

1. The Holiday Ends



Paul and Sarah were twins. They were eager to start school again. Although they often pretended they didn't enjoy it, in fact they liked it very much. They were both excited about moving up a class. They'd heard a lot about their new teacher, and everyone who had been in her class before liked her.

'Are you glad you're going back to school, Sarah?' asked Paul.

'I think so,' said Sarah. 'It will be fun to go up, won't it?'



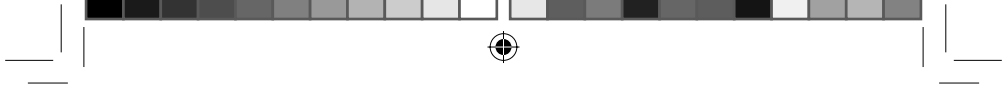
Sarah and Paul

‘Yes,’ answered Paul. ‘Miss Simon said that Mrs Fox’s class is a very good class to be in.’

‘I know,’ said Sarah. ‘She’s supposed to be great at story-telling and she can draw well. Her class draws plants and things, and the drawings are hung all round the walls.’

The weekend before they returned to school was an exciting one for Paul and Sarah,





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because it was their birthday on the Saturday.
They had a lovely birthday party and they were
given lots of presents.

There were some wonderful games to share, books and gift vouchers to spend. Paul had a new football and Sarah a painting by numbers set. Both their teachers at church had given them new hardback Bibles.



Sarah and Paul



After the party Mum said, 'Why don't you go and collect together all your presents? You could tidy your bedrooms as well.'

'Oh, no,' groaned Paul. 'We always have to tidy our rooms! It's so boring!'

'Oh, yes!' replied Mum. 'Now you just do as you're told! Once you've tidied up you can enjoy playing with some of your presents.'

'All right,' said Paul and Sarah, with more of a smile on their faces now.

Once they'd finished, Paul went out into the garden with his new football. He enjoyed kicking it up against the wall, and then seeing how hard he could kick it as it bounced back to him. Sarah started her painting by numbers kit and was surprised how quickly time went.

* * *

On Sunday afternoon they were looking through the books they had received as birthday presents. Sarah had an exciting book

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about Mary Slessor, who worked in Africa as a missionary. Mary's life had been full of adventure and working for God. Paul had a book about a doctor and his hospital in the jungle.

Paul turned over the pages of his book and looked at the photographs and drawings. As he read about some of the pictures he was very surprised. The book showed how people in some parts of the world did not worship the same God as he did. The pictures showed people bowing down in front of their idols made of wood and stone, which they called 'gods'. They all looked rather strange and ugly to Paul.

'Don't these people worship strange gods!' exclaimed Paul. 'Imagine carving a god out of a block of wood, or chipping one out of a lump of stone! It must take a long time to make them. But how silly to





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worship something you've made yourself. It's as stupid as worshipping one of those models I've made.'

Paul rather enjoyed model-making. The hobby had all started when his father had bought him a model electric train and track for Christmas. He had enjoyed making the houses and shops and crossings so much that when he had finished them he went and bought some other plaster-cast models to make, like Julius Caesar and George Washington.

Julius Caesar had been rather a messy job and the colours had run when he painted him. But just as he was remembering making the plaster-cast model he thought of something else too.

'Is there any difference really between these idols in my book and my models? Are these pictures of idols real gods?' Paul asked his mother.

Sarah wanted to know too. 'Why do they worship idols, if they aren't real?'

Before Mum had a chance to answer either question, Paul added, 'I'm glad I don't worship strange things like that!'



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'Yes, I'm glad too,' answered Mum quietly.
Paul suddenly remembered something else
to ask his mother.

'Do you remember that missionary who came
to church? He'd been with a tribe of Indians
in Brazil. He was the first outsider to learn
their language. He did it because he wanted
to write down the Bible for them. He showed



Sarah and Paul

us a photograph of a man who had been a witch doctor. When he became a Christian he threw away all his idols and burned all the charms he'd used in trying to make sick people better.'

