

The Virtue Chronicles

Humility

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How Achab Kept His Head

Sermon for Quinquagesima Sunday

“And they rebuked him but he cried out much more.”

THE blind man of today's Gospel did not worry about what people thought of him. They told him not to pray but he kept right on praying anyway and his prayers were answered.

Unlike that blind man, some children are always worried about what people think of them. Before they do anything they always wonder what people will think. This is a very common fault with children and it goes by the name of vanity. Some children don't like to tip their hats when they pass a church because of what people might think. Some children do not study because the other children might think they are pluggers. It goes on and on. But fortunately it is an easy thing to overcome. Here is how a man once did.

This man's name was Achab and he lived in India a long time ago. Like some of you, he was always afraid of what people would think. He came to the wise old emperor and asked for his advice. He said:

“I am always worrying about what people will think. It has gotten so that I am afraid to do anything. I can hardly move without worrying about what everyone is going to think. I am almost going crazy and would like to get over it.”

The Emperor answered, “I will cure you if you do what I tell you. Take this vessel which is filled to the brim with oil and carry it through the streets of the city and then back to me.”

Then the Emperor called a large slave who carried a sword as big as himself and said to the man, “If you spill one drop of oil on the way, your head will be chopped off the next instant.”

Out onto the street went Achab, carrying the vessel filled to the brim with oil, followed by the tall slave with the long, sharp sword. An hour later he came back to the palace. He had not spilled a drop of oil and his head was still on his shoulders.

“Now,” said the Emperor, “did you notice anyone looking at you while

you walked along? You must have looked very funny.”

“No,” said the man, “I did not see anyone at all. All I was worrying about was the oil in the pitcher, and the slave with the big sword.”

“Then learn your lesson,” said the Emperor. “Just keep your mind on what you are doing and don’t worry about what people think of you. That is the easiest way to keep your head.”

The man learned his lesson and had no more trouble from that day forward. He was happier because now he was not afraid of what people thought of him. After all, what people think isn’t very important because they change their minds every day. You all remember Babe Ruth. When Babe hit a home run, all the people would cheer. The next day, if he struck out, they would all boo at him. People change their minds overnight. As long as you know that what you are doing is right, just go right ahead and don’t worry about what anyone thinks. Be like the blind man in the Gospel who, although they rebuked him, cried out all the more.



“Wherefore he saith: God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.” ~ James 4:6

Write Your Own Acrostic Poem!

Acrostic poems are very easy to write. They may or may not rhyme.

H umility is a very wonderful virtue.

U _____

M _____

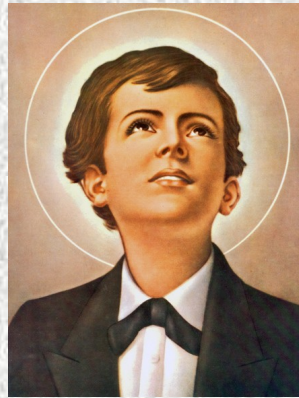
I _____

L _____

I _____

T _____

Y _____



*St. Dominic Savio,
Patron of Children*

All you have to do is think of a few words that have to do with the vertical word, (in this case it is Humility), the beginning word starting with the letter at the beginning of the line. Fill in the blanks as shown in the example!



*St. Francis de Sales
Patron of Writers*

How Theodoret's Mother was Cured of Pride

THEODORET, the eminent Church historian, relates that his mother suffered a great deal from a diseased eye. Having heard of a holy hermit, who dwelt in a cell near Antioch, she went to him, in the hope of obtaining a cure. She was only twenty-three years of age, and very beautiful. Being fond of dress, she decked herself out in bracelets, earrings, and other costly ornaments, trying by every means in her power to add to her personal charms.

At the sight of all this splendour, the man of God conceived the idea of curing the good lady's pride, an evil which, in his eyes, was much more to be regretted than her bodily affliction.

"Daughter," said the venerable anchorite, "were a painter, uncommonly skilful in his art, to execute a portrait, and were a man, altogether ignorant of painting, to give it some additional touches, can you suppose that the artist would not feel affronted? Then, my child," continued the holy solitary, "can you doubt the Creator is offended at your seeming to tax his wisdom with ignorance, and His skill with awkwardness, by endeavouring to improve and to perfect His word in your own person?"

