



Book 1

Tommy the Dreamer!



By Linda Unugboke

***Thanks be to God,
The Giver of every good and perfect gift.***

For S.A.C.H., with all my love.

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Chapter 1

About Tomy



Tomy lived in a cosy, comfortable cottage called ‘Caritas’ with his mum, dad, and three younger siblings. Tomy had just celebrated his seventh birthday, while his younger sister Candy was three years old and the twins, Joey and Josie, were just coming up to their first birthday.

Needless to say, Tomy’s mum had her hands full all day with cooking, cleaning, tidying and everything else! However, Tomy had earned a remarkable nickname from his mum as ‘her little helper’. Tomy was great at helping out whenever and wherever he could. He helped his mum take out the clothes from the laundry as she hung them on the washing line.



He cleared the dishes after meals and properly stacked them up in the sink.

He even helped his mum cuddle the twins while she was busy getting their bottles together.

Tomy was a star indeed and his mum, dad, and siblings loved him dearly!

“One day,” said his sister Candy to him, “I’ll grow up to be nice and helpful just like you. You’re my star, Tomy!”

Tomy was pleased and replied, “I wish I could do more things, you know. I want to be great—as great as a superhero!”

Candy giggled, “Tomy, that’s so silly.”

Tomy smiled as he thought of having special powers and being able to do things extraordinarily.

While the conversation between Tomy and Candy was going on, Dad came out onto the back garden where they were playing. “Come on, kids. Dinner is ready. It’s time to wash up and eat.”

“Hooray!” shouted Tomy.

“Hooray!” shouted Candy.

“What’s for dinner?” Tomy asked.

“Well, Tomy, you’ll just have to wait and see what your Mum’s prepared,” replied Dad. “It’s a surprise!”

“Oooh, I love surprises,” said Tomy.

“I love surprises too,” Candy echoed as she and Tomy walked into the kitchen to wash up.

Mum was at the table when the two kids scurried with Dad into the dining room—all were happy and excited.

“What’s the giggling about?” asked Mum.

“Well, Dad said you’ve made us a surprise dinner, and we can’t wait to eat it,” Tomy replied.

Mum looked up at Dad in amazement, and he smiled and winked back at her, trying to hide a chuckle.

“Okay, then, everyone sit down and let’s open up the surprise dinner,” said Mum smiling.

“Great!” shouted Candy.

Tomy had hardly sat down when he hurried to the largest dish and quickly opened it. “Oh, my favourite!” he squealed. “It’s roast chicken!”

Mum opened the rest of the dishes which had roasted potatoes, steamed broccoli and carrots and a lovely apple pie for dessert.

“Yummy, yummy, scrumptious!” said Dad.

Everyone laughed as they passed their plates round to Mum, who served out the meal.

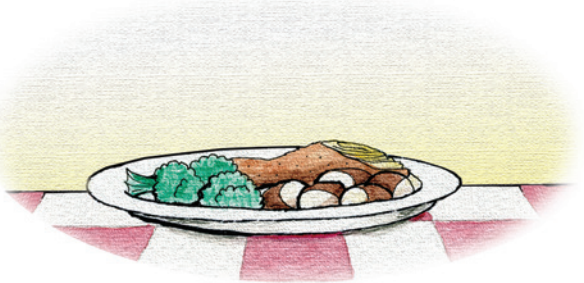
Dad said the grace before the meal, and everyone tucked in to the nice, lovely dinner.

“Gravy anyone?” asked Mum.

“Oh, yes, please,” said both Tomy and Candy. “None for me, thanks,” said Dad.

“Daddy, guess what Tomy said today?” Candy broke the silence at the family meal as she recalled her conversation with Tomy at the back garden.

“What?” Dad asked.



"Tomy said he wants to have super powers like a superhero!"

"Now that's interesting," remarked Dad. "So, Tomy, why do you want to have super powers?"

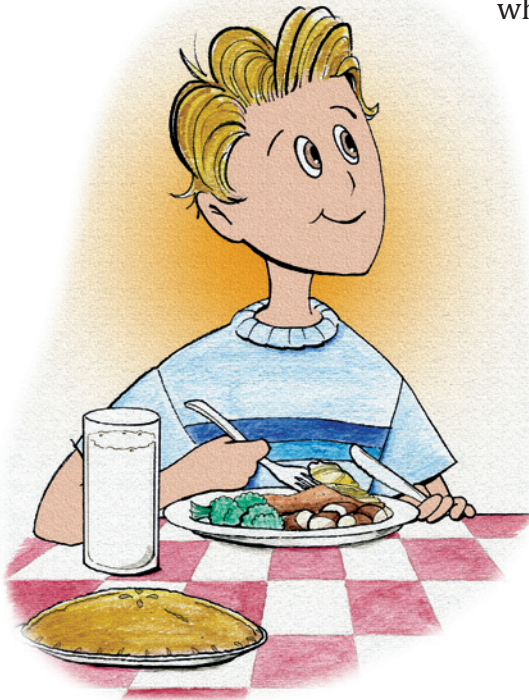
"Well, Dad, I want to be able to do great things and to help others in great ways. Mum always calls me her little helper, but I also want to be known as 'Tomy, the great helper,'" Tomy said triumphantly. "But..." he suddenly grew droopy, "...I don't know how superheroes get their extraordinary powers."

"Well, Tomy," Dad smiled at him, "I'm quite sure you are no ordinary boy and that you have greatness in you; you just need to find it."

"Is it hidden then?" asked Candy.

"Not really," laughed Dad. He went on to explain, "You see, to have great powers means that you have to be able to use your powers wisely.

Now Tomy intends to do this by helping people, but he also needs to prove that he would do just as he says when he gets the powers so that they would not be wasted."



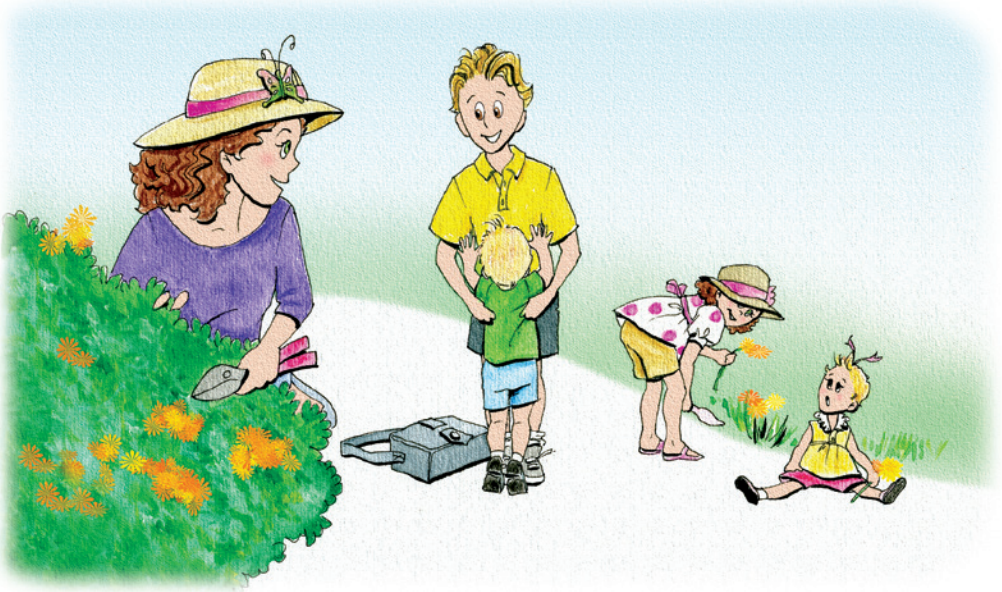
"Oh, I would! I would! I promise!"
said Tomy.

Mum, who had been quiet all this while as she listened to the conversation said, "That's great, Tomy. I'm sure you will find your extraordinary powers and use them very wisely in helping others. That way, you will become my little great helper!"

"Ha, ha, that's so funny, Mum,"
Tomy laughed as he settled down to finish his dinner.

Chapter 2

Night Time



Josie and Joey were playing out in the garden with Candy and Mum. Tomy had just gotten back from school and scampered out into the garden to join in the play. Joey loved his big brother, Tomy, and he ran to give him a cuddle and a kiss.

“Hi, Joey.” Tomy bent down to pick him up.

