



Primary Songs Blessed Me

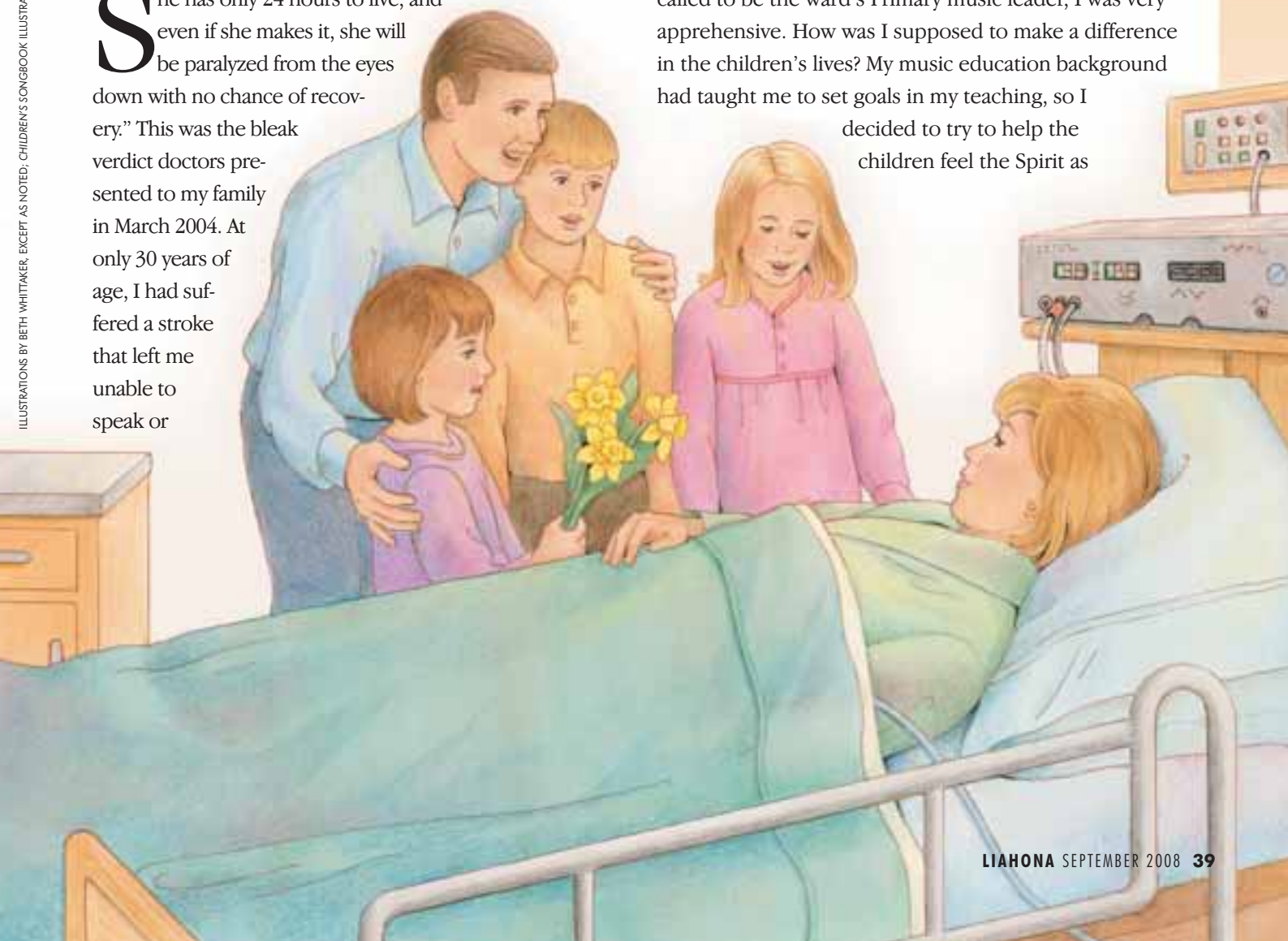
BY JENNIFER A. LYNN

I didn't expect to benefit from my calling as a music leader. Now it's hard to think of a way I haven't benefited.

