

By Elyse Alexandria Holmes

LEARNING, TEACHING, AND PREACHING *The Gospel*

PRAY AND RELY ON THE SPIRIT

“The message of the Restoration of the gospel must be taught by divine power—the power of the Holy Ghost, who is the third member of the Godhead. . . .

“ . . . As you strive to develop the faith to rely on the Spirit, you should . . . pray for the Spirit. ”

Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service (2004), 3.

“How do you *know* Joseph Smith was a prophet?” the investigator asked.

“OK, deep breath. You can answer this,” Tanner thought to himself. Tanner J. was teaching the First Vision with his companion for one of the first times.

Suddenly, the noise faded into the background, and the room became tranquil and calm. In that moment, only Tanner, his companion, and the investigator mattered to him. Tanner related the First Vision and bore a solemn and sincere testimony of Joseph Smith. Since then, Tanner has never been nervous about sharing his testimony of the First Vision.

But this experience didn’t happen while Tanner was on a full-time mission. It actually occurred three years earlier in his ward building with the first counselor in the bishopric as his “investigator.”

Starting Early

When *Preach My Gospel* was first published, the bishopric of Tanner’s ward immediately recognized its importance. They set aside

You don’t have to wait for your mission to start using Preach My Gospel.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ELYSE ALEXANDRIA HOLMES







one Sunday a month, combined all of the Aaronic Priesthood young men, and focused on teaching the principles in *Preach My Gospel*. From then on, every young man was given a copy of *Preach My Gospel* upon receiving the Aaronic



Priesthood. Aaron C., a priest, remembers feeling excited to enter the

meetings with ‘investigators’ and trying to teach the lessons,” Aaron says.

Most young men agree that teaching is their favorite part or that they are looking forward to doing it. Ben B., a new deacon, says, “I’m excited to teach because it’s going to be applying what I know and teaching it, like what I’m going to be doing on my mission.”

Although teaching is one of their favorite parts of the experience, it’s often the one they’re most nervous about, at least initially. Jordan M., also a deacon, remembers his feelings when he first started teaching from



Aaronic Priesthood, but he didn’t know what to think about *Preach My Gospel* when he first heard about it. “I hadn’t heard about *Preach My Gospel* until the bishop introduced it to me in our interview,” he says. “But as we got more into it and learned about it every month, it excited me for my mission and the gospel—to spread the word of Christ.”

Derek P., a deacon, had a similar experience: “I didn’t really know about it until my interview with the bishop. After he introduced it to me, I was excited for it.”

Aaron’s brother Ryan also participated, and he is currently serving in the Colombia Bogotá North Mission. Ryan told Aaron how useful this experience was in preparing for his mission. Aaron shares, “He told me that doing this every month has helped him a lot and that he’s just learned so much more from it.”

Learning to Teach

But these young men say that learning from *Preach My Gospel* isn’t the best part. They like how it has helped them to love teaching the gospel. Even though they aren’t teaching real investigators, they are placed into companionships and teach in different situations—just like on a full-time mission. “My favorite part has been acting out



Young men of all ages are studying and using *Preach My Gospel* now to help them prepare to share the gospel.

Fulfilling Your Duty to God

Learning and teaching from *Preach My Gospel* is only one example of how Aaronic Priesthood young men and quorums are preparing for and doing their duty to God to “invite all to come unto Christ” (D&C 20:59). Learn to set your own plans for this aspect of your priesthood service by studying and using the *Fulfilling My Duty to God* booklet.

Preach My Gospel: “My very first time, I was really nervous. I didn’t really say that much, but as I got older, I’d say more.”

Tanner remembers being nervous about teaching, even though he was 16 when the program was implemented: “I was kind of uncomfortable with teaching the first couple of times, but it really helped me out in the long run.”



Preparing to Serve

Adam B., who is preparing to submit his mission papers, has really appreciated the experience with *Preach My Gospel*. “It gets you used to knowing what you’re going to teach out in the mission field,” he says. Adam also recognizes that knowing *Preach My Gospel* will give him a head start when he gets to the missionary training center and throughout his mission.

Many of the young men, like Adam’s twin brother, Aaron B., feel like *Preach My Gospel* is a great way to strengthen testimony. “It gives you a stronger testimony of missionary work because it helps you understand what you have to teach,” says Aaron.

Zach J. has also felt his testimony of the gospel grow: “I think that being able to teach has given me a better testimony than just hearing a lesson does.”

The young men already on missions are

also grateful for this class approach. Elder Chris Hughes, who is serving in the Scotland/Ireland Mission, says that “by learning [from *Preach My Gospel*] beforehand, I was able to hit the ground running.”

Encouraging Others to Study

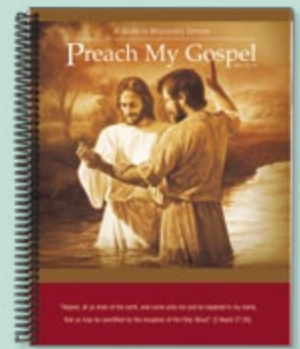
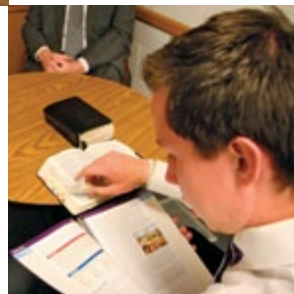
Through this experience, the young men have quickly recognized the importance of

Preach My Gospel.

Alex B. believes that all young men should get to know *Preach My Gospel* during their years in the Aaronic Priesthood. “I think all the young men should do this, because it puts them ahead, gives them more experience, and prepares them for when they get into the missionary training center,” he asserts.

Chris gives this advice to other young men: “Don’t underestimate what *Preach My Gospel*

can do for you as you prepare to serve the Lord. We have been given this tool so we can become the missionaries He needs us to be.” That’s true whether you use *Preach My Gospel* in a class or quorum or just on your own at home. **NE**



NO NEED TO PANIC

By Tanner J.

In my sophomore year of high school, after I had been learning and teaching from *Preach My Gospel*, a friend of mine came up to me during weight-lifting class and said, “Hey, Tanner, you’re Mormon, right?”

A little nervous, I answered, “Yeah, I am.”

“Can you answer a couple questions for me about your Church?” he asked.

I started to panic. What if I didn’t know the answers to his questions, or what if I just sounded stupid? Then I thought about it for a minute: “I’ve done this before. I’ve practiced in the class we have every month, and I can answer these questions. It’s no big deal. Why am I so scared?”

Because of what I had already learned and practiced, I was able to answer some of his questions and point him in the right direction. He got in touch with the missionaries and was later baptized and served a mission.

