

GROWING UP IN
Oak Grove

Kristi Dozier

Growing Up in Oak Grove
by Kristi Dozier

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Introduction

Join some of the children growing up in Oak Grove as they play together, spend time with their families, and learn at Oak Grove Christian School. These 35 short devotional stories teach lessons about humility, generosity, self-control, and many other important character traits.

Growing Up in Oak Grove is written to be read to early elementary students. Each story also includes three unique features to help students to grow.



Way to Grow

A specific trait children can learn to live out their faith



Scripture Reading

A Bible verse that highlights the Way to Grow



Your Turn to Grow

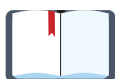
An application to challenge students to grow in their personal relationship with God

You can read one story each week throughout the school year or according to whatever schedule works best for your classroom. We pray these stories direct students to the teaching of God's Word to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).

Trampoline Tricks



Growth



2 Peter 3:18

Luca and Malachi were jumping on the trampoline in Luca's backyard.

"Hey, Malachi. Watch this!" Luca jumped into the air as high as he could. He leaned forward and spread his arms out wide like a bird before landing on his belly. He bounced back into the air and landed on his feet.

"Wow! That was such a cool trick!

"My sister, Kinsley, taught me how to do it," said Luca, still jumping. "It's called the belly drop. Want me to teach you?"

"Yeah!"

Luca showed Malachi what to do. "Now you try," he said.

After several tries, Malachi got the hang of it. "This is awesome!" he yelled. "Watch this!" He did two belly drops back-to-back to show Luca that he had mastered the skill.

"You're getting good!" Luca said. "How about an ice cream break?"

Luca hopped off the trampoline and ran into the kitchen from the backdoor. A few minutes later, he came back with two ice cream bars from the freezer. The boys sat on the back porch and ate their snack.

"Today's been so much fun," said Malachi. "We should do this again tomorrow!"

"I wish we could, but tomorrow's the first day of school."

“Please don’t remind me. I’ve been trying to forget all day,” said Malachi. “I don’t want to go to kindergarten.”

“Why not?” Luca asked, his mouth full of cold ice cream bar.

“Because then I can’t play all day. And what if my teacher is mean? I have Miss Johnson.”

Luca smiled. “Miss Johnson isn’t mean. She was my teacher last year, and she is really fun. My parents said I grew a lot in her class.”

“You grew at school?” asked Malachi. “That’s good! I need to grow. You’re way taller than me,” Malachi said.

Luca laughed. “I don’t mean that kind of growing.”

“What do you mean?”

“I learned how to do things, like how to cross the monkey bars all by myself.”

“All by yourself?”

“Yeah, I got pretty good,” Luca said. “And we went on a field trip to the science museum! I got to touch some real animals and do fun experiments.”

“Cool! I love animals. What else?”

“I also learned about how God made everything, how He gave us the Bible so that we can know Him better, and how He sent His Son Jesus to die for our sins.”

“Wow! Sounds like you learned a lot,” said Malachi.

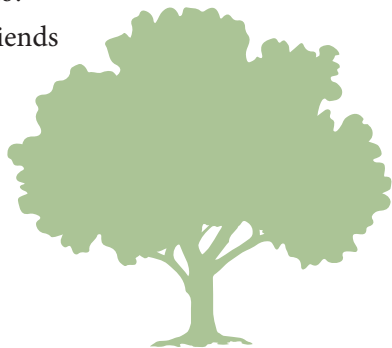
“I did, but I grew a lot, too. Learning about God’s love has made me want to tell other people about Jesus. And Miss Johnson says every time I obey, God is growing me to be more like Jesus.”

“I think I see what you mean,” said Malachi, “but I’m still nervous. What if I don’t know anyone in my class?”

“Don’t worry. You will make new friends at school. That’s part of growing, too!”

“I guess school doesn’t sound so bad,” said Malachi.

“We can grow together!” Luca stood up and grabbed his trash.



“Let’s throw away these wrappers and get back to the trampoline. I’ve still got to teach you the pike jump!”



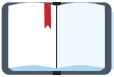
Your Turn to Grow

Are you taller than you were last year? God makes people grow on the outside, but did you know that He also makes us grow on the inside? Not only do we learn new things, but with God’s help we can grow to love and obey Him more. Are you ready to grow?

Fish Factor



Responsibility



Luke 16:10a

“Oh, Dad! What about this one? It looks just like Ava’s cat Buttercup,” said Kinsley, picking up the small orange kitten. “Isn’t it cute?”

Kinsley, Luca, and their dad were at the pet store. For several months, Kinsley and Luca had been asking their parents for a pet.

The kitten purred and snuggled up against Kinsley, blinking its big green eyes.

“It does look a lot like Buttercup, doesn’t it? But Mom is allergic to cats, remember?”

“Yeah, every time Mom is anywhere near cats, she sneezes,” said Luca, adding a fake sneeze for effect. “Achoo!”

“How about something smaller?” suggested Mr. Miller to his children.

