

SITTING WITH CHRIS

BY AMANDA TINGEN JONES

Everyone said Chris was weird, but as soon as we started talking, I realized he was a really neat guy, and we became the best of friends.

I can still remember one particular Young Women lesson, even though my teacher, Sister Cato, taught it years ago. It was about reaching out to others who may not seem to fit in with “our group.”

I was in high school then, captain of the marching band color guard, publicity chair for a club, active on the academic team and in drama, Laurel class president, and a member of the stake youth committee. I was the only member of the Church at my school, but people seemed to respect me for my beliefs.

The day after Sister Cato’s wonderful lesson, I noticed a guy at lunch I’d never really noticed before. He was sitting by himself, except for two other guys who were making fun of him. I remembered having seen him at band practice after school, but I didn’t even know his name. I asked my friends from the band if they knew anything about him.

“That’s Chris. He can’t march and won’t play his trombone loud enough for you to hear him three feet from you!” the trombone section leader replied.

“I think he just moved here from another school,” said another. “People say he’s really weird.”

“I heard he can’t drive to save his life. Once he hit someone’s trash can when he was driving home after school!” another of my friends said.

The bell rang, and we all scattered for class. I continued to think about Chris and

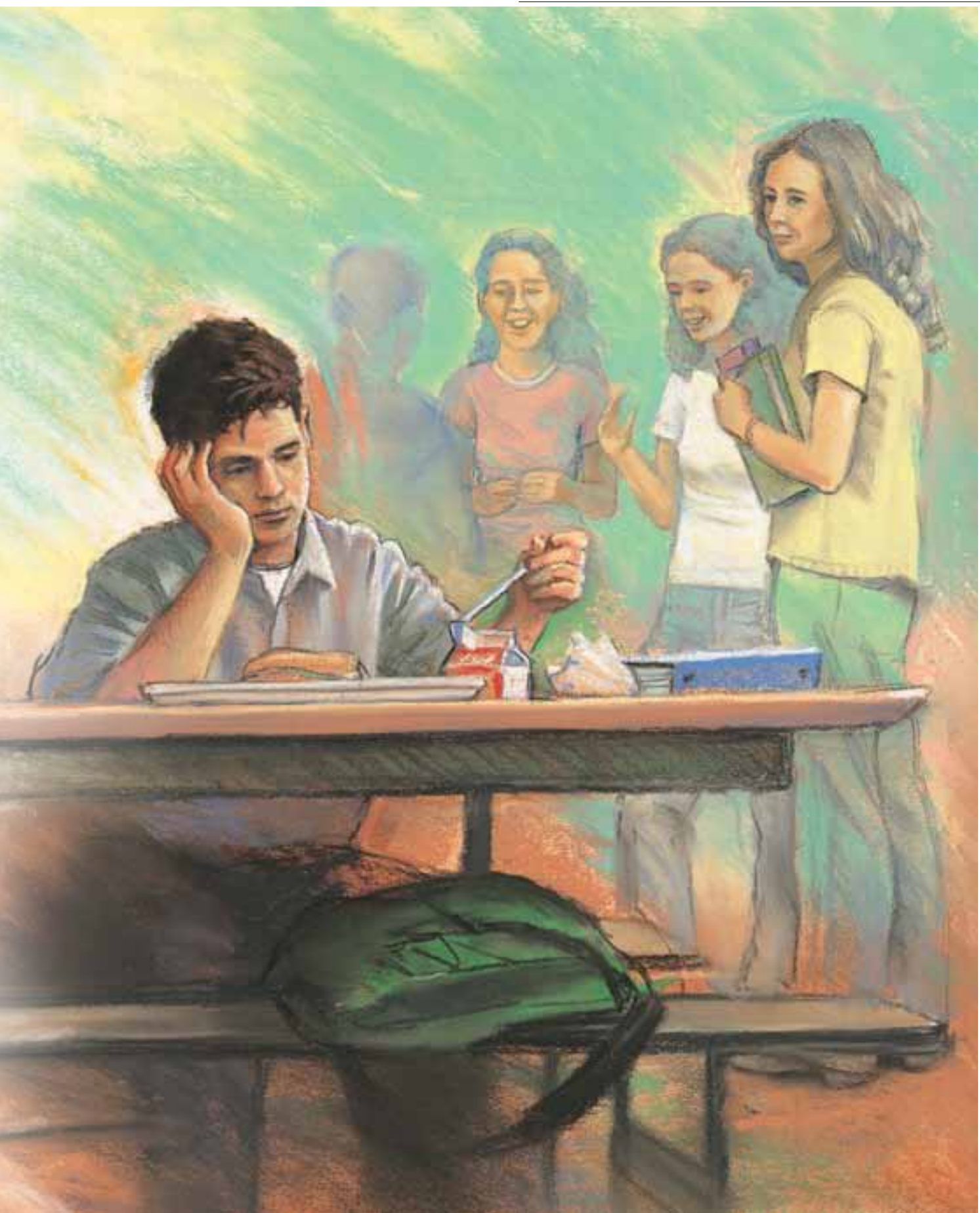
how lonely he had seemed at lunch.

The next day, I decided to sit with Chris instead of with my usual group. Ignoring my friends’ stares, I introduced myself and sat down. I really enjoyed my lunch with Chris. He was funny and bright, though a little quiet that first day. The next day at lunch, I asked Chris to sit with my friends and me. My friends protested, but I insisted, and Chris had lunch with us the rest of the year.

I’m so thankful for that lesson in Young Women. Chris and I became the best of friends. When band practice ended each afternoon, we would often end up at one or the other’s house. I introduced him to my younger brothers, with whom he became fast friends, and he introduced me to his girlfriend. We went to the movies together. He helped me get my first job, and we even double-dated to the prom.

The next year, I completed the Personal Progress program in Young Women. My parents decided to have a little party to celebrate my receiving the Young Womanhood Recognition. I handed out invitations to all my friends and reminded them many times, hoping they would come. Chris came—my only friend who wasn’t a member of the Church to show up.

Graduation day came and went, but Chris and I still keep in touch. Who would have known that by following a Young Women lesson, I would end up with a great friendship? **NE**



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