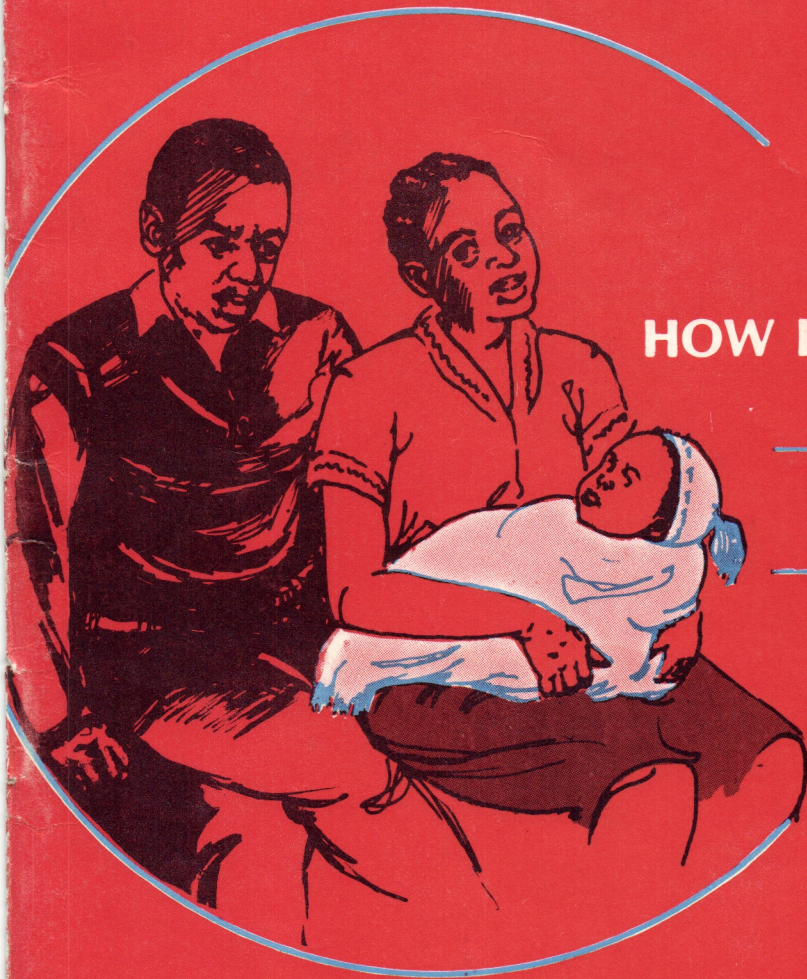


# The Story of Life



## HOW LIFE BEGINS

- a tender explanation for children
- a guide for parents and teachers

by **Mae Alice Reggi, Ph.D.**

*Illustrated by Aggrey Were*

# **The Story of Life**

**by Mae Alice Reggi, Ph.D.**

**Illustrated by Aggrey Were**

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## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book is for parents and children to read together in the home while the children are still young. It can also be used in the classroom. It tells how life comes about. The family in the story is imaginary, but their story will help children learn about reproduction in a wholesome and interesting way. The book provides simple, frank and accurate information. It is designed to instill in children respect for God's wonderful plan for bringing new life into the world. Parents (or teachers) should read it to the children when they begin to ask questions such as: "Where do babies come from?" or "Why am I different from Mary (or James)? Older children may read the story on their own.

Parents (and teachers) should read the story through once or twice from beginning to end before reading it to young children. Then they will be well prepared to read the story to the children and answer their questions. Parents (and teachers) must use their own discretion on how soon to read the story to their children and how much of the story to read. But it is probably more wise to give too much information too early than too little too late. Many children fall into wrong practices through ignorance.

It is suggested that parents (and teachers) begin reading the story in this way:

"Now we are going to read an exciting and sacred story. You will understand that you came into the world by one of God's most wonderful plans. You will learn that every part of your body is given to you by God for a purpose. You will learn to take care of your body all through life. If you take care of your body well, you will have a chance to be healthy and happy in future."

## **Acknowledgements**

We especially thank Mr. Nicholas Dondi, Rev. Daniel Serwanga, Mrs. Juliet Kitembwe, Pastor Elkanah Salamba, Mr. Albert Okinda, Mrs. Ellah Okinda, Mr. Richard Ondeng', Mrs. Mary Opiyo, Dr. Amtul Hussein, Rev. Noah Kamau Thananga and Mrs. Margaret Mwangola for reading and reviewing this book.

