

# THE **New Era**



**FEBRUARY 2011**

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*Cover photography: Seth Smoot*

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# PARENTS AND CHILDREN:

*Elder Ballard shares ideas on how daughters and sons can build better relationships with their mothers and fathers.*



# Listening, Learning, and Loving

## TO FATHERS AND SONS

There is no other relationship quite like that which can and should exist between a boy and his dad. It can be one of the most nurturing, joyful relationships in life, one that can have a profound impact on who boys and dads become. Now, I understand that some of you young men do not have fathers with whom you can have these kinds of conversations. And some of you men do not have sons or have lost your sons to accident or illness. But much of what I say will apply to uncles and grandfathers and priesthood leaders and other mentors who sometimes fill the gaps for these significant father-son relationships.

I know that father-son relationships are never perfect, but everything I am going to suggest to you is possible if you will put in the effort to make it happen.

Young men, you are your father's pride and joy. In you they see a promising future and their hope for a better, improved version of themselves. Your accomplishments are a joy to them. Your worries and problems are their worries and problems.

### Sons

Young men, with these three simple suggestions you can take full advantage of your relationship with your dad and make your relationship with your father better than it is right now.

### 1. *Trust your father.*

He is not perfect, but he loves you and would never do anything he didn't think was in your best interest. So talk to him. Share your thoughts and feelings, your dreams and your fears. The more he knows about your life, the better chance he has to understand your concerns and to give you good counsel. When you put your trust in your dad, he will feel the responsibility of that trust and try harder than ever to understand and to help. As your father, he is entitled to inspiration on your behalf. His advice to you will be the heartfelt expressions of someone who knows and loves you. Your dad wants more than anything for you to be happy and successful, so why would you not want to trust someone like that?

### 2. *Take an interest in your father's life.*

Ask about his job, his interests, his goals. How did he decide to do the work that he does? What was he like when he was your age? How did he meet your mother? And as you learn more about him, you may find that his experiences help you to better understand why he responds the way that he does. Watch your dad. Watch how he treats your mother. Watch how he performs his Church callings. Watch how he interacts with other people. You will be surprised what you learn about him just by watching him and listening to him. Think about what you don't know



**By Elder  
M. Russell Ballard**

Of the Quorum of the  
Twelve Apostles

*In these last days it is essential—even critical—that parents and children listen to and learn from one another.*

*Young men, you are your father's pride and joy. In you they see a promising future and their hope for a better, improved version of themselves. Your accomplishments are a joy to them. Your worries and problems are their worries and problems.*

about him and find out. Your love, admiration, and understanding will increase by what you learn.

### **3. Ask your father for advice.**

Let's be honest: he is probably going to give you his advice whether you ask for it or not, but it just works so much better when you ask! Ask for his advice on Church activity, on classes, on friends, on school, on dating, on sports or other hobbies. Ask for his counsel on your Church assignments, on preparing for your mission, on decisions or choices you have to make. Nothing shows respect for another person as much as asking for his advice, because what you are really saying is, "I appreciate what you know and the experiences you have had, and I value your ideas and suggestions." Those are nice things for a father to hear from his son.

In my experience, fathers who are asked for advice try harder to give good, sound, useful counsel. By asking your father for advice, you not only receive the benefit of his input, but you also provide him with a little extra motivation to strive to be a better father and a better man.

### **Fathers**

Here are some things you can do to enhance your relationship with your sons.

#### **1. Listen to your sons—really listen to them.**

Ask the right kind of questions, and listen to what your sons have to say each time you have a few minutes together. You need to know—not to guess but to know—what is going on in your son's life. Your sons live in a very different world from the one in which you grew up. As they share with you what's

going on, you will have to listen very carefully and without being judgmental in order to understand what they are thinking and experiencing.

#### **2. Pray with and for your sons.**

Give them priesthood blessings. A son who is worried about a big exam or a special event will surely benefit from a father's priesthood blessing. Occasions like the start of a new school year, a birthday, or as he begins to date may be opportune times to call upon the Lord to bless your son. One-on-one prayer and the sharing of testimonies can draw you closer to each other as well as closer to the Lord.

#### **3. Dare to have the "big talks" with your sons.**

You know what I mean: talks about drugs and drinking, about the dangers of today's media—the Internet, cyber technologies, and pornography—and about priesthood worthiness, respect for girls, and moral cleanliness. While these should not be the only subjects you talk about with your sons, please don't shy away from them. Your boys need your counsel, guidance, and input on these subjects.

I am especially concerned that we communicate openly and clearly with our sons about sexual matters. Your sons are growing up in a world that openly embraces and flaunts early, casual, and thoughtless promiscuity. Your sons simply cannot avoid the blatant sexual imagery, messages, and enticements that are all around them. Fathers and Church leaders need to have open and frequent discussions that teach and clarify how young men of the priesthood handle this issue. Be positive about how wonderful

and beautiful physical intimacy can be when it happens within the bounds the Lord has set, including temple covenants and commitments of eternal marriage. Studies show that the biggest deterrent to casual sexual activity is a wholesome attitude that connects such personal relationships with genuine commitment and mature love.

## TO MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS

Mothers and daughters play a critical role in helping each other explore their infinite possibilities, despite the undermining influences of a world in which womanhood and motherhood are being corrupted and manipulated.

Sisters, we, your brethren, cannot do what you were divinely designated to do from before the foundation of the world. We may

try, but we cannot ever hope to replicate your unique gifts. There is nothing in this world as personal, as nurturing, or as life changing as the influence of a righteous woman.

I understand that some of you young women do not have mothers with whom you can discuss these issues. And many of you women do not presently have daughters in your lives. But because all women have within their divine nature both the inherent talent and the stewardship to mother, most of what I will say applies equally to grandmothers, aunts, sisters, stepmothers, mothers-in-law, leaders, and other mentors who sometimes fill the gaps for these significant mother-daughter relationships.

Young women, your mothers adore you. They see in you the promise of future

*Young women, your mothers adore you. They see in you the promise of future generations. Everything you accomplish, every challenge you overcome brings them pure joy. And likewise your worries and heartaches are their worries and heartaches.*



*Three things you can do to make your relationship with your parents better than it is right now:*

1. *Trust your parents*
2. *Take an interest in their lives*
3. *Ask your parents for advice*

generations. Everything you accomplish, every challenge you overcome brings them pure joy. And likewise your worries and heartaches are their worries and heartaches.

I wish to give you young women some suggestions on how to take full advantage of your relationship with your mother. And then I have a few thoughts to share with mothers about how they can maximize their influence with their daughters.

### **Daughters**

It is, unfortunately, all too easy to illustrate the confusion and distortion of womanhood in contemporary society. Immodest, immoral, intemperate women jam the airwaves, monopolize magazines, and slink across movie screens—all while being celebrated by the world. Popular culture today often makes women look silly, inconsequential, mindless, and powerless. It objectifies them and disrespects them and then suggests that they are able to leave their mark on mankind only by seduction—easily the most pervasively dangerous message the adversary sends to women about themselves.

And so, my dear young women, with all my heart I urge you not to look to contemporary culture for your role models and mentors. Please look to your faithful mothers for a pattern to follow. Model yourselves after them, not after celebrities whose standards are not the Lord's standards and whose values may not reflect an eternal perspective. Look to your mother. Learn from her strengths, her courage, and her faithfulness. Listen to her. She may not be a whiz at texting; she may not even have a Facebook page. But when it comes to matters of the heart and the things of the Lord, she has a wealth of knowledge. As you approach the

time for marriage and young motherhood, she will be your greatest source of wisdom. No other person on earth loves you in the same way or is willing to sacrifice as much to encourage you and help you find happiness—in this life and forever.

Love your mother, my young sisters. Respect her. Listen to her. Trust her. She has your best interests at heart. She cares about your eternal safety and happiness. So be kind to her. Be patient with her imperfections, for she has them. We all do.

### **Mothers**

Teach your daughters to find joy in nurturing children. This is where their love and talents can have the greatest eternal significance. Consider in this context President Harold B. Lee's injunction that "the most important . . . work you will ever do will be within the walls of your own homes" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee* [2000], 134).

Mothers, teach your daughters that a faithful daughter of God avoids the temptation to gossip or judge one another.

Your daughters as well as your sons are coming of age in a world that openly embraces early, casual, and thoughtless promiscuity. Immodest, unchaste women are glamorized and all too often celebrated and emulated. You need to have frequent, open discussions during which you teach your daughters the truth about these issues.

All youth will be more likely to make and keep covenants if they learn how to recognize the presence and the voice of the Spirit. Teach your daughters about things of the Spirit. Point them to the scriptures. Give them experiences that will help them cherish the blessing of priesthood power in their lives.

Through keeping covenants they will learn to hear the voice of the Lord and receive personal revelation. God will truly hear and answer their prayers.

### Conclusion

I hope you are listening and see a pattern and hear a steady, consistent message that in these last days it is essential—even critical—that parents and children listen to and learn from one another. These are not just ethereal concepts about which I have been speaking. They are the essence, the center, of God’s plan for our eternal happiness and peace.

The Church will help wherever we can. We are there to support and sustain you as parents and as children. But the home is the most important place to prepare the youth of today to lead the families and the Church of tomorrow. It rests upon each one of us as mothers and fathers to do all we can to prepare our youth to be faithful, righteous men and women. It is in the home where we must teach the gospel by precept and by example. **NE**

*Excerpted from general conference talks given in October 2009 and April 2010.*

### NEmore

Go to [youth.lds.org](http://youth.lds.org) to see videos that illustrate the principles Elder Ballard taught. Look for “Mothers and Daughters” and “Fathers and Sons” under Videos.

## DUTY TO GOD AND PERSONAL PROGRESS



**C**onsider inviting your mother or father to work with you side by side on Duty to God or on Personal Progress. Working together with your parent will give you a chance to show them how you are striving to improve yourself; it will also allow you to see that your parents are trying to better themselves too. You can become closer to your mother or father as you encourage one another in setting and achieving worthy goals.



# WHEN I BECAME INVISIBLE



## Name withheld

**W**e had barely arrived in our motel room when the phone rang. I knew it would be bad news about Jodi, my nine-month-old sister. She had been in a coma since birth and required round-the-clock monitoring and special tubal feedings. We had left Jodi temporarily at a care center so our family could take a much-needed vacation.

I answered the phone. My grandpa was on the line. His voice was firm: “Get your dad.”

Their conversation ended quickly. My fears were confirmed. Jodi had died.

The next day, after we had arrived home, I breathed a sigh of relief.



the next or the next. They didn't wait for me after school either.

During this time my family received lots of support from the Relief Society and other ward members. However, chicken casserole did little to soothe my 13-year-old aching heart. When I returned to Mutual, my adviser gave a lesson on life after death. I started crying. My adviser looked down and continued reading. My classmates stared ahead. I sobbed. How I wished somebody would have cried with me or put her arms around me.

Looking back on these events, I

the loss of your friendship as well. There is something comforting about doing regular things.

**Don't feel the need to give a life-after-death sermon.** When this type of lesson is given, do as Alma counseled: "Mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort" (Mosiah 18:9). Your friend probably already knows she will see her loved one again, and if she doesn't, the topic will come up in a natural way as she expresses her thoughts and concerns. That's the time to bear your testimony

The school bus was at the top of the street. My friends would be coming. At last I would have somebody my own age to share my pain.

However, as I stood in my driveway waiting for my friends, something strange happened. It was almost as if I had become invisible. I watched as my friends crossed to the other side of the street and continued talking with one another. They didn't even look at me.

The next morning my friends didn't pick me up as they usually did. "That's understandable," I thought. They probably knew I wasn't going to school because of funeral planning. But they didn't come the next day or

realize that my friends were not cruel and uncaring. They just didn't know how to respond to my pain. They assumed that I wanted to be left alone to grieve and, since I was in mourning, I would not want to do anything fun.

