

Braden Leads the Way

By Haley Yancey
(Based on a true story)

*“Be thou an example of the believers”
(1 Timothy 4:12).*

Braden and Dad carried heavy buckets of alligator pellets toward the feeding dock. The tops of the alligators’ heads came to the surface and glided toward them. When Braden and Dad reached the feeding spot, some of the alligators had their mouths open.

But Braden wasn’t scared. Working with Dad on the alligator farm was the *best*.

“Feeding time!” Braden said. He picked up a scoop of pellets and tossed them into the water.

Life on the alligator farm was great. But one thing was missing.

Chomp. Chomp. Splash.

Some of the alligators caught the pellets in the air. Others snapped at them when they hit the water. Braden and Dad kept tossing the food until their buckets were empty.

“Thanks for helping me,” Dad said. “Let’s go.

The missionaries will be coming soon.”

Braden and his family had started talking with the missionaries a few months ago. He liked the missionaries! And he liked learning about the Church. Dad was a member of the Church, but he hadn’t been going to church very much. Mom and Braden had never been baptized.

“Last week you set a goal to read Mosiah 18,” Sister Cox said that evening. “How did that go?”

Mom and Dad looked at each other and were quiet for a moment. “We were busy this week,” Mom said.

“I read it!” Braden said.

“Great job!” Sister Blood said, reaching over for a high five. “How did you feel after you read it?”

Braden gave a big smile. “Really good. And I prayed about being baptized. I really want to.”

“That’s great! I know that makes Heavenly Father very happy,” Sister Cox said. She turned to Braden’s mom. “How are you feeling about it?”

“I’m still not sure. I think I need a little more time,” Mom said.

Braden felt a little sad during the rest of the lesson. He wished both his parents were members of the Church. And he wanted to be a member of the Church too!

When the missionaries left, he told his parents that he meant what he said earlier. “I really want to be baptized. And . . .” Braden took a deep breath. “I really want Dad to baptize me.”

After a moment, Dad spoke up. “I really want that too.”

Mom was quiet. “Let’s pray about it.”

Braden knelt down with his family and asked Heavenly Father if he and Mom should be baptized. He felt warm and loved.

For the next few weeks, Braden read the scriptures and prayed every day. At first, he was always the one asking his parents if they would pray and read with him.



But soon, they started asking him. When he and Dad fed the alligators, they would talk about the scriptures or what they learned at church. He and Mom would talk about the missionary lessons. Every day, Mom and Dad seemed a little happier.

One day during a lesson with the missionaries, Mom said the words Braden had been waiting for: “I want to be baptized.”

For the next few weeks, Braden felt like he was floating on clouds.

Finally, it was the day of Mom and Braden’s baptism. When Braden came up out of the water, he felt Heavenly Father’s love for him and his family. He gave Dad a big hug.

Dad held Braden close and whispered, “Thank you for being a good example and helping us. I love you.” ●

This story took place in Louisiana, USA. The author lives in California, USA.

See Come, Follow Me for Doctrine and Covenants 30–36.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY C.B. GANGA