

## Reuben's Backpack

Reuben woke up grumpy. He was stomping around with a very unhappy face and shouting at everyone. Nothing was right. There was no Nutella for his toast. He couldn't find his lucky socks. His shoes were still a little bit wet from when he went sloshing through the puddles yesterday. Mum wanted to do his reading before he left for school but Reuben wanted to watch cartoons. "Goodness", said Mum, "I guess I know who got out of the wrong side of the bed this morning". "Don't be stupid", said Reuben, "My bed's against the wall. There's only one side I can get out!" "That just means you've woken up grumpy", said Mum. "I guess we'd better do something about it before you get to school. What's going to make you feel happier?" "I dunno", said Reuben. "Well", said Mum, "Let's see what we can do. What if I put a little packet of Smarties in your lunchbox? Would that help?" "It might", said Reuben. "And what about if we changed those soggy shoes for some dry ones? Would that be better?" "A wee bit", said Reuben. "And what about if we planned to have pizza for dinner tonight and you made one just for you with your favourite toppings? That would help, I'm sure". "Yes, I think it would", said Reuben.

"Just one thing though", said Mum, "we need to throw that grumpy face out the window. It definitely can't come to school with you. There are much better things you can put in your backpack to come to school with you. We could put in a big smile – because you know you really like school, and we could put in some good manners – because good manners help make school a better place, and we could put in some sharing – because at school you have to share with other people, and we could put in some caring – because some kids might be having a hard time and need a friend, and ....."

"I think my backpack's getting too heavy with all these things in it", said Reuben. "If I have to be doing all these things, I might get too tired trying to be good and my grumpy face might come back again."

"You'll be fine", said Mum. "Remember you don't have to carry that backpack all by yourself. Jesus is always with you and he will help."

"It's good that Jesus is always with me and that he loves me" said Reuben, "even when I'm grumpy. And I'm glad that he will help me to live in his way."