



Good Neighbors

By Darlene Young

(Based on a true story)

Love one another as Jesus loves you. Try to show kindness in all that you do (Children's Songbook, 78–79).

All summer long, before her family moved into their new house, Sadie had wondered about her new neighbors. She had imagined a girl her age who loved to climb trees. But soon after they moved in, Sadie learned that there was no little girl next door. Just the Ludwigs.

Early that fall a big snowstorm came. Sadie and her sister bundled up and went outside. After playing in the snow for a while, Sadie noticed that no one had walked in the snow in the Ludwigs' yard. Wouldn't it be nice to make a snow angel in that clean snow?

That afternoon, the phone rang. Mom came into Sadie's room. "Sadie, did you play in the Ludwigs' snow this morning?"

"Yes," she said softly.

"Sadie, Mr. Ludwig is from a country where children must never play in someone else's yard without permission. He is very angry at the mess you made."

"I didn't mean to be naughty," Sadie said.

"I know you didn't," Mom said. "But we need to think about how other people might feel about the things we do."

"The girls at school say that everyone hates the Ludwigs because they are so mean," Sadie said. "They say that Mr. Ludwig yells at everyone."

"Well, if that's how people talk about them, it sounds as if the Ludwigs need some kindness," Mom said. "And it seems to me that we could show them some."

Mom and Sadie made cookies and took them next door. Sadie tried to be brave, but Mr. Ludwig was frowning.

"I'm sorry for making a mess of your snow," Sadie said. "I won't do it again."

"Make sure you don't," Mr. Ludwig said. Then he slammed the door.

"At least he took the cookies," Mom said.

As Christmas drew near, the girls got excited about their tradition of leaving a small treat or gift on someone's doorstep the 12 days before Christmas.

"Have you girls thought of someone who might appreciate some kindness?" Dad asked. "Someone who might need some extra cheer?"

Sadie thought of the Ludwigs. Probably no one would give them anything because Mr. Ludwig was so mean.

"What about the Ludwigs?" Sadie asked slowly.

"I think that's a great idea," Dad said.

Every night the girls took turns ringing the doorbell and hiding while Mr. Ludwig opened the door and took the treat inside. He answered the door more quickly each night. Sometimes Sadie was sure she saw him peeking out between the curtains when she was sneaking up his sidewalk.

On Christmas Eve, the doorbell rang. Dad opened the door and there stood Mr. Ludwig holding a large box.

"I am so grateful for your Christmas treats," he said. "My wife is sick and doesn't get out of bed. But I have told her about you. She likes to sew, and she made some things for you. Have a good Christmas." Mr. Ludwig set down the box and left.

The girls gathered around as Dad opened the box. It was filled with colorful packages. Mom unwrapped towels and napkins with lace around the edges. Then she pulled out a package for each of the girls. They opened them to find beautiful handmade dolls.

"I didn't know Mrs. Ludwig was sick in bed," Sadie said. "I didn't know she was making dolls for us."

"Neither did I," Mom said. "But we knew they needed some kindness." ♦

"If we are truly disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, we will reach out with love and understanding to all of our neighbors at all times, particularly in times of need."

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

