

Liahona

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Liahona



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Photography by Christina Smith, posed by models.



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Illustrated by Taia Morley.



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Family Home Evening Ideas



*This page can help you use
the Liahona to enhance your
teaching in the classroom
as well as in the home.*

"Keys of the Priesthood,"

p. 26: Prepare a license that authorizes a special privilege to a family member. Present it and discuss the importance of having a license to do certain things. Read about the privileges and responsibilities Elder Russell M. Nelson's medical license gave him. Have each family member use a section of the article to teach about the keys of the priesthood. Share how your life has been blessed by those who hold priesthood keys.

"How Great Shall Be Your Joy,"

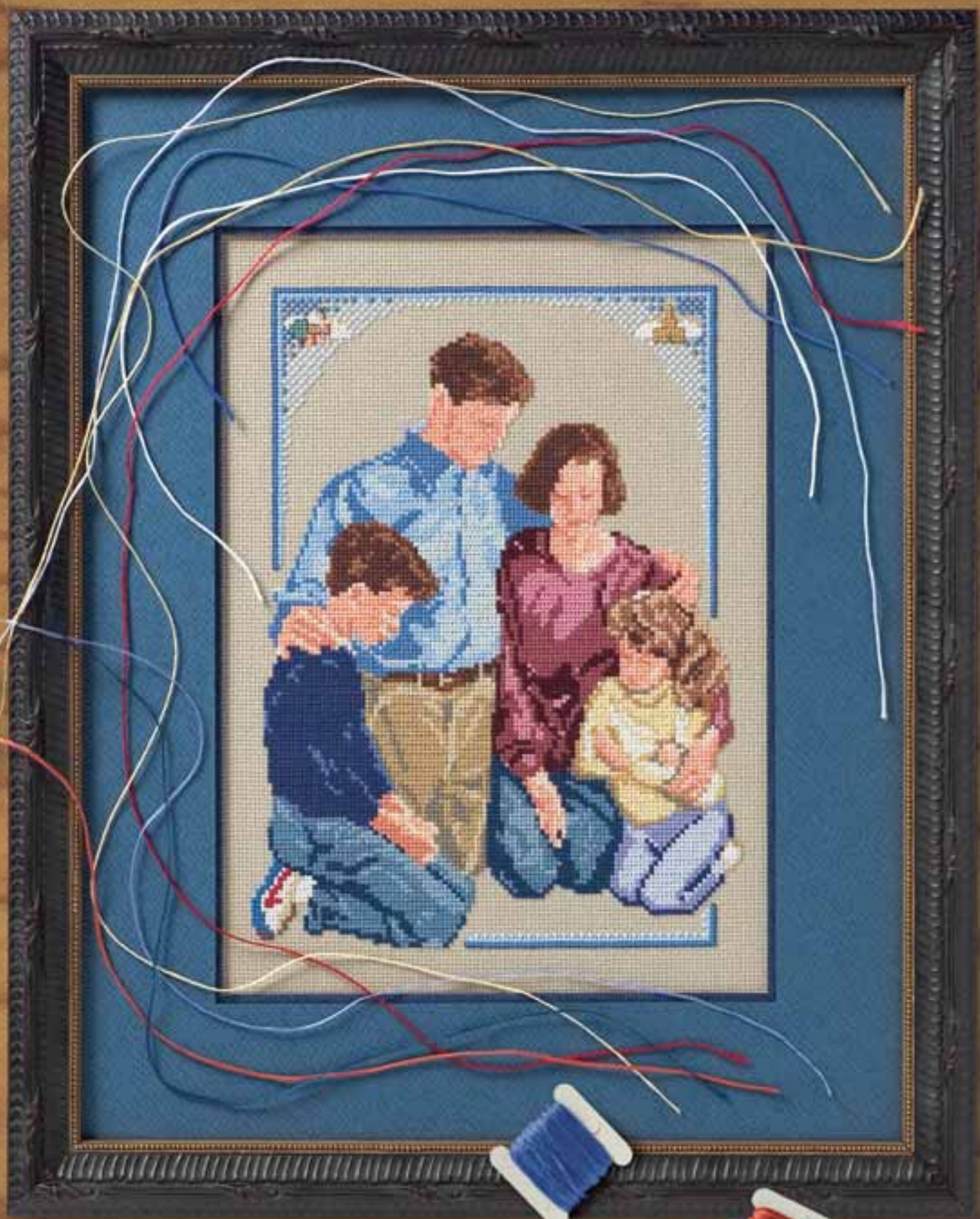
p. 34: Study together D&C 18:13–16. Invite family members to share how they feel about these verses. Read Elder Rodrigo Myrrha's story aloud. Testify of the three principles listed at the end of this article.

"You're a Mormon?" p. 36: Read the first six paragraphs of this story, and ask family members what they would do in a similar situation. Ask how they think this story ends. Discuss how to respond when asked about the Church. Practice by acting out the situation in this article.

"Forgive," p. F2: Tell the story of the peasant, and discuss why he died so unhappy. Read aloud the last paragraph, and bear testimony of the peace forgiveness brings. Give family members small pieces of string as reminders to forgive.
"Hero," p. F14: Ask family members to share the name of someone they admire and to tell why. How did the girl in this story come to know that the music star should not be her hero? Discuss who our heroes should be. Share a scripture that can help us decide whom to admire (see, for example, 3 Nephi 27:27; Moroni 7:16–17).

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A Thousand Threads Of Love

BY PRESIDENT JAMES E. FAUST
Second Counselor in the First Presidency

Parenthood is the greatest challenge in the world. In fact, on the subject of parenthood there are about as many opinions as there are parents, yet there are few who claim to have all of the answers. I am certainly not one of them.

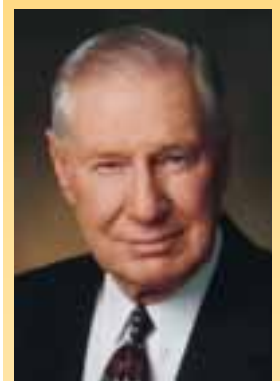
I feel that there are more outstanding young men and women among our people at present than at any other moment in my lifetime. This presupposes that most of these fine young people have come from good homes and have committed, caring parents. Even so, the most conscientious parents feel that they may have made some mistakes. One time, when I did a thoughtless thing, I remember my own mother exclaiming, “Where did I fail?”

The Lord has directed, “Bring up your children in light and truth.”¹ To me, there is no more important human effort. Being a father or a mother is not only a great challenge; it is a divine calling. It is an effort requiring consecration. President David O. McKay (1873–1970) stated that being parents is “the greatest trust that has been given to human beings.”²

A Great Challenge

While few human challenges are greater than that of being good parents, few opportunities offer greater potential for joy. Surely no more important work is to be done in this world than preparing our children to be God-fearing, happy, honorable, and productive. Parents will find no more fulfilling happiness than to have their children honor them and their teachings. It is the glory of parenthood. John testified, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”³

In my opinion, the teaching, rearing, and training of children requires more intelligence, intuitive understanding, humility, strength, wisdom, spirituality, perseverance, and hard work than any other challenge we might have in life. This is especially so when moral foundations of honor and decency are eroding around us. For us to have successful homes, values must be taught, and there must be rules, there must be standards, there must be absolutes. Many societies give parents very little support in teaching and honoring moral values. A number of cultures are becoming essentially valueless, and many of the younger people in those societies are becoming moral cynics.



Surely no more important work is to be done in this world than preparing our children to be God-fearing, happy, honorable, and productive.

The Best Hope

As whole societies have decayed and lost their moral identity and so many homes are broken, the best hope is to turn greater attention and effort to the teaching of the next generation—our children. In order to do this, we must first reinforce the primary teachers of children. Chief among these are the parents and other family members. The best environment should be in the home. Somehow, someday, we must try harder to make our homes stronger so that they will stand as sanctuaries against the unwholesome, pervasive moral dry rot around us. Harmony, happiness, peace, and love in the home can help give children the required inner strength to cope with life's challenges. Barbara Bush, wife of former United States president George Bush, once said to the graduates of Wellesley College:

“Whatever the era, whatever the times, one thing will never change: Fathers and mothers, if you have children, they must come first. You must read to your children and you must hug your children and you must love your children. Your success as a family, our success as a society, depends not on what happens in the White House but on what happens inside your house.”⁴

To be a good father and mother requires that the parents defer many of their own needs and desires in favor of the needs of their children. As a consequence of this sacrifice, conscientious parents develop a nobility of character and learn to put into practice the selfless truths taught by the Savior Himself.

I have the greatest respect for single parents who struggle and sacrifice, trying against almost superhuman odds to hold the family together. They should be honored and helped in their heroic efforts. But any mother's or father's task is much easier where there are two functioning parents in the home. Children often challenge and tax the strength and wisdom of both parents.

Years ago, Bishop Stanley Smoot was interviewed by President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985). President Kimball asked, “How often do you have family prayer?”

Bishop Smoot answered, “We try to have family prayer twice a day, but we average about once.”

President Kimball responded, “In the past, having family prayer once a day may have been all right. But in the future it will not be enough if we are going to save our families.”

I wonder if having casual and infrequent family home evening will be enough in the future to fortify our children with sufficient moral strength. In the future, infrequent family scripture study may be inadequate to arm our children with the virtue necessary to withstand the moral decay of the environment in which they will live. Where in the world will the children learn chastity, integrity, honesty, and basic human decency if not at home? These values will, of course, be reinforced at church, but parental teaching is more constant.

When parents try to teach their children to avoid danger, it is no answer for parents to say to their children, “We are experienced and wise in the ways of the world, and we can get closer to the edge of the cliff than you.” Parental hypocrisy can make children cynical and unbelieving of what they are taught in the home. For instance, when parents attend movies they forbid their children to see, parental credibility is diminished. If children are expected to be honest, parents must be honest. If children are expected to be virtuous, parents must be virtuous. If you expect your children to be honorable, you must be honorable.

Among the other values children should be taught are respect for others, beginning with the child's own parents and family; respect for the symbols of faith and the patriotic beliefs of others; respect for law and order; respect for the property of others; respect for authority. Paul reminds us that children should “learn first to shew piety at home.”⁵

Appropriate Discipline

One of the most difficult parental challenges is to appropriately discipline children. Child rearing is so individualistic. Every child is different and unique. What works with one may not work with another. I do not know who is wise enough to say what discipline is too harsh or what is too lenient except the parents of the children themselves, who love them most. It is a matter of prayerful discernment for the parents. Certainly the overarching and undergirding

principle is that the discipline of children must be motivated more by love than by punishment. Brigham Young (1801–77) counseled, “If you are ever called upon to chasten a person, never chasten beyond the balm you have within you to bind up.”⁶ Direction and discipline are, however, certainly an indispensable part of child rearing. If parents do not discipline their children, then the public will discipline them in a way the parents do not like. Without discipline, children will not respect either the rules of the home or of society.

A principal purpose for discipline is to teach obedience. President David O. McKay stated: “Parents who fail to teach obedience to their children, if [their] homes do not develop obedience society will demand it and get it. It is therefore better for the home, with its kindness, sympathy and understanding to train the child in obedience rather than callously to leave him to the brutal and unsympathetic discipline that society will impose if the home has not already fulfilled its obligation.”⁷

Teaching Responsibility

An essential part of teaching children to be disciplined and responsible is to have them learn to work. As we grow up, many of us are like the man who said, “I like work; it fascinates me. I can sit and look at it for hours.”⁸ Again, the best teachers of the principle of work are the parents themselves. For me, work became a joy when I first worked alongside my father, grandfather, uncles, and brothers. I am sure that I was often more of an aggravation than a help, but the memories are sweet and the lessons learned are valuable. Children need to learn responsibility and independence. Are the parents personally taking the time to show and demonstrate



and explain so that children can, as Lehi taught, “act for themselves and not . . . be acted upon”⁹

Luther Burbank, one of the world’s greatest horticulturists, said, “If we had paid no more attention to our plants than we have to our children, we would now be living in a jungle of weeds.”¹⁰

Children are also beneficiaries of moral agency by which we are all afforded the opportunity to progress, grow, and develop. That agency also permits children to pursue the alternate choices of selfishness, wastefulness, self-indulgence, and self-destruction. Children often express this agency when very young.

Let parents who have been conscientious, loving, and concerned and who have lived the principles of righteousness as best they could be comforted in knowing that they are good parents despite the actions of some of their children. The children themselves have a responsibility to listen, to obey, and, having been taught, to learn. Parents cannot always answer for all their children’s misconduct

An essential part of teaching children to be disciplined and responsible is to have them learn to work. The best teachers of the principle of work are the parents themselves.



The scriptures tell us that parents are to teach their children “faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost,” as well as “the doctrine of repentance.” These truths must be taught in the home.

because they cannot ensure the children’s good behavior. Some few children would tax even Solomon’s wisdom and Job’s patience.

There is often a special challenge for those parents who are affluent or overly indulgent. In a sense, some children in those circumstances hold their parents hostage by withholding their support of parental rules unless the parents acquiesce to the children’s demands. Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “Those who do too much *for* their children will soon find they can do nothing *with* their children. So many children have been so much *done for* they are almost *done in*.”¹¹ It seems to be human nature that we do not fully appreciate material things we have not ourselves earned.

There is a certain irony in the fact that some parents are so anxious for their children to be accepted by and be popular with their peers, yet these same parents fear that their children may be doing the things their peers are doing.

Generally, those children who make the decision and have the resolve to abstain from drugs, alcohol, and illicit sex are those who have adopted and internalized the strong values of their homes as lived by their parents. In times of difficult decisions they are most likely to follow the teachings of their parents rather than the example of their peers or the sophistries of the media, which glamorize alcohol consumption, illicit sex, infidelity, dishonesty, and other vices. Those strong young people are like Helaman’s 2,000 young men who “had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them” from death.¹² “And they rehearsed . . . the words of their mothers, saying: We do not doubt our mothers knew it.”¹³

A Firm Belief in Deity

What seems to help cement parental teachings and values in place in children’s lives is a firm belief in Deity. When this belief becomes part of their very souls, they have inner strength. So, of all that is important to

be taught, what should parents teach? The scriptures tell us that parents are to teach their children “faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost,” as well as “the doctrine of repentance.”¹⁴ These truths must be taught in the home. They cannot be taught in the public schools, nor will they be fostered by the government or by society. Of course, Church programs can help, but the most effective teaching takes place in the home.

Parental teaching moments need not be big or dramatic or powerful. We learn this from the Master Teacher. Commenting on the Savior, one writer said:

“The completed beauty of Christ’s life is only the added beauty of little inconspicuous acts of beauty—talking with the woman at the well; . . . showing the young ruler the stealthy ambition laid away in his heart that kept him out of the kingdom of Heaven; . . . teaching a little knot of followers how to pray; . . . kindling a fire and broiling fish that His disciples might have a breakfast waiting for them when they came ashore from a night of fishing, cold, tired, and discouraged. All of these things, you see, let us in so easily into the real quality and tone of [Christ’s] interests, so specific, so narrowed down, so enlisted in what is small, so engrossed with what is minute.”¹⁵

And so it is with being parents. The little things are the big things sewn into the family tapestry by a thousand threads of love, faith, discipline, sacrifice, patience, and work.

There are some great spiritual promises that parents may have visited upon them; these are the same divine promises made to their valiant forebears who nobly kept their covenants. Covenants remembered by parents will be remembered by God. The children may thus become the beneficiaries and inheritors of these great covenants and promises. This is because they are the children of the covenant.¹⁶

God bless the struggling, sacrificing, honorable parents of this world. May He especially honor the covenants kept by faithful parents among our people and watch over these children of the covenant. ■

NOTES

1. D&C 93:40.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: David O. McKay* (2003), 155.
3. 3 John 1:4.
4. “Text of Mrs. Bush’s Speech,” *Washington Post*, June 2, 1990, sec. C, p. 4.
5. 1 Timothy 5:4.
6. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (1997), 219.
7. *The Responsibility of Parents to Their Children* (pamphlet, n.d.), 3.
8. Jerome Klapka Jerome, in *The International Dictionary of Thoughts* (1969), 782.
9. 2 Nephi 2:26.
10. In *Elbert Hubbard’s Scrap Book* (1923), 227.
11. “The Man of Christ,” *Ensign*, May 1975, 101.
12. Alma 56:47.
13. Alma 56:48.
14. D&C 68:25.
15. Charles Henry Parkhurst, in *Leaves of Gold* (1938), 177.
16. See 3 Nephi 20:25–26; Orson F. Whitney, in Conference Report, Apr. 1929, 110–11.

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

After prayerfully studying this message, share it using a method that encourages the participation of those you teach. A few examples follow:

1. Tell family members that a sanctuary is a place of protection from danger or distress. Invite each person to draw a picture of what he or she thinks a sanctuary looks like. Ask them to explain what they drew and why it is a sanctuary. Read aloud the first paragraph after the heading “The Best Hope.” How can our homes be a sanctuary?
2. Read aloud the first sentence of this message. Then share what President Faust said are some of the challenges of parenthood. Ask family members to share ideas of how parents can meet these challenges. What advice from President Faust could the family implement in the coming months?
3. Reading together the sections “Teaching Responsibility” and “A Firm Belief in Deity,” make a list of what President Faust said children need to learn. Select one or two of these topics to discuss. You may want to include some scriptures in the discussion. Bear testimony of the blessings of teaching and learning the gospel in the home.



STRENGTHENING THE FAMILY

AS EQUAL PARTNERS

A continuing series giving insights for your study and use of "The Family: A Proclamation to the World."

"By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners."¹

Presiding, Providing, and Protecting

Fathers are to preside in the home, but presiding does not mean a man is to rule or exercise unrighteous dominion over his wife or children. The Savior taught His Apostles that the rulers among the Gentiles exercised



authority over their subjects. "But it shall not be so among you," He cautioned, "but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (see Matthew 20:25–27). Presiding, then, is to love and serve and sacrifice. The Apostle Paul taught, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25). President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) stated: "Brethren, I say to you with all soberness, [Jesus Christ] is the model we must follow as we take the spiritual lead in our families. Particularly is this true in your relationship with your wife."²

The Lord said “that every man who is obliged to provide for his own family, let him provide, and he shall in nowise lose his crown” (D&C 75:28). In today’s world being able to provide for a family often depends on a father’s willingness and opportunity to obtain sufficient education. But acquiring an education and suitable employment and providing the necessities of life does not mean spending an inordinate amount of time working to create a high standard of living. President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) warned that some fathers spend so much time providing for things far beyond the necessities of life that physical possessions become their false gods and they have little time to preside in their families in love and righteousness.³

The responsibility to protect a family stretches far beyond the obvious physical shelter and security a father should provide. President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) taught: “A righteous father protects his children with his time and presence in their social, educational, and spiritual activities and responsibilities.”⁴ Fathers can protect their children by teaching them to make wise choices regarding the media they choose and the friends they spend time with.

