

Grade 1, 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 Dominic and Sara, who fall in love and decide to marry.
- discover that husbands and wives share their love by becoming parents.
- learn about the development of babies before birth and about the care and love they need after they are born.
- learn that God made boys and girls physically different.

Looking Ahead

In Grade 1 the amount of information given to children is quite limited: the development of the baby in the mother’s uterus; the introduction of the terms *penis* and *vagina* for the physical differences between boys and girls; and a brief explanation of breast feeding. In Grades 2 and 3, additional information about prenatal life is included. A very simple explanation of sexual intercourse is given in Grade 4 by the teacher, but is not in the student book until Grade 5.

Working together at school and at home

- Ask your child to tell you about Dominic and Sara. What was your child’s favourite part of the story?
- Take this opportunity to talk to your child about how babies grow before they are born, and the special care they need after they are born.
- Tell your child about when he or she was born. Do you have a baby picture of your child to lend to our classroom? We would love to see it.

Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Theme Three Topics

In Grade One, this theme is developed through five topics. Together, the five topics tell the story

of a young man and woman, Dominic and Sara. The story of their courtship and marriage, and the birth of their first child provides the context for an early understanding of marriage as a special kind of love, and of God's plan for new life. You will find the stories about Dominic and Sara at the end of this theme.

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.

Something else to remember is this: 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 she or he 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.

To help you figure out what children understand or want to know when they ask a question you can 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 — A Special Love

The core of love in the family is the love husband and wife have for each other.

Curriculum Guidelines for Family Life Education, OCCB

Summary

This topic helps the children understand that a special love between a man and a woman

often leads to marriage and a new life together. The teacher and children read the first part of the story, “Dominic and Sara.” They discuss the story and their own experiences of weddings.

Main ideas

- A man and a woman need time to get to know each other.
- When they are sure they want to spend the rest of their lives together, they decide to get married.
- When they marry, they make a special promise to share their lives with each other and with the children they hope to have.
- They ask God to help them keep their promise.

Family participation

- You could ask your child to tell you about the story of how Sara and Dominic met, learned to love each other, and decided to marry.
- If your child has already been at a wedding, you could talk about it together. What did he or she like best about the experience?
- Children love to see pictures of family weddings, especially of your wedding.

Topic 2 — A wonderful Announcement

Children, in a very real sense, and the concrete expression of their parents' love.

Curriculum Guidelines for Family Life Education, OCCB

Summary

This topic helps the children understand that one special way husbands and wives share their love by becoming parents. The teacher and children read the next part of the story of Dominic and Sara, “A New Life Together.” They talk about Sara and Dominic’s big surprise, and how excited people are when they are expecting a baby.

Main ideas

- After they are married, a husband and wife make a new life together.
- Married people share their love in a special way by becoming parents.
- When a husband and wife cannot have children, they often decide to adopt a baby. Adoption is another way to become parents.

Family participation

- This is a good opportunity to let your child know how pleased and excited you were when you found out you were pregnant with him or her. If this is not the case, then it is best to say nothing. Sometimes parents make remarks like, “This one is our mistake,” or “This is our afterthought.” Even when intended as humorous, these kinds of remarks should never be made in front of a child. What the child understands is that she or he was not wanted.
- When you say the “Hail Mary” together you might want to explain the words “fruit of thy womb” to your child. You could say that Jesus was inside his mother, Mary, waiting to be born into his family. This is a good opportunity, if your child does not already know, to explain that all babies grow in a special place inside their mothers called the womb or uterus. The children will be learning about this in the next topic, and it’s good for them to hear your explanation first.
- If your child is adopted, and you have not yet spoken about it, this topic gives you an ideal opportunity. Be sure to let your child know how eagerly you waited for him or her, just as a pregnant mother waits for her child to be born.
- Foster children also need to know that no matter what has happened since, their lives began in the love of their birth 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 her or him.
- Whenever natural situations come up, let your child know how wonderful God’s plan for new babies is. Mention that a new baby is part of the family, even though it is still inside its mother.

Topic 3 — Before You Were Born

*Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you;
and before you were born I consecrated you.*

Jeremiah 1:5

Summary

This topic helps the children understand that human life begins in a special place inside a

mother's body, which is part of God's plan of creation. The teacher and children read the next part of the story of Dominic and Sara, "A Special Home." They discuss the story, and the children learn that a new baby grows inside its mother in a special place, the *uterus*.

