

By Heidi Poelman

(Based on a true story)

If you want a friend, you must show that you care
(*Children's Songbook*, 262).

Come on, Sarah!" Kim called as she ran up the stairs. "I want to show you the new books I got for my birthday!"

"I can't wait!" Sarah said, following close behind.

The girls sat on the bed in Kim's room and pulled out the books. "You'll love this one," Kim said, passing Sarah a book with a dragon and a beautiful princess on the cover.

The girls read stories together until Kim's mom said it was homework time. The girls agreed that the fun always seemed to end too soon.

The next day at school, Sarah and Kim sat down in the cafeteria for lunch. They were talking about Kim's new books when three boys from the next grade walked by. One of them said something about Sarah's glasses and laughed. Everyone around them laughed too. Sarah's cheeks flushed pink. She looked over and saw Kim laughing too.

"Why are you laughing?" Sarah whispered, looking at Kim in surprise.

"Oh, they're just teasing," Kim said. "Don't worry about it."

On the way home from school, Sarah and Kim walked together as usual. But Sarah kept her head down.

"What's the matter?" Kim asked.

"Well," Sarah said, hesitating, "I don't understand why, when it's just us, you're such a good friend. But at school, when that boy said those mean things, you laughed."

"I didn't really think it was funny," Kim said. "I just laughed because everyone else was laughing."

The girls finished their walk home in silence. Kim didn't understand why Sarah was so upset.

Later that night, Kim thought of Sarah. She tried to imagine the kids at school laughing at her the way they had laughed at Sarah. Maybe they would laugh at her hair one day, or maybe they would laugh at the shirt she was wearing. Having Sarah laugh with them wouldn't feel so good.

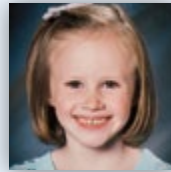
true friends



The next morning, Kim waited outside for Sarah. When Sarah came out of her house, Kim waved. "Hey, Sarah!" she said. "I'm sorry I laughed yesterday. I should have been a better friend. I won't do that again, I promise."

Sarah smiled. "Thanks," she said.

At lunch, the girls were sitting together again when the boy who had teased Sarah walked over. He said the same thing and laughed again. This time, instead of laughing, Kim looked at him and said, "I think Sarah



One day a girl in my class started teasing my friend. I was scared to tell the girl to stop teasing, so I prayed that she would stop. The next day I told my friend that I would ask the girl to stop teasing her. My friend said that the girl had stopped and now wanted to be friends with us. I'm glad I can help my friends.

Carly H., age 7, Colorado

looks great in her glasses. I might even get a pair myself."

The boy looked around. No one else was laughing with him this time, so he walked away.

Sarah smiled at Kim. "Thanks for doing that," she said. "You really are a true friend." ♦

stay true

