



The Kindness Test

By Noelle Lambert Barrus
(Based on a true story)

This story happened in Taiwan.

Melanie ran as fast as she could across the school play yard. Three of her classmates were just a few steps ahead of her. They were almost to the line that marked the "safe area."

She stretched her arm out. She pushed her legs harder. Finally, she tagged two of them just in time!

"Got you!" Melanie said. Her friends laughed as they collapsed to the ground.

"You're fast," Jia said as she breathed in and out.

Melanie had almost tagged Jonny too. But she just missed him.

Jonny pointed at her and laughed. "Too slow!" Then he called her a name.

Melanie frowned. Jonny was mean to her a lot! She didn't like it.

After school, Melanie sat at the kitchen table. She worked on her homework with her older sister. But she couldn't stop thinking about what Jonny said.

"Liv, what do you do when someone is mean to you?" Melanie asked.

Liv looked at her. "Was someone mean to you?"

Melanie nodded. "A boy at school. He teases me all the time!"

Liv put her pencil down. "That's really hard. I'm sorry." She leaned back and folded her arms. "Maybe you could do something nice for him."

Melanie scrunched up her nose. "Something nice?" That didn't sound very fun.

"Yeah!" Liv nodded. "If you're nice to him, maybe he'll be nice back. Have you tried that?"

Melanie shook her head. She wasn't so sure about this idea. Why would she be nice to someone who was mean?



That night, Melanie said a prayer. "Heavenly Father, please bless that Jonny will be nicer to me." She paused. She thought again about what Liv said. "And please help me find a way to be nice to him too. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen."

But what nice thing could she do?

A few days later, Melanie's class went on a hike together. There were lots of big green trees and cool streams on the trail. When it was time for a break and lunch, Melanie ate with her friends.

Then she noticed Jonny sitting under a tree. He was alone. *Maybe I can share my treat with him*, she thought.

Melanie walked to Jonny and sat down. "Hi, Jonny."

Jonny looked up at her. "Hi."

"Do you want a cookie?" she asked.

She handed one of her cookies to Jonny. He took it and smiled. "Thanks."

"Did you like our hike?" she asked.

"Yeah. The bridge we crossed was awesome." He bit into the cookie. "Mmm. This is really good."

"Thanks! I made them with my mom and sister."

Melanie and Jonny finished their lunch together. They talked about a card game they both liked. Jonny was actually pretty funny. They laughed a lot. Melanie liked this much better than when he teased her.

"Do you want to play a game?" Jonny asked as they followed everyone else down the hiking trail.

Melanie nodded and smiled. "Sure!"

They took turns hopping between rocks during the rest of the hike. Melanie had a lot of fun. When the hike was over and it was time to go home, she was sad to say goodbye.

"Let's play that card game next week," Jonny said.

Melanie nodded. "OK! Bye, Jonny!"

Melanie waved goodbye and smiled. Jonny wasn't the boy who teased her anymore. Now, he was her friend. ●



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