

Read the short story. Then answer each question.

Amusement Park Problem

The smell of popcorn was in the air. I could hear kids laughing and screaming. People were everywhere! The breeze felt warm on my skin. It was a perfect day at the amusement park.

My family and I wandered around the park, getting snacks and going on rides. I loved almost all types of rides! I loved to go fast and to spin around, to go down hills and to get splashed. The only rides I didn't like were rides that turn you upside-down. My little brother, Ben, didn't like those either, but my older sister, Laura, loved them. When we finally were near a ride that went upside-down, she started asking me to go with her. I told her I don't like those rides, but she kept asking. Then she started whining because she didn't want to go alone. I was feeling sympathy for her, so I started thinking that maybe I should go with her, even though I really don't like to go upside-down. I looked to my parents for help.

“Matt, you are allowed to stand up for yourself. If something makes you feel really uncomfortable, you can tell people ‘no.’ It's OK to tell Laura that you love her, but that you can't go with her because going upside-down makes you uncomfortable. Be strong but kind when you tell her, so that she knows you're serious,” Mom said.



“I don't want to make Laura mad or sad, though,” I replied to Mom, “and I don't want her to think I'm being mean.”

“There's a difference between being aggressive and being assertive. You're not saying 'no' to be mean to Laura or to hurt her feelings, you're just listening to your own feelings to make sure you stay safe. It's fine to tell her no for this,” Mom answered. “The same goes for Laura. If you ask her to arm wrestle and she doesn't feel comfortable, she's allowed to say 'no,' too. We are all allowed to stand up for ourselves to make sure we stay safe. Does that make sense?”

“Yes, thanks Mom,” I said. I told Laura that I love her and like to do things with her, but that I wasn’t comfortable going on upside-down rides today because they scare me. She was sad, but went on the ride by herself and was really happy when it was over. We had a great rest of the day at the amusement park!



Questions:

1. Recount the story in your own words.

2. What lesson did Matt learn?

3. What is the difference between being aggressive and being assertive?

4. Where in the short story did you find the answer?

5. What does “*wandered*” mean in the 2nd paragraph? How do you know?

6. How might Matt have felt if he agreed to go on the ride with Laura? Why?

Answers:

1. Recount the story in your own words.
Answers will vary.
2. What lesson did Matt learn?
Matt learned that it is fine to tell his sister that he does not want to go on the ride. It is fine for him to listen to his own feelings to make sure he stays safe.
3. What is the difference between being aggressive and being assertive?
The difference is aggressive is a forceful way to achieve one's goal, which usually ends up in a fight or argument. Assertive means to be confident in one self. When you want people to listen to your point of view, it is good to be assertive.
4. Where in the short story did you find the answer?
From the mom's response: "There's a difference between being aggressive and being assertive. You're not saying 'no' to be mean to Laura or to hurt her feelings, you're just listening to your own feelings to make sure you stay safe. It's fine to tell her no for this," Mom answered.
5. What does "wandered" mean in the 2nd paragraph? How do you know?
Wander means moving around without having any specific purpose or direction. The family moved around getting snacks and going on various rides. They did not go to a specific place to snack or on a specific ride.
6. How might Matt have felt if he agreed to go on the ride with Laura? Why?
Answers will vary. Acceptable answers are: He would have felt scared, nervous, uncomfortable or not well.