

The PARADE Prize

By Jenny Workman
(Based on a true story)

"Jesus said love ev'ryone; treat them kindly, too" (Children's Songbook, 61).

Matthew got in the van with his family and put on his seatbelt. Today they were going to the parade!

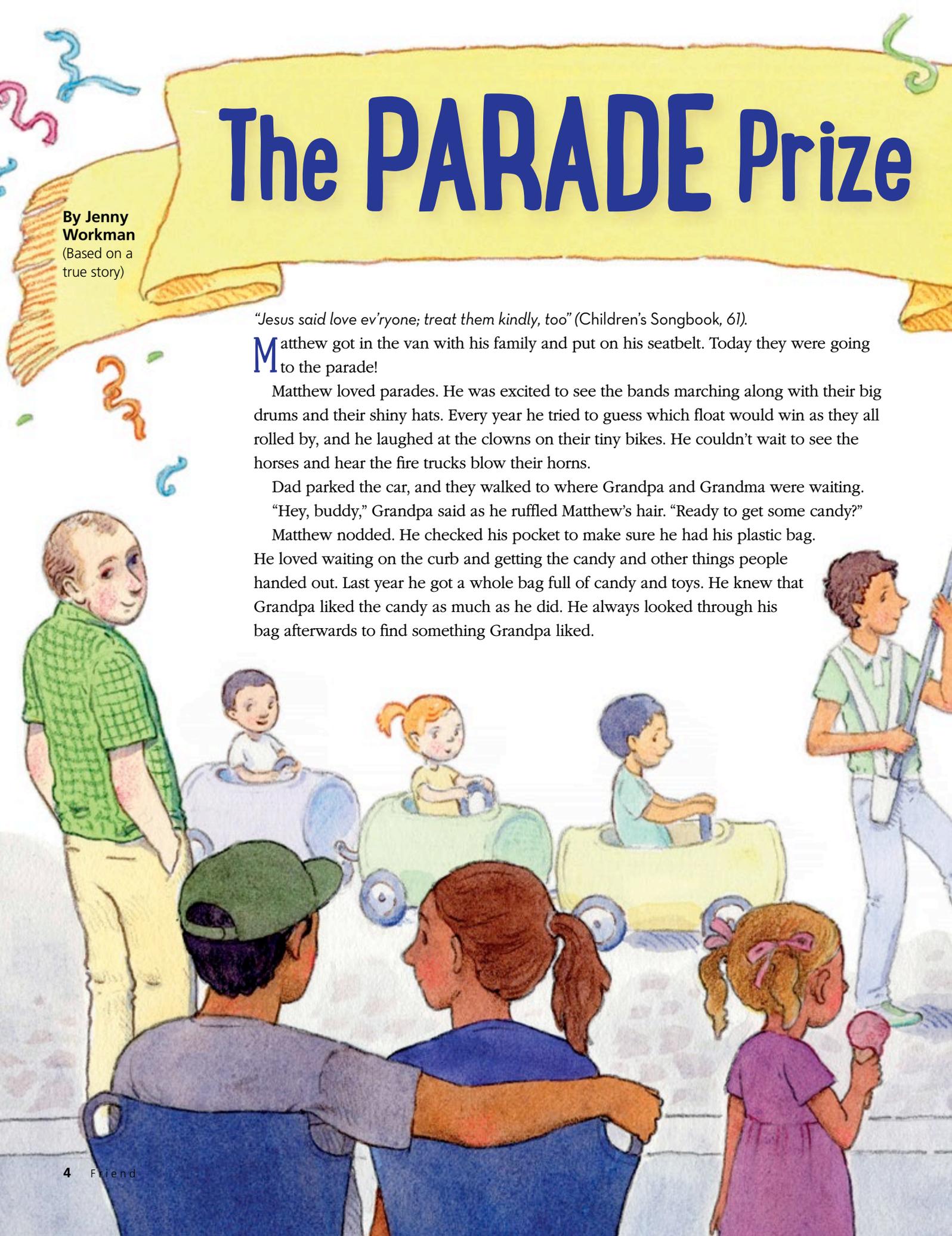
Matthew loved parades. He was excited to see the bands marching along with their big drums and their shiny hats. Every year he tried to guess which float would win as they all rolled by, and he laughed at the clowns on their tiny bikes. He couldn't wait to see the horses and hear the fire trucks blow their horns.

Dad parked the car, and they walked to where Grandpa and Grandma were waiting.

"Hey, buddy," Grandpa said as he ruffled Matthew's hair. "Ready to get some candy?"

Matthew nodded. He checked his pocket to make sure he had his plastic bag.

He loved waiting on the curb and getting the candy and other things people handed out. Last year he got a whole bag full of candy and toys. He knew that Grandpa liked the candy as much as he did. He always looked through his bag afterwards to find something Grandpa liked.



Matthew's favorite part of the parade wasn't what he saw but what he did.

"I hope I get lots of candy!" Matthew's sister Abby yelled as she jumped up and down. "Look! It's starting!"

Matthew quickly picked a spot on the curb. He felt his heart thud as a band began to play. Suddenly the air was filled with bubbles as a float covered with tropical fish passed by. The people walking behind it were handing out lollipops. Matthew and Abby both got one.

The next group handed out tickets to the bowling alley. Then the clowns came. Some were on stilts, one rode a unicycle, and some rode the tiny bikes Matthew liked.

The next group was dancing and handing out bright green water bottles. A water bottle like that would be perfect for soccer! Matthew and Abby both grabbed one. Then Matthew saw a little boy nearby crying because he hadn't gotten one. Matthew looked at his bag filled with candy and toys. He looked again at the boy and then took out his water bottle and walked over to him.

"Here you go," Matthew said, holding it out to the boy. The boy grabbed it, smiled, and wiped his eyes. The boy's mom smiled and said thank you.

As Matthew went back to sit on the curb, he saw Grandpa wink at him. He felt good that he had shared the water bottle with the little boy, even though he could have used it for soccer. Matthew thought that sharing with the boy was what Jesus would have wanted him to do.

After the parade Grandpa asked Matthew what he liked most. Matthew thought about all the fun things in the parade. Then he thought about the boy and the water bottle. He knew he had done something even better than watching a parade and getting candy. ♦

The author lives in Oregon, USA.

