

DADDY, BAPTIZE ME!

When I walked in the door one evening, Jessie, my six-year-old daughter, was sitting on a stool in our kitchen. Her countenance worried me. I asked her what had happened.

"Daddy, is it true that I'm a child of the devil?" she asked with deep concern.

Her question hit me like a bucket of cold water. Jessie said her friend's three-month-old sister had already been baptized. Jessie was surprised and asked her friend why her little sister had been baptized at such a young age. Her friend replied that all babies had to be baptized.

"You haven't been baptized?" her friend then asked. When Jessie said no, her friend insisted that she was a child of the devil.

"Daddy, baptize me!" Jessie implored. "I don't want to be a child of the devil!"

I realized that this challenge needed to be resolved immediately. I explained the importance of baptism and how children need no baptism until they are eight years old (see Moroni 8:11–23). Because she was only six years old, I told Jessie she would have to wait a little longer before her baptism. I assured her that she was a child of

God and that He loved her. Her question led us to Moroni 10:4–5, where Moroni tells us how we can determine "the truth of all things."

After reading these verses, I asked if she wanted to pray to Heavenly Father and ask Him if the things we had talked about were true. She said yes.

We knelt together, and Jessie bowed her head and prayed, "Heavenly Father, I want to know if the things my daddy has told me are true. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen."

I realized I had led my daughter to say one of the most important prayers of her life. I began pleading in my heart as I had never done before, asking Heavenly Father to answer her prayer.

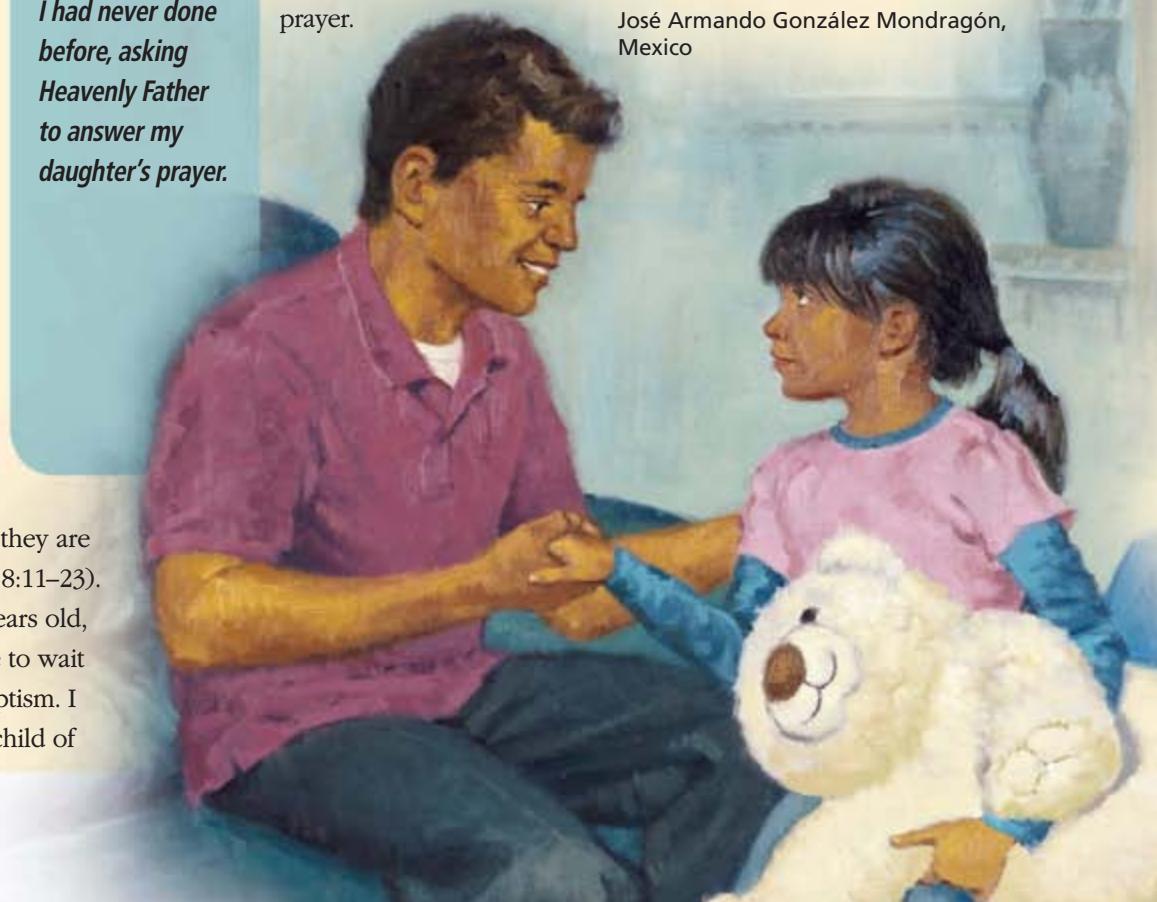
After a few minutes, she said, "I didn't hear anything." I took her in my arms and said, "Heavenly Father gave us the Comforter, who answers us with . . ." I put my hand on my heart. She interrupted me and said, "With a warm feeling in my chest! I feel it, Daddy!"

