

Sunbeam Smiles



BY CONSTANCE PALMER LEWIS

When our ward Primary had a service activity, I wasn't sure how three-year-old Sunbeams could help.

My husband and I were blessed with a baby girl when we were in our forties and had thought that our family was complete. Many times as I dealt with the daily pressures of life with several teenagers and one little girl, I realized that her presence calmed me and helped me remember the important things in life.

When Mary-Celeste started Primary, I was called to teach her Sunbeam class. I had very little experience teaching Primary and felt unsure of myself, but I decided to give it my best effort. Looking into the children's open, smiling faces each week, I grew to love each of them and to cherish the time I spent with them. One of the first lessons in the Primary manual taught the children that they can help others be happy by being

cheerful—smiling their Sunbeam smiles. Looking at eight wonderful Sunbeam smiles every Sunday truly did brighten my day.

After several months, our ward Primary had a service activity. I was asked to think of something that my class could do to be of service. I wasn't at all sure what little Sunbeams could do to give service. The Primary president had suggested baking some cookies and taking them to someone in our ward. I thought that might be nice, but I didn't think that it would hold the children's attention throughout the activity. It seemed too complicated to bake cookies as part of the activity, but if I baked cookies myself beforehand, then the children wouldn't really be providing service.

I began thinking of what little children can actually do to serve others. Then I thought of their Sunbeam smiles. On the day of the activity, I brought paper plates, yarn, and bright washable markers for each child. I asked them to draw a picture of themselves with their very best Sunbeam smile. I fastened yarn to the plates so they each could wear their own picture as a necklace. With the help of a member of the



Primary presidency and a couple of my own teenagers, we took the children to a nearby hospital to visit an elderly sister from our ward. I had checked with her and with her nurses beforehand to make sure the visit would be all right.

As we entered Sister Fisher's hospital room, the children smiled their very brightest Sunbeam smiles. We greeted her and sang:

*If you chance to meet a frown,
Do not let it stay.*

*Quickly turn it upside down
And smile that frown away.*

No one likes a frowning face.

Change it for a smile.

Make the world a better place

By smiling all the while.

("Smiles," *Children's Songbook*, 267)

CHOOSE HAPPINESS



"The most fundamental of all human searches is for happiness. . . . Smiling brings a glow to our countenances that radiates to others.

Being friendly to our neighbors, to people at school, at church, or at work is a great way to show the Lord that we want to keep the covenant we made at baptism 'to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light' (Mosiah 18:8). I recommend friendliness because so many people are shy or lonely and need a kind word or smile. Lifting others expands our inner selves. It is also the way of the Master."

President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "Who Do You Think You Are?" Ensign, Mar. 2001, 6.

The children explained that they had brought their Sunbeam smiles to help her be happy. Then, to help Sister Fisher remember their smiles, they each gave her the paper plate with their brightly colored smiling picture on it. Sister Fisher was delighted! A nurse helped us hang each smiling paper-plate face on the wall of her hospital room.

On the way back to the church, the children talked about what they had done. I believe they realized what it means to serve others. And I realized how much my own life was blessed by having our little daughter and her cheerful Sunbeam smile. ■