

## EASTER BASKETS WITH BLESSINGS

With a little thought, you can prepare Easter baskets for your children that focus on the gospel.

Many materials at Church distribution centers make ideal gifts. One year we purchased several sets of New Era poster cards and some red scripture-marking pencils. We divided up some of the

cards and put them and a pencil in each basket. The rest we gave to neighborhood children. Another year we included pocket-sized hymnbooks among the Easter treats. Many options are available to help your family focus on the true purpose of celebrating Easter.

**Julie Eichler, Utah**

Note: If you do not live near an LDS distribution center, you may place orders online at [www.ldscatalog.com](http://www.ldscatalog.com). U.S. and Canadian residents may also call the Salt Lake Distribution Center at 1-800-537-5971.



## MOVING OUT, JUMPING IN

During my first year of college it really helped me to remember that none of us is ever truly alone. Whenever I felt homesick or was having a hard time with school, I tried to remember that I could always reach out to Heavenly Father and the new friends He had blessed me with. Fortunately, as members of the Church, we also have many ways we can become involved.

### **Attend your Church meetings.**

Though it may seem daunting to attend a new ward or branch at first, make sure you go and participate. You will be blessed as you do so.

### **Get to know your bishopric.**

Take the initiative to meet them at the first opportunity instead of assuming they'll reach out to you. They do their best to meet everyone, but you can also make the effort. Let them know you would welcome a calling.

**Be involved.** Take time from your studies to attend family home evening, baptisms, ward prayer, firesides, activities, and institute classes. Most of my friends that first year were in my ward, and they became my biggest support system.

**Give referrals to the local missionaries.** I have found that

college life provides many opportunities for sharing the gospel. Have the courage and make the time to do so.

**Keep in touch with your parents.**

Discuss what you're doing, learning, and experiencing. Call, write, e-mail, or send text messages often. They love you and can offer much-needed support—even by long-distance.

**Remember and live by Church teachings.** Pray, read the scriptures, write in your journal, do your home or visiting teaching. While you might think your time is too limited to do such things, you'll find that putting the gospel first will help you to more effectively manage your study time and do better in school overall. Associate with others who have goals and values similar to yours. Let them know by your example—modest appearance, clean language, choice of activities, and high standards—that you live a gospel-centered life.

**Aimee Sauvageau, Utah**

## PREACHING HIS GOSPEL

You don't have to be a full-time missionary to enjoy the blessings of studying the *Preach My Gospel* manual (item no. 36617000). Our family unity has been strengthened as we've studied it together. We firmly believe in the promise from the First Presidency that "more happiness awaits you than you have ever experienced as you labor among His children" (*Preach My Gospel*, 2004, v).

## FAMILY HOME EVENING HELPS



### Family Stories

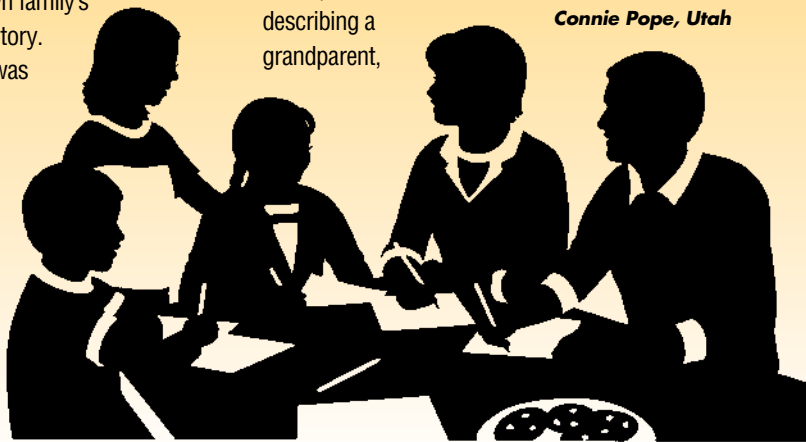
When our children were at home, we made history every week—our own family's history. It was

a tradition my parents started when I was young. We simply set aside 10 minutes together to write on an assigned topic. When finished, we shared what we had written down. Some of the entries included telling about a Fourth of July (or a Christmas, Halloween, or Easter) we remembered, describing a grandparent,

telling about an accident or illness, or recalling a vacation or fun birthday tradition.

When we were done, each of us had a binder to store our growing collection of journal entries. We enjoyed sharing each other's experiences in this way and are grateful that we preserved special memories.

**Connie Pope, Utah**



We often refer to the "What Do I Study and Teach?" chapter, which helps us learn more about the message of the Restoration. Each heading within the section covers a topic that we read and then discuss together. Study begins with "God Is Our Loving Heavenly Father" and concludes with "Endure to the End." Throughout the manual, scripture-study references are easily identified in blue.

My husband and I also study the manual together to gain parenting insights. We like to refer to the orange-colored activity suggestions throughout the book. Some are for personal study, and others indicate companionship study as well. When reading the text, we replace the word "missionary" with "parent." The same activities suggested for missionaries

have helped us to more effectively teach our children the gospel. And just as companion study can unify a missionary companionship, we feel it is ever more worthwhile to strengthen the unity of our eternal companionship.

**Kelley Estrada, Arizona**

Do you have ideas for Random Sampler? We invite you to send short (less than 500-word) articles on any of these topics related to practical gospel living:

- Teaching ideas for home or church, especially for family home evening
- Personal or family financial management tips
- General health and physical fitness tips
- Home production and storage ideas
- Gospel-related holiday traditions that build testimony.

Please see the "Do You Have a Story to Tell?" box on p. 2 for submission instructions.