

# FAMILY HOME EVENING— YOU CAN DO IT!

*No matter what your family is like, family home evening can bless and strengthen you.*

A father gets home tired after a long day at work and finds the rest of his family struggling with similar grumpy feelings. It's Monday night, and holding family home evening seems impossible. After saying a prayer for help, the father and mother decide to keep things simple. They call their family together, sing a hymn, and pray together. They give each member a small candle to light as they tell about something that inspired them recently. In a darkened room, the light of the candles represents inspiration and focuses the children's attention. As testimonies are shared, a feeling of sweet peace and love enters the home. The family ends the night grateful they held home evening.

Did you know that family home evening has been a Church program for 100 years? In April 1915, the First Presidency directed members to set aside one night each week for family prayer, music, gospel learning, stories, and activities. (See page 80 for an excerpt from the First Presidency letter.) Prophets continue to remind us of the importance of family home

evening. “We cannot afford to neglect this heaven-inspired program,” President Thomas S. Monson said. “It can bring spiritual growth to each member of the family, helping him or her to withstand temptations which are everywhere.”<sup>1</sup>

Here are some attitudes to keep in mind as you make family home evening part of your week:

*This applies to me.* “Family home evenings are for everyone,” said Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.<sup>2</sup> All of us—married or single, with children or without—can dedicate time to strengthening family and learning the gospel.

*I can find time.* The Church sets the example by keeping Monday nights free from Church activities. You can show the Lord and your family that you are willing to set aside time for what is most important.

*I can find what works for my family.* If your family is separated geographically, try a “family online evening” to talk with family members online or over the phone. Does someone have to work late? Hold a “family park evening”

near the workplace during a break. A divorced father held a “family letter evening” each Monday, writing to his children who lived far away.<sup>3</sup> Let obstacles be a catalyst for greater creativity.

*I can start this week.* Family home evening can be organized according to the needs and circumstances of your home. Here are some general suggestions:

- Start and end with prayer.
- Use music, including hymns and Primary songs.
- Learn from the scriptures and modern prophets.
- Include a variety of physical activities, service projects, and gospel-centered activities from week to week.
- Have fun! Play a game or make refreshments.
- Be consistent. If you can't do it on Monday, find another day that works.

*I want the blessings.* Prophets have promised that if we participate in family home evening, great blessings will result: Love and obedience at





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home will increase. Faith will develop in the hearts of youth. Families “will gain power to combat the evil influences and temptations” that surround them.<sup>4</sup>

While your family home evenings may not be perfect experiences every time, your family will be strengthened and blessed by your efforts. “Each family home evening is a brushstroke on the canvas of our souls,” Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught. “No one event may appear to be very impressive or memorable. But just as the . . . strokes

of paint complement each other and produce an impressive masterpiece, so our consistency in doing seemingly small things can lead to significant spiritual results.”<sup>5</sup> ■

#### NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Constant Truths for Changing Times,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2005, 19.
2. L. Tom Perry, “Therefore I Was Taught,” *Ensign*, May 1994, 38.
3. See “Family Home Evening: Any Size, Any Situation,” *Ensign*, Dec. 2001, 42.
4. First Presidency, in James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (1965–75), 4:339.
5. David A. Bednar, “More Diligent and Concerned at Home,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 19–20.

#### GIVE HIGHEST PRIORITY

“We counsel parents and children to give highest priority to family prayer, family home evening, gospel study and instruction, and wholesome family activities. However worthy and appropriate other demands or activities may be, they must not be permitted to displace the divinely-appointed duties that only parents and families can adequately perform.”

**First Presidency letter, Feb. 11, 1999.**