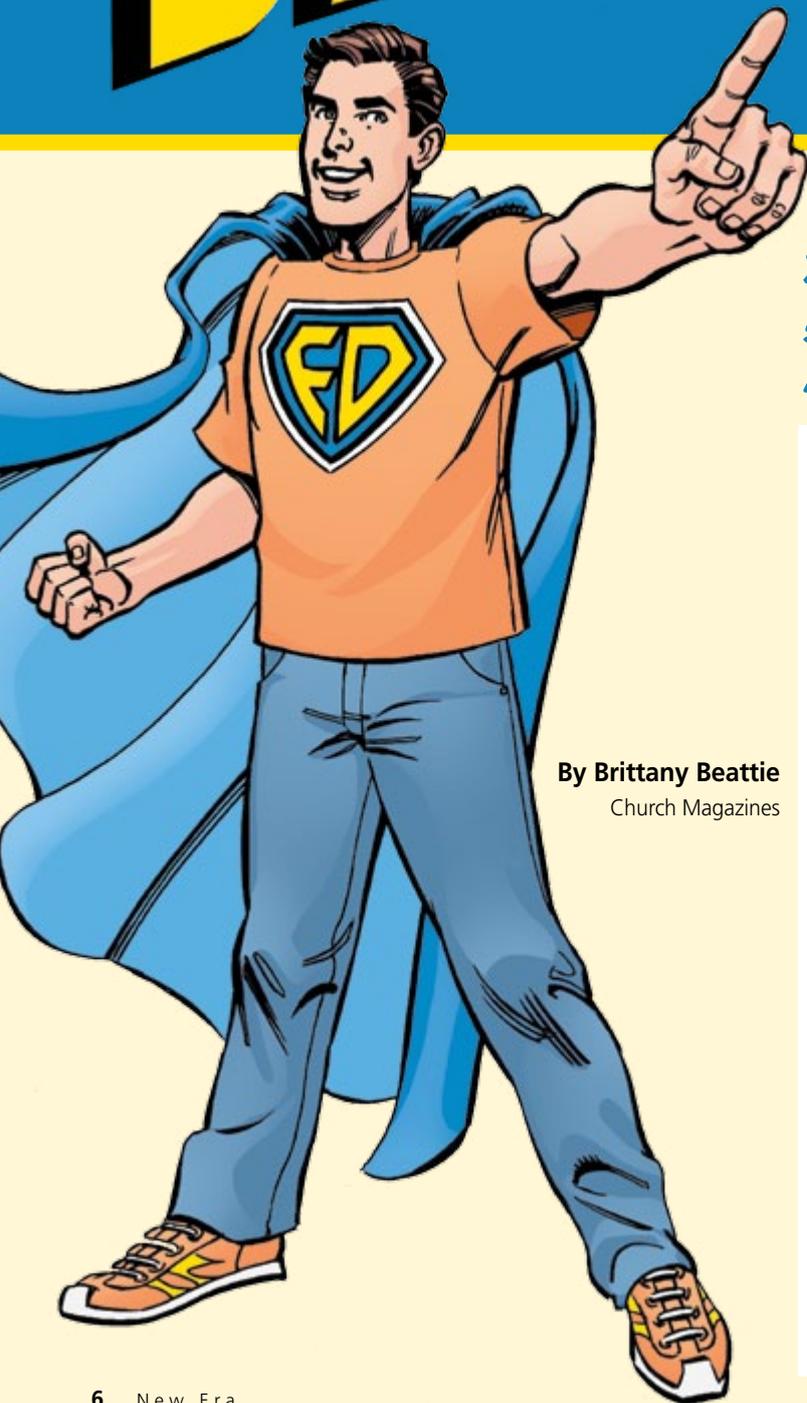


BE A DEFENDER OF THE FAMILY



*YOU CAN HELP CHANGE THE WORLD BY
STANDING UP FOR WHAT PROPHETS
HAVE TAUGHT ABOUT THE FAMILY.*

By Brittany Beattie
Church Magazines

Did you know that you can help change the world during your teenage years? You have the power within you to stand up for eternal truths that are being attacked in one of Satan's biggest battles. How can you do it? You can make a huge difference by being a defender of the family and letting those around you know that "the family is ordained of God. It is the most important unit in time and in eternity" (*Administering the Church* [2010], 2).

