

Liahona



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Given at Christmas, p. 14**

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Potential, p. 20

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NEW IN JANUARY

WATCH FOR
A SEPARATE
**CHILDREN'S
SECTION.**

THE
CHURCH
IS HERE

La Paz **Bolivia**





Snow-covered Illimani Mountain provides a striking backdrop for the high-altitude, red-brick city of La Paz, often regarded as the administrative center of Bolivia because so many government official offices are located there.

Missionaries preaching in the Andes Mission arrived in Bolivia in November 1964 and held a meeting with 19 in attendance. They baptized and confirmed the first convert one month later. Today, Church membership in Bolivia exceeds 203,000 in 255 congregations and 5 missions. The nearest temple is in Cochabamba, 145 miles (233 km) away, a seven-hour drive from La Paz.

The Church in Bolivia is well-known for community humanitarian projects, including donating wheelchairs and neonatal medical equipment; participating in blood drives; supporting agricultural, home-gardening, and village-development efforts; and organizing relief efforts in times of need.

- Latter-day Saints in the La Paz metropolitan area meet in 40 different locations.
- Spanish is the most dominant language, but many speak Quechua, Aymara, or Guarani.
- The first full-time missionary from Bolivia was called in 1967.
- December 2014 marked the 50th anniversary of the Church in Bolivia. Members in La Paz held a community celebration in January 2015.



“You Want **Us** to Do What?!”

As the Church’s curriculum development team asked members to test the new *Come, Follow Me* curriculum for 2019, we heard this question repeatedly, along with comments like: “At first I thought, ‘This is crazy!’ I wasn’t sure it would work.” But these early concerns were gradually replaced by confirmation that “our scripture study changed completely” or “It works!”

Why do their experiences matter to you? Because the new curriculum is for you and your family in your home and not just for your teacher at church.

At the suggestion of the First Presidency, this month’s issue explores the principles behind this newest phase of *Come, Follow Me* curriculum—which comes on the heels of the revised youth curriculum introduced in 2013, *Teaching in the Savior’s Way* in 2016, and the Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society curriculum launched in 2018.

Beginning on page 20, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, who gave guidance to the curriculum-development work, provides

insights that if applied can transform us in profound and eternal ways. It is not just a curriculum but an approach to daily gospel learning and living.

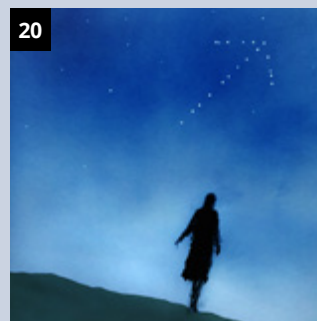
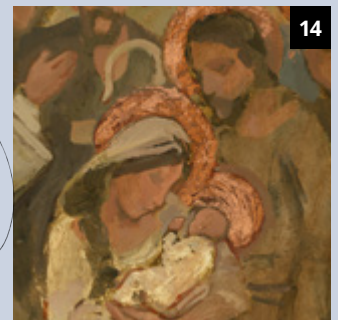
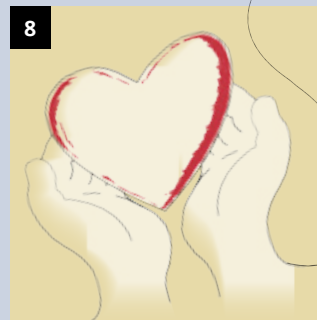
As I have watched prophets, seers, and revelators direct the development of this new home-centered, Church-supported curriculum, I have marveled at how it fits the Church’s movement toward a less prescriptive approach to gospel living, inviting us to take greater responsibility for our personal spiritual growth. As we do so, I am convinced that we will receive greater light and truth and our capacity to follow Jesus Christ and forsake the evil one will increase (see D&C 93:29–40), bringing peace to our lives and goodness to the world.



Michael Magleby
Director of Curriculum Development

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By Leah Barton

Feeling stuck? Here's how you can bounce back and start progressing again.



Why I No Longer Ask "Why?" after My Brother's Death

By Ximena Cardozo Corbalán

Ximena explains how she found peace after her brother passed away on his mission. Her father's account is found on page 18 of this issue.

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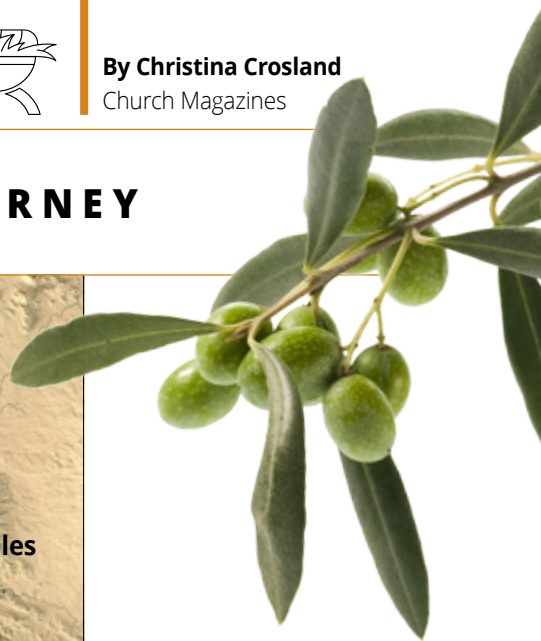
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THE FIRST CHRISTMAS JOURNEY



W

e tell the Christmas story every year, but how often do we picture the journey that Mary and Joseph took? Their faith and sacrifices are significant parts of the story.



1. Luke 1:26-27, 30-31

Mary was from Nazareth, a village of 400-500 people.¹ To the world, she was a simple peasant girl. And yet she and Joseph accepted their calling to raise the Son of God.

2. Luke 2:4-5

Traveling to Bethlehem would have taken at least four to five days,² and the scriptures give no hint of a donkey accompanying them through the rocky hills. Even “great with child,” Mary made the journey with Joseph that fulfilled prophecy: the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (see Micah 5:2).

3. Luke 2:7-11

In Bethlehem, Joseph and Mary were without their own home or crib to place the King of kings. They must have felt great humility as they witnessed, amidst an otherwise



Nazareth

About 92 miles
(148 km)

Jerusalem
Bethlehem

Egypt At least 150 miles (240 km)



humble birth, the clear signs that this babe was the Son of God.

4. Matthew 2:13-14

Without warning, the small family had to leave their city and country behind.

Before the Christ child was even two years old, His life was being threatened (see Matthew 2:16). But dedication to and love for their Savior motivated Mary and Joseph to take the long trip to Egypt.

5. Matthew 2:19-23

After some time in an unfamiliar land, Joseph and Mary made their longest trip yet. But the miles must have seemed shorter, because this time, they were returning home. Once there, they put their faith in God and raised He who would “be called a Nazarene” (Matthew 2:23).



Like Mary and Joseph, **WE TOO ARE TRAVELING ON OUR OWN JOURNEY WITH JESUS CHRIST.**

While the going may be long and difficult, every footstep of faith leads us closer to eternal life—a gift provided by our loving Savior, whose own journey made salvation possible. ■

NOTES

- 1. See James E. Strange, “Nazareth,” *Anchor Bible Dictionary*.
- 2. See D. Kelly Ogden, “The Road to Bethlehem,” *Tarnbuli*, Dec. 1993, 41.

MAP AND PHOTOGRAPH OF STATUE FROM GETTY IMAGES; DETAIL FROM THE ANNUNCIATION, BY CARL HEINRICH BLOCH-FLIGHT, BY ROSE DATOC DALL

When Blanca's husband and mother became sick and unable to care for themselves, she had to leave her job to care for them full-time. By turning to the Lord, Blanca has found strength beyond her own.

CODY BELL, PHOTOGRAPHER

Blanca Solis

Asunción, Paraguay

I do not get tired of praying and asking the Lord for strength to continue forward. I pray to Him at all times. What my family has gone through has helped me realize that the Lord has walked with me through it all. He gives me the opportunity to rise up again. It is incredible the great amount of strength the Lord gives me.

I never ask myself, "Why me?" I have always thought there was a reason for it. I trust the Lord and accept what He sends me. He has supported me as I have passed through very difficult times, and I have been strengthened.

FIND MORE

Need help as a caregiver? Visit lds.org/go/12186.

Learn more about providing care for elderly loved ones at lds.org/go/12187.

Find more Portraits of Faith at lds.org/go/18.





Ministering Principles

COMMUNICATE THAT YOU CARE

There are so many ways we can show we care, especially at Christmastime. We can say it, text it, write it, give it, share it, pray it, bake it, sing it, hug it, play it, plant it, or clean it. Simply try it.

Showing love to others is at the very heart of ministering. Relief Society General President Jean B. Bingham said: “True ministering is accomplished one by one with love as the motivation. . . . With love as the motivation, miracles will happen, and we will find ways to bring our ‘missing’ sisters and brothers into the all-inclusive embrace of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”¹

Letting others know we care is an essential element of developing personal relationships. But different people get the message in different ways. So how can we appropriately express our love for others in ways they will understand and appreciate? Here are some ways to communicate that we care, along with a few ideas to start your own thinking.

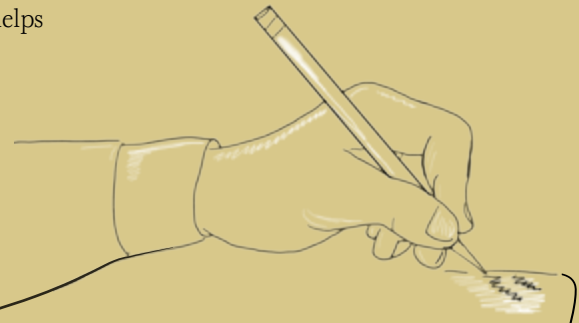


“Ministering Principles” articles are intended to help us learn to care for one another—not to be shared as a message during visits. As we come to know those we serve, the Holy Ghost will prompt us to know what message they might need in addition to our care and compassion.

Say It

Sometimes there's no substitute for saying how you feel about someone. While this could mean telling someone you love them, it also includes sharing what you admire about them or paying a sincere compliment. This kind of affirmation helps strengthen relationships. (See Ephesians 4:29.)

- Find an opportunity to let the individual know how much you admire one of his or her strengths.
- Stop by, call, or send an email, text, or card telling the individual you're thinking of them.



Visit

Taking the time to talk with and listen to someone is a powerful way to show how much you value him or her. Whether you visit at home, at church, or elsewhere, there are many people who need someone they can talk to. (See Mosiah 4:26; D&C 20:47.)

- According to the individual's needs, schedule a visit. Take time to really listen and understand his or her circumstances.
- Where it may be difficult to visit homes because of distance, cultural norms, or other circumstances, consider finding time together after Church meetings.



Serve with a Purpose

Be mindful of what the individual or family needs. Providing meaningful service communicates that you care. It combines the valuable gifts of time and thoughtful effort. “Simple acts of service can have profound effects on others,” said Sister Bingham.²

- Offer service that strengthens individuals or their families, such as watching the children so parents can go to the temple.
- Look for ways to lighten loads when life gets overwhelming, such as cleaning windows, walking the dog, or helping in the yard.



Listening to others will help us discover ways to show them that we care. See the Ministering Principles article “Five Things Good Listeners Do” in the June 2018 issue of the *Liahona*.



Do Things Together

There are individuals who don't connect through deep conversations. For some people, connections are made by finding common interests and spending time together doing those things. The Lord urged that we “be with and strengthen” (D&C 20:53) our brothers and sisters.

- Go for a walk, plan a game night, or set up a regular time to exercise together.
- Serve together on a community or Church project.

Give a Gift

Sometimes time or opportunities to interact are limited. In many cultures, giving gifts is a sign of caring and empathy. Even an occasional, simple gift can communicate your interest to build a better relationship. (See Proverbs 21:14.)

- Take them a favorite treat.
- Share a quote, scripture, or other message you feel they could benefit from.



A Labor of Love

As you come to know those to whom you minister and for whom you seek inspiration, you will learn more specifically how to communicate your love and care to them individually.

Kimberly Seyboldt of Oregon, USA, tells the story of seeking inspiration and giving gifts to show love:

“When I find life is getting me down, I get up and make zucchini bread, usually about eight loaves. My special ingredient is the silent prayer I offer as I bake to know who needs those loaves of bread. I have been able to better know my surrounding neighbors as the warm zucchini bread has been my invite into their homes and lives.

“One warm summer day, I pulled up alongside a family selling pints of blackberries on the side of the road. I didn’t need more blackberries, but the young, thin boy at the stand was excited to see me, thinking I was his next customer. I bought some blackberries, but I also had a gift for him. I gave the boy two loaves of bread. He turned to his father for approval, then said, ‘Look, Dad, now we have something to eat today.’ I was filled with gratitude for this opportunity to show love in a simple way.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles pleaded “that every man and woman—and our older young men and young women—will [be] . . . more deeply committed to heartfelt care for one another, motivated only by the pure love of Christ to do so. . . . May we labor side by side with the Lord of the vineyard, giving the God and Father of us all a helping hand with His staggering task of answering prayers, providing comfort, drying tears, and strengthening feeble knees.”³



Jesus Christ Cares

Before Jesus Christ raised Lazarus from the dead, “Jesus wept.

“Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!” (John 11:35–36).

“I have compassion upon you,” Christ said to the Nephites. Then He called for their sick and afflicted, their lame and blind, and “he did heal them” (see 3 Nephi 17:7–9).

The Savior set the example for us as He cared for others. He taught us:

“Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

“This is the first and great commandment.

“And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matthew 22:37–39).

Who needs your care? How could you show them that you care? ■

NOTES

1. Jean B. Bingham, “Ministering as the Savior Does,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 106.
2. Jean B. Bingham, “Ministering as the Savior Does,” 104.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Be With and Strengthen Them,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 103.



By Jean B. Bingham
Relief Society
General President

Where Did My Home and Visiting Teachers Go?

The flexibility of ministering should encourage us to show greater caring, not lead us to relax.

One of my friends recently asked me in bewilderment, “Where did my visiting teachers go?” From the time her husband passed away, they had been so caring and attentive, but since the announcement of the new ministering program at general conference in April 2018, she hasn’t seen hide nor hair of them.

We are all adjusting to a new way of doing things, and some ministering brothers and sisters may not have understood that although a home visit isn’t the only way to minister, it is certainly a wonderful way to show love and genuine interest—and many members still need it.

Putting *Why* over *How*

For some, the problem may be misunderstanding the purpose of the change. The purpose

behind replacing home and visiting teaching with ministering wasn’t simply to change *how*

we take care of each other but to help us be more guided by *why*.

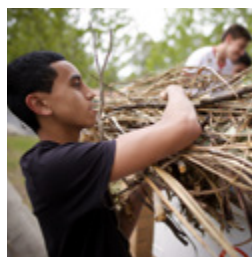
The ultimate goal of our ministering is to help others become more deeply converted to the Savior Jesus Christ and grow toward their divine potential. The program’s added flexibility isn’t meant to encourage relaxing our efforts; it’s meant to provide greater opportunity for the Spirit to guide our efforts.

So whether or not someone needs a visit today should be based in large part on what will help them move forward on Heavenly Father’s path for them.

