

# Childhood Memories

## Jamaican Childhood Memories – Prompts

kindly shared by Claudia Ferguson, retired School Teacher from Jamaica

### Family & Work

- Families would often have multiple generations and extended family, cousins, grandparents etc, in one house
- Mum was the housekeeper, as well as earning money as a dressmaker, and dad was a farmer and a watchman (security guard)
- Farming was quite common in Jamaica in the 60s. Agriculture farming of coffee, bananas, cocoa and sugar and also vanilla, pimento, ginger and tobacco. Animal Husbandry, rearing cattle and other livestock. Fishermen, Forestry, Mining, clerical work.

### Food

- Breakfast - Fried Dumpling, Bread, Ackee, Porridge, Hot drinks, Hot Chocolate
- Lunch - Bread, Porridge, Bulla and Fritters, Lemonade, Cornmeal, Potato Pudding, Polenta
- Dinner - Banana, Yam, Breadfruit, Potato Dumpling, Chicken or Pork or Prawns (known as Swims)
- Popular Dishes - Ackee and Saltfish, Rice and Peas, Chicken Stew, Dip and Fall Back (cho cho and Saltfish), Pepperpot Soup

# Childhood Memories

## Jamaican Childhood Memories – Prompts

### Typical Day

Wake up early around 6.00am, complete household chores before school, after breakfast would walk to school, which started at 8.00am. We would walk with other children in the neighbourhood. We wore school uniform every day. Our lessons were done using slates and chalkboards. We spent a lot of time reciting for learning, learning poems and scriptures of the bible. We would go home for lunch and return in time for the next lesson. We played games at school, called Dandy Shandy\*, Baseball, Jax (Jacks)\*\*, Skipping and Hide and Seek. School ended at 3.00pm, we would walk home and then help out with any household chores. Older girls would help to prepare the evening meal, otherwise it would just be mum. If on a farm, would

help look after the animals. Then homework would need to be done, spellings, reciting poems and knowing scripture verses. Dinner would be around 6pm and we would all eat together, at times sitting outside on the verandah or steps of the house.

Nightfall was around 6.45pm and dad would read stories, mainly Ananci stories. Ananci, meaning Spider, was a folktale character who would be considered the God of all Stories. (More information on these stories can be found <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anansi>) and actual stories are published on line too

As there was no electricity in the home, there was no TV only a small transistor radio. Light was supplied by Kerosene lamps. Bedtime was at 8pm

# Childhood Memories

## Jamaican Childhood Memories – Prompts

### Typical Day (continued)

\*Dandy Shandy – a playground ball game, where a ball is thrown by one of the players to a player standing in the middle and they must do all they can to prevent the ball from hitting them, by jumping, leaping, ducking to avoid this. An exciting game that was considered a girls game but boys would often play too (similar to Dodge Ball in the US, but the ball would be made out of a milk box stuffed with paper, some wet, to make it really effective for throwing)

\*Jax (Jacks) (Jax are small pronged metal or plastic pieces, in a set of 10) played with a small bouncy ball. The Jaxs would be thrown on the surface, a player throws the ball up in the air giving it enough height for you to pick up a jax before the ball bounces and then catch, with the same hand. Pass the jax to the opposite hand and throw the ball up again and keep going picking up the jax, as many as you can before the ball drops or if you drop a jax. Play then moves to the next player. The person who caught the most jax is the winner

# Childhood Memories

## Jamaican Childhood Memories – Prompts

### Entertainment/Other

There would be street dances, usually reserved for adults.

Church was attended every Sunday and afterwards would go to nearby rivers or fields to play  
Christianity was and still is the most popular religion in Jamaica. There would be praise, worship, sermons, readings or scriptures, several prayers and singing of hymns. Most popular Psalms can be found on additional attachment

Junkanoo is Independence day celebrated on August 6th – people would dress in different costumes and parade in the streets. This would be a big event celebrated each year <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Junkanoo>

Grand Market - this was more for children in more rural areas on Christmas Eve and all communities would have major shopping and eating and greeting people and this is still a big event continuing to be celebrated now. However it is also celebrated on Christmas Day morning generally, with brightly decorated market stalls, bands playing, children dressing up in their new clothes and going to the market to see all the toys for sale. The highlight of every child's holiday.

Most popular music would be Reggae, Calypso and Gospel

Most favoured flowers in Jamaica are the Hibiscus, Fern and Cocoa Plant

If ever unwell we would look to herbal remedies more to help us get better, like drinking herbs and bush teas

# Childhood Memories

## Jamaican Childhood Memories – Prompts

### Popular Psalms

#### Chapter 1

- |   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.                  | 4 | shall prosper.   |
| 2 | But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.  | 5 | The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.                              |
| 3 | And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth | 6 | Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. |
|   |  |   | For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.                  |

#### Chapter 23

- 1 (A Psalm of David.) The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
- 2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.
- 3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
- 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
- 5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
- 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

# Childhood Memories

## Jamaican Childhood Memories – Prompts

### Popular Psalms

#### Chapter 90

1 (A Prayer of Moses the man of God.) Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.

2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

3 Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.

4 For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

5 Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up.

6 In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.

7 For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled.

8 Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.

9 For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.

10 The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

11 Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.

12 So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

13 Return, O LORD, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants.

14 O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

15 Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.

16 Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.

17 And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

# Childhood Memories

## Jamaican Childhood Memories – Prompts

### Popular Psalms

#### Chapter 100

- 1 (A Psalm of praise.) Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.
- 2 Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.
- 3 Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
- 4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.
- 5 For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.