

# People Are Born To Shine!

A newsletter rooted in the Christian faith created to inspire and support all people, irrespective of nationality, race, and religion.



## ACTS OF KINDNESS

### Mary's Meals: A Brighter Future for Children

*Mary's Meals* began in 2002 as a school feeding program in Scotland.

During 1992, two brothers from Scotland, Magnus and Fergus MacFarlane-Barrow, watched the TV news about the Bosnian conflict with increasing horror. They were so moved, they decided to organize an appeal for food and blankets.

They quickly gathered a jeep-load and joined one of the convoys leaving the UK to deliver aid to Medjugorje in Bosnia, a place of international pilgrimage they had visited with their family years before. Believing their good deed was done, they returned to their home in Argyll expecting to resume their jobs as fish farmers. However, they came home to discover the public had continued



**“To have enough to eat and to go to school one day...”**

to donate in their absence filling their parents' garage with goods.

Magnus decided to give up his job for a year and drive the aid to Bosnia for as long as the public kept donating. The public did not stop. Soon it became necessary to set up a registered charity: *Scottish International Relief*. The charity soon expanded. They began to work in Romania building homes for abandoned children. In Liberia, they helped returning refugees by setting up mobile clinics. All the while, they continued delivering material aid to Croatia and Bosnia and funding additional projects.

“Our vision is that all those who have more than they need share with those who lack even the most basic things. And, that every child receives one daily meal at their educational institution.”

In 2002, *Scottish International Relief* was operating a simple famine relief project in Malawi when Magnus met a family that led to a whole new area of work. The mother was dying of AIDS and lying on the floor of her hut surrounded by her six young children.

She said the only thing she had left was to pray for her children. She prayed that someone might look after them after she died. She knew that the AIDS epidemic had created one million orphans in Malawi alone. When Magnus asked her oldest son what he hoped for in life, his stark reply, “To have enough to eat, and to go to school one day...” was not easily forgotten. It inspired the campaign that became known as *Mary's Meals*.

The campaign aims to provide chronically hungry children with one meal a day at school, which helps to encourage and enable children to gain the education that can lift them out of poverty later in life.



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SPIRITUAL HEALTH

# Easy Ways to Pray

than we do! Thank him for the lovely companion he put in your care!

### PRAY WHILE GOING THROUGH YOUR FAMILY PHOTO ALBUM

Use pictures as an opportunity to thank God for the precious people in your life. Ask for His blessing on them to fulfill their destinies. Ask God to heal relationship rifts, and to help you heal from the grief of loved ones lost.

### PRAY DURING HOUSEHOLD DUTIES

While sweeping, dusting or following up on daily errands, ask God to accompany you through the day and be your friend. Who said morning prayers should be done in bed?

### PRAY TO YOUR FAVORITE SONG

God loves music. It's all over the Bible. Happy songs, sad songs, love songs...Sing to the Lord!

### PRAY THROUGH WRITTEN WORDS

Writing your prayers is a powerful practice. Write your prayers, then over time go back and review what you've written. Consider how God has responded over time.

### PRAY WHILE WALKING IN NATURE

Creation is a window into God's heart. In the woods, by the sea, beside a stream or in a garden, we find aspects of God's nature reflected in tangible ways. As you walk, talk with God about what you see. Then listen. God will respond!

### PRAY OUT LOUD

In fact, pray loud! There's a great tradition of speaking up—even shouting—to God. Try it. Go off somewhere alone where no one else but God can hear you. Speak aloud to Him. The Bible says, "Shout to the Lord!"

### PRAY WITH A FRIEND

Having someone to pray with is a powerful spiritual principle. God cares about relationships. In the comfort of two will come the power of three!

### PRAY WHILE READING THE PAPER

While reading the news, bring your hands together and ask for God's intervention in the specific crises at hand.

### PRAY WHILE EXERCISING

Use the rhythm of the exercise to make prayer routines. With every other step count your blessings or pray for a specific friend.

### PRAY IN SILENCE AND IN STILLNESS

Our days are filled with rushed activity. Finding a few moments to sit still can be a great opportunity for prayer. The Bible says, "In quietness and trust is your strength."

### PRAY ON A SPECIAL DAY

Each day has significant meaning for individual people. Perhaps today is the birthday of someone you know or the anniversary of an important event. Use any of these remembrances to focus and prompt your prayer for the day.