“Careful now,” said Mum to Tomy as he stumbled slightly. “How was school today?”

“School was great, Mum, I learned about animals, especially the lion, who is the king of the jungle.”

“Really? Animals have kings too?” Candy asked with her eyes wide open.

“Oh, yes,” said Tomy as he gave his little brother Joey a kiss.

Just then, Dad popped his head out of the window and called, “Tomy, it’s time for you to change your clothes and get some lunch.”

“Okay, coming, Dad.” Tomy ran back into the house.

Later that evening, Tomy was outside in the garden, playing by himself.

Caritas (Tomy's home) had a large garden with plenty of adventure paths. Tomy loved to wander all around the garden—especially during the day. But when it started to get dark, he would wonder at all the strange noises that seemed to creep out of the garden, from the trees and nearby rooftops.

This particular evening, as the sun started to go down and the dark skies came over the garden, Tomy became really frightened by all the noises he heard around him. He ran to his dad.

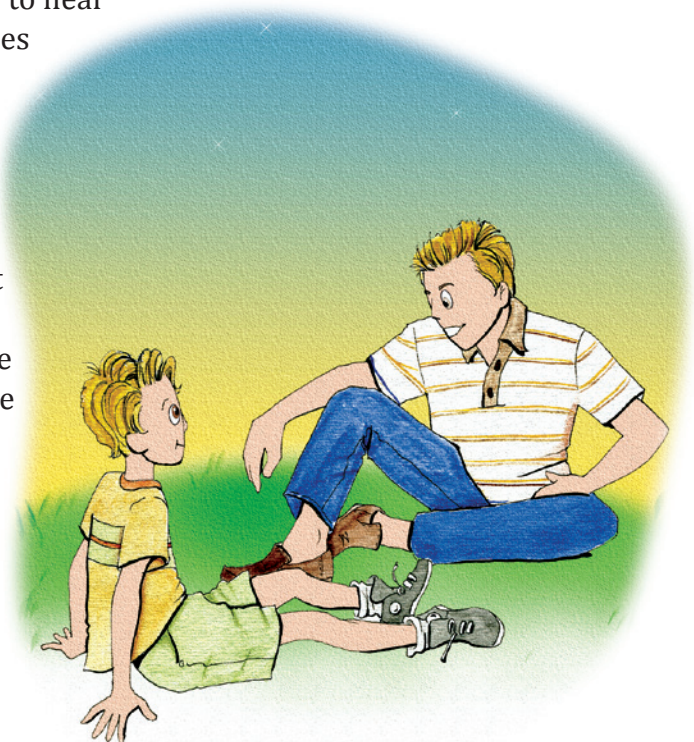
"Dad, why do we hear strange noises at night time?"

"It's because the night time is when some animals and insects come out to look for food and play, and that's why you hear those noises. Also," his dad continued, "during the day, there is so much noise going on around us from the cars and the movement of people. But at night, most people go indoors, and there is much less noise.

This gives us a chance to hear the bristling of the trees against the wind, the chirping of crickets, and all other noises from nature."

"Hmmm... so if the noise we hear at night is from nature, then there's no reason to be afraid of the night time then, is there?" asked Tomy.

"No reason whatsoever," replied his dad, as he shook his head and wagged his finger.



As Mum was tucking Tomy into bed that night, he remembered what his dad had told him about the noises from nature at night.

“Mum, Dad told me that night time is when we have the chance to hear nature’s noises as everything else is very quiet at night.”

“Yes Tomy, the night is day’s way of going to sleep—the same way we also go to sleep after a long day—so there’s no reason to be afraid of the night.

Besides,” continued Mum, “if you wish to be great with extraordinary powers, you have to be brave.”

“That’s true Mum,” said Tomy. “How I wish I could discover quickly the kind of powers I have. I’ll use them generously, I promise.”

Mum smiled. “Then, Tomy, what you can do is say a prayer first to be very brave and then ask for help so that you can discover your extraordinary powers.”

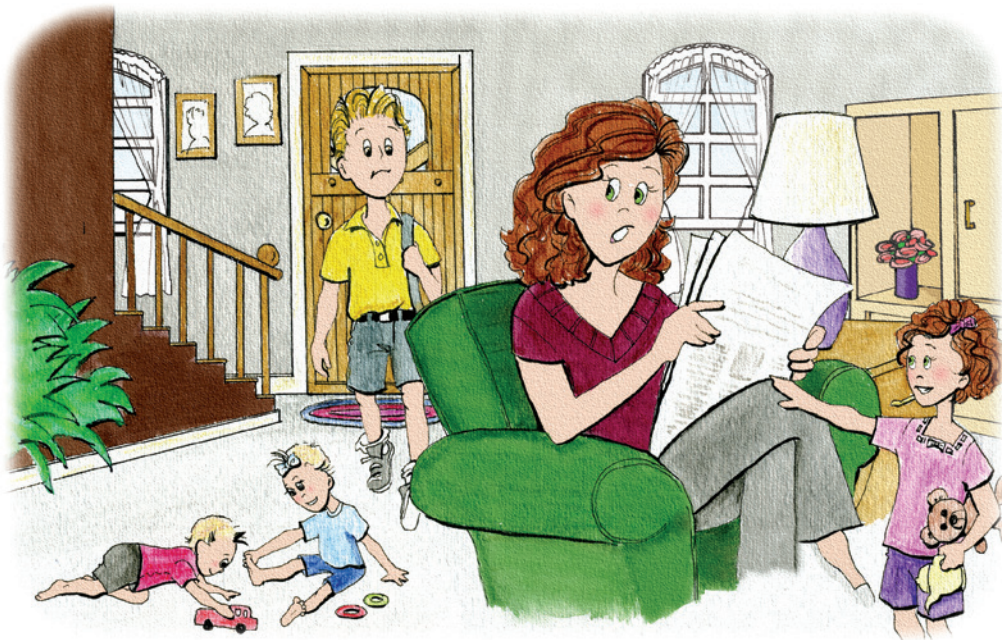
“Okay, Mum, I will. Good night.”

“Good night, darling. I love you,” whispered Mum as she kissed his cheek and quietly walked out of the room.



Chapter 3

Sandy: Tomy's Friend



The following day, Tomy came home from school looking sad.

“What’s the matter, Tomy?” asked Mum.

“Sandy was not in school today. His mum called the teacher and told her that Sandy is in the hospital with severe tonsillitis.”

“What’s tonsilaaatees?” asks Candy.

“Tonsill-i-tis,” Mum emphasised the pronunciation, “is when a special organ in the mouth and throat area called the tonsils get swollen and become sore.”

“The head teacher said that Sandy may stay in the hospital for a while because his tonsils could be taken out,” continued Tomy.

“That sounds quite bad,” replied Mum. “Tell you what, why don’t you change your uniform and have some lunch, then we can give Sandy’s mum a call to find out how he’s doing, okay?”

“Okay, Mum,” said Tomy, still feeling sad as he walked up the stairs to his room.

After lunch, Tomy's mum gave Sandy's mum a call and Tomy spoke to her to find out how his friend was doing.

"He's still in bed with a temperature, but he hopes he can be back in school soon, as he misses playing with you and his other friends."

"Tell him that I wish he gets well soon," Tomy whispered.

"I will, Tomy, thanks so much for your concern," Sandy's mum replied.

A few minutes later, Dad walked into the living room, back from work.

"Hello, kids! Hi, Darling! Hope you all had a lovely day."

"Daddy, welcome home!" Candy was the first to jump on Dad as Tomy sulked but walked up to him.

"Hey, Tomy, why aren't you your usual bubbly, happy self?"

"Tomy's sad because Sandy was not in school today. He's ill in the hospital with tonsillitis, and his mum says that he might be in the hospital for a while as his tonsils may have to be taken out," explained Mum.

"That does not sound good," Dad responded, looking a bit worried.

After Dad ate, he went up to Tomy's room where he found him alone.

"Hi, Tomy, do you wish to go and pay Sandy a visit in the hospital?"

"Really?" Tomy's face lit up with excitement. "That would be great, Dad!"

"Okay, then let's go," Dad walked toward the door and beckoned to Tomy.

When Tomy and Dad arrived at the hospital, they found Sandy with his mum in one of the rooms in the children's ward. Dad tapped on the door to alert Sandy's mum before they walked into the room.

