

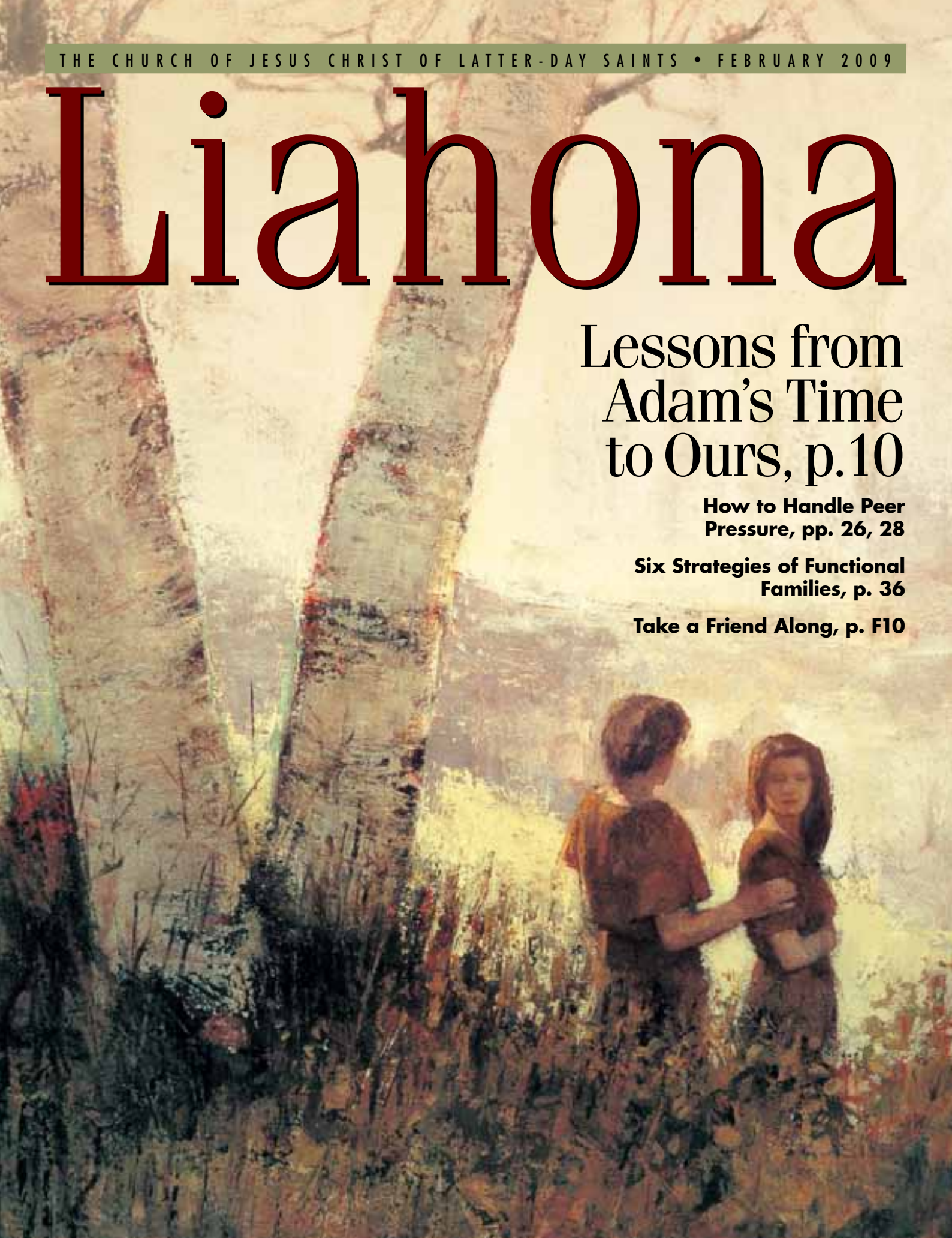
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February 2009 Vol. 33 No. 2
LIAHONA 04282

Official international magazine of
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

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For subscriptions and prices outside the United States and
Canada, contact your local Church distribution center or
ward or branch leader.

Send manuscripts and queries to Liahona, Rm. 2420, 50 E.
North Temple St., Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA; or
e-mail: liahona@ldschurch.org.

The *Liahona* (a Book of Mormon term meaning "compass"
or "director") is published in Albanian, Armenian, Bahasa
Bulgarian, Cambodian, Cebuano, Chinese, Croatian,
Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Fijian, Finnish,
French, German, Greek, Haitian, Hindi, Hungarian,
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Tahitian, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Tongan, Ukrainian, Urdu, and
Vietnamese. (Frequency varies by language.)

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The *Liahona* can be found in many languages on the Internet
at www.lds.org. For English, click on "Gospel Library." For
other languages, click on "Languages."

For Readers in the United States and Canada:

February 2009 Vol. 33 No. 2. LIAHONA (USPS 311)
English (ISSN 1080-9554) is published monthly by The
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 50 E. North
Temple St., Salt Lake City, UT 84150. USA subscription
price is \$10.00 per year; Canada, \$12.00 plus applicable
taxes. Periodicals Postage Paid at Salt Lake City, Utah. Sixty
days' notice required for change of address. Include address
label from a recent issue; old and new address must be
included. Send USA and Canadian subscriptions to Salt Lake
Distribution Center at address below. Subscription help line:
1-800-537-5971. Credit card orders (Visa, MasterCard,
American Express) may be taken by phone. (Canada Post
Information: Publication Agreement #40017431)

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Salt Lake
Distribution Center, Church Magazines, PO Box 26368,
Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368.

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THE FRIEND COVER
Photo illustration by
Laureni Ademar Fochetto.



See if you can find
the Ukrainian CTR
ring hidden in this
issue. Choose the
right page!



comment

An Added Measure of the Spirit

I am a mother with two wonderful children and a supportive husband. In this world of uncertainties, the *Liahona* is indeed our family's modern compass. As we read the First Presidency Message and other inspiring articles in our family home evenings, an added measure of the Spirit of the Lord comes into our home. We feel the power of the Atonement of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and find comfort and peace.

Crisanta Estayo Padilla, Philippines

Humility and Forgiveness in Marriage

The article "Putting My Marriage before My Pride" (Jan. 2008) helped me more fully understand the responsibility of the covenant of marriage. I read the article with my fiancé, and we made goals to make humility and forgiveness important principles in our relationship. I thought about framing the article to put in our future home so we can always remember the sweet spirit that we felt when we shared this message and strengthened our love.

Clébi Nascimento, Brazil



Precious Fruits of the First Vision

BY PRESIDENT DIETER F. UCHTDORF

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

In my growing-up years in Germany, I attended church in many different locations and circumstances—in humble back rooms, in impressive villas, and in very functional modern chapels. All of these buildings had one important factor in common: the Spirit of God was present. The love of the Savior could be felt as we assembled as a branch or ward family.

The Zwickau chapel had an old air-driven organ. Every Sunday a young man was assigned to push up and down the sturdy lever operating the bellows to make the organ work. Even before I was an Aaronic Priesthood bearer, I sometimes had the great privilege to assist in this important task.

While the congregation sang our beloved hymns of the Restoration, I pumped with all my strength so the organ would not run out of wind. The eyes of the organist unmistakably indicated whether I was doing fine or needed to increase my efforts quickly. I always felt honored by the importance of this duty and the trust that the organist had placed in me. It was a wonderful feeling of accomplishment to have a responsibility and to be part of this great work.

There was an additional benefit that came from this assignment: the bellows operator sat in a seat that offered a view of a stained-glass window that beautified the front part of the chapel. The stained glass portrayed the First Vision, with Joseph Smith kneeling in the Sacred Grove, looking up toward heaven and into a pillar of light.

During the hymns of the congregation and even during talks and testimonies given by our members, I often looked at this depiction of a most sacred moment in world history. In my mind's eye I saw Joseph receiving knowledge, witness, and divine instructions as he became a blessed instrument in the hand of our Heavenly Father.

I felt a special spirit while looking at the beautiful scene in this window picture of a believing young boy in a sacred grove who made a courageous decision to earnestly pray to our Heavenly Father—a Father who listened and responded lovingly to him.

The Spirit's Witness

Here I was, a young boy in post-World War II Germany, living in a city in ruins, thousands of miles away from Palmyra, New



By the universal power of the Holy Ghost, I felt in my heart and in my mind that Joseph Smith saw God and Jesus Christ and heard Their voices. I believed Joseph Smith's testimony of that experience in the Sacred Grove then, and I know it now.



This is how Joseph Smith's First Vision blesses our own personal lives, the lives of families, and eventually the whole human family—we come to believe in Jesus Christ through the testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

York, in North America and more than a hundred years after the event actually took place. By the universal power of the Holy Ghost, I felt in my heart and in my mind that it was true, that Joseph Smith saw God and Jesus Christ and heard Their voices. The Spirit of God comforted my soul at this young age with an assurance of the reality of this sacred moment which resulted in the beginning of a worldwide movement destined to “roll forth, until it has filled the whole earth” (D&C 65:2). I believed Joseph Smith’s testimony of that glorious experience in the Sacred Grove then, and I know it now. God has spoken to mankind again!

Looking back I am grateful for so many friends who helped me in my youth to gain a testimony of the restored Church of Jesus Christ. First I exercised simple faith in their testimonies, and then I received the divine witness of the Spirit to my mind and to my heart. I count Joseph Smith among those whose testimony of Christ helped me to develop my own testimony of the Savior. Before I recognized the tutoring of the Spirit testifying to me that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, my youthful heart felt that

he was a friend of God and would therefore, quite naturally, also be a friend of mine. I knew I could trust Joseph Smith.

The scriptures teach us that spiritual gifts are given to those who ask of God, who love Him, and who keep His commandments (see D&C 46:9).

“All have not every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God.

“To some is given one, and to some is given another, that all may be profited thereby” (D&C 46:11–12).

Today I know that my young testimony benefited greatly from the testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith and many friends in the Church who knew “by the Holy Ghost . . . that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he was crucified for the sins of the world” (D&C 46:13). Their good examples, caring love, and helping hands blessed me to receive another special gift of the Spirit described in the scriptures as I was yearning for more light and truth: “To others it is given to believe on their words, that they also might have eternal life if they continue faithful” (D&C 46:14). What a wonderful and precious gift this is!

The Gift of Faith

As we truly humble ourselves, we will be blessed with this gift to have faith and to hope for things which are not seen but are true (see Alma 32:21). As we experiment upon the words given to us by the scriptures and the living prophets—even if we have only a desire to believe—and do not resist the Spirit of the Lord, our souls will be enlarged and our understanding will be enlightened (see Alma 32:26–28).

The Savior Himself explained this merciful principle clearly to all the world in His great intercessory prayer, given not only for His Apostles but for all the Saints, even for us today, wherever we might be living. He said:

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may *believe* that thou hast sent me” (John 17:20–21; emphasis added).

This is how Joseph Smith’s First Vision blesses our own personal lives, the lives of families, and eventually the whole human family—we come to believe in Jesus Christ through the testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Prophets and apostles throughout the history of mankind have had divine manifestations similar to Joseph’s. Moses saw God face-to-face and learned that he was a son of God “in the similitude of [His] Only Begotten” (Moses 1:6). The Apostle Paul testified that the resurrected Jesus Christ appeared to him on the road to Damascus (see Acts 26:9–23). This experience led Paul to become one of the Lord’s great missionaries. Hearing Paul’s witness of his heavenly vision during the trial at Caesarea, the powerful King Agrippa admitted, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian” (Acts 26:28).

And there were many other ancient prophets who also bore powerful testimony of Christ. All of these

manifestations, ancient and modern, lead those who believe to the divine source of all righteousness and hope—to God, our Heavenly Father, and to His Son, Jesus Christ.

God has spoken to Joseph Smith for the purpose of blessing all of God’s children with His mercy and love, even in times of uncertainties and insecurities, of wars and rumors of wars, of natural and personal disasters. The Savior said, “Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you, and whosoever will come, him will I receive” (3 Nephi 9:14). And

all who accept this invitation will be “encircled about with the matchless bounty of his love” (Alma 26:15).

Through our faith in the personal witness of the Prophet Joseph and the reality of the First Vision, through study and prayer, deep and sincere, we will be blessed with a firm faith in the Savior of the world, who spoke

to Joseph “on the morning of a beautiful, clear day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty” (Joseph Smith—History 1:14).

Faith in Jesus Christ and a testimony of Him and His universal Atonement is not just a doctrine with great theological value. Such faith is a universal gift, glorious for all cultural regions of this earth, irrespective of race, color, language, nationality, or socioeconomic circumstance. The powers of reason may be used to try to understand this gift, but those who feel its effects most deeply are those who are willing to accept its blessings, which come from a pure and clean life of following the path of true repentance and living the commandments of God.

Gratitude for a Prophet

As we remember and honor the Prophet Joseph Smith, my heart reaches out to him in gratitude. He was a good,





F*faith in Jesus Christ and a testimony of Him and His universal Atonement is not just a doctrine with great theological value. Such faith is a universal gift, glorious for all cultural regions of this earth, irrespective of race, color, language, nationality, or socioeconomic circumstance.*

honest, humble, intelligent, and courageous young man with a heart of gold and an unshaken faith in God. He had integrity. In response to his humble prayer, the heavens opened again. Joseph Smith had actually seen a vision. He knew it, and he knew that God knew it, and he could not deny it (see Joseph Smith—History 1:25).

Through his work and sacrifice, I now have a true understanding of our Heavenly

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

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

1. Sing the hymn “Joseph Smith’s First Prayer” (*Hymns*, no. 26) with the family. Show a picture of the First Vision. Ask the family what they see in the picture. Read the first section of the article, and discuss what President Uchtdorf felt as he looked at the stained-glass window of the First Vision.

2. Have the family look for the truths of the First Vision that President Uchtdorf identifies as you

Father and His Son, our Redeemer and Savior, Jesus Christ, and I can feel the power of the Holy Ghost and know of Heavenly Father’s plan for us, His children. For me, these are truly the fruits of the First Vision.

I am grateful that early in my life I was blessed with a simple faith that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, that he saw God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, in a vision. Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon by the gift and power of God. That testimony has been confirmed to me over and over again.

I testify that Jesus Christ truly lives, that He is the Messiah. I do have a personal witness that He is the Savior and Redeemer of all mankind. I received this knowledge by the unspeakable peace and power of the Spirit of God, and the desire of my heart and of my mind is to be pure and faithful in serving Him now and forever. ■

read the last section of the article with the family. Ask the family what they feel are the fruits of the First Vision. Invite family members to share their feelings about Joseph Smith.

3. In preparation for the visit, read Joseph Smith’s account of the First Vision (see Joseph Smith—History 1:11–20). As you tell the story of the First Vision, have younger children draw a picture of the vision. Discuss President Uchtdorf’s statement that “God has spoken to Joseph Smith for the purpose of blessing all of God’s children with His mercy and love.” Have the children explain their drawings.

UNITY

Joseph Smith understood the power that comes from being united.

In the early days of the Church, the Lord commanded the Latter-day Saints to be one (see D&C 38:27). Throughout his life the Prophet Joseph Smith organized and unified the Saints to accomplish God's work. He taught them, led them, and encouraged them to sacrifice their time, talents, and possessions for the cause of Zion. Here are some of his teachings about unity.

The Way to Do the Lord's Work

"We are glad indeed to know that there is such a spirit of union existing throughout the churches, at home and abroad . . . ; for by this principle, and by a concentration of action, shall we be able to carry into effect the purposes of our God."

"Unity is strength. . . . Let the Saints of the Most High ever cultivate this principle, and the most glorious blessings must result, not only to them individually, but to the whole Church."

Removing Selfish Feelings

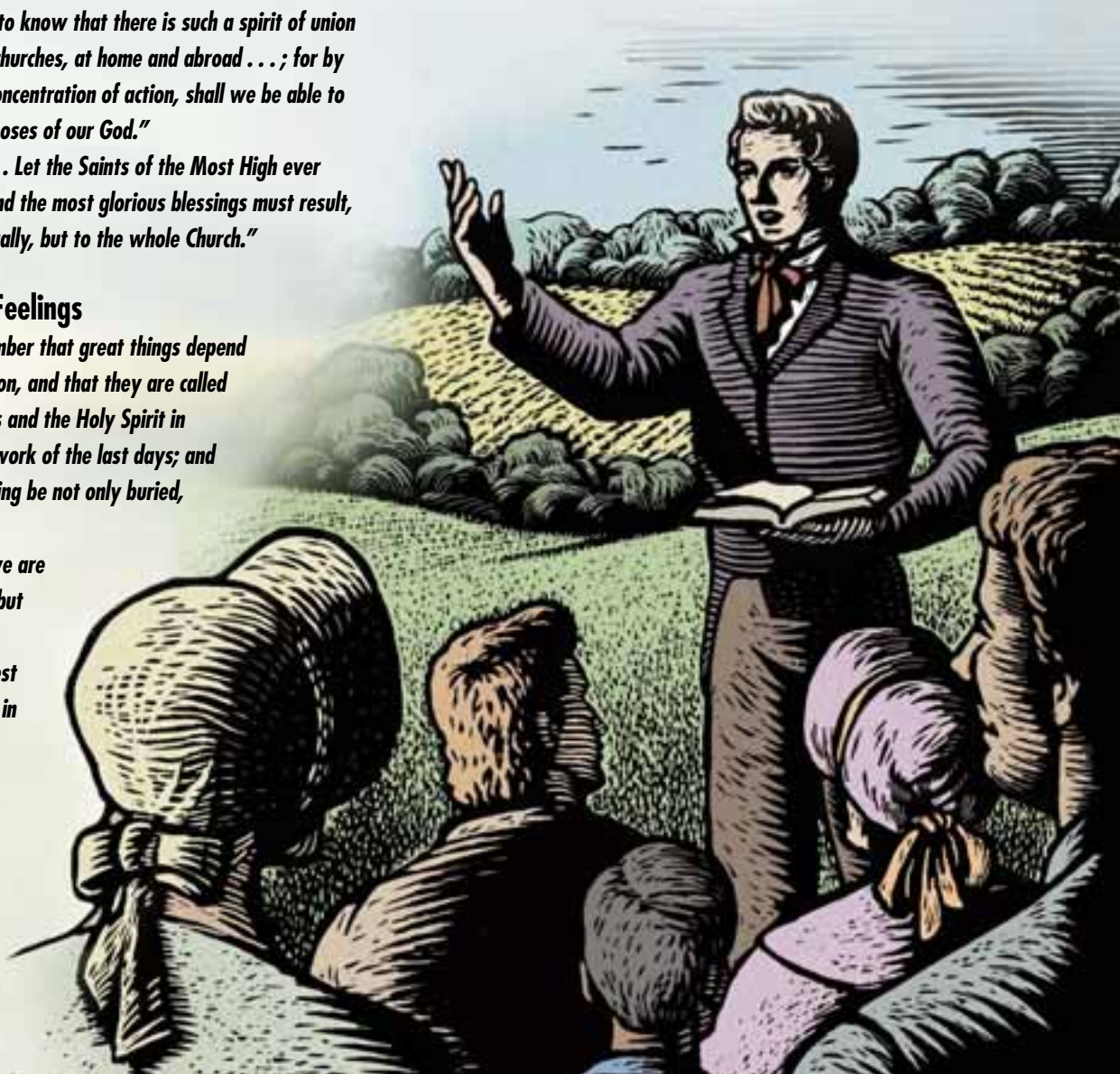
"Let the Saints remember that great things depend on their individual exertion, and that they are called to be co-workers with us and the Holy Spirit in accomplishing the great work of the last days; and . . . let every selfish feeling be not only buried, but annihilated."

