

Grade 2, Theme Three

Family Letter

Dear Family,

We are ready to begin Theme Three of *Fully Alive*, our family life program. Because the partnership of home, church, and school is so important, this letter is written to let you know what we talk about in class, and to offer some ideas for your involvement.

About Theme Three

Theme Three of *Fully Alive* is called “Created Sexual: Male and Female.” God made us male and female, and all of God’s creation is good. In the early grades, this theme is presented through a continuing story. The message of this story is that we begin life as a result of the love our mothers and fathers shared. No matter what happens later, nothing can change that. It is part of God’s plan that we grow and are sheltered in our mother’s body before birth. After we are born, it is our family that loves and cares for us.

In Theme Three we will:

- meet the Brunelle family, who are expecting their third child.
- discover more about the development of babies before birth and especially about how the baby breathes and receives nourishment in the uterus.
- learn about the importance of respect and care for the body, which is a gift from God.

Looking Ahead

The information included in Grade 2 is still quite limited: new terms include *amniotic sac*, *umbilical cord*, and *navel*; the terms *sperm* and *ovum*, which are described as tiny cells from the father and the mother, are also introduced, and a simple explanation of birth is provided. Next year, additional information about prenatal life and birth will be presented. In Grade 4 the teacher gives a very simple explanation of sexual intercourse. However, this information is not included in the student book until Grade 5.

Working together at school and at home

- Ask your child to tell you about the Brunelle family. What was your child’s favourite part of the story? What did he or she find especially interesting?
- Take this opportunity to talk to your child about how babies grow before they are born, and how all their needs are met inside the uterus.

Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Theme Three Topics

In Grade Two, this theme is developed through five topics. The first four topics tell the story of the Brunelle family: Martin and Marie, and their two children, Lucie and Paul. The children meet the Brunelle family in Topic 1 and learn that they are expecting their third child. The next two topics explore life before birth, including the beginning of human life as a tiny cell, and the special home the baby has in the uterus. In Topic 4 the children are presented with a very simple explanation of how a baby is born. The final topic is about the body, male and female, as a gift from God that is to be cared for and respected.

Talking to Children about Sexuality

Most parents want to talk about sexuality with their children, but many find it difficult. They feel shy or unsure of themselves because they are not “experts” or teachers. It’s important to remember that the exact words you use don’t matter. It’s letting your children know that you are happy to answer their questions that is important.

Here is something else to remember: Your child does not have all of the grown-up feelings that you have about sexuality. When you try to explain sexual intercourse to your child, you are thinking about a very intimate activity that has deep meaning for you. But your child doesn’t have any of these feelings. Your child is simply wondering how the sperm from the father gets together with the egg from the mother. From the child’s point of view, it’s not too different from questions about how skyscrapers are built or how astronauts get to the moon. This does not mean, of course, that sexual intercourse should be explained in the same way that you might explain skyscrapers or rockets. Children need to know how special this expression of love between wife and husband is.

There are many good opportunities for talking to children. For example, maybe your family is expecting a new baby. This is a wonderful time to talk about how the new baby develops. This program also provides you with a natural opportunity. There are many books for children about how new life develops inside the mother. It’s always a good idea to look through these carefully before you read them with your child. It’s important to make sure that the book has the same message about sexuality that you want to give.

Biological information in the *Fully Alive* program has been carefully selected for each grade level in order to give parents the opportunity to be the first people to talk to their children. In particular, information about sexual intercourse is not included in the school program until Grade 4 so that parents can introduce this intimate subject. When you tell your child about sexual intercourse and speak about God's special way of bringing new people into the world, you are creating a climate of trust. Your child learns that it's all right to ask you anything. An atmosphere of trust and open communication begins when children are very young and becomes more and more important as they grow older.

In the suggestions given for each topic, relevant information that is not in the school program at this grade level will be mentioned. As well, you will find a number of answers to the questions children often ask about sexuality. You may be more comfortable with your own words, but you may find that the suggested answers are useful.

