Thomas Spencer Monson was named for his grandfather Thomas Condie. Young Tommy learned many lessons from his grandfather, who lived just a few houses away. The lesson he best remembers was about how to serve others.

One day when Tommy was about eight years old, he and his grandfather were sitting on the front-porch swing. An elderly man from England lived on the same street. His name was Robert Dicks, but most of the neighbors just called him “Old Bob.” He was widowed and poor.

Old Bob came over and sat down on the porch swing with Tommy and his grandfather. He said that the small adobe house where he lived was going to be torn down. He had no family, no money, and nowhere to go.

Tommy wondered how his grandfather would respond to the sad story. His grandfather reached into his pocket and pulled out a small leather change purse. He took out a key and put it in Old Bob’s hand. “Mr. Dicks,” he said kindly, “you can move your things into that empty house of mine next door. It won’t cost you a cent, and you can stay there as long as you like. And remember, nobody is ever going to put you out again.” Tears filled Old Bob’s eyes.

Tommy’s mother also taught him how to love and serve others. Every Sunday before the Monson family ate dinner, Tommy’s mother prepared a plate of roast beef, potatoes, and gravy for Old Bob. Sometimes it also included Tommy’s mother’s famous ribbon cake with layers of green, pink, and yellow cake and chocolate frosting. Tommy’s job was to deliver the dinner to Old Bob.

At first Tommy did not understand why he couldn’t eat first and then...
How Are You Like President Monson?

What do you have in common with the prophet? Below is a list of things that describe President Monson when he was young. Mark the box next to the ones that you have in common.

- He had an older sister.
- He was the second child in his family.
- He was born on a Sunday.
- He was the oldest brother in his family.
- He had a nickname.
- He had five brothers and sisters.
- His dad often made breakfast for him.
- He gained a testimony of the gospel when he was young.
- He liked homemade ice cream.
- He had a library card.
- He liked to play with his cousins.
- He liked being with his grandpa.
- He lived next to train tracks.
- He ran errands for his mother.
- He liked to go fishing.
- He was baptized when he was eight years old.

Do you have a nickname that describes something special about you?

He had an older sister.
□ He was the second child in his family.
□ He was born on a Sunday.
□ He was the oldest brother in his family.
□ He had a nickname.
□ He had five brothers and sisters.
□ His dad often made breakfast for him.
□ He gained a testimony of the gospel when he was young.
□ He liked homemade ice cream.
□ He had a library card.
□ He liked to play with his cousins.
□ He liked being with his grandpa.
□ He lived next to train tracks.
□ He ran errands for his mother.
□ He liked to go fishing.
□ He was baptized when he was eight years old.
□ He had an older sister.
□ He was the second child in his family.
□ He was born on a Sunday.
□ He was the oldest brother in his family.
□ He had a nickname.
□ He had five brothers and sisters.
□ His dad often made breakfast for him.
□ He gained a testimony of the gospel when he was young.
□ He liked homemade ice cream.
□ He had a library card.
□ He liked to play with his cousins.
□ He liked being with his grandpa.
□ He lived next to train tracks.
□ He ran errands for his mother.
□ He liked to go fishing.
□ He was baptized when he was eight years old.

Names and Nicknames

Match each of President Monson’s names and nicknames with the situation when it was used. See answers on page 48.

1. What people called him at church and at school when he was young
   a. Dad

2. What members of the Church call him today
   b. Nervous Willy

3. What his grandchildren call him
   c. Tom or Tommy

4. What his children call him
   d. Thomas Spencer Monson

5. A nickname his mother gave him because he liked being busy doing things instead of resting
   e. President Monson

6. His full name, which was used when he was baptized
   f. Grandpa

Do you have a nickname that describes something special about you?

Illustration by Paul Mann; photo by Matt Reier (top); photo courtesy of Monson family (right)