

FEASTING ON SPIRITUAL THINGS

After a day of hiking, my hunger was filled in an unexpected way.

By Jennifer Ricks

"All right, girls, load them on the fire," Brother Andersen called as he stepped away from the circle of smoldering coals.

When we had arrived at our destination, everyone had piled their backpacks around the fire and taken off to swim in the lake for a few hours. By the time I was done swimming and had changed back into my hiking clothes, the fire was hot and burned down to coals, ready for our lumpy foil-dinner packets.

One by one all my peers put their dinners into the coals. Each one was marked with the girl's name, so we could identify our own. I, however, was left frantically searching my backpack for my foil dinner but couldn't find it anywhere. I desperately racked my memory. I remembered double-checking that my foil packet was in my bag before we had left in the morning. Sister Robinson had been stern about us double-checking because she said we wouldn't have anything to eat if we forgot. Maybe I had taken it out of my bag at the lunch spot and forgotten it along the trail.

All of the dinners were in the fire now and would take a little over half an hour to cook. I didn't have the courage to tell my leaders that I had lost mine. I was worried and embarrassed that they would scold me and would have to give me theirs. Instead, I sat around and waited with the group. As everyone started eating, I took off looking like I

was going to the bathroom, when really I just waited for a while until the group was mostly done eating.

I wandered back into the group after 15 minutes or so and found that my plan was working almost perfectly. No one had noticed that I had been gone or that I hadn't eaten. The only problem was that I was hungry. I drank a lot of water, but it only left me with that full-of-water-and-nothing-else feeling. The only thing I could hope for was a few marshmallows—mere sugary puffs of air. But now I was surrounded by the aroma of hamburger patties baked with hearty chunks of potatoes, carrots, and onions. It was torture!

All I could think about was foil dinners and how much my stomach really wanted one. I looked around for something to distract me. All the girls were playing around, happy and filled with a good dinner, and getting ready to start roasting marshmallows. Off in the corner I saw Rachel, the Big Sister assigned to me, surrounded by a group of my friends. She was telling them something, and they were listening intently. I was shy to join in, but something pushed me towards the group anyway, and I sat down with them.

I was surprised to find that Rachel wasn't telling them about a wonderful guy she knew or a favorite vacation. She was teaching them the gospel. They were taking turns asking her questions about scripture stories, gospel doctrine, or her personal testimony. I entered



the circle as she was telling about Mary, the mother of Christ, and how brave and obedient she was. From the moment I sat down at the foot of my friend and Big Sister, I could feel the Spirit teaching me that what she was telling us was true. I instantly forgot about my stomach and that I hadn't eaten. I even forgot to fill up on marshmallows as a last resort because we were all too engaged in discussion and searching the scriptures.

At 13, out in the wilderness with a group of girls my same age and an entirely empty stomach, I truly feasted on the words of Christ for the first time. I listened to the testimony of a girl who was only four years older than me, but what she taught was something that satisfied my hunger much more than any foil dinner. As we hiked home under the stars, I felt like I didn't even need a flashlight

because there was a light burning in my heart as my testimony had grown that night.

The Savior said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6). I knew that it was an evening that I would never forget. More than anything I wanted to build my own testimony to be like Rachel's so that I could share it with others and they could feel that wholeness that I had felt that night, having feasted on the words of Christ and been completely filled with the Spirit of God. **NE**

