



Mending

QUILTS MENDING LIVES

BY CAROLYN RUSCH
Repentance truly makes us whole.

As I was preparing to speak to a group of Young Women, I caught myself reflecting on quilts. I wanted to help the girls understand that each of our lives is like a quilt. Just as every quilt has a unique pattern, so too our lives have a pattern uniquely ours. Each piece in our quilt represents a challenge we've had, a blessing received, a truth learned, a talent nurtured, or an experience that has helped shape us into the person we are today—and the person we can become. Some quilts are orderly and have a precise pattern; others are crazy quilts with oddly shaped pieces and mismatched colors randomly sewn together. Although both types of quilts can be used for the same purpose, each is wonderfully unique.

As these thoughts wandered around in my head, I was reminded of the graduation quilt my grandmother had lovingly pieced together for me. She had used a sunbonnet design made of scraps of fabric left over from previous sewing projects, both hers and mine. After my grandmother had sewn all of the pieces together, quilting her work of art became a family project. I remember sitting for hours around that quilt with my grandmother, my mother, and an aunt as they taught me the art of taking tiny stitches—making sure each one went through both layers of fabric. We had worked on the quilt for several days when an unfortunate thing happened. One of us asked my aunt to pass the scissors, which

she quickly did. But much to everyone's horror, as she slid them across the quilt point first, they went into the quilt, leaving an unsightly hole. We were all upset and just knew the quilt was ruined. I remember my grandmother telling us not to worry because with iron-on tape and some careful "finagling" she would be able to make the hole almost invisible. Sure enough, she fixed it, and although a patch now covered the unsightly hole, we had to look closely to find it.

The night before I was to speak to the young women, I decided I would take my graduation quilt, now 37 years old, with me. The girls would be able to see how each square was unique and how each added to the beauty of the quilt. I could tell them about the hole in the quilt, how my grandmother had patched it, and how I treasured the memories sewn into the quilt with every stitch. I also wanted to remind them that just as the hole had been mended, we too can be mended when we do something wrong, not with iron-on tape, but through the gift of repentance and the great atoning sacrifice of a loving Savior.

As I finished my preparation, I decided to mark the patch in the quilt so I could quickly point it out to the young women. I pulled the quilt down from the shelf and began looking for the patch, but much to my amazement, I couldn't find it. I even laid the quilt on the floor and went over it inch by inch on my hands and knees but still could



not find the L-shaped scar. I began to wonder if my memory was failing, yet I knew the incident had happened and there had been a hole in the quilt—but where?

I searched for some time but the patch was not to be found. Then I was reminded of the words in Doctrine and Covenants 58:42: “Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more.” I knew then what I needed to share with the young women. They needed to know that they are beloved daughters of our Heavenly Father, each unique and

different, with individual talents, trials, weaknesses, and triumphs. They needed to know that repentance is available and forgiveness is possible. Just as I had been unable to find the patch in the quilt, so it is with our lives—if we truly repent, it can be as if a sin had not been committed and even the Lord will remember it no more.

I had caught myself reflecting on quilts but found my testimony of the principle of repentance and the power of the Atonement strengthened. That night I added one more piece to the quilt that is my life. ■