



Keeping in Touch

A quarterly newsletter for Catholic homeschooling families

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EDITORIAL

This issue of *Keeping In Touch* was edited by:

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We would like to thank the generous people who took the time to write articles or send in useful and interesting information.

We would like to encourage all families (both parents and children) and anyone who supports homeschooling to have a go at writing for *Keeping In Touch*.

Please share your thoughts, ideas, useful information, hints and resources, poems, stories and drawings. Articles on homeschooling, spiritual and family life topics are most welcome.

By contributing to *Keeping In Touch* you will be supporting, encouraging, entertaining and helping other homeschoolers.

If you would like to edit a future edition of *Keeping In Touch*, please contact Andy Elvis for more information.

We hope that you enjoy this edition. Any complaints and criticisms will be cheerfully considered if accompanied by an article for next term's *Keeping In Touch*!

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Please note that the deadline for contributions from readers is the **end of the second week of each term.**

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New Boys in the Bush \$16.50
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TERM THREE 2008

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REALLY BIG LITTLE THINGS FROM WYD

Being part of the great World Youth Day in Sydney gave me a very different perspective from what I had beforehand as an onlooker. For one thing, the media emphasis was – perhaps understandably – on the headlines. That meant a focus on scandals, apparent hypocrisy by pilgrims or Church leaders, and the hot button issues of climate change, reconciliation with aborigines and how greed and corruption can destroy our environment. It wasn't so much that the media reports were untrue (although some were blatantly wrong). It was the emphasis which gave the reports such a slant. A single sentence of a key address by the Pope or a Bishop was quoted accurately and then followed up by five times as much reporting, using statements from those who disagreed or criticised that statement. As I say, it wasn't explicit lies which distorted the reports; it was the emphasis.

Being on the ground gave me an entirely positive view of World Youth Day. Here are four little things which were not observed, or at least not emphasised by most outsiders, but are typical of the experiences of those who attended. They may seem little things but in fact they were monumental. The biggest, most important things in life are not always visible or easily noticed.

Really Big Little Thing #1: the Usher Nun

Alongside the excitement and sheer busyness of the Vocations Expo, there was a hall dedicated to Adoration and Confessions. The hall was set up very simply. It was stark, perhaps a little too much so. The Blessed Sacrament was exposed in a monstrance with an elaborate golden sun surrounding it. There were some candles, but no flowers or altar or kneelers in this Convention Centre converted for the week into a home for Our Lord. In the same hall, the confessionals consisted of face-to-face booths, where priest and penitent were seated. A single crucifix was the only sacramental among the thirty-odd booths manned by priests from all over the world.

A Dominican nun was directing the queue of penitents in this simple setting. She did little more than ask them the language they wished to confess in so she could direct them to a suitable priest, and she handed out examinations of conscience in that language, where they were available. A very simple job as an usher when her fellow sisters may have been talking to interested and excited candidates in the Vocations Expo nearby. My first reaction to this adoration/confession hall was "this could be better", and my first thought for that young nun was "what a dull job she has." Then it hit me. I realised that the heart of

World Youth Day wasn't only the cheering crowds when the Pope arrived spectacularly at Barangaroo. What WYD was primarily all about was getting every one of us closer to Christ. And what was this good Dominican sister doing when she asked people if they wanted a priest who could speak English? Exactly that: bringing people closer to Christ. I realised that this dull job was actually a very important one. This sister would be praying all day for the penitents. Not all of them would answer her question directly. Many would say "I really don't know what to say" or "I don't even know how I came to be here" and perhaps this anonymous Dominican would be the very instrument of bringing them from potency to act, from "I *could* have my sins forgiven" to "I *did* have my sins forgiven."

In those few moments while I was waiting for confession I told this good Sister that what was happening in that simple hall was the very heart of WYD. By a sincere confession Our Lord removed the obstacles which keep us from giving ourselves wholly to God's service, and then we are drawn to Him in adoration and Communion. When I told her my great insight she said "Yes! Isn't it wonderful?" I don't think I especially taught her anything new about how her dull job was an essential part of WYD. She already seemed to have understood that her faithfulness to that simple duty was a grace from God, for her and for others.

Really Big Little Thing #2: handling lost baggage

It was common to hear of pilgrims who had saved \$4000 or more to get to Sydney. One of the pilgrims from Prague interviewed on the radio had also worked very hard to save \$5000 for the trip to Sydney. Unfortunately, her baggage went missing and wasn't recovered. When the interviewer expressed some sympathy for her plight, the pilgrim took a completely supernatural approach to it all. "Oh, I'm focussing on the positive and I try not to think about the loss of the luggage. I'm not blaming anyone. The important thing is that we're here as pilgrims, and this is a small part of the sacrifice which is part of the pilgrimage."

Really Big Little Thing #3: the unmaddding crowd

Attending the final Mass at Randwick alongside maybe 400,000 others was a great experience, but taking five little children along was a little daunting. Although there were so many people there, I was struck by how many people noticed the

children and went out of their way to speak to them before and after Mass. When going home it took us almost an hour to walk a short, crowded path which had taken us about 10 minutes to walk when we came in for the Mass early in the morning. Despite the monumental crowds, I didn't hear a single person complain when the group had been stopped for up to ten minutes at a time to prevent a crowd crush further on. Most of the pilgrims had done the night vigil and got very little sleep ("vigil" is from the Latin word meaning "to stay awake"). They were tired from the night and the whole of the big week, but I didn't hear a single raised voice. People were so courteous when we had to cross the crowd with our overladen pram. That crowd courtesy, like driving manners, springs from the virtue of charity.

Really Big Little Thing #4: Bendición, Papa!

We had two girls from Venezuela stay with us for the week. They were simply angels and showed great affection to all the family, especially the children. When they got home exhausted from the week of sleep deprivation, they looked like they were not going to make it to their beds, but once they saw the children the pilgrims fired up with energy again and even taught our seven year old some Spanish for half an hour.

Each morning we had to drive them to a station about 2 km away. One day the children and I walked with them half the way, so that we could take part a little in the pilgrimage. Our two year old even carried the backpack.

It's the custom in Venezuela for children to ask their fathers for a blessing when they leave the house. So, each day these two lovely young pilgrims of the ripe age of 17 would ask me for a blessing: "Bendición, Papa". I gave them the blessing: "Que Dios te bendiga" (may God bless you), and they replied "Amen." This was probably the last and greatest of the Really Big Little Things from World Youth Day. It was touching to be called Papa by these girls, although it made me feel a little older than I look.

ANTHONY ENGLISH



STORY ABOUT BOYS

Mum doesn't like to see the boys
Turn crystal glassware into toys.
She also gets a little sore
When eggs go bouncing on the floor.

You'd think she wouldn't notice grime -
It gets her going all the time.

"This house is not some sort of pen,
A sty,
A lair,
Or lion's den.
Take your games outside to play
I want to have some peace today!"

So, out we went to have some fun.
The moon was up when we were done.

"Look at you!
Where have you been?
Just wash yourself -
The house is clean!"

So, we brushed the dirt onto the floor
As soon as we were through the door.
We knew that it just wouldn't do
To bring that mud and walk it through.

But, Mum began to screech and yell.
Why she was mad, we couldn't tell.
"Go outside and get the hose
And clean those hands
And legs
And toes!"

When we had done what we were told,
We shivered and shook with all the cold.
Mum warned us up with quilts and rugs,
Hot plates of cookies
And steaming mugs.

She told us of her childhood days,
When things were tough in lots of ways.

"Your dad left school when he was nine
To haul the coal up from the mine.
And my poor hands would have to scrub
The sheets and clothes in an old, tin tub.

"Yes, time's were hard - it's true to say.
We didn't get much time to play.
But, it warms my heart to see you smile,
To cuddle up
And rest awhile."

Mum was happy and we were glad.
She wasn't cross when we weren't bad.

But, that was all about to end
With the coming of our newest friend.
Our catch of the day - a slippery eel -
Slid on Mum's knee to share our meal.

Well, that was it! Mum screamed,
"Enough!"
You, take your pets and all your stuff!
Your animals can share your bed
Outside of here, inside the shed!"

We knew that we had been a trial.
We'd learnt our lesson - for a while.
All the same
It was a shame
To feel that we were rather tame
And have to sleep outside and camp
With grubs and bugs and all that damp.

But, to go indoors was at our peril,
When Mum's so sure that we are feral!

VICKY LEACH

SQUIGGLES & SQUINTER: A BOOK REVIEW

This book is about twin brothers, Squiggles and Squinter, who have many adventures together in the bush. As well as teaching their new friend, Fred, how to live in the bush, they must fight off two armed bushrangers who disturb the peace of the bush when they use it as their hiding place from the police.

It would appeal to younger children, or anyone who has enjoyed the Bush Boys books and likes adventure. The short chapters make it ideal for younger children to read or reading as a bedtime story. It is a good book for both boys and girls.

When reading this book to my younger sisters, I found that the characters and landscape were easy to picture from the descriptions given them. There is never a dull moment when the boys are either fighting the villains or just playing with their friend. We all enjoyed it very much.

CARRIE LEACH

DISCOVERIES

Bill used to greet me with a muttered, "Hello", his eyes barely meeting mine before hurrying off. Although I'd see Bill regularly at Mass we never exchanged more than a few words.

Then one morning, I met Bill and his wife Betty in the supermarket. Betty is a bubbly friendly person and soon we were deep in conversation, with Bill standing quietly waiting in the background. Betty told me that she was looking forward to a planned holiday in England later in the year and I enquired where she and Bill would be visiting. She rattled off a few destinations, some of which I'd visited myself.

"I've been to the Lake District."

"Have you?" Bill's eyes lit up and he stepped forward to join in our conversation. Soon we were discovering some interesting facts about each other's lives. I was relating stories about my years at university in Wales and the travelling I'd done during the semester breaks. Bill and Betty told me about their trips overseas. Betty's favourite place is Iceland while Bill favours Antarctica.

"When did you go to Antarctica?"

"I used to work there."

We became oblivious to the other shoppers who were trying to direct their trolleys around us. We were travelling the world in our imaginations. Finally, I noticed Imogen waiting patiently with my own trolley and regretfully I took my leave of Bill and Betty.

