

Small Wonders

Muddles

***Tell-Tale the Mouse is splashed with mud.
She learns a lesson about getting clean.***

Lesson Link: The story of God's love in Scripture. The nature of our fallen human condition can often make our lives "messy." We often spend a lot of time and effort trying to clean up the mess of our sin, frequently seeking advice from various sources. The means to clean up the mess of sin and avoid making new messes is given to us by God the Creator, who provides the "Instruction Manual" (Scripture) and the sacraments of the Church.

Tell-Tale the Mouse was strolling along a path in the Kind Garden. She wore a new red coat because it was a cool day and had been raining. She stopped and looked down at the ground. A thoughtful look crossed her face.

Stout the Pig saw Tell-Tale's very thoughtful look. He shuffled up to her. He asked, "Why do you look so thoughtful?"

Tell-Tale said, "Sometimes when the rain falls onto the ground, it makes little pools that everyone calls puddles. And sometimes the puddles have dirt in them that turns the dirt into little patches called mud. I was wondering why the mud isn't called *muddles*."

Stout nodded. But the truth was, Stout was really thinking how much he wanted to jump into the mud—or the muddle or whatever it should be called. "I think I should take a closer look," Stout said and threw himself into the water and mud.

A big splash of the wet brown dirt hit Tell-Tale's new red coat and her furry legs. A splotch landed on the side of her nose.

"Oh no!" she cried out. "I'm dirty now!" Her nose twitched.

"You don't look dirty to me," said Stout as he rolled around.

"I'm a mess," she complained. "How do I become unmessy?"

Stout said, "You should ask Percy the Possum."



Everyone knew Percy the Possum was very persnickety and unmessy about things.

Tell-Tale went to see Percy the Possum. Percy lived in the top of a barn.

Percy circled Tell-Tale as he looked her over. He made a lot of "tsk, tsk" noises. Then he said, "You should jump in a puddle and wiggle around."

"Stout did that," Tell-Tale explained. "That's how I got messy in the first place."

"Find a *clean* puddle without Stout," Percy said.

Tell-Tale looked all over the Kind Garden for the cleanest puddle she could find. Then she jumped in and wiggled around.

Kevin the Duck rolled up. "What are you doing?" he asked.

"Getting unmessy," she explained.

She stood up. To her surprise, her red coat had more brown stains on it than before, and her fur looked even dirtier. "What am I going to do now?" she said.

Kevin said, "Look at the Small Print on your Tag."

"What Small Print on what Tag?" Tell-Tale asked.

Kevin moved around her and found a square piece of something hidden under the fur on her leg. He pointed and said, "There."

"I thought that was part of my fur," Tell-Tale said. "What does it say?"

Kevin took a closer look. "*In-Struct-Shuns*. But the rest of the Small Print is faded away."

Tell-Tale was puzzled. "What are *In-Struct-Shuns*?" she asked.

Kevin shrugged and said, "Go to Granna. She'll know."

Tell-Tale went to the cottage of Granna the Bunny. Granna was a big brown rabbit with a white snout. She wore a blue dress with a white apron. Little glasses were perched on her nose.

"Oh my," said Granna when she saw Tell-Tale.

Tell-Tale told her what had happened and about the *In-Struct-Shuns*.

Granna chuckled and said, "Please take off your red coat."

Tell-Tale took off her coat.

Granna looked it over. "Here is a Tag on the inside collar. The instructions say to clean with cool clean water and soap."

"What about the rest of me?" asked Tell-Tale. She held up her leg so Granna could see the Tag.

"The print is worn away," Granna said. She went to a shelf on the wall. "The Scroll will help," she said.

The Scroll was a big roll of different pieces of paper sewn together.

Granna said, "The Scroll was given to us by the Toymaker. It tells us what to do."

Granna looked at the Scroll. Then she said with a smile, "You need a bath in clean water."

She took out a bucket and filled it with warm water.

"Get in," she told Tell-Tale.

Tell-Tale got into the bucket. The warm water felt good. Granna scrubbed her with gentle soap. Then Granna washed Tell-Tale's red coat in the sink with cool clean water.

Later, Tell-Tale looked at herself in Granna's tall mirror.

"The Scroll's *In-Struct-Shuns* worked!" Tell-Tale exclaimed.

"They always do," Granna said.

Tell-Tale asked, "What else does the Scroll say about us?"

"We'll read it together," Granna said. "There are a lot of things the Toymaker wants us to know because he loves us."

Tell-Tale was happy being clean again. *In-Struct-Shuns are good*, she decided.

Questions:

1. **What lesson did Tell-Tale learn about getting clean?** (*We can't become clean by doing what made us messy. To be clean, we have to go to the source that will make us truly clean.*)
2. **What is the "Scroll" with helpful instructions that God has given us for living a happy and holy life and cleaning up the messes we make with sin?** (*The Bible.*)