

DECEMBER 2014

THE

New Era



PROPHETS TESTIFY OF
Jesus Christ
..... p. 2

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IN CHRISTMAS**
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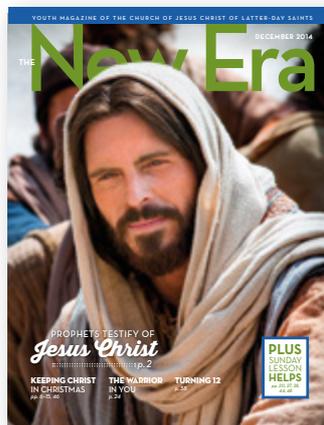
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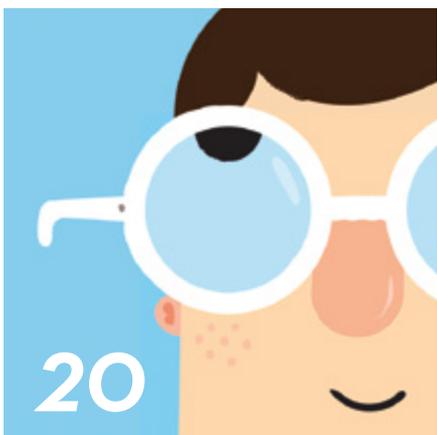
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Rejoice in Christ

As special witnesses of Jesus Christ,
living prophets and apostles
share their testimonies of the Savior.



Jesus Christ, Our Redeemer

"With all my heart and the fervency of my soul, I lift up my voice in testimony as a special

witness and declare that God does live. Jesus is His Son, the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh. He is our Redeemer; He is our Mediator with the Father. He it was who died on the cross to atone for our sins. He became the firstfruits of the Resurrection. Because He died, all shall live again. 'Oh, sweet the joy this sentence gives: "I know that my Redeemer lives!"' ("I Know That My Redeemer Lives," *Hymns*, no. 136)."

President Thomas S. Monson, "I Know That My Redeemer Lives!" *Ensign*, May 2007, 25.



He Lives

"Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon recorded the following after a sacred experience:

"And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

"For we saw him' (D&C 76:22-23). Their words are my words. I believe and I am sure that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that He lives. . . .

"I know the Lord. I am His witness. I know of His great sacrifice and eternal love for all of Heavenly Father's children. I bear my special witness in all humility but with absolute certainty."

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Witness," *Ensign*, May 2014, 97.



I Am a Witness

"I am a witness of the Resurrection of the Lord as surely as if I had been there in the evening with the two disciples in the house on Emmaus road. I know that He lives as surely as did Joseph Smith when he saw the Father and the Son in the light of a brilliant morning in a grove of trees in Palmyra. . . .

"We will on the Day of Judgment stand before the Savior, face to face. It will be a time of joy for those who have drawn close to Him in His service in this life. It will be a joy to hear the words: 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant' [Matthew 25:21]."

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "Come unto Me," *Ensign*, May 2013, 25.



The Central Figure in Our Doctrine

"Jesus Christ is the central figure in our doctrine as well as in the doctrine of all Christians' faith. He was more than just sinless, good, and loving. He was more than just a teacher. He ministered on earth as a man, though He was the Son of God. He died, was buried, and rose on the third day to make the atoning sacrifice for all mankind so that death would not hold a permanent power."

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Great Plan of Our God" (Brigham Young University devotional, Oct. 30, 2007), 5; speeches.byu.edu.



Our Hope and Salvation

"Jesus Christ [is] the source of light, life, and love. . . . He gave us His gospel, a pearl beyond price, the grand key of knowledge that, once understood and applied, unlocks a life of happiness, peace, and fulfillment. . . .

"I bear my solemn witness that Jesus the Christ lives. He is the Savior and Redeemer of the world. He is the promised Messiah. He lived a perfect life and atoned for our sins. He will ever be at our side. He will fight our battles. He is our hope; He is our salvation; He is the way."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "The Way of the Disciple," *Ensign*, May 2009, 75, 78.



The Divine Son

"At His First Coming Jesus came almost in secret. Only a few mortals knew of His birth. At His Second Coming the whole of humankind will know of His return. Then He will come, not as 'a man traveling on the earth' (D&C 49:22), but His glory 'shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together' (Isaiah 40:5; see also D&C 101:23).

"As a special witness of His holy name, I testify that Jesus is the divine Son of the living God. He will love you, lift you, and manifest Himself unto you if you will love Him and keep His commandments."

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Christ the Savior Is Born" (Brigham Young University devotional, Dec. 10, 2002), 4-5; speeches.byu.edu.



“Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. ... And his sweat was as it were great drops of blood” (Luke 22:42, 44).



The Reach and Power of His Atonement

“The Savior teaches that we will have tribulation in the world, but we should ‘be of good cheer’ because

He has ‘overcome the world’ (John 16:33). His Atonement reaches and is powerful enough not only to pay the price for sin but also to heal every mortal affliction. . . .

“He knows of our anguish, and He is there for us. Like the good Samaritan in His parable, when He finds us wounded at the wayside, He binds up our wounds and cares for us (see Luke 10:34). . . . The healing power of His Atonement is for you, for us, for all.”

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “He Heals the Heavy Laden,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 6-7.



The Savior in the Garden of Gethsemane

“There is no greater expression of love than the heroic Atonement performed by

the Son of God. . . . Jesus Christ courageously fulfilled this sacrifice in ancient Jerusalem. There in the quiet isolation of the Garden of Gethsemane, He knelt among the gnarled olive trees, and in some incredible way that none of us can fully comprehend, the Savior took upon Himself the sins of the world. Even though His life was pure and free of sin, He paid the ultimate penalty for sin—yours, mine, and everyone who has ever lived.”

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Atonement and the Value of One Soul,” *Ensign*, May 2004, 84-85.



Our Guide

“I testify that [the Lord] lives. As you worthily seek His help, He will guide you in your life. I testify of that with every capacity that I possess. Jesus Christ lives. He guides His work on earth. As Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have experiences that are very sacred that allow us to bear our testimony of His name and of His power. I do that with deep conviction. Jesus Christ loves you. He will guide you in your life. In times of great challenge, when you are perplexed about which turn to take, kneel down and ask your Father in Heaven to bless you, and let your faith in the Savior and His Atonement be the rock and foundation of a successful life.”

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “To Live Well” (Brigham Young University commencement address, Apr. 21, 2011), 7; speeches.byu.edu.



Only Begotten Son

“As a special witness of the Only Begotten Son of our loving Heavenly Father, even Jesus Christ, I testify that God lives. I know He lives. I promise that if you and those you love will seek Him in all humility, sincerity, and diligence, you will know with a surety too. Your witness will come. And the blessings of knowing God will be yours and your family’s forever.”

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Seeking to Know God, Our Heavenly Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 32.



He Will Never Leave Us Alone

“Because Jesus walked such a long, lonely path utterly alone, we do not have to do so. His solitary journey brought great company for our little version of that path—the merciful care of our Father in Heaven, the unfailing companionship of this Beloved Son, the consummate gift of the Holy Ghost, angels in heaven, family members on both sides of the veil, prophets and

apostles, teachers, leaders, friends. All of these and more have been given . . . because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ and the Restoration of His gospel. . . . We will never be left alone nor unaided, even if sometimes we may feel that we are. Truly the Redeemer of us all said: ‘I will not leave you comfortless: [My Father and I] will come to you [and abide with you]’ (John 14:18; see also v. 23).”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “None Were With Him,” *Ensign*, May 2009, 88.



His Infinite and Eternal Sacrifice

“The Savior has suffered not just for our iniquities but also for the inequality, the unfairness, the pain, the anguish, and the emotional distresses that so frequently beset us. There is no physical pain, no anguish of soul, no suffering of spirit, no infirmity or weakness that you or I ever experience during our mortal journey that the Savior did not experience first. . . . Because He paid the ultimate price and bore that burden, He has perfect empathy and can extend to us His arm of mercy. . . .

“I declare my witness of and appreciation for the infinite and eternal sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. I know the Savior lives. I have experienced both His redeeming power and His enabling power, and I testify that these powers are real and available to each of us.”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Atonement and the Journey of Mortality,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2012, 47.



The Way

“As an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, I testify that we are all spirit children of a loving Father in Heaven, who wants us to return to His presence. He has provided a way through His Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, for us to return to Him. It is my privilege and responsibility to be a special witness of Jesus Christ, His Atonement, and His supernal, transcendent mission. Sacred experiences

throughout my life allow me to express the overwhelming feelings of love I have for the Savior and to testify that He lives. Of this I bear solemn apostolic witness.”

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Special Witnesses of Christ,” lds.org/prophets-and-apostles/what-are-prophets-testimonies.



Scriptural Witnesses

“I believe the many witnesses of the Savior’s Resurrection whose experiences and testimonies are found in the New

Testament—Peter and his companions of the Twelve and dear, pure Mary of Magdala, among others. I believe the testimonies found in the Book of Mormon—of Nephi the Apostle with the unnamed multitude in the land Bountiful, among others. And I believe the testimony of Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon who, after many other testimonies, proclaimed the great witness of this last dispensation “that he lives! For we saw him” (D&C 76:22-23). Under the glance of His

all-seeing eye, I stand myself as a witness that Jesus of Nazareth is the resurrected Redeemer, and I testify of all that follows from the *fact* of His Resurrection.”

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Resurrection of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 114.



His Healing Hand

“I bear witness that our Savior can deliver us from our sins. I have personally felt His redeeming power. I have unmistakably seen His healing hand upon thousands in nations throughout the world. I testify that His divine gift removes guilt from our heart and brings peace to our conscience.

“He loves us. We are members of His Church. He invites each of us to repent, turn away from our sins, and come unto Him. I witness that He is there.”

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Repent . . . That I May Heal You,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 43.



“Jesus saith unto [Mary], *Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God*” (John 20:17).

THE *Seer Star*

By Casey Lee Dong

It's your turn for the family home evening lesson, and since it's December, you want to do something Christmas-related. Acting out the Nativity is probably the first thing that pops into your head, but Mom and Dad have that lined up for Christmas Eve. So here's another *bright* FHE idea that's *out of this world* as a *galactic* way to teach your family about keeping Christ in Christmas.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

A star.

You may have one on top of the Christmas tree. If not, just tap into your inner artist and make one out of paper. Make sure it's fairly small, because you'll be hiding it around the house.

STEP

1:

Pick your game.

The “Hotter/Colder” Game: Send one of your family members out of the room while you and the rest of the crew hide the star for this celestial lesson (done with the star-related jokes now). When it's hidden, ask the family member to rejoin the group. That family member now needs to find the star, but he or she won't have to do it alone. The rest of the family will help him or her find the star by saying “hotter” when he or she moves closer to it and “colder” when he or she moves away from it. Have your family keep giving the “hotter” and “colder” instructions until he or she finds the star.

Star Treasure Hunt Game: In this treasure hunt, your family will follow clues to find the hidden star, which you should place near a light switch or lamp. Jot down these clues (or come up with your own) on scraps of paper, and then hide the clues and the star before the lesson. As your family finds each clue, talk about how that characteristic of Christ is important in our lives.

Clue 1 (give this to your family to start the hunt):

John 6:35. “And Jesus said unto them, I am the **bread** of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”

Clue 2 (hide this clue wherever you keep bread):

John 4:14. “But whosoever **drinketh** of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

Clue 3 (hide this clue by a faucet or water pitcher):

Mosiah 16:9. “He is the **light** and the life of the world; yea, a light that is endless, that can never be darkened; yea, and also a life which is endless, that there can be no more death.”

STEP 2:

Play the game.

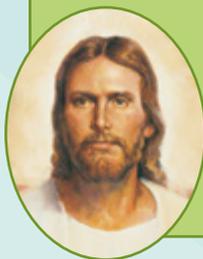
If you're playing the treasure hunt, you'll notice that clue 3 leads your family back to the star.

STEP 3:

Make the connection.

Just like the star was hidden and took some serious seeking to find, Christ can sometimes get hidden in our Christmas celebrations if we're not careful. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has taught:

"Sometimes the most precious and sacred things are right in front of us—in plain sight, so to speak—but we cannot or will not see them. This may be especially true during the blessed and precious season of Christmas" ("Can We See the Christ in Christmas?" 2009 Christmas Devotional; lds.org/broadcasts).



Talk with your family about how Christ can be hidden by events and traditions during the Christmas season. Come up with ways you can make sure Christ is a central part of your celebration this year.

STEP 4:

Wrap it up!