"Perhaps we could call in some time and have afternoon tea with you?" suggested Bill. "I'd like to continue our conversation." I was surprised but delighted that he wanted to visit us.

A couple of weeks later, I met Bill again. This time he was by himself. He gave me such a warm welcome and seemed so pleased to see me. "I've booked a holiday in Antarctica for January," he announced. "Betty isn't too sure about it but I am sure she'll love it once she gets there."

Bill said they would be travelling to South America and approaching Antarctica from this direction. I suddenly realised I was a bit vague about exactly where Antarctica is in relation to other countries of the world. Somewhere south of Australia was as accurate as I could get. When we began talking about explorers such as Mawson and Shackleton I knew that again my facts were rather hazy. The phrase "Scott of the

Antarctic" leapt to my mind but I had the feeling that it wasn't Scott who was the first person to journey to the South Pole. Could it have been Mawson or Shackleton?

Reluctantly, after chatting for about twenty minutes, I had to say goodbye to Bill but not before he asked for our email address. Apparently, he will be able to send emails at various times during his Antarctic holiday and he has promised to share all the excitement of his trip with us.

I returned home determined to find out more about Antarctica. I visited our local library and came home with a pile of interesting DVDs and books and these have become the basis of this term's work. What a fascinating subject. We have become expert penguin identifiers; we discovered that it was Amundsen who won the race to the South Pole; we have discovered exactly where the Falklands Islands are; we have read about the amazing survival stories of both Mawson and Shackleton.

The biggest discovery of all was that Bill is such an interesting person. John Tucker once said that everyone is unique and interesting with something worthwhile to share. We just have to find a way of unlocking the treasures contained within each person. We have to find that particular topic that will spark them off. We have to find their passion. Well, we certainly found Bill's passion. By sharing conversations about Bill's interest in travelling we have got to know him better and become real friends. Also, Bill's passion and excitement is contagious. We are really enjoying our own discoveries of Antarctica.

Join us in a fascinating journey to the deep frozen south. All these resources we found with no trouble in our library. And if anyone knows of any novels set in this continent, please let me know.

Polar Exploration: Journeys to the Arctic and Antarctic by Martyn Bramwell

Antarctic Witness: South with Mawson by Charles F. Laseron and Shackleton's Argonauts by Frank Hurley

A Visual Introduction to Penguins by Bernard Stonehouse

The March of the Penguins: DVD

David Attenborough's Life in the Freezer: DVD

Mawson: Life and Death in Antarctica by Tim Jarvis, book and DVD

Eyewitness Penguin plaster casting kit which we bought from Taronga Zoo

SUE ELVIS

STOWAWAY: A BOOK REVIEW

STOWAWAY

by Karen Hesse

Aladdin Paperbacks, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division,
1230 Avenue of the Americas,
New York, NY 10020;
paperback A.D. 2002; text copyright A.D. 2000.

REVIEW

The back cover blurb to this wonderful piece of historical fiction reveals that "in the summer of 1768, Captain James Cook sailed from England on *HMS Endeavour*, beginning a three-year voyage around the world on a secret mission to discover an unknown continent at the bottom of the globe. What is less known is that boy by the name of Nicholas Young was a stowaway on that ship.



"... Karen Hesse re-creates Cook's momentous voyage through the eyes of this remarkable boy, creating a fictional journal filled with fierce hurricanes, warring natives, and disease, as Nick discovers new lands, incredible creatures, and lifelong friends."

This reviewer was already familiar with the facts of Cook's historic voyage, and subsequent voyages, and from the start of reading *Stowaway*, was personally very sympathetic. However, I must admit that I am simply not sure if other readers would like it as well: that must be decided by experiment, which is true of most children's books.

The chapters are very long and are called "parts", all twenty one of them. They are broken up into a very digestible format as the stowaway's dated daily entries in his log book. These episodes are sometimes a mere paragraph, other times a page or two

and bridging several days. I found the format and contents irresistible and, having made it my bedtime book, could not turn out the light: I wanted more. In children's bedtime stories, whether read aloud or made up for the occasion, this is definitely a mark of success.

The author's Afterword lists the sparse records of hard fact available to her about the real Nicholas Young, and so makes quite clear the extent of her own fictional invention.

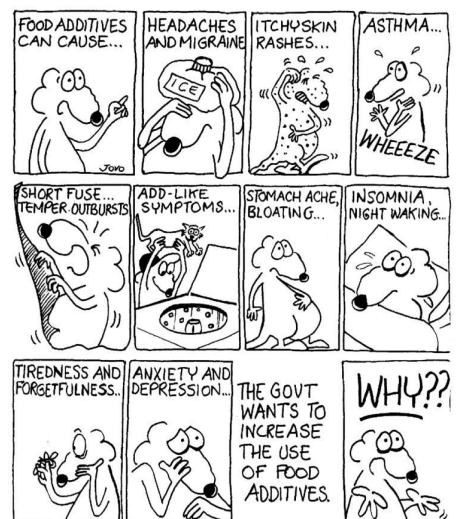
At the end of the book she gives a full list of the Ship's Company, the Ship's Itinerary, and a very informative Glossary, which contains background information not in the story itself.

Interestingly, the thriller writer Alistair McLean's only non-fiction was an account of the voyaging of Captain Cook, in which he acclaims him as "the greatest seaman, the greatest navigator and the greatest explorer of all time". McLean says: "that Cook was beloved by his officers and men is beyond dispute;" and paradoxically, "We know all about Cook and nothing about him."

It is into the context of such material that Karen Hesse enfleshes her stowaway. He is eleven years old, and a likeable scamp. Having known real youngsters just like him, I can vouch for the authenticity of her fictional hero.

The illustrations are not to my taste, but children are extremely "catholic" in putting up with artists, and it is they who should be consulted on such matters.

FATHER JAMES TIERNEY



thanks to Joanne van Oo for the cartoons (not to be copied for profit)

FOOD INTOLERANCES

One thing people have noticed about our family is that we have become difficult to feed. For about a year or so now we have been watching what we eat. We have confused people by shunning grapes and oranges in favour of rice crackers and home made cake. Most people understand the idea that food additives are best minimised, but what is wrong with fresh avocado and tomato? For all the wonderful people who have tried to accommodate us I offer this article as an explanation.

It all began with the arrival of our fourth boy, Bernard. He was restless and clingy, his eyes were perpetually clogging up and he had green motions. We tried different things. At 2 months I stopped eating dairy products and he was less unhappy. I stopped caffeine – no tea, chocolate or coffee. Around the 6 month mark I came across Sue Dengate's book *Fed Up*.

This book is not especially new. It has been around for well over ten years. It is available for sale through the Australian Breastfeeding Association so it must have won the approval of an educated group of mothers. The book describes a diet Free of Additives, Low in Salicylates, Amines and Flavour Enhancers, which is where the name FAILSAFE comes from. I had been under the impression that the failsafe diet was one safe for all allergy types, but that is not the case. However, the book described some cases where the failsafe diet helped ease the severity of some allergies. Sue Dengate found that this diet helps a long list of common conditions covering physical, emotional and social problems. Symptoms include rashes, asthma, learning disorders, ADHD, tummy aches, migraines, insomnia, depression, bedwetting, irritable bowel, irritability in general and even autistic spectrum disorders to name a few. There were quite a few listed problems which matched our family so it seemed worth the while to give it a try.

At first we avoided the additives known to cause problems (see references at the end for where to find the list). I was surprised how much of a change this was. MSG is called flavour enhancer 621 on ingredient lists and it's even in some plain potato chips! Now I know why the convenience foods in the supermarket are so tasty.

I was unwilling to do anything so drastic as an elimination diet. I had heard how difficult

it was. I did not want to be seen as a fussy eater or an over-protective mother. The social impact of food intolerances is interesting. Food is a big part of meeting people, spending time together and celebrating. When you turn up with your own food it can seem confronting. All the same, when I saw a friend's son before and after the diet, the social inconvenience seemed reversed. Before the diet they could not stay for long since the little boy was so irritable and restless. Once you see the results, the food part becomes much easier.



It took months and a few false starts to really get going. After a while it seemed that Bernard was still reacting to something so we cut out more foods for him. As he was eating whatever he could find, it was easier to make this change for the whole family rather than constantly sweeping and vacuuming up crumbs. So we also cut out nuts, eggs, fish, soy and gluten – the most common allergens for babies.

The results were not sudden or dramatic, but looking back on the diary notes the change is very real. Bernard is much happier and healthier. The rest of the family is calmer and I have stopped having mysterious stomach aches like I used to get. It hasn't made us perfect – far from it. It hasn't made us immune to colds and flu or gastro. Just as the subtitle for the Failsafe Cookbook says: "Reducing food chemicals for calm, happy

families".

Now we are refining the diet, testing our tolerance levels and seeing how we go. Nuts are back on the menu in the form of cashews (other nuts are high in salicylates and amines). Amines are not a severe problem so bananas are back. We can handle food moderate in salicylates so carrots and butternut pumpkin are regular vegies once more. We don't always peel the pears anymore.

I can imagine some people are confused at this point. You may still be wondering about the grapes, oranges, avocado and tomato from the first paragraph. These are some of the fruits and vegetables that are high in naturally occurring chemicals. These are the salicylates, amines and glutamates – long words for substances that may make plants more resistant to pests, tastier and prolong their shelf life. Some people are sensitive to these substances, especially the young and the elderly. Because they are eaten all the time, it is hard to find out unless you take the plunge and do the diet.

For those who haven't read the book, these examples might seem odd. Many people seem staggered by the idea and ask "What can you eat?" It's a difficult one to answer briefly. If you are intrigued, check the website: [fedup.com.au](http://www.fedup.com.au) or read the book. There's even a DVD available. All these resources are low budget productions. They aren't making lots of money out of this. The website is a little odd to navigate, but digging around you can find readers' stories, medical references, support, recipes and much more.

