

## My Years in the Classroom

In all my years as a classroom teacher I was constantly amazed at some of the things that children brought to school with them like the time one little boy just piped up during the middle of class and asked, "Mr. Coulter, do you think this generation will dip snuff?" Of course, as it turned out, they did. Many times it was impossible to hold a straight face and maintain composure when they told about some of their experiences. Such was the case one Monday morning in the early 1990's. I was teaching sixth grade mathematics that year and had a little boy named Nathan in my homeroom whose family attended the Coulterville Baptist Church.

On that Monday morning Nathan came to school very excited and eager to tell something. He came up to my desk and fidgeted with pencils in my pencil holder and looked around the classroom. Eventually, he looked at me and said, "Mr. Coulter, you should have been in our church last night. It was something else."

I asked him what happened, and that is where I made my mistake. "Well," he said, "we were all up there in the church, and my mama, she was a playin' the pi-an-er, and everyone was a sangin', and nothin' was happenin', and all of a sudden a bat fell out of the top of the church and went to floppin' through the air and a flyin' back through the crowd. And, Mr. Coulter, there was the awfulest screamin' and hollerin' went on like you've never heard. The preacher's wife was sitting on the front pew and she took off running and ran into the restroom and slammed the door and locked it and nobody else could get in. My mama jumped up off that pi-an-er bench and she got down on her hands and knees and crawled under the banch, and that bat just kept a flappin' around through the church.

By this time I was in stitches, but it wasn't over yet. He continued, "Mr. Coulter, that thang just kept a going and everyone was a swangin' at it when it came by and nearly everybody had crawled under the pews. Finally, that thang flopped around and went up and lit on the top of my mama's pi-an-er and just stuck there, and the preacher crawled out from under one of them pews and he got one of them big hymn books and he sneaked up there on his tippy toes to where that thang was stretched out on that pi-an-er, and he took that hymn book and he just wore that thang out good.

End of story and end of composure.