

Ensign



**Deepen Your
Learning—Reach Your
Divine Potential, p. 26**

**Inviting Others Back to the
Gospel, pp. 13, 50, 80**

**How Honesty Determines Our
Eternal Destiny, p. 36**

**8 Ways to Fortify Your Family
against Pornography, p. 54**



The Kirtland Temple, pictured in the background in 1907, was the first temple built in this dispensation. The Prophet Joseph Smith saw the temple in a vision, which provided its design (see D&C 95). The temple was dedicated on March 27, 1836 (see D&C 109). Of that great spiritual experience, Eliza R. Snow wrote, "Angels appeared to some, while a sense of divine presence was realized by all present" (in Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith [2007], 307).

Photograph by George Edward Anderson,
courtesy of Church History Library

Contents August 2017

Volume 47 • Number 8



MESSAGES

FIRST PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

4 A Disciple's Life
By President Dieter F. Uchtdorf

VISITING TEACHING MESSAGE

7 Living a Consecrated Life

ON THE COVER
Photograph by
Cody Bell



YOUNG ADULT FEATURES

16 Inquire Well to Marry Well
By Michael A. Goodman
Looking to the inward character will help us know the true nature of a potential spouse.

20 What Is Institute?
By Wayne L. Davis
How can institute help you gain friends, spiritual protection, and gospel knowledge?

22 Institute Is for Us
By Leah Welker
We've got a lot on our plates—institute can help.

FEATURES

26 Learning for the Whole Soul
By Elder Kim B. Clark
Become educated with your entire soul—not just your mind.

32 Blessed by Seminary in Spite of Myself
By Jeremy Vick
I didn't want to attend seminary, but the lessons I learned there helped me when I needed them most.

34 Seminary and Institute at a Glance
Learn interesting facts and figures about these worldwide programs of the Church.

36 The Divine Standard of Honesty
By Elder Neil L. Andersen
For a disciple of Christ, honesty is at the very heart of spirituality.

42 Inspired Home Teaching
Members tell how they were blessed through the Christlike service of caring home teachers.





54

- 46 Sweeten the Sabbath with Family History**
 By Margot Hovley
Ten ways to enrich your family's Sabbath day through connecting with the past.
- 50 Blessing Those Who Are Less Active**
 By Elder Terence M. Vinson
As we live in tune with the Spirit and seek the Lord's help, He will bless our efforts to bring His lost sheep back to the fold.
- 54 Eight Strategies to Help Children Reject Pornography**
 By Lisa Ann Thomson
Even with the seeming pervasiveness of pornography, parents have power to protect their children and prepare them to face and reject pornography.
- 62 Faith, Determination, and a Deadline**
 By Aaron Barrus
Time was running out to finish the wood pieces we were asked to make for the temple.
- 64 Prompted to Pay Tithing**
 By Robert G. Cox
I had a clear and unmistakable impression that I needed to pay my tithing.
- 67 Preparing a Spiritual Feast**
 By Manuel Emilio Ciriaco
We decided to treat sacrament meeting like more than just another Sunday meeting—and the results were extraordinary.



72

DEPARTMENTS

- 8 April 2017 Conference Notebook**
- 10 Our Homes, Our Families: Our Kitchen and Our Covenants**
 By Bonnie L. Ford
- 12 Reflections: Clocks**
 By Christy Rusch Banz
- 13 Serving in the Church: The Lord's Concern for Us**
 By Paige Anderson
- 14 News of the Church: Area Presidencies**
- 68 Music: Angels Round About**
 By Marvin K. Gardner and Vanja Y. Watkins
- 70 Friend Connection: The Burdens of Bullying**
- 71 Teaching the Proclamation to Children**
- 72 Turning Hearts: My Missionary Heritage**
 By Alexandra Warner
- 74 Portraits of Faith: Niki Covington—Lazio, Italy**
- 76 Latter-day Saint Voices**
- 80 Until We Meet Again: Please Come Back!**
 By President James E. Faust

Ensign

A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
August 2017 Volume 47 • Number 8

The First Presidency: Thomas S. Monson, Henry B. Eyring, Dieter F. Uchtdorf

The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, Robert D. Hales, Jeffrey R. Holland, David A. Bednar, Quentin L. Cook, D. Todd Christofferson, Neil L. Andersen, Ronald A. Rasband, Gary E. Stevenson, Dale G. Renlund

Editor: Joseph W. Sitati

Assistant Editors: Randall K. Bennett, Carol F. McConkie

Advisers: Brian K. Ashton, Bonnie H. Cordon, LeGrand R. Curtis Jr., Sharon Eubank, Christoffel Golden, Douglas D. Holmes, Erich W. Kopischke, Larry R. Lawrence

Managing Director: Richard I. Heaton

Director of Church Magazines:

Allan R. Loyborg

Business Manager: Garff Cannon

Managing Editor: Adam C. Olson

Assistant Managing Editor:

LaRene Porter Gaunt

Publications Assistant: Georgina Valls-Mayor

Writing and Editing: Ryan Carr, Maryssa Dennis, David Dickson, David A. Edwards, Matthew Flitton, Lori Fuller, Garrett H. Garff, Charlotte Larcabal, Michael R. Morris, Eric Murdock, Richard M. Romney, Mindy Anne Selu

Editorial Interns: Lauren Hanson, Heather J. Johnson

Managing Art Director: J. Scott Knudsen

Art Director: Tadd R. Peterson

Design: David S. Green, Colleen Hinckley, Eric P. Johnsen, Susan Lofgren, Scott Mooy, Rachel Smith

Design Intern: Emily Remington

Intellectual Property Coordinator:

Collette Nebeker Aune

Production Manager: Jane Ann Peters

Production: Glen Adair, Connie Bowthorpe Bridge, Julie Burdett, Thomas G. Cronin, Bryan W. Gygi, Ginny J. Nilson, Derek Richardson

Prepress: Joshua Dennis

Printing Director: Steven T. Lewis

Distribution Director: Troy K. Vellinga

© 2017 by Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved. The *Ensign* (ISSN 0884-1136) is published monthly by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 50 E. North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA. Periodicals Postage Paid at Salt Lake City, Utah.

Copyright information: Unless otherwise indicated, individuals may copy material from the *Ensign* for their own personal, noncommercial use (including such use in connection with their calling in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints). This right can be revoked at any time and for any reason. Visual material may not be copied if restrictions are indicated in the credit line with the artwork. Copyright questions should be addressed to Intellectual Property Office, 50 E. North Temple St., Fl. 13, Salt Lake City, UT 84150, USA; email: cor-intellectualproperty@ldschurch.org.

POSTMASTER: Send all UAA to CFS (see DMM 507.1.5.2).

NONPOSTAL AND MILITARY FACILITIES: Send address changes to Distribution Services, Church Magazines, P.O. Box 26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368, USA.

Canada Post Information: Publication Agreement #40017431.

MORE ONLINE



ICONS FROM GETTY IMAGES

ISSUES BEHIND THIS ISSUE

Education is a major topic in this issue (see page 26). Learn why it's important to us and why we're so excited about the future: lds.org/go/educationE817.

TEACHING KIDS HOW TO REJECT PORNOGRAPHY

Teaching your children about pornography doesn't have to be as hard as you might think (see page 54). Find family home evening ideas on the topic at lds.org/go/fheE817.

AN 11TH WAY TO SWEETEN THE SABBATH DAY

This month we share 10 ways to "Sweeten the Sabbath with Family History" (see page 46). Find our bonus idea online at lds.org/go/bonusE817.

Find these and other digital-exclusive articles at ensign.lds.org or in the Gospel Library app in the *Liahona* under "2017 Digital Articles."



**By President
Dieter F. Uchtdorf**
Second Counselor in
the First Presidency

A DISCIPLE'S LIFE

Thirty years ago in Ghana, a young college student named Doe stepped inside an LDS meetinghouse for the first time. A friend had invited Doe to come with her, and Doe was curious to know what the Church was like.

The people there were so nice and warm that she couldn't help but wonder, "What kind of church is this?"

Doe felt so impressed that she decided to learn more about the Church and its people, who were filled with so much joy. But as soon as she began doing so, well-meaning family and friends began to oppose her at every turn. They said terrible things about the Church and did all they could to dissuade her.

But Doe had received a testimony.

She had faith, and she loved the gospel, which was filling her life with joy. And so, she entered the waters of baptism.

Afterward, she immersed herself in study and prayer. She fasted and sought the influence of the Holy Ghost

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

President Uchtdorf teaches us that the path of discipleship is difficult but that those who live the "peaceable life of a disciple of Jesus Christ are those who will eventually find joy." Just as President Uchtdorf tells the story of Doe to show how a true disciple of Christ can find peace and joy despite life's trials, you may consider sharing a story from your own life about why you choose to follow Christ and how He has strengthened you. When you are led by the Spirit, sharing personal stories can strengthen those you teach.

in her life. As a result, Doe's testimony and faith grew stronger and deeper. Eventually she decided to serve a full-time mission for the Lord.

After returning from her mission, she dated and married a returned missionary—the very one who had baptized her years earlier—and they were later sealed in the Johannesburg South Africa Temple.

Many years have passed since Doe Kaku first experienced the joy of the gospel of Jesus Christ. During that time, life has not always been sweet for her. She has endured her share of heartbreak and despair, including the loss of two children—the deep grief of those experiences still weighs heavily upon her heart.

But she and her husband, Anthony, have striven to draw close to each other and to their beloved Heavenly Father, whom they love with all their heart.

Today, 30 years after she entered the waters of baptism, Sister Kaku recently completed another full-time



Doe Kaku at the time of her conversion to the Church.



Sister Kaku today with her husband, Anthony.

mission—this time together with her husband, who served as a mission president in Nigeria.

Those who know Sister Kaku say there is something special about her. She glows. It's hard to spend time with her without feeling happier yourself.

Her testimony is certain: "I know that the Savior sees me as His daughter and friend (see Mosiah 5:7; Ether 3:14)," she says. "And I am learning and trying so hard to be His friend too—not only by what I say but also by what I do."

We Are Disciples

Sister Kaku's story is similar to that of many others. She had a desire to know the truth, she paid the price to gain spiritual light, she demonstrated her love for God and her fellowman, and along the way she experienced hardships and sorrow.

But no matter the opposition, no matter the sorrow, she kept moving forward in faith. And just as important, she kept her joy. She found a way not only to endure the hardships of life but also to thrive despite them!

Her story is similar to yours and mine.

Rarely is our journey smooth or without trial.

We each have our heartaches, our disappointments, our sorrows.

We may even feel discouraged and at times overwhelmed.

But those who live a disciple's life—who remain faithful and keep moving forward in faith; who trust God and keep His commandments;¹ who live the gospel day by day and hour by hour; who give Christlike service to those around them, one good deed at a time—are those whose small acts often make a big difference.

Those who are a little kinder, a bit more forgiving, and a touch more merciful are the merciful who will receive mercy.² Those who make this world a better place, one caring and loving act at a time, and who strive to live the blessed, satisfying, and peaceable life of a disciple of Jesus Christ are those who will eventually find joy.

They will know that "the love of God, which sheddeth itself abroad in the hearts of the children of men . . . is the most desirable above all things . . . and the most joyous to the soul."³ ■

NOTES

1. See Mosiah 4:6.
2. See Matthew 5:7.
3. 1 Nephi 11:22–23.



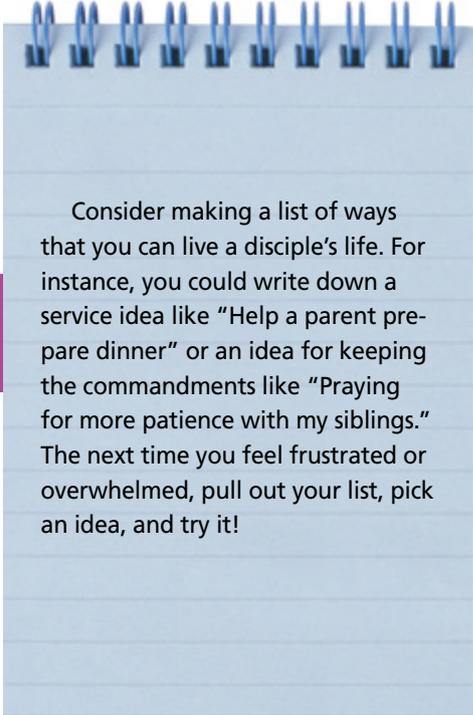
YOUTH

Joy as a Disciple of Jesus Christ

Have you ever had a bad day? What did you do to cheer up? President Uchtdorf knows that “we each have our heartaches, our disappointments, our sorrows. We may even feel discouraged and at times overwhelmed.”

His solution is to live what he calls “a disciple’s life”: “remain faithful and

keep moving forward in faith.” When we move forward in faith, we are able to trust God, keep His commandments, and serve others—and feel joy during all of it! As President Uchtdorf said, “Those who live a disciple’s life . . . are those whose small acts often make a big difference.”

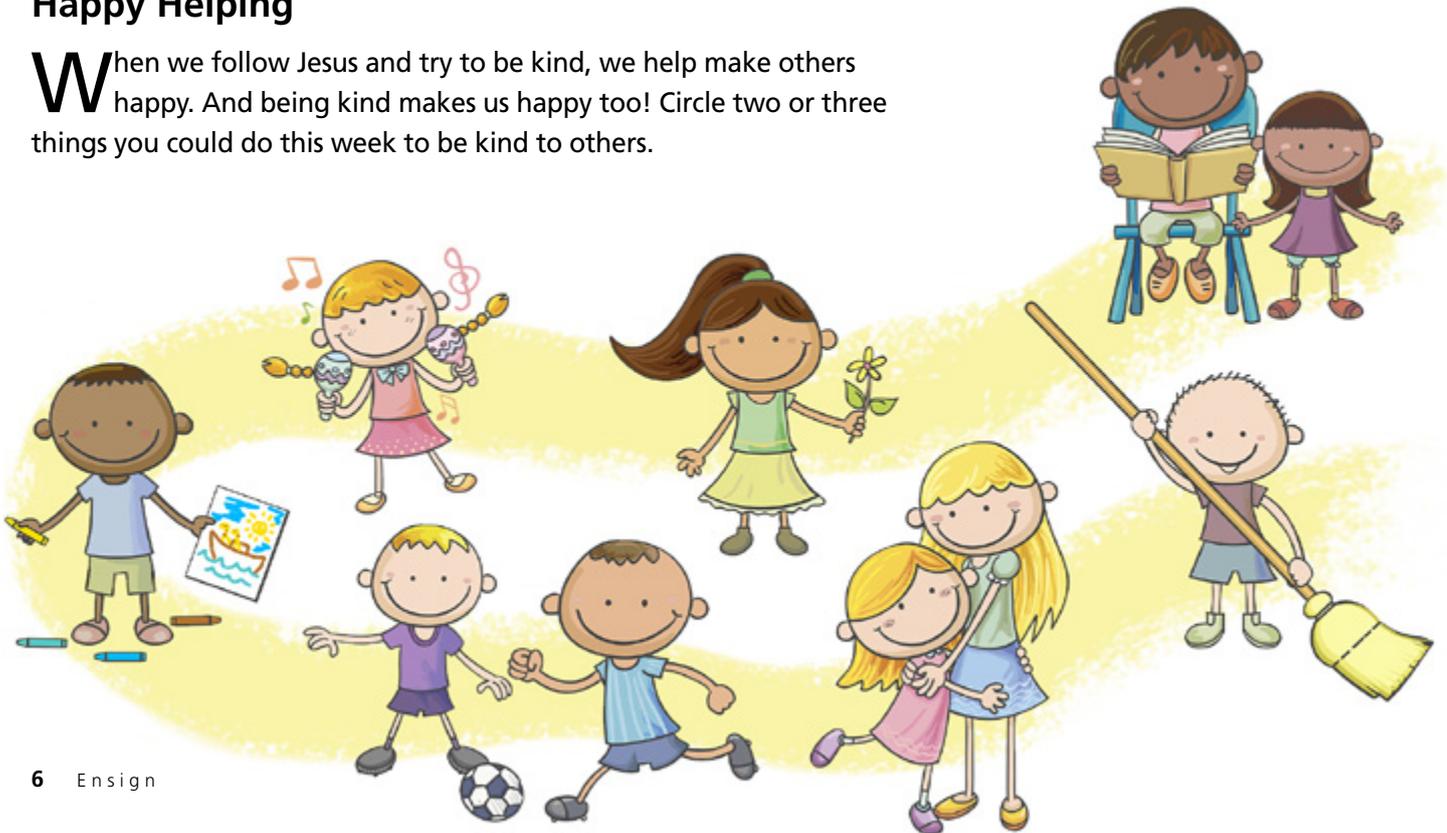


Consider making a list of ways that you can live a disciple’s life. For instance, you could write down a service idea like “Help a parent prepare dinner” or an idea for keeping the commandments like “Praying for more patience with my siblings.” The next time you feel frustrated or overwhelmed, pull out your list, pick an idea, and try it!

CHILDREN

Happy Helping

When we follow Jesus and try to be kind, we help make others happy. And being kind makes us happy too! Circle two or three things you could do this week to be kind to others.



Living a Consecrated Life

Prayerfully study this material and seek for inspiration to know what to share. How will understanding the purpose of Relief Society prepare daughters of God for the blessings of eternal life?

“To consecrate is to set apart or dedicate something as sacred, devoted to holy purposes,” said Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “True success in this life comes in consecrating our lives—that is, our time and choices—to God’s purposes.”¹

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “We tend to think of consecration only as yielding up, when divinely directed, our material possessions. But ultimate consecration is the yielding up of oneself to God.”²

As we consecrate ourselves to the purposes of God, our faith in Jesus Christ and in His Atonement will increase. As we live a consecrated life, we can be made holy through those actions.



Faith
Family
Relief

Carole M. Stephens, former First Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, said:

“Elder Robert D. Hales taught, ‘When we make and keep covenants, we are coming out of the world and into the kingdom of God.’

“We are changed. We look different, and we act different. The things we listen to and read and say are different, and what we wear is different because we become daughters of God bound to Him by covenant.”³

Consecration is the covenant God makes “with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the

Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jeremiah 31:33). Living a consecrated life is in harmony with God’s plan for us.

Additional Scriptures

1 Thessalonians 1:3; Doctrine and Covenants 105:5;
reliefsociety.lds.org

NOTES

1. D. Todd Christofferson, “Reflections on a Consecrated Life,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 16.
2. Neal A. Maxwell, “Consecrate Thy Performance,” *Ensign*, May 2002, 36.
3. Carole M. Stephens, “Wide Awake to Our Duties,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 115–16.



Consider This

How does consecrating our lives to the Lord help us become more like Him?

APRIL 2017 CONFERENCE NOTEBOOK

“What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken; . . . whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38).

As you review the April 2017 general conference, you can use these pages (and Conference Notebooks in future issues) to help you study and apply the recent teachings of the living prophets and apostles and other Church leaders.



DOCTRINAL HIGHLIGHT

Be Not Guilty of Persecution

In various countries across the world, I have had small glimpses into the ugliness of prejudice and discrimination suffered by those who are targeted because of their race or ethnicity.

“Persecution comes in many forms: ridicule, harassment, bullying, exclusion and isolation, or hatred toward another. We must guard against bigotry that raises its ugly voice toward those who hold different opinions. Bigotry manifests itself, in part, in unwillingness to grant equal freedom of expression. Everyone, including people of religion, has the right to express his or her opinions in the

public square. But no one has a license to be hateful toward others as those opinions are expressed.

“. . . The Savior taught, ‘Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them’ [Matthew 7:12]. For us to ask for respect, we must be respectful. Furthermore, our genuine conversion brings ‘meekness, and lowliness of heart,’ which invites ‘the Holy Ghost [and fills us with] perfect love’ [Moroni 8:26], an ‘unfeigned love’ [1 Peter 1:22] for others.”

Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Our Good Shepherd,” *Ensign*, May 2017, 31–32.

PROPHETIC PROMISE



GOD TRUSTS US TO SERVE OUR ANCESTORS

“God knew that you would feel drawn to your ancestors in love and that you would have the technology necessary to identify them. . . . And He knew that He could trust you to accomplish this work in behalf of your ancestors. . . .

“This is the work of our generation. . . . You have felt this, as I have, when you have experienced an increase of love as you looked at the picture of an ancestor. You have felt it in the temple when the name on a card seemed like more than a name, and you couldn’t help but sense that this person was aware of you and felt your love.

“I testify that God the Father wants His children home again, in families and in glory. . . . I promise you the inspired help that you seek and need.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Gathering the Family of God,” *Ensign*, May 2017, 21, 22.



Sin-Resistant Means Being Repentant

Being sin-resistant doesn't mean being sinless, but it does imply being continually repentant, vigilant, and valiant.

Perhaps being sin-resistant comes as a blessing from repeatedly resisting sin. . . .

"The stripling warriors 'were exceedingly valiant for courage. . . . They had been taught to keep the commandments of God and to walk uprightly before him' [Alma 53:20, 21]. These young men went to war carrying Christlike virtues as weapons against their adversaries. . . .

"Our children don spiritual armor as they establish patterns of personal daily discipleship."

Joy D. Jones, Primary General President, "A Sin-Resistant Generation," *Ensign*, May 2017, 88.

ANSWERS FOR YOU



How Can I Know If My Answer Is from the Spirit or Just Me?

"Remember the words of Nephi. 'I was led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things which I should do. Nevertheless,'

he said, 'I went forth' [1 Nephi 4:6–7].

"And so must we. We must be confident in our first promptings. Sometimes we rationalize; we wonder if we are feeling a spiritual impression or if it is just our own thoughts. When we begin to second-guess, even third-guess, our feelings—and we all have—we are dismissing the Spirit; we are questioning divine counsel. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that if you will listen to the first promptings, you will get it right nine times out of ten."

Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Let the Holy Spirit Guide," *Ensign*, May 2017, 95–96.

To read, watch, or listen to general conference addresses, visit conference.lds.org.

FILL IN THE BLANK

Use the May 2017 issue or visit conference.lds.org to read more of what these speakers said.

1. "Overcoming the world is not one defining moment in a lifetime, but a lifetime of moments that define an _____." —Neil L. Andersen, "Overcoming the World."
2. "An assignment to labor in a specific _____ is essential and important but secondary to a call to the work." —David A. Bednar, "Called to the Work."
3. "In the eyes of God, there is no _____ in the kingdom that is more important than another." —Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "The Greatest among You."
4. "Seeking the _____ is in our spiritual DNA." —Mark A. Bragg, "Brighter and Brighter until the Perfect Day."

Answers: (1) eternity, (2) place, (3) calling, (4) light

OUR KITCHEN AND OUR COVENANTS

By Bonnie L. Ford

Work with my husband for hours every day? That was the last thing I wanted to do.

The day I told my husband to move out is forever ingrained in my memory. Despite a temple marriage of 13 years and five children, it seemed that our relationship had become irreparably damaged. We had allowed pride to seep into our hearts, which caused us to lose sight of our goals as husband and wife. Our days were spent focusing more on blaming each other for problems that existed in our marriage rather than accepting that we were both at fault and simply forgiving each other. The flame of our love had died down to embers, and we had allowed it to happen. The only thing that held our marriage together now was the covenants we had made in the temple.

Thankfully, our love for the Lord and our desire to choose the right were still strong, so we decided to seek help through LDS Family Services. At a counseling session, we were asked if there was anything that we liked to do together. My initial response was, “Nothing!” But my husband spoke up, saying that we worked well together on projects.

My mind went back to our first date. I was serving as activities chairman in my young single adult branch, working as a preschool teacher, and attending evening classes, trying to finish my degree. I often took projects to young single adult activities, and my husband became my most diligent helper. On one occasion he even helped me clean and prepare my preschool room until late into the evening for a state inspection the next day. We enjoyed each other’s company so much that we always considered that to be our first date. I admitted to the counselor that we did work well together.

That was our common ground. The foundation of our temple marriage was not only the sacred covenants we took upon ourselves but also friendship and service, which I had forgotten. Now the hard work of repairing our marriage was before us. We agreed that the kitchen in our home needed renovation. So, with some awkwardness and trepidation, we began talking civilly to each other again.

As the kitchen remodel progressed, we rediscovered how much we

enjoyed working together. Our friendship began to flourish and I began to develop a more forgiving heart. I realized that the problems in our marriage were not as devastating as I had come to believe. With faith, service, and most importantly forgiveness, our problems could be overcome. We began attending the temple on a regular basis and praying together again. Family scripture study with our children became a regular routine. We looked for times to be together, like going for walks and holding hands. By spending time together and living the gospel more fully, we became best friends again.

It took nearly four years to finish the work in the kitchen. We did it together, and it saved our marriage. It forced us to control our selfish impulses and communicate without screaming. We were able to talk things over calmly and rationally. I also began to notice that there was less arguing among the children. Even amidst the chaos of remodeling, our home became a peaceful place of refuge from the



storm, instead of the center of it. We realized that the key to a successful marriage is the sacrifice of time and talents for each other. But most of all, it reminded us why we fell in love.

In February we celebrated 21 years of marriage, and it is stronger than ever. Now I can't imagine living my life without my husband, my best friend. We know that without the covenants we made in the temple, our marriage would likely have ended in divorce. When there was nothing else keeping us together, the covenants we had made with the Lord became the anchor we needed. Our kitchen renovation taught us to continue to hold together the building blocks of our marriage—namely, faith, hope, love, sacrifice, friendship, and most of all, forgiveness. ■

The author lives in Ohio, USA.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, my servants, that inasmuch as you have forgiven one another your trespasses, even so I, the Lord, forgive you.”

Doctrine and Covenants 82:1

CLOCKS

By Christy Rusch Banz

The Holy Ghost is much like the clocks my son was so fascinated with.

When my son, Joshua, was about two years old, he developed a keen interest in clocks. If we passed a clock in the house, he wanted to stop and look at it. He especially liked to put his ear up close to the clock and listen to the ticking sound it made. He went through a phase where we couldn't pass by a clock without stopping to listen to it tick.

I realized some interesting things from that simple activity. First, the clock ticked all the time, not just when we paid attention to it. Second, even though we knew the clock made a sound, we had to get close to it and be very quiet and still in order to hear the soft ticking.

The Holy Ghost is much like the clocks my son was so fascinated with. Those of us who have been baptized and received the gift of the Holy Ghost can have His constant companionship if we live worthy of it. The Holy

Ghost is always with us, but sometimes we let the noises of the world drown out the quiet promptings He gives us. Just as my son and I had to be quiet and still to hear the soft ticking of the clock, we each need to be still in order to hear, or feel, the quiet promptings the Spirit gives.

President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: “The voice of the Spirit is described in the scripture as being neither ‘loud’ nor ‘harsh.’ It is ‘not a voice of thunder, neither . . .

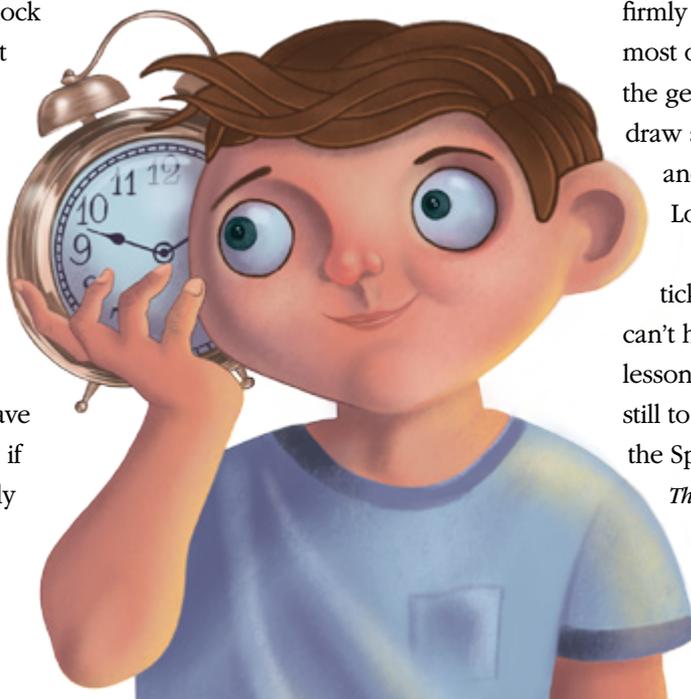
[a] voice of a great tumultuous noise.’ But rather, ‘a still voice of perfect mildness, as if it had been a whisper,’ and it can ‘pierce even to the very soul’ and ‘cause [the heart] to burn’ (3 Nephi 11:3; Helaman 5:30; D&C 85:6–7). . . .

“The Spirit,” President Packer taught, “does not get our attention by shouting or shaking us with a heavy hand. Rather it whispers. It caresses so gently that if we are preoccupied we may not feel it at all. . . .

“Occasionally it will press just firmly enough for us to pay heed. But most of the time, if we do not heed the gentle feeling, the Spirit will withdraw and wait until we come seeking and listening” (“The Candle of the Lord,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1983, 53).

Now whenever I hear soft ticking sounds from a clock, I can't help but remember the simple lesson my son taught me about being still to hear the quiet promptings of the Spirit. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



THE LORD'S CONCERN FOR US

By Paige Anderson

Thinking back to when my family was the focus of ward councils, I realized that we were not just the ward's concern—we were the Lord's concern.

When my bishop asked if I would accept a calling as Young Women president, I wanted to say no. I felt inadequate to preside over the young women. But three months after I had accepted, I was heartbroken to learn that our ward boundaries were changing and I would be released.

might feel like ward projects. After I had voiced my concern, however, the Spirit told me that Heavenly Father is concerned about all His children.

Some years ago my husband and I were the focus of a ward council, and we knew it. I returned to activation after our first child was born, but my husband did not. For years, stake



"Loving service and devotion to the needs of others was perhaps the chief characteristic of the Savior's mortal life. It will always be a

mark of the Master's disciples."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, "What I Wish Every New Member Knew—and Every Longtime Member Remembered," *Ensign*, Oct. 2006, 12.

a testimony. I will never forget the beautiful day our family was sealed in the temple.

It wasn't until I was called as Young Women president and had the opportunity to serve on a ward council that my eyes were opened to what it means to be the focus of a ward council. I learned that ward councils focus on certain people not because they care about numbers but because they, and the Lord, care about individuals. When we serve in our callings, the Lord fills us with His love for those we serve.

Thinking back to when my family was the focus of ward councils, I realized that we were not just the *ward's* concern—we were the *Lord's* concern. They cared about us because He cares about us.

The truth is, we are all the Lord's concern. Out of love, He has designed a plan to strengthen us and, if necessary, activate us—a plan often carried out by people like the bishop and home teacher who helped my husband. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



I prayed to know why the Lord would allow me to come to love the young women only to say goodbye so soon. My answer came unexpectedly during a ward council meeting.

Council members had been asked to share stories at stake conference about helping members of our ward, but I was concerned that some people

presidencies, bishoprics, and home teachers tried to help us.

Then we moved into a new ward. A patient and loving bishop and a home teacher became my husband's friends. This time my husband was receptive to the Spirit. He was prompted to read the Book of Mormon, and he started going to church. Slowly he regained

NEWS OF THE CHURCH

Visit news.lds.org for more Church news and events.

New Area Leaders Assigned

The First Presidency has announced changes in area leadership assignments, effective on August 1, 2017.

The Seventy are called by revelation, under the direction of the First Presidency, to assist the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in their ministry

throughout the world. The Presidency of the Seventy and Area Presidencies preside over geographic areas, and area leaders travel within their assigned area to teach and encourage local leaders and members of the Church.

During Christ's mortal ministry, He called the Seventy, instructed them in a manner similar to the Twelve Apostles, and sent them out "before his face," explaining that those who heard their voices would hear His voice (see Matthew 10:1, 16–17; Luke 10). ■

United States and Canada



L. Whitney Clayton

Assists in all areas



Craig C. Christensen

Utah North
Utah Salt Lake City
Utah South



Ulisses Soares

Idaho
North America Central



Lynn G. Robbins

North America Southeast



Gerrit W. Gong

North America Northeast



Juan A. Uceda

North America Southwest



Patrick Kearon

North America Northwest
North America West

Africa Southeast



S. Mark Palmer
First Counselor



Kevin S. Hamilton
President



Joni L. Koch
Second Counselor

Africa West



Marcus B. Nash
First Counselor



Terence M. Vinson
President



Larry S. Kacher
Second Counselor

Asia



David F. Evans
First Counselor



Randy D. Funk
President



Peter F. Meurs
Second Counselor

Asia North



Kazuhiko Yamashita
First Counselor



Robert C. Gay
President



Yoon Hwan Choi
Second Counselor

Brazil



W. Mark Bassett
First Counselor



Marcos A. Aidukaitis
President



Joaquin E. Costa
Second Counselor

Caribbean



Claudio D. Zivic
First Counselor



Walter F. González
President



Jose L. Alonso
Second Counselor

Central America



Jorge F. Zeballos
First Counselor



Adrián Ochoa
President



Valeri V. Córdón
Second Counselor

Europe



Gary B. Sabin
First Counselor



Paul V. Johnson
President



Massimo De Feo
Second Counselor

Europe East



Christoffel Golden
First Counselor



James B. Martino
President



Alexey V. Samaykin*
Second Counselor

Mexico



Arnulfo Valenzuela
First Counselor



Paul B. Pieper
President



Rafael E. Pino
Second Counselor

Middle East/Africa North



Wilford W. Andersen



Anthony D. Perkins

Administered from Church headquarters

Pacific



Craig A. Cardon
First Counselor



O. Vincent Haleck
President



Ian S. Ardern
Second Counselor

Philippines



Allen D. Haynie
First Counselor



Shayne M. Bowen
President



Evan A. Schmutz
Second Counselor

South America Northwest



Enrique R. Falabella
First Counselor



Carlos A. Godoy
President



Hugo Montoya
Second Counselor

South America South



Allan F. Packer
First Counselor



José A. Teixeira
President



Mark A. Bragg
Second Counselor

*Area Seventy

Inquire Well to Marry Well

**Points to ponder
as you make the
decision to marry.**

By Michael A. Goodman

Associate Professor of Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University

As Latter-day Saints, many of us have heard a version of the following thought: There is no decision—other than whether to come unto Christ—that will have a more profound impact on your life than whom you choose to marry. Statements like this can strike terror in the hearts of young and old alike. Is it any wonder that many members of the Church are anxious and fearful regarding dating, courtship, and marriage? Add to this the increased prevalence of broken hearts and marriages, and it is clear why so many struggle. Far too often I hear such comments as this: “What if I marry Dr. Jekyll and he turns out to be Mr. Hyde? My sister married a man who seemed wonderful—a returned missionary, a temple-recommend holder. He treated her so well. But within only three years, they were divorced.”

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained: “The best way to avoid *divorce* from an unfaithful, abusive, or unsupportive spouse is to avoid *marriage* to such a person. If you wish to marry well, inquire well.”¹

Through understanding correct principles and heeding prophetic guidance, our ability to “inquire well” increases and the chance of making a serious mistake lessens. It is also important to remember that even if we “inquire well” and receive the Lord’s confirmation of our choice, God does not take away our, nor our future spouse’s, agency. For the “happy ending” and the desired blessings to come to pass, both people have to continue to exercise their agency righteously. This is why it’s so important to know the true nature of the person you are going to marry.

So what does it mean to “inquire well”? The booklet *For the Strength of Youth* counsels:

“Choose to date only those who have high moral standards and in whose company you can maintain your standards. . . .

“ . . . Seek a companion who is worthy to go to the temple to be sealed to you for time and all eternity.”²

With this counsel as a baseline, let’s consider some other principles that can help lead us to an eternal companion.

Outward Personality versus Inward Character

To make wise dating and marriage decisions, we need to develop the ability to differentiate between an individual’s outward personality and their deeper, inward character. Outward traits, such as a sense of humor, are not unimportant, but they can be used for good or ill, based on the inward character of the person. That sense of humor that can be used to build you up can also be used to tear you down. With this in mind, consider the following couplets:

*He married her because she seemed so pretty and petite;
He divorced her because she was so weak and helpless.*

She married him because he was fun and romantic;

She divorced him because he was irresponsible and lazy.

*He married her because she was passionate and affectionate;
He divorced her because she was so clingy and possessive.*

*She married him because he was so intelligent and witty;
She divorced him because he was so critical and sarcastic.*³

The examples above illustrate the danger of relying solely on outward personality traits when considering your compatibility with another individual. Such traits don’t always tell you about a person’s deeper character, which is what you need to know before deciding to spend eternity together.

Look for Essential Character Qualities

What are the essential character qualities we should look for as we date and court? It can seem that there are as many qualities to develop and discern as there are commandments to keep. To help us understand what is most important, perhaps we can draw a lesson from the Savior’s counsel:

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

“This is the first and great commandment.

“And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matthew 22:37–39).

Through focusing on the two great commandments, we can better discern the character of those we are dating. To love the Lord with all our heart speaks of a person’s relationship with God. To love your neighbor as yourself speaks of a person’s relationship with other people. Focusing on these two key relationships will tell us much about those we date.

Relationship with God

You don't want to marry someone who is complying with the commandments just to please you—you want to marry someone who deeply loves God and His commandments and who is determined to always live them.

The key to judging character in relation to God lies in private more than public spiritual behavior. Consider private religious behaviors such as personal scripture study, personal and family prayer, and temple attendance. These behaviors tell you much more about the person's private motivations (love of God, a desire to renew covenants) than public behaviors would.

Relationship with Others

The key to judging character in relation to our fellowmen lies in how we treat others we are not trying to impress. The fact that a potential date is kind toward you is not sufficient to tell you that the individual is a kind person. If you want to know if people are charitable, observe how they treat others whom they are not so invested in pleasing. If they are kind to their families, to their roommates, to strangers, and even to those they are not pleased with, that will tell you much more about their character than whether they are kind to you.

You Marry Potential, Not Perfection

Clearly, no one will have a perfect relationship with God or others. With the help of the Spirit, and through understanding the principles presented here, we can learn to differentiate between someone who truly loves God and the gospel and someone who is simply publicly religious. We can differentiate between a kind person who is having an occasional bad day and someone who is kind toward us but not kind by nature. We can more clearly differentiate between outward personality and inward character. We can be led to someone we will truly love and want to spend eternity with. This end is worth every ounce of effort it takes to achieve it.

Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015)

of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that there are certain essential attributes we all need to develop to find happiness: “There is more to a foundation of eternal marriage than a pretty face or an attractive figure. There is more to consider than popularity or charisma. As you seek an eternal companion, look for someone who is developing the essential attributes that bring happiness: a deep love of the Lord and of His commandments, a determination to live them, one that is kindly understanding, forgiving of others, and willing to give of self, with the desire to have a family crowned with beautiful children and a commitment to teach them the principles of truth in the home.”⁴

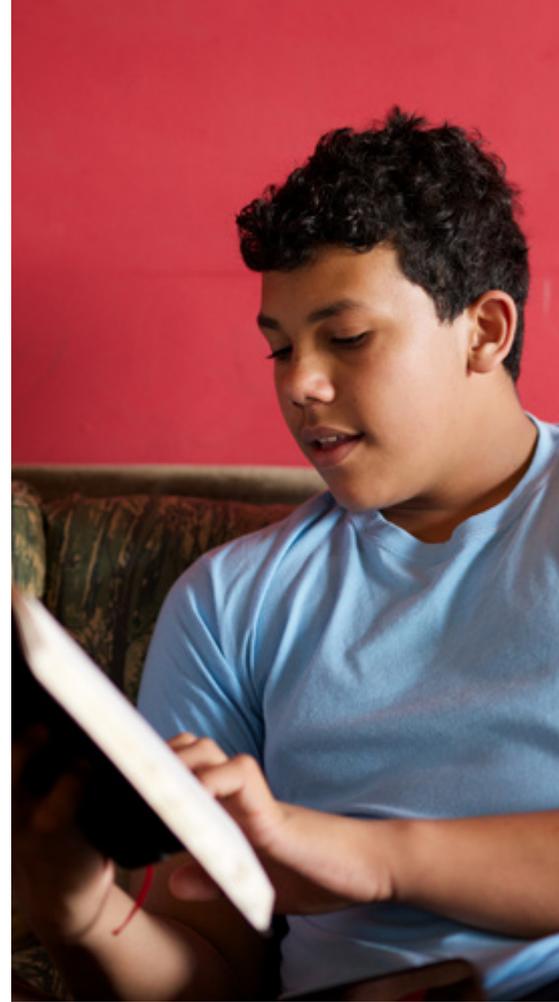
These attributes are essential exactly because they allow for the

kind of happiness that every married couple seeks. It is, of course, important to remember that ultimately “these attributes are best polished together as husband and wife.”⁵

By understanding these basic principles taken from the scriptures and the words of living prophets, we can date and court with much greater confidence. Then with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, our ability to “inquire well” can help us move forward with faith instead of fear. ■

NOTES

1. Dallin H. Oaks, “Divorce,” *Ensign*, May 2007, 73.
2. *For the Strength of Youth* (booklet, 2011), 4, 5.
3. Based on material in Douglas E. Brinley, *Strengthening Your Marriage and Family* (1994), 103.
4. Richard G. Scott, “Receive the Temple Blessings,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 26.
5. Richard G. Scott, “Receive the Temple Blessings,” 26.





QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU “INQUIRE WELL”

1. Is the person worthy to go with me to the temple?
2. Have I paid attention to the person’s inward character, or have I been focusing solely on the outward personality?
3. How does the person treat the Sabbath day?
4. How does the person publicly and privately observe the commandments?
5. How does the person treat family members, roommates, and strangers?



LEARN MORE

Lynn G. Robbins, “Finding Your Sweetheart” (Brigham Young University–Idaho devotional, Feb. 12, 2002), byui.edu.

Thomas B. Holman, “Choosing and Being the Right Spouse,” *Ensign*, Sept. 2002, 62–67.

Robert D. Hales, “Meeting the Challenges of Today’s World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 44–47.

Face to Face with Elder Holland, Sister Stephens, and Elder Hallstrom (worldwide young single adult broadcast, Mar. 8, 2016), facetoface.lds.org.

We can be led to someone we will truly love and want to spend eternity with.



What Is Institute?

By **Wayne L. Davis**

Seminaries and Institutes

When Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles encouraged young adults to become “the greatest generation of young adults in the history of the Church,” one thing he recommended they do was enroll in an institute of religion. He promised that by doing so, they would be better prepared for a mission, eternal marriage, and life as an adult, and better able to receive inspiration and guidance from the Spirit.¹

But if you’re not exactly sure what the Church’s institute of religion is or how it can bless your life after high school, I’ll try to answer a few questions you might have.

Who Can Attend?

Most youth choose to participate in seminary, but then what? Some students go on to attend a Church university or college, where religion courses are built into their school

schedule. Why? Because having a spiritual education experience along with an academic experience is crucial.

But what if you don’t attend a Church school? A lot of young adults don’t realize that a combined academic and spiritual education is available almost anywhere they go. As you attend college, an institute of religion program is usually close by, often across the road from the college or in a local Church building. Some colleges even allow institute classes to be taught right on their campuses. Even after college graduation, you are welcome to attend.

You don’t even have to be a college student. All young adults, ages 18–30, married or single, can attend institute.