References:

The Food Intolerance Network :
<http://www.fedup.com.au>

For a list of additives known to cause problems :
<http://www.fedupwithfoodadditives.info/failsafe.htm>

For information on food intolerances from the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital :
<http://www.cs.nsw.gov.au/rpa/Allergy/>

VERONICA BRANDT

SEWING - FRIEND OR FOE

I've been asked to write an article for KIT. After deliberating for some time the topic I have chosen for this term's newsletter is Sewing. This has been somewhat of a gradual interest developing within. I guess having 6 boys and 1 girl my motivation is to help my daughter and I acquire skills that will help us in home making, help us relax and make the inevitable football matches etc. on TV more bearable. Not having grown up in an environment where needlework was cherished, my mum was not keen on sewing, (academics, sport and music were more the focus) I have somewhat struggled in this area, however am slowly beginning to realise the benefits.

On my 21st birthday, my fiancé Bernard, soon to be husband, bought me a sewing machine. At first I was quite excited about this and took a "Just knits" stretch sewing course after we were married. Although I made a couple of items, the frustration of sewing was too much for me. I remember throwing a jump suit I was making for our baby son Benjamin (who turns 20 this year) across the room because I just couldn't get it. Fortunately he wasn't in it. (Joke!)



That was the end of that for about 3 years. I had another go with a lady I know who is quite professional at sewing and while I made a few more items it was still all too hard. With various spasmodic attempts over the years which included cross-stitch and mending it's only been in the last couple of years I've attempted sewing again with more determination.

My first attempt after many years were some dolls from a pattern Imogen Elvis spoke about in one of the KIT newsletters. My daughter Gemma, two younger sons John and Joseph and I joined the Leach family one day and made these dolls. I recall it to be one of the happiest days I've had homeschooling as we sewed and made hair and drew faces on these dolls. This

gave me a bit of confidence.

My second attempt was a nightie for Gemma and third attempt was a skirt and underskirt for Gemma to wear as it turned out to be, to her 1st Reconciliation. These I attempted at a sewing class held by my aforementioned friend and this time found the work a little easier. I made the underskirt myself based on the skirt pattern. It turned out well. This is OK I thought to myself.

Two of my boys had albs for altar serving made for them. I had taken the measurements for them and these were incorrect. So when they came back they were too long in both height and arm length. Because I had successfully made Gemma's nightie and skirt I thought I could now at least attempt alterations. So with my mother-in-law's help these alterations were made quite successfully. Just in time for the opening of our new Church. Not professional but to the best of my ability.

I downloaded a sewing book bought over the internet called "Learning to Sew a step by step guide" by Kristi Borchardt. www.sewingwithkids.com. This has been a wonderful help as it has easy to follow instructions with pictures alongside. My 1st attempt from this book was a bible cover for one of my boy's bibles. He asked me for this one day. With a few alterations I made this out of vinyl with good results.

Since then I've made another bible cover with a third on the way, a tabernacle curtain and white baptismal garment for a doll. Both Gemma and I have made a drawstring bag and a skirt each with good results. Our next project is an apron for my husband (He said to say for his famous BBQs). Later we may branch into knitting and crochet.

I guess the purpose of this article is to encourage whoever may be reading this not to be afraid of developing new talents. New ones and also those that have seemed too daunting in the past, may become a source of relaxation/ happiness. As it says in Philippians 4:13. "In him who is the source of my strength. I have the strength for everything."

CHRISTINE FRENCH

WYD

Recently, my family and I were lucky enough to see the Holy Father, during his visit to Sydney, for World Youth Day. We were not able to go to the official events but, on the last Monday, we saw the final motorcade as he left St. Mary's Cathedral for the Domain.

We didn't know that we were going to get as close as we did to the motorcade so we felt very blessed to see the Pope pass closely by. I was standing on the ledge of a pillar and waited for about 40 minutes for him to arrive. When he came by, I felt him making eye contact with me and I felt the Holy Spirit rush over me as he gave us his blessing. It was a great feeling and my soul felt uplifted.



Afterwards, we saw St. Patrick's Church, in Sydney, and outside of this church, we spoke with three pilgrim monks who gave us each a Miraculous Medal. They said that they had had a wonderful time at World Youth Day and that everyone had been very good to them. We also saw heaps of pilgrims singing, as they walked to the Domain, carrying Crosses and large holy pictures. That was very inspiring.

It was a great day and I am going to nag my parents to let me go to a future World Youth Day, when I am old enough.

CAMERON LEACH



FROM PRINCESS STORIES TO A TALE OF GRIEF, LOVE AND HOPE

All children have secret places and, many years ago, mine was in the bottom of my wardrobe. There, half-hidden by the dangling clothes, was a large old grocery box. In this box were layers and layers of scrap-paper covered with my untidy handwriting: dozens and dozens of unfinished stories.

When I was a child I loved to write. My imagination was filled with wonderful, exciting stories which always began well but never seemed to get finished. Before one story was completed I'd have a newer and better idea and the first story would be filed away in my secret cardboard box. Perhaps I'd hoped that I would come back and finish all those tales but I never did.

There were definite themes running through all my writings. Princesses featured prominently as did large families. (I wasn't a Catholic but I did grow up in the Brady Bunch era!) Oh how I wished I could write captivating tales that would be worthy of a glossy cover and a position in a library, my favourite place. I day dreamed about becoming a real author. What would I call myself? Would I use the name 'Sue' or the longer form 'Susan'. Perhaps a pen-name would be appropriate.

Well, I grew up and somehow I didn't follow a literary career. I found myself a scientist after studying botany and biochemistry. Although I still enjoyed writing, I no longer thought about becoming an author. I became too busy bringing up that large family I used to dream and write about.

Then in November 1999 our son Thomas died after one day of life. As part of the healing process, I felt the need to put down on paper thoughts and feelings associated with Thomas' death. I explored different aspects of grief by writing a number of articles which were published in different editions of *Keeping in Touch*. As the number of articles increased I began to think about using them as a basis for a book. For the first time since my childhood, I was toying with the idea of becoming an author. At this stage I had no plans to seek a publisher if the book was actually written. All I really had in mind was writing a book for Thomas. I wanted a book I could put into his memory box, a book that would say "Thomas you are special, we love you and are glad we had you even for that one day." I also wanted to put into writing a heartfelt thank you to God

who brought me back from the brink of despair and restored in me hope for the future.

So one school holiday in 2007, when I had a little time, I sat down and gathered together the few articles I'd already written about Thomas. I made a list of things I wanted to include in the story of our son and I began writing. Gradually a book took shape on my computer. I confided my secret activity to a few friends and they were very encouraging asking if they could read what I had written. Running off copies, on the printer, of my very personal story was at first very frightening. What if my writings were thought to be silly? Would my precious story be pulled apart and criticised? Could I deal with advice and suggestions? Well, all my proof readers were very helpful. They had some good suggestions and were very kind when wording their comments.



As I said, originally I wanted to write Thomas' story just for him and would have been satisfied with producing one copy as a family story. But it was suggested that I share my experience of losing a baby in a bigger way in order to connect with other parents who might be treading the same sorrowful path we'd already been along. Questions I remember asking in the early days of our grief were: "Will we survive? Will this pain ever grow lighter? Will we ever experience joy again?" Perhaps another parent's story about coming out the other end of that dark, dark tunnel might have given me hope.

Fr James Tierney was a wonderful help to me while I was writing my book. He read all my stories, gave helpful suggestions and most of all was so very encouraging making me feel that my efforts were very worthwhile. Even before the book was

quite finished, Fr Tierney offered to publish it as a Newman Publication. When Father sent me my very own ISBN I knew I was well on my way to producing a real book.

With the text of the book written, I had to give thought to the cover. It seemed to me that most books have a few complimentary comments from reviewers on the back cover, comments that will encourage prospective readers to buy and read the book. I needed the same for my book. So I approached my faithful proof readers and asked them nicely if they felt able to write a few positive words. Being so kind, everyone said they'd give it a go.

My sister Vicky asked me what I'd like her to say.

"Well, how about something along these lines," I answered: "This book is going straight to the top of the bestsellers' list. It's a must-have. If you only buy one book this year make sure it is this one. I read it from cover to cover at one sitting. I just couldn't put it down. Reserve your copy today before they are all sold out."

"Um," replied Vicky. "It is true I read it cover to cover in one sitting...I'll see what I can come up with."

Of course, what I'd suggested was totally inappropriate and Vicky in her kind and caring way came up with something much more suitable. Have a look at my book to find out just what she said!

Now I am the author of a glossy covered book bearing my name. In case you're wondering, I chose 'Sue' over 'Susan'. If I'd ever managed to finish any of my princess stories I might be a very rich woman by now as princess stories seem to be in vogue. But I am content with my Thomas book, *Grief, Love and Hope: the Death of Our Baby Thomas*. It won't be a bestseller and make me any money but I am a rich woman anyway for God gave me a beloved son and through his death, I discovered just how much God loves me and became aware of the many, many blessings He has bestowed on myself and my family.

Grief, Love and Hope: the Death of Our Baby Thomas available from Cardinal Newman Faith Resources, tel: 02 9637 9406, email <fr@cardinalnewman.com.au> \$10 plus \$2 postage

SUE ELVIS

GRIEF, LOVE AND HOPE: THE DEATH OF OUR BABY THOMAS

In 1999, we were eagerly looking forward to the arrival of our sixth child. Then, during a routine ultrasound, it was discovered that our baby had a life threatening abnormality. With that discovery our lives were changed forever. The usually happy event of pregnancy became a grief filled trial as we waited for the birth of our child. Would our baby live? If he died, how would we survive?

This is the story of our long journey through the pregnancy of our baby Thomas, his short life and the difficult months after his death. It is a sorrowful story but also one filled with hope. We did emerge out of that long dark tunnel of grief although at one point we never believed we would.

I hope our story will encourage other parents who are facing similar trials.

Grief, Hope and Love contains articles written on various aspects of losing a baby. Interspersed between these essays are extracts taken from a diary written during the

year after the death of Thomas.

