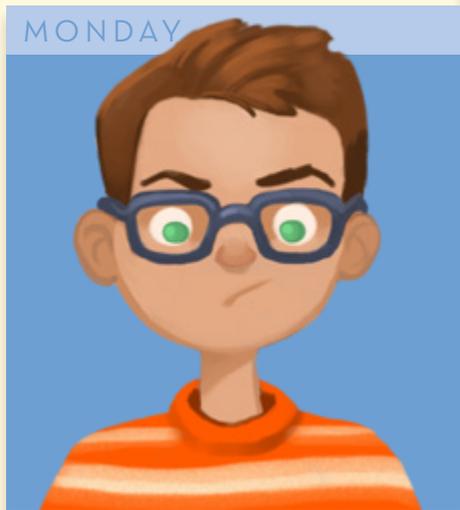


The NEXT Level



By Alex Masterson

(Based on a true story)

“The Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world, that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit” (D&C 84:46).

Max’s family visited the temple grounds every week. He always brought his video game with him.

Otherwise it would be too boring to just walk around. On the way home, Max’s sisters joked and giggled beside him in the car, but he didn’t hear them. He was too focused on his game.

When they all got home, Max walked inside. He was so proud of himself. He didn’t even have to look up to make it to the living room. So much gaming must have made his brain bigger.

“Max, how did you like the temple?” Mom asked. He didn’t answer.

“Max!” she said a little louder. He jumped. He hadn’t seen her sit down next to him.

“Did you like the temple?” Mom asked again.

“It was nice,” he said. His eyes moved back to the game.

“Did you feel anything special?” she asked.

Max sighed and paused the game. Couldn’t she see he was busy?

“I don’t know, Mom. I guess it was all pretty special,” he said with a grin.

Mom didn’t smile back. “Max, I’m a little worried. It seems like you’re playing that thing more and more.”

“Mom, I’m fine,” Max said. “I’m just having fun. I can stop anytime.”

“Oh, really?” Mom said. Now she was smiling. “How about you stop playing your games for a week? And maybe when we go to the temple you’ll be surprised.”

A whole week! What would he do? He worried about giving up his games, but he loved Mom and thought he could give it a try.

Max sighed. “OK. I’ll do it.”

Mom gave Max a big hug. Max looked at his game and frowned. What had he gotten himself into?

The first two days were the worst because all he could think about was his game. He was so bored that even cleaning sounded good. So he did all his chores, and since he had more time before dinner, he did his sisters’ chores too.

After dinner, Max helped with the dishes. Then he thought of something else to do.

“Hey, Dad, wanna play catch?”

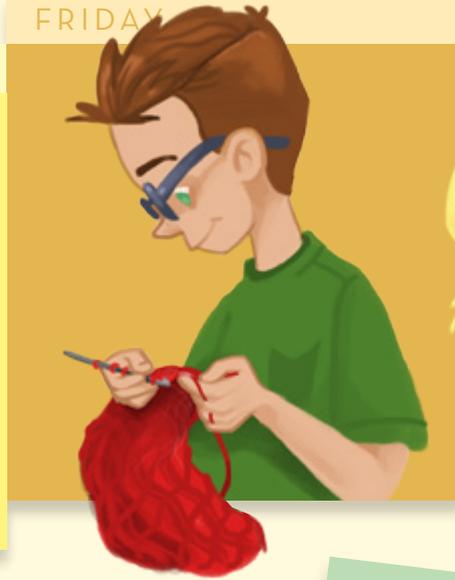
Dad smiled. “I’d love to! It’s been too long. Grab your mitt.”

Max went to bed feeling happy. He usually played video games until he fell asleep, but tonight he didn’t even want to. He thought of what he was going to do tomorrow. It

THURSDAY



FRIDAY



SATURDAY



SUNDAY



seemed like he had so much more time now.

The week raced by. Max spent time with his family, helped his sisters, read the scriptures, and even started learning how to crochet! He had to admit that using his time differently felt pretty good.

