



**Mennonite
Church
Canada**

Resource Centre

Sunday School Bullies

Children's Story

Year B, Easter 7

Title: Sunday School Bullies
Author: Charlotte Martens
Church: Charleswood Mennonite
Church, Winnipeg, MB
Text: John 17: 6-19
Theme: Jesus prays for us so we will
be like a loving, joy-filled
family.

Wondering questions:

- I wonder why Vanessa and Sandy thought it was fun to ignore Abby.
- I wonder if this kind of bullying ever happens in our Sunday school.
- I wonder how Jesus' prayer was answered in this story.

Gathering Activity:

Welcome the children as they gather together for this special story time. Remind them that this time gives them a good chance to notice the nearness of God and to remember that God delights in our worship. Open your Bible to John 17 and explain that the ideas for today's story come out of the longest prayer of Jesus that anyone wrote down. Read verse 13 of the prayer to them as a short sample of how Jesus prayed for us. Invite them to listen for ways Jesus' prayer is answered in the story.

Story:

It was a sunny Sunday morning in church. Grace saw her friends, Sandy and Vanessa, and ran over to them to say hello. They had been friends for a long time and Grace looked forward to being with them in Sunday school every week. Today, when Grace joined her friends, they whispered: "When we get into Sunday school today, we're going to ignore Abby; we won't talk to her, won't look at her, let's just pretend she isn't there. It will be fun to see what she does." With that, Sandy and Vanessa

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skipped toward the classroom. Grace just stood there with a horrible sinking feeling in the pit of her stomach.

Grace walked slowly toward the classroom. Abby was already sitting down. She hadn't been going to Sunday school very long and was a bit shy. Grace couldn't look Abby in the eye. So, she sat down and just stared at the floor. Sandy and Vanessa giggled. Before anything else could happen, the Sunday school teacher started the lesson for the day.

Sandy and Vanessa continued to ignore Abby. And, even though Grace hadn't agreed to the plan, she ignored Abby too, because she was worried her friends wouldn't like her if she didn't go along with their plan. For the rest of the morning, Grace couldn't concentrate on anything. She felt so bad for ignoring Abby.

When they got home from church, her Dad could see that something was wrong. Finally, Grace told him the whole story. And then she asked: "What do I do about next week, Dad? I feel bad for Abby but I think it would just be too hard to tell Sandy and Vanessa how I feel. They may never speak to me again." Her Dad said: "There are some verses in the Bible that might help you to solve this problem. The Bible says that Jesus prays for us so that we will be like one loving family. I think that Jesus will give you the strength you need to do the right thing." Grace didn't feel very strong, but she thought a lot about what her Dad had told her and prayed for strength. After a few days, she came up with a plan.

Next Sunday, Sandy and Vanessa were waiting for her. "Same as last week, O.K.?" said Vanessa. Grace took a deep breath and quietly said: "I won't ignore Abby, it's not right." Then she walked toward the classroom. The first thing Grace said when she got into the classroom was, "Hi, Abby." Abby smiled shyly. When it was time to work with a partner, Grace asked Abby to work with her. They ended up having a great time. Grace hardly noticed Sandy and Vanessa watching her.

When class ended, Vanessa suggested that Grace and Abby sit with her and Sandy during church. With a quiet voice, Sandy said: "We're sorry about last week, Abby, we shouldn't have ignored you." As all four girls walked into church together, Grace realized that the horrible sinking feeling in the pit of her stomach had been replaced by joy.

Prayer:

Thank you, Jesus, for helping Grace be strong and loving, and for giving her joy. Please help us behave like a loving family in our church, too, so that your joy can keep on growing in our church.