

10 Christmas Children Stories

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A Bad Dream

Value: Forgiveness and Reconciliation

"DAD how dare you look in my diary?" Max screamed at his father in fury. Chuck was red with anger at his little boy for what he read in that diary.

"How dare you lie to me? You said you would never smoke a cigarette and right here in this diary, you confess you have. Your promises are no good to me now Max!" Chuck yelled at his young son.

"Well my privacy is ruined. How I can ever trust you again!" Max said crying.

"Me? Its you who lied and I can never trust you again. I wish I never had a son." Chuck said and right away he was sorry he said that. Max burst into tears and ran out the door to go down the block to his friends house to hide. Chuck slammed his hand down on the counter and hurt it. He hated fighting with his son. Parents hate it when their children are mad at them. It hurts them way down inside but sometimes they are proud and don't know how to make things are ok.

"That kid drives me crazy." Chuck fumed thinking of what he read in that diary. "Let him go. I will just take a nap." And with that Chuck laid down on his sofa and went soundly to sleep.

Chuck woke up suddenly and looked around. It wasn't his bedroom but some other place. He was on a flat white stone sleeping and there was no furniture and everything was dark all around him.

"Fluffy, where are you fluffy?" Chuck heard a familiar sound.

"Grandpa?" Chuck said as the elderly man walked past him looking for his dog. He said curious of how this could be considering Chuck's grandfather went to be with Jesus long ago.

"Why hello little Chucky, are you ok?"

"Yes Grandpa, just didn't expect to see you. Where are we?"

"Well I am in heaven. I am looking for our dog Fluffy. You remember Fluffy? You loved him so much. Well he is here now and he still likes to run away. Where are you Fluffy! Say, I am not sure why you are here. Is something wrong Chucky?"

"Well I sort of had a fight with Max and I guess that is on my mind. Oh yeah, Max is my son, your great grandson. He looks a lot like you Grandpa."

"Aww, well I am sure he is a spark plug like you and your dad were growing up. Listen, the only regret I have from my life is that I went to heaven with some people who had not forgiven me. You probably don't know this that when I died, I was not speaking to your mother, my daughter. It was something silly now that I look back on it but I wish I had apologized and got past it so I could have hugged her before...."

"ARF ARF."

"Oh there you are Fluffy. Gotta run now. I have to get Fluffy home. Grandma is waiting supper on us." Chuck's grandfather said and then he was gone. Chuck didn't know exactly what to make of it when he looked up and a large powerful man walked past him as he sat on the slab. The man walked like he had someplace important to go and did not look to the right or left.

"Dad?" Chuck said with amazement. The big man stopped in his tracks and looked at Chuck curiously.

"Son? Is that you? What are you doing here? Wait a minute. Are you asleep?" The big man asked.

"Well no Dad. Well, ummm, yes, I think so." Chuck confessed.

"I thought so." Chuck's deceased father said with his big barrel laugh. "Ok spill it, what did you do wrong. When you were a kid, you always took a nap when you had done something wrong."

"Well, it's Max. He and I had a fight. I read his diary which was wrong but found out he lied to me which made me really mad and now I can't forgive him." Chuck told his father, the one guy he could always talk to.

"Chuck do you think you have ever been forgiven?" His Dad asked.

"Well, by you maybe, a few times."

"Try 10,316 times Chuck. But that's not what I mean. Who forgave you of everything and made it possible for you to go to heaven?"

Chuck thought for a moment and then he remembered his Sunday school classes when he was a child. "JESUS. That's it isn't it? He died on the cross so I could be forgiven." Chuck said with excitement for getting the right answer.

"That's right Chuck. God forgave us all of lots worse things than Max has done. And if He was willing to give his life for our forgiveness. It's the least you can do to forgive Max, ask his forgiveness too. Do it now son, before it's too late." And with that Chuck's dad stood and began to fade out.

"Wait dad, I wanted to ask you about how to build a shed."

"No time now son. I have to go. Have you seen your Grandpa? He just stepped out to walk Fluffy." And he was gone.

Suddenly Chuck woke up with a start. He realized he was home now but the visits from his ancestors had not been for nothing. Suddenly he heard the door to the house open. "Max is that you?"

Max entered the room looking very sad and staring down. Chuck stood up and put his hands on his shoulders and just said, "I'm sorry." To stop themselves from crying (which men don't like to do), Chuck and Max hugged and Chuck knew he would never let some little issue come between him and his son again.

A Raven Named Marvin

Value: Respect Authority

"Hannah, come outside." Hannah's best friend Betty called up to her. Hannah slipped downstairs.

"What is it? It's the middle of the night." Hannah said shivering a bit from the cool night air..

"Its Lorenzo, he's run away, we have to help them find him!" Betty said with deep concern and worry in her voice. Lorenzo was a neighbor of Betty's who lived several houses down. Many times when Hannah was over, they found Lorenzo wandering the streets or in some strange place, just not being home. He told them things were not good there because his new step dad was mean to him but the girls didn't know what to do.

"How do you know he ran away?" Hannah whispered.

"Officer Duncan and Youth Director Cindy came over and told my dad. Dad works at the youth center and they have been trying to help Lorenzo." She told her friend. It was true that Lorenzo had come to Officer Duncan several times. The kind policeman wanted to help more but Lorenzo would not trust him completely. Youth Director Cindy had even tried to come over and visit Lorenzo at home but when she got there, usually Lorenzo was mysteriously "not here." So all of the people who could help him most were frustrated because Lorenzo seemed to avoid them.

"I know where he is." Hannah suddenly said snapping her fingers. "Sabines woods! He said he goes there sometimes because other people are afraid of it." Hannah remembered as Betty nodded knowing she was right. "Let me get some clothes on and we can go look for him."

The girls entered the woods fearfully. It was so dark and their little flashlights didn't help much. "Lorenzo," they tried to call out while whispering at the same time for fear they would wake up something nasty in the woods. "Lorenzo, its Hannah and Betty, come on, come home with us." They huddled together and whispered.