Learning Together

Despite the initial uncertainty about what is expected of us as we minister, our sisters and brothers are reaching out to one another. Wherever I’ve traveled, it has been exciting to hear from countless women (and many men) sharing their stories of the positive impact their ministering—or being ministered to—is having on relationships and personal growth.

I recently came back from North Carolina, USA, where a ward Relief Society president shared some ideas she had received from stake leaders. With a few clarifications, I thought they were spot on and worth sharing.





“A NEWER, HOLIER APPROACH”

This chart represents the way some members had come to perceive the old program, compared to how we hope all will understand what it means to minister.

OLD

Home and visiting teaching

Motivated by duty

Box*

What do I do?

Focus on process

CHECK IT OFF

Focus on the task

Once-a-month visit

Bring a set message

What counts as a visit?

Assigned to brothers and sisters

Report that it's done

NEW

Ministering

Motivated by love

Pearl

Why do I do?

Focus on outcome

KEEP CHECKING IN

Focus on the person

Simple, flexible contact(s)

Spirit-led gospel sharing

Accountable for spiritual welfare

Entrusted with brothers and sisters

Change hearts

* A parable is told of a jeweler who had a precious pearl but was saddened when the people who came to see it focused more on the beautiful box it sat in rather than the pearl itself. Similarly, as we shift from home and visiting teaching to ministering, we can better focus on the “pearls” of meaningful ministering rather than the “box” of policy and procedure.

HOW TO HAVE SUCCESSFUL MINISTERING INTERVIEWS

In the digital version of this article, Sister Bingham shares five guidelines for helpful ministering interviews. Visit lds.org/go/121813.

Keep Going

We are all learning together as we embrace “a newer, holier approach” to ministering.¹ Perhaps some of us feel overwhelmed or intimidated. It helps to remember that “newer and holier” does not mean “flawless and unachievable.”

Whether you are still uncertain about the purposes of ministering and how it works or you think you have it down, I invite you to watch and read the resources at ministering.lds.org and study the Ministering Principles articles published each month in the *Ensign* and *Liahona* (see page 8

in this issue). These materials will help align your ministering efforts with the Savior’s work.

Thank you, wonderful sisters and brothers, for loving and caring and reaching out and giving of yourselves. You are truly remarkable, and your ministering will be “something extraordinary”!² ■

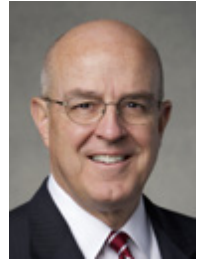
NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Ministering,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 100.
2. Emma Smith, in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 14.





By Elder
L. Whitney Clayton
Of the Presidency
of the Seventy



THE SAVIOR'S GIFT OF PEACE

Even in a world where peace seems far off, the Savior's gift of peace can live in our hearts regardless of our circumstances.

Is there anything better than beautiful Christmas music and carols, Christmas gatherings of family and friends, smiling faces, and the joyful exuberance of children? Christmas has a divine ability to bring us together as families, friends, and communities. We look forward to exchanging gifts and enjoying a festive holiday meal.

In *A Christmas Carol*, written by English author Charles Dickens, Ebenezer Scrooge's nephew captures the magic of this sacred time of year. He reflects, "I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round . . . as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their . . . hearts freely, and to think of [other] people. . . . And therefore . . . , though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it!"¹

As a parent, and now as a grandparent, I have been reminded of the magic of Christmas as I have watched my children, and now their children, celebrate the Savior's birth and

enjoy one another's company as our family gathers together. I am sure you have watched, as I have, the joy and innocence with which children look forward to and relish this special holiday. Seeing their joy reminds each of us of happy Christmases past. It was Dickens again who observed, "It is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas, when its mighty Founder was a child himself."²

I was raised near Los Angeles, California, USA, where our home was surrounded by orange groves. One evening each Christmas, my parents invited family, friends, and neighbors to our home to sing Christmas carols and enjoy refreshments. It was a wonderful tradition for all of us, and the singing seemed to go on for hours. We children would sing as long as we felt we must, and then we would steal away to the orange groves to play.

My wife, Kathy, and I also raised our family in Southern California, relatively close to the coast. Christmas there is characterized by palm trees swaying in the breeze. Every year, our children looked forward to going down to the harbor to watch the annual Christmas boat parade. Hundreds of beautiful



THE TRANSFORMATIVE SPIRIT OF THE CHRISTMAS SEASON IS ROOTED IN THE REDEEMING POWER OF JESUS CHRIST TO CHANGE OUR LIVES FOR THE BETTER.

yachts, twinkling with lights of all colors, circled the harbor as we watched in wonder.

Now that we live in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, Kathy and I have made a tradition of taking our children and grandchildren to a local production of the play *A Christmas Carol*. Every year as we watch Scrooge undertake his miraculous transformation from a heartless hermit to a happy neighbor filled with Christmas joy, we feel the tug to let go of the Scrooge within us. We feel prompted to do a little better to follow the Savior's example of charity to all.

The Redeeming Power of Jesus Christ

The transformative spirit of the Christmas season is rooted in the redeeming power of Jesus Christ to change our lives for the better. The beloved account of the birth of the Son of God more than 2,000 years ago in Bethlehem is recorded in the book of Luke:

“And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. . . .

“And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

“And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; . . .

“To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

“And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

“And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

“And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

“And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

“And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

“And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:1, 3–14).

Fear Not

The angel perceived the shepherds' fear when he appeared to them, telling them to “fear



not.” The astonishing glory of God, which radiated from the unexpected heavenly messenger, had indeed struck fear in their hearts. But the news the angel had come to share was nothing to be afraid of. He had come to announce a miracle, to bring the ultimate good news, to tell them that the redemption of mankind literally had commenced. No other messenger before or since has brought happier greetings.

The Only Begotten of the Father was beginning His mortal sojourn: “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” These were indeed good tidings of great joy.

We each face moments in our lives when the great joy that the angel promised can seem elusive and distant. All of us are subject to the frailties and hardships of life—illness, failure, problems, disappointment, and, in the end, death. While many people are blessed to live in physical safety, others today do not. Many face great difficulty meeting the demands of life and the physical and emotional toll those demands can bring.

And yet, despite life’s hardships, the message of the Lord to each of us is the same today as it was to the shepherds keeping watch 2,000 years ago: “Fear not.” Perhaps the angel’s injunction to fear not has more transcendent relevance to us today than it did in calming the shepherds’ fear that first Christmas night. Could he also have meant for us to understand that because of the Savior, fear will never triumph? Could he have meant to reinforce the fact that ultimate fear is never justified, that no earthly problem need be lasting, and that none of us is beyond redeeming?

The sweetest gift given at Christmas will always be the one our Savior Himself gave us: His perfect peace. He said: “Peace I

leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27).

Even in a world where peace seems far off, the Savior’s gift of peace can live in our hearts regardless of our circumstances. If we accept the Savior’s invitation to follow Him, lasting fear is forever banished. Our future has been secured. These are the “good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.”

“Fear thou not,” the prophet Isaiah reminded us, “for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Isaiah 41:10).

Hope in the Savior

Because of the Savior, born 2,000 years ago in Bethlehem, there is hope—and so much more. There is redemption, release, victory, and triumph. “The wrong shall fail, the right prevail.”³

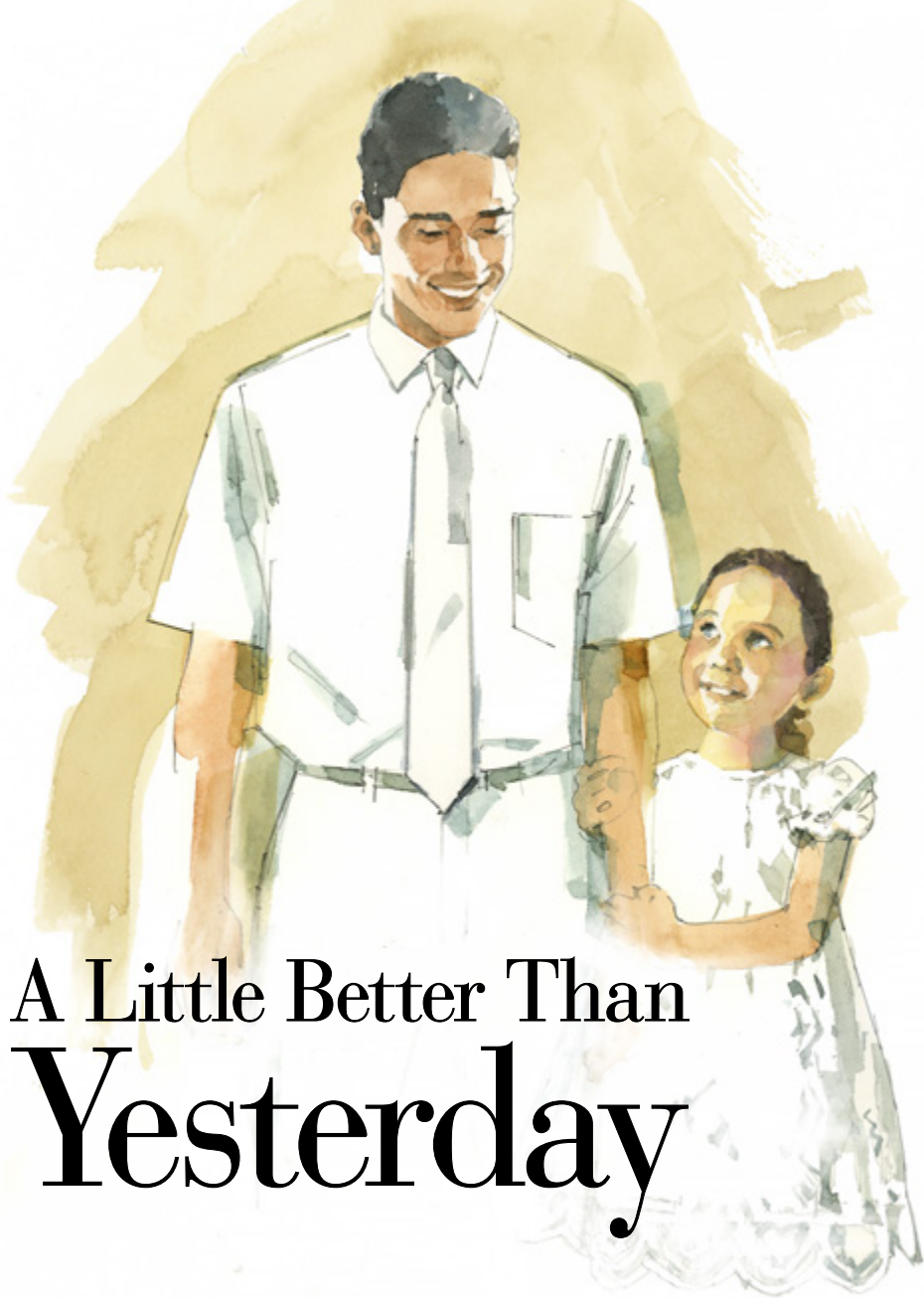
No wonder a choir of angels suddenly appeared as a heavenly exclamation point to the angel’s announcement of the Savior’s birth, singing, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” No message could ever be more reassuring. No message was ever filled with more good will toward men.

May this season be one of peace and joy for all of us, “for unto [us was] born [that] day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” ■

From a First Presidency Christmas Devotional address, “Fear Not,” given on December 6, 2015, in the Conference Center.

NOTES

1. Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol* (1858), 5–6.
2. *A Christmas Carol*, 67.
3. “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day,” *Hymns*, no. 214.



A Little Better Than Yesterday

By Luis Omar Cardozo

When his mission president called, Sergio had been out almost a year. He was our only son, and he was the first of our children to serve a full-time mission. My wife, Liliana, and I were proud of him and the example he set for his two sisters.

Sergio had a way about him that we knew would make him a good missionary. He was a natural leader, he was happy and sincere, and he could motivate others.

It didn't matter to him whether someone was a member of the Church—he made friends with everyone. And if

others made fun of him for being a Latter-day Saint, he took it with good humor and seldom got offended.

We were excited when Sergio received his mission call to the Peru Chiclayo Mission. He began his service on November 20, 2013. He loved his mission. At first, it was easy to write to him. But as the months passed, I needed more time to think about his letters and respond to his spiritual growth.

We didn't worry about Sergio. We thought that the mission field was the safest place he could be. His mission president called us on October 7, 2014.

We Never Felt Alone

The mission president told us that Sergio and his companion had been teaching investigators about the temple and eternal families. Afterward, as Sergio offered the closing prayer, he paused, suddenly lost consciousness, and fell to the floor. He received a blessing and was rushed to a medical center. Doctors determined that he had suffered a ruptured brain aneurysm. They tried in vain to revive him.

The news filled us with deep sorrow. Despite our grief, Liliana and I had to travel to Peru to retrieve Sergio's body and personal belongings. We had difficulty thinking clearly, so we were grateful that someone from the Church—from the moment we left our home until we returned—was there to help us. We also

received help from the Holy Ghost, who comforted us and helped us endure. We never felt alone.

It is difficult to find gratitude in tragedy, but I am grateful for the Lord's tender mercies associated with Sergio's death. When he died, I was serving as bishop, Liliana was teaching seminary, and our daughter Ximena was serving as ward Young Women president. We were busy serving and loving others, which grounded us in the gospel. If Sergio had to leave us, I will always be thankful that Heavenly Father took him while we were strong in the faith.

I am also grateful that Sergio departed this life while serving the Lord and while "in the service of [his] fellow beings" (Mosiah 2:17). The Lord has declared, "Those that die in me shall not taste of death, for it shall be sweet unto them" (D&C 42:46).

The Holy Ghost gave me a small glimpse of what Heavenly Father must have endured when His Only Begotten died for us. I realized that I didn't have any right to be angry with God. My Father in Heaven knew what I was going through. A peace came over me that allowed me to accept His will and the timing of Sergio's death. Liliana experienced and felt the same.

Comforting Words

Our family had been sealed in the temple in 2005, when Sergio and Ximena

were small. Ruth was born in the covenant a short while later. Before he left on his mission, Sergio baptized her.

Three days after his death, Ruth had a dream about Sergio. It was the night of her ninth birthday. Ruth dreamt that the two of them walked hand in hand together throughout the day and that he spoke comforting words to her.

Ruth and Ximena were very close to Sergio, and they miss him deeply. Ruth

still receives comfort from the memory of her dream.

One day as we were going through Sergio's belongings, Liliana and I found his mission day planner. We noticed that on each page of each day, Sergio had written the phrase "Be a little better than yesterday."

Those words have never left me. They remind me that we must continue to live the gospel. That's how we can be together as a family after this life. That's how Sergio can be ours again.

As we pass through difficult times, the Savior will succor us. I know that is true, just as I know that His promises are sure. So we hold onto the gospel, and we follow Sergio's example. We try to be a little better each day. ■

The author lives in Salta, Argentina.

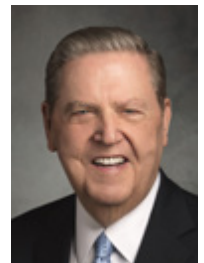
We must continue
to live the gospel.
That's how Sergio
can be ours again.





MAKING
YOUR LIFE A
SOUL-STIRRING
JOURNEY OF

Personal Growth



**By Elder
Jeffrey R. Holland**
Of the Quorum
of the Twelve
Apostles

Learning, living, and
teaching the gospel is at
the heart of growing toward
our divine potential.

