



The Substitute

What happens to you when you do something bad – disobey your parents, steal, cheat, tell a lie, and so on? Do you get punished? Did anyone ever take a punishment for something you did?

Many, many years ago life was different than today. Children were often whipped with a hickory stick as punishment for doing bad things, even in the schools!

At one of these schools the students were so bad that several teachers had given up trying to teach them. Then a new teacher came to this school.

The first thing he did was ask the students to make up their own rules for the classroom, along with the punishment for breaking these rules. He was surprised that they took the assignment seriously and were very strict with themselves.

Some of the students' rules were: "No stealing; no cursing; no fighting..." The punishment for each rule was the same: "Ten lashes (a whipping) across the back without a coat on. No exceptions."

The first day went well. But on the second day someone's lunch was stolen. After searching, the teacher found out that the

smallest, thinnest student was the thief.

The punishment for stealing was ten lashes, according to the students' own rules. The class watched as the teacher prepared to whip the guilty little boy. But the boy would not take off his coat.

Finally the teacher made him remove it, only to find he had no shirt underneath! Everyone in the school saw how skinny the boy was. He seemed too weak and thin to bear the whipping. Crying, he told them all how poor his family was.

The boy's story made his classmates feel sorry for him. But what about the punishment? *A rule had been broken, and punishment must be given.*

Suddenly the big boy whose lunch had been stolen came forward. He said he would take the whipping for the smaller boy. Just think – the boy whose lunch had been taken was now offering to receive the punishment for the one who stole it!

The class agreed that a substitute could take the whipping for the rule-breaker. After it was over, everyone was in tears as the small boy told the bigger one, "You took my whipping! I'll thank you forever!"

Boys and girls, do you know that Someone has suffered for all the bad things you have ever done? Jesus Christ died on the cross as *your* Substitute. God punished Him for *your* sins. If you confess to God that you are a sinner, He will forgive you because of Jesus' death. Then you will be ready for heaven!

“He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities ... and by His stripes (a whipping) we are healed (Isaiah 53:5).

He “bore our sins in His own body on the tree (cross)” (1 Peter 2:24).



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