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## The New Baby

One day James and Sara were playing in the yard. It was a rainy day. The wet ground in front of their house was littered with maize cobs and pieces of wire. James was making a toy-lorry. Sara, his younger sister, was helping him put wheels on the little lorry. They liked playing in the rain.

Suddenly there was a noise. The children looked up in surprise. They rubbed their eyes. They could not believe what they saw. It was mother. And she was carrying a little baby.

"Mama's home!" James shouted.

James jumped for joy. He was so happy to see his mother. She had been away for a few days. Sara pulled at her mother's arm. She wanted to get a better look at the little baby.

"Come inside, children," said Mama.

The children followed their mother into the house. They watched her remove the thick blankets that kept the baby warm.

"Whaaaa." cried the little baby.

"Who's that?" asked James, looking at him.

He's your brother," said Mama.

"Does he have a name?" asked Sara.

"He's called Kadioli. It means he was born at sunset." said Mama.

“Where did you get him from?” asked James.

The children waited for their mother’s answer. It was a big mystery to them to suddenly see a little baby in the home. But the little baby’s crying got louder and louder. So their mother could not answer them at all.

All day long Sara and James wondered about the little baby. They wanted to ask their mother about him. But the little baby kept crying. WHAA. WHAA. WHAAAAAAAAAAAA. And Mama was too busy caring for him. They wanted to ask their father about him. But their father was far away. He had gone on safari.





That afternoon, James ran into the yard where Anna, his older sister, was helping to shell some peas.

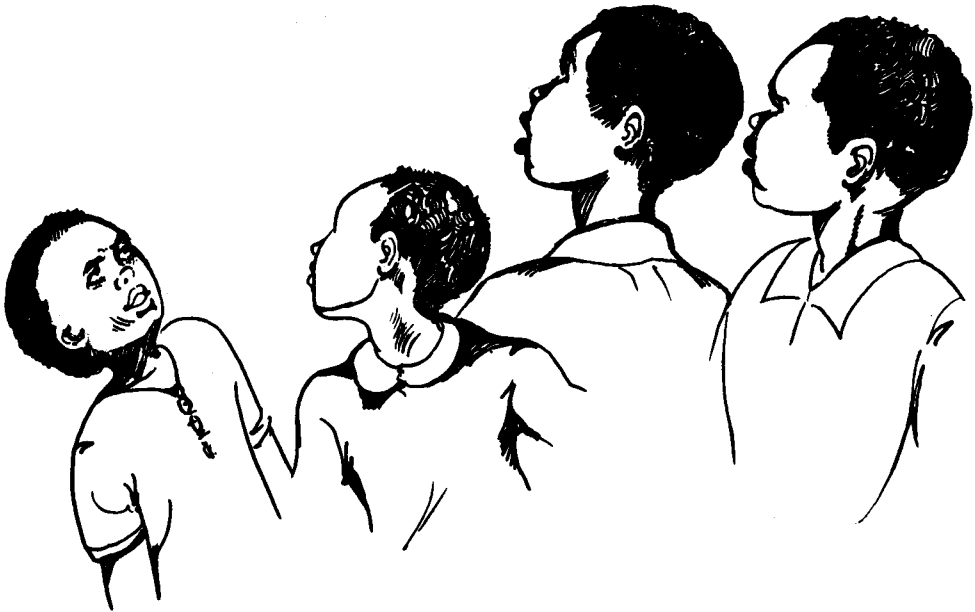
"Anna," said James, "Where did the little baby come from?"

"I don't know," said Anna, "but think a big bird brought him!"

James ran as fast as he could. He wanted to tell the news to Sara.

"A big bird brought the baby!" he shouted to Sara, who was skipping rope with some other girls.

"No. No. James," shouted Sara. "That can't be! My friends told me that mother bought the baby at the market."



A few days later as James and Sara ran along the path towards the school, they met some friends.

"We've got a new baby," said Sara.

"I know," said Timothy Kamau. Timothy was a tall, lean boy who lived in the next house. Sometimes he could hear the little baby crying at night.

"Is it a brother or a sister," asked Rosa Akello. She lived in a house on the same street.

"He's a boy." answered Sara.

"That's good," said Rosa, "We've got a little baby at home too. She's a girl. Mama keeps on getting girls!"

