

A FRIEND like

“Be ye kind
one to another”
(*Ephesians 4:32*).

Josh carefully colored in the last black spot on his white T-shirt. Normally he’d be grounded for a million years for coloring on his clothes. But Mom said it was OK this time. Josh was going to a Primary activity, and all the kids were supposed to dress up like their favorite book or movie character. Josh was going as Dex the Dalmatian, the mystery-solving dog!

After Mom dropped Josh off, he spotted Robbie and Nate from his Primary class. Robbie looked like a pirate, and Nate was some kind of superhero.

“What are you supposed to be?” Robbie asked when Josh came closer.

“I’m Dex from *Sticky Ricky*.”

Robbie and Nate laughed. “That show is so lame!” Robbie said.

Josh felt his face go red. “Well, who did you guys dress up as?”

“Can’t you tell?” Robbie asked. “I’m Percy, from *The Pirate’s Revenge*.”

“And I’m Captain Scorpio,” said Nate. “You seriously haven’t seen those movies? Everybody has!”

Josh looked down. “I guess my family watches different kinds of shows.”

Just then Sister McCarthy called everyone to get in a circle for a game. Josh made sure he was far away from Robbie and Nate.



The next week, Josh played basketball with some other boys from Primary. He tried his best, but he wasn’t very good at it. He couldn’t bounce the ball right or make a basket. The other boys laughed when he couldn’t throw the ball very high.

Josh ran home, trying not to cry. *I’m not doing that ever*

again! I don’t even like sports! he thought. *And I’m not going to any more Primary activities, either. I just don’t fit in.* When Josh got home, he played the piano to calm himself down. Then he read his favorite book until he felt better.

A few weeks later, a boy named Mark moved into Josh’s ward. Josh could tell right away that he was cool and popular and good at sports. Would he make fun of Josh like the other boys did?

But he was actually really nice! Mark sat by Josh and talked with him about a book he was reading. A few days later he invited Josh to play basketball.

Josh didn’t really want to play basketball. It had been pretty awful last time. But maybe with Mark there it would be better. He decided to give it another chance.

The first time Josh tried to shoot the ball, it didn’t get very far. It dropped to the ground and bounced away. Josh froze, waiting for Mark to laugh at him. But instead, Mark just grabbed the ball and smiled.

“Hey, good try!” Mark passed the ball back to Josh. “Try again.”

Later, during a game, Mark kept passing the ball to Josh. Their team lost, but Mark didn’t seem mad about it.

MARK

By Jason Lyle Black
(Based on a true story)

"Great game!" he said with a smile. "If you want, we could stay and practice for a little while." Mark taught Josh how to hold the ball when he was shooting and how to aim for the basket. After a little while, Josh made a basket!

"Awesome!" Mark gave Josh a high five.

"Thanks for helping me," said Josh.

"It was fun! See you tomorrow?"

"OK!"

As Josh walked home, he couldn't stop smiling. He was glad to have a friend like Mark. And maybe one day, he could be a friend like Mark to someone else. ●

The author lives in Utah, USA.



One day I noticed a new girl at school. Her name was Huda. She came from Iraq and spoke no English, and she seemed nice. I talked to her at lunch (well, I tried to). After that, we became friends. The girls I had started being friends with basically ignored me after that because they were uncomfortable talking to Huda. Even though I lost my friendship with them, I found a better friend.

Katie L., age 11, Mississippi, USA