

THE
New Era

SEPTEMBER

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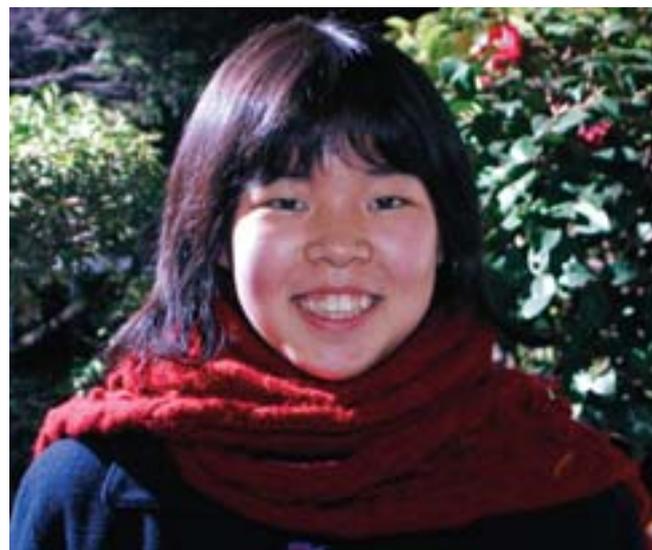
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Courage COUNTS

BY PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON
First Counselor in the First Presidency



Courage characterized the life of Abinadi, as shown in the Book of Mormon by his willingness to offer his life rather than to deny the truth.

The need for courage came to me in a most vivid and dramatic manner some 50 years ago. I was serving as a bishop. The general session of our stake conference was being held in the Assembly Hall. Our stake presidency was to be reorganized. The Aaronic Priesthood, including members of bishoprics, were providing the music for the conference. As we concluded singing our first selection, President Joseph Fielding Smith, our conference visitor, stepped to the pulpit and read for sustaining approval the names of the new stake presidency. I am confident that the other members of the stake presidency had been made aware of their callings, but I had not. After reading my name, President Smith announced: “If Brother Monson is willing to respond to this call, we shall be pleased to hear from him now.”

As I stood at the pulpit and gazed out on that sea of faces, I remembered the song we had just sung. Its title was “Have Courage, My Boy, to Say No.” That day I selected as my acceptance theme, “Have Courage, My

Boy, to Say Yes.”

Life’s journey is not traveled on a freeway devoid of obstacles, pitfalls, and snares. Rather, it is a pathway marked by forks and turnings. Decisions are constantly before us. To make them wisely, courage is needed: the courage to say no, the courage to say yes. Decisions do determine destiny.

The Call for Courage

The call for courage comes constantly to each of us. It has ever been so, and so shall it ever be. The battlefields of war witness acts of courage. Some are printed on pages of books or contained on rolls of film, while others are indelibly impressed on the human heart.

The courage of a military leader was recorded by a young infantryman wearing the gray uniform of the Confederacy during America’s Civil War. He describes the influence of General J.E.B. Stuart in these words: “At a critical point in the battle, he leaped his horse over the breastworks near my company, and when he had reached a point



Those who followed the Savior then, and those who follow Him now, win a significant victory, with consequences that are everlasting. But the need for courage is constant.

about opposite the center of the brigade, while the men were loudly cheering him, he waved his hand toward the enemy and shouted, ‘Forward men! Forward! Just follow me!’

“The men were wild with enthusiasm. The veriest coward on earth would have felt his blood thrill, and his heart leap with courage and resolution. The men poured over the breastworks after him like a wide raging torrent overcoming its barriers” (Emory M. Thomas, *Bold Dragoon: The Life of J.E.B. Stuart* [1986], 211–12).

At an earlier time, and in a land far distant, another leader issued the same plea: “Follow me” (Matthew 4:19). He was not a general of war. Rather, He was the Prince of Peace, the Son of God. Those who followed Him then, and those who follow Him now, win a far more significant victory, with consequences that are everlasting. But the need for courage is constant. Courage is ever required.

Scriptural Examples of Courage

The holy scriptures portray the evidence of this truth. Joseph, son of Jacob, the same who was sold into Egypt, demonstrated the firm resolve of courage when to Potiphar’s wife, who attempted to seduce him, he declared: “How . . . can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? And . . . he hearkened not unto her” and got out (Genesis 39:9–10).

In our day, a father applied this example of courage to the lives of his children by declaring: “If you ever find yourself where you shouldn’t ought to be, get out!”

The prophet Daniel demonstrated supreme courage by standing up for what he

knew to be right and by demonstrating the courage to pray, though threatened by death were he to do so (see Daniel 6).

Courage characterized the life of Abinadi, as shown in the Book of Mormon by his willingness to offer his life rather than to deny the truth (see Mosiah 11:20, 17:20).

Who can help but be inspired by the lives of the 2,000 stripling sons of Helaman who taught and demonstrated the need of courage to follow the teachings of parents, the courage to be chaste and pure? (see Alma 56).

Perhaps each of these accounts is crowned by the example of Moroni, who had the courage to persevere to the end in righteousness (see Moroni 1–10).

“He Will Not Fail Thee, Nor Forsake Thee”

All were fortified by the words of Moses: “Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid . . . for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee” (Deuteronomy 31:6). He did not fail them. He will not fail us. He did not forsake them. He will not forsake us.

It was this knowledge that prompted the courage of Columbus—the quiet resolve to record in his ship’s log again and again: “This day we sailed on.” It was this witness that motivated the Prophet Joseph to declare, “I am going like a lamb to the slaughter; but I am calm as a summer’s morning” (D&C 135:4).

Have Courage to Stand for Principle

It is this sweet assurance that can guide you and me—in our time, in our day, in our lives. Of course we will face fear, experience ridicule, and meet opposition. Let us have



CHRIST CALLING PETER AND ANDREW, BY HARRY ANDERSON

the courage to defy the consensus, the courage to stand for principle. Courage, not compromise, brings the smile of God's approval. Courage becomes a living and an attractive virtue when it is regarded not only as a willingness to die manfully, but as the determination to live decently. A moral coward is one who is afraid to do what he thinks is right because others will disapprove or laugh. Remember that all men have their fears, but those

who face their fears with dignity have courage as well.

From my personal chronology of courage, let me share with you two examples: one from military service, one from missionary experience.

Courage of a World War II Seaman

Entering the United States Navy in the closing months of World War II was a challenging experience for me. I learned of brave deeds, acts of valor, and examples of courage. One best remembered was the quiet courage of an 18-year-old seaman—not of our faith—who was not too proud to pray. Of 250 men in the company, he was the only one who each night knelt down by the side of his bunk, at times amidst the jeers of the curious and the jests of unbelievers, and, with bowed head, prayed to God. He never wavered. He never faltered. He had courage.

Courage of Randal Ellsworth

Missionary service has ever called for courage. One who responded to this call was Randal Ellsworth. While serving in Guatemala as a missionary for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Randal Ellsworth survived a devastating earthquake which struck Guatemala on February 4, 1976. A beam fell onto his back, paralyzing his legs and severely damaging his kidneys. He was the only American injured in the quake, which claimed the lives of some 30,000 persons.

After receiving emergency medical treatment, he was flown to a large hospital near his home in Rockville, Maryland. While Randal was confined there, a newscaster conducted with him an interview that I witnessed on television. The reporter asked, "Can you walk?"

The answer: "Not yet, but I will."

"Do you think you will be able to complete your mission?"

Came the reply: "Others think not, but I will. With the president of my church praying for me, and through the prayers of my family, my friends, and my missionary companions, I will walk, and I will return again to Guatemala. The Lord wants me to preach the gospel there



Missionary service has ever called for courage. Let us be active participants—not mere spectators—on the stage of gospel power.

for two years, and that's what I intend to do."

There followed a lengthy period of therapy, punctuated by heroic yet silent courage. Little by little, feeling began to return to the almost lifeless limbs. More therapy, more courage, more prayer.

At last, Randal Ellsworth walked aboard the plane that carried him back to the mission to which he had been called—back to the people whom he loved. Behind he left a trail of skeptics and a host of doubters, but also hundreds amazed at the power of God, the miracle of faith, and the example of courage.

On his return to Guatemala, Randal Ellsworth supported himself with the help of two canes. His walk was slow and deliberate. Then one day, as he stood before his mission president, Elder Ellsworth heard these almost unbelievable words spoken to him. "You have been the recipient of a miracle," said the mission president. "Your faith has been rewarded. If you have the necessary confidence, if you have abiding faith, if you have supreme courage, place those two canes on my desk and walk."

After a long pause, first one cane and then the other was placed on the desk, and a missionary walked. It was halting, it was painful—but he walked, never again to need the canes.

In the spring of 1986 I thought once more of the courage demonstrated by Randal Ellsworth. Ten years had passed since his ordeal. He was now a husband and a father. An engraved announcement arrived at my office. It read: "The President and Directors of Georgetown University announce commencement exercises of Georgetown University School of Medicine." Randal Ellsworth received his Doctor of Medicine degree. More effort, more study, more faith, more sacrifice, more courage had been required. The price was paid, the victory won.

May each one of us be active participants—not mere spectators—on the stage of gospel power. May we muster courage at the crossroads, courage for the conflicts, courage to say no, courage to say yes, for courage counts.

From an October 1986 general conference address.

LEARN TO SHARE

Most of us *want* to share the gospel with our friends. Sometimes we just don't know *how*. So we asked seminary students in the Des Moines Iowa Stake for their ideas. They know something about the subject because one of the students is a recent convert himself and two others in the early-morning class are not Church members. Here's what the class said:

Pray. Pray to be guided to someone who will be interested in hearing the gospel. Pray to know what to say and do to help that person.

Be a friend first. When you are a true friend, you'll share the gospel out of love, and your friend will sense that and not be offended.

Be an example. It is pretty hard to ask a friend to accept principles you don't live yourself.

Give service. That is how the Savior lived His mortal life. It is how the sons of Mosiah won the hearts of their Lamanite converts (see Alma 17–18).

Help your friend have uplifting experiences. Spending time with you at Church activities or just having fun with you and your Latter-day Saint

friends can provide an environment where the Spirit will touch your friend's heart.

Listen with interest and respect. Listening is part of being a friend. And it invites the other person to show the same interest and respect when you share how you feel about the Savior and His Church.

Share the Book of Mormon and your testimony. Mark a few of your favorite passages, and point out the promise in Moroni 10:3–5.

Invite your friend to meet with the full-time missionaries. The missionaries can explain our beliefs clearly and answer any questions your friend has. Take part in the lessons with your friend.

Believe in the power of the Spirit to touch hearts. Remember that even the simplest testimony or explanation of gospel truth invites the witness of the Spirit. Pray for the Spirit to be with you and to guide you.

Believe in your friend. Be supportive and encouraging. Above all, if your friend does not show interest in the Church at this time, remain a friend. **NE**

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE BLUNDERSON



UNCLE BIRL'S LETTER

Sarah (below left) holds her little sister, Katharine, and is seated next to their grandpa, Gene Brown, at their first meeting since Sarah was four. Great-uncle Birl (right) wrote the letter that reunited Sarah's family and introduced her to her grandfather and her ancestors.

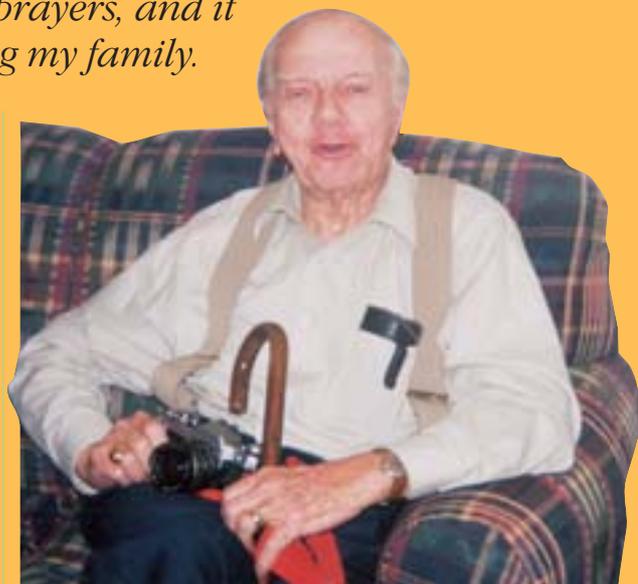
A family photo (far right) of Sarah's grandparents, Gene and Alice Louise Brown, with her great-uncle Paul Brown. Uncle Birl gave this photo to Sarah along with 6,000 names he had compiled.

His letter was an answer to my prayers, and it started me on the path to uniting my family.

BY SARAH K. BROWN

For as long as I can remember, our family had no contact with my dad's side of the family, except for his two sisters. I had never known my grandfather, much less anything about my father's genealogy. That all changed a few years ago.

My grandfather had disapproved of our religion, and in past years he had often criticized it in his letters to my family. My father



had tried many times to reason with him, but it never worked. So unfortunately, when I was four years old, our family lost all contact with him.

Then in January of 2002, I began looking through our family records for names to take to the temple during an upcoming temple trip. To my disappointment, I discovered only five temple-ready names in my mother's files. We had very few names on my father's side, and the few we had were already done. I prayed hard for a long time about where to start researching further.

