

## AN EMAIL FOR

# JESSICA

By Sydney Squires

I didn't usually run home from school and fling open my scriptures to study them, but today was unusual. Sprawled on my bed, I booted up my laptop and typed two words: *Dear Jessica*.

I'd known Jessica for a few years, but our conversations were brief. One day in English, however, we were assigned seats by each other, and our class discussion ventured into the topic of religious symbolism.

I was surprised when Jessica, an atheist and usually argumentative, started asking the teacher questions that were uncharacteristically sincere: "What did 'Godhead' mean? What does it mean that there are three members?"

Finally, Jessica leaned back and confided to me, "I'm glad I'm not religious; it just seems like a lot to keep track of."

I struggled for words, but I couldn't let a moment like

this pass. "I actually love the Church," I said at last. The discussion was moving on, so we promised to talk more after class. I shared a bit of my testimony and eventually lent her a few books about our faith.

After a few weeks of discussions both religious and nonreligious, Jessica finally said, "I understand what you're getting at, Sydney, but I don't know if I can believe all of this. I just can't believe that God would let so many bad things happen to us."

I didn't feel ready to answer her question on the spot, so I asked for her email, which led to me being sprawled on my bed, scriptures open, unsure of what to write.

I refocused on the screen. *Dear Jessica*. I looked at the sticky notes I'd filled with scriptures and started writing.

As I wrote, the Spirit surged up within me. Each word fell together with power and clarity.



Sharing the gospel can be as simple as an email to a friend.

Dear Jessica,

I don't know exactly what you've been through, what your struggles are, or what the exact words you need are, but God does.

I've been thinking a lot about your questions: "Why do I have trials? And why doesn't God just stop them and make everything easier?"

First, it's important to understand that progression is eternal. We don't just become worthy of God's presence overnight. It's a lifelong process. Struggle is required, but even though life is hard, I know that "men are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25). God does not cast our struggles upon us because that's just how life is; He desperately wants us to be happy. However, I can say that this life is about not only our natural progression through struggles, but about our eternal progression in overcoming them.

Jessica, Jesus Christ knows how to come to our aid! While you have struggles in your life, Jesus Christ had them in His too. I promise that He understands every one of your struggles exactly and that He knows you personally. I know I'm only a 15-year-old girl, but I know He lives, that this is all true, and that He loves you more than it is humanly possible to imagine.

Please come to me with any more questions you have!

Love,

Sydney

I stared at the document for a few minutes. I'd written for almost two hours, leafing through scriptures and every example I could think of to produce this. As I scanned through it, I felt completely at peace. I closed my scriptures and clicked Send.

Jessica and I never talked about that letter, and she ended up moving. I don't know if my words will lead her to the gospel this year, in 10 years, or ever in this lifetime, but writing that email helped my testimony. I'm confident it can have the same effect on her as soon as she chooses to let it.

*Sydney Squires lives in Utah, USA.*