"I can take you to him." A voice said firmly and the girls yelped with surprise. They looked around and didn't see anyone. "Up here sillies, on the branch." And they looked up and there was a very large black bird looking at them and talking.

"Did you talk?" Betty asked fearfully. "I never heard a crow talk before."

"Yes I did but don't be afraid. I am here to help you. You are looking for Lorenzo I think. I know where he is." The bird said.

"Oh please help us Mr. Crow, we are sorry we were afraid of you." The girls said together.

"I will do it but first of all, I am a raven, not a crow. My name is Marvin the Raven. Come along then, I think he is with Grimley the groundhog. They were going to make tea. Marvin flew ahead but low and slowly so the girls could follow. Somehow a light came up the further into the woods they went so they could see without their flashlights.

"Hannah, Betty, what are you doing here?" They suddenly heard the happy sound of Lorenzo's voice. He came running from a clearing that was just teeming with animals, many of them walking around on their hind legs, drinking tea and talking in a most sociable manner. Lorenzo ran to the girls and hugged them.

"Lorenzo, how long have you known about all this?" Hannah asked hugging him back.

"Lots of kids come here." He said with a big grin. "Lots of kids whose parents don't love them come here because its safer here than at home. Let me introduce you to my friends."

The next hour was amazing. They met Leonard the Llama who could quote Shakespeare flawlessly which is rare in a Llama. They met Grimley the Groundhog and his huge family of little baby groundhogs who loved to be petted. Grimley indeed make very good tea. They met Morris the Unicorn who really liked Betty and let her ride him.

"I didn't know there were real unicorns much less in our woods." Hannah said with amazement watching Betty hug Morris's neck as she rode.

"Well they keep pretty quiet and they like to be with other they feel safe around," Lorenzo observed.

"Everybody wants that." Hannah heard herself say under her breath. After the ride. Lorenzo introduced them to a huge black bear.

"Hannah and Betty, meet Rocco." He said pointing up. The bear was easily twelve feet tall, much bigger than any bear the girls had ever seen.

"Pleased to meet you girls." The bear said and then he bowed. Betty was a little afraid of him.

"Don't be afraid of Rocco, Betty." Marvin the Raven said landing on the big bears shoulders. Yes, he is very dangerous and anyone who would harm these woods would meet with a very bad mauling from Rocco. But you are friends of Lorenzo so you will always be safe with Rocco and with all of us here. Now Lorenzo, Rocco and I have a special mission to take you to meet the King and Queen of the Forest."

So Marvin the Raven lead Rocco, Hanna, Betty on a treacherous mission to the far side of the forest, where even the most magical and courageous forest animals went. Their destination, to meet the King and Queen of the forest was by invitation only. Along the way, they crossed over streams of shimmering flowing gold only to find nearby terrible dangers from falling poison pods and screaming monkeys who seem bent on stopping or destroying the party. But one mighty roar from the mighty Rocco sent the monkey running and screaming back to their lairs high in the trees.

Finally, they climbed a tall hill to a clearing before a portal that was surrounded with ivory pillars and majestic although sometimes spooky gargoyles. Marvin the Raven landed on the head of one such gargoyle and commanded all to kneel and bow so allow the King and Queen to enter.

"BEHOND THE KING AND QUEEN." He said with majesty and they entered.

"Hello Lorenzo. Girls you did a good job of saving him." Said the very familiar voice of the King of the Forest.

"Officer Duncan? You are the King of the Forest." Lorenzo said with a gasp.

"Hello Hannah, Hello Betty, Hello Lorenzo." A soft female voice soothed every creature there.

"Youth Director Cindy? How can this be?" Betty said rushing to her arms.

"Its true children." Officer Duncan said lifting Lorenzo lovingly into his strong arms. "We have known of the magic of this forest for as long as it has been here. We work in your town to help children like Lorenzo but our roles in the magical world of Sabines woods is a secret kept in the heart of all of its citizens. Marvin the Raven, Rocco the bear and all the rest you met last night, they serve us by loving and caring for children who are running from adults who hurt them. But you can trust the authorities in your lives kids. The policemen, the teachers, the church ministers you know, they are as magical as we because they have been placed on this world by Jesus for the purpose of saving children that need help, just like Lorenzo here."

"Now children, we will go to the youth center where your dad is Betty." Queen Cindy said taking their

hands. "But you must all hold what you have learned here dear to your heart. You are now part of this magical world and you must help bring children to us that we can help with their family problems. Do you swear your alliance to the secret of Sabines woods and its mission to help good children get the help they need?"

And Lorenzo, Betty and Hannah all swore so their membership in this magical society was made eternal. And now children, you too have become aware of the magical secret of Sabines woods. You must swear your allegiance to its secrets and to the calling God has on it, on you and on you parents, teachers, policemen, firemen, youth directors and all the rest to rescue children who are in trouble and bring Gods love and peace to a troubled world. If you agree to be citizens of Sabines woods, then raise your hand and your teacher will receive your pledge and the magic will be yours.

A Swear Word in Heaven

Value: Foul Language is bad.

In heaven, running and playing was what all the children are supposed to do. Ever since Jesus came and got them, Georgie and his family were blissfully happy in heaven. And for Georgie, there was so many things to see and do and you never had to be afraid or come in after dark or worry about getting hurt or bad people because you can't be hurt or get sick or meet any bad people in heave because heaven is full of people that love Jesus just like he did. So if he ran screaming in joy through the streets, nobody complained and in fact, the angels and Jesus himself might run into the street and play kickball with him. That is just the kind of place heaven is.

One day Georgie was trying to figure out how old he was. Since there is no getting older or days or months in heaven, he might be a bazillion years old for all he knew. He never worried about it but he was playing with little diamonds that he collected from the streets and using them to count. That's when he saw it. It was not like anything he had ever seen in heaven. It was very small, maybe a foot high and wide. It didn't have a head, no wait, in fact, it only had a head. It was just one little round hairy ball in the middle, with ears on the side, no arms, two very thin and scrawny crow like legs sticking out and these two HUGE feet, bigger than ducks feet which is picked up and flopped down with a PLOP PLOP PLOP as it walked down the middle of the street in heaven.

