

Senior Sharing Time: August**Week 4: Miracles come to those who have faith.**

PREPARATION

Story & Questions for each group

Paper & Pen for each group

ACTIVITY

The children are split into three groups, each with a leader. Each group will be given a story which shows how faith preceded a miracle.

Each group will do the following:

1. Read out the questions they will want to answer while listening to the story.
2. Have a child/children take turns reading the story or the teacher may read it.
3. As a group discuss, the answers to the questions, make sure everyone has a chance to speak. You might wish to assign a child/children to write down the answers and another to share them.
4. The groups come together to share their answers.
5. The Sharing Time Leader may share her testimony of faith and miracles.

NB: In 'Alan's Miracle' Alan actually experiences two miracles: a healed bird and forgiveness for his carelessness, both made possible by Faith in Jesus Christ.

The Tortilla Miracle

By Jane McBride Choate

Two young men dressed in white shirts and ties came to our home in Honduras. "We are from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," they said.

Mama welcomed them in. The missionaries taught our family about the gospel of Jesus Christ. Though I was only nine, I felt the truth of their words in my heart.

"What must we do to become members of Christ's Church?" Papa asked.

"Be baptized," one of the elders said.

Mama, Papa, and I were baptized one month later. My brother, Tomas, who was six years old, would be baptized in two years.

While teaching us more about the gospel, the elders explained how families could be sealed together in the temple.

The closest temple was in Guatemala, many kilometers away. We would need to pay for a two-day bus ride and two nights' lodging in the city. We had no money for such a trip, but Mama and Papa refused to let that stop us from attending the temple.

Every year our family grew corn. We used it to make tortillas to sell to travelers who passed through our village.

Mama pulled out a paper and pencil. She added up some numbers and said, "We must sell 2,500 tortillas to pay for our trip."

My eyes widened. That was so many tortillas! "We have never sold so many tortillas," I said.

Mama didn't look worried. "The Lord will provide," she said. "Raoul, you and Tomas must help your papa harvest the corn," Mama told me.

Tomas and I helped Papa harvest the corn. Every day, Mama ground it, made the dough, and fried it. Tomas and I took the tortillas to the village.

"A bus of tourists came today," I told Mama when we returned home the first day. "We sold many tortillas."

"It is a miracle," Mama said.

Every day we sold more tortillas. Within a few months we had saved the money we needed to make the journey to Guatemala. But I was still worried. I had heard stories about robbers who stopped buses passing through the jungle. They took all the passengers' valuables.

"What about the robbers?" I asked.

"The Lord will protect us," Mama said. Then she asked, "Raoul, do you believe in the gospel?"

"Yes."

"Then you know that we must do all in our power to follow the Lord and His prophets."

One year after we were baptized, my family was ready to make the trip to the temple. We rode to Guatemala City in a bus. I will never forget the spirit I felt as my family was sealed together for time and eternity.

That night, as I knelt to say my prayers, I thanked Heavenly Father for the blessings of the temple.

(Jane McBride Choate, "The Tortilla Miracle," *Friend*, Oct 2009, 10–11)

Q. What miracle did the family need?

Q. How did they show their faith?

Q. What did the Lord do?

Alan's Miracle

As told to Judy Arrington
A True Story

My name is Alan Matthews.* I'm nine years old and have listened to many lessons in church and family home evening. None ever taught me so much about Heavenly Father's love for me as the lesson I learned through our ducks.

I'm an animal lover. I have a huge collection of small plastic animals from all over the world, and I've read nearly every book on animals that our school library has to offer. The fact that I love animals so much is what makes what happened to me so amazing.

My parents, my brothers, and I live in the state of Washington. We have a huge yard with trees, a pond my dad made, and our own little hill. Last spring, my parents surprised us by coming home with two baby ducklings, Samson and Delilah. We raised them in the house until their adult feathers grew in and it warmed up a bit outside. They were cute and cuddly, and we loved to sit and hold them. But once they were old enough to set loose in the backyard, it was pretty hard to catch them when we wanted to hold one.

One day I found myself sitting by the edge of the pond, watching them dive for bugs and bathe themselves. The longer I watched, the more bored I became and the more I wanted to catch one of them to hold. I circled the pond several times, trying to get them to come out of the water. But they knew exactly what I intended and swam away from me. Finally, tired of going in circles, I sat down to try to come up with another idea.

