

A BLESSING OF STRENGTH



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Church Magazines
(Based on a true story)

I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day (John 11:24).

I didn't have any brothers or sisters, but soon I would have two! Mom was going to have twins. Dad packed up the things in our extra bedroom and hauled them to the basement. Then he put together two cribs, one on each side of the room. Grandma and Mom made two quilts, one blue and one yellow. Sometimes I practiced setting the table for

five instead of three. Everything was ready—all we had to do was wait. Mom told me that when the leaves started changing and the air got cooler, I'd know that my brothers would be born soon.

But one summer morning, I found my mom sitting next to the bathtub. She was holding her stomach and crying.

"What's the matter?" I asked. I was scared.

"It's not time for the babies to be born yet, but they're coming," she said.

Dad took Mom to the hospital while Grandma stayed with me. Usually Grandma would take me somewhere fun, like the zoo or the state capitol building. But not today.

Finally, the call from the hospital came. Grandma told me that I had two new brothers, Aaron and Carl. "Tomorrow I'll take you to see them," she said.

I couldn't wait! "Do they have red hair, like me?" I asked.

"I'm not sure," Grandma said. She told me that they wouldn't look like other babies I had seen because they were born three months early. Their skin was very delicate, and they were less than half the size of most newborn babies.

"Will we see Mom at the hospital?" I asked.

"No. Mommy is resting at a different hospital," Grandma said. "The twins are so weak that as soon as they were born, they rode in a helicopter to another hospital." She said that Dad and Grandpa had given them a priesthood blessing so that they could be strong.

Before bed, I prayed for my brothers. Then I dreamed. Would Mom let me help tuck them into bed at night? When they were older, would they play with me in the backyard? Part of me was worried. Would I be left out because there were two of them and only one of me?

The next morning, Grandma looked sad.

"Can we go to the hospital now?" I begged.

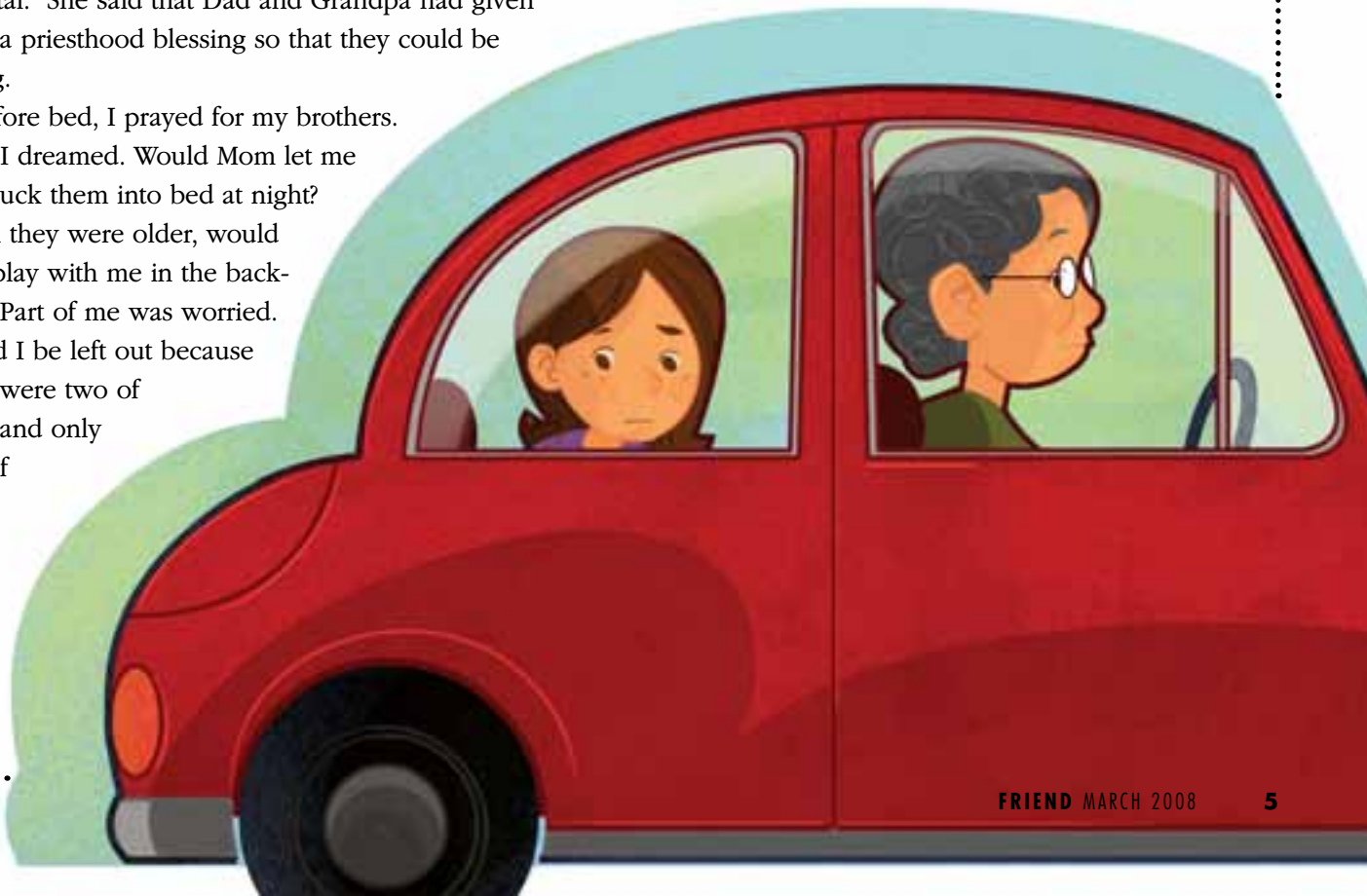
"Yes, honey, we can go see Carl," Grandma said, "but Aaron died last night. His little lungs weren't strong enough to keep breathing."

