By Nancy Whitaker

THERE WAS A LITTLE TURTLE

I always enjoy going to see my grandchildren taking part in a school program. This is not only fun for parents and grandparents, but for the child as well.

Last week it was the youngest grandson, Owen's, turn to participate in his preschool program. He is going to be making that important leap from preschool to Kindergarten and this annual end of the year performance is always a treat to watch.

These preschoolers attend a church based preschool in Monroeville, Ind. The performance is presented in the basement where a stage and chairs are set up.

As we found some good seats, the preschoolers began coming in to take their spots in the little chairs which were onstage. I will say this class of preschoolers were very active and vocal, that is, until the program started. It was then that activeness wore off and bashfulness set in.

Each child had to stand up and tell the audience their name. A couple of the children did not participate in the introductions, but little Owen stood up and proudly said, "My name is Owen

Whit-a-kurr." The teacher said, "Thank-you, Mr. Owen Whitaker."

The children lived up to their family's expectations and showed quite an impressive array of talent. Songs, skits, tumbling and finger plays were all on the program.

Of course every child wanted to wave at family members and smile adoringly for the many cameras. Of course this grandma had her camera out snapping pictures.

As the teachers worked with these preschoolers, I thought, "Wow. These teachers sure have patience."

Of course, some children became restless and began poking their neighbors, making faces and talking, but the teachers kept the program rolling right along.

I was pleasantly surprised to hear the children do a poem that I had actually done when I was in Kindergarten. The students all did the motions and said the words to, "There was a little turtle, who lived in a box. He swam in the puddles and climbed on the rocks."

I turned around and said to my son, "You're not going to believe this, but I did that same poem when I was in Kindergarten."

The "Spooky Walk" song was played and the children were all serious and wide eyed as they went through the motions and the sounds of a "spooky walk."

The program ended with everyone singing, "This Little Gospel Light of Mine" followed by a slide show which portrayed the children and their activities throughout the year.

There is nothing more rewarding than seeing children learning and growing. It is with the

simplest of songs, interacting with others and the patience of teachers that get our children and grandchildren on the road to becoming adults.

Yes, these preschoolers were a lively group. They spontaneously poked each other, waved, laughed, and even jumped up and down. However, you could tell by the light in the parents and grandparents eyes, that this show was great and the performers were even better.

The night ended with punch and cookies and a gift from the preschoolers.

Do you enjoy going to see your children or grandchildren perform in a program? Do you believe it takes a lot of patience to be a teacher? Do you remember the nursery rhyme, “There was a Little Turtle?”

Let me know and I’ll give you a Penny for Your Thoughts.”