

## Freddy's Christmas Story

This is a story about Freddy, a preteen boy from a dysfunctional family situation, but with a loving mother. Freddy was a skinny, lanky, and frail boy who had been physically abused by his own father. Freddy struggled with school subjects, and even though he was well into his elementary school years, he could barely read. He loved basketball but was poorly coordinated, so he spent most of his time on the bench when the boys played. He was happy to be the "ball boy" and rescue loose balls and roll them back onto the court. His teacher - coach was content to leave him on the bench". Not all, but some of his classmates made fun of him for his gangly looks and ill kept appearance. He wore hand me down clothes and his hygiene was lacking. Freddy was the object of school-based bullying but he just took it because he wanted to be liked.

In short, life was very difficult for him. In spite of all of these obstacles, however, he remained a resilient boy with a warm and giving heart. It was hard to keep him down and he had an infectious grin. One December day near Christmas, his mother awakened him with great news. "Get up Freddy" "Remember I am taking you and your big sister to the St. Vincent DePaul Christmas Store. The St. Vincent DePaul sponsored a Christmas Store for needy children throughout the community. They collected mostly toys and some clothing from which the children could select two or three items.

"Can I pick out my own present" he asked his mother. "Sure" she assured him. He knew what he wanted. "But don't be disappointed if they don't have exactly the toy you have in mind" his mother cautioned.

When the volunteer from the Church picked them up, Freddy could hardly contain himself. He knew about the store, and he knew precisely what he wanted. He had even made a mental wish list. His mother was pleased with his enthusiasm, and didn't want him to be let down.

When they arrived at the Christmas Store, there was a beautiful Nativity Scene with a baby Jesus, and even a live St. Nicholas who greeted and hugged everyone. The room was overflowing with stacks of the same kinds of toys that were for sale in the department stores. There were balls, gloves, and bats, freebies, tabletop games, puzzles, electronic devices, and all sorts of things that appeal to boys. His mother sent him off to pick his first gift. She was so happy to watch Freddy as he joyfully ran through a maze of toys that would be on any boy's wish list. But she was surprised as he ran past the sport items, the table top games, and all sorts of fun things.

Then Freddy made his first choice and ran to show his selection to his mother. He held up a package of boy's jockey shorts. It would have been hard to find a happier or more grateful child in the entire store. You see, the hand-me-downs were from his older sister. This fall, at the start of the school year, he needed underwear. His loving mother used her sewing skills to refit several pairs of his sister's old underwear into a boy's style. Freddy did not complain. But this time, Freddy had his own brand new jockey shorts imprinted with colorful images of balls and bats and such. Real boy's stuff! He was one of the guys

now.

When you respond with your gifts to the Divine Mercy Christmas Drive for underwear and socks, there just may be some kid like Freddy there, who runs up to his mother with a grin and exclaims "Look mom, see what I got!"

Then you will know that... You are love,

DEACON DAN