Like all questions that children ask, questions about sexuality don't come in any particular order or at the times that you might expect. For this reason, you might like to look ahead and read through this theme before your child begins these topics in school. In this way you will know what your child will be learning and be prepared for any question he or she might ask.

You should also be aware that children differ in the amount of information they can handle or want. Some children ask a lot of questions about how babies begin, develop, and are born. Others ask few, although their lack of questions does not necessarily mean that they do not have any. Some children like detailed, scientific answers, while others are not interested in too many facts.

Sometimes when children ask a question about the beginning of life, they are not even looking for a biological answer. They may be wondering about something much deeper. As a rule, the shortest, simplest answer is probably the best one. If you have answered a question and your child isn't satisfied with the answer, he or she will usually ask another question or look puzzled. For example, when your child first asks, "Where did I come from?" you might reply, "You came from God. God gave you to our family." If he or she says, "But where did I come from? Where was I before?" then you know that a fuller answer is needed. At this point, you might explain how a baby grows inside its mother. Whatever information you decide to give your child, and at whatever age, however, it should be true. When parents

make up stories about cabbage patches or storks, eventually they have to admit that these stories aren't true.

One way to figure out what children understand or want to know when they ask a question is to ask them: "What do you think the answer is?" When adults listen carefully, they can usually tell what the child understands, and where the child might be confused or need additional explanations. It's good to remember that the key to teaching and understanding children lies much more in listening than in talking. This is true not only when children are little, but throughout their growing years.

In the years to come, your children will be exposed from many sources to ideas about sexuality that are not Christian. If you have never talked about sexuality with them, they are unlikely to confide in you. That is why it is so important to begin to talk while they are young.

It is almost impossible to shield children, even when they are young, from information about abuses of sexuality. These abuses appear regularly on television and in the newspapers and magazines that come into our homes. You can, however, try to limit what children see and hear. Families choose different ways to do this. A few families have decided to eliminate television; others restrict it quite carefully.

The evening news probably provokes more questions from children than any other program. Questions like, "What does rape mean?" or "What is abortion?" are difficult to answer when children are young. Ideally, abuses of sexuality should not have to be explained until the child has a basic understanding of the Christian vision of sexuality. It's a good idea, however, to try to answer your child's questions in some way. If the child is very young and asks about rape or abortion, for example, you might say, "It is something that people do that is wrong. It is not what God wants us to do. It hurts people. When you're a little older, I'll explain more about it to you."

Parents who have found it difficult to talk to their children about sexuality, are usually pleasantly surprised when they begin. Once started, it gets easier. And if your child asks a question that you don't know the answer to, just say so. You can always ask someone else or look it up in a book, and then give your child an answer. Your child doesn't need an expert. Your child needs a parent who cares and is willing to talk and listen.

Topic 1 — Life Begins in Love

*Man needs Woman and Woman needs Man;
Together they create new life with God.*

Curriculum Guidelines for Family Life Education, OCCB

Summary

This topic helps the children understand share life and love in marriage. The teacher and children read the first part of the Brunelle family story, “An Exciting Day.” They talk about the family wedding the Brunelles attended, and the exciting news that a new baby is expected. You will find all of the stories about the Brunelle family at the end of this theme.

Main ideas

- A man and woman decide to marry because they love each other and want to spend the rest of their lives together.
- They ask God to help them make this important decision.
- One of the ways husbands and wives share their love is by becoming parents.

Family participation

- You could ask your child to tell you about the Brunelle family, and what happened in the first part of the story. What was the exciting news? Your child might enjoy rereading the story with you.
- If your child has been to a wedding, this would be a good time to recall the occasion. Or you might bring out the family photos, and tell your child a story about a family wedding. It could be your own wedding or another one. If it is about your own, you might like to talk about how you and your spouse met and how you decided to get married.
- This story provides you with a good opportunity to let your child know how excited you were when you knew that he or she was expected. You might talk about the plans and the preparations the family made. Children have a deep need to know that they are loved and wanted. They learn this primarily through the day-to-day care and affection they receive in their families. But it’s good for them to hear how pleased their parents were to be expecting a child. This is particularly important for children whose parents are not living together. They need assurance that both parents loved them from the beginning and still love them even though they live apart.