Soon the day of the temple trip came. Max had totally forgotten what Mom had said about a surprise. He was just excited to spend time with his family.

The sun was setting as Max's family walked around the temple grounds. The sky was red, orange, and yellow. Max felt something special as he watched the light shine on the temple windows. *This is what it must feel like to live with Heavenly Father*, he thought.

Max knew he was feeling the Spirit. He thought about how serving and spending time with other people made him feel happier than always playing his games did. He felt closer to Heavenly Father too.

Mom walked up beside him. "What are you thinking?"

Max looked up at the Angel Moroni glowing gold in the sunset. "That this is even better than video games."

Mom wrapped her arm around his shoulders. "Surprise," she said.

Max just smiled. ◆

The author lives in Utah, USA.



I was playing on my dad's phone before a baptism. When I heard the music start, I turned the phone off and listened to the music.

Paige J., age 8, Oregon, USA



I Have a Question!



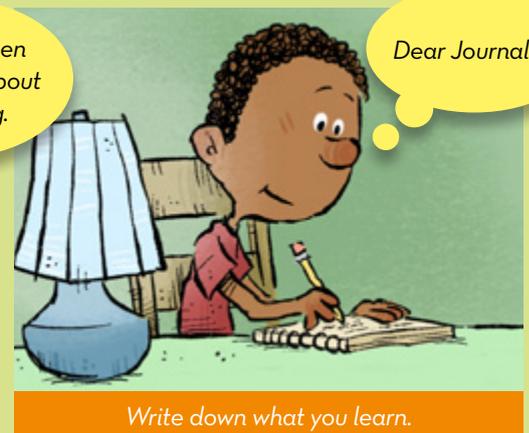
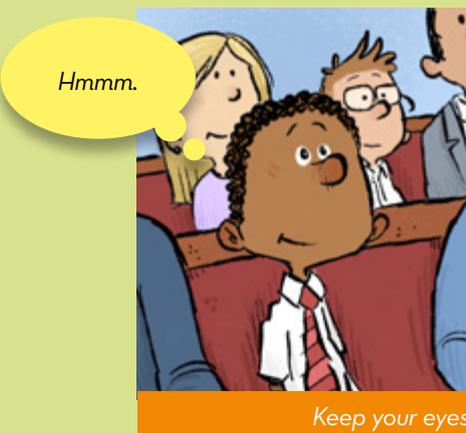
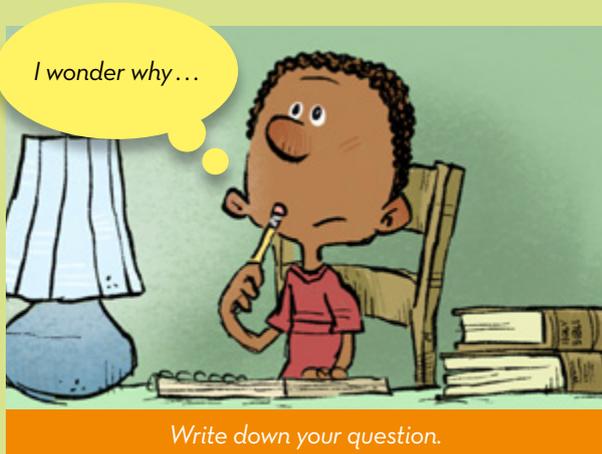
Joseph Smith had some big questions when he was 14. He was worried about the problems in the world around him and about his own sins. He also wondered where he could find a church like the one he read about in the New Testament.

Where do you find answers when you have a question about life or the gospel? Put a check mark by each place you look:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mom or Dad ★ | <input type="checkbox"/> Online ★ | <input type="checkbox"/> Church lessons and talks ★ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer ★ | <input type="checkbox"/> Videos ★ | <input type="checkbox"/> Schoolteachers ★ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scriptures ★ | <input type="checkbox"/> Hymns or Primary songs ★ | <input type="checkbox"/> General conference ★ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friends ★ | <input type="checkbox"/> TV commercials or magazine ads ★ | <input type="checkbox"/> Bishop or Primary leader ★ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TV shows ★ | <input type="checkbox"/> School or library books ★ | <input type="checkbox"/> The Friend ★ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grandparents ★ | | |

Which places do you trust the most? Color the star by the ones you think are the most trustworthy. If your checkmarks and stars don't match up, think about where you're looking for answers.

