

Blessed by My Calling

By Judith Castillo Martelo

The Lord has called you to serve as president of our Primary,” the branch president told me. It had been only a year since I had left the Laurel class and only two years since I had been baptized into the Church. I was incredulous.

“I don’t have the patience required to teach children,” I told him.

“Do you believe your calling came from God?” he asked. “When He calls us, He qualifies us.”¹

His words filled me with confidence, and immediately I knew that the Lord must need me in Primary. I had no idea how to fulfill my new calling, but I knew He would guide me.

I desired to do the best job I could, but a few months later my mother was diagnosed with cancer. In addition, I was studying systems engineering. I found it difficult to meet all of my responsibilities at home, at the university, and in Primary. My spirits began to flag, and one Sunday at church everything came to a head, and the tears began to flow.

A fellow ward member noticed and gave me some wonderful advice: “Judith, the best way to get through trials is to lose yourself in the gospel and in service to others,” he said. “By doing so, you will see how the Lord will ease your burdens.”

As I followed his encouraging advice, my attitude changed, my faith was strengthened, and I was filled with a determination to serve the Lord. My trials continued, but I dedicated myself to my calling and looked forward to seeing the children each Sunday. They taught me something every week as they showed me their testimonies through their actions. As the

months passed, I saw how the Lord was molding my character and how I was developing gifts and talents I didn’t know I had.

The following year I left Barranquilla, Colombia, to go to Bogotá for a month with my mother because she needed chemotherapy. During that time I prayed constantly and felt close to the Lord. I decided to change my university major, and through inspiration, I learned that the Lord wanted me to devote my life to teaching children. When I returned to school, I began working on a degree in special education.

I knew that Heavenly Father had given me my calling in Primary to prepare me. As I served, I discovered my true vocation, and as I lived the gospel and lost myself in service, I felt that I was in the Lord’s arms.

The testimony I gained while serving in the Primary presidency and later in a stake Primary presidency has sustained me as a member of the Church. I have learned how to teach with love, to see with the eyes of a child, and to seek the Lord for guidance and inspiration.

Each day when I teach at a bilingual school in my city, I think about the efforts, challenges, and blessings of those years. The children who were in Primary back then are now teenagers, but their eyes still shine with love for the Savior and His gospel.

I know that when the Lord calls us, He teaches and trains us and places leaders in our path to help us live this beautiful gospel of Jesus Christ. ■

NOTE

1. See Thomas S. Monson, “Duty Calls,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 44.



AN OPPORTUNITY TO GROW

“Every calling provides an opportunity to serve and to grow. The Lord organized the Church in a way that offers each member an opportunity for service, which, in turn, leads to personal spiritual growth. Whatever your calling, I urge you to see it as an opportunity not only to strengthen and bless others but also to become what Heavenly Father wants you to become.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Lift Where You Stand,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 56.