

TORNADO!

By Jessica Larsen
(Based on a true story)

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee" (Isaiah 41:10).

Owen woke up suddenly in the middle of the night and peeked out the window. It was hailing and the sky had turned green.

"Is that what I think it is?" Mitchell asked, sitting up in bed.

"A tornado," Owen whispered. His eyes scanned the sky for signs of swirling.

Both boys jumped as Mom opened the door, a flashlight in her hand cutting through the darkness. "The power is out, and the storm's coming," she said. "Everybody get down to the bathroom."

Owen grabbed Mitchell's hand and followed Mom to the downstairs bathroom, the center of their home. They had talked about what to do during a tornado, but Owen's hands were shaking. What if it hit their house?

When they were halfway down the stairs, a high-pitched alarm filled the air. Owen felt Mitchell's hand tighten around his. Those were tornado sirens, and they only went off when a tornado was nearby. Owen froze, but

Owen had an idea to help his family not be so scared.

Mom gently pushed him toward the bathroom, which was lit by a small lantern.

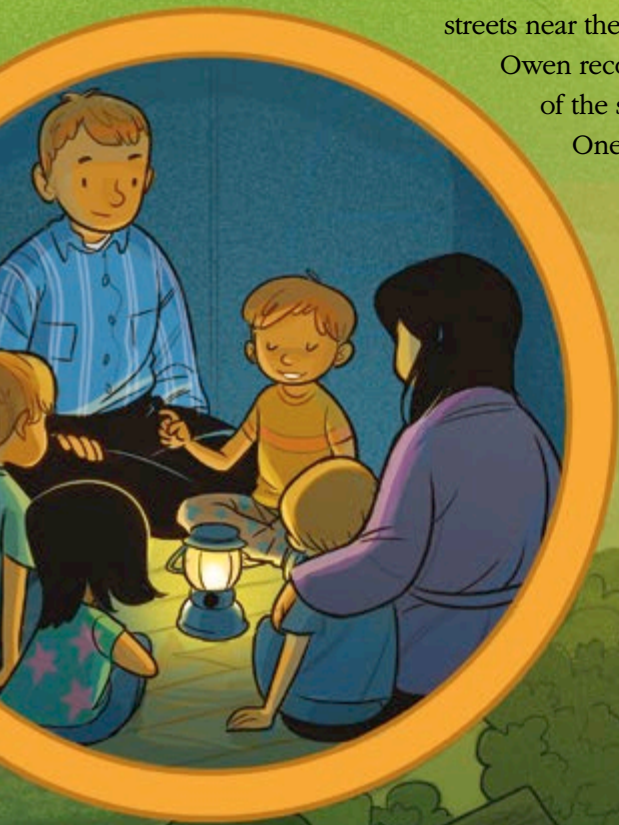
Owen's two sisters were already huddled on the floor, so he crouched in a corner to make room for Dad, who came in holding a radio. The space was small for six people, but Owen was glad they were all together.

Dad turned the radio dial until he found a station reporting the storm. "We have four tornadoes in the area," the announcer said. "Everybody within the sound of a tornado siren is to stay inside until further notice."

Owen gasped. *Four* tornadoes? He imagined them barreling down the street toward his house, and he reached out his hand to Dad for comfort. His little sister started crying in Mom's arms. Owen's panic grew when

the announcer read off a list of streets near the tornadoes.

Owen recognized all of the street names. One was even



right by his school. The tornado could hit them at any moment! He had never felt this afraid before.

Owen knew exactly what he needed to do to feel better. He bowed his head and said a silent prayer. When he finished praying, he felt a little better—he was still nervous, but he felt peaceful too. Mom saw his bowed head and said, "Good idea, Owen. I think we could use a family prayer right now."

Dad prayed aloud, and Owen's fear went away a little more. He turned to Mitchell, who still seemed scared. "Want to play I Spy?" he whispered. It was one of Mitchell's favorite games, and the lantern gave them just enough light to play. Mitchell nodded, and Owen started.

"I spy something . . . pink!"

"Mom's robe!" Mitchell giggled, and the game began. The wind still howled, but Owen's little sister stopped crying. Owen could feel peace in the small bathroom, surrounded by his family.

It seemed like hours later, but the sirens finally stopped. Owen took a deep breath, knowing the tornadoes had moved on. Dad turned up the radio again, and the announcer said it was safe to leave cover. Dad opened the door and squeezed Owen's shoulder as they walked out into the hall to stretch.

"I'm proud of you, buddy," Dad said. "You were really brave tonight."

Owen hadn't felt very brave, but he'd felt more peaceful after his prayer. He hugged Dad back, took Mitchell's hand, and led him back to bed. The storm was over. ♦

The author lives in Arizona, USA.



Once when my mom and little brother and I were driving home, it began to snow. Mom was worried because the car was slipping and sliding. I said, "We should say a prayer!" After our prayer, our car was able to make it up the hill. My brother and I cheered. I know Heavenly Father cares about us and hears our prayers.

Austin H., age 6, Alberta, Canada