

An Original Story by Father Matthew:  
What is Milo Good At? Because Everyone is Good at Something!

It was a beautiful Autumn day and Mrs. Jenkins' 4<sup>th</sup> grade class had worked so hard all week – she decided to give them an extended afternoon recess at the city park.

Since the park was just a short walk from the school – Mr. Hill, the principal, gave his approval -- - so off they went.

Almost immediately the girls ran to the swings – and the boys quickly organized a touch football game.

Everyone was involved with something, enjoying their afternoon of freedom from fractions and poetry and history --- everyone, that is, except Milo.

This came as no surprise to anyone in the class, including Mrs. Jenkins, since Milo always kept to himself – which made him just a bit different --- a little odd in what he said and did.

He didn't like sports, he wasn't good at math, he ate by himself in the lunchroom – he wasn't good at anything, except for being made fun of. . . And when his classmates did that – he would never defend himself.

When one of the boys kicked the football off course – and it went down a hill into some bushes – they made Milo go and get it – just in case there were any spiders or snakes or other creepy things lurking in the bushes.

When Milo reluctantly went to get the football – he felt lucky that he did not find any spiders or snakes or other creepy things – but what he did find was an old wooden box.

When the boys saw the box, they thought it best to bring it to Mrs. Jenkins – just in case there were any spiders, snakes or creepy things in the box – my, weren't they nice & thoughtful??

When Mrs. Jenkins opened the box, she found a book whose title was, "The Great Gift." They all agreed they would give up the remainder of their outside freedom – to go back to their classroom to begin to read the book together – again, weren't they nice & thoughtful??

What they discovered as they read, "The Great Gift", was it contained stories about great inventors, artists, writers, explorers, athletes, and leaders. . . With each story, the children became more wide-eyed, and were captivated by all these people with special gifts who put them to such good use.

They finally reached the last page of the book, which spoke about how one receives such great gifts. Mrs. Jenkins read:

"There is a place in heaven called the fountain of hearts, where before a person is born – each heart is given its special gifts. Everyone gets at least one special gift. And lots of people get more than one gift – more than one thing that they are good at. When one discovers their special gift and puts it to good use, their achievements will become part of books like this one."

When Mrs. Jenkins closed the book, there was a long silence as each child began thinking about what their own special gifts were.

Everyone knew that Paige was the best at math in their class – and that she should become someone important like an engineer, using her math skills to build things.

Everyone knew that Bryce was the best at science in their class – and that he should become someone important like a research scientist, using his skills to find a cure for diseases – like cancer.

Bree was a good dancer. William could recite long parts of stories by heart. Cierra liked to cook. Mike was good at building things. Katie was the fastest reader and Pete was the fastest runner. . .

As everyone was pointing out everyone else's gifts, Milo spoke up and said, "I guess I must have gotten passed over at the fountain of hearts – because I am not good at anything."

At that, his classmates felt ashamed of every time they had laughed at his clumsiness or his funny quirks. From that day forward, never again did they try making fun of Milo. Instead, they all worked together to try to help him discover his special gift – because everyone is good at something!

As it turns out, Milo's gift was an incredible artistic talent. And Milo grew up to be a very famous painter.

Each of us, before we were born, were given special gifts and talents. And throughout our lives we are called to discover what those gifts and talents are --- and then to put them to good use, not to bury them deep within us and never use them.

And, like Mrs. Jenkins' class – all of us are called to help others, like Milo, discover what their gifts and talents are – so they can put their gifts to use.

We are called to bring out the best in one another – not to laugh or make fun of someone else just because they are different from us, or to think they have nothing to contribute --- because everyone is good at something!

So, may we all **Be Prepared:** to be our own unique selves – to use the gifts God has placed within us --- and to help others be who they are called to be.

And may we all **BE PREPARED:** to be able to tell God at the end of our lives – this is how I used the gifts you placed within in my heart, long before I was born. And God will say to each one of us: "Good Job! Thanks for being a faithful steward!" >>

So – what are you good at? Because everyone is good at something! Be sure to thank God for your gifts – and to put them to good use. And maybe someday students in a 4<sup>th</sup> grade classroom somewhere --- will be reading about you in a book like, "The Great Gift."