

although shirley jones says she and stepson david cassidy are very alike, that changes when it comes to the ways they worship god, since shirley feels...

CHURCH WILL ALWAYS BE GOD'S HOUSE TO ME

Into each life some rain must fall . . . unless you're Shirley Jones! She probably doesn't even own a raincoat.

Shirley is a brave, courageous gal. She's pretty and perky and

pocketsize. Too tiny to tackle today's world, yet she meets each day with a great big smile, efficiently deals with whatever the day brings and says, "I've been very fortunate, really," in a voice that positively lilts. There's an inner radiance, even in her voice!

It's Shirley's approach to life that holds the key. She has some sort of built-in sunshine that beats an umbrella anyday for warding off those raindrops we're all supposed to encounter. She calls it "positive thinking," "faith," "a pattern of life," "God's plan."

"I'm basically positive about everything," she admits, "though I think we're all intended for some sorrow. I think basically I am a Christian Scientist at heart. I don't mean to the point where I wouldn't go see a doctor—not that kind—but I think positive."

Shirley was raised as a Methodist, her handsome husband, Jack Cassidy, as a Catholic. But there have been changes for both in their religious concepts since childhood days.

"When I was a very little tyke in Pennsylvania," Shirley said, she attended church with her parents. "I used to sing in church when I was three years old!" She must have been only knee-high to a Methodist minister in those days. In the little town of 800 people [Smithton, Pennsylvania] it was as natural as breathing to make Sunday-morning services an unvaried habit. Her mother had explained it simply: "God made you and me and Daddy and everyone in the world. He made the earth and the sky and the stars you see at night. He made everything that's good. He loves you and protects you—that's why we go to church: to honor Him."

To the little girl, visiting God's house seemed very logical, just as "talking to God" in prayer became easy and natural. She was fascinated by Bible stories and thrilled by the music of the choir. "I got goose pimples all over," she said, thinking back to those first experiences at church.

Her faith strengthened rather than faltered during those questioning teen years. "I had a feeling religion

is what you make it. All through school, it gave me strength—a feeling of security, and most of all, the courage to overcome disappointments," she explained. She realized, too, that

her ability to sing was God-given.

"God gave me a wonderful gift. He gave me a voice and a love for music," she said. "I made a habit of saying a little prayer before I started to sing." Shirley knew that in a special way her prayers were answered: "When I got up to do my number, I would always be calm and confident."

Careerwise, everything has seemingly fallen into place for little Shirley Jones. It started out with *Oklahoma*, that tremendously successful first musical in which a very young Shirley sang the lead after just one audition!

From there, it was pictures—and when musicals stopped being made, she went into a nightclub act with Jack. After that came *Elmer Gantry* and an Oscar for Shirley's performance in it. That opened new doors for her. As she puts it, "It bridged the gap for me. I had an opportunity to do dramatic pictures. I guess I've really been in every medium of this business." She's surprised at the turns of events that led her from one facet to another. "It's been marvelous," she glows.

Actually, Shirley's been a very busy lady, combining an active career with marriage (she and Jack have been married 15 years) and the raising of their three small boys: Shaun, 13, Patrick, 9, and Ryan, who is 5.

Shirley would have settled for a bungalow and babies in the beginning years of her marriage, but Jack wouldn't let her hide the talent God gave her. He urged her to continue with her career. "I just wanted to be a housewife," she says. "Jack was the one who said, 'Shirley, I'm not going to let you do this. You're too talented and you have too much to give . . . I'm not going to let you stop.' And he was right because now I'm enjoying it more than ever."

Her newest role as Mrs. Partridge is a natural for Shirley. It combines her talents, really. "I have three boys of my own and a stepson," she points out, "so playing a mother isn't anything new for me." Best of all, it gives her an opportunity / please turn to page 77