

STANDARDS: ONE SIZE FITS ALL

Adults in one stake in England are discovering for themselves the blessings that come from paying closer attention to For the Strength of Youth.

BY DEBBIE TWIGGER

Sarah Edwards, Emily Bowles, and Eleanor McKee love shopping, and when they hit the clothes shops in Northampton, England, these young Latter-day Saint women take both cash and a certain booklet. That same booklet guides their parents when buying clothes or looking for a film to view.

In the Northampton England Stake, adults as well as teens are taking *For the Strength of Youth* to heart. It has helped parents evaluate the films and TV programs they watch and the activities they participate in. It has helped others to live the Sabbath more fully and enjoyably with their families. In fact, the adults of the stake have begun to call it “For the Strength of *You*” because it applies equally to them.

President Clive Joliffe, who was released as the stake president last year, says, “We discussed and prayed about helping families progress in the gospel and helping to prepare our children for missions and temple marriage, and we were inspired to use the *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet. We wanted the whole family to understand the standards that would bring happiness and joy to all members of the family.”

Youth in the stake have noticed—and appreciate—the



PHOTOGRAPHS BY SIMON JONES



Sarah Edwards, Eleanor McKee, and Emily Bowles have found *For the Strength of Youth* to be a handy guide when they shop for clothes.

difference this emphasis has made in their own families. “It’s really important to uphold standards, and as youth we look up to adults, so *For the Strength of Youth* reminds them of the standards we should all live,” says Eleanor McKee, 19. “It’s good for all of us to be reminded of what is expected of us and to make sure there are no double standards.”

Seventeen-year-old Daniel Kitsell, of the Huntingdon Ward, adds, “I like *For the Strength of Youth* because it is not just for the youth, but I know my parents are hearing it too, and it helps them keep the standards.”

One family that has felt the effects of following this counsel is that of Bishop Richard Auger of the Banbury Ward; his wife, Gill; and their two daughters, Hannah and Charlotte, both recently married in the London England Temple. Bishop Auger, an inspector with Thames Valley Police, is very aware of the world’s poor standards and their effects on youth and their behavior. “Gill and I used *For the Strength of Youth* to learn about parenting so we could be consistent and based on the scriptures,” he says. “Throughout the girls’ teenage years, we used it as a ready guide and in many different ways. When the girls wanted to shop for their own clothes, it was a worry to us, so we sent them out with the *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet so they could refer to it when making choices.”

Hannah, 21, says, “We kept the booklet in our purses as it states clearly what is and what isn’t appropriate.” The sisters learnt they could make some clothing more modest

with a little sewing or by adding accessories. Charlotte, 19, adds, “Hannah and I never felt that our parents made decisions for us. We knew that our parents followed the prophet and the Savior, and so by following our parents, we would always be living the teachings of the Savior too.”

A number of adults say that in addition to providing standards of modesty and wise media choices, the booklet benefits them by helping them pay attention to prophetic counsel on Sabbath observance. Sue Preece, Relief Society president in the Kettering Ward, sees *For the Strength of Youth* as a “tool for us to use as we strive for perfection. We don’t stop needing those guidelines when we reach 18. They prompt me into evaluating how I am doing, and there have been some changes made in my life that can only bring me closer to my Father in Heaven. For example, the Sabbath has become a real oasis to me, just by my making a minor change in the way that I observe this day.”

Sister A. J. Hough, also of the Kettering Ward, tells of how emphasis on *For the Strength of Youth* has helped her



The Auger family—Charlotte, Gill, Richard, and Hannah—have long recognized that it’s important for parents and children to be on the same page where standards are concerned.



When Josh Reynolds faced a choice about Sunday sports participation, his parents' good examples and teaching helped him make the right decision.

be a better parent: "Having three teenagers, I wanted to ensure that I, too, was living the standards completely. I was keen to find ways I could 'raise the bar' and set a good example. I decided on the section on 'Sabbath Day Observance' and have set myself new goals to improve the example I am personally. I hope I can be a better influence to those I love the most—my family. We now use the booklet during family home evening. And whether we're being creative with our family activities or planning ahead to fully observe the Sabbath, we use these standards to guide us."

Those kinds of examples are not lost on the youth of the stake. Like many young men, 16-year-old priest Josh Reynolds, from the

Kettering Ward, loves football and found initial success as a youngster. But conflict arose when he wanted to play alongside some of his friends on a local team whose matches were held on Sundays. "My mum and dad explained why and how as members of the Church we need to keep the Sabbath day holy. I accepted this and after a while did not feel upset. I am extremely grateful to my parents for setting a good example to me and teaching me to keep the Sabbath day holy."

A parent of five children, Heather Slattery, of the Kettering Ward, says, "Sometimes as parents and adults we think of these standards as youth values and forget that we are just as susceptible to temptation as the young people are. *For the Strength of Youth* is a constant reminder that we need to hold on to the iron rod alongside our youth and work together, strengthening and supporting

each other as children of our Heavenly Father."

There is no doubt the members of the Northampton stake feel stronger as individuals and families by following the guidelines in *For the Strength of Youth*. President Joliffe sums up his feelings: "The pamphlet is inspired and is simply put so each of us can see clearly what Heavenly Father expects from His children. I have tried to live by the standards so that my children would be encouraged to follow my example. I have a strong testimony that we are blessed to have clear counsel on how we should live in order to qualify for all the Father has for us." ■

IDEAS FOR USING FOR THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH

- Regularly read and discuss subjects from the booklet in family home evening.
- With the approval of your bishop or branch president, make the booklet a lesson topic for first-Sunday lessons in Relief Society and priesthood quorum meetings.
- Encourage family members to keep a copy with them to help them make correct choices.
- Base youth activities on the guidelines.
- Use the guidelines as a theme for a single adult activity.
- Refer to the guidelines when buying clothes, choosing a film, or planning activities.
- Have regular ward and stake youth firesides based on subjects from the booklet.

