



*An Early-
Morning*
DECISION

By Debra Nance

I loved ice-skating. But when I learned that skating practice would be at the same time as early-morning seminary, I had a choice to make.

At 13, I was a brand-new ice-skater with high hopes. Apparently I showed some aptitude, because after I had had a couple of group lessons, the teacher suggested I take private lessons. My parents agreed, and my ice-skating dream began in earnest. This was great!

To begin with, lessons were once a week, but I practiced more often. Soon I became friends with Jacque. She was short like me but with curly red hair and smiling green eyes. She was a good skater and had taken lessons since she was three. She could do figure eights and other complicated precision skating as well as the fancy jumps, hops, and spins for freestyle. I soon realized that I was “old” to be starting competition skating, but I practiced hard to learn my freestyle routine and precision skating.

Freezing-cold fingers and toes, falls on cold ice, and the tedium of performing the same moves over and over were all part of skating, but the effort was worth it. I loved the exhilaration of jumping, twisting in the air, and successfully landing and of gliding across smooth ice on one foot with my arms extended and cold air rushing past my face.

That winter, Jacque and I enthusiastically watched the Olympics, continued to practice, and even went to a competition where I passed off preliminary figures. She and I did a lot of things together that spring and summer. I tried to share the gospel with her once, but she wasn’t interested. All her thoughts were on skating.

Then one day Jacque said something that nearly took my breath away. She didn’t notice and kept chattering while lacing up her skates, but her words struck at my heart. She had said how much fun we would have at our morning practices when school started in the fall. That was the moment when I realized that skating would conflict with early-morning seminary. That had not occurred to me. I would be a freshman that year and would be eligible for seminary, which was held every morning before school. I could continue with my dream of skating, or I could go to early-morning seminary, but I couldn’t do both. I felt sick. What was I to do?

Though it seemed much longer, in reality it took only a few seconds for me to make a choice. I had been taught correct principles my whole life, and God and Church came first.



I gave up my skating and went to early-morning seminary. Jacque and I drifted apart. But I never regretted my decision. I made more friends and gained a testimony of the scriptures. I have wonderful memories of seminary that I wouldn’t trade for any honors I might have received from ice skating. **NE**

Watch a Video

Just like Debbra, other youth around the world are making the decision to choose seminary over extracurricular activities. You can watch a *Mormon Messages for Youth* video, “Surfing or Seminary?” about a young man in California who made a similar decision at lds.org/go/422.