



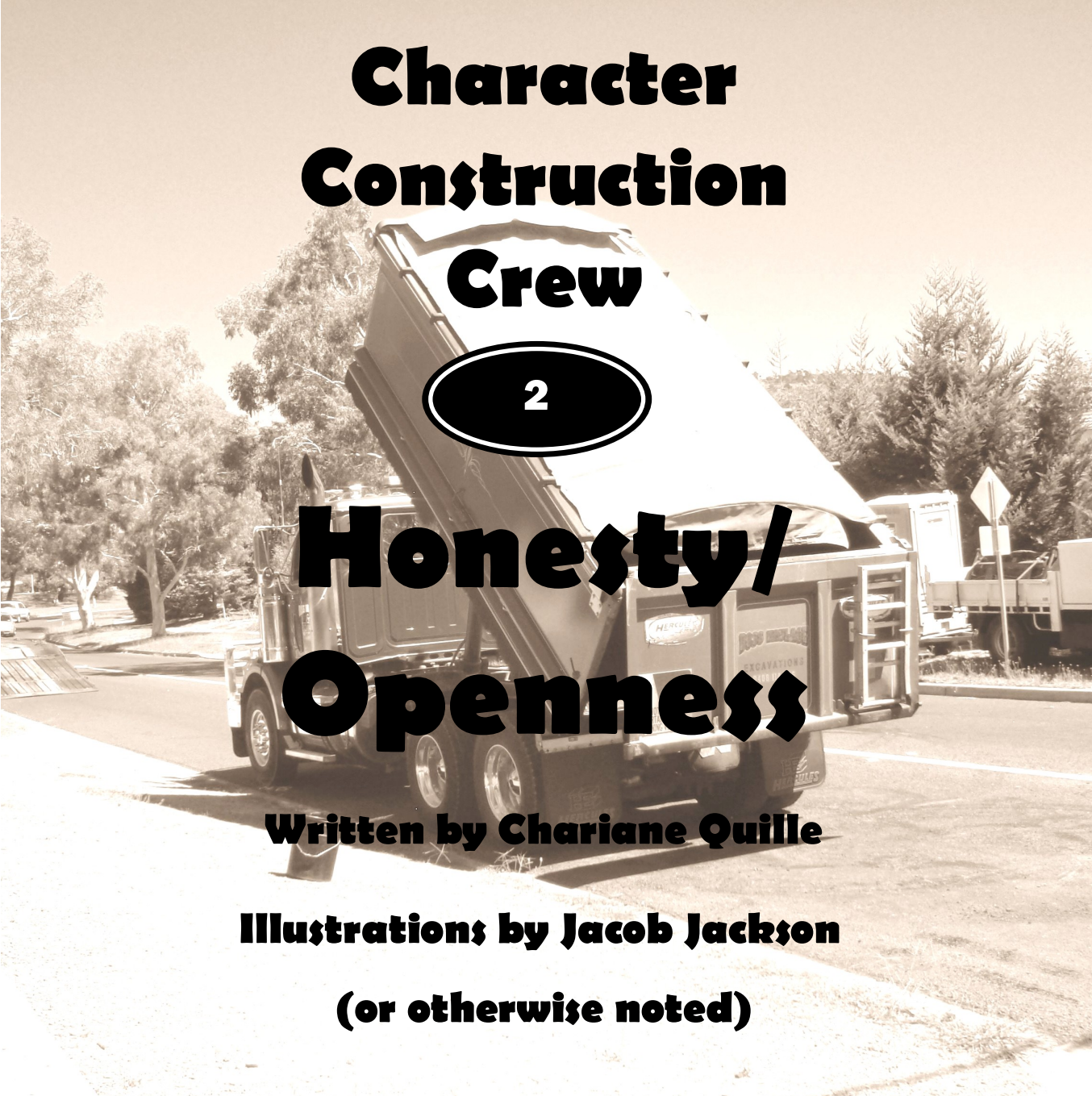
Honesty/ Openness

Character Construction Crew

*“Listening to Jesus and talking to Him ...
and getting good advice from the right
people is sure to bring good things your
way. ”*

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Character Construction Crew

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Honesty/ Openness

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Definitions

Honesty:

- *The state or quality of being honest.
- *Acting honourably.
- *Refraining from lying, cheating, or stealing; being truthful, trustworthy, or upright.
- *Sincerity; fairness; straightforwardness.

Openness:

- *Not hidden or secret.
- *Frank; candid; direct; honest.