"Oh, my goodness!" whispered Sandy's mum. "What a pleasant surprise to see you!" She smiled at Tomy and his dad as they walked to the bedside. Sandy was taking a rest and had his eyes closed, so he didn't realise when Tomy walked into the room.



"Sandy, guess who's here to see you," his mum whispered. Sandy opened his eyes, and to his surprise, he saw Tomy.

"Tomy, am I glad to see you! I've been so bored! My mum's been trying to keep me entertained, but I want to be out with my friends,"

Sandy whispered slowly. The swollen tonsils made it hard for him to speak.

"Here you go, Sandy." Tomy handed Sandy a remote controlled robot, which he and his dad had picked from one of the shops in the hospital.

"This is great! Thanks, Tomy. Thanks, Tomy's dad."

Just then, Sandy's dad entered the room. He brought some fresh clothes for Sandy and his mum, who was spending the night with Sandy.

"Hello, Tomy, great to see you."

"Good afternoon, nice to see you too," Tomy replied as he shook hands with Sandy's dad.

Sandy's mum gave Tomy and his dad an update about Sandy's situation. She explained that the doctor had assessed Sandy and said that he may be in the hospital for a couple of days and out of school for up to a week.

Tomy and his dad stayed for a while longer to keep Sandy company. The doctor walked into the room to examine Sandy, and Dad beckoned to Tomy that it was time to leave.

"We have to start heading home," he said.

"It's been great to have you visit," echoed Sandy and his parents.

"I'm sorry to interrupt your visit. Oh, that's a cool robot, Sandy. I bet it can give me a good chase round the room," joked Dr. Beasle.

"Don't worry. I won't be long. I'll just do a few tests, and in a day or two, we'll get the results back, okay?"

"Sure, Doctor," Sandy smiled. He liked Dr.

Beasle a lot.

"Get well soon,"

Tomy and his dad both said to Sandy as they stood up to leave.

"I hope Sandy will be okay. I don't like to see him in the hospital," Tomy said to his dad as they left the room.



At night, Mum tucked Tomy into bed. "Tomy, do you know how you can help Sandy to get better?"

"How, Mum?"

Mum had Tomy's attention now as he sat up excitedly.

"Well, you have special powers that when you ask for things, they are given to you. You just have to ask in prayer."

"Oh, yes! I need to say a prayer for Sandy. I will, I promise," Tomy replied.

After Mum left the room, Tomy got on his knees beside his bed.

"Dear God, please make my friend Sandy well again, in Jesus Name, Amen."

The following day after school, Mum had great news for Tomy.

"Sandy's feeling much better; his mum called and said that the swelling in his tonsils has gone down. He no longer has a temperature, and the doctor is going to release him from the hospital soon."

"Hooray!" cheered Tomy. "I'm glad that my request was granted."

"So you said a prayer for Sandy, then?"

"Yes, I did, Mum!"

"Good job, Son," Mum said.

Two days later, Tomy returned home from school. He yelled out to his mum, who was in the kitchen, "Mum, guess who's back in school today!"

"Who?"

"Sandy!" replied Tomy with a big grin.



Chapter 4

First Camping Trip



When everyone was done eating, Mum uncovered two secret boxes. Tomy was set to go on a weekend camping trip with his friends from school. It was a trip for the schools' scouts, and Tomy was a member of the scouts' team. The scouts' masters, Mr. Bower and Mr. Neil, were taking the boys to camp outside town in a nature reserve area.

Tomy was very excited, and on the morning of the trip, as he packed his backpack, he looked through a checklist with his dad to make sure he had all he needed. His little sister Candy was excited too, and she also wanted to go camping with Tomy.

"Why can't I go camping with Tomy, Daddy?" asked Candy, her eyes downcast.

"Maybe when you are older like Tomy, then you can go camping with your friends," explained Dad.

Candy grimaced and squashed Tomy's clothes into his bag. "That's not fair!" she complained.



“Hey, don’t squash my clothes,” Tomy retorted back angrily at his sister.

Dad chuckled. “You don’t look too pretty with a face like that, Candy. Tell you what, if you stop sulking and help to pack Tomy’s things nicely, then I will take you to the ice-cream parlour once we drop Tomy off.”

“Yummy, ice-cream!” squealed Candy as she jumped onto Tomy’s bed and handed him his socks.

With the packing done, Tomy came downstairs to give Mum a kiss. She handed him a packed lunch that she had freshly prepared for him.

“Tomy, I hope you have a great time camping and learn a lot about nature while you’re out there. Remember to be on your best behaviour, and I’m gonna miss you so much,” Mum said as she bent down and gave him a big, warm hug.

“I will, Mum,” Tomy replied excitedly and kissed her goodbye.

“Okay, darling, see you soon and love you. God bless... mwaaaaah!” Mum blew kisses to Tomy

The school bus was already waiting when Tomy arrived at school.

He waved goodbye to Candy and Dad, and as he climbed onto the bus, he spotted Sandy.

“Hi, Sandy!”

“Hello, Tomy! Are you excited about the trip?”

“You bet I am,” Tomy replied as he settled in on the seat next to Sandy.

Meanwhile, Candy and Dad had arrived at the ice-cream parlour.

“I’ll have four flavours, please,” Candy said as she made her choice of ice-cream, “strawberry, mint, chocolate, and um... vanilla.”

Back at the school, all the boys and the scout masters were on board the bus. The driver started the engine and drove off.

Mr. Neil got up and welcomed the boys.

“Welcome to your first camping trip, boys. Mr. Bower and I can assure you that you’re going to have your most exciting experience as yet.

First before anything else, we need to pray and ask for God’s guidance and protection.”

After the prayer, Mr. Neil started chanting a tune.

“We’re going on a camping trip... we’re going on a camping trip... ho, la, la, la, laaaaa. We’re going on a camping trip... we’re going on a camping trip... to catch a fish to eat!”

Tomy and Sandy laughed at the last line of the song. Sandy piped along with the tune of the song, and Tomy joined in too, laughing loudly every time Sandy went off tune.

The bus drove through the countryside and the children saw vast farmlands with cattle and sheep grazing in the fields.

After about an hour’s ride, they arrived at the camping spot, and everyone hopped off the bus.

Tomy looked around and was amazed to see so many trees and bushes. He began to wonder where on earth they were and how they were going to camp in such a place. Mr. Bower seemed to read Tomy’s thoughts as he interrupted them.

“Don’t worry, Tomy. You’re all in safe hands. You see, over there is a trail, and if we follow the path, we would eventually get to an open field where we can set up camp and build our tents.”

“Oh, that’s good,” said Tomy, somewhat relieved to hear they didn’t have to wander through the scary-looking forest.



Mr. Bower led the way through the trail, the boys following closely behind, and Mr. Neil was at the tail end of the line. All the while, they kept on singing their camping song that they had been taught on the bus. In a short while, the trail burst out to a vast open field in an area surrounded by trees on the borders but mostly covered in grass and having a few scattered trees here and there in the middle.

Tomy took off his backpack as did the other boys, and Mr. Bower showed them the spot where they would pitch their tents for the night. Soon, everyone had their hands full trying to set up tents.

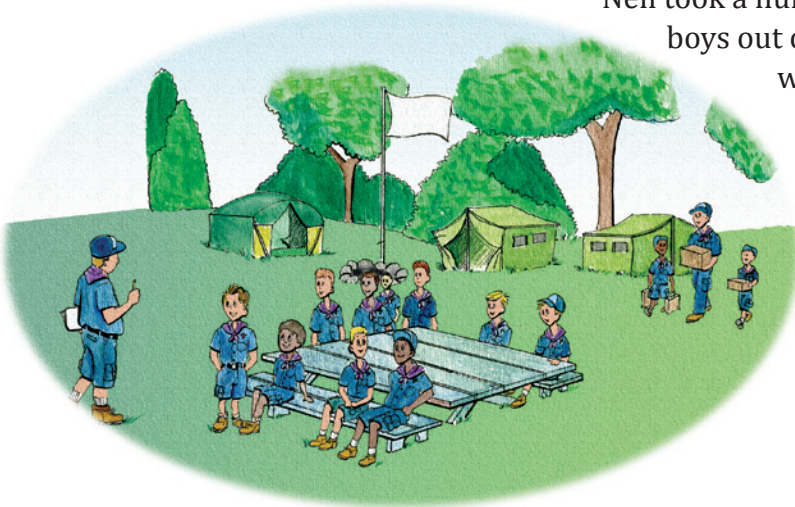
“Boy, this is hard work,” Tomy muttered under his breath as he struggled to get a grip of the tent ropes.

