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When you discover your family's story, you learn about yourself in the process.



THREE WAYS

TO BE INVOLVED IN FAMILY HISTORY

By Sally Johnson Odekirk
Church Magazines

When Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “Your fingers have been trained to text and tweet to accelerate and advance the work of the Lord—not just to communicate quickly with your friends,” he was talking about you! He then said, “I encourage you to study, to search out your ancestors, and to prepare yourselves to perform proxy baptisms in the house of the Lord for *your* kindred dead” (“The Hearts of the Children Shall Turn,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 27).

Thousands of young men and young women all over the world have accepted his invitation to search out their ancestors and perform proxy baptisms for them. One young woman, Kaitlen D., discovered that when she takes family names to the temple, it becomes a more meaningful experience.

She says, “When I began doing family temple ordinances, I realized that in the midst of the raging world that I live in, the only time I was able to be still and settle myself was within the walls of that holy place. I also began to feel closer to those on the other side of the veil. When performing the baptisms and confirmations, I began to think of all those people who had been waiting for so long for this to happen. It’s a nearly indescribable feeling—full of love and hope—that has increased my testimony so much.”

There are many different ways to get involved in family history and temple work, so where do you start? Three youth share their experiences of learning about family stories, interviewing family members, and finding family names to take to the temple.

1 My Ancestors Are Good Examples to Me

By Kyle S., Texas, USA

My parents and I listened to Elder Bednar in the October 2011 general conference when he said that working on family history would give us protection against the adversary. We started working on our family history then. I keep learning and growing from family history; it's really fun.

I like finding out about where I'm from and about my ancestors. I learn from their experiences and use them in my life to help me be a better person. It's amazing to discover who they were, what they did for a living, what life was like, and how hard it was for them.

For example, I enjoyed learning about one of my ancestors who moved with his family from Tennessee to Texas, USA, in the 1870s to be a cattle rancher. He faced many challenges in his life, and from him I learned that life can be hard, so it's important to stand up for what you believe.

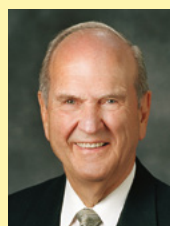
When I have challenges in my life, working on family history makes me feel like my ancestors are always with me and will help me through hard trials, just as Elder Bednar promised us.

How to Find Your Family Stories

Collect stories of what your ancestors liked to do.

Help make your ancestors come alive and find common ground with them. What sports did they play? What foods did they eat? What was their school like?

Talk to your parents and grandparents about stories from their lives. You can use the Church's *My Family* booklet to get started with gathering and sharing family stories. On FamilySearch.org, you can add photos, stories, sources of information, audio recordings, and documents to help others in your family get to know your ancestors. Visit FamilySearch.org and click "Memories" to get started.



HOW FAMILY HISTORY CHANGES US

"When our hearts turn to our ancestors, something changes inside us. We feel part of something greater than ourselves. Our inborn yearnings for family connections are fulfilled when we are linked to our ancestors through sacred ordinances of the temple."

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Generations Linked in Love," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2010, 92.



Recording My Grandparents' Stories

By Matias M., Utah, USA

My grandparents live in Uruguay. When my maternal grandparents visited my family, I took the opportunity to interview them and learn about their story of how they became members of the Church. I had never heard their story before, so hearing the story from my grandparents was truly an amazing experience.

I took notes while interviewing them, and I also recorded them using my phone so that I could listen to it whenever I want to hear it again. I uploaded that audio file to FamilySearch so that others could benefit from listening to their story, both now and in the future.

A few months later I was able to record and upload an interview with my paternal grandparents. I learned so much that I hadn't known before, and they told me a lot more about their lives than what I expected.

It was so great to hear my own grandparents tell their story and to listen to some advice they had for me. I know that having just taken a few minutes to do these interviews will help me to “persuade [my] children . . . to believe in Christ” (2 Nephi 25:23) as the prophet Nephi in the Book of Mormon did for his descendants. I know that when my children hear my grandparents' testimonies, their testimonies will be strengthened also.

How to Interview Family Members

For a ward or branch activity, you and the other youth could interview older family members. Think of a question or two that you would like to ask your parents, grandparents, or other relatives. Then sit down with them, ask them a question about their lives, and film or record it on your phone. When you are done, you can upload it to the memories section of FamilySearch.org.

My Goal: Take 10 Family Names to the Temple

By Rajane S., Jamaica

I have always been fascinated by genealogy work, so when our Area Presidency gave the youth the goal of gathering 10 ancestors' names to do baptisms and confirmations for them at the temple, I was ecstatic.

I started my research without any help, but I wasn't getting anywhere. I had three names without any information, and at that point I felt stuck both spiritually and physically. I decided to ask my mother for help. She suggested that I call her mother. When I called my grandmother, she was more than happy to help. She even gave me permission to act as proxy on behalf of the names we talked about. I was overjoyed and grateful.

The temple trip was approaching, and I had no names from my father's side. A few hours before I was to leave home, I felt impressed to go to the cemetery and have my father call his aunt to come. We went to the cemetery, and as I watched my father and great-aunt walk around the cemetery, I felt myself being led toward some of my ancestors' headstones. I felt their willingness to be part of the gospel. With help from the Holy Ghost and from my family members, I had reached my target. I had the names of 16 temple-ready ancestors!

When I went to the temple, I could feel the enthusiasm and excitement of my ancestors who were ready and waiting. During the baptisms and confirmations, I could feel their souls filled with joy and peace. I felt amazing, and all I wanted to do was thank them for giving me the opportunity to be a part of something so special.

How to Find Your Family Names for the Temple

Try the Descendancy view at FamilySearch.org to help you look for ancestors who need to have their temple work done. Then take the youth temple challenge: see page 54 in this issue. ■