Main ideas

- It is God's special plan for a new baby to grow inside a mother's uterus.
- Mothers and fathers and other family members prepare for the baby.
- One way mothers prepare for a baby is by taking good care of themselves.

Family participation

- This topic provides you with a good opportunity to tell your child about the beginning of new human life. In Grade 2, the children will receive some of this information. It is always best when you are the first person to talk about such special matters. You will find some suggested answers to children's questions at the end of this topic, which you may find helpful. You know your own child best and can judge how much of an explanation you want to give. What's important is that you begin to talk to your child about these topics.
- You might begin by reading with your child Part 3 of the story of Dominic and Sara, "A Special Home." What questions does your child have?

You could explain that God has a wonderful plan for new life. A tiny part from the father called a *sperm* and a tiny part from the mother called an *ovum* join together inside the mother's body to begin a new baby. You might explain that the word *ovum* means egg, but the mother's egg is not like the eggs we eat. It is very, very tiny, about the size of the period at the end of this sentence. The father's sperm is even smaller, so small that it can't be seen, except with a microscope.

Even though using these words may seem strange to you, it is a good idea to use them from the beginning. These are the words that the children will learn next year at school. Also, the word *seed*, which many people use for the man's sperm (for example, "The daddy puts a seed in the mother"), can be confusing. In children's minds, seeds and plants go together. Children have been known to ask if they can get a baby by swallowing a seed. It is better to use the correct words, and avoid this confusion.

At this point, some children will ask how the sperm and the ovum join together. If your child asks this question, there are a number of ways in which you might answer it. There are some suggested answers at the end of this topic that you may find helpful. Some children also ask about where the father's sperm is, or where the mother's ovum is. You may want to answer by saying that the sperm and ovum are made in a special place in the man's body and a special place in the woman's body. If you wish to give more detail, you could explain that the sperm are made in the man's *testicles* and the ovum is made in the woman's *ovaries*.

- Although it is always a good idea to use the correct words, for example, *uterus*, *sperm*, and *ovum*, the words you use are not nearly as important as your willingness to answer questions. You should expect that your child will forget the new words, so you can mention them again the next time you talk about new babies.
- Children often think that a baby grows inside its mother's stomach. It's a natural mistake, because it seems to them that the mother's stomach gets big when she is pregnant. It is so natural that adults often tell children that the baby is inside the mother's tummy or stomach. Again, it is better to give children correct information from the beginning, and to use the right word, which is *uterus*. If your child is a girl, you might like to mention that God made her with a uterus so that one day, when she is grown up, she might be a mother.

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 came from:

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

- Where do babies come from?

Some 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.
- 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?

Some Suggested answers:

- 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. 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 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 4 — A Gift of Love

His mother bore Him in her womb, with love beyond all telling.

Advent preface

Summary

This topic helps the children understand that the uterus is a perfect home for a growing baby. The teacher and children read the next part of the story, “Waiting for the New Baby.” They talk about how well the baby is protected inside the uterus, and what a good home the uterus is for a developing baby.

Main ideas

- God has a wonderful plan for bringing new people into the world.
- The uterus is a perfect home for a growing baby.
- New babies are a gift from God. We greet them with joy and thank God for them.

Family participation

- Ask your child to tell you about the story the class read in school. Did Sara and Dominic have a boy or a girl? How did they feel when the baby arrived? What did they name the baby?
- If you are pregnant, or a relative or close friend is pregnant, let your child feel the baby move around inside the uterus. This helps your child understand that there really is a baby inside the mother.
- If your child is interested, you might talk about why the uterus is such a good home for the baby — warm and safe, it stretches as the baby grows, and the good food the mother eats also nourishes the baby.
- If your child seems interested, you might enjoy reading together Part 4 of the story of Dominic and Sara, “Waiting for the New Baby.”
- The new words in this story that your child may not have heard are *vagina* and *birth canal*. A very natural question that children often ask is, how does the baby get out? You may want to look at the suggested answers below. Again, it is a good idea to use the

words *vagina* and *birth canal* when you talk about the special opening in the mother's body.

- Topic 3 and this topic provide a natural opportunity to talk about new babies and how they grow and are born. But children's questions about new babies can come at any time. If it isn't a good time to answer a question, you might say, "That's a good question. Let's talk about that later when I have more time." It can also happen that you are taken by surprise by your child's question and want to think about it for a while before answering. Let your child know that you need a little time and will answer the question later. Of course, it's important that you do talk about it later, perhaps at bedtime, which is often a good time for a special chat.
- Sometimes, when children are learning about new babies, they ask if they can see the special place where the baby comes out of the mother. It's a natural question, but one that often alarms parents. You might answer, "No, you can't see it. Those are special parts of our bodies that we don't show to people. They are private parts."

