

# Ensign



## THE Revelatory Events OF 1829

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**Food Allergies: Making  
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**Defined by Ability,  
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**Is My Child with a Disability  
Ready to Be Baptized?**  
page 50



THE  
CHURCH  
IS HERE

# Oakland Township **Pennsylvania,**





# USA



PHOTOGRAPH BY LESLIE NILSSON

This home at the Priesthood Restoration Site is a reconstruction of Joseph and Emma's home in Harmony, now known as Oakland Township.



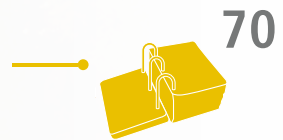
10 Wards and branches, including the Susquehanna Branch, in the Scranton Pennsylvania Stake.

Miles (260 km) from the Priesthood Restoration Site to the Palmyra New York Temple.



15 Revelations received in Harmony, Pennsylvania, that are included in the Doctrine and Covenants.

Approximate percentage of the Book of Mormon translated in Joseph and Emma's home.



**1804** Emma Hale (later to marry Joseph Smith) is born in Harmony.

**1829** John the Baptist confers the Aaronic Priesthood on Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. Later, Peter, James, and John confer on them the Melchizedek Priesthood.

**1960** Monument honoring the restoration of the priesthood is placed at the site.

**2015** President Russell M. Nelson dedicates the Priesthood Restoration Site.



Learn more about Church history sites at [history.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://history.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

## From the Ensign

Content in this issue was created before the COVID-19 pandemic. Some details may not be currently applicable. Please adapt suggestions as needed according to current Church and government guidelines.



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## The Baptism Decision

Recently, my husband and I were trying to decide if our seven-year-old son was ready to be baptized. He has autism, so we weren't sure if he understood enough to be accountable for this decision. On page 50, you can read about the many things we considered as we tried to make the right decision.

As a Church disabilities specialist, I know that many wonderful people with disabilities desire to feel included at church. To all our brothers and sisters who have disabilities of one kind or another and to their families, we say: We love you, we need you, and we want to learn how to better minister to you.

Several articles in this issue help us understand disabilities and how we can better foster inclusion in our wards and communities:

- Page 46: Elder Paul B. Pieper of the Seventy and his wife, Melissa, who

have a child with disabilities, give hope and encouragement to parents.

- Page 53: At the end of my article, you can find ideas on how to better accommodate members with disabilities in Church lessons and callings.
- Page 58: Use these conversation starters to have a meaningful discussion about disabilities with your children.

As you read this issue, remember that "the worth of souls is great in the sight of God" (Doctrine and Covenants 18:10). We can help foster loving, inclusive home and Church environments so that all who want to come and be like Jesus have that opportunity.

With love,  
Katie Edna Steed  
Disabilities Specialist, Priesthood and Family Department



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## June Digital-Only Articles

Available in the Gospel Library app or at [ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

TEACHING TRUE DOCTRINE, BY MICHAEL MALM



## Come, Follow Me Resources

For a list of articles and activities (organized by week) that can enrich your family's study of the Book of Mormon, see "Come, Follow Me: Book of Mormon—Support Articles and Activities" in the digital version of this issue (available in the Gospel Library app or at [ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)).

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### Supporting and Including Members Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

By Emmalee Christensen

A deaf member shares insights about inclusion.



### Finding Your Eternal Companion: Are You Standing In Your Own Way?

By Jae D. Varela

A young adult shares how she realized that many of her dating problems were linked to one thing: herself.

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A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS  
JUNE 2020 VOLUME 50 • NUMBER 6

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**POSTMASTER:** Send all UAA to CFS (see DMM 507.1.5.2). **NONPOSTAL AND MILITARY FACILITIES:** Send address changes to Distribution Services, Church Magazines, P.O. Box 26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368, USA.

**Canada Post Information:** Publication Agreement #40017431.



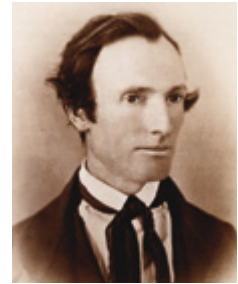


# THE RESTORATION OF THE AARONIC PRIESTHOOD

On May 15, 1829, John the Baptist gave the Aaronic Priesthood to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. These excerpts of their recollections of that important day show what an amazing event it was.

“**T**he messenger who visited us on this occasion and conferred this Priesthood upon us, said that **his name was John, the same that is called John the Baptist in the New Testament**, and that he acted under the direction of Peter, James, and John, who held the keys of the Priesthood of Melchizedek.”

Joseph Smith, in *Joseph Smith—History* 1:72; emphasis added



Oliver Cowdery was also with Joseph Smith in 1836 when priesthood keys were restored in the Kirtland Temple.

“As from the midst of eternity, **the voice of the Redeemer spake peace to us, while the veil was parted and the angel of God came down clothed with glory**, and delivered the anxiously looked for message, and the keys of the Gospel of repentance. What joy! what wonder! what amazement!”

Oliver Cowdery, in *Joseph Smith—History* 1:71, note; emphasis added



Bible video depiction of John the Baptist baptizing Jesus Christ.



The Susquehanna River at Harmony, Pennsylvania, near where Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were baptized on May 15, 1829.

To learn more about the restoration of the priesthood and its essential role, see Elder Gary E. Stevenson’s article “The Priesthood’s Vital Role in the Restoration” on page 12.

UPON, YOU, MY FELLOW SERVANTS, BY LINDA CURLEY, CHRISTENSEN AND MICHAEL MALIM  
PHOTOGRAPH OF SUSQUEHANNA RIVER BY BRAD WALKER, STEVENS



## Lini Uilaau

Savai'i, Samoa



*Lini once struggled with feelings of anger and impatience. But when she and her husband joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Lini felt those feelings disappear as she lived the gospel.*

LESLIE NILSSON, PHOTOGRAPHER

I started studying the gospel and learned through the teachings of the Church how Jesus loved the children. He was always so kind to them.

