

# THE WORTH OF SOLES



**By David Dickson**

Church Magazines  
(Based on a true story)

*“Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God”  
(D&C 18:10).*

**B**en stood with his friends after school in the hot sun as they waited for the bus home. He wished for the thousandth time that there was some shade at the bus stop!

“Hey, here comes Frankie,” one of his friends said. Frankie was part of their group.

“Dude, your shoes are so old they must’ve been made out of dinosaur skin!” Vince said once Frankie got closer. Ben laughed at the joke as he glanced down at Frankie’s feet. Yup, his friend had on the same pair of tennis shoes he’d worn all school year. It was almost summer vacation. By now, the ratty shoes had holes in them and were falling apart.

They liked to give him a hard time about it, but Frankie always laughed it off.

Sure enough, Frankie was chuckling along with everybody else. But then Ben noticed something he hadn’t seen before. Frankie’s smile seemed different somehow. Like he was trying to cover up that he really *was* upset.

Something cold turned in Ben’s stomach.

His friends teased Frankie about the old shoes until the bus rolled up. This time, though, Ben didn’t laugh with them. He couldn’t help but feel like they’d hurt Frankie’s feelings.





As Ben plopped down onto the hot green vinyl seat of the school bus, he kept remembering the look on Frankie's face from a few minutes earlier. Frankie walked to the back of the bus and chose a seat by himself.

Ben looked down at his lap. Had they gone too far? He knew Frankie's family didn't have a lot of money. In fact, now he wondered if those old scuffed shoes were his only pair besides church shoes.

Even though Ben had snagged a window seat on the bus, he couldn't enjoy the ride home.

The next day Ben's bad feeling grew worse. He thought about how he would feel if his friends made fun of what *he* wore. How often had they done that to Frankie?

And then he saw his friend at school. Ben's eyes widened. Frankie was wearing new shoes! Not just new shoes, but cool new shoes. Ben felt another stab of guilt as he wondered if Frankie's family could afford them.

At recess he grabbed a basketball and went over to shoot some hoops with Frankie. "So, where'd you buy those shoes?" Ben asked. "They're awesome!"

Frankie shook his head and said quietly, "I didn't. DJ bought them for me."

Ben nearly dropped the basketball. DJ was one of

the kids they hung out with at school. A kid who, now that Ben thought about it, never teased Frankie.

While the rest of them had made fun of Frankie, DJ did something nice instead.

*I'm supposed to be Frankie's friend*, Ben thought. *Why hadn't I been nice too?*

Ben cleared his throat and stopped bouncing the ball. "Hey. So, um, I'm really sorry about yesterday. You know. At the bus stop. That wasn't nice of us."

Frankie just shrugged. "It's OK."

"Hey, wanna play a game of one-on-one?" He passed the ball to Frankie. "You can start!"

Frankie's face lit up in a smile, and Ben knew how he wanted to act from then on. He wanted to help make his friends happy every chance he could. ◆



In third grade, most kids don't like a boy in my class named Isaiah. He has autism and has a hard time learning and speaking. So I help him by saying positive things to him and playing with him at recess. Now my friends want to help too. So we made up a game called

Run and Seek. This makes him happy!

**Eden W., age 9, Tennessee, USA**