

# FEELING THE Spirit



*Teens in the Ipswich England Stake talk about how they know when the Spirit is guiding their lives.*



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JANET THOMAS



## By Janet Thomas

Church Magazines

Three years ago, Edward Pentreath was attending a large youth activity in England, where he lives, when he remembers feeling the Spirit in an overwhelming way.

“After the evening fireside, I went back to my room. I was praying, and suddenly I realized that this gospel is all true. I was so happy. All I could say was, ‘It’s true. I know it’s true.’ I remember calling a good

friend of mine. When he picked up the phone, all he could hear was me saying, ‘It’s true! It’s so fantastic!’ ”

Now when Edward, a member of Ipswich England Stake, describes the feeling he had that night when the Holy Ghost testified of the truthfulness of the gospel, he describes it as a “warm shiver and a tingle which went through my body.” He has learned to recognize that feeling. He says he feels the Spirit often now that his friends are going on missions and as they have opportunities to bear their testimonies at camp, at youth conferences, or in church.

Edward was just one of the teens the *New Era* interviewed in the Ipswich England Stake.

When we began talking about what it is like to feel the Spirit, a change came over each group. As they talked about this special subject, the teens sat up a little straighter, they were focused on what their friends were saying, and their eyes sparkled. When they told of their own experiences, just like Edward, they could remember in vivid detail what it was like to feel the Spirit.

*“I felt comforted that everything would be OK.”*

### Strengthening Each Other

The teens from the different wards in the Ipswich stake enjoy being around each other. They really like going to youth conferences—or conventions as they are sometimes called—where something as simple as singing together can bring the Spirit. Rebecca Fagg remembers attending her first youth convention as a 14-year-old. “I was struggling a bit and finding attending church to be quite a lot of effort. Then I went to the youth convention.

The power of all the youth together made me realize how great it is to be able to go to meetings like that. When we sang, I was overwhelmed by the Spirit. I just burst into tears.”

Music was mentioned several times as a way to feel the Spirit. Seth Spencer, remembering how he felt at youth conference, said, “When you come together and hear about 1,000 people behind you singing, it’s so powerful.”

Simply attending church and doing the things they are asked to do helps these teens in their search for truth. James Mateer said, “I’m deacons quorum president now, and I look out for a few people. I like feeling of the Spirit guiding me. It’s peaceful. I feel happy.”

### Parents Can Help

“I didn’t know what feeling the Spirit felt like until the start of this year,” said Tiago Pereira. “I was speaking to my dad, and he really

## COMING BACK

Cliff Frances had, as he describes it, “slowly drifted away” from the gospel in his early teens. Three years later, he was invited to attend stake camp with the Young Men. He remembered loving these camps, so he agreed to go. Cliff was unaware that for several years his friends and family members had been praying that something would touch his heart.

Camp was great fun. Then came the last night’s testimony meeting around a campfire. Cliff felt he needed to be there, but he also felt he had slipped so far from the gospel that it may be impossible for him to change. “Something just told me this is the place to be. This is the right Church. It shocked me. While listening to the speakers, I was asking questions in my mind, and every time I asked anything, I would get an answer, literally every few seconds.”

As testimonies were borne, Cliff continued to get answers. “I would think of some doubt, then someone would stand and bear their testimony and tell a story relating to what I was thinking about and would answer my question.”

Overwhelmed, Cliff asked his best friend if he could go to church with him the next day. Thrilled by the news, his friend invited him to come with him. Cliff told him, “I don’t want to come just once. I have to come every week. There’s no way that I can deny it now.”

And Cliff’s life changed. Now he attends church every week. He’s also at seminary too. And he says, “Since I’ve come back to church, I feel the Spirit strongly.”



helped me understand. We were just driving along, and my dad asked me if I had a testimony. At first I said, ‘Well, I’m not really sure.’ Then he asked me to describe the feelings I had when I felt the Spirit. As we were talking, I felt

the Spirit again during our conversation. Both of us were crying by the end. It was good. From then on, it’s been easier to understand when I feel the Spirit.”

Seth Spencer summed up the way many of these youth feel about their parents. “My parents are my great teachers and have taught me since I was young to always listen to the Spirit. Whenever you have that warm feeling, that sort of little whisper in your ear, just follow it.”

*“One of my favorite times is every night when I start reading the scriptures.”*

### Speaking Out

Since the teens in Ipswich are often the only members in their school classes, they are sometimes put into the situation of teaching their friends, not just about the Church but about truths in life.

In Lucy Fagg’s case, she had to stand up for the gospel in class.

The teacher was discussing some things about the Church that were wrong. Lucy tried to avoid confronting her, but her friends kept looking at her and asking, “Is this true?”

Lucy raised her hand. “The Spirit really helped me to know what to say, to tell her and my whole class that I was a member. I also felt comfort, and I was helped to answer the questions that everyone was asking me.”

Mary Mateer had an experience similar to Lucy’s. “One time a girl in my class asked a question, and I couldn’t sit and not say anything. It felt like the Spirit was pushing me. My heart was pounding the whole time. I just remember hearing the Spirit say to me, ‘Speak about Noah. Speak about Moses.’ It was the most amazing experience I’ve ever had. The words concerning Noah were in my mind,

clear as day. I remember looking around the room at the people who were listening. You could see they were really listening. I could tell they felt the Spirit and that what I was saying was true.”

*“My parents are my great teachers.”*



## JOY AND THE SPIRIT

“When we understand that being filled with joy involves being filled with the Holy Ghost, we realize that true happiness comes from repenting of our sins and living worthy of the Spirit. In addition, when feeling the Spirit, we can find great joy in knowing that we are being sanctified before God.”

Elder Craig C. Christensen of the Seventy, “Lessons from the New Testament: The Joy of Repentance,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2007, 19.

Such experiences give the teens here confidence. They know that they are not alone. They can rely on the Lord for help.

### Reaching the Lord through Prayer

For some teens, feeling the Spirit is a daily occurrence. “One of my favorite times is every night when I start reading the scriptures. The Spirit is so strong,” says Joshua Donker. “Every day I look forward to reading my scriptures and writing in my journal.”

When Diogo Serra has a little time left after he has finished taking a school exam, he prays. At first he said very short prayers, but he started thinking that he would pray longer. He says that now “I have a conversation with my Heavenly Father. I tell the Lord about my week, what I’ve done, and ask for help or advice. That really makes me feel closer to Him.”

### Times of Comfort

Some of the teens in Ipswich have felt the comforting Spirit of the Lord when they were in frightening situations. Tirion Guy told a story about being on a boat on the River Thames during a windy, stormy day. “The river was choppy, and it seemed to be getting worse. I remember

some of the plates in the kitchen smashed, and the chairs were going everywhere. We had to walk up the sides of the boat so we wouldn’t fall over. While I was on the boat, I felt comforted that everything would be OK. But when we got off, when we were safe and it was calm, then I cried. When I was going through it, I can’t really describe it, but I was comforted.”

### Always with Us

Diana Nunes described one thing about the Spirit that everyone seemed to feel but hadn’t put into words. Diana remembered when she had been sent ahead to live with relatives and start school before the rest of her family moved to England. Her father had given her a blessing, promising her that she would have confidence while they were apart. Diana said, “When he finished the blessing, I knew that when I was feeling alone and no one, not even my parents, could help me, the Spirit would be there to comfort me.”

These teens in Ipswich know that there is a place to turn for comfort, for answers to their questions, and to find peace, because they know that the gift of the Holy Ghost has been given to them. **NE**

