

APRIL 2014

THE

New Era



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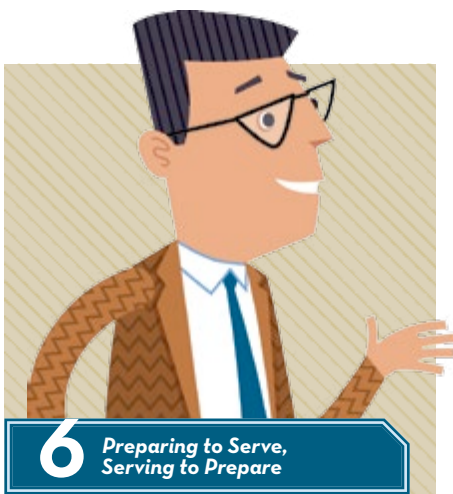
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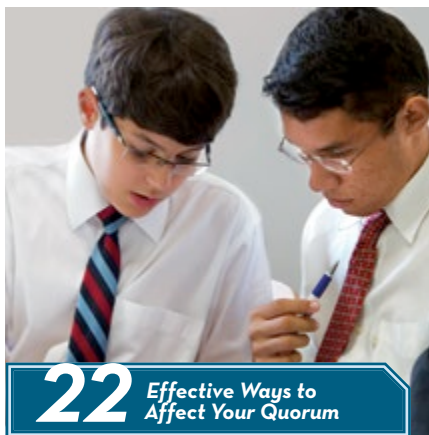
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Men and Women in the **WORK** of the **LORD**

In our Heavenly Father's great priesthood-endowed plan, men and women have different but equally valued roles.



By Elder
M. Russell Ballard
Of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles

I believe there are some truths that both women and men need to understand about the essential role women have in strengthening and building up the kingdom of God on the earth. In so many ways women are the heart of the Church. So with the help of the Lord, I would like to pay tribute to the faithful women and young women of the Church. To you dear sisters, wherever you live in the world, please know of the great affection for and trust that the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles have in you.

Let me begin with a refresher course about what we are doing here on earth.

We are beloved spirit sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father. We lived with Him in the premortal realms. In order to fulfill the mission of bringing “to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39), Heavenly Father created a plan designed to help His children achieve their ultimate potential. Our Father's plan called for man to fall and to be separated from Him for a time by being born into mortality, gaining a body, and entering a period of testing and

probation. His plan provided for a Savior to redeem mankind from the Fall. The Atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ provides the way through gospel ordinances and sacred covenants to return to the presence of God. Because we would live in a mortal environment filled with danger and distractions, Heavenly Father and His Son knew we would need access to power greater than our own. They knew we would need access to Their power. The gospel and doctrine of Christ give all who will accept it power to achieve eternal life and power to find joy in the journey.

There are those who question the place of women in God's plan and in the Church. I've been interviewed enough by national and international media to tell you that most journalists with whom I have dealt have had preconceived notions about this topic. Through the years many have asked questions implying that women are second-class citizens in the Church. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Let me suggest five key points for you to ponder regarding this important topic.

1. God Has a Plan to Help Us Achieve Eternal Life

Our Heavenly Father created both women and men, who are His spirit daughters and sons. This means that gender is eternal. He has a plan designed to help all who choose to follow Him and His Son, Jesus Christ, achieve their destiny as heirs of eternal life.

If our eventual exaltation is Their essential goal and purpose and if They are omniscient and perfect, as we know They are, then They understand best how to prepare, teach, and lead us so that we have the greatest chance to qualify for exaltation.

Most everyone has family or friends who have been caught up in various troubling social issues. Arguing about the issues generally does not bring any resolution and, in fact, can create contention. There are some questions about the Church's position on sensitive issues that are hard to answer to anyone's satisfaction. However, when we seek

the Lord in prayer about how to feel and what to do in these situations, the impression comes: "Do you believe in Jesus Christ and do you follow Him and the Father?" I believe most everyone in the Church at one time or another will wonder if they can do all they are asked to do. But if we really believe in the Lord, the reassurance comes: "I believe Jesus Christ, and I'm willing to do whatever He needs me to do." So we move forward. How powerful are the words "I believe Jesus Christ"!

Our testimonies and our peace of mind and our well-being begin with the willingness to believe that our Father in Heaven does indeed know best.

2. The Church Is Governed through Priesthood Keys

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Lord's Church, and His Church is governed by and through



priesthood authority and priesthood keys. “Priesthood keys are the authority God has given to priesthood leaders to direct, control, and govern the use of His priesthood on earth.”¹

Those who have priesthood keys—whether that be a deacon who has keys for his quorum or a bishop who has keys for his ward or the President of the Church, who holds all priesthood keys—literally make it possible for all who serve faithfully under their direction to exercise priesthood authority and have access to priesthood power.

All men and all women serve under the direction of those who have keys. This is how the Lord governs His Church.

Let me repeat something I stated in the April 2013 general conference: “In our Heavenly Father’s great priesthood-endowed plan, men have the unique responsibility to administer the priesthood, but they are not the priesthood. Men and women have different but equally valued roles. Just as a woman cannot conceive a child without a man, so a man cannot fully exercise the power of the priesthood to establish an eternal family without a woman. . . . In the eternal perspective, both the procreative power and the priesthood power are shared by husband and wife.”²

Why are men ordained to priesthood offices and not women? President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) explained that it was the Lord, not man, “who designated that men in His Church should hold the priesthood” and that it was also the Lord who endowed women with “capabilities to round out this great and marvelous organization, which is the Church and kingdom of God.”³ When all is said and done, the Lord has not revealed why He has organized His Church as He has.

Let us not forget that approximately one-half of all the teaching that takes place in the Church is done by sisters. Much of the leadership provided is from our sisters. Many service opportunities and activities are planned and directed by women. The counsel and other participation of women in ward and stake councils and in general councils

at Church headquarters provide needed insight, wisdom, and balance.

It takes both men who respect women and their distinctive spiritual gifts and women who respect the priesthood keys held by men to invite the full blessings of heaven in any endeavor in the Church.

3. Men and Women Are Equally Important

Men and women are equal in God’s eyes and in the eyes of the Church, but equal does not mean they are the same. The responsibilities and divine gifts of men and women differ in their nature but not in their importance or influence. Our Church doctrine places women equal to and yet different from men. God does not regard either gender as better or more important than the other. President Hinckley declared to women that “our Eternal Father . . . never intended that you should be less than the crowning glory of His creations.”⁴

Men and women have different gifts, different strengths, and different points of view and inclinations. That is one of the fundamental reasons why we need each other. It takes a man and a woman to create a family, and it takes men and women to carry out the work of the Lord. A husband and wife righteously working together complete each other. Let us be careful that we do not attempt to tamper with our Heavenly Father’s plan and purposes in our lives.

4. All Are Blessed by Priesthood Power

When men and women go to the temple, they are both endowed with the same power, which is priesthood power. While the authority of the priesthood is directed through priesthood keys, and priesthood keys are held only by worthy men, access to the power and the blessings of the priesthood is available to all of God’s children.

Our Father in Heaven is generous with His power. All men and all women have access to this power for help in their lives. All who have made sacred covenants with the Lord and who honor those covenants are eligible to receive



personal revelation, to be blessed by the ministering of angels, to commune with God, to receive the fulness of the gospel, and, ultimately, to become heirs alongside Jesus Christ of all our Father has.

5. We Need to Know and Bear Testimony of the Doctrine

We need the women of the Church to know the doctrine of Christ and to bear testimony of the Restoration in every way you can. Never has there been a more complex time in the history of the earth. Satan and his minions have been perfecting the weapons in their arsenal for millennia, and they are experienced at destroying faith and trust in God and in the Lord Jesus Christ among the human family.

All of us—men, women, young adults, youth, and boys and girls—have the Lord and His Church to defend, to protect, and to spread throughout the earth. We need more of the distinctive, influential voices and faith of women. We need you to learn the doctrine and to understand what we believe so that you can bear your testimonies about the truth of all things—whether those testimonies be given around a campfire at Young Women camp, in a testimony meeting, in a blog, or on Facebook. Only you can show the world what women of God who have made covenants look like and believe.

Sisters, your sphere of influence is a unique sphere—one that cannot be duplicated by men. No one can defend our Savior with any more persuasion or power than you, the daughters of God, can—you who have such inner strength and conviction. The power of a converted woman's voice is immeasurable, and the Church needs your voices now more than ever.

I leave you my witness and my testimony that we are in a time when we must stand in unity. We must stand together—men and women, young men and young women, boys and girls. We must stand for the plan of our Heavenly Father. We must defend Him. He is being pushed aside. We cannot stand idly by as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and allow that to continue to happen without being courageous enough to let our voices be heard.

May God bless you to have the courage to study and to know the simple truths of the gospel and then to share them every chance you get. **NE**

From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University on August 20, 2013. For the full text, visit lds.org/go/workNE4.

NOTES

1. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 2.1.1.
2. M. Russell Ballard, "This Is My Work and Glory," *Ensign*, May 2013, 19.
3. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Women of the Church," *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 70.
4. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Stand Strong against the Wiles of the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 98.

Preparing to Serve, SERVING TO PREPARE

God gave you the Aaronic Priesthood because He has a work for you—now and in the future.



David L. Beck
Young Men
General President

Jonathan is a friend of mine who joined the Church four years ago. He is the only member of the Church in his family. After he received the Aaronic Priesthood, he began serving others as he had never served before. Jonathan knew that to serve, he needed to learn a lot. He also wanted to be worthy and more dependable, so he studied the gospel, prayed, and attended his Sunday meetings and seminary. He worked hard to keep the commandments and Church standards. He diligently fulfilled his priesthood duties, including being a great home teacher. His *Duty to God* book helped him understand those duties and learn how to fulfill them.

Jonathan's faithful priesthood service gave him spiritual strength. It helped protect him from evil influences. He grew tremendously as he served and prepared for his future. This past year, he worthily received the Melchizedek Priesthood and the temple endowment. He is now serving a mission in Brazil.

The Aaronic Priesthood is often called the "preparatory priesthood." God gave you the Aaronic Priesthood because He has a work for you—now and in the future. Your faithful service in the Aaronic Priesthood prepares you for even greater opportunities to serve in the coming years. Like Jonathan, you

are preparing to "receive the Melchizedek Priesthood, to receive the blessings of the temple, to serve a full-time mission, to be a loving husband and father, and to continue in lifelong service to the Lord" (*True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* [2004], 4).

You may not know all of the details of the wonderful opportunities Heavenly Father has in store for you, but I am confident that you will be prepared to meet them if you remember to do the following as an Aaronic Priesthood holder.

Follow Jesus Christ

As a priesthood holder, you are a representative of Jesus Christ. That means you are asked to follow Him and to do what He would do. What would He do? In every situation, He devoted His life to serving and blessing others. So should you. Give yourself in service to others—and then grow and improve so that there is more of yourself to give! Remember how Jesus grew in His youth: He "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52).

Part of following the Savior is becoming wise and physically healthy in your youth. This requires you to work hard and always do your best (see D&C 4:2). You gain favor with God



AARONIC PRIESTHOOD HOLDERS:

HOW CAN I PREPARE TO:

Follow Jesus Christ through

- daily prayer and gospel study.
- obedience.
- seeking God's will.

Administer priesthood ordinances, such as

- blessing the sacrament.
- baptizing others.

Minister always by

- strengthening family and quorum members.
- rescuing less-active members.
- serving the needy.

Receive the Melchizedek Priesthood?

Receive temple blessings?

Serve a mission?

Become a husband and father?





You follow Christ when you seek God's will throughout the day to guide your service and act on the spiritual promptings you receive.

As a priesthood holder, you are a representative of Jesus Christ. In every situation, He devoted His life to serving and blessing others. So should you.

as you draw close to Him through daily prayer, gospel study, obedience, and service. You gain favor with others as you are kind and loyal to your family and a Christlike friend to all.

Remember that Jesus always did the will of the Father. You follow Christ when you seek God's will throughout the day to guide your service and act on the spiritual promptings you receive.

Administer Priesthood Ordinances

Priesthood ordinances are necessary for all of God's children and bless both His sons and daughters equally. From the moment you become a deacon, you help administer in a priesthood ordinance by passing the sacrament. You'll continue to administer priesthood ordinances in the Aaronic Priesthood later as you prepare and bless the sacrament, baptize, and participate in the ordination of other Aaronic Priesthood holders.

To participate in sacred ordinances, you must be clean. Your moral cleanliness can add great spiritual power to the ordinances you administer. Strive to be worthy in every way to bear the sacred vessels of the Lord's sacrament (see D&C 38:42). When you do, you can stand before your ward or branch members as a true representative of Jesus Christ. They will be blessed by your determination to keep the covenants you are helping them renew.

Minister Always

As an Aaronic Priesthood holder, you minister. At all times, seek opportunities

to minister to your family, friends, quorum members, and others. Everything you do in the priesthood helps you minister to others both physically and spiritually. For example, when you help your bishop or branch president by serving a family you home teach, you're learning how to identify and take care of others' needs. You'll also minister to others as you reach out to strengthen your quorum members and rescue the less-active, gather fast offerings to help the poor and needy, perform physical labor for the sick and disabled, teach and testify of Christ and His gospel, and lighten the burdens of the discouraged.

You minister as you teach lessons in your quorum meetings and in your family home evenings. You minister as you invite all to come unto Christ (see D&C 20:59)—at home, in your quorum, at school, with the full-time missionaries, and wherever else you are.

Your Future

Discuss with your parents or advisers what will be required of you in your future roles as a Melchizedek Priesthood holder, missionary, husband, and father. Write in the space provided some of those great responsibilities and how you can prepare for them today as you serve in the Aaronic Priesthood. It may seem overwhelming now, but remember that the best way to prepare is simply to do what Heavenly Father has asked you to do today. May you find happiness as you serve now and prepare for your glorious future. **NE**

The POWER to Bless ALL PEOPLE

Church leaders have taught us that priesthood ordinances and covenants equally bless and are equally available to all of God's children.