Here's what I wish my friends and adviser had known:

**Be there for your friend.** Take her a note or flower, but most important, take yourself. Put your arms around her and let her know you care. And by all means, go to the viewing or funeral.

**Include your friend in things you normally do.** Your friend is already adjusting to the loss of a loved one. Don't make her adjust to

of the plan of salvation.

A year after my sister's death, my friend's mother died. I felt incredible sorrow. I thought, "The next time I see her, I'll tell her how sorry I am." Then, remembering my own experience, I knew that my friend needed me right then. Walking to her house, I felt apprehensive. What if she didn't want to see me? Maybe her family didn't want me there. Should I wait and talk to her later? But when she answered the door, I could tell she was glad I came. Her father and older siblings were busy planning the funeral. We went for a walk. I didn't have to worry about what to say. She did most of the talking. **NE**

# WHERE WILL YOUR FRIENDS TAKE YOU?

By John Bytheway

**H**as this ever happened to you? You're sitting in church listening to the speaker when all of a sudden you hear loud noises coming from the ceiling above. To your great surprise, the roof opens up, revealing the bright blue sky, and you see the faces of four men peering down onto the congregation. The next thing you know, they are lowering another man on a stretcher onto the chapel floor.

Has that ever happened to you? Probably not. But something similar happened during the Savior's ministry.

## A Miraculous Healing

"Men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy" the story begins in Luke 5:18, "and they sought means to bring him in, and lay him before [Jesus]." The only problem was they couldn't bring their sick friend in because the place was packed! Even the doorways were blocked with the multitude,

and there was no way to get inside.

At this point the friends could have given up and gone home. But they didn't. You can almost imagine the conversation: "What should we do?" says one. "I have an idea," says another. "Let's go up on top of the building, make an opening in the roof, and lower him to the floor!" You can also imagine the sick man at this point hearing these unusual plans and saying, "You're going to do what?"

The story continues:

"They went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus.

"And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee" (Luke 5:19–20).

The scribes and Pharisees thought this was blasphemous, so Jesus responded:

"Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?

"But that ye may know that the



**Be the kind of friend who  
takes people to Christ.**

Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house" (Luke 5:23–24).



### If You Feel Spiritually Weak

Perhaps you haven't witnessed such an event, but there are a number of ways to apply this story to your life. You could put yourself in the place of the sick man. Let's say you were weak—not physically but spiritually. Where will your friends take you? Maybe there's a party or a movie or another activity, and you have little say in the matter—where will they take you? This story teaches us a wonderful lesson: There may come a day when you are not as strong as you should be. At that point your choice of friends will be critical. Choose friends who will take you to Christ. To have friends who will always take you to higher ground is an incalculable blessing.

### What Kind of Friend Are You?

But there's another way to look at this scripture. Put yourself in the place of the friends. What kind of friend are you? Although the Savior was the one who healed and forgave the man, the friends are also worthy of mention. They loved their friend and wanted to help him. They didn't give up and go home when things were difficult. Imagine the joy they must have felt when they looked down through the ceiling and saw their friend take up his bed and walk! That's another lesson: Be the kind of friend who takes people to Christ. These friends were courageous, persistent, even creative. In every word, in every action, in every choice, you can lead people to the Savior, who can heal us not only physically but also spiritually. **NE**

The story ends beautifully:  
“And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

“And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day” (Luke 5:25–26).

# NOT A SINGLE BAPTISM

By Ryan Squire

*My grandfather believed that on his mission he had never brought anyone into the Church—until I found out differently.*

I served in the São Paulo Brazil Mission. While I was there, I met an elderly Japanese couple who served in various capacities in the mission. Brother and Sister Tsuya were well known for two things. First was the haircuts Brother Tsuya would give the missionaries.

The other thing the Tsuyas were known for was their incredible love and mission spirit. They spoke no Portuguese and spoke English with a thick accent. But they would take a box of copies of the Book of Mormon they bought with their own money to the fruit fair on the street each week and would always come back empty-handed. Their spirit was incredibly powerful.

One transfer day I had the chance to talk to Brother Tsuya. I found out that he had joined the Church in Hawaii. I told him that my grandfather had served a mission in Hawaii and was there during the attack on Pearl Harbor. Brother Tsuya was very surprised and said he had joined the Church then but didn't remember an Elder Squire. I told him that it was my mom's father, Elder Thurgood, who had served in Hawaii.

Brother Tsuya almost fell out of his chair and yelled out "Elder Thurgood is your grandpa?" He related the story of their meeting. He said while he was eating a meal in the Hawaiian community style, he was being inappropriate and was taking the Lord's name in vain among other things. A

missionary, my grandfather, had spoken up and asked him to stop. Brother Tsuya said he took the name of the Lord in vain again. He said that my grandpa had come over to him, hit him on the shoulder, and lectured him about how little he knew about life, how he wasn't as smart as he thought, how he needed to quit smoking and do a bunch of things differently or he wouldn't ever amount to anything.

Brother Tsuya told me that when he went home that night, he knew my grandpa was right. He thought about it and decided he wanted to make some changes. He ran into two similarly dressed missionaries a couple of weeks later and listened to the discussions with a sincere desire to change. Brother Tsuya gave much of the credit for his decision to listen to the missionaries to my grandpa.

I quickly wrote home telling my family I had huge news and that Grandpa Thurgood needed to be there when I made my telephone call at Christmas. When I called home, I finally told him that I had met somebody he brought into the Church. I will always remember how quiet he became as he said, "Ryan, you are mistaken. I never brought anybody into the Church on my mission."

I asked him if he remembered hitting a smart-aleck Japanese kid at dinner in Hawaii and then lecturing him on how much he needed to change his life. He became



## YOU NEVER CAN FORETELL THE CONSEQUENCES

"You never can foretell the consequences of your work as a missionary in this Church. You don't know what will come of it. You may be turned down, you may have the door slammed in your face, you may have all of these things that happen so frequently and think that you've accomplished absolutely nothing, but miracles come out of these very, very small beginnings."

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), seminar for new mission presidents, June 23, 2000.

*Because of the seed my grandfather planted, Brother Tsuya was baptized, married in the temple, and served as a mission president. He blessed many lives.*

instantly curious and said that he did remember the incident well. He was transferred away shortly after that and hadn't heard more.

I told him that two weeks later that boy had decided to listen to the discussions because of what you said to him that night. He had later married in the temple in Hawaii. He had served in various callings in the Church and blessed many, many lives. He served as a mission president in Japan for three years. He also served as president of the MTC in Japan. He had served multiple missions with his wife.

My Grandpa Thurgood was in tears and couldn't talk to me after that. He had spent over 50 years thinking his mission hadn't made a difference to anybody. When the Tsuyas completed their mission in Brazil, my grandpa and his wife went to the temple with them and had a tearful reunion.

My grandfather's experience reminded me of Abinadi, my favorite Book of Mormon prophet. Abinadi had come before the wicked priests of King Noah and shared the gospel with great power and authority. He testified boldly and was burned to death because of what he taught. The only fruit he had the chance to see was one of the priests, whose name he may not have even known, who asked the king to let Abinadi go and then was chased out of the court. That priest (Alma the Elder) then became a great prophet himself.

We never know the effect our testimony will have on those around us. How could my grandpa have known the difference his testimony at dinner would have on a young man?

We learn that it is not ours to judge those around us when sharing the gospel. It is so easy to look at others and assume they are not interested in the gospel. We think the soil is rocky and that nothing would grow if we tried. Our responsibility is to cast seeds. We are called to share. We are called to invite. We are called to include. The gospel is a gospel of repentance, a gospel of change. In Christ is the power to change. Christ has the power to heal. There is nothing so exquisitely sweet as seeing a soul come unto Christ. **NE**

# 40

## YEARS OF TELLING YOUR STORY

"I love how you pick such strong stories that touch people's lives every day." That's what one reader recently said in a letter to the *New Era*. We have received many similar comments over the years about the personal stories featured in the magazine.

Storytelling throughout history has been an important way of teaching truths, exploring our common interests, and connecting us to one another. The personal accounts shared by our readers lift and inspire as they demonstrate how to apply gospel doctrines and principles in our lives. They let us know that we are, indeed, part of a great brotherhood and sisterhood in the worldwide Church.

We laugh, cry, and often marvel at your strength and goodness when you send us your stories. They are an important part of the magazine, and we wish we could print all of them. We review each submission, looking for those with a solid gospel application. When we decide to use one for the magazine, we then send it through an editing and review process before scheduling it for an issue of the magazine.

We look forward to sharing inspirational stories with you for many years to come.

### TOP TEN

Over the years the *New Era* has run some great stories. Making a short list of favorite stories is hard, but here are a few we thought to recommend. For more stories, go to [newera.lds.org](http://newera.lds.org) and look under Past Issues or Search. While you're there, let us know which ones are your favorites.

- B. Lloyd Poelman, "Strike the Steel," Jan. 1981
- Frank Day, "He Was Somebody Special," Sept. 1983
- Maria McKay, "Letters from Dad," June 1995
- "My Worst Date Ever," May 1998
- Ken Merrell, "The Visitor," May 2000
- Keith Waters, "Get Me Out of This!" June 2005
- Rebecca Taylor, "Wearing Millicent," July 2005
- Brian D. Stenquist, "This Recruit Does Not Swear, Sir!" Oct. 2005
- Jed Layton, "Anger Bounces Back," Jan. 2006
- Kyle Keim, "Guided to Do First Aid," Sept. 2010



### Would you like to share your story?

We welcome stories about missionary work, conversion, family relationships, friendship, faith-promoting experiences, and maintaining standards. We also have departments that feature stories about how you gained your testimony, what you learned from living a gospel principle, and how the scriptures have affected your life.

You can find our submission guidelines and a link for submitting articles at [newera.lds.org](http://newera.lds.org) on the bottom right-hand side of the page. Please let us hear from you.

## “I feel so alone at church. How can I learn to feel included?”

**A**s you prayerfully try to find an answer to your question, remember this teaching from the scriptures: when we join the Church, we “are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints” (Ephesians 2:19). This means we should be friendly to everyone at church. We’re all children of God trying to worship Him in love and unity.

Here are a couple ways to feel included:

**Get to know people of all ages.** In sacrament meeting, for example, you could sit by a single mother with young children. She might appreciate the help. Or you could welcome and get to know members who are new to your ward or branch. When 12-year-olds come into Young Men or Young Women, you could sit by them. It’s fun to have friends your own age, but if you reach out to others of different ages and interests, you’ll have more chances to develop friendships.

**Attend your ward or branch activities.** It’s hard to go alone, but you will make some friends by attending. Sit with someone who is sitting alone. Say hi and ask about his or her interests. That might be the start of a good friendship. **NE**

### Participate



Several months ago I left my country to go to one where I knew only my sister and her boyfriend. At church I felt like an outsider. Two or three months went by, and I felt the same feeling of loneliness until I decided to smile at others and ask, “How are you?” Each Sunday that went by, they were saying more to me than the simple “I’m fine.” It also helped to participate in seminary and Mutual and to work on Personal Progress with other young women. Now I feel comfortable at church, as if I were at home.

*Vanessa B., 17, La Vega, Dominican Republic*

### Get to Know Others

Years ago I had the same problem. So I decided I would try to be included and show people the real me. As soon as I opened up to others, they opened up to me, and this allowed for strong friendships to form among everyone in my quorum.

*MacCoy S., 17, Utah, USA*

### Help Others



Remember that all people are children of Heavenly Father. Try to smile and be friendly with everyone. Help others. Reach out to those who also feel lonely. When I serve others, I feel joy and do not feel lonely. It is also absolutely necessary to attend seminary or institute. We feel warmth and goodness there. Don’t be afraid of sharing your problems or worries. We are all brothers and sisters, and our problems and trials are similar.

*Igor P., 19, Kyiv, Ukraine*

## Form Friends in Other Age Groups



I have become better friends with younger age groups and leaders, more so than those around my age. I know that a day will come when you will be friends with those in the Church, and if not, it will be OK because you will still learn the Church material.