Visit institute.lds.org to find an institute near you.

Why Attend?

The program started with just 57 students near a college in Moscow, Idaho, USA, and now has over 250,000 students worldwide. They see great

strength and blessings pouring into their lives. In a recent survey, institute students in 10 different countries were asked what institute did for them. Why did they go? How was it helping? Thousands of responses were gathered and revealed three main themes: Institute helps students (1) strengthen their relationship with Jesus Christ, (2) progress spiritually, and (3) gain confidence to make important life decisions.

Don’t miss out on the friendships, spiritual protection, and gospel knowledge.

Think of the decisions you face: picking a college; deciding whether or not to go on a mission; and choosing a career, friends, and a spouse. These are huge decisions. And as President Thomas S. Monson said, “Decisions determine destiny.”² Certainly these critical decisions should be made with the help of the Holy Ghost. The needed divine help can be found as you connect with the Spirit, the scriptures, and friends who share your values through a religion class at institute or a Church school.

Laura is one student who benefits from institute. When she began attending a university in Ontario,

Canada, she felt lost and felt that her testimony wasn’t as strong as it once was. She started going to institute and once again “felt like herself” and “knew who she was.” (See her story and the stories of other young adults at InstitutesForMe.lds.org.)

When you truly know who you are—a son or daughter of a loving Heavenly Father who wants you to become someone incredible—you can make important decisions leading to happiness and success.

As you build upon what you learned in seminary and other Church experiences, attending institute will strengthen your relationship with Jesus Christ at a very crucial period of

life and help you continue your spiritual progression.

Heavenly Father loves you. He will provide ways for you to continue to become like Him. Institute is one of those ways that is making a difference in hundreds of thousands of lives every year. ■

NOTES

1. M. Russell Ballard, “The Greatest Generation of Young Adults,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 68, 69.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “Follow the Prophets,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2015, 5.

WHAT WILL YOU LEARN?

Institute offers a variety of courses. All students are invited to take the four cornerstone courses:

- Jesus Christ and the Everlasting Gospel teaches about Christ’s divine mission and how you can appreciate His role in your life.
- The Eternal Family explores topics such as understanding the relationship between gender and eternal identity, exercising faith in difficult family situations, and improving temple worship.
- Foundations of the Restoration explains the doctrinal foundation and historical context of Church history and how it relates to you today.
- Teachings and Doctrine of the Book of Mormon will help you understand the key doctrinal themes of this book of scripture that was written for our day.



Institute Is for Us

By Leah Welker

Church Magazines

We've got a lot on our plates. Some of us are students. Some are working long hours. Some of us are away from friends and family, or have responsibilities that weigh heavily on us. Some of us are trying to adjust after returning from a mission, or have just graduated from high school and aren't sure what comes next.

It might seem counterintuitive to add institute on top of everything else. Many of us have wondered at one time or another, will institute really help me?

The answer is *yes*.

Thousands of young adults across the world, many of them in situations like yours, find strength, support, friendship, and spiritual enrichment at institute. Here are just two examples of incredible young adults who, despite all their challenges, know that institute is for them.

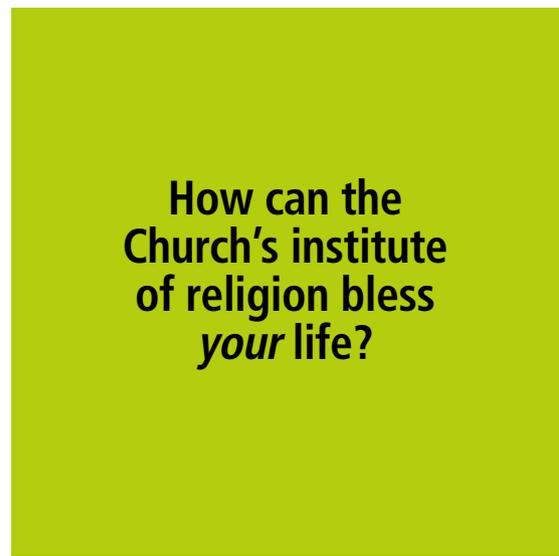
Institute Is Good for the Heart

Aric's story, Toronto, Ontario

Aric (pictured top right) is a PhD student at the University of Toronto, working with heart tissue and regenerative medicine.

In describing his research, he explains, "Certain types of stem cells can turn into anything in your body. We can put stem cells in a petri dish and grow them into a heart cell. After two weeks, they'll start beating themselves. We then use these to model different diseases and to test different drugs. My goal is to one day grow a heart in a laboratory setting like this."

Aric had his own change of heart during his mission to Belo Horizonte, Brazil. "When I served a mission, I learned how to listen to and follow the Spirit. It helped me learn how to study, to learn how to apply



**How can the
Church's institute
of religion bless
your life?**

myself." He changed so much that he was concerned about coming home. "I didn't really know how to act or what to do," he admitted. "I had to relearn how to act in certain situations. Going to institute helped me."

The social network at institute is important to Aric. "I've been able to befriend people who needed friends.



I've been able to comfort people when they needed to be comforted. That's important to me, to help other people, but then it's also important for me to feel that from other people as well."

He jokes about how long he has been going to institute, but he keeps going. "Every time that I go, I feel the Spirit that is present there. And it helps me be a better person, stay in good places, and do well in my work."

Aric draws a comparison between his work and institute. "If we put a cell in a good environment, there are internal changes that happen in the cell that make it more receptive to those positive changes or those positive signals that we want to give it. Over time, the cell changes—it morphs into something better, something bigger than itself. For me, that's something very, very special. If I put myself into the right environment, then I'm going to become more receptive to these spiritual aspects of life and less receptive to the negative influences that happen in the world."

He concludes, "God is real. That's something that I feel deep down inside myself. I haven't always felt His love in my life. I'm starting to realize that that's because of decisions that I've made. I realize that He's there to help me, that He really wants me to be my best self."



Institute Helps Me Remember Christ

Veronica's story, Madrid, Spain

When Veronica (pictured below) was 17, her twin sister died in her arms. Three years after her sister's death, on her own and struggling through life, Veronica started going for walks to work out her feelings of sadness. She had always believed in God,

WHAT LEADERS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT INSTITUTE

All young single adults who have not graduated from a Church university or institute of religion should be encouraged to enroll in and graduate from institute.

Local leaders counsel together to create an effective plan to identify and invite each young single adult to attend institute. Seminary and institute personnel are prepared to assist priesthood leaders in these efforts.

The most effective efforts involve the following:

- **Priesthood leaders** lead the initiative.
- **Personal invitations** are extended to the young adults.
- Leaders use a **system of accountability** to report back on invitations.

so one day while she was walking, she prayed, "Lord, why are you doing all of this to me?"

At that moment, she looked up at an LDS Church building she had always passed by. Really seeing it for the first time, she became curious; she went inside and introduced herself to two sister missionaries, who taught her later that week.

Veronica says that after the first lesson, "I stood up and told them, 'You're all crazy,' and I left." She didn't want any of it, but eventually she began to reconsider.

"I think it was the first time I prayed so much. I felt like God was telling me, 'I am sending you this opportunity so that you can get to know me better. Don't you want it?'"

She decided she *did* want it. Despite losing her home and her job because of the gospel, she was baptized. Even though her life continued to be difficult sometimes, she trusted in the Lord. "Before I knew about the Church, I would cry or get mad if I didn't know how I was going to pay my rent. But now I know that the Lord will provide."

Veronica's patriarchal blessing told her that she was to serve a mission, but she didn't have any skirts or any way to buy them. A member of the Seventy and his wife were passing through the area and heard about her need; the wife had felt inspired to pack extra skirts for the

trip, and she gave many of them to Veronica. She also encouraged Veronica to attend institute. When Veronica's bishop started an institute program for their area, she began attending regularly.

Institute has given her peace and happiness. "I think what I like the most about institute is that during the week, we have a lot of different tasks to do. We have Sundays to renew our covenants with Heavenly Father. But on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, what do we have? I am grateful that we have institute at least once during the week because it is a way to remember Jesus Christ. Institute is one way He's helping me progress."

And Veronica did serve a mission. In October 2016 she left to serve in the Chile Osorno Mission.

She says, "I know that I'm here today because of Him. I know that He has prepared a plan perfect for each one of us. He will give us opportunities throughout our lives. I can feel His love every day, even though sometimes I say, 'Father, why is this happening to me?' But before



INVITING YOUNG ADULTS TO INSTITUTE: A SUCCESS STORY

Inviting all young adults to attend institute is one of the goals of the Church. Depending on the stake, this effort could involve several leaders:

- Institute coordinators
- Stake presidency members and bishops
- Institute teachers
- Young single adult representatives
- Students

A small town in New Zealand offers an amazing example of how the leaders in one stake came together to create an institute class to better serve the needs of their area.

The bishop of the Ngaruawahia Ward, Sam Higgins, wanted to know how he could help the young adults in his ward. President Bobby Hamon, second counselor in the Hamilton New Zealand Stake presidency, suggested institute, and he got in touch with Jonathan Warwick, the institute coordinator for that area.

Brother Warwick explains, “At first, we proposed increased advertising and personal contact to encourage students to make the 30- to 45-minute journey to Hamilton to attend the institute class there. But everyone felt that having a class in Ngaruawahia would help the students feel at home.”

With the help of a senior missionary couple, they created an institute class in Ngaruawahia. The class has grown from 2 students to over 40.

Brother Warwick says, “The Ngaruawahia institute class has become a miraculous answer to prayers. Through this class, individuals are reminded that the Lord truly loves each of His children and is anxious to provide solutions that will strengthen their testimonies of Jesus Christ, help them experience lasting conversion to the gospel, and help them feel the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ in their lives.”

For more thoughts from these leaders about this successful experience or for help on how to collaborate in strengthening the young adults in your stake, visit lds.org/go/81747.



I go to sleep, He responds, “This is happening because of this. Now go to sleep.’ And I love Him, too. Maybe I had to go through everything I went through to come to feel so much love for Him.” ■

INSTITUTE IS FOR ME—VIDEO STORIES

Watch the stories of Aric, Veronica, and other young adults at lds.org/go/81749.



MAKE INSTITUTE A PRIORITY

“Think of it. Friends will be made, the Spirit will be felt, and faith will be strengthened. I promise you

that as you participate in institute and study the scriptures diligently, your power to avoid temptation and to receive direction of the Holy Ghost in all you do will be increased. That is a promise which I leave with you.”

President Thomas S. Monson, Apr. 21, 2009, si.lds.org.

By Elder Kim B. Clark

Of the Seventy
Commissioner of the Church Educational System



LEARNING FOR THE WHOLE SOUL

This message is for the youth and young adults in the Lord's Church. Many years ago I had a strong impression come to me about you and about this day. It was as if I saw children in Primary all across the earth. I knew they would make and keep covenants with the Lord. And I knew that the Lord would bless them with opportunities for deep learning, spiritually and temporally, and raise them up as a mighty army to build His kingdom and prepare the earth for His return.

You are those children, and this is your day.

It is a great day in the kingdom of God, a day full of opportunities for you to learn and grow and experience joy and happiness. There are important challenges, to be sure. Yet through the redeeming and strengthening powers of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, through His glorious gospel and His true and living Church, the Lord continues to open doors and prepare the way for you to repent, learn deeply, grow spiritually, and become more converted to Him. The Lord is preparing His kingdom and



His people for His return, and you of the rising generation are playing a central role in that great work.

This is a day of miracles. New technologies make it possible for learning and education to flourish. That is true

The Lord is moving with power in His Church for you to obtain the education He wants you to have.



Learning is essential to help us reach our mortal and eternal potential.

instructed more perfectly . . . in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand” (D&C 88:78).

Spiritual Knowledge Has Priority

Deep learning, in any field of study, is inherently a spiritual experience, anchored to a foundation of faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, and obedience to His commandments so that the Holy Ghost can teach you. Deep learning is not easy, but it is worth the effort! If you really desire to learn deeply, if your heart and your mind are open to learning, and if you act on that desire, the Lord will bless you. When you do your part—pray in faith, prepare, study, engage actively, and do your very best—the Holy Ghost will teach you, magnify your capacity to act on what you learn, and help you become what the Lord wants you to become. “Salvation itself,” taught President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918), “under the atonement of Christ, is a process of education. . . . Knowledge is a means of eternal progress.”⁵

for both secular as well as spiritual knowledge. The Lord is moving with power in His Church for you to obtain the education He wants you to have.

This is all part of the commandment the Lord gave to the Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44) in the beginning of the Restoration: “It is my will that you should . . . obtain a knowledge of history, and of countries, and of kingdoms, of laws of God and man, and all this for the salvation of Zion” (D&C 93:53).

This commandment has taken on an urgency in our day as the Lord hastens His work. Now is the time for you to take advantage of the opportunities for education that are before you, and the potential for learning and growth that is in you.

These words of President Thomas S. Monson ought to ring in your ears every day:

“I urge you to pursue your education.”¹

“Your talents will expand as you study and learn.”²

“Each of you . . . has the opportunity to learn and to grow. Expand your knowledge, both intellectual and spiritual, to the full stature of your divine potential.”³

Deep Learning

The learning that allows each of you to rise “to the full stature of your divine potential” is what I will call *deep learning*: learning of the whole soul—the mind, the heart, the body, and the immortal spirit. Deep learning applies to every kind of knowledge, whether spiritual or secular. Learning is deep when it increases your power to do three things: (1) to know and understand; (2) to take effective, righteous action; and (3) to become more like our Heavenly Father.⁴

As the Lord taught the Prophet Joseph, deep learning must be done in the Lord’s way, through revelation and inspiration in the Light of Christ and by the power of the Holy Ghost and through active, diligent study and teaching of one another, attended by the grace of Jesus Christ. That is true for any kind of knowledge. Here are the Lord’s commandments about deep learning:

“Seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118).

“Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be



This process applies to any setting you may be in and to any kind of knowledge. However, the most important knowledge you need to acquire is knowledge of the things of God. Spiritual knowledge, therefore, must have first place in your heart and in your priorities. The Prophet Joseph Smith emphasized the primacy of

spiritual knowledge in these words: “A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge, for if he does not get knowledge, he will be brought into captivity by some evil power in the other world, as evil spirits will have more knowledge, and consequently more power than many men who are on the earth. Hence it needs

revelation to assist us, and give us knowledge of the things of God.”⁶

It is true that the gospel encompasses all truth,⁷ but knowledge and understanding of the plain and simple truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ must be your foundation for all deep learning. Putting spiritual knowledge first in your mind and in your heart ensures that you will rely on the Lord and the Holy Spirit in your learning, that you will see everything you study in the light of His gospel, and that you will continue to learn deeply all through your lives.

Deep Learning for a Lifetime

Deep learning of both spiritual and secular knowledge is a commandment of the Lord. Imagine what would happen if you were to stop learning. What if I had stopped learning when I graduated from college in the mid-1970s? I would have had no new insights or revelation from the living prophets, the scriptures, or the Holy Ghost; I would know nothing of ongoing developments in technology, health care, world affairs, government regulations, or



Learning must be done in the Lord's way, through revelation and inspiration.

education. There would have been no personal growth or spiritual development through repentance and learning from experience.

When I served as president of Brigham Young University–Idaho, Sister Clark was often asked, “How did you meet President Clark?” Her response often began with, “He wasn’t President Clark when I met him.” If I had not continued learning, I would have gotten older, but I would still be the 25-year-old whom Sister Clark knew when I graduated from college—not a good prospect for Sister Clark or for our family!

If you stop learning, you cannot become more knowledgeable, more effective, more useful, more faithful, or more like your Father in Heaven.

Your experience with learning in your youth and young adult years lays the foundation for a lifetime of learning. If you develop the ability to learn deeply in the Lord’s way—through the Spirit and with diligent, active study—it will be a great blessing to you.

A key to reaping that blessing is to keep your heart and mind open to learning. Here are three things you can do to always be ready to learn:

1. Ask the Lord to bless you with the desire to learn deeply.

If you already have the desire to learn deeply, wonderful. If not, ask the Lord for that gift. The Lord will

educate your desires so that you will want to learn what and how He wants you to learn all through your lives. In the Lord’s plan, how He wants you to learn—by the Spirit, with diligent study—is just as important as what He wants you to learn.

2. Make repentance a central part of your life.

Repentance is a divine process. It is the way we change, grow, and get better through the redeeming and strengthening power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. If repentance is central to your life, you will always be on your knees, humbling yourself before the Lord, seeking His help in how to use your time and how to serve Him.

3. Worship in the temple as often as you can.

The temple is the Lord’s house of revelation and learning. If you go there often, if you take your questions and your desires to learn with you, the Lord Himself will teach you.

Overcoming Opposition to Deep Learning

Deep learning now will prepare you for a lifetime of learning. However, I know you face obstacles and even outright opposition to the learning the Lord wants you to obtain. Fear, discouragement, laziness, difficulty with reading, lack of support or opportunity, cultural or family



Through the Lord’s power, including advances in technology, learning opportunities are more available than ever.

traditions, worries about cost, temptations of the world, false ideas about education, and many other things may stand in your way.⁸

I know that some of you face several of these things, and they feel like insurmountable barriers to learning.

I bear you my witness that no matter where you live, no matter what your circumstances may be, the Lord Jesus Christ stands with you against all this opposition with His redeeming love and His almighty power. Through His atoning sacrifice, He has experienced and overcome everything that could block your progress toward eternal life. In His strength and with His power, you can overcome whatever stands between you and the learning the Lord wants you to obtain.

This is His promise to you, and His promises are true: “Draw near unto

me and I will draw near unto you; seek me diligently and ye shall find me; ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (D&C 88:63; see also Matthew 7:7).

Conclusion

This really is a great day in the kingdom of God. The Lord is hastening His work, and we have seen miracle after miracle as the Lord moves in power to open up wonderful opportunities for you to learn deeply.

The Lord is working in your lives to bless and prepare you. I pray that you will act with faith in Jesus Christ to take advantage of every opportunity

to learn deeply, grow in knowledge and understanding, bring about His righteous purposes, and become what you were born to become. ■

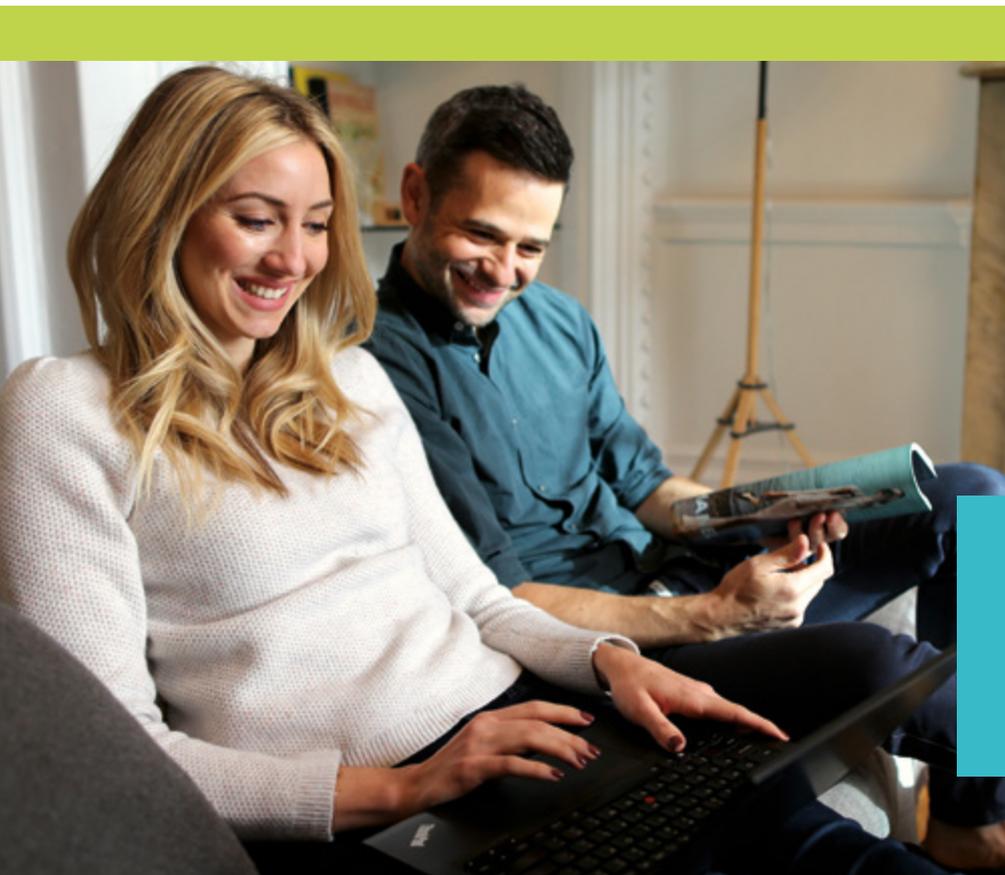
For more information on Church education opportunities, visit education.lds.org. To learn more about seminary for youth, see page 32 in this issue. To learn more about institute for young adults, see pages 20 and 22 in this issue.

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “If Ye Are Prepared Ye Shall Not Fear,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 116.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “Three Goals to Guide You,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 119.
3. Thomas S. Monson, “The Mighty Strength of the Relief Society,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 95.
4. The pattern of “know, do, become” has been used widely as a framework for leadership development and in discussion of the Lord’s plan for the spiritual

development of His children. See Thomas S. Monson, “To Learn, to Do, to Be,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 60–68; and Dallin H. Oaks, “The Challenge to Become,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 32–34. For an in-depth treatment of each of the elements of this pattern, see the three-volume series by David A. Bednar: *Increase in Learning* (2011); *Act in Doctrine* (2012); and *Power to Become* (2014).

5. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 314.
6. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 266.
7. This quote from Brigham Young captures the idea well: “Not only does the religion of Jesus Christ make the people acquainted with the things of God, and develop within them moral excellence and purity, but it holds out every encouragement and inducement possible, for them to increase in knowledge and intelligence, in every branch of mechanism, or in the arts and sciences, for all wisdom, and all the arts and sciences in the world are from God, and are designed for the good of his people” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 193).
8. Here is an example of a false idea born out of cultural traditions that may affect young adults: A generation ago, a person living in the developed world could find a good, well-paying job with enough income to support a family with some high school education or, even better, with high school graduation. That idea still persists despite the fact that for most people, in most developed countries, and even in the developing world, those days are gone. Education and learning beyond high school in fields that are in high demand, whether by earning certification in technical skills or acquiring a college degree (and in some fields an advanced degree), has become essential for supporting a family, providing for retirement years, and establishing a temporal foundation for service in the Church.



We have seen miracle after miracle as the Lord moves in power to open up wonderful opportunities for you to learn deeply.

BYU-Pathway Worldwide

By Elder Kim B. Clark

In our day the Lord is moving with power in His Church to deepen learning and extend its reach to more and more of you. Perhaps the best example of the Church extending the reach of deep learning is the 2017 announcement of a new organization within the Church Educational System (CES) known as BYU-Pathway Worldwide. This new organization was inspired by the Pathway program.

Pathway

In 2009, the Church Board of Education authorized Brigham Young University-Idaho to create a new academic program called Pathway with the intent of opening opportunities for higher education to many more members of the Church. Pathway is a three-semester program that prepares students for higher education by taking online courses and gathering at an institute or meetinghouse each week to receive religious education and to participate in student-led discussions of the material in the online courses. The Pathway program is guided by local priesthood leaders and supervised by Church-service missionaries who mentor and support the students.

Pathway's threefold purpose is to (1) get the gospel down into students' hearts, (2) help students become capable learners, and (3) prepare students to lead and support families.

Pathway now operates in approximately 500 sites worldwide and has served more than 57,000 students, opening doors of opportunity, increasing hope and faith in the Savior, and deepening learning for thousands of you. Completing the Pathway program has enabled many students to enroll in higher education opportunities, including certificate and degree programs offered online through BYU-Idaho or at local educational institutions.

BYU-Pathway Worldwide

The growth and success of the Pathway program has inspired the creation of a new organization, affiliated with all CES institutions, called BYU-Pathway Worldwide (BYU-PW). BYU-PW oversees Pathway and coordinates all other CES online higher education certificate and degree programs. The organization serves students through online courses and manages gathering activities in Pathway sites worldwide, including student-led academic discussions and workshops and local career services.

BYU-PW is the outgrowth of a policy approved by the Church Board



of Education in November 2015: “The Church Educational System will seek to provide opportunities for education to the members of the Church wherever the Church is organized.”

BYU-PW can help you gain access to its online certificate and degree programs that will open up improved opportunities for employment. Combined with religious education in institute and learning by the Spirit in the Lord's way, you can learn deeply wherever you study. In addition to academic advising, you will have access to advice and support from CES and Self-Reliance Services personnel to help you find internships and jobs or pursue local educational opportunities.

You can access BYU-PW programs, including Pathway, English language instruction, certificates, and degrees, through your local Church units and leaders. These programs are available in many areas now, and BYU-PW will continue to add new Pathway sites and new programs in a measured, steady way as the Church moves forward under the direction of the Lord. ■

Visit pathway.lds.org for more information.

Blessed by Seminary in Spite of Myself

I struggled with seminary, but my parents and leaders didn't give up on me.

By Jeremy Vick

I was the kind of kid who spent most of his time in early-morning seminary with a hoodie over his head and his head on his desk. My early-morning seminary teacher was the bishop's wife. She put up with a lot from us students. And even though I didn't want to be there, she wasn't pushy, and her patience made me feel safe. Still, the only reason I graduated was because my parents made sure I attended.

After high school graduation, I went to college. My only real goal was having fun. After about a year, I woke up one morning following a late-night party and had no idea where I was or what had happened the night before. I wondered what I was accomplishing with my life. Where was I going? At that moment I realized how far I was from living what I had learned in seminary and church. I was making mistakes and filling my life with meaningless and even dangerous activities. I had failed my God and my Savior. I had failed my parents and was a bad example for my siblings. I concluded that I was going to hell.

Picking Myself Up from Rock Bottom

A few days later I parked my car in a deserted area of town and poured out my heart to God. I was there for a couple of hours. I apologized for my failures and mistakes and let Heavenly Father know that although I was likely lost forever, I would do the best I could to be a

good example to my brothers and sister. I committed that I would not drag my siblings down with me.

That next Sunday I went to church to set the example. My mother was shocked when I arrived in a white shirt and tie, wearing socks. At that moment, and perhaps because I had met there for seminary every morning during high school, it felt like a safe place. Before long, my bishop was pulling me into his office to talk and soon after asked me if I had received my patriarchal blessing. When I told him no, he suggested I get it. I agreed. Even though our discussion was difficult as he interviewed me, I felt such relief as I realized I wasn't beyond help and that I could repent of my mistakes. I was so happy as I felt the Savior and His Atonement at work in my life. I thought back to my lessons in seminary and tried to understand how it was possible for someone like me to be forgiven. As I recalled the lessons, I felt the Spirit confirming that it was possible.

A Mission and Marriage

Receiving my patriarchal blessing gave me a desire to serve a mission. Surprisingly, I remembered more from my time in seminary than I had realized. That knowledge blessed me on my mission. I was grateful to my parents and seminary teacher for their encouragement.

After my mission, I remained active in the Church. I met my future wife. On one of our visits to get to know her

family, they asked me a lot of questions to learn about me and my priorities. One of the last questions they asked me was, “Did you graduate from seminary?” I was so grateful that I could say yes!

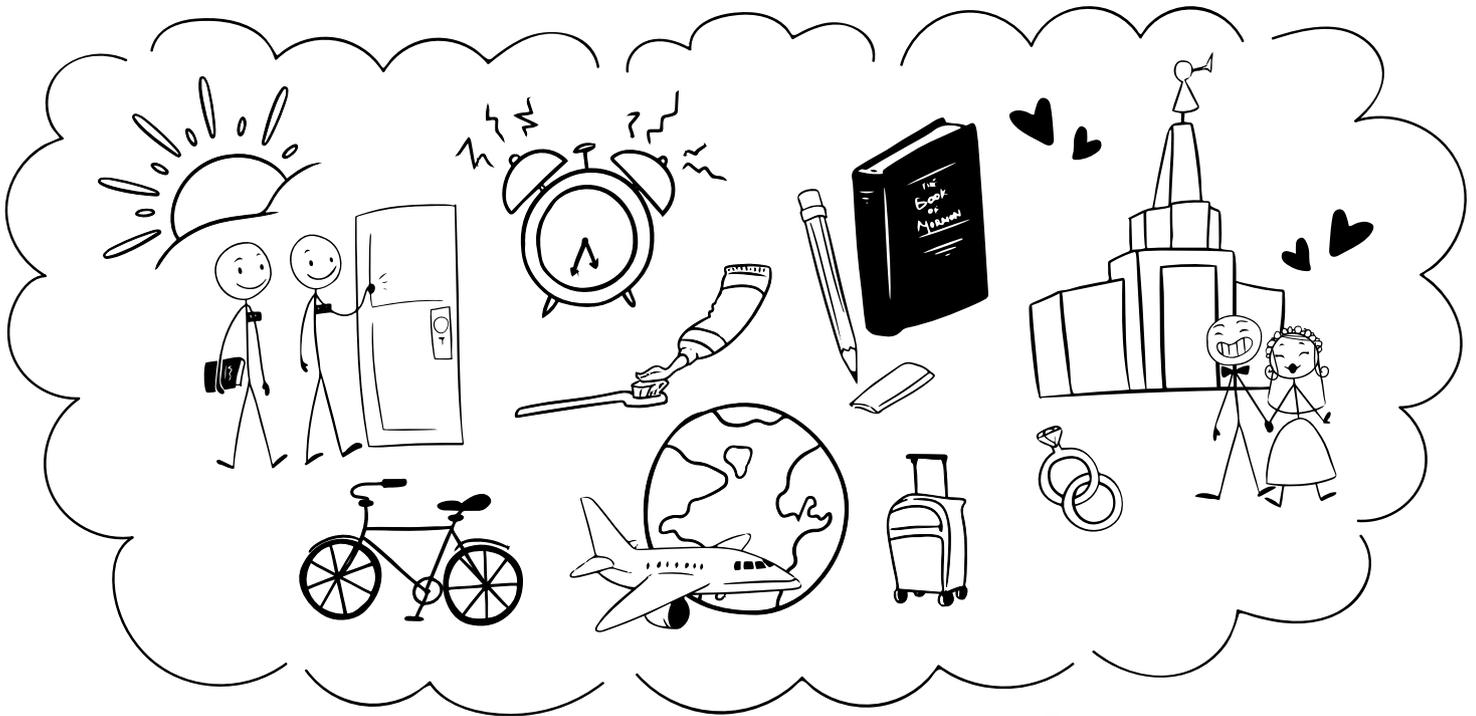
Hope for Parents

I look back on seminary as a place where I learned so much, even if I didn't realize it at the time. Just being in class allowed me to feel the Spirit, even if I didn't always recognize it. It helped change me. But it never would have

happened if my parents had caved in to my complaining about having to go. And today, as a parent, I can look my 14-year-old and 16-year-old in the face and tell them it's worth it—even if they don't get it yet.

I am grateful for parents who didn't give up on encouraging me to do what was right. I am grateful for a seminary teacher and a bishop who loved me, guided me, and taught me, even when I didn't want to be. Even though I didn't realize it at the time, seminary helped change my life. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



Seminary and Institute at a Glance

307

institute classes worldwide have only one student.

152

countries have seminary or institute classes.

1,549

seminary classes worldwide have only one student.



88.8%

of seminary programs gather in a meeting-house or home rather than a seminary-specific building.

9

students form the average seminary class.

592

students make up the largest institute class in the world.

All data taken from 2014–15 records



1912 First seminary opens (near Granite High School in Utah), with 70 students.



1938 Ninety-eight seminary programs in operation.



1949 First early-morning seminary classes held.

1912

1926

1938

1946

1949

1950



1926 First institute classes begin (near the University of Idaho), with 25 students.

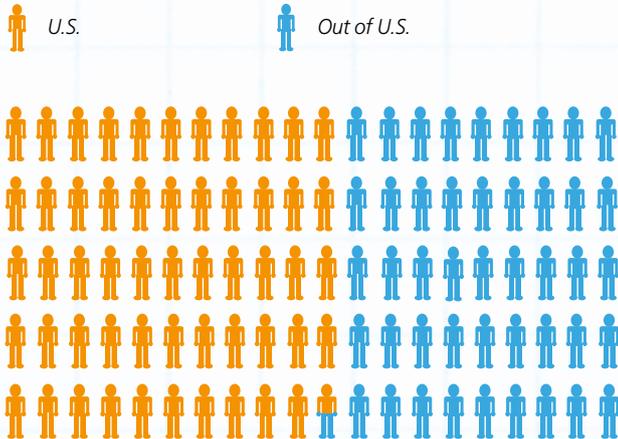


1946 Seventeen institute programs in operation.



1950 Early-morning seminary program begins in 11 stakes in California.

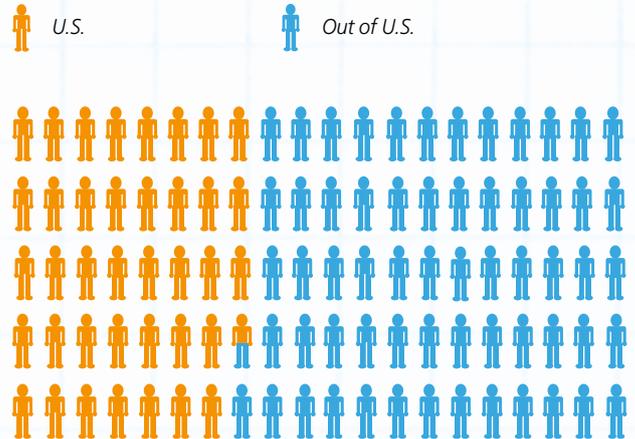
Seminary Enrollment



Around the world, 404,270 students are enrolled in seminary:

- 220,717 (U.S.)
- 183,553 (out of U.S.)

Institute Enrollment



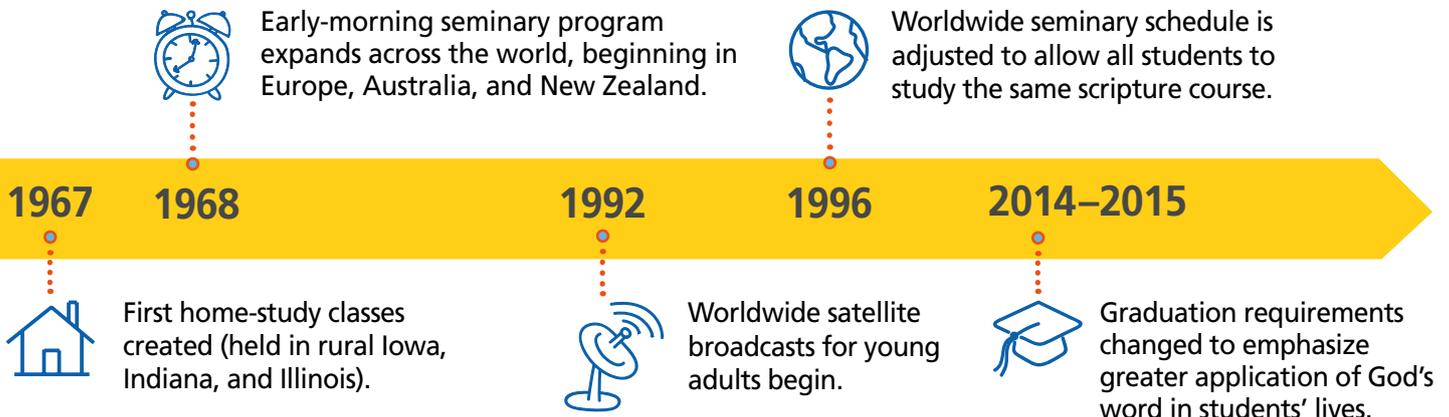
Around the world, 357,760 students are enrolled in institute:

- 137,740 (U.S.)
- 220,020 (out of U.S.)

Teachers



Globally, more than 48,000 members teach seminary and institute. Only 6.4% are full-time or part-time instructors.





ILLUSTRATIONS BY SIMONE SHIN

Defining moments will test your integrity. As you choose honesty and truth, you will realize that important crossroads become fundamental pillars of strength in your spiritual growth.



**By Elder
Neil L. Andersen**
Of the Quorum
of the Twelve
Apostles

THE DIVINE STANDARD OF Honesty

For a disciple of Christ, honesty is at the very heart of spirituality.

God our Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, are beings of absolute, perfect, and complete honesty and truth. We are sons and daughters of God. Our destiny is to become like Him. We seek to be perfectly honest and true like our Father and His Son. Honesty describes the character of God (see Isaiah 65:16), and therefore honesty is at the very heart of our spiritual growth and spiritual gifts.

Jesus declared, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6; see also John 18:37; D&C 84:45; 93:36).

The Lord asked the brother of Jared, “Believest thou the words which I shall speak?”

The brother of Jared answered, “Yea, Lord, I know that thou speakest the truth, for thou art a God of truth, and canst not lie” (Ether 3:11, 12).

And here are the Savior’s own words: “I am the Spirit of truth” (D&C 93:26; see also verse 24). “I tell you the truth” (John 16:7; see also verse 13).

On the other hand, Satan is described as the father of lies: “And he became Satan, yea, even the devil, the father of all lies, to deceive and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice” (Moses 4:4).



The world would tell us that truth and honesty are difficult to define. But we can be in the world but not of the world as we reject false concepts and false teachings.

Jesus said: “The devil . . . abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar” (John 8:44; see also D&C 93:39).

The Savior constantly rebuked those who professed one thing publicly but lived differently in their hearts (see Matthew 23:27). He praised those who lived without deception (see D&C 124:15). Can you see the contrasting difference? On one hand there is lying, deceiving, hypocrisy, and darkness. On the other hand there is truth, light, honesty, and integrity. The Lord draws a sharp distinction.

President Thomas S. Monson has said:

“Where once the standards of the Church and the standards of society were mostly compatible, now there is a wide chasm between us, and it’s growing ever wider. . . .

“The Savior of mankind described Himself as being in the world but not of the world [see John 17:14; D&C 49:5]. We also can be in the world but not of the world as we reject false concepts and false teachings and remain true to that which God has commanded.”¹

The world would tell us that truth and honesty are difficult to define. The world finds humor in casual lying and quickly excuses so-called “innocent” deception. The contrast between right and wrong is dulled, and the consequences of dishonesty are minimized.

To constantly receive the Spirit of Truth—the Holy Ghost—we must fill our lives with truth and honesty. As we become completely honest, our spiritual eyes are opened to increased enlightenment.

You can easily understand how this spiritual strength lifts your learning in the classroom. But can you also see how this principle applies to critical decisions of how you spend your time, with whom you spend your time, and how you shape your life?

Commit to Personal Honesty

You cannot separate the spiritual endowment of truth you need and want from your being a person of honesty and truth. The truth you seek is tied to the person you are. Light, spiritual answers, and heavenly direction are unalterably linked to your own honesty and truth. Much of your lasting satisfaction in life will come as you continually elevate your commitment to personal honesty.

Roy D. Atkin shared the following story:

“After a number of students dropped out following [my] freshman year, my dental school classes became even more competitive. Everyone worked hard to be at the top of the class. As the competition increased, some students decided that the way to succeed was by cheating. This troubled me greatly. . . .

“. . . I knew I couldn’t cheat. I wanted to be right with God even more than I wanted to become a dentist.”

"[During] my junior year, I was offered a copy of an upcoming test in a crucial class. Obviously that meant some of my classmates would have the test questions ahead of time. I declined the offer. When the corrected test papers were returned, the class average was extremely high, making my score low in comparison. The professor asked to speak to me.

"Roy," he said, "you usually do well on tests. What happened?"

"Sir," I told my professor, "on the next exam, if you give a test that you have never given before, I believe you will find that I do very well." There was no reply.

"We had another test in the same class. As the test was handed out, there were audible groans. It was a test the teacher had never given before. When our graded tests were handed back, I had received one of the highest grades in the class. From then on, all the tests were new."²

Because we are disciples of Christ, the divine standard of honesty grows within us. In the Book of Mormon, King Benjamin's admonition to "[put] off the natural man" (Mosiah 3:19) is in part a call for a more heightened sense of honesty and truth.

To the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul counseled, "Put off . . . the old man, which is corrupt . . . and be renewed in the spirit of your mind." Paul then gave specific counsel on becoming a "new man" or a "new woman": the very first thing he told them to do was "[put] away lying, speak every man truth" (see Ephesians 4:22–25; see also Colossians 3:9; 3 Nephi 30:2).

I like this definition of honesty: "Honesty is to be completely truthful, upright, and just." Also, integrity is "[having] the moral courage to make [your] actions consistent with [your] knowledge of right and wrong."³

President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, once told of applying for Officer's Candidate School in the United States Army. He said:

"I was summoned before the board of inquiry. My qualifications were few, but I had had two years of college and had finished a mission for the Church in South America.

"The questions asked of me at the officers' board of inquiry took a very surprising turn. Nearly all of them centered upon my beliefs. 'Do you smoke?' 'Do you drink?' 'What do you think of others who smoke and drink?' I

had no trouble answering these questions.

"Do you pray?' 'Do you believe that an officer should pray?' The officer asking these questions was a hard-bitten career soldier. He did not look like he prayed very often. . . . I wanted to be an officer very much. . . .

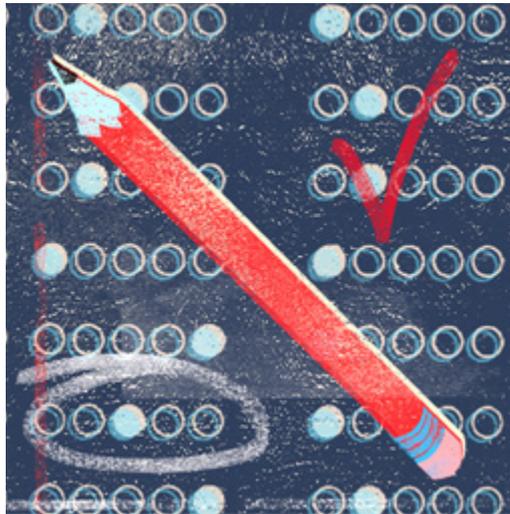
"I decided not to equivocate. I admitted that I did pray and that I felt that officers might seek divine guidance as some truly great generals had done. . . .

"More interesting questions came.

'In times of war, should not the moral code be relaxed? Does not the stress of battle justify men in doing things that they would not do when at home under normal situations?'

". . . I suspected that the men who were asking me this question did not live by the standards that I had been taught. The thought flashed through my mind that perhaps I could say that I had my own beliefs, but I did not wish to impose them on others. But there seemed to flash before my mind the faces of the many people to whom I had taught the law of chastity as a missionary. In the end I simply said, 'I do not believe there is a double standard of morality.'

"I left the hearing resigned to the fact that these hard-bitten officers would . . . surely score me very low. A few



days later when the scores were posted, to my astonishment I had passed. I was in the first group taken for Officer's Candidate School!"

And then President Faust, realizing how small decisions can have large consequences, said, "This was one of the critical crossroads of my life."⁴

Honesty, integrity, and truth are eternal principles that significantly shape our experience in mortality and help determine our eternal destiny. For a disciple of Christ, honesty is at the very heart of spirituality.