Nurturing Children

In 1942 the First Presidency stated: “Motherhood . . . becomes a holy calling, a sacred dedication for carrying out the Lord’s plans, a consecration of devotion to the uprearing and fostering, the nurturing in body, mind, and spirit, of those who kept their first estate. . . . To lead them to keep their second estate is the work of motherhood. . . . Motherhood is near to divinity. It is the highest, holiest service to be assumed by mankind. It places her who honors its holy calling and service next to the angels.”⁵

One of Satan’s most effective deceptions is to demean the work of wife and mother in the home. Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles cautioned that “this is an attack at the very heart of God’s plan. . . . Don’t



Husbands and wives are to share as equal partners in the responsibilities of parenthood and help each other in a spirit of selfless sacrifice.

be lured away from the plan of our God to the ways of the world, where motherhood is belittled, femininity is decried, and the divinely established role of wife and mother is mocked.”⁶

Prophets have emphasized the importance of mothers devoting their full-time efforts to nurturing their children. But to those who have to work to provide for the needs of their families, President Gordon B. Hinckley has said: “Do the very best you can. I hope that if you are employed full-

time you are doing it to ensure that basic needs are met and not simply to indulge a taste for an elaborate home, fancy cars, and other luxuries.”⁷

Helping One Another as Equal Partners

Mothers have primary responsibility to nurture children, and fathers are to preside, provide, and protect. But these roles are not exclusive. Husbands and wives are to share as equal partners in the responsibilities of parenthood and help each other in a spirit of selfless sacrifice.

The divine design to give mothers and fathers different primary responsibilities in the family reflects certain eternal differences between men and women. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” teaches that “gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.”⁸ These innate differences and unique responsibilities enable a couple to come together in unity, to complement each other’s strengths and gifts, and to forge the relationship that makes an eternal family possible. ■

NOTES

1. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
2. “To the Fathers in Israel,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 50.
3. See “The False Gods We Worship,” *Tambuli*, Aug. 1977, 2–3; *Ensign*, June 1976, 4–5.
4. “Being a Righteous Husband and Father,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 51.
5. In Conference Report, Oct. 1942, 12–13.
6. “The Joy of Living the Great Plan of Happiness,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 74–75.
7. “Women of the Church,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 69.
8. *Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.

Bearing Testimony

BY ELDER JAY E. JENSEN
Of the Seventy



I testify that there is a divine power accompanying a declared pure testimony.

In my experiences at home and in the Church, I appreciate more and more the power of bearing testimony. Few accounts in Church history have left a more profound impact on me than these words of President Brigham Young (1801–77), who was influenced by a pure testimony:

“If all the talent, tact, wisdom, and refinement of the world had been combined in one individual, and that person had been sent to me with the Book of Mormon, and had declared in the most exalted of earthly eloquence, the truth of it, undertaking to prove it by his learning and worldly wisdom, it would have been to me like the smoke which arises only to vanish. But when I saw a man without eloquence, or talents for public speaking, who could only just say, ‘I know by the power of the Holy Ghost that the Book of Mormon is true, that Joseph Smith is a prophet of the Lord,’ [the] Holy Ghost proceeding from that individual illuminate[d] my understanding, and light, glory, and immortality [were] before me.”¹

Using the scriptures and the words of the prophets, let us examine what a testimony is and how we should bear it.

What a Testimony Is

A testimony is usually defined as knowledge or assurance of a truth that a person declares by the convincing power of the Holy Ghost. The Apostle Paul taught, “No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost” (1 Corinthians 12:3). Because the things of God are known only by the power of the Spirit, they must be declared by the Spirit, and that means bearing testimony.

Because a testimony is personal, testimony bearing often begins with the pronoun *I*. (Parents, missionaries, and Church leaders may at times use *we*.) A testimony can be identified by the use of powerful verbs such as *know*, *testify*, *believe*, *certify*, *declare*, *affirm*, *bear witness*, *bear record*. Often it is a declaration of what you know, feel, experience, or believe, such as “We listened, we gazed, we admired!” (Joseph Smith—History 1:71, note). Generally speaking, a testimony is short, precise, and concise.

President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, shared the following insight:

“I had an experience in the mission field that taught me much about testimony. In spite of the fact that all seemed to be under control, we were not progressing as we



should. It was not something we were doing that we ought not to do so much, I felt, as something we were not doing that we ought to be doing.

“We held a series of zone conferences to improve the spirituality in the mission. Rather than schedule instruction on the mechanics of missionary work, we determined to have a testimony meeting. In the last conference, in the testimony of one of the humble elders, I found the answer to the problem. There was something different about the brief testimony of this frightened new elder.

He stood for less than a minute, yet I learned from his expression what it was that was missing.

“The testimonies we’d heard from all the other missionaries went something like this: ‘I’m grateful to be in the mission field. I’ve learned a lot from it. I have a fine companion. I’ve learned a lot from him. I’m grateful for my parents. We had an interesting experience last week. We were out knocking on doors and . . .’ Then the missionary would relate an experience. His conclusion would be something like this: ‘I’m grateful to be in the mission field. I have a testimony of the gospel.’ And he would conclude ‘in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.’

“This young elder was different somehow. Anxious not to spend an extra second on his feet, he said simply, in hurried, frightened words, ‘I know that God lives. I know that Jesus is the Christ. I know that we have a prophet of God leading the Church. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.’

“This was a testimony. It was not just an experience nor an expression of gratitude. It was a declaration, a witness!

“Most of the elders had said ‘I have a testimony,’ but they had not declared it. This young elder had, in a very few words, delivered his testimony—direct, basic, and, as it turned out, powerful.

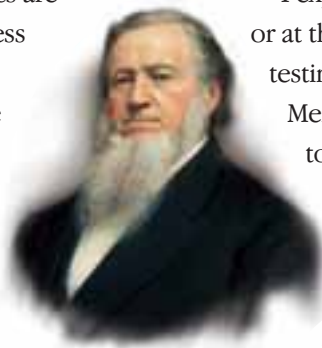
“I then knew what was wrong in the mission. We were telling stories, expressing gratitude, admitting that we had testimonies, but we were not bearing them.”²

The First Presidency has emphasized the importance of brevity and conciseness when bearing testimony: “We are concerned that in some instances, members who desire to bear their testimonies in fast and testimony meeting do not have the opportunity to do so. Bishoprics are encouraged to help all people learn to express a brief, heartfelt testimony of the Savior, His teachings, and the Restoration, so that more members may have the opportunity to participate.”³

What a Testimony Is Not

Sometimes we can learn much about a principle by identifying what it is not. I have found that a testimony is:

- Not an exhortation. Individuals who stand and exhort others in a fast and testimony meeting or even try to call others to repentance, even with the best of intentions, are usurping authority and are often offending others and disrupting the spirit of the meeting.
- Not an experience, although experiences may illustrate belief and conviction.
- Not an expression of gratitude or love, although these are often appropriately included in our testimony sharing.
- Not a public confession.
- Not a sermon or a talk on some doctrinal point, although someone may quote a scripture and then testify of it.
- Not a long explanation of *how* you know but rather *what* you know.
- Not merely saying the words “I have a testimony.” It is not inappropriate to say this, but hopefully there is an expression following these words about the doctrines, truths, and principles of which you have a testimony.



Brigham Young said:
“When I saw a man without eloquence, . . . who could only just say, ‘I know by the power of the Holy Ghost that the Book of Mormon is true, that Joseph Smith is a prophet of the Lord,’ [the] Holy Ghost proceeding from that individual illuminate[d] my understanding, and light, glory, and immortality [were] before me.”

Bearing Testimony in Lessons and Talks

After teaching a lesson or giving a talk, a person should usually conclude the message with a formal testimony, the capstone to all that has been said. Full-time missionaries often insert short, concise testimonies following each key principle they are teaching and then conclude with a summary testimony of the key principles taught.

I express a caution to teachers in the classroom or at the pulpit not to overdo it when interspersing testimonies throughout their talks and lessons.

Members might not listen as intently by the Spirit to too-frequent testimonies, and investigators may be confused. Worse, they might perceive a testimony as some legal or judicial expression. Simply stated, we might make sacred things common, and then the impact of our testimony is lost. The Lord cautions, “That which cometh from above is sacred, and must be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit” (D&C 63:64).

Illustrations of Testimony

Numerous illustrations of pure testimony appear in the scriptures. Alma knew that to reclaim his people he must bear pure testimony (see Alma 4:19). He tells the people *how* he knows (see Alma 5:45–46), then bears pure testimony of *what* he knows:

“I say unto you, that I know of myself that whatsoever I shall say unto you, concerning that which is to come, is true; and I say unto you, that I know that Jesus Christ shall come, yea, the Son, the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace, and mercy, and truth. And behold, it is he that cometh to take away the sins of the world, yea, the sins of every man who steadfastly believeth on his name” (Alma 5:48).

A powerful illustration of pure testimony comes from the account of the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon’s vision of the three degrees of glory:

“And now, after the many testimonies which have been

given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

“For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

“That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God” (D&C 76:22–24).

The Joseph Smith—History in the Pearl of Great Price is published in pamphlet form for missionary work with the title *The Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (item nos. 36081, 32667). In that account the Prophet declares in a simple, straightforward way, “I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it; at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation” (Joseph Smith—History 1:25).

We know that John the Baptist is bearing pure testimony when he uses the phrase *bear record*:

“And I, John, bear record that I beheld [the Savior’s] glory, as the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, even the Spirit of truth, which came and dwelt in the flesh, and dwelt among us. . . .

“And I, John, bear record, and lo, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove, and sat upon him, and there came a voice out of heaven saying: This is my beloved Son.

“And I, John, bear record that he received a fulness of the glory of the Father” (D&C 93:11, 15–16).

In some scriptures the Father or the Son bears testimony. For example, Nephi heard the testimony of God the Father, who



declared: “Yea, the words of my Beloved are true and faithful. He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved” (2 Nephi 31:15).

The Savior testified of the Prophet Joseph Smith and of the translation of the Book of Mormon: “He has translated the book, even that part which I have commanded him, and as your Lord and your God liveth it is true” (D&C 17:6).

The Savior testified of Himself: “I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father” (D&C 110:4).

I have great appreciation for the power of pure testimony. I continue to examine my own testimony bearing to keep it in line with correct principles taught by the scriptures and by latter-day prophets. I testify that there is a divine power accompanying a declared pure testimony. ■

NOTES

1. *Deseret News*, Feb. 9, 1854, 4; see *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (1997), 315.
2. *Teach Ye Diligently*, rev. ed. (1991), 323–24.
3. First Presidency letter, May 2, 2002; see also M. Russell Ballard, “Pure Testimony,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 40–43.

Teachers should conclude lessons with a formal testimony, the capstone to all that has been said.



Polynesian Pearls

The faith of Latter-day Saints in French Polynesia, like the pearls for which these islands are famous, grows layer upon layer, becoming brighter and more beautiful with time.

BY RICHARD M. ROMNEY
Church Magazines

Pearls are the product of patience. They grow layer upon layer, gaining luster with time. In French Polynesia, faith in the restored gospel has also grown in such a manner. That growth began in 1844, when the first missionaries arrived, and generation by generation, it has provided hope and meaning. Today Latter-day Saints make up eight percent of the population—20,000 members in 79 congregations. They are known as people who care for each other and for those around them. Like pearls, their glow is gentle. But as they reflect the light that comes from Christ, they truly shine. Here is a glimpse at some of these Saints.

Tubuai: Place of Beginnings

Just off the road on the far end of the island of Tubuai, Ronny Harevaa and his wife, Sandrine, tidy up the ground around a small stone monument. It is dedicated to the

memory of Elder Addison Pratt, the first Latter-day Saint missionary to visit this island 450 miles (700 km) south of Tahiti. Addison Pratt grew up in New Hampshire in the United States of America, but at age 19 he became a seafarer. He traveled to what are now the Hawaiian Islands, then sailed the Pacific, Atlantic, Caribbean, and Mediterranean before marrying and settling in New York. In 1838 he and his wife joined the Church. By 1841 they had gathered with the Saints in Nauvoo, Illinois. In May 1843 Addison Pratt was called by the Prophet Joseph Smith to help begin missionary work in the Pacific. On April 30, 1844, he and two other elders, Noah Rogers and Benjamin Grouard, arrived on Tubuai.

The islanders were eager to have a missionary among them, and Elder Pratt remained. He began learning Tahitian and preaching. The first convert was his interpreter, another American. Six of seven sailors on the island were also baptized and confirmed. Then on July 22, 1844—three years before Latter-day Saint pioneers arrived in Utah—the first Polynesian converts were baptized. By February 1845, 60 of the 200 inhabitants of Tubuai had joined the Church. From these beginnings and from the work of Elder Rogers and Elder Grouard on other islands, the Church spread throughout what is now French Polynesia.

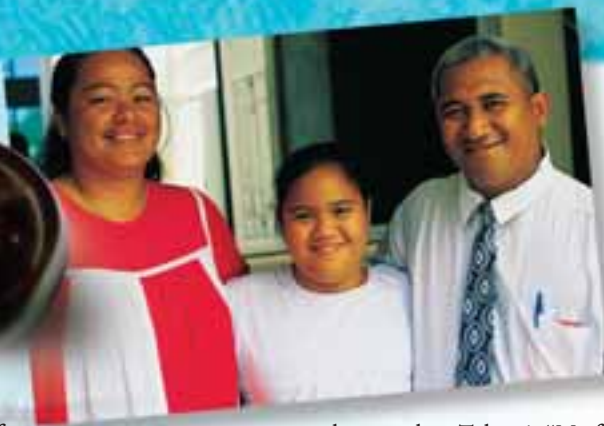
Today on Tubuai, Ronny Harevaa is the president of the



Throughout French Polynesia, Latter-day Saints build on a heritage that began here in 1844. Top: Tera Temahaga of Takaroa shows handmade crafts. Heiana Teriipaia, Garry Mou Tham, and Fari Le Bronnec (above) and the Teihotaata family (left) of Raiatea say the gospel helps them stay strong. Bottom: On Tubuai, Sandrine and Ronny Harevaa care for the monument to Elder Addison Pratt.

Tubuai Australes District, which numbers 593 members in five branches. Quite a few of the members are his relatives, and President Harevaa has learned much from them. "There is a deep heritage and history here," he says, "a great love of the Church and family."





church, and little by little good things entered in.”

They married

and moved to Tubuai. “My father-in-law invited

“Most people on Tubuai don’t have a lot of material things, but they have all they need to be happy,” says Lucien Hoffmann, president of the Mahu Branch. “Here you can get fruit from the trees, vegetables from the ground, and you can go fishing whenever you want. And when you ask people to help those who are sick or in need, they are always ready.”

“My wife and I chose to live on Tubuai to be close to our parents,” President Harevaa says. “It’s a wonderful place to be together as a family.” In fact, he has a brother who lives next door, another brother who lives in the house beyond that, and his father serves as one of his counselors. There are enough Harevaas on Tubuai that many people refer to President Harevaa as President Ronny, just to keep things straight.

In front of the Mahu chapel, one of three meeting-houses on Tubuai, Sandrine points out another monument honoring Addison Pratt. “I think Elder Pratt would be pleased to know that after more than 160 years, the Church is still strong here,” she says. And it is still growing.

One recent convert is Johan Bonno, who was born in the Marquesas Islands, the northernmost part of French Polynesia. Although he had led a rough life, he became interested in the restored gospel because of a school-teacher who had moved to the Marquesas from Tubuai. “Maimiti spoke to me of the true Church,” he explains. “She taught me about the Book of Mormon. Little by little, I let go of the bad things in my life. She invited me to

me to a missionary open house, and there I felt a powerful, comforting feeling,” Johan explains. “It filled me with a desire to know the truth. I prayed in earnest about Joseph Smith. I came to understand that the Lord had restored the Church through him.” Johan was soon baptized and confirmed.

Today Johan and Maimiti are preparing to be sealed in the Papeete Tahiti Temple. “Having the light of the temple in our life will be like trading a 15-watt bulb for the brightest sunshine,” he says. For Johan, learning of the restored gospel required building a layer of faith. So did getting married, moving to Tubuai, and joining the Church. Now going to the temple will add yet another layer to a pearl that keeps on growing.

Raiatea: Haven of Peace

When 23-year-old Spencer Moroni Teuiaiu received his mission call, he couldn’t stop smiling. After four years of delays waiting for dental procedures to be completed, this young man from the island of Raiatea received his call on his birthday. He remembers reading aloud phrases from the letter: “minister of the restored gospel,” “advocate and effective messenger of the truth,” “ambassador of the Savior,” and thinking, “Wow! With all my weaknesses I’m going to have to trust in the Lord.”

But that is something he is used to doing. Moroni grew up in the Church. He is the third of six children to serve

a full-time mission, and he recalls “dreaming about serving a mission ever since I was a little boy.” He remembers memorizing missionary scriptures during his four years of seminary and listening to returned missionaries talk about their missions. But he also remembers dental examinations, adjustments, and



Top: The Taumihau family joined the Church in Tahiti. Above right: Jewelry carver Johan Bonno (shown with his wife, Maimiti) joined the Church in Tubuai.

years of wearing an apparatus. “There were times when I almost gave up,” he says. However, with the encouragement of his family and his own perseverance, he kept hope alive. Today he is faithfully serving in the Tahiti Papeete Mission.

For Moroni and other young Latter-day Saints like him, the Church on Raiatea is a haven of strength. Garry Mou Tham, 16, a third-generation Latter-day Saint from the Avera Ward, explains. “Here,” he says, “we are different from the outside world. We have good relationships with friends and parents. We have the teachings of the prophets to remind us to stay close to our family, to read our scriptures together, and to have home evening. We know the Church is going to progress, and we choose to be part of the Lord’s great work.”

Garry’s friend Fari Le Bronnec, 14, agrees. He talks about two things that keep him safe from the world: seminary and prayer. “Seminary gives you a spiritual boost each morning,” he says. “And prayer can give

you a boost anytime you pray with faith.” The seminary and institute program is strong in French Polynesia, with a total of 740 seminary and 524 institute students in 2004–2005.

Another source of strength is the example members provide for those who are interested in the gospel. Such an example helped bring Adrien and Greta Teihotaata and their children into the Church. Although they had been without religion for years, “we decided we wanted to change,” Sister Teihotaata says. “We asked the Lord to guide us.” Just a few days later, neighbors invited them to an open house at the Uturoa Ward. “We decided to come back on Sunday,” Brother Teihotaata recalls, “and at church, we were impressed that everyone was involved—teaching, going to classes, taking care of children. They really seemed to love each other.”



