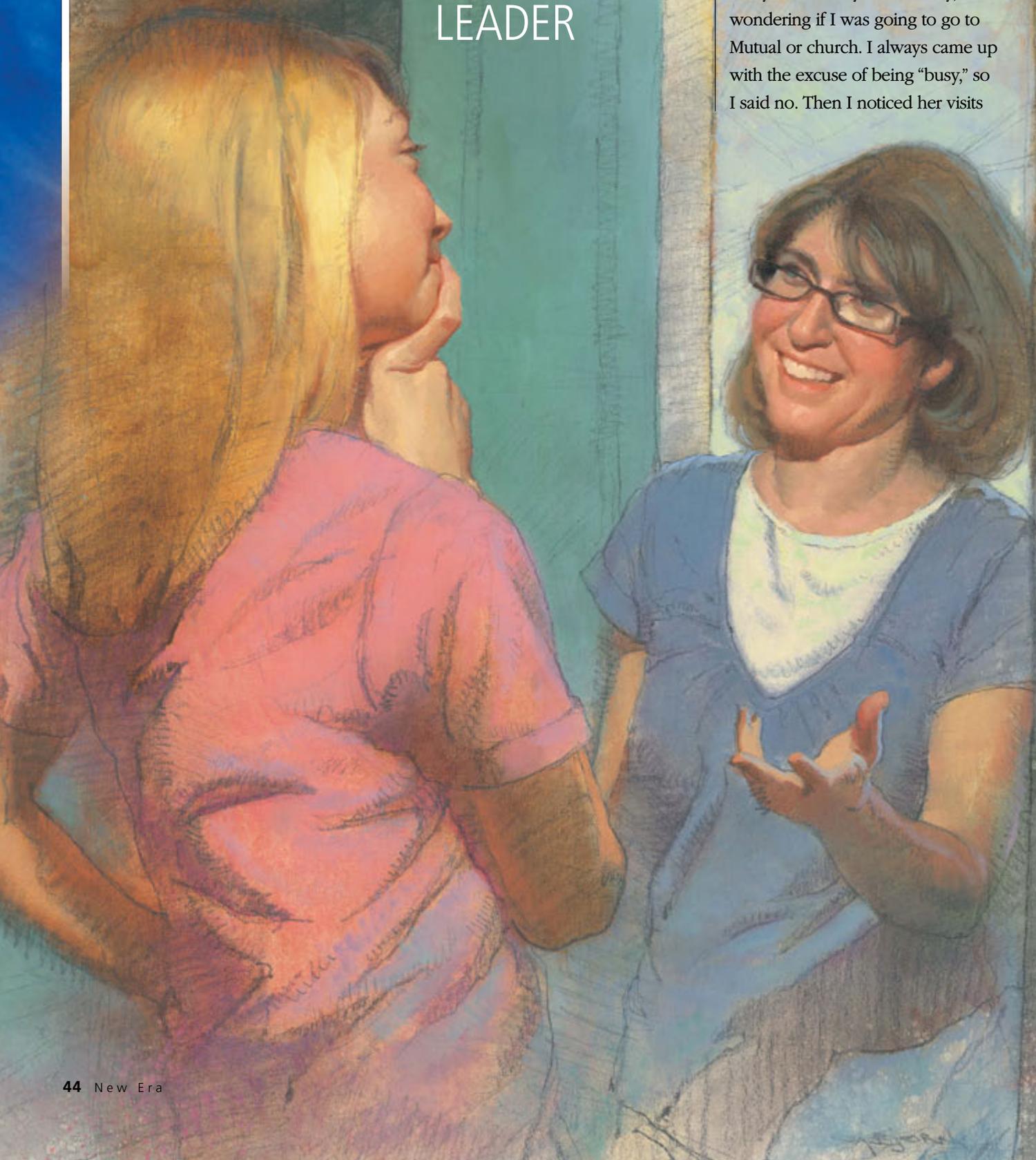


MY YOUNG WOMEN LEADER

I have a Young Women leader named Jennifer. She is my inspiration. When I was in seventh grade, she showed up at my doorstep every Wednesday and Sunday, wondering if I was going to go to Mutual or church. I always came up with the excuse of being “busy,” so I said no. Then I noticed her visits



were a repetition. She was showing up every week, so one Wednesday I decided to try going to Mutual.

