



How Do I Talk
to My Kids about

FAMILY MEMBERS WITH DIFFERENT BELIEFS?

What do you tell your children when a family member stops coming to church? Or when you visit someone who lives by different standards? A husband-and-wife team, one a Latter-day Saint and the other not, had these tips to share. You could use them to start a conversation about your family's situation.

WE CAN SHOW LOVE

In the Bible, Jesus taught that there are two great commandments. The first is to love God, and the second is to love our neighbor. Both of these commandments are important! We need to keep God's commandments, and we also need to love everyone. *How can we work on "keeping the commandments and walking the covenant path, while loving our neighbors along the way"?*¹

Scripture connection: Matthew 22:37–39

WE CAN RESPECT THEIR AGENCY

Heavenly Father gave each of us the power to make decisions. This is called "agency." We should respect the agency of others and let them make their own choices. We hope other people will respect our agency too. *How can we love others even when they choose things we don't agree with?*

Scripture connection: Luke 15:11–32

WE CAN BUILD ON COMMON GROUND

Instead of focusing on differences, we can work on building a relationship with others. When others talk about their beliefs, we should listen and try to understand. Then we can look for what values we share. *What common ground can we build on?*

Scripture connection: Alma 18:24–40

Additional Helpful Resources

- M. Russell Ballard, "Questions and Answers" (Brigham Young University devotional, Nov. 14, 2017), 5, speeches.byu.edu.
- "Different but Together," *Friend*, July 2020, 20.
- "My Brand New, Old Family," *New Era*, July 2020, 8.
- "Don't Forget to Pray for Erik," *Friend*, Jan. 2017, 36.
- "It's Not Easy," *New Era*, Feb. 2009, 26.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO WHEN . . . ?

- Pretend you are visiting extended family members who don't believe in God. They don't want to talk about religious things. How could you show them respect while still living what you believe? (See "Different but Together" from the additional resources.)
- Imagine that a family member decides to stop coming to church or does something else that makes you sad. How should you treat them? (See "Don't Forget to Pray for Erik" from the additional resources.)
- Think about a time you disagreed with someone. How could you be respectful while disagreeing? (See the tips below.)

Scripture connection: Articles of Faith 1:11

WHEN WE DISAGREE, WE CAN . . .

- Talk calmly instead of yelling.
- Share what we think and feel.
- Listen while others share. Don't think about what to say next—just listen.
- Ask questions and try to understand why others believe the way they do. Imagine ourselves in their shoes.
- Express compassion for what they share. Honor their journey.
- Politely agree to disagree. We could say something like, "It's OK if we disagree about this. I still love and respect you."

Scripture connection: Luke 6:35–38

NOTE

1. Dallin H. Oaks, "Two Great Commandments," *Ensign*, Nov. 2019, 75.