

# THE **New Era**

FEBRUARY 2013



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WITH  
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**To change address:**

Send old and new address information to:

Distribution Services

P.O. Box 26368

Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368, USA.

Please allow 60 days for changes to take effect.

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**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Distribution Services, P.O. Box 26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368, USA.

**Canada Post Information:** Publication Agreement #40017431.



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**Cover:** Mornings with Promise, see page 8

**Cover photography:** Kathe Espinili

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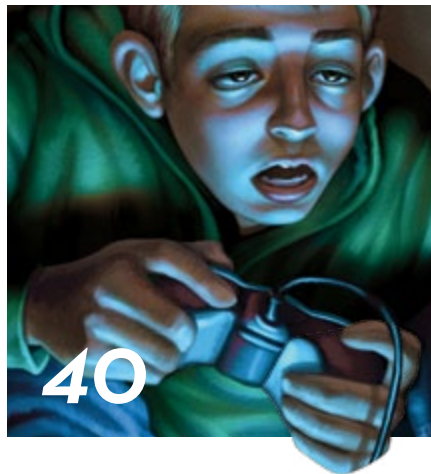
**Mail:** *New Era* Editorial, 50 E. North Temple St.

Rm. 2420, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA. For return, include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.



THE MONTHLY YOUTH MAGAZINE  
OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS  
CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS  
February 2013 Volume 43, Number 2

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# FOCUS on VALUES

*Developing eternal values will help us become all our Heavenly Father wants us to be.*



**By Elder  
Russell M. Nelson**  
Of the Quorum of the  
Twelve Apostles

*I would like to talk about some of the values you ought to be focused on in your daily lives. You young women will recognize them. And you young men, they are not exclusively for the young women. These values are just as worthy of your attention as they are for the young women.*

## **Faith**

The first Young Women value is faith. In fact, faith is the first principle of the gospel. Your faith should be focused on our loving Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. You should also continually strengthen your faith in God's plan of salvation.

It is important to develop faith to keep all of the commandments of God, knowing that they are given to bless you and bring you joy. You will encounter people who pick which commandments they will keep and which they will ignore. This practice of picking and choosing will not work. It will lead to misery. To prepare to meet God, you need to keep all of His commandments. It takes faith to obey them, and keeping His commandments will strengthen that faith.

## **Divine Nature**

The second Young Women value is divine nature. That's a grown-up way of saying, "I am a child of God." You have divinity within you. Our Heavenly Father created you.

Have you ever thought to be thankful for your heart? Look at the job it's doing. It's

pumping enough fluid every day to fill a railroad tank car, about 2,000 gallons (7,570 liters). Inside the heart are four sets of valves that open and close 100,000 times a day, more than 36 million times a year, and they don't break. No man-made material—paper, plastic, metal, or steel—can open and close that many times, with that frequency, without breaking. Every organ in the body is so well designed and so marvelous in its function.

You know if you try to swim underwater without taking a breath, you can go only so long. What is it that drives you up to take a breath? Carbon dioxide is being measured by two small meters in the neck, and they send word up to your brain as if to say, “Your carbon dioxide level is too high. Get rid of it.” So you swim up to the surface and exhale, getting rid of the carbon dioxide.

What incredible abilities your body possesses! Take good care of your body. Don't do anything that would defile the natural beauty of this marvelous, God-given creation.

### Individual Worth

The next Young Women value is individual worth. A faithful disciple of Jesus Christ will become a devoted son or daughter of God—more concerned with being righteous than with being selfish, more anxious to exercise compassion than to exercise dominion, more committed to integrity than to popularity.

You know of your infinite worth. Indeed, each faithful young woman in the Church proclaims that individual worth is one of her most cherished values. She declares, “I am of infinite worth with my own divine mission, which I will strive to fulfill” (*Young Women Personal Progress* [2009], 29). The same applies to young men. Each son and daughter of God is of infinite worth because of his or her divine mission.





Individual worth also includes the development of your faith as an individual. No one else can develop your faith for you. You can wish you had the faith of President Thomas S. Monson or some other hero, but you must develop it yourself. When you make a mistake, as an individual you repent of these past problems. When you were baptized and received the gift of the Holy Ghost, it was done as an individual. So, as an individual, you make covenants. These ordinances of salvation are all an individual matter.

The greatest ordinances and blessings of membership in the Church come in the temple. There we have the ordinances of the endowment and the sealings to parents, spouses, and ancestors. All ordinances of exaltation are a family matter. Do you see that difference? The ordinances of *salvation* are individual; the ordinances of *exaltation* involve more than one person.

### Knowledge

The next Young Women value is knowledge. In the Church, obtaining an education and getting knowledge are a religious responsibility. We educate our minds so that one day we can render service of worth to somebody else. Being educated is the difference between wishing you could do some good and being able to do some good.

Often people ask me what it's like to be a doctor. They ask, "How long were you in school?" Well, it was a long time. From the time I got my medical degree until the time I sent my first bill for professional services rendered was 12½ years. It was a long time, but how old would I have been 12½ years later if I weren't doing that? Exactly the same.

So you might as well strive to become all that you can become.

My medical education is what allowed me to perform a heart operation on President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) in 1972. So don't discount knowledge. The glory of God really is intelligence (see D&C 93:36).

### Choice and Accountability

The next Young Women value is choice and accountability. This is another way of saying "moral agency." Moral agency is part of life because Heavenly Father wanted each one of us to act for ourselves and to become what we want to be.

Choice and accountability tells you that for every choice you make, you are accountable for the consequences of that choice. So we need to make responsible decisions. It probably doesn't matter much whether you wear a blue tie or a red tie or a purple dress or a green dress, but what does matter is whether your choice draws you closer to or away from the Lord and His way of life. And why do we counsel and plead with you to follow the way of the Lord? It's simply because that is the way to happiness.

### Good Works

Next comes the Young Women value of good works. This value is patterned after the life of Jesus Christ, who loved people. To show His love for people, He served them. When we love somebody, we show it by doing something nice. So learn to serve: find a need and fulfill a need. Surprise people with a good deed they hadn't planned on. We have that opportunity at home, at school, and at church.

I remember the first time I went to Africa

as a General Authority. My traveling partner was Elder Russell C. Taylor. Each morning when I woke up, I found that he had shined my shoes. He didn't need to shine my shoes, but that was his way of saying, "I love you."

### Integrity

The next Young Women value is integrity. The word *integrity* comes from the word *integer*, meaning "whole" or "intact." In medicine we talk about the structural integrity of the heart. So when something goes wrong—for example, a wound to the heart—we say it has lost its integrity; it no longer does what it's supposed to do. Applied to the human being, integrity means you're dependable—you can be counted on.

In the scriptures we read that the Prophet Joseph Smith's brother Hyrum was loved by the Lord because of the "integrity of his heart" (D&C 124:15). The Lord was not talking about the anatomy of the heart; He was talking about the integrity of Hyrum's spirit.

### Virtue

The newest Young Women value is virtue. *Virtue* is a wonderful word. What does it mean to you? *Virtue* means "purity." But there's also another meaning. Do you remember in the New Testament when the woman who had the issue of blood touched the hem of the Savior's garment? The Savior said, "Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me" (Luke 8:46). In that case, *virtue* has a different meaning. In the Greek language it's the word *dunamis*, which is the root from which we get the words *dynamo* and *dynamite*. It means "power." We want both kinds of virtue for you precious young men and young women.

### Become All You Can Be

Knowledge brings power; purity brings power; love brings power. We want you to have the power to become all that the Lord wants you to become. You're growing, you're changing, and you are in charge of what you will end up being.

I don't think it makes any difference whether you are a furniture salesman, a surgeon, a lawyer, or an architect. Any worthy occupation, whatever suits you, is wonderful. But what really matters is what you are becoming.

Ask yourself these questions: Do I have integrity? Do I have purity? Do I have love? Do I have compassion? All of these attributes are beyond measure. And as you think about and live by the attributes of the Young Women values, they will help you become all that you can be. **NE**

*From an address given to youth in Nairobi, Kenya, in November 2011.*



# WAKE-UP CALL IN THE HALL

By Michael Palmer

*A short conversation left a lasting impression.*

**W**hen I was a junior in high school, I struggled with my testimony of the Church. I loved school, my social life, and athletics. I was a “three-sporter”—football, wrestling, and baseball were my sports of choice. I loved competition and the social appreciation that came with a job well done.

Unfortunately, this love of social appreciation influenced me to get involved in other activities that were not as productive—activities that I knew were clearly not acceptable in my home or in the Church. But I felt like a popular kid at school, and if participating in certain activities provided this attention, then I wanted to be involved, regardless of the consequences.

One young woman in my high school could be described as my polar opposite. Her life was filled with the scriptures, seminary, prayer, and active attendance at church and Mutual. She was also captain of the drill team.

She and I were in the same ward, but I rarely saw her because I didn’t actively participate in the ward. We really didn’t speak much. She knew who I was and



## REACH OUT

“As you strive to live the gospel, you will encourage your friends to do likewise. Set an example. . . . Make a special effort to reach out to new converts and to those who are less active.”

*For the Strength of Youth (2011), 17.*





## WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Consider praying to know if there's someone Heavenly Father wants you to reach out to, perhaps someone at school or in your ward. Then follow the promptings of the Spirit to know how you can help strengthen that person in the gospel. You may want to make a Duty to God or Personal Progress goal to help you in your efforts.

I knew who she was, but we just didn't have a lot to talk about. Although I never told anyone, I had a great appreciation for her commitment to the gospel. In a way, I wanted it, but I wasn't willing to go get it and give up what I needed to give up.

One day we were about to pass each other in the hall. I didn't want to talk with her, so I tried not to make eye contact. Then she said, "Hi, Mike. Can I talk with you for a minute?" I didn't know what she was doing. She continued, "Mike, I've had an impression that I need to share with you. I know that if you were to just give up some of the bad things you're doing, then you could be such an incredible influence for good. I just felt like I needed to tell you that. See ya."

She continued to walk down the hall in her direction and I in mine. But I was not the same. Her courage had planted a seed, and I started to reflect on my life and the truth of what she said. And then I started to change.

At the end of my senior year, someone presented me with the question "What's so bad about being good?" My answer is *nothing!* Everything I have in life that is good can be attributed to my doing something good. I have never received something good from doing something bad. I am grateful for this young woman and her willingness to stand up and testify of truth.

I am now happily married in the temple and have six beautiful children. My wife and I are trying to teach our children what this young woman taught me: that being good is great and that it allows us to have a positive impact on so many around us. **NE**

*Michael Palmer lives in Arizona, USA.*

ILLUSTRATION BY ROGER MOTZKUS

# MORNINGS WITH



*Youth in California found a way to make their summers better than ever before.*

Set on a small hillside, the Newport Beach California Temple serves 16 stakes in California. Youth in the area are scheduled to participate in baptisms for the dead regularly, but with so many willing youth, this means temple trips are limited. So when the temple announced an “open baptistry” for the summer, where youth could attend without a scheduled group appointment, young men and women from all over the county flooded in. Some hiked there, others biked there. Many came with family or friends. From sunrise until the baptistry closed, youth were often lined up waiting their turn.

## Temple Tuesdays

“I was super excited when I found out the Newport Beach temple was going to have an open schedule for baptisms,” McKenna C. says. On Tuesday mornings during the summer, McKenna gathered a few friends, and together they drove along the beach to the temple. There they met with other young women from their ward who came each week to do baptisms for the dead.

A real desire to be at the temple kept the young women coming consistently throughout the summer. “There was a connection between us all as we sat there quietly next to each other, all dressed the same,” Perry N. says.

# PROMISE

By Karen A. Kimball



The young women began to view each other in a different way. “We saw one another as Heavenly Father’s daughters and as sisters,” McKenna says. “There was no judging. We had a greater love and understanding for all the young women.”

Busy schedules often meant sacrificing other activities in order to attend the temple. “There were many times I had other activities going on,” Clementine W. says. “My mother gave me a choice: to go to the temple or to my activities. I chose the temple. It may not be an easy decision, but the temple is my favorite place.”

Clementine C. used “Temple Tuesday” trips to reach a Personal Progress goal. “Personal Progress is a great way to relive times when you are close to the Spirit. One Tuesday morning after attending the temple, I came straight home and wrote in my Personal Progress journal. I felt again the Spirit that was with me in the temple as I wrote down my thoughts about doing baptisms for the dead.”

Each Tuesday as the friends left the temple, Elianna B. says, “We all would look at each

## A GREAT PRIVILEGE



“To you who are worthy and able to attend the temple, I would

admonish you to go often. . . .

. . . Great service is given when we perform vicarious ordinances for those who have gone beyond the veil. . . . As our Savior gave His life as a vicarious sacrifice for us, so we, in some small measure, do the same when we perform proxy work in the temple for those who have no means of moving forward unless something is done for them by those of us here on the earth.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Until We Meet Again,” *Ensign*, May 2009, 113–14.

## WORK FOR YOUR OWN FAMILY

“When members of the Church find the names of their ancestors and take those names to the temple for ordinance work, the temple experience can be greatly enriched. Members with limited ability to do their own family history research are encouraged to perform vicarious ordinances with names provided by other members or by the temple.

“We especially encourage youth and young single adults to use for temple work their own family names or the names of ancestors of their ward and stake members.”

