



**THE**  
**NewEra**

**AUGUST**

**2008**

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Distribution Services, Church Magazines, P.O. Box 26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368, USA.

Canada Post Information: Publication Agreement #40017431.

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**The New Era Magazine**  
**Volume 38, Number 8**  
**August 2008**

*Official monthly publication for youth of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

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50 E. North Temple St.  
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### **E-mail Address:**

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### **To Change Address:**

Send old and new address information to:  
Distribution Services  
P.O. Box 26368  
Salt Lake City, UT  
84126-0368, USA.  
Please allow 60 days for changes to take effect.

*Cover: Karlee Bispo gets immersed in her sport. See "Good Sports" on p. 26.*

*Cover photography: Ryan Tucker (front) and Jennifer Maddy (back)*

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# GATES ONLY YOU CAN OPEN

BY PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON

*History swings on small hinges—and so will your life.*



***The Gate of Preparation, the Gate of Performance, and the Gate of Service. You must pass through each of these gates if you are to be successful in your journey through mortality.***

The Prophet Joseph Smith counseled: “Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God” (*History of the Church*, 5:134–35).

I have devoted considerable time reflecting on years gone by, when I was your age and facing your challenges, your objectives, your opportunities, your futures.

There were, however, some major differences in our times. During mine, World War II was raging in full conflict. Every young man faced military service and an interruption of his schooling. Looming in the background of every thought for each young man was the inevitable call to serve one’s country. Left behind were the comforts of family and home, the teachings of classrooms, and of course a special girlfriend. (She and I have now been married for almost 60 years!)

Whether speaking of your generation or of mine, there are some constancies amid the

changes of the times. The past is behind—we must learn from it. The future is ahead—we must prepare for it. The present is now—we must live in it.

Years ago, I discovered a thought which is true. It is this: The gate of history swings on small hinges, and so do people’s lives. I have chosen to discuss three gates which you alone can open. You must pass through each gate if you are to be successful in your journey through mortality:

The Gate of Preparation.

The Gate of Performance.

The Gate of Service.

## **The Gate of Preparation**

First let us speak of the Gate of Preparation. The Lord has counseled, “If ye are prepared ye shall not fear” (D&C 38:30). Fear is the enemy of growth and accomplishment.

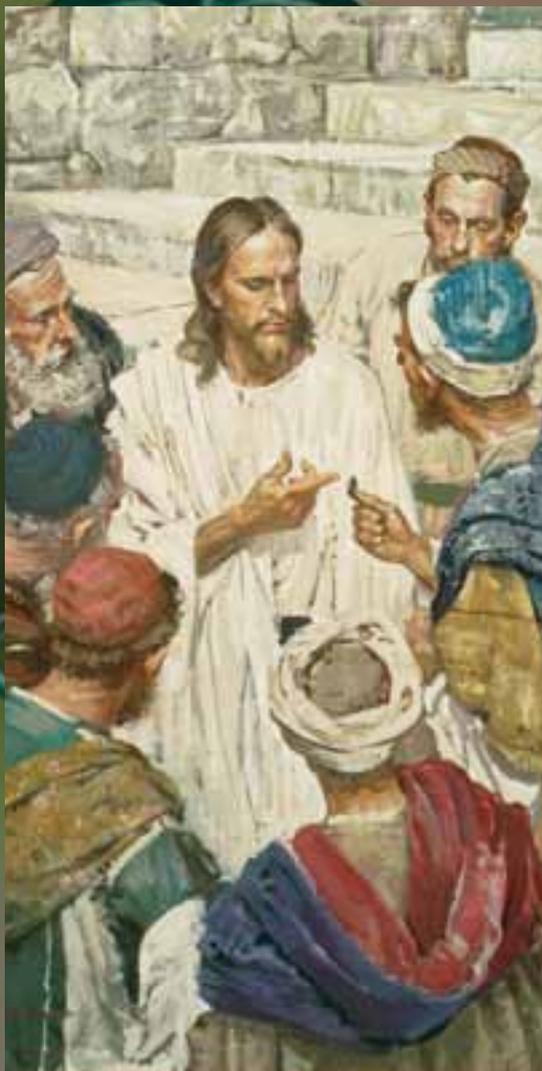
It is necessary to prepare, to plan, so that we don’t fritter away our lives. Without a goal, there can be no real success. The best definition of success I have ever found goes



*The Lord has counseled, "If ye are prepared ye shall not fear" (D&C 38:30). Looking to the Savior as our example, we see that even as a young man of 12, Jesus prepared for His earthly ministry.*

# 1 PREPARATION

*Pattern your own personal performance after the example of the Savior as you learn of Him by reading the scriptures regularly and following their teachings.*



something like this: Success is the progressive realization of a worthy ideal. Someone has said the trouble with not having a goal is that you can spend your life running up and down the field and never crossing the goal line.

I want to state here and now that wishing will not replace thorough preparation to meet the trials of life. Preparation is hard work but absolutely essential for our progress. The Lord urged: “Seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118).

The poet Emilie Poulsson put the thought this way:

*Books are keys to wisdom's treasure;  
Books are gates to lands of pleasure;  
Books are paths that upward lead;  
Books are friends. Come, let us read.*

Concerning your preparation, let me share with you this time-honored advice, which has never been more applicable than it is right now: it is not the number of hours you put in, but what you put in the hours that counts.

Have discipline in your preparations. Have checkpoints where you can determine if you're on course. Study something you like and which will make it possible for you to support a family. While this counsel would apply almost certainly to young men, it also has relevance to young women. There are situations in life which we cannot predict which will require employable skills. You can't get the jobs of tomorrow until you have the skills of today. Business in the new economy, where the only guarantee is change, brings us to serious preparation.

Make certain as you prepare that you do not procrastinate. Someone has said that

## 2 PERFORMANCE

procrastination is the thief of time. Actually, procrastination is much more. It is the thief of our self-respect. It nags at us and spoils our fun. It deprives us of the fullest realization of our ambitions and hopes.

In academic preparation, I have found it a good practice to read a text with the idea that I will be asked to explain that which the author wrote and its application to the subject it covered. Also, I have tried to be attentive in any lecture in the classroom and to pretend that I would be called upon to present the same lecture to others. While this practice is very hard work, it certainly helps during test week!

### **The Gate of Performance**

May I now turn to the Gate of Performance. Like the Gate of Preparation, you alone can open it.

The Apostle Paul provided sound counsel to guide our performance: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12).

Remember that the mantle of leadership is not the cloak of comfort, but the robe of responsibility. Accountability is not for the intention but for the deed. You must continue to choose the harder right, instead of the easier wrong. The poet John Greenleaf Whittier expressed the truth when he wrote these lines: "Of all sad words of tongue or pen, / The saddest are these: 'It might have been!'" ("Maud Muller," *The Complete Poetical Works of Whittier* [1892], 48). Don't forget: one of the saddest things in life is wasted talent.

Will you remember to choose your friends carefully, for you will tend to be like them and to be found where they choose to go. Consider the love your parents have for you and that you have for them. Instead of simply asking them, "Where are the keys to your car?" you might add, "I'll be a bit late tonight." Often the clock ticks more loudly and the hands move more slowly when the night is dark, the hour is late, and a son or a daughter has not yet come home. A telephone call, "We're okay; we just stopped for something to eat. Don't worry; we're fine," is an indication

of true love of parents and of the training of a Latter-day Saint home.

Youth need fewer critics and more models to follow. Your own personal performance in all aspects of your life, including reading the scriptures regularly and following their teachings, will help you to become such models. Then the Gate of Performance will open before you as you proceed to Gate 3—the Gate of Service.

### **The Gate of Service**

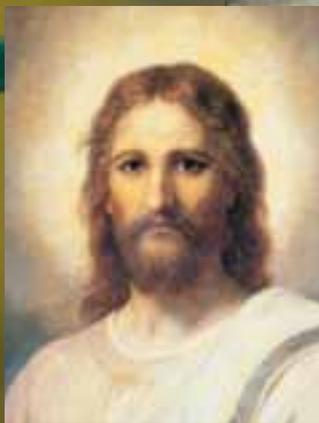
Albert Schweitzer, the noted theologian and missionary physician, declared: "I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve."

I witnessed such an act of service one Sunday as I attended the sacrament meeting of a small branch which consisted of patients in a nursing home. Most of the members were elderly and somewhat incapacitated. During the meeting, a sister called out aloud, "I'm cold! I'm cold!" Without a moment's hesitation, one of the priests at the sacrament table arose and walked over to this sister, removed his own suit coat, placed it around her shoulders, and then returned to his duties at the sacrament table.

After the meeting, this young man came to me and apologized for blessing the sacrament without his suit coat. Quietly I said to him that he was never more appropriately dressed than he was that day when a dear widow was uncomfortably cold and he provided the warmth she needed by placing his jacket around her shoulders. A simple act of kindness? Yes, but much more: a genuine love and concern for others.

The Holy Scriptures are replete with examples of service by the servants of the Lord and by Jesus, Himself. Of Him it is recorded: "[He] went about doing good . . . ; for God was with him" (Acts 10:38). He made lame beggars to walk and blind men to see. He cleansed the lepers and healed the centurion's servant. He restored to the widow at Nain her dead son, who now lived because of Him. He raised Lazarus from the tomb. He forgave the woman

*The Holy Scriptures are replete with examples of service by the servants of the Lord and by Jesus, Himself. Of Him it is recorded: “[He] went about doing good . . . ; for God was with him” (Acts 10:38).*



# 3 SERVICE

taken in adultery. He atoned for the sins of all of us. He died that we might eternally live.

As we go about our daily lives, we discover countless opportunities to follow the example of the Savior. When our hearts are in tune with His teachings, we discover the unmistakable nearness of His divine help. It is almost as though we are on the Lord's errand; and we then discover that, when we are on the Lord's errand, we are entitled to the Lord's help.

Through the years, the offices I have occupied have been decorated with lovely paintings of peaceful and pastoral scenes. However, there is one picture that always hangs on the wall which I face when seated behind my desk. It is a constant reminder of Him whom I serve, for it is a picture of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. When confronted with a vexing problem or difficult decision, I always gaze at that picture of the Master and silently ask myself the question: “What would He have me do?” No longer does doubt linger, nor does indecision prevail. The way to go is clear, and the pathway before me beckons. Such will also work for each of you as you focus on what the Lord would have you do.

The noble King Benjamin counseled his many subjects, after a lengthy but powerful sermon on the subject of service: “When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17).

I pray earnestly that each of us may open wide the three gates of which I have spoken—the gate of preparation, the gate of performance and the gate of service—and walk through them to our exaltation. **NE**

*From a talk given at Ricks College (BYU-Idaho) on January 14, 2001.*

# How Long Are You Going to Keep Me?

BY RYAN MARIE LUSVARDI

**H**ow long are you going to keep me?" Lily asked. My mother looked down at Lily's smooth, dark face and replied, "You're a part of our family now. I'm going to keep you forever."

Lily's puzzled expression gave away her confusion, so my mother tried again. "I'm going to keep you until tomorrow, and the next day, and the next day, and the next day. And every day, because I'm your mom forever."

Our family adopted four-year-old Lily while we were living in Hong Kong. At least once a day for three years Lily would ask, "How long are you going to keep me?"

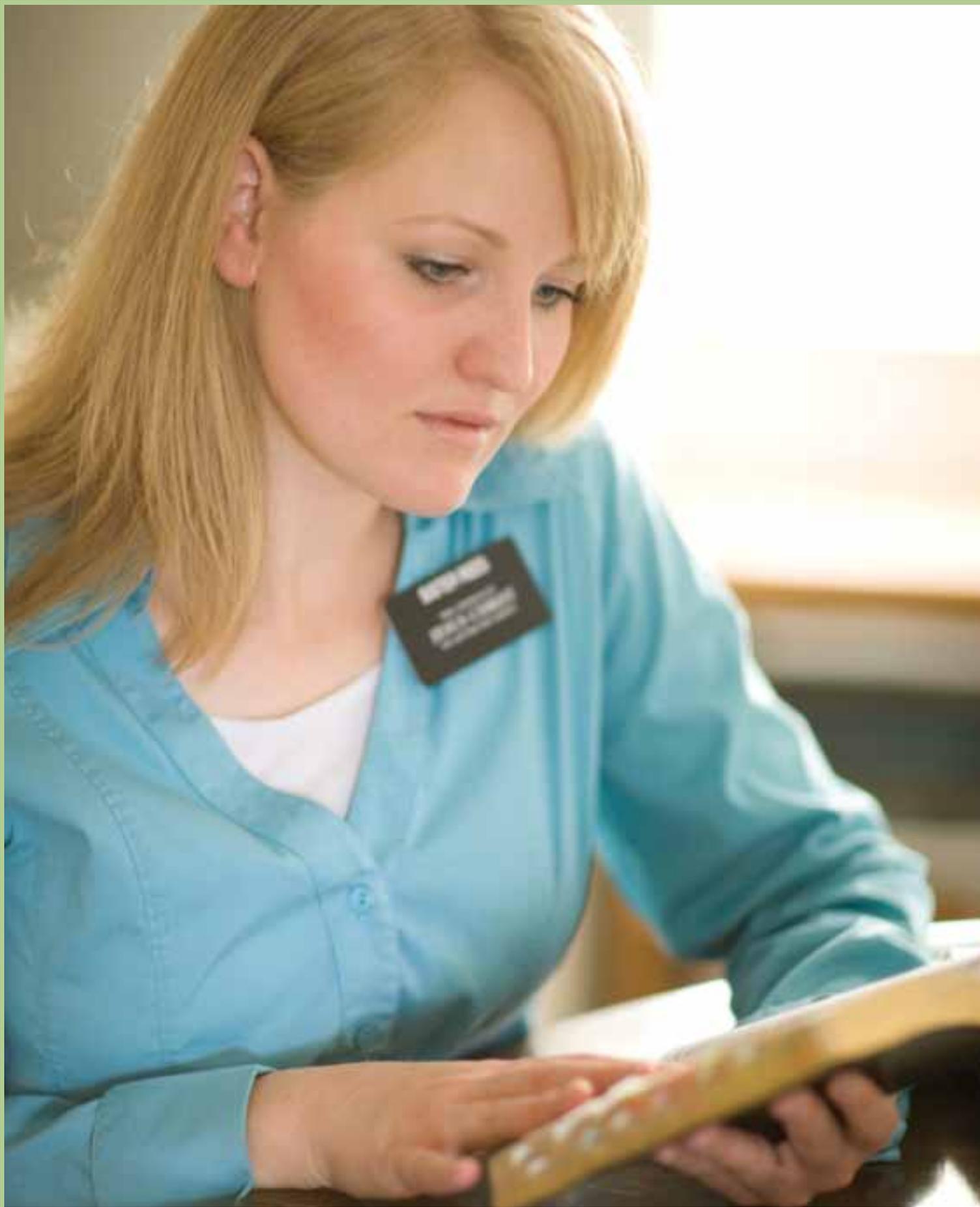
Slowly this repeated question transformed into a game for our family. Each member of our family gave a different answer. "As high as you can count—I'm going to keep you longer than that" and "I'm going to keep you for a million days times infinity" were a couple of Lily's favorite responses.

