

Young Women STRONG!

By Jan Pinborough
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(Based on a true story)

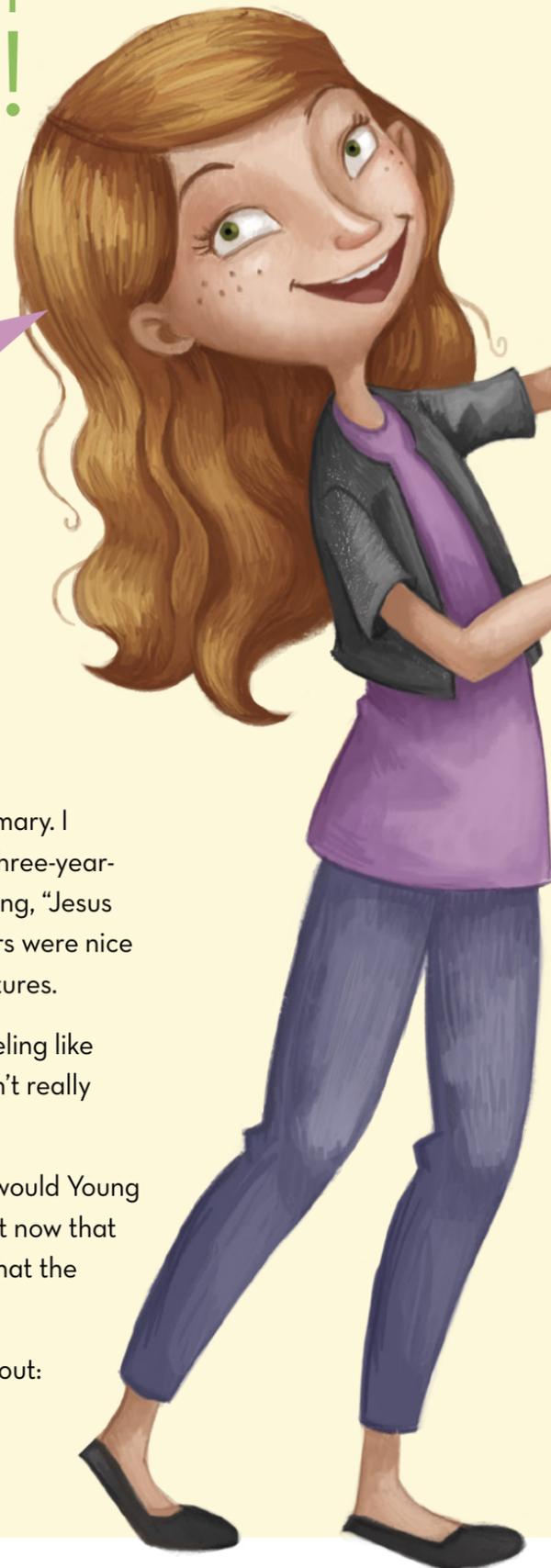
My name is Maya, and I just started Young Women.

Don't get me wrong. I really liked Primary. I mean, what's more fun than watching three-year-olds pop out of their seats when they sing, "Jesus wants me for a Sun-beam"? My teachers were nice too, and I learned a lot about the scriptures.

Then before I turned 12, I started feeling like I was ready for *more*. More what? I didn't really know. But I was excited to find out.

OK, I was a little nervous too. What would Young Women be like? Who would I sit by? But now that I've moved on, I think I've figured out what the *more* is.

I'm kind of a word nerd, so I'll spell it out:



S is for *sisters and stand*:

Usually I'm pretty shy. But at New Beginnings the older girls sang a song about friendship. Then they each invited a new Beehive to come up and sing with them. They treated us sort of like younger sisters. So now when a new girl joins our class, I try to forget my shyness because I know it's my turn to do the welcoming. After all, we're **sisters**!

Every Sunday we all **stand** up and say the Young Women theme. There's one part that says, "We will 'stand as witnesses of God at *all* times and in *all* things, and in *all* places.'" Sometimes when middle school is hard, I think about those three *alls*, and it helps me be brave.

T is for *temple*:

Going to the **temple** to do baptisms for my ancestors is the best! It feels peaceful and happy—sort of like you're all filled up with light. I want to go there for my endowment when I get older. It's one of my life goals.

R is for *recommend and reading*:

When you turn 12, CTR still stands for "choose the right," but it can also stand for "current temple **recommend**." When we follow the standards in For the Strength of Youth, we can stay strong and safe. And we can have a temple recommend!

Reading the Book of Mormon is one of our big goals in Personal Progress. I'm thinking about going on a mission when I'm older, and it's helping me prepare.

E is for *eight*:

There are **eight** Young Women values. They help us think about what kind of person we want to be. My favorite one is Divine Nature. That means I have Heavenly Parents and I can become like Them. That's an awesome thought!

N is for *nature*:

Before girls' camp I'd never hiked at midnight. Or watched a raccoon eat leftovers we forgot to put away. Being away from home and learning **nature** skills helped me feel more confident. I didn't even mind not having my cell phone.

G is for *goals*:

It's not easy keeping track of all the things I want to do. I want to be a writer. Or a doctor. Or an archeologist. Every year we have a special night when we display things we've done for our Personal Progress **goals**. Last year our theme was "Your Heroines." I decided to dress up like my mom. I don't think she knew she was one of my heroines.

T is for *testimony*:

Sometimes I can practically *feel* my **testimony** growing—like in the testimony meeting at girls' camp. My teacher always shares her testimony in class too. I want my testimony to be as strong as hers someday.

H is for *happy times*:

We have sad times too, like when Elena's dad passed away and we all went to visit her. But it doesn't matter if we're raking leaves, studying scriptures, learning about careers, or making fleece blankets for the homeless shelter. Just being together makes it fun.



So that's what I've figured out. Young Women is giving me a lot more strength. And I can't wait for more of that!

