

NEVER DYING TREE

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Intent of the Story.

- ✓ *We have to hope against hope.*
- ✓ *Hope should never die*
- ✓ *As long as there is hope, there is life*

The Story

Once upon a time, a young lad fell in love with a tree that was growing in the forest not far away from his home. He loved the tree! On and off, affectionately, he visited his friend. He watered it, manured it and prune it.. With delight, he kept gazing at his tree growing stronger and stronger

In the rolling of time, the days became shorter and the nights cooler, the winds stronger and the breezes freezing. The skies turned grey and snow began to fall. It was winter. The leaves of the tree turned brown, then withered and began to fall. Finally, the tree was dry and bare. It looked dead. The boy was sad and crest fallen. Yet, deep down his heart was telling him: “Your tree is not dead! It’s alive!” Hoping against hope, he kept waiting.

Then, with warmer days, and shorter nights, spring set in. The friendly sunrays revived the tree. From its bare and dry branches new sprouts shot out! Soon, luscious leaves covered the tree with a fresh green mantle of beauty. Our lad was overjoyed. He said to himself: “Yes, I knew it. I knew it. I felt it in my very d bones that the tree would come back to life. No, no, my tree can never die”

On an unfortunate day, however, when the lad went to the forest to meet his friend, he was stricken with grief. The tree wasn’t there anymore. What had happened to his friend? Some evil hands had felled the tree.. Only the stump was there as a sad reminder of his lost friend. Dishearten, the boy went home. It took a long time for him to accept that his tree was dead. In pain, he even refused to visit that side of the forest where his dear tree had been.

Many, many days later, inadvertently, he chanced to pass through that spot of the forest where his friend had been. But, oh what surprise! What delight! The stump of the dead tree had spruced up again. New supple branches, luscious leaves and multicolor flowers garland it with a fresh mantle of life. The boy said to himself:

**No! The tree didn’t die.
Only my hope died!
Oh, how bad of me!
My hope should have never died!**

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION AND SHARING:

1. What lessons can we draw from the story?
2. Can you describe or define “hope”?
3. Is it necessary for us human beings to have hope? Why?
4. Do we need ideals, dreams and hope in order to be happy? Why?
5. Can you find ‘human’ reasons for hope? Which?
6. Are there reasons in our faith for an enduring and never dying hope, even in the darkest moments
7. Can you explain the following sentences?
 - “Much can be done, when ‘nothing’ can be done
 - It’s better to lose one’s life than one’s hope.
 - Action breeds on hope. Hope breeds action
 - A Lost battle is not a lost war.
 - “There is a silver lining on every cloud, even in the darkest one”
8. Can you find passages in the Bible, especially in the New Testament encouraging us to have hope?. Mention them. Explain them.
9. Explain: “Christianity is a religion of hope”.
10. Have you ever lost hope in some moments of your life? Which? What happened?
11. Can you find incidents in your life that are somewhat expressed in the story of “The never dying tree” such as when failures turned out to be blessings in disguise?

IDEAS FOR AN INPUT.

- The tree is one of the most inspiring symbols of hope! Even when cut, it revives and sprouts again! The tree gives us hope. You can cut the branches, you can even cut the trunk, but the tree sprouts again.
- Human life is a series of failures and successes, of expectations and frustrations, of desires and disappointments. Often when we are about to gather the fruits of our labors, the fruits disappear and hope seems lost. Yet, is it really lost?
- Unless we keep our hope alive, we shall not be able to surmount the moments of frustration and despondency that life will of necessity bring
- We, Christians, have more than human reasons to hope. Even in the most hopeless situations, we still hold on to a hope that is based on divine reasons, on the promises of Christ.
- His death on the cross, which looked like his greatest defeat, turned up to be, at the resurrection, his final and greatest victory.
- Through death, He conquering, both sin and death
- **For a Christian, the final chapter of history has already been written and it is one of hope; Christ will come again, triumphantly as the Master and Lord of all.**
- The Resurrection of Christ, and our hope based on it, gives meaning to all sacrifices, sufferings, even to our temporal death which humanly speaking looks like the end of all!
- Nay, because of our trust in the victory of the Risen Lord, everything in our life – even our weaknesses and sins – will bear fruits of everlasting life.
- St. Paul wrote: “**Everything works together for the good of those who love God**” and St. Augustine commenting on it, adds three most encouraging words to the sentence: “**EVEN THEIR SINS**”