

By Hilary M. Hendricks

# Making Friends

Stephanie M., age 6, is great at making friends. Because families in Delhi, India, come from many religious backgrounds, most of Stephanie's friends don't share all of her beliefs. But that's not a problem for Stephanie.

In her neighborhood, Stephanie's best friend is Mansi, whose family is Hindu. Unlike members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Hindus believe in many gods. But just like Stephanie, Mansi believes in treating

*Stephanie walks through the colorful streets of Delhi with her mom and her sister Carolina (below). At right, standing in front of a 15th-century gateway.*



# of Many Faiths

people and all living things with kindness.

Stephanie attends a school for girls. Each school day she puts on a blue-and-white dress and pulls her hair back in two blue bows. Then she and her sister Carolina, 16, grab their lunches and catch the bus to school. “Sometimes we say our family prayer when the bus is coming—but we always have our prayer,” Carolina says.

At school, Stephanie has two best friends: Moli, whose family is Christian, and Syed, whose family is Muslim. Stephanie looks forward to lunchtime. She loves to sit and talk with her friends, and she usually trades the *chapati* (Indian flat bread) her mother packs for the traditionally Muslim sweet bread Syed brings. It’s no surprise that Stephanie’s favorite scripture story is

about Jesus Christ sharing bread with the multitude. (See Matthew 14:13–21; John 6:1–14.)

Stephanie’s mother is a nanny, and her father is a cook. They prayed for years that Stephanie would be able to attend school. They wanted her to learn English

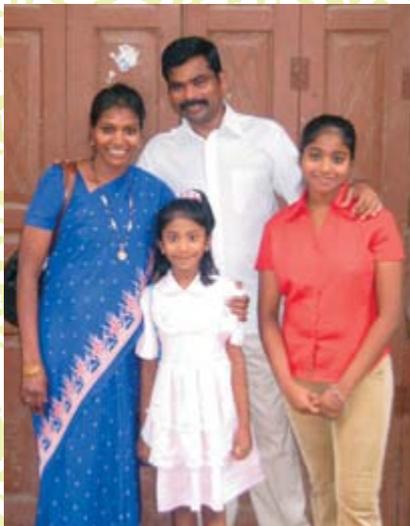
and good manners. It is expensive to go to school in Delhi, and much of the family’s income is spent on tuition. Stephanie’s mother did not have the opportunity to attend school as a child. She feels that being able to help her daughters go to school is a great blessing.

Stephanie’s mother first learned about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and invited her family to learn with her. Soon Stephanie’s father, mother, and oldest sister, Stella, were baptized. Each Sunday her family arrived early at the senior missionaries’ home where church was held to help set up for the meeting. Thanks to the growth of the Church in Delhi, the branch now meets in its own building.

Getting to church means waking up early to catch a bus or an auto rickshaw, which is like a tiny cab. The 30-minute ride seems to go quickly for Stephanie, who tells her parents about her friends and what she is learning in Primary.

Although there are only about eight children who attend Primary, Stephanie always enjoys

*Stephanie and her family (left), wearing her school uniform (right), with her Primary friends, and standing next to an auto rickshaw.*



being with these special friends. Together they learn about Jesus Christ, sing, and pray.

Every week the children sing Stephanie’s favorite song, “I Am a Child of God.” Stephanie is grateful to know that she—and all her friends—are children of God. ♦