

Growing up in Nepal

Sushma Nafziger is 13 years old and lives in Nepal with her parents, Dale and Bethsaba, and her older sister, Shova. Shova goes away to boarding school for most of the year, but Sushma still lives at home and takes the bus to school every day. Her favorite class is art.

Before school, Sushma eats breakfast and has devotions with her mother. They do the devotions in Nepali, which is the language of Nepal. After school, Sushma has devotions in English with her dad. She can speak both languages. When she is finished with her homework, she likes to spend time with her pets, including her cat, seven rabbits and three dogs. The rabbits live in cages on the roof of her house, which is also where the family grows flowers and vegetables.

On Saturday, Sushma and her parents go to church. (In Nepal, church happens on Saturday mornings). The people sit on the floor for church, men on one side and women on the other. Sushma's favorite part of church is Sunday school, where she gets to do a lot of different things. One Saturday they might sing songs about Jesus, the next week they might do arts and crafts, and the next time the children might do a talent show. Each week they learn about a story from the Bible.

Sushma sometimes visits the United States with her parents. When she is here, she notices that there aren't many motorcycles on the streets the way there are in Nepal. She says that in the United States she likes to eat good macaroni and cheese, which she can't get in Nepal. But in Nepal, she can get yak cheese, and she can't get that in America!



Photo by Deb Byler

At home in Nepal—Sushma Nafziger

A NEPALESE GAME

Kabaddi is a game that people play in Nepal and other countries in southeast Asia. To play, divide into two teams of equal numbers. Decide on boundaries for your court. Flip a coin to see which team goes first. That team starts out on offense, and the two teams alternate offense/defense until the game is over.

The team on offense sends out their "raider" to the defense's side of the field, where he must try to touch as many opposing teammates as possible before returning safely to his side of the court. The catch? He must do all of this while yelling, "Kabaddi, Kabaddi, Kabaddi, Kabaddi*..." repeatedly and in one long breath. Then he must run back to his side of the court.

If he makes it back to safety in one breath and without being caught, everyone he tagged has to leave the court and the offense gets a point for each of them. If the raider doesn't make it back without

taking a breath, the defending team gets a point and the raider has to leave.

Team members who are tagged out can be "revived." If, while on offense, the raider touches (for example) five people, then five members of her team who've been tagged out are able to come back into the game.

If a team succeeds in getting the entire other team out, they score a *lona* and get an extra two points. Play then continues by putting all players on both sides back on the field. The team with the most points after two rounds of a designated length (officially 20 minutes, but this can be shortened) is the winning team.

*The word "Kabaddi" doesn't really have an official meaning, but the name may be derived from the Tamil words "hand" (kai) and "catch" (pidi), which could be translated into "Holding Hands."

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 **NEPAL** 



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Loving our church friends

A few years ago, a woman and her two daughters moved to Kathmandu and started to come to the same church that the Nafzigers attend. Binita* and Sreya*, the daughters, loved Sunday school and never missed a service. They learned songs and learned how to pray. Both girls loved reading the Bible, especially 8-year-old Sreya. After seeing how much her children loved Jesus, Sreya and Binita's mother saw the importance of following Jesus, too, and she was baptized.

The father of this family worked in another country to make money to send home to his wife. Binita and Sreya prayed for him all the time. They wanted him to come to church.

Finally, Binita and Sreya's father was able to return to his family and come to church. He was happy to be part of the church family. But when he went to visit his parents, they weren't happy that he was going to church like a Christian. "We are not going to give you property or money," his parents told him. People in Nepal depend on their inheritance, and this man was going to lose everything.

After that, the family stopped coming to church. The church members worried about them. Binita and Sreya were upset and came to visit the Nafzigers to tell them what happened. They said their father was very angry and even burned their Bible. "Don't worry. You can get a Bible again, and you have memorized Bible verses," said Bethsaba Nafziger. "You can pray quietly."

Eventually the father had to return to his work far away. He told his wife and daughters not to go to church or learn about Jesus while he was gone. He told them that if they did, he would no longer send them money.

But Binita, Sreya and their mother were determined. They came back to church. "Even if he doesn't send us money, we will come," their mother said. When the family returned to church, the church members prayed and cried with them. They also especially prayed for Binita and Sreya's father, asking God to help him see the importance of following Jesus and loving his family.

Sometimes people at church are sad. There are lots of reasons for that. Maybe someone they love is sick or has died. Maybe a member of their family is unkind to them, like in this story. The good news is that God cares about our problems and God sends people to help us and take care of us.

**not actual names*

Prayer

Dear God,

Thank you that church members help each other and pray for each other. Thank you that the Nafzigers can be friends with this family in their church, and that Binita and Sreya and their mother can find love and support there. Please help their father see that he needs you. Help him to show love instead of anger toward his family.

Amen.

SHOWING LOVE

Do you know someone who is sad? What are ways you can help take care of them? Some ideas: Make them a card, pick flowers for them, bake them cookies or another treat, or tell them you are praying for them (and then do it!). What do you like people to do for you when you are sad?



Photo by Deb Byler

Sunday school—Nepali children learn about the stories in the Bible during "Sunday school" on Saturdays when they go to church.

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Meeting people with coffee

Dale and Bethsaba Nafziger run a coffee shop.

Every day they are open, people come into the shop to buy coffee, French fries, and other treats. It's a comfortable place, with chairs and tables for sitting and talking, and a corner for kids to play with toys. The Nafzigers think the coffee shop is a great place to meet and get to know people in their neighborhood.

The Nafzigers also hire people to work at their shop. Some of them aren't Christians, but the Nafzigers love to talk with all their employees. "We meet the staff every day and pray with them," says Bethsaba. "We never force them to pray with us, but we see them as being happy to come and pray in the morning."

Bethsaba remembers when a young woman named Sita* worked for them. Sita got to see the love that Dale and Bethsaba showed their daughters, Shova and Sushma. Sita didn't have that kind of love from her parents, but the love she witnessed and received from the Nafzigers led her to become a Christian and believe that Jesus loves her, too.

Sita met Jyoti Chettri*, who is a carpenter, while working for the Nafzigers, and they fell in love and got married. They now have a daughter and attend Tejwasi (Radiant) Church, where Bethsaba, Dale and their daughters also go to church.

**not actual names*

Prayer

Dear God,

Thank you for giving us drinks like coffee, and for the ways they help people come together. When we are eating or drinking with friends, help us to remember to include others who might not have friends to eat with.

Amen.

COFFEE TIME!

Get some coffee beans and talk about the way coffee is grown and harvested. Touch and smell the beans. Grind them into coffee grounds and make some coffee (perhaps decaffeinated!), and then taste it.

Does your church have a coffee time? If so, see if you can help with it one Sunday. Make more coffee than usual and share it with your neighborhood or invite friends to come get a free cup of coffee. If you don't normally have a coffee time at your church, see if you can have one for just one Sunday. Invite your church friends or people from the neighborhood to get a cup of coffee. Put out a basket or box for donations for mission. Encourage people to talk together before leaving.

And if you're feeling ambitious, hold a coffee shop of your own. Serve treats and coffee, and use the event as a fundraiser for mission. You can even ask your fellow church members to perform musical acts or read poetry as part of the entertainment.



Photo by Deb Byler

Coffee anyone? Ritu Kharel, shop manager at Top of the World Coffee Café, holds a cup of good, warm coffee.

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