

By Hilary Watkins Lemon
(Based on a true story)



“Jesus walked away from none. He gave his love to everyone” (Children’s Songbook, 141)

As soon as sacrament meeting ended, I headed straight for my Sunday School class. I couldn’t wait to see the guys.

Matt, Tom, Brendan, and I had been friends since before I could remember. We liked the same sports teams, music, clothes, and food. That was why our Sunday School class was so fun. We stuck together—we always had.

As we settled into our seats, our teachers, Brother and Sister Weston, came in. Before he sat down, Brother Weston asked, “Did you boys know someone is missing from our class?”

“No way,” I said. “We’re all here!”

“It’s great that you four always come to Sunday School,” Sister Weston said. “But there is one boy on our class roll who hasn’t ever come. His dad told me he’s coming next week. We’d like your help welcoming him.”

“Great! What’s his name?” Matt asked.

“Do any of you know a boy named Ronny Saunders?”

“That kid is bad news,” Tom said. “I’ve seen him around

great. But maybe Ronny liked some of the same things we did.

“I don’t know,” Tom said. “I don’t think Ronny will let us be nice to him. He’ll probably just get mad—like I said, he’s bad news.”

“We should pray about it, like Brother Weston said,” Brendan suggested.

I nodded. “Good idea.”

The next week, I went to Sunday School. I’d prayed about Ronny joining our class. I knew no matter how he acted, I should be kind and welcoming. I waved at my friends, who smiled back nervously.

I’d barely sat down when Brother Weston said, “Boys, meet your new classmate.”

Ronny stood frowning in the doorway. His dark hair fell over his face. His gray pants were closed at the waist with a safety pin. The buttons on his shirt pulled apart, and his black plastic jacket was torn at the shoulder.

I braced myself. “Welcome to Sunday School,” I squeaked, hoping he wasn’t going to beat me up for it.

To my surprise, Ronny’s frown disappeared. He gave a

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my school. He gets into fights all the time.”

The room was quiet. Ronny didn’t sound like someone who’d fit into our Sunday School class.

“Well, even if that’s true,” Sister Weston said, “he still deserves the blessings from coming to Sunday School. I want all of you to think of something you can do to welcome Ronny next week.”

Nobody said anything.

“Just think about it,” Brother Weston said. “Pray about it too.”

After church my friends and I hung around to talk about welcoming Ronny.

“We can at least be nice to him,” I said. It was hard to imagine someone else in our class. We already got along

small smile. “Thanks,” he muttered.

Tom shocked everyone by walking up to Ronny and giving him a huge bear hug. Ronny was the most surprised of all, but his smile grew even bigger.

“Hey, Ronny,” Matt said. “Sit next to me.” He offered the empty chair next to him.

Ronny didn’t seem like bad news at all. Brendan gave the opening prayer, and Brother Weston started our lesson. Our classroom felt better than ever. Ronny was going to fit right in. ♦

The author lives in Texas, USA.



“If people you do not know walk into one of your meetings, greet them warmly and invite them to sit with you.”

Bishop Gérald Caussé, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

“Ye Are No More Strangers,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 51.