"My mother," continues Theodoret, "cast herself at the feet of the Saint, and thanked him for his salutary admonition. Then she humbly solicited him to obtain from God the cure of her eye. Through humility, he resisted her importunities for a long time; but, overcome at last, he made the Sign of the Cross upon her eye, and it was instantly cured. As soon as my mother returned home, she threw away her cosmetics, cast off her ornaments in which she gloried so much, and ever after dressed in the neat, simple, and unaffected way which the man of God had recommended."

"If we possessed every virtue, but lacked humility, those virtues would be without root and would not last." ~ St. Vincent de Paul

The Proud Choirmaster

Sermon for the 16th Sunday after Pentecost

“He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

IN A certain Cathedral in Europe devotion to the Blessed Virgin was very important. Her feasts were celebrated with great pomp and ceremony. Her praises were sung by the choir with great fervor. On the feast of the Immaculate Conception it was the custom to sing that beautiful hymn to Our Lady, “The Magnificat.” Mary put together the words of that hymn herself. It had always been sung in this Cathedral by the whole choir together.

One year, though, the choir leader, who had a very beautiful voice, decided that instead of having everyone sing it he would do it alone. Which he did, well and beautifully. That night he had a vision and was asked by the Blessed Virgin why the Magnificat had not been sung in her honour, as it had been for hundreds of years. The choir leader said that the hymn had been sung, and by himself, personally. Mary replied, “You wished to glorify yourself. You sang the hymn out of pride and not one sound of it reached heaven.” “He that exalteth himself shall be humbled.”

Humility is a virtue which makes our souls very dear to God. He even told us to imitate Him because He is meek and humble of heart. Being humble means that we do not think too much of ourselves. When children think too much of themselves it can show in several ways. By being stuck up, for example, or by showing off, or by trying to attract attention to themselves, or by boasting. All these things are signs that the virtue of humility is not very strong in our souls and that we should try to strengthen it. We should try to strengthen it by performing actions which will humble us. By letting someone else do most of the talking for a while, by not boasting, and so on. In this way our souls will become more and more beautiful. We do not like to see children who are not humble. God doesn’t like to see them either.

Peter Rubens, a great painter, was traveling in Madrid in Spain. He visited a monastery and admired the paintings that were hanging on the walls. Rubens pointed out one picture which was a masterpiece, and asked the prior who the

artist was, because his name did not appear on the painting. The prior replied that it was done by a monk of the monastery who wanted to remain hidden from the world and go through life without any worldly praise. Reubens tried in vain to find out who the artist was. When he left, the prior went up to his rooms and fondled his brushes. He was the painter of the pictures. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Vanity Overcome; or, The Painter Monk

THE name of Rubens, one of the greatest painters of the days in which he lived, is also well known to every lover of the noble art even in our own days.

It happened that he went to visit a monastery of one of the austere Orders of the Church, and he saw in the humble sanctuary which appeared to him to be the greatest work of art he had ever seen. It represented the death of a monk. Rubens pointed it out to several of his pupils who accompanied him, who all joined with him in expressing their admiration at it.

"Who could have been the painter of this picture?" said Van Dyck, the favourite pupil of Rubens.

"His name had been written at the foot of the painting," said another, "but it is now entirely effaced."

Rubens then sent for the Prior, and asked him who the artist was who had painted such a magnificent picture.

"The painter is no longer of this world," he replied.

"Dead!" exclaimed Rubens - "dead, and no one has till now ever heard of him; no one has handed down his name, which ought to be immortal - his name, which might have even greater renown than my own! And yet," added the artist, with a noble pride, "yet, my Father, I am Peter Paul Rubens."

When he had uttered these words, the pale face of the Prior began to as-

sume a brilliant hue; his eyes sparkled, and he fixed his eyes on Rubens, not with curiosity only, but with a feeling of natural pride. But this was only for a moment. The monk cast his eyes upon the ground, crossed his arms on his breast - those arms which during the moment of enthusiasm he had raised heavenwards - and he repeated the words he had hitherto used: "The artist is no longer of this world."

"His name, his name, my Father - what is his name? I must make it known to the world, and give honour to whom honour is due."

And all the others present united their voices to his, asking him to tell them who was the painter of the picture.

The monk was troubled. A cold sweat issued from his forehead and trickled down his emaciated cheeks; his lips were convulsively pressed together, and he was tempted to reveal the mystery, the secret of which he possessed.

"His name, his name!" repeated Rubens.

The monk made a solemn gesture with his hand. "Hear me," he said; "you have not properly understood me. I said to you that the author of this painting was no longer of the world, but I did not say that he was dead."

"He lives, then - he lives!" ejaculated Rubens. "Oh, tell us where he is, that we may go and find him."

