



An Angry Outburst

Josh carried his lunch tray to his class table in the lunchroom. It was pizza day, a favorite among his classmates. As he walked toward his table, he passed his sister Mia, sitting with a group of friends.

Some boys were standing next to Mia and Josh heard them calling her names. He immediately stopped and walked up to the boys.

“What’s going on here?” he asked.



Mia sat frozen. Her eyes were large and she seemed afraid. Her friends were quiet, looking down at their food trays.

“Oh, just talking to Miss Know it All here,” one of the boys commented. “We’re reminding her of what happens to people who think they are better than others. She needs to stop answering so many questions in class or the teacher will start to expect everyone to care so much about stupid stuff like history.” He sneered at Mia and the rest of the boys laughed.

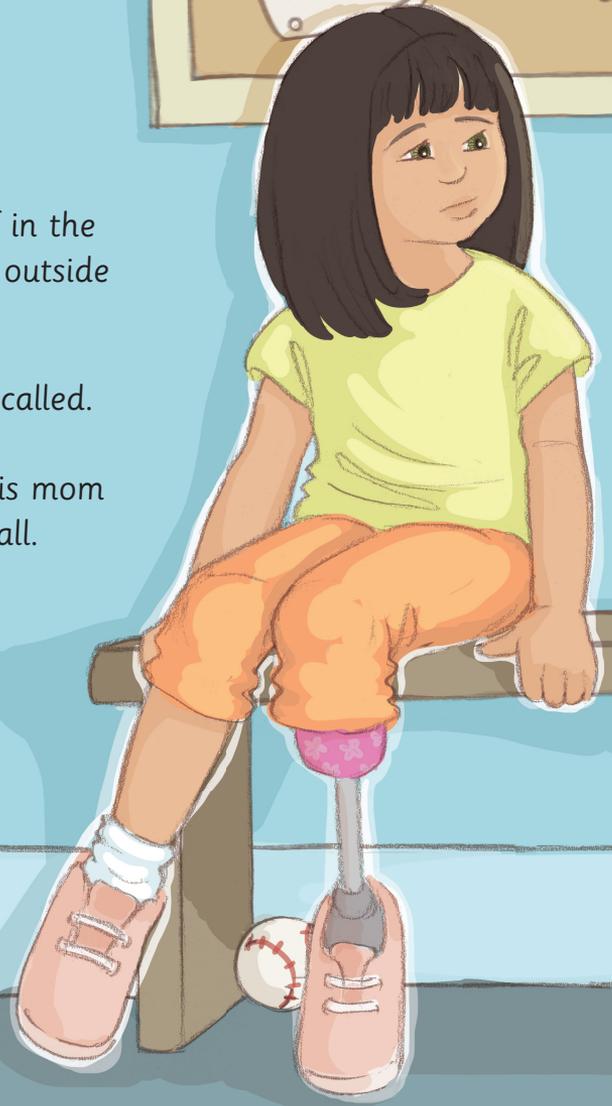
Josh felt his face burn and his fists clenched as he watched these boys bully his sister. He stormed up to the ringleader and shoved him backward. As the boy fell, he knocked into the boys behind him and they fell too. Lunch trays clattered onto the floor and food spilled all around. The lunchroom monitor saw it and ran over to the group, calling for assistance from other teachers in the room.



Josh soon found himself in the principal's office, waiting outside her door.

"Josh!" a familiar voice called.

He looked up and saw his mom walking down the hall.



They both looked up at the sound of the door opening and Mia came out of the principal's office.

"What happened? Why did the school call me to come in for a meeting?"

He looked down at his feet on the floor and shrugged. "I don't know," he muttered.



“Mia,” her mom said, “what happened?”

Mia looked at Josh and then at her mom and then back at Josh again. She hesitated, opened her mouth to respond, and then the principal came out to see the family gathered there. Mrs. Galloway smiled and remarked, “There was a conflict in the lunchroom today and I wanted to talk to you about it.”

Josh and his mom joined the principal in the office, and Josh recounted what had happened. “I was just so mad at what they were saying to Mia!” he exclaimed. “Someone had to stand up to them.”

Mrs. Galloway looked at Josh and said, “I heard from Mia what the boys said to her. It was wrong of them to say such things and they will receive a consequence for their actions. We do not tolerate bullying at this school.” She paused, directed her gaze at Josh, and continued, “However, it is equally wrong for you to shove the boys.”

She continued, “Since we attend the same church, and since I’ve known you since you were born, I’m going to talk to you now as a fellow church member and not as your principal. Josh, we all feel angry at injustice and we should. When God created the world, He created us to love and serve Him and one another. But because of sin, we don’t live as we should. We put ourselves first and are quick to be unkind. There’s nothing wrong with feeling angry about what happened to your sister. But God calls us to not sin when we are feeling angry and you did so.”

Mrs. Galloway then looked at Josh’s mom and told her, “I’d like you to take Josh home for the rest of the day and he is to stay home tomorrow as well. I hope you will talk with him about this, so it doesn’t happen again.”

Josh’s mom stood up and thanked Mrs. Galloway and assured her that she and Josh would talk about it at home.



PRINCIPAL





Once they arrived home, Josh's mom made him a snack and they sat down at the kitchen table to talk. Josh told her how angry he felt when his sister was bullied by the boys at school. "I'm still mad!" he proclaimed.

Mom reminded Josh of the story they recently read during family devotions, the story of David and how his enemies lied about him and chased after him to kill him. "David felt angry too. In fact, he once had an opportunity to kill King Saul, but he didn't do it. He knew it was wrong and instead waited for the Lord to deal with Saul. But what David did do was tell God about his anger." She then read from Psalm 109:

"Be not silent, O God of my praise!
For wicked and deceitful mouths are opened against me,
speaking against me with lying tongues.
They encircle me with words of hate,
and attack me without cause" (vv.1-3).

"That's like those boys! They attacked Mia without cause," remarked Josh.

"David then asked God to help him and deliver him and he praised and worshiped God," Mom continued. "Josh, when you feel angry, you need to tell God about it. Ask Him to help you. And when you are in a situation like today, you need to ask an adult to intervene. Bullying is wrong and God put adults in your life who have the authority to deal with it. Do you understand?"



“Yes. I’m sorry you had to come get me from school,” Josh said.

Mom smiled, gave him a hug, and said, “Let’s pray and tell God about what happened today. And then how about we have a cookie while we read more about what happened between David and King Saul?”

Questions for Discussion

1. Have you ever been angry like Josh was in this story?
What happened?
2. Mom and Dad, share a story about a time you felt the same way.
3. Read what Paul says about anger in Ephesians 4:26.
Is it always wrong to be angry?
When is it right to be angry?
What does God want us to do with our anger?
4. Why is it important to tell grown-ups when other people have been unkind to us?
5. For older children, read Psalm 4 and talk about how God hears us when we pray to Him.
6. Pray together, helping your child tell God about angry feelings and asking for His help.