Questions And Answers

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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 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 — God’s Wonderful Creation

*. . . male and female God created them . . .
God saw all he had made, and indeed it was very good.*

Genesis 1:27,31

Summary

This topic helps the children understand that new babies need special care after they are born. The children also learn some words for the differences in the bodies of boys and girls. The teacher and children read the last part of the story, “God’s Wonderful Creation,” and they discuss the care that a new baby needs.

Main ideas

- It is God’s plan for babies to be born into families.
- Babies need lots of care from their families. Most of all they need love.
- It is part of God’s plan that boys and girls are physically different.
- It is good to be a girl. It is good to be a boy.

Family participation

- You might ask your child to tell you about the arrival home of the new baby, Alexander. What did he or she learn about what new babies need? You could talk about all the things family members did when your child was a new baby, and about his or her baptism.
- If your child is interested, you could read together the last part of the story, “God’s Wonderful Creation.”
- This topic introduces the words *vagina* and *penis* for the male and female parts of the body. 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*.

- Young children usually get opportunities to see boys and girls without their clothes on. Little children take baths together, watch a baby being changed, or get changed for swimming together. It is at these times that they often ask questions about the differences in boys' and girls' bodies. When you answer these questions, it is a good idea to mention that this is the way God intended their bodies to be. It's good to be a girl and have a girl's body. It's good to be a boy and have a boy's body.
- Families differ in the way they handle nudity. In some families, children never see their parents undressed. In others, parents are much more casual. Opinions also differ as to how much nudity is good for children. In general, it is not a good idea to let children see much complete adult nudity. It provokes unnecessary curiosity. This doesn't mean that you have to panic if your child catches you undressed. You might mention that you would like some privacy while you dress. Children need to learn about the need for privacy when dressing and in the bathroom. They also need to know that parts of our body are special and we cover them with clothes.
- This topic also gives you an opportunity to teach your child about 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.

- If you, a relative, or close friend are nursing a new baby, it's good for your child to see this. It's a natural way to learn that a mother's body is specially designed to care for a new baby.
- At times, children go through stages of being silly or vulgar. Sometimes this is called "bathroom talk." A certain amount can simply be ignored, but when it gets out of hand, you may want to stop it. Just let them know that you've heard enough silly words for one day. It is also natural for children to repeat vulgar words that they have heard in the neighbourhood or in the schoolyard. They may not know what these words mean, but they may have some sense of the shock value. That's why it's best not to act shocked but to let them know that some words are very rude. You might say calmly, "We don't use that word in our house. It's not a nice word."

Theme Three Stories

Topics 1 – 5: Theme Three features a continuing story about a young couple named Sara Watson and Dominic Bruno. The story has five parts, one for each of the topics.

Part 1: Dominic and Sara

In the warm summer evenings after work, Dominic Bruno liked to take his dog, Pepe, for a walk in the park. He enjoyed watching all the people — children playing on the swings; young couples with arms around each other walking through the park; older people sitting on the benches playing cards or talking.

One evening, his dog Pepe jerked the leash right out of Dominic's hand, and off he ran!

"Come back here, Pepe!" Dominic shouted and he ran after the dog. He finally caught up with him on the other side of the park. A young woman was holding Pepe's leash and a little girl was petting him. Dominic recognized the young woman. She was Sara Watson, his brother's music teacher.

"Pepe, you're impossible!" Dominic panted. Then he said to Sara, "Thank you for catching him. You're Sara Watson, aren't you, my brother Carlo's music teacher?"

"I am," she said, "and you're welcome," she replied. "I recognize you, too.

You're Dominic Bruno."

"And I'm Ann Watson," the little girl said.

Dominic shook hands with Sara and her little sister, Ann. "Carlo thinks you're a wonderful piano teacher," he said to Sara.

"Sara teaches me piano, too," Ann said. "She's the best teacher in the whole world."

"I'll bet she is," Dominic replied, and he smiled at Sara.

Later that week Dominic met Sara and Ann again in the park. Sara and Dominic sat on a bench together and watched Ann playing on the climber. They talked about their jobs and their families and the plans they had for their lives. Dominic asked Sara to go to a movie with him.

As the weeks and months went by Sara and Dominic spent more and more time together. They took long walks in the park, they went out to dinner, and they went to concerts. One snowy winter day, they helped Ann build a snowman. But, most of all, they talked and talked.