Honor Your Word

Honesty envelops every part of your daily life, but let me refer to a few specific examples. In my student days, I remember then-Brigham Young University president Dallin H. Oaks, now a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, sharing this quotation from Karl G. Maeser: "My young friends, I have been asked what I mean by word of honor. I will tell you. Place me behind prison walls—walls of stone ever so high, ever so thick, reaching ever so far into the ground—there is a possibility that in some way or another I may be able to escape. But stand me on that floor and draw a chalk line around me and have me give my word of honor never to cross it. Can I get out of that circle? No, never! I'd die first!"⁵

There are times we honor commitments simply because we have agreed to honor them. You will have situations in your life when you will be tempted to disregard an agreement you have made. You will initially make the agreement because of something you wish to receive in return. Later, because of a change in circumstances, you will no longer want to honor the terms of the agreement. Learn now that when you give your word, when you make a promise,

when you sign your name, your personal honesty and integrity bind you to your word, your commitment, your agreement.

How grateful we are that you "believe in being honest" (Articles of Faith 1:13), that you tell the truth, that you would not cheat on an exam, plagiarize a paper, or deceive one another. The Lord tells us:

"And truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come;

"And whatsoever is more or less than this is the spirit of that wicked one who was a liar from the beginning" (D&C 93:24–25).

Our challenges often come in the "more or less"—the small temptations on the edge of being completely honest. As a college freshman, I kept a statement above my desk often quoted by then-President David O. McKay (1873–1970). It read: "The greatest battle of life is fought out within the silent chambers of the soul."⁶

How do you think the Lord feels when we make difficult decisions

of honesty? There is enormous spiritual power in remaining true and honest when the consequences of your honesty could appear to be a disadvantage. Each of you will face such decisions. These defining moments will test your integrity. As you choose honesty and truth—whether or not the situation works out the way you hope—you will realize that these important crossroads become fundamental pillars of strength in your spiritual growth.

"Be Righteous in the Dark"

President Brigham Young (1801–77) once said, "We must learn to be righteous in the dark."⁷ One definition of this phrase is that we must learn to be honest when no one would know if we were dishonest. I challenge you to be



“righteous in the dark.” Choose the course that the Savior Himself would choose.

The poet Edgar A. Guest wrote:

*I don't want to keep on a closet shelf
A lot of secrets about myself,
And fool myself, as I come and go,
Into thinking that nobody else will know.*⁸

Remember the beautiful words of the Prophet Joseph Smith: “I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it; at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation” (Joseph Smith—History 1:25).

There is pressure to achieve, pressure to keep high grades, pressure to find employment, pressure to find friends, pressure to please those around you, pressure to graduate. Do not allow these pressures to crack your character of honesty. Be honest when the consequences appear to move against you. Pray for greater honesty, think about the areas in which the Lord would want you to be more honest, and have the courage to take the needed steps to lift your spirit to a higher level of resolve in being completely honest.

President Monson has admonished us, “May we be examples of honesty and integrity wherever we go and in whatever we do.”⁹ You might consider putting this counsel by the Lord’s prophet where you can see it often.

Elder Oaks has counseled: “We should not be tolerant with ourselves. We should be ruled by the demands of truth.”¹⁰ Be uncompromising with yourself. The Savior said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matthew 16:24).



I end where I began. Our Heavenly Father and His Son are beings of absolute, perfect, and complete honesty. I testify that our Father in Heaven and His Beloved Son live. They know you personally. They love you. Your destiny as a son or a daughter of God is to become like Them. We are disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us have the courage to follow Him. ■

From a devotional address, “Honesty—The Heart of Spirituality,” delivered at Brigham Young University on September 13, 2011. For the full address, go to speeches.byu.edu.

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Priesthood Power,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 66, 67.
2. Roy D. Atkin, “I Wouldn’t Cheat,” *New Era*, Oct. 2006, 22–23.
3. *Young Women Personal Progress* (booklet, 2009), 61.
4. James E. Faust, “Honesty—A Moral Compass,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 42–43.
5. In Alma P. Burton, *Karl G. Maeser: Mormon Educator* (1953), 71; see also Dallin H. Oaks, “Be Honest in All Behavior” (Brigham Young University devotional, Jan. 30, 1973), 4, speeches.byu.edu.
6. See James L. Gordon, *The Young Man and His Problems* (1911), 130.
7. Brigham Young’s Office Journal, Jan. 28, 1857.
8. Edgar A. Guest, “Myself,” in *The Best Loved Poems of the American People* (1936), 91.
9. Thomas S. Monson, “At Parting,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 114.
10. Dallin H. Oaks, “Balancing Truth and Tolerance,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2013, 28.

Do not allow the pressures of life to crack your character of honesty. Be honest even when the consequences appear to move against you.



Inspired

HOME TEACHING



COMPOSITE PHOTO ILLUSTRATION FROM GETTY IMAGES

*We can all be changed by home teaching as we change **how** we home teach.*

The following accounts come from Latter-day Saints who, in their time of need, found home teachers ready to reach out and help.

He Served Selflessly

My wife and I were awakened by a knock on our door early on a Saturday morning. We were rather surprised that anyone even knew we were in our new home, since our young family of four had just arrived the night before after a stressful long-distance move. When I answered the door, I was greeted by a group of men. One of them introduced himself as Joe and, extending his hand, said, “Brother Ross, we’re here to help you unload that moving truck.” The other men in the group also stepped forward and shook my hand.

As the group began unloading our moving truck, my wife, Judith, explained that Joe must be our home teacher. I was not a member of the Church, so I didn’t know what a home teacher was or what he had to do with unloading my truck. But I was glad for the help, and after the work was finished, I reached into

my wallet to pay Joe. But before I could pull out any money, he said, “No, thanks, Brother Ross. We’re just happy we could be of help. Welcome to town.”

I asked, “But how will I ever be able to repay you for your kindness?”

Joe and the others all smiled at me as if they knew something I didn’t. I wanted to say more, but they were quickly gone. As we spent the rest of the day getting settled into what would be our home for the next 25 years, I reflected on how nice it was to have the home teachers give us a hand. Judith and I agreed that the least we could do to show our gratitude was to attend church the next day.

Now I am a member of the Church and a home teacher myself. I smile whenever I remember my offer to repay our home teacher for his timely service. To this day, when an invitation to provide service is extended in quorum meetings, I volunteer whenever I can, remembering the favorable and long-lasting impression made by those who served my family so many years ago.

Ron Ross, Montana, USA

Being a single parent was the hardest thing I've ever had to do, but my home teachers lifted my burdens.

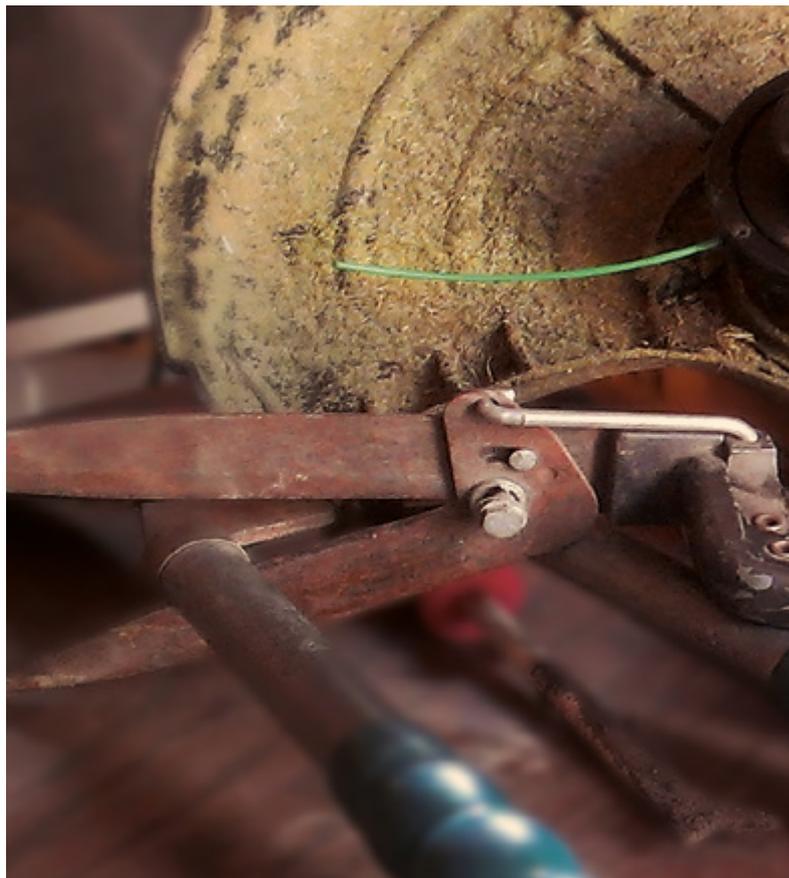
He Was Ready to Bless

As converts to the Church, my wife and I had always looked forward to visits from the missionaries. After our baptisms, we were blessed with a diligent home teacher, and we came to look forward to his monthly visits as much as we had to seeing the missionaries.

We didn't realize how much we would come to rely on our home teacher's help until one morning my wife woke up nearly blind. Her corneas, weakened by an existing eye condition, had been damaged as she slept. I had not yet received the Melchizedek Priesthood, so I called our home teacher, who came to our home with his brother that evening to give my wife a blessing. The next morning, the first words out of her mouth were, "I can see!"

My wife suffered no severe repercussions from the incident, though she had to begin putting a gel into her eyes each night to prevent her corneas from tearing again. To this day, she and I are both grateful for her timely recovery through the divine blessing of the Lord and for a home teacher who loved us and honored his sacred calling to watch over us.

Andrew Aldrich, New Hampshire, USA



He Did More Than Just Visit

Some years ago my life changed when my husband passed away from cancer. I knew the Lord had a plan for me, but I was overwhelmed by the responsibility of raising my three-, five-, and seven-year-old children by myself. My home teachers greatly blessed my life during this time; they lifted my burdens and brought joy and friendship into our home.

One home teacher and his two sons faithfully came over every week to mow my lawn and care for the yard. I had the best-kept yard in the neighborhood, and I felt so relieved and blessed to not have to worry about it. I was so grateful for their faithful service and knew I could count on them.

Thank you so much for going to watch James play ball! He really felt special that you both came and cheered him on.

Mon, Aug 14, 2017, 2:30 PM

We are happy to help out and getting to know your children has been wonderful for us.

Mon, Aug 14, 2017, 2:37 PM

Tomorrow I will have Emma bring you back the pan & bowl.

Mon, Aug 14, 2017, 2:39 PM

I know you are having a difficult day. Mary and I were able to get three extra tickets to the community theater for tonight. Can we take your children to it so you can have a break?

Sat, Aug 19, 2017, 10:55 AM



A NEW ERA OF HOME TEACHING

“Lift your vision of home teaching. Please, in newer, better ways see yourselves as emissaries of the Lord to His children. . . . We would hope . . . that you will establish an era of genuine . . . watching over and caring for each other, addressing spiritual and temporal needs in any way that helps.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Emissaries to the Church,” *Ensign* Nov. 2016, 62.

After several months I received new home teachers, who continued to bless my life. At the time, my children’s behavior was difficult to handle as they worked through the spectrum of their emotions. But my home teachers didn’t give up; they had a special way of connecting to my children. At church, my children received friendly words of encouragement along with a handshake and a smile. This helped them to feel loved and accepted during a tumultuous time.

A call from a faithful home teacher was once an answer to prayer. On a

particularly difficult day, I was praying for some kind of reprieve. That afternoon my home teacher called me to ask if he and his wife could take my three children to a play. With gratitude I gladly accepted the offer and was able to have an evening of rest. I was so thankful that my Heavenly Father answered my prayer through my home teacher.

Being a single parent was the hardest thing I’ve ever had to do, but my home teachers lifted my burdens.

Joelle Pedersen Baker, Utah, USA ■



For more stories, read “3 (More) Examples of Inspired Home Teaching” at ensign.lds.org.

SHARE WITH US

What simple thing have your home teachers done that has blessed you? Share your story with us by messaging us at [facebook.com/ensign.magazine](https://www.facebook.com/ensign.magazine).



The Sabbath can be one of the sweetest, most rewarding times to do family history.

Sweeten —THE— Sabbath

WITH FAMILY HISTORY

By Margot Hovley

Some people feel family history is not for them. Some think Great-Aunt Edna has already done all the family history, or others think poring over old records would be boring and hard. If you think that, consider looking for a different approach to adding family history to your Sabbath. Here are some ideas.

1. GATHER FAMILY STORIES

Take time on a Sunday to interview family members. Parents, grandparents, and other relatives have precious memories that can be captured. It's easy to record audio on a cell phone or other devices. Look online for lists of questions that can spur your thoughts and help flesh out the interview. Once the interview is complete, you can upload the text or audio file to [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org). Not only does this keep it safe (FamilySearch has one of the most protected databases in the world), but it makes it simple to share with others—family members can access the information simply by logging in to the website. Older children and teens can help with this project, creating lasting connections.

Rosalia Badger Ford was famous for her storytelling and knew dozens of poems by memory, often delighting the family with her charming recitations. Before she passed away, family members made a recording of her reciting poems and stories to preserve them for coming generations. This recording has become a precious keepsake for her family.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY JEREMY HALL

HAND LETTERING IN TITLE BY JILL DEHAAN



2. SHARE FAMILY PHOTOS

Add items to the Memories section of FamilySearch. Photos and documents can be scanned and added to your ancestors' records, making them more complete and interesting. Many people have the technology necessary right in their pockets, with many free scanning apps available for cell phones. As with interviews, uploading photos and documents to FamilySearch safeguards them and makes them readily accessible to the whole family, who can view them simply by logging in to the site. Paper scrapbooks are wonderful, but many people have concerns about repeated handling of delicate documents, or they simply live too far away to easily share a paper scrapbook. Collecting these items online in the Memories section of FamilySearch resolves these concerns.

3. ADD LIVING RELATIVES

Maybe your four generations are complete. Have you added your living relatives to FamilySearch? Because records of the living are private, living persons must be added to FamilySearch manually. For example, if your sister has added her living children to her family tree, they won't show up on your tree automatically. A great Sabbath project would be to add these living relatives to your own tree. There is something beautiful about seeing both the branches and roots of your tree, giving your family a sense of the eternal. And now that FamilySearch can show profile pictures on various charts and pages, another Sabbath project could include uploading and attaching photos to the living records you create. This fills the pedigree with faces, increasing our sense of connection. Choose from traditional pedigrees, vertical tree charts, or fan charts, which can be printed out and framed.

4. WRITE DOWN YOUR STORIES

Write your personal history or a history of your parents or grandparents. FamilySearch provides a place for both stories and life sketches—use them in whatever way suits your family.

One way to tackle this project is to visit FamilySearch and learn about the #52Stories project (see familysearch.org/blog/en/52stories). You'll find 52 questions designed to spark memories about the people, places, and

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY KARIN HILDEBRAND LAUSHUTTERSTOCK.COM

RIGHT: PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY JEREMY HALL





FRUITFUL USE OF THE SABBATH DAY

“Family commitments and expectations should be at the top of our priorities to protect our divine destiny. For those who are looking for more fruitful use of the Sabbath day for the family as a whole, the hastening of this work is fertile ground.”

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Roots and Branches,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 47.



events that have mattered most in your life. Start anywhere. You're more likely to stick with the process to completion if you allow yourself to tell the stories that feel the most compelling in the moment. You can always rearrange the order later. Encourage other members of the family to participate. Choose or modify some of the questions so they appeal to younger children.

5. MOVE OFF THE MAIN BRANCH

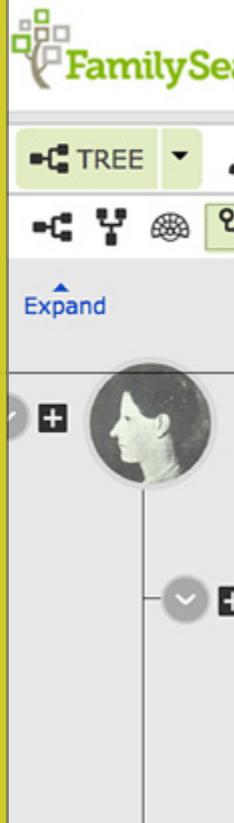
Some people with family trees that are quite complete have discovered opportunities for temple work by looking at collateral lines, or in other words, the families of siblings of your ancestors. FamilySearch makes this easier through the use of its descendant view. To give this a try, go to an ancestor who is four or five generations back in your pedigree. Make this person the root person of the tree by clicking the name and then clicking “Tree.” In the upper left area of the pedigree screen, click the designated button to change the view to “Descendancy.” Once there, you can set the screen to display one to four generations at a time. In this view you'll be able to easily see the extended families of your ancestors that aren't readily visible when looking at a traditional pedigree chart. Color-coded symbols help you determine quickly if any of them need temple ordinances. This process can be repeated farther back on your line for even more possibilities.

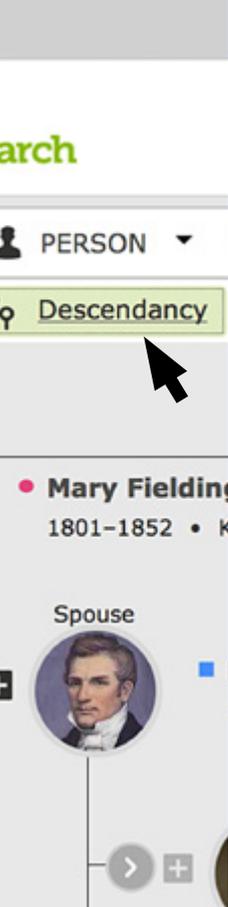
6. DO THE TEMPLE WORK

Once a need for ordinances is determined, you can add the name to your temple list on FamilySearch. From there, you can print temple ordinance cards for your own use using plain white paper, send the ordinance to a relative for them to complete, or even turn the name in to the temple file to be completed by other patrons.

7. LINK DOCUMENTS

Billions of ancestor records are on FamilySearch, but many of them contain information that's unverified. It's important to do as much as we can to validate and correct the data whenever possible. FamilySearch has new tools that make this easier. Source records can be located and attached to the corresponding ancestor profiles, helping to show that information is accurate. The website automatically checks names and dates in FamilySearch for possible matches in its enormous, constantly growing database of vital records and documents. If a high probability match is found, a notification,





or “hint,” appears on the ancestor’s page, and it’s then a simple matter to attach these verifying records to your ancestor’s information.

If you have private records that back up information on FamilySearch, such as copies of birth, death, or marriage certificates that FamilySearch doesn’t yet have, it’s possible to scan those documents and upload them to the site. Then they can be attached as a source to your ancestor’s personal page. This process may not only help you complete information for your own ancestors but also help others doing research connected to your lines.

8. EXPAND YOUR FAMILYSEARCH SKILLS

FamilySearch has an extensive learning and help center, and you could make it a Sabbath day project to study and learn genealogy skills. Set up your own family history course for your family. Pick a topic and dive into the tutorials, and watch training videos together. Free accounts to several premium online genealogy websites are available to members of the Church, such as Ancestry.com, Findmypast.com, MyHeritage.com, Geneanet.org, and AmericanAncestors.org. Each site has its own help and guidance for any level of genealogist, not to mention access to billions more records.

9. DO SOME INDEXING

There is always a need for help with FamilySearch indexing, which has become part of many people’s Sabbath day. If you’ve tried indexing in the past and felt like you could have used some personal assistance, be aware that trained missionaries are ready online and by phone to help you with special tools that allow them to look at the same batch you are working on. For support options, visit familysearch.org/ask/help.

10. EXPLORE RELATIVE FINDER AND MORE

Fun Sabbath activities could include visiting RelativeFinder.org. You can see how you and your family are related to U.S. presidents, Church leaders, historical figures, and even royalty. Many people have discovered unknown cousins through the site.

Family history is often a work of data: names, dates, places, and bits of textual information. Sometimes it’s easy to forget that those names represent your ancestors—people who really lived and had families, cares and concerns, sorrows and joys. By using the Sabbath for family history activities, we can add an extra helping of spirituality to our day and form connections with the people to whom we owe our lives. The Sabbath can become a blessed time to increase our feeling of family love across the generations. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



Relative Finder

Explore the App Gallery (familysearch.org/apps) for charts, games, and other useful apps related to family history.



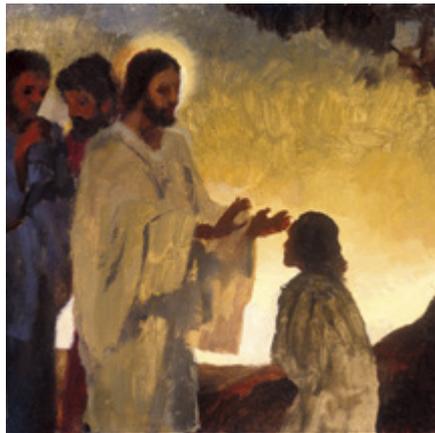
By Elder
Terence M.
Vinson
Of the Seventy

Blessing THOSE WHO ARE Less Active

We discover many of life's beautiful truths through our spiritual senses rather than through our physical senses. In fact, many important things—including eternal things—can be felt but not seen.

The Apostle Paul taught this principle to the Corinthian Saints: “We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:18).

Love is learned and felt primarily through the spiritual senses. Likewise, compassion, friendship, longsuffering, and faith are fruits of the Spirit (see Galatians 5:22). Heavenly Father uses these feelings of the Spirit to bless His children, including those who have strayed.



*As we live in tune with
the Spirit and seek the
Lord's help, He will bless
our efforts to bring His lost
sheep back to the fold.*

I have lived most of my life in the Pacific Area. Many people of the Pacific have a profound understanding of the importance of the unseen things described by Paul, and many clearly prioritize spiritual things over physical needs.