The other boys were also struggling to peg the ropes of their tents. They stumbled over each other in the process and ended up in fits of laughter.

After what seemed like ages—though in reality it was not even an hour since they had started to raise the tents—all the tents were up and sturdy, and the boys chose their sleeping tents. There were twelve boys on the trip with Mr. Bower and Mr. Neil. They had five tents set up, so the boys had to share tents.

With the tent picking done, everyone unpacked their sleeping bags and got ready for the night. After that, they had a short break where Mr.

Neil took a number of curious boys out on a short walk while Mr. Bower watched over the other team who remained in the camp.





Later that evening, as they prepared for dinner, Tomy and Sandy volunteered to assist Mr. Bower find some wood to light a fire.

As they passed through the forest, Tomy was very aware of strange noises. “What’s that sound?” asked Tomy nervously.

“I don’t know. It sounds like a fox,” Sandy replied, equally nervous.

“That’s not a fox, boys. You need to listen again,” interjected Mr. Bower, who was listening in to their conversation.

“What does it sound like? Perhaps we can move a little bit closer to where the noise is coming from... but we need to be very quiet.”

Tomy wasn’t keen on getting closer, but he had to be brave, so he swallowed his fear and walked on. The noise seemed to be coming from a tree in the distance where Mr. Bower had pointed.

“Do foxes climb trees?” Sandy asked, a bit perplexed. Mr. Bower smiled, “We’ll find out about that.”

“Oh, I’ve spotted what’s making that noise! It’s an owl,” Tomy whispered.

“Now what kind of owl is it—any ideas boys?” Mr Bower asked. “It’s got grey and reddish brown feathers.”

“It’s a screech owl,” Tomy whispered, finding it hard to hold back his excitement.

“Great job, Tomy! You’ve earned a badge for animal spotting,” Mr. Bower responded in excitement. “Now we need to get back to the camp. The boys should be hungry by now.”

After they returned with the wood, Mr. Neil lit a fire. He picked up two rocks, rubbed them together, and a spark came up, igniting the wood. The boys were amazed by this, as they thought it was some kind of trick. Each one tried to have a go, and they laughed at their failed attempts. Finally, the food was brought out, and the boys had dinner around the fire.

As the sun was setting, Tomy, Sandy, and Mr. Bower narrated their experience spotting the owl. “Here’s your first badge, Tomy,” Mr. Bower handed Tomy an animal ranger badge.

“Wow, I want one too,” whispered one of the boys.

“And me too,” echoed the rest of the camp.

“Sure, you can have one, but you have to earn it,” Mr Bower replied, smiling.

“What do you want to take back with you from this trip, boys?” Mr. Neil asked. “Let’s begin with Tomy, since he’s earned a badge first.”

Tomy said he wished that through this trip, he would learn more about nature and how to appreciate the beauty of nature. He also wanted to develop more discipline through the daily routine of camping. Sandy just wanted to have fun and learn more stories from the scouts masters. The other boys all had different interests and wishes.

At the end of their conversation, Mr. Bower smiled at them and said, “I hope myself and Mr. Neil can take you on expeditions that can satisfy your curiosity and make you all feel great at the end of these three days.”

Three days later, Tomy came home. He’d had a wonderful time camping in the woods, but he was really glad to be home, too. He proudly showed off his badges that he earned on the camping trip.



“This is a very special one to me, Dad,” Tomy said, proudly holding up a unique badge. “It’s called the ‘brave survivor badge’ because I earned it for getting to know more about animals and general survival tactics in the forests.”

“We’re all very proud of you, son,” Dad replied, stroking Tomy’s hair.

Most of all, Tomy was really proud of the fact that he could confidently say to his dad and mum that he was no longer afraid of the dark and the sounds of nature.

“They are all part of the beauty of creation,” said Tomy as he smiled and then winked at Mum.

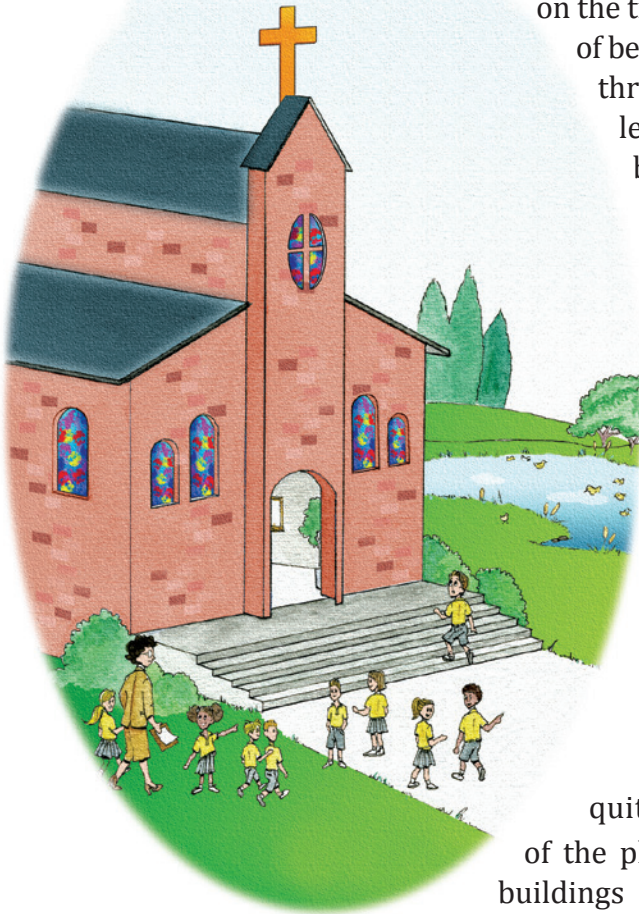
Chapter 5

Tomy Experiences God

Tomy's school had planned a special trip as part of their religious education class. The kids were going on a day's pilgrimage to a monastery where a famous saint who performed great miracles once lived.

Tomy was very excited to be going on the trip because he had dreams of being great. He hoped that through this visit he could

learn one or two secrets to becoming great. However, not everyone in school was as excited as Tomy about the trip. So Tomy made up his mind to enjoy the trip regardless of how his friends felt. His plan was to visit and pray in the special places where traces of wonders that occurred during the lifetime of the saint could be seen.



When they arrived at the monastery, everyone was quite surprised at the beauty of the place. It had ancient stone buildings restored from the 18th century. Within the outside grounds, there was a duck pond, a garden, and lots of recreational space for outdoor games. Everyone was delighted, and the kids got excited.

Tomy stuck to his plan. His first stop was a small cave where the first miracle performed by this saint was recorded. Tomy spent some time in prayer with the other kids, and then moved on to the other special places to pray. He was used to spending time in prayer, since his family went to church on Sundays. Sometimes Mum even took him to church when it wasn't Sunday, and together they spent some quiet prayer time together.

It was time for lunch, and the school group gathered together in the garden for a picnic. It was such a beautiful day.

After lunch, the boys began to kick a ball about in the field near the duck pond. There was a small chapel there, and Tomy was curious to have a look. So he climbed up the stairs and peeped inside. A red oil lamp was burning at the front.

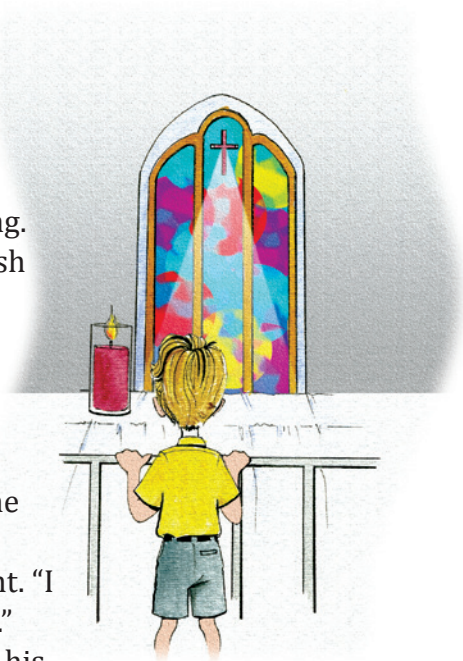
Tomy started to feel a very peaceful and warm presence around him. So he decided to spend a bit more time there, and he walked straight to the front of the chapel where the red oil lamp was burning.