Then one day, out of the blue, we





Sarab's dad, Kenny, is reunited with his father after receiving a letter from Uncle Birl.



received a letter from my great-uncle Birl, my grandfather's older brother. He wrote that he wanted to get back in contact with our family, and he enclosed his e-mail address and two sheets of genealogy. The Sunday before we received the letter I had been set apart as the first counselor in the Beehive class presidency. My blessing said I would "receive the materials needed to support the Church and my family." I felt that Uncle Birl's letter was the answer to that blessing and my prayers.

Still, I was a little uneasy at first. I had never even heard of my Uncle Birl before, and for all I knew he could disapprove of our religious beliefs as my grandfather did. But the more I thought about it, the more excited I got. I finally had names for the upcoming temple trip.

After looking over the genealogy, I went to my room and got down on my knees, asking my Heavenly Father for guidance. Should I contact my uncle and pursue the rest of the family history? My answer came. A few minutes after I finished my prayer, a peaceful

feeling washed over me, bringing me again to my knees in awe. I knew that this would unite our family again.

That night I e-mailed my uncle. Since then, Uncle Birl has sent me vast amounts of information, including his complete database of more than 6,000 names he has been compiling throughout his life. Many of these files he had already given to the Church. He has told me more than once that he has great respect for our beliefs.

I love my Uncle Birl very much. Through him, I was finally able to meet my grandfather and reopen the gates of communication between us. With all this help, our family has been able to supply the members of our ward with many names they can take to the temple.

Every time I go to the temple to perform baptisms for my ancestors, I know I am really making a difference. I truly believe this is one of the greatest services we can do here on this earth. And every day as I learn more about my ancestors, I am also learning more about who I am. **NE**

BY CATHERINE MATTHEWS PAVIA

“The gospel fills my life with such joy!” the young woman at the pulpit in my student ward exclaimed. I could tell it was true, but my own heart was heavy. I had always been a member of the Church, and I believed in the gospel with all my heart. I followed its principles faithfully. But I didn’t feel that there was any true joy in my life, only the never-ending demands of school, Church callings, friends, and family. Why couldn’t I feel the way the girl at the pulpit did?

The question soon began to consume my thoughts. The familiar Book of Mormon scripture echoed in my head: “Men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25). I became determined to find an answer.

“Father in Heaven,” I prayed late one night, “please, oh please. I’m not happy, and I’m not sure why. Where can I find the joy that prophets and others speak of?”

I crossed campus the next day, sure that now I would get the answer to my prayers. Rain had been falling for three days, filling the flower beds and spilling down the sidewalks. As I plodded through the puddles, I peered into the faces of the other students and wondered if they were truly happy.

The day passed as usual, and I was still discouraged. I sat doing homework, more downhearted than ever.

The shrill ring of the telephone shattered the silence of my self-pity.

“Catherine!” It was my dad’s cheery voice. “How are you?”

“Hi, Dad,” I said. “I’m okay.”

“Just okay?” he asked.

Soon I had told him the whole

problem. Finally, I asked, “Where can I find true joy?”

He was silent for a moment, thinking.

“When I was in Germany on a mission,” he said slowly, “the sun sometimes shone for only a few hours a day. Depressing darkness would fill the rest of our waking hours. I struggled with the gloominess for some time before I learned that if I wanted to have sunshine, I had to carry it with me in my heart.”

I think back on this conversation with my dad regularly. My answer came then. Joy is something inside a person. It comes from living the gospel, being grateful for the opportunity to do so, and then remembering to simply be happy about it. **NE**



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY FAY ANDRUS, POSED BY MODEL

RICARDO KNOWS

BY R. VAL JOHNSON
Church Magazines

Have you ever felt so unimportant that you thought God wouldn't pay attention to your prayers? If so, Luis Ricardo da Silva of Brazil has some experiences to share with you.

Ricardo and his friends stood outside one of the sealing rooms in the São Paulo Brazil Temple, wondering why they couldn't go in. No one was stopping them; after all, the temple was being rededicated, and this was its open house. They asked the leader they were with why they couldn't go in, but he couldn't tell them. He felt the same restraining spirit. It was a good spirit, but still it stopped them from entering.

Then it occurred to the leader. This room was reserved for President Gordon B. Hinckley. He would be there shortly, looking for some time alone in the Lord's house, seeking the Lord's peace and inspiration in prayer.

Ricardo and his friends quietly left.

We expect, of course, that Heavenly Father listens to the prayers of the prophet. But what about the rest of us? Can we really expect God to listen to our prayers?

Luis Ricardo da Silva can answer that question. At one time he considered himself too unimportant for the Lord to pay attention to him. "I felt, why would God pay attention to someone of no importance like me? But now I know that Jesus loves me. I feel His

Spirit, and I know Heavenly Father listens to my prayers."

He knows because he has had prayers answered. He speaks quietly of times at home and school and church when the Lord has responded to his prayers. One experience stands out: "I was in the temple with





After an experience at the open house of the São Paulo Brazil Temple, Ricardo wondered, “Why would God pay attention to someone of no importance like me?” But now, he says, “I know that Jesus loves me. I know Heavenly Father listens to my prayers.”

friends one day doing baptisms for the dead. We decided to have a prayer in the dressing room of the baptistry. While we were praying we felt something special, as if a light had filled the room and someone else was with us. I had been praying to know that God really lives, and this was my answer. The feeling that I had was powerful. I just *knew*. Prayer is sacred.”

Ricardo’s testimony was strengthened that day, but before he was 11, he didn’t even know what a testimony was. Then one day a friend invited him to church. He enjoyed it so much he kept coming back.

His mother didn’t like him going. And she didn’t want him joining the Church when he asked to be baptized. “But the missionaries talked to my mother, and she liked them, so she finally gave permission,” he says.

Ever since then Ricardo has been a devoted and energetic disciple of Christ. He

currently holds the priesthood office of priest in the Barueri Ward, Barueri Brazil Stake. Ricardo is usually the first one at church, even though he must walk two and a half miles (4 km) to get there. He says he wants to come to every meeting, even those not on Sunday.

Although he is the only Church member in his family, he still does all he can to build the Lord’s kingdom. That’s what you want to do when you have a testimony, he says. He is even learning to play the piano so he can accompany the singing in priesthood meeting.

“What is important is eternity,” he says. “Now that I’m a member of the Church, I see everything in an eternal light.”

Does heaven’s light shine for anyone who seeks the Lord? Even for those who consider themselves the least in the kingdom? Indeed it does. Ask Ricardo. He knows. **NE**

Q & A

“My brothers and sister tell jokes about me that hurt my feelings. But I don’t know how to tell them that they are pushing me farther from them. What should I do?”

NEW ERA

No one has the right to make jokes that hurt another person. Even if the joke seems funny to one person, if it hurts someone else’s feelings, it is wrong. But hurtful teasing sometimes happens between brothers and sisters, especially during the teenage years.

Your siblings may tease you just to see what your reaction will be. If you get upset, it may encourage them to keep teasing you. One way to deal with this situation is to change the way you respond. If you can, try to walk away. If you can’t, try ignoring their jokes. Remember that as they mature, your siblings will probably learn that hurtful humor is inappropriate.

It is also possible your siblings don’t understand how their teasing is affecting you. They may not even realize they are being cruel. They may just be copying the kind of humor they hear at school or on TV. If that is the case, explain to them that their teasing really does hurt your feelings. That means you need to speak with them honestly. That may seem hard to do, so pray for help in deciding how to approach the subject with them.

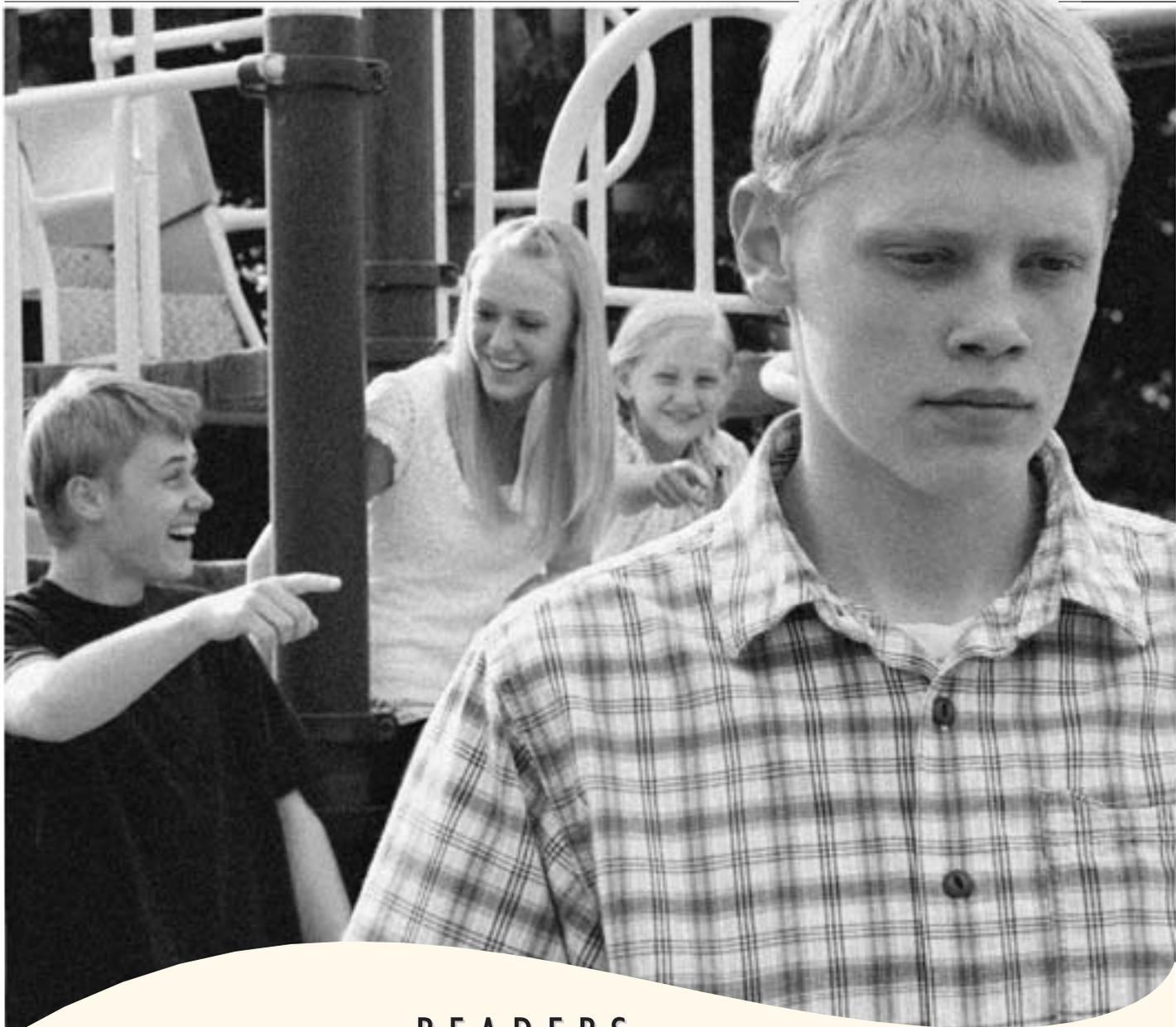
You can also talk with your parents. They

- **Pray about your concerns.** *Heavenly Father will answer your prayers.*
- **Remember that you and your siblings are children of God and should treat each other with respect and dignity.**
- **Remember your family is intended to be eternal, so good feelings are important.**
- **Explain to your siblings how their teasing is affecting you.**
- **Counsel with your parents.**
- **Be kind. Turn the other cheek if you need to. Give your siblings a chance to change.**

may be able to help you decide if the best approach is to discuss this as a family, talk with your brothers and sister by yourself (either as a group or one-on-one), or perhaps to start by writing a note. In one family, sisters kept teasing a brother who was overweight. Finally he turned to his parents. “After that,” he recalls, “whenever we were together and my sisters would say something mean to me, my dad would help by changing the subject.” Eventually, the jokes stopped.

Remember that your family is intended to be eternal. That means good feelings are a high priority. Both you and your siblings are children of God. You should treat each other with respect and dignity. Remember this counsel from *For the Strength of Youth*:

“Do your part to build a happy home. Be cheerful, helpful, and considerate of others. Many problems in the home are created because family members speak and act selfishly or unkindly. Concern yourself with the needs of other family members. Seek to be a peacemaker rather than to tease, fight, and quarrel” (10).



READERS

Does this mean there is no room for good-natured teasing? Not at all. Kindhearted humor is a sign of affection. And so you'll need to ask yourself if you're being overly sensitive. Be willing to listen to your siblings' feelings, and you'll discover that deep inside they love you. They just may not know the right way to show it.

Let your siblings know you love them. Be kind to them in every way you can. Turn the other cheek when you need to, and give them a chance to grow and change. **NE**



If you are one who is offended easily, pray for strength to ask them to stop. And if you are too scared or embarrassed to ask them in

person, write them a note. I have done this, and my life has become easier and happier.

Bethany R., 13, New Mexico

I would describe my feelings to them and ask them if they could tell nice jokes that are not about anyone. Then I'd tell them that those jokes about others are a lot like telling rumors. I would say that being

unkind is taking you further and further away from Christ. Think about it. Would the Savior do what you are doing?

Briana K., 13, Washington



I try to tolerate people who say jokes about me as much as I can. However, when it really hurts, I remember and do as the Savior taught: "If

thy brother shall [hurt] thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother" (Matthew 18:15). But then if they

continue, take it to an authority—your parents—so it can be resolved with love.

