

Smiling, Talking, & Keeping Covenants

By Carolyn Call

I first saw Hannah* at a Mutual activity. No one really talked with her. She just sat by herself looking miserable. I had already made several good friends in the ward, so at first I didn't see any reason to talk with her. I thought it would be a burden to leave my friends and be with someone who seemed so unhappy.

Then I thought, "I used to be left out. I've been there before." I remembered a time when I was watching everyone happily talking with each other but not with me. I felt bad thinking that Hannah might come away from Mutual feeling like that.

So I went up to her, smiled, and said hi.

She nodded in return.

I asked what her name was and what school she went to.

I got two one-word answers in a row.

As a naturally talkative person, I felt awkward. But I didn't want to just get up and leave her alone, so I sat next to her until it was time to split up for our different activities. I mustered another smile and said, "It was nice to meet you. Will you come again next week?" She nodded.

She came back to Mutual over the next several weeks. Her dark hair was never combed, and she always seemed to be wearing the same black clothing. I talked with her whenever she came, even though it was hard. But, from the bits and pieces that she spoke, I got to know her better and found out that she likes drawing and art. After a while, I started to see her as one of my friends.



I realized that by helping others and being a friend, I was keeping my covenants.



“By small and simple things are great things brought to pass.”

Alma 37:6.

I soon found myself hoping she would keep coming to activities and especially to church. But I still didn't know much about her circumstances or if she even wanted to come to church.

I went to her house a few times to drop off activity announcements. Later, I dropped off a card and a treat on her birthday. In spite of my efforts, she was never home and never answered the phone.

She only came to Mutual, so I kept on talking with her there and including her during the combined activities.

Then one Sunday it happened—she came to church! Although she only attended occasionally, I made

sure to sit by her during lessons on Sundays whenever she came.

Later on that year we both took the same art class. I had never taken high school art before, and I was the one who needed help. I would ask her about how to use the different tools and for advice on creating art.

“Hey, Hannah, what does this white pencil do?” I asked.

“It's a blending tool. It makes your pencil drawings look smoother. Cool, huh?”

“Wow! I didn't know that. Thanks!” She smiled.

At the end of the semester, we gave each other small sketches and drawings we had created in class.

When I graduated from high school about five months later, Hannah was wearing colorful clothes, looked happier, and had attended church several times. And she was actually smiling!

This experience confirmed to me that sometimes it's hard to make righteous choices, but it's those choices that make us stronger. I also learned to never underestimate the influence of small actions and decisions. Who knew that I would be the one needing Hannah's help in the end?

I didn't know it then, but as I look back on the experience, I also realize that being nice to Hannah and trying to be her friend was a part of keeping my covenants. Of course, at that first Mutual activity, I didn't go up to Hannah thinking, “OK, I'm going to keep my covenants by befriending her.” I just saw that she looked lonely, and I didn't want her to feel alone during Mutual. And that small act made a big difference in my life.

We don't need to perform giant miracles with immediate results in order to keep our covenants. We do it through the small choices we make every day. **NE**

Carolyn Call lives in Utah, USA.

* Name has been changed.



HELPING OTHERS

“When you love, watch over, and serve others in small and simple ways, you are actively participating in the work of salvation, God's work ‘to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man’ [Moses 1:39].”

Carole M. Stephens, “We Have Great Reason to Rejoice,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 116.