

# Pray Kids!

ADVENTURES WITH JESUS IN PRAYER

## Praying the Distance

By Cheri Fuller

### The Word On...

#### Perseverance

The dictionary says that **perseverance** means “continuing firmly or with steady effort in spite of difficulties.” But really that’s just a fancy way of saying, “keep on keeping on”!

Praying with **perseverance** means that you “keep on keeping on” in your prayers. You keep praying about something as many times as it takes, because you know God will come through in the end.

Jesus knew that it would be really important for us to learn this. He told His disciples, “Ask and keep on asking and it shall be given you; seek and keep on seeking and you shall find; knock and keep on knocking and the door shall be opened to you” (Luke 11:9, The Amplified Bible). That’s good news! When you “keep on keeping on” in prayer, He hears and answers (Luke 11:10)! ★

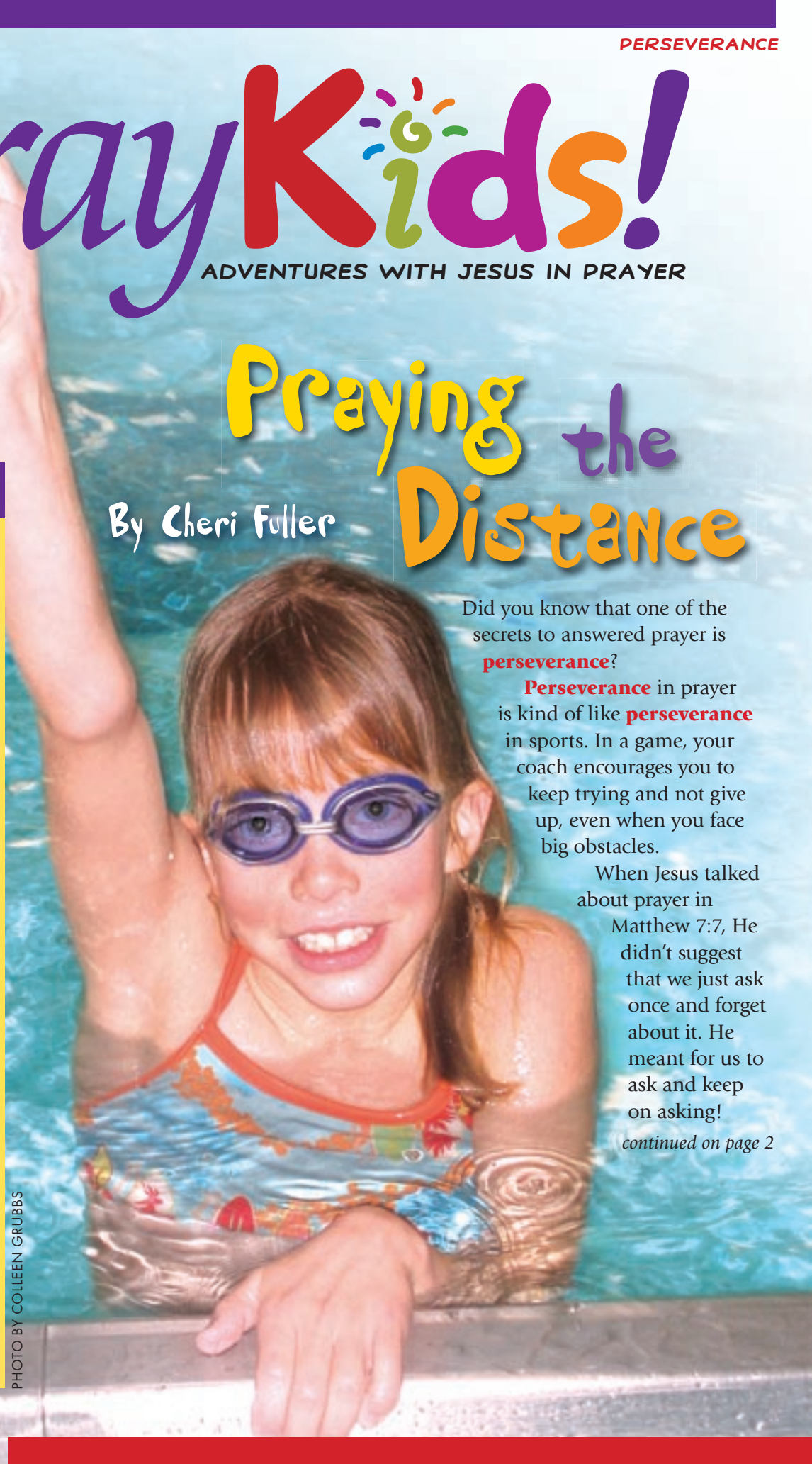
PHOTO BY COLLEEN GRUBBS

Did you know that one of the secrets to answered prayer is **perseverance**?

