

How to make a bully a friend

By [Beverly Goldsmith](#), Christian Science [practitioner](#) and [teacher](#) in Brisbane, Australia.
Published in *My Herald* - special issue of *The Herald of Christian Science* 2000, as a comic strip.

This story is about a little boy who relied on God for protection when another boy in his class brought a knife to school. We share this true story with My Herald readers because today kids sometimes encounter difficult times at school, and we thought this might help.

Jamie liked school. He learned new things. His friends were fun to be with. And his teacher Mrs Perry was kind and gentle. All was going well. That is, until a new boy named Eric joined the class. Eric came from another school. He wasn't very friendly. He did mean things.



One day he came with a knife. He chased everyone in Jamie's class and tried to press the knife on their skin. Mrs Perry ordered him to stop. But he didn't. The next morning Jamie spoke to his mother about Eric and the knife. His mother suggested that he visit his Sunday School teacher. "She's also a Christian Science practitioner who prays with people about whatever is troubling them", she said. "You could ask her to pray with us. OK?"

That same afternoon Jamie visited the practitioner. He told her how he was scared of Eric. "Jamie" she said, "You don't have to be afraid. God loves you. He is taking care of you. He is keeping you safe. But we need to remember something else. God also loves Eric. God made Eric in His image and likeness. He made Eric kind and gentle just as He made you loving and good. Eric is a child of God just like you are. The bad stuff that Eric is doing is not the real him. It's not the Eric that God knows and loves. In fact it's no part of him. The bad stuff is like a label that's been stuck on him. You and I can help Eric by taking the "bad boy" label off him. We do this in our thinking. We refuse to believe that he's a bully and we think of him instead as being God's lovable and well-behaved child. Do you think you could do that?"

Jamie said yes. He'd actually found that when Eric stopped acting badly, he was really a nice person. "Why then", he asked the practitioner "does Eric do bad things". She said, "Why do *you* think Eric acts this way?" Immediately this thought came to Jamie. "It's because he wants to be loved". The answer surprised him. "Gosh", he said, "I've never thought of that before. He's doing all this bad stuff because he wants us to be his friends". "Well then", said the practitioner, "Would you be Eric's friend?" Jamie sadly shook his head. He felt scared again. All he wanted to do was run away from Eric.

"God is with you Jamie", said the practitioner. "He won't let you be hurt for doing something good. I know being friends with Eric seems hard. But God has given you the courage to love Eric just as He does. You don't have to run away scared."

Then she asked Jamie if he'd heard about a young man in the Bible called David. He was brave and fearless. The Bible says that one day David heard about a big strong man named Goliath. This Goliath wanted to fight. Most people were afraid and ran away from him. But David didn't. He trusted God to help and protect him. Even though he was only young, David had courage. He didn't run away. He stood up to Goliath and defeated him. Read the story in the [King James Bible. I Samuel chapter 17:1-50](#)



“Is Eric like Goliath?” Jamie wanted to know. The practitioner explained that Eric was God’s child. It was the bullying behavior that was like a Goliath. Jamie could defeat bullying by doing what David had done. Like David, he too could trust God to keep him safe from harm. He too could stand his ground and be brave and fearless.

Jamie liked these ideas. He felt happy again. He thanked the practitioner and asked her if she would pray with him. She said she would do so right away.

The next day at school Eric grabbed Jamie and pressed the knife against his skin. For a moment Jamie felt frightened. Then he remembered the story of David and Goliath. Instead of struggling with Eric and trying to get away, he put out his hand and said to him, “If you give me your knife I will be your friend”. This took a lot of courage. But Jamie knew in his heart that he really and truly meant it. Eric looked Jamie right in the eye. Then without saying a single word, he handed him the knife.

Jamie was amazed but *very* glad. He and Eric walked into class together smiling and happy. Mrs Perry couldn’t believe her eyes. She later told Jamie’s mother that a wonderful miracle had taken place. Eric was a different person. And it was all thanks to Jamie.

After that day Eric was never mean to anyone in the class again. Jamie and he became best friends. Everyone agreed that Eric had turned out to be a very nice person. Jamie was happy at school once more. But more than this, he was grateful that he’d learned to think of others like Eric as God’s children.



That’s something we can all learn to do. Through our love and prayers we can help any boy or girl take off the “bully” label and be the friend that God made.

Beverly Goldsmith is a Christian Science [practitioner](#) and [teacher](#) in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. Visit her [web site](#) for more inspirational, healing [articles](#), [Takeaway Tips](#), and [E-Cards](#).