



CONNECTING WITH THE BLESSINGS OF *Relief Society*

Like a “fabric of lace,” Relief Society unites Latter-day Saint women and blesses the lives of all.

Connecting with the Gospel

“You are members of the greatest women’s organization in the world, an organization which is a vital part of the kingdom of God on earth and which is so designed and operated that it helps its faithful members to gain eternal life in our Father’s kingdom.”¹

—President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972)

Christa Marsee became a member of the Church at age 19. She sometimes felt unsure of herself as a new member, but attending Relief Society helped her realize she was in a safe and wonderful place. She felt like she belonged.

“Everything was so new to me,” Christa says. “It was as though I had been in a drought, but in Relief Society, I felt truth flowing over me like water. I just drank it in.”

One of her first visiting teaching assignments was to a young sister who was pregnant and had a toddler. “During the time I was her visiting teacher,” Christa says, “her husband was killed in a car accident.” Although Christa didn’t feel equipped to help this young

sister, she tried to comfort her. Through that experience and meaningful opportunities to serve in Relief Society, Christa came to understand the truths of the gospel. She says, “I have learned what it is to mourn with those who mourn. I have observed sufferings of all kinds in my sisters and seen them endure with great dignity.”

Like Christa, women around the world have found that because they belong to Relief Society, they have access to unique power and strength. Women who find themselves isolated from loved ones, feel overwhelmed by trials, or desire more purpose in their lives can draw power from their membership in Relief Society.

Relief Society connects us with sisters who love us—sisters who can help us and whom we can serve. It connects us with important information about practical concerns as well as deeply spiritual matters. As President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained, Relief Society is “like a fabric of lace spread across the continents.”² Its power comes from the ties it creates between sisters and the gospel.



Connecting with Information

“This society is to get instruction through the order which God has established . . . and this society shall rejoice and knowledge and intelligence shall flow down from this time.”³—Joseph Smith (1805–44)

As a Relief Society activity leader, Heidi Sampson decided to have representatives from the American Cancer Society speak to her ward about breast cancer awareness and prevention. The night of the activity, the speakers taught them how to detect early signs of cancer.

Six months later, at the age of 32, Heidi discovered a lump. “Because of what I had learned at our Relief Society activity, I knew what to do. During the next several years I went through surgery, reconstruction, chemotherapy, and radiation.”

As ward members learned of her situation, they opened their hearts to her and her family and took care of their needs. They even held a special fast for her. “During that difficult time,” Heidi explains, “I relied on the love of my family, my ward, and especially my Heavenly Father to carry me when I was weak.” Through her trying experience, her appreciation for Relief Society was strengthened. “Relief Society meetings are a way for sisters to learn, to love, and to teach one another,” Heidi says. “I am living proof that this inspired program will bless your life in ways you might never imagine.”



COULD YOU PLEASE HELP ME?

“A few weeks ago, I was hurried and frazzled, with too many to-dos on my list. I had hoped to go to the temple that day but felt I was just too busy. As soon as that thought of being too busy for temple service crossed my mind, it awakened me to what I most needed to do. I left my office to walk over to the Salt Lake Temple, wondering when I was going to recapture the time I was losing. Thankfully, the Lord is patient and merciful and taught me a beautiful lesson that day.

“As I sat down in the session room, a young sister leaned over and reverently whispered, ‘I’m really nervous. This is only my second time in the temple. Could you please help me?’ How could she ever have known that those words were exactly what I needed to hear? She didn’t know, but Heavenly Father knew. He had observed my greatest need. I needed to serve. He prompted this humble young sister to serve me by inviting me to serve her. I assure you that I was the one who benefited most.”

Linda K. Burton, Relief Society general president, “First Observe, Then Serve,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 80.



Connecting with Sisters through Service

“We are the Lord’s hands here upon the earth, with the mandate to serve and to lift His children. He is dependent upon each of us.”⁴—President Thomas S. Monson

Over the course of three months, K. Laura Sommer gave birth to a fifth child, her husband started a new job, and the family moved to a new area far from relatives.

“Each day’s work felt like bricks dragging me down,” she explains. “I was overwhelmed by how much I had to do. For the first time in my life, I felt incapable and embarrassed that I wasn’t able to take care of my family as I had always been able to do.”

Laura felt that asking for help was her only hope, but she didn’t know whom to ask. Finally, she decided

to ask Heavenly Father to direct her to the person who could help her. She prayed, “Father, isn’t there someone who has *nothing to do* who could help me? Then I wouldn’t feel so bad accepting the help.”

The next Sunday at church, Laura and her family sat next to a woman who introduced herself after the meeting. “It looks like you could use some help,” she said. “Can I come over this week and help you? I am at a very strange place in my life. I’ve just moved here, and I have *nothing to do*. I’ve been praying to find someone I could help.”

Laura recalls, “My eyes overflowed with tears of joy as the Spirit filled my heart. Not only had the Lord sent a kind sister to help me, but He had answered my prayer in such a deeply personal way that it left no room for doubt.” Laura recognized that the answer to her prayer had come because a Relief Society sister she barely knew was in tune with the Spirit. Their bond as Relief Society sisters offered them each the chance to minister and be ministered to.

Like Laura, women all over the world—whatever their situation—are connected through the unbreakable bonds of Relief Society. This unique women’s organization is, President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) observed, “divinely ordained of God to minister for the salvation of the souls of women and of men.”⁵ Its power as a force for good stems in part from the unity of faithful women spread throughout the earth who are “of one heart and one mind” (Moses 7:18) in their goal to “strengthen families and build up the kingdom of God on the earth.”⁶ As Emma Smith, the first Relief Society president, declared, “We are going to do something extraordinary.”⁷ ■

NOTES

1. Joseph Fielding Smith, in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 97.
2. Boyd K. Packer, in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 99.
3. Joseph Smith, in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 14–15.
4. Thomas S. Monson, in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 103.
5. Joseph F. Smith, in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 66.
6. The First Presidency, in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, ix.
7. Emma Smith, in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 14.

