

# Alpacas on the Loose!

*That last alpaca wouldn't budge. What was I supposed to do?*

By Romney P., age 12, California, USA

*"Heav'nly Father, now I pray, guide and guard me ev'ry day" ("Heavenly Father, Now I Pray," Children's Songbook, 19).*

Last summer I worked for my neighbor. She has a big alpaca farm right next to her walnut orchard. Alpacas look kind of like llamas, only smaller.

My job was to clean out their

stalls every day. I liked the work, even if it wasn't easy.

One hot summer afternoon I showed up and my neighbor was gone. That wasn't a problem, though. She already told me I could clean the stalls any time I chose, even if she was away.

While I was cleaning, one of the alpacas knocked over a gate. In a few seconds all 14 alpacas escaped into the yard and orchard!

I couldn't believe it! I felt sick to my stomach. How would I ever get them back by myself?

I started scrambling as fast as I could, rounding them up one or two at a time. Fifteen minutes later my heart was pounding from all the running, but the last one finally went back into the stall. Whew!

Then I turned and saw a pregnant alpaca lying down by a fruit tree 30 feet away. Ugh. Still one more to go. I tried scaring her back into the stall, but she wouldn't budge. Then I tried pulling her with a harness and a rope that I found in the garage. No good. She lay there like a giant pile of bricks. I blew out my breath in frustration. What else could I try?

Then I remembered there's always a way to ask for help, no matter where I am. I knelt down to pray. As soon as I finished praying, I opened my eyes and could hardly believe what I saw. The alpaca was walking back toward the stall, all on her own. I opened the gate, and she walked right in.

I smiled as I rode my bike home. I knew Heavenly Father had answered my prayer. ■

