



**By Heidi Poelman**

(Based on a true story)

*I will use the names of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ reverently. I will not swear or use crude words (My Gospel Standards).*

Zach knew he wasn't supposed to use that word. But so many boys at school said it that he had started using it too. At first he felt guilty, but after a while it started to feel normal. He got so used to saying the word that one day he said it at home.

"What was that?" his dad said after the word slipped out. Zach and Dad had been playing basketball in the driveway, but suddenly Dad was holding the ball and looking at Zach.

"Oh, nothing, Dad," Zach said. "It's just something the kids at school say sometimes. It's not a big deal."

"Hmm . . ." Dad wasn't convinced. He shook his head and passed the ball to Zach.

"But everyone says it!" Zach said. "And other words are a lot worse!"

"I'm sure that's true," Dad said. "But just because a whole bunch of people say or do something, does that make it right?"

"Well, no," Zach answered, looking down at the ball.

"Here's a question that might help you decide if using that word is right," Dad said. "Do you feel like you have the Holy Ghost with you when you say it?"



Zach's family often talked about living so they could have the Holy Ghost to help them. Zach knew that when he made good choices, the Holy Ghost would guide him and he would feel good about his choices. But when he made bad choices, the Holy Ghost could not stay with him.

"Not really," Zach said. "When I first said it, I felt guilty, but that feeling went away after a while."

"That feeling was the Holy Ghost speaking to you," Dad said. "When we don't listen, we are tuning Him out."



## Can words drive the Spirit away?

wasn't a good word. All the other boys laughed, but Zach didn't.

"What's wrong?" Bryan asked.

"Nothing," Zach said as Bryan passed the ball to him. He hoped Bryan and the others wouldn't make fun of him. "I've just decided I'm not going to talk like that any more." Then he shot the basketball right through the hoop.

"What did you say?" Jeremy asked as he walked over.

"I just think I've been talking in a way that isn't right," Zach said. "I know better. So I decided last night that I'm only going to use words that make me feel good inside."

The boys looked at each other. "OK, that's cool," Bryan said. Then the bell rang to go inside.

As they headed into class, Jeremy said to Zach, "You know, I've been thinking the same thing, but I didn't want to say anything. Thanks for bringing it up."

Zach nodded and smiled. He felt good, and he knew that feeling was from the Holy Ghost. He was glad he'd had the courage to choose the right. ◆

"I'll try to do better," Zach said.

"I think that's a good decision, buddy," Dad said as he took the ball and tossed it into the hoop. "What do you say we go inside for some ice cream? I'm beat!"

"OK!" Zach said as he scooped up the ball and took one last shot.

The next day at school, Zach was on the basketball court with his friends. They were running down the court when Zach's friend Bryan used a word Zach knew



At school I overheard two girls from my class talking and using the name of God in vain. I knew this is something we've been commanded not to do. I told them it makes Heavenly Father and Jesus sad if we use Their names in an unkind way. The girls looked a little surprised, but I had a very warm feeling in my heart after I shared my testimony with them. After this I never heard them say God's name in vain again.

**Alana C., age 6, Indiana, USA**