



# PREACHING WITHOUT BEING PREACHY

*Young men and young women in Arkansas have learned how to share the gospel by example.*

**By Sally Johnson Odekirk**

Church Magazines

**W**hen Sierra P., 17, moved to an area where few members of the Church live, her new friends wanted to know about her beliefs. This scenario isn't new, and sometimes we may wonder how we can share the gospel with our friends without being overbearing. During a recent conversation with the *New Era*, youth in Arkansas shared what they have learned.



### **Common Ground**

Sierra discovered that she could best answer questions when she asked her friends about their beliefs first and then focused on similarities and differences. "We studied a little about the Church in U.S. history, and that made everyone curious, so they came to me with their questions," she says. "I had an

opportunity to explain the entire plan of salvation to my volleyball team. Some of them realized that we have a lot of faith and are good people."



Carter A., 16, adds, "Relate the gospel teachings to their lives. Don't just throw a lot of facts at them, because 9 times out of 10 they're not going to remember any of them. You have to

## WHERE TO FIND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS YOUR FRIENDS ASK

“When I get questions about what we believe, I go through the Articles of Faith. It helps them to realize that we have a lot in common.” —*Ashley S.*, 18

“I usually have a *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet with me, and if a friend has a question, I’ll pull it out and read the answer. I’ve given a few pamphlets out and have marked a couple spots that I thought they should read.” —*Allie H.*, 16

“I go to **LDS.org** to get answers to my questions and gain some additional insights. It’s really helpful if you want to know something about an issue that you’re not clear on, and it helps you explain it better to your friends when they have questions. I also invite them to go to church with me.” —*Martina B.*, 18

“If I have a specific topic that I’m not really sure about, I go to the Bible Dictionary to see what it has to say, and then I’ll look at the Topical Guide to find scriptures on the subject.” —*Ali H.*, 18

“If they sincerely want to know and aren’t just curious, I’ll send them to the missionaries.” —*T.J. R.*, 18

### Learn More

For more suggestions on how to answer friends’ questions, see “Answering Your Friends’ Questions,” *New Era*, Jan. 2012, 30.

relate the gospel to their lives and to your life.”

“Let your response be warm and joyful. And let your response be relevant to that individual. Remember, he or she is also a child of God.”

**Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Be Thou an Example of the Believers,”** *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 48.



### The Importance of Example

Lauren J., 17, says the best gospel conversations that she has had

with friends at school have happened after they have watched her interact with others and know what her standards are. “You need to develop a strong relationship with others before you can share the gospel with them,” Lauren says. “I try to remember that I’m the only member of the Church my friends know. It helps to know that my actions not only reflect on my family and me but also on the Church. That pushes me to be kind and to represent the Church well.”

“The most effective way to preach the gospel is through example. If we live according to our beliefs, people will notice. If the countenance of Jesus Christ shines in our lives, if we are joyful and at peace with the world, people will want to know why.”

**President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Waiting on the Road to Damascus,”** *Ensign*, May 2011, 77.



### Difficult Questions

Sometimes people like to stir controversy, but these teens know that arguing about religion doesn’t work. Cameron H., 16, says, “I tell them my belief, agree to disagree, and walk away from the conversation. After a while it’s not you trying to defend your religion and your beliefs; it becomes you trying to prove a point. That’s not what I want to do. I’m trying to teach them, not argue with them.”

“Every disciple of Christ will be most effective and do the most good by adopting a demeanor worthy of a follower of the Savior. Discussions focused on questioning, debating, and doubting gospel principles do little to build the kingdom of God. . . . There is no need to become defensive.”

**Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Sharing the Gospel Using the Internet,”** *Ensign*, July 2008, 63.