"What is that thing?" Georgie's sister asked and Georgie sure didn't know. Just then, his daddy stepped behind the children and pulled them back.

"It's a swear word." He said solemnly.

"A swear word?" Georgie said puzzled. "In heaven? How can that be, how did it get in here?"

PLOP PLOP PLOP the swear word in heaven just kept plodding along making slow and stead progress. Behind him, his footprints were green and yucky and smelled bad. Every so often, it stopped and shook and suddenly a big belch of fowl brown smoke oozed out of it and everyone on the street just went "Ewwwwwww".

All of God's people were very unhappy about the swear word in heaven and that was bad because nobody was ever supposed to be unhappy in heaven. Everybody knew that nobody knew what to do about it. Georgie ran to the one who always made him feel better. He ran to Jesus. Jesus was sitting on a park bench teaching about 30 people about what it was really like the day he gave his life for their sins so they could be in heaven when Georgie ran up and sat right at his feet. It was ok. In heaven, you can hug God anytime you need a hug. He likes it. But as Georgie was holding Jesus by the ankles, they all heard it.

PLOP PLOP PLOP. The swear word in heave was coming. They heard it before they smelled it but when they smelled it, they remembered why swear word always were so yucky. It rounded the corner and one plop after the other walked up to about five feet in front of Jesus and it stopped.

"Do you know who I am?" The swear word said to Jesus.

"Yes, you are a swear word. I know all about you. I have cleaned you up before." Jesus answered.

"Well here I am in heaven. And I am going to ruin it for everyone." It said with a nasty laugh.

"No you won't. I know that because I know why you are a swear word and not a praise word." Jesus said with a soft sternness in his voice.

"Nobody knows that. If they did, nobody would let a swear word in heaven, in their houses or anywhere where people are." The swear word said with a small billow of that awful smoke oozing up.

“There is a door in your tummy, open it.” Jesus commanded and Georgie looked closely. Sure enough, there was a tiny door in the middle of his fat round body, which was really all there was to him, with tiny little hinges and a handle with no lock. Slowly the swear word, raised his huge foot so it flipped the handle and the door swung open. A gasp went through the people of God at what they saw. They saw nothing. The swear word in heave was empty inside. “That’s why you swear isn’t it? Because you are empty inside and you want people to think you are something so instead of blessing them and loving them, you are a swear word which only pushes people away.”

“So what?” The swear word said defiantly. “Nobody can fix my emptiness.” A gasp went up because everybody knew that everybody knew who could fix the emptiness inside of an empty soul. Jesus smiled and from his eyes came that glow that became a light beam of pure love that poured from his divine heart, out his eyes, passed Georgie who stuck his finger in it, just for a little sample and then it poured into the open door of the heart of that empty place in the creature. Just like that the swear word in heaven burst with light that drove all the awful smoke from the air. The hole inside him filled to overflowing with the sweet water of life that every occupant of heaven drank of every single day.

“What happened?” It said with a confused but joyful song in its voice. “What am I now?”

“You are no longer a swear word in heaven.” Jesus pronounced. “You are now a praise word in heaven and here is your family. Rushing down the hills were not three, not seven, not thirty-eight but millions, no zillions, no bazillions of happy glowing praise words that overran heaven every single day. They rushed to their new brother and hugged him with their feet and giggled and the song of praise words that went up carried all of heaven into a concert of praise that lasted for centuries. Georgie watched the joyful celebration of a saved praise word, he still hugged Jesus’ feet and together they watched the happy thing make its way to its new home in heaven where it will never be alone, never lonely, never bored and always full of happiness, joy and fun because in heaven, a praise word is always loved by everyone.

“He will be all right now Georgie,” Jesus told him.

“I know Jesus but one thing I can’t help but notice.” Georgie answered.

“What’s that?”

“It still has awfully big feet.” Georgie answered, and then he ran off to laugh and play some more.

A Trip on a Comet

Value: The Sabbath Day

“God is going to hear you talking about that Tommy and he won’t like it.” Steve told his best friend as they were going to school Monday morning.

“Well I don’t get it. What is Sunday even good for anyway? I don’t get it. We go to church every Sunday but nobody knows why. Maybe it’s just a bunch of goofy rules the church made up so why should we do it anyway?” Tommy said in a snotty way. Tommy really was a good boy. He loved God and his family and all those things but sometimes he just had questions and he wanted someone to tell him the truth. Lots of us are like that.

“Tommy, be careful. If you keep asking those kinds of questions, well God can hear you.” Steve said but Tommy said “fine” and he meant it. He didn’t care if God did hear him. If God wanted to show him why Sunday was important, that would suit Tommy just fine. Tommy thought about it all day at school. As he walked out onto the playground after school, he noticed that all of a sudden, there were not any other kids around.

As he came around the corner to the bicycles racks, he stopped short. He faced the biggest pair of feet he ever saw. They had sandals and they together were so wide, he had to turn his head to see from one toe to the other. Slowly Tommy’s eyes followed up the massive legs to the edge of a huge white robe, on up the big body to a huge beaming face that was all white with a glow like it has a light bulb inside of it. Behind each shoulder, he saw the edges of a huge angel’s wing.

“Hello Tommy, you ready to go?” The angel said with a deep voice that seemed to fill every inch of the air for miles around.

“Who are you?” Tommy asked feeling it was a pretty good question.

“I am Gabriel. I am the chief Angel of God. Are you ready to go find out why there is a Sunday?” Gabriel answered in a kind but firm voice.

“Where are we going?” Tommy wanted to know.

“You will see when we get there.” The angel answered.

“How will we get there?” Tommy continued.

“Well by comet of course. See?” And Gabriel gestured over to the swing sets where he had tied up to the jungle gym a steaming, flaming, very angry comet that didn’t like being tied up and it wanted to go right now.

