

THE

New Era

MARCH

2006

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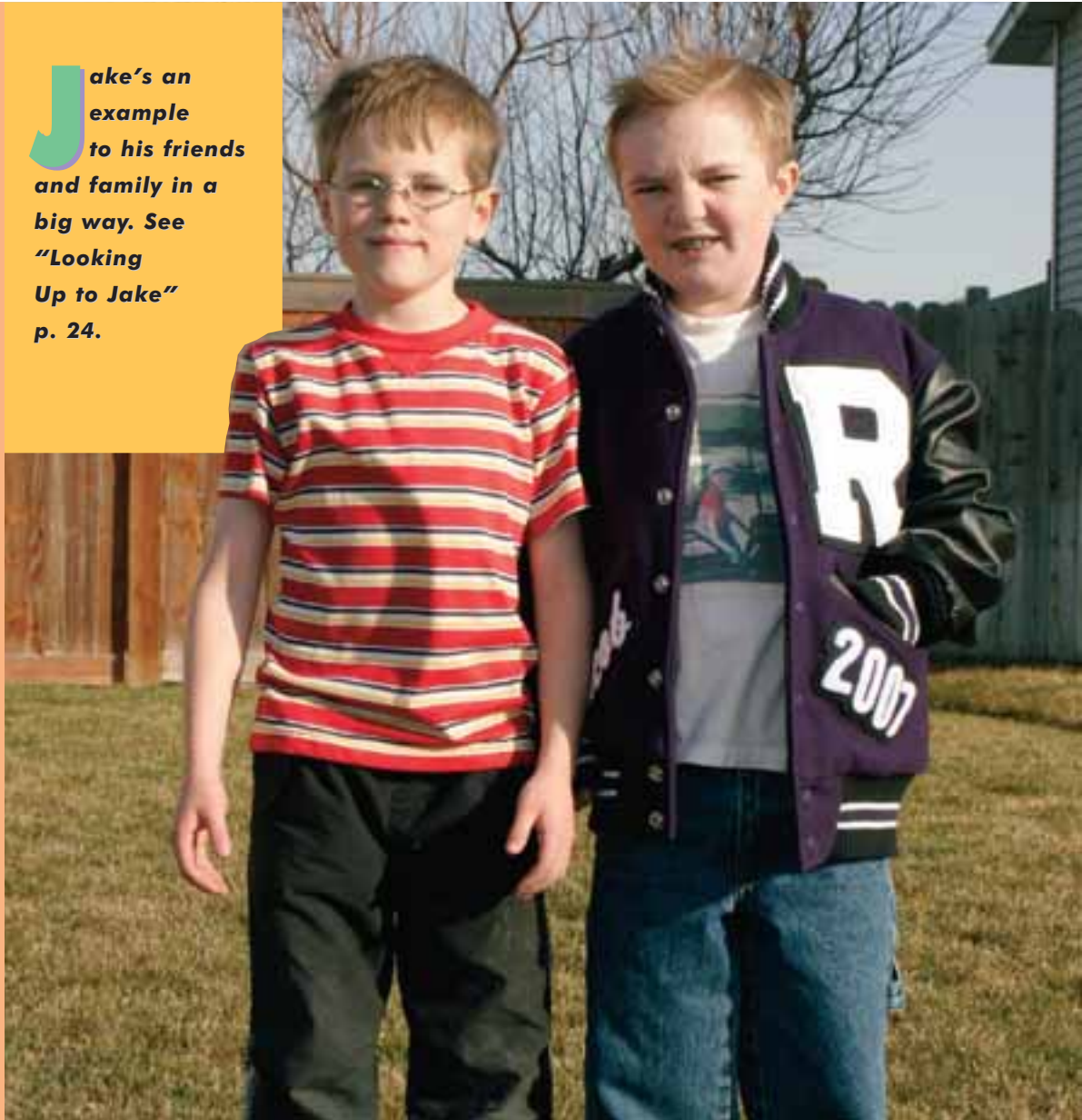
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Matt Reier (front) and
(back)

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The HANDIWORK

BY ELDER M. RUSSELL BALLARD
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



The Easter season is a good time for people everywhere to appreciate the wonders of nature and to give thanks to the Creator of this beautiful world.

“Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee, How great thou art! How great thou art!”

This is a beautiful time of year with spring beginning to burst forth in many parts of the world, bringing all of its colors, scents, and cheerful sounds. The miracle of the changing seasons, with the reawakening and rebirth in nature, inspires feelings of love and reverence within us for God’s marvelous, creative handiwork.

The Easter season is a good time for people everywhere to appreciate the wonders of nature and give thanks to the Creator of this beautiful world. Think of what would happen if all of us took time to look carefully at the wonders of nature that surround us and devoted ourselves to learning more about this world that God created for us!

My family and I had a simple but impressive experience with one of God’s creations. I gave my wife, Barbara, a dozen roses as a valentine. They were a delicate shade of peach in color and had a rich scent. Barbara put them in a vase and placed them on the table in our family room. As the days passed, the family watched the blossoms

unfold from buds to full flower.

As I watched this miracle, I became curious about roses. I was amazed to learn from a botanist friend that there are thousands of different varieties of roses. Inside each rose is a giant storehouse of genetic coding that develops a seed or a slip into roots, stems, thorns, leaves, colors, and blooms.

Each rose is a compact chemical-processing factory. Using sunlight, the green leaves take carbon dioxide from the air and replace it with oxygen, which we breathe. When other chemicals within the plant react with sunlight, it produces starch that becomes food. As you know, this process is called photosynthesis, and without it the earth’s atmosphere would soon be devoid of oxygen, and most living things would disappear from the earth.

This experience led me to consider the myriad forms of plant and animal life that thrive in astounding balance upon the earth. My esteem for our little roses took on an element of wonder and reverence. I pondered the power of the Creative Genius who lovingly provided such marvels for His children. I thought then how important it is for every human soul to see and appreciate

OF GOD

the glory and grandeur of God in everything about us. Into my mind came the words and message of a beautiful hymn:

*When thru the woods and forest glades I wander,
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees,
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur
And hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze,
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee,
How great thou art! How great thou art!
("How Great Thou Art," Hymns, no. 86)*

I felt a deep reverence for both the creation and the Creator. Reverence may be defined as a profound respect mingled with love and awe. Other words that add to our understanding of reverence include *gratitude*, *honor*, *veneration*, and *admiration*. The root word *revere* also implies an element of fear. Thus, reverence might be understood to mean an attitude of profound respect and love with a desire to honor and show gratitude, with a fear of breaking faith or offending.

All Things Bear Record

In the book of Moses we read, "And behold, all things have their likeness, and all things are created and made to bear record of me, both things which are temporal, and things which are spiritual; things which are in the heavens above, and things which are on the earth, and things which are in the earth, and things which are under the earth, both above and beneath: all things bear record of



All things denote there is a God; yea, even the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it . . . do witness that there is a Supreme Creator” (Alma 30:44).

me” (Moses 6:63). Truly, the heavens and the earth and all things in them evidence the handiwork of God, their Creator. In the Book of Mormon we learn of Korihor, an anti-Christ who was brought to the Prophet Alma. He asked for a sign of God’s existence before he would believe. “But Alma said unto him: Thou hast had signs enough; will ye tempt your God? Will ye say, Show unto me a sign, when ye have the testimony of all these thy brethren, and also all the holy prophets? The scriptures are laid before thee, yea, and all things denote there is a God; yea, even the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it, yea, and its motion, yea, and also all the planets which move in their regular form do witness that there is a Supreme Creator” (Alma 30:44). These eternal evidences continue to testify to us today.

Astronauts viewing the earth from space have stated how incredibly beautiful it is and how alive it appears. United States Senator Jake Garn wrote of his experience in space: “It is impossible for me to describe the beauty of the earth. It is a breathtaking, awe-inspiring, spiritual experience to view the earth from space while traveling at twenty-five times the speed of sound. I could also look into the blackness of the vacuum of space and see billions of stars and galaxies

millions of light-years away. The universe is so vast as to be impossible to comprehend. But I did comprehend the hand of God in all things. I felt His presence throughout my seven days in space. I know that God created this earth and the universe. I know that we are His children wherever we live on the earth, without regard to our nationality or the color of our skin. Most important, I know that God lives and is the Creator of us all” (letter to M. Russell Ballard, March 3, 1988).

Again, the words of the hymn came to mind:

*O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
Consider all the worlds thy hands have made,
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy pow’r thruout the universe displayed;
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee,
How great thou art! How great thou art!*
(Hymns, no. 86)

The Gift of Life

The psalmist wrote, “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

“What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

“For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour” (Psalm 8:3–5).

The Lord gave an answer to the psalmist’s question; it is recorded in the book of Moses: “For mine own purpose have I made

these things. . . .

“And by the word of my power, have I created them. . . .

“For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:31–32, 39).

When we look to see the evidence of Creation all around us, from a grain of sand to the majestic planets, we begin to realize that we are the greatest of all God’s creations; we are created in His image. God created the earth in all its magnificent glory, not as an end in itself, but for us, His children. Indeed, we are His children, His offspring, and He is the Father of our spirits.

We sometimes feel great respect and reverence for creative genius as expressed in great art or music. How much more should we revere the power and majesty of our Divine Creator? We may stand in awe of man’s creations of beautiful buildings or bridges. But remember the Apostle Paul’s words to the Hebrews: “He who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.

“For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God” (Hebrews 3:3–4).

Those who feel no reverence for the creations and the divine attributes of God likely will have little appreciation for other sacred things. Such a lack of respect for God’s creations may diminish until a person becomes totally insensitive to the feelings of others. This, I am afraid, is the condition in some parts of the world.

When we consider people who are irreverent, we may think of those who lack manners, sensitivity, and courtesy, and who show little or no respect for the finer things or for sacred things. Perhaps some lack reverence for life and for their fellow men because they do not understand who they are and what they have the potential to become.

Our Great Potential

God expresses His love for us by providing the guidance we need to progress and reach our potential. Perhaps a simple story will illustrate this point. Recently, a young man purchased a used computer but could not get it to work properly. Soon he became discouraged. His temper grew short, and he threatened the inanimate object with painful destruction unless its performance





improved. A wise father intervened and took his son to a local vendor, where they obtained an instruction manual. After all, who would know more about a complex computer than the person or company that created it? Who would know most about its capacity and potential? Who would better know the safeguards required to avoid damaging or ruining this fine instrument? Soon the boy enjoyed the full potential of his computer by working within the guidelines given in the instruction book provided by its creator.

Likewise in our lives, He who knows most about us, our potential, and our eternal possibilities has given us divine counsel and commandments in His instruction manuals—the holy scriptures. When we understand and follow these instructions, our lives have purpose and meaning. We

learn that our Maker loves us and desires our happiness. In an incomparable manifestation of this divine love for us, He sent His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” (John 3:16–17).

Jesus was born into mortality. He led a perfect life and, in so doing, marked the path for us to follow. He taught His disciples: “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12).

Love One Another

His gospel is a gospel of love—love for God and love for one another. He directs us to follow His example. Our discipleship is measured by how well we comply.

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34–35).

Can you imagine what an impact following this instruction would have on society today?

Many people, I fear, never come to understand that the commandments of God are for our benefit and that as we sow, so shall we reap.

Our return to our Heavenly Father is through His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus told His disciples, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). He instructed us to keep His commandments if we love Him (see John 14:15). He taught further that “he that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (John 14:21).

In the Atonement and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, we can glimpse the reality of His divine mission to redeem

all who will come unto Him and will honor and reverence God, our Eternal Father.

We may begin to understand the depths of Christ's love for us when we consider that He was willing to atone and suffer the pain for our sins, "which suffering caused [Him], even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit" (D&C 19:18). Nevertheless, He gave glory to His Father and partook and finished His preparations unto the children of men (see D&C 19:19).

The crowning words of the inspired hymn continue:

*And when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
Sent him to die, I scarce can take it in,
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin,
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee,
How great thou art! How great thou art!*
(Hymns, no. 86)

Let us give special thanks to God for the Atonement and Resurrection of His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ. For in Him, by Him, and through Him, this temporary mortal condition can be made into a permanent, perfect existence, for which words cannot express our joy.

To truly reverence the Creator, we must appreciate His creations. We need to plan to take time to observe the marvels of nature. Today, we can easily become surrounded by brick buildings and asphalt surfaces that shelter us from real life around us. Plan to share with your family the miracle of buds



changing to fragrant blossoms. Take time to sit on a hillside and feel the tranquillity of the evening, when the sun casts its last golden glow over the horizon. Take time to smell the roses.

All the marvels of nature are glimpses of the Lord's divine power and expressions of His love. Yet the greatest of all miracles awaits us. It will occur when, by His power, we will come forth from death and the grave to a new world that will not pass away, where, if we are worthy, we will be with Him and our Father in Heaven forever and ever. **NE**

From an April 1988 general conference address.

