

## Three Questions by Jon Muth

Narrator: There was once a little girl named Marita who sometimes felt uncertain about the right way to act. So she told her friends

Marita: I want to be a good person but I don't always know the best way to do that.

Narrator: Marita's friends understood and they wanted to help her.

Marita: If only I could find the answers to my three questions then I would always know what to do.

When is the best time to do things?

Who is the most important one?

What is the right thing to do?

So, what is the best time to do things?

Narrator: Marita's friends considered her first question. Then Sonya the heron spoke

Sonya: To know the best time to do things, you must make a plan.

Narrator: Gogol, the monkey who had been rooting through some leaves to find something good to eat said,

Gogol You will know when to do things if you watch and pay close attention.

Narrator: Then Puskin the dog who was just dozing off, rolled over and said,

Pushkin You can't pay attention to everything yourself. You need a pack to keep watch and help you decide when to do things. For example, Gogol, a coconut is about to fall on your head.

Narrator: Marita thought for a moment. Then she asked

Marita: Who is the most important one?

Sonya: Those who are closest to heaven

Narrator: Said Sonya circling up into the sky

Gogol: Those who know how to heal the sick

Narrator: Said Gogol, stroking his bruised noggin.

Pushkin: Those who make the rules!

Narrator: Growled Pushkin. Marita thought some more. Then she asked the third question.

Marita: (thinks hard) What is the right thing to do?

Sonya: Flying

Gogol: Having fun all the time.

Pushkin (barks) Fighting

Narrator: The little girl thought for a long while. She loved her friends. She knew they were all trying their best to help him answer his questions. But their answers didn't seem quite right. Then she had an idea.

Marita: I know. I will ask Leo, the turtle. He has lived a very long time. Surely he will know the answers I am looking for.

Narrator: Marita hiked high up into the mountains where the old turtle lived all alone. When Marita arrived Leo was digging a garden. The turtle was old and digging was hard for him.

Marita: I have three questions and I came to ask your help. When is the best time to do things? Who is the most important one? What is the right thing to do?

Narrator: Leo listened carefully but he only smiled and went on with his digging.

Marita: (after waiting awhile) You must be tired. Let me help you.

Leo: Thank you.

Narrator: And because it was easier for a young girl to dig than it was for an old turtle, Marita kept on digging until the rows were finished. Just as she finished the

wind blew wildly and rain burst from darkened clouds. As they moved toward the cottage for shelter, Marita suddenly heard a cry for help. Running down the path, she found a panda whose leg had been injured by a fallen tree. Carefully Marita carried her into Leo's house and made a splint for her leg. As the storm raged on, banging doors and windows Panda awoke and said.

Panda: Where am I? And where is my child?

Marita: Your baby? You mean your baby is out in the rain?

Narrator: Marita ran out of the cottage and down the path. The roar of the storm was deafening. Pushing against the howling wind and drenching rain, she ran further into the forest. There she found the panda's child, cold and shivering on the ground.

Marita: Here is your baby. She's wet and scared but alive. (dries her off and hands them to the panda)

Panda: Thank-you!

Narrator: The next morning the sun was warm, birds sang and all was well with the world. The panda's leg was healing nicely.

Panda Thank you for saving me and my baby from the storm.

Marita: I really feel peaceful about saving the panda and her baby but I'm still disappointed. I still have not found answers to my three questions.

Leo: But your questions have been answered.

Marita: They have?

Leo: Yesterday, if you had not stayed to help me dig my garden, you wouldn't have heard the panda's cries for help in the storm. Therefore, the most important time was the time you spend digging the garden. The most important one at that moment was me, and the most important thing to do was help me with my garden.

Later when you found the injured panda

Marita: The most important time was the time I spend mending her leg and saving her baby. The most important ones were the panda and her baby. And the most important thing was to take care of them and make them safe. Is that right?

Leo: Yes. Remember then that there is only one important time, and that time is now. The most important one is always the one you are with. And the most important thing to do is, to do good for the one who is standing at your side. For these, my dear child, are the answers to what is most important in this world.

Marita: Leo the turtle gave me the perfect answers to my questions.

Sonja: When is the best time?

Marita: The most important time is now.

Gogol: Who is the most important one?

Marita: The most important one is always the one you are with.

Pushkin: What is the most important thing?

Marita: The most important thing is, to do good for the one who is beside you.

All: This is why we are here on Earth.