When I went, I felt so loved. I just loved being there with the other young women and leaders. I went home and cried myself to sleep, I was so happy. On Sunday, Jennifer was at my door again. I said no, so she made me a deal. She said if I went to just Young Women and liked it, she would continue to take me; if not, she would keep bugging me. So I went, and I loved it.

I started getting back into the Church, and I remembered how much I loved the gospel. Jennifer has been there for me through everything. I am so glad that Heavenly Father has blessed me with my leaders, especially Jennifer. She has made such a great impact on my life. I haven't always made the right choices, but I am glad and so grateful that I have her on my side. She has motivated me to become active again. I don't know how I could ever repay her. I thank Heavenly Father that I have her in my life.

I now know how to appreciate my leaders more. I know that they are here for us and they can help us become better young women and men. That's why God blessed us with them.

Kandee F., Idaho, USA

WAS THIS CALLING A MISTAKE?

I was called to be the Mia Maid class president in my ward when I was 15. I was semi-active in the Church at the time and not living the gospel as I

visited Palmyra, New York, with my stake for youth conference in the summer of 2004.

While we were there, we visited Church history sites around Palmyra, including the Sacred Grove, as well as the Palmyra temple. We ended with a testimony meeting in the Church building at the Peter Whitmer Farm. What a testimony-building experience!

I loved standing where Joseph Smith stood. It struck me during testimony meeting that most of the sites were such small buildings that I must have stood in places that Joseph Smith stood, even if it was only for five seconds. But I also know that I don't have to stand where he stood to gain a testimony of him. My testimony of him has been strengthened while I have been alone in my own bedroom as well. But I am grateful that I was able to visit where it all began.

should have been. I didn't feel worthy for a calling like this and prayed about whether I should accept the calling or not. I had a strong feeling that I should. I thought there had to be a mistake. I accepted the calling but continued praying, asking why Heavenly Father wanted me to have this calling.

After I was released I received a letter from my Young Women leader, who told me that she had had an impression that she should tell me



WHERE HE STOOD

I especially loved the peaceful feeling when I stepped inside the Sacred Grove. It is truly a place where God and Jesus Christ have been. The peace there is much like the peace that a temple or Church building brings. It is truly the Spirit.

In the Sacred Grove we split into small groups and went off

with our leaders. They taught us about the First Vision, and we each found a quiet spot to pray. I felt a real peace when I prayed. I felt reconfirmation that the Church is true.

By the end of the youth conference, after visiting all the sites, I learned that I want to know Jesus Christ and that the only way to know Him is to constantly learn of Him and to be like Him. I am so grateful for my chance to learn these powerful lessons while visiting the spot where the Restoration began.

Rachel H., Maryland, USA

that Heavenly Father wanted me to have this calling because He wanted me to be closer to Him.

I will never forget this letter. It has increased my testimony about having a loving Heavenly Father who cares about each and every one of us, no matter what we may have done. I am grateful that my Young Women leader acted upon her impression and helped answer my prayer.

Shannon L., Utah, USA

SINGING WITH ANNIE

When a teacher recommended me to help in the special needs seminary class,

I accepted, but not without some serious doubts. My hesitations were purely selfish but were doubts nonetheless. Many questions ran through my mind: How would I interact with them? What if they didn't like me? Why did they choose me when I had such a busy schedule and wanted to enjoy my time in seminary?

I would love to say that when I went to the class for the first time, all my doubts washed away and I opened my arms to these amazing youth. But I did not. I was standoffish and gave the smallest effort possible.