First Presidency Letter, Oct. 8, 2012.



Nearly every morning throughout the summer, Cameron rode his bike to the temple to participate in baptisms for the dead.

other and smile. You can see how happy we are to be together. I feel like we are all family.”

### Solo Rides

An early-morning seminary student, Cameron K. was used to starting his day in a spiritual way. “Seminary gives me that spiritual boost for the day. I wanted to get that boost,” Cameron says. And summer vacation was no exception. When the temple baptistry opened each summer morning at 6:30 a.m., Cameron was there.

Every morning, Tuesday through Saturday, Cameron left his home before 6:00 a.m., his bike lights flashing in the dark as he pedaled the five-mile route to the temple. “The streets were quiet. It felt peaceful,” Cameron says. Since he was riding a single-speed bike, enduring the initial uphill climb was his biggest challenge. “Whenever I would crest the top of the hill, I would start looking to see where the temple was. I was able to see a glimpse of the angel Moroni,” he says. “It helped me focus on the temple.”

While doing baptisms for the dead, Cameron tried to focus on the people. “Sometimes I’d think about a person as I was doing an ordinance for him, trying to feel better connected with him. There were a few

times when a certain name would be read for the baptism and I kind of knew that person was happy his work was being done.”

“One time when I was leaving the temple,” says Cameron, “the temple president was at the front door. He reached out to me and said, ‘Thank you for coming.’ It made me really want to come back. It made me realize that it really is a huge work that we do in the temple. It made me want to be even more a part of it.”

By summer’s end, Cameron had made over 40 round trips to the temple, biking over 400 miles.

### A Family Goal

Like most priests, Steven P. was looking forward to sleeping in during his summer



vacation. But then his bishop invited every temple-worthy member in the ward to do as many proxy ordinances in the temple during the summer as their circum-

stances would allow. Steven’s whole family decided to go to the temple early on two or three mornings each week.

Waking up at 5:00 a.m. was challenging at first, but after several trips “it became like clockwork,” Steven says. And he kept going back. By the end of summer, Steven had performed over 400 baptisms and confirmations. “It made me feel good to go to the temple to be baptized and confirmed for those who aren’t able to do it.”

For Steven, being with his family was an important part of going to the temple. “I feel the Spirit a lot stronger when I am with people I am familiar with,” Steven says. “We’re pretty close as a family as it is.” After attending the temple together frequently, “I feel we got closer as a family.” **NE**

*Karen A. Kimball lives in California, USA.*

CONVERSION IS NOT  
A ONETIME EVENT.

IT IS A LIFELONG QUEST

— *to become more like* —  
**THE SAVIOR.**

Russell T. Osguthorpe, Sunday School general president,  
October 2012 general conference

Answering  
Questions  
ABOUT

# THE PLAN OF SALVATION

By Michael R. Morris  
Church Magazines

And what do Mormons believe about marriage?" my high school Spanish teacher asked me.

All of my classmates turned in their seats, listening for my answer. I gulped as I wondered how our class discussion had wandered from Don Quixote and Dulcinea to dating and marriage.

There wasn't another member of the Church in the class. What should I say? How much detail should I give? Would everyone make fun of me if I talked about eternal marriage?

"We, uh . . .," I stammered, still uncertain what to say.

Just then, my friend Denise came to my rescue. "Mormons have a beautiful view of marriage," she said. "They believe that marriages performed in their temples can last forever."

"That *is* beautiful," our teacher replied. Even my classmates seemed satisfied.

With that, class resumed and I was left wondering why I had been sweating over a question that my nonmember friend answered so easily.

As more people hear about the Church, Latter-day Saints will have more opportunities

to answer questions about the gospel. In high school, I learned that we don't have to give long answers, and we don't have to be afraid. The beautiful, simple doctrines of the gospel speak for themselves.

The next time your friends ask questions about what we know as "the plan of salvation," consider using the following short answers. They offer the details most people want to know, so you don't have to feel like you need to diagram the entire plan of salvation in a chart.

Where Did  
We Come From?

We are eternal beings. Before we were born, we lived with God, the Father of our spirits. All persons on earth are literally brothers and sisters of the same Father in Heaven. In our pre-earth life, each of us was an individual with a divine nature and destiny. God gave all of us the gift of agency, or the right to choose for ourselves, both in the pre-earth life and here on earth. Because He is the Father of our spirits, we call Him our Heavenly Father.



WHY ARE WE HERE?

Earth life is part of God's plan for our eternal happiness. That plan includes gaining a physical body and learning to choose between good and evil. Our living prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, has said: "How grateful we should be that a wise Creator fashioned an earth and placed us here, with a veil of forgetfulness of our previous existence so that we might experience a time of testing, an opportunity to prove ourselves in order to qualify for all that God has prepared for us to receive" ("The Race of Life," *Ensign*, May 2012, 91).

"And then it shall come to pass, that the spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow" (Alma 40:11-12).

If we apply the Atonement, or sacrifice, of Jesus Christ, repent of our sins, and strive to live as He lived, His Atonement will cleanse us and allow us to live forever with Heavenly Father.

Those who choose not to follow Christ and accept His gospel will not receive those blessings (see Alma 40:13-14).

What Is the Role of Jesus Christ?

Where Are We Going after This Life?

Our lives continue after we die, but our future lives are determined by how we live now. If we live the gospel, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ enables us to repent, be forgiven, and become clean before God.

In the Book of Mormon we learn "that the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body, . . . whether they be good or evil, are taken home to that God who gave them life.

Our Heavenly Father sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Savior and to show us the way

to live according to God's plan. The Savior's Atonement can wash away our sins and make us worthy to return to God's presence. Following the Savior's Crucifixion, His body lay in the tomb for three days until His spirit returned. As a result of Jesus's victory over the grave (see Mormon 7:5), we will be resurrected after we die and live forever in perfected bodies. **NE**



JOIN THE CONVERSATION



In February, you'll be studying about the plan of salvation in your Sunday School and Young Women classes and priesthood quorums. Sunday School in particular will focus on how you can *teach* the plan of salvation. Consider creating a list of additional questions you or your friends may have about the plan of salvation and share them with your teacher and the other youth

in your ward or branch. Together, you can find ways to help teach this doctrine to others.

PREPARED TO TEACH



"If you live the principles of the gospel [rather than] just study them, that special combination of knowledge will allow you to feel comfortable and prepared to teach what you know to be true."

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, in Michael Otterson, "Answering Questions about Our Faith," *Ensign*, Aug. 2012, 78.



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“One of my friends  
really offended me.  
I know I’m supposed  
to be  
forgiving,  
but how do I get over  
the hurt?”

**F**orgiving your friend and letting go of hurt feelings can be difficult. To forgive *and* to get over the hurt feelings will require mercy—yours and the Lord’s. Your job is not to try to get over the hurt but to forgive: to show mercy to your friend (see D&C 64:8–10). As you do, the Lord, if you seek His help, will show mercy to you. That is, He can replace your hurt feelings with love and peace.

Talk to your friend. Seek to understand what happened. You may find that your friend did not mean to hurt you, which could make it easier to forgive and get over the hurt.

Even if forgiveness is hard or takes a long time, keep trying. Eventually, you will want to let your friend know that you forgive him or her and still want to be friends. Holding a grudge at the cost of a friendship can never lead to the peace that comes from true forgiveness.

Remember that we all depend on the Savior’s Atonement to be forgiven of our sins. Pray to be able to forgive, and have faith that the Lord will help you. He has the power to heal the hurt in your heart. **NE**

### Let the Lord Judge

Let the Lord be the judge of harmful acts done by others. Remember that the Lord says: “I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men” (D&C 64:10). It is difficult to forget about hurt feelings, but if you pray for help, you will realize that forgiveness can heal terrible wounds and replace hatred with the peace and love that only God can give.

*Genesis H., 16, Antofagasta, Chile*

### Love Them



I’ve found that the best way to deal with hurt is to love the person who offended you. After someone offends me,

I try to compliment them and show extra kindness toward them as much as possible. By doing this, the anger doesn’t fester inside you. Instead it goes away completely. You will have a strengthened relationship with whoever offended you.

*Katie A., 18, Utah, USA*

### Trust in the Atonement

My heart fills with joy when I remember that the atoning power of Jesus Christ can take away our pain. We all have painful experiences from time to time, but by holding tight to Heavenly Father’s word, we can receive the strength that we need to endure. Even while the soldiers nailed Him to the cross, Jesus Christ asked the Father to forgive them. His bowels were full of love and mercy for all men. I know that if we come unto Him and ask for His help, we will be encircled about by His infinite love.

*Virginia M., 20, Peru*



## Pray to Feel Forgiving



Pray to our loving Heavenly Father that you and your friend will have the courage to forgive one another.

Forgiving someone who has hurt you is a Christlike action. Forgiveness cures even the most hurt feelings.

*Lehi E., 16, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates*

## Remember Charity

Nephi taught, “The Lord God hath given a commandment that all men should have charity, which charity is love” (2 Nephi 26:30). For me, charity is the best way to get over the hurt when one of my friends has offended me. Charity means accepting someone’s weaknesses, having patience with someone who has let us down, and resisting the impulse to become offended when someone doesn’t handle something the way we might have hoped. If we have charity toward our friends, we will be blessed.

*Liezel V., 21, Negros Occidental, Philippines*

## Forgive Everyone



The sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ made Him bleed from every pore, but He overcame the pain and had the strength to forgive while on the cross. Not because He didn’t feel pain but because for Him, the only thing that mattered was the will of the Father. Likewise for us, the only thing that should matter is the will of God, and He requires us to forgive everyone. Even if our wounds heal slowly, we

can overcome our pain through prayer and sincere forgiveness of those who wrong us.

*Ahou O., age 17, Ivory Coast*

## See Them through the Lord’s Eyes

Jesus Christ has felt your pain so that you can be forgiven for your sins and also so that you can forgive others.

When you pray for the ability to see someone through His eyes, you will find that you understand them better.

As the weeks pass, you will notice that your harsh feelings will go away.

*Kimberly B., 18, Nebraska, USA*

## Pray to Learn to Forgive

You have to pray to learn how to love and forgive others. Although forgiveness can sometimes be very difficult, our Heavenly Father is always willing to help us. Remember the example that the Savior set by forgiving all.

Colossians 3:13 says, “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.” True forgiveness is a process,

sometimes a long one. But when we truly forgive, we feel great relief and joy. I know that with effort you will be able to rid yourself of the pain and find true happiness.

*Leonardo L., 20, Buenos Aires, Argentina*

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



## FOLLOW THE SAVIOR’S EXAMPLE

“In the most painful hours of the Crucifixion the Savior could say, ‘Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do’ (Luke 23:34). That is a hard thing to ask when we’re hurting or have been offended, are tired or stressed out or suffering innocently. But that is when Christian behavior may matter the most.”

**Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Lessons from Liberty Jail,” *Ensign*, Sept. 2009, 32.**

## UPCOMING QUESTION

“The temple is so far away that I don’t get to attend very often.

How can the temple be a bigger part of my life today?”

Send your answer and photo by March 15, 2013.

Go to [newera.lds.org](http://newera.lds.org) and click “Submit Material.”

You can also write to us at [newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org)

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

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.

HOW  
to Be

# GUIDED BY THE SPIRIT

*In recent messages, prophets and apostles  
have taught us how we can have the  
Holy Ghost as our constant companion.*

**W**hat do we know about the gift of the Holy Ghost? How does it operate in our lives? How do we recognize it? After we are baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, what must we do to have His constant influence, to be guided by personal revelation and inspiration?

Because these are such important questions for each of us, the members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles speak about them frequently. Here are some of the principles they have taught recently.