Above: Iosua Brothers, a patriarch in Tahiti, was baptized and confirmed on Moorea in 1968. Like many others, he has seen the Church become a force for good all over the islands. Below: On Takarua, the rising generation includes Ranitea and Vehina Teihoarii and Vaimiti Nyjland.





But little by little, the Church grew.” Kind of like a pearl.

Tahiti: Center of Strength

One way to see how far the Church has come in French Polynesia is to talk with the public affairs council in Papeete, Tahiti. At a recent meeting,



Right: In a place known for craftsmanship, the temple is revered as the brightest jewel of all. Opposite page, top: On Tahiti, patriarch Tiatia Teio and his wife, Imihaa, feel the temple’s influence. So do deacons Jesse Pereitai and Jean-Philippe McGrevy. Below: The French Polynesian flag flies over Raiatea and Spencer Moroni Teuia.

It was fast Sunday, and “when testimony meeting began, we felt something peaceful we had never felt before—the Holy Ghost. We said, ‘This is something we need,’” Sister Teihotaata says. The family met with the missionaries and continued learning. Though their oldest son did not join the Church, Brother and Sister Teihotaata and their five other children were baptized and confirmed in 1998. Since then, keeping the commandments, studying the scriptures, and going to the temple “has strengthened us in our testimony, and so has the continuing example of members who have taught us and helped us,” says Sister Teihotaata.

Another member is at the stake center this day, one who was baptized in 1956. “The Church wasn’t so well known on Raiatea back then,” says Harriet Brodien Terooatea. “There weren’t many members, and meetings were held in a little house that had one room for a chapel and one room for the missionaries.

they reminisced about some significant events:

- The Church in French Polynesia celebrated its 160th anniversary in October 2004. Events included (1) public exhibits about the Church; (2) a spectacular in the stadium, featuring dancing, singing, choruses, and multimedia presentations; (3) a sports day including traditional competitions such as carrying bananas on a bamboo pole; and (4) a fireside with speeches from Church and government leaders, as well as a 500-voice choir. Many activities were covered by newspapers and broadcast on national television.
- Church officials have paid several courtesy visits to government officials, and several Latter-day Saints presently serve in the national assembly. The government has expressed thanks for the benefits the Church brings, especially its role in teaching family values.
- A 400-voice LDS choir performed before an audience of 30,000 during French president Jacques Chirac’s visit to French Polynesia in July 2003. The event was televised not only

in French Polynesia but also in France. The choir left many in tears when they sang “I Know That My Redeemer Lives” (*Hymns*, no. 136) and “God Be with You Till We Meet Again” (*Hymns*, no. 152).

• The Papeete Tahiti Temple celebrated its 20th anniversary in October 2003. To mark the event, members of the Paea Tahiti Stake did temple work from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. so all endowed members could perform at least one ordinance.

“The Church has come of age here,” says Marama Tarati, the Church’s national director of public affairs. “Throughout French Polynesia it is recognized as a force for good.” On Tahiti the Church has beautiful meetinghouses, congregations filled with faithful Saints, and—as the brightest jewel of all—the temple, a well-known landmark in the capital city.

The light of the temple has come into many lives. “Before I became a member of the Church I did not know what my life would be after death,” explains Marguerite Teriinohopua. Her family learned of the Church because another family prayed to find them. Ernest Montrose, now first counselor in the Faaa Tahiti Stake presidency, was at that time bishop of the Heiri Ward. When missionaries encouraged members to pray to find investigators, “I figured our family should go first.” Inspiration came. Bishop Montrose invited a coworker, Danielson Teriinohopua, to bring his family to a home evening with the missionaries.

“We were at the same time praying to be guided to the truth,” recalls Danielson, who is now a member of the high council. “At the end of the evening, we told them we wanted to know more—immediately.” Bishop Montrose scheduled another meeting the next night, then the next and the next. Within weeks the Teriinohopuas were baptized and confirmed, and a year later they were sealed in the temple. “Today I have a response to my questions,” Marguerite says. “In the temple I feel great peace and joy.”

Chanterel Hauata of the Heiri Ward also knows the joy of attending the temple. Although a benign brain tumor caused him to go blind six years ago, in the temple he



sees clearly. “It is a place of clarity,” he explains. “In the temple we learn of eternity. It lifts us beyond this mortal life.”

The Pepe Mariteragi family has also felt the blessings of the temple. When they gathered at the family home in Paea

in October 2003, they spoke about Tēpahu, Pepe’s wife—their mother and grandmother. “She passed away seven months ago,” explained Lucien, one of her sons, “but our hearts are still turned toward her.”

“It is thanks to the gospel that we are able to deal with such things,” said Jean-Marie, another son. “The blessings of the temple give us the understanding that we can be an eternal family.”

This spreading of the gospel across generations is another indication of the maturity and strength of the Church. Bishop Moroni Alvarez of the Tavararo Ward and his wife, Juanita, talk about heritage that stretches back to his grandfather. They spread out seminary and institute diplomas for all six of their children and photos of all six while they were serving full-time missions. They talk about children married in the temple and grandchildren being raised in the Church. “We talked and studied and prayed together and shared our testimonies,” Bishop Alvarez explains. “Now they do the same with their children.”

Talk with Jared Peltzer, 21, of the Matatia Ward, Paea Tahiti Stake, as he prepares to leave for a mission in the Philippines, and you’ll meet his older brother Lorenzo, 30, who served in French Polynesia several years ago, and two younger





Tahia Brown of Takaroa works at one of the dozens of pearl farms dotting the island.

brothers, Narii, 18, and Hyrum, 14, who plan to be full-time missionaries. “We didn’t have a missionary tradition in the family until now,” says Jared. “But when Lorenzo went, it made me want to go, and now we’re encouraging our younger brothers too.” Layer upon layer, the pearl keeps growing.

Takaroa: Home of Heritage

If you live on Takaroa, you know about pearls. Many of those who live on the island owe their livelihood to pearl farming. Some raise the oysters in which the pearls grow. Others clean the shells, attach the oysters to cords, insert pearl starts, hang oysters in the water, harvest the pearls, or make jewelry and souvenirs.

“We take things Heavenly Father has given us and bring out the beauty that is in them,” explains Tahia Brown, who works at one of the dozens of pearl farms that dot the island. She and Marie Teihoarii, both former branch Relief Society presidents, love to display necklaces, table decorations, and other crafts made by Latter-day Saints. “I learned to do this from my mother,” Sister Brown explains. “Most of the sisters here do this or some other craft that requires skill. We work to earn food and to make good use of our time but also to create things of beauty.”

Pearls and shells aren’t the only things of beauty created here. Sisters like Tera Temahaga weave plant strands into exquisite fans, hats, and baskets, while others like Tipapa Mahotu use cloth and thread to sew brightly colored quilts and pillows. Tradition holds that quilt making was first taught by Addison Pratt’s wife, Louisa, who came to the islands in 1850.

Another evidence of the craftsmanship of the people of Takaroa is the tallest building on the island—a beautiful white church built starting in 1891. The building is remarkable for the heritage it represents. Political situations in

French Polynesia and the United States forced missionaries to withdraw from the islands in 1852. Missionaries did not return until 1892. But when they did, they found a congregation of 100 on Takaroa that had remained faithful. And

these Latter-day Saints were in the process of building a large chapel where they could worship together. Within a month, missionaries baptized and confirmed 33 new members, and the congregation began growing again.

“Today the chapel presides over the village, just as the Church presides over our lives,” says Sister Mahotu, 82. She traces her LDS roots back to her great-grandparents. “The chapel,” she says, “reminds us of the heritage our ancestors have given us. It reminds us that we can be faithful like they were.”

At the Family History Center located in an addition to the chapel, director Suzanne Pimati labors to honor those ancestors. She regularly organizes firesides and spends many hours on the phone encouraging everyone on the island to attend. “I am eager for everyone to find his or her ancestors,” she says. The Spirit of Elijah is strong on Takaroa. And with a computer to help the work along, Sister Pimati plans for many names to be sent to the temple.

“At one time, the population of Takaroa was 90 percent LDS,” explains Thierry Teihoarii, president of the Takaroa Tuamotu District. By the 1950s population was in decline, but in the 1960s the cultured pearl industry brought people back. Today there are two branches on Takaroa, with a total of 380 members out of 1,000 residents on the island. There are also four branches with an additional 450 members on neighboring islands.

“Our greatest challenge is still those who leave our islands,” President Teihoarii explains, “particularly the young.” Though many of the youth go away to boarding schools, for those who remain, seminary and institute become their main source of education. “Seminary helps them not to forget the gospel,” President Teihoarii says.

So does going to the temple. “Every year we make trips to perform temple ordinances, and the youth do baptisms for the dead,” President Teihoarii says. “It encourages the

youth a lot. It isn't just the accomplishment of saving enough for the trip. They know that if they want to go to the temple they must be worthy, and that helps them to stay strong."

Though his calling sometimes requires him to be gone on visits to other islands, President Teihoarii says his family has been greatly blessed. "The first thing I do when I come home is to share the faith and testimonies of the members with Marie and my two daughters. These are uplifting times for my family. We truly feel the Spirit is with us." His wife agrees. "There is so much to learn in the Church," she says, "and also many blessings. There is sweet work to do, and as we do it, the Church will prosper."

It is evening on the island of Takaraoa. The sun is going down. The shadows lengthen around the white chapel as the Saints gather —teens for seminary, Sister Pimati to do family history work, President Teihoarii to meet with two branch presidents. It is the crepuscule, a time of gentle light. Light like that which shines from a pearl. ■

Left: On Tahiti, Bettey Tama prepares to baptize Eddy Tama.



Clockwise from above: The Takaraoa chapel. This chapel "presides over the village," says Tipapa Mahotu. Church leaders Pierre Tumarae,



James L. Brown, and Thierry Teihoarii meet at the chapel. Suzanne Pimati runs the Family History Center.

Questions & Answers

“How can I help encourage my family to have family home evening, family prayer, and family scripture study?”

LIAHONA

You’re doing the right thing by wanting to have family prayer, home evening, and scripture study. These activities build faith, improve communication, create a good feeling in the family, and can be fun too.

Few things in families are more important than family gospel study and prayer, but they can be hard to do, even if your whole family is active in the Church. To encourage your family, set a good example. Have prayer, scripture study, or home evening by yourself if necessary or with a brother or sister if the entire family isn’t participating. Your example in fulfilling these commandments will encourage others.

As family members join you for home evening, try to make it fun for them. At first, you could play a game or watch a Church movie. Prepare treats and activities they enjoy. In the lessons, show them how the gospel can apply to their lives. Later, they may want to give a lesson

Set a good example by having your own prayer and scripture study.

Encourage your family members to participate, and make home evening enjoyable for them.

Help your family feel the Spirit by being reverent and loving.

Be patient with your family, and keep trying. The blessings of family prayer, scripture study, and home evening will be worth it.

themselves. Let them know you can help.

If your parents are members of the Church, they probably want to do these things and may just need a little help. Offer to prepare a lesson. Encourage your siblings to participate with a positive attitude. Be prompt when your parents call you for these activities. If your parents aren’t members, they would probably support a weekly family night. Plan one or two so they can see how good home evening can be for your family.

Most important, invite the Spirit of the Lord during prayer, scripture study, and home evening. You can do that by being reverent, sharing your testimony, and expressing your love and gratitude for the gospel and for your family. When family members are impressed by the Spirit, they will want to continue these activities.

At times, you might get frustrated with your family, but try to be patient. Being upset is the opposite feeling these activities are intended to create. Instead, do your best to



encourage your family—invite them, fast and pray for them, plan fun and spiritual home evenings, and so on—and then let your family choose. As you patiently and lovingly set a good example, they may join you.

Whether you do these activities by yourself, with a brother or sister, or with your whole family, you will be blessed for your efforts. Family prayer, scripture study, and home evening will strengthen your family and lead you closer to the Lord.

READERS

When it is time for family scripture study and prayer, I tell my siblings and parents, “Scriptures and prayer in five minutes.”

This gives them time to finish up what they are doing. For family home evening, we take turns giving the lesson. Maybe you can bring up this idea to your parents and offer to make a calendar and remind the person giving the lesson in advance.

Courtney Moss, 15, Hidden Springs Ward, Moreno Valley California Stake



The key is prayer, love, and faith. Thus, in time, your family will become sensitive to your efforts to maintain family unity and your desire to have an eternal family.

Diana Martins, 18, Lisboa Fifth Ward, Lisbon Portugal Stake

To help our family get excited about home evening, my sister and I hand out home-made invitations to our family members, saying when and where the lesson is going

to take place. Then we get on www.lds.org and plan a lesson. Once my sister and I did a skit and sang a song. Sometimes we make treats for the end of the lesson.

Autumn Reese, 13, Woodhaven Ward,
Idaho Falls Idaho Taylor Mountain Stake



A great incentive that we can all give to have family home evening, prayer, and scripture study is to be an example. If we do our part, the Spirit of Christ will enter our

homes and there abide.

Érika Patrícia Gomes da Silva, 15,
Guarujá Ward, Guarujá Brazil Stake



My family has struggled with family home evening. I always knew it was important, so I decided to do something everyone enjoyed and invite my family to join in. From that simple

gesture, it turned into a structured family home evening every Monday. This has strengthened my family a great deal.

Ashley Atkinson, 17, Bracebridge Ward,
Sudbury Ontario Stake



I can help my family by praying that everyone can receive inspiration to do these things. I am going to try to be a good example in my family by being diligent in reading the scrip-

tures and praying that my family members will be influenced.

Lotomua Lealaisalanoa, 16, Pesega Third Ward,
Pesega Samoa Stake



I've helped motivate my family by asking my parents what we are going to do. I try to offer fun and original ideas that the entire family will enjoy. I offer to give the lesson

for family home evening. Preparing special treats



“Monday nights are reserved throughout the Church for family home evenings. We encourage members to set aside this time to strengthen family ties and teach the gospel in their homes.

“Earlier this year we . . . counseled parents and children to give highest priority to family prayer, family home evening, gospel study and instruction, and wholesome family activities.”

The First Presidency, see Gordon B. Hinckley, “Family Home Evening,” Liahona and Ensign, Mar. 2003, 4.

works well to bring the family together for an evening. Try to make home evening something that your family wants to come to, not something they dread each week.

Jarrett Lever, 15, Holladay Fourth Ward,
Salt Lake Holladay South Stake



I made a chart that says personal prayer, family prayer, daily scripture reading, and so on. As we complete each activity, we put a sticker on the chart, and the one who gets

the most is given a prize.

Francisco Javier Domínguez Lubiano Hdz., 15,
Pedregal Ward, Monterrey Mexico Libertad Stake

We must continue to motivate our families by bringing the Spirit of the Lord into our homes. Pray, study the scriptures, and speak gently with each other so that you are living in harmony. Ask the Lord to help you so that you can attain eternal happiness in your family.

Vanessa T. Teupoorautoa, 18, Hipu Branch,
Raromatai Tahiti Stake

Liahona and readers' answers are intended for help and perspective, not as pronouncements of Church doctrine.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Youth readers: Send your answer, along with your name, birth date, address, ward and stake (or branch and district), and a photograph to:

Questions and Answers 11/05

50 E. North Temple St. Rm. 2420

Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

Or e-mail: cur-liahona-imag@ldschurch.org

Please respond by November 15, 2005.

QUESTION

“I know I should serve a mission, but I would feel like a hypocrite because I don't know if the Church is true. What should I do?” ■

Rejoice in the Knowledge of Eternal Families



Prayerfully select and read from this message the scriptures and teachings that meet the needs of the sisters you visit. Share your experiences and testimony. Invite those you teach to do the same.

The Prophet Joseph Smith: “The Great Parent of the universe looks upon the whole of the human family with a fatherly care and paternal regard; He views them as His offspring” (*History of the Church*, 4:595).

What Is God’s Plan for Families?

The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102).

President Gordon B. Hinckley: “Temple work is concerned with the family, with each of us as members of God’s eternal family and with each of us as members of earthly families. It is concerned with the sanctity and eternal nature of the marriage covenant and family relationships. . . . Since every man and woman is a child of a

Heavenly Father, then each is a member of a divine family; hence, every person is his brother or sister” (“Why These Temples?” *Tambuli*, June 1992, 4; see *Ensign*, Aug. 1974, 39).

D&C 110:14–15: “Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi—testifying that he [Elijah] should be sent, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come—to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers.”

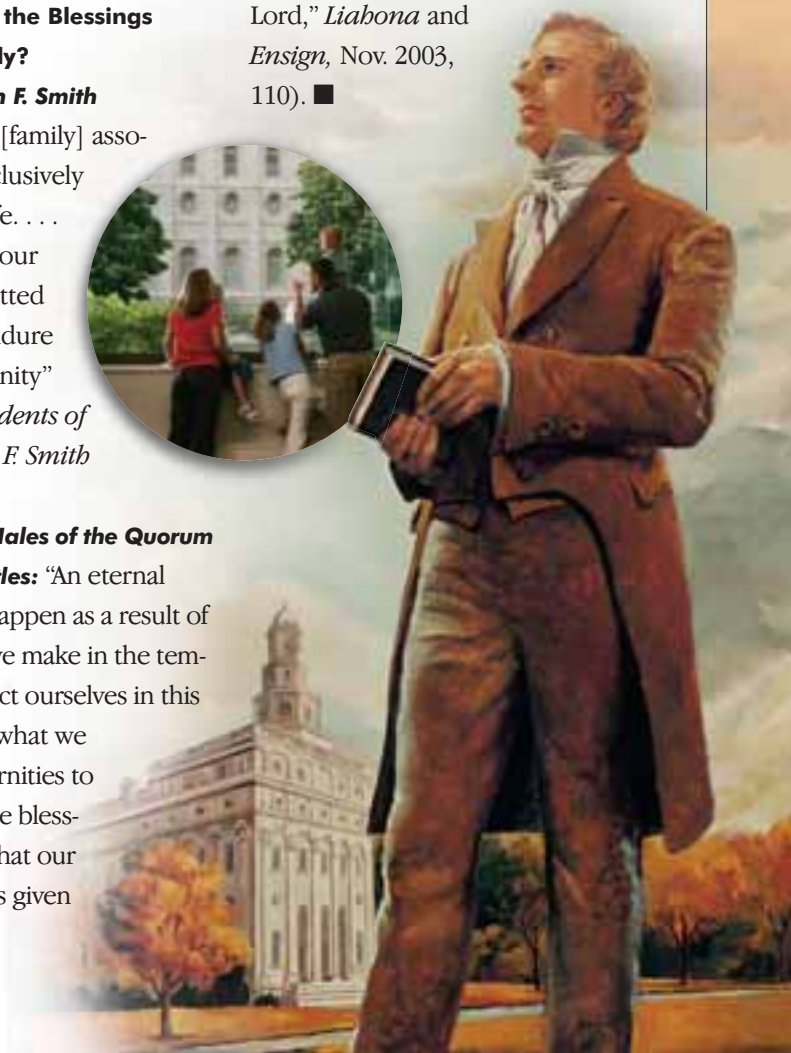
How Can I Receive the Blessings of an Eternal Family?