If you're not very handy with the wrapping paper and tape, have no fear, because all you need in order to wrap up this lesson is your testimony. Then, for the bow on top, leave your family with a challenge to seek Christ this season. **NE**

Casey Lee Dong lives in Utah, USA.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS

- Looking for an opening song? "Stars Were Gleaming" (*Children's Songbook*, 37) and "With Wondering Awe" (*Hymns*, no. 210) are both shining stars.
- If you want to display a poster, the Mormonad on page 13 fits perfectly with the theme.
- To make this lesson a *supergiant*, you could talk about how to help others find Christ and ways you can share the gospel this Christmas season.



No Angels Needed

On that Christmas morning in a hospital in Guatemala, we couldn't call on angels to sing. But we could call on ourselves.

By Jeniann Jensen Nielsen

Fireworks and firecrackers, brightly colored nativity scenes, and feasts featuring stuffed tamales—that's Christmas in Guatemala. As a full-time missionary I found the traditions very different from my own traditions in the United States. I was homesick and thought my Christmas would be miserable.

My companion, Sister Anaya, said we would find joy on Christmas by serving others. She suggested that we spend the morning singing at the hospital, and we invited other missionaries to join us.

As we approached the entrance, I watched the people waiting in line to see their loved ones. Their faces were sad, their sandal-clad feet dusty, their clothes faded. We waited with them. When we were finally allowed to enter the building, we walked down narrow halls with flaking green paint and cement floors. The smells of medicines and sickness overwhelmed me.

In the dim light I could see sick patients on beds in a large room with little ventilation or privacy. They lay there, some with bandages, some with IVs, some hooked up to machines to help them breathe. Some moaned quietly. Others slept. I wondered why we had come. Most in our small group of missionaries stood in the doorway, not knowing what to do.

But not Sister Anaya. She went to each bed, greeting those who were sick, asking them how they felt, and wishing them a merry Christmas. Her boldness reminded the rest of us why we had come, and we started to sing Christmas carols, softly at first but more confidently as we continued. Some of the patients smiled, some just lay there and didn't seem to notice, and some hummed along.

Sister Anaya, singing with a hymnbook in her hand, approached a woman who was wrapped in bandages. The woman began to cry quietly, and my companion lovingly stroked her hair. Through her tears the woman spoke, "You are angels. You are angels."

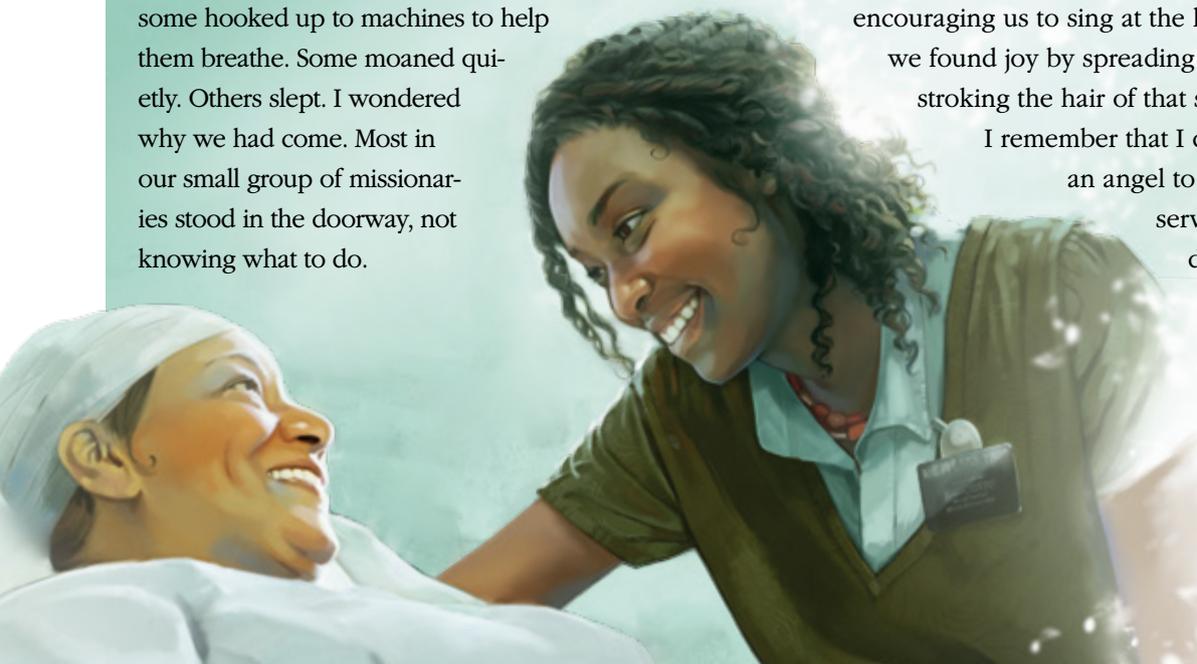
I will never forget Sister Anaya's response. "No, you are not hearing angels," she replied. "You are hearing Latter-day Saints."

When Jesus Christ was born, an angel announced His birth and a multitude of the heavenly host praised God (see Luke 2:8–14). I think of those angels every Christmas.

But I also think of Sister Anaya. I remember her encouraging us to sing at the hospital and how we found joy by spreading joy. I remember her stroking the hair of that sick woman. And

I remember that I don't need to be an angel to serve others. I can serve them as a Latter-day Saint. **NE**

Jeniann Jensen Nielsen lives in Utah, USA.



GOD HATH SENT HIS SON

This Day



Joyfully ♩ = 92-106

14th-Century Tune
Words by Jan Pinborough

1. God hath sent His Son this day, Je - sus Christ, our
 2. Born to ba - nish death's dark night, For our sins a -
 3. Stars and an - gels thron'g the skies, Sing - ing of His

Sav - ior, Sleep - ing mild - ly on the hay And
 ton - ing. Fears and sha - dows take their flight This
 glo - ry. Has - ten, shep - herds, where He lies; Then

crowned with lov - ing fa - vor, And crowned with lov - ing fa - vor,
 ho - ly Christ - mas morn - ing, This ho - ly Christ - mas morn - ing.
 tell the world His sto - ry, Then tell the world His sto - ry.

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HE IS THE GIFT

With Christmas coming, there's a lot of excitement about the gifts that'll be placed under the Christmas tree. You'll find them with bows and tags. They've come from stores and websites—or maybe the creative hands of a loved one. But the greatest gift of all won't be found under the tree or come from a store. And it's the reason we even celebrate Christmas.

The greatest gift was given by our Heavenly Father to all of His children. It's the gift of His Son, the Savior: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Because of Christ, we can overcome the obstacles of sorrow, sin, and death, and we can be strengthened to become more like Him. Because of the Father's gift, we can be changed forever.

As you celebrate that greatest gift this Christmas season, you're invited to share it with others by visiting christmas.mormon.org. You'll find the short video "He Is the Gift" to share, and you can also read and share social media posts with your feelings about Christmas and the Savior using the hashtag #ShareTheGift. You can even come up with ideas for how you'll share the gift of Christ and then write them on a printable sign, take a picture, and share it on social media. It's giving gifts like these that helps you become more like Jesus Christ, the greatest gift of all.

HOW WILL YOU #ShareTheGift?

Share the video "He Is the Gift" online at christmas.mormon.org.

DISCOVER, EMBRACE, SHARE



"Christmas is a time of reflection on what we can become because of God's sacred gift. As we *discover the gift*, we learn of the immeasurable love of God and our absolute need for a Savior. As we *embrace the gift*, we strengthen our faith in Jesus Christ and desire to become more like Him. As we *share the gift*, we follow the Master's footsteps, who invited all to hear His message."

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



My CHRISTMAS Gift

What would I give the Savior this year?

By Dustin Ward

My usual spot in ninth-grade seminary was in the back row, where I could talk and joke around with my friend. I had only signed up for seminary because there was an open space in my schedule. Seminary was offered during the school day where I lived, and a school counselor suggested I take it since I'm a Latter-day Saint. I knew the teacher's name, but that was about all I had learned from class.

Then my friend was gone one day, so I ran into a problem: I had no one to joke with. How would I pass the time? In a panic, I went with the only other option—I listened. It was the first time I paid any attention to the teacher.

As I look back, I don't remember a word he said that day, but I do remember being captivated. My friend was back the next day, but

instead of joking around, I listened and was again pulled in.

I eventually moved from the back of the room and sat on the front row, where I could pay better attention. Not a class went by in which I didn't feel a strong interest in the lesson or in the students who were sharing their testimonies.

I enjoyed seminary so much that I signed up for it again the next year. I had been baptized at eight years old but had never really gone to church. But something changed one day in December right before the Christmas break. The teacher invited us to come to the front of the room and say what gift we would give Christ that year.

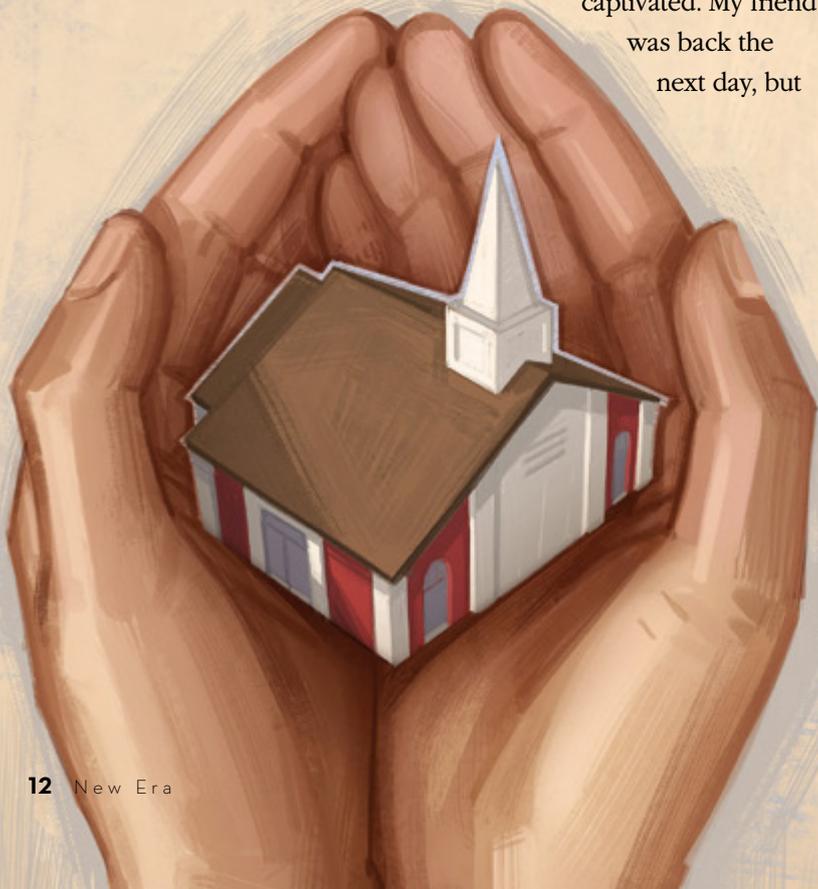
"No one will do this," I thought. But, to my surprise, one by one the students walked to the front of the class. Some shed tears, others shared goals they had set, and some told stories. I couldn't believe it.

Time was ticking. I was the only one who hadn't gone. Before I knew it, I was on my feet. I had no idea what I was going to say. Then, with a shaky voice, I said, "This year for Christ's birthday, I'm going to start going to church."

From that day forward, I started going to church as my gift to the Savior. The ironic part was that I was the one who received the gift. Going back to church changed my life, and it all started the day I stopped talking long enough to listen and allow the Spirit to touch my heart.

The Spirit still speaks to me. All I have to do is stop to listen—and then follow. **NE**

Dustin Ward lives in Utah, USA.





MAKE ROOM

“Each of us is an innkeeper who decides if there is room for Jesus!”

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,
“Settle This in Your Hearts,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 66.





By Elder
Russell M. Nelson

Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

THE
SACRED RESPONSIBILITIES
OF THE
LORD

As our great Exemplar, Jesus taught us how to live.

Memories of Christmas bring recollections of family, of gifts, and of service to others. They stem from the real reason for Christmas, that transcendent gift from our Heavenly Father.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”¹

My message pertains to the only source of true and lasting peace, Jesus the Christ—our Prince of Peace.² This title He bore in addition to others for which He was foreordained.

He was anointed by His Father to be the Savior of the world. These two titles—the Messiah and the Christ—designated His responsibility as the *anointed* one.³

Under the direction of His Father, Jesus was Creator of this and other worlds.⁴ Jesus is our Advocate with the Father.⁵ Jesus was the promised Immanuel,⁶ the great I Am and Jehovah of Old Testament times.⁷

He was sent by His Father to accomplish the Atonement, *the* central act of all human history. Because of His Atonement, immortality became a reality for all, and eternal life became a possibility for those who choose to follow Him.⁸ These objectives are the work and glory of Almighty God.⁹

As our great Exemplar, Jesus taught us how to live, to love, and to learn. He taught us how to pray, to

forgive, and endure to the end.¹⁰

He taught us how to care about others more than we care about ourselves. He taught us about mercy and kindness—making real changes in our lives through His power. He taught us how to find peace of heart and mind. One day, we will stand before Him as our just Judge and merciful Master.¹¹

These sacred responsibilities of the Lord cause us to adore Him as our personal and perennial Prince of Peace.

