

January 2021

For the Strength of Youth

A New
Magazine
Just for
you p. 2

Finding Joy in Christ

HELLO

MEET YOUR NEW MAGAZINE.

FOR THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH is *your* magazine, created specifically for youth.

In each issue you'll find something special. We'll have spiritually uplifting messages from Apostles and other leaders, testimonies and experiences from youth, fun activities, and more.

Here in this section we will feature youth from around the world telling about what they love to do and giving a glimpse into their lives. We want to share *your* stories too! Send us a message with your favorite hobbies, a favorite scripture, a little bit about your family, and a brief experience where you felt the Lord help you. Email us at ftsoy@ChurchofJesusChrist.org.



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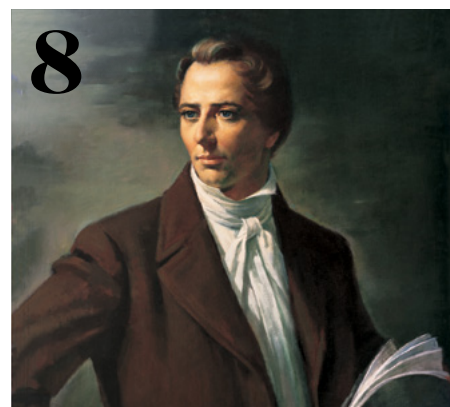
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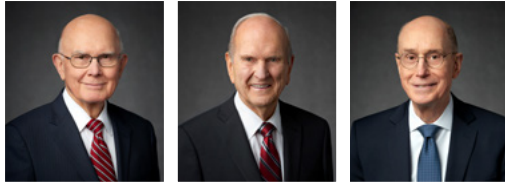
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A MESSAGE FROM THE FIRST PRESIDENCY

OUR DEAR YOUNG BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

We are grateful to introduce you to this new magazine for youth of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: *For the Strength of Youth*. We are thankful for your goodness and strength as the youth of the Church today. You truly are the hope of Israel. It is our sincere desire that this new publication will help you remain strong and close to your Heavenly Father and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

The Lord has a great work for you and your generation. To help you, this magazine will provide timely teachings of modern prophets and apostles, who love you. As you study the scriptures using the Church's *Come, Follow Me* resources for living and learning the gospel of Jesus Christ, you can also look to this magazine for additional knowledge, insights, and inspiration.

For the first time, this separate publication just for youth is available in different countries and languages. We hope this will bring a spirit of worldwide belonging and unity and that you will gain strength from testimonies and experiences shared by other youth from throughout the world.

The name of this magazine reflects our confidence in your strength as the youth of the Church. We testify that true joy comes through our faith in Jesus Christ, His gospel, and His restored Church.

Sincerely,
The First Presidency



By President M. Russell Ballard
Acting President of the Quorum
of the Twelve Apostles

The Great Cause of the Restoration

*The work Joseph and Hyrum Smith started,
along with so many other faithful people,
continues in the Church today.*





WHEN YOUNG JOSEPH SMITH went to the woods to pray, he experienced a wondrous vision, known today as the First Vision.

In this vision, the Savior told Joseph that his sins were forgiven. He also answered Joseph’s question and said that none of the churches at the time were “acknowledged of God as his church and kingdom.”

“At the same time,” Joseph recalled, “[I] receive[d] a promise that the fulness of the gospel should at some future time be made known unto me.”¹

Following this glorious vision, Joseph emerged from the Sacred Grove to begin his preparation to become a prophet of God.

Moroni and the Book of Mormon

Three years later, in 1823, the heavens opened again as part of the continuing Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the last days. An angel named Moroni appeared to him and said “that God had a work for [him] to do . . . [and that] there was

a book deposited, written upon gold plates” that contained “the fulness of the everlasting Gospel” (Joseph Smith—History 1:33–34).

Eventually, Joseph obtained, translated, and published the ancient record, known today as the Book of Mormon.

Faithful Brothers

Joseph’s brother Hyrum was always Joseph’s constant supporter. During their lives, Joseph and Hyrum faced mobs and persecution together. For example, they languished in the most wretched conditions in the Liberty Jail in Missouri for five months during the cold winter of 1838–39.

In the face of persecution, Hyrum exhibited faith in the Lord’s promises, including a guarantee to escape his enemies if he so chose. In June 1844, Hyrum was presented the choice to live or to lay down his life to glorify God and to “seal his testimony with his blood”—side by side together with his beloved brother Joseph (see Doctrine and Covenants 136:39).



“We should always remember the price Hyrum and Joseph Smith paid. . . . Their faithfulness should never be forgotten!”

A week before they were murdered in cold blood, Joseph told Hyrum to take his family and leave. I still feel great emotion as I remember Hyrum’s reply: *“Joseph, I can’t leave you.”*²

So Joseph and Hyrum went to Carthage, where they became martyrs for Christ’s cause and name. *“In life they were not divided, and in death they were not separated!”* (Doctrine and Covenants 135:3; emphasis added).

A Call to Action

We should always remember the price Joseph and Hyrum Smith paid, along with so many other faithful men, women, and children, to establish the Church so you and I could enjoy the many blessings and all of these revealed truths we have today. Their faithfulness should never be forgotten!

Before his death in 1844, Joseph wrote a spirited letter to the Saints. It was a call to action, which continues in the Church today:

“Brethren [and sisters], shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage, brethren [and sisters]; and on, on to the victory! . . .

“ . . . Let us, therefore, as a church and a people, and as Latter-day Saints, offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness” (Doctrine and Covenants 128:22, 24; emphasis added).

Consider what offering you will present to the Lord in righteousness in the coming days. Be courageous—share it with someone you trust, and most important, please take the time to do it!

I know that the Savior is pleased when we present Him an offering from our hearts in righteousness, just as He was pleased with the faithful offering of those remarkable brothers, Joseph and Hyrum Smith, and all other faithful Saints. 🏠

NOTES

1. Joseph Smith, “Church History,” *Times and Seasons*, Mar. 1, 1842, 707; see also josephsmithpapers.org.
2. Joseph Smith, “History of Joseph Smith,” *The Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star*, Apr. 19, 1862, 248; emphasis added.