I started trying to be more like Jesus. I now try to love all of my family members better. I spend more time with them and more time getting to know their needs. We read the scriptures as a family and pray together every night.

My heart is now much softer. I feel more love and peace and happiness in our home as we follow the teachings of Jesus Christ. I'm grateful for how the gospel helps me learn how to be a better wife, mother, and grandmother.







**DISCOVER MORE**

See more about Lini's journey of faith, including additional photos, in the digital version of this article in the Gospel Library app or at [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/E6206](https://ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/E6206).

Read what Elder Neil L. Andersen teaches about how our love for the Lord inspires us to become better: [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/E6207](https://ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/E6207).



# Ministering Principles

## MINISTERING THROUGH SACRAMENT MEETING

*Sacrament meeting provides opportunities to connect with and minister to others.*

**S**acrament meeting is a time for spiritual nourishment and personal reflection on the Savior and His Atonement. As we partake of the sacrament each week, we are edified together (see Doctrine and Covenants 84:110). But some in our wards and branches bring with them heavy burdens or aren't there at all.

Here are a few opportunities for how we might use that sacred hour to minister to others and make a difference in their lives.

### **Help Make Sacrament Meeting Better for Those You Minister To**

The first step in learning how to minister is getting to know the individuals or families and their needs. There may be ways you can help make their sacrament worship experience better simply by learning more about them.





For Mindy, a young mother of twin toddlers, the simple efforts of her ministering sister made a huge difference in her sacrament meeting experience every week.

“Because of my husband’s work schedule, I take our twin daughters to church by myself every week,” Mindy explains. “It’s really overwhelming to try to make it through all of sacrament meeting with two



busy toddlers, but my ministering sister has taken it upon herself to help me.

“She sits with us and helps me take care of my girls every week. Just having her next to me means so much and really

eases my anxiety in their moments of tantrums or fussiness. I don’t think she’ll ever know how much her actions have impacted me at this time in my life. She saw my need as a young, anxiety-filled mother, and she helps make church a peaceful and happy place for all of us.”

#### IDEAS TO HELP THOSE WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS

- Counsel with elders quorum and Relief Society leaders about the needs of members.
- Leaders plan sacrament meeting talks to help meet members’ needs. If those you minister to would benefit from hearing a certain message, share the idea with your leaders.
- If you know that someone has a disability or food allergy that prevents them from enjoying the blessings of the sacrament, ask them for details and what accommodations could be made to improve their worship experience. Share this information with your leaders.<sup>1</sup>
- If someone you minister to or know about is homebound, either permanently or temporarily, ask your bishop if the sacrament can be given to them at home. You could even take notes during sacrament meeting and share them over the phone, through email, or in person.
- If someone you minister to has young children, you can offer to help them during sacrament meeting.
- If those you minister to don’t often come to sacrament meeting, try to understand and consider ways you can help. If they need transportation, you could offer them a ride. If they feel unsupported by their family, you could invite them to sit with you. You could make special invitations to help them feel welcome and wanted at sacrament meeting.

#### Remember, Simple Gestures Go a Long Way

Speaking about ministering, Sister Jean B. Bingham, Relief Society General President, taught: “Sometimes we think we have to do something grand and heroic to ‘count’ as serving our neighbors. Yet simple acts of service can have profound effects on others—as well as on ourselves.”<sup>2</sup>

In a small ward in Belgium, Evita often offers to translate for Spanish-speaking visitors and members during Church meetings. One time, Evita was introduced to someone from the Dominican Republic who was learning about the Church. He did know some English, but Spanish was his native language. So Evita offered to quietly translate for him in sacrament meeting so he felt more comfortable.

“Translating can sometimes make my Sabbath a little more hectic,” Evita says. “But following promptings to ask others if they need an interpreter definitely gives me a feeling of joy and warmth in knowing that I’m able to help them feel the Spirit and enjoy their meetings.”







## IDEAS TO HELP THROUGH SIMPLE GESTURES

- Talk to your leaders to see who might need a little extra service during sacrament meeting. Or if you know of someone who does, make sure your leaders are aware of them.
- Sit quietly as you wait for the meeting to start. This will help “the other broken hearts and sorrowing spirits that surround us”<sup>3</sup> who need the peace that can come through reverence in a holy place.
- On fast Sunday, consider dedicating your fasting and prayers to someone you minister to who may need extra comfort.
- Pray to know if there is somebody who could benefit from you sitting next to or near them during sacrament meeting or if there is some other way you can help.

*It's important to make sure that all who attend sacrament meeting feel welcome and spiritually fed.*

## Sacrament Meeting Can Be a Welcoming Place for All

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) taught, “Sacrament meeting is the most sacred, the most holy, of all the meetings of the Church.”<sup>4</sup> In which case, it's important to make sure all who are attending sacrament meeting feel welcome and spiritually fed—especially new members or members who have not attended for a while.

Merania from New South Wales, Australia, befriended a woman who was learning about the Church in her ward. “She has become one of my dear friends now,” Merania says. “I love sitting with her in sacrament meeting every week, and I always ask how she's doing and if there is anything I can do to help her.” After a while, Merania's friend was baptized. The efforts of ward members, as well as the welcoming atmosphere in sacrament meeting, played a huge part in her decision.

