

CALLED TO SERVE:

Roselyn Nez



First, I would like to introduce myself. I am a Diné woman from the Navajo Nation. My clan is Saltwater. I was born from Salt people. As a child, I lived in Pinon, AZ, where my dad lived. Then I moved back to my grandma's residence in Whippoorwill, AZ. I remember as a little girl, me and my sister would go with my dad to NAC (Native American Church), and listen to him singing peyote songs.

One day, my dad sold our hogan that he built. We all moved to Chinle, AZ. That is where my journey began. My mom and my dad divorced. It wasn't an easy life, but I was free and did whatever a kid would do. I was mostly raised in government dormitories from kindergarten to fifth grade. Later on, my mom couldn't raise her children alone, and she needed help. So, my mother enrolled me and my other siblings in LDS (Latter-day Saints) placement programs in Utah. We all grew up in foster homes. My foster parents were good parents. And I love my foster grandparents as well. One thing I had to do was to learn to speak English. After three years in foster homes, my mom told the LDS church member that she missed her children.

When school was out, me, my sister, and other Navajo kids were ready to depart on the bus from Utah back to Arizona. It was a long trip, and I still remember when, on the bus, I saw my mom and older sisters waiting by the Chinle LDS Church. It was good to be back home, but at the same time, I missed my foster family. I didn't understand what my family was saying because they were speaking in the Navajo language. It took me about two to three years to understand my language again. We all moved back to my grandma's residence.

During my high school years, it was tough. I had to go to school and get my high school diploma. One day my mom and I were planning to go to the laundromat. As our clothes were washing, I started to read some announcements on the bulletin board. I saw a small card; it had "10 Commandments" written on it. One number caught my eye—it was number four, Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. I said to myself, "What is Sabbath?" The next day I got on the bus and was still thinking about what I read at the laundromat. I planned to go to the library during lunchtime, and I did. I looked up the word Sabbath. I was surprised and speechless. I had another plan: that weekend, I

would rest. I still didn't know what it meant. I guess the Holy Spirit was with me and showing me something that I didn't know.

As the years went by, I wasn't interested in church, only traditional ceremonies. Then, my mom started to tell me to go to church because I didn't understand the Navajo ceremonies. My older sister was going to the local church. One day, she took me there. That was where I went back to church. The more I went, the more I wanted to know Jesus. I didn't know what I was searching for. I knew in my heart I was missing something. I prayed about it.

Another year went by. I was a volunteer in Chapter House. I was sitting in the office, and this lady came in and said, "May I put these flyers on the bulletin board?" I say, "Yes." Then I went to check it, and I saw it. I smiled to myself: "This is what I've been searching for!" The flyer was about the "Armageddon and the End" meeting at Chinle SDA church. I didn't know what SDA meant or its location. I had never been there.

I told my family, and we attended the one-week meeting. It was a strong sermon. We all got baptized, but sadly, my family said the church was too far and went back to the local church. I was the only one to go back to Chinle SDA. Probably six or more months went by. One of the church members said, "Let's go to Holbrook SDA." That was the first time I stepped onto the Holbrook SDA campus and slept in the guest room. I thought it was an interesting place.

When the principal from Holbrook SDA school came to visit Chinle SDA church, she told me about the Holbrook SDA school. I wasn't sure what I was getting myself into, because I was still learning about Seventh-day Adventists.

I enrolled one of my sons at Holbrook SDA school. I visited my son, like, every weekend. One day I was eating in the cafeteria with my boys, and the principal came up to me and asked if I wanted to work here, and that there was an opening in the cafeteria department. But I had a job already back at the Navajo reservation. Without thinking twice, I said yes. That was back in September 2009. I started working in the cafeteria department as a cook assistant before changing to custodian. To this day, I've been living and working on campus. I believe God has other plans for me, and I decided to go back to school to be a medical assistant. When I finish my AAS, I will continue to do God's work elsewhere. Holbrook Indian School is my second home, and I am grateful to be here.