MUSH- ROOM

Scholarship

*What lessons could I learn from something
as yucky as mushrooms?*



By Jun Hori

I DON'T LIKE MUSHROOMS. That smell and texture—I don't like them at all! But my parents began cultivating mushrooms when I was a child, so we ate them at meals every day. During the harvest season, I would help my parents late into the night. I would measure 200 grams of mushrooms, pack them in a bag, and press the seal on the package. I remember having fun while talking with my family. It was almost like having a family home evening every day.

It also provided income for the family, so we had to help out. But there were two downsides: First, one of my favorite television programs was on at the time we had to work, so I couldn't watch it. And second, by the time I finished work, my hands would be black from the mushrooms, and it was hard to get rid of the color and smell with soap. When I was a child, I sometimes complained about why I had to help so much every day.

The mushrooms provided a good income for a while, but eventually the prices fell as the number of mushroom farmers increased, and my parents stopped growing mushrooms. I thought that they had only stopped because the prices fell, but I learned a fact that surprised me when I graduated from college.

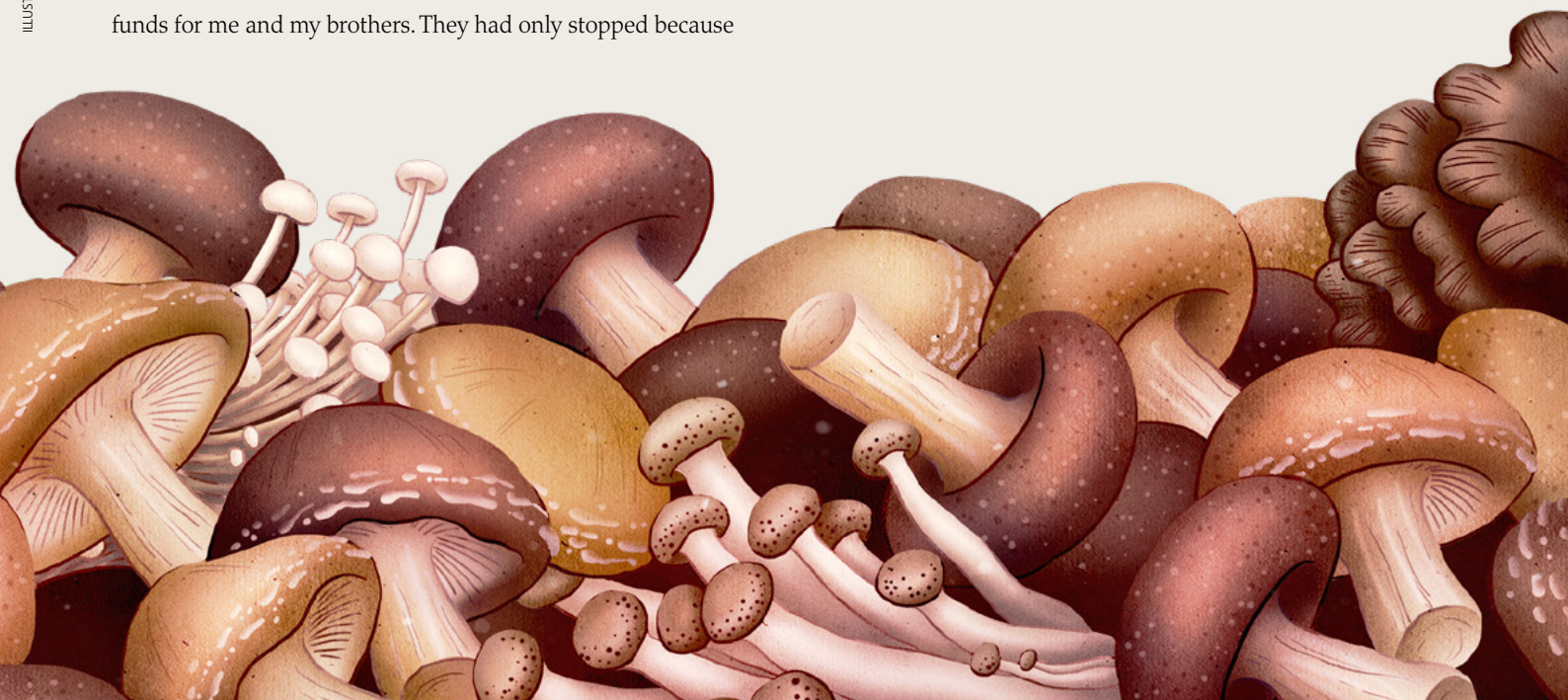
My parents had started cultivating mushrooms to save college funds for me and my brothers. They had only stopped because

they'd reached their target amount. When I found out, I felt ashamed of ever complaining. I hadn't known that I had been working for my future college expenses. And on top of that, my family had helped me!

I had complained over and over without knowing that we grew the mushrooms for my own scholarship. My complaining was like Laman and Lemuel's in 1 Nephi 2:12: "And thus Laman and Lemuel . . . did murmur because they knew not the dealings of that God who had created them." I'm so glad the Lord knows me well and blessed me, despite my complaining.

I don't think I'll ever like eating mushrooms. But if there were no mushrooms, I would actually be a little sad, because I wouldn't have the opportunity to remember those experiences with my family. Because of them, I learned to value my blessings and trust in the Lord's plan—and not to complain! So even though I dislike mushrooms, I now appreciate them. They are an important symbol for me to remember my family bonds. 🍄

The author lives in Shinagawa City, Japan.





My Prophet

By David A. Edwards
Church Magazines

SOMETHING President Russell M. Nelson said in the April 2020 general conference struck a chord with me: “Regardless of where you live or what your circumstances are, the Lord Jesus Christ is *your* Savior, and God’s prophet, Joseph Smith, is *your* prophet” (“Hear Him” [*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2020, 88]).

Ever since I was young, that’s how I’ve felt—Joseph Smith is *my* prophet. More than anyone, this prophet of the Restoration has helped me come to know Jesus Christ and His gospel. I studied the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants. And when I was a teenager, my dad gave me a book of the Prophet Joseph Smith’s teachings, and I ate it up. Studying those teachings became a major building block of my testimony of the restored gospel.

