

# HELPING CHILDREN LOVE THE BOOK OF MORMON

*We found these tools helpful in teaching our children from the Book of Mormon.*

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**A**s my wife and I raised our family, we deeply desired to instill in our five children a love for the Book of Mormon. Like carpenters, we learned that a variety of tools would be not only helpful but also essential in teaching our children to love the scriptures. We also came to realize that having the tools or techniques to teach our children was one thing and knowing how to use them was another.

In addition, we knew we needed to learn how to teach our children to apply the Book of Mormon to their lives and see its relevance to the world in which they live. Our ability to use various approaches to help our children depended first and foremost upon our personal understanding of the scriptures, our testimony of their truthfulness, and our enthusiasm for them.

## **Teaching Younger Children**

Because the language of the scriptures is somewhat uncommon and a child's vocabulary is limited,

teaching children to love the Book of Mormon can be challenging. When our children were young, their attention spans were short and so was our scripture study time. We often used the illustrated scripture readers for family scripture study.

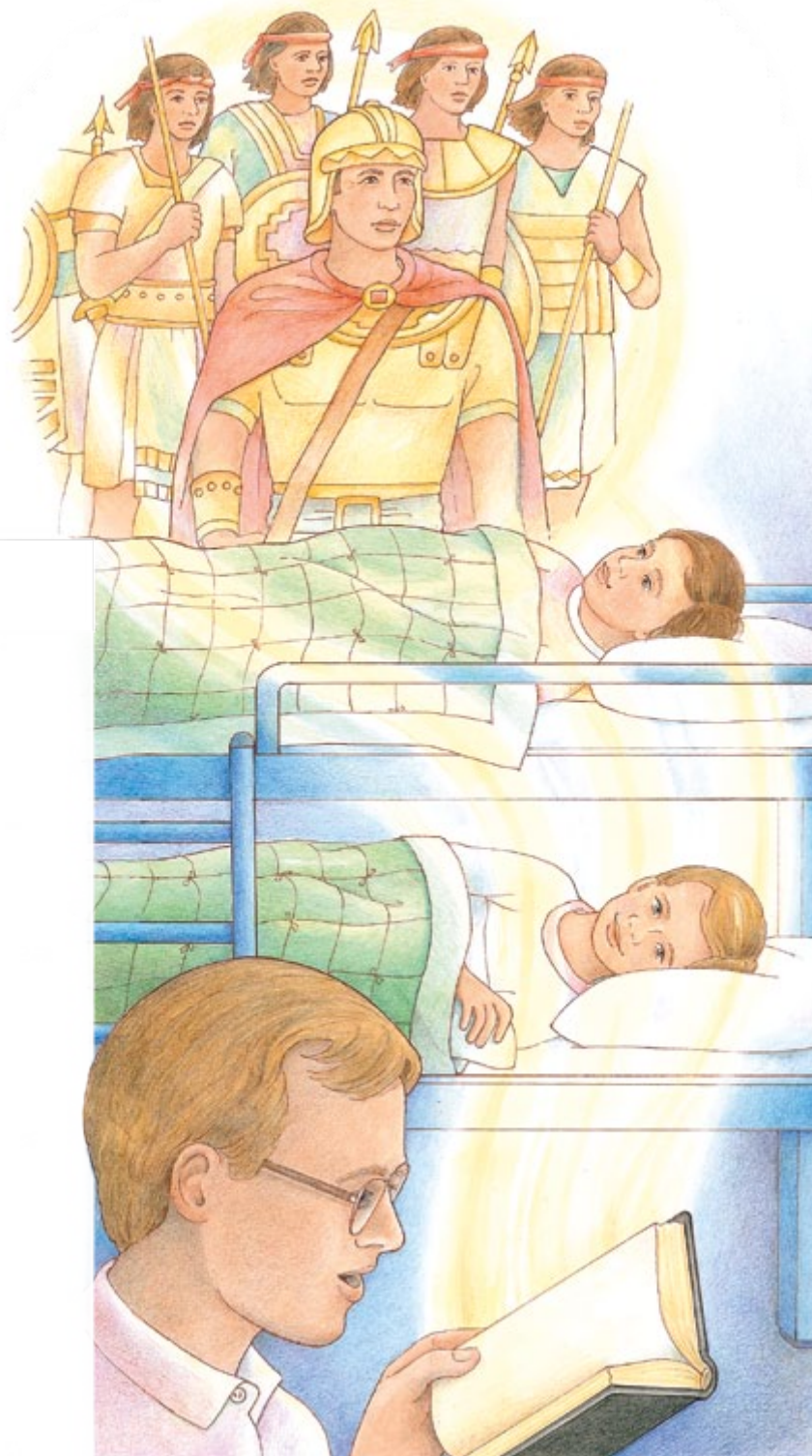
To reinforce the principles our children were reading and learning in scripture study, I often used scripture stories as bedtime stories. In later years my daughter shared how influential this was. She said, "I think stories that were told over and over again became favorites for us. You sat beside our beds and shared the stories from the scriptures. We loved them and asked to hear them again and again because even at that young age we could feel the spirit of the message they carried and knew the people you were telling us about were valiant and faithful. We wanted to be like them."

## **Tailoring Lessons to the Needs of Our Family**

Of course, as our children matured, we read from the Book of Mormon and other scriptures directly. We tried faithfully to read from the scriptures every morning, even though some of the children were wrapped up in blankets with their eyes half closed. Nevertheless, they now report that they were listening, remembering, and planting seeds for the future.

We also emphasized scriptures during family home evening. For example, we often included activities such as scripture charades: family members would act out a story from the scriptures, and other family members would try to guess the story. Our children also loved playing "Who Am I?"—a game in which we would give them a series of clues until they could guess the individual from the Book of Mormon we were identifying. As our children got older, they participated in preparing and presenting the lessons.

As we tailored our home evenings to the current needs of our family, we used stories and insights



from the Book of Mormon to help teach principles. For example, we drew lessons on morality and avoiding pornography from Alma's counsel to his son Corianton in Alma 39. A good lesson on avoiding marking our bodies with tattoos developed from the story of the Amlicites in Alma 3.

I've prepared lessons on dealing appropriately with sibling rivalries based on the lives of Nephi (see 1 Nephi 7:20–21; 16:4–5), Jacob (see 2 Nephi

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2:1–3), and Corianton (see Alma 39:1, 10). The sobering account of Alma and Amulek in Alma 14:12–28 teaches about patience in suffering. One important principle we learned with these and many other issues was to make sure we addressed them with our children before they had really become an issue or a problem in their lives.

### **Asking Questions**

In addition to reading the scriptures with our children, we realized it was important to ask questions that would help our children see the significance of what they were reading. The complexity of these questions varied depending on their ages, but the point was to teach them to look for insights and application and to help them realize how much there is to discover in the Book of Mormon.

For example, I asked why they thought Nephi would say that he had “seen many afflictions in the course of [his] days” and in the very next line say something that seemed contradictory: that he had “been highly favored of the Lord” (1 Nephi 1:1). Through our discussion, our children discovered that even as the Lord delivered Nephi from his afflictions, He also gave Nephi greater understanding of His mysteries (see 1 Nephi 1:1, 20).

Children and youth learn best when we help them discover truths for themselves. As they do so, they will feel inspired to love and use the Book of Mormon throughout their lives and will feel equipped to help others do the same.

Our children came to know that we knew that the Book of Mormon contained real stories of real people. They came to see what we saw, know what we knew, and feel how we felt about the Book of Mormon. This has fortified their testimonies, helped them love the Book of Mormon, and led them to endeavor to do the same for their own children. ■