

CHARITY FILLED OUR HEARTS

By Fiona Maile

My daughters, ages 8 and 10, seemed to be growing farther and farther apart. As their mother, I ached inside to see the bickering between them and the mean looks they often directed at each other.

During this time I was praying earnestly to the Lord to help me with my own weaknesses. I prayed that He would help me learn what I needed to learn about charity, and I was led to some beautiful passages of scripture.

One night things came to a head with my daughters. I lost my temper and, after ranting and raving at them, stormed outside to cool down and think. After a few minutes, the Spirit began to soften my heart, prompting me to go inside and apologize to my eldest daughter, who had caught the worst of my temper.

As I entered her bedroom, I saw my 10-year-old daughter kneeling beside her bed, weeping. She looked up at me with tears in her eyes and said, "I don't know what to do." She told me she wanted to pray and read her scriptures so she

would feel better, but she couldn't because she felt so bad.

When she told me how sorry she felt for her part in our quarrel and then said I was not to blame, oh, what shame I felt. We talked a while and then turned to the scriptures, where I read to her about charity, "the pure love of Christ" (Moroni 7:47), and shared some of the things I had learned. At that point her younger sister looked in the room, and we invited her to join us. I then explained, in words an eight-year-old could

understand, what we had read about charity.

After I had finished, both girls turned to me with big eyes and expressed a desire to be filled with this great love spoken of in the

We embraced and expressed our love for each other. At that moment I saw an eternal sisterhood and friendship begin to bloom between my daughters.

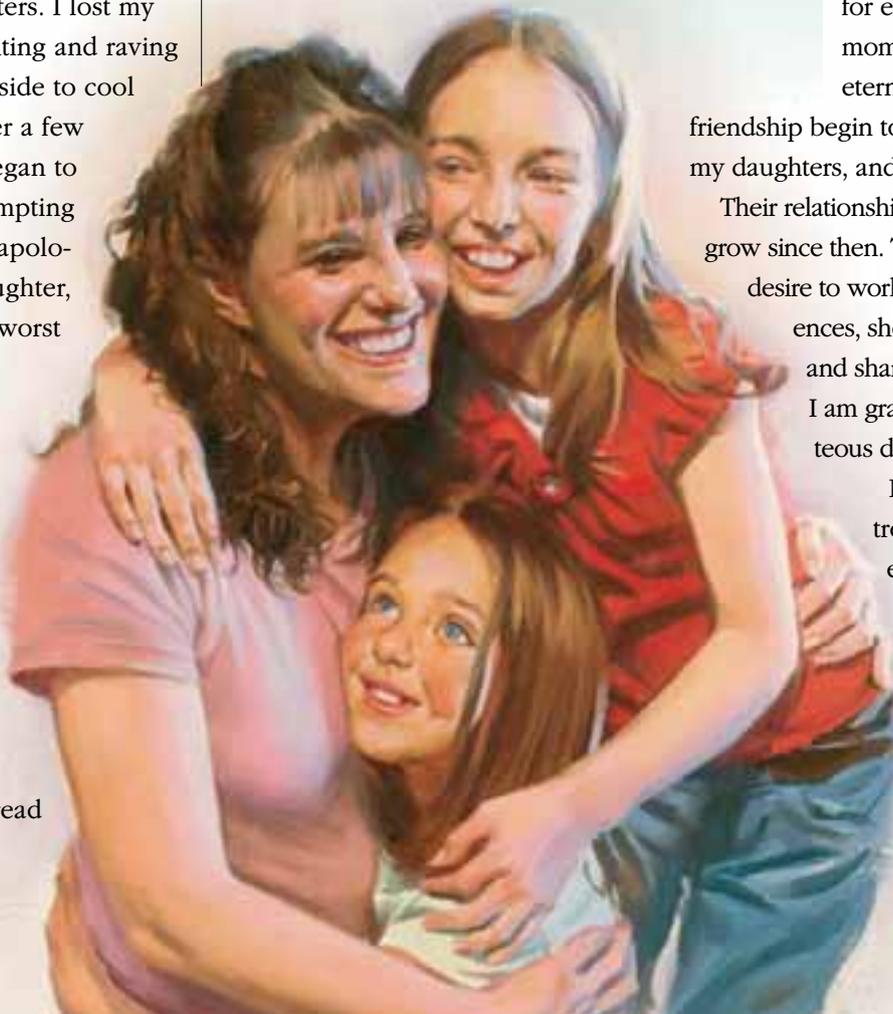
scriptures. We then knelt and, as Mormon counseled, humbly asked the Father to fill us with this love (see Moroni 7:48).