Something very special began to happen to Sara and Dominic. They wanted to be together all of the time. They had come to love each other in a special way. They asked God to help them make a very important decision. They also talked to their families about this decision.

Dominic and Sara decided to get married. They visited the priest at Sara's parish and talked to him about their plans. Then they began to prepare for their wedding. It was a very exciting time.

On their wedding day, they walked down the aisle of St. Anthony's church with their parents. Their family members and friends were all gathered in the church to celebrate with them. Sara and Dominic asked God to help them to be a good wife and a good husband.

* * * * *

Part 2: A New Life Together

After Dominic and Sara were married, they moved into an apartment of their own. They had the first floor of an old house, and they were very happy together.

They couldn't wait to get home each day so that they could be together. They painted their apartment, bought furniture and dishes, and hung pictures on the wall. They also put up some bookcases. They worked hard to make their new home beautiful.

On Saturdays they went shopping. They held hands as they walked along the street. It was fun shopping for groceries together. They took turns making dinner. They liked to surprise each other with what they made.

On Sundays they went to Mass together and then often went to visit their families. Sara's little sister, Ann, looked forward to seeing them. Sometimes Sara gave Ann a piano lesson on Sunday afternoons.

Sometimes, they just liked to be by themselves, reading books or listening to music. It was good to be together.

It was also good to be with other people. When their apartment was all fixed up, Sara and Dominic wanted to have a celebration with their friends. On the night of the party there was music and good food and lots of talking and laughing. Everyone had a wonderful time. After the party, Sara and Dominic cleaned up together.

The months went by and Sara and Dominic felt as if they had always been together. They shared a very special secret that nobody else knew. Can you guess what their secret was?

• • •

Sara and Dominic were expecting a baby. Sara was pregnant and they wanted to share their good news with their families.

"Let's have a family party!" Dominic suggested. "Then we can tell everybody about the baby."

"That's a wonderful idea," Sara said.

The party was a very happy occasion. Everyone hugged Sara and

Dominic, and Ann jumped up and down when she heard the good news.

“I’m going to be an aunt!” she shouted. “Do you think the baby will call me Aunt Ann?”

“I don’t know what the baby is going to call you,” Dominic teased, “but I’m going to call you Aunt Ann from now on.”

* * * * *

Part 3: A Special Home

Sara and Dominic were very excited about having a baby. Sometimes, Sara would put her hand over the place where the baby was growing inside her, and think how happy she was.

It was a very busy time for Sara and Dominic. They bought a small house so that they would have a room for the baby. The house needed lots of work, but Sara and Dominic were happy to have their own home. Dominic painted the outside and Sara put up wallpaper in the baby’s room.

Everyone was getting ready. Sara’s mother gave them the rocking chair that she used when Ann was a baby, and Dominic’s father painted it. Ann was happy that the baby would have the old rocking chair.

Now that Sara and Dominic had a house, there was enough room for Sara to have her piano. She had lots of piano students, including her sister, Ann.

One day after Ann had finished her piano lesson, Sara showed her a big stuffed bear that Dominic had bought for the baby.

“Oh, he’s so cute,” Ann said, and she hugged the bear. Then she said, “Sara, why don’t you look pregnant?” Mrs. Jensen is expecting a baby and she’s really big.”

“Mrs. Jensen’s baby is almost ready to be born,” Sara explained. “My baby is still very tiny.”

“Where is it?” Ann asked. “In your stomach?”

“No, not in my stomach,” Sara replied. “The baby is in a special place called a *uterus*, right here.” Sara put her hand on the front of her body below her

waist so that Ann could see where the uterus was.

“Are you going to get fat like Mrs. Jensen?”

Sara laughed. “Oh yes,” she said, “but not for a while. The baby has a lot of growing to do.”

“Will your uterus have enough room?” Ann asked.

“The uterus can get bigger, Ann,” Sara explained. “Right now it’s still small, about the size of my hand when I make a fist. But it will slowly stretch to make room for the baby.”

“Do I have a uterus?” Ann asked.

“Yes you do,” Sara replied. “That’s the way God made all girls and women.”

Ann jumped up. “Let’s go to the park for a little while, Sara. Please?”

“I can’t this afternoon, Ann,” Sara answered. “I have another piano lesson in a little while and I need a short rest and a glass of milk.”

“But you don’t like milk,” Ann said.

“I know, but it’s good for me. When you’re pregnant you need to take good care of yourself so the baby will be strong and healthy.”