Journaling Answers Writing in a journal can help you figure out answers about life and the gospel!



Keep listening and learning! You'll find more answers to your questions.

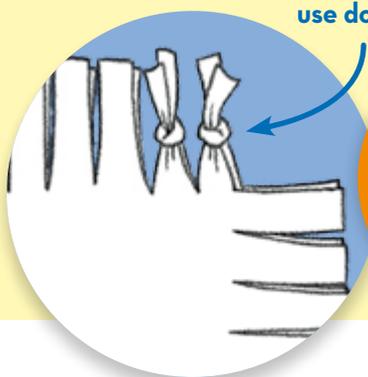
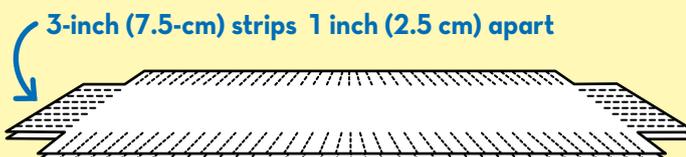
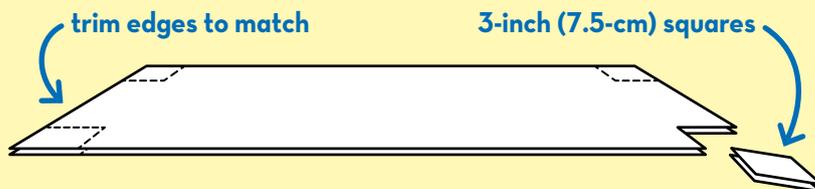
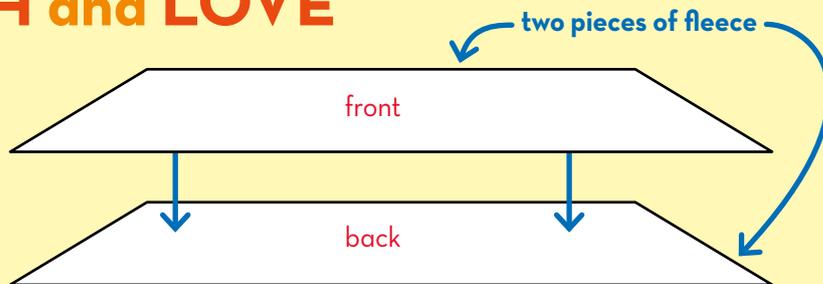
Sharing WARMTH and LOVE

Have you met Brooks on page 14? He raised money to help refugees. Make this no-sew blanket to donate or give to a friend!

OTHER STUFF TO DONATE



Check with humanitarian centers near you to see what they need.



use double knots to tie

TIP:
Tie the knots as close to the middle of the strips as you can.

Scrumptious SALSA

Make your own salsa just like Brooks did! Have an adult help.



