

By Jane McBride

Based on a true story

“Do that which is honest” (2 Corinthians 13:7).

“I need you to watch your brother,” Mama said. “Your pa and I are going to help someone who is sick.”

I looked up from sweeping the floor of our small house and nodded. Mama was the Relief Society president, and she often went to visit sisters in our ward.

“Thank you, Arlyn,” Mama said, kissing the top of my head. “John’s asleep. And there’s bread dough rising on the counter. Please don’t touch it.”

I watched through the doorway as she and Pa rode the wagon down our dusty road. I felt proud that Mama trusted me.

As I swept the kitchen, I stopped to look at the bread dough. I could hardly wait for Mama to bake it tonight. Usually we ate the fresh bread with homemade jam. But we had run out of jam three months ago.

Jam! The thought made me hungry for something sweet. I glanced up at the sugar jar, high up on the shelf. I knew Mama was saving it to make more jam.

But the more I thought about the sugar, the hungrier I felt. Finally, I pulled a chair up to the counter and reached up. My fingers just barely touched the jar of sugar. I pulled it closer to the edge of the shelf. . . .

And then the jar slipped right off the shelf! I tried to catch it, but it fell with a loud plop right in the middle of the bread dough. Sugar spilled all over the bread and counter and onto the floor.

“Oh no!” I yelled. That woke my baby brother up. He started crying. I wanted to cry too. What would Mama say about this mess?



Sweet Honesty

ILLUSTRATION BY SARAH GRAMELSPACHER

After I got John calmed down, I did my best to clean up the sugar. I pulled the jar out of the dough and washed it. I wiped the sugar off the counter and floor. But there was nothing I could do to get the sugar out of the dough.

I thought about putting the jar back on the shelf. Maybe Mama wouldn’t notice it was empty. But I knew that wasn’t right. So I set the jar on the table and waited for Mama and Pa to come home.

When they got home, Mama noticed the sugar jar right away.

I took a deep breath. “I just wanted a taste of sugar. But I knocked the jar off the shelf. I tried to clean it up, but I couldn’t get it out of the bread dough.” The words rushed out as I looked down at the floor.

Mama was quiet for a minute.

“I’m so sorry,” I whispered.

Mama let out a sigh. “Well, I guess the bread will be extra sweet tonight,” she said. I looked up. She gave me a little smile. “Thank you for telling us what happened.”

As we ate the sugary bread that night, Mama and Pa and I talked about honesty.

“We all make lots of mistakes in life,” Pa said. “But when we are honest and try to repent, Heavenly Father and Jesus are happy. We will always be blessed for being honest—even if it seems harder at first.”

I was still sad that I had spilled the sugar. I knew we probably wouldn’t have as much jam this year because of my mistake. But I was glad I had told the truth. That was a sweet feeling no amount of sugar could give. ●

The author lives in Colorado, USA.



“Keeping divine commandments brings blessings, every time! Breaking divine commandments brings a loss of blessings, every time!”

President Russell M. Nelson, “Let Your Faith Show,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 30.