Every day in Hong Kong Lily saw faces like her own. But when our family moved back to the United States, she went weeks without seeing another person with her same sleek black hair and deep brown eyes. Once while in the store, Lily saw a Hispanic woman and excitedly asked, "Mom, is she Chinese?"

Lily had her own system of deciding who was Chinese. She decided our mother, who has dark brown hair, was Chinese because, as Lily put it, "Your hair is like mine." When my skin became brown in the sun, Lily would say, "You're kind of Chinese because your skin is like mine." Lily looked for and found ways each member of our family was like her.

Although Lily does not look like any other member of our family, she is sealed to my parents by the same authority that I am. I know that Heavenly Father has restored priesthood power to the earth and that this power can bind families together for eternity. I am so grateful for that power and my opportunity to be with my family—my whole family—together forever. **NE**





FROM THE FIELD

# AARON, AMMON, AND ME

BY LESLIE A. REES



*We all had struggles in our missionary work, but with Christ on our side, we could do all things.*

It was early in the morning, and I sat in our small apartment trying to study. I had been serving as a missionary in Atlanta, Georgia, for the past six months. The first few months of my mission had been good, but that morning I felt hopeless and discouraged. I had been transferred to a hard area, and we were not teaching many people. We would go from door to door, day after day, but with little success.

As I tried to read my scriptures, my mind wandered. “Why do I have to serve in this area?” “Why is it so hard?” “What are we doing wrong?” There were so many questions going through my mind, but I did not know the answers. I only knew that I was ready to quit.

I sighed and tried to return to my studies, but it was no use. “What’s the point?” I thought. “There doesn’t seem to be anyone to teach in this area anyway.”

In desperation I knelt and began to pray. I had read in the scriptures about crying to God, but I did not really understand what it meant until that moment. I prayed hard and fervently, pouring out my heart. I asked God to help me get through my mission and to help us have success. I asked Him to help me so I would not be discouraged and to give me the strength to go on. I asked Him to help me study, because I knew I could gain something from the passages of scripture I was trying to read.

I closed my prayer and tried to read again. This time the scriptures opened up to me, and I felt intrigued by the story I was reading. It was in Alma 26. I realized the story was about missionary work. Aaron and Ammon were missionaries who had challenges that were more severe than what I was experiencing. They were put in prison, beaten,

laughed at, threatened with their lives, and condemned for their beliefs. Their faith was tried also. They did not give up. Instead, they were faithful and strong through all their trials. I then realized that if Ammon and Aaron could endure all their trials, then I could endure mine too.

I read more of the story and saw the blessings that Ammon and Aaron received. They saw thousands of people experience a change of heart, repent, and be baptized. Their trials eventually brought them indescribable joy.

When I finished reading the chapter, I noticed a plaque that hung on the wall above our desk. It read, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13). I had never really noticed that plaque until then. Reading the verse left me with a wonderful feeling. Christ was my strength because He knew what I was going through. He suffered all things. He even knew what it was like to be a discouraged, frightened young missionary serving in Georgia.

After I went through the trials, I did see the blessings. We were teaching one woman who was truly prepared to receive the gospel. She told us she wanted to be baptized. I grew to love her as a daughter of God, and when I saw her baptism, I felt the same joy that Aaron and Ammon felt—pure, indescribable joy.

Throughout my mission I saw many others come into the gospel. I saw miracles. I never forgot that scripture: “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Whenever I felt discouraged or afraid, I would think about that scripture and remember that Christ was my strength and that He would not leave me alone. I knew that with Christ on my side as my strength, I could do all things. **NE**

# The Biggest TEST

of Her Life . . . So Far

*While preparing for her big test, Andrea learned the key to passing the ultimate test.*

BY ADAM C. OLSON  
Church Magazines

**A**s a young teen growing up in Santiago, Chile, Andrea González never had much except for a dream—a university degree that would allow her to support her family if necessary.

To get there, she hoped to graduate from seminary, get good grades at school, and score high enough on her college placement exam (PSU) to go to a university where she could study engineering.

But by the time she had started her final year of high school in preparation for the PSU, she started to wonder if any of that was possible. “All my goals seemed impossible to achieve,” she recalls.

## No Easy Goals

Andrea was trying to break into a competitive and male-dominated field of study. Because of the competition, the top universities were looking for extremely high scores on the math portion of the PSU, scores usually earned by those who could afford to attend private schools.

To try and overcome these obstacles, Andrea kept a daunting schedule her final year. She was up early and studying after school until late, eating when she had a free moment and squeezing in seminary four nights a week.

“It was discouraging sometimes,” she says. “I had to sacrifice a lot. I don’t know how many times my friends heard me say, ‘No, I’ve got to study’ or



how often I've been teased for being smart.”  
But she knew she couldn't give up if she wanted to secure her future.

### Passing the Test

Her sacrifices paid off. On the math section of the PSU, Andrea was one of 200 students in the country to earn a perfect score of 850 and one of only two girls from public schools to do so.

She also graduated from seminary, got the good grades she studied so hard for, and was named by her classmates as the year's "Best Friend" because of all of the time she spent helping others with their own studying.

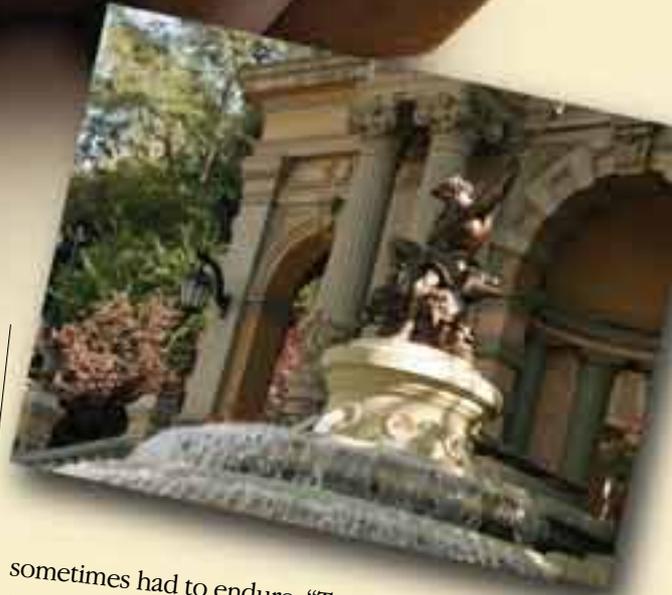
But Andrea believes her success has less to do with how much she *knows* than it does with what she knows she must *do*. In other words, blessings come from following the Lord's counsel, not our own (see 2 Nephi 9:28–29). "It's not worth anything to be smart if we ignore God," she says. "You always have to put God first."

### The Other Test

Learning that principle as she studied for her college entrance exam was critical to the *other* test Andrea was taking—the test of life that everyone must take.

The Lord Himself explains this test in the scriptures: "We will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them" (Abraham 3:25).

"Heavenly Father tests us to see what we will do," Andrea says, thinking back on the difficult schedule she had to keep and the teasing she



sometimes had to endure. "To pass life's test, we have to be obedient," Andrea says.  
And not just when things are going well but during the hard times too.

"The great test of life," said President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "is to see whether we will hearken to and obey God's commands in the midst of the storms of life."<sup>1</sup>

### No Test Is Too Much with Him

Often her two tests collided. That's when Andrea learned that putting God first was the secret to passing both tests.

Many times she had to choose between Church activities and school activities, between studying the gospel and studying for her test. She says she learned early on that she felt better if she chose Church first. It strengthened her testimony that Heavenly Father would help her with *her* concerns if her first concern was *Him*.

These experiences also taught Andrea another important lesson. "He is capable of helping me with the tests He has given me," she says.

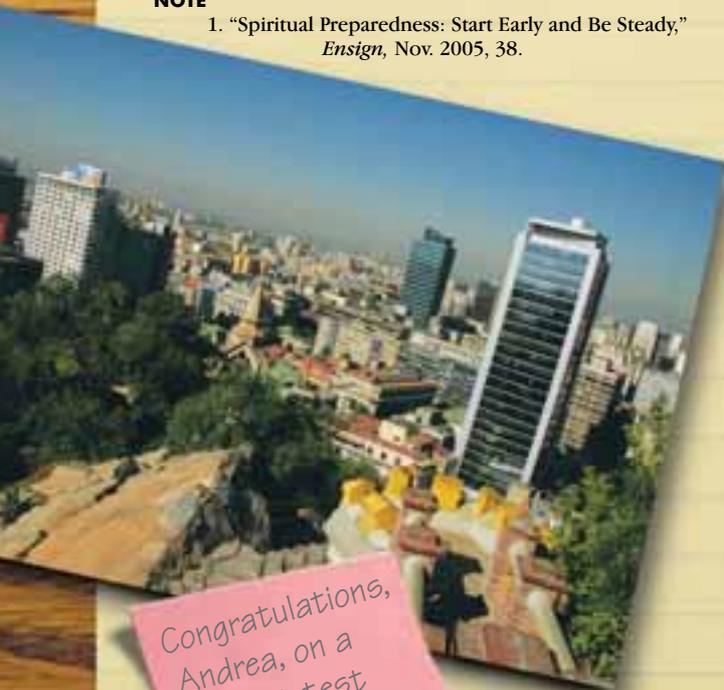
Or as one of her heroes, Nephi, said, "I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he

commandeth them” (1 Nephi 3:7).

Andrea knows that even though she has passed her first test, there is a lot she must learn before she’ll feel ready to pass the next. But she knows if she puts God first, He’ll help her pass that test too. **NE**

**NOTE**

1. “Spiritual Preparedness: Start Early and Be Steady,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 38.



Congratulations,  
Andrea, on a  
perfect test  
score!

### THE LORD’S TEXTBOOKS

As Andrea prepared for her big test, her math and science texts weren’t the only books she studied.

“The scriptures are the Lord’s textbooks,” she says. “In the scriptures are the things God wants us to understand. We have to study the scriptures.”

When she was discouraged, she didn’t turn to her schoolbooks. “I read the Lord’s texts to lift my spirits. When you’re discouraged, reading the scriptures will help.”

She especially learned to love the Book of Mormon. “It has changed my life,” she says. “The examples of those people in the scriptures have really helped me.”

The way Nephi trusted that God could help him get through his trials was a great example as Andrea has faced her own tests. “Nephi has helped me a lot,” she says.

It was Nephi who said, “But behold, I, Nephi, will show unto you that the tender mercies of the Lord are over all those whom he hath chosen, because of their faith, to make them mighty even unto the power of deliverance” (1 Nephi 1:20).

To learn from Nephi’s example of faith in the Lord, read the following verses: 1 Nephi 3:7; 4:1; 7:12; 9:6; 17:3, 50; 2 Nephi 4:19, 34.

WHAT JOSEPH TAUGHT

# COMFORT

## AT THE TIME OF DEATH

*The Prophet Joseph Smith knew that the plan of salvation can console us when a loved one dies.*

**D**uring his life Joseph Smith suffered the loss of many close relatives and friends, including his father, six children, and three brothers. Yet he also gained great comfort from the many revelations he received regarding life after death. Here are some of his teachings on this topic.

### DEATH IS A TEMPORARY SEPARATION

*“When I talk to these mourners, what have they lost? Their relatives and friends are only separated from their bodies for a short season: their spirits which existed with God have left the tabernacle of clay only for a little moment, as it were; and they now exist in a place where they converse together the same as we do on the earth.”*

*“The expectation of seeing my friends in the morning of the resurrection cheers my soul and makes me bear up against the evils of life.”*

### THE DEATH OF SMALL CHILDREN

*“I have meditated upon the subject, and asked the question, why it is that infants, innocent children, are taken away from us. . . . The Lord takes many away, even in infancy, that they may escape the envy of man, and the sorrows and evils of this present world; they were too pure, too lovely, to live on earth; therefore, if rightly considered, instead of mourning we have reason to rejoice as they are delivered from evil, and we shall soon have them again.”*

*“Children . . . must rise just as they died; we can there hail our lovely infants with the same glory—the same loveliness in the celestial glory.”*

### TRUST IN GOD

*“It has been hard for me to live on earth and see . . . young men . . . taken from us in the midst of their youth. Yes, it has been hard to be reconciled to these things. . . . Yet I know we ought to be still and know it is of God, and be reconciled to His will; all is right.”*

*From Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (2007), 174–78.*



# "I have a couple of friends who don't come to church anymore. What are some ways to help them return?"

**E**very new member needs a friend at church, a Church assignment, and nourishment "by the good word of God" (Moroni 6:4).<sup>1</sup> While your friends may not be recent converts, these three things can help them.

You can also pray for help. In the Book of Mormon, one of the most powerful accounts of someone coming back to the gospel occurred because of prayer (see Mosiah 27:14).

Let your friends know that you care, and be a good example. Show them that living gospel standards is a great way to be happy (see Mosiah 2:41).

Finally, don't give up. The Lord respects our agency and allows each of us to come to Him when we are ready. For some this may take longer than others. But no matter how long it takes, your efforts will be worth it.

By helping your friends return to church, you are following the Savior's example. With love and compassion, He invited others to come unto Him, live the gospel more fully, and rise to their full potential. **NE**

**NOTE**

1. See Gordon B. Hinckley, "A Perfect Brightness of Hope," *Ensign*, Oct. 2006, 4.



**Talk about Gospel Topics**

It worried me when I noticed that my good friend was not coming to church anymore. Her close friend, I found, had recently passed away, and she was beginning to doubt. One day I invited her to a party with some girls from church. I made it a goal to bring up the Church once. After the others left, we talked about various Church topics that I would have never thought to talk to her about. I learned that by doing my part, the Lord will take care of the rest. All we need to do is open our mouths (see D&C 28:16).  
Rebecca T., 16, Washington



**Pray for Them**

Something that would help a lot is to visit them and show an interest in them. Invite them to Church activities. Pray a lot to Heavenly Father. Ask Him to help you see what the best way would be to help them to return, and pray for them so there can be a change in their hearts to replace any sinful desire with a desire to follow Christ. Give them a good example, and show them that the gospel brings happiness.  
Marilú P., 17, Nuevo León, Mexico

*Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as pronouncements of Church doctrine.*



### Share Your Testimony

The first thing I want to find out is why they aren't coming to church. After that I will invite them for dinner, family home evening, and some Church activities as well. At the same time, I want to let them know how much our Heavenly Father loves them by sharing some scriptures and inviting them to church. I will bear my testimony to them of the truthfulness of this Church, that it is the only way we can go back and live with our Father in Heaven.