President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918): “Our [family] associations are not exclusively intended for this life. . . . Our affections and our desires are found fitted and prepared to endure . . . through all eternity” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* [1998], 385–86).

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “An eternal bond doesn’t just happen as a result of sealing covenants we make in the temple. How we conduct ourselves in this life will determine what we will be in all the eternities to come. To receive the blessings of the sealing that our Heavenly Father has given

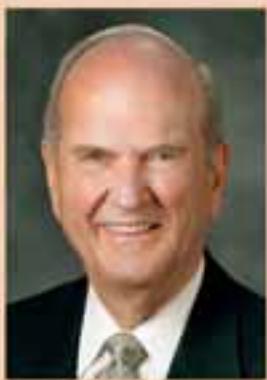
to us, we have to keep the commandments and conduct ourselves in such a way that our families will want to live with us in the eternities” (“The Eternal Family,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 65).

Anne C. Pingree, second counselor in the Relief Society general presidency: “When a woman chooses to have Christ at the center of her own heart, at the nucleus of her personal world, she brings the Lord into the core of her home and family, be it a family of one or a family of many. Wherever she lives and whatever her circumstances, as the heart of the home and the family, what is in each woman’s heart is reflected in the environment and spirit of her home” (“Choose Ye Therefore Christ the Lord,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 110). ■



KEYS of the PRIESTHOOD

The ninth in a series of articles about the priesthood and its purposes.



Keys are conferred by the laying on of hands by one who holds proper authority and whose authority is known to the Church.

BY ELDER RUSSELL M. NELSON
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

KeyS are important and valuable. Most of us carry keys in pockets or purses wherever we go. Other keys are not only important and valuable; they are precious, powerful, and invisible! They have eternal significance. They are the keys of the priesthood.¹

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught “the fundamental principles, government, and doctrine of the Church are vested in the keys of the kingdom.”² Those keys refer to the right to preside over priesthood authority in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Keys carry the right to preside over a local organization of the Church, such as a stake, a ward or branch, a mission or district, a priesthood quorum, or a temple. Keys are conferred by the laying on of hands by one who holds proper authority and whose authority is known to the Church.³

All the keys of the kingdom of God on earth are held by members of the First Presidency and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. The President of the Church—the senior Apostle—presides over the entire Church and is the only person on earth who exercises all the keys in their fullness.⁴ He delegates authority by conferring or authorizing the conferral of keys upon other bearers of the priesthood in their specific offices and callings.⁵

Priesthood is the authority of God delegated to man to minister for the salvation of men. “The power of directing these labors constitutes the keys of the Priesthood.”⁶ We distinguish between holding the priesthood and holding keys of the priesthood. When an individual is given keys, he does not receive additional priesthood. What he has is the right to direct the work of the priesthood.

Preparation and Permission

To serve well as one who bears the holy priesthood, one needs both preparation and permission. May I relate a personal experience? Prior to my call to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, I served as a medical doctor and surgeon. I had earned two doctor’s degrees. I had been certified by two specialty boards. That long preparation had consumed many years, yet the education itself did not allow me to serve the public. Why? Because I needed legal permission.

That could be granted only by authorities of the state government and directing boards of hospitals in which I desired to work. Once officials holding proper authority granted me a license and permission, then I could care for patients who needed surgical relief from their ailments. After legal administrators had exercised their keys, then I could render the service for which I had been prepared.



In return, I was accountable to those who granted those privileges. I was required to obey legal and ethical expectations and never abuse the power entrusted to me.

Just as the important steps of preparation and permission pertain to medicine (and other professions), they also relate to priesthood service. Those who hold the priesthood—Aaronic and Melchizedek—have authority to render priesthood service. As agents of the Lord, they have the right to perform sacred ordinances of the gospel. Keys authorize the performance of that service.

A distinction also exists between priesthood authority and priesthood power. When ordained to an office in the priesthood, one is granted authority. But power comes from exercising that authority in righteousness.⁷ Thus, although priesthood holders have authority, they must prepare themselves to have power. That they do through making themselves personally worthy and through learning and practicing the duties and doctrines of the priesthood.

Why do these things matter? Why is the power to act in the name of God so important? Why is it important that bearers of the priesthood prepare to serve with power? Because the priesthood is of eternal significance. The priesthood benefits every man, woman, and child who now lives, who has lived, and who yet will live upon the earth. Those who hold the priesthood need to prepare in order to make the blessings of priesthood power readily available to all of God's children. Those who hold priesthood keys need to understand how to use those keys wisely and righteously.⁸

History of Priesthood Keys

Keys and authority of the priesthood can be traced through three periods of history: in ancient days, during the Lord's mortal ministry, and in modern times.

Period One: Ancient Days. Priesthood authority was known anciently, even before creation of the earth. The



Prophet Joseph Smith declared, “The Priesthood is an everlasting principle, and existed with God from eternity, and will to eternity.”⁹ President Brigham Young (1801–77) added that the priesthood “is the law by which the worlds are, were, and will continue for ever and ever.”¹⁰

In a premortal realm we existed as spirit children of God. Abraham was one of us. He was told that he was among those chosen before birth to be “rulers” (spiritual leaders).¹¹ Scriptures also relate that the Lord God fore-ordained after His holy order priests who were prepared from the foundation of the world according to His fore-knowledge. Thus, our callings to bear the holy priesthood were portended even before we were born.¹²

Adam received priesthood authority before the world was formed.¹³ We know that “the Priesthood was first given to Adam; he obtained the First Presidency, and held the keys of it from generation to generation.”¹⁴ The priesthood was conferred through generations from Adam to Moses “through the lineage of their fathers.”¹⁵ Referring to prophets of Old Testament times, the Prophet Joseph Smith declared that “all the prophets had the Melchizedek Priesthood.”¹⁶

Period Two: The Lord’s Mortal Ministry. During His mortal ministry Jesus conferred priesthood upon His Twelve Apostles and revealed the principle of priesthood keys. To His Apostle Peter the Savior said, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt

bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”¹⁷ The Lord also promised these keys to James and John.¹⁸

Within a week of that promise, Jesus took Peter, James, and John to a high mountain. There, under the direction of the Lord, keys of the priesthood were bestowed upon those Apostles by Moses and Elijah (also known as Elias).¹⁹

The Master reminded His disciples of the source of their authority: “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you.”²⁰

Not long thereafter, the Savior was crucified. Even before the early Apostles completed their labors, the Apostasy began. It occurred, as prophesied, when teachings of men with priesthood keys were rejected and sacred ordinances were defiled.²¹

Period Three: Modern Times. The restoration of priesthood keys is one of the many miracles of this, the dispensation of the fulness of times.²² As the Prophet taught, “The keys have to be brought from heaven whenever the Gospel is sent.”²³ In 1820 our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith. In May 1829 John the Baptist conferred the Aaronic Priesthood upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.²⁴ In so doing, he conferred “the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins.”²⁵ Shortly thereafter

the Prophet and his associate received the Melchizedek Priesthood under the hands of Peter, James, and John.²⁶ Joseph Smith had keys to organize the Church, send missionaries, and ordain priesthood leaders.

Later, the Lord spoke to Joseph and Oliver of others to whom additional specific keys of the priesthood had been committed.²⁷ Each, in turn, conferred these keys upon Joseph and Oliver:

- Moses delivered the keys of the gathering of Israel and the leading of the ten tribes;²⁸
- Elias, the keys of the Abrahamic covenant;²⁹
- And Elijah, the keys of the sealing authority.³⁰

Joseph Smith conferred those restored priesthood keys upon all of the Apostles called in his day.³¹ In turn, these keys have been transferred through the generations to the present leaders of the Church. Today, the President of the Church actively holds every key held by “all those who have received a dispensation at any time from the beginning of the creation.”³²

A sacred moment of my life occurred on April 12, 1984, when the First Presidency and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles laid their hands upon my head. As had been done for others before me, all the keys of the priesthood were conferred. Like each member of the Quorum of the Twelve, I hold all the keys of the priesthood as restored in these latter days, but some keys are not used unless specifically directed by the senior Apostle or upon his death. All of us in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles feel the weight of responsibility and the burden of timeless trust. We know the keys we hold have been restored “for the last days and for the last time.”³³

Obligations and Accountability

When hands are laid upon one’s head to be ordained or set apart, both the conveyor and the recipient of that priesthood authority bear obligations and accountability. Let me illustrate. Suppose you own keys to something of value in your life—a vehicle, a home, or a fine instrument. If you loan those keys to another with the intent that he or she use your property, you have certain obligations. You as the lender have a duty toward your borrower’s success. So you teach and train adequately to protect the user and, at the same time, safeguard your own valuable property. The receiver also has obligations. He or she must know applicable laws and obey them, take care of your property, and report back on how well he or she has used it.

The same concepts apply to keys of the priesthood. Temple presidents, mission presidents, stake presidents, district presidents, bishops, branch presidents, and quorum presidents hold priesthood keys of presidency. Their keys control the power of their unit of the Church. That the mission of the Church be accomplished, those leaders not only call and release, but they also train and hold accountable those whom they call. Thus, members who receive priesthood ordinations or callings to serve in the Church have obligations of obedience and accountability.

Every priesthood quorum has a president, whether it is a quorum of deacons, teachers, priests, elders, or high priests. Each president holds keys of authority. Quorum activities and opportunities for service are authorized by the president who holds those keys. Although a quorum president holds keys, his counselors do not. Auxiliary presidents do not hold keys. Counselors and auxiliary presidents serve on assignment from one holding

The priesthood was conferred in ancient days “through the lineage of their fathers.”



keys who, in turn, has delegated authority for each of them to act.

When one is released from his calling in the priesthood, if keys have been conferred, those keys are relinquished, to be given by proper authority to the new leader. When a bishop is released, for example, his priesthood ordination to the office of bishop remains, but his priesthood keys to serve as the bishop of the ward are conferred upon the new bishop.

Revelation, Loyalty, and the Privilege of Service

Those who receive the Melchizedek Priesthood are under solemn oath and covenant to “live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God.”³⁴ By so doing, one becomes worthy to receive personal revelation.

Loyalty too is vital to receiving power in one’s priesthood. Loyalty to him who holds the keys to call and to release will foster unity, and unity is essential to success.³⁵ The Lord so explained when He said, “If ye are not one ye are not mine,”³⁶ and “Israel shall be saved in mine own due time; and by the keys which I have given shall they be led.”³⁷

We need to be reminded and warned that the privilege of priesthood service, if abused, may be withdrawn. That is not difficult to understand. The same caution applies in secular activity. If one were to drive another’s automobile recklessly, future permission from the owner would likely be refused. So it is with priesthood authority. If it is abused, “the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man.”³⁸

Each bearer of the holy priesthood should feel deeply grateful for that incomparable privilege. It is humbling to know that each of us was foreordained from the foundation of the world for the responsibility we now have.³⁹



Bishops hold priesthood keys of presidency. They not only call and release, but they also train and hold accountable those whom they call.

May we be true to the trust the Savior has given to those who bear His holy priesthood and hold its sacred keys. I pray that we may use them wisely and precisely as the Lord would have us do. ■

NOTES

1. See Russell M. Nelson, “Keys of the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 36–39.
2. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 21.
3. See D&C 42:11.
4. See D&C 132:7.
5. See D&C 107:8–9, 91–92; 124:123.
6. Joseph F. Smith, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 141.
7. See Russell M. Nelson, “Personal Priesthood Responsibility,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 44.
8. Information regarding priesthood keys is summarized in *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2: Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders* (1998), 161.
9. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 157.
10. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (1997), 125.
11. See Abraham 3:23.
12. See Alma 13:1–5.
13. See *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 157, 167–68; see also D&C 78:16.
14. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 157.
15. D&C 84:15; see also D&C 84:6–17; 107:41–57.
16. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 181.
17. Matthew 16:19; see also D&C 128:10.
18. See D&C 7:7.
19. See Matthew 17:1–5; see also *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 158.
20. John 15:16; see also D&C 7:7.
21. Restoration scripture carries a similar prophecy and promise: “If my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place” (D&C 124:45).
22. See D&C 27:13; 128:18, 20–21.
23. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 157.
24. See D&C 13; 27:8; Joseph Smith—History 1:69, 72.
25. D&C 13:1; 107:20; Joseph Smith—History 1:69; see also D&C 129.
26. See D&C 27:12–13.
27. See D&C 27:6–13. Moroni also held keys for the Book of Mormon (see D&C 27:5).
28. See D&C 110:11.
29. See D&C 110:12; Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (1954–56), 3:126–27.
30. See D&C 27:9; 110:13–16; see also D&C 128:17–18, 21; 132:7, 19.
31. See *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:154–56.
32. D&C 112:31; see also v. 30.
33. D&C 112:30.
34. D&C 84:44.
35. See D&C 124:45–46.
36. D&C 38:27.
37. D&C 35:25.
38. D&C 121:37.
39. See Alma 13:1–5.

Staying Converted

I began as a nonbeliever, but that all changed when I learned about the truthfulness of the gospel.

BY VACLAVA SVOBODOVA

All my life I was taught that there was no God. Little did I know how that would change when I applied to be a high school exchange student in the United States, representing the Czech Republic. When I filled out the application, one question was “What is your religious preference?” I knew most Americans were Christian, so that was what I wrote down. But I was a nonbeliever.

With anticipation, I awaited the outcome of my application. Where would I live?

I was assigned to the Grant and Jewel Hodson family, Latter-day Saints in Utah. Where is Utah? Mormons? Who are they? I looked up Utah in books, and I looked up Mormons too. The books said terrible things about the Church and especially about Joseph Smith. I spent my last night at home crying. I was terrified.

My mother assured me that everything would be all right, and if I didn't like the family or Utah, I could come home or be assigned to another family.

When I arrived in Utah, Emily, one of the daughters, came to pick me up. She was 16 years old, wearing normal, casual clothes, and she was so nice. I thought, “Wow! This might not be that bad after all!” The whole family was warm and welcoming to me.

I experienced quite a cultural adjustment. I saw that my host family prayed before every meal and before they went to bed. They didn't drink alcohol or smoke cigarettes. They lived moral lives.

Everything was totally opposite of how the teenagers I had known lived.

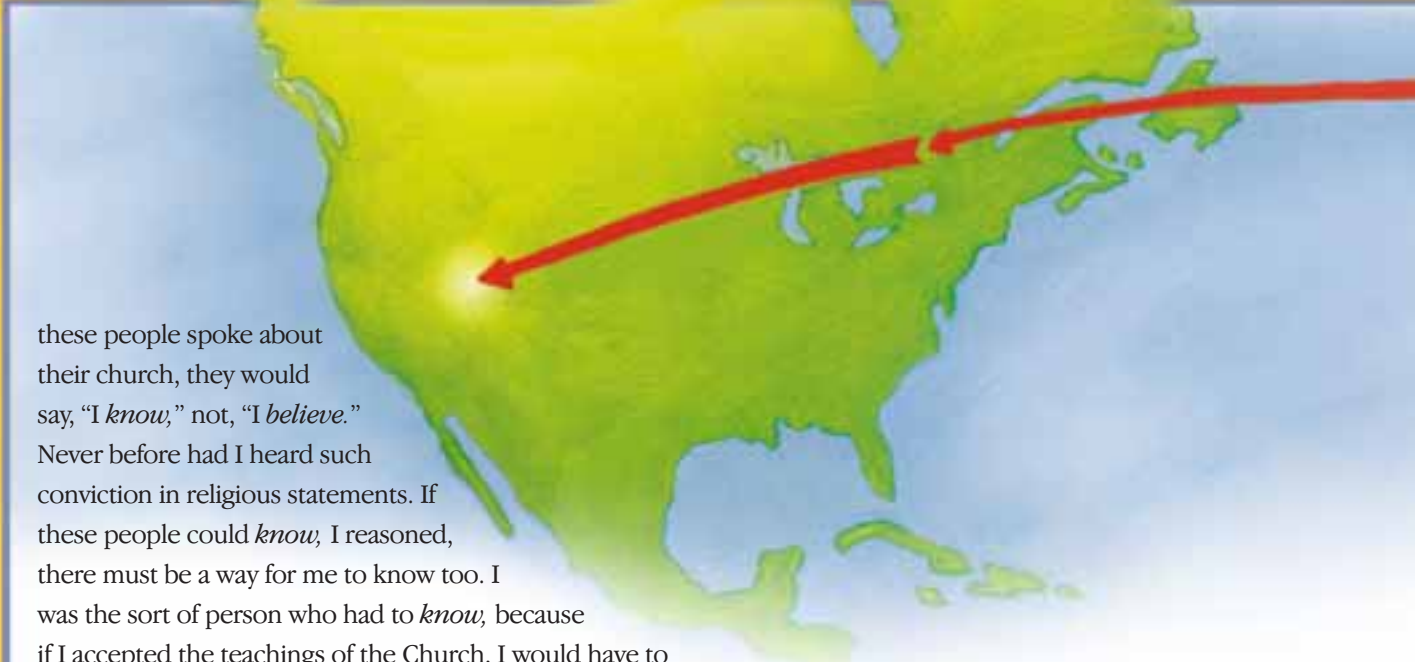
And it seemed that almost everybody I met was a member of the LDS Church. I was impressed that when



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these people spoke about their church, they would say, “I *know*,” not, “I *believe*.” Never before had I heard such conviction in religious statements. If these people could *know*, I reasoned, there must be a way for me to know too. I was the sort of person who had to *know*, because if I accepted the teachings of the Church, I would have to make changes in my lifestyle and in my future plans.

With a strong desire to know for myself about the truthfulness of the Church, I watched the example of my host family. They didn’t proselytize, but the way they lived made me want to know what was behind their actions. I had never seen such faith.

I heard a Church leader say, “People will want to know Christ because they know you.” I wanted to know Christ because I knew the Hodsons. They were a great example to me of the way a family should live.

I began praying. I prayed for three weeks and nothing happened. I was a little discouraged. I thought that maybe I was not worthy to feel God’s love.

That same week I decided to join the Hodsons’ traditional family testimony meeting on the first Sunday of the month. The mother, Jewel, asked me if I would like to say anything. I said, “Sure.” But I thought, “What am I going to say?”