This area of the Church is diverse, with developed and sophisticated nations, such as Australia and New

Zealand, as well as farming and fishing nations, such as Tonga and Samoa, where Church members represent high proportions of the population. Then there are developing nations, such as Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, where significant challenges confront the people.

This diversity provides opportunities to learn.

Urgency to Visit the Less Active

One such learning experience stands out. As an Area Seventy, I had been assigned to preside at a stake conference in New Zealand. Only a few months before, President Thomas S. Monson had delivered a powerful address to all the Seventies of the world. His address centered on rescuing those who had slipped away from the ordinances of the gospel.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY BRIAN CALL

As a result of President Monson's address and the consequent challenge he gave us, I felt an urgency to visit and invite those not fully involved in the gospel to return to the covenants and ordinances of salvation. I invited stake presidents to take me with them during stake conference weekends to visit less-active members. Those visits were always wonderful.

One Saturday during a particular stake conference weekend, the stake president and I visited several families. The husband and wife of one of these families had been married for about 10 years and had been sealed in the temple but were now less active. They welcomed us warmly, and we had a spiritual visit. As the visit was ending, I felt prompted to ask the husband if he would like a blessing and then to ask him to give his wife a blessing.

This was an unusual prompting. I had been taught that as a guest in another's home, I should take a subordinate role and that the head of the home should be the one who decides what is done. This brother, however, was grateful for the offer of a blessing, and he was visibly moved after the stake president and I had finished.

As he arose, however, he asked whether one of us would bless his wife. He told us that despite being married 10 years, he had never given her a blessing and was uncomfortable doing so.

"We will help you," I said, encouraging him.

After we had explained how to give a blessing and helped him rehearse what to say at the beginning and at the end, he gave his wife a wonderful blessing. When he finished, we all had moist eyes, and he and his wife accepted our invitation to return to the gospel.

As a result of this tender experience, the stake president felt inspired during his address to stake members the next day to challenge priesthood holders to return home after stake conference and to give blessings to family members.

Prompted to Bless

As that Sunday session of stake conference ended, I felt another prompting—this time to approach a young sister who was sitting about 10 rows from the front of the chapel and ask whether she needed a blessing. I did not know her, but the prompting was compelling.

Taken aback, the sister said hesitantly, "No, thank you."

I was somewhat grateful for her reply, but I felt that I had done as the Spirit had directed. I returned to the front of the chapel to greet members when this same young woman suddenly came forward and asked me whether I was still willing to give her a blessing. I told her "of course" and suggested that she go to the stake president's office, where we would join her shortly.

As the stake president and I made our way to his office, I asked about her. He

explained that she had just returned to Church after about 10 years of not attending. She was living alone, but during those 10 years she had led a life contrary to gospel standards.

Before the blessing, this young sister told us of her feelings of unworthiness. During her time away from the Church, she said, she had simply done what she wanted with no thought of spiritual matters. She had since reawakened to the gospel but felt that she had slipped so far behind in her spiritual development that she had no hope of ever catching up.



The laborers who enter the vineyard late will receive the same reward as those who have long labored there.

We taught her that the laborers who enter the vineyard late—and those who return to the vineyard after leaving for a time—will still receive the same reward as those who have long labored there (see Matthew 20:1–16). Then we gave her a priesthood blessing.

As the voice of that blessing, I was overwhelmed by the outpouring of love I felt that the Lord had for her. It was a more powerful feeling than I had ever felt before—one that made me aware that I was in the presence of a particularly noble spirit. As we finished the blessing, the sister rose from the chair. Two black lines of mascara were running from beneath her eyes. I too was moved to tears.

The Lord had allowed me to see that this exceptional young lady was in the early stages of a process that we all must experience to achieve our full potential here on earth. When we lose our way spiritually and when we commit sin, we all must humble ourselves and repent.

As the Apostle Paul taught the Galatians, this life is the time for the spirit to subdue the flesh. “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would” (Galatians 5:17).

Whether we reach our potential depends on whether our spirits govern our bodies, whether we prevail over “the natural man” (Mosiah 3:19). In today’s world, many seem to have no fight for this battle. The appetites of the flesh govern their lives, and the flesh subdues their spirits.

This young woman was on a path that would enable her spirit to subdue the flesh. She had begun a contest she was determined to win.

“Walk in the Spirit”

As I left the stake that day, I asked the stake president to provide me contact information for those I had met that weekend so I could encourage them to continue on the gospel path and to remember the commitments they had made.



The young sister continued to progress and to do so rapidly. By her faith, she began to “walk in the Spirit” and to “live in the Spirit” (Galatians 5:16, 25). She kept in touch and confided in me about the significant challenges she had overcome and has since faced. She has become a dear friend to our family, and we have seen the strength of her spirit as she has drawn close to the Savior.

She now enjoys the blessings of the temple, has served as an ordinance worker, and radiates the spiritual gifts of charity and goodness. She has since married a worthy young man in the temple.

The spiritual has clearly overcome the temporal in this young lady. We have seen her heart become pure, and she has “no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually” (Mosiah 5:2).

Perhaps the Lord’s knowledge of the nobility of her soul was the cause of the prompting I received that day. That prompting has blessed me to see Heavenly Father’s power and grace manifest in her life.

We all have a responsibility to help our less-active brothers and sisters, and we can all be prompted in ways to bless them. As we live in tune with the Spirit and seek the Lord’s help, He will bless our efforts in “bringing them back to the fold” (“Dear to the Heart of the Shepherd,” *Hymns*, no. 221; see also Alma 26:4). ■

136 BILLION PORNOGRAPHIC

videos were viewed on smartphones in 2015.



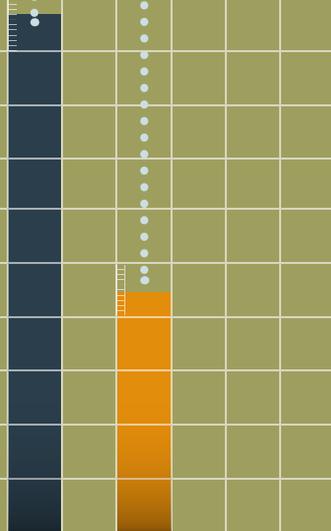
30% of
INTERNET
DATA is
PORNOGRAPHY.

Pornography is a

\$97 BILLION
industry.

*By comparison, the
COMBINED revenue of
the top-10 sports leagues
in North America,
Europe, and Asia is*

\$45.8 BILLION.



EIGHT STRATEGIES TO Help Children Reject Pornography



By Lisa Ann Thomson

The statistics can overwhelm parents. Extremetech.com estimates that about 30 percent of all data transferred over the internet is pornography.¹ It is found on literally hundreds of millions of web pages, including social media giants Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. It is accessible through television, computers, tablets, and smartphones.

“The material a child is coming across just traumatizes a child’s tender and fragile brain,” points out therapist Dr. Jill C. Manning, who is a frequent presenter on the impact of pornography on marriage and family.

But there is hope.

Even with the seeming pervasiveness of pornography, parents have power to protect their children and prepare them to face and reject pornography.

Here are eight strategies from Church leaders and experts to help parents fortify their families.

1. Address Access and Family Rules

Start with the outer defenses. “We safeguard our children until the time they can safeguard themselves,”

says Jason S. Carroll, professor of family life at Brigham Young University. The brain stem, which houses the pleasure centers of the brain, develops first, he explains. Only later do the reasoning and decision-making abilities in the frontal cortex fully develop. “So kids have the gas pedal without the full brake,” he says. Therefore, external filters and monitoring are crucial for young people.

Simple steps and rules can protect children (and adults) from unintentional exposure and help them think twice about the content they choose to view:

- Use filters at the computer, router, and internet-service-provider levels.
- Enable parental and content controls through cable providers and online media services.
- Set up content restriction settings on mobile devices.
- Keep computers and tablets in common areas.
- Ask children and teens to turn in their phones and mobile devices at night.
- Establish an open-book policy; parents can view texts and social media accounts at any time.

TEACH CHILDREN what to do if they encounter **PORNOGRAPHY:**

- Close their eyes.
- Shut down the device.
- Tell an adult.
- Redirect their thoughts.

SOCIAL MEDIA platforms have become highly trafficked pornography exchange sites.

76% of internet users across 40 countries use social media.



Teach children what to do if they encounter pornography: (1) close their eyes and shut down the device, (2) tell an adult, and (3) redirect their thoughts. Assure them that they did nothing wrong and are not in trouble.

2. Preach of Christ

“Filters are useful tools, but the greatest filter in the world, the only one that will ultimately work, is the personal internal filter that comes from a deep and abiding testimony of our Heavenly Father’s love and our Savior’s atoning sacrifice for each one of us,” said Linda S. Reeves, Second Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency.²

To help children develop that internal filter, Sister Reeves points to the counsel of Nephi: “We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, [and] we prophesy of Christ . . . that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins” (2 Nephi 25:26).

Experts agree. Studies have confirmed that religiosity in the home, coupled with a “warm parenting style,” has a protective effect against pornography.³

“The best preventative measure and the best reparative measure for pornography is the true teaching of the gospel in the home,” says Timothy

Rarick, parenting professor at Brigham Young University–Idaho and member of the United Families International advisory board. “The best thing we can do is help our children establish their own connection to heaven.”

3. Teach Children How to Filter Internally

Parents can teach specific strategies for filtering media through gospel standards. For Dr. Manning, the thirteenth article of faith is the quintessential filter for all media choices.

“We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men [and women]. . . . If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things’ [Articles of Faith 1:13]. There is a lot of material in the latter days that does not line up with that criteria. And if what we find does not line up, we need to keep looking,” says Dr. Manning.

But it is that effort that sets Latter-day Saints apart, pointed out President Thomas S. Monson: “As the world moves further and further away from the principles and guidelines given to us by a loving Heavenly Father, we will stand out from the crowd. . . . We will be different as we decide not to fill our minds with media choices that are base and demeaning and that will remove the Spirit from our homes and our lives.”⁴



4. Teach Children Healthy Sexuality

The principle of “opposition in all things” (2 Nephi 2:11) applies to pornography. It is not enough to label pornography as bad; parents also need to teach their children what is good.

“One of the most powerful buffers and protections for our youth is to teach them sexuality in the home, starting early,” says Dr. Manning. “Our youth are suffering because they are growing up in a vacuum of toxic messages with too few positive messages within the gospel framework.”

Brigham Young University family life professor Mark H. Butler recommends a straightforward explanation: “The sexual-response cycle exists naturally in us as human beings. The desire and drive we have is a God-given endowment which blesses us, drawing us naturally and affectionately toward the opposite sex, toward marriage, and toward family life.”

Age-appropriate discussions about healthy sexuality can begin early. Professor Carroll points out that conversations about

good touch and bad touch and personal privacy, along with correct terminology for body parts, can be taught starting at a young age. By age eight, a child is able to gain a basic understanding of sex in its physical, spiritual, emotional, and relational contexts, he says.

Youth also appreciate correct and direct language. One young man said, “If you beat around the bush, people can really misunderstand. I was taught about the law of chastity a dozen times before I knew they were talking about sex.”

Professor Carroll says parents should also pay attention to the context of these discussions. “Do everything possible not to ritualize these conversations,” he says. “We take our child out to dinner, we put on our church clothes, or we have the conversation in the parking lot of the temple,” he says. But if children get the message that sex can be discussed only under those circumstances, they might not know how to recreate those circumstances when they have questions.

Rather, parents should create an ongoing dialogue and opportunities for children to ask



Watch a video of children explaining how to stay safe from pornography at lds.org/go/81722.



questions whenever they have them. “If the conversation happens sitting on your bedroom floor or in your pickup truck or out picking strawberries, they know how to get back there,” says Carroll.

“My experience has taught me that the teenagers who are the most sexually active are usually the least informed,” points out BYU associate professor Bradley R. Wilcox. “Young people who get answers from parents at early ages are usually the ones who avoid sexual experimentation.”

5. Shatter the Myth of Pornography

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) clearly stated the truth about pornography. “It is vicious,” he said. “It is lewd and filthy. It is enticing and habit-forming. It will take

[you] down to destruction as surely as anything in this world. It is foul sleaze that makes its exploiters wealthy, its victims impoverished.”⁵

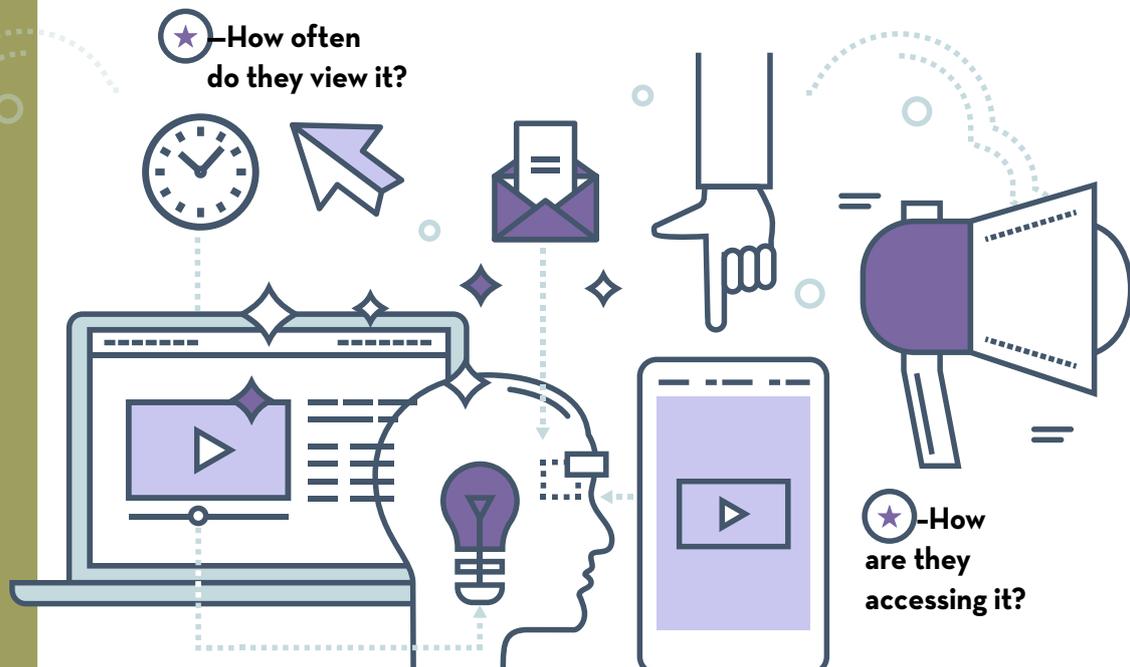
“Pornography use by adolescents and young adults often leads to a distorted view of sexuality and its role in fostering healthy personal relationships,” points out the American College of Pediatricians. “These distortions include the overestimation of the prevalence of sexual activity in the community, the belief that sexual promiscuity is normal, and the belief that sexual abstinence is unhealthy.”⁶

In discussions about pornography, parents should point out that pornography is mythical on all levels. The behaviors portrayed in pornography are neither normal nor a reflection of what should be anticipated or

When addressing issues, take a TRIAGE APPROACH:



★—How long has it been going on?





expected in a healthy relationship. “Pornography is attractive only as long as the myth of pornography is embraced,” Professor Carroll says.

6. Change the Conversation about the Problem

Experts and Church leaders warn against jumping too quickly to the conclusion that any involvement with pornography necessarily indicates an addiction.

“Not everyone who uses pornography willfully is addicted to it,” points out Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “In fact, most young men and young women who struggle with pornography are not addicted. That is a very important distinction to make—not just for the parents, spouses, and leaders who desire to help but also for those who struggle with this problem.”⁷

“Young men and young women get involved with pornography out of curiosity, out of accessibility, and out of what, at its core, amounts to immaturity,” says Professor Carroll. “Every one of us experiences the power of the sexual-response cycle triggered during

puberty, long before we have the emotional or spiritual maturity to fully make sense of it.”

Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, BYU professor of Church history and faculty adviser to the student club Unraveling Pornography, observes that “the problem is real and has terrible consequences, but making blanket statements about the problem often pushes it deeper into the souls of those struggling.”

Elder Oaks points out that pornography problems can range from “occasional or repeated intentional use, to intensive use, to compulsive (addictive) use. . . . If behavior is incorrectly classified as an addiction, the user may think he or she has lost agency and the capacity to overcome the problem. . . . On the other hand, having a clearer understanding of the depth of the problem—that it may not be as ingrained or extreme as feared—can give hope and an increased capacity to . . . repent.”⁸

When addressing issues, Professor Butler suggests parents take a triage approach: How long has it been going on? How often do they view it? How are they accessing it? Then parents can work with the youth to determine an appropriate level of action.

Create an ONGOING DIALOGUE for children to ask questions.

GUILT

is a natural response to mistakes that can motivate change.



SHAME

is a destructive feeling that can lead to a sense of hopelessness.

“Understand the person and who they are,” says Professor Holzapfel. “How deep is their problem? What is really going on? What is their reason for viewing pornography, and how can we address the deeper problems?”

7. Teach Emotional Management

Addressing deeper problems may be key to preventing pornography problems as well, says Nathan Acree, a Utah-based therapist. Beyond natural curiosity, pornography is often used as a way to cope with emotion, particularly overwhelming emotion.

Professor Butler adds, “At some point, a young man or woman has a difficult or distressing psychological, relational, or spiritual experience.” He says negative experiences can lead the adolescent brain to revert to “feel-good experiences” such as viewing pornography and engaging in related behaviors such as masturbation. The emotions created in such behaviors then replace or mask distressing emotions. And therein lies the danger: “The person moves away from a feel-good experience into the initiation of a psychological dependency orientation. Now he or she is using the behavior as a way of managing life.”

Brother Acree says parents should teach children that both pleasant and

unpleasant emotions are normal, and it is OK to experience negative feelings such as sadness, anger, frustration, or hurt. Parents often feel the need to control their children’s emotions, but allowing them to experience and cope with negative feelings builds a critical skill set.

If a pornography problem exists, parents should take care not to add to the child’s emotional burden through shaming. BYU family life professor James M. Harper noted that while *guilt* is a natural response to mistakes that can motivate change, *shame* is a destructive feeling that can lead to a sense of hopelessness.

In other words, creating or exacerbating a feeling of shame in a child damages the child’s ability both to develop positive emotional responses and to recognize the influence of the Spirit, which is ultimately the most powerful ally in the prevention of and recovery from pornography use.

One young man who struggled with pornography remembers clearly how his parents responded when his challenge came to light: “My mother reacted strongly, yelling and screaming, and it made me feel worse about it rather than hopeful of overcoming it,” he says. “The most helpful was my dad telling me repeatedly how much he loved me.”



“Please do not condemn them,” pleads Elder Oaks. “They are not evil or without hope. They are sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father.”⁹

8. Teach That the Savior’s Atonement Works

In talks, lessons, and reading materials, youth receive the clear message that pornography is a dangerous evil, but we need to give additional emphasis to the doctrine of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

For youth, Professor Butler believes that the adolescent brain may be one of the primary reasons to teach them about the Atonement. “The adolescent brain is not fully formed, and that leads to certain issues like impulse control and lack of forward thinking,” he explains. “A spiritually sincere, striving teen can become crippled by overwhelming guilt when he encounters weaknesses that he is uniquely vulnerable to having with that still-adolescent brain. It is so critical that, alongside teaching the commandments, you teach adolescents the Atonement—that it’s there for the purpose of developmental patience and persistence in life.”

“All of us need the Atonement of Jesus Christ. . . . Through proper and complete repentance, [all] may become clean, pure, and worthy of every covenant and temple blessing promised by God,” says Elder Oaks.¹⁰ This includes those who have used pornography.

And that is a hopeful message: there is much parents can do to prepare their children to reject pornography,

and when they falter, the Savior’s infinite Atonement makes change and repentance possible.

“That means, come what may, Heavenly Father will never stop loving you, and we, your parents, will never stop loving you,” says Professor Rarick. For a child, there can be no more hope than that. ■

Adapted from “Arm Your Kids for the Battle,” BYU Magazine, Spring 2015.

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. Sebastian Anthony, “Just How Big Are Porn Sites?” *ExtremeTech*, Apr. 4, 2012, extremetech.com.
2. Linda S. Reeves, “Protection from Pornography—a Christ-Focused Home,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 16.
3. See Sam A. Hardy and others, “Adolescent Religiousness as a Protective Factor against Pornography Use,” *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, vol. 34 (May–June 2013), 131–39, sciencedirect.com. The author also interviewed the lead researcher.
4. Thomas S. Monson, “Be an Example and a Light,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 88.
5. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Great Shall Be the Peace of Thy Children,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 51.
6. “The Impact of Pornography on Children,” *American College of Pediatrics*, June 2016, acpeds.org.
7. Dallin H. Oaks, “Recovering from the Trap of Pornography,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2015, 34.
8. Dallin H. Oaks, “Recovering,” *Ensign*, 34–35.
9. Dallin H. Oaks, “Recovering,” *Ensign*, 37.
10. Dallin H. Oaks, “Recovering,” *Ensign*, 37.





FAITH, DETERMINATION, FAITH, AND A DEADLINE

By Aaron Barrus

My father, Tim Barrus, who owned a woodshop, had invested in sophisticated machinery that allowed him to create designs on his computer and then mill those designs in wood. He had previously used this machinery to create decorative trim for the Bountiful Utah Temple. During the reconstruction of the Nauvoo Illinois Temple, he was hired to mill some cylindrical parts out of solid maple to help support the handrails. The design was simple in nature but difficult to produce. Nevertheless we were excited to use our machinery on another temple project. We tested the cuts and milled the parts for the temple and delivered them with confidence.