Bible Story

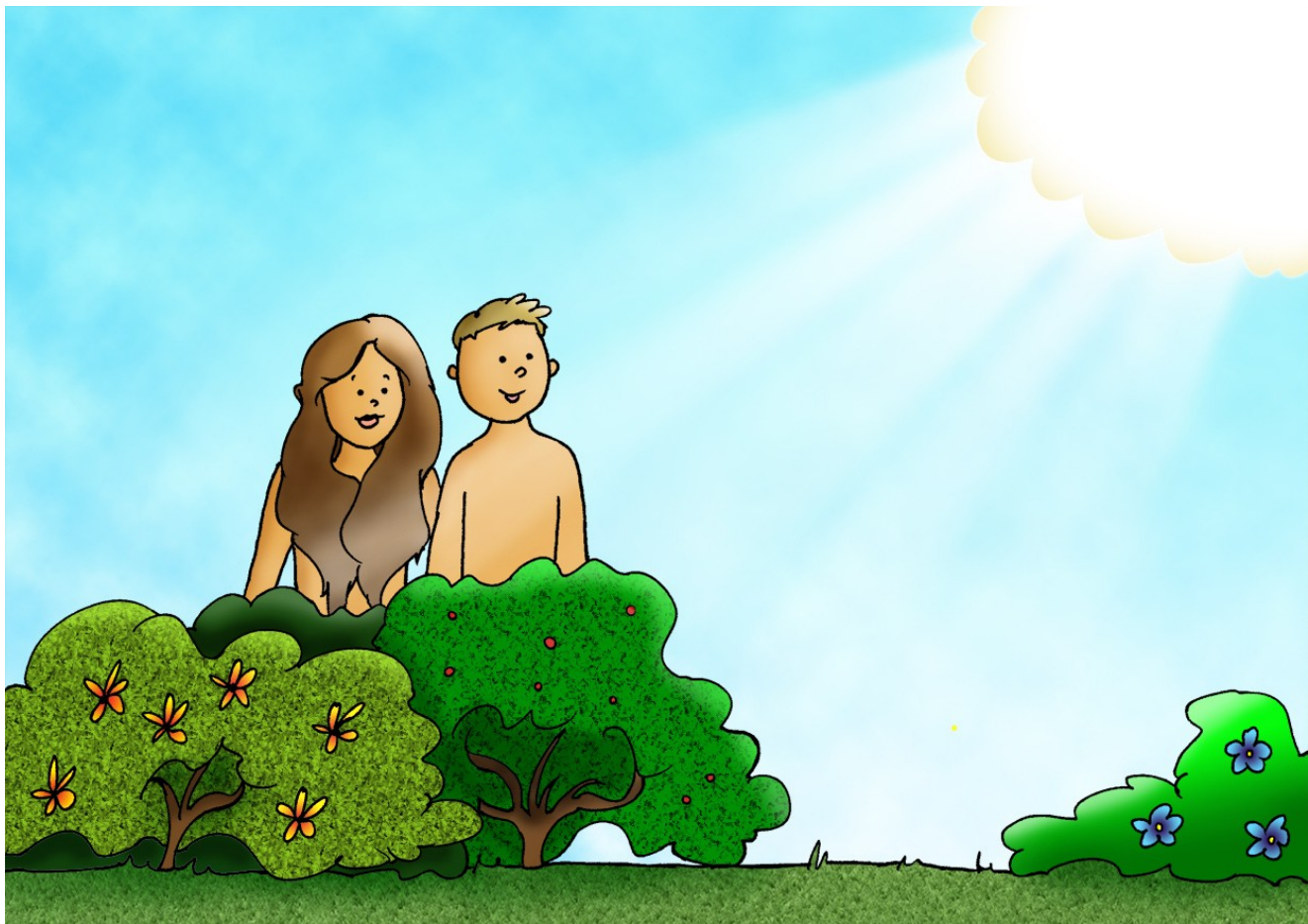
(True Story)

Talking about Feelings

While living in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve had a hard time being honest when they had disobeyed God.

The Lord would walk and talk with them in the garden. But after they did what they knew was wrong, it was hard for them to be honest and to talk with Jesus. They felt like hiding.

Jesus loved them so much, and missed being with them. That's why He then came to Earth, to make things all right again, to be with us, to pay the price to forgive all people's wrong doings.



Art by Fleur Celeste/ Coloured by Mia

1 John 1:8-9

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The Bible says, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.” (1 John 1:9)

We can always talk with Him about what happens, whether it’s a careless mistake or a wrong that we’ve done. We know God loves us, but sometimes we aren’t so sure that others will love us as much as God does, and we wonder what they will say or think if we tell them the truth about something.

However, if it’s something that should be said, and needs to be said to make things right again, then the Lord will help things to go better than if we were to hold it in and not say anything. We can get help when we talk about the things that need to be said.

King David often had things on his heart that he wanted to talk with the Lord about, and he wrote down many of his prayers. These are compiled in the Book of Psalms.

One time he wrote, “I acknowledge my sin unto

thee, and
mine iniquity
have I not hid.

I said, I will
confess my
transgressions
unto the Lord;
and thou
forgavest the
iniquity of my
sin.”



Art by Amanda Martins

(Psalm 32:5)

When he had done something that wasn't right, and was sorry for it, he wanted his heart to be clean again. It can feel uncomfortable and like your heart is dirty if you have something you haven't been honest about.

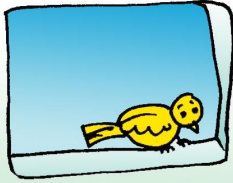
So, it helps to do like King David did, and talk with Jesus about it, asking Him to forgive you and to

2 Corinthians 8:21

Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

Roman 14:19

Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.



