

Newbie Peers

Greetings!



Major announcement to follow:



We're getting a new transfer student to our school from Sweden...



...apparently she has a music scholarship, and she's arriving today!


Jenna was bugged. She feared that her world was going to be turned upside down, and it all had to do with that Swedish girl—Brigit—who had just transferred to her school, her class, and her band! And who was probably, right now, making inroads into Jenna's inner circle of BFFs!

Jenna didn't want things to change. She was happy with her group of friends, pleased with how their music club was coming along, but now that Brigit was here, she didn't know how to cope.




I'm Brigit!


I hear you have a music club...



I'd love to be in it!
I play bass.



Awesome! Maybe she could fill in for our missing bass player?



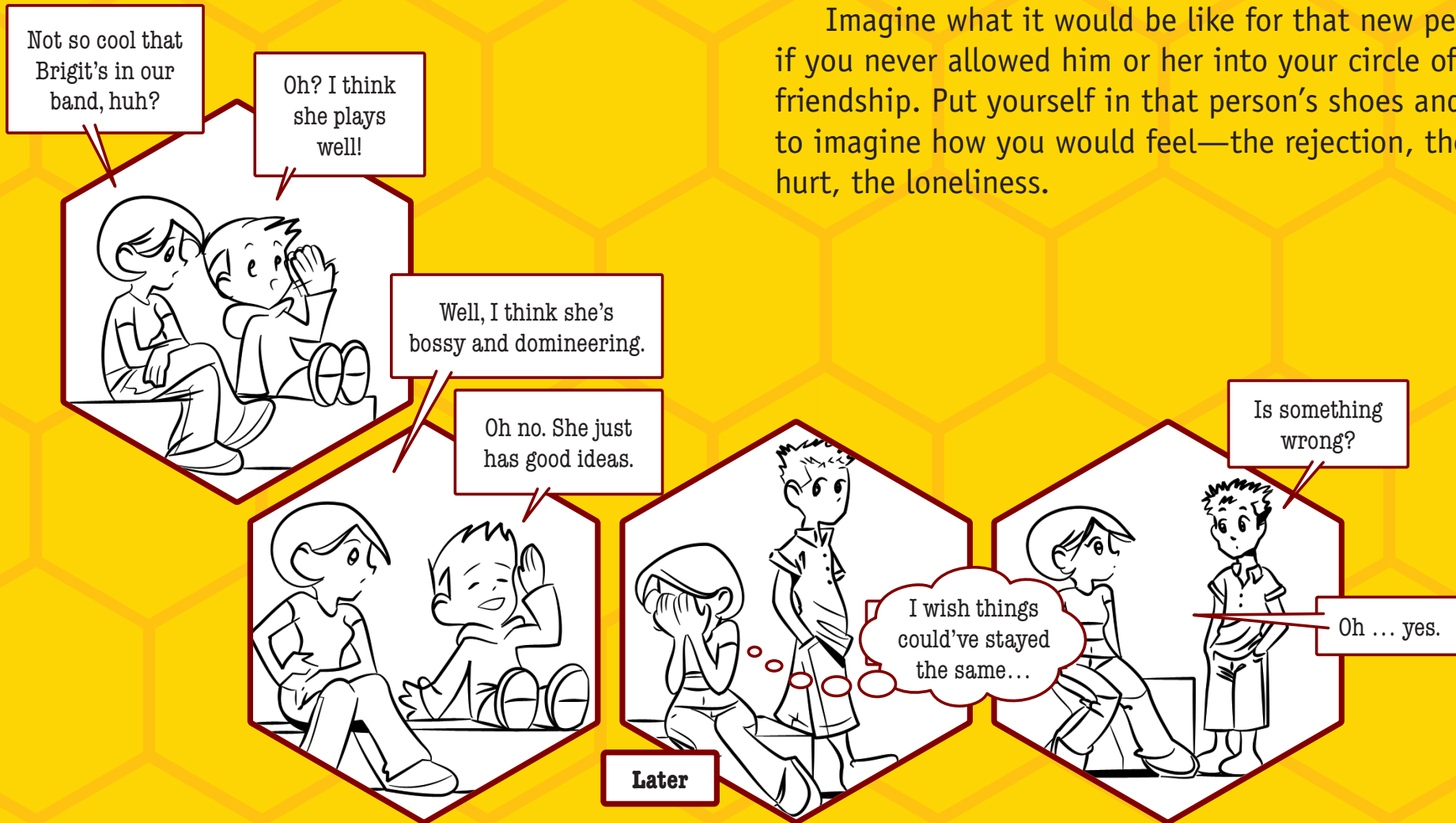
Brigit! We're gonna practice!