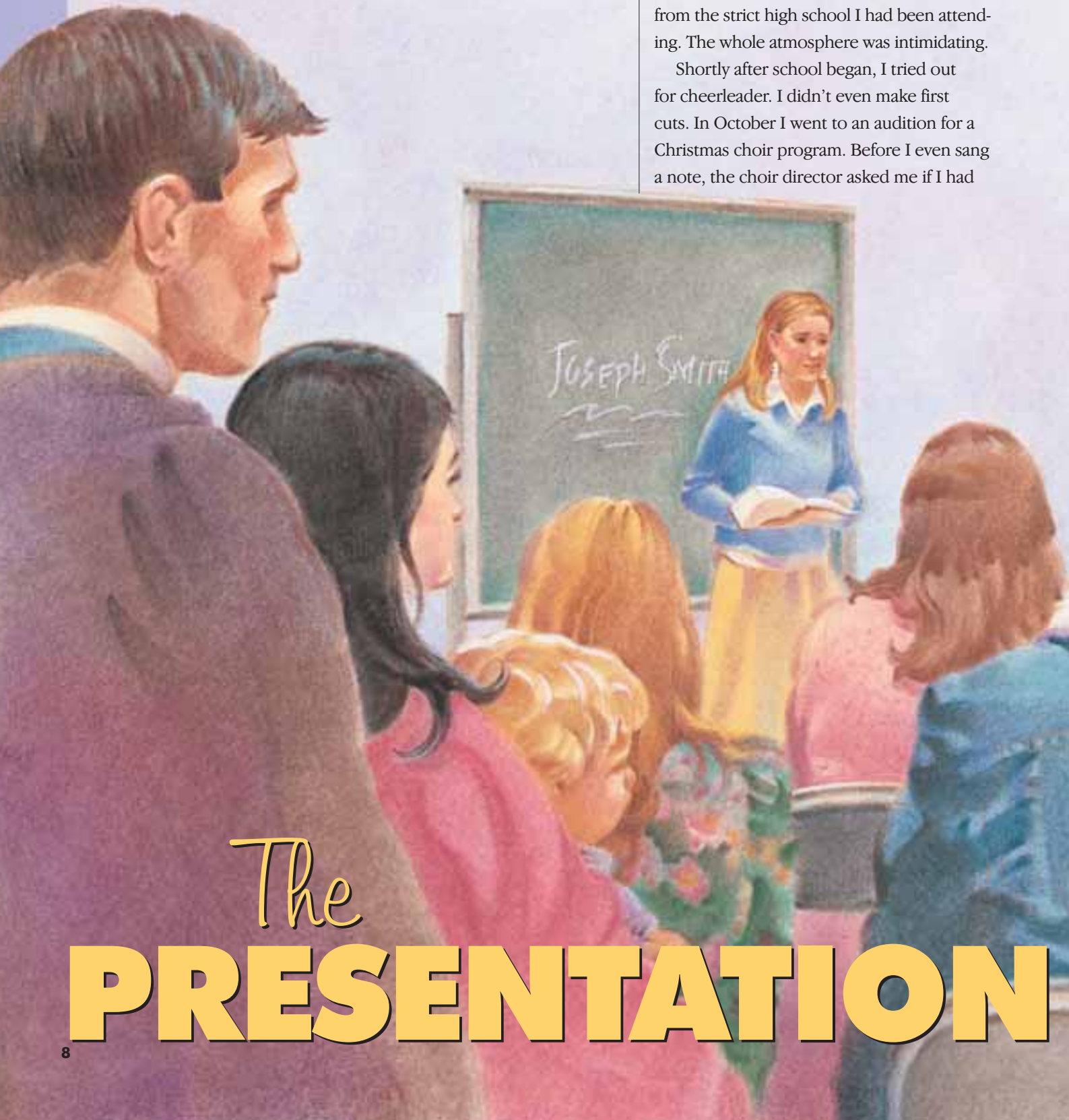
Let us give special thanks to God for the Atonement and Resurrection of His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ. For in Him, by Him, and through Him, this temporary mortal condition can be made into a permanent, perfect existence.

All eyes were on me as I stood in front of the group.

Just before my junior year in high school, my family moved 3,000 miles to the San Francisco area. I started the year knowing exactly one person—my freshman sister.

Redwood High School was very different from the strict high school I had been attending. The whole atmosphere was intimidating.

Shortly after school began, I tried out for cheerleader. I didn't even make first cuts. In October I went to an audition for a Christmas choir program. Before I even sang a note, the choir director asked me if I had



The PRESENTATION

ever been in a school choir. When my answer was no, I was ushered out the door and told thank you very much.

The one bright spot in my day was early-morning seminary, where I always felt welcome and accepted.

At school I worked hard and occasionally forced myself to contribute during classroom discussions. Eventually I made some friends and found a group to eat lunch with. I went to the ball games and school plays, volunteered during spirit week, and hung out at the dances. But I still never felt like I quite belonged.

I kept busy my senior year filling out college application forms, taking entrance exams, and applying for scholarships. Three weeks before graduation, Lee, the good-looking,

iron-pumping, brainy debate team member and senior class president, called out to

me after class and asked me to walk with him. I was stunned that he even knew my name.

As we walked he explained that he was the president of his church youth group. The group had been studying the religions of the world, and someone had expressed interest in learning about Latter-day Saints. Lee turned to face me and asked if I would deliver an hour-long presentation about the Church to his group.

Weakly I managed to reply, "You don't want me to speak; who you really want is our missionaries. I'll ask them for you."

His response startled me, "We don't want your missionaries. We want you. We know you, we've watched you, and we like who you are."

Stunned again, I told Lee I would be glad to speak to his group.

The next five days were a flurry of preparation. My seminary teacher, my parents, and the missionaries helped me prepare to explain the basic principles of the gospel and how



ILLUSTRATED BY DILEEN MARSH



All young women 12 to 18 years of age, their mothers, and Young Women leaders are invited.

LIVE BROADCAST
 8 P.M. EASTERN
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 6 P.M. MOUNTAIN
 5 P.M. PACIFIC

REBROADCAST
 10 P.M. EASTERN
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 8 P.M. MOUNTAIN
 7 P.M. PACIFIC

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SATURDAY, MARCH 27, 2004, IN THE CONFERENCE CENTER

GENERAL YOUNG WOMEN MEETING SATURDAY, MARCH 25

The general Young Women meeting is a great opportunity for the young women of the Church to receive encouragement and instruction from the First Presidency and Young Women general presidency. Young women ages 12 to 18 should attend with their mothers and Young Women leaders. Young women can prepare for the meeting through personal prayer and scripture study.

Before the meeting, Young Women leaders can help girls prepare by encouraging them to:

- memorize the words of the hymn, *I Know That My Redeemer Lives* (Hymns, no. 136);
- read “The Living Christ,” ponder the meaning of this declaration, and record their feelings about it. (A copy of “The Living Christ” can be found on the inside front cover of the Personal Progress booklet and on the second to last page of *For the Strength of Youth*.)

Young women can view the meeting at their stake centers, watch it on television, listen to it on the radio, or access it at www.lds.org/broadcast.

For those who receive KBYU or BYU TV, note the following times for the initial broadcast and later rebroadcast:

Live Broadcast	Rebroadcast
8 p.m. Eastern time	10 p.m. Eastern time
7 p.m. Central time	9 p.m. Central time
6 p.m. Mountain time	8 p.m. Mountain time
5 p.m. Pacific time	7 p.m. Pacific time

(If you live in an area that does not receive KBYU or BYU TV, contact your priesthood leaders for a viewing time and location. Information about international broadcast times is available at www.lds.org/broadcast.) **NE**

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints differs from other churches. Knowing that Lee and his friends were forceful debaters who could be merciless against opponents, I also fasted and prayed for divine guidance.

The day of the presentation arrived. With scriptures in hand and a prayer in my heart, I entered the meeting hall. The 35 people in the room—kids from school, a few adults, and the pastor—all turned to look at me as I walked to the front. After Lee greeted me warmly and introduced me, I took a deep breath and began by telling the Joseph Smith story. A calm feeling filled the room, and for the next 45 minutes

the words I spoke came smoothly and effortlessly. I ended by bearing my testimony of modern-day prophets, revelation, and the love Jesus Christ has for each of us.

Then, with great apprehension, I asked if there were any questions.

Hands shot up all over the room. Oh boy, here it comes, I thought to myself. But to my surprise, none of the questions were hostile or quarrelsome.

As I left the hall I knew that a power stronger than my own had directed the evening’s event.

Throughout high school I had always assumed that being popular meant dating cool guys, appearing in lots of yearbook pictures, or being prom queen.

Through this experience, I finally realized that there is a different kind of popularity—popularity based on respect. **NE**

I was frightened; yet as I began to speak, words came smoothly.



Matthew 6:9–13

The Lord teaches us the pattern for prayer in the New Testament.

The general pattern outlined in the Savior’s prayer is the same basic way you learn to pray in your family, in Primary, or from the missionaries.

Hallowed means blessed or sanctified and holy. Remember to be respectful in addressing Heavenly Father and to thank Him for blessings.

The Savior used *thee, thou, thy,* and *thine* instead of *you, your,* and *yours* when He prayed. We should do the same. To learn more about prayer language, see Elder Dallin H. Oaks, “The Special Language of Prayer,” *New Era*, Jan. 2006, 4.

Ask for what you need when you pray. Try recording what you pray for in your journal. Then record the answers to your prayers to help you better remember all the times the Lord has answered them. Sometimes answers to prayers come immediately, and sometimes they take a long time.

These scriptures will tell you more about the link between being forgiven and forgiving others.

- Matthew 6:14–15; 18:21–35
- Mosiah 26:30–31
- D&C 64:8–10

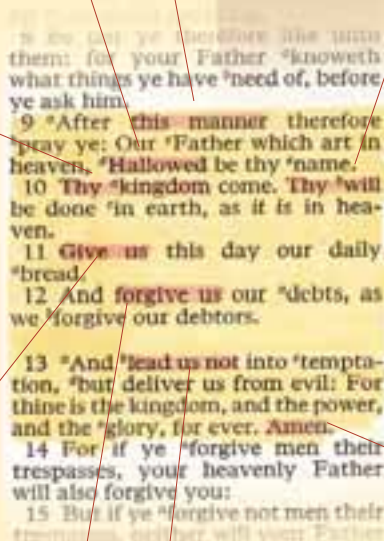
The Joseph Smith Translation of this verse asks the Lord to “suffer us not to be led into temptation.” The Lord never leads us into temptation, but He can deliver us from it if we ask Him.

“Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth’ (Luke 11:2). That was [the Savior’s] prayer in the extremity of offering the Atonement for all mankind and all the world



(see Matthew 26:42). The faithful servant prays that even the apparently smallest task will be done as God would have it done. It makes all the difference to work and to pray for His success more than for our own.”

—Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Watch Over and Strengthen,” *Ensign*, May 2000, 68.

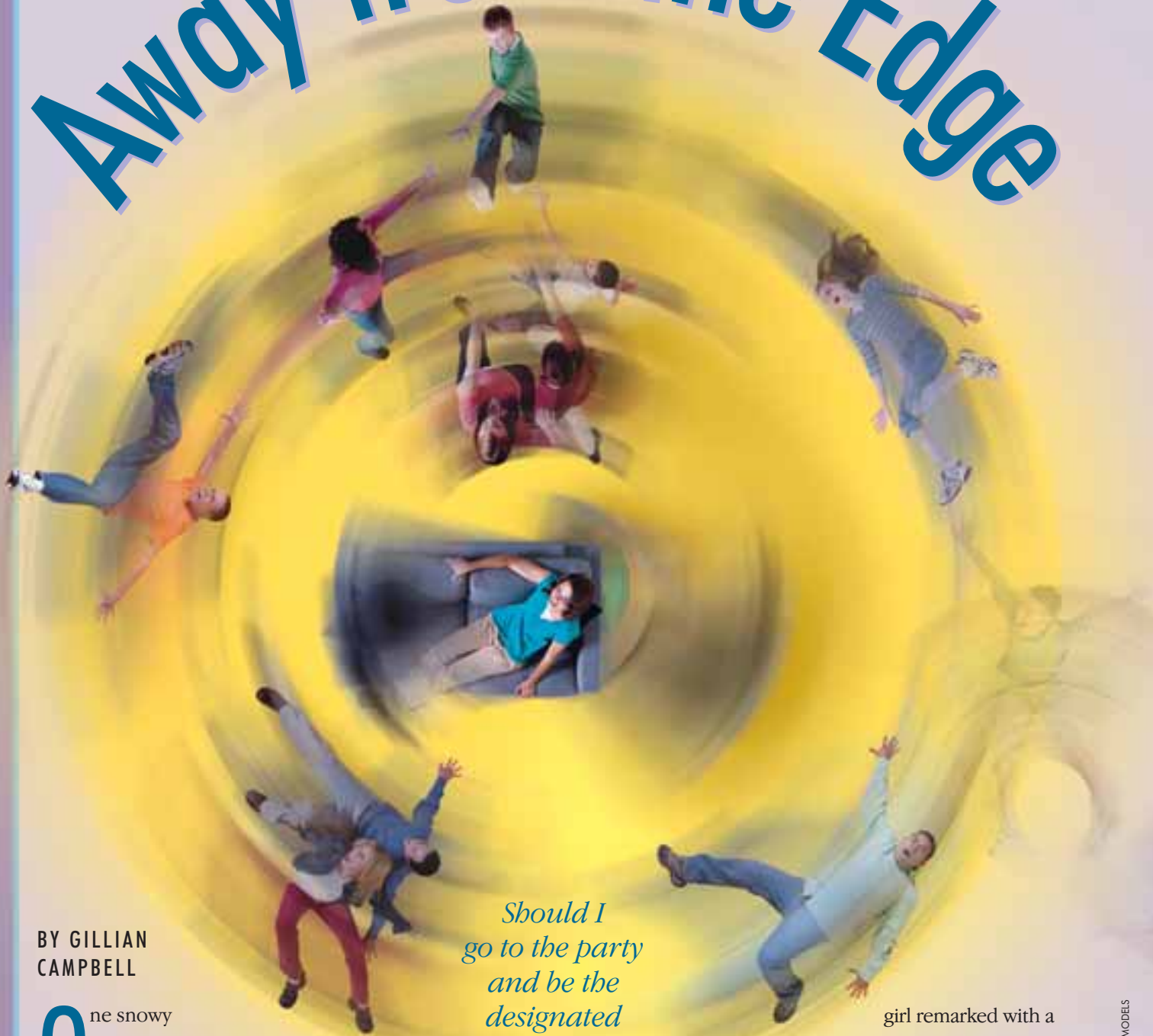


Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles says when we say amen we are saying, “That is my prayer too” (see “Sweet Power of Prayer,” *Ensign*, May 2003, 7). We should also close our prayers in the name of the Savior.

Elder L. Edward Brown of the Seventy says: “When we use these sacred words, ‘in the name of Jesus Christ,’ they are much more than a way to get out of a prayer or out of a testimony or out of a talk. We are on holy ground. . . . We are using a name most sublime, most holy, and most wonderful—the very name of the Son of God. . . . What power and reassurance and peace come when we really pray in His name” (“Pray unto the Father in My Name,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 79).

Editors’ note: This page is not meant to be a comprehensive explanation of the selected scripture verses, only a starting point for your own study.

