

## Transistor Radios and Simple Marvels

One Christmas, when I was a boy, I unwrapped a present containing a small, transistor radio. I treasured that radio, a small, beige model that I kept on the edge of my desk next to my bed. In the evening, after lights out, I would frequently take that radio under the covers with me and tune in to the powerful, silky smooth voice of Jim Robson, play-by-play man for the Vancouver Canucks. At other times, when there was no hockey game, I would slowly rotate the dial, searching for stations in such exotic places as Los Angeles, California, or Seattle, Washington. On clear nights I could sometimes catch a baseball game from somewhere way down south, and I would be magically transported to places yet to be explored. Oh, how that one little radio expanded my world and stirred my imagination!

The months of January and February can sometimes be such dreary times. I would like to remind you that during such times, a child's mind is ever ripe for adventure, and often those can be simple moments of marvel that can be captured right in front of us. My wife and I like to put bird seeds in a dish in our back yard, and love to watch the sparrows, starlings, and flickers who come to visit. A walk by the North Thompson provides the chance to enjoy the colours and sounds of the water as it carries its cargo from places upriver. We even encountered a runaway turkey on Robbin's Range Road on our way to a family sledding excursion, wondering what he was saying to us in his incessant gobbling! In years past, the winter evenings were special times to read stories aloud to my children. One year, I read the entire Chronicles of Narnia to them. Oh, how they loved to hear voices of Aslan, the white witch, and Mr. Tumnus! A good book, a half hour time investment, yielding many cherished moments and memories.

I encourage you as parents to use your imagination and invest your time in creating your own moments of marvel for your family this winter. Such investments have a way of paying off in untold dividends, both now and in future years. And, you never know, you may just rekindle your own childlike heart again, finding pleasure in simple things that are always there for your enjoyment!



## At Your Service

One of my favourite books is [The Hobbit](#), by J.R.R. Tolkien. In the story, the young Bilbo Baggins' is put to the test by hosting a large company of dwarves in his humble Hobbit abode. Each dwarf, as he arrives, begins with a wonderful salutation, "Dwalin (Balin, Bifur, Bofur, Bombur. etc), at your service!" Wouldn't it be great if everyone had that attitude? I have a few favourite places to shop in Kamloops (including Bulk Barn...so many exciting treats!), and what characterizes those places are the people that work there. There is something really refreshing about getting good service, which is often accompanied by a smile. When I reflect on what makes the difference in service in those instances, it's all about attention to details, and feeling

like I am important to someone else. In fact, it feels like, in that moment, whether I am standing at the till or asking for help in the aisle of Home Depot, that I am the only person in the world that matters to that individual in that particular moment. Even if all I am looking for is a bag of salted pretzels!

As we have been teaching our students at school, practicing service is all about wanting to make a difference in the world. That difference can be made in a myriad of small ways. It's picking up a dropped pencil for a classmate. It's holding the door open for a teacher entering the school. It's stopping in the middle of a game on the playground to help a peer who is hurt. An anonymous quote that is posted in our hallway goes like this, "Never get tired of doing little things for others." Sometimes those little things will represent the best moments in a person's day, and they have the power to multiply, like ripples in a pond.

May our school be such a pond, one where we all take on the genuine posture of service, refreshing, restoring, and inspiring one another by simple deeds of thoughtfulness and kindness.



### **The Power of a Smile**

Our virtue focus at Pacific Way at the moment is friendliness. Each day we talk about the signs of success in our quest to practice this wonderful virtue. One of the signs is really simple - smile and greet someone you don't know. I've gotta say, I sure enjoy getting smiles from people myself, whether I know them or not! Something about receiving a smile from a child just lights me up inside, but for some reason we adults don't seem to be quite as good at it. Personally, I'd like to be known as a smiler. When I watch the Vancouver Canucks play, I'm particularly drawn to their young defenceman, Ben Hutton, who just seems to exude joy whether he's on the ice or on the bench. And why not? He's playing a game he loves in the best league in the world. I can relate. I get to do a job I love in the best place in the world. So I've got plenty to smile about. But the thing is, there are still times when the cares of this world get the best of me. And it's amazing what one smile from another person, adult or child, can do to help me get back on track. We each have the power to do that for one another and the opportunity to model it for our children. A higher dose of friendliness leads to a higher degree of happiness and sense of belonging, and from all of the research I've read, happy people in positive work environments learn more and are more productive. All the more reason to smile, eh?!