

Life

A CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE



THE LITTLE PAWS HOTEL

Dachshund delight - a day in the life



WARREN FURMAN
Gladiator for God



BATCH COOK
Save Time, Save Money



JONATHAN BRYAN
Eye Can Write

90's Saturday Night TV

Christmas Tree Book Craft

Chocolate Bark Gifts

Welcome

Welcome to issue 12 of the Life Magazine. We have some great stories to share, including catching up with former Gladiator Ace, checking into a doggie hotel for the day, and celebrating the incredible success of disability advocate Jonathan Bryan.

Other articles include how to prepare six family meals for just £5 a meal (and in under 1 hour!), casting our minds back nostalgically to Saturday night TV in the 90's, thinking about happy endings, crafts and chocolate treats to make, plus stories of how Jesus transforms lives.

This magazine may have been distributed by your local church or Christian organisation (you can find their contact details on the back) and they would love to hear from you if you've been intrigued by any of the stories in the magazine. Alternatively, you can contact us on the form below if you'd like more information about what it means to be a Christian.

Bethan EDITOR [f/LifemagazineUK](https://www.facebook.com/LifemagazineUK)

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I would like to know more about Jesus Christ.

Please send me a FREE copy of John's Gospel (a book of the Bible that describes Jesus' life).

Please send me a FREE booklet on how to become a Christian.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Life Magazine, c/o Unit C, Tomlinson Road, Leyland, PR25 2DY, UK
Or email Life@10ofthose.com with the subject *Tell Me More*.

Or follow the QR code:
Or check out the website tell-me-more.org



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CHOCOLATE BARK

This super-simple slab of chocolate is studded with the toppings of your choice. You can tailor this to anyone's tastes by playing around with the type of chocolate and toppings you know they love. Pass on as an edible gift, or simply enjoy yourself!

Makes 4 gift-sized servings.



Storage: Best eaten within a fortnight.

METHOD

1. Melt the chocolate in a bowl suspended over a pan of gently simmering water, stirring every now and then, or in a microwave safe bowl, heating in 10-second bursts until melted. Meanwhile, line a large baking tray with baking parchment. Allow the chocolate to cool for 5 mins.
2. Pour the chocolate onto the parchment and spread it into a rectangular shape (roughly 20 x 30 cm, A4). Alternatively, create 4 smaller bars, 10 x 15 cm, if you'd prefer to gift them whole. Scatter over the toppings of your choice, then leave somewhere cool to set.
3. Break into shards or leave whole, wrap in cellophane or pack into a gift box.

Allergies: When giving edible gifts make sure to label common allergens, and also check with the recipient.

HINT

Combine 2 or 3 types of chocolate (melted separately) and create a swirled pattern by dragging a cocktail stick back and forth across the chocolate.

INGREDIENTS:

- 400g chocolate
- 100g toppings
- Top Toppings:
 - Mini marshmallows
 - Nuts or seeds
 - Dried fruit - chopped
 - Broken biscuits
 - Popcorn or pretzels
 - Sweets or sprinkles
 - Fudge



You don't need to spend lots of money on expensive chocolate, supermarket value ranges are great for this project.

EYE CAN WRITE

JONATHAN BRYAN



Jonathan with mentor Michael Morpurgo

“Can you imagine not being able to speak or communicate? The silence, the loneliness, the pain. Inside you disappear to magical places, but most of the time remain imprisoned within the isolation. Waiting, longing, hoping. Until someone realises your potential and discovers your key, so your unlocking can begin. Now you are free, flying like a wild bird in the open sky. A voice for the voiceless.”¹

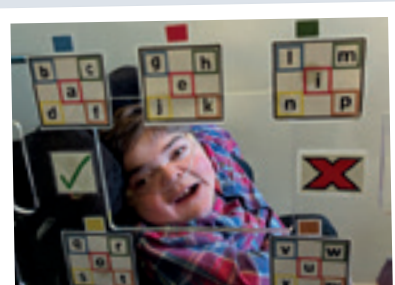
These incredible words were written by 12-year-old Jonathan Bryan, just a few years after he learned to talk and write. Now 18, Jonathan is unlocking the next chapter of his life at university.

Jonathan, the eldest child of Chantal and Christopher Bryan, entered the world on a cold soggy January day in 2006. The couple were involved in a car accident earlier that morning, and Jonathan was delivered by emergency section as the accident had resulted in the placenta detaching from the womb, depriving Jonathan of oxygen. Shortly after birth he was diagnosed with severe cerebral palsy – linked to brain damage caused by this lack of oxygen – and also kidney failure.

Jonathan’s quadriplegic cerebral palsy means he spends almost all of his time in a wheelchair, and the only part of his body he has full control over is his eyes. For many years the only way of expressing himself was through a smile or a frown.

Chantal and Christopher were told not to expect Jonathan to walk, talk or even recognise them, and even the most optimistic of doctors suggested his life expectancy would only be 12 years. While physically Jonathan’s early years were a struggle, his parents began to see signs of his understanding shining through.

By the time Jonathan had turned 7, Chantal was starting to teach him the basics of literacy at home, and by age 9 he was able to begin writing using a special board, called an E-Tran frame. By looking at a specific grouping of letters, followed by the corresponding colour,



Jonathan’s E-Tran writing frame

he could, letter by letter, spell out the word he wanted to communicate, followed by a yes (tick) or no (cross).

This process requires someone to track Jonathan’s eye movements and locate the letters from behind the frame. Writing in this way is not only physically, but mentally, laborious for Jonathan, with each sentence taking up to five minutes to complete.

Over the years, this process has speeded up slightly for informal communication, but not for more serious writing. “I’ve got a bit quicker,” Jonathan explains, “and when I chat, I more readily accept predictions (like predictive text on a phone), but when I write, prediction gets in the way of the flow.”

Despite the effort, Jonathan loves to write and his vocabulary has always been ahead of others his age. He credits this to his mum reading to him from his early years: “During the nine years of being effectively locked in by my severe cerebral palsy, words and phrases had been banked while my mother read to me. Unable to develop the physical skills of my peers, maybe my mind had more room for academic learning.”²

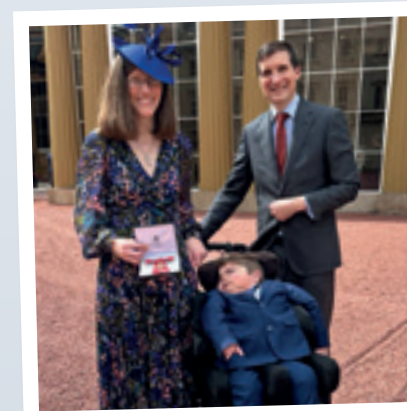
Jonathan still loves fiction: “I always have a long list of books I want to read,” Jonathan enthuses. “I’m particularly interested in what makes a book

a classic, and enjoy thinking about this whilst reading a range of classic literature as well as reading modern books. I mostly listen to books on Audible, but also enjoy reading the print on a Kindle. The exception is poetry where I like to both hear a variety of readings and see the print on the page.”

