



PUT SOME *Muscle* INTO YOUR FAMILY

A simple object lesson can help you teach your family about sticking together and strengthening one another.

Bring on the Muscle

Do you have a brother or other relative who likes to prove their physical strength at every opportunity? You know, someone who never met a phone book they wouldn't try to rip in half with their bare hands?

If so, here's the perfect family home evening lesson for that guy! But even if you don't have a muscle-minded relative close at hand, this object lesson still has something valuable to teach us all about the

importance of strengthening one another.

For this lesson, you'll need about 50 craft sticks (Popsicle sticks) and your scriptures.

Getting Snappy

To begin your lesson, ask for a volunteer willing to demonstrate a feat of amazing strength. You can actually pick anybody from your family, because this part is easy. Once you have your volunteer, hand over a single craft stick and ask if he or she can break it in

two. Your volunteer should be able to snap it with no problem.

Tell your family that each craft stick represents a single person—and that we're not always strong when we try to go through life's trials relying only on our own abilities.

Standing Together

You might want to share the following quote from President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, about why we should gather together with other people: "God urges us to gather so that He can bless us. He wants us to gather into families. He has established classes, wards, and branches and commanded us to meet together often" ("Our Hearts Knit as One," *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 69).

We all stand stronger with the support of those around us, and you can put that analogy to the test in your lesson. Ask your muscle guy (or girl) to help out for this next part. Hand him the remaining craft sticks and ask if he can break them all at the same time. If you have at least 40 craft sticks together, they should be nearly impossible to break, even though it looks easy.

As Muscle Man (or whomever you've asked to be your volunteer) strains and grunts and tries in vain to complete the task, explain that these sticks represent the people in your family and at church who can help support and strengthen you. And of course, the Lord is always our greatest source of strength.

Now's a great time to discuss why the Lord has commanded us to be unified. Consider sharing a scripture on this topic, such as Doctrine and Covenants 38:27: "Be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine." You can

then talk about why your family members believe there's strength in sticking together.

The Strength You Add

Just as the people in your life are a strength to you, *you* can help others be strong as well—especially those in your own family. As explained in *For the Strength of Youth*, "Strong families require effort. Your family will be blessed as you do your part to strengthen it. . . . Your righteous example can make a difference in strengthening your family" ([2011], 14).

As we support one another and also as we each follow the commandments, we all contribute to the bundle of craft sticks that can't be broken when we stand together. Standing strong with a group of friends and family who support you, as you support them, is a great way to navigate the challenges of life.

A Strong Finish

You might consider closing your lesson with this quote from President Thomas S. Monson: "When we can work together cooperatively to lift the level of life for so many people, we can accomplish anything. When we do so, we eliminate the weakness of one person standing alone and substitute the strength of many serving together" ("Our Brothers' Keepers," *Ensign*, June 1998, 38).

Oh, and if Muscle Man hasn't yet stopped trying to break the sticks, hand him an old phone book to shred instead. Reassure him that the laws of physics were just plain working against him earlier.

There's strength in gathering together. **NE**

