

Liahona

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**Why Weepst Thou?
Taking Comfort from the
Empty Tomb, p. 8**

**Secrets for Scripture Success,
pp. 15, 16**

**Meet Some People Who Love
You, p. F8**



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FAMILY HOME EVENING IDEAS

*These ideas can help you use
the Liahona to enhance
your teaching in the
classroom as well as in
the home.*

*"From the Garden to the
Empty Tomb," p. 8:*

Use this article to cre-
ate an Easter program. Assign
family members to read the
quotes in order. Choose songs
or hymns about the Savior, about
Easter, or about the sacrament to
intersperse during the reading of
the quotes. At the conclusion of

the program, bear your testimony.

**"Because We Have Them
Before Our Eyes," p. 16:**

Choose a chapter in the
Book of Mormon that you
feel will be meaningful to
your family. Explain
the five principles
of scripture study that Elder
David A. Bednar teaches, and
incorporate these as you study
the selected chapter. Consider
beginning a family scripture jour-
nal in which you record insights
that are significant to your family.



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22 Fighting to Find the Truth



Heavenly Father has made many promises to His children. As we choose the right, we can receive those promises. Beginning with this issue, the *Liahona* will include a picture of a CTR ring each month. As you look for the CTR ring hidden in this issue, remember how grateful you are for the Savior.

“The Perfect Comeback,” p. 44: Write down some common circumstances in which people might be offended. Have family members role-play these situations, and use this article to talk about ways we can be more sensitive to the feelings of others and how we can forgive rather than take offense.

“No Ordinary Home Teacher,” p. F10: Read the article and discuss with your family what Brother Erickson did well as a home teacher. What are the qualities of a caring home teacher? Discuss how to

develop these Christlike qualities. Bear testimony of the importance of helping meet people’s needs.

“Why I Believe in Jesus Christ,” p. F14: Write the bold words from the article on pieces of paper. Place them in a container. After reading the article, let each family member take a paper and discuss how those things helped Lindsey gain her testimony. Have family members share what helps their testimonies grow by asking them to write down their feelings, draw a picture, or sing a song.

THE FRIEND: FOR CHILDREN

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- F4 Sharing Time: I Can Repent and Be Happy
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- F6 From the Life of President Wilford Woodruff:
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- F8 People Who Love You and Serve You
- F10 No Ordinary Home Teacher
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- F14 Why I Believe in Jesus Christ
Lindsey M.
- F16 Trying to Be like Jesus: My Decision to Be Baptized
José M.

F10 No Ordinary Home teacher



ON THE COVER

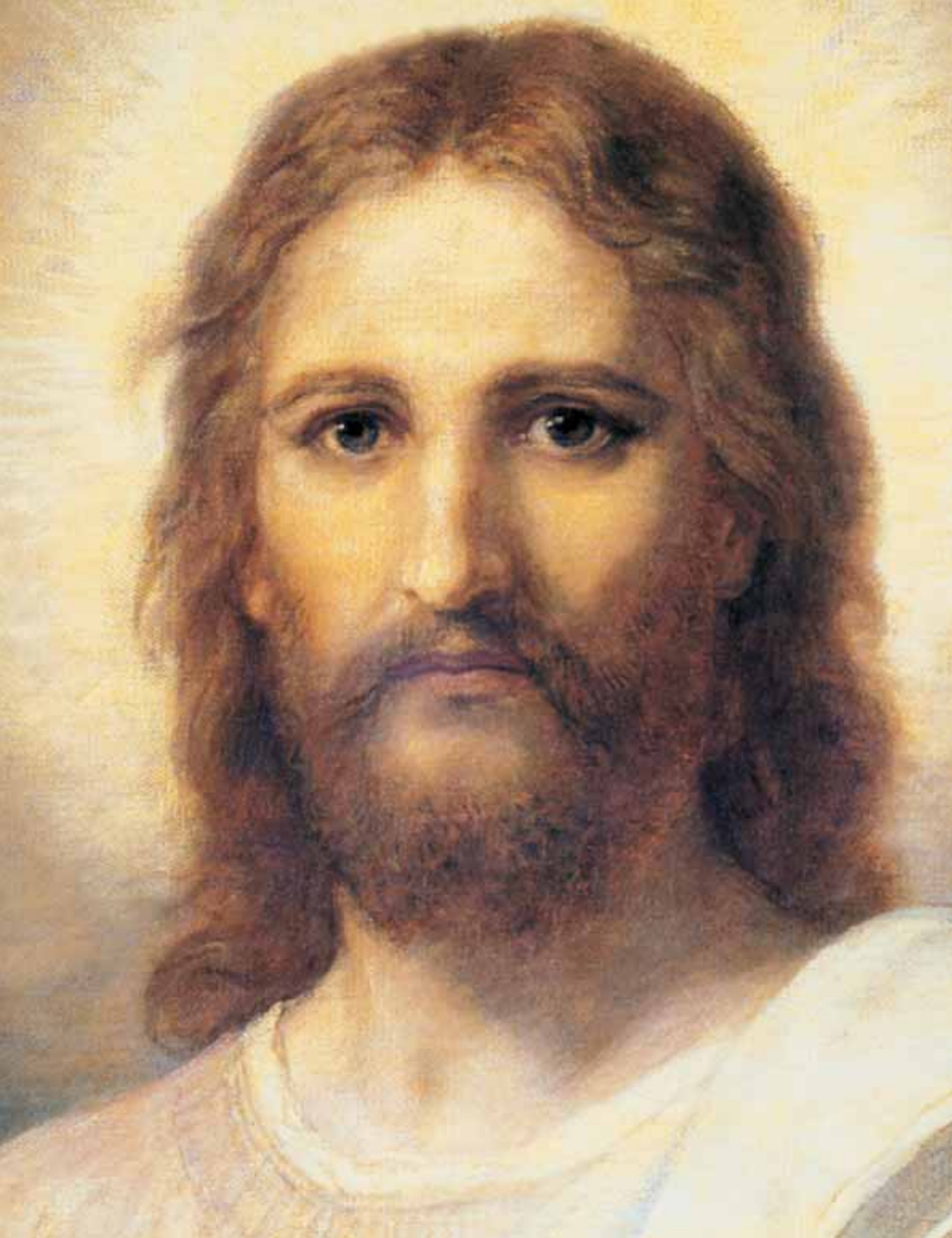
Front: *Christ at Emmaus*, by Carl Bloch. Back: *He Is Not Here*, by Mark Elbert Eastmond, may not be copied.

THE FRIEND COVER

As I Have Loved You, by Simon Dewey, courtesy of Altus Fine Art, American Fork, Utah, may not be copied.

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Becoming Our Best Selves

BY PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON
First Counselor in the First Presidency

During a time long past, and in a place far away, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ taught the multitudes and His disciples “the way, the truth, and the life.”¹ He provided counsel with His holy words. He lived an example for us with His exemplary life.

His teachings and His example prompted Peter to ask this question: “What manner of persons ought ye to be?”² During His ministry on the American continent, the Lord Jesus Christ added significant words when He answered the same question: “What manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am.”³

Seeking the Best in Us

In His earthly ministry, the Master outlined how we should live, how we should teach, how we should serve, and what we should do so that we could become our best selves.

One such lesson comes from the book of John in the Holy Bible:

“Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto

him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

“And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

“Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!”⁴

In our mortal journey, the advice of the Apostle Paul provides heavenly guidance: “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” Then came the concluding charge: “Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.”⁵

In the search for our best selves, several questions will guide our thinking: Am I what I want to be? Am I closer to the Savior today than I was yesterday? Will I be closer yet tomorrow? Do I have the courage to change for the better?



In the search for our best selves, several questions will guide our thinking: Am I what I want to be? Am I closer to the Savior today than I was yesterday? Will I be closer yet tomorrow? Do I have the courage to change for the better?

It is in the home that we form our attitudes, our deeply held beliefs. It is in the home that hope is fostered or destroyed. Our homes are to be places where God's Spirit can dwell, where the storm stops at the door, where love reigns and peace dwells.

Choosing the Family Path

It is time to choose an oft-forgotten path, the path we might call "the family way," so that our children and grandchildren might indeed grow to their full potential. There is an international tide running. It carries the unspoken message, "Return to your roots, to your families, to lessons learned, to lives lived, to examples shown, even family values." Often

it is just a matter of coming home—coming home to attics not recently examined,

to diaries seldom read, to photo albums almost forgotten.

The Scottish poet James Barrie wrote, "God gave us memory so that we might have roses in December."⁶ What memories do we have of Mother? Father? Grandparents? Family? Friends?

What lessons have we learned from our fathers? Years ago a father asked Elder ElRay L. Christiansen (1897–1975), Assistant to the Twelve Apostles, what name Elder Christiansen could suggest for the man's newly acquired boat. Elder Christiansen suggested, "Why not call it *The Sabbath Breaker*?" I'm confident the would-be sailor pondered whether his pride and joy would be a Sabbath breaker or a Sabbath keeper. Whatever his decision, it no doubt left a lasting impression upon his children.

It is in the home that we form our attitudes, our deeply held beliefs. It is in the home that hope is fostered or destroyed. Our homes are to be more than sanctuaries; they should also be places where God's Spirit can dwell, where the storm stops at the door, where love reigns and peace dwells.

A young mother wrote to me: "Sometimes I wonder if I make a difference in my children's lives. Especially as a single mother working two jobs to make ends meet, I sometimes come home to confusion, but I never give up hope.

"My children and I were watching a television broadcast of general conference, and you were speaking



PHOTOGRAPHY BY DEREK SMITH, POSED BY MODELS

about prayer. My son made the statement, 'Mother, you've already taught us that.' I said, 'What do you mean?' And he replied, 'Well, you've taught us to pray and showed us how, but the other night I came to your room to ask something and found you on your knees praying to Heavenly Father. If He's important to you, He'll be important to me.' The letter concluded, "I guess you never know what kind of influence you'll be until a child observes you doing yourself what you have tried to teach him to do." What a magnificent lesson a child learned from his mother.

As a boy, I made a startling discovery in Sunday School one Mother's Day which has remained with me all through the years. Melvin, a sightless brother in the ward, a talented vocalist, would stand and face the congregation as though he were seeing one and all. He would then sing "That Wonderful Mother of Mine." The bright, glowing embers of memory penetrated human hearts. Men reached for their handkerchiefs; women's eyes brimmed with tears.

We deacons would go among the congregation carrying a small geranium in a clay pot for presentation to each mother. Some of the mothers were young; some were middle-aged; some were barely hanging on to life in their old age. I became aware that the eyes of each mother were kind eyes. The words of each mother were, "Thank you." I felt the spirit of the statement, "When someone gives another person a flower, the fragrance of the flower lingers on the hands of the giver." I have not forgotten the lesson learned, nor shall I ever forget it.

Giving Our Lives in Service

The years have come and the years have gone, but the need for a testimony of the gospel continues paramount. As we move toward the future, we must not neglect the lessons

We are asked to give our lives in service. There are lessons to be taught, souls to be saved.



of the past. Our Heavenly Father gave His Son. The Son of God gave His life. We are asked by Them to give our lives, as it were, in Their divine service. Will you? Will I? Will we? There are lessons to be taught; there are kind deeds to be done; there are souls to be saved.

Let us remember the counsel of King Benjamin: "When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God."⁷ Reach out to rescue those who need your help. Lift such to the higher road and the better way. As we sing in Primary: "Lead me, guide me, walk beside me, / Help me find the way. / Teach me all that I must do / To live with him someday."⁸

Real faith is not restricted to childhood but rather applies to all. We learn from the Proverbs:

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

"In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."⁹

When we do, we will come to realize that we have been on His holy errand, that His divine purposes have been fulfilled, and that we have shared in that fulfillment.

May I illustrate this truth with a personal experience. Many years ago, while serving as a bishop, I felt impressed to call upon Augusta Schneider, a widow from the Alsace-Lorraine area of Europe who spoke very little English, although she was fluent in French and German. For years after that first impression, I would visit with her at Christmastime. On one occasion, Augusta said, "Bishop, I have something of great value to me which I would like to present to you." She then went to a special place in her modest apartment and retrieved the gift. It was a beautiful piece of felt, perhaps six by eight inches (15 by 20 cm) in size, to which she had pinned the medals her husband had been presented for his service as a member of the French forces in World War I. She said, "I would like you to have

this personal treasure which is so close to my heart.” I protested politely and suggested there must be some member of her extended family to whom the gift should be given. “No,” she replied firmly, “the gift is yours, for you have the soul of a Frenchman.”

Shortly after presenting this special gift to me, Augusta departed mortality and went home to that God who gave her life. Occasionally I would wonder concerning her declaration that I had “the soul of a Frenchman.” I didn’t have the slightest idea what that meant. I still don’t.

Many years later, I had the privilege to accompany President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) to the dedication of the Frankfurt Germany Temple, which temple would serve German-, French-, and Dutch-speaking members. In packing for the trip, I felt impressed to take along the gift of medals, without any thought concerning what I would do with them. I’d had them a number of years.

For a French-speaking dedication session, the temple was filled. The singing and messages presented were beautiful. Gratitude for God’s blessings penetrated each heart. I saw from my conducting notes that the session included members from the Alsace-Lorraine area.

During my remarks, I observed that the organist had the name of Schneider. I therefore related the account of my association with Augusta Schneider, then stepped to the organ and presented the organist with the medals, along with the charge that since his name was Schneider, he had a responsibility to pursue the Schneider name in his genealogical activities. The Spirit of the Lord confirmed in our hearts that this was a special session. Brother Schneider had a difficult time preparing to play the closing number of the dedicatory service, so moved was he by the Spirit which we felt there in the temple.

I knew that the treasured gift—even the widow’s mite, for it was all Augusta Schneider had—was placed in the hand of one who would ensure that many with the souls of Frenchmen would now receive the blessings the holy temples provide, both for the living and for those who have passed beyond mortality.

I testify that with God, all things are possible. He is our

Heavenly Father; His Son is our Redeemer. As we strive to learn His truths and then to live them, our lives and the lives of others will be abundantly blessed.

I declare in all soberness that Gordon B. Hinckley is a true prophet for our time and is guided in the great work going forward under his leadership.

May we ever remember that obedience to God’s commandments brings forth the blessings promised. May each of us qualify to receive them. ■

NOTES

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1. John 14:6. | 6. <i>Courage</i> (1925), 1. |
| 2. 2 Peter 3:11. | 7. Mosiah 2:17. |
| 3. 3 Nephi 27:27. | 8. Naomi W. Randall, “I Am a Child of God,” <i>Hymns</i> , no. 301. |
| 4. John 1:45–47. | 9. Proverbs 3:5–6. |
| 5. Philippians 4:8–9. | |

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

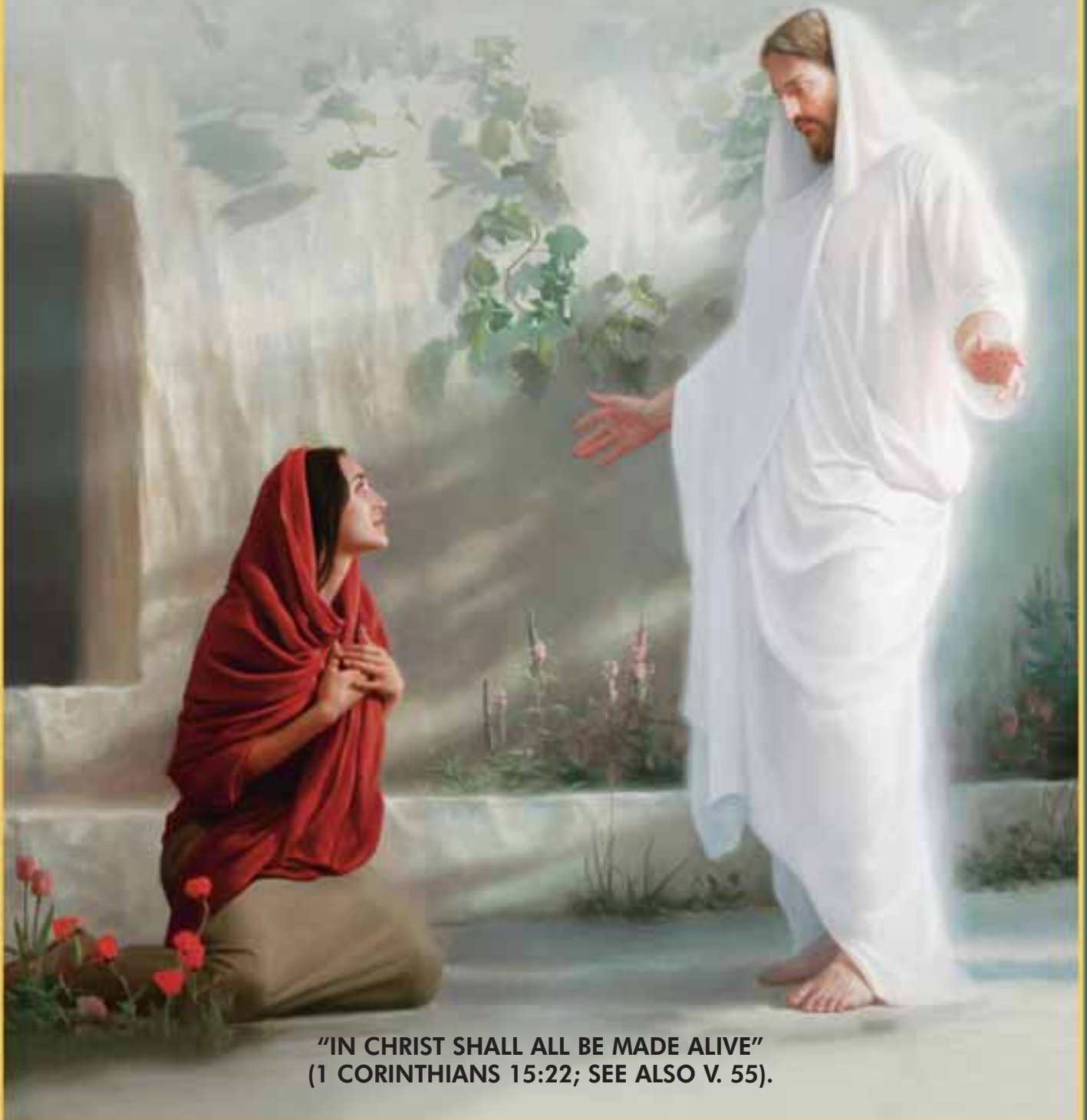
After prayerfully studying this message, share it using a method that encourages the participation of those you teach. Following are some examples.

