

# SODA POP!



By Gian M. Rosborough

(Based on a true story)

"Kindness begins with me" (Children's Songbook, 145).

Have a soda, *Marco*," Mike said.

I looked up, surprised. I was pretty sure he said my name funny on purpose, but it was nice of him to give me a soda. My family had just moved to the United States from Italy, and it was my first day at my new school. It had been OK, but I was glad to be on the bus going home.

"Shake it first," Mike said. "It makes it taste better." The boys sitting next to him giggled.

I wasn't sure what was so funny about opening a can of soda. In Italy I had always drunk soda from a bottle. But things were different here. So I shook the can.

"Harder!" the boys yelled. I shook the can harder.

Then I lifted the tab.

*Pffsssst!*

Orange soda squirted all over! Everyone screamed as the soda shot into the air, hit the ceiling, and rained down on the seats around me. The bus driver slammed on the brakes. I couldn't understand what he said as he marched toward me, but his face said I was in trouble. All I could do was hold up my dripping can of soda and point to the boys laughing at me. The driver yelled at them instead. Mike glared at me, and I sunk even lower in my seat.

Finally the driver sat back down and started driving. At last we reached my stop. I hurried off the bus, embarrassed and sticky. Soda trickled down my forehead as I ran up to our apartment. This had been a rotten first day.

"Why do kids have to be so mean?" I asked my mom as I wiped sticky orange soda off my bag. Mamma helped me dry off my wet books on the balcony.

"Usually it's because they've been hurt."

"But I didn't do anything to them," I said.

"When someone is mean to you, it's easy to feel like being mean to others," Mamma said. "It's called a vicious cycle."

"But I wasn't the one being mean."

"Maybe other people have been mean to those boys, and they decided to be mean too. But you can choose the right even if someone does something mean to you. You can start a good cycle."

A few weeks later, my brother Tony had a birthday party with cake, ice cream, and soda. When my brother reached for his can of soda, I knew just the funny trick to play on him. "Shake it!" I said.

Tony shook his soda. "Now what?" he asked.

I was just about to tell him to open it. But then I pictured Tony and his birthday cake both covered in sticky soda. The

trick didn't seem so funny anymore. It hadn't even been funny the first time.

"Don't open it!" I said. "It will spray all over you." I handed him a new can. I didn't want to ruin his day.

Tony smiled as he opened the new can of soda. Then he cut a piece of cake and handed it to me.

*This is a better cycle to start*, I thought as I ate my cake. ♦

The author lives in Utah, USA.



*My brother picked up the can.  
I knew just the trick to play.*



"Being meek does not mean weakness, but it does mean behaving with goodness and kindness."

Elder Ulisses Soares of the Quorum of the Seventy

"Be Meek and Lowly of Heart," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 9.