Art by Fleur Celeste/ Coloured by Mia

Psalm 119:29,30

**Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me
Thy law graciously. I have chosen the way of
truth: Thy judgments have I laid before me.**

show you if there's anyone else you should be honest with, and what to say about it.

Sometimes it can feel so very scary to think about telling someone something—whether it's about what you did that wasn't right, or even you giving someone else a suggestion of a way they could improve their behaviour, or explaining that they have made you feel bad by their words or actions.

The Book of Psalms has many words and thoughts from King David's heart. He was a man that went through a lot of things. He'd made plenty of mistakes and experienced many different emotions and feelings, as well as sickness and pain.

David faced many challenges and had lots of struggles in his life. He talked to the Lord in prayer and with words of praise during his times of

difficulty, and found peace and encouragement when he did.

Many of these words of communion with the Lord are written down, and now we can benefit from these words too. It helps to read from the Book of Psalms when you are feeling difficult emotions and facing hard situations and don't know who to go to or talk with.

When you talk to Jesus first of all, as King David did, and you get His thoughts and instructions on

1 Peter 3:15

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

Character Construction Crew Stories

(Imaginary story)

The Stage

Darin Dillygint-deedz wasn't sure how it happened, but the hammer seemed to just break in his hand while working hard on setting up the stage for the park performances. It wasn't a stage that would be there all the time. It was just put together quickly to last for a few weeks.

Each afternoon different teams of performers would be on the stage entertaining the crowds that wandered around the park. This spring time festival was always a fun one.

He was puzzled. "It just broke! Now what should I do?" There were a few more hammers to use, but he'd have to go and ask for another one.



As he was on his way the craziest thoughts tried to stop him. “If I say I broke it, others might think that I am not a good handyman. Or maybe they won’t let me finish the job, as they’ll worry that more tools will break if I use them.”

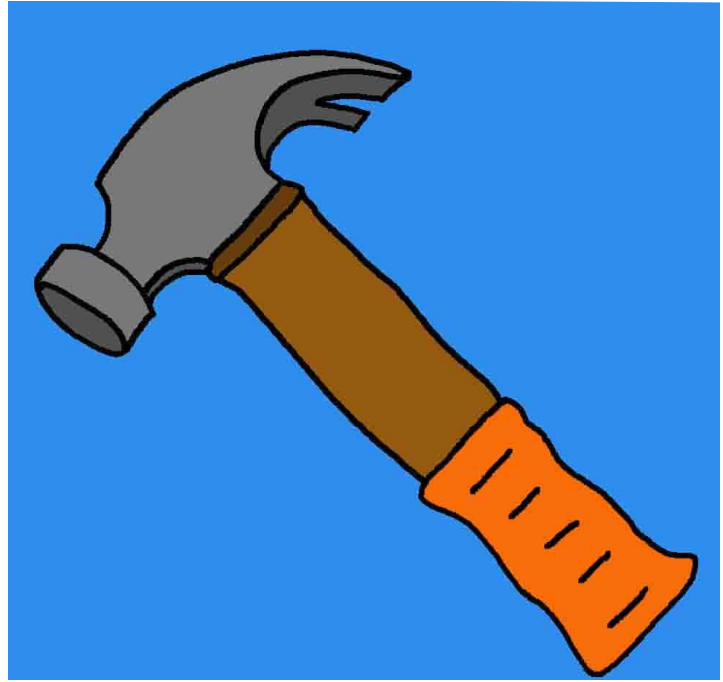
Darin Dillygint-deedz knew that these kinds of thoughts weren’t right and weren’t even true. The type of people that others can trust are those that tell the truth, are honest about the facts, and are humble to admit when something goes wrong.

That was the kind of person he was, and always tried to be.

“I was using this hammer and the head just broke off. Perhaps I wasn’t holding it right, I don’t know.” Darin Dillygint-deedz explained.

“Oh, don’t worry about it!” said Kiran Kontolictuz.

“I didn’t even know we were still using that old hammer. It’s been on the brink of breaking for awhile. We shouldn’t have even had it with the tools. Here’s a better one that we just bought.



“I’m glad you didn’t get hurt with that old weak hammer. And hey, you are doing a terrific job! That stage is looking great. I’m amazed at how strong it looks, and how much you were able to do today. Good for you!”

Those words made Darin Dillygint-deedz feel pretty good. As he walked back to the stage he thought,

“It feels great to be honest, to tell what happened, and get things working right again. Sometimes people haven’t been so understanding when I tried to be honest, even though it was the right thing to do, and it felt better than not saying anything at all.

“But honestly, I haven’t always treated others that kindly either when they told me about their mistakes. Kiran Kontolictuz made me feel encouraged and like doing an even better job. I hope I can be that way with others too.”

Galatians 6:1

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

(Imaginary story)

“I don’t feel well...”

It was going to be a rather fun day, or so Ben-Jim Bennifits thought. He was looking forward to another good day of using the cement truck to starting filling in the area planned for today. It was always fun when things were starting to take shape.