Chapters include:

The Birth
 The Perfect Birth
 Number of Children
 How many Children Do You Have?
 People's Reaction to Grief
 Saying the Right Thing
 Holding a Child after Death
 The Viewing
 Making Memories
 Thomas' Memory Box
 Christmas
 Feeling Angry
 The Early Weeks of Grief
 The Grief Continues
 A Husband, a Father, a Friend
 The First Birthday
 A Celebration of Love
 A Name on a Stone
 A Miracle
 Death

Grateful

Another Baby

Sophie

Love

A Mother, a Child: a Special Love

Suffering: a Reflection

And more

Grief, Love and Hope is available direct from **CARDINAL NEWMAN FAITH RESOURCES** at 342 Merrylands Road, Merrylands write to PO Box 697 Merrylands, NSW 2160; phone 02 9637 9406; fax 02 9637 3351 email <fr@cardinalnewman.com.au>

For more information, visit:
 <www.cardinalnewman.com.au>

\$10 each. Plus postage & packaging **\$2**

SUE ELVIS

NORTH AND SOUTH: A BOOK REVIEW

North and South by Elizabeth Gaskell

Elizabeth Gaskell's book, "North and South", is a romance and a social commentary about the conditions of workers living in towns after the Industrial Revolution. The author was the wife of a minister of the Unitarian Chapel in Manchester and drew upon her experiences as she lived and worked among the poor factory workers. Her main characters, Margaret Hale and John Thornton, were well developed and Mrs. Gaskell showed great insight and understanding of human nature as she portrayed them.

The story opened in the home of a wealthy, upper middle-class family in London in the mid nineteenth century. Here Margaret, a poor county parson's daughter, had been living as a sister and companion to her rich, spoilt, pretty cousin, Edith, for the past ten years, and the situation was about to come to an end with Edith's marriage to Captain Lennox. Margaret was down-to-earth, generous and loving, whilst Edith, though loving, was thoughtless and silly, thinking too much about pretty clothes, dancing, playing the piano, dinner parties and socialising. Margaret was tolerant of her present life-style but disliked the artificiality of London society. She looked forward to returning to Helstone, located in the south of England, and helping her parents around the parsonage, visiting the poor and needy. She was unaware that Captain

Lennox's brother, Henry, a lawyer, had fallen in love with her, and when the fuss and bother that surrounded Edith's wedding was irritating Margaret, she remarked to him that when she married she hoped to walk to the church on a sunny morning, without bridesmaids or a wedding breakfast.

Back home Margaret revelled in walking everywhere, visited parishioners, helped her mother, enjoyed reading, and tried to avoid the topic of 'poor Frederick'. Occasionally there was a glimpse of Margaret's prejudices when she told her mother that she would never consider marrying a tradesman. She thought a suitor like a soldier or sailor, or from the three professions, was respectable. Quite to Margaret's surprise Henry Lennox arrived and much to her distaste Margaret received a proposal. Her earlier chance remark had been all the encouragement Henry had needed. Not being ready to even consider marriage she was very glad when he quickly returned to London.

There was happiness she began to recognise agitation and disquiet in her home. Within two months her father had told her that his conscience could no longer allow him to continue as a Church of England minister and they had to go because he had already resigned. The move was to be to the industrial township of Milton-Northern. He had not told his delicate

wife, Maria, because he was afraid of her reaction. Because Margaret was resilient, very self-controlled, and somewhat proud he bade her tell her mother.

Two weeks later they travelled North via London to Milton, the industrial town suggested by Mr Hale's closest friend, his Oxford companion, Mr Bell. Mr Bell owned property there and thought this grey, cold industrial town offered nothing that would remind the Hales of the tranquil beauty and the slow gentle lifestyle they were leaving. Mr Hale wanted to tutor for his income, and Mr Bell had many friends and acquaintances there to whom he could recommend Mr Hale. Only their good and faithful servant, Dixon accompanied them because she refused to stay behind.

Margaret always thought of others and so while she and her father looked for accommodation in the larger town she had her father rent a small place at the seaside for her mother and Dixon.

There lived in Milton a Mr Thornton, who operated a large cotton mill and was a magistrate. He was a very busy man as well as highly respected. Being Mr Bell's friend, Mr Thornton was asked by him to make sure that the Hales secured the best accommodation they could under the circumstances. Arriving at their hotel to look over what they had viewed he was confronted by a simple,

straightforward unabashed young lady of beauty instead of the little girl he had expected. Mr Hale was still out looking for housing and Mr Thornton who was used to being a man of authority, himself, was disconcerted by Margaret who was completely in command and so utterly unlike any Milton girl. In London society, Margaret had learned to be at ease in anyone's company by putting up a thin veil of haughtiness to cover up any fear of strangers. She was extremely polite, gentle and friendly without seeming artificial or overpolished.

Margaret was tired at this first meeting and was quite indifferent to the tradesman, Mr Thornton, who was tall and handsome in a rugged way, but he, who had been too busy to even notice a woman before, found himself admiring her demeanour and beauty. The Hales never guessed that when they entered their new residence the redecoration had been done at Mr Thornton's remonstrance to the landlord and not theirs.

The Hales settled in but the cold fogs and smog soon took their toll. Margaret became homesick and Mrs. Hale's health plummeted. Mr Hale gathered pupils, with Mr Thornton being his oldest and favourite. He liked the energy of this new town but Margaret and Dixon found they had trouble securing a servant because the townspeople were fiercely independent and gave themselves airs and graces unheard of in London society.

Margaret made friends amongst the workers including a union advocate, Nicholas Higgins, and his consumptive daughter, Bessy. She also met Mr Thornton's silly sister, Fanny, and his shy, arrogant, dominating, mother, who was excessively proud of her son's position and achievements. Margaret became aware of growing unrest amongst the poor workers and was told of an impending strike by Mrs. Thornton who had taken a dislike to Margaret because she was indifferent to her son. Since Margaret saw both sides of the story where the strike was concerned she found it hard to understand why masters and workers did not talk to each other.

Soon Margaret became aware that her mother's delicate condition was no fancy and that she was dying. The unspeakable topic of 'poor Frederick' came up and 'poor Frederick' was secretly sent for.

The strike eventuated and so did a riot, when strike-breakers were brought in from Ireland. Margaret saved Mr Thornton's life but the Thornton servants and Fanny Thornton's gossiping tongues almost destroyed Margaret's reputation. Mr Thornton had fallen in love with Margaret but when he proposed to her the following day, part of her felt that he

was only trying to rescue her reputation because she had heard Fanny talking to the servants. Until this point she had only felt indifference and dislike for tradesmen, including Mr Thornton. As he left after being rejected, a slight unease began to overtake Margaret because she realized she had hurt his feelings. He left telling her that he would not stop loving her.

'Poor Frederick' arrived to give some comfort to the dying Mrs Hale but it was a short stay marred by what looked like a murder. Margaret lied to protect her family but it caused scandal to surround her. Though upset by Margaret's behaviour, Mr Thornton used his influence to protect her but they rarely spoke after this and she felt that he had lost all respect for her. She could not confide in him.

Margaret's life became worse as friends and family died and departed. She saw a darker side to union power and was as much disgusted by it as she was by some of the more selfish mill owners. After her father's sudden death, she returned to London to live with her cousin, Edith, and her family. Her friendship with Henry Lennox was renewed but she was still sad and did not enjoy London much. Her father's friend Mr Bell took her back to her beloved Helstone but it had changed and memories of the past hurt deeply. She knew she would always love Helstone but would probably never return. Margaret also began to feel more intensely the loss of Mr Thornton's friendship and respect but knew she was never to see him again.

Mr Bell had given her an income enabling her to reside with Edith without being a burden. During this time Margaret realized that she could never be a heroine or successful in life by her own power. She knew that God was at the helm and that she had to pray. Using this newfound knowledge Margaret began to help the poor in London much to the disgust of her aunt and cousin. She had loved helping the needy in both Helstone and Milton. Her work brought her much peace. Mr Bell died and left her the rest of his fortune and property which included the building that housed Mr Thornton's mill.

Meanwhile in Milton the effects of the strike nearly two years ago, the falling demand for cotton clothes and rising costs for raw cotton had taken their toll. Mills had closed and unemployment spread. Mr Thornton worked night and day. He refused to gamble the workers' pay on a speculative scheme that was risky even though Fanny's husband was trying to influence him into it. Mr Thornton was a good mill owner who looked

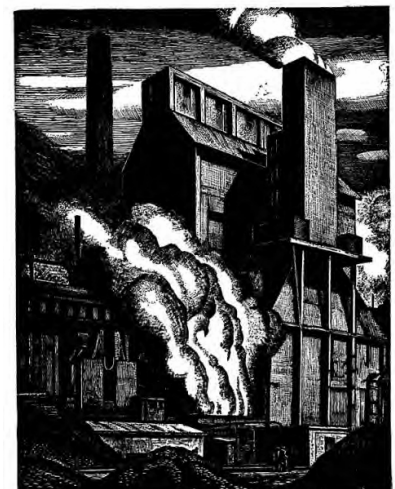
after his workers. Upon implementing new schemes to facilitate better co-operations between himself and the workers, he found new respect for them. As things got worse financially he and his mother thanked God for the good and the bad, though she did not understand why his diligence, justice and overall goodness to everyone was not being rewarded in the way she thought it should but he accepted God's will.

Henry Lennox became Margaret's business manager and they spent a great deal of time together. Margaret enjoyed this. When Mr Thornton's mill inevitably collapsed he had to come to London to see Mr Lennox about finding someone to take over his lease as he no longer had an income. Mr Lennox and Mr Thornton became friends.

The book is long but not tedious, though Mrs Gaskell does seem to understand more about the workers' plight than she does of the mill owners. There is a striking contrast and lack of communication between the classes in English society. The poor do not seem to be viewed as human beings but rather as "things" or "workers", and the workers seem to think all "masters" have limitless money. The fact that Mrs Gaskell brings out an understanding of how we cannot live without God makes it highly recommended reading. The plot is simple and easy to understand, the characters are credible and easy to relate to and the element of romance, tinged with sadness and tragedy make it very enjoyable.

The BBC mini-series version diverges a little too much from the story and it does not capture Mrs Gaskell's message: the overall view that we have to pray and do God's will even in hardship, to give our hearts peace.

The one criticism with the book is that it dwells too much on sin and exaggerates its effects. However, the book is definitely worth reading. Of Elizabeth Gaskell's other novels only *Wives and Daughters* is recommended.



