Aroha's Story

Aroha was seven years old. She lived at home with her Mum and Dad. They all loved playing sport. Aroha's Dad would spend lots of time with Aroha in the garden throwing a ball. Even when Aroha was only five, she could catch a tennis ball really well. By the time she was six, Aroha could throw the ball hard and straight. One day – by mistake – she threw it right through the bathroom window! Dad just said, "Great shot, Aroha", but that's not what Mum said. She was in the shower! When Aroha was seven, she decided that she would like to join a cricket team. So Dad helped her with batting and bowling and soon Aroha was very good indeed.

The Pīwakawaka cricket team that Aroha joined was made up of lots of other seven year old children, boys and girls. They all met at the park at 9am on Saturday morning in their clean white t shirts and shorts. Aroha was first up to bat, and she was amazing. She hit 3 sixes. In fact she hit the ball so far that they couldn't find it and they had to get a new ball. The other kids in the team had their turn at batting too, but actually they weren't very good so the total number of runs for the Pīwakawaka team was just 25 runs. Then it was their turn to field. Aroha caught three people out, but she couldn't be all over the field and most of the other children in her team weren't good at catching the ball. At the end of the game, the other team had won, and Aroha was just so disappointed. "I don't want to be in that team, Dad", she said in the car on the way home. "I want to be in a team that wins. Can I join another team?" Dad had a think. "Maybe", he suggested, "we could help your team to do better. What about we organise a cricket practice for the Pīwakawaka team?" And that's just what he did.

On Thursday night after dinner all the Pīwakawaka children lined up down at the park for cricket practice. Mum and Dad were there along with some other parents. Dad organised batting practice. Mum and Aroha helped the children practise their throwing. At the end of an hour the children were much better and much more confident. Dad even gave them batting and throwing homework to do! "They are getting better, aren't they Dad?" Aroha said. "Yes", said Dad, "but let's see what happens on Saturday."

On Saturday all the Pīwakawaka children were at the park early. Dad got them to do stretches and catches so that they were ready for the big game. This week they were playing the Kiwi cricket team. The game started and Pīwakawaka children were fielding first. They spread out round the field. The Kiwi team were very good, but so were the Piwakawakas. Aroha caught two people out, and Simon and Natalia from her team caught people out too. They were very quick at getting the ball back to the bowler. When it was their turn to bat, Stephen and Lucy were first in. Poor Lucy was bowled out first ball, but then Simon came in, and he did really well. Aroha was one of the last people to bat. When she came in, the score was Kiwis 34, Piwakawaka 29. They needed 6 runs to win. Aroha felt so proud of her team. They had improved so much and played so well. Could she help them to win? The ball came rolling down the wicket towards her. She hit it, and it went racing over to the very edge of the field and over the fence. "Six", said the umpire. That meant that Piwakawaka now had 35 runs and had won the match. The whole team was so excited.

They had all worked together and together they had won. “See you at practice on Thursday”, they said as they went off home.

Aroha hopped into the car with Mum and Dad. “That was so great”, she said. “It feels better when everyone wins than if you just play well yourself. Thank you for helping my team.”

“Not a problem”, Dad said. “I think that’s how we’re meant to live, helping each other out. Jesus said to love other people just as much as you love yourself. You helped your team, Aroha, and you helped to make a lot of people happy. And I think you feel pretty happy too. Living in Jesus’ way is a good thing to do”.

This story relates to the 2025 Christian World Service Christmas Appeal