“Well I.....” Tommy hesitated but he didn’t have time to finish deciding because in a flash he was holding on for dear life. The comet wasn’t tied to the jungle gym any more, it was streaking through space faster than ten rockets with fire and smoke streaming past as Tommy held on to part of the comet and Gabriel’s toe. He suddenly heard himself going “whoooooooooooooooooooo” but then he suddenly heard Gabriel going “whoooooooooooooooooooo” too. Who knew angels go “whoooooooooooooooooooo”?

Suddenly it seemed like the comet wasn’t moving. Tommy couldn’t see anything but could hear a sound like something out of control below. “Where is everything Gabriel?” Tommy asked.

“Everything hasn’t been created yet.” He said, “Listen” and as Tommy listened, a different voice, a booming and yet endlessly loving voice spoke with more authority than his dad and the principle combined when it said...

“LET THERE BE LIGHT!”.

And so much light exploded, it was like a billion light bulbs. Suddenly things were happening everywhere. He kept hearing that loving voice saying “LET THERE BE...” and more and more stuff happened. Below he saw a huge round thing form when he realized it was a planet and that it was his home, the earth. The sky formed up, really, really fast when that voice told it to and then the stars and the sun and then oceans and plants and plants and animals and then..... and then.....

Then Tommy saw a little space of dust. And that voice said “LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE...” and like some invisible hands were making a model, a shape of a person formed in the dirt and then it was like a complete person with a face and fingers and everything but made all of dirt. Then a breeze came to it but not a regular breeze, it came from that voice and when that breeze hit the dirt guy, he sat up and he was a person.

Suddenly Tommy understood and he turned to Gabriel's toe and then looked up and he said, “Gabriel is this why we have Sunday? To remember when God created the world?”

“This is why we have the Sabbath, Tommy.” Gabriel said, “Let me show you why we have a Sunday.” And the comet took off but moved like a super fast elevator and suddenly Tommy was standing on a hill. He held on to Gabriel's toe still but he wasn't home or on the comet. He looked up at a huge signpost in the ground. But it wasn't a signpost. It was a beam of wood and as he followed it up into the air, he saw a man, up on that wood, his arms out and he was stretched on a beam across. A beam that was like, well, like,.....

“It's the cross!” Tommy said gasping at what he was seeing. He turned to Gabriel to try to understand what he was seeing but when he did, Gabriel was gone. He turned back and the cross was gone but he saw the jungle gym and the swings and his bike in the bike rack and there stood Steve looking at him funny.

“Tommy, where have you been? You look terrible.” Steve said helping Tommy get his clothes back on right.

“Never mind that. I know why we have a Sunday now Steve.”

“You do? Why?”

“Because of the Cross. Because Jesus died for us on that day and every Sunday we worship him for it and it is a holy day this week and every week for ever and ever and ever.” Tommy said reverently.

“Wow, that must have been some trip. Where did you go?”

“I can't explain it now Steve.” Tommy said. “But here is a souvenir and I will tell you later” he said handing Steve something and walking to his bike. Steve looked down and opened his hand puzzled and wondered even more as he picked up the tiny piece of comet chip and put it in his pocket for later.

Abe and Zack

Value: The Story of Abraham and Israel

Note: The following is a modern rendition of when God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his only son. Keep that in mind as you read it because it will seem somewhat odd to your listeners and you should be prepared to explain it to them if they get confused during the telling. JM

Abe and his only son Zack loved to camp and fish and hunt. They usually set aside a couple fall or early winter days for the outing. This time, they were out just a week before Thanksgiving. Usually when they hunted, they didn't care if they shot a bird or just took pictures of one. But they brought guns because there were bears and large cats in this area of the country.

The first night, Zack hit his sleeping bag early and Abe was enjoying a quiet fire in the cool of the evening when he felt God speaking to him.

"God?" Abe said to the inner voice that was guiding him with very specific instructions. "I am listening." He whispered.

"Take Zack to the top of the mountain tomorrow." He felt the spirit was saying. "There you will use your gun you will offer him to me to be the special kill that will be used to honor the Lord your God this Thanksgiving Day."

What an odd instruction. How could God ask him to kill his own son, a son that God gave him after many prayers and one that God had promised to make into a mighty servant of the kingdom of God? Should he argue with God? No. Somehow, despite a very confused mind, he knew that obedience was the right thing to do.

In the morning, they broke camp and Abe told Zack about his prayer time. "God wants us to go to the top of the mountain where we will kill a very special prize to be used for our Thanksgiving meal this year." Said Abe.

"God said that Dad?" Zack said skeptically. But Zack trusted God and trusted his dad with everything so finally he said. "Ok, if that what God wants, that is what we will do."

They hiked along quietly with Zack in the lead. As Abe cradled his gun, he knew it would be so hard to turn his gun on his son who he loved more than even his own life. Finally, they got to the top of the mountain and Zack crossed the clearing. "Ok Pop, did God have any specifics about where this special prize was or what it would be? Is it a turkey or a boar or something else? You know mom doesn't like surprises." Then Zack turned back toward his dad and froze. There directly opposite was Abe holding his rifle to his face and pointing it directly at him.

Still Zack did not believe that his dad was going to kill him. His mind raced. Abe loved him more than any human in the world and Zack knew that God loved him too and had a wonderful future for him. So why was his dad pointing that gun at him? "Uh dad? Is the kill behind me because you know, I don't mind ducking."

"God will provide the kill." Abe said solemnly and he brought back the hammer of the gun. Zack's head was directly in his sights. As he began to squeeze the trigger, a powerful anointing from inside his heart surged up from his spirit.

"To the left!" the Holy Spirit said and without a moment's hesitation, Abe turned the gun to the left and fired. The recoil of the gun knocked the old man down. He was afraid to get up but he knew God was in control. When he sat up, there stood Zack with a huge turkey in his arms killed with one precision shot from Abe's rifle.

“That was some shot dad. I didn’t even see you aim. For a minute I thought that gun was pointed at me and I was all, you know dad, I can clean my room better, no need to get so dramatic but they you fired and....” Zack’s happy voice continued on but Abe just bowed his head and thanked God for honoring his obedience. Zack did go on to a great career, a ministry that brought salvation to many. In their old age, Abe finally told his wife about the hunting trip. Before she could get upset he told her the lesson he had finally come to from that amazing outing.

