

Learning from Conference

Do you want to make the messages and spirit of general conference a regular part of your life? Read how these members are doing it.

In his closing remarks at the 177th Annual General Conference in April 2007, President Gordon B. Hinckley told members of the Church: “We hope that you will use the May edition of the Church magazines as a text for your family home evenings, to review that which has been spoken in this conference. What has been said by each of the speakers represents his or her prayerful attempt to impart knowledge that will inspire and cause all who have heard it to stand a little taller and be a little better” (*Ensign*, May 2007, 105). Here, members share how they have implemented that counsel and found additional ways to learn from general conference.

Putting the Lessons to Use Immediately

Our 10-year-old daughter, Rachel, was in charge of the family home evening lesson the Monday following the April 2007 general conference. She asked me what she should teach the family, and I suggested she choose something we learned over the week-end. She said she remembered Elder David A. Bednar’s talk about making pickles (“Ye Must Be Born Again,” *Ensign*, May 2007, 19), and although the

text of the conference talk was not yet available online, we brainstormed together to remember the message of the “Parable of the Pickle.”

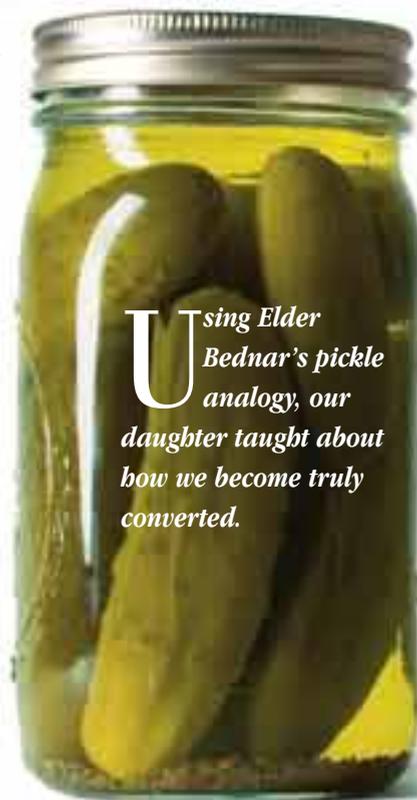
That night Rachel taught a great lesson about being truly converted. Using Elder Bednar’s analogy, we discussed what happens to a cucumber that is merely dunked—not immersed—and how that relates to our lives and relationship with the Savior. Even our youngest daughter, who is three, paid attention because she loves pickles.

My wife and I were excited to see that our children did pay attention while watching conference and that we had found a way to put it to use in our lives the next day. We are thankful for living apostles and prophets who teach in ways that help all of us learn and understand.

Trevor Hansen, Arizona

Studying and Discussing

With our busy lives and schedules, preparing a lesson for family home evening every week is sometimes challenging. When our two youngest children were still at home—both of them teenagers—we started using the general conference talks for our weekly family home evening lessons. I order enough copies of the May and November *Ensign*



Using Elder Bednar’s pickle analogy, our daughter taught about how we become truly converted.

magazine for each family member to have a personal copy. We take turns choosing the talk to focus on, independently read the talk we've selected for the week, highlight the parts that impress us, and then discuss the talk as our lesson. The person who chose the talk leads the discussion and closes with his or her testimony. We then choose the talk for the following week.

This approach has completely taken away the last-minute panic of deciding what to do for family home evening and has led to many tender moments for us. It has truly been a blessing to our family and a way to help us remember and apply the messages of general conference.

Christy White, Utah

Note: A 14-issue subscription to the Ensign is available at www.ldscatalog.com. This subscription includes 12 monthly issues of the Ensign plus one extra copy of the May and November issues (which include the talks delivered at general conference), for a total of 14 issues. You can also purchase single copies of the Ensign at this site.

Hearing the Voice of the Messenger

I have had the privilege of sharing family home evening for the past two years with two other single sisters in my ward. We use both the conference DVD and the conference edition of the *Ensign* as the basis for our lessons. Each Monday we watch one talk from the DVD and then discuss the message. (We take turns from week to week in leading the discussion.)

