



STORY 1: A Story of Compassion

Once upon a time in Washington, there was a 9-year-old girl named Hailey Fort. One day, while she was out with her mom, Hailey saw a homeless man named Edward. He looked cold, hungry, and in need of help. Hailey felt a strong urge to assist him, so she approached and offered him a sandwich. That simple act of kindness was just the beginning.

Edward's situation made Hailey think, "How can I help more?" Instead of stopping at just giving a sandwich, Hailey decided she wanted to do more for people like Edward. She started gardening, growing fruits and vegetables to donate to the homeless. But her vision didn't stop there.

Hailey learned that many homeless people didn't have shelter from the rain or cold. With a big heart and determination, she decided to build mobile shelters for them. With a little help from her family, she constructed small, portable houses, ensuring that the homeless had a safe place to sleep at night.

She named her mission "Hailey's Harvest" and, over the years, donated hundreds of pounds of fresh produce and built numerous shelters for those in need. Hailey's story shows that no matter how young you are, if you see someone in need and ask yourself, "How can I help?" you can make a significant impact.

Hailey's genuine initiative beautifully illustrates the theme of being your brother's/sister's keeper. Her story can inspire our students to look beyond themselves and find ways to assist those in need.

For Parents:

1. **Observation:** Young Hailey, while out with her mom, notices Edward, a homeless man in need.
2. **Immediate Act of Kindness:** Instead of just passing by, Hailey approaches Edward and offers him a sandwich, symbolizing a direct, personal gesture of help.
3. **Taking Further Action:** Moved by Edward's situation, Hailey wonders, "How can I help more?" She starts gardening to provide fresh produce to the homeless, going beyond a one-time gesture.
4. **Extending the Mission:** Recognizing the need for shelter, Hailey, with support from her family, begins constructing mobile shelters, ensuring the homeless have protection from the elements.
5. **Impact and Legacy:** "Hailey's Harvest" becomes a symbol of dedication, with Hailey donating vast amounts of fresh produce and building shelters for the homeless.
6. **Core Message:** The story underscores the importance of seeing a need, asking "How can I help?" and then taking actionable steps to make a difference. Age or size doesn't matter; it's the heart's intent that counts.



STORY 2: Someone who truly understands: A Boy & A Pup

A farmer had some puppies he needed to sell. He painted a sign advertising the 4 pups and set about nailing it to a post on the edge of his yard. As he was driving the last nail into the post, he felt a tug on his overalls. He looked down into the eyes of a little boy.

“Mister,” he said, “I want to buy one of the puppies.”

“Well,” said the farmer, as he rubbed the sweat off the back of his neck, “These puppies come from fine parents and cost a good deal of money.”

The boy dropped his head for a moment. Then reaching deep into his pocket, he pulled out a handful of change and held it up to the farmer. “I’ve got thirty-nine cents. Is that enough to take a look?”

“Sure,” said the farmer. And with that he let out a whistle. “Here, Dolly!” he called.

Out from the doghouse and down the ramp ran Dolly followed by four little balls of fur. The little boy pressed his face against the chain link fence. His eyes danced with delight. As the dogs made their way to the fence, the little boy noticed something else stirring just inside the dog house. Slowly another little ball appeared, this one noticeably smaller. Down the ramp it slid. Then in a somewhat awkward manner, the littlest pup began hobbling toward the others, doing its best to catch up...

“I want that one,” the little boy said, pointing to the runt. The farmer knelt down at the boy’s side and said, “Son, you don’t want that puppy. He will never be able to run and play with you like these other dogs would.”

With that the little boy stepped back from the fence, reached down, and began rolling up one leg of his trousers. In doing so, he revealed a steel brace running down both sides of his leg attaching itself to a specially made shoe. Looking back up at the farmer, he said, “You see sir, I don’t run too well myself, and he will need someone who understands.”

With tears in his eyes, the farmer reached down and picked up the little pup.

