

## A Trip to Aunt Sarah's

*You might begin by saying something like, "Who gave us every single thing we have? Right, God did! We belong to God, and everything we have belongs to God. Stewardship is taking care of God's stuff God's way. Here is a story about a girl who wants to learn to take care of herself and her things God's way."*

*This story may be simplified for younger children.*

"Kaylee!"

Kaylee jumped, startled. Hurriedly she shoved her book under her pillow, shut off the flashlight she had been using, and pulled the blanket back from her face. "Yes, Mom?"

Mom gave her The Look. "You've been reading in bed past your bedtime again, haven't you?"

"Well, I—" Kaylee couldn't actually lie about it. She made a face and sighed.

Mom held out her hand. Frowning, Kaylee pulled out the flashlight and gave it to Mom. Mom took it and held out her other hand. With a great sigh, Kaylee pulled out the book, too.

Mom sat down on the edge of the bed and tucked back the hair that fell across Kaylee's face from being under the blanket. "Listen, Honey, you know I'm not trying to be mean."

"I was only going to read a little bit more," said Kaylee. "I want to know what happens to the lost dog!"

"You can find out tomorrow," said Mom. "This is bad for you in so many ways. First of all, you are growing fast, and must have your sleep. Second, it's hard on your eyes to read that way. The book is too close, the light isn't right, and probably your whole body is in a cramped position, too. Third, you don't get enough oxygen when the blanket is over your head. And fourth, it's important that you learn to wait for things. You're a big enough girl to read some now and some tomorrow. Did you get all your homework done?"

"No..." Kaylee admitted.

"And I can see you didn't clean up your room, as I asked you to. Your new dress that you like so much is crumpled on the floor, your doll's hair will never be the same again if you leave it tossed in the corner like that, you've left food under your bed, and oh, Kaylee, look at your Bible!"

Kaylee looked guiltily at her beautiful white Bible, new last Christmas, which was lying open, upside down, on the floor by her bookshelf.

Mom picked up the Bible and smoothed its pages, sighing. "Kaylee, someday you'll be a grown woman, and you'll have to be responsible. Now is the time to start learning." She leaned forward and kissed Kaylee's forehead. "Did you know stewardship is taking care of God's stuff God's way? And you, my dear, are God's kid! I love you. Now go to sleep."

After Mom left, Kaylee lay there feeling guilty. She knew she could do better, because sometimes she did. Just last week, she'd had her whole room clean, and she'd done her homework and chores every day all week! But then she'd started this new book, and it was really interesting! She guessed she was just lazy.

A week later, Mom said, "Kaylee, I have some exciting news for you! Now that school is out, Aunt Sarah has asked if you'd like to come and stay with her for a whole week!"

Kaylee jumped up and down with joy. A whole week at Aunt Sarah's beautiful apartment in the city! She worked hard that week, cleaning up, packing her things, and making plans. On Sunday, Aunt Sarah came in her blue convertible and they got to ride all the way to the city with the top down and the wind blowing in their hair. It was so cool!

At Aunt Sarah's building, they went up 14 whole floors in an elevator. Aunt Sarah unlocked her door and they walked into the white carpeted room. There were fresh flowers on the coffee table, and the city lights were coming on outside the big window. Aunt Sarah led Kaylee down the hall with her suitcase.

"Here's your room, Kaylee. I hope you like it."

Like it! Kaylee turned around in a circle in the middle of the room. It had wallpaper with pale pink stripes, a huge bed with pink roses on its ruffled bedspread and pink and white satin pillows in the middle, and a fluffy white rug.

"Here's the bathroom," said Aunt Sarah, opening a door.

"My own bathroom?" exclaimed Kaylee. She went into the bathroom, which was as big as her bedroom at home, and it had pearly white bubbles on the shower curtain and a bowl of shells on the sink. The faucets were gold, and there were fluffy towels as big as Kaylee.

"Oh, Aunt Sarah, this is the most beautiful room in the whole world!" she cried, coming back into the bedroom.

Aunt Sarah showed her a crystal bowl on the dresser. "In this dish are some peppermints. They're yours, but you must only have two per day. You may decide when. I'll show you the broom and duster in the hallway, and I expect you to keep your room and bathroom clean. Can you do that for me?"

"Of course!" Kaylee promised.

And she did. Every day, she made her beautiful bed carefully. Sometimes she had to ask Aunt Sarah for help. She wiped around the sink when she brushed her teeth, made sure her hair was out of the bathtub drain, and swept her shiny wood floor every evening.

Aunt Sarah took her out to eat at a fancy restaurant where there were a whole bunch of forks and spoons, and they went to the zoo and to the top of a skyscraper where you could look through a telescope and see all the way across the city.

And every night after supper, Kaylee ate two peppermints. Then she and Aunt Sarah would read one, or maybe two chapters in a really awesome book Aunt Sarah had.

At the end of the week, when Kaylee went back home, Mom said, "Aunt Sarah says you were really responsible this week."

"Yes, Mom, I really was!" said Kaylee.

"Was it hard?"

"No, I liked it!"

"Why do you think that is?" asked Mom.

"Well, everything was so pretty!" said Kaylee.

"Your room is pretty, too, when you keep it nice."

"That's true. But it's not the same." Kaylee thought for a minute, and said, "I think it's because the things weren't mine. Aunt Sarah's house is so beautiful, and I wanted to be sure I didn't hurt anything."

"Good thinking," said Mom. "You were being a good steward."

"I was?"

"Yes, a steward takes good care of things that belong to someone else. I wonder if it would help you to think about your room and your things belonging to God? Would you like taking care of them for Him, the way you took care of Aunt Sarah's things for her?"

Kaylee had to admit, that was a pretty cool thought.

"And how about your health? Did you go to bed on time, and not sneak too much candy?" Kaylee nodded. "Your body belongs to God, too," Mom reminded her. "Why don't you try taking care of His Kaylee His way?"

Kaylee smiled. "I think I will! I'd like to take care of things for Jesus!"

*Thought Question: Are you taking care of your things and your body as if they belong to Jesus?*

*Taking Care of God's Stuff God's Way by Debbonnaire Kovacs pp. 33-36*