“God honored my obedience and the obedience of Zack. Since then I have walked with God as a friend. But friendship with God is always grounded in obedience.” He said.

All the Little Lemurs

Value: Blessed are the Pure of Heart

All little lemurs love to play. They play all the day and every day they play. Why any day that a little lemur doesn't play is a bad day for a baby lemur. Little lemurs know hundreds of games. They know hundreds of games because they make up dozens of games every day. Sometimes they play a game that has no rules, no objective and nobody knows when it ends or who ever wins. The idea is just to play, play, play, play, play. Mommies of little Lemurs know their babies are healthy when they play from the moment they wake up until the moment they lay in their cribs to sleep and when they are asleep, they dream of playing.

But the mommy of little Lloyd Lemur was worried. Lloyd didn't seem to want to run out into the field to run and jump and play with the other little lemurs. He didn't want to climb up and down hills and rocks and fallen trees and spring out at his friends chasing them or being chased or sometimes not even knowing which but knowing it was all great clean fun. Lloyd had a friend named Levi. Levi and Lloyd loved to be in secret. They hid from the other lemurs and whispered all the time. They had special ways of walking and wore special things on their ears and skin to make them look like they were in a secret society that was much better than the community of fun loving lemurs that played in the field every day.

Lloyd wasn't always this way. But he and Levi started having secrets and before long, that's all they wanted to do. They stayed inside whispering and making up codes and they never exercised so lots of time Lloyd felt sick. This was hard for him because nobody was ever sick because everybody lived pure, open happy lives so nobody understood how he felt. Levi and Lloyd loved to make plans that nobody knew about. They always seemed to have something cooked up and no matter how much Lloyd's sister Lexy Lemur begged, Lloyd said she couldn't be in the club because it had to be a secret. He even pretended there was something more holy and special about being in his secret club with its strange rituals and vows of silence.

Lloyd and Levi never got any exercise and nobody talked to them because they talked nonstop about their secret club but wouldn't tell the other lemurs about it because it was a secret. Lexy Lemur was worried about her brother. She remembered when Lloyd ran and laughed and played with her and the other baby lemurs all day long and never had a care in the world. He was by far the silliest, happiest lemur of them all before the secret club.

Then came the nightmares. Lloyd started waking up with terrible dreams. Dreams of deep dark monsters coming to get him and nobody could help him because he was in a secret club with the monsters. He woke up at night crying from the dreams and Lexy Lemur ran to him.

"Lloyd you are not happy and carefree any more. What happened? Your secret club has made you all worried and scared and dark inside. You know all good little lemurs have a pure love of play. Where is your purity Lloyd?" Asked Lexy. The next day she took him out into the field when all the little lemurs were leaping and laughing and screaming in joy but Lloyd just sat on his bottom on the ground and cried.

"I have lost my lemur purity Lexy. I am a lost lemur." He moaned.

"What happened in your club? You always seemed to have plans with the club and lemurs don't plan Lloyd, lemurs play." She asked.

"Yes, we had lots of secret plans. We played jokes on the other lemurs so they would fall off of things or things would happen to them and then we would laugh. We had all kinds of secret plans and games we did that nobody knew about and schemes. I was a scheming lemur Lexy. I don't want to be a scheming lemur, I want to be playing, laughing lemur. What can I do?" He cried.

So they went to the wise old owl who looked after all of the lemurs. There Lloyd poured out his soul to the wise old owl in hopes he would have some magic to make him pure and simple again.

“Well there is a magic but it’s not from me little lemur.” Mr. Owl confessed. “God created all lemurs to be pure in heart. But you have used up your purity Lloyd.” Said Mr. Owl and Lloyd started to cry loudly. “Now stop that, there is hope. If you will pray that the spirit of purity come inside you from God, he can change you into a completely new lemur, one that is pure and happy inside again.”

“Oh yes, yes, Mr. Owl. Please teach me how to ask God for that.”

So Mr. Owl and Lexy and Lloyd all prayed and the miracle did happen. His dark schemer lemur heart was filled with God and he discovered all over again that the love of God is what made lemurs happy and playful in the first place. He forgot all about having secrets and worries and how to just run and play and trust God with everything else and he was a brand new creature. And before long, he once again had regained his title of silliest lemur in the whole field.

Baby Polar Bears

Value: Helping the Poor

The one thing Pudgy and the older baby polar bears he played with loved to do is explore. Sometimes their moms and dads let them go out in a pack and explore the many coves and hills that made up their beautiful polar world. They made sure to stick together mostly but often split up in small packs of two to explore several coves at a time. That often turned into a game of hunt and catch with the smaller packs attacking each other playfully and wrestling and sometimes falling into the frigid ocean as they played. They loved the cold water and it made them even more playful.

Pudgy really liked being with his friends, Boris, Hector and Philippe and playing all day while the adults did whatever it is that adults do. One day they had found a whole area of coastline that they had not explored so they were very excited. Suddenly as Pudgy and Boris were playing tag in the water, they heard Hector yell out with excitement "HEY LOOK WHAT I FOUND!"

All of the baby bears ran as fast as they could to his voice. Pudgy's feet kept slipping on the ice and he would bounce on his fat belly and then get up but he was used to that. That was how he ran. All of them stopped and just gasp at what Hector had found. He was standing on the edge of a small cove that was almost completely hidden from the sea or other inlets around it and the fish were so plentiful, they were almost jumping onto the shore to be eaten. Boris was standing over a huge stack of fish he had already pulled out for his snack. He looked up and smiled and then yelled "WELL COME ON IN!"

The boys went wild fishing and catching the biggest, fattest fish and eating as fast as they could as though this paradise was going to disappear any second. Soon they were lying on the side of the water moaning for being so full. They napped and got back to their families before they were missed. For the next week, the four happy polar bears snuck off to their secret cove and stuffed themselves full on the amazing abundance of fish in that cove. To a polar bear, an unlimited quantity of fish is like unlimited money or gold is to humans so you can imagine how much they wanted to keep it all for themselves.