She has only 24 hours to live, and even if she makes it, she will be paralyzed from the eyes down with no chance of recovery." This was the bleak verdict doctors presented to my family in March 2004. At only 30 years of age, I had suffered a stroke that left me unable to speak or

move. Yet in those dark, lonely hours, experiences from my previous calling as a Primary music leader gave me hope.

I have always loved music and felt strength in the words of the hymns. Yet prior to my stroke, when I was called to be the ward's Primary music leader, I was very apprehensive. How was I supposed to make a difference in the children's lives? My music education background had taught me to set goals in my teaching, so I decided to try to help the children feel the Spirit as





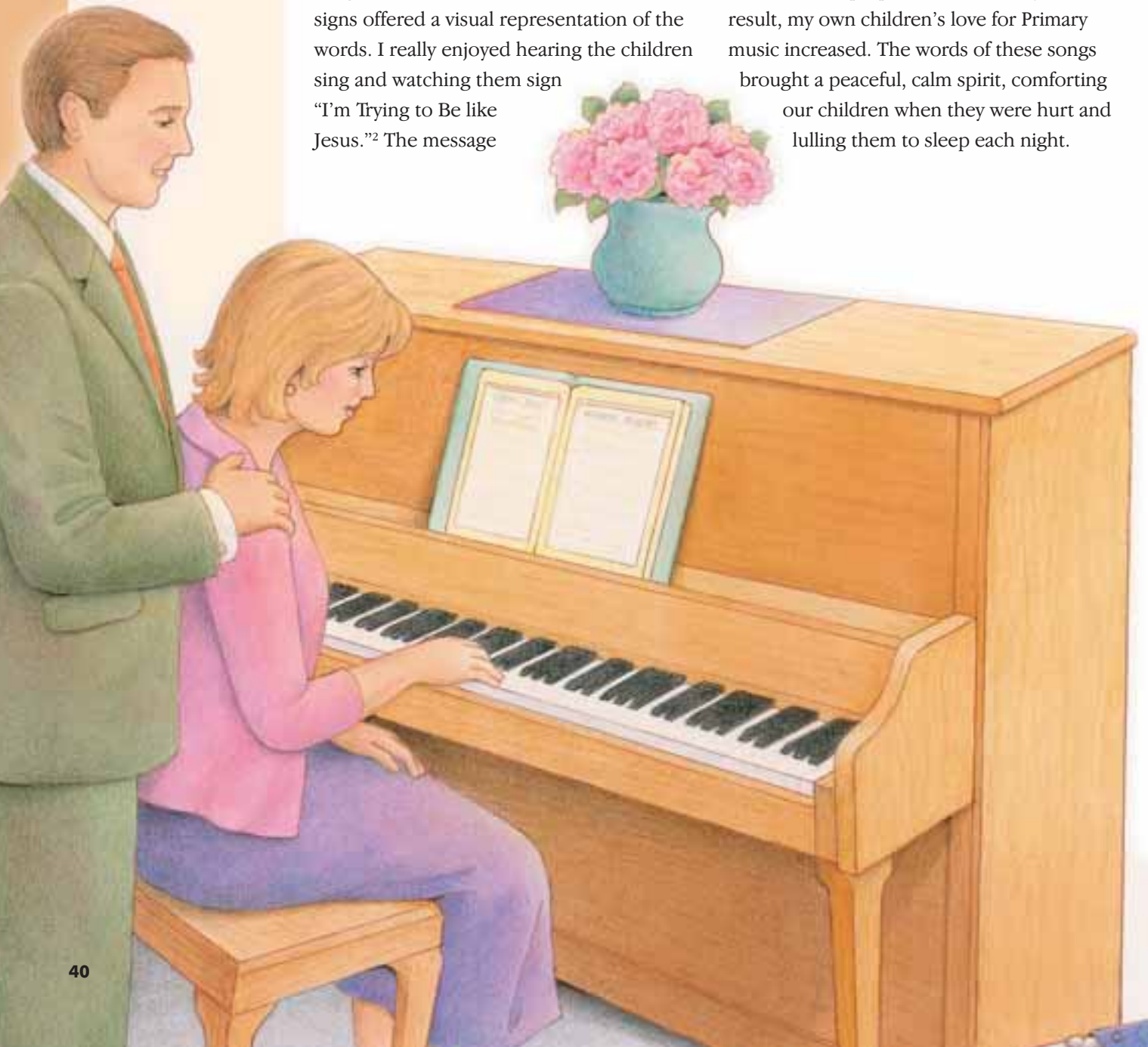
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we sang. When we sang songs such as “I Lived in Heaven,”¹ I was astonished by the strong presence of the Holy Ghost in the room and by the children’s deep, thoughtful questions about the lyrics.

