

~Auntie Joanne's Virtues Corner ~

Sunflower the Squirrel



My mother and I recently put up two bird feeders to attract birds. One is on a tall pole in the middle of the garden. The other hangs from a chain attached to a bar over our kitchen window. There is a lot of birdseed in the feeders, but do you think the birds know it? We haven't seen any birds around the feeders at all!

The squirrels know it, though! They discovered the bird feeders right away! It was so funny to see one squirrel sitting on the pole feeder and another one hanging by her back legs from the hanging feeder eating seeds with their little paws.

Because the seeds were really for birds—not for squirrels—I put grease on both the pole feeder and the bar supporting the other feeder, hoping to keep the squirrels from getting the seeds. That stopped most of them, but not *all* of them! One little squirrel jumped up on the tall pole, expecting to climb right up to the bird feeder, but to her surprise, she slid all the way down to the ground! Hmmmm. What a problem, she thought. She decided to try the hanging feeder. She bounded along the roof of the house and jumped onto the greased bar that held the feeder, but the grease made her slip right off and somersault to the ground! Another surprise!

Two days later, that determined little squirrel was back again, and somehow she had reached the feeder. She was hanging upside down by her feet on the hanging feeder and happily nibbling sunflower seeds! (Right then I decided to call her Sunflower.) But how had she managed to get there without walking along the greased bar? I was determined to find out, and suddenly ... I had a plan! By watching her get *back* from the feeder, I would know how she got there in the first place!

Taking some peanuts from the kitchen, I went outside and scattered them on the path. Sunflower was watching me. As soon as she spied those nice fat peanuts, she wanted them. She carefully climbed up the chain, but just before she reached the slippery bar overhead, she let go and leapt through the air towards

the edge of the roof. She just made it and hung on by the tips of her claws! She looked down at the peanuts to make sure they were still there, then ran along the roof and disappeared into the leafy branches of a tree. Less than a minute later, she reappeared on the ground, peeking around the end of the building.

She ran along the path, getting closer and closer to the peanuts. Finally she arrived! Oh was she excited! Her tail quivered with delight as she eagerly held a peanut between her two front paws, sat up straight, and nibbled it until it was gone. It was so delicious! She ate another and another. What a determined, happy little squirrel!

Now my mother and I look out the window for Sunflower every time we're in the kitchen. In the morning when we're at the table eating our oatmeal and grapefruit, Sunflower is outside on the feeder eating her breakfast of sunflower seeds ...upside down! At suppertime, she's out there again eating more birdseed. She looks at us with her bright little eyes and seems to enjoy watching us as much as we enjoy watching her!

Even if the birds never find our feeders, we're certainly glad little Sunflower did!

Without knowing it, this little squirrel was demonstrating the attribute of DETERMINATION.

Determination is doing your very best to do something. Once you start, you don't give up until it's done, even if it is difficult.

Can you think of something you did that showed you had determination, too?