1. Bring the following objects (or similar ones) with you to your visit: a mirror, a picture of a home, a garden tool. Read 3 Nephi 27:27, and ask what this scripture might have to do with these three objects. Explain that President Monson teaches us three ways we can be like Jesus Christ. As you study each section, use the corresponding object as a visual reminder of the teaching (for example, use the mirror with the section “Seeking the Best in Us”).

2. President Monson asks, “What lessons have we learned from our fathers?” Share an example from the article. Then ask family members about lessons they have learned from their own family. As appropriate, invite them to record stories to add to their family history.

3. After reviewing the message, ask: “What impresses you about President Monson’s message? What do you think President Monson wants us to learn from this message? What do you think President Monson wants us to do as a result of these teachings?”

DEATH, WHERE IS THY VICTORY?



**"IN CHRIST SHALL ALL BE MADE ALIVE"
(1 CORINTHIANS 15:22; SEE ALSO V. 55).**

From the Garden to the Empty Tomb

Gethsemane

Elder James E. Talmage (1862–1933)

“Gethsemane.—The name means ‘oil-press’ and probably has reference to a mill maintained at the place for the extraction of oil from the olives there cultivated. John refers to the spot as a garden, from which designation we may regard it as an enclosed space of private ownership. That it was a place frequented by Jesus when He sought retirement for prayer, or opportunity for confidential converse with the disciples, is indicated by the same writer (John 18:1, 2)” (*Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. [1916], 620).

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972)

“We speak of the passion of Jesus Christ. A great many people have an idea that when he was on the cross, and nails were driven into his hands and feet, that was his great suffering. His great suffering was before he ever was placed upon the cross. It was in the Garden of Gethsemane that the blood oozed from the pores of his

body: ‘Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink’ [D&C 19:18].

“That was not when he was on the cross; that was in the garden. That is where he bled from every pore in his body.

“Now I cannot comprehend that pain. I have suffered pain, you have suffered pain, and sometimes it has been quite severe; but I cannot comprehend pain, which is *mental anguish more than physical*, that would cause the blood, like sweat, to come out upon the body. It was something terrible, something terrific; so we can understand why he would cry unto his Father:

“‘If it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt’ [Matthew 26:39]” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 1:130).

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994)

“On the night Jesus was betrayed, He took three of the Twelve and went into the place called Gethsemane. There He suffered the pains of all men. He suffered as only God could suffer, bearing our griefs, carrying our sorrows, being wounded for our transgressions, voluntarily submitting Himself to the iniquity of us all, just as Isaiah prophesied (see Isaiah 53:4–6).

“It was in Gethsemane that Jesus took on Himself the sins of the world, in Gethsemane that His pain was equivalent to the cumulative burden of all men, in Gethsemane that He descended below all things so that all could repent and come to Him. The mortal mind fails to fathom, the tongue cannot express, the pen of man cannot describe the breadth, the depth, the height of the suffering of our Lord—nor His infinite love for us” (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [1988], 14).

Elder James E. Talmage

“Christ’s agony in the garden is unfathomable by the finite mind, both as to intensity and cause. . . . It was not physical pain, nor mental anguish alone, that caused Him to suffer such torture as to produce an extrusion of blood from every pore; but a spiritual agony of soul such as only God was capable of experiencing. No other man, however great his powers of physical or mental endurance, could have suffered so;

for his human organism would have succumbed, and syncope would have produced unconsciousness and welcome oblivion. In that hour of anguish Christ met and overcame all the horrors that Satan, ‘the prince of this world’ could inflict. . . .

“In some manner, actual and terribly real though to man incomprehensible, the Savior took upon Himself the burden of the sins of mankind from Adam to the end of the world” (*Jesus the Christ*, 613).

President John Taylor (1808–87)

“Groaning beneath this concentrated load, this intense, incomprehensible pressure, this terrible exaction of Divine justice, from which feeble humanity shrank, and through the agony thus experienced sweating great drops of blood, He was led to exclaim, ‘Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me’ [Matthew 26:39]. He had wrestled with the superincumbent load in the wilderness; He had struggled against the powers of darkness that had been let loose upon him there; placed below all things, His mind surcharged with agony and pain, lonely and apparently helpless and forsaken, in his agony the blood oozed from His pores” (*The Mediation and Atonement* [1882], 150).

Calvary

Elder James E. Talmage

“It seems, that in addition to the fearful suffering incident to crucifixion, the agony of Gethsemane had recurred, intensified beyond human power to endure. In that bitterest hour the dying Christ was alone, alone in most terrible reality. That the supreme sacrifice of the Son might be consummated in all its fulness, the Father seems to have withdrawn the support of His immediate Presence, leaving to the Savior of men the glory of complete victory over the forces of sin and death. . . .



“The period of faintness, the conception of utter forsakenness soon passed, and the natural cravings of the body reasserted themselves. The maddening thirst, which constituted one of the worst of the crucifixion agonies, wrung from the Savior’s lips His one recorded utterance expressive of physical suffering. ‘I thirst’ [John 19:28], He said. One of those who stood by, whether Roman or Jew, disciple or skeptic, we are not told, hastily saturated a sponge with vinegar, a vessel of which was at hand, and having fastened the sponge to the end of a reed, or stalk of hyssop, pressed it to the Lord’s fevered lips. . . .

“Fully realizing that He was no longer forsaken, but that His atoning sacrifice had been accepted by the Father, and that His mission in the flesh had been carried to glorious consummation, He exclaimed in a loud voice of holy triumph: ‘It is finished’ [John 19:30]. In reverence, resignation, and relief, He addressed the Father saying: ‘Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit’ [Luke 23:46]. He bowed His head, and voluntarily gave up His life.

“Jesus the Christ was dead. His life had not been taken from Him except as He had willed to permit. Sweet and welcome as would have been the relief of death in any of the earlier stages of His suffering from Gethsemane to the cross, He lived until all things were accomplished as had been appointed” (*Jesus the Christ*, 661–62).



The Empty Tomb

President John Taylor

“As a God, He descended below all things, and made Himself subject to man in man’s fallen condition; as a man, He grappled with all the circumstances incident to His sufferings in the world. Anointed, indeed, with the oil of gladness above His fellows, He struggled with and overcame the powers of men and devils, of earth and hell combined; and aided by this superior power of the Godhead, He vanquished death, hell and the grave, and arose triumphant as the Son of

God, the very eternal Father, the Messiah, the Prince of peace, the Redeemer, the Savior of the world” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: John Taylor* [2001], 43).

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985)

“Only a God could bring about this miracle of resurrection. As a teacher of righteousness, Jesus could inspire souls to goodness; as a prophet, he could foreshadow the future; as an intelligent leader of men, he could organize a church; and as a possessor

and magnifier of the priesthood, he could heal the sick, give sight to the blind, even raise other dead; but only as a God could he raise himself from the tomb, overcome death permanently, and bring incorruption in place of corruption, and replace mortality with immortality. . . .

“No human hands had been at work to remove the sealed door nor to resuscitate nor restore. No magician nor sorcerer had invaded the precincts to work his cures; not even the priesthood, exercised by another, had been brought in use to heal, but the God who had purposefully and intentionally laid down his life had, by the power of his godhead, taken up his life again. . . . The spirit which had been by him commended to his Father in Heaven from the cross, and which, according to his later reports, had been to the spirit world, had returned and, ignoring the impenetrable walls of the sepulcher, had entered the place, re-entered the body, had caused the stone door to be rolled away, and walked in life again, with his body changed to immortality, incorruptible—his every faculty keen and alert.

“Unexplainable? Yes! And not understandable—but incontestable. More than 500 unimpeachable witnesses had contact with him. They walked with him, talked with him, ate with him, felt the flesh of his body and saw the wounds in his side

and feet and hands; discussed with him the program which had been common to them, and him; and, by many infallible proofs knew and testified that he was risen, and that that last and most dreaded enemy, death, had been overcome. . . .

“And so we bear testimony that the being who created the earth and its contents, who made numerous appearances upon the earth prior to his birth in Bethlehem, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is resurrected and immortal, and that this great boon of resurrection and immortality becomes now, through our Redeemer, the heritage of mankind” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 17–18).

President Gordon B. Hinckley

“Then dawned the first day of the week, the Sabbath of the Lord as we have come to know it. To those who came to the tomb, heavy with sorrow, the attending angel declared, ‘Why seek ye the living among the dead?’ (Luke 24:5).

“‘He is not here: . . . he is risen, as he said’ (Matthew 28:6).

“Here was the greatest miracle of human history. Earlier He had told them, ‘I am the resurrection, and the life’ (John 11:25). But they had not understood. Now they knew. He had died in misery and pain and loneliness. Now, on the third day, He arose in power and beauty and life, the

firstfruits of all who slept, the assurance for men of all ages that ‘as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive’ (1 Corinthians 15:22).

“On Calvary He was the dying Jesus. From the tomb He emerged the Living Christ. The cross had been the bitter fruit of Judas’s betrayal, the summary of Peter’s denial. The empty tomb now became the testimony of His divinity, the assurance of eternal life, the answer to Job’s unanswered question: ‘If a man die, shall he live again?’ (Job 14:14). . . .

“And so, because our Savior lives, we do not use the symbol of His death as the symbol of our faith. But what shall we use? No sign, no work of art, no representation of form is adequate to express the glory and the wonder of the Living Christ. He told us what that symbol should be when He said, ‘If ye love me, keep my commandments’ (John 14:15).

“As His followers, we cannot do a mean or shoddy or ungracious thing without tarnishing His image. Nor can we do a good and gracious and generous act without burnishing more brightly the symbol of Him whose name we have taken upon ourselves. And so our lives must become a meaningful expression, the symbol of our declaration of our testimony of the Living Christ, the Eternal Son of the Living God” (“The Symbol of Our Faith,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Apr. 2005, 4–6). ■



Finding What Was LOST

As I rejoiced in helping to find my lost ancestors, I mourned over being unable to help my lost daughter.

BY MARIE SANCHEZ

I peered diligently at the microfilm of church records and read name after name of my ancestors from northern Spain, written generations ago in elegant Spanish penmanship. These families had lived in peace in their little fishing village for centuries. They loved the Lord and one another. Their village was nestled on a little coastal inlet and surrounded by rolling hills of eucalyptus trees, a setting that provided a serene and quiet sanctuary for their families. Few were ever drawn away from its simple beauty and warmth of spirit. Most were related to one another by blood or marriage.

These records had special meaning to me—my grandfather Andres Sanchez had



saved them from destruction during the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s. I grew up knowing his story, but my connection with it became evident only as I began my search for the records. Although I never knew my grandfather, I felt his spirit as I read these names and dates.

Together we had become a team that made it possible to provide temple ordinances for more than 10,000 of our ancestors.

This day, however, like most days of the last few years, was also filled with pain and sorrow over my daughter and the direction her life was going. I cried out in the depths of despair to my Heavenly Father, pleading for His help in my daughter's behalf against odds that seemed impossible. My heart was filled with emotion—though I was working faithfully to provide saving temple ordinances for my ancestors, I could do little to save my own child. Then I felt the strength of past generations joining with me in an effort to save my daughter, and I found a measure of peace at the microfilm reader as I lost myself in extracting the precious names and dates from church records.

A Choice with Conviction

Andres had been a good man and a leader in his village. He was the father of five. Though not a wealthy man, he had a good trucking business and was considered a man of means.

But his was a turbulent time in the history of Spain. The Spanish Civil War brought starvation and destruction to much of the nation. Politics became the most common topic of discussion among the people. In all other periods

in the history of Europe, this quiet village had been spared from the ravages of war, even during World War I. But now the enemy was coming. Andres named his new baby Libertia as an outward expression of his convictions.

Everywhere the invaders burned the churches and killed the church leaders in an effort to stifle opposition. In defiance, Andres and a few of his good neighbors secreted away the sacred artifacts and records from the little village church. He did this knowing that the consequences could be devastating for himself and his family. He made a choice and stood by that choice with conviction.

Eventually the enemy came to his village. The name of Andres Sanchez was discovered, and he was dragged into custody. As a result of his actions at the little village church, he met a fate of torture and deprivation. Andres's business and property were confiscated and his family left destitute as beggars. Andres's health weakened under the deplorable prison conditions, and after a short while he contracted tuberculosis. He was released to his family two weeks prior to his death.

My grandfather Andres Sanchez helped save the family records from the village church during the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s.

A Willing Sacrifice

The Lord did not forget the efforts of one man and a handful of brave friends who loved Him and sacrificed their very lives for these records. Years later the records were microfilmed by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Now I sat in a large dim room in the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah, reading a copy of that microfilm. As I proceeded with the tedious task of searching through names so foreign to me, I was drawn to these people. A feeling of family unity grew in my mind and heart.

My husband and I drew inspiration, courage, and hope from the example of my grandfather, who willingly sacrificed for future generations. In turn, we felt the strength of past generations joining with us in our efforts to help our daughter.

It was in March 1999, the same week President Gordon B. Hinckley dedicated the Madrid Spain Temple, that I submitted my first 6,000 family names to the temple file in the Bountiful Utah Temple, as complete as possible and within their proper families. Now my next 4,000 names were ready. The names of an entire community of people were available at the temple for their temple ordinances to be performed. The work of salvation for a faithful little Spanish village had begun.

A Double Celebration

As temple ordinances were performed for my ancestors, it seemed to my husband and me that the heavens were weeping and praying with us in our daughter's behalf. In time our daughter realized that she needed to change her life and rediscover the peace that had been missing for so long. She began the arduous process of repentance, and gradually we saw the light enter her countenance again. At long last, our heartfelt, pleading prayers were being answered. She enjoyed the healing intervention of a loving Heavenly Father, who is mindful of all of His children.

On a beautiful evening, I sat in the Bountiful temple, my eyes wet with tears of joy. Beside me was my daughter, there to receive her own endowment and to be sealed to a worthy young man.

But the story does not end there. As family and friends gathered to participate in this glorious event, the sister at the desk handed out the proxy names to those attending the session. By coincidence, the names she gave us were some of the same names I had submitted to the temple file. Indeed, it was a double celebration—we rejoiced as we served as proxies for our Spanish ancestors, and in turn they must have rejoiced with us as our daughter was sealed to her husband for time and all eternity in the house of the Lord. In that moment, we could feel the circle of eternal family uniting the past and the present. We were one. ■

Marie Sanchez is a member of the Bountiful 11th Ward, Bountiful Utah East Stake.

In the temple we rejoiced as we served as proxies for our Spanish ancestors and rejoiced also for our daughter, who had returned to the gospel.



A close-up photograph of a hand holding an open book with a red cover. The pages are white with black text. The background is a blurred indoor setting. The title 'my scripture secret' is written in a large, black, serif font, slanted upwards from left to right, overlaid on the right side of the image.

my scripture secret

It's a secret I can't tell you, but you can find out for yourself what it is.

BY MELISSA DOMEYER AINA

One of the greatest blessings we receive from being faithful members of the Church is the peace of our Savior. I have felt this peace many times as I have read the scriptures.

I can remember making many goals to complete the Book of Mormon. I made many attempts but would slowly lose interest and then start over again later. It wasn't until my first year in college that I truly "experimented upon the word" (see Alma 32:27). I began getting up at 6:30 every weekday morning and reading for half an hour. Because I had an allotted time, I didn't feel anxious to be done.

I began looking forward to reading the scriptures. After I read, I felt happy and peaceful. My whole day was affected. I could more easily keep a prayer in my heart. The Spirit stayed closer than before. My worries did not disappear, but my days really were happier.

I realized I was gaining a testimony of the scriptures. I had no idea that obeying the commandment to read the scriptures would bring me so many blessings. I felt as though I had been let in on a secret that only scripture readers knew.

Alma taught the way to gain a testimony:

"If ye will awake and arouse your faculties, even to an experiment upon my words, and exercise a particle of faith, yea, even if ye can no more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you, even until ye believe in a manner that ye can give place for a portion of my words" (Alma 32:27).

Before I started my experiment, I didn't really understand why we are commanded to read the scriptures, but I had a little faith—faith enough to read for a short time every day. And, as Alma taught, I gained a testimony.

I know there is nothing I can say to let you in on the secret of the blessings of reading the scriptures, because nobody could tell me. But I promise that if you read them, you will be blessed with peace and happiness despite your trials. Give it a try. Experiment. ■

Melissa Domeyer Aina is a member of the Newhall First Ward, Valencia California Stake.

Because We Have Them Before Our Eyes



As we continue in the process of coming unto the Savior, we will be strengthened and prospered as we consistently and diligently “feast upon the words of Christ.”

Applying five principles to your scripture study can help you not only learn more about the Savior but also become more like Him.

BY ELDER DAVID A. BEDNAR
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Over the past 20 years, Sister Bednar and I have met with tens of thousands of young Latter-day Saints to discuss the doctrines of the restored gospel and to consider the blessings of living correct principles in our daily lives. As we have met with both large and small groups, we typically have invited the youth to ask questions. We have been greatly impressed with their depth of gospel knowledge and the quality of their questions.

Two of the questions that have been posed to us over and over again are these: Why is studying the scriptures so important? How can I make scripture study more edifying and effective?