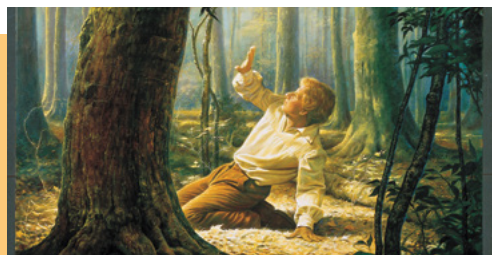
I’ve thought since then: what was it about the teachings of Joseph Smith that made such an impression on me? What allowed the Spirit to witness so strongly to me of their truth? I’d say it was three things: (1) he knew what he knew, and he stated it boldly; (2) he had a way of clearly explaining truths he had learned through revelation; and (3) his character and personality always shone through.

PHOTOGRAPH BY GETTY IMAGES



Smith

He's your prophet too. You can study his teachings this year to make him more so.



Example:

Though most people in the Christian world believed that man was created by God out of nothing, Joseph Smith confidently taught something different:

“Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be” (Doctrine and Covenants 93:29).

“The soul—the mind of man—the immortal spirit. Where did it come from? All learned men and doctors of divinity say that God created it in the beginning; but it is not so: the very idea lessens man in my estimation. I do not believe the doctrine; I know better. Hear it, all ye ends of the world; for God has told me so; and if you don't believe me, it will not make the truth without effect” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 209).

He Knew What He Knew, and He Stated It Boldly

Ever since the First Vision, Joseph Smith faced persecution for sharing what he learned through revelation. But he knew he couldn't back down from it: “Why persecute me for telling the truth? I have actually seen a vision; and who am I that I can withstand God, or why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen?

For I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it” (Joseph Smith—History 1:25).

Though he knew that he would invite more persecution and hatred by doing so, Joseph Smith boldly declared the truths he learned from God for the rest of his life.



He Explained Truths Clearly

Joseph Smith sometimes hinted that he knew a great deal more of God's mysteries than he could share with the world. But when he taught, he had a way of making the truths of God plain and simple.

Example:

From the First Vision onward, Joseph Smith learned many truths about the nature of God the Eternal Father. And in his teachings he explained the significance of these truths. For instance, he said:

"If men do not comprehend the character of God, they do not comprehend themselves" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 40). That's a pretty clear statement that gets at the heart of who God is, who we are, what our relationship to Him is, and what our potential is.

He followed that up with this statement: "God Himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 40). Even clearer.

And then he taught this: "God himself, finding he was in the midst of spirits and glory, because he was more intelligent, saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 210). Joseph Smith expressed something here that's fundamental to Heavenly Father's plan: Heavenly Father wants us to become like Him.



His Character and Personality Shine Through

The way Joseph Smith expressed himself gives us an idea of who he was and what he was like as a person as well as a prophet. This is important, because connecting with people somehow makes connecting with ideas easier. Joseph's character shines through in his teachings.

Example:

Though Joseph Smith was generally cheerful by nature (see Joseph Smith—History 1:28), when it came to what the Lord commanded, he didn't treat it lightly. He had learned by experience what the consequence of straying from such commandments might be (see, for instance, Doctrine and Covenants 3:4–9). I find this blend of a lighthearted nature and serious-minded discipleship intriguing—and personally, I can identify with it.

Now, as the prophet of the Restoration, Joseph Smith was commanded to teach God's revealed truths, many of which were new to everyone. Joseph had to try to help people learn these new truths. But sometimes it was frustrating. He once said:

"There has been a great difficulty in getting anything into the heads of this generation. It has been like splitting hemlock knots with a corn-dodger [a piece of corn bread] for a wedge, and a pumpkin for a beetle [a wooden mallet]. Even the Saints are slow to understand" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 540).



This was a serious subject for Joseph Smith. There must have been so much that he wanted people to know and understand and embrace and live—and they just wouldn't. But a little homespun analogy from the nineteenth-century U.S. frontier paints an amusing picture and gives us a small window into Joseph Smith's personality.

There are many other aspects of Joseph Smith's character that shine through in his teachings. For instance, his love of friends: "My heart shall love those, and my hands shall toil for those, who love and toil for me, and shall ever be found faithful to my friends" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 462).

Or his kindness and generosity: Once when men were saying how sorry they felt for a man whose house had burned down, Joseph immediately said, "I feel sorry for this brother to the amount of five dollars; how much do you all feel sorry?" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 460).

Then there's his love of family, integrity, humility, confidence, justice and fairness, faith amid trials and suffering. It's all there, expressed alongside eternal truths and principles to live by.

He Is My Prophet

Joseph Smith still gets attacked and criticized today, of course. But like he said, "I never told you I was perfect; but there is no error in the revelations which I have taught" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 522). We can bear a bold witness of the fact that he was a prophet. I have found it easy to testify of Joseph Smith—not because there's an easy answer all of the questions people might pose about him but because I have studied his revelations and prophetic teachings and felt the Holy Ghost testifying that they're true. It's like Joseph himself once said:

"I can taste the principles of eternal life, and so can you. They are given to me by the revelations of Jesus Christ; and I know that when I tell you these words of eternal life as they are given to me, you taste them, and I know that you believe them. You say honey is sweet, and so do I. I can also taste the spirit of eternal life. I know that it is good; and when I tell you of these things which were given me by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, you are bound to receive them as sweet, and rejoice more and more" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 525).

I've tasted that sweetness. It was shared with me by *my* prophet, Joseph Smith. And like President Nelson said, he's *your* prophet too. You can make a serious of study his life and teachings this year with *Come, Follow Me*. Then you can bear witness of the sweet truths he has helped you taste. 🙏

An Answer for Oliver

WRITTEN BY ERIC B. MURDOCK, ILLUSTRATED BY LANCE FRY

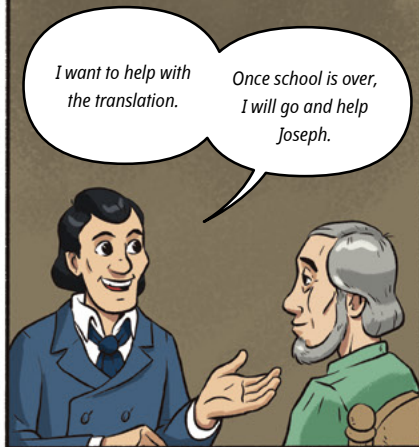
Oliver Cowdery came to stay at Joseph Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith's home while he taught school near their farm.



Oliver heard about their son Joseph and the gold plates. He wanted to know more.