'Yes, I remember that,' answered Mum. 'There's only one true God, no matter how many gods and idols people may worship. And the one true God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. But, you see, we live in a country where most people have heard about the Lord Jesus. People can hear about Him in churches. We can read about Him, for we've the Bible in our own language. But there are lots of people in the world who've never heard about the one true God and His Son, the Lord Jesus. So some

of them worship strange gods. They don't know the way to heaven.'

Sarah felt sorry for all the people who had never heard about the Lord Jesus, so



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she asked, 'Can't you get to heaven without knowing about the Lord Jesus?'

Mum replied, 'The Bible tells us that it's only through the Lord Jesus that anyone can go to heaven. Can you remember a hymn we sing that says that?'

Sarah and Paul thought hard for a moment.

Paul guessed it first. 'It's that hymn "There is a green hill far away". One of the verses says,

"There was no other
good enough
To pay the price of
sin;
He only could unlock the gate
Of heaven, and let us in."



Sarah began to hum the tune immediately.

'The hymn's right,' explained Mum. 'Only the Lord Jesus could unlock the gate of heaven. Unlocking the gate of heaven is just another way of saying letting us into heaven. He is the

Sarah and Paul

way for us to come to God. Men, women, boys and girls sin so much that they don't deserve to go to heaven. Indeed they deserve to be shut out. But Jesus Christ is the only one who can let us into heaven if we trust in Him.'



'It must be horrible to be shut out of heaven,' said Paul. 'Last term when my class saw a DVD I was shut out of the hall as a punishment because I talked after Miss Simon told us to be quiet. I didn't like it at all.'

'It served you right,' Sarah told him. 'Three times Miss Simon told you to keep quiet!'

'No telling tales, Sarah,' interrupted Mum. 'Just remember, it will be far worse for someone to be shut out of heaven. It will mean being shut out forever. But Jesus took the punishment which disobedient men, women, boys and girls, ought to suffer, when He died on the *cross*.'

Sarah thought for a moment.

'The Muslim boy down the street doesn't



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believe in Jesus as we do. His family came from Pakistan. And then there's that Jewish girl whose father is a tailor. They don't believe that Jesus is their Messiah.'

Sarah thought for a second or two before asking another question.

'Do they need to believe in the Lord Jesus too to go to heaven? God wouldn't want to shut them out of heaven, would He?'

'No, He doesn't want to do that,' answered Mum. 'That's the reason He sent the Lord



Sarah and Paul



Jesus to be our Saviour. God wants us to put our trust in the Lord Jesus as our Saviour. When we do, He's able to forgive our sins and to make us His children.'

Sarah looked at her mother and thought for a moment.

'But how do you know that what you say is right? Couldn't their gods be true gods?'



'That's a big question to answer,' said Mum. 'But the Bible, which is God's Word, tells us that these things are so. You'll find the answer to nearly all your questions in the Bible.'



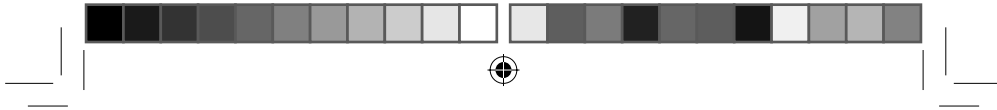
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'I'm glad we were given new Bibles for our birthday,' said Sarah.

'My old one was falling to pieces,' added Paul.

Mum smiled. 'Well, look after them, and - more important still - read them! Now who would like a doughnut and a glass of milk?'





Sarah and Paul

Get Active!

Find out about Mary Slessor.

Where was she born?

What other Scottish city did she live in?

What did she work as before she became a missionary?



Name the area of Africa that she went to work in.

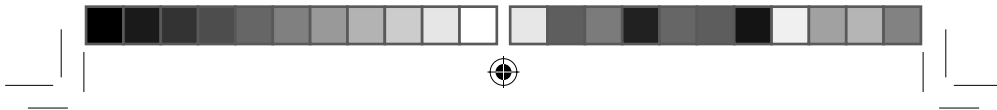


What modern day African country is that area in today?

Look in an encyclopaedia or on the web for more information about her.

* You may check your answers on pages 106-7





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Art Attack!

Mrs. Fox told her class to draw things like plants. Draw a plant or a flower that you can see in your home.