BOOK REVIEW: THE GOAT WHO SAILED THE WORLD

The Goat Who Sailed the World

By Jackie French
Historical

From up on the quarterdeck the goat watched the sea go by. She was a good sailor and had sailed round the world twice. She knew she was important.

The Goat first sailed on the ship *Dolphin* which was under the command of Captain Wallis. She gave fresh milk for the captain and had to be treated well. She had her own sailor to milk her and give her hay



When the story begins we meet a young boy named Isaac who has just signed on for his first voyage. He will be sailing on the ship *Endeavour* with Captain Cook. The ship is going to Tahiti although there is a rumour that they will also go to try and discover the Great Southern Land. The Great Southern Land was thought to be a great continent on the other side of the world to balance Europe. Many Captains had been sent to try and find the Great Southern Land.

Isaac soon makes friends with the only other person of his age on the ship, a young midshipman named Jonathan. It is Jonathan's job to milk and feed the Goat. When, however, he takes her kids to be killed, he angers the Goat who then refuses to let him near her. The job of Goat's Boy is then given to Isaac who has milked at home. The Goat and Isaac become firm friends.

Captain Cook takes them on a three year voyage round the world from England to Rio, the tip of South America, Tahiti and Australia. Through all these places the Goat stands up on the quarterdeck surveying the sea. Sometimes Captain Cook would talk to the Goat for company. After the *Endeavour* left Australia they caught a fever. Over

one third of the ship's crew died including Jonathan. Isaac is promoted to the role of midshipman in place of Isaac.

The Goat Who Sailed the World is the story of one of Captain Cook's adventures. The whole story actually happened and there really was a young boy called Isaac. I liked reading the book because it was a story and a history lesson all in one. I have read some of Jackie French's other books and I have enjoyed them all immensely. She is an excellent writer having written other historical books.

IMOGEN ELVIS

ADAM'S RECIPES

I like to cook. Here are some of my recipes.

BANANA CAKE

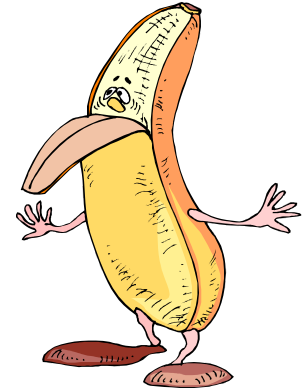
125g softened butter
¾ cup sugar
2 eggs
2 cups mashed ripe bananas
2tbsp hot milk
2 cups plain flour
1tsp baking powder
chocolate or lemon icing

- ◆ Cream butter and sugar together until light and fluffy.
- ◆ Beat in eggs, one at a time.
- ◆ Add mashed banana and mixed thoroughly.
- ◆ Stir soda into hot milk and add to creamed mixture.
- ◆ Fold in flour and baking powder.
- ◆ Turn into loaf tin.
- ◆ Bake for 50 minutes at 180°C or until

cake is golden and springs back when lightly touched.

- ◆ Dust with icing sugar or ice with icing.

Cooking Time:
50 minutes at 180°C



CHOCOLATE PUDDING

100g softened butter
¾ cup sugar
1 egg
1tsp vanilla essence
1¼ cups plain flour
2tsp baking powder
1tbsp cocoa
2 cups boiling water

Sauce

½ cup sugar
1tbsp flour
¼ cup cocoa

- ◆ Cream butter, vanilla, egg and sugar together.
- ◆ Beat in flour, baking powder and cocoa.
- ◆ Spoon into microwave dish.
- ◆ Sprinkle sauce mixture over.
- ◆ Carefully, pour boiling water over the back of a spoon onto the pudding.
- ◆ Microwave for 12 minutes on High or 30-40 minutes at 150°C in oven.

Cooking Time:
12 minutes in microwave on High or
30-40 minutes in oven at 150°C

ADAM LEACH

WRITERS CLUB

Do you like writing in any form?
Would you like to become acquainted with poets and their poetry?
Do you like reading original works?

The St. Frances de Sales Writers Club Newsletter has all of these things. A poet is featured every issue and one or more of his poems as well. Stories, poems and other

writings from all ages are published. The newsletter is published at the beginning of every term. If you would like to contribute to the newsletter send your pieces to Imogen Elvis at:
imogenceleste@optusnet.com.au
Copies of the newsletter can be obtained by emailing Carrie Leach at:
carrieleach@live.com

STRING, STRAIGHT EDGE & SHADOW

STRING, STRAIGHT EDGE, & SHADOW
The Story of Geometry

by Julia E. Digging Whole Spirit Press,
Denver CO, USA, 2003, first published
1965.

REVIEW

When cowboys galloped across the movie screen in the late 1940s, we knew the baddies from their black hats, and we booed loud and long. And whenever they showed up again... Boo! Boo!

Alas, so it is when some well-intentioned teacher of mathematics tries to write a book to make it easier, and interesting, digestible and relevant. Even doing it successfully is no excuse, in fact, more damnable. The criminal will be shot at dawn (or even the night before), and the book disdainfully tossed aside, if not burnt at the stake. This too is the fate in store for the reviewer. Once it is realized he's keen on maths, he's just about as welcome as an outbreak of the Plague. Maths! Ugh! Down come the shutters, up with the drawbridge, drop the portcullis, repel boarders. The review is not read by the very people it could have helped. A real Catch 22.

It's just not fair that maths is given a bad name and then lynched without trial. Oh yes, we all know examples of poor teaching, but we don't admit the bias of the witnesses, witnesses who won't give anything a fair trial. Maths is hard to teach well, takes some effort to do it at all, just as sport, or anything else worthwhile. Indeed, the bad-mouthing is decidedly unsporting.

But maths can be taught well, and this book shows how.

STRING, STRAIGHT EDGE, & SHADOW is about some real people in ages past, with their share of sticky problems in social life and politics. Moreover, our heroes were mostly eccentric -- interesting people mostly are. And they are definitely not dullards or mouthers of flatland prose like the modern liturgy.

The book opens with the stone age and all that -- which regrettably the author does not relate to salvation history, and the decline of man after the Fall. How did man sink so low, and then rise from savagery to civilization, with all its natural moral law and mathematical technology?

It goes on to folk who had the mindset of a modern detective, solving the "what-done-it" problems of nature, rather than the "who-done-it" of crimes. Incidentally, the "who-done-it" could lead to the Creator, as in Wisdom 13.

Their detective work started on stones, flowers, crystals, stretched strings (cf. guitar). They found that nature was using simple numbers like 3, 4, 5 and 6 for nice regular shapes. No wonder they became geometers. They were stirred to explain things, those men of old, the rope-stretchers and star-gazers of antiquity. And even the shadows prompted them to work out time and direction before clocks and compasses.

What is more, the *String* book inclines a reader to make the observations for himself. He can use the same simple equipment, a string with equally spaced knots for marking out a 3, 4, 5 triangle on a sandy patch of ground, or understanding proportions from the measurements made on shadows. It is here that the book's diagrammatic drawing are such an inspiration, and a help.

The *String* book matches my own program for unenthusiastic pupils, of teaching maths more as an experimental science, with shapes cut-out in ply or cardboard, not just the abstract lines on paper, with things to touch and handle, and thereby understanding. Mind, there will be those who need to have the book read to them, or for them. Either way, they can do the experiments and catch the ideas. See my *New Boys in the Bush*, when Max Lawson teaches thus -- he's me, of course, in that regard.

The book's drawings of ancient days are done so well they make you feel you're there, on the spot, in antiquity, with those early heroes of maths. Here and there a reader might be puzzled to match the details of the text with the illustrations, but most won't even notice warts and glitches, and those who do will work it out for themselves. That's life!

This book brings you close to the men themselves, no longer actors remote on a screen, distant Olympians, but likeable intriguing friendly folk: Thales, Pythagoras, Archimedes, Euclid and the lesser lights. You don't need to have

studied Ancient History. The book will give you a crash-course. Actually, it's an integrated curriculum, and might prompt you to say gratefully with Sir Isaac Newton: "I could not have seen so far, had I not stood on the shoulders of giants."

It attempts to reconstruct the dialogues between those early men of maths and their pupils, and does it plausibly. Further, its more rousing pictures range over things like catapulting fire-bombs as land-to-sea missiles, and how your finger joints can do 'abracadabra and discover the square root of five, yes, $\sqrt{5}$. Just fancy that! The body, too, is built on maths.

The back-cover blurb says, "Whether you are learning geometry for the first time, teaching it to your students, or parents helping your children through their first geometry course, this is a must read for everyone!"

Inside the back cover, it says, "This book is a wonderful class reader when 6th graders are introduced to Geometry." I agree whole-heartedly, and recommend this book to all maths teachers, primary, secondary, tertiary -- and I've taught all three myself. History well-recounted is the eyes and ears not only of philosophy and theology, but of mathematics, too. Everyone loves a good story.

Just to finish off: back to those baddies in the black hats. The men who made the movies paid us back for booing. They tricked us when they put the baddies in white hats instead, and so reversed things, and we had to re-adjust and do a minimum of thinking, and not just boo like raucous cockatoos. This book also reverses things, and prompts a little dose of thinking -- and cons you in, cunningly, painlessly.

157 pp, illustrated, \$29.95, from Fountain Resources, PO Box 2051, Magil North SA 5072,
Ph 08 8365 8921,
Fx 08 8365 7156,
email <admin@fountainresources.com.au>
or <www.fountainresources.com.au>.

Review by **FATHER JAMES TIERNEY**
B.Sc. Dip.Ed. a practising priest and
catechist who wrote *Bush Boys*

CREATING LESSON PLANS - A STRUCTURED GUIDE

Three years ago, I wrote an article for KIT which explained what I believed to be the benefits of lesson plans to our home schooling. While the design and content of our lesson plans has developed considerably during that time, the overall structure and purpose has remained the same. With this in mind, I believe that lesson plans can be adapted to many types of home schooling and environments, with similar advantages. Changes in detail and subject matter can determine the level of formality and method so that the practical benefits of this approach can be enjoyed without compromising a preferred approach to learning.