Editors' note: In this article written for the *Liahona*, Elder Holland shares the powerful principles of conversion that serve as a foundation for the Church's new *Come, Follow Me* curriculum.

What a thrilling time it is to be a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints! When I think about recent developments in the Lord's kingdom, it seems obvious that God is taking us on a soul-stirring journey with hills and vales and vistas so stunning we can scarcely imagine them until we climb a little higher and there they are before us.

In the past year alone, we've bid farewell to a beloved prophet and lovingly sustained a new one. We've taken a new approach to Relief Society and Melchizedek Priesthood quorum meetings, with greater emphasis on

counseling together to accomplish the Lord's work. In that same spirit, we've seen the Lord bring high priests and elders together in one quorum and witnessed a seismic shift in the way priesthood holders and sisters minister to God's children. If that's not enough to take your breath away, consider the First Presidency's recent

He Wants to Change Our Hearts

Even so, as we look back on where we've been, I hope we can see more than just modified policies, new programs, and revised manuals. The Lord's work has always been ultimately about people, not programs. Whatever changes He directs in an organization or a schedule or a curriculum, what He's

Teaching, learning, and living the gospel are key principles at the heart of growing toward our divine potential and becoming like our Heavenly Parents.

announcement about new resources to support personal and family scripture study, with corresponding changes to Primary and Sunday School materials—to say nothing of ongoing advancements in the areas of missionary work, family history research, and temple work.

And surely there is more to come. As our ninth article of faith declares, “We believe all that God has revealed”—that's often the easy part. It takes a special kind of faith to “believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom,” and then to be ready to accept them, whatever they are. If we are willing, God will lead us to places we've never dreamed we could go—as lofty as our dreams might already be. His thoughts and His ways are certainly much higher than ours (see Isaiah 55:8–9). In a sense, I suppose we're not unlike those in Kirtland to whom the Prophet Joseph Smith said, “You know no more concerning the destinies of this Church and kingdom than a babe upon its mother's lap.”¹

really hoping to change is you and me. He wants to change our hearts and enhance our future.

No, we can't yet see those great and important things that lie beyond the next bend in the trail. But we do have some idea about the ultimate destination:

“It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2).

“What manner of men [and women] ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am” (3 Nephi 27:27).

“You shall receive of his fulness, and be glorified in me as I am in the Father; therefore, I say unto you, you shall receive grace for grace” (Doctrine and Covenants 93:20).

I don't know about you, but to me that sounds like a long journey—and an exhilarating one! Such a divine goal, lofty though it is, is at the heart of what makes the restored gospel so attractive and inspiring. Deep in our souls is an echo—a memory—that tells us this is why we came to



earth. We accepted our Father in Heaven's plan first and foremost because we wanted to become like Him. We knew that it was a staggering goal that would never be easy to achieve. But we simply couldn't be satisfied with anything less. Our souls were created to grow, and we were stirred then and now to make the journey.

Learning and Becoming

Teaching, learning, and living the gospel are key principles at the heart of growing toward our divine potential and becoming like our Heavenly Parents. Sometimes we call this process *eternal progression*. Sometimes we call it *conversion*. Sometimes we simply name it *repentance*. But whatever we call it, it involves learning. The Prophet Joseph Smith said: "You have got to learn how to be gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, . . . by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one. . . ."

"When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the gospel—you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation."²

So let's talk about learning. As a teacher at heart, I love the word and the idea, though I do think we should define it a little better than we usually do. For gospel purposes I don't just mean the accumulation of knowledge, though that is part of it. I also don't just mean passively listening to a lecture or memorizing facts. I mean learning in the sense of growth and change, of insight leading to improvement, of knowing the truth, which in turn leads us closer to the God of all truth.

President Russell M. Nelson tied together learning and this converting change of heart when he taught that as "the Holy Ghost gives conviction to the earnest seeker of truth," it fosters faith, which "promotes repentance and obedience to God's commandments." These essential ingredients of conversion turn us "*from* the ways of the world *to* . . . the ways of the Lord," which "brings a mighty change of heart."³

This isn't about knowing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel or diagramming the allegory of the olives trees, as useful as such exercises may be. This kind of learning is about changing ourselves,

about being different (better) because we know more of what God knows.

You can see that the kind of learning I'm talking about is far too big to fit into a classroom or to be wrapped up in a 45-minute lesson. Scriptures, prophets, parents, sunshine, rainy days, spiritual promptings, and the everyday curriculum of life itself all provide opportunities for us to learn about God and His plan, for surely "all things bear record" of Him

The home is both classroom and lab, where learning and living the gospel are so seamlessly combined that they are almost indistinguishable.

(Moses 6:63). Eventually we all discover that He is willing to teach us not only at church but anywhere and anytime—in informal moments with our children and our friends, our neighbor or our workmates, the man or woman we see on the bus or the employee who helps us at the market—wherever and whenever we are willing to learn.

But all these truths God is trying to teach us each day are only so many seeds sown in rocky soil or among the thorns to be burned up or choked out unless we take Alma's counsel to nourish them by experimenting on the word, or as James says, to be doers of the word and not hearers only (see Mark 4:1–20; James 1:22; Alma 32:27–43). As we learn truth and choose to act on it, our testimonies grow (see John 7:17). Then, as we make the truth a part of us by striving to live it consistently even in the face of challenges, it changes us and we become more like the Father of truth.⁴



Gospel Learning Is Centered in the Home

This is why we say that gospel teaching, learning, and living must be "home centered and Church supported."⁵ First, the home is where we spend most of our time—certainly more time than we spend at church (overworked bishops notwithstanding). We wouldn't expect our physical bodies to survive long on one meal a week—even if it is a very good meal. Similarly, if a one-hour Church class, even an excellent Church class, is the main setting for our "feasting upon the word of Christ" (2 Nephi 31:20), then we are in danger of spiritual malnourishment.

Second, the home is both classroom and lab, where learning and living the gospel are so seamlessly combined that they are almost indistinguishable. This living laboratory experience simply can't be recreated in the classroom alone.

Perhaps most important, the home is—or can be—an echo of heaven, a reminder of the

eternal goal we came here to pursue. As President Henry B. Eyring, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, put it: “Though earthly families are far from perfect, they give God’s children the best chance to be welcomed to the world with the only love on earth that comes close to what we felt in heaven—parental love. Families are also the best way to preserve and pass on moral virtues and true principles that are most likely to lead us back to God’s presence.”⁶

Have I frightened you parents? I hope not. This emphasis on teaching, learning, and living at home is not meant to be an added burden for individuals and families. Quite the opposite, actually—we hope that by acknowledging and supporting your efforts at home, we can in some way lighten the burden you carry there. Or, better yet, perhaps we can strengthen you to “bear [it] with ease” (Mosiah 24:15).

Supporting Gospel Learning at Church

This expanded view of embracing the gospel outside of the classroom doesn’t mean that the classroom isn’t important. Of course we hope that meaningful learning still happens at church. In fact, the supporting role of Church classes is critical to home-centered learning. But in order to help change lives, teaching at church can’t be independent of what’s happening in those lives. It must be relevant to and draw on the experiences of both teachers and learners.

Clearly then, focusing on a manual or a chalkboard or the arrangement of chairs or even some excellent discussion questions may not be the right focus. The individual child of God and his or her eternal progress must be the object of our effort and affection. We are trying to touch lives, and we only touch chairs or chalk or audiovisual equipment if that helps us touch a life. To paraphrase

LEARNING AND LIVING THE GOSPEL AT HOME

Research by both LDS and non-LDS researchers has found that home-centered religious practices have a powerful and lasting effect on children. As children grow into adulthood, they often maintain the religious beliefs and patterns established in the home of their youth.

Parents who establish their families on principles of righteousness as found in “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” give their children advantages that accumulate over time, bringing spiritual and temporal blessings to them.

Also, Church research in the United States has found that children and youth in LDS families who have daily family prayer, family scripture study at least several times a week, and weekly family home evening are about 20 percent more likely than others to attend church weekly, be endowed, or marry in the temple when they become adults.

Of course, children have their agency, so parents’ faithful religious observance in the home, such as regular family prayer and scripture study, does not always result in a child’s acceptance of parental values. The likelihood of inter-generational transmission of religious beliefs and behaviors increases when parents set a good example, have a close and loving relationship with their children, and have open conversations about religious topics. One’s family tends to be such a powerful influence on individual religious observance that a significant minority of “prodigals” eventually return to the fold in mortality.

While the implications of this research suggest positive outcomes where there is rich home-centered gospel learning, they also suggest that Church support is especially important for new converts or other members who live in homes where gospel practices may be weak. These members may benefit from modeling and mentoring, such as having family home evening with another family, learning how to have family prayer consistently, observing positive ways to talk about religion at home, and ministering alongside more experienced members.

the Savior, what doth it profit a teacher or a class if it sponsors the world's greatest doctrinal presentation and none of that doctrine becomes evident in the life and love, the thought and the feelings of the individual member, the person God so much wants to save and exalt?

The true measure of success will not be how smoothly the lesson went, how well we filled the time, how many compliments the teacher gets afterwards, or even how many class members participated. Success depends on what happens in the life of the learner.

Did Brother Herrero find something in the scriptures in class last week that helped him get through the challenges he's been facing? Or better yet, did something happen in class that enhanced his ability to find during the week the answers he needs? When he shared that experience this week, did Sister Schmidt find the hope and faith she needed to believe that God would help her too? (See "You Don't Get Fit by Watching Others.")

All of this may mean that, if you are a teacher, what you see in one of our new teaching resources will be somewhat different from what you're used to seeing in our old manuals. You may find less specific instruction about what to do and how to do it. That was by design, to urge you to pray for, watch for, and draw on your own experiences and your own inspiration, as well as that of the people you teach. (See "Are You Soloing or Leading the Choir?")

So let's assume the course of study is the New Testament and I'm the Sunday School teacher. I don't necessarily come to class with a quiver full of factoids about the setting of Matthew 5, inspirational quotes from wise people regarding the Sermon on the Mount, and creative activities about how to be a peacemaker, all organized and timed to take us right up to five minutes before the hour. Instead, I study and live the principles in Matthew 5 just as I expect the learners to do. The only difference is that I might do it with more thought and prayer about each of my class members

and how these principles might be meaningful to them. Then, in class, under the influence of the Spirit, I encourage them to edify and support one another in their strivings to study and live by Matthew 5. I help them see connections between their lives and the precious doctrine in the scriptures. Above all, I

YOU DON'T GET FIT BY WATCHING OTHERS

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles compared gospel learning to a trip to the fitness center. Learners, he said, "do not get stronger by watching someone else do the exercises. They learn and then participate. As their spiritual strength increases, they gain confidence and apply themselves all the more" ("A Classroom of Faith, Hope, and Charity" [evening with a General Authority, broadcast for Church Educational System religious educators, Feb. 28, 2014], broadcasts.lds.org).

ARE YOU SOLOING OR LEADING THE CHOIR?

Often teachers feel like a soloist, as if everything depends on them. Instead, they can view themselves more like a choir director. A teacher's role is unique and needed—they direct the discussion, inspire gospel living, and point everything back to pure doctrine. But the music comes from all of us. Teachers help us find the gospel voice we each have inside by inviting and inspiring us to have our own experiences in studying the scriptures. Then, when we come to class, we share our personal insights and discoveries. This will add to the chorus.

pray for inspiration in the moment to turn a fact into faith, to turn a question into a quest.

Of course, in Primary my role may be a little different. But my goal is not to keep the little ones entertained for 45 minutes or keep them quiet so I can say what I want to say without interruption. My purpose is to build them up as independent learners, to help them see how their lives are enriched by gospel truths, and to support their parents—their most important gospel teachers.

Now, having stunned the parents, perhaps I have frightened the teachers. If so, let me reassure you with two thoughts: (1) You are teaching people, not lessons, and you know the people better than any lesson manual

*Success depends
on what happens
in the life of the
learner.*



possibly can. (2) Your personal efforts to learn and live the gospel are the best possible preparation to teach the gospel to others. Remember that the best way to invite the Spirit into our lives—and into our teaching—is to learn and live the gospel ourselves. The Spirit is the ultimate teacher in this Church, and fortunately, there is no limit to that influence.

He Marked the Path and Led the Way

It is our great desire that the Lord will lift us to new heights of spiritual growth through new ways of learning and living the gospel. With His help, we will share the gospel with our friends, not because we feel it is an obligation but because

the gospel is part of our everyday lives, and we can't open our mouths without some truth of the gospel tumbling out! Ideally, our friends of other faiths will see increased light in our lives and will find the missionaries—even before the missionaries find them—to get for their own families some of what they have seen. Temple marriages, family history work, priesthood power and ordinances, moral purity, caring for the poor—all of that will be the blessed result of deeply converted disciples of Christ learning and living the gospel every day, with full, appropriate, consistent support from Sunday classes. That is what the Lord is leading us toward, and it truly is a soul-stirring journey!

*I bear witness
that as we learn
His will, as we
gather light and
truth and make
it part of us
every day, that
light will grow
in us.*



We use the phrase “Teaching in the Savior’s Way,” but I hope that it never becomes a catchphrase or a cliché. Really, all we mean by it is that we need to be Christlike, as teachers and as learners, to try to share the gospel the way He did. This is a chance to join the disciples, to go into the highways and byways with Jesus, looking for one who may be lost. This is a chance to climb the Mount of Beatitudes with the multitudes and sit by the shore of Galilee with the throng. This is a chance for all of us to touch the hem of the Master’s clothing and be healed.

I have always loved these poetic words penned by Eliza R. Snow for one of the most moving hymns in the Church:

*He marked the path and led the way,
And ev’ry point defines
To light and life and endless day
Where God’s full presence shines.⁷*

Brothers and sisters, I am honored to walk with you toward the glorious future our Father in Heaven has in store for us. I know your hearts. I know that you love the Lord and want to do His will. I bear witness that as we learn His will, as we gather light and truth and make it part of us every day, that light will grow in us, “brighter and brighter until the *perfect* day” (D&C 50:24; emphasis added) when we can be with Him because we will be like Him. ■

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 137.
2. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 221, 268.
3. Russell M. Nelson, “Jesus Christ—the Master Healer,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2005, 86.
4. See Dallin H. Oaks, “The Challenge to Become,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 32–34; *Liahona*, Jan. 2001, 40–43; see also David A. Bednar, “Converted unto the Lord,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 106–9.
5. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 1.4.
6. Henry B. Eyring, “Gathering the Family of God,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2017, 20.
7. “How Great the Wisdom and the Love,” *Hymns*, no. 195.



NEW INSIGHTS WILL COME

“As you ponder and pray about doctrinal principles, the Holy Ghost will speak to your mind and your heart. From events portrayed in the scriptures, new insights will come and principles relevant to your situation will distill upon your heart.

“You cultivate such revelatory experiences by living according to the light already given you and by searching the scriptures with pure motives—with real intent to ‘come unto Christ.’ As you do so, your confidence will ‘wax strong in the presence of God,’ and the Holy Ghost will be your constant companion.”

President Russell M. Nelson, “Living by Scriptural Guidance,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 18; *Liahona*, Jan. 2001, 21.