"Let us realize that we are not to live to ourselves, but to God; by so doing the greatest blessings will rest upon us both in time and in eternity."

The Blessings of Unity

"By a concentration of action, and a unity of effort, we can only accomplish the great work of the last days . . . , while our interests, both temporal and spiritual, will be greatly enhanced, and the blessings of heaven must flow unto us in an uninterrupted stream." ■

From Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society course of study, 2007), 274, 276, 278.





Becoming JOSEPH

I was less than enthusiastic about dramatizing the Joseph Smith story. But something happened that changed my life.

BY RICARDO REYES VILLALTA

I had been taught the Joseph Smith story my entire life. I believed it was true because I trusted those who taught me. If anybody spoke negatively of the Prophet Joseph, I defended him, not because I had a testimony of him but on principle, knowing it was what I was supposed to do.

That all changed when my ward was assigned to provide a special number for a cultural event of the San Salvador El Salvador Ilopango Stake. My friends and I thought that a humorous skit would be best; our Young Men president disagreed. He suggested that we dramatize some of the Prophet Joseph Smith's experiences.

We were not excited about this idea. My friends and I knew that everyone else would perform a funny dance or skit, and we were embarrassed to do anything different. We knew people would laugh at us when they saw us dressed up in old-fashioned clothing, performing a serious drama. I had seen that happen on other occasions, and I have to admit that I had even been one of those who had laughed. However, our Young Men president promised us that if we worked diligently to prepare the Joseph Smith story, nobody would laugh.

So for the next two months, we lived the Joseph Smith story. We saw the film of the First Vision countless times, and we memorized every word and every detail of it. We painted an enormous set that showed the Sacred Grove and the open sky. We made a stack of gold plates and found a huge Bible and a rocking chair to use as props. One of my friends who played the piano recorded the hymn "Joseph Smith's First Prayer" (*Hymns*, no. 26). We even recorded the

sound of birds singing in the grove and of Joseph's footsteps as he stepped on the leaves. When we drew for our parts, it fell to me to play Joseph Smith.

On the day of the performance, we found out that, as expected, we were the only ones performing something serious. So before our turn came, we joined together to pray that all would go well. Then something happened that changed my life.

It was time for me to go on stage. The set of the grove was before me. I walked toward it and heard the recorded hymn playing in the background. As I did, I felt something burning in my chest. Somehow I knew that the event I was reenacting had indeed happened, that a young boy just younger than I was had really had this experience. When I knelt down for the prayer scene, my lips were sealed—but not by an evil influence. Rather, I knew I couldn't talk without crying. A powerful force testified to my heart that Joseph's account was true! I felt great gratitude to the Lord for Joseph Smith, and there was born in me a great love for him.

When I opened my eyes, I realized some members of the audience also had tears in their eyes. I had no doubt that the Spirit was testifying to them of the sacred truthfulness of what we were portraying.

When I later served a mission, I still defended the Church and the Prophet Joseph Smith but not just on principle. I bore witness of him because, as the Prophet himself said, "I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it" (Joseph Smith—History 1:25). ■

The Great Plan of Our God



Each dispensation has a special lesson that we can include in our personal plans as we prepare for our eternal destiny.

BY ELDER L. TOM PERRY

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

In the fast pace of today's world, too many people are leaving much of life's experience to chance, without adequate planning and preparation. I find that when I ask some students what their major is, I often receive the answer, "I haven't decided yet. I will make that decision later." I have seen families and individuals fall into traps of debt because they have failed to make a sound financial plan and have lived beyond their means. Others overcommit themselves in activities, lessons, clubs, and athletics. While participation in such organizations can certainly be good, involvement in them can quickly turn frenzied when we fail to plan. In failing to plan, we lose sight of our eternal destiny.

We can find the ultimate example of planning by turning to the scriptures. In Moses 1:39, the Lord declares, "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." His great plan, which includes the atoning sacrifice, is to give immortality to all mankind. Through the gift and power of the priesthood, those who will adhere to and follow His plan will receive life eternal, the greatest gift God can give to His children (see D&C 14:7). The scriptures contain abundant references to this plan.

A history of the process of following that

design certainly testifies of its completeness and consistency. The Lord has carefully instructed His children about the gospel plan during periods of time called dispensations, periods when "the Lord has at least one authorized servant on the earth who bears the keys of the holy priesthood. . . .

" . . . When the Lord organizes a dispensation, the gospel is revealed anew so that the people of that dispensation do not have to depend on past dispensations for knowledge of the plan of salvation."¹

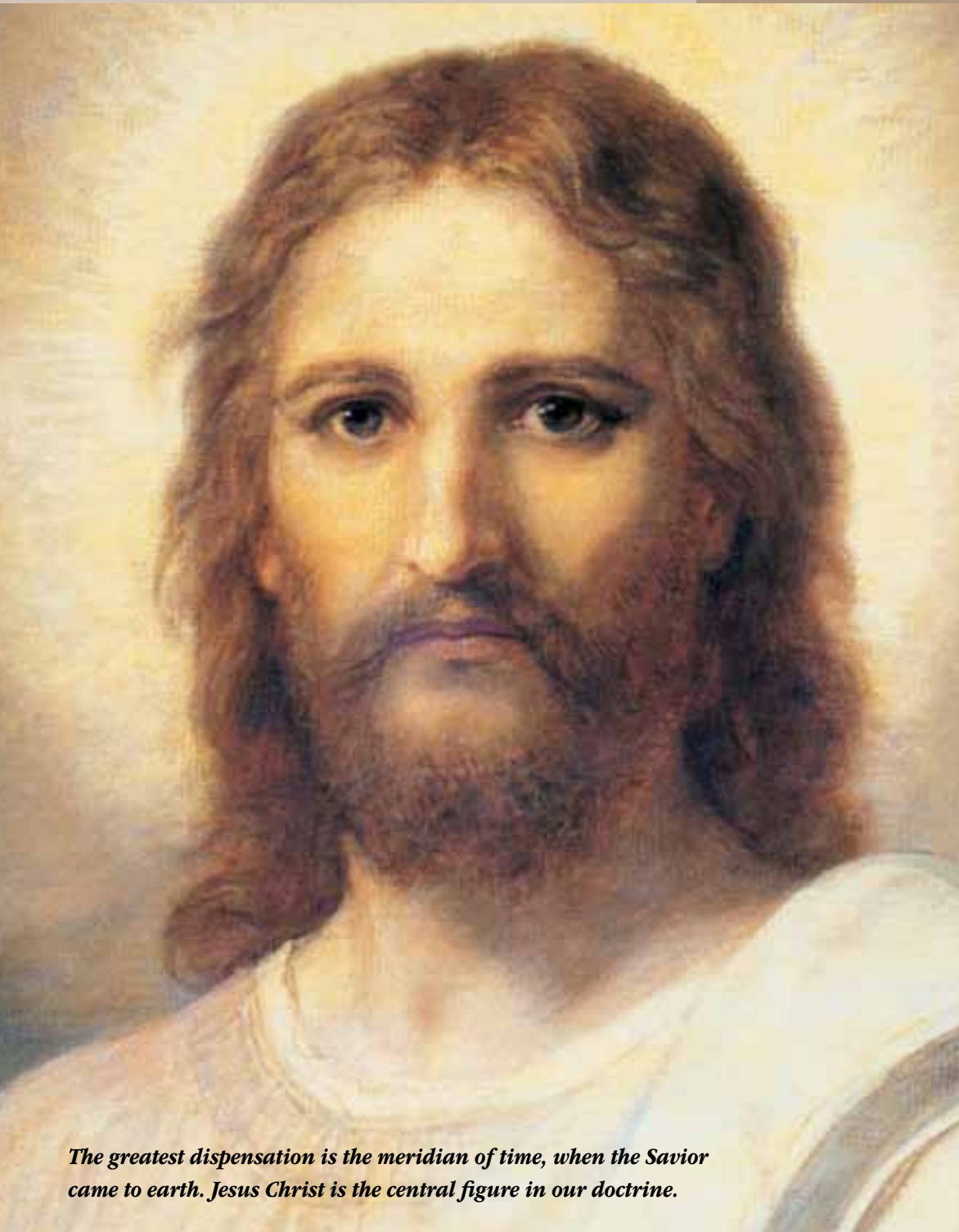
Each dispensation has a special lesson that we can include in our personal plans as we prepare for our eternal destiny.

The Dispensation of Adam: Become Like Our Father in Heaven

In the first dispensation, the Lord created Adam and Eve, placed them on earth, and gave them opportunities to choose (see Moses 3:17). They were commanded not to



RIGHT: CHRIST'S IMAGE, BY HEINRICH HOFMANN; COURTESY OF C. HARRISON CONROY CO.; BELOW, FROM LEFT: ADAM AND EVE IN THE GARDEN, BY LOWELL BRUCE BENNETT; CITY OF ZION TRANSLATED, BY DEL PARSON; NOAH'S REACHING SCORNED, BY HARRY ANDERSON



**LESSONS
FROM GOSPEL
DISPENSATIONS**

**The Dispensation of
Adam: Become Like Our
Father in Heaven**

**The Dispensations
of Enoch and Noah:
Choose Righteousness
over Wickedness**

**The Dispensation of
Abraham: Make and
Keep Covenants**

**The Dispensation of
Moses: Follow the Lord's
Prophets**

**The Meridian of Time:
Let Your Light Shine**

**The Dispensation of the
Fulness of Times: Rejoice
in the Fulness of the
Gospel**

The greatest dispensation is the meridian of time, when the Savior came to earth. Jesus Christ is the central figure in our doctrine.



ENOCH



NOAH

partake of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for they were told they would be cast out of the garden if they did. But partaking of the fruit would give them mortality. They partook of the fruit.

The Fall was not a disaster. It wasn't a mistake or an accident. It was a deliberate part of the Lord's plan of salvation. As a result of the Fall, we are subject to temptation and misery as a price to comprehend authentic joy. Without tasting the bitter, we would never be able to understand the sweet (see 2 Nephi 2:15). We required mortality's discipline and refinement for the next step of our development to become more like our Father.

What does this first dispensation teach us? We are the literal spiritual offspring of our Heavenly Father. When we are born into mortality, we receive physical bodies created in His image (see Genesis 1:27). We are promised that if we receive the necessary ordinances, keep the covenants, and obey God's commandments, we will enter into exaltation and become like Him.

We also learn that as sons and daughters of an Eternal Father, we can communicate with Him through prayer and receive answers through inspiration and revelation. Included in our life's plan should be constant and regular communication with our Father.

The Dispensations of Enoch and Noah: Choose Righteousness over Wickedness

The second dispensation is known as that of Enoch, who "walked with God" (Genesis 5:24). He established the city of Zion, which became a powerful symbol of the righteousness that can be obtained on earth as well as in heaven (see Moses 7:18–21).

Next in line is the dispensation of Noah. Noah lived in times of great wickedness, and although he cried to the people to repent, they did not heed his words. When the flood came, only Noah and his family were saved (see Genesis 7:23).

The second and third dispensations teach us great

lessons about what comes from choosing good over evil. Enoch and all who were with him were blessed mightily as a result of their righteousness. The people who would not follow Noah found that destruction follows the sinner.

These two dispensations teach us to seek after that which is good and wholesome. In our plan for life, certainly our objective will be to absorb as much of the good as we can find on this earth. We can find much of this good by searching the scriptures daily. They will lead us to life eternal.

The Dispensation of Abraham: Make and Keep Covenants

The next dispensation was that of Abraham. Like Adam, Enoch, and Noah, Abraham received a divine commission from the Lord. The Lord also made covenants—or binding, firm agreements—with Abraham:

"Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee. . . .



"And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee above measure, and make thy name great among all nations, and thou shalt be a blessing unto thy seed after thee, that in their hands they shall bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations;

"And I will bless them through thy name; for as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall be accounted thy seed, and shall rise up and bless thee, as their father;

FROM LEFT: ABRAHAM ON THE PLAINS OF MAMRE, BY GRANT ROMNEY; CLAWSON; MOSES PARTING THE RED SEA, BY ROBERT BARRETT; LIGHT AND TRUTH, BY SIMON DEWEY; BROTHER JOSEPH, BY DAVID LINDSEY; CHRIST IN GETSEMANE, BY HEINRICH HOFMANN, COURTESY OF C. HARRISON CONROY CO.

“And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; and in thee (that is, in thy Priesthood) and in thy seed (that is, thy Priesthood), for I give unto thee a promise that this right shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee (that is to say, the literal seed, or the seed of the body) shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal” (Abraham 2:3, 9–11).

Latter-day Saints are a covenant people. We have agreements with the Lord in which He promises us many blessings on condition that we commit ourselves to obey His laws and commandments. Our plan for life should include making and keeping covenants. We can do this in part by always living worthy of holding a current temple recommend.



The Savior died, was buried, and rose on the third day to make the atoning sacrifice for all mankind so that death would not hold permanent power. Because of that act, all would rejoice and enjoy immortality.

Through these and other lessons from the Lord, Moses became an effective leader.

We too can become effective leaders. Leadership requires balance in our lives. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008)



The Dispensation of Moses: Follow the Lord's Prophets

Moses was one of the mightiest men who ever lived. He walked and talked with God. He was chosen by God to deliver Israel from the bondage of Egypt (see Exodus 6:13). He was privileged to receive for mankind the great law contained in the Ten Commandments (see Exodus 19; 20).

outlined the responsibilities we should consider when allocating and balancing our time to achieve success:

- A responsibility to our families.
- A responsibility to our employers.
- A responsibility to the Lord's work.
- A responsibility to ourselves. This was

particularly interesting to me. President Hinckley noted that we must allot time for

We are living in the remarkable age of the dispensation of the fulness of times, when the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored in its fulness.



rest, exercise, recreation, study, meditation, and temple worship in order to be balanced in our lives.²

The dispensation of Moses teaches us and prepares us to follow prophetic leadership and to develop ourselves into more effective tools in building our Father in Heaven's kingdom on earth.

The Meridian of Time: Let Your Light Shine

Of course the greatest dispensation is the meridian of time, when the Savior came to earth. Jesus Christ is the central figure in our doctrine. He was more than just sinless, good, and loving. He was more than just a teacher. He ministered on earth as a man, though He was the Son of God. He died, was buried, and rose on the third day to make the atoning sacrifice for all mankind so that death would not hold permanent power. Because of that act, all would rejoice and enjoy immortality.

Among the many things the Savior taught us was that we are the light of the world and that we should let our light shine before others (see Matthew 5:14–16). We have been

blessed to receive His gospel. Let your light shine that others may see your good works and want to learn more of God's eternal plan.

The Dispensation of the Fulness of Times: Rejoice in the Fulness of the Gospel

We are living in the remarkable age of the dispensation of the fulness of times, when the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored in its fulness (see D&C 27:13). Our generation also has the benefit of all previous dispensations on which we can build our lives as we understand God's dealings with His children.

The words of the Lord, as they have been given to us through the ages from His holy prophets, have guided us in a plan the Lord has established for us. That plan is complete from the beginning of time until we have an opportunity, if we live worthily, to live with Him in the eternities to come.

You are children of promise. I hope that you do not plan to be just common but that you plan to excel. There is no place in this world for mediocrity; we need to strive for perfection. You can obtain perfection in so many areas as you seek and work toward the goals you have established.

You have a rich heritage; do not be afraid to think and act according to the principles of the gospel and to enjoy its blessings as you fulfill the measure of your creation as a child of God. God bless you that you may have the desire to go forward and seek salvation under this great plan He has given us. ■

From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University on October 30, 2007.

NOTES

1. Guide to the Scriptures, "Dispensation"; available at www.lds.org in the Gospel Library under "Scriptures."
2. See Gordon B. Hinckley, "Rejoicing in the Privilege to Serve," *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, June 21, 2003, 22–23.

JUST LOOKING?



[CLICK HERE!](#)

PORNOGRAPHY BITES—EVERY TIME.

(SEE MORONI 10:30.)

It's Not Easy

. . . being the only member in my family. But I'm really not alone.

BY KELLI WILLIAMS

I grew up in the Methodist Church. Even though my family usually attended church only on Christmas and Easter, I always knew I had a Father in Heaven. My brother and I used to pray with my mom. What my parents taught me as a child prepared me for what I would learn in the future.

In sixth grade I learned that my parents were getting divorced. I was heartbroken and felt very alone. My friend Courtney could relate to me because her parents divorced when she was a little girl. She became my best friend.

Courtney and I were sitting on my bed talking when she first introduced the Church to me. She didn't go into detail about it. She just asked me if I wanted to attend church with her on Sunday. I started going to church with her every once in a while, and then I went every Sunday. After I turned 12, I even attended Mutual. There was something there. I didn't know what it was, but I enjoyed it.

In seventh grade Courtney and another good friend, Aubrey, introduced me to the missionaries. I soon learned what the missionaries meant when they talked about feeling the Spirit. I knew the Church was true after the second discussion.

Despite my testimony of the gospel, I was scared to death to ask my parents if I could be baptized. I continued to go to church and have incredible testimony-building experiences, but I put off the "big question" for two years.

In my freshman year of high school, I enrolled in seminary, and by November I knew I had to ask. I talked with my mom. She told me the Church had only made changes in me for the better, and if being baptized was what I really wanted, then I should go ahead and do it. My first



thought was, "Why in the world did I wait so long?"

Then I called my dad, but he wasn't very excited. When I asked him if I could be baptized, he said no. He said he wanted me to attend some other churches first. So I went to some other churches, and I met some amazing people—people who lived very righteous lives. But nothing could change the feeling I felt when I stepped

into a Latter-day Saint chapel. In February I called my dad and said, "I'm getting baptized on March 7th. I hope you'll be there."

