

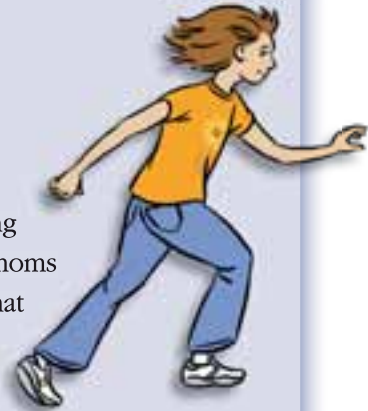
Oh No,
Activity Day!





BY LORI MORTENSEN

(Based on a true story)



To have a friend, you must be a friend, too
(*Children's Songbook*, 262).

Eight-year-old Katie didn't remember until her bus pulled up to a rumbling stop in front of her house. Whitney and Jessie were already knocking at her door. The other girls were probably inside. "Oh no," Katie thought with a sigh. "It's Tuesday, and that means Primary activity day."

"Race you to the door," her brother said as he scrambled down the bus's narrow black steps.

"Go ahead," she called after him.

"I want to be last today."

Katie hated activity days.

"Well, not exactly hate," she thought as she trudged across the grass. Her mom was the activity-day leader, and they had done a lot of fun things like making bread, learning to polka, and putting together their own journals.

But Katie just felt uncomfortable at activity days. When everyone came, there were eight girls all laughing and talking. She'd try to join in, but whenever she said something, somebody would say, "Oh," and then go right back to what they were doing as if she hadn't said anything.

Today wasn't any different. When Katie tried to show everyone her new guinea pig, Squeakers, a few of the girls giggled at his soft fur, but as soon as the doorbell rang they raced to the door and forgot all about her.

When her mother told the girls to gather around the kitchen table to make invitations for their daddy-daughter dance, they scrambled around so they could sit next to their friends. Nobody tried to sit next to Katie.

And when the girls were playing tag on the lawn waiting for their moms to pick them up, Katie was sure that nobody noticed that she wasn't there. They were too busy having fun without her.

"I don't want to go to activity days anymore," Katie said that night as her mother tucked her in bed.

Mother looked surprised. "Why not? I thought you liked activity days."

"I would if it wasn't for *them*," Katie said.

"Them?" Mom asked.

Katie nodded. "Alyssa, Whitney,

Jessie—all of them. They're all a bunch of brats." Katie knew that she wasn't being very nice, but that's how she felt.

Mother sat down on the edge of the bed.

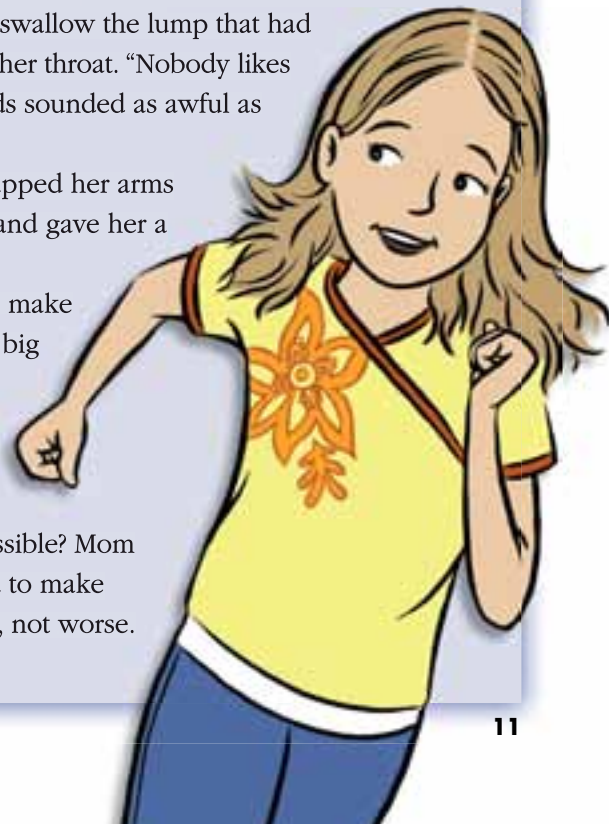
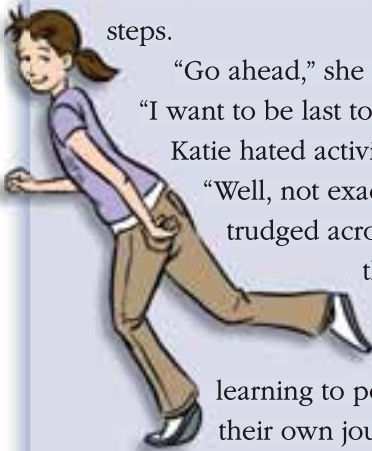
"What have they done?"

"Nothing—that's just it," Katie said, trying to swallow the lump that had swelled up in her throat. "Nobody likes me." The words sounded as awful as she felt.

Mother wrapped her arms around Katie and gave her a big hug.

"It's hard to make friends with a big group. In fact, I'd say it's impossible."

Katie gulped. Impossible? Mom was supposed to make her feel better, not worse.



“Then I’m definitely not going anymore,” she said.

“Impossible with a *group*,” Mother said. “But you could make friends with an individual. That’s one of the things I love about the gospel. Heavenly Father knows and loves each one of us individually—not just as a big group. Can you think of one girl you’d like to get to know better?”

Katie thought for a moment. There was Alyssa, Jessie, Whitney, Natalie, Hayley . . .

Katie stopped. Hayley. She hadn’t really thought of Hayley before. Hayley always came to activity days. She just wasn’t as loud as the other girls. “What about Hayley?”

Katie asked.

“Why don’t you give her a call and invite her to play tomorrow?”

The next day Hayley arrived just as they’d planned. Katie showed Hayley her guinea pig and let her hold him in her lap. Hayley laughed at the funny whistling noises he made and the way he nibbled at her clothes. Katie found out that Hayley had a lot of pets—a rabbit, two dogs, and four cats!

They spent the rest of the afternoon jumping on the trampoline and making up stories with Katie’s dolls.



Katie never knew that Hayley was such a good storyteller. They both had fun creating the latest doll fashions out of scraps of fabric they got from Katie’s mother.

Two hours seemed more like two minutes. Before they knew it, Hayley’s mom was picking her up.

On the next activity day, Katie raced her brother to their door and joined the girls who had already arrived. Katie and Hayley exchanged grins and began talking about all the things they’d done.

“OK, girls,” Katie’s mother announced. “Time to gather around the table.”

“Let’s sit over there, Hayley,” Katie said, pointing at the chairs on the other side of the table. Everyone was laughing and talking. It was fun to have a friend at activity day. Maybe Hayley *and* Natalie could come over next week. ●



“Every boy or girl longs for friends. No one wishes to walk alone.”³

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008)