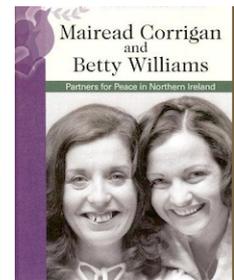


As you read, look for these **words** in the text. Use the surrounding writing to make an educated guess about the meaning of the words. Write your educated guess on this form, or on another piece of paper. Later on, after you have finished this work, find the word in the dictionary and find the meaning that is closest to the one used in this story. Write it down.

Word	definition - educated guess	dictionary definition
island		
knead		
share		
cooperate		
butcher		
generous		
ghetto		
respect		
humble		

The Childhood Story of Mairead Corrigan Maguire

Máiread Corrigan Maguire was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, on January 27, 1944. She lived in a very poor, Catholic part of the city called a **ghetto**. She had five sisters and two brothers. Her house was always full of children playing games on the floor. Máiread and her brothers and sisters had to **share** everything. They shared all of their toys, and even shared the same beds! Máiread slept in the same bed with three of her sisters. Since Máiread was the second oldest, she always had to help take care of her brothers and sisters and help her mother cook in the kitchen.



Máiread and her brothers and sisters did not buy their clothes from a department store like we do. Máiread's mother knitted all of her children's sweaters and skirts and sewed all of their shirts and pants. When Mairead got older she too would knit. When she was ten years old she learned to knit socks and taught her friends at school how to knit socks too. She loved her hand knitted clothes and was always excited when her mother would finish a beautiful new sweater that she could wear to school.

Máiread and her brothers and sisters lived very close to their school. They would walk to school every day together. Máiread was a good student but one day, she got into a bit of trouble. Máiread's class had pet tadpoles growing into frogs on the second floor of their school.

One day Máiread and her best friend, Geraldine, were put in charge of changing the water in the tadpole bowls. Máiread and her friend accidentally dropped the slimy tadpoles on the ground and they fell through the cracks in the floor.

Everyone was angry that the tadpoles were lost. Some of the older girls in the school tried to scare Máiread and her friend by saying that the tadpoles were going to grow into frogs and fall through the ceiling onto their heads. Everyday Máiread would come to school early to see if the frogs had fallen through the ceiling.

Because Máiread was raised in the Catholic part of Belfast, she had no Protestant friends because the Protestants lived in the other part of Belfast. Catholic people and Protestant people lived in separate neighborhoods, shopped at separate stores, and went to separate schools.

Catholics and Protestants are people who believe in the same God but have different ways of doing it. The problems in Northern Ireland were not really about the differences between Catholics and Protestants. The problems came from different ideas about how Northern Ireland should be run. You see, the Catholics wanted Northern Ireland to be part of the Republic of Ireland and the Protestants wanted Northern Ireland to stay a part of the country called the United Kingdom. We will learn more about this when we read Betty Williams' childhood story.

The Catholic and Protestant children did not even play the same games. Catholic children played Gaelic football, which is like American football, and hurling, which is a game like field hockey. Protestants played cricket and rugby. Children of both religions played soccer but they did not play on the same teams because they were not allowed to play together.

Máiread's parents taught her ways to overcome the hatred and violence in Northern Ireland. Her father taught her to **respect** everyone, even if they had beliefs different from her own. She learned from him to treat everyone – both Catholics and Protestants – fairly and equally. Her father also taught her the importance of forgiveness. Each night he would lead the family prayers before the children went to bed. He told them, “don't let the sun go down on your anger” which means that, before you go to bed you

should always say you are sorry if you have hurt someone.

Máiread's mother spent a lot of her time taking care of people in their community. She had a deep faith in her religion and in prayer. This taught Máiread to always help others who were in need and gave her spiritual strength when she faced troubles as she grew up. Máiread's father was a window washer. A window washer's work is very hard. Máiread wanted to help her family so she left primary school and went to Secretary college where she learned shorthand and typing (shorthand is a way of taking notes). At the age of 16 she got her first job as a secretary. In the evenings and on weekends, she volunteered at a preschool center taking care of young children. She worried about the children being scared and hurt by the fighting going on in the streets of Belfast.

Máiread decided she wanted to help. To help, she would take the younger children who lived in her neighborhood on trips to the countryside, away from the fighting between the people in Belfast. Like her mother, Máiread was very **generous** with her time – which means she spent her time helping others. All the sharing she had to do with her brothers and sisters when she was young helped Máiread learn to be generous.

As she grew up, Máiread watched sadly as the fighting and violence between the Catholics and Protestants continued in Northern Ireland and in her city of Belfast.

The Childhood Story of Betty Williams

Betty Williams was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland on May 22, 1942 – just one year before Máiread Corrigan Maguire. The family lived in a three-bedroom house in a Catholic section of Belfast. Betty had one sister, Margaret, who was five years younger. But Betty's parents had many brothers and sisters, so there were always many aunts, uncles, and cousins at their house.

Betty's mother was Catholic. But her father was raised Protestant. He decided to change and become Catholic when he married Betty's mother. Some Protestants were mean to Betty's father and his family because he married a Catholic woman. This shows how deeply divided the people were in Northern Ireland.

Betty's father taught her to always be kind, to respect people no matter what religion they were, and to always talk through problems instead of using violence. One day when Betty Williams was a small girl, she did something naughty and her mother said, "Wait until your father gets home."

Betty was scared. Her father was very nice and funny. He was also very kind and never used violence but she wondered what would happen. She hid in a hallway behind some coats. When he got home from work, he went and found Betty hiding behind the coats. He took her by the hand and said, "Mom said we need to talk." Then he paused and said, "What would you like to talk about?" He did not spank her or punish her. They talked through the problem. It was this gentle way about him that Betty adored.