Since everybody had expressed appreciation, I thought I could at least express my appreciation to the Hodsons for all they had done for me. They had been so patient with me. They treated me as their own daughter and had never pushed me into anything. I would express my true gratitude.

I was the last to speak. I stood up and started saying how grateful I was for their kindness and patience and also for their desire to teach me about God. All of a sudden, a strong, overwhelming feeling came over me. The language barrier was gone; I had no problem speaking English. I was

fluent for the first time! I had never felt anything like this before. I spoke as I was inspired. It was such a warm, beautiful feeling. I was quietly being taught, “You *know* what you are saying is true. You *know* I exist. You *know*.”

And I did know! With tears in my eyes, I sat down. I thought, “What was that?” Answering as though she had heard my question, my host mother quietly spoke, “What you are feeling is the Spirit.” All I could think was “Wow! It is true!”

With my parents’ permission, I asked my host father to baptize me into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It was a happy day for me. I felt so clean and fresh! In addition to my host family, I was surrounded by many members from my ward who came to support me. I appreciated that so much.

When I returned to the Czech Republic from Utah, I was the only member of the Church not just in my town, Chrastava (population 8,000), but also in Liberec (population 120,000), a city about six miles (10 km) from Chrastava. I worked as a hotel receptionist and taught English in a private high school. I was desperately seeking to find my new place at home. I was close to giving up. Nevertheless, I continued to kneel every night and pray for a miracle that would bring me out of my despair. I also tried really hard to stay away from my old habits and friends.

Finally my prayers were answered. The missionaries came to Liberec, where I was teaching. (I later learned that Brother Hodson had contacted the mission president for the Czech Republic and told him about me. Now there



Vaclava,
or Wendy
as she
is sometimes
called, spreads
the gospel mes-
sage wherever
she goes. She
remembers the
evening when the
Spirit whispered to
her that she already
knew that Heavenly
Father existed and
this was His Church.

is a growing branch of about 40 Latter-day Saints in my hometown.)

I have since attended Brigham Young University—Idaho and finished my fine arts degree at BYU—Hawaii. One of the highlights of being at BYU—Hawaii was playing on the volleyball team. On that special campus, my testimony grew.

I have now returned to my home in the Czech Republic. I want to spread the gospel message. At first, my father and mother thought I was totally crazy to have made such a conversion. Now they

support me completely, and they are grateful for my education.

Maybe I can also have an influence as a teacher in the arts. The people here need the gospel, and they need the arts. I wish they knew what I know. I want to teach them the true plan of happiness. I know Heavenly Father wants my people to have the gospel and all the really good things in life. I know my Heavenly Father loves me and will help me to do my best, even though I have imperfections. I continue to desire to be guided by Him always. ■

Vaclava Svobodova is a member of the Liberec Branch, Prague Czech District.





How Great Shall Be Your Joy



BY ELDER RODRIGO MYRRHA

Area Seventy
Brazil South Area

Section 18 of the Doctrine and Covenants teaches us that the Lord loves His children and desires that we work on behalf of their salvation. Each time I read this section, many experiences about the activation and retention of Church members come to my mind—experiences that remind me that the Lord will lead the work if we have faith in Him and put forth the required effort.

One of these experiences began a few years ago when I was assigned as a home teacher to a young man who had been raised in a faithful Latter-day Saint family. After he left home to attend school, he chose other paths. Month after month my home teaching companion and I visited him without success; it seemed he didn't even hear what we said to him. But when the tempests came and he was confused, not knowing what to do to resolve his problems, it was his home teachers he sought out.

At the time I was his stake president. He told me he remembered something his mother had taught him: "The Lord hears the prayers of those who sincerely seek Him." As he confided that he had returned to praying

and reading the scriptures, I saw with joy that the Lord had touched him.

I decided to follow up with him more closely, so I asked that he be assigned as my home teaching companion. Each month he and I visited four homes, and each month I prepared four different messages in an effort to strengthen my friend and help him in his return to gospel activity. Eventually he made the decision to repent, to faithfully attend his meetings, and to sincerely partake of the sacrament. The Lord's sacrifice was having an effect on his life.

For six months we visited a father who was the only member of the Church in his family. Despite our efforts and although we were always well received, we didn't have success in activating him or baptizing his wife and three children. We were then inspired to involve the children by picking them up on Sundays to take them to church. This became my companion's special responsibility.

Our efforts began to have an effect. The children loved being at church and were soon baptized. The whole ward worked to involve the parents, but it was still necessary for the Spirit of the Lord to touch their lives.

One time my companion, who had scarcely said a word during our monthly

Heavenly Father loves us and wants us to do missionary and activation work in His way.

visits, spoke up and bore his testimony in a very emotional way. He had experienced great difficulty in his life, and now he shared how marvelous it was to be in the arms of the Lord. His testimony was so sincere and powerful and the Spirit was so strong that all of us were touched. That same week the wife decided to hear the missionary discussions and was finally baptized. The husband became active again.

Today the family remains active and totally integrated in the ward, and they have been sealed in the Lord's temple. My companion continues to progress rapidly in the gospel. He married a wonderful young woman in the temple, and they now have two children. They are happy and contribute valuable service to our ward and to the Church.

Six people were converted to the gospel as a result of that experience. A collective miracle! I felt the joy described in the scriptures:

“And how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth!

“Wherefore, you are called to cry repentance unto this people.

“And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be

one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!

“And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!” (D&C 18:13–16).

This experience taught me three essential principles:

1. The Lord is at the head of this work. He prepared the way. He is interested and directly involved in our missionary efforts.

2. The visits of home teachers and visiting teachers need to be consistent and well prepared. We need to take the Spirit of the Lord to the homes we visit. We need to gain the confidence of those we visit as well.

3. It is essential that we involve other people in the activation and conversion process. Ward or branch leaders can coordinate efforts with the ward or branch council and priesthood executive committee to help us accomplish our missionary objectives.

I testify that God is our Father. He loves us and wants us to do missionary and activation work in His way. We can then become powerful instruments in His hands for the salvation of His beloved children. ■



You're a Mormon?

A coworker had some bad information about Latter-day Saints. How could I help him understand we really are Christians?

BY ANA LEE GRANIELA LÓPEZ

During my second year of college, I worked at the university library as a student assistant. One day in December I was assigned to work with another student assistant. I had never met him before, so as we worked I tried to strike up a conversation. We talked about school, work, and our families.

Later in the afternoon he started to sing songs that mentioned God. I asked him about his religion. I hoped he would ask me the same thing so I could talk to him about the Church, and he did. I was so excited, because this was a great missionary opportunity. With a big smile, I told him I was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He looked surprised and, in a not-very-pleasant tone of voice, replied, “The Mormons? You’re a Mormon? Those people don’t believe in Jesus Christ.”

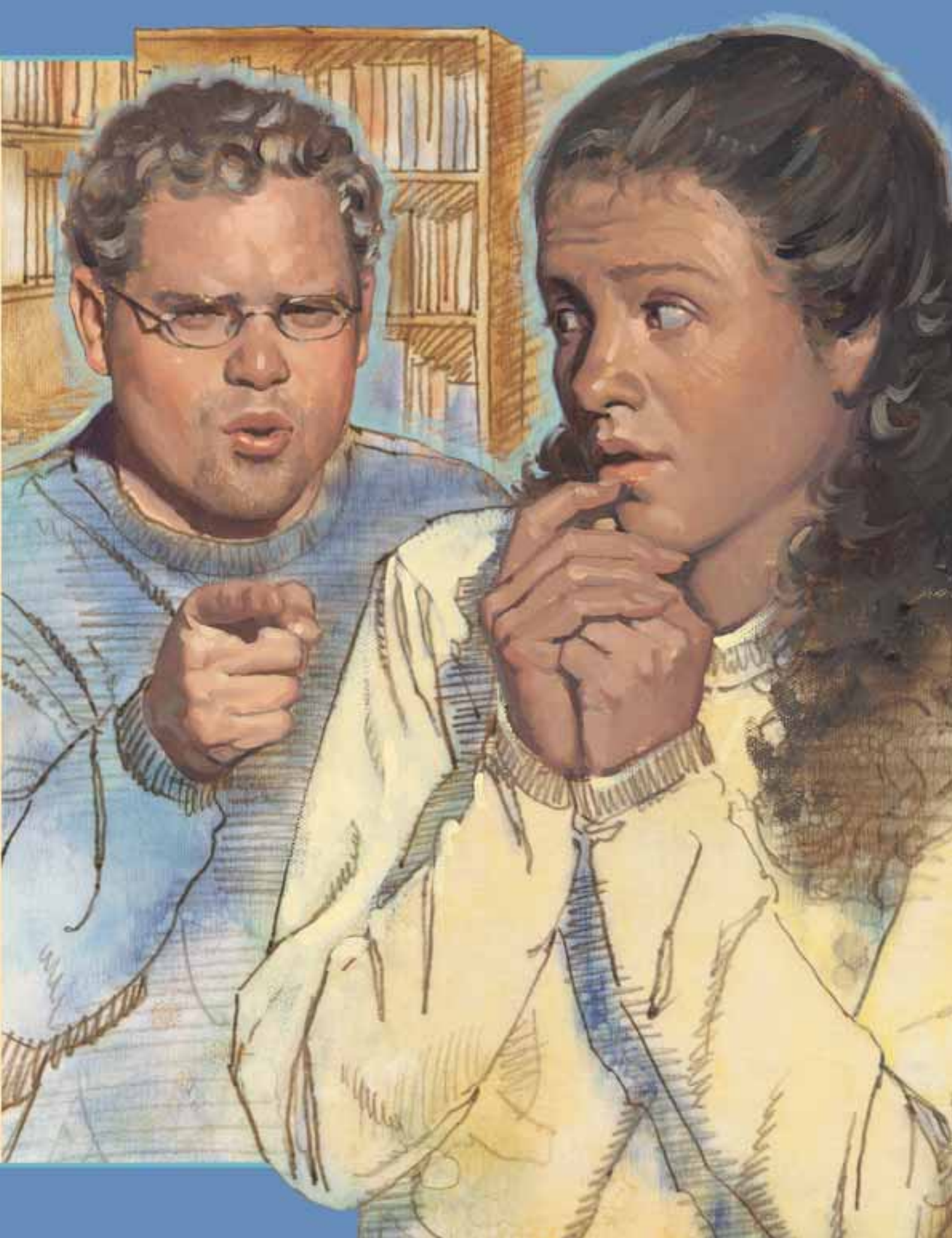
His words were hard for me to hear. Whatever I was expecting, it certainly wasn’t to hear that I didn’t believe in Jesus Christ. I

had heard stories like this, but now it was happening to me. What should I say? How could I respond to such a remark? The only thing that came to mind was, “But it’s the Church of Jesus Christ!”

I knew I had to repeat in my mind the Young Women motto—“Stand for Truth and Righteousness”—and put it into action. But how?

I proceeded to tell the other assistant that our church is the Church of Jesus Christ, that we believed in Him as our Savior, and that I understood the love He has for God’s children. I expressed from the depths of my soul that I believed in Jesus Christ, that I was a member of His Church, and that I had been taught to love Him and to follow His example.

My coworker did not want to listen anymore. He responded reproachfully to the things I said even while I kept trying to explain. He also talked about the Book of Mormon in the same manner as he had spoken about the Church. I could tell he didn’t want to listen. I didn’t want to listen to what





WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN?

“Some people erroneously believe that The Church of Jesus Christ of

Latter-day Saints and its members are not Christian. We have difficulty understanding why anyone could accept and promote an idea that is so far from the truth. . . .



“A dictionary defines a Christian as ‘one who professes belief in Jesus as the Christ or follows the religion based on [the life and teachings of

Jesus],’ and ‘one who lives according to the teachings of Jesus.’ Thus two characteristics identify Christians: (1) they profess belief in a Savior, and (2) they act in harmony with the Savior’s teachings. Faithful members of the Church, called Saints or Latter-day Saints, qualify clearly in both characteristics. In our belief and our action, we demonstrate that ‘Jesus Christ himself [is] the chief corner stone’ [Ephesians 2:20] of our faith.”

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Christians in Belief and Action,” Ensign, Nov. 1996, 70.

he was saying either because he was trying to contend with me. I knew I shouldn’t go on explaining, so I bore my testimony. I told him that I *knew* everything I was saying was true. I could feel it in my heart.

As I left the library, I wondered how anyone could possibly talk about the Church that way. I thought about what I had felt as I testified to him and wondered if I should have allowed him to express himself the way he did. I felt anger and fear and thought of things I could have said. I felt frustrated and doubted my own

level of spirituality because he had not changed his mind. Had I failed?

On the way home, I prayed. I wanted to get rid of my negative thoughts. I wanted to feel sure of what I had been taught my whole life, and I wanted to feel that Heavenly Father was pleased with me for what I had done. Prayer was the best tool I had. Prayer and the Holy Ghost had helped me know what to say and how to testify to my coworker, and they also helped me to know that my Heavenly Father was pleased with me.

This experience helped me to know with a greater certainty that this is the true Church of Jesus Christ and that, just as He



was persecuted, so is His Church. I learned the importance of having a firm testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ and His Church.

I think that every young member of the Church should seek to gain a firm testimony so that he or she can testify to others, regardless of whether we are successful in changing someone's mind. When we bear our testimonies, our testimonies will, in turn, be strengthened, and we can at least plant a seed in the hearts of others. Even if they

don't show interest at the moment, they can know more about what we believe. ■

Ana Lee Graniela López is a member of the Cabo Rojo Second Ward, Mayaguez Puerto Rico Stake.

HOW TO RESPOND

Remember the Lord has said, "Seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men" (D&C 11:21).

After you have studied and know the basic doctrines of the Church concerning the Savior, here are a few suggestions on how you can explain to others that you belong to a Christian church.

- Explain that the full name of the Church is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Other names are just nicknames.
- Tell them that Church members believe in the Bible and show them passages in the Book of Mormon that testify of Jesus Christ.
- Explain the Restoration of the gospel—that Joseph Smith was a great prophet and that he restored Christ's Church to the earth.



WHY DON'T WE USE CROSSES?

President Gordon B. Hinckley was once asked by a minister

why Latter-day Saints do not wear crosses or display them in their buildings.

President Hinckley said to him:

"I do not wish to give offense to any of my Christian colleagues who use the cross on the steeples of their cathedrals and at the altars of their chapels, who wear it on their vestments, and imprint it on their books and other literature. But for us, the cross is the symbol of the dying Christ, while our message is a declaration of the Living Christ."

"[The minister] then asked: If you do not use the cross, what is the symbol of your religion?"

"I replied that the lives of our people must become the most meaningful expression of our faith."

President Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Symbol of our Faith," *Liahona*, Apr. 2005, 2; see "The Symbol of Christ," *New Era*, Apr. 1990, 4.

EXTRA! EXTRA!

For more on this subject, see these articles in English in the Gospel Library at www.lds.org: Richard C. Edgley, "A Disciple, a Friend" (*Ensign*, May 1998); Stephen E. Robinson, "Are Mormons Christians?" (*New Era*, May 1998); and Robert E. Wells, "We Are Christians Because . . ." (*Ensign*, Jan. 1984).

- Take them to a local visitors' center, if possible. Have them view the paintings and statues of the Savior and talk to the missionaries.
- Invite them to church with you so they can see for themselves that Church members believe in the Savior.
- Direct them to the "Beliefs and Doctrines" link under "Frequently Asked Questions" at www.mormon.org for a great explanation of the Church's basic doctrines.
- If they are not receptive to what you are saying, don't argue. Bear your testimony of the Savior, and tell them what you know to be true.
- Don't feel rejected if people do not believe your testimony. Remember, the things you know are still true and this is God's true Church. Let the way you live your life testify that you are Christian.

Diving into Seminary

BY ADAM C. OLSON
Church Magazines

Somewhere, in the middle of the ocean, on a beautiful tropical island where the breeze can smell like flowers and the palm trees stretch toward heaven, Latter-day Saint teens are discovering the power of the scriptures.

On the island of Tahiti, a word meaning “the gathering place,” many of these young men and women are gathering every morning as early as 5:15 a.m. to study the scriptures and learn how the gospel can change their lives.

Seminary in Tahiti, as on several of the other 117 islands that make up French Polynesia, is well attended. Sure it’s a challenge to get up that early, but these youth are finding that the blessings outweigh the sacrifices.

“It isn’t easy,” says Vaitiare Timo, 17, of the Mahina Ward, Arue Tahiti Stake. “But there’s no way to escape. I have to come. I have to serve the Lord after all He’s done for me.”

Each of the youth has his or her own reasons for attending. They come to learn, to understand, to apply, to find friends, to gain

daily help with life’s problems, to prepare for a mission and marriage, to be converted, to serve the Lord, to feel good, and to find safety. They’re finding out that seminary helps them accomplish all that and more.


Getting into the Scriptures

“I come to learn,” says Raymonde Chapman, 15, of the Orofero Ward, Paea Tahiti Stake, “to know more about the scriptures and the lives of the prophets. I want to understand.”

If Raymonde wants to learn more about the scriptures, seminary is the right place. It’s not uncommon to hear a seminary teacher say something like, “We try to get the students into the scriptures so that the scriptures get into the students.”

It’s obvious that these students are getting into the scriptures and that the scriptures are becoming part of them.

Eighteen-year-old Karere Teiho’s latest favorite scripture is D&C 10:5: “Pray always, that you may come off conqueror; yea, that you may conquer Satan, and that you may



Teens in Tahiti immerse themselves in scripture study.



“Seminary helps us apply the gospel in our lives,” says Benjamin Tuahiva, 14, of the Orofero Ward. “The lives of the prophets are an example to us.”

“I liked the part where Joseph forgave his brothers,” says Benjamin’s classmate Rumia Temauri, 14, speaking about when Joseph was sold into Egypt. “It’s a good example about how to have good relationships with your family. It’s helped me.”

Sister Ariiotima Mahirava, Benjamin’s and

For Karere Teiho, Vaitiare Timo, Kent Manarani (bottom), and Rumia Temauri (left), seminary doesn’t help them just to understand the scriptures but also to apply them in life.

escape the hands of the servants of Satan that do uphold his work.”

“Satan is very strong,” says Karere, a member of the Mahina Ward. “Every morning before seminary I pray to receive help to be protected from temptations. It works.” He shrugs. “I’m not perfect, but so far I’ve been blessed to find the strength to resist.”

When students like Karere begin to put into practice what they’ve learned, the power of the scriptures really begins to change lives.



Rumia's seminary teacher, asks her students to learn one scripture mastery each week. On the back of each scripture mastery card is a suggestion for how the student can apply in his or her life what the scripture is teaching. Sister Mahirava challenges the students to live that personal application during the week, then share their testimonies in class of how it blessed them.

