

# LEADING *the* WAY

*When the Calderón children joined the Church, they led the way to great changes for their family.*

**By Melissa Merrill**

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**T**he children of the Calderón family started a great transition for their family. Jared, age 15, was the first to join the Church, followed a year later by his sister, Angie, 13. Their parents joined the Church three years after Angie's baptism.

At first this family from Costa Rica had no idea how much the gospel of Jesus Christ would change their lives. They were introduced to the Church by a family member in 2002, and for many months afterward the Calderóns regularly invited the missionaries to their home so they could learn more. As they did so, the family experienced a transformation—a true conversion.

## **A Richer Spiritual Life**

Before the family joined the Church, the Calderóns were concerned that Jared and Angie were having a hard time getting a moral and spiritual education in a world that downplays religion.

The gospel, the Calderóns found, had answers to the problems they were facing. "When we came to understand the gospel and started applying its

***Jared (left) was the first of the Calderóns to join the Church, in 2003. His sister, Angie (right), followed a year later. Their parents and younger brother joined in 2007.***

teachings, that knowledge changed the way we lived,” says Brother Calderón. “We learned who we are and how we can return to our Heavenly Father. Because of what we found, we have lived a richer spiritual life.”

It wasn’t always easy to accept readily what they were learning from the missionaries, but as they tested gospel principles, they gained a testimony of them. “As we learned about gospel standards,” says Sister Calderón, “we tried to stay within the boundaries of worthiness. I gave up drinking coffee. (And I drank plenty of coffee before then!) We made goals as a family to not swear, to speak kindly to each other, and to keep other good principles.

“The main sacrifice we made was our pride,” she continues. “We had to learn to be humble, but as we’ve tried to learn and live with humility, we’ve received many blessings and experienced great progress as individuals, as a couple, and as a family.”

### Looking toward the Temple

The family then began preparing for additional covenants and ordinances in the temple. “We knew that baptism was just the first step,” says Sister Calderón. “We set a goal to continue to progress, including going to the temple and being sealed as a family so that we can someday live with our Heavenly Father.”

In preparation for their temple sealing, the whole family spent time praying and fasting. Jared also participated several times in performing baptisms for the dead. Then on May 10, 2008, the family was sealed in the San José Costa Rica Temple.

Jared remembers what he felt that day. “When I entered the sealing room, the Spirit was so powerful. It felt so right to be there with my family,” he says.

His brother, James, recalls having to wait for a long time before he could enter the sealing room, but, he says, it was worth it: “I felt a lot of joy and happiness. I continue to feel happy knowing that I can be with my family forever.”

### The Influence of Covenants

While the family made many changes in their lives to prepare for temple ordinances, they are finding that the ordinances are, in fact, *changing them*. For instance,

Angie remembers that before their family was sealed, she told her mom that she did not want to be married in the temple. “I didn’t understand the promises then,” she says. “Now I see the bigger picture, and I have a bigger goal. I *do* want to marry in the temple. I want to have my own family someday and live with them eternally.”

Another change Angie has experienced is having an increased desire to do family history and temple work for her deceased ancestors. She and her mother visit the family history library at their local meetinghouse to research these names. Angie has a great feeling of love for her ancestors. She is always willing to do family history work.

Jared has also noticed an adjustment in himself in the way he treats his family. He explains: “When you go to the temple, you see things more clearly. I have felt the Spirit guide me to treat my parents and siblings better, to maintain a good relationship with them. There have been times where I have felt upset and was convinced that the other person was wrong, but when I remember that we are an eternal family, I realize that it’s not worth it to argue over petty things.

“Besides,” he adds, with a wry smile, “if I am going to live with them forever, I had better get used to them.”

### Great Happiness

The Calderóns realize that *making* covenants isn’t enough—it’s also essential to keep them. They are trying to keep reading the scriptures and keep praying together. They go to church and fulfill their callings and support each other. “Those things help us remember what we have promised and bring us lots of blessings, both spiritually and temporally,” says Sister Calderón.

The family has continued and will continue to face challenges in their lives, but covenants have made a huge difference in their perspective. Looking back at the decisions his family has made, Brother Calderón feels great happiness: “As we learned about the gospel and have lived it, we have developed a conviction, a certainty, that this is the gospel of Jesus Christ, and its direction helps us correctly make important decisions. Our family is coming closer to the Savior. We have progressed spiritually, and we’ve never been this happy in our lives.” **NE**