









## Who Made This Mess?

By Janene Dykstra

*I'll form good habits in my youth, To keep my word, to tell the truth (Children's Songbook, page 149).*

Janene Dykstra, "Who Made This Mess?" *Friend*, Feb. 2001, 32

Mommy stopped at Austin's bedroom door. She looked around the messy room.

There were books, trucks, puzzles, blocks, and stuffed animals scattered all over. Mommy stepped over the clutter and into the room. "Austin, did you make this mess?"

Austin looked up from his stack of blocks. "Not me, Mommy."

"Then who made this mess?" Mommy asked. She knelt down next to a large dump truck. "Dump truck, did you make this mess?"

"Mommy!" Austin giggled. "Dump trucks can't make a mess. Trucks can't even talk. But I can." He snatched up his truck. "Brrrm. Brrrm." Austin drove the truck into the toy box.

"Who made this mess?" Mommy asked. She scooped up a handful of puzzle pieces. "Puzzle, did you make this mess?"

Austin said, "Puzzles can't make a mess. Puzzles don't have fingers to use. But I do. I can pick the pieces up like this." Austin dumped all the puzzle pieces into their box on the shelf.

"Who made this mess?" Mommy asked. She stood up and leaned over the bookcase. "Books, did you make this mess?"

Austin rolled his eyes. "Books can't make a mess. Books can't even jump from high places. But I can." Austin climbed onto a chair and jumped into Mommy's arms. She put him down. Austin bent over and picked up some books. He climbed back onto the chair and set the books on the shelf.

"Who made this mess?" Mommy asked. She gathered together three teddy bears. "Teddy bears, did you make this mess?"

"Teddy bears can't make a mess," Austin said. "Teddy bears can't even turn somersaults. But I can." Austin crouched low, tucked his head under, and flipped over. He stood up, gathered the bears in his arms, and laid them on the windowsill.

"Who made this mess?" Mommy asked. She picked up a stuffed lion. "Lion, did you make this mess?"

Austin said, "The lion can't make a mess. The lion can't even give hugs. But I can." Austin gave Mommy a hug. He took the lion and gently placed it on the bed.

"Know what, Mommy?" Austin said. "Toys can't make a mess, but I can. I made this mess."

Mommy leaned over and gave Austin another hug. "Austin, you made this mess. But you cleaned it up, too. You are my big helper."

Mommy's face grew serious. "You did something besides making a mess, Austin. You told Mommy a lie. But you cleaned that up, too, by telling the truth. Toys can't tell the truth. But you can."

Austin smiled. Being a big helper felt good. Being a truth-teller felt even better.

*Gospel topic: honesty*