



who needs a *Squeaky* wheel?

Children's Story

Cycle C, Proper 24

Title: Who Needs a Squeaky Wheel?
Author: Elsie Rempel
Church: Charleswood Mennonite Church, Winnipeg MB
Text: Luke 18:1 – 8, especially 7-8.
Theme: Persistence pays off, even with unfair people, but God answers quickly

Wondering Questions:

- I wonder how it felt to keep on asking people to be fair to David for 23 years.
- I wonder when it is important to keep on asking and when is it better to stop asking for something.
- I wonder how God feels when people don't listen to people who are squeaky wheels for making things right.
- I wonder what things God wants us to be squeaky wheels about.

Gathering Activity:

Welcome the children and ask them if they think asking for something many times is worth it. Does it get them into trouble? Ask those who get into trouble for asking for something again and again to sit on one side of you and those who end up getting what they want to sit on the other side.

People who keep on asking and asking for something are sometimes called squeaky wheels. Squeaky wheels can be very annoying, but sometimes it is important to listen to them, just like it's important to listen to a squeaky wheel on our cars because the squeak lets us know we need to add oil or fix the brake pads. Jesus told a story, it's written down here in Luke 18 (*show them*) about a person who was like a squeaky wheel and finally got fair treatment from an unfair judge. Today's children's story is about a modern mom who did the same thing. So, let's get ready to listen by settling into comfortable positions and connecting with that quiet spot inside where we know that God is near. (*Pause*) Are you ready? Here is the story.

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Story:

This morning I'd like to tell you a true story about a woman from Langenburg, Saskatchewan. She liked making pickles and baking bread, but, when her son was treated unfairly she changed the way she lived and became a squeaky wheel. You see, Joyce Milgaard's son, David, was sent to prison for something he said he did not do. The judge thought David had killed someone, but he hadn't. David's mom believed her son was innocent, even when others didn't. So, instead of baking and cooking in her kitchen all the time, she started writing letters, making phone calls or visits to anyone who could help her son prove that he had not killed anyone and shouldn't be in prison. It took a very long time, but she just kept on trying to show that her son, David, deserved to be free. Sometimes she was discouraged and felt like giving up, but then she thought of people in the Bible who didn't give up, like the woman in Jesus' story, or the story of David and Goliath. These stories cheered her up. In a newspaper story about Joyce Milgaard, she told people that she prayed to God every day and said, "OK Father, what do you want me to do tomorrow?" God was different from the people she wrote letters to. God listened right away, and helped her keep on doing the right things to free her son. God listens when people are treated unfairly because God really wants things to be right and fair. That's why we say that God is righteous.

After 23 years of letters, and phone calls, and visits, Joyce and her friends finally proved that David was innocent. Finally, he was free and could come back home. She was so happy. In those 23 years Joyce Milgaard became very good at being a squeaky wheel when something was unfair. Soon other people, who needed her kind of squeaky wheel skills, asked her to help them. And she did. And she is still helping people with her special skill of being a squeaky wheel for fairness.

Quote from *Randy Burton, The StarPhoenix, January 29, 2005. Other facts in this story come from the website http://www.injusticebusters.com/05/Milgaard_Joyce.shtml.*

Prayer:

Thank you, God, for always listening and always being fair. Thank you for helping Joyce be a good squeaky wheel for fairness. Please help us be partners with you, like Joyce, in making this world a fairer place. Amen.