

TOMMY HELPFUL

KEYWORD: Attraction.

Our story today is about a little boy called Tommy Helpful. He was such a little chap to have such a big name, but he had, oh, such a big, big heart. His real name was Thomas, but everybody called him Tommy, and his father added the name of Helpful. Of course, there was a reason for it though. Can you guess what the reason was? Yes, you are right!

It was because Tommy Helpful was always trying to help somebody else. It didn't matter whether it was his mother cooking the dinner, his sister setting the table, his father mending the fence, or even his baby brother learning to walk; whatever it was, if Tommy was there, he would be sure to be trying to help get it done.

One day a man came to Tommy Helpful's home with a big truck loaded with stones, which he dumped in a pile by the garden and then went away. Pretty soon he came back with a load of sand, and left that in another pile together with some sacks filled with lime.

Tommy wondered what it was all about, and so when his father came home, he asked him. He was told that they

were to build a stone wall around the garden. That pleased Tommy Helpful very much, for he knew he would like to help his father build the wall, and the more he thought about it, the more excited he felt. His father told him that if he were up early next morning, he might help him to place a line where the wall was to be built. So Tommy awoke early and he got dressed so quickly, his shoes all laced, that his mother said he was a regular alarm clock to be up so early.

Father told Tommy Helpful to eat plenty of breakfast, as there was a lot of work to be done, so Tommy did so, even to the crust on his toast, for it would never do to fail when so much depended on him. He was putting on his cap and getting ready to go to the garden, when a messenger came to say that Grandfather had been hurt, and his father had to hurry away as fast as possible to see him.

Poor Tommy Helpful! How disappointed he was, to be sure. And how sorry he felt because his kind grandfather, whom he loved very dearly, was suffering. He hardly knew how to keep from crying, but he wanted to be brave like his father, so instead of making a big fuss, he just went out to the garden alone.

There he saw the stones, all in a big pile, looking just as though they were waiting to be built into a wall. They were round stones, with such round friendly faces that Tommy Helpful thought he would just stay and play with them a little while. Then he thought that perhaps *he* could build the stone wall. All of a sudden he heard a whisper, "You can't build it by yourself, Tommy. Don't try it." It was a whisper that somehow seemed right inside of him.

Then another voice whispered, "You can build it, Tommy. Go ahead and build it."

So Tommy listened to this second voice and started to pile up the stones for a wall. He forgot that he had been taught never to meddle with his father's things when he

was away; he forgot that he didn't know how to build a stone wall; all he thought of was that he wanted to do it.

Do you think he was able to build the wall? Why, no! He worked away just as hard as he could, but as fast as he put the stones up, down they fell again. He wasn't very pleased, but he kept on piling them up and piling them up, and they kept on falling down and falling down. At last he got so hot and tired and cross that he didn't feel a bit happy. He blamed the stones, and he decided to quit.

But what a mess he had made of the garden! The stones were scattered about in all directions, and the flowers all broken down and crushed.

When Father came home, he looked so grieved that Tommy felt ashamed, and when Father told him that he could not call him Tommy Helpful any more if he did things like that, Tommy felt more ashamed and very sorry. He made up his mind that he would listen only to the good voice in the future. You see, he knew all about the two voices that speak to little boys and girls, and to big papas and mamas, too; one was Mr. Love, who makes everybody happy, and the other was Mr. Selfish, who gets people into trouble. He knew that it was very good to be helpful to others, but he also knew that he should obey his parents.

Next day he watched his father make a mixture of sand, lime, and water which was called mortar. This his father spread between the stones as he piled them up, and it kept them from falling out of the wall. So the wall was built.

"Mortar is like love, you see," said Tommy Helpful's father. "It binds things together."