

# It's Good to Visit!

## A Visiting Memory...

“Fran! Fran! Has anyone seen her?” It was 1931 and my mother Fran Hillukka was four years old. Aunt Minnie had come to visit and brought Fran her first box of animal crackers.

Have you ever had a box of animal crackers? In 1902, animal crackers came to America and were named “Barnum’s Animals” after a famous circus owner.

My mom was so excited to have her own box, but she didn’t want her brothers and sisters to see her treat. She went to hide under her parents’ bed to eat her crackers and listen to the ladies visit. By suppertime the whole family was looking for her, calling out, “Fran! Fran!” They finally found her—fast asleep under the bed holding her box of animal crackers!

While I was growing up in the 1970s, we children wanted to be part of the excitement of company and good coffee lunch. One job I remember having is to help my mom prepare the blueberry coffee cake by drizzling the frosting on top. We had lots of “sauna” company. In the summer we took our company kids to watch airplanes land and take off at the airport a block away. I remember dreaming of flying my own plane! Sometimes we lay in the grassy field waiting for planes to come, looking for shapes in the clouds. We found clowns, dogs, balls, and angels—all kinds of things! I remember one time watching the clouds as I ate animal-shaped cookies from a red animal cracker box.

## We Made Many Friends

Now that I’m a mom and grandma, again we’ve had many guests in our home visiting, talking, laughing, and sharing stories. We’ve made lasting friendships with young people, older people, people from Finland, Sweden, and all over America and Canada.

We even got to have four generations living in the same house for a few years. Great-grandma Fran helped care for her great-grandchildren by rocking, singing, and talking with them. She sometimes even bought each child his or her own animal cracker box! When great-grandma lived in assisted living, her great-grandchildren visited her and told her stories. They sang with her, shook her hand, and greeted her with God’s Peace!

I asked a couple of my grandchildren what they think visiting means. “Talking!” they said. All our life we visit or talk with people. Part of visiting is building relationships and friendships. We learn about each other. With friends we can freely talk about our hopes and dreams, our trials, and disappointments.

Even having one true friend to talk about our walk of faith is a gift. True friends in God’s kingdom help us get to heaven. We can preach the gospel to each other and believe our sins forgiven!

Carol Kariniemi

## THINGS TO VISIT ABOUT:

1. Have you gone to visit someone in the hospital or a nursing home? What was it like?
2. Can you be friends with people of different ages? Share thoughts about this.
3. How does it feel when a good friend invites you to a birthday party?
4. How do you feel after you say hello to someone sitting alone? Or, after shaking the hand of an elder and saying, God’s Peace? How do you think they feel?

**5.** Have electronics changed how we visit? If so, how?

**6.** Have you ever had a box of animal crackers and laid on the grass to watch the clouds go by?