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CAPTAIN MORONI HELPED ME TEACH MIDDLE SCHOOL

I was in the middle of a difficult year teaching 13- and 14-year-olds. I had just come home from a frustrating meeting with the assistant principal going over a recent evaluation. Being a new teacher and needing to create most of my lessons, I found myself struggling to keep the students on task and interested. Basically the conversation came down to the need for me to force my students to make a choice—get on task or get in trouble—and to follow through with my warnings.

I left the conference feeling down

and overwhelmed. I made it a point to make this meeting the question of the day as I studied my scriptures the next day. Incredibly, answers came to me as I read from the Book of Mormon.

I prayed to learn from the scriptures that morning how to be a better teacher. The Holy Ghost taught me as I read about Captain Moroni in Alma 44. At this point in the story, Captain Moroni and the Nephites had surrounded the Lamanites at the river Sidon and scared them to the point of making the Lamanites drop their

weapons. I continued to read, thinking of how I'd like to be like Captain Moroni in the classroom: commanding, confident, and successful.

I read through the dialogue and noticed Moroni telling Zerahemnah and the Lamanites that they were being forced to make a choice: “Deliver up your weapons of war unto us, and . . . we will spare your lives, if ye will go your way and come not again to war against us” or else “if ye do not this, . . . I will command my men that they shall fall upon you” (Alma 44:6, 7). I realized he was doing what my administrator had told me to do! “Give them two choices, and follow through,” he had said. With that in mind, I adopted Moroni’s motto, “Behold, we will end the conflict” (Alma 44:10).

Armed with the principles I had learned in a scripture story about one of my heroes, I returned to class confident with my battle plan. I happened to have a Captain Moroni figurine, and he sat in my shirt pocket the rest of the school year as a reminder of how Captain Moroni had taught me to manage a middle school classroom. As I gave my students two choices, their behavior improved, they did their work, and we got along better. The year finished, and it was still hard, but with the answered prayer and the power of the scriptures, I was able to “end the conflict.” ■

Ben Floyd, Washington, USA