"The priesthood is the power and authority of God given for the salvation and blessing of all—men, women, and children..."

"There are special blessings from God for every worthy person who is baptized, receives the Holy Ghost, and regularly partakes of the sacrament. The temple brings added light and strength, along with the promise of eternal life [see D&C 138:37, 51]."

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Power in the Priesthood," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 92.



"Priesthood ordinances and covenants provide access to the fulness of the blessings promised to us by God, which are made possible by the

Savior's Atonement. They arm sons and daughters of God with power, God's power, and provide us with the opportunity to receive eternal life—to return to God's presence and live with Him in His eternal family."

Carole M. Stephens, first counselor in the Relief Society general presidency, "Do We Know What We Have?" *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 12.



"It is crucial for us to understand that Heavenly Father has provided a way for all of His sons and His daughters to have access to

the blessings of and be strengthened by the power of the priesthood. Central to God's plan for His spirit children is His own declaration: 'This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man' (Moses 1:39)."

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "This Is My Work and Glory," *Ensign*, May 2013, 19.

ILLUSTRATION BY GAIL ARMSTRONG



SHARE YOUR BLESSINGS

Share some ways that the priesthood has blessed you that may not be obvious (for instance, when you're given opportunities to serve or set apart for callings). Go to lds.org/go/bleessNE4.

Bringing the **BLESSINGS** of the **PRIESTHOOD** into Your Home



By **Bonnie L. Oscarson**

Young Women
General President

As you keep your covenants, you draw upon priesthood power to bless your home and family.

How can you as a young man or a young woman, no matter your family circumstances, draw upon the power of the priesthood covenants you made at baptism to strengthen your homes and families? Understanding the role and importance of our families in the Lord's plan can inspire us to honor the promises we have made by seeing that our best and most enthusiastic service is done within our own homes. Let's look at some of the ways we draw upon the power of our covenants to strengthen and serve those who mean the most to us.

How Would You Respond?

It's Monday night, and you have a ton of homework. You hear your father calling the family to gather for family home evening. What do you do?

Choice A: You respond, "Ah, Dad, I don't have time for that tonight! I've got to study!"

Choice B: You quickly help gather your siblings and cheerfully participate in the prayers, music, and message.

When There's Priesthood Leadership at Home

Supporting your parents by willingly participating in family home evening, family prayer, and family scripture study are some ways to strengthen priesthood leadership in your home. There are many other ways, such as:

- Pray for your parents. (They almost certainly pray for you each day.)
- Support your parents in their Church callings and offer to help around the house, especially when they are busy with special assignments.
- Help your parents welcome the home teachers when they come, and then courteously listen to their message.
- If there is a temple in your area, offer

to babysit younger siblings so that your parents can go to the temple and participate in priesthood ordinances.

Remember that it is not just parents who are responsible for inviting and maintaining the Spirit in your home. There is much you can do to invite the Spirit through your actions and attitude. Are you doing your part to invite the influence of the Spirit in your home?

When There's No Priesthood Leadership at Home

Families do not all look or function the same way. You may be in a single-parent family or not have a priesthood holder who presides in your home. There are still many ways to invite priesthood power to strengthen you and your family. These are things we should all be doing, regardless of our circumstances:

- Have personal prayer, study the scriptures, and fast. These efforts will help you be spiritually strong and invite the Spirit into your life and into your sphere of influence.
- Take time to magnify your callings or Church assignments and be prepared for Sunday lessons. Doing so helps you have confidence in yourself and shows support for priesthood programs.
- Show respect for all members of your family and support their

wholesome activities. These choices help strengthen the whole family.

- Share with your family the things you learn and do in your Church classes and quorums. It is a way to bring gospel teachings into the home.
- Find ways to serve those around you through simple acts of kindness.
- Help around the house by doing chores or helping a brother or sister.
- Show Christlike love to your family—it will have a bigger impact on building strong family ties than almost anything else you can do.

Honoring Your Covenants

By serving, loving, and strengthening our families, we are being true to the covenants we made at baptism to stand as witnesses of Jesus Christ, keep His commandments, and strengthen those around us. We can draw upon the strength of priesthood covenants to be a blessing to and help in our homes and families. *Priesthood, service, and home* are words that should be eternally connected in our minds. The members of our own families should be the number-one priority as we find ways to participate in the work of salvation. When we strengthen our families, we also strengthen the Church, our communities, and the world. **NE**



“The family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children.”

“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.



“The most important of the Lord’s work you will ever do will be within the walls of your own homes.”

Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee (2000), 134.



THE GATE *and* THE PATH

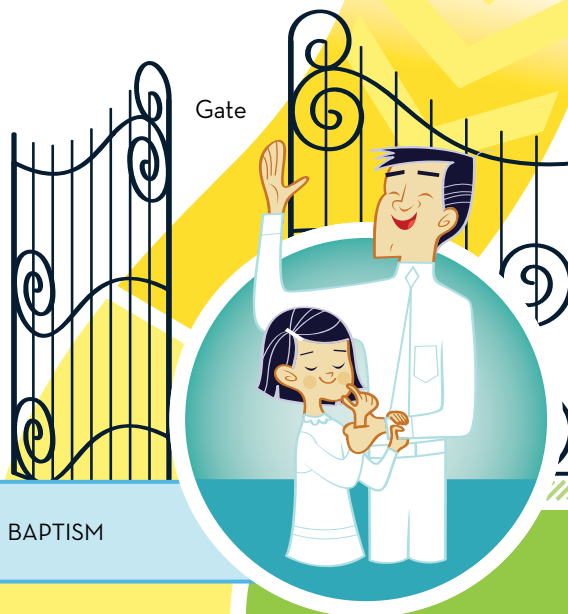
Priesthood ordinances and covenants set us on the path to eternal life and bless us with the strength we need right now.

We all seek eternal life, which means being saved and exalted in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom, where we can live in Heavenly Father's presence as families.

In addition to faith in Jesus Christ and repentance, the ordinances and covenants of the priesthood allow us to enter the path that leads to eternal life. No matter when you entered this path or where you are on it—whether you were born in the Church or converted later, whether you have been active all your life or are just returning to Church activity—you can progress along it as you focus on your covenants and what you can do to receive and keep them.

And it's important to know that priesthood ordinances and covenants don't just offer the promise of a glorious future. They also give us the strength, comfort, and support we need right now in order to follow the path and endure to the end in righteousness. **NE**

PATH LEADING TO ETERNAL LIFE
(Enduring to the End)
See 2 Nephi 31



Gate

BAPTISM



"It is priesthood authority in the Church that provides for sacred ordinances and covenants that bind **families together** and

qualify each of us to **return to God the Father and Jesus Christ** in the celestial kingdom. These ordinances bring peace because they are covenants with the Lord."

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Personal Peace: The Reward of Righteousness," *Ensign*, May 2013, 34.



Sacrament—
weekly renewal of baptismal covenant

GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST

ESSENTIAL ORDINANCES AND COVENANTS
RENEWING AND STRENGTHENING ORDINANCES

HELPS ALONG THE WAY

THE PRIESTHOOD
Stewart Cavanaugh

Patriarchal blessings—
special individual guidance and
promised blessings



Scriptures—guidance and instruction received as part of covenant between God and His people (see D&C 84:57)

Prayer—“[The Master] offers us the covenant to ‘always remember Him’ and the warning to ‘pray always’ so that we will place our reliance on Him, our only safety” (President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Always,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1999, 9).

Service—fulfilling our covenants by serving God and His children, including callings, temple and family history work, sharing the gospel, full-time missionary service

Repentance—remembering our covenants and drawing closer to the Savior when we have strayed, sometimes including help from priesthood leaders

PRIESTHOOD CONFERRAL AND ORDINATION
(FOR YOUNG MEN)

TEMPLE ENDOWMENT

Blessings for the sick—
help and healing



**Father’s blessings and other
blessings of comfort and counsel—**
peace and guidance when needed



TEMPLE SEALING



“Staying on the gospel path of covenants, commandments, and ordinances **protects** us and **prepares** us to do God’s work in this world.”

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Stand Strong in Holy Places,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 49.



“As you worthily participate in the ordinances of the priesthood, the Lord will give you greater **strength, peace, and eternal perspective.**”

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Power in the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 95.

ETERNAL LIFE
(Celestial Kingdom with Family)

Why Do We Have TWO PRIESTHOODS?

In Adam’s day and for a long time afterward, there was one priesthood. We now have two—the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods. Here is the history behind this division in the priesthood.

Adam was given the Melchizedek Priesthood, which was passed along through the prophets and patriarchs of the book of Genesis and eventually to Moses. Then “Moses . . . sought diligently to sanctify his people that they might behold the face of God; but they hardened their hearts and could not endure his presence. . . . Therefore, [the Lord] took Moses out of their midst, and the Holy [Melchizedek] Priesthood also; and the lesser [Aaronic] priesthood continued” (D&C 84:23–26).

The higher keys and blessings were taken away from the people, but others remained.¹ During the ministry of the Savior and His Apostles, the Melchizedek Priesthood was restored and its blessings were again seen among the people. But eventually all priesthood authority was lost. Each of the divisions in the priesthood—Aaronic and Melchizedek—was restored separately through Joseph Smith, and we still have both of them today. Here is a very basic outline of their keys, blessings, and roles.

AARONIC PRIESTHOOD	MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD
Holds the “keys of the ministering of angels” (D&C 13:1). ²	Holds the “key of the knowledge of God” (D&C 84:19).
Holds the key of the preparatory gospel, which includes repentance and baptism (see D&C 84:26–27).	Administers the fulness of the gospel (see D&C 84:19).
Administers in outward ordinances (see D&C 107:20), such as sacrifices anciently and the sacrament today.	Holds “the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church” (D&C 107:18), such as the gift of the Holy Ghost, temple ordinances, blessings of healing and comfort, and revelation to the Church. ³
Is “an appendage to . . . the Melchizedek Priesthood” (D&C 107:14). ⁴	“Holds the right of presidency, and has power and authority over all the offices in the church” (D&C 107:8).

NOTES

1. Though the blessings of the Melchizedek Priesthood were not generally available to the people after the days of Moses, Joseph Smith explained that “all the prophets had the Melchizedek Priesthood” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 109).
2. Joseph Smith taught, “The Melchizedek Priesthood . . . is the channel through which all knowledge, doctrine, the plan of salvation, and every important matter is revealed from heaven” (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 108).
3. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught: “Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ’ (2 Nephi 32:3). So it is that those who hold the Aaronic Priesthood open the door for all Church members who worthily partake of the sacrament to enjoy the companionship of the Spirit of the Lord and the ministering of angels” (“The Aaronic Priesthood and the Sacrament,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 39).
4. As the Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “The Melchizedek Priesthood comprehends [includes or encompasses] the Aaronic . . . Priesthood” (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 108). He also taught, “All priesthood is Melchizedek; but there are different portions or degrees of it” (109).

There are basically two kinds of priesthood blessings you can ask for: (1) healing blessings and (2) blessings of comfort and counsel. The first help you overcome illness or injury. The second can give you direction and spiritual strength.

Many people wonder how often they should ask for such blessings.



HOW OFTEN CAN I ASK FOR A PRIESTHOOD BLESSING?

Seeking Physical Healing

We have been taught to ask for healing blessings when we are sick or injured but not to ask for them too frequently in dealing with the same problem.¹ In each situation where you seek a blessing, you should also be seeking appropriate medical care—and then exercise faith to be healed. Seeking a healing blessing

WHEN SHOULD I ASK?

Elder Oaks once suggested some times when we could ask for priesthood blessings. Consider asking for a priesthood blessing when you are:

- Making an important decision.
- Overcoming a personal challenge.
- Starting a new school year.
- Going on a long trip.³

should not necessarily be a last resort, but it should also not be the only thing you do.

Seeking Spiritual Strength

So, what about blessings of comfort and counsel? Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “Do not be hesitant to ask for a priesthood blessing when you are in need of spiritual power.”²

A priesthood blessing can be a great help. But some Church members rarely—or never—ask for them. On the other hand, some may ask for blessings frequently on even small matters, neglecting to put forth any effort to solve the problems themselves. You should probably seek a balance between these approaches, recognizing that Heavenly Father has given us the priesthood to help us but remembering that blessings do not replace personal prayer, scripture study, and other sources of spiritual strength and guidance.

Overcoming Fears

Some people don’t ask for blessings simply because they don’t know whom to ask or are uncomfortable about asking. Those without a Melchizedek Priesthood holder in the home can ask home teachers, other nearby family members, or local Church leaders for a blessing. You need not fear that you’ll be bothering them. They would be happy to do it. Just ask them. **NE**

NOTES

1. See “President Kimball Speaks Out on Administration to the Sick,” *New Era*, Oct. 1981, 46–47.
2. Dallin H. Oaks, “Priesthood Blessings,” *Ensign*, May 1987, 39.
3. Dallin H. Oaks, “Priesthood Blessings,” 36.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY NATHANIEL RAY EDWARDS

CONSCIOUS

of My Blessing

It was a long road to recovery after I was knocked unconscious on the football field. But I know a priesthood blessing helped.

By Bryson Adams

November 4, 2011, changed my life. I was a senior in high school and was playing my last regular season football game. During a punt-return play late in the fourth quarter, I went to tackle a player on the other team and was knocked unconscious when his shoulder pad hit my face.

I woke up briefly minutes later only to slip back into unconsciousness almost immediately. It was clear, however, that my





PRIESTHOOD BLESSINGS AND HEALING

If you're ill or injured, is receiving a priesthood blessing the only thing you need to do to be healed? Usually not. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught that there are multiple aspects of "healing the sick—by medical science, by prayers of faith, and by priesthood blessings" ("Healing the Sick," *Ensign*, May 2010, 47). He has also taught, "Of course we don't wait until all other methods are exhausted before we pray in faith or give priesthood blessings for healing. In emergencies, prayers and blessings come first. Most often we pursue all efforts simultaneously" ("Healing the Sick," 47).

