



A BOY, A DUCK & A PRAYER

by PATTI MAGUIRE ARMSTRONG

This was a day my nine-year-old son, Luke, had dreamed of for weeks. We had moved out into the country two months earlier and Luke was impatient for some kind of farm animal. His five brothers and sisters were mildly interested in the ducklings, but not like Luke was.

Never content just to watch critters, he held them securely and talked softly, each one relaxed in his hand until he slowly put it down and lifted another. Luke never left the brood except to eat dinner.

As the sun began to set, Luke steered his ducklings into the garden for a snack of grasshoppers. He accidentally stepped into their huddle and scattered them. The other ducks drew back together, but Quacks scampered off behind a storage chest in the garage and disappeared. He had fallen down a small drainage pipe. The opening was golf ball-sized.

"Is there anything we can do?" Luke asked doubtfully.

"I can't think of anything," I told him helplessly.

"That's what I thought," he said and sadly. "And he was my favorite one, too — Quacks."

There were still eleven ducklings left, but the little lost one broke our hearts. The parable of the Good Shepherd suddenly took on a new relevance. When I awoke to his peeps early the next morning, I wondered how long before lack of food and water would finally quiet him.

"Food," I thought. "That's it!" Luke was just coming out of his room. "Luke," I whispered, "I have an idea. What if you tied a grasshopper to the end of a fishing line? If Quacks is hungry enough, maybe he'll bite it and you can pull him up." I admitted I had no idea if he could survive swallowing the fishing line.

"It's worth a try," Luke said, bounding out the door. He returned a short time later.

"Mom," Luke called excitedly. "Can you pray? Quacks bites the grasshopper but when I pull up the line, he lets go."

I sat down in the living room and prayed for God to guide Quacks up out of the hole. In minutes, Luke returned with a big smile and a little duckling.

"He bit the grasshopper and I was able to pull him all the way up," he explained breathlessly. "When I grabbed him, he just let the grasshopper drop out of his mouth."

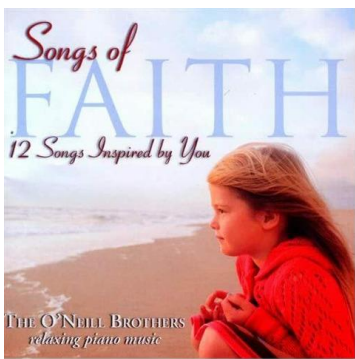
By now the other kids were coming downstairs so we filled them in on the rescue. "Didn't you all think it was impossible that we'd ever see Quacks again?" I asked.

The kids looked surprised. "I knew God could do anything so I prayed to Him last night to save Quacks," seven-year-old Tyler said, nonchalantly.

"That's what I did too," agreed Luke.

I was really impressed. Their faith had no limits. If God could save wayward souls that fall through the cracks, how could I have doubted that He would be willing to save a lost little duck.

“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. ” Luke 19:10



This was one of twelve original stories featured in our Songs of Faith project, a partnership with Tim O'Neill of The Piano Brothers. People submitted their stories and we selected one a month to be scored. Listen to soundtrack [here](#). The whole project: Keys2Heaven.com.



MARK & PATTI ARMSTRONG

Patti and Mark Armstrong live in North Dakota and are the parents of ten children, eight boys and two girls, including two adopted AIDS orphans from Kenya. Patti worked in the field of social work and public administration before staying home full-time to raise her children. As a freelance writer, Patti has

published more than 400 articles for both secular and religious publications. ([GO](#)) Mark Armstrong spent nearly 30 years as an award-winning broadcast journalist before serving as the Communications Executive for North Dakota's Workforce Safety & Insurance. He travels and presents "Our Lady of Guadalupe" to retreats, church events and conferences. He also co-authored the best-selling Catholic book, "Amazing Grace for Fathers."

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Thank you in advance!

So blessed to be united in building the Kingdom,



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~ Pope St. John Paul II

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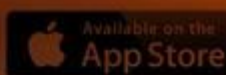
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