



Jn my first year of high school, I rode the bus every morning with my friends. As we traveled to school, we chatted about our teachers, test scores, and our latest crushes.

When I turned 16, some of my friends from church who were still 15 wished they could start dating like many of the other people our age.

One day someone said, "I know we're supposed to wait until we're 16 to date, but my parents told me I am old enough to decide for myself."

Another said, "If it's just asking someone to a dance, it's not really a date. It's just having fun with friends."

My friends turned to me and asked what I thought. Suddenly, I had to decide whether to stand up for this Church standard. At the risk

STANDING UP for 16

Name withheld

Even my friends were making fun of me. What could I do?

of sounding self-righteous, I told my friends I had decided not to date before 16 based on the guidelines of the Church because I felt they were there to help us.

A young man declared, "Yeah, but they're just guidelines. They're not commandments."

Even some of my closest friends started making fun of me for thinking the Church standards were so important. I was hurt, and I felt alone.

The entire day, I couldn't

get the mean words out of my head. Finally, at home I knelt down to pray. As I sat there crying and praying, I felt prompted to read my scriptures. I started to read where I'd last left off:

"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. . . . If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you" (Matthew 5:10). **NE**



More on Dating

Read more on dating in the *New Era* special issue "Dating for Beginners" at lds.org/go/122C.