

WHAT'S MORE IMPORTANT

BY CARLA CARROLL

I have always been ambitious about education and leap at every opportunity. One year in high school, I took courses at the local community college through a program funded by my school. I really like computer science, and I was excited to take a computer programming class so I could learn more.

When I got my schedule from the college, I realized that my programming class was at the same time as my Young Women activity every

week. I tried to ignore it at first and tell myself that education was encouraged by the Church and that I was doing the right thing. As the time for classes to start drew nearer, I felt more and more uncomfortable about taking the class. When the time came that I had to tell my Young Women leader that I wouldn't be making it to any of the

activities, she sounded devastated. She told me that I would be sorely missed, and she would do anything to help me.

After talking to her, I felt bad that I thought the class was more important. When I got home, I went to my room and looked at the goal board



I had made for Personal Progress. I had written on it, "If you want something, you've got to *prove* it." I read my scriptures with that in mind and came across Mosiah 2:21. I realized I had to prove that I was going to serve God and not myself by letting my desires get in the way. I cancelled the class the next day. I had a wonderful year of Young Women activities, and I was able to set a higher priority for the Church in my life. I know it was the right thing to drop that class, and I am really glad that I did. **NE**

THE BEST WAY TO LEARN

BY MALLORY JESPERSON

I felt so behind in everything. I had been having trouble with my algebra class. I wasn't turning in my homework, and I was doing poorly on tests. I was not used to failing at anything, so I didn't understand why I just couldn't get the hang of math. My discouragement was affecting my attitude in my other classes as well. I was starting to become really lazy, which was a total change in me. Just the year before, I was attentive in all my classes, and I asked for help if I didn't understand.

I finally decided I needed to do something about it, so I did



TRUE FRIENDS

BY DUMDI BARIBE

Being the only Church member in my school is hard. Although I have lots of friends, I sometimes feel alone because my friends don't have the same beliefs. I try so hard every day to avoid bad language, gossiping, and getting laughed at.

But I know one place I will always be accepted and loved is at church and Young Women. I have

the greatest friends there and I always look forward to seeing them. I love to go to Mutual and to church. I appreciate both my friends at school and at church, but I love to be with my friends from church the most because they say and do the right things.

I am so grateful to have the gospel in my life and to have such great friends in Young Women and Young Men. **NE**

something I had never done before: I sat down without any distractions and said a heartfelt prayer to my Heavenly Father. I asked Him to help me understand the work and to help me feel the Spirit as well. I then went into my brother's old room, put on some Church music, and started to do my homework.

The easier problems went quickly, but when they got harder and harder, I was still able to answer them. I felt as if I were on a cloud. I was so relieved and overjoyed. I had never said a prayer for something and received the answer so quickly. From

then on I started doing better in all of my classes.

When fast and testimony meeting came on Sunday, I felt my heart try to leap out of my chest, and my hands became clammy. I finally got the courage to share my testimony. For the first time, I said the Church was true and really meant it in my heart. I still have a lot to learn about the Church—and about math—but I will gladly take anything that comes my way. Although it took a lot of time and effort, that one class taught me a lot about prayer and helped strengthen my testimony. **NE**