For example, when seeking healing for a health condition, in addition to receiving a blessing you can work with medical professionals and follow their advice to aid recovery, pray, fast (if your condition allows), and express your faith in Jesus Christ through the power of prayer and the priesthood. Studying the scriptures can also help, because as Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, "Pondering . . . scriptures can . . . accelerate physical healing" ("The Power of Scripture," *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 6).

body was paralyzed. As paramedics prepared to take me to the hospital, my mom wanted to make sure my dad gave me a priesthood blessing. So he found the dad of another Latter-day Saint player and they gave me a blessing in the back of the ambulance.

The only thing that kept me going was the Spirit. As someone who'd been very social, it was hard to be home by myself all day while Mom and Dad were at work. I found comfort through the Spirit and through prayer and scripture study. The gospel kept me going.

He told me how surprised he was that I was even alive.

Later that evening, I regained consciousness and slowly began to gain feeling in my body. When that happened, the hospital staff sent me home and told me nothing was wrong. However, my parents and I felt that there was still a problem, so I went to see a specialist.

After looking at my injuries, the specialist said, "I don't know how you walked into my office today. You shouldn't be able to move or even breathe on your own because of the severe problems in your spinal cord. Someone has been watching over you." He told me how surprised he was that I was even alive and that I wasn't paralyzed. I knew it was because of the priesthood blessing, and I was grateful my dad and my teammate's father were both worthy and prepared to administer the blessing.

My recovery was still painful. I continued to see the specialist and began physical therapy. I struggled with severe pain and fatigue and was unable to attend school—I couldn't even sit up by myself for three months.

And I knew the priesthood blessing and the prayers of my friends (both Church members and friends of other faiths) helped.

After a few months, I felt strongly that I needed to return to seminary. And even though my medication made it extremely hard to get out of bed, I was determined to go. At first, seminary took all my energy for the day. But once I started going, my recovery time seemed to decrease, and I began to heal more quickly and to feel better. This was a miracle to my family and me.

Two years later, I can now run, jump, and move around with little pain.

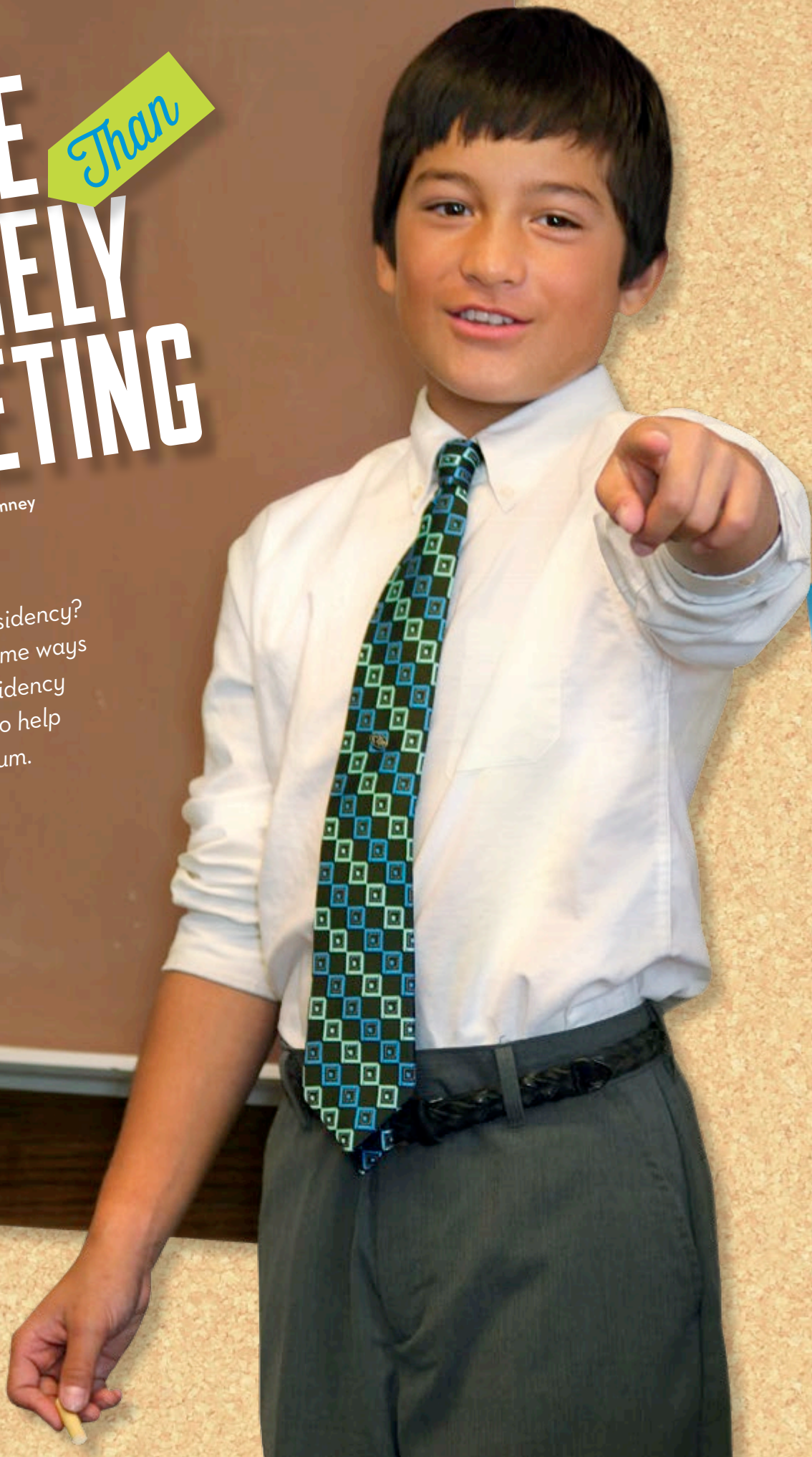
I know that Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and angels were watching over me the night of the accident. I've felt the power of the priesthood so strongly because I received a blessing from worthy priesthood holders. That, combined with the pattern of personal prayer, scripture study, and seminary attendance I'd established before the accident and have continued after, helped me through the healing process. **NE**

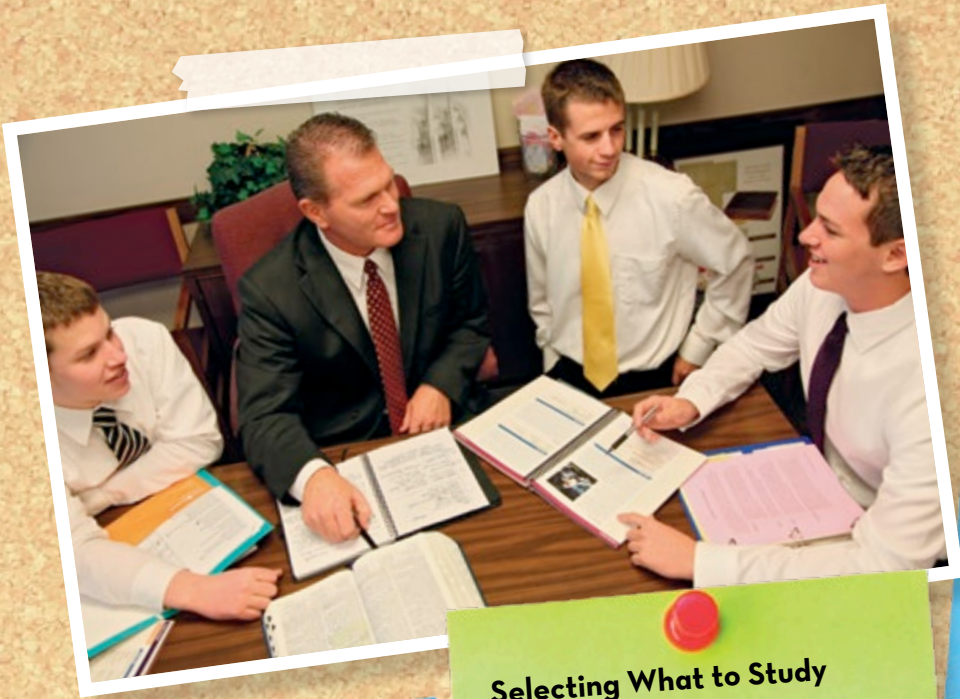
Bryson Adams lives in Virginia, USA.

MORE *Than* MERELY MEETING

By Richard M. Romney
Church Magazines

Serving in a
quorum presidency?
Here are some ways
to use presidency
meetings to help
your quorum.





Reaching Individuals

Another purpose of presidency meetings is to organize the quorum to reach out to those who are struggling or who aren't as involved as they could be.

"We look at who's having a hard time or who's not coming to church, and we try to focus our weeknight activities around them," Landon says.

The presidency also visits quorum members. For example, Brandon says, "We had some priests that hadn't been able to make it out for a while, so after our meeting we went to their houses and asked, 'Hey, are you all right? Did we say something that offended you?' We got them involved again by letting them know we're there for them."

Dylan S., the second counselor in the deacons quorum, regularly reminds the presidency to encourage the deacons to invite their friends to activities. Then Dylan leads by example—he's invited three different friends to quorum and Scout activities, and they have each attended.



Selecting What to Study

Presidency meetings provide a great opportunity to discuss the new youth curriculum, *Come, Follow Me*.

"We look at the outlines for the month and talk about them with the other priests—what do they want to know, what do they have questions about," says Brandon L., the second assistant in the priests quorum. "Then in presidency meeting we talk with our advisers and decide what would be best to learn as a quorum."

The teachers and deacons quorums do the same. "We're not just being told what to learn; we're all helping each other to learn," says Colton V., the first counselor in the deacons quorum presidency.

The Savior taught a principle that can bless Aaronic Priesthood quorum presidencies: "For which of you," He said, "intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?" (Luke 14:28).

Counting the Cost

You may not normally think of "counting the cost" as part of a presidency meeting, but consider this: planning first, or counting the cost, enables a presidency to know what will be needed to achieve its goals, and that empowers the entire quorum to work together.

"We don't hold meetings just to hold meetings," says Landon O. of northern Utah, USA, who serves as first assistant to Bishop Brock W. Hill, the president of the priests quorum. "We have in mind what we're trying to do, and then we figure out what it will take to do it."

Landon and others serving in Aaronic Priesthood quorum presidencies in his ward are strengthening their quorums by holding effective presidency meetings.



AARONIC PRIESTHOOD POWER

"At first I didn't realize the power that I'd been given," says Landon O. "But as I have advanced from deacon to teacher to priest, I have realized that we really have the power of God and He will help us do whatever we need to do."



JUST AS POWERFUL

“The priesthood in the boy is just as powerful as the priesthood in the man when exercised in righteousness.”

Elder Tad R. Callister of the Presidency of the Seventy, “The Power of the Priesthood in the Boy,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 52.



Learning Your Duty

Presidency meetings can also be a time to evaluate and improve. “We had a sacrament meeting where not too many people showed up, and it was hard to know how to adjust when we were passing the sacrament,” says Bridger O., the deacons quorum president.

“As a presidency,” Bridger explains, we decided that the deacons should talk that through and be prepared if it ever happens again.” The presidency also decided to meet with each new deacon as he comes into the quorum and show him how to pass the sacrament.

By doing such things, the presidency is encouraging the deacons to follow another principle: “Let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence” (D&C 107:99).

Cameron H., the teachers quorum president, says he learns a lot about his duty by going home teaching. In presidency meetings, he often shares what he has learned from his Melchizedek Priesthood companion. “Home teaching is a really good experience,” Cameron says. “It helps us to experience what the priesthood should be doing.”

Giving Service

Presidency meetings always include a discussion of opportunities to provide service. “As we plan activities, we look for ways to help anyone we can,” says Andrew B., the first counselor in the teachers quorum presidency.

“We always try to remember that holding the Aaronic Priesthood means doing more than just coming to church on Sunday,” says Mason M., the teachers quorum secretary.

Presidencies gather and pass along ideas from quorum members, who may be aware of individuals in the ward who need service, and adult leaders remind the presidencies of service activities already planned by the ward or stake.

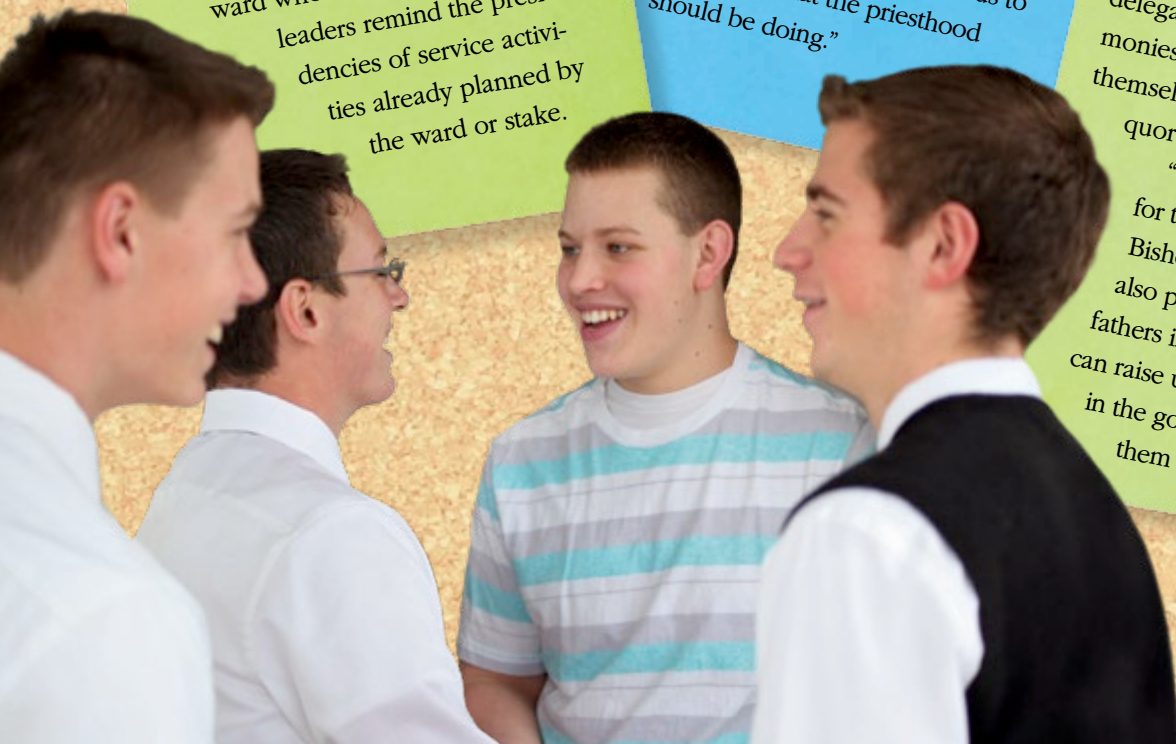
Increasing in Wisdom and Stature

Just as the Savior did when He was young, the leaders of the deacons, teachers, and priests quorums in Landon’s ward are increasing in wisdom and stature (see Luke 2:52). They are learning to be better leaders, exercise priesthood keys, delegate responsibilities, build testimonies, share the gospel, and prepare themselves and the members of their quorums for a lifetime of service.

