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I Will Be a Strong Link

The family is ordained of God (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World”).

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When President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) was a young man, he and his family lived on a farm during the summer.

He had this experience there:

“There was a dead tree I wished to pull. I fastened one end of a chain to the tractor and the other end to the tree. As the tractor began to move, the tree shook a little, and then the chain broke.

“I looked at that broken link and wondered how it could have given way. I went to the hardware store and bought a repair link. I put it together again, but it was an awkward and ugly connection. The chain was never, never the same.”¹

Think of yourself as part of a chain—a family chain. President Hinckley said we should never let ourselves be a weak link in our family chain.

Adam and Eve were the first family on earth. They began the family chain. God told them to have children. As

Adam and Eve had children, they taught them the gospel.

Just as the children of Adam and Eve learned from their parents and then taught their own children, Heavenly Father wants you to learn from your parents. Then when you have children, He wants you to teach them. You can look to Adam and Eve and other righteous families in the scriptures to learn how to help your family be strong links in the family chain. ●

NOTE

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Keep the Chain Unbroken,” in *Brigham Young University 1999–2000 Speeches* (2000), 108–9.

Activity

Remove page 12, and mount it on heavier paper. Cut out each link on the solid black lines. To cut out the inside of the links, cut through the link on the broken line. Write your name on one of the links and the names of your parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, or other relatives on the other links. Connect the links. Hang your chain where it will remind you that you are part of a family and that you can be a strong link. In a family home evening, have your family members choose a name on one of the links and tell one thing they have learned from that person that helps them be strong.

SHARING TIME IDEAS

February Theme: *I came to earth as part of a family.*
(Note: All songs are from *Children's Songbook* unless otherwise noted; GAK = Gospel Art Picture Kit; TNGC = Teaching, No Greater Call.)

1. ***Adam and Eve were the first family.*** Write the following scripture references on the outside of six envelopes, one reference per envelope: Moses 3:24; Moses 5:1; Moses 5:2; Moses 5:4; Moses 5:5; Moses 5:12. Prepare these six wordstrips in large letters: marriage, work together, have children, pray, obey commandments, teach children. Cut the letters apart, paper clip each word together, and put them inside the corresponding envelope. Find pictures of families that illustrate each wordstrip.

Display GAK 119 (Adam and Eve Teaching Their Children). Briefly tell the story of Adam and Eve, emphasizing that through them Heavenly Father's pattern of families was established. Divide the children into six groups, and give each group an envelope. With their teacher's help, have the children read the scripture, unscramble the letters, and glue or tape them on a wordstrip. Beginning with Moses 3:24 and going in order, have each group show their wordstrip and choose a matching picture. Post the pictures around the picture of Adam and Eve. Explain that Adam and Eve taught the gospel to their children and that the family is the best place to learn and live the gospel. Sing "Teach Me to Walk in the Light" (p. 177).

2. ***Heavenly Father blesses righteous families in the scriptures.*** To help the children understand that Heavenly Father blesses righteous families, prepare a readers' theater about the sons of Helaman being protected in battle (see "Readers' Theaters," TNGC, 177). Using the scriptures as a guide, include parts for a narrator, Helaman, and the sons of Helaman (see Alma 53:10–23; 56; 57). Keep the parts simple, and point out the men's righteous qualities and how they were blessed. Use name tags or simple costumes if desired.

The scriptures record other stories of righteous families who were blessed by Heavenly Father. Divide into two groups. Give each group one of the following scripture stories: Nephi's family (1 Nephi 17:7–13; 18:1–6) and Jaredite families (Genesis 11:1–9; Ether 1:33–43). With the help of teachers, have each group read the story. Act as a reporter (use a microphone if available), and interview each group by asking questions that bring out the details of each story. You might ask a child how he or she feels about what happened in the story. Ask the children to listen for what Heavenly Father will send us when we keep the commandments as you sing together the first verse of "Keep the Commandments" (pp. 146–47). Listen to the children's responses, and help them identify blessings Heavenly Father has given to their families. Bear testimony that Heavenly Father blesses righteous families.

3. ***The priesthood blesses my family.*** Use stations to teach that the priesthood is the power and authority of God used to bless and guide us. Invite priesthood holders approved by the bishop or branch president to teach at each station. Ask the pianist to play "The Priesthood Is Restored" (p. 89) as the children move between stations (see "Stations," TNGC, 179).