William V., 20, Tongatapu, Tonga



### Answer Their Questions

Getting friends to come back to church is hard. People have many reasons for falling away. You should talk to your friends about their reasons for not coming. You can also help them understand the answers to the questions they have that could be keeping them from coming. Also let them know how much they are missed. When they do come to church, make them feel loved and welcome.

Madison B., 14, Arizona

### Be a Good Friend

Just be the best friend you can. Be there for your friends. Be an example. Pray for them. Let the Lord show you how you can help your friends. He knows and loves His children and will lead them

back to the correct path if they will let Him.

Jenna K., 19, Lower Saxony, Germany

### Help Them Remember Spiritual Experiences

Ask them to remember their testimony, which moved them to be baptized. Ask them to remember the miracles the Lord wrought for them according to their faith. Also have them remember the power of prayer and the power of the priesthood.

Anna R., 21, Donetsk, Ukraine

### Let Them Know You Care

I have found that the easiest way to encourage them to come to church again is just telling them that you love them and that the ward loves them. I have recently gotten one of my less-active friends to commit to coming to our Mia Maid activities. God will show you how to touch their hearts.

Denali L., 15, Alaska

## NEXT QUESTION

*"My friend has started smoking.*

*How can I offer to help her quit without offending her?"*

*Please send your answer by*

*September 15, 2008, to:*

*New Era, Q & A, 9/08*

*50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420*

*Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA*

*Or e-mail: [newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org)*

**The following information and permission must be included in your e-mail or letter:**

FULL NAME

BIRTH DATE

WARD (or branch)

STAKE (or district)

**I grant permission to print response and photo:**

SIGNATURE

PARENT'S SIGNATURE (if you are under 18)

## Lift Those Who Need Help



*"Under the sacred and compelling trust we have as members of the Church of Jesus Christ, ours is a work of redemption, of lifting and saving those who need help. Ours is a task of raising the sights of those of our people who fail to realize the great potential that lies within them."*

**President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), "What This Work Is All About," Ensign, Aug. 2002, 5.**

BY RICHARD M. ROMNEY  
Church Magazines

*In an instant, injury ended Mark's season. But despite the setback, he found ways to help the team.*

**D**uring the second match of his senior season, middle blocker Mark Fletcher of Desert Vista High School in Phoenix, Arizona, leaped high into the air, just as he had in so many volleyball games before. But this time when he landed, something went horribly wrong.

#### **It Was Tough**

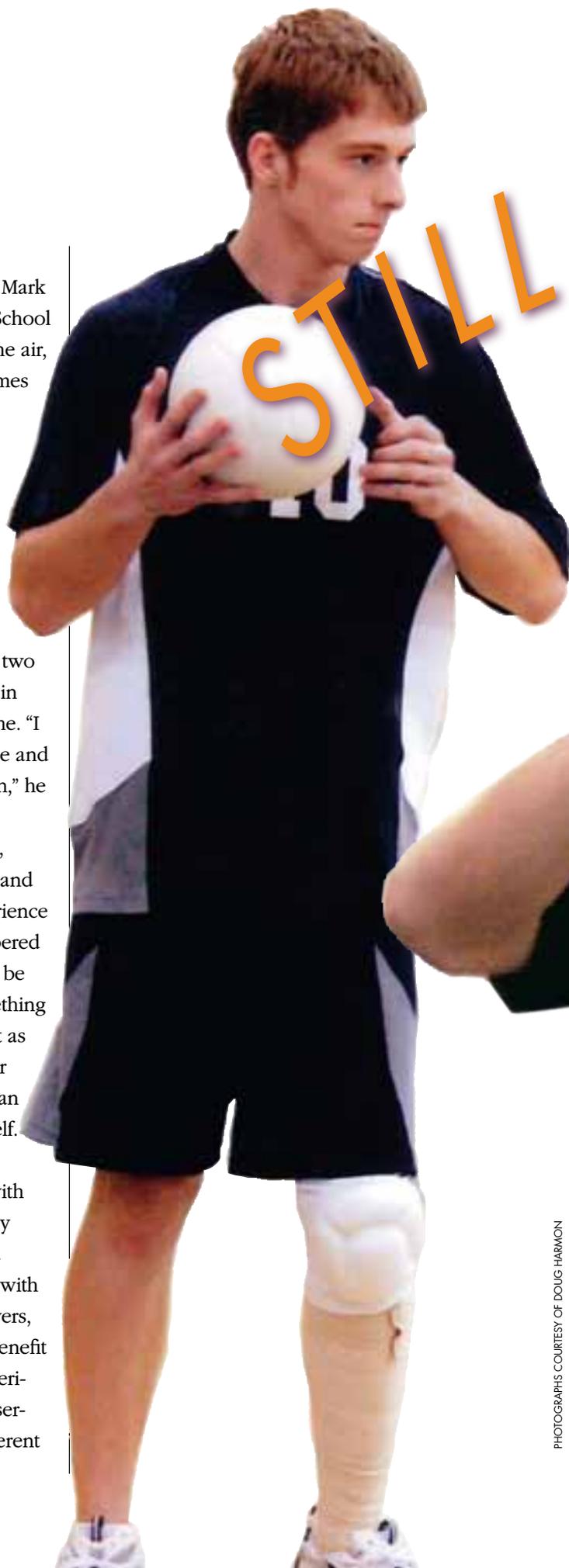
"You could hear the bone snap," he recalls. "There was no question my leg was broken." He had suffered a near compound fracture of the tibia and shattered the fibula in his leg. The next two weeks were filled with heartache, both in the hospital and then recovering at home. "I kept thinking about the years of practice and training, the hopes for a winning season," he says. "It was tough."

His father read two scriptures to him, Doctrine & Covenants 121:7 and 122:7, and told him that this would give him experience and be for his good. Mark also remembered reading in 2 Nephi 2:11 that there must be opposition in all things. "I figured something good could come out of this, so I might as well figure out what it was." The answer was to focus on helping others rather than wondering why he had been hurt himself.

Coach Ryan Tolman, who is also a Latter-day Saint, kept Mark practicing with

the team daily and assigned him to work with younger players, who could benefit from his experience. Call it service of a different

***Mark serves the ball in the final game of the regular season (right) and joins the celebration (below) after the team takes state.***



# SERVING



kind. Team members adjusted by playing in different positions; Mark adjusted by offering encouragement. Even though the season didn't turn out as great as everyone had hoped, Desert Vista still qualified for the playoffs.

## Strong Enough

As the last home match approached, Coach Tolman asked

Mark to serve the first serve. With a pin in his leg but strong enough to participate, Mark practiced over and over. "I didn't want to just hit it into the net," he explains. "I was praying the whole time."

When the game began, he limped to the line and then hit the ball so precisely the other team couldn't return it. The coach left him in. Mark couldn't move around the court, so his teammates had to cover balls that came his way. With the score 9-0, Mark finally lost service and left to a standing ovation. He limped to the bench and continued to cheer for his team.

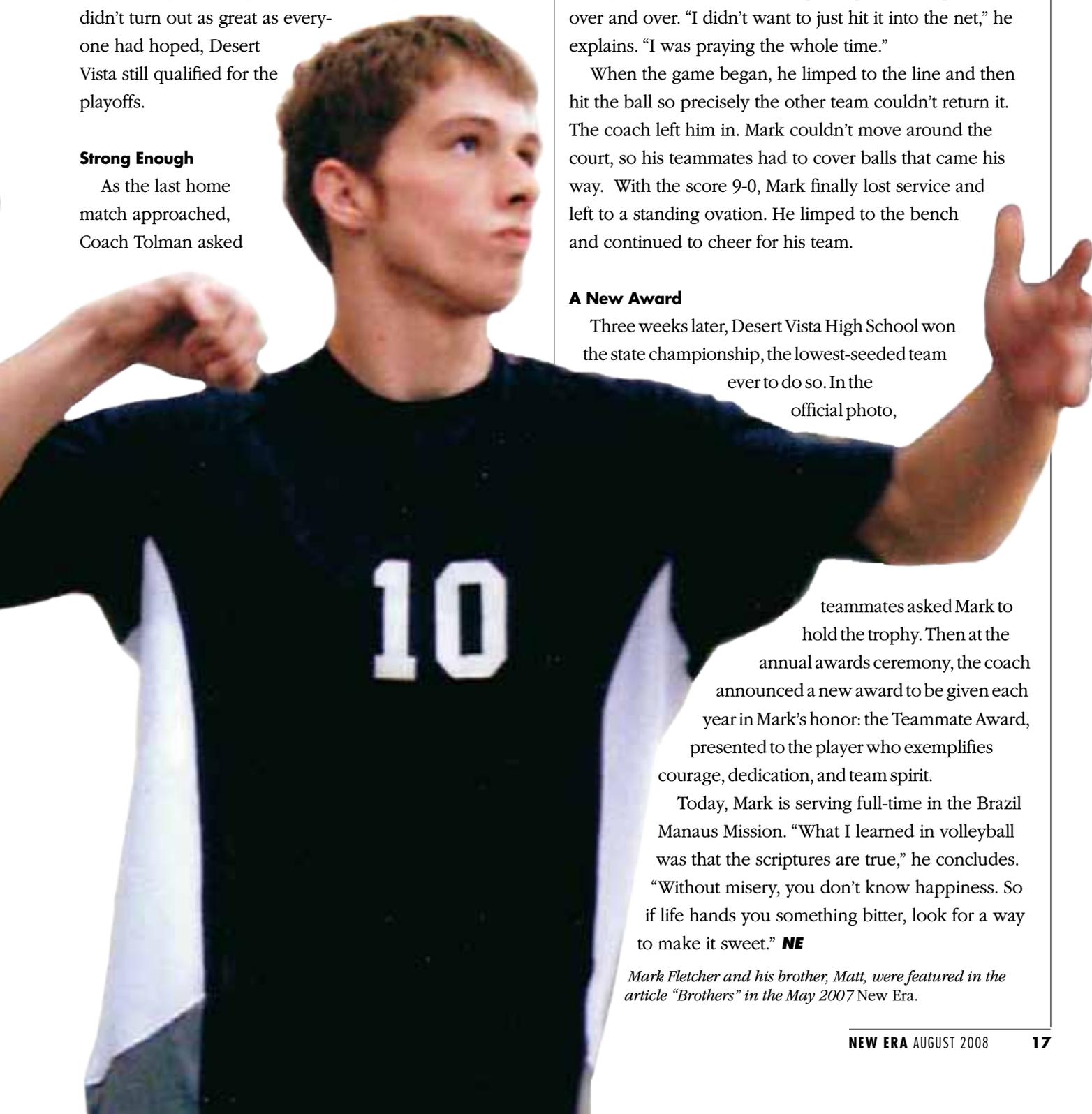
## A New Award

Three weeks later, Desert Vista High School won the state championship, the lowest-seeded team ever to do so. In the official photo,

teammates asked Mark to hold the trophy. Then at the annual awards ceremony, the coach announced a new award to be given each year in Mark's honor: the Teammate Award, presented to the player who exemplifies courage, dedication, and team spirit.

Today, Mark is serving full-time in the Brazil Manaus Mission. "What I learned in volleyball was that the scriptures are true," he concludes. "Without misery, you don't know happiness. So if life hands you something bitter, look for a way to make it sweet." **NE**

*Mark Fletcher and his brother, Matt, were featured in the article "Brothers" in the May 2007 New Era.*



BY CHRISTA SKOUSEN

# MUTUAL BENEFITS





*What is Mutual for? The benefits are numerous: friendship, gospel instruction, learning to lead, service, and fun.*



### **"On your mark, get set . . ."**

Before Young Women president Malinda Anderson can even finish her sentence, 30 teens from the Rush Valley Ward in Eagle Mountain, Utah, burst out of the meetinghouse double doors. Sprinting from house to house, they go right to work loading dishwashers, sweeping porches, and vacuuming out cars, in what seem like random, chaotic blurs.

What could possibly spur this kind of enthusiasm? A service "scavenger hunt" is what Sister Anderson calls it. The youth are divided into teams to see who can help ward members with safe, uncomplicated household chores—in exchange for food items—in the shortest amount of time. The food items collected will eventually be donated to anonymous needy families within the ward.

Service projects like this and other Mutual activities serve as a backbone for the youth program here in Eagle Mountain. It is a newer town southwest of Salt Lake City, so almost everyone feels like "the new kid."

Mutual helps these teens—and Latter-day Saint teens everywhere—develop friendships and testimonies. Mutual is an important place to gather together during the week and feel the Spirit. It is a time to rest from the cares of the world and enjoy the company of other youth.

### **THE PURPOSE OF MUTUAL**

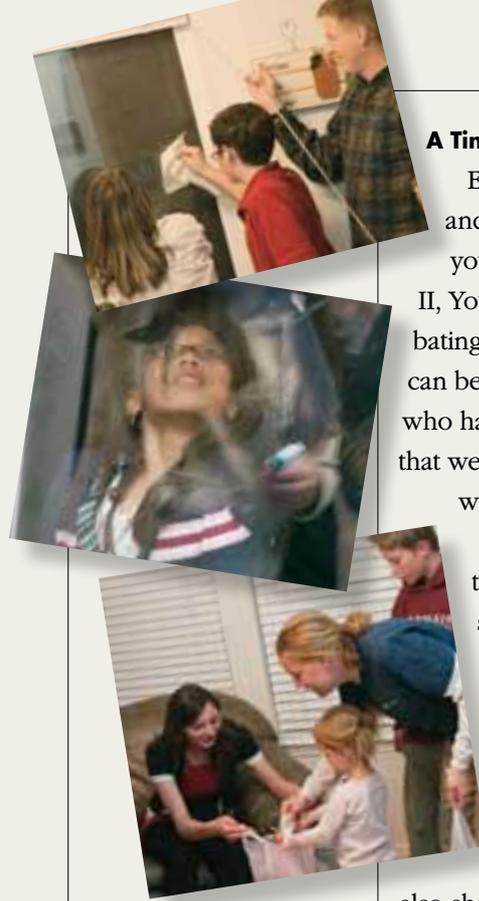
*"I ask you to do everything you can to create or to provide the circumstances for a spiritual experience in the lives of our Aaronic Priesthood young men and the young women of the Church as well. Nothing we do for them in our various programs will matter as much as that, and I promise you it is what they will remember and treasure the most."*

**Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Bishops and the Aaronic Priesthood," Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting, June 2004, 19.**

**Develop friendships and testimonies.**



PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRISTA SKOUSEN, EXCEPT AS NOTED



### A Time to Gather

Every day you face all sorts of pressures and temptations. Does it ever feel like you're the only one? Charles W. Dahlquist II, Young Men general president, says combating that feeling is one reason why Mutual can be a blessing. "In gathering with those who have similar values, we are reassured that we are not alone," he said in an interview with the *New Era*.

There are many examples in the scriptures where Saints gather together to strengthen each other. Mutual can provide such a refuge. When you gather with other youth and leaders, you will also find many righteous role models.

