

Growing Stronger as a Family

Some families can grow apart for a while when a child has cancer. But there are ways to help your family grow stronger and closer. Teens who saw their families grow closer say that it happened because people in their family:

- **Tried** to put themselves in the other person's shoes and thought about how they would feel if they were the other person
- **Understood** that even though people reacted differently to situations, they were all hurting. Some cried a lot. Others showed little emotion. Some used humor to get by.
- **Learned** to respect and talk about differences. The more they asked about how others were feeling, the more they could help each other.

"My family wasn't really close before my sister Gina got cancer. We used to go our own way and never did much together. When Gina got sick, we started pulling together more. We talked to our pastor about how much more each day meant. Now it seems like even simple things are special—like eating dinner together as a family." —Jared, age 13

"We all acted differently when my middle brother Terrell got cancer. My younger brother started acting like a baby again and my older brother never seems to be home. I'm the only girl and feel like I have to hold it all together for my whole family." —Keisha, age 14