



By Kirsten Bradford

I was anxious as I walked into the empty classroom. It was my first day back as a substitute teacher after my marriage, and I had been assigned to teach a high school family life and child development class. I was also thrilled to be assigned to a class that was so relevant to the period of life I was entering.

After stashing my purse under the teacher's desk, I grabbed the lesson plan and started reading:

"Dear Substitute, Thank you for taking my class today. Please remind students that their marriage planning projects are due on Friday. Today they will be creating a five-year plan for their lives. Please pass out one strip of white paper to each student and have each one create a time line for things they hope to accomplish in the five years after high school."

I looked at the long strips of white paper and thought about my own five years since I had graduated from high school. I had gone to college, graduated, started a job, and met and married my husband.

Students began filing in and taking their seats as the bell rang. I picked up the stack of paper strips and stood in front of the class to explain the assignment. As they worked, I walked around talking to students and reading some of the things they hoped to accomplish: go to college, graduate, get married, buy a house. Some students' plans included having children.

Although many of their goals sounded similar to what I had done, there was one thing on many of the time lines that was very different. The simple phrase caught me by surprise—*Find a church*.

It was scrawled on at least half of the students' papers. Of all the complex and life



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changing decisions I had made during the past five years, I had never worried about that one. When my husband and I were married and left the young single adult ward, we went to lds.org and found out what time our new ward met. It was simple. The only searching we had to do was finding out how to get to the building.

For at least half of these students, though, they would be searching for a new church once they left home.

I felt gratitude sweep over me for the organization of the Church, for members united around a faith in Jesus Christ, and for the leadership of a prophet of God.

Several years later, I felt that same gratitude as I sat in a mothers' lounge at a department store holding our new baby girl. I was speaking with a person not of our faith who was telling me about her recent attempt to find a church now that she had a family of her own. I testified to her that we have the fulness of the restored gospel and a

living prophet who receives revelation—God's word for us today. Because of that, there is no confusion between congregations. We all believe the same things. We are all taught the same things. We are truly united.

This is the Lord's Church. I am so grateful for that stability and this blessing in my life. ■