- If your child is adopted, he or she will most likely know about this by now. You might talk about how eagerly you waited, and how exciting it was when your child finally arrived.
- Foster children also need to know that no matter what has happened since, their lives began in the love of their parents. If you are a foster parent, you might let your child know how happy you are that you have had the opportunity to know and love him or her.

Topic 2 — How Life Begins

*Human life is precious because it is a gift of God whose love is infinite;
and when God gives life, it is forever.*

Pope John Paul II, Washington, 1979

Summary

This topic helps the children understand more about the beginning of new life inside the uterus. The teacher and children read the next part of the Brunelle family story, “The New Baby Grows.” They talk about the special place where the baby is growing (the uterus), and the children learn that the baby begins from a tiny cell, when a tiny part from the father (sperm) and a tiny part from the mother (ovum) join together to create the tiny cell.

Main ideas

- God has a special plan for the beginning of new human life.
- Each new person begins as a tiny cell. This cell begins to grow inside the mother's body.
- Adoption is another way of becoming parents and sharing love with children.

Family participation

- Your child might enjoy reading with you the second part of the Brunelle family story. Are there any questions he or she has?
- This topic provides you with an opportunity to answer questions your child may have and to continue to teach her or him about the beginning of new human life. At school, if the children want to know how the sperm got inside the mother, the teacher is asked to have the children bring that question home. This is because, ideally, children should receive their first explanation of sexual intercourse from you. You may want to look at the various answers provided for this question at the end of this topic. They are just suggestions, but they may help you to find the right words.
- In school, the children have learned that a tiny part from the father, called a *sperm*, and a tiny part from the mother, called an *ovum* (egg), meet inside the mother and become a single *cell*. You might tell your child that this cell is so tiny that it's hard to imagine that a baby could develop from it. And because this tiny cell comes from the mother and the father, the baby is like its parents in many ways. You might ask your child to think about the ways in which she or he looks like you and your spouse. If there are other children in the family, whom do they look like?
- If your child seems interested and has questions about where the sperm and ovum come from, this would be a good time to answer. Explain to your child that the father's sperm is made in his *testicles*. The testicles are inside the scrotum, which is a sac of skin under the penis. The mother's ovum comes from her *ovaries*, which are inside her body, near the uterus. If your child is a boy, you might tell him that when he is older, his body will start to make sperm so that when he is grown up, he could be a father. If your child is a girl, you might tell her that when she is older, her ovaries will ripen ova so that when she

is grown up she could be a mother. This is part of God's plan for creating new human life.

- The children learn a little bit about adoption in this topic, and you may want to talk about it. This is, of course, especially important if your child is adopted or if there is an adopted child in your family or in that of relatives or close friends. You could explain that adoption is another way that people become parents.
- Sometimes children ask about why some parents cannot have a baby. If your child asks this question, you might say, "Sometimes it just doesn't happen. Our bodies can have some kind of problem so that a new baby can't start to grow." You can add that often this is why people decide to adopt.

Questions And Answers

In this section, you will find some examples of questions young children often ask and a number of suggested answers. When there is more than one answer to a question, the first answer is the simplest, and the last is the most detailed. You may want to begin with the simplest answer, but you should expect that your child will ask the same questions again as the months go by. In this way, you will have several opportunities to provide your child with a more detailed answer.

It is hoped that these answers will give you some ideas about what you would like to say to your child. They are, of course, only suggestions to be used in any way that suits you and your child.

Questions about where babies come from:

- Where did I come from?
- Where was I before I was born?
- Where do babies come from?

Suggested answers:

- You came from God. God knew that we wanted a baby and we were so happy when you were born.
- You came from a special place inside my body. This is the way God makes new babies. They grow inside their mothers until they are ready to be born.

