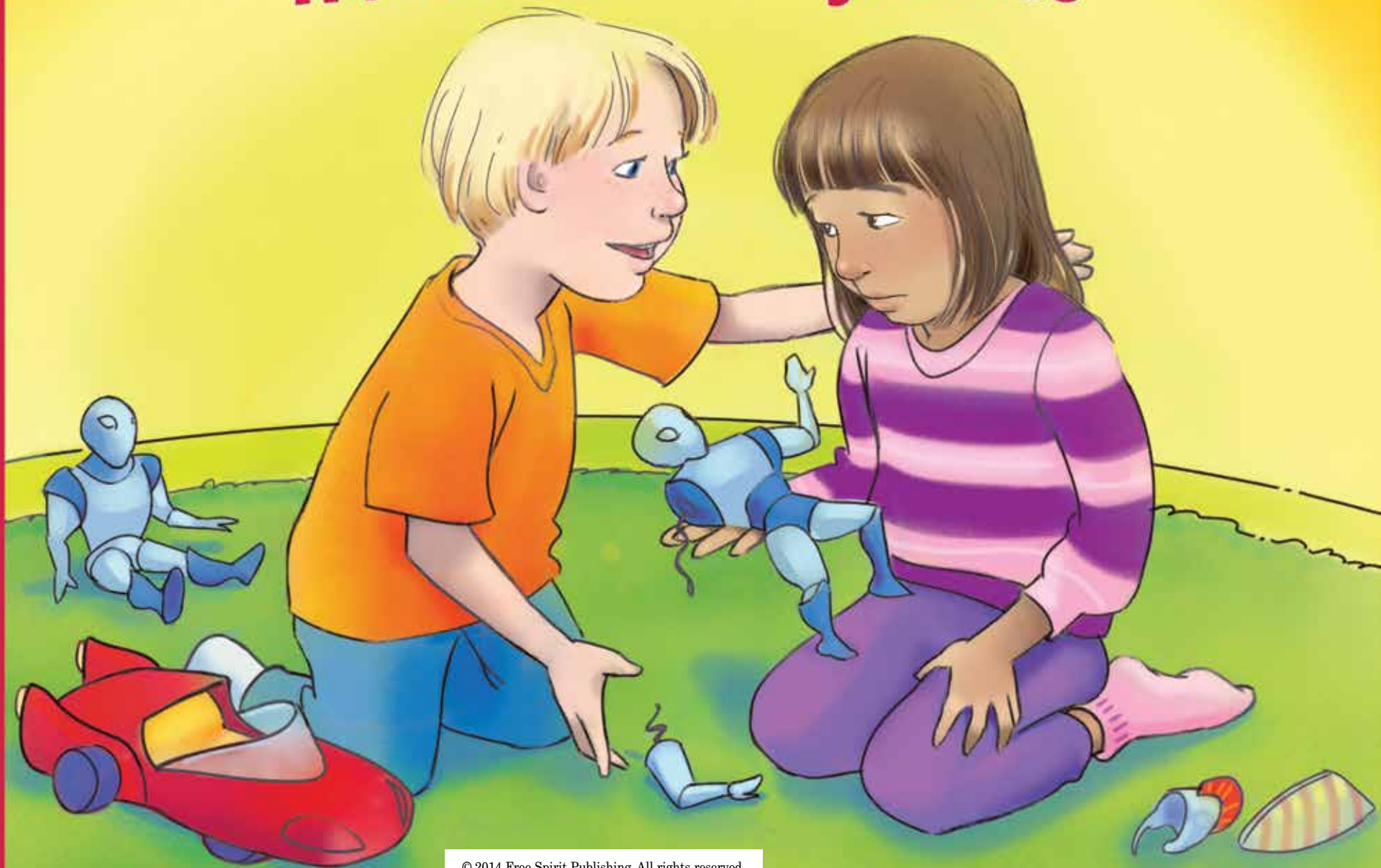




Includes
activity
guide for
adults

Forgive and Let Go!