I couldn't believe it. My brother had died?

"I'm sorry I didn't take you to see him yesterday," Grandma said.

I frowned. I thought Dad gave Carl and Aaron blessings so they could be strong. I had learned in Primary that not all prayers are answered the way we want, but I wondered why not. Whenever I was sick and Dad gave me blessings, I felt better. I wanted my brothers to get better too.

I sadly peered out the window as Grandma drove to the hospital. When we got there, Dad met us. A nurse helped me tie a mask over my mouth and nose. She washed my hands and fingernails with a scrub brush, then let us in to meet Carl.





“There’s your new brother,” Dad said. Carl was covered by a clear box. He was teeny and red. Tubes were in his mouth and needles were in his arms.

“What are they doing to him?” I croaked. “Why is he in there?”

“So he can stay warm,” Dad said. “The tubes are to help him breathe, and the needles give him food.” Then Dad opened a little circle-shaped door on the side of the box. “Go ahead. Touch him.”

I was afraid to. Carl barely seemed alive, and I didn’t want to hurt him.

“It’s OK,” Dad whispered, so I reached through the little door and brushed Carl’s hand with my finger. His little hand curled around my finger. I giggled. He squeezed so tight!

“He won’t let go!” I laughed. Dad smiled. Carl’s hand barely reached around my finger, but I couldn’t pull it away. His grip was too strong.

“Dad’s priesthood blessing worked,” I thought. Carl didn’t look very strong, but he was. Many weeks later, Carl came home to live with us.

It was sad to watch Dad take apart the second crib and move it out of Carl’s room. Sometimes I felt sad that I would never set five places at the table. But Mom and Dad told me to remember that Aaron was still a part of our family, even if he couldn’t be with us now. Someday we would all be resurrected, and we could be an eternal family.

Until then, Mom said we could make Aaron a part of our lives if we remembered him. She made a page in our Book of Remembrance for him and saved a piece of paper with his tiny ink footprints on it. She also saved a piece of his hair. It’s red, just like mine. ●

“The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave.”

“The Family: A Proclamation to the World”¹