Away from the Edge



BY GILLIAN
CAMPBELL

One snowy night in January when I was in high school, I was at a friend's birthday party. Giggling girls were sprawled all over the living room, chatting and eating cake. I sat in the middle of the group with my back against the couch.

"My sister moved out of the side house this week," one

*Should I
go to the party
and be the
designated
driver?*

girl remarked with a grin. "From now on it's going to be the perfect spot for the weekend! I think our class would become so much closer if we all partied together. Like Jeremy Roberts. He is so much fun to be around when he's drunk."

I stared at the girl, shocked to hear those words come

out of her mouth. To my great surprise, everyone else joined in, offering names of other people it would be fun to party with. I looked around in disbelief. An icy feeling crept into my heart. Already? My friends? Drinking? I had known that some in my group of friends drank, but all of a sudden everyone seemed to be in on it. I lowered my head, feeling isolated among my best friends.

“Of course I’ll be there,” said a friend between bites of cake. “But I think I’ll just be the designated driver. I don’t really want to drink.” She smiled at me. “Gillian, you can come too. We’ll keep each other company!”

I relaxed a little. That sounded okay. “I could go,” I thought. “I could make sure all of my friends got home safely. I could just be there and not drink or do anything wrong. I

could still be included.”

“Sounds great!” I heard myself say.

“Sure! I’ll be there. We’ll get everyone home safe and sound.”

Everyone nodded enthusiastically,



SAFER IN THE CENTER

“Part of the spirit of the Word of Wisdom is moderation in all things, except those things specifically forbidden by the Lord. . . .

“When I was a young man, my friends and I went to an amusement park, where we rode the flying saucer. It was shaped something like an upside-down plate that went round and round. Most of us tried to get to the middle so we wouldn’t be thrown off by the centrifugal force as the saucer picked up speed. Sometimes those on the edge would grab a friend who was closer to the middle, but that would pull them both completely off the saucer. I soon recognized that the centrifugal force was far less powerful in the middle. I was quite safe in the center even though the saucer was still spinning. But it was risky when someone on the fringe latched on to me. I learned that safety comes from staying close to the center.”

—President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “The Virtues of Righteous Daughters of God,” *Ensign*, May 2003, 109–10.

and the conversation shifted to other subjects.

The next evening I attended a stake youth fireside. The stake president spoke. “My young brothers and sisters,” he began, “you are at a stage in your life where you are under tremendous pressure to succumb to temptation. My best advice to you is this: Don’t even come close to the edge. Don’t go to the party and say you won’t drink. Don’t go to the party as a designated driver. Don’t even put yourself in that situation. Once you walk in the door, you are vulnerable. I have never counseled with someone who suddenly became an alcoholic or suddenly had a huge morality problem. It comes bit by bit, step by step. Don’t take the first step. I guarantee that you will never have a problem with the Word of Wisdom if you never put yourself in a situation where you might be tempted to take your first drink.”

I sat stunned by his words. He had spoken directly to my problem. Then I knew that it was not enough to go to a party and say I wouldn’t drink. That evening I decided I would never set foot in a party where alcohol was being served.

Through this experience, I learned that the Lord understands our problems and that one of the ways He guides us is through our leaders. Perhaps if I had gone to parties without drinking alcohol, I would have made it through high school okay. But I know the Lord blesses us when we keep His commandments, and I was able to follow His guidelines by staying away from the edge. **NE**

Q & A

“Is there anything wrong with getting a tattoo?”

NEW ERA

Thousands of years ago, the Lord told His people, “Ye shall not . . . print any marks upon you” (Leviticus 19:28). Today, President Gordon B. Hinckley has given the same message: “You are a child of God. Your body is His creation. Would you disfigure that creation with portrayals of people, animals, and words painted into your skin?”

“I promise you that the time will come, if you have tattoos, that you will regret your actions. They cannot be washed off. They are permanent. Only by an expensive and painful process can they be removed. If you are tattooed, then probably for the remainder of your life you will carry it with you. I believe the time will come when it will be an embarrassment to you. Avoid it” (“A Prophet’s Counsel and Prayer for Youth,” *New Era*, Jan. 2001, 11).

Embarrassment. Regret. Permanent. Painful. Getting a tattoo doesn’t sound like much fun. Besides being expensive and painful, a tattoo can affect getting a job or even your eligibility to serve a mission (see “Tattoos and Your Mission” on p. 44 of this issue).

Some teens who responded to this

■ **Your body is a gift from God; it is the temple for your spirit. Tattoos are like graffiti on the temple.**

■ **Getting a tattoo has spiritual and financial costs.**

■ **Not getting a tattoo shows you follow the prophet’s counsel.**

■ **People who get tattoos regret it sooner or later and often go through the expensive and painful process of trying to have them removed.**

question have parents or grandparents who have lived with tattoos for many years and wish they hadn’t gotten them. Even if a tattoo seems cool or seems like something that would help you fit in with certain people, sooner or later you will regret having it.

To learn what’s wrong with tattoos, read Alma 3. It doesn’t say “tattoos,” but it talks about the Amlicites, who “marked themselves” to show that they had left the faithful Nephites and joined the Lamanites. That mark was a sign of their “rebellion against God.” That’s the problem with getting a tattoo. Those who get tattoos disobey the prophet and, instead, follow the fads of the world.

Your body is a sacred creation (see 1 Corinthians 3:16–17). Keeping it clean invites the Spirit to be with you and shows reverence for Heavenly Father and the gift He has given you. Those are some of the reasons the prophet has asked us not to get a tattoo.

If you are still considering getting one, pray for guidance and talk to your parents about it. One thing is for sure: you will never regret following the prophet’s counsel. **NE**



READERS



I would say getting a tattoo is a bad thing. You may think that it's just a little ink on your skin, but that ink won't

go away like a marker does in a few days. If you get a tattoo, you might not be able to go on a mission. My grandfather never stops telling my brother and me that if he could go back in time, he would have never gotten his tattoos.

Gerald M., 14, Arizona



When people get tattoos, they are not showing respect to God because they are not showing gratitude for the wonderful

bodies He has given them. My mother has a tattoo on one of her feet. It is a little butterfly. But now as she attends the temple, it doesn't look as cute as she thought it did many years ago. She has tried to cover it with makeup, but that doesn't really work. Living the commandments is a choice, and I choose

to show my love to Heavenly Father by never getting a tattoo.

Rachel H., 17, California



Our bodies are created in God's image. God's body has no impurities in it, nor does the temple. Why would you want to damage some-

thing that is so beautiful? Keeping our bodies free of impurities shows respect to ourselves and the Lord.

Cassandra K., 16, Alberta, Canada

I believe that getting a tattoo is wrong. A tattoo shows disrespect to yourself, your body, and Heavenly Father. Getting a tattoo shows that your body isn't good enough without a picture or words on it. Your body is a sacred temple, and you should take care of it as such. A tattoo can also be very dangerous to your health; you can get diseases from a tattoo if the needle they use is dirty. If you have a tattoo, you wear a constant reminder of a mistake you have made.

Myles M., 16, New Mexico



Our bodies are temples. Getting a tattoo would be like painting on a temple. We want our bodies to be like a temple so that we can always have the Holy Ghost to be with us.

Right now you may want a tattoo, but what if you start feeling embarrassed about it later? It takes so much money to try to get a tattoo removed, so what's the use in getting one?

Becky C., 20, California

Our body is a temple. We wouldn't want our temples to be defaced with graffiti. It should be the same with our bodies. We need to keep them as spotless as the temples of our Lord.

Tracey G., 16, South Australia, Australia



People who get tattoos go through a lot of pain because the tattoo artist is jabbing needles into their skin. They risk getting diseases, and they can be allergic to the dyes.

Having a tattoo can interfere with relationships and getting a job. Some people will avoid you if you have a tattoo, associating you with drug use or gangs. The prophet says not to get tattoos. He says not to harm your body. Our bodies are temples, and they are beautiful as they are.

Sasha S., 16, Washington



I cannot understand why any young man—or young woman, for that matter—would wish to undergo the painful process of disfiguring the skin with various multicolored representations of people, animals, and various symbols. With tattoos, the process is permanent, unless there is another painful and costly undertaking to remove it. . . . A tattoo is graffiti on the temple of the body.”

—President Gordon B. Hinckley, “Great Shall Be the Peace of Thy Children,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 52.



The Lord has given me a temple to live with on earth. Temples are the work of the Master Craftsman: beautiful, pure, and undefiled.

There's something wrong in getting a tattoo. “If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Corinthians 3:17).

Emmanuel S., 21, Ghana



We believe our bodies are temples given to us by God. We should respect our bodies in every way. I think getting a tattoo would be very disrespectful to your body.

A tattoo might send the message that you do not appreciate your body. This may attract a wrong crowd of people to you who do not respect themselves. So, to keep your body clean like a temple, you should keep away from getting tattoos.

Cassie S., 14, Indiana

Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as pronouncements of Church doctrine.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Send your answer, along with your full name, birth date, ward and stake, and a photograph (including your parent's written permission to print the photo if you are under 18) to:

New Era, Q&A

50 E. North Temple St. Rm. 2420

Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

Or e-mail: newera@ldschurch.org

Please respond by April 15, 2006.

QUESTION

“At school, a lot of people curse and talk about sex. I want to get away from this bad language, but it's everywhere at school. What can I do?”

YOU'RE NEVER BIG ENOUGH



AND YOU'RE NEVER STRONG ENOUGH TO TOY WITH SIN.
(See D&C 88:86.)

YOUR RIGHT TO REVELATION



PHOTOGRAPH BY MERRETT T. SMITH

BY PRESIDENT HAROLD B. LEE (1899–1973)
Eleventh President of the Church

“We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.”

—Articles of Faith 1:9

I started to climb through the fence, and I heard a voice calling me by name and saying, “Don’t go over there!”

I have a believing heart that started with a simple testimony that came when I was a child. I was with my father out on a farm away from our home, trying to find things to do until my father was ready to go home. Over the fence from our place were some old sheds that would attract a curious boy, and I was adventurous. I started to climb through the fence, and I heard a voice calling me by name and saying, “Don’t go over there!” I turned to look at my father to see if he were talking to me, but he was far away at the other end of the field. There was no person in sight. I realized then, as a child, that there were persons beyond my sight, for I had definitely heard a voice.

Through the scriptures this phrase is often repeated: “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Matthew 11:15). All of us are not so blessed to hear all that we ought to hear.

Words to Our Ears

There was an occasion, just before the Crucifixion when the Master was in the temple, and the Greeks came among the people, apparently anxious to see Him because He had gained such notoriety. There, in that place sacred to Him, the Master knelt down and prayed, asking the Lord to let this hour pass, and then He said, “Father, glorify thy name.” The answer came, “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again” (John 12:28). There were some people who heard it and said that it had thundered; there were a few who said an angel of the Lord had spoken to Him. You see, there were some who had ears to hear, but they didn’t hear.

You will recall the occasion when the Apostle Paul was converted; he was on his way to Damascus with writs of authority to further persecute the Saints at that place.



When I was preparing a radio talk on the life of the Savior and read again the story of His life, Crucifixion, and Resurrection, there came to me a testimony, a reality of Him. It was more than just what was on the written page, for in truth I found myself viewing the scenes with as much certainty as though I had been there in person. I know that these things come by the revelations of the living God.

Remember how he was stricken down by a bright light that overshadowed him and blinded him, and a voice spoke out of heaven and said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:4). And Paul, in telling about the incident, says, "And they that were with me, saw indeed the light . . . but they heard not the voice of him that spoke to me" (Acts 22:9). These also had ears to hear, but

they heard nothing.

Some of us fail to live so that we can understand the message that comes from eternity when God speaks, but if each of us could commit ourselves to obey God's commandments and live as we should, a wonderful change would be effected in us, and we could then hear the messages from the unseen world.



Words to Our Minds

Another way by which we receive revelation was spoken of by the Prophet Enos. He writes this very significant statement in his record in the Book of Mormon: “And while I was thus struggling in the spirit, the voice of the Lord came into my mind” (Enos 1:10).

In other words, sometimes we hear the voice of the Lord coming into our minds, and when it comes, the impressions are just as strong as though He were sounding a trumpet in our ears.

We as individual members of the Church may receive personal revelation by the power of the Holy Ghost. The Lord said to the Prophet Joseph Smith in the early days of the Church, “Yea, behold, I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart. Now, behold, this is the spirit of revelation” (D&C 8:2–3). The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “No man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations. The Holy Ghost is a revelator” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 328).

We Can All Receive Revelation

On what matters may you receive a revelation? Is it startling to you to hear that you—all members of the Church who have received the Holy Ghost—may receive revelation? Not for the President of the Church, not about how to look after the affairs pertaining to the ward, the stake, or the mission in which you live; but every individual within his own area of responsibility has the right to receive revelation by the Holy Ghost.

Every man has the privilege to exercise these gifts and these privileges in the conduct of his own affairs, in bringing up his children in the way they should go, in the management of his business, or whatever he does. It is his right to enjoy the spirit of revelation and of inspiration to do the right things, to be wise and prudent, just and good, in everything that he does. I know that this is a true principle and that is the thing that I would like the Latter-day Saints to know. Now then, all of us should try to strive and listen to and obey the sudden ideas that come to us, and if we’ll obey them and develop the ability to hear these promptings we too—each of us—can grow in the spirit of revelation.

Revelation Is Learning

The revelations of God are the standards by which we measure all learning, and if anything does not agree with the revelations, then we may be certain that it is not truth.

I have seen matters come before the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve in our weekly meetings on which decisions have been reached that were not based upon reasoning, but were based upon an impression which, after that decision had been made, has been found to have been a heaven-sent direction to protect and to guide.

After an important decision has been made, it has been a thrilling thing to hear the President of the Church say, “Brethren, the Lord has spoken.”

It was a week following a conference, when I was preparing a radio talk on the life of the Savior and read again the story of His life, Crucifixion, and Resurrection, that there came to me a testimony, a reality of Him. It was more than just what was on the written page, for in truth I found myself viewing the scenes with as much certainty as though I had been there in person. I know that these things come by the revelations of the living God.