My whole family came, including my dad. To have my family there meant the world to me. It was the most incredible day of my life.

Sometimes people ask me: "How do you do it? How do you stay so strong in the Church all by yourself? You don't have anyone to wake you up and make you go to church or seminary. You're all alone."

Well, the answer is simple. I'm not alone. I have had my struggles since my baptism—it's not easy being the only Church member in my family. But the Lord has promised that He will never leave us alone (see John 14:16–18). Heavenly Father loves us so much that He sent Christ to die for us. How could He forget us?

Life is hard, and we have all gone through times when we have felt that our strength is gone and our faith is weak. But if we will cling to the One who loves us the most—Heavenly Father—and strengthen our relationship with Him through study and prayer, we will make it through. The Lord promised: "I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up" (D&C 84:88). ■



Helping New Converts

BY SUSAN W. TANNER

Served as Young Women general president from 2002 to 2008



We are all engaged in the process of retaining new members. It is the ongoing process of conversion—of turning and constantly returning to the Lord.

When I visited southern Brazil some time ago, my husband accompanied me. This was the area where he served his mission. One evening when we arrived at a meeting, we were greeted at the door by a young mother who introduced herself as my interpreter for the meeting. She excitedly turned to my husband and said, “Elder Tanner, you are the one who brought the gospel to my family many years ago. I was just a toddler at the time, but I grew up hearing your name associated with the first baptisms in our family.” Then she told us about each family member’s faithfulness in the Church through the years. What a touching reunion this was!

During the meeting, as my husband looked out at the audience, he saw others dotting the congregation to whom he had taught the gospel and who had remained faithful. When he bore his testimony, my husband expressed his joy to know of their continued faithfulness. He

said he was reminded of the Book of Mormon story in which Alma met his dear friends, the sons of Mosiah, as he was journeying:

“Now these sons of Mosiah were with Alma at the time the angel first appeared unto him; therefore Alma did rejoice exceedingly to see his brethren; and what added more to his joy, *they were still his brethren in the Lord*” (Alma 17:2; emphasis added).

That night in Brazil, my husband likewise met dear friends from the past who “were still his brethren [and sisters] in the Lord.”

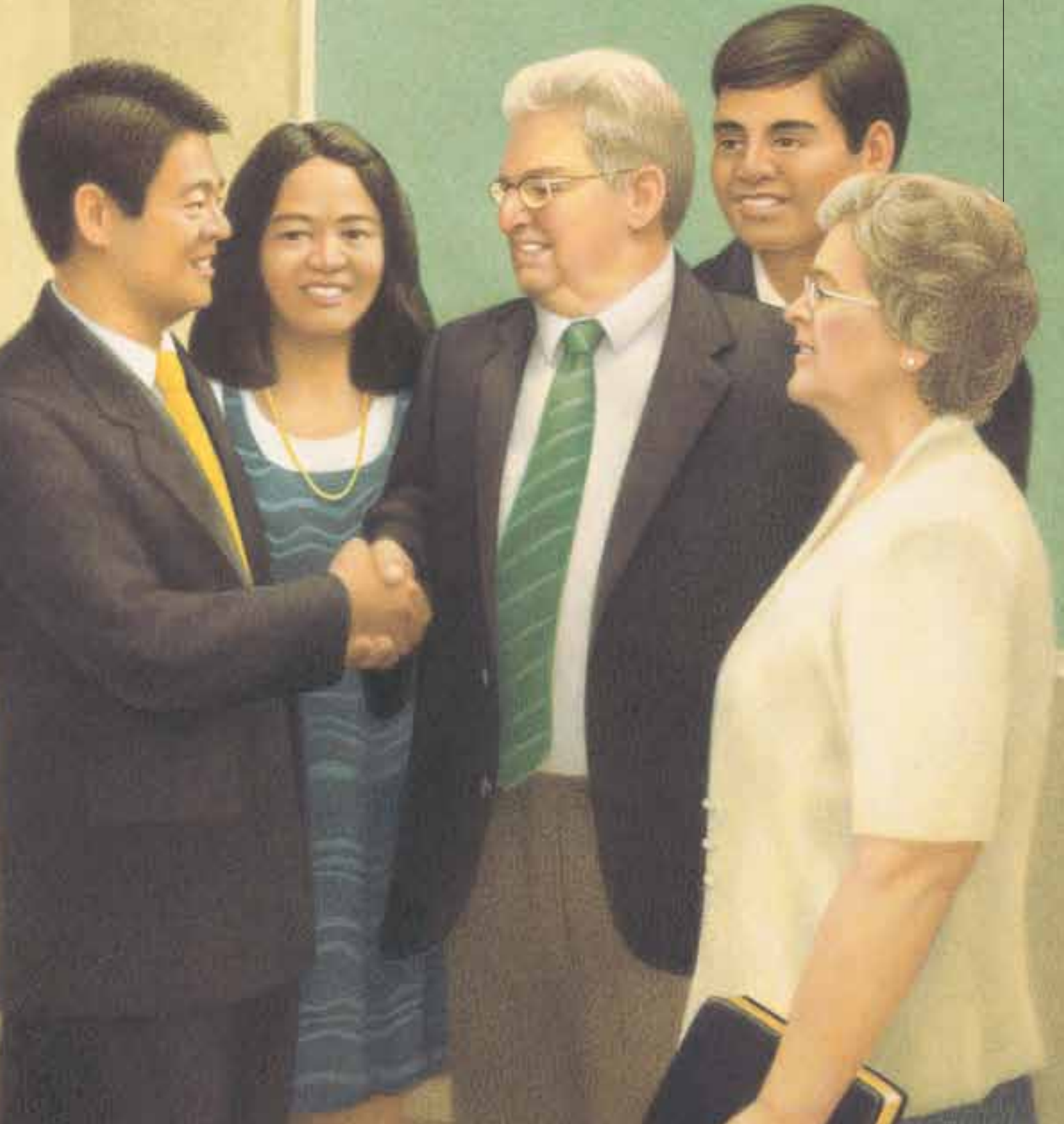
This is the desire of every faithful missionary: that new converts stay in the Church and “[wax] strong in the knowledge of the truth” (Alma 17:2). This is the desire of every faithful parent: that their children stay true to the faith. This is also the desire of Church leaders for the members under their care, and it is the heartfelt desire of our Father in Heaven for His children (see Moses 1:39).

Seeking Those Who Stray

I am touched by how frequently the Lord expresses His love for His people, even if they stray—maybe especially when they stray. Think of the parables the Savior gives about lost things: sheep, coins, a prodigal son (see Luke 15). The shepherd goes out after the lost sheep; the woman diligently searches her house for the lost silver; the father runs out to his wayward son while he is “yet a great way off . . . and [falls] on his neck,



STAY STRONG



N*ew members
and straying
members
need our help.
They need a friend,
a responsibility,
and spiritual
nourishing.*

and [kisses] him” (Luke 15:20). Likewise, in the parable of the olive tree we glimpse the Lord’s longsuffering love for those who stray (see Jacob 5). Again and again, the Lord of the vineyard laments, “It grieveth me that I should lose this tree” (Jacob 5:7, 11, 13, 32). Throughout the book of Isaiah, the Lord reassures Israel that He cannot forget them: “Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands” (Isaiah 49:16). In the book of Ezekiel the Lord says, “I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken” (Ezekiel 34:16).

When we engage in the work of retention and reactivation, we become agents with the Lord in the loving work of seeking our brothers and sisters who might be as the lost sheep, the lost coin, or the prodigal son.

Entering a New World

The way can also be perilous for those who are new to the Church as they try to adjust to this mighty change in their lives. One new member described this difficult change. She said: “When we as investigators become members of the Church, we are surprised to discover that we have entered into a completely foreign world, a world that has its own traditions, culture, and language. We discover that there is no one person or no one place of reference that we can turn to for guidance in our trip into this new world.”¹



President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) repeatedly taught that both our new members and our straying members need our help. They need a friend, a responsibility, and spiritual nourishing, as taught in the book of Moroni: “After they had been received unto baptism, . . . they were numbered among the people of the church of Christ; and their names were taken, that they might be remembered and nourished by the good word of God, to keep them in the right way” (Moroni 6:4).

During that same trip to Brazil I visited many young women in their homes, desiring to “remember and nourish” them. Some were completely valiant in their testimonies, while others were no longer active in the Church. In each case I asked them if they could recite the Young Women theme. Each one could! Then I asked each one which Young Women value meant the most to her and why. As each girl answered me I felt the Spirit and found at least a spark of faith still alive in those who were no longer attending church. I knew that if someone would remember each of them and love them and nourish that little spark of faith, their light could burn bright again.

Personal Responsibility

To nourish by the good word of God implies that we are attentive to others’ spiritual growth and well-being, just as we nourish our physical bodies. While parents, leaders, and friends should help in this process, new converts, inquiring youths, and struggling members have a personal responsibility to help themselves also. This happens best through personal gospel study.

I remember well the summer I graduated from high school. It was a tumultuous time for me spiritually, a time when I was finding



my way in the gospel, as are many new converts. My antidote for these problems was diligent reading and studying of the Book of Mormon every day, often for extended periods of time. I still remember some of those Spirit-filled times. This was a foundational period for the nourishing and growth of my testimony.

In addition to remembering and nourishing those who are lost or straying, we need to allow them the opportunity to serve. The Savior admonished the Apostle Peter, “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:32). Church callings give members the opportunity to strengthen others and in that very service grow within themselves as well.

When my children were teenagers and they sometimes did not want to attend Mutual or other meetings, I talked to them about their responsibility. I said that we don’t always go to a meeting for what we can get out of it, but for what we can give. I said often, “You need the Church, and the Church needs you.” New converts and less-active members need to feel needed because they *are* needed.

A Work for All

We are all engaged in the process of retention. It is the ongoing process of conversion—of turning and constantly

returning to the Lord. Alma refers to it as a mighty change (see Alma 5:14). Conversion is the work we are about, whether we labor with investigators, youth, less-active members, or even active members. We should all be engaged in helping in the Lord’s work, to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of His children (see Moses 1:39).

My husband wrote in his missionary journal: “Conversion is the greatest miracle. It is even more wonderful than healing the sick or raising the dead. For while a person who is healed will eventually fall sick again and ultimately die, the miracle of conversion can last forever and affect the eternities for the convert as well as for his or her posterity. Whole generations are healed and redeemed from death through the miracle of conversion.”

Let us join the Lord in seeking that which was lost, bringing again that which was driven away, and binding up that which was broken. Then, in that great day of the Lord, we may rejoice as my husband did, finding that those we have loved in the gospel are still our brothers and sisters in the Lord. ■

NOTE

1. Quoted in Gordon B. Hinckley, “Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep,” *Liahona*, July 1999, 122; *Ensign*, May 1999, 108.

Succeeding as a New Convert

BY GAYLE S. ILIFF

As we reach out to others in friendship, engage in service, and feast upon the scriptures, our confidence will wax strong.

The winter morning that I first attended The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was unusually bright and crisp. As I approached the meetinghouse, I had no idea how joining the Church would change my life. Fortunately, there are things converts like me can do to become strong in the gospel. We need to cultivate friendships, serve in the Church, and “feast upon the words of Christ” (2 Nephi 32:3).

Cultivating Friendships

All members of the Church, especially new converts, need friends to help them along. Here are some ways that developing friendships can make a difference.

Members can reach out to converts. Prior to my baptism, a kind sister walked from the farthest end of the meetinghouse simply because she wanted to meet me. I was touched that she went out of her way to help me feel so valued. Many others acted similarly. As converts realize how much the members of the Church love them, their own hearts will be filled with love.

Teachers in Church classes care about us too. My Gospel Essentials teacher was a great source of inspiration to me. Often I felt as though the Savior were speaking directly to me through these lessons, uplifting me and encouraging me to press forward.

Likewise, home and visiting teachers watch over and bless the members of the Church. Welcome them into your



CARING FOR CONVERTS

“Every [convert] needs three things: a friend, a responsibility, and nurturing with ‘the good word of God’” (Moroni 6:4).

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), “Converts and Young Men,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 47.



home, and express gratitude to them and to the Lord for their service. As Elder David B. Haight (1906–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

taught, “Gratitude . . . can bless our hearts and our minds and our souls to where we’d like to continue to carry on and do those things that we are asked to do.”¹

Converts will be blessed when they, too, reach out to others. One day I bought a greeting card with a picture of a giant eyeball on its cover. Inside it said, “Thanks for keeping an eye on me!” I sent the card to a sister in the ward who had been friendly to me. As I did so, I felt a warm feeling of Christian love for her.

Finally, we need to strengthen our relationships with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. This will happen as we serve others, express gratitude, and pray. The Spirit will confirm that we are worthy of the great sacrifice the Savior made for us.

Serving in the Church

Usually at some point soon after baptism, new members will be asked to take on a greater role in serving in their ward or branch. The bishop or branch president will issue a calling. This can be a difficult time for some.

When I accepted the first calling I received—Relief Society secretary—I wondered, “How could I be given such an important responsibility?” President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, explained how: “There will be times when you will feel overwhelmed. One of the ways you will be attacked is with the feeling that you are inadequate. . . . But you have access to more than your natural capacities, and you do not work alone.”²

Sometime later, the Relief Society president commented that the suggestions I had made at a presidency meeting showed that I was inspired. Confused, I replied, “I am?”

She kindly reassured me that I was responding to the Spirit. Recognizing the hand of God guiding the work we do is not

easy at first, but as we keep the commandments and work diligently, we will recognize that He magnifies those whom He calls.

Feasting upon the Words of Christ

Perhaps the best way to discover that the Lord loves us and will sustain us is through studying the scriptures. The scriptures teach that the Lord invites “all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him” (2 Nephi 26:33).

Some new members might marvel at the knowledge and testimony of others. But remember, the Lord’s way of teaching is “line upon line, precept upon precept” (2 Nephi 28:30). Each of us has to learn as we go. Even Jesus “received not of the fulness at the first, but continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness; and thus he was called the Son of God, because he received not of the fulness at the first” (D&C 93:13–14).

That knowledge has deepened my reverence and respect for Him. He truly knows the pain, temptation, adversity, and loneliness I have experienced (see Alma 7:11). I can turn to Him with complete confidence. The scriptures teach that the Savior’s love, understanding, and compassion for us, wherever we may be, are perfect and boundless.

As we reach out to others in friendship, engage in service, and feast upon the scriptures, our confidence will wax strong and we will become the faithful Latter-day Saints that we desire to be. ■

NOTES

1. David B. Haight, “Were There Not 10 Cleansed?” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 26.
2. Henry B. Eyring, “Rise to Your Call,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 76.

Understand the Divine Roles of Women



Teach the scriptures and quotations that meet the needs of the sisters you visit. Bear testimony of the doctrine. Invite those you teach to share what they have felt and learned.

Julie B. Beck, Relief Society

general president: “I have a testimony gained from pondering and studying the scriptures of a plan of happiness given to us by our Father in Heaven. That plan has a part for His daughters. We have the female half to take care of, and if we don’t do our part, no one else is going to do it for us. The half of our Father’s plan that creates life, that nurtures souls, that promotes growth, that influences everything else was given to us. We can’t delegate it. We can’t pass it off to anyone. It’s ours. We can refuse it, we can deny it, but it’s still our part, and we’re accountable for it. There will come a day when we will all remember what we knew before we were born. We will remember that we fought in a great conflict for this privilege. How do we meet this responsibility? We daily put our energies into the work that is uniquely ours to do.”

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “The basic doctrinal purpose for the Creation of the earth is to provide for God’s spirit children the continuation of the process of exaltation and eternal life. . . .

“ . . . Although there is simply not a more significant contribution you can make to society, to the Church, or to the eternal destiny of our Father’s children than what you will do as a mother or father, motherhood and fatherhood are not the only measures of goodness or of one’s acceptance before the Lord. . . .

“Every sister in this Church who has made covenants with the Lord has a divine mandate to help save souls, to lead the women of the world, to strengthen the homes of Zion, and to build the kingdom of God” (“Women of Righteousness,” *Liahona*, Dec. 2002, 36, 39; *Ensign*, Apr. 2002, 68, 70).

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “By divine design, men and women are intended to progress together toward perfection and a fulness of glory. Because of their distinctive temperaments and capacities, males and females each bring to a marriage relationship unique perspectives and experiences. The man and the woman contribute differently but equally to

a oneness and a unity that can be achieved in no other way” (“Marriage Is Essential to His Eternal Plan,” *Liahona*, June 2006, 51–52; *Ensign*, June 2006, 83–84).



Silvia H. Allred, first counselor in the Relief Society general presidency:

“The Lord has blessed women with divine attributes of love, compassion, kindness, and charity. Through our monthly visits as visiting teachers, we have the power to bless each sister as we extend our arms of love and kindness and give the gifts of compassion and charity. No matter what our individual circumstances are, we all have the opportunity to edify and nurture others” (“Feed My Sheep,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 113).

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985): “To be a righteous woman during the winding up scenes on this earth, before the second coming of our Savior, is an especially noble calling. The righteous woman’s strength and influence today can be tenfold what it might be in more tranquil times” (“Privileges and Responsibilities of Sisters,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 103). ■

“I’m afraid that someone might offer me alcohol or drugs. I don’t like to say no to people or make them mad at me. How can I make sure I won’t give in?”

Determine ahead of time—now—that you will say no. If you give in, it will be much harder to say no in the future. Most people will respect you for living up to your standards. And they will be less likely to ask you to partake in the future.

Don’t worry about people getting mad at you. That’s their choice if they do, but it’s your choice to keep the Spirit with you and not do something you would regret.

You may find it easier to say no if you have a friend on your side. The support of a friend can help you stand up to a group.

Also, try to prevent this situation from coming up. Choose friends who share and respect your standards. If you’re going to a party, for instance, find out who will be there. Don’t go if you feel uncomfortable or prompted not to.



Keep Your Promise

After I got baptized, I didn’t go to parties with alcohol and cigarettes anymore. One day my friends told me, “Come on, let’s go. Nothing’s going to happen.” But I told them no because I had promised that I would not drink alcohol, smoke, or take drugs. They understood because they knew that I belonged to the Church, and they know how important making a promise is.

We need to please not our friends but our Heavenly Father. If we fulfill the promises we made to Him when we were baptized, we will be blessed.

Roxana C., 19, Lima, Peru



Make the Commitment

I too was afraid to let my friends down. But I thought to myself that if I did give in, whom else would I let down? What worked best for me was to make the decision long before the situation came up. I made the commitment to myself that I would say no to drugs and alcohol. After I said no a couple of times, I was more respected for the decision I made. After a while, when someone would ask me again if I wanted a drink, one of my friends would say, “No, Calder doesn’t drink.” It made it easier for me once my friends realized that I wasn’t going to drink.