*Susanna Z., 18, California, USA*

## Start the Conversation



A couple of years ago my family and I moved. The first few weeks that I attended church and Mutual, I felt alone. But I prayed every day that I would be able to make new friends and feel a part of my new ward. Little by little I have come to love and appreciate this ward. I had to be the one to initiate friendships. I had to start the conversation. I had to fully participate in classes and listen to what others said. With Heavenly Father's help, I now have close friendships with people I never pictured being friends with.

*Leah V., 16, Colorado, USA*

## Make Friends with Your Leaders



I felt alone at church for many months. I enjoyed the meetings and activities, but I just did not feel that I meshed with the other girls. I then started talking to my leaders more than I used to. My leaders are fun. Once I started talking to them, I started feeling more a part

of the program and that I had friends at Mutual.

*Kimberly G., 14, Arizona, USA*

## Pray to Have Good Friends

At Church activities I would ask myself, "Why don't I have friends?" I felt sad and alone and went to God in prayer. I asked my Heavenly Father to send me good friends. It hasn't been easy, but over time I've made many great friends. I'm not afraid to talk anymore and to get involved with groups of girls. I realize that Heavenly Father answered my prayers and that I was never alone.

*Daiana I., 16, Corrientes, Argentina*

## Seek Out Companionship



When I first entered Young Women, I felt alone because I had left my friends in the Valiant class. However, I tried to support the young women, and they also supported me, and I was able to make new friends and interact with them. I no longer felt alone, and that made me happy. Now I am the

president of the Beehives, and if I see a new sister who feels uncomfortable being with us, I talk with her, explain what we do in class, and make her feel that she is part of us.

*Gredy G., 14, Lima, Peru*

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



## GIVE TO OTHERS IN LOVE AND SERVICE

"Loneliness in the kingdom of God is often a self-imposed exile. . . .

"We hope . . . each of you feels the need to join the whole ward [or branch] family and use your unique gifts and talents to touch the lives of all of our brothers and sisters. . . . The opportunities we all have for caring and fellowshipping in the ward [or branch] are boundless if we are willing to give of ourselves in love and service."

**Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Belonging to a Ward Family," *Ensign*, Mar. 1996, 16.**

## NEXT QUESTION

"My parents are divorced. Sometimes I get advice from one of them that contradicts advice from the other. What do I do?"

Send your answer and photo by March 15, 2011.

Go to [newera.lds.org](http://newera.lds.org), click Submit Your Material, and then select Questions and Answers.

You can also write to us at [newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org)

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New Era, Q&A, advice  
50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420  
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA

# Music in His

*Developing his talents has become a personal responsibility.*

**By Charlotte Wood Wilson**

**W**hen you were three or four years old, perhaps you wanted to be a doctor, an astronaut, or a firefighter, and those aspirations probably changed from year to year. Maybe one year you even wanted to be a baseball player.

Will Hagen, a 17-year-old from Salt Lake City, Utah, *was* a baseball player through his childhood and most of high school, but he's known for almost his entire life what he really wants to be—a violinist. And being a violinist isn't just something Will wants to do, it's something he feels he's meant to do.

## **Balancing Act**

Will started playing the violin when he was almost four years old, and since then the instrument has been a major part of Will's life, sometimes making it hard for him to balance his other responsibilities. Though he had been playing on his high school's varsity baseball team for several years, Will decided to give up the sport his last year of high school to concentrate on his music. His music career has become more serious, and he spends a lot of time traveling for lessons and concerts, which can make it challenging to keep up in the classroom.

After playing the violin for 13 years, however, Will has a better idea of how to manage his time and priorities. "I do what's important first. I try not to get too bogged down in one thing."





# HEART

With his regular teen-age life and his music life often pulling him in different directions, he finds that his membership in the Church is what keeps him on track. “Being a member of the Church is one thing that keeps me steady. The Church is a wonderful constant in my life.”

## **Discipline in Action**

Playing the violin as seriously as Will does takes a tremendous amount of discipline, which he says is the hardest part about playing the violin. “It’s hard

## **USING YOUR TALENTS**

**D**on’t know what your talents are or don’t know what to do with them? Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Seventy gives you three tips:

- “Seek earnestly to discover the talents the Lord has given you.”
- “Use your talents to build up the kingdom of God.”
- “Acknowledge God’s hand in your success.”

(See “Parables of Jesus: The Parable of the Talents,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2003, 34.)

## BUILDING ON THE BASICS

**W**ill spends four hours practicing each day. When learning a new piece, he says, “You have to play it really, really slow first. Make sure you can play it in tune. Setting the foundation for it is important.” Will has to start slow before he can work on detail and technique. In many ways, the way Will practices mirrors the ways in which we grow in the gospel. We must start with the most basic components, and once we have those under control, then we can move on to more complex and refining practicing. We must learn “line upon line, precept upon precept” (2 Nephi 28:30).



*Will Hagen playing with the Utah Symphony Orchestra in his early teens. He now travels throughout the country playing with other symphonies.*

to practice slowly,” he explains. “It’s hard to practice every day.” It also takes discipline to balance his social and school life and his music life “because they’re so completely different.”

### Speaking a Different Language

Will was first attracted to the violin after hearing people play the instrument in a Church meeting. “I’ve always felt that I’m meant to play, because I’ve always had a very personal connection to the music.” He says that the techniques associated with string playing distinguish the violin from other instruments, like the piano. “With the piano, you don’t have vibrato, you don’t have slides, and those slides and vibrato can make it sound more human. The violin is a great instrument. It’s really expressive, and you can really sound like you are saying something.”

He sees music as more than just notes on a page. While few classical composers have been LDS, Will believes “that many were inspired by God in some way, and

there’s a good connection there.” He continues, “I treat the music like it really is more than a song.”

With such clear talent for the instrument, Will could easily let his ability get to his head, but he keeps his motivation on track: “I just love the music. That’s what I’m in it for.” He recognizes the power music has to influence people and tries to stay in tune with the Spirit when he performs. “Music is very, very powerful. I pray every single time before I go on stage. It’s really strengthened my testimony of prayer, because prayer really does work. Many times I’ve had prayers directly answered, and it’s strengthened my testimony.”

### Magnify Your Talents

Will has a bright future ahead of him as he continues to develop his talent on the violin. He’s learned that through dedicated effort and continual prayer, the Lord will help him magnify his abilities. We, like Will, need to follow Paul’s counsel and “neglect not the gift that is in [us]” (1 Timothy 4:14). **NE**



MORMONAD

# REFLECT ON ETERNITY



See D&C 131:1-4; 132:1-20.



# Making THE MOVE

*How would I survive living in a new town where I didn't know anyone?*

It all began on a chilly November morning when I was in eighth grade. My parents called my younger sister and me into their bedroom, requesting that we hold a family meeting. I saw my mother's face, and instantly a cold, worried feeling filled my heart. My father explained to us that he had had the impression for many months that he should begin looking for a new job. A chilling thought crept into my mind, *We're going to move.*

Horrified, I quickly voiced my speculation, hoping to clear the terrible thought from my mind. Instead, I was only met by a new wave of anxiety, as my parents confirmed my judgment. I burst into tears. My parents tried to console me, but I dreaded leaving my home, friends, and ward that I knew so well. I refused to see any good thing about moving. For the next few months before the move, I could never last a week without shedding a tear.

My first Sunday in our new ward was pleasant but did not make much of an impression on me. I knew that the ward would be a strength for me, so I tried to keep a positive outlook on the situation.

Then came my first day at a new school. I did not have my own schedule yet, so I was assigned to shadow another student and follow her schedule until I had my own. I was very shy, and everything was new and confusing. So many of my peers introduced themselves to me, and yet when I went home at the end of the day, I was unable to remember even one. Overwhelmed, I did not look forward to another day of school, but I decided it

was tolerable enough and concluded that I would survive the experience.

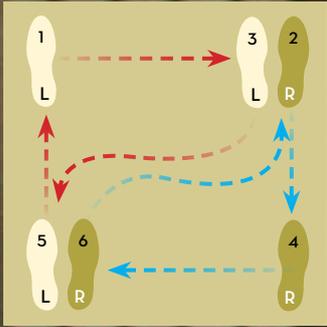
Things at school progressed very slowly. I made some friends. I did well in my classes, but I was unhappy. I did not want to be there. My only truly happy times were when I went to church. I developed strong friendships with several girls my age very quickly, and those friendships provided strength and hope for me while I struggled to adapt. But still, despite those brief reprieves, I felt unhappy.

Everything changed when I went to young women's camp. The testimony I gained at camp is one that I have kept and developed. I realized then why I was unhappy. I had let the Spirit leave my life. I had not relied on the Lord for strength. The instant I got home I knelt down and prayed for strength and courage, for peace and comfort, and for the loving feeling that the Spirit brings to life. Suddenly a warm, comforting feeling filled my heart. I know that my Heavenly Father heard my prayers that day, and every day before that, and every day since.

Heavenly Father can always guide us and will always be there for something to hold on to. He has given us the most powerful gift in the world, the gift of the Holy Ghost, which we can use to help us through our trials and tribulations. The power of the Holy Ghost is strong; it can heal wounded hearts and build up testimonies. By keeping the Lord in our lives, we can be happy. Even though we may have to face trials, the Lord eases our burdens. I know no matter where we are, He can be with us. **NE**



**Y**oung women's camp reminded me to find comfort and courage through prayer.



# DANCING BALLROOM

By Julia Woodbury

*One group of dancers help some special partners to learn the joy of dancing—ballroom style.*





*Cassidy Edgington is learning to ballroom dance with her volunteer partner, Richard Davis, a past member of the BYU ballroom touring team, as they get ready for their performance at a Special Olympics ballroom dance event.*

The room is charged with competitive energy. Dancers in sparkling dresses and sharp tuxedos swirl and spin on an open dance floor under brightly colored lights. The Brigham Young University DanceSport Ballroom Competition is in full swing, and the music and tension mount as more and more competitors fill the floor.



Then suddenly the din of the crowd quiets, and the competitive edge of the atmosphere dissipates as a new group of couples takes the floor.

Who are they? Special Olympics athletes and their volunteer partners are competing in their first-ever ballroom dance event. The music begins, and the crowd, with supportive enthusiasm, erupts into cheers as the couples begin to gracefully waltz across the floor.

From the sidelines, college sophomore Allie Edgington watches as her goal to create a Special Olympics dance event unfolds. It was a dream that was sparked, in part, by her love for her sisters. And now it is a reality blessing many lives and helping Allie and others understand how Heavenly Father loves His children.

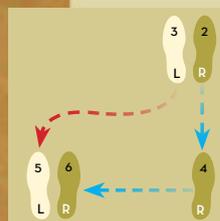
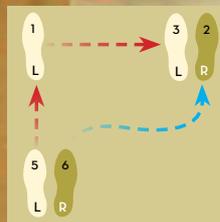
### Loving and Lifting Each Other

Support and encouragement are second nature among Allie and her siblings. Their trials bring them closer, and their triumphs take them all higher. Allie's brother and twin sisters were all diagnosed with Fragile X Syndrome, a genetic condition resulting in mental impairment and autistic behaviors.

Allie, an avid dancer, is a dance education major and a member of BYU's touring ballroom team. In 2008 she was named Miss Provo, going on to become the first runner-up to Miss Utah 2009. As the title holder, Allie needed a platform or specific cause to promote. She showed her support for her siblings by promoting Special Olympics. For the past seven years Allie's brother, Tanner, has competed in Special Olympics, a program providing Olympic-style athletic events for disabled children and adults.

However, Allie noticed that her younger sisters, 17-year-old twins

Courtney and Cassidy, were reluctant to participate. "Our brother has done well in Special Olympics, and he likes it a lot, but we're just not so into it," Courtney explains.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE ACADEMY PARK WARD.



