

Redden ✦ Reed ✦ Yamada

**God's
Amazing
Creation**



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Dedication

For Ron
—Vicki

Father, Grandfather Lowell Litten,
who taught us to love words.
—Dee and Joelle

Authors' Bios



VICKI REDDEN works with *Insight* magazine and enjoys kids of all ages. She lives in Mayland with her husband, Ron, and their two dogs, and has explored God's creation from Australia to her own backyard.



DEE LITTEN REED grew up on a farm in Virginia, surrounded by the usual farm animals, as well as a few wild creatures she rescued. She loves visiting zoos and aquariums with her grandson, Tommy, and watching whales cruise off the coast of Ventura, California.



JOELLE REED YAMADA took a year off from teaching high school religion classes to backpack around the world by herself. She and her husband, Brent, live on a dairy farm in England, where she teaches psychology and is learning all about being an English farm wife. She tries very hard to keep her dog, Nala, out of trouble.

Worship Dog

Duchess loved morning worship. Unfortunately, on some mornings *she* was the only one that did.

Morning after morning, day after day, the seven of us gathered in our living room for worship. It didn't matter if we were late to work or to school, or if I had a huge assignment due, or if my hair wasn't cooperating, or that I hated what I was wearing—we had to sit down and have worship.

The scene went something like this: Dad would finish reading the day's devotional, then slam the book shut. This was Duchess', our big German shepherd, cue to jump to her feet and wait for us to kneel for prayer. After prayer, she'd dance for joy until the last of our family rushed out the front door. Her morning duties done, she napped until the mail mysteriously appeared in the slot in our front door. It was then her job to tear everything to shreds.

Have you ever had one of those crazy mornings when your Mom's alarm clock doesn't buzz, or your Dad forgot to get milk, and you can't find your other sneaker? Well, it was one of those mornings, and instead of stopping for worship we all raced for the door and to the station wagon, our books, jackets, lunch bags, and homework piled in our arms. The last one out, I turned to lock the door—and saw Duchess in her usual place by my father's empty chair. She hadn't forgotten worship.

So we all filed back into the house and sat down for worship. And you know something? I enjoyed worship a lot more than usual that day. Duchess had reminded me how important it was.

To be honest, you won't always be happy when you sit down to have worship. Some days you'll be grumpy, in a rush, or bored. But don't give up. Keep reading stories about how much God loves you and how He has plans for every part of your life.

—Dee

*Worship the Lord
with gladness;
come before him,
singing with joy.
Psalm 100:2, NLT.*



Brave and Strong Insect

*Be strong, all of
you who put your
hope in the Lord.
Never give up.
Psalm 31:24,
NIV.*

They were everywhere. They were on the living room couch, on the piano, in the bathroom on the sink, on my new bedspread, and on our kitchen table. And I still remember how frustrated with me my Mom was.

“But I was just learning about nature,” I whined.

“Next time, check with me before you bring in your experiments,” she said sternly. “And now, get a box, catch the praying mantis babies and let them loose outside.”

At least Mom had answered one part of my puzzle: the name of the insect. A while before I’d found a brown lump that looked kind of like Styrofoam attached to a twig in our yard. I carefully broke it off, brought it in, and set it on the kitchen windowsill. And then . . . forgot about it. That brown lump was the egg sac of a praying mantis, and we had mantis babies all over the house.

After rounding up as many of the babies as I could and depositing them outside, I went to our well-worn bookcase of encyclopedias—this was in the olden days before the Internet.

I discovered that praying mantis egg cases contain 100 to 300 nymphs (babies). When fully grown, a mantis is about four inches tall. People who have gardens love them because they eat grasshoppers, houseflies, wasps, caterpillars, moths, beetles, and fruit flies. The mantis is also super strong and can lift 24 times its own weight.

All through history, people have been fascinated by the mantis. In fact, an ancient Chinese carving of a mantis has this saying underneath: Be as brave as the mantis—fear not your enemy.

You can be strong, too. You can have the strength that comes from having hope in the Lord,

—Dee



Who Am I?

