

The Story of a Boy Named Joseph

Pope Benedict XVI was born in Germany and grew up in the southern state called Bavaria. His father was a policeman. His mother was a cook in a hotel before she married. **In what country were you born?**

The Pope lives in Vatican City, which is in Rome, Italy. **In what city or town do you live now?**

The Pope was not always called Benedict. When he was born, his parents named him Joseph. His last name was Ratzinger. **Write your first and last name.**

Joseph Ratzinger was a good student. He especially liked to write and play the piano. **What do you like best about school?**

What do you like to do for fun?

When Joseph was twelve, the leader of Germany, Adolph Hitler, started wars with other countries and began doing terrible things. Many innocent people were killed just because of their religion or heritage or disability.

In our country, we can worship God in whatever way we choose. **What is your favorite way to pray?**

Joseph began his studies to be a priest but they were interrupted by World War II. He was drafted against his will into the German army. After the war ended he finished his studies and was ordained.

Fr. Ratzinger became a great teacher. Soon he became an archbishop and then a cardinal. Then he was made the leader of an office that makes sure all Catholic teachers are teaching the real truths of the faith. **Can you name at least one thing you know is true about God and your faith?**

In 2005, Pope John Paul II died, and Cardinal Ratzinger was elected pope. He chose the name of Benedict in honor of two Catholic heroes he admires. In the sixth century, St. Benedict of Nursia spread God's word throughout Europe. In the twentieth century, Pope Benedict XV worked hard for peace in the world. **Who is someone you think is a hero?**

Pope Benedict's favorite drink is orange soda, and he loves cats. He has many figurines of cats in his apartment in Vatican City. **What are some of your favorite things?**

When Pope Benedict comes to the United States, one of the things he will remind people is that God wants us to love and care for one another, especially the poor. **What is one way you can help the poor?**

When you say your prayers today, pray for the success of Pope Benedict's visit.