Oh no! They invited Brigit.

Have you ever had someone new move to your neighborhood or join your class whom you weren't sure about welcoming into your world? You had your cozy group of friends, and everything was fine and dandy until someone new came along, and well, you just didn't warm up to this "intruder." You may have wondered how the dynamics of your peer group would change, and you weren't sure you wanted things different than they were.

Learning to make people feel welcome is important when others join your social or school circle.

Imagine what it would be like for that new person if you never allowed him or her into your circle of friendship. Put yourself in that person's shoes and try to imagine how you would feel—the rejection, the hurt, the loneliness.



That night

I'm glad I
talked with
João. ...



He said I should
put myself in
Brigit's place.



The Bible tells us “Let us love one another, for love comes from God” (1 John 4:7a) and to “Do everything in love” (1 Corinthians 16:14 NIV). This means that regardless of feelings of insecurity or other fears when it comes to meeting new people or making new friends, God expects us to extend love to everyone we meet. You don’t need to become best friends with each new person who enters your life, but you do need to extend to them care and concern, which are manifestations of love.

What if I had
to go to a new
school...

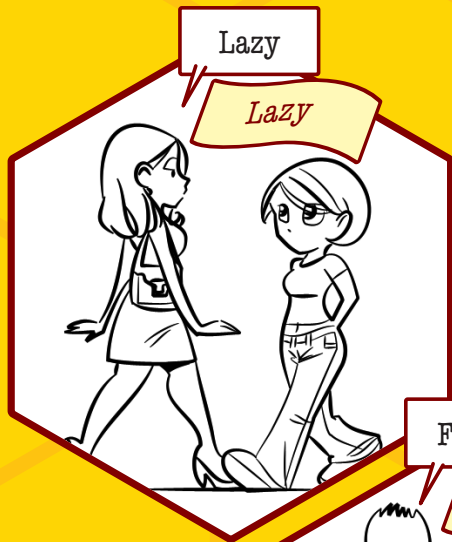


...and the
students there
labeled me?

How would
I feel?



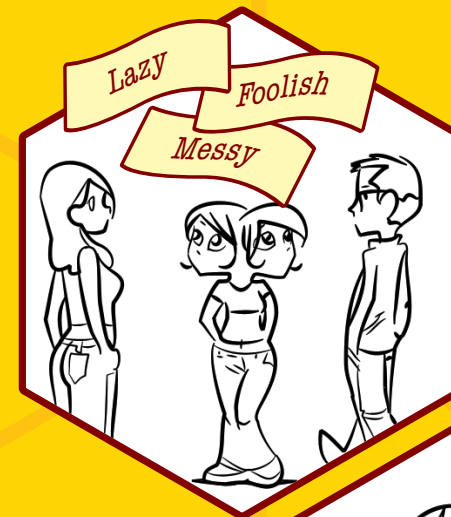
Love is the basic standard that Jesus expects of Christians. “Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8 NIV). You show love by drawing a circle big enough to include others in your circle of friends, and that doesn’t shut anyone out. “Offer hospitality to each other without grumbling” (1 Peter 4:9 NIV).



Someone might not be your favorite person to hang out with, and that's understandable. Although, if you've never tried spending time with them, then you'd never know if they might be someone whom you really click with! But even if that person never becomes your best friend, you still need to love and accept them as someone who Jesus loves and created.



Even if you don't feel you have any other common ground with that person, you have this in common—you were both created by God to be like Him, and Jesus cared enough about that person to die on the cross for them, just as He did for you.



I hate when people label me.



"So God created people in his own image; God patterned them after himself" (Genesis 1:27 NLT).

As you grow older, you will begin to recognize the value of friendship and the strength and joy friends bring into your life. So do what you can now to build those habits of care and concern, so that you will be skilled in reaching out, accepting others, and bringing them into your circle of friendship—and into your life.

Memory nugget: “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love” (1 John 4:7–8 NIV).

