

## A SECOND CHANCE

"I don't know how we're sisters. It's like we're from two different planets," I complained to my best friend as I saw my older sister walking away from me at school.

Catheryn and I were three years apart and had been best friends until she turned eight. I think she realized it wasn't cool to be friends with your little sister, and we started making new friends.

When I was 17, I moved to Orem, Utah, where Catheryn had moved for college. We seldom saw each other. She left for a semester abroad, and I was busy finishing up my senior year of high school.

When she returned, however, things began to change. She never said anything about the two of us not being friends. Everything clicked, and we began to have a real relationship. It was more than just friends; we were sisters again.

We spent the next year and a half getting to know each other. We would talk on the phone, go shopping, have dinner together, and of course we loved to share clothes. It was my dream come true.

Then in November of 2006 Catheryn and her husband, Steve, were involved in an accident at a reservoir. They were



both killed. In an instant my new best friend was gone, and I felt like a part of me was gone with her. I didn't understand why Heavenly Father would take my sister away when I was just starting to get to know her again. "If only we had more time," I thought.

Each day I prayed to understand the Lord's plan and why Catheryn had died. I didn't think I would ever feel whole again.

One night as I prayed, I felt completely surrounded by the love of God. His Spirit wrapped around me like a thick, warm quilt and filled the emptiness I had been feeling. I changed my bitter attitude to a thankful one. I was grateful Catheryn and I had become friends at all. And more than that, I was grateful to have a Father who answered my prayers and could understand exactly how I felt.

**Stacey W., Idaho, USA**

## THANKS— I NEEDED THAT

All my life I've had difficulty adjusting to new places and making new friends. A few years ago, my family and I moved. After being in our new home for only a couple of days, we rose early to attend church on Sunday. I didn't know a soul, but a few girls from Young Women came up and greeted me. Everyone was very friendly that first Sunday, but I still felt a twinge of loneliness and longing for my old friends.

A couple of months later, I prepared to go to girls' camp. The first few days were filled with physical, mental, and

## A SIMPLE EXAMPLE

I was taught a powerful lesson about the influence of setting an example. I strive to read my scriptures each night before I go to sleep. At times, I do well studying and feeling of the Spirit. Other times I barely read a few verses with sleepy eyes before setting my scriptures back on the nightstand and dropping off to sleep. Although my study is not perfect, I try to remain consistent in my goal to read every night.

One afternoon I had had a difficult day at school. I came home grumpy and discouraged. After I kicked off my shoes, my eyes fell to my nightstand. I scooped up my scriptures and settled into my bed, eager for some needed comfort. As I opened the pages, a paper fell to my lap. I discovered it was a letter.

The letter began with an apology for intruding. The writer explained that he had been playing with my brother when strangely, in the middle of the day, my alarm went off. After the blaring alarm did not

spiritual activities that drew me away from my personal worries as I enjoyed myself. But sitting on my bunk during a break time, I felt the strain brim over, and I quietly cried. I didn't understand why we had had to move and break away from all that was familiar to me.

After we shared our testimonies while munching on s'mores by the fire that night, I went up to the cabin with all the other girls to go to bed. As I came to the door, a tall Laurel turned

automatically turn off, the writer had entered my room and switched it off. He had seen my scriptures sitting next to the alarm. He wrote that he was impressed by my example because my scriptures were out and ready to use while his lay forgotten somewhere in his closet. He was so moved that he began to read again and expressed his gratitude for my example.

On that discouraging day the kind note reminded me of the quiet influence I can be on others. I realized that if he had not thought to write this note I would never have known that I had been an influence in someone's life. It taught me that each of us can be a powerful example in our simple daily actions.

**Jessica B., Utah, USA**



around and said kindly, "Let's have a good-night hug!" As I embraced her, I could feel tears welling up inside me again, but they weren't tears of self-pity. They were tears of appreciation and gratitude. She cheerfully said good night and left, but the feeling she'd brought with her stayed. I can still feel it now, three years later. I just want to say, "Thank you immensely, and may the Lord bless you!"

**Noelle-Marie S., Colorado, USA**

## BEST LESSON

**W**hen I was 16 years old, I had been attending church regularly for almost a year, but I was not a member of the Church yet. I really enjoyed going with my friends. However, my parents did not have kind feelings toward the Church or my attendance. This fear that I would join the Church led my family to decide that moving across the country from Arizona to North Carolina would be best. I was really upset, and I did not want to leave, but I had little choice in the matter.

On my last Sunday in Arizona the leaders knew that I was leaving and decided to have a testimony meeting just for us boys. It was amazing for me to hear the testimonies of my closest friends and others in this meeting.

I could feel the Spirit so strongly I could almost touch it. As the boys took their turns bearing their testimony, I could not stop myself from standing.

I bore a simple but heartfelt testimony that I knew the Church was true and that Jesus is my Savior. I had never borne my testimony before, but as the words came out of my mouth, I realized how much I knew they were true. As 16-year-old youth, it was hard for any of us to show our feelings, but

I know that I was not the only one a little choked up. I felt so good, and it was a feeling of eternal joy. I was home. It was at that meeting that I knew that I would join myself with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. My whole conversion process can point to this one moment as the turning point.

I am so glad I had this lesson, because despite all my prayers, my family and I moved to North Carolina. I had hope, for I knew that just because I was moving away from my friends, I was not moving away from the Lord. The simple testimony I had gained carried me through my time in North Carolina, even though I was no longer allowed to attend church during our time there. When my family moved back, my parents' hearts were softened a little, and I was allowed to attend Church meetings again. On my 18th birthday, I was baptized, thanks in part to a lesson on testimony.

*Paul J., Arizona, USA*

