

Talk Time

I will honor my parents and do my part to strengthen my family (My Gospel Standards).



By Hilary Watkins Lemon

(Based on a true story)

All right, everyone. Let's have talk time," Mom called. Josie had been looking forward to talk time all day. Every evening, Josie and her two little brothers, Ben and Wes, gathered in the living room with Mom and Dad to talk about what was going on in their lives.

Tonight Dad had said he would help Josie practice her script for the morning announcements. Reading the morning announcements was a special privilege at Josie's school. Tomorrow Josie would play a small part of her favorite song over the school's speakers and use the microphone to announce the day's activities and lunch menu.

Josie ran to the living room, excited to rehearse her script.

"There's our famous announcer!" Dad said when Josie hopped on the couch next to him. "How are you feeling about tomorrow?"

"I'm excited but a little nervous. I'm afraid I'll mess something up in front of the whole school," Josie said.

"That's why we practice," Dad said. "Go ahead and read through your script, and I will listen for places you can improve."

"Thanks, Dad," Josie said.

She and Dad reviewed the script so many times

that Josie lost count. Then Josie stood and performed her script one last time for her family. Mom and Dad cheered. Ben gave her a high five, and Wes smiled and clapped his hands.

Josie went to bed happy and confident.

The next day everything went smoothly. Even though she was nervous, Josie smiled when she heard her music play on the school's speakers. She was glad she had practiced the script with Dad, and she read it slowly and clearly without any mistakes.

"You did an excellent job," Mrs. Blake, the assistant principal, said.

At the end of the school day, Josie stood in line for the bus. An older boy turned around and asked, "Are you the girl who read the announcements today?"

Josie smiled. "Yes," she said.

"Why did you pick that song?" the boy asked.

"It was a dumb song. You really ruined morning



I have an announcement!
Talk time is fun!



announcements.” Then he called her a mean name and laughed with his friends.

Josie sat alone in the front seat of the bus. She felt sick to her stomach.

When Josie got home, she found Mom playing with Wes.

“Mom, I know it’s not talk time yet, but I was wondering if we could still talk right now,” Josie said.

“Of course, Josie,” Mom said. “What happened? Did something go wrong with the morning announcements?”

“No,” Josie said. “Everything was perfect. At least I thought so, until a boy told me I picked a dumb song. He called me a really mean name too.”

Mom patted the floor next to her. Josie walked over and sat down. Mom gave her a big hug. Josie and Mom talked about everything that happened that day, including Mrs. Blake’s compliment.

“Nothing is more important to the relationship between family members than open, honest communication.”¹

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



“I’m sorry that boy and his friends were rude to you,” Mom said. “But it sounds like other people you respect, like Mrs. Blake, were very pleased with the way you read the announcements. Dad and I are so proud of you. You worked very hard, and it paid off!”

Josie hugged Mom again. “Thanks, Mom,” Josie said. “I feel a lot better.” Josie was glad that any time could be talk time.





TALKING TOGETHER

Here are some suggestions for having your own family “talk time”:

- Ask your parents about setting aside a few minutes each day for your family to talk together.
- It could be during a meal or at a certain time of day.
- Make sure everyone takes turns talking and listening. Include everyone!
- Be respectful of the opinions of your family members. Make sure everyone feels that what he or she says is important.



CONVERSATION GAMES

Need some ideas for talk time? Try these games:

Beanbag Toss: If your family is large or has a hard time taking turns, use a beanbag to show whose turn it is to talk. After the person with the beanbag says what he or she would like to say, toss the beanbag to another family member to take a turn to talk.

Interviewer: Split into groups of two and take turns pretending to be interviewers. Think of a few questions for your partner and then ask him or her questions. You can even use a real microphone or sound recorder for your interviews.

What Would You Do? Take turns asking your family different questions that begin with “What would you do . . . ?” Some examples are “What would you do if you got lost?” and “What would you do if you could go anywhere in the world?”

HELP FOR PARENTS: ONE-ON-ONE TIME

As fun as it is to talk as a family, it is also important for parents and children to spend one-on-one time together. Take advantage of moments during the day to visit with your children individually. Invite one child at a time to help you complete a household chore, accompany you on an errand, or chat with you in your room for a few minutes. Just a few short moments can lead to meaningful conversations.

Find more ideas for talking together in “Taking Time to Talk and Listen” by Primary general president Sister Rosemary M. Wixom on page 10 of this month’s Ensign.