## IDEAS TO MINISTER TO RETURNING OR NEW MEMBERS

- When you are going to be speaking in sacrament meeting, you could invite friends, family, and others to come hear your message.
- You can look for and welcome those who are alone or who may need help. Ask if you can sit by them or invite them to sit with you.
- When the meeting ends, you could invite those you minister to and others to upcoming Church activities, to the temple, or to a social event.
- If someone you minister to attends sacrament meeting but hasn't been for a while, you can ask them if they had any questions about what was taught. Tell them they're always welcome to approach you if there was a term, story, or piece of doctrine they didn't understand. You can look up the answers together if necessary. ■



## NOTES

1. Consider reading “4 Ways to Serve Families with Disabilities” (digital-only article), *Ensign*, June 2018; or “Managing Food Allergies at Church” in this issue on page 40.
2. Jean B. Bingham, “Ministering as the Savior Does,” *Ensign*, May 2018, 104.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Behold the Lamb of God,” *Ensign*, May 2019, 46.
4. Joseph Fielding Smith, in Conference Report, Oct. 1929, 60–61.







**By Elder Gary E. Stevenson**

Of the Quorum  
of the Twelve  
Apostles

# THE *Priesthood's Vital Role* IN THE RESTORATION

---

*Without the return of the priesthood to the earth,  
the Restoration would not have been possible.*

**B**y April 1829, Joseph Smith had been receiving divine visitations for nearly a decade. The Father and the Son appeared to him in 1820 in a grove of trees near his home when he was 14 years old (see Joseph Smith—History 1:5–17).<sup>1</sup> The angel Moroni's first visit occurred in 1823, followed by annual visits during which Joseph was taught and mentored until 1827, when he received the ancient record written upon plates that would become the Book of Mormon (see Joseph Smith—History 1:30–54).

For 18 months after obtaining the plates, however, Joseph struggled to translate the record because of harassment from locals, revolving scribes, and the loss of a portion of the manuscript. It was a frustrating and painful time for Joseph. (See Joseph Smith—History 1:58–62; Doctrine and Covenants 3.)

But everything changed in April 1829 with the arrival of a schoolteacher named Oliver Cowdery, who became Joseph's full-time scribe. The translation of the Book of Mormon then accelerated at a rapid pace.

After spending much of his time during the fall of 1828 working his farm in Harmony, Pennsylvania, to provide for his family, Joseph turned his full attention in 1829 to the translation of the Book of Mormon. For a brief period, Joseph's wife, Emma, and his brother Samuel acted as scribes. At the same time, Oliver Cowdery was boarding at the home of Joseph's parents in New York.

Having heard about the plates and their translation, Oliver became intrigued and desired to know if these things were of God. "One night after he retired to

bed he called upon the Lord to know if these things were so," Joseph recorded, "and the Lord manifested to him that they were true."<sup>2</sup>

Oliver immediately traveled the 140 miles (225 km) to Harmony to meet Joseph. Oliver was an answer to Joseph's prayers. Two days after they met in April, the translation of the Book of Mormon resumed at a rapid pace, nearing completion in an astounding 60 to 65 estimated working days. The whole translation was complete by June 30.

The Prophet Joseph may have considered that his whole work was nearing completion, having performed his divine mandate prescribed by the angel messenger to translate and publish the ancient record.

*While translating the Book of Mormon, Joseph and Oliver encountered numerous passages regarding baptism and authority.*

Little did the Prophet know then that he was not completing but rather just beginning his fundamental role in the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Few events in history compare in significance to what occurred in the spring of 1829.

Oliver described this remarkable chapter of the Restoration as "days never to be forgotten" (Joseph Smith—History 1:71, note). Beyond the miracle of the translation of the Book of Mormon, angels soon appeared and conferred priesthood authority on Joseph and Oliver. This revelatory season of translation and restoration redirected and expanded Joseph's view and paved the way for the formal organization of the Church one year later.

### Restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood

While translating the Book of Mormon, Joseph and Oliver encountered numerous passages regarding baptism and authority. Joseph had previously been told that "the Lord [would] give the holy priesthood to some."<sup>3</sup> On May 15, 1829, Joseph and Oliver retreated to a secluded spot in a nearby sugar maple grove "to inquire of the Lord, by prayer, His will concerning me."<sup>4</sup>

As they prayed, the voice of the Redeemer spoke peace to them "while the veil was parted and the angel of God came down clothed with glory, and delivered the anxiously looked for message, and the keys of the Gospel of repentance" (Joseph Smith—History 1:71, note). The angel introduced himself as John, "the same that is called John the Baptist in the New Testament, and that he acted under the direction of Peter, James and John" (Joseph Smith—History 1:72).

Joseph and Oliver knelt as the resurrected John placed his hands upon their heads and conferred on them the Aaronic Priesthood, "which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins" (Joseph Smith—History 1:69; see also Doctrine and Covenants 13:1). They were promised that additional priesthood authority would be conferred upon them "in due time." Joseph was named "the first Elder of the Church, and he (Oliver Cowdery) the second" (Joseph Smith—History 1:72). They were also instructed to baptize one another—Joseph to baptize Oliver first and then Oliver to baptize Joseph.

At some point that day, the two "repaired to the water" along the banks of the Susquehanna River to be baptized. They "were forced to keep secret the circumstances of having received the Priesthood and [their] having been baptized,





owing to a spirit of persecution which had already manifested itself in the neighborhood” (Joseph Smith—History 1:74). The river served as a main thoroughfare for commerce and transportation during the spring floods, with a steady flow of watercraft. It is possible that Joseph and Oliver waited until after dusk or took advantage of higher waters and found a more secluded spot on the floodplain.<sup>5</sup>

After baptizing each other, Joseph ordained Oliver to the Aaronic Priesthood. Oliver then ordained Joseph as the angel had commanded them. President Joseph Fielding Smith taught that it was necessary to reconfirm the initial ordination received under the hands of John the Baptist following their baptisms to “*reseal* those blessings in the proper order.”<sup>6</sup>

### Restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood

We have less detail regarding the visitation of Peter, James, and John to Joseph and Oliver to restore the Melchizedek Priesthood. Various interpretations based upon reminiscent accounts place the event from the spring of 1829, perhaps late May or June, to months later.<sup>7</sup> Joseph and Oliver never dated the appearance of Peter, James, and John, as they did for John the Baptist and the restoration for the Aaronic Priesthood. They may not have fully comprehended the nature of the priesthood or its divisions early on. Joseph’s understanding of the priesthood came incrementally.