We’ll sing all hail to the Prince of Peace,¹² for He will come again. Then “the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.”¹³ As the millennial Messiah, He will reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.¹⁴ **NE**

From a 2013 Christmas Devotional address.

NOTES

1. John 3:16.
2. See Isaiah 9:6; 2 Nephi 19:6.
3. *Messiah* in Hebrew and *Christ* in Greek both mean “anointed.”
4. See Moses 1:32–33.
5. See 1 John 2:1; Doctrine and Covenants 29:5; 110:4.
6. See Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; 2 Nephi 17:14.
7. See Exodus 3:11–14; 6:3; Abraham 1:16; 2:8.
8. See 3 Nephi 27:13–14.
9. See Moses 1:39.
10. See 3 Nephi 27:21.
11. See 2 Nephi 9:41.
12. See “We’ll Sing All Hail to Jesus’ Name,” *Hymns*, no. 182.
13. Isaiah 40:5.
14. See Revelation 19:16.



By David L. Beck
Young Men
General President

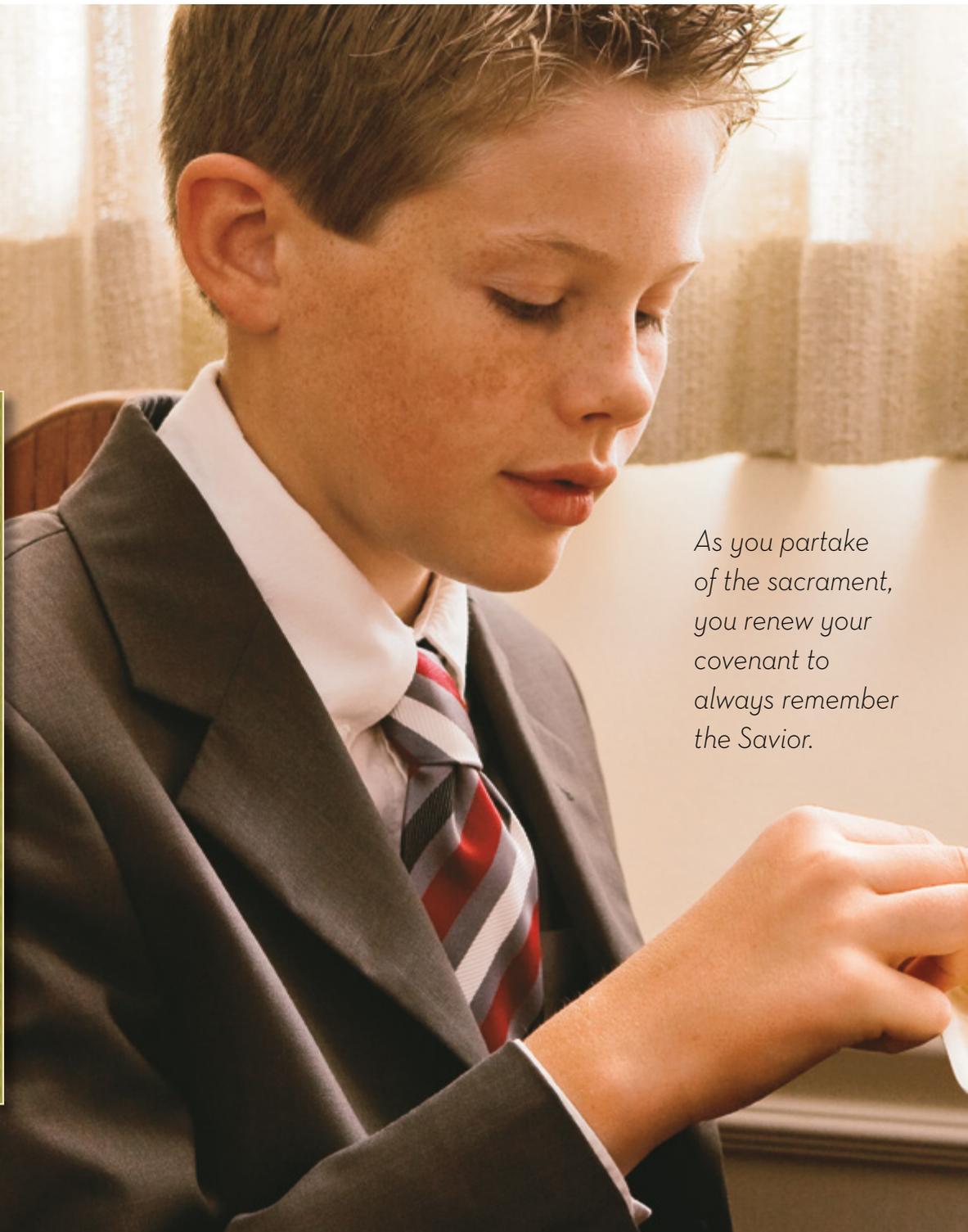
THE SAVIOR AND THE SACRAMENT

MY SACRAMENT EXPERIENCE

As long as I can remember, I was told to think about Jesus Christ during the sacrament. When I first passed the sacrament last December, a feeling of peace and holiness came over me. I felt the Spirit telling me I was helping others to come unto Christ. I am grateful Heavenly Father trusts me enough to allow me to serve Him and help others.

Jacob R., 12, Idaho, USA

*As you partake
of the sacrament,
you renew your
covenant to
always remember
the Savior.*



What do you think about when you eat the bread and drink the water of the sacrament or when you prepare, bless, or pass the sacrament? Many of us ponder our covenants and how we are living. We think about our sins and pray for forgiveness and determine to do better.

These are important aspects of the ordinance of the sacrament. In addition, there is something else to ponder—something so profound and so specific that it is part of the sacramental prayer itself. It is remembering Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of the world. Those who eat the bread promise to “eat in remembrance of the body of [the] Son” and to “always remember him” (D&C 20:77). Similarly, those who drink the water promise to drink “in remembrance of the blood of [the] Son” and “that they do always remember him” (D&C 20:79).

The choice to remember the Savior and His Atonement and sacrifice is fundamental to the ordinance. As Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the

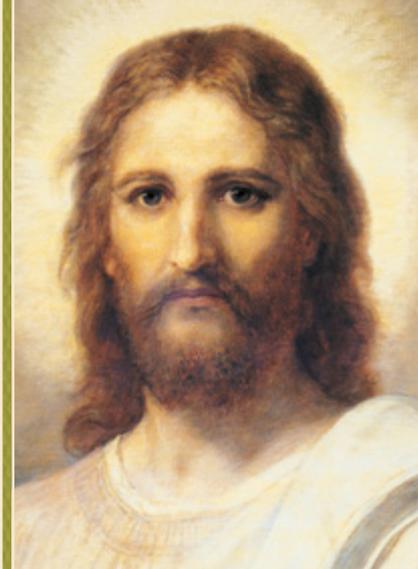


Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, “In the simple and beautiful language of the sacramental prayers . . . the principal word we hear seems to be *remember*. . . . What *is* stressed in both prayers is that all of this is done in remembrance of Christ. In so participating we witness that we will always remember him, that we may always have his Spirit to be with us.”¹

The Savior stressed these same points when He instituted the sacrament with His Apostles during the Passover in Jerusalem on the last night of His mortal ministry—the night He suffered for us in the Garden of Gethsemane before suffering again on the cross. For example, after giving them bread to eat, He said, “This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19; see also Matthew 26:26–28).

During the Savior’s first day among the Nephites in the Americas, He also taught them the ordinance of the sacrament. Again, He instructed them to partake in remembrance of His body and blood and told them that as they did, “it shall be a testimony unto the Father that ye do always remember me” (3 Nephi 18:7). He then promised them, “If ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you” (3 Nephi 18:7, 11).

What a marvelous blessing! In a world filled with challenges and turmoil and temptations constantly trying to lead us astray, what more important gift could we have? By having the



REMEMBERING THE SAVIOR

To help you and your family remember the Savior, consider studying the *Come, Follow Me* lesson outline “How can I help others have a meaningful experience with the sacrament?” at lds.org/go/sacramentNE12. The video on that page, “Always Remember Him,” can be used as a powerful family home evening resource.

Spirit with us, we can “know the truth of all things” (Moroni 10:5). That will give us the power and wisdom to live the way the Lord would have us live, to make correct choices, to serve faithfully, and to become like Him.

As you participate in the sacrament each week, what can you do to remember him? What can you do to *always* remember Him—throughout the week and throughout your life?

May I invite you to ponder those questions and to make a commitment to always remember the Savior. You’ll be amazed at how it will change your life. **NE**

NOTE

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, “This Do in Remembrance of Me,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 68.



GRANDPA TWEDE'S

11 RULES FOR LIVING

1. SAY SECRET PRAYERS. (MATTHEW 6:6)
2. KEEP YOUR TONGUE IN CHECK. (PROVERBS 21:23)
3. SUPPRESS ANGER. (PROVERBS 16:32)
4. CONSIDER THE EFFECT OF EVERY ACTION BEFORE DOING IT. (LUKE 14:28-29)
5. CULTIVATE HUMILITY AND CHARITY. (1 CORINTHIANS 16:14)
6. LET LOVE BE THE MAINSTREAM OF ALL YOUR ACTIONS. (JOHN 3:16)
7. THINK OF CHRIST UPON THE CROSS. (1 CORINTHIANS 15:22)
8. STOP WORK WHEN TIRED. (MOSIAH 4:27)
9. DO NOT EAT, SLEEP, OR DRINK MORE THAN NEEDED. (D&C 88:124)
10. CONSIDER THAT OTHERS DO NOT LOOK ON THINGS AS YOU DO, AND SOMETIMES THEY ARE RIGHT. (D&C 88:122)
11. REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE NEVER ALONE, THEREFORE, DO NOTHING YOU WOULDN'T DO IN THE PRESENCE OF ANGELS. (D&C 121:9)



*I discovered that his story
was not just history.*

By Sara Turner

I thought family history was ancient history that was completely irrelevant to me until I had an experience that helped me gain a new appreciation for it.

During a family home evening lesson on the life of one of my ancestors, I discovered that even though he lived more than 150 years ago, he learned lessons in his lifetime that can help me in my life today.

My great-grandfather, Christian Frederick Nelson Twede, was converted to the gospel and was baptized around 1850 by Elder Erastus Snow (1818–88), one of the Twelve Apostles who was serving a mission in Copenhagen, Denmark. Christian had some amazing spiritual experiences that confirmed the truth of the gospel to him. His decision to be baptized came at a high personal cost. His family disowned him, and his fiancée broke off their engagement. Despite these setbacks, he continued to believe in the gospel and emigrated to the United States to join the pioneers on their trek to Utah.

He kept a detailed journal, which included “11 Rules for Living.” In our family home evening lesson we discussed his rules and looked up scriptures that supported them. They are:

1. Say secret prayers (Matthew 6:6).
2. Keep your tongue in check (Proverbs 21:23).
3. Suppress anger (Proverbs 16:32).
4. Consider the effect of every action before doing it (Luke 14:28–29).
5. Cultivate humility and charity (1 Corinthians 16:14).
6. Let love be the mainstream of all your actions (John 3:16).
7. Think of Christ upon the cross (1 Corinthians 15:22).
8. Stop work when tired (Mosiah 4:27).
9. Do not eat, sleep, or drink more than needed (D&C 88:124).
10. Consider that others do not look on things as you do, and sometimes they are right (D&C 88:122).
11. Remember that you are never alone. Therefore, do nothing you wouldn't do in the presence of angels (D&C 121:9).

My aunt embroidered these rules on a wall-hanging that we keep near our door to remind us to try to live by them. My Great-Grandfather Twede also taught me the importance of keeping a journal. I love writing in my journal and then reading

back through what I've written. It's interesting to see how I've changed and how much I've learned.

I have also learned that the rules my Great-Grandfather Twede lived by in the 1800s still work today. My favorite rule to live by is “Remember you are never alone. Therefore, do nothing you wouldn't do in the presence of angels.” This has helped me realize that I should always strive to choose the right and live up to my standards. Studying Great-Grandfather Twede's 11 rules for living has helped me appreciate his example and understand that family history is important to my life today. **NE**

Sara Turner lives in Utah, USA.



INVITATIONS TOO

Youth share how weekly assignments and sharing experiences in Sunday classes have changed their lives.

