

# THE BOY'S EMPTY EGG

He was 9 years old – in a Sunday school class of 8-year-olds. And 8-year-olds can be cruel.

The third-graders did not welcome Philip into their group. Not just because he was older. He was “different.” He suffered from Down’s syndrome and its obvious manifestation: facial characteristics, slow responses, symptoms of retardation.

One week before Easter, the Sunday school teacher gathered some of those L’eggs pantyhose containers, the kind that look like large eggs. She gave one of them to each child. Since it was a beautiful spring day, the students’ instructions were to go outdoors and discover some symbol of “new life” and place that symbolic seed or leaf or whatever inside his or her egg. They would then open the eggs one by one, and the youngsters would explain how their finds were symbols of new life.

After a time, the children gathered around and put their eggs on a table, and the teacher began to open them. One child found a flower. All the children *oohed* and *aahed* at this lovely symbol of new life.

In another was a butterfly. “Beautiful!” the girls exclaimed. Another egg was opened to reveal a rock. Some of the children laughed.

“That’s crazy!” one said. “How is a rock supposed to be like new life?” Immediately the boy spoke up and said, “That’s mine. I knew everybody would get flowers and leaves and butterflies and all that stuff, so I got a rock to be different.” Everyone laughed.

The teacher opened the last one, and there was nothing inside. “That’s not fair!” someone shouted. “That’s stupid!” said another. “Somebody didn’t do the assignment,” one student spoke up.



The teacher felt a tug on her sleeve. It was Philip. Looking up, he said, “It’s mine. I did do it,” Philip insisted. “I did do it! It’s empty. The tomb was empty. I have new life because the tomb was empty.”

The class fell silent.

From that day on, Philip became part of the group. They welcomed him. Whatever had made him different was never mentioned again.

(more)

Philip's family had known he would not have a long life; just too many things wrong with his tiny body. That summer, overcome with infection, Philip died.

On the day of his funeral, nine 8-year-old boys and girls confronted the reality of death and marched up to the altar, but not with flowers.

Nine children with their Sunday school teacher placed on the casket of their friend the gift of love – an empty egg.

This Easter Sunday, April 5, 2015, we can celebrate new life in Christ – achieved through faith in Him.

All because – praise God! – the tomb was empty.

*Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it ... But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay (Mathew 28:1-2, 5-6 NKJV).*

– Beecher Hunter