"I think the students are realizing that the gospel isn't something you live only on Sundays," Sister Mahirava says. "It's neat to watch the light come on."

The Blessings of Seminary

Seminary students in French Polynesia are grateful for the opportunity to attend seminary. They recognize the many blessings they're receiving for their faithfulness.

"It's such a blessing to know the Book of Mormon is the word of God," says Karere. "It's the keystone of our religion. It will help us be converted to our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. I have come to love Them so much."

The students have also come to appreciate the words and experiences of the prophets.

"The stories we learn about in the scriptures help us every day," says Vaitiare. "What the prophets did then can help us today. Experiences from the lives of modern prophets help me too, especially Joseph Smith."

"I know seminary will help me," says Karere. "I know going every morning to learn about the gospel will help me when I go on my mission to know how to teach and how to testify."

Finding Someone to Lean On

Not only is seminary helping to strengthen the students individually, but the students are finding strength together as well.



SEMINARY FRIENDS

"Thank you for your efforts in . . . going to institute, going to seminary, partaking of the blessings that are to be had there, not only in the teaching of the gospel but in the society in which you can mingle. I want to say to you, look for your friends among members of the Church. Band together and strengthen one another. And when the time of temptation comes you will have someone to lean on to bless you and give you strength when you need it."

President Gordon B. Hinckley, "Words of the Living Prophet," *Liahona*, Aug. 1998, 16; "Excerpts from Recent Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley," *Ensign*, July 1997, 73.

"There are a couple of classes that meet at the same time," says Vaitiare. "So we get to know students from the other classes and other wards. Because most of us go to the same school, it helps us to find friends at school who are members."

Having friends who share the same standards helps these students of the scriptures stand up for their beliefs as students at school.

"We do a lot with our friends who aren't members," Vaitiare says. "But sometimes it's nice to have someone to lean on who you know believes what you do."

Safety in the Latter Days

Vaitiare has a favorite scripture too. At least until she finds another one in her studies that helps her just as much. It's Revelation 1:3: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."

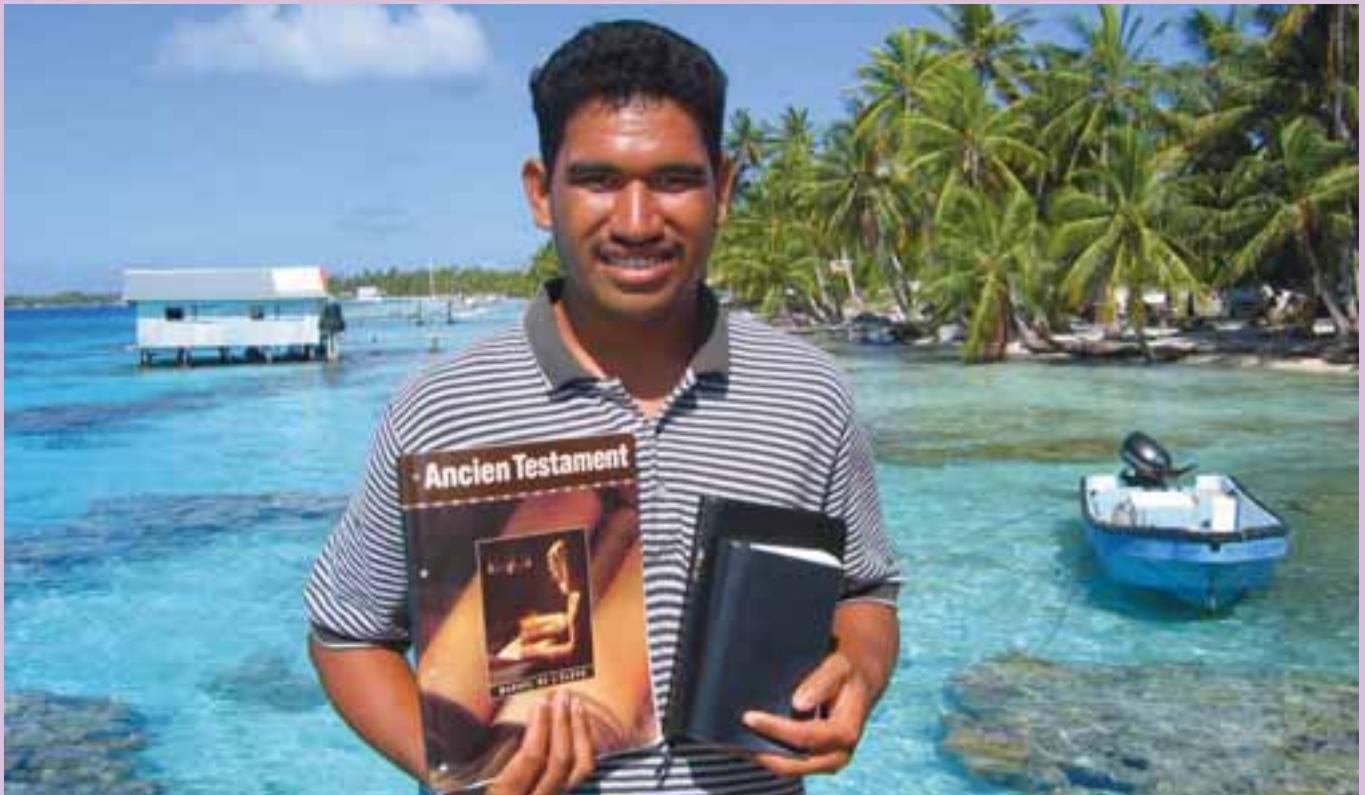
"The scriptures will teach us the truth if we will read them," she says. "What the prophets say is a guide for us. If we follow the scriptures and the words of the prophets, we will be

safe during these last days."

That's just one more reason to gather at seminary and get into the scriptures. ■



Raymonde Chapman enjoys studying the scriptures during seminary.



SEMINARY AFTER DARK

BY RICHARD M. ROMNEY

Church Magazines

On the island of Takaroa, 400 miles (600 km) northeast of Tahiti, seminary isn't an early morning activity, but an evening one. Once each week on Wednesdays, as the sun is going down, Sister Hina Garbutt teaches her students about the restored gospel. She's following a pattern of study established in the 1850s when Latter-day Saint missionaries first began teaching here. In fact, the seminary class meets next to a chapel built in the 1890s.

For teenagers living on Takaroa, seminary is the only formal education available. While elementary education exists, the only option for secondary students is to go to a boarding school on another island far away.

"We have only priests here among the young men," says Tetuarere Temahaga (above), 17, of the Takaroa Second Branch, Takaroa Tuamotu District. "The deacons and teachers have all gone away to school. But

the six priests and three young women who remain come to seminary. Everyone believes it's like our school for us, and so they come. We learn a lot, and we enjoy being together. Seminary allows us to keep learning."

Like most of the youth on Takaroa, Tetuarere works on the pearl farms. He has to get up as early as 4:30 a.m., and he spends the day diving and swimming, lifting heavy strings of oysters into boats. Others, like young women (right) Hinaui Tehina, 14, and Tapiu Tino, 15, work all day long tying oysters to nylon strings so that others can put them back in the water. That's how the pearls are grown, and that helps keep the economy alive on Takaroa. "We are needed here," Tapiu explains. She went to boarding school for a while but found there were a lot of negative influences, so she returned to be with her family, surrounded by those she loves.

After a long day of labor, what do teens on Takaroa do to unwind? "Not much," laughs Tetuarere. "We watch television, although there isn't much to watch, or we go

swimming. Most of all, we go fishing. We go fishing to get food, but we go for fun too."

Sundays and Wednesdays are especially welcome. "Sunday, of course, we go to church, and Wednesday night is seminary," Hinaui explains.

"We learn a lot about the gospel." Tetuarere talks about one of the many principles he has studied:

the importance of the temple. "You cannot go there taking with you the things of the world. It is the house of the Lord, and no unclean thing can enter there."

In fact, one of the exciting goals for seminary students here is to save money they earn and go with other branch members to the temple in Tahiti. "We will perform baptisms for the dead," says Hinaui. "It's a good goal. Everything we learn in church and everything we learn in seminary points us to the house of the Lord." ■





But once he stood at the pulpit, this brother's appearance was transformed in a most remarkable manner, and he immediately captured our attention. His posture became erect, almost military, although he wore no uniform or medals. His manner was that of a soldier—old, but proud. Slowly but confidently he began his compelling story.

During World War II he had served in an infantry battalion in an area where constant combat covered the earth with blood, pain, and death.

His squad was commanded by a sergeant who had earned the hatred of his men through extraordinary harshness. One terrible night a mortar shell exploded not far from the sergeant, critically wounding him. The commanding officer stopped a dilapidated truck that often passed by to pick up the wounded and dying and take them behind

No one wanted to help the dying sergeant. Then, after something of a pause, Brother Thamas stepped forward.

the lines to be cared for or buried.

The squad watched the fate of their dying leader from a distance. Not one went to help him. The officer asked for a volunteer to carry the man to the truck and accompany him behind the lines. No one volunteered.

Then, after something of a pause, Brother Thamas stepped forward. "Moved by compassion," he told us,

Moved by Compassion

By Juan Aldo Leone

Brother Thamas, a thin elderly man, sat by himself, often some distance from the other members who gathered to greet each other at the beginning of our Sunday meetings. His was a small figure, humble in appearance. He had been recently baptized and had no family. His Spanish, although understandable, was a mixture of Portuguese, French, German, English, and his

native Hungarian. In brief conversations with those members who tried to fellowship him, he spoke of far-away Hungary.

One day the bishop asked him to speak for a few minutes in sacrament meeting. He was surprised but accepted. We too were surprised to hear his name announced. We prepared ourselves for a brief and simple testimony.

"I decided to carry the unfortunate fellow and go with him on his trip. I took care of him the best I could during his long and painful ride.

"I returned later in search of my squad. When I reached the front, I learned that fierce bombardment had wiped out a large number of men on the awful night of my departure. Not one man from my squad had survived apart from myself. And then I understood. I thanked God for having moved me to compassion. He saved my life and gave me a chance to hear the restored gospel."

Our simple affection for a bent old man changed to appreciation, admiration, and gratitude for his having shared an example of the pure love of Christ. ■

Juan Aldo Leone is a member of the Villa Allende Ward, Córdoba Argentina Sierras Stake.

Deer in the Headlights

By Arlene Housman

Many years ago I was returning home after dropping my husband off at school. The drive would take me through a canyon in the mountains of Utah.

I had our new baby, April, with me. This was long before infant car seats, so April lay wrapped in a blanket on a pillow in the



front seat, her head resting on my leg.

To stay awake on this late trip I was singing the last hymn we had sung at church, "Abide with Me; 'Tis Eventide" (*Hymns*, no. 165). As I sang it started raining. When we reached

the canyon the rain turned to snow and began sticking to the pavement.

Rounding a bend on the narrow two-lane road, I found a herd of deer directly in my path.

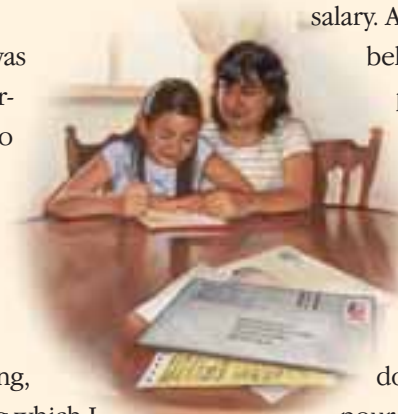
I hit the brake, and the car slid. On

One day I started to pay tithing anyway. As always I continued to plan my budget. And I began to realize that I had enough money for everything, even with the same salary. At first I couldn't

believe what was happening. Then I read the passage in the Bible where the Lord says, "Prove me now herewith . . . 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" (Malachi 3:10). I knelt down and cried unto the Lord in gratitude. He has never forsaken me. ■

Ana Cristina Merino Rivas is a member of the North Park Second Ward, Provo Utah North Park Stake.



Not Enough for Tithing?

By Ana Cristina Merino Rivas

Shortly after I was baptized, I married a man who was not a member of the Church. He controlled all the money I earned and never let me pay tithing.

I suffered for 10 long, unhappy years, during which I could not progress. Eventually I was divorced and began to support my daughter and myself. However, what I earned was insufficient to pay for our rent, bills, food, clothes, and the other things we needed. If I had enough for one thing, I could not afford another.

my right was the mountain, and on my left the road dropped off to the river. There was nowhere to go but straight ahead. Holding the steering wheel with one hand and grabbing my baby with the other, I got ready for impact. But to my amazement, the deer just stepped aside, allowing us to pass.

After clearing the herd, I looked in the rearview mirror. The herd hadn't frozen in the headlights or scattered—as deer normally would when frightened. They had merely backed up enough to let a little Volkswagen bug through. It felt to me like our parting of the Red Sea.



I rejoiced for the 10 miles (16 km) home, thanking God for “abid[ing] with me.”

When I arrived home and got out of the car, I realized what a tragedy it could have been and wasn't. Tears started to flow. Even if I had hit just one deer, it could have caused serious damage to the tiny car and injury to my baby and me. The near miss had occurred five miles (8 km) from the nearest farmhouse, and we hadn't passed any vehicles on the road through the canyon or the rest of the way home. I cried with joy, holding my baby in my arms and thanking God for protecting us from harm. ■

Arlene Housman is a member of the White River Ward, Auburn Washington Stake.

“No Mormons Allowed”

Name withheld

We had just moved to a small rural town where not many members of the Church lived. Our little branch was a friendly, close-knit group, and we

Rounding a bend, I found a herd of deer in my path. I hit the brake, and the car slid.

enjoyed each Sabbath day and the opportunity to attend church. Our only concern was for our children, who had few playmates their ages in our branch. My husband and I decided to look for ways to make friends outside of the Church so our children could have new friends and get to

know people from different faiths.

My hopes were soon dashed, however, when a local children's group told me that because we were “Mormons,” we were not welcome in their group. I had belonged to similar groups in other areas where there weren't many Latter-day Saints, and religion had never been an issue before. I assured the leaders of the group that I would not try to proselytize or force my religion on anyone; my family and I just wanted to make friends and meet new people. But they remained firm in their decision and did not allow us to join.

I decided that I would be kind, Christlike, and friendly to the people of this town so they would see that members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are good

people. We started inviting other children over to play, inviting neighbor families to dinner, and visiting with others in an effort to get to know people. I read conference talks, Church magazine articles, and scriptures about fellowship, kindness, and serving others. Then I worked to put these principles into practice in my life. I knew if I could show the people of this town how kind and loving Latter-day Saint families can be, this group would be sure to accept us in time.

Time passed, however, and although we were able to befriend the leaders of this social group, they remained firm in their “no Mormons allowed” position.

I decided then to continue being neighborly and kind to the people in my town, but I also decided to search out a similar social group in a neighboring town. But even there I was told that Latter-day Saints were not allowed to join their group. By then I was so frustrated I wanted to cry. What was wrong with the people in these two towns? Couldn't they see that we were a kind, fun family?

I prayed for the Spirit to guide me and help me be as friendly and Christlike as possible. I prayed that those who knew me would feel in their hearts that we were good people. I prayed they would experience a change of heart that would lead them to accept us. Still, I felt as if my prayers weren't being answered. No matter how hard I tried, I was

unable to soften their hearts.

Then one evening I received a phone call that shattered my hopes altogether. The leaders of the group called and told me once again that my family was not welcome in their group. They were concerned that we might be expecting to join in the future because we had made so many friends in the community. They said some very hurtful things, and I cried with a broken heart. All of the dinners, service projects, cookies, and sidewalk chats had meant nothing to these people. Where had I gone wrong?

That night I prayed a heartfelt and sincere request for help in dealing with those who had such strong feelings against the Church. I felt as if I were now entitled to their favor because of my efforts, and I explained this to my Father in Heaven.

The answer was stronger than any impression I had received for quite some time: “Follow Christ.”

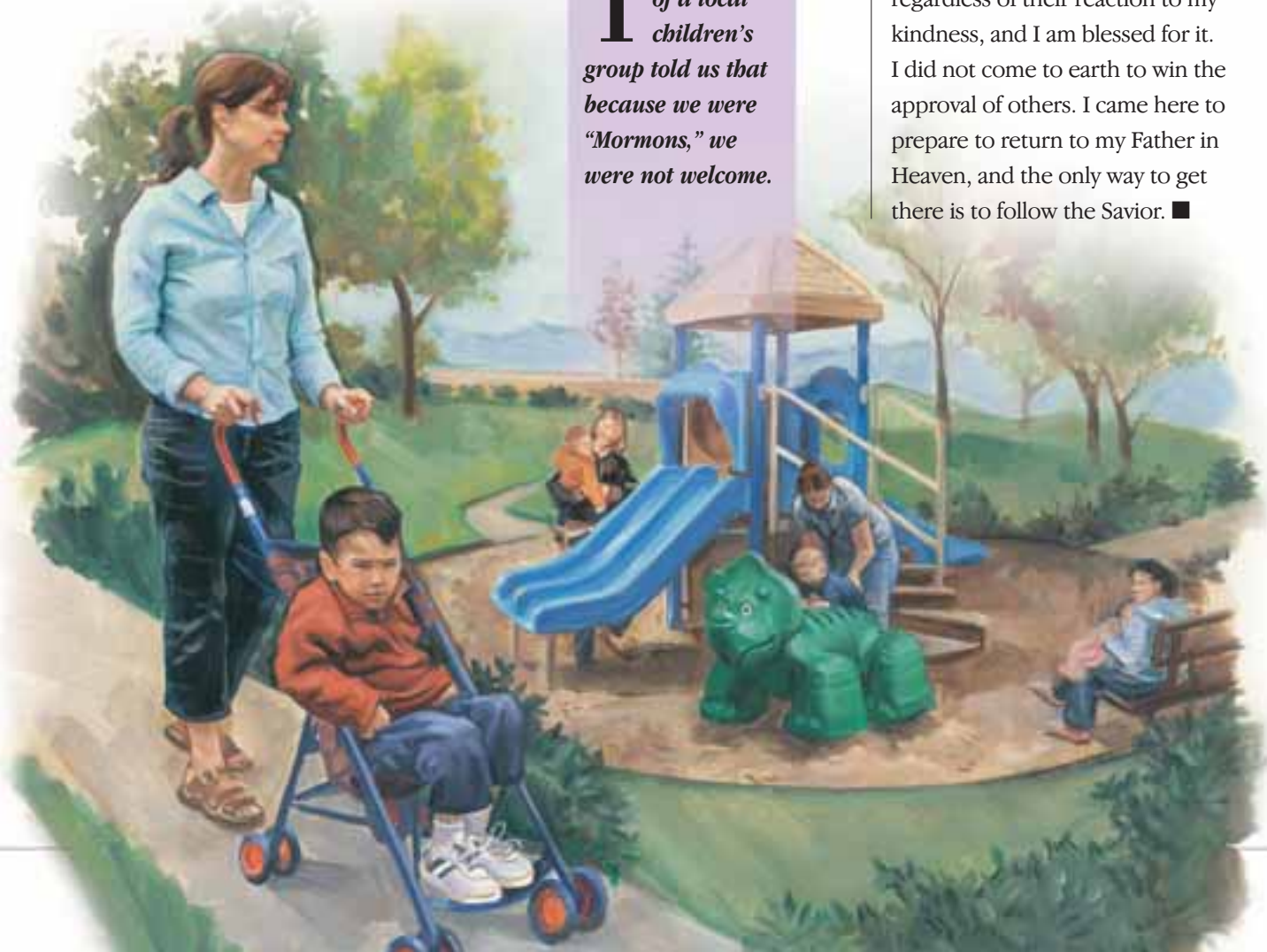
It confused me at first. “Yes,” I thought, “but I already do.” The cookies, the friendship, the reaching out—I was being as Christlike as I

could. Still, the only impression I received was “Follow Christ.”