He’d been assigned to help with this part of the

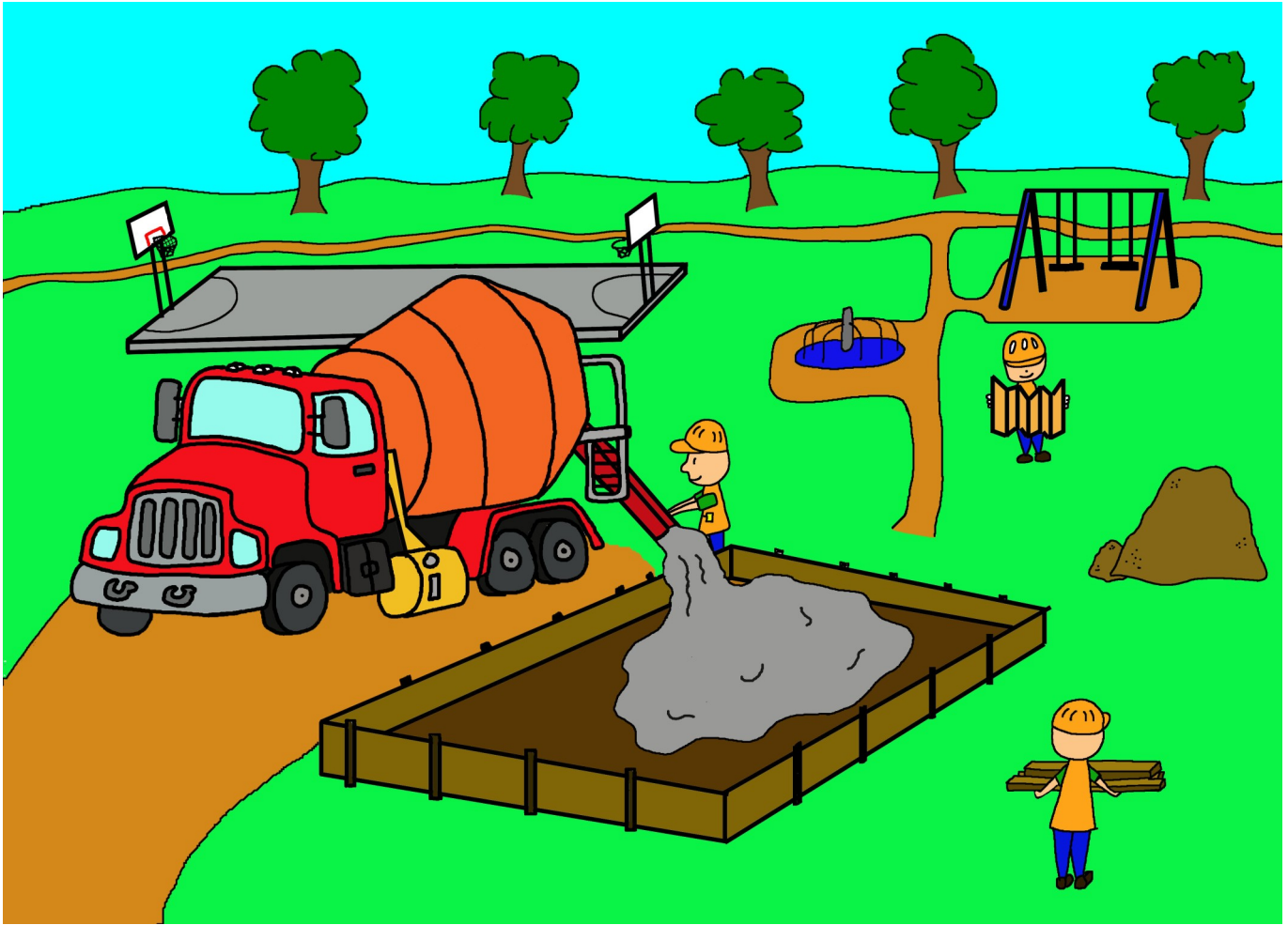


job in making a recreation centre. There were to be tennis courts, a basketball court, a playground, and all sorts of play areas.

“Okay, ready!” he yelled, above the noise of the trucks’ engines. They were working together well, and things were going great. That is until he started to get a bad pain in his stomach.

Ben-Jim Bennifits wasn’t often sick, so it was rather unusual.

“Oh, dear. I just don’t think I can keep on right now,” he thought. “What shall I do? I don’t want everyone to have a hard time because I can’t do my part of the job. But if I don’t honestly tell them what is happening then I’ll risk not only getting worse—whatever it is—but I might make a big mistake on this project, because I can’t focus properly.” He was thinking it over.



Finally Ben-Jim Bennifits had the strength to say what he was feeling, and to excuse himself from the work for awhile. It felt hard to be honest.

It would have been nicer for him to appear to be strong and like he was the perfect workman, able to do everything and to do it well, but he just couldn't.

After resting on the side for a bit, his friend Carl came over to see how he was doing.

“I feel a bit better now,” he said. “I think it's just because I ate something that doesn't agree with me.”

He was starting to remember that on the way to the worksite he'd snacked on something that was in the truck, that wasn't good for him personally to eat. It was hard to admit that he'd made that silly mistake.

“Well, at least it's nothing too serious then,” Carl encouraged him. After about half an hour, Ben-Jim Bennifits was able to start work again.