From 1830 to 1835, priesthood offices were clarified, and quorums, councils, presidencies, and bishoprics were formed. Even the term *Melchizedek Priesthood* was not used as a name for the “High Priesthood” or “greater priesthood” (Doctrine and Covenants 107:9; 84:19) until 1835 (see Doctrine and Covenants 107:2–4).

Joseph did provide rough details about the location. In 1842, he recalled hearing “the voice of Peter, James, and John in the wilderness between Harmony . . . and Colesville . . . on the Susquehanna river, declaring themselves as possessing the keys of the kingdom” (Doctrine and Covenants 128:20).

This suggests that the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood occurred somewhere along a 28-mile (45 km) stretch of road between the Smith home in Harmony, Pennsylvania, and the town of Colesville, New York, where the Joseph Knight family lived. The Knight family were early Church members and devoted friends of Joseph Smith. They supplied paper and provisions during the translation of the Book of Mormon and later formed the core of the Colesville Branch of the Church.

In addition to receiving the Melchizedek Priesthood from Peter, James, and John, Joseph and Oliver were ordained “to be apostles, and especial witnesses” of the Lord (Doctrine and Covenants 27:12) and received the



*The restoration of the priesthood was central to the divine call of Joseph Smith as the first prophet of this dispensation.*

keys necessary to usher in the dispensation of the fulness of times. They now had the authority to administer all priesthood ordinances, including the bestowal of the gift of the Holy Ghost.

They also received “the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church” (Doctrine and Covenants 107:18) essential to organize the Church in April 1830 and received revelation to restore all things in their proper order. Spiritual blessings were manifested through miracles, healings, and ordinances performed by the authority of the priesthood. In 1836, additional angelic messengers delivered priesthood keys related to the gathering of Israel and temple work (see Doctrine and Covenants 110).

### Implications of Priesthood Restoration

President David O. McKay (1873–1970) taught that the most distinguishing feature of the Savior’s restored Church is “divine authority

---

*May each of us be willing  
participants in the  
ongoing Restoration of  
the gospel by enthusiastically  
embracing and practicing  
what has been revealed  
to modern-day prophets.*

by direct revelation.”<sup>8</sup> Without the return of the priesthood to the earth, the Restoration would not have been possible. The priesthood authorizes the performing of ordinances and provides the framework for governing the Lord’s Church on earth.

Joseph formally organized the Church on April 6, 1830. Over the next few years, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles were organized. Under the direction of the President of the Church, priesthood keys are delegated to local leaders worldwide, allowing the gospel to “roll forth unto the ends of the earth” (Doctrine and Covenants 65:2).

The restoration of the priesthood was central to the divine call of Joseph Smith as the first prophet of this dispensation. In the preface of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord explained, “Wherefore, I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments” (Doctrine and Covenants 1:17).

Before the visit of John the Baptist in May 1829, Joseph focused on translating the Book of Mormon. With the restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods, he realized that his call included much more. Receiving authority from heaven further prepared Joseph to shoulder his responsibilities as “a seer, a translator, a prophet, [and] an apostle of Jesus Christ” (Doctrine and Covenants 21:1).

Elder Robert D. Hales (1932–2017) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles described what our lives would be like without the priesthood: “If the power of the priesthood were not upon the earth, the adversary would have freedom to roam and reign without restraint. There would be no gift of the Holy Ghost to direct and enlighten us; no prophets to speak in the name of the Lord; no temples where we could make sacred, eternal covenants; no authority to bless or baptize, to heal or comfort. Without the power of the priesthood, ‘the whole earth would be utterly wasted’ (see Doctrine and Covenants 2:1–3). There would be no light, no hope—only darkness.”<sup>9</sup>

Receiving priesthood ordinances is central to the Lord’s work in “bring[ing] to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). Baptism and confirmation, the temple endowment, and sealing for time and eternity are essential to our salvation. The ability to bind and seal

families in temples for those on both sides of the veil is possible only through priesthood authority and keys as directed by the President of the Church.

### **The Ongoing Restoration**

How might priesthood authority inspire your participation in the ongoing Restoration of the Church? We may not know what the future holds, but it is clear that the Restoration is ongoing. The Lord did not reveal every doctrine or ordinance, or impart all instructions to Joseph in the Sacred Grove, through Moroni on Cumorah, or at the organizational meeting of the Church. The Restoration did not occur as a single event. Rather, the Lord revealed things “line upon line” (2 Nephi 28:30) to Joseph just as He continues to reveal things to His prophets today according to His purposes and timing.

