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Odekirk  
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When

LIFE'S

Always

Changing

*These teens have learned that the gospel provides strength during times of change.*

**Y**ou will experience a lot of changes during your teen years. But you can always rely on a constant source of strength: the gospel and its teachings.

For example, Sarah J. has lived on three continents, learned a new language, and figured out how to navigate through a foreign city with friends, all while still in high school. And she's not the only one. The *New Era* asked teens whose parents work in the diplomatic corps or the military, which means they move often, what they've learned about the strength the gospel brings in adapting to new places, making friends, and staying close to family members who are away.

#### **Adjusting to New Situations**

These teens agree that one of the challenges they face is frequently moving to new places and meeting new people. But with the help of family and of gospel teachings, they have learned to enjoy the experiences.

Sarah, 18, says that keeping an open mind is important. "As soon as my family and I know where we are going, I try to find out about our new ward and the interesting things about our new location," she says.

Tianna, 15, and Bronson E., 13, live in Italy with their family. While they miss their extended family and friends and find it challenging to go to school where a different language is spoken, they appreciate learning about another culture—which is one way they try to strengthen their education (see *For the Strength of Youth* [2011], 9–10). Tianna says, "I go to a linguistic high school and am studying five languages."

Aaron, 16, and Anna A., 14, who are currently in Thailand, have often lived in places where they were the only Church members at their school and the only English-speaking youth in their branch. At school they try to find good friends from other religions (see *For the Strength of Youth*, 16). They also try

to speak some of the new language and are patient as their friends practice speaking English with them. Anna says, "It's hard to not



understand everything being said, so I like to play sports because it's fun and it doesn't matter if we don't speak the same language."

**Bryce R.** "As long as you're trying to make friends and be nice to everyone, people will naturally want to be around you," says Bryce R., 14, of Virginia. "Be outgoing and willing to try new things, go to Mutual activities, and say hello to others. It also helps to get involved in your quorum or class, which are full of camaraderie and almost instant friendships."

### Making New Friends

Attending new wards helps these young men and women appreciate the fellowship of ward members and the worldwide Church. And they understand how you can play a big



role in the lives of similar youth. Several youth in Germany know how it feels to be the new kid, and they say including others is important. "It can be

**Giuliana G.** hard to adapt, but if one person will be your friend, it feels like a load of bricks is taken off your back," says Giuliana G., 16. "If you ever want to make a new person's day, make him or her feel welcome."

There are many ways to help people feel welcome. Hailey S., 17, says, "Smile. Ask them their names and where they came from. When you talk to people and make them feel included, they will be more social, and you never know—they could become your best friends." Spencer G., 19, adds, "Ask them about their interests, and introduce them to all the young men and young women."

Joshua S., 15, in Japan, learned to follow the Spirit and talk to people he meets. "I trust that the Lord will lead me to people who will

## WAYS TO BEFRIEND OTHERS

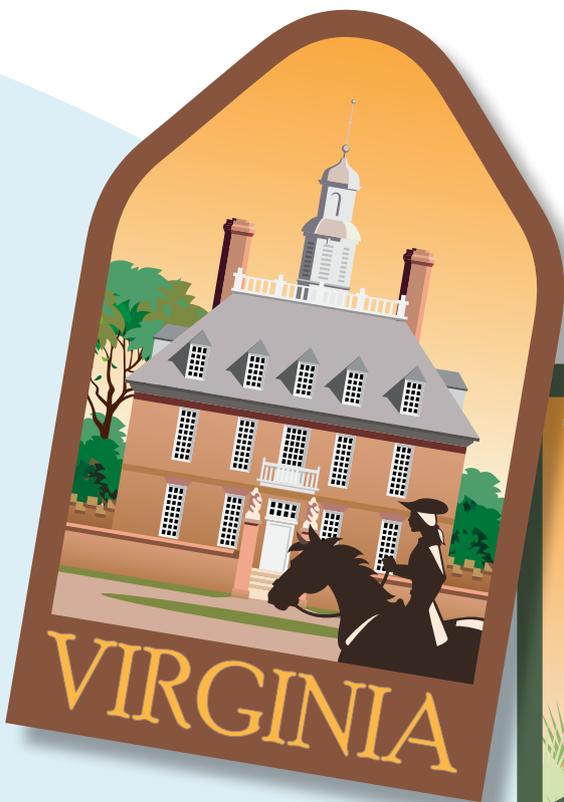
You can strengthen others who are going through change by being a good friend to them:

"One friend set the example for me. He asked questions and showed me around the area, pointing out all of the cool, fun places to see."—Britton H., North Carolina

"Don't make cliques. Talk to new friends and include them in your activities."—Brytt B., Utah

