

What activities should I do in my free time to make it more valuable?

“Alma spoke of priorities when he taught that ‘this life became a probationary state; a time to prepare to meet God’ (Alma 12:24). How to best use the rich heritage of time to prepare to meet God may require some guidance, but surely we would place the Lord and our families at the top of the list.”

Elder Ian S. Arden of the Seventy,
Oct. 2011 general conference.



Work Toward a Finished Product

Do something that matters. Sometimes I waste my time doing mean-

ingless things, like surfing the internet for two hours, and I regret it later. You could try to develop a new talent, work on Personal Progress or Duty to God, tutor a sibling or friend, grow a garden, write a story, or get organized—the possibilities are endless. The rule I live by is to make sure my use of free time is always helping me work toward a finished product.

Kimberly A., 19, Alaska, USA



Become Who You Want to Be

There is a quote in my living room that says, “Ask yourself if what you

are doing today is getting you closer to where you want to be tomorrow.” Think about the type of person you want to become and the goals you have. Choose to do things that will help you achieve those goals. Do things that will allow you to keep the Spirit with you and that align with the standards in *For the Strength of Youth*.

Amy P., 16, Kentucky, USA



Sing or Listen to Hymns

The activity I love doing most in my free time is singing hymns. I made it a goal to memorize as many Church hymns as I could. I usually download some hymns I want to learn so I can listen to them anytime I have a free moment.

Justice O., 16, Orlu, Nigeria

Study the Book of Mormon

I make my free time more meaningful and valuable by studying the Book of Mormon. It is the keystone of our religion and, in the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith, we can “get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book” (introduction to the Book of Mormon).

Lynne T., 18, Accra, Ghana



Set Goals

You first need to think about the person you want to be in a few years. Then you can decide what you should do now with your free time to achieve that goal. At the end of each day, I think about what my goals are and make a schedule of what I will do the next day with my free time.

Elder Agostinelli, 20, Chile Santiago West Mission

Study Doctrine

One great way to use your free time is by studying the Lord’s doctrine. From an eternal perspective, reading scriptures, Church magazine articles, and other uplifting materials will benefit you a lot more than doing other activities.

Josh C., 13, Tennessee, USA

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

Tell Us What You Think:

“How can I get along better with my family?”

Send your answer and photo by September 15, 2018.



If God knows every decision we’re going to make, what’s the point of our agency?

This question has puzzled people for centuries. The way we answer it is based on two basic, revealed truths:

God knows all. God’s view is not bound by time (see D&C 38:2). In addition, He had an eternity of personal experience with us before we came to this earth, so He knows the inclinations and character of each of us better than we do.

We have agency. We are intelligent beings, children of God, who loves us and has established a plan that allows us to become like Him—if we choose to obey Him (see D&C 93:27–32; Abraham 3:21–25). Agency means that we can act for ourselves and not be acted upon (see 2 Nephi 2:14, 16, 27).

God’s familiarity with our character and His foreknowledge of our choices does not cause us to make those choices. Both because He knows us and because we have agency, He invites and entices us—but does not force us—to do good and believe in Jesus Christ (see Moroni 7:16–17).

Go to newera.lds.org, and click “Submit Your Work.” Sign in with your LDS Account and then select “New Era” under “Choose Magazine.” Click “Add File” to select your file and photos, and then click “Submit” to upload and send us your file.

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.

FUN STOP ANSWERS (from pages 40-41): Solving in Circles: neat, nest, best, beat, bear, fear, sear, soar, boat, moat, meat, To Solve or Not to Solve?: “One red hat and one blue hat.” Since all labels are wrong, this has either two blue or two red. The other boxes can then be worked out by elimination. **Temple Time:** (a) Rome Italy Temple.