Things had to slow down a bit while he was gone, but it was sure better than pretending that everything was fine, and keeping his mistake to himself.

He apologized to everyone, and told them what had happened. He promised to not let that happen again. Everyone was glad to see that he was feeling

better, and the work could now carry on full speed again.

When they were taking a break later on for lunch, one of the men, Stuart, came up to Ben-Jim Bennifits and said,



“Thanks for being a good example to me today. See, I’ve been having a hard time telling my brother about a mistake I made. But you showed me how simple it is to just be honest and explain things, and apologize too.

“After what happened today I went to talk to my brother who works nearby. I told him about what I did last week. By mistake I took his tool box, instead of mine. Then when he went to work it wasn’t there. I didn’t mean to, but I didn’t want him to be upset at me so I didn’t apologize. I just put it back as soon as I realised it. But that wasn’t right, and I didn’t feel good in my heart all week.

“So today, I just talked to him, and he forgave me, and I feel so much better. We’re good friends you know, and when we are honest with each other we get along even better.”

Ben-Jim Bennifits was glad to hear that his example helped someone else.

“Thanks for telling me that. It’s nice to know what you think!” he told Stuart. “I’m glad even my mistake that seemed so hard for me to admit to you and the others helped in some way. That’s pretty neat.”

Ecclesiastes 4:9

Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour.

For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.

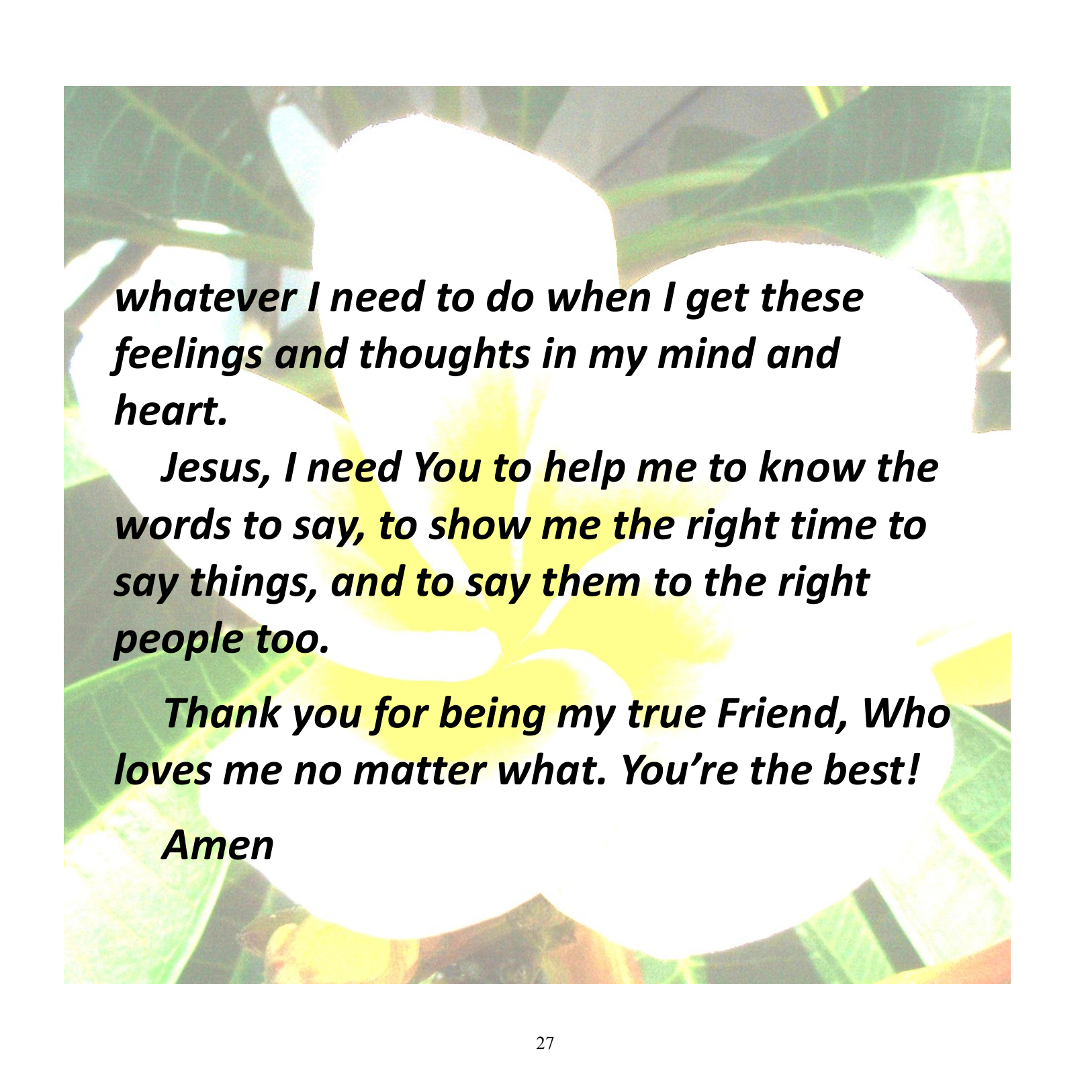


A Prayer

Jesus, Your Word says, “Let the words of my mouth be acceptable in Thy sight”, and I want my words to please You.

