



The Airplane That Landed on a Tiny Sandbar!

THIS STORY IS ABOUT: GOD PREPARES A WAY

BIG IDEA

Even when everything runs out, God has already gone ahead of us and made a way. He can prepare a safe place before we ever know we need one!

THE STORY

High above the green jungle of the Amazon, a missionary named Bennie DeMerchant flew his little airplane. Bennie loved Jesus, and he flew to faraway villages that had no roads, just so he could tell people about God's love. Down below, the trees stretched on and on like a giant green blanket!

On this day, Bennie had a helper riding with him. They had taken off with a full tank of fuel. But high over the jungle, the fuel gauge started acting funny. Then... the engine coughed. And sputtered. And Bennie's heart began to beat fast.

Soon it was clear: the airplane was running out of fuel! There was no airport close enough to reach. Bennie picked up his radio and called for help, but nobody could hear him. He was all alone in the sky with the jungle far, far below.



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THE STORY CONTINUES

Then the engine grew quiet. The plane began to glide down toward the trees. But Bennie was not the kind of man to give up! He and his helper began to pray out loud in the name of Jesus. 'Lord, help us!

Show us a place to land! Keep us safe!'

Bennie looked everywhere for somewhere flat. Suddenly, far below, he spotted a thin little strip of sand beside a winding river. It was tiny. It was short. Jungle crowded both sides. Any pilot would say it was much too small to land on. But it was the only place there was!

Bennie lined up the airplane. He whispered one more prayer. Then gently, carefully, he set the wheels down on the sand. The plane bounced hard and skidded... and stopped! The nose came to rest just a few feet from the water. They were down. They were alive!

For three days, Bennie and his helper waited on that little sandbar.

They had almost no food and water. But instead of being scared, they sang hymns and prayed and trusted Jesus to take care of them. And He did!

On the third day, a small boat came chugging up the river. Some local Christians had heard Bennie's faint radio call, and they came to the rescue! Bennie and his helper were tired and hungry, but they were perfectly safe.

Later, Bennie loved to tell this story. He always said the same thing: that little sandbar should not have been there. It should have been too short. The plane should have flipped over or sunk. But God had gotten there first and prepared a safe place to land!



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THE STORY

Over more than forty years in the Amazon, Bennie and his wife Theresa helped start over 650 churches. Bennie flew thousands and thousands of hours over dangerous jungle. And for every single safe landing, he gave the glory to Jesus!



DID YOU KNOW?

- Bennie DeMerchant and his wife Theresa helped start over 650 churches and 35 Bible schools in the Amazon region of Brazil!
- The Amazon jungle is so thick and wide that some villages can only be reached by airplane or boat, never by car.
- Bennie wrote books about his flying adventures called Full Throttle and Still Flying Full Throttle.
- There is even a fun series of books for young readers called Pilot Bennie's Amazing Amazon Adventures!

MEMORY VERSE

"I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight." Isaiah 45:2

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

1. Why did Bennie fly his little airplane deep into the jungle?
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LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

- 2** When the engine stopped, what was the very first thing Bennie and his helper decided to do?

- 3** Bennie said the sandbar 'should not have been there.' What does that tell us about how God takes care of His children?

- 4** Bennie and his helper sang hymns instead of being scared. What can YOU do when you feel afraid?

- 5** Has God ever helped your family right when you needed it? How can we thank Him for that?

LET'S PRAY

Dear Jesus, thank You that You always go before me and make a way, even before I know I need one. When I feel scared, help me to pray and sing and trust You like Bennie did. You are stronger than any problem! In Your name I pray, Amen.

TRY THIS!

Make a paper airplane together! On the wings, write the words 'God makes a way.' Then take turns flying it across the room. Each time someone catches it, they share one way God has taken care of their family. Hang your airplane up to remember that God always goes before us!