For Parents:

The concept of being your brother's/sister's keeper revolves around the idea of taking responsibility for the welfare of others, especially those who might be vulnerable or in need. It's about understanding, supporting, and actively caring for one another.

1. **The Farmer's Perception:** At first, the farmer perceives the runt as disadvantaged, assuming it would be less desired. He assumes that the boy would want a puppy that can play and run without limitations. The farmer's initial reaction is out of sympathy; he feels bad for the boy and believes the boy deserves "better".
2. **The Boy's Connection:** The boy, however, sees himself in the puppy. He's not looking for a pet to pity; he's seeking a companion who understands him, one he can relate to. The boy knows firsthand what it feels like to face challenges and be perceived as "less than". He sees the puppy not as a burden, but as a fellow being with shared experiences. This connection is deep, personal, and born from empathy.
3. **Being a Keeper:** The boy's decision to choose the runt demonstrates the essence of being one's brother's/sister's keeper. He is effectively saying, "I see you, I understand you, and I will care for you because we share similar struggles." The boy recognizes the value in the puppy that others might overlook and is willing to stand up for it, to protect and care for it.

In essence, the story illustrates that to truly be your brother's/sister's keeper, one must move beyond sympathy (merely feeling sorry for someone) to empathy (understanding and connecting with their feelings and experiences). The boy doesn't just want to help; he wants to be there side by side, as equals, with the puppy. The question isn't just about "What can I do for you?" but rather "How can I be here with you, understanding and sharing in your experience?" This is the heart of being one's brother's or sister's keeper.



STORY 3: Let Your Gentleness Be Evident to All

A young student was taking a walk one day with a kindly professor who commonly treated his students as friends. As they went along, lying on the edge of the path, they saw a pair of old shoes, which they supposed to belong to a poor man who was employed in a field close by, and who had nearly finished his day's work. The student turned to the professor, saying: "Let us play the man a trick: we will hide his shoes and conceal ourselves behind those bushes, and wait to see his perplexity when he cannot find them."

"My friend," answered the professor, "we should never amuse ourselves at the expense of the poor. But you are comparatively rich and may give yourself a much greater pleasure by means of the poor man. Put a coin into each shoe, and then we will hide ourselves and watch how the discovery affects him."

The student did so, and they both placed themselves behind the bushes nearby. The poor man soon finished his work and came across the field to the path where he had left his coat and shoes. While putting on his coat, he slipped his foot into one of the shoes; but feeling something hard, he stooped down to feel what it was, and found the coin. Astonishment and wonder were seen upon his countenance. He gazed upon the coin, turned it around, and looked at it again and again. He then looked around him on all sides, but no person was to be seen. He now put the money back into his pocket and proceeded to put on the other shoe: but his surprise was doubled on finding the other coin. His feelings overcame him; he fell upon his knees, looked up to heaven and uttered aloud a fervent thanksgiving, in which he spoke of his wife, sick and helpless, and his children without bread, whom the timely bounty, from some unknown hand, would save from perishing.

The student stood there deeply affected, and his eyes filled with tears.

"Now," said the professor, "are you not much better pleased than if you had played your intended trick?" The youth replied, "You have taught me a lesson which I will never forget. I feel now the truth of those words, which I never understood before: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

For Parents:

1. **Starting Point:** The story begins with a student wanting to play a trick on a poor man for amusement, showing a lack of empathy.
2. **Turning Point:** The wise professor suggests an act of kindness instead, prompting the student to put coins in the man's shoes.

3. **Impact of Kindness:** The poor man's heartfelt gratitude, especially considering his dire situation with a sick wife and hungry kids, highlights the profound effect of a simple kind act.
4. **Lesson Learned:** The student realizes the deep satisfaction and joy derived from helping and understanding others, rather than making fun of them.
5. **Core Message:** The story emphasizes the importance of asking, "How can I help?" rather than seeking personal gain or amusement. It embodies the essence of being one's brother's/sister's keeper, emphasizing compassion, understanding, and positive influence.