Elder Obaseki Alexander Jesuorobo, 21,
Nigeria Port Harcourt Mission



I think the best way to correct it is to simply ignore your siblings' teasing. It is really hard sometimes, but it is always effective.

Andrea M., 16, Arizona

Once during family home evening my dad asked us what we wanted to change in our household. One of my sisters said, "Teasing." My dad told us to turn to Moroni 7:44–46. Verse 45 says, "And charity suffereth long, and is kind, and envieth not, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth not in iniquity." This scripture reminds us all to have charity.

Lauren H., 14, California



I suggest you leave a little gift for them or say something nice to them. They'll probably be surprised, but they may return your favor. When you feel like you're on better terms, talk

to them individually. Tell them how you feel, and ask them if they're teasing you for a reason. Finally, make up with them!

Sarah E., 14, Utah

Don't be scared to tell your brothers or sisters that they are hurting your feelings. They shouldn't be teasing and mocking you. They should be your best friends. They should be kind to you and help you with your problems. If they still tease you when you ask them not to, my advice to you is to tell your parents and ask for their advice.

Laukau M., 12, New Zealand

They will do that until all of you grow older. Ignoring their offensive statements is the key to dealing with it. If you ignore their words, or completely change the subject, they will notice that you no longer react to their jokes. Soon, they will find



"Nothing is more critically connected to happiness . . . than how well we love and support one another within the family."

—Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "What Matters Most Is What Lasts Longest," *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 42.

that making unkind comments out loud is not as entertaining as it used to be, and they will do it less and less until they quit altogether. In the meantime, pray for help so you will have enough strength not to overreact, so you can still be close to your family.

Haley A., 14, Colorado

If my brothers and sister did that to me, I would say, "Um, guys, please don't get mad, but those jokes kind of make me feel like you don't love me that much. Could you please change the punch line?" They don't mean to make you feel unloved; they usually just want to be funny.

Rachel I., 12, Kansas



Try telling your brothers and sister about how you feel and that their comments hurt your feelings. If you express your feelings in a serious and rational manner, they will respect

your feelings and try to make you feel better.

Another approach is to go to a parent and share your feelings with them. Your parents can give good advice, and they can also talk to your siblings.

Lauren J., 18, Utah

Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as pronouncements of Church doctrine.

NEXT QUESTION

"I feel like I have to be perfect all the time.

I'm always thinking I could've done better.

Even when I make a simple mistake, I feel guilty.

Are my expectations for myself too high?"

SEND YOUR ANSWER, along with your full name, birth date, ward and stake, and a photograph (including your parent's written permission to print the photo if you are under 18) to:

New Era, Q&A, 9/06

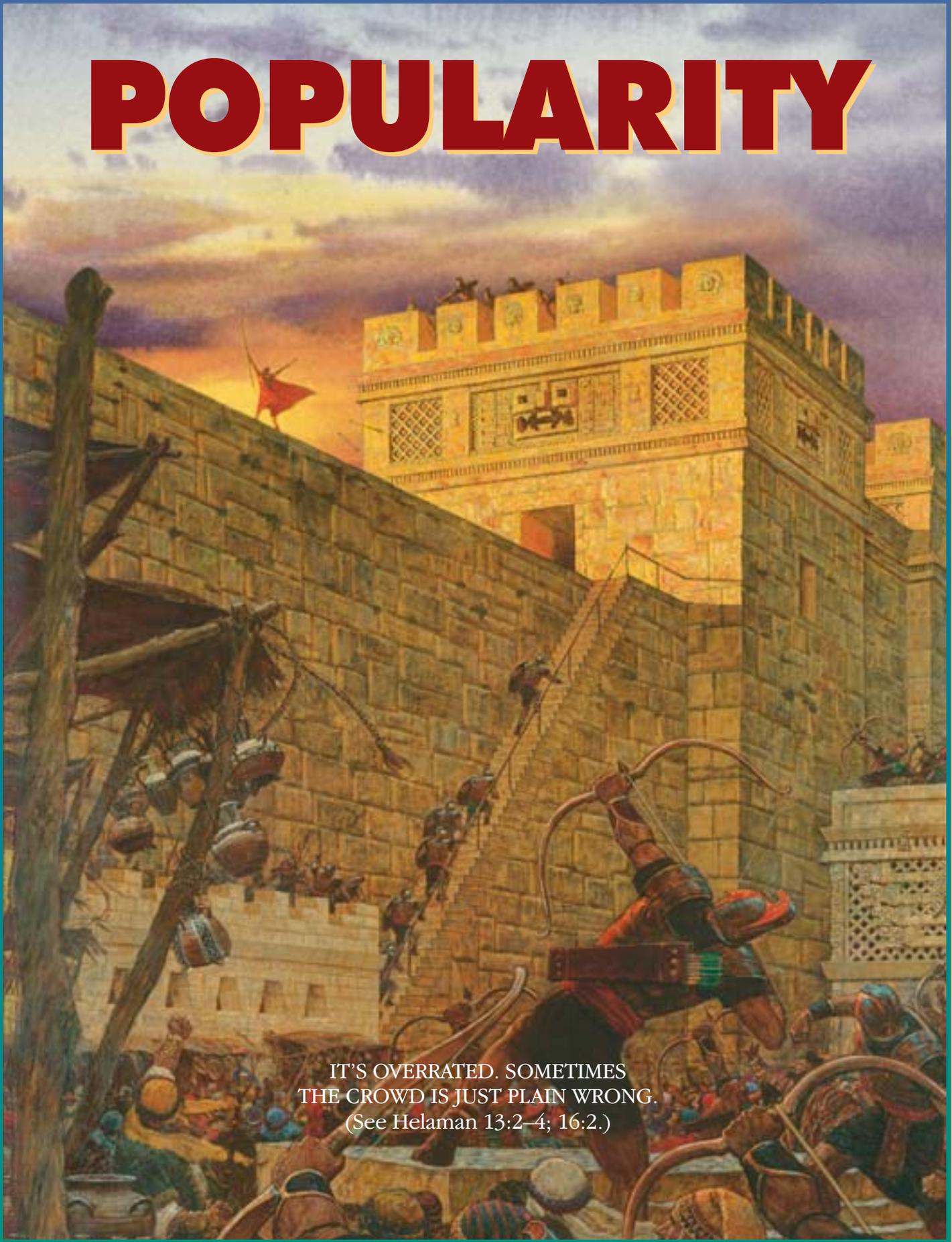
50 E. North Temple St. Rm. 2420

Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

Or e-mail: newera@ldschurch.org

Please respond by October 15, 2006.

POPULARITY



IT'S OVERRATED. SOMETIMES
THE CROWD IS JUST PLAIN WRONG.
(See Helaman 13:2–4; 16:2.)



Falling into a Miracle

BY JANET THOMAS
Church Magazines

The incident made news headlines around the world. A Latter-day Saint missionary had fallen off a 230-foot (70-m) cliff in Australia—and lived! That’s like falling from the top of a 23-story building.

Sometimes a miracle can be told in a single sentence. But for Elder Matthew Weirich—the missionary who fell—every detail of his story testifies to him that the Lord has a plan for his life that he has not yet completed.

Elder Weirich, from Fredricksburg, Texas, had just three months left of his missionary service in the Australia Sydney South Mission. On a preparation day in June 2004, Elder Weirich and three other missionaries got permission to visit a local park to see some of the animals unique to Australia. On the way back from the park they saw a sign pointing to the Grand Canyon lookout. It was close by, so they decided to stop and see what the Grand Canyon looked like in Australia. It is at this point that Elder Weirich’s memory of the



*Matt Weirich
fell from
this cliff in
Australia and
lived to tell
about it.*

day ends. Days later, in the hospital, he had to ask his companions what happened next.

The group had walked to the lookout and then followed marked paths below the lookout to some caves. The path had some crude rock steps back up to the lookout, and one of the missionaries lost a shoe that had been loosely tied. The shoe rolled partway down an incline. From his position Elder Weirich could see that the shoe was caught in a bush just a few steps from the path. It seemed easy

to retrieve, and he offered to get it. His companions said that Elder Weirich called out that he had the shoe. Then they heard the noise of sliding rocks. Since they couldn’t see Elder Weirich, they didn’t know what had happened. But when he no longer answered their calls, they were afraid he had fallen.

The three missionaries looked as far over the cliff edges as they dared, then prayed and

PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR AND COURTESY OF THE WEIRICH FAMILY, EXCEPT AS NOTED



A helicopter rescued Matt from the base of the cliff. Matt's ring (which says "faith") shows how he felt. *Opposite page: A few weeks after his fall, Matt and his companion, Elder Peterson, baptized Marcus and May Wong. Matt and his parents at the Sydney Australia Temple.*

went looking for a cell phone to call the police. They heard a car door slam in the parking lot and ran to ask the man who had just arrived if he had a phone they could borrow. He did, and they called 000, the emergency number.

An hour later a rescue squad arrived just as darkness was falling. It was turning cold, and the heat-seeking helicopter flying overhead could find no sign of Elder Weirich. Everyone was afraid there was no longer a survivor to rescue.

But they were wrong.

At dawn the next day searchers made their way to the bottom of the cliff. They found Elder Weirich, alive but semiconscious. They carefully loaded him into a stretcher and flew him out by helicopter. He was taken to the hospital, where the medical staff expected to work on someone with many broken bones and other serious injuries. It turned out Elder Weirich had some swelling in his brain, but the only

broken bones were his nose and two small fractures above his eye, all of which were left alone to heal.

A List of Miracles

Looking back, Matt lists the miracles that helped him survive.

Before his mission, Matt had been a pole-vaulter. In fact, he was a national champion in high school and was planning on going to college on a track scholarship. Perhaps—although Matt can't remember exactly what he did while falling—his training took over and helped him adjust as he fell so he landed in a way that reduced his injuries.

At the top part of the cliff he hit several ledges that slowed him down, evidenced by the scrapes and cuts on his arms, before he took the final 90-foot (27-m) free fall.

The weather had been below freezing every night. But on the night he spent at the bottom of the cliff, the temperature was 10



Today,
Matt
is
*healthy
and
regularly
takes a
fall of
about 17
feet onto a
pad as a
pole-vaulter
for BYU.*

degrees warmer than usual and did not dip below freezing.

He crawled a few feet after he landed, his head ending up downhill, which may have helped maintain good circulation to his injuries.

He was rescued by experts and given excellent medical care.

His survival story created great interest throughout Australia. Suddenly people everywhere wanted to talk to missionaries. Doors were opened. Many people wondered why this apparent miracle had happened and were asking searching questions about God and the Church this missionary represented.

Matt found other blessings from this experience. He says, "This whole event has brought me closer to my family and has helped me understand the value of life. It is more than just living day-to-day or thinking that you'll be able to make up for mistakes later.

"I have stopped asking why. I'm now asking, 'What can I learn from this?' All I know is that I was an instrument in

the Lord's hands. I have seen some of the effects on other people. I've come to the conclusion that the Lord has things for me to accomplish. When temptations come my way, I realize that I wasn't saved to fall into sin. I have to remember that the Lord has a plan for us all."

Matt Weirich has returned from his mission. He has recovered and is a pole-vaulter on the track team at Brigham Young University, where he continues his studies. **NE**



Having the Last Word



BY SIÂN OWEN BESSEY

My teacher said, “And what does our goody-goody Mormon girl have to say this time?” How was I supposed to respond to that?

As the only Latter-day Saint student at my high school in Anglesey, North Wales, I knew that my peers found my religion a bit strange. But as time went by, most of them seemed to accept me and my religion.

By the time I was in my last couple of years at school, I noticed that some of my peers not only accepted but respected my lifestyle. This became even more evident during my advanced English classes.

Much of the literature we studied fueled discussions about religious and moral issues. One of the last books we read was *Paradise Lost*. It was my first exposure to John Milton’s work, and I was amazed by his insights. I was twice amazed, however, by the doubts and lack of scriptural knowledge my classmates showed. Often I found that I was the only student willing to venture an opinion in class. I bore testimony of the reality of the premortal existence, of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, and of Their divine roles in our lives.

Our teacher, Mr. Brown, was rather a cynic, and he rarely let me have the last word. But I had no way of knowing how my ideas were being taken by the rest of the class, whose silence left me feeling a little lonely in my convictions.

Then one day Mr. Brown walked into our classroom wearing a glower that signaled he was having a bad day. He asked us to turn to Milton and opened the discussion with a question on yet another moral issue. I slowly raised my hand. Mr. Brown looked up, rolled his eyes, then sneered, “And what does our goody-goody Mormon girl have to say this time?”

I opened my mouth, then closed it again. I couldn’t believe it. I felt tears coming as I lowered my head, bit my lip hard, and tried to gain some control over my emotions.

Suddenly all around me I heard chairs being scooted back and angry voices. I looked up. Several of the students

were on their feet.

“Hey, you take that back,” yelled Andrew.

“That was unfair,” echoed David.

“You have no right to say that to her,” came another cry.

I started to tremble. I looked up at a couple of my classmates. Andrew leaned over and gave my shoulder a thump. I smiled gratefully, then turned to Mr. Brown. His face was alternating between beet red and sheet white. He raised his hand to try to bring order back to the room and said, “All right! All right! That’s enough!”