Susan W. Tanner, Young Women general president, and her counselors, Elaine Dalton and Mary Cook, also shared their feelings about Mutual with the *New Era*. Sister Tanner said gathering to strengthen each other is one of the chief purposes of Mutual. "The youth of the Church need to be together, and they need to feel of each other's goodness and wholesomeness. They need to be in places where they can feel the Spirit."

Mutual allows youth to gather together during the week in a somewhat less formal setting. There isn't a lesson manual to follow. Leaders determine the needs of the youth in their specific areas and plan accordingly. Do you have questions about a gospel principle? Would you like a little help in preparing for college? Talk to your leaders about what you would like to do. Together you can make Mutual an enriching experience.

### Polished and Prepared

Youth are also encouraged to help plan, carry out, and lead Mutual activities. This can be great preparation for the future, especially for those who will serve full-time missions. Brother Dahlquist remembers a leader in Idaho who said that youth need "to learn leadership skills where they plan activities, participate, support, and serve."

Mutual is a place to develop such leadership skills and other talents. In fact, Brother Dahlquist considers it one of the best places to develop these skills outside your own home. At different activities you will find tools that will better prepare you for your future, whether that be college, a mission,

***The youth in the Rush Valley Ward found that Mutual activities are a good way for a newly formed ward to bond in friendship.***



marriage, or all of the above.

You will also strengthen basic communication skills. Sister Cook, second counselor in the Young Women general presidency, stressed the need for these skills. She explained, “I think Mutual was important in my day, but I think it is even more important now since there is less direct social interaction going on.”

Technology is gradually replacing in-person interaction. One night, Sister Cook sat down with some of her grandchildren, and they brought up this subject. They admitted how often they escape speaking, or being kind, or showing manners since they think they can say what they need to simply through text messaging.

Mutual is a fun way to learn good communication skills and develop self-reliance. It might seem like a simple activity—teaching a new dance, learning CPR, or giving service—but you will learn skills that will help you through life.

Sister Dalton, first counselor in the Young Women general presidency, said she still uses skills she learned while attending Mutual. “I was polished, tutored, and prepared. I learned things I couldn’t have learned in any other setting that have made a difference in my life now.”

### Go, and Bring a Friend

Sister Tanner remembered one Tuesday night a few years ago when she was eating dinner with some of her teenagers. One of them said, “Oh, I don’t think I will go to Mutual tonight. They’re not doing anything interesting.” Sister Tanner responded, “You need the Church, but the Church needs you too.”

“I think youth need to understand the impact they can have on other youth,” Sister Cook added. “When you show up in the right spirit, you can contribute to a Beehive, you can help that little Beehive.” One of our responsibilities as Latter-day Saints is to help build the kingdom. We shouldn’t always go to a lesson or an activity thinking about what we can get out of it, but rather what we can give to it.”

Mutual can also be an opportunity to participate in missionary work. It is a great place to invite less-active members or friends of other faiths to feel the Spirit in a casual, less intimidating setting.

Brother Dahlquist told the story of a priesthood leader he met in Uruguay. After talking with him for a minute, Brother Dahlquist discovered that this man went through a period of inactivity in his youth. When Brother Dahlquist asked what happened, this man said, “When I was 12, I received a visit from a deacons quorum president and his counselor, and they invited me to come play soccer at Mutual. And so I went, and I brought some friends for moral support. My friends and I outnumbered the quorum that was there, but we had a great time. After the activity, the quorum president came to me and said, ‘Why don’t you come on Sunday? We’d love to have you.’ The rest is history. I went on a mission. I married in the temple, and I am now serving in the stake presidency.”

Mutual is a wonderful place to fellowship other youth and get them involved. As President Hinckley said, everyone needs a friend, an opportunity to serve, and to be nourished by the good word of God. This is all present at Mutual. Just like the young man in Uruguay, you will see the positive results—however long-term they may be—that can come as a result of attending Mutual. **NE**

**Gather together to strengthen each other.**

**Develop leadership skills and other talents.**

## MAKING THE MOST OF MUTUAL

Sometimes, maybe too often, we default to those things that are easiest. We have got to get away from the default. We’ve got to make these activities meaningful and fun.

“If we are focused on meeting the needs: the spiritual, the physical, the emotional, the social, and the intellectual needs of our young people—active and less active—then all of the sudden, the variety brings excitement and difference everywhere.”

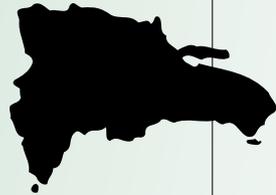
“Those who do really well have a three-month, detailed calendar, and a full year plan. They know when their combined activities are, they know when their youth conference is, they know when their special activities are, and they plan.”

**Charles W. Dahlquist II, Young Men general president**



**Learn good communication skills and develop self-reliance.**

# MUTUAL IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



BY RICHARD M. ROMNEY  
Church Magazines

Sometimes life can be puzzling, but with the help of the gospel life's puzzles are much easier to solve. That was the message of a recent Mutual activity in the Dominican Republic. Youth and leaders were asked to read scripture quotes that provided clues on how to solve some of life's dilemmas. Then as a group they used those clues to put together jigsaw puzzles of scriptural scenes.

Youth throughout the Santo Domingo Dominican Republic Ozama Stake say such weeknight activities are beneficial. "Mutual helps me to better understand the gospel of Jesus Christ and to learn how to gain exaltation," says Isabel Antigua, 17, of the Los Mameyes Ward. She also loves Mutual "because I am very

sociable. I like to get together and meet people."

Moroni Castillo, 17, of the Sabana Larga Ward, says "I love Mutual because it's a great opportunity to be with people who share the same high standards that I do, to enjoy learning the gospel together, and to stay strong." He especially likes activities when young men and young women learn together, "because we can share our perspectives about gospel principles. It also helps us to get to know each other in a good way."

He says Mutual activities help LDS youth to see that they are not alone. "Although one by one we may sometimes feel isolated, when we are all together we feel strong." **NE**

## OUT OF IDEAS?

On the right are a few Mutual activity suggestions. The Church also offers a Mutual planning guide online to help you plan activities that will match the needs in your area. Go to [lds.org](http://lds.org), click on the heading Serving in the Church, and go to either the Young Women or Aaronic Priesthood homepage. Scroll down until you see a sidebar entitled Mutual and Activities, and look for a link to “Planning Mutual in Two Easy Steps.”



## ADAPTING ACTIVITIES

In areas where travel to activities involves long distances, where returning home at night might be unsafe, or where Church population is small, local leaders can adapt youth activities to fit their circumstances. In Germany, for example, youth gathered on a Saturday morning for a table tennis (ping pong) tournament. In Tonga, youth cleaned the chapel inside and out and also tidied up the grounds and gardens. And in Ghana, youth gathered in a member's home to sing hymns and talk about worthy music. No matter what country or circumstance the youth were in, they all recognized that by being together they were strengthening each other.



### Future roles/self-reliance

- Do some short role-plays on future roles and parenting skills. Invite a teen to play the role of a parent and another to play the role a son or daughter. Discuss possible solutions to conflicts and make lists of how-to's.
- Learn how to plan menus, especially week-long menus. Prepare corresponding shopping lists.
- Learn how to fill out school, scholarship, or job applications.

### Service

- Make games or create a puppet show to share in the nursery.
- Do a family history project. Teach each person how to fill in a pedigree chart. Find one name to take to the temple. Attend the temple to do the baptisms.
- Serve as a group at a soup kitchen or homeless shelter.
- Write to the missionaries and servicemen. If the missionary is serving where packages can easily be received, make some cookies to send along with the letter.
- Support a class member by attending an activity in which he or she is participating, such as a school play or a sports activity.

### For the Strength of Youth/Standards activities

- Have a planned discussion. Pose a question: "What would you do if . . ." Complete the sentence with an issue youth face that would require them to make wise choices. Bring out the consequences of good choices.
- Hang up some *New Era* posters. Divide into groups. Each group receives a bag of props to create a poster using one or more items from the bag. Come back together to share posters. This could be done in conjunction with the Mutual theme for the year. If you come up with a great poster idea, send it to us.
- Have a panel discussion about dating.
- Discuss how to apply the standards in *For the Strength of Youth* to issues such as language, modesty, etc.

### Other

- Have everyone read a few general conference talks. Meet together and divide into small groups to answer questions about the talks. Invite a few to share what they learned.
- Go through "The Family: A Proclamation to the World." Young women highlight concepts that represent each Young Women value, with the appropriate color. Young men highlight concepts that apply to the Aaronic Priesthood and to fatherhood.
- Assign everyone to read an issue of the *New Era*. Meet together and divide into small groups to answer questions about the reading. At the end invite a few to share a lesson they learned.
- Have the ward music leader or a music specialist come to teach how to lead music. Have a sing-along with each person taking a turn to lead.
- Visit museums, art galleries, or libraries. Discuss your own talents and how you might develop them.

### WHERE TO GO FOR EVEN MORE

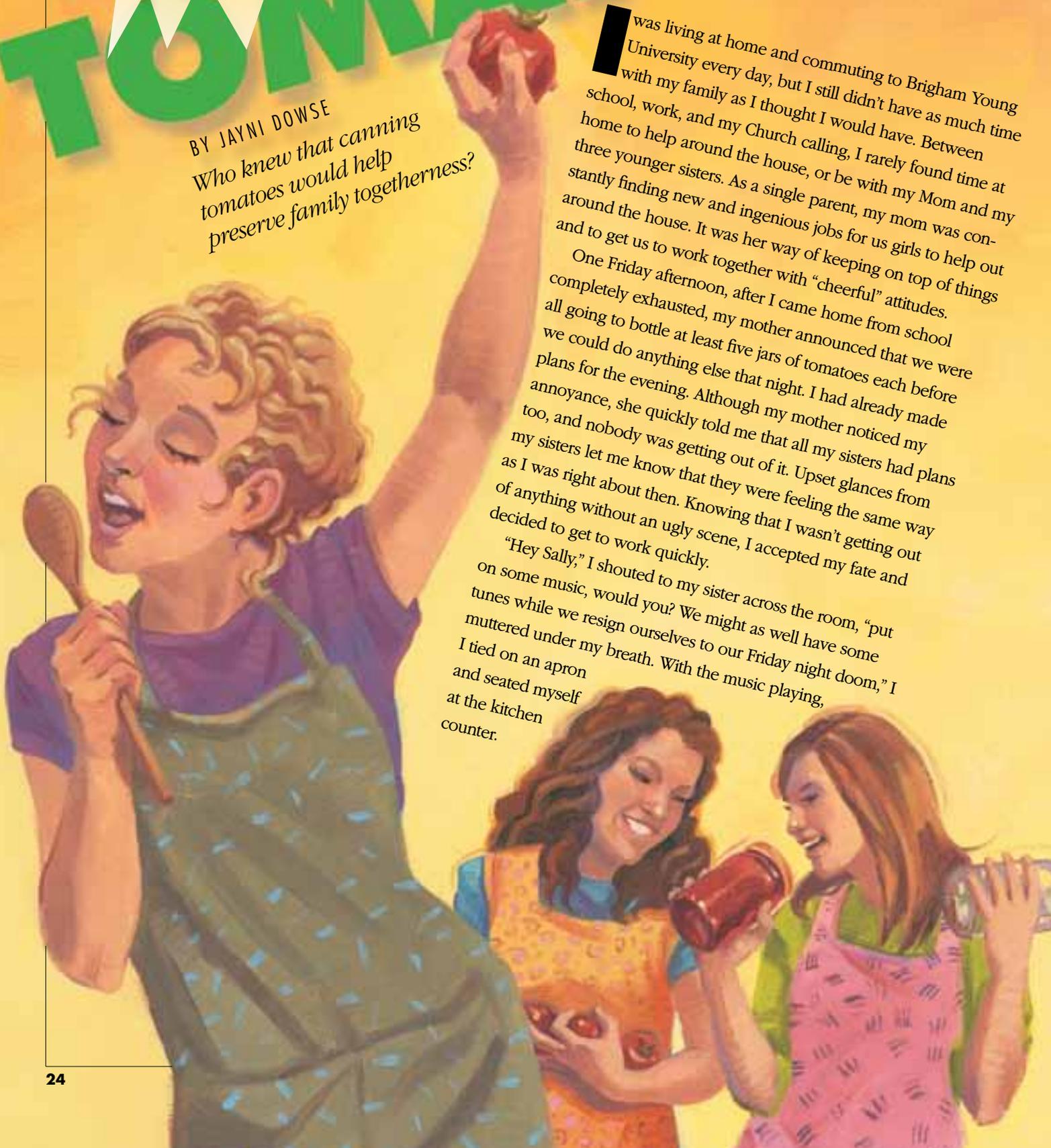
We ran out of room here, but if you're still searching for more, or if you'd like to share a great idea of your own, go to [www.newera.lds.org](http://www.newera.lds.org). You'll also find a history of Mutual from 1843 to 1977.

# FRIDAY NIGHT

# TOMATOES

BY JAYNI DOWSE

*Who knew that canning tomatoes would help preserve family togetherness?*



I was living at home and commuting to Brigham Young University every day, but I still didn't have as much time with my family as I thought I would have. Between school, work, and my Church calling, I rarely found time at home to help around the house, or be with my Mom and my three younger sisters. As a single parent, my mom was constantly finding new and ingenious jobs for us girls to help out around the house. It was her way of keeping on top of things and to get us to work together with "cheerful" attitudes. One Friday afternoon, after I came home from school completely exhausted, my mother announced that we were all going to bottle at least five jars of tomatoes each before we could do anything else that night. I had already made plans for the evening. Although my mother noticed my annoyance, she quickly told me that all my sisters had plans too, and nobody was getting out of it. Upset glances from my sisters let me know that they were feeling the same way as I was right about then. Knowing that I wasn't getting out of anything without an ugly scene, I accepted my fate and decided to get to work quickly. "Hey Sally," I shouted to my sister across the room, "put on some music, would you? We might as well have some tunes while we resign ourselves to our Friday night doom," I muttered under my breath. With the music playing, I tied on an apron and seated myself at the kitchen counter.

Anger continued to boil as I started peeling the tomatoes. What right did my mom have to tell me I couldn't see my friends until I had bottled some dumb tomatoes anyway? I was the one who needed to relax after such a crazy school week! The negative thoughts continued coming as I sliced and peeled more tomatoes. The dirty work seemed endless.

Suddenly I heard my sister Katherine start to sing. Out of nowhere she began to belt along with the music and even added her own dance moves as she continued bottling tomatoes. Livvy, the youngest, began giggling and soon joined in. Sally, always one for light-

hearted fun, quickly gave up her bad attitude and began to add dance moves of her own. I sat and watched as these girls, whom I loved so much, began laughing and singing together. They acted as if they were having the time of their lives. It occurred to me that I wasn't spending the quality time with these girls as I should have been.

Was I just the older sister with a bad attitude? I suddenly felt an incredible need to be with my sisters more, and to feel the amazing energy they had to offer to our family. It dawned on me that I wasn't setting the example. I knew that in order for change to happen, I needed to change.