"If there are new people, I try to sit next to them to make them feel more welcome."—Amy H., Maryland

"Talk to new people about where they lived before, what their interests are, and what classes they take in school."—Taylor S., Germany





## WAYS TO GET THROUGH HARD TIMES

The gospel can help you adapt to change:

“Being optimistic and friendly helps me have a positive attitude toward the new place I move to, and with that, friends come.”—Ashley M., Germany

“I trust in the Lord to guide and comfort me. I work hard to maintain daily scripture study and prayer. During deployments I also help out more at home and try to be a peacemaker.”—Joshua S., Japan

“We take it one day at a time. Some days are better than others, but as a family we get through it. I pray a lot and try to attend all Church activities and meetings.”—James B., Texas

“Everyone steps up to keep the household running. We stick together to overcome the challenges.”—Zac C., Germany



**Mia L.**

be good friends. Because of this I have been able to share the gospel and be a good example to my friends,” he says.

Mia, 18, and Lynn L., 16, in Indiana, have moved every two or three years while growing up. They’ve learned a lot during these moves: “We know how it feels to be new to an area, so we look for those who may not be sure of themselves because they are new. Making an effort to fit into a new place is a lot of work. Sometimes we open our arms a little wider and host a party to get to know people.” Mia and Lynn know that their best friends are their family members. “We travel a lot to see each other, and family traditions keep us close.”



**Lynn L.**

### Dealing with Long Distances

One of the hardest challenges for youth comes when a parent is away for an extended period of time because of work,



*“Relocation is hard, but it’s fun to see new sites and homes. I am glad to have the Young Women program; it seems like you make friends faster at church.”—Makayla T., Tennessee*



**Emily S.**

deployment, or divorce. But these teens know that relying on each other and their families gives them strength, and gospel teachings help them feel peace, even during difficult times.

Emily S., 17, in Germany, explains that in a military ward people often move in and out, but they become close as a ward family. “We know we can count on the ward family for help,” she says.

Haley G., 18, in Germany, adds, “There are a lot of people in the ward who have been through moves too, so we depend on each other and talk about our stress and worries.”

“Deployments have helped me gain a lot of responsibility; my mom relies on me to help out with chores that my dad usually does and to be a good example to my younger brother,” says Lucion D., 18, in Texas. “My dad gave each of us a journal to write some of the daily things that happen so he can read about what we are doing and see things from our point of view.”



**Cole R.**

Thanks to modern technology, family members can keep in touch with each other, even across long distances. Cole R., 16, says, “My dad still gives me advice, congratulations, and sometimes a rebuke. When my younger brother and I were advancing in the priesthood, our extended family gathered at our home. My dad was on the computer, watching via video chat. He asked family members to say the prayers. It was a powerful witness that even though we are thousands of miles apart, he is still the patriarch of our home and we are still a family.”

Maddie R., 13, in Virginia, has a “Dad’s box,” where she keeps her father’s letters and pictures. She e-mails him regularly so he doesn’t feel left out. “My dad used to ask me to go on bike rides with him, but I usually said no and didn’t think much about it. But

now I would give almost anything to spend time with him,” she says. “I just want people to not take their parents for granted. You never know what will happen. Sometimes my dad is gone for a short time, sometimes he’s gone for a long time, and sometime,” she pauses for a moment, thinking, “it might just be for the rest of my life.”

Cole says, “One of the greatest blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ is the peace that it brings. Like some of my friends, I could restlessly wonder every night whether I will see my father again. But thanks to the comfort that the plan of salvation brings, I don’t have to worry. I can sleep soundly, knowing that no matter what happens, I will see my dad again. I am so grateful that with the help of my Father in Heaven, I can make it through trying times and know that our family will emerge stronger and closer to Him.” **NE**

*“Moving around so much and being exposed to different points of view has tested everything I thought I knew, but it has also helped strengthen my testimony of Jesus Christ and of the Church.”*  
—Amanda B., Texas



## WAYS TO STAY CLOSE TO LOVED ONES FROM A DISTANCE

Even if family members live far away, you can do several things to help keep your family close:

“My siblings and I send my dad journal entries. It helps him feel more connected to us. He gives us a father’s blessing when he leaves, and my mom writes down the main points so we can refer to them when times are rough.”—Tianna E., Italy

“We make paper chains with as many links as days that my dad is gone. At first the chain seems so long, but we get excited as it gets shorter and shorter.”—Zac C., Germany

“Instead of thinking about my dad leaving, I think about the next time we will see each other and the things we will do.”—Bronson E., Italy

“We send letters and keep in touch through video chat, so we can talk with him.”  
—Jacob W., Germany