When creating a first lesson plan, the process may appear to be slightly daunting but, with a bit of planning, the task becomes quite simple. The following list shows the steps that I use in making my own lesson plans:

1. Write a list of goals for each child for the Term

An assessment of previous work can provide the basis for establishing broad goals and areas which need particular attention, during the coming term. The identification of specific targets and recording of aspirations can also be included on this list.

2. Choose and prioritize subject areas

Using these goals, determine which subjects to include in the plan and allocate how much time will be devoted to each one.

3. Write a preferred timetable for the week

Whether you adhere to a timetable or not is a matter of personal choice, but a rough, initial plan will provide a guide for future time management and a structure for the overall lesson plan. When planning each day's activities, decide how many subjects you would like to complete in one day and whether you would prefer to work at formal lessons for 4 or 5 days per week. We keep Fridays free of planned lessons and use the extra day to finish off work or to do more informal activities, such as field trips, crafts or social events.

It is also useful to determine each child's concentration span and whether there is a need to alternate formal work with physical or creative activities throughout the day. This will influence the structure and scope of the plan, and ultimately determine how it will be used to greatest effect by the family or the child as an individual. You may also decide whether to follow a common routine every day or to vary each day to accommodate outside activities or add interest to the week.

4. Decide which books, texts, activities, DVDs, etc, to use

Collect them together in order to create sequential tasks for each subject area.

5. Type out the first week's work

Type the week's work over a spread of two pages, using the computer. With two days on each page, there should be enough room remaining to include boxes for such details as memory work, bible verses, prayer intentions, extra activities or notes. The layout can be colourful and creative or plain and simple, depending on the amount of time available and the level of interest in the design process. I try to make my plans appealing and easy to use by including colourful shapes and pictures on each page. Holy pictures can be downloaded free of charge from such websites as <http://www.twoheartdesign.com/clipart.html>. The newer versions of Microsoft Word have many attractive features which also inspire creativity in design.

How specific you are in recording the details of each task will determine the structural character of your home schooling. For example, problems of discipline can be overcome by specifying the exact pages to be read in a day, whereas merely identifying the book title or subject area to be studied can create spontaneity and remove time constraints from the day's schedule.

Use boxes (available in the 'symbols' tab) in front of each task to record the completion of each activity and to give a sense of achievement to the day's accomplishments. This will also fulfill the record-keeping requirements of the Board of Studies and help to both assess and plan for the future.

We use the header and footer options to include intercessions to our favourite saints (ie. as a header, we include a small picture of Our Lady and the words 'Jesus, Mary, Joseph, pray for us' – for the footer, 'St. Therese of Lisieux, pray for us'). We also include page numbers for easy reference and a specific prayer intention for each week (eg. Pray for priests and religious).

6. Duplicate to make multiple weeks

When the first week is completed, copy and paste the pages nine times to make a ten week term.

If you are worried about maintaining momentum over a ten-week period of formal scheduling, the final week can be recorded as a week of free activities. In the past, we

have used this week for projects, crafts and reading. However, it may be necessary to schedule a full ten-week term in order to cover all that you plan to achieve, without resulting in overload and stress-filled days.

7. Edit, cut and paste

Edit the content of weeks 2 to 10 to show the scope of each subject to be followed, during the term. Cutting and pasting makes this stage a lot quicker. It is also faster to edit subject by subject, rather than week by week.

8. Plan the back pages

Once the weeks' activities are all recorded, it can be decided what to include in the back pages of the plan. If time is limited, these pages can be omitted but their inclusion can make the term run a lot more smoothly. In our back pages, I include such details as prayers; the term's poetry (often pasted from the Internet); times tables and number charts; letters and phonics; spelling words and spelling rules; Latin prayers, vocabulary and chants; catechism questions and answers; maps; piano scales; grammar concepts and exercises; punctuation exercises; poetry terms; famous speeches; an assessment table and a timetable. Including these items means that we avoid disruptions caused by lost books or the need to share resources.

I spread my layout over a number of pages which total a multiple of 4. This enables the plan to be printed in a booklet form on A4 paper and usually means a total of 36, 40, 44 or 48 pages.

9. Design a title page

These days, I include a table outlining the term's goals on the title page. This can give a sense of purpose which is useful for planning and maintaining direction, throughout the term. It can also be a motivating reminder of the broader picture if the day-to-day slog becomes a bit grinding. Other items I include on this page are an attractive holy picture and information relating to the name of child, school level and relevant dates for the study period.

10. Design a cover

We allow the children to choose the colour of their lesson plan and help to design the cover. Then, it is printed on A4 card, using a 2-in-1 layout. (Click the 'Properties' or 'Preferences' option in the print window and then click '2-in-1' in the page layout box.)

(continued overpage)

11. Print the pages of the plan

Again, we choose the 2-in-1 option but the pages must be printed in a certain order to produce a lesson plan which is in booklet format. For a 44 page plan, the first page printed will be the pages 44 and 1, at half size. To do this, select the 'Pages' option in the print window and type '44,1' in the box. The other side of this page would be '2,39.' I usually print the up sides first (ie. '44,1,42,3,40,5,...etc') and then turn the pages over, making sure the first page is uppermost, and print the down sides together in the second stage (ie. '2,43,4,41,6,39...etc').

After printing, I staple the pages together with a long-arm stapler, but the same effect can be achieved by marking the position of the staple holes with an unused staple and making the hole with a thick needle. Then, the staple can be inserted by hand.

End Result

The first lesson plan provides a useful template for the future, so the process becomes a lot quicker the second time around. However, as home schooling develops so do the plans and this is part of the excitement of the creative, learning process, which results in personalization and growth. It is, therefore, unnecessary to create a perfect plan – the plan is part of the process and not an end in itself. I find that the time spent in developing the plan is offset by the time saved during the actual term. This allows me to be involved with the children's work and to spend time reading and tutoring, yet also to have enough time to pursue my own hobbies and household chores.

(Example Lesson Plan on Page 14)

VICKY LEACH

NURTURING THE YOUNG

As I was milking our Friesian cow this morning, it occurred to me that there are quite a few parallels between raising a cow and raising a child. Our cow, Daisy, came to us when she was about two months old; our son John Pat was two months at the time, so for a while I had two babies to look after. Daisy arrived on the back of our older son's ute, a cold, forlorn little creature, a reject from a dairy farm, with the appealing knobbly knees and large dark eyes of all calves and the magic that all baby creatures exude. Once she had been taught to drink from a bucket she quickly settled in, as usual going through twice as many calf nuts as the packet dictates; by the time John Pat

was eighteen months, however, Daisy was with the herd and the bull, and two months ago she gave birth to her own little calf. So now Daisy is our milker.

We have had two other milkers, both Jerseys. Getting them in from the paddock was time consuming and frustrating. Both had tiny teats that were fiddly and irritating to milk, both gave rich, creamy yellow milk, and both were – well, they were cows. Milking time was torture time. They bucked and reared getting into the head stocks; they swung sideways unexpectedly to knock you over; they kicked with deadly accuracy, aiming for the bucket or for you impartially; they waited till the bucket was brim-full of lovely warm milk and then carefully plonked a filthy hoof into it, negating the whole. They were lovely animals to look at, dewy-eyed, soft, a lovely caramel brown, and they had it in for the human race. The first one, Mousey, we bought from people who had done the 'hobby farm thing' and were heading back to the city. They assured us her name echoed her mouse-like nature, that she came when called, hung around waiting to chat, and loved people. Evidently they knew a different cow, but once she was here and installed, you don't get your money back.

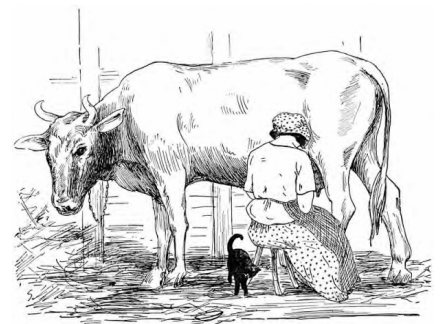
The next was her daughter, Emby, orphaned at a young age when her mother died of calcium deficiency (and I suspect old age). Emby, though hand-reared, was the responsibility of our ten year old daughter, who was too frightened of the very idea of cows to spend much time with her. The plan was that getting to know this sweet little baby would simultaneously cure her of her fear and instill in the calf a burning love of the human race, but it failed. Emby was a wild, suspicious creature and would have needed a good deal of time, love and attention to bring about a good relationship with people, which our daughter was too timid to offer. This brings me to the point of this article; time, love and attention are, I think, what we need if we are to achieve anything, not just with calves, but with children.

Daisy arrived at a point in our lives when I had more time and energy than hitherto, since apart from John Pat the other children were much older (the next one up from him was then four). I also had more experience of what was required in a good

milking cow; I knew what I wanted to achieve. With experience of previous failure I also knew what I did not want to achieve! (These are decisions also useful with children.) I not only fed Daisy her buckets daily, I made sure she was tethered for a part of each day, so that she got to accept restraint; each day I brushed her down, felt her all over, and pulled at her tiny little baby udder, to accustom her to being handled. Thus I hoped she would learn discipline and submission. I led her on the rope to different areas of the yards and paddock so that she got used to different surroundings, and to being led, by which I hoped to encourage confidence and co-operativeness. I talked to her and gave her tid bits and encouraged the children to play with and near her, so that she would not shy at people or be unnerved by new faces, new clothes, new noises.

Well, Daisy is a great animal to milk. She isn't nearly as big as a commercial Friesian, partly because she didn't get her mother's milk as a youngster, partly because she was put into calf early, and she doesn't give anything like the quantity of milk her commercial sisters would be expected to provide; but then we only milk her once a day, and we are only providing for our family. But she is tractable, comes when called, goes into the stocks without trouble, stands patiently when being milked without ever kicking, never tries to knock you or the bucket over, indeed never complains. Is this because she is naturally so, or is it that all that early care is paying off? I don't know. But I do know that she is a relief and a joy after our previous experiences. So perhaps the time, love and attention have achieved what I wanted, or perhaps we're just lucky. But, as I reflected this morning as the warm milk squirted rapidly into the bucket and Daisy heaved the occasional hay-scented sigh, if it is the nurture that has produced this result, why, how richly I have been repaid!