One of my favorite teaching methods was using American Sign Language (ASL). I found that the children understood the songs better when we discussed how the signs offered a visual representation of the words. I really enjoyed hearing the children sing and watching them sign “I’m Trying to Be like Jesus.”² The message

rang true in my heart, and I often felt that I was the benefactor of the Spirit that the children invited. I could sense my testimony growing, and I truly felt blessed by the Lord.

The blessings of my calling as Primary music leader were not limited to the Primary room, though. With the calling came the need to practice and play the music at home so I would be prepared each Sunday. As a result, my own children’s love for Primary music increased. The words of these songs brought a peaceful, calm spirit, comforting our children when they were hurt and lulling them to sleep each night.





They insisted on listening to the *Children's Songbook* CDs³ in the car—even if the ride was just a short one—and consequently began to memorize many of the songs.

However, it was not until after my stroke that I was aware of the far-reaching effects of this music in my life. With so much recent experience singing Primary songs, I found they were what kept me going during my trials. During my darkest hours I would pray and sing “A Child’s Prayer”⁴ in my head. As I cried out like the child of the first verse, “Heavenly Father, are you really there?” He would mercifully answer by reassuring me that I was not alone and that He *was* there, as stated in the second verse of the song. What a strength and reassurance!

During the recovery process, my husband and children came to my hospital room to hold family home evenings and frequently sang “Love Is Spoken Here.”⁵ That was the last song I had taught in Primary, and it was wonderful to hear my children sing it, knowing that I had planted those seeds. As they sang, I could relate to the mother in the song, praying on her knees (how I wished that I too could kneel!). Her pleas to Heavenly Father were also mine. I also shared the same gratitude for priesthood authority in my home. While I could not voice these thoughts to my family, the Primary song voiced these feelings for me.

It has been nearly four years since I suffered my stroke,

and I have been able to regain far more abilities than the doctors expected I ever would. I have a small amount of movement in my right arm, which allows me to type on my computer and operate a powered wheelchair.

I use a modified form of ASL—which I first learned in my Primary calling—to communicate. Because of this, I can still “sing” Primary songs with my children and express my feelings to family and friends.

Before my stroke I had always planned on singing at my children’s baptisms. In August 2005 my oldest child, Zach, was baptized. I was able to use my right hand to plunk out “When I Am Baptized”⁶ while my husband supported me at the piano bench. It felt good to express my deepest feelings about baptism through music and in a way that Zach would understand.

When I began serving as a Primary music leader, I did not think the calling would benefit me. Yet it plainly has! The Primary songs have blessed me with a better understanding of gospel principles, a strengthened testimony, the ability to communicate with my family, and the strength to persevere. The words and melody of Primary songs may be simple, but the message and the power of each one are clear.

We may not always understand why the Lord has given us a particular assignment. Even so, we must trust the Lord and put our faith in Him and His promptings. I am so grateful I was a Primary music leader before my stroke! The songs I can no longer sing can still communicate my feelings of the gospel to others. Every time I hear my children sing Primary songs, I know that their testimonies are being strengthened and that they share my love for the Lord and His gospel. ■

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NOTES

1. *Children's Songbook*, 4.
2. *Children's Songbook*, 78–79.
3. Item no. 50428.
4. *Children's Songbook*, 12–13.
5. *Children's Songbook*, 190–91.
6. *Children's Songbook*, 103.