I hugged her tightly and thanked Heavenly Father for answering her prayer. I also felt a burning in my bosom. I told Jessie that what she had felt was an answer to her prayer and that now she knew she was a daughter of God and that she should be baptized when she was eight. She told me she would wait.

Many years have passed since that experience, but it still reminds me that Heavenly Father keeps His promises. ■

José Armando González Mondragón,
Mexico

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TRADING MY FEAR FOR LOVE

I saw him riding the bus every day on my way home from the university. He always wore the same baggy T-shirt, worn-out tennis shoes, and big smile. And he always sat by himself. He was a special passenger, though, because he was mentally challenged.

Every day the Spirit prompted me to say hello to him. Every day, however, my pride stopped me. I was afraid that someone might see me associating with someone different from everyone else. After all, I had a reputation to keep.

One winter afternoon, when the Spirit was especially strong and my courage was a little greater, I got on the bus, saw him in his usual spot, and sat down next to him—not too close in case I chickened out. When I was almost to my stop, I closed my eyes, said a silent prayer, and turned to him.

"Hi," I said in an insecure but friendly voice, "I'm Ashley."

When he smiled at me, my fear and pride immediately melted away.

"I'm Lenny," he shyly replied.

With those few words, we began a bond of friendship.

The next day I sat next to Lenny again, but it was easier—we were friends. As I sat down, he reached into his backpack and pulled out a handmade Valentine's Day card. It was addressed to "The pretty girl I see on the bus every day."

Valentine's Day was long passed, but Lenny had made this special card for me and had been patiently waiting for the opportunity to give it to me. I couldn't keep the tears from trickling down my cheeks. How grateful I was that the Spirit hadn't given up on me and that I had finally put aside my

pride and faced my fear of talking to Lenny.

Now he comes to Sunday dinner every week and has become like another member of my family. Every day Lenny helps me remember the blessings that come from forgetting pride and having courage to do what is right. Seeing him every day reminds me of 1 John 4:18: "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear." ■

Ashley Johnson Evanson, Utah, USA

MY BROTHER'S FRENCH HORN

I grew up to the sound of my older brother practicing his French horn. Day after day, year after year, the sound of his horn emanated from our house. I could even hear it blocks away when I walked home from elementary school.

If challenged, I would surely have contended that my brother was the best French horn player there ever was. Nevertheless, his constant playing embarrassed me sometimes, and once I asked my mother to make him stop. He would even bring his French horn on vacation!

Years later my brother and I found ourselves at a music competition in northern California on the campus of a big university I'd never been to

before. While there, my high school madrigal group earned a top ranking, which meant we got to do an encore performance later that day. We were given directions as to where and when to meet, and we all went on our way. Soon I found myself alone, standing in the middle of the campus looking at all the tall buildings. I couldn't see anyone I knew, but I remembered what my mother had told me to do if I ever got lost: "Stay where you are."

I stayed but was too shy to ask for directions; besides, I didn't know where I was going. I couldn't remember anything we'd been told about where or when to meet. But suddenly the thought occurred to me to ask Heavenly Father for help. I was not a member of the Church at the time, but I had attended church regularly with my Latter-day Saint friends and had been taught that Heavenly Father answers prayers.

So I stood there and silently prayed in my heart. Before I had even said amen, my ears perked up. Far off in the distance, ever so quietly, I heard a familiar sound—a sound I had heard most of my life. As I started walking in the direction of the music, it grew louder. Could it be my brother's French horn? I was sure of it.

But then other French horns started playing. I hesitated. Did I really think I could tell which of all those horns was my brother's? Every time I doubted, however, I heard his horn, as if beckoning to me. As I entered a building, climbed the stairs, and got closer to the

music, I grew scared. The thought of opening the wrong door to find someone I didn't know made my face turn red. When I reached the third floor, I listened one more time, made my decision, took a deep breath, and opened the door. There he was!

Heavenly Father gives us His Spirit to teach us, testify to us, protect us, and guide us to safety when we feel alone and abandoned. We learn His voice by hearing it often and becoming so familiar with it that we can recognize it in the midst of many other voices that would lead us astray.

We should not be embarrassed by His voice or hesitate to follow it. If we ask Heavenly Father for His help and then listen, ready to obey, I know we will hear Him. ■

Sandy Lauderdale Cane, Missouri, USA

LEAVE THE PARTY!