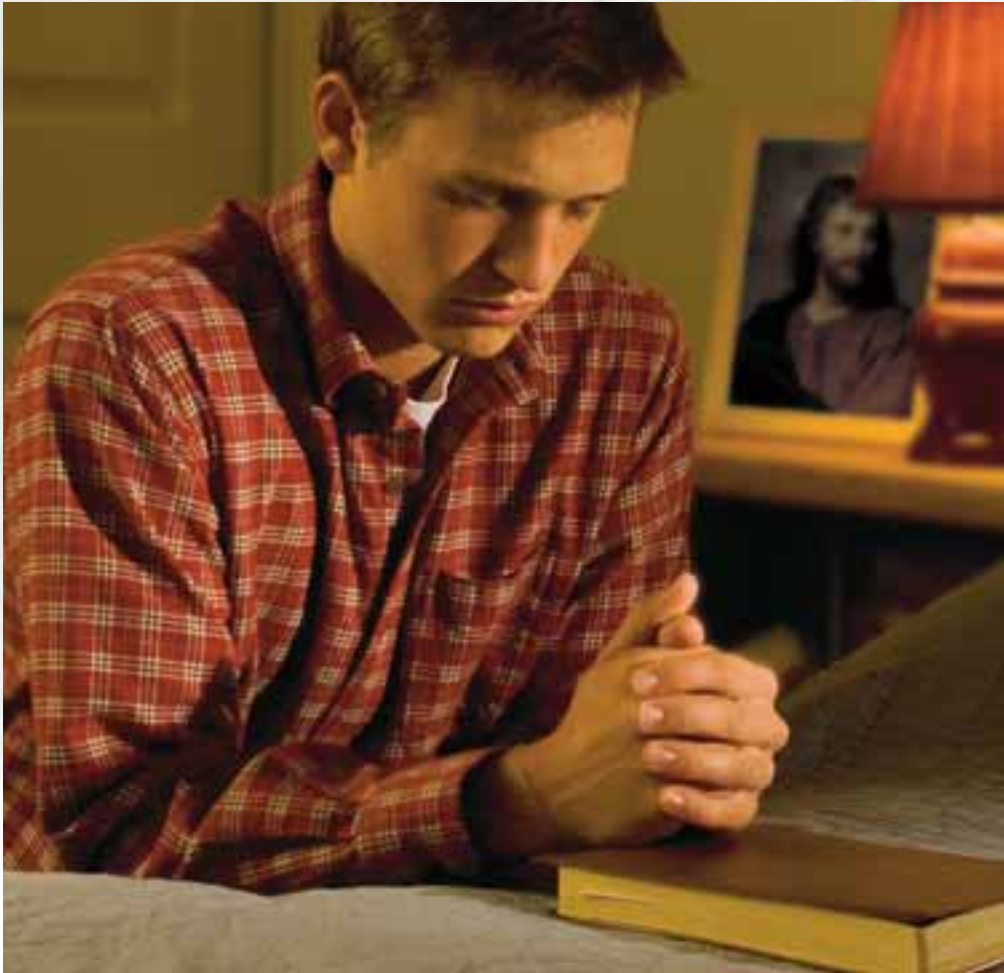
These excellent questions deserve serious consideration by each of us.

Why Is Studying the Scriptures So Important?

The Lord has declared that it is His work and His glory “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). He has established His Church to help in this great work. Accordingly, the grand mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is to “invite all to come unto Christ” (D&C 20:59) and “be perfected in him” (Moroni 10:32). Thus, all that we learn and know and do as disciples of the Savior and as members of His Church is intended to assist us in responding affirmatively to this supernal invitation.

Coming unto Christ is not a single event with a fixed point of beginning or ending; rather, it is a process that develops and deepens during a lifetime. As an initial step in the process, we certainly must obtain knowledge and *learn about Jesus* and His life, teachings, and ministry. But truly coming unto Him also requires consistent obedience and striving to *become like Jesus* in our thoughts, motives, communications, and actions. As we “press forward” (2 Nephi 31:20) on the pathway of discipleship, we can draw near unto the Savior with the expectation that He will draw





all key elements in the process of coming unto the Savior.

The scriptures are vitally important to me as I continue to come unto Christ. To my mind and heart frequently comes a strong admonition from my patriarchal blessing to “study the scriptures at every available opportunity.” For decades that simple phrase has provided focus for my gospel study, and the promised blessings of inspiration and direction associated with that admonition have been realized repeatedly in my life.

The things of the Spirit can be learned only by and through the influence of the Spirit. Each time we begin a session of sincere scripture study, it is helpful to pray not only at the beginning, but to plead for understanding as you study.

near unto us; we can seek Him diligently with the hope that we shall find Him; we can ask with confidence that we shall receive; and we can knock anticipating that the door shall be opened unto us (see D&C 88:63).

One of the best ways to draw near unto Him and to both learn about and become more like the Lord Jesus Christ is to consistently study the holy scriptures—to daily “feast upon the words of Christ” (2 Nephi 32:3).

Please notice that I used the word *study* and not the word *read*. Studying and feasting suggest a focus and an intensity that reach far beyond casual reading or quick perusing. Studying and feasting, followed by sincere prayer and steadfast application of the truths and principles we learn, yield personal resolve, spiritual commitment, and the bright light of testimony. Studying, learning, praying, and appropriately applying gospel truths are

I also have been greatly influenced in my study and use of the scriptures by President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973). During my initial missionary training in Salt Lake City in 1971, approximately 300 elders and sisters were blessed to receive instruction from President Lee in the assembly room of the Salt Lake Temple. To be taught by one of the Lord’s special witnesses and a member of the First Presidency in such a sacred setting was a most memorable experience for me.

The format for the instruction was quite simple: President Lee invited us to ask questions about any and all gospel topics. I will never forget what I felt as I watched President Lee answer every single question from the scriptures! I knew I would never have the command of the scriptures that he did, but then and there in the Salt Lake Temple I

resolved to study and use the scriptures in my teaching and follow the example of President Lee. And that commitment as a new and inexperienced 19-year-old missionary has blessed my life in ways that cannot be counted or adequately described.

In the following instruction, note the central role of the scriptures in the process of coming to know and rely upon God:

“Search the scriptures—search the revelations which we publish, and ask your Heavenly Father, in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, to manifest the truth unto you, and if you do it with an eye single to his glory, nothing doubting, he will answer you by the power of his Holy Spirit: *You will then know for yourselves and not for another*: You will not then be dependent on man for the knowledge of God; nor will there be any room for speculation. No; for, when men receive their instruction from him that made them, they know how he will save them.”¹

By the power of the Holy Ghost, each of us can receive a spiritual witness independent of any other person and “know for yourselves” that Jesus is the Savior and our Redeemer.

The scriptures, in essence, are a written “recording” of the voice of the Lord—a voice we feel in our hearts more than we hear with our ears. And as we study the content and feel the spirit of the written word of God, *we learn to bear His voice in the words we read* and to understand the means whereby the words are given to us by the Holy Ghost. As is explained in Doctrine and Covenants 18:34–36:

“These words are not of men nor of man, but of me; wherefore, you shall testify they are of me and not of man;

“For it is my voice which speaketh them unto you; for they

are given by my Spirit unto you, and by my power you can read them one to another; and save it were by my power you could not have them;

“Wherefore, you can testify that you have heard my voice, and know my words.”

How important it is for each of us to return repeatedly to the holy scriptures and thereby gain experience and confidence in hearing and feeling His voice. As we regularly study the holy scriptures, “Behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:3).

In our process of coming unto Christ, hearing and feeling the voice of the Lord and knowing His words are essential. The Savior taught, “My sheep *bear my voice*, and I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:27; emphasis added). Thus, hearing His voice precedes properly following Him, “for mine elect hear my voice and harden not their hearts” (D&C 29:7). Truly, we can receive instruction from Him and follow Him. And the spiritual capacity to hear, to feel, and to follow is available to every member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—and that capacity is strengthened through diligent study of the scriptures.

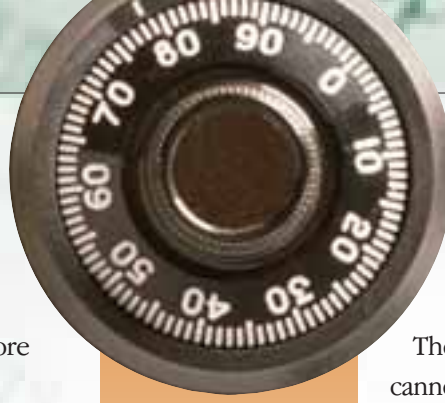
Why is studying the scriptures so important? Sincere study of the scriptures helps us progress in the process of coming unto Christ and becoming more like Him. Through daily feasting, we can gain a testimony of the gospel truths for ourselves and learn to hear and follow the voice of the Lord.

How Can I Make Scripture Study More Edifying and Effective?

Understanding and applying five basic principles can help

A **specific and scheduled time set aside each day and, as much as possible, a particular place for study greatly increase the effectiveness of our searching in the scriptures.**





our personal scripture study become more edifying and effective.

Principle 1: Pray for understanding, and invite the help of the Holy Ghost. The things of the Spirit can be learned only by and through the influence of the Spirit. Each time we begin a session of sincere scripture study, an earnest and humble prayer in which we petition our Heavenly Father in the name of His Son for the assistance of the Holy Ghost will greatly improve our learning, understanding, and recall. It is helpful to pray not only at the beginning, but to plead for understanding as you study. Also, I find it helpful to express gratitude for what I have been taught as I conclude the session.

Principle 2: Work. Gospel knowledge and understanding come through diligent study of the scriptures and tutoring by the Holy Ghost. The combination that opens the vault door to hidden scriptural treasures includes a great deal of work—simple, old-fashioned, hard work. A farmer cannot expect to harvest a crop in the fall if he does not properly sow in the spring and work hard during the summer to weed, nourish, and cultivate the plants. In like manner, we cannot expect to reap a rich scriptural harvest unless we pay the price of regular and diligent study. The scriptural treasures we seek in our lives cannot be borrowed or loaned or obtained secondhand. We must each learn to open the vault door by applying the principle of work.

Principle 3: Be consistent. Given the hectic pace of our lives, good intentions and simply “hoping” to find the time for meaningful scripture study are not sufficient. My experience suggests that a specific and scheduled time set aside each day and, as much as possible, a particular place for study greatly increase the effectiveness of our searching in and study of the scriptures.

Principle 4: Ponder. The word *ponder* means to consider, contemplate, reflect upon, or think about. Pondering the scriptures, then, is reverent reflecting on the truths, experiences, and lessons contained in the standard works.

The combination that opens the vault door to hidden scriptural treasures includes a great deal of work—simple, old-fashioned, hard work.

The process of pondering takes time and cannot be forced, hurried, or rushed.

The Prophet Joseph Smith provided an important guideline about pondering and reflecting upon the scriptures. He taught: “I have a key by which I understand the scriptures. I enquire, what was the question which drew out the answer, or caused Jesus to utter the parable?”² Thus, striving to understand the question that preceded a particular revelation, parable, or episode can assist us in obtaining a deeper understanding of the scriptures.

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) emphasized a similar approach to studying and pondering the holy scriptures in general

and the Book of Mormon in particular:

“If [the Book of Mormon writers] saw our day and chose those things which would be of greatest worth to us, is not that how we should study the Book of Mormon? We should constantly ask ourselves, ‘Why did the Lord inspire Mormon (or Moroni or Alma) to include that in his record? What lesson can I learn from that to help me live in this day and age?’”³

President Benson’s teaching helps us to follow the counsel of Nephi to “liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning” (1 Nephi 19:23). Thus, asking questions about and pondering the things we have studied in the scriptures invite inspiration and the assistance of the Holy Ghost.

Principle 5: Write down impressions, thoughts, and feelings. Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles frequently has emphasized the importance of writing down spiritual impressions and thoughts:

“You will find that as you write down precious impressions, often more will come. Also, the knowledge you gain will be available throughout your life. Always, day or night, wherever you are, whatever you are doing, seek to recognize and respond to the direction of the Spirit. Express gratitude for the help received and obey it. This practice will reinforce your capacity to learn by the Spirit. It will permit the Lord to



guide your life and to enrich the use of every other capacity latent in your being.”⁴

Writing down what we learn, think, and feel as we study the scriptures is another form of pondering and a powerful invitation to the Holy Ghost for continuing instruction.

We are blessed to live at a time when the holy scriptures are so readily available. I pray that we will never take them for granted or treat them casually. We should remember and apply to all of the holy scriptures the teachings of King Benjamin to his sons:

“I say unto you, my sons, were it not for *these things [the scriptures], which have been kept and preserved by the hand of God*, that we might read and understand of his mysteries, and have his commandments always before our eyes, that even our fathers would have dwindled in unbelief. . . .

“O my sons, I would that ye should remember that *these sayings are true, and also that these records are true* . . . ; and we

can know of their surety because we have them before our eyes.

“And now, my sons, I would that ye should *remember to search them diligently*, that ye may profit thereby; and I would that ye should keep the commandments of God, that ye may prosper in the land according to the promises which the Lord made unto our fathers” (Mosiah 1:5–7; emphasis added).

I testify and witness that the holy scriptures are true and contain the word of God. As we continue in the process of coming unto the Savior, we will be strengthened and prospered as we consistently and diligently “feast upon the words of Christ.” Indeed, we are blessed because we have them before our eyes. ■

NOTES

1. “To the Honorable Men of the World,” *The Evening and the Morning Star*, Aug. 1832, 22; emphasis added.
2. *History of the Church*, 5:261.
3. “The Keystone of Our Religion,” *Tambuli*, Aug. 1992, 7; “The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 6.
4. “To Acquire Knowledge and the Strength to Use It Wisely,” *Liabona*, Aug. 2002, 12–14; *Ensign*, June 2002, 32–34.

Writing down what we learn, think, and feel as we study the scriptures is another form of pondering and a powerful invitation to the Holy Ghost for continuing instruction.



Fighting to

Artur Tomaszewski had asked God to show him the truth. But he struggled with the answer he received.

BY DON L. SEARLE
Church Magazines

Artur Tomaszewski could defend himself if the need arose. After all, he was the national jujitsu champion in his native Poland at age 17. But he believes the wisest course is always to seek peace first. That is what he was doing, in a way, when he won his greatest battle—the struggle to find truth.

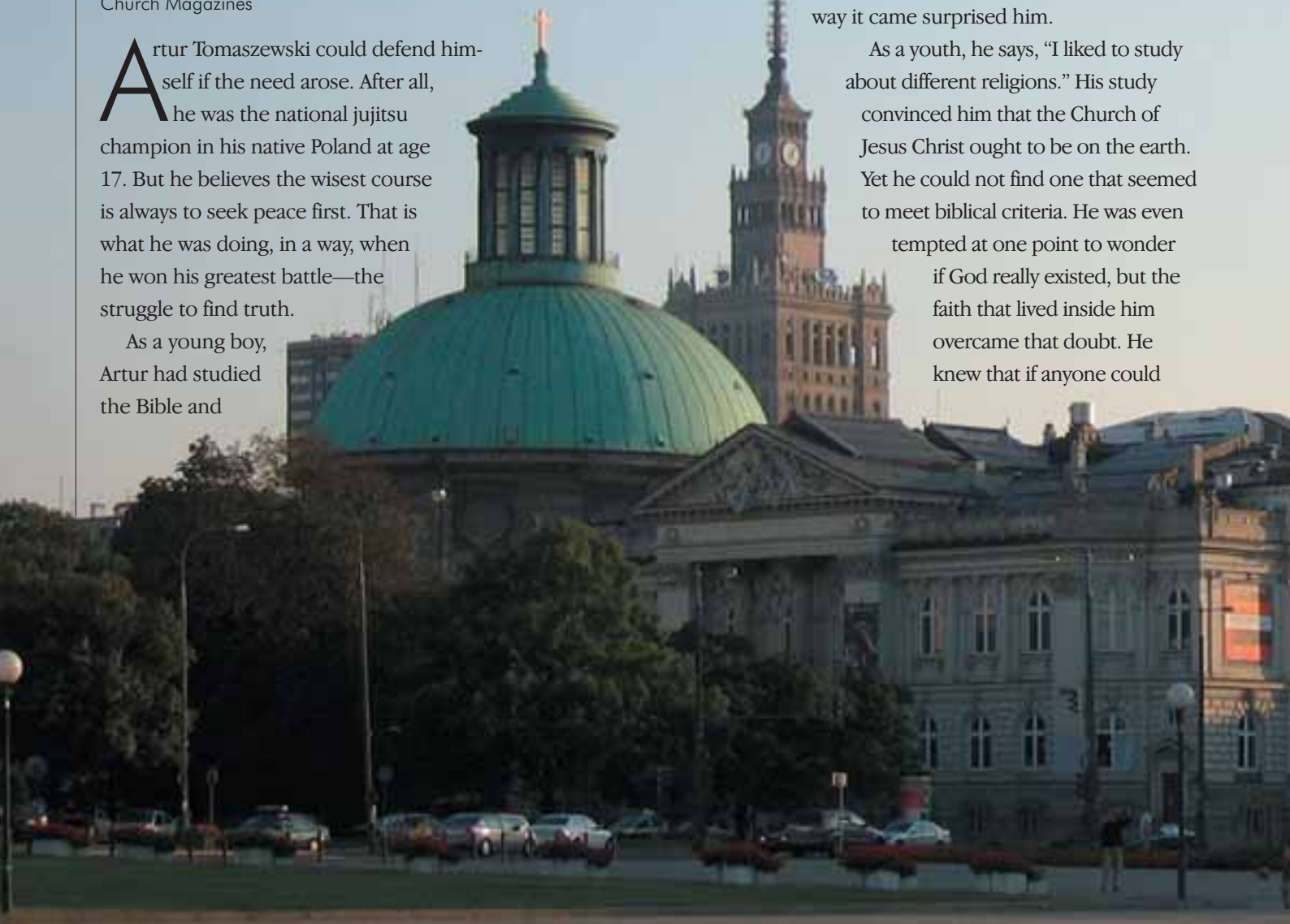
As a young boy, Artur had studied the Bible and

formed questions about his relationship to God and about God's true Church. No one had answers to satisfy him. Finally, he prayed to God to show him which church was true.

Does this story sound familiar?

Both the answer Artur received and the way it came surprised him.

As a youth, he says, "I liked to study about different religions." His study convinced him that the Church of Jesus Christ ought to be on the earth. Yet he could not find one that seemed to meet biblical criteria. He was even tempted at one point to wonder if God really existed, but the faith that lived inside him overcame that doubt. He knew that if anyone could



Find the Truth

provide answers, it would be God. There came a time when he was 18 that Artur prayed, specifically asking to be led to the true Church.