HOW SHOULD I USE THE NEW COME, FOLLOW ME RESOURCES?

The new *Come, Follow Me* resources for individuals and families, Sunday School, and Primary are meant to help us have meaningful experiences learning from the scriptures at home and at church. So how will these new *Come, Follow Me* resources work together?

- In 2019 you will be invited to study the New Testament. *Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families* will provide ideas to support your personal and family study at home. Use this resource in any way that is helpful to you.
- Each week, adults, youth, and children throughout the Church will study and discuss the same chapters of the New Testament.
- If you are a Sunday School or Primary teacher, use *Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families* to enhance your personal and family study. You will also receive a teacher’s manual to help you create engaging classroom experiences that support the scripture study that class members are doing at home.

For more information about the new *Come, Follow Me* resources, visit comefollowme.lds.org.

Decisions and Miracles: And Now I See

By Irina V. Kratzer

This series highlights the lives of devoted women and their messages, excerpted from the book *At the Pulpit: 185 Years of Discourses by Latter-day Saint Women* (2017). The complete book, along with seven bonus chapters, is available in the Gospel Library app and online at churchhistorianspress.org/at-the-pulpit.

There was a time in my life when I was touched by love and the Light of Christ. My life has since changed forever.

I know how it is to live without the gospel. I lived that way for 30 years. I was born in Russia of goodly parents. . . . When I grew up, I got married and gave birth to a lovely baby girl. Soon I successfully graduated from the university and got a job I really liked. And yet, . . . I was far from being happy.

. . . My marriage . . . gradually fell apart. . . . I was hardly able to provide simple food for my daughter and me. I sinned. I made one wrong choice after another. Hunger, depression, and poor decisions made my life miserable. I [blamed] bad fortune, not realizing that in many ways I was suffering the natural consequences of my sins. But how could I know that? Sin did not exist according to what I had been taught. . . .

Religion in [the Soviet Union] was prohibited after the Communist

Revolution in 1917. I was taught from kindergarten that there is no such thing as God and that only the Communist Party and Grandpa Lenin could bring happiness to the Russian people. Religious people were badly persecuted in our society. Believers lost their jobs, were not allowed to go to school, and were labeled “crazy.” Everybody was required to take atheism classes at the university, where we proved that God does not exist. . . . I just did not think of God. Yet I felt pain in my heart about my poor choices. Later I would learn that the pain I felt was the Light of Christ giving me a sense of conscience to tell right from wrong. . . .

. . . Life seemed to me like a dark tunnel with only the grave at the end. I felt I was slowly dying. . . . I did not know how to pray, so I dreamed. . . . I dreamed that one day I would run away from everything miserable in my life and would start again from the beginning—happy and bright. I wanted so much



ABOUT SISTER KRATZER

Irina Valentinovna Kratzer (b. 1965) lived in Barnaul, Siberia, where she went to

medical school and became a cardiologist. Medicine was not a lucrative field; months would go by when the hospital did not distribute paychecks. After divorcing her abusive husband in 1996, Irina felt exhausted and hopeless as she worked extra night shifts to support her mother and daughter on low wages.

Irina was raised in an atheist environment and did not believe in God. Nevertheless, one night she ventured a request: “All right, God, if you’re there, just let me know, because you probably don’t even care about me. Who am I to you, a little thing here trying to survive?”

A few weeks later, in August 1996, Irina met a man who would introduce her to the Church and help her travel to the United States to study English. Eight months after her arrival in Utah, USA, in April 1998, Irina married Tay Kratzer.

Sister Kratzer was a teacher in an Orem, Utah, Relief Society when she was invited to speak at the Brigham Young University Women’s Conference. Punctuation and capitalization standardized.

for my daughter to have a better life than I did. . . .

[Then] the Book of Mormon came into my life. I read one chapter every morning before I went to work. Reading this book, I learned that God lives, that Jesus is His Son, [who] came to this earth to help sinners like me. The more I read this book, the more I saw the gap between the teachings of Christ and the way I lived. I learned that was why my life was so miserable. . . .

. . . I was ready for a dramatic change. I will always remember the night . . . when I cried the whole night through, realizing that my life was not

good, that my poor decisions had hurt people I loved the most. It was the most painful experience of my life. I sobbed and pled the whole night. . . . By the end of the night I was exhausted and had no more tears. When the first morning light broke through, peace and relief came to me. I heard the words: “Here is my hand. I will lead you and guide you. But you have to promise me that you will change.” And I did; I promised. I wanted this guidance and help more than anything else. . . .

I did not know, on that painful and joyous night in Russia, how great Christ’s promises are. I did not know then that

in just a little while I would travel to America where I would learn more about the gospel, and I would soon be baptized. . . . I did not know that my daughter would come to America to join us in happiness. . . .

. . . He gave me so many miracles that I did not have even a little chance to doubt His divine hand in my life. . . .

Walk with Christ! Hold onto His hand! Feast upon His word. Drink in His light with your every pore, with all your soul. In times of hardships, you won’t be left in a dark tunnel but in the light of His love with brighter light always ahead of you. ■



FRAME AND PHOTOGRAPH FROM GETTY IMAGES

“I Am That I Am”

Symbols of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament

In this ancient record particularly, Jesus Christ must be sought or He might not be found.



By Stephen P. Schank

Priesthood and Family Department of the Church

As Moses hid his face, the Lord's merciful words issuing forth from the burning bush must have rung with the echoes of eternity: "I have surely seen the affliction of my people . . . ; for I know their sorrows; "And I am come down to deliver them. . . .

"And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?"

"And God said unto Moses, I am that I am: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I am hath sent me unto you" (Exodus 3:7–8, 13–14).

Known to ancient Israel as the Lord Jehovah, the premortal Jesus Christ identified Himself as the source to which His people should look for redemption. Thousands of years later, the resurrected Jesus Christ reconfirmed His promise of deliverance to modern Israel with these words: "Be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you; and ye shall bear record of me, even Jesus Christ, that *I am* the Son of the living God, that *I was*, that *I am*, and that *I am to come*" (D&C 68:6; emphasis added).

The scriptures, the words of life, are designed to point the children of God in every generation to Jesus Christ

for deliverance from sin and death and all our earthly problems. The Old Testament is no exception; as with every volume of scripture, it is intended to turn our hearts and minds to our Deliverer, the Lord Jesus Christ. But in this ancient record particularly, He must be sought or He might not be found.

When searching for Christ in any book of scripture, it helps to constantly remind ourselves what we are looking for. Jesus Christ *is* the source of life! To the fatal problems of spiritual and physical death introduced by the Fall, Christ *is* Israel's eternal solution. Lehi declared, "He offereth himself . . . to *answer* the ends of the law" (2 Nephi 2:7; emphasis added). It is that answer—the Redeemer of Israel, the Great "I Am"—that we seek when searching the scriptures. Within the poetic and often archaic language of the Old Testament, however, the eternal problems—and Jesus Christ, the solution—are not always readily identifiable. Even so, Jesus Christ is there beneath the surface, waiting to be found in the ancient narratives.

As you keep in mind the name of the Lord shared with Moses on Mount Sinai—"I Am"—consider the many things that Jesus Christ *is* to those who put their trust in Him. The following examples are symbolic teachings from the Old Testament designed to turn our hearts and minds to the Lord Jesus Christ for deliverance.

SEARCHING FOR JESUS CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The prophets, including those in the Old Testament, can be seen as "types and shadows of their Messiah," wrote Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "It is wholesome and proper to look for similitudes of Christ everywhere and to use them repeatedly in keeping him and his laws uppermost in our minds" (*The Promised Messiah* [1978], 453).

The Old Testament was not designed simply to preserve a narrative history of God's covenant people. The stories themselves, along with their accompanying surface-level messages and morals, are of secondary importance to disciples of Christ. Consistently, the primary subject of the prophets' writing—and therefore the most worthy object of our study—is Jesus Christ!

Here are a few principles to keep in mind when searching for truths about Jesus Christ in the Old Testament:

1. All things created by God are like Jesus Christ (see Moses 6:63).
2. All things given from God to mankind typify Jesus Christ (see 2 Nephi 11:4).
3. All prophets are types, or symbols, of Jesus Christ (see Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah* [1978], 451).
4. Repentance opens the door to learning about Jesus Christ through types (see Alma 26:21–22).

I AM . . . THE LAMB SLAIN FOR YOU
Animal Sacrifice and the Coat of Skins



Before Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden of Eden, the Lord clothed them in the skins of an animal to provide a covering for them. In the Old Testament, the word *atonement*, in its various forms, appears 81 times. In 73 of those occurrences, the original Hebrew word is *kaphar*, which literally means “to cover.” After their expulsion from the garden, Adam and Eve were commanded to offer the firstlings of their flocks for an offering unto the Lord. An angel later instructed them that this practice was “a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father” (Moses 5:7).

Animal sacrifices continued under the law of Moses, along with the ritual covering of those participating in priesthood ordinances.

When we covenant with the Lord and receive His holy ordinances, His Atonement covers us so that we are no longer exposed to the full effects of the Fall of Adam. Jesus Christ is truly the Lamb of God who was sacrificed for us so that we no longer have to be subject to the effects of sin and death.

Genesis 3:21; 37:3; Exodus 40:14–15; Ezekiel 16:1–12; Matthew 22:11–12; Galatians 3:26–29; 1 Nephi 11:21, 32–33; Alma 34:14–16; Moses 5:5–8; 7:47

I AM . . . THE BREAD OF LIFE
Manna



While Moses and the children of Israel journeyed from Egypt toward the promised land, they relied upon the mercies of the Lord for daily bread. The Lord provided them with a sweet “bread from heaven,” which the people called “Manna” (interpreted as “What is this?”). Those who gathered the bread daily and remained faithful to the Lord and His prophet had life continually throughout their journey in the wilderness. Jesus Christ is the Bread of Life; He came down to earth from heaven to bring us life every day of our mortal journey. As we gather His words every day, we will experience the sweetness and vitality available through Him throughout our mortal journey.

Exodus 16:4, 12–21, 31; Deuteronomy 8:2–3; John 6:26–35, 48–58, 66–68; 3 Nephi 20:8

I AM . . . THE SOURCE OF LIVING WATER

Water from the Rock at Horeb



As the children of Israel thirsted for water in the wilderness, Moses turned to the Lord. Moses was instructed to smite a certain rock at Horeb (Mount Sinai) with the rod given him by the Lord. When he did, water gushed forth from the rock to sustain life for the millions of journeying Israelites.

Jesus Christ is the Rock of Israel; when He was smitten at Calvary, blood issued forth from His body. The blood of Christ brings us life! We can access the life found in the atoning blood of Christ as we follow prophets who have been given keys to bring forth living water from Him.

Exodus 17:1–6; Numbers 20:8, 11; John 4:10–15; 1 Corinthians 10:1–4; D&C 28:2

I AM . . . YOUR HEALER

Serpent Raised Up on a Pole



The difficulties of their journey caused the children of Israel to complain, murmuring against the prophet and the Lord. As a result, the Lord allowed poisonous serpents to bite them, bringing death to many. Moses prayed to the Lord to take away the serpents; instead, the Lord provided a way for the people to escape death when they had been bitten. The action required for them to be healed was to look upon a brass serpent that was affixed to a pole.

Jesus Christ was nailed to a pole—the cross—so that we might look to Him in our sufferings and not be overcome by them. Jesus Christ does not always take away our trials, but as our Healer, He can take the poison out of them through the blessings of His Atonement.

Numbers 21:4–9; John 3:14–16; 1 Peter 2:24; Alma 33:18–22; Helaman 8:14–15; 3 Nephi 27:13–15

A Single Red Bulb

By Lori Ries

A simple Christmas tree ornament reminded me of what Christmas is really about.

Christmas wasn't Christmas. Although I tried to be merry with carols playing in the background, I pulled out the storage bins with a heavy heart. The snowman cookie jar only reminded me that there was no one to bake with. The Santa figurine seemed to say that there was little reason to hang stockings, and the peppermint-striped wrapping paper reminded me that morning wouldn't bring the voices of excited children.

This year our youngest had left for college, and our house felt lonely and quiet. I chose only the non-Santa type decorations and placed everything else back in their boxes.

With my husband out of town, I decorated the tree alone. My daughter-in-law posted pictures online of my grandchildren hanging ornaments on their tree, and my heart yearned for yesterday. I wondered how time had slipped by so quickly. How had my children grow so fast? Lost in my thoughts, I looked down at the light bulb in my hand. It was a single red bulb.



I examined the color, a deep red. Crimson. I looked around at the simplicity of what was left of the decorations: a few nativities, a manger built from popsicle sticks, and a decoration that spelled out NOEL in gold letters. My eyes were wet. The bulb was red—red like the atoning blood of the Savior.

I thought about how I had always equated decorations, cookie cutouts, and children's glee on Christmas morning with what made me happy at

Christmastime. Then I thought about my children and their eternal families. I thought about all the joy I had in my family and the joy they had in their own. I pondered how the babe lying in the manger made that possible. A sweetness of warmth sprung in my heart as I contemplated the gift of the Savior—not just for me but for all mankind.

“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to *all people*” (Luke 2:10; emphasis added).

As I continued decorating the tree, I meditated on the humble birth and life of Jesus Christ. He came to mend the broken, build the downtrodden, comfort the lonely, bring peace in imperfection, and give compassion for suffering. He was born and died that we might live with Him in our Father's kingdom once more. He came that man might know true happiness. My heart swelled and I found joy in Christ because Christ is Christmas. ■
The author lives in Oregon, USA.

Growth from Service

By Po Nien (Felipe) Chou and Petra Chou

We felt impressed that our new branch members should quickly be given callings so they could grow by serving.



The Kaohsiung Seventh Branch at the Taipei Taiwan Temple in December 2001.

In 2000 we were called to serve as branch president and Primary president of the smallest unit in the Kaohsiung Taiwan Stake. We had about 20 people at sacrament meeting, including our young family, four active elders, and the missionaries. We later sent out two elders on missions, trusting that the Lord would replenish our branch.

As we worked with our branch, we remembered President Gordon B. Hinckley's (1910–2008) counsel that every convert needs “a friend, a responsibility, and nurturing with ‘the good word of God.’”¹ We felt impressed that our new members should quickly be given callings so they could grow by serving. The missionaries introduced us to each investigator, and within two weeks of each of their baptisms, they received a calling. They developed friendships as they served with other members.

Within a month, every newly baptized brother received the Aaronic Priesthood,

and each blessed and passed the sacrament. We also prepared them to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood by the next stake conference.

New elders were taught how to perform ordinances, and then these elders taught the newer elders. We believed in learning by doing and in retaining learning by teaching. Branch members were responsible to model and mentor, teach and train, and sustain and support each other.

We used home and visiting teachers, family home evenings, ward activities, and potlucks to fellowship new converts. They were nurtured with the word of God through Sunday and weekday religious instructions. Institute grew from 2 to 25 students. To further nurture our small branch, we attended and served in the Taipei Taiwan Temple every month—a 10-hour round-trip by bus. Normally, our stake struggled to fill a second

temple bus. As our branch grew and families prepared for their temple blessings, we set a goal to fill our own bus. Twice that first year, while the rest of the stake filled one temple bus, our small branch filled a second one. Soon after, the stake asked each ward to fill one temple bus at least once a year.

