

HEY CHRISTIAN KIDS! LET'S WRITE SOME STORIES.

This is the way your day goes. You get out of bed in the morning, you go through your day, and then you return to your bed in the evening.

During the day, everything may go smoothly. Nobody crosses you. Everybody does everything you tell them to and nobody fights back.

Then again, maybe the day doesn't go your way. Something goes wrong and that wrong needs correcting. Maybe you've lost something and nobody knows where it is. Maybe you've said something that's gotten you into a heap of trouble. You've got to find the person who told everybody what you said.

Or maybe someone has started a rumor about you and you want to track down who it was.

You've just worked yourself into a good set-up for a cycle story.

You start with a problem. You search for a solution. You return home with nothing solved only to find that the answer was at home all the time. You've had to return home to find the solution.

It's like running the bases in baseball. You think you know who took your mitt or your favorite bracelet. You go out and track it down. But every where you go, you get the same answer: "Who me? I don't know anything about your old mitt. Go see Jack. I think I saw him wearing it."

You go see Jack. He doesn't have it any more. He gave it to Joe. You go find Joe. He says he never had it. You find Bill. "You crazy?" he says. "I got a better mitt that you. Why would I want your mitt?"

It's getting late. Supper is at six. You go home, complaining to your Ma that you can't find your mitt. Nobody has it and nobody's seen it.

She says, "Have you looked under your bed? Everything you ever lose ends up under your bed."

You look.

Oh.

It's under your bed.

This is the cycle story. Your character has a problem. He goes out to search for a solution, asking everybody he sees. He comes "home," wherever "home" is, and finds what he's been looking for right there.

With the cycle story, there is always the going out and the coming back to where you started.

Let's look at some stories that have used the cycle structure. After each one is a suggestion for a story you might want to write that uses the same idea. The law does not allow you to copy what someone else has written. But you are home free when you take his idea and tell your version.

In Anthony Abraham's **POLONIUS PENGUIN LEARNS TO SWIM** (New York: Franklin Watts, 1963), Polonius is the only penguin who can't swim. He stows away on a ship that has visited his South Pole home.

His trip takes him to England where a youngster with water wings teaches him to swim in a bath tub. He returns home in triumph to tell his family and friends about his exciting adventures.

YOUR TURN: Choose a creature who can't do what it was made to do. Take him out of his environment to a strange place where someone teaches him the skills he needs. Let him return to his home to show his family what he can do. This is like the story of Jacob in Genesis.