Not long afterward, while he was visiting at the home of his aunt, he saw a dusty book sitting on a shelf. It was titled the Book of Mormon. His aunt had received it from some sister missionaries, then had laid it aside and forgotten it.

Artur picked it up and put it back down three times, struggling over whether to read it. No, he would not; he believed only in the Bible. But this book said it was another testament of Jesus Christ. No, this Joseph Smith story at the beginning was too fantastic. But what if it was true? No, the story in the first 20 pages of the book was simply foreign to all he knew.

Still, what he had read stayed with him all week long. When he returned to his

aunt's house, planning to resume reading where he had left off, the book was gone!

It would be some time before Artur received his own copy of the Book of Mormon.

He introduced himself to missionaries on the street in Katowice. When they did not call him immediately as promised (this is a mistake Elder Tomaszewski the missionary

Below: Elder Artur Tomaszewski and his companion, Elder Ricky Dias, walk down a street in Warsaw, Poland.



does not make now), he decided to seek them out on a Sunday morning at the meetinghouse address on a flyer they had given him.

It happened to be a fast Sunday, and as members bore their testimonies, Artur felt the same feeling of peace and surety that had stayed with him after his first reading in the Book of Mormon. The feeling was so strong that he wanted to stand and bear his own testimony that the book was true, but he did not know if this would be permitted.

When the missionaries finally gave him his own copy of the Book of Mormon, they asked him solemnly if he would promise to read it and pray for an answer about its truthfulness. Artur laughed. He already knew he could get an answer from God.

He read and he prayed. The answer that came was so strong it seemed to be not only a feeling, but also “like light to my eyes,” giving great clarity to the truths he already knew from the Bible. He laughed out loud once more, wondering if the answer about the Church of Jesus Christ could really be this “clear and simple.” He had thought it might be some complicated thing. He prayed again to be sure and received the same strong answer, assuring him that God’s truths are plain, not complicated.

“When I found out it was true, I went home full of joy,” he recalls. But no one wanted to share the joy. His mother and two younger brothers were not interested. His father was antagonistic. After Artur’s baptism in 2002, he had almost no support from friends and acquaintances either, except within his branch.

Religious tradition is very strong in Poland. No one could understand why he wanted to leave the dominant faith. Still, he says, his parents’ teaching and example were very valuable in preparing him to find the truth. “I’m grateful they did what they knew how to do in teaching me.”

Being alone in living the gospel did not break down his



Patryk Tomaszewski, Elder Tomaszewski’s younger brother, accepted the challenge to read the Book of Mormon and learn for himself whether it is true.

faith. When he determined to serve a mission, he was willing to give up the jujitsu practices and competitions he loved—something that had been part of his life from childhood—to work and save money for a mission. Jujitsu, he says, was an art form for him. “I felt like a painter painting a picture when I practiced.” But working left him no time to practice.

Before leaving his hometown of Mystowice to serve as a missionary, Elder Tomaszewski left a challenge for his younger brother Patryk, who was also deeply involved in jujitsu. “If you

want to find out why I’m doing this, why I’m giving up my sport, read the Book of Mormon and pray about it.”

Elder Tomaszewski says some of the qualities developed through the discipline of jujitsu have been helpful in the mission field: patience, humility, and the capacity for hard work.

What does he like most about missionary work?

“Often when I’m really tired, when I feel like I don’t have any strength left and maybe I’m lacking a little in faith, we knock on a door and find someone,” he says. Finding someone who wants to listen sometimes makes him so excited he can’t sleep.

And what has been his best day as a missionary?

The day he learned that his younger brother had taken his challenge to read and pray about the Book of Mormon. Patryk Tomaszewski also received a testimony. He was baptized in August 2004.

Now there are two Tomaszewskis to share the joy of the gospel. ■



Emphasizing the Divine Worth of Each Sister



Prayerfully select and read from this message the scriptures and teachings that meet the needs of the sisters you visit. Share your experiences and testimony. Invite those you teach to do the same.

Blessings of Belonging to Relief

Society: Relief Society helps each sister learn that she is a beloved spirit daughter of Heavenly Father, that she has a divine nature, and that she has the potential to inherit eternal life.

What Do We Know about Our Divine Nature?

The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. . . . In the premortal realm, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshiped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize his or her divine destiny as an heir of eternal life” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102).

Bonnie D. Parkin, Relief Society general president: “Relief Society has renewed, strengthened, and

committed me to be a better wife and mother and daughter of God. My heart has been enlarged with gospel understanding and with love of the Savior and what He’s done for me” (“How Has Relief Society Blessed Your Life?” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 35).

Romans 8:16–17: “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.”

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985): “Relief Society leaders and teachers should ask, how can we help the wife and mother understand the dignity and worth of her role in the divine process of motherhood? How can we help her make her home a place of love and learning, a place of refuge and refinement? . . . Our success, individually and as a Church, will largely be determined by how faithfully we focus on living the gospel in the home” (“Living the Gospel in the Home,” *Ensign*, May 1978, 101).

How Can Understanding Our Divine Nature Change Our Attitudes and Actions?

President Gordon B. Hinckley: “There is something of divinity within each of you. You have such tremendous potential with that quality as a

part of your inherited nature. Every one of you was endowed by your Father in Heaven with a tremendous capacity to do good in the world. Train your minds and your hands that you may be equipped to serve well in the society of which you are a part. Cultivate the art of being kind, of being thoughtful, of being helpful. Refine within you the quality of mercy which comes as a part of the divine attributes you have inherited” (“The Light within You,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 99).

President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency: “A conviction that you are a daughter of God gives you a feeling of comfort in your self-worth. It means that you can find strength in the balm of Christ. It will help you meet the heartaches and challenges with faith and serenity. . . . A woman can and must have an identity and feel useful, valued, and needed whether she is single or married. She must feel that she can do something for someone else that no one else ever born can do” (“What It Means to Be a Daughter of God,” *Liabona*, Jan. 2000, 123–24; *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 102). ■



An illustration of a man in profile, facing right, wearing a white t-shirt. He is holding an open newspaper or magazine. The background is a light blue and white gradient. The title 'Peace at Home' is written in large, bold, black serif font on the right side of the image.

Peace at Home

My brother and I argued about our differing religious beliefs. I finally learned how to disagree without being disagreeable.

NAME WITHHELD

When I was 12, I never dreamed that I would have to defend my belief in the Church. After all, I lived in a predominantly Latter-day Saint community, and most everyone I knew believed the same things I did. I didn't anticipate the heated discussion I would have with my brother while he was on leave from his military duties. I wasn't prepared to deal with the situation, and I finally left the room crying.

Since then, I've learned a lot about getting along with family members who don't believe the same things I do. Here are some of the things that have helped me keep the peace without compromising my beliefs:

1. Remember courtesy. No matter where they stand on religious issues, it is important to treat all family members with kindness and love—serve them, communicate with them, and include them in family discussions and decisions.

2. Include family members in all family activities, even if those activities are Church related. For many years my brother refused to have anything to do with our religious activities, but now he wants to be invited to weddings, baby blessings, and other activities. Those with other beliefs still want to feel welcome, even if they don't accept an invitation.

3. Use challenging questions to build your testimony. As hard as it was to answer my brother's questions about the Church, I was determined to know for certain that what I had been taught was true. I studied the scriptures



and asked my Church leaders and parents many questions until I gained a firm testimony of the gospel.

4. Do not avoid religious topics.

Because the Church is so much a part of the life of a Latter-day Saint, avoiding the subject of religion may make family members feel as though you're keeping secrets from them. In your conversations, include personal experiences that relate to the Church.

5. Seek to understand their point of view.

I used to think my brother was always wrong, but when I started to look at things from his perspective, I was surprised. How would I feel if I couldn't attend my little sister's wedding? How would I feel if I didn't understand some of the language my family members often used? If I were him, I might also sometimes react negatively to such things.

6. Take responsibility for mistakes.



THE IMPORTANCE OF EXAMPLE

"Our adherence to these divinely given standards

need never be an offensive thing to those about us. We need not contend with them. But if we will pursue a steady course, our very example will become the most effective argument we could ever make in favor of the virtues of the cause with which we are associated."

President Gordon B. Hinckley, "Contend Not with Others," *Tambuli*, Nov. 1989, 4.

my brother or attack his beliefs.

When I was finally mature enough to realize I was in the wrong, I apologized, and my relationship with my brother has never been better. You never need to apologize for your beliefs, just for actions that are not in keeping with the gospel.

7. Avoid contention. The Spirit will not stay where there is contention. If the Spirit is gone, opportunities for learning and growth are also gone.

8. Encourage those of other faiths in their own religious activities.

Although we believe our Church to have the fulness of the gospel, many truths are taught in other churches. And where our views differ, we

should still respect the religious views of others. Be as supportive of your family members' righteous and wholesome religious activities as you want them to be of yours. ■

The Proclamation

A Guide, a Comfort, and an Inspiration

BY E. JEFFREY HILL

Associate Professor of Family Life, Brigham Young University

In the general Relief Society meeting in September 1995, President Gordon B. Hinckley read a document prepared by the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Before reading “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” President Hinckley explained: “The world we are in is a world of turmoil, of shifting values. Shrill voices call out for one thing or another in betrayal of time-tested standards of behavior. . . . With so much of deception concerning standards and values, with so much of allurements and enticement to take on the slow stain of the world, we have felt to warn and forewarn” (“Stand Strong against the Wiles of the World,” Ensign, Nov. 1995, 99–100). This proclamation has proven prophetic in the years since it was written, as values continue to shift and morals to decay. This article illustrates how the principles in the proclamation can help families achieve peace and happiness even during times of adversity.

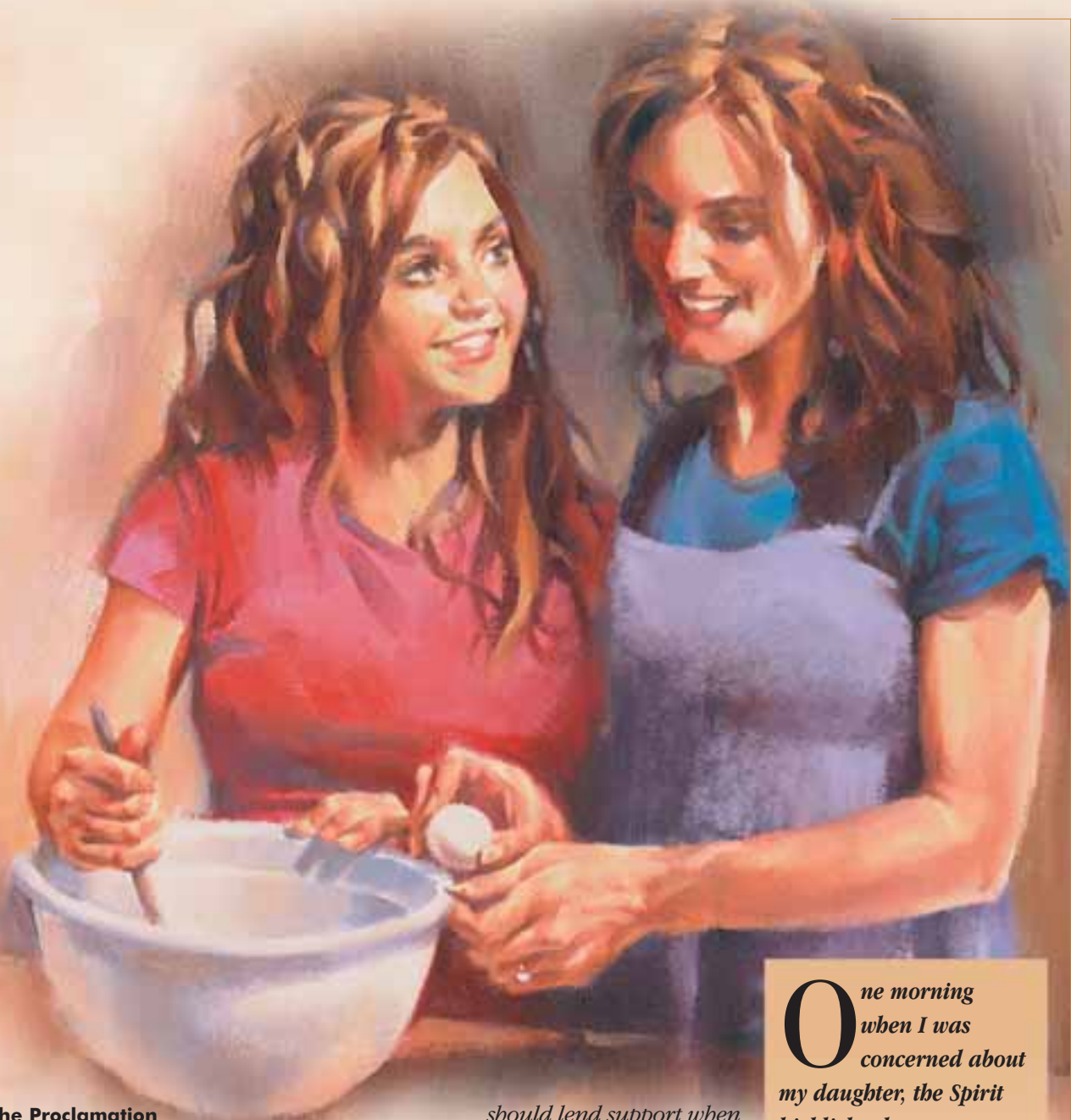
September 23, 1995, was a life-changing day for me. My calling on the stake high council required that I attend the broadcast of the general Relief Society meeting. President Gordon B. Hinckley spoke, and for the first time I heard the words of “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.”

Immediately a growing brightness illuminated my mind and heart. I listened with rapt attention. I had just completed a PhD in family studies, but now I heard in five minutes more pure truth about the family than I had gleaned in nearly five years of graduate study. I wanted to stand up and applaud. As President Hinckley concluded, I felt a great desire to apply these principles in my family and share them with the world.

In the days that followed, I thought constantly about the proclamation. When the conference magazine finally came, I

read the proclamation over and over again. I pondered and prayed. I wanted to so thoroughly digest its words that they would become an indelible part of my being. That’s when I felt impressed to memorize the proclamation. It would not be easy. I was in my mid-40s, and memorizing was not nearly as easy as it once had been. But again and again I felt the prompting: “Memorize the proclamation. Memorize the proclamation! MEMORIZE THE PROCLAMATION!”

I took a copy of the proclamation with me wherever I went. I memorized while shaving. I memorized while walking to the university. I memorized while exercising. The last words on my mind before retiring and the first words in my mind upon arising were the words of the proclamation. No miracle aided my memorizing, and my progress was painstakingly slow. But after about a month I could repeat the whole proclamation.



Applying the Proclamation

Now that I had it, I wanted to keep it. So I would recite the proclamation several times each day during morning exercise and stretching. As I did, it seemed as if the Spirit highlighted certain words or sentences. I would linger on these passages, and they, in turn, would prompt impressions that would bless my family and me.

For example, the next summer I was concerned about the friends my teenage daughter was spending so much time with. But when I tried to talk to her about the situation, she discounted what I said and became more distant. While I was jogging and thinking about the proclamation one morning, the Spirit highlighted in my thoughts the last sentence in paragraph seven: *“Extended families*

should lend support when needed.” I slowed the pace of my jog, and an image of my younger sister came into my mind. This sister had experienced many trials in her life and was now nearly full term with her seventh pregnancy. The impression I had was that we, as extended family, should lend her support right now. So I bought a plane

One morning when I was concerned about my daughter, the Spirit highlighted a sentence in the proclamation: *“Extended families should lend support when needed.”* I was impressed that I needed to send my daughter to help my sister during her pregnancy.



The proclamation inspired my wife, Juanita, and me to begin holding a family testimony meeting on fast Sunday after church.

ticket for my daughter and asked her to spend a week serving in my sister's home.

In this distant place an interesting thing happened. During the day my daughter found joy serving my sister's family. And after the children were asleep, she and

my sister had many long talks. My sister was able to talk to my daughter in a way that I had been unable to. She told her how decisions she had made as a teenager had produced a lifetime of challenges. When my daughter returned home, something had changed in her. She began making choices that blessed her life. My sister, her family, my daughter, and I were all blessed by this trip, which was prompted by the words of the proclamation.

Another time the words "*Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs*" weighed heavily on my mind. Our family members loved and had a good time with each other, but I felt that we were far from our spiritual potential. The words of the proclamation inspired my wife, Juanita, and me to begin having a family testimony meeting on fast Sunday after church. Unfortunately, our first attempt did little to provide for our children's spiritual needs. None of them really wanted to be there. Several children complained about how hungry they were, and our youngest asked several times, "When is this going to be over?" Still, we persevered, and after a few months the complaining stopped and we started feeling the Spirit more. This family testimony meeting became a precious time to share sacred truths and to help us "*rear [our] children in love and righteousness.*"

A pattern was emerging. As I frequently reviewed the words of the proclamation, they formed a conduit through which the Spirit could give my wife and me inspiration to move our family forward. True, most of the inspiration was not as grand as these examples. Most of it came as ideas like "Take Hannah on a daddy-daughter date," or "Fix dinner for Juanita tonight," or "Listen more to Emily," or "Put Seth to bed more often." But the hundreds of little bits of direction added up to a much better family life.

Comfort in Adversity

In 2001 Juanita was diagnosed with advanced breast cancer and was given a 50 percent chance for five-year survival. Our best option was to pursue an aggressive but

very taxing course of chemotherapy, surgery, and radiation. We were discouraged when after eight weeks of nauseating chemo the large tumor had not shrunk at all. During this trial I went jogging and recited the proclamation as loud as I could to relieve the stress I was feeling. It comforted me.