By the second year, our convert retention increased from 30 percent to more than 90 percent, and our sacrament meetings grew to about 100 people, including 25 active elders. Our branch became a ward, and our old building was renovated into a new chapel.

The smallest branch had become the strongest ward in the stake because every convert had been blessed with friends, callings, and nurturing with the word of God. ■

The authors live in Utah, USA.

NOTE

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Converts and Young Men,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 47.

A Sweet Christmas

My family has made Christmas a memorable occasion for as long as I can remember. When I left for the Brazil Porto Alegre South Mission, I didn't realize how hard it would be for me to spend Christmas away from them for the first time.

During my first Christmas in the mission field, I longed to be with my family, but my companion and I were alone. A sense of self-pity and sadness seized me.

On Christmas Eve, a dear family invited my companion and me to dinner. We had a nice evening, but this family's happiness just reminded me that I was away from my own family. That night we went home, and I tried to sleep and forget that the next day was Christmas. For the first time in my life, I was relieved when Christmas was over.

A year later, I reflected on the previous Christmas and thought about what I could do to have a better Christmas in the mission field. I realized that my feelings of sadness the year before came from focusing on myself instead of on the Savior. I also realized that Christmas is a time to remember the Savior's birth



For a better Christmas in the mission field, my companion and I decided to buy lollipops to give to anyone we came across on Christmas Day.

and that I should be happy to serve Him as His representative.

In talking with my companion, we decided to buy lollipops to give to members, investigators, children, and anyone else we came across on Christmas Day. We also practiced Christmas hymns to sing. Joy flooded my heart on Christmas Day as we met with people, sang hymns, and gave away lollipops.

On our way home that evening, we met an elderly man sitting on the sidewalk. We asked if he had received a Christmas present that day. He said yes—he had spoken on the phone with his children who lived far away.

“We have one more present to give you,” we said. We gave him a lollipop.

“This will not only sweeten my mouth,” he said, “but this will also sweeten my spirit.”

I had the worst Christmas on my mission because I focused only on myself. I also had the best Christmas when I instead focused on the Savior. I know when we focus on Him, He will bring sweetness to our spirits at Christmas and every day of the year. ■

**Wilson Correia dos Santos,
Pernambuco, Brazil**



*I felt prompted to meet this man.
I approached him, extended my
hand, and asked for his name.*

“Ye Have Done It unto Me”

Our family has a Christmas tradition of giving gift bags of food, gloves, hats, and other necessities to those in need. In 2016, Christmas Eve was especially cold for the area of California, USA, we live in. We were bundled up, but we were still shivering!

As we drove to a park near our home where many people who are homeless stay, we saw a man huddled in the meager shelter of a bus stop, covered in an old blanket. My husband, Dennis, stopped the car and took our son, Jonathan, with him to give the man a gift bag. Our daughter, Abbey, and I stayed in the car and watched.

The man lifted his head as Dennis handed him the bag. A huge smile spread across the man’s face. They shook

hands and began to talk. This was unusual because normally there isn’t much of an exchange.

After several minutes, Dennis returned to the car and opened the trunk.

“Is everything OK?” I asked.

“Yes,” he said. “I’m giving him my parka. He needs it more than I do.”

I was speechless. This was a really nice parka that Dennis had worn only a handful of times! Dennis went back to the man and helped him put on the warm parka. The man’s face was beaming. Dennis and the man continued talking.

I felt compelled to meet this man. I opened my car door, and Abbey followed me. Dennis smiled as we approached, and he introduced us to the man. I extended my hand and asked for his name.

He took my hand, smiled warmly, and replied, “Jesús.”

My family continued the conversation, but I didn’t hear much after that. I kept thinking of the significance of this sweet man’s name: Jesús—the name of our Savior. In that moment, I was reminded of the Savior’s teaching: “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40). That experience forever changed me. ■

Shannon Knight, California, USA

I wrapped my white cane and gave it as a Christmas gift to the brother who gave me a priesthood blessing.



We Were Both Blessed

I was left half-blind when a truck knocked me off my bike. A little over four years later, during the Christmas season in 2011, I felt prompted to ask a brother I had known in a previous ward for a priesthood blessing. I saw this brother only from time to time, so I didn't understand why I should ask him. I knew there were other worthy priesthood holders I could ask instead.

In the weeks that followed, the feeling that I needed a blessing became stronger. I was serving as a temple worker in the Frankfurt Germany Temple, so I decided to ask one of the brethren there for a blessing.

After I made this decision, the brother I had been impressed to ask entered the temple. I immediately knew this wasn't a coincidence—Heavenly Father wanted

me to ask this brother specifically. I worked up my courage and asked to talk with him after his session. He agreed.

Later, I explained that I didn't know why, but I felt I needed a blessing from him. He said he would be happy to help. He invited another brother into the room and then began giving me a blessing. As he finished, I was confused. The blessing was nice, but there was nothing particularly special about it.

Then I opened my eyes.

When I opened my eyes, I could see the whole room almost clearly. I couldn't believe it! I asked the brother if he knew why he was the one who needed to give me this blessing. His response humbled me.

"I don't think this blessing was only for you," he said. "It was for me too. I'm giving my niece a blessing tomorrow

because she is getting baptized. Our family is not active in the Church, and she is the first family member to be baptized in almost 20 years. Many in our family will attend the baptism, and I wasn't sure my faith was strong enough to give the blessing. Now I know I can do it."

In the days that followed, my vision improved enough that I no longer needed my white cane. I wrapped it and gave it as a Christmas gift to this brother along with a letter. "I know this is not the staff of Moses," I wrote, "but I hope it reminds you of the priesthood power that you hold."

Heavenly Father loves us and delights to bless us. This blessing at Christmas not only restored my sight but also gave a humble priesthood holder confidence in his priesthood service. ■

Anna Fingerle, Hesse, Germany

The Book of Mormon: A Special Gift

On Christmas Eve 2016, while my husband and I were serving as temple missionaries for the Manila Philippines Temple, I wanted to give a copy of the Book of Mormon to someone. Inside the front cover of a copy, I wrote my testimony and included a postcard of the Manila Temple with information on where to learn more about the Church. Then I knelt in prayer and asked the Lord to guide me to someone He had prepared.

I left our apartment and crossed the street. A security guard for the nearby missionary training center was visiting with two men. He called out, “Merry Christmas!” I felt impressed to walk over to them.

After I introduced myself, I learned that one man was a groundskeeper for the missionary training center and the other was a farmer. I learned that they were both members of the Church.

I asked if they knew someone who might be interested in receiving as a Christmas gift a copy of the Book of Mormon. The farmer looked surprised. He said he had a friend coming to visit the temple grounds with him in a few minutes. He had wanted to give his friend a Book of Mormon but had not been able to obtain

one. Filled with emotion, I pulled the Book of Mormon from my bag. I told them about my prayer and gave him the book.

The Spirit touched us all, and the farmer expressed hope that his friend would read the Book of Mormon and accept the gospel. As I walked back to my apartment, I thanked the Lord and prayed that the farmer’s friend would keep his commitment to visit the temple grounds.

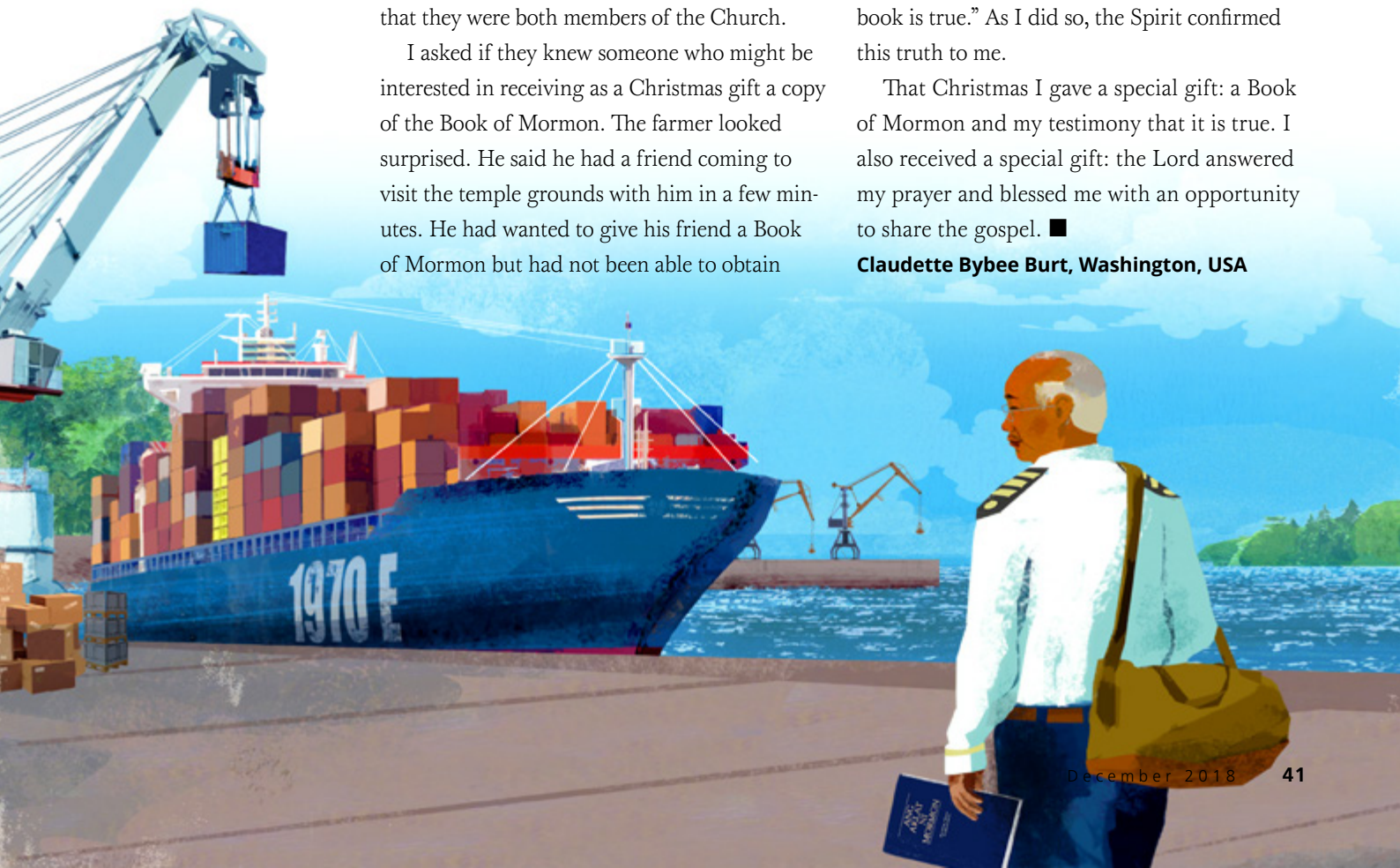
About 15 minutes later, I received a call from the MTC security gate. The farmer’s friend had arrived. I immediately went to meet him. He was the captain of a merchant ship that was heading back to sea in two days. He thanked me for the Book of Mormon and said he would take it on the ship with him. Before we said goodbye, I looked directly into his eyes and said, “This book is true.” As I did so, the Spirit confirmed this truth to me.

That Christmas I gave a special gift: a Book of Mormon and my testimony that it is true. I also received a special gift: the Lord answered my prayer and blessed me with an opportunity to share the gospel. ■

Claudette Bybee Burt, Washington, USA

The captain thanked me for the Book of Mormon and said he would take it on the ship with him.

ILLUSTRATION BY EVA VASQUEZ





By M. Joseph Brough

Second Counselor in the Young Men General Presidency

A Still, Small Voice among **Big Decisions**

**If you are worthy,
Heavenly Father will
not let you make big
mistakes without
giving you a warning.**

As a new mission president in the fall of 2011, I was excited to be out among our missionaries. My wife, Emily, and I decided to do apartment inspections and visit every pair of missionaries in the mission.

As we traveled from Guatemala City to one of our more remote zones, known as Sololá, we learned that a demonstration was blocking the road in front of us. Demonstrations in Guatemala can take hours, and there is usually no way to get past them. But when we inquired about a possible detour, we learned of another route. That route, however, came with the following warnings:

- It is not a great road.
- Make sure you are not on the road after dark.
- Bands of robbers frequent the road.

Like any zealous new mission president and wife, on Emily and

I went. After driving a while, we came to a spot on a dirt road that looked like a steep drop-off in front of us. Emily joked that we should get the camera out and take pictures as we went over the edge.

Years earlier, when I was a young missionary in Guatemala, I had learned that a small branch dragged onto the road meant “proceed with caution.” It might even mean “stop.” I had seen a branch but failed to register what it meant.

A moment later, we found ourselves dangling off a 20-foot (6 m) ledge where a bridge had washed out. I managed to climb out my side, but Emily could not open her door. When she tried to climb over the seat and come out my door, the vehicle began to rock. Obviously, it was a very disconcerting moment.





Many thoughts ran through my mind. I could see the headlines: “New Mission President Drives over Embankment Where There Was No Bridge, Resulting in Severe Injury to Wife” or “New Mission President and Wife Missing after Being Robbed on a Road They Should Not Have Been Traveling on.”

Not knowing what to do, I paused outside the vehicle and pleaded with Heavenly Father, “Please help me in my moment of carelessness.” Can you believe that a large banana truck suddenly pulled up behind us? The driver and passengers saw us and came over to laugh and enjoy the predicament of the silly gringo. They pointed out the branch on the road. Literally, it was just a twig.

Then, to our miraculous blessing, they retrieved from their truck the only chain I saw in three years of service in Guatemala. Before they left, they cut down a tree and

pulled it across the road. I think they wanted to make sure that the next North American to come by did not make the same mistake.

Heed Promptings and Warnings

I tell you this story to make the point that we must heed warnings, promptings, and direction given us by the voice of the Lord—no matter how strong or mild. That voice comes in many forms: scriptures, commandments, whisperings from the Holy Ghost, words of living prophets, and counsel from parents, Church leaders, and good friends. Are we listening for and heeding these promptings and warnings? Why is it important to do so?

We read in 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.

“Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil” (Proverbs 3:5–7).

We must trust the Lord with all our heart. We must understand that our knowledge falls short of what is best for us and best for others. If we do trust in Him, what a wonderful promise He bestows: He will direct our paths.

In our family, we have a saying that became an important part of our mission. President Russell M. Nelson has been teaching the concept for a



while. He said it this way: “Obedience brings success; exact obedience brings miracles.”¹

Our family and mission version is “Obedience brings blessings, but exact obedience brings miracles.”