Having been unlocked from his silence, Jonathan has been passionate about helping his peers access the means to communicate. Many children with similar conditions are never taught to read or write – even within an education setting – as physical disability is often presumed to impact academic ability. By 2016, Jonathan was writing letters to MPs and educational influencers campaigning for all children to be taught literacy, regardless of their needs or disabilities. The campaign was given the name Teach Us Too.

When asked about those who are physically limited, but mentally capable, being shown cartoons to pass the time at school and spoken to like toddlers, Jonathan remains as passionate as ever: “I long for the day when I can answer this question purely in the past tense, but tragically this is still the experience of too many pupils. As a voice for the voiceless I feel a burden and urgency to speak up for those who don’t yet have their voice. Increasingly I am aware that my time here is limited and of the need to amplify the voices of those who have had similar experiences to me. Together we are a testimony that is harder to ignore.”

Jonathan’s mother, Chantal, has committed herself to the mission of Teach Us Too since it was founded, and was this year awarded an OBE in recognition of her contribution. Jonathan was able to accompany his



Chantal Bryan receiving her OBE, 2024, accompanied by Jonathan and Christopher

mum as she received this prestigious award, and was suitably proud, saying, “This award is a fitting tribute to her dedication to enhance literacy education for all students, and highlights the charity’s shared goal: promoting a system that affords every child the opportunity to learn to read and write. It is truly well-earned.”

In 2017, Jonathan was awarded the inaugural Princess Diana Legacy Award, meeting both Prince William and Prince Harry at the ceremony, in recognition of the Teach Us Too campaign.



Jonathan Receiving a Diana Legacy Award

The following year Jonathan’s memoir, *Eye Can Write: A Memoir of a Child’s Silent Soul Emerging*, was published and endorsed by Sir Michael Morpurgo and Bear Grylls – not bad for a first-time author, aged 12!

Jonathan’s faith in Jesus shines through in his writing. Some may credit this to his father, Christopher, being a vicar, but reading Jonathan’s book and blog, it becomes clear his trust in God is certainly not secondhand. He says the pinnacle of all his achievements and his ability to communicate is the fact that he can now share his faith. He wrote a piece for his confirmation service called ‘Living Life in all its Fullness’:

“With Jesus as my saviour, companion and friend, I have lived my hours here with happiness in my spirit and contented calm in my soul. Knowing Jesus is with me, cradling me in pain, sheltering me from darkness and beckoning me forward, has given me the strength and serenity to look life in the eye and smile. Like the constancy of the second hand of a clock, Jesus inhabits the quaver beats of my life; and as that beat slows, I look forward with excited anticipation to the day I will see Jesus and live together with him in the garden forever. In the meantime, I cleave to Jesus: my faith and my life.”

Jonathan has a number of much loved passages in the Bible: “My favourite



Jonathan with sisters Susannah and Jemima

story is the four friends. You probably know it as the story of the paralysed man who gets lowered through the roof, but for me this is a story that is just as much about what those friends did for him as about what Jesus did for him.

“I also love what the story of Lazarus teaches us about faith, hope and grief. Both these passages are in my funeral service, which I planned and wrote a few years ago.”

This year Jonathan has achieved another incredible milestone, securing a place at university. He will be studying Creative Writing at Bath Spa University: “I’m looking forward to learning about writing and meeting others who love writing.”

As he prepares for this new phase of life, his faith remains central. “Knowing Jesus is with me is a great source of comfort, but also a challenge,” Jonathan explains. “I can’t rely on His presence and not introduce people to Him. Knowing how to do that well is something I pray about.”

You can read more about Jonathan’s incredible journey in his memoir, *Eye Can Write: A Memoir of a Child’s Silent Soul Emerging*, or follow his ongoing story on his blog eyecantalk.net.



If you’d like to know more about having a personal relationship with God, and the faith in Jesus that Jonathan talks about, do get in touch via the contact details on the inside front cover.

10 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW YOU NEEDED FOR UNIVERSITY

Ten things you might not think to buy ... but you'll be glad to have.

There are a hundred and one things you need at university. Of course your duvet and laptop are a must, plus toiletries, trainers and phone charger. But some things are not quite so obvious. Here are a few items you'll certainly not regret having while living in halls:

DIGITAL PASSPORT PHOTOS

You may be studying in Kingston, London not Kingston, Jamaica – but you'll be surprised how many passport photos you need for cards, passes and forms.

1



A LAMP

Accommodation lighting can make your space feel more like an office than a bedroom. A lamp will add a 'homely' touch.

3

EXTENSION LEAD

Very handy! Don't use too many appliances at once though and remember to keep both the cord and sockets uncovered to prevent a fire risk.

6



CASSEROLE DISH

This isn't for everyone, but if you'd like to learn the art of cooking en masse and freezing a week's worth of curry, it's worth investing in. Cooking this way will save you a fortune.

9

Check out our Marmalade and Harissa Bake on page 8!

And if you know any first-time students, why not consider posting them a little pack of goodies? You'd be surprised by how much a little parcel can mean.

OVER-DOOR HANGER

The unsung hero of storage! This little beauty will save you space while keeping your coat and dressing gown off the floor.

2



TOASTIE MAKER

Offering a toastie is offering friendship. It's a miracle machine: put in the cheapest bread and the grimmest cheese and voilà – gooey, crispy gorgeousness. If money is tight (and it probably will be), why not ask for one for Christmas.



4

BOX OF PINS

Spare yourself from staring at the complimentary bald pin board found in every university bedroom (they never chuck in the pins!). Print off some photos to pop up too!

5



FULL-LENGTH MIRROR

Uni rooms usually come with a very small mirror; if you want to see your bottom half in the first year, buy a big one – or better still, put it on your Christmas list. It will also give a sense of space to your itty-bitty room.

8

SPECIAL DATES

Pop 'important' dates on your phone calendar – your mum is bound to know them all, so give her a ring! That way you won't forget Great Aunt Nora's ninetieth birthday card – and it's a good way to stay in touch.

10

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED...

WHY WE LIKE HAPPY ENDINGS?



By Gavin Matthews

In 1996, Walt Disney released their animated version of Victor Hugo's novel *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* starring A-listers like Demi Moore and Kevin Kline. Disney clearly got something right as it grossed a massive \$325m at the box office.

Whether Victor Hugo would have approved of Disney's reworking of his story remains doubtful. Hugo ends his tale of rivalry, love and betrayal in shocking fashion. The evil Frollo frames the beautiful Esmerelda for his own crime, and laughs as she is executed. This provokes Quasimodo to kill him, before starving himself to death in grief. Dark stuff indeed. Far too dark for Hollywood, at least. In the Disney version Quasimodo rescues Esmerelda, and kills Frollo by accident, and finally becomes loved by all.

