

# Passing the Story Along

How important is good communication? Very. Anyone who has been married for any length of time can affirm that answer.

And communication can deteriorate rapidly if care is not given to how it is shared. Most of us have played the game of “gossip,” in which information is related and passed on down a line of participants. The message at the end is always hilarious and – most of the time – not recognizable from its origin. Here is an example:



A school superintendent told his assistant superintendent the following: “Next Thursday morning at 10:30, Halley’s Comet will appear over this area. This is an event which occurs only once every 75 years. Call the school principals and have them assemble their teachers and classes on their athletic fields and explain this phenomenon to them. If it rains, then cancel the day’s observation and

have the classes meet in the auditorium to see a film about the comet.”

Assistant superintendent to school principals: “By order of the superintendent of schools, next Thursday at 10:30 Halley’s Comet will appear over your athletic field. If it rains, then cancel the day’s classes and report to the auditorium with your teachers and students where you will be shown films, a phenomenal event which occurs only once every 75 years”

Principals to teachers: “By order of the phenomenal superintendent of schools, at 10:30 next Thursday Halley’s Comet will appear in the auditorium. In case of rain over the athletic field, the superintendent will give another order – something which occurs only once every 75 years.”

Teachers to students: “Next Thursday at 10:30 the superintendent of schools will appear in our school auditorium with Halley’s Comet, something which occurs once every 75 years. If it rains, the superintendent will cancel the comet and will order us out to our phenomenal athletic field.”

Students to parents: “When it rains next Thursday at 10:30 over the school athletic field, the phenomenal 75-year-old superintendent of schools will cancel all classes and appear before the school in the auditorium, accompanied by Bill Haley and the Comets.”

No doubt, that is an exaggerated account.

But not by much!

– Beecher Hunter