

40 MY Favorite Ensign ARTICLES YEARS

The Ensign is turning 40! Members share some of their favorite articles.



It was a year of significant launches: the Apollo 14 and 15 moon landings by American astronauts, the first microprocessor on a single chip, the first video arcade game. And in January of that year—1971—the first issue of the *Ensign* magazine appeared in the homes of Latter-day Saints.

It was also a turbulent year, with a hot war in Vietnam, a cold war between East and West, and terrorism and sectarian violence in many places. At the same time, a counterculture movement that mocked God's laws continued its sweep across much of the globe.

In the 40 years since, the world's battlegrounds have simply shifted locations. Defiance of God and His laws has acquired a cloak of respectability. And although advancing communication technology brings us into instant contact with each other, it also threatens to scatter our attention, dilute our relationships, and bring decadence into our homes.

The world has become a more challenging place in which to be a Latter-day Saint, which is why the *Ensign's* purposes haven't changed. The *Ensign* continues to carry the prophetic voice with its sure

guidance. We help Latter-day Saints see how to apply the gospel in their lives and provide a place where they can testify of the blessings that come from doing so. And we're using technological advances to lengthen our reach through the Internet, Facebook, and other electronic media.

Recently we invited readers to talk about some of the *Ensign* articles that have blessed their lives during the past 40 years. In the following pages we share some of those responses. We invite you to visit LDS.org to read the original articles and to study the current issues of the *Ensign* magazine throughout the year.

Deciding to Serve a Mission

Shortly after I joined the Church, my bishop would always ask, "Have you thought more about serving a mission?"

I'd always respond, "Yes, but I don't think it's the right thing for me right now." The truth

was I had already decided—I didn't

want to go. I had my entire

life planned out, and a

mission wasn't part of it.

Even though I knew what

I wanted, I had been praying

to know what the Lord wanted.

Did God want me to serve a mis-

sion? My answer came while reading

"Planning for a Full and Abundant Life"





(May 1974), by President Spencer W. Kimball. A line caught my attention: "Should every young man fill a mission? And the answer of the Church is yes, and the answer of the Lord is yes." Reading this article changed my life, for I almost missed out on the inexplicable blessing of serving a mission. The Lord answered my prayer through a prophet of God and the accessibility to his words. The Spirit has spoken to me time and again while reading the *Ensign*. The Church magazines bring the words of the Lord directly to our door. I am very grateful for the *Ensign* and hope to never miss an issue.
Robert Smith, North Carolina, USA

Healing Power of the Atonement

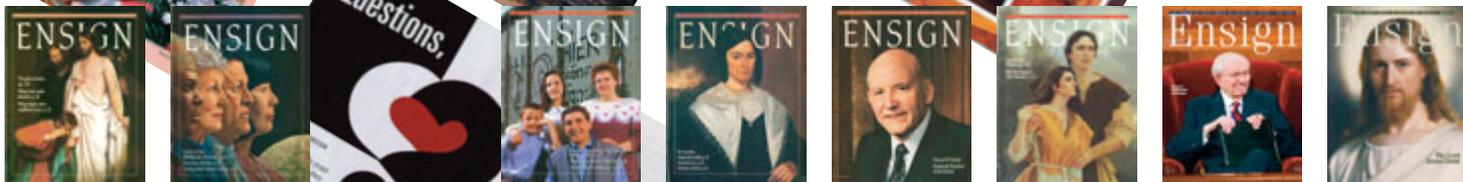
I remember sitting in my living room one evening over 20 years ago flipping through the pages of the *Ensign* when I came to "Sage's Song" (August 1989), by R. Val Johnson. This article was about a young girl named Sage who had been badly burned in a fire a few years earlier. Her story strengthened my testimony of the reality of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and the promise of a perfected body for all of Heavenly Father's children. Each of us faces difficult challenges in life. Some, like Sage's, are more visible. Thankfully, through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we can all experience the healing and enabling powers that help us overcome challenging times.
Betsy Hollingshead, Utah, USA

Making Marriage Great

My favorite, most memorable article was "Twenty Ways to Make a Good Marriage Great" (December 1983), by Richard W. Linford. The art made the two-page article so appealing, and the message was amazing. I have given copies of this article to many friends celebrating marriages and anniversaries and have framed it and hung it in our home for my husband and me to refer to and for our children to see what is expected when they are grown and ready to marry. The advice is timeless and sweet.
Christina Parks, Washington, USA

Mealtime Nurturing

"Powerful Nurturing" (December 2005), by Julie B. Beck, then serving as a counselor in the Young Women general presidency, gave me great insight into my role as a mother. As I read, my heart was touched by the powerful imagery of a mother nurturing and strengthening her family daily through mealtime food and conversation. I realized the influence I could have in my children's lives by establishing mealtime rituals that feed both their bodies and spirits. Since then, I have worked to make our mealtimes more nutritious, peaceful, and enjoyable and to direct conversations to gospel topics. I was grateful to be reminded of the value of my work as a mother and to be given specific ideas on how to improve. Sister Beck's message was truly inspired: her



words validated me as a mother and taught me that the daily work I do really does have eternal significance.
Priscilla Finlayson, Utah, USA

Listening to the Spirit

“Fresh Crab and French Bread” (June 1985), by Garnee Faulkner, had a profound impact on me, and I’ve never forgotten it. It taught me a lesson on listening to the Spirit and following spiritual promptings: it is often through others that our prayers are answered, and if we don’t listen to the Spirit, we might miss the opportunity to bless another’s life. After reading this article, I have tried to pay careful attention to the whisperings of the Spirit and to act on those promptings. A gift, an act of service, a phone call, or a handwritten note is often the result of a spiritual prompting. I hope that by following Sister Faulkner’s example I can be better at listening to the still, small voice.
Sharlene T. Barber, Tennessee, USA

