

WISEMANS

BY MATTHEW DINGER

I had to visit two of the most knowledgeable members of the ward on my first home teaching assignment!

The Wisemans really lived up to their name. What was I going to talk to them about?

“**M**atthew, Brother Erickson is here!” These were the words I had been dreading to hear all day. It was the type of situation you knew you would have to face eventually but hoped desperately would always be one more day away. But this was the day.

Earlier that morning, just before opening exercises for priesthood, 80-year-old Brother Erickson had caught me. “You have been called as my home teaching companion. Would it be all right if we visited one of our families later today?”

I was shocked. All my friends had been assigned to be their dads’ companions. At least when they made a fool of themselves it would be in front of a family member, not someone who has had eight decades to get to know everything about the gospel. I muttered to him that it would be fine.

He replied, “We will be going to the Wiseman family. You are going to love it!”

I was convinced this was a rather large lie.

The Wiseman family truly lived up to their name. Like Brother Erickson, they were older and wiser members of the ward. They had known apostles and even prophets and had a reputation for having a great understanding of the gospel. If that

weren’t enough, there were two of them; what one didn’t know, I was sure the other one would. So I trudged out the door and into the car where Brother Erickson waited, smiling.

We talked a bit about school and my family on the way to the Wisemans. I think Brother Erickson sensed I was nervous. We finally arrived at the door, and I forced a smile. When I entered the home, warm smiles and hearty handshakes greeted me. The Wisemans were as amazing as I had thought, only they were so much cooler than I imagined they would be.

“Will you be starting school soon, Matt?” Sister Wiseman asked.

“I will be in ninth grade in August,” I responded quickly, not knowing how Sister Wiseman would react.

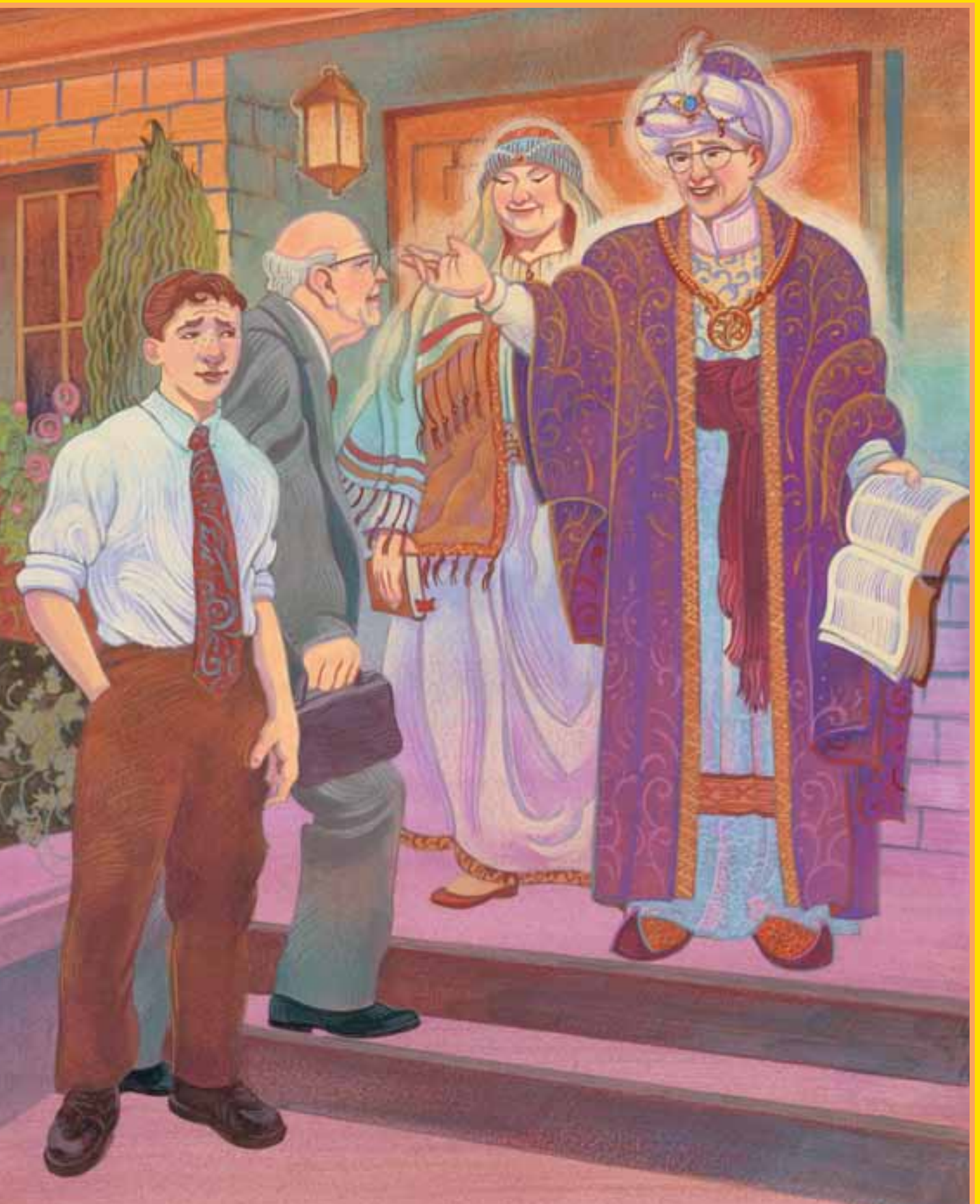
“That’s wonderful!” she exclaimed, and she actually meant it.

“What things do you like to do in school?” she said, diving in for more.

“Well, I’m in the choir,” I said a little less timidly.

“I used to love to sing too,” Sister Wiseman said, and the conversation continued more fluidly from there as my nervousness slowly eased away.

We continued talking about school,



As they taught me and allowed me to teach them, my reluctance turned into appreciation, and I realized I had more in common with the Wisemans than I thought.



WHEN YOU GIVE THE MESSAGE

As a home teacher, you “preach, teach, expound, exhort, . . . and visit the house of each member” (D&C 20:46–47). You and your companion will share a message each month, usually using the First Presidency Message in the *Ensign*. Here are a few tips for preparing and giving the message:

- Read the article ahead of time, and find some ideas that would be helpful or interesting to the families you visit.
- Think of ways to teach those ideas. Keep in mind the ages of those you teach. For instance, children might enjoy acting out a part of the message. An older family member could read part of the article. You could hand out questions about the topic and then have the family members answer them. Teaching suggestions are found at the end of each First Presidency Message.
- As part of your message, bear your testimony and say what the topic means to you.
- If your companion is giving the message, pray for the Spirit to be with him and the family. Be prepared to comment on the topic if he asks you to.

skiing, television, and everything else imaginable. I was amazed that I actually had things in common with these people! And more than that, they seemed to enjoy talking to me. To my great surprise I found that when the lesson was over and the closing prayer said, I didn’t want to leave. My fear of home teaching turned into a fear of the clock telling us it was time to go.

As I continued as a home teacher I grew to love my companion, Brother Erickson, and the Wiseman family more than I thought I ever could. They taught me much and allowed me to teach them as well. I never knew I had so much in common with other members of the Church, regardless of age, background, or education.

I know that even though the home teaching program is meant to bless the lives of the families taught, it also has a great impact on the home teachers. To this day I still consider Brother Erickson and the Wisemans as three of my best friends. **NE**