Elder Calder, 20, Idaho Pocatello Mission



Find the Courage to Hold True

Earlier this year I was offered drugs. I did not want to offend that person, but I gained the courage to tell him that I was not interested. I cannot even tell you how grateful I am for holding true to what I believe in. A couple of weeks later, the guy who offered me drugs told me that he was so impressed that I stood up for what I believe in. He told me that he had never met anyone who could do that and that it took a lot of courage. He said he would never forget that experience.

Through your example you can be a light to others and a good influence (see Matthew 5:16).

Mary T., 16, Arizona, USA



Be Steadfast and Immovable

Your peers will respect you for saying no and keeping your standards. Surround yourself with friends who have the same standards as you. They will support you in being steadfast and immovable.

Lindy S., 15, Utah, USA



Decide Now

If you decide now to never accept drugs or alcohol, then it will be much easier not to take them. You will not have to think twice about your answer. People will often respect your choice, and you might have a missionary experience by telling them about the Word of Wisdom.

Chandler H., 14, Alabama, USA



Have Courage

I also had such an experience. I prayed to our Heavenly Father. I read the scriptures and pondered upon them and tried to strengthen my testimony. And then when I was faced with such a situation, I said, "I am sorry, but I don't drink. I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." I tried to help others understand my standards. At first I was nervous, but now I have become accustomed to doing it, and I continue to keep the Lord's commandments. I overcame the trial with the Lord's help, and I was also blessed with confidence, faith, good health, and high standards. Please tell your friends no with confidence and courage. When you do not compromise your standards, you can shine as a bright light.

Lee, M., 17, Seoul, Korea



BE STRONG

"You face tremendous temptation. It comes at you in the halls of popular entertainment, on the Internet, in the movies, on television, in cheap literature, and in other ways—subtle, titillating, and difficult to resist. Peer pressure may be almost overpowering. But, my dear young friends, you must not give in. You must be strong. You must take the long look ahead rather than succumbing to the present seductive temptation."

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), "An Ensign to the Nations, a Light to the World," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 83.

NEXT QUESTION

"How can I convince my friends that our standards are really about freedom and not about restriction?"

Send your answer by March 15, 2009, to:

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PARENT'S SIGNATURE (IF YOU ARE UNDER 18)



No One Will Ever Know

BY ELDER STANLEY G. ELLIS

Of the Seventy

I was born and grew up in Burley, Idaho, USA. My father had a farm and a ranch there, so I spent my time working in the out-of-doors. My family had been members of the Church for generations, and I was raised in a faithful home. But while I was in high school, my testimony was tested by an opportunity I had sought out.

I knew of a person from our high school who had been an exchange student. I thought it sounded like an interesting experience, so I researched the idea of becoming an exchange student, found out the procedure, and applied. I was accepted. I was then 16 years old. I had taken one year of German, so I assumed, as did my adviser, that I would be assigned to go to Germany. This particular exchange program took all your information, matched it up with families willing to act as hosts, then assigned you to a country.

When I was accepted, I was assigned to Brazil, and I agreed to the assignment. I lived with a wonderful family in São Paulo. They had six boys and one girl, just like my family at home. Fortunately, they spoke English. It turned out to be a great experience, even though I was there only for the summer.

During my time in Brazil, I made some

friends who were in that stage in life when they were experimenting with things. They started inviting me to go out with them to have fun with some girls they had met.

I was thousands of miles from home in a country where nobody knew me except my host family. The friends who would invite me to go out with them used the line “No one will ever know.” In many respects that was true. Certainly, none of my American family would ever know. I was a teenager, far from home, with an invitation to do what was wrong, and nobody would ever know.

But I knew that I would know. I knew the Lord would know, so I said no to their invitations and continued to say no. They asked repeatedly, sure that they could persuade me. It was not a one-time challenge, but every time I declined, I grew more determined to stand my ground.

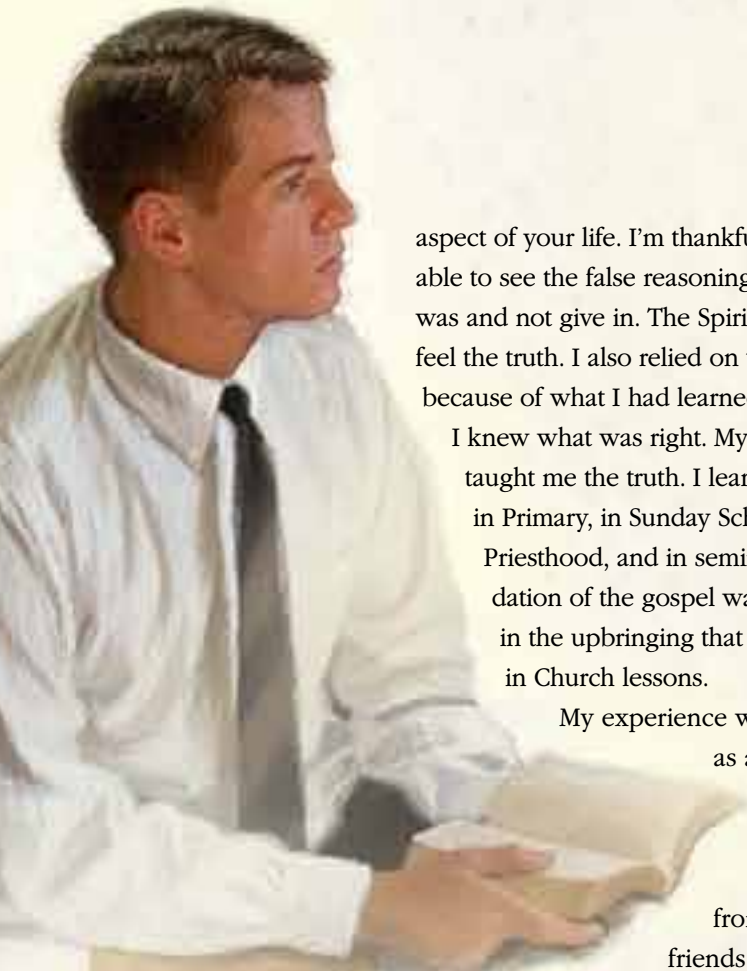
Satan’s Rationalization

“No one will ever know” is a rationalization that Satan uses against us in our lives. It’s a lie. I discovered that for myself during my summer in Brazil. Falling for Satan’s lie is, in fact, how many people get into such things as Internet pornography. They think they can do it in a way that no one will ever know. But in every case, they know and God knows.

Please don’t ever buy into that lie in any



The friends who would invite me to go out with them used the line “No one will ever know.” But I knew that I would know. I knew the Lord would know.



aspect of your life. I'm thankful that I was able to see the false reasoning for what it was and not give in. The Spirit helped me feel the truth. I also relied on the fact that because of what I had learned in my family, I knew what was right. My parents had taught me the truth. I learned the truth in Primary, in Sunday School, in Aaronic Priesthood, and in seminary. That foundation of the gospel was in my home, in the upbringing that I had had, and in Church lessons.

My experience with temptation as an exchange student came from the outside, from persistent friends. It was an external challenge to the things I believed, and I was able to stand firm. But as additional experiences came to me, I learned that we are going to be tested from all sides. Some of the most difficult challenges are internal ones, when the temptations that have to be resisted take place in the quiet of our own hearts and minds.

Proving the Lord

One of these challenges came when I chose to pay an honest tithe when I was away from home. Every year my dad would take us to tithing settlement. He would help us calculate our tithing, and we would pay it. All during the time I was growing up, I developed this habit of paying tithing. If you had asked me at the time, I would have told you that I had a testimony of tithing.

When I finished high school, I had been

admitted to Harvard University, so I worked that summer and earned money to pay for the expenses that weren't covered by my scholarship. By the end of the first semester, I had foolishly spent all the money that I had earned to get me through the whole year.

At the start of the second semester, I got a job. I couldn't work very much because I was a full-time student, but I worked a few hours a week and received my first paycheck. Of course, it wasn't very much, but it was all I had to get by until the next paycheck.

Then the question arose in my mind, "What about tithing?" I had been in the habit of paying my tithing but had always had sufficient money to pay the tithing. Here I was faced with the challenge: do I pay my tithing when I don't know if I've got enough money to get through the next two weeks?

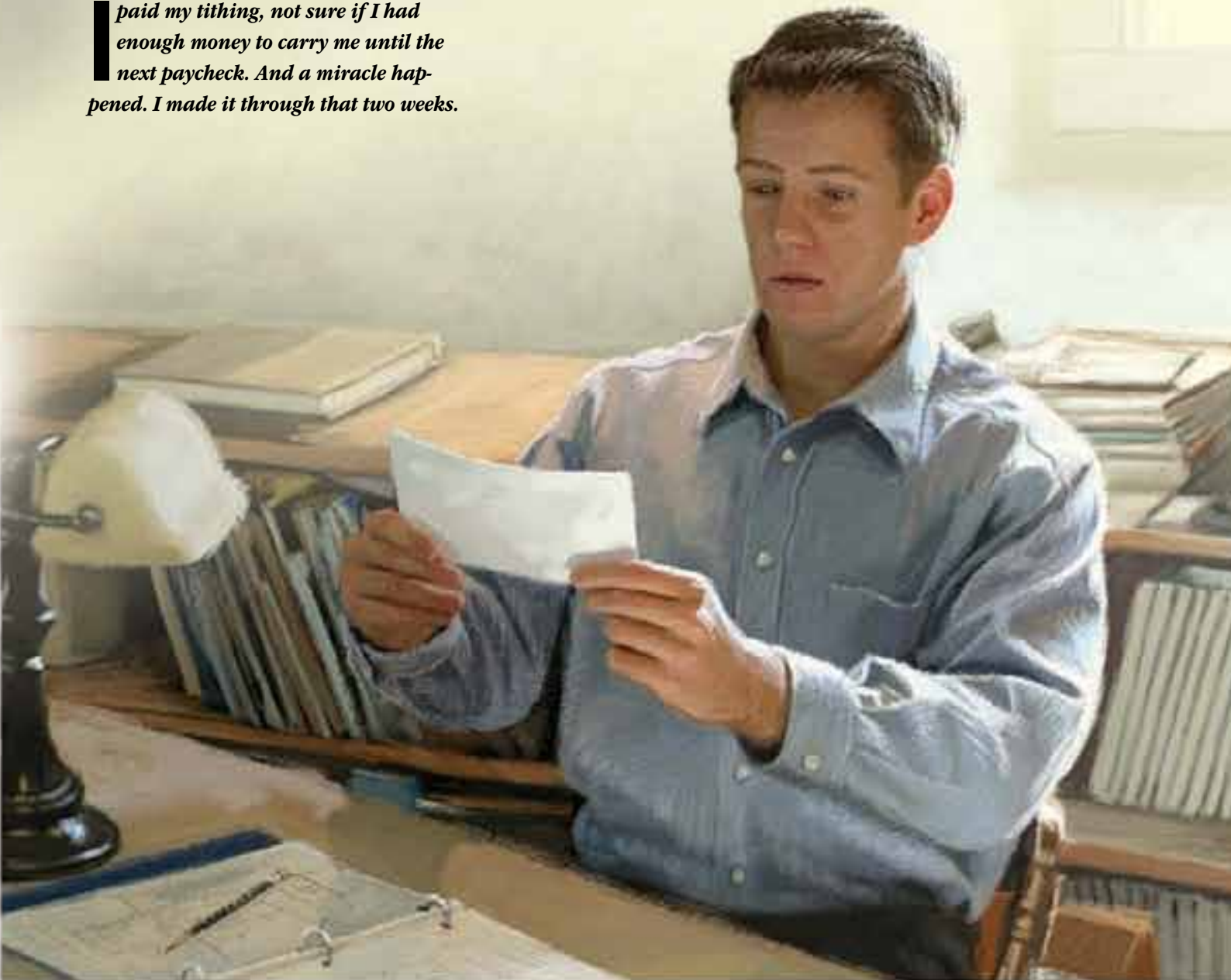
As I thought about it, I remembered the scripture in Malachi 3:10, where the Lord promises, "Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

So I realized that was my answer. I would leave it up to the Lord. I paid my tithing, not sure if I had enough money to carry me until the next paycheck. And a miracle happened. I made it through that two weeks.

It came to me so powerfully that the Lord keeps His word. The Lord came through the way He promised. Just as the scriptures say, if we pay our tithing, He will bless us. That same miracle happened every two weeks throughout the rest of the semester. Before, I had thought I had a testimony of tithing, but now, because of my correct decision, I had a powerful testimony of tithing. The Lord

learned that we are going to be tested from all sides. Some of the most difficult challenges are internal ones, in the quiet of our own hearts and minds.

I paid my tithing, not sure if I had enough money to carry me until the next paycheck. And a miracle happened. I made it through that two weeks.



always does what He says, so my testimony continued to grow step-by-step.

Believe the Lord

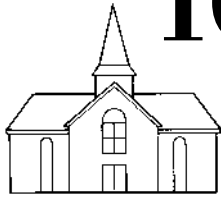
I would encourage you, while in your teen years and as you develop your own testimony, that you need to take the Lord at His word. When the Lord promises something, we can count on it because, as the scriptures teach us, God cannot lie. The Lord keeps His word. Whenever the Lord makes a promise either through His prophet

or directly through His scriptures, we can count on it.

In the scriptures we are encouraged to turn to the Lord. “Ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for he that asketh, receiveth; and unto him that knocketh, it shall be opened” (3 Nephi 27:29).

I learned through these and other experiences that this scripture is true. Heavenly Father is always there for us. Whether our challenge is external or internal, His plan, His scriptures, His love, and His gift of the Holy Ghost will see us through. ■

Teaching in the Nursery, Teaching at Home



Many things make the new Primary nursery manual special, including activities to help nursery-age children learn gospel truths through seeing, hearing, and doing.

BY MARGARET S. LIFFERTH
First Counselor in the Primary General Presidency

Charlie, at 20 months of age, eagerly responds to gospel learning at home. He can point to a picture of the Savior and say, “Jesus.” However, when he attends the Primary nursery class, where he also learns about Jesus, he is still a little shy.

Sam is almost three and is comfortable in the nursery. He has learned a variety of Primary songs in class and likes to sing them during family home evening. In fact, when his grandmother sang with him, she was surprised that Sam could sing at least a dozen songs from memory.

Both Charlie and Sam are participating in their first organized Church experience—the nursery class. Here children age 18 months to three years expand their gospel learning. The new Primary nursery manual, *Behold Your Little Ones*, is a wonderful resource for both teachers in the nursery and parents in the home to teach children basic gospel truths.

A Flexible Teaching Tool

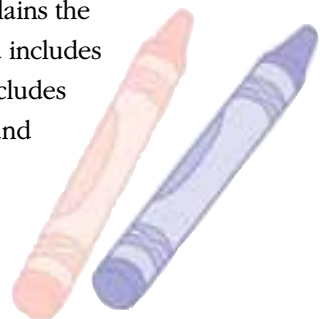
Children of this age can begin to understand simple, yet profound, gospel principles such as the reality and love of Heavenly Father and Jesus, the love of family, the strength of prayer, the truth of the First

Vision, and the beauty of God’s creations.

They are active, need love and affection, have short attention spans, are acquiring language skills, and enjoy a variety of activities. They are always learning. President Thomas S. Monson has quoted a prominent medical authority who said “that the most receptive age in human life is that of two or three years.”¹

During the class time, the children enjoy music activities, play time, snack time, and a lesson in which they are taught the basic doctrines of the gospel. The lessons in the new nursery manual are designed to be flexible and meet the needs of this age group.

Each lesson begins with an introduction for the teacher. It briefly explains the doctrine to be taught and includes scripture references. It includes teaching tips so parents and teachers will know what to expect from nursery-age children and how to adapt the teaching experience to meet the children’s needs. The lessons also include a variety of learning activities that help children hear the doctrine, see something related to





Teachers in the nursery and parents at home can use Behold Your Little Ones to teach children basic gospel truths.



Each lesson includes two pages of visuals to reinforce the doctrine taught in the lesson.

2

MI PADRE CELESTIAL TIENE UN PLAN PARA MÍ

INTRODUCCIÓN PARA EL MAESTRO

Este es el día de preparar espiritualmente para enseñar una lección, luego a leer, leer y enseñar un cuento a los alumnos.

Visiten una muestra Padre Celestial como espíritu antes de enseñar. Muestre Padre Celestial preparó un plan que nos permite venir a la tierra y recibir el cuerpo físico a fin de que podamos llegar a ser como Él y que podamos regocijarnos a su presencia. Esto es posible por medio de la repetición de lecciones y de nuestras oraciones. Escríbanlo en tarjetas para sus alumnos. (Veremos: Misión: Misión 2:24-27; Artículo de Fe 1:3).

PREPARACIÓN

Muestran la página 19 de este manual para que la pueda enseñar los maestros.

ACTIVIDADES DE VARIACIONES

Comenzar con una actividad de grupo. El maestro tiene para ellos, ver la página 5.

Oración: Pido a los niños que hagan la primera oración.

Contar un cuento: Utilice "Dios es un hijo de Dios" (Contar para los niños, págs. 2-10) para enseñar a los niños algunos detalles básicos del plan de salvación. El siguiente es un ejemplo:

Diga a los niños que todos vivieron con nuestro Padre Celestial antes de nacer.

Cuando se dijo: "Dios es un hijo de Dios."

Se fue un hijo de Dios.

El me enseñó así.

Diga a los niños que nuestro Padre Celestial tiene un plan para nosotros. Nos dijo que nos fuéramos a la tierra a vivir. Estábamos tan felices que dijimos un grito de alegría. Luego a los niños a decir: "¡Hurray!"

Muestre la historia de la familia que se encuentra en la página 11. Diga a los niños que vivieron a la tierra a vivir con una familia que Dios ama. Pido a los niños que dibujen los brazos y que se abrazen a sí mismos.

Cuando se dijo:

No fue fácil ser feliz

y poder hacer para mí.

Diga a los niños que vivieron solamente en la tierra, nuestro Padre Celestial desea que nosotros también y que sigamos sus mandamientos.

Cuando se dijo:

Comenzar enseñando

la verdad a seguir.

Muestre la historia de los niños que se encuentran en la página 16. Diga a los niños que nuestro Padre Celestial quiere a los niños que aprendan con Él. Escríbanlo en tarjetas para leer y el guardarlo los



CONSEJOS PRÁCTICOS PARA LA ENSEÑANZA

Preparar: Tener los libros, historias y otros materiales de que vamos a hablar. El maestro puede preparar un cuento a la vez.

