

What I Like Best about Church

By Isabelle Alpert

Recently my husband and I had dinner with some friends. The conversation turned to religion, and one friend, a less-active member of the Church, began telling me why the Church was not true.

In the course of his explanation, he became adamant, hostile, and angry. The entire time I sat and listened. At first I felt like crying, but then I became angry and wanted to tell him off. The still, small voice, however, told me to be quiet.

Our friend didn't finish his tirade until we had finished our dinner and paid the bill.

Then he paused,

as if waiting for my rebuttal. I sat there for a moment in silent prayer. Then, in a soft voice, I calmly said, "Do you know what I like best about going to church on Sunday? The sacrament. It allows me the opportunity to quietly bow my head and pray to Heavenly Father. I tell Him all the ways in which I could have done things differently during the past week, and I seek for ways to improve."

Then I added, "I think of all the people I tried to be a blessing to during the past week, and I ask Heavenly Father to help me find more people to bless during the coming week. I am thankful that I have time during the sacrament each week to do this and to become the best I can be."

Our friend looked at me and said nothing. We left the restaurant and walked to the car. I then asked him if he remembered all of the self-help books I had on my bookshelf at home. He did. I told him that since I had joined the Church, I had never read another self-help book. I said the only book I get my answers from anymore is the Book of Mormon.

A few days later he called to apologize.

"Come unto Christ . . . and love God with all your might,

I told our angry, less-active friend that what I like best about going to church is taking the sacrament.

mind and strength” (Moroni 10:32), Moroni counsels us. As I have tried to follow that counsel, my love for God’s children has increased—even for those who try to be my enemy. ■

A Week to Go until Payday

By Julie C. Donaldson

With some difficulty, my husband and I, carrying our two young children, found an empty table in the college’s large dining room. Pulling out the sandwiches we had made at home, we discussed our bleak financial situation.

We had no money and a week to go until our next paycheck. Neither of us wanted to ask our parents for help. We had credit cards, but if we started using them, how would we stop? We had been paying our tithing faithfully, and we hoped Heavenly Father would bless us.

As we considered our options, I noticed a man smiling at us from several tables away. With our noisy, active children, I was used to people staring at us. I gave his notice no thought until he walked toward us. Placing a folded piece of paper on the table, he patted my husband on the back and said with a smile, “It looks like you’ve got your hands full.”

Then he walked away and quickly

disappeared into the crowd. Unfolding the paper, we read, “Good luck! It looks like you’re doing a good job so far.” Tucked into the fold was enough money to get us through the next week and then some.

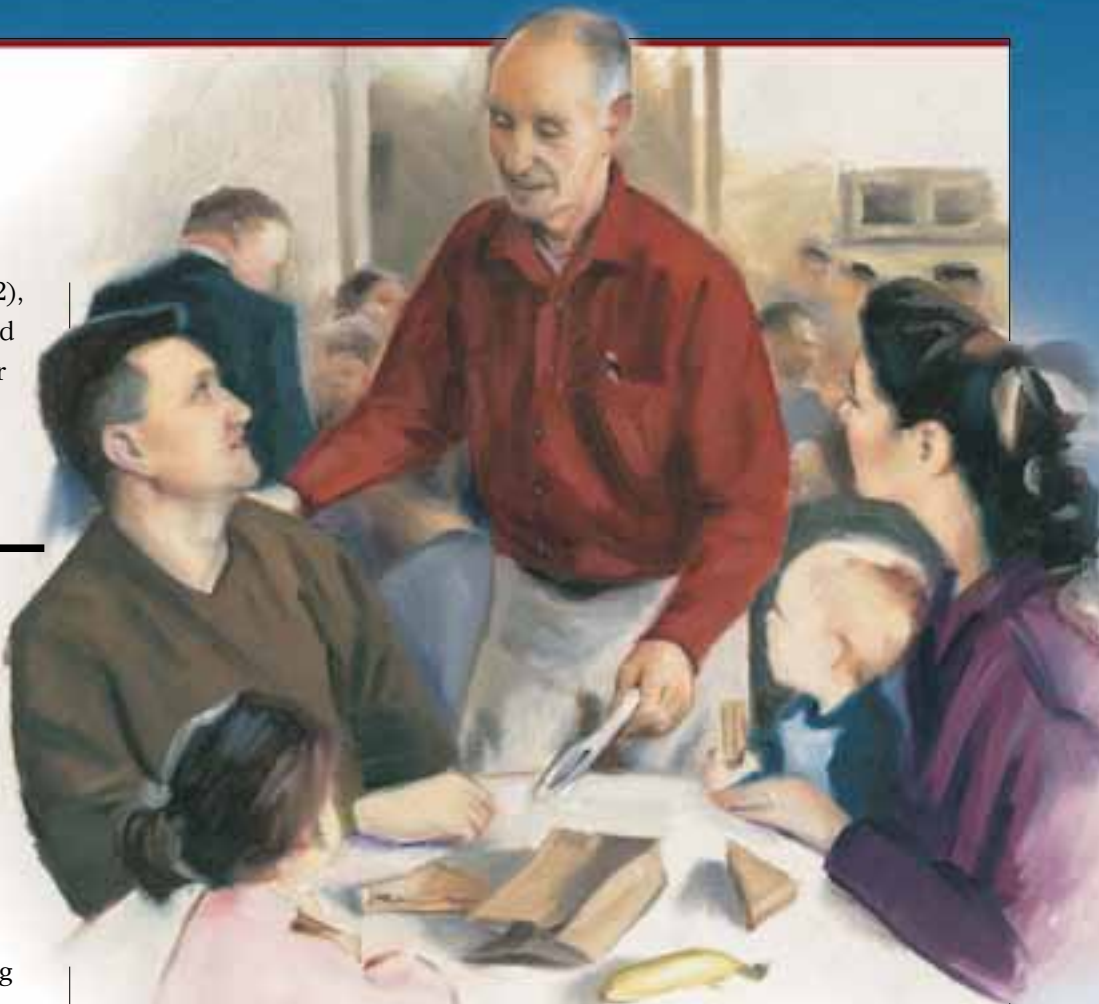
With tears in my eyes, I felt the Spirit’s peaceful assurance that this was an answer to our prayers and a blessing from paying our tithing. I knew at that moment that Heavenly Father was intimately aware of our little family and that He would not forsake us.