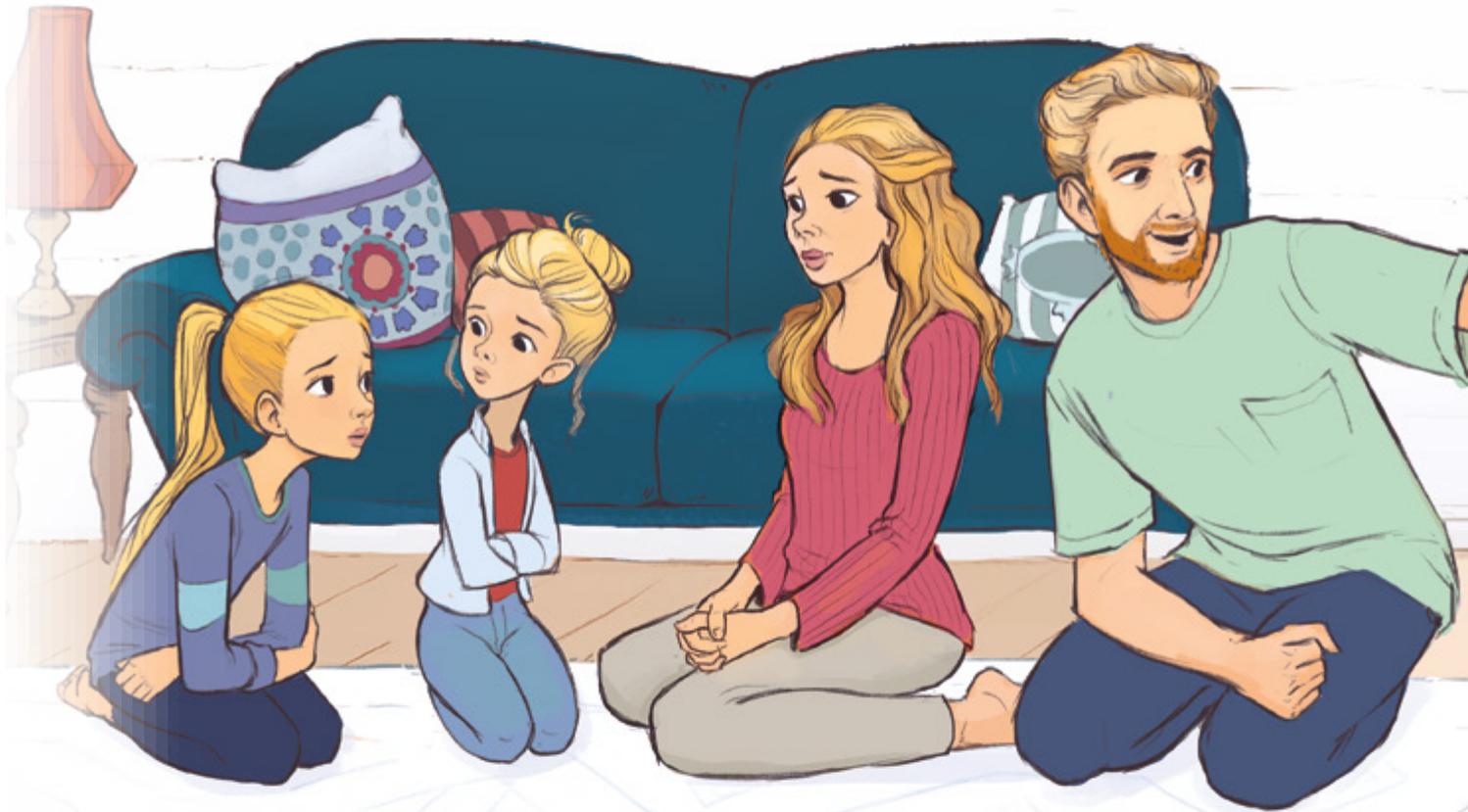
For basic salsa use chopped tomatoes, onions, cilantro, and peppers (depending on how spicy you like it). Get creative! Add mango, pineapple, avocado, corn, melon, or whatever! Try a fruit-only salsa and enjoy it with graham crackers or cinnamon chips.

TIP: For chunky salsa, just mix the chopped ingredients. For smoother salsa, use a blender or food processor.

Don't Forget to Pray for Erik

By Julie Cornelius-Huang

(Based on a true story)



“Ev’ry soul is free to choose his life and what he’ll be”
(Hymns, no. 240).