I then realized that when my energies are focused on following Christ, I am not affected as much by the opinions of others. I serve them because it is right and not because it will help my image as a Latter-day Saint. I am friendly and neighborly because I feel friendly and neighborly, not because I have some self-centered reason for being friendly.

“Follow Christ” has become my motto whenever I am troubled by those who dislike us because of our faith. I now find joy in serving others regardless of their reaction to my kindness, and I am blessed for it. I did not come to earth to win the approval of others. I came here to prepare to return to my Father in Heaven, and the only way to get there is to follow the Savior. ■

The leaders of a local children's group told us that because we were “Mormons,” we were not welcome.





Grateful for Prophet's Counsel

I want to express my gratitude for the *Liabona*. It fills me with joy to read the testimonies of other Latter-day Saints around the world. I appreciated President Gordon B. Hinckley's admonition in the September 2004 First Presidency Message to raise our voices in opposition to evil. The articles about strengthening our families inspire me each day. I am grateful for the prophet and for the magazine, which unites the Saints all over the world.

*Carolina Tello Vargas,
Ventilador Ward,
Neiva Colombia Stake*

Spirit of the Temple

I have always loved the feeling that the temple brings to my life. When I was called to serve a mission in an area where I would not be able to attend the temple, I was afraid that I would be without that feeling for two years. Then I found that Heavenly Father has sent us a gift that can bring a similar feeling no matter where we are. I am very grateful for the *Liabona*. When I read the messages in the magazine, I feel the same spirit I felt in the temple.

*Elder Allan Herbert Silva,
Brazil Goiânia Mission*

Like an Iron Rod

I want to express my sincere appreciation to my Heavenly Father for the *Liabona* magazine. In the five years I have been a member it has been like an iron rod, keeping me on the strait and narrow path. It has strengthened my testimony that the Lord guides His Church and its members through the prophets.

*Javier Enrique Bobóquez Zambrano,
Calderón Ward,
Guayaquil Ecuador South Stake*

Liabona Makes Me Happy

I really like the *Liabona*. The children's section makes me happy, and it has interesting articles that help me. I carefully choose friends who help me do what is right, and I try to say only good words and to have a good attitude.

*Lebonti Melquisedec Ramos Ochoa, age 9,
Auditorio Ward,
Guadalajara Mexico Independencia Stake*

Source of Strength

Words cannot really express how thankful I am for the *Liabona*. It is my source of strength in this world full of challenges. When I read the messages of the prophets, I feel God's love for me. What more could I ask for?

*Mary Ann D. Ranches,
Alaminos First Branch,
Alaminos Philippines District*

Let Your Talent SHINE!



If you are a professional artist or photographer interested in being considered for freelance assignments for the Church magazines, we invite you to contact us. Freelance assignments would require the ability to create art-directed editorial and documentary work within specific deadlines.

Please send up to 10 digital samples of your work (PDF or JPEG files up to 1.5 megabytes per e-mail), contact information, and a short history of your experience to cur-artist-photographer@ldschurch.org. Or mail your information and copies of your work to Artists and Photographers, *Liabona*, 50 East North Temple Street, Floor 24, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA.

the Friend



Forgive

BY PRESIDENT
GORDON B. HINCKLEY



**President Hinckley
pleads with us to ask
the Lord for the
strength to forgive.**

Guy de Maupassant, the French writer, tells the story of a peasant named Hauchecorne. While walking through the public square, he caught sight of a piece of string lying on the cobblestones. He picked it up and put it in his pocket.

Later in the day the loss of a purse was reported. Hauchecorne was arrested and taken before the mayor. He protested his innocence, showing that it was only a piece of string that he had picked up. But he was not believed and was laughed at.

The next day the purse was found, and Hauchecorne was absolved [cleared] of any wrongdoing. But, resentful of the false accusation, he became embittered and would not let the matter die. Unwilling to forgive and forget, he thought and talked of little else. Everyone he met had to be told of the injustice. Obsessed with his grievance, he became ill and died. In his death struggles, he repeatedly murmured, “A piece of string,

a piece of string.” (See “The Piece of String,” in *The Works of Guy de Maupassant* [n.d.], 34–38.)

With variations of characters and circumstances, that story could be repeated many times in our own day. How difficult it is for any of us to forgive those who have injured us.

My brothers and sisters, let us bind up the wounds caused by plans to “get even” with those who have wronged us. We all have a little of this spirit of revenge in us. Fortunately, we all have the power to rise above it. I plead with you to ask the Lord for strength to forgive. It may not be easy, and it may not come quickly. But if you will seek it, there will come into your heart a peace. This is the sweet peace of Christ, who said, “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God” (Matthew 5:9). ●

From “Of You It Is Required to Forgive,” Tambuli, Nov. 1991, 2–7; Ensign, June 1991, 2–5.





START

I WILL ALWAYS CHOOSE THE RIGHT

“Choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15).

BY MARGARET S. LIFFERTH

First Counselor in the Primary General Presidency



Think about the choices you make every day. Do you choose what to wear, what to say, what to read and watch, and how to act? The ability to make choices is a gift from Heavenly Father. It is called *agency*. Using our agency is an important part of Heavenly Father’s plan for us. What helps you choose the right?

Heavenly Father will help you choose the right. You are a child of God, and He wants you to return to live with Him again. Remember, you can pray to Heavenly Father anytime, anywhere, and He will bless you with courage to choose the right.

Jesus Christ will help you choose the right. He is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6) and the perfect example for you to follow. You will choose the right when you ask yourself, “What would Jesus want me to do?”

The Holy Ghost will help you choose the right. When you are baptized and when you take the sacrament, you covenant (or promise) to keep the commandments. When you do this, Heavenly Father promises that the Holy Ghost will be with you. The Holy Ghost will prompt you to do what is right, warn you, and bless you with peace when you choose the right.

Prophets help you choose the right. The scriptures contain the word of God taught by His prophets. They can help you know what to do. Today, our prophet and other leaders are the servants of God. Listen when they speak in general conference. As you follow their counsel, you will choose the right.

“Choose the Right” Maze

Follow the maze on page F4. Choose the pictures that represent good decisions. As you make the correct choices, the maze will lead you to Jesus Christ.

Sharing Time Ideas

1. Teach the Word of Wisdom and the standard of modesty by preparing strips of paper with the following written on them: from D&C 89, verses 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 14; and the following quotes from President Gordon B. Hinckley—“How truly beautiful is a well-groomed young woman who is clean in body and mind.” “How handsome is a young man who is well groomed. He is a son of God, deemed worthy of holding the holy priesthood of God.” “[A son of God] does not need tattoos or earrings on or in his body.” “I promise you that the time will come, if you have tattoos, that you will regret your actions.” “As for the young women, . . . one modest pair of earrings is sufficient.” “There is no need for any Latter-day Saint boy or girl . . . to even try [drugs].” (See “A Prophet’s Counsel and Prayer for Youth,” *Liahona*, Apr. 2001, 30–41.) Explain that both modesty and the Word of Wisdom have to do with taking care of our bodies. Place the strips of paper in a bag; then pass the bag while the children sing. Stop the music, and invite a child to choose and read a reference from the bag. Discuss and teach the principles of the Word of Wisdom and modesty in dress.

2. Post on the board eight to ten pictures from the Gospel Art Picture Kit of Christ doing kind acts for others. Teach the children that Jesus is our friend, and He also taught us how to be a friend by His example. Have each class choose one picture and read the story about the picture from the scriptures or from the back of the picture. As each class presents a role play of the story, discuss ways that Jesus’s example helps us be a friend. ●



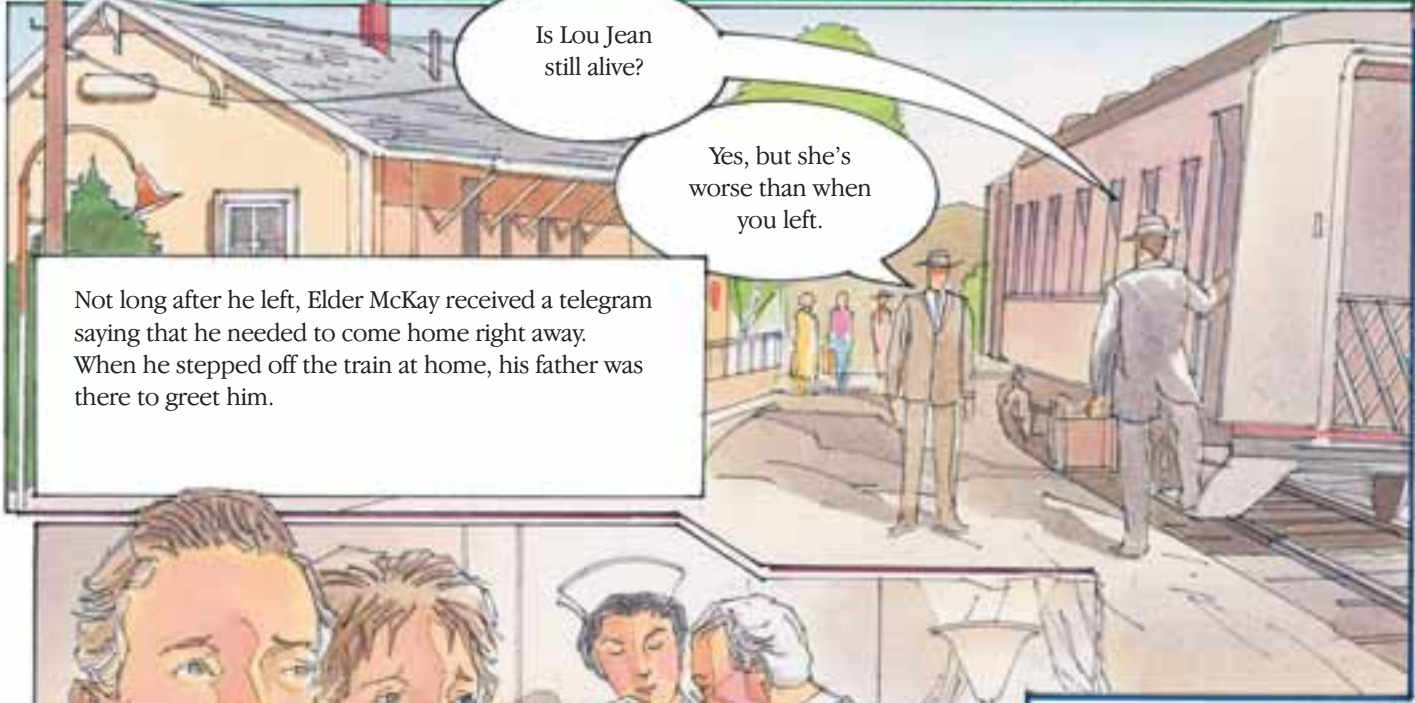
FROM THE LIFE OF PRESIDENT DAVID O. MCKAY

A Prayer for Lou Jean



I'll be back as soon as I can.

Even though Elder David O. McKay's daughter Lou Jean was very ill, he had to travel out of state for a stake conference.



Is Lou Jean still alive?

Yes, but she's worse than when you left.

Not long after he left, Elder McKay received a telegram saying that he needed to come home right away. When he stepped off the train at home, his father was there to greet him.

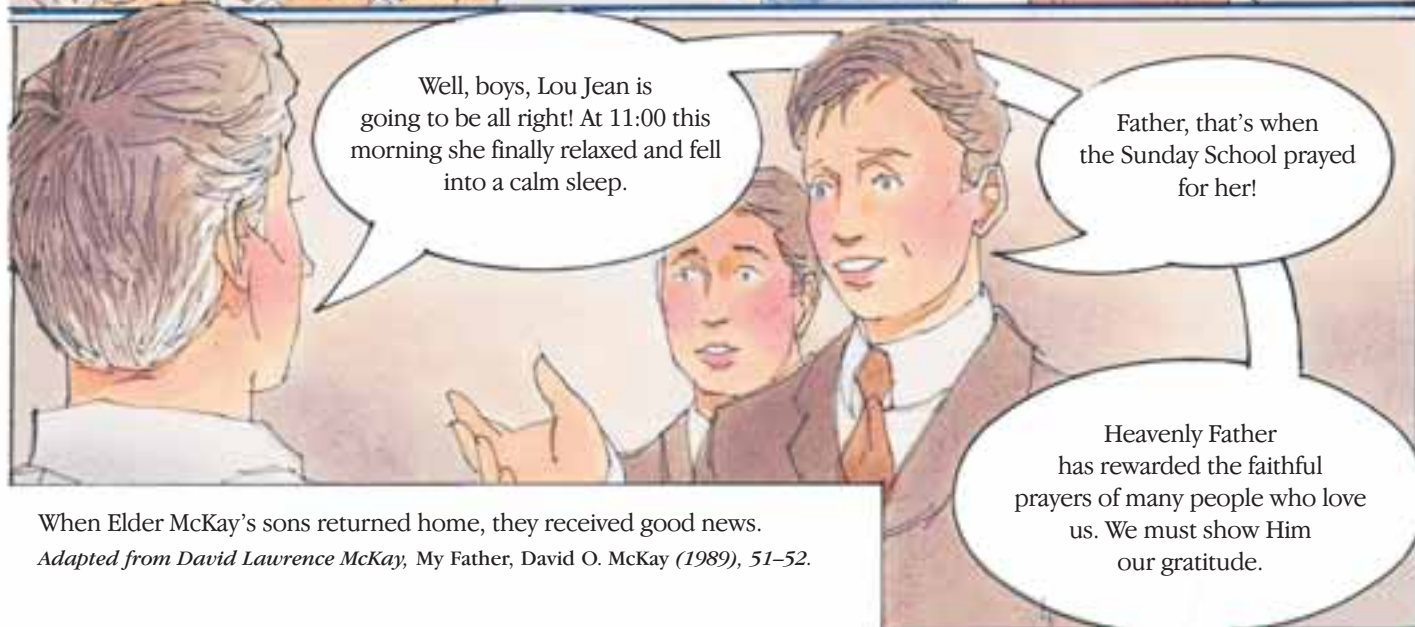
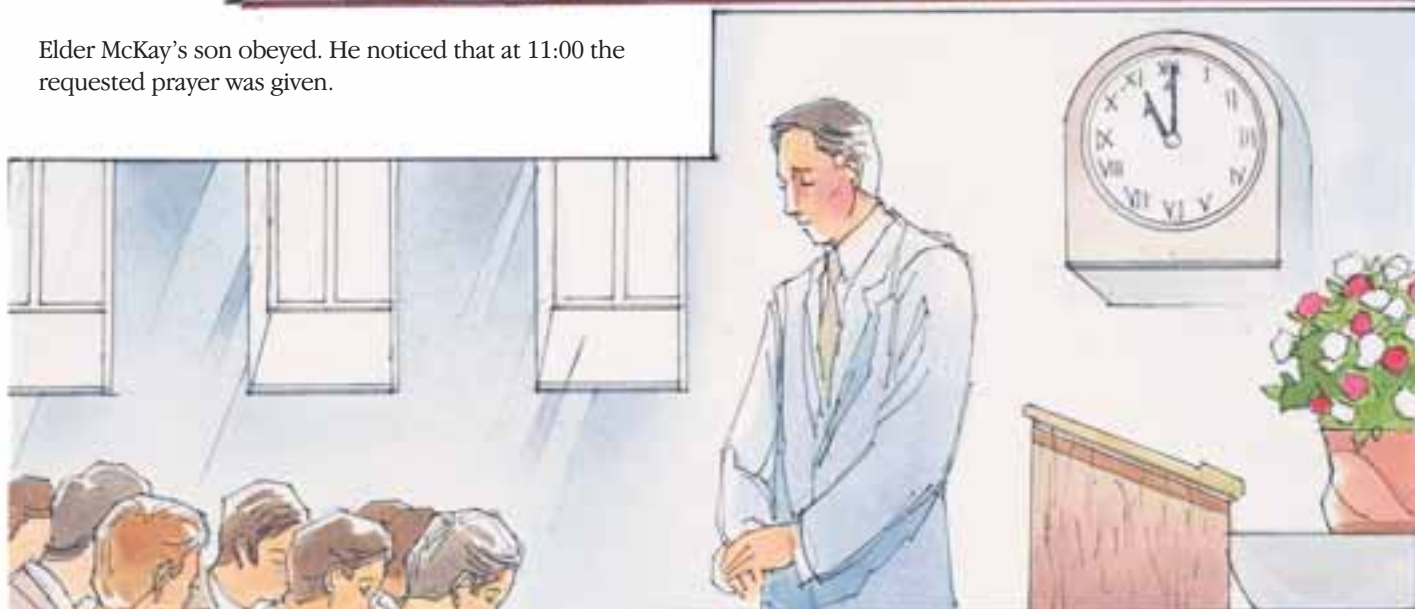


A doctor and a nurse stayed at Elder McKay's house all night. Other family members came to help for several days, but Lou Jean grew only worse.

On Sunday, Elder McKay sent his sons Lawrence and Llewelyn to church while he and his wife, Emma Ray, stayed home to care for Lou Jean.



Elder McKay's son obeyed. He noticed that at 11:00 the requested prayer was given.



When Elder McKay's sons returned home, they received good news.
Adapted from David Lawrence McKay, My Father, David O. McKay (1989), 51-52.

