



What's So Important in That Bag?

When a young man asked me what I needed in my bag, I didn't realize how much he needed what was in it, too.

By Marnie Lovstedt

It was two days before Christmas, and the airport was full of people. After standing in line to check my luggage and pick up my boarding pass, I was cranky. When I arrived at the gate to wait to board the plane, I couldn't find a place to sit, so I ended up lying along the back wall, using my carry-on bag as a pillow.

The airline I was flying on had open seating, and when it finally came time to board, I scanned the rows of seats ahead of me on the plane in search of an available window seat. The flight was full, but I managed to find a window seat near the back of the plane with only one other person in the row—a young man about my age in the aisle seat.

I climbed over the young man to get to my seat, making no attempt to talk to him because of my bad mood. As I struggled to shove my big carry-on bag under the seat



OPPORTUNITIES WILL COME

"We must demonstrate our faith and watch for opportunities to introduce the gospel of Jesus Christ to our Heavenly Father's children, and surely those opportunities will come. . . . They will flow as a natural result of our love for our brothers and sisters. Just be positive, and those whom you speak with will feel your love. They will never forget that feeling."

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Put Your Trust in the Lord," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 44.

in front of me, my neighbor offered to put it in the overhead storage bin for me. I declined, but I at least mustered enough charity to thank him for his offer.

"What's so important in that bag that you need it with you?" he asked. As I thought about it, I honestly didn't know.

"Nothing really, I guess," I said.

I hadn't thought about what was in my bag. I just knew that I liked to have my stuff with me and not in some overhead bin. This friendly neighbor continued to ask questions, and soon we were talking about where we were going for Christmas and what our plans were. By this time, a man was trying to climb into the middle seat between my new friend and me. But before he climbed over, the young man from the aisle seat slid into the seat next to me.

We kept talking, and by the time the plane took off I found out his name is P.K. He was flying to Houston to see his dad, whom he hadn't seen for years. Then we talked about Christmas traditions. The longer we talked, the more I realized we come from strikingly different backgrounds.

I started thinking about how the Church had influenced my life. Almost as if P.K. could read my thoughts, he asked me how I felt about religion and God. Once he found out I was a Latter-day Saint, he wanted to know what we believed, if I really believed the gospel's teachings, and how I could believe something so intangible.

I quickly prayed in my heart to say the right things to P.K., and I found myself answering his questions and telling him that I really did know the Church is true.

We continued talking until we landed in Texas. Then he said, "I've been searching for all kinds of things in my life to make me happy, and even when I've found temporary satisfaction or peace, I've never been as happy and confident as you seem.

"If what you say is true, then maybe this Church of yours isn't so bad," he said. "You must have been pretty lucky to grow up knowing all this. What you've told me is what people spend their entire lives looking for."

At that moment I realized why I needed my bag with me. I'd brought a copy of the Book of Mormon to give away. I pulled it out of my bag and shared some of my favorite passages with P.K. I felt the Spirit confirm to me that what I was saying was true. The Book of Mormon really can bring P.K. the peace he is looking for because it teaches of Jesus Christ, who is the ultimate source of peace.

That Christmas I discovered how the gospel of Jesus Christ really does make us happy and how blessed I am, as a Latter-day Saint, to know that. After wishing P.K. a merry Christmas, I offered a silent prayer that he would come to know what I know: that the gospel is true and can bring us peace. **NE**

Marnie Lovstedt lives in Texas, USA.