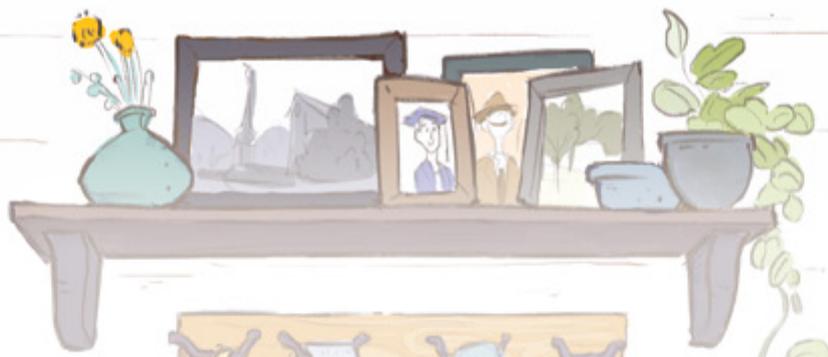
Kari’s family knelt by the couch for family prayer. Everyone reverently folded their arms. Papa asked Kari’s little sister, Liv, to pray.

“Don’t forget to thank Heavenly Father for our *many* blessings,” Papa reminded her.

“And don’t forget to pray for Erik,” Mama added. Mama always reminded them to pray for Erik.

Erik was Kari’s older brother. Before he left for university, he and Kari were best friends. She really missed all the fun things they used to do together.

Then a few months ago, Erik told Mama and Papa that he didn’t want to be a member of the Church anymore.



Kari and her family were surprised and sad. They started praying for Erik every night. Sometimes they prayed that he would feel the Holy Ghost and want to go back to church. Papa prayed that Erik's mind would be clear to make good choices. Mama often prayed that somebody he trusted could help him find the right path. After all of their prayers, Kari couldn't help feeling a little angry. Why hadn't Heavenly Father brought Erik back to church?

Finally, just as Liv had opened her mouth to pray, Kari couldn't hold it in anymore. "Why hasn't Heavenly Father answered our prayers?" she blurted out. Everyone looked at Kari in surprise, but she was too upset to care. For a minute nobody said anything.

"Kari," said Papa, "when you got home from school

had to do with anything. Wasn't Papa taking her question seriously?"

"I know that when we pray for Erik, Heavenly Father does answer our prayers—every time. The problem is that Erik may not be listening right now. Erik gets to choose whether he listens to the Holy Ghost, just like you choose whether to listen to Mama about your backpack. But do you think that you will *always* ignore Mama when she asks you to hang up your backpack?"

"No, I guess not," said Kari.

"Someday she'll listen!" Mama said, winking at Kari. Kari smiled.

"So maybe someday Erik will listen too?" Kari asked.

"Absolutely," said Mama. "Listening to the Holy Ghost is a skill you have to develop. Maybe Erik hasn't learned that skill yet." Kari began to feel a little better.

They all bowed their heads while Liv said the prayer. She prayed that Erik would learn to listen to the Holy Ghost. While Liv was praying, Kari felt peaceful and warm. She knew that Heavenly Father was hearing their prayers. As Liv listed some of the ways their family had been blessed, Kari thought of another blessing to add to the list—she understood more about prayer now!

As the prayer ended, Kari knew that Heavenly Father hadn't forgotten Erik. And Heavenly Father would never forget her either. ◆

The author lives in Nevada, USA.

today, did you put your backpack away?"

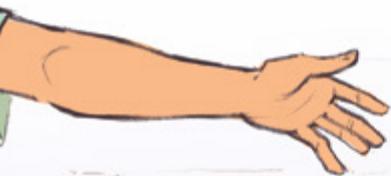
"Huh?" Kari asked, confused. What did her backpack have to do with anything? She glanced at the front door and saw her backpack thrown against the wall instead of hung up beside Liv's. "No . . . sorry,"

"Didn't Mama remind you to hang it up?"

"Yes," Kari answered. She looked down at her knees.

"Doesn't Mama often remind you to hang up your backpack?"

