

MORE THAN a Sidekick

Think you're only a tagalong when it comes to home teaching? Think again.

"I know how to be a friend as well as a home teacher. I love seeing what I can do to help others."



You've seen it in novels or movies dozens of times. There's a big, scary problem hanging like a dark cloud in the distance.

Disaster seems inevitable. Then along comes the hero who beats the odds and saves the day.

Such heroes are often accompanied by a sidekick. This character typically has a few basic skills but mainly exists to toss the hero a weapon when the villains start to swarm.

As a home teaching junior companion, it might be tempting to think of yourself as something of a sidekick in the companionship. After all, your adult companion has been around longer and has more experience than you. So it should be up to him to save the day, right?

Not quite.

When it comes to home teaching, there's no such thing as a superhero

(your older companion) and his sidekick (you)—just two superheroes who can truly change the world together.

No matter who you are and what your background might be, you personally have what it takes to make a big difference in the lives of those you visit.

No Greater Calling

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) said, "There is no greater Church calling than that of a home teacher."¹

Home teachers do so much more than share a spiritual message. They help each family to know they have friends they can call on.

President Thomas S. Monson has said: "A friend makes more than a dutiful visit each month. . . . A friend cares. A friend loves. A friend listens. And a friend reaches out."²

Great friendships, of course, can be formed at any age.

Serving as a Friend

Sean C., a 16-year-old from southern Utah, USA, knows how to be a friend as well as a home teacher. Sean has a



JOIN THE CONVERSATION



Throughout December, your Sunday lessons will focus on building the kingdom of God. Home teaching is one way to do this, but everyone can build the kingdom of God through everyday acts of service. As you pray for others, the Spirit may bring to mind something you can do. Remember this counsel from Sister Linda K. Burton, Relief Society general president: “First observe, then serve.”⁴ How have you found ways to observe and then serve in building God’s kingdom? Be prepared to share your experiences in your ward, with your family, or with other youth.

broad range of interests that include competing in rodeo, wrestling, working with cattle, and repairing cars. He also loves cultivating friendships with the people he home teaches.

“I love talking to people and seeing what I can do to help them,” Sean says.

His home teaching companion is the bishop of their ward. In one home they visit, the wife is a member of the Church and the husband is not. Sean connected with the husband, Floyd, on their very first visit. As Floyd began talking about his Jeep, Sean perked up. “We just clicked,” says Sean.

In the year that Sean and the bishop have visited Floyd and his wife, Sean has strengthened those friendships—including helping Floyd work on engines from time to time.

One of Sean’s favorite scriptures is about service: “When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17).

Sean explains, “Everybody needs to be looking out to find ways to serve.”

Your Spiritual Gifts

We all have spiritual gifts and talents. In addition, we have unique interests and hobbies. Each of us has something special to offer that nobody else can do in quite the same way.

“Every person is different and has a different contribution to make,” teaches President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency.

“No one is destined to fail.”³ Home teaching can be an opportunity for you to use those gifts to benefit others.

For example, when it’s your turn to share a spiritual message, you might consider praying ahead of time about what you can say that will be most helpful to the people you visit.

Often, you will have a personal experience with a given topic that you can mention with the family. Let your light shine! Share what you know.

You can also find creative and meaningful ways to serve the families you visit. Pretend, for example, that someone in one of your home teaching families wants to learn the guitar. As it happens, you’ve been playing guitar for years. In this situation, a few music tips from time to time might be as helpful as shoveling snow off their driveway or trimming their trees.

When it comes to home teaching, your senior companion might indeed be a spiritual powerhouse. But make no mistake. You’re a child of God and equal to your responsibility as home teacher.

You’ll always have something incredible to add. ■

NOTES

1. Ezra Taft Benson, “To the Home Teachers of the Church,” *Ensign*, May 1987, 50.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “Home Teaching—a Divine Service,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 47.
3. Henry B. Eyring, “Help Them Aim High,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 60.
4. Linda K. Burton, “First Observe, Then Serve,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 78.