

Not a Bad Girl

GraceLink Connection: Community.

Afia



Afia's auntie treated her badly, but the children at the Adventist church taught her that she is a child of God.

Afia [ah-FEE-ah] lives with her aunt's family in Ghana [*locate Ghana on a map*]. But Afia's aunt was not kind to her. She made Afia clean the house and cook for the family, more like a servant than a family member.

Finding Friends

One Saturday Afia saw some girls dressed in smart uniforms walking by her home. "Where are you going?" she asked. The girls said they were going to Pathfinder Club. "What is Pathfinders?" Afia asked.

"Come with us and see," the girls invited. Afia followed them to the church, where the meeting was held. The children welcomed Afia and included her in the activities. Afia smiled shyly.

Afia began attending Pathfinders every Saturday. Her aunt did not care, because she spent Saturdays with her own children who were home from school that day. Someone invited Afia to attend church on Saturday morning, so Afia began attending Sabbath School as well. She was still shy and seldom talked to others, but she listened quietly to the teacher. No one knew the sad life Afia lived at home.

After church, members ate their lunch so they could stay for the afternoon meetings. Afia had no food, so she waited silently until Pathfinders began. Some children noticed that Afia was not eating, and they shared their food with her.

The Teacher's Visit

Afia liked church and Pathfinders because the people there treated her nicely—not like her aunt. Afia's Sabbath School teacher knew that Afia was not treated well at home, and he decided to visit her aunt and uncle. Perhaps he could encourage them to treat her more kindly.

When the teacher arrived at the home, Afia's aunt invited him in. He introduced himself as a leader at the Adventist church. "We enjoy having Afia in our Sabbath School and in our Pathfinder Club," the teacher said. "She is such a good girl and listens well to her teachers.

I am pleased that she is a member of our church and our Pathfinder Club."

Afia's aunt did not smile and said little. After the man left, Afia's aunt told Afia, "I don't have money to waste on a child who runs off to play with church children! You will not enroll in school this year."

Afia was so sad. She loved school! She wished she could tell her parents what her aunt was doing, but she did not know how to contact them. So Afia stayed home from school and cooked and cleaned for the family.

Afia still went to church on Sabbath because her aunt did not want her around her own children. On Sunday while her aunt's family went to church, Afia stayed home to prepare dinner. She had no girlfriend to talk to, so she told Jesus how much she wanted to go to school again.

Afia's New School

A year later the pastor learned of Afia's plight and went to see Afia's aunt. "We understand that Afia is not in school," he said. "We would like to help her study." But before the pastor could finish, Afia's aunt interrupted and said, "Afia is a bad girl and does not obey. I cannot waste my money educating a problem child." The pastor knew that Afia was not bad.

"If you will allow Afia to go to school, we will enroll her in the Adventist school and pay her school fees and even buy her uniform," the pastor said. Afia's aunt could not refuse.

When the school year started again, Afia walked into her new classroom. Her shy smile showed her happiness. Her friends from church were happy to see her and introduced her to her new classmates. At last Afia could continue her studies!

Afia did well in school. Slowly she came out of her shell and became a lovely, happy girl for Jesus. *I'm not a bad girl*, she thought. *Jesus has made me a good girl*. Even her aunt saw how well Afia was doing in school and was proud of her.

"I am glad that Jesus loves me, no matter what others think or say," Afia says. "I am His child."

Children, we can share God's love with others who may have a sad life, such as Afia. Let's look for someone

Recipes From West Africa

Photocopy onto heavy paper and cut apart, or fold on dotted line.

Jollof Rice

This dish is popular throughout West Africa, and every cook has her favorite version. Season to suit your taste from the seasonings suggested below. Liberians use palm oil, a thick red oil with a distinctive flavor, for nearly every recipe. We have substituted the more healthful olive oil and reduced the amount usually called for.

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large onion, sliced
- 2 14.5-ounce cans stewed tomatoes
- ½ 6-ounce can tomato paste
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary
- 3 cups water
- 1 teaspoon chicken- or beef-style seasoning
- ½ cups uncooked white rice
- 1 cup diced carrots
- ½ pound fresh green beans, trimmed and cut into 1- to 2-inch pieces (or peas)
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 can gluten steaks or 2 cans FriChik, torn into bite-size pieces

Heat oil in large saucepan, and add onion. Cook over medium-low heat until translucent.

Stir in stewed tomatoes and tomato paste, and season with salt, cayenne pepper, red pepper flakes (if desired), Worcestershire sauce, and rosemary. Cover, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat. Stir chicken- or beef-style seasoning into water, and add to pot; simmer for 25 minutes. Stir in rice, carrots, and green beans or peas, and season with nutmeg. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low. Cover, and simmer until rice is almost cooked. Add gluten steaks or FriChik, and cook until rice is tender. Serves 8.

Fufu

Fufu is traditionally made from cassava, white yam, or other starchy vegetable, and is work intensive. Today, even in Africa, one can buy fufu powder that is mixed with water and kneaded to make fufu. You may wish to give out the traditional fufu recipe but prepare the simplified version. If you cannot find powdered fufu mix in an international store, instant mashed potatoes make a reasonably good substitute.

Traditional Fufu

- 1 pound cassava roots
- water

Peel cassava roots; cover with water and let soak four days until soft. Cut out the central hard cores. Place in a pan and cover with water. Bring to boil and simmer 10 minutes. Remove cassava roots from pan and pound with a pestle until the mixture forms a soft dough. Place the dough in a dish, and serve.

Simple Fufu

- ¼ cup dehydrated potatoes
- 2 cups water

Mix the dehydrated potatoes and half the water in a small pan to form a smooth paste. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly. As it boils, beat in more water until the paste becomes thick and gooey. Cook for 5 minutes. Scoop out tablespoons of the mixture and shape into six or eight oval dumplings. Serve with vegetable stew or palaver sauce (see recipe on page 10.)