- A baby starts growing inside its mother when a tiny part from the father and a tiny part from the mother join together. This is God’s special plan for creating new babies. The baby grows and grows inside the mother until it is ready to be born.
- God has a wonderful plan for creating new people. A baby starts as a tiny cell and it grows in a special place inside the mother. This special home for a baby is called the *uterus*. Only women have a uterus. It takes a mother and a father to begin a new baby. A tiny part from the father, called a *sperm*, and a tiny part from the mother, called an *ovum* (egg), join together inside the mother’s body and become a single, tiny cell, which grows and grows. And that’s the beginning of a new baby.

Questions about how the baby got started:

- How does the baby get into the mother?
- How does the father’s sperm get into the mother?

Suggested answers:

- When mothers and fathers are alone and loving each other very much, they hold each very close in a special way just for husbands and wives. The sperm from the father goes into the mother’s body. If the sperm joins together with the mother’s ovum, a new baby begins to grow. This is a special gift that God gave mothers and fathers. They can help God create new people.
- When mothers and fathers are alone and loving each other very much, they hold each other very close in a special way just for husbands and wives. God made their bodies so that they fit together. The father’s penis fits into the mother’s vagina. Then the sperm leave the father’s body and go into the mother’s body. If a sperm joins together with the mother’s ovum, a new baby begins to grow. This is a special gift that God gave mothers and fathers. When they are loving each other in this special way, they can help God create new people. This special way of loving is just for married people and it is called sexual intercourse.

Topic 3 — A Special Home

*Human life is not just an idea or an abstraction;
human life is the concrete reality of a being that lives, that acts, that grows and develops;
human life is the concrete reality of a being that is capable of love.*

Pope John Paul II, Washington, 1979

Summary

This topic helps the children understand more about how human life develops and is protected inside the mother's uterus. The teacher and children read the third part of the Brunelle family story, "The New Baby's Special Home," and talk about what a good home the baby has. The teacher introduces some new words: *sac*, *fluid*, *umbilical cord*, and *navel*.

Main ideas

- It is God's wonderful plan that we have a special home, called the uterus, to grow in before we are born.
- The baby has everything it needs inside the uterus. The baby gets oxygen and food from its mother through the umbilical cord.
- The navel is a sign of the special home we once lived in. The navel is also called a belly button.

Family participation

- You and your child might enjoy reading today the third part of the story of the Brunelle family. This gives you a chance to see what questions your child has.
- There is a lot of new information in this topic about life in the uterus. Most children are very interested in how the baby lives in the uterus, especially when they hear that the baby is surrounded by fluid.
- Children love to hear about what they were like when they lived in the uterus. They are particularly delighted with the idea that the baby can turn a somersault inside its mother. You might mention to them that the baby can also suck its thumb, and even get the hiccups! If you have funny stories about how active your child was, be sure to share them.
- It is hard for children to understand what nine months means. You can help them realize how long the baby is in the uterus by telling them that it is just about as long as it takes them to go through Grade 2.

- You might notice that in this topic, it is the father who is telling Lucy and Peter about the new baby's special home. In many families, it is only the mother who talks to the children about how new babies begin, develop, and are born. Fathers generally seem to have more difficulty speaking to their children about this subject than mothers do. It is ideal for children if both parents can answer questions and educate their children about sexuality. This is much easier for both parents if they start when the children are young.
- Children ask a variety of questions at this age. In part this is influenced by what they have heard from friends, what they have overheard adults talking about, or seen on television. Two topics that some children raise are Caesarian section and miscarriage. In the case of miscarriage, you might say, "Yes, sometimes a baby growing inside its mother dies before it's ready to be born. This makes the mother and father and the other members of the family very sad." You can explain Caesarian section by saying, "Sometimes a mother has difficulty when her baby is ready to be born. The baby's parents and the doctor don't want the baby or the mother to get hurt. So the doctor makes an opening in the mother's body and takes the baby out. Then the doctor sews the opening closed again. This doesn't harm the baby and the mother gets better in a little while."
- A few children ask whether people can have a baby if they're not married. You might answer this by saying, "Yes, but it's not the way God planned it. God wants new babies to have a mother and a father who are married. Babies need love and care in a family."