Actividad de aprendizaje: Pido a los niños que dibujen a Dios y a los niños que dibujen a los niños que se abrazan a sí mismos. El maestro puede preparar un cuento a la vez.

the doctrine, sing a song, do a physical activity, and say something related to the doctrine.

The nursery leader or parent, as guided by inspiration, can teach the lessons in any order. To reinforce learning, lessons and activities can be repeated in consecutive weeks or repeated twice during one nursery class depending on the needs and interests of the children.

The optional activities listed can be used any time and any number of times during the nursery class. All visual aids and activities are included in the manual.

Testimonies of Success

As the nursery manual was being developed, nursery leaders in Primaries all over the world tested the lessons. They offered many good suggestions that were incorporated into the manual.

From the Cape Coast Ghana Stake, one nursery leader wrote, "I learned a lot about teaching while testing the lessons. The children were interested in the stories, answered questions, and painted the pictures. They were so happy." A Primary leader from

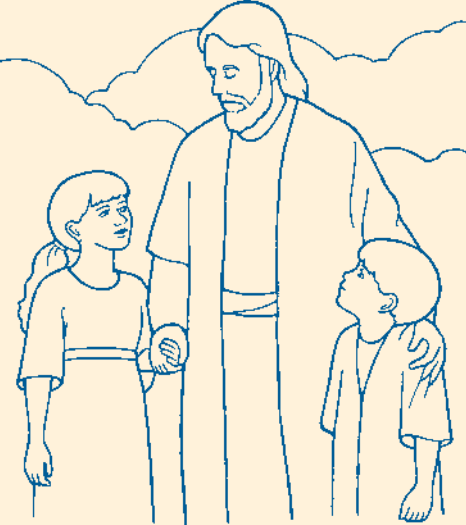
Scranton, Pennsylvania, USA, wrote: "We have a small branch, and we don't always have a teacher.

These lessons can be put together in a very short amount of time and still be effective for the children."

In the Caracas Venezuela Los Teques Stake, one leader appreciated the fact that the lessons leave room for the teacher to use them as guided by the Spirit.

"The children loved the finger puppets,"

Teaching tips help parents and teachers know how to adapt the lesson to meet the children's needs.



wrote a leader from West Jordan, Utah. “I gave the children a chance to tell me a story using their own puppets. They did so well that I believe they could do it on their own for family home evening.” She added, “The teaching tips were also a great help to me.”

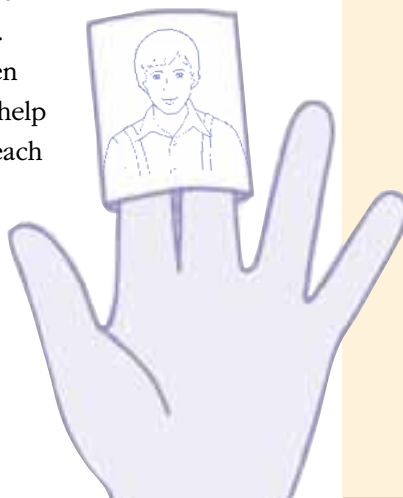
For Parents and Nursery Leaders

It is a privilege for parents or Primary leaders to be entrusted with the care and teaching of nursery-age children. These children are capable and full of faith. They are quick to believe, eager to learn, and happy to participate in activities. They thrive in an atmosphere of love and the light of the gospel.

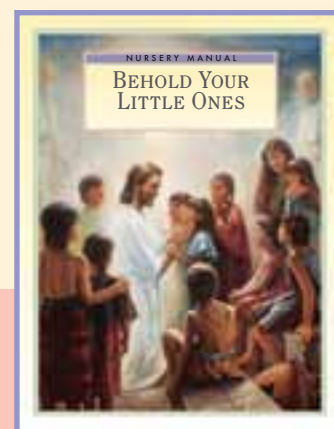
The new Primary nursery manual, when used with inspiration and testimony, will help parents and Primary leaders worldwide teach young children, such as Charlie and Sam, the gospel of Jesus Christ. ■

NOTE

1. Glenn J. Doman, quoted in Thomas S. Monson, “Constant Truths for Changing Times,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2005, 19.



Nursery-age children thrive in an atmosphere of love and the light of the gospel.



BEHOLD YOUR LITTLE ONES

Parents can purchase the manual (item no. 37108) to use in family home evening and to learn more about how best to teach young children.





The Functional Family

BY JAMES D. MacARTHUR, PhD

Director, Counseling and Career Center, Brigham Young University

I remember being a young parent and reading Doctrine and Covenants 93:40, where the Lord says, “I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth.” I wondered, “Exactly how do I do that?” I had heard a lot of people talk about *dysfunctional* families, but I wanted to raise a functional family. So what exactly is a *functional* family?

People seem to think that family members in functional families get along perfectly and solve problems together perfectly. Of course, the reality is that calling a family “functional” does not mean the family is perfect. All families face challenges in dealing with the unique

personalities of family members. However, in a family that functions well, family members recognize that they have weaknesses, and they work to improve their relationships despite their weaknesses. Indeed, family members will be happier when they strive to apply gospel principles in their lives to improve individual and family relationships.

Through many years of working with couples and families as a professional counselor, I have learned some principles that I believe help families function well. This article discusses just a few of them; you may think of some on your own. As you read through these principles, take a moment to consider how they might apply to your family.

In the functional family, parents focus their energy on teaching their children correct principles and allowing them to exercise their agency. As a parent

and grandparent, I put thought and effort into offering as much love, instruction, time, concern, help, guidance, and attention as I can to teach my children and grandchildren correct principles. This includes teaching them that choices have consequences—both good and bad.

Sometimes as parents we slip into the role of a manager seeking to control our children because we expect a desired result. The problem with this approach is that children resist coercion or compulsion, especially as they get older. We will be more effective the less we act as managers and the more we act as coaches, consultants, and guides. That means that we teach our children correct principles and, as their maturity and experience allow, continue to grant them greater latitude to make choices and reap the consequences.

In the functional family, parents *intentionally* strengthen their families. This means that you regularly and privately ponder each child's needs and assess them

What is a functional family? One in which family members work together to improve relationships as they face challenges.

against the overall needs of the family. Many of us find ourselves constantly reacting to the challenges of life. Busy schedules and the demands of life can make it difficult to actively decide how you want to live and respond to the needs and demands of your family. This means that circumstance, other people, or old habits can end up dictating how you respond to a given situation rather than you deciding how you will act. Needless to say, such reactions often lead to unhappy situations where we don't live up to our best capabilities.

One of the best ways parents can strengthen their families is to establish a specific time each week to discuss how the family is doing. I call it "family discussion time." By establishing family discussion time, you and your spouse commit to regularly reflect on your family's needs.

You also create time to consider the changes you and your family may need to make. If you are a single parent, you can schedule time each week to ponder and pray about your family.

Intentionally focusing on your family also means you think about the impact of what you say or do not say to your children. As parents, you begin sending messages about how you feel about your children from the minute they are born. These messages include your words, actions, and attitudes, whether you mean to or not. All of these messages shape how children come to view themselves.



Examples of unintentional though often harmful messages include ignoring or being impatient with a child. If you are too busy to spend time with your son or daughter, you might be sending the message "You are not very important to me." Now, remember, sometimes you can't help being busy, so don't get too paranoid about this. Just remember it is important to intentionally send positive messages to edify your children and to evaluate now and again what messages you are sending so you can adjust as necessary.

What messages would you like to intentionally send your children? Do you want them to know that you love them and are thinking about them? If you plan ahead, you can often send positive messages even when it seems difficult. For example, suppose you have to leave for

work each day before your children awake. Think how surprised and happy a child would be if you made a little sign on colored paper and taped it to the foot of his or her bed so it was the first thing your child saw upon waking up. The sign could read something like this: “Hi! Daddy loves you! See you at dinner. We’ll play together when I get home!” That kind of positive message can have a lasting and powerful impact for good.

In the functional family, relationships are of supreme importance. It is a good idea to regularly examine the condition of *each* relationship in the family. You never know when there might be a specific unmet need that for some reason your children have not shared with you. By listening carefully and being sensitive to the Spirit, you will be more likely to discern how your children are doing and what their needs are.

Of course, that raises a question: when you realize that someone in your family needs some help either in a relationship with you or with someone else, how do you help things improve? One thing I’ve learned is that relationships usually don’t get better accidentally; rather, they improve when we make that result a priority.

Try to invest time in the relationship in obvious ways. Here are some things I’ve tried that may work for you: talk together; play together; spend one-on-one time together; send letters, cards, or notes sharing your affection; give compliments; do something fun and unexpected; say, “I love you”; listen to the other person; ask him or her to help you on a project; share personal feelings. All of these require that you personally get engaged in things the other person is doing. Afterward, talk about your efforts with your spouse during your family discussion time. You might be surprised at how far-reaching your positive influence can be.

In the functional family, parents are active teachers. Adam and Eve were excellent examples of parents being good teachers. For example, “Adam and Eve . . . made all things known unto their sons and their daughters” (Moses 5:12). They taught their children gospel principles, such as the plan of salvation and the importance

and blessings of keeping the commandments. We have the same responsibility to teach our children not only life skills but also the gospel. If we leave the spiritual education of our children to chance or to someone else, we take a big risk that they won’t learn the things that will bring them true happiness.

That means we need to consider what we teach and how we teach. For example, when holding family discussion time, you might ask, “What do we want to teach in our family in the next few months? How, when, and where do we want to teach it?” Consider writing the answers down as family goals and posting them prominently so



you remember them. Then follow through with your goals.

What else might you teach? Anything you think your family needs to learn. Some topics include courtesy, honesty, prayer, scripture study, finances and getting out of debt, mutual respect in the family, how to use time effectively, how to manage angry feelings, the importance of education, and the need for all family members to do their share within the home.

Effective teaching also happens outside of a formal or direct teaching setting. Indirect teaching occurs when you teach without using words. In fact, you might not even be present when the “teaching” occurs! For example, I hang pictures that represent characteristics I would like my children to think about, such as a picture of pioneers traveling in a snowstorm to represent not giving up when

things get tough. We also have 29 individual photographs of our grandchildren along the mantle in our living room at home. Although there are no written words with these pictures, this visual presentation gets a lot of comments. People just can't miss them. The pictures send the message that our grandchildren are an important part of our family.

In the functional family, parents lead by example. Children are always watching and observing our behavior, whether we know it or not. In my role as a father, I regularly take stock of my behavior by asking myself, "Can I recommend to my children that they follow my example both publicly and privately?" If the answer is no, I make corrections where needed.

Here are some questions I've asked myself:

- Do I want my children to be patient? Yes, so I try to be as patient with them as I can.
- Do I want my children to relax, have fun, and learn to enjoy life? Yes, because I believe these qualities are vital

T*each your children correct principles by word, by example, and by the Spirit as you bear testimony to them.*

to developing healthy, happy relationships. I try to have fun with my children as often as I can.

- Do I want my children to read the scriptures and wholesome books? Yes, so I make sure they see me reading, and I read to them.
- Do I want my children to care about family relationships? Yes, so I kiss and hug them, smile at them, listen to them, play with them, and share personal experiences with them.

Remember, our children want their parents to set an example of a person who has a clear sense of direction on personal as well as spiritual matters. We as parents need to live worthy of the guidance of the Holy Ghost at all times, especially when things get tough.

Finally, in the functional family, parents teach

their children faith in our Heavenly Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ. This faith will establish a sure and solid foundation for family living that is unequaled in any other way. It is also a commandment from our Heavenly Father. Regarding our duty to our children, King Benjamin taught that "ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another" (Mosiah 4:15).

Perhaps the most important thing we will do in life will be to teach our family members to have faith in Jesus Christ and His teachings and to keep the commandments. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" states, "Happiness in



family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ."¹ Teach your children correct principles by word, by example, and by the Spirit as you bear your testimony to them.

Remember to be patient with yourself and your family members. Relationships usually improve in stages, not overnight. Strengthening them requires time and effort. However, as you strive to have a functional family based on the teachings of our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and His restored gospel, you will provide your family the best opportunity you can to grow closer together and to face challenges with a greater sense of harmony and happiness. ■

NOTE

1. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Liahona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.

Generations

Whether you're a new member or your family has been in the Church for decades, Latter-day Saint youth in Guadeloupe can tell you that living the gospel builds strength over time.

BY RICHARD M. ROMNEY
Church Magazines

Coralie “Coco” Gamiette, 12, has a lot of favorite places to visit, and one of them is a waterfall. It’s called *la Cascade aux Écrevisses*. It’s the place where many of the early members of the Church on the West Indies island of Guadeloupe were baptized.

Coco says the waterfall reminds her of a place in the Book of Mormon, the Waters of Mormon, described as “a fountain of pure water” with “a thicket of small trees” nearby. That’s where 450 of those who believed Alma’s teachings were baptized. (See Mosiah 18.)

Of course, in Guadeloupe today, as in most places in the Church, baptisms are performed in a font at the chapel. But for Coco, *la Cascade* is still a pleasant place for picnicking, wading in the creek, and sitting in the cool shade to think about the heritage of the Church in her own family.

From France, with Love

That heritage lies in a somewhat complex story that stretches back about 20 years, to the city of Angoulême, France. There, full-time missionaries were guided to a man named Michel Menardin, who had come from Guadeloupe, an overseas department of France, to perform his military service. Michel accepted the gospel and was baptized and confirmed.

That same year in the same town, missionaries left a pamphlet in a mailbox. It triggered interest from a single mother, Claudine, who was raising a 19-year-old daughter,

Delphine. They both gained testimonies and were also baptized and confirmed.

Michel and Claudine met at church, decided they were meant for each other, and married. (They are Coco's grandparents.) When Michel's mother, Marthé, came for the wedding, she stayed in Angoulême, became acquainted with the Church, and joined.

Later, Delphine was called on a mission to Seattle, Washington. While she was serving, her parents and grandmother moved back to Guadeloupe. After her mission, Delphine came to visit them, and while in Guadeloupe she met Claude Gamiette, who had recently returned from the Florida Jacksonville Mission. He was serving as a counselor to Delphine's stepfather in the branch presidency. The two returned missionaries dated and were married a short time later. Claude and Delphine



A SACRED PLACE

The Waters of Mormon were a sacred place for those who were taught and baptized there by Alma. "The place of Mormon, the waters of Mormon, the forest of Mormon, how beautiful are they to the eyes of them who there came to the knowledge of their Redeemer; yea, and how blessed are they, for they shall sing to his praise forever" (Mosiah 18:30).

Do you have a favorite place that reminds you of a place in the scriptures?





Above, from top: Seminary students Luidgia, Travis, Eole, and Leslie (opposite page) enjoy learning the gospel together. Coco (previous page) knows the gospel strengthens her family.

are Coco's parents. Now, 14 years and five children later, Claude, whose own family goes back years in the Church, is president of the Basse-Terre Guadeloupe District.

So with all of that, Coco is a fourth-generation Latter-day Saint. "I've grown up in the Church," she says. "I've heard about it my whole life, gone to Primary and now to Young Women, and heard my parents and their parents and their parents bear their testimonies. I've always known the gospel is true. When I read in Mosiah about the promises the believers made when Alma baptized them, that's what I've seen and felt my whole life."

Coco remembers her great-grandmother saying that a family extends beyond a mother and father and their children. "She says family stretches across generations, from eternity to eternity," Coco says. "That's what I see in my family."

Little by Little, Day by Day

On another part of the island, in the capital city of Basse-Terre, the Church is becoming a two-generation heritage for Luidgia Duflo, 13, and her sister Stella, 17, who joined the Church two years ago at the same time as their older sister, their younger brother, and their parents. They

say the gospel has taught them to honor their mother and their father. They especially enjoy family home evening, which they hold in their family's apartment, located above their father's small store. He sells household products, sugar, spices, candy, and animal food. One of their favorite places to talk with him is in his office at the back of the store, where the wall is covered with photos of various Latter-day Saint temples.

"It gives him an opportunity to do a little missionary work when people come in on business and want to know what all those buildings are," Stella explains. "But I think it also reminds him every day of his eternal promises and goals; it certainly does that for us. We should prepare to go to the temple, and he is constantly reminding us of that."

The Duflo family sees a bright future ahead. "The Church will keep growing in Guadeloupe, and it will flourish," Stella says. "We just have to do our part, little by little, day by day, trusting the Lord in all things and sharing the gospel whenever we can."

Seminary and Goliath

Eole Montredon, 15, comes to seminary every school morning, even though she isn't yet a member of the Church. "In many ways," she says, "it's like I've been a member my whole life because I've grown up around the Church, and I'm familiar with the gospel."

She says she loves to come to seminary because "it's good for us as young people to study the scriptures together, even if we have to get up before the sun to be there." Seminary starts at 6:00 a.m., so she gets up at 5:00. "Some of my friends think I'm crazy, but then when I explain what we're doing, they think it sounds all right. Besides, I feel the Holy Ghost when I'm there. It's a good feeling that I remember all day long."

One of her favorite Bible stories is David and Goliath. She says it gives her courage to know that the Lord will help small people conquer big problems, because she faces a challenge that sometimes seems as large as Goliath to her. Her parents are separated, and although her mother is an active member who would love to see her become



a Latter-day Saint, Eole's father insists that she wait. And so, to honor her father, she is waiting, patiently living the gospel, and praying that someday his heart will change.

"If I could give a message to the youth of the Church," Eole says, "it would be to come to seminary every week-day and to church every Sunday, because the more you do, the more you will see how good it is and how it makes you strong." Even though Eole can't enjoy the heritage of multiple generations in the Church—not yet—she knows she *can* work today to build that heritage for generations to come. "I know I need to start now," she says, "and if I remain faithful, good things will happen."

Early-Morning Regeneration

At an early-morning seminary class in Abymes, the same desire to build strength over time is evident. Class members race each other to find scripture references. They eagerly come to the blackboard to draw pictures. Each time the teacher asks a question, hands shoot up to volunteer an answer.

"Seminary helps us to know God better," says Travis Devarre, 14. "It also helps us prepare so that we can do missionary work now and be ready for a full-time mission later. You learn by studying the word of God, and you arrive at school wide awake, with your head full of good thoughts. It regenerates you."

One of the meanings of *regenerate* is "to be spiritually reborn or converted." It can also mean "restored to a better, higher, or more worthy state." Travis says priesthood service also regenerates him. "It blesses me and my family, because it allows me to help those around me, including my family. That fills my heart with happiness."

"If we have confidence in Heavenly Father, we can be blessed," says Leslie Amoussouga, 15. "We know that He always prepares a path for us. If we don't doubt, if we have faith and keep the commandments, He will bring sunshine to our souls." In other words, He will help us regenerate ourselves, from generation to generation. ■

WHY LESLIE GOES TO SEMINARY



I think it's nice to get up early in the morning, before the sun itself gets up, and to be with my friends," says Leslie Amoussouga, 15, a member of the Abymes Branch.