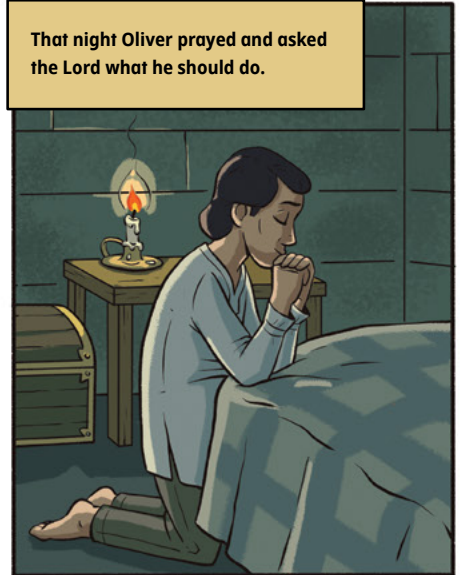
Oliver was fascinated to learn how God gave Joseph the power to translate the gold plates.



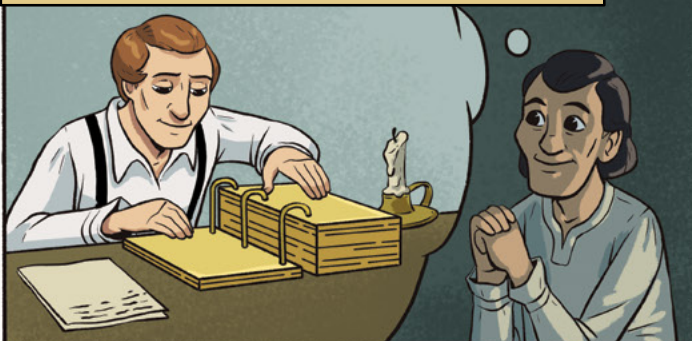
You should pray and ask the Lord if that is right for you.



That night Oliver prayed and asked the Lord what he should do.



Oliver felt peace when he prayed about helping Joseph translate.



Soon Oliver set out to meet Joseph Smith. He travelled with Joseph's brother Samuel.





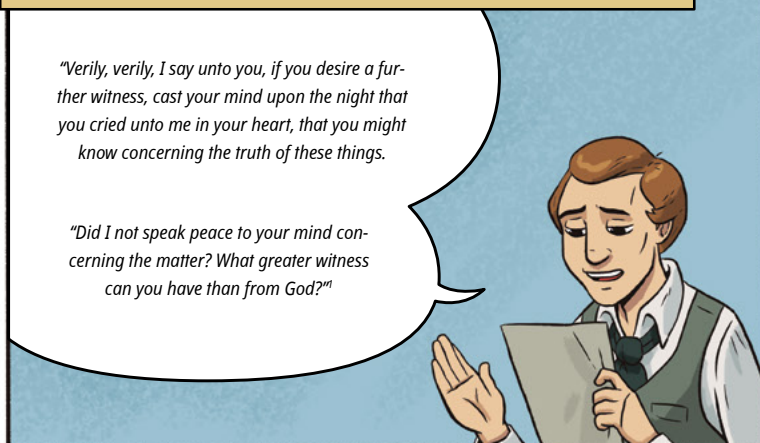
Joseph and Oliver start translating. This experience thrilled Oliver, but he still had questions.



One day, Joseph received a revelation for Oliver reminding him of the answer to his prayer.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, if you desire a further witness, cast your mind upon the night that you cried unto me in your heart, that you might know concerning the truth of these things.

"Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter? What greater witness can you have than from God?"



I prayed to know if I should come and help you, and I felt peace. No one could have known about this except God.



Oliver knew for sure that the work was true. He and Joseph finished the translation that became the Book of Mormon.



"Never forget, question, or ignore personal, sacred spiritual experiences. The adversary's design is to distract us from spiritual witnesses, while the Lord's desire is to enlighten and engage us in His work."

Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles²

NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 6:22–23.
2. Ronald A. Rasband, "Lest Thou Forget," Oct. 2016 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 115).

The Doctrine and Covenants: *An Overview*

By Annelise Gardiner
Church Magazines

What is it?

The Doctrine and Covenants is a collection of modern revelations from God received mainly through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Many of these revelations were given in answer to questions that Joseph and other early members of the Church asked of God.

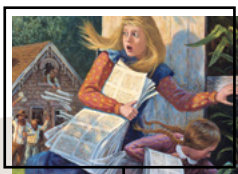


JOSEPH AND SYDNEY BY ANNIE HENRIE NADER

A Time Line:

1823

First revelation recorded: section 2.

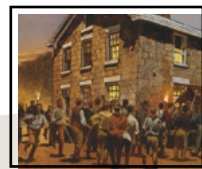


1833

The Book of Commandments was published. Few copies survived a mob attack on the printing press. Two teens, Mary Elizabeth and Caroline Amelia Rollins, saved as many pages as they could and hid from the mob in a cornfield.

1835

The first widely printed edition. It had additional revelations and changed the title to the Doctrine and Covenants.

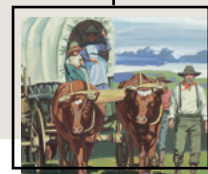


1844

Printed shortly after Joseph Smith's martyrdom, this edition added revelations, plus section 135.

1847

Brigham Young received instructions on how to move the Saints west: section 136.



Why was the Doctrine and Covenants made?

During the early days of the Church, there were only a few handwritten copies of these revelations. In 1831, Church leaders decided to print and publish the revelations in a Book of Commandments. At a November 1831 conference discussing the Book of Commandments, Joseph received the revelation that is now section 1, the preface to the Doctrine and Covenants.