As he stared intently at the light, he suddenly felt the presence of someone next to him. In fright, he turned to look around him and saw nothing. Just as he decided to leave and meet up with the rest of the school team, Tomy heard himself singing. He immediately experienced a great rush of joy within him. He had never felt this way before and it was such a beautiful feeling. He stayed for a while longer, still singing; he started to feel drowsy, so he laid down on the floor.

Tomy could hear people singing in the distance.

"Oh, what beautiful tunes," he thought. "I need to see where they're coming from."

"Tomy... Tomy..." someone whispered his name, interrupting the sound of singing. There was a tap on his shoulder.



He opened his eyes to see the head teacher crouching beside him.

"Tomy, we've been looking for you everywhere. Nearly two hours have passed since we last saw you with the group." She spoke with a noticeable sigh of relief.

Tomy suddenly realised that he had fallen fast asleep on the floor of the chapel. "Oh, I'm so sorry, Mrs. Trebel. I just came here to pray. I guess I must have fallen asleep. I didn't mean to make everyone worried about me."

"That's fine, Tomy," Mrs. Trebel smiled. "I'm just glad we found you. In fact, I came here to pray that the Lord would help us find you soon."

"Then your prayers were answered," Tomy said, smiling.

"Yes, indeed," responded Mrs. Trebel as she took Tomy by the hand outside the door of the chapel.

When Tomy got back home from school that day, he told Mum all that had happened at the school trip.

"My trip to the monastery was absolutely great! The buildings are so grand; they even had a duck pond and a chapel. I went into the chapel to pray," Tomy continued.

"I'm not really sure what happened, but I found myself singing. Then, I fell asleep on the floor. I even felt as though someone came and stood next to me, but I couldn't see anyone else when I looked around," Tomy continued his story with a puzzled look on his face.

Mum smiled at him tenderly.

"Tomy, you have just experienced the real presence of God as you prayed in the chapel," she said.

Tomy was amazed and delighted at Mum's words. "Really, Mum? Have I?" he asked in wonder.

"Yes, Tomy, you have," she answered him with a warm smile.



Chapter 6

Love for Chocolate

“Mummy, Muuuumyyy!!!”

Candy was yelling for Mum at the top of her voice.

“Oh dear, what’s the matter now,” sighed Mum as she got up to see what the yelling was about.

“Mummy, tell Tomy to give me the bar of chocolate,” sulked Candy.

“No, I won’t,” retorted Tomy. “It’s mine. I had it first.”

“But it’s the last bar, and I want it too,” said Candy as she grimaced with a pout.

“Now both of you have to learn to share without disturbing the peace,” remarked Mum, who was quite annoyed.

“Tomy doesn’t want to share, Mum.”

“Yes, I don’t as it’s all mine. You had all the others, and this last one is mine.”

“Oooh, Tomy, you’re so selfish!” screamed Candy.

“No, you’re naughty and spoiled, Candy,” replied Tomy angrily.

“Would both of you stop calling each other names right now?” scolded Mum.

“But he started it, Mummy,” said Candy as she started to cry.

Just then, Josie crawled into the room crying. She had heard all the yelling between Candy and Tomy, and it made her upset. Mum gently picked Josie up and then walked to Tomy and held out her hand. “Now give me that bar of chocolate.”



Tomy handed the chocolate bar to Mum, and she immediately walked to the trash can and threw it away. She looked at Tomy and Candy, quite cross, and said, "Now nobody gets to have it, since you both don't want to be reasonable. Also, as you've both been calling each other names and have been disrespectful to each other and me as well, you're both going to spend time in your rooms and remain there until your dad gets back from work."



"Oh, no, Mummy, please! I want to play with my dolls... please!" stuttered Candy.

"No dolls until after dinner. Now go up to your rooms immediately, the both of you," replied Mum.

Candy began to sob as she walked up the stairs.

Tomy too had tears in his eyes—partly because he had lost his chocolate bar but also because his mum seemed so cross with him, which she hardly ever was.

"I'm sorry, Mum," he mumbled as he walked past her with his head hanging down.

It seemed to take forever before dinner came. Tomy finally fell asleep waiting for time to pass; he was also too tired from his argument with Candy and the tears that followed afterwards. He heard a tap on his door, and as he opened his eyes, his dad walked into the room.

"Tomy, your mum tells me that you and Candy have not been on your best behaviour today," started Dad gently but with a firm tone.

"Yes Dad, we were arguing over a bar of chocolate and neither of us agreed to share, so Mum got really cross because we made a lot of noise and woke up Josie from her nap."

"Now, Tomy, you know that you're older than Candy, and even if she's throwing tantrums, it's not right for you to do the same."

"I know, and I'm sorry," replied Tomy.

"That's okay now. It's time for dinner, so I came to get you. Make sure you and Candy apologise to your mum and do it properly this time, okay?"

"Yes, Dad."

Dad went on to Candy's room where she too had fallen fast asleep. He woke her up and gave her a similar talk as he had given to Tomy. Candy apologised to both her dad and Tomy, and they all went downstairs to the dining room. Dinner was already set on the table when they walked in, and Mum was already sitting. On seeing Mum, both Tomy and Candy apologised to her.

She smiled at their apology. "That's okay now," she replied.

Just as they started to have dinner, the doorbell rang.

"I wonder who that is?" said Mum as Dad walked to the door. It happened to be Mr. Neil, the scouts master who had taken Tomy on the school camping trip. Mr. Neil also doubled as a handyman and had been helping Dad do some repairs to the porch in the back garden. He had just come over to return a can of paint that he had mistakenly picked up with the rest of his tools after his work on the porch.

"Oh, thank you," said Dad to Mr. Neil as he took the can of paint.

"Why don't you come in? We just sat down to dinner and would be glad to have you join us."

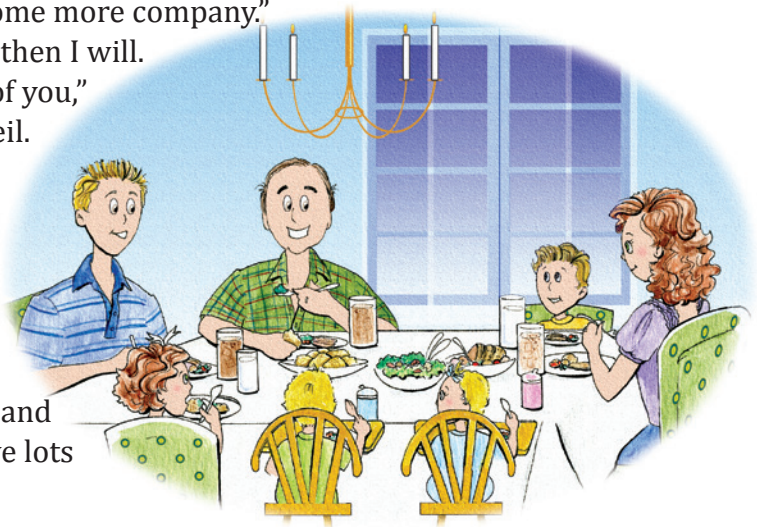
"Thanks, but I don't want to bother you," Mr. Neil responded, somewhat embarrassed by Dad's kind gesture.

"Now, Mr. Neil, it's not any bother at all," replied Mum who had walked over and heard the conversation. "Please, come in. We've got lots to spare and would like some more company."

"Great, thanks, then I will.

That's very nice of you," responded Mr. Neil.

Tomy was glad to see Mr. Neil join them at the table, as he was a very nice man. Tomy especially loved his stories, and he seemed to have lots of them.



Chapter Six • Love for Chocolate

From his experiences as a handyman to his experiences camping in the wild,– Mr. Neil was full of stories which were very funny!

And sure to it, as he sat at the table with them for dinner, he began a story of one time on a camping trip when all the dinner they had prepared was blown away by an unexpected gust of wind. He went on to describe how he chased after the food to recover some. The image of him running after the food made such a funny impression on everyone's minds, and before long, he had everyone at the table laughing so hard that their eyes watered.

