



FAMILY INCLUDED

THINK ABOUT IT

Heavenly Father wants all of His children to receive the gospel, and He will give you opportunities to share it if you pray for them. Think about someone you can share the gospel with. Write down his or her name, and pray that the Spirit will help you tell that person about the gospel and the Church.

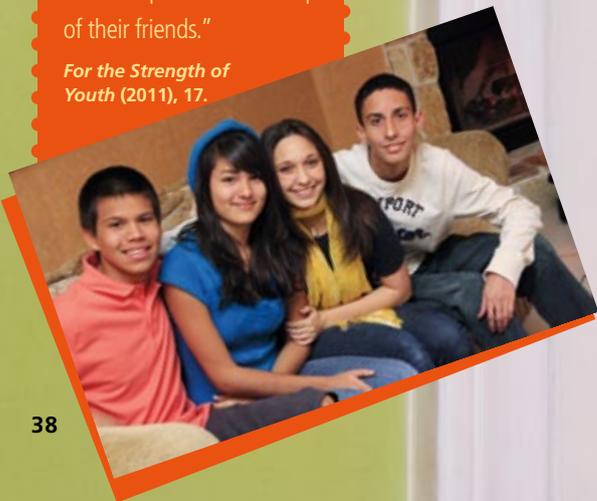
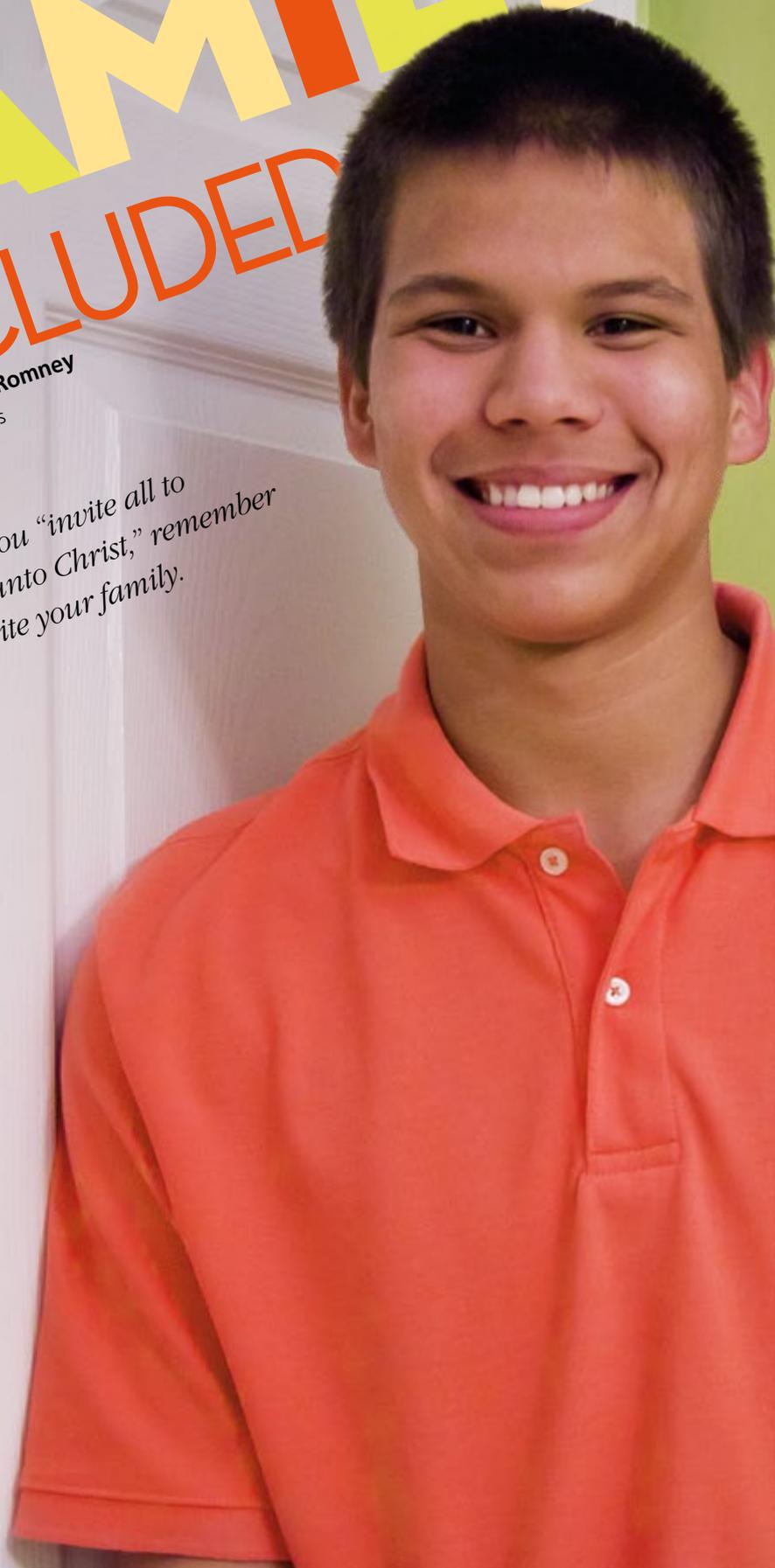
MAKE THE INVITATION

Invoke your friends of other faiths to your Church meetings and activities. Help them feel welcome and included. Many people have joined the Church through the example and fellowship of their friends."

