

MUCH MORE THAN A Nursery Manual

How parents are using Behold Your Little Ones to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ to their families.

Parents are using the nursery manual to teach simple gospel truths to children like Mitch, who learned that praying can help him not be afraid of thunderstorms.

As all parents know, raising children is a challenge. Parents want to follow the Lord's direction to "teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord" (D&C 68:28), but many struggle to know *how* to teach children the gospel in ways that are engaging and clear. Some parents wonder how to interest little children who have short attention spans, wiggly bodies, and a limited vocabulary. Many parents of children with intellectual disabilities or physical challenges hunger to find ways to help their children understand the gospel.

Behold Your Little Ones helps provide a solution. In addition to being the course of study for nursery-age children, the manual is designed for families to use at home. In the following stories, parents testify how using the nursery manual helped them teach their children with confidence, simplicity, and power.

Teaching Family Home Evening

One Sunday Elizabeth Fewkes realized that her 18-month-old daughter could

identify colors, animals, and famous animated characters, but she did not recognize pictures of the Savior. "It was a wake-up call for me," Elizabeth says. "I hadn't given priority to teaching her the most essential knowledge—the gospel of Jesus Christ. I had mistakenly thought she was too young to understand, too young to benefit from family home evening."

Although Elizabeth now recognized what she needed to do, she was unsure how to do it. She and her husband, Gary, decided to try using *Behold Your Little Ones* for family home evening lessons. They quickly discovered its value. "It became my inspiration and guide on how to teach our daughter," Elizabeth says. Two weeks after a lesson about Jesus, their daughter noticed a replica of the *Christus* statue and ran up to it. She pointed and said excitedly, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!"

"We are grateful for the inspired *Behold Your Little Ones* manual," Elizabeth says. "It has helped us fulfill a sacred responsibility of parenthood—teaching our daughter the gospel."





A MOST VALUABLE RESOURCE

“Parents, look into the eyes of your young children—their minds are receptive. They are ready to learn pure and simple gospel truths. Don’t wait; teach them now! *Behold Your Little Ones* is a valuable resource to assist you.

“As I helped my four-year-old grandson prepare a family home evening from *Behold Your Little Ones*, he was thrilled with his efforts and the whole family benefited. Next to the scriptures, I consider this manual the most valuable resource for young families. I do hope every family will use it.”

Rosemary M. Wixom,
Primary general president

Helping Converts, Uniting Families

Brian and Rebecca Garcia initially began using *Behold Your Little Ones* to teach their nursery-age sons during family home evening. However, the family soon discovered that these simple lessons were meaningful to older family members as well.

Brian joined the Church in 2006 with his 12-year-old daughter, Melissa, just a few months before he married Rebecca. Even now after being members for a few years, the family finds that the manual’s focus on basics reinforces their understanding of gospel principles. For instance, after one family home evening lesson on prayer, the Garcias set a goal to pray together each evening. This habit brought increased peace and unity to their home.

Melissa, now an older teen, sees the nursery manual as a source for concise, clear doctrine. She uses it as the basis for her family home evening lessons and adds insights she has gained in seminary. The manual has increased her confidence in sharing the gospel, preparing her for future teaching opportunities.

“The manual has helped unite our family,” says Rebecca, “as we learn and reinforce the beautifully simple truths of the gospel.”

Helping Children with Disabilities

Russell and Leta-Kaye Hansen have been using *Behold Your Little Ones* with their children—ages one, three, and four—for two years. The family has found that the manual is especially helpful in teaching four-year-old Mitch, who has autism.

When Russell and Leta-Kaye began using the manual in family home evening, they couldn’t tell how much Mitch comprehended. “One Monday night when Mitch was three,”

Leta-Kaye says, “skimming through the nursery manual, I found a picture I knew Mitch would recognize—a mother and son in reverent prayer.¹ Warmth filled my heart when I saw that the accompanying story was about how the Holy Ghost helped a small boy who was afraid of a thunderstorm.”

At this time a series of thunderstorms had been sweeping through the area, and Mitch was often scared. “Because his autism makes him extremely sensitive to noise, Mitch was terrified of thunder,” Leta-Kaye continues. “A single dark cloud was enough to send him cowering under the kitchen table. Even when we prayed with him, the comfort didn’t last beyond the embrace.”

As Leta-Kaye taught about how the Holy Ghost helps us and related the story about the boy and the thunderstorm, Mitch was riveted, Leta-Kaye says. “He insisted on holding the picture, and he patted the faces rhythmically. Here was a tangible representation of his own bitter struggle. In the days that followed, he frequently requested to hold the picture. Instead of darting immediately under the table when the rain began to fall, he would come to us, indicating with folded arms his desire to pray. We saw peace descend upon him even in the midst of the storm.”

Leta-Kaye says that even a year later, every time they brought out the nursery manual, Mitch turned to the picture of the boy praying with his mom and “fervently related its story in his painstaking, simple language,” sharing this heartfelt testimony with his mom: “Holy. Ghost. Jesus. Christ. Help. Mitch. No. Scares. Wind. Thunder.”

“The beautiful, concise lessons help us teach Mitch and his sisters the gospel in a way they can understand,” Leta-Kaye says.

“The manual has helped unite our family,” says Rebecca Garcia, “as we learn and reinforce the beautifully simple truths of the gospel.”



“These lessons bring the peace of the Spirit to our home.”

Teaching Children to Recognize the Spirit

Edgar and Olivia Cobían struggled to find a solution for their four-year-old son’s behavior problems in church. “Though our son, Ruben, had been in Primary for a year and a half,” Olivia says, “he didn’t enjoy attending and often misbehaved. I was concerned by his teachers’ reports and continually tried to remedy his behavior.”

One day as Olivia prayed for help, she received an answer. “I understood my focus had been all wrong,” she says. “I had been so concerned with fixing my son’s behavior that I had missed the main reason I wanted him to attend church—to develop a testimony of the gospel through the witness of the Holy Ghost.” Olivia realized that her priority needed to be helping Ruben feel

the Spirit. Though the family faithfully held family home evenings and scripture study, she felt Ruben needed individual gospel instruction. She decided to teach him at home, one on one. “I wanted to focus on helping him to feel the Spirit and to have a positive experience with learning the gospel,” Olivia says.

She taught him a lesson from *Behold Your Little Ones* once a week for several months. “Following the nursery manual made it easy for me,” Olivia says. “The activities, songs, pictures, and stories easily held Ruben’s attention, and he loved his ‘at-home Primary.’ We had tender experiences as I shared my testimony with him on his level.”

Ruben’s behavior at church improved, and he now looks forward to attending Primary each week. ■

NOTE

1. *Behold Your Little Ones*, 30.

*To order Behold Your Little Ones for your family, go to store.lds.org. The manual, including pictures and activity pages, can be accessed online as well at lds.org/manual/primary. You can also order other excellent resources for teaching children from the store, including the Gospel Art Book, *The Friend* magazine, the illustrated scripture stories, and the Family Home Evening Resource Book.*