

# Max and the Not-So-Perfect Apology

By Carl Harris Shuman |

Illustrated by Rory Walker and Michael Garton

# READING & ACTIVITY GUIDE

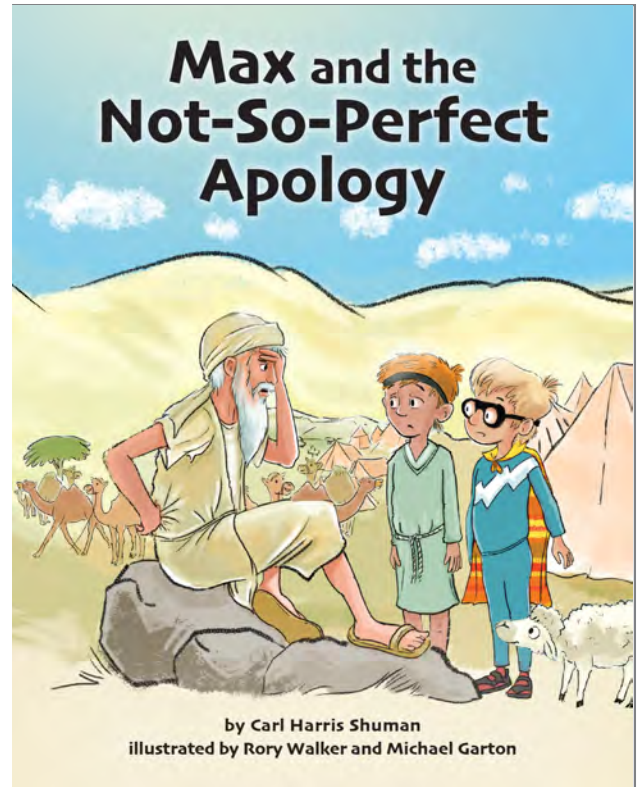
## About the Book

Max and Emma have teamed up again, this time to work on a diorama for school. They're supposed to depict the biblical story of Jacob and Esau. Esau was the older twin and therefore would be granted a blessing, an inheritance, by their father. Jacob disguised himself as Esau and stole the blessing, then disappeared for more than twenty years.

Max is excited to work with Emma; their teamwork will surely help them win the best diorama! But the groups change at the last second. Emma is now on a team with Eitan, who makes a better box than Max, and will probably win the competition. Max also starts to feel jealous of Eitan's new friendship with Emma. Max's feelings are hurt, and because of that, he gets into a fight with Emma that only makes matters worse.

Max wants to learn more about Jacob and Esau and if they ever made up after their fight. Using his cardboard time machine, he travels back in time to the day Jacob and Esau would be reunited. He meets Joseph, Jacob's son, and listens as Jacob tells his story.

When Esau arrives, the brothers hug but that doesn't solve the past hurt. Jacob apologizes to his brother and gives Esau the blessing from their father that he had stolen all those years ago. Max realizes that he must apologize to Emma and Eitan. Back at home, Max gives his own apology, and in the end, doesn't just get his best friend back, but makes a new one in the process.



## Key Themes:

Apologizing; Forgiveness; Friendship; Sibling relationships

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Ages 6–8 years



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Use these questions to preface and conclude a reading of this book with children.

Encourage them to share their observations as you read the book together, and take time to linger on pages or spreads that generate more discussion.

## Before Reading

- Look carefully at the people on the cover. Then look at the setting they are in. Do all the characters match their setting? Which ones do or don't? How can you tell?
- After looking at the cover illustration, when and where do you think this story takes place? What makes you think that?
- Read aloud the title of the book. Think about the word 'apology.' Have you ever had to apologize? Has someone apologized to you? What do you think might make an apology "not-so-perfect?"

## After Reading

- On page 51, it says that Max, "...was beginning to understand how a good apology worked." How do you think a good apology works? How can apologizing help make a relationship stronger?
- On page 58, Max lists some important parts of an apology:
  - o An apology comes from the heart
  - o An apology is simple and direct
  - o An apology doesn't involve making lame excuses for bad behavior
- When Jacob apologized to Esau, which of the above parts did he do? Which did he miss? What might Jacob have done differently in the way he chose to apologize?
- Do you think Max's apology to Eitan was "perfect" or "not-so-perfect? In what ways?
- This book is part of a series. In Book 1, Max travels through time to meet Abraham and Sarah. He crossed the Red Sea in Book 2, in this book meets Esau and Jacob. Where and when would you like Max to travel next? Why?

## Optional: Extension Activity

Think of something you've done that you might want to apologize for, and write out a "perfect" apology. You can decide later if you'd like to share it with that person or not. But for now, just practice what you might say:

I'm sorry for \_\_\_\_\_

What I did was wrong because \_\_\_\_\_

Next time I will \_\_\_\_\_

Will you forgive me?

*Discussion questions by Ann Diament Koffsky*