### PRAY WITH SIMPLE TRIGGERS

Triggers are memory tools that help direct our minds. We can build our prayer practice by placing triggers in our day to remind us to pray. Use a post-it on your bathroom mirror, an hourly alarm or carry a small stone in your pocket. It can be anything.

### PRAY NOW

God is down to earth. He comes to meet us where we live to prepare us to meet Him where He lives. Communicate with Him now. Simply. Directly. Personally.

Source: Mark Herringshaw, Beliefnet.com

Prayer should be simple, short and spontaneous. God doesn't require fancy language, nor does He ask for prepared speeches. Communicating with God is very simple and can be done anytime!

Here are some great ways to pray.

### PRAY WHILE DRIVING

While going to work, school or dropping your children off somewhere, pinpoint specific landmarks to remind you to praise God!

### PRAY OVER A GOOD MEAL WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Use either an ordinary meal or a special occasion to thank God for the food, and to ask him to bless the people who made it.

### PRAY HOLDING YOUR FAVORITE PET

God loves animals even more

OUR DAILY BREAD

# Radical and Upside Down

*Blessed Savior, make me humble,  
Take away my sinful pride,  
In myself I'm sure to stumble,  
Help me stay close by Your side.*

—D. DE HAAN



## Read: Luke 14:7-14

*There are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last.*  
—Luke 13:30

## BIBLE IN A YEAR: ESTHER 9-10; ACTS 7:1-21

The values of the kingdom that Jesus came to establish were radically different than those of His day. The Pharisees and teachers of the law clamored for the spotlight and sought the adulation of the crowds. Many of us still do this today.

In Luke 14, Jesus told a parable that taught His followers not to be like that. The parable talks about people who chose the most honored seat for themselves at a wedding feast (vv.7-8). He said they would be embarrassed when the host asked them publicly to take their rightful place (v.9). Jesus went on in His story to talk about whom to invite to such dinners. He said they shouldn't invite friends and family, but "when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you." (vv.13-14).

Are you disappointed because you have not broken into the more elite group in your church or neighborhood? Are you feeling stuck down on rung two when you'd rather be on rung eight, or at least climbing the social ladder? Listen to what Jesus said: "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." (v.11). That's the radical and upside-down way of God's kingdom!

In Christ's kingdom, humility trumps pride every time.

Source: David C. Egner, *Our Daily Bread*, odb.org

## MARY'S MEALS continued from page 1

This simple but effective idea has gathered momentum, and today provides daily meals for over 500,000 children in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Eastern Europe. "When I think of *Mary's Meals*, I think of it as a series of lots of little acts of love," said Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow. "I have learned that every small act of kindness does make a difference."

*Mary's Meals is named after Mary, the mother of Jesus, who also brought her child up in poverty.*

It costs under 10 pounds PER YEAR to feed a child at school. People are always surprised by how little it costs. However, the cost is kept so

low because important strategies are used to benefit the countries being helped:

- The food is bought locally to support the local economy, to respect local culture and food preferences, and to avoid transport cost.
- Local communities are active partners in the *Mary's Meals* project. In Liberia, the communities build the simple kitchens needed to cook *Mary's Meals* at a school. In Malawi, over 60,000 volunteers (usually parents) cook and serve 400,000 meals every school day. They are willing to volunteer their services in this way because they understand better than anyone how important the daily meal is for their children.

- *Scottish International Relief* has made a commitment to spend at least 93 percent of every \$1 donated on charitable work. They are extra careful to keep running costs as low as possible, and rely on volunteers in all aspects of the organization while encouraging in-kind and financial donations.

Mother Theresa said, "If you cannot feed a hundred people, then feed just one." Feeding a child for a whole year costs less than 10 pounds, which is around 16 USD. If you wish to contribute to *Mary's Meals*, please visit [www.marysmeals.org](http://www.marysmeals.org) to learn about their ongoing projects and ways you can help.

Source: *Marysmeals.org*



## FAMILY &amp; PARENTING

# How to Raise a Happy Child!

Is my child happy? There's the million dollar question! What if the answer is "NO?" Is there something you can do about it? One thing is for sure; happiness cannot be bought or wrapped in a present to be given on a birthday. Showering children with toys is also not the right way to make a child happy. Experts say this will get in the way of a child's longtime happiness denying them the chance to develop certain important tools.

The good news is you don't have to be an expert in child psychology to steer your child toward happiness. Here are eight key strategies you can use to raise a happy child.

