

“I feel so alone at church. How can I learn to feel included?”

As you prayerfully try to find an answer to your question, remember this teaching from the scriptures: when we join the Church, we “are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints” (Ephesians 2:19). This means we should be friendly to everyone at church. We’re all children of God trying to worship Him in love and unity.

Here are a couple ways to feel included:

Get to know people of all ages. In sacrament meeting, for example, you could sit by a single mother with young children. She might appreciate the help. Or you could welcome and get to know members who are new to your ward or branch. When 12-year-olds come into Young Men or Young Women, you could sit by them. It’s fun to have friends your own age, but if you reach out to others of different ages and interests, you’ll have more chances to develop friendships.

Attend your ward or branch activities. It’s hard to go alone, but you will make some friends by attending. Sit with someone who is sitting alone. Say hi and ask about his or her interests. That might be the start of a good friendship.

Participate



Several months ago I left my country to go to one where I knew only my sister and her boyfriend. At church I felt like an outsider. Two or three months went by, and I felt the same feeling of loneliness until I decided to smile at others and ask, “How are you?”

Each Sunday that went by, they were saying more to me than the simple “I’m fine.” It also helped to participate in seminary and Mutual and to work on Personal Progress with other young women. Now I feel comfortable at church, as if I were at home.

Vanessa B., age 17, La Vega, Dominican Republic

Get to Know Others

Years ago I had the same problem. So I decided I would try to be included and show people the real me. As soon as I opened up to others, they opened up to me, and this allowed for strong friendships to form among everyone in my quorum.

MacCoy S., age 17, Utah, USA

Help Others



Remember that all people are children of Heavenly Father. Try to smile and be friendly with everyone. Help others.

Reach out to those who also feel lonely. When I serve others, I feel joy and do not feel lonely. It is also absolutely necessary to attend seminary or institute. We feel warmth and goodness there. Don’t be afraid of sharing your problems or worries. We are all brothers and sisters, and our problems and trials are similar.

Igor P., age 19, Kyiv, Ukraine

Form Friends in Other Age Groups



I have become better friends with younger age groups and leaders, more so than those around my age. I know that a day will come when you will

be friends with those in the Church, and if not, it will be OK because you will still learn the Church material.

Susanna Z., age 18, California, USA

Start the Conversation



A couple of years ago my family and I moved. The first few weeks that I attended church and Mutual, I felt alone. But I prayed every day that I would be able to make new friends and feel a part of my new ward. Little by little I have come to love and appreciate this ward. I had to be the one to initiate friendships. I had to start the conversation. I had to fully participate in classes and listen to what others said. With Heavenly Father's help, I now have close friendships with people I never pictured being friends with.

Leah V., age 16, Colorado, USA

Make Friends with Your Leaders



I felt alone at church for many months. I enjoyed the meetings and activities, but I just did not feel that I meshed with the other girls. I then started talking to my leaders more than I used to. My leaders are fun. Once I started talking to them, I started feeling more a part of the program and that I had friends at Mutual.

Kimberly G., age 14, Arizona, USA

Pray to Have Good Friends

At Church activities I would ask myself, "Why don't I have friends?" I felt sad and alone and went to God in prayer. I asked

my Heavenly Father to send me good friends. It hasn't been easy, but over time I've made many great friends. I'm not afraid to talk anymore and to get involved with groups of girls. I realize that Heavenly Father answered my prayers and that I was never alone.

Daiana I., age 16, Corrientes, Argentina

Seek Out Companionship



When I first entered Young Women, I felt alone because I had left my friends in the Valiant class. However, I tried to support the young women, and they also supported me, and I was able to make new friends and interact with them. I no longer felt alone, and that made me happy. Now I am the president of the Beehives, and if I see a new sister who feels uncomfortable being with us, I talk with her, explain what we

do in class, and make her feel that she is part of us.

Gredy G., age 14, Lima, Peru



GIVE TO OTHERS IN LOVE AND SERVICE

"Loneliness in the kingdom of God is often a self-imposed exile.

"We hope each of you feels the need to join with the whole ward or branch family and use your unique gifts and talents to touch the lives of all of our brothers and sisters. The opportunities we all have for caring and fellowshiping in the ward or branch are boundless if we are willing to give of ourselves in love and service."

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Belonging to a Ward Family," *Liahona*, Mar. 1999, 12.

NEXT QUESTION

"My parents are divorced. Sometimes I get advice from one of them that contradicts advice from the other. What do I do?"

Send your answer by March 15, 2011, to:

Liahona, Questions & Answers 3/11
50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA
Or e-mail: liahona@ldschurch.org

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.

The following information and permission must be included in your e-mail or letter: (1) full name, (2) birth date, (3) ward or branch, (4) stake or district, (5) your written permission, and, if you are under age 18, your parent's written permission (e-mail is acceptable) to publish your response and photograph.