

Cleaning Up

By Elyssa J. Kirkham

(Based on a true story)

Help me, dear Father, to truly repent, making things right, and changing my ways (Children's Songbook, 99).

Gabi and her friend Milo were playing in the dirt in her yard.

"Hey, look at this," Milo said. He had what looked like a rock in his hand, but when he squished it, it turned into powdery dirt.

"Whoa!" Gabi said. "Are there more of those?"

They dug through the dirt and found several more clods.

"Watch this," Gabi said, and she threw a dirt clod high up in the air. It sailed over the chain link fence and landed on the neighbor's driveway, breaking in a big smear of dust.

"Awesome!" Milo said, and they took turns throwing the clods and watching them explode.

Suddenly Gabi heard a car driving up.

"Oh no," she said. "Someone's coming. Hide!"

They ducked around the edge of Gabi's house just as the car pulled over the driveway and into the garage. They giggled nervously. They heard the car door open and shut.

"Who threw dirt in my driveway?" they heard a voice say. Gabi knew that must be Mrs. Fietzer, her elderly neighbor. "How am I going to clean this up?"

Milo laughed quietly, but Gabi didn't feel like laughing.

After Milo went home, Gabi went inside and tried to play

with her dolls, but she couldn't get Mrs. Fietzer's sad voice out of her head. Mrs. Fietzer lived alone, and old age made it hard for her to do many things, including cleaning up her driveway.

Gabi hadn't meant to be rude to Mrs. Fietzer, but now she realized that throwing the dirt had been mean. She felt sad and sorry for what she had done.

Then Gabi remembered a lesson she had had in Primary about repentance.

"When you do something wrong," her teacher had said, "you need to first feel sorry about it. Then you apologize and ask for forgiveness and make it better if you can. Then you promise not to make the mistake again."

I can make this right! Gabi thought.

Gabi went to the garage and grabbed a big push broom. Then she got to work sweeping the dirt off the driveway. It took a long time, but finally the driveway was clean again.



Dirt Clods

Then Gabi rang Mrs. Fietzer's doorbell. When Mrs. Fietzer opened the door, she seemed surprised to see Gabi.

"Well, hello there," she said.

"Hi, Mrs. Fietzer," Gabi said. She felt scared, but she prayed for courage. "I was the one who threw dirt onto your driveway earlier today."

"Oh, was that you?" Mrs. Fietzer asked. She looked a little sad.

"But I cleaned it up!" Gabi said, lifting the broom in her hand. "I'm very sorry, Mrs. Fietzer. I promise I won't ever do it again. Will you forgive me?"

A smile spread across Mrs. Fietzer's face. "Yes, of

course I forgive you," she said. "Thank you for cleaning it up."

Gabi looked at Mrs. Fietzer's big mulberry trees and had an idea.

"Can I help you rake your leaves in the fall too?" Gabi asked.

"That's very sweet of you," Mrs. Fietzer said. "But you don't have to. You already made up for what you did."

"But I want to. Please?" Gabi asked.

Mrs. Fietzer agreed. Gabi said goodbye and skipped all the way back to her house. She was glad that when she did something wrong, she could make it right again. ♦



Once I was trading cards with my friend at his house. I saw one I loved and wished to get, but he never traded it. I was tempted to take it, so I did. But when I got home, I felt bad, so the next day I went back over to his house and told him. I gave it back and asked for forgiveness. He said he forgave me and thanked me for returning it. When I went home I felt a warm feeling, and I was happy.

Josh S., age 10, Utah, USA

Gabi couldn't get Mrs. Fietzer's sad voice out of her head.