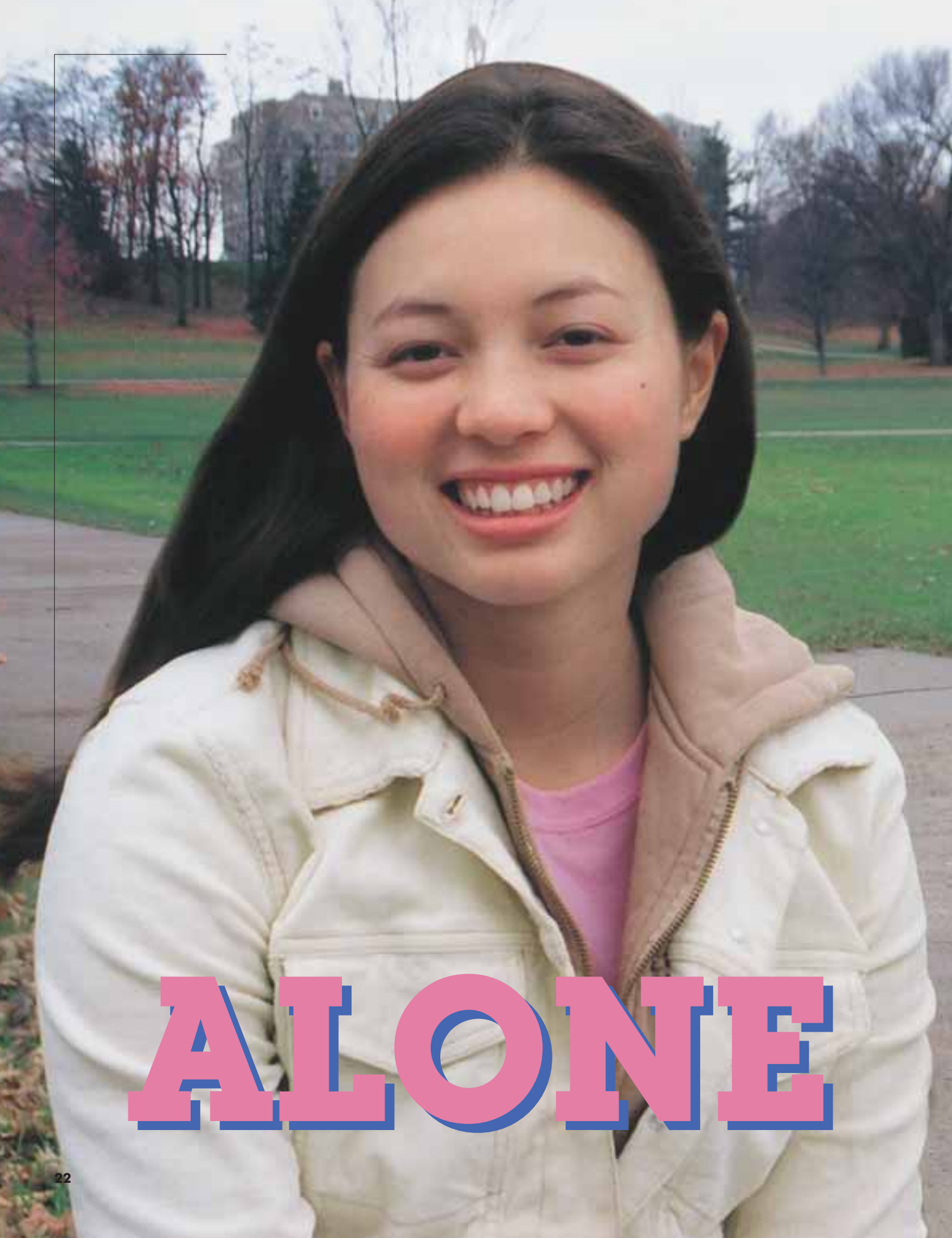
Live to Be Able to Receive Revelation

The thing that all of us should strive for is to so live, keeping the commandments of the Lord, that He can answer our prayers. If we will live worthy, then the Lord will guide us—by a personal appearance, or by His actual voice, or by His voice coming into our mind, or by impressions upon our heart and our soul. And oh, how grateful we ought to be if the Lord sends us a dream in which is revealed to us the beauties of eternity or a warning and direction for our special comfort. Yes, if we so live, the Lord will guide us for our salvation and for our benefit.

I want to bear you my humble testimony that I have received by the voice and the power of revelation the knowledge and an understanding that God is.

I bear you my solemn testimony that the Church is guided by revelation. Every soul in it who has been blessed to receive the Holy Ghost has the power to receive revelation. **NE**

From an article printed in the Feb. 1980 Liahona; see also Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee (2000), “To Hear the Voice of the Lord,” 47–52; capitalization standardized.



ALONE

BY SHEENA JAMES

As the only Latter-day Saint student at my college, I began to feel lonely and to question my beliefs.

Returning to college to begin my sophomore year, I found myself the only active member of the Church at my school. In my freshman year of college, there were two of us who were. The summer after my freshman year, the other LDS student left on a mission, and that fall no new LDS students showed up in the incoming freshman class. I was alone.

With no other LDS students near me and my family thousands of miles away, feelings of loneliness and uncertainty crept into my life. I began to doubt and question the Church and myself. I still knew that the Church was true, but I was full of questions. If Heavenly Father really loved His children, why was I the only one out of so many to have the gift of the Book of Mormon? Why did only one person out of an entire college believe in the restored gospel?

I still went to church every week. I read the Book of Mormon every night and prayed every morning and night. That's what made it so hard. I was trying to do everything right, yet I still felt like Heavenly Father was not answering my prayers, and I still felt fear and doubt. All I needed was a spiritual boost. I wasn't looking for a huge sign or miracle. I just wanted to feel the Spirit in the same strong way that I had previously felt it.

So many times in my past I had answers to prayers, experiences in the temple, or moments reading the scriptures when I had felt the Spirit so strongly—moments when my testimony of the Church was confirmed. All I needed was to feel that same Spirit again. I prayed frequently, pleading with my Heavenly Father to let me know again, let me feel again, let me have a reason to throw away all my doubts.

I never did have an “aha!” moment. I was not brought to tears with convincing feelings of the Spirit. There wasn't just one clear answer to my prayers. It took time, but over the next weeks and months, as I continued to try to do what was right, I found small answers. A verse in the scriptures, a speaker at a singles conference, and President

Hinckley's words at general conference all helped me to slowly shove out my doubts.

Throughout that semester I learned that I did not always feel the Spirit in the same way. Sometimes I had a strong, warm feeling; sometimes I felt overwhelming joy; but sometimes I just felt okay. I realized that there is strength in remembering previous spiritual experiences. I did not need to have another strong spiritual confirmation of the truthfulness of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I just had to trust in the feelings I had previously.

Hebrews 10:32 says, “Call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions.”

I had been “illuminated” by the Spirit before, and with the help of the Spirit I had endured trials before. I had to remember those previous experiences. Satan would like me to forget my earlier testimony-building feelings and experiences, but I can fight his efforts by having faith in myself, in the Church, and in the Spirit that I had felt before.

“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering” (Hebrews 10:23). I now know that even when we do have doubts and fears and it seems like Heavenly Father isn't answering our prayers, we have to just keep praying. He is always there and always listening. **NE**

EXTRA! EXTRA!

For more on the importance of remembering spiritual experiences see the following articles at www.lds.org: “Cast Not Away Therefore Your Confidence,” by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland in the March 2002 *Ensign*, and “Remember How Merciful the Lord Hath Been,” by Elder Neal A. Maxwell in the May 2004 *Ensign*.

LOOKING UP TO

BY JED LAYTON



Jake Cram has a lot of people who look up to him in many ways: his mom, Kim (above), his friends Riley Davis (below) and Sheen Beard (right), and his high school football team.

What makes Jake stand so tall in the eyes of those who know him? His height has nothing to do with it.

Imagine that you go to a high school where all the kids are one or two feet taller than you. Everything would be out of proportion; everything would seem a little too big for you. How would you do in such a setting? How would you fit in?

Just ask Jake Cram, age 17, who at 3 feet 11 inches (119 cm) tall is a bit on the short side. But what he lacks in height he makes up for with an unusually large testimony and positive outlook on life.

Jake was born with dextrocardia, a rare condition causing his heart to be on the right side of his chest and his growth to be stunted. He also has other heart problems and has had to undergo three open-heart surgeries.

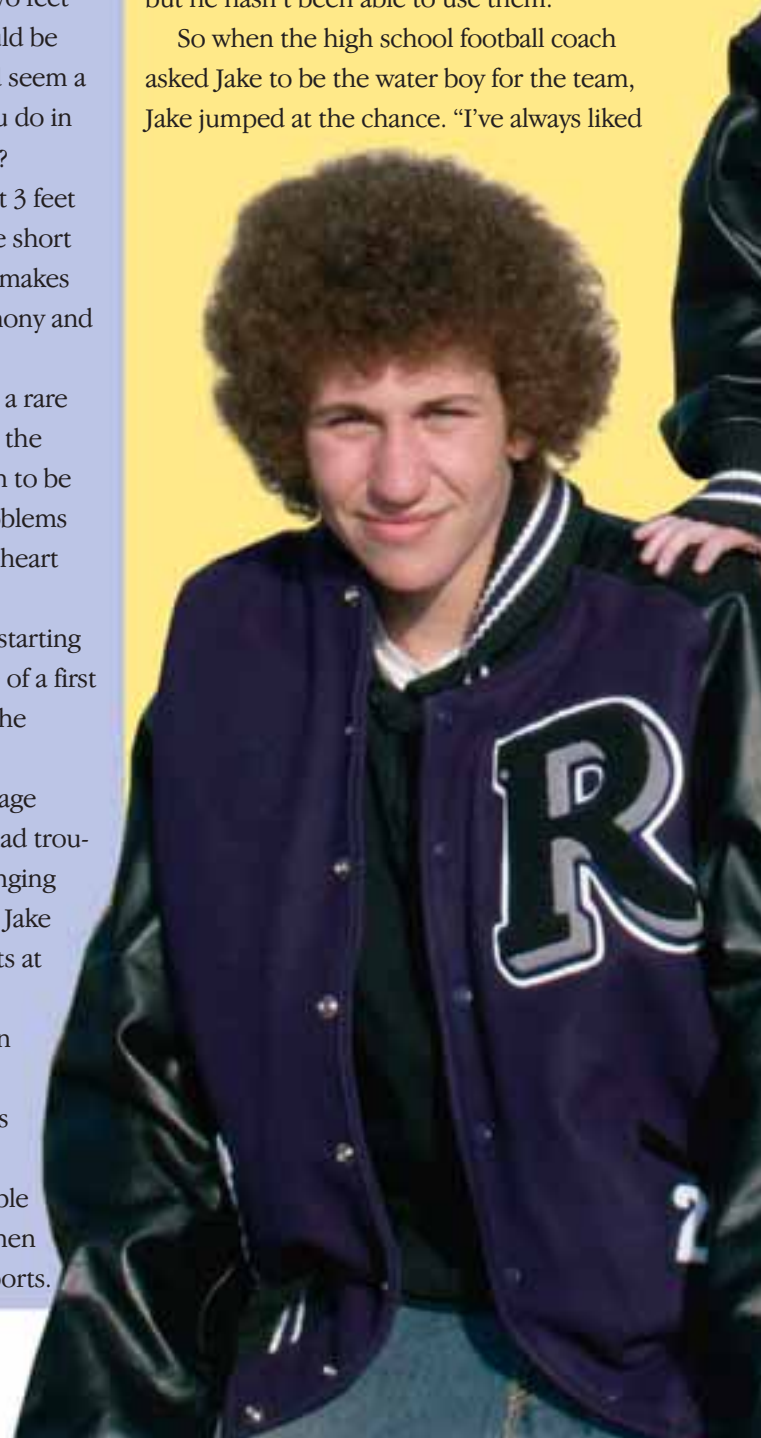
"In middle school, everyone was starting to get taller while I was still the size of a first grader," says Jake, a member of the Riverton Utah South Stake.

Being shorter than others his age hasn't been easy for Jake. "I've had trouble fitting in. Talking and hanging out like other kids is hard," Jake says. "Plus, I can't play sports at the level of everyone else."