“You sit down and I’ll get you a big glass of milk,” Ann said. “I want the baby to be healthy, too.”

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Part 4: Waiting for the New Baby

Ann was visiting Sara and helping her get ready for Thanksgiving. They were making decorations for the big Thanksgiving dinner Sara and Dominic were having for their families.

“This is going to be a wonderful Thanksgiving,” Sara said. “A new baby on the way, and everyone coming for dinner. I’ve never cooked a big turkey before. I hope it turns out okay.”

“You should ask mom how to do it,” Ann said. “She’s cooked lots of turkeys. I wish the baby could be here for Thanksgiving. It takes so long for a

baby to come.”

Sara laughed. “Well,” she said, “it’s going to take nine months — about as long as a school year.”

“That’s too long,” Ann complained.

“It can’t happen any faster,” Sara said. “The baby has to be a lot bigger to be able to live outside my body. Right now, my uterus is the perfect place for the baby. It’s warm and safe. Even if I accidentally bump into something, the baby stays safe. God thought of everything to protect the baby.”

“How does the baby eat?” Ann asked.

“When I feed myself good food, I’m really feeding the baby too,” Sara explained. “All the good things from my food reach the baby through my body.”

“That’s why you drink milk,” Ann said.

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The days did pass. Christmas arrived, and Sara and Dominic bought a Christmas tree.

“Just think,” Dominic said, “next Christmas the baby will be with us.”

It was a long cold winter. Dominic and Sara were just about ready for the baby. But baby wasn’t ready to be born yet.

Sara liked to go for walks sometimes. She bundled up in her coat and scarf and walked to the park or the store. Even though it was freezing cold outside, the baby was cozy and warm inside the uterus. And the baby didn’t have a winter coat or scarf!

Finally spring came and Sara and Dominic knew that their baby would be born very soon. Sara packed her suitcase so that she would be all ready.

One fine morning in May, Sara knew it was time. The bottom of her uterus had begun to open. The baby was ready to live outside her body.

Sara and Dominic went to the hospital. They were very excited. The doctor and Dominic helped Sara as the baby moved through the birth canal, which is also called the vagina, and out of her body into a brand new world.

“It’s a boy!” Dominic cried.

“He’s so beautiful,” Sara said and she touched his soft cheek.

“Welcome, Alexander,” Dominic said. “Thank you, God, for our son.”

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Part 5: Alex Comes Home

Sara and Alex came home from the hospital in a few days. Dominic was very happy to have them at home with him.

Sara’s mother and Ann were at Sara and Dominic’s house to greet them. Sara’s mother was so happy to be a grandmother and Ann couldn’t wait to meet her new nephew.

“I want to hold Alex,” Ann announced. “I’ve been waiting a long time for him.”

“In a little while,” her mother promised. “But right now, I think we had better change him. Sara, I’ll look after Alex. You have a rest.”

Sara’s mother took off Alex’s wet diaper. “Ann,” she said, “will you hand me a new diaper?”

Ann stood next to her mother and watched her change Alex. Then she giggled because before her mother could get his diaper on, he wet again. Her mother laughed too.

“Mom,” Ann asked. “Why are boys and girls different?”

“What do you mean?”

“Because he has a penis,” Ann said.

“That’s right. He has a penis. That’s the special way God made boys. God made girls special too.”

“I know, I have a vagina,” Ann said. “I’m glad I’m a girl.”

“I’m glad you are too,” her mother answered. “And I’m glad Alex is a boy.”

Just then Alex let out a loud cry. His little face began to turn bright red.

“What’s the matter with Alex?” Ann asked. “He looks really mad.”

“I think he’s hungry,” her mother answered. “When babies need something,

they cry to let you know.”

“I’ll get Sara,” Ann said.

Sara got up and came to feed Alex. She fed him milk from her breast. He was too little to eat grown-up food.

Later on, Dominic changed him again, and put him in a clean sleeper.

After Alex was all cleaned up, Dominic let Ann hold him. She rocked him carefully in the chair, and sang to him.

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Not long after Alex was born, it was time for him to be baptized. Sara and Dominic asked their good friends Robert and Elizabeth to be Alex’s godparents. Sara and Dominic wanted Alex to belong to God in a special way and to share their faith.

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As time passed, Sara and Dominic were amazed at how quickly Alex grew. He started to walk and talk, and his parents helped him learn how to dress and feed himself. Sara and Dominic were very happy with each other, and with Alex. They were grateful to God for their life together.

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