

Fly, Wendy, Fly!

By Jane Bullivant

Soaring over the rooftops of London with Peter Pan was my favorite way to spend an evening. After lights out, I would creep past my brother and sister to the window and gaze at the cobbled streets swathed in moonlight. As the nearby church bells chimed I would imagine a warm wind bringing a flurry of fairy dust. I closed my eyes tight and thought happy thoughts. I even had a little sewing kit in a drawer, just in case Peter needed me to sew his shadow back on. Then one day we moved away from the city of cobbled streets and clanging church bells, and my special sewing kit got put away. The years passed and other things caught my imagination. Recently, however, the story of Peter Pan has pulled at my heart once more as we have explored fairy stories as our read-alouds. There's no doubt, one of the best treats a homeschooling mom can give her family is a daily soar through the clouds of classic literature that billow a child's imagination.

As my children snuggle up with me on the sofa and we open the pages of *Peter Pan*, my daughter's eyes grow wide as if she's expecting fairy dust to come sparkling off the pages. We lose ourselves in swashbuckling adventures and moonlit exploits. My favorite character has to be Wendy. She has an innocence and beauty that comes from within. She is resourceful, compassionate, and brave. The character of Wendy also has a number of parallels to the thrills and spills of life as a homeschool parent.

Abandoning Myself to the Supplies Cupboard

Homeschool parents the world over are renowned for thriftiness and making use of the strangest things in homeschool projects. Just as Wendy made medicine out of rainwater from a dripping leaf, we are resourceful and imaginative. My homeschooling friend can make a masterpiece from almost anything. Even an old bit of string on a winter's day gets transformed into an ice-and-leaf mobile. All sorts of things have their uses in a modern homeschool; however, there is a danger for an overzealous mom to line herself up with the "items to be put to use to benefit homeschooling." Self-sacrifice can become so encompassing that a homeschool mom can lose a sense of her inner beauty and individuality. Rather than soaring the skies like Wendy, she becomes a steel-reinforced plane chugging through the sky. As well as raising her children to live a life worth living, she also needs to rediscover her own gifts and live her life to the full as a daughter of the King. As she renews her joy in the Lord her heart will soar with wings like eagles.

"Do you know," Peter asked, "why swallows build in the eaves of houses? It is to listen to the stories."

This Peter Pan quote reminds me of one of my personal goals for our family homeschool. I want it to be a place so rich in truth and inspiration that it challenges, inspires, and leads others. We want to see lives touched by God and families stirred by the calling of Christian homeschooling. It saddens me greatly to see brothers and sisters in the Lord

allowing their children to be raised outside a Christian setting. The book of Proverbs reminds us that an honest answer is like a kiss on the lips (Proverbs 24:26). So I have learned not to shy away from sharing the biblical requirement of Christian education with my brothers and sisters in the Lord. I have also learned that self-righteousness and condemnation of others are not characteristics to harbor in a Christian home. Beneath the busyness of life, we need an undercurrent of graciousness. *“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind” (Colossians 3:12)*. As the Lost Boys were drawn to Wendy’s gentleness, so it is our compassion that will move mountains in our communities.

The key theme of the story of Peter Pan is the wonder and innocence of childhood. One of the privileges of being a homeschool parent is the joy of watching childhood innocence blossom into maturity. We need not fear our children stumbling around in the sludge of peer pressure, where popularity is prized above all else. Our journey is a family affair, growing in knowledge, wisdom, and experience together. The opportunity to watch and learn from known adults “in action” in the rough-and-tumble of everyday life surely makes for an adventurous childhood. It’s a real-world childhood, where the preparation for adulthood is woven into everyday life and the benefits of strong character and responsibility are clear to see. In Peter Pan’s world, innocence and purity belong only to children. The adult world is to be dreaded and avoided at all costs. What a thrill that the reality is that childhood innocence can blossom into purity and a rich adulthood full of hope and direction.

Give a Thimble of Grace

When Peter first meets Wendy, they exchange thimbles as gestures of kindness. It is the thimble around Wendy’s neck that later saves her from arrows shot from Neverland. Thanks to a Christian upbringing, I was taught always to be kind, because “it’s the right thing to do.” I can tolerate annoying people or situations and remain grumble-free. However, lured by the satisfied recipients of my “grace,” I sometimes overlook the fact that tolerating people is not actually operating in true grace. Tolerance is performed with a touch of duty and a smattering of self-satisfaction. Tolerance chuckles at Sarah’s limp corn dogs at the homeschool barbecue, while grace tucks into a plateful with her. Tolerance lays out the chairs for the science fair but refuses to pick up the candy wrappers dropped by the teens. Grace buys them a big bag of gummi bears. Tolerance, in homeschool groups, checks all the right boxes. Yet it’s grace on the cheap. The glory never goes heavenward. If the heart-thumping pursuit of the grace of God is lost in the oh-so-noble efforts of a homeschooling co-op, heaven hears nothing more than the scrape of plastic chairs. Real kindness and genuine care is like sparkling fairy dust in a homeschool group. Just as the Lost Boys built a house to keep Wendy warm and safe, so we can build kindness and encouragement into the walls of our homeschool communities.

The Croc with the Ticking Clock!

Of course, Christian homeschooling is no sticking plaster or guarantee of a life of roses. Sometimes life can take an unexpected turn, and simply “thinking happy thoughts” is not

enough to fix things. The online community that is *HomeschoolBlogger.com* is a lively place where many of us share our trials and triumphs of everyday life. Some homeschool families have been touched recently by tragedy, and many of us carry them in prayer. As precious as it is to share each other's burdens, sometimes a lingering fear can remain. Fear of what the future could hold can freeze us to the spot just as Captain Hook froze in fear at the sound of a ticking clock. Grappling with fear is like grappling with a croc—it leaves you worn out, weary, and bruised. Maybe I can find peace from the croc by realigning my priorities so that I want God's glory and His will more than I want life to turn out the way I want it to. Father God is not careless with His children; we are safe in His pocket. When our work on earth is done, we too will run into His arms and join all the Christians who have gone before us. For now, let's scoop up our kids and run the race of our lives. We can urge our children on in the words of Peter Pan: "I'll teach you to jump on the wind's back, and away we go!"

Biographical Information

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