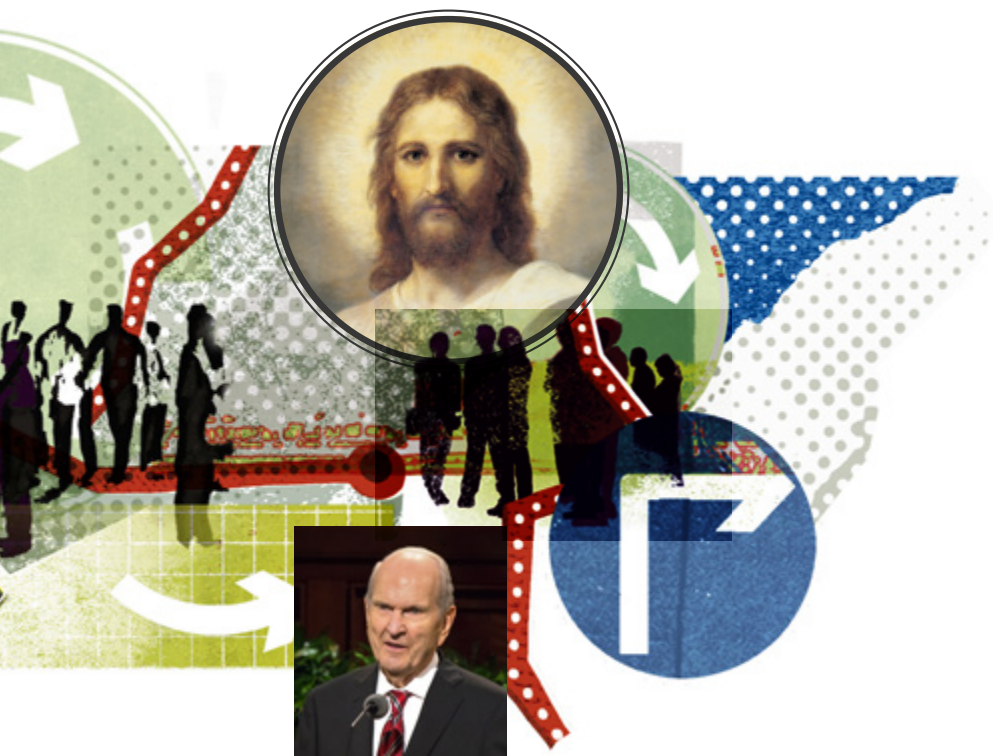
I do not completely understand what exact obedience means, but here is what I have come to understand. It does not mean that we are perfectly obedient right now in all things, although we can be perfect in obeying many of the Lord’s commandments. Hence, repentance must be a key part of exact obedience. Exact obedience requires a commitment to all the warnings and promptings and commandments Heavenly Father gives us.

Sometimes we will not understand why Heavenly Father asks certain things of us. Those times can be some of the toughest times to be

exactly obedient. Remember when Adam, one of the greatest of all, was asked why he gave sacrifice: “And after many days an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying: Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him: I know not, save the Lord commanded me” (Moses 5:6).

Follow the Prophets

Emily has been a wonderful example of exact obedience even when she has not understood. During the October 2000 general conference, she heard the following counsel from President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008): “We discourage tattoos and also ‘the piercing of the body for other than medical purposes.’ We do not, however, take any position ‘on the minimal piercing of the ears by women



for one pair of earrings’—one pair.”²

When my wife arrived home, she explained to our second daughter the importance of following the prophets no matter what. As she talked, my wife also obeyed. She took out her second pair of earrings for the last time. I believe she still does not understand why, but I know that why does not matter to her.

To some of us, that may seem insignificant because it is such a small thing. That is true. However, I do not remember the Savior saying, “If ye love me, keep my commandments that appear important” (see John 14:15).

My dear brothers and sisters, one clear voice of warning we must always heed comes from the Lord’s chosen apostles and prophets. It might not be popular by the world’s

standards, just like that small thing requested by President Hinckley. But you can—you must—trust that it comes from Heavenly Father. It might be only a small twig, or it might be a whole tree dragged across the road. I exhort you to read or listen to general conference with this thought in mind: What twigs or trees did the Lord place in my path?

Trust in the Lord

Some of you may be thinking, “Well, that is great. But what do you do when you are seeking promptings, counsel from the Lord, warnings, and direction, and you just do not seem to receive an answer?”

Maybe you have this concern regarding important decisions in your life. Remember the promise to trust in the Lord with all your heart,

and He will direct your paths.

Regarding important events in our lives, we do want clear direction, and that may be hard to find. But I have come to understand that if I am repentant, being exactly obedient, following my leaders, and making other good choices—in other words, if I am worthy—Heavenly Father will not let me make big mistakes without proper warning. Nor will He let you.

My young friends, Heavenly Father is here to keep us from making costly mistakes if we seek His warnings, promptings, and revelations from all available sources—and if we heed and act upon them. We have the right to have the Holy Ghost always with us, especially in crucial moments of life.

That you will successfully identify the warning twigs and trees that Heavenly Father places in your path is my hope.

I testify that as we heed the voice of the Lord, as we receive it from its many sources and strive to be exactly obedient, we can have a life that ends with “and they lived happily ever after.” That can happen only by living the doctrine of Christ and making and keeping sacred covenants. ■

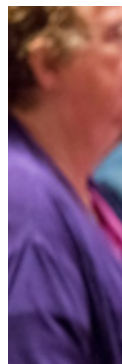
From a devotional address, “Heeding the Voice of the Lord,” delivered at Brigham Young University–Idaho on October 17, 2017.

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, in R. Scott Lloyd, “Elder Nelson Delivers Spiritual Thanksgiving Feast to MTCs,” Church News section of LDS.org, Dec. 4, 2013, news.lds.org.
2. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Great Shall Be the Peace of Thy Children,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 52; *Liahona*, Jan. 2001, 68.

From an address given on June 1, 2018, at “Be One,” the 40th-anniversary celebration of the 1978 revelation on the priesthood.

BE ONE



By President
Dallin H. Oaks
First Counselor in
the First Presidency

A CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION

FOR LATTER-DAY SAINTS who were adults at that time, the 1978 revelation on the priesthood was an event that is etched in memory.

I.

The news reached me on a telephone that seldom rang. My two sons and I were working in the yard of a mountain home we built as a place of retreat from my heavy responsibilities as president of Brigham Young University. The caller was Elder Boyd K. Packer. He told me about the revelation on the priesthood, which was just being announced. We exchanged expressions of joy, and I walked back to my work. I sat down on the pile of dirt we had been moving and beckoned to my sons. As I told them that all worthy male members of the Church could now be ordained to the priesthood, I wept for joy.

Why was the revelation on the priesthood such an occasion of joy? As a young man studying and working in the legal profession, I lived in the Midwestern and Eastern regions of the United States for 17 years. I had observed and shared the pain and frustration experienced by those who suffered these restrictions and those who observed them, criticized them, and sought for reasons. I studied the reasons then being given and could not feel confirmation about the truth of any of them. As part of my prayerful study, I learned that, in general, the Lord seldom gives reasons for the commandments and directions He gives to His servants. I determined to be loyal to our prophetic leaders and to pray—as promised from the beginning of these restrictions—that the day would come when all would enjoy the blessings of priesthood and temple. Now, on June 8, 1978, that day had come, and I wept for joy.





II.

When we consider what has happened and is happening in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and in the lives of its members since 1978, we all have cause for celebration.

Institutionally, the Church reacted swiftly to the revelation on the priesthood. Ordinations and temple recommends came immediately. The

reasons that had been given to try to explain the prior restrictions on members of African ancestry—even those previously voiced by revered Church leaders—were promptly and publicly disavowed. The Lord had spoken through His prophet, and His Church obeyed.

In contrast, changes in the hearts and practices of individual members did not come suddenly and

universally. Some accepted the effects of the revelation immediately and gracefully, some accepted gradually, and some, in their personal lives, continued the attitudes of racism that have been painful to so many throughout the world, including the past 40 years. Some have wanted to look back, concentrating attention on reexamining the past, including seeking reasons for the now-outdated restrictions. But most in the Church, including its senior leadership, have concentrated on the opportunities of the future rather than the disappointments of the past. Most have trusted the wisdom and timing of the Lord and accepted the directions of His prophet. In doing so, we have realized the eternal significance of His prophetic teaching that “one being is as precious in his sight as the other” (Jacob 2:21). In doing so, we have received new impetus to fulfill the command of the Lord Jesus Christ that we are to teach the everlasting gospel unto all—to “all nations, kindreds, tongues and people” (D&C 42:58).

III.

To concern ourselves with what has not been revealed or with past explanations by those who were operating with limited understanding can only result in speculation and frustration. To all who have such concerns, we extend our love and this special invitation. Let us all look forward in the unity of our faith and trust in the



**“ONE BEING IS AS PRECIOUS
IN HIS SIGHT AS THE OTHER.”**



**“WE INVITE
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TO WORK
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ALL KINDS.”**

Lord’s promise that “he inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female” (2 Nephi 26:33).

As we look to the future, one of the most important effects of the revelation on the priesthood is its divine call to abandon attitudes of prejudice against any group of God’s children. Racism is probably the most familiar source of prejudice today, and we are all called to repent of that. But throughout history, many groups of God’s children are or have been persecuted or disadvantaged by prejudices, such as those based on ethnicity or culture or nationality or education or economic circumstances.

As servants of God who have the knowledge and responsibilities of His great plan of salvation, we should hasten to prepare our attitudes and our actions—institutionally and personally—to put all personal prejudices behind us. As President

Russell M. Nelson said following our recent meeting with the national officers of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People: “Together we invite all people, organizations, and government[s] to work with greater civility, eliminating prejudice of all kinds.”¹

Even as we unite to banish attitudes and practices of prejudice, we should remember that it is not prejudice for the Church to insist on certain rules in furtherance of the Lord’s requirement of worthiness to enter a temple. The Lord has declared that obedience to covenants and commandments is an essential requirement to enjoy sacred blessings. Any attempt to erase divine requirements for eternal life and eternal families would be like trying to establish Satan’s plan that “all would be saved.” We mortals already rejected Satan’s plan in our premortal lives. We chose the plan of our Heavenly Father, which provides the freedom to choose and keep the eternal covenants and commandments that apply

equally to all. The equality of God is not equal outcomes for all, but equal opportunity for all.

IV.

Our determination in this anniversary program is to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the revelation on the priesthood by looking forward. As we do, we express special appreciation for our marvelous members of African descent, especially our African-American members who have

persisted in faith and faithfulness through a difficult transition period of fading prejudice. Now we join together in concentrating our attention on the glorious post-1978 effects of that revelation in blessing the children of God all over the world. As our prophetic leaders declared at that time:

“The Lord has now made known his will for the blessing of all his children throughout the earth who will hearken to the voice of his authorized servants, and prepare themselves to

receive every blessing of the gospel.”²

Now temples are being built in many nations for the blessing of God’s children on both sides of the veil. On earth and in heaven, we rejoice together. This is part of our preparation for the Second Coming of Him who declared through a Book of Mormon prophet that “he commandeth none that they shall not partake of his salvation” (2 Nephi 26:24) and who declared through a modern prophet that “if ye are not one ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27). ■

NOTES

1. “First Presidency and NAACP Leaders Call for Greater Civility, Racial Harmony,” May 17, 2018, mormonnewsroom.org.
2. Official Declaration 2.



**WE SHOULD
HASTEN ...
TO PUT ALL
PERSONAL
PREJUDICES
BEHIND US.**

BUILDING BRIDGES

By President Russell M. Nelson

CENTURIES AGO, an exacting lawyer asked the Savior:

“Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

“This is the first and great commandment.

“And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

“On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”¹

Again in 1831, this instruction was revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith, when the Lord said, “And let every man esteem his brother as himself, and practice virtue and holiness before me.”

Then, by way of emphasis, He added, “And again I say unto you, let every man esteem his brother as himself.”²

In the meridian of time and again in the latter days, the Lord has stressed His essential doctrine of equal opportunity for His children. And President Oaks has reminded us of this teaching from the Book of Mormon: “[The Lord] denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; . . . all are alike unto God.”³

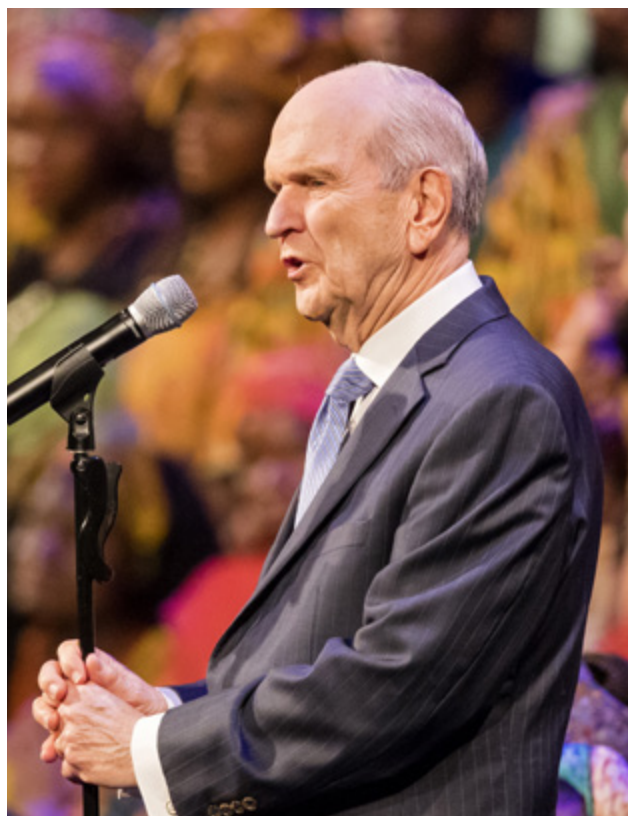
On every continent and across the isles of the sea, faithful people are being gathered into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Differences in culture, language, gender, race, and nationality fade into insignificance as the faithful enter the covenant path and come unto our beloved Redeemer.

Ultimately, we realize that only the comprehension of the true Fatherhood of God can bring full appreciation of the true brotherhood of men and the true sisterhood of women. That understanding inspires us with passionate desire to build bridges of cooperation instead of walls of segregation.

It is my prayer and blessing that I leave upon all who are listening that we may overcome any burdens of prejudice and walk uprightly with God—and with one another—in perfect peace and harmony. ■

NOTES

1. Matthew 22:36–40.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 38:24–25.
3. 2 Nephi 26:33.



“BLACK AND WHITE,
BOND AND FREE,
MALE AND FEMALE;
... ALL ARE ALIKE
UNTO GOD.”



MINISTERING

AS THE SAVIOR DID

*As you do your best to help others,
the Savior will open your eyes
to see with love and compassion.*

By Eric B. Murdock

Church Magazines

We've all noticed a friend having a rough day or someone who's lonely or being made fun of at school. Maybe you've heard about someone in your ward or branch going through a serious challenge. At times like these, what can you do?

Sometimes it's hard to know how you can help. It can seem a lot easier to wait for someone else to take action, but there's a lot *you* can do, even if it's just to let those around you know you care. The opportunities are all around us, and any time you show love, concern, and interest for others, you are *ministering*.

A Personal Ministry

Ministering. You've probably heard that word a lot at church lately. In the past, we usually talked about the Savior or the prophets and apostles having a ministry, but have you ever

wondered if *you* have a personal ministry?

To minister means to love and care for others and to do the kinds of things the Savior would do if He were living among us today. Ministering is a way to help others feel Heavenly Father's love and meet their spiritual and temporal needs.

Jesus "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Matthew 20:28). He ministered as He "went about

*To minister
means to love and care
for others.*

doing good" (Acts 10:38). As His disciples, we've been asked to follow His example. We *do* have a personal ministry!

But you don't have to organize a huge service project to minister.

President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: "Some service opportunities are formal—in our family, our Church callings, and our participation in community service organizations. . . .