"But tell us," said James in a big hurry. "Where do babies come from?"

"Mama told me that she picks them from the river," said Rosa Akello.

"No, No Rosa," said Timothy Kamau, "My father told us that aeroplanes drop them from the sky."

Now James and Sara didn't know what to think. That night as they went to sleep, they wondered about the little baby: Where did he come from? Did a big bird bring him? Or was it an aeroplane? Did Mama buy him at the market? Or, did she pick him from the river? Why did everyone tell a different story?

## **Baba Comes Home**

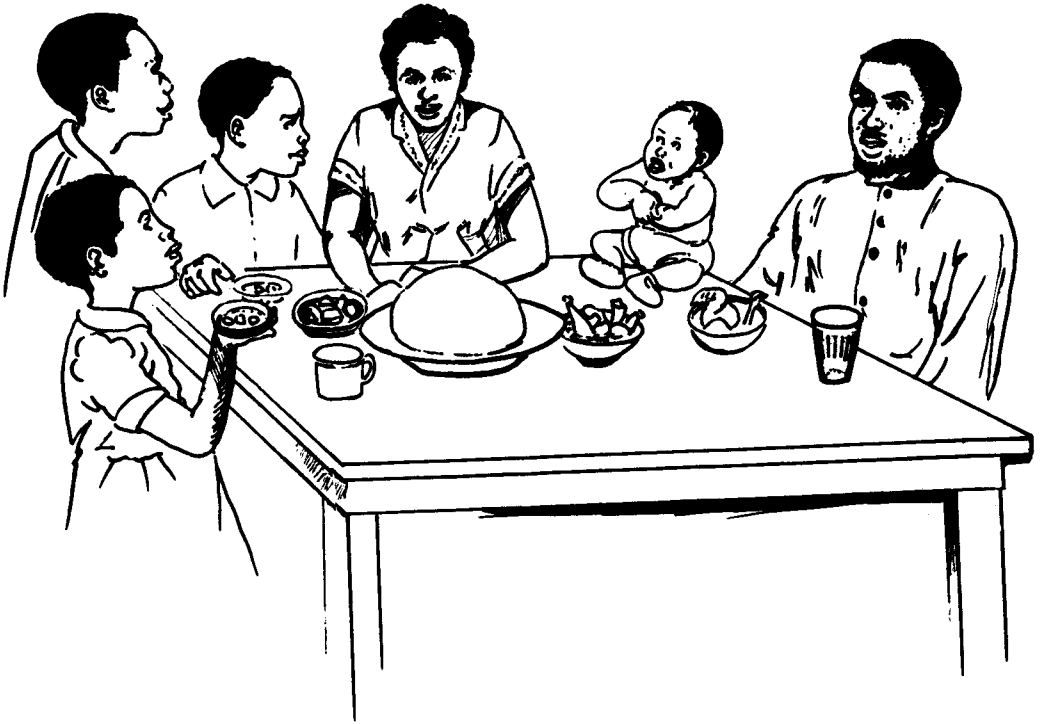
The following week James and Sara's father came back from his safari. That night the whole family ate together. Mama Kadioli had cooked many good things to eat. Before eating, Baba Kadioli prayed. He thanked God for returning him safely from his safari. He thanked God for his wife. And he thanked God for each of the children. He said that all children – girls and boys – are gifts from God. He especially thanked God for the little baby.

James and Sara could hardly wait for their father to finish praying. As soon as he said AMEN, James and Sara shouted out the question that had been on their minds for weeks.

"Baba," they shouted, "Where did the little baby come from?" Baba Kadioli smiled.

"Let's eat first!" he said. As they ate, Baba Kadioli was thinking very deeply. "It is not our custom to tell children about these things. The old mothers used to tell these things to children," he thought. "But now things have changed. Because the old mothers are not around to do it, parents have to teach children about these things."

When he had finished eating, Baba Kadioli called all of the children into the sitting room. He opened up his big Bible. And he began to tell them the story of life.



## How God made the World

“Long, long ago there was nothing, and so God made the heaven and earth. At first the earth was dark. And so God made the light. Then God separated the light from the darkness so that there was day and night.

“Then God made the sky. And he made the oceans and the dry lands. He also made the sun, the moon and the stars.” said Baba Kadioli.

“Did God make trees too?” asked Sara.

“Yes,” said Baba Kadioli “God made trees and plants of every kind. And when he made the trees and plants, he made them bear seeds.”

