



An

# EXPERIMENT in Forgiving

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(Based on a true story)

*Forgive one another your trespasses* (Mosiah 26:31).

**J**ared carefully recorded the last bit of information for his sixth-grade science project—comparing the differences between plants watered with tap water and those watered with distilled water.

“There,” he said in satisfaction. “All done.”

He ran into the laundry room. “Mom, I finished the experiment. Do you want to see it?”

Mom finished folding a towel and smiled. “Of course.”

Jared led her into the kitchen, where the two sets of plants occupied a shelf by the big glass door. When he saw the plants, he stopped in his tracks. “Oh, no!” he cried.

Kaitlyn, Jared’s three-year-old sister, looked up and smiled, her hands covered with dirt. Potting soil and crushed plants were strewn across the floor.

“You ruined my project!” Jared wiped angry tears from his eyes. “You wreck everything I have.”

“Jared, your sister didn’t mean to do anything wrong,” Mom said quietly.

“Sure,” Jared said bitterly. “Just like she didn’t mean to write all over my geography homework last week. Just like she didn’t mean to spill milk on my book report. Just like she—”

“That’s enough,” Mom said.

Jared recognized the tone in his mother’s voice and knew he’d said too much.

“Tell Jared you’re sorry,” Mom said to Kaitlyn.

Kaitlyn’s bottom lip trembled. “I’m sorry.”

Normally, Jared couldn’t stay angry at his little sister for very long, but this was different. He had spent a whole month caring for the plants and recording the differences between the two sets for the sixth-grade science fair. Now they were destroyed. He wouldn’t

have anything to show in the fair next week.

He cleaned up the mess as well as he could, but he couldn’t save the plants. He dumped them into the big trash can in the garage. In his room, he slammed his fist into his baseball mitt. All his work had been for nothing.

A few minutes later, he heard a knock at his door.

“Jared, can I come in?” Mom called.



Reluctantly, he got up and opened the door. Mom wrapped her arm around his shoulders. “I know you’re disappointed. Is there anything I can do?”

He shook his head.

“I’m sorry about the experiment,” she said.

“Me, too,” he said, still slamming the ball into his mitt.

“Kaitlyn made a mistake. Can you forgive her?”

When Jared didn’t answer, his mother turned and quietly left the room.

When another knock sounded at his door, Jared ignored it. The door inched open, and Kaitlyn stood there. “I’m sorry.”

Jared looked at his sister’s red eyes. For a moment, his heart softened. Then he remembered how hard he’d worked on the experiment.

He had hoped to win a prize with it. “Go away.”

Kaitlyn sniffled and rubbed her eyes before closing the door behind her.

Jared asked to be excused from dinner. He knew his parents were disappointed in him, but he didn’t care. He tried to do his homework but couldn’t concentrate. After staring at the same page of his history book for five minutes, he gave up. He got ready for bed, then knelt down, intending to say his prayers as he did every night. The words refused to come.

He didn’t sleep very well. He kept tossing and turning, remembering the hurt in Kaitlyn’s eyes when he’d refused to speak to her. He tried to push away the image. Kaitlyn had wrecked his experiment. He didn’t know if he could ever forgive her.

He thought about the word *forgive* and recalled part of the blessing his father had given him after his baptism and confirmation. “There will be times in your life when you need to seek forgiveness. I bless you with the meekness of heart to do so. There will also be times when you must forgive others. Remember the example of the Savior when you are faced with such times. Forgiveness

is a gift. Use it and you will be blessed.”

The following morning, Jared trudged to school, his heart heavy. But it wasn’t the ruined experiment that filled his thoughts—it was Kaitlyn. He told himself he had nothing to feel guilty about, but he couldn’t erase the picture of Kaitlyn’s unhappy face from his mind.

At school, he explained to his science teacher what had happened. Mr. MacKade laid a hand on Jared’s shoulder. “I know you’re disappointed. You put a lot of work into your experiment.” His teacher tapped a finger against the notebook he always carried. “Did you take photos of it?”

Jared nodded. He’d asked his father if he could use his camera to take photos of the plants at

different stages.

“We’ll show the photos instead,” Mr. MacKade said. “It won’t be the same as displaying the plants themselves, but it’ll be the next best thing.”

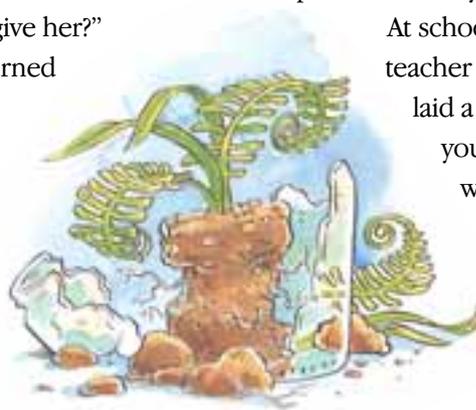
“Thanks, Mr. MacKade. I’ll do that.”

Jared slipped into his seat. He should have felt better, but the ache in his heart remained. He couldn’t concentrate on his math problems or his spelling test. He could not even choke down the sandwich and cupcake his mother had packed in his lunch. All he could see was Kaitlyn’s face, her quivering lips and tear-reddened eyes. No science experiment was worth the pain he’d caused his little sister.

By the end of school, Jared knew what he had to do. Kaitlyn had been wrong to ruin his plants, but that did not excuse how he had treated her. He hurried home from school.

“Mom, I’m home. Where’s Kaitlyn?” he called, slamming the door behind him.

Mom looked up from the Primary manual she was studying. “She’s in her room.” His mother looked like she wanted to say something else.





“Don’t worry, Mom,” Jared said. “Everything’s going to be all right.”

Jared raced up the stairs and knocked on Kaitlyn’s door. “Kaitlyn, it’s me.” He heard a muffled “Come in.” He pushed open the door.

Kaitlyn was sitting on her bed, her arms looped around her knees. “Are you still mad at me?” she asked in a small voice.

Jared crossed the room to sit beside her. “No, Kaitlyn.

I’m not angry anymore. I’m sorry I yelled at you. I know you only wanted to help.” He hugged her and asked, “How would you like to go to the park with me?”

Kaitlyn nodded and gave him a big smile.

That evening Jared labeled the pictures he had taken of the plants. Kaitlyn played with her dolls beside him. A quiet feeling of peace enveloped him. And when he knelt by his bed that night to say his prayers, he didn’t have any trouble finding the words. ●



“Don’t carry the burden of offense any longer. Genuinely ask forgiveness of one that has offended you, even when you consider you have done no wrong. That effort will assuredly bring you peace.”

**Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “To Be Free of Heavy Burdens,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 88.**