



# The Trouble with RECESS

By Juliann Tenney Doman  
(Based on a true story)

ILLUSTRATION BY LINDA PRATER

“Jesus said love ev’ryone; treat them kindly too” (Children’s Songbook, 61).

“OK,” Jason,” Mom said as she tucked him into bed. “You’ve been extra quiet tonight. Is anything wrong?”

Jason looked up at her. “It’s about school,” he said. “I just wish recess was different.”

“Have you made any new friends?” Mom asked.

Their family had just moved, and Jason was finally starting to feel comfortable in his new third-grade class.

“A few,” he said. “But it’s the playground helper. She’s grouchy all the time! And some of the kids say mean things about her.”

“What do you think about that?” Mom said.

“Well, I don’t think she’s nice, but I also don’t like it when the kids talk like that about her,” Jason said. “It makes me feel bad inside, even when she doesn’t hear them.”

“Jason, do you remember how the Holy Ghost speaks to you?” Mom said.

Jason tapped his heart.

“That’s right,” Mom said. “He talks to you through feelings and thoughts.”

Jason loved the peaceful feeling of the Holy Ghost. But when the kids were mean to the playground helper, he didn’t feel peaceful at all.

“But the Holy Ghost makes me feel good,” he said.

Mom nodded. “That’s right, but He also tells us when something isn’t right, or when we need to fix something. When you feel bad or uncomfortable inside, it could be the Holy Ghost telling you that something is wrong and you need to do the right thing.” She smoothed his hair. “What do you think is the right thing to do?”

Why was  
the playground  
helper so  
grouchy?

“Well, I know Jesus wants us to be kind to everyone,” Jason said thoughtfully. “I guess that means playground helpers too.”

“Yes, it does!” Mom said. “We are all children of Heavenly Father, so we should treat everyone nicely.”

“Well, what can I do?” Jason said, frowning. “If she wasn’t so grumpy, maybe everyone would be nicer to her.”

“We don’t always know why people act a certain way,” Mom said. “We don’t know what’s going on in her life. Maybe she’s doing the best she can.”

Jason thought about when they had first moved here. Everything was so different from his old home. He had tried not to show it, but at first he had been scared and sad. Maybe the playground helper felt that way too.

“But if I don’t know *why* she’s feeling bad, how can I help?” Jason asked.

“We don’t always have to know what’s wrong to cheer someone up,” Mom said.

Jason thought about what cheered him up. “I know! Can we make her some chocolate-chip cookies?”

Mom smiled. “That’s a great idea.”

Jason was getting excited. “And maybe we can make some extra cookies to give to the kids at recess too!” he said. “I could share cookies with everyone and talk about how we can brighten her day even more!”

“Even better,” Mom said. “I sure am proud of you, Jason.”

Jason smiled. He was glad he had the Holy Ghost to remind him to treat others like Jesus would treat them. Recess was going to get a whole lot sweeter. ♦

The author lives in Colorado, USA.

Some people look grouchy when they really aren't.

Their faces just forget they're happy, so give 'em a chance!

