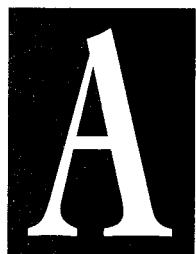




CAST • THY • BREAD

BY ARLENE MAE YORK



proposed outreach project at Portland Adventist Elementary School in Gresham, Oregon, provoked a lot of controversy.

Some said: "It's a horrible idea! I don't want any part of it!" Others replied: "Sounds great to me! Put me down for 20 loaves of bread!"

Some said: "It's too risky for children to be out in the neighborhoods in this day and age."

Others said: "What a wonderful idea for helping children learn to share!"

Some said: "The people will just throw the bread away, and that's a waste of time and money!"

Others replied: "What people do with the bread after they get it is their business. You've done your part by giving it to them."

Some said: "If no one is at home, don't leave the bread on the porch for the dogs to eat!"

Others replied: "Leave it! I want all the neighbors to have a loaf of bread, whether they are at home or not!"

Others said: "I don't have the right size bread pans, and I really don't want to buy any more."

Others replied: "I'll make round loaves or put dividers in my pans. Don't worry, I'll think of something!"

Some said, "I've never made bread in my life. Sorry!"

Others replied: "I'm a bit rusty, but I'll do my best!"

Principal Robert McDonald said: "You'll never find a project everyone will agree on, so I say . . . Go for it!"

Getting Ready

The orange paper pumpkins tied to the loaves of bread read: "A TREAT FOR YOU FROM YOUR FRIENDS, THE FIRST GRADE OF PORTLAND ADVENTIST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL."

During the children's morning worship, Pastor Chuck Williams from the Sunnyside church had told them, "Jesus is the Bread of Life, and we want to share Jesus with our neighbors!"

The 39 eager first-graders, along with their teachers, Fae

Haffner and Arlene York, prepared to deliver the 213 loaves of homemade bread donated by the Sunnyside and Rockwood church members. On Halloween morning, the children dashed from home to home in their school neighborhood, ringing doorbells and leaving their bread on the doorsteps if no one answered.

When seven-year-old Megan Lapworth knocked on one

door, an older lady answered. After Megan gave her the bread, she exclaimed, "I just brought my husband home from the hospital. He has cancer. He will enjoy this bread so much!"

Letters and Phone Calls

Many neighbors who received the bread responded by letters and phone calls. One woman sent the children a plant with this note: "I just felt like returning your kindness in a small way. You made me so happy!" Other letters read:

"We did so appreciate the kindness you extended—the thought of giving, rather than getting, at Halloween!"

"What a nice surprise to come home Halloween night and find a loaf of bread on my front porch!"

"Instead of eating candy, we enjoyed your good bread Halloween night. (Our dentist will be happy, too!)"

"We enjoyed every crumb of that loaf of bread. What a nice thing to do!"

And our favorite letter:

"I am a bachelor, so I don't have homemade bread very often. And I don't have children, so your attention to me is really special.

"As you students grow into adults, I hope you will never forget to think and care for others."

More Loaves

The next day the telephone rang. It was Linda Usher, an enthusiastic supporter of the school.

"Would you be willing to give out more bread if you had it?" she asked. "How many more loaves of bread would you need to finish the old territory and go into two more areas? Go count the houses and tell me. I want everyone to know about our school!"

"Will 300 more loaves of bread do it for you? The bread will be ready and in your school freezer so you can deliver it for Thanksgiving."

Thanks to Linda and her bread-baking skills, the first-graders were able to deliver a total of 514 loaves of bread to their neighbors.

More Letters

Again, letters began to fill the school mailbox.

"Thank you so much for the thoughtful and so delicious loaf of home-baked bread. When you brought it to our home on Hartley Avenue, my 69-year-

old mother answered the door. She was completely overwhelmed, and had tears in her eyes when she told me about it. What a wonderful Thanksgiving!"

But this was not the end of the story. Almost two months later we received yet another letter:

"Dear First-graders: Thank you so much for the loaf of bread you gave us at Thanksgiving. We were very surprised, and it made us feel very good that we live in a community that has such nice people like you. We are sorry this thank-you note is late—but we wanted very much

to thank you! The bread was delicious and it was a wonderful thought!"

As the Bible says: "Cast your bread upon the waters, for after many days you will find it again" (Ecclesiastes 11:1, NIV).*

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Arlene Mae York teaches Grade 1 at Portland Adventist Elementary School in Gresham, Oregon.