

“I Need You”

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO | August 10



Faith

At home alone at night, 11-year-old Faith stopped sewing the button back onto the shirt of her school uniform. She picked up a pair of sharp scissors and slowly cut her arms until blood came out. Her head grew light, and she thought she was going to faint.

Faith's life started going into a downward spiral a few months earlier when Mother underwent an emergency operation. As Mother recovered in the hospital, the girl was left at home alone for six months on the Caribbean island of Trinidad.

Usually, older siblings or neighbors step in to help in such a situation. But Faith didn't have any brothers or sisters. The neighbors didn't know that she was at home alone, and she didn't think to tell them.

Her father, who lived elsewhere and wasn't involved in her life, visited once or twice a week.

“How are you doing?” he asked every time.

“I'm fine,” Faith always replied.

Sometimes he gave her money, and then he left. Faith didn't tell him about her life. She didn't think that he would understand.

On her own, Faith learned to cook rice and beans. When they ran out, she lived on bread, butter, and cheese that she bought

with Father's money and the meager funds that Mother had left at home. She taught herself to sew so she could repair her clothes.

During the day, she attended an all-girls' school. She had been the target of bullying before, but the problem grew worse after Mother's hospitalization. The girls taunted Faith about her weight, looks, and intelligence. At first, Faith responded kindly, hoping that they would become friends. But nothing seemed to change. Her self-esteem evaporated, and she began to hate herself.

Once, she was able to visit Mother when someone gave her a car ride to the hospital, located 30 minutes away. Mother looked so frail, pale, and lifeless. When Faith saw her, she burst into tears. She wanted to tell Mother about the bullying, but she couldn't.

At school, the bullying escalated. One day, a girl said, “You should kill yourself. Then everybody would be happy.”

Faith believed it. She thought she deserved to be insulted. She thought that she didn't deserve love, friends, or anything nice. She began to harm herself. She starved herself. She grew long nails and scratched her body until she bled. Then she turned to razor blades, knives, and scissors. She wanted to feel something, anything. Her grades dropped from B's to F's.

Then came the night that she decided to commit suicide with the scissors.

As she grew dizzy, she heard a voice in her head. It was Mother's voice. She hadn't heard the voice in a long time.

“I need you,” the voice said. “I need you



more than anyone else, even if no one else needs you.”

At that moment, Faith decided not to kill herself. She would live for Mother. She forced herself to get up and bandage her arms.

The next day, the teacher noticed the bandages and spoke with Faith privately.

“Are you OK?” she asked.

Faith started to cry and scream. Everything that had built up inside over all those months came out. The teacher began to cry.

“Have you been eating?” she asked.

“No, I’ve been starving myself.”

“Are you sleeping?”

“No, I can’t sleep without my mother.”

From that day, the teacher took Faith under her wing. Under her watchful eye, the bullying subsided and finally stopped.

Then Mother came home. It was a wonderful day! Faith told Mother everything. As she listened, Mother began to cry. Claspng Faith’s hand, she said, “Will you please promise that you will never ever hurt yourself again in any way? Promise that you will not try to take yourself away from me. I need you and love you.”

Faith, through tears, said, “I promise.”

Due to her poor grades, Faith had to repeat the same grade the next year. She was upset, but Mother said it was for the best. And it was. She left her old classmates behind and was surrounded by new classmates who loved and respected her. She made many good friends.

Mother started going to church, and she invited Faith to join her. Neither had gone to church for years. Faith wasn’t interested at first because she thought it would be boring. But she went and enjoyed the singing and the choir. So, she kept going and hasn’t stopped. Both she and Mother have given their hearts to Jesus in baptism.

Looking back, she believes God saved her life by sending her the voice of her mother in her hour of need. “I can’t explain it,” she said. “I was home alone, and I know that I heard my mother’s voice from inside my thoughts. I guess she was the person who I needed the most at the time. It must have been the Holy

Story Tips

- Show Trinidad and Tobago on the map.
- Watch a short YouTube video of Faith: bit.ly/Faith-IAD.
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Inter-American Division: bit.ly/iad-2024.

Mission Post

- The first specific positive response to Adventist teachings in Trinidad came through a copy of Ellen White’s book *Patriarchs and Prophets*, which was purchased by a minister from another island and eventually came into the possession of an individual who became one of the first Sabbath-keepers on the island.

Spirit. He knew what I needed.”

To young people who also face bullying, she said, “If I could have a time machine and I could go back to the age of 11 years old, I would tell myself, ‘You’re going to be OK. Everything is going to be just fine. You’re going to meet a lot of really nice people who are going to love you and appreciate you just as you are. All you have to do is put God first and you will be OK.’” 🌍

This mission story provides an inside look at life in Trinidad and the missional challenges there. Part of a 2018 Thirteenth Sabbath Offering went to build a church at the University of the Southern Caribbean, which is located near Faith’s home. Adventist Mission met with Faith to hear her story at the university. Thank you for your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter that will help bring hope to young people in the Inter-American Division.

By Andrew McChesney