

Jesus Christ

A MODEL OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Children and Youth encourages young people to follow the pattern set by the Savior.

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When it comes to Jesus Christ's early years as a child and youth, we don't have much information. We know he "continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness" (Doctrine and Covenants 93:13), and we have a story of Jesus teaching in the temple and going "about [His] Father's business" (Luke 2:49), but beyond that, all we have is one sentence from Luke: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52).

Those few words of scripture may not seem like much, but they actually give us a clear pattern to follow. To become like Jesus Christ, we should develop spiritually, socially, physically, and intellectually. Children and Youth will show how this can be done through gospel learning, service and activities, and personal development.

Increase in Favor with God (Spiritual)

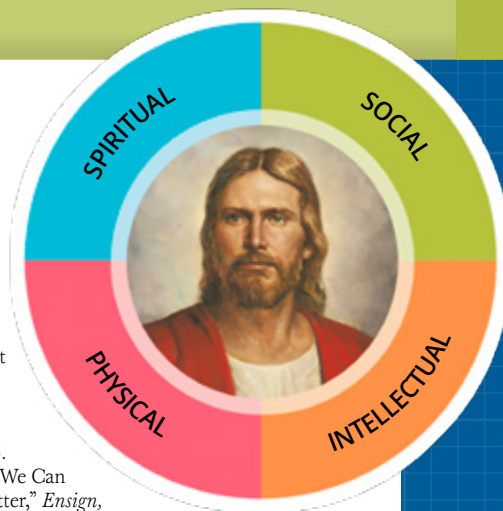
As we grow in obedience to God, making and keeping sacred covenants, we will feel a greater measure of His love. We will find it easier to recognize His influence in our lives, and our relationship with Him will grow. President Russell M. Nelson has taught, "When you know your life is being directed by God, regardless of the challenges and disappointments that may and will come, you will feel joy and peace."¹

Increase in Favor with Man (Social)

Instead of seeking approval and chasing popularity, we can follow the Savior's example of loving more fully, strengthening genuine relationships, and serving others. As President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency, taught, "Our Savior teaches us to follow Him by making the sacrifices necessary to lose ourselves in unselfish service to others."² Doing so helps us develop more charity and become a more positive influence on those around us.

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, "Hope of Israel" (worldwide youth devotional, June 3, 2018), HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
2. Dallin H. Oaks, "Unselfish Service," *Ensign*, May 2009, 96.
3. Russell M. Nelson, "We Can Do Better and Be Better," *Ensign*, May 2019, 68.
4. Ezra Taft Benson, "Your Charge: To Increase in Wisdom and Favor with God and Man," *New Era*, Sept. 1979, 42.
5. Russell M. Nelson, "Youth of the Noble Birthright: What Will You Choose?" (Church Educational System devotional for young adults, Sept. 6, 2013), broadcasts.lds.org.
6. L. Tom Perry, "And Jesus Increased in Wisdom and Stature, and in Favour with God and Man" (Brigham Young University devotional, Feb. 11, 1992), 4, speeches.byu.edu.
7. M. Russell Ballard, "Return and Receive," *Ensign*, May 2017, 62.