"Yes," Kari muttered. She still didn't know what this

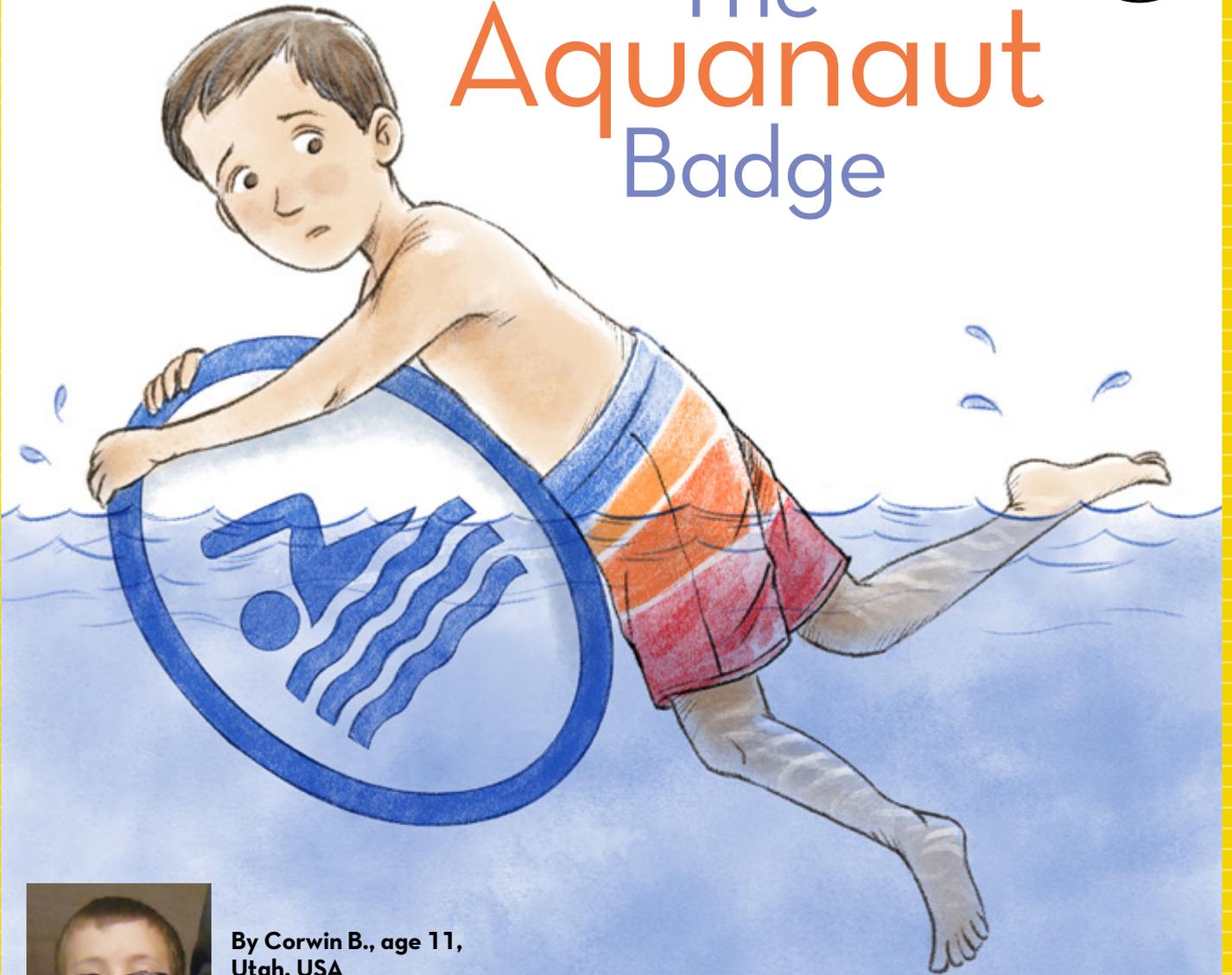


WHAT IS AGENCY?

Agency is a gift Heavenly Father has given to everyone. It is the gift to choose what we will do. Heavenly Father helps us, but He doesn't force us to do things. Instead, He lets us choose for ourselves.



