

Introduction

Hey, my name is Sabrina Andrea Richardson, yes that's my full government name, but all my friends call me, "Bri" for short. My friends and I recently joined the Pearly Girls Club at my church. We are so excited to finally be a part of this club.

Many of the girls in the Pearly Girls Club have real pearls, not the fake costume jewelry kind you can get at the local hair supply store. They had the real, genuine expensive pearls; the ones that cost more than the change in your piggy bank could buy you.

The real pearls take a long process to make. The last guest speaker at the Pearly Girls Club meeting almost put me to sleep until she started talking about how pearls were made. She shared with us that something gets caught in those oysters; I think its some kind of particle that floats around until it lands in the oyster. Then it bothers the oyster until a substance called nacre grows all around it and then a pearl is formed. She told us this whole process could take anywhere from a few months to several years.

I didn't realize that a pearl went through all that for such a long time just to become so beautiful. I couldn't imagine someone bothering me for months; even years. I got a feeling that wouldn't make me so beautiful even though my daddy tells me all the time that I am.

I can't get over how something so rare and precious is wanted by every woman and many young girls had to have them too; especially if they were part of the Pearly Girls Club.

It wasn't like our group was a bunch of uppity girls from the suburbs, but we've been taught to have class, respect ourselves and not allow our peers (this is what older people call our friends) to pressure us into doing something we really didn't want to do.

The Pearly Girls Club was a young girls group that started at Zion Missionary Baptist church for girls aged 9-12 years old. The group is so big that it also meets in the local community center at least once a month.

On first Sundays the Pearly Girls Club meets for thirty minutes right before church service ends. All the girls aged nine through twelve get together for a girl talk session on whatever subject First Lady Pearline Taylor or Sister Pamela Pearlson wants to share with us. The Pearly Girls Club was named after the two of them because both their names have the word, "pearl" in it. Yeah, I know it sounds corny, but that's how it all got started. At the talk sessions they also serve us *hors d'oeuvres* as old people call them, but we all call them finger foods because that's how we eat them; with our fingers.

The Pearly Girls Club is a great club for girls to talk, play games, have fun days and listen to speakers talk about different things that girls go through. Every girl that was a part of the group wanted to have their own pearls because the pearls symbolized how valuable and delicate we are. First Lady Pearline said that the pearls were also symbolic to how strong we are too because of all that a pearl went through to become one.

Part of me always looked forward to the first Sunday at Zion Missionary Baptist Church because that's when the Pearly Girls Club meets at the church. On that day, all the women wore white suits and their pearls.

The other part of me that doesn't like going to the meetings is because I don't own a real pair of pearls yet. Yup, I'm one of many girls that still wore the fake pearls. Ugh!

Well, keep turning the pages and you'll learn about my story of how I finally got pearls of my own and the many lessons I learned after I did.