

BEING THE NEW KID

I was having a hard time feeling like I fit in. My family had recently moved to the East Coast from California after living there for the first 15 years of my life. The ward we moved to had a good-sized youth group, but this was the first time that I would be the “new kid.” I figured that since I had been friendly with the new people in

our ward back in California, this new youth group would be the same way with me. It was a lot tougher than I had imagined. The worst part was going to a new school. I worried about who I would sit with at lunch. Maybe I’d see someone from church, but then again, I didn’t want to barge in on someone else’s lunch table, especially since I didn’t know if they would want me there to begin with.

The first day of school seemed to drag on forever. I kept feeling as though everyone was staring at me. Then the lunch bell rang. As I slowly entered into the lunch room, I prayed to Heavenly Father to help me find someone I knew. I glanced around to see if I could

recognize anyone. No one. So I made my way to a table on the far side of the lunch room and ate my lunch.

Later that day during my math period, there was a familiar face. I had seen David at seminary that morning. At the beginning of class he and a couple of people around him asked to see my schedule. He discovered that we both had the same lunch period.

“Hey where were you at lunch today?”

“I was there. I ate on the far side of the room,” I responded.

He thought for a second trying to remember seeing me. Then he said, “Well, tomorrow come and sit with me at lunch.”

I’m grateful for a loving Heavenly



Father, who knows each of our needs individually and who answers each of our prayers. I'm so grateful for someone who was willing to extend a hand of friendship. Something as simple as an invitation can make all the difference in the world.

Matthew O., Kansas

MY DAD, MY EXAMPLE

Dad made each of us kids feel special. He would look after each of us and talk to us like an equal. He loved us unconditionally and would forgive easily if we said we were sorry. He did his best to make sure that each of us was happy, and he made it clear that he wanted the best for us. I loved him so much.

When I was in sixth grade my dad died in a car accident. My family and I were totally devastated. There was a big hole in our family. I was totally lost. Dad was the one I leaned on, the one I went to if I was having problems. I felt that he had no right to leave me. Instead of seeking help, I let the anger and hurt stay. I finally decided it was God's fault. I stopped reading my scriptures and saying prayers. I only went to church because Mom wanted me to. I tried to stay far away from my Heavenly Father.

Then I had my first year of girls' camp. Mom made me go, and I had fun. I liked meeting new friends, but I still didn't really read my scriptures. On the last night we had a testimony meeting. I felt something I hadn't in a long time—the Spirit. I admired the girls who got up and bore their

TURN BACK

On the second day of young women's camp, we went on a five-mile hike. We had to climb over a cattle gate to continue on the trail, which led up a hill. Climbing through the gate, we found a dying cow at the bottom of the hill. One of our leaders went back to find a rancher as the rest of us continued our hike.

On the way back, I was in a slower group, five girls and our leader. They were busy taking pictures, so I decided to go ahead. As I walked down the hill I heard a cow. My first thought was that it was the dying cow. A warning voice, firm yet silent, said "Turn back." I almost ignored it, but it came again. This time I listened and returned to the group. As we started down, we saw two enormous black bulls walking fast and angrily up the hill. The biggest one started pawing the ground as he stared at us, possibly angered by the dead cow at the bottom of the hill. We were

testimonies, but I stayed seated because I thought I didn't have one. All of a sudden I felt like I had to get up. It took a while, but I did get up. I opened my mouth wondering what to say, because I didn't know that the Church was true or anything like that. So I started like the other girls did. I said I was glad for girls' camp, which was true. Then I found myself saying that I knew Jesus died for me and that my Heavenly Father loved me and that the Church was true. And the most amazing thing was that I knew what I was saying was absolutely true.

I was filled with a remarkable

scared out of our minds, but our priesthood leader distracted it, and we were able to climb over a fence to safety.

As we entered camp again, I realized that if I hadn't listened to the warning from the Spirit, I could have been badly hurt or even killed. I knew that Heavenly Father cared about me personally and had kept me safe. I am so thankful to the Lord for that warning. This experience strengthened my testimony and gave me a greater love for the Lord.

Marissa W., Utah

peace that I hadn't felt in a long time. Then I realized that all the things I loved about my dad were attributes of Christ and that my dad was trying to show me not just how much he loved me but how much Jesus and Heavenly Father loved me. I was so grateful for that. Because of this experience I can really say that this is the true Church, that I have a Heavenly Father who loves me more than I could ever imagine, and that Jesus loves me and died for me. I also know that I will see my dad again because of the Atonement and Resurrection.

Morgan W., Florida



WHAT BAPTISM MEANS

The main reason I went to church my junior year of high school was because my parents never gave me any other option. But I had an experience that changed my life. One Sunday a new girl was in our Sunday school class. I felt prompted to slide over a few chairs and introduce myself. As we talked, I realized that Kristeen was very shy, so I took it upon myself to introduce her to our class. I assumed she had just moved into the ward, and she and I became fast friends.

A month and a half after she joined our class, I received a phone call from our ward mission leader. He told me that Kristeen and her mother were getting baptized and that Kristeen wanted me to speak at her baptism. I was floored; I thought Kristeen was a member all along. I also felt like I was the wrong person to speak on baptism, but I accepted the invitation.

To prepare for the talk, I used some scriptures on baptism, the fourth article of faith, and a good-sized chunk out of *True to the Faith* and called it good.

The day of Kristeen's baptism was beautiful. She looked so confident and cheerful. I could tell she was excited and ready for baptism. Then it came time for me to speak. I've always felt comfortable speaking in front of large groups, so the talk seemed cohesive. Things were going well until I read Romans 6:4: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

I could feel the Spirit, and I knew that I had not been keeping my baptismal covenants fully. I started crying and did my best to finish my talk. I was jealous of Kristeen, that she was going to be baptized and have the slate of her life wiped clean and renewed. But I was even more overcome by feelings of happiness for her and for her strength. She wanted to follow Christ.

How wonderful it is to know that we can be made pure by baptism and that if we fall even a little short, we can repent and be made whole again through the atoning sacrifice of Christ. I am so thankful for my Heavenly Father's plan and for Jesus Christ and His eternal sacrifice for me. I know that if I keep trying my best and continue to repent, I can also "walk in newness of life."

Hannah G., Texas

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