But it's not just about being with friends. "In seminary we study the scriptures more deeply than I do when I'm at home by myself," she says. "You learn many good things

when you study together and when you have an instructor who is genuinely interested in helping you learn, who can explain things you may not completely understand on your own.

"And seminary helps me in school too because I get myself up early to go to seminary. By the time I get to school, I'm already alert and active while some of the other students are still sleepy. Seminary helps you form good habits and teaches you self-discipline, both in studying and in simple things like getting up and getting going."



My True Purpose as a Missionary


By Denise Barfuss

I had been serving as a full-time missionary in Argentina for only two months when word arrived that my younger, and only, sister was engaged. Rebecca and I were close growing up and had dreamed of each other's weddings, but now I would miss hers.

My parents sent me plans, pictures, menus, and schedules, but I still felt left out, alone, and far away. Missionary work was hard and slow. I found myself wondering what I was doing so far from home, and I became confused about what I was supposed to accomplish.

Nevertheless, I knew that the Lord had called me to serve, and I had a strong testimony of prayer and the power of the priesthood. I received a blessing of comfort that promised me I was where I needed to be.

As missionaries we often shared the exhortation found in Moroni 10:4–5. I believed firmly in the promise of those verses—that if I asked God, my Eternal Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, I could know the truth of all things by the power of the Holy Ghost. I prayed diligently to know whether I had done the right thing by coming to Argentina instead of remaining at home, where I would



A young man called to us. We ignored him, but when he called again, I felt a prompting to answer him.

her wedding. As her wedding drew closer, my prayers became increasingly heartfelt. I felt the reassuring influence of the Spirit, but I still hoped for an answer.

Two weeks before the wedding, my companion and I were walking home from a lunch appointment with members of the branch in which we served. The branch was in a little town in central Argentina, where people observed the midday custom of siesta. At that time of day there was usually no one about.

As we walked along, however, a young man called to us. Because many young men teased us, we ignored him and continued walking.

have been helping my sister prepare for

When he called again, I felt a prompting to answer him.

His name was Horacio, and he wanted to know if we were friends with two young women who had been reading the Book of Mormon with his cousin. He told us he had felt something special while the sisters, who also served in our branch, were reading. He wanted to know if he could come to our church.

As we taught Horacio with the help of local members, he quickly grew to love the gospel. He changed his life as he grew in the gospel, but his family raised objections and his friends rejected him. Nevertheless, Horacio felt the love of the Lord and desired to follow Him. I had some of the most special experiences of my mission teaching Horacio.

As my family sat in the Oakland

California Temple watching my sister complete one of the ordinances that would help prepare her for the celestial kingdom, I sat in a little chapel in General Pico, Argentina, waiting for Horacio to complete an interview in preparation for receiving his first saving ordinance—baptism. My sister had been able to prepare for her ordinances without my help, but Horacio might not have been able to do the same. He needed my companion and me to teach him the gospel, and I needed him to remind me of my true purpose as a missionary—helping bring souls to Christ.

As I prepared to leave Argentina at the end of my mission, Horacio was preparing to serve his own mission. Through him, Heavenly Father had answered my prayers and then sent Horacio to answer the prayers of others. ■

W*hy would I feel such a strong impression to seek Stuart's help, only to find out he was unavailable?*

He Must Be Here!

By Paul Culbert

One Saturday morning I received a phone call from a friend, another young single adult in our ward in Wiltshire, England. Her stepmother, who lived in the same village as I, was ill at home in bed. She could hardly move

and, though not a member of the Church, had asked if I could give her a blessing.

I had been a member of the Church for just a few months, but because of training in priesthood meeting, I felt reasonably prepared to give a blessing, though a little apprehensive. I said I would find a companion and come as soon as possible.

I immediately thought of the nearest elder in the ward and drove to his abode. His wife answered and reminded me that the endowed brethren in the Swindon Ward had gone to the temple that day. As I drove away, somewhat despondently, I stopped the car and asked Heavenly Father for direction.

As I prayed, I asked if there was a Melchizedek Priesthood holder available to go with me. The name of Stuart Ramsey immediately came to my mind. I didn't have his phone number, but he and his wife, Gill, lived on an air force base about six miles away.

Arriving at their home, I knocked on the door with full confidence that Stuart would be able to accompany me. "He's not here," Gill said to my surprise. "He had to go to the base."

Undeterred, I asked if I could contact him. She explained that Stuart, a



mechanic, was helping a friend with his car in a secured area of the base. He couldn't be contacted by phone, and I wouldn't be allowed past the security gates.

Why would I feel such a strong impression to seek Stuart's help, only to find out he was unavailable? Had I misunderstood the answer to my prayer? "No," I thought to myself, "he *must* be here."

At that very moment I heard a cheery voice call out from behind me. "Paul, what are you doing here?" It was Stuart! He had been struggling to repair his friend's car and had felt impressed that he should return home. I explained my predicament, and he readily agreed to assist me in administering a blessing.

I was grateful to have Stuart's experience. He anointed, and as I sealed the anointing, I felt prompted to pronounce a blessing of healing. As I drove Stuart home, he rejoiced in being led by the Spirit to leave his work in time to meet me at his house.

I was overjoyed the next morning to learn that my friend's step-mother was feeling much better. I have administered blessings on many occasions since, but I am grateful that I learned early on that no matter how inexperienced we are in our priesthood duties, when we rely on the Lord, keep His commandments, and do our best to magnify our callings, He will guide us in the path we should take. ■

Elders, Need a Lift?

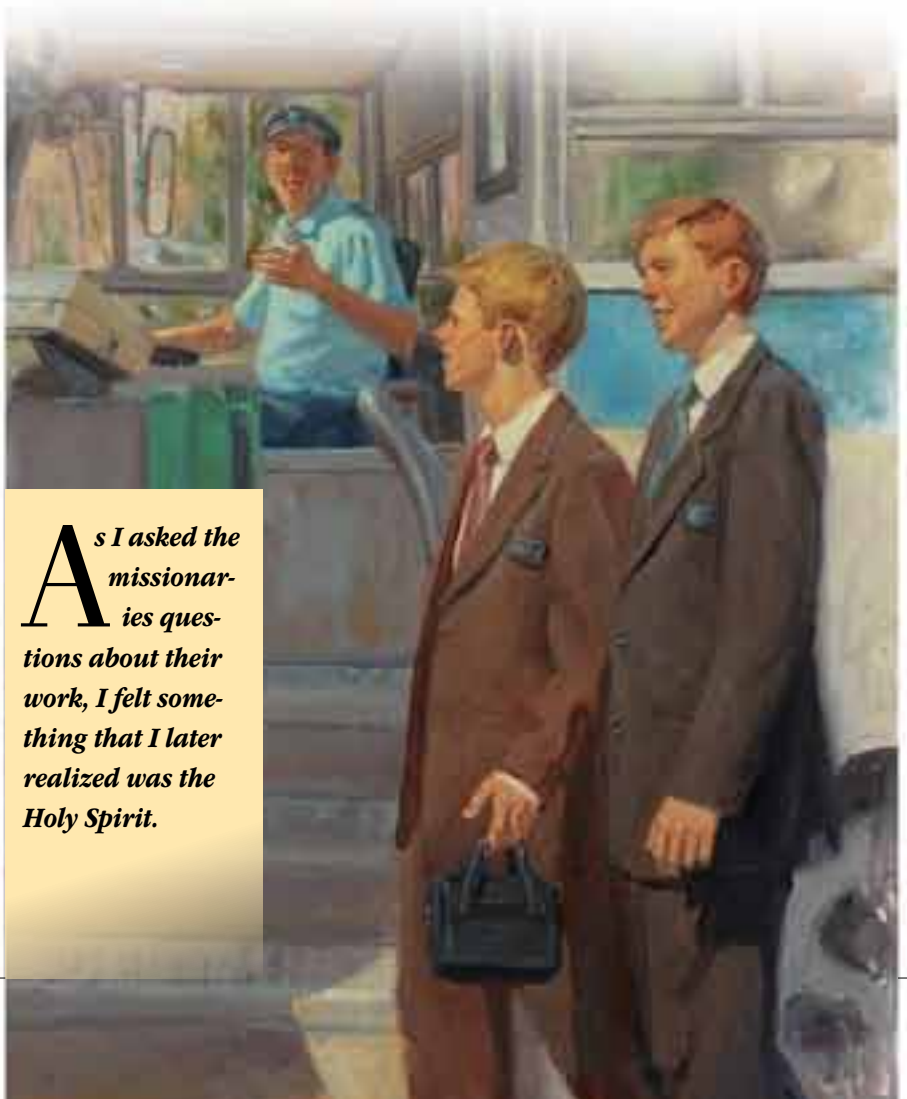
By Errol Fernando

After a long day of driving my bus in Victoria, Australia, I was making my last trip of the evening, heading home. On the way I saw two well-dressed young men walking. I decided to stop the bus and ask them if they needed a lift.

I asked them why they wore

name tags, white shirts, and ties. One of them explained that they were missionaries for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As I asked questions about their work, I felt something fill the bus that I later realized was the Holy Spirit. When I asked them to tell me more about Jesus Christ, I couldn't help but become excited by their answers.

Unfortunately it was getting late, so I dropped off the missionaries in Dandenong. Afterward, I was sad when I realized that I did not get their



As I asked the missionaries questions about their work, I felt something that I later realized was the Holy Spirit.

phone number. For weeks I prayed that I could meet them again. As I drove my bus route, I even looked for them. Months went by, and then an unbelievable thing happened on my birthday, August 19, 2002.

As I was eating lunch with my wife, Camelia, a knock came at the door. When she answered it, I heard familiar voices. It was the missionaries I had met on the bus! They were just as surprised to see me as I was to see them. They had been tracting on our street and were led to our house. My prayers had been answered.

Elders Jason Frandsen and James Thieler immediately began teaching us. The Book of Mormon and the Prophet Joseph Smith were new to us, but we easily understood the gospel because we had a Christian background. The missionaries asked us to pray about and ponder what we were learning. As we did so, we felt the Spirit, a desire to attend church, and a prompting to be baptized. We have been blessed ever since.

Today, several years later, I still drive a bus, and I still give rides to missionaries. But now I help them carry out missionary work by introducing people to them and by sharing the Book of Mormon and other Church materials with my passengers.

People on my bus can't help but notice how happy I am. When they ask why, I simply say, "The Lord has done this for me. He can change your life too." ■

Have a Cup

By Eleanor F. Williamson

Not long after we joined the Church, my husband and I were vacationing in Bermuda. While there I took advantage one day of a midafternoon social held in our hotel. As I was eyeing the delicious pastries, I caught a whiff of the smell of tea. I found it so inviting that in my mind I seemed to hear a voice say, "Have a cup."

I had faithfully lived the Word of Wisdom since my baptism. In my mind I said, "No, I will not."

"Oh, come on," a soothing voice seemed to say in reply. "You don't know anybody here, and you are far from home."

With even more conviction, I once again responded in my mind, "No, I will not!"

Again that enticing, reasoning voice came: "No one will *ever* know."

Firmly I responded, "I will know!"

At that point I was standing by a waiter who was pouring tea. Resolutely I passed by. As I looked for a table, I was surprised to hear someone call out my name. To my amazement I saw the smiling face of a former boss whom I had not seen for many years. He came up to me, and as we walked toward a table he said, "I heard that you joined the Mormon Church. Tell me all about it."



Again that enticing, reasoning voice came: "No one will ever know."

I was happy to oblige, sharing with him some principles of the gospel, my happiness as a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and my testimony. My former boss told me that he had been researching his family name and that he had documented many generations of family history. He was sincerely interested in what I had to share about the Church, and I felt a great outpouring of the Spirit as we conversed.

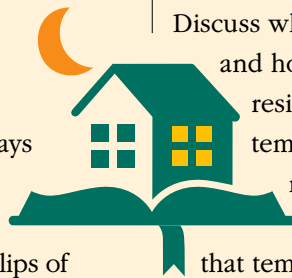
During our visit a thought came into my mind: "Could you have had this conversation had you put a cup of tea on your tray?" I knew the answer. Had I given in to temptation, I would have missed out on a memorable spiritual experience and a chance to share my testimony. ■

FAMILY HOME EVENING IDEAS

These teaching suggestions can be used in the classroom as well as in the home. You may tailor these ideas to your family or class.

“It’s Not Easy,” p. 16: Invite family members to write on a slip of paper ways the Lord has helped or blessed them. Make a gratitude jar, and put the slips of paper in it. Encourage family members to continue adding to the jar (or to write about it in their journals) whenever they have an experience in which the Lord helps them.

“Succeeding as a New Convert,” p. 22: Whether you are a new member or not, cultivating friendships among Church members is important. As a family, discuss ways you can reach out to members of your ward or branch. Explain that strengthening these relationships can create lasting friendships and can help us come unto Christ by serving others.



“No One Will Ever Know,” p. 28: What do people mean when they say no one will ever know? Discuss why this logic is faulty and how family members can resist temptation. List some temptations, and have family members role-play how they would respond if that temptation came up. Read 1 Corinthians 10:13.

“Generations,” p. 40: Share your conversion stories, or share stories of ancestors who found the gospel. Invite family members to share why the gospel is important in their lives.

“An Activity Day Invitation,” p. F10, and **“I Can Be a Missionary Now,”** p. F14: After reading these stories, think of people you can invite to a Church meeting or activity. List neighbors, friends, and family members. Even if you think someone may not be interested,

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include him or her on the list. You never know who will accept your invitation. Prior to the meeting or activity, prayerfully choose some people on your list, and invite them to attend with you. Offer to walk with them or give them a ride if possible. If they choose not to attend, continue your friendship with them.

A Family Home Evening Invitation

Since my baptism 12 years ago, my life has changed significantly. For this reason my husband and I decided to share the divine light we have received with many different people. We started to invite the missionaries and some neighbors to our home for family home evening.

We made little invitation cards for our neighbors. Many people began attending who were interested in finding out what a family home evening was. Some were more interested than others, but most liked the activities and refreshments. One of the families

we invited was even baptized! As I have shared my happiness about belonging to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints through family home evening, my faith has also grown.

Gladys Elena Yepes de Velásquez,
Antioquia, Colombia

YOUR FAVORITE HOME EVENING

Send a description of your favorite family home evening to liahona@ldschurch.org.

the Friend



Help to Heal

BY PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON

During World War II, I was ordained an elder—one week before I departed for active duty with the navy. A member of my bishopric was at the train station to bid me farewell. Just before train time, he placed in my hand a book: *The Missionary's Hand Book*. I laughed and commented, "I'll be in the navy—not on a mission." He answered, "Take it anyway. It may come in handy."

It did. During basic training our company commander instructed us how we might best pack our clothing in a large seabag. He then advised, "If you have a hard, rectangular object you can place in the bottom of the bag, your clothes will stay more firm." I thought, "Where am I going to find a hard, rectangular object?" Suddenly I remembered *The Missionary's Hand Book*. And thus it served for 12 weeks at the bottom of that seabag.

The night preceding our Christmas leave, the barracks were quiet. Suddenly I became aware that my buddy in the adjoining bunk—a member of the Church, Leland Merrill—was moaning in pain. I asked, "What's the matter, Merrill?"

He replied, "I'm sick. I'm really sick."

The hours lengthened; his groans grew louder. Then, in desperation, he whispered, "Monson, aren't you an elder?" I acknowledged this to be so, whereupon he pleaded, "Give me a blessing."

I became very much aware that I had never given a blessing. My prayer to God was a plea for help. The answer came: "Look in the bottom of the seabag." Thus, at 2:00 a.m. I emptied the bag. I then took to the

President Monson testifies that we are entitled to the Lord's help.



night-light *The Missionary's Hand Book* and read how one blesses the sick. With about 120 curious sailors looking on, I proceeded with the blessing. Before I could again stow my gear, Leland Merrill was sleeping.

The next morning, Merrill smilingly turned to me and said, "Monson, I'm glad you hold the priesthood!" His gladness was only surpassed by my gratitude—gratitude not only for the priesthood but for being worthy to receive the help I required in a time of desperate need.

If we are on the Lord's errand, we are entitled to the Lord's help. His help has come

to me on countless occasions throughout my life. ●

From an April 2007 general conference address.

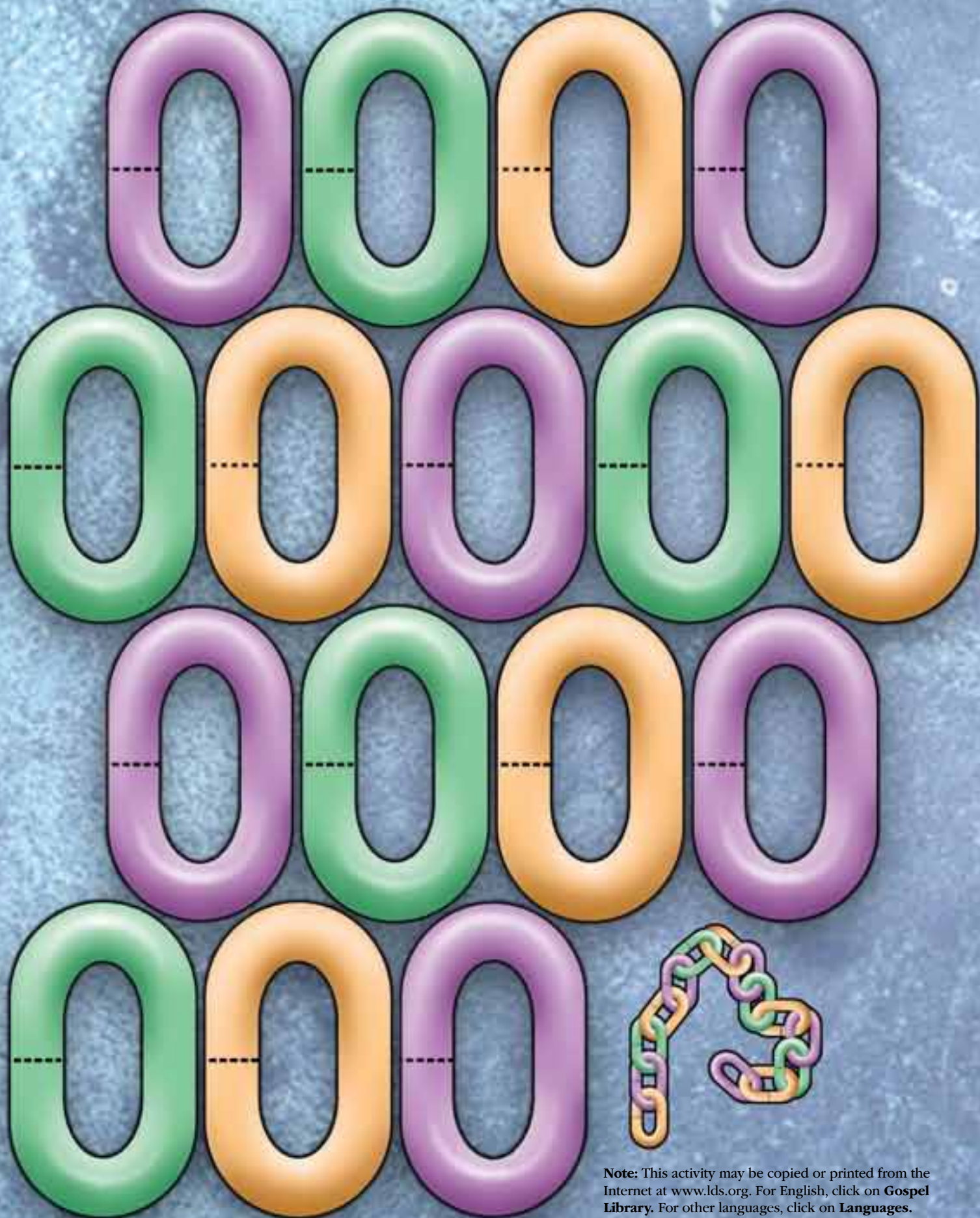
THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. At first President Monson thought he wouldn't need *The Missionary's Hand Book* because he was going in the navy, but he found out he needed to know the things that were in it. How can knowing what is in the scriptures help you in different times and places?