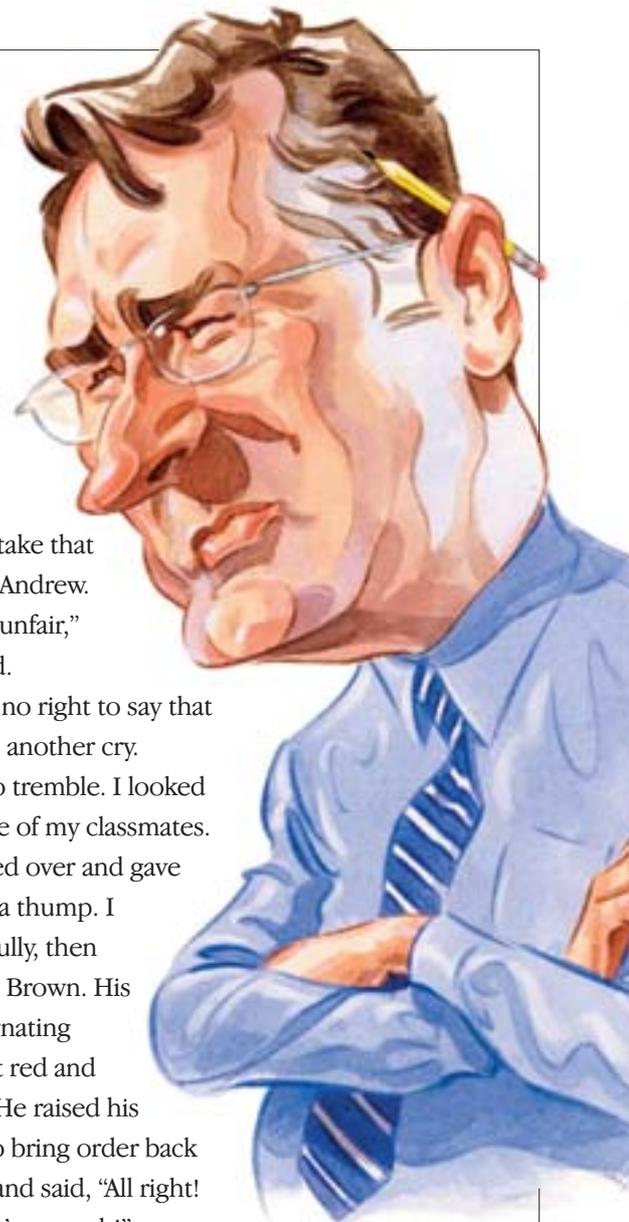
Gradually everyone sat down, and Mr. Brown turned to me. “Siân, my comment was out of line. I apologize.” My hands were shaking, but my heart sang with gratitude for my loyal classmates. Quietly I accepted his apology. The lesson continued, but I made no more comments that day.

As we exited the classroom, Mr. Brown pulled me aside and apologized once more. “I don’t know what came over me,” he said, “but I do want you to continue to comment in class. I think we’ve all learned a lot from you. Many of us wish we had the peace of mind you have.” He sounded unhappy, and my heart went out to him.

“If you really want to know what I know,” I suggested, “I’ll bring you a Book of Mormon tomorrow.”

Mr. Brown groaned. “Oh, brother. I guess I asked for that, didn’t I?”

“You most certainly did,” I agreed with a smile. **NE**





UP TO THE CHALLENGE

BY ADAM C. OLSON
Church Magazines

Tokyo teens talk about how they handle tough temptations.

After school one day Yuriya Kitahara's friends wanted to show her a new comic book. It took only a moment for Yuriya, a Laurel, to realize that there was nothing funny about these comics—the book was pornographic.

Around the same time, Junko Saijo, a Mia Maid, was with her friends when one of them lit a cigarette and offered it to Junko.

Not long after, a group of students at Sho Watanabe's school was arrested for selling drugs to other students.

Fortunately, Yuriya dropped the comic book. Junko refused the cigarette. And Sho, a priest, has tried to be careful in choosing his friends.

Though the Church is growing in Japan, these teens still have to face the temptations of the world every day. That's part of the test we came to earth to take. The question is: are we up to the challenge? And if we aren't, how can we be?

Living with Temptation

Breaking the Word of Wisdom is a common temptation in Tokyo, according to a group of young members from different stakes who have gotten together to talk about the challenges they face.

Several of the youth were faced with the temptation of

tobacco as soon as they were teenagers. Others are lucky enough to have avoided it altogether so far. Not everyone faces the same temptations. But tobacco is a common trap for Tokyo teens.

"It's so easy to buy tobacco here; it's difficult for some *not* to buy it," says Hikaru Watanabe, a deacon and Sho's younger brother.

Alcohol is another problem presented early on to many youth.

"After a school activity ends, all the students usually go somewhere to have a party," says Yuriya. "Sometimes my friends ask me to go. They don't say they're going to drink, but to many teens, going to a party means going to drink. They don't think that's bad." The other youth all nod in agreement—they've been in similar situations.

The teens also agree that pornography and immorality are running rampant among their peers.

"Music is getting bad too," says Keiko Saijo, a Laurel and Junko's older sister. "The lyrics are just awful."

These are temptations and challenges Latter-day Saint teens are facing all around the world. What are they doing about it? They are learning that through the gospel, they can find the strength they need to overcome all their challenges.

Finding the Strength

The youth agree that to overcome the temptations thrown at them every day, they need the guidance



Yuriya Kitahara



Sho Watanabe



Junko Saijo



Yuuya Kitahara



Keiko Saijo

of the Holy Ghost.

“It’s not just my own strength, but relying on the Lord that gets me through,” says priest Yuuya Kitahara, Yuriya’s younger brother. “Coming closer to the Lord helps us avoid the temptations and overcome them.”

That is a valuable lesson. “If we don’t do things to be closer to the Spirit, we would probably end up just like many youth outside of the Church, smoking, watching pornography, and worse,” says Yuriya.

It’s a lesson taught several times in the Book of Mormon. Without the Spirit of the Lord, the Nephites became “weak, like unto their brethren, the Lamanites” (Helaman 4:24; see also Mosiah 1:13; Mormon 2:26).

“When I feel the Spirit, I feel like the temptations just go away,” says Hikaru. “That strength comes from the Spirit.”

Yuuya says praying morning and night helps bring the Spirit. Yuriya feels closer to the Holy Ghost by studying the scriptures every day.

Yuuya’s twin brother, Yuuki, mentions youth activities and seminary. And Junko says going to church and family home evening have not only

YOUR EXAMPLE CAN HELP OTHERS



“God bless you, my dear young friends. You are the best generation we have ever had. You know the gospel better. You are more faithful in your duties. You are stronger to face the temptations which come your way. Live by your standards. Pray for the guidance and protection of the Lord. He will never leave you alone. He will comfort you. He will sustain you. He will bless and magnify you and make your reward sweet and beautiful. And you will discover that your example will attract others who will take courage from your strength.”

—President Gordon B. Hinckley, “An Ensign to the Nations, a Light to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 84.

helped her feel the Spirit but have taught her ways to overcome temptations. And each says attending the temple has made a big difference. “I feel a special power when I come to the temple of the Lord,” says Sho. He says he can resist temptations better when he goes to the temple regularly.

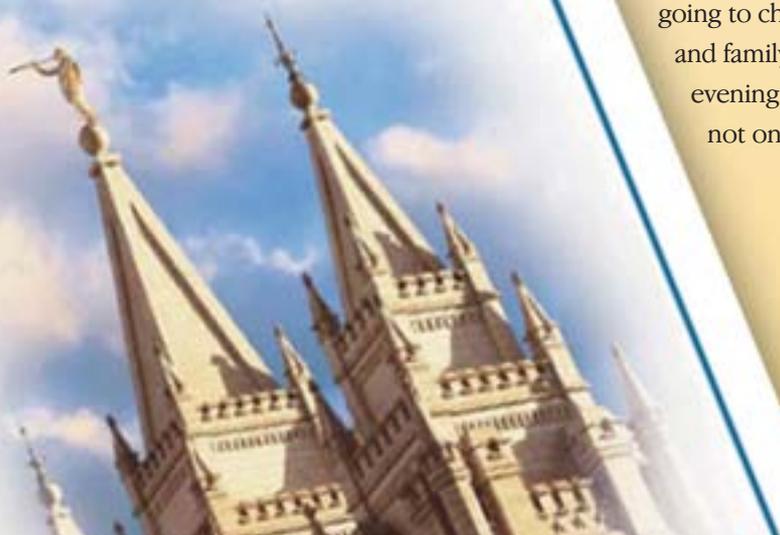
For the past few years, Sho and Hikaru have tried to go to the temple every Thursday to perform baptisms for the dead. Keiko and Junko, and Yuriya and her brothers try to attend every Friday.

“Coming to the temple strengthens me,” Keiko says.

For the Strength of Youth

And then during their conversation, someone mentions the *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet, and half of them pull out the wallet-sized version.

強さのために
の務めを果たす



“This is written for us,” says Yuuya. “It’s easy to understand and easy to apply. When I apply the principles taught in this pamphlet, it helps protect me from temptation.”

The others agree. Most of them refer to it regularly. “We read from it almost every week in Young Women,” says Junko.

Hikaru says it helps him overcome temptation. Church leaders, he says, “tell us that when we are struggling with a temptation, we should think of a scripture. But sometimes it’s hard to carry the scriptures with you. I can keep this card with me all the time, and it helps.”

For many of the youth, the pamphlet has helped them learn how to apply the gospel to how they live and the choices they make.

“The gospel isn’t about just knowing what’s right, but doing what’s right,” says Yuuki. “When I read *For the Strength of Youth*, I learned what to *do*. It tells you how to apply the gospel to your life.”

“Before the pamphlet came out, our leaders would talk about Church standards, but we can’t remember everything,” Sho says. “*For the Strength of Youth* is so easy to understand. It helps explain how the scriptures apply to us. And I can carry it with me.”

“I’m not a great reader,” Keiko says. “But the pamphlet is easy. When I concentrate on its words, I feel this really is right. I think God prepared this for our day.”

The pamphlet *was* prepared for our day, and so were the youth of this generation.

“You have been told often, and I will say it again: You are a chosen generation,” said Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “You have been raised up by the Lord to carry His Church and kingdom into the 21st century. You have been chosen by the Lord to come forth on the earth when wickedness and evil are very powerful. But you are up to the challenge” (“Growing into the Priesthood,” *Liabona*, Jan. 2000, 48–49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 41).

What does it take to be up to the challenge? A willingness to stay close to the Spirit and follow the counsel of the Lord. **NE**



Yuuki Kitahara



Hikaru Watanabe

WHAT TO DO WHEN A FRIEND BECOMES A TEMPTER

Whom you choose as friends makes a difference. “If you choose bad friends, many temptations will follow,” says Sho Watanabe.

The first time you stand up to someone can be the hardest, but it’s usually easier after that. “Cigarettes aren’t good for you,” Junko Saijo told a friend after the girl offered her a cigarette. “My friend didn’t stop smoking, but she has left me alone about it since then.”

Standing up doesn’t always work. Sometimes you have to leave the situation. “When my friends start talking about bad things, I try to change the topic,” says Yuuki Kitahara. “If they don’t stop, I walk away.”

In many cases you can handle situations politely. Once, Keiko Saijo’s friend was listening to music on her headphones. “She offered it to me, but the music made me feel bad inside. I said, ‘Nice music but not for me,’ and gave the headphones back.”

THE AWARD WE DIDN'T WIN

BY BARBARA ANDERSON

We were trying hard to play by a set of rules our coach gave us. Winning was great, but it certainly wasn't all we were working for.

We won the championship game but went home disappointed.

Softball season was approaching, and we had just enough girls in our ward for a team. Our coach, Sister Bowman, was a busy mother who had been asked to make an unlikely group of girls into a team. Sister Bowman turned out to be the best coach I ever had.

At the first practice, Sister Bowman went over the rules of the game. Then she laid out the “new rules.” She said, “This year we will not only be scored for our runs; we will also be scored for our sportsmanship. I want you to do your best. But win or lose, I want you to have the highest sportsmanship score possible at every game.”

Sister Bowman’s rules went something like this:

1. Before each game, greet the opposing team and wish them luck.
2. If a girl on your team makes an error, encourage her. Do not criticize.
3. If a member of your team or the

opposing team falls down, help her up and make sure she’s all right.

4. Do not say unkind things to any member of your team or the opposing team.

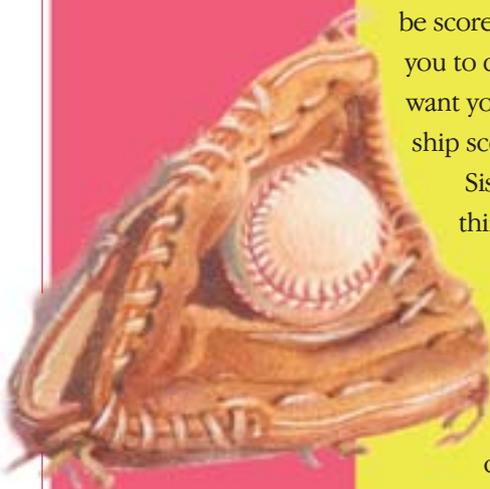
5. Each girl who shows up for the game will have an opportunity to play, regardless of her ability.