On one jog when I got to *“Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer,”* I stopped. I felt a sense of peace as an impression formed in my mind. It was the Saturday morning before fast Sunday, and I felt inspired to send an e-mail to everyone I knew, inviting them to fast and pray and exercise their faith for Juanita so that the chemotherapy would be effective. We received a great outpouring of support. Even friends of other faiths described powerful experiences with fasting and prayer. Without our asking them to do so, friends in Australia, Japan, Hawaii, Salt Lake, Boston, Belgium, and South Africa put Juanita’s name on the prayer roll in their temples. The results were miraculous. Immediately our mood and our faith improved. And during the next four weeks of treatments, the tumor almost totally disappeared. Juanita finished the treatment, and no measurable cancer remained. We were so grateful! But this wasn’t the end of our trials or of the continued comfort the proclamation brought us.

In early 2004 we were devastated to learn that Juanita’s cancer had returned, this time in her lungs. In somber tones our doctor told us he would try to keep the cancer under control as long as possible, but there was now no possible cure. At first I felt betrayed and hopeless. Juanita and I had righteous desires and plans. What about the missions we were going to serve together? What about the grandchildren we were going to strengthen spiritually? How could this happen to us?

As I went through the proclamation again, this time it was as if someone turned a flashlight on to highlight the words *“Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of*

matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother.” I recognized my children were entitled to be raised by a father *and a mother*. This statement filled me with hope that in the face of very large medical odds Juanita would be blessed with a miracle and be healed.

A Change of Focus

We lived a fairly normal and hopeful life for about six months, but then the cancer began to take its unmistakable toll. Juanita lost weight rapidly and acquired a nearly constant and uncomfortable cough. Even the smallest exertion left her struggling for breath. Things seemed always to get worse and never better. Soon it became apparent that it was not God’s will for Juanita to live very much longer. I was at a complete loss to explain why God had not stepped forward with the miracle we so badly needed and so sincerely hoped for. But then again the words of the proclamation provided inspiration and comfort: *“Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.”* Through many tears my understanding was enlarged to see that Juanita would indeed receive a miraculous healing. Because of the plan of salvation, Juanita would pass from this life into a beautiful place to be greeted by her father, our daughter who had passed away, and the Savior. Because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, Juanita would be healed and at the Resurrection receive a perfect body, free from cancer and any other illness. I could also see that through all eternity our children would have access to her influence as their mother—another miracle.

I also felt impressed that there was much we could yet do in this life to give the children continued access to her wisdom. I received a clear impression that it was time for us to stop focusing our faith on a physical miracle that was not in keeping with God’s will and focus instead on

“Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs.”

learning as much as we could from Juanita in the short time we had left. We needed to be better prepared “to return to the presence of God and for [our family] to be united eternally.” In our family testimony meeting we

expressed these feelings poignantly, and their truth washed over us all. Then we went to work.

Juanita wrote her testimony of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, and I wrote mine as well. We printed and laminated them along with our pictures in a size that would fit in the children’s scriptures. Juanita then wrote long letters in her own hand to each of the children, expressing appreciation and offering words of encouragement and advice. We recorded Juanita’s sweet voice singing hymns, Primary songs, and childhood lullabies and made CDs for each of the children and for future grandchildren. We also recorded messages to be listened to on special occasions such as going to the temple, leaving on a mission, getting married, giving birth to a child. Juanita crocheted baby blankets and bibs for future grandchildren. Our lives now became focused, full of activity, and we received great comfort from the Spirit. All this came as a result of inspiration from the proclamation.

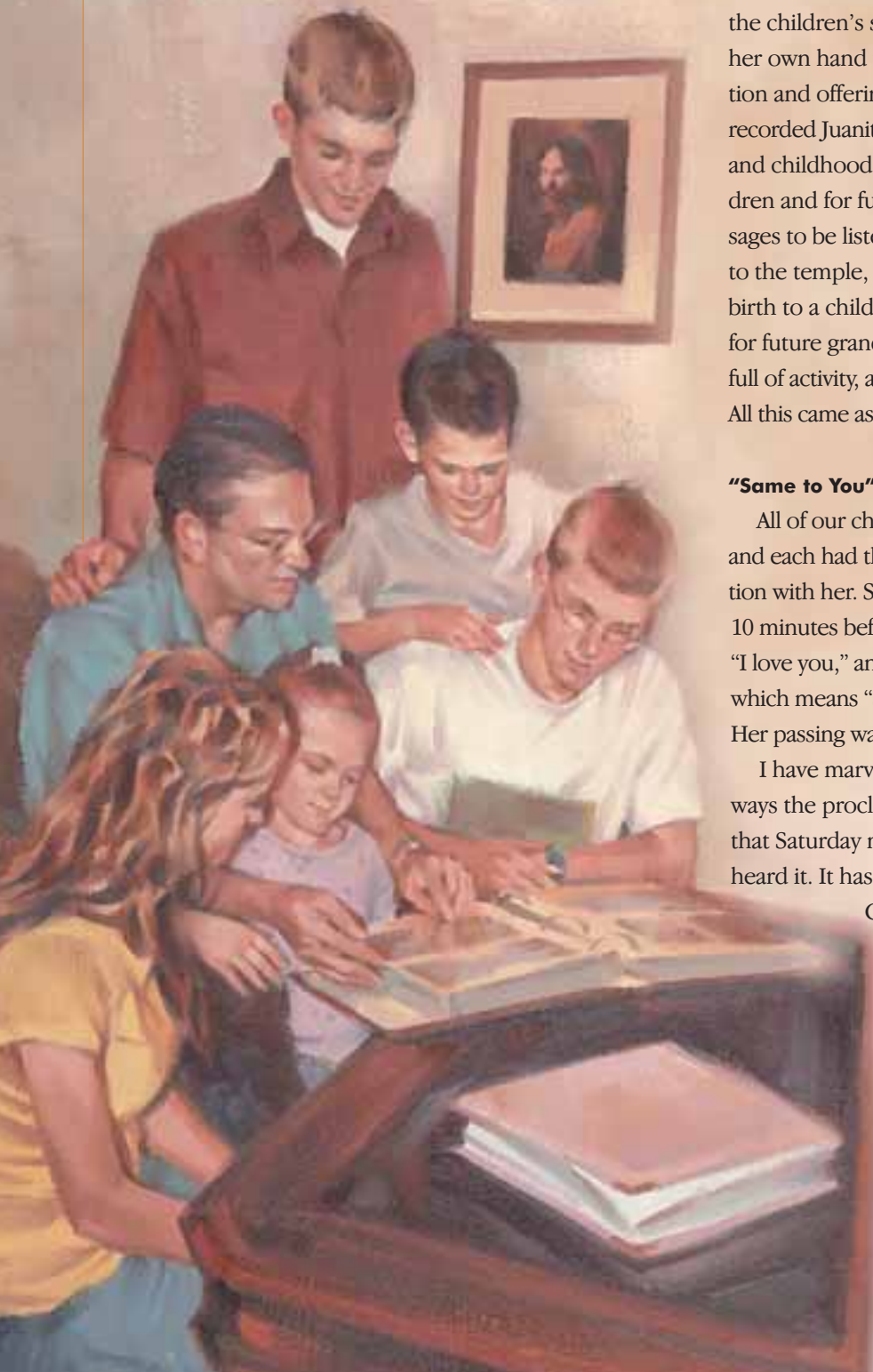
“Same to You”

All of our children were at Juanita’s side when she died, and each had the opportunity to share tender communication with her. She was alert and talked to us until about 10 minutes before she passed away. That’s when I told her, “I love you,” and she responded in Spanish, “Lo mismo,” which means “Same to you.” Those were her last words. Her passing was sweet.

I have marveled at the numerous specific and personal ways the proclamation has blessed me and my family since that Saturday night more than a decade ago when I first heard it. It has changed our lives forever. It is the word of

God, and it can be the basis for great joy and happiness in family life, even in the midst of unfathomable trials. I know by the Spirit that “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” is an inspired document for families today, and if seriously studied, it will open the windows of divine assistance for our families. ■

E. Jeffrey Hill is a member of the Canyon View Fifth Ward, Orem Utah Canyon View Stake.



Two Toddlers Underfoot

BY IDA L. EWING

At the end of a particularly unproductive day, I found myself feeling exasperated at my inability to get anything done with two toddlers constantly underfoot. I decided to call my older sister, Treisa, for some advice. She has three active boys, yet she remains cheerful and calm. Treisa commiserated with me and said my struggles brought to mind an experience she had had shortly after moving from their small trailer.

Treisa had expected that after the move into a larger home, her children would build toy castles somewhere other than in front of the kitchen sink and would no longer need to use the pile of laundry she was folding as the base for their hide-and-seek games. Somehow, though, that change never occurred—her children continued to exist in a sort of holding pattern around her legs. But, she told me, one day she came across a passage of scripture in Mark 10:13–14, 16 that helped her overcome her frustrations.

After our conversation I read:

“And they brought young children to

him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them.

“But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. . . .

“And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.”

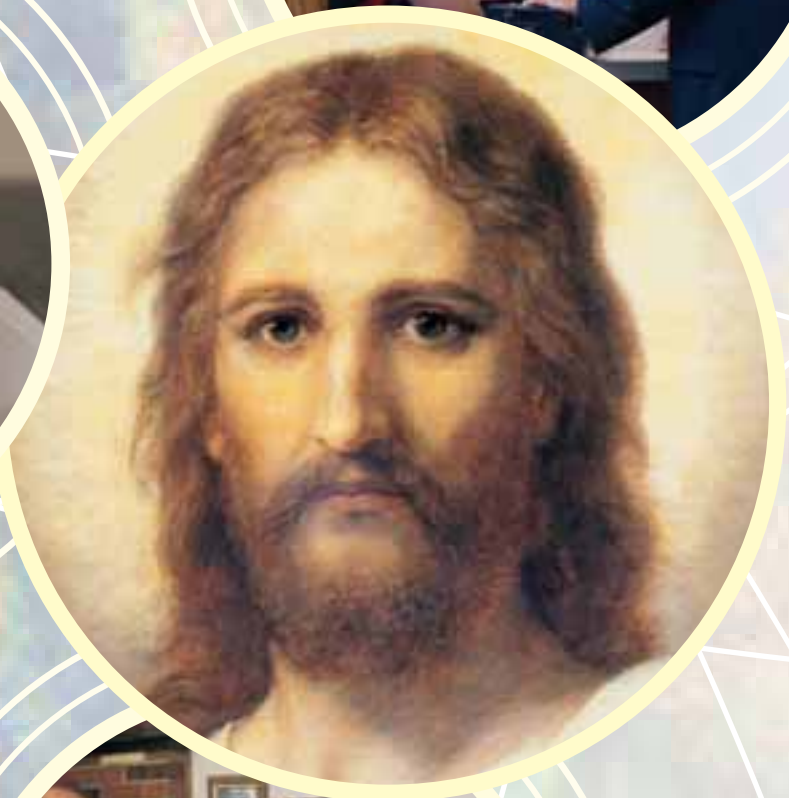
I noticed that just before this incident with the children, Christ was challenged by the Pharisees. He easily could have felt tired or irritable, yet He welcomed the children, picked them up, and blessed them.

I pondered this selfless act of love, focusing on what it could mean for me as a mother. I realized that too often I pushed my children away. But if I follow Christ’s example, then

even when the laundry and dishes are piling up, the bills need to be paid, and I’ve had too little sleep, I can stop, take my children in my arms, and love them. Perhaps this was what my sister was trying to tell me—when your children are in your arms, they are no longer underfoot. ■

Ida L. Ewing is a member of the Crestview Ward, Fort Walton Beach Florida Stake.





SINGLES AND MARRIEDS

Together in the Faith



BY KATHLEEN LUBECK PETERSON

Juan Fortunato of Buenos Aires, Argentina, teaches an English class for interested members of his ward. “I’ve been blessed with a strong friendship with each member of the class,” he says. “We all have something to share with each other.”

When Shirley Sun of Taipei, Taiwan, joined

a new ward, her bishop called her to teach the Gospel Essentials class in Sunday School. “I had a lot of opportunities to talk to members in the class and get to know them better,” she says.

Susan Buckles settled in Hilton Head, South Carolina, and visited the local family history library. The librarian asked Susan if she would like to volunteer there, and Susan said yes. “There is no way to measure growth unless you are actively involved,” says Susan. “Make yourself useful. Others will notice you and want you to help them.”

Who was single in these three situations? Who was married? It really doesn’t matter. What does matter is the joy that can come when fellowshipping and the love of Christ go hand in hand.

President Gordon B. Hinckley is mindful of all Saints. He has said to members who are single: “I feel some concern about the tendency in the Church to divide the members into various classes and groups. . . . You are men and women, holders of the priesthood, workers in the Relief Society. You are tremendously important to this work. The

Whether single or married, Latter-day Saints can experience the unifying power of the Savior’s love.



WHAT UNIFIES US? OUR TESTIMONIES

Having encountered missionaries many times since my teens, I was, at the age of 34, blessed to see, recognize, and know the truth.

Through the years, I had always been too egotistical to believe the story of a boy, a vision, and the gold plates. Now I know through the confirmation of the Holy Ghost that Joseph Smith is a chosen prophet of God. Because of the Prophet's guileless innocence and yearning, the true Church of our living Savior has been restored. I know we can return to loving heavenly parents as we come unto Christ.

Marianne Lipps of Sydney, Australia

Church is much the stronger because of you.”¹

All can experience the pure love of Christ regardless of age, marital status, wealth, poverty, or even celebrity. The power of this love can transform lives so that we become “no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Ephesians 2:19).

Working Together as Saints

As ward or branch members work together and show Christlike love to one another, the ward or branch family can grow closer.

Married couples and singles alike get together at the institute in Hsin Chu, Taiwan. At institute, says Jianbang Lee, “I have a chance to mingle with members besides at Sunday Church meetings. It is a wonderful occasion for members to get to know each other, share ideas, and make friends.”

Brother Lee used to think it was hard to develop friendships with other ward members. “But when I started to realize that there were many people who cared about me and loved me, the whole world seemed to change,” he says. “I started to love the ward and the members in it. I started to give more, not just waiting to receive service, love, or friendship from others.”

Kristine Amosin Cazon of Manila, Philippines, went to her new ward with a friend. A kind sister introduced them to other young single adults, the Relief Society president, and the bishop. Kristine and her friend were asked to stand during sacrament meeting. It made them feel welcome.

“When I was first welcomed in the branch, I was surprised at how loving and caring everybody was,” says Natassa Cokl of Celje,

Slovenia. “I was not used to meeting somebody once and the next time hearing them tell me they loved me. I was welcomed with outstretched arms.”

Carla Martinez, a young adult in Buenos Aires, Argentina, felt invisible in her new ward. She didn’t know the members. Carla had moved many times with her family, and life was not always easy for them. But then a sister in the ward started to develop a friendship with her.

“Aldana made me a birthday cake and decorated the humble room where my parents and I lived,” says Carla. “She gave me the best present I could get—her sincere love.”

A member helped Juan Fortunato get acquainted with others in his new ward, making the transition easier. “She literally introduced me to every young person in the stake,” says Brother Fortunato. “She helped me feel part of the group, like I had a new family. She now happens to be my wife.”

Easing the Way for Singles

Joyce Baggerly of Provo, Utah, considers herself a member of the Lord’s kingdom on earth who happens to be single. “Being single in a mostly married church has never been a problem for me,” she says. “I would rather be married, but I’m not, so I do the best I can with what I have.”

When she moves into a new ward, she finds the executive secretary and requests an appointment with the bishop, and she makes sure the membership clerk requests her records.

“I introduce myself to the Relief Society president and request a visiting teaching assignment. The first fast Sunday, I bear my testimony of Jesus Christ and express how



As members serve in the Church, they can look past their differences and feel a sense of belonging.

much I love the Savior. I attend every activity the ward has," she says. "On the rare occasion when I come home from a meeting where I feel ignored, I say a prayer that I might be able to go again with the same cheerful countenance I usually have on Sunday and that I can keep that smile until I am accepted."

Julie Gill of San Antonio, Texas, works to build friendships with single and married sisters. "The gospel is a great bonding force," she says. "But sometimes married people forget that all singles don't fit into the same mold, or they assume that singles can build friendships only with other singles. One sister said to me, 'You're so young,' and yet she was my same age, with two children. It's a common assumption, but we can embrace our differences to help each other."

Called to Serve

Courtney McGregor moved to Salt Lake City after the sudden death of his wife. To get involved, he went the extra mile. "There are always service opportunities without

being called to any particular assignment," he says. "I volunteered to help with the sacrament.

That got me talking to people I otherwise might not have met so soon. I also volunteered to help clean the temple. My experience, married or single, has been the same: friends are there to be made."

Katrina Young of San Antonio, Texas, has a similar perspective: "I have a desire to belong, so I participate in lessons, accept callings, visit teach, offer to help clean the building, give rides to members in our ward, attend activities, and try to learn the name of a family or individual each week. I have found that I am the one who is served."



INCLUDED IN THE GOSPEL

I love young single adult activities. The Church offers us so many opportunities to become friends, date, and eventually marry. I know that Church leaders are constantly thinking of this age group, and I am grateful for their love. I know that we are not excluded because we're young or unmarried, but we are included in every aspect of the gospel.

Holly Smith of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

Watching Out for Seniors

Annelise Scott had just moved into her new ward in Irvine, California. So had several other new senior widows. Nobody really knew each other. Then two sisters in the ward planned a luncheon for others, and from that day on, these sisters have been friends, sitting together in Church meetings, celebrating birthdays, carpooling to activities, and helping each other as needed.

“We watch for new senior sisters when they first come to Relief Society, then get their names and phone numbers so we can keep them active and enjoying our little group,” says Sister Scott.

For Those Who Are Not Outgoing

Just as some ward or branch members are outgoing, some are not. Talking to the bishop or branch president might help singles get better involved in a ward or branch.

“If you are willing to leave your comfort zone and take the initiative in making friends with singles and families in the Church, even Primary children, you’ll find that the people will love you and hold you dearly in their hearts,” says Shuwen Yang of Kaohsiung, Taiwan.

Susan Buckles attended a gathering with some Latino brothers and sisters and noticed that they had a particular way of dancing. “If someone didn’t have a partner, they included you in the dance by holding hands and dancing together in a circle,” she says. “They made differences disappear so everyone felt included.”

Turning to the Savior

What unifies the Saints?

