



# FROM YOUNG WOMEN TO RELIEF SOCIETY

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JERRY GARNIS

**R**elief Society can be a blessing for young adult sisters. Within a loving sisterhood they can enlarge their understanding of gospel principles, build firm testimonies, and give Christlike service. Six women in the Church share experiences they have had—as mothers, leaders, or as young women themselves—to help make the transition from Young Women to Relief Society.

## A Warm Welcome

I was nervous and full of doubt about leaving my friends in the Young Women program when I became old enough to join Relief Society. I wondered how I could relate to women who were at such different stages in life. Luckily these

sisters were confident that they could help me find my place in the Lord's organization for women.

My mother presented to me my first Relief Society manual with a tender message inscribed inside the front cover. I also appreciated that both the president and the secretary called and invited me to attend Relief Society on that first Sunday. Sisters asked to sit beside me and genuinely

befriended me week after week. My visiting teacher became a wonderful support for me as

I adjusted, and I was soon assigned to visit teach other sisters, which helped me feel trusted and capable.

The women showed an interest in me and in my thoughts and opinions. They taught me when I joined Relief Society that age, marital status, and the number of children we have are not as important as the fact that we all share the same Heavenly Father. How grateful I am for my mother and these sisters who gladly received me. By giving me a warm

welcome and kindly continuing to include me, they helped me feel at ease.

*JoLynne Dougherty,  
Pennsylvania*



## Transition Festivities

Each year our stake invites the Laurels who will soon graduate from high school

to celebrate, along with their mothers, their upcoming transition to Relief Society. We hold a special banquet for the occasion.

The festivities begin with a delicious dinner or dessert and a few brief talks explaining the purposes of Relief Society and what the young women can expect. The testimony sharing and singing that follow are a great way to help these young women feel the Spirit, creating a sense of sisterhood and spiritual unity. Dividing into small groups gives the young women opportunities to ask questions and to get to know their sisters in the Relief Society.

*Amanda Terry, California*



## Reaching Out to Others in Relief Society

Going from Young Women to Relief Society was an enriching experience for me. Because I had been a babysitter, I already knew some of the young mothers in Relief Society, and I felt comfortable being with them. Soon I began volunteering to help at Relief Society activities. By doing this I committed myself to attending and prevented myself from backing out because of fear. I also decided to introduce myself to sisters I didn't know. These sisters had much to offer, and I wanted their friendship and guidance. Now I feel as if I have always belonged in Relief Society with these sisters.

*LeAnn H. Daniels, Arizona*



## READY TO PARTICIPATE

*"The work of Relief Society is relevant for the young women who are entering their adult*

*years. They are ready to serve and ready to participate in a cause that is bigger than themselves. They want to be part of something that changes lives and makes the world a better place."*

**Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president, from an interview with the Ensign, May 27, 2008.**

## Teaching with Sensitivity

Instructors have an important role in welcoming young women to Relief Society. Teachers can help by making sure their lessons apply to sisters in a variety of circumstances. A skilled teacher can invite young sisters to share their personal experiences, gospel knowledge, and testimonies. Teachers can also use Church Educational System firesides to prepare questions relevant to young women. Young sisters often feel particularly welcomed when teachers use their names in class, fostering a spirit of closeness with the whole Relief Society.

The young women of the Church have strong testimonies and amazing experiences. Welcoming them to Relief Society and including them in class discussions enables everyone to learn from our young sisters.

*Michelle Lehnardt, Utah*



**Above and below:  
Serving one another  
builds bonds of love  
among sisters and  
brings joy and  
comfort.**





**Above and below: Through signing up for activities, young sisters can develop friendships with other women in Relief Society.**

### Accepting Early Callings

In our ward, the Young Women and Relief Society presidencies counseled together before each Laurel entered Relief Society, so that the Relief Society presidency could consider callings and visiting teaching assignments well suited to these young sisters. The presidency kept in mind each girl's time constraints, abilities, and personality while praying about callings for them. Some were called upon to play the piano, direct the music, serve on committees, or teach Relief Society lessons. Through serving others, the young sisters bonded quickly with the other women in Relief Society. Their attendance grew more consistent, and they felt more needed, loved, and involved.

*Joan Amley Cluff, Oregon*

### Getting Excited for the Move

I had anticipated going to Relief Society since I was young. Even though this program is intended for the adult women of the Church, my mother would occasionally take me to some of the Relief Society's weekday activities when

I was a child. If they were working on a summertime activity or a service project that Mom thought I might enjoy, she would invite me to come sit beside her and help.

Being with my mother and the other women was exciting, and it felt good to be contributing. They made such fun things and learned to cook such tasty treats in Relief Society!



I remember thinking the quilts the women made and gave to those in need were simply gorgeous. Even as a child, I saw that these sisters didn't know who would receive their quilts, yet they put loving care into each one. In fact, I spent so much time with my mother and the other sisters that I became familiar with the purpose and mission of Relief Society when I was very young, and

I eagerly looked forward to the time when I could join.

I also watched Mom make personal sacrifices for sisters in Relief Society. Though it was sometimes difficult, she took meals to sisters when they needed help, and she did her visiting teaching faithfully. I saw that Relief Society could bless the lives of the sisters through diligent, loving service. Relief Society sisters became role models for me. Seeing their examples made my transition into Relief Society not only easy but also fun. ■

*April Moss, California*