



“How We Preach of Christ” in Our Home



By Darren E. Schmidt

During Easter time one year, my wife suggested that we read as a family the scriptural accounts of the Savior's final week in mortality. Each night at bedtime, we read the New Testament and showed our children a short video clip of each event and discussed questions that arose. I was amazed at the questions our children brought up as well as the Spirit that permeated our home during our reading and discussions.

At the conclusion of the week, I felt a more profound gratitude and love toward the Savior, having reflected much on His sacrifice and the eternal consequences that result from all that He went through for us. Along with my own stirrings, I knew my wife had been inspired, and I sensed a deeper understanding and love for the Savior in our children as well as a greater desire to demonstrate Christlike demeanor toward one another.

Since then we have explored other ways that we might “talk of Christ” and “preach of Christ” more in our conversations and lessons, knowing that by building upon a foundation of Jesus Christ, we are promised great resistance against the storms of life (see Helaman 5:12).

“We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins” (2 Nephi 25:26).



An Example of Teaching about Prayer

For example, let's say that you are teaching the importance of prayer. You might use Doctrine and Covenants 10:5, where we are instructed to “pray always,” or Nephi’s counsel that the “evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray, but teacheth him that he must not pray” (2 Nephi 32:8). These scriptures teach the doctrine of prayer powerfully. As you discuss them, let’s say you ask something like “How did the Savior pray?” or “What were the Savior’s

prayers like?” If you have younger children, you might ask, “What do you *think* the Savior’s prayers were like?”

Take a moment to think of how you might personally answer this question by considering the scriptural accounts that come to mind. I think immediately of the Savior’s visit to the Americas, when “he prayed unto the Father, and the things which he prayed cannot be written. . . . Eye hath never seen, neither hath the ear heard, before, so great and marvelous things as we saw and heard Jesus speak unto the Father” (3 Nephi 17:15–16).

Later in the account we discover that the people tried to pattern their prayers after His and as a result “did not multiply many words, for it was *given unto them* what they should pray, and they were *filled with desire*” (3 Nephi 19:24; emphasis added). At this point, you might invite your children to share a time when they were filled with a desire to pray, or you could share a time when you were given the very words to say while praying. Then you could testify of how different a prayer is when it is given this way, as the Savior taught.

Think of the difference you could have on your children if they were to act on the principles of prayer found in these verses and in the testimonies you and they have

Make the Savior the Focus of Your Teaching

One of the things we have discovered is that when we bring the Savior’s example and teachings into our family discussions and interactions, they have become much more powerful and purposeful. To use an analogy from the Savior Himself, He taught, “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit” (John 15:5). If we apply this analogy to our teaching, we teach gospel principles not as unrelated ideas but as appendages of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, as the Prophet Joseph Smith declared them to be.¹ This is how we make the Savior the focus of our instruction and not just merely leaves that we have plucked from His true vine.

If we make Him the center of our instruction, we are promised nourishment, strength, and growth, including fruit-bearing branches—in other words, that our discussions and lessons will have greater converting power and long-term results. One way that we have found to do this is to teach a gospel principle and then ask our children a question such as “How did Jesus demonstrate this principle or teaching?” or “What did the Lord say or teach about this very thing?”

borne. Think how this could improve their ability to feel and recognize the Spirit, magnify their callings, give priesthood blessings, and later raise a family of their own, being directed by the same Spirit that “teacheth a man to pray” (2 Nephi 32:8).

If the Savior’s example or teachings were left out of this instruction, we could still have a good discussion on prayer, but including His example and teachings adds greater depth and power.

Gospel-Centered Artwork

Another thing we have sought to do to establish a more Christ-centered home is to have pictures of Christ, the temple, and other gospel-related things where they can readily be seen and where our children can know what is truly important to us.

A few years ago, while sitting with our children at tithing settlement, our bishop invited our 10-year-old son to take a small picture of the Savior and decide where in our home to place it, where it would be a constant reminder of our family’s commitment to follow Him. After returning home, he placed the picture on the front door, where, our son said, “each of us would see it the most.” This has been a great blessing and constant reminder to all of us every day in a small but powerful way of our promises to follow Jesus Christ.

Regardless of where pictures are placed in your home, it would be worth the effort to note the pictures on the walls and the messages you are sending to your children. Is the art in your home portraying the message that you are committed to following Christ?

Other Ways to Teach of Christ

I admit I have laughed on more than one occasion when one of my children has asked me if Jesus was tougher than a cartoon superhero, yet I have found that my child’s inquiry has always made for a great discussion about what makes the Savior superior to a superhero. Along with everyday conversations such as these, here are a few

additional ideas that you might consider in order to make your home more Christ-centered:

- Use the Book of Mormon to teach your children about the Atonement of Jesus Christ. The word *Atonement* or *atone* appears 39 times in the Book of Mormon.
- Use Mormon Messages videos, Bible videos, and other Church media that teach of Jesus Christ to enhance your family home evening lessons and scripture studies.
- Learn and sing the hymns about the Savior together and discuss their teachings and meanings.
- Find ways to emphasize that prophets are powerful witnesses of Jesus Christ.
- Seek consistently to improve your own relationship with the Savior.

I have come to know through careful study and fervent prayer that Jesus Christ lives and that His great gift of the Atonement is real and gives our lives, and the lives of those we love, meaning and purpose, with the grand and glorious hope that our families can and will be ours for eternity. May each of us realize the great importance of establishing a Christ-centered home, recognizing “that there is no other way or means whereby man can be saved, only in and through Christ” (Alma 38:9). ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTE

1. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 49–50.