“They’re preparing not only for the temple and for missions,” Bishop Hill says, “but they’re also preparing to be righteous fathers in their own homes so they can raise up their own children in the gospel and bring them to Christ.” NE

Learn about Leadership

Find videos and other resources for quorum presidencies at lds.org/go/dutiesNE4.



MY ASSIGNMENT

from the

BISHOP

By Alyssa Driscoll

In October 2011, my bishop heard a talk by Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles about the Spirit of Elijah and the responsibility the youth have to serve through family history. My bishop was inspired by this talk and decided to have the bishopric youth committee watch it in their meeting. He asked the youth what they wanted to do to follow Elder Bednar's instruction, and they told him they wanted to set up a summer indexing project. Together with the bishop, they set a goal of 50,000 names and invited my whole ward to help with the project.

I was asked by Brother Watts, a member of our bishopric, to serve as an indexing specialist. I accepted, but I had no idea what indexing was or how to do it. I was very confused and just a little bit nervous.

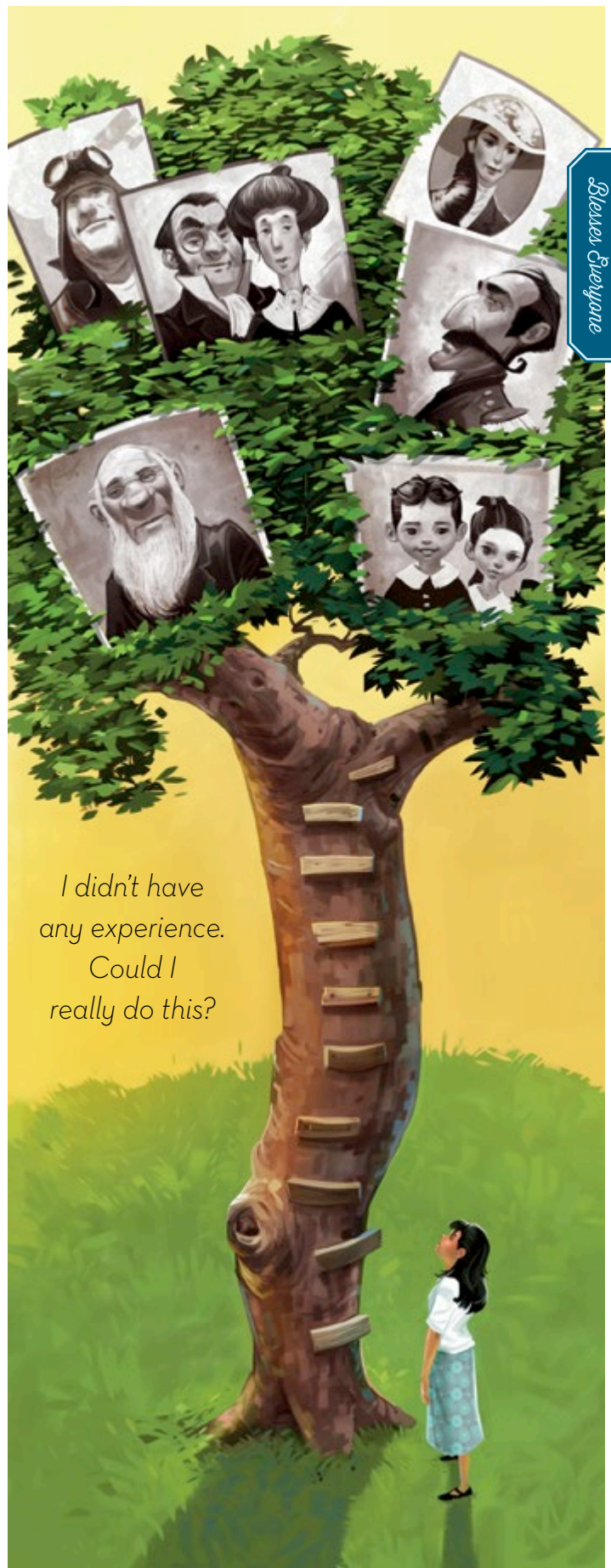
Brother Watts showed me how to use the indexing program on FamilySearch.org. He told me that he was absolutely confident we were going to reach our goal. Even though it was my first official assignment as a young woman, I was determined to learn how to do what I was asked to do by my priesthood leaders, no matter how hard it was.

I soon learned that indexing is part of family history—typing people's names from records into a database so their family members can find them. I knew this effort was important, and so did my whole ward, especially my bishop.

To serve in this project, I showed many different people how to index and contribute names. By the end of the summer, the youth alone had finished 25,000 names! Before we knew it, we met our goal 100 percent.

I know that every one of my leaders is called of God to serve and direct the Church, and that when I listen to them, I'm not only doing what they ask me to do but also what God asks me to do. When I listen to and follow my leaders, I'm serving too—participating in the work of the priesthood, the work of salvation. **NE**

Alyssa Driscoll lives in Arizona, USA.



*I didn't have
any experience.
Could I
really do this?*



EFFECTIVE WAYS TO *Affect Your Quorum*

.....
Three simple principles can make a major difference in helping others.

Quorum activities such as campouts, dodgeball, capture the flag, or game nights can make for some really fun times with your friends. But what about for the guys who don't come? They need to know that they're welcomed and wanted. And quorum activities provide a natural way to fellowship them in a setting that's often more comfortable for them than coming straight back to a Sunday meeting. Here's how quorum presidencies from Georgia and Nebraska, USA, have made the most of their activities.

➔ **GET TO KNOW YOUR QUORUM MEMBERS FIRST** ⚡

You won't know how to best help others until you know what interests them and what they need.

Let quorum members know you care about them.

“There were two brothers in my quorum who weren't coming to activities. I found out they like soccer, so I took a guy in my ward who plays soccer with me to their house. We found some cool ways to relate the gospel to soccer and made sure they knew we still cared and that we wanted them to come back and feel the Spirit.”
 —Caleb F., Georgia, USA

Serve less-active quorum members.

“I think that if you serve them, they really appreciate it. When they see a priesthood group coming to serve them, it shows them

.....
 that we're all willing to help, and it lets them know that we're their friends.”
 —Louis H., Georgia, USA

Invite quorum members to activities outside of Church or Scouting activities.

.....
 “I've found that activities outside of Church activities can also be effective. Hang out with them and let them know that you're their friend. If you're going out with a group of friends, invite the less-active members along. Let them know that you're thinking of them.” —Cyrus C., Nebraska, USA

➔ PLAN FUN, EXCITING ACTIVITIES ✈

Once you know your quorum members, you can plan more effective ways to help them through activities.

Plan activities based on their interests.

“Find something that the less-active guys like to do, and then do that for an activity. If they like wrestling, get a group of people and go to the gym and have a wrestling match. Just be a good friend. Sooner or later, you’ll find out what they like to do.”

—Shaun E., Nebraska, USA

Focus on friendships, not activities.

“There was a guy in my quorum who would only come to activities that were more sports-based. Usually when we focused on Scouts or spiritual things, he wouldn’t come. But I just focused on being

his friend and we became best friends. Now every Wednesday it doesn’t matter what we’re going to do. My friend is always asking me if I’m going to go, and as long as I’m going, he’s going to be there.”

—Chase W., Georgia, USA

Organize a ride to the activity.

“Some guys are less-active and their parents don’t really support them doing things with the Church. We play a lot of Frisbee for activities, and the parents of some of the guys seem more open to that than to them coming to church on Sunday. We just have to organize a ride for them to get there.”

—Zach L., Georgia, USA

➔ DON'T FORGET TO INVOLVE THE SPIRIT ✈

Remember that the Spirit will help everyone involved get the most out of any activity.

Relate the spiritual thought to the activity.

“When we were having a sports activity, we had our leader share a spiritual experience that related sports to the gospel. The guys who are less-active listened and asked questions, and they came to other activities too.”

—Caleb F., Georgia, USA

because he’d never said a prayer before. It was awesome! We could all feel the Spirit really strong.”

—Conner B., Nebraska, USA

Editor’s note: Not everyone will feel comfortable praying in front of people, especially if they haven’t been to activities in a while; be sensitive to their needs and the promptings of the Spirit. You may want to ask them individually ahead of time in case they wouldn’t want to do it and would feel embarrassed about being asked in front of the group.

Be an example of choosing the right.

Start and end activities with a prayer.

“After an activity, get everybody together and have a prayer. One time, a guy who was very inactive came to a dart-gun war in the gym. Afterward we asked him to say the prayer. We helped him

“When we do Scouting activities, we usually invite two brothers who are less-active to come with us. We always make sure to keep our standards high and invite them to pray with us.”

—Samuel F., Nebraska, USA



THE PRIESTHOOD
Shawna Overman


APPLICABLE TO ALL

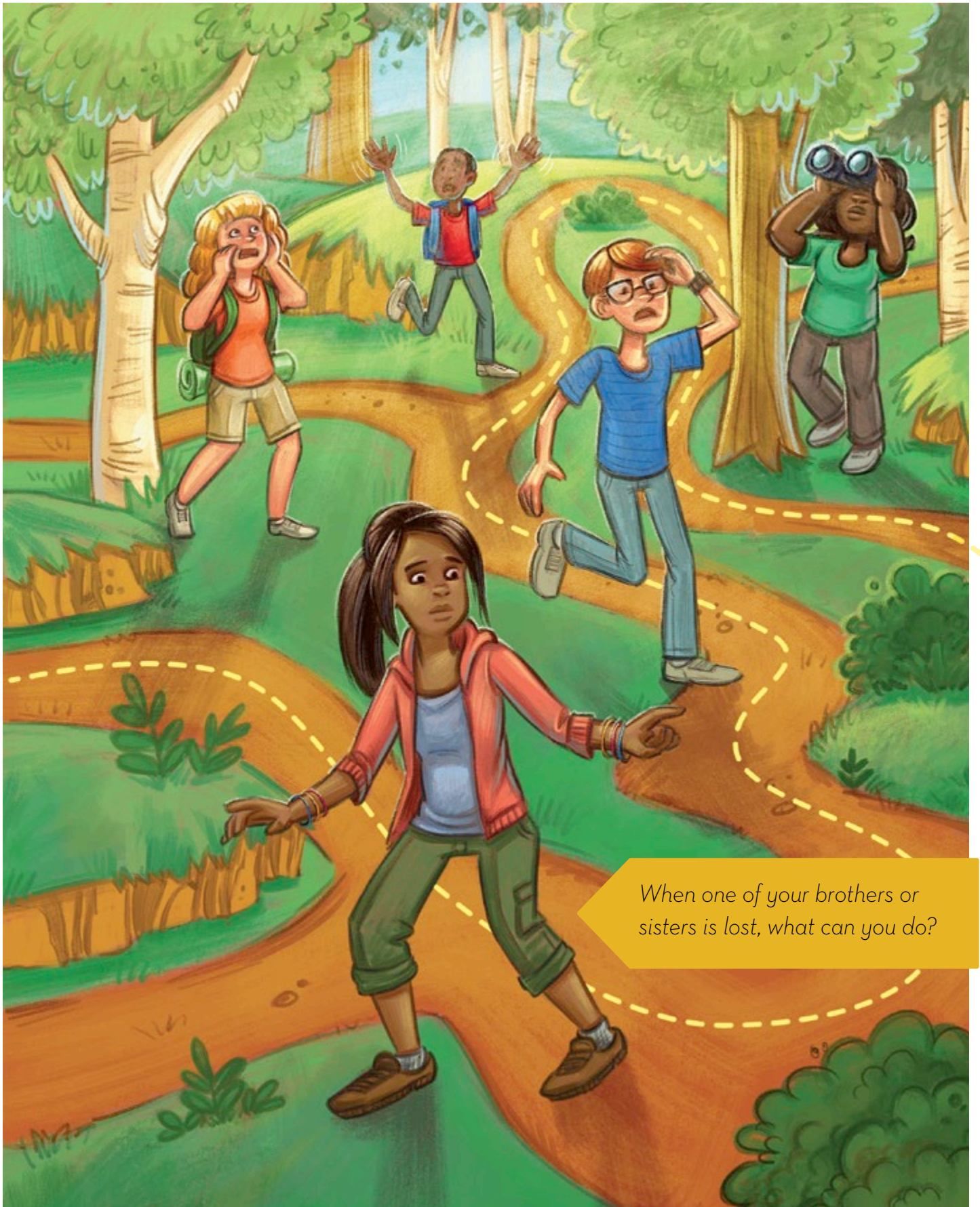
While this article focuses on what young men can do to help plan activities for less-active quorum members, the principles apply to Young Women classes as well.

TO SUMMARIZE

You can help create activities where less-active members of your group will feel welcome by doing the following:

- Make sure everyone has a genuine friend at the activity.
- Plan activities that are interesting to quorum members.
- Create a comfortable setting where quorum members can feel the Spirit.

 **Activity Ideas**
Find lots of ideas for meaningful activities at [lds.org/go/activitiesNE4](https://www.lds.org/go/activitiesNE4).



