

FOR THE SLOW LEARNER

Oh, Father,
this child is so slow,
and I am so impatient.
We are both trying hard,
and I desperately need to see some success.

If only I could see a little progress —
slow, plodding progress.
But the word he read yesterday
he can't read today.
The math concept he seemed to grasp yesterday
has slipped away today.

And somewhere inside me
Discouragement is moaning, "Give up."

Help me not to listen.

Help me instead to listen for your voice
reminding me of all the good and true things
I've learned about teaching.

Remind me that progress is more a spiral staircase
than a straight flight of steps;
that learning rarely moves at a heartening pace;
it is more likely to dip and double back,
and move on in little spurts of growth.

So help me, Father,
not to give up when we move so slowly,
or stand still,
or even seem to slip backwards.
Give to me, and to this child,
the sure and steady faith to keep on trying.

But, Father,
when I grit my teeth and try so hard
that I am overcome with impatience,
let me hear your still, small voice saying,
"Relax!"

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