

"Three Little Trees"

Once upon a mountaintop, three little trees stood and dreamed of what they wanted to become when they grew up.

The first little tree looked up at the stars and said: "I want to hold treasure. I want to be covered with gold and filled with precious stones. I'll be the most beautiful treasure chest in the world!"

The second little tree looked out at the small stream trickling by on its way to the ocean. "I want to be traveling mighty waters and carrying powerful kings. I'll be the strongest ship in the world!"

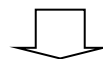
The third little tree looked down into the valley below where busy men and women worked in a busy town. "I don't want to leave the mountain top at all. I want to grow so tall that when people stop to look at me, they'll raise their eyes to heaven and think of God. I will be the tallest tree in the world."

Years passed. The rain came, the sun shone, and the little trees grew tall. One day three woodcutters climbed the mountain.

The first woodcutter looked at the first tree and said, "This tree is beautiful. It is perfect for me." With a swoop of his shining axe, the first tree fell. "Now I shall be made into a beautiful chest. I shall hold wonderful treasure!" the first tree thought

The second woodcutter looked at the second tree and said, "This tree is strong. It is perfect for me." With a swoop of his shining axe, the second tree fell. "Now I shall sail mighty waters!" thought the second tree. "I shall be a strong ship for mighty kings!"

The third tree felt her heart sink when the last woodcutter looked her way. She stood straight and tall and pointed bravely to heaven. But the woodcutter never even looked up. "Any kind of tree will do for me," he muttered. With a swoop of his shining axe, the third tree fell.



“Three Little Trees” (continued)

The first tree rejoiced when the woodcutter brought her to a carpenter’s shop. But the carpenter fashioned the tree into a feedbox for animals. The once beautiful tree was not covered with gold, nor with treasure. She was coated with sawdust and filled with hay for hungry farm animals.

The second tree smiled when the woodcutter took her to a shipyard, but no mighty sailing ship was made that day. Instead, the once strong tree was hammered and sawed into a simple fishing boat. She was too small and too weak to sail on an ocean or even a river; instead, she was taken to a little lake.

The third tree was confused when the woodcutter cut her into strong beams and left her in a lumberyard. “What happened?” the once tall tree wondered. “All I ever wanted was to stay on the mountaintop and point to God...”

Many, many days and nights passed. The three trees nearly forgot their dreams. But one night, golden starlight poured over the first tree as a young woman placed her newborn baby in the feedbox. “I wish I could make a cradle for him,” her husband whispered. The mother squeezed his hand and smiled as the starlight shone on the smooth and sturdy wood. “This manger is beautiful,” she said. And suddenly the first tree knew he was holding the greatest treasure in the world.

One evening a tired traveler and his friends crowded into the old fishing boat. The traveler fell asleep as the second tree quietly sailed out into the lake. Soon a thundering and thrashing storm arose. The little tree shuddered. She knew she did not have the strength to carry so many passengers safely through the wind and the rain. The sleeping man awakened. He stood up, stretched out his hand, and said, “Peace.” The storm stopped as quickly as it had begun. And suddenly the second tree knew he was carrying the king of heaven and earth.

One Friday morning, the third tree was startled when her beams were yanked from the forgotten woodpile. She flinched as she was carried through an angry jeering crowd. She shuddered when soldiers nailed a man’s hands to her. She felt ugly and harsh and cruel. But on Sunday morning, when the sun rose and the earth trembled with joy beneath her, the third tree knew that God’s love had changed everything.

It had made the third tree strong. And every time people thought of the third tree, they would think of God. That was better than being the tallest tree in the world!

Matthew 28:5-6 (KJV) “And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.”

2023 VGMA Retreat Information

**Lodge of the Ozarks
3431 W. 76 Country Blvd.
Branson, MO 65616**

Check-in is at 3:00 PM on Tuesday the 25th of April.
Room reservations will be in YOUR name.

Retreat Attire: “Smart Casual.”

