



## Jake — Junior Arborist

Like most 5 year olds, my son Jake is naturally curious. He had been learning about different kinds of jobs at school and was very excited about that.

“Daddy, I know what a teacher is,” giggled Jake, “And I know what policemen, firemen, postmen and doctors do. But Daddy, what is your job?”

“Well son, I’m an arborist.”

“An arbatrist? That’s a funny word. Daddy, what does an arbatrist do?”

“Arborist, Jake, ar-bor-ist. An arborist is someone who takes care of trees.”

“Daddy, doesn’t Mother Nature take care of the trees? Didn’t she plant them and teach them how to grow?”

Not wanting to get into a theological discussion I decided to simplify matters for Jake.

“Yes son, that’s true, but arborists try to help out by taking care of them. Before there were people, the trees grew by themselves without any problem. Then people starting cutting them down to build houses and furniture, to clear land for farming , burn in a fire to cook and keep warm. That started a long time ago before even Daddy was alive.”

“If that was a long time ago, why do you have to take care of the trees now?”

“Well, people still cut down trees but for different reasons. Nowadays when we need more room to build houses for people to live, a whole forest can be cut down.



After the houses are built, people that live in them want to plant trees so I help those trees to be healthy.”

“If people don’t need the trees anymore to build houses, why do we need trees?”

“Trees are still very important for many reasons. They clean the air and provide oxygen so we can breathe, they are homes for birds and other animals to live in, they bear fruits and nuts for people and animals to eat, plus their roots hold the soil together so it doesn’t all wash away when it rains.”

“Wow, Daddy! That sounds like important stuff. We sure would be in trouble if we couldn’t breathe.”

“Yes, Jake. I think it’s very important, but some people don’t understand how really important trees are. Part of my job is to teach people about the importance of trees.”

“So after you tell them not to cut down trees they stop doing it don’t they?”

“Not always son. Some people don’t understand how important trees are until it’s too late. Taking care of trees is the best way to be “green.”

“Green? Like a Marian?” Asked Jake.

“No Jake, green as in taking care of the environment. In some parts of the world people think they have to cut down the rainforest so they can plant crops to eat. Arborists try to teach them that keeping the forest healthy is good for everybody and there are things that grow in the rainforest they can eat. A lot of medicines are made from plants that grow in the rainforest and they can sell those plants and buy food instead of destroying the place they grow.”

“What’s the rainforest, Daddy? Isn’t that the restaurant in the mall?”

“Well son, in countries around the middle of the Earth they have what’s called the rainforest. A lot of trees and other plants grow there because it rains a lot. That’s where a lot of plants and animals live and it makes a lot of the oxygen so we can breathe clean air.”

“Gee Daddy. Since trees are where a lot of animals live, where we get food and air to breathe, being an arbatrist must be the most important job in the world. I want to be an arbatrist when I grow up.”

“Arborist, Jake, ar-bor-ist. And I think it’s a pretty important job, too.”

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