



# My **FIRST** Talk

By President Thomas S. Monson

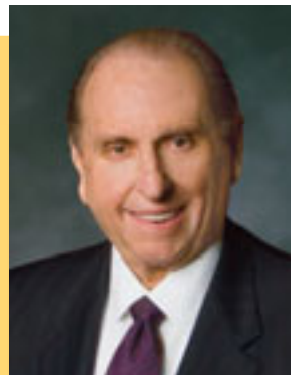
I remember when I was assigned to give my first talk in church. I was given the liberty to choose my subject. I've always liked birds, so I thought of the Seagull Monument. In preparation, I went to

Temple Square and looked at the

monument. First I

was attracted to all the coins in the water surrounding the monument. I wondered how they would be retrieved and who would retrieve them. Then

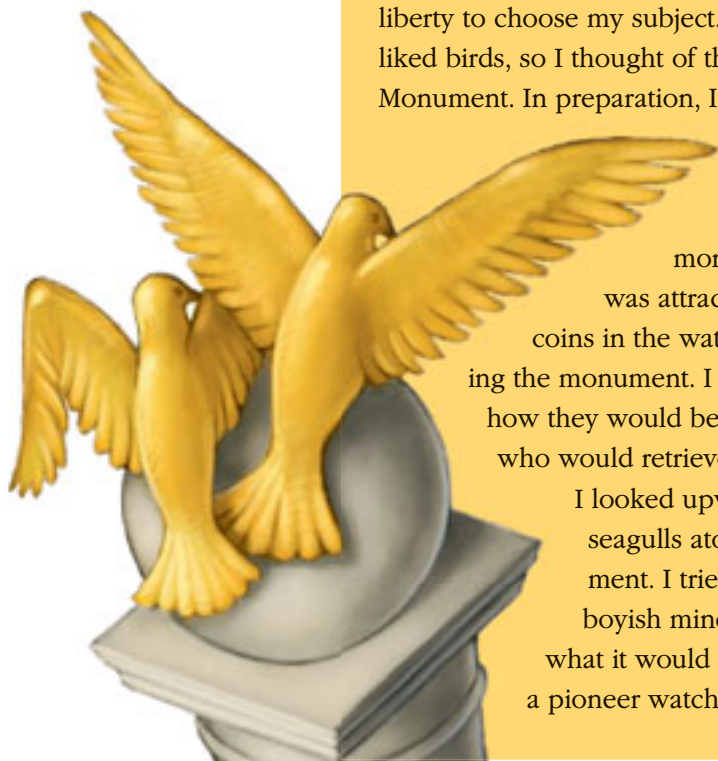
I looked upward at the seagulls atop that monument. I tried in my boyish mind to imagine what it would be like to be a pioneer watching the first



year's growth of precious grain being devoured by crickets and then seeing those seagulls, with their lofty

wings, descending upon the fields and eating the crickets. I loved the account. I sat down with a pencil in hand and wrote out a two-and-one-half-minute talk. I've never forgotten the seagulls. I've never forgotten the crickets. I've never forgotten my knees knocking together as I gave that talk. I've never forgotten the experience of letting some of my innermost feelings be expressed verbally at the pulpit.

*From an October 2000 general conference address.*



President Monson was a boy just like me!





## Your Turn!

When it's your turn to give a talk, here are some simple steps to help you get ready:

1. Pray to Heavenly Father to ask for His Spirit to help you prepare.

2. Write down the topic of your talk in one sentence: "My talk is about \_\_\_\_\_."

3. Find a scripture about your topic. You can use the Topical Guide to help you find a scripture. Think about what that scripture teaches you about the topic.

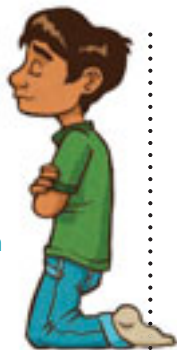
4. Find a story that teaches about the topic. It can be about a prophet, about someone from the scriptures or Church history, or about someone you know. It can even be about you! The *Friend* is a great place to find a story for your talk.

5. Think about what you've learned about your topic and what it means to you. Think about what you would like to bear your testimony about.

6. Write down notes or draw pictures to help you remember what you want to say.

7. Practice giving your talk to a family member, or share it in family home evening.

8. Pray to Heavenly Father to ask for His Spirit to help you as you give your talk.



» President Monson was about 10 years old when he stood at the pulpit to give his first talk in the Sixth-Seventh Ward in Salt Lake City, depicted at right.



## A Pulpit Then and Now

» When he was 22 years old, President Monson became bishop of that ward. The ward had 87 widows, and he visited and looked after each of them. Often he would go into the chapel and kneel down near the pulpit to pray about what he should do as bishop.

» When the old Sixth-Seventh Ward chapel was torn down, President Monson saved the beautifully carved pulpit. It is now in the Church History Museum.

» Last year President Monson stood at the old pulpit, shown at left, once again when he dedicated the new Church History Library.