“Like a puppy?” asked Luca. “These puppies are tiny.” The small, yellow puppy stood on its hind legs and nibbled Luca’s fingers like a chew toy.

“These puppies are little now, but they will eventually grow up to be big dogs. Plus, taking care of dogs takes a lot of responsibility.”

“I can be responsible, Dad,” said Kinsley.

“Me too,” said Luca. “How hard could it be?”

“Someone would have to feed the dog, give it fresh water, and take it outside many times every day.”

“Every day?” asked Luca.

“Even when it’s raining?” asked Kinsley.

“Yes, every day—even when it’s raining or snowing or really hot outside.”

Luca and Kinsley stared wide-eyed at their dad. “Want to keep looking?” he asked.

“Yes!” they replied together.

“Look at the birdie,” said Kinsley. “It looks just like Mrs. Chu’s bird.”

Kinsley walked up to the cage and said, “Hello” and “Pretty Bird,” just like she’d heard Mrs. Chu say to her bird. Mrs. Chu’s bird usually said these words back to her, but this bird just turned its head sideways and looked at Kinsley.

“What’s wrong with this bird, Dad?”

“Nothing’s wrong with it—it just hasn’t been trained to talk yet. Mrs. Chu probably spent a long time working with her bird to teach it to talk.”

“That sounds like a lot of work,” said Luca.

“It can be,” said Mr. Miller. “And someone would have to clean the bird’s cage at least once a week. Which of you wants to be responsible for that?”

“Not me,” said Kinsley.

“Me neither,” said Luca.

“That’s why I suggested something smaller,” said Mr. Miller. “This is your first pet, so maybe you should work your way up to a bigger pet. You can practice some responsibility.”

“I like that idea,” said Luca. “But what kind of pet would help us do that?”

“I was thinking about a fish! Goldfish don’t take up much space, they’re fun to watch, and you just have to feed them. It can live on the kitchen



counter where we can all enjoy it, and you two can take turns feeding it. What do you think?” asked Mr. Miller, holding up a plastic bag with a bright little fish.

The fish flitted around in the water. As Luca and Kinsley leaned in to take a closer look, the fish stared back at them and blew a big bubble.

“I love him, Daddy! Let’s call him Mr. Bubbles!”

“What do you think, Luca?”

“I like him, too!”

“Maybe once you’ve both proven you can be responsible, we can try a bigger pet. Do you think you can do that?”

“I can!” exclaimed Luca.

“Me too, Daddy!”

“Then let’s take Mr. Bubbles home and show him to Mom.”



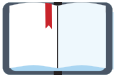
Your Turn to Grow

How do you practice responsibility at home? Can your parents depend on you to do the tasks that you’ve promised to do? The more you practice responsibility, the more you can be trusted.

Just a Bite



Honesty



Ephesians 4:25

“What’s that amazing smell?” Ava followed the scent of freshly baked cookies into the kitchen. Ava’s mom made the best homemade chocolate chip cookies in Oak Grove. They were usually for guests, and today was no exception. Mrs. Chu and her daughter Kylie were coming over for afternoon tea.

Ava dragged a chair to the counter and climbed up to see a plate of warm chocolate chip cookies. They looked and smelled delicious. Ava knew it would be wrong to eat one of the cookies before their guests arrived, but surely her mom wouldn’t mind if she just touched one.

Ava looked around to make sure she was alone. Then she touched a cookie on the edge of the plate. The chocolate chips were so soft that some of the chocolate smeared on the plate. *Mom won’t mind if I lick the chocolate off the plate,* she said to herself, and she took a big lick.

As she moved the cookies around a little more, Ava noticed that one of the cookies was broken. *Surely Mom wouldn’t want to serve that cookie to our guests.* So, she picked up the broken pieces one at a time and stuffed them into her mouth.

Once she finished the first cookie, Ava noticed other cookies that were broken, so she ate a couple more.

Just as Ava was about to bite into her fourth broken cookie, she heard the doorbell ring.

“Ava, will you let our guests in?” called her mother.

Without thinking, Ava took one last bite, quickly slid the chair back to the table, and rushed to the door.

“Hi, Mrs. Chu. Hi, Kylie,” said Ava politely. “Come on in.”

Ava led the guests to the dining room table where her mom had already set out the fancy teacups.

“Wow, these teacups are lovely!” said Mrs. Chu.

Just then, Ava’s mother, Mrs. Wilson, walked in from the kitchen with the plate of homemade cookies in her hand.

Ava’s eyes grew wide as her mother placed the plate on the table. *Maybe no one will notice the missing cookies*, Ava thought to herself.

Mrs. Wilson gasped when she noticed the half-eaten cookie. She quickly picked up the plate of cookies and said, “Ava, may I speak with you in the kitchen, please?”

Ava followed her mom into the kitchen, trying her best to pretend that everything was normal.

Mrs. Wilson held up the cookie with a bite missing. “Do you know what might have happened to this cookie?”

“Uh—I saw Buttercup in here earlier. Maybe she got into the cookies.”