Wanting her sisters to succeed, Allie started looking for ideas. “I got to thinking that maybe there was some way to get them involved, some way to help them be comfortable enough to participate,” Allie says.

When a friend mentioned that the state of Indiana had held the first Special Olympics dance event, Allie knew she had found her solution. Combining her dance education major with her Special Olympics platform and her desire to help her sisters, Allie hatched a plan to create a Special Olympics ballroom dance event in Provo.

### Learning in Her Shoes

The waltz music finishes, and the Special Olympics couples spin out and take deep bows for the enthusiastic crowd. Then they exit the floor and file into a row of chairs on the sidelines or go backstage to wait for their next event, the cha-cha.

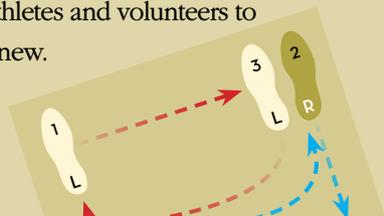
Backstage, Courtney sits with her sister Cassidy and cradles a pair of high-heeled ballroom shoes in her lap. They are scuffed and very flexible. “They’re comfortable because Allie wore them out,” Courtney explains, “and now I get to use them.”

While lively music blares from the speakers, Courtney quietly talks about her sister. “I want to be like Allie. She dances a lot, and I want to do a lot of dance at my school.” Cassidy chimes in, “I’ve learned a lot from just watching her.”

More than just learning steps and routines, these sisters know that they’ve learned a lot about life by dancing with their sister. “I can have fun, even though some things are still a little scary. I can be comfortable,” Courtney says. When asked about what advice she would give to other teens, she adds, “Just get involved and do things that you don’t usually do. Get out and have fun!”

### New Friends and Fun

Allie’s idea helped her sisters to get out and have fun and, in the end, it was also a great way for the other athletes and volunteers to try something new.



Out by the dance floor, Emily Chai, one of the volunteers, sits with Connor Morris, her cha-cha partner. Like other athletes and volunteers, they’ve become good friends while learning to dance together. “After practices we all would stay and get involved in an impromptu dance party. I think we all just loved the interaction,” Emily says.

Interaction was one of Allie’s biggest goals for the athletes. Over the course of a few months, she taught six weekly workshops where the athletes were matched with a volunteer partner and learned to dance. “I hoped that the experience would give the athletes a chance to interact with people they really look up to and admire,” Allie explains.

For Emily, these workshops were one of the best parts of the experience. “It has been fun to watch the participants get really excited. I think that excitement became the whole reason I wanted to do this.”

### Happiness in What They Can Do

The other competitors soon take their final bow, and it’s time for the Special Olympics athletes to perform the cha-cha. While everyone lines up and gets ready to go back onto the



**D**ance partners practice their routines. (Top) Couples join together for a group bow after their performance. (Bottom) The Special Olympians show off their trophies. (Far right) Allie Edgington has an arm around each of her sisters, Courtney and Cassidy. (Inset) Their brother Tanner. Allie’s siblings were her inspiration for the event.



floor, Keilani Stolk, another volunteer, excitedly describes the feeling of dancing with the Special Olympics athletes. "It's not about how good you are; it's about having fun and being friends." In Special Olympics, there are no winners and losers, only athletes trying their best and having fun.

Richard, a past member of the BYU ballroom touring team, adds, "It is so rare to have an event where you just care how everyone else is doing. I just want everyone to have fun and to do well."

Under the bright lights these special dancers spin, twirl, and cha-cha to a chorus of cheers and claps from the crowd. It is clear from the smiles on their faces and the enthusiasm they show in their dance that, for these dancers, having fun and supporting each other is the goal.

"The athletes just have the most wonderful spirit about them,"

Allie says, watching from the sidelines as her students perform. "Instead of focusing on those things they can't do, they come and have so much happiness in the things they can do."

Looking back on her experience, Allie knows that she has been blessed. Beginning a Special Olympics ballroom event allowed her to help her sisters, helped her move forward on her own goals, and strengthened her understanding of God's love. Watching her students take their final bow, Allie says, "The athletes' love for life is such a testimony to me of the purity and goodness that can exist in the world.

They give so freely of their own love to everyone. I know that Heavenly Father loves them." **NE**





When I was young my school showed all the students a film titled *Say NO to Strangers*. In the film several young children were confronted by strangers and had to choose whether they should go with the stranger or not when, for example, a stranger would try to lure them away with candy or ice cream. If a child gave in, tragedy could result.

I thought of that movie recently when I read what the Lord said through the Prophet Joseph Smith at a conference of the Church in 1831: “The enemy in the secret chambers seeketh your lives” (D&C 38:28).

### A Hidden Enemy

Pornography is like that evil stranger, that enemy operating in secret chambers. It targets children, teens, and adults—both male and female. Its purveyors often operate in secrecy and seek to deceive us by claiming to offer something normal and pleasurable that doesn’t harm anyone.

Pornography pretends that it is no evil stranger—that it is not a problem and is not addictive. That is a lie. One 12-year-old boy recently wrote to the *New Era*, telling of his experience viewing pornography when he was alone at home. While initially it was exciting, he soon felt deep despair. He wrote: “I have been trying my best to forget those images. I would like to say to anyone reading the *Friend* or *New Era* that while porn might be pleasurable, it really wrecks your soul and is hard to recover from.”

Pornography is more prevalent today than at any other time. For most people of earlier generations, pornography

was something hidden in the dark corners of society. Nowadays, because of the Internet, it seems that encountering pornography is increasingly not a matter of *if* but *when*. That is why it is important that you decide now to prepare a way to flee from this evil stranger.

Dr. Donald L. Hilton Jr., a specialist in neurological surgery and a Church member, says that even one viewing of pornography can be enough to sow the seeds of a future addiction. Its allure and the accompanying act of self-stimulation may not seem horribly bad at first. Excitement, fascination, and gratification all accompany the viewing of pornography, and because of that, he warns, you may not believe you are addicted until it is too late.

### There Is Help

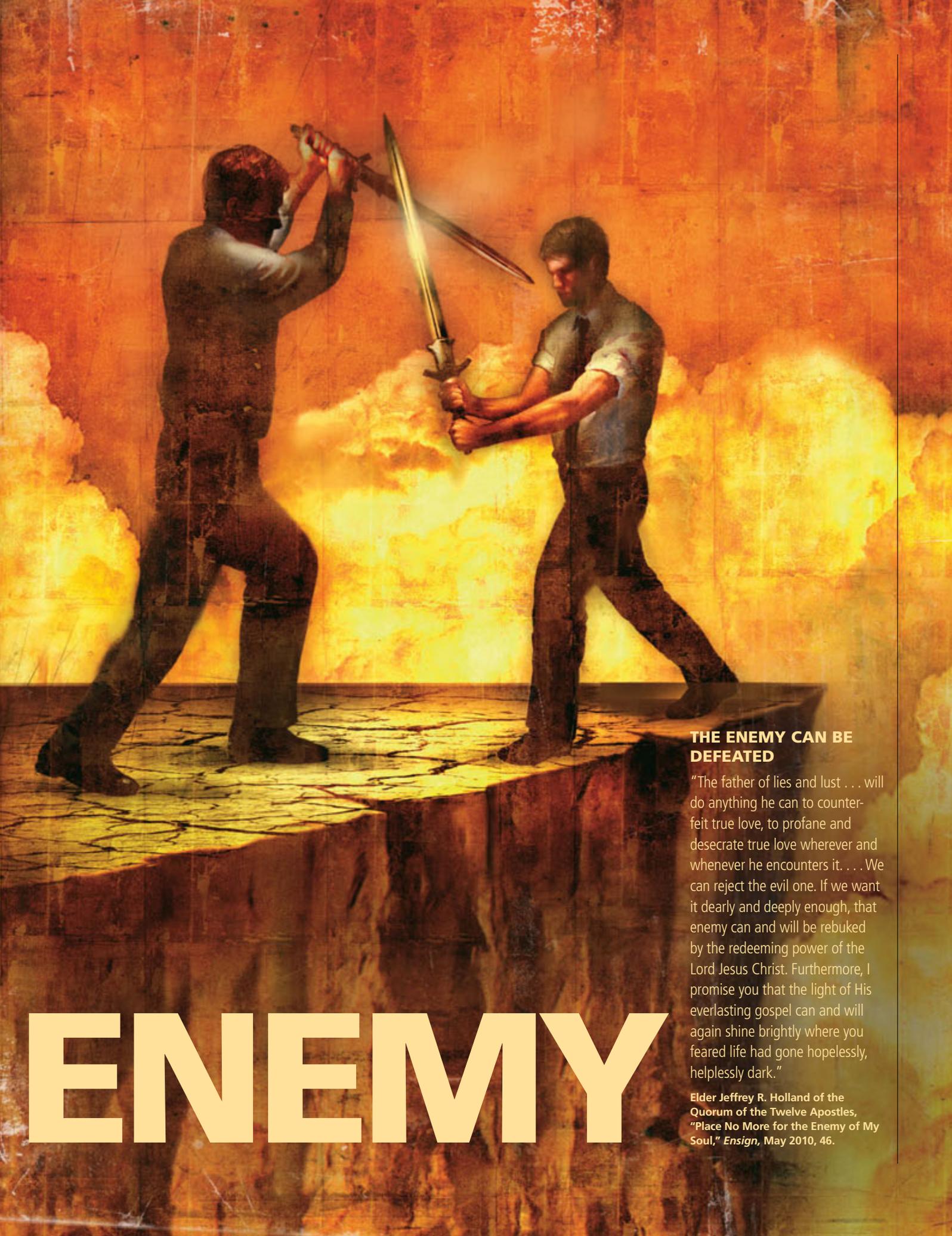
If you are tempted to view pornography, there are ways to resist. If you have developed a habit of viewing pornography, there is help. Talking with your bishop about these things may seem scary, uncomfortable, or embarrassing, but he, along with your parents and your Heavenly Father, loves you and wants only the best for you.

The best way to stay safe is surprisingly simple—talk to your parents and ask for their help in avoiding pornography. Make a plan together so that they can support you.

The best way to escape if you need to repent is also simple, though it may require courage: go to your bishop

*You need to prepare a battle plan now to avoid or overcome pornography.*

# The Secret



# ENEMY

## THE ENEMY CAN BE DEFEATED

"The father of lies and lust . . . will do anything he can to counterfeit true love, to profane and desecrate true love wherever and whenever he encounters it. . . . We can reject the evil one. If we want it dearly and deeply enough, that enemy can and will be rebuked by the redeeming power of the Lord Jesus Christ. Furthermore, I promise you that the light of His everlasting gospel can and will again shine brightly where you feared life had gone hopelessly, helplessly dark."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Place No More for the Enemy of My Soul," *Ensign*, May 2010, 46.



## TURNING A VICIOUS CYCLE INTO A VIRTUOUS CIRCLE

If you can recognize the sexual addiction cycle, you can make a battle plan to combat it. Counseling with the Lord, your bishop, and your parents will help you to discover ways that will help you personally. Then you can turn your behavior patterns from a vicious cycle to a virtuous circle, which will reinforce themselves as you repeat them again and again. (For more information on pornography addiction, see [CombatingPornography.org](http://CombatingPornography.org).)

### THE ADDICTION CYCLE

1. **Thoughts.** A person's mind becomes completely preoccupied with the object of the addiction, leading to an obsessive search for stimulation. Catching yourself at this stage and stopping yourself can help you avoid being trapped.
2. **Rituals.** A person goes through routines that intensify the preoccupation, adding more arousal and excitement. Again, recognizing these routines and altering them can help you to avoid the addictive behavior.
3. **Behavior.** A person acts out, feeling that he or she cannot control or stop this behavior (whether it's taking drugs or engaging in sexual behavior). But you have agency; you can stop the behavior, even if you've allowed yourself to get to the stage where it's much more difficult to withstand the temptation.
4. **Despair.** A person feels utterly hopeless about his or her behavior and feels powerless to control it. Often, because of the damage done to self-worth and as a way to cope with these depressing feelings, a person's thoughts turn again to the object of the addiction, and the cycle begins again. But even if you've gone this far, you don't have to let the cycle repeat itself. With the Lord's help, you can overcome it.

