

BY SMALL AND SIMPLE THINGS

Years ago a severe car accident left me with chronic back pain. Because of a bad reaction to a cortisone treatment, I'm unable to sit for more than 45 minutes at a time or lie down for more than two hours unless I am connected to an electronic device to ease the pain. But I have learned to use these precious snippets of time when I feel well to be of service to the Lord. There is much that I and others in similar situations can do even when we are homebound.



Callings. As a visiting teacher, I contact the sisters who have requested only phone calls or written correspondence. I'm also a visiting teacher supervisor, and I enjoy sending out birthday cards from the Relief Society.

Family history. I began by entering information on Personal Ancestral File. My daily goal then was to increase my time sitting at the computer by one minute. I would do this several times a day. When I finally gained Internet access, I had over 700 names in my computer files that I had entered in just three months. About a year after that, I submitted more than 40,000 names—and I'm still going strong. There are also volunteer opportunities to

index names from home. Just log on to FamilySearchIndexing.org to get started.

Friends. I have a list of friends who are homebound like me, and I call them regularly to visit and make sure they're doing well.

Overlooked projects. The baptismal clothing for our ward was not sorted well. I asked to have it delivered to my home, where I organized it into boxes labeled by size and type of clothing.

Though I'm limited in what I can do, I feel immense joy and inner peace as I serve Heavenly Father and those around me in small and simple ways.

Jessica Edwards-Englestead, Virginia



WE CAN ALL LEARN

Since being diagnosed with dyslexia as a first-grader, I have come to understand that my disability doesn't prevent me from learning. It just means that I learn differently than many of my peers. Here are a few things that teachers have done to create an ideal learning environment for me; the ideas may also be helpful for those teaching other people who struggle with learning disabilities.

Visual aids. Because it helps me to both see and hear a subject, I appreciate it when teachers provide pictures or other visual aids relating to the lesson. However, an excessive amount of text, illustrations, or photos (for me, more than three or four visual aids) can prove distracting from what the teacher or other class members are saying.

Focused material. Rather than presenting all pictures, notes, or quotes at the beginning of a lesson, place them on the board as they are discussed. This can help all learners—including those who do not have learning disabilities—focus on the current discussion.

Short quotes. Long quotes posted on the board can be overwhelming and difficult to comprehend for people with dyslexia. For me, keyword summaries work better. Similarly, it's difficult for most class members to read and comprehend long scriptures or



Family Night Notebook

You're thumbing through a Church magazine and see a great lesson idea. But by Monday night you've either forgotten about it or can't find it without a lot of searching. It's a good thing there's an easy solution: simply cut out or copy the article or picture and slip it into a binder or notebook kept specifically for lesson ideas. Using a few tab markers, you can easily organize a growing collection of lesson material by basic gospel topics.

Early in our marriage, my husband had an erratic work schedule that left him little time to prepare family home evening lessons. But with the binder, he could quickly select a topic he felt we needed to study. As a result, we enjoyed consistent lessons and established a good Monday-night habit. Now that our children are old

enough to take turns leading family home evening, we still have plenty of lesson ideas in the binder if they choose to use it.

It's easy to update our lesson notebook whenever we read the Church magazines. We cut, copy, and save as we go so we are always prepared for family night.

Sarah John, Utah



passages of text without a discussion. I feel grateful when teachers pause during or after the reading of passages to provide opportunities for questions, explanations, and clarification.

Sensitivity to readers. As a child, I dreaded reading aloud because I was self-conscious about my ability to do so. When a teacher asked us to "go around the room" and each take a turn reading, I would cringe. Although I don't mind reading aloud now, I appreciate teachers who are sensitive to class members' preferences and abilities.

These suggestions are based on my experience. Some people may like more visual aids than what I am comfortable with, for instance. The best way to find out the particular needs of those you teach is to ask them.

I am thankful for leaders and teachers who have taken the time to find out about my specific learning needs. The compassion they have shown in doing so has made a tremendous difference in my gospel learning experience.

Amanda Merrill, Texas

Do you have ideas for Random Sampler? We invite you to send short (less than 500-word) articles on any of these topics related to practical gospel living:

- Teaching ideas for home or church, especially for family home evening
- Personal or family financial management tips
- General health and physical fitness tips
- Home production and storage ideas
- Gospel-related holiday traditions that build testimony.

Please see the "Do You Have a Story to Tell?" box on p. 2 for submission instructions.

NO SWEARING ALLOWED

By Keith Porter

In 1962, 11 of my high school classmates from Preston, Idaho, and I joined the National Guard. Basic training was like a vacation until we got to Fort Ord, in California.

We needed one another in order to survive our new military surroundings and the onslaught of the other recruits, many of whom used reprehensible language and seemed to have no morals. I sought every opportunity to be with my Latter-day Saint buddies for support from the harassment of our fellow recruits.

After basic training, a couple of my school classmates and I stayed on at Fort Ord to continue training in field communications. Soon, two of the tough, stout recruits in our training class began having a contest to see which one could say the most detestable and vulgar things. Each morning when they arose, they would shout vulgarities so everyone in the barracks could hear their filthy language.

One morning I found myself in front of them and, longing for relief, demanded that they stop. Embarrassed, they turned their ugliness on me, calling me several names. Then they warned me that they had better not catch me alone.

Later that morning, as I was picking up trash, I found myself

alone between barracks. Suddenly I saw someone coming my way. It was one of the recruits who had threatened me.

I prepared for the worst as he approached me. But he began telling me how much he respected me and wished that he had the courage to live as I lived. He admitted that his parents would be disappointed if they knew how he was living. He said he would never again use vulgar language in my presence. Then he turned and left.

As I passed the next barracks, I saw the second fellow coming my way. He approached me and apologized for the way he had been acting. He also told me how much he respected me, saying he hoped that someday he could live as he had been taught.

One weekend when my Latter-day

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Saint buddies were on leave, these two young men invited me to go to a movie with them and their group. As we walked together, someone swore. The two stout recruits

told the group that there would be no swearing while I was with them.

After the movie, when the group decided to go to a club for some drinking, my friends excused themselves, explaining that they were going to spend the evening with me. Once we were alone, they asked me about my family and the kind of church I belonged to that would help young men develop the standards by which our Latter-day Saint group lived. I answered their questions and told them about the Church.

I learned that heaven sustains courage and blesses those who stand up for what is right. ■