By Sally Johnson Odekirk
Church Magazines

When a teacher gave Brooklyn M., 18, of Utah, USA, an invitation during a Sunday class, it made a big difference. “A teacher asked us to tell ourselves each day that we’re beautiful daughters of God,” she says. “Now I’m happier, and it’s great to know that Heavenly Father loves us.”

As you give and accept weekly invitations based on your Sunday learning, they’ll help you apply the principles learned, share experiences in more meaningful class discussions, deepen your testimony of Christ, and change your life.

Calls to Take Action

How can invitations to act help you and your fellow class members change your lives? Consider these ideas.

1 THEY SHOULD BE MEANINGFUL, TIMELY, AND RELEVANT TO EVERYDAY LIFE.

“The weekly assignments help everyone get involved in the lesson,” says Derek H., 16, of Nevada, USA.

“We all strengthen one another’s testimonies. I was invited to clean up my media and music and to listen to and watch only wholesome things. I did it, and I’ve had the Spirit with me a lot more.”



2 MEDIA, SUCH AS VIDEOS FOUND AT LDS.ORG/YOUTH/LEARN OR YOUTH.LDS.ORG CAN BE A SPRINGBOARD.

You can have class members watch the videos at home and then share their thoughts in class or through technology.



GOOD TO PASS UP

3 FOLLOWING UP WITH MIDWEEK REMINDERS HELPS.

“When our teacher sends us a mid-week text reminder, I’m more likely to remember it and act on it,” says Courtney M., 16, of Oregon, USA.

4 TAKE NOTES.

Madison G., 18, of Utah, USA, says the new class has strengthened her testimony. “I have a notebook so I can take notes and write questions and my feelings about the lessons.”

5 EXPERIENCES AND TESTIMONY FROM THE ASSIGNMENTS CAN BE A WAY TO START MEANINGFUL DISCUSSIONS.

Coleman W., 16, of Utah, USA, observes, “The weekly invitations help me think about the topic all week rather than just during church. They’ve also helped the class bond as we feel the Spirit and share things we wouldn’t say otherwise.” And Anna M., 14, of Oklahoma, USA, says that the weekly assignments have helped with class discussions: “We always have something different to talk about each week as long as you did the assignment.”

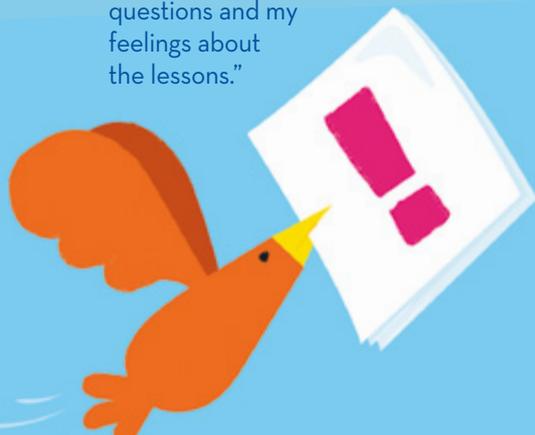
I KNOW THAT . . .

I WANT TO . . .

The Spirit Teaches Us

“The class is more prepared and the atmosphere is different” with this focus on sharing experiences, says Parker J., 15, of Nevada, USA. “I can feel the Spirit easier now. When we learned about personal revelation, I challenged myself to try and receive inspiration more often, and it’s blessed my life.”

Bethany S., 19, of Florida, USA, sums up the importance of sharing experiences: “When it comes right down to it, we’re all children of God placed on this earth to grow and learn together. We come from so many walks of life. We struggle with different things. We feel differently, and the Spirit testifies to each of us in very personal and individualized ways. By sharing these insights, we can support one another.” NE



75

TRUTHS

IN THE

DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS



Here's just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the important teachings found in the scriptures of the Restoration. |||



THE LORD CAN SPEAK TO us through His servants. D&C 1:4, 37-39

PRAY and ASK in FAITH. D&C 8:10

JOSEPH SMITH

was called of God. D&C 1:17-23

This is the ONLY true and living Church. D&C 1:30

GOD'S PURPOSES CANNOT be frustrated. D&C 3:1-3

Receiving personal revelation REQUIRES EFFORT. ||| D&C 9:8 |||

PRAY ALWAYS that you may come off conqueror. D&C 10:5



The worth of souls is GREAT in the sight of God. D&C 18:10-15

As we PARTAKE of the sacrament, we are to REMEMBER the Atonement of Jesus Christ. D&C 27:1-2



We must put on the armor of God. D&C 27:15

Jesus Christ is the ONLY NAME whereby we can be saved. D&C 18:23

SPIRITUAL DEATH IS

separation from God. D&C 29:41

Christ bled from every pore and suffered so that WE COULD REPENT. D&C 19:16-19

Pray VOCALLY and in your HEART. D&C 19:28



THE LORD WILL INSPIRE US AS we declare the gospel. D&C 33:7-10

BAPTISM must be done by immersion and proper authority. D&C 20:72-74

We are to VALUE OTHERS as much as we VALUE OURSELVES. D&C 38:24-25

FOLLOWING THE PROPHET protects us against the adversary. D&C 21:4-6

Faith PRECEDES miracles. D&C 35:7-11



The Lord delights in righteous music. D&C 25:4-16

..... If we are prepared, WE SHALL NOT FEAR. D&C 38:30

We are called to LABOR in God's kingdom. D&C 4

STUDY

precedes spiritual power in teaching the gospel. D&C 11:21-22

The Lord blesses the faithful both spiritually and temporally. D&C 14:9-11

In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. D&C 6:28



The wisdom of God is >>> greater than >>> the cunning of the devil. D&C 10:38-45

The Book of Mormon IS TRUE. D&C 17:6; 20:8-12

..... Christ can help us OVERCOME DOUBT AND FEAR. D&C 6:34-37



John the Beloved was to stay on earth and minister and not die. D&C 7:1-3

THE TRUE CHURCH is built upon JESUS CHRIST AND HIS GOSPEL. D&C 18:3-5

Leaders must be called and set apart
BY PROPER AUTHORITY.

■■■■■■■■■■ D&C 42:11 ■■■■■■■■■■

HEALINGS HAPPEN according to faith and God's will.
D&C 42:48

Jesus Christ will *reign on earth* during the Millennium.
D&C 43:28-31

Faith DOES NOT COME by signs.
D&C 63:7-9

WE MUST FORGIVE ALL PEOPLE.
D&C 64:10

The Word of Wisdom is
GOD'S LAW OF HEALTH.
D&C 89:18-21

The Lord can *soften* hearts.
D&C 124:9 ♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥

BAPTISM for the DEAD
links us to our ancestors.
D&C 128:18

If we treat God's revelations lightly, we will stumble and fall.
D&C 90:4-5

ZION is the *pure in heart.*
D&C 97:21

The knowledge we gain in this life will be with us after the resurrection.
D&C 130:18-19

Only God knows when the Second Coming will occur.
D&C 130:14-17

Blessings are predicated upon **obedience.**
D&C 130:20-21

WE CAN PREPARE for the SECOND COMING.
D&C 45:39

The Lord has commanded parents to teach their children the gospel.
D&C 68:25-27

MEETINGS should be directed by the *Holy Spirit.*
D&C 46:2

JESUS CHRIST lives.
D&C 76:22-24

THE HOLY GHOST is the Comforter and the teacher of truth.
D&C 50:14

There are three KINGDOMS OF HEAVEN.
D&C 76:91-98

THE LORD EXPECTS US TO *be honest and unified.*
D&C 51:9

The Spirit helps us *teach and learn.*
D&C 50:21-22

Unto whom MUCH is given MUCH is required.
D&C 82:3-4

We must be *anxiously engaged* in a **GOOD CAUSE.**
D&C 58:26-28

The Lord *always* keeps His promises *when we are faithful.*
D&C 82:10

THE POWER OF GODLINESS is manifest in ordinances.
■■■■■■■■ D&C 84:19-22 ■■■■■■■■

KEEPING the Sabbath day holy *grants us* **STRENGTH.**
D&C 59:9-12

The Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood IS SET FORTH.
D&C 84:33-42

TO REPENT we must confess and forsake sin.
D&C 58:42-43

The *spirit and body* are the *soul of man.*
D&C 88:15

We must *share the gospel* with the **whole world.**
D&C 84:62

GOD IS AWARE OF US, and our trials will work together for our good.
D&C 98:1-3

FORGIVENESS brings rest to our souls.
D&C 108:1-2

THE FATHER AND SON HAVE PHYSICAL BODIES.
D&C 130:22-23

The Lord commands us to **BUILD TEMPLES.**
D&C 109:1-4

..... *Marriage,* the new and everlasting covenant, is essential to attaining exaltation.
..... D&C 131:1-4

10% **PAYING TITHING HELPS sanctify us.**
D&C 119:5-7

Receiving temple blessings arms us WITH POWER.
D&C 109:22-23

We cannot be *saved* in ignorance.
D&C 131:6

The Lord can *grant us* peace during *adversity.*
D&C 121:7-10

COMING TO KNOW Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ LEADS TO EXALTATION.
D&C 132:21-24

PRIESTHOOD POWER depends on *righteous living.*
D&C 121:36

Many are kept from the truth *because* they don't know where to find it.
D&C 123:11-12

WE WILL BE JUDGED ACCORDING to our ACTIONS and DESIRES.
D&C 137:9

ALL CHILDREN who die *before* they become *accountable* WILL BE SAVED in the celestial kingdom.
D&C 137:10

BACKGROUND TEXTURE FROM ISTOCK/THINKSTOCK

⊕ THE ENEMY IS CIRCLING.
YOUR FAMILY NEEDS YOU MORE THAN EVER.



The

WARRIOR IN YOU

By David Dickson
Church Magazines

In this modern day, we're all warriors whether we want to be or not. "We live in a very dangerous world that threatens those things that are most spiritual," teaches President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "The family, the fundamental organization in time and eternity, is under attack from forces seen and unseen" ("These Things I Know," *Ensign*, May 2013, 7).

Instead of a battlefield with tanks and mortar blasts, this is spiritual warfare—and it has eternal stakes. "The adversary is about," President Packer teaches. "His objective is to cause injury. If he can weaken and destroy the family, he will have succeeded."

Imagine your mom and dad standing on a hillside before oncoming enemies carrying massive weapons in overwhelming numbers. Sound intimidating? Well, maybe. But in addition to all the armor and knowledge they have, your parents also have another secret weapon you might have not thought about. *They have you.*

TURNING THE TIDE OF BATTLE

If the adversary wins when he weakens a family, what's the best way to fight back? Strengthening your family! And you—yes, you—can make an enormous difference here.

Maybe you live with two parents. Maybe you live with only one parent. Perhaps they're armed with the protection of the gospel. Perhaps one doesn't attend church or isn't a Church member. Your home life might be challenging. Whatever the conditions, though, you can help shore up your family's spiritual defenses.

Doing so strikes a blow for good and strikes back against

the adversary's efforts. Every act of righteousness on your part strengthens the army of good and is a hand grenade lobbed at the enemy.

As explained in *For the Strength of Youth*, "Strong families require effort" ([2011], 14). "Your family will be blessed as you do your part to strengthen it."

So how do we strengthen our families? What can we actually *do* to make our homes stronger and safer spiritually? The following seven principles from the "Family" section of *For the Strength of Youth* (pages 14–15) are a great place to start:



1. "BE CHEERFUL, HELPFUL, AND CONSIDERATE OF FAMILY MEMBERS. MANY PROBLEMS IN THE HOME COME FROM FAMILY MEMBERS SPEAKING AND ACTING SELFISHLY OR UNKINDLY."

Each time you help your sister with homework or help your mom, you strengthen your family. That last cookie in the cookie jar? Try slipping it into your brother's lunch box with a kind note that uplifts him instead of snatching it for yourself. (Positive spiritual warfare at its best!)

2. "SEEK TO BE A PEACEMAKER RATHER THAN TO TEASE, FIGHT, AND QUARREL."

Finding a way to help siblings get along instead of arguing keeps contention—one of the devil's favorite weapons—out of your home (see 3 Nephi 11:29).

3. "SHOW LOVE FOR YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS EACH DAY."

Smile! Hug! Tell your family often that you love them. Few things strengthen a home like increased love. Show them your love by doing something kind for a parent or sibling every day—and by telling them those three little words: "I love you."

4. "SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY WITH YOUR FAMILY THROUGH WORDS AND ACTIONS."

Telling your family during dinner about an answered prayer is just as powerful as bearing testimony in a packed chapel. Look for simple ways to bear testimony in daily life.



5. “HONOR YOUR PARENTS BY SHOWING LOVE AND RESPECT FOR THEM. OBEY THEM AS THEY LEAD YOU IN RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

Showing disrespect to parents is another way contention can enter homes. Respecting and obeying parents helps bring peace and harmony. Will showing up a few minutes after curfew really make a big difference in your activities? Probably not. But showing up on time for curfew will have a big impact on showing your parents you honor them—and receiving the blessings from doing so.