"He has renounced all worldly things," replied the Prior. "He dwells in the cloister; he is a monk."

"A monk, my Father, a monk! Oh, tell me in what monastery he lives, for he must leave it. When God marks a man with the seal of genius, that man must not go and hide himself from the world. God has given such a one a sublime mission on earth, and it is his duty to accomplish it. Tell me the name of the cloister where he has hid himself, and I myself will go and take him hence, and I will show him what glory awaits him. If he refuses to accompany me, I will tell him that I will go to our Holy Father the Pope, and ask him to order him to go back again into the world. Yes, my Father, I will go to the Pope himself, and the Pope will grant my request."

The monk answered in a determined tone: "I will not tell you his name, nor the place where he is to be found."

“But the Pope will order you to do this,” said Rubens.

“Hear me,” said the monk - “in God’s name, hear me! Do you imagine that that man, before leaving the world, before renouncing the fortune and the glory he could so easily have gained, had not to fight bravely against a great temptation? Do you believe that he had not been pressed by bitter suggestions and by a cruel agony of mind, before he was able to throw all this human glory at his feet, and, striking his breast, to acknowledge that all was vanity? Leave him, then, to die in the home he has chosen in his earthly pilgrimage in this deceitful world. Besides this, all your efforts would be without avail. It is a temptation which he would overcome,” added he, in making on himself the Sign of the Cross, “for God will not deprive him of His assistance in that his day of need. God, Who in His goodness has called him in this world to serve Him alone, will not cast him from His presence.”

“But, my Father,” continued Rubens, “it is an immortal name he sacrifices.”

“An immortal name is nothing,” answered the monk, “when compared with eternity.” And the monk, covering his head to hide his countenance, immediately changed the conversation, so that Rubens could not return to the subject.

The celebrated artist left the monastery along with his pupils, and returned to Madrid, silent and sorrowful. The Prior went back to his cell, and, kneeling on the mat which served as a bed, raised up a fervent prayer to God. Then he gathered together all his painting material and his easel, and threw them into the river which ran beneath the window of his cell.

For a little time, he gazed sadly on them, as he saw them sink in the water or carried away by the stream, and when they had all disappeared, he returned to his prayer on the mat of straw before his Crucifix.



“Pride makes us forgetful of our eternal interests. It causes us to neglect totally the care of our soul.” ~

St. John Baptist de la Salle

Word Search

H	U	M	I	L	I	T	Y
U	B	O	A	S	T	R	T
M	G	E	H	S	A	T	I
B	R	A	G	M	G	A	N
L	Y	D	P	E	G	L	A
E	V	I	R	T	U	E	V
S	G	E	I	H	F	N	S
J	R	F	D	S	G	T	E
R	H	J	E	S	U	S	E

~Answers on Page 23~

Word Bank:

Humility	Pride
Jesus	Mary
Vanity	Humble
Brag	Boast
Talent	Virtue

Humility of the Blessed Virgin



ANOTHER virtue that the Blessed Virgin possessed was that of humility. Humility means being humble, and being humble means to know ourselves as we really are in God's sight. When we are humble we will not think ourselves better than others, even when we know that we are prettier, have more money, or wear better clothes. These things should not make a person proud.

Take a lesson from the Blessed Virgin. As you learned before, she was the loveliest being God ever created. Was she proud on account of her beauty? Oh, no! She praised God for giving her such wonderful graces, but she never for a moment thought herself better than others. She was obedient to her parents, kind and gentle to her companions, pure and holy in all her actions. Did she ever look down on her little friends in the temple and brag about anything she had? Sometimes we find children vain about what they have at home, their toys, their fine house, and other things. These things are nothing to be proud of; rather should such children thank God for letting them enjoy these gifts.

The Gifts of God Should Not Make Us Proud

Other children look down on their classmates because they have more talents, can learn and understand their lessons better. Again I say such children have no reason to be proud, for a good mind is the gift of God. Perhaps they are not making the best use of the talents God has given them. If God has given you talents to learn, He wants you to use the talents. If you are lazy and do not study your lessons, God will not be pleased with you. If God has not given you many talents, He will be quite satisfied if you make good use of what He has given to you.

Never be vain, then, because you are more beautiful than others; do not think yourself better because you wear finer clothing, have richer parents or more talents than your companions. These things do not count before God.

