

# THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD FRIENDS

Friends have a strong influence on our actions, especially in our youth. “They will influence how you think and act, and even help determine the person you will become.”<sup>1</sup> And when you choose good friends, “they will be a great strength and blessing to you. . . . They will help you be a better person and will make it easier for you to live the gospel of Jesus Christ.”<sup>2</sup>

On pages 26–27 of this month’s *New Era*, Elaine S. Dalton, Young Women general president, teaches the importance of seeking and being a good friend. “Seeking another person’s highest good is the essence of true friendship,” she says.

Building friendships on these principles will help youth form lasting relationships and social skills that go beyond merely becoming “friends” on social networking sites. As a parent you can help your children understand the importance of being a good friend and of choosing friends who will encourage them to live the gospel. The following suggestions may be helpful.

## Suggestions for Teaching Youth

- As a family, search the scriptures for examples of good friends. Discuss what qualities made those friendships strong.

Consider David and Jonathan (see 1 Samuel 18–23), Ruth and Naomi (see Ruth 1–2), and Alma and the sons of Mosiah (see Mosiah 27–28; Alma 17–20).<sup>3</sup>

- Review the section on friends in *For the Strength of Youth*. Share with your teens how friendships influenced your life. Invite them to share how they have influenced and been influenced by their friends.
- Read Sister Dalton’s article in this month’s *New Era*. Talk about the goal her daughter, Emi, set to seek good friends. Help your children set goals about the type of friends they want to seek and be.
- Consider holding a family home evening to share ideas for building friendships, such as: “To have good friends, be a good friend. Show genuine interest in others; smile and let them know you care about them. Treat everyone with kindness and respect, and refrain from judging and criticizing those around you.”<sup>4</sup>

## Suggestions for Teaching Children

- Being a friend includes helping others. Read “Standing Up for



## SCRIPTURES ON FRIENDSHIP

Proverbs 17:17; 18:24

Ecclesiastes 4:9–10

Matthew 25:34–40

Luke 22:32

Mosiah 18:8–9

Caleb” in the March 2009 *Friend* and talk with your children about ways they can be kind to everyone they meet.

- In all situations, we have to decide what kind of friend we’ll be. Sing together “I’m Trying to Be Like Jesus”<sup>5</sup> and then talk with your children about how they can choose to be a good friend, like the Savior, in various settings. ■

## NOTES

1. *For the Strength of Youth* (booklet, 2011), 16.
2. *For the Strength of Youth*, 16.
3. See Jeffrey R. Holland, “Real Friendship,” *New Era*, June 1998, 62–66.
4. *For the Strength of Youth*, 16.
5. “I’m Trying to Be Like Jesus,” *Children’s Songbook*, 78–79.