Please check into your room and then come directly to the
Crystal Hall to get your welcome bag which will contain your
Dinner Vouchers and “**Queen Esther**” **Tickets.**

Breakfast will be served at “The Lodge” – Dinner Buffet, served from 4 PM—6 PM,
will be “off-site.”

The Tuesday evening session will be in the “Crystal Hall” starting at 7:00 PM

Wednesday / Thursday morning sessions at 9:00 AM in the “Crystal Hall”

The Wednesday evening’s session will be at the “**Sight and Sound**”
1001 Shepherd of the Hills Expressway Branson, MO 65616

Performance starts promptly at 7:30 PM.
Sight and Sound’s Management asks that you arrive NO LATER than
6:45 PM.
Entrance MAY BE denied to late-comers.
(Their rule – not ours)



IMPORTANT NOTE:

Branson is “spread out” and Retreat functions will take place in 3 different venues. If arriving by air, **you will need to arrange your own transportation** from / to the Airport and Retreat venues. **The VGMA cannot provide any ground transportation.**

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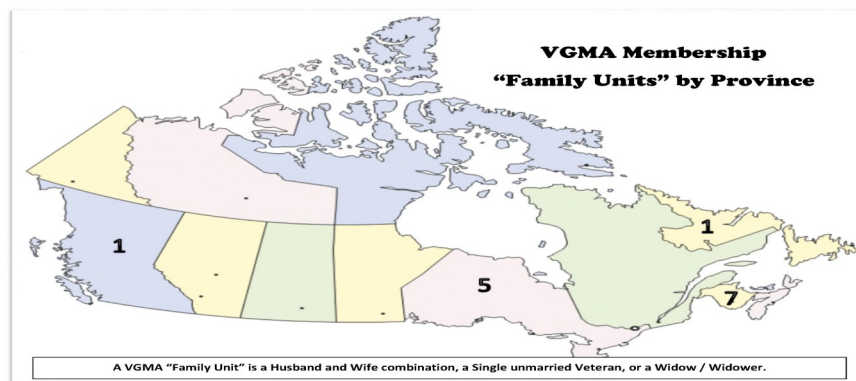
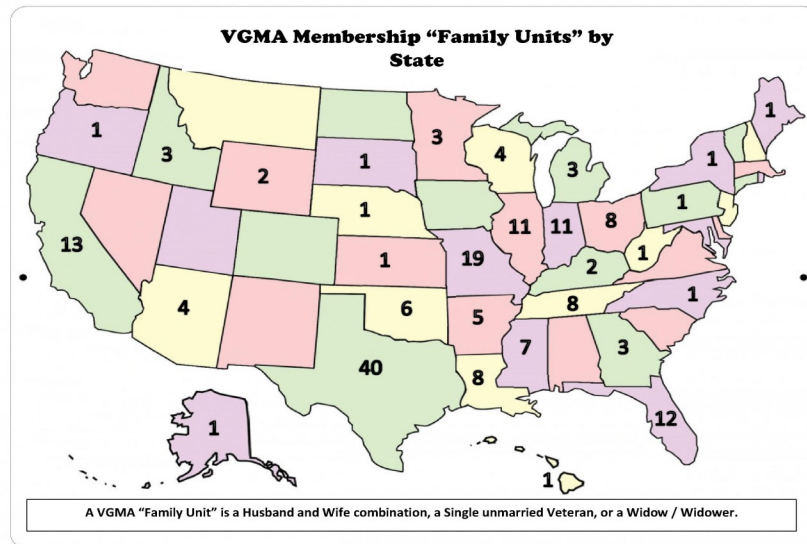
Check out the
new Videos
posted on the
VGMA
Website!

www.vgmaupci.com

**Welcome to our
Newest
Members!**

**Philip and Twyla
Tolstad**

**Oscar and Erin
Rodrigues**



The VGMA extends their sincerest and heartfelt
condolences to the Families of the following
Members who have been recently promoted to their
Heavenly Home:

June Hughes

Terry McIntyre

Ronald Cole