

# The Most Precious Gift

*“There is no gift greater than the gift of salvation” (D&C 6:13).*

*Based on a true story*

**S**ophie helped Mama clean their home. The missionaries were visiting today. They were welcome visitors in Sophie’s home in Colombia. Mama prepared a special meal: tamales, rice, and corn with peppers.

The missionaries had taught Sophie’s family about Jesus Christ and His Church. Just two weeks ago Elder Kraig and his new companion, Elder Jessen, had baptized Sophie, her parents, and her two older brothers. Already, Sophie felt the difference in their family. There was more laughing, singing, and praying.

During the meal Sophie listened to her parents and brothers discuss the scriptures with the missionaries. After the dishes were cleared away, Elder Kraig said, “I will be going home next week.”

Sophie hadn’t realized he would be leaving so soon. Tears crowded the corners of her eyes. Sophie glanced at her brothers. They were near tears too.

Elder Kraig sniffled a couple of times. “I have something for you,” he said to Papa. He pulled a package from his backpack. “These are for you and your sons.”

Papa opened the box and pulled out six white Sunday shirts. For a long moment he was silent. “We

cannot accept so fine a gift,” he said at last.

Sophie heard the regret in Papa’s voice. Their family did not have white shirts for Papa and the boys, and Sophie knew Papa wanted to show respect by dressing in white shirts when they went to church.

“I will not need so many shirts when I go home,” Elder Kraig said. “You will be doing me a favor by keeping them.”

“But I have nothing for you,” Papa said. He pointed to the Book of Mormon. “You have already given us the most precious gift. You brought us the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

The next day Sophie decided to make something for Elder Kraig. After talking with Mama, she decided to make a small woven blanket called a serape. She borrowed her mother’s loom, chose the colors of yarn, and worked on it each day after school and chores. When her fingers fumbled, she carefully undid the strands and started over.

At last the serape was finished. She hoped Elder Kraig would like the soft browns and cream colors she had woven together. She wrapped the serape in brown paper.

On the day of Elder Kraig’s last visit to their home, Sophie presented her gift.

“Thank you, Sophie,” Elder Kraig said. Tears shone in his eyes. “I will never forget you or your family.”

“And we will never forget you,” Sophie said. ■



ILLUSTRATION BY JIM MADSEN



**I**t is a rare and precious thing to have a testimony that God our Heavenly Father lives; that His Son, Jesus Christ, is our Savior and Redeemer; and that priesthood authority . . . has been restored once again."

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Pure Testimony," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 40.