6. “PARTICIPATE IN WHOLESOME FAMILY ACTIVITIES AND TRADITIONS.”

Can a family tradition of making gingerbread houses every December strengthen a family? You bet! So can any other activity or tradition that helps your family stay close and spend time together.

7. “JOIN YOUR FAMILY IN FAMILY PRAYER, FAMILY SCRIPTURE STUDY, AND FAMILY HOME EVENINGS. . . IF YOUR FAMILY DOES NOT DO THESE THINGS TOGETHER, PRAY AND STUDY THE SCRIPTURES YOURSELF. YOUR EXAMPLE MAY ENCOURAGE YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS TO JOIN YOU.”

Ultimately, keeping the commandments is the best possible thing you can do to strengthen your family—even if you do so alone. And the commandments to have daily prayer and scripture study and weekly family home evening will have a greater influence on your future than you may realize.

YOU CAN MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

Remember when Nephi broke his bow and his whole family was hungry? Through Nephi’s faithful obedience, he was able to bless his entire family with food as well as help them draw closer to the Lord (see 1 Nephi 16:14–32). How much worse might things have been if Nephi had merely complained and given up alongside everybody else, thinking it wasn’t worth it to try when he was doing it all alone?

All family members have a responsibility to encourage and strengthen one another. “In these last days it is

essential—even critical—that parents and children listen to and learn from one another,” teaches Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (“Mothers and Daughters,” *Ensign*, May 2010, 21).

Yes, it’s a dangerous world out there spiritually. But God’s power is much greater than the enemy’s. And you’re a highly capable warrior for righteousness when you live the gospel and strengthen your family.

Enemies beware. NE



HE *Decided* TO COME

By James Teichert

After the creation of the *Come, Follow Me* curriculum, I noticed in priests quorum, Sunday School, and seminary that our teachers began to give us more challenges to do things. They especially encouraged us to do missionary work among our nonmember and less-active friends. One week our priests quorum adviser challenged us to pray and ask God how we could reach out to our friends. We all accepted the challenge.

There was a boy at school named Gavin, who wasn't a member of the Church. We all decided to start being more friendly to him. We started with small things—saying hi to him in the halls and inviting him to hang out. He even came to some Mutual activities with us. I know the Spirit guided us to him because we had prayed.

Most of my friends are on the wrestling team with me, and Gavin decided to join the team. Our team always prays before matches and studies the scriptures together

when we travel for tournaments. Gavin started listening in and got really curious. Seeing us do these things together and being able to do them with us made him want to learn more. He started meeting with the missionaries and decided to be baptized.

After he was confirmed, he bore his testimony in sacrament meeting and thanked the boys in the quorum and on the wrestling team. His grandmother had passed away shortly before we started to befriend him, and he said the Spirit he felt when he came to Church activities helped him cope with the loss. We knew of his grandmother's passing, but we didn't think much about it until he bore his testimony that day. As I listened to Gavin's testimony, I realized that God led us to do simple acts of kindness that didn't take much work for us but that meant the world to him. **NE**

James Teichert lives in Wyoming, USA

By Joshua J. Perkey
Church Magazines



WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE A BRAND NEW CONVERT?

You can help new members by understanding what they are going through.

If you grow up in the Church, churchy things become pretty normal. You get used to the regularity of the meetings, the building you attend, the kind of clothes people wear at church. Things like giving talks in sacrament meeting, paying tithing and fast offerings, and fasting once a month are just a part of life. Living the Word of Wisdom, accepting callings to serve, and living the law of chastity are all part of what you learn to do.

But for converts, it can be a big adjustment trying to take it all in. Certainly, gaining a testimony of gospel truths is the first step to membership in Christ's Church. But having a testimony doesn't mean the transition to living life as a member of the Church is easy.

The Church Can Seem Very Different

Take me for example. I'd had LDS friends since I was 13, and I eventually joined the Church when I was 19. But despite learning a lot about Church culture over those years, I had a hard transition. To me, the Church culture and practices were so different that they seemed kind of weird.

I grew up in a church that in many ways is quite unlike the one you know or are coming to know. At church the ministers and choir wore robes similar to high school graduation robes. During worship service—their equivalent of sacrament meeting—the ministers gave sermons and did all the talking. Every Sunday we all repeated the Lord's Prayer in unison and always sang the hymn "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow." Babies were baptized by having water sprinkled on their heads, but confirmation happened at around 14 years old.



We used grape juice instead of water for the sacrament, and high school kids attended Sunday School with the adults in a class that talked about current issues in society.

Even our building was different from the LDS buildings I had visited. We had a large chapel modeled after Christian churches in Europe, with a high peaked roof and tall, stained-glass windows. There was a cross in the choir loft. A beautiful, tall bell tower stood out front. I loved ringing that bell after church services. It was heavy enough that it could lift a small child off the ground as the rope went up and down.

Our customs and social beliefs were different too. We were taught that it was OK to drink alcohol or smoke. Having a boyfriend or girlfriend as a teenager was OK. In fact, we were taught that you could even have sexual relations before marriage as long as you believed you were in love. We never talked about having a testimony. The first time I saw a fast and testimony meeting—wow! I couldn't believe how odd that seemed. No one ever stood to share their beliefs like that in my church.

Coming to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints wasn't just about learning new doctrines, such as the

**THE FIRST SIX MONTHS AFTER
MY BAPTISM WERE REALLY HARD.**

I ALMOST DIDN'T MAKE IT.

**EVERYTHING WAS
SO DIFFERENT ...**

premortal life and baptism for the dead; it was a change in culture and lifestyle and expectations. Resolving those differences was a hard road to walk.

The first six months after my baptism were really hard. I almost didn't make it. Everything was so different, especially because I was attending church without my family. I still struggled with certain doctrinal points, as well as feelings of being estranged from my past.

Fortunately, my friends in the Church were patient, kind, and constant. They took me to activities, invited me to their homes for dinner and family home evening, and prayed with me. That made a huge difference not just in my joining the Church but also in my staying active and finding strength when my testimony wavered. I owe a lot to them for helping me figure things out.

In the following stories, two young members share their own experiences of joining the Church and how they found the strength to make it. As you read their experiences, think about what you could do to help a new convert or someone returning to activity find the strength to adapt socially and culturally and to grow spiritually.

////// WAITING YEARS TO BE BAPTIZED ////

When I was in high school, I decided to join the Church after meeting the missionaries at English classes and studying with them. My parents reacted pretty badly when I told them I wanted to be baptized. They didn't know a whole lot about the Church, and they were afraid I would be caught up in something dangerous. They thought that the Church would get in the way of my education and that



I HAD TO **BUILD MY FAITH AND MY TESTIMONY** WITH PRAYER, SCRIPTURE READING, AND THE WORDS OF MODERN PROPHETS—**BY MYSELF.**

WHAT CONVERTS FACE

Here are some of the challenges new converts face. How might your friendship help them face their challenges?

1. Struggling to understand new doctrine.
2. Choosing different media, music, movies, and books.
3. Understanding scripture language.
4. Coping with lack of acceptance from non-LDS family and friends.
5. Wearing different clothing.
6. Dedicating the time to attend church and seminary.
7. Learning new practices and customs in the worship services.
8. Having to change habits, language, and ways of thinking.
9. Adapting to LDS social culture.
10. Learning the LDS-specific meanings of terms, like *gospel*, *apostasy*, and *restoration*.

because of all the rules, I wouldn't be able to enjoy life. They wouldn't let me get baptized for two and a half years.

I was tested right from the start. In the years before I could be baptized, I prayed over and over again for strength and the necessary faith to keep believing. I couldn't attend church or associate with members or missionaries. I had to build my faith and my testimony with prayer, scripture reading, and the words of modern prophets—by myself. I missed out on a lot of interesting programs and fun activities.

When I moved to Rome for college, my bishop became a true friend who stood by me when my parents were really angry. He taught me that it was essential to love my parents regardless.

When I finally got baptized, many ward members came and supported me. I joined the choir and made a lot of friends there. Their friendship and kindness made me feel at home.

When we are true to the teachings of Jesus Christ and follow His example in loving and caring for others, recent converts and investigators will see that we don't just talk the talk, we walk the walk.

Ottavio Caruso is from Italy and is currently serving a full-time mission.

//// NOT FITTING IN ////

I joined the Church when I was 13 years old. I had a testimony of the gospel, yet I had a nagging feeling that I didn't quite fit in at church. Everyone else knew the songs and the scripture stories; I didn't. Everyone else had memories of Primary activities or family home evening lessons; I'd never done either of those things.

But beyond that, everyone seemed to have the same interests and

**YOU'RE NICE PEOPLE
AND I AM A NICE
PERSON. BUT WE ARE
JUST TOO
DIFFERENT.
I DON'T BELONG HERE.**

opinions—sometimes very strong opinions that were the opposite of mine—about everything from movies and politics to the interpretation of certain scriptures. I would look around at all of the nodding heads and think, “You're nice people and I am a nice person. But we are just too different. I don't belong here.”

I struggled with those feelings for several years. Then I recalled and reread the story from Luke 19 about Zacchaeus. Because he was a publican, he was unpopular and considered a sinner. But when Jesus passed through his city, Zacchaeus climbed a tree to see over the crowd. He didn't care what others thought of him. It was this act of climbing the tree—separating himself from the

crowd—that enabled him to have a very beautiful and personal experience with the Savior. As I read, I recognized that my feelings of being an outsider were not coming from Christ. Jesus was inclusive and forgiving. He actively sought those who were judged and cast aside—those who seemed different.

I can't say I've never felt out of place again. I have. But I've learned that the things that make me different—the way I look, the way others look at me, the things I'm passionate about, the way I think about the world—these are not reasons to fall away. These are the reasons the Church needs all of us, with all our different talents, strengths, and perspectives. **NE**

Elaine Vickers lives in Utah, USA.



Zacchaeus climbed a tree to see over the crowd as Christ passed through his city.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Things to Ponder

- What kinds of changes make it hard for some people to join the Church?
- How might your friendship help someone come back to or stay strong in the Church?

Things You Might Do

- Write down a list of challenges converts often have to overcome and set goals for how you can help them.
- Invite a recent convert or a less-active friend to help you run an activity for your class or quorum.
- Share your experiences at church, at home, or online at lds.org/go/convertNE12.

SO, CAN I WATCH IT OR NOT?



There are good reasons why the Church doesn't just have a list of approved things to watch, read, and listen to.

By David A. Edwards

Church Magazines

Here's an imaginary conversation. See if it feels familiar.

"Hey, Joe. How's it going?"

"Hey, Tyler. I'm doing all right."

"Did you see that episode of *Junior Varsity Superspy* last night?"

"Uh, no . . ." [*Joe starts to feel a little uncomfortable because he always thought that show had content that was against Church standards, and Tyler is his quorum president.*]

"It was awesome. I love that show. It's way better than *Rich Kids with Issues*. That just



More on Entertainment and Media

For videos, articles, and more on entertainment and media, go to lds.org/go/mediaNE12.

has way too much swearing and too many bad scenes. Don't you think so?"

"Uh, well . . ." [*Joe feels even more uncomfortable because that show is actually one of his favorites and he never thought it had that much bad stuff in it.*]

If you can relate to any of this, then you may be able to see why some teens kind of wish the Church would just come out with a regularly updated list of approved media so that it's clear to everybody what's OK and what's not OK.

There are a few reasons why this would never happen. First of all, keeping up a list of TV shows, movies, songs, books, and so on, everywhere and in every language, would be pretty much impossible. But more importantly, the Church is following a fundamental rule that the Prophet Joseph Smith expressed this way: "I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 284). Correct principles, not hyper-detailed lists of do's and don'ts, allow us to exercise our agency and become familiar with how the Spirit guides us. There are greater blessings in this than in being "compelled in all things" (see D&C 58:26–29).

In addition, a list of approved media would distract us from the heart of the gospel, where our focus should be. In other words, it would be *pharisaical*—meaning "like the Pharisees," the people in Jesus's day who "[paid] tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and . . . omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith" (Matthew 23:23). They were so caught up in the outward minutiae of what they considered to be God's law that they gave no thought to the "weightier matters"—the true principles that can sink into our hearts and help us draw near to God and make good decisions.

So, what are *principles*, anyway? Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has explained: "Principles are concentrated truth, packaged for application to a wide variety of circumstances. A true principle

makes decisions clear even under the most confusing and compelling circumstances. It is worth great effort to organize the truth we gather to simple statements of principle" ("Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge," *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 86).

For instance, *For the Strength of Youth* says this about entertainment and media:

"Choose wisely when using media because whatever you read, listen to, or look at has an effect on you. Select only media that uplifts you.