Without another thought, I joined in the chorus. With prune fingers, I began dancing alongside Sally, adding my own harmony to the music. I began laughing and felt the horrible evening of bottling tomatoes suddenly turn into a fun-filled tomato dance party!

Moments later I spotted my mother with a video camera. Even she felt that she needed to document this hilarious moment! I couldn't believe my sudden change

of attitude. I suddenly felt free from my burdens during the week. I was surprised that doing one of my most dreaded chores could be so much fun! It was then that I realized how important

family time was and the incredible influence I had on my own family, as well as the influence they had on me. Although I still have my very busy schedule, I have now found that my first priority has become my family. Who knew that bottling tomatoes could teach me so much about life? **NE**

# GOOD SPORTS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GETTY IMAGES; ILLUSTRATIONS BY SCOTT GREER

*Young LDS athletes aim high in both their physical and spiritual goals.*

**W**hether they run, swim, jump, throw, or kick, athletes typically achieve victory by prevailing in competition against other athletes. But most of them will tell you that the real victory comes in the competition against yourself. In many ways, athletics parallels our spiritual struggle to overcome our natural selves and become the best we can be. It requires goal-setting, discipline, dedication, and perseverance.

Here are a few young LDS athletes whose participation in athletics has helped them better understand and live the gospel and has taught them how to maintain balance in their lives.

## Enduring to the Finish Line

**Name:** Chris Carter

**Age:** 21

**Sport:** Track and field (hurdles, sprints)

**Location:** Utah, USA (currently serving in Canada Toronto East Mission)

**Major Achievement:** Gold medalist in the 400-meter hurdles and the 4x400-meter relay at the 2006 World Junior Track and Field Championship in Beijing, China.



*“Running has taught me about hard work and enduring to the end—even when you want to quit. Because the prize at the end is what matters, and the hardships of life are always*

*worth enduring to obtain that prize.”*





## Dojo Mojo

**Name:** Nicoli Scalco

**Age:** 22

**Sport:** Karate

**Location:** Santa Catarina, Brazil

**Major Achievement:** Placed first in women's individuals above 55 kg. in the Brazilian Karate Championship; chosen to represent Brazil in the 2007 world karate championships; chosen to participate in the 2008 Worldwide Championship of World Traditional Karate Association.



*"You need to add love to everything you do. When you do anything with all your heart, Heavenly Father will help you in the end. This is what happens in each battle, each victory, and even each defeat.*

*"Sport ends up proving to us that discipline is crucial. It shows that we must learn to live wisely, and it teaches us how to relate with other people and that we need to have confidence in ourselves. It shows also that we need to improve and to search, fight for, and follow good teachings. And what else could provide us better teaching than the restored gospel? At some point in life we will surely need to make a decision, and through the gospel we certainly choose what is right, because we believe in it. Sport teaches us that you have to believe in yourself to succeed. And the same goes for the gospel—you need to believe in it with all your heart, follow it, respect it. That is crucial to our lives."*

## Not Throwing Away Your Goals

**Name:** Billy Matthews

**Age:** 18

**Sport:** Track and field (discus)

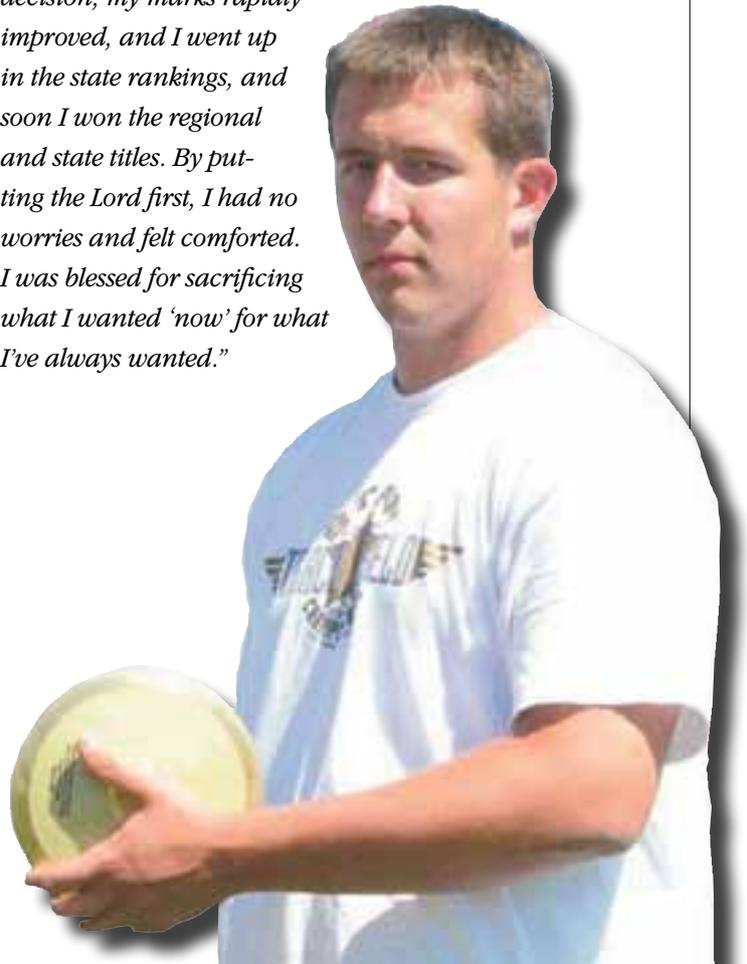
**Location:** Washington, USA

**Major Achievement:** 2007

Washington State high school discus champion with a throw of 164 feet, 8 inches.



*"In track two of my goals were to earn a scholarship and to win the state title. I had also set the goal to serve a mission. During my senior year I was offered two scholarships. I worried about which school to attend, and my throwing marks began to suffer as well. Eventually another school offered a scholarship, and athletically I was sure this was the school for me. But once again my marks decreased, and I began to question my decision. I finally realized something I had learned from one of my seminary teachers: 'Don't give up what you want most, for what you want now.' That's what I had been doing. I decided that I needed to put the Lord first in everything. Shortly after making this decision, my marks rapidly improved, and I went up in the state rankings, and soon I won the regional and state titles. By putting the Lord first, I had no worries and felt comforted. I was blessed for sacrificing what I wanted 'now' for what I've always wanted."*



## A Golden Spike

**Name:** Lorena Gomes de Azevedo  
Ribeiro Araujo

**Age:** 14

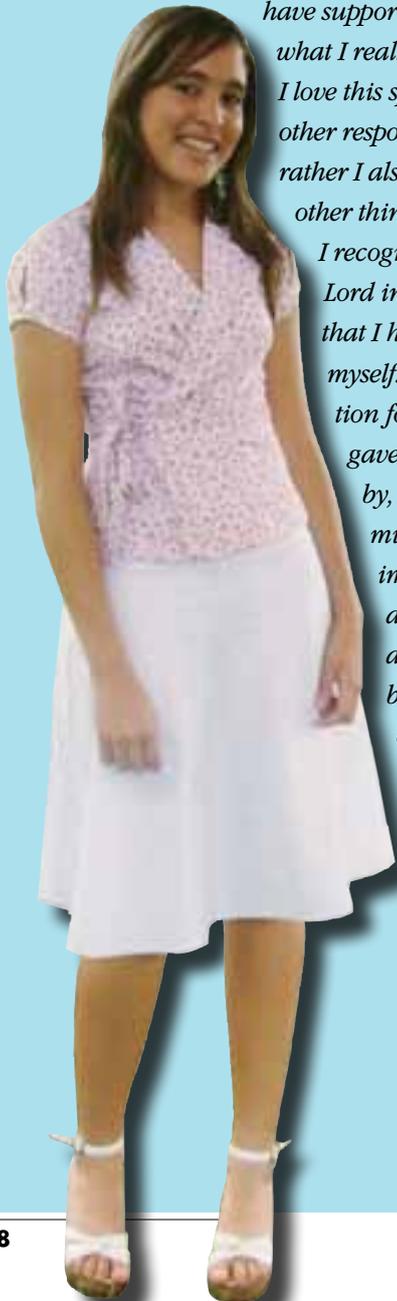
**Sport:** Volleyball

**Location:** Tocantins, Brazil

**Major Achievement:** In 2007, her team won a gold medal in the 2007 Olympic and City Games of Palmas and a bronze medal in the nationwide Brazilian Students Games.



*"I have always been encouraged by my family; they have supported me a lot. I'm doing what I really love to do. Because I love this sport, I never leave my other responsibilities behind, rather I also do my best to include other things in my everyday life. I recognize the hand of the Lord in everything, but I know that I have a lot of things to do myself. I express my appreciation for the talent the Lord gave me. As each day goes by, I know that I must do much more, and most importantly, I have to be an example to the people around me. I have to bring the gospel wherever I go and be a light to the world."*



## A Kicking Habit

**Name:** Brandon Newman-Smith

**Age:** 14

**Sport:** Tae kwon do

**Location:** Brighton, England

**Major Achievement:** Undefeated UK tae kwon do champion in the 12- to 13-year old category at the Junior ITF Impact Competition; second



place in the 14- to 17-year-old category as the youngest competitor.



*"I spend six to seven hours training in tae kwon do every week. This is often difficult, as I need to balance this between my schoolwork and the gospel. I have been taught to keep important things first, so*

*sometimes the odd training session gets missed.*

*"Tae kwon do has taught me that you get nothing in life unless you put in the effort. Since starting from a white belt, tae kwon do has been hard work. The first grade is a yellow tag, which means the earth as a seed is sown and takes root as training begins. This reminds me of the Aaronic Priesthood, becoming a deacon, teacher, and priest and preparing for the Melchizedek Priesthood. Seeds of the gospel are sown, and they too take root and develop into a strong tree with deep, strong roots. The gospel has the answers to challenges, and while tae kwon do is an art that develops me physically, it disciplines me mentally. I then use that discipline in my life and the gospel*

when things get hard or I feel fed up. Keeping the Word of Wisdom has made me strong. I am not very large in stature, yet on the day of the competition I fought off boys bigger than myself.

“Last October I moved into the 14 to 17 age category up to black belts. I was very scared when I saw my group. Not only was I the youngest (the rest in my group being 17), I was also the smallest. My dad, who is a black belt in taekwondo, was a judge in my competition, and even he said he was praying I didn’t get killed! My sister, who is also a black belt, was judging in the next ring, and she said she never prayed so much! It was like David and Goliath.

“I couldn’t believe it when I won my first round, then second, and ended up in the final. Everybody had expected this competition would be just for experience for me. They were shocked when I got to the final. After being penalized three points, I lost by only two points to a 17-year-old black belt. I nearly won it, and that would have been a major achievement—a 14-year-old beating all the 17-year-olds. I knew my Heavenly Father had answered my prayers to do my best. I learned that faith without works is dead.”

## A Master Stroke

**Name:** Karlee Bispo

**Age:** 17

**Sport:** Swimming

**Location:** California, USA

**Major Achievement:** Qualified for the 2008 U.S. Olympic trials in four events; set U.S. high school record in 200-yard freestyle.



“Balancing sports, academics, and Church obligations like seminary is very challenging, but keeping up my spirituality helps me maintain a balance for my other responsibilities. My academics come before my sport, and my love for the gospel and what it offers me just comes naturally.

“Swimming is a talent from my Heavenly Father, and I am watched by many people who know me and by many who do not. I can be an example to all of those people by



not only achieving success at swimming but also by choosing Christ-like actions. There are those who look up to athletes because of their great athletic accomplishments. I also want to be known for being a righteous daughter of God.”



## On a Roll

**Name:** Adam Schmuki

**Age:** 17

**Sport:** Wheelchair sports (swimming, racing, etc.)

**Location:** Arizona, USA

**Major Achievement:** Won six gold medals and four bronze medals at the 2007 International Junior Wheelchair and Amputee Sports World Championships in South Africa.



*"I have learned to prioritize my time between church, sports, and school. It is difficult at times because I have to miss school for some events. Sports allow me to meet different people from across the country and be a good example to them."*



## Leaps of Faith

**Name:** Yukio Gall

**Age:** 20

**Sport:** Track and field (long jump)

**Location:** Amazonas, Brazil (currently serving in the Brazil Rieirão Preto Mission)

**Major Achievement:** Represented Brazil in the 2006 Pan-American Games in Mexico, receiving gold medals in the long jump, triple jump, and freestyle.



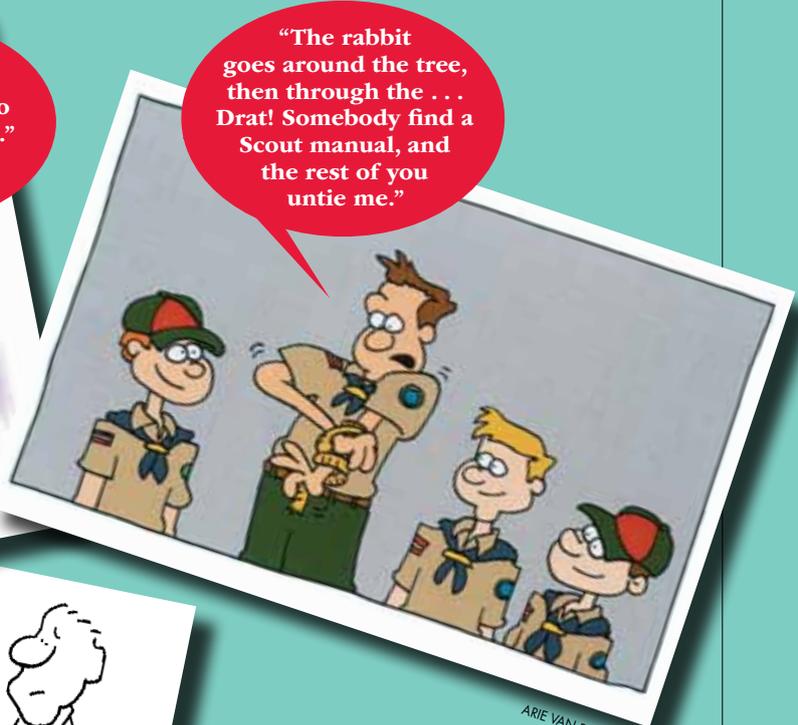
*"You know when you do everything to obtain what you want? My family battled hard to go to the temple [after joining the Church in 2002]. I find that that is a quality that our family has—we do not give up on the things that are certain. My results improved after the true gospel of Jesus Christ entered our lives! I have several goals: I intend to follow firmly in the gospel, honorably fulfill my mission, marry in the temple, have a family, and be a competent professional in engineering and physiotherapy. Who knows? Maybe I'll be an engineer in the work of constructing sacred temples." **NE***

THE EXTRA SMILE

"Tommy! Would it kill you to pick up some clothes around here?!"

"I don't want to chance it, Mom."

"The rabbit goes around the tree, then through the . . . Drat! Somebody find a Scout manual, and the rest of you untie me."