On the eighth day of the feast, finally as they lay there groaning, Philippe said, "You know, I don't feel right keeping this to ourselves. Our parents work so hard to hunt for food for us and when I get home, I am not even hungry any more. I know all of our parents are pretty rich but maybe we should share this with our families.

"I think we should share it with the poor families in our community." Philippe suddenly announced. "You know Georgio's mom? She is raising 10 cubs herself and her husband was killed by that fishing trawler so it's hard for her to find enough fish. I want to share with them." Quietly Pudgy thought that was a good idea but the other bears got very upset.

"All those cubs will eat it all gone and there will be none left for us!" Hector worried.

"They can have our scraps but they shouldn't get the best. They are poor. They wouldn't know what to do with all this wealth. They would just waste it." Boris added and they threw snowballs at Philippe for such a dumb idea. Pudgy felt bad for now defending Philippe who had to take that abuse all alone. All the way home, they taunted him when finally Pudgy spoke up.

"I don't think we know best about this. Let's consult King Marcos. He will know what to do." He advised.

King Marcos was the wise head of the polar bear community and it was well known he would help them see what God would have them do with the fortune. Boris and Hector knew that their parents were on some committees with King Marcos so they would advise him that the wealthy deserve this amazing discovery and that the poor should just have the left overs. The day came for the little bears to go in and see King Marcos but the rest were all scared so they made Pudgy go in and tell him what they found. When he came out, all of the little bears were on fire with curiosity but all Pudgy said was. "I just told him what we found. I told him both sides of our talks about what to do with it all and he just thanked me and

said he would decide before the Polar Bear Council this Friday.

The Polar Bear council was where King Marcos gathered every single bear in the community and told them of his recent decisions, news that concerns the community and his rulings. The meeting went on and on and on and the four baby bears were so bored but they stayed to hear his decision.

“And now I want to tell you of four baby bears who are setting an example of how to serve God and their fellow bears.” The king finally announced. “These four bears found a treasure trove of fish, enough to feed all of us for many generations to come. They did not hoard it for themselves but they want to share it with all of us. Come up here boys.” He said signaling to the four little bears to join him on the flat rise where he did his announcements.

“These four baby bears have given their find, which they could have kept hidden for themselves, to the community and it is my decision that the first to visit the cove will be the poorest amongst us. I decided this because this is what our great God who created all living things would want and I know that in their hearts, these wonderful boys want to serve God more than anything. They have truly brought a miracle from God to us and God will reward them mightily.” The roar of approval that went up from all the bears in the community was thunderous. Each baby polar bear could look out and see their families and see them beam with pride for them.

All of the boys were blushing but when Pudgy looked over at Hector and Boris, he knew that in their hearts they were both unhappy with the decision but also embarrassed because they were being praised for their love of the poor but they secretly didn't want to serve. The meeting ended and the four little bears met privately.

“I am sorry I didn't encourage us to give the fish to the poor.” Boris said. “Pudgy, you and Philippe were right. We don't deserve these praises and yet somehow we feel proud that it turned out this way.”

“Its ok Boris” a voice came from behind them and King Marcos had walked up and put his huge paws on their heads to give them some pats of appreciation. “Even if you had your doubts, you did the right thing. And because you overcame selfishness to serve God, your sacrifice is even more wonderful. Forget your sins and praise God that you are going to be a good little polar bear from this day forward.”

And from that day forward all of the little bears were the best citizens of the community and they knew that even better than the fish, the episode at the cove taught them how to be humble and know God's heart for the poor and that lesson was more valuable than all the wealth in the universe.

Bad Imaginary Friend

Value: Lying

Lots of us have imaginary friends. John had one and he talked to him every day. John's imaginary friend was named Duncan. Since John was an only child, he had lots of time for Duncan. Whenever mom and dad were too busy, he and Duncan made up lots of fun games together. They would play in the yard and turn it into a wonderful forest full of wild imaginary creatures. Sometimes they were spacemen fighting the evil Lord Gnulle and his army of mutants. Duncan and John always won. Other times Duncan would just get in his jammies and watch movies with John and make funny remarks about the adults.

One day John and Duncan were working on a fort in a part of the yard where nobody ever went. Duncan had already talked John into taking scrap wood from building sites near by even though John didn't really feel ok about it. "Go ahead." Duncan said. "Look, they have so much wood. They won't miss a few boards." John never let himself he had stolen the boards and Duncan said was ok so he took them.

At home, he got busy building the fort. Duncan said it was ok to use John's daddy's tools because they both knew that John's daddy wanted John to learn to use tools so this was a perfect way. Suddenly as he worked, John cut his finger. It was bleeding pretty badly so he ran crying into the house to have mommy fix it. As mommy was putting the band-aid on she asked, "How did you cut your finger John?"

"Don't tell her it was on your daddy's saw." Duncan whispered. "Tell her you cut it stacking firewood."

"But that's a lie." John answered his friend. Mommy didn't see the chat happening because parents can't see what happens with your imaginary friend.

"Don't worry. I have a magic dust and I will throw it on her to turn the lie into the truth." Duncan whispered.

"I cut it stacking up some of the firewood like you wanted me to do mommy." John said feeling really guilty inside and just then, he saw Duncan blow the magic dust.

"Well, I am glad you were doing something good sweetie." Mommy said. "Just try to be more careful next time."

Wow it had worked. John's mom really did believe it and when she did, it almost made it true. Well at least until John went back to building his fort and saw the blood on the saw. So he cleaned it up then the lie became the truth. Duncan and John worked all afternoon but as supertime came close, it looked like rain.

"We better go in and tell mommy what we want for supper." Duncan recommended. "I want macaroni and cheese." He cheered which seemed odd to John because imaginary friends don't eat.

"Ok, we better put daddy's tools up or I will get caught and be in big trouble." John told Duncan.

"Oh leave them." Duncan said. "We will need them tomorrow to finish the fort and this way it won't take so long getting them out. Anyway, daddy never uses them during the week so we can clean up on Friday." So John listened to Duncan and left the tools out. He thought about it later when he was watching TV with his parents and it started to rain but it was too late to run out there now and daddy would know for sure. Then, just like Duncan said, they used the tools the next day and everything was fine.

