

Maria's New Dress

By Angie Bergstrom Miller

(Based on a true story)

Worship God, in whatsoever place ye may be in, in spirit and in truth
(Alma 34:38).

Maria twirled in the pretty new Sunday dress that her grandmother had made for her. It was pink with white ribbons. It was the prettiest dress Maria had ever had, and she felt very beautiful in it. She smiled at herself in the mirror and twirled again to make the skirt fan out. Maria was excited to go to church on Sunday to show her friends her new dress.

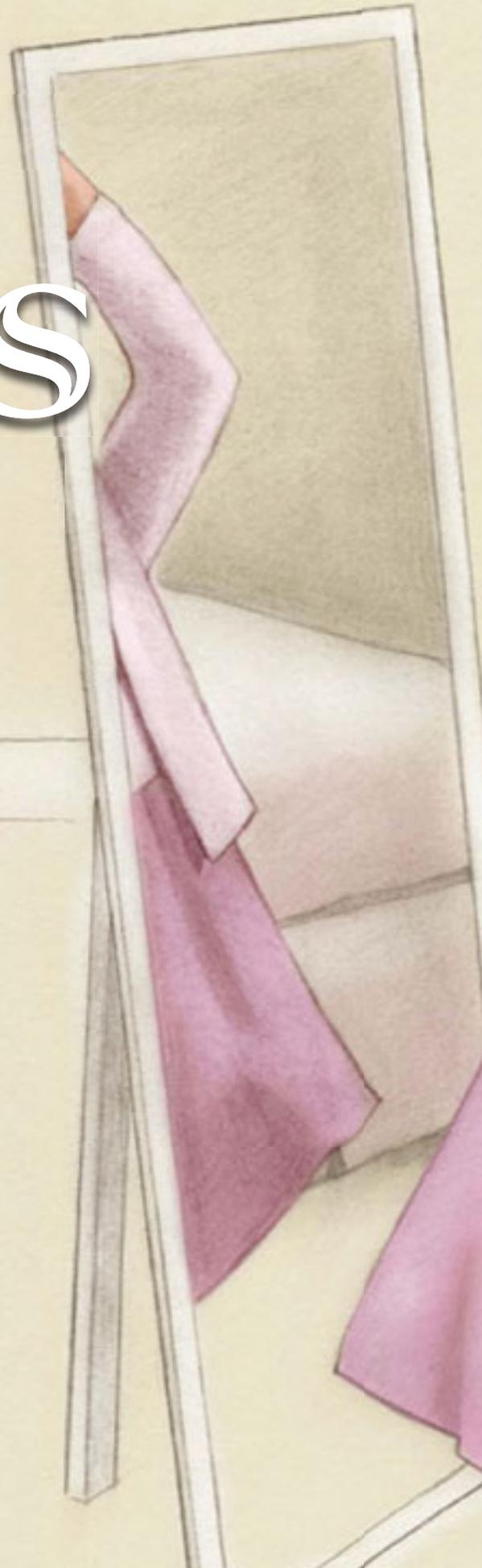
At church Maria liked hearing all her friends say nice things about her dress. In Primary she played with the ribbons on her dress instead of listening to Sister Sánchez's lesson.

Maria didn't pay attention to the testimonies people gave in sacrament meeting either. She was busy untying and retying each of the bows on her dress over and over again.

When the meeting was over, she noticed that some people had tears in their eyes as they left the chapel.

"Why are those people crying, Mama?" Maria asked.

"They felt the Spirit today," Mama said as she wiped away a tear of her own. "And sometimes that brings





"During sacrament meeting . . . we should concentrate on worship and refrain from all other activities."³

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



tears to our eyes. The testimonies were wonderful, weren't they?"

Maria didn't answer. She couldn't remember anything anyone had said.

That night as Mama tucked Maria into bed, Maria asked, "Why didn't I feel the Spirit in church today, Mama?"

"The Spirit speaks in a still, small voice," Mama said. "We must pay attention to notice it. When we go to church, we need to think about Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ—then we can feel the Spirit."

Maria thought about what she had been thinking about at church that day. She had been thinking about her new dress, not about Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

The next week Maria wore her pretty pink dress to church again. But she listened to Sister Sánchez in Primary.

In sacrament meeting she tried to think about Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

Maria left church feeling the Spirit in her heart.

She was glad she had gone to church not just to show off her new dress. ♦