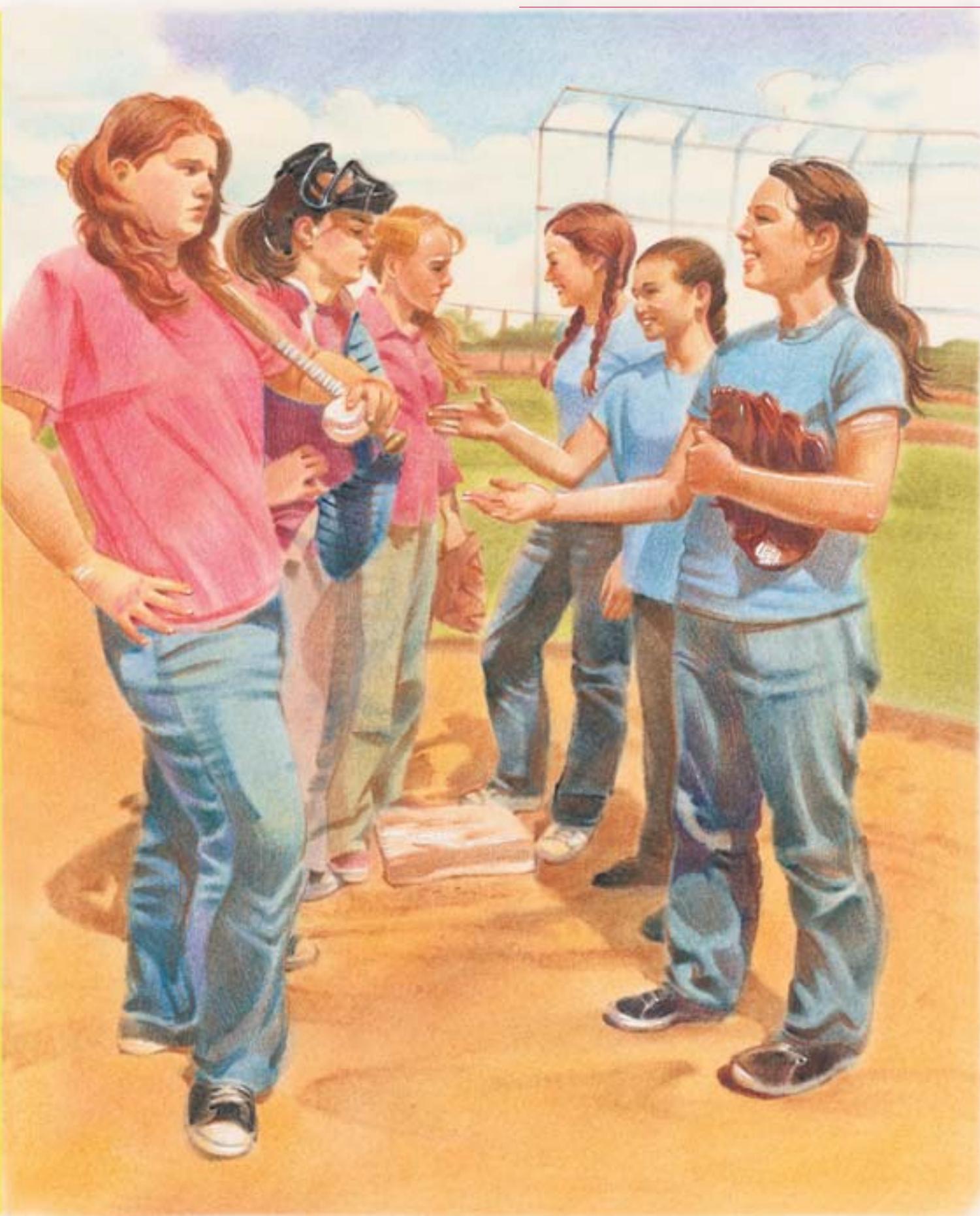
6. Win or lose, enthusiastically cheer the opposing team and shake each competitor’s hand.

Sister Bowman regularly emphasized these rules.

The first game went well. Though we weren’t the best players in the world, we discovered that encouraging each other boosted the confidence and abilities of the entire team. When we won that first game, we found it was easy to cheer the opposing team. After all, it’s easy to be a good sport when you win.

Our real test came the first time we lost. One of the girls cried because she felt responsible for our loss. We gathered around her and assured her it was all right. We were surprisingly enthusiastic as we cheered the





The sportsmanship medal that we had worked so hard to earn was given to the other team. This would be our greatest test of all. Could we show true sportsmanship by graciously accepting this decision?

winning team and shook their hands. Even though we lost, we realized we'd had fun. Most importantly, our sportsmanship score was high.

As the season progressed, our focus shifted. We liked winning, but we became as interested in our sportsmanship scores as we were in the game scores. What started as a list of rules was becoming second nature to us.

At the end of the season when the stake leaders reviewed our record—games won as well as sportsmanship scores—we were the stake champions. We would be representing our stake at the regional playoffs.

When the big day arrived, we were ready to play our best. The team we were playing was undefeated, and when we went over to wish them luck, they didn't seem as friendly as the other teams we had played. As the game progressed we began to realize that these girls were not playing by our rules. It seemed to us that they intended to win at any cost. They laughed at us. They ran into us and knocked us down every chance they got. If one of the girls on their team made an error, they yelled at her and called her names. Even their coach was yelling at them.

In the dugout Sister Bowman continued to encourage us, and we hung in there. Near the end of the game, and only one point behind, we were up to bat. With runners on, we had a hit. One of our teammates came around third base and headed for home plate. In an attempt to keep us from scoring, the catcher stood across home plate. But her efforts didn't prevent our runner from crossing home plate safe. The score was tied.

Our team was excited, but then we noticed that our teammate was still at home plate. She didn't get up. She just sat there crying and holding her ankle, which had been cut by the catcher's cleat. The girls on the other team were too busy yelling at each other to apologize or help her up.

As our injured friend sat on the bench, we

scored another run and to everyone's astonishment, including our own, won the game.

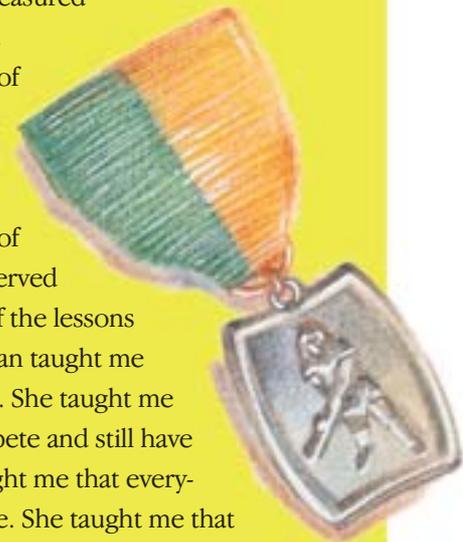
We gathered on the grass for the awards ceremony. First we received our medals for winning the playoffs, then waited for the next award. We were excited. The sportsmanship medal, the award we had worked so hard for all season, was within our grasp!

But we sat in shock as the sportsmanship medal was awarded to the other team. Our faces fell. Our hearts sank. How could this be? We felt we had earned that medal! Had the region leaders felt they could not send the other team home empty-handed? This turned out to be the greatest test of what we had practiced all season. Could we show true sportsmanship by graciously accepting this decision, despite our disappointment? It was difficult, to say the least.

Afterward, Sister Bowman took us out for pizza to celebrate our "victory." Any casual observer would never have guessed that we had just won the region softball championship.

I still have that medal. I keep it in a box with other treasured keepsakes. It reminds me of what we won. More

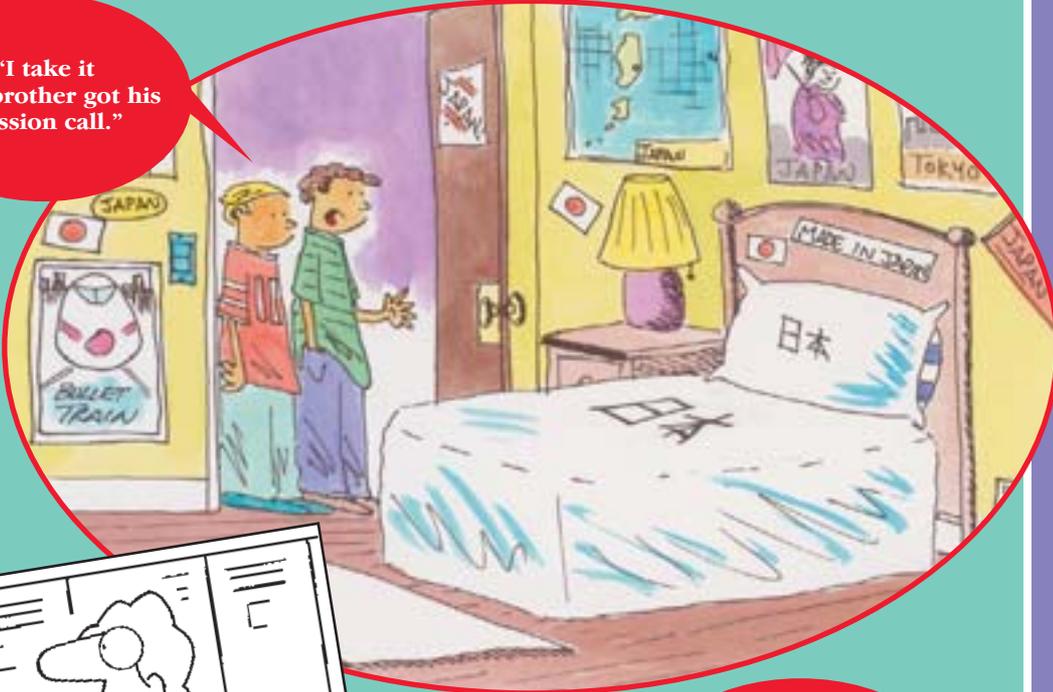
important, it reminds me of what we deserved to win and of the lessons Sister Bowman taught me that summer. She taught me how to compete and still have fun. She taught me that everyone has value. She taught me that winning is not, and should never be, the most important thing. I suppose she taught me the true meaning of the saying "It's not whether you win or lose; it's how you play the game." That philosophy, I have found, applies in life as well as in softball. **NE**



THE EXTRA SMILE

"I take it your brother got his mission call."

"My mom still treats me like a baby, and my dad keeps telling me to be a man. I carry a copy of my birth certificate just in case I forget my real age."



RYAN STOKER

"I think we need to clarify what we meant when we said 'study the scriptures.'"



RANDY GLASBERGEN





WEIGHING IN FOR A MISSION

One hundred and twenty pounds separated Neil Bridenstine from his goal of serving a mission, but he wasn't about to let that stop him.

BY DANIELLE NYE POULTER

“**N**othing in this world, not even a T-bone steak, could taste as good as it will feel to wear a missionary name badge. Nothing tastes that good.”

That thought gave Neil Bridenstine constant motivation to stick to a demanding weight-loss program. He had one goal in mind: serving a mission.

Just before his 19th birthday, Neil, then weighing about 400 pounds, learned he'd have to lose more than 120 pounds to drop to the recommended maximum weight for a missionary his height. The weight requirement from the Missionary Department helps ensure that young men and women will be able to live the physically challenging lifestyle of a missionary.

At first Neil felt the weight requirement would be impossible for him to meet. After all, his previous attempts to lose weight had been unsuccessful.

“I was a little discouraged when they said I needed to lose 120 pounds. I was feeling pretty down, and I thought, ‘Well, I’m not going on a mission then.’”

After a month of feeling discouraged, Neil came to an important realization. His current

Determined to improve his health and become eligible to receive a mission call, Neil began each weekday at 6:30 a.m. with a three-hour hike.



weight was unhealthy, and he *did* need to make a drastic change.

“Being 400 pounds, I was at the end of the rope. I needed to lose the weight anyway.”

To lose weight, Neil enrolled for six months at a full-time weight-loss center in St. George, Utah. Once he got there, he began to realize that his goal of a mission might not be impossible after all. “I went there with the wrong frame of mind, that I was going just to lose some weight, but then I turned around and said: ‘I’m going to do this so I can go on a mission.’”

Working to Lose

Because Neil needed to lose so much weight in a short period of time, he needed to be monitored and advised by professionals during the entire process. Neil, along with his parents and doctor, decided that a health center was the safest option. There he was supervised and learned the basics of healthy living so that he could maintain his weight when he returned home and while on his mission.

The center’s weight loss regimen put Neil on a 1,200-calorie-per-day diet. His meals were carefully balanced to make sure he got

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANIELLE NYE POULTER AND COURTESY OF THE BRIDENSTINE FAMILY



all the nutrients he needed. “My diet was straight out of the Word of Wisdom—whole foods, whole grains, fresh vegetables, fruit, and meat, but very sparingly.”

On weekdays, Neil’s day began at 6:30 a.m. with a three-hour hike. “We would hike between four and six miles, depending on our hiking ability. My first hike I went about two miles in three hours. That was as far as I could go.”

But during his stay Neil built up his physical endurance. He spent part of each day in the gym doing strength training, aerobics, stretching, and cardiovascular exercises. In the evening, he attended lectures on how to main-

The blessings Neil realized as a result of his hard work and preparation were spiritual as well as physical. He received his call to serve in the Armenia Yerevan Mission.

tain a healthy diet and lifestyle. Over the course of six months, Neil hiked a total of 600 miles and lost an average of five pounds a week.

