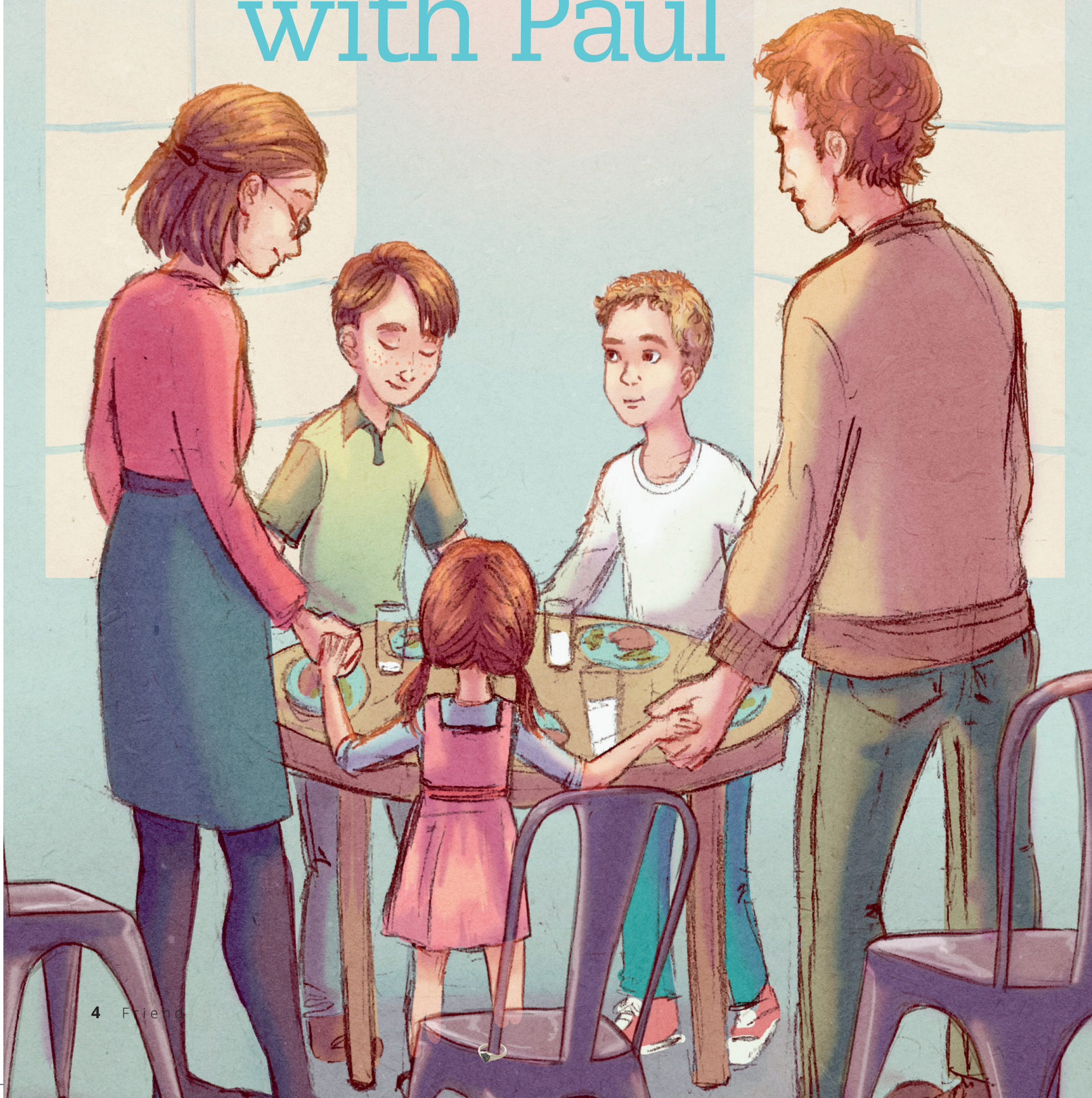


PRAYING

with Paul



What does it mean to “say grace”?

By Shirley Espada-Richey

(Based on a true story)

“Pray always” (Doctrine and Covenants 19:38).

It was Hunter’s first time at Paul’s house. They had a great time building a cardboard spaceship. They even colored awesome flames on it. When Paul’s mom called them for dinner, Hunter followed Paul into the kitchen.

“I’ll say grace,” said Paul’s dad.

What does that mean? Hunter wondered. He watched Paul and his family as they each touched their forehead, then the middle of their chest, then the left side, then the right. Hunter had never seen anyone do that before.

Paul held his hand out. Hunter looked around and saw that the rest of Paul’s family were holding hands and bowing their heads. *Are they about to pray? Is that what it means to “say grace”?* Hunter wondered.

Hunter didn’t want to hurt Paul’s feelings, so he took Paul’s hand. Paul’s dad took Hunter’s other hand and then started to pray.

“Bless us, O Lord . . .”

Before they sat down, Paul and his family touched their foreheads and chests like they had before.

When Hunter got home, Mom found him and asked about his day.

“Did you have a good time?” Mom asked.

“Yes,” Hunter said quietly. He *did* have a good time. The spaceship was awesome, and the hamburgers were yummy. But something was bothering him.

Mom looked at him more closely. “You don’t sound OK. Is something wrong?”

“Well . . .”

Hunter had so many questions! He kept thinking about that prayer. Why was it so different from how he and his family prayed?

“Mom,” he asked, “how did you pray before you

joined the Church?” Hunter told her about Paul’s family’s prayer.

“It sounds like they’re Catholic, like I used to be,” Mom said. “They were making the sign of the cross with their hands. See how it looks like a cross? It’s a reminder that Jesus died for us.”

Hunter smiled. “So Paul believes in Jesus too?”

“That’s right,” Mom said. “Do you remember what Paul’s dad said in the prayer?”

Hunter had to think about it. “He thanked God for the gifts He gives us . . . and he talked about Christ!”

“See?” Mom said with a smile. “We’re not so different. I’m glad you could pray with Paul’s family.”

A few days later, Paul came over to play. They were playing outside when Dad called them in for dinner. Hunter’s stomach rumbled as they ran to the kitchen.

“I’m starving!” said Hunter.

“Me too,” said Paul.

Everyone took their places around the table. Paul sat next to Hunter. Paul made the sign of the cross and reached for Hunter’s hand.

“This is how we pray at our house,” said Hunter. “We fold our arms, close our eyes, and bow our heads.”

“That’s it?”

“That’s it.”

“Easy,” said Paul.

Hunter closed his eyes and smiled. He was glad he could pray with his friend. ●

The author lives in California, USA.



I have friends at school who are Catholic and Muslim, and we are all best friends because that is how Jesus wants us to treat each other.

**Elizabeth A., age 8,
West Midlands, England**