

.....WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MEMBER

By Tina Dean
(Based on a true story)

"I belong to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (Children's Songbook, 77).

Your turn!" Monica said to Kami.

Kami listened to the beat of the ropes hitting the pavement.

"One, two, one, two, *annnnnd* jump!"

Kami leaped between the ropes, raising one foot and then the other. Double Dutch was one of her favorite things to do during recess.

"Hey, Kami!"

Kami turned around to see her friend, Chelsea, waving her over.

"Hey! I was wondering where you were," Kami said with a grin. But her smile faded when she saw Chelsea's face. Her friend looked sad.

"Can you come here really quick?"

"Yeah! What's wrong?" Kami asked, jogging over.

Chelsea took a deep breath and stared at her shoes. "I just wanted to let you know I can't come over after school today. My mom said we can't spend so much time together."

"What? Why?"

"Um . . . 'cause you're Mormon."

Kami felt her mouth fall open. She didn't know what to say. Chelsea had been coming over to Kami's house a lot lately to work on school projects.

"My mom's worried I might learn some things from you that our family doesn't agree with," Chelsea said.

Kami felt like she was frozen in place.

"I guess I'd better go," Chelsea said and walked away.

Kami sat down and picked at the grass for the rest of recess. When she got home, she told Mom what happened.

"Is there something wrong with being Mormon?" Kami asked.



Mom paused for a minute. "Do *you* think there's something wrong with being Mormon?"

Kami thought about it. "No. I mean, we believe in following Jesus and helping others. How can Chelsea's parents not like that?"

"Well, I think sometimes people don't understand what we believe," Mom said. "They don't know what it means to be a member of the Church."

What does it mean to be a member of the Church? Kami thought as she drifted off to sleep that night.

The next day was a field trip, and her whole class was excited as they stood in line in front of the bus.

Kami groaned when she heard the seating assignments. She wanted to sit by Monica, and instead she had to sit by her teacher in the front seat! But soon

Mrs. Weir started talking to her, and Kami's bad mood didn't last long.

"I've noticed that many of the children in my classes who are Mormon are good students," Mrs. Weir said. Kami blinked in surprise. She had expected her teacher to talk about school stuff, not this. "Will you tell me a little about your religion?"

Kami told Mrs. Weir the full name of the Church. She told her about when she was baptized and about going to Primary. Mrs. Weir had a few questions about what Kami could eat and drink and what she believed about God. Kami did her best to answer. She even remembered some lines from the article of faith she was memorizing.

Later that afternoon Kami ran through her front door, excited to tell Mom all about the conversation.

"I'm proud of you, Kami!"

Mom said. "And guess what? By being a good example, you're helping Mrs. Weir learn something really important. Do you know what?"

Kami smiled and nodded. Chelsea's mom didn't know it yet, but Kami's teacher was noticing.

"I'm teaching her what it means to be a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints!" ♦

The author lives in Utah, USA.

What could Kami and her teacher have to talk about?



Part of being a member means being kind to everyone.

No matter what they believe!