

Me? A Bully?

By Merilee Booren

(Based on a true story)

“Be ye kind one to another” (Ephesians 4:32).

It had been a great day at school. Jeff had spent all recess playing tetherball with his friend, Ben. After two years at his new school, Jeff was glad to finally have a best friend. Ben liked the same things as Jeff did, and they always had lots to talk about.

When Jeff got home, he saw Mom waiting for him. She didn't look happy at all. His smile faded away. “Jeff,” Mom said, “I got a call from the principal today. She said you've been bullying a boy in your class.”

“I have not!” said Jeff. He knew that bullying was wrong. A bully made people sad and afraid. Jeff had never done anything like that.

“Are you sure?” Mom asked. She made room on the couch for Jeff. “The principal said you and Ben tell Sam to go away, that he's not in your club, and that he can't join unless he jumps off the top of the slide.”

Jeff looked down. Sam asked to play with them almost every day. But Ben was his best friend, and they liked playing by themselves. That didn't mean he had been a bully, did it?

“Is it wrong for Ben and me to play alone?” Jeff asked. It didn't seem fair that someone called him a bully just for playing with his best friend.

“You two can still spend lots of time together. But when Sam is around, it's wrong to make him feel left out and alone. The principal said you called Sam names for not jumping off the slide.”

“I did not!” Jeff said. But Ben had. And he had laughed.

“Remember how you felt when we first moved?” Mom asked.

Jeff nodded. School had been really lonely at first. He had prayed a lot to find a good friend.

“What do you wish people had done?” Mom asked.

“I wished they'd invited me to play games at recess. Or sit with them at lunch.”

“Isn't it amazing that you have such a good friend now?” Mom said. “You can be someone who helps people who are lonely, like you used to be. I'm going to give you a challenge. Tomorrow I want you to find out three cool things about Sam. Then tell me after school.”

“I can probably do that,” Jeff said, staring at his shoes. He hadn't meant to bully Sam. He wanted to be kind like Jesus. Tomorrow he could tell Sam he was sorry. And he could tell Ben that he wanted Sam to play too.

“Hey,” said Mom. She tipped Jeff's chin up. “You are a good, kind boy. Sam would be lucky to have you as a friend. And guess what? I bet you'll find out you're lucky to have Sam as a friend too.”

Jeff smiled a little. Ben could still be his best friend. It wouldn't hurt to have another friend too. ♦

The author lives in Utah, USA.

KINDNESS CHALLENGE

- Find out three cool things about someone you don't know well.
- Think what Jesus would do. Memorize a Primary song like *“If the Savior Stood Beside Me.”*
- You don't have to be best friends with everyone, but you can choose to be kind. Do something nice for someone you don't get along with.

ILLUSTRATION BY CHRIS DANGER

