

WHEN THE PLAN **BECAME REAL**

*Suddenly the plan of salvation was more than just a flow chart—
it was the source of my hope and comfort.*



By Alissa Holm

“Write down all of your talents, and pick one to tell us about,” Sister Jensen said to our Laurel class. I proudly explained that volleyball was my greatest talent and that our next season—my last year of volleyball—was going to be the best one yet.

“Talents come in many forms. Some are spiritual gifts,” Sister Jensen taught. “I think that Heavenly Father has blessed me to be able to love everyone around me.”

Sister Jensen radiated love everywhere she went and shared her testimony in everyday conversations. Her love was genuine, kind, and Christlike. She had become more than a Young Women leader to me—she felt like a second mother, a sister, or a best friend during my high school years. We went to concerts together, went shopping together, and made strawberry jam together. She brought me homemade pudding when I got my wisdom teeth pulled, and she liked to visit me at the snow-cone shack where I worked. She worked at my school, so she went to all my volleyball games too.

A few months later, near the end of summer vacation, I woke up at 3:00 a.m. to the phone ringing. My mom answered and then came to my bedroom. “The Jensens were in a car accident coming home from their family reunion,” she said. “The car rolled off the freeway, and Sister Jensen didn’t make it.”

My heart sank. “This isn’t real,” I thought. “She texted me earlier today. How could she be gone now?”

I felt shocked, confused, and sad all at the same time. After a few minutes, the tears came, and my mom held me while I cried. Sleep was impossible, so I lay there with my thoughts and tears for the rest of the night.

In the coming weeks, I dropped into a sadness I’d never felt before. Volleyball wasn’t a priority, and I no longer looked forward to starting the school year. Everything I was so excited about before was now buried by sadness. “I feel completely overwhelmed with grief,”

I wrote in my journal one night. “I can’t stop crying and I’m always tired.”

The night before the first day of school, I lay in bed crying and thinking about Sister Jensen’s death. I was sick of being sad, and I realized that I needed help to overcome the pain. I needed to pray.

“Please help me understand why she died and how I can cope with this,” I prayed.

I knelt there in silence, wondering if He would answer. After a few minutes, my mind started making connections between everything that had happened. My heart felt warm and my mind felt elevated. I realized that these thoughts weren’t my own; the Spirit was teaching me.

The plan of salvation—the flow chart I’d been taught since Primary—was *real*. Sister Jensen was born, she experienced happiness, she endured trials, she shared her love, and now she was in the spirit world. Her spirit still existed, and I *would* see her again. I realized that this plan, the plan of *happiness*, was designed to help us return to our Heavenly Father, to our families, and to our friends. In that moment, I wanted more than anything to live righteously so I could see her again.

During those first few weeks of school, I focused on trying to develop Sister Jensen’s talent of loving everyone. As I concentrated on loving other people, my pain began to slowly subside and I felt happier. I learned that we can show our love for others in many ways—by listening to them, by smiling at them, by taking them a treat, or by complimenting them. These are the small things that Sister Jensen did for me, so the best way to keep her memory alive was to spread her kind of love.

Although Sister Jensen died, I will always feel her love. As I strive each day to show a little more love for other people, I’m living the kind of life she did—and taking one step closer to seeing her again. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.