

“But Mom and Dad say it’s OK,” Ava said. “And we’ve been playing it forever!”

By Margo Mae

(Based on a true story)

“Every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ” (Moroni 7:16).

The word *winner* flashed across the TV screen. Ava had lost. Again.

Ava frowned at her brother Skyler and hit the start button on her video game controller. “Let’s play again.”

The game quickly started a new level. This time they were in an abandoned warehouse. Bad guys would be hiding everywhere. Ava shivered with delight and gripped her controller tightly.

But Skyler set his controller down. “I’m done playing,” he said.

Ava tried to hand his controller back. “You’re just saying that because you won,” she said. “Come on. One more level.”

Skyler shook his head. “I don’t think we should play it anymore.”

Ava watched Skyler pull the game from the console. Her mouth dropped open in shock. “Ever?”

Skyler shrugged. “It doesn’t make me feel good when I play it.”

“But Mom and Dad say it’s OK!” Ava said. “And we’ve been playing it forever!”

“I think we should get rid of it so we don’t play it again.”



Ava grabbed the game from him. “You can’t decide for the rest of us!” she said. “It has to be fair!” She turned to the couch where their little sister Betsy sat watching. “Betsy, what do you think?”

“It’s kind of scary,” she said.

Ava couldn’t believe Betsy was choosing Skyler’s side.

Skyler gently took the game from her hand. “OK, I’ll just hide it for a while,” he said. “We have lots of good games to play instead. Maybe we won’t even miss it.”

Ava just glared and watched him put the game into his pocket.

The next day Ava went to the family room to play the game. Then she remembered. Skyler had hidden it. *I’ll just find it then*, Ava thought. She checked under Skyler’s bed. She checked between the couch cushions. She even checked the chicken coop!

But weeks went by and the game was still missing. Skyler had hidden it really well. Some days, Ava completely forgot about the game.

One afternoon it was Ava’s turn to do laundry. She opened Skyler’s dresser drawer and started putting his clothes away.

Something poked out at the back of a drawer. It didn’t look like clothes. Ava slowly pulled it out.

It was the game! It had been here the whole time! Ava grinned. She couldn’t wait to play it again. She was sure Skyler would play it too once he remembered how fun it was.

Except . . . it was a little scary, like Betsy had said. Suddenly Ava wasn’t so sure. It *was* more violent than their other games—even if Mom and Dad hadn’t noticed.



Skyler said it didn’t make him feel good. Ava thought about it. Maybe he was right. Sometimes after playing the game, she would argue with Betsy more or be angry at Skyler for winning. She hadn’t felt good either. She just hadn’t noticed until now. Ava put the game back in the drawer and set a stack of shirts on top.

“Ava!” Skyler called. He leaned into the room, smiling. “Dad says we can’t beat him at basketball. Want to prove him wrong?”

Ava glanced down at the drawer. She thought a moment. The video game was fun. But it didn’t make her or her siblings feel good.

Ava smiled. “Yeah!” she said. She closed the drawer, and the two raced out of the bedroom, leaving the game behind. ◆

The author lives in California, USA.



I checked out a library book that I had a feeling I shouldn’t read. I started reading anyway, and soon the main character took the Lord’s name in vain. I decided I would stop reading. I was sad I wouldn’t get to the end of the book, but I had a good feeling that I was doing the right thing!

Miranda J., age 9, Oklahoma, USA

Watching movies or playing games that make you feel bad ...

... is like eating worms just because they’re there!