Betty's father was a **butcher** in town, so the family always had good meat for dinner. Betty's mother was a waitress at a fancy place called the Grand Central hotel. She watched the cooks prepare meals and became a good cook herself. Betty's home always smelled of good food like corned beef and cabbage.

Betty's parents were also talented ballroom dancers. They won dancing championships so often that after awhile, they were not allowed to enter anymore! No one else ever won. So they became judges at the dancing contests instead. Betty's father taught her to dance. Betty would stand on the tops of his feet and he would dance around the room with her.

Betty's parents had a very happy marriage. One day, when Betty returned from singing in the church choir, she walked into the house and saw her parents kiss. While some children might think this was embarrassing, Betty knew she was lucky to have parents who loved each other so much. Her father called her mother, "The Queen Bee."

When Betty was thirteen years old, her life changed. Her mother had a stroke which made it hard for her arms and legs to work right. Betty then became the woman of the house. She cooked and cleaned and took care of her mother, her father, and her little sister Margaret.

Betty's father always encouraged her and told her she could do anything she wanted. He was her hero. One day she tried to get a job at a newspaper. Since she was Catholic, she was not hired. The newspaper would not hire a Catholic. Betty came home and cried. She was learning about how much hatred there was in Northern Ireland. Betty was angry but she did not react violently. Her mother once told her, "If you ever want to get rid of anger, **knead** bread." So Betty took out some dough and pressed it and squeezed it to get rid of her anger. It was a trick she used many

times, even as an adult.

TROUBLE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

For over fifty years there has been trouble in Northern Ireland because some people, called the Loyalists, want Northern Ireland stay a part of the country called the United Kingdom -- or UK. These people are Protestants. Other people, called the Nationalists, would like to be a separate country from the UK. They would like the whole **island** of Ireland to be one country like the United States. These people are mostly Catholic. The problem in Northern Ireland is that half the people want to stay part of the UK and half want to be their own country. Many people on both sides have tried to solve this problem with violence and war.

Many people in Northern Ireland who are Catholic, Protestant, and other religions live and work together peacefully. However, just like in our country, there are some places where some people are afraid to go because most of the people who live there are different from them.

One day, Betty Williams, who was now a housewife and a mother, heard gunshots and then a terrible crash. She saw a car that was being chased by soldiers had accidentally crashed into a mother and her three little children. The children had been killed and the mother was badly hurt. Betty was scared and upset.

She knew that the violence in Northern Ireland had to stop! No more mothers, fathers or children should die. She ran up and down the street, knocking on people's doors and telling them that the fighting must stop. She went to houses where Protestants lived and houses where Catholics lived.

She was very brave. She wrote a letter saying peace had to come and over 6,000 people signed it. They wanted peace too!

Máiread Corrigan Maguire heard about the terrible news, too. The mother who was hit by the car was Máiread's sister, Anne. The children were her niece and nephews. Máiread was very sad. She also knew the violence had to stop. She wanted to talk to as many people as she could. So she walked to the local television studios. They let her be on TV and she begged the people watching to help stop the fighting. "We have to talk together and work for peace," she said. She knew that the people would need to **cooperate** if they were going to end the fighting.

Then Máiread heard about Betty and the work she was doing to stop the violence. Máiread had never met Betty, but she went straight to the telephone and called her. On the day that the three Maguire children were buried, Máiread and Betty met and made a plan. Together with a man named, Ciaran McKeown, they formed a group they named the Peace People which was made up of men, women, girls and boys of all ages and backgrounds. Ciaran wrote a Peace Declaration that was read at peace rallies all over Northern Ireland and beyond.

Betty and Máiread helped people from both the Catholic neighborhoods and the Protestant neighborhoods of Belfast get on buses and meet each other in the middle of the city in park for peace rallies. Even though they lived in the same city they had never met each other because the two religions lived apart. They got off of the buses they laughed and hugged each other. Everyone made many new friends at the peace rallies.

The people on both sides agreed that they would do everything they could to stop the fighting. They walked down the roads in the city – the Catholic streets and the Protestant streets. Of course, people were very surprised to see so many people walking together for peace and there was less fighting. Because all these people tried to work together and talk together to solve their problems, peace has begun to happen in Northern Ireland.

WORKING FOR PEACE

Mairead Corrigan Maguire and Betty Williams won the 1976 Nobel Peace Prize for their work in Northern Ireland. For the past thirty years they have traveled around the world talking about peace and nonviolence.



They help children in countries that have a lot of violence and war. Betty and Mairead are very **humble**. They often describe themselves as "ordinary people" who decided to do something about the problems they saw around them.

TODAY

In 1998, the political parties in Northern Ireland signed a Peace Agreement called "The Good Friday Agreement." A "peace agreement" says that both sides agree to stop fighting and to try to solve their problems peacefully. The people of Northern Ireland are still working hard to live in peace.

Answer these questions in complete sentences on pad paper or on the computer:

Máiread Corigan MacGuire

1. *Did you ever have an accident like Máiread did? How did you feel?*
2. *What does a butcher do?*

Betty Williams

1. *Máiread's and Betty's lives both changed when they were thirteen years old. Describe how each of their lives changed when they were thirteen?*
2. *Do you think Betty was brave to go to the Protestant neighborhoods? Why?*
3. *Was she brave?*
4. *What do you think people do at a peace rally? What do you think the Peace Declaration said?*

Circle these three places on the map below: United Kingdom, Ireland, and Belfast