## LEARN TO READ THE SIGNS

As your child matures, he'll become a pro at showing you when something makes him content or upset. His face lights up when you enter the room or he wails when someone takes away his favorite toy.

But if your baby is crying, how do you know if he's in pain, hungry, or just bored? "A mother will learn to pick up on different kinds of cries and facial expressions," says Paul C. Holinger, professor of psychiatry at Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center in Chicago. "The eyebrows, the mouth, and vocalizations are all signaling systems for the baby." And mothers know the language!

Experts say that young infants don't really feel happy when they look happy. The good news is they're not emotionally aware when they're screaming either. Experts explain that the "cortical emotion centers" of your baby's brain don't begin to function until they are 6 to 8 months old, when they start to feel the emotions that seem so vivid on their faces.

Your baby probably has his own ways of showing you when he's not content. Some babies may cry, while others become clingy. As you get to know your own child's temperament, you'll become better at learning the signs that something's not right in his world.

## MAKE ROOM FOR FUN

Your baby might smile at a favorite toy or a colorful picture, but what really makes her happy is YOU. That's the first step to creating a happy child. Connect with your child and have fun with her. This is called the "connected childhood" which is a crucial element to guide your child toward happiness in the long run.

Your child will develop essential skills through play. As she gets older, unstructured play will allow her to discover what she loves to do. Play doesn't only mean music class, organized sports, and other structured "enriching" activities. Play is when children invent, create and daydream.

## HELP THEM DEVELOP THEIR TALENTS

Happy people are often those who have mastered a skill! Have you heard that before? For example, when your baby figures out how to get the spoon into his mouth or takes those first shaky steps by himself, he learns from his mistakes. He learns persistence and discipline, and then experiences the joy of succeeding due to his own efforts.



He also reaps the reward of gaining recognition from others for his accomplishment. Most importantly, he discovers he has some control over his life. If he tries to do something, eventually he can do it. Research shows that this feeling of control through mastery is an important factor in determining adult happiness.

## HEALTHY BODIES, HAPPY CHILDREN

Lots of sleep, exercise and a healthy diet are important to everyone's well-being, especially a child's. Giving your baby plenty of space to release her energy will help put her in a good mood.

You might also want to pay attention to any connection between your baby's mood and particular foods. Some parents find that while sugar can give their child an energy boost, it can also lead to fussiness. Food allergies and sensitivities may also

**HAPPY CHILD** continued on page 7

## PRAYER CORNER

***Mother Teresa's United Nations Prayer***

*“Heavenly Father, you have given us a model of life in the Holy Family of Nazareth. Help us, oh loving Father, to make our family another Nazareth, where love, peace and joy reign. May it be deeply contemplative, intensely Eucharistic and vibrant with joy. Help us to stay together in joy and sorrow through family prayer. Teach us to see Jesus in the members of our family, especially in their distressing disguise. May the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus make our hearts meek and humble like His and help us to carry out our family duties in a holy way. May we love one another as God loves each one of us, more and more each day, and forgive each other's faults as You forgive our sins. Help us, oh loving Father, to take whatever You give and to give whatever You take with a big smile. Immaculate Heart of Mary, cause of our joy, pray for us. St. Joseph, pray for us. Holy Guardian Angels, be always with us, guide and protect us. Amen.”*

— Mother Teresa

Composed for the United Nations  
International Year of the Family

## ROAD SAFETY

**Drivers' Ten Commandments**

A couple of years ago, The Vatican issued a set of commandments for drivers within a document titled “Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of the Road.” Driving, it says, can be “an occasion of sin” because it can encourage rage and immoral behavior, including speeding, reckless driving, cursing and rudeness! The document said drivers need to remember that even when there is no one sitting next to them, they are never alone. Driving is “a way of relating to others” and it brings forward people’s capacities of “coexisting and integrating within a community.” These thoughts suggest specific preferable qualities in a driver, namely self-mastery, prudence, courtesy, spirit of service and knowledge of the highway code, including sympathy toward people and families affected by road accidents.

- I. You shall not kill.
- II. The road shall be for you a means of communion between people, and not of mortal harm.
- III. Courtesy, uprightness and prudence will help you deal with unforeseen events.
- IV. Be charitable and help your neighbor in need, especially victims of accidents.
- V. Cars shall not be for you an expression of power and domination and an occasion of sin.
- VI. Charitably convince the young and not so young not to drive when they are not in a fitting condition to do so.
- VII. Support the families of accident victims.
- VIII. Bring guilty motorists and their victims together at the appropriate time so that they can undergo the liberating experience of forgiveness.
- IX. On the road, protect the more vulnerable party.
- X. Feel responsible toward others.