An unbroken line of prophets since the days of Joseph Smith has spoken on behalf of the Lord and continues to make known His will. Prophets see the wider view and receive specific direction for the challenges of their day. President Russell M. Nelson proclaims that we are all “witnesses to a process of restoration. If you think the Church has been fully restored, you’re just seeing the beginning. There is much more to come.”<sup>10</sup>

### **The Restoration and You**

May each of us be willing participants in the ongoing Restoration of the gospel by enthusiastically embracing and practicing what has been revealed to modern-day prophets. Examples include living the higher and holier law of ministering to our brothers and sisters.<sup>11</sup> And may each of us find enduring gospel joy through the



home-centered, Church-supported plan to learn doctrine, strengthen faith, keep the commandments, and foster greater personal worship, including a home evening that meets individual and family needs.<sup>12</sup>

We can prepare for the Second Coming of the Savior by accelerating the gathering of Israel on both sides of the veil.<sup>13</sup> We can do better at making the Sabbath day a delight both in our Sunday worship services and at home.<sup>14</sup> We can stay more closely attuned to the Holy Ghost by doing the spiritual work necessary to receive daily personal revelation.<sup>15</sup>

I testify that the heavens remain open and that there is much more to come as the Lord prepares us for the exciting days ahead. The restoration of the priesthood allows God's children to administer and receive saving ordinances, and it authorizes modern prophets, seers, and revelators to direct the Lord's kingdom.

Countless blessings come daily to the Church and its members because of the accessibility of the Lord's priesthood. May we express our gratitude daily for the appearances of John the Baptist and of Peter, James, and John and for the return of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods in this last and final dispensation preparatory for the return of our Lord and Savior, even Jesus Christ. ■

#### NOTES

1. Joseph Smith, History, 1838–1856, vol. A-1, created June 11, 1839–Aug. 24, 1843, 15, Church History Library.
2. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 1:35.
3. Oliver Cowdery, letter to W. W. Phelps, in *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate*, Oct. 1835, 199.
4. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 85. While long-held tradition placed them along the banks of the Susquehanna River, contemporaneous records indicate that they retreated to a grove of sugar maple trees on the north end of the property (see Mark Lyman Staker, "Where Was the Aaronic Priesthood Restored? Identifying the Location of John the Baptist's Appearance, May 15, 1829," *Mormon Historical Studies*, vol. 12, no. 2 [Fall 2011], 142–59).
5. See Mark L. Staker, "Where Was the Aaronic Priesthood Restored?" 153.
6. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie (1954), 1:197.
7. See Larry C. Porter, "Dating the Restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood," *Ensign*, June 1979, 5–9; Larry C. Porter, "The Restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods," *Ensign*, Dec. 1996, 42–44.
8. David O. McKay, "The Mission of the Church and Its Members," *Improvement Era*, Nov. 1956, 781.
9. Robert D. Hales, "Blessings of the Priesthood," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 32.
10. "Latter-day Saint Prophet, Wife and Apostle Share Insights of Global Ministry," Oct. 30, 2018, [newsroom.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.newsroom.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).
11. See Russell M. Nelson, "Ministering with the Power and Authority of God," *Ensign*, May 2018, 68–70, 75; Russell M. Nelson, "Ministering," *Ensign*, May 2018, 100; Henry B. Eyring, "Inspired Ministering," *Ensign*, May 2018, 61–64; Jean B. Bingham, "Ministering as the Savior Does," *Ensign*, May 2018, 104–6.
12. See Russell M. Nelson, "Opening Remarks," *Ensign*, Nov. 2018, 6–8; Quentin L. Cook, "Deep and Lasting Conversion to Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," *Ensign*, Nov. 2018, 8–12.
13. See Russell M. Nelson, "Hope of Israel" (worldwide youth devotional, Jun. 3, 2018), [HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org); Russell M. Nelson, "Sisters' Participation in the Gathering of Israel," *Ensign*, Nov. 2018, 69–70.
14. See Russell M. Nelson, "The Sabbath Is a Delight," *Ensign*, May 2015, 129–32.
15. See Russell M. Nelson, "Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives," *Ensign*, May 2018, 93–96.



# A Gift of Love

By Faith S. Watson

*As my husband blessed our baby daughter, I began to glimpse the depth and breadth of Heavenly Father's gift of love—the priesthood.*

I was a new member of the Church, a new wife, and now a new mother. It was fast Sunday, and our tiny daughter was about to receive a name and a blessing. I had never seen a baby blessing before because we lived in a ward with few young families. I didn't know what to expect. Yet I felt by the Spirit that this was something very special and significant.

My husband, joined by other reverent priesthood holders, carefully cradled our precious little daughter. The sweetness of the Spirit filled me with joy. Tears ran down my cheeks, and myriad impressions flooded my mind. I knew I was only beginning to glimpse the depth and breadth of Heavenly Father's magnificent gift of love to us—the priesthood.

When the missionaries taught me the discussions, I had sensed how honored they felt to bear the priesthood. I had heard it in their words and in their prayers, including when they blessed me to overcome a challenge with the Word of Wisdom. I felt their hands, gently laid on my head,

begin to tremble as they spoke words I knew were coming from the Lord—words of love and of healing.

Soon I was baptized, and priesthood holders' hands were again laid upon my head. I was confirmed a member of the Lord's Church, and the gift of the Holy Ghost was conferred upon me. I was cleansed and born anew. I felt the power of the priesthood throughout my entire body, and for the first time in my life, I knew joy.

Shortly after my baptism, my husband and I were married. His parents were members of the Church and his home was centered in the gospel, but I knew his testimony was not well rooted. I was not worried, though. My young faith brimmed with optimism. I would simply love him and be patient and prayerful.

During the months I carried our firstborn, I felt as mothers do—so close to my little one, so full of the wonder at this new life within me. When our daughter was born, my bond with her had become a cord of love, strong and sweet.

But I was concerned for my husband. He hadn't had the blessing of this intense closeness to our daughter that I had enjoyed. Of course he loved her, but I wondered and worried about whether a strong bond would develop between him and her. I worried as I spent time nursing her, bathing her, and holding her, while most of my husband's time was occupied with working to support our family.

