

**Clearly A Parent
Mommy, Do I Have an Angel?
By NELLDA GALLAGHER, Dallas Correspondent**

Mommy, do I have an angel?

I was greeted with this question by my 5-year-old daughter, Emily, after she had spent the day with her best friend.

“Do you know what an angel is?” I asked.

“Yes. It’s a fat, naked baby with wings and no pee-pee,” she said confidently.

Trying to keep a straight face, but proud of her keen observation, I began to investigate her knowledge of angels. It was her understanding that God gives every person an angel that is with them all the time for protection.

Knowing that her family did not believe in God, Emily wanted to know if she qualified for an attendant spirit. I quickly prepared myself for a lengthy discussion on Buddhist deities, the protective forces of the universe.

Being very careful, I explained to her protection in a way that she would not feel invincible.

I read to her the first prayer in our sutra book, and then we began going over some of her recent experiences of protection. She eagerly began to point out the people, or in one case a dog, who stepped in at the right moment to keep her from hurting herself.

She even thought of a few cases where she was the protective force.

We discussed how even the weather can function to our benefit and that sometimes the bad things that happen protect us from something worse.

We then went back to that first prayer and focused on the section that explains how we activate the protective forces in the universe by practicing the Law.

“But I can’t do gongyo,” she said with a worried expression.

“That’s where Mommy and Daddy come in. We chant for the whole family, and when you learn gongyo, you will help all of us, too.” She feels better.

We talked about other ways to practice the Law. Being kind to others, watching what we say and do, participating in the Boys and Girls Group, and most important, allowing Mom and Dad the opportunity to do gongyo and participate in meetings by being on her best behavior. (Couldn’t pass that one up.)

This conversation caused me to think about a recent movie I had checked out titled *Michael*. Michael is an angel summoned to Earth by a woman desperate for divine intervention.

He has unhealthy vices, uses unsavory language and has an unkempt appearance. Despite his outer flaws, he is still capable of recognizing right from wrong and then uses his “power” to create an atmosphere or unexplained phenomena so things work for the better.

Sounds familiar.

I assured my daughter that people may use different names to describe their protective forces, and that’s OK. Also, the next time she sees one of those fat, naked babies with wings, to remember our talk.

And when someone calls her an angel, to say, “Thank you.”

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