

# Extra Help

By Allie Arnell

I descended at my own pace. Five feet (1.5 m) . . . I felt a current jostle me. Now ten feet. Suddenly it became dark. I felt my breaths shorten. This freezing, murky ocean was nothing like the pool we had practiced in. Scared and claustrophobic, I darted up to the water's surface.

"What happened?" the instructor's assistant asked me. Tears welled up inside my mask. I was in the middle of my scuba-diving certification exam, performing a 30-foot (9 m) descent, one of the necessary skills to pass the exam. The assistant saw my panic and assured me I would be OK. He was encouraging, yet not prodding. At one point he told me, "You don't have to do this." It was then I realized that I wanted to.

I realized that although this was hard for me, I wanted to accomplish it; I wanted to gain my certification. So I bridled my fear and completed the remaining skills with the class to pass the exam. It was hard, but with some encouragement I was able to do it.

Months later when I was serving as a missionary in Peru, I was reminded of my difficult scuba-diving experience as I invited people

to strengthen their faith and change their lives. One family my companion and I especially loved to visit was the Rumays. Carina and Enrique and their two teenage daughters, Karen and Nicole, welcomed us often and quickly stole our hearts. It wasn't long before Carina, Karen, and Nicole accepted the gospel and joined the church.

Enrique, however, needed a bit of extra help. Our message differed from what his upbringing had exposed him to, so it took us a while to earn

his trust. Enrique had various concerns. The main aspect of the gospel that troubled him was the Book of Mormon. He had never heard of this book and had a hard time reading and understanding it. Its unfamiliarity made Enrique feel unsure.

At that point, Enrique was like me when I swam back up to the water's surface: everyone else seemed to be descending with ease, while I was frozen with fear. Also like me, all that Enrique needed to be successful was some extra help.



*On your mission, you might meet investigators who need someone at their side, willing to dive into the process with them.*

This help came to him in various forms. He had missionaries to help him address his concerns and feel the Spirit. He also had ward members who fellowshiped him and taught him about his role as a father. The biggest help of all, though, was Enrique's own family.

Even before their baptism, the Rumays made a habit of holding family prayer and scripture study. They got Enrique a set of scriptures with larger text and an audio version so that he could study the Book of Mormon more easily. These simple efforts helped Enrique immensely. At no time did anyone pressure him; they simply supported him. Through their actions, they told him, "We know you can do this."

This help allowed Enrique discover for himself the power of the Book of Mormon. One day he announced that he had listened to the entire book and that he knew it was the word of God. About four months after the baptism of his wife and daughters, Enrique took the same step and was baptized too.

Enrique says he's thankful for the help and patience he received that allowed him to reach where he is today. As a missionary, I felt blessed to have witnessed this family's

example of love as they helped their husband and father overcome his doubts. I was also grateful that I had my challenging scuba-diving experience that allowed me to relate in a small way to how Enrique felt and how other investigators might feel during the conversion process.

As you invite people to repent and change on your mission, remember that sometimes all people need to be successful is some extra

encouragement. They might need someone trusted and experienced at their side saying, "It's going to be OK. I know you can do it. I really believe in you." They might be hoping that you'll be that person who is willing to dive into the process with them, help them master new habits and skills, and help them gain their certification, which is ultimately the approval of the Lord. ■

*The author lives in Iowa, USA.*