“Why did God do that?” asked James.

“Just think about it, James,” said Baba Kadioli. “What would have happened if God had made the first trees but had forgotten to make them bear seeds. Would we have any trees today?”

“No!” said Anna, “because the trees that God made first would die. And that would be the end of them. There would be no other trees to take their place!”

“That’s right!” said Baba Kadioli, “God made the trees bear seeds. A ripe seed goes into the ground. Soon it pops out of its shell, and comes through the ground as a new tree, which bears seeds of its own. This is God’s plan for keeping the trees from getting finished.”

"How do the seeds get ripe?" asked Sara.

"The flower is the part that contains the ripe seed," said Baba Kadioli.

"When God made the flowers in the beginning, he gave them two special parts. He called one part **male** and the other part **female**. The male is the father. The female is the mother. According to God's plan both the male and the female parts of the flower help to make the baby.

"But how?" asked Sara.

"Come near the window," said Mama Kadioli, pointing to a large plant with big yellow flowers next to the window.

"It's an hibiscus plant," said Mama Kadioli.

It was almost dark outside, but the children could still see the yellow flowers near the window.

"These long stalks are called **stamens**," said Mama Kadioli, pointing inside one of the flowers.

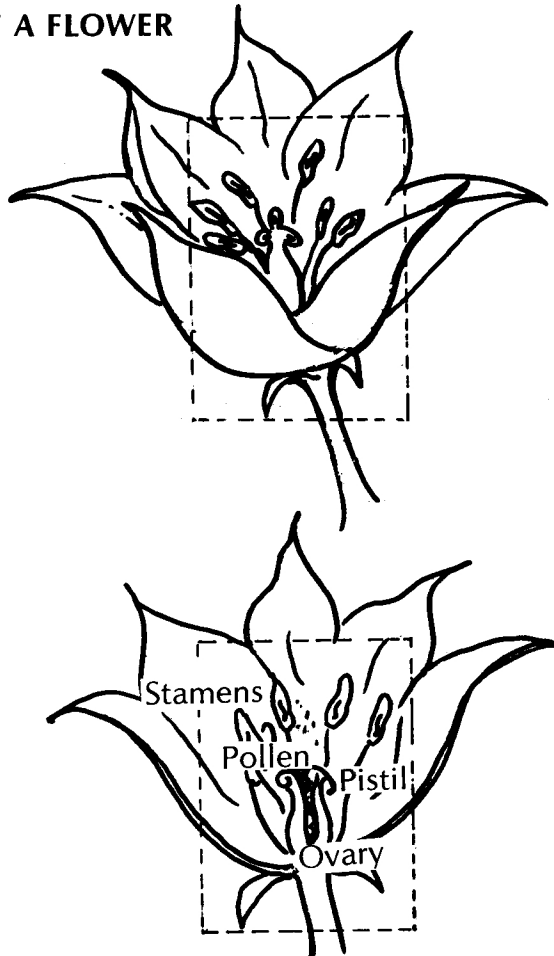


“At the top of the stamens are some powder — like grains called **pollen**. The stamens and the pollen are the male (father) parts of the flower.”

“I can see,” said James. He had already reached his hands through the open window. And he was pulling a flower from the plant near the window.

“At the centre of the flower is the **pistil**. The pistil is the female (mother) part of the flower.”

### PARTS OF A FLOWER



“Now,” said Mama Kadioli, “when the plant is old enough, the tiny grains of pollen drop down into the pistil. Soon the pollen reaches the lower part of the pistil which is called the **ovary.**”

“Inside the ovary are some tiny **eggs**. When the eggs (from the mother part of the flower) and the pollen (from the father part of the flower) join together into one, this is called **fertilisation.**

“The fertilised egg grows while staying inside the pistil of the flower for a long time. But one day it will burst open and give a ripe seed, which contains the baby plant.”

“Do baby animals come into the world the same way as baby flowers do?” asked Sara.

“It’s nearly the same,” said Baba Kadioli, “In the beginning God made two of every living thing. He made two animals of every kind. He made two birds of every kind. And he made two fishes of every kind.”

“He made one a male and one a female. The female is the mother. The male is the father. According to God’s plan, a male (father) and a female (mother) both have a part in bringing new life into the world.

“But how?” asked Sara.

Baba Kadioli pointed to a hen in the yard.

“Eggs come from hens,” he said. Some hens lay eggs everyday. These eggs are for eating.”

