

SEEING A NEW FRIEND



Beth had never met someone who was blind before.

By Ruth O'Neil
(Based on a true story)

"It is fun to have a friend who will play with you"
(Children's Songbook, 262).

Beth skipped to her room to pick up her toys. A new family from church was coming over for dinner, and they had a girl her age. Mama said her name was Cara. Beth couldn't wait to meet her!

When the doorbell rang, Beth ran to the front door. "Hi! I'm Beth."

"We're the Palmers, and this is our daughter, Cara," said the dad.

Right away, Beth could tell there was something different about Cara. Cara didn't look right at Beth when she talked. When everyone walked to the table to eat, Cara's dad held her arm. And before they started eating, Cara's mom told her where each food was on her plate. Could Cara not see?

"I'm blind," Cara said. "So Mom helps me know what I'm about to eat."

Beth remembered a story from the Bible about a blind man that Jesus healed. But she had never met someone who was blind before.

After dinner, Mama said, "Beth, why don't you and Cara play in your room?"

Beth looked at Mom with wide eyes. She wasn't sure what to do.

Cara smiled and held out her hand. "Lead the way!" she said.

Seeing Cara smile made Beth feel better. She took Cara's hand and led her down the hall to her room. Then Beth let go of Cara's hand to get some toys for them to play with.

Cara stood in the doorway. "If you tell me where there's a bed or a chair, I can sit down," she said.

"Oh!" Beth turned around. "Sorry about that!"

"It's OK," Cara said. "Where should I go?"

Beth tried to think of a way to explain where the chair was.

"Is it to my right or to my left?" Cara asked.

"To your right," Beth said, starting to understand. "Take two steps."

Cara took two steps to her right. She put her hand out, felt the chair, and sat down perfectly. "Thank you," she said. "Now let's play!"

"How can you play with toys if you don't know what they look like?" Beth asked shyly.

"I feel them," Cara said. "Here—hand me something, but don't tell me what it is."

Beth handed Cara a toy and watched as she felt it all over. Cara grinned. "It's a sock monkey."

Beth laughed. "That's right! Mama and I made it together."

"Someday I'm going to learn to sew too," Cara said.

"Really?"

"Yeah! I'll be able to feel all the stitches. Maybe I can learn to make a sock monkey like yours." Cara hugged the sock monkey close.

"You can keep that one, if you want," Beth said.

"But you and your mom made it together," said Cara. "Don't you want to keep it?"

That made Beth giggle because there was a whole pile of sock monkeys on her bed! "I have plenty!" She began to plop them on Cara's lap one at a time. "We made this one, and this one, and this one, and all of these." Cara and Beth laughed.

"So really, you can pick one to take home!" Beth said.

"Thanks!" As Beth watched Cara feel each monkey and pick one to keep, she realized she had made a new friend.

"I'm glad I met you tonight," Beth said.

"Me too," said Cara. "Someday, I'll make a sock monkey to give to you!" ●

The author lives in Virginia, USA.