To be fair to Disney, we *love* a happy ending—Elizabeth Bennet marries Mr Darcy, Inigo Montoya defeats the six-fingered man, Matilda gets to live with Miss Honey. Richard Curtis didn't just bring William Thacker and Anna Scott together at the end of *Notting Hill*, but ended with them dreamily awaiting the birth of their child. Happy endings are extraordinarily popular.

But why? After all, life is rarely like that most of the time. Maybe relentless happy endings can sometimes feel too sugary-sweet or just cheesy, especially if you're experiencing the brute realities of divorce, cancer, infertility or betrayal.

But even when life is hard for many,

happy endings continue to sell. These stories appeal to something deep within us, about the way we know the world *ought* to be. After all, the greatest happy endings come after serious obstacles, difficulties and disappointments have been overcome. The greater the tension, the greater the relief when hardship is overcome. It's the same with the 'Will-they/won't they?' of romance, making that kiss at the end all the more moving. We want the world to be this way—we want Johnny to beat the bully in *The Karate Kid* and Marty McFly to save his family. Happy endings make all the struggle worth it. We feel instinctively that the world *ought* to be like this, that there *should* be a good outcome after the struggle. These stories bridge between the way the world is, and the hope we have for a world as it ought to be; played out in mini-dramas through characters we can relate to.

But are these happy endings just a delusion? Which ending of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is the truer story? If this physical world is all there is—no God, no eternity, no ultimate meaning—then eventually our ending is more Victor Hugo than Disney. Life's a tragedy and we all just die. But we just can't accept that. Just as James Bond surely *can't* die in his nemesis' lair, Marianne Dashwood *can't* be left heartbroken and Aslan *can't* be defeated, surely there's hope for us too. In every cinema visit or late-night reading session, we instinctively

hope for some almost miraculous intervention, some external force to come in and set things straight. Bond needs a gadget, Marianne needs a Colonel Brandon, and Aslan needs to rise from the dead. Surely we need something or someone to come and bring about our happy ending too?

Western culture is thoroughly soaked in the Christian story: our law and education as well as our stories, values and standards ooze biblical assumptions. When we respond to happy endings—when it feels so right that after some catastrophe rescue arrives—something chimes within us. Instinctively we already believe this is the way things ought to be and ultimately will be.

The Bible's central story is of a hero who came to rescue a fallen world, but who was crucified by those he came to love. Yet while all his friends and family gave in to despair, Jesus's death on the cross turned out to be the turning point in history making reconciliation with God possible. And in the ultimate plot-twist, Jesus rises from the dead, walking out of the grave on the first Easter morning. He defeats evil and death and reaches out his hand to us, ready to take hold of us and bring us through death too. We can have our happy ending.

Behind every satisfying conclusion to a book or a film lies this Christian story. Maybe we love happy endings so much because they point to something true?



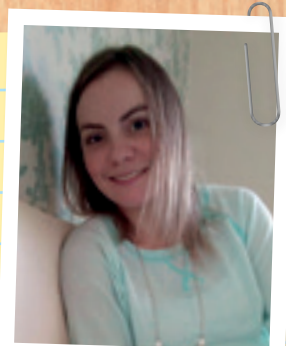
READY STEADY

Batch cooking not only saves you time, but buying ingredients in larger quantities often saves money too – winner, winner, chicken dinner!

Alison Brewis shares her favourite batch cook chicken recipes.

“As a busy mum, I’m always looking for ways to save time and money in the kitchen. These recipes will help you to cook six family meals, so they’ll be in the freezer whenever you need them! You’ll prepare two batches of Marmalade and Harissa Chicken Bake, two Coronation Chicken Curries, and two Chicken and Mushroom Pies. Each meal feeds a family of four.”

Alison Brewis is currently a stay-at-home mum to her four children, wife to Church of England Minister, Rob, and children’s author.



SHOPPING LIST

- 20 chicken breasts (approx. 3kg)
- 2 red onions
- 4 brown onions
- 500g mushrooms
- 6 red/orange peppers
- 2 x 320g pre-rolled puff pastry
- 8 tbsp marmalade
- 2 x 230g jars mango chutney
- 500g natural yoghurt
- 1 tin apricots (or 200g dried apricots, chopped)
- 150 ml orange juice
- 1 litre milk

STORE CUPBOARD

- 6 tbsp oil
- 3 tbsp mayonnaise
- 2 tbsp harissa paste
- 2 tbsp tomato puree
- 2 tsp dried oregano/Italian herbs
- 2 tbsp curry powder
- 4 tbsp plain flour
- 2 stock cubes
- salt and pepper

METHOD

Before you start, make sure your kitchen surfaces are clear, and chop any ingredients as necessary. Prepare six labelled large freezer bags or freezer-proof containers. Pre-heat oven to 180C fan.

1. Set aside 8 chicken breasts. Divide all the remaining chicken into two foil parcels and bake in the oven for 30–40 minutes, until cooked through.
2. Meanwhile prepare the **Marmalade and Harissa Chicken Bake**. Place into each of the two **Chicken Bake** freezer bags: 1 chopped red onion, 3 chopped peppers, and 4 chicken breasts (set aside in step 1).

Cont.



MARMALADE AND HARISSA CHICKEN BAKE

Defrost one portion in the fridge overnight. Preheat oven to 180C fan. Transfer the contents of the bag into an oven dish. Add **1 kg new potatoes**, halved. Bake for 45 minutes until the chicken is cooked through, stirring halfway. This doesn’t need any accompaniment, but some green beans wouldn’t be out of place!

BATCH COOK!

READY TO EAT?

3. In a jug, whisk together 2 tbsp oil, 2 tbsp harissa paste, 8 tbsp marmalade, 150 ml orange juice, and 2 tsp oregano. Pour half of the mixture into each bag. Seal the bags, and squish together the ingredients. These are ready to freeze now.
4. Next make the **Chicken and Mushroom Pie**. In a large pan, heat 4 tbsp of oil and fry 4 chopped brown onions until soft. Divide the onions, leaving half in the pan and putting the other half into a large mixing bowl, setting this aside for the **Coronation Chicken Curry**.
5. Add 500g of sliced mushrooms to the onions in the pan and fry for a few minutes, until soft. Then add 4 tbsp of flour to onions and mushrooms and mix well. Remove the pan from the heat. Add 1 litre of milk bit by bit, stirring well after each addition. Crumble in 2 stock cubes and mix well.
6. Return the pan to the heat and stir regularly until the sauce thickens. Remove from the heat, stir in some salt and pepper, and allow to cool.
7. When the chicken in the oven is cooked, allow to cool for a few minutes and then shred it with two forks. Set half the shredded chicken aside and add half to the pan and mix. Divide this mixture into the two **Chicken Pie** freezer bags. Freeze these along with both 320g pre-rolled sheets of puff pastry.
8. In the mixing bowl, you can now prepare the **Coronation Chicken Curry**. Add 2 tbsp curry powder, 3 tbsp mayonnaise, 2 tbsp tomato puree, 2 x 230g jars of mango chutney, 500g natural yoghurt, and the drained and chopped tin of apricots. Mix well. Add the rest of the shredded chicken to the bowl and mix. Divide this mixture into each of the two **Chicken Curry** freezer bags. These are now ready to freeze.