Saturday daddy found the tools. He called John into the garage. "John, did you play with my tools and leave them out?" daddy said holding his favorite saw. "See? It's rusting. Was it out when it rained that night?"

"Tell him no." Duncan whispered. "Tell him that he left them out the last time he worked on the fence and

that you found them and put them up for him.”

“But that’s a lie!” John objected to his imaginary friend.

“I will use my magic dust to make it the truth like we did before.” Duncan reassured him. So John said what Duncan wanted him to and when he finished the lie, he heard Duncan blow the magic dust. Daddy stared at John like he could see right through him. John even saw daddy’s eyes shift like he could actually see Duncan and John got really scared. If daddy has magic and knows about Duncan, he will be in big trouble.

“Ok John, we will talk about it later.” Daddy said.

“We did it!” Duncan said triumphantly. “The magic dust worked and changed the lie into the truth.” John still felt really bad in his spirit and the play that day was not so fun.

“John lets talk about the tools.” John’s daddy said coming into his bedroom and sitting on the bed. Then he did something John didn’t expect. He picked John up and hugged him and let him sit on his lap. “Now, you have always been an honest boy and you know you can tell me the truth no matter what, don’t you?”

“Yes daddy.” John said feeling himself close to tears. “Daddy, I left the tools out. I lied to you in the garage.” He said sniffing a bit.

“NO DON’T TELL HIM THAT. WHAT ABOUT OUR SECRETS?” Duncan complained loudly but John didn’t listen.

“Who taught you to lie like that?” John’s daddy asked.

“My imaginary friend Duncan.” John said feeling much better getting it out.

“John, remember in the Bible where the serpent convinced Eve to lie? Well that serpent was kind of like Duncan because Eve hid things from those she loved, first her husband and then God. But God can see in our hearts and knows when we lie because nothing is hidden from him. God knows you and Duncan used lies to cover up things.” Daddy said holding John so he felt safe even though he was being corrected.

“Yes daddy I know. I have felt awful about it all day.” John confessed.

“Well, the Bible teaches us not to listen to spirits that make us sin. If Duncan is making you sin then its time he either met the Lord or you got a new imaginary friend. Maybe one that goes to our church.” Daddy said and then he prayed with John and John repented of lying and of listening to a spirit that told him to sin. He hopped down from daddy’s knee and ran out to have a snack with mommy.

“Oh and John?” His daddy said standing up from the bed. “Tell Duncan his magic dust doesn’t work because I could see him blowing it the whole time.” He said and John’s jaw dropped.

“You could see Duncan? And you knew about the dust?” he gasped. “How much can mommies and daddies see?” he gasped.

“You never know John.” Daddy said chuckling. “You just never know.”

Belinda and Tempest

Value: An allegory about temptation

Belinda was a good girl. She tried to keep the right kinds of friends and together they tried to stay away from things they knew their parents and teachers would not approve of. Most of her friends were from the church so they listened closely to the sermons, the Sunday school lessons and other instructions they got at church to make sure they knew what was right. Belinda also did as she was taught and read the bible and prayed even though she didn't always understand what she prayed and if she prayed with her eyes closed, sometimes she went to sleep.

One day daddy brought home a new pet. His name was Pete the Parakeet. For several days, everybody had fun talking to Pete but he didn't say much. But it was clear that Pete had come to the house to be Belinda's friend. So he lived in her room.

"Wake up Belinda." Pete suddenly said as she dozed off reading her Bible.

"Did you just talk to me?" she said to the little bird. She had a hard time believing that Pete the Parakeet would actually speak to her.

"Yes, it's my job to talk to you. I have been sent here to do this. I am called to be by your side to help when you have trouble like sleeping when you should be reading your Bible."

Well it was clear that God had sent Pete for a very special mission to help Belinda with her faith, in struggling against her weaknesses and to advise, comfort and teach her. That's a pretty good parakeet.

One day, Belinda met Tempest. Tempest wasn't like the other girls, she was new, exotic, kind of exciting. So Belinda wanted to know Tempest more because she felt that Tempest could teach her some of those grown up things that other people would tell her about because they always treated Belinda like a little kid.

Belinda started finding times to be with Tempest when nobody knew about it. She found her best times with Tempest were always when nobody knew she was around and the thing she was telling Belinda were secrets. Secrets are fun.

"You know most of the things your parents and the church say are bad aren't bad." Tempest told her.

"Really? Why would they lie to me?" Belinda objected. "I know they love me."

"They do love you but they think you have to be protected because they don't want you to have the fun things they have. God could let you have fun things like smoking and drinking and staying out all night but he knows the adults should keep things fun things all to themselves." Tempest lied to Belinda. Sadly, Belinda started to believe her. It was so easy to want to be like Tempest and to try to please her.

As Belinda was walking home from spending time with Tempest, she was thinking about trying a few things she liked to do. After all, it was a secret so nobody would know. Plus she would still be a good girl to her friends and family and at church. Her fun times with Tempest would just be a little secret between the two of them. Suddenly Pete the Parakeet landed on her shoulder.

"How did you get out of your cage?" Belinda objected.

"You would like to box up the voice that reminds you of your moral duties but it doesn't work like that," the little bird said to her sternly. Belinda didn't like be lectured, particularly by a bird but she knew he was right. "Tempest is leading you astray from God." Pete continued. "God knows what is going on so your little secret isn't a secret and if you develop sin habits with her, they won't be a secret long from your parents and friends either." He said insistently.

Belinda felt so much guilt and conviction in her spirit because of what Pete was telling her. But she was confused because she wanted it both ways. She wanted to be good and have the respect of God and her mom and dad and the church but the fun things Tempests offered were so hard to resist. Finally, she did start to give in and met with Tempest to try some things.

Tempest laid all of the exciting forbidden things on the table in front of her at Tempests house when nobody was around. There it all was, the cigarettes, the alcohol, the bad magazines and tapes, a connection to the internet already on some naughty sites. All she had to do is reach out and take it and nobody was there to stop her.