A Growing Testimony

As Neil’s body slowly began to change, he underwent a rapid change of heart. “Being there tested my faith because if I didn’t go to church on Sunday, my parents weren’t there to baby me, and my roommates didn’t care. I very quickly felt tested to see if I was there for the right reasons. It really made me understand that I did want to go on a mission and that I would deeply regret it if I didn’t.”

Several counselors at the health center who are members of the Church befriended Neil. He attended a young single adult ward with them, and through their example, his testimony grew. He also used the free time between workouts and lectures to study the gospel. He read *Preach My Gospel*, other Church books, and the Book of Mormon, with the goal of sharing his testimony with others.

“That’s what I was really trying to do—to really *know* the Book of Mormon, more than



just reading the words to say I read it.”

Neil’s gospel study, coupled with his intense weight-loss program, paid off. “I was losing weight physically, but I was gaining so much spiritually—spiritual knowledge through the Book of Mormon and *Preach My Gospel*.”

The spiritual strength he was gaining carried him through difficult periods in his training. “Some nights there were times when I would cry myself to sleep because I dreaded waking up and going on a six-mile hike, or I dreaded having to eat another piece of tofu. But I said my prayers every night. Some mornings I would go on a hike, and it would feel like someone was pushing me. I was amazed that I was able to do what I did.”

Not only was Neil preparing physically and spiritually for his mission; he was also getting a lot of practice in missionary work. Most of the guests at the health center were not members of the Church, so Neil found opportunities to introduce them to the gospel and share his testimony.

“I gave out 12 copies of the Book of Mormon, told the Joseph Smith story a handful of times, and bore my testimony literally hundreds of times. When I was hiking I would try to pick a guest for that week and bear my testimony about the Church. It was the best missionary preparation ever because I got to do real missionary work.”

Reaping the Fruit

Now Neil has the opportunity to put all that practice to the test as a missionary in the Armenia Yerevan Mission. Almost six months to the day after Neil began his weight-loss program, he weighed in on the doctor’s scales at 280 pounds.

“It was a lot of work, and it was difficult, but it paid off. To get the doctor to sign off, to get the missionary papers in, and to get my

H *healthier and 120 pounds leaner, Neil no longer fills his old suit coats. But what he’s lost in weight he’s gained in spiritual knowledge and confidence. Says Elder Bridenstine, “I can honestly say that I’ve been very blessed, spiritually and physically, to be able to do what I’ve done.”*



mission call—the whole thing, every minute of misery I thought I was in, was well worth it.”

Neil says he is grateful for the weight requirement because of everything the experience taught him. But he gives the credit to Heavenly Father for helping him accomplish his goal.

“I can honestly say that I’ve been very blessed, spiritually and physically, to be able to do what I’ve done. The physical results are out of this world. Those came from heavenly help, and I can take very little credit for that. I know that there’s a reason I was supposed to go on a mission.”

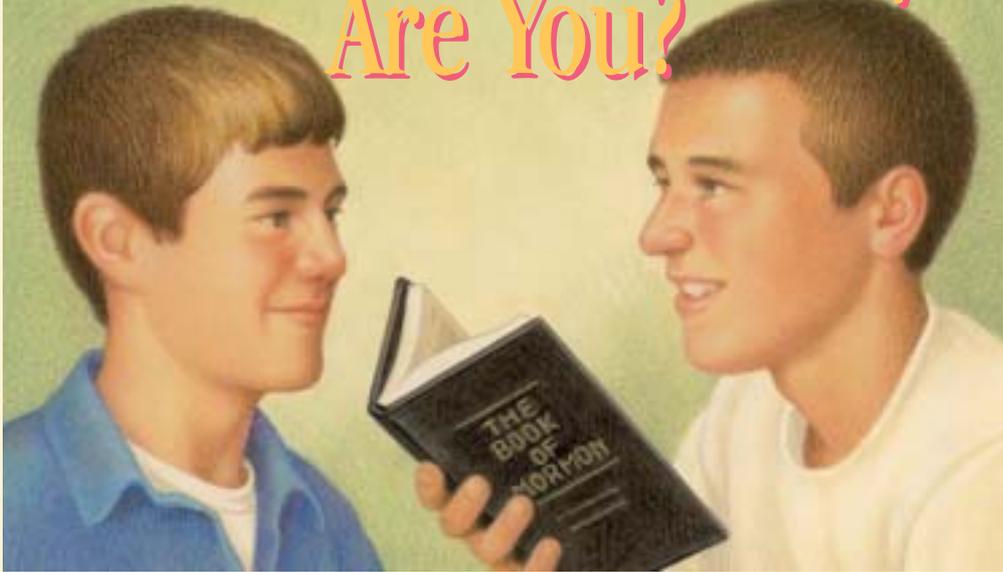
Elder Bridenstine is now discovering what that reason is. And his weight loss not only got him there, it also taught him an important lesson he now uses as a missionary.

“Anything is possible with the Lord on your side. If you’re doing what you’re asked and living righteously, the Lord will bless you.”

Whether those blessings come in pounds lost or in souls found. **NE**



What Kind of Member Missionary Are You?



Do your friends know you're a Latter-day Saint? How do you let them know you have a testimony? Take this quiz to see how you're doing on member missionary work.

1. Your best friend asks you what you did over the weekend. You say:

- A.** Oh, you know, the usual—just hung out.
B. I did some fun stuff on Saturday and went to church with my family on Sunday.
C. I had a soccer match on Saturday, and then on Sunday at church we had a lesson about serving missions. It made me feel really excited to be a missionary when I get older.

2. You're eating lunch at school. The people at your table notice your CTR ring. When they ask what it is, you say:

- A.** This is my CTR ring. It stands for "Choose the Right," and it reminds me to do what the Lord wants me to do.
B. A lot of kids from my church wear this ring. I like it.
C. Oh, this is just a church ring. No big deal.

3. Your friend asks you why you don't drink iced tea or coffee.

- A.** You tell your friend that you just don't like these drinks.
B. You let your friend know

that it's against your religion to drink them. Besides, they're not good for you.

C. You explain that in the Church we have what's called the Word of Wisdom, which gives us advice on how to stay healthy.

4. A girl in your English class has been asking you questions about the Church. You think she might be interested in learning more. What do you do?

- A.** Keep answering her questions the best you can, and think about giving her a copy of the Book of Mormon.
B. Invite her to family home evening at your house.

C. Ask her to come to church with you or if she would like to meet with the missionaries at your house.

5. A friend notices a picture of the temple in your living room at home and asks what building it is. You say:

- A.** That's a temple. It's like a special church building for LDS people.
B. That's the temple where my parents got married. Temples are special buildings in my church. Let me tell you more about it.
C. Oh, that's a church building.

Calculate your score!

1.	A, 1	B, 2	C, 3
2.	A, 3	B, 2	C, 1
3.	A, 1	B, 2	C, 3
4.	A, 1	B, 2	C, 3
5.	A, 2	B, 3	C, 1

1–5 Super Shy

You're a Latter-day Saint who's a little timid to admit it. Shed your shyness, and start trying to share the gospel. Many of your friends need the gospel in their lives! You can do it!

6–10 A Little More Confident

You're good about letting people know you belong to the Church, but you could share a little more. Be bold, and share the gospel even more with those around you.

11–15 Super Sharer

You're doing an awesome job of being a member missionary. You're bold and love to share your testimony. Keep up the good work, and remember to share the gospel with love and compassion!

COMING NEXT MONTH . . .

Do you have a friend who is new to the Church? Then you'll definitely want to show them next month's *Ensign* or *Liabona* magazine—an edition created especially for new members.

The October issue has answers to questions like "How do I handle the concerns of family members who aren't LDS?" or "Where do I go for answers to questions I don't even have yet?"

You can get a copy at your distribution center. You can also see the magazine online in the Gospel Library at www.ldschurch.org.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE MANGUS FAMILY

Living Legend

Katy Mangus was crowned Miss Legend at Oconee County High School's annual pageant in January 2005. A Laurel in the Athens Second Ward, Athens Georgia Stake, Katy stood out from the other contestants in many ways—but one distinction was the most obvious. Of the 30 contestants who each took the stage in a formal evening gown, Katy was the only one whose dress was modest. When she stood at the microphone to introduce herself and her platform, she explained, "Something

that influences our everyday lives—how we feel about ourselves and how we interact with others—is my platform: 'Making a Difference with Modesty.'"

By choosing to stand for modesty, Katy hoped to set an example for other young people, both in and out of the Church, and to encourage them to take a stand and make a difference through modesty in dress and behavior. She said, "We can influence others for the better by being an example of modesty and setting a higher standard for ourselves."

MAKE A FAMILY FLAG

Here's a great family project that can help you learn more about your family history, and you'll have a lot of fun doing it. Do some planning and designing, and then gather the items you'll need to make a family flag: scissors and sewing materials, glue, different colors of cloth, maybe some paints, and a flag pole or stick.

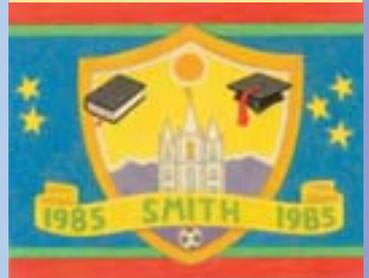


ILLUSTRATION BY STEVE KROPP

How to Do It

- * Discuss the project with your family members and get their ideas on what should be part of your family flag.
- * Do some family history research so you can include symbols of important events.
- * Sit down with your family and design the flag on paper.
- * Write out an explanation of the flag's design and significance.
- * Have fun putting the flag together with your family.

“IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT GOD LIVES, THAT JESUS CHRIST IS OUR SAVIOR, AND THAT THE GOSPEL IS TRUE. WE MUST TAKE THE HIGH ROAD BY ACTING UPON THE KNOWLEDGE.”

—Elder Dallin H. Oaks, "Be Not Deceived," *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 46.

CHOOSE A BRIGHT FUTURE



If you do what's right, things will turn out right. It's as simple as that.

BY ELDER JOHN H. GROBERG

Of the Seventy

One of the biggest decisions you'll ever make is whether or not you are going to trust the Lord. If you want a bright future, you have to make the decision right now: do you trust the Lord or not? If you trust Him, you will keep His commandments.

You can either trust man, or you can trust the Lord. You are a lot better off trusting the Lord, because if you trust man, who knows where you will end up? I have a little saying: "If you do what's right, things will turn out right. If you do what's wrong, things will turn out wrong." It's as simple as that. Trust the Lord. Obey Him.

A Huge Difference

How do we obey the Lord? There are a lot of ways. I would like to address one particularly for the young men.

You have a responsibility. When you received the priesthood, you took upon yourself the responsibility to share the gospel. One of the best ways to do that is to serve a mission. Now, in order to serve a mission, there are a lot of things you have to do. You have to pay your tithing. You have to

attend church. You have to be morally clean. You have to be worthy in every respect. You have to prepare. You have to study the scriptures. But I promise you that if you will prepare yourself, if you will keep the Lord's commandments, and if you will serve a mission, it will make a huge difference in your life, and it will make a huge difference in the world.

On a mission you not only teach others the truth, but you learn more of the truth yourself. I can honestly say that I learned more eternal gospel principles on my mission than any other single time. Even today I look back on my mission and realize lessons I learned then.

Go on a mission. Prepare.

Now you young women might say, "Well, you have talked about the young men. What about us?" Young men have the *responsibility* to go on a mission, and young women have the *opportunity*. You have the choice. You can go or not go.

My wife and I have quite a few daughters. About half of them went on missions. Those who went are very happy they went. Those who didn't are also very satisfied. They're married and have families of their own. It's your choice.



think. Let me give you an example. Several years ago I had a stake conference assignment in a small mining town.

As I visited with the stake president prior to leaving, he said, "Do you have time to visit with a young man? This young man is a good young man. He always planned on going on a mission. But just recently he said he isn't going. We've talked to him, and we can't seem to make any difference. Would you talk to

him?" I said I'd be happy to.

The young man had grown up

But you young women have the responsibility to make sure that the young men you associate with are eager and worthy to serve. Don't do anything, and don't allow them to do anything with you, that would discourage or disqualify them from serving a mission. Always encourage them.

Jill's Answer

Sometimes you wonder, "Do I really have much power to encourage others to serve?" You have more power than you

active in the Church, but he had seen his father in and out of work in the mines. Just before this young man turned 19, he had a job in a store. The manager was so impressed with him that he said, “If you’ll take this job right now, I’ll make you the assistant manager, and in a couple of years you’ll be the manager.”

“I was planning on going on a mission,” he said.

The manager said, “Well, you can do whatever you want, but you’ll lose this job. I need you right now.”

Well, he thought about it. He had a girlfriend named Jill. And he thought, “I really love Jill. If I get this job, I won’t have to work at the mine. We can get a house. We can get married and have a family.” So he made up his mind that he wasn’t going on a mission because he had this tremendous opportunity.

He talked to his father, and his father did everything he could to persuade him to go on a mission. He couldn’t persuade him. The father asked his son to talk to the bishop. The bishop couldn’t persuade him. The stake president couldn’t persuade him. I talked to him, and I couldn’t persuade him. He was determined to work at this store.

Finally, when it became evident that he wasn’t going to go, his father said, “Well, what are your plans?”

