

SHE'S *my* SISTER?

What was I supposed to do when I couldn't get along with my teacher?

By Nettie Hunsaker Francis

I was in the ninth grade. I had friends, and I was on the yearbook staff. Things were going my way. Everything except gym class. My problem wasn't exactly the class—it was the teacher. She was new, just graduated from college. She was strict and never smiled. It wasn't that I didn't try during class; it was just that my athletic ability wasn't the greatest.

I remember the day we practiced basketball layups. The gym teacher taught us how to place our feet and shoot the ball. I tried to follow her directions, but my ball just wouldn't go into the basket. She growled at me.

Another day we played dodgeball. When the ball hit me squarely in the shin, she yelled at me. I felt humiliated and upset. I started to dread gym class because I was afraid I would be yelled at in front of everyone. I wanted to place the blame on her. But one day I had a realization that changed everything.

I was sitting in line waiting for roll call. I watched my teacher

moving up and down the line, marking her clipboard as she checked our gym uniforms. Suddenly, a thought occurred to me: "She's your sister!"

"My sister?" I thought. How could that be? I wouldn't claim her for all the world. But the thought came again: "She's your sister." And then it occurred to me. She *is* my sister. We are spirit sisters. We have the same Heavenly Father. We both chose to follow the Savior in the pre-mortal world. We are both here on earth to gain a body and learn and grow. This realization was startling. It was as if someone had slipped a pair of spiritual glasses over my eyes. I began to see my gym teacher with a whole new perspective. She is a child of God.

I started to smile at the thought. What if we had actually been friends in the premortal existence? What if she had tried to teach me basketball there and we had laughed together?

I watched her make her way down the line. Soon she was in front of me, marking her chart. I couldn't help but smile at her in a genuine, friendly way. She seemed a little shocked at my new friendliness.

The rest of the class period I thought about what I had

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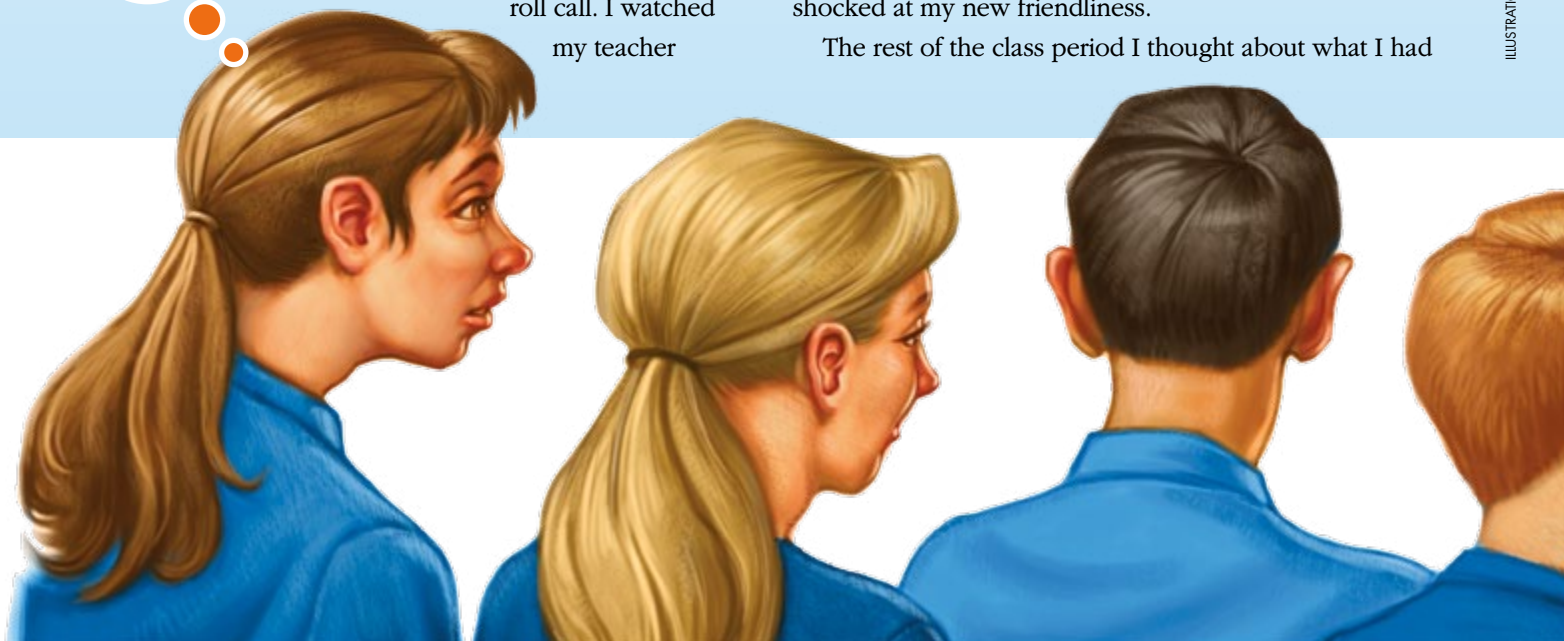


ILLUSTRATION BY GREG NEWBOLD

An Idea for Getting Along

Is there anyone you're having a hard time getting along with? Consider writing down some of their positive traits, and see how it can help change your perspective.

discovered. If she really were my sister, I would want her to be successful as a teacher. Maybe there were some things I could do to make her day go better. To begin with, I could change my attitude.

The next day as I entered the gymnasium and looked at my teacher, the old distasteful feeling started to come back. "Wait," I thought. "That's your sister over there. Love her."

I confidently went and sat in line. Throughout the class I tried to listen respectfully and show real interest in what she was saying. No matter what my teacher did or said to me, I appreciated her. Soon I felt genuine friendship toward her.

She must have sensed my change of attitude because she actually smiled at me a few times. I knew she could tell that I was sincere in my efforts. The rest of the semester went smoothly, and by the end of the year I had even earned an A. But the miracle of the class was not my grade; it was my change of heart.

Now sometimes when I find myself feeling dislike toward someone, I stop and mentally slip on my spiritual glasses. I try to remember that we are all brothers and

sisters. My corrected vision makes all the difference. I can reach out in love to people I would otherwise turn away from. After all, that's what we are here to learn—how to love one another. And that's much more important than an A in gym class. **NE**