The Gospel Makes Us Happy



**From an interview
with Elder Jean A.
Tefan, Area Seventy,
Pacific Islands Area;
by Kimberly Webb,
Church Magazines**

*“Now, what do we hear in the gospel which we have received? A voice of gladness!”
(D&C 128:19).*

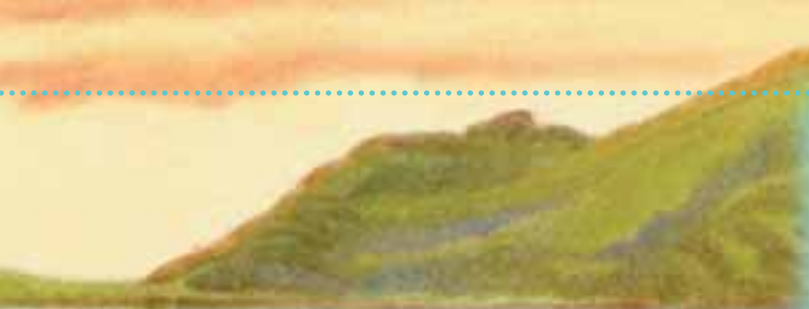
I grew up in Tahiti. My mother and father joined the Church when I was a child, but I was not baptized right away. When I was 11 years old, I went to Primary one Wednesday afternoon. We sat on a mat under a mango tree while my Primary teacher told us the story of the First Vision. As she spoke, my heart started to pound. I had a strong feeling that Joseph Smith’s First Vision was true and that he was a true prophet. After that spiritual experience, I told my parents, “I have a testimony, and I want to be baptized.”

From the day I was baptized until I graduated from high school, I was the only member of the Church in my school. My

classmates would say, “You don’t smoke? You don’t drink? You aren’t a man; you’re a sissy!”

At the end of the school year when I was in 11th or 12th grade, some of my classmates brought alcohol to a party. They grabbed me, held me down, and tried to pour champagne in my mouth. They didn’t want to hurt me; they just wanted to make fun of me. Luckily, I was able to get away. I never regretted keeping the Word of Wisdom. Some of my classmates have since passed away, but I’m thankful to still be alive, healthy, and trying to serve the Lord.

One of my classmates became very wealthy when he grew up. He once told me, “I admire you. My family has money, but we are not as happy as you are.” I felt it was a compliment to all Latter-day Saints. He could see that living the gospel makes us happy.



I served as president of the Fiji Suva Mission. One day on the island of Kiribati I was walking with two elders when a man came up to us. He was drunk. I wanted to chase him off, but he saw my name tag and called me by name. “President Tefan, I would like you and your missionaries to come to dinner at my home.”

I thought, “Uh-oh, maybe he doesn’t know what he’s doing.” I turned to the elders and asked, “How do you feel? Would you like to accept the invitation?” They said that they would like to go. I felt impressed to accept his offer.

The following night we all had a nice Chinese dinner—chicken, fish, other meats, and noodles. The missionaries were happy because it was a change from their daily menu of fish and rice. At the end of the dinner, I thanked the man and said, “Now I have a gift I would like to offer you. Would you like these missionaries to teach you the gospel of Jesus Christ?”

He said he wasn’t interested but the missionaries could teach his wife and 18-year-old son. Three months later the 18-year-old son was baptized. One year later the wife was baptized, and her husband started attending church. He asked me for a blessing to help him stop smoking and drinking, and he was able to quit. The last time I visited that family, the son had been admitted to Brigham Young University—Hawaii on a full-tuition scholarship and had also received a mission call to Hong Kong.

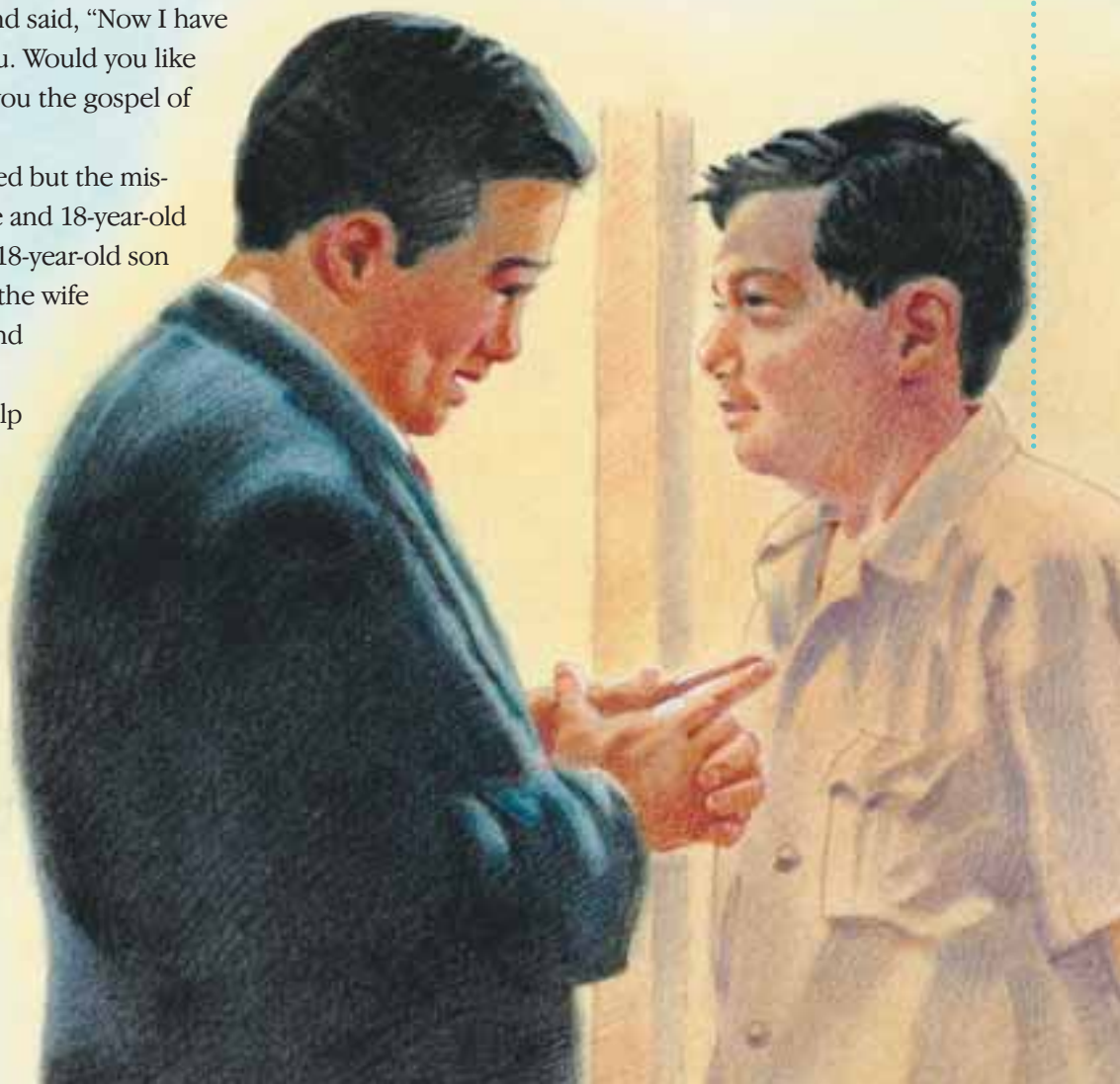
When I think back on my experience with that family, I’m glad that I didn’t chase the “drunk man” away but



Elder Tefan with his family.

instead followed the prompting of the Spirit to accept the dinner invitation, open my mouth, and ask him to hear the gospel.

I invite you children to open your mouths—invite your friends to church and to learn about the gospel. You never know what miracles may follow. ●



Truth Restored

With dignity ♩ = 112-126

1. Jo - seph Smith when hum - bly pray - ing saw the Fa - ther and the Son,
2. Jo - seph then was called by God to bring to light His ho - ly word;

As They are in all Their glo - ry, bright - er than the noon - day sun.
In the Book of Mor - mon we will find God's pre - cious truth re - stored.

Give Them glo - ry, give Them hon - or for the truths re - stored through prayer.
Read it dai - ly, seek and pon - der, and lift up your soul in prayer.

God a - bove shall beam His light in - to your heart these truths to share.
God a - bove shall beam His light in - to your heart its truth to share.

Words: Alan L. Jones Jr., b. 1931, © 2004 IRI

Music: Ludwig van Beethoven, 1770-1827

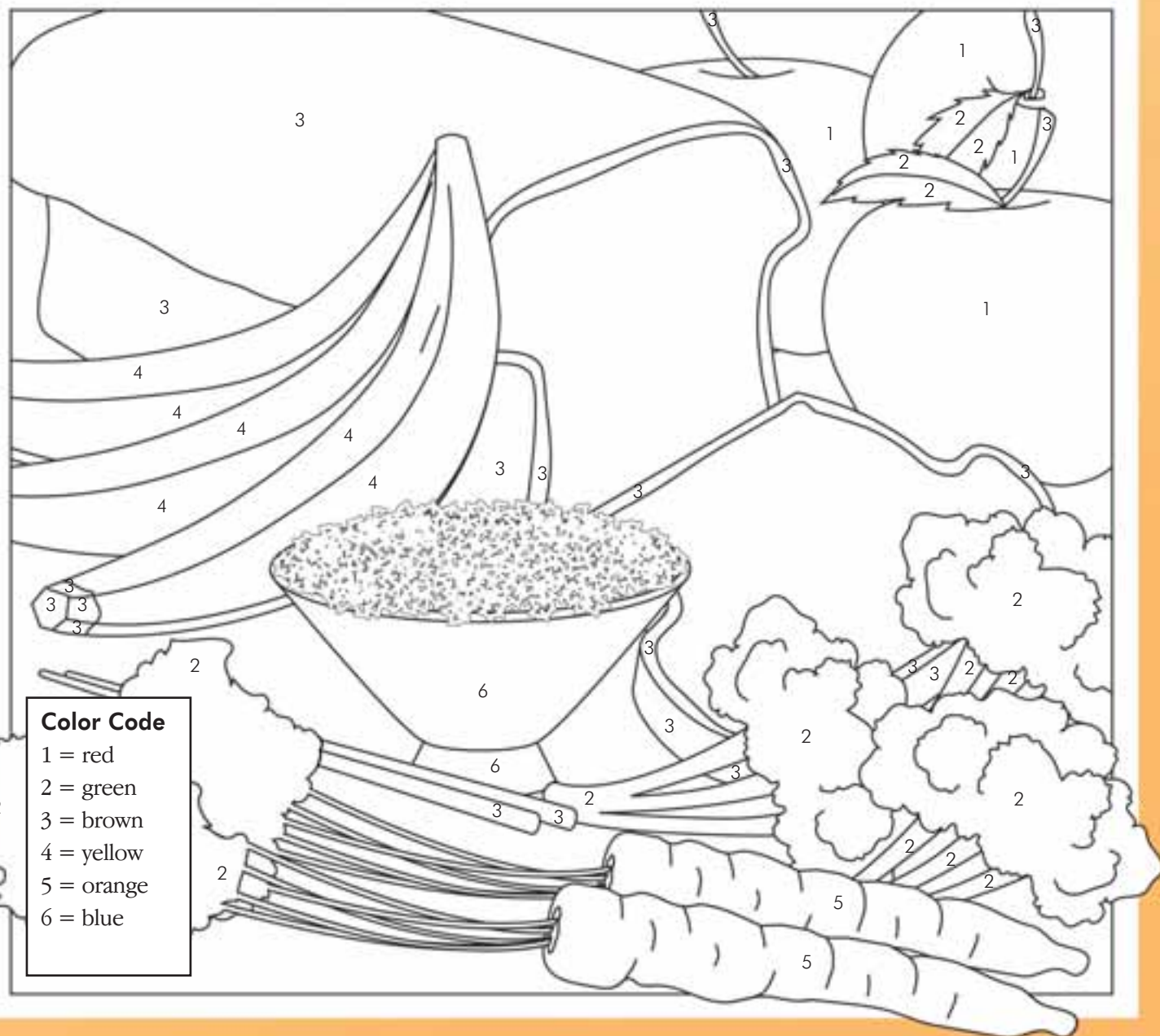
This song may be copied for incidental, noncommercial church or home use.

Good Choices

BY JULIE WARDELL
Church Magazines

Heavenly Father wants us to take care of our bodies. He has told us in section 89 of the Doctrine and Covenants about some foods that are good for our bodies. This section is called the Word of Wisdom. You can find some foods that are healthy

for you by coloring the picture on this page. Use the color code below to color the picture. Leave the unnumbered spaces white. You could use the picture to talk about the Word of Wisdom in family home evening or Primary. ●

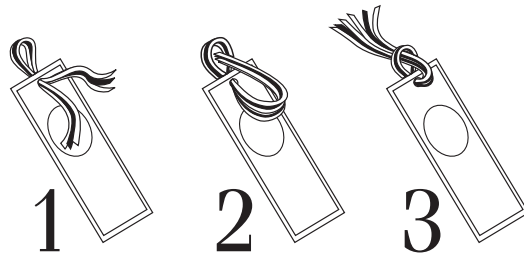


My Gospel Standards Bookmark

Instructions: Mount pages F12 and F13 on heavy paper. Cut out the bookmarks, fold them along the broken lines, and glue the backs together. Punch a hole in the top of each bookmark, and loop-tie several narrow strips of ribbon about nine inches (23 cm) long through the hole (see illustration). These bookmarks will help you remember to use My Gospel Standards to choose the right each day. They would also make good gifts for

friends who want to know more about the Church's standards.

Note: If you do not wish to remove pages from the magazine, this activity may be copied, traced, or printed out from the Internet at www.lds.org. For English, click on "Gospel Library." For other languages, click on the world map.



ILLUSTRATION

I AM A CHILD OF GOD



*I know Heavenly Father
loves me,
and I love Him.
I can pray to Heavenly
Father anytime,
anywhere.
I am trying to
remember and follow
Jesus Christ.*



MY GOSPEL STANDARDS

- I will follow Heavenly Father's plan for me.
- I will remember my baptismal covenant and listen to the Holy Ghost.
- I will choose the right. I know I can repent when I make a mistake.
- I will be honest with Heavenly Father, others, and myself.
- I will use the names of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ reverently. I will not swear or use crude words.
- I will do those things on the Sabbath that will help me feel close to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.
- I will honor my parents and do my part to strengthen my family.
- I will keep my mind and body sacred and pure, and I will not partake of things that are harmful to me.
- I will dress modestly to show respect for Heavenly Father and myself.
- I will only read and watch things that are pleasing to Heavenly Father.
- I will only listen to music that is pleasing to Heavenly Father.
- I will seek good friends and treat others kindly.
- I will live now to be worthy to go to the temple and do my part to have an eternal family.

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Hero

*“The Spirit speaketh the truth and lieth not.
Wherefore, it speaketh of things as they really are”
(Jacob 4:13).*

BY KIMBERLY WEBB

Church Magazines
Based on a personal experience

Come over after school,” Caroline said. “I have the new CD by Alisha.” (Artist’s name has been changed.)

I gasped. “OK!” Even though Grandma was taking me shopping for my birthday on Saturday, I couldn’t wait that long. I was desperate to hear the new CD right away.

Alisha was my hero. Caroline and I pretended to be her, holding hairbrushes like microphones and singing along with her music. Sometimes Mom asked us to keep it down, but she didn’t mind our noise that much because Alisha’s lyrics were so good. Alisha was religious—I had read it in a magazine.

After school I hurried to my room and finished my homework. Alisha’s smile beamed down at me from the poster tacked above my desk.

When I finally bounded across the street to Caroline’s house, she handed me the CD cover and bubbled, “Isn’t she *so* pretty?”

I nodded, but my stomach felt funny. Alisha wasn’t smiling this time; her expression was more like a sneer. And I had never seen a photo of her dressed like that.

“Don’t you think her outfit is a little immodest?”

I asked.

Caroline frowned. “Yeah, but maybe her church doesn’t care about stuff like that. She probably doesn’t know any better. Now listen—this is my favorite song.” She pushed the play button as I skimmed the lyrics printed in the CD jacket. I felt relieved that there weren’t any swear words.

“See? This CD is fine,” I told myself. But a dull feeling followed me home that night.

On Saturday morning I watched cartoons, waiting for Grandma to pick me up for our shopping trip. During a commercial, an announcer said that Alisha’s new music video would be shown at the end of the program!

Mom came into the family room just as the music started. “What are you watching?” She smiled and sat down.

“It’s the new Alisha video.” I tried to sound casual.

Mom’s smile disappeared as she watched Alisha dance across the screen. She looked at me and raised her eyebrows.



“The decisions you make now will determine much of what will follow during your life and throughout eternity.”

The First Presidency, *For the Strength of Youth* (2001), 2.

I squirmed. “Just because she’s wearing that outfit doesn’t mean the song is bad.”

“Are you sure?”

I wished the video would hurry and end, but it kept going. Finally I switched the TV off. Mom was silent, watching me.

“I read the lyrics,” I mumbled. “There weren’t any swear words.”

She pointed at the darkened TV screen. “But Alisha is still sending a message. You don’t have to say bad words to drive away the Spirit.”

A feeling inside told me that Mom was right. Maybe I didn’t understand what Alisha was suggesting, but the Holy Ghost knew—and His influence had left.

I trudged to my room and looked at my poster of grinning Alisha. I didn’t grin back. Why had my hero changed?

A car honked in the driveway, so I swallowed the lump rising in my throat and ran outside.

“Hi, birthday girl,” Grandma greeted me as I climbed into her van. “Where to?”

All week my decision had been made, but now I wasn’t sure. “Let me think for a second.”

Caroline’s words about Alisha popped into my head: “She probably doesn’t know any better.” It had sounded like a good excuse, but now I knew why it wasn’t—because *I* knew better!

The dark feeling melted away as I realized something important. I was a daughter of God, and I didn’t need another hero. Why should I admire someone who didn’t even know who she was? “*I should be Alisha’s hero,*” I thought with a giggle. Grandma gave me a questioning look.

“Can we go to a clothes store?” I asked. “I’ve almost outgrown my favorite blue church dress.”

“Good idea. You look really pretty in blue.”

I smiled. I looked pretty with the Spirit glowing inside too—prettier than a famous pop star could ever be. ●





MAY NOT BE COPIED

Back o' Hill Road, Stirling, Scotland, by Diane Dean

As a missionary in Scotland in 1898, David O. McKay noticed the stone plaque in the upper right corner of this building. He found inspiration in the words carved there—"What-e'er thou art act well thy part"—and said, "That was a message to me that morning to act my part well as a missionary."



*“The little things are the
big things sewn into the family
tapestry by a thousand threads
of love, faith, discipline,
sacrifice, patience, and work.”
See President James E. Faust,
“A Thousand Threads of Love,”
p. 2.*