

Better to Be Nice

By Kimberly Reid
(Based on a true story.)



Why should we let David play with us? He was a boy!

"When I am kind to others, my heart sings"
(Children's Songbook, 145).

Boys were mean. By the time I was in fifth grade, I knew that for sure. One time some boys stole my favorite umbrella and smashed the handle. Another time they chased me across the playground with spiders. They even made fun of the way I kicked and threw a ball. I did *not* like boys.

One rainy day, my class had to stay inside for recess. So I found a board game for my friends and me to play. As we set up the game, a boy named David walked over to us.

"Can I play too?" he asked.

I narrowed my eyes. My friends stared at him. I didn't remember David being mean to me before, but that didn't

matter. He was still a boy.

"Don't talk to us," I said. I glanced at my friends. They nodded. So I called David a mean name.

My friends laughed. "This is a girls-only game," one of them said.

"OK," David mumbled. He frowned and walked away. My friends finished setting up the game, still laughing. I looked over my shoulder and saw David sitting alone, reading a book. He looked like he might cry.

I felt *awful*. I'd made David feel bad. For no reason. Just like those boys had made me feel with the umbrella and the spiders. Maybe boys weren't the only ones who could be mean. And girls weren't the only ones who got hurt.

"I don't feel like playing anymore," I told my friends.

I went back to my desk and put my head down. Why had I been so mean? Maybe I'd been afraid David would be like those boys who'd been mean to me before. But he wasn't. And now I felt terrible. It would've been much better to be kind, like Jesus.

I closed my eyes and prayed. *Heavenly Father, please forgive me. I don't want to be mean like that again.*

Over the next few days, I tried to remember that not all boys were mean. In fact, some of them were really nice. One boy in P.E. class even made sure the girls got as many turns with the soccer ball as the boys.

It took me a couple of days to get the courage to talk to David. I still felt so bad about everything! It wasn't easy, but

I finally talked to him during art time. I took a deep breath.

"Nice drawing, David. I really like that horse."

"Uh, thanks." David barely looked up from his drawing. He probably thought I'd say something mean again.

So I smiled my nicest smile and kept talking as we worked. I hoped my friendliness showed I wasn't really mean and that I was sorry for what I'd said before. By the end of art time, David was talking too. He even told some great jokes.

When I accidentally spilled paint on our table, he helped me clean it up. He didn't get mad, even though some of it got on his paper.

David could have gotten mad or said something mean, like I'd done. But he didn't. Being nice really was better. ♦

The author lives in Utah, USA.



When we mess up, we can repent.

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