

### **The Little Box**

Once upon a time, there was a little box. It wasn't a very noticeable box. It wasn't a particularly big box. It wasn't red or yellow and it didn't have stripes or stars on its sides or a fancy bow on its top. Maybe it was because it wasn't very noticeable that the little box didn't feel very special.

As the little box grew older and moved out into the world of boxes, it met lots of other boxes. Some were much bigger. Some wore bright colors and some had elegant ribbon wrapped around them. Some had important looking writing on them. The box figured that all of the other boxes were better than it because of their size, or their color, or their markings, so it didn't resist when the other boxes would reach inside and take things from the little box.

After a time, the little box began to feel quite empty. Every once in a while, it would meet a box not like all the other bigger, brighter boxes. The other box would not reach inside and take something from the little box. Instead, the other box would put something nice inside the little box. It always felt so good when another box put something inside. When this would happen, the little box realized how bad it felt when another box took things away. The little box sighed and wished that there were more boxes that gave of themselves and fewer boxes that took things away.

The little box wandered aimlessly through life, feeling empty most of the time, until one day when it bumped into a whole collection of other boxes. These boxes put lots of nice things inside the little box. It made the little box feel really wonderful. The little box spent more and

more time around the other boxes, getting to know them better and sharing in their love for one another. Soon the little box knew lots and lots of these other boxes. Because each of them gave something of themselves to the little box, it felt full for the first time in its life. The little box relished its fullness and held on tightly to its precious contents.

It wasn't long before the little box noticed that it couldn't receive any more gifts from the other boxes because it was so full. There just wasn't any more room left inside. Soon the other boxes turned their attention to other boxes that weren't so full. The little box discovered that while feeling full was really great, receiving was even better. The little box figured that the only way to receive again was to give something of itself to another to make room. But after having been empty for so much of its life, it was afraid to give anything away because it might never feel full again.

The little box decided that the only way to overcome its fear of not feeling full again was to test its theory and give something away. Several days later the little box happened across another box that was almost empty. The little box boldly placed something of itself inside the other box. The other box was very appreciative. The very next day, a large and important box quite unexpectedly put a surprise inside the little box and it felt full again.

"It worked!" shouted the little box.

During the next several weeks, the little box found other opportunities to put pieces of itself into other boxes that looked like they were empty. These other boxes were very grateful. And sure enough, more and more unexpected things dropped into the little box. The little box felt so good about receiving things again that it scarcely missed feeling full all the time.

Then the little box finally understood. Feeling full is a wonderful gift. But to put something into another box who is feeling empty ... that is truly a richer gift. The little box knew then that it was really was a special box after all.

\* \* \*

*Dear Heavenly Father ...*

*You know better than any of us that giving away something special can be scary ... especially if that something is a someone you care deeply about. We soon will have to give away one of our dear friends to new friends and another church. We thank you for the gift of her friendship. We recognize that the vacuum left in our hearts by her leaving will soon be filled with Your abundance. We ask Your special blessing upon our friend and her family. Take good care of them as they set out on the next part of their life's journey. "May the Lord watch over our going out and our coming in both now and forevermore." (Ps 121:8) Amen.*