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How Idiopathic Juvenile Osteoporosis Will Not Ruin Your Life; Also How God Can Turn Your Pain to Joy: A Memoir

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Aubrey Podnar is a freshman nursing major from Akron, Ohio. She enjoys language and descriptive writing. Aubrey's interests include drawing, playing sand volleyball, and riding horses.

How Idiopathic Juvenile Osteoporosis Will Not Ruin Your Life; Also How God Can Turn Your Pain to Joy: A memoir

In the third grade I went to The doctor's for an x-ray of My lungs. They were looking To improve my vocal cord Dysfunction, but instead Found two fractures in my spine. My T7 and T8 vertebrae Were misshapen. I was forbid From playing any contact Sports, which meant for me No more soccer or horseback Riding. As an active nine-year-Old girl I was devastated to have My favorite things taken away From me. I was not allowed to Participate in the normal gym Class activities, for fear of further Injuring my back. Self-esteem is Crucial in a girl's adolescent years, And mine plummeted after this

Revelation. I grew unsure of Myself and doubted my self Worth. From birth to my fifth Birthday I had unwillingly Succumbed to seven seizures, And my vocal chord dysfunction Made me wheeze like your average Asthmatic. To top off the new Knowledge that my spinal cord was Missing pieces, I was transferring Schools. Elementary school is crucial For developing friendships, and I did Not know a single soul at my new school. I was the freak with the back brace. However, I was not alone. There were Other children who could not play In gym class with everyone else either. I showed up on my first day of gym time, And I saw my future. I was no longer the weird new girl with spine problems who had to drink glasses of milk at all of her meals, the child Wearing the ugly Beige back brace contraption, swallowing pills the size of Texas. I was just Another student in gym class, trying To make it around the gym on the Specially crafted tricycles. My new Gym classmates were the occupants Of the special needs classroom at the End of the hall: as a third grader, they Were already known as the weird kids.

Now I was a weird kid as well. I knew there Was something about them that was different, And I also knew as an innocent nine-year Old that Jesus calls us to love everyone. So I tried to ignore the reproaches of the other Students and I got to know my new friends As we spent an hour together each day. Over The next three years, some of my best friends Struggled with Autism and Williams syndrome. We would play together on the playground, share Meals together in a cramped lunchroom, but our Gym time together was unique. It was where we grew together, laughed together, got frustrated Together, learned together. It seems inconsequential, a recounting of a Third grade girl's experience with a minor Back injury. 'Tis a woeful tale of misfortune starring A middle child from a middle class suburban family. But I believe that my close relationship with a mentally disabled elementary class gave Me new eyes. Getting to know those children As a child myself gave me an appreciation for how Diversely we have all been created, and how similar We are to one another. The one characteristic that Bonds us together is that we were all formed by the Most imaginative Creator. No matter how quickly Your brain develops, your genetics, or at what level you function, we are all created in Christ's image. I learned pretty quickly how cruel people can be. With my own abnormalities, I felt a fraction of My friends' pain. Long after I outgrew my own Osteoporosis, I thought about my time with the Special needs class, and I decided that I wanted To make my experience a part of my future. I Chose to pursue nursing to help people feel Valued. No child should have to grow up Thinking they are alone in their struggles. Through my own physical pain and

Emotional turbulence, I learned that every Person has a place in God's kingdom. We All were created with purpose, and I Wish to spread that message to the Ill and broken people throughout The world. I have a special place In my heart for the mentally Disabled, people who may believe They are not worth much in Today's chaotic society. "But even the hairs of Your head have all Been numbered. Fear not; you are More valuable Than many Sparrows." Luke 12:7 I am a Child Of

God.

Psalm 139:13-14

"For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well."