I am a bug. I'm usually seen only in warm weather—summer in most parts of the United States.

I live all over the world.

In the Far East and the West Indies, people catch large numbers of my relatives and put us in lanterns for light.

To “talk” to others like me, I light up the tip of the bottom side of my belly and blink my light. Different species can usually be told apart by the pattern of their blinking.

In most species like me, only the female lights up. She does this to attract a mate. Sometimes, though, a female will blink like another species of me to trick a male. Then, when he gets close, she grabs him and eats him!

Many kids like to try to catch me in jars on warm summer evenings to watch me light up.

ANSWER: You probably guessed by now that I'm a firefly! My light can be seen very clearly on a dark summer night. The way you live your life can be like a light in a dark world. Let your light shine today!

—Vicki

*Let us walk in the
light of the Lord.*

Isaiah 2:5, NIV.



Lions and Lambs, Kittens and Bunnies

Wolves will live with lambs.

Leopards will lie down with goats.

Calves and lions will eat together.

And little children will lead them

around. Isaiah

11:6, NIV.

Mr. X was a tabby cat with a patch of white fur that looked like a white bow tie. Lordly and lazy, he had his own fireside basket and a cat door on the back porch so he could go outside whenever he wanted. Occasionally, he'd bring in a field mouse to prove he had earned his breakfast bowl of milk.

One January morning 9-year-old Martin rushed in screaming to his father that Mr. X had caught a baby rabbit and was about to kill it. So Martin's dad ran out and rescued the tiny, gray-brown ball of fur. That night Martin fed That Rabbit, as the bunny became known, through the rubber tube from his father's fountain pen. The next morning the baby rabbit was well enough to eat dandelion and clover leaves from the garden, and soon she became a full member of the household.

TR, as That Rabbit was called for short, loved to play—especially catch-me-if-you-can. She would run under the furniture, but if you took too long to find her, she would stamp her feet to give you a hint where she was. She would also make little grunting sounds when she was happy.

TR became quite a part of the family, but she had yet to make friends with Mr. X. So you can imagine how surprised Martin was the day he found Mr. X and TR lying side by side on the rug in front of the fireplace. Mr. X was purring and licking TR. What brought about this change of heart was quite a mystery until Martin remembered seeing TR digging a hole under the catnip in the garden that afternoon. The rabbit still smelled like catnip, which is irresistible to almost any cat.

In heaven, lions and lambs and cats and bunnies will lie down together, but it won't be catnip that's done the trick. God will have made all things new, and even animals that are enemies here will be friends.

—Dee



I Spy

Have you ever played I Spy? To play, someone puts a small object in plain sight in a room, and you ask questions that help you discover where it is. When you see it, you say, “I spy!”

Do you like to lie on your back and find pictures in the clouds, or get down on your knees and watch a tiny ant carrying a crumb back to its home?

Some people have trained themselves to be able to see things that others may not see. I remember looking for sand dollars on the beach near an ocean that I visited. At first I had a hard time spotting them for they were covered with a light coating of sand. But my friend who was with me found one after another. But the more I looked, the better my eyes got at finding these round flat shells.

Marlin Perkins is a man who knows all about nature. He tells about traveling to Alberta, Canada, in the winter to see a kind of owl called a snowy owl. Its feathers are snow-white. His friend took him for a drive in the country, and now and then the friend stopped and pointed. Without using binoculars, Marlin could never see the snowy owls. It happened over and over again.

“There was nothing wrong with my vision,” said Perkins, “So finally I said, ‘Al, how in the world do you spot them so quickly?’”

“Well,” he replied, “I always look for a little spot that’s whiter than the snow.”

When you were in beginners and kindergarten Sabbath school, you sang a song that said no matter how dirty your heart is with sin, “Jesus makes it white when He comes in.” It’s true. When we ask Jesus to forgive us, he will make our sins whiter than snow. And when Jesus is looking for a child with a clean loving heart, He’ll look at you and say, “I spy!”

—Dee

Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. Isaiah 1:18, NIV.

