

# Something **NICE** for **MEAN** Mr. Gates



How would  
Jesus treat mean  
Mr. Gates?

**By Wendy Whitmore Niceler and David Dickson**

(Based on a true story)

*“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you” (Matthew 5:44).*

**M**ichael ran straight toward the huge maple tree. He needed to work up a little speed if he wanted to reach the bottom branch.

*Step . . . step . . . jump! GRAB!*

His fingers curled around the branch. Michael swung his legs up to hook an ankle over the limb.

Soon he was perched on the branch. *Just like a panther!* he thought with a smile. This was the perfect hide-and-seek spot! Why hadn't he used it before?

“Ready or not, here I come!” his friend William yelled from down the street.

Michael grinned again. William wouldn't find him

for a long time.

“HEY!” a voice yelled. “Get out of my tree!”

Michael jumped and nearly fell out of the tree. He looked down. His stomach flip-flopped when he saw Mr. Gates. He was holding a rake and hurrying toward the tree.

“I'm sorry!” Michael said, scrambling down as fast as he could. The rough bark scraped his arms.

“STAY OFF my property!” Mr. Gates shouted.

Michael dropped and hit the ground hard. He didn't stop running until he got home.

The next day, as Sister Stiles was giving the Primary lesson, Michael couldn't stop thinking about mean Mr. Gates. He was the grumpiest person Michael knew.



Michael leaned back in his chair and sighed.

Suddenly something Sister Stiles was saying caught Michael's attention.

"We can usually love people who are nice to us," she said. "But Jesus was kind even to those who hated Him."

Michael let the front legs of his chair drop back down on the floor. Did that mean Jesus would be nice even to Mr. Gates?

Yes, *He would*, Michael thought. Suddenly he had an idea. He couldn't wait to tell his family.

"You want to do *what*!?" his sister Molly asked after they got home.

"I want to make some cookies and take them to Mr. Gates," Michael said.

His sister Wendy looked at him like he'd said he wanted to eat worms for dinner. "Why? He'll just chase you away!"

"We're supposed to be nice to people," Michael said. "Even the ones who are mean."

Even Mom and Dad looked a little unsure. "Well, yes," Mom said. "But Mr. Gates might not like the gift, just to warn you."

Michael still knew it was a good idea. All week he kept asking his family to help him make cookies. But nobody did. Finally, on Sunday, Michael was done waiting. He was going to figure out how to make cookies, all by himself, and deliver them *today*!

"Hold on," Wendy said when she saw him getting out the chocolate chips. "I'll help. But I still say it's a bad idea."

After the cookies came out of the oven, Dad offered to go with him to deliver them.

Michael was excited. He was doing what Jesus would do! As they walked under the big maple tree, though, Michael started feeling nervous. Maybe he should just forget the whole thing.

No, he decided. *This is what Jesus would do*. Michael stepped up to the door and knocked.

As the door opened, Michael quickly said, "Hello, sir. I made these for you." He held out the cookies. Mr. Gates looked down at them. Then at Michael. And then his whole face lit up.

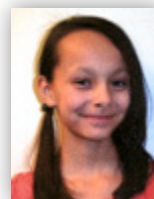
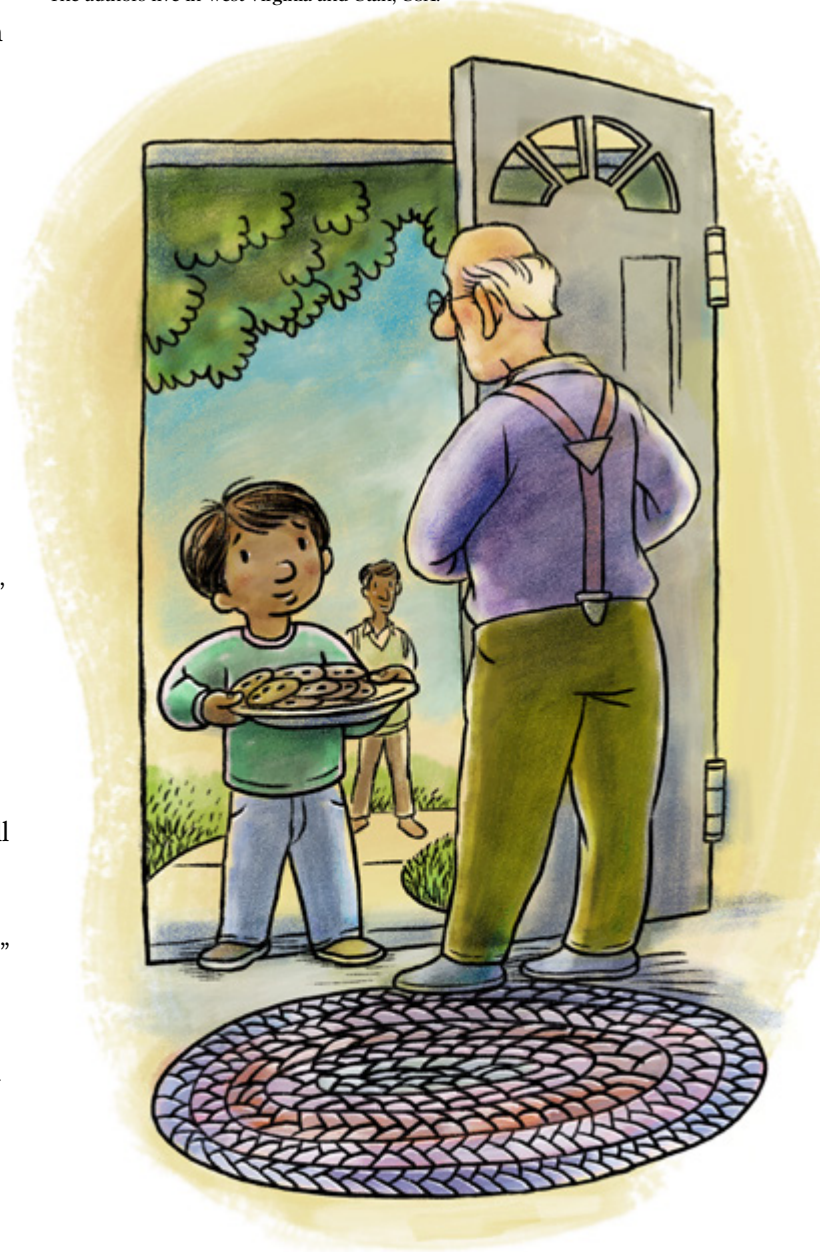
Michael almost fell over. Mr. Gates could smile?

"Well, thank you, young man!" he said. "But tell me

. . . how on earth did you know that today is my 80th birthday?"

Michael smiled back at Mr. Gates. He thought Jesus would have smiled too. ●

The authors live in West Virginia and Utah, USA.



I told my music teacher she was amazing, and she was so happy for the rest of the day!

**Paige T., age 11, Colorado, USA**