

The Bead

There were many advantages to being number one child, especially being a girl with three younger male siblings. The best part about my parent's accidental spacing is that I can vividly recall the childhood mishaps of my brothers Gary, Brian and Gerry .

For example, there's the incident of "the bead" with the oldest boy Gary. There we were quite innocently, at least one of us, bouncing around in our jammies one morning on our parent's vacant bed. Rosary beads were neatly hung from each post of the headboard. Gary, with the characteristic curiosity of a three year old, grabbed the black beads from my father's side. Beads were not just for PRAYING but PLAYING too! I giggled and toddler Gary squealed, as he stretched the beads every which way till they broke apart and scattered around the wood floor of the bedroom. Uh-oh.

Yet to be discovered, we continued playing with the beads. Then, a light went on in little brother's head and he started to put the black beads up his small nose. Laughing, I watched as he continued to amuse me by doing something that I, the seven year old big sister, would NEVER consider. After all, what would happen if one got stuck? Uh-oh.

Laughter quickly turned to tears as Gary's stubby fingers only pushed the bead up further rather than dislodge it. "MOMMYYYYYYYYY!"

As with most of our childhood accidents, my Mom's first call was ALWAYS to my fireman Dad as he worked his shift, this time, at Amory Street fire station. She frantically explained the dilemma. Then after she hung up, "get in the car you two" glaring at the one who should've known better. It was a short drive, the only sound other than a bit of grumbling by my mother was the sniff, sniff, sniff sound my brother was making.

We stood by the fire trucks in the front of the station as the handsome Lieutenant approached us. He didn't ask how or why, he just looked up Gary's nose and without fanfare took a white cotton hanky out of his pant pocket. "Gary...blow". Out came the single black bead. Amen!