The stranger walked toward us, placed a folded piece of paper on the table, and patted my husband on the back.

I kept the note and have read it many times over the past few years. I am sure that the generous stranger did not fully comprehend the impact his action would have. But for

our family, this experience was a turning point—a turning toward greater obedience, faith, and gratitude.

A spiritual prompting, a generous stranger willing to act, and a helpful note have blessed my family eternally. ■





As Favio approached the book lying on the sidewalk, he recognized the golden letters. It was Heavenly Father's answer.

Where Would I Find Another Book of Mormon?

By Curtis Kleinman

My companion and I had just ended a long, unsuccessful day of knocking on doors in Buenos Aires, Argentina. As we sat waiting for the bus, I began to sink into a daze of self-pity. I'd served in the area for three months with no success. I felt that I had let the Lord down.

Just then I noticed a man in the distance hurrying toward us on a bicycle. He was yelling and waving. Hoping to avoid the seemingly angry man, we walked quickly toward our approaching bus. It was getting dark, and we were in a dangerous part of our area. We hoped to reach the bus before the frightening man reached us.

"I have a question for you," yelled the man. The bus arrived just before

he did, and we scrambled aboard. Then I heard the man's question: "What happened to the gold plates after Joseph Smith translated them?" My mouth fell open. I wanted to jump from the bus as it drove away. Instead I yelled, "Where do you live?" and hurriedly scribbled his address.

We stopped by the man's house the next day. His name was Favio. A month before, he told us, his friend had loaned him a copy of the Book of Mormon.

"I have always been interested in Jesus Christ, but I had never heard of another testament of His life," Favio said. "I knew only about the Bible and

Christ's ministry in the East. No one ever told me that Christ came to America! I was excited to learn more."

A few weeks later Favio had to return the book. "I didn't know where I would get another copy," he said. "I wanted more than anything to know if the book was true. I got down on my knees and asked for Heavenly Father's help. I said, 'Father, if the Book of Mormon is true, please let another copy fall into my hands so I can continue to study it.'"

One day Favio was at a train station. Out of the corner of his eye he saw what looked like a blue book lying on the sidewalk. As he approached it he recognized the golden letters. It was Heavenly Father's answer.

Weeks after he had found the Book of Mormon, Favio saw us at the bus stop. By then he knew the book was true. Over the next few weeks we taught Favio the basic principles of the

gospel and encouraged him to continue reading. Every time we asked him if he would commit to living a new gospel principle, he would answer, "I'm afraid not to." Shortly thereafter, he entered the waters of baptism.

Now every time I have a difficult day, instead of sinking into self-pity, I remember Favio—his question for two discouraged missionaries and his commitment to the Lord after he received an answer. ■

taught at home and in Primary. They were only six and seven, but they had faith in the power of prayer. They knew that Heavenly Father was able to help their little sister.

I thought about their faith all afternoon. Then a question came to mind: when did I start to feel peaceful? After figuring out how long it took to reach the hospital, I realized that my peaceful feeling came at about the same time that Vanessa and Vasco had prayed.

I know that Heavenly Father heard those sweet voices and not only blessed my daughter with health but also blessed me with peace. I will never forget what I learned that day from my children: we have a loving Father who hears our prayers and wants to bless us "with a sweet and calm assurance that he cares" ("Be Thou Humble," *Hymns*, no. 130). ■

My Children's Prayer

By Virgínia Augusta de Pádua Lima Pereira

As I answered the phone at our chapel in Viseu, Portugal, I wondered who was calling. I was surprised to hear the trembling voice of my eight-year-old son on the line.

"Mom, Viviana was hit by a car," he said. "She is alive, but her head is bleeding! She is going to the hospital."

I almost fainted. What was I going to do? Fortunately, I had family nearby—two of my sisters were with me. One of them accompanied me to the hospital, while the other one went to watch and comfort my three distressed children at home.

In the middle of so much anguish, I wanted to pray but could only weep.

On the way to the hospital, however, I was suddenly overcome by a feeling of peace and assurance. I felt that I didn't need to worry; everything would be all right.

My sister noticed the change and asked, "Are you OK?" I nodded. Skeptical, she asked again, "Really? Are you OK?"

"Yes," I replied, remaining silent for the rest of the journey.

When we arrived at the hospital, I found my four-year-old daughter conscious and only slightly hurt. After comforting her, I couldn't stop thinking about the peace I had felt.

Viviana returned home after one day in the hospital. In talking about the accident, my sister who had stayed with the children said, "Yesterday, after the ambulance left, Vanessa and Vasco went into the house and prayed together."

I was touched to know that in the midst of all the fear they were experiencing, my children remembered what they had been

In the midst of all the fear they were experiencing, my children remembered what they had been taught.