Topic 4 — The Baby Arrives

*“I have no name:
I am but two days old.”
“What shall I call thee?”
“I happy am,
Joy is my name.”
Sweet joy befall thee!*

William Blake, *Songs of Innocence*

Summary

This topic helps the children understand how babies are born. The teacher and children read the last part of the Brunelle family story, “The New Baby Arrives,” and talk about how the baby is born and how excited the family is when the baby arrives.

Main ideas

- God made women’s bodies in a special way, with an opening at the bottom of the uterus.
- When the time comes to be born, the baby moves through this opening.
- We welcome new babies with joy. They are wonderful gifts from God.

Family participation

- You might ask your child about the arrival of the Brunelle family’s new baby. Was it a boy or a girl? What is the baby’s name? You may want to read the last part of the story with your child.
- Children love to hear about what it was like when they were born and what you thought when you first saw them.
- This topic provides more information on the process of birth. Since the words *vagina* and *birth canal* were introduced in Grade 1, your child is probably already familiar with them. Be sure to answer any questions your child has. You will find some suggested answers to questions about birth at the end of this section. One question that children often ask is whether it hurts when the baby is born. You might answer by saying, “Yes, it hurts when the baby is being pushed out. But after the baby is born the mother and father are so excited that the pain is forgotten.”

- If your child was born at home, you might want to tell him or her about this. It is important for children to understand that having a baby is not like being sick. You might explain that the mother goes to the hospital so that other people, including the doctors, midwives, and nurses, can help her.

Questions about how the baby gets out of the mother:

- How does the baby get out?
- How are babies born?

Some suggested answers:

- The mother goes to the hospital, and the doctor (midwife) helps the baby out.
- There is a special opening in the mother's body and the doctor (midwife) helps the baby come out through that opening.
- There is a special opening at the bottom of the mother's uterus. The opening is called the vagina or sometimes we call it the birth canal. When the baby is ready to be born, it starts to push on that opening. The opening starts to stretch and then the baby can move into the birth canal and into the world. The mother helps push the baby out. The doctor (midwife) is there to make sure that the mother and baby are all right.

Topic 5 — The Gift of Bodies

And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us ...

John, 1:14

Summary

This topic helps that children understand that our bodies are a gift from God, and are meant to be treated with respect and care. The teacher briefly reviews with the children the physical differences between boys and girls, and then they talk about different ways of caring for and respecting the body: eating good food; dressing warmly when it's cold; brushing teeth; keeping the body clean; respecting other people's privacy; and getting lots of fresh air and exercise.

Main ideas

- God gave us the gift of our bodies.
- Some of us are girls, and some of us are boys.

- We respect and care for our bodies.
- We can show respect for other people's bodies by what we do and what we say.

Family participation

- This topic includes a review of the physical differences between boys and girls, including the words *vagina* and *penis*, which were introduced in Grade 1. Many families have special words for these body parts that they use at home. Family words are fine, but it is good for children also to know the correct terms.

If your child is a girl, you could explain that the part that you can see (the folds of skin on the outside of the body) is called the *vulva*. The *vagina* is inside the body and it is the special birth canal through which the baby is born. You might also mention that when she grows up, she will have breasts. God made women with breasts so that they can feed a new baby.

If your child is a boy, you could explain that he has a *penis* and a *scrotum* on the outside of his body. The scrotum is under the penis and is the sac of skin covering the *testicles*.