Station 1: Display a picture of Jesus Christ. Use pictures to teach about the restoration of the priesthood (examples: GAK 407 [John the Baptist Conferring the Aaronic Priesthood] and GAK 408 [Melchizedek Priesthood Restoration]). Have a priesthood holder tell about his line of authority back to Jesus Christ by letting the children represent the priesthood holders in this line as he talks about them. Recite the fifth article of faith together.

Station 2: Teach the children about the ordinances and blessings made possible through the priesthood by showing a picture and sharing a personal experience that goes with the picture (examples:

baptizing and confirming: GAK 601 [Baptism]; giving a healing blessing: GAK 613 [Administering to the Sick]). Give the children an opportunity to share feelings about a blessing they've received. Make sure the children understand that if they do not have a priesthood holder in their home, they can receive blessings through home teachers, missionaries, the bishop or branch president, or relatives who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Station 3: Have the children look up "Priesthood, Qualifying for" in the Topical Guide. Ask them to work in pairs to choose a scripture and find qualities that men need to qualify for the priesthood. Have them or their teachers write each quality on a piece of paper. Have the children choose a quality and tell what a Primary boy could do now to work on that quality. Sing the second verse of "Love Is Spoken Here" (pp. 190–91). Bear testimony that having the priesthood to bless us is a blessing from Heavenly Father.

4. ***God's creations bless us.*** Display pictures that represent each day of the Creation. Invite the children to look at the creations while you sing together "All Things Bright and Beautiful" (p. 231) or "The World Is So Lovely" (p. 233). Teach that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ created the earth and everything on it for the benefit and use of people. Read together and discuss Doctrine and Covenants 59:18–20. Help the children understand the terms. For example: What is "raiment"? (clothing). What does it mean to "enliven the soul"? (to liven up or brighten). How do we use judgment and avoid excess in using God's creations?

Tape one of the following labels on eight children: please the eye, gladden the heart, for food, for raiment, for taste, for smell, to strengthen the body, to enliven the soul. Have these children sit facing the rest of the Primary. Have another child choose and hold a picture from the first day of Creation. Let the children decide which label fits that creation. Have the child wearing that label hold the picture. Ask how we show appreciation and good judgment in using that creation. Repeat for each day of the Creation. Stand the children with labels in the correct order, and read again Doctrine and Covenants 59:18–19. Bear testimony that God's creations bless us.

5. ***Song presentation:*** "How Firm a Foundation" (*Hymns*, no. 85, vv. 1 and 3). Introduce the song by singing the phrase "The wise man built his house upon the rock" ("The Wise Man and the Foolish Man," p. 281). Hold up a rock and ask: Why was the man wise to build his house upon a rock (a firm foundation)? Have the children listen for who should be our rock (our foundation) as you read Helaman 5:12.

Have a child hold the rock and a picture of Jesus Christ while you sing the first line of "How Firm a Foundation." Have the children repeat the line. On the board, write "faith in his _____." Have the children listen for the words to put in the blanks while you sing the second line of the first verse. Have them sing the line. Ask: Where do we find His word (scriptures)? Invite a child to come up and hold scriptures. Have the children sing the first two lines. Sing line three. Add to the child's scriptures until he or she is holding all the standard works, a conference issue of the *Ensign*, and pictures of modern prophets to show how abundantly the Lord has given us His word. Have the children sing line three. Ask them to listen while you sing lines four and five for the word that is repeated three times ("Savior"). Define *refuge* (place of safety), and have the children sing lines four and five. For each line in the third verse, show a picture of Jesus Christ that represents the message. Ask the children to listen again in lines four and five for the word that is repeated three times. Define *omnipotent* (all-powerful). Bear testimony that Christ is a sure foundation and that if we are built upon His gospel, we shall not fall.

6. ***Friend*** references: "Heavenly Father's Plan," June 2003, 7; "Garden of Eden," Sept. 2006, 32–33; "The Creation," Feb. 2007, 32–33; "Reverence for Heavenly Father's Creations," Nov. 1992, 46; "The Restoration of the Priesthood," May 2003, 39.