## HOW TO BEGIN

- “Seek heavenly guidance one day at a time. Life by the yard is hard; by the inch it’s a cinch. Each of us can be true for just one day—and then one more and then one more after that—until we’ve lived a lifetime guided by the Spirit.”<sup>1</sup>
- “Sincere desire and worthiness invite the spirit of revelation into our lives.”<sup>2</sup>
- “(1) Sincerely desire to receive the Holy Ghost, (2) appropriately invite the Holy Ghost into our lives, and (3) faithfully obey God’s commandments.”<sup>3</sup>

*Constant  
Influence*

*Inspiration*

*Guidance*

*Personal  
Revelation*

## HOW TO RECOGNIZE SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE

• “The gift of the Holy Ghost . . . is a spiritual voice that comes into the mind as a thought or a feeling put into your heart.”<sup>4</sup>

• “Sometimes the spirit of revelation will operate immediately and intensely, other times subtly and gradually, and often so delicately you may not even consciously recognize it. But regardless of the pattern whereby this blessing is received, the light it provides will illuminate and enlarge your soul, enlighten your understanding (see Alma 5:7; 32:28), and direct and protect you.”<sup>5</sup>

• “Selfless acts of service and consecration refine our spirits, remove the scales from our spiritual eyes, and open the windows of heaven. By becoming the answer to someone’s prayer, we often find the answer to our own.”<sup>6</sup>

• “Sometimes when you have made a mistake, you may have said afterward, ‘I knew I should not have done that. It did not feel right,’ or perhaps, ‘I knew I should have done that. I just did not have the courage to act!’ Those impressions are the Holy Ghost attempting to direct you toward good or warning you away from harm.”<sup>7</sup>

## WHAT TO DO

• “First on your ‘to do’ list, put the word *prayer*.”<sup>8</sup>

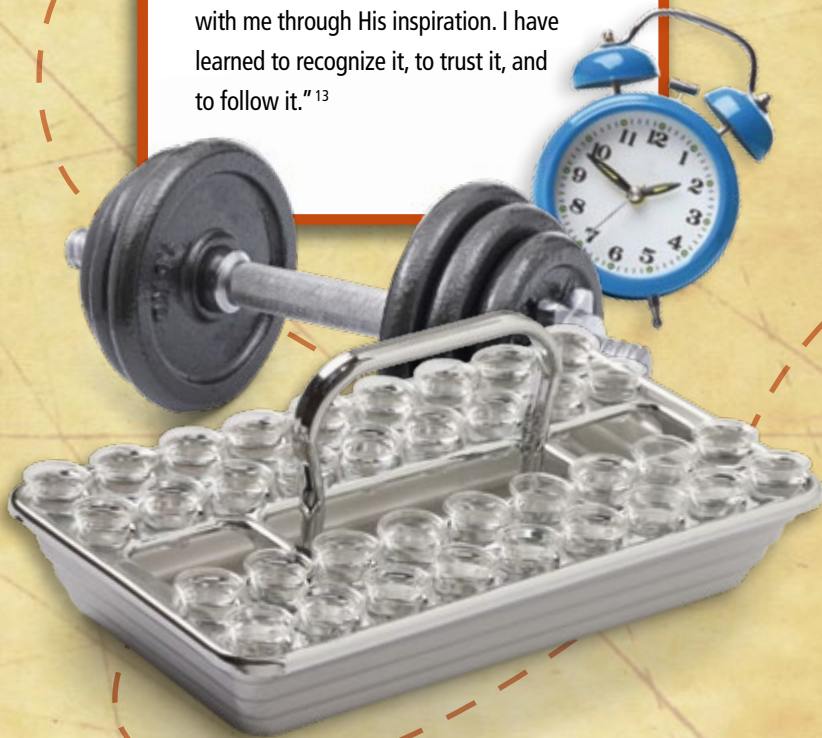
• “As we honor our covenants and keep the commandments, as we strive ever more consistently to do good and to become better, we can walk with the confidence that God will guide our steps.”<sup>9</sup>

• “Take care of your body. Be clean. . . . Stay away from tattoos and similar things which deface your body.”<sup>10</sup>

• “Exercise, reasonable amounts of sleep, and good eating habits increase our capacity to receive and understand revelation.”<sup>11</sup>

• “Renew [your] covenants by partaking of the sacrament each Sabbath day.”<sup>12</sup>

• “I am always humbled and grateful when my Heavenly Father communicates with me through His inspiration. I have learned to recognize it, to trust it, and to follow it.”<sup>13</sup>





CAUTION

## WHAT TO AVOID

- “Yielding to emotions such as anger or hurt or defensiveness will drive away the Holy Ghost.”<sup>14</sup>
- “Be cautious with humor. Loud, inappropriate laughter will offend the Spirit. A good sense of humor helps revelation; loud laughter does not.”<sup>15</sup>
- “Another enemy to revelation comes from exaggeration or loudness in what is stated. Careful, quiet speech will favor the receipt of revelation.”<sup>16</sup>
- “You cannot lie or cheat or steal or act immorally and have those channels remain free from disruption. Do not go where the environment resists spiritual communication.”<sup>17</sup>
- “Turn down the volume control of the worldly noise in our lives.”<sup>18</sup>

## WHAT YOU ARE PROMISED

- “You will not make a major mistake without first being warned by the promptings of the Spirit.”<sup>19</sup>
- “The spirit of revelation is available to every person who receives by proper priesthood authority the saving ordinances of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost—and who is acting in faith to fulfill the priesthood injunction to ‘receive the Holy Ghost.’”<sup>20</sup>
- “We can walk with the confidence that God will guide our steps. And we can speak with the assurance that God will inspire our utterances.”<sup>21</sup>
- “Discovering how the Holy Ghost operates in your life is the quest of a lifetime. Once you have made that discovery for yourself, you can live in enemy territory and will not be deceived or destroyed.”<sup>22</sup> **NE**

### NOTES

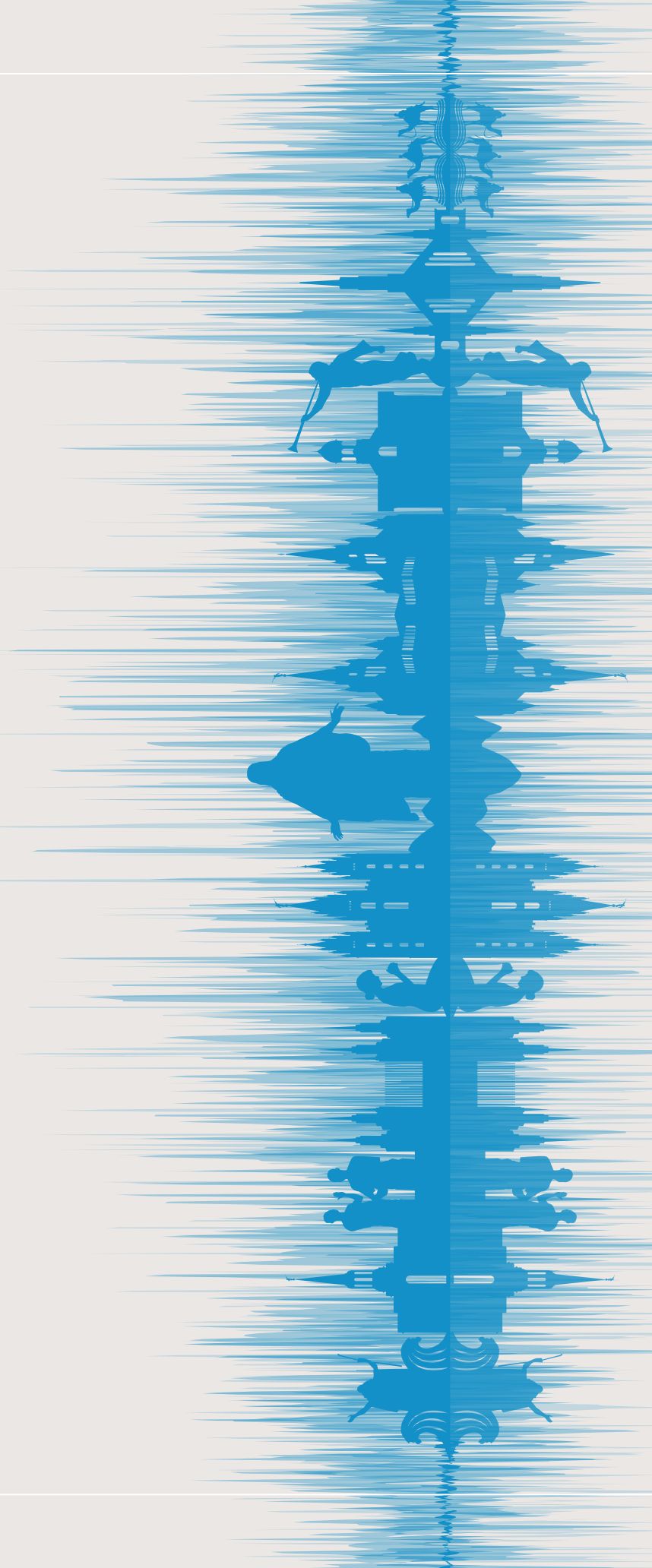
1. Thomas S. Monson, “Believe, Obey, and Endure,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 129.
2. David A. Bednar, “The Spirit of Revelation,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 87.
3. David A. Bednar, “Receive the Holy Ghost,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 95.
4. Boyd K. Packer, “Counsel to Youth,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 17–18.
5. David A. Bednar, “The Spirit of Revelation,” 90.
6. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Waiting on the Road to Damascus,”

- Ensign*, May 2011, 76.
7. Boyd K. Packer, “How to Survive in Enemy Territory,” *New Era*, Apr. 2012, 3.
8. Boyd K. Packer, “How to Survive in Enemy Territory,” 3.
9. David A. Bednar, “The Spirit of Revelation,” 90.
10. Boyd K. Packer, “How to Survive in Enemy Territory,” 3.
11. Richard G. Scott, “How to Obtain Revelation and Inspiration for Your Personal Life,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 46.
12. Dallin H. Oaks, “Two Lines

- of Communication,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 83.
13. Thomas S. Monson, “Stand in Holy Places,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 84.
14. Richard G. Scott, “How to Obtain Revelation and Inspiration for Your Personal Life,” 45.
15. Richard G. Scott, “How to Obtain Revelation and Inspiration for Your Personal Life,” 46.
16. Richard G. Scott, “How to Obtain Revelation and Inspiration for Your Personal

- Life,” 46.
17. Boyd K. Packer, “How to Survive in Enemy Territory,” 3.
18. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Waiting on the Road to Damascus,” 70.
19. Boyd K. Packer, “Counsel to Youth,” 18.
20. David A. Bednar, “The Spirit of Revelation,” 87.
21. David A. Bednar, “The Spirit of Revelation,” 90.
22. Boyd K. Packer, “How to Survive in Enemy Territory,” 3.

MORMONAD

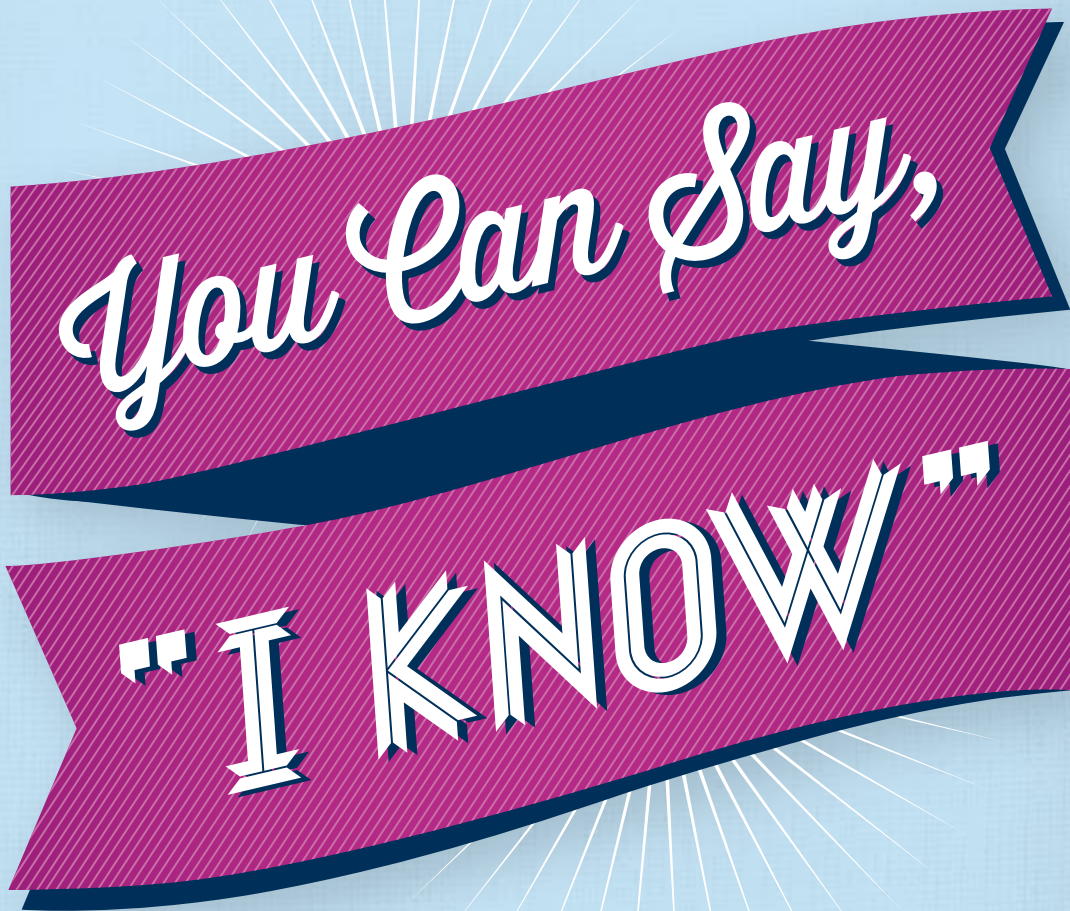


LET YOUR VOICE  
**BE HEARD**

"A testimony is to be *found* in the bearing of it."

President Boyd K. Packer,  
President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,  
"The Candle of the Lord," *Ensign*, Jan. 1983, 54.