CORONATION CHICKEN CURRY

Defrost in the fridge overnight. Pour the contents into a large pan, and reheat for about 10 minutes. Stir regularly, until the curry is piping hot. Serve with **rice, naan bread, or jacket potatoes**.



CHICKEN AND MUSHROOM PIE

Defrost the pie filling and a roll of pastry in the fridge overnight. Preheat oven to 180C fan. Tip the mixture into a baking dish (preferably rectangular to make the most of the pastry!). Lay the pastry sheet over the dish, pressing down the edges. Cut a cross in the centre to let out steam and then brush the pastry with a **beaten egg** all over to help it brown. Cook in the oven for about 30 minutes, until golden brown. Serve with **potatoes or chips, and vegetables**.

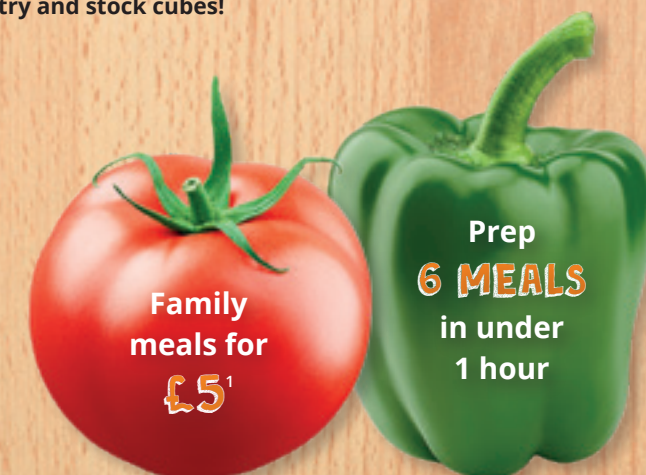
Make this gluten free by substituting gluten free flour, pastry and stock cubes!

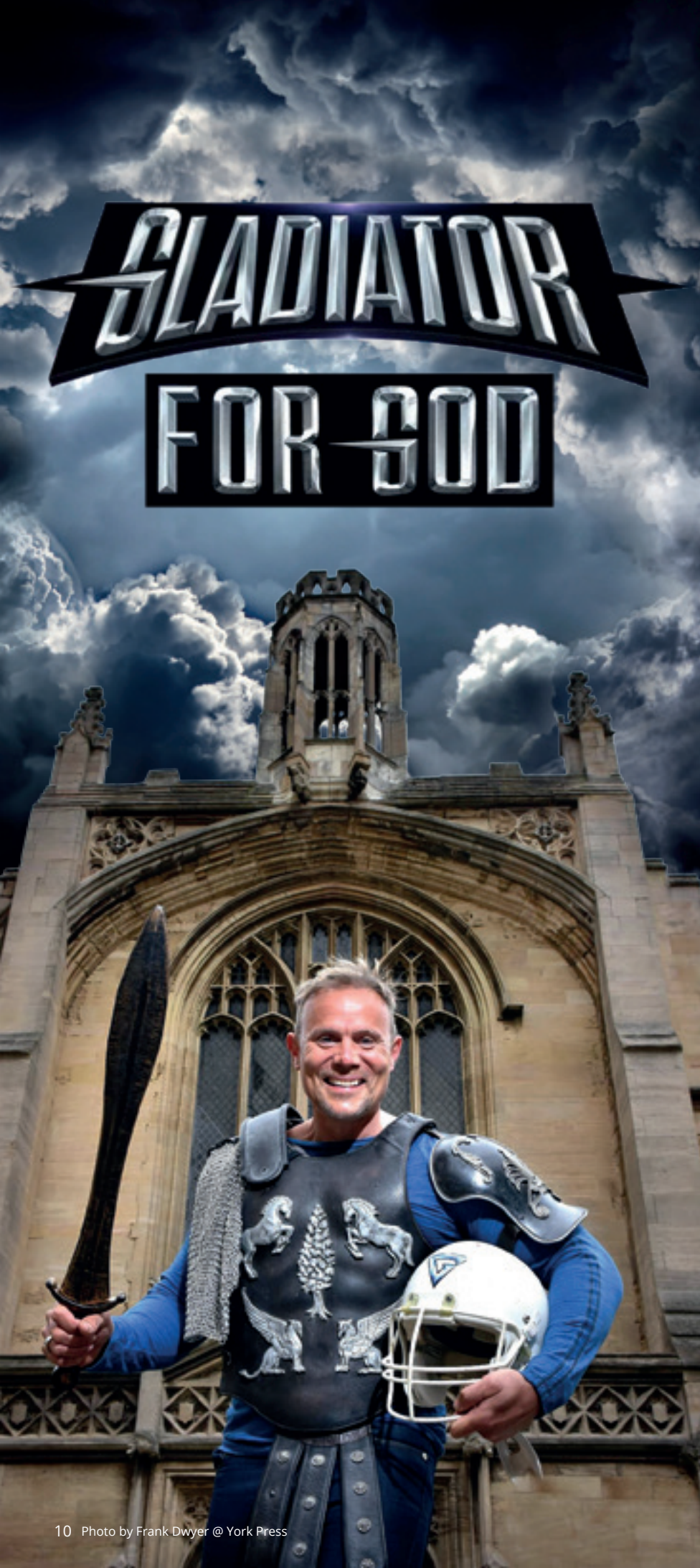
STUDENTS!

Not wanting to batch cook 24 portions? Why not have a go at the Marmalade and Harissa Chicken Bake? Follow method steps 2 and 3 and cook the family version, then freeze any leftovers for another time!



For more money saving advice head to the Christians Against Poverty (CAP) blog: www.capuk.org/about-us/news-and-blog





The original Gladiators burst onto our screens in 1992. Warren Furman (A.K.A. Gladiator Ace), 52, starred in the show from series 5 to 8. We spoke to him about those incredible years and what he's been doing since.

How did you end up on Gladiators?

Life up until Gladiators was always a struggle just to survive. There was a recession back in the early 90s, and it was quite grim. I tried roofing, and I hated it. You're self-employed, so if it rains, you get no money. My dad worked as a roofer and growing up we were skint. I thought, "I don't want this. I don't want this miserable life." I was living in the YMCA in Harlow, trying to do bits and pieces, signing on the dole. Looking back, it was going to the gym every day that kept me on the straight and narrow.

I used to be a fan of Gladiators and at the end of the show you could apply to be on it. I was about 22, and was the second youngest on the show when I joined, following a fitness try-out in London.

Getting Gladiators was a real rags to riches story. Overnight, everybody knew you. It was an incredible transition.

"Getting Gladiators was a real rags to riches story. Overnight, everybody knew you."

What was your favourite event to take part in back then?

It changed from time to time, but the best one overall was Hang Tough, because it was easy to play, easy to win. Visually, it looked good and you didn't get injured on it – win-win! The only way you would mess up as a Gladiator was if you panicked. Skytrak and Pole-Axe were the worst.

How did you cope with the transition from a normal life to that of a Gladiator?

It was really tough. I was introverted and spent the first two years just sweating continually, always in a state of nervousness. There was no training for it – it was a sink or swim situation.

But, it was such a dream job, so as much as I was out of my comfort zone, I was making a good living. And trust me, it's much better than roofing in winter!

Show business was a real eye opener – the fact that it is a business. You're always selling something 24-7 and everybody's looking at you for potential sponsorship, that's how you make your money. It's a double-edged sword because you want the money, but you want to be authentic. My whole identity became wrapped up in the show. I became conceited and full of myself.

"My whole identity became wrapped up in the show. I became conceited and full of myself."

My idol had been Arnold Schwarzenegger, and I wanted to be like that guy, the highest paid movie star in history. He was winning, so I'd pump myself up into something else to try and be a success. But what is success?

When the show ended, my whole identity came crashing down. That's

"When the show ended, my whole identity came crashing down."

when my eyes were opened and I started to think, "Who am I really? I'm not Ace. I'm not better than other people."

After Gladiators wrapped up, were you keen to continue riding that celebrity wave?

I carried on sort of making a living through Gladiators. They said we could keep our Gladiator names, so many of us did pantomimes. Pantomimes were always fun, I was always the hero of the show. Everyone wanted to see a Gladiator, and there was no acting ability required!

But I ended up with a load of existential questions. I had a brother who died when he was a baby, and my mum and dad blamed God for it. Instead of dealing with their grief, they just buried it, and ended up addicted to all sorts of prescription medication. It was a tragic story really. I grew up with my dad telling me that life's about working hard and playing hard, paying the bills, but I felt my family had a tough life.

I had a taste of being rich and famous doing Gladiators. You're not working all day. You're celebrated wherever you go.



People give you things for free. You've got the golden ticket, then someone snatches it out of your hands. And you're like, "Oh". When the show ended, I went on a real spiritual search.

Were you interested in the Christian faith before this?

I'd previously discounted the Bible, and Jesus, because I wanted to be macho, not weak like I thought Jesus was. I thought people that can't cope in life must go to these gods, but I had time on my hands and I began to look for real purpose. I spent two years studying everything, going on courses, reading books. I even studied atheism and looked into the cults. Finally, it was a Christian Alpha Course that really changed everything. I was able to ask my big questions and suddenly I started getting answers that seemed to make a bit of sense.

After weeks of examining all the evidence, I came to the conclusion that you can't dispute who Jesus is, or his place in history, and I believed he was the Son of God. I felt it was too good to be true though. I struggled to believe I could be in a relationship with God and it wouldn't cost me anything, because it cost Jesus everything. All my sins, all the things I'd done wrong that haunted me, could they really be washed clean? Did I really not need to fear death because of Jesus' death for me?

Over that 10 weeks, I slowly realised I couldn't find a reason not to pray to God and ask him to forgive me. I came out of the rat race and into God's grace. I encountered Jesus, and my life was transformed. When I say transformed, I don't

mean that I'm living happily ever after, I mean it was turned upside down. I'm now connected to the Creator of the Universe. I'd been trying to be Mr Universe, then all of a sudden I met the real Mr Universe!

"I'd been trying to be Mr Universe, then all of a sudden I met the real Mr Universe!"

What did your wife make of your new belief?

Dionne has always been beautiful on the outside, but also a beautiful personality. She's very tolerant with me, always forgiving me, but she didn't go to church. At that point she identified as a Christian but wasn't actually trusting in Jesus. I assumed she was a Christian too because of how she tried to be a nice person.

When I was doing all the spiritual searching, she refused to do any of it, but when I was invited on the Alpha Course she agreed to come too. In the weeks after I became a Christian, she saw such a change in me, and obviously the Holy Spirit was at work, and she knew she needed to commit to Jesus too. Our kids, Bailey and Annabel, also trusted in Jesus, and we were all baptised at the same time.



Warren, Bailey, Dionne, Annabel



Photo by Frank Dwyer @ York Press

You now run Ace Active, can you explain what you do?

I decided there would be nothing better to do with my life than going round telling people about what Jesus has done.

Ace Active's tagline is 'Fit for Eternity'. We go into primary schools and I'll do an assembly with the kids. I'll tell them my story and I'll dress as a Roman Gladiator. I teach them about the

Roman Gladiators and I take in swords and shields, and talk about the armour of God.

I have a real heart for making sure that when we go into schools the children see the Christian life is an abundant life, full of fun and joy. I talk to the kids about getting fit for eternity – being fit in mind, body and soul – and I take Gladiator games in with me, it's so exciting. I've got all manner of inflatable events that I take in with me to schools and churches.

What is your advice to young people living in a world obsessed by social media and celebrity culture?

Whereas the world is saying to the young people, "You're not good enough. Your lips aren't full enough. Your arms aren't big enough." I love to say "Your Creator God loves you. He created you uniquely as you look, and nobody else has been created like you."

I love being able to share that. God has given you a body for a reason and it's where the Holy Spirit comes to dwell. We need to look after ourselves, but if we put that before God, we'll end up worshipping ourselves and it becomes destructive.

But you don't have to conform to social media; you don't have to pretend to be someone.

In a world that's almost encouraging you to blur the lines

of truth saying: "Put a filter on your face" or "Oh it doesn't matter if you tell a lie", being able to tell the truth and to have integrity is a real gift. I think it comes down to identity. A lot of people are looking for their purpose. They're trying to find where they fit in the world and they're trying to find community.

Jesus comes to give you an abundant life now, and a glorious, glorious one after. God created you. God loves you. God has a plan for your life. He's given you not just your own family – and they may let you down terribly – but a wider family, the church. That's how important you are.

What is next for you and the family?

I love introducing people to Jesus. There's nothing better to do with your life than to be a disciple of Jesus. Dionne and I have just been ordained in the Church of England as what's called self-supporting ministers. I'll continue to go into schools and run events through Ace Active.

Our son Bailey is 20 and a talented musician. God has given our daughter Annabel, 18, a real gift for caring for children. She works in a nursery and also loves helping with the Ace Active events – although she gets sick of hearing me talk at them!

The Bible says "Seek and you will find" and whatever I do in the future, I want to continue helping people do just that. If you're only fit for this life, you might miss the whole purpose that you've been born for – there's nothing I'd rather do than tell people about Jesus.



"If you're only fit for this life, you might miss the whole purpose that you've been born for."



If you'd like to find out more about the faith that Warren has found get in touch using the form on the inside front cover.

If you're interested in taking part in a course to learn more about the Christian faith you can find a course here:



90's SATURDAY NIGHT TV

by Sheri Newton

Gladiators first aired just as I turned 10 years old – the perfect age to boo at Wolf and sing 'Another One Bites the Dust' as Jet swooped in and pulled a contender down from the rings. Unbeatable whilst eating crumpets round the TV on a Saturday night with all the family.

Running from 1992 to 2000, Gladiators spanned the 90s, pulling in more than 12 million viewers at its height. And just like many parents, I've loved seeing

the same delight on my children's faces as they cheer on their favourite Gladiator, and spend their Sunday afternoons setting up an eliminator in the garden – that notorious obstacle course deciding each week's winner. Less fun was having to race round it, but I won thanks to a handy disqualification.

TV has of course changed with streaming services, but shows like Britain's Got Talent and Strictly Come

What sticks in the memory for you? To test yourself on the great Saturday night TV of yesteryear, here's a little quiz. Can you name each of the popular 90s programmes from their catchphrase?

- 1 "But we don't want to give you that!"
- 2 "And our survey says..."
- 3 "Nice to see you, to see you nice!"
- 4 "Gotcha!"
- 5 "Tonight, Matthew, I'm going to be..."
- 6 "Next week, the star of the show could be you!"
- 7 "It's good, but it's not right."
- 8 "And here's our Graham with a quick reminder."

Answers on page 19

Dancing still tempt the family to pile on the sofa together on a Saturday evening. There's no hiding the fact that viewer numbers have declined, however, and perhaps I'm not alone in reminiscing about such Saturday night classics as Noel's House Party complete with the gunk tank and terrible jokes, or The Generation Game with its conveyer belt and cuddly toy.

CONVEYOR BELT CHALLENGE

How would you do on The Generation Game's iconic conveyer belt challenge? Time yourself for 45 seconds and then see how many of the following objects you can write down without looking.



All 10: Game show royalty 8-9: Bruce Forsyth would be proud 4-7: Not bad at all – did you get the trip to New York? 2-3: Never mind, you probably didn't need a cassette player anyway! 1: At least you got the cuddly toy!

All I Want for Christmas

Little did Mariah Carey imagine that when she recorded 'All I Want for Christmas Is You' 30 years ago in 1994 it would go on to be the greatest-selling Christmas single of all time. She sang about her wish coming true, and it certainly did. It's estimated that she's received over £60 million in royalties from that one song. In 2019, Walkers crisps reportedly paid her £9 million to use the song in their advert and for a marketing campaign!



All I want for Christmas ... is you, is a great thought. And it's certainly better than the hit novelty song written 50 years earlier by schoolteacher Donald Yetter Gardner, 'All I Want for Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth!' The sentiment is somewhat different from what was announced to shepherds keeping watch over their flocks that first Christmas:

'Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will



be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find the babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.'

"What do you really want for Christmas this year?"

What do you really want for Christmas this year – two front teeth, a romantic relationship, a Saviour? And when Jesus, the Son of God, came into our world, to be born and laid in a manger in Bethlehem, what did God want of us? The trouble with relationships, as with front teeth, is they don't last forever. When Jesus came into the world, He had a more lasting intention for us all.

We know that family gatherings at Christmas are often wonderful, but they can be fraught. Arguments and

disagreements can be as common as the turkey dinner. Just as a Christmas cracker can be pulled apart with a bang, so can family harmony. And the reason is that we all have an ingrained selfishness and sinfulness.

It's that which wrecks relationships, not only between individuals, but also between us and our Creator, God. But if sin separates, Jesus joins. He came to bring lost and broken people into a relationship with Himself, and with each other.

Mariah Carey wants the person she loves to be with her at Christmas – that's so much better than stockings and presents. That's what Jesus came for! He didn't come for our money or our resolutions. He knows we always fall short. He came for you and me – to buy us back and make us His very own! Jesus Himself is the biggest gift ever given. Jesus is our Emmanuel, our 'God with us'. The Son of God became human, becoming like us in every way except He never sinned. He lived a perfect life before making His way to a place called Calvary where He would be crucified.

Jesus wanted us so much that He suffered on the cross to deal with everything that cuts us off from God. Jesus took the rottenness and wrong in each of our lives on Himself. He was paying the price of all that fractures us and separates us from God. He loved us so much that He died for us. That's why Jesus entered our messed-up world that first Christmas. The same Jesus who died on the cross then rose from the dead three days later, defeating our greatest enemy – death. What God wants this Christmas, and every day, is that we turn from our own way, and put our trust in Jesus as our Lord. Then we receive the forgiveness and everlasting life which Jesus the Saviour purchased. The Bible says, 'For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.'

Jesus wants you and me this Christmas. Will you come to Him and trust Him as your Lord and Saviour?

BY ROGER CARSWELL

To find out more get in touch via the form on the inside front cover.

Top 10 requested gifts for adults*

1. Vouchers/gift cards
2. Money
3. Cosmetics or fragrances
4. Clothing
5. Food and drink
6. Jewellery or watches
7. Books
8. Event tickets
9. Smartphones, tablets & accessories
10. Travel/holiday



Four Gift Rule

A recent poll by Ipsos shows that almost three quarters of UK parents think that spending on children's presents has got out of control, and over half are concerned that their children will be disappointed with the presents they will get for Christmas.

A growing number of families are implementing the four gift rule, where children receive just four gifts from their parents: something they **want**, something they **need**, something to **wear**, and something to **read**.

Depending on your children's age, you might ask for their input on some or all of these gifts, or you might choose them yourself.

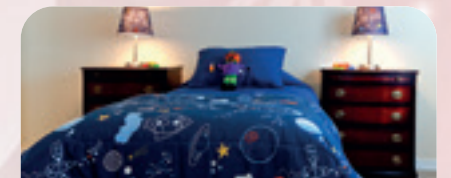
The four gift rule is great because it teaches children that they can't always have everything they want, and helps them to focus on things they actually need instead. As an added bonus it overcomes the comparison between siblings of who got the most presents!

It also teaches children about sustainability since they get gifts they really appreciate and value, without getting many unwanted or undervalued gifts.

Ideas for young children



Want: Doll's house, marble run, scooter, Lego set



Need: Bike helmet, colourful new bedding, novelty lunchbox



Wear: New coat, trainers, pyjamas, gloves and hat set



Read: Picture books, comic or magazine subscription, search and find books

Ideas for teenagers



Want: Video game, board game, drone, day out, gift cards



Need: Hairdryer, new glasses, football boot bag, nice stationary, body wash



Wear: Sports kit, jewellery, clothing gift card, scarf



Read: Fiction series, magazine subscription, audiobook subscription

*<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1084794/christmas-gifts-desired-by-uk-consumers/>

The Little Paws Hotel

Clare Luther is dachshund crazy! For many years she has run a doggie hotel, eventually specialising in dachshunds. She was even inspired to write a series of children's books, *The Little Paws Hotel*, based on some of the guests at her hotel. Clare shares with us some of her highlights.



Why did you open The Little Paws Hotel?

I stopped working as an occupational therapist to care full-time for our young children when my husband's work hours significantly ramped up. I found a homebased agency job looking after dogs and every time a booking came in for a dachshund our family's hearts melted. We quickly got one of our own; a miniature smooth haired black and tan dachshund called Wotsit.

One day I received a call from an owner wanting some day care for her dachshund as she'd heard I was a 'dachshund specialist' (which I wasn't at the time). In that moment the business idea of looking after these short-legged long-backed hounds was born!

What is it?

The Little Paws Hotel is run in our family home where we open our door to six dachshunds at a time for day care or overnight stays. It may seem quite niche, but each dog spends their day with others their own shape and size playing, eating, sleeping, going for short walks, and receiving copious amounts of cuddles from us. With their long backs they need to be cared for in quite a specific way – no stairs, no furniture jumping (we try!), and short walks.

Why dachshunds? What makes them so special?

These quirky fun-sized dogs are packed with character. They are both entertaining and exasperating in equal measure with their love of being cuddled, desire to be buried under blankets, relentless barking, early waking, and indoor toileting if it is raining! They are definitely fair-weather dogs. Most days dogs are queuing up by my feet pleading with their puppy dog eyes to be lavished upon with hugs and strokes.

A funny moment at the hotel?

One day, we were getting the dogs ready to go for a walk and couldn't locate one. We found her in the washing machine! She had climbed in and was patiently waiting for us to help her out.

You're about to hang up the leads... What will you miss?

I have lived out my promise to be home-based until my two daughters

finish school, a milestone we've just reached. I will miss the sofa snuggles with all six dogs curled up around me under a blanket, but thankfully we have Wotsit to give us our daily dachshund fix.

You've published a number of children's books over the past few years. What do you write about?

I write rhyming picture books about everyday big emotions and core values for children aged three to eight years old. The series title, *The Little Paws Hotel*, and characters in my first book, *Olive*, were inspired by my dog business. The other characters then developed from there. I've also recently published a Christian picture book called *Say What?!*. My passion with all of my writing, whoever the reader, is to support the family unit as a whole with their emotional and spiritual health. Each picture book is well researched and relatable to help young children explore their own thoughts and feelings, plus I include questions to prompt parents and caregivers to start meaningful conversations with their little ones. I've also recently published a parenting handbook, *The Daesy Dialogue*, focusing on the 'how to' aspect of having conversations with young children to promote their emotional growth.



What's your plan going forward?

By God's grace and after years of praying, my husband came to faith in 2021. Because of our personal journey I long for people to know and share the same joy in God – a God who prioritises relationship, who loves us, forgives us, and saves us. Jesus has dramatically and miraculously changed our marriage and my parenting over the years, so my hope is to continue writing about the importance of connection and conversation for both adults and children.

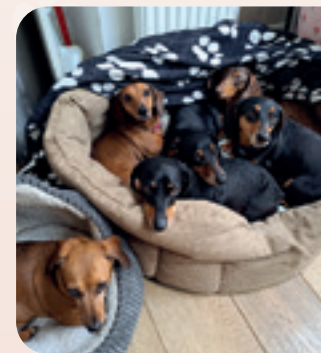
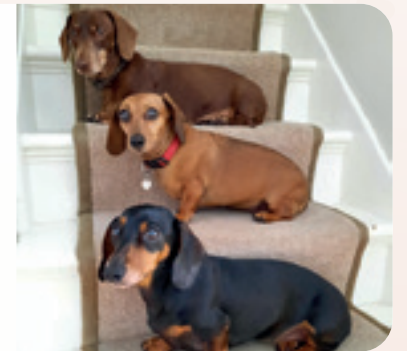
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A day in the life of The Little Paws Hotel



I don't use an alarm clock at The Little Paws Hotel – I have my overnight dachshund guests! With small whimpers that can sometimes escalate to high-pitched barks, guests get me up between 5 and 6am for breakfast. If I'm lucky, I might be able to return to bed once they're fed.

At 6.20 I collect a dachshund locally and return ready for the next guest to be dropped off at 6.45. The last dog drop-off is around 9.30am and, depending on my other commitments, I will either walk them in the morning or in the afternoon. I take two or three dogs out at a time, depending on who they are most compatible with and how noisy they are.



The middle of my days (and evenings) are dedicated to writing and online or in-person meetings. The dogs keep each other company in beds surrounding my desk and often I find four or five curled up together under blankets. But don't be fooled into thinking all is quiet! At any given moment a squirrel, pigeon, passing pedestrian, or postman causes a Mexican wave of barking – they all set each other off!

The trickiest days are the rainy ones. Dachshunds loathe wet weather – they will *not* go out, either to walk or to toilet. So, you can imagine how busy it is keeping my house clean with them playing and toileting indoors!



Dinner is at 4pm and each dog has their own food given in weighed quantities. Once fed, pick-ups start from 4.30pm until late depending on the agreed time with the owner. Then it's lights out for overnight guests and our own dog, Wotsit, between 11pm and midnight.

CHRISTMAS BOOK CRAFT

This is an easy Christmas craft, suitable for children, that doesn't take many supplies. Simply repeat a couple of simple folds, you can even do it while you listen to music or watch something. They look great propped up on a shelf, or you can even frame them.

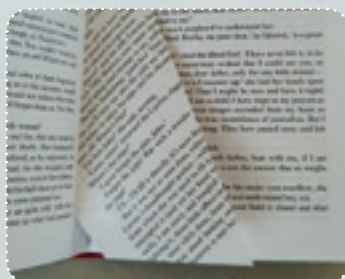


Method

1. Find the halfway point of the book and open wide to crease the spine.
2. From this halfway point, flick forward 25, 50 and 75 pages, creasing at each point.
3. Go back to the halfway point and flick backward 25, 50 and 75 pages, creasing the spine at each point.
4. You will fold the 50 pages before, and 50 pages after the middle (50 pages is 25 folds – each fold is 2 pages, the front and back of one sheet).
5. Each fold requires 3 steps:
 - A. Fold down the top right-hand corner to meet the centre of the book (A1-A2). Make a neat fold and crease well.
 - B. Take the same page and fold so the edge you just creased sits directly on top of the centre line (B1-B2). Crease well.
 - C. The part of the page hanging over the bottom (C) needs to be creased and tucked inside of the page.
6. Repeat the process. The more pages you fold, the harder it is to stay neat at the top, but you can use a cocktail stick, or nail file to get into the top section.
7. Once you've done 50 folds, you're ready to add the twine and star using a glue gun or other glue.
8. Apply glue behind the 1st and last folds to secure the twine. Apply a small amount of glue to attach the star.
9. Display your tree!

