

Repentance Is a Good Thing!

By Julia Willardson
(Based on a true story)

Gemma and her friend Harper sat under the tree in front of Gemma's house. The tree was full of pink blossoms. It was a lovely day.

"Guess what?" Harper said. "My cousin is graduating from elementary school."

Gemma picked at the grass. She wished *she* were graduating too.

"That's cool, I guess," she said.

"We are going to have a big family party to celebrate," said Harper. "My cousin gets to go to middle school next year. He is so lucky!"

"My brother already went to middle school," said Gemma.

"Did you know in middle school you get your own locker?" Harper asked.

"Yes, I know!" Gemma said. "I just told you—my brother already went to middle school." *Why does Harper keep bragging?* Gemma thought. *She's not giving me a chance to say anything!*

"And gym! They get to go to gym every day," Harper said. "My cousin said—"

"Harper, I don't care what your cousin said," Gemma said. "I already know all about middle school."

Harper stared down at the blossoms that had fallen from the tree. Gemma's face felt hot. She didn't know what to do or say.

At last Gemma stood up. She brushed the dirt off her pants and ran into her house.



Why did she get so mad? Harper didn't do anything wrong. Gemma sat on the edge of her bed and took a deep breath. She wished she hadn't said that to Harper. It hadn't been kind at all.

She looked at her desk and saw a peach-colored binder with shiny hearts. It was the baptism book her mom had made. Inside were pictures from her life and notes from family and friends. She grabbed the binder and flipped through the pages.

She noticed one note. It read, "I want you to know that Heavenly Father is proud of your choice to be baptized. When you make mistakes and repent, He will forgive you. Repentance is a good thing!"

Gemma took a deep breath. The way she treated Harper was not a good choice. But she knew what to do now.

She ran outside and sat down by Harper. Harper looked down.

"I'm sorry for what I said.

I shouldn't have been so rude," Gemma said.

Harper looked up. "That's OK. I know you didn't mean it. Thanks for saying sorry." She gave Gemma a blossom that had fallen from the tree.

That night, Gemma told Mom what had happened. "Harper forgave me," Gemma said. "But I still need to repent to Heavenly Father. Will you help me?"

"Of course," Mom said. She gave Gemma a big hug. "Do you want to pray about it right now?"

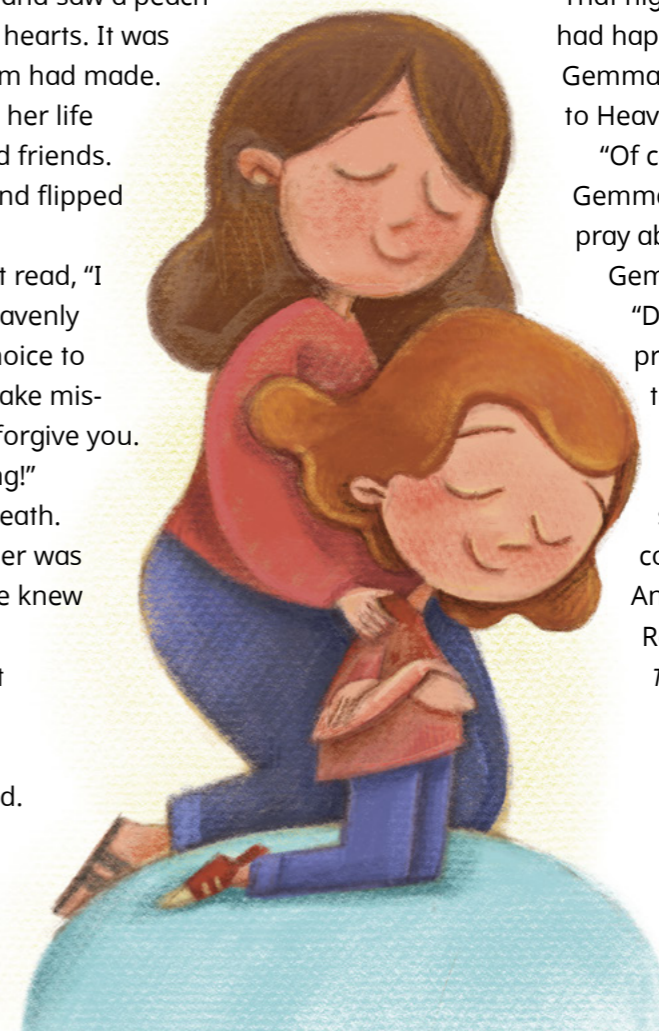
Gemma and Mom knelt down.

"Dear Heavenly Father," Gemma prayed, "I'm sorry I was so mean to Harper. I want to repent and do better."

Gemma felt good inside as she prayed. She was glad she could fix things with Harper. And with Heavenly Father.

Repentance was a good thing! ●

This story took place in the USA.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY CAROLINA FARIAS