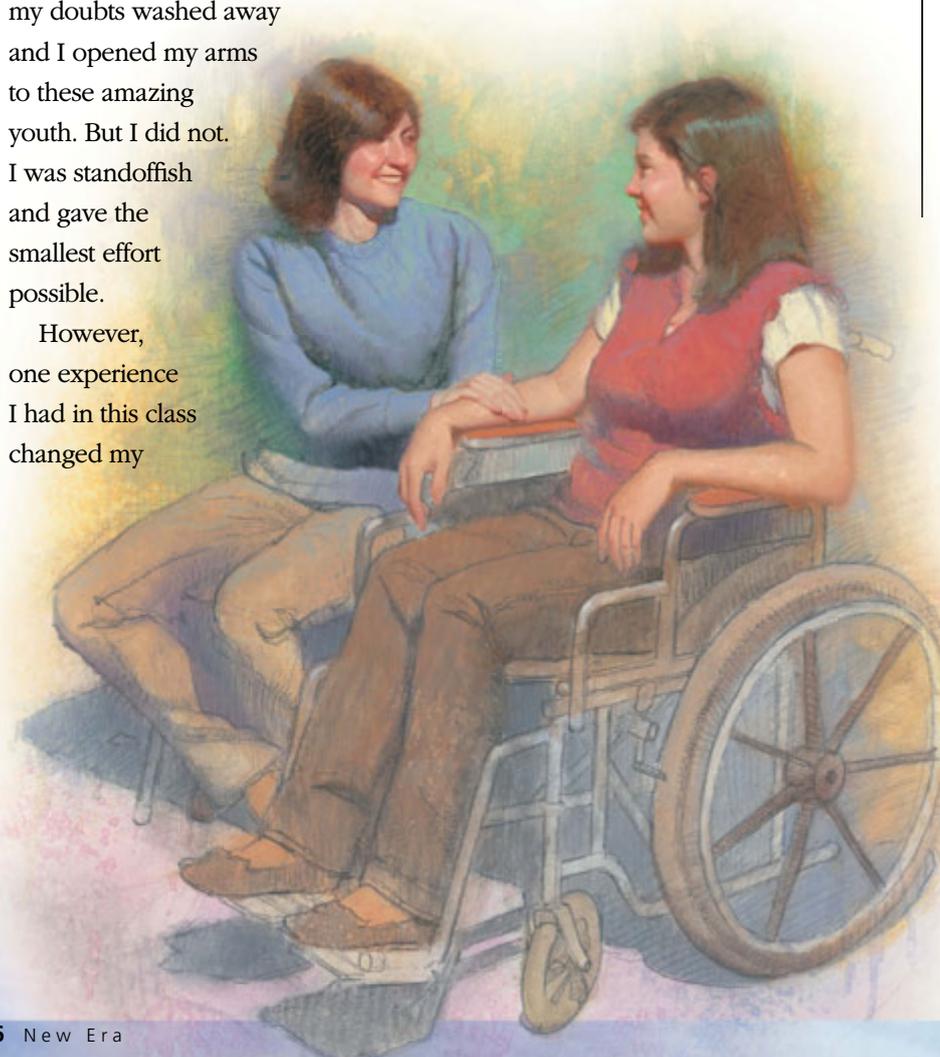
However, one experience I had in this class changed my

perspective. One day, the teacher decided to sing hymns the entire class period. I sat next to a girl named Annie who was severely autistic. She couldn't talk and could hardly even communicate through the very little sign language that she knew. The teacher told me that she loved it when people would pat out the beat of the music to her on her arm or leg, as well as sing to her. After an hour of patting her arm, my arm felt like it would soon fall off. Also, I have always known that I was not blessed with a wonderful singing voice. I get embarrassed to sing in front of other people, because I know I don't sing well. But Annie didn't care. She was so happy,

just sitting there smiling and smiling. Whenever I would stop singing or patting, she would get very agitated and start shaking or moaning. But as soon as I would start singing again, she would be right back to smiling (even if I was noticeably off-key). I felt the Spirit so strong as we sang "The Spirit of God" (*Hymns*, no. 2), and Annie smiled up at me from her wheelchair.

I would often get discouraged in that class because I was not seeing the results of my efforts come out in the students. I am extremely goal-oriented, and I expect clear results from my hard work. But this one experience showed me that if I would just forget myself, I would make a difference for these incredible people. What I wasn't aware of was that they were making a bigger impact on my life by their amazing spirits and the goodness that radiates from them.

Katie L., Utah, USA



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