When one of your brothers or sisters is lost, what can you do?

FIND THEM *and* BRING THEM BACK

Imagine you're with a group of youth in a remote wilderness. The forest is thick—easy to lose your bearings in—and there are hidden dangers all around. Now imagine that one of the youth has gone missing and is lost in this wilderness. What would happen next? What would the rest of you do?

That's easy—every last one of you would go looking for the one who was lost, and the search wouldn't end until he or she had been found. No other response is imaginable in such a situation.

Now, imagine that lost young person is a friend living in your ward who, rather than straying into a thick forest wilderness, is wandering spiritually, living without the benefit of the gospel and Church of Jesus Christ. How do you and your fellow youth rescue that person?

Opportunities to help someone come unto Christ are all around you, both in your quorum or class and in your wider circle of friends, family members, and acquaintances. Here are a couple of examples of simple things young people did in order to reach out to others and help them come a step closer to the Savior.

Saving the One in Samoa

As the youth of a branch in Samoa planned a combined Aaronic Priesthood/Young Women activity, they

decided to make a special effort to invite other youth who were not active in the Church or were not members of the Church to this activity. They would have a brief fun run followed by food and entertainment, and each young man and young woman was encouraged to bring someone with them.

They referred to the activity as “saving the one.”

The day of the activity came, and one by one the youth arrived, accompanied by less-active and nonmember friends. Before the opening exercises began, someone looked around and asked, “Where's Alex?”

Alex and his mother had been baptized some time before, but they both had not attended church in quite a while. But all of the youth remembered him and started asking, “Where's Alex?” They wondered if anyone

knew his address. One of the leaders told them that Alex lived up the hill not far away. Then the young men sprang into action.

Three priests and one of their leaders ran up the hill to get Alex. Minutes later, the rest of the assembled youth could hear sounds of joy and laughter coming down the hill. The priests were returning—with Alex.

As the evening went on, Alex and the others laughed and had fun together, and they also prayed together as things drew to a close. When they parted, they said their good-byes, adding, “Until Sunday.”





**What Have You Done?
What Will You Do?**

Share your experiences and plans regarding bringing others to Christ at lds.org/go/rescueNE4.

review. He asked the young man what had happened.

The young man paused for a moment and then explained that shortly after he had received his Life Scout rank, his sister had died. In their grief, his family had drifted away from activity in the Church, and he had stopped participating in Scouts as well.

Taken off-guard by the young man's straightforward answer, the reviewer then asked what had changed to make him so fully active today. The man almost cried when he heard the response.

"The guys came and got me."

That was all. It was that simple.

The other members of his priests quorum had started visiting him at home and talking to him at school, asking him to come back and join with them. The young man said he could tell that they cared about him, and he felt good when he was with them.

So he had decided to come back.

Sitting in that board of review, this young man expressed gratitude that his quorum had not forgotten him and had gone out of their way to bring him back. They had even pushed him to complete his Eagle Scout project. Now he wanted to give back by helping and serving them too.

This young man was now on the path to receiving the Melchizedek Priesthood, receiving his temple endowment, and serving a full-time mission.

All because "the guys came and got me." **NE**



LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES

"Ministering is not just something we do—it defines who we are.

"Minister every day. Opportunities are all around you. Look for them. Ask the Lord to help you recognize them. You will find that most consist of small, sincere acts that help others become followers of Jesus Christ."

David L. Beck, Young Men general president, "Your Sacred Duty to Minister," *Ensign*, May 2013, 57.

When Sunday morning came, Alex was at the leader's doorstep, ready and excited to go to church. When he arrived at church, he was greeted warmly by everyone, especially his fellow quorum members, who were very happy to see him there. Their seemingly small and simple efforts to "save the one" had had a great effect on Alex, who then attended church and was able to feel the Spirit more strongly.

Scouting One Out in Nevada

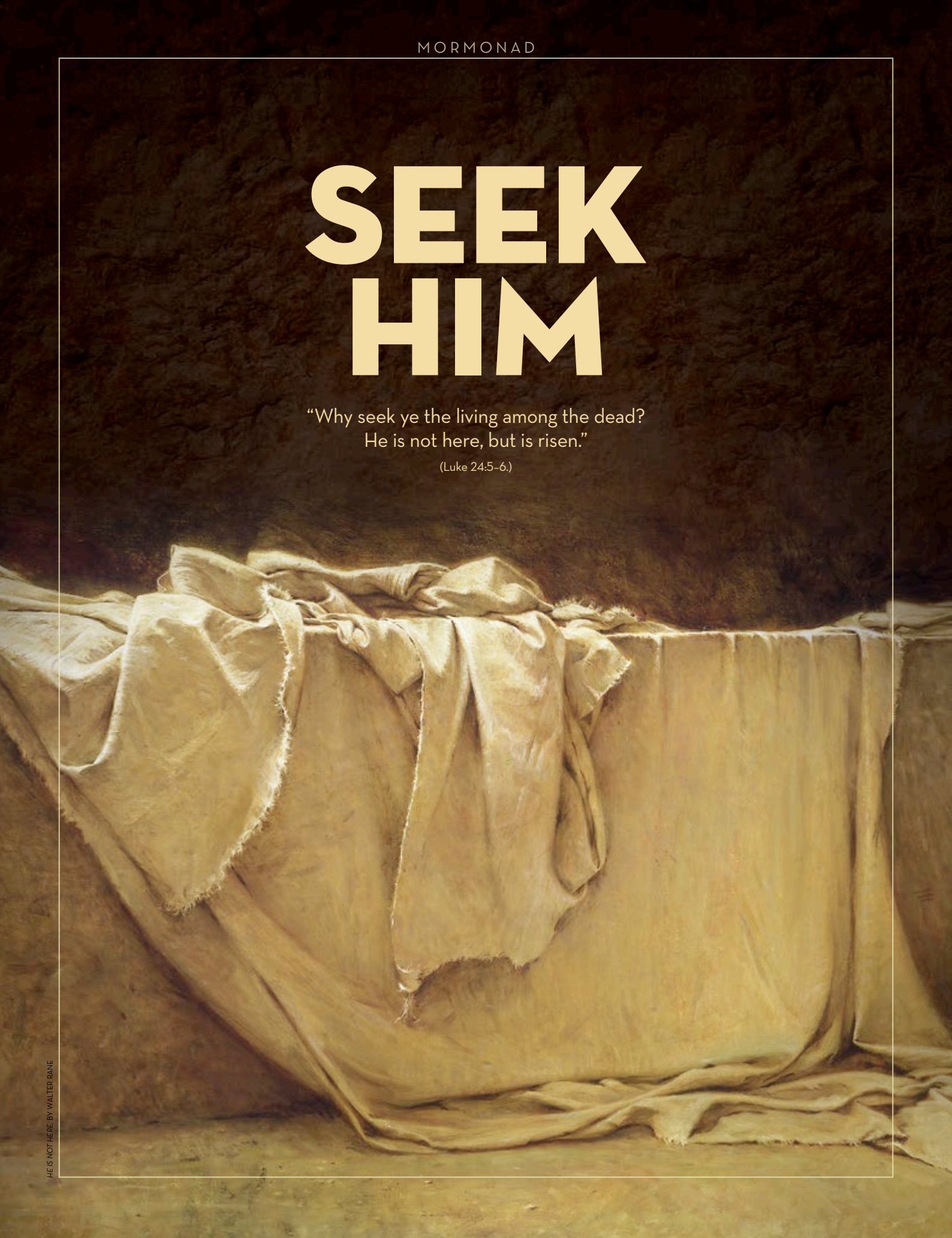
In Nevada, USA, at a Boy Scout board of review for an Eagle Scout award, one young man made quite an impression. It wasn't because of his achievements as a Scout. They were impressive, of course, but that's what the men on the board of review expect of someone who has come that far in Scouting. No, it was something else that stood out—something that was missing.

One of the reviewers looked at this young man's record and noticed that there was a three-year gap between his last rank advancement and his Eagle Scout board of

SEEK HIM

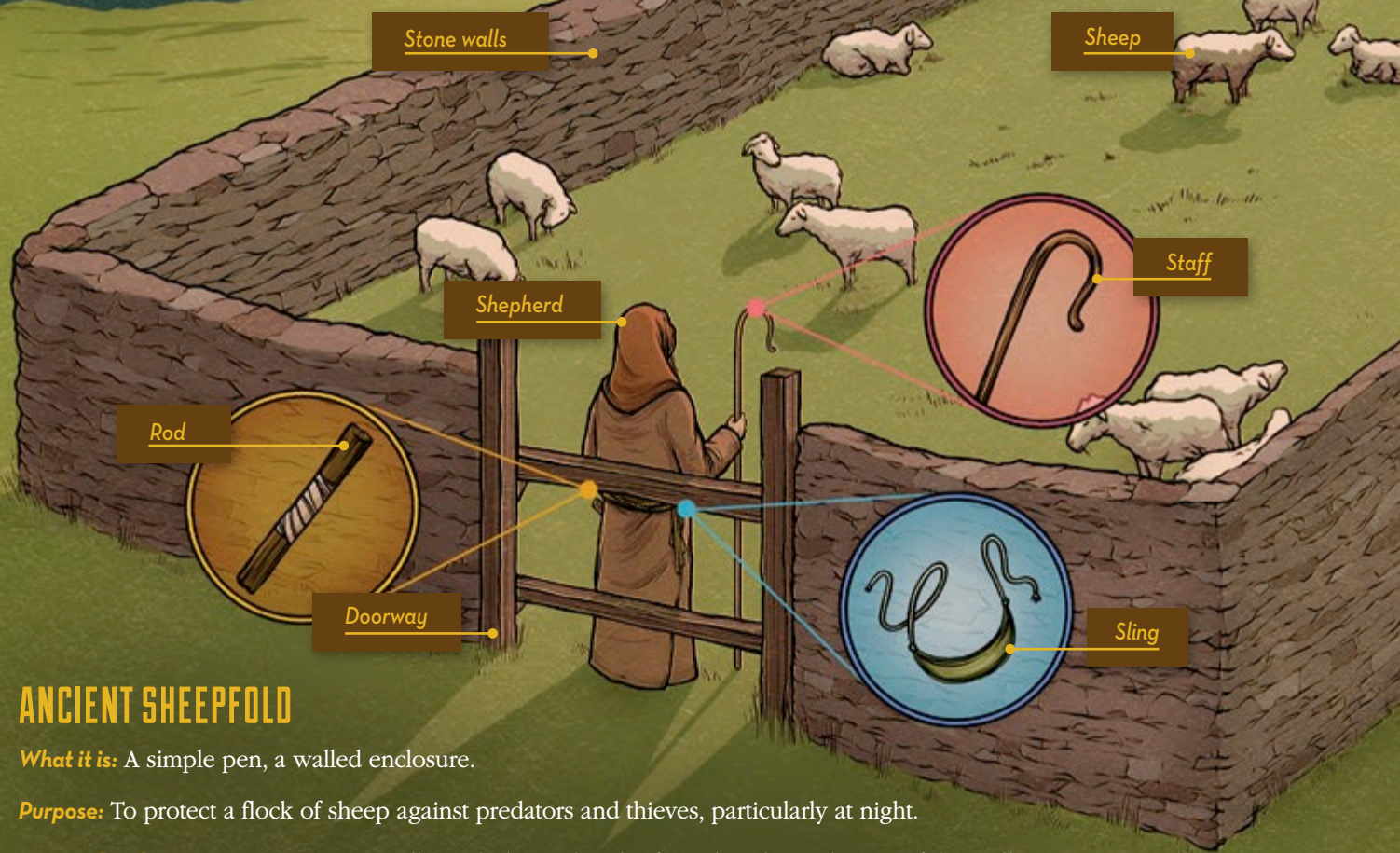
“Why seek ye the living among the dead?
He is not here, but is risen.”

(Luke 24:5-6)



THE FOLD AND SHEPHERD

AN ENCLOSURE FOR A FLOCK OF SHEEP TEACHES US ABOUT THE SAVIOR'S CARE FOR HIS PEOPLE.



ANCIENT SHEEPFOLD

What it is: A simple pen, a walled enclosure.

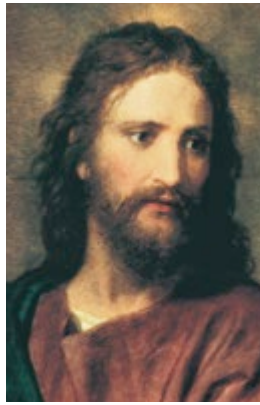
Purpose: To protect a flock of sheep against predators and thieves, particularly at night.

Material and construction: Stones, usually, with thorny brush often placed into the top of the walls. Thick thorn bushes were also often used to make a fence for a temporary makeshift sheepfold. Caves sometimes served as a sheepfold, with small rock or brush barriers placed in front of them.

BIBLE FACTS

- Sheep were very valuable for their meat, milk, fat, wool, skins, and horns and were a primary sacrificial animal.
- In Israel, wolves, hyenas, panthers, and jackals are among predators that would target sheep. In ancient times, lions and bears also inhabited the region (see 1 Samuel 17:33-37).
- Shepherds used a staff to lead the sheep and a rod and a sling to defend them.
- A shepherd led his sheep to food and water during the day (see Psalm 23:1-2) and back to the fold at night. The shepherd would count the sheep as they returned, searching for strays if any were missing. He would then lie in the doorway of the fold to protect them.
- Jesus Christ called Himself the Good Shepherd (see John 10:11-15) because He laid down His life for us. He also compared Himself to the door of the sheepfold (see John 10:1-9) because it is through Him that we receive spiritual nourishment, rest, peace, salvation, and exaltation.
- The Apostle Paul compared the Church to a flock of sheep (see Acts 20:28).

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID HABBEN



“OTHER SHEEP I HAVE, WHICH ARE NOT OF THIS FOLD: THEM ALSO I MUST BRING, AND THEY SHALL HEAR MY VOICE; AND THERE SHALL BE ONE FOLD, AND ONE SHEPHERD.”