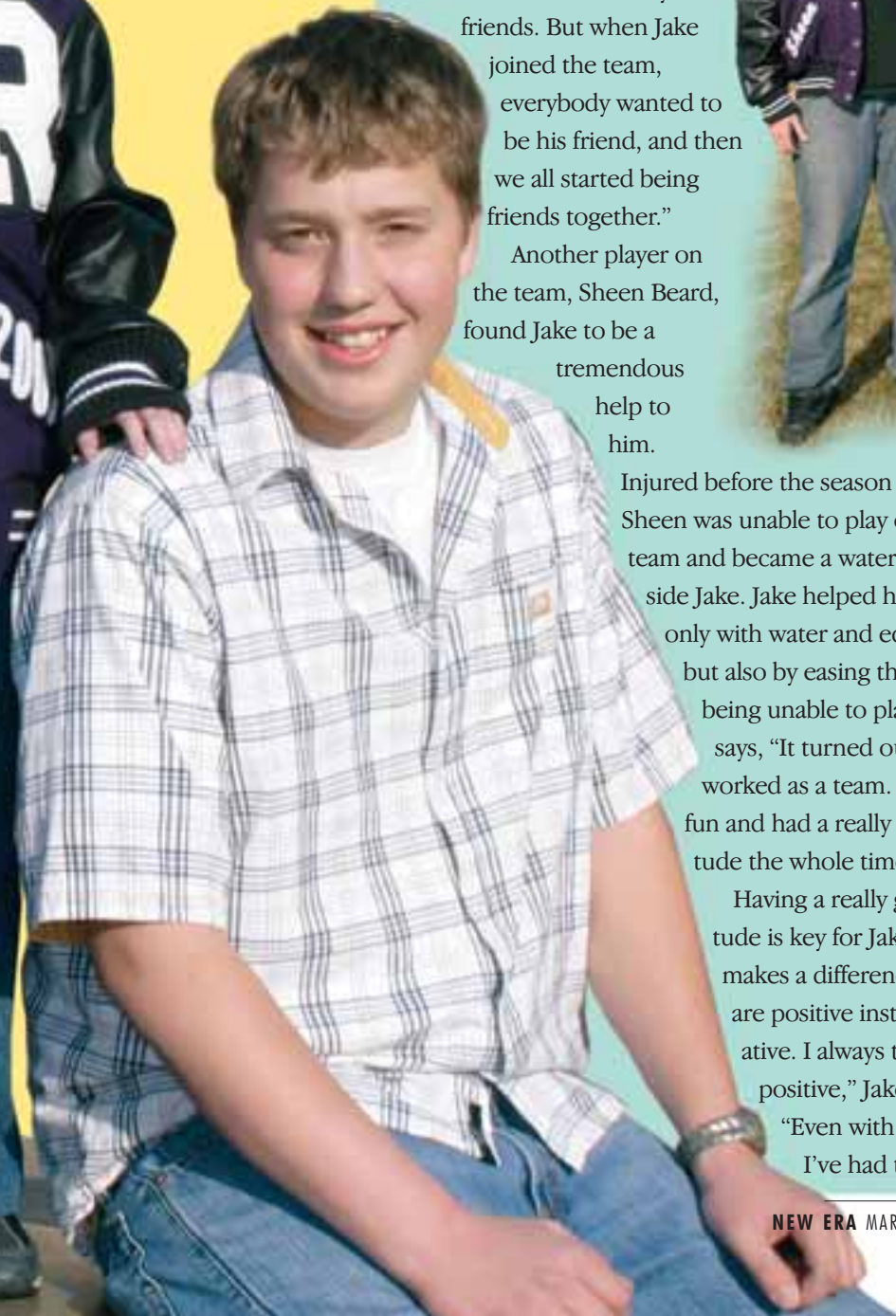
As others have outgrown him, "Jake has become a little less social," explains his mom, Kim. "He was upset about not being able to grow, especially when it came to playing sports.

Jake is so talented and easily picks up skills, but he hasn't been able to use them."

So when the high school football coach asked Jake to be the water boy for the team, Jake jumped at the chance. "I've always liked



JAKE



football. There was never any doubt that I would say yes. I was pretty excited,” says Jake.

Jake is happy to be part of the team, and his positive influence also lifts the spirits of those around him.

Riley Davis

plays center on

the football team and is one of Jake’s longtime friends. He says the players “were all sophomores coming into the school and didn’t have too many

friends. But when Jake

joined the team,

everybody wanted to

be his friend, and then

we all started being

friends together.”

Another player on the team, Sheen Beard,

found Jake to be a

tremendous

help to

him.

Injured before the season began, Sheen was unable to play on the team and became a water boy alongside Jake. Jake helped him not only with water and equipment but also by easing the ache of being unable to play. Sheen says, “It turned out well; we worked as a team. He made it fun and had a really good attitude the whole time.”

Having a really good attitude is key for Jake. “It makes a difference if you are positive instead of negative. I always try to be positive,” Jake explains.

“Even with everything I’ve had to go





Jake loves to golf with his dad and has a wonderful relationship with his four younger siblings. Jake stands with his brother, Aaron—whom he baptized—and sister Nicole (opposite page).



through and all of my circumstances, I am still a happy kid because of my attitude.”

And Jake has been through a lot. Along with being shorter than average and having open-heart surgeries, Jake has had to make some major decisions about his life. “I had to decide on whether to have a heart transplant or not,” he says. “I felt like I was doing pretty good most of the time, and I have chosen not to have it done.”

When doctors presented the various options to Jake and his parents, one of which was a heart transplant, Jake’s positive outlook helped him make the decision that he didn’t need a transplant right now. This realization might not have come to him if he were seeing his life negatively. “It feels like I made the right decision,” Jake says.

Through his trials Jake has also developed a strong testimony of the gospel and the power of priesthood blessings. “I’ve had a lot of blessings, and if it weren’t for the priesthood, I wouldn’t be here,” Jake says.

“Usually before surgeries or when I get really sick, my dad gives me one,” Jake explains about priesthood blessings. “One particular blessing I had was given last year before going into the hospital. My dad gave me a blessing, and I know that I felt a lot better afterward.”

Jake also has a strong testimony of Joseph Smith and the Restoration of the gospel. “The gospel has helped me to stay positive and to try and make the best of what I have. To go through my life without worrying a lot is my goal.”

So far Jake is succeeding.

“He is always a good friend,” Riley says with a smile. “He isn’t one to hold a grudge and is always in a good mood. If you ever need a friend, there is Jake.”

“Jake has never allowed his problems to affect his life too much,” his mother says. “Of course, he

couldn’t do it alone. Joining the football team has made it a lot easier for him and for us, as parents.”

Jake and his parents are especially grateful to Coach Mike Miller for giving Jake such a tremendous opportunity. “This new opportunity gave Jake something to look forward to at a time when he really needed it,” his mom says.

“Jake also receives help from his good friend Riley,” she says. “He has always been the one to go out of his way to do things with him.”

While Jake has a good time on the football field or learning in school, he feels most comfortable at home. This might be because he doesn’t feel quite as short there. “We are all pretty short,” Jake jokes.

Over the years, Jake has developed a strong relationship with his family. He often goes golfing with his dad and thinks his mom is pretty cool. Jake also has a fun bond with his siblings. He loves and cares for each of them. He was even able to baptize his younger brother, Aaron. “It was a great experience,” Jake says. “If he had been much bigger, though, I don’t know if I would have been able to.”

The love and care is mutual from his family. His mother says, “We are so grateful for him. He relies on the Spirit, and he is able to recognize all the blessings in his life.”

Jake plans to continue living a positive lifestyle. “I hope I never have to go through with a heart transplant,” he says, “but if I do I’ll accept it and move on.”

In the meantime, Jake hopes to carry on with his life: going to school, working, spending time with his brother and sisters, golfing with his dad, getting together with his friends, and going through the challenges of being a teenager. “Someday I hope to go on some kind of mission, whether it be full time or service,” Jake says with a grin. “Either way I’ll be positive about it.” **NE**



A painting depicting a woman with long dark hair, wearing a dark, textured sweater, embracing a man from behind. The man has dark hair and is wearing a light-colored shirt. The woman's hands are resting on the man's shoulders and upper back. The background is a soft, textured wash of light colors, possibly representing a wall or a window. The overall mood is intimate and tender.

THE ADO

NAME WITHHELD

PTION DECISION

A 19-year-old unwed mother, whom we'll call Charlotte, recently placed her baby girl for adoption through LDS Family Services. She shared her difficult experience with the *New Era*. Charlotte realizes that her violation of the law of chastity has complicated her life. But she has taken the necessary steps to receive, through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, forgiveness and healing of spirit. This article focuses on her adoption decision, not on the process of her repentance.

I can still remember the day I found out I was pregnant. I was filled with dread and shock and fear. When I told my boyfriend the test was positive, we both sat in silence for a long time.

He finally hugged me, but I was too shocked to cry. I remember saying, "So what's next? Should we get married?"

He was just as shocked as I was. He asked me if there were any other options besides marriage. I was upset by that because I assumed he was referring to abortion, which was out of the question.

A few days after I found out I was pregnant, I decided to tell my mom. It was a Sunday night, and we were lying down in the family room, tired after a long weekend of moving. Suddenly I said, "Mom, I need to tell you something."

She asked, "What?"

I hesitated, then said, "I'm pregnant."

She didn't cry at first, but after we started talking, she started to cry but stayed calm enough for us to talk. I had been afraid she would be upset, but she was loving and supportive.

My mom later told my dad, and he came into my room and hugged me and offered his love and support. Just weeks before I found out I was pregnant, he had given me a birthday card in which he wrote that he was proud of me. I remember reading that card and being sad at the thought of disappointing him.

As the days passed, Charlotte started thinking of her options: to get married, to be a single parent, or to place her baby for adoption. She determined that a successful marriage was not possible for her, so she followed her doctor's advice to go to LDS Family Services to discuss her options. Charlotte started seeing a counselor there named Kathy (name has been changed).

For a couple of weeks, Kathy and I talked about single parenting. She gave me a lot of articles and worksheets that dealt with the emotional, physical, and financial aspects of raising a child. I knew my parents would help support my baby and me, but it was scary to think, "What if I had to do it on my own?"

We discussed the pros and cons of single parenting. "Where would I live?" "Would the

A few days after I found out I was pregnant, I decided to tell my mother. She was supportive, but telling her was only the first of many difficult decisions I had to make.



When marriage is not possible, experience has shown that adoption, difficult though this may be for the young mother, may afford a greater opportunity for the child to live a life of happiness. Wise and experienced professional counselors and prayerful bishops can assist in these circumstances.”

—President Gordon B. Hinckley, “Save the Children,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 53.

baby be a source of contention between me and my parents?” “Would I work full time?” “What about child care?” and so on.

We discussed how I might have to live with my parents and how girls struggle with that. Young mothers worry about their mothers taking over and being the mother of the child, and that can cause a lot of contention between the two. I also wondered if I would be able to go to college if I were a single mom. I would probably have to work full time, which wouldn’t make it easy to go to school.

Kathy asked me what appealed to me about single parenting. As I thought about it, all my reasons for choosing to be a single parent were selfish. They all boiled down to the fact that I’d have my baby with me. The problem with that is, I knew she wasn’t just mine. My baby was Heavenly Father’s child.

In my next couple of appointments with Kathy, we talked about adoption and how that process works. Finally, after weeks of meeting with Kathy, I felt that I had a good idea of what was involved with adoption and with single parenting.

Being a single parent would be hard, as would placing my baby for adoption. So I prayed about this decision continually. I put off deciding to place my baby for adoption because it was a difficult decision I didn’t want to make right away.

I came to the decision to place my baby for adoption after months of soul searching, deep thought, and lots of prayer. It took me a long time to feel like I had an answer. Even when I knew I had an answer, I sometimes wanted to not follow it. But I knew it was what I needed to do.

One night I was looking at one of my favorite pictures of the Savior. It shows Him with a little boy sitting on His knee looking up at Him. As I looked at that picture I could imagine my own child sitting up in heaven on the Lord’s knee. I realized that my baby



would be coming to me straight from God’s arms. I began to realize the worth of the soul I was carrying. It was easy at that moment for me to forget my own cares and concerns and see the bigger picture. I knew I needed to place my baby for adoption, so I began to pray for the strength to be able to do it.

At my next meeting with Kathy, I told her my decision.

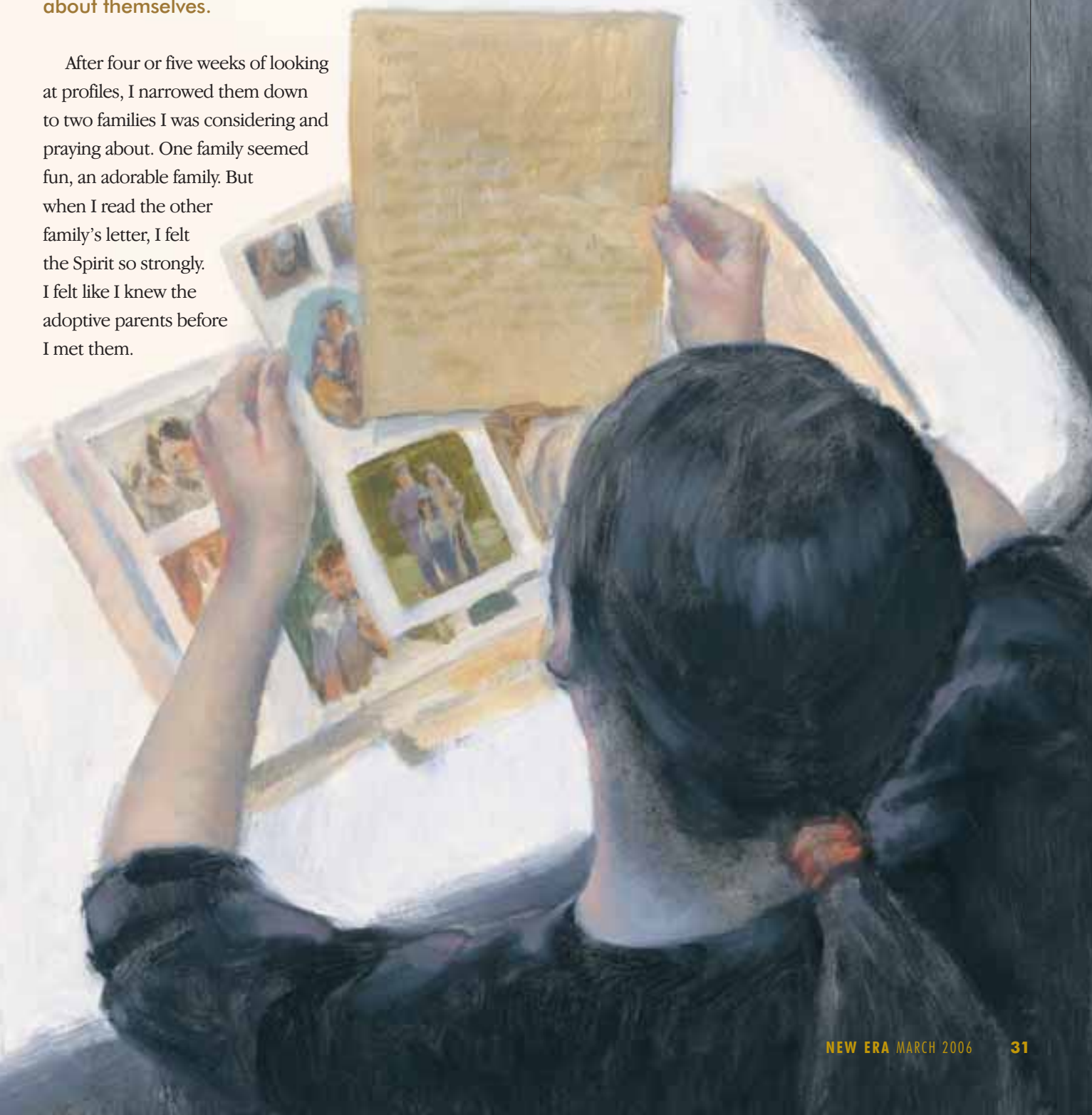
After deciding on adoption, Charlotte met with her bishop.

