

Madeleine Juneau, Age 12

Magpie Lessons

I live in an older neighborhood with a big back yard decorated with cypress, elm, oak, Japanese magnolia, and many other gorgeous plants. Blue jays, red cardinals, and doves play in this landscape. For the past two summers, some birds have nested in a column on the back porch of our house. They are sleek, black birds with long, thin beaks. I think they are magpies. The mother bird works hard to make her nest. She brings twigs, pine straw, and leaves to the column hideaway. She is always bringing her children food. When we open the back door, she quickly flies to protect her young. It is very enjoyable to laze on the back porch and watch her. She loves her chicks. Their little chirping sounds are adorable.

When I see the mother magpie taking care of her children, I am reminded that we are God's children, and He will always take care of us. Matthew 6:26 says, "*Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth more than they?*" I have spent some time looking at the birds.

I have had a very hard 6th grade school year. My parents and I decided to move me from my private school and try a public school instead because of all the trouble. Sixth grade was full of bullies and disloyal friends. I sometimes doubted whether or not God was with me. I tried to be nice. I stood up for myself. My parents went to the principal, yet the school was unsure of what to do. I was not in the protective nest anymore of my parents that I had when I was young. No one could keep me away from the bullies. Disloyal friends wanted popularity more than real friendships. This made my parents very sad, and they went to the teachers and principal many times about the pushing and kicking. The physical stuff stopped but the mean comments did not. I know my parents will always be by my side and try to protect me.

Seeing the birds' protection, I know that God will always take care of us too. He gave the baby birds a mother and father to watch out for them and care for them. The parents protect their babies from any dangers in our backyard like squirrels. He gave me parents that look out for me. If He takes time to make sure

the birds are safe, I am certain that He will always keep us safe. He will always be by our side whatever trials we face. God loves us so much that He died for us, to take care of us. I see Him taking care of nature, and I am sure of His unfailing love for all of us. I am looking forward to going to a new school.