Mr. Neil left after dinner, and after the clearing and washing up of the dishes was completed, the family gathered together in the living room. Tonight was movie night, and today Mum had the selection of what movie the family was going to see.

"Well," began Mum with a twinkle in her eyes, "I have a very nice movie that both Tomy and Candy will love. It's called Charlie and the Chocolate Factory."

Tomy, Candy, and Dad burst out in fits of laughter.

"Oh, boy, not another chocolate episode," sighed Dad, as the whole family settled down to the start of the movie.



Chapter 7

All Hallow's Eve

It was mid-October. The leaves were just beginning to fall from the trees as the start of autumn. Tomy was out shopping with his family. As they passed through the store aisles, he noticed the scary masks on the shop shelves. His sister Candy was frightened by the scary toys and winced away in fright as she grasped Mum's hand.

"What's the matter, Candy?" asked Mum.

"There's a scary monster up there."

"It's not real, darling," replied Mum.

Tomy interjected, "Yes, there are no such things as monsters, remember?"

"So why are all these scary toys all over the place then?" asks Candy, a bit perplexed. Mum thought of an answer but couldn't quite give one to Candy;



she had never been very comfortable with the idea of having scary toys all over the shops, and she wondered what explanation to give.

Later on that evening, Mum was telling Dad about her conversation with Candy at the store and how she has been at a loss to address Candy's concerns and fears.

Suddenly, she had a brilliant idea and, in her excitement, she called out to Tomy.

"Tomy, where are you? Come over, please."

"In a minute, Mum," yelled Tomy from the top of the stairs.

A few seconds later, Tomy appeared, startling both Mum and Dad, who did not see him enter the living room.

"Oh, there you are, Tomy. Have you finished with your homework?"

"Yes, I have, Mum. What's up? You seemed excited when you called me," asked Tomy with a puzzled but curious look on his face.

"Ah, yes, I have a proposition to make to you. Actually, I just had a thought on how we can celebrate All Hallows' Eve, and I wanted to get your views on it."

"Wow, that sounds interesting, so what are we going to do to celebrate?" asks Tomy, who by now was completely tuned in to the conversation.

"How about we make a celebration in honour of saints? This way it's no longer scary, and Candy will feel comfortable to participate in it."

"That sounds like a good idea, Mum. But how is that going to work? How do we celebrate if we are the only ones involved?" he asks a bit perplexed.

"That's exactly right, so we need to get more people involved," Mum explained.

"If you and Candy like the idea, we can tell more people about it and get some of our friends to join in too. We can plan all the details of the feast day and make it a happy and fun celebration," she continued.

"Sounds great to me," chirped Tomy.

"Great, why don't you sleep on it and see what ideas you come up with? Tomorrow we can start planning," said Mum, who was greatly relieved at finding a way around the problem.



The following Sunday, Tomy was to give a talk at church to encourage people to join in to celebrate the feast of All Hallow's Eve. He was really nervous, as he hadn't given a talk to a large crowd before. He had prepared his short speech and practiced it hundreds of times before his bedroom mirror. He even got the courage to practice his speech before his family, who gave him a round of applause when he was finished. This support encouraged Tomy greatly, and he gave a great motivational talk with lots of fun ideas. Inspired by Tomy's ideas, loads of people sign up to attend the feast day.



It was the eve of All Hallow's, and loads of people turned up for the feast. Thanks to Tomy and Mum's organising with help from a few friends, there are a variety of activities to engage everyone. There are pumpkin carving stalls and toffee apple stalls.



"Come on. Let's have a go at carving a few pumpkins," Tomy beckoned to Sandy.

With help from the stall lady, the boys did a pretty good job. Tomy carved out a dove, and Sandy a cross.

"Well done, boys. You can have a toffee apple for your treat," the lady rewarded them. The party was so much fun. All the children were dressed up for the party. Tomy was dressed as a knight in shining armor, brandishing a plastic shining sword. Candy was dressed as an angel, complete with a halo on her head.

The party ended quite late, and Dad took the twins home. Meanwhile Mum, Tomy, Candy, and a few friends went on a door-to-door neighbourhood visit. There were a number of elderly people in the area who were quite ill, so the group decided to visit them. At each visit, they offered prayers in return for sweets for the children.

On few occasions, when the person visited did not have any sweets, the group offered both prayers and sweets.

It was a very long and exhausting day, and later that night, Tomy was glad to get into bed.

"Thanks for organising such a brilliant night, Tomy," Dad said as he tucked him in to sleep.

"I'm glad I did, Dad," replied Tomy as he recalled the evening. A few moments later, he was sound asleep.

As Tomy slept, he had a dream. In the dream, someone approached him.

This person stretched out a hand to Tomy and offered him three lily flowers. Tomy saw that each one of the flowers had pure white petals and a transparent stem that was like glass. Inside the stems, droplets of water had formed like crystals. Tomy took the lilies and began to admire their beauty. He immediately sensed an inner peace within him, and as he raised his head to see if he could recognise who this stranger was, the dream ceased.





Tomy woke up wondering about the meaning of the dream. He couldn't understand it. He looked at the time and it was just about 2am.

"It's still early," he thought to himself, so he lay back in bed and continued his sleep.

In the morning, when Tomy woke up, he forgot about the dream from the night before. However, on the way to school, the dream flashed back. He started to wonder what the gift meant and who it was that had given him the flowers. He just couldn't figure it out, so as soon as he got back home from school, he narrated his experience to Mum.

His mum smiled at him and said in amazement, "Wow, Tomy, that is a great dream."

"I think you've met with someone special—maybe an angel or a saint."

"In any case, someone special is offering you something special. You are well on your way to discovering your great powers," she continued.

"Whoa, that's exciting, Mum. What does the gift of flowers mean?" he asked with eyes wide open in delight.

"I'm not sure about the meaning of the gift, but I think it is also a special thank you gift for doing a fantastic job organising the All Hallow's party!" replied Mum.

Tomy was hugely relieved to hear these words from his mum. "Oh, thank you, Mum! I love you so much," he said as he gave her a great big hug.

Chapter 8

Candy Turns 4



Candy had been waiting for this day for weeks and even months. Today was her birthday, and she had finally reached the four year old mark! As she got up in the morning to start the day, she was really excited, since today is the day she would be having a party with her family and friends.

Mum had sent out invitations to the party over a month ago, and many of Candy's friends had accepted the invitations and would be attending.

It was early November, and Candy and her friends had been wishing to have winter snow early. So far, their wish had not been granted, so Dad and Mum decided to make their wishes come true by holding Candy's birthday party at an indoor snow slope.

It was 2 o'clock in the afternoon, and all of Candy's friends had arrived at the party venue. The kids were so excited. Some of their parents were at hand to help as well.

"Come on, everyone! Put on your jackets and mittens inside; it is very cold!" Dad called out. "You also need to choose proper sized rain boots and safety helmets to keep you safe on the slopes."

"Oh, this is fun," Candy giggled with her friend Lucy.

A few minutes later, Candy, Tomy, and all their friends were having lots of fun sliding and skidding down the snowy slope on their snowboards.

Dad placed Candy on his lap and swooped down the slope. "Come on, birthday girl. Let's go for a ride."

"Whoopee!" squealed Candy in excitement.

"Watch out, guys." Tomy yelled out as he slid down the slope. Too late!

"Bump!" Chris bumped off his snowboard, startled by Tomy's speed.

"So sorry, Chris! I didn't mean to scare you." Tomy laughed as he and Sandy helped Chris up.



After the snow party, everyone gathered back at Caritas. It was evening by now, and Dad started off a display of fireworks in the garden.

“Bang! Pop! Whoosh!” The loud crackling noises followed by sudden bursts of bright and wonderful colours in the sky were spectacular.

“Here are kids sparklers for the big boys and girls,” Mum handed Tomy and his friends lighted sparklers. “Now, remember to keep it away from your faces.”

“Thanks, Mum.”

“Yeah, thanks, Tomy’s mum,” the other kids responded, mesmerised by the sparklers.

It was time for some food. Mum and Tomy spread out the food on top of tables on the decked patio. Next, Mum brought out a beautiful princess cake with a doll standing in the middle and lit four candles. Candy absolutely loved her cake and could not wait to cut it. But first, she had to make a wish. She closed her eyes for a few seconds and then made a very, very special private wish that included her family.