Now, a few weeks after her birth, there we were in our chapel. A miracle was unfolding before my eyes and in my heart. My tentative husband humbly smiled at his brethren in the circle, his eyes full of light and a glint of tears. In return, love and support flowed from those brethren to him as they placed hands on shoulders and helped cradle our baby, forming a little circle bathed in pure and sacred love. As my husband began the blessing, I heard trembling in his voice, and I knew that he was feeling the Lord's power and the honor of holding His priesthood.

I felt a great love welling up in him for our little girl, and I knew he





had tried hard to prepare himself to give her the blessing Heavenly Father intended for her. My joy was full as I realized that he now felt tightly bonded to our daughter. It was a bond that was never to weaken.

Years have passed since that experience. Countless times I have witnessed and felt the power and beauty of the priesthood

exercised in so many ways, in so many places, and for so many of Heavenly Father's children. I have watched beautiful saving ordinances bestowed and hearts filled. I have observed cleansing, healing, comforting, and teaching. I have seen and felt burdens lifted.

I know I still don't understand the full magnificence of the priesthood,

but every baby blessing I have viewed has filled me with the same awe I felt during my firstborn's blessing. I am awed at the love Heavenly Father has shown by sharing His power with us, and I am filled with gratitude beyond words for my testimony of Him, His Beloved Son, and our beautiful restored gospel. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*



*Our lives are meant to be useful  
and full in our older years.*

**By Martine Leavitt**

I've always thought it a poignant moment in the scriptures when great men, like Jacob, Enos, and Mormon, tell us, suddenly, that they "began to be old" (see Jacob 7:26; Enos 1:25; Mormon 6:6).

I knew I had begun to be old when one Sunday I forgot to take my reading glasses to church, and I couldn't see the words in the hymnbook. That was no surprise. What surprised me was discovering that, in singing the hymns for so many decades, I had unconsciously memorized them. It all worked out.

I knew I'd begun to be old when the missionaries all looked 12 years old to me. At church, people stopped calling me by my first name: it's always Sister Leavitt now. They're giving me the veneration due the aged. I've noticed that my stamina is not what it was, and I have many aches and pains and little signs that my age is not, as some say, just a number.

Of course, with age comes many blessings: grandchildren; the wonderful sense that you have accomplished a thing or two; a deeper understanding, perhaps, of the meaning of life. Still, in my new status as a senior citizen, I've put more thought into what it means for a Latter-day Saint to be old. I have heard the phrase "aging gracefully," and I've pondered what that might mean in the perspective of gospel living.

### **Getting Old "with Style"**

I remember when President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) began to be old and first appeared in general conference with a cane. He said: "People are talking about why in the world I'm walking with a cane. . . . Well, I saw that Brigham Young used a cane. John Taylor had a cane, and Wilford Woodruff had a cane, and President Grant had a cane in his old age. And I've seen President McKay with a cane and Spencer Kimball with a cane, and I'm just trying to get in style."<sup>1</sup>

Now that I've begun to be old, I have begun to pay more attention to the example of those who have been old before me and to how I might do it with style.

Out in the world, aging is spoken of, at times, as something slightly sad or even preventable: "Well, if you'd just taken care of yourself, this wouldn't be happening to you!" Another worldly view of aging sends the message that we are entitled to a life of meaningless relaxation after all those years of hard work.

I'm coming to the understanding that neither of these notions is accurate. Yes, I should care for my physical body even into my older years, but I haven't done anything wrong by getting old. And yes, I may be retired from my day job, but the example of the prophets and apostles says that I don't want to retire into years of endless





relaxation. There are some things, it appears, that we can never retire from.

### Keeping Covenants

Those who have begun to be old may have tread the covenant path diligently for many years. It is a beaten path, and we have walked it steadily enough and long enough that it no longer sprouts weeds. But perhaps with every age comes some obstacle along the path, small or large temptations to deviate from the path.

For me in my older years, I've been tempted to sit down by the path and take my rest, to leave certain callings to younger people with more energy or ideas. I've caught myself thinking that surely, at my age, I needn't attend the optional Church activities that people work so hard to plan. Don't they know I go to bed at 8:00 p.m.? It can be tempting to think that we may be too senior to serve a senior couple's mission. It may be easy to become casual in daily repentance.

But being old, should we not also be wise?

The covenant path is about making covenants and also about keeping them. We never retire from keeping covenants. It takes a lifetime of trying to get it right, even all the way to the end of a lifetime, be it ever so long. Surely we don't want to rest ourselves on the path just yet. What a blessing to meet the Lord, when our days are over, knowing that we endured to the end—the very end.

### Example of Church Leaders

Thankfully, we have a wonderful pattern in our Church leaders of how to begin to be old. They do not retire. They continue to serve with all their hearts. They make themselves aware of the issues of the day. They counsel and travel and learn and teach and love. They do the work of the Lord until the end of their days.

President Hinckley said at the age of 87: "I am no longer a young man filled with energy and vitality. I am an old man . . . given to meditation and prayer. I would

enjoy sitting in a rocker, swallowing prescriptions, listening to soft music, and contemplating the things of the universe. But such activity offers no challenge and makes no contribution."<sup>2</sup>

What a blessing to understand that even in our most senior years, we can—we are expected to—make a contribution, take on a new challenge! Perhaps it's partly this determination to be on the Lord's errand that makes our leaders so long-lived.