**Perseverance** in prayer is kind of like **perseverance** in sports. In a game, your coach encourages you to keep trying and not give up, even when you face big obstacles.

When Jesus talked about prayer in Matthew 7:7, He didn’t suggest that we just ask once and forget about it. He meant for us to ask and keep on asking!

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Sure, God could answer our prayers immediately. But sometimes He doesn't, because He's going to make something bigger and better happen while we wait.

Here's a story that reminds me to **persevere** in my prayers:

A long time ago, a champion swimmer named Florence was set to swim the long distance from the California coast to Catalina Island. That day, the water was freezing, the fog was so thick she couldn't see, and the waters were infested with sharks. Florence's trainers had to use rifles to keep the sharks away from her!

Florence swam for 15 hours. But then, she decided she couldn't swim anymore. She was too tired, too cold. When she got into the boat, however, she saw that she was only a half-mile from her goal!

If Florence had ended there, she would have never met her goal. But that's not the end of the story. Two months later, Florence tried again. It was still hard, but this time she made it. Why? Because this time she **persevered**!

Do you know what happens after a dam is

built in a mountain valley? It can take many months (sometimes even a year) for water to fill the reservoir behind the dam. Drop by drop, the water gets higher and higher. But when it gets to a certain level, the water begins to turn hydroelectric generators. Then, a huge amount of power is released. It can light up a whole city!

Something like this seems to happen when we **persevere** in prayer. As more and more prayers are said for a situation, the prayer "dam" fills up. Then, when it's God's perfect time, He releases His energy into that situation.

You may feel tired of praying for something. You may think that things will never change. But don't stop. Remember God's faithfulness. Trust His wisdom and timing. And get your friends to pray with you—they can help you to keep praying until the answer comes.

The Bible tells us, "So don't get tired of doing what is good" (and we know prayer is good!). "Don't get discouraged and give up, for we will reap a harvest of blessing at the appropriate time" (Galatians 6:9, New Living Translation). Keep praying: the "appropriate" time may be just around the corner! ★

Cheri Fuller is the author of *When Children Pray* and *When Mothers Pray* (from which this article is adapted).

## It's Not Nagging!

A child once asked me, "If I pray about something over and over, won't God think I'm nagging?" Actually, when Jesus said not to use "vain [meaningless] repetitions" (Matthew 6:7, New King James Version) in prayer, He meant don't use prayer as a religious ritual.

**Perseverance** in prayer is never nagging. God loves to hear your voice! Just as I love to hear my kids' voices whenever they call me on the phone (they're grown up and live in other cities), God loves for you to come to Him. He *wants* you to ask and keep on asking Him for the things on your heart. ★

—By Cheri Fuller

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### Mission Statement

The mission of **PrayKids!** is to teach, encourage, and equip children (ages eight to 12) as they develop a deepening relationship with Christ through prayer, so that they might become more effective prayer warriors.

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# Prayer to the Rescue

**Hi.** My name is Katie. My dad works at night loading boxes into trailers. The trailers are big and white and pulled by semi-trucks. They go all over the country. The trailers can hold around a thousand packages. My dad helps load two trailers every night.

To get into the trailer, he climbs a short ladder and then walks across a concrete and steel catwalk. The catwalk is about four feet off the floor. He has to get into and out of the trailer dozens of times each night. After handling thousands of packages, he comes home with bruises, scratches, and achy muscles. Things my dad says to my mom make me think it's not the safest job.

Before I go to sleep every night I say prayers. I learned how to pray about two years ago with a group of kids at my church. I pray for Mom, Dad, my sister Emily, grandmas and grandpas, aunts and uncles, cousins, and friends. One night, when I said my bedtime prayers, I prayed protection for my dad. I don't know why I prayed protection. It just came out. This had never happened to me before.

The night I prayed protection for my dad, a supervisor asked him to come up onto the catwalk right away to help load a very heavy package. It was 120 pounds, and it needed to be loaded into the trailer quickly because the driver was waiting to leave. My dad climbed the ladder, went over to the package, and knelt down. He grabbed the box and got ready to lift. His left foot slipped off the catwalk and he tumbled four feet onto the concrete floor. He hit his elbow on the concrete. He said it hurt a lot. My dad was taken to an office and had to fill out some papers and explain what had happened. His elbow was sore, but nothing was broken. He didn't have to go to the hospital or anything.