That's when I came up with what I thought was a foolproof plan. I began to toss small stones into the water beyond the ducks. The splash startled them and made them instinctively swim closer to me. With each stone, I became more confident that I'd soon have a duck to hold. Then the unexpected

happened: I looked down to pick up a stone, and there were none left.

Fearful that the ducks would retreat to the other side of the pond, I quickly searched behind me for another rock. I spied one a little way off. Without taking my eyes off the ducks, I grabbed the rock. My fingertips barely had time to feel its smooth edges before I hurled it into the water.

In my hurry, my aim was a little off. Everything would have been fine except that Samson, spooked by my sudden movement, jerked around and headed right into the stone's path. With a small thud, the rock hit him squarely in the head. For a moment, I sat frozen, shocked at what I'd done and afraid that he'd been badly hurt.

Delilah started beating the water with her wings and screeching at me. Samson jumped out of the water and ran straight across the yard to a little hut we'd built for them. I was relieved that he seemed to be OK, but my heart was beating so hard that I went to lie on my bed for a while.

Two days later the scene came back to haunt me. Mom was out feeding the birds and found Samson nearly drowned at the edge of the pond. Scooping him up and hollering for one of us to get Dad, she rushed Samson into the house. Delilah, who normally set up quite a wail when separated from her mate, followed and stood patiently on the back porch next to the door.

Samson was very cold and could not stand or control his wings very well. Dad wrapped him in towels and put him in a tub under a heat lamp. He showed no sign of improvement after an hour, so Dad brought in Delilah. She nestled right up to Samson.

The next few days, I spent a lot of time by the side of the tub, cleaning up after the ducks and feeding them. I found little comfort in helping them. Everyone tried to guess what had caused Samson's illness. I felt terrible,

knowing what was wrong and that it was my fault.

A week passed. We had seen little change in Samson. It was a warm spring day, and we were all outside enjoying the sunshine. I walked around aimlessly, hitting the ground with a stick that I'd picked up somewhere. I didn't hear my mother walk up behind me. I jumped as she gently placed her hand on my shoulder.

"Alan, your father felt that I should ask you about Samson." When I didn't respond, she continued. "Sometimes we do something we're not proud of, and it can make us very unhappy inside. It can make us so unhappy that it is like carrying a huge boulder around with us everywhere we go."

I turned to face her. Tears began to well up in my eyes. I wanted to cry out, "Yes, that's just how I feel!" but I remained silent.

"When that happens, we need to confide in our Heavenly Father and ask for His forgiveness and for the burden to be removed," she said.

Finally I mustered up the courage to speak. I asked, "Is that all I have to do?"

"No," Mother said. "We need to confess our sins, do whatever we can to make the wrong right, and promise that we will never do it again."

I thought about what she had said. I knew that she was right, and I knew what I had to do. I looked up at her, unable to hold back the tears any longer. "Mom, I hit Samson in the head with a rock. I didn't mean to hurt him, and I don't want him to die."

She pulled me close to her and hugged me tightly. "That surely has been a heavy burden to carry around all this time."

Q. What two miracles did Alan need?

I nodded. Then, pulling out of her comforting arms, I said, "I need to go to my room for a few minutes."

She nodded in understanding, and I ran inside.

As I knelt beside my bed, I told Heavenly Father that I'd done something very wrong and that I was very sorry. I explained that despite our efforts, Samson was not getting any better, and I asked Him if He would help make things right. I asked for His forgiveness and promised that I would try to never again do something so careless. Closing in the name of Jesus Christ, I arose, amazed at how much better I felt inside already.

For the first time all week, I joined in the dinner conversation and played with my brothers. I now understood what my mother was saying about the weight, because I felt as light as a feather.

When I awoke the next morning, I hurried to check on the ducks and to get their food and water. As I went around the corner, the first sight that met my eyes was Samson, standing up and preening his feathers! He looked his old self again, and he started quacking for his breakfast. He had been healed! Excitedly I ran to tell my parents the good news. I had been forgiven, and I knew that Heavenly Father had helped make Samson better.