2. Leland Merrill showed his faith in God and in the power of the priesthood by asking for a blessing. How can you show your faith?

3. How do you think President Monson felt, knowing that 120 other sailors were watching him give his first priesthood blessing? How can you have the courage to do what Heavenly Father wants, even when other people watching you may not understand?





Note: This activity may be copied or printed from the Internet at www.lds.org. For English, click on **Gospel Library**. For other languages, click on **Languages**.

I Will Be a Strong Link

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

BY CHERYL ESPLIN



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

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

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

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

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

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

NOTE

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

Activity

Remove page F4, and mount it on heavier paper. Cut out each link on the solid black lines. To cut out the inside of the links, cut through the link on the broken line. Write

your name on one of the links and the names of your parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, or other relatives on the other links. Connect the links. Hang your chain where it will remind you that you are part of a family and that you can be a strong link. In a family home evening, have your family members choose a name on one of the links and tell one thing they have learned from that person that helps them be strong.

Sharing Time Ideas

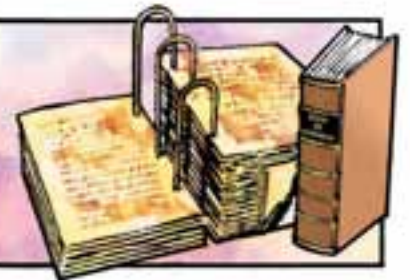
1. Write the following scripture references on the outside of six envelopes, one reference per envelope: Moses 3:24; Moses 5:1; Moses 5:2; Moses 5:4; Moses 5:5; Moses 5:12. Prepare these six wordstrips: *marriage, work together, have children, pray, obey commandments, teach children*. Cut the letters apart, paper clip each word together, and put them inside the corresponding envelope. Find pictures of families that illustrate each wordstrip. Display Gospel Art Picture Kit 119 (*Adam and Eve Teaching Their Children*). Briefly tell the story of Adam and Eve, emphasizing that through them Heavenly Father’s pattern of families was established. Divide into six groups, and give each group an envelope. Have the children read the scripture, unscramble the letters, and glue or tape them together. Beginning with Moses 3:24 and going in order, have each group show their wordstrip and choose a matching picture. Post the pictures around the picture of Adam and Eve. Explain that the family is the best place to learn and live the gospel.

2. To teach that Heavenly Father blesses righteous families, present a dramatization about the sons of Helaman being protected in battle. Include parts for a narrator, Helaman, and the sons of Helaman (see Alma 53:10–23; 56; 57). Use name tags or simple costumes if desired. Other righteous families were also blessed by Heavenly Father. Divide into two groups. Give each group one of the following stories: *Nephi’s family* (1 Nephi 17:7–13; 18:1–6) and *Jaredite families* (Genesis 11:1–9; Ether 1:33–43). Have each group read the story. Act as a reporter (use a microphone if available), and interview each group by asking questions that bring out the details of each story. Bear testimony that Heavenly Father blesses righteous families. ●

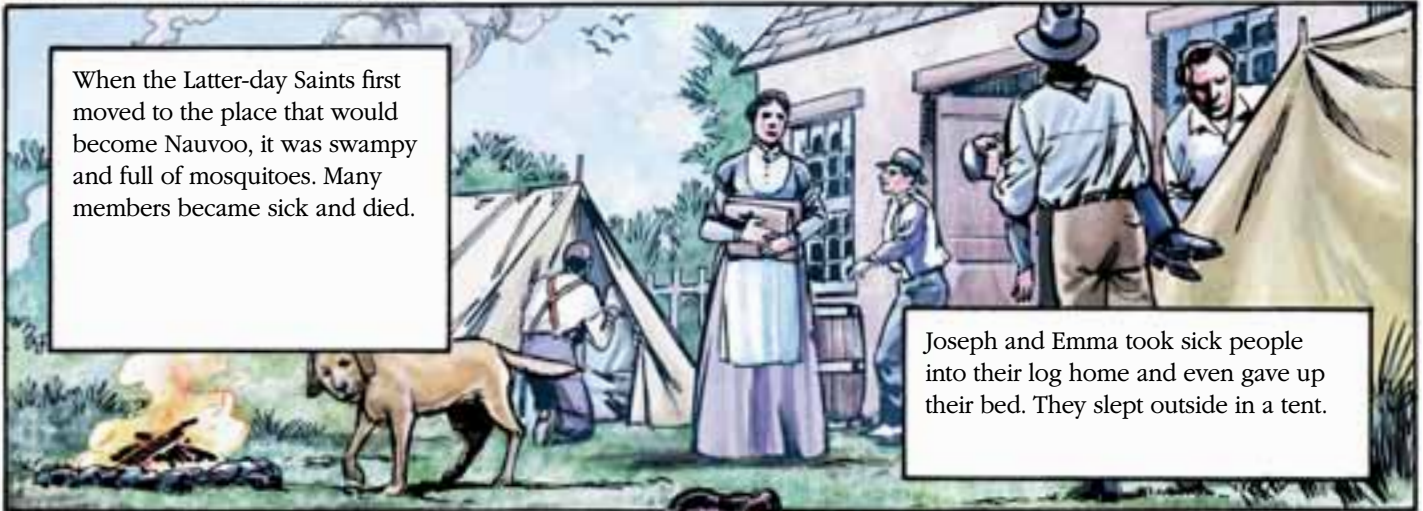


FROM THE LIFE OF THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH

A Day of God's Power



When the Latter-day Saints first moved to the place that would become Nauvoo, it was swampy and full of mosquitoes. Many members became sick and died.



Joseph and Emma took sick people into their log home and even gave up their bed. They slept outside in a tent.

There was one day that Wilford Woodruff later called "a day of God's power." After a morning prayer, Joseph blessed the sick.



Brigham, do you have faith enough to be healed?

Yes, Joseph, I do.

Joseph and Brigham went to see Elijah Fordham, who was about to die. Each minute was expected to be his last.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY SAL VELLUTO AND EUGENIO MATTOZZI

Joseph took Elijah by the hand. Elijah did not answer at first, but everyone in the room could see the effect of the Spirit of God resting upon him.

Brother Fordham, do you know me?

Elijah, do you not know me?

Yes!

Have you faith to be healed?

I'm afraid it is too late. If you had come sooner . . .

Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ?

I do, Brother Joseph.

Elijah, I command you, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, to arise and be made whole!

The words Joseph spoke were like the voice of God. They seemed to shake the house, and they caused Elijah to leap from his bed.



Healthy color came to Elijah's face, and he was full of life. He called for his clothes, ate a bowl of bread and milk, and put on his hat. Then he went with Joseph to bless the other sick members.



Like Adam and Eve

BY KIMBERLY REID

Adam was a son of God.
Adam honored Eve.
Adam learned the difference between good and evil.
Adam was honest in confessing his transgression.
Adam was worthy to hold the priesthood.
Adam worked to provide for his family.
Adam listened to the Lord and learned the gospel.
Adam obeyed the commandments.
Adam taught his family the gospel.
Adam loved his family.



INSTRUCTIONS: Remove these pages from the magazine. Fold the pages so the blue dots align with the yellow dots. Read how Adam and Eve worked

I am a child of God.
I can treat women with respect.
I can learn to choose the right.
I can be honest.
I can prepare to receive the priesthood.
I can work to help my family and develop my talents.
I can listen to prophets and ponder the scriptures.
I can obey and repent when I need to.
I can share the gospel.
I can love my family and do my part to be with them for eternity.
I can be like Adam.



together as equal partners while they were on earth. Then unfold the pages, and find out how you can follow their examples.

- I am a child of God.
- I can sustain my priesthood leaders.
- I can learn to choose the right.
- I can be honest.
- I can prepare to fulfill God's plan for me.
- I can work to help my family and develop my talents.
- I can listen to the prophets and ponder the scriptures.
- I can obey and repent when I need to.
- I can share the gospel.
- I can love my family and do my part to be with them for eternity.
- I can be like Eve.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DILLEN MARSH



- Eve was a daughter of God.
- Eve honored Adam, the prophet.
- Eve learned the difference between good and evil.
- Eve was honest in confessing her transgression.
- Eve became a righteous mother.
- Eve worked to take care of her family.
- Eve listened to the Lord and learned the gospel.
- Eve obeyed the commandments.

Eve taught her family the gospel.
Eve loved her family.



An Activity Day Invitation

BY MARIANNE DAHL JOHNSON

Based on a true story

"Gather together in one the children of God" (John 11:52).

Remember that activity day is after school today," Mom said at breakfast.

Clarissa sighed. "I know."

"What's wrong?" Mom asked. "I thought you loved activity day."

"It's all right," Clarissa said.

"Remember how excited you were to go when you turned eight?" Mom asked. "And you like Sister Cobian."

"She's great," Clarissa said. "It's just hard because Ashley and I are the only two who go. I like Ashley, and she is always nice to me. But she is almost 12, and I just turned 9. I don't really know what to say to her. It's not that fun."

Mom put her arm around Clarissa. "I'm sorry it's hard sometimes. We have a small Primary without a lot of girls, but I'm sure you'll have a good time this afternoon."

After school Clarissa walked the one block to the church where they held activity day. Sister Cobian and Ashley greeted her happily. After the opening prayer Sister Cobian said, "I asked the Primary president about

girls who are on the Primary rolls but don't come to activity day or Primary. I have this list of the girls and their phone numbers. I thought that if we called them before each activity day, they might come join us."

"That's a great idea!" Clarissa exclaimed. "It would be fun to have more girls here."

Sister Cobian smiled. "I'm glad you like the idea, because I want to ask you to call the girls before our next activity day."

"Me?" Clarissa gulped. She wasn't sure about that. Sister Cobian handed her the list. She knew all the girls from school, and some of them came to church occasionally. But it might be scary to call and invite them.

"Will you do it?" Sister Cobian asked.

Clarissa looked at the list again. Some of these girls were her age. Activity day would be a lot more fun if they came too. "Sure," she said.

Before the next activity day, Clarissa called the girls on the list. She left messages or talked to all of them. It wasn't hard at all.

The next day at school, Olivia, one of the girls Clarissa had called, asked her if they could walk to activity day together. Clarissa was thrilled! After school Clarissa and Olivia walked to the church together.



When they entered the Primary room, Sister Cobian gave them a big smile.

Before the next activity day, Clarissa called the girls again. Olivia was excited to come again. Chelsea said she would come too. The next afternoon Clarissa felt so happy as she walked to the meetinghouse with Olivia and Chelsea.

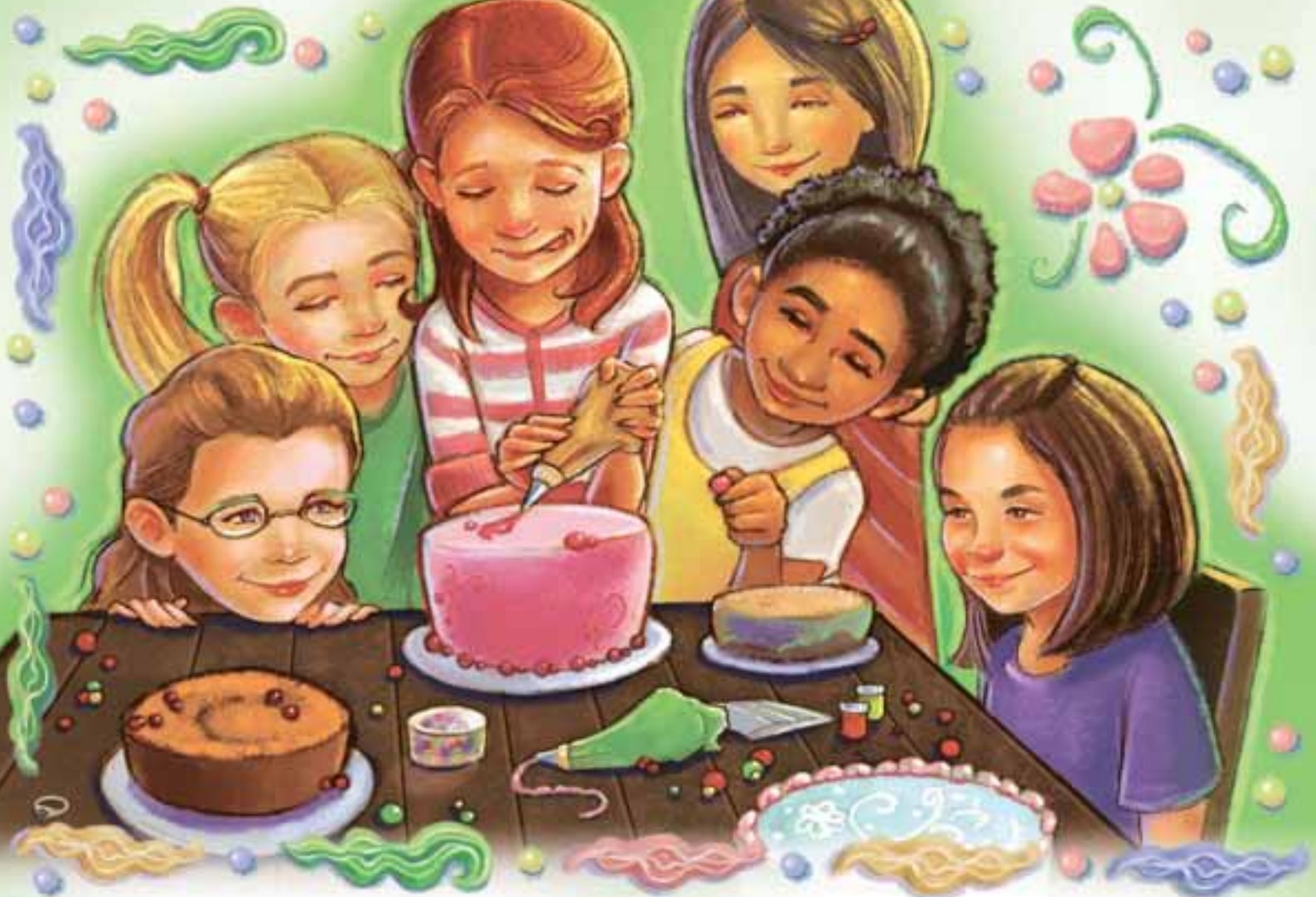
That night Clarissa told her mother how fun activity day was with more girls. "I just wish Madison could come," Clarissa said. "She's my best friend."

"Well, why can't she?" Mom asked.

"Mom, she's not on the list. She's not a member of the Church."

"That doesn't matter," Mom said. "You'll be doing missionary work when you invite her. You're already being a missionary by encouraging Olivia and Chelsea."

Clarissa thought about that. When she called the activity-day girls again, she called Madison too. Madison asked her mom if she could go, and her mom said yes. Clarissa couldn't believe how easy it was. She wondered why she hadn't invited Madison months ago!



At activity day that week, Sister Cobian made an exciting announcement. At their next activity day, they were going to have a special guest teach them how to decorate cakes. Clarissa and Madison smiled at each other. That sounded fun! As they left that afternoon, Madison said, "Thanks for inviting me. I want to come next time to decorate cakes."

The very next day, Clarissa started talking to all of her friends at school about the cake-decorating activity. Madison helped. Many of their friends said they wanted to come.

"There might be 15 girls at our next activity day," Clarissa told her mother.

"Fifteen!" Mom exclaimed. "Where did you find that many girls?"

"I've been inviting all the girls in my class," Clarissa said.

"That's wonderful!" Mom said. "But you better let Sister Cobian know so she will be prepared for that many."

Clarissa called Sister Cobian to tell her how many girls to expect. On activity day the Primary room was crowded with girls chattering and laughing as they decorated cakes. Sister Cobian winked at Clarissa and gave her a big smile.

Afterward Clarissa helped Sister Cobian clean up. Her friend Emily came to say good-bye. "Thanks," she said shyly to Sister Cobian. "Is it OK if I invite my older sister and my two cousins next time?"

Sister Cobian smiled. "That would be great, Emily," she said.

Clarissa could hardly wait for the next activity day! ●



"[Invite] our friends and neighbors into the ongoing flow of family and Church activities. As we invite our friends to join us for these activities, they will also feel the Spirit."

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Creating a Gospel-Sharing Home," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2006, 86.

What is true conversion?

Stated simply, true conversion is the fruit of *faith*, *repentance*, and *consistent obedience*.

Faith comes by hearing the word of God and responding to it. You will receive from the Holy Ghost a confirming witness of things you accept on *faith* by willingly doing them.

You will be led to *repent* of errors resulting from wrong things done or right things not done. As a consequence, your capacity

to *consistently obey* will be strengthened.

This cycle of *faith*, *repentance*, and *consistent obedience* will lead you to greater conversion with its attendant blessings.

True conversion will strengthen your capacity to do what you know you should do, when you should do it, regardless of the circumstances. ●

From "Full Conversion Brings Happiness," Liahona, July 2002, 27; Ensign, May 2002, 25.



Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shares some of his thoughts on this subject.



