



MEXICO | April 26

ZURI'S HOPE

Zuri didn't like the noise and the fighting that fiestas brought. He had a better idea.

Zuri lives in a village in the mountains of central Mexico. Like most villages in Mexico, Zuri's village celebrates many religious and secular festivals each year. During these festivals people eat and drink and dance and laugh. They work hard every day, and when it's festival time, they want to forget their troubles and have fun. People in Zuri's village like the festivals. But Zuri didn't like them.

FAST FACTS

- Mexico is the fifth largest country in the Western Hemisphere. The capital city is Mexico City, which has a population of about 20 million people. One-fifth of Mexico's population lives in or near Mexico City.
- More than 107 million people live in Mexico, and more than 431,000 people are Seventh-day Adventists. That is one Adventist for every 250 people. But in some areas the ratio is closer to one Adventist for every 900 people.

During the festivals his father and the other men often got drunk. Then they started fighting, and someone usually got hurt. Zuri didn't like how his father acted when he was drunk. Zuri didn't like the loud music and the drinking and the fighting that the festivals brought. One day after a festival, Zuri told his father how he hated the festivals. "But what can we do?" his father asked. "We live here."

Zuri's Suggestion

"We could go to the Adventist church on festival days," Zuri suggested. "Those people have a good time, but they don't drink and dance, and no one gets hurt."

"How do you know that," Zuri's father asked. "I've seen them," Zuri said. "They have game

nights, and everyone has fun. And I've gone to some programs where they sing a lot. It's nice." Zuri decided not to tell his father that he had gone to the river to watch the church hold baptisms. He had listened to them sing songs about Jesus while the pastor baptized the people. Zuri liked these people. He felt good when he was around them.

Father knew about the Adventist church and respected the Adventist believers. He told Zuri that he could attend the church programs if he wished.

Zuri Goes to Church

The next Sabbath Zuri went to Sabbath School. He liked the children's program and decided to go every week. Then he discovered that the church had evening programs during the week, and he went to those services as well. He liked to sit in the front row where he could watch the musicians play their guitars and lead the singing. He hoped that one day he could play the guitar too. In the meantime, he could sing with them.

A few months later, Zuri invited his parents to a church social. They went with him and enjoyed it. Then he invited his parents to attend church services with him, and they agreed. They liked the programs, and they were pleased to see how the church members had taken Zuri into their circle of friends.

Zuri's Wish

One day the pastor announced that he would hold a baptism soon. Zuri remembered watching the baptisms at the river. He wanted to be baptized and become a member of God's family.

Zuri asked his father for permission to be baptized. But his father said he wasn't old enough, that baptism is a decision for adults. Disappointed, Zuri asked the pastor whether he had to be a grown-up to be baptized. The pastor said that anyone who loves Jesus and wants to follow Him can be baptized. Zuri ran home and told his parents what the pastor had said. They gave Zuri permission to be baptized.

On Sabbath Zuri told the pastor that his parents would let him be baptized. The pastor talked to him about what Adventists believe and what God expects His followers to be. Zuri eagerly listened and learned what it means to be a Seventh-day Adventist.

On the day of the baptism Zuri hurried to the river with some dry clothes. Other times he had stood on the bank to watch others be baptized, but this day his parents stood on the bank to watch as he was baptized.

Zuri encouraged his whole family to attend church every Sabbath. A few months later Zuri stood again on the riverbank to watch a baptism. This time his mother and father were the ones being baptized.

Zuri is glad that his father and mother are Adventist Christians now, and when the village festivals come, his father doesn't drink and get into fights. Instead the entire family spends the day with their Adventist church family. It is so much better to be a family in God's house.

Our mission offerings this quarter will help build churches and camps throughout central Mexico so that more people can become part of God's family. 🌍