GIVING THE Best Gift

I gave my friend the best birthday present she had ever received.

By Mariela Rodriguez

When I was 13 years old, the prophet asked Church members to read the Book of Mormon in five months, by the end of that year, and promised blessings for doing so. One day as I was reading on the bus, a girl named Cynthia sat by me and asked what the book was. I said it was the Book of Mormon and that it was a special book. I said I wanted to finish reading it before the year ended so I could receive blessings.

She started asking more questions, and I told her she could come to my house so we could talk more about it. She accepted my invitation, and we spent several hours over the following days talking about the Book of Mormon and the Church.

The next Monday, I invited her to family home evening, where I introduced her to the missionaries. They started teaching her the lessons, and she began coming to church and to all the youth activities and other Church meetings.

She decided that she wanted to be baptized, and with her parents' permission, she was baptized on her birthday that year. She said it was the best present she'd ever received. Her mother and siblings attended the baptism. She asked me to sing "The Spirit of God" (*Hymns,* no. 2), and she asked my father to perform the baptism. After she came out of the water, we embraced and cried. I will never forget that day because I felt such incredible happiness.

A year later my family moved away. It was difficult because Cynthia and I had become good friends and sisters in the gospel.

Even though we don't live close to each other anymore, we're still great friends. We talk often on the phone, and recently she called to tell me that her mom was listening to the missionary lessons. This made me happy because before that her mom didn't want to listen to the lessons. Cynthia told me that someday she hopes to go to church with her entire family. She thanked me for introducing her to the Church. ∎

The author lives in Texas, USA.