

WHEN I BECAME INVISIBLE



Name withheld

We had barely arrived in our motel room when the phone rang. I knew it would be bad news about Jodi, my nine-month-old sister. She had been in a coma since birth and required round-the-clock monitoring and special tubal feedings. We had left Jodi temporarily at a care center so our family could take a much-needed vacation.

I answered the phone. My grandpa was on the line. His voice was firm: “Get your dad.”

Their conversation ended quickly. My fears were confirmed. Jodi had died.

The next day, after we had arrived home, I breathed a sigh of relief.



the next or the next. They didn't wait for me after school either.

During this time my family received lots of support from the Relief Society and other ward members. However, chicken casserole did little to soothe my 13-year-old aching heart. When I returned to Mutual, my adviser gave a lesson on life after death. I started crying. My adviser looked down and continued reading. My classmates stared ahead. I sobbed. How I wished somebody would have cried with me or put her arms around me.

Looking back on these events, I

the loss of your friendship as well. There is something comforting about doing regular things.

Don't feel the need to give a life-after-death sermon. When this type of lesson is given, do as Alma counseled: "Mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort" (Mosiah 18:9). Your friend probably already knows she will see her loved one again, and if she doesn't, the topic will come up in a natural way as she expresses her thoughts and concerns. That's the time to bear your testimony

The school bus was at the top of the street. My friends would be coming. At last I would have somebody my own age to share my pain.

However, as I stood in my driveway waiting for my friends, something strange happened. It was almost as if I had become invisible. I watched as my friends crossed to the other side of the street and continued talking with one another. They didn't even look at me.

The next morning my friends didn't pick me up as they usually did. "That's understandable," I thought. They probably knew I wasn't going to school because of funeral planning. But they didn't come the next day or

realize that my friends were not cruel and uncaring. They just didn't know how to respond to my pain. They assumed that I wanted to be left alone to grieve and, since I was in mourning, I would not want to do anything fun.

Here's what I wish my friends and adviser had known:

Be there for your friend. Take her a note or flower, but most important, take yourself. Put your arms around her and let her know you care. And by all means, go to the viewing or funeral.

Include your friend in things you normally do. Your friend is already adjusting to the loss of a loved one. Don't make her adjust to

of the plan of salvation.

A year after my sister's death, my friend's mother died. I felt incredible sorrow. I thought, "The next time I see her, I'll tell her how sorry I am." Then, remembering my own experience, I knew that my friend needed me right then. Walking to her house, I felt apprehensive. What if she didn't want to see me? Maybe her family didn't want me there. Should I wait and talk to her later? But when she answered the door, I could tell she was glad I came. Her father and older siblings were busy planning the funeral. We went for a walk. I didn't have to worry about what to say. She did most of the talking. ■