By Brad Wilcox



*When it comes to the gospel, you probably know more than you think.*

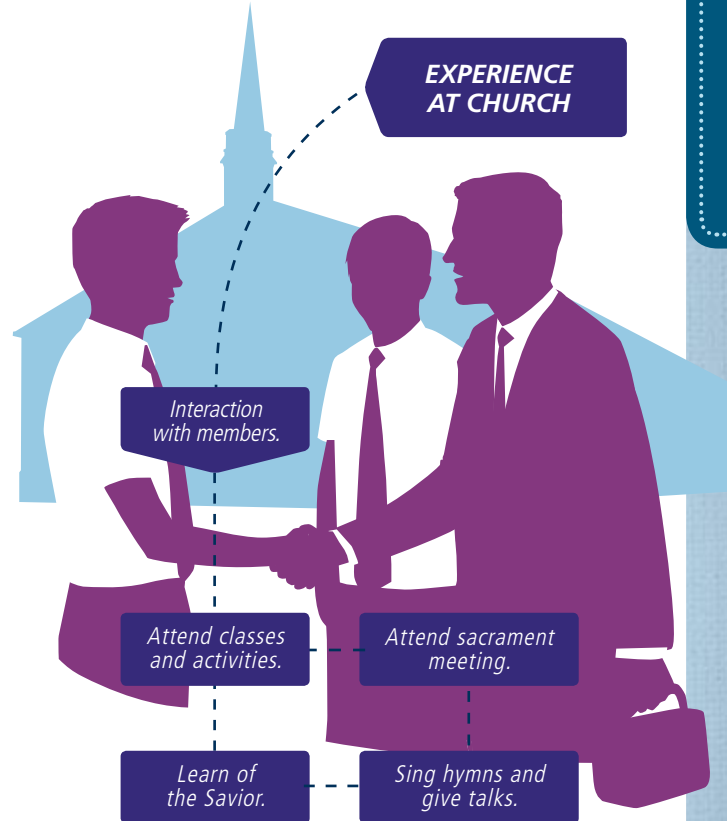
“I don’t like it when people stand in testimony meetings and say, ‘I know,’” said one teenager. “You can’t know stuff like that. You can believe or have faith, but you can’t *know!*”

Really? But what about when Jesus said, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3), or when He said, “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32)? We *can* know, but there are different kinds of knowledge: knowledge through *experience*, knowledge through *study*, and knowledge through *revelation*. Though we may sometimes feel like our knowledge is incomplete, that doesn’t mean that we don’t know. Just because a gas tank isn’t full doesn’t mean it’s empty. With every new drop of experience, study, and revelation, we fill our tanks—we can say, “I know.”

## KNOWLEDGE THROUGH EXPERIENCE

We gain a testimony through experience as we participate in the Church and interact with other members. We attend classes and activities. We go to sacrament meeting, where we partake of the sacrament. We worship the Savior and learn of Him. We sing hymns, prepare and give talks, and participate in interviews. We know what it is like to live as Latter-day Saints because we have experienced it firsthand. And though we may not always recognize it, the Spirit is there, which helps us receive knowledge.

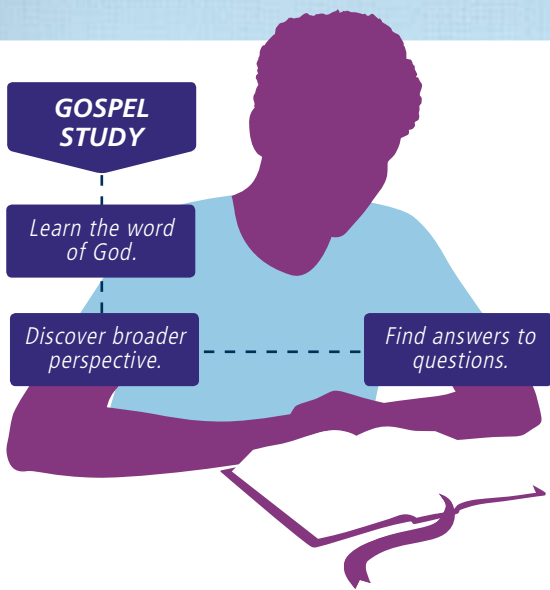
Even the youngest Primary children can legitimately bear a strong testimony based on experience. Christ taught, “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine” (John 7:17). Young people who “do” by being active in the Church know much more than they give themselves credit for. Even if they have not yet received an intense spiritual witness, they can still stand and bear testimony from their experience.



## KNOWLEDGE THROUGH STUDY

A testimony obtained through study is gained as we learn the revealed word of God and find answers to our questions (see Alma 17:2). Again, the Spirit is there through this process, though we may not always recognize it. For instance, people who study the gospel with the missionaries often start to gain a sense that all the puzzle pieces are finally fitting together. They see ideas confirmed that they have always felt to be true and discover a broader perspective.

While serving as young missionaries in Chile, my companion and I were walking down a street in the city of Los Andes. Across the way, a lady leaned out of her window to shake a blanket and said, “Good morning, elders.” She then disappeared into her



house. I was surprised by her greeting. I walked up to the door, knocked, and when the woman answered, I asked, “How did you know us?”

She invited us in and explained that she and her husband had been two of the first people baptized in that community many years earlier. They had loved the Church until they had been offended. They now attended another church. “Now we know the Mormon Church is not true,” she said,



**A TESTIMONY IS A TESTIMONY**

“A testimony is a testimony, and it should be respected, whether it is small or large. We become taller in our testimony like we grow in physical stature and hardly know it is happening, because it comes by growth.

“I know that the gospel is true; the Spirit is there. . . .

“You’d think there would be a better way for one of the Twelve to bear testimony, but we’re left to bear it in the same way our little grandkids do in Primary—just to say we know it’s true.”

**President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “How Does the Spirit Speak to Us?” *New Era*, Feb. 2010, 3.**

retrieving a book titled something like *Everything You Want to Know about the Mormons* and written, of course, by a non-LDS author.

I glanced at the first few pages. I wasn’t an expert in Church history, but I knew Joseph Smith did *not* claim to see two angels named Urim and Thummim! “Not all this is true,” I said to the woman. “Look, if you want to know about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, talk to us. We’ll help you.”

That was the beginning. In the weeks that followed, my companion and I watched the members of this family add to their testimony tanks through study. They became active in the Church, but relying only on experiences in the Church was not enough to see this sister and her family through when the going got rough. Now, because they had also studied hard and found answers on their own, they each could say, “I know.”

**KNOWLEDGE THROUGH REVELATION**

The third level of testimony comes through revelation—when the Holy Spirit bears witness to our spirits and we recognize it. President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) said, “When a man has the manifestation from the Holy Ghost, it leaves an indelible impression on his soul, one that is not easily erased. It is Spirit speaking to spirit, and it comes with convincing force” (*Answers to Gospel Questions* [1979], 2:151).

One evening, after a testimony meeting at an Especially for Youth, a young man with tears





streaming down his face approached me and said, “I know. I know. I have learned for myself.”

I was struck by what he said because it was almost exactly what Joseph Smith said when he walked out of the grove and into his home in 1820. As Joseph leaned against the fireplace, his mother asked what the matter was. He replied, “Never mind, all is well—I am well enough off.” He then said, “I have learned for myself” (Joseph Smith—History 1:20).

Joseph had received a testimony by revelation. Yet, even his powerful and world-changing testimony came by degrees. Before the grove, there was the groundwork. Before the pillar, there was the prayer. Before the revelation, there was the reading. Joseph’s experiences and study had built the faith, humility, and obedience necessary for him to receive a perfect knowledge of God’s existence. The gauge of his testimony tank was on full.

But even without a vision, we can all stand with President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) and declare, “I have received the witness of the Spirit of God in my own heart, which exceeds all other evidences, for it bears record to me, to my very soul” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* [1998], 201).

## THE RIGHT TO SAY, “I KNOW”

Whether knowledge comes from experience, study, or personal revelation, you have the right to say, “I know.” Your gauge may not measure a full tank, but you are not on empty, either. No one gets to a full tank of gas without adding to the tank along the way. And just as cars don’t run forever on a single tank of gas, testimonies, like gas tanks, must be filled and refilled regularly. It’s up to you. When it comes right down to it, each of us puts gas in his or her own tank—or, better said, puts oil in his or her own lamp (see Matthew 25:1–13). **NE**

*Brad Wilcox lives in Utah, USA.*



## DIFFERENT KINDS OF KNOWLEDGE

“What do we mean when we testify and say that we *know* the gospel is true? Contrast that kind of knowledge with ‘I know it is cold outside’ or ‘I know I love my wife.’ These are three different kinds of knowledge, each learned in a different way. . . .

“One of the greatest things about our Heavenly Father’s plan for His children is that each of us can know the truth of that plan for ourselves. . . . We can receive that knowledge directly from our Heavenly Father through the witness of the Holy Ghost.

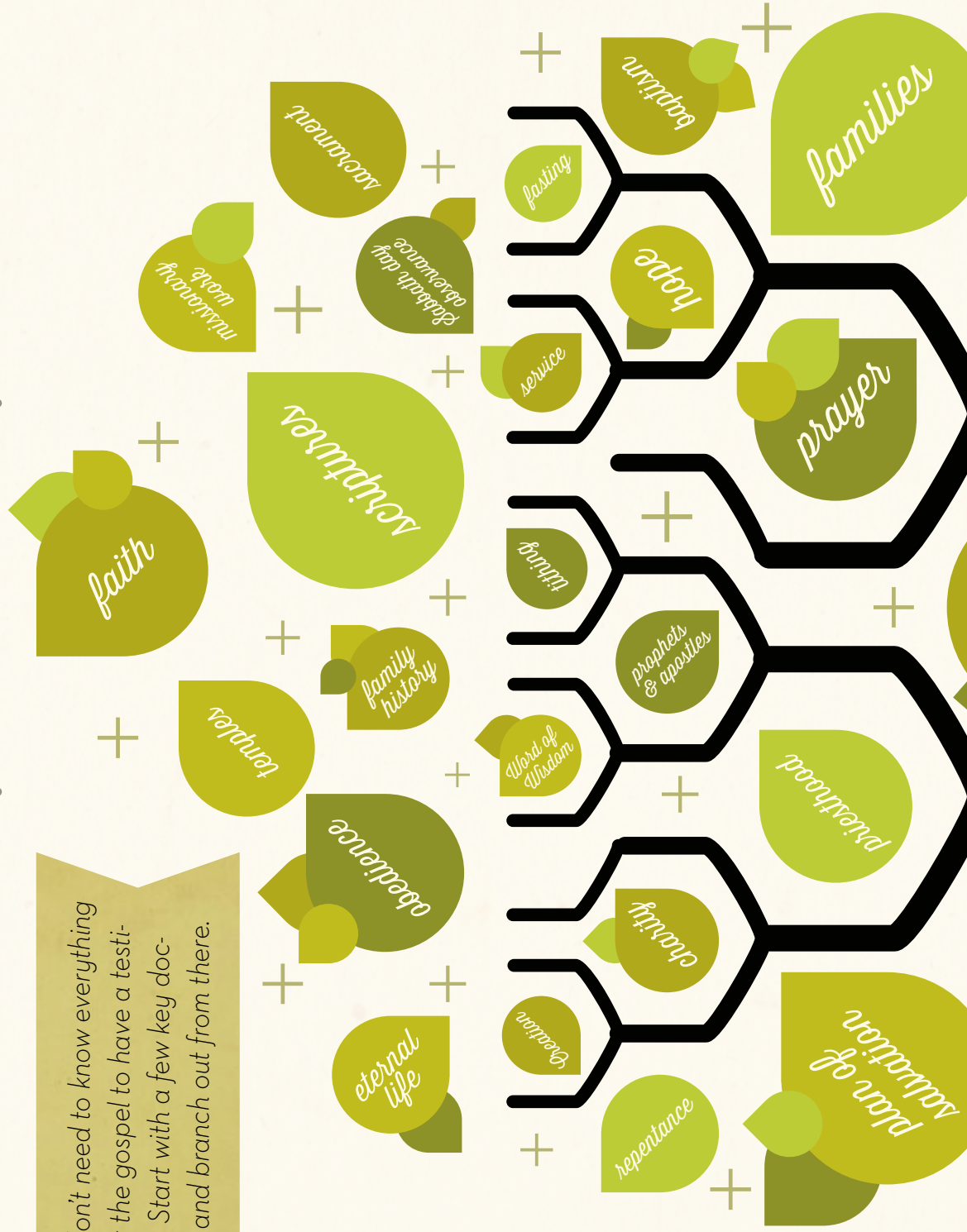
“When we know spiritual truths by spiritual means, we can be just as sure of that knowledge as scholars and scientists are of the different kinds of knowledge they have acquired by different methods.”

**Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Testimony,” *Ensign*, May 2008, 26.**

I KNOW.

# Growing YOUR Testimony

You don't need to know everything about the gospel to have a testimony. Start with a few key doctrines and branch out from there.



By **Mindy Raye Friedman**  
Church Magazines

Some people may occasionally feel overwhelmed because they think they need to have a strong testimony of every gospel principle *right now*. Or they may think they don't have a testimony just because they don't understand *everything* about the gospel.

Sometimes learning about the gospel can seem hard, especially when you talk with people who have been studying the gospel for decades. Does that mean you don't have a testimony just because you don't know as much as another person? Of course not! Gaining a testimony of all the principles of the gospel at once is impossible. A testimony is meant to grow "line upon line, precept upon precept" (2 Nephi 28:30) throughout your life. But there is a place you can start to build your testimony. *True to the Faith* gives this helpful information:

"A testimony is a spiritual witness given by the Holy Ghost. The foundation of a testimony is the knowledge that Heavenly Father lives and loves us; that Jesus Christ lives, that He is the Son of God, and that He carried out the infinite Atonement; that Joseph Smith is the prophet of God who was called to restore the gospel; that we are led by a living prophet today; and that The Church of Jesus

the Restoration

revelation

Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Savior's true Church on the earth. With this foundation, a testimony grows to include all principles of the gospel" (*True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* [2004], 178–79).

