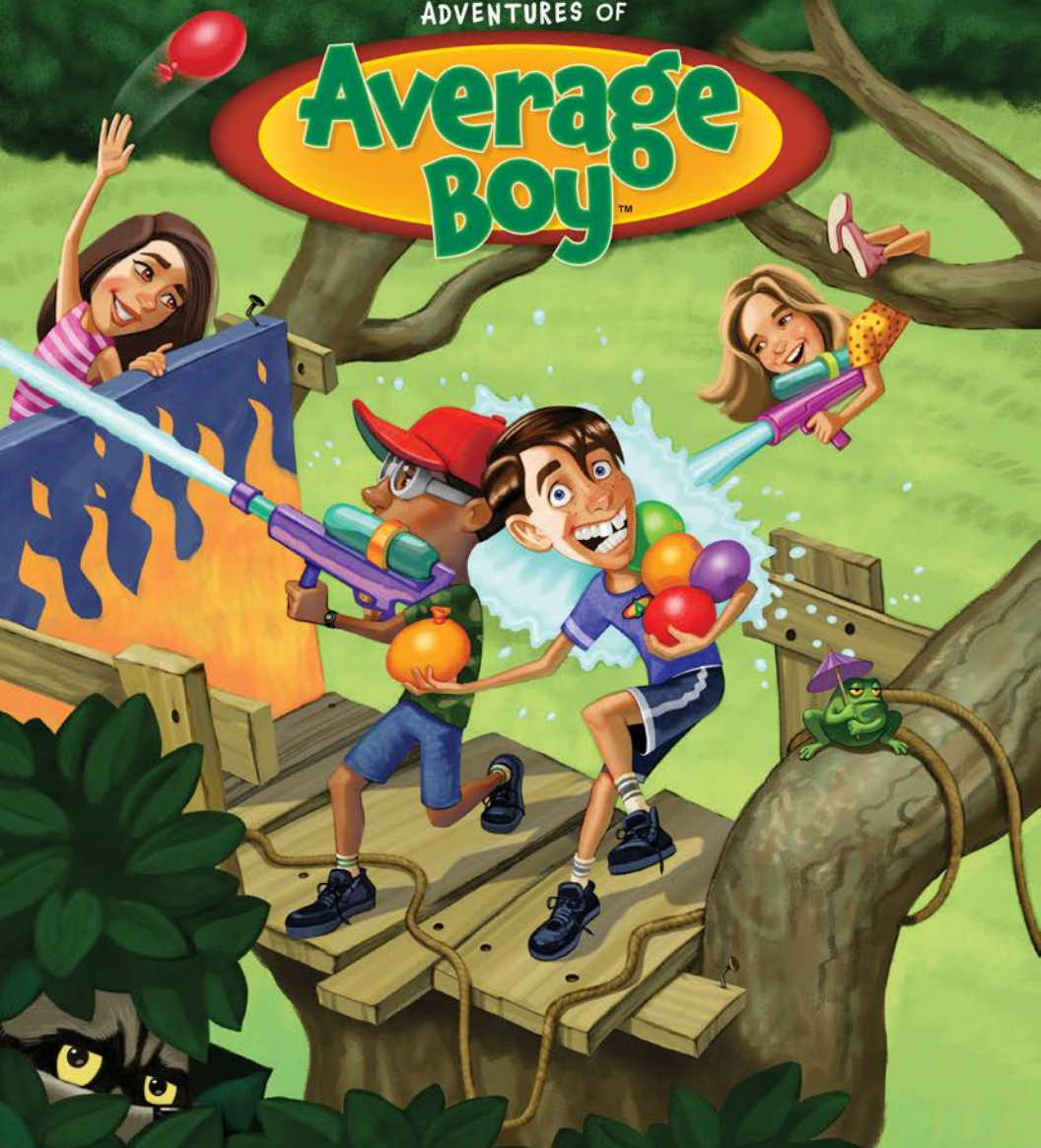


ADVENTURES OF

Average Boy™



Average Boy's Above-Average Summer

Bob Smiley and Jesse Florea

ADVENTURES OF



Average Boy's Above-Average Summer

Bob Smiley & Jesse Florea

FOCUS
ON THE FAMILY[®]

*A Focus on the Family resource
published by Tyndale House Publishers*

Average Boy's Above-Average Summer

Copyright © 2024 by Bob Smiley and Jesse Florea.

A Focus on the Family book published by Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188

Focus on the Family and the accompanying logo and design are federally registered trademarks of Focus on the Family, 8605 Explorer Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80920.

Tyndale and Tyndale's quill logo are registered trademarks of Tyndale House Ministries.

Scotch Tape is a registered trademark of 3M Company.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise—without prior written permission of Focus on the Family.

Cover image and illustrations copyright © 2024 by David Harrington. All rights reserved.

Scripture taken from the Holy Bible, *New International Reader's Version*,® *NIrV*.® Copyright © 1995, 1996, 1998, 2014 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

The use of material from or references to various websites does not imply endorsement of those sites in their entirety. Availability of websites and pages is subject to change without notice.

For manufacturing information regarding this product, please call 1-855-277-9400.

