

CHEATING LESSON

BY BRITNEY RULE (Based on a true story)

Let no man deceive himself (1 Corinthians 3:18).

tudents, here is the math portion of the test," Miss Higgins said as she handed out papers. "Remember, you need to fill in the circles on the answer sheet completely. Just do your best, and I'm sure you will do fine."

Most of my fifth-grade class groaned. We had been taking tests all day, and we were tired. But I wasn't too worried. I was good at math. I took out my pencil and checked the eraser.

"Now, keep your eyes on your own paper," Miss Higgins said. "The test will end at 1:30. Ready, begin."

I began working on the problems carefully and took my time to fill in each circle on the answer sheet. Most of the problems weren't too hard. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Brent scribbling furiously. I laughed to myself. "Slow and steady wins the race," I thought.

All of a sudden, Miss Higgins's voice interrupted my thoughts. "Time's up! Pencils down, everybody."

I looked at my paper in horror. I still had two columns of circles to fill in! "How could this have happened?" I thought. "I usually do so well!"

I looked down at my scratch paper. I had written the next answer, but I hadn't filled in the circle yet. I glanced around, then carefully filled in the correct circle.

Trying not to think about what I was doing, I continued working on problems and filling in answers. No one was looking at me. I quickly filled in five or six more circles.

"Lauren!" said a loud voice from behind me.

I jumped and whirled around to see Miss Higgins. The class was silent. I wished I could fall into a hole. I felt my eyes filling up with tears. I quickly erased all the answers that I had filled in after the time was up and handed my answer sheet to Miss Higgins. She took it away, and I put my head on my desk and hid my face in my arms.

I had been cheating! An awful blackness filled me up inside. My whole class had seen me, and now my teacher probably wouldn't trust me ever again. I knew I was supposed to be honest. Instead, I had disappointed my teacher, myself, and, worst of all, Heavenly Father. And I had pushed away my conscience without really thinking about it.

The rest of the day continued as usual—or, at least I think it did. I didn't answer any questions or talk to my friends. That same heavy, dark feeling stayed with me. I knew I needed to repent.

After class, I gathered all my courage to apologize to Miss Higgins. I could see the disappointment on her face. "I'm sorry," I said. I couldn't say anything more. I ran back to my desk, grabbed my backpack, and started to hurry out the door.

"Lauren," Miss Higgins called.

I stopped, fearing the worst. "Yes?"

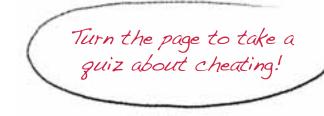
"Promise me you will never cheat again."

"Oh, I promise!" I said. I had already made that

promise to myself a hundred times that day.

"Good," she said. "Thank you."

The dark feeling began to leave. After class I said a prayer, asking Heavenly Father's forgiveness and thanking Him for a kind teacher. Peace filled my heart. It felt good to be clean again.



IS IT CHEATING IF I ...?

You know that copying someone's answers or sneaking notes into a test is cheating. But sometimes it's hard to know what counts as cheating. Take this quiz to find out some do's and don'ts of cheating.

1. You haven't thought of anything to do for your science project yet. You overhear Alyssa telling someone about her project, and it sounds really cool! You only have a few days before it's due. So you ...

- A. Use Alyssa's idea.
- B. Keep trying to think of your own project idea.

2. You need to write a book report for English class. You've read the book, but now you just can't seem to get your report started. You search the Internet for ideas and find some reviews of the book you read.

A. Copy a review from the Internet. Your So you ... teacher will never know, and besides, you did read the book.

B. Get off the Internet and back to writing.

3. Your friend Matt didn't finish his math homework. He asks if he can copy the last 10 problems from your paper. So you ...

A. Let him copy your paper. He's your friend, and you don't want him to think you're a "goody-goody." Besides, it's not like he's copying the whole assignment. It's more like sharing.

B. Don't let him copy your homework.

4. On your history test you leave the fourth question blank because you can't remember the answer. As your teacher collects the tests, you see Sean's answer to number four. You realize that you really did know the answer. So you ...

A. Quickly write down the answer on your test. You knew the answer anyway. B. Leave the question blank and turn in your test.

What Do You Say?

Sometimes it's hard when classmates ask if they can copy your answers, especially if they're your friends. But copying is cheating. You need to say no. It might be hard if someone gets mad or makes fun of you, but you will know you're doing the right thing. If someone asks you a question during a test, you need to ignore him or her. If your teacher sees you talking—even if you're saying no—he might think you are cheating too. Keep up the honesty, and your classmates will eventually stop asking you to cheat.

3. B. Don't let him copy your homework. Matt's your friend, and you don't want him to get mad at you. But letting him copy your homework isn't sharing. It's cheating, whether it's one answer or ten. Tell him you're sorry, but don't let him bully you into letting him copy.

4. B. Leave the question blank and turn in your test. It might be tempting to write down the

answer, but that would be cheating because you saw the answer and the test was already over. Sometimes people forget things during tests because they're nervous. Take a few deep breaths before you start, and don't let yourself get distracted.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MARYN ROOS



Answers

1. B. Keep trying to think of your own project idea. Sometimes cheating isn't just copying someone's paper. Taking someone else's idea and turning it in as your own is cheating. If you like Alyssa's ideas, maybe you can work together on another project.

2. B. Get off the Internet and back to writing.

You'd be surprised to know how many teachers search the Internet to make sure their students haven't copied anything. Using someone else's words and putting your name on them is cheating. Having trouble writing? Make a list of what you liked and didn't like about the book, then start with one of those ideas. Or take a break, do some jumping jacks, or listen to music for a few minutes.