Touched by the Spirit, we could not help but weep. We rose from our knees, embraced, and expressed our love for each other. At that moment I saw an eternal sisterhood and

friendship begin to bloom between my daughters, and I was comforted.

Their relationship has continued to grow since then. They have a greater desire to work out their differences, show more patience, and share their belongings. I am grateful for their righteous desires and efforts.

I will always treasure that experience, and I pray that there will be more like it as we continue to strengthen the bonds of charity and love in our home. ■



OUR LITTLE PIECE OF HEAVEN

By Roseli de Oliveira Ribeiro

After we were baptized in 1992, my family did everything together, including attending Sunday meetings, Church conferences, and other activities. But time passed, things changed, and I eventually found myself alone at church—the rest of my family having become less active. Thereafter, whenever I heard someone in church teach about eternal families, my heart ached and a profound sadness overcame me.

In 1995 I decided to receive my patriarchal blessing to learn more of what the Lord expected of me and to receive strength. My blessing contained the following promise: through fasting, prayer, and family home evening, I would have my family “in the gospel.” I constantly prayed and fasted for my family, but I didn’t follow the counsel to hold family home evening.

I eventually left my home in São

Paulo, Brazil, to serve a mission. While serving, I saw many broken homes, but as I studied my patriarchal blessing, I found the solution for those homes: family home evening. Through teaching people about family home evening, I saw families strengthened, couples reconciled, and siblings united. In short, I saw homes transformed into little pieces of heaven.

“If this can happen to families in my mission,” I wondered, “why not to my own family?”

After my mission I was determined to hold family home evening with my family. At first, all participated grudgingly, and I had trouble finishing my lessons as planned. But I knew the Lord wouldn’t counsel me to do something that wouldn’t be a blessing, so I didn’t give up. Eventually, the promise in my patriarchal blessing was fulfilled.

If I didn’t hold family home evening, I heard about it. Family members all participated with opinions, ideas, and counsel, and they listened attentively to the message. Even though we were older then, when game time came, we had a party!

As a result, members of my family once again began obeying commandments they had ignored, and they became more active in the Church.

I can truly say that my home was transformed into a little bit of heaven, thanks to an inspired program that should be a tradition in every home: family home evening. ■

If families I taught on my mission could be strengthened by family home evening, why not my own family?

WAS I LIVING THE GOSPEL FULLY?

ByCarolynn R. Spencer

My scripture study would have to wait. All three of our sons had awakened—and much earlier than usual. The youngest, Caden, then 18 months old, was screaming in his crib. I went into his room and saw instantly that he was sick.

Thus began a Monday of one challenge after another. At one point, shortly after I had changed Caden's clothes and tried to feed him, he flung a large jar onto the floor, spilling applesauce everywhere and sending shattered glass across the kitchen. As I was cleaning up the mess, I thought about all the things I wasn't getting done: family history, service, home storage, missionary work.

"How in the world can I do everything I know I should be doing when I am barely managing the basic tasks of my day?" I wondered. By early evening I was exhausted, but I set aside discouraging thoughts during dinner, family home evening, and the boys' bath and bedtime routine.

Finally, with the children in bed, I sat down to do what I had not had time for earlier. I picked up the May 2006 *Ensign*, which was open to a talk by President Henry B. Eyring titled "As a Child." My eyes fell on a

As I read, I wondered, "How can I feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick, and help people spiritually and temporally when I can scarcely take care of my own family?"