Do you not think, dear children, that if God looked upon riches, a fine house, pretty clothes, and fine food as wonderful gifts, He would have given the Blessed Virgin all these things? Would He not have given her the finest home to live in, rich and beautiful clothes to wear, servants to wait on her, and every-

thing that would help to make her life easy and comfortable? Instead he gave her the most wonderful gifts of the heart and mind, and in great gratitude she made use of her many graces to live a life of great holiness and purity; and so she became worthy to be made the Mother of God.

Try then, dear children, to imitate the Blessed Virgin in her humility. Although you are still small, many of you have perhaps sometimes allowed yourselves to feel proud about what you thought made you better than your play-mates. True, it is not being proud to know that God has given you many good qualities, but you should thank God for these. You ought never on that account think yourself better than others. Ask the Blessed Virgin to help you to be humble so that you may in this way please Jesus and become more like Him.

Practice:

1. I will not think myself better than others on account of my talents or other gifts.
2. I will often say this prayer: "Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto Thine."

"There is more value in a little study of humility and in a single act of it than in all the knowledge of the world." ~ Theresa of Avila

*"The gate of Heaven is very low; only the humble can enter it."
~ Elizabeth Ann Seton*



The Manly Boy

DURING recess two boys were left to themselves in the class room, and one of them, having some firecrackers in his pocket, set them off. The teacher, hearing the noise, came into the room and asked who was the cause of it. One of the boys, Frank Clark, denied having set off the crackers, and the other, James Gibson, would neither admit or deny, and the teacher, thinking he was the culprit, punished him severely.

When the time came for class to dismiss, Frank and James met. "Why didn't you deny it?" asked Frank.

"Because we were the only two in the room, and one of us must have lied," said James.

"Then why did you not say I did it?" asked Frank.

"Because you said you didn't, and I would spare the liar."

Frank's heart melted.

When school began the next day, Frank went up to the teacher's desk and said: "Please, sir, I can't bear to be a liar. I set off the crackers." And he burst into tears.

The teacher thought how harshly James had been treated, and he was sorry. Before the whole school, hand in hand with Frank, he walked down to where James sat, and said aloud:

"James—Frank and I beg your pardon. We are both to blame."

The school was hushed and still - so still that they might have almost heard James' big boy-tears dropping on his book; and when, from want of something else to say, he gently cried: "Three cheers for our teacher!" the loud shout of the scholars filled the old man's eyes with something behind his glasses which made him wipe them before he sat down again.

"Humility is the mother of salvation." ~ St. Bernard

"Humility is the foundation of sanctity." ~ St. Cyprian

Memorize These Bible Quotes!

“He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble.” ~ Luke 1:52

“For if any man thinketh himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.” ~ Gal. 6:5

“Be humbled in the sight of the Lord, and he will exalt you.” ~ James 4:10

“Wherefore he saith: God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.” ~ James 4:6

“Humiliation followeth the proud: and glory shall uphold the humble of spirit.” ~ Proverbs 29:23

“The fear of the Lord is the lesson of wisdom: and humility goeth before glory.” ~ Proverbs 15:33

“Amen, I say to you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter into it.” ~ Mark 10:15

“Be you humbled, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in the time of visitation.” ~ 1 Peter 5:6

“God hath made the roots of the proud nations to wither, and hath planted the humble of these nations..... God hath abolished the memory of the proud, and hath preserved the memory of them that are humble in mind.” ~ Ecclus. 10:18,19

“What Must I Do to be Good?”

THE Blessed Cure of Ars was asked one day by one who had taken a firm resolution to serve God faithfully: “Father, what must I do to be good?”

“My child, you must love the good God.”

“And what am I to do in order that I may love God?”

“Ah! My child, be humble,” he answered. “Humility! Humility! Humility! It is our pride that prevents us from becoming saints.”

In the Cemetery

ONE day, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, when quite a young girl, was playing with her companions, who were all of the same age as herself. They began to show her their beautiful clothes and the precious ornaments they were wearing.

St. Elizabeth made no remark, but quietly taking them to a cemetery which was not far distant, she pointed to the tombs, and said: “The people who are buried there, beneath the ground, were once beautiful and young as we are. What like are they now? And what has become of all the fine apparel they wore? All gone! It is all over with them. One day it will be the same with us. Why, then, should we be proud, and take up our minds with our bodies, and think so much of what we wear? Rather let us try to think of God, and speak of those things which we can take with us when we leave the world.”

Many who have led holy lives for a long time, have in the end lost all the merits of their good works, and their souls also, because they allowed pride to enter their hearts.