A book about forgiveness



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Cheri J. Meiners ★ **illustrated by Elizabeth Allen**



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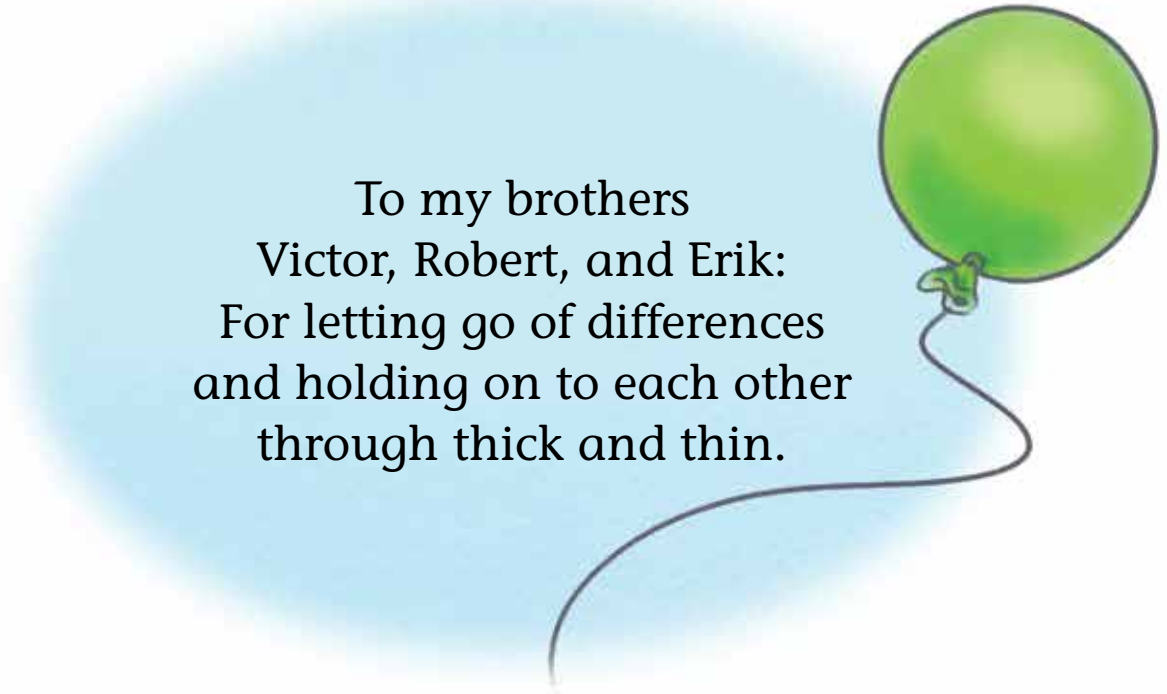
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To my brothers
Victor, Robert, and Erik:
For letting go of differences
and holding on to each other
through thick and thin.