Source: Catholic News Services, catholicnews.com

## NUTRITION

# Become More Radiant by Shopping for the Right Food

Like any of your body's organs, your skin needs a proper nutritious diet to remain vibrant and healthy. A few basic changes in your diet will help reflect a healthier and more radiant you!

Following are six easy-to-follow steps that will keep your skin looking it's best.

## Hydrate Yourself!

An essential component in the function of all your body cells and organs, water promotes healthy skin by moving nutrients in and removing waste out of cells.

## Eat Nature's Gifts: Fruits and Vegetables

Fruits and vegetables are rich in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants which, in return, carry plentiful benefits for the skin. Vitamins A, C and B complex abundant in these foods, help by reducing the damage induced by external factors on your skin.

## Consume the Good Fat

Omega-3 and Omega-6 won the title of "good fats" for a reason. These essential fatty acids (EFA) have a number of positive effects on the body. Besides regulating hormones

that have a direct link to overall skin health, these fatty acids also aid in nourishing the skin as well as the hair follicles. EFAs also help in lubricating the skin, thus making it look better overall.

## Eliminate Your Skin's Worst Enemies from Your Diet

Sugar! We are all familiar with the effect sugar has on our weight and teeth. However, the danger of excessive sugar intake is broader than just that. Studies show that consumption of sugar-rich foods is associated with increased skin wrinkling. The change in skin collagen is a result of excessive simple sugar consumption.

## Add More Antioxidants to Your Diet

Go deeper in color when you choose your fruits and vegetables. For example, choose berries, plums, red, green and yellow peppers, red cabbage and parsley. The common link between these foods is their high antioxidant content. Antioxidants work in the body as a defending and healing component against various negative elements.



*Fruits and vegetables are rich in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants.*

## Exercise, Exercise, Exercise!

Exercise doesn't just enhance your overall physique, it helps your skin, too. When you exercise, your vessels dilate allowing more oxygen and nutrients to flow to your organs and cells, nourishing them with needed water and nutrients. Exercise also helps by increasing skin perspiration and opening sweat pores to release more toxins.

*Source: Lana Zailaa L.D. - Holford, P. (2001). Solve Your Skin Problems. Piatkus Books.*

## Will You Further NCF's Work?

If you like the work NCF is doing and wish to participate, we invite you to become a member of our Board. The goal is to share our inspiration and activities in your country. Please contact us for more information.

[info@najicherfanfoundation.org](mailto:info@najicherfanfoundation.org)

## Quoteable!

Words, which do not give the light of Christ, increase the darkness.

– Mother Teresa





## ALLOW THEM TO BE SAD OR MAD

Experts say you shouldn't overreact to your child's negative feelings. "It's normal for kids to become oversensitive or clingy or nervous at times. This is not unhappiness."

You'll find this is especially important as your child grows. When your child pouts in a corner during a birthday party, your natural reaction may be to push her to join in the fun. But it's important to allow her to be unhappy. Children need to know that it's okay to be unhappy sometimes; it's simply part of life. And if we try to squelch any unhappiness, we may be sending the message that it's wrong to feel sad.

## BE A ROLE MODEL

According to Dora Wang, assistant professor of psychiatry at the University of New Mexico School of Medicine and mother of 3-year-old Zoe, research shows that you can pass on your temperament to your children through your own behavior. Children pick up on their parents' moods. In simple words, **PRAY** continued from page 2

when you smile, your baby smiles and his brain becomes "wired" for smiling. Similarly, if you have a colicky baby who cries for hours, the best thing you can do is to stay calm, because babies pick up on their caregivers' stress.

## TEACH THEM TO DO MEANINGFUL THINGS

Research shows that people who have meaning in their lives feel less depressed. As your baby matures, she can be taught that helping others is satisfying. As early as 10 months of age, you can teach your child the satisfaction of give and take. If you give her a bite of a banana, let her do the same by feeding you a piece. Show her how happy her gesture of generosity made you feel. If you brush her hair, give her a chance to brush yours. These small moments can nourish a sensibility toward sharing and caring for others. As your baby grows into a toddler, simple household chores, such as putting her dirty clothes in the hamper or setting the table, can help a young child feel that she's making a contribution.

