

An illustration of an elderly woman with short, curly white hair and round glasses, wearing a purple turtleneck sweater, looking down at a young girl. The girl has short brown hair and is wearing a pink long-sleeved shirt with white polka dots and blue pants. She is kneeling in a garden, wearing brown gardening gloves and holding a silver trowel. She is planting a small bouquet of white flowers and red strawberries into a hole in the soil. The background is filled with green foliage and several tall green plants.

# GROWING A Testimony

**By Julie C. Donaldson**

(Based on a true story)

*The Holy Ghost . . . filleth with hope and perfect love*  
(Moroni 8:26).

Mary knelt in the warm dirt next to her grandma. She gently lifted the leaves of the strawberry plants, looking for rich red berries that were ripe and ready to eat. Mary felt happy when she helped at Grandma's farm.

"Mary, look at everything Heavenly Father has given us," Grandma said.

"Look at the sun that warms us and makes things grow, the creek that gives us water, the trees that give us shade. What the scriptures say is true: all things on earth testify that there is a God."

Mary's happiness faded away as Grandma's words reminded her of something her dad had said. "Grandma, Dad said that he doesn't know if Heavenly Father is real. He doesn't say prayers or go to church with us anymore."

Mary stared at the dirt and poked at an ant crawling around. She felt bad saying those things because she loved her dad.

Grandma put her hand on Mary's cheek. Looking right into Mary's eyes, Grandma asked, "Mary, do *you* believe in Heavenly Father?"

"So much!" Mary exclaimed, feeling the Spirit warm her heart.

Grandma patted her cheek. "I know you do. You have a testimony. Don't you ever doubt it, no matter what anybody tells you."

"I won't, Grandma," Mary promised. "I just wish it

could be like it was before, when we all went to church together."

"So do I, sweetheart," Grandma said with a sigh. "But people are like plants. We can't make them believe any more than we can make these strawberries grow."

"But don't you pray to Heavenly Father to help the plants grow?" Mary asked.

"I sure do. Every day," Grandma said.

Mary smiled. Now she knew what she could do.

That night Mary knelt beside her bed, bowed her head, and prayed to Heavenly Father. She thanked Him for Grandma and for Dad, for strawberries, and for the beautiful earth. Then she asked Heavenly Father to bless Dad to believe in Him again.

After her prayer, Mary felt peaceful and happy inside, like she was full of love. She knew it was

the Holy Ghost she was feeling, and her testimony grew a little stronger. She knew that Heavenly Father heard her prayer and loved her. She knew He loved Dad too.

Mary hoped her dad would believe in Heavenly Father again someday. But no matter what, *she* would always believe in Heavenly Father. He was as real to her as sunlight and shade and water, as real as the love she felt in her heart when she prayed. ♦



**"I will remember my baptismal covenant and listen to the Holy Ghost."**

My Gospel Standards