"Because of the importance of the family to the eternal plan of happiness, Satan makes a major effort to destroy the sanctity of the family, demean the importance of the role of men and women, encourage moral uncleanliness and violations of the sacred law of chastity, and to discourage parents from placing the bearing and rearing of children as one of their highest priorities" (Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Eternal Family," *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 65).

You can help counter the destructive forces of Satan by standing up for the family through your actions and in your conversations at home, in the community, and even online. Here are several ways you can defend the family every day.

FAMILY DEFENDER PUTS FAMILY FIRST BY ATTENDING HIS BROTHER'S MUSIC RECITAL.



FAMILY DEFENDER STRENGTHENS HIS FAMILY BY HELPING HIS SISTER WITH THE DISHES.



1. Put family time first. With so many sporting events, parties, school functions, and other activities in your schedule, it's easy to say, "I'll spend time with my family later—when things slow down." But you'll soon find that life will never slow down, so it's important to give high priority to family activities now. Don't underestimate the way you can defend the family unit just by participating in *your* family unit.

For example, be on the front row at your brother's music recital. Read the family newsletter your mother wrote. Be excited about the family home evening lesson your sister planned. Listen to and use kind words with your family members. See how close you grow as you support one another in your interests.

The First Presidency has taught: "We counsel parents and children to give highest priority to family prayer, family home evening, gospel study and instruction, and wholesome family activities. However worthy and appropriate other demands or activities may be, they must not be permitted to displace the divinely-appointed

duties that only parents and families can adequately perform" (First Presidency letter, Feb. 11, 1999).

2. Strengthen your family members.

Look for ways to make life easier for your siblings and parents. Find something they need help with and do it, such as giving a hug to a brother who had a hard day at school or helping your sister when it's her turn to do the dishes. When you support one another in your needs, your family will grow stronger as one. Remember that family happiness is a team effort.

Elder Robert D. Hales said we need to "understand that we are each an important and integral part of a family and the highest blessings can be received only within an eternal family. . . . Being one in a family carries a great responsibility of caring, loving, lifting, and strengthening each member of the family so that all can righteously endure to the end in mortality and dwell together throughout eternity. . . . The eternal nature of an individual becomes the eternal nature of the family" ("The Eternal Family," *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 65).

KEY DOCTRINES ABOUT THE FAMILY

Be prepared to defend the truth about eternal families by knowing and living the important doctrines taught in "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" (*Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102):

- Marriage between a man and woman is ordained of God and essential to His plan.
- The family is ordained of God and central to His plan for His children.
- Families can be eternal through temple ordinances and covenants.
- God has commanded husbands and wives to have children.
- Powers of procreation are to be reserved for marriage.
- Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony.
- Family life is happiest when founded upon Christ's teachings.
- Fathers are to preside, provide, and protect.*
- Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children.*
- Fathers and mothers are to help one another as equal partners.
- We will be accountable before God for how we fulfill our family responsibilities.
- The disintegration of the family will bring calamity to individuals, communities, and nations.

* Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation.



HELP FROM THE POWERS OF HEAVEN

“As we read what the proclamation tells us about the family, we can expect—in

fact, we must expect—impressions to come to our minds as to what we are to do. And we can be confident it is possible for us to do according to those impressions. . . .

“ . . . We can start now to ‘promote those measures designed to maintain and strengthen the family’ [‘The Family: A Proclamation to the World,’ *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102]. I pray that we will. I pray that you will ask, ‘Father, how can I prepare?’ Tell [Him] how much you want what He desires to give you. You will receive impressions, and if you act on them, I promise you the help of the powers of heaven.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “The Family,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1998, 10, 18.