I Can Be a Missionary Now

BY PATSY PEHRSON

Based on a true story

"I will be with you; and in whatsoever place ye shall proclaim my name an effectual door shall be opened unto you, that they may receive my word" (D&C 112:19).

It was dusk as Micah knelt beside his bed with his younger brother, Noah, to say their prayers. He was still thinking about their neighbor, an older man named Sam. Just then Mom appeared in the doorway.

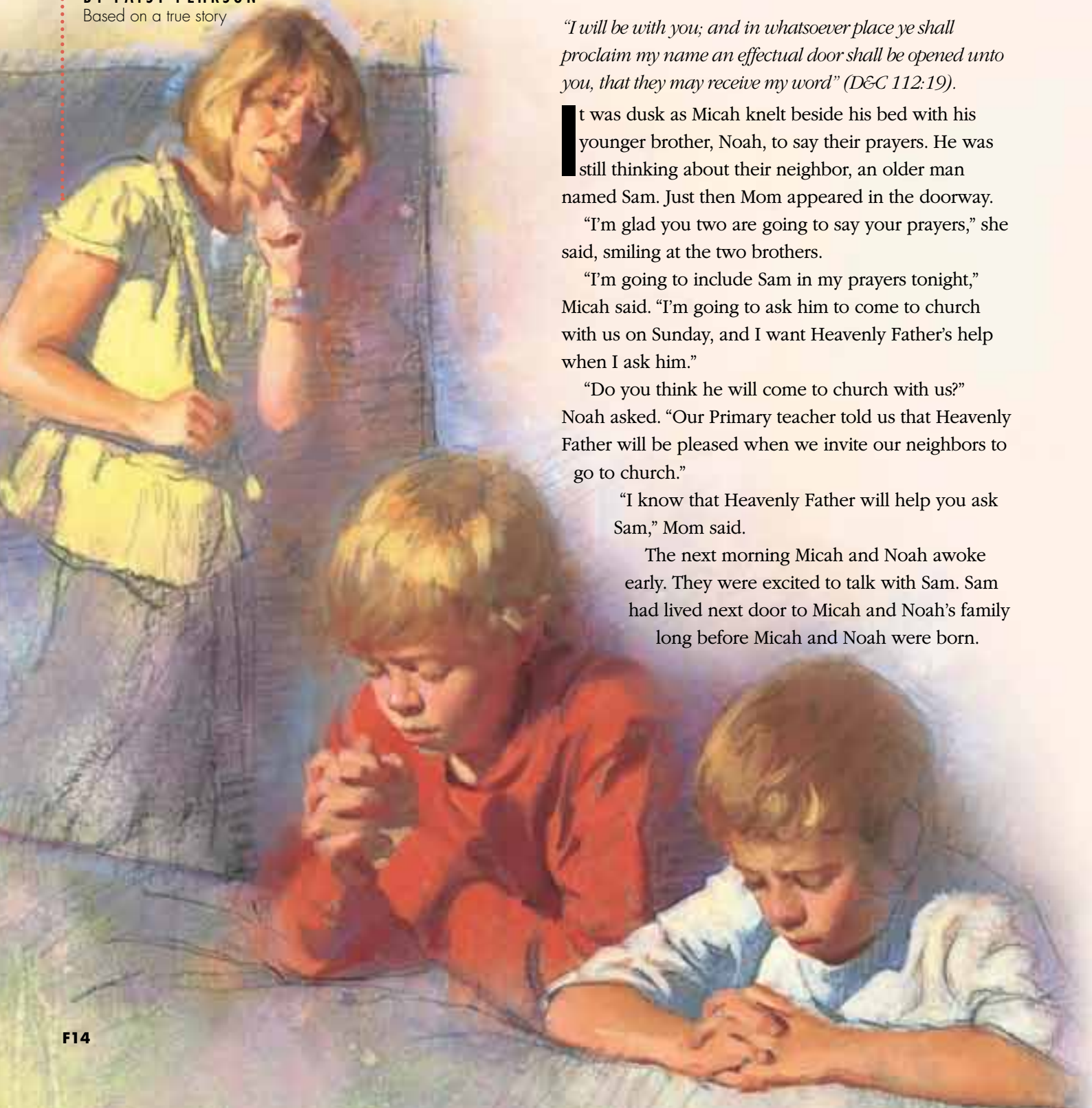
"I'm glad you two are going to say your prayers," she said, smiling at the two brothers.

"I'm going to include Sam in my prayers tonight," Micah said. "I'm going to ask him to come to church with us on Sunday, and I want Heavenly Father's help when I ask him."

"Do you think he will come to church with us?" Noah asked. "Our Primary teacher told us that Heavenly Father will be pleased when we invite our neighbors to go to church."

"I know that Heavenly Father will help you ask Sam," Mom said.

The next morning Micah and Noah awoke early. They were excited to talk with Sam. Sam had lived next door to Micah and Noah's family long before Micah and Noah were born.



Micah knew Sam had been very lonely since his wife died.

The boys made their beds without being reminded and quickly ate their breakfast before heading out the door.

“Are you scared?” Noah asked Micah.

“No. I think Sam is going to say yes,” Micah replied.

“Well, maybe I’m a little scared,” he added.

The two ran toward Sam’s house. Micah was sure that Noah was as nervous as he was. What if Sam said no? What if Sam wouldn’t want to be their friend anymore and stopped taking them and Dad fishing?

They walked in silence up to Sam’s front door. Just as they knocked at the door, someone walked around the side of the house. “Hello, boys!” he said, walking toward them. “What are you two up to today?” Even though a large straw hat hid his face, the boys knew from the voice that it was Sam. And they knew that he was smiling.

“We came to visit you,” Micah said.

“Yeah,” Noah said. He quickly added, “Micah has something to ask you.”

Micah’s heart pounded in his chest. He took a deep breath and blurted out, “Will you come to church with us tomorrow? You can ride with us—we have plenty of room—and you can sit with us at church.”

“Well, I see your family leaving for church every Sunday, and I haven’t been to a church in a long time,” Sam said. “I think that would be OK for me to go to church with you this Sunday.”

“Yea!” both boys exclaimed at the same time.

Noah said, “We leave at 9:30. We’ll pick you up then!”

As the boys ran home, Micah turned and called to Sam, who was still smiling. “See you tomorrow morning at 9:30!”

As they entered their house, Mom and Dad were waiting for them.

“What did Sam say?” Dad asked. “Is he going to church with us?”

Micah grinned. “Yes. We said we’d pick him up at 9:30.”

That night when they said their prayers, Noah and Micah remembered to thank Heavenly Father for helping them ask Sam to go to church with them.

“I feel really happy,” Micah said.

“I do too,” Noah said.

The two boys climbed into their beds, and Micah remembered something their bishop had said in sacrament meeting the week before: “Every member a missionary!” ●



“We are missionaries every day in our families . . . and in our communities. Regardless of our age, experience, or station in life, we are all missionaries.”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Becoming a Missionary,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 44.



I CAME TO EARTH AS PART OF A FAMILY

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



Child of Mine, by Jon McNaughton

*“And [Jesus] grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom:
and the grace of God was upon him” (Luke 2:40).*



The words of the Lord, as they have been given to us through the ages from His holy prophets, have guided us in a plan the Lord has established for us. That plan is complete from the beginning of time until we have an opportunity, if we live worthily, to live with Him in the eternities to come.” See Elder L. Tom Perry, “The Great Plan of Our God,” page 10.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

Committed to the Kingdom

On a memorable Christmas Eve in 1937, Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, then a full-time missionary, and his companion walked from Salzburg, Austria, to the village of Oberndorf, nestled in the Bavarian Alps. While visiting the village known as the inspiration for the hymn “Silent Night,”¹ they paused in a small church to listen to Christmas music sung by a choir.

“A crisp, clear winter night enveloped us as we began our return trip,” Elder Wirthlin recalled. “We walked under a canopy of stars and across the smooth stillness of new-fallen snow.”²

As they walked, the young missionaries shared their hopes, dreams, and goals for the future. In that heavenly setting, Elder Wirthlin renewed his commitment to serve the Lord: “I made up my mind that I would magnify any callings I received in the Lord’s kingdom.”³

Elder Wirthlin kept that commitment for the rest of his mortal life, which ended on December 1, 2008, when he died peacefully at age 91 of causes incident to age.

Of his service as a bishop, counselor in a stake presidency, counselor in the Sunday School general presidency, Assistant to the Twelve, and member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, he declared, “I’ve loved every assignment I’ve ever had in the kingdom.” Upon being sustained as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles on October 4, 1986, he explained, “And in that service, every day seemed like Sunday, because it was in the service of the Lord.”⁴



Faith and Football

Joseph Bitner Wirthlin was born in Salt Lake City, Utah, on June 11, 1917, the first of five children born to Joseph L. Wirthlin, who served as Presiding Bishop, and Madeline Bitner Wirthlin. Joseph’s father supported the family as head of Wirthlin’s Inc., a wholesale and retail food business, while his mother encouraged their children in a variety of pursuits, including music and sports. Joseph and Madeline taught their children humility, honesty, diligence, service, compassion, and faith.

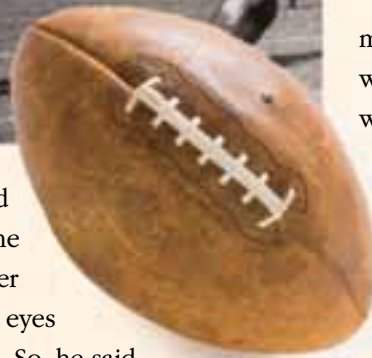
Young Joseph had many talents but eventually gravitated to sports, lettering in high school football, basketball, and track. After playing quarterback at East High School, he went on to play running back for three years at the University of Utah.⁵

From the pulpit, Elder Wirthlin enjoyed sharing lessons he had learned as a football player. One important lesson came at the bottom of a pile of 10 players during a conference championship game. After attempting to score what would have been the winning touchdown, Joseph was tackled just short of the goal line.

“At that moment I was tempted to push the ball forward. . . . I would have been a hero,” he recalled. But then he remembered the words of his mother: “Joseph,” she had often said to him, “do what is right, no matter the consequence.”



Above: For three years Joseph B. Wirthlin (number 4) played running back for the University of Utah football team before giving up football and postponing his schooling to become a missionary (below) in 1937. **Right:** Joseph B. and Elisa Young Rogers Wirthlin on their wedding day, May 26, 1941.



Joseph wanted to be a hero in the eyes of his mother more than in the eyes of his teammates. So, he said, “I left the ball where it was—two inches from the goal line.”⁶

After the end of the 1936 football season, Joseph’s father approached him about serving a mission. War was brewing in Europe, and if Joseph didn’t leave soon, he could lose the chance to serve.

“I wanted to pursue my dream of continuing to play football and to graduate from the university,” Elder Wirthlin said. “If I were to accept a mission call, I would have to give up everything. In those days a mission call was 30 months long, and I knew if I accepted, there was a good chance I would never play football again—perhaps I would not even be able to graduate.”⁷

But Joseph had also dreamed of being a missionary, and he knew what he must do. A few months later he was on his way to Europe, where he would serve in the German-Austrian and the Swiss-Austrian Missions from 1937 to 1939.

He never played football again, but he did graduate from the university, majoring in business administration. “Even so, I’ve never regretted serving a mission and committing myself to serving the Lord,” he said. “By doing so, my life has been filled with adventure, spiritual experiences, and joy that surpasses understanding.”⁸

“A Perfect Marriage”

Among the resolutions Elder Wirthlin made that Christmas night in Oberndorf was that he would marry a spiritually strong woman who lived the gospel. He described her physical traits to his mission companion: five-foot-five (1.6 m), blonde hair, and blue eyes. Two and a half years after his mission, he met Elisa Young Rogers. She fit his description perfectly.

“I remember the first time I met her,” Elder Wirthlin said during a conference address in 2006, two months after she died. “As a favor to a friend, I had gone to her home to pick up her sister, Frances. Elisa opened the door, and at least for me, it was love at first sight.



“I think she must have felt something too, for the first words I ever remember her saying were, ‘I knew who you was.’”

Elder Wirthlin joked about that grammatical error because she was majoring in English. But, he said, “I still cherish those five words as some of the most beautiful in human language.”⁹

They married in the Salt Lake Temple on May 26, 1941, and for 65 years shared what Elder Wirthlin called “a perfect marriage.”¹⁰ They strengthened, encouraged, and sustained each other, and they counseled together when making decisions. Elder Wirthlin never left the house without kissing Elisa good-bye, and he



would call often each day to check on her.¹¹

Elder Wirthlin's father was called to the Presiding Bishopric in 1938, so Elder Wirthlin took over the family's food business when he returned from his mission. Later, while he and Elisa were raising their children, he put in long hours meeting the demands of work and Church responsibilities. Elisa and their seven daughters and one son, however, remained Elder Wirthlin's pride and joy. At his passing, he had 59 grandchildren and nearly 100 great-grandchildren.

Loving Others

Elder Wirthlin, whom President Thomas S. Monson called "a man of great innate goodness,"¹² was loved by all who knew him. For 33 years while he served as a General Authority, including 22 years as an Apostle, that goodness manifested itself as he shared his testimony—in both word and deed—of the Savior and His restored gospel.

With humility and often with humor, Elder Wirthlin encouraged Latter-day Saints to make the most of mortality by emulating the example of the Savior. To do that, he taught, focus on the one, cultivate kindness, and love others.

"The most cherished and sacred moments of our lives are those filled with the spirit of love," he taught. "The greater the measure of our love, the greater is our joy. In the end, the development of such love is the true



measure of success in life." To truly learn how to love, he added, we need merely reflect on the life of the Savior.¹³

"We are all busy," Elder Wirthlin said on another occasion. "It's easy to find excuses for not reaching out to others, but I imagine they will sound as hollow to our Heavenly Father as the elementary school boy who gave his teacher a note asking that he be excused from school March 30th through the 34th."¹⁴

Elder Wirthlin also encouraged members of the Church to "live in thanksgiving daily," regardless of adversity.¹⁵ "If we will consider the blessings we have, we will forget some of our worries," he taught.¹⁶

A Parting Testimony

"There may be some who think that General Authorities rarely experience pain, suffering, or distress. If only that were true," Elder Wirthlin said during his last general conference address. "The Lord in His wisdom does not shield anyone from grief or sadness."¹⁷

Above: The extended Wirthlin family in June 1999. Left: Elder and Sister Wirthlin greet Church members following an Education Week devotional at Ricks College (now Brigham Young University-Idaho) in 1998. Below: A 1999 painting of Elder and Sister Wirthlin.



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE WIRTHLIN FAMILY. EXCEPT AS NOTED: LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH OF FOOTBALL BY CHRISTINA SMITH; RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPH OF SISTER AND ELDER WIRTHLIN BY MICHAEL LEWIS; BYU-IDAHO, MAY NOT BE COPIED; PAINTING BY CLOY KENT

Elder Wirthlin's "greatest sorrow" came with the death of his beloved Elisa. During the lonely hours that ensued, he drew strength from "the comforting doctrines of eternal life" and from his testimony that the dark Friday of the Savior's Crucifixion was followed by the bright Sunday of His Resurrection.¹⁸

Because Elder Wirthlin had a firm testimony of the Savior's atoning sacrifice, he knew that death is not the end of existence and that a reunion awaits the faithful who have made promises in holy temples.

"We will all rise from the grave," he testified in October 2006. "On that day my father will embrace my mother. On that day I will once again hold in my arms my beloved Elisa."¹⁹

And on that day, a commitment made on a cold winter night long ago will have made all the difference. ■

NOTES

1. "Silent Night," *Hymns*, no. 204.
2. Joseph B. Wirthlin, "Lessons Learned in the Journey of Life," *Liahona*, May 2001, 36; *Ensign*, Dec. 2000, 7.
3. *Liahona*, May 2001, 37; *Ensign*, Dec. 2000, 8.
4. Joseph B. Wirthlin, "Pulling in the Gospel Net," *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 59.
5. See Don L. Searle, "Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin: Finding Happiness Serving the Lord," *Ensign*, Dec. 1986, 10.
6. Joseph B. Wirthlin, "Life's Lessons Learned," *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2007, 46.
7. *Liahona*, May 2001, 36; *Ensign*, Dec. 2000, 7.
8. *Liahona*, May 2001, 37; *Ensign*, Dec. 2000, 8.
9. Joseph B. Wirthlin, "Sunday Will Come," *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 28.
10. *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 28.
11. See *Ensign*, Dec. 1986, 10.
12. Quoted in *Ensign*, Dec. 1986, 13.
13. Joseph B. Wirthlin, "The Great Commandment," *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 30.
14. Joseph B. Wirthlin, "The Abundant Life," *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2006, 101.
15. Joseph B. Wirthlin, "Live in Thanksgiving Daily," *Ensign*, Sept. 2001, 13.
16. Joseph B. Wirthlin, "One Step after Another," *Liahona*, Jan. 2002, 27; *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 25.
17. Joseph B. Wirthlin, "Come What May, and Love It," *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 26.
18. See *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 29.
19. *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 30.



FUNERAL TRIBUTES

"I loved him as a brother. I miss him. Over the years, Joseph and I served together in many assignments. We were more than colleagues, however; we were close personal friends. . . . There was no chink in his armor. There was no guile in his soul. There was no flaw in his character. Elder Wirthlin loved the Lord with all his heart and soul and served Him with all his might to the very end of his mortal life. . . . Joseph knew the Lord, and the Lord knew Joseph."

President Thomas S. Monson

After reading an article and testimony by Elder Wirthlin (see "Silent Night, Holy Night," *Church News*, Nov. 29, 2008, 8–9), President Packer suggested that the family have it "printed in such a way that members of the Wirthlin family yet unborn will come to know the great man who was their grandfather and was an Apostle."

**President Boyd K. Packer,
President of the Quorum
of the Twelve Apostles**



"He and I sat side by side on the [stake] high council. . . . For a total of 11 years, Joseph served as my counselor [in the stake presidency and the general superintendency of the Sunday School]. Every assignment he completed well. . . . Little did we know then that we would later sit together in the Quorum of the Twelve. . . . He never sought the limelight. He personified the statement of the Master, who said, 'He that is greatest among you shall be your servant.' Now Joseph will experience another promise of the Lord: 'He that shall humble himself shall be exalted' (Matthew 23:11–12)."

**Elder Russell M. Nelson of the
Quorum of the Twelve Apostles**

"When I contemplate the legacy that Dad left his family and the Church, his humility stands out. Dad just never saw himself as anyone special. When President Monson ordained him an Apostle, he prophetically declared to Dad, 'Your humility will endear you to the people.' And so it has."

Joseph B. Wirthlin Jr.