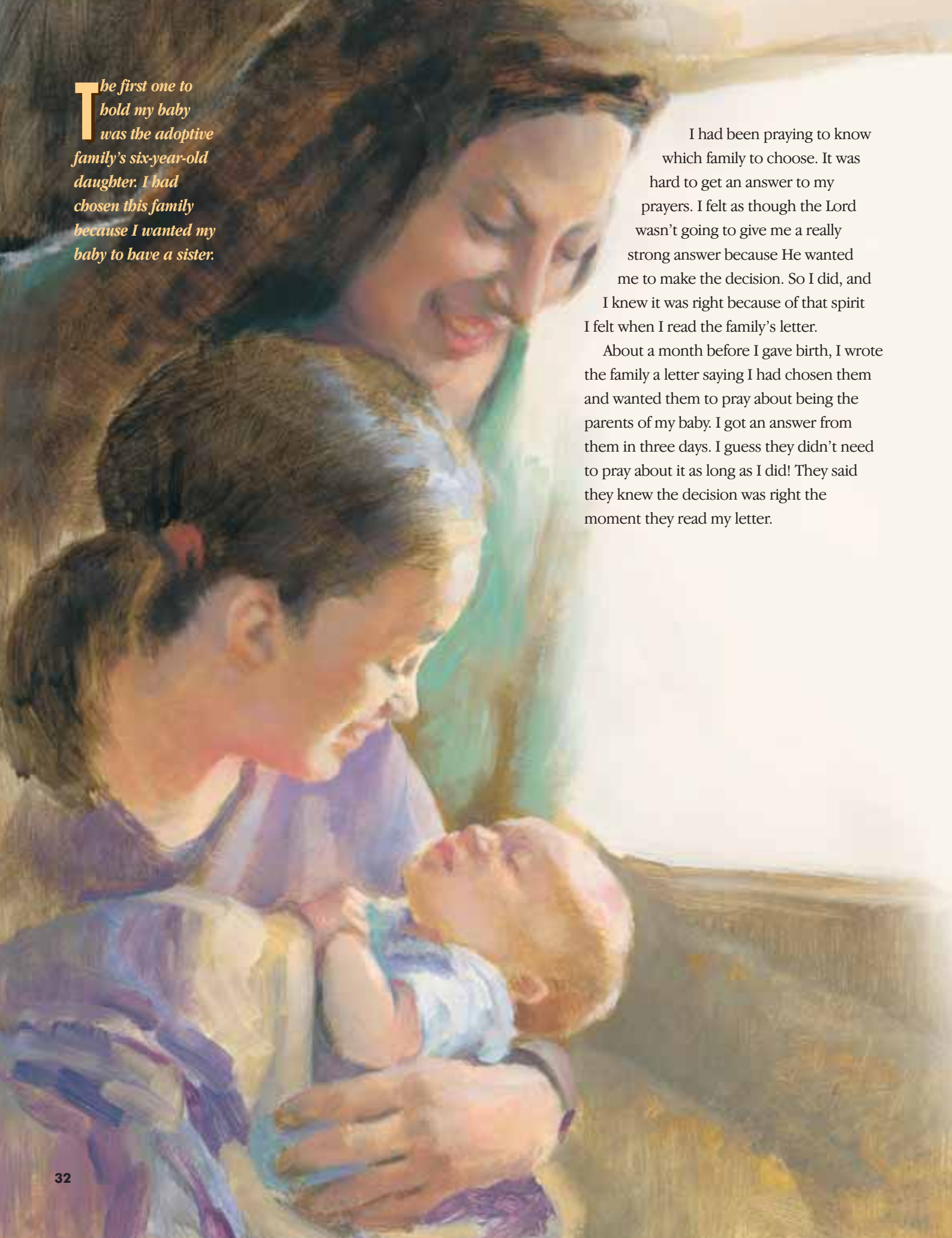
I put off talking to my bishop for a long time because I felt like I needed to know what I was doing and, as silly as this sounds, I felt like I wasn’t worthy to talk to him. It would have been better if I had talked with him months earlier, but my emotions were in turmoil. I was embarrassed about breaking the law of chastity, angry at myself and my boyfriend for the mistake we had made, and resentful about being pregnant. I was confused and just didn’t feel ready to talk with my bishop.

But then, a few months before I was due, my bishop called me in to see him. I took the opportunity to confess, and he heard me with compassion. He also helped confirm that adoption was right for me and my baby. Immediately after talking to him, I asked myself, “Why didn’t I do that earlier?!” Had I talked to him earlier, he would’ve been such a help to me throughout my decision-making and repentance process. Instead, I was punishing myself and holding myself back from receiving revelation through him.

Having decided to place her baby for adoption, Charlotte started looking at profiles of adoptive parents. Adoptive parents give LDS Family Services a collage of family pictures, a letter to the birth parents, and an information sheet about themselves.

After four or five weeks of looking at profiles, I narrowed them down to two families I was considering and praying about. One family seemed fun, an adorable family. But when I read the other family's letter, I felt the Spirit so strongly. I felt like I knew the adoptive parents before I met them.



An oil painting depicting a woman in a purple top holding a baby in a blue outfit. Another woman with long dark hair is leaning over her, smiling warmly. The background is a soft, hazy landscape. The style is soft and painterly, with visible brushstrokes.

The first one to hold my baby was the adoptive family's six-year-old daughter. I had chosen this family because I wanted my baby to have a sister.

I had been praying to know which family to choose. It was hard to get an answer to my prayers. I felt as though the Lord wasn't going to give me a really strong answer because He wanted me to make the decision. So I did, and I knew it was right because of that spirit I felt when I read the family's letter.

About a month before I gave birth, I wrote the family a letter saying I had chosen them and wanted them to pray about being the parents of my baby. I got an answer from them in three days. I guess they didn't need to pray about it as long as I did! They said they knew the decision was right the moment they read my letter.

We met each other a few weeks before I gave birth, and we bonded immediately. At LDS Family Services, my parents and I met the adoptive parents and their six-year-old daughter. We visited for about two hours, talking and getting to know each other. The day after we met each other, they wrote me a letter saying how good they felt about everything. They said it was an answer to their prayers.

After I gave birth to my baby girl, I had a couple days with her to myself. The night before the placement was hard. I was holding the baby, thinking, “How am I going to do this? Will I be able to do this?” I was praying for strength.

The next step was placement, the meeting at LDS Family Services when the birth mother gives the baby to the adoptive parents. Charlotte’s parents and sister came with her, and the adoptive couple’s parents were there too.

The first one to hold my baby was the adoptive family’s six-year-old daughter. I wanted my baby to have a sister, so I thought it was important that she hold her baby sister first. Our families then spent an hour talking, getting acquainted, and taking pictures.

At the end of our visit, I held my baby for the last time and then gave her to her adoptive mom. I felt a sense of relief and knew that I was doing the right thing. I saw love and joy on the parents’ faces. It was great for them to get their baby, but I could see pain

in their eyes for me. I knew they could feel my sacrifice. I’ll never forget the look in their eyes as I gave them a hug and left. They were so grateful.

I didn’t really feel sad—until that night, when the shock had passed. That night

was the hardest part of the process for me. My thoughts were racing, and I was very emotional. I was wondering if my daughter was eating regularly. In the hospital she didn’t have an appetite. I wondered if she was crying or if she was content.

The next day, Kathy came to my house with a letter and a packet of pictures from the adoptive family. The letter answered all the questions that had been racing through my mind the night before. I felt better immediately.

EXTRA! EXTRA!

For more on adoption, you can read these articles in the Gospel Library at www.lds.org:

- “Could I Let My Baby Go?” (*Ensign*, Feb. 2002)
- “What’s Best for My Baby?” (*New Era*, Nov. 2001)
- “But What Was Best for the Baby?” (*Ensign*, July 1999)
- “Guidance for Unwed Parents” (*Ensign*, Sept. 1994), by Elder Monte J. Brough
- “My Decision” (*Ensign*, Aug. 1991)
- “A Special Child” (*Ensign*, July 1980), by Elder Theodore M. Burton

Six months after Charlotte placed her baby for adoption, she says:

It has been a gradual healing process for me, both spiritually and emotionally. Every week seems to get better. I feel more confidence in my relationship with the Lord, and I’m still getting letters and pictures from the adoptive family. I have gone back to college full time and back to work part time.

Placing my baby for adoption was hard, but I felt it was right. I was guided by the Spirit. It’s amazing how it worked out so well. **NE**

To learn how LDS Family Services can help, visit www.itsaboutlove.org or call 1-800-537-2229. All of the services are free and do not require a bishop’s referral. Those dealing with morality problems should actively seek the counsel of their bishop.

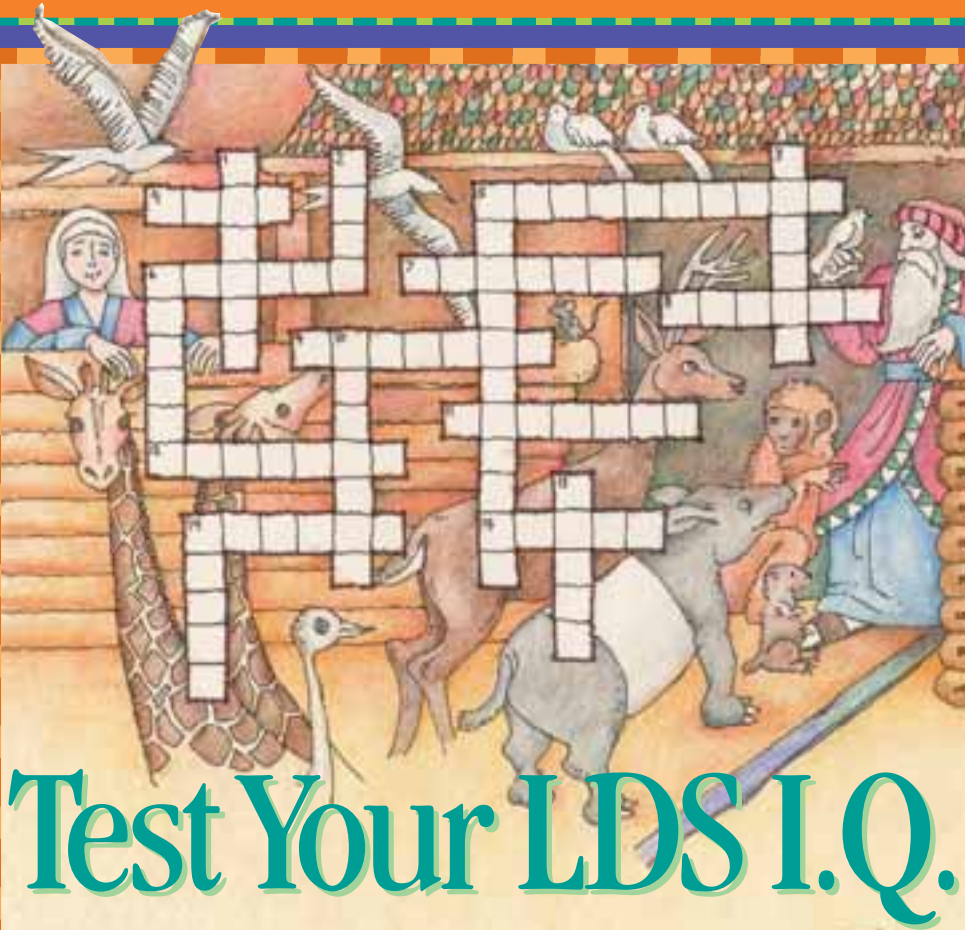
TEEN MOTHERS AND ADOPTED CHILDREN

■ Young women who place their babies for adoption are more likely to complete high school and go on to higher education. They are more likely than single mothers to have a job and less likely to live in poverty or receive government help. They are also less likely to get pregnant again before they’re married.

■ Children who are raised by a mother and a father are less likely to be involved in crime or pre-marital sexual behavior. They are more likely to develop better intellectually, emotionally, and psychologically.

■ Children of unwed mothers who keep their babies have more problems later in life than those who are adopted. They are more likely to have a child out of wedlock, drop out of high school, and have emotional or behavioral problems.

■ Teen mothers are not able to give themselves or their children as many opportunities in life. They usually don’t have the financial or emotional resources that children need to grow up to be happy, successful adults.



Test Your LDS I.Q.

Here's a crossword puzzle that will help test your knowledge of people in the Old Testament.

ACROSS

4. Patriarch of those saved from the Flood
5. Patriarch who had the most birthdays
6. Called down fire from heaven to consume a sacrifice
7. Known for his great wisdom
8. Ran from Potiphar's wife
9. Taught about the bounteous blessings of paying tithing
11. Prophesied of the uniting of the stick of Ephraim with the stick of Judah
12. Mother of Esau and Jacob
14. Most quoted of all the prophets
15. He and his entire city, Zion, were translated

DOWN

1. Prayed to God, contrary to King Darius's decree
2. Faithful daughter-in-law to Naomi
3. Served as a boy in the tabernacle with Eli
5. Abraham brought tithes to this king of Salem
6. Convinced a king not to have Jews put to death
10. Father of a multitude
13. Parted the Red Sea
14. Son born to Abraham and Sarah in their old age

Answers—Across: 4. Noah, 5. Methuselah, 6. Elijah, 7. Malachi, 8. Joseph, 9. Malachi, 11. Ezekiel, 12. Rebekah, 14. Isaiah, 15. Enoch. Down: 1. Daniel, 2. Ruth, 3. Samuel, 5. Melchizedek, 6. Esther, 10. Abraham, 13. Moses, 14. Isaac.



