

## No Right Answer Here

### A Modern Day Parable inspired by Matthew 22:15-21

Jessi & Jonnie are twin brothers in the 3rd grade at Cypress Elementary School. They are also best buds and sometimes too smart for their own good. When they want to figure something out, they put their heads together and let their imaginations run wild.

Rita is the boys' mother. She is a stay-at-home mom by choice. Before she had her first child, Bella, she worked as an editor at the University Publishing Company. Her husband is a professor at the University. Once they began having children, Rita decided to leave her job and take a few years to finally work on her novel. She began writing stories at a very young age, and always knew that one day she would have a book published. But first, her strategy was to delve into the world of publishing and learn the business from the inside out. That way, when she was ready, she would know the best way to get her own work published.

Well, that dream was postponed a while because Jessie and Jonnie came quickly after Bella was born, and caring for three babies didn't leave Rita much time for writing.

One day on the bus ride home, the two boys started wondering why their Mom didn't go to work. They had learned in class that day that their teacher, Ms. Lewis, had two children. They put the pieces together and realized that she's a mom, and she goes to her job as a teacher every day. Their Mom has always stayed home. They had never seen her go to a job. "Maybe she's not smart enough," Jessie wondered out loud. Jonnie gave it some thought and said, "I think Mom is smart, but if she were as smart as Ms. Lewis she would either go to work in an office or she would homeschool us. Wow! This was quite a puzzle and they were aching to get to the bottom of it.

They knew they couldn't just come straight and ask their mom, so they put their over-active imaginations into high gear to devise a plan to get to the truth of the matter. The bus stopped at the end of their driveway. The boys jumped off the bus and hit the gravel racing to the front door. This was a daily competition and Jonnie usually won. The two boys burst through the door ready to begin the inquisition.

Even though she had no clue of their plan, Mom threw them a curve ball by making fresh-baked chocolate chip cookies. That delicious smell filled the house and totally distracted the boys from their agenda. They gave Mom quick hugs, then made a beeline for the kitchen. "Hold on one minute!" Mom called out. "What are you two boys up to?"

Jessie and Jonnie froze and looked at each other in terror. How could she possibly know they were up to something? They slowly turned around to face Mom putting on the most innocent, endearing grins they could muster. Jonnie spoke first, "What do you mean, mother dear?" His words were oozing, sweet as honey dripping from his cute little mouth. Jessie chimed in, trying to save this moment and help them not sound so phony..... and guilty. "Yeah, Mom. We are only going to have some of your wonderful cookies. They smell soooooo good, and you make the best cookies. We can't resist!"

"Why, thank you." Mom replied. "But, you boys know you have to put away your book bags and wash up first. It's like you suddenly forgot all the rules of this house!" Relieved, the boys answered in unison, "Oh, yes ma'am. Sorry Mom." and they darted to the bathroom to clean away the germs of the day.

After warm cookies and cold milk, the twins decided it was time to execute their plan. Jessie cleared his thought and began. "Hmm. Hmm. Excuse me, Mom. I know you are busy, but I would like to say how lovely you look today." "Yes, I agree!" said Jonnie. "And you are such a good cook, too!"

Mom turned to face her clever, but not-so-subtle sons. "Why thank you, my dear sons," she said. "I really appreciate those very kind compliments." Mom was smart enough to wait patiently. Surely there was more to come. She could sense they were buttering her up for something big, and the twins did not disappoint.

They continued. "Mother, we know that you are a truthful woman and that you teach us the way of God. And you are not concerned with what others' think, or about who has the best job, or who has the most money. Tell us though, who is smarter, you or Ms. Lewis? You stay home. She has a job. Would you be able to make up this homework and teach our class?"

They were obviously trying to trap her — if she said the teacher was smarter, they would think she wasn't capable of holding down a job. If she said she was smarter, they would question her decisions to stay home, and send them away to school. Mom asked the twins, "Why are you questioning my intelligence? Show me your homework papers."

They handed her their assignment sheets and she asked, "Whose name is at the top of these papers?" They replied, "Ms. Lewis." At that, Mom said to them, "Then complete your assignment and return it to Ms. Lewis. But, also give to me what is my due! Before I had children, I had a job as a top editor at University Press. I decided to stay home with your sister and you. I have also been writing a novel. I work on it at least one hour a day while you are at school. It is a very slow process, but it is a great book! One day, it will be published and we will see my work for sale in a bookstore!" The boys were quite surprised and impressed. They gave their mom a big hug, satisfied and probably a little relieved. **The end.**