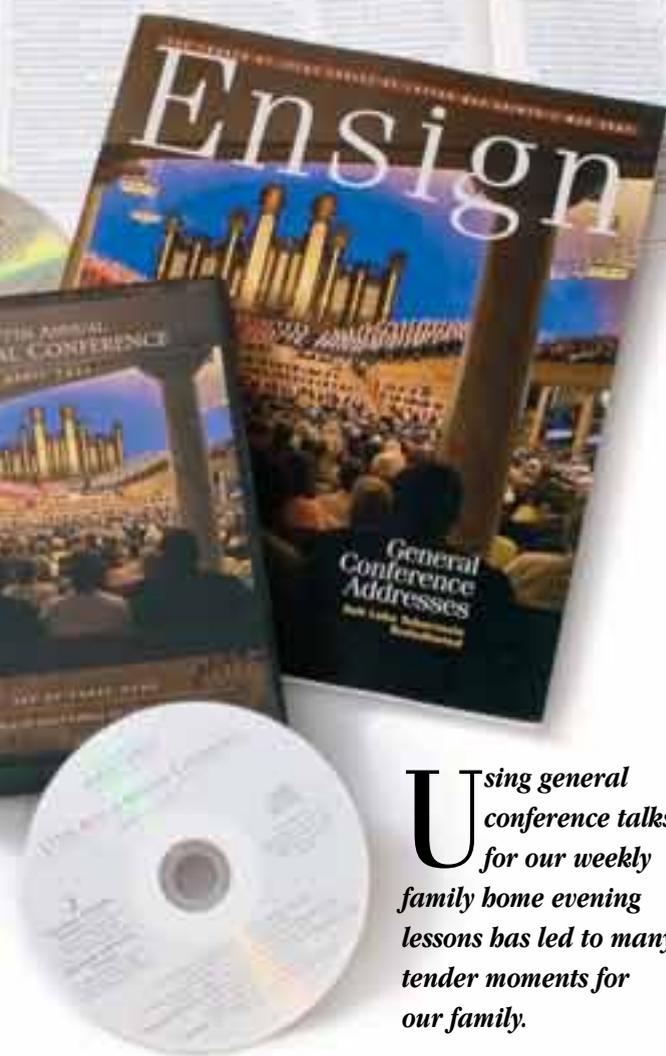
In doing this, we are able to concentrate on one message at a time. Because we are not only discussing the message but also listening to the voice of the messenger and to the music of that conference session, we get so much more out of our family home evenings than we previously have!

Although I listen carefully when I attend conference, I find it difficult to assimilate all of the information, gospel principles, and life lessons at once. Our family home evening format helps us learn the things our General Authorities are teaching "line upon line, precept upon precept" (2 Nephi 28:30) during the six months that follow each conference.

Julie Junod, Arizona

Helping Children Learn from Conference

Our family enjoyed experiencing general conference together this year. On Saturday we attended both sessions



Using general conference talks for our weekly family home evening lessons has led to many tender moments for our family.

at our branch meetinghouse. On Sunday we watched the sessions at home via the Web site LDS.org.

I wanted to find something that would help our children, ages six and four, pay attention to what the speakers were saying. With a little online searching in the Gospel Library, I found a conference word sheet activity (see Hilary Hendricks and Kathy Chatfield, "Listen to Our Leaders," *Friend*, Apr. 2002, 24). The children and I listened carefully for the words on our lists, making a check mark each time we heard a particular word. Our children enjoyed the game and were excited every time they heard a familiar word. I was amazed at how much they enjoyed paying attention and listening to our leaders. As I helped them listen for words and noticed which ones received the most check marks, I also understood better the basic message of each talk.

Jenifer Fugal, Michigan

Using Talks in Family Home Evening

In the April 2007 conference, Elder Richard G. Scott gave a talk about prayer ("Using the Supernal Gift of Prayer," *Ensign*, May 2007, 8). He spoke in simple terms that even



our young children understood. Elder Scott's talk was particularly meaningful to us since we had a chance to meet him a few years ago at our stake conference.

Following general conference, we had a family home evening with our extended family, including a less-active family member. The lesson focused on Elder Scott's talk, and it was a wonderful, engaging experience for us. We look forward to using more conference talks as topical discussions in both our individual and extended family home evenings.

Jim Worden, California

Writing Down Key Words

Chinese is my native language, but I watched conference in English this year. I tried my best to write down key words that would remind me of what I had heard and, more important, what I had felt. These phrases have served as a helpful reminder in the weeks following general conference.

Even after conference is over, I love listening to conference addresses again and again. In the past I've purchased the DVDs, sometimes in Chinese, sometimes in English. Regardless of which language I'm listening in, my heart is always touched. Each time, my faith improves, and my testimony grows.

Pei Yi (Belinda) Norberg, Utah

Acting Out the Story

With two toddler children, my husband and I often find that family home evening can be challenging. The children have a difficult time sitting quietly to hear scriptures or stories for very long. As we attempted to read the story of Joseph F. Smith's dream from President Hinckley's priesthood talk (see "I Am Clean," *Ensign*, May 2007, 60–62), things seemed to be as chaotic as ever.

