



# COURAGE

— around the —

# Campfire

MY FRIEND WAS GOING TO YOUNG WOMEN CAMP WITH ME.  
I WONDERED HOW SHE WOULD LIKE IT.



Name Withheld

It was finally here. My favorite time of the summer: Young Women camp. I was super excited because I was bringing my best friend, who was of another faith.

A few weeks earlier I had started bringing my friend to Mutual. She enjoyed the first activity and wanted to keep coming back. The other girls and I talked a lot about Young Women camp, so when it was almost time for camp, she asked if she could come. I said yes, of course, but the problem was convincing her parents. They weren't keen on the Mormon religion and had denied her going with me to church before.

I went over to their house to bring the papers for camp and talked to her parents about letting her come, but I wasn't sure they would let her go. That night I prayed earnestly to Heavenly Father that her parents' hearts would be softened. I called back the next day and they had agreed to let her go!

I was glad my friend was coming to camp but nervous at the same time. I was scared that she would feel out of place when we played gospel-oriented games or sang hymns around the campfire. I was also scared because I felt like my friend didn't really care for religion. I spent a lot of time praying that things would all go well at camp.

It turned out that I hadn't needed to worry. All of us, including my friend, had fun playing games, hiking, and laughing. It was the night hike and testimony meeting, however, that were my favorite parts of camp.

It was stake camp, and every ward had their own campsite. For the night hike, the girls were separated into several groups and then each group took turns going from one campsite to another, where they had different speakers talk on women who had "lived as they believed" (that year's camp theme). As we sat around the campfires and listened to the different speakers talk about courageous women, we felt the Spirit so strongly.

I glanced from time to time at my friend but couldn't read her expression and couldn't tell if she was paying attention to anything the speakers said. As we neared the

end of the night hike however, my friend turned to me and the first words out of her mouth touched me deeply.

"I'm going to camp every year."

I smiled and silently thanked Heavenly Father that my friend had been able to feel the Spirit. She had enjoyed the games and having fun, but she had felt the Spirit, and it was what made her want to come back again.

The next night was our last night at camp and our testimony meeting. My friend was confused as to what a testimony was so I quickly explained as best I could. She didn't look too excited. After the opening prayer, the bishop and several young women bore beautiful testimonies and the Spirit was very strong.

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**"BUT BEHOLD, THAT WHICH IS OF GOD INVITETH AND ENTICETH TO DO GOOD CONTINUALLY; WHEREFORE EVERY THING WHICH INVITETH AND ENTICETH TO DO GOOD, AND TO LOVE GOD, AND TO SERVE HIM, IS INSPIRED OF GOD."** MORONI 7:13

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My friend, who never liked to talk in public, stood up to share her feelings. She explained that even though she was of a different religion, watching us girls read our scriptures and pray had touched her. She said that after being here at camp, she wanted to start being a better person and was going to try to be nicer to her family. She also said that coming to camp was probably the best decision she had ever made. She sat down and I glanced over at her and saw there were tears in her eyes. I had never seen her become emotional or cry, but the Spirit of the Lord touched her so deeply it moved her to tears.

This experience at camp taught me a lot about how the Spirit touches the lives of others and about the power of testimonies. The Spirit can speak to everyone regardless of who they are. I now better understand the importance of having a strong testimony and sharing it with others. The gospel can touch the lives of those you would never expect. **NE**