“The pure love of Christ makes us of the

household of God,” says Yingling Huang of Hsin Chu, Taiwan. By looking to the Savior, we can become one.

“What unifies singles with their ward or branch is the same thing that unifies all members—our testimonies of Jesus Christ,” says Roger Borg of Costa Mesa, California. “The Savior invites all to come to Him. All worthy single members may receive the blessings of the gospel, including temple blessings, and can look forward with hope to blessings, including eternal marriage, that they have not yet been able to receive in this life.”

When friendship and love come together, singles and families of all ages serve each other, look out for each other, and have “their hearts knit together in unity and in love one towards another” (Mosiah 18:21). All are blessed as a result. ■

Kathleen Lubeck Peterson is a member of the Footbill Ward, North Salt Lake Utah Stake.

NOTE

1. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 605.



The Exit Interview

By Ofelia J. Hurtado

One particular conversation has been a great blessing to me in my spiritual progress and will continue to be forever. When I finished my mission, I had an exit interview with my mission president. He talked about the changes that would come into my life when I went home. He told me that if I wanted to stay active, I needed to always have a calling, and if I didn't have one, I should talk to my bishop. The other piece of counsel he gave me was even more emphatic. He said that if I wasn't going to marry in the temple, I should not get married at all.

I followed his advice to the letter, and every time I was tempted to marry out of the temple, I remembered his words. They gave me the strength I needed to hold to my decision to marry in the temple.

Generally speaking, returned missionaries struggle because we want to get married soon. It is even more difficult when members of our wards and branches ask us why we're not married yet. Time goes by, and if we aren't married, we often hear conversations that are hurtful and may make us bitter.

But I'm grateful to my mission president, who gave me the wise

counsel to marry only in the temple, because now I'm reaping the fruit of it. Ten years went by after my mission before I met my eternal companion. We were married in the Caracas Venezuela Temple in 2000, and it was

I will always be grateful for the counsel my mission president gave me at the end of my mission.

a beautiful experience. While I waited, nothing could stop me from trusting the words of the Lord's servant.

I now have the good fortune to be the mother of a little girl, and I'm glad I was able to give her the blessing of being born in the covenant. When I look at her, I see the impact of the conversation I had with my mission president. ■

Ofelia J. Hurtado is a member of Las Delicias Ward, Maracay Venezuela Stake.



Groceries or Tithing?

By Charlotte Arnold

I was in my first year of employment with a cosmetics company. At the time I was divorced and lived alone with my two children. In December the company sent each salesperson large boxes containing the Christmas merchandise we were to sell during the holiday season. That meant, however, that a large amount had been withdrawn from my salary. When I calculated all my monthly expenses and tithing, I had enough for three people to live on—but only for one week. And this money had to cover groceries for the entire month and gas for the car, which I needed for my work.

When our home teacher came, I told him about our situation. I told him I would not be able to pay my tithing because if I did, I wouldn't be able to feed my family. My faithful home teacher counseled me to pay tithing. He recommended that I do it faithfully, and the Lord would surely bless me. My home teacher had always been

distinguished by faithfulness and reliability. I jokingly told him, "If I cannot buy groceries, I will come to you." But I trusted him and did not want to disappoint him by not following his advice. So I paid a full tithing.

When I presented the Christmas merchandise early in the month, I was able to sell many of my goods. By the end of the month I had sold all of the Christmas items and all of the goods I had had in stock for several

months. Had I had more products on hand, I would likely have been able to sell them too.

My home teacher's promise was completely fulfilled. The Lord really did open the windows of heaven. We had more money than we needed that month. Later I inquired of my colleagues how their Christmas business had gone. They were not satisfied. At that time, a recession had caused a strong decline in sales in

the cosmetics industry.

How grateful I am to that home teacher for giving me this good counsel. I have had a strong testimony of tithing ever since. When I visit teach sisters who feel they have too little money to pay tithing, I share my testimony about how much we will be blessed if we do so. ■

Charlotte Arnold is a member of the Essen Ward, Dortmund Germany Stake.

Because of the large amount that had been withdrawn from my monthly salary, I had only enough money to cover our expenses for one week.



Your Book Is a True Book

By Ann Cue

The day the missionaries knocked on my door will always stand out as one of the pivotal moments of my life. It wasn't that I was searching for meaning—I had been deeply religious since childhood. I had spent seven years in a convent, and although I had left that lifestyle because it wasn't bringing me closer to God, I was involved in my church congregation working with the choir and teaching religion.

In fact, I had made a firm resolution not to discuss religion with any door-to-door missionaries because the spirit of contention frequently arose when conflicting interpretations of scripture were discussed. But the Lord, in His goodness, had prepared me for this visit. A few months earlier I had heard someone make a remark about a "Mormon book" connected to the mythology of South America. This prompted me to want to investigate any light such a book might shed on some themes I had already studied. I had filed this away for future reference, knowing that sooner or later I would read the Mormon book and investigate its mythological validity.

Answering the door that day, I was not thinking about books or mythological themes. I was a busy young

mother spending most of my energy tending a small baby and chasing a very active three-year-old. But as I approached the door, my mind was overcome with a kind of vision, a mental picture of Abraham going to



the door of his tent on the day he received an important message. I was impressed with the premonition that opening that door would bring a message of some importance.

Nevertheless, I was confused when all that stood there were these two young men labeled as Latter-day Saint missionaries. If it hadn't been for the "vision," I would have politely said good-bye and shut the door. I decided, instead, that I needed to find out what sort of message they had for me.

It started out all wrong. One of them asked me if I believed in prophets. Of course I did. But when these young men enthusiastically presented me a photo of 15 men in modern business suits and proclaimed that prophets and apostles were currently on the earth, credibility was

stretched to the limit. I had been brought up in a religion whose clergy

When the missionaries returned, I had a message of great importance for

them:
"Your book is a true book!"

dressed the part, and business

suits were not what they wore! So I decided, generously, to ignore the remark. And I searched mentally for some rational foundation for the "vision" still fresh in my mind.

I do not remember how I made the connection that "Latter-day Saint" missionaries might know something about a "Mormon" book. But once that thought crossed my mind, I was quick to pursue the topic.

"Don't you have some kind of book?" I asked. They did. I told them I had not found it in the library and did not know where to get it. Maybe they could help me. They could. They volunteered to come back with a copy the following week. And I made a mental note to be unavailable for religious "discussion" so they could simply drop off the book and leave.

When I finally did receive my copy of the book, I thanked the young men and agreed, again without any sense of commitment, that they could come back to answer any questions I had. Later that evening with my husband home from work and the children somewhat settled down, I picked up the book and began to read.

Nothing had prepared me for what I found in its pages. And it was with awe, shock, delight, and some confusion that I shortly announced to my husband my most amazing discovery: “This is a book of scripture!”

There was no doubt at all. I had done enough serious scripture study and had read enough of the world’s sacred literature to become immediately aware that this book was not a record of myth or an ancient history text or anything other than the true word of God. It spoke to me with that spiritual voice, and as I began following footnotes and looking up topics that interested me, it gave me answers to many of the theological questions I had puzzled over for years. It was, without doubt, the most exciting book I had ever picked up, and it continued to amaze and edify me whichever page I opened it to.

When the young missionaries returned as they had promised, I was home. And I had a message of great importance for them. I told them something I felt they needed to know: “Your book is a true book!” And I demanded to know why it was the property of *their* church, feeling that

it was entirely in the wrong hands!

At that point, I was ready to listen to what they had to say. After many months of investigation, I came to know that this wonderful book had not only brought me light and knowledge beyond my highest expectations, but it had also led me to the fulness of the gospel, the power of the priesthood, and the knowledge that those 15 men in business suits were evidence of the true Church of Jesus Christ, present again upon the earth. ■

Ann Cue is a member of the Madison Fourth Ward, Madison Wisconsin Stake.

Growing in the Gospel

By Douglas Zardo

My wife and I had taught our children to pray to Heavenly Father, but we did not attend any church regularly—we believed we could love God just as well in our home. Our lives began to change when two young missionaries came to my office in early March 1997.

They told me they would like to give me a special gift. I asked them to come to my home that evening when all my family would be there. That night they brought us not only a spiritual message, but the gift of the Book of Mormon.

During the subsequent weeks, the missionaries returned to our house

many times. We learned to pray sincerely, we learned new commandments from the Lord, and finally we were invited to become members of the true Church of Jesus Christ. Baptism would be the first step in becoming associated with the Church.

My wife and I were baptized on March 26, 1997. Three months after our baptism, our bishop called me to be Sunday School president. I resisted, saying that I could not fulfill this calling because I wasn’t prepared for it. The bishop, however, persuaded me to accept this challenge and gave me the Sunday School manual to study.

Two months later the Gospel Doctrine teacher called me during the week to tell me she could not be at church on Sunday to give her lesson on section 98 of the Doctrine and Covenants. She named three other people who could substitute for her. I contacted them, but they all had previous engagements. As I hung up the phone after the last conversation, I felt that Heavenly Father wanted me to teach this class.

I was not familiar with the Doctrine and Covenants, but with the help of the bishop’s first counselor, the ward library, and the lesson manual, I was able to prepare the lesson.

I was nervous to teach ward members who knew more about the gospel than I did. But during my short time in the Church, I had learned that if we pray to Heavenly Father, He will help us. On Sunday before the class began, I asked for

peace and strength. As I entered the classroom, the brothers and sisters were smiling and receptive, and they helped me. All participated attentively, and I felt that the Spirit of the Lord had blessed me to impart that important lesson.

Afterward I had the assurance that Heavenly Father only gives us tasks that we are able to fulfill—with His assistance and help from other members.

After eight months I received the Melchizedek Priesthood. My son,

Anderson, who was not a member of the Church, had a skin problem on

his neck and had already been examined by three doctors. But even after taking antibiotics he saw no improvement.

I believed the priesthood could help him, and I explained priesthood blessings to him, but he did not accept my offer of one. He thought the medications would soon heal the infection. Finally, after several months he asked me for a blessing.

This was the first time I had exercised my priesthood in this way. Five days later Anderson entered my room very happy. His neck was completely healed.

As the one-year anniversary of our baptism approached, I was called to serve as the ward mission leader. This time I had no hesitation in accepting my calling. My wife was called to serve as the second counselor in the Relief Society.

In April 1998 we were sealed in the São Paulo Brazil Temple. We will never forget that day, as we made new covenants with our Heavenly Father.

A month after our sealing, we attended a stake conference where a new stake presidency was called and sustained. Our bishop was called into the stake presidency. Much to my surprise, I was called to serve as the new bishop of our ward. I was astonished and insecure, but I never questioned the calling. In fact, as I accepted the calling, I had the assurance that God was blessing me and that He would help me to fulfill the calling of bishop.

As a bishop I learned that we are building the Church of Jesus Christ all across the earth and that through a prophet, seer, and revelator, He has commissioned us to take the gospel to all nations, peoples, and tongues.

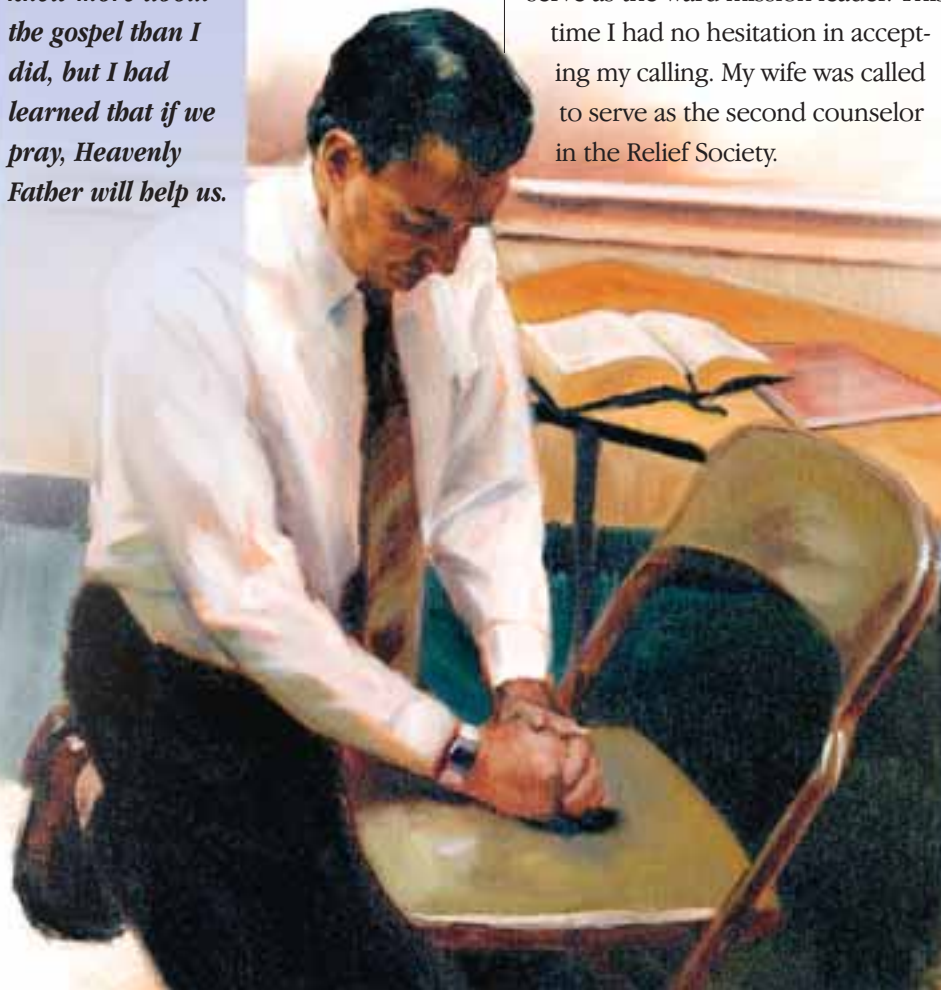
Our lives have changed because my wife and I allowed the gospel to enter our hearts. Now we understand that if we are faithful to the

covenants made in the temple with Heavenly

Father, He will bless us in this life, strengthen us in our callings, and eventually receive us into His presence. ■

Douglas Zardo is a member of the Indianópolis Ward, São Paulo Brazil Santo Amaro Stake.

I was nervous to teach ward members who knew more about the gospel than I did, but I had learned that if we pray, Heavenly Father will help us.



The Perfect Comeback

What would you do if one of your classmates was offended at a Mutual activity?

BY RICHARD D. HAWKS

One night, while serving as a youth leader in my ward, I arrived at the church and was not surprised to find a group of young men playing basketball in the gym while they waited for opening exercises to begin. I was surprised, however, to see David. He was relatively new in the ward but had already demonstrated that attending Church-related activities was not a normal part of his routine. Coming to a Young Men activity was a big step.

David did a pretty good job of quietly easing into the group without being noticed—that is, until the basketball rebounded off the rim and went straight at him. He caught the ball and realized it was his turn to take a shot. He dribbled a few times and clumsily threw the ball up toward the hoop. It banged hard off the bottom of the rim and came right back at him, hitting him on the arms he had put up to protect his head. Everyone laughed, and so did David.

The ball then went into the hands of another boy, who mockingly imitated David's

awkward shot. As before, most of the boys laughed, but this time David was not laughing. He had come to be a part of his priests quorum but had become the brunt of their laughter.

David turned to the exit and walked out.

My heart broke for David. I was not sure what to do, but I knew I needed to try anything to get him to stay. I followed David out the door, trying to think of something to say that might help him have the courage to come back.

As I was walking after David, I was surprised to see Dennis, one of the other priests, run past me and put his arm around David. I do not know what he said, but Dennis must have been inspired, for David's heart was softened and he hesitantly, but willingly, turned around and came back into the church. It was a wonderful moment.

It was only a few weeks later when a similar situation occurred. Some of our ward members, including many of our young men, were practicing for an upcoming theatrical performance. Todd, a priest, was one of the



performers. During a rehearsal, someone mockingly mimicked Todd's performance. He was offended and started walking toward the door dejectedly.

"Oh no," I thought, "here we go again." I felt compelled to follow him outside and encourage him to ignore the offense and come back.

What happened next was a beautiful surprise.

This time it was not Dennis who hurried past me, but David. David, who only a few weeks earlier had been the dejected one, was now the inspired one. He ran up to Todd and, putting his arm around him, pleaded with him to return. Todd accepted the invitation, and within minutes both boys were standing side by side on the stage. David had now successfully convinced another to stay.

As I witnessed this example of the Aaronic Priesthood in action, I was reminded of a statement by Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "We are so busy checking on our own temperatures, we do not notice the burning fevers of others even when we can offer them some of the needed remedies, such as encouragement, kindness, and commendation. The hands which hang down and most need to be lifted up belong to those too discouraged even to reach out anymore" ("Swallowed Up in the Will of the Father," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 23).

David's hands had been ones that hung down. From the selfless act of one young man to another, David's hands then became those that lifted up. ■

Richard D. Hawks is a member of the Country Crossing Second Ward, South Jordan Utah Country Crossing Stake.



Questions & Answers

“Kids at school are always harassing and making fun of me because they know I’m a member of the Church. What’s the best way to deal with it?”

L I A H O N A

All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12). The Lord’s disciples often have to endure persecution. Think of Nephi, Moroni, and Joseph Smith. The Savior Himself was mocked and “despised and rejected of men” (Isaiah 53:3). Persecution occasionally still exists for Latter-day Saints today.

Two ways to handle this problem are to ignore the harassment or to talk to those who make fun of you. Either way, pray for guidance on how best to respond, and be a good example. You can also ask your parents for advice. If people in your ward or branch have gone through the same thing, they can tell you how they handled it.

You could ignore the harassment if you aren’t going to see those kids anymore after school ends. In the meantime, be patient, pray for strength, and try not to let it bother you.

But if you are going to see those kids for a while, consider talking with them about their

Prayerfully decide whether you will ignore the harassment or talk about it with those who harass you.

As you stand up for yourself and your beliefs, don’t hurt or make fun of those who harass you.

Try to follow the Savior’s example. Be kind, patient, and forgiving. Being a good example is a way of sharing your testimony.