John 10:16 (see also 3 Nephi 15:14-24; 16:1-3)

WHAT WE CAN LEARN

SHEEPFOLDS ARE:

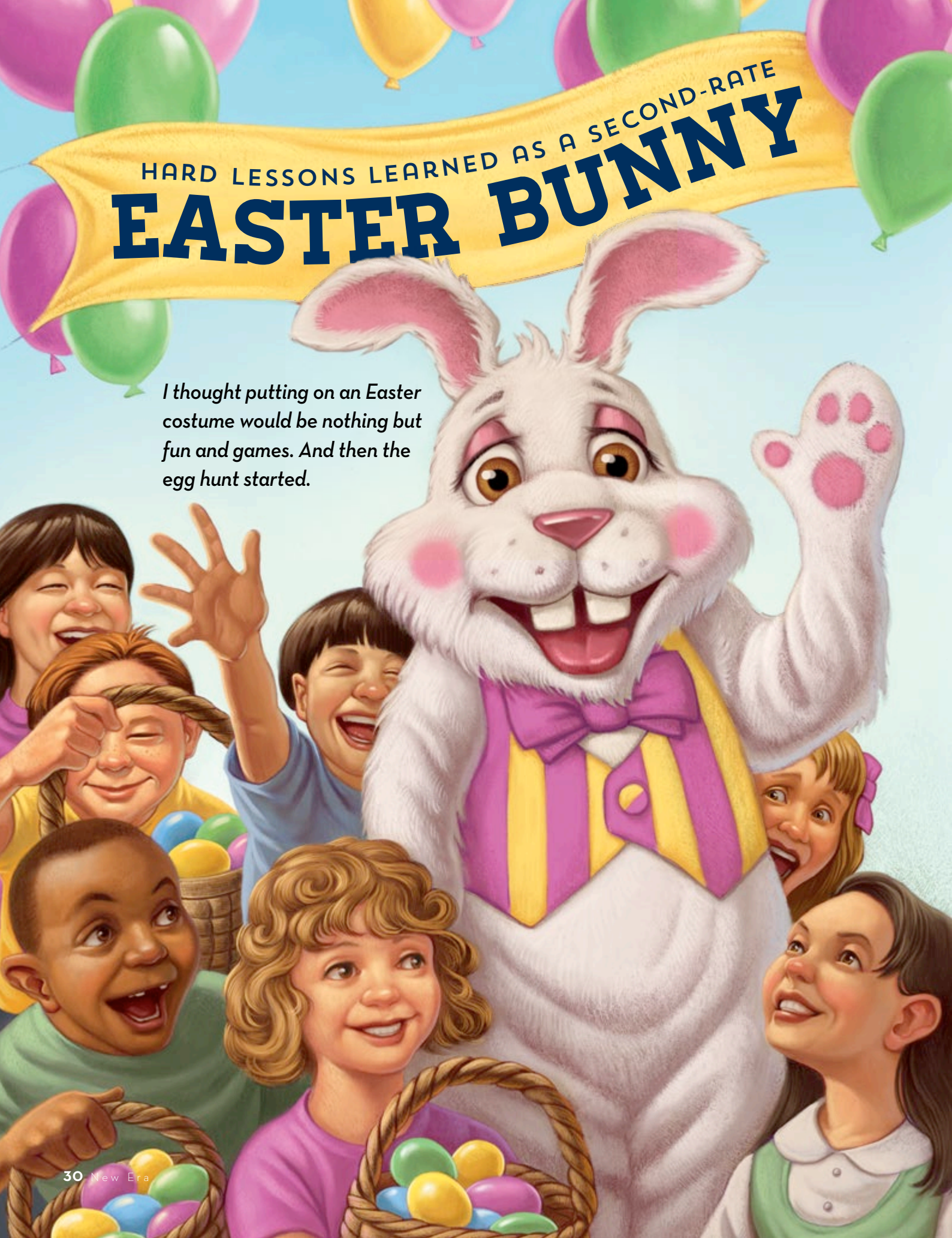
Where the flock gathers. As Church members, we share a bond of unity through our faith and our covenants, as well as through literally gathering together. President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has taught: “The joy of unity [Heavenly Father] wants so much to give us is not solitary. We must seek it and qualify for it with others. It is not surprising then that God urges us to gather so that He can bless us. He wants us to gather into families. He has established classes, wards, and branches and commanded us to meet together often. In those gatherings, . . . we can pray and work for the unity that will bring us joy and multiply our power to serve” (“Our Hearts Knit as One,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 69).


A place of safety and rest. In Jesus Christ we “find rest unto [our] souls” (Matthew 11:29). His Church is “a defense, and . . . a refuge” (D&C 115:6). And as President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has taught, “We find safety and security for ourselves and our children in honoring the covenants we have made and living up to the ordinary acts of obedience required of the followers of Christ” (“These Things I Know,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 7).

Guarded by the shepherd. Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd who saves us. He suffered and died so that we might overcome sin and death and return to our Heavenly Father. As we come unto Christ and are obedient to His commandments, He blesses, guides, and protects us both individually and as His covenant people.

HARD LESSONS LEARNED AS A SECOND-RATE
EASTER BUNNY

I thought putting on an Easter costume would be nothing but fun and games. And then the egg hunt started.





By David Dickson

Church Magazines

I was excited to don the costume of the Easter Bunny at my school's Easter egg hunt. I'd always loved children, so when a volunteer was needed to wear the rabbit suit for the event, I raised my hand. Setting aside for a moment the idea that a bunny isn't the manliest animal costume you can wear (after all, there's no such thing as an Easter Alligator), I knew I could make the most of it.

And I did.

I had dance moves. I had charisma! I passed out high fives by the dozen to the children. Kids of all ages wanted to take pictures with me while they waited for the hunt to start. I was a rock star.

That all changed about 90 seconds after the whistle blew to start the candy grab. What happened next has been seared into my brain ever since.

A tidal wave of older kids swept across the grassy hill we'd chosen for the hunt. The eggs vanished almost instantly while several dozen younger kids were left behind with nothing

more to collect than candy wrappers, their young faces filled with disappointment.

I felt *awful*. Watching the excitement fade from their eyes was enough to make me want to sprint to the store and buy them buckets of chocolate eggs.

But then it got worse. These younger kids, the very ones who had been high-fiving and taking pictures with the Easter Bunny, all turned to me as if the whole thing had been my fault. I can still hear their voices: "I didn't get any caaaaaaandy!"

Never mind I'd been their best pal only minutes earlier. Something had gone wrong, I was the guy in the rabbit suit, and that made me the main culprit.

BLAME THE BUNNY

The egg-hunt tradition at my school improved after that first year. For one thing, it became better organized so that different hunts were held for different age groups. And the

person in the rabbit costume always had a basket of candy to hand out at the end, just in case. So at least the inaugural hunt proved to be a good learning experience.

For me, however, the big take-away that I've thought about ever since was realizing how differently the children viewed me because of the uniform (costume) I wore. Never mind that there were plenty of other people running the event. Fair or not fair, the blame fell on me in the kids' eyes because I was dressed as the Easter Bunny.



THE UNIFORM

The truth is, just like I wore the rabbit costume, we all wear uniforms—both literally and figuratively—more often than we might expect. We certainly wear a uniform as full-time missionaries—and not merely in just the name tag and clothes. In *Preach My Gospel*, missionaries are given the following counsel: “You are called to represent Jesus Christ in helping people become clean from their sins” ([2004], 2).

Of course, being a full-time missionary isn’t the only time our actions are watched closely. We wear different uniforms or identities that we’re recognized for every day: sister, brother, son, daughter, priesthood holder, Church member, neighbor, or friend, just to name a few.

EVERYDAY EXAMPLES

And because of that, as Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, “Whether full-time missionaries or members, we should all be good examples of the believers in Jesus Christ” (“Be Thou an Example of the Believers,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 47).

Do your friends know you’re a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints? If so, chances are good that they watch you closely. Each day you have an opportunity to influence such friends with your small and simple positive choices.



That’s why you should, as the Savior taught, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

BETTER THAN CANDY

In the years since the egg hunt, I’ve done my best to live up to whatever “uniform” I might be wearing at the time. Sometimes that’s been an actual uniform, such as at a choir performance. At other times it’s been more figurative, like somebody knowing I’m a member of the Church. Either way, I’ve had a responsibility to live up to the person I represent.

“Always remember that people are looking to you for leadership and you are influencing the lives of individuals either for good or for bad, which influence will be felt for generations to come” (President N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency [1898–1982], “For They Loved the Praise of Men More Than the Praise of God,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1975, 74).

So while a basketful of Easter goodies—and perhaps a chocolate Easter rabbit now and again—is certainly a treasure worth celebrating, when it comes to eternal matters, such as those daily choices that can influence others, it’s worth putting forth your very best effort every single day. **NE**

I Marvel AT THE Miracle

Words by John V. Pearson
Music by Janice Kapp Perry

With feeling ♩ = 60-72

1. I mar - vel at the mir - a - cle Of God's great love for
 2. I wear - ied of my weak-ness - es And tri - als filled my
 3. I pled with God to shed His grace And take a - way my
 4. I won - der at the grace di - vine And pow - er to re -

me. I try but can - not com - pre - hend And ask how this could
 days. I cried out, "Lord, my bur - den's hard - Is there no oth - er
 sin. He did, and yet I turned a - way And stum - bled once a -
 deem, That Christ a - lone could o - ver - come And change e - ter - ni -

be. For I had left be - hind my God And lost my way through
 way?" He said, "I give men weak-ness - es, And if they come to
 gain. At last I knelt be - fore His throne And of - fered Him my
 ty. My thanks can - not suf - fi - cient be. My praise is in - com -

sin. Still God loved me and sent His Son To lead me back to Him.
 me, I give them strength to o - ver - come And I will make them free."
 soul. He wept, then gave it back to me, Re - newed and washed and whole.
 plete. For all I pay, my debt re - mains For God's great gift to me.

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Luke 15:11-32
 2 Corinthians 12:7-10
 Ether 12:27

EMBELLISHMENTS BY KELLYANNE LEYMAN/ISTOCK/THINKSTOCK



YOU HAVE THE AUTHORITY

IN A WORLD OF
SINKING STANDARDS, YOU CAN
RISE ABOVE THE NORM AND BE A
MORAL AUTHORITY.

By Paul VanDenBerghe

Church Magazines

Imagine you're having fun swimming in the ocean. The water seems fine, and you're a strong enough swimmer to keep your head above water. Besides, you can see land nearby. But what if the level of the sea itself is sinking? No matter how hard you swim you have no choice but to go down with the level of the water you're in—even if you're sitting in a life raft. But if you're standing on firm ground, you'll stand tall no matter how low the water level goes.

All around us in today's world, moral standards are falling. Society's acceptable levels of right and wrong are sinking. But you can stand on the solid ground provided by the gospel of Jesus Christ as you develop your moral authority—your ability to influence yourself and others for good.

In the October 2013 general conference, Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles told about a woman he knew from Mexico. Her faith in God and the way she lived had empowered her with a natural ability to affect others. He said, "This lovely woman radiated a moral authority, born of goodness, that influenced all around her for good" ("The Moral Force of Women," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 29).

Elder Christofferson pleaded that you "protect and cultivate the moral force that is within you" and said that you have a duty to "stand for truth and righteousness" ("Moral Authority," 31–32).



BECOMING A MORAL AUTHORITY

You have the power to be an influence for good. Your moral authority will come from what you do and say. Elder Christofferson explained: “Take particular care that your language is clean, not coarse; that your dress reflects modesty, not vanity; and that your conduct manifests purity, not promiscuity. You cannot lift others to virtue on the one hand if you are entertaining vice on the other” (“Moral Authority,” 31).

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO DEVELOP AND PROTECT MORAL AUTHORITY IN YOURSELF AND IN OTHERS?

YOUNG MEN CAN HELP . . .

YOURSELF

- Take part in Duty to God.
- Begin now preparing to serve a full-time mission.
- Prepare to become a husband and father who can preside over, provide for, and protect your family.
- Respect yourself by always dressing and acting modestly.
- Remember that others are daughters and sons of God.
- Keep your mind clean by avoiding pornography.
- Strengthen your spirituality through daily prayer and scripture study.
- Promise yourself to stay sexually pure.
- Think of yourself as a son of God.

OTHERS

- Don't be ashamed to let those around you know that you look forward to becoming a husband and father.
- Always use language that's clean and uplifting.
- Be an example in the way you treat others.
- Do not tell off-color jokes or stories.
- Support modesty by asking out young women who dress and act modestly.
- Suggest a wholesome movie when choosing what to watch with friends.
- Compliment young women on their modest clothing.

YOUNG WOMEN CAN HELP . . .

YOURSELF

- Take part in Personal Progress.
- Prepare to become a wife and mother who can nurture and teach her children.
- Respect yourself by always dressing and acting modestly.
- Remember that others are sons and daughters of God.
- Keep your mind clean by avoiding pornography.
- Strengthen your spirituality through daily prayer and scripture study.
- Promise yourself to stay sexually pure.
- Think of yourself as a daughter of God.

OTHERS

- Don't be ashamed to let those around you know that you look forward to becoming a wife and mother.
- At school pay more attention to young men who dress and act modestly and who show respect to young women.
- Listen to uplifting music when you are with friends.
- Dress in clothes that are modest rather than clothes that simply use your body to get attention.
- Compliment others when they dress in modest clothes. **NE**



SUNDAY LESSONS
 This Month's Topic:
**The Apostasy and
 the Restoration**

TRUE OR FALSE?

Sometimes knowing truth from error is difficult, but our Heavenly Father has given us powerful gifts to help us distinguish between God's truths and Satan's lies.

By David A. Edwards

Church Magazines

If you've ever taken a test with true-or-false questions, you know it's sometimes hard to spot a falsehood. Likewise, in the big questions of faith, belief, and everyday living, while it is extremely important to be able to tell the difference between what's true and what isn't, it's not always easy.

However, we need not fear like unprepared test takers. Our Heavenly Father has blessed us with many gifts to help us recognize His truths and the adversary's lies.