"Satan uses media to deceive you by making what is wrong and evil look normal, humorous, or exciting. He tries to mislead you into thinking that breaking God's commandments is acceptable and has no negative consequences for you or others. Do not attend, view, or participate in anything that is vulgar, immoral, violent, or pornographic in any way. Do not participate in anything that presents immorality or violence as acceptable" ([2011], 11).

These are principles you can apply when you're thinking about whether to download a song or watch a movie. "But," you may ask, "if I haven't seen it or listened to it yet, how can I know if it's OK?" Well, that's one of the great things about the information age, actually. There are lots of websites, apps, and other resources that can give you the relevant information about the content of movies, songs, books, or other media. So do just a little bit of homework and you'll be able to make an informed choice in line with these principles.

So, instead of thinking, "Does the Church disapprove of *Vampires in Lust II*?" you might instead think, "How will this affect me? Does it invite the Spirit? Is it uplifting? Does it make evil look normal? Is it vulgar or violent?" and so on. These guiding principles can place your focus on the "weightier matters" and help you govern yourself by making good decisions. And there's power in that. **NE**

Note: Back to that conversation between Tyler and Joe—when you're in a situation like that, you may be tempted to criticize the media choices of others. But it's probably best to hold off on doing so unless the Spirit prompts you to.



By Elder
Mervyn B. Arnold
Of the Seventy

WHERE AM I?

How to Discover and Develop Your Spiritual Gifts and Talents

Heavenly Father has given you spiritual gifts and talents to help you become who He would have you become.

In the scriptures we find many questions that cause us to reflect on our lives. One of the first questions asked in the Bible was directed to Adam after he partook of the forbidden fruit. I invite you to ponder how this question may apply to your life:

“Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.

“And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, *Where art thou?*” (Genesis 3:8–9; emphasis added).

The Lord is all-knowing, so we can be certain that He knew where Adam and Eve were hiding. If He knew where they were, what was the Lord really asking?

This question most likely prompted

Adam and Eve to think about what was happening in their lives. We could ask ourselves similar questions. For example: Where are we on our journey along the covenant path to eternal life? What gifts and talents did our Heavenly Father give us in the pre-mortal life to help us along this path? What other gifts and talents are we to gain as we strive to become who the Lord would have us become?

President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) stated, “Man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents, and reared to maturity in the eternal mansions of the Father, prior to coming upon the earth in a temporal [physical] body.”¹ The *Gospel Principles* manual teaches us that “Father in Heaven knows who we are and what we did before we came here. He has chosen the time and place for each of us to be born so we can learn the lessons we personally need and *do the most good with our individual talents and personalities.*”²

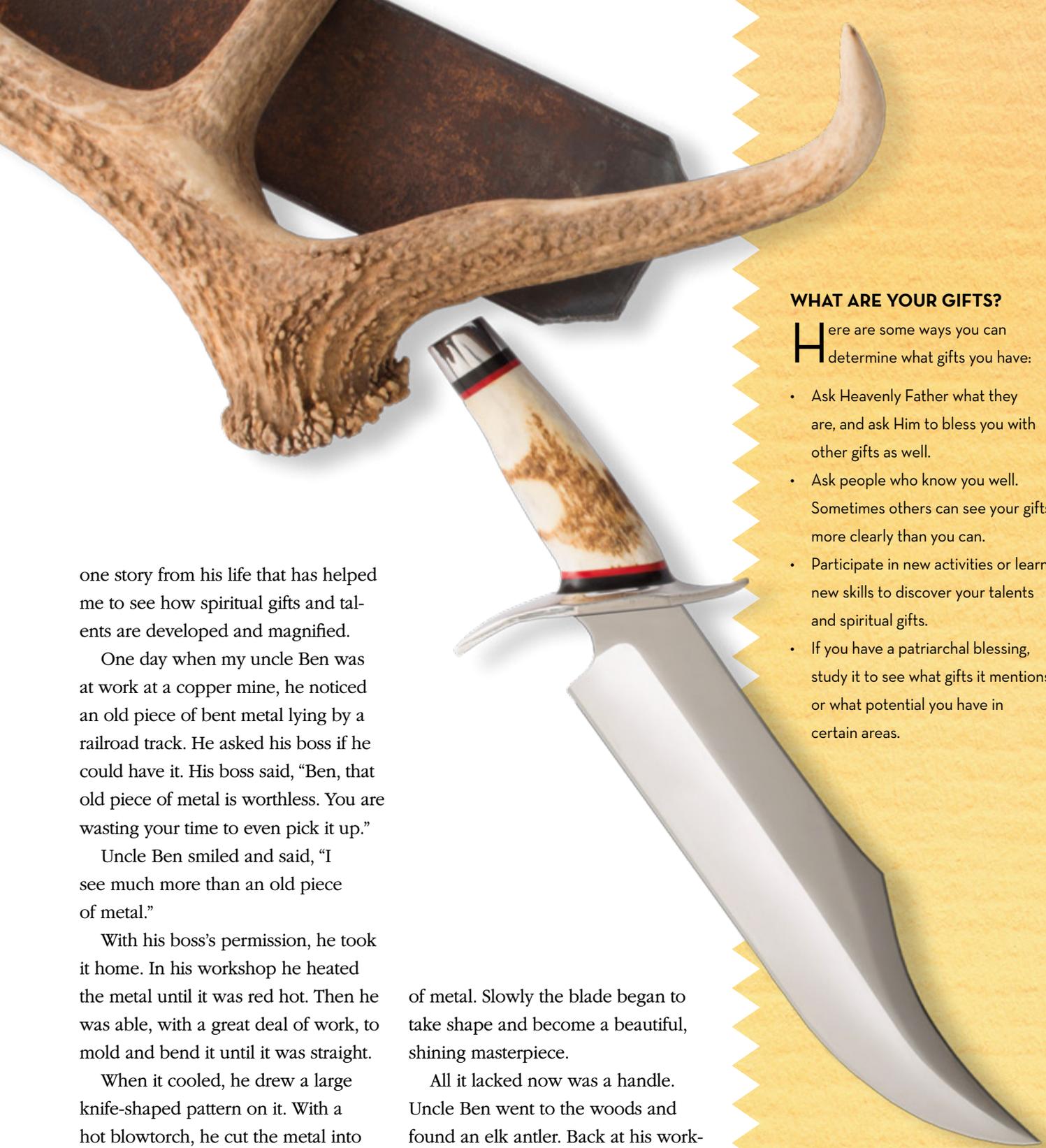
Heavenly Father placed you in the best place to use your spiritual gifts

and build your talents. No matter where you live or what life circumstances you find yourself in, you can make the choice to succeed, regardless of your challenges. Don’t ever give up. Keep going. Don’t quit. Remember, it’s what you do with what you have that makes you who you are.

Adam and Eve’s example can give us a lot of hope. After they transgressed the commandment not to partake of the forbidden fruit, they were cast out of a beautiful garden, the ground was cursed, thorns and thistles appeared, and they had to work and till the earth to provide for themselves. They did not give up. They went to work, as the Lord had commanded them (see Moses 5:1). Their son Cain made a very bad choice, but they continued to live righteously and kept teaching their children.

Uncle Ben’s Discovery

I have an uncle who was continually seeking to improve and increase the gifts and talents he had received from Heavenly Father. Let me share



one story from his life that has helped me to see how spiritual gifts and talents are developed and magnified.

One day when my uncle Ben was at work at a copper mine, he noticed an old piece of bent metal lying by a railroad track. He asked his boss if he could have it. His boss said, "Ben, that old piece of metal is worthless. You are wasting your time to even pick it up."

Uncle Ben smiled and said, "I see much more than an old piece of metal."

With his boss's permission, he took it home. In his workshop he heated the metal until it was red hot. Then he was able, with a great deal of work, to mold and bend it until it was straight.

When it cooled, he drew a large knife-shaped pattern on it. With a hot blowtorch, he cut the metal into the shape of a knife. Uncle Ben then began knocking off the rough edges, working hour after hour to cut, grind, polish, and refine that old piece of metal.

Day after day he worked on what his boss had called a worthless piece

of metal. Slowly the blade began to take shape and become a beautiful, shining masterpiece.

All it lacked now was a handle. Uncle Ben went to the woods and found an elk antler. Back at his workshop he cleaned, cut, and polished the antler. When he was done, it was smooth and beautiful. Carefully he attached the handle to the knife. What was once an old, rusty, bent piece of metal became a beautiful knife that won several awards.

WHAT ARE YOUR GIFTS?

Here are some ways you can determine what gifts you have:

- Ask Heavenly Father what they are, and ask Him to bless you with other gifts as well.
- Ask people who know you well. Sometimes others can see your gifts more clearly than you can.
- Participate in new activities or learn new skills to discover your talents and spiritual gifts.
- If you have a patriarchal blessing, study it to see what gifts it mentions or what potential you have in certain areas.



DO YOU HAVE ONE OF THESE GIFTS?

“Let me mention a few gifts that are not always evident or noteworthy but that are very important. Among these may be your gifts—gifts not so

evident but nevertheless real and valuable.

“Let us review some of these less-conspicuous gifts: the gift of asking; the gift of listening; the gift of hearing and using a still, small voice; the gift of being able to weep; the gift of avoiding contention; the gift of being agreeable; the gift of avoiding vain repetition; the gift of seeking that which is righteous; the gift of not passing judgment; the gift of looking to God for guidance; the gift of being a disciple; the gift of caring for others; the gift of being able to ponder; the gift of offering prayer; the gift of bearing a mighty testimony; and the gift of receiving the Holy Ghost.”

Elder Marvin J. Ashton (1915–94) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “There Are Many Gifts,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 20.

You and I are like that old piece of metal. We also need molding, refining, and polishing to reach our full potential. Part of that process is discovering, strengthening, and multiplying our talents and gifts.

Uncle Ben understood that much of our potential is not visible on the surface and must be discovered and developed. The Lord teaches us to “seek ye earnestly the best gifts” (D&C 46:8) and “that every man may improve upon his talent, that every man may gain other talents, yea, even an hundred fold” (D&C 82:18). And why must we do this? We can use our talents and gifts to serve others, as the next verse explains: “Every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all



things with an eye single to the glory of God” (D&C 82:19). Giving service molds us into living a more Christlike life.

Finding Our Talents

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught how trials can shape us: “Just when all seems to be going right, challenges often come in multiple doses applied simultaneously. When those trials are not consequences of your disobedience, they are evidence that the Lord feels you are prepared to grow more (see Proverbs 3:11–12). He therefore gives you experiences that stimulate growth, *understanding, and compassion* [two very important gifts] which *polish you for your everlasting benefit*. To get you from where you are to where He wants you to be requires a lot of stretching, and that generally entails discomfort and pain.”³

Improving Our Talents

Increasing our talents requires work. Not long ago, Elder Scott said to my wife, “Devonna, you should paint.”

Sister Arnold had never painted in her life. She had to work at it. She took some lessons, painted day after day, and after a great deal of time and effort learned to paint beautifully. I have one of her gorgeous paintings of a river scene hanging on my office wall.

Yes, obtaining talents requires work, but how great shall be our joy

What are your gifts and talents? I know our Heavenly Father has given you some.

when we hear the Lord tell us, “Well done. Thy gifts and talents shall be multiplied because of thy diligence” (see Matthew 25:14–30).

Your Spiritual Gifts

My wife discovered a talent for painting. What are your gifts and talents? I know our Heavenly Father has given you some. How do I know? “There are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God” (D&C 46:11). God’s gifts and powers are available to all of us. It is our right and responsibility to accept our spiritual gifts, multiply our talents, and share them.

The scriptures list a few gifts we can seek (see, for example, D&C 46), but there are actually hundreds of gifts and talents. Search the Book of Mormon, particularly 3 Nephi 11–26, and you will discover many gifts and talents that are available to each of us. For example, in 3 Nephi 11 we read about the people hearing Heavenly Father’s voice but not understanding it at first:

“The third time they did hear the voice, and did open their ears to hear it; and their eyes were towards the sound thereof . . .

“And it came to pass, as they understood they cast their eyes up again towards heaven; and behold, they saw a Man [Jesus Christ] descending out of heaven” (verses 5, 8).

To hear clearly and to see clearly are just two examples of spiritual gifts and talents that you can obtain and multiply if you are willing to *seek after and work for* them.

I invite each of us to do as Uncle Ben did: see the best in everything as we seek spiritual gifts and talents and use them to bless those around us. I know our Heavenly Father has many gifts and talents that He wishes to bestow upon us, but they “are made conditional on our asking for them. Blessings require some work or effort on our part” (Bible Dictionary, “Prayer”). May we discover, work for, and multiply the God-given gifts and talents we were born with, and may we acquire other gifts is my humble prayer. **NE**

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 335.
2. *Gospel Principles* (2009), 10; emphasis added.
3. Richard G. Scott, “Trust in the Lord,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 16–17; emphasis added.