“Blessed are all they who are persecuted for my name’s sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (3 Nephi 12:10).

harassment. Sometimes, those who make fun of Church members do so because they don’t understand our beliefs. They say things like, “You don’t believe in Christ,” or, “If you don’t drink alcohol, you can’t have a good time.” In that case, you could let them know that you believe in Jesus Christ and that you are a member of the Church of Jesus Christ. Or let them know that you choose not to drink alcohol, and you can have a good time without it.

When you are harassed, try to follow the Savior’s example in the way you react. The Lord didn’t get angry or try to get back at those who hurt Him. He loved them and didn’t take offense. When you need encouragement, read what the Apostle Peter taught about the Lord’s example in 1 Peter 2:20–23.

If you seek the Lord’s help in this trial, it can be an opportunity to strengthen your faith and to show those kids a Christlike example. Your life is the symbol of your faith in the Lord, says President Gordon B. Hinckley:



“As His followers, we cannot do a mean or shoddy or ungracious thing without tarnishing His image. Nor can we do a good and gracious and generous act without burnishing more brightly the symbol of Him whose name we have taken upon ourselves. And so our lives must become a meaningful expression, the symbol of our declaration of our testimony of the Living Christ” (“The Symbol of Our Faith,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, Apr. 2005, 6).

READERS



If I were in your place, I would try to bear the humiliation without retaliation, because they do not know what they are doing. I would

try to be a good example and do my best to be exemplary in words and deeds.

Leah N., 19, Legazpi, Philippines

Take the situation as your opportunity to share the gospel through your example. The Lord admonished us to be patient

in afflictions, that we may show forth good examples unto them in Him (see Alma 17:11).

Leah N., 19, Legazpi, Philippines



Never verbally or physically threaten those who may abuse you. Looking back at high school, I could not have made it through some

of the taunting I endured without having a fixed hope in the Lord and love of Him and His commandments. When you walk

out the doors on your last day of school, you will never see most of those people again. Make the decision to walk out with your head high and your testimony strong, knowing that you were true to the standards of the Lord.

Samuel B., 19, Montréal, Québec, Canada

The method I use to solve the problem is to have a strong belief in our Heavenly Father. He may be allowing us to be tested so that we can become stronger. I believe that He loves all His children, and that is why He disciplines us. We should not think too much about what others say, because it may only confuse us or make us scared. However, we should continue to be a good example to our friends. And we should stand firm as a witness in all truth and live our lives according to the standards of what is right.

Apechard S., 18, Khon Kaen, Thailand



I know how you feel. In my school, the children think that I am strange and that I am “too” good because I never swear or do inappropriate things. I felt very much alone, but I

made friends with some girls who have good hearts, although they are not members of the Church. Today, whenever students need help with something, they come to me because they know that I am a member of the Church, that I would never lie, and that they can trust me.

Ester K., 11, Itatiba, Brazil

You can confront the harassment in simple ways such as praying for those people and trying to talk kindly with them about our Church and its principles. Always be an example of kindness and charity, and always show them that your faith is stronger than their criticism and mistreatment. I know this will produce results because I have put it into practice, and my classmates



There is meaning and purpose in our earthly challenges. Consider the Prophet Joseph Smith: throughout his life he faced daunting opposition—illness, accident, poverty, misunderstanding, false accusation, and even persecution. . . . Each of us must go through certain experiences to become more like our Savior. In the school of mortality, the tutor is often pain and tribulation, but the lessons are meant to refine and bless us and strengthen us, not to destroy us.”

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Faith through Tribulation Brings Peace and Joy,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2003, 17.

were able to understand me and respect me as a member of the Church.

Karen P., 18, Asunción, Paraguay



As members of the Church, we should help those who don’t know about the truth. My classmates made fun of me and said things about the Church. I felt bad, but I prayed with

faith and asked my Heavenly Father to help me help them understand. I helped them, and now they support me.

Ricay R., 14, Comayaguela, Honduras

I know how it is to get harassed for being a member of our Church. It has been my experience that when you are not ashamed of the gospel and the Church and you stand up for your morals and standards, people recognize that they aren’t getting anywhere by making fun of you. Kids who harass you are just unfamiliar with what you are all about.

Kelly E., 18, West Jordan, Utah, USA

Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as pronouncements of Church doctrine.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Youth readers: Send your answer, along with your name, birth date, ward and stake (or branch and district), and a photograph (including your parent’s written permission to print the photo) to:

Questions & Answers 5/06

50 E. North Temple St. Rm. 2420

Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

Or e-mail: liahona@ldschurch.org

Please respond by May 15, 2006.

QUESTION

“One of my Church friends is not living some gospel standards. I’m worried about him.

How can I help?” ■

the Friend



He Lives

BY PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY

Easter morning is the Lord's day, when we celebrate the greatest victory of all time, the victory over death.

Those who hated Jesus thought they had put an end to Him forever when the cruel spikes pierced His quivering flesh and the cross was raised on Calvary. But this was the Son of God, with whose power they did not reckon. Through His death came the Resurrection and the assurance of eternal life.

With sorrow unspeakable those who loved Him placed His wounded, lifeless body in the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. He had taught them of His eventual death and Resurrection, but they had not understood.

The Jewish Sabbath passed. Then came a new day, a day that ever after was to be the Lord's day. In their sorrow Mary Magdalene and the other women came to the tomb. The stone was no longer in place. Curiously they looked inside. To their astonishment the tomb was empty.

Distraught and fearful, Mary ran to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved. She cried, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him" (John 20:2).

She who had loved Him so much, she who had been



President Gordon B. Hinckley teaches us that remembering the Savior's Resurrection can bring us peace.

healed by Him, was the first to whom He appeared. There followed others, even, as Paul declares, up to 500 brethren at one time (see 1 Corinthians 15:6).

Now the Apostles understood what He had tried to teach them. Thomas, on feeling of His wounds, declared, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28).

Can anyone doubt the veracity [truth] of that account? No event of history has been more certainly confirmed. There is the testimony of all who saw and felt and spoke with the risen Lord. Two sacred volumes speak of this most glorious of all events in all of human history. Beyond these is the witness and the testimony, borne by the power of the Holy Ghost, of the truth and validity of this most

remarkable event.

In the hour of deepest sorrow we draw hope and peace and certitude [certainty] from the words of the angel that Easter morning: "He is not here: for he is risen, as he said" (Matthew 28:6).

He is our King, our Lord, our Master, the living Christ, who stands on the right hand of His Father. He lives! He lives, resplendent [magnificent] and wonderful, the living Son of the living God. ●

From an April 1996 general conference address.



Case Studies

Josh says something unkind about someone.

What should Josh do?

Jenny does not share her toys. What should

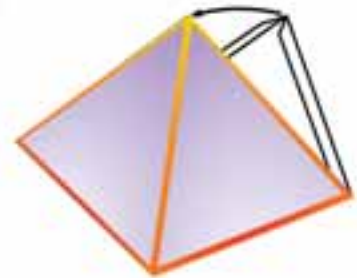
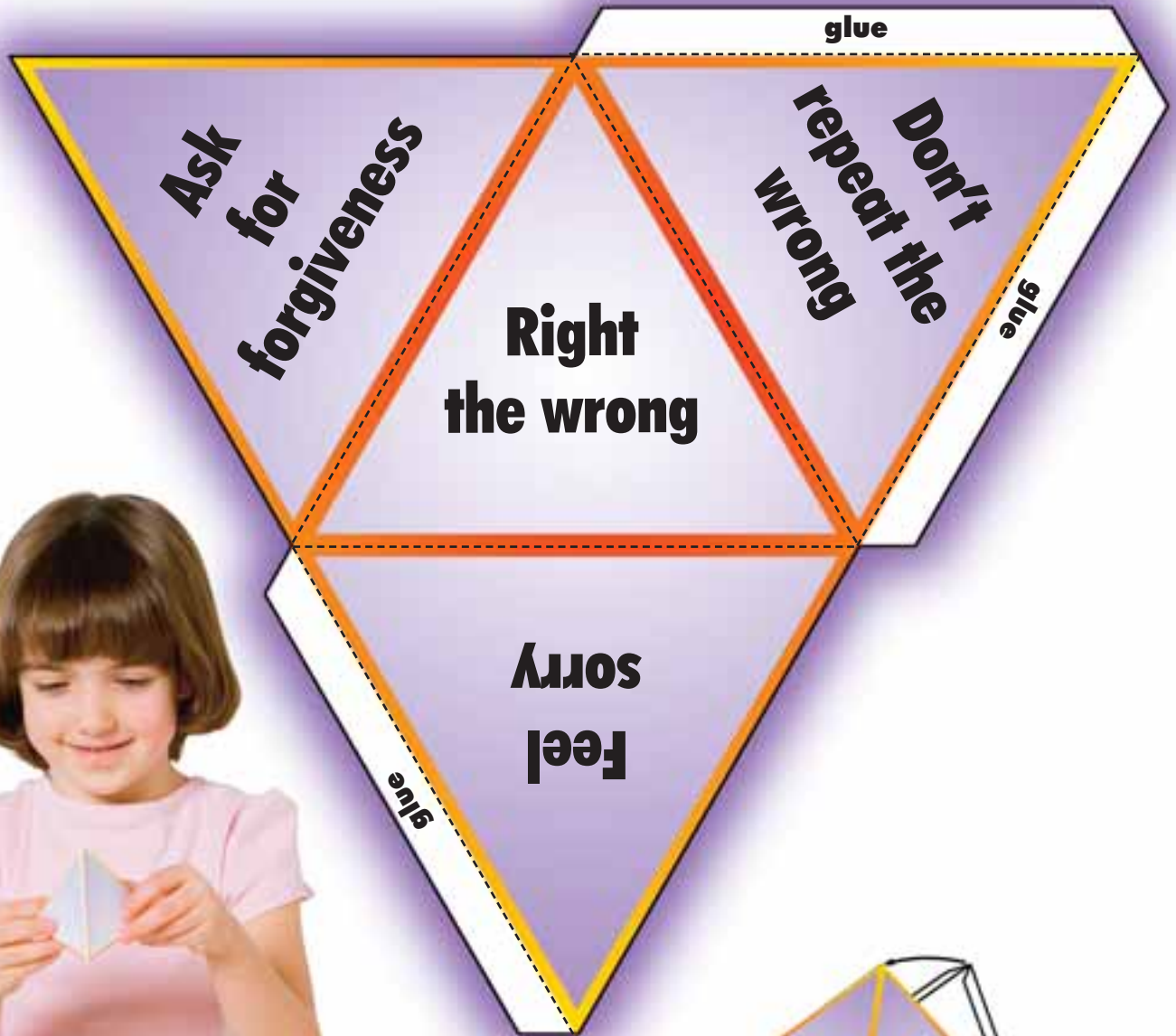
Jenny do?

Some boys do not include someone in their game.

What should they do?

Lisa takes something that does not belong to her.

What should Lisa do?



I CAN REPENT AND BE HAPPY

“Behold I say unto you that ye shall have hope through the atonement of Christ . . . to be raised unto life eternal, and this because of your faith in him according to the promise” (Moroni 7:41).

BY LINDA MAGLEBY



There was a girl who got a splinter in her finger. Her dad took his pocketknife, cleaned it, and gently scraped it across her finger to catch the end of the splinter and pull it out. Even though her dad was gentle, it hurt to have the splinter removed! The next time the girl got a splinter, she didn't tell anyone. After a few days, her finger became infected. It hurt so much that she wanted the splinter removed no matter what. Her dad gently removed it. After the splinter was gone, her finger began to heal.

When we do something wrong, it always hurts us and it often hurts others. We may think the hurt will go away if we ignore it. But left alone, the wrong will continue to hurt us and make us sad.

Heavenly Father loves us. He wants us to be happy. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to make it possible for us to repent. Through His Atonement, Jesus paid the price for our sins so that we can repent and be forgiven.

Repentance is a way of removing and healing from a sin that hurts us spiritually. The first thing we need to do is to realize that we have done something wrong and to feel sorry that we did it. This feeling comes from the Holy Ghost. We must ask Heavenly Father and any people we have wronged to forgive us. We need to do the best we can to correct any problems caused because of our wrong choices. We must also decide not to do the wrong thing again. After we have done all that we can to repent, because of Christ's Atonement, Heavenly Father will forgive us. Repentance makes us happier now and makes it possible for us to live with Heavenly Father and Jesus forever.

Activity

You can play this game by yourself or with your family. Cut out the shape on page F4 on the heavy black lines. Fold it on the dotted lines to make a pyramid. Glue or tape the tabs so they are on the inside of the pyramid. Choose a case study from the list, toss the pyramid, and tell how to apply the part of repentance that is facing you to the situation described by the case study.

Sharing Time Ideas

1. *Before we came to earth, we lived with Heavenly Father. Show Primary picture 3–3 (The Pre-Earth Life). This is one artist's idea of what heaven is like. Explain that Heavenly Father presented a plan for all of us to get a physical body and to learn to choose the right. Read Moses 4:1–4, and have the children tell the story in their own words. Ask, “Who is the ‘Beloved Son’ Heavenly Father spoke of?” Show Gospel Art Picture Kit 240 (Jesus the Christ). On the chalkboard list the following: “An earth would be created where we could live and show we would obey Heavenly Father’s commandments”; “We shouted for joy when we heard Heavenly Father’s plan”; “Jesus was prepared to redeem us”; “There was a war in heaven.” Write another list of the following scriptures in random order: Abraham 3:24–25; Job 38:7; Ether 3:14; Revelation 12:7–9. Have the children read the scriptures and match each scripture to a statement.*

2. *Read and discuss 2 Nephi 2:27. Point out that the most important choices we make will be between good and evil. Divide the children into three groups, and give each group one of the following pictures: Gospel Art Picture Kit 309 (Alma Baptizes in the Waters of Mormon), 310 (Ammon Defends the Flocks of King Lamoni), 311 (The Anti-Nephi-Lehies Burying Their Swords). Each of these stories tells of people who rebelled, repented, and turned to serve the Lord. With the help of teachers and using the scriptures and stories on the back of each picture, have each group prepare and present their story in a simple role play. Ask how each person or group of people showed they had repented. Ask how we can know when we have repented. ●*



FROM THE LIFE OF PRESIDENT WILFORD WOODRUFF

They Were Speaking the Truth



Ever since he was a boy, Wilford Woodruff wanted to know which church was true. When he was 26 years old, he still had not joined any church. He lived with his brother Azmon on his farm.

Heavenly Father, help me to know how to live my life.

On December 29, 1833, two Mormon missionaries stopped at Azmon's house. He and Wilford were both away working, but Azmon's wife was home.

God has restored His Church upon the earth, and we would like to tell you more about it.

My husband and brother-in-law are not home right now, but we would definitely be interested in hearing more.

The missionaries rented the local schoolhouse that afternoon. They passed out notices inviting anybody who wanted to learn more about the gospel to come to a meeting that evening.



ILLUSTRATED BY SAL VELLUTO AND EUGENIO MATTOZZI

When Wilford got home from working, his sister-in-law told him about the meeting. He immediately turned his horses around and started to the schoolhouse, praying the whole way to know whether or not the missionaries were true followers of Christ.

But, Wilford, what about supper?

These men could be the answer to my prayers! I must go.

Wilford arrived at the schoolhouse, which was packed with people. His brother Azmon was already there. Wilford couldn't find an empty chair, so he sat on one of the writing desks where he could see and hear everything.

After the missionaries were finished speaking, they asked members of the congregation if they would like to stand and say anything. Immediately, Wilford stood up and told everyone that he knew the missionaries were speaking the truth.

The Lord urges me to bear testimony of the truth of this message. Do not oppose these men, for they are true servants of God. They have preached to us the pure gospel of Jesus Christ.

I bear strong testimony of the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon. I also know that Joseph Smith is a prophet who has come to fulfill a great mission here on earth.

I can feel the Spirit telling me that these are men of God.

Two days later Wilford and his brother Azmon were baptized.

Adapted from Leon R. Hartshorn, ed., Classic Stories from the Lives of Our Prophets (1971), 106–8; and Susan Arrington Madsen, The Lord Needed a Prophet (1990), 64.

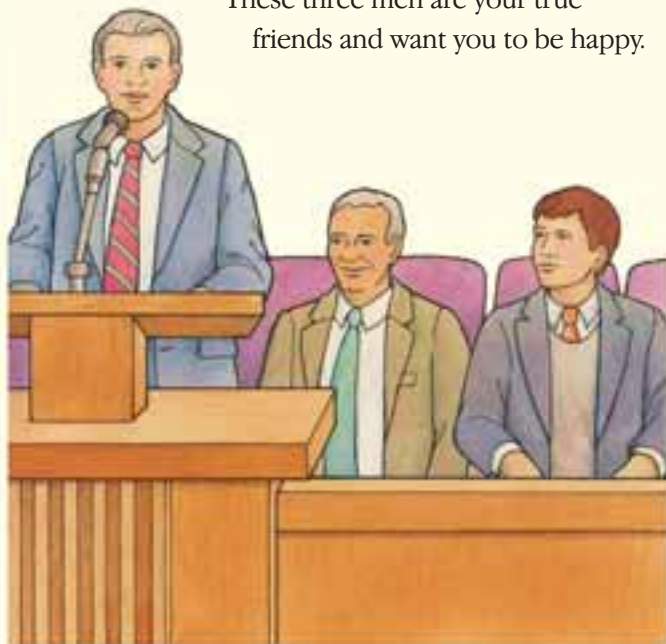
People Who Love



Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ love you more than you can imagine. Jesus suffered and died for you. Heavenly Father hears your prayers and speaks to you through the **Holy Ghost**. They have given us the Church and the priesthood.

The **bishop or branch president** presides over the ward or branch with the help of his two **counselors**.

These three men are your true friends and want you to be happy.



Your family was given to you by Heavenly Father, and your parents love you very much. Always return that love.



