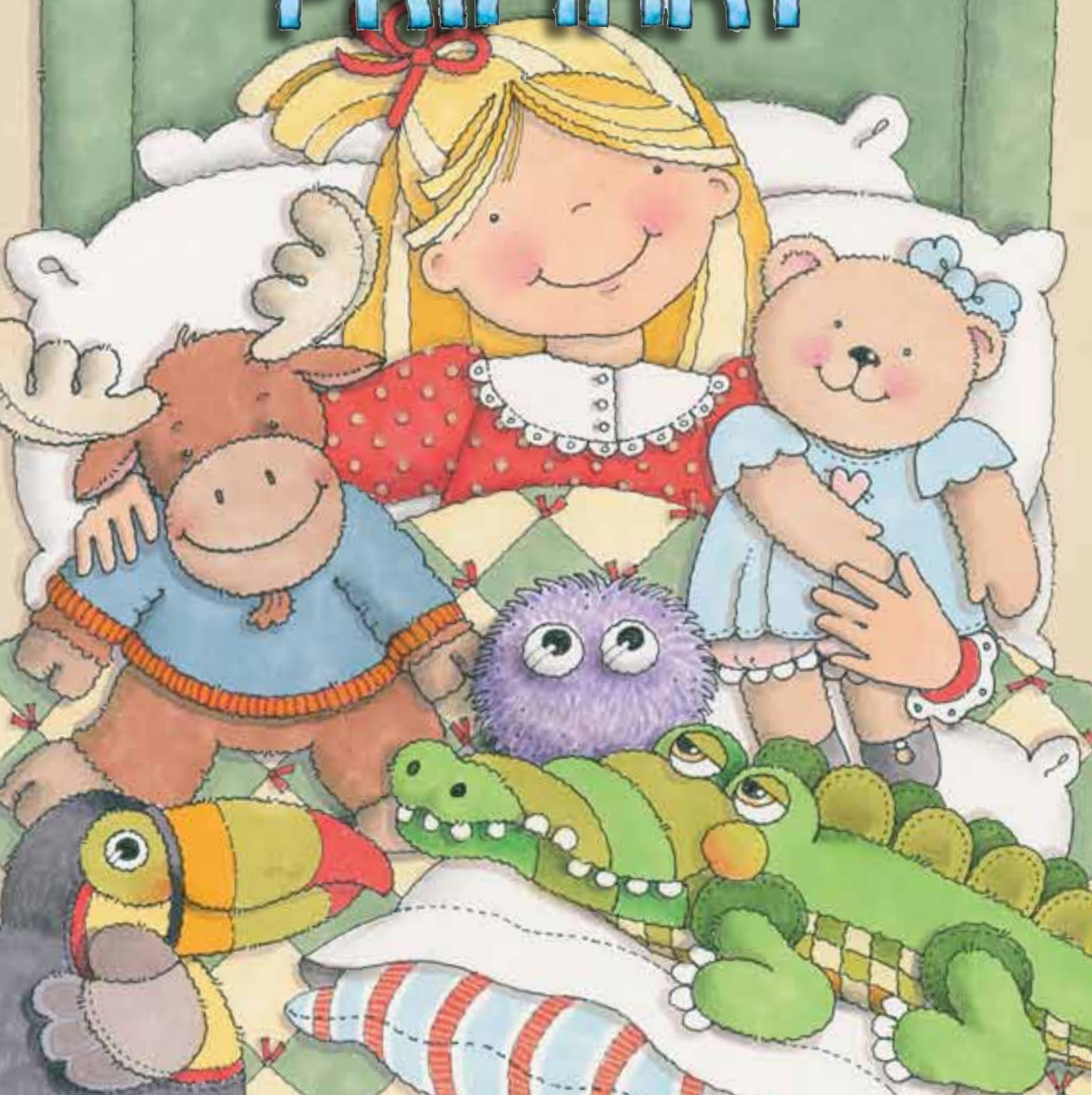


stuffed animal

PRIMARY



BY SARAH CUTLER

(Based on a true story)

I want to be rev'rent, to show my love for thee (Children's Songbook, 28).

Mom, cough, cough, can I please go?"

Haley asked.

"Listen to you. You're even coughing now while you're pretending to be well. I'm sorry, Haley, but you and I will have to stay home from church today," Mom said.

Haley climbed back in bed with her toy stuffed animals. Her family hadn't always gone to church. But when they moved to their new home, her parents decided it was time to go back to church. Now Haley, her little brother Nick, and their parents attended church every Sunday.

Haley loved going to church. She liked singing time. She liked the prayers. She liked the talks the other children gave. She liked the sacrament. She liked her class. Every week, all through church, she felt happy, and she knew going to church was right.

So she was excited when Mom and Dad announced a few weeks ago at dinner that they would be going to the temple soon to be sealed as a family. They had talked about keeping the commandments and being worthy to go to the temple. After that, when Haley went to church, she thought about how it was helping her family be eternal and she liked it even better.

But now she was sick and would miss church. Haley lay on her bed and looked around her room. If she had to stay home, she wanted to at least do something reverent.

Watch TV? That didn't feel right.

Build with blocks? Probably not.



Color? Maybe.

Listen to songs? If they were Church songs.

Read books? Maybe her illustrated scriptures.

Haley's eyes had gone all the way around her room. Then she looked at her bed. She was surrounded by stuffed animals: Clara the bear, Madeleine the toucan, Bill the alligator, Summer Daylight the moose, and Jane the purple fuzz ball.

And then Haley had an idea. She put her pillow on her bed like a bench and set each of her stuffed animals on it. Then she announced: "Thank you for coming to Primary, everyone. Today we are going to sing 'I Am a Child of God.'"

Haley held Clara's arm and helped her lead the music. Then Bill gave a talk about prayer, Madeleine read a story from Haley's illustrated scriptures, and Summer Daylight had everyone color a picture for sharing time. Jane the purple fuzz ball didn't have a mouth, but she listened carefully the whole time.

When her stuffed animal Primary was over, Haley put each of the animals back to sleep on her bed and she lay down too.

Next week she could go to real church and Primary, but she was glad that today she had tried to be reverent even though she couldn't go. ●

"I am satisfied that the Latter-day Saints have within their hearts a desire to do the right thing, to live after the manner which the Lord has outlined for us."

President Gordon B. Hinckley⁴ (1910-2008)