Your testimony is like a tree that grows over time. It first grows with a few main branches, and then it develops from there. Your testimony can grow as you first focus on these five basic principles mentioned in *True to the Faith* and then strengthen your knowledge and testimony over time to eventually include all the principles of the gospel.

## THE FOUNDATION OF TESTIMONY IS:

- 1 Knowing Heavenly Father lives and loves His children.
- 2 Jesus Christ lives and is the Son of God. He carried out the infinite Atonement.
- 3 Joseph Smith is the prophet of God who was called to restore the gospel.
- 4 The Church is led by a living prophet today.
- 5 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Savior's true Church on the earth.

*A testimony of these principles comes through the witness of the Holy Ghost.*



### More Ideas

For ideas on how to strengthen your testimony of these principles and others, see pages 16 and 20 in this issue.



### THE ROOTS OF TESTIMONY

"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. When firmly planted, your testimony of the gospel, of the Savior, and of our Heavenly Father will influence all that you do throughout your life."

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



# I Wanted to **KNOW FOR SURE**

By Karen Jepson

*I realized I may have been leaning on my parents' testimonies, and it was time to find out for myself what I believe.*

I was raised in an active Latter-day Saint family. I went to church every Sunday, read my scriptures every night, prayed every day, and went to seminary and Young Women activities. I even wrote in my journal every day. I thought I knew what the Church was all about, and I believed it was true.

Then one Sunday during an interview, one of the counselors in my bishopric asked me, "Do you have a testimony of this Church?"

"Of course I do," I replied. Didn't he know that my parents served actively in their callings, that my brother had just come home from his mission, and that my sister was engaged to be married in the temple? With a family like that, how could I not believe?

He responded, "That is good to know, because I didn't have a testimony until after I graduated from high school. I always thought

I had one, but then I realized that I was leaning on my parents' testimonies. You need to promise that you will continue to strengthen and nourish your testimony." I promised him that I would strive harder to make my testimony grow.

On the way home from church, I began to ask myself if I really had a testimony or if I was leaning on my parents' testimonies.

I recalled a time a few months earlier when I had felt the Spirit so strong. That day I was sure the Church is true. Why had I begun to doubt again? I remembered my seminary teacher telling us that if we ever doubted, to just ask God with real intent, faith in Christ, and a pure heart and we would receive an answer (see Moroni 10:3–5).

That night I went home and prayed and read my scriptures over and over again. "Why am I not getting an answer?" I wondered. My seminary teacher promised I would get an answer. I could feel something, but it wasn't enough. I wanted more proof to know that the Church is true. It couldn't just be a feeling; I wanted to *know* for sure.

My answer didn't come for a while, but it finally came. One night I was reading in the Doctrine and Covenants, and that is when it all came together for me:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, if you desire a further witness, cast your mind upon the night that you cried unto me in your heart, that you might know concerning the truth of these things.

"Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter? What greater witness can you have than from God?" (D&C 6:22–23).

So many times I had felt the Spirit. So many times I had believed. So many times I had had an overwhelming love for the

Church and the Savior. That was the answer. I already knew, so why keep asking? Why did I not nourish the testimony I had?

I realized I couldn't just expect the answer to come to me. I couldn't just read my scriptures; I needed to search them. I couldn't just pray to Heavenly Father; I needed to listen to His answers.

A few weeks later I found counsel by President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) that described what I needed to do. He said:

**"Testimony is as elusive as a moonbeam; . . . you have to recapture it every morning of your life . . . by study, by faith, and by prayer."**

**—President Harold B. Lee**

"Your testimony is something that you have today but you may not have it always.


"Testimony is as elusive as a moonbeam; it's as fragile as an orchid; you have to recapture it every morning of your life. You have to hold on by study, by faith, and by prayer. . . .

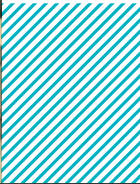
"That which you possess today in testimony will not be yours tomorrow unless you do something about it. . . .

". . . Testimony is either going to grow and grow to the brightness of certainty, or it is going to diminish to nothingness, depending upon what we do about it" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee* [2000], 43).

I know that if I keep listening to Heavenly Father's answers and searching the scriptures every day, my testimony will be as bright as the sun. **NE**

*Karen Jepson lives in Utah, USA.*

 **Share What You Do**  
Share with other youth what you do to strengthen your testimony by leaving a comment online at [lds.org/go/23A](https://www.lds.org/go/23A), where you'll also find additional ideas for keeping your testimony strong in "Gaining and Keeping a Testimony" from the February 2012 *New Era*.



**H**ave you ever gone through your checklist of *do nots*?

- Don't drink alcohol.
- Don't lie.
- Don't swear.
- Don't listen to bad music.

Many people in the world seem to believe that as long as they *don't* do the "bad things," then they will receive automatic admission into heaven. When you review the Ten Commandments, this may seem like a reasonable idea: "Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. . . ."<sup>1</sup> Most of these commandments tell you what you should *not* do.

Through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord has given additional guidance:

"Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do

# DON'T FORGET TO DO

LIVING THE GOSPEL IS ABOUT MORE THAN WHAT YOU CAN'T DO. IT'S ALSO ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN DO.

By Sarah Petersen





STRENGTHEN YOUR Testimony

many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness;

“For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves.”<sup>2</sup>

Although it’s important to know and follow what *not* to do, the Lord explains in those verses that we also show how committed we are to following His example by the good things we *choose to do* (for instance, serving others, showing kindness, and sharing the gospel). When we use our agency to do good, we not only help others but also deepen our own conversion.

## THE PROCESS OF REAL CONVERSION

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has explained, “Our spiritual journey is the process of a lifetime. We do not know everything in the beginning or even along the way. Our conversion comes step-by-step, line upon line. . . . But we are not alone.”<sup>3</sup>

The word “converted” is often used when someone has decided to become a member of the Church, but real conversion also means much more. Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has linked true conversion to when “you make the gospel of Jesus Christ not just an influence in your life but the controlling influence and, indeed, the very core of what you are.”<sup>4</sup> This is not just a change of behavior—it is a change of your very nature.<sup>5</sup> Brigham Young counseled, “Wherever you see an opportunity to do good, do it, for that is the way to increase and grow in the knowledge of the truth.”<sup>6</sup>

And you do good because of your love for Heavenly Father and the Savior. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has said God’s love “directs and encourages us to become more pure and holy. It inspires us to walk in righteousness—not out of fear or obligation but out of an earnest desire to become even more like Him because we love Him.”<sup>7</sup>

**“WHEREVER YOU SEE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DO GOOD, DO IT, FOR THAT IS THE WAY TO INCREASE AND GROW IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH.”**

PRESIDENT BRIGHAM YOUNG

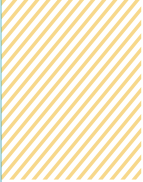


## THE DEGREE OF YOUR CONVERSION

So, do you show your true conversion by the way you live? If you’re not sure, consider these situations:

- You don’t gossip, but do you compliment others?
- Do you find ways to make someone’s day brighter?
- As you sit in sacrament meeting, do you find yourself thinking about your homework, or are you “anxiously engaged” in strengthening your testimony?

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHURCH PUBLISHING SERVICES; CHRIST RAISING THE DAUGHTER OF JARUS; GREGG K. OLSEN © 1990



“PLEAD WITH GOD IN THE NAME OF CHRIST TO WRITE THE GOSPEL IN YOUR MIND THAT YOU MAY HAVE UNDERSTANDING AND IN YOUR HEART THAT YOU MAY LOVE TO DO HIS WILL.”

ELDER D. TODD CHRISTOFFERSON



• Most important, do you strive to make your actions reflect those of the Savior?

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, “Your happiness now and forever is conditioned on your degree of conversion and the transformation that it brings to your life.”<sup>8</sup>

Gospel living is not just about everything we don’t do. It’s even more focused on the good things we choose to do because we love God and His children and we want to be like Him. **NE**

*Sarah Petersen lives in Utah, USA.*

**NOTES**

1. Exodus 20:13–15.
2. D&C 58:27–28.
3. “You Know Enough,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 13–14.
4. “When Thou Art Converted,” *Ensign*, May 2004, 11.
5. See *True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* (2004), 41.
6. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1954), 335.
7. “The Love of God,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 23.
8. “Full Conversion Brings Happiness,” *Ensign*, May 2002, 25.

## 5 STEPS OF CONVERSION



“Do you want conversion for yourself? I can tell you how that can happen, but it must be something you want. The gospel cannot be written in your heart unless your heart is open. But if your heart is open and willing, like the heart of a child (see Matthew 18:3–4), let me tell you what you can do to be converted.

“1. **Lay aside any feeling of pride** that is so common in the world today. By this I mean the attitude that rejects the authority of God to rule in our lives. Willingly submitting to God’s authority is the first step in conversion.

“2. **Know the gospel and grow to understand it more fully.** That means you will study it. When I say ‘study,’ I mean something more than reading. For conversion, you should care more about the amount of time you spend in the scriptures than about the amount you read in that time.

“3. **Pray about everything in your life.** Your Heavenly Father wants you to pray about your hopes and fears, your friends and family, your school and work, and the needs of those around you. Most of all, you should pray to be filled with the love of Christ (see Moroni 7:48).

“4. **Serve others.** Jesus said that He came to serve, not to be served (see Mark 10:45). So it must be with you. You must look outward and care about others.

“5. **Offer the Lord the gift of your broken, or repentant, heart and your contrite, or obedient, spirit.** In reality, it is the gift of yourself—what you are and what you are becoming.

“Plead with God in the name of Christ to write the gospel in your mind that you may have understanding and in your heart that you may love to do His will.”

**Adapted from Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “When Thou Art Converted,” *Ensign*, May 2004, 11–13.**



# FASTING ON FOOT

Could walking instead of driving two days a week really make much difference?

By B. N. Kohler

One morning as my companion and I were leaving our flat for the day, I wasn't very happy. I wanted to take the car that day, but we have a rule in the mission that we have to "car fast" (walk, not drive) for two days each week—and this was one of those days. I was not happy about having to walk, and as we left I said a prayer asking that I might be able to see the reason why we had to "car fast."

We walked down the road and talked to a few people. As we turned onto another long road, I noticed a man with two children. I had the distinct impression to talk to him. However, to my shame, I initially thought, "He's so far away."

Again the impression came, and again I ignored it. Suddenly the man noticed I was looking at him, and he yelled, "G'day, boys." I crossed the street and said hello. We chatted for a minute, and I found out his name is Daniel and his grandmother is a member of the Church. He told us we could come to his house and teach him and his boys, and the boys seemed keen.

Three months later I had the wonderful experience of witnessing the baptisms of

Daniel and one of his sons. Daniel had grown closer to the Lord in numerous ways. He had changed his life and sincerely repented of past sins, and through great effort and total commitment, he was worthy to be baptized and confirmed.

We recently visited Daniel and his family. He told us his wife is now interested in learning more about the Church. She said that it seems she, too, will be baptized.



## BLESSINGS FLOW

"Obedience allows God's blessings to flow without constraint."

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Face the Future with Faith," *Ensign*, May 2011, 34.

It has been a humbling and spiritual experience to see the family progress. It causes me to reflect on the mercy and goodness of God, who would reach down and answer my simple prayer. I know that everything the Lord commands has a purpose. I know that He is preparing people to hear the gospel and that I have to be obedient for them to come to me and for me to be led to them. **NE**

*B. N. Kohler lives in Utah, USA.*

# WE NEED CHRIST'S CHURCH

*One trendy attitude is a devil of a lie.*

By David A. Edwards

Church Magazines

If you could peek inside the devil's toolbox, you'd see precision instruments for leading people astray, as well as a few well-worn tools that are obviously among his go-to gear.

One particular saw he's been reaching for more and more these days comes in the form of this subtle lie: "You don't need organized religion to be a good person, to be spiritual, or to love Jesus. All churches are imperfect and corrupt anyway."

This deception is cunning because it relies on a couple of true ideas to get you to swallow the big lie. It's true that we should strengthen our relationship with God and that people are imperfect, but these facts don't

mean that the very idea of a church is wrong.

This kind of thinking is false, and here are just five reasons why:

**1. Christ established His Church.** In the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, you'll see that a good deal of the Savior's ministry consisted of calling people, giving them authority, training them for leadership, and teaching them how to act as a group. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, "Those who reject the need for organized religion reject the work of the Master, who established His Church and its officers in the meridian of time and who reestablished them in modern times."<sup>1</sup>

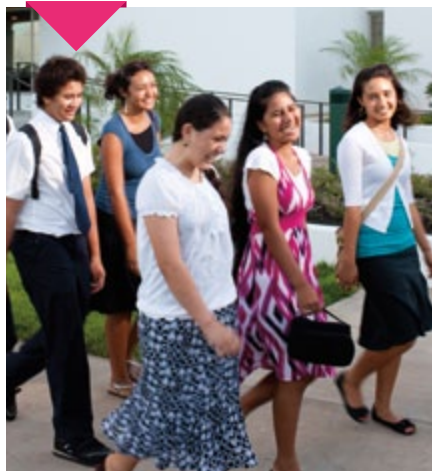
**2. The Church administers the gospel and its ordinances.** The Savior clearly taught that baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost are necessary for salvation (see John 3:5), and the authority to preach the gospel and perform these ordinances was regulated. As Elder Oaks has said, "The Bible is clear that priesthood authority is necessary and that this authority had to be conferred by the laying on of hands by those who held it.