When the safety lady asked him what had happened, he said, "Well, I fell off the catwalk and hit my elbow. I was in a hurry and got careless."

"Were there any witnesses?" asked the lady.

"Well, the supervisor, Jason, saw it happen. I know the truck driver saw me fall, and, of course, God was there. He was the one who caught me."

The lady didn't say anything after that.

My dad didn't know that I had prayed for his protection that night. But he felt God catch him. And I think this experience has made him closer to God. ★



By Katie McConnell, age 12

## Hope for the Heart

When you've been hoping and praying a long time for something that hasn't happened yet, it can feel pretty discouraging. God understands. He even says in Proverbs 13:12 that "Hope that is put off makes one sick at heart" (New International Reader's Version).

But you don't need to lose hope, even if you have to pray a long time before God answers. Ask God to help you.

There are lots of Scriptures you can use to pray for **perseverance**, such as: "He gives power to those who are tired and worn out; he offers strength to the weak" (Isaiah 40:29, New Living Translation).

Here's how you can turn that verse into a prayer: "Mighty God, I'm tired and worn out from praying so long but not seeing an answer. Please give me Your power and strength to keep on praying. I trust You, God. Amen."

Here are other verses you can turn into prayers for **perseverance**: Galatians 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Ephesians 6:18.

Remember—don't lose hope. God is good. He loves you! He will give you **persevering** power! ★

# The Widow Who

**A fictional story  
based on Luke 18:1-8**

**By Joyce K. Ellis**

*Jesus once told a story to encourage us to keep praying, even when things look hopeless. Let's call the widow in the story Mara and imagine how it might have happened:*

**W**hack! A loud blow on Mara's door sent her scrambling into a dark corner inside her little house. "Go away!" the young widow called. "I told you yesterday . . . and the day before . . . and the day before that, I don't have any more money."

The thump of a big wooden club shook the walls. "If you don't pay me more," called a deep, gruff voice, "I'll set fire to your house!" Cruel laughter filled the air.

Mara's heart beat faster. "No, please," she begged. "I've paid what my husband owed you. Leave me alone!"

The sound of other men's voices drew close.

"Tomorrow," the greedy businessman called. "I want my money tomorrow!"

Mara peeked out the window as he retreated. Then she paced back and forth. "What can I do?" she cried. "What can I do?"

Mara's husband had died, and she now lived alone. Trembling, she headed out to see Ikkesh\*, the local judge. He was her only hope.

Ikkesh, a large man, sat at the city gate, stroking his long red beard and swapping stories with other town leaders.



# Wouldn't Give Up



Approaching, Mara straightened her shawl over her dark hair. "Ikkesh, sir," she said. "Please help. That wicked man has come again."

Ikkesh laughed. "What do I care? That is your problem!"

"But sir," Mara persisted, "I have no one else to turn to."

"Every day you come here," Ikkesh replied as he spat on the ground. "Leave me alone. I'm conducting important business."

Tears filled Mara's eyes. "But he threatened to burn my house! Jehovah commands you to protect widows and orphans."

"Jehovah! Ha!" Ikkesh scoffed. "Do you think your tears move me, woman? Get out of here." He nodded toward a mean-looking brute nearby, who lunged at her.

Mara jumped back. "I won't go!" she cried. "For weeks I have begged you. I'm not leaving until you arrest that awful man and make him leave me alone."

Ikkesh silently stroked his beard. Anger flashed in his eyes. "I . . . could not . . . care less . . . what happens to you," he said slowly. "But I am tired of you coming here day after day. I am tired of your tears. I am tired of your persistent pleas. Your **perseverance** wears me out."

Again, Ikkesh nodded toward the brute. "Go ahead. Arrest the man," he ordered.

The brute stomped off, and Mara almost collapsed in relief. "Thank you, Ikkesh. May Jehovah smile on you." She turned and started to run.

"I do not want Jehovah's smile," Ikkesh shouted.

Mara stopped. "Then you shall have mine."

A big grin brightened her face, and she scurried home, unafraid.

*After Jesus finished this story, He said that even a judge who didn't respect God or care about people would listen to someone who **persevered** in asking. Imagine how our heavenly Father, who is completely good and loves us so much, listens when we keep asking without giving up.*

*\*Ikkesh is an obscure Old Testament name meaning "crooked" or "depraved." ★*

Author and speaker Joyce K. Ellis created the book, *One-Minute Bible Devotions for Kids* (Broadman & Holman), an enjoyable way for children to listen to and respond to God's Word each day of the year. To see more of her stories and puzzles, go to her web site ([www.joycekellis.com](http://www.joycekellis.com)) and click on Kids' Corner.

