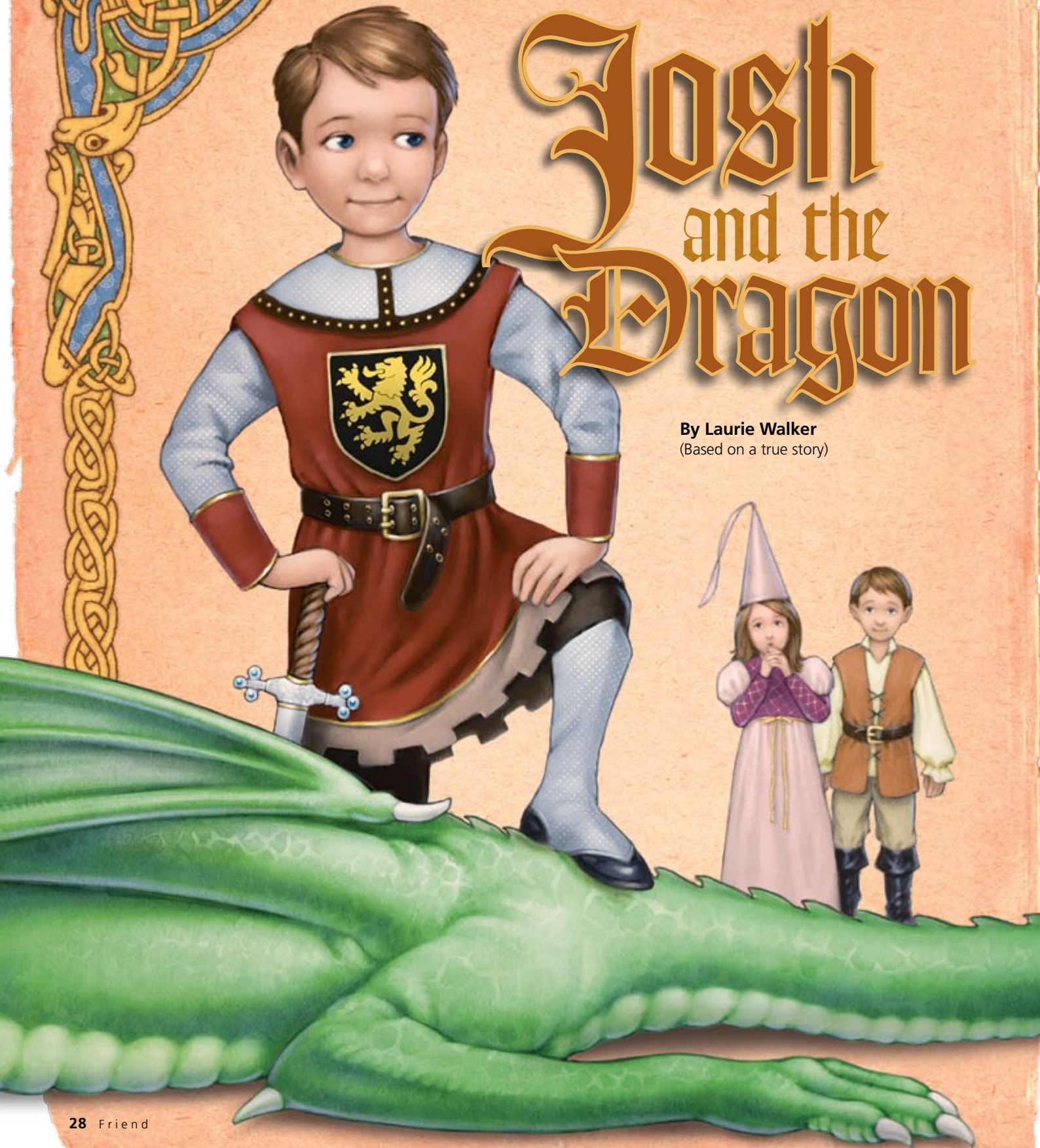


Josh and the Dragon

By Laurie Walker
(Based on a true story)



"I will honor my parents and do my part
to strengthen my family."

My Gospel Standards

The righteous are bold as a lion (Proverbs 28:1).

Josh patted his stomach, feeling more than a little full.

"That was so good," he said, smiling at Mom and Dad.

"Are you done already?" Mom asked. "You must have been really hungry."

"I was," Josh said. He eyed the indoor playground in the restaurant where they were eating. "Can I go play now?"

Dad nodded. "Go ahead."

Josh jumped up from the table, cleared away his trash, and headed to the playground. He knew it wouldn't be long before his little brother and sister came to join him.

He had just finished climbing to the top of what he imagined to be a giant mountain where he was about to battle a dragon when he heard a voice chirp from far below.

"Joshy?"

That was his sister Anna's nickname for him. She was almost four. He loved her a lot.

"Just a minute, Anna," Josh called out as he raced for the twisty slide. In a flash he was down at the bottom, ready to help his sister climb. About halfway up, his younger brother, Brian, joined them. The three of them started off on a grand adventure with dragons and knights and princesses. Anna was the princess,

of course. Josh wanted to be the knight, and Brian was happy to be a growly dragon.

It wasn't long before their imaginary world was interrupted by a group of children coming in to play. Josh didn't mind. He liked making new friends. After a few minutes, though, he began to wonder if playing with them was a good idea. The kids were nice, but they kept swearing.

Josh had been baptized a year ago, and he had been trying hard to choose the right. Mom and Dad had been talking a lot about choosing which words to use. They had taught him that Heavenly Father didn't like swearing, mean words, or name-calling.

Josh really wanted to stay and play, but he didn't like listening to bad words. Maybe the other kids would stop if he asked. Josh turned to the group. "Could you please not swear?" he asked quietly.

"Whatever," one of the boys said. None of the kids stopped swearing. Josh said a quick prayer asking what to do. Into his mind popped an image of himself dressed in knight's armor, fighting a dragon. Behind him were his brother and sister. All of a sudden, Josh knew it was more important to protect his little brother and sister from hearing the swearing than to keep playing.

"Come on, guys," Josh said. "Let's go see Mom and Dad."

The three of them went down the slide and ran to their family.

"What are you doing back so soon?" Dad asked, ruffling Josh's hair.

Josh shrugged. "Some kids in there were swearing," he said. "I didn't want Anna and Brian to hear it."

Dad patted him on the shoulder. "I'm proud of you for watching out for your little brother and sister."

Josh smiled. It was almost like he really was a knight watching over those he loved while fighting a dragon. Josh also knew he'd done more than protect his brother and sister—he had also protected himself. ♦