“But sometimes a father rooster gives some seeds from his body to the mother hen. When the father rooster’s seeds and the mother hen’s eggs join into one, this is called **fertilisation**. A baby chicken begins to grow inside the fertilised egg.”

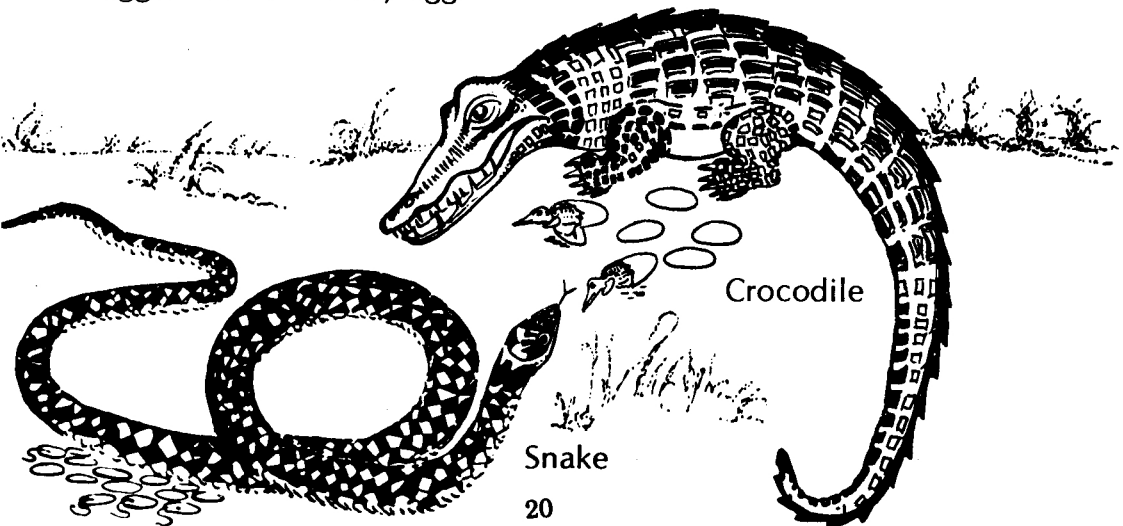


“A mother hen lays the eggs outside her body. She sits on the eggs and keeps them warm. One day the baby chicken comes out of the egg. It breaks the shell with its beak.”



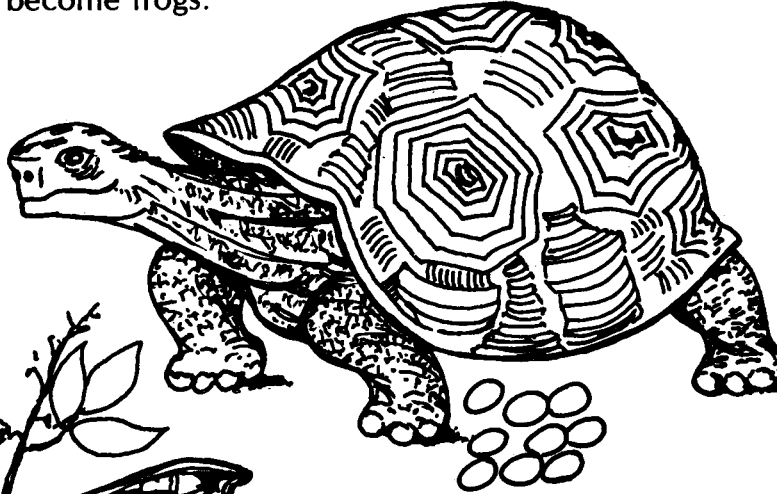
“Do other animals lay eggs too?” asked Anna.

“Yes,” said Mama Kadioli. “Fish lay eggs. Crocodiles lay eggs. Some snakes lay eggs. Butterflies lay eggs. Tortoises lay eggs. Even snails lay eggs.”

