

The following is a sample story from 'Tell Us A Story'.

Social Habits

Helen was a lovely girl, but she had some dreadful habits. In fact there were a number of children in school who were just like her. Helen often threw books down on the floor. In the morning she came to school late. Helen dropped litter everywhere she went. She opened doors, but never closed them behind her. Whenever Helen and her school friends went into a room, they often let the warm air escape through the open door. They thoughtlessly allowed cold draughts to blow into the room. They never closed the gates behind them in the fields, when they went for a walk. After they had passed through, the cows would later be found wandering on the busy road. In school Helen left the door of the rabbit hutch open, and the rabbits were found running about the playground. No-one liked Helen, or the other children who behaved like her, when they became careless and forgetful.

Mr. Turner the headteacher had spoken to Helen a number of times about her bad habits. Helen did not seem to care. At one morning Assembly, Mr. Turner decided to show Helen and the other children, that if they persisted in their behaviour, that after a time they would not be able to escape from their bad habits.

Mr. Turner called Helen up to the front of the Assembly. He took a large reel of cotton thread from his pocket. He asked Mrs. Brown, another Teacher, to tie it round Helen's arms and body once. He said, 'Helen, try and break the thread.' Helen easily broke the thread, and laughed. Mr. Turner, then asked the Teacher to tie the thread around Helen, three times, as the children were watching. Helen breathed in deeply, and pressed her arms out, and again she broke the thread. Although she felt that it was more difficult the second time.

Now, Mr. Turner asked the Teacher to tie the thread round and round Helen many times, as the children, sitting in silence, were beginning to understand the lesson. The headteacher said, 'Helen, try and break the thread.' Helen breathed very deeply, and she tried forcing her arms out-wards, but she could not move them. She was tied up as if with a strong rope. No matter how Helen tried, she could not break free. Immediately, the Teacher cut the thread with the scissors, and Helen became free and happy again. The children realised what had happened was like watching a school play being enacted before them. They wondered about its meaning!

Mr. Turner said to the children, 'Imagine that every thread is one day. Children can break a bad habit if they only do wrong a few times. However, if they are bad every day, then after months of bad behaviour, they will find that they are unable to escape from their bad habits. The bad ways take over, and it becomes almost impossible to be good.' They understood, because really underneath, they were good children.

Helen made up her mind to be very careful in future. She took care of books. She came to school early, and felt so much better about attending school. Helen helped the other children to Pick up their litter and to put it into litter bins. She really tried to close gates and doors behind her. Everyone began to like Helen and they became her friends again. When the Teacher was in the playground, and she wanted a responsible person to take care of her keys, whom do you think she chose? The most amazing thing was that the other children who had copied Helen's bad habits, now copied her good one's. The school became a much happier place.





Prayer

Teach us Lord, to be considerate of others.
Let not bad habits bind us.
Show us that actions form habits, and that habits form our character.
Help us to form good habits. Amen.

Hymn

He Made Me (C&P1. 18)

Teachers' Note:

-  Helen had some bad habits.
-  She may not have been aware of her bad habits.
-  Acts form habits, and habits form character.
-  Everybody liked Helen. when she changed her conduct.