## What's in a Name?

Write your name vertically, and use each letter to begin a word, phrase, or sentence to remind you to **persevere** in prayer. (Parents may enjoy helping.) For example, if your name is Jake, you might write something like this:

**J**esus persevered on the cross for me.

**A**lways remember God's love.

**K**eep praying, and never give up.


**E**very time I pray, I show God that I trust Him to be wise, kind, and just.


Display your acrostic on your dresser or in your school locker. You can make similar acrostics with the names of other people in your family and give them as gifts. ★




## Let's Pray for Your School

Did you know that you and Jesus can be partners in making your school a better place? If you pray, Jesus can do amazing things in your classroom and in your classmates. Start by asking Him to help you see beyond what's on the outside to what's going on inside of others. For instance:


 A classmate has shabby clothes. Maybe she doesn't have parents around to help her buy her clothes and keep them clean. Maybe her family doesn't have enough money to buy new clothes.


 A kid is very shy and quiet. Maybe he faces a scary walk home past a bully every day. Maybe he goes home to an empty house every afternoon. Maybe he has a parent with a drinking or drug problem, and he's worried that other kids will find out.



 A friend brags about her nice clothes or her good grades. Maybe she doesn't get enough attention or affection from her parents. Or maybe her

parents put a lot of pressure on her to be perfect in everything she does. Maybe she feels that her grades are never good enough or she's not pretty enough.

 Your teacher is yelling a lot. Maybe she has an unhappy marriage or her own children are having problems. Maybe she's worried about her job.

 A big kid is being mean to a little kid. Maybe the big kid is getting bullied at home. Maybe he doesn't have any friends. Maybe no one has ever shown him how to work out problems without being aggressive.

SIX

# COVER THE GLOBE

## Let's Pray for Our Schools

**1.** Place a hedge of protection and blessing around my school, Lord. Send Your angels to guard us from any violence or mean acts (Job 1:10; Psalm 91:11).

**2.** Loving Father, make our school a place where students and teachers are kind and forgiving, just like You are with us. Show us ways to bless our enemies and give us grace and courage to do what You show us (Ephesians 4:32; Matthew 5:43-47).

**3.** God, teach me—and all of the students at my school—to obey and respect the principal, teach-

ers, coaches, and other adults at school. Help us to submit to their authority because You have put them in that position (Romans 13:1-2).

**4.** Jesus, protect us from forming unhealthy relationships with people who will mislead us and pull us into wrong choices (1 Corinthians 15:33).

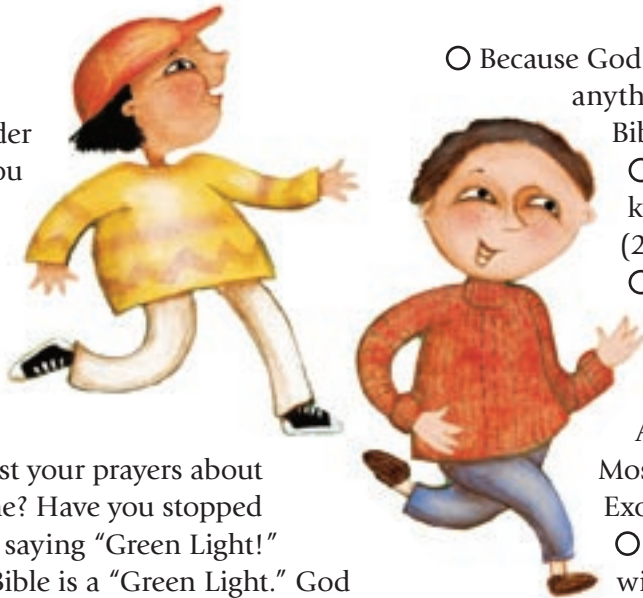
**5.** Lord, I pray what's on Your heart: that every student and teacher at my school would come to know the truth about You and be saved (1 Timothy 2:4).

When you pray for your school, the Holy Spirit joins right in. He knows just what's needed, even if you don't. Before you know it, the atmosphere of your school can change completely! ★

By Fern Nichols, president of Moms In Touch. Cover the Globe prayer points were adapted from the prayer card "Praying for My School," which is available at [www.praykids.com](http://www.praykids.com) or by calling 1-800-366-7788.

## You've Got the Green Light!

Have you ever played "Red Light, Green Light"? When the leader yells "Green light!" you run toward the finish line. When he yells "Red light!" you have to stop. When he yells "Green Light!" you can move again.



Do you feel there is a "Red Light" against your prayers about something or someone? Have you stopped praying? Well, God is saying "Green Light!" Each promise in the Bible is a "Green Light." God wants you to keep praying until He answers. That's when you cross the prayer "finish line."