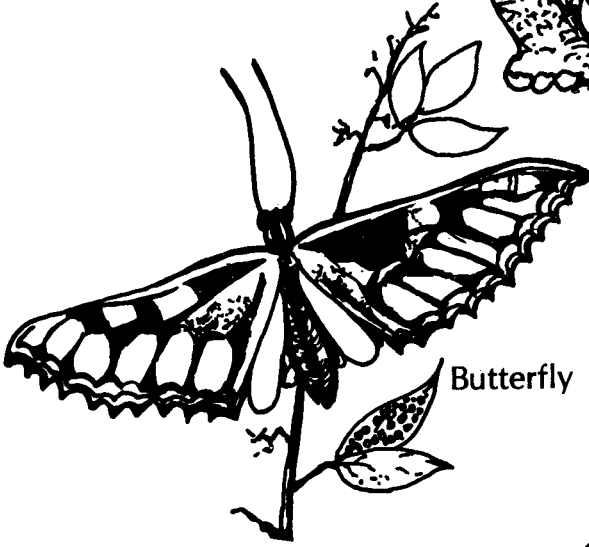


“What about frogs?” asked James. He liked to catch frogs and watch them try to leap away.

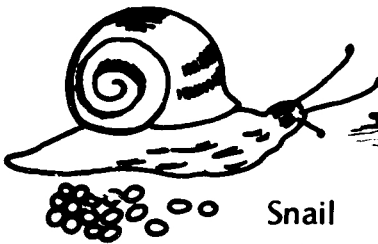
“A frog starts as a mass of tiny eggs. The eggs are laid by the female (mother) frog. The male (father) frog fertilises them as they enter the water. These tiny eggs grow into tadpoles which later on become frogs.



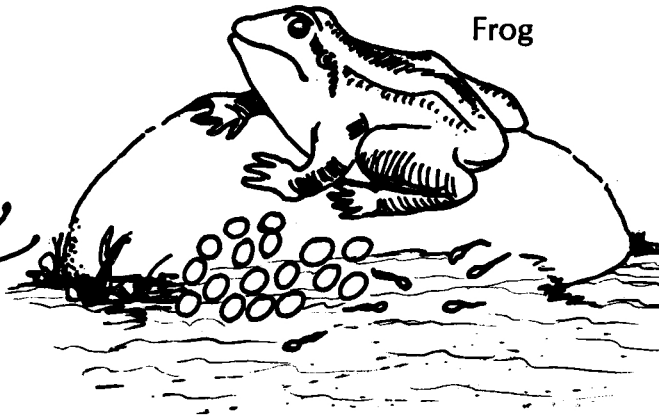
Tortoise



Butterfly



Snail



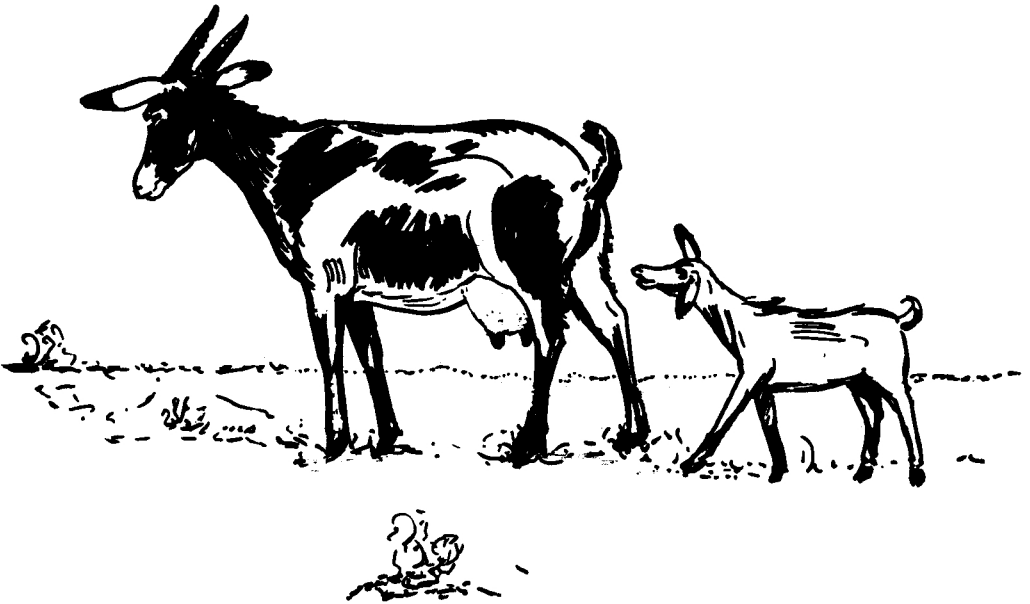
Frog

“Does a baby goat come into the world the same as baby chickens and baby frogs do?” asked Sara. She could hear a goat in Timothy Kamau’s yard. It was making a lot of noise.