RYAN STOKER

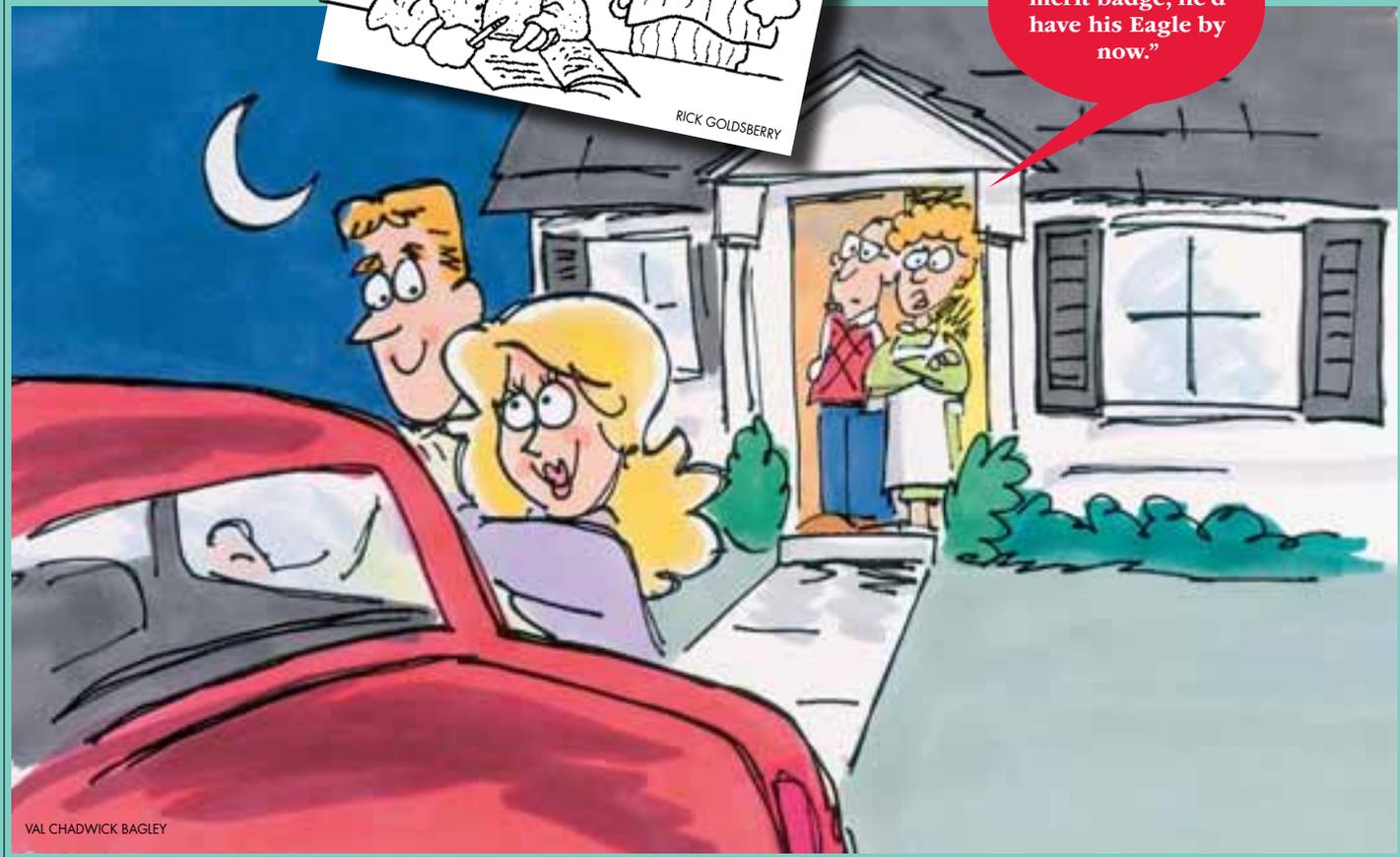
ARIE VAN DE GRAAFF

"You're new, Elder, and I like your enthusiasm. But you don't need to wear a tie with your pajamas."



RICK GOLDSBERRY

"If dating were a merit badge, he'd have his Eagle by now."



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

*“Nurtured through righteous living, [a] testimony of Jesus becomes the governing force in all that a person does.”*

**Bishop Keith B. McMullin of the Presiding Bishopric, “Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee,” *Ensign*, May 2004, 33.**

## 10,000 POUNDS OF FOOD

**H**ow long does it take to collect 10,000 pounds of food? The youth of the Marysville Washington Stake did it in about three hours! There were approximately 170 of them. And to be fair, they did get a little help from their adult leaders.

Dressed in yellow vests bearing the words “Mormon Helping Hands,” these young men and women went door-to-door in pairs gathering donations. Along the way, they had some very heartwarming experiences, most notably meeting a family who receives help from their local food bank and an obviously poor elderly woman who didn’t have much to spare. But in both cases, these people were deeply touched by the actions of the youth and still sacrificed by donating food. Talk about the widow’s mite!

The Marysville, Arlington, and Stanwood food banks were the recipients of the generous donations from individuals in each community. The directors of these three food banks were overwhelmed with gratitude for the amount of food donated by the community and collected by the youth and adults of the Marysville stake.



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE MARYSVILLE WASHINGTON STAKE



## BY THE NUMBERS

# 127

Number of temples operating worldwide  
[as of August 9, 2008]

## THE CHURCH IN IRELAND

The first missionary to Ireland arrived in Belfast in May 1840. He was followed on July 28 by the Apostle John Taylor. More than 600 people heard Elder Taylor preach that evening in Newry. Three days later, Thomas Tait was the first to be baptized.

As part of the 150th anniversary of the Church in the British Isles in 1987, markers were dedicated at the site of the first baptism and at the birthplace in Dublin of Elder Charles A. Callis of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, once president of the Irish Conference while serving as a missionary during the 1890s.

Here are a few facts about the Church in Ireland today:

<b>Membership</b>	<b>2,710</b>
<b>Missions</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Congregations</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Family History Centers</b>	<b>3</b>

## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

See if you can find these books of the New Testament. Names of the books are hidden in the grid reading forward, backward, up, down, and diagonally.

<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Romans</b>	<b>Colossians</b>	<b>Hebrews</b>
<b>Mark</b>	<b>Corinthians</b>	<b>Thessalonians</b>	<b>James</b>
<b>Luke</b>	<b>Galatians</b>	<b>Timothy</b>	<b>Peter</b>
<b>John</b>	<b>Ephesians</b>	<b>Titus</b>	<b>Jude</b>
<b>Acts</b>	<b>Philippians</b>	<b>Philemon</b>	<b>Revelation</b>



topics you'd like to read about in the future. If you'd like to be on the list just send an e-mail to [newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org) letting us know you want to be on the panel.

## WRITE AWAY

Your parents called it dating, but is that term too, well, dated? Whatever you call it these days (and we'd like to know just what you call it), we'd like to hear what it means to you. Tell us how you date in your culture. What kinds of activities do you do? How do you keep your standards high and in line with the guidelines in *For the Strength of Youth*?



JOHN TAYLOR BAPTIZING THOMAS TAIT, BY PAUL MANN

## WHAT'S UP?

### MY FAVORITE SCRIPTURE



"My favorite scripture is **Alma 48:17** because it tells about what a great man Moroni

was, and that if we were all like him, Satan would have no power."

**Preston T., 15, Utah, USA**

Tell us about your favorite scripture in one or two sentences. Send it to [newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org).

## WE NEED YOU

We want to hear what you've got to say. Would you like to be on our *New Era* e-mail panel?

From time to time we have questions or requests that we'll send out to those on our e-mail list. We might ask for your response to an article, we might ask you to tell us about your favorite Mutual activity, or we might ask you what

topics you'd like to read about in the future. If you'd like to be on the list just send an e-mail to [newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org) letting us know you want to be on the panel.

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# More Than Bread and Water

BY RYAN CARR  
Church Magazines

While we are blessed to have the chance to partake of the sacrament each Sunday, it can be easy to take it for granted because we take it so often. How can we better appreciate this sacred ordinance? Some young men from the Belgrade Second Ward, Bozeman Montana Stake, share a few ideas.

Brek and Jake Halgren and Michael and Evan Romrell want to remember the Savior and have His Atonement work in their lives. Taking the sacrament gives them—and each of us—that opportunity. It’s a chance to worship the Savior and to improve. And as the young men help with the sacrament, they use the priesthood to serve others.

## Feeling Reverence for the Sacrament

These young men also know the sacrament is important to ward members, so they take their priesthood responsibility seriously. What do they think about as they share the sacrament with the ward? Jake, 16, is grateful for the chance to serve. “You realize that you’re representing the Lord,” he says.

His brother Brek, 18, says, “As a priest, I’m

trying to make sure I’m doing everything correctly. But I’m also trying to think about the Atonement. Every week you have the incredible opportunity to repent of your sins, to have a new start on the week, to work on the things you need to work on. It’s a great opportunity to be spiritually uplifted.”



## EMBLEMS OF THE ATONEMENT

“When an Aaronic Priesthood bearer’s hand is extended with a sacrament tray, he isn’t just

passing the sacrament. He is introducing into the lives of members the emblems of the holy Atonement and lifting the members heavenward.”

**Bishop Keith B. McMullin, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, “The Miracle of the Priesthood,” *New Era*, Apr. 2004, 14.**

*How can you feel the Spirit more in sacrament meeting?*

Michael, 17, also thinks about the Savior: “One of the strongest parts of my testimony is of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. I can think about mistakes I’ve made and know that if I repent, those mistakes are cleared because of what He did. Every time we take the sacrament, that reminds me of the Atonement.”

### **Being Worthy**

They understand that being worthy to hold the priesthood is important. Brek says it’s a privilege to hold the priesthood. “I see it as a great opportunity. You watch your actions throughout the week. It really helps.”

Evan, 15, says, “During the week, knowing I have the priesthood helps me choose the right so I can be able to help with the sacrament worthily.”

### **Learning Reverence**

These young men learned reverence for the sacrament when they were children. Their parents asked them to pay attention while the sacrament was being passed. That feeling has carried over to their teen years. Michael says, “I can’t stress enough how important the sacrament is to me. The sacrament represents the Lord’s body and His blood. We take His name upon ourselves. We go forth and proclaim His gospel and try to be good examples. There’s no way that we could ever return to our Heavenly Father if it were not for Him. The sacrament is that reminder.”

They also learned reverence for the sacrament by seeing other Aaronic Priesthood holders, including their older brothers, perform their priesthood duties. Evan, for example, remembers times when his older brother, who is now serving a mission in Brazil, talked to him about the sacrament, the priesthood, and other gospel topics.

Brek’s older brothers were good examples to him too. “As they prepared the sacrament, I always looked up to them,” Brek says.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY RYAN CARR AND COURTESY OF THE HALGREN FAMILY, EXCEPT AS NOTED; LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH OF SACRAMENT BY MATTHEW REIER



### DRESS CAN SHOW REVERENCE

Why do these young men wear white shirts and ties? To show respect for the Lord's sacrament. "Clothes tell others how you feel," says Evan Romrell. "If you dress sloppy, that's basically saying that you don't really care."

They want to dress nicely so they don't distract ward members from thinking of the Savior as they take the sacrament. Jake Halgren says, "If



you're in the congregation and you're watching deacons and priests and their shirts are hanging out or are dirty, people are going to be distracted by that. And they might question what you think of the sacrament. So if you're dressed well, you convey a sense of respect for the sacrament."

*The Halgren (top) and Romrell brothers help with the sacrament, and they do so reverently because of their testimonies of the Savior.*

Michael thinks of his mother's teaching: "She has stressed that the sacrament is the main reason why we come to church. We have the sacrament to remind us of the Atonement."

The Atonement of Jesus Christ was an act of service that affects the whole human family. On a smaller scale, Aaronic Priesthood holders can serve their ward or branch by helping with the sacrament, showing reverence for it, and living worthy to partake of it. **NE**

MORMONAD

# FEAST



(SEE JOHN 4:14; 6:35.)



# I Almost Lost My Sister

NAME WITHHELD

*Her desperate act led me to realize how much I cherished her.*

**C**ome on!" I said, impatiently swinging my keys around my index finger. "We're both going to be late if you don't hurry up!"

My 17-year-old sister slid off of the bed where she had been lying facedown. We were late for our summer jobs, and she was moving agonizingly slow. It seemed like she was always trying to annoy me. Born 11 months apart, my sister and I could be best friends or best enemies. I sighed and harassed her, trying to get her to move faster.

She limped slowly to the car, saying she didn't feel well. "She's so dramatic," I thought to myself as I pulled up to the fast food restaurant where she worked. "You're not that sick," I said as she staggered out of the car. Sometimes having a sister could be so aggravating.

That night when I got home, my mother opened the door. She had been waiting up for me. Her eyes were red and swollen. "Your sister tried to commit suicide. She took a bunch of pills . . ."

"No!" I remembered the last words I had said to her. She must have been thinking that I wouldn't even care.

The next months were a blur for our family—trying to prove how much we loved her, trying to give her a reason to live. We prayed

and fasted; we sought priest-hood counsel and blessings. I watched my father's hair turn grey and my mother's face sag with worry.

My sister! Though at times we drove each other crazy, she was my best friend. I didn't know she was feeling so desperate. I thought of all the teasing remarks I had made in the last few months. Instead of supporting her as a family member should, I had been making the problem worse.

Although I knew what she had done was her choice, I couldn't help agonizing over how I could have helped her if I had known. Tears rolled down my cheeks as my mind flooded with memories of growing up together. The ache made my heart feel hollow.

I never realized until that moment how powerful words could be. Perhaps if I had used my words to support my sister instead of teasing her, she would have opened her heart. Then I would have realized she needed me to be her friend.

I determined I would be that friend. I began to follow Paul's admonition in the scriptures to "be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:32). As I did so, I noticed a change both in my sister and in myself. She was grateful for the little ways I showed my love for her. But I was also blessed. Being kind to her made me feel happier and more confident in myself.

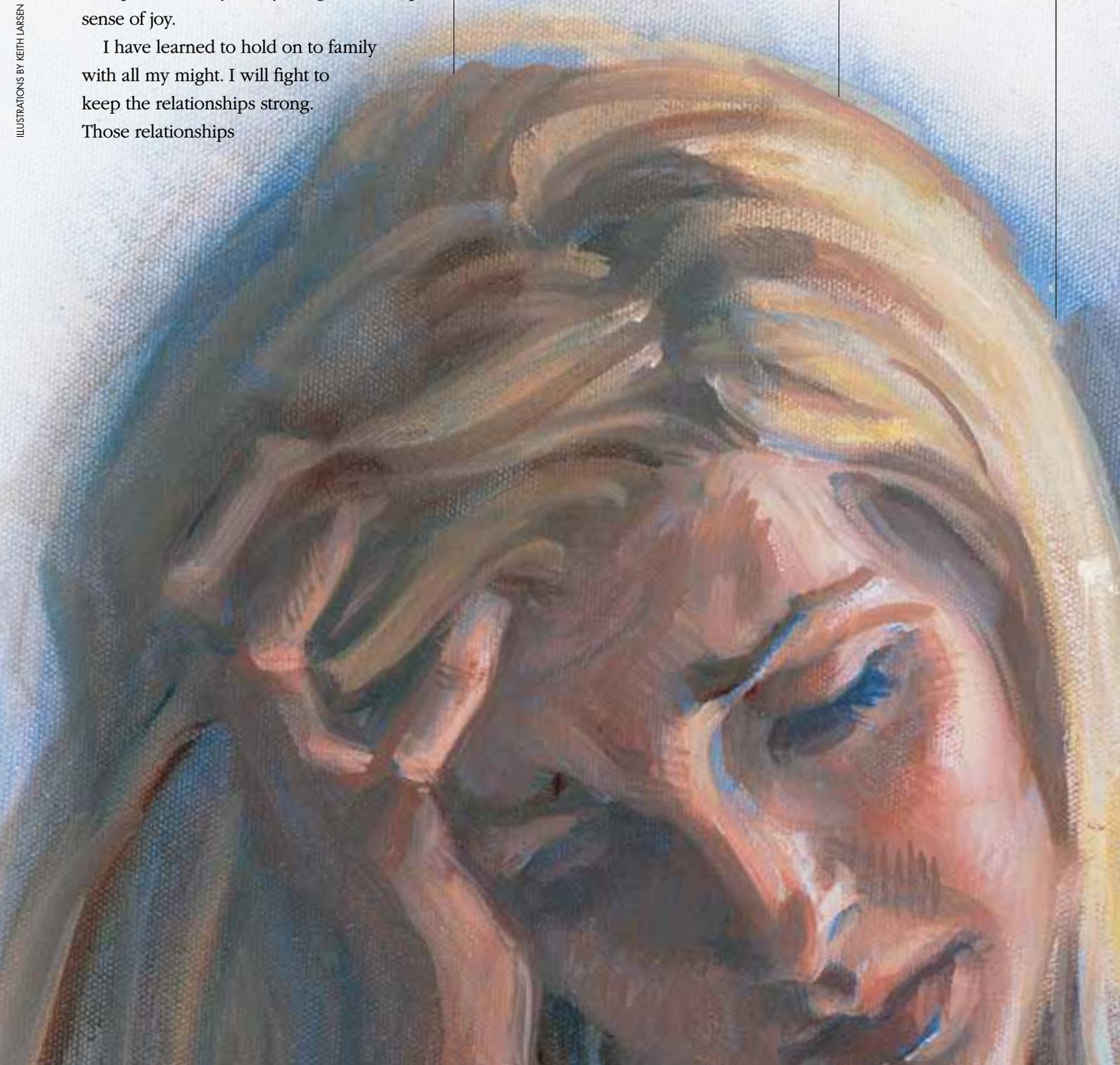
Eventually my sister's medications were able to calm the turmoil that raged inside her. She had a chemical imbalance in her brain that affected her moods drastically. Her hormones became more balanced, and she achieved a sort of stability, although she would continue to struggle with the effects of that horrific time.

Because I almost lost her, I now cherish the time we have together and try to be more like the Savior when I interact with all my family members. I savor each new year with my sister as a gift. Sometimes when we visit each other we just laugh and laugh because it feels so good to be together. The time I can spend with my family brings me a deep sense of joy.

I have learned to hold on to family with all my might. I will fight to keep the relationships strong. Those relationships

are a gift from God to bring us joy and bless us in times of need. Family relationships are precious. Life is precious. I will savor these gifts while they are mine. **NE**

For information and help regarding depression and suicide, go to [www.ldsfamilyservices.org](http://www.ldsfamilyservices.org). For articles on depression, go to <http://providentliving.org/ses/media/articles/0,11275,2875-1---51,00.html>.



# Building an

BY ELDER BENJAMÍN DE HOYOS  
Of the Seventy



*My father was a master teacher of the scriptures. Now I think of those study sessions as my own seminary class with my father as the teacher.*

Growing up in Mexico, I had the blessing of belonging to a wonderful Latter-day Saint family. I loved coming home from college in the wintertime, opening the door, and smelling the cinnamon and flour tortillas. While we were a family poor in temporal things, we were a family rich in the gospel and testimony.

I especially loved my parents' testimonies of the Book of Mormon. My father was a wonderful student of the Book of Mormon. Many times, even when I was an adult, we would talk about the book and cry because the Spirit was strong. He understood the doctrines of the book. He was converted in 1917, when he was six years old, and many times he shared experiences he had had when he was a boy watching animals on the ranch. He always had in his bag a copy of the Book of Mormon.

My mother was a peaceful woman who always served her family and the Lord. She became a strong example of faith to our family, raising six children and continually serving in the Church. She served as a missionary in the 1940s, when our whole country was just a single mission.

## My Father's Teachings

While I was growing up, my father was a very busy man because he had a demanding job as a truck driver for construction projects. But he always took time for me. When I was in high school, my father would ask my five sisters when he came home from work, "Where is Benjamín?"

My sisters would come to me and say, "Father wants you."

I would leave playing with my friends and run to ask him, "What do you need, Father?"

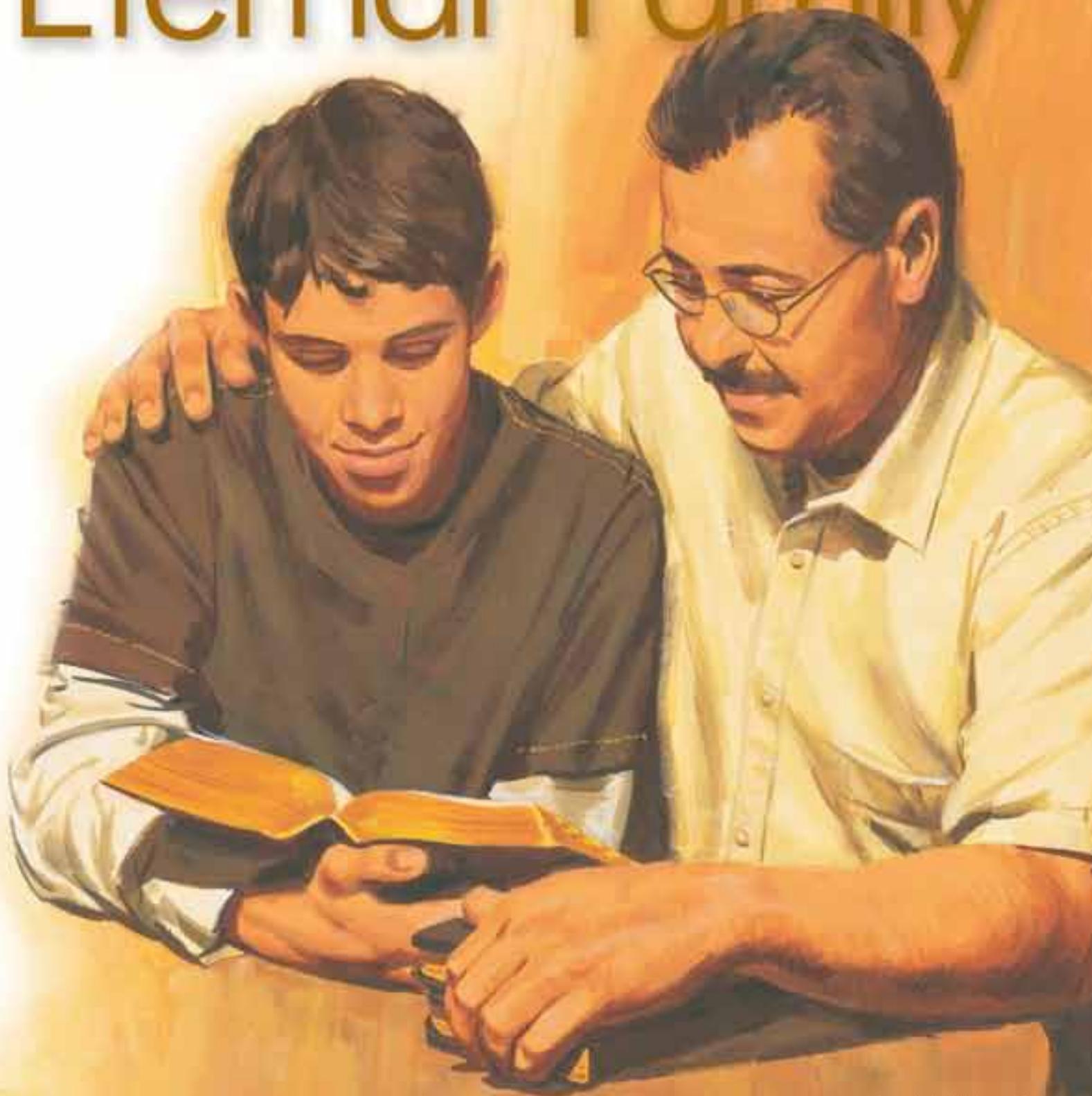
He would say, "Bring your scriptures, and come with me."

Two or three times a week we would read the scriptures together like that. He was a master teacher of the scriptures. At that time we did not have seminary in Mexico. Now I think of those study sessions as my own seminary class with my father as the teacher.

While reading the scriptures and hearing my father explain them to me, I learned for myself what the Spirit feels like in my heart and in my mind. Many times the Spirit was very strong as he would explain the scriptures.

These kinds of experiences with my father were the beginning of my own testimony of Heavenly Father and the Church. I always thought that the Church was true, but just

# Eternal Family





**O**nce when I was in a car with my friends, they drove really fast. A policeman pulled us over, and I was scared. I remembered the words of my father about taking care of the future. That experience helped me make a decision about the kinds of friends I wanted to have.

*thinking* so was not enough. My father took my hand and put it on the iron rod. His manner of taking care of me was the key for my testimony and my inner security in the gospel.

During those meetings, not only did I learn many things from him about the scriptures, but I learned that my father loved me in a way that I couldn't quite understand at the time. Many other times he would invite me to a movie or to eat, and I know that I was protected by my father's care for me.

Now I am a father, and I know that he loved me in a special way.

#### **Choosing Friends Carefully**

When I was 16, most of my friends at school weren't members, but they knew that I was a member of the Church. They started to smoke and do other things I wouldn't do. So things began to change between us; our types of conversation were very different, and our thinking and activities weren't compatible.

One day my father asked me, “Why aren’t you thinking about your friends’ effect on you?” He counseled me to be careful and think about the necessity of changing my friends.

When I started at the university, I became very busy and didn’t spend a lot of time with my friends, but one time when we were together, they decided to do something bad. We were in a car, and they drove really fast. A policeman pulled us over, and I was scared. I remembered the words of my father about taking care of the future. That experience helped me make a decision about the kinds of friends I wanted to have.

I became very involved in Church activities. Attending Mutual was wonderful because I decided to have those kinds of friends. I learned that my father was right—that I should take care of my relationship with good friends. I needed friends who would help me prepare for a mission.

### **A Loving Heavenly Father**

As my father did with me, my Heavenly Father takes care of me personally. I know that Heavenly Father loves me. In many ways and in many circumstances, He takes care of us individually. Sometimes we do not hear and we are not willing to listen because our friends may get our attention more than He does. But I know that Heavenly Father loves us, and He will give us the opportunity to know in our hearts that He will be with us as we ask for His help.

### **The Privilege of Passing the Sacrament**

I especially remember feeling the love of Heavenly Father as a youth participating in the sacrament. In my ward there were only a few young men, so every Sunday I passed the sacrament. When I served as a teacher, every Sunday I prepared the bread and the water. At that time we used glass cups, which I had to wash one by one.

When I passed the sacrament, I could see the eyes of the people. Old people, young people, children—each

had a special feeling while taking the bread and water. I could see that they felt the love of Heavenly Father personally. Those experiences with the sacrament marked my life forever. Every week I remember the Lord, who died for us. I remember that if we are worthy, we can be together as a family eternally.

### **Comfort from Testimony**

When my father was an old man, we talked about the possibility of his death. He did not have fear; he felt peace. When he spoke about death, he knew that he would be with his family again. Because of the Atonement and Resurrection, both of us had great inner security. We were always very grateful to the Lord because of the miracle of the Resurrection.

Because of the teachings of my father, I knew since I was a child that the gospel of Jesus Christ is true—not just in my mind but also in my heart. Many times the Spirit has let me know that the Book of Mormon is true, that Joseph Smith is a prophet, and that we have a prophet today, President Thomas S. Monson. Knowing that I have the gospel makes me happy. And I know with certainty that the Lord cares about us and knows us. Consequently, I have my own personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and because of His sacrifice, I know that I can be with my father and the rest of my family again. **NE**



### **THEY WILL HELP YOU**

“Honor your fathers and mothers. They will help you make good decisions. . . . Choose friends who have high ideals. Choose friends who will help you to be good.”

**President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), “To the Children of the Church,” *Ensign*, May 1989, 82.**

# GRATEFUL FOR THE SAVIOR

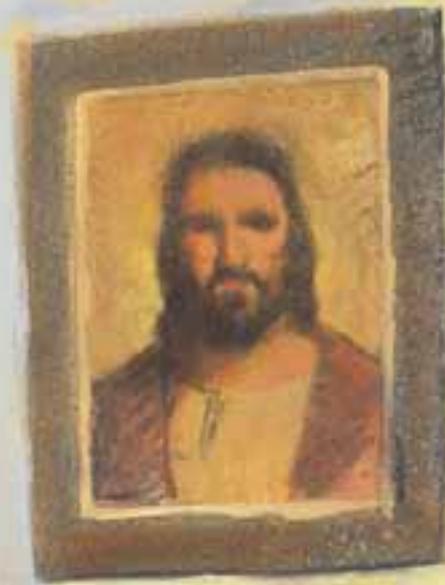
BY JANELLA  
CLOWARD

## INSTANT MESSAGES

**G**randma Rose passed away at about 9:30 this morning.”

I heard the words, but my mind refused to process them. After her four-year battle with cancer, seizures, and strokes, I knew that she deserved to rest from all the pain she'd been suffering. But how could she really be gone?

My denial was shattered by reality when I walked into the funeral home. The body lying on a table no longer looked like my grandmother.



My mom and aunt bravely set about the tasks of dressing Grandma for her funeral and then fixing her hair and makeup. She looked a little better when they finished but still not like herself.

As we drove away from the funeral home, I realized why she was so different: the body was hers, but her spirit was gone. A body without a spirit is an empty shell. Until I saw my grandmother, I didn't comprehend how literally true that is. Everything that made her essentially who she was had left with her spirit, and her spirit lived on.

