



BELIEVE IT TO THE BONE



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Is your commitment to the gospel more than skin deep? Here are some tips from teens in Trinidad about how to live what you believe.

If you love Trinidad, they say you're "Trini to de bone." Mark, Peaches, and Curfew are also LDS "to the bone."

When you really believe in something, when you know with all your heart that it's right and that you will defend it and live by it, how do you express that feeling? If you live in Trinidad and feel that way about your culture, they say you are "Trini to de bone."

A similar expression could apply to young Latter-day Saints in Trinidad. Because they know the Church is true and that they will stand up for it and live by its standards no matter what, you could say that they are Latter-day Saints "to the bone." They don't just live the gospel on the surface; it's in every thought and action.

Bone Builders

Here are some of the things youth in the Arima



Branch, Port of Spain Trinidad District, recommend that you should do to build your own spiritual “bones.”

Stay morally clean. On billboards and TV, in videos and magazines, even in conversations with some friends, unclean thoughts seem to jump in anywhere you’ll permit them. The best way to beat them is to fill your mind with worthy thoughts instead. “My favorite scripture is D&C 121:45,” says Curfew Sherazade Ali, 17. “If we learn now

to have clean thoughts, then we will want to be around others who think the same way. And at the last day, when we meet the Savior, we won’t be ashamed. We will have the confidence to face Him



because we will be worthy to stand in His presence.”

Choose good music. “Music is an issue here,” says Curfew. “Dancing, too.” Every weekend in Trinidad, clubs blast loud beats into the streets, and people waiting to dance mill around outside in less-than-modest clothing. On the other hand, Curfew says, “Good music doesn’t degrade you or anyone else. It doesn’t use foul language or drive the Spirit away. Good music can help you feel calm, cheer you up, or help you get closer to your Heavenly Father.” So if you want to feel better, club hopping isn’t the answer. Instead, surround yourself with songs that are uplifting and inspirational, and go to—or organize—dances where standards are observed.



Make good friends. Peer pressure is another challenge for youth in Trinidad, according to Mark Christian Mangray, 17. “No matter what wrong things some of your peers might try to influence you to do, you need to choose the right. Good friends with high standards make that a lot easier. Be a good example yourself, and look for friends who will be a good example to you.” Peaches Clarke, 16, says that once you establish a reputation for being good, it gets easier and easier. “People know me, and they know I won’t do things that are wrong,” Peaches says. Though some will tease or make fun, most will respect your beliefs if you stand strong.

Get an education, but also become wise. Curfew dreams of working as a marine biologist, and Mark talks about becoming an environmentalist, surveyor, or maybe even a pilot. But they both agree that there is a difference between learning and wisdom. “We can study many things,” Mark explains. “But unless we also learn the gospel, we may have knowledge without understanding.”

Build strength daily. One of the best ways to build spiritual bones is through scripture study. “The



Peaches loves to talk with other LDS youth about the blessings that the gospel brings into her life. She was one of many who rejoiced on the day that Kimberly and Jenelle were baptized.



DANCING TO A DIFFERENT BEAT

Peaches Clarke, 16, loves to dance. “Latin, mostly, or jazz. I dance all the time, just for fun.”

But when her school dance class in Port of Spain, Trinidad, received the costumes for their next performance, Peaches knew she had to make a move—not on the dance floor but straight to the instructor.

“They wanted us to wear strapless costumes, short dresses that I could not wear,” she says. “I

said, ‘No way!’ So I told the dance instructor. I was afraid he would dismiss me from the class or tell me I couldn’t perform. But instead he said, ‘Okay, you can wear whatever you want,’ and I gained the opportunity to wear a different costume.”

Peaches learned something important. “The standards in *For the Strength of Youth* have helped me many times,” she says. “But that day, they helped me in the classroom.”



stories in the scriptures help me know I'm not the only one who faces challenges and trials," Mark says. "I love the story of Alma. He was one of the high priests of wicked King Noah, but he listened to Abinadi and knew he must repent. The scriptures show me that it's happened before and these people found a way to learn from their mistakes." In Trinidad such scripture study takes place daily through home-study seminary. Then on Saturdays, all of the students get together and discuss what they have learned.

"What helps me be strong every day," Curfew says, "is thinking about the promises the Lord made to the prophets of old, like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I have faith in those promises. Each day, I think about what the Lord would have me do in each circumstance I am facing. I try to act as if He is right beside me, and I try to be a good example to those around me, because they may want to come unto Christ, too."

A Great Day

Two other Arima Branch members who were influenced by that kind of example are Jenelle and Kimberly Phillip, who were recently baptized and confirmed along with their mother.

"I saw all the good things they are doing in the Church,

and I wanted to be a part of it too," says Jenelle, 12. The other youth, she adds, have really made her feel welcome.

Kimberly, 17, says a turning point came when their mother heard them talking about baptism. "She said that she liked the Church and that she wanted to be baptized, too! I really like it that she was baptized and confirmed at the same time and place that we were."

All of the youth came for the baptismal service, and Kimberly says that means a lot to her, too. "It feels nice being a part of the Church and learning about Heavenly Father and how He wants us to live," she says. "We know that in the Church the living prophets teach everyone the word of God. When I learned about that I said, 'This is right for me.'"

Believers to the Bone

With belief like that, both Kimberly and Jenelle are well on their way to becoming Latter-day Saints to the bone. It's a feeling well known to all of the LDS youth in Trinidad, a feeling Peaches sums up when she says, "I feel blessed. Before I understood the gospel, I didn't really have any idea of who I am. But now, I feel like I have purpose. I am a child of God, and He put me here for a reason, so I had better fulfill it." And she feels it, all the way to her bones. **NE**