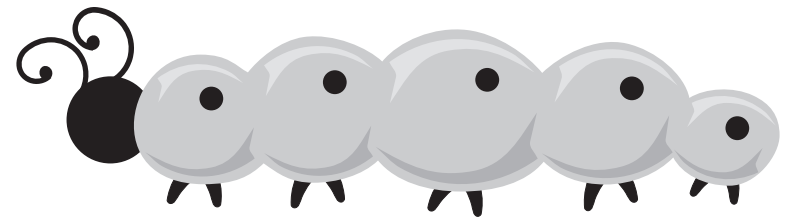
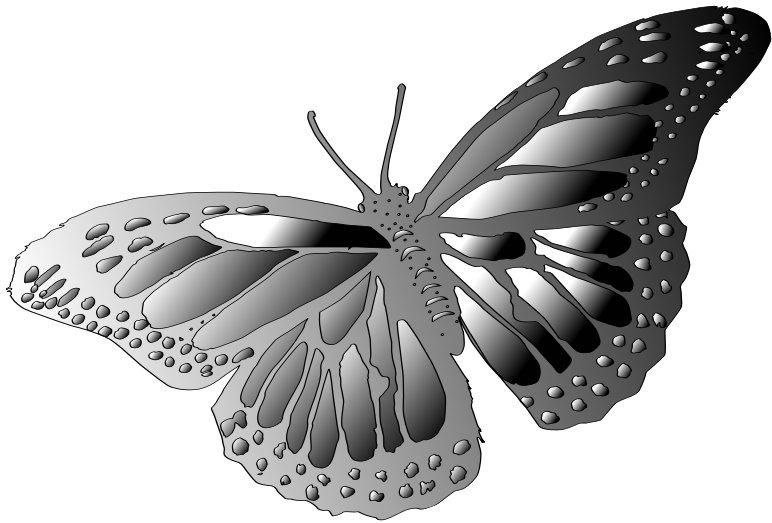


Taking It Home

I want to give each of you a reminder of our old pal Chris. This butterfly reminds us that just like God grows beautiful butterflies from dead chrysalises, he also gives us life and makes us his holy people in Jesus!



Dead and Alive

Introduction

I'd like you to meet my friend Chris. We've been friends for a very long time.

(Enter Chris, the oldest caterpillar in the world. Chris should have a long white beard, a cane, and other props to communicate his age. Allow time for Chris to hobble in and collapse, exhausted.)

Wow! It looks like Chris is pretty tired. I guess that's what happens when you're the oldest caterpillar in the world!

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Getting to the Heart

Leader: Chris, tell us, how did you become the oldest caterpillar in the world?

Chris: Well, to be honest, my life wasn't supposed to be like this. I was born to fly. My dad was a flyer. So was my mom. My grandpa, he was a *radical* flyer. He did things most flyers never dream of doing. And I was determined to be the greatest flyer of them all!

Leader: What kept you from flying, Chris?

Chris: I'm not exactly sure. I worked harder than any other caterpillar around. I exercised. I ate the right vegetation. I got the proper sleep. I even read *Flyer's Weekly*—where I learned techniques from the best of the best. But then came the day of the covering.

Leader: The “covering”?

Chris: I will never forget it. I was sitting on a leaf, minding my own business, when something started to cover me. My parents said “the covering” was how they became new creatures. They said it was the day they became free to one day soar through the sky!

But I wasn't expecting it. What was happening? I was afraid. So I squirmed out from underneath it.

Oh, I knew I was *supposed* to change into a chrysalis, and then a few days or weeks later, I'd change again to become a butterfly. But I saw a chrysalis once. It sort of freaked me out. It looked dead! How could anything good come out of that? What if I didn't come out at all?

So every time it starts to happen, I squirm away. Now, I'm the oldest caterpillar ever. And I've never become a flyer. (*Chris begins to leave, but before he totally exits, he turns and says,*) Maybe one of these days . . . it seems kind of risky, but maybe one day . . .”

What do you think? What has Chris missed? Why won't he allow himself to be covered? (*Allow volunteers to respond.*)

The Bible says, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Jesus came to earth so that through his life, his death on the cross, and his resurrection, he could make us new. He came to cover all our sin and disobedience. But he didn't just cover it up; he took it away! He makes us his new people. He gives us his own purity, his own goodness, his own holiness, so we can live as God's friends now and forever. We don't have to earn this new life. We don't have to work and strive to get it. New life is a free gift.

In Jesus, you have become a new creation! Just as God turns caterpillars into beautiful butterflies, he has made you his beautiful new creation through faith in what Jesus did for you on the cross! Now you are new!

Let's thank Jesus for his great gift of new life! (*Have the children repeat each phrase of the prayer after you.*)

Dear Jesus, thank you for making me your new creation.

*Thank you for covering my sin, my mistakes,
and my selfishness with the blood of your cross.*

*Thank you for giving me your very own goodness
in place of my sin. Make me strong in faith
so I can live out the new life you created me to live.*

I love you, Lord Jesus! Amen.