As she opened her eyes, everyone started singing, “Happy birthday to you...”

At the third cheer of ‘hip hip hooray!’ Candy blew out her candles, and Mum cut her cake, with the bigger kids whistling loudly.

The kids went indoors for a game of hide and go-seek. “Ready or not, here I come!” Lucy called out as she counted down to 1. It didn’t take long before she found Candy, and then Chris, her older brother. But Tomy and Sandy were proving hard to find. Candy and Chris joined her to look for the duo.

“I know where we can find Tomy,” Candy led them into Tomy’s room. Right under the bed, Tomy was hiding in his favourite spot. The curtain behind the bed rustled.

“Gotcha!” said Lucy as she caught hold of Sandy behind the curtains.

“Come on out, kids! It’s time to go!” Sandy’s parents called. Dad, Mum, and Candy saw their guests off at the door.

As soon as the door was shut, Candy screamed out in excitement. “Mummy, Daddy, this is one of the best days of my life!”

“Thank you so much for making it so special,” she continued.

“You’re welcome, hunny bunny,” Dad replied as he gave her a big kiss on the cheek.



Chapter 9

Joy to the World



It was that wonderful time of the year when everyone was preparing for Christmas. At school, there were Christmas plays to be held. In the shops, there were lots of toys, gifts, and decorations to celebrate the season. It even seemed as though all the adults were chattier and merrier than usual at the thought of the holidays ahead.

This year, Tomy was taking part in a Nativity play at school. He was starring as one of the wise men who go

to seek out the baby Jesus. Tomy's present to the baby Jesus was the gift of myrrh. When Tomy got on stage, Mum pointed him out.

"Look, kids! There's your big brother."

"Hi, Tomy!" Candy yelled out.

Tomy heard Candy's voice through the crowd and smiled. The play was a huge success. All the stars got on stage after the show and received a standing ovation from the crowd.

Tomy was absolutely thrilled at having performed his first play in front of a large crowd.

It was the start of Tomy's school holidays. Dad also took a long vacation from work which meant that the family was together for the holiday period. They had a lot to do to get ready for Christmas. This year, they would be celebrating Christmas with other relatives at Mum's parents' home, which was about four hours' drive from Caritas.

To get ready for their trip, Tomy and his family went shopping to buy presents.

"We need to buy gifts for Grandma, Grandpa, Sandy, Lucy, and your dad," Mum checked her list to make sure no one had been left out.

“Oh, can we also go to the arts and crafts store to pick up some things for making decorations?” Candy asked.

“Okay, sure, we’ll do that after we catch up with Tomy and Dad at the other store. Hop along, now,” Mum replied.

So Candy skipped down the aisles, trying to keep up with Mum who was wheeling the twins on the pushchair with lightning speed.

When they got back home, everyone got to work: sorting out gifts and making decorations to hang up on the walls and on the Christmas tree. It was such an exciting time of the year for the family and with about two weeks to go to Christmas, joy was truly in the air!

It was four days until Christmas, and Tomy and his family packed their suitcases and headed off early in the morning for his grandparents’ place. They arrived shortly after noon and were the first family to arrive.

“Welcome, children!” Grandpa said as he opened the door.

“Great to see you, Grandpa, and you too, Grandma,” Tomy ran to hug his grandma.



“The twins have grown a lot since the last time we saw them,” Grandma exclaimed.

The doorbell buzzed continuously for the rest of the day, indicating the arrival of the rest of the family. Tomy and Candy were so excited to see everyone. Their mother’s side of the family was very large with four aunties, two uncles, and eight cousins.

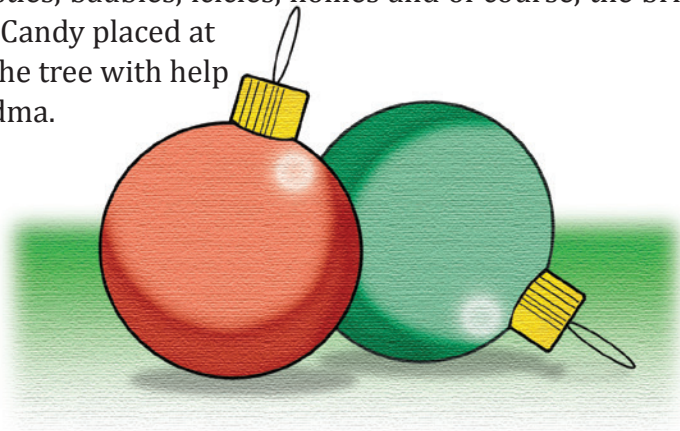
Even though Grandma and Grandpa had a big house with lots of rooms, all the rooms were completely taken up by their Christmas guests. The parents and adults got a room to themselves, while the children had to share rooms.

Tomy got to share a room with his cousin Declan, who was about the same age as him, and Candy also shared a room with Declan’s younger sister Katie.

The evening of arrival of all the family members was always a very busy one.

All the adults were chatting and making lots of noise, and the kids were playing and running all over the house and making even more noise. However, no one, not even Grandpa, seemed bothered by the noise. In fact, everyone loved the fun, bubbly atmosphere in the home. After dinner, Grandma brought out the decorations for the Christmas tree.

“Come on, kids. Come and help me set up the decorations.” The box holding the Christmas tree decorations was like a box of treasure. Inside it were thistles, baubles, icicles, hollies and of course, the bright shining star which Candy placed at the top of the tree with help from Grandma.





While the kids and Grandma were busy setting up the Christmas tree, Tomy's dad and his uncles, together with Grandpa, were outside the house in the front garden. Tomy wanted to see what they're up to. He stepped out of the door and stared with mouth wide open at the surprise scene before him.

It was a life-size nativity scene which his dad, uncles and grandpa have set up.

"Wow! This is awesome!" Tomy cried out.

He was really struggling to take in everything.

The nativity scene was complete with the baby Jesus lying in a manger—Mary and Joseph kneeling beside the baby Jesus and a group of shepherds surrounding the stable. The roof of the stable was made out of thatch, and the sides were made of rough wood.

The floor of the stable was strewn with straw. There are also a number of wooden animals to complete the nativity scene including two sheep, a lamb, an ox, and a donkey, all looking adoringly at the baby Jesus. Tomy saw his uncles carrying some more statues, which he recognised at once to be the wise men.



Dad moved rapidly from one end of the garden to the other, covering the entire area with lots and lots of brightly coloured light bulbs.

It all seemed so dreamlike to Tomy, but he sure didn't want to wake up if it was a dream. So he simply stood at the same spot and watched his dad, uncles, and grandpa as they put together the entire Christmas scene.

"Tomy, go call your mum and all the others out. It's time for us to turn on the lights," called Dad.

Tomy was jostled back into reality. "Right, Dad," he yelled as he ran into the house and called everyone to the front garden.

When everyone had gathered together, Grandpa began a short speech.

"You're all welcome back home for the Christmas holidays. This year, we've decided to make our home celebration even more special by putting up a life-size nativity scene."

"Wow!" "Awesome!" "Great!"

Little voices cheered from different corners of the garden. "And now for the grand commissioning, we're turning on our Christmas lights!" Tomy's dad turned on a switch, and at once, everywhere was lit up with the brightest of colours.

"Oh, my goodness! This is terrific!" exclaimed Declan.

"Hooray!" shouted everyone in unison, including Tomy, who, very unlike him, was actually at a loss for words.



Chapter 10

Christmas

Tomy was dreaming of Santa Claus and his reindeers. Santa was riding to the North Pole through lands and lands of snow. Suddenly, Santa looked at Tomy and smiled at him with a twinkle in his eyes. Tomy's heart seemed to stop for a moment, and then, he quickly regained his composure and waved at Santa, who suddenly disappeared into the night skies.



Tomy's dream changed, and he suddenly found himself in a little town. It was night time. He looked all around him, and there was no one in sight. He looked up to the sky. It was all clear, and there was not a star in sight. A cool, refreshing wind blew across his face. Tomy closed his eyes to breathe in the air. When he opened his eyes, he realised that someone was standing beside him. Tomy was startled and gasped in fright. He seemed to recognise, perhaps even know, this person, but somehow he was unable to see the face clearly.

"Don't be afraid, Tomy," the familiar stranger spoke to him in a very gentle voice.

