

Game Changer



Last year on the first day of school, I met a new student. He made friends with boys who didn't have good standards. They swore and sometimes made fun of other people. After a few weeks, I joined their group.

My mom started to notice some changes in my attitude. I got into trouble with these boys, who I thought were my friends. My mom spent months telling me that if I wanted to make better choices, I needed to switch my friends. But I didn't believe my mom. I got into a fist fight once. I didn't feel very happy. I felt frustrated sometimes.

Fast forward four months. . . . One afternoon I read a story

from the *Friend* called "Game Changer" (April 2017). When my mom and I were done reading the story, I felt in my heart that I needed to change friends or I would continue to have a bad last two months in school.

The next day I went to school and decided to sit away from my friends. I sat beside a girl named Olivia. We

By Melissa Puente
(Based on a true story)

"OK, may I always listen to that still small voice. And with His light I'll do what's right each time I make a choice!" (Children's Songbook, 1:05)

Caleb rolled over in bed and sighed. He thought about his favorite online game. That castle he built yesterday was awesome—if I ever get the chance to finish it! But I can't keep playing when everyone's using bad words. Maybe Henry and their other friends were playing online together right now.

Just then Mom knocked on his door and saw Caleb still in bed. "Why aren't you getting ready for church?" "I don't want to go," Caleb said. He turned and stared at the wall.

"Are you still thinking about the message board yesterday? I talked to Henry's mom like you asked."

"But it didn't even make a difference."

"I'm sorry about the game," Mom said. "For now, can you get ready so we're not late?"

"I'm tired of feeling different!" said Caleb. "I just want to do what my friends are doing. They're not going to church today."

Mom nodded. "Sometimes choosing the right is lonely, but that's one reason we go to church."

"To feel lonely?"

"No, to feel the Holy Ghost. When we feel lonely, the Holy Ghost can comfort us."

Caleb didn't say anything. But why am I the only one who has to make good choices? he thought. No one else stopped playing when they saw the bad words.

"Can we talk about this more after church?" Mom asked.

"OK!" Caleb slowly got dressed and grabbed his scriptures.

During sacrament meeting, Mom asked Caleb how he was feeling.

"Bored. I want to go home."

Mom put her arm around Caleb. "Are you listening to the talk? This is a good one."

Caleb looked up. Bishop Marsh was talking about commandments. Caleb started listening. After a while, a peaceful feeling started to push out his grumpy feelings. He kept listening. The feeling grew stronger until it seemed to fill him all the way up.

"How are you feeling now?" Mom whispered.

"Pretty good."

In Primary they talked about how the Holy Ghost can guide and direct us. When Caleb came home, he felt like everything would be OK. He was actually glad he'd gone to church.

On Wednesday, Caleb was doing his homework in the kitchen. Mom came and sat by him.

"By the way," she said, "Henry's mom found out who was using the bad words and asked him to stop. It starts monitoring the message board, and everyone's using better language."

Caleb nodded and twirled his pencil. "Well, Henry and I decided we were getting too addicted to the game, so we're taking a break. It's nice to not always be thinking about it. But I'm glad the guys are using good language."

"Sounds like you helped your friends make better choices," Mom said. "Remember how you said you felt different from your friends? Well, there's something that does make you different, but in a good way. Do you know what it is?"

Caleb thought. "I have the gift of the Holy Ghost?"

"That's right," Mom said. "The Holy Ghost helps you notice and avoid things that can hurt your spirit. I think He also prompted you to leave me talk to Henry's mom. Sometimes you'll be the only one making a good choice. But when you follow the Holy Ghost, you'll be happier in the long run."

Caleb smiled. He did like having the Holy Ghost with him—even if it meant being different.

The author lives in Connecticut, USA.

The kids on my bus are really disrespectful, and I used to always get in trouble. My older sister told me to start praying. My older brother told me to start praying full of Church songs, and now I don't dread going on the bus. I just get on the Holy Spirit and some Church magazines. I am really glad the Church can help me stay on the right path.

Samantha N., age 11, Arizona, USA

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DEAR FRIENDS

Easter is on April 7, just a month away! We hope you'll enjoy the countdown activity to help you get ready for that important day (see page 24). On page 28 you'll also find a beautiful song called "Gethsemane." As this song

Was there a story or activity this month that helped you? Tell us about it! Turn to page 39 to find out how.

reminds us, "The biggest battle that ever was won—this was done by Jesus! The fight was won by Jesus!" Please write to tell us what Easter means to you.

Love,
The Friend

started talking, and it took one day to become friends. My mom prayed that I could make a new friend easily after we read the story in the *Friend*.

From this experience in my life, I've learned that your choice of friends affects your life a lot. Making new friends is not that hard if you make them with the right people. The Holy Ghost told me in my heart that I should sit at that different table, not tomorrow or in a week, but that day. I think Heavenly Father wanted to give me a new friend so that I could change. I'm thankful that I read the article in the *Friend* with my mom that day.

Harrison C., age 9, British Columbia, Canada