For information about special discounts for bulk purchases, please contact Tyndale House Publishers at csresponse@tyndale.com, or call 1-855-277-9400.

ISBN 978-1-64607-152-4

Printed in the United States of America

30 29 28 27 26 25 24
7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Chapter 1

If only I could remember my locker combination. Then I would be able to open it and finally be done with school! Of course, that would be easier if I was *outside* my locker, instead of stuck *inside*.

This last day of school can't end soon enough. I have huge plans for the next few months. This is the summer I'm going to finally build that tree house. This summer I'm setting a goal to invite everyone in my town to church. This summer I'm going to brush my teeth every morning when I wake up at noon. Oh yeah, I have *plans*!

This is going to be an above-average summer. I just need to get out of this locker.

I don't know why I fell for Donny's trick in the first

place. You see, I was cleaning out my locker when Donny walked up. You can always tell when he's close because his massive shadow blocks out all sunlight and the temperature gets colder. There's also a smell, but I won't go into that in case you're eating right now. But trust me, there are lots of ways to know when Donny is around.

So there I was, cleaning out my locker, when the hallway suddenly got really cold and dark. I also had to start breathing through my mouth. I knew what this meant. Donny was near. I turned around to face my school's biggest bully. Sure enough, he was standing over me like a . . . like a . . . a . . . giant thing standing over a . . . a . . . much smaller thing. (Hey, you wouldn't be able to think of a good analogy either if Donny was standing over you. The kid is so big that he has his own zip code!)

Now, if you've read my other books, you probably know all about Donny. Or, if you've ever brought a big lunch to school, you've probably already met someone like Donny . . . and watched him eat your lunch. Or maybe you have a "Donny" at your school. If so, feel free to go through this book and change Donny's name to whatever your school bully's name is. I won't mind. You bought the book, so feel free to do whatever you want with it. (Of course, if you borrowed this book from the library, then please don't write in it. They get pretty upset when you do that. Trust me!)

Anyway, I thought Donny and I had worked through

our problems during the school year. We were friends now, which is probably why I fell for his locker trick. Donny's not the cleverest kid in school. In fact, he wouldn't be the cleverest kid in school if he was the only kid in school.

It's comments like that last one that my dad says get me into trouble. Usually I'm able to keep those thoughts in my head, but sometimes my mouth works faster than my brain and the words spill out. I know words can hurt, but usually not as much as being stuffed in a locker. I think I'm getting a leg cramp. At least I found a bag of barbecue chips—and they're already open!

Still, I can't believe I fell for Donny's trick. I was even trying to be nice when he first walked up.

"Hey, Donny!" I said. "Ready for summer break? Do you have big plans? I sure do!"

This was absolutely the wrong thing to say. I'd forgotten that Donny had to take summer school.

As soon as I remembered that, I tried to make things better by adding, "You know what they say about sixth grade—third time's the charm!"

Some people just don't appreciate encouraging comments. Donny must be one of them. He just grunted and stared at me.

You see, God gives us all gifts. Mine is making people laugh. Donny's is the ability to impersonate Goliath . . . and to grow a beard while staring at you.

To be honest, I'm not sure how old Donny is since he's repeated a few grades. I guess that's why he picks on other kids. I think school frustrates him, which is why I try being his friend. I even told him about Jesus and how much God loves him.

But after my incredibly funny school comment, Donny got a pained look on his face. That's his signature move when he's trying to think. Then he grinned.

That's when I should have known something was up.

"Yup! Ready for summer," Donny said. "I just have to clean out the secret safe in the top of my locker."

"What secret safe?" I asked, falling for his trick—hook, line, and he's a big stinker! "I didn't get a secret safe. Or wait, do I have a secret safe? Where is the secret safe? I want one."

Donny explained that each locker has a tiny trapdoor in the ceiling.

"That's where you store all your valuables," he said.

Donny didn't actually use the word *valuables*. He said, "cool crud." He added that he'd only discovered this secret compartment about halfway through the school year.

Again, I should have known something was up. Donny's not very good at fractions, so there's no way he knew it was halfway through the school year when he discovered the secret safe. It was probably more like eight-fourths. I'm

pretty sure that would be March, but I'm not good at math either. Or months.

Yet as Donny was talking, my mind was elsewhere. My mind was already eight-fourths of the way up a tree with a hammer in my hand, somewhere in the woods behind my house. My mind was already thinking of cool ways to invite the 486 people in my town to church. My mind was trying to remember where I left my toothbrush.

I leaned into my locker and stared at the top. Suddenly things got darker, both physically and emotionally.

Donny pushed me inside the locker, closed the door, and spun the lock.



“Ha!” Donny laughed. “Now you have one more big summer plan: trying to get out of your locker.”

I have no idea how Donny properly used a colon in a sentence. But he was right. I was trapped! I can’t believe he tricked me. But I guess my mouth was partly to blame.

I knew I needed to stay calm. Most kids would be scared to be locked in a locker that smells just slightly better than where Donny was. But I wasn’t scared at all!

After all, I’m Average Boy. (Some of my friends call me “AB” for short.) I may not have super strength or super size, but I’m super good at being positive in any situation. Plus, I know that God always has my back.

My summer wasn’t off to a great start, but at least it was about to start!