"Give me your hand, and let's go on a journey."

Tomy's initial fright disappeared. He trustfully, even carefreely, placed his hands in the hand of this person, who seemed to him like a friend, and they took a walk together.

As they walked along the quiet roads, the skies lit up brightly, and though there were no visible stars, Tomy could sense the presence of a bright light shining through the skies.



“Look over there, Tomy! Can you see the small house with a barn up ahead?”

Tomy looked ahead, and he noticed that there was a barn at the corner of the house in the distance.

“Yes, I can,” he responded in excitement, wondering where they were.

They continued walking together until they were within a short distance of the barn. Suddenly, Tomy’s friend disappeared and he was left alone, standing and staring in the direction of the barn. He could hear a lamb bleating in the background and he began to feel a strong urge, like a pull, to walk toward the barn. Slowly, he took a few steps toward the barn and, as the intensity of the lamb bleating increased, he quickened his steps. The pull was getting stronger, and he was now within a few yards of the barn.

“Tomy, Tomy, wake up!”

Tomy suddenly heard someone yelling in his ears. He opened his eyes and saw his cousin Declan crouched over him, shaking him awake.

“Hey, take it easy,” retorted Tomy rather annoyed at the harsh morning wake up call.

“Boy, you sleep like a log of wood. I had no choice but to shake you up. I’ve been trying for ages to get you awake,” replied Declan, rather exasperated.

“Okay, okay, I’m up now,” sighed Tomy, sitting up on his bed. “Great, because guess what...!” exclaimed Declan with a big grin. Tomy, by now, was wide awake and had come off his grumpiness.

“What?” he asked rather curiously.

"It's Christmas Eve," replied Declan with a giggle.

"Hooray, Christmas Eve!" shouted back Tomy as he jumped on his bed and made silly dances.

"Knock, knock, are you boys awake?"

Declan's dad peered past the door and saw both boys dancing all around the room.

"It seems like you've both been up all night partying," he said in amusement.

"Come on, now. It's time to clean up and dress up. Who'll be first to get ready for breakfast?"

"I will!" shouted Tomy as he dashed off into the bathroom to get himself ready for the morning.

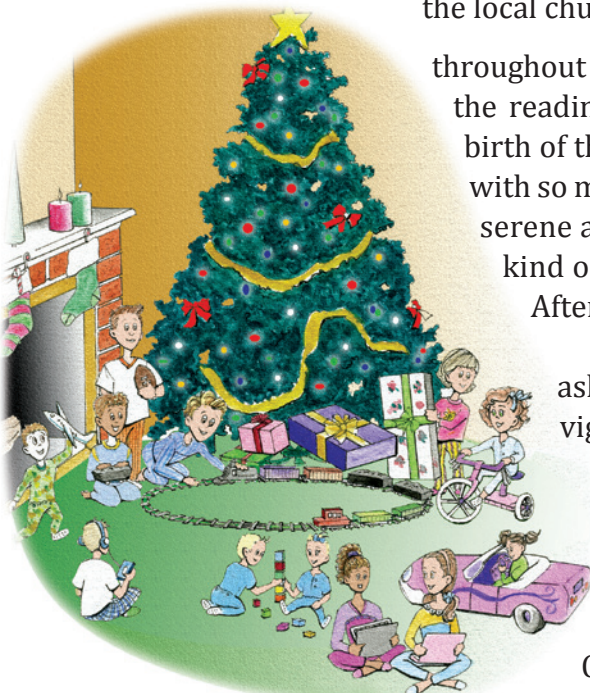
Around noon, the adults went door-to-door, singing carols for the neighbours. While the grownups were out, Grandma stayed at home to look after the kids with help from one of Tomy's uncles.

Later that night, all the family went for the Christmas Vigil Mass at the local church. Tomy stayed wide awake

throughout the vigil, and as he listened to the readings from the Bible about the birth of the baby Jesus, his heart filled with so much joy. To him, it seems very serene and almost familiar, like a kind of *déjà-vu*.

After church, as they headed back to his grandparents, his mum asked him how he found the vigil celebration.

"I feel as though I was right there with baby Jesus and Mary and Joseph and all the shepherds on the same Christmas night when Christ was born," said Tomy.



Chapter Ten • Christmas

The kids woke up on Christmas morning to see that Santa had paid them a visit.

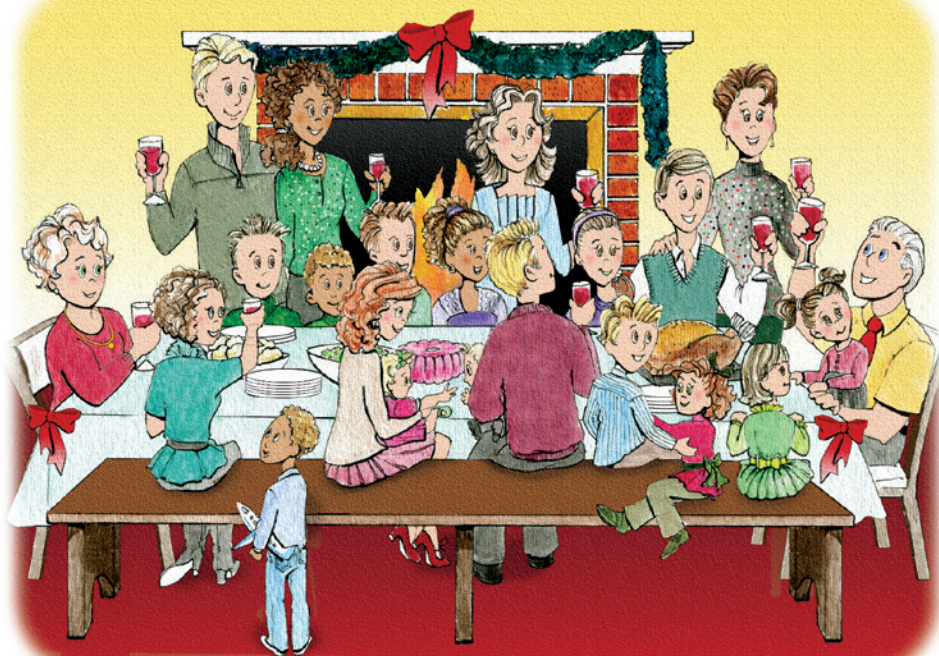
As they rushed to the Christmas tree and opened up the gifts left by Santa, everyone was so happy. They all got exactly the present they had hoped for. Tomy got a new mechanical choo-choo train as his present.

He gave it a test run with his dad, and as the train ran on its rails, he made a funny chugging noise along with the train, “Chugga, chugga, chugga, chugga, choo-choo!”

After opening presents, the entire family gathered around the dining table for a meal. Grandpa was pleased to see his family together. Tomy was almost sure he could see his grandpa’s eyes welling up with tears as the family held hands together around the dining table to give thanks for Christmas before they tucked in to the bountiful meal.

“Merry Christmas, everyone!” said Grandpa, as he raised up his drinking glass in a salute.

“Merry Christmas!” echoed the rest of the family joyfully.

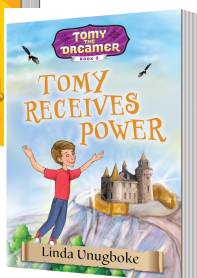
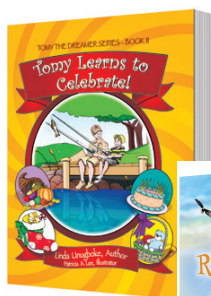


10 Things Every Child Should Know

- 🌀 Do you think that Tomy is a star? So are you! You're shining so bright that people flock to your light!
- 🌀 Are you ever afraid? If only you could see what's inside of you – you'll be as bold as a lion.
- 🌀 A friend is a great companion. Know that Jesus is always your friend.
- 🌀 Do you like adventure? Childhood is a great adventure. Enjoy it while it lasts!
- 🌀 Talking to God in prayer makes us know how much he loves us.
- 🌀 Sharing with family shows them you love them.
- 🌀 It's fun to Celebrate! Celebrate! Celebrate!
- 🌀 Be thankful for all the loved ones in your life.
- 🌀 Spending time with family and friends fills you with joy.
- 🌀 The best Christmas gift is the gift of Jesus to the world!



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Carit♥s, (Lots of love),

Linda