

# What Can't God Do?

A couple of weeks ago my three-year-old niece, Molly, told my mother and me that she had a bad dream. She wouldn't elaborate, simply because she told me I was in the nightmare. Once she got through the sheepishness, she shared that she figured out who was responsible giving her those night terrors. She raised her index finger with conviction, as she does so often, and said, "God definitely did it." Suddenly, she had turned into Nancy Drew and was getting to the bottom of life's mysteries. Quick, kid, tell me the meaning of life. My mother and I shared a quick glance at one another and tried, quite unsuccessfully, to stifle laughter. How could you not chuckle at something so blunt? My mother and I reassured Molly that God loved her too much and he wouldn't do that to her. God, we said, didn't want to scare her. "No, uncle Matt," Molly insisted with a stern finger, "God did it." My sister and brother-in-law have done a tremendous job teaching Molly about God and introducing her to the Catholic Church. She leads the family in the Sign of the Cross before meals. The concept of God is mind-blowing on any level, but particularly for a young child. Think about the fact that there's an omnipotent being that has created every single thing in the universe and provides for all of us via unfathomable power. God can do anything. The tremendous thing about children is that they believe with unshakable conviction. When mommy says it, it's true times two. I didn't have an answer for my niece to change her mind. My mom, too, struggled to find the right words. She had three children of her own but couldn't provide an answer that made Molly reconsider. I felt like a kid. "Mom, figure this out!" Since that day, I laugh when I think of Molly's explanation. She's so determined and well-spoken that it feels like I'm talking with a philosophy major. How do you tell a child that God isn't responsible for everything that happens in the world? Who or what do you shift the blame to? I think about the day when I'll have my own children and I'm faced with that question. Then, I thank God it's my sister's challenge for the time being.