Sometimes it’s just really hard to say things that make me look less than perfect. I want people to see, and think, and say good things about me.

I want to have good feelings in my heart, but I don’t always. I’m always making mistakes. I know it will make things easier on me and others, and make things better if I admit, apologize, explain, tell, confess, or



whatever I need to do when I get these feelings and thoughts in my mind and heart.

Jesus, I need You to help me to know the words to say, to show me the right time to say things, and to say them to the right people too.

Thank you for being my true Friend, Who loves me no matter what. You're the best!

Amen

When Mummy was Growing Up...

(True story)

The Hair Locket

One afternoon my friends and I were sitting around in the room wondering what new thing to do for fun. “Let’s all cut a piece of our hair off,” someone suggested. We knew that was a bad idea. Our consciences told us it wasn’t for us to cut, but up to our parents. We didn’t know how to do it properly.

However, no one said honestly what they thought, nor came up with a better idea. We passed around a pair of scissors and each snipped a little piece off our own hair. Probably many children do this to try it.

The wrong thing was that in our heart we knew it

was wrong to do it, but still did it anyway. You know when something is wrong to do, if you get that sudden “afraid” feeling, wanting to hide and not wanting someone to know about it.

Just as we finished, we heard the footsteps of my friend’s mum coming down the hall. We didn’t want her to see us and find out what we had just done.

Sometimes you can do some pretty ridiculous things when you are trying to avoid being honest, afraid of what might happen. We all quickly did as Adam and Eve did and hid by crawling under the bunk bed. Well, as many of us as could fit.



Photo by: Naomi

One boy didn't make it as he couldn't fit. Then his mum walked in she saw him, he then noticed that there were bits of hair on the floor. We'd forgotten about that part in our rush to do the hiding thing.

Crazy, wasn't it? Especially since she could probably see us anyway, and she knew we were in the room playing. We wouldn't have just disappeared suddenly!

It probably looked pretty funny to her, especially as her son looked down and spotted his lock of hair on the floor and said to his mum, "What's that?" — as if he really didn't know!

Since I felt bad in my heart for doing what I did, I felt I couldn't tell anyone about it—or I chose not to. It's odd how afraid the Enemy makes you feel, making you think it's really a bad thing to admit a mistake or wrong doing.

But everyone does the wrong thing or makes poor choices at times, and the more we are honest about them, the better we'll feel, and we can get help and learn and grow through the experience.

Telling someone honestly about our mistake or bad decision can help us to stay humble, and can even help the person we talk about it with to learn something too.

We learn something from our failures, and telling others what we've learned can help and encourage them too.

Zechariah 8:16

These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates.

Well, it was dinner time a bit later on, and I couldn't continue to stay away from everyone. As I walked into the dining room, and a table full of people looked my way, it was obvious that I had cut a piece off my hair. One short little part was hanging down in my face.

Someone asked aloud, "Did you cut your hair?" And I said, "No."

Isn't that silly? Instead of making one mistake I made two! Everyone could see that I had cut it a bit, and knew that I wasn't telling the truth. They kind of laughed a bit about it. No one got mad at me, but I felt bad in my heart for not saying to others what I had done, and saying I was sorry, since I knew it was wrong.

Not telling the truth about it would make people think that they couldn't trust the things I said to be

true. They would think that perhaps if I didn't say what really happened in this situation, maybe I wouldn't be honest at other times either.

People can't trust you to be truthful, or be sure that what you say is true and accurate if they find out that you have told an untruth to them. It makes people sad. They feel like you don't love them. They feel hurt in their heart when you do that.

Untruthfulness or lying can take away people's trust in you, and can make friends feel bad towards each other. Someone can feel that if you love them and you know that they love you, you won't be afraid to let them in on the full and true story of what happened.

People want to know the truth, and it shows love to your family and friends to tell it to them. Even if it makes you feel more embarrassed at the time,

you and they will stay closer friends if you can be honest with one another and also forgive one another.

I was glad that I was forgiven for that mistake. It wasn't a big deal. Everyone still loved me. I saw then that it wasn't necessary for me to feel so afraid to be honest.

I would have felt much better much sooner had I taken the step to admit my mistake and apologize.



Perhaps one of the lessons that I learned also was to speak up honestly when my friends had an idea of something to do that I didn't feel in my heart was right.

It wasn't fun at the time to go ahead with it, but now I can look back and laugh at how silly I acted by not mentioning something to my friends and instead agreed to their idea.

When I grew a bit older, about 10 years later, I took a hair cutting course, and learned how to cut hair properly. I've since helped to give children, adults, and even myself, a hair trim.

It's a bit tricky to do, but when you are older it can be a fun thing to learn, and a handy skill to have.

(True story)

The Candy

One time when I was seven years old we had a problem. We were told to never accept and eat candy from people we didn't know. Besides, we weren't to eat candy anyway, because it wasn't good for us. Then when we were outside playing one day, a boy reached over our low garden wall and offered us a handful of candy.