“It’s nearly the same,” said Baba Kadioli. “The female (mother) goat has some tiny eggs inside her body. The male (father) goat gives some seeds from his body to the mother goat.”

“When the male (father) goat’s seeds and the female (mother) goat’s eggs join together into one, this is called fertilisation. A baby goat begins to grow from a fertilised egg.”

“God made a special little “nest” called a **uterus** inside the mother goat’s body, for the baby goat to stay and grow until he is ready to be born.”



“Did God make people too?” asked Sara.

“Yes,” said Baba Kadioli, “God made two people in the beginning. Adam and Eve.”

“Why did God make two people? Why didn’t he just make one?” asked Anna.

“God made two people. A husband and a wife because he wanted them to be happy together. He wanted them to have a happy home. And he wanted them to bring babies into the world.”

“So God made Adam a male. And he made Eve a female. He made Adam’s body different from Eve’s body. He made a male (father) different from a female (mother) because he wanted them to be able to produce children.”

“God had a special plan. He arranged it so that a father (male) and a mother (female) both have a part in bringing a new baby into the world. The baby belongs to the father as much as to the mother.”

“God made only two people in the beginning? But there are so many people in the world! How did they all get here?” asked James.

Baba Kadioli smiled. “They got here by Adam and Eve having babies. And these babies grew up and had more babies. And each of these babies grew up and had more babies. This went on and on. And it’s still going on. This is why there are so many people today.” said Baba Kadioli.

## How Our Babies Come into the World

"Now," said Baba Kadioli, "Baby animals, birds and fish all start life from a tiny egg. The growth of all of us starts like a tiny egg too."

"An egg? How does it happen?" asked Sara.

"Our little babies begin life in nearly the same way as baby goats and baby calves do," said Mama Kadioli.

"In every mother's body there are two small **ovaries**. The ovaries are the part of the mother's body which makes the mother's eggs. A mother's eggs are tiny like little grains. A baby grows from these tiny eggs."

"Inside the mother's body, the ovaries are joined to a little "nest". This little "nest" is called the **uterus**. The uterus is in the lower part of the mother's body, just below the navel. The uterus (or womb) is where the baby first starts to grow inside the mother's body."

"Isn't it wonderful how God planned to keep little babies safe and warm inside their mother's bodies until they are strong enough to live in the outside world?" Baba Kadioli said. The children nodded their heads.

"Now," said Mama Kadioli, "there will come a time when a father and a mother want to get a baby. Then according to God's plan, a father must give some seeds from his body to the mother. The father's seeds are called **sperm**. The part of the father's body which gives the seeds to the mother is the same part of the father's body that he uses for urinating. This is the same part as you (boys) use for urinating."

"When the father's seeds and the mother's eggs join together into one, this is called fertilisation," said Mama Kadioli.

"The fertilised egg goes down into the mother's uterus. There it will stay and grow into a little baby."

"The mother's belly will begin to grow too. Her dresses will become tight on her. At this time the uterus is getting bigger and bigger to make room for the baby."

"How does the baby stay alive inside the mother?" asked Anna.

"The job of carrying food to the baby is done by the mother's blood," said Mama Kadioli.

"But how does the baby get food?" asked James.

"The mother's body and the baby's body are joined into each other. The joining part is called the **cord**. The food that the mother eats gets into her blood, then passes to the baby through the cord. He gets food, air and water in the same way until he is ready to be born."

"How does the baby get born?" asked Sara.

"After about nine months the baby is ready to be born. This means that he is strong enough to leave the little "nest" inside his mother's body. He can now get into the world. When that day comes, the muscles inside the mother's body push the baby out. And the baby is born."

"Where does the baby come out?" asked James.

"The baby comes out through almost the same opening in the mother's body that she uses for urinating," said Baba Kadioli.

"But how does the baby come out through such a small opening?" asked Anna.

"When the time comes for the baby to be born the opening gets wider and wider. It becomes wide enough to let the baby's head pass through easily."

"Does it hurt when the baby is getting born?" asked Sara.

"It hurts a little," said Mama Kadioli, "but all mothers go through the same little bit of pain to get a baby. And there is so much joy in a mother's heart when she sees a new little baby. She soon forgets all about the little bit of pain."

"Why do some mothers go to hospital to get a baby?" asked Anna.

