



THE HELPFUL EGRET (Children's Story/Parable)

February 2, 2019

Danielle E Drabik

[Materials: Pictures of an egret, a buffalo, and a picture with an egret on a buffalo. Stuffed animals the children can pass around may also be a good option.]

In Mark 12:29, Jesus said that we are to love our neighbors as ourselves. Tell me, who is your neighbor? *[Choose a couple children to answer the question.]* Yes, the person that lives next door to you is your neighbor. But did you know that every other person is also your neighbor? Jesus was really saying that we are to love and to be kind, courteous, and helpful to all people, wherever and whenever we can. It seems that many animals follow Jesus' counsel naturally and they don't even know it.

Have you ever heard of an egret? Raise your hand if you have ever heard of an egret. *[Allow a moment for children to raise their hands and then choose one to answer the next question.]* Can someone tell me what an egret is? Yes, an egret is a bird. In fact it is a bird that helps the water buffalo, one of his many neighbors.

How in the world can a little bird help a big, heavy water buffalo? Well, the egret hops a ride on the back of the nearest passing water buffalo taxi and guess what? The buffalo lets him ride! You see, the egret likes to eat the tiny insects that really upset the water buffalo. Ticks and fleas in the tall grasses can get in the ears, eyes, and nostrils of the water buffalo and really annoy him. The buffalo knows the egret eats these tiny annoying creatures, so he is quite happy to let the egret get a free ride and settle on his back for a snack.

The egret is nothing like the water buffalo, and the water buffalo is definitely not a bird. However, the egret helps the buffalo in a very important way. What could the egret possibly do in appreciation for his free ride and delicious meal? Well, the egret, who is very alert and aware of what is around him, also helps to let the buffalo know when dangerous hunters or vicious animals are around. The water buffalo is very different from the egret. He is not even in the bird family, but he is another creature that needs help.

Look around for people you may be able to help in some way. You don't have to have a lot of money, just use what you have. Ask your parents to go with you to give one of your beautiful drawings to a lonely senior. Maybe you and your parents can help a neighbor or someone in need in a simple way that may go a long way in bringing them comfort. You will be surprised at how much a little help means to people. Try it!

Close with prayer.