Priesthood authority did not come from a desire to serve or from reading the scriptures."<sup>2</sup>

**3. The Church helps us become better people.** Elder Donald L. Hallstrom of the Presidency of the Seventy recently taught: "We need the gospel *and* the Church. In fact, the purpose of the Church is to help us live the gospel."<sup>3</sup> Though the Church is made up of imperfect people, it helps us become more like Jesus Christ by teaching us His doctrine, giving us opportunities for service and personal growth, and allowing us to enter into and renew covenants with God.

**4. Unity matters.** The Lord has commanded us to "be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine" (D&C 38:27). This oneness is an essential part of our Heavenly Father's plan for us. President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has taught:

"We yearn, as spirit children of our Heavenly Father, for that joy which we once had with Him in the life before this one. His desire is to grant us that sacred wish for unity out of His love for us.





“He cannot grant it to us as individuals. The joy of unity He wants so much to give us is not solitary. We must seek it and qualify for it with others. It is not surprising then that God urges us to gather so that He can bless us.”<sup>4</sup>

**5. “Organized” is not a synonym for “bad” or “corrupt.”** Usually when people call someone or something “organized,” it’s a compliment. But somehow in religion it’s a put-down. According to Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, one of the reasons Christ organized His Church was “because random, individual

goodness is not enough in the fight against evil.”<sup>5</sup> The Lord spelled out the issue clearly when He said, “Behold, mine house is a house of order, saith the Lord God, and not a house of confusion” (D&C 132:8). Organized is exactly what a religion needs to be.

As you encounter the lies that are the tools of the devil’s trade, remember that you have your own set of tools to help you live the gospel—tools available to us through the Church of Jesus Christ: the scriptures, the gift of the Holy Ghost, your testimony, and truths revealed through modern prophets. **NE**

#### NOTES

1. Dallin H. Oaks, “Two Lines of Communication,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 85.
2. Dallin H. Oaks, “The Only True and Living Church,” *New Era*, Aug. 2011, 4.
3. Donald L. Hallstrom, “Converted to His Gospel through His Church,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 14.
4. Henry B. Eyring, “Our Hearts Knit as One,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 69.
5. Neal A. Maxwell, “Why Not Now?” *Ensign*, Nov. 1974, 13.



# THE MUSTARD SEED

Learn more about the little seed with a big reputation.



## The Mustard Plant

**Plant name:** black mustard  
(*Sinapis nigra* or *Brassica nigra*)

**Plant type:** annual, dicotyledon

**Average size of seed:** 1–2 millimeters  
(about .05 inch)

**Average size of plant:** 1–2 meters  
(about 3–6 feet) high, though under  
certain conditions it can sometimes grow  
to be 3–5 meters (about 10–15 feet) high  
or more, and just as wide

## THE RESTORED CHURCH IS BRANCHING FORTH

“This figure [the mustard seed] is given to represent the Church as it shall come forth in the last days. . . .

“Let us take the Book of Mormon . . . ; let us behold it coming forth out of the ground, which is indeed accounted the least of all seeds, but behold it branching forth, yea, even towering with lofty branches and God-like majesty, until it, like the mustard seed, becomes the greatest of all herbs. And it is truth, . . . and God is sending down His powers, gifts, and angels to lodge in the branches thereof.”

The Prophet Joseph Smith, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 301.



## WHAT WE CAN LEARN

“THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE TO A GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED, WHICH A MAN TOOK, AND SOWED IN HIS FIELD:

“WHICH INDEED IS THE LEAST OF ALL SEEDS: BUT WHEN IT IS GROWN, IT IS THE GREATEST AMONG HERBS, AND BECOMETH A TREE, SO THAT THE BIRDS OF THE AIR COME AND LODGE IN THE BRANCHES THEREOF.”

Matthew 13:31–32.

### MUSTARD SEEDS:

- **Are small.** The kingdom of heaven (Christ’s Church) arose from humble beginnings, both in Jesus’s day and in the latter days.
- **Can spread widely and quickly.** As we share the gospel with others and the Holy Ghost testifies to them that it is true, the Church of Jesus Christ can spread until it accomplishes its destiny of filling the earth.
- **Can grow to be unusually large.** When Christ says that the mustard seed will become a tree, He is describing something unique that can happen with a mustard plant under certain conditions—it can grow into a large, tree-like bush. So it is with the Church. From obscure beginnings and with the unique blessings, authority, and power of God, the Church has been restored and will fulfill its purpose of preparing the world for the Second Coming of the Savior.



## Facts about Mustard Seeds

- In Jesus’s day, it was common for people to say something was like a mustard seed in order to suggest that it was very, very small.
- The mustard plant is quite common in the Near East and is often considered to be a weed because it can spread so widely and quickly with its tiny seeds.
- Mustard plants don’t grow into what we normally think of as trees, with woody trunks, bark, and big branches, though when conditions are right, they can become quite large.
- Seeds were often ground up to make powder, paste, or oil for use in medicines (poultices and plasters) or foods (pickling spice, cooking oil, and condiments).
- The name *mustard*, as well as the use of mustard as a condiment, came from the Romans, who added must (freshly pressed grape juice) to the spicy-hot powder from the ground-up seeds.



# A CALENDAR WITH NO SUNDAYS

**I LEARNED AS A TEENAGER THAT WHEN I DO EVERYTHING IN MY POWER TO KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS, THE LORD WILL BLESS ME.**



**By Elder  
Brent H.  
Nielson**  
Of the Seventy

**E**arly in the scriptures we learn of Moses receiving the Ten Commandments. One of those commandments is to keep the Sabbath day holy. The Lord taught Moses, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work” (Exodus 20:8–10).

We live in a world where it can be difficult to keep the Sabbath day holy as the Lord has commanded. Nephi learned as a young man that if the Lord gives us a commandment, then the Lord will also prepare a way for us to accomplish the thing He has commanded (see 1 Nephi 3:7).

Upon graduation from high school and before I left on my mission, I obtained a summer job as a lifeguard at a swimming pool. As I arrived for my first day, I learned that because I was the newest employee I had been scheduled to work every Sunday the entire summer. I tried to work out a different arrangement with my employers, but they wouldn't change my schedule.

I had committed to keep the Sabbath day holy as an Aaronic Priesthood holder. And as I prepared to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood, I knew I needed to keep that commitment. Because of the nature of my job, my options were to quit or make other arrangements with my schedule so that I could keep the Sabbath day holy. As I prayed, I felt impressed to stay at the job and that the Lord would help me accomplish the thing He had commanded.

As the summer progressed, I met individually each week with other lifeguards who did not share my standards and offered to work for them on Friday nights or Saturdays if they would switch with me so I could have Sundays off. I was able to find a different person who would switch with me for all 12 weeks of the summer. The Lord prepared the way, and I was able to attend Church and keep the Sabbath day holy all summer.

Not only did this experience strengthen my understanding that the Lord would prepare a way for me to keep His commandments, but soon my co-workers noticed I was always searching for someone to work for me on Sunday. They learned that keeping the Sabbath

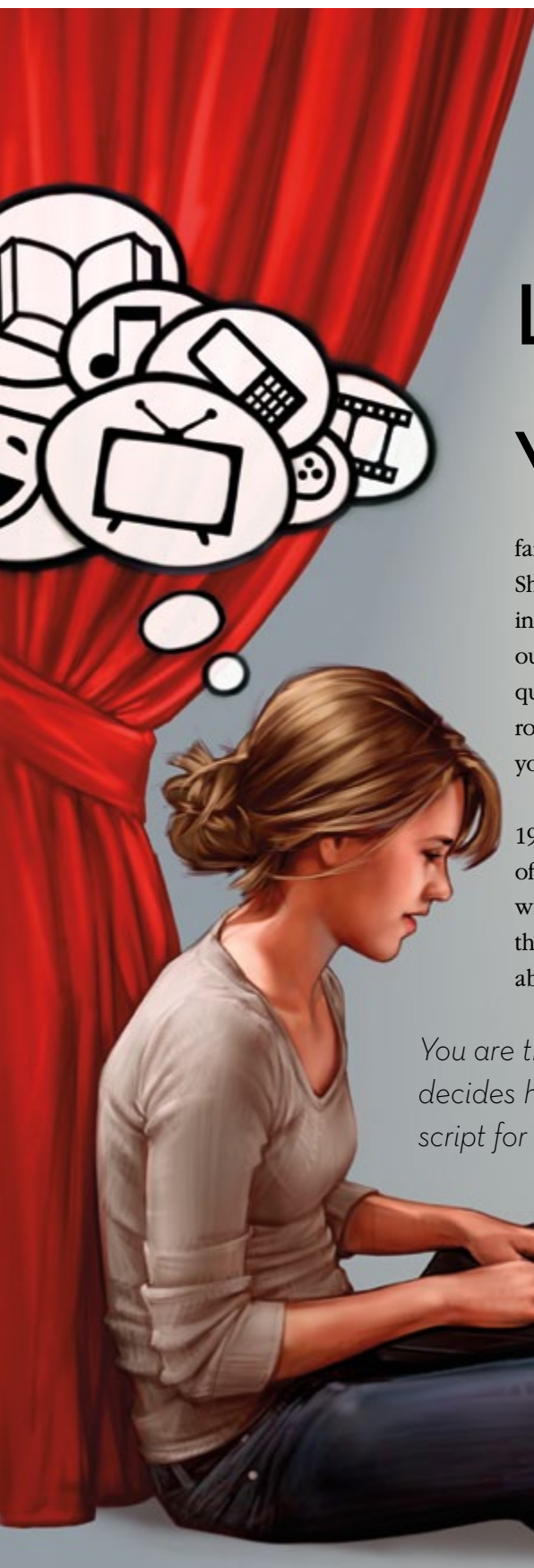
## AT THE END-OF-SUMMER PARTY, I RECEIVED A PARTING GIFT FROM THE OTHER LIFEGUARDS.

day holy was a commandment and that I was determined to keep the commandment. At the end of the summer when the pool closed, there was a party with all of the lifeguards. At the party I received a parting gift from the other lifeguards. It was a work calendar they had made for me without any Sundays. They acknowledged that I had been scheduled to work every Sunday but had not worked one. They expressed respect for my commitment to keep the Sabbath day holy.

With every commandment we keep, the Lord gives us promised blessings. As we keep the Sabbath day holy, the Lord teaches “the fulness of the earth is yours” (D&C 59:16). In addition, we learn that “he who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come” (D&C 59:23). In D&C 82:10 we are reminded, “I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise.”

My commitment to keep the Sabbath day holy as a young man and through my life as an adult has brought me the blessings the Lord has promised. This lesson was learned many years ago when I received a calendar with no Sundays. **NE**





## LIGHTS ... CAMERA ...

You've probably heard the phrase "All the world's a stage" from William Shakespeare's famous play *As You Like It*. The idea Shakespeare's character was expressing is that we are all performers acting out roles in the grand play of life. My question to you now is, "What is your role in life?" or better still, "What do you want your role in life to be?"

President David O. McKay (1873–1970) said, "Thoughts are the seeds of acts, and precede them."<sup>1</sup> But what makes your thoughts become the script in your brain? You probably know that our brains are like a

*You are the one who decides how to write the script for your life.*

computer: you can only output what you have stored on it. If you put in only garbage, then that is all you will ever get out. You need to realize that everything you watch, read, or listen to will help write the script to your life.

### Powerful Images and Thoughts

Since a large part of my professional career was in advertising, I have a lot of experience in seeing how media can create powerful images and thoughts in people's minds. Making a great television commercial can be exactly like making a Hollywood movie, except the "shooting" or filming is usually done over the space of a few days instead of months.

After spending a long time researching and planning a media campaign, I might hire cinematographers from Hollywood, models from Italy, and music producers from New York City. Then the work would begin. Following a frenetic production schedule, we would launch the advertising campaign in all kinds of media. It was mesmerizing, exciting, and fun work.

With this experience I can tell you for a fact that the advertisements you



By Adrián Ochoa

Second Counselor  
in the Young Men  
General Presidency



# ACTION!

see online, on television, or in magazines are not actually real. The images you see are just artistic creations, made purposely to entice people to buy the advertised product. That is why I never agreed to do advertising for products I did not believe in. Most people understand these facts about advertisements, but the same general principle goes for movies, TV shows, web and mobile content, and electronic games: they are all created with calculated messages and motives behind them.

## Powerful Protection

Because Satan uses media to try to mislead us into breaking God's commandments, you should follow with unwavering determination the counsel given in *For the Strength of Youth*: "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."<sup>2</sup>

Remember that in reality you are here in this life to develop your faith, to be tested, and to learn and be happy. As a member of Christ's true Church, you have great power to help you. You have the power of the Holy Ghost to warn you when

something in front of you is not right. You also have the power of agency, so you can choose what you will and will not do.