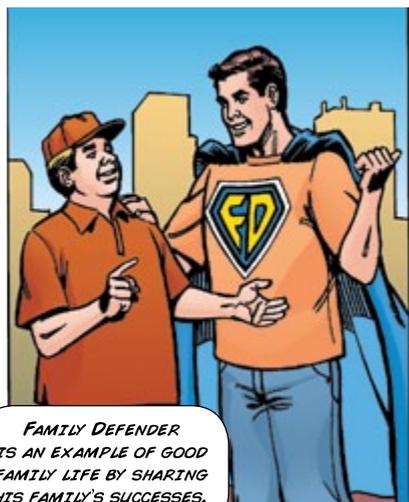
3. Be an example of good family life. Let your friends know about successes your family shares. You could talk with them about something fun your family did together over the weekend. Tell them about your brother’s winning goal or your sister’s high score on the test you helped her study for. Don’t say anything bad about your parents or siblings, but focus just on the good things your family does—in both face-to-face and online conversations.

Do your part to make your home a holy place where others can feel the Spirit (see D&C 88:119) and where they can see what God’s plan for families is all about. Consider inviting friends over when your family spends time together so they can see the joy of family friendships.

4. Stand up for the family in your conversations. When conversations come up in school, work, and other activities—or even in text messages, e-mails, social networking sites, or online articles—where truths about the family are attacked, have the courage to defend the doctrines

about Heavenly Father’s plan for families (see the sidebar on page 7 for key teachings from “The Family: A Proclamation to the World”). The world continues to attack these eternal doctrines, and it’s up to you to be a voice of truth. The Spirit will help you know what to say.

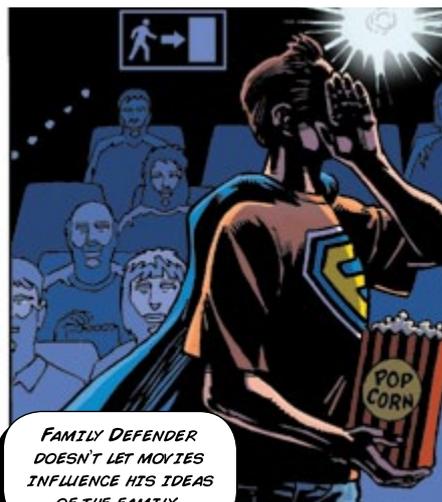
5. Beware of how the media defines families. Much in the media today does not support God’s definition of marriage and families. It might endorse or glorify alternatives to wholesome family life that are contrary to God’s plan. The counsel in *For the Strength of Youth* can apply to teachings about the family: “Satan uses media to deceive you by making what is wrong and evil look normal, humorous, or exciting. He tries to mislead you into thinking that breaking God’s commandments is acceptable and has no negative consequences for you or others. . . . Have the courage to walk out of a movie, change your music, or turn off a computer, television, or mobile device if what you see or hear drives away the Spirit” ([2011], 11).



FAMILY DEFENDER IS AN EXAMPLE OF GOOD FAMILY LIFE BY SHARING HIS FAMILY’S SUCCESSES.



FAMILY DEFENDER STANDS UP FOR THE FAMILY IN HIS CONVERSATIONS ON THE PHONE AND IN PERSON.