THE BEST SCHOOL ASSIGNMENT

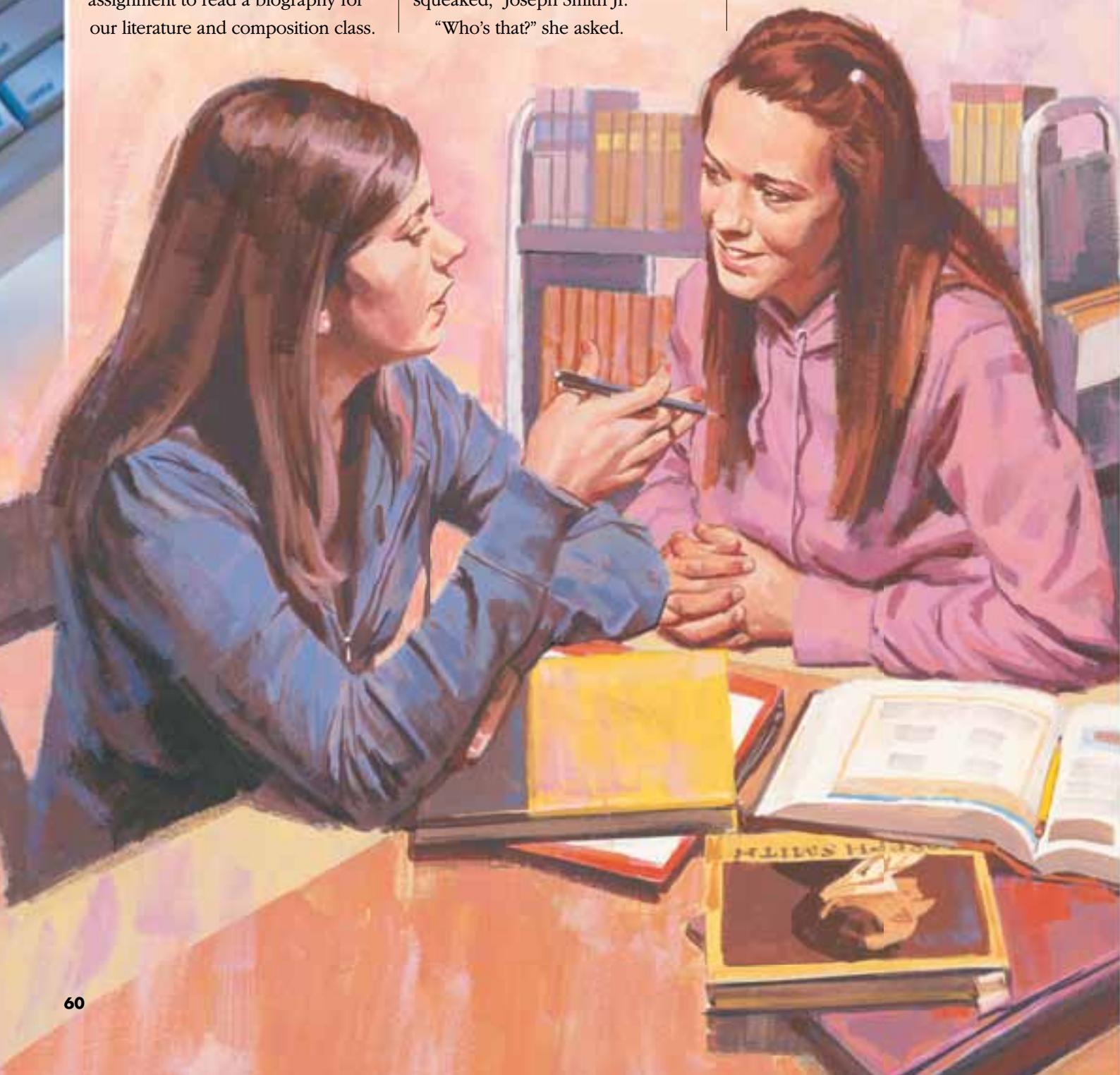
BY SIERRA HOFFMAN

Who are you doing your biography on?" my best friend, Jasmine,* asked. We were in the library working on an assignment to read a biography for our literature and composition class.

My head started whirling. Jasmine wasn't a member of the Church. What would she think? Mustering up my courage, I opened my mouth and squeaked, "Joseph Smith Jr."

"Who's that?" she asked.

The butterflies in my stomach fluttered about as I spoke. "A prophet of God who lived in these latter days." "A prophet?"



"Yeah, like Abraham and Moses," I explained. She only shrugged.

Not knowing how to continue, I simply returned to reading the biography I had chosen. How do you describe someone who is that incredible? With a troubled heart, I said a sincere, silent prayer that the Holy Ghost would help me know what to say, but the bell rang. It was too late. Disappointed with myself, I left for home.

The next day, Jasmine and I were working in the library again. We both sat down and began reading our books. Then I stopped myself. I was sitting here with a perfect missionary opportunity before me but was unsure how to approach the situation. But my problem was solved when Jasmine asked, "Hey Sierra, where do you think we go after we die?"

With truth in my mind and warmth in my heart, I explained to her why we were here, where we are going, and the importance of getting there.

As the days went on and we had that precious time together in the library, we had wonderful conversations. I told her about the Restoration of the gospel and Joseph Smith. Eventually I bore my testimony of the Prophet. I didn't realize it at the time, but my testimony was growing as well. I realized that Joseph Smith really was a prophet of God and that God speaks today. I had had my doubts, but the day I finished the book, I finally could say that I knew that Joseph Smith saw Heavenly Father and Jesus in the Sacred Grove, and he really did translate the Book of Mormon. Somehow, I just knew

it. No visions, no voices, no angels, just the calm reassurance that Joseph Smith was a prophet.

As I walked back to class that day with the book under my arm, I found myself humming the hymn "Praise to the Man" (*Hymns*, no. 27). My arm tingled just knowing I was carrying a book about such a marvelous man.

I don't know that Jasmine believed what I told her, but perhaps I planted a seed that will sprout someday. One thing I do know for certain, though, is that reading a biography on Joseph Smith was definitely one of the most meaningful school assignments I have ever completed. **NE**

* Name has been changed.

MY DAILY SCRIPTURE GOAL

BY TRISHA MALLORY

At the beginning of each year, I make at least one resolution. Last year, I resolved to read the Book of Mormon every day. But I didn't want to just read it like I would any other book. I committed to really study and ponder the things I would read.

The night that I resolved to do this, I said a prayer and asked Heavenly Father to help me stick to my goal. Then I started reading. As I read, the Spirit filled my room, and I knew this was going to be one resolution that I would keep.

There were many nights that I couldn't put my book down to go to sleep because I was so involved with what I was reading. As I read about the prophets, they came alive to me. I felt like I was getting to know them each individually. They were becoming a part of my life like never before.

Whenever I experienced a trial or hardship, I would think of the trials that Nephi, Abinadi, or Alma went through. For the most part, my

trials seemed small in comparison. But the lessons I learned from my trials were similar. I learned faith, patience, humility, and forgiveness. Most important of all, I learned how important and how real the Atonement of Jesus Christ is.

I am grateful that my testimony of the Book of Mormon has been strengthened, and that my love for the prophets and for my Savior has deepened. **NE**

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