Then we decided to have the children act out the story as my husband read it. We went into the bathroom and showed them the bathtub and talked about how Joseph F.

Smith washed himself clean. They liked uncovering the "bundle" I had made and finding the white shirt I had placed inside. We talked about how repentance makes our spirits clean like the white shirt. Our daughter enjoyed putting on the shirt and knocking at the front door to find "Joseph Smith" (me) there. She was happy to report that she was "clean."

It was a lot of fun to participate together, and my husband and I enjoyed teaching the children. We were able to focus less on trying to keep the children quiet and more on teaching gospel principles.

Rebekah Jakeman, Utah

Creating Reminder Notes

I used to take extensive notes during conference, but I decided this wasn't effective since the talks are printed in the *Ensign*. Instead of concentrating on writing down every point that is made, I now use a couple of note cards to jot down the promptings I feel while I am listening to the counsel of the General Authorities. I keep the cards in small page holders near my computer monitor. That way, I see them daily and am reminded that it's not just what we know or how we feel during conference but what we do to apply it that matters. Keeping these reminder notes has helped me form better habits based on the promptings I feel.

Karen Tibbitts, California

Listening Frequently

I love general conference! Yet with two young children, concentrating during 10 hours over a weekend can be a challenge for my wife and me, although we try. One thing that helps me internalize the messages is downloading the talks to my digital music player and listening to them as I commute to work, exercise, or do tasks around the house. Many moments of inspiration have come in those ordinary contexts. Recently I was doing the dishes as I listened to Elder Henry B.

Eyring's talk "This Day" (*Ensign*, May 2007, 89), and I felt impressed that I needed to stop complaining about a certain trial I had been facing. I've sought to heed that impression. Another time, following the October 2006 general conference, I was jogging through the park listening to Elder Robert D. Hales's talk "Holy Scriptures: The Power of God unto Our Salvation." One of Elder Hales's comments particularly stood out to me: "When we want to speak to God, we pray. And when we want Him to speak to us, we search the scriptures" (*Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 26–27). This has stayed with me and affected the way I think about my scripture study.

General conference talks are a source of inspiration to me and invite the Spirit into my life—even long after the closing session's benediction.

David Evans, California

Uniting Extended Family

While two of my five siblings are still at home and still participate in weekly family home evenings with Mom and Dad, the rest of us are now married and living throughout the United States, and we conduct our own family home evenings. But twice a year, to reinforce the important lessons of general conference and to unite the members of our family, even in spite of distance, my parents hold "Conference Review."



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

1. Consider having a family member walk blindfolded across the room trying to avoid certain objects. Then repeat the same activity but have another family member tell the one blindfolded how to get around the objects. Explain how heeding the words of the prophet and apostles can guide us through our lives.
2. Using the examples from the article, list ways that your family can apply the lessons they learn from general conference in their daily lives.

The text for each of these meetings is the most recent general conference edition of the *Ensign*. Each household chooses a talk to study, apply, and teach to the rest of the family. To present our lessons to one another, we get together via speaker phone, e-mail, or video conference, depending on what circumstances allow. If we are really lucky, we sit down together in Mom and Dad's living room.

Each presentation is unique to the family giving it. We have told

stories, solved puzzles, played games, and studied scriptures as part of Conference Review.

During our most recent review, my seven-year-old sister held up pictures of cucumbers and pickles as she taught us about pickling. Then my fourteen-year-old sister explained how each of those steps applies to the conversion process. Through this, we learned

more about the doctrine that Elder David A. Bednar taught (see "Ye Must Be Born Again," *Ensign*, May 2007, 19).

At the same review, my sister and brother-in-law used "The Tongue of Angels," given by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, to remind us of the power of our words (see *Ensign*, May 2007, 16). They then provided each of us with envelopes addressed to other members of our family and challenged us to write notes of gratitude and kind words to one another. These are just two examples of how the tradition of Conference Review helps our family review, remember, and apply the teachings of general conference.

Through this tradition we have grown closer as a family, shared our testimonies with one another, challenged each other to live the counsel given at each general conference, and increased our love for the Savior and His gospel. ■

Tiffany Jean Costley Moore, Arizona

Note: Many of the general conference resources mentioned in this article—and others—are available for purchase online at www.ldscatalog.com. You can also find free text, audio, and video files of conference proceedings online at www.lds.org.

Listening to conference talks as I exercise, commute, or do tasks around the house has brought moments of inspiration during otherwise ordinary routines.