### Finishing Our Work

Our beloved prophet, President Russell M. Nelson, aged 95, has taught: "Even though our Creator endowed us with this incredible power [the ability of the body to heal from injury or illness], He consigned a counterbalancing gift to our bodies. It is the blessing of *aging*, with visible reminders that we are mortal beings destined one day to leave this 'frail existence.'"<sup>3</sup>

He seems to be saying that our aging bodies should be reminders that our time may be short on the earth, and so we should be about finishing our work, not stopping our work. Nephi, Jacob, Enos, and Mormon, when they began to be old, set about passing on the responsibility of the records to make sure all was in order before they passed into the next life. What a blessing to know that our lives are meant to be useful and full in our elder years.

I've decided that aging gracefully will mean, to me at least, to age with the grace of my Savior, Jesus Christ. He will ease the way when it needs to be eased and give me strength to carry forward. I will continue to pray for determination to walk the covenant path and to do it in style—even if it's with a cane. ■

*The author lives in Alberta, Canada.*

#### NOTES

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Good-bye for Another Season," *Ensign*, May 2001, 85.
2. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Testimony," *Ensign*, May 1998, 69.
3. Russell M. Nelson, "The Atonement," *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 34.





# A Time to Dance

By Sherilyn Farnes

*Trust that there are good things to come.*

Sometimes it's hard to say goodbye to a good thing. At the close of a wedding reception recently, my young niece and I danced and twirled in the mostly empty room as the reception came to a close. All too soon it was time to go. Pouting for a few seconds, my seven-year-old niece put her shoes back on and we twirled one last time. I don't remember who suggested it, but whether she came up with the idea or simply agreed to it, her eyes brightened as she said, "Let's dance our way out." And so we did.

I kept thinking of this moment, realizing what struck me about it. She trusted that this wasn't the last night in her life that she would ever dance. She trusted that there were other good things to come, and she could leave this one evening behind. And though a fun night of dancing doesn't compare to much larger endings, I realized that perhaps I have something to learn from her. Perhaps I could try to adapt that motto when I have to say goodbye to something I love, when I feel prompted to put on my shoes



and move on. Can I say with her, "Let's dance our way out," and trust that I too have someone walking by my side when He wants me to move on?

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained, "Faith trusts that God has great things in store for each of us and that Christ truly is the 'high priest of good things to come' (Hebrews 9:11)."<sup>1</sup> Like my niece, I can trust that even as one beloved season in my life comes to an end, other good seasons will follow in time—for that is the nature of life:

"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. . . .

"A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

". . . A time to keep silence, and a time to speak" (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 6–7).

And yes, I would say to my niece, even Ecclesiastes agrees that one of these times is "a time to dance" (verse 4). ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

**NOTE**

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, "The Best Is Yet to Be," *Ensign*, Jan. 2010, 27.



## Alma 5–7

JUNE 1–7

# How Can Alma's Questions Help Us Grow Spiritually?

### How Am I Doing?

Alma asked the people of Zarahemla 36 questions to help them evaluate their spiritual progress. President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained that a spiritual evaluation is helpful. He said, “As a guide for me during this [evaluation] . . . , I like to read and ponder the introspective words found in the fifth chapter of Alma.”<sup>1</sup>

### What Do I Need to Change?

As you read Alma 5:7–13, look for what Alma taught about how we can change and come closer to Christ. Consider what things you can change, and make a plan to act.

### How Has the Lord Blessed Me?

Alma also invited the people to remember how the Lord delivered their fathers and to recall their conversion. Consider writing your conversion story to remember how the Lord has blessed you. You could also read the conversion stories of your ancestors or early Church members.

“It would be a wonderful thing if every Latter-day Saint knew the conversion stories of their forefathers. . . . Each of us will be greatly blessed if we know the stories of faith and sacrifice that led our forefathers to join the Lord’s Church.”<sup>2</sup>

#### NOTES

1. M. Russell Ballard, “Return and Receive,” *Ensign*, May 2017, 64.
2. William R. Walker, “Live True to the Faith,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 97, 99.







## Alma 8–12

JUNE 8–14

# How Does Developing a Soft Heart Help Us Gain Spiritual Knowledge?

**W**hen Alma preached the gospel in Ammonihah, most of the people rejected him, but Amulek listened and believed. The difference between Amulek and the rest of Ammonihah shows us the consequences of having a softened heart or hardened heart to the things of God (see Alma 12:10). You can choose to have a soft heart.

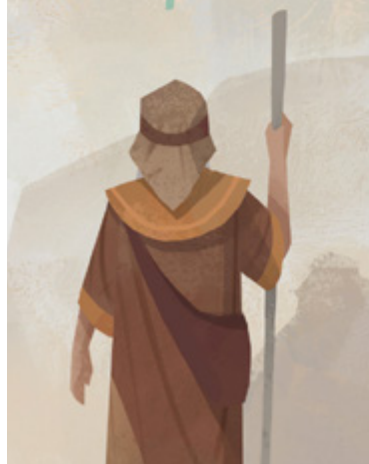
### DISCUSSION

- What characteristics did Amulek have? How can you develop his good characteristics?
- If you're seeking answers to a specific question, what can you do to be more receptive to revelation from Heavenly Father?
- What blessings might the Lord have in store for you and your family as you choose to have a soft and obedient heart?



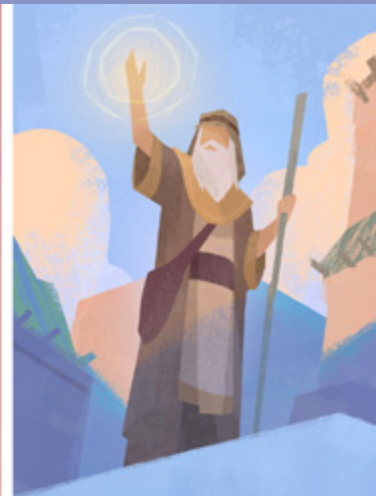
### Amulek and the People of Ammonihah

Amulek believed that Alma was a prophet of God (see Alma 8:20). When an angel told him to let Alma into his home, he chose to obey (see Alma 10:8). He also answered God's call to preach the gospel (see Alma 8:29–30). The other people in the city, however, rejected Alma and refused to believe.



