

Andrei and the Bad Word

By Julie C. Donaldson

Based on a true story

"I'll try to repent, to do better, to pray"
(Children's Songbook, 98).

"**Y**ou think you're better than everyone else because you don't swear," Nikolai said at recess.

"That's not true," said Andrei.

"Then why won't you say one swear word? Just one? It's not going to kill you. Everybody else swears."

Andrei shrugged. "I just don't want to."

Andrei knew swearing was wrong and makes the Holy Ghost leave. Andrei wanted the Holy Ghost with him. So he didn't swear.

Andrei was new at school, and so far, Nikolai was the only one in his sixth-grade class who wanted to be his friend. But Nikolai bugged him about swearing every single day. And every day Andrei got a little more tired of saying no. Besides,

Andrei was afraid that Nikolai would stop being his friend, and then he'd really be lonely.

"Just say one swear word," Nikolai said after school. "Then I'll leave you alone."

Finally Andrei was so tired of being bothered that he

said one swear word—one that wasn't *too* bad.

Nikolai nodded. "Good, now you're one of us."

After that, Nikolai's other friends talked to Andrei too. They ate lunch with him and played football with him at recess. But





being in Nikolai's group of friends was like walking into quicksand. The more Andrei hung out with them, the more he talked and acted like them. And they all swore. A lot. They laughed at and insulted each other. They said rude things about their teachers. They got mad and acted mean a lot. Slowly Andrei started feeling angry more often and found more and more reasons to swear.

One night when Mom and Dad were gone, Andrei and his older sister Katya got into an argument about what show to watch. Before Andrei even thought about it, a swear word jumped out of his mouth.

Katya looked shocked. "I'm telling Mom."

Andrei ran to his bedroom and slammed the door. What was wrong with everyone? Why were they making him mad all the time? When his parents came home, Andrei cracked open his door and heard Katya say, "Mom, Andrei swore at me."

"What?" Mom sounded surprised. "Andrei would never swear."

Andrei closed the door and slumped down on his bed. He thought about how different he'd become since he started swearing. It had been a long time since he had felt the Holy Ghost.


Andrei knelt down by his bed and prayed. "Dear Heavenly Father, I'm so sorry I've been mean and angry. I'm sorry I started swearing. I'm going to do better."

As Andrei prayed, a warm feeling filled his heart. For the first time since he started swearing, he felt really happy. He knew God loved him, and he could feel the Holy Ghost. He felt forgiven and knew he could change and become better.

After his prayer, he told Mom the truth and apologized to Katya. Andrei felt better after that. It felt good to repent.

The next day at school, Andrei didn't eat lunch with Nikolai's group. Instead he sat next to some kids he didn't know. It would take time, but Andrei knew he would find friends who were good and happy and didn't swear. Just like him. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



CHALLENGE

"I will use the names of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ reverently. I will not swear or use crude words" (My Gospel Standards).

On one side of a piece of paper, write or draw how good words make you feel. On the other, write or draw how bad words make you feel.

Read Leviticus 19:12. Why is it important to use the names of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ with respect?

Ask a parent or leader why we should use good language and how it has blessed them.

I challenge myself to . . .

