



By Elder Neil L. Andersen
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

How do I help EVERYONE feel welcome in Primary?

God loves all children. We are all His sons and daughters. We need to be thoughtful and kind. Some of our friends come to church by themselves. Some can't get baptized until they grow up.

You can reach out to someone who feels alone or left behind.

Knowing someone's name can make a difference.

Invite someone to sit by you.

Let's open our arms and our hearts a little wider.

Help those who feel scared or shy. Think about them. Welcome them.

From "Whoso Receiveth Them, Receiveth Me," Ensign, May 2016, 49–52.

REACHING OUT to New Friends



ILLUSTRATIONS BY JULISSA MORA

Elder Neil L. Andersen and his wife, Kathy, visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Africa. They had a Church meeting outside under tents. Around the tents was a big fence. Elder Andersen could see children watching them from the other side of the fence. Kathy asked him, "Neil, do you think you might want to invite the children to come in?" Elder Andersen walked up to the man at the microphone. He asked the man to invite the children to come in and join them.

The children came running! They were all smiling and excited to be a part of the meeting.

Elder Andersen also told a story of a boy named Joshua who reached out to another child at church.

When Joseph, a boy from Uganda, went to church for the first time, he didn't have any family there to help him know where to go. Then the missionaries introduced him to Joshua.

Joshua told Joseph he would be his friend. He gave Joseph a songbook for Primary, and he sat next to him. Then the Primary class sang "I Am a Child of God" to Joseph. Everyone made Joseph feel very special, especially his new friend, Joshua. When they were older, Joshua and Joseph served as missionary companions!

These experiences reminded Elder Andersen that we all need to reach out to people around us who might feel left out or alone. ♦