A number of years ago I had a chance to represent the state of Utah at a nationwide convention in Ohio attended by high school swimmers.

Our stay included parties for the athletes. When I went to a party the first night, I thought it was going to be like the fun parties we held back home—drinking root beer and playing games. But as soon as I walked into the room, I got a reality check.

Immediately, I understood what the articles in the Church magazines

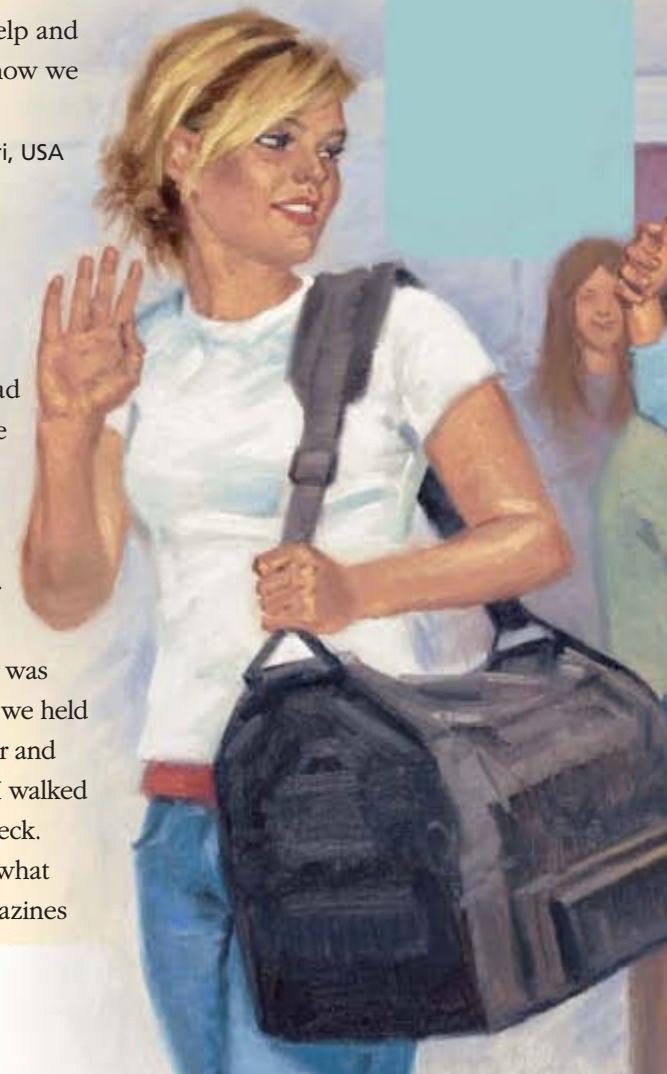
were talking about when they said, "You will stand out when you are the only member of the Church." Somehow my fellow athletes had already figured out that I was a Latter-day Saint. The room grew quiet, and everyone seemed to be staring at me as I dug into the chip bowl.

"Hey," someone said, "you're a Mormon, aren't you?"

I smiled proudly and said, "I sure am, and I'm happy to be one."

The party then resumed, but I felt

When I grabbed my swim bag and headed for the door, one of the boys yelled, "Hey, are you wimping out on us?"



many eyes on me, watching my every move. After a while, the party began to get wild. I wasn't sure how wild it would become, but I didn't want to be part of it. If I stayed, I feared I would give people the wrong impression about my standards. Besides, the Spirit prompted me to leave. When I grabbed my swim bag and headed for the door, one of the boys yelled, "Hey, are you wimping out on us?"

I just smiled and said, "See you guys tomorrow." I then walked out, feeling good that I had made my presence known while

defending the Lord's standards.

The next day during a house of delegates meeting, one of the delegates rose and sternly said, "Something happened last night that I don't ever want to happen again. You're here to represent your state, so do it well and act appropriately!"

Then he added, "Some of you left and didn't take part in what happened. Thank you."

For the rest of the week, I received more respect and friendly expressions than I had ever received before. Many coaches from across the United States urged me to run for an athlete-representative position for the western states because I had represented Utah well.

I never found out what happened at the party, but I'm grateful that the Spirit prompted me to leave. ■

Sonrisa Oles Hasselbach, California, USA

bleeding. I would then need to take over his work, in addition to finishing my own.

One Monday when washing time came around, Elder Moss seemed a bit worried. I had injured my hand the previous day, and he knew that I was not going to be able to help him with his laundry. I wouldn't even be able to do my own. He started his washing, but as usual, he needed help halfway through.