### THE VIRTUOUS CIRCLE

1. **Thoughts.** Change your environment. Surround yourself with pictures, music, and literature that will inspire good and uplifting thoughts. Avoid media, people, or settings that have tempted you

in the past. Disconnect the Internet or television cable. Learn constructive ways to respond to conflict, boredom, or other negative feelings. Think about ways to serve others.

2. **Rituals.** Engage in positive activities, such as studying the scriptures, exercising, or talking with a family member or friend.
3. **Behavior.** Fast and pray for help, and do good works. Addiction, which is selfish by nature, can be replaced by selfless service to others.
4. **Joy.** President Thomas S. Monson has said, "Don't put your eternal life at risk. Keep the commandments of God. If you have sinned, the sooner you begin to make your way back, the sooner you will find the sweet peace and joy that come with the miracle of forgiveness. Happiness comes from living the way the Lord wants you to live and from service to God and others" ("Preparation Brings Blessings," *Ensign*, May 2010, 66–67).

## DO I HAVE A PORNOGRAPHY PROBLEM?

Do you wonder whether you have a pornography problem that is compulsive or addictive? If you answer yes to any of the questions below, you may benefit from discussing it with a professional counselor in addition to your parents and your bishop. These and other questions can be found at [CombatingPornography.org](http://CombatingPornography.org).

- Do you view pornography frequently or regularly?
- Have you ever promised yourself that you would never again view pornography?
- Have sexual thoughts interfered with your ability to function at school or at work?
- Do you sometimes think that you are the only person who has certain sexual thoughts?
- Do you view pornography in order to escape, deny, or numb your feelings?
- Do sexual thoughts interfere with your spiritual life?
- Do you use pornography to deal with, deny, or avoid problems in your life?



and confess completely and honestly. “By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them” (D&C 58:43). Complete truthfulness with the appropriate authority is a necessary step. Talk to your parents, your bishop, or a professional counselor. You cannot overcome pornography alone; it will not stop without help. Willpower alone will not be enough to help you back on the road to recovery and peace.

*When it comes to avoiding or overcoming pornography, there is help and there is hope. Talk to your parents. Go to your bishop. Turn to the Lord. You can defeat your enemy and find happiness, joy, and peace of mind.*

### There Is Hope

“Addiction is a collision with the adversary that causes a wound on the soul,” Dr. Hilton says. But although there may be a wound, even a deep one, repentance is the process by which there can be a complete healing of that wound.

For those in the grip of pornography addiction, there is a way out. Happiness, joy, and peace of mind can eventually be regained. The Church pamphlet *Let Virtue Garnish Thy Thoughts* (available from your bishop) offers encouragement: “Your desire to change must be powerful—more powerful than your desire for pornography. Ponder your most sincere desires for your life and the life of your family, and focus on accomplishing good instead of dwelling on your struggles with pornography” ([2006], 10; also available at the Church’s website [CombatingPornography.org](http://CombatingPornography.org)).

Remember, there is hope. The Lord has said, “Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more” (D&C 58:43).

You *can* avoid and overcome the enticements of this enemy of your soul. You *can* take control and banish pornography from your life. **NE**

### **Help for Yourself and Those You Love**

At [CombatingPornography.org](http://CombatingPornography.org) you will find a wealth of information and resources to help someone overcome a pornography addiction, including a section just for youth, as well as a section for parents.

# The Message Tasted

*I wasn't really looking for God, but when two young men asked if they could share a message with me, I decided to listen.*

By Anthony X. Diaz

**A**lthough I was baptized as an infant in one church and attended another on and off during my childhood, religion was never a huge part of my life. As I grew older, my family moved a lot, and we stopped attending worship services. I believed in God, but I did not think about Him or religion very often.

That all changed in 2006, when I was 14. My uncle Billy died; he was only in his mid-30s. His premature death made me realize how much I loved him and caused me to start asking questions internally. Where did he go when he died? Did he continue to live and have a future? What would become of his children and other family members left behind? What did his life mean? What did *my* life mean?

These thoughts ran through my mind for the next several months. One evening in September 2007, my mother, my three younger siblings, and I were leaving a deli in my hometown of Haverhill, Massachusetts, USA, and stopped to sit on a bench.

**I remember reading in Alma 32 about the seed of faith developing and tasting good. That description was exactly how the Book of Mormon seemed to me.**

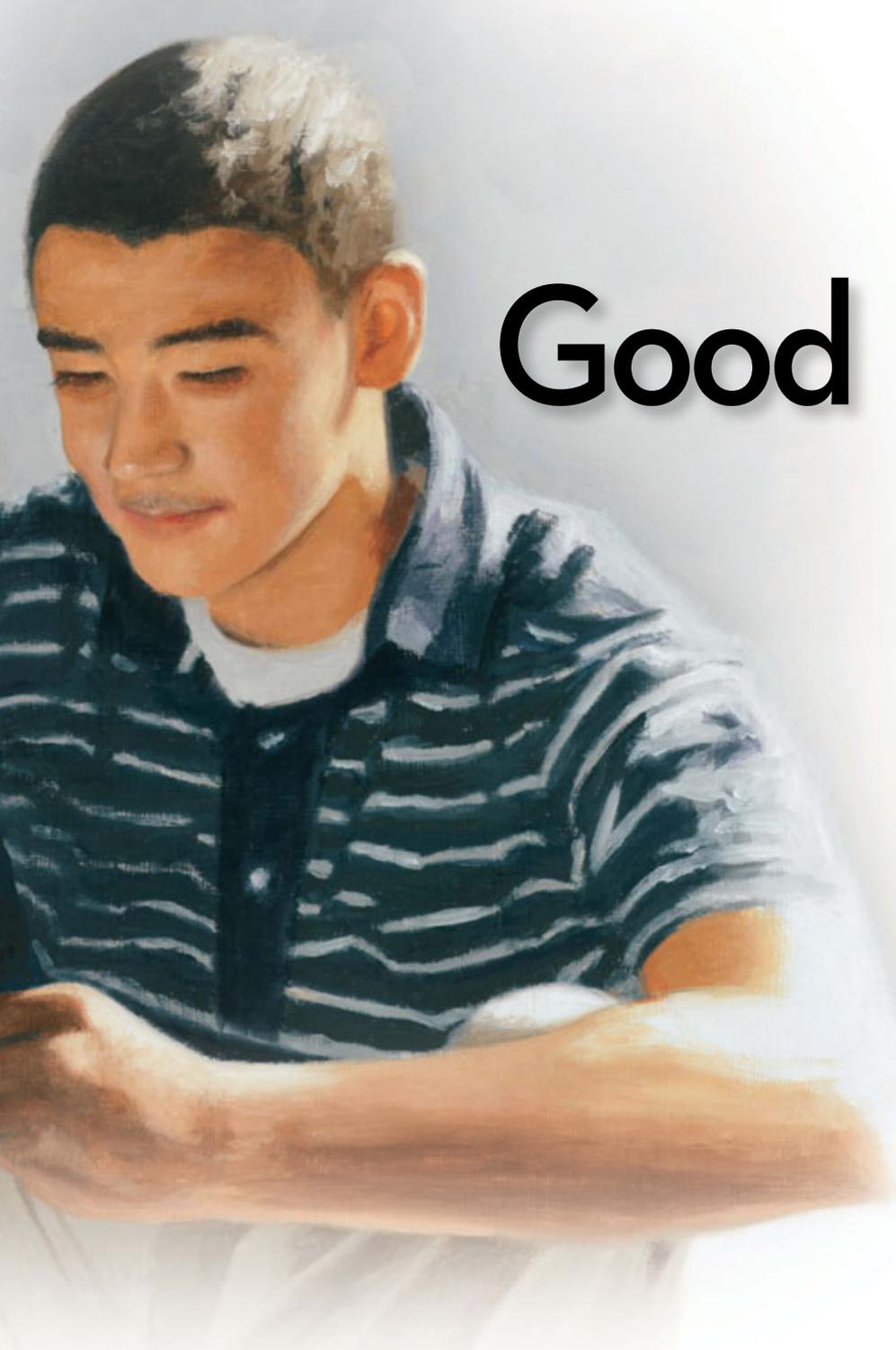
Two young men in black suits, white shirts, and ties approached us. One of them said, "I know it may seem a little bit awkward to talk to two people you don't know, but could we share a message with you?"

We agreed. I knew they were going to talk to us about religion, and I was impressed that they didn't just thrust a card or pamphlet at us and

walk off. Rather, these young men genuinely seemed interested in us and excited about their message. At the conclusion of their message, they asked if they could visit our family. My mother agreed and set up a time, so I have her to thank for what became a great change for good in my life.

We started learning the gospel.





# Good



## YOUR CONVERSION

“You will know that the gospel is being written in your heart, that your conversion is happening, as the word of the Lord from His prophets, past and present, feels more and more delicious to your soul.”

**Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “When Thou Art Converted,” *Ensign*, May 2004, 12.**

exactly how the Book of Mormon seemed to me. What I was reading and what the missionaries were teaching me rang true, felt right, and tasted good.

My mom teased me about what she called my “hermit crab stage” because I would retreat to my bedroom and spend several hours reading the Book of Mormon. Although I didn’t recognize my feelings as the Holy Ghost at that time, I felt that this path was right.

When the missionaries asked me to be baptized, they encouraged me to pray about the decision. When I prayed to know if joining The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was what I was supposed to do, I received a very direct answer, to the point that it shocked me. The direction was clear: go forward with baptism.

I remember vividly the day I was baptized—December 15, 2007. As I stood in the cold water with Elder Kelsey and he raised his hand to the square, the Spirit just filled me up; it seemed to take over my whole frame.

After a while Mom became busy with different things and didn’t continue to meet with the missionaries, but I did.

I connected easily with Elder Kelsey and Elder Hancock. Perhaps part of the reason was that they weren’t that much older than I was. I felt great love from them and for them. Soon I felt that same love from ward members and from

other youth in my stake.

The missionaries taught me the plan of salvation, which answered the questions I had about my uncle and about my own purpose in life. The elders also introduced me to the Book of Mormon. I remember reading in Alma 32 about the seed of faith developing and tasting good (see verse 28). That description was

ILLUSTRATION BY ROB WILSON

I could say that I was also grinning from ear to ear, but that description doesn't even come close to describing what I felt.

After my baptism I continued to feel the Spirit. I *felt* sanctified. I *knew* that my sins had been remitted. I felt the approval of Heavenly Father that this was, indeed, the path I was supposed to take.

Occasionally, when little doubts pop up, I go back to that experience and remember how I felt that day. Remembering what I felt then helps me dispel any doubt I may encounter.

Even though we don't reenter the waters of baptism to have those powerful feelings again, we can remember that feeling when we renew our covenants through repentance and the sacrament. Each time I repent, I can find that feeling again—one of being cleansed and of being loved.

Feeling that love helps me identify with what Joseph Smith taught: "A man filled with the love of God, is not content with blessing his family alone, but ranges through the whole world, anxious to bless the whole human race."<sup>1</sup> Knowing the worth of a soul helps me be excited about opportunities to go teaching with the missionaries in my area. I also look forward to the day when I can serve a full-time mission and share how happy the gospel of Jesus Christ has made me. **NE**

**NOTE**

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 330–31.



PRODIGAL SON, BY LIZ LEMON SWINDLE, FOUNDATION ARTS, MAY NOT BE COPIED

### KEEP LIVING THE GOSPEL

**A**lthough Anthony is grateful for the powerful spiritual experiences he had when he joined the Church, he knows that the light of one pivotal experience isn't enough to live on. "We have to keep our testimony burning," he says. "And we know the ways to do that. Read the scriptures. Go to church. That kind of thing."

