

TPE Kids page Horsepower

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Island of wild ponies

No one knows for sure how a herd of wild ponies arrived on Maryland and Virginia's Assateague Island. They've roamed the sandy shores for more than 300 years.

Some say early settlers placed their horses on the island. It would have been a fine place for the animals to roam and graze when they weren't needed for farm work. And since it is a naturally enclosed area, it would have saved settlers the trouble of building fences.

Others say the horses swam ashore centuries ago when a Spanish ship ran aground off the barrier island. Shipwrecks have even been found in the area.

The real story will probably remain a mystery. But however they got there, the wild ponies are a popular attraction for people who visit the area. They are often seen grazing in the sand dune grasses and even splashing in the surf.

Each year, dozens of horses are rounded up and herded across the Assateague Channel during low tide. They are then sold at auction on Chincoteague Island in Virginia.

Thousands of people attend the annual pony swim to see and bid on the horses. Marguerite Henry wrote about the tradition in her famous

children's book, *Misty of Chincoteague*.

Strong, healthy, attractive horses with good muscles are the most valuable. They will bring the most money at auction.

Sadly, people are often judged by outward qualities, too. But God doesn't care how smart or strong or good-looking we are. He looks at our hearts. He is most pleased by people who honor Him and love Him and try to obey Him. That's what God values.

We shouldn't judge people by what we see on the outside. God wants us to share His love with others so they can come to know Him and live a life that pleases Him.

"He's not impressed with horsepower; the size of our muscles means little to him. Those who fear God get God's attention; they can depend on his strength" (Psalm 147:10,11, *The Message*).



JUST FOR laughs

Why do horses seem friendlier in cold weather?

They're always saying "neigh-brrrrr."

What do you call a pony that enjoys painting and putting together model car kits?

A hobby horse.



Did you know?

The ponies of Assateague share the island with deer, raccoons, foxes, otters, snakes, lizards, crabs, birds and other wild creatures. The pony auction helps keep the herd numbers down so the other animals can survive.



Wild horse challenge

Draw a picture of your favorite horse. Send it to us by June 30, and we'll send you a horse finger puppet! Write *Today's Pentecostal Evangel*, TPE Kids Horse Promotion, 1445 North Boonville Avenue, Springfield, Mo. 65802. You must include a home or post office address.