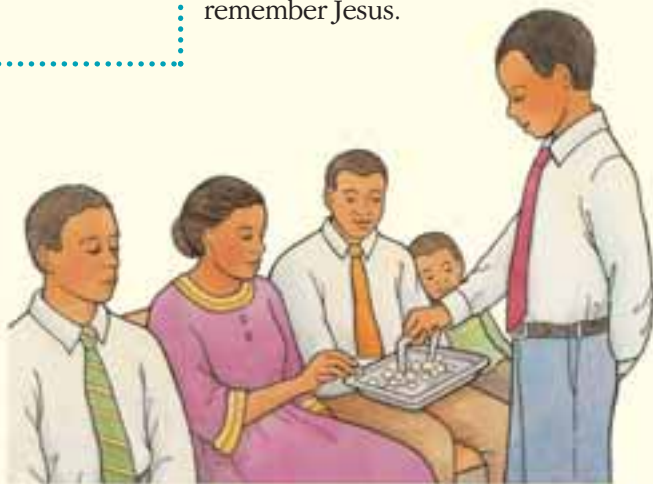
There are many people who want to help you feel at home.



You and Serve You

at church who love you and me. Here are a few of them.

Aaronic Priesthood holders prepare, bless, and pass the sacrament. This sacred ordinance allows baptized members to renew their baptismal covenants. Younger children can also partake of the sacrament and remember Jesus.



Primary is an organization for the children of the ward or branch. The **Primary president** and her two **counselors** conduct the meetings and help you to learn and live the gospel.

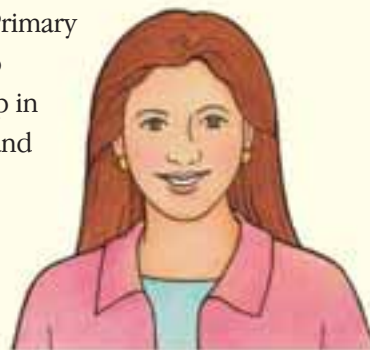
The **Primary pianist and music leader** play and lead the music in Primary. Gospel hymns are a special kind of prayer. Sing with all your heart, and you will feel the Spirit.



During the month your **home teachers** will visit your home and make sure that you are all doing well. They will also teach your family more about the gospel.



Your **Primary teacher** teaches gospel lessons to your Primary class. He or she prays to Heavenly Father for help in teaching you the truth and is eager to answer your questions.



ILLUSTRATED BY BETH M. WHITTAKER

No Ordinary Home Teacher

BY TESS HILMO

Based on a true story

“Visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction” (James 1:27).

Saturday’s activity will be a daddy-daughter cooking class,” Sister Marshall announced.

A wave of excited murmurs rolled through our Primary group. I suppose every girl was imagining bubbling desserts, fun games, and two whole hours with her dad. Every girl but me, that is. I didn’t have a dad—not even a shared-visitation dad like the ones some girls at school talked about. Instead of excitement, an anxious knot twisted in my stomach. I felt my face flush hot with emotion, and I clenched my teeth, fighting to force back tears.

Sister Marshall must have noticed my reaction. Once the meeting was over, she gently placed her hand on my shoulder. “Feel free to bring your mom, Tess.” She meant well, but those simple words were enough to set my tears free. I dropped my head so she wouldn’t notice and turned away.

“It’s OK,” I told myself. “You don’t have to go to that silly activity anyway.” But I knew it was a lie. I would have given anything to be part of a family that didn’t need special instructions from Sister Marshall—a family like the others that I saw dotting the rows of the chapel every Sunday. But my dad had left my mom and me



when I was just a baby. We hadn’t heard from him in years, and I knew there was no way he was going to magically reappear just in time for Saturday’s activity.

“Get over it!” I ordered myself for at least the hundredth time since our baptism three years before. Our family was so much stronger now that we had a testimony of Heavenly Father’s plan, and I was grateful for all

the gospel had given us. Still, it hadn’t been easy stepping into a group of friends who had been together since they were little—sharing baptisms, Primary activities, ward socials. I was the new girl, and although the others really tried to make me feel included, I still felt that I was different. I sometimes felt like a puzzle with one center piece missing.

“How was class?” Mom asked cheerfully as we drove home. She was a different person since our baptism—happier and more confident.

“Great,” I fibbed. Probably better not to worry her about the cooking class. After all, there was nothing she could do about it.

The week passed quickly. Schoolwork, chores, and friends kept me busy and allowed me to forget about Saturday’s activity. That is, until the phone rang Friday night.

“It’s for you,” my sister said, holding out the receiver.



“Hello?”

“Hi, Tess. This is Brother Erickson.” Brother Erickson was our home teacher. He owned an ice-cream shop in town and sometimes brought containers of mint chip or cherry



chocolate to our house. He often made me laugh with his twinkling eyes and quick smile. But I couldn't imagine why he would be calling me.

His voice was cheerful and strong. “I was wondering if you'd let me join you at the cooking class tomorrow.”

I held my breath and peeked into the kitchen where my mom was washing the dinner dishes. I smiled at the mounds of bubbles clinging to her arms. “She couldn't have told him,” I thought. “She didn't even know.” I wondered if Sister Marshall had called him.

“I read about it in the bulletin last Sunday,” he continued. “It sounds like fun.”

“Oh yeah, the bulletin.”

“So? Think you can handle toting an old man like me around your party?”

“You don't have to—” I started.

“I want to!” Then he was silent for a moment. “Please.”

“Well, OK.” To be honest, I wasn't entirely sure it *would* be OK. I mean, I didn't know him *that* well. But my new excitement for going to the activity outweighed any doubt.

Saturday came, and when Mom dropped me off at the church, Brother Erickson was waiting for me in a bright red apron. His smile eased my worries as we joined the other fathers and daughters. We had a blast learning how to make cherry cobbler and homemade

whipping cream in our crowded meetinghouse kitchen. He never once made me feel like he was doing me a favor or just fulfilling his calling.

When Mom came to pick me

up, Brother Erickson gave me a big high five. “Thanks for letting me come. I had a great time!” I knew that he really meant it.

Years passed, and Brother Erickson remained our home teacher. In addition to his visits, he invited my family over for many game nights at his house. He joined me at more father-daughter activities and gave me my first real job at his ice-cream store when I turned 16.

After college when I was getting married in the Los Angeles California Temple, I asked Brother Erickson to serve as a witness. When I walked into the sealing room, I saw him sitting in the chair typically reserved for the father of the bride. He smiled his silly smile at me, and I knew that he was exactly where he should be. After all, he was no ordinary home teacher. He had become my very close friend. ●

Tess Hilmo is a member of the Highland Fourth Ward, Highland Utah Stake.



“The priesthood can bless all members through the ministration of home teachers.”

President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Father, Come Home,” Ensign, May 1993, 36.

The Still Small Voice

Reverently ♩ = 96-108

Through a still small voice, — the Spir - it speaks to me — To

softly

3 3 3

guide me, to save me from the e - vil I may see. If I

try to do what's right, He will lead me thru the night, Di -

3

rect me, pro - tect me, and give my soul His light.

Lis - ten, lis - ten. The Ho - ly Ghost will whis - per.

softer

3 2/4

Lis - ten, lis - ten to the still small voice.

very soft

3 1

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D&C 8:2-5

Why I Believe in Jesus Christ

BY LINDSEY M.

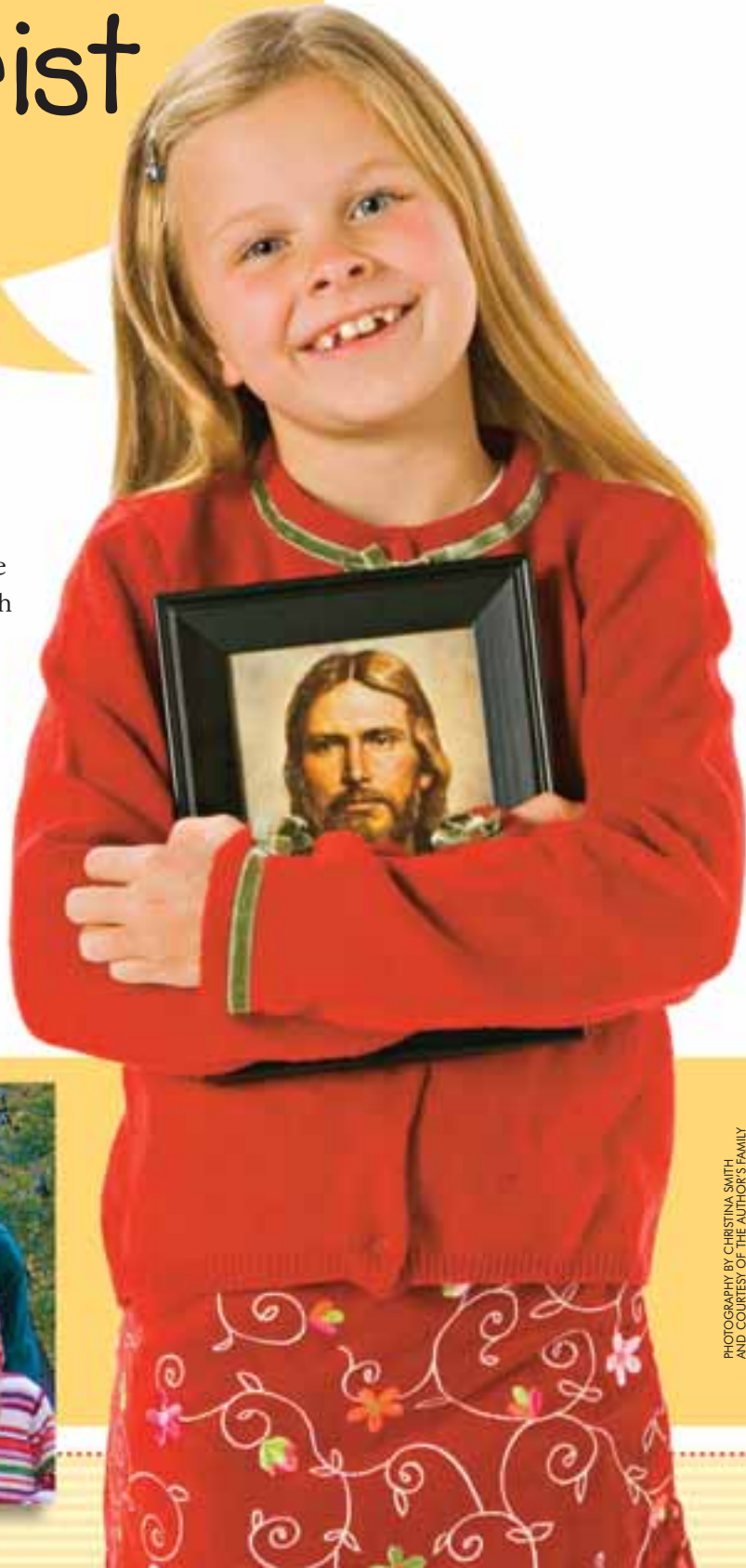
A talk given on February 6, 2005, at stake conference

“This is the testimony which is in me” (Alma 7:13).

I want to tell you why I believe in Jesus Christ. **Scriptures** help my testimony of Jesus Christ grow. They tell us about Him—that He created the world and that He died for us so that we could live with Him again. The scriptures teach us that Jesus loves us and wants to bless us. I especially like the story in the scriptures of Jesus blessing the Nephite children.

My family helps my testimony of Jesus Christ to grow by teaching me the gospel and loving and caring for me. When we have family home evening, we share stories and our feelings about the Savior.

Prayers help my testimony to grow. When my baby sister Rachel was born, she had a hard time breathing and had to have an oxygen hood. I couldn’t hold her, and she had to stay in the hospital. I prayed



that she would get better and be able to come home with us. My prayer was answered. She got better and came home with us soon after that. Prayers help me to feel close to Jesus Christ.

Teachers and leaders help my testimony to grow. When I go to church, I learn and hear the testimonies of others. Also my home teachers, Brother Hackett and Brother Pahnke, bear their testimonies to my family.

Prophets help my testimony to grow. I love to read about the prophets and learn about their lives and how they were committed to following Jesus Christ. One story I love is about Joseph F. Smith (1830–1918). He was returning to Salt Lake City with several missionaries when a mob approached them. They shot their guns and cursed and yelled. The leader jumped off his horse and shouted, “We will kill anyone who is a Mormon!” All the other missionaries ran into the woods, but Joseph F. Smith stood strong. The man held a gun and asked, “Are you a Mormon?” Joseph F. Smith stood up even straighter and said, “Yes, siree; dyed in the wool; true blue, through and through!” The man was surprised. Putting the gun away, he shook Joseph’s hand, and said, “Well, you are the pleasantest man I ever met! I’m glad to see a man that stands up for his convictions.” Then he rode off and didn’t bother them again.¹

The Friend magazine helps my faith to grow. I like to read the stories and see the pictures that children draw of Jesus Christ. I like to hear about other

people who are living the gospel and have testimonies.

Pioneers help my testimony of Jesus Christ to grow because of their sacrifices to follow Him. I have an ancestor named Lars Larson who listened to the missionaries and chose to follow Jesus Christ even though his parents were angry about it. They told him that if he was baptized, they would not let him live there and they would not help him at all. His testimony was so strong that he left his family to follow the Savior and be baptized. He was later called as a missionary to where his family lived. He went to their house, and when his mother answered the door, she quickly closed it on him. But he caught the door before it closed all the way and simply said, “Mother, I just want you to know that I have found the truth.” This testimony wasn’t easy to have—it meant that he lost a lot—but following the Savior was so important to him that it was worth the sacrifice.

My baptism helps my testimony of Jesus Christ to grow. I chose to be baptized last year. I made a covenant with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ because I want to follow Them and feel Their love and the influence of the Holy Ghost in my life.

I do believe in Jesus Christ. I have a testimony that He died for us, that He was resurrected, that He lives and loves us, and that He wants to bless and help us. ●

Lindsey M., age 9, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA

NOTE

1. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 104.



My Decision to Be Baptized

BY JOSÉ M.

“He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12).

My parents helped me prepare for my baptism and to understand the reasons why I needed to be baptized. I started reading the Book of Mormon with my mother, and the more we read, the more I liked it.

Later, the missionaries taught me, and I started understanding the things I learned in Primary. When the missionaries asked if I wanted to take upon me the name of Christ, I was a little scared because I knew the responsibilities baptism brought with it. But I said yes—I wanted to be baptized as soon as I turned 8.

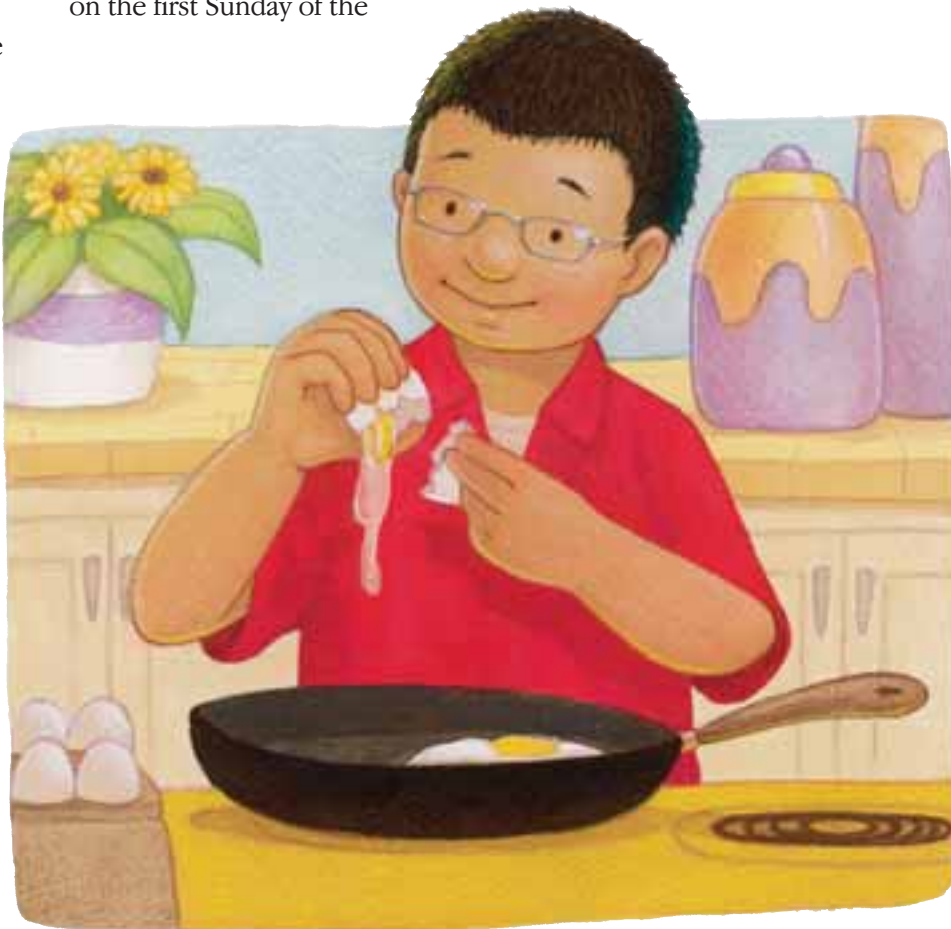
On November 14, 2004, I was baptized a member of the Church. Since then, I have faced many situations that have caused me to remember that I need to always live the way Jesus Christ did. For example, my sisters are 7 and 2 years old, and now I know

what kind of example I need to be for them. I try to take care of my sister at school and help her behave. I work hard at school, and at home I always try to be quieter so my sisters will do the same. I help my mom fix breakfast every Sunday, and I have started fasting on the first Sunday of the

month like my parents.

As I try to do the things that Jesus taught, I can see blessings. My parents teach me to feel the Savior’s love in all the things I do. I am eagerly waiting for the day when I can serve a mission. ●

José M., age 9, Tacoma, Washington, USA





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Why Weepest Thou, by Simon Dewey

“Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master” (John 20:15–16).



The Resurrection “was the greatest miracle of human history,” said President Gordon B. Hinckley. “Earlier He had told them, ‘I am the resurrection, and the life’ (John 11:25). But they had not understood. Now they knew. He had died in misery and pain and loneliness. Now, on the third day, He arose in power and beauty and life, the firstfruits of all who slept, the assurance for men of all ages that ‘as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive’ (1 Corinthians 15:22).” See “From the Garden to the Empty Tomb,” p. 8.