"[But] many opportunities to serve are informal—without assignment—and come as we reach out to others we meet in life's journey."¹

Often, Christlike ministering takes place in the small, sincere acts you do every day.

One by One

When the Savior appeared to the Nephites, He told everyone to come and feel the marks in His side and in His hands and feet. "And this they did do, going forth *one by one* until they had *all* gone forth" (3 Nephi 11:15; emphasis added).

Then He invited them to bring

everyone who was sick, hurt, or “afflicted in any manner . . . and he did heal them *every one* as they were brought forth unto him” (3 Nephi 17:7, 9; emphasis added). After this, He “took their little children, *one by one*, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them” (3 Nephi 17:21; emphasis added).



The love
Jesus shows to the one is what ministering is all about.

This wasn’t a small group of people. The scriptures tell us that about 2,500 people were there (see 3 Nephi 17:25). But the Savior *still* took time to heal, comfort, encourage, and show love to each individual.

Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught: “There is a very profound and tender personal message here. Jesus Christ ministers to, and loves us all, one by one.”² The love Jesus shows to the one is what ministering is all about.

Eyes to See

The Savior helped those around Him. Jean B. Bingham, Relief Society General President, has said that He “smiled at, talked with, walked with, listened to, made time for, encouraged, taught, fed, and forgave. He served family and friends, neighbors and strangers alike, and He invited acquaintances and loved ones to enjoy the rich blessings of His gospel.”³

Jesus Christ had eyes to see the needs of everyone around Him, and He reached out to all of them! We can follow His example and reach out to those who need our help too.

But the Savior is perfect. How can we see the needs of others and minister as He does? President Ballard has said: “In your morning prayer each new day, ask Heavenly Father to

guide you to recognize an opportunity to serve one of His precious children. Then go throughout the day with your heart full of faith and love, looking for someone to help. . . . If you do this, your spiritual sensitivities will be enlarged and you will discover opportunities to serve that you never before realized were possible.”⁴

Act on Promptings

Imagine this scenario: You see your friend at school, and she looks like she’s a little down. You feel that you should do something for her, but you worry if you’ll bug her or embarrass her or yourself. Then you start to worry if it was a spiritual prompting or just you.

Sometimes it’s hard to know if you’re receiving a spiritual prompting to minister or just having your

own thought, but Mormon teaches us how to recognize spiritual promptings: “That which is of God inviteth and enticeth to do good continually; wherefore, every thing which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God” (Moroni 7:13).

President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) said, “If we are observant and aware, and if we act on the promptings which come to us, we can accomplish much good.”⁵

Ministering Is for Everyone

During the April 2018 general conference, President Russell M. Nelson announced: “The Lord has made important adjustments in the way we care for each other. Sisters and brothers—old and young—will serve one another in a new, holier way.”⁶ This includes opportunities to serve in ministering companionships, but ministering isn’t just something we do

on Sunday or during Mutual activities. It’s not just a responsibility that comes with certain callings. Ministering is for everyone. It’s for all the time.

*If we act
on the promptings which
come to us, we can
accomplish much good.*

When we’re baptized, we promise to be “willing to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light; yea, and [be] willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort” (Mosiah 18:8–9). Ministering to others is a part of what we have promised to do.

Bonnie L. Oscarson, former Young Women General President, said, “The Lord desires for you to look around at your peers and then minister as He would.”⁷ As you do so, He will open

your eyes to see with love and compassion how to serve others. He won’t leave you guessing about what you should do. He will guide you in how you can best minister to them.

Ministering Brings Blessings

President Nelson has said, “We as [the Lord’s] servants will minister to the one, just as He did.”⁸ This not only blesses others; it blesses us as well.

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “As we extend our hands and hearts toward others in Christlike love, something wonderful happens to us. Our own spirits become healed, more refined, and stronger. We become happier, more peaceful, and more receptive to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit.”⁹

Jesus Christ has shown the way to a richer, more fulfilling life. Ministering as He does will bring true happiness and a sense of peace and joy into your life. ■

NOTES

1. M. Russell Ballard, “Precious Gifts from God,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 10.
2. Ronald A. Rasband, “One by One,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2000, 29.
3. Jean B. Bingham, “Ministering as the Savior Does,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 104.
4. M. Russell Ballard, “Be Anxiously Engaged,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 31.
5. Thomas S. Monson, “Three Goals to Guide You,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 121.
6. Russell M. Nelson, “Let Us All Press On,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 118.
7. Bonnie L. Oscarson, “The Needs before Us,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 26.
8. Russell M. Nelson, “Ministering with the Power and Authority of God,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 69.
9. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “You Are My Hands,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2010, 75.





Seven
WAYS TO
CATCH
THE CHRISTMAS
Spirit

THE FLOURISH AND FESTIVITIES ARE FUN, BUT MERRY MINISTERING IS THE KEY TO HAVING THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT.

By Charlotte Larcabal
Church Magazines



“It just doesn’t feel like Christmas.”

Have you ever thought something like that? Maybe you feel like that right now: No matter how loudly you blare Christmas songs or how many Christmas cookies you snarf down, you’re just not feeling the Christmas spirit.

If that sounds like you, or if you’re just looking to feel that Christmassy glow a bit more this year, read on!

President David O. McKay (1873–1970) made it pretty simple: “The Christmas spirit is the Christ spirit, that makes our hearts glow in brotherly love and friendship and prompts us to kind deeds of service.”¹ Bonnie L. Oscarson, former Young Women General President, agrees: “The way to increase the Christmas spirit is to reach out generously to those around us and give of ourselves.”²

Decorating trees and giving gifts are ways to celebrate Christmas, but the key to feeling the spirit of Christmas is to minister to others. (Check out the previous article, “Ministering as the Savior Did,” to learn more about ministering.)

And good news! There are many wonderful ways to minister to others at Christmastime. Try some of these out, and in no time you will feel the warmth of the Spirit and feel closer to the Savior—the true spirit of Christmas!

1. Visit the lonely.

Think about those you know who might not have family and friends to spend the holidays with. Consider visiting someone who is elderly or someone who just moved to your neighborhood. Reaching out to just one lonely person can be powerful. As Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles pointed out, Christ “ministered to the ‘ones,’” by helping people one by one.³ We can do the same.

2. Go caroling.

Did you know that our prophet loves Christmas carols? Whether it’s belting out the “whimsical ditties about Santa” or reverently singing your favorite hymns about the Savior, President Russell M. Nelson believes that sharing music with others is a wonderful way to “truly feel the real spirit of Christmas.”⁴





3. Look around before you look at your phone.

You don't have to keep your phone in your pocket the whole day, but being present and focusing on those around you is a great way to get back in touch with the Christmas spirit.

"Instead of picking up your phone to see what your friends are doing, stop, look around, and ask yourself, 'Who needs me today?'" said Sister Oscarson. "You may be the key to reaching out and touching the life of a peer or to giving encouragement to a friend who is quietly struggling."⁵

4. Do some extra chores.

Can cleaning the house, offering to babysit, or doing any other extra housework really help you feel the Christmas spirit? If you do it with the right attitude, you bet it will! As you're scrubbing or tidying up, think about the person you're serving. Think about how much your family or friends will love the gift of your hard work!



5. Deliver some Christmas treats!

Speaking of those Christmas cookies you snarfed down earlier, why not whip up a batch of your favorite Christmas treats? You should probably taste a few (or more) yourself, but the key to feeling the Christmas spirit here is to give them away.



6. Share a Christmas video.

Share a Christmas message on social media. Check out the Christmas Mormon Messages for some ideas. You might also brighten someone's day just by sharing the Church's Christmas video on Mormon.org. You can send it to a friend or share it on your own page.

7. Be sneaky about it.

How much secret service can you do without getting caught? You could leave groceries or gifts on someone's doorstep, slip a kind note into a coat pocket, shovel snow, or rake up leaves—but make sure no one knows it was you! Remember: let thine alms be done in secret (see Matthew 6:4).



Ministering at Christmas

Twinkling trimmings and festive fanfare can bring wonder and fun to your holidays, but when it comes to feeling the true Christmas spirit, merry ministering is the key.

“To truly honor [the Lord’s] coming into the world, we must do as He did and reach out in compassion and mercy to our fellowmen,” said Elder

Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “This we can do daily, by word and deed. Let this become our Christmas tradition, no matter where we are—to be a little kinder, more forgiving, less judging, more grateful, and more generous in sharing our abundance with those in need.”⁶ ■

NOTES

1. David O. McKay, *Gospel Ideals* (1953), 551.
2. Bonnie L. Oscarson, “Christmas Is Christlike Love” (First Presidency Christmas Devotional, Dec. 7, 2014), broadcasts.lds.org.
3. David A. Bednar’s Facebook page, video posted on Jan. 22, 2017, [facebook.com/lds.david.a.bednar/videos](https://www.facebook.com/lds.david.a.bednar/videos).
4. Russell M. Nelson, in “Christmas Memories from Prophets and Apostles,” *New Era*, Dec. 2015, 10.
5. Bonnie L. Oscarson, “The Needs before Us,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 26.
6. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Scatter Your Crumbs” (First Presidency Christmas Devotional, Dec. 3, 2017), broadcasts.lds.org.

ADDING GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT TO YOUR CHRISTMAS LIST

By David Dickson
Church Magazines



I've always made an impressive grilled cheese sandwich. Between that delectable dish and a handful of other recipes, I kept myself alive and functioning throughout my mission and well into adulthood. But then I got married and had kids, all of whom have different tastes. I needed to expand my menu!

However, on nights when it was my turn to cook, attempting new meals proved to be a challenge. For

starters, my evening time was usually limited. Even though I wanted to cook a variety of meals, I kept hitting snags. I couldn't find ingredients fast enough, or we'd be missing some. More often than not, I'd scrap my planned dinner and instead go for quick and easy.

And yet I kept wanting to improve in this area. So I decided to do something I had never done. I prayed for a spiritual gift by name.

One Gift, Many Uses

Specifically, I prayed for the gift of organization. Yes, organization! We already had a spice cupboard. We also had cooking utensils drawers. Yet even with those in place, I seemed to spend more time looking for supplies than cooking.

As I consistently prayed for this gift, I began receiving specific ideas. A wall-mounted spice rack would organize spices and keep them handy. A magnetic kitchen bar (also wall-mounted) could store knives and other metal cooking utensils. These and other ideas, once put in motion, made a big difference in my cooking efforts. Need some thyme? Garlic salt? Garlic *powder*? I'm your guy!

But then a funny thing happened. Little ideas continued popping into my mind for small ways to better organize other areas of my life. For example, my three-level home-made laundry tower won't carry my family to the promised land, but even Nephi would've appreciated the way in which I built it—by following promptings that came to me one piece at a time.

The spiritual gift of organization has improved my life and the lives of my family more than I would've ever guessed.

And it all came because I asked for it.

Many Gifts, Few Askers

The Apostle Paul taught the Corinthians about some of the many different spiritual gifts available, such as faith or healing (see 1 Corinthians 12:5–11). And then he instructed them to “covet earnestly the best gifts” (1 Corinthians 12:31).

It might be hard to wrap your brain around the idea that coveting can be a *good* thing, but in this case it can be.

We're instructed to look at some of the spiritual gifts we see in others and then ask God to bless us with that same gift. Our hope in doing so should be to better serve others and build God's kingdom (see D&C 46:26–29).

There are so many gifts—many more than you'll find in the scriptures. Patience is a spiritual gift. So is optimism. And courage. And being a peacemaker. Elder Larry R. Lawrence of the Seventy taught: “I sometimes visualize a large storehouse up in heaven, completely filled with spiritual gifts, available to all Saints who have the faith to ask for them. Unfortunately, not too many are asking, so the storehouse is always overstocked.”¹

Elder Lawrence described a friend who decided to pray for the gift of charity. He related her experience: “She wrote: ‘I have been praying specifically for an increase of charity for several months. . . . Gradually my perception of others has changed. . . . I have begun to not just love the people around me but to enjoy them. Before, I may have kept my distance, but now I am genuinely interested in everyone.’”²

Your Gifts, Ready and Waiting

Spiritual gifts are so much more valuable than physical ones! They are, in fact, the *best* gifts. We're commanded in scripture, “Seek ye earnestly the best gifts” (D&C 46:8).

Whatever else you hope to open Christmas morning, try and imagine a few of the “best gifts” waiting for you as well. They're already “wrapped” and ready to bless you and those around you.

So go ahead and ask. ■

NOTES

1. Larry R. Lawrence, “Why Not Ask?” (Brigham Young University–Idaho devotional, June 13, 2017), byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches.
2. Larry R. Lawrence, “Why Not Ask?”

“I don’t feel worthy to be loved by the Savior. How can I overcome this feeling and recognize my self-worth?”



“God’s love is there for you whether or not you feel you deserve love. It is simply always there.

“As we seek our Heavenly Father through fervent, sincere prayer and earnest, dedicated scripture study, our testimonies will become strong and deeply rooted. We will know of God’s love for us.”

President Thomas S. Monson (1927-2018), “We Never Walk Alone,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 124.



Pray to Feel His Love

We are all sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father. His love for us is infinite.

If we ever feel like we are unworthy of His love, we should pray to Him. Pray to feel His love. Pray that you will feel worthy of His love for you and that you can see yourself as He sees you. In His time and His way, He will always answer our prayers with an affirmation of His perfect love. Whenever I have felt down or lonely, praying for His love has always lifted me up.

Julia M., age 16, Virginia, USA



Draw Close to the Savior

Recently in a mission preparation class, we had a discussion about

how to open our eyes to God’s love for us. We discussed various things that we could do to feel more self-worth; some of these things are serving your neighbor, praying for help in things that matter to you, reading the scriptures, and being a missionary. All these things are meant to bring us closer to Jesus Christ and help us see our potential to become like Him.

Santiago Z., age 17, Arizona, USA



Keep the Commandments

Sometimes I do not feel worthy to be loved by the Savior because I am not totally obedient to the Lord's commandments. I can overcome these feelings

by repenting, sometimes with the help of my bishop, who teaches me that the Lord loves all of His children.

Jacques D., age 15, Abidjan, Ivory Coast

Repentance Is Key

We all commit sin, and because of that, we may feel unworthy of the Savior's love. But He gave His life for us—He sacrificed for us. That selfless act was done because of love. The only thing we need to do to feel worthy of His love is use the power of His Atonement by repenting of our sins. Repentance is the key in recognizing our self-worth and the love of the Savior.

Sister Custan, age 23, Philippines Cebu Mission

Love Others

One way to recognize our self-worth is to recognize the self-worth of those around us. Focusing on others helps us feel good about ourselves because we are building others up. It's a win-win! When I struggled with self-confidence, I decided I would serve someone around me who needed help. Every day for a month I gave a compliment to a friend who was struggling. Focusing on others helped me feel worthy and needed. When we strive to love others for who they are, it becomes easier to see how much God loves us. Helping others feel worthy of love will help us feel worthy of love ourselves.

Jayme W., age 15, Minnesota, USA

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

I've repented, but I still feel so much guilt. How can I have peace?

Because of Jesus Christ's infinite Atonement, your guilt can be swept away if you fully repent. But people sometimes still feel flashes of guilt over the memory of their sins even though they've repented.