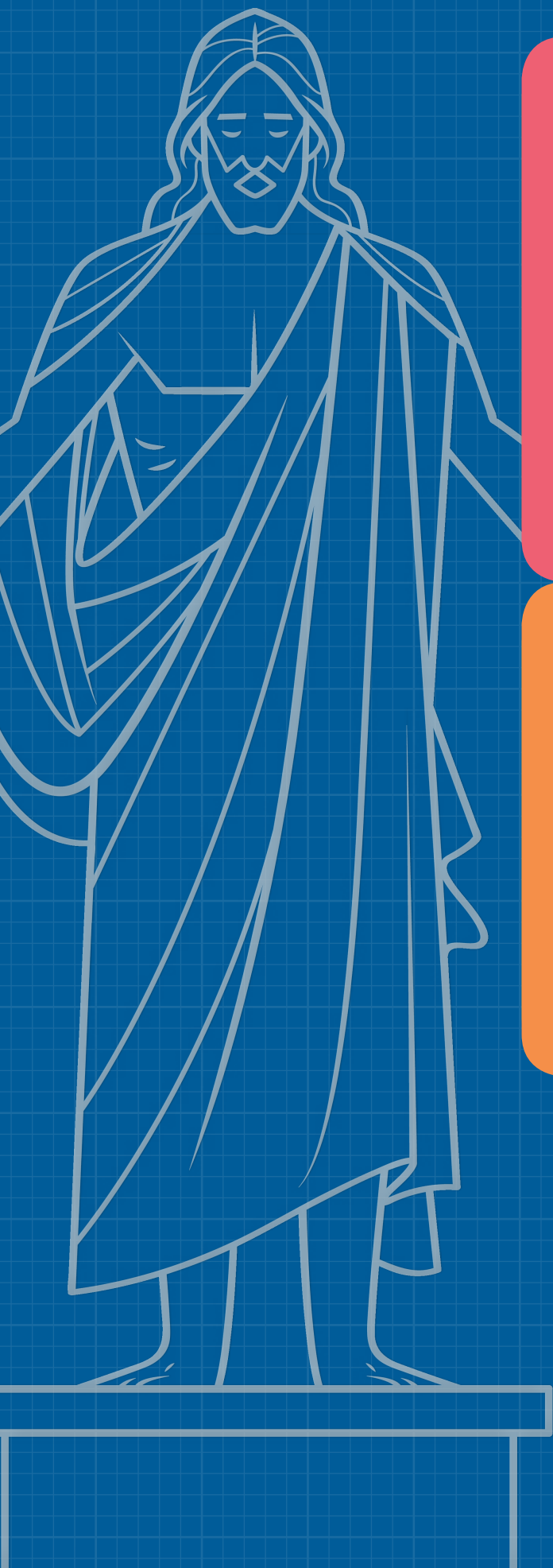


SPIRITUAL

SOCIAL

ILLUSTRATION BY BRYAN BEACH

LEFT: DETAIL FROM "THE LORD JESUS CHRIST" BY DEL PARSON



PHYSICAL

Increase in Stature (Physical)

Remember that your physical body is one of God's crowning creations. President Nelson has said: "I stand in awe of the miracle of the human body. It is a magnificent creation, essential to our gradual ascent toward our ultimate divine potential. We cannot progress without it. In giving us the gift of a body, God has allowed us to take a vital step toward becoming more like Him."³

To foster that growth and physical development, we must care for our bodies by eating right, obeying the Word of Wisdom, exercising, and adopting other healthy practices. Physical development can also include serving others through physical labor and taking care of your home, neighborhood, and the things around you. "A clean mind in a healthy body will enable you to render far more effective service to others," said President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994).⁴

INTELLECTUAL

Increase in Wisdom (Intellectual)

President Nelson has taught: "Wherever you are, develop a deep desire to learn. For us as Latter-day Saints, gaining an education is not just a privilege; it is a religious responsibility. The glory of God is intelligence. Indeed, our education is for the eternities."⁵ Growing intellectually can mean acquiring new knowledge, learning new skills, or refining our ability to apply the knowledge we have. This pursuit need not begin or end in schools and has eternal consequences. As Elder L. Tom Perry (1922–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: "Learn to appreciate the power and potential in your heads. Get out of your comfort zone! Expand your vision!"⁶

A Vision and a Plan

President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught, "Those who accomplish the most in this world are those with a vision for their lives, with goals to keep them focused on their vision and tactical plans for how to achieve them."⁷

Following the Savior can give you and your children the clearest vision for growth. As you work together to learn the gospel and participate in service and activities, you will feel inspired and directed on how to become more like Him. ■