Joseph Smith: A Prophet of God

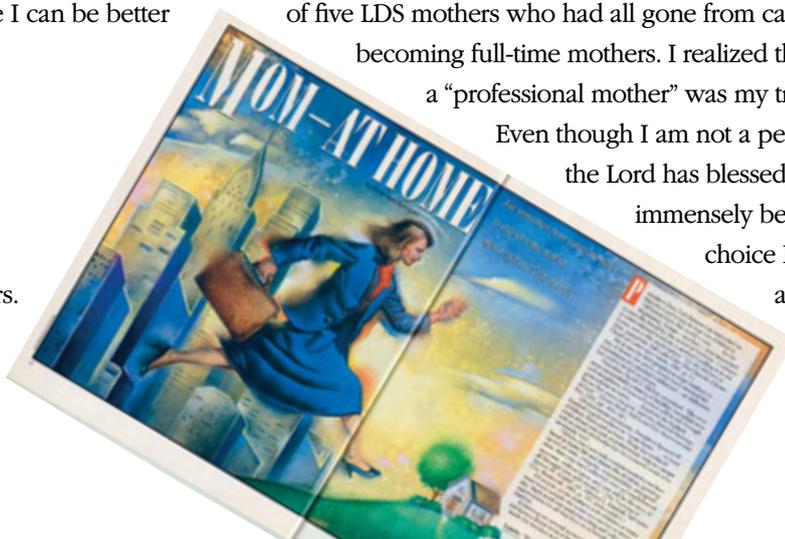
My favorite *Ensign* article was “Two Significant Sites of the Restoration” (September 1998), by Donald L. Enders. This article discusses the rebuilding of the Smith log home, where the

angel Moroni first visited Joseph Smith. As I read the article and viewed the pictures of the home and the upstairs bedroom where the visions occurred, I had a strong feeling that Joseph’s testimony concerning the visions was true and that Moroni truly appeared to him. This article strengthened my testimony of Joseph Smith, his prophetic calling, and the Book of Mormon. I am grateful for the testimony-building experience the *Ensign* gives to me.
Alex Demutskiy, California, USA

Being a Full-Time Mother

“Mom—at Home” (October 1989), by Darin Head Rodriguez, changed the way I looked at being a mother. My husband and I had been married for almost five years and had two small daughters, but I still hadn’t adjusted to being home full time. I felt that the time had come for me to find employment. One day while flipping through a stack of old magazines, I came across this article that presented the stories of five LDS mothers who had all gone from careers to becoming full-time mothers. I realized that becoming a “professional mother” was my true desire!

Even though I am not a perfect mother, the Lord has blessed our family immensely because of the choice I made years ago to stay at home.





THE ENSIGN MAGAZINE

- **What is the magazine's purpose?** To convey the witness of the prophets and the apostles of the divine mission of Jesus Christ and proclaim to the Church and the world that His gospel has been restored.
- **How do you pronounce *Ensign*?** The correct pronunciation is N'sine, not N'sun.
- **What is the history?** The word 'ensign' refers to a flag, standard, or sign. In battle, an ensign would be held up to give guidance to soldiers so they would know where to go. If the standard was lost, or its bearer killed, then the soldiers would be like sheep without a shepherd and at the mercy of their enemies. The term also refers to a battle cry or a watchword. Scripturally, the term often looks forward to the restoration. The magazine draws its name from several passages in Isaiah. For example: "And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth" (Isaiah 11:12). In July 1847, President Brigham Young, Elder Wilford Woodruff, and several others climbed a peak north of what is now Temple Square in Salt Lake City. There, it is believed, Elder Wilford Woodruff took out a bandana and waved it as an ensign to the nations. The peak is now called Ensign Peak. (See President Gordon B. Hinckley, "An Ensign to the Nations," *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 51–52.)

This article taught our family volumes about sacrifice, faith, and love.

Cynthia Allton, Utah, USA

Teaching with Questions

"Questions, the Heart of Learning and Teaching" (January 2008), by Brian Gudmundson, is a practical guide to becoming a more effective teacher. Even though I had earned my degree as a teacher, I still felt ineffective and was searching for help, especially in my home as I tried teaching my three young children. This article teaches different types of questions you can ask to help the learner and teacher engage and internalize the topic. The guidelines in this article allowed the Spirit to work through me as never before and gave me the confidence I needed. The questions presented in the article apply to all of us. I have truly learned a new way of teaching from the *Ensign*. I tried it, and it proved true!

Heather Hassell, Kentucky, USA

Preparing Spiritually for Trials

"When Do the Angels Come?" (April 1992), by Elder Bruce C. Hafen, taught me that the Savior gives us opportunities to prepare spiritually for challenges that may come in our lives. Since reading this article, I have observed this truth in my life and in the

lives of others. When I have great spiritual experiences, I treasure them and recognize them as a blessing from the Lord. During difficult times I can often look back and see how those experiences helped prepare and strengthen me for the trials I am facing.

Pam Voelker, California, USA

FamilySearch

As a result of "FamilySearch Indexing" (August 2007), by Constance Palmer Lewis, we had a 30 percent increase in indexers in the Mesa Arizona North Stake. And I have used it extensively to explain the program to new indexers. Our Church is well organized and inspired by the Lord.

Janice Shaw, Arizona, USA

Testimony of the Savior

"The Purifying Power of Gethsemane" (May 1985), by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, has made such an indelible impression on me. Elder McConkie, a witness of the Savior, reminds us of His atoning sacrifice and the impact the Atonement can have in our lives. The Savior's love in providing His Atonement so that I can repent and share the blessings of eternity with my eternal companion is the greatest gift that can be given. ■

W. Mack Park, South Africa