

Writing for the Friend

friend@ChurchofJesusChrist.org • 801.240.2210 / 1.800.453.3860, ext. 22210



Thanks for your interest in contributing to the *Friend*. Please remember that **stories must be based on actual events** and must be written from the point of view of a child 3–12 years of age. If you'd like to be compensated, send us a query letter first.

As of spring 2019, we especially need stories that feature children...

- In countries outside of the United States
- From non-Caucasian cultural and ethnic groups
- In various family situations
- Grappling with sensitive issues or challenging situations in an authentic way
- Standing up for what's right, even when immediate consequences aren't happy ones

Example topics include...

- Choosing / standing up for the right
- Coping with scary events (terrorism, natural disasters, etc.)
- Disabilities (especially from the point of view of those with different ability levels)
- Girl / boy relationships
- "If I'm good, why do bad things happen?"
- Kindness in words and actions
- Media (especially reducing screen time and connecting with people instead)
- Peer pressure
- Pornography
- Prayers (especially those that don't seem to be answered in the desired way)
- Priesthood preparation
- Repentance (as a daily gift that helps us find happiness; the sacrament's role)
- Respecting those who seem different
- Sabbath day
- Scripture study (as a family, or those without family support)
- Temple preparation
- Word of Wisdom

We already have lots of stories about answered prayers, especially with lost items.

What makes a good illustrated story?

These stories are 500–600 words long.

Stories must be based on actual events. Dialogue and other minor details may be fictionalized.

The story is written from the child's perspective. The author tells us what the child is thinking but shows the thoughts of adults by words and actions.

The author uses vivid, descriptive words to set the scene. Words like "hummed" and "hissed" bring the reader in.

There is conflict in the story. The author is honest about how the main character feels—the author doesn't try to make him unrealistically good or stereotypically bad.

FOR OLDER KIDS

By Kimberly Reid
(Based on a true story)

Ye should do that which is honest (2 Corinthians 13:7).

It was a warm summer morning as Josh followed his dad into the hardware store. Outside, bees hummed and sprinklers hissed, but inside everything was cool and quiet. Josh stood at the window and watched a bee bump against the glass.

Then something on a shelf caught his eye—a pocketknife gleaming in the sunlight near the window. Josh was sure he could use a knife like that for all sorts of things. But he didn't ask Dad if he could buy it. He already knew

So why did it feel like a heavy rock in his pocket? By the time Josh got home, he felt like he had a rock in his stomach too. Josh went to his room and took out the knife. It didn't seem to gleam anymore. Josh tried to imagine what kinds of things he'd use it for, but he couldn't think of any. Besides, if he took the knife out of his room, Dad might see it.

Josh felt anxious all day. The knife's weight in his pocket kept reminding him of the wrong choice he had made. He had to get rid of it.

"Can I ride my bike?" he asked Mom.

what Dad would say: "You should wait until you're a Boy Scout to get a pocketknife." Josh didn't want to wait until then. He wanted a pocketknife right now.

Josh looked over his shoulder. Dad was busy paying the cashier for some work gloves. Josh snatched the knife and put it in his pocket.

"Ready to go?" Dad asked.

Josh followed Dad to the car, his heart thumping like the bee against the window. As they drove away, Josh smiled. No one had noticed! The knife was his.

"Yes, just be home in time for dinner," Mom said. Josh hurried to get his bicycle from the garage and pedaled onto the sidewalk.

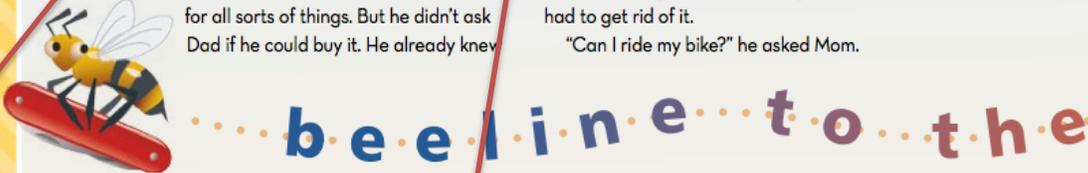
"Hey, Josh! Where are you going?" Josh's brother Tanner called from his friend Chris's yard.

Josh didn't slow down. He raced to the end of the street, where a brick wall was built into a hillside. Josh found a crack between the bricks and stuffed the pocketknife into the dark hole. No one would know what he'd done. Now he could forget about it too.

A few hours later, Tanner and Chris burst into the house.

bee line to the

I will be honest with Heavenly Father, others, and myself.
My Gospel Standards



These words show us what guilt feels like rather than just saying "Josh felt guilty." Instead of relying on labels or jargon, the author describes a feeling in a way a child would understand.

The child in this story is working to try to solve his own problems. There is no preachy adult telling the child what he should or should not do.



"Look what we found!" Tanner held up the pocketknife.

Josh tried not to look guilty. "Where did you get that?" he asked.

"We followed a bee," Tanner said.

"You followed a bee?" Mom repeated.

