

Pretty Much Brothers

By Jill Hacking

(Based on a true story)

"I am thankful love is spoken here"
(Children's Songbook, 191).

Xander always wished he had a big brother. And now he had one!

Well, not really, but Xander liked to pretend that Sevàk was his brother. Sevàk was staying with Xander's family while he visited the United States to go to school.

For family home evening tonight, Sevàk was teaching them about his home country. He pulled a little flag out of his pocket. It had three stripes—red, blue, and orange. "This is the Armenian flag. Armenia is in Eastern Europe," he said. He told them more cool stuff about his country—like how it was so small that it could fit inside Xander's state eight times!

While Xander listened, he thought about how Sevàk was different. He talked kind of funny. He looked different too—his hair and eyes were darker than Xander's. And Sevàk's family went to a different church than Xander's family.

But he's not that different, Xander thought. *We both like to play games.* They had even made up their own game together with Xander's trading cards. They also both liked watching Saturday morning cartoons.

After Sevàk finished telling about his country, they sang a Primary song and read a scripture. "Thank you for sharing with us, Sevàk," Dad said. "Nathan, will you say the closing prayer?"

"Yup!" said Nathan. Xander glanced at Sevàk, who bowed his head and clasped his hands reverently.



How could Xander tell his new big brother that those words weren't good to say?



Even though he's different, Xander thought, he's Heavenly Father's son—just like me. That makes us pretty much brothers!

The next afternoon Xander and Nathan were playing basketball on the driveway.

"Hey, guys," Sevàk said when he got home from school. "Can I play?"

"Sure!" Xander said. "We're playing Horse."

Sevàk didn't know how to play, so Xander explained the rules while Nathan went into the garage to get another ball.

"So when it's your turn, just make sure you don't miss the basket," Xander finished.

"OK, let's play," Sevàk said.

They all took turns shooting baskets. Sevàk was pretty good. But after a couple of rounds, he missed a shot, and the ball bounced off the backboard.

Sevàk laughed. "I can't believe I missed that!" Then he said some words that made Xander's stomach squirm.

Sevàk wasn't a bad person, so why did he say those bad words? *Maybe he doesn't know that's wrong*, Xander thought. Sometimes he forgot that Sevàk didn't know the same things about Heavenly Father and Jesus.

"Umm, we don't say those words at our house because it makes Heavenly Father sad," Xander said as kindly as he could. "If you want to say that, you can always just say 'bummer' instead."

"Oh, OK," Sevàk said, picking up the ball. "Thanks for telling me."

They kept playing. Sevàk missed again, but this time he said, "Bummer!" and smiled at Xander.

The month went by quickly, and soon it was time for Sevàk to leave. Before he left, he hugged Xander goodbye. "Thank you for teaching me about God. I learned a lot from you," Sevàk said. "I had such a cool feeling during family home evening and prayers with your family. I want to have a feeling like that in my home someday."

Xander hugged him back. "Bye, Sevàk. I'll really miss you!"

Xander felt warm inside. He knew that Heavenly Father was happy that he had helped Sevàk feel the Holy Ghost and learn about how Jesus wanted him to live. ◆

The author lives in New York, USA.



"As we follow the example of the Savior, ours will be the opportunity to be a light in the lives of others."

President Thomas S. Monson

"Be an Example and a Light," *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 88.

Sevàk got baptized later!

And he's still like a brother to Xander.