- You might ask your child what he or she learned at school about caring for the body and showing respect for it. One of the topics the children talked about was showing respect for the body by giving other people privacy in the bathroom or when they are dressing. You may have noticed that your child is beginning to want more privacy in these situations. This is a natural development that should be respected.
- As children grow up, they need to learn about modesty. You might explain that we cover certain parts of our bodies with clothes because these parts of our bodies are private and special. Even in hot weather, we wear bathing suits.
- This topic also gives you an opportunity to protect your child from sexual abuse. Children need to know that, with a few exceptions (for example, if the doctor needs to examine them or you are helping them bathe), no one is allowed to look at or touch these private parts of their bodies. They should also be told that they should not look at or touch the private parts of another person's body, even if that person asks or tells them to. They should say no and tell you right away. It's important to reassure children that if someone is touching them in a way that makes them uncomfortable, or acting in a way that worries or frightens them, they can always talk to you and you will know what to do.

- When children use vulgar words, or tell silly jokes about the body, they need to be reminded that they aren't showing respect for the body. It is also important that parents show respect for the body in the way they speak and act. If we want our children to respect the body as part of God's good creation, then vulgar jokes or crude language about the male or female body are a very bad example for them.

Theme Three Stories

Topics 1 – 4: Theme Three features a continuing story about the Brunelle family. The story has four parts, one for each of the first four topics in Theme 3.

Part 1: An Exciting Day

"This was the best of my whole life," said seven-year-old Lucie from the back seat of the car.

The Brunelle family was driving home after Aunt Lisa's wedding. Lucie and her brother, Paul, had never been to a wedding before.

"Paul, did you have a good time at the wedding?" asked his mom.

Paul could barely keep his eyes open. "I like the party and all the pop," he said.

His dad laughed. "I never saw one five-year-old boy drink so much pop," he said. Then he glanced at his wife who was sitting beside him in the car. "It was a wonderful wedding, wasn't it?"

Mrs. Brunelle smiled and said, "It was. But it's hard to think of Lisa married. It seems like only yesterday she was a little girl at our wedding."

"Mom, was I at your wedding?" asked Paul.

Lucie laughed. "Don't be silly, Paul! You couldn't be at Mom and Dad's

wedding. You weren't even alive!"

"Well," Paul replied, "if I had been alive Mom and Dad would have invited me, right Dad?"

"Absolutely," said his dad.

"Was your wedding like Aunt Lisa's?" asked Lucie.

"Yes, it was," replied Mrs. Brunelle, "except your dad was the groom and I was the bride."

The children were quiet in the back seat of the car for a while. Then Lucie asked, "Mom, when you were a little girl did you want to marry Daddy?"

"I didn't know your dad when I was a little girl. But when I met him it wasn't long before I knew I wanted to marry him."

"Dad, did you want to marry Mom?" Paul asked.

"You bet!" he said as he smiled at his wife. "When I met your mother I asked for a date right away."

"What's a date?" asked Paul.

"It's when a boy and girl go out with each other," answered Lucie.

"That's right," said their dad. "I asked your mom to go out to dinner with me."

"And you said yes. Right, Mom?" Paul asked.

"I did."

"And then what happened, Mom?" Lucie asked.

“Well, before long we were spending most of our time together,” she explained, smiling at her husband. “Whatever we were doing, we liked doing it together.”

“Well it’s a good thing you did get married because otherwise we wouldn’t be here,” said Lucie.

Their mom and dad both laughed.

“And what would we do without you,” said their mom, turning around to smile at the children. “You were one of the big reasons we wanted to get married. We hoped that God had a Lucie and a Paul waiting for us.”

She paused and looked at her husband. Then she continued, “And do you know what? God has another little boy or girl for us.”

“Who?” exclaimed Paul.

“What do you mean, Mom?” asked Lucie.

Mr. and Mrs. Brunelle smiled. “You’re going to have a new brother or a new sister,” Mr. Brunelle said. “What do you think about that?”

“It’s great!” Lucie said. “I’ll help you look after her.”

“Wow!” Paul said. “A new brother.”

“Here we are, home again,” said their father as he pulled into the driveway. “Time for a good long sleep, I think.”

“I’m going to dream about my new baby sister,” said Lucie.