// PRAISE TO THE MAN //

The Prophet Joseph Smith's friend William W. Phelps wrote this hymn as a tribute to Joseph soon after Joseph and Hyrum were martyred at Carthage Jail. This song of tribute reflects the mournful feelings of Church members at that time. It is a cry to heaven against the Prophet's martyrdom and has a joyful sadness to it. The opening lines of the hymn were patterned after Sir Walter Scott's poem "The Lady of the Lake." The tune's origin is unknown. (See *Hymns*, no. 27.)

IN A WORD

FAITH

Faith is a principle of action and power. Whenever you work toward a worthy goal, you exercise faith. You show your hope for something that you cannot yet see.

■ In order for your faith to lead you to salvation, it must be centered in the Lord Jesus Christ.

■ Having faith in Jesus Christ means relying completely on Him—trusting in His infinite power, intelligence, and love.

■ Faith is much more than passive belief. You express your faith through action—by the way you live.

■ Faith is a gift from God, but you must nurture your faith to keep it strong.



Shining Bright

Did you see Torah Bright tearing it up at the 2006 Torino Winter Olympics? At 19, she's one of the world's leading snowboarders. She's so well known in the sport that you can actually choose to *be* Torah in several major snowboarding video games. She's also a member of the Canberra Australia Stake.

During 2005, Torah took overall women's first place in the Arctic Challenge in Tromso, Norway. The challenge is one of the most prestigious international snowboarding competitions. She also placed first in four other competitions, second in three others, and third in two more.

The pressures of being an international sports star don't seem to bother her

much. She says that as the people around her have come to know what she stands for and the standards she keeps, they've come to respect her.

"I can't live without the gospel," says Torah. "It's the truth. You know who you are, and you know that you are individually important. It gives me purpose in everything I do."

“Whether in tranquil or turbulent times, our best source of comfort is the Comforter.”

—Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004), “Encircled in the Arms of His Love,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 16.

On the LORD'S TEAM

BY R. VAL JOHNSON
Church Magazines

Raphael Queiroz eyes the volleyball net, tosses his ball high, then runs a few steps forward and leaps. For a moment he hovers above the floor, seeming to defy gravity. A split second later he meets the volleyball and drives his hand into it. The ball flashes over the net at a terrifying speed.

Anyone watching might wonder how an opponent could return the missiles Raphael launches. “Wow!” is the only response one stunned observer can make.

Raphael just shrugs—but with a hint of satisfaction in his serve. “Actually,” the unassuming Brazilian says, “I prefer soccer. But since I’m not agile enough to play the game well, I play volleyball.”

Perhaps it’s his size. At 6 feet 5 inches (196 cm) and 205 pounds (94 kg), he may not be as quick as smaller, lighter players. But he certainly has the height and weight to put a volleyball only fractions of an inch over a net with such power that only the brave would want to intercept it.

Soccer may be Raphael’s sport of choice, but volleyball is most definitely his game. And he is really good at it. He is so good, in fact, that he played in the final game of the high school volleyball nationals. “That,” Raphael says, “was one of the three happiest days of my life.”

And the other two? “The day I was baptized a member of the Church and the day I received my patriarchal blessing.”

At 19, Raphael de Moraes Queiroz of the Jardim Massangana Ward, Recife Brazil Boa Viagem Stake, has learned a couple of important lessons some people never learn. He knows that when you place the Lord first in your life, good things happen. He also knows that sometimes you have to adjust your dreams to take advantage of the talents and opportunities the Lord gives you.

Strength Training

Raphael’s parents joined the Church before he was born, so he grew up in a gospel-oriented home.

“Growing up in the Church, you’re taught from a very young age the principles of the gospel and the importance of keeping the commandments,” he says. “But you still need to get your own testimony.”

Raphael remembers one day in seminary when the class was watching a video about the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith. “I started crying. ‘Why?’ I asked myself. As I concentrated on what I was feeling, the answer came: I was receiving a witness from the Holy Ghost that Joseph Smith is a prophet and that the Church is true.”

He smiles at the memory. “Good things happen in seminary,” he says.

Good things happen at church, too. During one priests quorum lesson, he felt impressed to get a patriarchal blessing. “In preparing for it, I did some studying, then went to the bishop, and he sent me to the patriarch. I was overwhelmed by what I heard. The Lord entrusted me with a lot. I love my blessing.”

Since those experiences, he has found his testimony strengthened in other ways. Scripture study is one of them. He especially likes the Book of Mormon. “I admire Nephi,” Raphael says.

Assists from Family

Like Nephi, Raphael was born of goodly parents. Family is important to



Raphael Queiroz of Brazil is a terrific volleyball player—he's a star on his state team. His sister, Gabriela (below), thinks he's also a pretty terrific brother.





Having a solid relationship with your teammates is vital to the success of any team. Raphael followed the lead of his stake president, President Mozart Soares (above), to get ready for his mission. Now serving in the Brazil Belo Horizonte Mission, Raphael says, “There’s no better place to learn to live the gospel than in the Church.”

him. He feels particularly close to his only sibling, 18-year-old Gabriela.

“To me, Gabriela is an example of righteousness,” Raphael says. “She always follows Church standards.” He points out that she attends seminary twice a day—once early in the morning and again in the evening.

When asked why, she says, “I love learning the gospel. I get a different perspective in the different classes. Then, too, I have friends in the evening class I like being with. Mostly, though, I love feeling the Spirit. I feel it often in seminary.”

For Raphael, his sister illustrates how placing the gospel first in your life can give you strength to resist worldly pressures. “Having a gospel perspective helps us meet our challenges,” he says. “It teaches us to stay away from temptations. Although I’m not free from temptations, I always try to avoid them. Youth need to learn how to avoid temptations by deciding ahead of time how they will handle them.”

He knows well the temptations athletes face. “As an athlete, I always do what athletes do, but not the bad things—I don’t break the Word of Wisdom or do the other things young men sometimes do. I try to set an example as a Latter-day Saint.”

“At first,” he says, “my friends thought my choices were funny. But later they respected me for my standards.”

Joining the Lord’s Team

It was a friend who introduced Raphael to volleyball. In 2001 a teammate on his soccer team in Recife pointed out that some private

high schools offer volleyball scholarships. At the time, Raphael was trying for a soccer scholarship but found his physical assets kept him from playing at the level the coaches wanted. But he seemed to have an unexplored talent for volleyball. “So I played volleyball until I got good at it,” he says. He became so good that he was able to secure a full scholarship to a private high school.

At school, he played in the Recife city championships, then in the regionals in northeast Brazil, one of the most important tournaments in the country. But his success didn’t end there. Not long afterward, he was asked to join the Pernambuco State team to prepare for the national high school tournament. His team won almost all its games, losing only in the final match. He has the medals to show for it.

“As a volleyball player,” he says, “I’ve learned to play as a member of a team. One person can’t win alone. You have to look out for one another and help one another.”

In the same way, the Church has taught him to play as a member of the Lord’s team. “The Church has taught me to teach and care for others, to always watch for when people need help. There’s no better place to learn to live the gospel than in the Church. The Lord wants all of us to practice the gospel. That’s why I’m going on a mission.”

Raphael will be giving up a college athletic scholarship to do so. Recruited by several schools, he was tempted to accept a scholarship from one of them. But at this point in his life, he would rather serve on a mission than serve on a volleyball court. He knows he is making the right choice.

“As much success as I have had in sports,” he says, “I want to do better as a missionary. I feel that no matter where I go, I can do well—if I let the Lord coach me.” **NE**



"I've heard of the armor of God, but this is ridiculous!"

Nathan K., England
Nathan represents about 75 others who sent in similar captions.

"I really hate playing the Camelot Ward!"

Brianne D., Colorado

"Old-school tournament. Gotta play two knights in a row."

Val S., Nevada

"So this explains the horses tied up outside."

Sam C., Oregon

"We might win tonight; these guys look a little rusty."

Wendy M., Washington

"I guess they heard about our fouling record."

Bret T., Texas

"You take Brother Galahad. I'll take Brother Lancelot."

Daniel H., Utah

"I thought the bishop said, 'No heavy metal in the church.'"

Zac S., West Virginia

Last March we printed this picture of basketball players wearing armor and asked you to send us your funny captions. We received hundreds of responses. Thank you for playing along. We thought these were some of the funniest.

"I think the Knights took their name a wee bit literally. Don't you?"

Jessica N., Texas
Karen M., Texas

"I don't think these guys are afraid to take a charge."

Rick G., Illinois

"At least they don't have swords."

Molly M., Texas

"Somehow I don't think that's what they meant by 'ward basketball night.'"

Amber B., Utah

"I know the elders quorum is old, but I had no idea they were *that* old."

Jay G., Utah

"This is a basketball game, not a chess match!"

Emily D., Nova Scotia, Canada

"I've heard of night games, but this is ridiculous!"

Kendra J., Kansas

"I thought this was church ball, not war ball!"

Kailey T., Utah

LISTENING FOR ANSWERS

At the start of general conference a few years ago, President Gordon B. Hinckley promised several blessings to those who listen to conference: “I invite you to listen, listen if you will by the power of the Spirit, to the speakers who will address you today and tomorrow as well as this evening. If you will do so, I do not hesitate to promise that you will be uplifted, your

resolution to do what is right will be stronger, you will find solutions to your problems and your needs, and you will be led to thank the Lord for what you have heard” (“Listen by the Power of the Spirit,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 4).

Put the prophet’s promise to the test as you fill out this general conference worksheet.

Pre-conference Checklist

- I have thought and prayed about questions I have, and I will listen for answers during conference.
- I have prayed for the general conference speakers.
- I will get a good night’s sleep so I can stay awake and attentive during conference.
- I have a notebook and pen ready so I can take notes during conference.

What I Learned during General Conference

The talk(s) that meant the most to me during the Saturday sessions of conference was/were by _____
_____. I enjoyed the talk(s) because _____

The talk(s) that meant the most to me during the Sunday sessions of conference was/were by _____
_____. I enjoyed the talk(s) because _____

The prophet counseled Church members to: _____

This specific counsel was given to the youth of the Church: _____

The answers I received from listening and pondering during general conference are: _____

The main themes of general conference were: _____

After listening to general conference, I want to become better in the following ways, or I was prompted to do the following: _____



LISTEN, LEARN, LIVE IT

The students in the early-morning seminary classes of the Capotillo and Simon Bolivar Wards in the Santo Domingo Dominican Republic Stake enjoy watching and learning from general conference. Here are some of their ideas on how to use what you learn during general conference.

- ✿ Come to general conference prepared to learn and listen carefully to the talks. Fasting and prayer can help you be prepared.
- ✿ Write down what you learn so you can think more about it later.
- ✿ Talk about general conference with your family. Share with them what you have learned, and listen to and learn from their experiences.
- ✿ Listen carefully to President Gordon B. Hinckley's talks, and write down at least three things he asks you to do or to become. Pray about these things, and see how you can make them happen in your life.
- ✿ If the Spirit prompts you to do something while you are listening to or pondering general conference, do it.
- ✿ Set goals on how and when to apply the counsel you receive during general conference. Write your goals and deadlines in your journal, and refer to them often.
- ✿ Be with people who make it easy to do what the prophets say. Then, when you try to apply the speakers' counsel, you will have support.
- ✿ Share what you have learned with a friend who could also benefit.
- ✿ Live worthy of the Holy Spirit, and pray for guidance on how to live what you have learned during conference.
- ✿ Listen carefully to what the Church leaders encourage you to do, and work on becoming better. Remember to "be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only" (see James 1:22–25).
- ✿ Look up and mark in your own scriptures the references quoted in the talks.
- ✿ Read the conference talks when the *Liabona* and *Ensign* come out so you can gain new insights and renew your enthusiasm. **NE**

SISTERS THREE

BY JESSIE NOEMI P. PATRIA

A year after I was baptized, I received my mission call and entered the Missionary Training Center in Manila, Philippines. It was there that I made some treasured friends. The first was my companion, Sister Loh, a convert from Singapore. Since I couldn't speak her language and she didn't know any Filipino dialects, our only option was to communicate in English.

The 16 days I spent in the MTC were the most spiritual of my life. Although we were far from our families, we still felt loved thanks to a special person—Sister Luda Lee Cottrell, the wife of the MTC president. She was always smiling and happy. She gave us comfort and love and taught me about charity in word and in deed.

On our last night in the MTC, Sister Loh and I wanted to give something to Sister Cottrell as a remembrance and to thank her for all the

love she gave us. We didn't have anything nice to give, so my companion suggested that we sing a song for Sister Cottrell. I immediately agreed. Because we were new in the Church, neither of us was familiar with most of the hymns. We chose to sing "I Am a Child of God" (*Hymns*, no. 301).

We found Sister Cottrell in her office. We told her of our simple present, and she gladly and patiently listened to us. While Sister Loh and I were singing, a memorable spiritual experience happened. I realized that we were three people of three different races, cultures, and languages. My companion and I were singing in English so that our beloved Sister Cottrell could understand what we were singing.

At that moment I forgot all our



NO PLACE LIKE HOME

BY FAAPISA M. TUPE

As I got closer to completing my years in Young Women, I was struggling to know whether the Church was really true. I went through a difficult time, which challenged me but also answered my question whether or not The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the true Church on the earth.

One day I was alone at home, and I had been instructed by my mother to clean the house and wash the windows. However, when my mother returned, the things she had asked me to do were not done. My mother started to scold me, and the more I was scolded the more stubborn I became. Some of the words she said were said in anger. Some bad thoughts came to me, and the adversary's influence became very strong. I then wrote a letter to my family and made plans to leave the following day.

After I had hurriedly packed my stuff,

differences. The Spirit was telling me that what we are on earth doesn't really matter, because the three of us are literally daughters of Heavenly Father. The Spirit taught me why and what brought the three of us there. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the gospel that brought Sister Loh and me to the MTC. It is the gospel that made Sister Cottrell such a wonderful, loving person. It is the gospel that gave the three of us the knowledge that we are all children of God. **NE**



I suddenly remembered a talk by Elder Kenneth Johnson of the Seventy. We had read it in our seminary class, taught by our cheerful teacher, Sister Leone A. Aiono. I picked up the seminary book that lay next to me and read the words I had written: "There's no place like home."

