



An Honesty Test

BY PATRICIA A. JACOBS AND FRANCINI PRESENÇA

Patricia: My best friend, Francini, and I are some of the only members of the Church in our school in Brazil, and we often find that the small things we do make a big difference.

One such small thing occurred in a Saturday math class Francini and I had together. On this particular day, Francini was absent. During class, the tests we had taken a few days before were passed back. I wasn't paying much attention when the teacher placed Francini's test on my desk and asked me to give it to her.


Since Francini and I had already discussed how we thought we had done, I was surprised that her grade was higher than we had expected. I looked at her test and saw that the teacher had failed to mark one incorrect answer as wrong. Without even considering, I told the teacher that Francini's grade was too high.

It wasn't a test of our math skills or of our friendship; it was a test of our honesty.

What I didn't realize was that the whole class was watching. As soon as I spoke, the class began to criticize me, saying that I was wrong to do that to a friend and that I only wanted my grade to be higher than hers. I was confused and upset by the response. I was sure I had done what Francini would have done. But someone said it was impossible for anyone to be honest to the point of lowering his or her own grade. Everyone saw me as a traitor to my friend. I tried to tell them that Francini would have been honest about her grade and that truly honest people still exist in the world.

After much debate, the teacher and class decided that they would test us. The teacher said he would keep Francini's grade wrong and that we would wait and see her reaction on Monday.

I didn't like the idea. I felt that testing Francini was not fair. But the teacher had made his decision, and I couldn't change it.



That weekend I was anxious about what would happen, even though I had confidence that Francini would do what was right. I fervently prayed that she would notice the error on her test.

In math class on Monday, the whole class was alert as they watched Francini pick up her test.

Francini: Shortly after class started on Monday, the teacher handed me back my math test. I was about to put it away without really looking at it, but then I noticed that my grade was higher than I had expected. I raised my hand and went to the teacher's desk. I asked if he had graded the test correctly, and he answered that he had. I then pointed to my test and said, "But I made a mistake." At that moment Patricia also came up to the teacher's desk and told him that he had also left a wrong answer unmarked on her test and with all the confusion on Saturday, she had not noticed it.

The classroom immediately erupted. Some people began to murmur about Patricia telling me, but others gave embarrassed smiles. I was confused by all the different reactions to these events.

Later, Patricia explained what had happened on Saturday. I was surprised to know that I had been through a test unrelated to math and that my classmates had responded to my friend in that way. However, I was happy that I had been honest and that Patricia's prayers had helped me be prompted to notice the mistake on my test. I am also grateful that my friend believed in me.

Patricia and Francini: Both of us learned a great lesson from this experience. Our testimonies have grown about the important role Latter-day Saints have in being witnesses of Jesus Christ and examples of His principles. We are grateful to the Lord for His gospel, which gives us the opportunity to make a difference. ■