What should we do? Our parents were in the

Ephesians 4:25

Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

house, and the candy looked pretty interesting.

Since we usually never had any we wanted to try it out. We each took one, ate it, and then must have felt the same way that Adam and Eve did. It was a terrible feeling. We couldn't even keep playing we felt so bad inside. We literally started hiding.

We hid the wrappers, and some of us hid in the house. We drank tons of water and kept giving each other a “breath test” to see if our breath smelled like the candy—so we wouldn't get caught that we'd eaten it.

Roman's 9:1

I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.

It would have solved the whole problem if we had brought the candy right away to our parents and asked them if we could try it out. Or since we had made the mistake of going ahead and eating it, we could have felt so much better if we'd just gone and told them right away what had happened.

The bad feeling never went away all afternoon, till we were discovered! A wrapper was found and our parents asked us about it.

We could have answered then and gotten it cleared up, and gone on to happier times. However, because we were so afraid to be honest it took so long with a lot of talking until we finally told them what had happened.

Some of my friends made up silly reasons for why they ate it, saying things like, "The boy who gave it to us said in a scary voice that we had to eat it!"

Of course it wasn't true, and our parents knew no child would do that. So, rather than being honest we tried to make up reasons to try to make ourselves look better. It only did the opposite.

Finally, at the end we told the truth and admitted our mistake. We were forgiven and then began to feel much better again.

Daddy said that just that day he had brought home some sweet treats for us. Oh boy! If we had told them right way, we could have been eating the treats he brought for us much earlier, and saved ourselves from the bad feelings and all that wasted play time!

From Jesus to Us

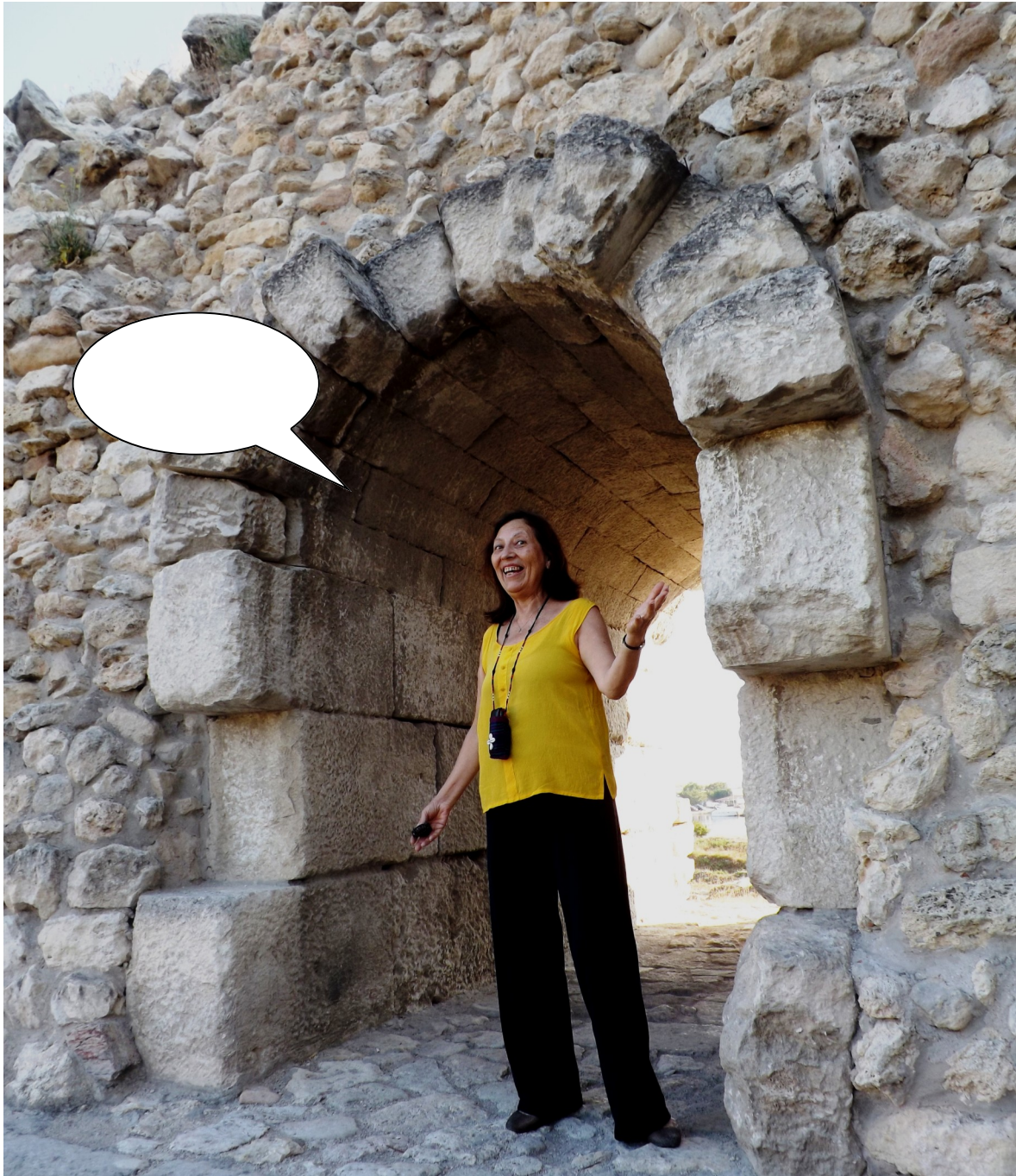
There are so many reasons why it's hard to say what you are thinking, or to tell others about something you've done. Mostly it's because you are afraid of something happening that you don't want to happen.