A Fall Through Pride



AMONG the disciples of St. Macarius was one of the name of Valens. During the first years he lived in the desert he even surpassed many of his brethren in the practice of austerities. But Satan put into his mind the thought that he was so holy as to be already worthy of conversing with the angels of God.

Instead of banishing this temptation, he allowed it to rest in his mind, and the Evil One, seeing the advantage he had gained, one day, transforming himself into an angel of light, appeared to him, accompanied by other wicked spirits, also in the same form, carrying torches. One of them said to him: "Jesus Christ is so pleased with your holy life that He is coming to honour you with a visit; come forth, therefore, to meet Him and adore Him."

Valens, in great joy, immediately went out of his cell, and, thinking it was Jesus Christ he saw before him, he fell down and adored Satan himself. When he had done this, the vision ended.

Next day he went to the church where the brethren were assembled, and boldly said: "I do not need, like you, to go to Communion, for Jesus Christ Himself has come to visit me."

St. Macarius, who knew what had happened, rebuked him for his great pride, and asked the brethren to pray for his conversion. He also ordered him to be confined to his cell till such time as he would open his eyes, and see how far he had fallen because of his pride.



*"Humility is so precious that it obtains the things that are too high to be taught. It attains and possesses what words do not attain." ~
Blessed John Ruysbroeck*

Humility as Understood By The Saints

ST. AUGUSTINE thus spoke of humility: "Humility is the foundation of all other virtues; there is no virtue more powerful than this one for obtaining God's choicest favours."

It was this virtue of humility that the youthful St. Aloysius endeavoured to gain with all the eagerness of his soul. Every day he prayed with fervour to the holy angels to obtain it for him by their intercession, since it had been for them the cause of their victory on the day of trial, and of their present glory and happiness in the Kingdom of Heaven.

A certain holy religious was often heard to say: "I would willingly and with the greatest pleasure give my two eyes to acquire true humility."

St. Thomas of Villanova often said these words: "Humility is the mother of many virtues: of it are born obedience, the fear of God, patience, modesty, and peace."

St. Jane Frances de Chantal had so great a love for humility that she watched with the greatest attention never to allow to pass by any opportunity of practising that virtue. Writing to St. Francis de Sales on one occasion, she used these words: "O my dearest Father, I beg of you, for the love of God, to help me to humble myself daily more and more!"

St. Francis of Paula continually inculcated humility. "The most powerful weapon for overcoming Satan is humility," he said.

St. Teresa could not understand why priests used to speak so frequently on the necessity of being humble. "Is it not quite evident," she used to say, "that no one can attribute to himself any good he may do? For without the help of God what good could anyone perform? How can people be so proud as to think of any little good they may have done, since they are so full of every kind of evil dispositions, and since they have committed so many sins against God? Even if I should desire to draw to myself vanity from any good I may have performed solely by the help of God, how in justice could I do it?"

St. Dominic had the custom of casting himself on his knees before the gate of any town in which he went to preach, to beg of Our Lord not to visit the people with any affliction on account of his sins.

St. Phillip Neri advised all those whom he directed in Confession to say to themselves, when they had fallen into any fault: "Had I only been humble, I never would have committed this sin."

When the holy penitent Thais had been converted from her sinful life, she would continually call to mind the evil she had committed by her own fault in the days when she had fallen away from the path of virtue. She would, in her humility, consider herself unworthy of even uttering the Holy Name of God, and her great prayer was in these words: "O Thou Who hast created me, have mercy on me."

St. Teresa, again, used to say: "One single day in which a person humbles himself profoundly before God on account of his sins and his own natural weakness brings more graces into his soul than if he had spent many days in prayer."

"I know what I will do to appease the anger of my God against me on account of my sins," said St. Bonaventure; "I will consider myself to be the greatest sinner upon the face of the earth; I will look upon myself as an object of contempt, and when I see myself looked down upon, despised, covered with insults and opprobrium, I will be glad and rejoice, and I will bless the Lord for granting me so great a grace."

St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi was convinced in her own heart that she was, of all creatures whom God had made, the most miserable. Her great humility made her exaggerate her little faults, that people might have a more contemptuous opinion concerning her. It was the greatest torment for this humble soul to see herself esteemed, or to hear herself praised, and she appeared to be covered with confusion when she was unable to hide from the knowledge of others the many favours and marks of the love of God, Who had for her a special predilection.

St. Bonaventure often said: "Be full of contempt for yourself in your own eyes, on account of your negligences in corresponding with the graces offered you by God, and be glad when others condemn you. Do not boast of the fav-

ours you have received from God, but remember that it is God Who has given them to you.”