Guilt, or "godly sorrow" (2 Corinthians 7:10), can be helpful. It can center our thoughts on Jesus Christ and lead us to real repentance and change. Shame, on the other hand, centers our thoughts on ourselves and hinders our progress.

The Book of Mormon gives us good examples of how we can repent and then enjoy peace in Jesus Christ:

- Remembering his past sins caused Ammon to praise the Savior and His mercy, bringing him joy instead of suffering (see Alma 26:17-20).¹
- After Alma's "mind caught hold upon [the] thought" of Jesus Christ and His Atonement, he "was harrowed up by the memory of [his] sins no more" (Alma 36:17-19). Though the memory was there, he was no longer tortured by it.²

NOTES

1. See Richard G. Scott, "Peace of Conscience and Peace of Mind," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2004, 18.
2. See Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Point of Safe Return," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2007, 101.

What Do You Think?

"How do I decide whether to serve a mission?"

Submit your answer and, if desired, a high-resolution photograph by January 15, 2019, at liahona.lds.org (click "Submit an Article or Feedback").

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.

The
SAVIOR'S BIRTH

is the gift that

**MAKES IT
POSSIBLE**

for the Father to give us "peace in this
world, and eternal life in the world to
come" [D&C 59:23].

President Henry B. Eyring,
Second Counselor in the First Presidency,
"Gifts of Peace" (First Presidency Christmas Devotional, Dec. 4, 2016)





ENLIST IN **THE YOUTH BATTALION OF THE LORD** TO HELP GATHER ISRAEL

I invite you to prepare yourself by doing . . . **FIVE THINGS** that will change you and help you change the world.



1. HOLD A SEVEN-DAY SOCIAL MEDIA FAST.

2. MAKE A WEEKLY SACRIFICE OF TIME TO THE LORD.



3. KEEP ON THE COVENANT PATH.

4. PRAY DAILY THAT ALL MIGHT RECEIVE THE BLESSINGS OF THE GOSPEL.



5. STAND OUT. BE DIFFERENT. BE A LIGHT.



Carl's Christmas Gift

By Juliann Tenney Doman

Based on a true story

"When there is a task to do, do it with a smile. Do more than you are asked to do and go the second mile"
(Children's Songbook, 167).

Carl shivered as he pushed his bike against the wind. "I can't wait to get home and get warm," he thought. "And I can't wait to open Christmas presents!"

He had gotten up extra early that morning to deliver newspapers. As he pushed his bike up the steep hill on his way home, he thought about Mom's homemade Christmas cinnamon rolls. They were going to taste so good. He could almost taste the sweet creamy frosting.

Cream! Carl's shoulders slumped. He had forgotten about milking the cow and the other chores he needed to do. Even on Christmas.

Carl parked his bike in front of the house. He and his brother had raced to see who could get their paper routes done first. He didn't see his brother's bike, so Carl had won!

The only problem with winning was that now he had to wait for his brother before they could open presents. Then they'd have to go back outside and do chores. Carl wished he could just stay inside and enjoy Christmas.

"I could just get my chores done now," Carl thought. "Then I won't have to come back out in the cold." He hurried to the barn.

As he grabbed a pail and sat down to milk the cow, Carl looked around. All the other chores still needed to be done. Then he had an idea. If he did all the chores himself, he could surprise his family and they could spend the rest of Christmas morning together. It would be the best Christmas present ever!

Carl hurried and milked the cows. Then he cleaned

the barn, fed the chickens, and collected the eggs. He smiled as he thought of how surprised his family would be.

Carl went back to the house. He peeked in the door to see if anyone was there. Then he sneaked into the kitchen. He had just finished putting the milk and eggs in the refrigerator when Mom walked in.

"Oh good, you're home," Mom said, giving him a hug. "We were beginning to wonder where you were."

Mom helped him take off his coat. When Carl's siblings saw him they shouted, "Carl's home! Let's open presents!" Everyone crowded around the Christmas tree and waited for Dad to hand out gifts. Carl loved watching everyone share their treasures.

"All right!" Dad said. "Now it's time to do the chores. But first, I think we need some juice and cinnamon rolls."

Dad walked to the kitchen and opened the refrigerator. He stopped and stared.

"Well, look at that!" Dad said. "The milk jug is already full, and here are the eggs already gathered! Who could have done that?"

Dad came back into the living room. Carl tried his best to hide his smile.

"Do you know anything about this, Carl?" Dad said with a smile of his own. "It seems our chores are already done."

"Merry Christmas!" Carl shouted.

Dad put his arm around Carl. "Thank you, son. That was very thoughtful. This might be our best Christmas yet!"

Carl grinned. He already knew this was *his* best Christmas ever. ■

The author lives in Colorado, USA.

Katie and Quincy

By Evan Valentine and Marissa Widdison

Based on a true story

“A friend loveth at all times”
(Proverbs 17:17).

Katie loved singing. She loved dancing. But most of all, she loved Sundays! That’s when she got to see her friend Quincy.

Katie had Down syndrome. Sometimes at church she got confused and didn’t know what to do. But she knew Quincy would be there to help her.

Quincy would hold Katie’s hand and walked with her to Primary. Sometimes Katie felt wiggly during sharing time, and Quincy would give her a hug. It always helped Katie calm down. After sharing time, Quincy helped Katie find her class. Katie loved Quincy.

One day Katie learned that something sad had happened in Quincy’s family. Quincy’s older brother Cory had died. Katie knew her friend would be so sad. She knew Quincy loved her big brother very much.

Mom told Katie that tonight people were going to the church building to show Quincy’s family that they were loved. Then tomorrow would be Cory’s funeral.

“Would you like to go to the church with Dad and me tonight?” Mom asked Katie.

Katie nodded. She wanted to tell Quincy that she loved her!

Mom helped Katie put on nice clothes. Then they drove to the church.

When they got there, Katie could see lots of people. She knew some of them from church. She saw her bishop. She saw her Primary teacher. But she couldn’t see her friend.



“Mom, where’s Quincy?” Katie asked.

Mom didn’t know.

“Why don’t we ask someone?” Mom said.

Usually Katie didn’t like talking around lots of people. But tonight she needed to find Quincy. Katie felt brave. She marched up to the bishop.

“Quincy is sad. I need to find Quincy!” she told him.

The bishop smiled and took Katie’s hand. “Then let’s go find Quincy.”

Together, the bishop, Mom, and Katie walked around the church building. Finally they found her! Quincy was sitting in a corner. She looked really, really sad.

Katie walked over to her friend and wrapped her arms around her. She thought of how much Quincy missed her brother.

"It's OK, Quincy. Jesus will take care of Cory," Katie said. She carefully patted Quincy's hair, making sure to be gentle.

Quincy started crying. Katie hugged her tighter.



"It's OK," Katie said. "Jesus will take care of Cory."

Quincy cried and cried. Katie just kept hugging her friend. After a while, Quincy got quieter. She was still sniffing, but not crying so much. She looked up at Katie.

"Thank you, Katie," she said.

"You're right. Jesus will take care of my brother."

Katie was happy that she could help her friend feel better. She loved Quincy! ■

The authors live in Utah, USA.

FRIENDS WITH DISABILITIES

Some disabilities make it harder for a body to work. Other disabilities make it harder for a brain to work. Some people have a disability that affects their brain and their body. No matter what, every child is an important and loved child of God!

If you meet someone with a disability:

Don't...

- Stare, point, or whisper about them.
- Ignore them.
- Make fun of them.
- Call them mean names.

Do...

- Say hello and be nice.
- Ask questions in a polite way.
- Stick up for them if others are mean.
- Remember that they are a child of God, just like you are!



Reverence Is Love



By Luaipou W., age 10, Victoria, Australia

On Friday my teacher asked me to read a poem I wrote in front of all the students, teachers, and parents at our school assembly. I was really excited, so I said, “Yes!” But I was also really nervous about it.

As I was sitting on the stage waiting to read my poem, my heart began to beat very fast. I felt very nervous about sharing something I had written with a lot of people.

Then a thought came to my mind. I thought of how my family and I read from the Book of Mormon together in the mornings before school. The thought of reading the scriptures with my family made me think of Heavenly Father. I thought of how He loves me. I felt

comforted and no longer alone. My heart wasn’t beating as fast, and I felt reverent.

In the *Children’s Songbook* on page 31, the lyrics say,

Rev’rence is more than just quietly sitting:

It’s thinking of Father above,

A feeling I get when I think of His blessings.

I’m rev’rent, for rev’rence is love.

When I’m rev’rent, it shows in my words and my deeds.

The pathway to follow is clear.

And when I am rev’rent, I know in my heart

Heav’nly Father and Jesus are near.

I am thankful that I felt Heavenly Father’s love when I was nervous at the assembly. And I am thankful to know that He loves me very much.

I know that in difficult situations, I can choose to be reverent and think of God. ■



Saved from the Mud

By Elder Adilson
de Paula Parrella

Of the Seventy

“I’ll share my Savior’s love by serving others freely”
(Children’s Songbook, 74).

My family lived in São Paulo, Brazil. On the other side of our street, there was a forest of mangrove trees. Mangrove forests have rivers crossing through the trees. The ground is very muddy.

Many people built houses on that muddy ground. They put huge logs in the mud. Then they built their house on top of them. But when it rained, the river overflowed. The water got into their houses. Then the people had nowhere to sleep at night.

When that happened, my father would invite all of them into our home. Sometimes there were as many as 15 people! He brought them into our living room and gave them blankets. Mom made them something to eat. Then they slept in our house until the next day.

This happened at least three or four times. I remember thinking, “Not very many people would take strangers in.” My father was letting people we barely knew sleep in our house! But then I thought, “They have nowhere else to go.”

My parents always did things to help people. But their service was more than just helping and giving. It was showing love to our neighbor, even when our neighbor was somebody we didn’t know well.

We should reach out to people in need. We should help them with everything we can. We shouldn’t limit what we do to help people. We can give shelter and resources. We can share our time. We can share our knowledge about Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, especially this Christmas season. ■





ILLUSTRATION BY AUBREY BLACKHAM



“Jesus Christ lives and is the Savior and Redeemer of the world. He has provided the pathway to true happiness.”

By Elder Quentin L. Cook

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

“We Follow Jesus Christ,” Ensign or Liahona, May 2010, 86.

OUR PAGE



I was very happy to enter the waters of baptism and be confirmed a member of the Church of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit will be my faithful companion if I stay pure and obey the commandments. I know that God lives, that He loves us, that the Church is true, and that the Book of Mormon is true.

Juan O., age 8, Cali, Colombia



"I love Heavenly Father's plan," by Irreantum D. and "I want to share with everyone," by Verlann T., Luzon, Philippines

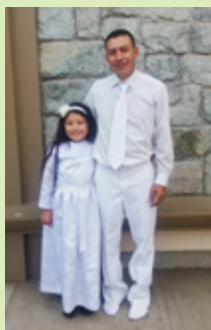


"The Lord's Missionaries," Emilio A., age 9, Formosa, Argentina



Every birthday is special, but since I was little I have been preparing for my baptism. Now that I am baptized I feel very happy. I know my Heavenly Father is happy with me and loves me.

Danna M., age 9, Chimaltenango, Guatemala



Brothers Who Light the World



1

Jayden: A Christmas Song

My class at school had a nativity play, and I played the piano for the whole programme. I taught everyone to sing "O Holy Night."

2

Jayden: Teaching Neighbors

I like to teach my neighbors when we are playing because I want to serve them. In Matthew 5:16, Jesus taught us to let our light shine. When I do this, I feel happy.

3

Hubert: Helping the Hungry

During break time at school, I see people who are hungry and have nothing to eat. I share my snack and help them feel better. After sharing, I feel happy.



4

Hubert: Playing the Organ

At church I play the organ
for members to sing.
When doing this,
I feel happy.



We live in a country called Ghana. Our city, Accra, is near the Atlantic Ocean. It also has a beautiful temple!

5

Let Us Light the World

In the scriptures it says that Jesus is the Light and Life of the world. So let us light the world!



Thank You for Sending Your Stars to the *Liahona*!

This year you filled our sky with thousands of stars and stories of your loving service. Truly you have let your light shine!

Jonah and the Whale

By Kim Webb Reid



God told Jonah to go on a mission. He was supposed to go to a city called Nineveh and tell the people to repent. But Jonah didn't want to go there. He got on a ship going to a different city.



A huge storm came.
The sailors were afraid
their ship would sink!

Jonah knew God had sent the storm because Jonah ran away. He told the sailors to throw him overboard so the storm would stop.



God sent a whale to save Jonah. He was in the whale's belly for three days. Jonah prayed. He decided to repent and follow God. God told the whale to spit Jonah out on dry land.



Jonah went to Nineveh. He taught the people there. And the people of Nineveh listened! They started following God again.



When I make a wrong choice, I can repent and try again. God loved Jonah, and God loves me! ■

From Jonah 1-4.

“I bring you good tidings of great joy.”

—Luke 2:10



ILLUSTRATION BY APRYL STOTT



By Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85)
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Knowing Christ through Joseph Smith

There is one by whom the knowledge of Christ and of salvation has come in our day.

We teach and testify that salvation is in Christ. He is our Lord, our God, our King. We worship the Father in His name, as have all the holy prophets, and all the Saints of all ages.

We rejoice in Him and in His atoning sacrifice. His name is above every name, and to Him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord of all, without whom there would be neither immortality nor eternal life.

But I shall now speak of another, of the one by whom the knowledge of Christ and of salvation has come in our day. . . .

I shall speak of Joseph Smith, Jr., the mighty prophet of the Restoration, the one who first heard the heavenly voice in this dispensation, the one through whose instrumentality the kingdom of God was once again established among men. . . .

In the spring of 1820 [God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ] rent the veil of darkness which for long ages had shrouded the earth. . . . They came down from Their celestial home to a grove of trees near Palmyra, New York. Calling young Joseph by name, They then told him that . . . he would be the instrument in Their hands of restoring the fulness of Their everlasting gospel. . . .

All men may well ask themselves where they stand with reference to Joseph Smith and his divine mission. Do they inquire after his name and seek that salvation found only in the gospel of Christ as revealed to His latter-day prophet . . . ? The great



question which all men in our day must answer—and that at the peril of their own salvation—is: Was Joseph Smith called of God? . . .

. . . Let there be no misunderstanding. We are witnesses of Christ. He is our Savior. . . . But we are also witnesses of Joseph Smith, by whom we know of Christ, and who is the legal administrator to whom power was given to bind on earth and seal in heaven, that all men from his day forward might be heirs of salvation. ■

From “Joseph Smith—The Mighty Prophet of the Restoration,” Ensign, May 1976, 94–96. Capitalization standardized.



**NATIVITY QUILT BY
JUDY WANGEMANN**

*"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.
"And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. . . .
"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:11-12, 14).*

YOUNG ADULTS

BIG DECISIONS TO MAKE?

You can trust the perfect navigator to help guide you.

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"BE ONE" CELEBRATION
**LOOKING FORWARD
IN UNITY**

46, 51

YOUTH
**FULFILLING YOUR
PERSONAL MINISTRY**

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CHRISTMAS
**SEVEN WAYS TO SHARE
JOY**

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**ADD THIS TO YOUR
CHRISTMAS LIST**

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THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

