



**The Friendly Race  
(Children's Story/Parable)**

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Good morning, boys and girls! Is there anyone here who likes boats? There are so many different kinds of boats; big ones, small ones, colorful ones, boats for people to ride in and even boats that transport food and other things that we use every day. It can also take many people to work together to operate a boat, especially a larger one.

Today I have a story about some people on boats who worked together when things didn't go as planned. Every year in spring time there is a great boat race between Grosseto and Elba Island in the Tyrrhenian Sea. It takes place on a Sunday morning with about twenty to thirty boats.

The race begins when the boats depart from Grosseto around 9:00 in the morning, and it takes at least four hours to complete the race. The length of the crossing depends upon many factors, such as the strength of the winds and the status of the sea.

Along with the boats that compete in the race, there are supporting boats that are part of the event, including a lifeguard boat, some Red Cross ambulance boats, and even helicopters.

One year during this race, the boats started out as they usually did with good weather, sunny skies and favorable winds. After navigating about two hours, the winds started to increase, the sky got cloudier, and the waves swelled higher and higher.

Navigation was getting more difficult in the rough seas. A short time later, many of the boats ran into difficulty and began taking on water. Some even capsized! On other boats, the competitors fell into the water. The supporting ships were called into action to save the floundering racers from their predicament.

There were seven boats that were close to each other that were not in peril, and one of their competitors came up with an idea to assist the failing boats, which he shared with everyone else. The idea was transmitted to those seven boats closest to those in danger.

In a few minutes, the race was called to a halt, and those seven competitors linked their boats together as if they were a raft. Just when the waves were at their highest, these boats were sailing to safety as they helped each other in a united effort. Unity, solidarity, and mutual friendship helped to protect and save!

In the Bible, we are told, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Psalm 133:1, NKJV). It doesn’t matter if we are helping to rescue someone in a great boat race, or helping mom and dad at home, or being a friend to a visitor at church, we can do many great things when we work together in the name of Christ.