



Family Banner

Our family was inspired by Elder M. Russell Ballard's talk in the October 2005 general conference. He called on families to make "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" like a banner in their homes.¹ We decided to take his admonition literally. On a piece of fabric, we wrote with a permanent marker: "Successful families are established . . . on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome

recreational activities."² We tied the banner to a pole and everyone signed the fabric.

Now the banner is a regular part of our

family home evenings. Our sons enjoy taking turns holding the banner high as we recite our family theme.

Sometimes we even march around the room if our flag bearer is especially

energetic. Having the banner routine has added feelings of joy and unity to our family home evenings. Every week we're reminded of the true principles our family strives to achieve.

Rena Phung, Hawaii, USA

- NOTES**
1. See "What Matters Most Is What Lasts Longest," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 42.
 2. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.



ILLUSTRATION BY BETH WHITTAKER

HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

"Learning through Life's Trials," on page 27. After the lesson, you may want to invite family members to share experiences when a trial has blessed their life. You could conclude by discussing with family members what they can do next time they are faced with a challenge.

LEARNING THROUGH Life's Trials

By Larry Richman

The trials of this life will ultimately lead to joy if we patiently trust in God's plan and discover how to use adversity to grow stronger.

It is learned that the way I respond to trials can have a great effect on whether they become obstacles in my life or opportunities to learn and grow. When I engage over difficulties, the experience only serves to weigh me down. But something that does not weigh me down is the great plan of happiness that is set for me as an opportunity to grow and learn.

An individual of loving God, we accepted our Father's plan to obtain a physical body, gain earthly experience, and qualify to access to the presence and enjoyment of His Father, we "deserve for joy" the chance to participate in the "plan of happiness" (Alma 42: 8). Here on earth, there is a lot of joy, but there are also times of trial, adversity, and grief.

A common misunderstanding among members of the Church is that if we suffer with all our might to try to overcome, nothing bad will happen to us. We may believe if we succeed in this struggle, our struggle will automatically be forgiven on earth, or in the World to Come. We will never get sick. But the truth is that things will happen in the face of people. The consequences of good and bad actions will come, but they do not always come instantaneously, and they may not even come in this life.

"The Law of the Fast," on page 52. Consider making a family plan for the next fast Sunday. Decide when the family will pray to begin and end the fast. Discuss what you might fast for and how you are blessed by sharing your testimonies during the fast. If a family member cannot go without food or water, discuss other ways he or she can participate.

"The Value of Experiencing and Expressing Gratitude," on page 44. As part of the lesson, consider starting a family gratitude journal. For example, before family prayers each night you could have each person share one thing from the day that they are grateful for and list these things in your journal. At the end of an appointed time period, such as a year, review the blessings your family has received.

THE VALUE OF EXPERIENCING AND EXPRESSING GRATITUDE

My daughter, 10-year-old Lexia, and I were talking about the value of gratitude. She said she was grateful for the fact that she had a mother who loved her. I said I was grateful for the fact that I had a daughter who loved me.

Gratitude is a powerful emotion that comes from recognizing gifts or blessings and feeling thankful. It is also an attitude, a way of perceiving life, in which individuals are willing to receive and acknowledge the beneficial nature of others and the world around them. Gratitude is a powerful emotion that comes from recognizing gifts or blessings and feeling thankful. It is also an attitude, a way of perceiving life, in which individuals are willing to receive and acknowledge the beneficial nature of others and the world around them.