READY TO MOVE

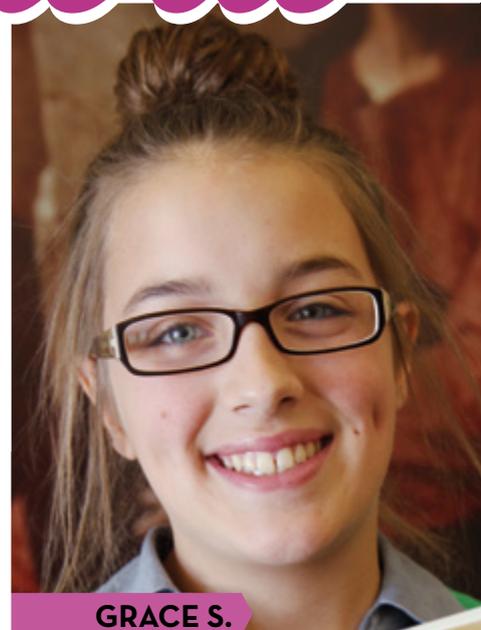
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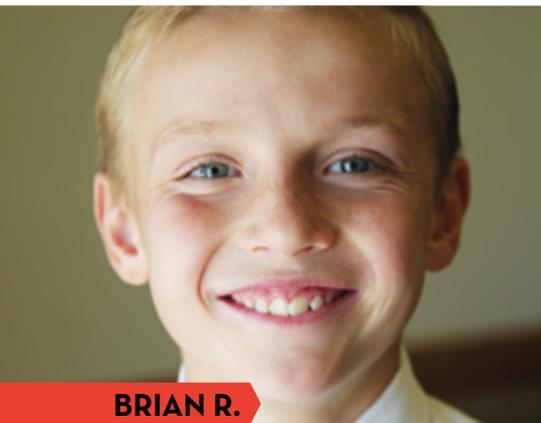
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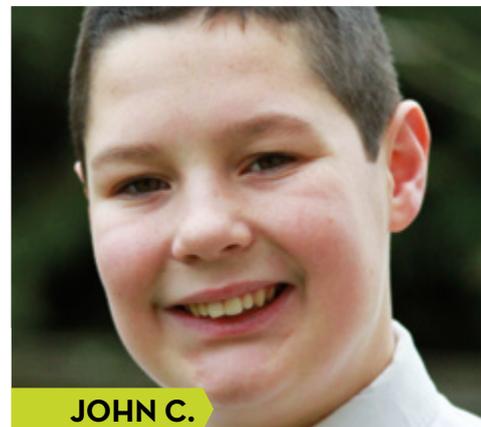
GRACE S.



BRIAN R.



AÏOLAH AND EVALINE V.



JOHN C.

Advancing from Primary into Young Women or the Aaronic Priesthood? Check out these thoughts from seven 12-year-olds who are making that change.

By Richard M. Romney, Church Magazines
and Mickey Shimomiya, Tokyo, Japan

You just turned 12. Life is full of changes. At church, you're advancing from Primary into Young Men or Young Women. That means setting goals, giving service, preparing for the temple, and learning more about the gospel. But don't be nervous! Others going through the same thing say it's great.

TWO TOGETHER

Aiolah V. of France is a 12-year-old Beehive. So is her sister Evaline, who turns 13 in a month. “I’m glad my sister is here to help me move from Primary into Young Women,” Aiolah says.

One of their favorite things is Personal Progress, but when they read about one goal, they laughed. “Learn to play a musical instrument,” it said.

“We’ve been playing for years,” Evaline says. But then they talked with their mother. She helped them to see that they could use music to fulfill another goal: service.

Aiolah and Evaline are now preparing to perform in sacrament meetings and talent nights, give concerts for children and seniors, and accompany missionaries as they sing.

“Personal Progress is nice,” Evaline says. “It lets you do what you love and do new things too.”



ASK QUESTIONS

Twelve-year-old Brian R. of Arizona, USA, was preparing to pass the sacrament for the first time. He didn’t want to make a mistake, so he asked the other Aaronic Priesthood holders in his ward to explain things to him.

“They were great,” he says. “They told me where to stand, where to go, and how to pass the trays.”

But even more important, they reminded him to be reverent. “We need to remember the Savior as we pass the sacrament,” Brian says. “If we are reverent, it helps others to remember Him too.”

Brian learned that others are happy to help him to understand his duties and to learn to do them well. “Just ask,” he says. “Moving from Primary into the Aaronic Priesthood is easier than you think.”



MAKE NEW FRIENDS

“I was nervous when the counselor asked me to go to stake Young Women camp for the first time,” says Nodoka T. of Okinawa, Japan. “I decided to pray. After my prayer I felt comfortable, so I decided to go.

“From the very first day, I was able to make new friends. The young women were so nice and kind to me; my fear soon disappeared. And I learned to purify water, tie knots, make bandages, perform rescue breathing, and find edible plants!”

JOIN IN

“My first day in Young Women was my birthday,” says Grace S. of Arizona, USA. “They made a fuss about it, but then they kept being kind. They made me feel welcome.”

Her adviser also welcomed her. “She tells us about things she did when she was in Young Women,” Grace says. “And she goes through the *Personal Progress* booklet with each of us, to make sure we understand.”



EXPLORE TO LEARN MORE

Find out what's in store for you in *Young Women* or the *Aaronic Priesthood* at youth.lds.org.

LEARN, TEACH, AND SHARE

As a new deacon, Josh W. of Utah, USA, was asked to teach a lesson about being a disciple of Christ. “I found scriptures about when Peter and others were fishing. They tried one side of the boat and didn’t catch anything,” Josh says. “Then the Savior told them to fish on the other side, and they caught lots of fish (see Luke 5:5–11 and John 21:6–11). So in my lesson, we read that. Then we talked about how it’s like that for us. When we go on our own, we can have trouble. But when we listen to the Lord, He helps us.”

Josh says that learning, teaching, and sharing are important in priesthood quorums. “In Primary we learned a lot and had lots of activities,”

he says. “Now we’re learning a lot *and* sharing. That means *doing* a lot with what we learn.” For example, after a priesthood lesson, Josh visited a friend who hadn’t been to church for a long time. “His parents work on Sundays, so they don’t come. But I told him he could come with me.”

Josh is learning the purpose of Young Men and Young Women. “It’s to show us how to become more like the Savior,” he says. He knows that the call to “come unto Christ” means moving along a path that started with baptism and confirmation, continues toward the temple, and leads to eternal life.

“I’m ready to move forward,” he says. **NE**



WORKING TOGETHER ON DUTY TO GOD

Twelve-year-old John C. and his father often work on projects together. For example, they sewed patches on blankets they will use when they go camping. The patches are from various camps and activities they have attended in British Columbia, Canada, where they live.

“Dad’s a great help,” John says. “I can’t imagine doing Church projects without him.”

When John turned 12, they reviewed the *Duty to God* booklet together. Soon they came to the “Understand Doctrine” items in the Deacon section. “Dad explained to me about priesthood keys and authority,” John says. And that helped John fulfill one of the requirements.

“When you’re doing Duty to God,” John says, “get your father involved. My dad has already helped me a lot.”



How can I **give** people **meaningful** Christmas **presents without** getting **caught up** in **commercialism**?



It's probably best not to put too much pressure on yourself to give the "perfect gift." If you give gifts, do so with love, thoughtfulness, and kindness in your heart. Often a simple, inexpensive gift from the heart (including giving of yourself and your time) can say more than a big, flashy present ever could. But whatever you do, don't stress yourself out about it.

During the Christmas season, remember this suggestion from Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "Maybe the purchasing and the making and the wrapping and the decorating . . . should be separated, if only slightly, from the more quiet, personal moments when we consider the meaning of the Baby (and his birth) who prompts the giving of such gifts" ("Maybe Christmas Doesn't Come from a Store," *Ensign*, Dec. 1977, 64). **NE**
Editor's note: See more on page 10.

I used to view pornography, and I have **worked with** my **bishop** to **repent**, but I have a hard time **keeping** my **thoughts clean**.
What can I do?

First, keep praying to Heavenly Father for help and strength, and have faith in the power of Christ's Atonement to cleanse and transform you.

Next, try to identify the triggers for your unclean thoughts, and then, if possible, avoid those things. Viewing pornography is

habit-forming because of the intense chemical effect it has on your brain. So you need to break the habit by changing your life and changing the associations your brain makes, even if it's just in small and simple ways. Some of your triggers may be obvious, but others may not be. For instance,

you may consider altering your daily routine in small ways to avoid things that could remind you (even unconsciously) of the habit you're trying to quit. If you find there are certain places, situations, objects, or any other things that remind you of it, avoid them and try to replace them with things that trigger good, positive thoughts.

For people struggling with pornography, one of the most powerful negative triggers is, quite simply,

having idle time alone. So fill your life with activities that will steer your mind in another direction—service, work, exercise, learning a musical instrument—anything positive and productive.

Finally, don't go through this alone. Get help from your bishop, parents, friends, or, if needed, a professional counselor. For additional resources, visit lds.org/go/clean-thoughtsNE12. **NE**

“What should I do when I am mocked at school for following Church standards?”

If you are mocked for following Church standards, you can take it as an opportunity to represent Jesus Christ. Be respectful and charitable. If prompted, you might explain why you live the way you do. Consider using *For the Strength of Youth* to help you discuss your standards. Invite the Spirit into your life so He can touch the hearts of your peers. The Spirit can help you know what to say.

You can also get advice from your parents, Church leaders, or the full-time missionaries. Ask them how they have responded in similar situations.

At times you may feel tempted to argue with others about your beliefs. But remember that “he that hath the spirit of contention is not of [Christ]” (3 Nephi 11:29).

At other times, you may feel pressure to give in and stop following Church standards. Be strong. Standing firm will not only bless your life with peace, but it can bless the lives of your peers. Your example can encourage them to make righteous decisions.

Look to the example of the Savior for strength. The Savior was ridiculed for standing up for truth (see Isaiah 53). He knows exactly how you feel. He performed the Atonement for *you* and experienced the same trials you face. He is with you. Study more about His life so you can be like Him in these situations. **NE**



Hold to the Rod

When people make fun of me at my school, I think of the vision that Lehi had about the great and spacious building: “It was filled with people, both old and young, both male and female; and their manner of dress was exceedingly fine; and they were in the attitude of mocking and pointing their fingers towards those who had come at and were partaking of the fruit” (1 Nephi 8:27). I will be like Lehi. I will never let go of this iron rod that leads to eternal life.

Pierre S., 18, Haiti



Share the Gospel

As a friend and I were completing the virtue value project for Personal Progress, we read the Book of Mormon at school during breaks. Our teacher and our classmates began to make fun of us. At times I wanted to stop reading, but I simply could not leave my scriptures at home. We continued to read at school, and over time we weren’t made fun of anymore. One of our friends became interested in the gospel and in Personal Progress. We gave her the booklet and a triple combination, and since then we have been telling her about the gospel. Her brother also became interested in the gospel. They are both reading the Book of Mormon.

Kimberly A., 16, Brazil



Be an Example

At my school, not a lot of the students are familiar with the gospel. I think the best thing you can do is show people how living the gospel affects you positively. By being kind and respectful no matter what they say to you, you set a wonderful example, and they will have a greater respect for you and your beliefs. Remembering your example, those same people may be open to learning more about the gospel later on!

Kelsey P., 14, Florida, USA

Share Your Testimony

Once you know the blessings that follow from living the standards, you don't need to feel ashamed when mocked. You can teach the standards and share a testimony of living them. Your peers may learn and be filled with the Spirit since you're sharing a testimony of the gospel.

Emmanuel A., 16, Ghana



Remember Who You Are

For school events, my classmates or even my friends tell me to wear clothes that are not appealing in God's eyes. They say, "You must look cute. You must look different." Sometimes they say that I must forget my beliefs in order to fit in with this world. But

my answer is always no. I know that being the real me is being true and different from the world. It's OK if they don't like me for being me. It is not about what others say; it's about following Heavenly Father's ways.

Jazzy C., 19, Philippines



Be a Missionary

I have had many experiences regarding living the standards of the gospel at school. I have learned that this is an excellent moment for us to strengthen our testimonies and participate in missionary work. Whenever I have found myself in a situation like this and kept my standards high, I have felt happy with myself for acting as God would like me to act. Never leave any doubt as to who you are and what you believe.

Hiram D., 18, Brazil



NOURISH YOUR TESTIMONY

"Have the courage to stand firm for truth and righteousness.

