

That They May Grow Up in Thee:

# MARKERS OF ADULTHOOD

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During the dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland Temple, Joseph Smith prayed that those who worship in the temple “may *grow up* in thee, and receive a fulness of the Holy Ghost, and be organized according to thy laws, and be prepared to obtain every needful thing” (D&C 109:15; emphasis added).

We’ve learned from our professional experience in counseling Latter-day Saint young adults that they can feel uncertain about what it takes to grow up, especially to grow up in the Lord. By considering what adulthood entails, all young adults—single or married—can work constructively toward growing up, not just growing older. Some crucial markers of adulthood include the following.

## 1. Acquiring an Adult Sense of Mission

Creating a sense of mission and choosing among career options are challenging propositions. Adults gain clarity about educational and career choices by trying multiple options, asking questions, volunteering or working in entry-level jobs to gain experience, and attending to what they find enjoyable and energizing. Making these commitments even amid uncertainty builds a sense of competence and reduces our dependence on others.

## 2. Establishing Personal Goals and Routines

Adults learn the satisfaction of setting goals, exercising discipline, savoring the journey, establishing daily routines and patterns, and determining a life course consistent with their deepest values. Goals and routines help people

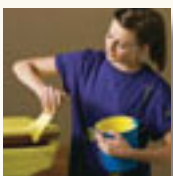
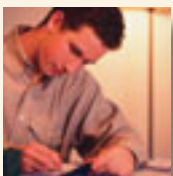
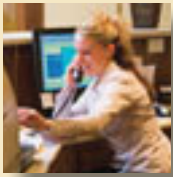
prevent depression and temptation and navigate between the opposing quicksands of boredom and excessive stress. As we learn to stick with a difficult task, we have the pleasure of getting the things we want most, not just the things we want now.

## 3. Managing Physical Self-Care

Arranging for our own dental and medical care, haircuts, exercise, nutritious food, and consistent sleep can become positive ways to truly claim the gift of the body. Physical self-care allows us to take responsibility for our health and well-being.

## 4. Increasing Financial Independence

As we increase our earning power and manage our funds, we both secure our financial future and get things we



currently need. Young adults can benefit from suggestions from their parents and leaders about paying tithing, budgeting, investing, saving a percentage of income, and understanding debt.

### 5. Creating a Home

As we get older, we can make a home that reflects our taste, lifestyle, and personality. How satisfying to have a place of our own—be it a corner of a room for our books or tools or an apartment or house. As we impose order and beauty on our surroundings, we join the Creator in a creative process.

### 6. Developing Other Relationships

Marriage and parenthood are an obvious transition into adulthood. But single adults can also “grow up” in terms of their other relationships. Although nothing replaces the ideal of marriage and having children, singles can enjoy relationships with siblings, cousins, friends, co-workers, neighbors, and ward or branch members. Friends can provide continuity, regular interaction, and mutual care.



### 7. Learning Skills of Emotional Connection

Initiating friendliness, responding to others’ invitations, and enjoying people of different ages are all social skills of adulthood. As we increase our capacity to care about other people, work through conflicts, and share ourselves honestly, we feel meaningfully connected to others.

Some young adults feel anxiety in social interactions. They may turn to alcohol, drugs, pornography, eating disorders, or other unhealthy behaviors as a distraction from or defense against fears. Learning to make conversation, deepen friendships gradually, and solve interpersonal conflict help us overcome social vulnerabilities.

### 8. Building a Community

Young adults can make a real difference for good in the world. Being involved in community service, taking someone to dinner, inviting others over, doing home or visiting teaching, joining a sports team, and magnifying Church callings all make our lives—and those of others—richer and more meaningful.

### 9. Supporting the Next Generation

We know people are real adults when they move from

being the *taken-care-of* to being the *taking-care-of*. Young adults bless lives by passing their knowledge, experience, and care to the next generation. Regular activities with nieces and nephews, neighborhood children, or Primary and youth classes encourage relationships that are meaningful for both generations. We also support the next generation by mentoring new people at work, contributing to our profession, doing missionary work, or getting to know those who are investigating the Church.

### 10. Growing in Spiritual Responsibility

As we establish adult routines, we clarify our spiritual priorities for prayer, scripture study, Church service, and temple worship. The temple emphasizes the importance of family across and between the generations, and it also makes clear that God relates to each of us as individuals. Qualifying for a temple recommend means we are welcome in God’s house, where we can continue to “grow up” in Him. ■

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