For the Strength of Youth (2011), 17.

By Richard M. Romney
Church Magazines

When you "invite all to come unto Christ," remember to invite your family.

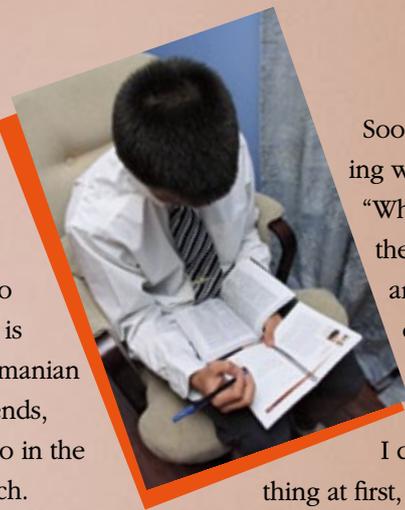


You could say 17-year-old Chris S. of Florida danced his way into the Church, but that's not totally correct. Actually, it was the people he danced *with* who introduced him to the gospel. Chris is part of a troupe that performs Panamanian folk dances, and two of his best friends, Rebecca and Joshua R., who are also in the group, invited him to come to church.

The Invitation

"One time we started talking about the Church, and I just told him more about it, and he seemed really interested," Rebecca says. "I told my parents about it, and they said we should invite him to church." So one day they invited Chris to come, and he accepted.

"I asked my parents, and they said I could go," Chris remembers. He also remembers how well received he was. "I was kind of nervous. But once I came, everyone was so warm and welcoming. It was nice to be there, and I felt comfortable."



Soon Chris began meeting with the missionaries. "When they came over, they taught me a lesson and gave me a Book of Mormon," he says. "They told me to read and pray, and I did. I didn't feel any-

thing at first, but then later on as I prayed, I felt great because it was like something inside of me was really warm. I know that was the Spirit, and it was a great feeling."

Chris continued learning and decided to be baptized. "After being baptized, I received the Holy Ghost, received the Aaronic Priesthood, and was ordained a priest," he says. "I felt special knowing that I am in God's Church and that He loves me."

An Example of the Believers

Rebecca and Joshua's father, Curtis, was the branch mission leader, and he had gospel discussions with Chris. "He told me he wanted his family to be happier and to be able to have the same things in common with them."

"I wanted to share the gospel with my family, but it was tough because my family never went to church," Chris says. "They really didn't have time."

But they did see Chris's example after he was baptized.

"When the missionaries were at our house, I didn't really pay attention," says Chris's stepfather, Terrance. "But as time went on, Chris was baptized, and I saw a lot of changes in him. He seemed to care more and respect everybody a lot more. So my wife and I decided to check out the Church."

Chris was surprised by his family's sudden interest. "When the missionaries told me they were coming to my house to teach my family, I didn't know if my family would be OK with that," he says. "Then the missionaries told

A SECOND OPPORTUNITY

The relationship between these two families goes back further than Chris's involvement with the folk dance group. Both fathers actually knew each other years ago when they were stationed at a naval base in Panama.

"We briefly knew each other because of our jobs," Curtis says. "Being a member of the Church, I wanted to share the gospel." But he didn't get that opportunity until much later.

"If I had the opportunity to go back and talk to Chris's father when I first met him back in Panama, I would be more open about the gospel," Curtis says. "But the second chance came around, and I wasn't going to let it pass by."



DANCING FOR PANAMA

Chris S. and his sister, Ashley R., both dance in the Panamanian folk dance group with their friends Joshua and Rebecca R. They have learned that “dancing can be fun and can provide an opportunity to meet new people” (*For the Strength of Youth* [2011], 23). They also enjoy the opportunity that dancing gives them to express themselves and learn about their heritage.

“We like dancing because it’s fun and you get to do it with a lot of friends,” Rebecca says. “It also teaches you a lot about how to move your body and a lot about your culture as well.”

“I think it’s nice how you dance in front of people and show them what you do,” Ashley says.

Joshua likes the dance group because it is something unique in his life. “I really like it for the simple fact that it’s different,” he says.

me that my parents invited them over, and I thought that was pretty cool.”

A United Family

Chris’s parents had a great experience going to church, and as they learned more, they grew closer as a family.

“When I started going to church, I really liked it,” says Chris’s mother, Anita. “I was very interested. Most people were there as a family, and I’ve learned to be more unified with my family.”

“After seeing the changes in Chris and enjoying church—everybody was friendly, everybody wanted to get to know you and all that—the whole family ended up getting baptized,” Terrance says. “Since joining the Church, we’ve realized family is forever.

What you make of your family is what counts

in life, and Jesus and Heavenly Father help you unite as a family forever.”

Inviting Others to Come to Christ

Chris understands why we all need to invite others to come unto Christ.

“It’s important because you want to help as many people as you can to be saved,” Chris says. “It’s good to bring people to God. If Rebecca and Joshua’s family hadn’t done that, I wouldn’t be here right now. I know Jesus Christ put them in my life, and I’m so blessed that I’ve been brought into the gospel and that I could share it with my family.”

Sometimes inviting your family and friends to come unto Christ is as easy as being a good example for them.

“Chris invited us to church not by directly asking us, but he did more by the way his reactions were in life,” Terrance says. “He showed how much enjoyment church brought. He showed what being in church can do for you, how it can change you, make you better, and help you with what’s going on in life. Chris was our wake-up call from the Lord.” **NE**

