

# Toddlers AND TANTRUMS



Ever since my husband and I became parents, we have felt the need to teach our young daughter gospel principles and help her learn to feel the Spirit. We have learned, however, that putting that desire into action can be challenging.

I was especially discouraged after one particularly difficult day of whining and tantrums. My husband and I decided to pray for an added measure of patience and for specific ideas of how to lovingly teach our daughter the gospel.

The next morning, I woke up feeling peace in my heart and patience that I knew came as an answer to our prayers. I had a renewed desire to create a positive, loving environment for learning in our home. When the first tantrum of the day began, I decided to not let myself get frustrated. I sat down and began to read the *Ensign*.

After a few seconds, my daughter asked me to hold her. I took her in my arms, and we sat quietly for a minute. Then her eyes rested on the *Ensign*, and she said in her limited vocabulary, “Read this.”

I opened the magazine and turned to a beautiful painting of the Savior kneeling in prayer and looking up to heaven. My daughter identified the picture as “Jesus.” I said, “Yes, Jesus is praying to Heavenly Father.”

Then I started singing “A Child’s Prayer.”<sup>1</sup> As I sang

she sat quietly and reverently while studying the picture of the Savior. When I finished, she asked me to sing “Heavenly Father” (her name for “A Child’s Prayer”) again. I felt the Spirit as I sang the song three more times at her request.

After the fourth time through the song, we looked at other pictures and paintings in the magazine. We came to a photograph of a family in front of the temple. I sang “I Love to See the Temple.”<sup>2</sup> She again asked me to sing it several times. This pattern continued, though after every few songs, she wanted to turn back to the picture of Jesus and listen to me sing “Heavenly Father” again.

As we shared this special time, I was filled with gratitude for a loving Heavenly Father’s answer to my prayer. I had been blessed with patience and inspired to know how to teach my toddler the gospel. I knew she was feeling the Spirit testify of a loving Heavenly Father and His son, Jesus Christ. She was learning about the feelings of the Spirit, the power of prayer, and her relationship to Jesus Christ and Heavenly Father. I know that our Heavenly Father hears and answers prayers from all His children—the mother’s prayer as well as the child’s. ■

#### NOTES

1. “A Child’s Prayer,” *Children’s Songbook*, 12–13.
2. “I Love to See the Temple,” *Children’s Songbook*, 95.