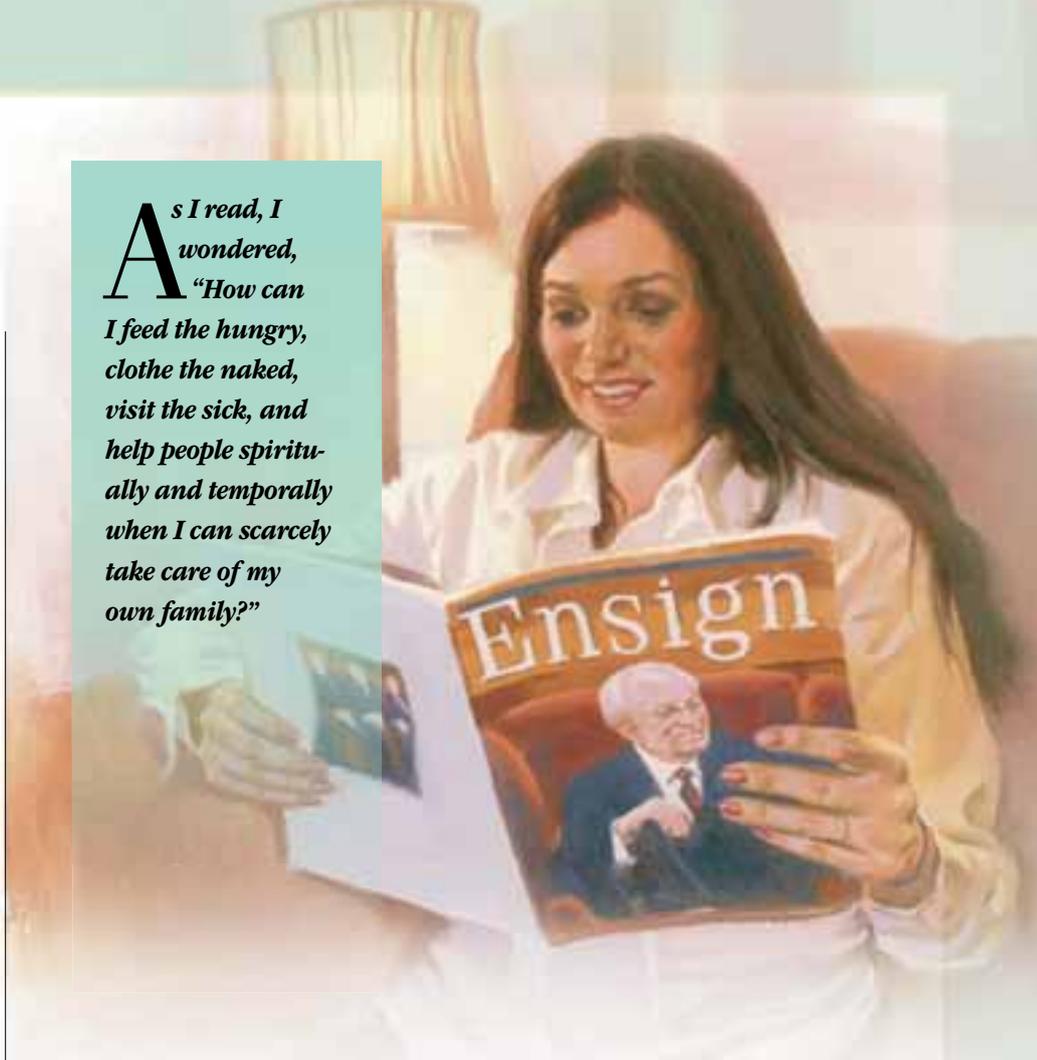
passage I had previously marked: "To keep the blessing of [changed natures] in our hearts will require determination, effort, and faith. King Benjamin taught at least some of what that will require. He said that to retain a remission of our sins from day to day we must feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick, and help people spiritually and temporally" (*Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2006, 17).

Immediately, I again felt that I wasn't living the gospel fully. I wondered, "How can I feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick, and help people spiritually and temporally when I can scarcely take care of my own family?"

That's when I experienced an overwhelming feeling of divine

approval. It was so clear, precise, and tangible that I knew I had to write it down so I wouldn't forget. I could see my day replay in my mind—full of feeding the hungry, doing laundry to clothe the naked (I changed Caden's outfit multiple times), gently caring for our sick baby, helping our five-year-old prepare a family home evening lesson on missionary work, and then discussing the power of example with my family—in other words, helping people spiritually and temporally.