The Doctrine

The first collection of revelations was called the Book of Commandments. Later collections were called the Doctrine and Covenants because they added a series of lectures "on the doctrine of the church," known as the "doctrine" for short (now called the Lectures on Faith). Since the 1921 edition, the Lectures on Faith were no longer included, but the title Doctrine and Covenants stayed the same.¹

The Covenants

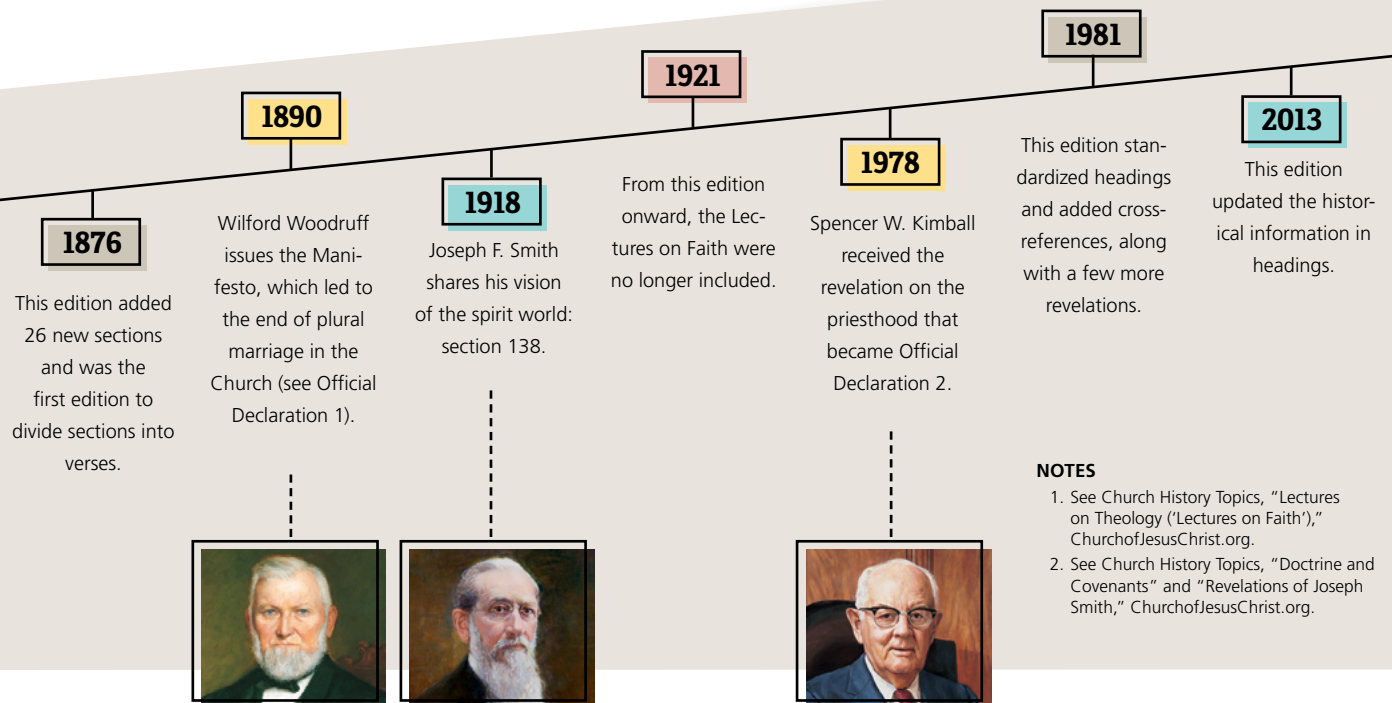
The remainder of the book contained revelations received by Joseph Smith. This portion was known as the "covenants and commandments of the Lord" or "covenants" for short. The early Saints used "covenants" or "commandments" to refer to these revelations received by the Prophet in order to tell them apart from Joseph Smith's other writings, such as inspired sermons and his translations of the Bible.²

Why is the Doctrine and Covenants important today?

The Doctrine and Covenants contains revelations from Jesus Christ to His people. It teaches us that God knows each of us by name, that He hears our prayers and answers our questions, and that God still speaks today. It also teaches valuable doctrine about the plan of salvation and gives us additional insight into Jesus Christ's Atonement. It provides comfort by illustrating how God loves us and still calls us to come to Him even when we make mistakes.

Quick Facts

- Longest section: section 124 (145 verses)
- Shortest section(s): sections 13, 116, and 120 (1 verse each)
- 138 sections and 2 official declarations.
- The main voice in the Doctrine and Covenants is Jesus Christ.
- Unlike other scriptures, it is not translated from ancient documents.
- The majority of revelations in the book were received by the Prophet Joseph Smith; others were received by Brigham Young (section 136) and Joseph F. Smith (section 138), as well as Wilford Woodruff (Official Declaration 1) and Spencer W. Kimball (Official Declaration 2).



NOTES

1. See Church History Topics, "Lectures on Theology ('Lectures on Faith')," ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
2. See Church History Topics, "Doctrine and Covenants" and "Revelations of Joseph Smith," ChurchofJesusChrist.org.



LEARNING
THE

LANGUAGE

OF THE SPIRIT

*Revelation is like a
language we each
need to learn.*



By Sam Lofgran
Church Magazines

LEARNING A NEW LANGUAGE can be tough work. If you've ever had a language class in school or have tried to learn a language on your own, you might know this from experience! It takes hard work and dedication. I learned Spanish on my mission, which was tough at first, but eventually, with the help of the Spirit, I got the hang of it.

I like to think of revelation as a kind of language—the language of the Spirit—that we each need to learn during our life. President Russell M. Nelson has said, “In coming days, it will not be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, directing, comforting, and constant influence of the Holy Ghost.”¹

When you think about it, learning a new language and learning the language of the Spirit have a lot in common. Take a look at the following similarities—they can really help you learn more about how to receive revelation through the language of the Spirit.

LEARNING STYLES

When we're first learning a new language, different approaches work for different people to get things to stick. For me, studying grammar and writing things down really helped with learning Spanish. Other missionaries preferred to practice speaking with their companion. One approach may help more than another—find what works best for you.

We don't all feel or hear the Spirit in the same way either. Take my mom, for example. For a while when I was growing up, I was worried that I couldn't feel the Spirit because I never got promptings the way she did. She would always describe promptings coming as words to her mind. I never had this happen, so I thought I just couldn't feel the Spirit. But I've discovered with time that the Spirit communicates with me mostly through feelings or impressions rather than through words. Feelings of peace, joy, and love are typically associated with my experience of revelation.

Just like with learning styles, one way of feeling the Spirit isn't better than another. We are each unique, so the Spirit communicates with each of us differently. In the Doctrine and Covenants, we can learn about all kinds of ways the Spirit can speak to us. He may “enlighten [our] mind,” “speak peace to [our] mind,” “tell [us] in our mind and in [our] heart,” or “dwell in [our] heart,” or we may feel a burning in our bosom or “feel that it is right,” as well as many other ways (see Doctrine and Covenants 6:15, 23; 8:2; 9:8).

As we study the scriptures and practice listening to the Spirit, we can recognize how He speaks to us.