Because the trend in society today is away from the values and principles the Lord has given us, you will almost certainly be called upon to defend that which you believe. Unless the roots of your testimony are firmly planted, it will be difficult for you to withstand the ridicule of those who challenge your faith. . . . Your testimony, when constantly nourished, will keep you safe."

President Thomas S. Monson, "May You Have Courage," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2009, 126.

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

UPCOMING QUESTION

"I feel inadequate to be a Mia Maid class president. How can I be a better leader?"

Send your answer and photo by January 15, 2015.

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

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.



Building the Kingdom of God in the Latter Days

This month you'll be studying about building the kingdom of God in the latter days. As you study and discuss this topic, you may ponder these questions: Do I have a desire to share the gospel, including with nonmembers and less-active members? If so, where does this desire come from? If not, how can I gain this desire? What are simple things I can do to help build God's kingdom?

Keep these questions in mind as you study the scriptures and *Preach My Gospel*, as well as talks from the most recent general conference at conference.lds.org.

Give yourself an easy reminder to prepare for your Sunday lessons. Just place these cards in your scriptures, locker, or bedroom. You can also download or share them online at lds.org/go/cardsNE12.

BACKGROUND TEXTURES BY ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK



WE NEED

each and every one of us

IF WE ARE GOING
to succeed

IN THE WORK
the Savior has for us to do.

President Boyd K. Packer
President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
October 2014 general conference

We can
ALL

HELP *one*
ANOTHER.

We should always be anxiously engaged in seeking to

rescue
those in need.

Elder Chi Hong (Sam) Wong
Of the Seventy
October 2014 general conference

Devoted disciples of
JESUS CHRIST

always have been and always will be

VALIANT
missionaries.

Elder David A. Bednar
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
October 2014 general conference



"Yes, we're Latter-day Saints.
How did you know?"

"I brought my snowman in
last night because I thought
he looked cold, and now I
can't find him anyplace!"



KEVIN BECKSTROM



JON CLARK

"Didn't ya get my text?"



"It's not fair. You always
win at dodgeball!"

The young
Samuel
the Lamanite

ARIE VAN DE GRAAFF



TOP-SECRET CHRISTMAS ANGELS

During December, my seminary teacher invited our class to bring food and presents for a family in need. We didn't know the circumstances—only that there was a husband and wife with three little girls, ages 5 to 10 years old.

A few days before Christmas, I met my classmates in the seminary building with a Barbie doll and some boxes of macaroni and cheese in my hands. I was surprised to see that our class had filled not one box but several boxes with canned food, a large cooked turkey, baked goods, and toys.

We wrapped all the presents and carpoled to the family's home. Most of us hid behind bushes and watched as a few boys quietly carried the boxes to the doorstep of the small, run-down home. Wanting our contributions to be anonymous, the boys rang the doorbell and ran.

From our hiding places, we watched a small girl in her pajamas open the door and squeal. One by one her sisters joined her, each screaming with delight as they saw the many boxes overflowing with presents.

The door widened and, as the mother stepped out, we could see

a small Christmas tree with no presents beneath it in the center of their living room.

I saw the mother look around, bewildered. She then fell to her knees and began to cry. We saw her look up and heard her pray: "Thank Thee, God. Oh, thank Thee for sending Thine angels to give my children Christmas."

We drove back to the seminary building in silence. No one thought of the doughnuts or hot chocolate waiting for us. Instead, there was a tangible feeling of love, peace, and gratitude.

When I got home that night, I sat on my bed and prayed to Heavenly Father, thanking Him for letting me act as His angel for a night. I realized that “I have been given much” and that part of that blessing requires that “I too must give” (“Because I Have Been Given Much,” *Hymns*, no. 219), which was the greatest blessing of all.

Keri S., Arizona, USA

GLENNA'S GIFTS

My grandfather died just three days before Christmas. That year, my family received a gift that changed our lives forever: Glenna. Glenna is my dad's sister who was born with disabilities. She came to live with us after my grandpa passed away. Ever since that first Christmas, Glenna's example has taught me how to be more Christlike.

Glenna was born with many physical challenges, and she's helped me see that sometimes the most beautiful spirits are housed in different-looking bodies. Because of Glenna, I'm no longer self-conscious about the way I look, and I choose to focus on what's inside.

Living with Glenna has taught me patience. She has difficulty speaking, she often breaks things, and she struggles to do many tasks on her own,

“TELL YOUR MOTHER THE MISSIONARIES ARE HERE”

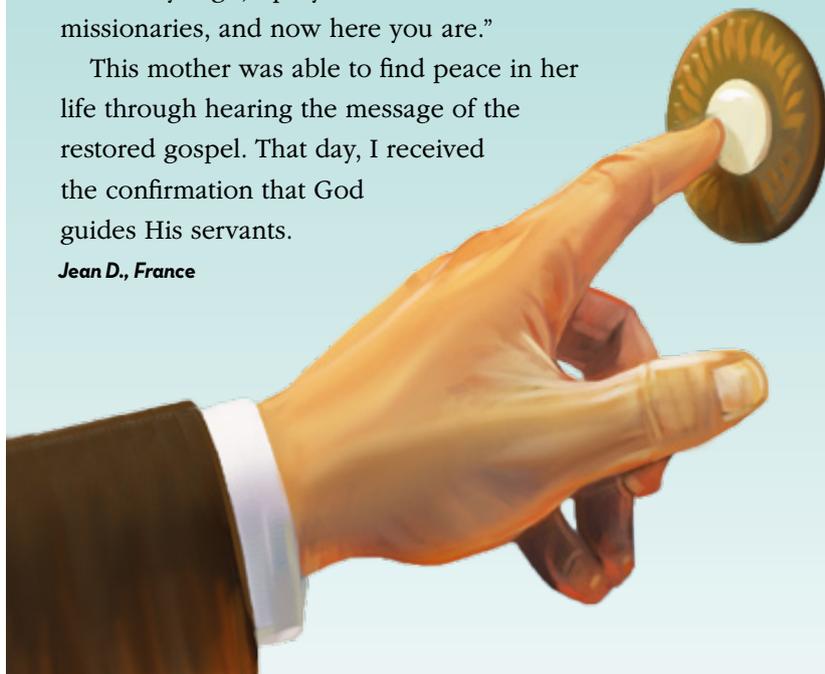
It was preparation day on my mission in Yamoussoukro, Cote d'Ivoire, a small country in West Africa.

At about 11 o'clock in the morning, I had the feeling that my companion and I should go out, without really knowing in advance where we would go. I suggested that we go, and he agreed without hesitation. A few minutes later, we were out in the street. We walked as if we were being guided by someone and went straight to a particular residence. I rang the doorbell and a young girl answered the door. I said to her, “Tell your mother the missionaries are here.”

The mother came out to greet us. She was in tears and said, “Three days ago, I prayed and asked God to send me missionaries, and now here you are.”

This mother was able to find peace in her life through hearing the message of the restored gospel. That day, I received the confirmation that God guides His servants.

Jean D., France



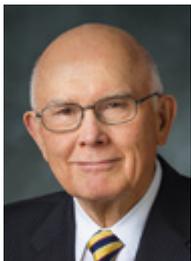
but she's also willing to learn. There's no greater reward than working with Glenna until she gets something right.

Glenna has taught me to find joy in the little things. For instance, at Glenna's birthday parties, it didn't matter whether she received a one-dollar bill or a one-hundred-dollar bill—she was delighted. And when we drove around each year at Christmastime, Glenna would shout, “Wow!” and clap her hands at each

brightly lit home we passed by. She's taught me to see the extraordinary within the ordinary. She's taught me to see that there's something special in everything—and everyone.

As I look back on the past Christmases I spent with Glenna, I can see the impact she's made on my life. Every year, the one Christmas gift I will never forget—and will be forever grateful for—is Glenna.

Lauren B., California, USA



By Elder
Dallin H. Oaks

Of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE SECOND COMING

“This life is the time for men to prepare to meet God” (Alma 34:32). Are we preparing?

What if the day of His coming were tomorrow? If we knew that we would meet the Lord tomorrow—through our premature death or through His unexpected coming—what would we do today? What confessions would we make? What practices would we discontinue? What accounts would we settle? What forgivenesses would we extend? What testimonies would we bear?

If we would do those things then, why not now? Why not seek peace while peace can be obtained?

Evil that used to be localized and covered like a boil is now legalized and paraded like a banner. The most

fundamental roots and bulwarks (protective walls) of civilization are questioned or attacked. Nations disavow their religious heritage. Marriage and family responsibilities are discarded as impediments to personal indulgence. The movies and magazines and television that shape our attitudes are filled with stories or images that portray the children of God as predatory beasts or, at best, as trivial creations pursuing little more than personal pleasure. And too many of us accept this as entertainment.

The good, the true, and the beautiful are being replaced by the no-good, the “whatever,” and the valueless fodder of personal whim. Not surprisingly, many are caught up in pornography, pagan piercing of body parts, self-serving pleasure pursuits, dishonest behavior, revealing attire, foul language, and degrading sexual indulgence.

All of this is grievous in the sight of our Heavenly Father, who loves all of His children and forbids every practice that keeps any from returning to His presence.

What is the state of our personal preparation for eternal life? The people of God have always been people of covenant, including the sacred promises we made in the waters of baptism, in receiving the holy priesthood, and in the temples of God. Are we promisers who do not fulfill and believers who do not perform?

Are we following the Lord’s



Share Your Experiences

Share how you’re preparing and read the experiences of other youth at lds.org/go/prepareNE12.

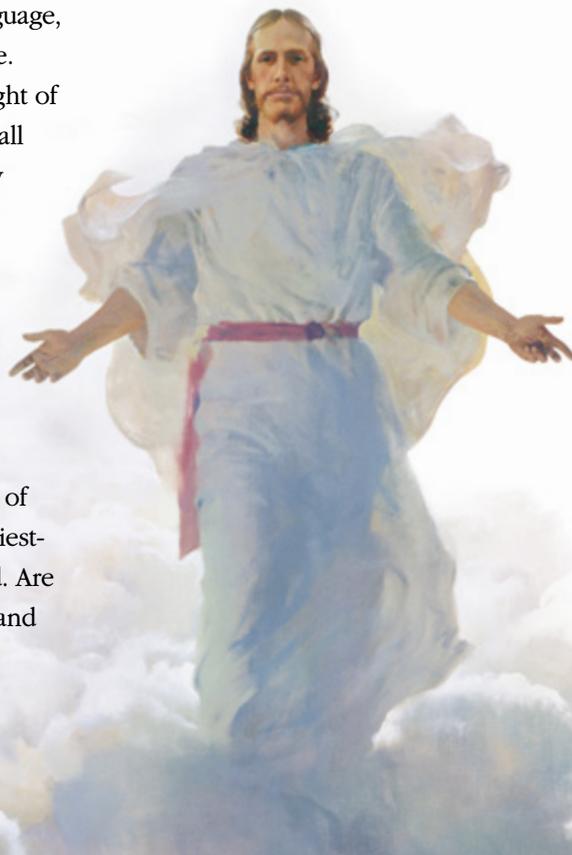
command, “Stand ye in holy places, and be not moved, until the day of the Lord come; for behold, it cometh quickly?” (D&C 87:8).

We are surrounded by challenges on all sides (see 2 Corinthians 4:8–9). But with faith in God, we trust the blessings He has promised those who keep His commandments. We have faith in the future, and we are preparing for that future.

“Wherefore,” the Savior tells us, “be faithful, praying always, having your lamps trimmed and burning, and oil with you, that you may be ready at the coming of the Bridegroom—

“For behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, that I come quickly” (D&C 33:17–18). **NE**

From an April 2004 general conference address.



DETAIL FROM THE SECOND COMING. BY HARRY ANDERSON

Make the
Church
and the
restored gospel
your whole life,
not just a part of your
outward or social life.

Elder Jörg Klebingat
Of the Seventy
October 2014 general conference

WHAT'S ONLINE



DOWNLOAD AN INSPIRATIONAL POSTER

Looking for an extra bit of inspiration? The Media Library on LDS.org has tons of inspiring quotes and posters just for you—perfect for your locker or bedroom or even as wallpaper for your tech device. Find them at lds.org/go/posters14 and share one with a friend. You'll find Christmas-themed quotes at lds.org/go/Christmas14 too.



JOIN THE #TEMPLECHALLENGE

In February, Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles invited youth to “prepare as many names for the temple as you perform baptisms in the temple.” Are you ready? Watch a video and add your name to the thousands who have accepted the challenge at lds.org/go/templechallenge. Share experiences and see others’ experiences with the social media hashtag #templechallenge.

SHARE THE GIFT OF CHRIST



The greatest gift ever given was not found under a Christmas tree and did not come wrapped with a bow. It was the gift of a Savior given to us by our loving Heavenly Father. This Christmas, share the message of that great gift in a new video at Christmas.mormon.org (see page 10 in this issue).