

Talking about Testimonies

You play a vital role in helping children grow in the gospel and navigate new spiritual terrain. Teach them what a testimony is in clear, simple terms—for example, “A testimony is what you know or believe is true about the gospel. The Holy Ghost helps us know what is true.” Help them recognize what they already believe with questions like, “How do you think Jesus feels about you?” or “How do you feel when you pray?”

Older children and teens may wonder if they have a testimony or worry that their testimony is not as strong as they want it to be. A lot of this worry comes from an incomplete understanding of faith and testimonies. You can help them by dispelling their misconceptions in a compassionate, faith-affirming way. Here are some examples.



I feel like everyone has a testimony but me.

It's normal to feel like that when your testimony is just starting to grow. Be patient. Your faith will get stronger as you keep following Jesus Christ.

I wish my testimony was as strong as my friend's.

Every person's testimony grows at a different pace, so you don't need to worry about comparing yours to others'. You might develop a testimony of some things first and of other things later, and that's OK.

I feel bad for having questions about the gospel.

Questions are good! If we ask in faith, questions help us turn to Heavenly Father and seek truth. Joseph Smith had a question, which is why he prayed.

I don't have a testimony because I'm not sure if these things are true.

You don't have to know something to believe in it. Believing or even just wanting to believe is a good start (see Alma 32:27).

I can't have a testimony because I haven't had any big spiritual experiences.

You don't need a huge revelation to gain a testimony. Most spiritual experiences are small and quiet. But over time, they can build up into a strong testimony.

I want to get a testimony, but I don't know how.

Faith grows through action (see John 7:17; Alma 32:27–33). Want to have a testimony of tithing? Pay it. Want to know if the Book of Mormon is true? Read it. Heavenly Father rewards our faith after we prove we are willing to obey Him (see Ether 12:6).

These responses may not fit every situation, but they provide a good starting point. Seek the Spirit's guidance to know how best to teach your children. To strengthen their faith, be open about yours. Share personal experiences where possible. President Russell M. Nelson taught: "Let them feel your faith, even when sore trials come upon you. . . . Teach that faith with deep conviction" ("Face the

Future with Faith," *Ensign*, May 2011, 34). Even if you're struggling with your own testimony, you can provide your children with much-needed strength and insight.

Above all, show support and understanding for your children's unique journey of faith. As you do this, you will empower them to seek truth with the Lord's help and develop a solid testimony of their own. ■

FOR CHILDREN

In this month's *Friend*:

- "Testimony Plants" (pages 8–9)
- "Seeds of Faith" (page 10)
- "Jesus Learned and Grew" (pages FJ4–FJ7)

For other resources, visit lessonhelps.lds.org and click "Lesson Helps by Topic."

FOR TEENS

In previous *New Era* issues:

- "You Cannot Freeze What's in My Heart," *New Era*, Feb. 2018, 18–19
- Questions & Answers: "In addition to prayer and scripture study, what's the best way to strengthen my testimony?" *New Era*, Oct. 2017, 42–43
- "How to Gain a Testimony," *New Era*, July 2017, 48
- "What Is Pure Testimony?" *New Era*, July 2012, 6–9

For other resources, visit youth.lds.org.