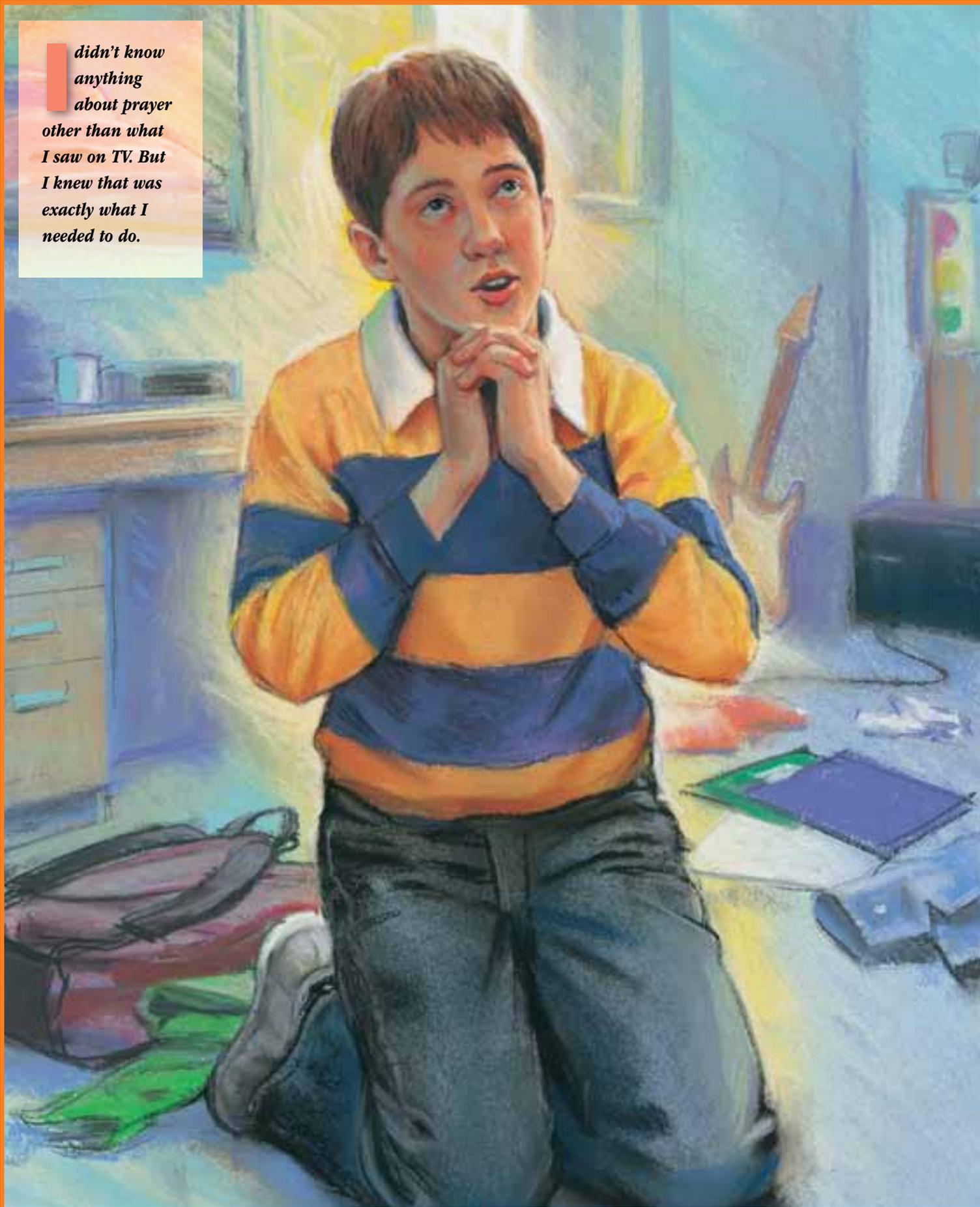


I didn't know anything about prayer other than what I saw on TV. But I knew that was exactly what I needed to do.



"THIS IS ACE"

BY ACE STRYKER

When I was seven, I learned one of the greatest lessons of my life. We were studying the environment in school. We discussed pollution and ways we could help decrease its terrible effects on the world. We talked about the oceans and how, even in little ways, we could change some of the things we do at home to make the world safer for all creatures.

I was still pretty young then, but I really took what we had been learning to heart. To me, the environment is a very important thing. The more I learned about why we should conserve our natural resources, the more I wanted everyone else to know the same things and think they were just as important as I did. I became a seven-year-old warrior fighting in the everyday battle to save Mother Nature.

One day, I came home from school having just finished drinking a soda. We had a recycling bin, which we used regularly, and with my newfound enthusiasm for caring about the environment, I went straight to toss my empty bottle in.

"Stop," my mom said over her shoulder. "Our recycling company doesn't allow us to recycle green plastic."

I was shocked. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. The recycling companies were supposed to be the heroes; why would they say we could recycle some things and not others? It didn't make any sense to me. Disappointed, I dropped my bottle in the trash and headed back toward my room.

At that moment, I had an impression I'd never had before. Coming from a family that was not very religious, we had never had family prayer or even knew what prayer was, other than what



we had seen on TV. But right then that was exactly what I felt I needed to do: get on my knees by my bed and pray about it. So I slipped into my room and, not really knowing how to begin, gave it a simple try.

"God," I started quietly, "this is Ace. Thank you for the environment. Please let us recycle green plastic bottles in this area. It's really important." I closed with an "amen" and waited. I didn't know what to expect. Although I wasn't visited by angels or struck by lightning, I did feel something I had never felt before. As I sat there, I felt good. I felt like I wasn't alone in the room anymore, although there clearly wasn't any other person I could see. Something told me that what I had just done was right.

Life continued the same as it always had. In fact, by the next afternoon I had been so involved in usual things at school that I had mostly forgotten about the green bottle episode and the prayer.

When I got home, I went back to my room, but before long my mom called my name and asked me to come to the kitchen. When I did, I saw that she had a letter in her hand. She explained that it was from the recycling company stating that now we could recycle green plastics in addition to other things.

She handed me the letter. I looked it over, but I couldn't believe it. The same feeling I had had the day before came rushing back to me. It was an answer.

That was an experience that has never left me. Every time I think about it, I'm still amazed that it could have happened at all. And it was this experience that, three years later, helped me to feel the truth of the gospel when the missionaries came knocking at our family's door. It was the same feeling. **NE**

