

# FRIENDSHIP OR HONESTY?

BY EMILY HOPKINS

I placed my heavy textbook down on the table as the bell rang for first period. My biology teacher was finishing up some work at his computer. "Hello Hop," he said as I walked in. I sat down and unzipped my pink backpack, pulling out my homework while the other students came through the open door. I had worked hard to get my worksheet on plants done late the night before.

I greeted my friend sitting in the chair next to me. I had fun chatting

with her every morning at the beginning of biology class.

"Emily, I need your help," she said.

"What can I do for you?" I responded cheerfully.

"I couldn't get my homework done, and I was wondering if I could use your answers. I've missed so much being sick, and I really need to get this assignment in or my grade will drop."

My mind started to whirl. "But isn't that cheating?" I questioned in amazement.

"Well, I already did this assignment, I just don't have it with me now. Can I hurry and copy your paper before class starts?"

She was my friend and I really wanted to help her. It was a fill-in-the-blank worksheet, so the teacher wouldn't know they were my answers. He was busy, so he wouldn't see her copying my notes. I sat there undecided, a battle raging in my mind. Should I help her cheat, or should I refuse to help my friend? It was true that she had been sick and missed



a lot of class, and I really wanted to be a good friend.

As I hesitated, my mind made a long list of reasons why it would be OK to help her. On the other hand, I knew it wouldn't be right. Then I made a choice. I wanted to be a reliable friend, but even more, I wanted to be honest.

Apprehensively, I turned toward her. "I wish I could help you, but I don't feel right about letting you use my answers," I said. "I am really sorry."

It was hard for me to disappoint my friend, but I had a good feeling inside, one that comes from knowing I had kept my integrity and been honest even with a good friendship on the line. As my teacher started the day's lesson, many students in that first period biology class thought it was just a normal day. But for me, it was a day to remember. That day marked an important decision in my life. That choice defined what was honest and what wasn't honest. The next time I faced someone asking me to share my answers, I had already made my decision. I had made the resolve to be honest under all circumstances. **NE**

## NOT A DROP

BY TAMSYN OPIE

**W**here I live, we have no cinemas, no bowling alleys. The only thing a lot of teenagers think there is to do around here, it seems, is party and drink alcohol. Peer pressure can also be overwhelming. What makes it worse is that there are only a few active

## GRATITUDE AT TWILIGHT

BY RUSSELL TAYLOR

**L**et's go," the voice of our group counselor rang out. My week at a college program in Idaho had barely begun, and it was already the end of the first day. We walked a short distance from our campsite with the bright blue of the sun's disappearance just fading below the horizon. Our counselor stopped us all on the dirt road in the center of a field and told us we could go off alone to try to get in touch with the Spirit. I had already chosen my spot—behind us and down a hill, in a stand of trees.

As I slipped away from the rest of my group, I sat down in the grass and began to think. I began to hear the noises of small insects in the grass around me. I then picked up a small pink flower, noticing the details and

members of the Church at my school.

One afternoon at work I talked with a male friend of mine. The conversation eventually turned to drinking. "I don't drink, ever. Not a drop," I said. He gave me a strange look, and then, in a low voice, said, "I wish I could do that. I could never stick with decisions like that." He started picking on me for my standards, but I knew that deep down he fully respected me.

A few months later, the same friend had a birthday party, and I went, not knowing what would be going on there. My friend walked around with a \$50 note in his hands, which I jokingly snatched from his

intricacies that made it. As the sky grew darker, I looked up, noticing the perfectly clear field of millions of stars hovering above me. As I sat thinking, the scriptures about God's creations popped into my mind. God had created worlds more numerous than the sands of the sea, and yet I looked down at the flower in my hand, at how intricately formed it was. The rest of the week I felt grateful for God's creations and His care for even the smallest of them. **NE**

hand, thanking him. He sat down next to me. "Okay," he said. "You can keep the money, but only if you sip some alcohol." I politely refused and gave him the money. He was shocked that somebody would pass up a \$50 note. Then, he told me how strong and brave I was. The person sitting on the other side of him said good things about me. It was cool—one of the best feelings I have ever had.

I learned that people respect our standards and expect us to stay true to them. If we're not true to our standards, we don't earn respect from them or ourselves. People notice everything we do. **NE**

