



A short story by Leo Schoof, Kelmscott, Western Australia

The Duck Family

It was lunchtime.

Andrew, a boy with Down syndrome, who was working at McDonald's in Armadale, did not even notice that some of the workers were leaving to go to lunch.

He really enjoys his work and was very busy sweeping the floor and cleaning the tables after the customers left.

Therefore his boss suddenly called out: "Andrew, It's lunchtime, you better go and have your lunch now".

Andrew was very happy to have this job as most people don't really want to employ a boy with a disability. Can they work hard enough? Can they do things properly? Or are they just a nuisance and always get in the way? Can they be polite to the customers and can they understand him?

Andrew knew that the Lord had looked after him and allowed him to get this job. He was very happy and thankful for being allowed to work here and he did his work faithfully and diligently, always humming a little tune as he was working. He did his work well for this is what his parents had taught him.





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Recently he had an operation on his knee which made it a little harder for him to do everything and he had to use a crutch to get around. He got his lunch box from his bag and off he went to the Minnowarra Park where he always ate his lunch. He had a lovey spot there close to the water's edge. That was his favourite spot because from there he could see plenty of water birds such as the Pacific Ducks, Purple Swamp Hens and Coots.



Pacific Duck

When he had nearly finished his lunch he saw a mother duck with some little baby ducklings walking quietly on the grass.

But, look where they were going!

They were heading straight towards the busy Armadale Road. It was always very busy there with lots of cars and big trucks as well.

“I hope this duck family is not going to try and cross that busy road”, Andrew thought.

Oh dear, that was exactly what they were going to do. They were heading straight for the busy road. Didn't the mother duck know how busy it was and how dangerous? Fancy going to cross that busy road with her little ducklings!

“What can I do about it?”, thought Andrew.



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“How can I help this duck family?”

So he left his lunch on the grass and as quickly as he could manage with his crutch he walked to the road and stepped into the middle of the road. As he did this he lifted up his crutch and tried to stop a big truck, which was coming straight for him. Wasn't that a dangerous thing to do? The truck driver put his foot on the brakes and the truck stopped suddenly. The driver of the truck was not very happy because he did not see the family of ducks yet. He was actually very, very cross. “What a stupid thing to do, to step right in front of a big truck. How dangerous”, he thought. He yelled at Andrew in a very gruff voice, and told him to get off the road. But Andrew did not even hear it.



He was too worried about this mother duck with her little ducklings. And just what he expected, the mother duck started to cross the road and all her little ducklings followed her. When the truck driver saw what was happening he was no longer angry at Andrew. He was quite pleased with that boy. And if that had been his son he would have been proud of him.

But the danger was not over yet for the duck family. They were only half way and in the middle of the road there was a narrow strip of grass. Now Andrew had to stop all the cars coming from the other way. And again the first driver was very angry when Andrew stepped on to the road and lifted up his crutch. But just like the truck driver he was no longer angry when he saw what was happening. He smiled when he saw the duck family safely cross the road.



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When the whole Duck family had safely reached the other side of the road everybody was very happy. Lots of people had come to watch and when the Duck family disappeared on the other side of the road they all clapped. They were all so happy. Andrew was also very happy that he could save some of God's precious creatures.



But what happened next? He thought the Duck family was safe now and that the troubles were all over. But, no, they were not safe at all. A crow had seen the little ducklings and was trying to catch one for his meal. But the mother duck protected her little ones and chased the crow away. But he kept on coming back. When they reached the lake on the other side of the road they all went into the water and finally they were safe.

Now Andrew could go back and finish his lunch. But when he came back to the spot where he had left it there was no lunch left. All the other ducks and crows had eaten the whole lot. Only the paper and his empty lunch box was left. So he picked up the paper and threw it in the rubbish bin.

Of course he was late for work now. So he quickly went back to work as fast as he could with his crutch. The boss was not very happy with him. But when he told the boss all that had happened he was a bit friendlier.

The next week the other workers showed him how to serve the customers and how to take orders. He learned quite quickly because it was not even that difficult. And after a whole week he could do it all by himself.



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One day a blind man came into the McDonald's restaurant and ordered a meal. Andrew helped him with his order and gave the man his meal. The blind man had a white walking stick, which is not to lean on, but just to help him feel his way around. He found a table and sat down and started to cut his meal with the plastic knife Andrew had given him with his meal. But he could not cut it very well and because he was blind he just could not use that weak and wobbly knife. It bent in all directions and was no good for cutting the meat. While Andrew was serving the next customer he saw what was happening. So he left all the customers and said: "Excuse me, I will be back in a minute". He went to the kitchen and got a good knife and quickly walked over to where the blind man was sitting. He started cutting the man's meat but in the meantime the people were getting quite angry. Some came during their lunch break and were in a hurry. They became impatient and quite irritated. But when they saw what Andrew was doing they soon calmed down. In the meantime the boss was looking through the window of his office and was wondering why the line of customers was getting so long. Then he noticed that Andrew was gone.

"Where would that boy be?", the boss thought, and he was getting quite upset and angry. From his office he could see that some of the customers were also getting quite impatient and even angry, and no wonder. Then he spotted Andrew and saw what he was doing and his heart softened. How could he be angry now? When Andrew was finished helping the blind man he went back to his place behind the counter and simply asked: "Who is next?"

The boss in his office suddenly remembered what the minister spoke about in church the previous Sunday. The minister had preached about the text from Matthew 7 verse 12, which says: "*whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them*".

Andrew was also in church that Sunday morning and had heard the same sermon and without realising it he had put into practice what he had learned.

The boss was very thankful to have Andrew working for him.



SpindleWorks 



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