

ADVENTURES OF

# Average Boy™



## Average Boy's Above-Average Year

Bob Smiley

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**Bob Smiley**

**FOCUS**  
ON  
THE FAMILY.

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# Chapter 1

I want to get one thing straight. I'm Average Boy. I am not a wimpy kid. Just ask anyone. Well, you aren't supposed to talk to strangers, so don't ask them. And don't ask Donny because he doesn't like me right now.

You could ask my dog. He knows me pretty well. But he has a very limited vocabulary, so you won't get very far. (That's another reason not to ask Donny. Limited vocabulary.)

I'm not wimpy. Not at all. I play all kinds of sports right up until I'm asked to stop, usually by coaches. And I'm not nervous about starting middle school. You'd think I would

be, because it's a new place with waaay bigger kids. I've heard some of the boys shave.

That's another reason not to trust Donny. He's been held back so much he's already shaving. Donny loves to scare other students by flexing his muscles . . . or growing a beard.

Nope, I'm not nervous. I think middle school will be great. There are so many different sports! Sports are like a religion here in Texas, especially football. I don't know what it's like in other countries, but in Texas football is worshipped. People here can't recall Jesus' twelve disciples, but they can rattle off the starting offensive and defensive lines for the Dallas Cowboys.

I wonder if Jesus and His buddies ever played football. Jesus could've been the best player. He could just divide the other team like Moses parting the Red Sea and run for a touchdown every time. Plus, He could heal anyone who got injured.

I've already signed up to wrestle for my school this year. I watch wrestling on TV and can't wait to do it on a team. My mom made me the coolest cape and mask to wear at matches. I'm going to call myself "The Smiley Slammer." I've even picked out the intro music for the coach to play when I walk onto the mat.

It's going to be awesome! I've been perfecting my wrestling maneuvers all week. My dog won't come to me

anymore—but that just means I'm doing it right. Oh, that's another reason you shouldn't ask my dog about me. Like Donny, he's pretty mad at me right now.

Anyway, I'm constantly practicing my moves. In fact, I'm standing on the picnic table right now, waiting for my dog to walk by. Once he's in range, I'm going to attempt an atomic body smash.



Okay, atomic may be too strong a word. I'm barely fifty pounds, which means I'll be wrestling in the lightest weight class. Instead of smashing opponents, I'll probably just float down on them like a feather. I wonder if you can tickle an opponent into submission. I've never seen that on TV. But I tend to do things differently than other kids.

I'm also excited about wrestling because I get to wear a mask. I have it on right now. Mom says I look better this way. This is probably my fault. Last week, I put some sun-highlighter spray in my hair. Instead of giving me highlights, like the package advertised, it turned my hair white.

Dad says I now look like a Q-tip. That's not a good look for a new middle school student. I either need to bulk up my body or dye my hair back to its normal color. Anyway, if my hair still looks this way in a week or two, maybe I'll change my wrestling name to "The Blonde Bobber."

Anyhow, you probably have some questions about me. I get a lot of questions from people. The question I'm asked most often is, "Why are you in our pool?"

That's an easy one. My neighbors don't have a lock on their fence. The second most asked question I get is, "How did you get the name Average Boy?"

The name actually fits. You see, I'm not really good at anything. When I was in elementary school, I entered a long-distance race. It might have been a marathon, or something even harder. I think it was called a 5K.

My dad was a runner, so he was excited to watch me. Once the race started, he drove to the finish line to wait. And wait. I still remember when I saw him cheering for me. Everyone else had already gone home after the ribbons were awarded, but Dad stayed until I finished the race.

As I crossed the finish line, he shouted, "Wow, that was some truly average running!"

Dad is often encouraging like that. He's always truthful too.

Don't feel sorry for me. I like being average. In fact, C is my favorite grade in school. C means average. But I like to think that C also stands for Christian. Because God is present in my life, He can take my average ability and do great things with it. So rather than living up to my "average" name, I want to honor God's name. So that's what makes me Average Boy, superhero for hire. Mostly to mow lawns.

That's enough about me. I need to concentrate. My dog just came up from the creek. It's time to get back to wrestling practice. Here comes the atomic body smash! I know I can master this move, because my mask already feels atomic. It's fusing to my face in this hot Texas sun.

My heartbeat quickens as my dog shakes the water from his coat. For non-dog owners, a coat is his fur. I don't want anyone to think we're rich and that my dog wears a nice leather jacket.

Feeling mostly dry, my dog bounds for the house. His tongue is sticking out of his mouth. I'm not sure if it's directed at me, but it's go time. I crouch down like the wrestlers I've seen on TV. My dog nears the table. I'm ready to spring. . . .

"Bob, get off that table!" Mom yells.

*Noooo!* I shout, in my head. I've learned from experience not to shout at my mom with my actual voice.

My dog runs off. I've never seen professional wrestlers get their signature move messed up by their moms, but I'm sure it happens.

Oh well, I've got two more days to practice before school starts.

I peel the wrestling mask from my face, feeling like a human banana.

"Why don't you do something useful?" Mom says.

"I was trying to," I reply.

"Attacking our dog isn't useful," Mom says. "He's been frazzled since your brother tried to ride him."

Mom makes a good point, even though that homemade rodeo was fun. Maybe I can be more useful at a neighbor's house. Mr. Polvado down the street does have a dog. I could practice on him. (The dog, not Mr. Polvado.)

Mr. Polvado is somewhere around 183 years old. His house is filled with history. One day I saw him talking on something he called a "landline." I know this sounds made

up, but a landline is actually a big phone connected to his house with a cord! I don't know how he listens to music when he goes for a walk. Maybe he has a really long cord?

Anyway, Mr. Polvado loves when I drop by. His house is a short bike ride away. I park in his driveway and knock on the door.

"Why are you here?" he greets me warmly.

"I came to hang out," I say. "What are you doing?"

"I was listening to the quiet, but I can see now that it's over. I thought you were in school?"

"Nope! Not for two more days."

"Hmmm . . . I guess your school didn't get my email to start sooner."

"That's funny," I say. "Do you even have email?"

"You caught me. I heard someone talk about it on TV."

"Did you ever wrestle?" I ask. "You know with dinosaurs or something."

Mr. Polvado has a funny way of laughing. It sounds like a groan.

"I'm going to wrestle for my school this year," I explain. "I'm practicing on my dog. Hey, where's your dog?"

"I think he smelled you coming and is hiding somewhere," Mr. Polvado says.

"That's just my wrestling mask," I say. "It gets hot in there."

Mr. Polvado asks if I want some cookies. Ten minutes

later he returns with a plateful of crackers. I've always thought he had a strange sense of humor.

"Are you ready to start middle school?" Mr. Polvado asks.

I've been asking myself that question all summer. And yes, I'm ready! I can't wait for this school year to start! Last week, my youth pastor encouraged everyone to focus on taking more risks this year. Not dumb risks like trying to eat a bowl of hair. No, he wants us to take real risks that push us out of our comfort zones, make us try new things, and help reveal God's love to others. That's what I plan to do.

And to make it interesting, he said whoever pushes themselves to do the most and keeps track of these decisions in a journal would win a new GameStation 6.5 video game console. I couldn't believe it! The Gamestation 6.5 is way better than the 6.0. And by way better, I mean by .5. I can already feel the controller in my hands.

Can I win it? Well, it just so happens that one of my superpowers, in addition to peeling off stuck wrestling masks, is trying new things, taking risks, and getting outside of my comfort zone. And now I have another reason to do those things this year!

So I think middle school is going to be great. Look out, world! It's time for Average Boy's above-average year!