

Like a STAR

By Carrie Salisbury and Sydney Squires
(Based on a true story)

"I know Heavenly Father loves me" (Children's Songbook, 163).

Carrie dug through her duffel bag. Had she remembered to pack a skirt?

Yes—there it was, at the very, very bottom: a little dirty and a little wrinkled, but there!

Carrie ran out of the tent with her skirt on. "Look, Mom!" She twirled.

"Oh, I'm so glad you found it!" Mom wiped a smudge off of Carrie's cheek. "Let's get you in the car."

Carrie ran across the campsite and climbed into the car with her younger brother and sister. Her brother,

Bryan, had put on a tie, and Alaina had put on her dress.

They drove down the long, winding road out of the mountains.

"It's so nice to get back in the valley!" Dad said.

Carrie nodded. She stared at the houses and big, important-looking buildings.

A few months ago, Dad's job changed. Then just a few weeks ago, Mom and Dad told her that they couldn't keep their house anymore. Carrie had packed her duffel bag, which Mom called her "life bag," with her toothbrush, shoes, and some clothes. Whatever didn't fit, like toys, she had left behind. The only extra thing she'd been able to bring was her violin.

At first it was fun living at a campsite. But camping for weeks and weeks wasn't so fun. They didn't have extra money for gas, so they never got to go

anywhere else. But today they were going to church. Carrie would finally be able to go to Primary again!

The further they drove, the more Carrie's stomach tied itself into tight knots. She liked to look her best for church. But the campsite didn't have showers, and her fingernails and the creases of her hands were filled with dirt. She couldn't wash or braid her hair either.

They pulled up to the church. Bryan and Alaina climbed out quickly with Mom and Dad. Carrie followed slowly, her arms folded tight.

When it was finally time for Primary, Carrie kept her eyes on her sneakers. Some kids stared, but others were really nice. She talked with a few kids, but it was hard to try to make friends. She probably wouldn't see them again.

When they got back up to the campsite at the end of the day, Carrie's heart was heavy. She missed her old Primary, and she missed staying in one place and seeing the same friends every week. Mom and Dad said they wouldn't be at the campsite for too much longer, but Carrie didn't know where they'd live next.

After a while, Carrie pulled out her violin. At first she just played a few notes here and there. She paced beneath the tall trees and looked out at the meadow. Carrie took a big, deep breath and said a prayer in her heart. She told Heavenly Father how sad and hurt

she'd felt today. She wanted to have a house again so that they didn't have to stay in this campsite anymore.

Finally Carrie raised her violin. Slowly she started to play her favorite Primary song. She sang along in her head.

"I am like a star shining brightly, smiling for the whole world to see."

Carrie looked up between the tall trees. Violin music filled the campground. This song reminded her that Heavenly Father had created a beautiful world. He made everything perfectly and with love—including her. Heavenly Father loved her for her.

Carrie smiled as she played the last lines: *"I can do and say happy things each day, for I know Heavenly Father loves me."* ●

The authors live in California, USA, and West Midlands, England.

Carrie grew up to be a violin teacher who helps people feel comfort and belonging through music. She and her children share music to raise money for community food pantries to help other people in need. You can read more about Carrie and her family in "Gabriel's Cello" (Friend, Dec. 2017).



ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID MILES