Anthony notes that he can feel a difference when he is consistent with these practices and when he is not. And he has discovered ways to keep the pattern of gospel living "fresh."

"I remember studying in the Gospel Principles class the story of the prodigal son (see Luke 15:11–32). As I read about the young man who left his father's home, I thought, 'I could have been that son.' The Spirit bore a powerful witness to me that like that son, I could also return to my Father. The feeling was as though Heavenly Father was saying, 'I love you.' It was as powerful a feeling as I felt on my baptism day."

He has also found that it's important to ask questions in his prayers and scripture study. "When I read the scriptures," he says, "I look for answers to things I am thinking about or wondering. I ask Heavenly Father what He would have me learn from what I'm reading. I do the same thing when I go to church.

"When I ask questions, whether it's about something specific I should do in my life or about what something I'm studying means, I'm able to more easily feel the guidance of the Holy Ghost. I know Heavenly Father really is there and that He will always answer us."

# AN HONEST TITHE, A GREAT BLESSING

By Oscar Alfredo Benavides

**W**hen I was almost 17, I was baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and felt a desire to serve the Lord on a mission. When my mission call arrived a few years later, I was called to leave Peru and preach the restored gospel in Salt Lake City.

Even as I thought about the great blessing of serving a mission, many things that I was going to need weighed on my mind: documents, passport, visa, clothing, and, of course, money. I was working but wasn't making enough. I felt desperate! With a month and a half before I was to leave, I found I had only a small part of the necessary funds. All I could do was go to the Lord in prayer.

Because I didn't make very much money, the tithes I paid each month were meager. But I soon realized that the Lord doesn't care about the small amount: He cares that we pay the 10 percent He has asked. I felt a conviction and assurance that if I continued to pay tithing, the Lord would provide what I needed.

Everything began to come together. I got two additional jobs and obtained my documents. Many members of my ward, especially the Relief Society sisters, helped with other necessities. And the members of my stake offered their help as well. I left on my mission with what was required.

As a full-time missionary, I taught the law of tithing and its promises (see Malachi 3:10) with gratitude and testimony. **NE**



**H**eavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:32–33).

*I was  
hoping  
for an  
overwhelming  
spiritual  
confirmation,  
but it did  
not come.*

# *An Unexpected Answer*



By Amy Carpenter

I've noticed a lot of times when I've picked up a Church magazine or listened to the testimonies of others, people often share experiences when they've been overcome by the Spirit after asking Heavenly Father a particular question, specifically if the Book of Mormon is true. Spiritual experiences are amazing; I love reading about them. However, I think many people get the wrong impression that if they don't receive an overpowering response to their question that somehow their testimony must not be strong enough. In my experience, the Spirit more often comes in a quiet, soft way rather than a metaphorical lightning bolt of truth.

Last summer the youth in our ward were challenged to read the entire Book of Mormon. Eventually the summer came to an

## THE STILL SMALL VOICE

"We should recognize that the Lord will speak to us through the Spirit in his own time and in his own way. . . . In most cases, 'his own way' is not the thunderous interruption or the blinding light, but what the scriptures call 'the still small voice' (1 Kgs. 19:12; 1 Ne. 17:45; D&C 85:6). Some have misunderstood this principle. As a result, some have looked exclusively for the great manifestations that are recorded in the scriptures and have failed to recognize the still, small voice that is given to them. This is like making up our minds that we will learn only from a teacher who shouts and that we will refuse to listen to even the wisest teaching when it comes in a whisper.

"We need to know that the Lord rarely speaks loudly. His messages almost always come in a whisper."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Teaching and Learning by the Spirit," *Ensign*, Mar. 1997, 7.

end, and I finished the Book of Mormon. As I kneeled to pray and asked if the book was true, I remember thinking that this was it—I would finally have the experience that everyone seems to talk about where they are overcome by the Spirit.

The truth is, when I prayed, I didn't feel that way. At first I was a little upset. Why hadn't I received such a witness? Was I not worthy? But I soon realized that though many people might feel the Spirit confirming truth to them very strongly when they pray about the Book of Mormon, there are many others who don't have that same experience. Just because you may not receive an extremely strong confirmation does not mean the Book of Mormon isn't true or that your testimony is not as strong as someone else's. It simply means that the Spirit can speak to people in different ways and at different times.

For me, this experience taught me that we don't always receive answers in the way we expect. I thought I would feel an overpowering spiritual impression after I prayed about the Book of Mormon—but I didn't. Honestly, I believe I already knew it was true.

Though I may not have felt the Spirit very strongly at that time, I knew I had felt it while reading about Alma's conversion and about Ammon and his brothers bringing thousands of Lamanites to the gospel, and about Christ teaching the Nephites after His Resurrection. I realized that feeling the Spirit while reading different parts of the Book of Mormon also confirmed to me that the entire book was true.

I believe this same message is applicable to any part of the gospel. The things we know can help us accept the things we may not fully understand. I know that this gospel is true, and I know that we can all gain testimonies if we work at it. **NE**

## EAGLES A-HMONG US

**O**n a Sunday in July last year, the Hmong ward in Sacramento, California, gathered for a special celebration. Five boys from the Nong Shala Ward (Hmong), Troop 338, and one from Oroville met with friends and family to celebrate their new wings. All six earned their Eagle awards over the summer.

These Scouts' Eagle projects were varied and reached into their community. At a local school, volunteers painted volleyball courts, basketball courts, and murals; others cleaned and refurbished the school's garden areas. At another school, they painted bathrooms and offices. Several of the boys had projects that took on tasks suggested by the city to build benches for the old cemetery. Another project included installing directional signs, clearing trails, and general clean up for the Church's girls' camp facility.

These 6 young men are the latest in a series of 21 to receive the award since Troop 338 was chartered in 1993. Since then, 11 of the Eagle Scouts have gone on to serve full-time missions.



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE HAMMERL FAMILY AND © GETTY IMAGES

## A SHINING STAR

"I forever am amazed by nature and its beauty," says Marlies Hammerl, Laurel class president from the Salt Ash Branch, Newcastle Australia Stake. "One aspect of nature I especially enjoy is the night sky and the glorious stars." Marlies will now get to study those glorious stars more in depth after being awarded one of only 12 Stellar Astronomy Scholarships offered to young women in New South Wales, Australia.

"It is easy to be grateful for all the blessings I have and realize that I, like the stars, need to let my light shine even though my two sisters and I are the only members at my school." Marlies travelled to Sydney last April, where she was awarded her scholarship by the Governor General of Australia.

Marlies adds, "I am just so grateful that I have taken heed of our prophets' counsel, to gain the best education that we can. It's definitely important to strive in all you do." In other words, we should reach for the stars.

"BUILD YOUR LIVES ON A FOUNDATION OF TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS. IT IS THE ONLY FOUNDATION THAT WILL STAND THE PRESSURES OF THIS LIFE AND ENDURE THROUGH THE ETERNITIES."

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Priesthood of Aaron," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 94.

## HAVE YOU SEEN THIS?

**Y**ou use them in Sunday School every week. You refer to them each time you go to seminary. Hopefully, you read from them every day on your own. But have you ever considered how much work went into publishing the standard works? Now there is a new documentary titled *That Promised Day: The Coming Forth of the LDS Scriptures*, which tells the miraculous stories of the many men and women who helped bring us our current scriptures. You can watch it anytime online at [www.byutv.org](http://www.byutv.org).



PHOTOGRAPH BY ANGELA COWAN

## THE CHURCH IN BRAZIL



THE BRAZIL MISSIONARY TRAINING CENTER

The first Church-owned meetinghouse in South America was dedicated in Joinville in October 1931. A Brazilian

mission was created from the South American Mission in May 1935. Church teaching materials were translated into Portuguese in 1937, and missionaries began teaching in Portuguese a year later.

Missionary efforts continued in the 1950s, and by 1959, membership was about 3,700. Brazil's first stake was organized in 1966. Ten years later, Brazil had 10 stakes, and a temple was announced for São Paulo. It was dedicated on October 30, 1978 by President Spencer W. Kimball.

On February 2, 1986, Brazil became the third country outside the United States to have 50 stakes. That number doubled to 100 by 1993.

In October of 1993, construction began on Brazil's new Missionary Training Center, the Church's second largest. And, with 23 missions in 1995, Brazil has the largest number of missions outside the United States.

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

<b>Membership</b>	<b>1,102,674</b>
<b>Missions</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Wards &amp; Branches</b>	<b>1,885</b>
<b>Family History Centers</b>	<b>310</b>

## BY THE NUMBERS

# 23,432,000

Number of gallons of concrete used in the construction of the Conference Center.



## SEARCH THE NEW TESTAMENT

See if you can find the names of the books of the New Testament.

**MATTHEW**  
**MARK**  
**LUKE**  
**JOHN**  
**ACTS**

**ROMANS**  
**CORINTHIANS**  
**GALATIANS**  
**EPHESIANS**  
**PHILIPPIANS**

**COLOSSIANS**  
**THESSALONIANS**  
**TIMOTHY**  
**TITUS**  
**PHILEMON**

**HEBREWS**  
**JAMES**  
**PETER**  
**JUDE**  
**REVELATION**



## MY FAVORITE SCRIPTURE

**Alma 11:22-23**

This scripture is important to me because it tells me that no matter what I'm offered to deny my faith, I must stand up for what I know and believe in because "the righteous yieldeth to no such temptations."  
**Bekah S., 17, Wales, UK**

Tell us about your favorite scripture in one or two sentences. Go to [newera.lds.org](http://newera.lds.org) and click on Submit Your Material.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF BEKAH S.



PHOTOGRAPH BY MATT REIER



By Elder  
Carlos A. Godoy  
Of the Seventy



# THE GOSPEL IS FOR EVERYONE

*I had often wondered where true happiness came from.  
Then I found it in “the big box.”*

When I was 16 years old and living in Porto Alegre, Brazil, my older brother had a friend who often visited our home. One day this friend told us that he had found a church and that he liked its members’ way of living.

He told us a little bit about his experience with joining The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but he wasn’t sure that my brother and I were “church material.” He knew that our lifestyle included smoking and drinking and worldly pursuits, and he thought that the standards of the Church would be too much for my brother and me to embrace, that the change would be too drastic for us to handle.

Our sister, however, didn’t smoke or drink. She lived a clean life and was a good, kind girl. Because of these traits, our friend thought that she might be interested in what Latter-day Saints stood for, so he asked our mother if she could attend a Church activity with him.

Our mother agreed but only on the condition that my brother or I go too. My brother was faster than I was and quickly said, “Not me!” So I was designated to go to the activity with my sister.



*My brother’s friend wasn’t sure that my brother and I (above) were “church material.” But I was curious.*

I didn’t really mind. I had been curious about the Church since I had first seen the large, square chapel across from my school. I had seen people coming and going from the church often, and I had noticed that the men wore white shirts and ties. I wondered what could be going on inside “the big box,” as I then thought of the building.

## My First Activity

My sister and I arrived at the church with our friend. Inside, at the center of a large cultural hall was a small group of

people: two sister missionaries and maybe six others. They were playing a simple game and enjoying popcorn and juice. Everyone was laughing and having a good time.

“Who are these people,” I wondered, “and why are they so happy?” I knew it certainly couldn’t be because of the game they were playing or the physical environment or the treats they were sharing. Those were all so simple. The happiness seemed to be coming from inside them.

I had often wondered where true happiness came from and what I could do to find it. I thought maybe it came from exciting activities or taking exotic vacations or pursuing

all that the world has to offer. I had tried some of that, but it hadn't filled the emptiness I felt. And then I went to that meetinghouse, where these people were so happy without any of those things. It made a significant impression on me.

After the activity the missionaries stood at the exit to shake hands with everyone. When my sister got to the door, they asked her if she would be interested in knowing more about the Church. She said, "No, thanks." But I was still curious. I felt a "desire to believe" (Alma 32:27), so when they invited me to learn more about the gospel, I said yes.

