

# CHANGING FRIENDS

NAME WITHHELD

I have always had a hard time making friends. I knew people and had a lot of acquaintances, but I didn't feel like I had anyone that I could hang out with without feeling out of place.

When I started 10th grade, I had a group that I ate lunch with from junior high, but I just didn't fit in with them. I tried to stay strong, but it felt like I was being dragged slowly down where I could never escape. I decided that no friends were better than bad ones, so I stopped hanging out with them.

The period of time when I had no one to eat with was the loneliest time of my life. Still, I tried to be good. I told my Mia Maid leader about it, and she said, "You are a great girl, and no matter what happens, you will be better because of this." I took her words to heart, and my world brightened. I prayed that I would meet good people and find happiness. I felt as though weights were lifted.

Soon at school I met some Latter-day Saint girls who went to the temple to do baptisms for the dead nearly every week, and they





# HEY, SIS!

BY LISA NISSEN

included me in their circle of friends. I felt happier than ever. They were so nice and honest in everything they did. They were wonderful, but I was scared they would change and end up just like the others.

Before an important test, my father gave me a blessing. He said something that took me by surprise. He said, "You are doing what's right, and your Father is very pleased. If you continue in righteousness and do not falter, you will gain friends. Your friends will encourage you to be good and strive to be your best."

I was struck deeply. I followed the blessing and found these girls to be more than I had ever hoped for. They introduced me to other friends, and we became a strong support to each other.

I found that Heavenly Father listens to my prayers and cares about what I feel. **NE**

I was leaving junior high school, embarking on a new adventure riddled with unknown possibilities and, of course, filled with fun. Little did I know that the first few months of high school would feel disastrous and ultimately change my life.

It all started normally enough for a freshman. I felt small at this new, big school. Everything seemed twice as big, but it was nice knowing I was going through this with my friends. When we checked our class schedules, we saw that I didn't have any classes with my friends. As the weeks passed, we drifted apart. Instead of the close relationship we'd once shared, I would be lucky to see the backs of their heads as they walked in another direction.

My lunch hour was miserable. I tried to make myself look busy, like making several unneeded trips to my locker

to retrieve books I didn't need, tying my shoes, or pretending to look for someone who would never be found. I guess I wasn't very good at pretending, because my older brother, Shawn, noticed.

Since my childhood, Shawn was always there, whether it was teasing me incessantly or putting his arm around me after a bad day. He never really asked me what was wrong; he just knew. He started inviting me to eat lunch with him and his friends. When I was with him, he never ignored me. I remember him yelling, "Hey, Sis!" and walking over to put his arm around me.

Slowly I became stronger, and I became comfortable in my own skin. I realized I didn't need my old friends to define who I was. I had my brother, my friend. **NE**

# A PRAYER IN SAMOAN

BY JACOB LOOSLE

When I opened my mission call and learned I would serve an English-speaking mission in America, I was relieved. I struggled in vain to learn a language in high school, and I was glad I wouldn't have to deal with that again in the MTC.

During my mission I served in a Samoan ward. Most of the members spoke English as well, so we could easily work with them.

Then my companion and I began to teach a part-member family who

had been raised in Samoa and had just moved to America. When one of the girls asked me to perform her baptism, I felt impressed to learn how to say the baptism prayer in Samoan. I knew my weakness in learning other languages, but my love for her and her family overcame my fear.

That night I went to another member's house so he could teach me how to say the prayer in Samoan. Despite 30 minutes of practicing, I left discouraged and frustrated because I had not gotten very far.

That night I asked the Lord to bless me with the gift of tongues if He wanted me to say the baptism prayer in Samoan.

When I practiced the next morning, I quickly found I was not only able to say the baptism prayer, but also recite it from memory. The day of the baptism came, and I was able to say the baptism prayer in Samoan nearly perfectly. I felt the Spirit work through me. I know the Lord can work miracles for us if we have the faith and allow Him to work through us. **NE**

ILLUSTRATIONS BY GREGG THORKEISON, PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF LISA NISSEN

# FAITH FOR MY FATHER

BY TYNDALL TAYLOR

A few years ago our family had a faith-building experience. My dad, who is in the military, got called on deployment to Iraq for six months. He would leave in October and miss Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, Valentine's Day, four kids' birthdays (including my sister Danielle, who was going to wait until Dad got home to be baptized), and his anniversary. We were very sad. But we knew he had to go, and we said goodbye.

It was almost time for him to come home when he called us from Iraq and told us that he might have to stay for another six months to a year. We were very discouraged. He had already missed so much, and we didn't want him to miss any more!

That night Mom came to us with a plan that we should fast and pray for Dad. We decided it was a good idea. The next day we woke up and

got ready for school. It was the day we had chosen to fast. All through the day people were offering us food and asking if we were OK. We declined the offers because we knew that if we followed through with the fast, the Lord would bless us and comfort us with an understanding and acceptance of His will.

That afternoon, before we had broken our fast, our dad called and said that he had just received news that he would be coming home soon. We were so happy! We thanked Heavenly Father for blessing us in this way. Now when something is wrong, we remember to combine prayer with fasting. I will always remember this experience, and I will turn to Heavenly Father to help me. **NE**

For more on the purposes of fasting, read *True to the Faith* (2004), pp. 66–69.

**INSTANT MESSAGES** features personal experiences, insights into favorite hymns and scriptures, and other uplifting thoughts. If you have a personal experience that has strengthened your testimony and you'd like us to consider it for Instant Messages, please e-mail it to

[newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org)

or send it to:

New Era, Instant Messages  
50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420  
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

Please limit submissions to 400 words or less. They may be edited for length and clarity.

