

Dress and Appearance

“Let the Holy Spirit Guide”



By Mary N. Cook

First Counselor in
the Young Women
General Presidency

As Christ’s representatives, we show respect for our bodies “at all times and in all things, and in all places” by abiding by certain standards.

Kim has consistently worn modest clothing. The other day I asked for her opinion on what she considers to be a modest skirt, a modest blouse, and a modest swimsuit. Instead of coming up with exact measurements for hemlines and necklines, we discussed the principles surrounding modesty and the challenge of finding modest clothing that looks attractive. We had fun brainstorming ways to creatively lengthen a skirt. Finally Kim said, “If I’m not comfortable when I first put something on, it usually means it’s immodest and I won’t be comfortable wearing it. I’ve learned to never buy it. I just put it back on the rack.”

As Kim strives to live worthily, the Holy Ghost can guide her in her clothing choices. She lives the standard of modesty generously and doesn’t try to alter the rules of dress and appearance. She understands that her body is a temple (see 1 Corinthians 3:16) and that she has a responsibility to care for, protect, and properly clothe it.

As a temple is built, great care is taken to ensure it is protected and beautifully adorned, inside and out. A key to planning temples is the understanding that a temple *represents* the Lord—it is His house. We *respect* temples as sacred structures where only those who are worthy may enter. We *revere* temples because the sacred ordinances and covenants in which we participate make it possible for us to return to our Heavenly Father.

Your body is more precious than the most exquisite temple on earth. You are God’s beloved son or daughter! These same principles—representation, respect, and reverence—apply even more so to the care and protection you give your body.

Representation

Each week as we partake of the sacrament, we take upon us the Savior’s name. We are His representatives on earth. One of the guidelines in *For the Strength of Youth* states: “Through your dress and appearance, you can show [the Lord] that you know how precious your body is. You can show that you are a disciple of Jesus Christ and that you love Him.”¹

When one young woman read this statement, she decided she didn’t want to walk even close to the line of immodesty.

Immediately she removed anything in her wardrobe that wasn't consistent with being a representative of the Savior. She said, "I would be smart if I didn't even try on anything in stores that I knew I shouldn't wear. Why be tempted?" The principle of representation helped her make that firm resolve.

Respect

As Christ's representatives, we show respect for our body "at all times and in all things, and in all places" (Mosiah 18:9) by agreeing to abide by certain standards. The Lord requires that only those who are clean may enter the temple. Your choice to be virtuous is evidence of your respect for the Lord and your physical body.

We should also show respect for others' bodies and help them live virtuous lives. Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: "[Young women] need to understand that when they wear clothing that is too tight, too short, or too low cut, they not only can send the wrong message to young men with whom they associate, but they also perpetuate in their own minds the fallacy that a woman's value is dependent solely upon her sensual appeal. This never has been nor will it ever be within the righteous definition of a faithful daughter of God."²

Young women, respect your body and help others, particularly young men, maintain virtuous thoughts and actions. Respect your body, knowing that *daily* righteous living gives you *eternal* value.

Reverence

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "Just as the temple grounds portray the sacredness and reverence for what takes place inside the temple, our



clothing portrays the beauty and purity of our inner selves. How we dress portrays whether we have proper respect for . . . ordinances and eternal covenants and whether we are preparing ourselves to receive them."³

Show your reverence for our Savior's atoning sacrifice by wearing your "Sunday best" to participate in the ordinance of the sacrament. "Young men should dress with dignity when officiating in the ordinance of the sacrament."⁴ Young women, dress modestly.

Arise! Be the example of modest dress at home, at school, on the beach, at dances, or when playing sports. Follow Kim's example when choosing your clothing, letting the Holy Spirit guide you in your decisions. "Ask yourself, 'Would I feel comfortable with my appearance if I were in the Lord's presence?'"⁵

If you live these three principles—representation, respect, and reverence—when you are choosing your attire, you *will* "shine forth" (D&C 115:5) as the Savior's beloved representatives. **NE**

NOTES

1. *For the Strength of Youth* (2011), 6.
2. M. Russell Ballard, "Mothers and Daughters," *Ensign*, May 2010, 20.
3. Robert D. Hales, "Modesty: Reverence for the Lord," *Ensign*, Aug. 2008, 36.
4. *For the Strength of Youth*, 8.
5. *For the Strength of Youth*, 8.



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