St. Bernard, speaking of humility, said: “To be great in the eyes of God by the practice of virtues, and at the same time to appear contemptible in our own eyes, is that humility which is most agreeable to God, but which, alas! is so seldom to be found amongst men.”



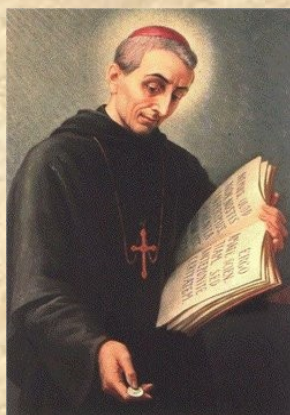
*St. Jane Frances de
Chantal*



*St. Mary Magdalene of
Pazzi*



St. Francis of Paula



*St. Thomas of Villa-
nova*



St. Phillip Neri



St. Bonaventure

“IF I LOVE JESUS, I
OUGHT TO RESEMBLE
HIM. IF I LOVE JESUS, I
OUGHT TO LOVE WHAT
HE LOVES, WHAT HE
PREFERS TO ALL
ELSE: HUMILITY.”



ST. PETER EYMARD

Satan Hates Humility

ST. Macarius was once going to his cell with some palm-leaves with which he was accustomed to make mats. Satan appeared to him carrying a scythe, with which he appeared to strike him. But he could not touch him.

“O Macarius,” he said to him in a tone of great anger, “how grieved I am that I cannot strike you. I can do the works you do even better than you are able to do them. You, indeed, sometimes fast, but I am always fasting; you sometimes watch when others sleep; I never sleep, I am always watching. But there is one thing that makes you stronger than I am, and that is your humility.”

O my child, learn from the example of Jesus to be humble, and the enemy of your soul shall have no power to hurt you.

The Pert Chicken

THERE was once a pretty chicken;

But his friends were very few,

For he thought that there was nothing

In the world but what he knew;

So he always, in the farmyard,

Had a very forward way,

Telling all the hens and turkeys

What they ought to do and say.

“Mrs. Goose,” he said, “I wonder

That your goslings you should let

Go out paddling in the water;

It will kill them to get wet.”

“I wish, my old Aunt Dorking,”

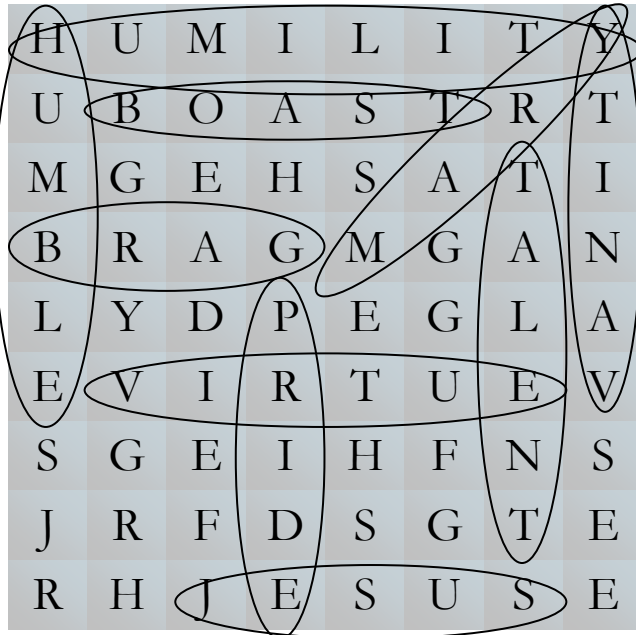
He began to her, one day,
“That you shouldn’t sit all summer
In your nest upon the hay.
Won’t you come out to the meadow,
Where the grass with seeds is filled?”
“If I should,” said Mrs. Dorking,
“Then my eggs would all get chilled.”
“No, they won’t,” replied the chicken;
“And no matter if they do;
Eggs are really good for nothing;
What’s an egg to me or you?”

“What’s an egg!” said Mrs. Dorking;
“Can it be you do not know
You yourself were in an eggshell
Just one little month ago?
And, if kind wings had not warmed you,
You would not be out today,
Telling hens, and geese, and turkeys,
What they ought to do and say!
To be very wise, and show it,
Is a pleasant thing, no doubt;
But, when young folks talk to old folks,
They should know what they’re about.”

~ Marian Douglas

Activity Answer Key

Answers for 'Word Search' on Page 10:



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