ASK FOR HELP

When you're learning a language, it can be really useful to get help from someone who knows the language. Books and other resources certainly help, but it speeds up the process to talk to someone who speaks the language.

When we want to learn more about the Spirit, we can get extra help if we ask people we trust how they do it—family members, leaders, or friends. But most important is to ask Heavenly Father. We might ask Him for things like more opportunities to hear the Spirit or for help recognizing when we receive promptings. If we are humble, ask Him to help us, and have faith that He will help us learn how to feel the Spirit, He will help us.

WRITE THINGS DOWN

When you're learning a language, writing things down can be super helpful too. I kept a small notebook with me throughout the day to write down new vocabulary words I heard, and I would try to journal in Spanish each night so I could practice. We don't have perfect memories, so writing things down lets us go back to review.

We've been invited by our leaders to write down spiritual impressions so we don't forget them.² Writing such things down can help us with the Spirit in a couple of ways: (1) It can help us remember promptings and feelings after time has passed. Maybe a past prompting will help you in the future, or it might just remind you that the Spirit really *has* spoken to you. (2) It is also a great way to keep track of how you have felt the Spirit in the past so you can recognize it better in the future. That way, you can start to identify the Spirit more clearly.

KEEP TRYING

And last but not least, don't give up. Even with the gift of tongues, it's very likely you won't learn a language perfectly overnight. As you keep practicing and working hard, it'll come, but you have to have faith and keep persevering.

Learning to receive revelation and becoming more in tune with the Spirit really is a lifelong effort. I'm sure if you asked your parents or Church leaders, they'd say that they're still working on it too. So don't be discouraged if it feels like it's taking a while—it's not just you! We all need time to learn a new language. So be patient, keep trying, and the Lord will be there to help you learn the language of the Spirit. 🙏

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, "Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives," Apr. 2018 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 96).
2. See, for example, Neil L. Andersen, Apr. 2020 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2020, 21).

Revelation Will Come

"We will get promptings of the Spirit when we have done everything we can, when we are out in the sun working rather than sitting back in the shade praying for direction on the first step to take. . . .

"So we do all we can. Then we wait upon the Lord for His revelation. He has His own timetable."

President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "In His Own Time, in His Own Way," *Ensign*, Aug. 2013, 24.

LAY THE FOUNDATION

This year's theme helps you see your role in building up God's kingdom.

Doctrine and Covenants 64:33–34

33 Wherefore, be not weary in **well-doing**, for ye are laying the **foundation** of a **great work**. And **out of small things** proceedeth that which is great.

34 Behold, the Lord requireth the **heart and a willing mind**; and the willing and obedient shall **eat the good of the land of Zion** in these last days.

Well-doing

Doing good that inspires or motivates others to embrace and do good and noble things.

Foundation

The bottom part of a building, bearing the load of the structure on top of it.



Great work

Our great work is to help build up of God's kingdom on earth, including the gathering of Israel.¹

Out of small things

Every little good thing you're doing is helping to build something big.



Heart and a willing mind

The Lord needs us to devote our desires, thoughts, and feelings to His work.



Eat the good of the land

From the Old Testament, meaning to thrive plentifully (see Isaiah 1:19).



Zion

Zion can mean: the Lord's people, a place where the Lord's people dwell, or how the Lord's people live (pure in heart, living a celestial law).



NOTE

1. See Russell M. Nelson, "Hope of Israel" (worldwide devotional for youth, June 3, 2018), [HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.hopeofisrael.org).



A Great Work

The Lord has invited you to join “the greatest work” on the earth.¹

**2021 YOUTH THEME:
DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS 64:33–34**

**By the Young Women
and Young Men General Presidencies**

YOU MARVELOUS YOUNG WOMEN AND YOUNG MEN are part of something wonderful—you are “laying the foundation of a great work” (Doctrine and Covenants 64:33). That work helps the Lord, Jesus Christ, carry out His mission as we participate in the gathering of Israel on both sides of the veil and the building of Zion.

JOINING THE YOUTH BATTALION

President Russell M. Nelson has invited each of you to join in that work as part of “the youth battalion of the Lord.”² But what is a battalion? A battalion is a specialized unit designed to accomplish specific tasks together. That means you are part of a specialized unit to find and accomplish your part in the Lord’s great work.

When the prophet invited you to see the purpose of your lives with a focus on the gathering of Israel, your life started to look like Moses’s life. Moses, who was raised as a prince of Egypt, had to flee for his life and later became content with his simple life tending sheep. But the Lord called on him and declared, “I have a work for thee” (Moses 1:6). Our Father in Heaven knew what Moses did not: that with God’s help, Moses could be instrumental in rescuing a great nation—he could do anything.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

You might wonder, “I am not Moses. Can I even make a difference in this world?” We have felt the same way at times, but we have been around long enough to know the answer is yes. We see ordinary youth every day who are choosing not to live ordinary lives. They are having a powerful influence on those around them by just quietly being true disciples of Jesus Christ. They are developing their talents and helping their families succeed. You are called by a prophet to “lay the foundation of a great work.” As we trust in Jesus Christ and seek to do His will, we make a difference!

You are not alone in this. As you join in the Lord’s battalion, you join a vast group of youth across the world. We stand beside you shoulder to shoulder along with your parents, leaders, and friends, apostles and prophets, and the very angels of heaven, all striving to accomplish the work of the Lord together (see Doctrine and Covenants 84:88).

OUT OF SMALL THINGS PROCEEDETH THAT WHICH IS GREAT

We will take it a little at a time. The Lord invites us to take small and simple steps as we embark in this great work (see Doctrine and Covenants 64:33). Consistent, faithful actions will move us forward and invite us to reach out and help those around us. Some of these simple things can be tailored personally to you since everyone's journey is not going to be exactly the same.

Pray to know who you are and understand your personal role in God's plan. Pray to know what small and simple things you should do each day. You will likely have to get out of your comfort zone, but as you are willing to act on promptings you receive, you will be given more.

As President Nelson recently taught: "As we seek to be disciples of Jesus Christ, our efforts to *hear Him* need to be ever more intentional. It takes conscious and consistent effort to fill our daily lives with His words, His teachings, His truths."³

THE LORD WILL EXPAND YOUR ABILITIES AND INCREASE YOUR JOY

As you seek revelation, the Lord will guide you to know how to use your individual talents and personality to serve and live the gospel. He will stretch your imagination, creativity, and capacity in ways you never would have thought possible.