"Sometimes a mother may need a little help when the baby is getting born. In hospital there are doctors and nurses who know how to help the mother. And they know how to take care of the little baby properly," said Mama Kadioli.

"Can a mother get a baby any time?" asked Sara.

"No" said Baba Kadioli, "When an egg moves out of the ovaries into a special spot inside of the mother's body, this is when the egg is ripe. This is the only time when a baby can start to grow. This happens only about once a month."

"Does a mother get a little baby every time the egg is ripe?" asked James.

"No," said Mama Kadioli, "If the egg does not join a sperm (seeds from the father's body) then the mother can not get a little baby."

"What happens to the egg then?" asked James.

"If the egg does not join with a sperm, it breaks and passes out of the mother's body. It passes through almost the same opening that she uses for urinating." said Mama Kadioli, "As it passes out of the mother's body, a little blood leaves her body also. This is a normal happening. We call it **monthly period** or **menstruation**. All little **girls will start getting** a monthly period

soon. It is a way to show that a girl is growing up into womanhood.”

“Why are some babies boys and other ones girls?” asked James.

“That is because inside a father’s body there are two kinds of sperm (seeds). One kind makes boy babies. The other kind makes girl babies. So whether a mother gets a boy or a girl depends on which one of the father’s sperm (seeds) joins with the mother’s egg.

“But how do the father’s seeds get into the mother’s body?” asked Anna.

“That’s a part of God’s plan too,” said Baba Kadioli. “You see when God made Adam and Eve, he gave them a plan for happiness in the home. He gave them special love for each other. This love comes from God. And God gave a mother (wife) and a father (husband) a special way to show their love for each other.”

“Sometimes when a father and mother are close together and loving each other, the father places the part of his body which gives the seeds (sperm) into the part of the mother’s body which receives the seeds. This is called **mating**.”

“Mating between a father and a mother is a part of God’s wonderful plan.”

## Taking Care of Your Body

“God made you,” said Mama Kadioli. “even when you were a little baby growing in the “nest” (uterus) inside your mother’s body, God was helping you to grow. He made your two arms, and your two legs – and all the rest of your body.”

“God made every part of your body for a purpose. So you must take care of every part of it. You must wash your body with soap and water everyday. Then you will be clean. Also you must not misuse any part of your body. When you grow up and marry, then you will use some parts of your body to bring new life into the world. This is why boys and girls must take care of their bodies. Then they will have strong minds and bodies in future.”

“Can’t I marry now?” said James.

Baba Kadioli smiled. “You are still too young to marry,” he said. “But wait! One day when you are old enough, you will find a good girl to marry.”

“Can I get a baby now?” asked Sara.

“It’s not possible, said Mama Kadioli, “You are still too young. But in a few years you will be old enough. And even then you must wait. You must wait for the proper time.”

“Remember that God made males and females in such a way that if they mate, a little baby can result. Bringing a little baby into the world before you are old enough to take care of him is not good. Such a small child will suffer. He will lack a good home with two loving parents – a mother and a father.”

“God’s plan for bringing babies into the world calls for taking responsibility. You will marry and make a home **first**. A baby comes later on. Even the father and mother birds build a safe nest **before** bringing baby birds into the world,” said Mama Kadioli.

“They look for twigs to make the nest strong,” said James.

“They look for feathers to make the nest soft,” said Sara.

“And then the mother bird lays the eggs and waits for the baby birds to come out!” said Anna.

“That’s right!” said Baba Kadioli, “And you must each grow up and make a home first – a baby comes later on!” “Remember,” said Mama Kadioli, “that boys and girls who misuse their bodies will get into a lot of problems. This is because God intended that we should not misuse our bodies. When we misuse them, God calls this sin. And sin always makes people suffer.”

Now James and Sara were sleepy. But they were happy too. Now they knew all about God’s plan for bringing babies into the world.

**And so do you!**

In the past children were taught about family life through the traditional ways. Now as many of the old traditions have broken down, there is a gap of information which needs to be filled. This book is designed to meet this urgent need for African family life education materials. It is written for parents and children to read together in the home while the children are still young. Older children may read it on their own. It can also be used in the schoolroom. The book gives simple, accurate information about human reproduction. It will instill within young children a respect for themselves and for God's wonderful plan for bringing children into the world. Parents should read it to the children, when they first ask the natural curiosity question: "where do babies come from?"

It is an excellent book for use in homes, schools, churches and libraries.

