

# Feeling NEW



**By Jessica Larsen**

Based on a true story

*Estonia*

“I have a surprise!” *Ema* (Mom) said when she picked Rasmus up from school. They walked together down the narrow streets lined with colorful buildings.

“*Rosolje* for dinner?” Rasmus guessed hopefully. They had eaten it just last week for his seventh birthday. But he could always eat more beet-and-potato salad with pickled herring!

*Ema* shook her head with a smile. “I met two young women on the bus this morning. Missionaries. They’re coming to visit tonight to talk about their church.”

Rasmus looked up curiously. He had never met missionaries before.

He was in his bedroom playing with his fire truck when the missionaries came. “*Tere! Tere!* Hello!” they greeted *Ema* as they walked into the apartment. They

removed their heavy boots and put on the house slippers *Ema* kept for visitors. *Ema* led them to the orange couch. But Rasmus hung back by the door.

The taller woman noticed him and smiled. Her black name tag said Õde Craig (Sister Craig). “Your mother told us you just had a birthday,” she said. “We brought you something.” She held out a small card. Rasmus looked at it closely.

It was a picture of a man. He wore a white robe, and his hand was stretched out.

“Do you know who that is?” Õde Craig asked.

Rasmus didn’t know the man’s name. He had never seen this picture before. But the man looked kind and powerful. “I think he’s a king!” Rasmus said.

Both missionaries smiled. “Yes, He is! He is the King of kings! His name is Jesus Christ.” Õde Craig pulled

out a book with a blue cover. “And this is a book that teaches about Him, the *Mormoni Raamat*. The Book of Mormon.”

He and *Ema* began reading the Book of Mormon every day before he went to school. During school, Rasmus and his class went on nature walks and then took a nap. After school, he and *Ema* often met with the missionaries. They talked with the missionaries about what they had read in the Book of Mormon. Sometimes *Ema* fed everyone *kringel*, braided cinnamon bread. On weekends he and *Ema* rode bikes or picnicked on the beach. Sometimes they took long walks in the forest or along their favorite river.

On one of those forest walks, *Ema* told him she wanted to be baptized. Rasmus grinned. The missionaries had asked *Ema* to pray about whether or not to get baptized. It sounded like she had gotten her answer!

“And I know just where I’m going to be baptized,” she told him with a smile. “Can you guess?”

Rasmus thought about the missionaries’ lesson on baptism. They had held up a picture showing Jesus with John the Baptist in a river. . . .



“The river!” he exclaimed. “Our favorite river.”

One week later, Rasmus stood on the riverbank with the missionaries and some other people from church. *Ema* was ready to be baptized. She went all the way under the water, just like Jesus did. When she came up, she was smiling. Rasmus wanted to remember this moment forever—the blue water, the white wildflowers in the green grass, and his mother’s smile.

“What did getting baptized feel like?” he asked later, when everyone was eating cookies the missionaries had brought.

“Wonderful,” she told him. “I wanted to stay in the river forever. I feel so new!” She hugged him tight.

“For my next birthday, I want to be baptized, just like you and Jesus,” he told her. “I want to feel new too!” ●

*The author lives in Texas, USA.*