That evening I sat on my bed, writing in my journal:

"I know that I am a child of God, that He hears and answers my prayers, and that even a nine-year-old is important enough for a miracle."

(Judy Arrington, "Alan's Miracle," *Friend*, Apr 2001, 8)

Q. How did Alan show his faith?

Q. What did Heavenly Father do?

Jake's Miracle

By Susan Denney

(Based on a true story)

Jake's coaches and teammates crowded around his hospital bed. "Thanks!" he said as he opened their presents—books about his favorite sport, baseball.

"Get well, OK?" one of his teammates said.

"We need our shortstop back!"

"Yeah, we need you!"

Jake smiled as they waved good-bye. He liked the baseball books but he didn't really feel like reading them. He didn't feel like watching TV. He didn't feel like doing anything. Sick with pneumonia, his throat and chest ached every time he coughed. He was so weak he had tubes attached to his arms delivering medication to his bloodstream, and whenever he stood up to go to the bathroom, his head hurt and he got dizzy.

Jake didn't get better the next day or the next. The sicker he got, the stranger his surroundings seemed. The people in the room looked fuzzy. He wasn't sure who they were. He didn't know if it was night or day.

"He's not acting like himself," he heard his mother say.

He wondered what that meant, but he didn't really care. All he knew was how weak and uncomfortable he felt and how much he wanted the pain to go away.

Finally, Jake fell asleep. He didn't know how long he slept, but it seemed like days had passed when he finally cracked open his eyes. He was starting to feel better. Two days later, he was well enough to go home.

"What happened to me in the hospital?" Jake asked his mom during the car ride home. "I don't remember much after the baseball team came to visit me."

"You were too sick to know what was going on," Mom said. "You were delirious."

"Delirious? What does that mean?"

"Your fever was so high you couldn't think straight," Mom explained. "I knew you must be really sick when you yelled at the nurse."

Jake was shocked. "I yelled at a nurse?"

"Yes," Mom said. "You didn't want to take the medicine she was giving you. I told her it wasn't like you to be so impolite. That night you started mumbling and saying strange things in your sleep. I called for the doctor to come quickly, even though it was the middle of the night."

"What did he say?" Jake asked.

"He discovered that you had meningitis in addition to the pneumonia. I was so frightened when he said that there wasn't anything more they could do."

Jake felt like he had swallowed a rock. He had been really sick! "Then how did I get better?" he asked.

Mom smiled. "I believe it's because Dad gave you a blessing, and the ward members fasted for you. The bishop asked everyone to fast and pray for you last Sunday."

"Everybody in the ward didn't eat or drink for a whole day because of me?" Jake said.

"That's right. They also prayed. The people who fasted used their faith and asked Heavenly Father to help you get well. Even Maddie fasted for you."

Maddie was Jake's friend from down the street.

“But she’s not much older than me,” Jake said.

“It was her first fast. She really wanted you to get well.”

Jake stared quietly down at his hands. “I can’t believe everyone in the ward would do that for me.”

“They were happy to do it, Jake.”

Jake smiled. “So fasting really works,” he murmured.

After a week of rest, Jake returned to school and the baseball team welcomed their shortstop back. Jake never forgot the people who had fasted and prayed to make him well. He knew he had been part of a fasting miracle.

(Susan Denney, “Jake’s Miracle,” *Friend*, Oct 2007, 16–17)

Q. What miracles did Jake need?

Q. How did his family and friends show their faith?

Q. What did Heavenly Father do?

JUNIOR SHARING TIME: AUGUST**Week 4: Miracles come to those who have faith.****PREPARATION**

Copy of Alan's Miracle

Stick the pictures onto cardboard and cut them out.

You may want to colour the blond hair brown to match the other pictures of the boy who represents Alan.

ACTIVITY

Explain that miracles can happen in our lives, but first we have to have faith in Heavenly Father.

Tell: This story tells about two miracles that happened to Alan. See if you can work out how he showed his faith first.

Tell the story of Alan's miracle in your own words using the pictures to illustrate it. You may want to invite the children to come and place the pictures.

Ask the children to share their ideas about Alan's miracle. Help them relate the story to themselves.

Talk about how we show Faith in Jesus Christ.

Share your testimony that miracles follow faith.