If you have not been wise at times and have occasionally chosen to view or listen to the wrong content, decide now to make a change. If those bad choices have diminished your ability to feel the Spirit, get on your knees and ask Heavenly Father for strength and forgiveness. And if you are still having trouble, ask for help from your parents or bishop. You may feel ashamed or scared to talk to them, but that means you need to do it all the more. With courage and humility you can overcome your challenges, and when you do, you will feel the glorious peace and joy of repentance.

You are not just an actor or actress on a stage; you are a child of God in a probationary world that is filled with good and bad media. If you feed your spirit with the right content, your role in life will be one of happiness, and you will be as a light that shines forth to help and guide others. There is always darkness around us, but there is always an eternal and illuminated path guiding us to the fount of all goodness and light. **NE**

## ENTERTAINMENT AND MEDIA

"Take care that your use of media does not dull your sensitivity to the Spirit."

*For the Strength of Youth*  
(2011), 12.

## Mormon Messages for Youth

Watch a short video about this topic featuring Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles at [lds.org/go/23B](http://lds.org/go/23B).

## NOTES

1. David O. McKay, *Stepping Stones to an Abundant Life*, comp. Llewelyn R. McKay (1971), 206.
2. *For the Strength of Youth* (2011), 11.



### **IS IT WORTH OUR TIME?**

“Consider how we use our time in the choices we make in viewing television, playing video games, surfing the Internet, or reading books or magazines. Of course it is good to view wholesome entertainment or to obtain interesting information. But not everything of that sort is worth the portion of our life we give to obtain it. Some things are better, and others are best.”

**Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Good, Better, Best,”**  
*Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 105.

# ADDICTED TO VIDEO GAMES

Name withheld

**W**hen I was 13, my mother gave me a video game for my birthday. Video games were relatively new for me, and this one had great graphics and was very entertaining. School was on break, and I decided that I would finish the game as soon as possible so that I would have more time to play outside with my friends.

One Thursday afternoon I began playing my new video game. Before I knew it, it was past midnight, and I had not said my evening prayer. But I kept on playing.

Things just got worse. When I woke up the following day, the first thing I did was turn on the game

and start playing again. I hardly even stopped to eat or sleep, and all I thought about was how I was going to reach the next level in my game.

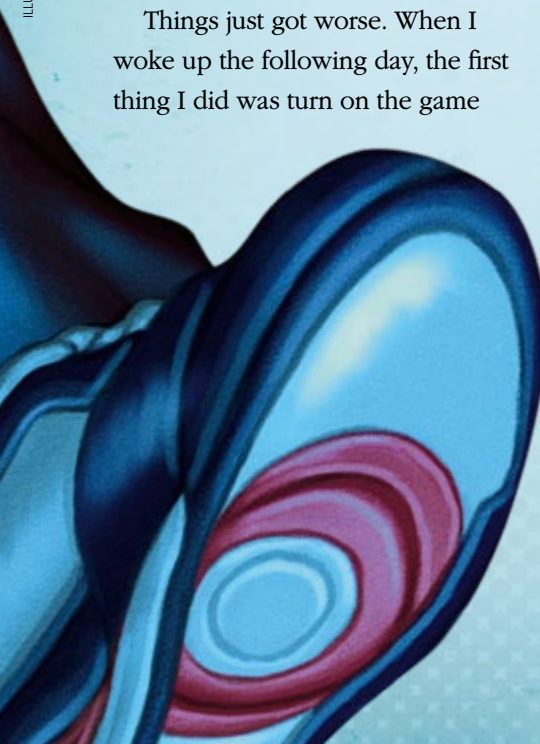
On Saturday evening my mother warned me that if I did not go to sleep early, I would have a hard time waking up the next morning to go to church. But I kept on playing and did not fall asleep until 3:00 in the morning. When I arrived at church, I felt so tired that I had trouble concentrating. I wasn't able to pass the sacrament, and I returned home to sleep, completely exhausted.

I slept all through Sunday and did not wake up until Monday morning, and I only woke up so I could keep playing. That week I knew that I had to get a good night's rest and try to go to bed early, but even then I kept wasting my time on video games. I began spending more time playing video games than reading the scriptures. In fact, I even stopped reading for several days. When school started up again, my mom forbade me to play during the week, so I took advantage of the weekends to play, including Sundays.

By no longer attending Sunday services, I stopped doing what really mattered for something as unimportant as a video game. I was not following the advice of my grandfather, who once said, "Don't ever forsake the things that really matter for something commonplace." This advice has always stuck with me.

I realized I needed to find balance in my life. One thing that helped me was my seminary class. At my middle school, seminary was held as part of the daily curriculum, and it helped me a lot. It gave me the opportunity to learn to set my priorities straight and place the Lord before everything else. If we trust Him and if we ask Him from the bottom of our hearts to help us with some aspect of our lives, the Lord will hear us. If we truly desire to change, we can.

Fortunately, I didn't have to go through a major problem to make me quit gaming. Setting my priorities straight and limiting the time I spent gaming was enough. However, that did not happen until I asked the Lord in prayer for help, and He helped me. **NE**



# How Do I CONDUCT A MEETING?

So you've turned 12 and moved from the Primary into Young Women or the Aaronic Priesthood. Things are going great, and you love some of the new things you get to do. You've discovered, though, that this change also brings

new responsibilities. One of those responsibilities that might be a little scary for you is that you may now be asked to conduct meetings.

Depending on what meeting you are conducting (Mutual activity, Sunday meetings, quorum or class presidency meetings), the requirements and agenda

may be a little different, but here are some general suggestions and guidelines to consider as you fulfill this responsibility:

- Use an agenda that outlines what will happen in the meeting. Ask your leaders if they have an agenda template for you to fill out.
- Choose music that will invite the Spirit.
- Plan for opening and closing prayers.
- Make assignments ahead of time if you can.
- Arrive early and make sure everything is ready.
- Announce who will pray, lead the music, teach, and do other things in the meeting.
- Be reverent as you conduct and allow the Spirit to guide you. Be a good example for the other youth attending the meeting.

Learning how to conduct a meeting may be a little scary at first, but it will get easier as you do it more, and it will help you to gain some of the skills you will need as a future leader in the Church. **NE**



## SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA

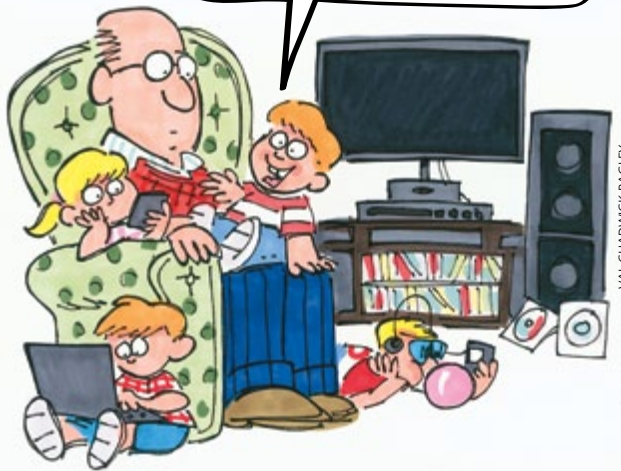
Most meetings in the Church follow a similar pattern. Here's what your agenda will most likely include:

- Welcome
- Opening hymn
- Opening prayer
- Introduction of visitors
- Business and announcements
- Lesson or activity
- Closing prayer

### Download an Agenda Form

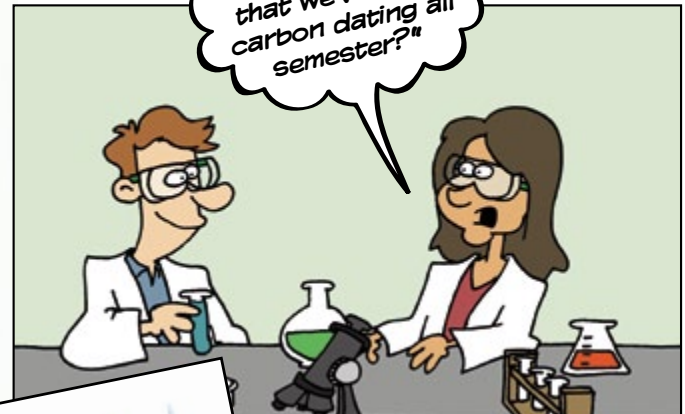
Young men can download an example of an agenda for a quorum meeting at [lds.org/go/32D](https://www.lds.org/go/32D). Young women can download an agenda for presidency meetings at [lds.org/go/32E](https://www.lds.org/go/32E).

"Grandpa, tell us about the 'olden days' when you crossed the plains with handcarts and watched Church movies on a filmstrip projector."



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

"Go out with you? Isn't it enough that we've been carbon dating all semester?"



ARIE VAN DE GRAAFF

"Yeah! Ready for the stake daddy-daughter dance?"

"Dad. No..."



RYAN STOKER

"No, Brother Pitts, the keys you'll have as deacons quorum president are not car keys..."



JON CLARK



## What We Really Think of Youth



.....

“Those of you in the rising generation are better prepared [for missionary service] than any previous generation. Your knowledge of the scriptures is particularly impressive.”

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Can Ye Feel So Now?” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 6.



## 1,002 Cans of Wheat

**K**aylan J., a 17-year-old from Montana, knew that the only grocery store in his small town of 1,700 people would be cleared out quickly in the event of a major disaster. Nobody he asked had any real food storage. If anything, they seemed confused when he brought up the concept. “I’ve always been nervous for my community that way,” says Kaylan.

So Kaylan, who comes from a farming family, decided to give his community a huge jump-start on food storage. His father generously donated 12 acres of land for Kaylan’s Eagle Scout project—12 acres that Kaylan would plant, grow, harvest, and ultimately can as wheat for the entire community. “My goal was to produce over 1,000 cans,” Kaylan explains.

As the project unfolded, many of Kaylan’s friends, most of whom are not members of the Church, began seeing the importance of food storage—which was his goal all along. “I hoped to not only immediately help the people but also maybe spark the idea for food storage,” Kaylan says.

In the end, Kaylan and 35 volunteers canned and boxed

1,002 five-pound cans of wheat, all of which are now stored under the high school gymnasium floor until needed. With enough wheat in each can to make six loaves of bread, his work can feed 1,000 people for approximately one month.

“It worked out awesome,” Kaylan says of the project. “It puts my mind at ease a little.”



PHOTOGRAPHS © ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK. COURTESY OF KAYLAN J.



## By the Numbers

Number of parking spaces in the Conference Center. Combined, the parking spaces cover 450,000 square feet.

# 1,300

## My Favorite Scripture

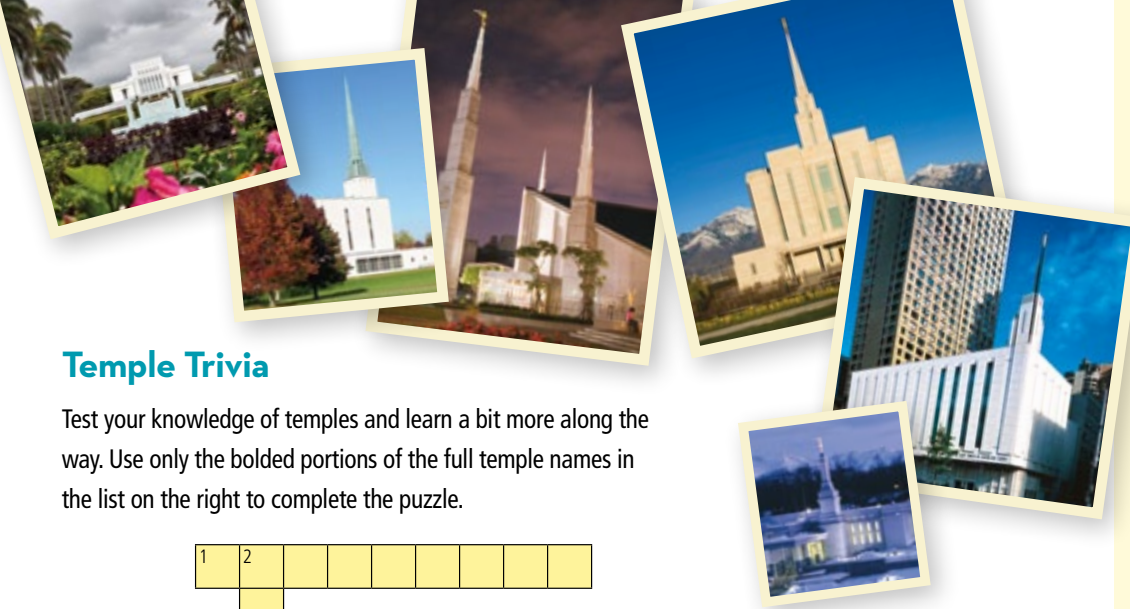
**Alma 30:44** *“The scriptures are laid before thee, yea, and all things denote there is a God; yea, even the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it, yea, and its motion, yea, and also all the planets which move in their regular form do witness that there is a Supreme Creator.”*

I like this scripture because of its power and importance. It is an excellent example of Alma’s belief in Christ’s doctrine. And it allows us all to realize what God has done for us and makes it seem difficult to deny God’s existence.