“I’m going to marry Jill.”

“What does Jill have to say about it?”

“Well, I haven’t talked to her yet.”

“How do you know she’ll even marry you?”

He had just assumed that she would.

His dad told him, “You’d better talk to Jill.”

So he explained to Jill about this great job and how he would make good money. Finally, he said, “You know, with this job we can buy a house. We can start a family.”

Jill asked, “Are you proposing to me?”

“Well, yeah, I guess so.”

“What about your mission?”

“I’ve already told you that if I go on a mission, I’ll lose this job. If I lose the job, we won’t have the income. We won’t be able to get married. We won’t be able to have a home.”

Now, remember, four priesthood brethren—

father, bishop, stake president, and General Authority—couldn’t sway him.

Jill looked at him and said, “No mission, no Jill.”

He was in the bishop’s office the next day filling out his papers to go on his mission.

The Lord Will Prepare a Way

He served a mission, and while he was serving, Jill married someone else. But he had been out on his mission long enough that he had gained a solid testimony.

When this elder came home after serving a wonderful mission, he went to his folks and said, “I’ve decided I’m going to go on to college.”

They almost fainted and said, “No one in our family has gone to college. How can you do that?”

“I don’t know, but I talked to my mission president, and he said he thought it was a good idea and, if it was right, the Lord would prepare the way.” And the Lord did prepare a way. He was a smart young man. He eventually became a dentist, married a wonderful woman, and they raised a great family.

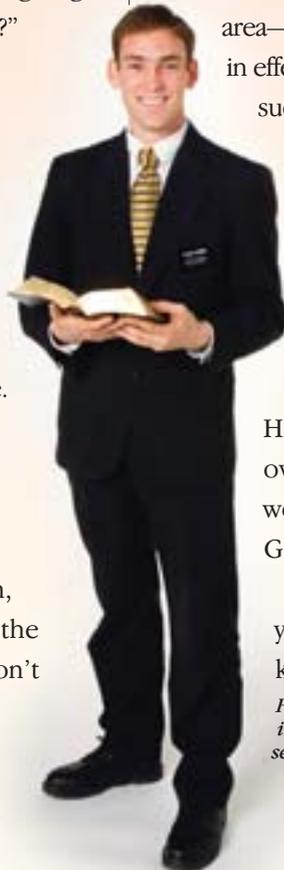
Now the sequel to this story is that not very many years after he had started his dental practice in a different area—guess what happened? They closed the mine, in effect, closing the town. And the store that was such a big thing to him years earlier closed. It couldn’t stay in business.

What if he had followed the dictates of man or just his own feelings? He might have married Jill, and they would have had a mortgage they couldn’t have paid and a house they couldn’t have sold.

God always blesses you when you keep His commandments. But if you go on your own thinking, you are at the mercies of the world. It’s a lot better to be at the mercies of God—a lot better.

By doing right, things will turn out right. If you want a bright future, trust the Lord and keep His commandments. **NE**

From a youth devotional address given on June 8, 2004, in the Salt Lake Tabernacle. Elder John H. Groberg served as a member of the Seventy from 1976 to 2005.



CLASS PRAYER

BY JOHN DAYTON

I was sitting in my advanced neuroscience class during my last semester of undergraduate work at Brigham Young University. One of my favorite things about BYU was that most of my classes began with a prayer. This morning, it was Josh's turn to pray (name has been changed).

I had met Josh in a biology class the previous year. He had a quiet confidence that set him apart from the other pre-medical students, and he was someone I looked up to. He seemed to get good grades effortlessly. While the rest of us scrambled for scientific research experience to pad our graduate school applications, he had chosen to study with a renowned religious scholar instead.

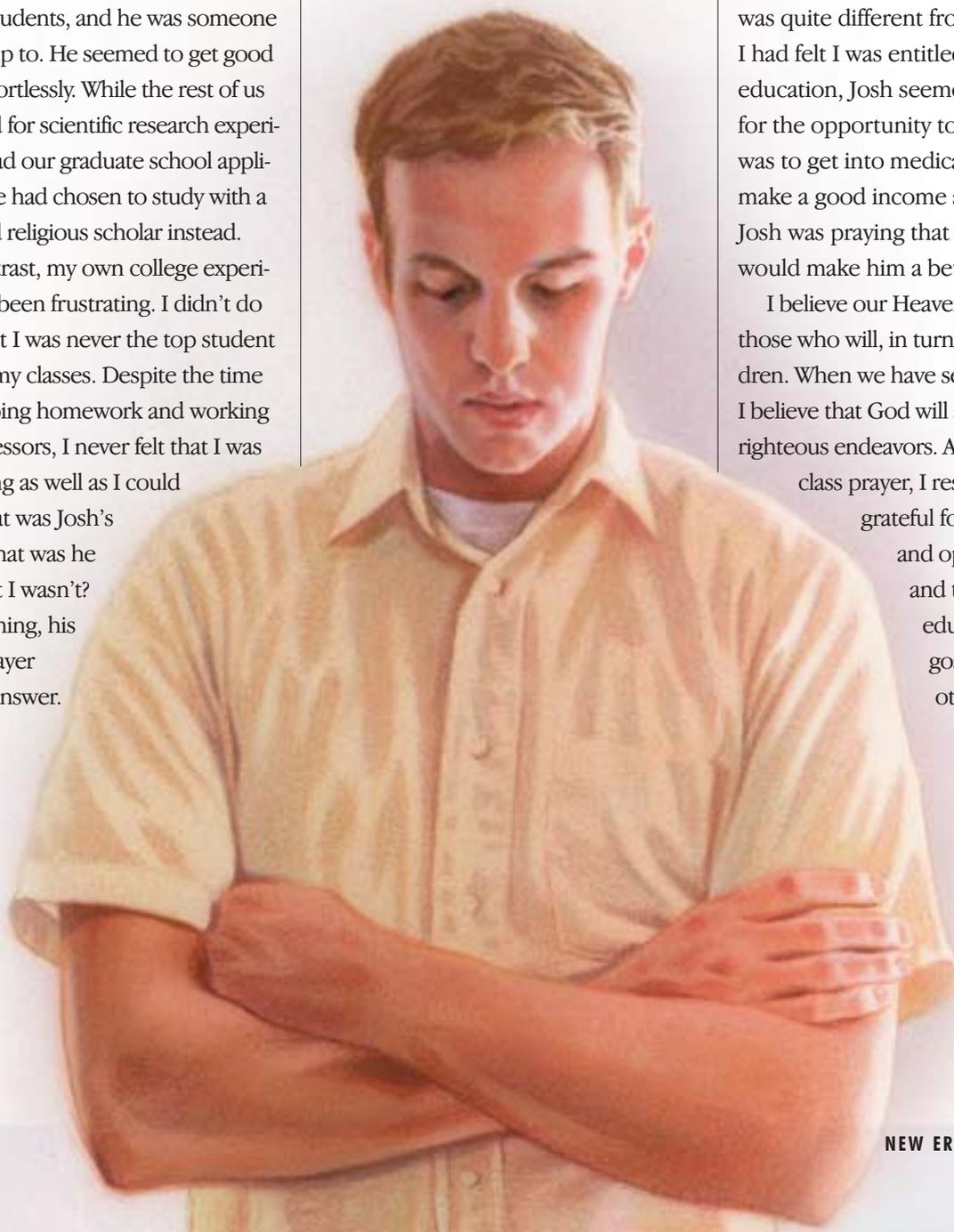
In contrast, my own college experience had been frustrating. I didn't do poorly, but I was never the top student in any of my classes. Despite the time I spent doing homework and working with professors, I never felt that I was performing as well as I could have. What was Josh's secret? What was he doing that I wasn't? That morning, his simple prayer held the answer.

He began by reverently addressing Heavenly Father. He respectfully thanked Him for the opportunity to be at school that morning and to learn from our accomplished professor. He thanked God for blessing us with good minds. Then he asked Him to help us

remember that our talents and gifts were not ours alone but to be used in His service. He humbly concluded by asking that we be blessed with the Spirit that morning so that we could internalize what we were taught and ultimately use that knowledge to perform well on our tests, provide for our families, and serve our fellowmen.

I was touched and edified by Josh's prayer. His attitude toward learning was quite different from mine. While I had felt I was entitled to a college education, Josh seemed truly grateful for the opportunity to learn. My goal was to get into medical school and make a good income as a doctor, but Josh was praying that what he learned would make him a better servant.

I believe our Heavenly Father blesses those who will, in turn, bless His children. When we have service as a goal, I believe that God will aid us in our righteous endeavors. As a result of Josh's class prayer, I resolved to be more grateful for my blessings and opportunities and to approach my education with the goal of serving others better. **NE**





GETTING THE MESSAGE

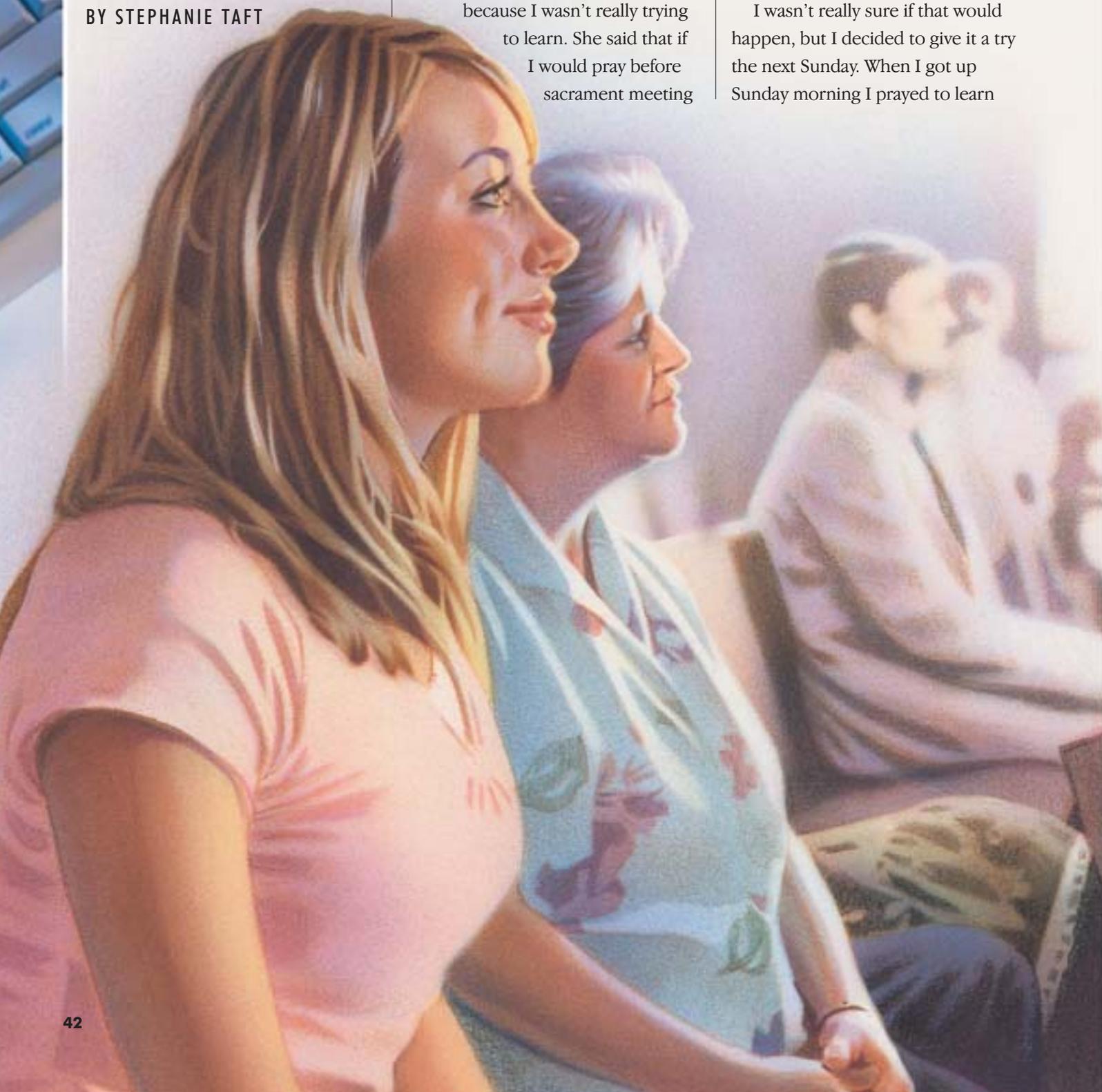
BY STEPHANIE TAFT

One day I was complaining to my mom about how boring sacrament meeting was. I felt that it was just for adults and that it didn't help me at all.

My mom told me it was boring because I wasn't really trying to learn. She said that if I would pray before sacrament meeting

to understand the talks and then really try to listen, I would hear the answers to questions I had. She also said the Spirit could help me understand the message in a way that would make the talk just for me.