Source: Jill Storey, [babycenter.com](http://babycenter.com)

## HAPPY CHILD continued from page 4

play a role in your child's behavior and mood. If you're nursing, you may find that your baby becomes fussy after you eat certain foods.

## LET THEM STRUGGLE WITH PROBLEMS

In the first six months of a baby's life, it's important for parents to respond to their infant's needs. "You can't spoil a baby," says Masia-Warner. But after about six months, if you run over at every little hiccup, you're taking away an important learning opportunity. Masia-Warner says it's good to let babies cry a little, as long as you're giving them lots of positive affection and attention the rest of the time.

Parents always try to make it better and make their children happy all the time. That is not realistic. Children need to learn to tolerate some distress. Let them struggle and figure out things on their own. It allows them to learn how to cope.

In your baby's first year, he's learning so many things: to sit up, crawl, grasp objects, walk and talk. Each accomplishment brings confidence and satisfaction in achievement. So, don't hurry to pick up the rattle he just dropped or the teddy bear he's struggling to reach. Allowing children a range of experiences, even the difficult or frustrating ones, helps build the reservoir of inner strength that leads to happiness.



## HOW I REMEMBER NAJI...

Dearest Naji was the life of the party. Every time we met in the house for a celebration, Naji was the center of attention. He left his mark on everyone we introduced him to.

As you all know, Naji was obsessed with his beautiful face. One day he saw a small pimple on his forehead. He panicked and called my nephew, a dermatologist, for an appointment. The doctor asked him what the appointment was for and he said, "I'm breaking up, you have to see me ASAP!" When my nephew saw Naji's

emergency, he cracked up laughing and said to him, "I had to squeeze you in for this?"

That was Naji. Always unpredictable yet always convincing. No one could say "no" to him. When Naji found out that our deacon and his wife were from Jordan, he approached them and said, "I was born there." Then he added, "I'm craving Mansaf." Within a few days, we were feasting on lamb shanks, rice and yogurt sauce.

When Naji used to meet young people at our house, he always gave them advice saying things like, "Life is short. Cherish every minute. Follow your dreams. Achieve your goals. Don't be a quitter."

One day, Naji called me and asked what "Qadishat Aloho" meant. I told him that it means "Holy God, Holy Almighty". I chanted the piece for him on the phone, and he learned it and chanted it often. For some reason, he loved it so much.

My husband and I had a great time with Naji when he showed up at our doorstep in a yellow sports car just three months before he fell asleep with the Lord. That time, he insisted I go with him 'someplace'. That Sunday after church, I kept asking him "Where are we going?" And he simply spoke his famous phrase: "Patience, Khouryee. Patience is a virtue. All in good time." We stopped in front of Barnes & Noble. He asked me to stay in the car. When he

emerged carrying a bag, he looked at me and said, "I'm worried about Abouna's health. I want him to lose some weight, so I got him the South Beach diet cook book." When my husband read that he would be required to skip fruits for one month, he told Naji that this was a big sacrifice that he was not willing to make, even for him. Naji doesn't take "no" for an answer. He begged him to at least try. We cooked a few recipes from the book. And rest assured, my dearest boy, your mission is almost accomplished.

*One day, Naji called me and asked what "Qadishat Aloho" meant. I told him that it means "Holy God, Holy Almighty".*

Last May, Sana took us to visit Naji's resting place. We chanted for him "Qadishat Aloho." We felt his strong presence with us.

"Najnouj" you will never be forgotten. You are still in our hearts and minds. Not one day goes by without thinking about you. Enjoy your heavenly spot. I bid you farewell until we meet again.

I remain your best cook, friend and second Mom.

*Yours in Christ,  
Khouryee Odette Shalhoub  
West Palm Beach, FL.*

## People Are Born To Shine!

*People are Born To Shine* is a bi-monthly, electronic newsletter owned by The Naji Cherfan Foundation focusing on spirituality and health. The objective of *People are Born to Shine* is to raise awareness among our readers on health challenges and disease prevention, while inspiring them to live a fuller, more abundant life guided by Christian values. This newsletter is dedicated to those affected by brain injuries.

The content has been carefully selected from sources considered reliable and accurate, however The Naji Cherfan Foundation assumes no responsibility for inaccurate information.

For subscriptions, comments, contributions and suggestions please contact us: [info@najicherfanfoundation.org](mailto:info@najicherfanfoundation.org)

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