Suddenly she looked out the window and saw Pete the Parakeet in the tree out side the window and his eyes were fixed on her. She thought she could hear his voice in her head. But this time he wasn't lecturing her or making her feel bad.

"None of that will satisfy you Belinda." The voice said. "All of these things are Satan's cheap substitute for the perfect joy and love that Jesus gives. Right now Jesus am inside you giving you the strength to get up and walk away from these sins. You can feel him can't you?" The voice said.

"Yes, I can feel him." Belinda said out loud.

"What?" Tempest responded. "Who are you talking to?"

"Don't use your own strength to resist the sins Belinda." The voice said to her. "Use God's strength inside you and get up and walk away and go home and have a Bible study with your pet bird." It helped her.

And that is what she did. She stood up and just turned and walked away. God's strength inside her even helped her resist arguing with Tempest but instead she just put Tempest behind her and treated her like she didn't even exists. Belinda had learned an important lesson about resisting the devil and his desire to make you sin. You can too. You are the believer, like Belinda. And you will get temptations, like the ones Tempest brought. But the Holy Spirit's job is to "come along side and help" you resist temptation, just like Pete the parakeet did. If you look for your own Pete, you will hear his voice and he will help you feel God's power to resists temptation in you too every day.

Cartoon Dreams

Value: Is Idolatry Bad?

Kimberly loved cartoons. It was a pretty big hobby before but when mom and dad let her have a TV in her room, she really started loving cartoons even more. She loved the old ones a lot like Bugs Bunny, The Roadrunner, Popeye and lots of new ones too. Recently the one she liked best was Roscoe Rabbit. On Saturday nights, they play three hours of Roscoe Rabbit in a row. So Kimberly goes to bed early to curl up for a long fun evening of watching cartoons.

As half hour episode after half hour episode drifted by, Kimberly thought she felt herself drifting off to sleep. She really couldn't tell the difference between sleep and being awake. Suddenly she woke up feeling a strange shaking sound and a high squeaky voice saying, "Kimberley, Kimberley, wake up, we have a long way to go and a lot to do."

She felt herself come away slowly and suddenly bolting up staring right into that strange face. "Who are you?" she shouted although she recognized him right away.

"Well, I'm Roscoe Rabbit of course, come on, we have to travel three dozen galaxies to get to Moonblind where you will live forever"

"What do you mean forever?" But before she could get an answer, his white gloved hand closed on hers and they shot out in space like two Fourth of July rockets out into the cosmos and past the sun. Kimberly felt herself changed into just a blur of cartoon steam as she rocketed past stars and planets and comets sometimes doing squiggly patterns and loop-de-loops in space and then THUNK she was standing on a completely cartooned world, holding hands with the cartoon Roscoe Rabbit who was twice as big as her.

"Well, here we are? What do you want to do first?" Roscoe said in that goofy cartoon voice of his.

"I want to go home. How did I get here?"

"Wait, here comes the Bosco Boys!" Roscoe said with a wild giggle and in a flash from horizon to horizon was filled with every size, assortment, species and gender of alien motorcycle riders heads down and racing along at ridiculous speeds right toward them. Before Kimberly could yell, "HELP" she was swept up and holding for dear life to a huge pink and green hairy cartoon animal that kept doing wheelies with his motorcycle.

"Hang on Kimberly, we are going to ZIMZIM CITY" You are going to meet the GRAND ZIMZIM!!" Roscoe yelled as his hat blew from his head and he almost toppled from behind a yellow skeleton with big floppy feet racing his motorcycle with his skinny Skelton bottom shoved high up in the air. When the thousands of motorcyclists hit the gates of ZIMZIP CITY, they suddenly merged into a cycle of cartoon creatures all mixing together into one out of control mess when they were suddenly shot out and landed in a huge room in front of a throne high above them.

Turning to Roscoe Rabbit, Kimberly had to know "Is the GRAND ZIMZIM the president or something?" Suddenly Roscoe slammed to the floor and became flat as a pancake with his long cartoon rabbit arms stretched out before him. His totally flap lips moved when he said "Bow down, Kimberly, the GRAND ZIMZIM is our God!!!"

ALL BOW said another voice that came from a smallish purple cartoon duck with yellow spots. Then it came in, what had to be the GRAND ZIMZIM. The thing that walked in looked somewhat like a cross between an alligator and a petunia. It sat on the throne looking very pleased with itself, until it saw Kimberly.

"You are not bowed down? You better get with it. Cartoon land works badly when someone disobeys. I am the God in this cartoon you know."

"I am NOT going to bow because first, I am not a cartoon and second, I already have a god and I don't worship anybody else."

"Well, "the GRAND ZIMZIM said beginning to pout. "Why not?"

"Well because in the real world there is only one God and we only worship him." Kimberly insisted.

"Oh please, juts a little worship."

"NO" Kimberly said and she stomped her feet.

"Ok then, you have a right to your choices, but the penalty for not worshipping the GRAND ZIMZIM is to be dangled above the huge worm tank!!"

There was a cartoon flash and Kimberly first felt her arms over her head, bound by cartoon ropes. "Well I hope your satisfied NOW" she heard to her right where she found Roscoe Rabbit dangling and wiggling above a tank of very nasty multi-colored worms. "All this because YOU couldn't FOR JUST FIVE MINUTES worship the GREAT ZIMZIM!!!"

"OHYEAH!" Kimberly shouted loosing her temper. "WELL I AM NEVER WATCHING YOUR SHOW AGAIN!" but before the words were completely out, the ropes let go. Kimberly felt herself screaming and falling and falling and falling and.....

'EEK" she sat straight up in her bed. It was morning and the cartoon channel was selling exercise equipment to her. The first thing Kimberly saw was not all the cartoon posters and toys but in the corner a sweet picture of her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. She ran to that picture and hugged it crying. "Jesus, I'm sorry I loved cartoons more than you" and she was too. Because before the weekend was over the posters were gone and mom and dad happily took TV from her room and Kimberly knew for certain why she should never consider worshipping another god who is not the one true God again.