The impression flowed with such an overpowering feeling of peace that I knew the Lord was telling me He had accepted my offering. In caring for my family, I was fulfilling the admonitions of King Benjamin and President Eyring. ■



TAKE ME TO THE TEMPLE

By Alejandro Robles V.

One Saturday morning while I was serving in the Lima Peru Temple, a group of about 20 children from one of the Lima stakes came for a visit. After warmly shaking the hand of each child, the temple president spoke to them about the sacred work of the temple. He especially emphasized the continuation of family relationships and the meaning of the phrase “Families are forever.”

The children were reverent and listened carefully. One of these visitors was a little girl named Rosita, who was five years old. That night she stayed up late until her father returned from work, waiting for him on the edge of her bed.

When he arrived, he was surprised to see his daughter still awake. Rosita jumped off the bed and ran to him. He picked her up, and she put her arms around his neck and kissed him.

“And how is my little Rosa?” he asked.

“I am well, Papi.”

“Were you a good girl today?”

“Yes, Papi.”

“Was there something you wanted me to do for you?”

She nodded her head.

“What is it? What do you want, sweetheart?”

“Papi,” she said, pausing briefly, “when are you going to take me to the temple?”

Her father paused a few seconds before answering.

“I’m going to take you, Rosa. It’s just that I’m working hard right now, and I’m really busy. But I promise I will take you.”

“Thank you, Papi,” said Rosita, hugging and kissing her father again.

“Now go to bed and try to sleep.”

Many months later, Rosita’s family gathered in one of the sealing rooms of the temple. Moments of great rejoicing followed the sealing ceremony. Rosita’s father, with

great love and tenderness, embraced each of his children, ending with the youngest—Rosita.

“Some months ago this little girl made a trip to the temple with the Primary children from our stake,” Rosita’s father told the sealer who had performed the ceremony. “That night she waited for me to get home from work and asked me when I was going to take her to the temple. I knew she didn’t just want to see the outside of the temple, so I have had to put my life in order and get rid of my bad habits. It has taken a lot of effort, but I have finally succeeded. Today is the most beautiful day I have ever experienced because today my family has been united for all eternity.” ■



Papi,” Rosita asked her father, “when are you going to take me to the temple?”

COULD TITHING EASE MY WORRIES?

By Nancy Kay Smith

While my older children were at school and the little ones napped, I spread the household bills across the kitchen table. I began this dreaded monthly task by praying for wisdom and ability to stretch our meager income. The tithing check, as always, would be the first one written.

When I joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as a young wife and mother, I had committed to pay tithing. I had never wavered from that promise. I was deeply distressed, however, by inadequate funds to cover yet another month of utility, mortgage, and insurance bills.

Now I was a single mother of six young children. I frequently felt overwhelmed by the constant workload, financial worries, and endless decisions involved in my efforts to be both mother and father with no extended family to give me relief or support.

As I sat at the table pleading with the Lord for His help and mercy, the Holy Ghost opened to my view a beautiful and comforting manifestation of the Savior's love. I was able to see the money owed for household expenses with a new perspective as the sacred priorities of life were brought to my remembrance. I knew that our

Heavenly Father wanted me to have the blessings promised to those who faithfully paid tithes and offerings. I also knew that tithing should be a joyful act of love, devoid of fear and worry.

When I spread the household bills across the kitchen table, I was deeply distressed by inadequate funds to cover yet another month of utility, mortgage, and insurance bills.

As the Spirit of the Lord filled me, I found myself bearing testimony of convictions I had long held firm and sacred. My voice broke the silence of the kitchen as I declared that I would rather lose the water source to my house than lose the living water offered by the Savior. I would rather have no food on our table than be without the Bread of Life. I would prefer to endure the darkness and discomfort of no electricity than to forfeit the Light of Christ in my life. I would rather abide with my children in a tent than relinquish my privilege of entering the house of the Lord.

The burden of worry immediately lifted. My love for the Lord overcame the weakness generated by my fears.

Our Heavenly Father is our deliverer, our benefactor, and our protector. He truly does supply all our needs. His promises are sure and unfailing. He commands us to pay tithing on our increase so that He may shower down blessings from heaven—including peace of mind, freedom from worldly and material worry, and confidence in His holy name.

From that day forward I have counted it a joy to pay my tithing, without reservation or fear, to Him and for Him who first loved me. ■

