

Charlotte's Family



By Charlotte Larcabal
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(Based on a true story)

Charlotte pushed her fingers into her ears. Singing time was usually her favorite part of Primary. But today she didn't want to hear the songs they were singing. She had asked if she could sit in the hall instead.

She stared at the green carpet, trying not to cry. It didn't work.

Someone walked up beside her. Charlotte quickly wiped away her tears and looked up.

It was Sister Henry. "What's wrong?" she asked.

Charlotte swallowed. "Those songs are about happy families and being together forever," she said quietly.

"Oh. I see." Sister Henry sat down beside Charlotte.

A few months ago, Charlotte's parents had called a family meeting. Dad explained that he was moving.

"So it's kind of like you're getting a divorce?" Charlotte had asked.

"Not kind of," Mom said. "We both love you, but yes, we are getting divorced."

Charlotte remembered how her skin felt cold and hot at the same time. Then all of her feelings erupted! Fear,

anger, confusion, and deep sadness—the kind that made you feel sick.

She still felt that way sometimes. Like when Mom and Dad sat on opposite sides of the pool at her swim meets. Or when her little brother cried for Mom when they stayed at Dad's house.

Or when they were singing about families in Primary. "When my parents got divorced, it felt like someone was punching me in the stomach," Sister Henry said. "Over and over again."

Charlotte was surprised. "Your parents are divorced too?"

Sister Henry nodded. "They got divorced when I was about your age."

Charlotte looked at her hands. "Sometimes when we sing 'Families Can Be Together Forever,' I think, 'Except for mine.'" She squeezed her eyes closed. "I get so mad. And that's bad, isn't it?"

Sister Henry shook her head. "No. I used to feel sick whenever I saw kids with both of their parents together."

"Yeah!" Charlotte said. "It's like they're in a happy family club, and I'm not. Everything is different now."

"It's normal to feel mad, sad, or scared now—however you feel," Sister Henry said. "Divorce is hard. But I promise that you will feel better. Your family is still your family, even if it looks different now. It helped me a lot to

remember that my parents still loved me, and would for all eternity."

Charlotte smiled. She liked Sister Henry.

Sister Henry leaned closer to Charlotte. "But you know what helped me the most?" she whispered.

"What?" Charlotte whispered back.

"I learned that I still have a perfect, happy family," Sister Henry said. "And so do you. We all do, no matter what our earthly family is like right now."

Charlotte crinkled her nose. "How?"

"Well, our earthly families aren't perfect, but our heavenly family is. So no matter what happens, we have heavenly parents who love us and a wonderful heavenly home waiting for us."

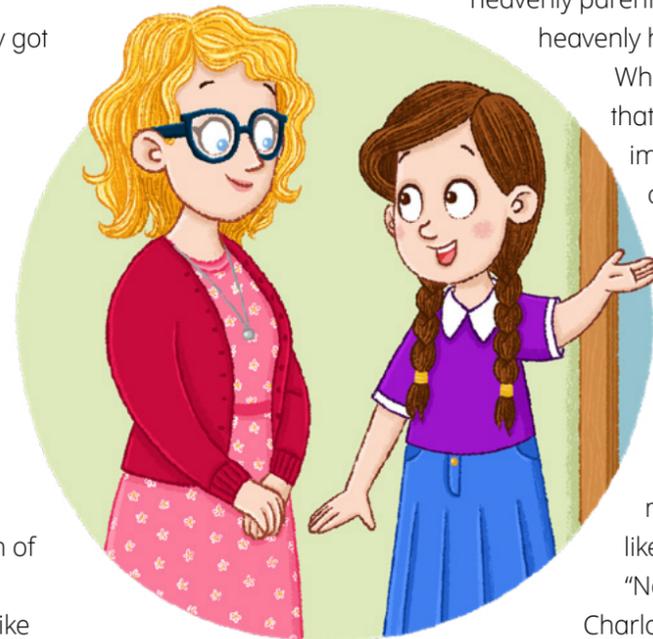
When Charlotte thought about that, she felt a little hopeful. She imagined what it would be like one day when she saw her heavenly parents again.

"Maybe when we're singing about families, I can think about my heavenly family," Charlotte said. Sister Henry nodded.

Charlotte had just one more question. "Does it look like I've been crying?"

"Not a bit," Sister Henry said.

Charlotte stood up. "Then I think I'm ready to sing." ●



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"Each [person] is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents."

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