The Son of God gave His life for us so we could live forever. I always knew that was true, but I didn't really appreciate His sacrifice until I lost someone I loved. At that moment, I had never been so grateful to have a Savior. **NE**

## NEW BEST FRIENDS

BY MEGAN GEBHARD

**W**hen I moved to Colorado, everything was different and strange to me. I was so lonely. My family eased some of the loneliness, but I still felt hollow inside. I figured it was because I was hours away from the friends I had known since I was two. That wasn't the only reason, though. I had not been saying my prayers every night or relying on the Lord as I should.

School started, and I made some new friends who had high standards, but I was still lonely. They weren't close friends I could talk to like those

## PROMPTED TO LEAVE

BY CHASE MCPHIE

I never really understood the statement in 2 Nephi 32:5 "the Holy Ghost . . . will show unto you all things what ye should do" until I experienced it.

My friends and I often took our bikes to a place we called the dirt hills. It was our favorite place to go. It was only about a mile from where we lived, so we could ride our bikes to get there. We would literally spend hours at the dirt hills jumping and riding our bikes. It was great fun.

One day, my friend Tyler crashed his bike. He seemed to be OK, and the bike looked OK, so we kept jumping. After about five more minutes, I stopped. Tyler rode over to me and asked what was wrong. I told him that I had this really strong feeling that we should leave and go home, even though we had only been there about 15 minutes. Tyler

I had left behind, so I wallowed in self-pity, frustration, and tears many times that year.

One night, after I had managed two fouls and a pass in the wrong direction at a ward basketball game, I went home, buried my head under my pillow, and sobbed. I sobbed all the way through my homework until my brother, who was at college, called. My dad had him talk to me.

I told my brother about how I felt, and he suggested that I read this scripture: "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not

told me that he had the same feeling, and we both realized it was time to go.

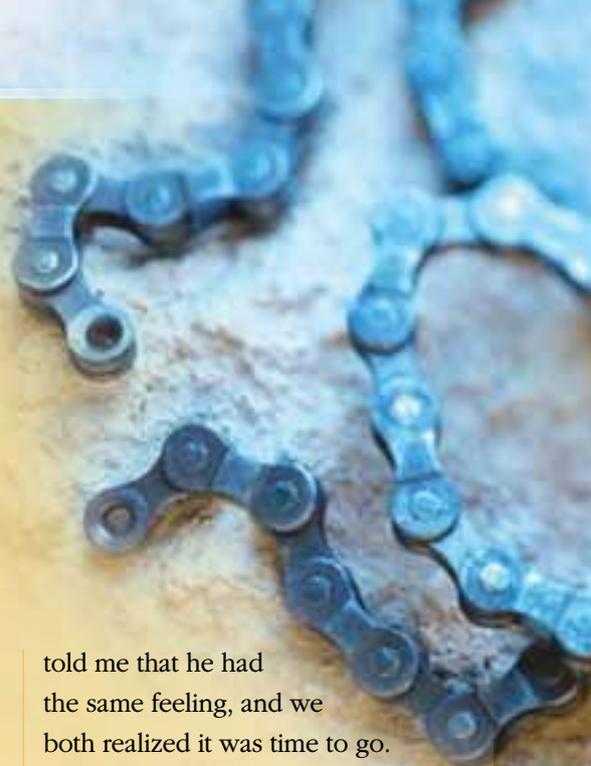
As we rode closer to home, Tyler said that his bike was acting weird. As we got to the corner of the street where we both lived, Tyler's bike broke into pieces—the pedals fell off and the chain broke.

What would have happened had we not followed the prompting to leave and had still been jumping? Tyler may have been seriously hurt. The Holy Ghost knew it was time for us to go. I am so thankful that we listened. **NE**

afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest" (Joshua 1:9).

My brother and I then made a deal that we would each try to help those we met at school who might need a friend. I decided to become a friend to others instead of feeling sorry for myself. The feeling of making someone else's day better was wonderful.

Though I still miss my old friends, whenever I need a shoulder to lean on, I know I can turn to my family and to Heavenly Father. They are my best and closest friends. **NE**





BY JANET THOMAS  
Church Magazines

# JUST

David Archuleta, a 17-year-old from Murray, Utah, a town centered in the Salt Lake Valley, made it as one of the top two on *American Idol*, a television singing competition.

In one interview given while in the middle of the competition, David was wondering about the changes that were coming with the fame of performing for millions of viewers each week. He said that he still felt like “I’m just David from Murray.”

The nation may have been surprised to hear such a pure, clear voice coming from one so young, but David’s classmates at school, and especially those in seminary, were not surprised at all. They already knew he had an amazing voice because they get to hear him sing at school programs and for seminary devotionals.

“Every time it’s his turn to do the class devotional,” says Brother Justin Harper of the Murray High Seminary, “he asks if he can sing. Then the other teachers will bring their classes in just for devotional to hear him. It really sets a wonderful spirit for class.” Even while busy and involved with the television show, Brother Harper said David reported on his daily scripture reading to keep up with his seminary class.

Mietra Aarabi, one of David’s close friends, says that David did not enter the competition to become a celebrity. She says, “David understands that he has a talent and that his voice affects people. He’s not arrogant about it. He is as humble and thankful to those who help

“To have been given this opportunity and to be able to share music with people is just the best feeling ever.”  
—David Archuleta

# DAVID



him as you saw on the show. That’s how he really is.”

Was David the popular guy in school? Jessica Judd, another of David’s friends says, “If by popular you mean people like him, then yes, everyone likes him. At lunch, you know how everyone has their own group to sit with. You can never find David because he’s going around talking to people. He cares about you.”

The Church is a major force in David’s life. “He is so strong,” says Mietra. “He is the one that reminds us of what is right. He will keep on doing what he believes.”

“Even while he was so busy in Hollywood, he asked about the meeting schedules of wards in the area and went to church,” says Jessica.

David Archuleta is not just David from Murray anymore. The music world now knows about a great guy with an amazing voice that has a quality they can’t quite describe. Those at home in his ward, in his seminary class, and his hometown know what that is. What he believes shows. **NE**

*Fellow contestant and Church member Brooke White came in fifth in the competition.*



INSET PHOTOGRAPH BY RAVELL CALL; DESERET NEWS; ALL OTHER PHOTOGRAPHS BY GETTY IMAGES.

## WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU

### Mutual Activity Idea

• Organize a game night. Bring several board games and other games that can include a larger number of participants. Have someone who is skilled teach others how to play chess or checkers. Gather enough boards to have plenty of playing space for everyone interested. Most of all, talk about being a good sport and enjoying the fun of playing games no matter who wins or loses.



### Personal Progress or Duty to God

• Create a plan for studying some aspect of the scriptures that interests you. For example, learn all you can about the women of the Old Testament. Select some of the missionaries in the Book of Mormon and learn about their missions. Read the verses describing the Crucifixion and Resurrection in all four Gospels of the New Testament.

### Family Home Evening Idea

• Have your parents, immediate relatives, or grandparents tell something about their patriarchal blessings. Learn about what it takes to prepare to have your blessing.

## SUNDAY LESSON HELPS

In addition to the Resource Guides (online at [www.lds.org/gospellibrary](http://www.lds.org/gospellibrary), in the Shortcuts section), Young Women and Aaronic Priesthood teachers may find these resources helpful in enhancing lessons 34–37.

### Young Women Manual 2

#### Lesson 34: Avoiding Dishonesty

David A. Bednar, “Be Honest,” *New Era*, Oct. 2005, 4.  
Robert M. Bogardus, “Did You Cheat?” *New Era*, July 2007, 6.

#### Lesson 35: Dating Decisions

Boyd K. Packer, “You’re in the Driver’s Seat,” *New Era*, June 2004, 4.  
Idea List: “How to Be a First-Rate Date,” *New Era*, Oct. 2004, 34.  
Bruce Monson, “Speaking of Kissing,” *New Era*, June 2001, 32.

#### Lesson 36: Marriage Standards

Thomas S. Monson, “Whom Shall I Marry?” *New Era*, Oct. 2004, 4.  
Astell Cerf, “The One You Wed,” *New Era*, Feb. 1987, 16.  
Chris Crowe, “A Marvelous Work,” *New Era*, Feb. 1987, 32.

#### Lesson 37: The Word of God as a Standard

Idea List “Overcoming Temptation,” *New Era*, Jan. 2007, 23.  
Boyd K. Packer, “Spiritual Crocodiles,” *New Era*, Oct. 2001, 8.  
James E. Faust, “The Enemy Within,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 44.

### Aaronic Priesthood Manual 2

#### Lesson 34: Obedience

Richard L. Evans, “Why All the Rules?” *New Era*, Nov. 2003, 44.  
Q&A (rules versus agency), *New Era*, Nov. 2007, 14.  
Name Withheld, “I Almost Lost My Sister,” this issue, 38.

#### Lesson 35: Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ

Idea List: “How Can I Come to Know Christ?” *New Era*, Mar. 2008, 31.  
Robert D. Hales, “Finding Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ,” *New Era*, Dec. 2007, 32.

#### Lesson 36: Patriarchal Blessings

Q&A (learning from patriarchal blessings), *New Era*, May 2007, 14.  
James E. Faust, “Your Patriarchal Blessing,” *New Era*, Nov. 2005, 4.

#### Lesson 37: Fruits and Gifts of the Spirit

Richard G. Scott, “Don’t Face the World Alone,” *New Era*, Feb. 2007, 2.  
Angela Woods Anderson, “The Gift of Tagalog,” *New Era*, Jan. 2006, 38.

**THANKS FOR THE BACK PAGE**

I want to thank you for publishing the poems and photographs on the inside back cover of the *New Era* each month. It's becoming increasingly difficult to find uplifting poetry and photography in the media. I look forward to the new poem and photograph each month.

*Todd A., Georgia*

Thank you for the inspirational poem at the end of the March 2008 issue. It helps us to draw courage to do the Lord's work. I believe it will help my friend who is preparing for a mission.

*Bernadette H., location not given*

**GOOD COUNSEL**

Thank you so much for "Preparing to Receive the Ordinances of the Temple" (Apr. 2008). I have recently been fasting and praying for a desire to read the scriptures. As I read the *New Era*, I found some good counsel in this article. I love going to the temple, and I want to always be able to go. This article gave me an answer to my fasting and prayer.

*Delaney D., Utah*

**OUR REAL SELVES**

I'm so glad the *New Era* talks about self-confidence and your inner self, unlike some other magazines that talk about how you can change yourself to become more like the world. Thank you for helping teenage girls like me to see that we are special when we are our real selves.

*Makenzie P., Utah*

*I'm so glad  
the New Era talks  
about  
self-confidence  
and your inner self,  
unlike some  
other magazines.*

**A POWERFUL RELATION**

I love to read the *New Era*. I love all the new stories and experiences that come in each new magazine. Whenever I have a problem, I can open the scriptures or the *New Era* and find a solution, like the article "I Am Important" in the April 2008 issue. Thank you so much for letting me and many other youth in the world have the opportunity to read such a powerful and inspiring magazine.

*Meissa H., Nebraska*

**SKATERS' RULE**

I really liked the article "Skaters' Rule" in the January 2008 *New Era*. It just goes to show that even the little things, such as following the Word of Wisdom, can help in avoiding big problems. If we dress modestly and stay away from drugs and alcohol, it will be easier to withstand Satan's temptations. Another example is if we read the scriptures and say our prayers regularly, we can feel closer to the Savior.

*Riley L., location not given*

*We love hearing from you. Write us at the following address. Please include names of your ward and stake (or branch and district).*

*New Era  
We've Got Mail  
50 E. North Temple St. Rm. 2420  
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA*

*Or e-mail us at [newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org)*

*Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.*

ILLUSTRATED BY SCOTT GREER

## THE SWING

BY JESSICA C. MILLER

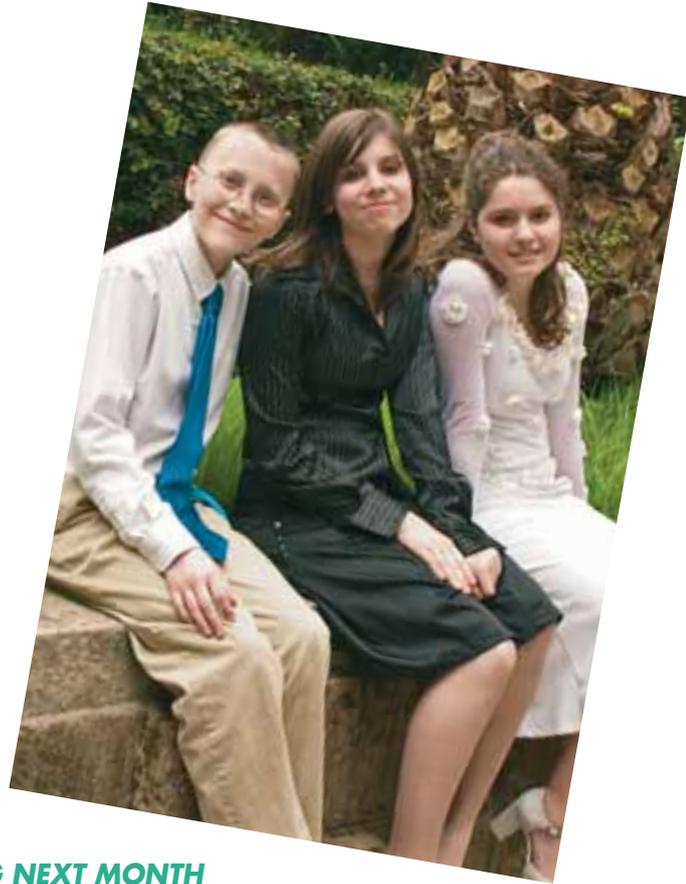
With the wind in my hair  
And blue skies everywhere  
And there seems to exist not a thing  
But the peace and the ease  
Of the calm gentle breeze  
Yes, that's how I feel when I swing

Here I close my eyes  
Think of sweet lullabies  
And the songs my mother used to  
sing  
And the stories Dad read  
When he tucked me in bed  
Yes, that's how I feel when I swing

Into the future I can look  
As if skipping ahead in my book  
To picture me living my dreams  
This is where I write the story  
And what I feel is the glory  
Yes, that's how I feel when I swing

I look at the flowers, the grass and the  
trees  
The birds, the butterflies, even the  
bees  
I feel as if I have their wings  
Oh, if I were to drop  
I'd be sorry to stop  
Yes, that's how I feel when I swing





## COMING NEXT MONTH

- *Read about the lives of LDS teens in Rome.*
- *Having a hard time? The scriptures can give you some great advice.*
- *Read about making fasting each month your decision.*
- *What are you going to do when your sister is lying to your parents?*
- *Check out the answers to some “To The Point” questions, such as:  
“Should you call your youth leaders by their first names?” or “Who can you talk to about your doubts?”*

*Just a few of the articles waiting for you in the upcoming September 2008 New Era.*

SEE US ONLINE AT [WWW.NEWERA.LDS.ORG](http://WWW.NEWERA.LDS.ORG)