As you offer your willing heart and mind to the Lord, you will discover more friends and increased opportunities to serve. Your sense of identity and purpose will be strengthened, and you will find joy.

We may sometimes feel content to settle and coast, but God has something else in store. Just as He had a great work for Moses, He has a great work for you. Be not weary! We have complete confidence in you—the youth battalion of the Lord. 🏰

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, "Hope of Israel" (worldwide youth devotional, June 3, 2018), 3, [HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/hopeofisrael).
2. Russell M. Nelson, "Hope of Israel," 12, [HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/hopeofisrael).
3. Russell M. Nelson, "Hear Him," Apr. 2020 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2020, 89).

2021 YOUTH THEME RESOURCES



POSTERS & T-SHIRTS

Download graphics for posters and T-shirts.



KEEP READING

Follow @StriveToBe on Instagram to read stories from other youth and share your own experiences.



NEW MUSIC!

Check out the 2021 Youth theme song, "A Great Work," along with the rest of the album. It's available in many languages.



KEEP READING

Find stories to inspire you to "Lay a Foundation" in the Gospel Living app, and in *For the Strength of Youth*.

Great Work

2021 Youth Theme Song

Words and music by Nik Day

♩ = 75

B \flat F G m E \flat

5

1. There is a work to do that's been pre-pared for you — long be-
 2. If you give Him your heart, He'll show you who you are and all His

B \flat F G m

8

fore the world was made. — You have the strength you
 hopes and dreams for you. — And when you fol - low

E \flat B \flat

10 (1st verse only)

need to cross the storm - y seas that you will find a - long the way.

(2nd verse only) Go to %2nd verse

Him the great work will be - gin and per-fect love will win. — This is a

10 F G m E \flat Go to %2nd verse

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13

He is your re - fuge from the storm.

13 F Gm E^b

15

And you will ne - ver be a - lone. This is a

15 F Gm E^b

17

great work that we've been gi - ven. This is a part of His grand de -

17 B^b F Gm

20

sign. — So don't be wea - ry. He will be with you, and He will

20 E^b B^b F

23

lead you through the night in this great work. This

G m E^b B^b

26

great work. This is a great work.

To Coda \oplus
(3rd time only)

F G m E^b

29

This is His work and glo - ry, and He wants you by His side

F G m

31

so He can help you find your place in this

D.S. al Coda

E^b F

CODA

33

8

In this great work. This

33

E \flat B \flat

35

8

great work. This is a great work.

35

F Gm

37

8

37

E \flat B \flat

39

8

39

F Gm E \flat



A Great Work

"Wherefore, be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great. Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind."

DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS 64:33-34

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

DEFENDING MY BELIEFS

ONE NIGHT I WAS hanging out with a group of friends. We were talking and they started gossiping about my other friends who weren't present. I felt uncomfortable about what they were saying. I then got a prompting from the Spirit that I should stand up for what I believe.

Without further hesitation, I told them I didn't feel very comfortable about what they were saying and asked if they would not gossip when I was around. They said it's just a part of life and it didn't matter. Without getting upset about it, I listened to their point and then explained what I believe. Then I got up and walked away.

My experience that night made me think about what Joseph Smith went through. When Joseph Smith retrieved the gold plates, he experienced a lot of persecution. No matter how much persecution there was, Joseph Smith still stood tall and didn't falter. God was with Joseph Smith and helped him, and I knew that God was with me too when I stood for what was right.

I did lose a couple friends that night for defending my beliefs, and I was sad about that. But I felt peace and comfort for doing what was right. A little later, one of my friends thanked me for what I had said. Because of that, I gained a friendship back that was stronger than it was before.

Andrew F., Utah, USA

"You and I have enough light to share right now. We can light the next step to help someone draw nearer to Jesus Christ, and then the next step, and the next."

Sister Bonnie H. Cordon, Young Women General President, Apr. 2020 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2020, 80).



ILLUSTRATION BY LUCA DI BARTOLOMEO

FUN STOP

IMMERSED IN NUMBERS

People performing baptisms have to say specific words. Those words are found in Doctrine and Covenants 20, but which verse? Do the following math using numbers from the scriptures to find out.

- A.** Take the number of sections in the Doctrine and Covenants and subtract Joseph Smith's age when he received the First Vision (see Joseph Smith—History 1:23).



- B.** Take the result of A and divide it by the number of books in the Book of Mormon that are called "Nephi."



- C.** Take the result of B and multiply it by the number of times the angel Moroni visited Joseph Smith on the night of September 21–22, 1823 (see Joseph Smith—History 1:30–47).



- D.** Take the result of C and subtract the number of the tribes of Israel (see, for instance, Genesis 49:28).



- E.** Take the result of D and subtract the age when a person may be baptized.



ANSWER: _____

SPOT THE DIFFERENCES

Can you find 10 things that are different between these two photos?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____



The Spirit might be on your right hand and on your left and angels round about you, but you are still wearing a helmet!



ARIE VAN DE GRAEFF

Thanks for helping me bring in the groceries! Just don't get in the cookies. They're for my Sunday School lesson!



RYAN STOKER



Representatives of Jesus Christ

"It is important to remember that we

have taken Jesus Christ's name upon us, so we are representatives of Him. In everything we do, we should ask ourselves if we are acting as He would and if we are bringing ourselves closer to Him."

Brandon K., 17, Ohio, USA



Standards of the World

"I also choose not to play teen-rated games.

Some of them can be fun, but you never know what could happen. I play fun games with my family, and I feel better about not playing teen-rated games. The standards the world has today are not equal to God's standards, and I want to be like Him."

Payton D., 13, Nevada, USA



Listen to the Spirit

"Do the video games have any profanity

or immodesty? We should try to avoid these, because these things drive away the Spirit. Violence can also drive away the Spirit. Carefully and prayerfully consider whether or not you can feel the Spirit in your life when you are playing these games regularly."

Miriana B., 18, Washington, USA

"All my friends play teen-rated video games, but I choose not to. Are teen-rated games OK?"



Good, Better, and Best

"We should remember that there are

always good, better, and best things we can be watching, playing, and listening to. Even if there are worse things we could be doing, there are probably more wholesome and uplifting things we could be doing too."

Ash H., 17, Virginia, USA



How Would the Savior Feel?