"We were bored," Tanner said. "We chased the bee to the end of the street. It crawled into a hole in the brick wall, and that's where the pocketknife was."

Josh felt sick. Even though he'd hidden the knife, Heavenly Father knew where it was. He went to his room and counted the dollar bills in his wallet. Then

t · r · u · t · h

he prayed for the courage to tell the truth. When he got up from his knees, the anxiousness in his mind quieted. He felt a little nervous about telling his parents and the cashier at the hardware store what he had done, but he felt lighter than he had all day—like a bee zipping over the rooftops toward home. ♦

The knife's weight in Josh's pocket reminded him of the wrong choice he had made.

ILLUSTRATION BY BRIAN BEAN

45

The story contains a mix of description and dialogue, and both move the story forward in meaningful ways. The dialogue sounds realistic.

The character models the ideal—in this case, the steps of repentance—for the reader.

The blessings described are realistic and not overly miraculous or exceptional. Rather than stating a "moral of the story," the story clearly shows the blessings that come from good decisions. There is still emotional honesty in the description.

In this story, the imagery of a bee is used multiple times to describe emotions and give the story a sense of continuity. This recurring image also lends itself well to interesting artwork.

What makes a good *Friend Junior* story?

These stories are about 250 words long.

These stories are written for early readers. They should use very simple vocabulary. The text should be fun and lend itself to interesting art details.

Super Spencer



By Jenna Koford
(Based on a true story)

Spencer found a note in his brown paper bag at lunchtime. It was from Mom. The note said, "You are a super smart boy." He looked at the words and smiled.

His friends took the note and read it. They said, "No, you are a super silly boy." They laughed at him. Spencer felt sad. When he got home he told Mom what happened. She felt sad too.

"Words can hurt," Mom said.

"But they can also make people happy. You can always choose to use kind words."

Spencer didn't want to go to school the next day. He didn't want his friends to laugh at him. Mom drove him to school.

"Try using your words to make someone else happy," she told Spencer. "Go say something kind to that teacher standing by the front doors. See what she does."

He looked at the teacher. He thought for a minute. Then he jumped out of the car. He didn't know the teacher, but he wanted to use kind words. "I hope you have a great day!" he said.

The teacher smiled. "You made my day!"

Spencer felt great. He felt the power of good words. He walked to his classroom with a smile on his face. He colored at his desk. His friends didn't laugh at him at lunchtime. But even if they had, Spencer knew he could choose to use kind words.

After school Mom picked him up. She asked him what he learned that day. "Good words can make someone's day better," he said. "I want to be kind to someone every day."

Mom smiled. "You are a super good example." ♦

The author lives in California, USA.



September 2016 FJ9

FJ8 Friend

Two Little Feet



Two little feet to run and play.



Two little legs to help all day.



Two little hands to choose the right.



Two little arms to hug goodnight!

September 2016 FJ5

This is an example of an action rhyme from the *Friend Junior* section.

Other Types of Content

Activities. Family- and gospel-oriented puzzles and games. We also welcome simple recipes and craft projects that appeal to children.

Music. We occasionally publish new songs about gospel subjects.

Children's Submissions. In "Friends by Mail," children share their feelings about the magazine. "Show and Tell" submissions include art, short poems, and experiences (50–100 words) about children following the example of Jesus Christ. "Written by You" stories (300 words) are children's experiences written by children themselves. All children's submissions should include the child's photo, age, and address, and MUST include the signed parental permission slip found on page 39 of the magazine. The *Friend* does not pay for children's contributions. Due to the number received, they cannot all be published, nor can they be returned.

Poetry and Action Rhymes. Easy-to-illustrate poems with catchy cadences, consistent meter, and child-friendly subjects. Poems should convey a sense of joy and reflect gospel teachings. We especially need brief poems, including action rhymes, for preschoolers.

***Friend Junior* Stories.** We need short, very simple stories that could be used as an early reader or rebus story in the *Friend Junior* section. (Rebus stories are very short stories where certain words are replaced with small pictures or icons.)

Submitting Your Work

Traditional mail. Please print your submission double-spaced on one side of 8 1/2- x 11-inch white paper. Include your name, address, and telephone number with each submission. Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you would like your manuscript returned. Address submissions to Friend Magazine, 50 East North Temple, Room 2393, Salt Lake City, UT 84150, USA.

Digital submission. Send your submission to friend@ChurchofJesusChrist.org, or use the "Submit Your Material" link on friend.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

Review process. Editors will review your submission, and a staff member will let you know whether we would like to accept your submission for our files. If your submission is accepted, you will be asked to sign a contract that allows the Church to publish it in print or online. Due to our lengthy planning and approval process, a submission will usually not appear in print for at least a year, and often much longer. Two copies of any issue containing your work, not including child submissions, will be sent to you upon publication.

The *Friend* currently pays by commission only. If you would like your work to be considered for purchase, please send a query letter to the mailing or email address above. Or you can send us your material immediately as a donated piece. **Thanks again for your interest in the *Friend* magazine!**