Different Kinds of Falsehoods

First, to illustrate a point, here's a little true-or-false quiz for you:



1

The moon is green.

TRUE FALSE

Neil Armstrong, the Apollo 12 astronaut who was the first person to walk on the moon, said that the event was a "giant leap for mankind."

2

TRUE FALSE



3

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) program couldn't go to Mars in 1969, so they had to go to the moon.

TRUE

FALSE



Solar winds, radiation, cosmic rays, and other obstacles would have made the manned moon landings impossible, plus the photographs looked altered and the eyewitness accounts disagreed on some details, so the U.S. government must have staged the whole thing.

TRUE

FALSE

4

Modern Lies

When it comes to the things that influence your thoughts, beliefs, choices, and behaviors—the things that have potentially eternal consequences—it pays to look out for different kinds of falsehoods, since Satan, “the father of lies” (2 Nephi 9:9), will use any method he can to deceive us. Here are some examples of how he’s doing it today, as well as examples of how we can respond with the truth.

The answer to each question is *False*, and these questions represent some basic types of falsehoods you will likely encounter.

Question 1 is a *simple untruth*, a blatant error. Question 2 is a *partial truth*, which is tricky, since it pairs one or more truths with a falsehood (it was Apollo 11, not Apollo 12—gotcha!). Question 3 contains a *false dichotomy*, or a situation where only two options are presented that aren't really the only options (NASA could have chosen not to go anywhere, for instance). Question 4 is a “*logical*” *argument*, which piles on reasonable-sounding but often faulty evidence in order to lead to a specific mistaken conclusion.

Simple Untruth

False Idea:

Pornography is normal and doesn't hurt anyone.

Where It Leads (Big Lie):

Go ahead and view pornography.

The Truth:

Pornography distorts our view of sexuality, can be addictive, deeply harms us spiritually, and can destroy relationships.

Partial Truth

False Idea:

Each person is unique and can live as he or she chooses, so how you feel about and express yourself are the most important things in your life.

Where It Leads (Big Lie):

You shouldn't let God or the Church tell you how to live, so go ahead and do what you want if it makes you feel good.

The Truth:

Each of us is a unique child of Heavenly Father, who wants us to become our best selves and to become like Him. Obedience to His commandments helps us gain ultimate joy.

How to Know the Truth

So where does a more complete view of the truth come from? How are we able to see through the falsehoods? Here are some of the powerful gifts Heavenly Father has given us to distinguish truth from error.

- **The Light of Christ.** “The Light of Christ . . . prompts all rational individuals throughout the earth to distinguish truth from error, right from wrong. It activates your conscience.”¹
- **The Holy Ghost.** “The Spirit of truth . . . will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13).
- **Scriptures.** “God uses scripture to unmask erroneous thinking, false traditions, and sin with its devastating effects.”² The Book of Mormon is especially important in this regard, for it “exposes the enemies of Christ. It confounds false doctrines and lays down contention. (See 2 Ne. 3:12.)”³
- **Modern prophets.** “[A prophet’s] responsibility is to make known God’s will and true character to mankind. . . . A prophet denounces sin and foretells its consequences.”⁴
- **Education.** “A saint . . . seeks learning by study, and also by faith. Education . . . enables one to discern truth from error, particularly through studying the scriptures. (See D&C 88:118.)”⁵

False Dichotomy (Only Two Options)

False Idea:

The Church preaches against certain lifestyles; therefore, it is intolerant and hates people—it is not accepting and loving.

Where It Leads (Big Lie):

Since the Church is intolerant and hateful, it deserves to be criticized, ridiculed, and condemned, so you should stop associating with it.

The Truth:

Not accepting someone else’s lifestyle does not equal hatred and intolerance. We can show compassion, respect, and kindness to everyone—including people whose lifestyles run contrary to God’s laws—while staying true to God and His commandments.

“Logical” Argument

False Idea:

Some things in the Book of Mormon are refuted by current scientific evidence, and the accounts of how it was translated are inconsistent, so Joseph Smith must have made it all up or copied it from somewhere.

Where It Leads (Big Lie):

The Book of Mormon is not true and Joseph Smith was not a prophet, so stop associating with the Church.

The Truth:

Science affirms many things in the Book of Mormon, and the “evidence” against it is flawed. But the most important evidence for it is the witness of the Spirit telling you it is true and that Joseph Smith was a true prophet. (For more on the Book of Mormon translation, visit [lds.org/go/translateNE4](https://www.lds.org/go/translateNE4).)

Though it may not always be easy to answer *True* or *False* when facing all the different ideas out there, the gifts Heavenly Father has given you can help you pass the test. **NE**

NOTES

1. Richard G. Scott, “Peace of Conscience and Peace of Mind,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 15.
2. D. Todd Christofferson, “The Blessing of Scripture,” *Ensign*, May 2010, 33–34.
3. Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), “The Book of Mormon Is the Word of God,” *Ensign*, May 1975, 64.
4. Guide to the Scriptures, “Prophet,” *scriptures.lds.org*.
5. Russell M. Nelson, “Thus Shall My Church Be Called,” *Ensign*, May 1990, 16.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

THINGS TO PONDER FOR SUNDAY

- How has Heavenly Father helped you recognize the truth?
- How can you combat error?
- How can you encourage others to find out the truth?

THINGS YOU MIGHT DO

- In church, share how you came to believe that the restored gospel is true.
- On social media or at [lds.org/go/truthNE4](https://www.lds.org/go/truthNE4), share a truth and how you know it.



Why are we allowed to play only certain musical instruments in sacrament meeting?

“Music [in Church meetings] should be worshipful and fit the spirit of the meeting. Priesthood leaders determine what is suitable” (*Handbook 2: Administering the Church* [2010], 14.4). This guideline also applies to the instruments used to perform music in sacrament meeting. “Instruments with a prominent or less worshipful sound, such as most brass and percussion, are not appropriate for sacrament meeting” (*Handbook 2*, 14.4.2). So, besides brass and percussion instruments, what other instruments sound “prominent or less worshipful,” and which ones are appropriate? Your bishop and stake president are the ones who answer that question in your ward and stake. **NE**

If the sacrament is about repenting and coming unto Christ, why does the bishop sometimes ask people not to take the sacrament for a while?

Partaking of the sacrament is a privilege we have as Church members. Through it we remember Jesus Christ and His Atonement and

renew our baptismal covenants. For this reason, we must partake of it worthily (see 1 Corinthians 11:27–28; 3 Nephi 18:28–29; D&C 20:68–69; 46:4). The way we prepare for it each week is by examining our lives and repenting, which requires “a turning of the heart and will to God, and a renunciation of sin” (Bible Dictionary, “Repentance”). A bishop will sometimes ask a member who has confessed certain serious sins not to participate in the sacrament for a certain amount of time. In doing so, the bishop helps the person fully

repent by allowing time to recognize the seriousness of his or her sins, make needed changes, and show humility and continued faithfulness. As the person truly repents, he or she turns to God and experiences a change of heart through the grace of Christ. When the person does again partake of the sacrament, he or she will hopefully have a renewed and enhanced appreciation for it and for the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Cherishing this sacred ordinance can then strengthen the person’s resolve to remain free of sin. **NE**



Sunday School Lesson Helps: “How Can I Liken the Events of the Apostasy and the Restoration to My Life?”

When you heard that you’d be studying the Apostasy this month, did you wonder why we talk about something that happened so long ago, especially since the gospel has already been restored? Well, we can learn a lot from the past to help us avoid personal apostasy today. After all, distractions are all around us, trying to get us to leave the path to Heavenly Father. But you can stay strong. As Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

“The boundaries of good taste and public decency are being pushed to the point where there are no boundaries at all. The commandments of God have taken a beating in the . . . marketplace of ideas that absolutely rejects the notion of right and wrong. Certain factions of society seem generally mistrustful of anyone who chooses to live according to religious belief. And when people of faith attempt to warn others of the possible consequences of their sinful choices, they are scoffed at and ridiculed. . . .

“Does any of this sound familiar, my young brothers and sisters? Do you see the historical pattern emerging again—the pattern of righteousness followed by prosperity, followed by material comforts, followed by greed, followed by pride, followed by wickedness and a collapse of morality—the same pattern we’ve seen again and again within the pages of the Old and New Testaments and the Book of Mormon? . . . What impact will the lessons of the past have on the personal choices you make . . . ?

“... Each one of you has to decide for yourself if you are going to ignore the past and suffer the painful mistakes and tragic pitfalls that have befallen previous generations. . . . How much better your life will be if you will follow the noble example of the faithful followers of Christ . . . and choose, as they did, to remain faithful to your Heavenly Father’s commandments” (“Learning the Lessons of the Past,” *Ensign*, May 2009, 33).

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The
TEACHINGS
OF PROPHETS AND APOSTLES.

past AND present,

**ARE AS RELEVANT TO
YOUR LIFE
TODAY AS THEY EVER HAVE BEEN.**

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,
“Learning the Lessons of the Past,” *Ensign*, May 2009, 34.

YOU CAN
**SAFEGUARD
YOURSELF**

AGAINST PERSONAL APOSTASY

BY
KEEPING YOUR COVENANTS,
OBEYING THE COMMANDMENTS,
FOLLOWING CHURCH LEADERS,
PARTAKING OF THE SACRAMENT,
AND CONSTANTLY STRENGTHENING
YOUR TESTIMONY THROUGH
DAILY SCRIPTURE STUDY,
PRAYER, AND SERVICE.

BACKGROUND TEXTURE BY ISTOCK/THINKSTOCK



JON CLARK



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY



RYAN STOKER



ARIE VAN DE GRAAFF

“What should I do when a **topic** is brought up at **school** that goes **against** **gospel** teachings, such as abortion?”

There are many ways to respond—or not—depending on the situation. First, think about what might happen if you do or don’t say something. If your silence would cause others to think you agree with something you know to be wrong, you may want to find a simple way to make your disagreement known. If you think your comments would only cause contention, then you could find another occasion to comment. However, if your class is respectful to one another and the teacher is asking for participation, you could pray for inspiration and then explain your beliefs.

You can also prepare ahead of time if you know your class is going to discuss a certain topic. In addition to the scriptures and conference talks on the topic, take a look at *True to the Faith*, *Gospel Principles*, or *For the Strength of Youth*. You could also practice explaining the topic in family home evening. When you’re ready, talk to your teacher or your classmates.

How you respond is as important as *what* you say. Be respectful and try not to confuse people. For instance, if you use Church jargon, explain it. Your classmates will be lost as soon as you say, “A Young Women adviser in my ward taught me that . . .”

What’s most important is for you to know what the Church teaches and what the Holy Ghost is telling you so that you will not be deceived by errors you might hear or read in class. **NE**

Remember Whom You Represent

When dealing with these situations, try to remember that others may not share the same feelings toward the subject as you. Do not be overbearing or pushy, but don’t be afraid to defend your beliefs. Remember that you represent Christ.

Madeline K., 16, Wyoming, USA

Be Polite



I feel like I should share my views in a polite way and also state why I believe them. I don’t think

I need to make others share my views, but I think that they should know where I stand on certain topics and understand my point of view.

Sabrina S., 16, Oregon, USA

Be Respectful



It’s important to let ourselves be heard, but it’s also very important to be respectful of others’ beliefs. Don’t

argue. Arguing creates enemies and confusion. If an idea is brought up that is against our religion, stay calm, focused, and respectful, and don’t forget to listen to the Spirit. There are things we don’t understand that God does. We should listen to and learn from His Spirit.

Hannah M., 18, Utah, USA



Share What the Church Teaches

I try to answer such questions to the best of my capabilities because my friends and teachers don't know, unless I tell them, what the Church's stance is on such topics. When I do, they are able to know for future reference, and I benefit spiritually. Remember: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

Joshua M., 16, Manchester, England

Help Others Think about What Is Right



Share your feelings honestly. Many topics in school, like abortion, are highly debated, so don't be embarrassed to speak up. It is a good chance to share the gospel and the standards we believe in. If you share your beliefs, you can help people think about what is right.

Madison R., 14, North Carolina, USA

Correct the False Doctrine

We belong to a missionary-minded Church in which we are all called to preach; therefore, we cannot allow false doctrine to spread. In such situations, we must speak up in order to correct any false doctrine and help the people understand the restored gospel's viewpoint on the subject.

David M., 16, Kasai-Occidental Province, Democratic Republic of Congo

Know the Church's Stance



I was in a course where controversial topics were often discussed. The first thing to do is to respect others' beliefs, as you would expect from your fellow classmates. If the topic is in direct conflict with the Church, feel free to state your opinion. You do not have to mention the Church in your response. Nevertheless, be sure to know the Church's stance on these things.

Joseph Z., 18, Maryland, USA

Avoid Contention

I would explain my opinion, defending my principles and doctrines of the Church, respecting the ideas of others. I would not be contentious, which will drive away the Spirit, who could influence others in a positive way.

Daiana V., 15, Buenos Aires, Argentina



STAND FIRM

"Ours is to explain our position through reason, friendly persuasion, and accurate facts.

Ours is to stand firm and unyielding on the moral issues of the day and the eternal principles of the gospel, but to contend with no man or organization. Contention builds walls and puts up barriers. Love opens doors."

Elder Marvin J. Ashton (1915-94) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "No Time for Contention," Ensign, May 1978, 8.

Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as official pronouncements of Church doctrine.

UPCOMING QUESTION

"How can I become
comfortable
enough to **talk**
to **my bishop**
about issues
or concerns?"

Send your answer and photo by May 15, 2014.

Go to newera.lds.org, click "Submit Your Work," enter your LDS Account, and then select "New Era."

You can also write to us at newera@ldschurch.org or

New Era, Q&A, bishop
50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.



CONFERENCE CONNECTION

Sharing the gospel is a duty and a joy for every disciple of Christ. At the last general conference, we were encouraged to share the gospel in a variety of ways.