"When choosing entertainment, I ask

myself if the Savior would feel comfortable watching or playing with me. If the answer is no, then I don't use that entertainment, regardless of its rating. There are many good games that can be fun and challenging and still invite the Spirit to be with us."

Brigitte D., California, USA

"Of course it is good to view wholesome entertainment or to obtain interesting information. But not everything of that sort is worth the portion of our life we give to obtain it. Some things are better, and others are best."

President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency, Oct. 2007 general conference (Ensign or Liahona, Nov. 2007, 105).

Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as official pronouncements of Church doctrine.



People tell me it's arrogant to say we're the only true Church. What should I tell them?

THE LORD HIMSELF said to Joseph Smith that this Church is “the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth, with which I, the Lord, am well pleased, speaking unto the church collectively and not individually” (Doctrine and Covenants 1:30).

This statement certainly does *not* mean that we're better than anyone else. But it *does* mean that this is Jesus Christ's Church. He leads it, He restored it, and He gave it His authority. Because of this, there are certain things that only this Church can offer, such as prophets and apostles, temple ordinances and covenants, and the Book of Mormon. We're grateful for these things, and we want to share them with others out of genuine love—not because we want to “be right” or “grow the Church.”

While we can boldly and confidently testify of the Church, we should never be arrogant toward others or disrespect their beliefs. The Prophet Joseph Smith once said, “We don't ask any people to throw away any good they have got; we only ask them to come and get more” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 155).

What Do You Think?

I'm 16, and everyone around me is in a relationship and I'm not. I feel left out. What should I do?

Send your answer and photo by February 15, 2021.

Go to ftsoy.ChurchofJesusChrist.org, click “Submit Your Work.” Sign in with your Church Account and then select “For the Strength of Youth” under “Choose Magazine.” Click “Add File” to select your file and photos, and then click “Submit” to upload and send us your file. Or send an email to ftsoy@ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

FUN STOP ANSWERS (PAGES 28-29): Immersed in Numbers: A. 138-14=124 B. 124÷4=31 C. 31×3=93 D. 93-12=81 E. 81-8=73 Answer: Doctrine and Covenants 20:73 **Spot the Differences:** 1. Flower changed color. 2. Tie changed color. 3. Suspenders missing. 4. Bow tie changed color. 5. Monocle chain missing. 6. Money in shirt pocket missing. 7. White headband missing. 8. Feather duster changed color. 9. Back wall changed color. 10. Dress changed color. 11. Dress changed color on middle girl, back row.

Hear, Hearken, and Heed

By President Russell M. Nelson

President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

From an April 2020 general conference address.

THE VERY FIRST WORD in the Doctrine and Covenants is hearken (see Doctrine and Covenants 1:1). It means “to listen with the intent to obey.” To hearken means to “hear Him”—to hear what the Savior says and then to heed His counsel. In those two words—“Hear Him”—God gives us the pattern for success, happiness, and joy in this life. We are to hear the words of the Lord, hearken to them, and heed what He has told us!

Where can we go to hear Him?

We can go to the scriptures. We can also hear Him in the temple. We also hear Him more clearly as we refine our ability to recognize the whisperings of the Holy Ghost. And, finally, we hear Him as we heed the words of prophets, seers, and revelators.

What will happen as you more intentionally hear, hearken, and heed what the Savior has said and what He is saying now through His prophets? I promise that you will be blessed with additional power to deal with temptation, struggles, and weakness. I promise miracles in your family relationships and daily work. And I promise that your capacity to feel joy will increase even if turbulence increases in your life.

In Your Life

As President Russell M. Nelson taught, we “hearken” when we hear and follow the teachings we receive from the Lord and His servants. What can you do to better hearken to the words of the Lord in your life?





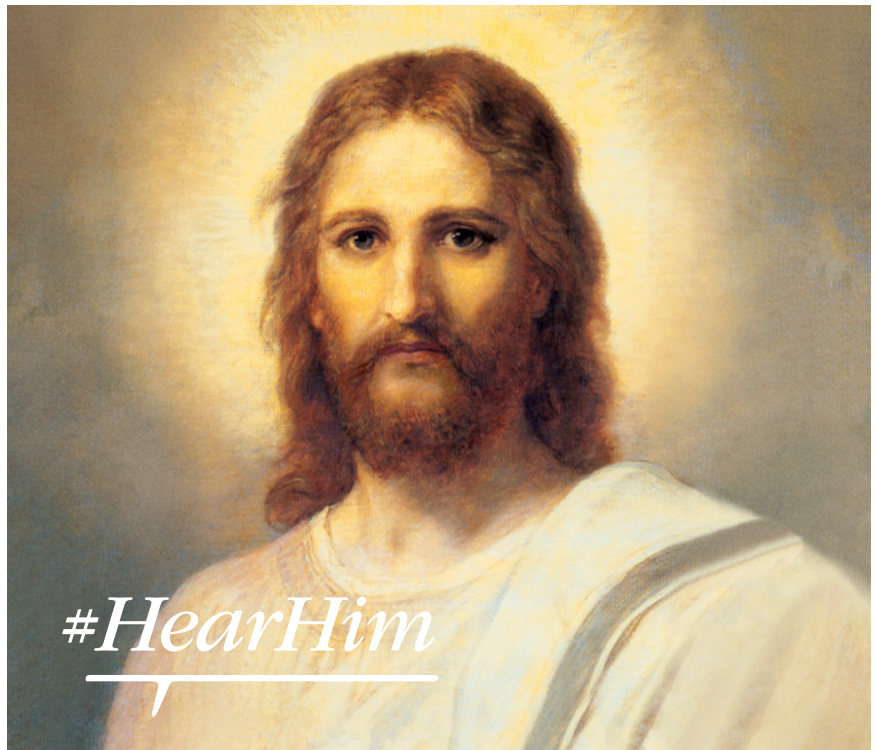
Joseph Smith Jr.

1805–1844

Had 11 children.

Owned a dog named Major.


As a youth, his heartfelt prayer led to the First Vision, the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, and the ongoing Restoration. He was the first President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.



This year in *Come, Follow Me*, you can learn to “Hear Him” through:

- Scriptures
- Temple worship
- The Holy Ghost
- Prayer
- Words of prophets

Share the ways you “Hear Him” by emailing your story to **ftsoy@ChurchofJesusChrist.org**.

 You can also direct message us on **@StrivetoBe** Instagram or post using **#StrivetoBe**.