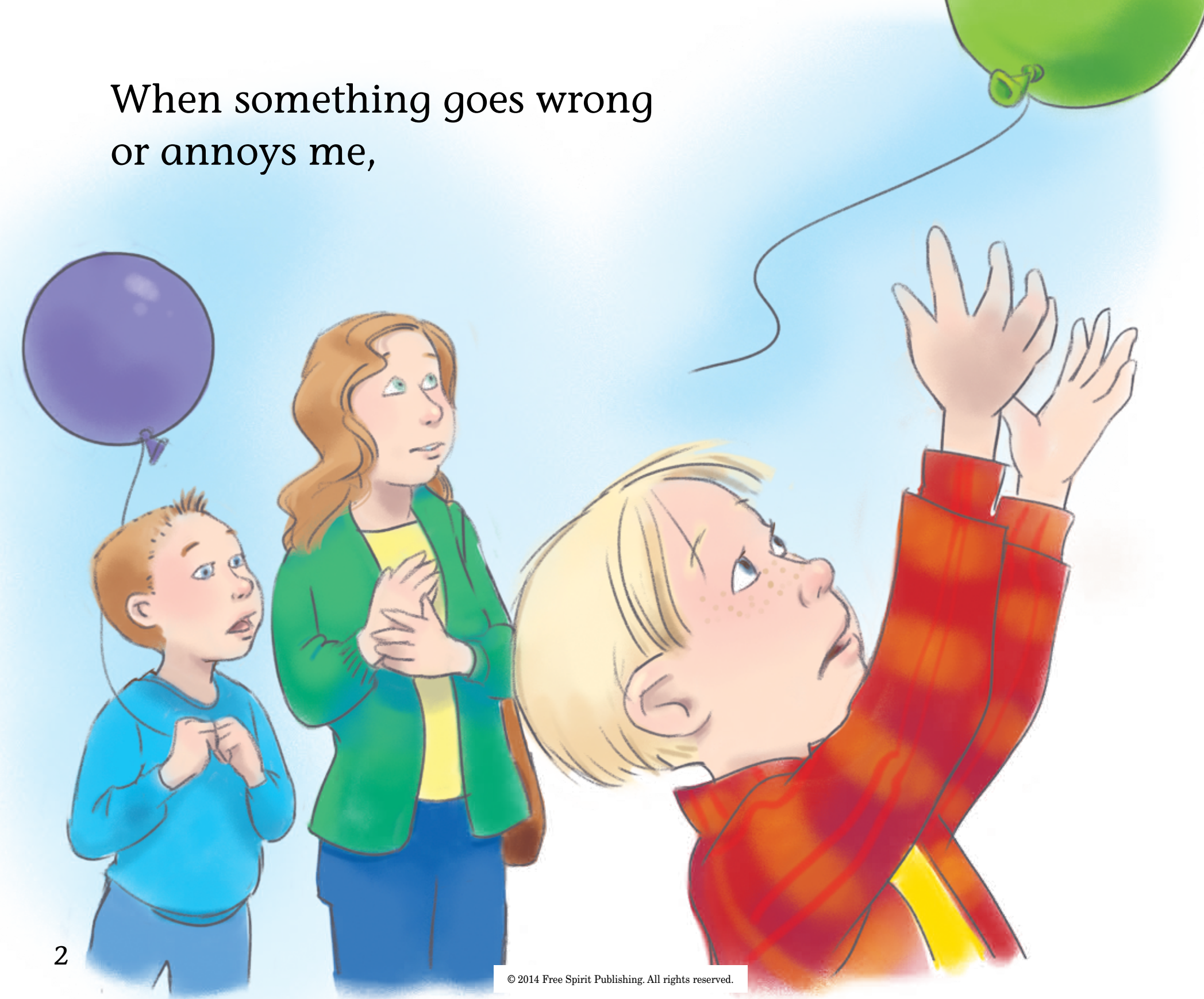


I like to get along
with people.

