

ONE WORD AT A TIME

With the help of his quorum, he learned the sacrament prayers . . .

BY TIMOTHY M. WILSON

Everyone looks forward to turning 16, and Evan Wilson was no different. He especially looked forward to the honor and duties that go with being a priest in the Medicine Lake Ward of the Minneapolis Minnesota Stake.

Evan, however, is not your average quorum member. Yes, he plays football, wrestles, and runs track for the junior varsity teams at the local high school. He sings in choir, is an Eagle Scout, and goes to the stake dances. Evan also has Down syndrome. He served faithfully as a deacon in the Aaronic Priesthood, always taking the same position when passing the sacrament because a routine brought comfort and success. He was solemn and respectful while passing the sacrament. Evan was equally successful in the responsibilities of a teacher.

For months before his 16th birthday, Evan practiced reading the sacrament prayers aloud with his family. Evan is not a strong reader or a particularly articulate speaker, and he needed the practice. He turned 16 and became a member of the priests quorum, attended quorum meetings, hung out with the priests, and assisted with the sacrament by distributing and collecting the sacrament trays. But offering the sacrament prayers

seemed beyond his grasp. He had the prayers memorized, but he rushed, resulting in slurred pronunciation. He was not yet ready to pray before the congregation.

One day Jeff Clark, the priests quorum first assistant, shared an inspired idea with the bishop: help Evan say the prayers more slowly and clearly by using a simple flip-chart. He suggested breaking down the sacrament prayers to one word per page. Evan's basic skills allowed him to read one word at a time, and through practice and pacing (which the flip-chart controlled), the words became more distinguishable. With practice, more reading aloud, more patience, and more prayer, Evan was ready.

Finally, the eagerly-awaited Sunday arrived when Evan would bless the water for the first time. A loving, patient bishop came down from the stand and knelt next to him. While the bishop flipped the cards, Evan painstakingly pronounced the prayer word-by-word, page-by-page, with the bishop's support and approval.

Many were moved while this special young priest uttered his first sacrament prayer. A quorum presidency had demonstrated the reality of modern revelation and what can happen when they acted upon that inspiration. They were given what President Thomas S. Monson called the "privilege to lift" those whom they were called to serve (see "Our Sacred Priesthood Trust," *Ensign*, May 2006, 57). **NE**