“You mean brother,” Paul replied, and the whole family laughed as they got

out of the car.

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Part 2: The New Baby Grows

Mrs. Brunelle and Paul were looking at some pictures in a family album.

Paul especially liked pictures of himself when he was little.

“Mom,” Paul said, pointing at a picture. “Is that you? You look different, bigger than you are now.”

“Yes, it is me, but it’s also a picture of someone else,” she said.

“Where?” Paul asked. “I can only see you.”

“Well, you’re missing something,” his mom answered, and she pointed to the picture. “Right there,” she said. “That’s you! That’s why I look bigger — you’re inside my body.”

“Mom,” Lucie said, “We found the clothes you were looking for. They look to big for you.”

“Not for long,” Mrs. Brunelle said. “This baby is getting bigger.”

“Is the baby in your stomach, Mom?” Paul asked.

“Not in her stomach,” Lucie said. “In your uterus, right Mom?”

“Right. The baby is in a special place in my body called the uterus. It’s lower than my stomach. See? It’s here.” Mrs. Brunelle showed Paul where her uterus was.

“Mom,” Lucie asked, “how does the baby fit inside you?”

“Well, that’s the wonderful thing about the uterus. It can stretch as the baby grows.”

“This big?” Paul exclaimed and he held his arms out as far as they could go.

Mr. Brunelle laughed. “No, not that big, Paul. We aren’t going to have a giant baby, just a regular-size one.”

Mrs. Brunelle pulled Paul onto her lap. “Paul,” she said, “when the baby begins, it’s so small that you couldn’t see it even if you had a magnifying glass or a microscope. A tiny part from the father called a sperm and a tiny part from the mother called an ovum meet inside the mother’s body. These two tiny parts become one cell, and that’s the start of a new baby.”

“What happens to the cell?” Lucie asked.

“It starts to grow, and before long it begins to look like a baby. And it just keeps on growing until it’s ready to be born.”

“Is that how I started?” Paul asked.

“That’s how everybody begins,” his mom said. “That’s how God planned it. And because that little cell is from the mother and the father, people look like their parents in some ways. Like your blond hair—it comes from me.”

“But my hair is curly, like Dad’s,” Paul said. “And Lucie’s hair is straight like yours, Mom.”

“And you look like your mother, Mom,” Lucie said. “Who do you look like,

Dad?"

"I don't really know because I was adopted. I never saw my birth parents."

"What's 'adopted'?" Paul asked. "And what's 'birth parents'?"

"I know what adopted means," Lucie said. "Your mother and father couldn't look after you, so Grandma and Grandpa Brunelle looked after you, and they became your parents."

"You're right, Lucie," her dad said. "My birth parents are the mother and father who began my life. They weren't able to look after a child, but they wanted me to have a good home and loving parents. So they let your Grandma and Grandpa adopt me. I don't look like them because they didn't begin my life. But they raised me and loved me, so they are my parents — and your grandparents."

Paul thought about what his dad said. "I'm glad they're my grandparents," he said.

"Time for lunch," Mrs. Brunelle announced. "I've got to look after this new baby and eat lots of good food."

"And then can we go for a bike ride?" Lucie asked.

"How about I take you on a bike ride," Dad said, "and we'll give your mother a chance to have some peace and quiet."

"I'll keep Mom company," Paul said.

"Great," his Mom replied. "And after I've had a little rest, you can invite Chris over to play."

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Part 3: The New Baby's Special Home

One Saturday afternoon, Mr. Brunelle and the children dropped Mrs. Brunelle off at the doctor's office.

"Can we get something to eat while we wait for Mom?" Paul begged.

"Please," Lucie added.

"Okay," their dad said, "we'll go to the coffee shop, and then your mom can meet us there."

Paul and Lucie had doughnuts and juice and their dad had a cup of coffee.

"Dad," Paul asked, "when's the baby going to come?"

"About two more months," Lucie answered. "Mom told you."

"But it takes so long," Paul complained.