Just remember the verse that says, “All things work together for good to them that love the Lord.” (Romans 8:28)

That means that if you love Me, and if you are saying and doing something because you think it's what I tell you in My Word is right, then the end result will be far better than if you hold back and are afraid to be honest.

Photo by: Curtis Peter van Gorder



I can make even the most difficult things easy.
Pray, obey and say! There's a good motto.

Pray for Me to help you to know what is the right thing to do or say when you feel something in your heart, or something goes wrong.

Do what you think is right or that I'm showing you to do.

Say the words you need to, in the way that is best—a loving, honest way.

Another time to be open and honest with others is when you need prayer. If things are getting too hard for you, or you keep getting the wrong ideas from the Enemy, or you are having bad feelings towards others, or you aren't feeling well, just be honest and ask someone who will understand to pray for you.

James wrote in his book, “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” (James 5:16)

Admitting to others that you need My help, and joining together in prayer brings much faster results than if you were to just keep trying on your own to make things better in your heart and mind.

1 Thessalonians 4:12

That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.

Hebrews 13:18

Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

It's just part of being in the world (ever since Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden) that people will get tempted to give in to thoughts and ideas from the Enemy.

But listening to Me and talking to Me about it, and getting good advice from the right people is sure to bring good things your way.

Be open, be honest with Me and with the kind of people who can help you, and it will bring good fruits and faster victory your way. Try it!

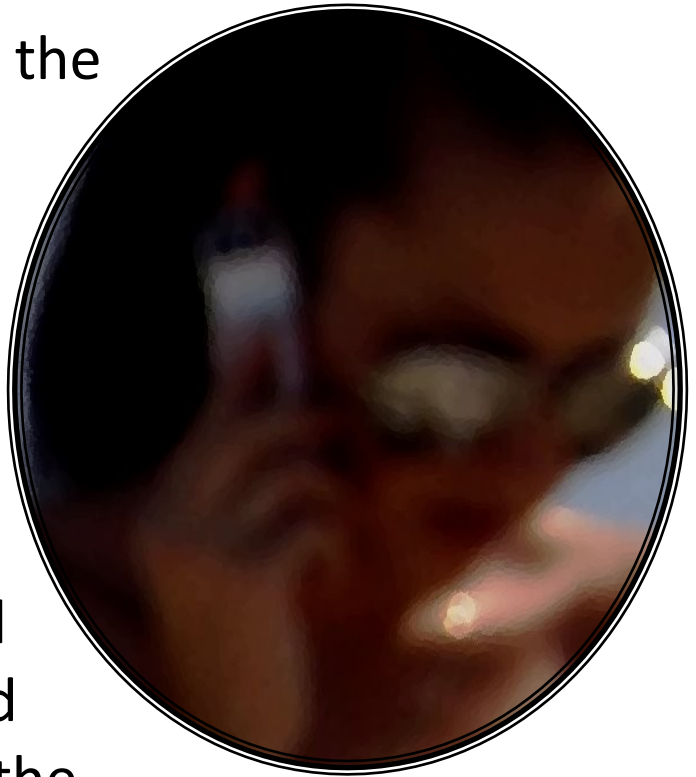


Photo by: Curtis Peter van Gorder

Discussion Questions

- *What is the most difficult part about telling someone of a mistake you've made?
- *What kinds of reactions make it hard for you to talk about things with others?
- *What kind of reaction do you wish others will have when you are telling them something that is difficult for you to admit?
- *When you need prayer and need to talk about things that are in your heart, who do you like talking with?

*What types of things are the hardest for you to admit or to mention?

*Does “being honest and open” mean that you are to say everything to everyone all the time? What might be some consequences of that? (Look up Proverbs 29:11 and Proverbs 25:11.)

Roman; 13:13

Let us walk honestly, as in the day; ...not in strife and envying.

Proverb; 20:5

Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out.

Ideas of When to Apply

What are some good times to practice being honest and truthful?

*When someone asks you a question.

*If you aren't feeling well.

*When you feel like taking something that belongs to someone else, or giving things back and apologizing if you have.

*When you need to ask for forgiveness and apologize for something you've done.

*When what someone has done has hurt you in some way, to tell your parents, to get help or prayer.

*When you've made a mistake that affects others.

*If someone is doing something that they shouldn't, and it would be good for you to tell someone about it.

*If what someone has said has bothered you or given you questions about it, to explain things to them, or ask more about it.

*When you feel and think differently than what others are saying they think or believe or like, to answer honestly what you personally think, even if it's different than what everyone else is saying.