I took the letter I had written and threw it in the trash. Although at that time of spiritual immaturity I was not fond of praying, the temptations that I faced urged me to pray often. I became convinced that the lessons I received in seminary are true and honest. I am grateful for my parents, for raising me in the gospel filled with good lessons that slowly change my life. The Church is true. **NE**

THE PROPHET'S INFLUENCE

BY ATTAH Y. FRED OMOKHUDU

Ever since I joined the Church in 1994, many Church members have had an impact for good in my life. However, the positive influence of the prophet, President Gordon B.

Hinckley, cannot be overemphasized.

I may not have met him physically, but spiritually I feel I have. Whenever I read his inspired messages, I imagine him talking to me one-to-one with his hand on my shoulder. A First Presidency Message entitled "Life's Obligations" (see *Ensign*, Feb. 1999, 2) helped me understand that although income is important, I do not need to be a multimillionaire to be happy. This message has brought me inner peace and satisfaction.

Encouraged also by the prophet's counsel in that same message not to waste the great days of preparation for my future work, I decided to enroll in a computer engineering training college for one year. I was undertaking my one year of National Youth Service in Nigeria and resolved to use my time judiciously. At the end of the program, I knew how to repair and install computer systems. Now my first successful appointment after my year of service is based on my added knowledge of computer systems.

I am closer to my friends and relatives than ever before. They understand and respect my standards now—simply because I've been living the counsel of the prophet. What a positive influence he has on me! How grateful I am to be under the guidance of a living prophet. **NE**



TATTOOS

AND YOUR MISSION

BY SHANNA BUTLER
Church Magazines

Imagine you are standing outside a beautiful white temple. Its walls and grounds are immaculate. On the lawn near the front door is a painter. He has displays of his art for all to see.

A few minutes later, you see this painter turn around, pull out cans of paint, and start to paint on the walls of the temple. His painting isn't ugly, but it just doesn't belong there. Do you say anything to him? Do you ask him to make his picture bigger and more colorful and offer to pay him for his work? Or do you say, "You can't do that! This is a holy temple!"?

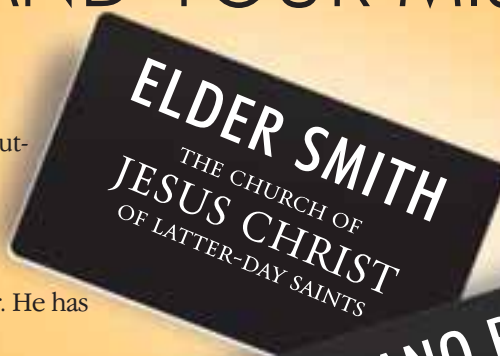
What would you do if it were *your* temple? The Apostle Paul said, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? . . . For the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Corinthians 3:16–17).

"A tattoo is graffiti on the temple of the body," said President Gordon B. Hinckley.¹

Tattoos are permanent. They are not only physically damaging, but through disobedience to the voice of the prophets, choosing to get one causes spiritual damage also. On top of that, something you might not have thought about before is that having a tattoo will affect your application to be a missionary.

Bobby's Mistake

When Bobby Collins (name has been changed) sent his



mission papers off, he was surprised that he did not get back a large white envelope containing his mission call. Instead, he

received a letter from the Church's Missionary Department asking about his tattoo.

When Bobby graduated from high school, he wasn't

sure if he wanted to go on a mission. He moved away from home to

work, and he liked the independence of not having his parents around all the time. At about the same time, his best friend and his cousin both got tattoos. "That kind of lowered my guard," he says.

Bobby had always been good at art, so he designed his own tattoo. He knew tattoos were discouraged by the Church and that his mother wouldn't like it, and before he went to get it, he asked his brother what he thought about it. His brother had some good advice. He said, "Life already gives us so many scars. Why would you want another one?"

But Bobby had already made up his mind. Six weeks and 700 hard-earned dollars later, he had a huge tattoo all the way up one leg. "It was really painful. It was bloody," he remembers. And "getting one made it easier to think about getting more." He didn't get any more, but after strengthening his testimony of the gospel, he did decide

he wanted to serve a mission.

As painful as getting his tattoo was, the pain of regret that Bobby felt was much worse. He was very worried about whether or not he would be able to serve a mission. He wanted to get the tattoo removed but couldn't afford to. He worried what his future spouse and children might think of it.

"That letter from the Missionary Department

scared me a lot," Bobby says. "My biggest fear was that this one thing was going to hold me back from serving a mission."

Bobby had to do what the Missionary Department asks all missionary applicants who have tattoos to do. On his original application he told them a little about his tattoo. The letter he received later requested a few more details, including an explanation of when and why he got it and where it is located on the body as well as a description or

photograph of it. He was also asked to describe how he felt about it.

When a missionary candidate with a tattoo applies, General Authorities review each case and decide whether that candidate will be allowed to serve a mission. Some cannot.

Bobby did receive his mission call. He is grateful to be a missionary and sorry that, now a representative of the Lord's Church, he once decided to get a tattoo.

For some missionaries, having a tattoo means being assigned to serve in a place where their tattoo is either culturally accepted or to a colder climate where long sleeves, and tights for women, will cover their tattoos. Not only can a tattoo limit where you can serve, but,



YOU ARE HIS CREATION

"You are a child of God. Your body is His creation. Would

you disfigure that creation with portrayals of people, animals, and words painted into your skin?

"I promise you that the time will come, if you have tattoos, that you will regret your actions. They cannot be washed off. They are permanent. Only by an expensive and painful process can they be removed. If you are tattooed, then probably for the remainder of your life you will carry it with you. I believe the time will come when it will be an embarrassment to you. Avoid it. We, as your Brethren who love you, plead with you not to become so disrespectful of the body which the Lord has given you."

—President Gordon B. Hinckley, "A Prophet's Counsel and Prayer for Youth," *Ensign*, Jan. 2001, 8.

depending on its content and your feelings about it, it could also determine whether you serve at all.

Advice for Future Missionaries

"I just hope people will follow President Hinckley's counsel," Bobby says. "I know that he is a prophet of God. If he says it's important, then it's important."

Bobby has some counsel of his own too, the same counsel his brother gave him: "Even though we can be forgiven through the Atonement, why do something else that's going to leave us scarred?" **NE**

NOTE

1. "Great Shall Be the Peace of Thy Children," *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 52.

FROM A HEALTH-CARE PROFESSIONAL

Inna Prokopenko is a registered nurse and licensed master aesthetician in Salt Lake City, Utah. She has attempted to remove many tattoos in her years of work. Here is some of what Inna has to say about tattoos:

PHYSICAL RISKS



- One big physical risk of getting a tattoo is ink allergies. They can develop right away or in six months to a year after someone is tattooed. Ink allergies make the tattooed part of your body swell up and get red and itchy. If you are allergic and ink gets into your bloodstream, you could become very ill.
- Blood-borne illnesses are another risk. If needles and other equipment are not properly sterilized, it is possible to get HIV or other illnesses.

REMOVALS

- Regret for being tattooed is more than a risk—it is a certainty for all of Inna's patients. Many people try to get tattoos removed so they can look more professional at their jobs or to show a good example to their children.

- Laser tattoo removal can remove some tattoos—at least partially—but removal is much more painful than getting tattooed in the first place.
- Laser treatments don't usually cause scarring, but there is a possibility.
- Yellow tattoos or tattoos using yellow inks cannot be removed without surgery.
- Removal treatments take a long time and are very expensive—much more expensive than getting the tattoo.



Mutual Activity Idea

- Organize an evening for each person to learn housekeeping and personal skills. Divide into small groups and learn to iron a shirt and sew on buttons. Learn to cook something simple but nutritious. You can even have contests as you learn household skills like mopping a floor or dusting. Not only will these skills come in handy as you leave home and serve a mission, but they can be put to use helping your family now.

Personal Progress or Duty to God

- Learn how to handle your money. With the help of your parents, make a budget and stick to it for two months. Open a savings account and, along with

paying your tithing, pay yourself by saving a percentage of what you make.

Family Home Evening Ideas

- After reading parts of “The Handiwork of God,” by Elder M. Russell Ballard on page 2, arrange for your family to go outside in your neighborhood or perhaps to a park. Challenge each family member to examine and then explain some creation in nature they find interesting.
- Review Matthew 6:9–13, referred to in Line upon Line on page 11. Before the closing prayer, have members of your family practice using proper prayer language.

SUNDAY LESSON HELPS

In addition to the Resource Guides (printed in May and November in the *Ensign*), Young Women and Aaronic Priesthood teachers may find these additional resources helpful in enhancing lessons 11–15.

Young Women Manual 1

Lesson 11: Growing and Maturing in Self-reliance, Part 1

Sheena James, “Alone,” *New Era*, this issue, 22.
 Kristi Linton, “Money Matters,” *New Era*, Sept. 2004, 34.

Lesson 12: Growing and Maturing in Self-reliance, Part 2

Poster, “You’re Never Big Enough,” this issue, 17.
 Richard Moore, “My Trust Fund,” *New Era*, Oct. 1999, 34.
 Shanna Butler, “How to Talk to Your Parents,” *New Era*, June 2005, 30.

Lesson 13: Sustaining Priesthood Bearers

H. David Burton, Richard C. Edgley, and Keith B. McMullin, “The Miracle of the Priesthood,” *New Era*, Apr. 2004, 12.
 “A Worldwide Priesthood,” *New Era*, May 2004, 44.

Lesson 14: Patriarchal Leadership in the Home

James E. Faust, “Your Patriarchal Blessing,” *New Era*, Nov. 2005, 4.
 Rosemarie Deppe, “My Fathers,” *New Era*, June 2003, 8.
 Néna Fairbanks, “Blessed to Perform,” *New Era*, Feb. 2006, 45.

Lesson 15: The Melchizedek Priesthood

Keith R. Waters, “Get Me Out of This!” *New Era*, June 2005, 8.
 Bruce R. McConkie, “Only an Elder,” *New Era*, Jan. 2003, 36.

Aaronic Priesthood Manual 1

Lesson 11: “As I Have Loved You, Love One Another”

Jed Layton, “Looking Up to Jake,” this issue, 24.
 Idea List: “Cooling Your Anger,” *New Era*, Feb. 2006, 9.

Lesson 12: Following the Living Prophet

“General Conference Worksheet: Listening for Answers,” this issue, 40.
 Keith Crockett, “Follow the Trail,” *New Era*, Mar. 2004, 42.

Lesson 13: Every Member Is a Missionary

Q&A: “How can I prepare to teach the gospel. . . ?” *New Era*, Jan. 2006, 14.
 David A. Pinkston, “The Answer I Forgot,” *New Era*, Jan. 2006, 8.

Lesson 14: Serving Others

“Storming into Service,” *New Era*, Sept. 2005, 40.
 George Brewer, “Wood for the Widows,” *New Era*, Dec. 2005, 36.
 Carl Webb, “Something Better to Do,” *New Era*, Nov. 2005, 14.

Lesson 15: Unity and Brotherhood in the Priesthood

To the Point, “Youth in my ward . . . don’t get along,” *New Era*, Nov. 2005, 36.
 Idea List: “Including Everyone,” *New Era*, Jan. 2006, 37.

PATRIARCHAL BLESSINGS

I would like to thank you for the article on patriarchal blessings in the November 2005 *New Era*. What was amazing was that I received the issue six days before I got my patriarchal blessing. It helped me to understand what it means and how it can help me in my life.

Kieren C., Scotland

SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS

I wanted to thank you for all the help this magazine has given me. It seems that you write this magazine especially for me, as each month the solutions to my problems arrive in the mail. I know the Lord often answers my prayers through the *New Era*. I was baptized about four years ago and since that time had never read any Church magazines. I thought ordering Church magazines was a waste of time, but a few months ago I decided to just do it. I love them so much that now I'm keeping an archive of *New Era* magazines and other Church magazines so I can refer to them any time I have a problem. What a shame I didn't order them earlier!

Evelyn S., Victoria, Australia

OVERCOMING TEMPTATION

Thank you for the article "Four Heavenly Helps" (Aug. 2005). I really enjoyed reading this article, and I read and reread it often. It helps me to be prepared to overcome temptations. I am now carrying the small version of the *For the Strength of Youth* with me.

Balmoris G., Guatemala

PONDERING SCRIPTURES

I read the Idea List on seminary (Sept. 2005). It helped me find the best way to read the scriptures. This is my first year in

seminary, and now I take the scriptures more seriously and ponder them a bit more. I didn't really understand the scriptures before; I would read one chapter and then not go back to it. I think it's a great Idea List because it tells how to ponder the scriptures and understand them better.

Jared M., Utah

WINNER!

I just thought I would let you know that the recipe in "The Family Secret" (Nov. 2004) is a winner, literally. My daughter Beth entered the rolls in the Georgia National Fair and won first place in her division!

Thanks for the great magazine and the teachings you deliver.

Desi E., Georgia

KNOWLEDGE PROJECT

When I was called to work with the Beehives, the first thing I did was subscribe to the *New Era*. That was the best decision I have made. It has wonderful articles written for the youth. Many times I have been able to use articles from the *New Era* for my lessons. I even chose reading the *New Era* for three consecutive months for my knowledge project. It was a fun project and one I try to continue every month. Reading the *New Era* is a good habit to get into.

Christine W., Utah

We love hearing from you. Write us at the following address. Please include the names of your ward and stake (or branch and district).

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50 E. North Temple St. Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA*

Or e-mail us at

newera@ldschurch.org

Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.



"Each month solutions to my problems arrive in the mail. I know the Lord often answers my prayers through the New Era."



DRINKING SCRIPTURES

BY SANDRA L. TOLMAN

Absorbing the pages into my soul,
like sunlight into leaves,
I revel in the glory of words
borne aloft by wings
of faith and Spirit,
raising words from the dust
to iridescent hymns whose tones
my soul seems to recognize,
words which mean more
each time the gift is opened
and the treasure is read.
These pages blossom open
beneath my fingers,
and with an open soul
I read, and like an open vessel,
I am filled to brimming,
for these are the waters of life,
and these are His words,
and I will drink
until I thirst no more.



“The Gospel has helped me to stay positive and to try and make the best of what I have.”

See “Looking Up to Jake,” p. 24.