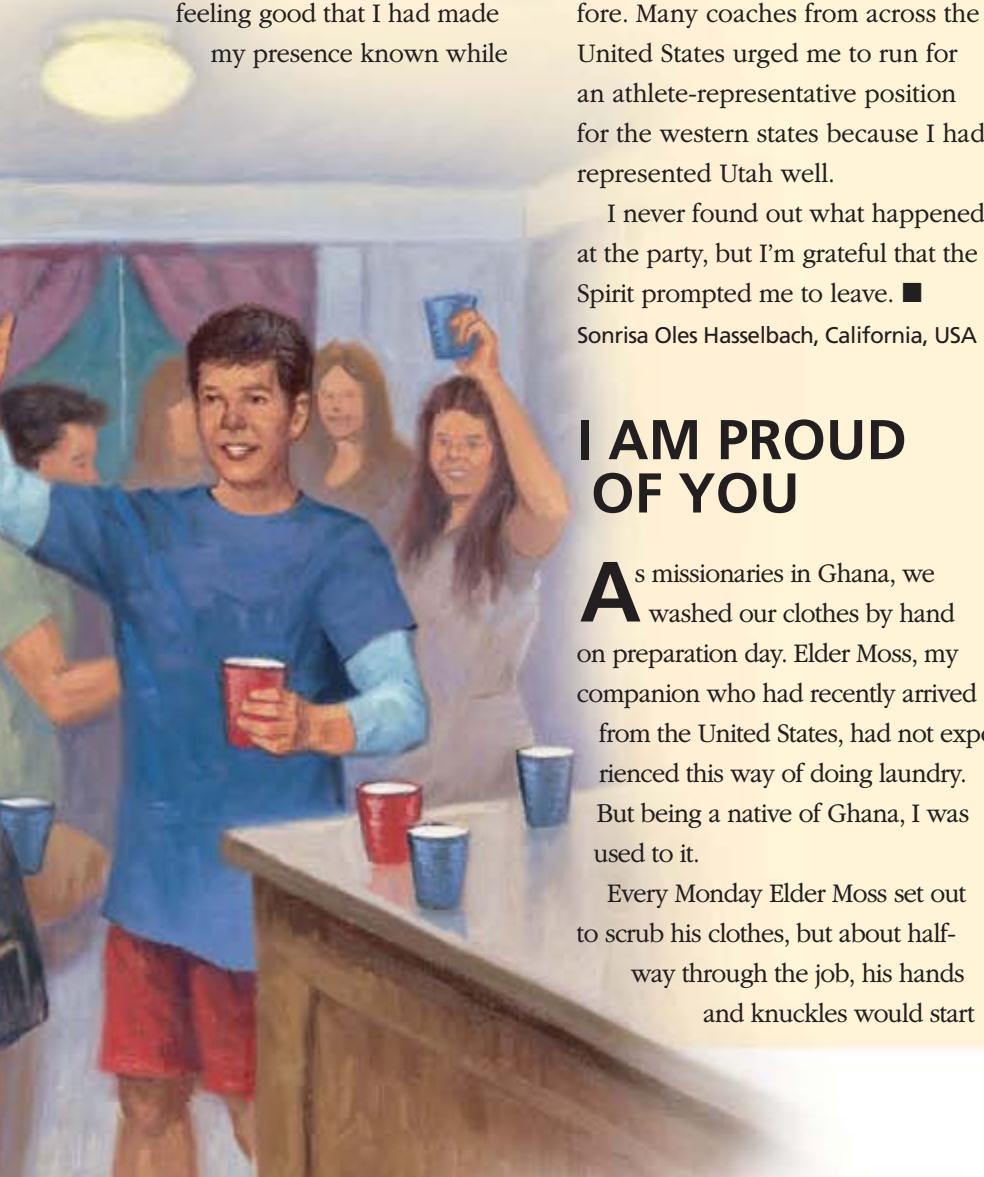
Since I couldn't help my companion with the actual washing, I encouraged him to endure—to let his hands rest and then keep trying. He stopped for a time and then continued. I told him he could find a way to finish. His hands and knuckles were still sore, but he pushed on. When the washing was completed, he said, "I am proud of myself. Elder Asante, are you proud of me?"

"Yes, of course I am proud of you," I answered.

As I have thought about this incident, I realized that Heavenly Father knows our potential, but He tests us so we can develop diligence, patience, and faithfulness. He is pleased with us when we make righteous choices and prove that we can bear our afflictions.

When we work hard and endure the trials placed before us, we can say, "Heavenly Father, art Thou proud of me?" I know that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ are pleased when we endure and that They will tell us so one day when They welcome us home. ■

Richard Domeng Asante, Ghana



I AM PROUD OF YOU

As missionaries in Ghana, we washed our clothes by hand on preparation day. Elder Moss, my companion who had recently arrived from the United States, had not experienced this way of doing laundry. But being a native of Ghana, I was used to it.

Every Monday Elder Moss set out to scrub his clothes, but about half-way through the job, his hands and knuckles would start