My parents weren't interested in the missionary lessons or in having them conducted in our home, so I arranged to have the lessons at the meetinghouse. Over the next month I learned about the restored gospel of Jesus Christ—about what made those people in that cultural hall so happy. I learned that happiness came from doing what the Lord wanted me to do, that it came from within, and that I could be happy no matter what was going on around me. That doctrine was "delicious to me" (Alma 32:28). I wanted it in my life.

A month after that first activity, I decided to join the Church. In the years that followed, both of my parents also joined the Church.

### **Trials after Baptism**

I faced a lot of challenges after my baptism. The changes I needed to make in my life were significant. On top of that, sometimes I felt that I had no friends in the Church, and it was tempting to go



**Elder Godoy as a missionary in Brazil, 1982.**

*My experience with conversion—my own and that of others—has taught me that the Spirit can touch anybody, anywhere and that there is no ideal profile for a potential member of the Church. All of us need the gospel of Jesus Christ.*



### **AN INVITATION TO SHARE GOSPEL JOY**

"To young men of the Aaronic

Priesthood and to you young men who are becoming elders: I repeat what prophets have long taught—that every worthy, able young man should prepare to serve a mission. Missionary service is a priesthood duty—an obligation the Lord expects of us who have been given so very much."

**President Thomas S. Monson, "As We Meet Together Again," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 5–6.**

back to my old friends. My parents later divorced, which was also difficult for me. But my desire to feel joy—and my understanding that we can be happy regardless of external circumstances—helped me keep coming back to church. I knew I couldn't "lay aside [my] faith" (Alma 32:36). Over time I made friends within the Church who helped me during the transition. And as I continued to live the gospel, my testimony and my happiness grew (see Alma 32:37).

My experience with conversion—my own and that of others—has taught me that the Spirit can touch anybody, anywhere and that there is no ideal profile for a potential member of the Church. All of us need the gospel of Jesus Christ. All of us are in the process of becoming more like Him.

That realization helped me as a missionary in São Paulo, Brazil; as a mission president in Belem, Brazil; and as a member of the Church. It has helped me as my wife and I have prepared our children for missionary service. Two of our children have already served full-time missions, and before they left, I reminded them not to judge people by their appearance or their way of living. "Don't give up on someone because you find them strange," I told them. "Try to see the inside. There might be another Carlos out there."

I am grateful to recognize that we are all children of God and to know that everyone—not just a few people—is a candidate for receiving the joy that comes from living the gospel of Jesus Christ. **NE**

# ON STAGE

**How do you get to Carnegie Hall?** I do think it takes a lot of practice, but it takes studying and developing. I haven't had a lot of training with acting. I've done a few workshops and Camp Broadway. My first time acting, I didn't have a speaking part. I've improved since. I guess it would be practicing that is the main thing. But studying and working hard is a huge part.

**When did you know you had the ability to sing and dance?** I don't remember when I started singing. Apparently I've been singing since I was little. I didn't realize I was good at it. Everyone told me that I had a great voice, but I didn't really know it. Since then I've done solos in choir and a bunch of things.

**What are the best things about being in Young Women?** Some of the best things are learning how to prepare to be a wife and mother. There are cookbooks for learning to cook, but there aren't recipes for what you need to be like as a parent. But in Young Women we learn about our future. I feel like our rule book is our scriptures.

**What has helped your testimony grow stronger?** This past school year, we have started reading the scriptures as a family. We read every morning before breakfast. While we are reading, my mom will stop and ask, "How would you feel if you were there in that time?" I have a favorite scripture. It is in D&C 58:42. I really like it because it's talking about forgiveness. I think that forgiveness is a really important thing. Without forgiveness, we wouldn't be able to return to our Heavenly Father.

**What made that your favorite scripture?** I like it because I am not perfect. I really like knowing that my sins can be forgiven. That is just such a wonderful thing to me.

**What does music mean to you? Or is dance more significant?** Those are the things I love. You can express yourself in more ways than just words.

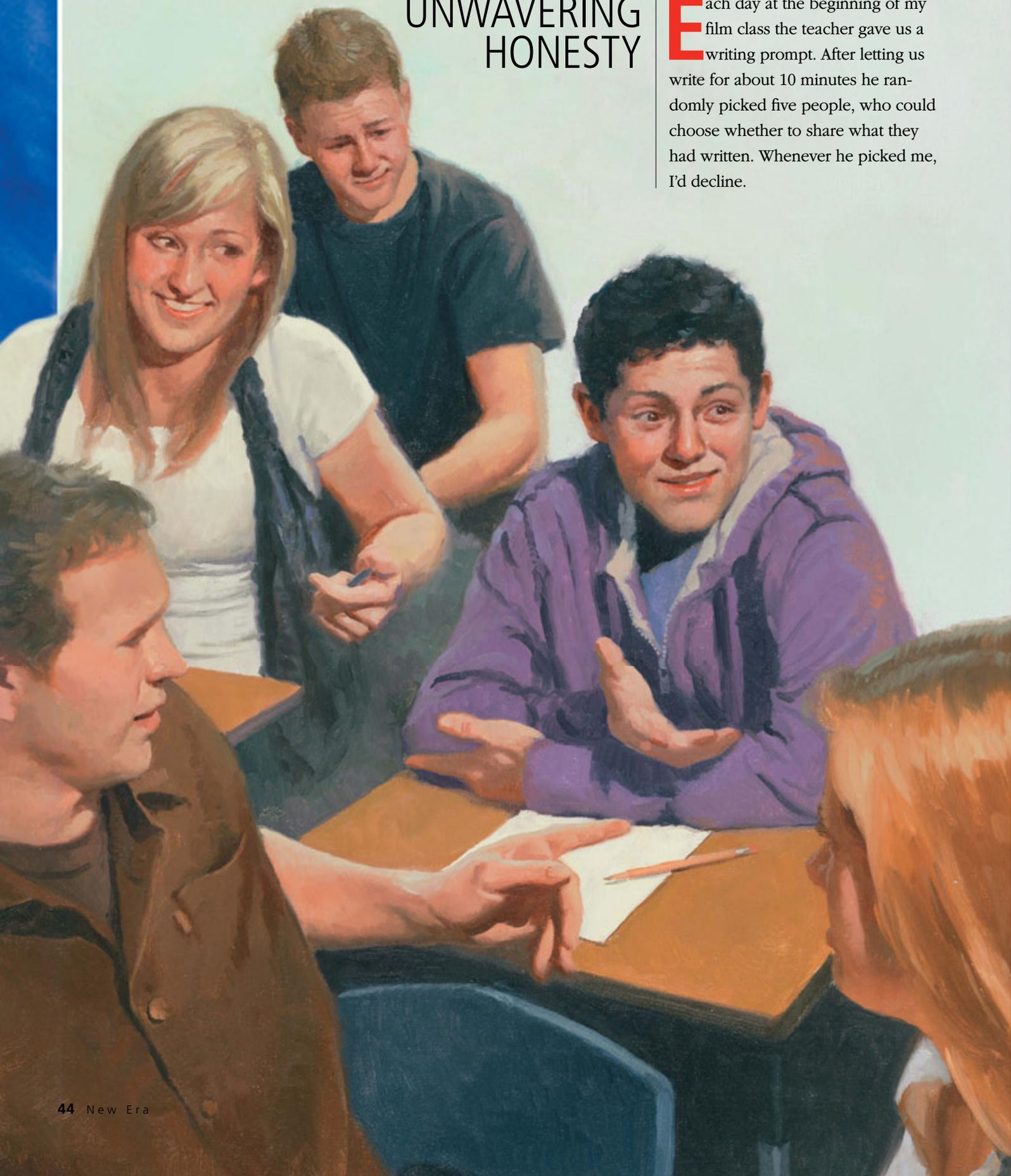
**What do you do when you are asked to wear an immodest costume.** We actually had that problem in my dance class. It didn't fit properly. We had it fixed so my shoulders were covered. I was so happy that I can represent who I am and people can see that by the way I act and the way I dress. **NE** —As told to Janet Thomas, Church Magazines

**Name:** Halley Pace  
**Age:** 14  
**Location:** Wellsville, New York  
**Accomplishment:** Chosen as one of 100 teens from across the nation to perform with the New York City Pop Orchestra in Carnegie Hall. Sings, dances, and acts in community theater.

*Halley in her Fiddler on the Roof costume.*

## UNWAVERING HONESTY

**E**ach day at the beginning of my film class the teacher gave us a writing prompt. After letting us write for about 10 minutes he randomly picked five people, who could choose whether to share what they had written. Whenever he picked me, I'd decline.



One day the prompt was “Are there certain kinds of stealing or borrowing without permission that are OK? What’s the difference? When was the last time you stole something?”

I wrote an answer to the prompt and didn’t think much of it. After a few minutes the teacher started calling on people to share. I noticed that the first four people each had a story of what they had stolen and how they stole it. Then he called my name. Even though I usually said no, I got a feeling to share what I wrote. I started talking about how I didn’t think there was any good kind of stealing. Then I answered the part about the last time you stole something: I’ve never stolen anything in my life. Right away my teacher didn’t believe me and everyone in the class thought I was lying. I insisted that I was telling the truth. After about five minutes of my being called a liar, the teacher said, “I’m going to call your mom and ask if you’ve ever been caught stealing.” I told him to go ahead and do it. Then he left the classroom to call my mom. While he was out of the room, most of the kids in the class kept saying I was lying, and I didn’t understand what the big deal was.

The teacher came back into the class and everyone asked him what my mom had said. He announced to the class that my mom had verified that I had never stolen anything. Some of the kids weren’t convinced, but most of them were just shocked. My teacher was impressed and actually said, “You’re a better human than I am.”

## COMPETING FOR MODESTY

**B**eing modest has its rewards! For one of my Personal Progress goals, I chose to make something for my 4-H project that would be modest and help me share my values with the community. I made a skirt, entered it into a 4-H fashion show, and modeled it. As I modeled, the judge looked to see if the outfit was age appropriate and how it fit; she also evaluated my demeanor. The judge commented on how she loved the skirt and how the shirt I chose complemented the modesty of the skirt. She praised me for the courage I had to choose an outfit that was age appropriate and modest. Other girls that I competed against had made outfits that

were more elaborate and revealing. It made me feel good to know that I had followed the teachings that I had learned in Young Women about virtue. I felt good about what I had done (and winning a ribbon made it all the better). Even if I hadn’t placed in the competition, I know that doing the right thing gives you rewards.

*Megan J., Oregon, USA*

I’m grateful to my mom for teaching me the importance of being honest. Until that day in film class I never thought that honesty was that rare. I’m glad that I took the opportunity to share with the class what I wrote and that my mom was there to back me up. With the help of my mother, I’ve become a trustworthy person.

*Jordan P., California, USA*

## THOUGHTS ON REVELATION

**T**his Sunday I was sitting in Young Women listening to a lesson on revelations and how to get them.

Earlier that week I had been praying and asking Heavenly Father for help in being a better person and daughter. I expected a big *wow* feeling, but I never got one. I got thoughts in my head, saying, “Is that what Jesus would do?” or “Do this for your mom,” and I thought that was me thinking.

But in church I realized God doesn’t always give you a loud answer. Sitting there listening, I felt the Spirit so much—the biggest, warmest feeling ever. I almost started crying. I now know that God doesn’t talk to you loudly or publicly. Sometimes it is just a quiet answer in your mind that you should follow.

*Ashley D., Nevada, USA*

**M**ilitary life is extremely stressful and always changing. Families constantly move, change schools, and in some cases switch countries. I know how awkward it is to be in a new school and new house and how long it takes to become acquainted with a new area, just to move again a little while later. My whole life I have been a military kid. I've always moved, made new friends, and changed my daily habits. Nothing was ever the same for more than three years at a time. Keeping in touch with old friends was always in my heart, but not

## THE CHURCH IS A CONSTANT

always on paper or by phone.