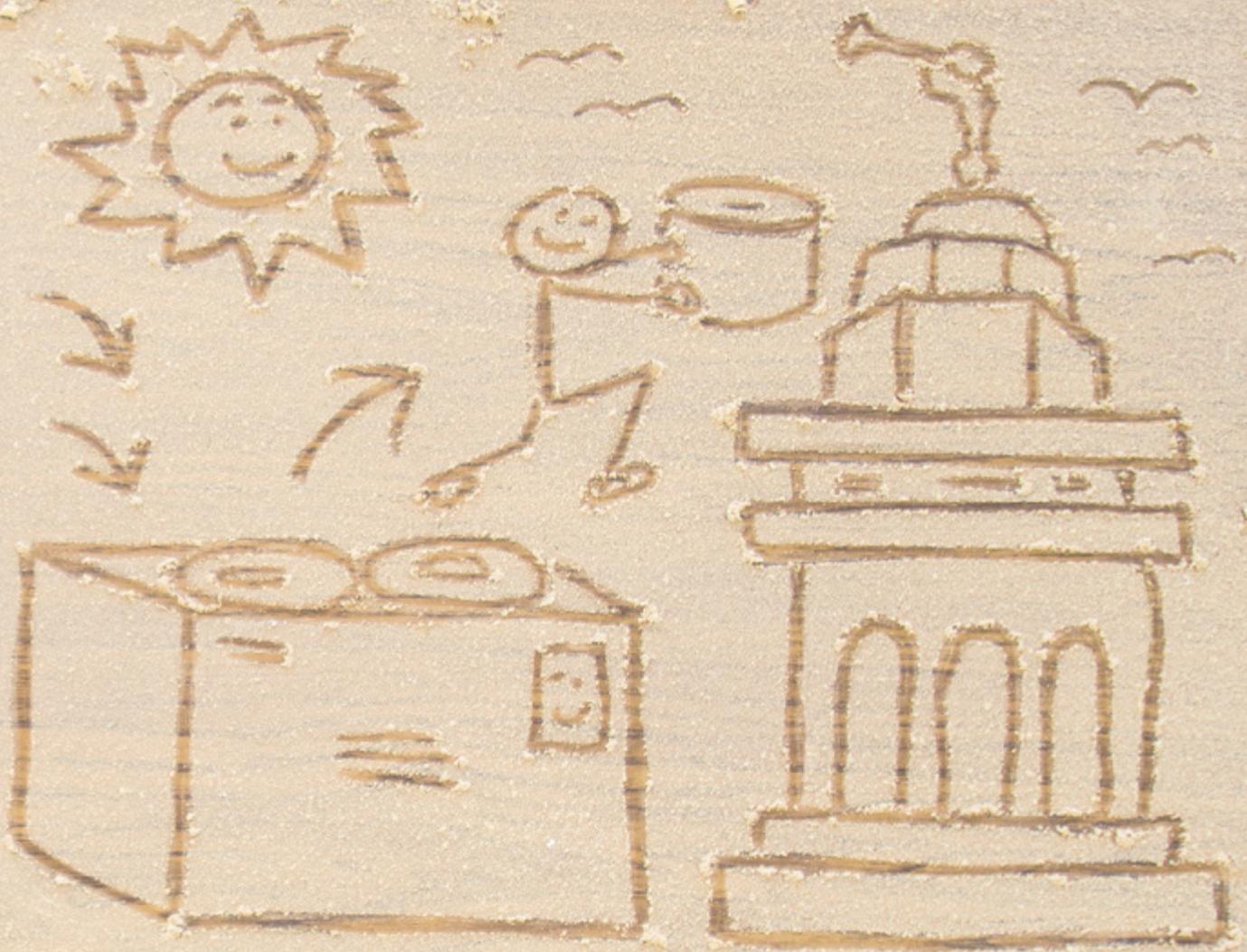
Unfortunately, the parts were rejected because of imperfections in the maple wood that chipped so easily. My father said he would replace the parts at no cost, and we got to work testing ways to cut the parts without damaging the dense maple. The day before the deadline, we still had not found a way to make the parts without imperfections.

The day before the deadline, we still had not found a way to make the new wooden parts for the Nauvoo Temple handrails.

We worked late into the evening, when I finally gave up and went home. But my father was determined and stayed behind at the shop.

The next morning I arrived back at the shop early, and to my surprise my father was in full production. As I approached the table where the parts were stacked, I was amazed at the quality. They were beautiful. In fact, they looked perfect. When I asked my father what had happened, he told me the following story.

After I had left that night, my father was very frustrated and wanted nothing more than to accomplish the task before him. He said that after a few moments of sitting in the office alone in silence, he knelt down and pleaded with Heavenly Father to help him. He said, "If You want these parts on the



delivery truck tomorrow morning, I'm going to need Your help." After his prayer, he sat again at the desk and placed his hands on the keyboard. A design came to his mind that he had not considered before. He could visualize how to mill the parts, and instantly he began programming the computer. Then he tested the cut and was humbled to find that it worked perfectly. He milled through the night and was finishing up when I arrived the next morning. We quickly sanded the parts and finished the final packaging just 15 minutes before the delivery truck arrived.

Those simple, beautiful cylinders made of solid maple still adorn the hallways of the Nauvoo Illinois Temple. They stand as a reminder to me of what I learned from my father's example—that there is power in the combination of choosing faith in Jesus Christ and working with determination when it comes to facing our challenges. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



CHOOSING FAITH

"Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is not something ethereal, floating loosely in the air. Faith does not fall upon us by chance or stay with us by birth-right. It is, as the scriptures say, 'substance . . . , the evidence of things not seen' [Hebrews 11:1]. Faith emits a spiritual light, and that light is discernible [see Alma 32:35]. Faith in Jesus Christ is a gift from heaven that comes as we choose to believe and as we seek it and hold on to it. Your faith is either growing stronger or becoming weaker. Faith is a principle of power, important not only in this life but also in our progression beyond the veil. By the grace of Christ, we will one day be saved through faith on His name [see Ephesians 2:8]. The future of your faith is not by chance, but by choice."

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Faith Is Not by Chance, but by Choice," *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 65.



I felt prompted to stay in San Francisco, but I had no job, almost no money, and my rent term was almost up.



Prompted

TO PAY TITHING

By Robert G. Cox

After being laid off from a management position in a large, nonprofit organization, I moved temporarily into a family member's home in the San Francisco Bay Area in California, USA. I immediately began looking for work and applying to graduate programs in the area. I picked up a couple of jobs in graphic design and grant writing that provided the funds necessary for me to sublet an apartment for two months. I didn't have much of a plan after those two months, but after several sincere prayers, I felt the Spirit confirm to me that the Bay Area was where the Lord wanted me to be.

A couple of weeks before I needed to move out and make my final rent payment, I was still unemployed and nearly broke. I had applied to a graduate program in Berkeley, but my acceptance status remained unknown, and even though I had identified a suitable living space to rent, I did not have the deposit and rent money to secure the room. My financial situation felt at odds with the prompting I had received to remain in the area. I felt helpless.

My Decision to Pay Tithing

One Saturday evening, while reassessing my finances and seeking the will and support of the Lord, I had a clear and unmistakable impression that I needed to pay my tithing. I had previously paid my tithing in a passive and, at times, even rounded-down



A TEST OF FAITH

“Tithing develops and tests our faith. By sacrificing to the Lord what we may think we need or want for ourselves, we learn to rely on Him. Our faith in Him makes it possible to keep temple covenants and receive eternal temple blessings. . . .

“To those who faithfully and honestly live the law of tithing, the Lord promises an abundance of blessings. Some of these blessings are temporal, just as tithes are temporal. But like the outward physical ordinances of baptism and the sacrament, the commandment to pay tithing requires temporal sacrifice, which ultimately yields great spiritual blessings.”

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Tithing: A Test of Faith with Eternal Blessings,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 27.

way in the past, but the Holy Ghost spoke unmistakably to my heart that I needed to take my already-scarce funds and pay a full and honest tithe. I also realized that the approaching Sabbath day would be fast Sunday, which further increased what I would return to the Lord. With tears in my eyes and exercising every ounce of faith I could muster, I counted out exactly 10 percent of my meager funds and included an additional 10 dollars as a fast offering.

That Sunday I met with my bishop. I told him of the situation I was in, gave him my tithing and fast offering, and then asked him for a priesthood blessing. In the blessing, he promised me that I would receive the miracle I needed in the coming days. I felt the Spirit of the Lord confirm to me that this was true. I realized that there had never been a time in my life when I was required to place so much faith in the temporal assistance of the Lord. I left the bishop’s office and went about the rest of my Sabbath day filled with a feeling of peace and assurance.

The Miracle I Needed

The following day, I woke up, read my scriptures, and said my morning prayer. Later that afternoon I received a call from a temporary employment agency that I had applied to weeks before but had heard nothing from. The agency representative told me that he had a clerk position available immediately and that it would probably last a week or so. I calculated what I could expect to receive from this position—I would still be a few hundred dollars short of what I needed to

remain in the Bay Area, but I took the job and moved forward with faith.

I also had some sound equipment for sale. I felt inspired to drop the asking price of the equipment. The next day I received a call from someone who was interested. Upon arriving and reviewing the items, the person decided to purchase not only the items listed in the ad but also several instrument cables and cords that more than tripled the amount I was expecting to get.

With this transaction and the money I received from my recent employment, I had more than enough funds to pay my outstanding bills, move into my new living quarters, and buy food for the rest of the week. The following week, I received the information that my application had been accepted to the graduate program in Berkeley. The Lord had blessed me with all that I needed in order to do what I had felt He wanted of me.

Six months after this experience, I met the amazing woman who now is my wife and eternal companion. While I was going through my own life-changing experience, the Lord was influencing and guiding my future wife to make very specific and even difficult decisions that brought her to the San Francisco YSA Ward. I felt the Lord had truly blessed me with the miracle I needed.

While I was blessed with many miracles at this time, I am confident that the greatest miracle was that I grew closer to my Father in Heaven. I saw an exponential increase of my faith in God’s love and in His awareness of me as one of His children. ■

The author lives in California, USA.

PREPARING A Spiritual Feast

By Manuel Emilio Ciriaco

When I was called as first counselor in the bishopric, sacrament meeting attendance in our ward had dwindled. As a bishopric, we decided to fast fervently and pray to Heavenly Father to give us the wisdom to know how to strengthen the members.

The Lord inspired us to emphasize the sacrament meeting as a spiritual feast, so we came up with a way to invite the members, their friends, and their neighbors to come to sacrament meeting and experience a spiritual feast. We made invitations that said, “Come and hear, see, and feel the presence of the Lord in a spiritual feast” and gave them to each of the members, including the young men and young women.

We also prepared a small ward choir of eight voices. We prayerfully selected spiritual hymns and speakers and invited members to help with the reverence of the occasion.

Everything was ready for the spiritual feast! Attendance that Sunday included 42 investigators and less-active members. At the second spiritual feast, there were 64 investigators and less-active members. Three months later we could no longer fit in the chapel, and six months later our ward had grown so much that we were preparing for it to be divided into two wards.

We learned that treating sacrament meeting as more than just a Sunday meeting but as a sacred experience gave us a marvelous opportunity to invite our loved ones to come unto Christ through a sacred spiritual feast.

Our preparation to improve the quality of the spirit and reverence of sacrament meeting helped improve the attendance of the people who had never imagined feeling joy by coming to see, feel, and find it in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. ■

The author lives in the Dominican Republic.

HOW CAN WE HELP MAKE THE SACRAMENT A MORE SPIRITUAL ORDINANCE?

- Preparation can begin at home as families discuss how to improve their experience with the sacrament.
- Priesthood holders who administer the sacrament can do so reverently, knowing they represent the Lord in sharing the sacrament with the members. Those who bless the sacrament can make the prayers a sacred communication with God, not just repetition of words.



We made invitations that said, “Come and hear, see, and feel the presence of the Lord in a spiritual feast.”

Angels Round About

Words by Marvin K. Gardner
Music by Vanja Y. Watkins

With expression ♩ = 60-66

mp

1. My Sav - ior, wilt Thou
Sav - ior, doubt and
Sav - ior, step by

go be - fore my face? Wilt Thou go be - fore my face? — Be on my
dark-ness flee Thy face. Doubt and dark-ness flee Thy face. — My hopes grow
step I'll seek Thy face, Step by step I'll seek Thy face, — My prayers as-

right hand, be on my left hand, — And fill my heart with peace, Thy love's em-
bright-er, my bur-dens light-er. — Through trou-bled hours I feel Thy love's em-
cend - ing, my praise un - end - ing. — For - ev - er may I feel Thy love's em-

brace. — Send an - gels round a - bout to bear me
brace — And an - gels round a - bout to bear me
brace — And an - gels round a - bout to bear me

© 2017 by Marvin K. Gardner and Vanja Y. Watkins. All rights reserved.
This song may be copied for incidental, noncommercial church or home use.
This notice must be included on each copy made.



Verse 3 to Coda ⊕

up. _____ Send an - gels round a - bout to bear me
 up. _____ And an - gels round a - bout to bear me
 up. _____ And

cresc.

1.

up. _____
 up. _____

2. My

2.

3. My

⊕ CODA

rit.

an - gels round a - bout to bear me up.

rit.

Doctrine and Covenants 84:88



Learn how the *Friend* magazine can help your family understand a different sensitive topic each month.

THE BURDENS OF BULLYING

Preparing your children to deal with bullies—or to avoid becoming bullies themselves—will help them as they interact with others in school, at church, in the neighborhood, and even in home settings. Talk with them about bullying and how it can hurt others. Explain that if someone treats us badly, we should stick up for ourselves, but we can also choose to be kind. Let your children know that if they ever encounter bullying, they can come to you, a teacher, or other trusted adult to work out a solution together. Use stories from this month's *Friend* to help start a discussion and to plan safe ways for your children to stand up against bullying.



“Enough Is Enough!” (pages 32–34)

Can bullies get bullied too? Olivia has never been nice, but what happens when someone stands up for her? After reading this story, role-play some similar situations so your kids can practice what to say and do in the heat of the moment.

Find stories, activities, and media about other gospel topics at lessonhelps.lds.org. For past *Friend* Connection articles, visit FriendConnection.lds.org.

“Being Like Nephi” (page 16)

When Mason gets angry at his brother, he decides to follow Nephi's example instead of being mean back. Find examples in the scriptures of men and women who chose to be kind, even in tough situations. You could draw and hang up pictures of these scripture heroes as reminders.



SCRIPTURE SUPPORT

Jesus said, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40). We show Christ we love Him by the way we treat other people. How can we be kind to bullies, even if we want to be mean too? What can you do if they are still rude after you've tried your best?



OBJECT LESSON IDEA

Cover several cans of food with paper and take turns writing on the cans ways that others hurt us, like ignoring, yelling, hitting, or saying, “I don't like you.” Then blow up some balloons. Use a marker to write on the balloons ways that others make us happy, like sharing toys or saying, “I like playing with you.” Have two people each hold a basket or box while everyone else gives balloons to one person and cans to the other. Explain how positive behaviors and words make our loads easy to carry, but negative actions and comments can weigh us down. Talk about what you and your family can do to help lighten others' burdens.

TEACHING THE PROCLAMATION TO CHILDREN

Each month, we'll give you tips for talking with your children about a portion of "The Family: A Proclamation to the World."¹

This Month's Selection

"We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.

"We declare the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed. We affirm the sanctity of life and of its importance in God's eternal plan."



How to Explain This to Children

Our bodies can do many wonderful things. One of the things men and women can do with their bodies is create babies together. This is a very beautiful, special power! It's a way men and women show they love each other. Heavenly Father says men and women should get married before they use this sacred power. Life is a wonderful gift. Having a body is an important part of God's plan for us.

Activity Idea

If possible, tell your children about the day they were born, and look at baby pictures if you have them. Tell your children how much you love them and that their Heavenly Parents love them too. If the time is right, be prepared to teach them, in an age-appropriate way, about sexual intimacy. Answer questions they have in an open, loving way. Play a game together that involves some sort of physical activity, and talk about the different, wonderful things our bodies can do. For example, you could play freeze tag. In order to be "unfrozen," a player has to say something they like about what their body can do. ■

NOTE

1. See "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.



Find other resources, including suggestions for talking about sexual intimacy, at ProclamationKids.lds.org.

MY MISSIONARY HERITAGE

By Alexandra Warner

We may identify our ancestors through family history, but learning about our ancestors helps us to identify ourselves as well.

For a long time, family history was nothing more to me than writing names on a pedigree chart, but I have learned that one of the rewards of this endeavor is getting to know our ancestors better.

My Great-Grandfather's Conversion

A few months ago I felt prompted to begin compiling some of my ancestors' life histories. I was overwhelmed

with the wonderful information I found when I read the life histories of my paternal great-grandparents. One of the most touching experiences for me was tracing the story of my great-grandfather's conversion to the gospel.

My great-grandfather Ole Hansen was converted to the gospel as a young man while living in Norway. His mother was a Latter-day Saint, but his father was a member of another church, and Ole was baptized into

his father's faith. Then, when Ole was 20 years old, he prayed to know which church to follow. After a week of offering many humble prayers to his Heavenly Father, he felt an overwhelming feeling that his mother's religion was true. The next day, he quietly went into town and sought out the missionaries. To avoid persecution, Ole was baptized in the dark, early-morning hours of February 2, 1910, in an icy Norwegian river near his home.

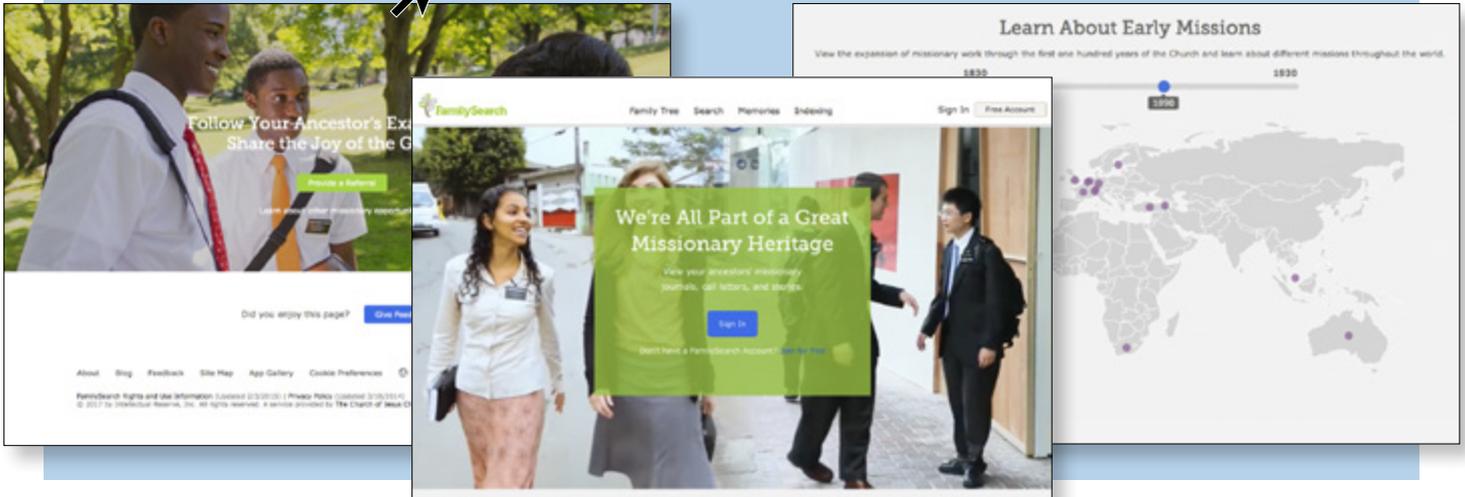


WE'RE ALL PART OF A GREAT MISSIONARY HERITAGE

Whether you have an ancestor who served as a missionary or not, we have all been touched by the missionary heritage of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Do you have ancestors who served early missions in the Church? Would you like to know more about their experiences? FamilySearch now has a missionary heritage site at:

familysearch.org/missionary



Learning More

The insights I gained from reading about my great-grandfather's conversion led to questions about his decision to immigrate to the United States and about other aspects of his life. I wanted to learn more, so I began to research his story. I found a wealth of information about him at FamilySearch and other genealogical websites. I found ship manifests detailing Ole's immigration to the United States, information on his service as a missionary called back to Norway, and copies of his passport and other documents. I also contacted relatives who had copies of photographs and other documents.

Throughout my research, I spoke with my grandmother and her living siblings numerous times, hoping to

understand my great-grandparents better. Stories were told, tears were shed, and testimonies were strengthened. My great-grandparents became more than just names on a pedigree chart; they became family. Even though they had always been part of my family tree, I had never fully appreciated the roots from which I had sprung. I began to appreciate my great-grandparents' lives, their faithfulness, and their examples. I understood my own identity as their descendant better, and I felt my testimony strengthened as I read of their sacrifices and lives of service. Hundreds of Ole's descendants have followed him into the waters of baptism, into the fields of missionary work, and into lifelong service in the Church.

Sharing My Discoveries

I realized that my discoveries needed to be shared with other family members so that my great-grandparents' lives and contributions may live on forever. I compiled photographs, notable documents, journals, letters, poems, pedigree charts, tributes, newspaper clippings, histories, and family memories into a bound book now enjoyed by hundreds of relatives.

When I began my research, I had not intended to turn my heart or my family's hearts back to my great-grandparents, but that's one of the blessings of family history—helping people understand their identity and the rich heritage of their forefathers. ■

The author lives in Idaho, USA.





PORTRAITS OF FAITH

Studying classical art has brought Niki and his family to Italy several times. Niki is currently pursuing his studies in Rome, where he is discovering ways to use his talents and the arts to bear testimony of Jesus Christ.

