

By Linda G. Paulsen

(Based on a true story)

“There are many gifts, and to every [person] is given a gift by the Spirit of God” (D&C 46:11).

Jacob grinned as Mom filled out the permission form. He could *finally* join the school band. So many instruments to choose from! But he knew which one he wanted to learn.

“I want to play the flute,” he told Mom.

Ever since third grade, Jacob had thought about what instrument to play. But now, saying the words out loud, he felt a little thrill. He had decided!

I Want
to Play the
Flute



A few days later Jacob said it again, this time to the band instructor. "I want to play the flute."

But Mr. Mortensen held out a shiny saxophone instead. "This one's ready to go," he said. "It's rent free. You could begin right away."

Jacob shook his head. "I'd rather play the flute, please."

"We already have plenty of flutes in the band," Mr. Mortensen said. "Try the saxophone. You might like it."

Marcie giggled. "The flute is a *girl's* instrument."

"But I want to play the flute." Jacob stood up taller and glanced at Marcie. She whispered something to Haley and rolled her eyes. Haley nodded.

Mr. Mortensen shrugged and put the saxophone back in its case. "Think about it."

Jacob crossed his arms. What would it be like in the flute section with Marcie and Haley there? How long before Mom and Dad could rent a flute, anyway? Until then he'd have to sit in band doing nothing. He sighed. Band was supposed to be fun.

On the way home from school, Jacob told his friend Ryan how he felt.

To his surprise, Ryan laughed! "Duh!" he said, and friendly-punched Jacob's shoulder. "Our band is mostly girls anyway! Why bother? You could be hanging with the

men!" He spun on his toes and pretended to throw a football over Jacob's head.

Jacob's shoulders slumped. Even his best friend thought playing the flute was dumb. Maybe it was.

When Jacob got home, Mom told him Mr. Mortensen had called. "There's a saxophone available for free," she said.

Jacob felt like everyone was ganging up on him. He nodded and went to his room without saying anything. He said a quick prayer. *Heavenly Father, please help me know what to do.*

Pretty soon Mom knocked on his open door. "What's up?" she asked.

"Do just girls play the flute?"

Mom seemed surprised. "No. Some of the best flute players in the world are men. Heavenly Father gives different gifts and talents to every person." She sat on his bed beside him. "Jacob, what do you want to do?"

Jacob took a deep breath. "I want to play the flute." It felt good to say it. "Mom, I just want to play the flute! Can we afford it?"

"If you promise to practice, Dad and I will rent you a flute." Mom gave him a quick hug.

"It's a deal," he said. "Thanks!" They shook hands on it. *Ready or not, Marcie, Jacob thought, here I come!*

By December the band was preparing for their first concert. Jacob asked Ryan if he was going to come. "I'm trying out to play a solo!"

"Probably." Ryan looked sideways at Jacob. "I'm thinking of joining band next semester," he said.

Jacob gave Ryan a friendly punch on the shoulder. "Great! What would you play?"

"Well, Mr. Mortensen said he has a spare saxophone..." ◆

The author lives in Utah, USA.

ILLUSTRATION BY MARK JARMAN



"God knows our gifts. My challenge to you and to me is to pray to know the gifts we have been given [and] to know how to develop them."

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency

"Help Them Aim High," *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 67.