



By Sarah Cutler
and Ryan Johnson
Based on a true story

We're All Shoes

*“The Lord God giveth
light unto the under-
standing; for he speaketh
unto men according to
their language, unto
their understanding”
(2 Nephi 31:3).*

The children in Ryan’s new neighborhood were from all over the world: Australia, Canada, Egypt, England, India, Kuwait, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Scotland, the United States, and Vietnam.

Ryan had been amazed to meet people from so many places, but he noticed that sometimes children in

the park played only with other children who spoke the same language. Ryan couldn’t understand why everyone didn’t want to play together, no matter where they were from or what language they spoke. Sometimes children from one country would be mean to children from another country. That made Ryan sad.

Ryan wondered what he could do, but it was hard to think of anything. He couldn’t just tell everyone to be friends—because they spoke so many different languages, they wouldn’t understand.

One day Ryan’s family took a walk down the street. Some of the boys who had been mean were



outside. One of them was holding a football. Ryan liked to play football too. Getting up his courage, Ryan walked over to the boys. He knew a few words of their language, and they knew a little of his. Ryan and the boys started smiling and laughing as they tried out the different languages. Then Ryan pointed to the football. “Do you want to play football with me?” he asked slowly, hoping they would understand. He smiled extra big.

The boys looked at him, then at each other. They talked for a minute, but Ryan couldn’t understand the words. Then they looked back at Ryan and nodded. Ryan grinned,

and they ran to the nearby park. Ryan waved to his friends who spoke English, and a little shyly, they walked over. One boy set down the football, and the game began.

A while later Ryan took a quick break to run home for a drink of water.

“How’s it going out there?” Mom asked.

“Great!” Ryan said. “It’s like this, Mom. We’re all shoes!”

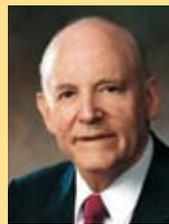
“Shoes?” Mom asked.

“Sure. We’re all different, but we all wear two shoes—and that’s all you need for football.”

“Good discovery,” Mom said. “You’re all children of Heavenly

Father, and you’re more alike than you think.”

Ryan waved as he ran back out the door to play with his new friends.



We need to extend the hand of friendship. We need to be kinder.”

President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95), “A More Excellent Way,” *Ensign*, May 1992, 61.

After that day the children in the neighborhood went to the park every Thursday to play football together. It didn’t matter what languages they spoke or where they were from—they were all shoes, and that was enough. ■