



Learn how the *Friend* magazine can help your family understand a different sensitive topic each month.

GENDER MATTERS

Is an elephant more like a rope or a tree? In this month's *Friend*, President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, tells the tale of six blind travelers who try to answer this question. But no one agrees, since each traveler can only base his opinion on the part of the elephant he happens to touch. So it's all pretty confusing.

Some of the most confusing questions our children face today have to do with gender. What makes us male or female? Is gender an innate part of who we are, or is it more changeable? Why does gender even matter?

"We know some things but not everything," President Uchtdorf explains. "But there is someone who sees all things clearly. There is a source of truth that is complete and correct. That source is our wise and all-knowing Heavenly Father."

This month's *Friend* has stories and activities to start a fun and natural family discussion about being a girl or being a boy:

- "What Is the Truth?" (page 2)—President Uchtdorf's message about the six travelers and the elephant could help you talk with your children about issues they may be confused about.

- "Love-Your-Neighbor Adventure" (page 24)—In this game, family members learn what prophets and apostles have taught about gospel principles

and standards—and role-play ways to show courage and compassion when neighbors act and believe differently.

- "I Want to Play the Flute" (page 36)—Jacob learns that certain talents aren't just for girls or just for boys.
- "What Are Your Spiritual Gifts?" (page 34)—Heavenly Father gives all His children spiritual gifts, whether they are boys or girls.

THREE Cs

We can make sure our children aren't like the blind travelers by teaching them three Cs:

Clarity: Eternal truths from the scriptures and words of living prophets can give children the sure guide of doctrinal clarity. Family discussions can help them learn to articulate their beliefs. Even when we don't know everything, we can choose to trust God.

Courage: Arm children with courage through role-playing, stories, and your own example. Articulating beliefs takes courage. So does standing up for a friend who believes differently from the rest of the crowd.

Compassion: Children quickly learn by watching us whether a difference of opinion justifies rudeness or excluding others. As we teach clarity and courage, we also need to help our children show kindness to all. After all, Jesus taught that love of God and love of our fellowman are the first great commandments (see Matthew 22:36–39).