“I don’t think so,” said Mrs. Wilson. “Buttercup has been outside all afternoon. I put her out myself.”

Ava looked out the kitchen window, and sure enough, there was Buttercup looking up into the neighbor’s tree, tail thumping as she watched the squirrels.

“Want to try again? How did this happen?” asked Mrs. Wilson.

“If it wasn’t Buttercup, then I don’t know who it was,” said Ava, shrugging her shoulders.

“Then why do you have chocolate on your lips?” Mrs. Wilson asked, handing Ava a napkin. “And why is there an Ava-shaped bite in this cookie?”

Ava wiped her mouth. *Chocolate! She had been caught!*



“I know you did this, Ava. I’m not upset that you ate cookies, but you do need to admit what you did wrong and apologize.”

Ava looked down, “I’m sorry, Mom. I know I shouldn’t have eaten the cookies. And I shouldn’t have lied to you about it either. Will you forgive me?”

“I forgive you, Ava,” said Mrs. Wilson, stooping down and wrapping her arms around Ava’s shoulders. “Now, let’s go have some tea with our guests!”



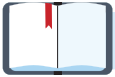
Your Turn to Grow

Do you tell the truth—even after you have done something wrong? Or are you tempted to lie instead of admitting what you have done? Being honest is important. God always forgives us when we sin, but we must do our part by telling the truth.

Laundry Letdown



Obedience



Colossians 3:23

Mason and Myles watched through the window as their sister Maddie took the clean clothes down from the clothesline.

“Boys,” said Mrs. Thompson, “Maddie is going to bring the dry clothes inside for you two to fold.”

“But Mom,” whined Mason, “Why does Maddie always get the fun jobs? Even before the dryer broke, she had the fun chores.”

“Yeah,” agreed Myles, “She just has to take the clothes down, and we get stuck folding them!”

“You boys only think that taking the clothes off the clothesline is fun because it’s not *your* job. If you were out in the hot sun, you’d probably feel different. Am I right?” Mrs. Thompson asked.

“Maybe,” said Mason, “but look at Maddie smiling out there.”

“Yeah, looks like she’s even singing,” said Myles.

“Probably because *she* doesn’t have to fold clothes,” added Mason.

“Watch your attitude, boys.”

Just then Maddie flung open the back door and walked into the kitchen. The basket she was carrying was piled to the top. “I love the smell of clean clothes,” Maddie said, sniffing them before she set the basket on the floor.

“Me too,” said Mrs. Thompson. “Thanks for getting the clothes off the line, Maddie. Now it’s time for you boys to fold.”

Mason reached down to pick up the basket. “Better go ahead and get it over with,” he complained, stomping toward the stairs.

Myles frowned and followed. Not only did the twins look alike, but they stomped alike, too.

Mason dumped the heap of clothes on Myles’s bed. He picked out the clothes that were his and left all the rest for Myles to fold.

“Hey! That’s not fair!” Myles said. “We’re supposed to do this job together.”

“We are doing it together,” Mason said. “You’re just doing more.”

“I’m not doing all of this by myself,” said Myles. “Here, you can fold Maddie’s stuff,” he said, throwing her clothes across the room. “And here’s one of your shirts,” he said, throwing a green Oak Grove Christian School shirt at Mason.

“I am definitely not folding *this*,” said Mason, tossing Maddie’s frilly, pink dress at Myles’s head, which knocked his glasses sideways.

Myles straightened his glasses and held the dress by its sleeve. “I’m not folding it either,” he said, scrunching up his nose.

This time Myles wadded the dress up like a ball and threw it right at the pile that Mason had already folded, knocking some of the clothes off the bed.

“What are you doing?” Mason yelled. “I just folded those! Now they’re on the dirty floor!”

“Sorry,” laughed Myles. “I guess you’ll have to start over now. I’m almost finished.”

“Not anymore!” said Mason, knocking Myles’s neatly stacked pile off his bed. “Looks like you’ll have to start over too.”

“Mom!” Myles yelled.

Mrs. Thompson stood in the doorway and looked around. The clean clothes were all over the floor. “What happened here? You boys were supposed to be folding these. What’s your dad going to say when he hears that you’ve both been disobedient?”



“I was obedient,” said Myles. “I was almost finished, and he knocked my pile over.”

“That may be true, but what about your attitude? Neither of you did this chore with a happy heart. Did you?”

Both boys looked at the floor. “No, Mom,” they said.

“Remember that obedience isn’t only doing what you’re told—it’s doing it with a good attitude. There’s a difference.”

“You’re right,” said Mason.

“Yeah, we’re sorry, Mom,” said Myles.

“Let’s start over,” said Mason. “It won’t take long if we work together.”

“Now, that’s better,” said Mrs. Thompson.



Your Turn to Grow

How do you respond when your parents give you a chore that you don’t really like? Are you obedient, or do you have a bad attitude? True obedience isn’t only doing what you’re told—but doing what you’re told with the right attitude from your heart.