OUR FAMILY'S IRON ROD

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN LUKE

Our family wanted a place to hang art and photographs. One evening after reading about Lehi's dream (see 1 Nephi 8), we decided to make a space by hanging our own "iron rod." I fastened a curtain rod to a prominent wall in our home, and a friend helped me put "Hold to the Rod" in vinyl lettering above the rod. Then we had a family home evening to discuss the importance of our family's iron rod. We decided to hang items that would help us stand firm and choose the right. Our four-year-old wanted to hang pictures of her grandparents, and our 11-year-old hung the Articles of Faith she was memorizing. We have since used our rod to hang pictures of General Authorities before general conference, visual aids used for family home evening, gospel art pictures, and more. At the center of our family's iron rod remains a picture of Christ to remind us whom we are striving to follow. ■

Jennifer Crooks, Michigan, USA

HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

"Pickles, Turnips, and Testimony: Inspiration from the Life and Teachings of Lorenzo Snow," page 22: Discuss as a family what you think President Snow meant when he said that in order to be converted we should be "saturated with the right spirit" (page 23). You might want to share some of his conversion experiences in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow* (see pages 1, 3, 59, and 61–62) and then take turns sharing your testimonies.

GOD WILL POUR OUT A

BLESSING

Name withheld

When I was a little girl, my parents taught me about tithing. During my childhood and much of my adult life, I did not think a lot about tithing and its importance, even though I paid it consistently. Yet until after the breakup of my 25-year marriage and an onslaught of trials that encompassed every aspect of my life did I understand what the Lord meant when He said, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:10).

In December 2001, just as I was beginning to feel grounded after my devastating divorce, I was diagnosed with stage IV non-Hodgkin lymphoma. This cancer of the lymph system affects the bone marrow and blood. The doctor said I had just six months to live unless I underwent chemotherapy, radiation, and a bone marrow transplant. This came as a great shock, but I received inspiring and comforting priesthood blessings that helped me decide to undergo the medical treatments.

Because of the intensity of these treatments, I was often absent from work. When my own leave and vacation time ran out, my co-workers compassionately donated theirs. Despite these absences, the company kept me on its payroll at full salary and continued to do so until I was out of the hospital.

Ultimately, I had to leave my job so I could recover. This created a terrible financial hardship. Moreover, I determined to pay tithing on my small monthly disability check. I also decided to pay as generous a fast offering as I could and make a small monthly contribution to each of the other categories on the tithes and offerings slip. I decided to leave the rest of my financial worries in God's hands.

I determined to pay tithing on my small monthly disability check. I would leave the rest in God's hands.

January 2013 59

"God Will Pour Out a Blessing," page 58: You may wish to share the story of how this sister had the faith to pay her tithing. Consider reading and discussing the section on "Tithes and Offerings" from the *For the Strength of Youth* booklet. Consider challenging your children to begin paying tithing and fast offerings if they aren't already.

"Embracing Ethan, Accepting Autism," page 64: Share the story of how Ethan's ward welcomed his priesthood service and discuss ways you can relate to people with special needs. Consider the people in your ward, school, and community who might benefit from your help and set goals to reach out to them.