

Primary Manners

BY JAN PINBOROUGH

Based on a true story

“Be still and know that I am God” (DeC 101:16).

Natanael held Mom’s hand tightly as they walked into the Primary room. Today was Natanael’s second week in the Sunbeam class. His stomach felt fluttery, and with each step, he walked a little more slowly.

Last week, Primary had been kind of confusing. During singing time, Mia kept standing up and turning around in circles. Natanael was tired of sitting, so he stood up too. But then his teacher asked him to sit back down. During sharing time, some of the older children talked and laughed. Sometimes it was too noisy to hear what Sister Miranda, the Primary president, was saying. When his friend Cara started crying, it made Natanael feel like crying too.

As he got closer to the front row, Natanael didn’t want to let go of Mom’s hand. He was worried that Primary would be confusing this week too. Then he saw his teacher.

“Hi, Natanael,” Sister Tejada said. “I’m glad to see you.” Sister Tejada patted the seat next to her.

Natanael liked his teacher’s friendly smile. He let go of Mom’s hand and sat down by Sister Tejada.

“I’ll be back to pick you up after class,” Mom said. “Remember to be reverent.”

Natanael wasn’t sure he knew how.

After the opening prayer, Sister Miranda stood up. “Today we have a special visitor,” she said.

Suddenly, a puppet appeared from behind a table

next to Sister Miranda. The puppet wiggled, waved his arms, and said, “Is it time to go yet? I need a drink!”

Some of the children giggled.

“This is Arlo’s first time in Primary,” Sister Miranda said, “and he doesn’t know how to be reverent. But before he can be reverent, he needs to learn good Primary manners.”

Natanael was surprised. At dinner Mom sometimes reminded him to put his napkin on his lap. That was good manners. And Dad always asked everyone to thank Mom for the nice meal before they started clearing off the table. That was good manners too. But what were Primary manners?

Arlo leaned backward over the front of the table. “Hey, everybody looks funny upside down!” he said.

“Good manners are rules that show we respect other people,” Sister Miranda explained. “Arlo doesn’t know the rules for good Primary manners. Do you think we could teach him?” she asked.

Sister Miranda went to the chalkboard and drew an arm. “What should Arlo do with his arms?” she asked.

“Fold them!” Mia called out.

“That’s right,” Sister Miranda said.

Arlo sat up. He folded his arms and raised them over his head. “Oh, you mean like this?” he asked.

Natanael knew that wasn’t right.

Sister Miranda asked if everyone in Primary could show Arlo how to fold his arms.

Natanael quickly folded his arms. Arlo folded his arms too.

On the chalkboard, next to the drawing of the arm, Sister Miranda wrote, “Fold our arms.”

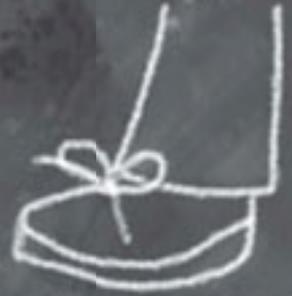
As Sister Miranda drew more pictures, the children taught Arlo the rules for good Primary manners. Natanael was glad that he knew most of them already.

Now Arlo wasn’t wiggling or waving his arms or calling out. His legs were still, and his arms were folded. The children were listening quietly too. Primary didn’t seem noisy and confusing anymore. Natanael felt calm and happy. It wouldn’t be too hard to be reverent in Primary. He already knew how. ●



Fold our arms.

Walk quietly.



Raise our hands for
a turn to talk.



Use a quiet voice.

Listen to
our teacher.



THIS IS GOD'S HOUSE

What are some ways you can show respect for Heavenly Father's house?

1. Walk quietly in the halls. Run only in the gym during special activities not held on Sunday.
2. Speak quietly.
3. Take good care of the hymnbooks. Put them away neatly after using them.
4. Throw away any trash you see.
5. Be careful not to put your feet on benches or chairs.
6. When asked, help put away chairs after meetings.



"When we meet to learn the doctrines of the gospel, it should be in a spirit of reverence."
President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Reverence Invites Revelation," Ensign, Nov. 1991, 21.

The children of the Kahului Ward in the Kahului Hawaii Stake worked hard to help take care of Heavenly Father's house. For a service activity, they cleaned the chairs they use every week in Primary.

The children in senior Primary scrubbed the chairs with water and baking soda, while the junior Primary children dried the chairs. Even the youngest children worked with enthusiasm and happy faces. Afterward, everyone felt good about keeping Heavenly Father's house clean.