The Aquanaut Badge



**By Corwin B., age 11,
Utah, USA**

Last year I was a Webelos Scout. When you're in Webelos you try to get your Webelos badge and Arrow of Light. To earn them you have to get a certain number of activity badges. When I looked through the book of activity badges I saw a lot that looked fun. But then I saw one badge that I was afraid of: the Aquanaut badge. I was scared of it because I didn't know how to swim. I thought I would sink. I decided not to try it.

Then my dad became my leader. He encouraged me to try to earn all of the activity badges. I was still scared of the Aquanaut badge. But I decided I'd earn all of them.

Dad said having faith in Heavenly Father would help me. We read [3 Nephi 18:20](#), which says, "And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you."

I prayed every day that Heavenly Father would help me be brave so that I could learn to swim. I did my part by practicing. I would exercise at home to strengthen my muscles, and my dad would take me swimming. Then I finally felt ready to pass it off. I said a prayer for help. Before I knew it, I had done it! After I was done, I gave a prayer of thanks to Heavenly Father.

I know Heavenly Father listens to my prayers. ♦

Building a Temple

By Amie Jane Leavitt

After the place to build a temple is chosen, there's a groundbreaking ceremony. A General Authority says a special prayer to bless the site and dedicate it, or set it aside, for the temple. Then the General Authority invites others to join him as they use gold- or silver-painted shovels to "break the ground."



Join us each month to see how the Payson Utah Temple was built!

At the groundbreaking, Elder Dallin H. Oaks invited all of the new deacons to come up and break the soil.



FUNSTUFF ANSWERS

Page 19: prophet, c; miracle, e; obedient, b; testimony, a; disciple, d
Page 31: the letter w



HIDDEN CTR RINGS

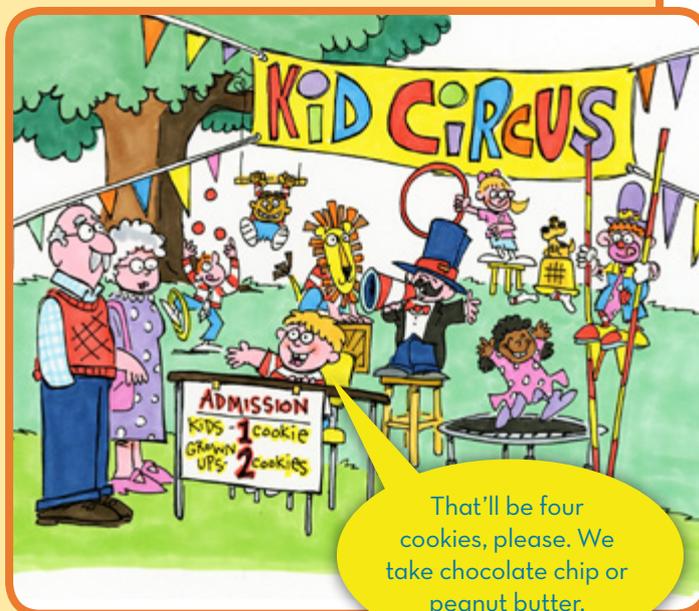
Did you find the rings?
 Look on pages FJ3, 8, and 16.

How to Write to the Friend

To send us a letter, drawing, poem, or paper heart...

1. Fill out the form below and send it in with your story or artwork.
2. Send a school picture or other high-resolution photo.
3. We might edit your submission for length or clarity, and we can't return it to you.
4. You must be at least three years old.

The Last Laugh



That'll be four cookies, please. We take chocolate chip or peanut butter.

Please send your submission to:

Friend Magazine
 50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2393
 Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024
 Or email: friend@ldschurch.org

May the Friend contact you with a survey?

Yes No

The following information and permission must be included:

First and last name

Age Boy/Girl State/Province, Country

I give my permission to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to use my child's submission and photo on the Church websites and social media platforms as well as for Church reports, print products, video, publications, and training materials.

Signature of parent or legal guardian

Email of parent or legal guardian