SARAH FANNING



CREATING LESSON PLANS (CONTINUED)



Jesus, Mary, Joseph, pray for us.



- Narration
- Speeches
- Maths
- Greek
- Geography
- Latin
- Music

Listen to classical reading and narrate. *My Daily Bread Book 2 Ch45.*

Compare & contrast the speeches studied of Presidents Nixon & Ford. What were their purposes & how effective was each in achieving its purpose?

Understanding Maths Year 10 Formulae & Equations – Read p255-256.

Athenaze Workbook 1 (Lawall, Johnson & Miraglia) Ch3 p10 Exercise 3η.

Intrepid Explorers (Anita Ganeri) p107-126.

Cambridge Latin Course Book 3 – Stage 23 read p48-53. Write this week’s chant & vocabulary into notebook.

- Alfred’s Adult Level 2 p42-43*
- A Dozen a Day Primary Gr III*
- Sight Reading Step-by-Step Gr3:7*
- Piano Technical Workbook Gr1*

Wednesday

- Shakespeare
- Economics
- Maths
- Religion
- Music Appreciation
- Art Appreciation
- Music

Macbeth: Act III, Scene II-IV. Copy quote in cursive writing.

Read & discuss *The Rise of Corporations, Corporate Power Facts & Stats*. Do further re-search on Internet, etc.

Understanding Maths Year 10 Formulae & Equations – Read p257-258.

Apologetics & Catholic Doctrine (Archbishop Sheehan). Write notes & discuss.

Frédéric Chopin Listen to The Great Composers (reading) & Ode to Joy CD.

Portraits (G.F.Watts) Prudence Penelope Cavendish Bentick & her Children p109.

- Alfred’s Adult Level 2 p42-43*
- A Dozen a Day Primary Gr III*
- Sight Reading Step-by-Step Gr 3:8*
- Piano Technical Workbook Gr1*

Thursday



Activities

- Research Nixon & Ford on the Internet



Activities

- Play Battleships



Listening

*...Stars, hide your fires!
Let not light see my black and deep desires...*

Music Appreciation

- ÿ *Faith of Our Fathers*
- ÿ *Classics 2001*
- ÿ *Ode to Joy*
- ÿ *The Best of Mozart*
- ÿ *The Best of J.S. Bach*

- ÿ *Classic Kids*
- ÿ *Hooked on Classics*
- ÿ *Faith of Our Fathers*
- ÿ *The Best of Beethoven*
- ÿ *Mozart’s Magical Fantasy*

THE EDUCATION OF LITTLE TREE: A BOOK REVIEW

The Education of Little Tree, a book by Forrest Carter.

"Hey! Don't throw out that book," I cried as Imogen tossed a rather faded paperback into the Vinnies pile. "I went to a lot of trouble to buy that book... 16 years ago." I picked up the rather sad looking copy of *The Education of Little Tree*, remembering how excited I'd been when the book arrived in our mailbox all those years ago. I'd tracked it down through a small homeschooling family business. But of course, like many of our books, this book had been filed onto one of our bulging shelves and forgotten about. "I'm sure that's a very good book, Immy. Perhaps we ought to get round to reading it." And so last term the girls all sat and listened while I read to them about the childhood of a Cherokee Indian who grew up in the 1930s.

Little Tree is orphaned and he goes to live with his Granpa and Granma in their cabin in the mountains. There he is given a unique education, an education that could never be received from a conventional school. Granma, who is able to read, is given the task of ensuring Little Tree learns the basic skills of education: how to read and write and how to 'figger'. But it is Granpa, with his quiet wisdom, who teaches him about the Way of the Cherokee and we realise there is more to education than book learning. In each chapter there is some lesson about life we can share.

I was particularly struck by Chapter 3: *Shadows on a Cabin Wall*. Once a month, Granpa and Little Tree would walk to the library in the settlement. They always carried along a list, made out by Granma, to be presented to the librarian. On this list, Granma would request a play by Mr Shakespeare. It was up to Granpa and Little Tree to come home with one they hadn't already read. They could never remember the titles of the plays they'd listened to so the librarian would begin to read a play aloud to see if the story was familiar to them. After a while, the librarian grew wise and made her own list of the plays that Granpa had already borrowed. Each Saturday and Sunday evening, Granpa would light the coal oil lamp and Granma would begin to read, Granpa rocking back and forth in his chair and coming to a halt at all the exciting parts. After she had finished,

the three of them would sit in the flickering shadows and discuss the story. "Wow! They studied Shakespeare in just the same way we do," I exclaimed when I'd read this part of the book. A six year old boy and a man who can't read enjoying Shakespeare! What if someone had said that it was too difficult for them? Besides Mr Shakespeare, Little Tree tells us Granma read *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* as well as Byron and Shelley.

The Education of Little Tree was in turn both touching and hilarious. Each chapter gave us plenty to talk about. There was the rare occasion when we didn't agree with an opinion put forth but we certainly enjoyed discussing other points of view. Towards the end of the book, the Indian family are visited by 'politicians' who say they are concerned about Little Tree's education. They give Granpa a paper. "The paper said that Granma and Granpa had no right to keep me; that they was old and had no education. It said that Granma was an Indian and Granpa was a half-breed...The paper said that Granma and Granpa was selfish, and being that way was total hampering me for the rest of my continual life." As the story continued and I read the next chapter, I began to doubt my ability to keep reading without dissolving into tears. At last I gave in and howled, "This is too sad." With tears pouring down my face, I thrust the book at Imogen and asked her to finish reading. The next day, with trepidation, I opened the book wondering whether I'd disgrace myself again but this time it was Charlotte who needed the tissue box. The book ended on a happy note but we were disappointed when we realised that our daily journey into the life of Little Tree, Cherokee Indian, was finally over.

I would certainly recommend reading this book to children. My own girls aged 4 to 13 were enthralled with this true life tale. However, I wouldn't give this story to a child for reading alone. There is a lot of low level coarse language. Granma does not approve of 'cussing' but Granpa ignores this rule when he and Little Tree are off by themselves. This language can easily be skipped over when reading out loud. Also, there are some adult themes mentioned in the book which might be

better omitted. Little Tree grew up in a different world from our children and there were a few subjects that would have been a natural part of life to him but might be regarded as taboo for young children of our time and culture.

SUE ELVIS

BUSH BOYS COMPETITION

Did you know that some of the illustrations from Father James Tierney's latest book, *New Boys in the Bush*, are now available online as colour-in pictures?

Visit www.cardinalnewman.com.au. Download your copies of these pictures from the Bush Boys children's activities page.

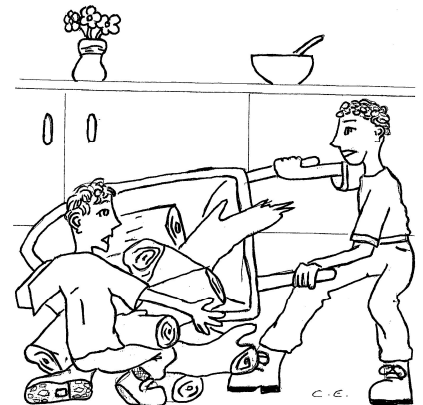
Choose your favourite picture, colour it in and send it, by the end of the second week of term 4, to:

New Boys in The Bush Colouring-in
Competition
PO Box 968,
Mittagong,
NSW 2576

Include your name and age

You could win a prize!

More pictures will be added to the website in the future. Watch out for them!



HOW TO SCARE THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS OUT OF YOUR SISTER

Materials

Tennis racquet, hooded jacket, pair of jeans, pair of shoes

Method

1. Stand the tennis racquet up in the corner of your sister's bedroom wall.
2. Put the jeans on the bottom of the tennis racquet and arrange in a sitting position.
3. Put the jacket on the top part of the racquet with the hood closed over the racquet head.
4. Arrange the shoes at the feet of the jeans.
5. Turn out the light and wait for your sister to go to bed.
6. Get your camera ready and make sure it has batteries.
7. Take your shots when you hear the first screams
8. Make a confession list



CAMERON LEACH

HOW TO GET REVENGE ON NAUGHTY, PRACTICAL-JOKING BROTHERS

1. Wash his cricket uniform (and all other white items) with your new red dress.
2. Turn the hot tap on full blast when he is in the shower – not once, but at intervals of thirty seconds apart.
3. Loudly remind him of his unfinished chores - just as the footy is starting on TV.
4. Volunteer him for every charitable work possible at church, especially those that meet on Saturday mornings during the cricket season.
5. Mention the expensive cricket equipment he has worn out, and is expecting Mum and Dad to replace, while they are discussing finances.
6. Draw attention to the holes in his brand new jeans – also while they are discussing finances.
7. Promise the neighbourhood preschoolers that he will play hide-and-seek with them on Sunday afternoon, to give their parents a break (the especially shrewd sister will time this to coincide with Sunday afternoon football).
8. Discreetly, change the setting to 'shave' on the hair clippers while Mum is cutting his hair.
9. Praise him on his superb cleaning of the bathroom and make sure your parents know that only he is capable of such superior cleaning.
10. Don't bother with the confession list as it is a charitable act to provide him with the opportunity to do penance for his previous hideous crimes towards innocent sisters.

BY CAMERON LEACH'S SISTER

NEW BOYS IN THE BUSH

Exciting News: Fr James Tierney has written a brand new Bush Boys book, *New Boys in the Bush*.

This exciting adventure features new Bush Boys, Jack, Jim and Joe Lawson who have just moved from the city to the bush, together with their parents, grandmother and six brothers and sisters. Their new home, *Terra Sancta*, is a rambling old house without any modern conveniences, even electricity.

The Bush Boys settle into their new way of life. They discover for themselves how to fell trees and chop wood, how to light the fires needed for cooking and hot water, how to start up and drive the old Land Rover. They enjoy exploring the old house and home paddocks. However, what they *really* want to do is explore the bush, the Wild Bush Mountains, which stretch out on the other side of the property fence. They want to discover for themselves how to be explorers of the bush, just like their ancestor, Lawson.

