

By Breanne Richards (Based on a true story)

Forgiving Demi



*"Pray, He is there;
Speak, He is list'ning"*
(Children's Songbook, 12).

"Say cheese!"
the
photographer said.

The camera clicked, and a light flashed. It was class picture day for Mae's sixth-grade class. And she was in the center of the back row—again. That was where the tallest person in the class always stood. And she was always the tallest.

Mae didn't like how she had to look down when she talked to her friends. She didn't like how the boys looked up at her like she was a

skyscraper. She didn't like how her friends wore size extra small and she wore size medium.

Every TV show she watched made it seem like girls were supposed to be *small*.

Mae's friends waited for her as she climbed down the bleachers.

Kayla waved for Mae to hurry. "It's finally lunchtime! I'm starving!" she said.

Mae smiled and headed to lunch with her friends. After eating their deliciously warm, cheesy pizza, they went outside.

"Let's go play kickball!" Kayla and Lexi said, running ahead.

Mae started to run after them when someone called, "Hey!"

She turned around. It was Demi and some of her friends.

"Good thing they put you in the back row for pictures," Demi said. "Otherwise you'd cover everyone up with your big head!"

Demi's friends laughed. Mae looked around for Kayla and Lexi. They were far away now.

"Leave me alone," Mae said.

"What's a giant like you going to do about it?" Demi smirked.

Mae felt tears roll down her cheeks as she ran past Demi and her friends. She ran until she got to the back corner of the field, where no one would see her crying.

Mae felt sick to her stomach, and her heart hurt. She thought of the words to her favorite Primary song: "Heavenly Father, are you really there? And do you hear and answer every child's prayer?"

Mae knew she could pray anytime, anywhere. She found a quiet spot behind a tree and knelt down to pray.

"Heavenly Father, what Demi said made me feel bad. Please help me feel better. I love Thee and thank Thee for the nice friends I do have."

Mae ended her prayer and continued to kneel quietly. She could hear kids playing across the field. She felt like someone had wrapped a blanket around her. It was like a warm hug!

Then she thought she heard the quietest voice in her mind say, "I love you, Mae."



She smiled. She knew that Heavenly Father was answering her prayer. Even though Demi's words still made her feel sad, she felt better.

Mae knew she was a child of God. There was nothing wrong with

the way she looked! God loved her and cared about her. *Maybe Demi wouldn't say mean things if she knew she was a child of God too,* she thought.

Then Mae got an idea. She smiled and prayed again.

"Heavenly Father," she said, "help me forgive Demi and be kind to her. Please help her know that she is a child of God too. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen."

When Mae stood up, she didn't feel sad anymore. Sure, she was still the tallest and probably would be for a few years. But she knew that Heavenly Father loved her, and that was all that mattered. ◆

The author lives in Utah, USA.