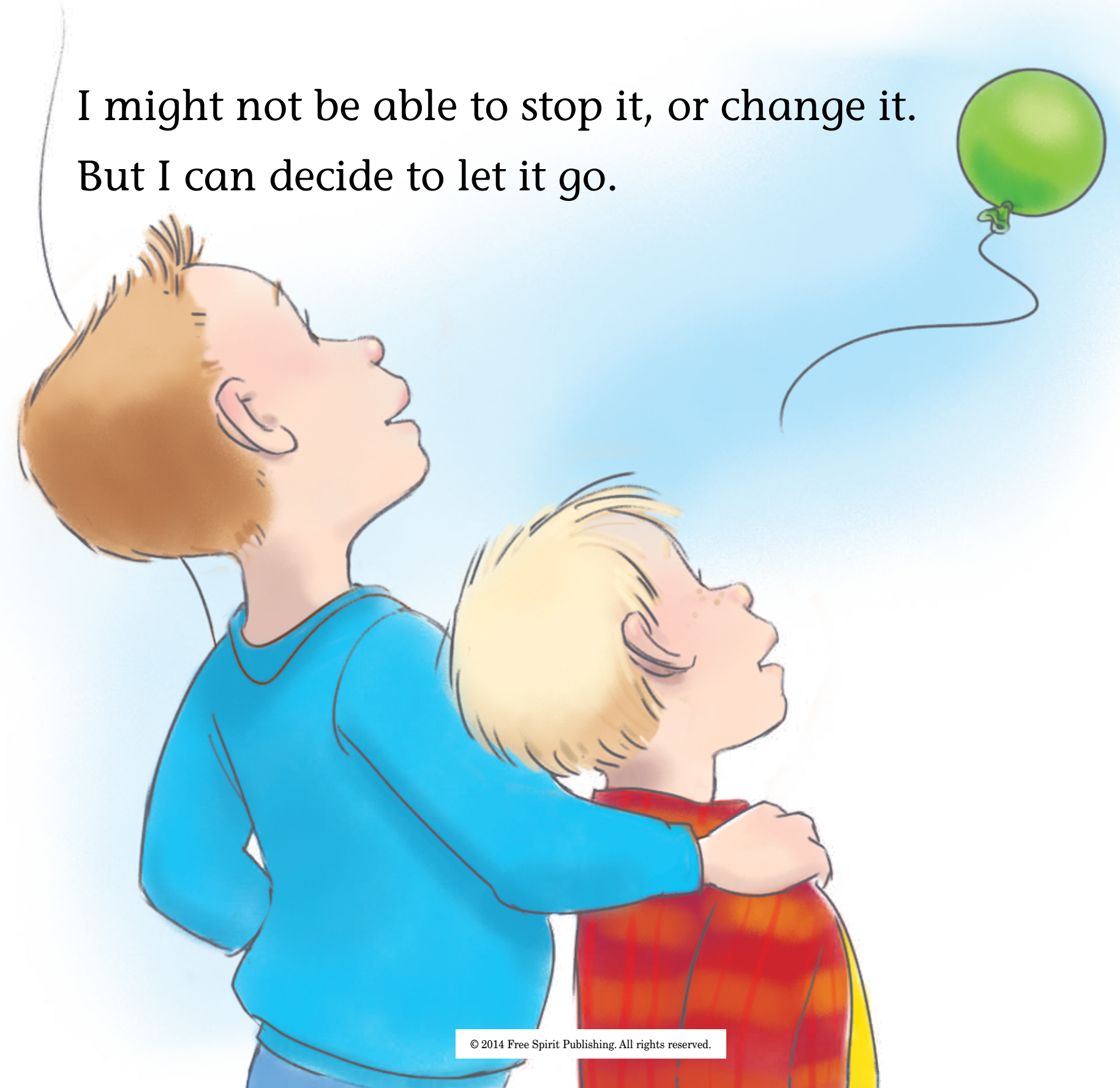
I try to speak kindly
and treat everyone well.

Thank you.

When something goes wrong
or annoys me,



I might not be able to stop it, or change it.
But I can decide to let it go.



Ways to Reinforce the Ideas in *Forgive and Let Go!*

Forgive and Let Go! focuses on forgiveness—the ability to let go of anger and resentment when we feel wronged. Forgiveness skills include being willing to accept apologies and offer them, working to rebuild and strengthen relationships when conflicts arise, and adopting thoughts and behaviors that help us recover from hurt feelings. Forgiveness is a choice—an act of strength that counteracts feelings of helplessness and sadness. It can lead to improved physical and mental health, a sense of healing, deeper feelings of fulfillment and relief from stress, improved relationships, and a greater sense of control over one’s life—all of which can lead to greater happiness. Young children can begin to develop forgiveness skills and grow in their ability to forgive and let go as they incorporate principles discussed in this book. In addition, the activities on pages 33–35 can help children develop the qualities of understanding, respect, and patience that accompany true forgiveness. Here is a quick summary of eight forgiveness skills, most of which are mentioned in the children’s text:

1. Ignore little things that bother you.
2. Cool down when you feel upset.
3. Talk and listen to others to resolve misunderstandings.
4. Accept other people’s apologies.
5. Imagine that a person has apologized to you.
6. Apologize for things you’ve done that may have hurt someone else.
7. Choose positive and kind thoughts to replace negative feelings.
8. Show kindness and forgiveness by doing something nice for a person you have disagreed with.