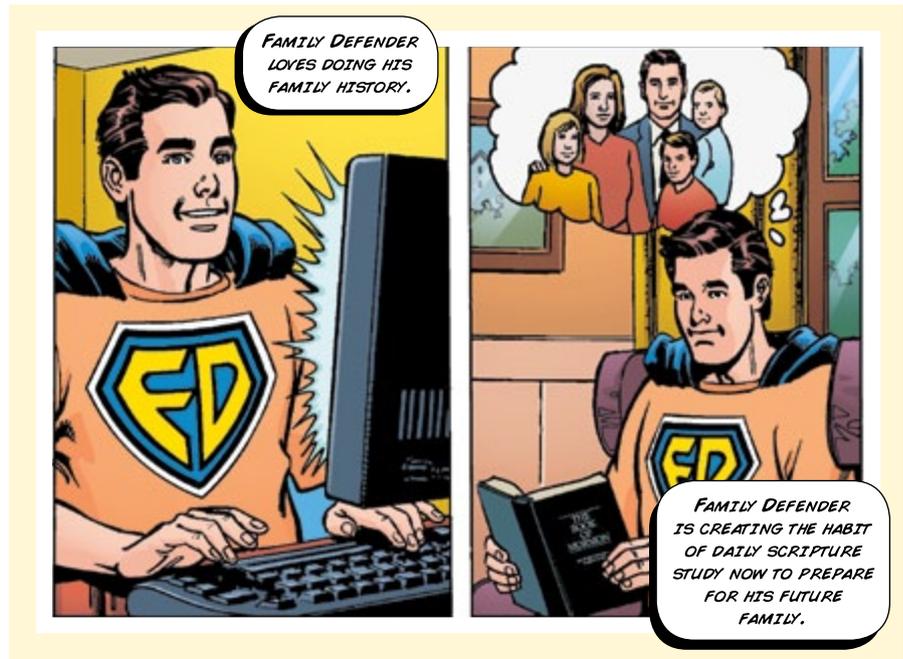
FAMILY DEFENDER DOESN’T LET MOVIES INFLUENCE HIS IDEAS OF THE FAMILY.

When you choose media that support the principles of an eternal family, it will be easier to strengthen the family and also prepare for a future temple marriage.

6. Do temple work. Many of your ancestors have not received the essential ordinances that seal them together as families. Remember that defending the family isn't just about the families on the earth today, but it's also about *all* families. With new.familysearch.org, it's easy to prepare names for temple work to help deceased family members receive the sealing ordinances. (You can watch video tutorials about FamilySearch at lds.org/fhy or talk with the family history specialist in your ward or stake.)

7. Develop habits today that you want in your future family. Even if you don't come from a strong family, you can make *your* future family strong as you prepare for and worthily marry in the temple and seek to raise a righteous family of your own. Think about the types of things you want to do in your future family, and start those habits today. For example, even if your family doesn't have daily scripture study, you can study the scriptures on your own each day. By forming that habit now, it will be easy to hold family scripture study when you get married.

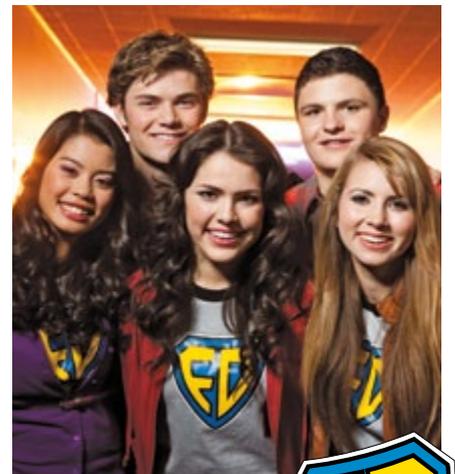
You can also defend the family by deciding now that when you are older you will marry in the temple and then strive to have children and raise them in righteousness. We have been counseled: "All members, even if they . . . are without family in the Church, should strive for the ideal of



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living in an eternal family. This means preparing to become worthy spouses and loving fathers or mothers" (*Administering the Church*, 4).

Sister Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president, has said to the young members of the Church, "This generation will be called upon to defend the doctrine of the family as never before" ("Teaching the Doctrine of the Family," *Ensign*, March 2011, 17). When you do this and live as a defender of the family, you can change your future and your family's future and also be a part of a generation that can change the future of the world as you protect the family together. Even if you don't see immediate results, your actions will be an influence for good in supporting Heavenly Father's plan for eternal families. **NE**



IT'S YOUR TURN

How will you prepare to be a family defender? Consider writing some goals in your journal and then jotting down your experiences as you work on those goals.