I wasn't really sure if that would happen, but I decided to give it a try the next Sunday. When I got up Sunday morning I prayed to learn

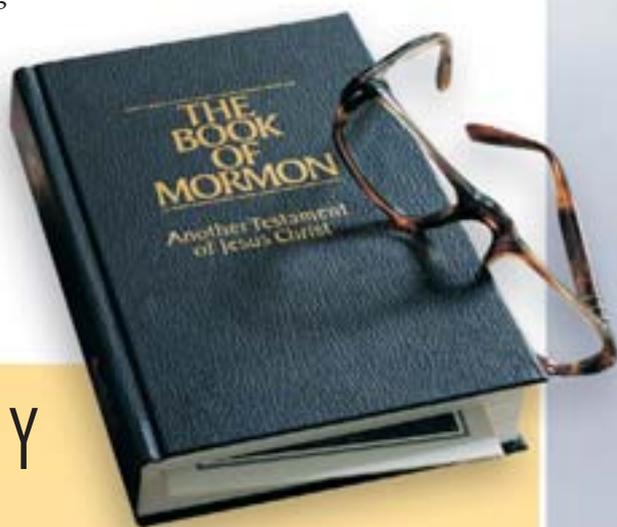


something in sacrament meeting. Then right before sacrament meeting began, I prayed about it again. During the talks I tried really hard to listen and understand, instead of thinking my own thoughts as I usually did.

I couldn't believe it! The first talk was about receiving personal direction from the speakers in sacrament

meeting. As the meeting went on, I felt like every speaker was saying exactly what I needed to hear, and I felt the Spirit telling me that the things I heard were true.

Now I look forward to sacrament meeting because I know I will always learn something if I go with the right attitude. **NE**



SINGING FOR STRENGTH

BY JARED B. KUNZ

As a Spanish-speaking missionary, I found the hymns to be an invaluable source of spiritual power. One hymn in particular helped me have faith in God and confidence in myself as we did our daily tracting.

The optimistic lines of "God Speed the Right" (*Hymns*, no. 106) helped me keep the Spirit with me despite harsh rejection.

One line in particular from the Spanish version of that hymn, "Dios Da Valor," gave me encouragement: "Como príncipes reales soportemos bien los males." This line translates into English, "As princes we'll endure well the difficult times."

As I memorized those motivating words, I found the strength within myself to keep going and to knock on that next door. **NE**

MISSIONARY TO MY GRANDPARENTS

BY KATHRYN ALLEN

For one of my value projects in the Personal Progress program, I decided to send a copy of the Book of Mormon to my grandparents, who are not members of the Church. I was very nervous about this because my grandparents had never seemed to like the Church very much, but I felt strongly that this was something I should do. I went through the Book of Mormon and marked the scriptures important to me. Then I wrote my testimony on the inside of the cover and fasted that they would accept my gift.

I was afraid their reaction would be negative, but they surprised me. One day while I was checking my e-mail, I found a message from them. They thanked me for sending the Book of Mormon to them and for the time I had taken to make it personal for them.

This experience taught me to have faith in the Lord and follow the promptings of the Spirit. We never know what the consequences of our actions will be, but if we trust in the Lord we will never regret it. **NE**

INSTANT MESSAGES features personal experiences, insights into favorite hymns and scriptures, and other uplifting thoughts. If you have a personal experience that has strengthened your testimony and you'd like us to consider it for Instant Messages, please send it to

*New Era, Instant Messages
50 E. North Temple St. Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA*

*Or e-mail it to
newera@ldschurch.org*

Please limit submissions to 400 words or less. They may be edited for length and clarity.

Good teachers use good resources and methods that involve learners. But most important of all, good teachers teach with the power of the Spirit.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN LUKE, POSED BY MODEL

BE WORTHY
OF THE
SPIRIT'S
GUIDANCE.

PREPARE
AN OUTLINE
OF YOUR
LESSON.

YOU'RE A TEACHER TOO

BY SHANNA BUTLER
Church Magazines

Even if you don't have a Church calling to teach, you still teach. Here are nine tips for doing it well.

You teach all the time. You might not realize it, but you do it every day. You teach by your example; you share the gospel with your family and others; and in more formal settings you give talks, seminary devotionals, and family home evening lessons. You might even go team teaching with the missionaries or invite a friend who is learning the gospel from the missionaries and your family to your home.

Whatever your circumstances, you can't help but be a teacher. So how can you be a good one?

Good teachers teach true doctrine, they use the scriptures, and they teach with the power of the Spirit. They also testify of the principles they teach, help learners apply the doctrine to their own lives, and live the principles themselves. This counsel applies whether you are teaching a Sunday

School class or simply telling a friend about the gospel. (See *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 10.) Try a few of the following ideas when you teach. Some apply only in a classroom setting, but others are great for any teaching situation:

1. Be worthy of the Spirit's guidance (see 2 Nephi 33:1 and D&C 42:13–14).
2. Prepare an outline for your lesson. Use the lesson manual if one is available. Throughout the *Preach My Gospel* manual you will find good suggestions for organizing lessons.
3. Share personal experiences that illustrate the gospel principles you are teaching.
4. Use sacred music to invite the Spirit and teach principles.

EXTRA! EXTRA!

The Church has many good resources for teachers. Read the following to learn more about being a better teacher: "Teaching, Preaching, Healing," *Ensign*, Jan. 2003, by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, and *Teaching, No Greater Call*, available in the Gospel Library at www.lds.org. *Preach My Gospel*, the manual for full-time missionaries, is helpful as well. You can also visit the Serving in the Church site at www.lds.org. Just click on Serving in the Church on the main page. The Sunday School link contains a teacher improvement site with much useful information.



REALLY
CARE ABOUT
THOSE
YOU TEACH.

LIVE AND
UNDERSTAND
THE PRINCIPLES
YOU TEACH.

ALWAYS
BEAR TESTIMONY
OF THE
PRINCIPLES
YOU TEACH.

Becoming a good learner can help turn a lesson into a spiritual feast. Put yourself in a position to be truly taught the gospel of Jesus Christ.

5. Ask questions that make people think, not just questions that prompt yes or no answers.
6. Pray to know what the Lord wants you to teach, how you can help those you teach, and what you can say to bless their lives. Really care about those you teach.
7. Seek to live and understand the principles you teach; then you will be able to teach them with more power and testimony (see D&C 11:21 and D&C 88:118).
8. Always bear testimony of the principles you are teaching. You can do this any time during a lesson or when you are just talking to someone about the gospel.
9. Stick to information from approved Church materials, such as the scriptures, the words of the prophets, Church manuals, and the Church magazines.

If you feel inadequate as a teacher, don't worry. The Lord will strengthen you. The Spirit is the real teacher in any situation, and when you are prepared, you prepare the way for the Spirit to reach those you are teaching (see D&C 42:14). **NE**

BEING A GOOD LEARNER

Much of what we get out of a class depends on us, the students, not just on the teacher. Here are some ways you can be a good learner when it comes to spiritual lessons.

- * Be worthy of the Holy Spirit and learn to recognize spiritual promptings. The Spirit is the true teacher.
- * Listen well in class. Take notes if that helps. And look for ways to apply in your life what you are learning.
- * Read assigned readings before class whenever possible.
- * Be respectful and attentive when a teacher is speaking. It is impolite to carry on a conversation or be otherwise distracted during a lesson. It sends the message that you don't care if the teacher spent hours preparing the lesson, and it shows disrespect for the subject being taught—the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- * Participate. Ask questions if you have any, and give your comments when asked for. Teachers appreciate your participation.
- * Pray for your teachers to teach with the Spirit, and pray for yourself that you will listen and understand with the Spirit (see D&C 50:21–22).

STICK
TO INFORMATION
FROM
CHURCH
MATERIALS.

Mutual Activity Idea

- Organize a physical fitness evening. Under the direction of your youth leaders, invite someone in your ward or stake who knows about fitness and exercise to lead an exercise class. Or follow along with an exercise video. Be sure to encourage everyone to wear modest exercise clothes.
- Suggest that your Mutual spend an evening preparing answers for the *New Era*. Check in the present and previous month's issues, and copy the question at the end of each Q&A. Have everyone write a response to either or both questions. Then arrange to have someone take each person's photo. Be sure to identify each photo clearly. And then send the responses and photos (including a parent's written permission to print the photo for each person under 18) to *New Era*, 50 East North Temple St., Rm. 2420, Salt Lake City, UT 84121.

Personal Progress or Duty to God

- After reading "Uncle Birli's Letter" on page 8, make an appointment to visit your grandparents or great aunts and uncles. Ask them to tell you some of your family stories. If possible, record them while you talk. Even if you have heard the stories before, different people remember different details. If your relatives are not nearby, write or e-mail them like Sarah did.

Family Home Evening Idea

- Hand out individual slips of paper and pencils. Ask each family member to write something they like about every other family member. Gather and sort the slips of paper. Then have someone read the positive comments about each person.

SUNDAY LESSON HELPS

In addition to the Resource Guides (printed in May and November in the *Ensign*), Young Women and Aaronic Priesthood teachers may find these additional resources helpful in enhancing lessons 40–43.

Young Women Manual 1

Lesson 40: Health Care in the Home

President Gordon B. Hinckley, "Forget Yourself and Serve," *New Era*, July 2006, 2.

Kelly M. Smurthwaite, "Unexpected Hero," *New Era*, May 2006, 36.

Lesson 41: The Ability to Succeed

Catherine Matthews Pavia, "How I Learned to Be Happy," this issue, 11.

"Idea List: Including Everyone," *New Era*, Jan. 2006, 37.

Lesson 42: Courage to Try

Thomas S. Monson, "Courage Counts," *New Era*, this issue, 2.

Cara Smith Webber, "What I Learned as a Corn Dog," *New Era*, July 2006, 24.

Lesson 43: Righteous Living

"Charting the Plan," *New Era*, July 2006, 33.

Clate W. Mask Jr., "Spotless before the Lord," *New Era*, July 2006, 42.

"The Girl in the Mirror," *New Era*, Aug. 2005, 12.

Aaronic Priesthood Manual 1

Lesson 40: The House of the Lord

Shanna Butler, "How to Talk about the Temple," *New Era*, Jan. 2006, 44.

"Idea List: Temple Blessings Now and Later," *New Era*, Oct. 2005, 15.

Lesson 41: Sexual Purity

Robert D. Hales, "Preparing for a Heavenly Marriage," *New Era*, Feb. 2006, 2.

"Who's It Hurting?" *New Era*, Jan. 2006, 34.

"To the Point: Kissing," *New Era*, May 2006, 35.

Lesson 42: Honesty

Sherilyn Farnes, "Do You Want to Copy My Homework?" *New Era*, July 2006, 6.

David A. Bednar, "Be Honest," *New Era*, Oct. 2005, 4.

Lesson 43: Tools for Searching the Scriptures

Andrea Cartwright, "Creative Scripture Study," *New Era*, May 2006, 15.

David A. Bednar, "Because We Have Them before Our Eyes," *New Era*, Apr. 2006, 2.

LIKE PERSONAL REVELATION

Every month I love getting the *New Era*. I read it that night, and then the rest of the month I can't wait to get the next month's issue. It's like I'm addicted to it (in a good way). I love how, when I am having a major problem, the *New Era* cover story gives me the answer. It's like my own revelation. Thanks for producing such a wonderful magazine that helps me live a clean life. It helps me remember who I am and what I am doing here. It helps me get through the day because I remember what I read and try to put it into my daily life.

Ashley M., Utah

GAMES

Last year when I read the section "Gaming Guru" (Aug. 2005), it inspired me to stop playing four, yes, four, video games. I realized that the games were not worthy for me to play. Every so often I would say to myself, "Would Jesus play this?" I'm so thankful that I had those promptings and that article to help me. I absolutely love this magazine. I even threw away a couple of songs after reading "Pop Quiz" in the June 2006 *New Era*.

Zachary K., California

ANOREXIA SECRET

I really noticed an increase in the Spirit as I have read this magazine. It is truly full of inspired writings and writers. The experiences shared here have led my life in different directions. Lately, the stories have really related to me. I want to thank you for the article "My Battle with Anorexia" (Apr. 2006). I had kept my eating disorder secret for a long time and this article helped me realize that what I was doing did not coin-

cide with the gospel and hurt me spiritually, though I would have never admitted it. This article helped me realize the pain my disorder caused those around me and helped provide strength and courage to admit that what I was doing was wrong. Thank you to the author and to the *New Era* staff for printing this article. It provided a lot of hope and knowledge.

Edward K., Utah

IT HAPPENED IN MAY

I was disappointed in the "It Happened in May" section of the May 2006 issue.

A very, very significant and important date in the history of the Restoration was left out.

During the translation of the golden plates, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery inquired of the Lord respecting baptism for the remission of sins. In answer to that prayer, John the Baptist came and conferred the Aaronic Priesthood on them. That was May 15, 1829. Please remind your readers of this very important day.

Douglas B., Texas

Editor's note: To accommodate needs of international readers who receive the conference issue of the Liahona magazine in May, material about the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood was published in April this year. In the future, material about the Aaronic Priesthood will be included in both the April and May issues of the New Era.

We love hearing from you. Write us at the following address. Please include the names of your ward and stake (or branch and district).

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Or e-mail us at

newera@ldschurch.org

Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.



"I love how, when I am having a major problem, the New Era cover story gives me the answer."

ILLUSTRATED BY BILL MAYER



THE END OF SUMMER

BY TEARESE SEGLER

Dusty heat
still turns long days
to forgotten dreams.
Yet a hint of autumn
creeps insidiously
up from the night,
filling early-morning dew,
and slipping through
the silvery shadows
of summer's end.



*“Whatever
your circumstances,
you can’t help
but be a teacher.
So how can
you be a good one?”*

See “You’re a Teacher Too,” p. 44.