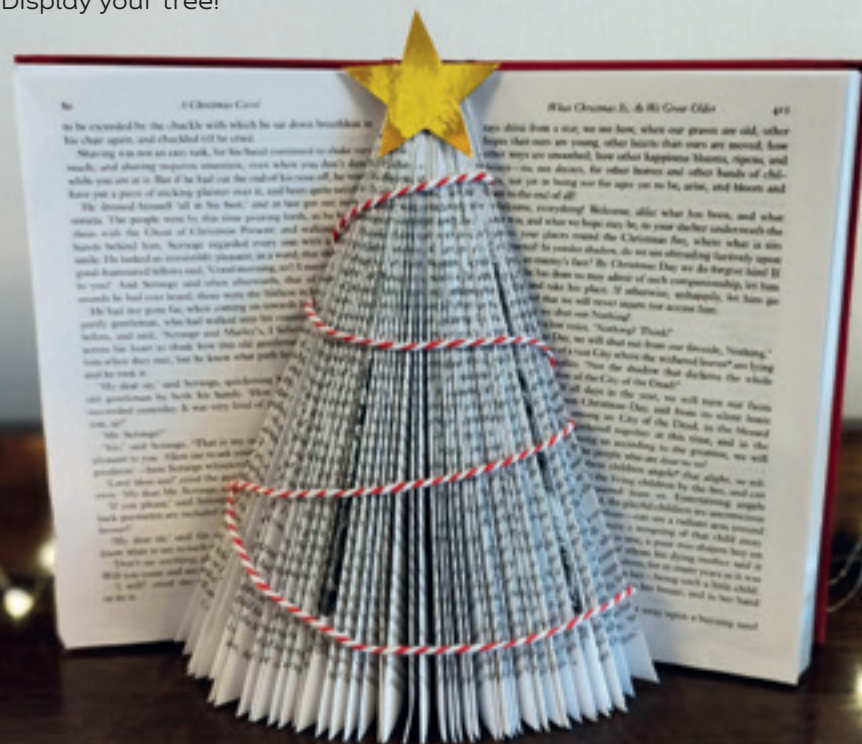
Supplies

- 1 x unwanted book
- 1 x cardboard star
- 50cm twine
- Glue



360 Degree Tree

If you want something to place on a table as a centrepiece you can adapt this method. Find an unwanted paperback, approx. 150 pages, and follow instructions 1 to 6 and keep going until all the pages are folded. You should have a 360 degree tree, ready for decoration and display.



Joni Eareckson Tada

Do you like running and jumping? Do you like swimming and kicking a ball about?

Joni Eareckson Tada liked all those things too. She liked to run and swim and ride horses and play tennis. But then, one day, she dived into a lake and hurt her neck. She hurt her neck so badly that she couldn't move her legs or her feet. She couldn't move her arms or her hands either. That made Joni very sad – then she remembered her friend Jesus.

She knew that Jesus was with her and loved her. She knew that bad things happened to Jesus too and that he understood. She knew that one day, when she went to live with her friend Jesus forever, she would be able to run and jump again.

So Joni has spent her life telling people about her friend Jesus. In books, on the radio, in talks and through pictures painted with a brush in her mouth, Joni has told people how Jesus is always with her, always loves her and always helps her. She has told them how Jesus loves everybody – whether they can run or not; whether they can jump or not; whether they can see or not; whether they can hear or not – and how one day Jesus' friends will all run and jump and hear and see when they live with him forever.



“My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life.”

PSALM 119:50



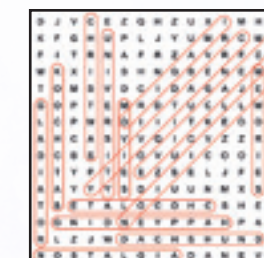
For more true stories of faithful lives get a copy of *Everyone a Child Should Know* published by 10Publishing.

QUIZ ANSWERS

Page 13 Saturday Night TV:

1. Who Wants to be a Millionaire
2. Family Fortunes
3. The Generation Game
4. Noel's Houseparty
5. Stars in their Eyes
6. You've Been Framed
7. Catchphrase
8. Blind Date

Page 20 Wordsearch:



Page 20 Sudoku: Easy

9	5	6	1	2	3	7	8	4
1	2	4	8	7	9	5	3	6
3	8	7	6	4	5	1	2	9
5	4	2	7	3	6	8	9	1
7	9	8	5	1	4	2	6	3
6	1	3	2	9	8	4	7	5
8	6	9	4	5	7	3	1	2
2	3	5	9	8	1	6	4	7
4	7	1	3	6	2	9	5	8

Page 20 Sudoku: Medium

1	4	8	5	6	9	7	2	3
9	7	6	2	3	4	1	5	8
3	2	5	8	7	1	6	9	4
6	3	9	4	2	5	8	7	1
7	5	2	3	1	8	9	4	6
8	1	4	6	9	7	5	3	2
2	6	7	9	8	3	4	1	5
4	9	3	1	5	6	2	8	7
5	8	1	7	4	2	3	6	9

Life Wordsearch

Complete the wordsearch by finding the words horizontally, vertically or diagonally.

D	J	V	C	E	Z	Q	H	Z	U	X	I	M	H	H
K	F	G	H	U	P	L	J	Y	U	M	R	C	M	A
F	I	T	R	N	A	F	R	Z	A	V	R	F	C	F
M	K	X	I	I	S	H	N	G	B	E	N	E	M	T
T	O	M	S	V	D	C	I	D	A	G	A	J	E	J
G	O	P	T	E	M	R	D	T	U	C	L	L	M	V
L	C	P	M	R	O	I	I	I	T	K	E	O	O	B
A	H	C	A	S	V	V	Q	I	C	V	Z	Z	R	W
D	C	B	S	I	I	O	V	U	I	C	O	O	I	O
I	T	Y	P	T	E	E	Z	S	E	L	J	F	E	N
A	A	Y	Y	Y	S	D	I	U	U	N	M	X	S	D
T	B	E	T	A	L	O	C	O	H	C	S	H	E	E
O	G	N	I	D	N	E	Y	P	P	A	H	P	A	R
R	L	Z	J	W	D	A	C	H	S	H	U	N	D	E
N	O	S	T	A	L	G	I	A	D	A	N	E	V	D

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| ACE ACTIVE | MEMORIES |
| BATCH COOK | MOVIES |
| CHOCOLATE | NOSTALGIA |
| CHRISTMAS | ORIGAMI |
| CREATIVITY | TELEVISION |
| DACHSHUND | UNIVERSITY |
| HAPPY ENDING | WONDERED |
| GLADIATOR | |

Sudoku

Place the numbers 1-9 in each 3x3 box, each full row and each full column without duplicating.

			1	2	3			
1		4				5		6
		7				1		
5						8		1
					4			
6				9				5
8				5				2
	3						4	
				6				

EASY

1								
			2	3	4			
		5				6		
6	3			2			7	1
			3		8			
8	1			9			3	2
		7				4		
			1	5	6			
								9

MEDIUM

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