**Jackson S., 13, Indiana, USA**

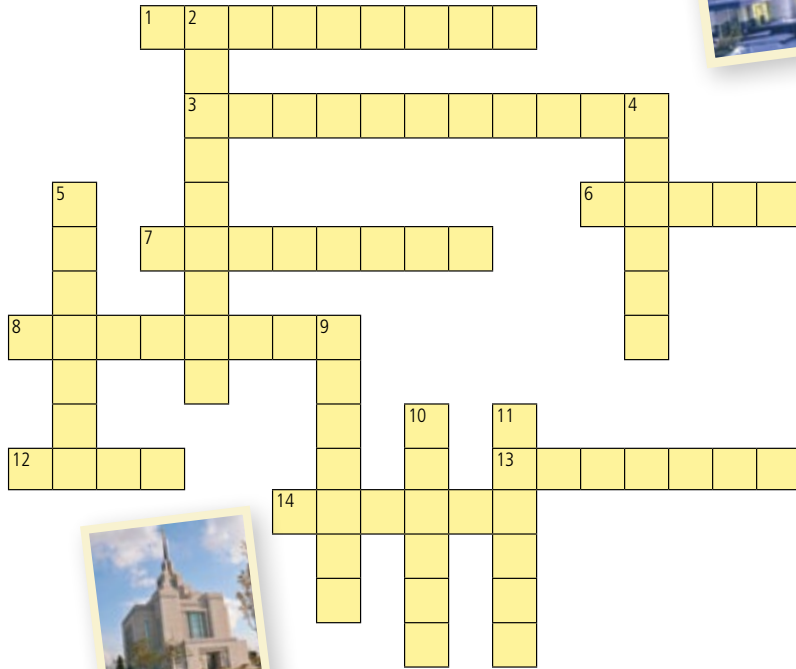


Tell us about your favorite scripture in a paragraph or two. Send it to us, along with a photo, by going to [newera.lds.org](http://newera.lds.org) and clicking “Submit Material.”



## Temple Trivia

Test your knowledge of temples and learn a bit more along the way. Use only the bolded portions of the full temple names in the list on the right to complete the puzzle.



- Anchorage* **Alaska** Temple
- Apia* **Samoa** Temple
- Johannesburg* Temple
- South Africa** Temple
- Kyiv* **Ukraine** Temple
- Laie* **Hawaii** Temple
- Lima* **Peru** Temple
- London** *England* Temple
- Manhattan** *New York* Temple
- Oakland** *California* Temple
- Oquirrh** *Mountain* *Utah* Temple
- Salt Lake** Temple
- Santiago** *Chile* Temple
- Sydney* **Australia** Temple
- Taipei* **Taiwan** Temple



### Across

1. Door handles in the shape of the Statue of Liberty torch can be found throughout this temple.
3. With the dedication of this temple in 1985, there was now a Latter-day Saint temple on every habitable continent of the world.
6. The angel Moroni statue survived a fire that destroyed the rest of the temple in 2003. When the temple was rebuilt and rededicated in 2005, the angel Moroni statue was put back in its place.
7. The largest temple in the Church in terms of square footage, this was also the first temple to be open to the public before its dedication.
8. This temple was the first to be built in a Spanish-speaking country.
12. This temple serves more stakes than any other temple.
13. For the first time ever, Sunday Church meetings were canceled statewide in Utah to allow members to attend the broadcast dedication of this temple.
14. A Latter-day Saint mission home, which once stood on the same site, needed to be leveled to make room for this temple.
4. Carvings of the Big Dipper and the North Star can be found in one of the exterior granite walls of this temple.
5. This temple was the first to be built in the former Soviet Union.
9. Two 35-foot-tall sculpted panels of the Savior decorate the exterior of this temple.
10. Crushed rock and coral were used in creating the concrete exterior of this temple.
11. In 1215, the Magna Carta was signed in the same county (Surrey County) where this temple stands today.

### Down

2. This temple, the first on its continent, sits on property formerly used as a school for boys.

### Source of Inspiration


The *New Era* has been a great source of inspiration for me. I especially enjoy the way it connects the youth from all over the world. I love hearing about different service projects and the experiences youth have had to strengthen their testimonies. Their examples have helped me to be a strong member of the Church and to be confident in sharing my beliefs with others.

**Esther P., 18, Australia**

### A Full Suit of Armor (from youth.lds.org)

I like this story ["What Is Pure Testimony?" [lds.org/go/23F](http://lds.org/go/23F)]. It reminds me that when I put on the armor of righteousness each day, it's like weaving rings into my breastplate or chainmail for every small spiritual experience I have. Just a small one . . . adds to my armor by a little bit. When I look back at my progress in life, I [will] have an entire piece of spiritual armor—entire faith [in] Christ.

**Samuel C., 17, Utah, USA**

 We love hearing from you. Go to [newera.lds.org](http://newera.lds.org) and click "Submit Material." Or leave a comment on any article at [youth.lds.org](http://youth.lds.org).

**Across:** 1. Manhattan; 3. South Africa; 6. Samoa; 7. Salt Lake; 8. Santiago; 9. Ukraine; 10. Hawaii; 11. London; 12. Peru; 13. Oquirrh; 14. Taiwan. **Down:** 2. Australia; 4. Alaska; 5. Ukraine; 6. Hawaii; 7. Salt Lake; 8. Santiago; 9. Ukraine; 10. Hawaii; 11. London; 12. Peru; 13. Oquirrh; 14. Taiwan.

## FINISHING THE COURSE

In high school I ran cross-country and distance track. I was never very good, but I enjoyed running and worked hard. One day my team was scheduled for a cross-country meet that took place on a particularly hilly course. I'd been practicing hard, so as we lined up in our starting positions, I said a silent prayer to Heavenly Father to ask if He would bless me with success in accordance to my hard work.

The gunshot sounded, and we were off. The first mile was flat and I was feeling pretty well, so I began to run even faster. Surely this was going to be my finest race! Then came the first hill. I ran up as fast as I could and came tearing down the other side. But then there was another hill. This one was even steeper, and I quickly lost my momentum. I started feeling like I might fall down the other side. I held it together, but when I came around the next corner, I saw multiple hills to come. Before long I became very tired. By mile two, other runners continually passed me. I became frustrated with myself for taking the first part of the race so fast, using all the energy that I needed now. I wanted to give up and walk off the course.

I decided to say another silent prayer. I asked my Father in Heaven



to bless me with the ability to finish the race. Then the thought came, “Sometimes life gets hard, and it’s all you can do to keep running, but in the end you’ll be glad you didn’t give up and walk.” I was able to finish the race, and while I didn’t run the amazing race I’d wanted to, I gained something that has helped me ever since—a sense for how it may feel to endure to the end.

Paul said to Timothy, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished

my course, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7). I learned that at the end of my life I want to say, as Paul did, that I fought the good fight, that I finished my course, and that I kept the faith. I now know that things don’t always work out perfectly, but even in something as small as a high school cross-country meet, the gospel of Jesus Christ helps give us the strength to endure to the end.

**Kyle C., Arizona, USA**





## BE NOT AFRAID

**M**y mom and I went to my first day of high school. The parents had a meeting while the students went on a tour of the school building. I was walking alone in the back when some kids started asking me a lot of questions about the Church. I was silent and didn't say anything, and so they started to cuss and mock me. They said that Joseph Smith was a false prophet who had stolen the gold plates. I was so angry and sad that, even though I was new and didn't know any of them, I stood up and shared my testimony. I told them that the Book of Mormon is another testament of Jesus Christ.

When I finished, they all looked at me without speaking. One young woman was crying. After the tour she came to me and asked questions about the Church. I invited her to church, and we have been reading the Book of Mormon together. Since then, no one has mocked what I believe. That night I prayed and thanked my Heavenly Father for helping me to be strong and be able to have courage to share my testimony with my friends. In Joshua 1:9 it says, "Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

**Teisa M., Tonga**

## VIDEO GAME DECISION

**I**n my freshmen year of high school, I came across a popular new video game that was exceptionally violent. After a few times playing it, I began to enjoy it. I'd come home from school and plop down lazily on the couch to play, and I'd tell my younger siblings to go away because the game wasn't appropriate for them.

It didn't take long for the effects of my decisions to start happening. Slowly, I lost patience, love, peace, and the Spirit. My thoughts became violent and my temper became high. I was rude to people and pushed away kind acts. This happened for way too long.

One day I was reading the *For the Strength of Youth* booklet in the "Entertainment and Media" section

when I realized what I had been doing. I'd been ignoring the warnings and silently been suffering for it. That day I repented and promised never to play games like that again. It was not easy in any way. I hadn't realized my addiction to the awful game, and I have been nothing but blessed for quitting. I have become closer to my family and to my Father in Heaven.

I also learned a valuable lesson about keeping myself pure. The Lord wants us to become like little children (see Matthew 18:3), so if something is inappropriate for a little child to play, then it's inappropriate for me.

**Sydney M., California, USA**

## THE POWER OF GOOD MUSIC

**H**as a song ever touched your heart and strengthened your testimony? It has mine—during one family home evening when we were singing a hymn. Normally I don't pay much attention to the words I'm singing, but that day I was listening. I heard the words "when Jesus shows His smiling face, there is sunshine in the soul" ("There

Is Sunshine in My Soul Today," *Hymns*, no. 227). When I heard these words, I felt a calming peace come over me. I realized that Jesus always loves us and is always willing to comfort us if we do what He wants us to do. I know that the power of good music can impact our lives for good and help us become better people.

**Michael W., Georgia, USA**



By Elder  
David A. Bednar

Of the Quorum of  
the Twelve Apostles

## HOW TO ALWAYS HAVE THE SPIRIT TO BE WITH US

The influence of the Holy Ghost is described in the scriptures as “a still small voice” (1 Kings 19:12; see also 3 Nephi 11:3) and a “voice of perfect mildness” (Helaman 5:30). Thus, the Spirit of the Lord usually communicates with us in ways that are **quiet, delicate, and subtle**.

In our individual study and classroom instruction, we repeatedly emphasize the importance of recognizing the inspiration and promptings we receive from the Spirit of the Lord. And such an approach is correct and useful. We should **seek diligently to recognize and respond to promptings** as they come to us. However, an important aspect of baptism by the Spirit may frequently be overlooked in our spiritual development.

We should also endeavor to **discern when we “withdraw**

**[ourselves] from the Spirit** of the Lord, that it may have no place in [us] to guide [us] in wisdom’s paths that [we] may be blessed, prospered, and preserved” (Mosiah 2:36). Precisely because the promised blessing is *that we may always have His Spirit to be with us* (see D&C 20:77), we should attend to and learn from the choices and influences that separate us from the Holy Spirit.

The standard is clear. If something we think, see, hear, or do distances us from the Holy Ghost, then we should stop thinking, seeing, hearing, or doing that thing. If that which is intended to entertain, for example, alienates us from the Holy Spirit, then certainly that type of entertainment is not for us. Because the Spirit cannot abide that which is vulgar, crude, or immodest, then clearly such things are not for us. Because we estrange the Spirit of the Lord when we engage in activities we know we should shun, then such things definitely are not for us. . . .

The Spirit of the Lord can be our guide and will bless us with direction, instruction, and spiritual protection during our mortal journey.

We invite the Holy Ghost into our lives through:

- Meaningful personal and family prayer.
- Feasting upon the words of Christ.
- Diligent and exacting obedience.
- Faithfulness and honoring of covenants.
- Virtue, humility, and service.

And we steadfastly should avoid things that are immodest, coarse, crude, sinful, or evil that cause us to withdraw ourselves from the Holy Ghost. . . .

Through the ordinance of the sacrament we **renew our baptismal covenant** and can receive and retain a remission of our sins (see Mosiah 4:12, 26). In addition, we are reminded on a weekly basis of the promise *that we may always have His Spirit to be with us*. As we then strive to **keep ourselves clean** and unspotted from the world, we become worthy vessels in whom the Spirit of the Lord can always dwell. **NE**

*From an April 2006 general conference address.*

### Share Your Experiences

Share your experiences in applying this principle and read the experiences of other youth by going to [lds.org/go/23G](https://lds.org/go/23G).





## Identity

By Janelle Bricknell

If you think I'm quiet  
You've got it all wrong.  
As I can be quite lively  
And chat all day long!

If you think I'm ordinary  
You're way off your peak.  
There's no one else like me,  
That's 'cause I'm unique!

If you think I'm special,  
You're very close there!  
It's actually something we all have—  
It's an Identity we all share!

*Janelle Bricknell lives in South Africa.*

## WHAT'S ONLINE

### New Media: Stand in Holy Places

As you focus this year on standing in holy places, be sure to check out the new music and videos created for the 2013 Mutual theme. You'll find them online at [lds.org/go/13H](http://lds.org/go/13H).

**STAND**  
— YE IN —  
**HOLY**  
**PLACES**  
AND BE NOT MOVED

### Youth Interviews: "We Will Stand"

Ever wonder what other youth are doing to live the standards in *For the Strength of Youth*? The Mormon Channel interviewed numerous young women as part of the *We Will Stand* program. You can hear their stories, with each episode focusing on a different standard, at [lds.org/go/13I](http://lds.org/go/13I).



### Backhoes, Landfills, and a New Start

Can you imagine showing up at a landfill and using a backhoe to dig up all of your personal garbage from earlier years of your life? It doesn't sound too logical, does it? Yet we often do similar things in our lives. Find out how this relates to you in the *Mormon Messages for Youth* video "Reclaimed" at [lds.org/go/13J](http://lds.org/go/13J).

THE CHURCH OF  
**JESUS CHRIST**  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

