



Better Friends

By Katherine Nelson

(Based on a true story)

“To have a friend, you must be a friend, too”
(Children’s Songbook, 262).

I was having a blast at activity day. Sister MacDonald, our leader, was teaching us how to make our own soap at her house. We mixed lye and water and added scented oils. Then we poured the mixture into molds and added dye. I used my favorite colors—blue and yellow.

I added sparkles, and Nikki leaned over to me. “Josie was talking about you yesterday,” she whispered. Then she told me something mean Josie had said about my body. “I wouldn’t ever say something like that, though,” she added.

I could feel my face get hot. “Um, thanks,” I said. But I didn’t really feel grateful. I felt sick.

I went into the bathroom, locked the door, and sat on

the floor. I picked at the braided rug and tried not to cry.

This wasn't the first time one of my friends said something mean about me. And it usually happened like that: someone in our group of friends telling me something mean someone else had said. I wished they wouldn't tell me. It hurt my feelings, and it made me embarrassed about the way I looked.

I wished Nikki hadn't said anything. The whole afternoon had gone from fun to terrible.

I decided to say a prayer. "Heavenly Father," I whispered. "Please help me to not cry, please help me to feel better, and please help me to know what to do about my friends."

When I got home, I curled up on the couch with a book, but I couldn't focus. Nikki's words bounced around in my head with other mean things my friends had said about me. My mom walked in and saw my face.

"Something wrong?" she asked. She sat and looped her arm around me. I leaned my head on her shoulder and told her what Nikki had said. "I wish I looked different. Then maybe people would want to be my friend." I swallowed, trying not to cry.

"There are a lot of reasons people want to be friends with someone," Mom said. "But I think people stay friends with someone when that person treats them well."

"I know, I know," I said. "It doesn't matter what I look like, just if I'm nice."

Mom turned so she was facing me. "It's hard when people say unkind things about the way we look. But your body is beautiful because you are a child of God. And you deserve to be treated with respect."

I bit my lip. "I guess that's true."

"Do you think Nikki and Josie are being kind to you?" Mom asked.

I looked down. "Not really."

Mom hugged me. "Is there anyone else that you could be friends with?"

I thought about that. There was Meera, who played violin in the orchestra with me. And there was Sarah, a girl in my math class. I hadn't ever hung out with them outside of school. But Meera and I liked to play duets together, and Sarah always helped me with word problems. They were



always nice to me, and I had fun with them. They never made fun of the way I looked.

"Yeah, I think so," I said. "Could I maybe invite them over sometime?"

Mom smiled. "I think that's a great idea," she said.

"And Mom?" I said. "Can we could get some dye? It would be fun to make soap with them." I could still keep being kind to Nikki and Josie. But maybe I needed to make some better friends too. ◆

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NEW FRIEND FIND

1. Put a star by words that could describe a good friend.
2. Write down the names of someone who fits what you starred.
3. Invite some of those people to do something together!

Kind ENCOURAGING
RESPECTFUL New at your school or ward
Funny, but sometimes in a mean way SHY
Talks behind people's backs Fun
Likes to do same things as you
NOT ALWAYS HONEST