Some people wonder how I was able to handle all the stress from my dad's job, but the truth is, I wouldn't have been able to do it if it wasn't for the Church. No matter where I went, I always had the Church to turn to—it's been something I can depend on. Even if the ward members, Church buildings, and ways to get to Church meetings change, the sacrament prayers are always the same. Home teaching, missionary

work, and Sunday school and Young Women lessons are all the same.

I can count on having fast Sundays the first week of the month, having Primary programs once a year, early-morning seminary every day, and Mutual in the middle of the week. All of these things have been different in each place I've lived in, but no matter what, I can go to church to learn and to worship Heavenly Father and Jesus.

Sometimes I wish I had the same house my whole life and that the members in my ward would have known me since I was in Primary, but then I think back on my life and the wonderful experiences I've had with my family. No matter where I go or where I end up in the world, the gospel will always be there, constant and unchanging.

*Christine W., Virginia, USA*

**I**nstant Messages features personal experiences, insights into favorite hymns and scriptures, and other uplifting thoughts. If you have a personal experience that has strengthened your testimony and you'd like us to consider it for Instant Messages, please send it to us by going to [newera.lds.org](http://newera.lds.org) and clicking on Submit Your Material.

You can also e-mail it to [newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org) or send it to:

*New Era*, Instant Messages

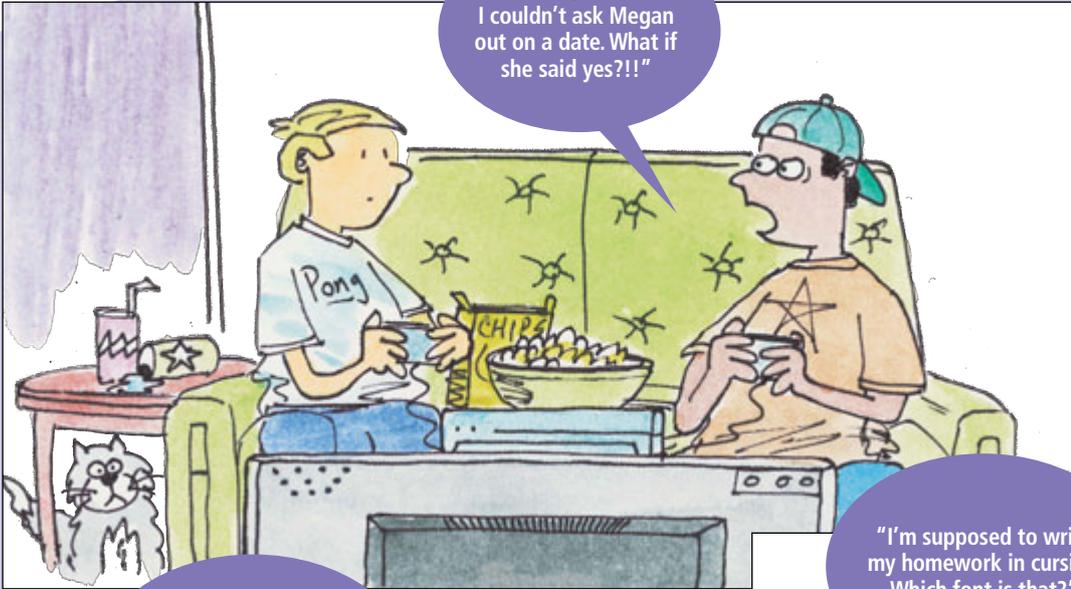
50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420

Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA

Please limit submissions to 400 words or fewer. They may be edited for length and clarity.



"Oh, no!  
I couldn't ask Megan  
out on a date. What if  
she said yes?!!"



RYAN STOKER

"I'm supposed to write  
my homework in cursive.  
Which font is that?"



RANDY GLASBERGEN

"There. I marked all my  
favorite verses . . . but now  
everything's marked."



JON CLARK

DO YOU THINK  
MISSIONARIES IN  
TAHITI LONG FOR  
DAYS IN THE SNOW?



KEVIN BECKSTROM

**NEmore**  
See a different  
Extra Smile  
online every  
week at  
[newera.lds.org](http://newera.lds.org).

**PRAYING OUR WAY TO CHURCH**

Thank you for the article "Praying Our Way to Church" (June 2010). When we are out of town on vacation my family rarely attends church. Recently I spent two weeks at a summer writing program and didn't plan on attending church while I was away. During the plane ride I came across the article and read it with great interest. I prayed to find a way to go to church that next Sunday. I found out that I had to have a permission slip to be released from the campus, but after a little persistence I was able to attend Sunday meetings.

Samantha F.

**CONQUERING THE WALL**

I liked the article "Conquering the Wall" (July 2010) because it was entertaining while teaching a lesson. It compared climbing a wall to our lives on earth. I learned from this article that we need to listen carefully to those who have more experience.

Tanner H., Nebraska

**GUIDED TO DO FIRST AID**

I enjoyed the article "Guided to Do First Aid" (Sept. 2010). When we have prepared ourselves to help others, the Lord can use us and direct us to those who need help. I have taken first aid and CPR training with the help of my friends (I have Down Syndrome). Helping others is a way we show respect and love to others and to Heavenly Father.

Joshua S., Canada

**GRATEFUL FOR THE HELP**

Recently I broke my leg in a football game, and reading the *New Era* has brightened my outlook and made life more enjoyable during these tough weeks. The magazines, along with the scriptures and prayer, have brought



*The magazines, along with the scriptures and prayer, have brought me closer to the Lord, and help me become more like Him.*

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me closer to the Lord, and help me become more like Him. Thanks for a great magazine for teens like me all around the world.

Brandyn Y., Arkansas

I am the first counselor in my deacons quorum, and recently I had to give a talk in presidency meeting. I looked at different LDS websites for a topic to write on and found the Mormonads online. I found one titled "Sharing Time" and wrote my talk on missionary work. The presidency loved it. Thank you for the magazine; it is a very good influence on my quorum.

Tim M.

*Editor's note: You can find the Mormonads online at [newera.lds.org](http://newera.lds.org).*

**IT INSPIRED ME**

The April 2010 *New Era* gave me a new perspective on dating. I'm not yet old enough to date, and this issue definitely convinced me to take a rain check. It now shocks me to find more and more people in my school who are dating before the age of 16.

Ramona

**DUTY TO GOD**

I really enjoyed the article about the new Duty to God program (Aug. 2010). I'm looking forward to using the new program because I think it will help me do better and remember the things I study.

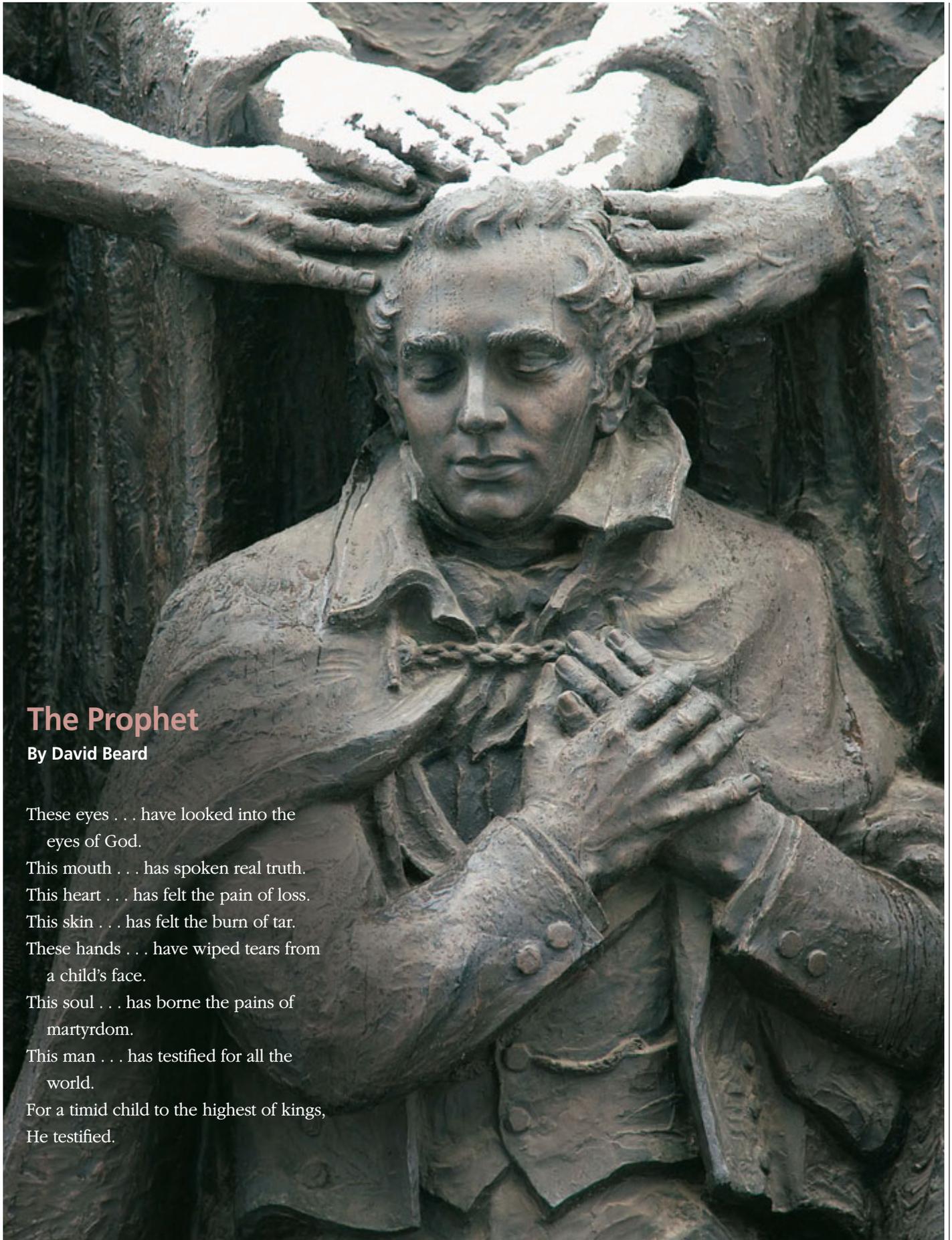
Casey B., Utah

**CHECKING THE MESSAGES**

Thank you for the story "Checking for Messages" (Oct. 2010). I especially liked the part where she said, "Turning our hearts to Him is more important than a text message."

Tristina M., Utah





## The Prophet

By David Beard

These eyes . . . have looked into the  
eyes of God.

This mouth . . . has spoken real truth.

This heart . . . has felt the pain of loss.

This skin . . . has felt the burn of tar.

These hands . . . have wiped tears from  
a child's face.

This soul . . . has borne the pains of  
martyrdom.

This man . . . has testified for all the  
world.

For a timid child to the highest of kings,  
He testified.

## WHAT'S ONLINE



***Watch for the Young Women Broadcast coming up in March.*** If you need to watch online or by satellite, be sure to set aside the time to watch the broadcast on Saturday, March 26. The meeting will be live from the Conference Center in Salt Lake City. Watch live or rebroadcast on **broadcast.lds.org**.



***Need to flex those page-turning muscles?*** Go online to the seminary website at **seminary.lds.org** and click on the scripture mastery game. You can go up against the clock and find scriptures by flipping through virtual scriptures. It can help you learn scripture mastery scriptures in a fun way. And check out the scripture mastery cards you can download and print.

***Looking for some music appropriate for Sunday listening?*** Go again to the **youth.lds.org** website and click on Music. Listen to or download the music offered on the site.

***Don't forget the New Era online.*** If you like to read past issues of the *New Era*, look through the gallery of Mormonads, look over the answers to past Q&As, and especially read the current issue of the *New Era*, go to **NewEra.lds.org** and **youth.lds.org**.