Words to know:

Here are terms you may want to discuss.

accept: to understand when something can’t be changed

annoy: to bother or irritate

apologize: to say “I’m sorry” for doing something that hurt another person

argue: to give or tell reasons against something

blaming: saying or feeling that something is someone else’s fault

forgive: to stop being angry with someone

let go: to move past something that bothered you

offended: insulted or hurt

As you read each spread, ask children:

- What is happening in this picture?
- What is the main idea?
- How would you feel if you were this person?

Here are additional questions you might discuss:

Pages 1–7

- How does getting along with people make you feel happy?
- What is something you do to treat people well?
- What is a little thing that annoys you?
- What does it mean to “let it go”? Why do you think it’s a good idea to let little things go?
- Think about a time that someone did something you didn’t like. How did you feel about it? What is a new way you could think about the situation and let it go?

Pages 8–15

- Take a big, deep breath. How can a deep breath help you cool down? What are some other ways to cool down? (*Examples: Count to ten, take a walk, sing a favorite song.*)
- Why is it a good idea to stop and think about what to do?
- What can you learn by listening to another person when you disagree? Why do you think listening is better than arguing?

Pages 16–25

- If a person doesn’t say “I’m sorry,” do you think you should still forgive the person? Why or why not?
- Imagine that someone is saying “I’m sorry” to you after a disagreement. How does it feel to think about this imaginary apology? Do you feel any different? (*Research shows that imagining an apology can produce feelings of calmness and resolution even if no apology takes place. This strategy can help children move past hurt feelings and disagreements.*)
- Think of a time you thought something wasn’t fair. How did that feel for you? How do you think you would feel if you could let it go?
- Name a person who cares about you. What do you think that person will do if you ask for help?
- How can it help you let go of other people’s mistakes if you remember that you make mistakes, too?
- Why is it hard to really listen to someone if you are arguing or blaming?
- Do you think it’s important to always be right? Why or why not? When you think you are right and someone else is wrong about something, how do you feel? What can you do at those times? (*You may wish to discuss how getting along, developing relationships, and being kind to people can bring us more satisfaction than always having the “right” answer. There are also times when people just have different ideas, and there is no single right point of view. Being kind and respectful can help everyone feel better about the situation.*)
- Do you think that apologizing is a good idea even when another person has also been hurtful? Why or why not?

Pages 26–31

- How do you feel when you choose to find the good in other people? How can this help you forgive?
- How can forgiveness be good for the other person? Why is it good for you?

- How do you think forgiving someone else can change you?
- How does forgiving someone help you be your best?
- What is something you will try to let go of? What can you think about to help you let go?

Games and Activities for Forgive and Letting Go

Read this book often with your child or group of children. Once children are familiar with the book, refer to it when teachable moments arise—both those involving healthy and positive letting go of hurt feelings and those relating to anger, frustration, and resentment. In addition, use the following activities to reinforce children’s understanding of forgiving and letting go.

A Taste of Letting Go

(Be sure to check with parents and caregivers about food allergies before doing this activity.)

Materials: Lemon juice, horseradish, or other foods with a bitter or sour taste; honey, small candies, or other sweet foods; small spoons (1 or 2 for each child)

Directions: Let children taste a small amount of something bitter or sour. Talk about how that taste could be similar to the emotions they may feel when they are angry at or hurt by someone. Then let the children taste something sweet. The sweet taste replaces the bitter one. Talk about how we can work to replace our hurt and angry thoughts with happier, forgiving thoughts. These thoughts can help us feel better and get along with others.

Shake Hands and Shake It Off

Directions: Put on some fun background music if you choose. You will be the “caller” as in a square dance. First, children line up in two parallel lines facing each other. When you call “Shake hands,” children shake hands with the people across from them in the opposite line. (Take time to teach a nice, firm handshake while looking and smiling at the person.)