"Nine months," his dad said. "The baby still has a little more growing to do."

"But Mom is so big I can't even sit on her lap anymore," Paul protested.

"What's the baby doing all day long, anyway?"

"Sleeping, growing, turning somersaults," his dad said.

"Somersaults!" Paul exclaimed.

"I felt the baby moving," Lucie said. "I think it was stretching."

"Probably," her dad said. "The baby's a bit like an underwater diver. Inside the uterus there's a sac around the baby and the sac is filled with warm fluid, like

water, and the baby floats in the fluid inside the special sac.”

“Like in a swimming pool?” Paul said.

“Sort of,” his dad answered, “but the baby has a special way of breathing underwater. You can’t stay underwater too long because you need to breathe.

The baby is underwater all the time.”

“So how does it breathe?” Lucie asked.

“Through a special cord that comes from the middle of the baby and is attached to the uterus. It’s called the umbilical cord.”

“Is that how the baby eats, too?” Lucie asked.

“Smart girl! Everything the baby needs comes through the umbilical cord—oxygen and food. That’s why it’s important for your mom to eat good food, because her body has to feed the baby, too.”

“What happened to my cord?” Paul asked.

“Your umbilical cord? You didn’t need it after you were born. You could breathe and drink milk for food. But you still have a special mark on your body where your umbilical cord was attached.”

“I know!” Paul shouted. “My belly button!”

“You don’t have to tell everyone,” Lucie said.

“Here comes your mom,” their dad said, and he waved to his wife. “You’re right, Paul, your belly button. Another name for it is your navel!”

“Mom!” Paul shouted as his mother approached the table. “Dad told me all

about my belly button. It's called a navel!"

"It sounds like you were having an interesting talk," Mom said. "Now, how about a snack for me and the new baby?"

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Part 4: The New Baby Arrives

It is almost Easter, and the Brunelles decided to begin the cleanup in the backyard. Mrs. Brunelle is taking it easy. The baby will be coming any day now.

"I get to sit and tell other people what to do," she said, as she watched her family working.

"Mom, when is Grandma coming?" Paul asked.

"Tomorrow afternoon."

"Maybe the baby will come tomorrow, too," Lucie said.

"Well, it could happen, but the doctor thinks it might be a few more days," her mom said.

"I think you should tell my new brother to hurry up," Paul said.

"You mean new sister," Lucie teased.

"Brother!" Paul said.

"Sister!" Lucie said.

"Enough, you two," Mrs. Brunelle said. "Brother or sister, either one will be wonderful."

"Mom, how will you know when it's time for the new baby to come?" Lucie

asked.

“I’ll know,” she answered, “because my body will tell me. My uterus will start to push on the baby, and I will feel that push.”

“And that means it’s time for the baby to be born?” Lucie asked. Her mother nodded.

“How will the baby get out?” Paul asked.

“Well, when the uterus begins to push, the opening at the bottom will begin to stretch. The opening is called the vagina or birth canal and, as it stretches the baby’s head will begin to push through it. After a while the whole baby will be out into a brand new world.”

“Is that how I was born?” Paul asked.

“That’s how you were born,” his dad answered. “And I was right there helping Mom when you arrived.”

“What did you say when you saw me?”

“I said, ‘Hi Paul, what took you so long?’”

“Oh, Dad, you did not!”

“Mom,” Lucie asked, “will you be away very long when the baby comes?”

“Just a day or so, Lucie. And Grandma and Dad will be here with you.”

“A whole day!” Paul exclaimed. “Why do you have to stay all day?”

“For a little rest, and to be sure the new baby and I are fine,” his mother answered. “Come on, how about you get busy and finish cleaning up this yard.”

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The next day, Mrs. Brunelle went to the hospital, and Emilie Brunelle was born. Everyone was very happy. Paul was so excited, he forgot that he wanted a baby brother. Mr. Brunelle told Lucie and Paul that Emilie was the most beautiful baby he had ever seen — except for them, of course.