Read the Scriptures below. Then, color the circle next to each sentence that gives you a "Green Light" to keep praying.

○ Because God's Word is always true, I can pray for anything He has promised in the Bible (1 John 5:14-15).

○ God is faithful and will keep His promises to me (2 Peter 1:3-6).

○ I can ask friends to join me and encourage me when I get tired waiting for an answer (like Aaron and Hur helped

Moses to **persevere** in Exodus 17:12).

○ Jesus loves me and is praying with me (Romans 8:34).

Also, read books about people who trusted God and kept praying, including Eric Liddell, George Müller, George Washington Carver, Corrie Ten Boom, and others. They are great examples of "Green Light" pray-ers. ★



## Seeds of Perseverance

This activity will help you see how important it is to keep praying and not give up.

You'll need:

- A small handful of seeds (bean seeds from a garden supply store, or pinto beans purchased in the grocery bulk foods section work well)
- 2 Styrofoam cups
- Potting soil
- A felt-tipped marker
- A clean spray bottle filled with water

Fill each cup about three-quarters full of soil. Plant five or six seeds in each cup, spacing them evenly over the top of the soil. Put a little more soil over the seeds, filling each cup to the brim. The seeds represent your prayer requests.

On one of the cups, use marker to write "**Persevering** Prayers." On the other cup, write "Prayed for One Time."

Now take the spray bottle and spritz each

cup until the surface of the soil is very wet. The water represents your prayers. The cup that says, "Prayed for One Time" gets watered only on the first day. But every time you notice the soil in the "**Persevering** Prayers" cup looking dry, water it again (up to twice a day).

For a while, it will seem like nothing is happening. But if you **persevere** in your watering, you'll start to see sprouts in a week or so! These tiny plants represent God's answers to your prayers!

What happened to the seeds that were "prayed for" just once? What does this tell you about not giving up in prayer? ★





# A Mountain-Moving Story

A Family Read-Aloud on Perseverance

By Cheri Fuller

Jesus often told stories to His disciples because storytelling is a wonderful way to convey truth. Here's a story that illustrates the power of **persevering** prayer. Gather your kids together and read this story to them. Then go through the discussion questions.

After World War II, many half-Japanese/half-American children were abandoned in Japan. They were left to die by a society that didn't value their lives. But Christian missionaries, seeing the children's plight, started orphanages. In one of these orphanages, Irene Smith, an English missionary, cared for 22 outcast children.

8 One night, a sick, bedridden orphan girl heard a sermon about how faith in God, combined with **persevering** prayer, could accomplish great things. The sermon revealed something that Jesus told His disciples: if they had faith and didn't doubt, they would be able to move mountains and cast them into the sea.

The story caught the little orphan's attention because she wanted more than anything to see the Japanese Inland Sea again. She couldn't go to the beach because of her illness, and a huge mountain blocked the view from her hospital bed.

That night at bedtime prayers, the little girl started praying that God would move the mountain, even

though Miss Irene told her the Bible verse referred to the mountains of trials in our lives, not a real mountain. Every night, however, the other orphan girls joined the sick child at her bedside and agreed together according to Matthew 18:19-20. They earnestly prayed that God show His kindness by moving the mountain so the little girl could see the sea.

Irene went back to England on furlough and returned months later. When she walked into the dormitory, she found all the little girls clustered in front of the window. Looking out, the missionary could hardly believe what she saw: the Japanese Inland Sea! "What happened to the mountain?" she exclaimed.

"All we know is that we saw many bulldozers going up and down the mountain moving dirt," the girls answered, their eyes lit up with joy.

Curious about this, Irene went to the town office. The mayor explained that coastal waves had eroded the land. They needed the earth from the mountain to backfill the coastline. Sure enough, they moved that mountain and "cast it into the sea"!

A few months later, the little girl who had **persevered** in prayer with her friends died. Eventually, the orphanage building was torn down. But the view of the Japanese Inland Sea is still there.

This story is excerpted from Cheri Fuller's devotional book for parents and kids, *When Families Pray* (Multnomah Publishers).

## Discussion questions:

- 1 Is there a "mountain" in your life that you'd like to see God move?
- 2 In the Bible, God parted the Red Sea. He brought down the walls of Jericho. He closed the mouths of hungry lions. He did many other "impossible" things as well. What "impossible" things has He done in your life so far? How can that help you to keep praying "mountain moving" prayers?
- 3 How can you help your friends and family to keep praying about the "mountains" you are facing in your lives?

## MEMORY VERSE

*Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*

Galatians 6:9

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