



**By David Dickson**  
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(Based on a true story)

*"I have a family here on earth. They are so good to me"* (Children's Songbook, 188).

Patrick watched the other boys from his ward laugh together as they hiked the trail. He tried not to frown. They were still ignoring him.

Patrick didn't understand. Normally, he got along with the other kids in the ward. Especially Brett and Tyson. But two days before the trip, Marcus started telling the other boys that they shouldn't hang out with Patrick any more. That was all it took. Suddenly nobody would talk to him no matter how hard he tried.

This was going to be the worst camping trip ever.

Tall pine trees grew so close together on both sides of the trail that Patrick could barely see the blue sky above. They were way up in the mountains with no houses anywhere. Even better, they were headed to a lake full of fish. But Patrick didn't care. What was the fun of going camping with kids who didn't want to be around him?

"Something wrong?" Dad called. "Normally you're at the head of the pack."

Patrick turned around. Dad wasn't far behind. He was walking with the other adults and using his favorite walking stick. Dad had volunteered to come as one of the leaders.

"No," Patrick said. "I'm fine. I just . . . want to walk a little slower today. That's all."

Dad glanced up the trail at the rest of the boys. Patrick squirmed. Did Dad realize the other kids didn't want to be around him?

Dad nodded his head slowly. Then he flashed a big

# MY DAD, My Friend

smile and took a few quick steps to catch up to Patrick. "Sounds good to me," Dad said. "Sometimes I like walking a little slower too. Let's walk together." Dad reached into his pocket and pulled out a granola bar. "Hey, how about a snack?"

"My favorite!" Patrick said. "Thanks!"  
"Any time, buddy. I think I'll have one too."

ILLUSTRATION BY MATT SMITH

They walked together for a few minutes without talking, each of them munching on a granola bar.

"Look at that!" Dad pointed up in the trees as they rounded the next bend in the trail. "I think it's an eagle in its nest."

Patrick stretched his neck to see. "Wow!"  
They started talking about eagles. Dad knew so much

## QUESTION FOR YOU

**What can you do to get ready to be a good mom or dad one day?**

about nature. Afterward, Dad kept pointing out other cool things along the trail. He even told Patrick a knock-knock joke he hadn't heard before. Patrick laughed out loud. Then Patrick told Dad some jokes of his own. Dad chuckled every time.

By the time they got to the lake, Patrick was feeling better. But then his shoulders slumped when he saw the other boys run off to the far side of the lake with their fishing poles. They never even looked in his direction. He wanted to cry.

"You know, Patrick," Dad said in a quiet voice. "I'm glad we're here together. I sure love spending time with my special friend."

Patrick turned away from the other boys and faced his dad. Dad reached down and squeezed his shoulder. "You up for a little fishing?"

Suddenly Patrick didn't mind so much that it was just the two of them on this side of the lake. He grinned. "Yeah! Let's try that spot over there!"

Before long Patrick and Dad were laughing and having a great time together. They even caught a few fish, but that wasn't the luckiest part of the day for Patrick. The luckiest part was having such a great dad as his friend. ♦



"There is no other relationship quite like that which can and should exist between a boy and his dad."<sup>1</sup>

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles