

10 *Kicking Out*

FIRST STEPS

THEME: being led into trouble by an older pupil

Jacob watched the other boys playing football. He wanted to play with them but they wouldn't let him. Jacob was good at football, the other boys knew that. The reason why they didn't like to play with him was because he was always arguing about whose turn it was to throw in or who was going into goal or if it was handball or not. The other boys just got fed up with him, especially Lawrence, and as it was his ball he said that Jacob couldn't play. So Jacob just watched, feeling very angry and fed up inside.

Jacob was sitting by himself watching the other boys, when he was aware of someone else sitting beside him. It was Tom from one of the older classes. This was the first time Tom had ever spoken to him.

"Why aren't you playing football?" asked Tom.

"I don't want to play with them, they're stupid," replied Jacob.

"Why?"

"Because they always want to play their way," said Jacob. "Do you like playing football?"

"Yeah, it's all right," said Tom.

"Why aren't you playing with the boys in your class?" asked Jacob.

"They're in a mood because I kicked Calvin's ball over the fence. Do you want to play chase?"

Jacob couldn't believe his ears: Tom was asking to play with him. Tom, from class 6H, who was good at everything. Jacob didn't need the stupid boys in his class, he would play with the older boys. The two boys began to chase each other around the playground. Tom let Jacob, who was obviously much smaller, catch him. Then Tom would take his time catching Jacob. Once they ran across the area where Jacob's friends were playing football. Lawrence had the ball, but Tom ran by and kicked the ball down the field as far as he could. Tom and Jacob laughed as Lawrence had to go on to the wet grass to get the ball back. The other boys playing with Lawrence glared at Tom and Jacob.

After a few more minutes the bell rang and the children went into class. "See you at lunchtime," Tom called out to Jacob, as they went off to different doors. Jacob was delighted that he had a new friend to play with, especially an older boy. Lawrence and the other boys just glared at him. Baku tried to tell Mrs Bloomer about Tom kicking the ball away but she just told him to sit down and be quiet.

Jacob couldn't wait until lunchtime. He kept telling Lawrence he never wanted to play football with him again. He had a new friend and he proudly told everyone that he was playing with one of the older boys. Lunchtime came and, after Jacob had rushed through his lunch, he ran outside to meet his new friend. He saw Tom standing on his own, watching his friends playing.

"Hello, Jacob. Do you want to play?" asked Tom, when Jacob ran over to him.

"Yeah. What do you want to do?" asked Jacob.

"Do you know how to play karate kicks?" asked Tom.

"Do you do karate?"

"Yeah, it's easy. I'll show you."

Tom began to show Jacob how to stand and then kick out with his feet. Jacob soon got the idea and they stood facing each other, making gruesome faces and doing karate kicks in the air.

After a while they sat down on a bench and watched Jacob's classmates play football. Two boys went for the ball and it rolled over to where Tom and Jacob were sitting. Jacob quickly stood up and kicked the ball away from the boys, across the playground.

"Why did you do that?" shouted Lawrence into Jacob's face. He gave Jacob a little push and ran off to get the ball.

"Don't let him push you like that," urged Tom.

"What do you mean?" asked Jacob.

"Give him a karate kick, right here," said Tom, pointing to his stomach.

"Should I?" asked Jacob, not sure if he really should do what Tom suggested.

"Yeah, you can say he pushed you first. Go on, it won't hurt him," Tom continued to urge him.

Lawrence had now come back with the ball. He walked past Jacob, saying that he would tell the dinner lady if he did that again. Jacob, encouraged by Tom, ran towards him and gave him a hard kick in the stomach. Lawrence dropped like a stone on to the ground, screaming and holding his stomach. The other boys gathered around, while Baku ran to get the teacher on duty. Jacob stood, rooted to the spot, suddenly realising that a karate kick can hurt and that he had done something very wrong. He turned round to Tom, but found he had run off and was nowhere to be seen.

"What's going on here, Jacob? The other boys said you kicked Lawrence," demanded Mrs Bloomer.

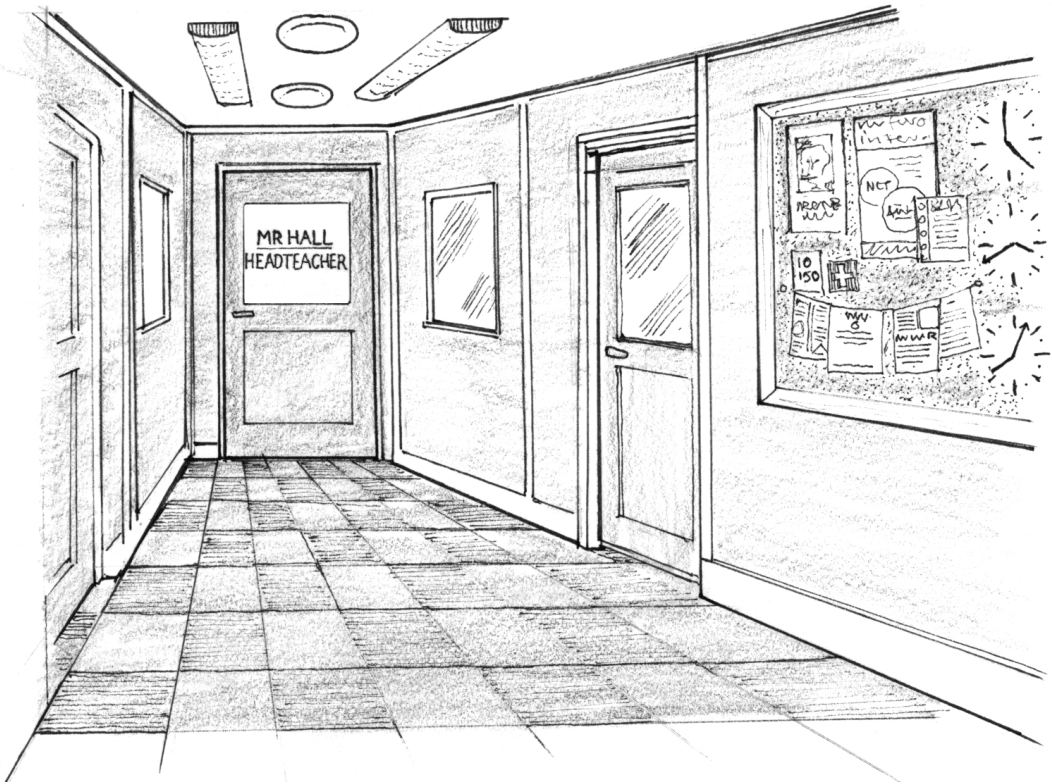
"It was Tom, the big boy in class 6H. He told me to do it," cried Jacob.

"If he told you to jump off the roof of the school, would you do it?"

"No."

"You know it is wrong to kick other people, so why did you do it?"

Jacob could not answer, he just looked down and cried. Lawrence got up and sat on the bench. He was still crying but he felt better. Mrs Bloomer led Jacob into school. With a horrible dread, he realised where he was going. When they got to Mr Hall's office he was told to wait outside the door while Mrs Bloomer went inside to talk to the headteacher. Jacob stood there, feeling wretched and all alone.



Discussion:

1. What do you think should happen to Jacob?
2. Why didn't the other boys want to play with him?
3. What does Jacob need to do now in order to win the friendship of the other boys?
4. What should you do when someone tells you to do something that you know is wrong?

Prayer:

Lord, teach us to be kind and gentle to our friends. Give us the courage to say no when someone tells us to do something we know is wrong. Help us to treat others as we would like them to treat us.