“[The Lord] has prepared the means for us to share the gospel in a multitude of ways, and He will assist us in our labors if we will act in faith to fulfill His work.”
President Thomas S. Monson,
 “Welcome to Conference,” *Ensign*,
 Nov. 2013, 4.



“Opportunities [to share the gospel] ... will flow as a natural result of our love for our brothers and sisters. Just be positive, and those whom you speak with will feel your love.”

Elder M. Russell Ballard
 of the Quorum of the Twelve
 Apostles, “Put Your
 Trust in the Lord,”
Ensign, Nov. 2013, 44.



“Our dear prophet, President Thomas S. Monson; his counselors; and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles have extended an invitation for us all to participate in the work of salvation. The new converts, youth, young adults, those who have retired from their professions, and full-time missionaries need to be equally yoked in hastening the work of salvation. ... We need ... teamwork in hastening the work of salvation as we invite others to come unto Christ.”
Elder Edward Dube of the Seventy, “Look Ahead and Believe,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 16.

A TEAM TO NOTICE

Ultimate (also known as Ultimate Frisbee™) is a fast-paced sport that combines the running of soccer, the aerial passing of football, and the vertical leaps of basketball. The game is played by millions in the United States alone, with competitions held around the country.

However, don't expect the number-one nationally ranked high school team to attend any competition held on Sunday.

Three years ago, Lone Peak High School in Utah started an Ultimate team. “Every single

person on the team said we were not going to play on Sundays,” explains Quinn A., a recent graduate who's played on the team since the first year.

Skipping Sunday competitions (and there are a lot of them) hasn't limited the team's success. Not only are they ranked number one, but they're also respected throughout the sport. For example, at a major national Ultimate competition—the Chicago Invite—judges allowed Lone Peak Ultimate to play all their games on Saturday even though the event took



place on Saturday and Sunday.

They also have a reputation for being one of the friendliest teams around no matter where they go. “We always

come out with friends,” Quinn says. “Every single game.”

Quinn is now helping to coach the team while he prepares to serve a full-time mission.

5

WAYS

TO GET THE MOST OUT OF GENERAL CONFERENCE

1. Create a list of questions that you're seeking answers to.
2. Sit in a kitchen chair. (Lying down on a couch with your pillow and blanket might not be the best way to stay focused!)
3. Look for new insights, even if a message seems familiar at first. Remember, prophets have always taught through repetition.
4. Watch every session and pay close attention to every speaker.
5. Have a notepad or digital device handy to write down any promptings or special thoughts you have while you watch.

MUTUAL ACTIVITY IDEA: PHOTO SCAVENGER HUNT: READY, SET, CLICK!

In a traditional scavenger hunt, it's not terribly hard to fit a stapler, a spool of thread, a yellow crayon, and other such small objects into your backpack as you scour the town and race the clock. But what about trying to bring back a dog holding a tennis ball in its mouth? Or a daughter, mother, and grandmother all power-flexing together like bodybuilders? Yes, that's a tad trickier.

That's what makes a digital photo scavenger hunt so much fun. Instead of trying to locate and bring back small physical objects, the objective here is to head out and take photos. The sky's the limit on what you decide to put on your to-find list. How about a picture of someone wearing polka-dot socks? Or a photo of a gargoyle on a building? Rusted metal? A tombstone where the person was born in the 1800s? An actual typewriter?

A list of everyday items works great if you're planning this Mutual activity as a fun way for youth to bring nonmember friends to get to

know each other in a casual setting. But you could also create a list of items that relate to a gospel topic you're studying or even that support principles related to the yearly Mutual theme. Or maybe each person in the group chooses an object that represents something he or she is interested in, so that everyone can learn more about the others in their ward or branch.

Digital photo scavenger hunts, for all their fun, require no cost and only very basic preparation. First create a list of more items than could reasonably be obtained in a single night. Split up into teams so no one is alone, and make sure each team has at least one digital camera.

Then head out for an agreed-upon time limit and return to compare results. The team that takes photos of the most items on the list is the winner.

As a side note, ensure beforehand that everyone goes to places that are safe.



MY FAVORITE SCRIPTURE

Matthew 5:16 "LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN, THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS, AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN."

I love this scripture because it talks about being an example in front of others and making sure that our examples please our Heavenly Father. Being one of the oldest Mia Maids in my ward, I have to be an example to the Beehives. If I work on my Personal Progress and work for my Honor Bee, that will show them that they can do it too.

Mary C., 14, Arizona, USA



“GO FORTH IN HIS MIGHT”

I hit the snooze button on my alarm clock. I was in a morning daze and slept in longer than usual. As a result, I was going to be late for early-morning seminary. I hurried out the door and started my car, but it would not move out of the driveway. After a few minutes, I realized that my emergency break was on, preventing the car from moving. It was only six in the morning, and things were already feeling difficult. Plus, I had a busy and demanding day ahead of me. As I drove, I pleaded with my Heavenly Father, “I’m trying to do what I should. Please help me.”

That morning we learned something in seminary that I really needed to hear. My teacher said, “Remember that Heavenly Father is more powerful than Satan, so don’t let Satan get you down.”

Satan was getting me down that morning—I was feeling defeated and upset. I decided that what I needed most was some comfort from the scriptures. I opened my Book of Mormon and read Mosiah 9.

In this chapter, the righteous people of Zeniff go up against a much larger army, the wicked Lamanites. But however daunting the

battle seemed, Zeniff’s people trusted Heavenly Father. “And God did hear our cries and did answer our prayers; and we did go forth in his might” (Mosiah 9:18). “Go forth in his might,” I repeated to myself.

I looked at my situation. Although I wasn’t going into a life-threatening battle, I thought of myself as the little army. I was a warrior going up against the difficult morning behind me and the demanding day ahead of me. I realized that I needed to put on the armor of God and “go forth in His might.” And by trusting in Him, I was able to accomplish a lot that day.

There is no doubt that Heavenly Father knows very well what we need, and when we have enough faith to pray or open our scriptures, we will be blessed. I believe that if we study the scriptures every day, they can relate to our specific needs *every day*.
Sadie O., Texas, USA

FROM COVER TO COVER

During high school, I didn't really do anything against Church standards, but I also didn't do much to strengthen my testimony. When I was 18, I was tired of just going through the motions each day without the constant companionship of the Spirit. And even though I'd heard many people bear their testimonies on how the Book of Mormon had blessed their lives, I'd never read the whole thing. So I decided to read the Book of Mormon from cover to cover.

As soon as I began reading, I felt so much more joy in my life. As time went on and I got further and further into the Book of Mormon, my testimony grew immensely and I was able to feel the influence of the Spirit each day.

One scripture excerpt became my motto: "If there be no righteousness there be no happiness" (2 Nephi 2:13). This scripture helped me stay diligent in my study.

KINDNESS REALLY WORKS

Sewing a quilt in my high school sewing class proved to be harder than I'd thought. For one thing, my thread kept getting jammed in my sewing machine, but that problem was easy enough to fix. The harder problem was the swear words. Three young women in my class were working together at the next machine over, and they'd been swearing loudly the entire class period.

The idea of asking them to stop swearing intimidated me. But I'd been taught by my parents and Church leaders that people will often respond well to our invitations to do good as long as we are kind. So I took a deep breath and asked the three young women as nicely as I knew how if they could stop swearing.

Unfortunately, they didn't take it well. The tallest one gave me a rude answer, and before I knew it, we were arguing. Eventually I gave up and went back to my sewing. Now I was frustrated with the swear words, the three young women, and myself. The last thing I'd wanted to do was start an argument.

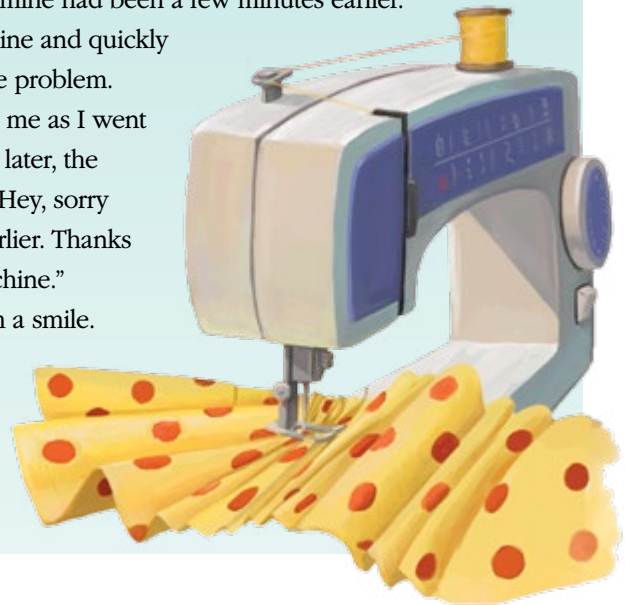
As I brooded over my mistake, I heard the three young women swearing again and saw them bent over their machine. I could tell that their machine was jammed the same way mine had been a few minutes earlier. I walked over to their machine and quickly showed them how to fix the problem.

I could feel their eyes on me as I went back to my seat. A moment later, the tallest young woman said, "Hey, sorry about the things we said earlier. Thanks for helping us with our machine."

"No problem," I said with a smile.

My parents and leaders are right—kindness really works!

Katie P., Utah, USA



On a chilly Sunday evening in October, I sat quietly on temple grounds and finished the Book of Mormon. I took Moroni's promise to heart and prayed to know if what I'd suspected all along was true—if the Book of Mormon is the word of God.

Since then, the Spirit has confirmed to me that the Book of Mormon is true. I have a firm testimony of its life-changing power, not only for me but also for all who sincerely read it.

Brian D., Virginia, USA



By Elder
Quentin L. Cook

Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

HOW TO BECOME A SAINT

The word *saint* in Greek denotes “set apart, separate, [and] holy.”¹

If we are to be Saints in our day, we need to **separate ourselves from evil conduct** and destructive pursuits that are prevalent in the world.

We are bombarded with visual images of violence and immorality. Inappropriate music and pornography are increasingly tolerated. The use of drugs and alcohol is rampant. There is less emphasis on honesty and character. Individual rights are demanded, but duties, responsibilities, and obligations are neglected. There has been a coarsening of dialogue and increased exposure to that which is base and vulgar. The adversary has been relentless in his efforts to undermine the plan of happiness. If we separate ourselves from this worldly conduct, we will have **the Spirit in our lives** and **experience the joy** of being worthy Latter-day Saints.

As Saints, we also need to **avoid the worship of worldly gods.**

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) expressed the desire that “everyone might have some of the good things of life” but cautioned, “It is the obsession with riches that cankers and destroys.”²

The prophet Moroni, speaking of our day, warned about the love of money and substance and suggested that we would love them more than we “love the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted” (Mormon 8:37).

If we are to be worthy Saints, we should **minister to others** and adhere to the Savior’s admonition to **love God and our fellowmen.**

Separation from the evils of the world needs to be accompanied by **holiness.** A Saint **loves the Savior** and **follows Him** in holiness and devotion. Evidence of this kind of holiness and devotion is exemplified by **consecration** and **sacrifice.** President Hinckley taught, “Without sacrifice there is no true worship of God.”³ Sacrifice is the crowning test of the gospel. It means consecrating time, talents, energy, and earthly possessions to further the work of God. In Doctrine and Covenants 97:8, it concludes, “All . . . who . . . are willing to observe their covenants by sacrifice—yea, every sacrifice which I, the Lord, shall command—they are accepted of me.”

Saints who respond to the Savior’s message **will not be led astray** by distracting and destructive pursuits and will be prepared to make appropriate sacrifices. The importance of sacrifice to those who want to be Saints is exemplified by the atoning sacrifice of the Savior, which is at the center of the gospel (see Alma 34:8–16). **NE**

Adapted from the October 2003 general conference address “Are You a Saint?”

NOTES

1. In Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. (1992), 3:1249.
2. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Thou Shalt Not Covet,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1990, 4–5.
3. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 565.

HOW HAVE YOU APPLIED THIS?

“The Lord’s side will always be the winning team. I want the blessings and promises of being a worthy Latter-day Saint because they are way better than anything the world has to offer. When I keep these things in mind, tough decisions become easier to make.”

Emily L., 17, Utah, USA



Let Your Voice Be Heard

Share your experiences in being a Saint and read the experiences of other youth by going to lds.org/go/saintNE4.

Fill

YOUR LIFE

WITH *service* TO

OTHERS.

As you lose your life in the service
of Father in Heaven's children,
Satan's temptations lose power
in your life.

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,
October 2013 general conference

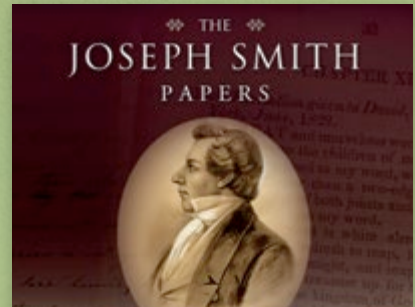
WHAT'S ONLINE



IDEAS FOR YOUTH CONFERENCE

Looking for additional activities to help you finalize your plans for an upcoming youth conference or camp? Check out lds.org/youth/activities and search for your perfect idea. Here are a few to get you started:

- Film Festival:
lds.org/go/filmNE4
- Service Scavenger Hunt:
lds.org/go/serviceNE4
- Web of Gratitude:
lds.org/go/webNE4.



DOCUMENTS OF THE RESTORATION

As you talk about the Restoration and Joseph Smith this month, did you know that you can read actual documents from that time period? At josephsmithpapers.org, you'll find scans of original journals, histories, revelations, translations, and more. For example, check out Joseph Smith's 1832-34 journal at lds.org/go/journalNE4.

STRENGTHENED IN CHRIST

If you sometimes feel like it's all you can do to just get by day by day and you wish you could have a break from trials, remember the children of Israel. They had to rely on the Lord every day.

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles teaches that “at least one of [the Lord’s] purposes was to teach [the children of Israel] to remember Him, to think of Him, to look to Him, to have faith in Him—that He was the source of their life.”

Learn more about how Christ can carry you through tribulation day by day in Elder Christofferson’s three-part video series “Daily Bread” at lds.org/go/breadNE4.