CODY BELL, PHOTOGRAPHER

Niki Covington

Lazio, Italy

How do you use the gifts and talents God has given you to share your testimony and your feelings about the gospel with others? This question has set our family on a quest to learn what our gifts are and how we can use them to bear testimony of the Savior.

As I've studied the roots of the arts, I've come to learn that the arts have a very sacred root in God. He is the author of all beauty, virtue, and truth. All forms of beauty emanate from Him. This has been a great discovery for me as an artist. Hopefully, through the workmanship of my hands, I can leave this as a testimony for my children and others.

Learn more about Niki's journey of faith at lds.org/go/portraitsE817.

See uplifting art from members around the world at lds.org/go/817art.

“I KNOW THAT GOD LIVES”

I'm from Nigeria, an English-speaking country, so when I was called to serve in the Benin Cotonou Mission and realized that I would be speaking French, I became nervous. How was I going to teach the gospel? As I expected, I struggled to learn French while in the missionary training center in Ghana. Many times I felt almost hopeless.

Then, in my first area, I was asked to bear my testimony to the branch *in French!* Everyone sat in silence as I slowly walked to the pulpit. I reached into my pocket for the short testimony I had written down. But I could not find it! Fear gripped me instantly!

When I looked out at the beautiful faces before me, my eyes filled

with tears. I had so much I wanted to share, but I didn't know how to say it. I said the only thing I could in French: “I know that God lives.”

I sat back down and during the rest of the meeting, I prayed in my heart. I told Heavenly Father that I really wanted to speak French, and that if He would help me, I would serve Him with all my heart.

Three months later a new missionary couple from the United States visited the branch. They were also asked to bear their testimonies. The sister walked to the pulpit, said a few words in French, and then stopped. Tears fell down her face. The chapel was silent. I walked up to her and asked if I could interpret for her.

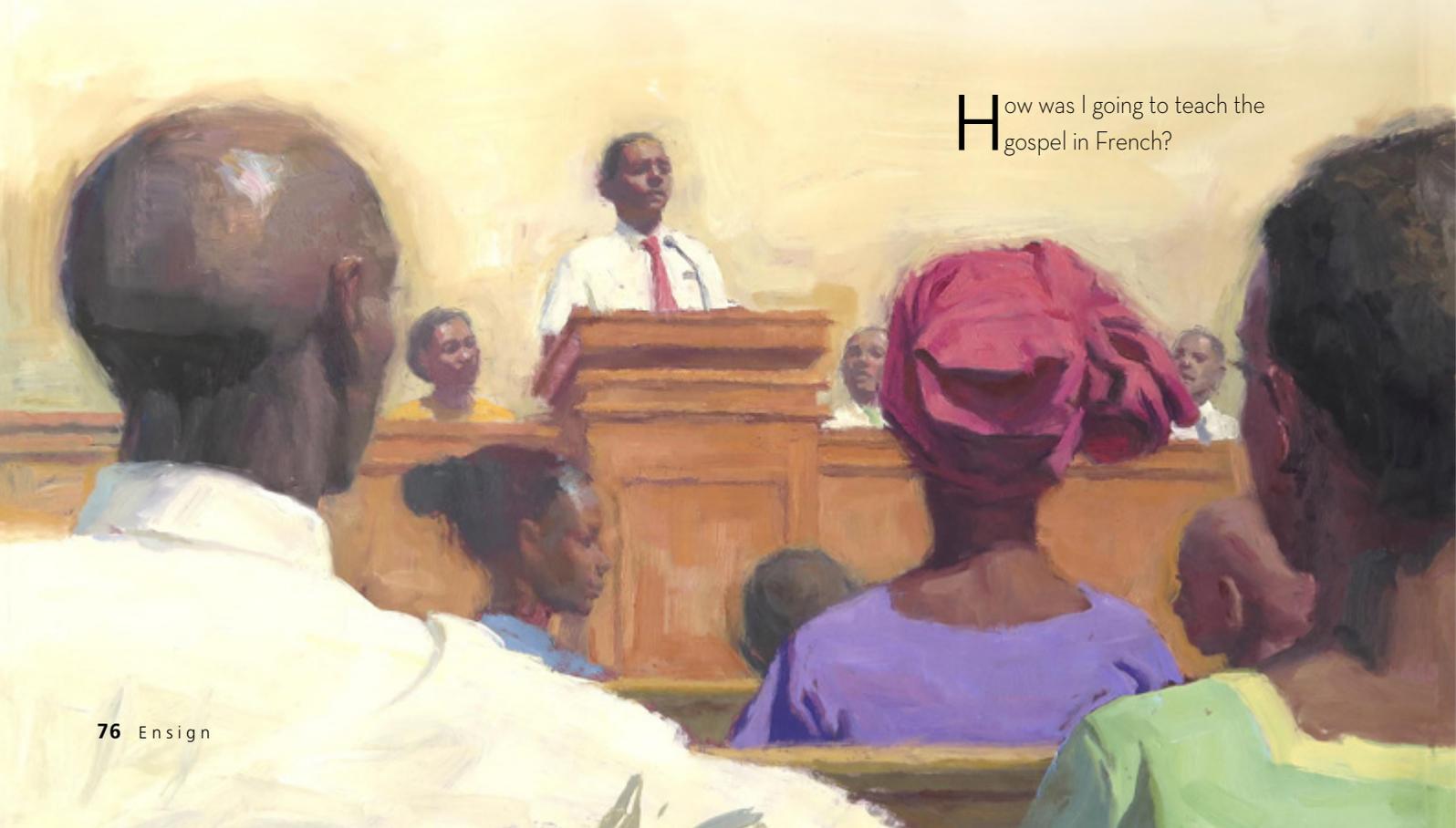
“Oh, that would be wonderful, Elder,” she said. I felt the Spirit as she spoke English, and I interpreted her testimony, word for word, in French.

After the meeting the branch president's wife said to me, “I remember how long it took you to say, ‘I know that God lives’ when you first arrived. Yes, God really lives and He has touched your tongue.”

I know that God understands every language and every problem we face. He is there to help us if we put our trust in Him, and He blesses our efforts when we try. Because He answered my prayer, I have been able to teach the gospel in French and my life has been blessed. ■

Donaldson Izekor, Utah, USA

How was I going to teach the gospel in French?



DID I NEED THE SACRAMENT?

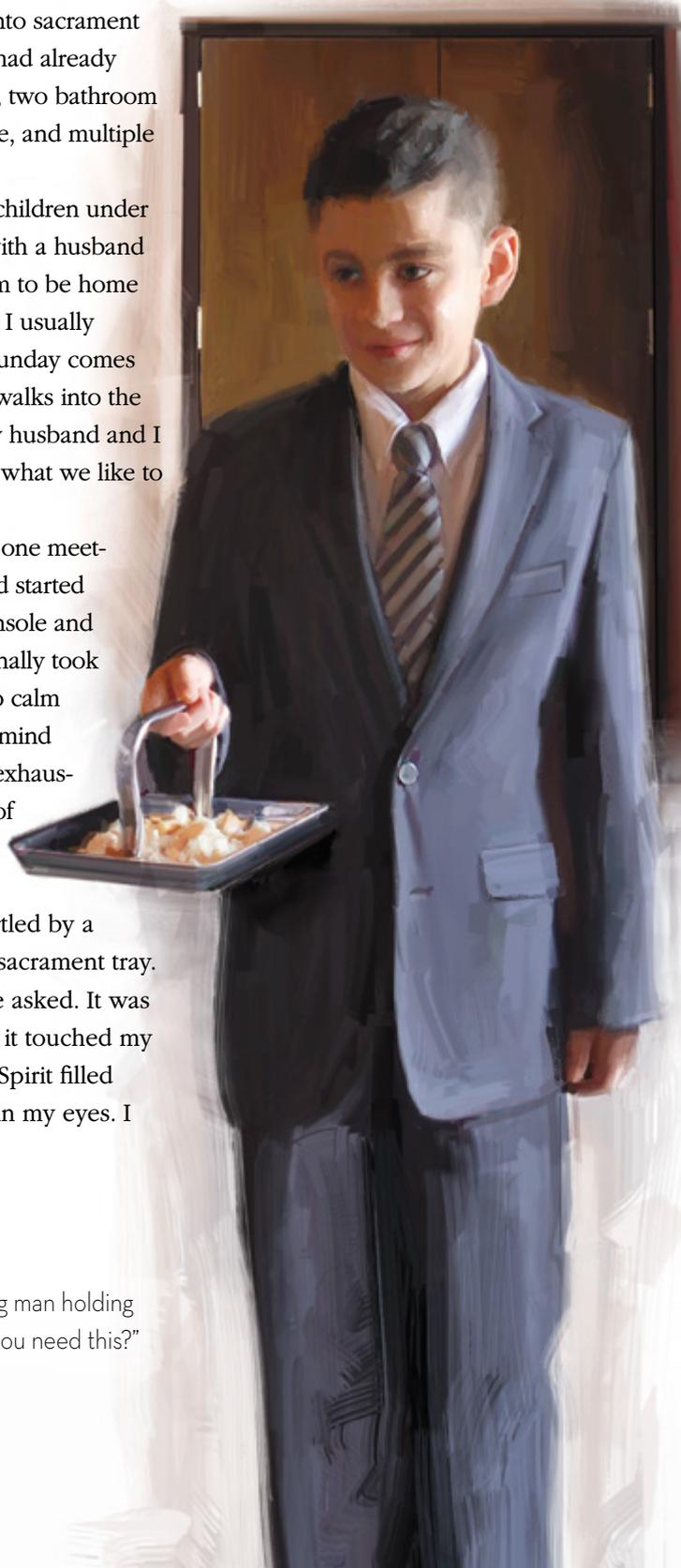
Only five minutes into sacrament meeting, and we had already experienced a tantrum, two bathroom breaks, a diaper change, and multiple cries of “I’m hungry!”

As a mother of five children under the age of eight, and with a husband whose work allows him to be home only on the weekends, I usually feel exhausted when Sunday comes around. As our family walks into the chapel on Sundays, my husband and I prepare for an hour of what we like to call “long-suffering.”

Fifteen minutes into one meeting, our nine-month-old started to scream. I tried to console and quiet her. In defeat, I finally took her out of the chapel to calm her. As I sat down, my mind began to focus on my exhaustion and the demands of the new week. I felt overwhelmed.

Suddenly, I was startled by a young man holding a sacrament tray. “Do you need this?” he asked. It was a simple question, but it touched my soul. Immediately the Spirit filled me, and tears formed in my eyes. I

I was startled by a young man holding a sacrament tray. “Do you need this?” he asked.



thought to myself: “More than you know.”

Daily demands and responsibilities can drain us throughout the week, but the sacrament can fill us up. As I partook of the sacrament, I felt peace and healing flow through me. In that moment I realized that I needed the sacrament more than anything because I needed the Spirit to be with me.

My eyes focused on a painting in the foyer of the Savior holding His hands outstretched. Gratitude swelled in my heart as I pondered how He is always ready to heal and strengthen us. I am reminded of this each Sunday as I partake of the sacrament. I am grateful that the Spirit taught me through a simple question that in the midst of life’s challenges, the Savior is our source of strength and peace. ■

Julie Archer, Utah, USA

GOD WAS CALLING ME AGAIN

After I completed my college education, I became a research scientist. Trained in the scientific method, I accepted only what could be sensed and proven. I lived without God's influence in my life; I was practically an atheist.

Then one morning I received a call that my son had been in a serious automobile accident. On the way to

the hospital, I felt prompted to say the Lord's Prayer, which I had learned in childhood. I could not remember it, but I felt that I needed to pray anyway.

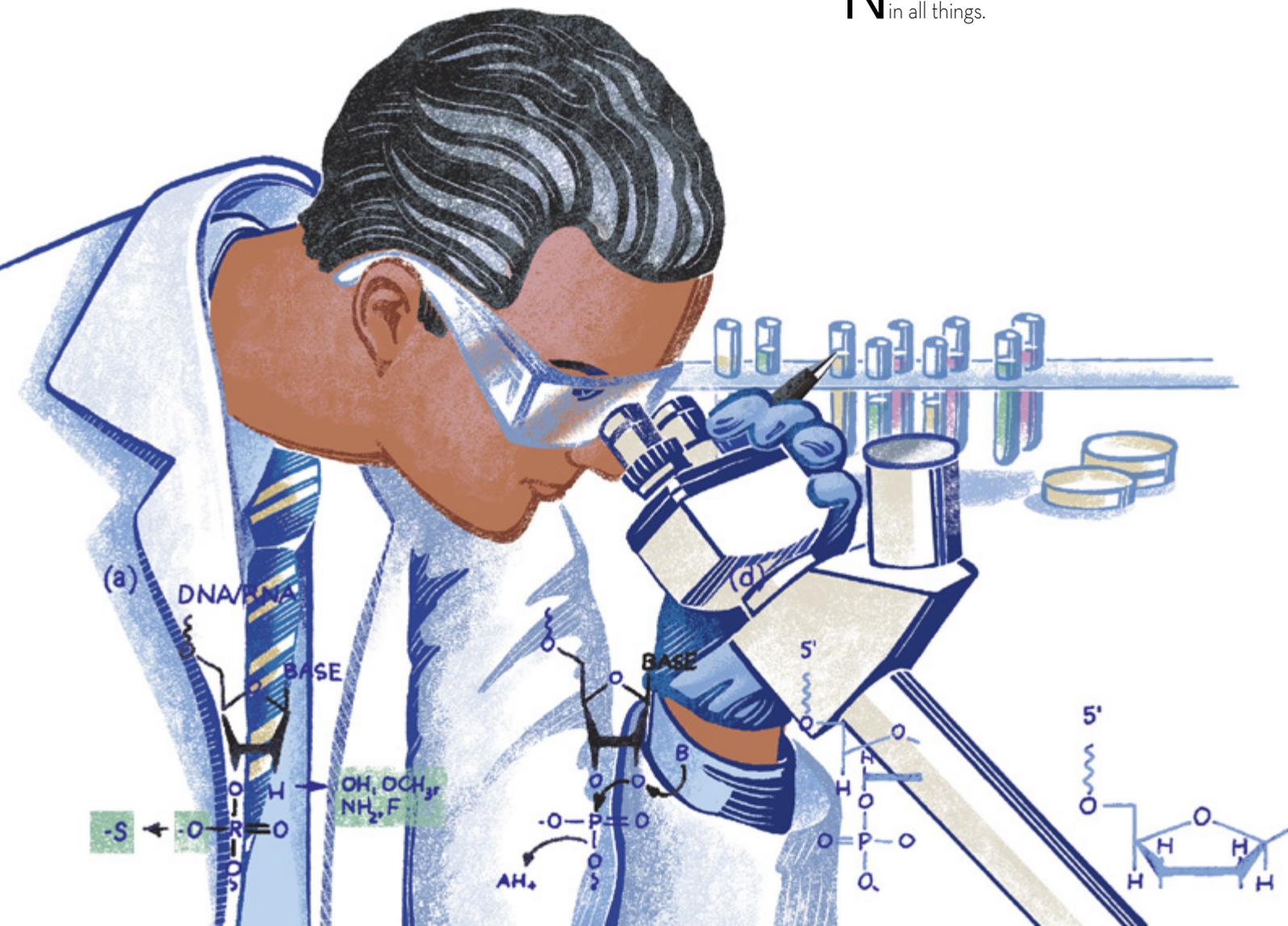
Even though God had called to me, when the crisis subsided and my son recovered, I continued to live without Him in my life.

Years later I began dating a woman named Rubí. She was a member of

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, though she was not active. We were together for three years when she began to feel the desire to go to church. She would ask me to go with her, but I always refused.

One day the missionaries came to our door. They gave me a Book of Mormon and left me with reading assignments. I read what they

Now I see the hand of God in all things.



CRISTINA'S MANY MIRACLES

requested but felt nothing. I also attended church but was always skeptical. Even so, I felt I needed to keep reading the Book of Mormon. God was calling me again.

As I continued reading, I started to feel that the book was true. My faith was growing. When I reached 3 Nephi 13:9–13 and read the Lord's Prayer, the Spirit flooded over me. I broke into sobs. God was calling me a third time. This time I listened.

My faith in God grew. I wanted to know more. In a short time, I read all the standard works. I continued attending church, and after Rubí and I married, I was baptized. I will never forget the joy I felt when I was confirmed a member of the Church.

Today I am still a research scientist. But now I see the hand of God in all things. I agree with Alma, who said, "All things denote there is a God; yea, even the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it, yea, and its motion, yea, and also all the planets which move in their regular form do witness that there is a Supreme Creator" (Alma 30:44). ■

Sergio I. Alva Estrada, Mexico City, Mexico

Our family has witnessed many miracles because of my sister, Cristina. She was born with a serious heart defect. When the doctors examined her, they told my parents she probably wouldn't survive. My parents, however, held their fragile baby in their arms and put their trust in the Lord. Cristina's survival was a miracle.

The years passed, and Cristina became a strong, smart, playful, and beautiful girl. When she was 12, she needed surgery to place an artificial valve in her heart. We worried whether she would survive the surgery, but with great strength and courage, she said goodbye to us and entered the operating room.

Cristina survived the operation and returned home to us. She always appeared happy and was grateful to Heavenly Father to be alive and to have the opportunity to learn and grow. Friends never imagined she had a heart defect, because she was very active.

After recovering from a stroke when she was 16, Cristina was asked to help teach seminary. She encouraged many students as they memorized scriptures and learned from the Book of Mormon. Cristina also played the piano and

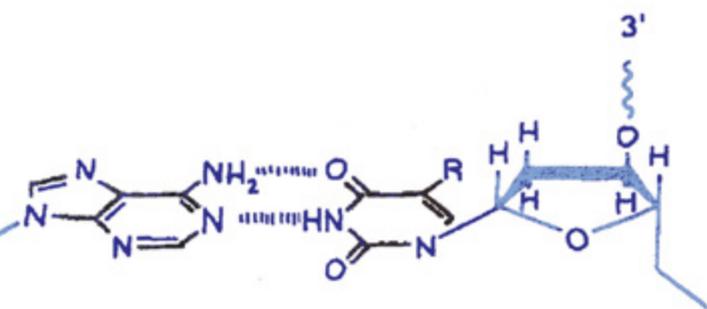
loved to sing. She didn't miss a beat when she was invited to direct a choir of 60 voices for a ward conference.

When she was 22, Cristina married a young man in the temple for eternity. Soon after getting married, she was called to be Young Women president in her ward.

When she was 26, Cristina's health quickly declined. She went to São Paulo for some tests. There she learned she needed another surgery. During the operation, Cristina suffered a heart attack that caused brain damage. Months passed, and she did not improve. As a family we gathered together to fast and pray for her recovery, but she did not improve. We decided to fast again, this time asking for help to accept the will of our Father in Heaven. The following day Cristina passed away.

This was not what we hoped for, but we realized this was a miracle too. Cristina no longer had to suffer. The gospel gave us joy and peace, even in moments of deep sadness. Because we have been sealed, we know we can be with Cristina again. ■

Gislaine Batista Pires Skraba, Paraná, Brazil





By President James E. Faust (1920–2007)

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

PLEASE COME BACK!

We open our arms to you.

We need your help.

To those who have been offended or lost interest [in the Church], or who have turned away for any reason, we invite all of you to join in full fellowship again with us. The faithful members, with all their faults and failings, are humbly striving to do God's holy work across the world. We need your help in the great struggle against the powers of darkness so prevalent in the world today. In becoming a part of this work, you can all satisfy the deepest yearnings of your souls. You can come to know the personal comfort that can be found in seeking the sacred and holy things of God. You can enjoy the blessings and covenants administered in the holy temples. You can have great meaning and purpose in your lives, even in the profane world in which we live. You can have



strength of character so that you can act for yourselves and not be acted upon. (See 2 Nephi 2:26.)

A few years ago, the First Presidency of the Church issued [this] invitation . . . :

"We are aware of some who are inactive, of others who have become critical and are prone to find fault, and of those who have been disfellowshipped or excommunicated because of serious transgressions.

"To all such we reach out in love. We are anxious to forgive in the spirit of Him who said: 'I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men.' (D&C 64:10.)

"We encourage Church members to forgive those who may have wronged them. To those who have ceased activity and to those who have become critical, we say, 'Come back. Come back and feast at the table of the Lord, and taste again the sweet and satisfying fruits of fellowship with the saints.'

"We are confident that many have [wanted] to return, but have felt awkward about doing so. We assure you that you will find open arms to receive you and willing hands to assist you." (*Church News*, 22 Dec. 1985, p. 3.)

. . . I sincerely and humbly reiterate that request. And we open our arms to you. ■

From "A Priceless Heritage," Ensign, Nov. 1992, 85–86.



**CHRIST HEALS
THE SICK,
BY JEFFREY HEIN**

"Nevertheless, ye shall not cast him out of your synagogues, or your places of worship, for unto such shall ye continue to minister; for ye know not but what they will return and repent, and come unto me with full purpose of heart, and I shall heal them; and ye shall be the means of bringing salvation unto them" (3 Nephi 18:32).



In Church Magazines

Ensign: Don't know what the institute of religion is or how it can bless your life? Find out why institute really is for you! See "What Is Institute?" (page 20). Plus, learn 10 ways to sweeten the Sabbath with family history (page 46).

New Era: This month, Elder D. Todd Christofferson talks about why we do baptisms for the dead (page 2), and youth learn how they can get involved in work for the dead (page 10). Also, youth discover the connections they can make in seminary (pages 14, 16).

Friend: Use this month's *Friend* to talk to your children about helping others feel welcome in Primary (page 12) and about being kind to people who aren't like them (page 22). Whom can your children reach out to this month?



THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS