

Outside the Box



After Mother went home to be with the Lord, the family held an estate sale of her possessions that had been sitting in boxes for years.

As I rummaged through the boxes of elegant china, laces and linens, one box in particular caught my eye. This one smelled musty, and a piece of straw was poking through the top. I pried it open with scissors and began to sneeze.

What was this? I came face-to-face with an ugly rock. Its moss on top made it look like a man's head. Aha! I remembered! Years before, Mother had been a special education teacher. Her passion was sharing the beautiful creations from her nature walks with her students. That meant her bedroom was filled with rocks, plants and seashells. Torn between keeping the old rock and tossing it, I prayed, "Lord, what would be the best thing to do here?"

Before I waited for an answer, I had an idea. The hairy rock was to stay and grace the estate sale table, alongside the fine china. This was turning out to not be your usual estate sale, but a display of one mother who was definitely outside the box!

Next I found a plate. Not the typical plate offered at an estate sale, but a paper plate, handcrafted into a clock with Popsicle-stick hands. On the back was a message scrawled by a child: "To Mrs. Stickum, with love from Billy." It didn't matter to Mother that her last name was really Stithem or that the back of the plate was smudged with pizza sauce from Billy's lunch. Mother had considered this a treasure from one of her special ed students, so it had to stay. Onto the table it went right next to the fine china.

If plates could talk, I would have heard a sigh from the fine china: "What's he doing here? He's a smudgy thing with 51-year-old pizza stains! We're so fine, and we're prettier!" I cut the imaginary scene of the battle of the plates and resumed emptying the musty box.

Suddenly, I screamed and jumped back. Had worms crept in? Heaven knows what had crawled into this old box from sitting in the basement for half a century.

Then a memory came to mind. One Sunday, I had called Mother and was greeted with, "Hey honey, I'm up to my elbows in worms and dirt. I got a Mother's Day gift of a worm Jell-O mold and chocolate dirt cookie kit! Can't wait to try this out on the neighborhood kids! Hee-hee-hee!" This was so Mother-saving Jell-O molds to make "worms" with chocolate dirt for cookies. No question about

it—Mother was outside the box!

I was reminded of a Scripture describing us as being
“fearfully
and wonderfully made” (Ps. 139:14,).

This described my mother—so wonderfully and uniquely made by
God.

If you are a mom, just know that you are unique and special in
your role. As for your mother or aunt or grandma—remind them
that
their role is not by accident, but divinely appointed by
God—to
nurture uniquely as God so uniquely designed them.