

By Charlotte Larcabal

Church Magazines
(Based on a true story)

"Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God"
(1 Corinthians 6:19).

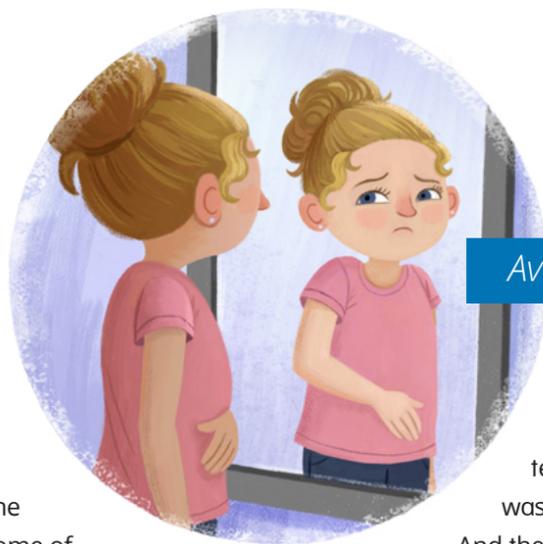
Ava stared at the mirror and sucked in her stomach. In her mind, she could still hear the girls from her swim team.

"Look at how your stomach pokes out! You should stand on the back row," Mackenzie had said. Some of the other girls laughed.

Tears started rolling down Ava's cheeks. She ran into Mom's room. "I don't want to be on the swim team anymore!"

Mom looked up from her desk. "What's wrong? You love swimming!"

"I'm too fat!" Ava said. "Swimmers should be skinnier."



Mom led Ava over to sit on the bed. "Where did you hear that?" she asked. "Athletes don't need

Ava felt bad about her body.

to be skinny. They come in all shapes and sizes."

Ava sniffed. "Today we had team pictures, and Mackenzie said I was too chubby to be in the front row.

And then Sarah said I should go on a diet."

Ava felt the tears coming again. "I'm done with swim team!" She buried her face in a pillow.

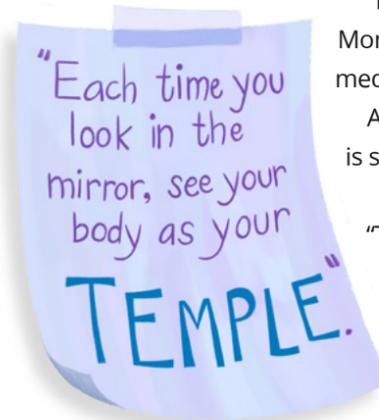
Mom stroked Ava's hair. "I'm so sorry," she said.

"That was really hurtful. Some people think the way they look on the outside is the most important thing

about them. That's not true at all. And saying mean things about another person's body is never OK."

Later, Mom came into Ava's room. "I thought you might like this," Mom said, handing her a piece of paper.

"Each time you look in the mirror, see your body as your temple," Ava read.



"President Nelson said that," Mom said. "What do you think it means?"

Ava shrugged. "That my body is special, like a temple?"

"Exactly," Mom said.

"Temples are all beautiful, and they're all built of precious materials. But

no two look exactly the same. It's what happens *inside* them that's

most important."

Ava nodded. She was getting ready to go to the temple to do baptisms soon.

"A lot of people focus on if their body *looks* a certain way," Mom said. "And sometimes that makes them feel bad. What's a lot more important is how we *use* our bodies. Heavenly Father gave you a body to learn and grow and help people. Your body is a beautiful home for your spirit."

Ava felt a peaceful feeling. She was pretty sure it was the Holy Ghost telling her that what Mom said was true.

"I think I'll tape this on my mirror," Ava said.

"Good idea," Mom said. "When you see it, you could think about one thing your body can *do*."

Ava already had one. "My lungs help me breathe when I freestyle."

Then she frowned. "But I still wish I could be skinny."

"Instead of focusing on being *skinny*, what about focusing on being *strong*?" Mom asked.

Mom flexed her arm, which made Ava laugh.

"I guess getting stronger will help with my swimming," Ava said.

Ava and Mom decided on some goals—like eating more of her favorite vegetables, playing outside after school, and getting enough sleep at night.

"And now, young lady, it's time for you to work on that sleeping goal."

"OK, Mom!"

Instead of feeling bad about her body, Ava was beginning to feel more grateful for it. It could do a lot of wonderful things. Like swimming! ●

*Russell M. Nelson, "Decisions for Eternity," Ensign, Nov. 2013, 107.

DONE

with
Swim Team!

ILLUSTRATIONS BY SHAWNA J.C. TENNEY



See family manual, pages 131–132; Primary manual, 130–132.