Dad says that if the boys work hard at their jobs and school work and stay out of trouble for a whole week, they will be rewarded by being allowed to go off and explore the bush on their own. But will the boys survive their Pioneer Week without getting into mischief? Can they even survive the week by staying alive? And if Dad grants them an Explorer Week will they be able to avoid the Seven Deadly Dangers of the bush?

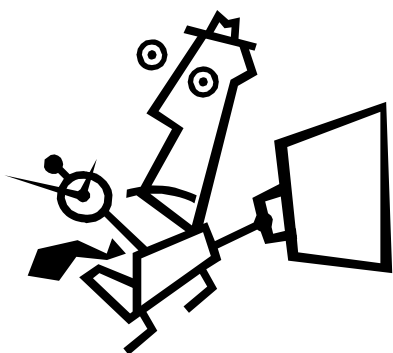
This exciting bush adventure is full of discoveries. Dad is pleased to see his Bush Boys finding out things for themselves but finally, it is Dad who makes a most important discovery of his own.

Reprinted from ***Bush Boys Explorers*** Magazine available to download from www.cardinalnewman.com.au

New Boys in the Bush available from
Cardinal Newman Faith Resources
Tel. 02 9367 9406
Email: fr@cardinalnewman.com.au

MORE THAN JUST A TAXI

I cannot say that I have a direct input into the education of our children. As a working father the time I spend away from the home means that teaching formal subject matter is impractical. You see, I am time challenged, and when I have the available time during the week, the children have already finished their school day. In actual fact the last thing that they want to hear is me banging on about geography after dinner – believe me I've tried! Sedimentation and Continental Drift might be very exciting subject matter, but they're not likely to stimulate anyone's interest at 7.00 o'clock.



Now before everybody writes me off as being a failure at homeschooling, I do have other uses, other than as a wallet and a taxi. These are manifested as less formal influences on our children's education. My role is first and foremost to be support for my long suffering wife, on whose shoulders the daily rigours of education fall and who is chiefly responsible for dragging our children up.

In addition to being the backstop (or principal of the school!) my position is more subtle and could best be described as education by example, even down to showing how not to do something. Yes, even I make mistakes, hard though it is to believe. So what are these education-by-stealth methods I hear you ask? Without resorting to some esoteric, psycho-babble explanation, the key ingredients would be involvement, interaction and fun.

Some years ago I was laid up from work with a broken leg, all my own fault I might add. During this enforced holiday I became interested in cooking and it is a hobby which I still like to indulge. Whilst I do not aspire to become a cordon bleu chef, there are practical educational and life skills that can be taught to children. When I was a child,

long, long ago, my mother's principle aims with her sons were that we could look after ourselves, meaning that we could cook, sew, wash and iron clothes. These are all still important life skills whatever level of education our children strive to obtain.

My observations have been that children, even from a young age, want to help in the kitchen, and they are all capable of being 'sous-chefs'. There is no reason why a 3 year old cannot stand on a chair and chop mushrooms with a dinner knife. This time together in the kitchen allows the children to talk and ask questions about what we are doing and why we are doing certain things. Cooking involves measuring computation, nutrition, co-ordination, organization and, importantly, patience. A good measure of fun will ensure that rather than having to press-gang children to help in the kitchen, there is a willing source of volunteers. Youngsters in particular also quickly work out that there are more tangible benefits to helping in the kitchen, like leftover cake mixture. As the children grow older they can be tasked with preparing meals for the whole family on a regular basis, taking the load off equally time challenged mothers.

The example I have just given could just as easily be applied to shopping, where our younger children view a trip to do the weekly shopping as a treat, especially if they are allowed to push the trolley. This is not a ready made recipe for disaster, as a child behind a loaded trolley can be easily guided from the front by a patient parent, in this case father. You will also be amazed at how quickly a supermarket aisle empties when other shoppers can only see a trolley being pushed by a pair of hands and feet.

As a family we have been fortunate to have assisted with a number of fund-raising dinners for our parish, in particular the annual St. Patrick's Day Dinner. This involves serving meals to over 150 ravenous pensioner, diners, requiring teamwork and a large dose of good humour. By putting an effort into showing my older children how to do things, they can now work largely unsupervised, allowing me to assume

the position of the "Fat Controller", this being to point a lot, while they get on with the job at hand.

These are just a couple of examples of how we have involved our children in what would seem fairly mundane activities, but they also show the kind of opportunities that present themselves to not only become more involved with our children, but to reinforce and add another dimension to their education.

I am also fortunate to have shared interests with my children, although these are not always the same interests with every child. In these cases we are all learning together, although I have found that the children do learn at a faster rate than I do. Singing is an example that comes to mind, where rather than just being "Dad's Taxi" and ferrying said loved ones to and from our Local Church every Tuesday night, I share the same experiences as they do. Like all of us there are times when I could think of reasons to skip Choir Practice, particularly after a rough day at work, but I have a commitment not only to the Choir but also to my children, which they understand and acknowledge. This shared love of music has led several of the children to want to have music lessons, whether singing or with a musical instrument, and whether this will lead them to pursue a career in music has not been the issue. It is all about letting them explore their capabilities and interests within the resources that we have available.

There was a period in my life, not so long ago, where every Saturday morning would be spent at a local Swimming School, in the "Baby Class". To the uninitiated, these involved getting into my swimming togs and standing waist-high in water, supporting various children and encouraging them to float, blow bubbles and put their heads into the water. It also meant learning the tunes to be sung whilst doing said actions, tunes which will remain with me to the grave. This may not sound like fun and to be honest there were times when having a root canal may have been preferable, but the joy on Sophie's and Gemma-Rose's faces made it all worth while. Watching their water confidence now puts all the encouragement and frustration into perspective.

As the children get older they develop their own interests and hobbies, and it is equally exciting to see these develop. Sure there are always going to be times when one of the children has ambition above their ability, but my role is support and trying to share some of my own experiences with them. My son Callum has developed an interest in mountain bikes, and this has involved the usual pile of unassembled bike parts and strewn tools in the garage as he gained an insight into mechanics. I have been able to help him with these projects and we have reached the stage where he knows more about bikes than I do, which is the natural order. It doesn't mean however that I am now surplus to requirement as we can still discuss and plan what he wants to do in this area, such as being his 'pit crew' at bike races. Callum's interest in bikes has also inspired the other children to want to ride, with the opportunity to teach them how to ride properly, bike maintenance, road safety and get some exercise. As the children gain confidence and the necessary skills they can then be trusted to ride unsupervised.



In my own profession I am regularly involved in graphic design, artwork and publishing, skills which I have been able to utilise in preparing newsletters such as, well *Keeping In Touch*. What started out as idle curiosity on behalf of two of our children, Imogen and Callum, in how to construct a publication resulted in them volunteering to design and publish their own newsletters, such as "Black Jacks" (St. John Ambulance Cadets – Southern Highlands). This entails planning articles, researching or creating subject material, writing copy and layout, as well as achieving deadlines. These skills will hopefully stand them in good stead when they have to take their place in the workforce.

I don't profess to be an expert at everything and my children know this. But this is surely the point about homeschooling, where we

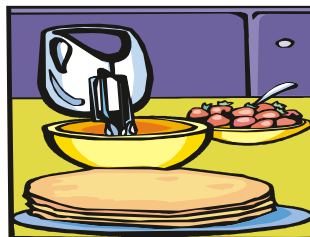
can all learn and hopefully enjoy the experience. My ego can accept that my children will surpass me in probably all endeavours, and that I may have to play second fiddle to their greater ability. I can also accept that I may have to break some stereo-typical, gender boundaries to be involved in extra-curricular activities, shopping not being the most 'manly' of pursuits. But I want to be involved in their development at whatever level, and if that means sacrificing some of my leisure time investing in their pursuits rather than my own, then I can live with that.

ANDY ELVIS

A PANCAKES-IN-BED PARTY

We were all in Mum and Dad's bed. There was Mum, Gemma-Rose and Sophie up one end and me down the other with space for Imogen. All our toes met in the middle. We all started to lick our lips as the pancakes came through the door. Imogen was balancing a tray piled high with pancakes and cups of hot chocolate.

Mum was very brave allowing us to eat drippy pancakes in her bed. Mum decided that particular day might be a good day for washing the sheets.



The pancakes were delicious and scrumptious even better than out-of-bed pancakes. After eating the pancakes we all settled back to drink the hot chocolate. And then Mum said we could have a lie in her bed while she had her shower.

We all snuggled in for a bit and then we all got out and made the bed to surprise Mum. The sheets didn't need washing after all. We'd been careful not to drop the yummy syrup on the bed.

The pancakes-in-bed party was a great success. I hope we can do it again next holiday.

CHARLOTTE ELVIS

HOW TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL PANCAKES-IN-BED PARTY

- ◆ Make some pancakes the night before the party (Dad made ours)
- ◆ Everyone wakes up and piles into Mum's bed
- ◆ The oldest child heats the pancakes and puts on the toppings: golden syrup, honey, lemon juice and sugar
- ◆ Make the hot chocolate. Don't fill the cups too much or else there will be a hot chocolatey bed.
- ◆ Deliver pancakes and hot chocolate to the boys' bedroom. (The bed's not big enough for boys as well.)
- ◆ Enjoy pancakes, hot chocolate and snuggling up together
- ◆ Make Mum's bed or put the sheets in the washing machine if necessary
- ◆ Get dressed and get on with the day

CHARLOTTE ELVIS

ARTISTIC BISCUITS

During the holidays we had great fun. We iced Arrowroot biscuits.

We made up icing in different colours. The icing had to be thin enough to spread but thick enough not to run off the biscuits.

We iced the biscuits each a different colour. Then we put sprinkles on them. We let the icing set. Then we ate two each for morning tea!

When our big sister Felicity came home for a holiday we iced more biscuits. Felicity showed us how to make patterns with more than one colour on each biscuit. We made stripy biscuits and dotty egg biscuits and swirly biscuits.

We made lots of very special looking yummy biscuits .

We licked out the leftover icing. Even Felicity licked out the bowls!

**SOPHIE AND GEMMA-ROSE ELVIS
(AND MUM)**