

SWEETER Than ICE CREAM

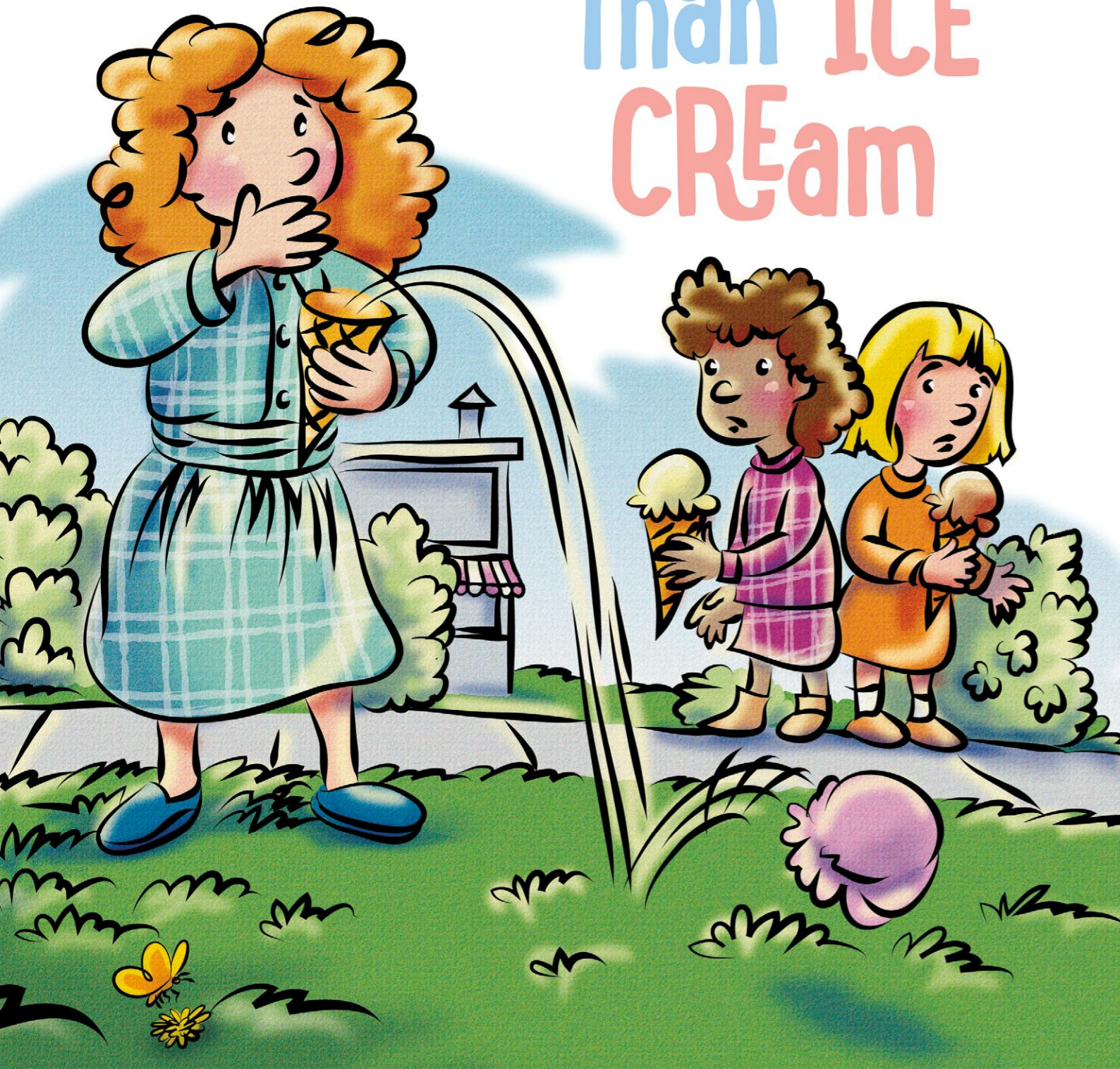


ILLUSTRATION BY BRAD TEARE

By Shanna Butler
(Based on a true story)

"Help me, dear Father, to truly repent, making things right, and changing my ways" (Children's Songbook, 99).

I stood in the warm font, my white dress billowing around me. I was excited to be baptized, to be clean! Elder Daniels put me under the water, and I came up soaking and smiling. When I opened my eyes, I felt so good. I never wanted to do anything wrong again. My parents smiled at me.

"You did great," my mom said after I was confirmed. She had even written me a poem for my baptism day. My dad was not a member of the Church, but I knew he felt OK about my choice since he let me take the missionary discussions.

Two of my best friends from the fifth grade came to see my baptism, and my parents took us all out for yummy ice cream afterward. My favorite food!

My friends and I took our cones and explored the gardens near the ice cream shop. The creamy ice cream on my cone looked so good. But on my first lick, the whole scoop fell off the cone and onto the grass!

Without thinking, I said a word my mom had asked me not to say. I slapped my hand over my mouth, realizing what I'd said. I was so sad. I didn't know what to do. My parents thought I was just sad about my ice cream. They offered to buy me another, but I didn't feel like eating anymore. Who cared about ice cream? I'd just made a terrible mistake and ruined my perfect day. I wasn't clean anymore!

The rest of the day I felt awful about what I had said. And I didn't want to tell my mom because

*I hadn't
been baptized for
a whole day yet,
and already I'd
messed up!*

she might get mad at me for saying a bad word. I was embarrassed that I had spoiled my new clean record so soon after being baptized.

That night I prayed for forgiveness.

"Heavenly Father, I'm sorry," I said. "I didn't mean to say that word. It just came out. I don't want to say it again."

I went to bed unhappy, and on Sunday morning I still wasn't feeling very good. When we got to church, I waved hello to Elder Daniels with the same crummy feeling in my stomach.

I felt even worse when my mom said, "I'm so glad you decided to be baptized."

During sacrament meeting a familiar tune made me look up. It was the sacrament hymn. The words were about Jesus. As I started to sing, I concentrated on the words. They spoke about Jesus's amazing Atonement and how wonderful it was. Then I remembered something the missionaries taught me. They said that every time I sincerely repented and took the sacrament, it would be just like I was baptized all over again! I could repent. Instantly my heart felt lighter, and I realized that everything would be OK.

I was so relieved and so grateful for the sacrament that day. I took the bread and water and promised Heavenly Father I would do my best the next week to keep all His commandments. I was so happy. I knew that I was clean again. ♦

The author lives in Colorado, USA.



*"If we have spent time before sacrament meeting repenting of our sins, we can leave sacrament meeting feeling clean and pure."*¹
Elder Don R. Clarke of the Seventy