### Blessings of a Soft Heart

Because he accepted the word of God, Amulek was blessed with spiritual knowledge. He was “filled with the Holy Ghost” (Alma 8:30), he gained a testimony of God's power (see Alma 10:5), and he even knew the thoughts of those who tried to deceive him (see Alma 10:17). You too can choose to accept the word of God and receive His blessings.



### Consequences of a Hard Heart

Because the people of Ammonihah hardened their hearts to Alma's teachings, they lost precious blessings. They had no knowledge of God's miracles (see Alma 9:5), and they were warned that God would destroy them and they would not inherit His kingdom (see Alma 9:12).







## Alma 13–16

JUNE 15–21

# How Do Saving Ordinances Point Me to Christ?

**G**ood conduct without the ordinances of the gospel will neither redeem nor exalt mankind.<sup>1</sup>

### Prepare

Alma and Amulek were called and prepared by the Lord to teach His commandments (see Alma 13:3). They were also “ordained with a holy ordinance” (Alma 13:8). This and other ordinances are given that we may know where to look for a remission of our sins (see Alma 13:16). All ordinances point us to Jesus Christ.

How can you prepare to receive the saving ordinances of the gospel?

### Repent

Repentance turns our hearts toward the Savior. Saving ordinances focus our minds on Christ and His grace so that we can return to Him (see Alma 13:16).

### Receive

The Lord provides saving ordinances so we may experience the “power of Christ unto salvation” (Alma 15:6).

Which saving ordinances have you received, and how have they brought you closer to the Savior?

#### NOTE

1. Boyd K. Packer, “The Only True Church,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 82.





## Alma 17–22

JUNE 22–28

# How Can I Act Immediately with Faith?

**T**he faithful and immediate actions of Abish in the Book of Mormon demonstrate how faith can help bring others to Christ. Consider how she was fully “converted unto the Lord” (Alma 19:16).

### DISCUSSION

How can you strengthen your faith in the Lord so that you, and perhaps others, will feel empowered to act immediately and fully on the will of God?

#### She Knew It

Abish’s faith was so strong that when she saw that Lamoni’s household had fallen to the ground, she “knew that it was the power of God” (Alma 19:17). How can you build your faith to know, as Abish did, the power of God?



#### She Ran Forth

Once Abish recognized the power of God, she “ran forth from house to house” and told the people to come see the miracle (Alma 19:17). Her faith empowered her to act immediately. Are there areas of the gospel where you are walking instead of running to act on God’s will in faith?

#### She Took Others by the Hand

Abish “took the queen by the hand” with faith that it would make the queen stand (Alma 19:29). She did what seemed impossible because of her faith in God. How can you strengthen your faith in God and accomplish the impossible in your life?







Alma 8-12  
JUNE 8-14

# MEMBERS AND MISSIONARIES





# WORKING TOGETHER



By Elder  
James B. Martino  
Of the Seventy

**O**ur friends, the Ragsdales, had just joined the Church. They began to invite my parents, who were not members, to hear the missionary discussions, come to church, and join in activities. This continued for more than two years. My parents always said they were not interested.

Finally my mother told my dad, “We are going to have to say yes, because they are not going to stop inviting us.” So Mom and Dad did finally go to a Church meeting. They felt the Spirit, became interested, learned more, and soon were baptized.

I asked Pat Ragsdale why they kept inviting my parents, even though my parents’ answer was negative. She shook her finger at me and said, “We did not invite your parents because it was our duty. We invited them because we loved them. We would never have stopped inviting them, because of that love.”

## Our Most Important Duty

We all have the responsibility to share the gospel. The Savior’s last words to His disciples as He ascended to the heavens were:

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19–20).

In this dispensation we have heard the constant voice of prophets telling us of our duty to preach the gospel. The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “After

all that has been said, the greatest and most important duty is to preach the Gospel.”<sup>1</sup>

President Russell M. Nelson told new mission presidents, “Your ability to link the enthusiasm of the missionaries with the stability and loving efforts of the members cannot be overemphasized. Your success will be multiplied exponentially as you harness the power of members with whom you serve.”<sup>2</sup>

## Alma in Ammonihah

The experience of Alma as he teaches in Ammonihah helps us understand how missionaries and members can work together. Before Alma began preaching, he “labored much in the spirit, wrestling with God in mighty prayer, that he would pour out his Spirit upon the people who were in the city; that he would also grant that he might baptize them unto repentance” (Alma 8:10).

**Alma and Amulek provide a great example for us to follow as we invite others to come unto Christ.**



ILLUSTRATIONS BY AUGUSTO ZAMBONATO



Alma was what I like to call a *Preach My Gospel* missionary. He focused on teaching by the Spirit. He invited others to come unto Christ with the hope that they would enter a covenant relationship with the Lord through baptism.

How did the people respond? They rejected him. He found no one willing to listen. Feeling quite discouraged, Alma decided to leave. But an angel appeared and said: “Blessed art thou, Alma; therefore, lift up thy head and rejoice, for thou hast great cause to rejoice; for thou hast been faithful in keeping the commandments of God from the time which thou receivedst thy first message. . . . I am sent to command thee [to] return to the city of Ammonihah, and preach again unto the people” (Alma 8:15–16).

### Why Alma Was Blessed

Why was Alma blessed? He was blessed because he was faithful in what he had been called to do. Was he blessed because of his success in baptizing? No, the Lord does not judge us according to our success in sharing the gospel but according to our willingness to do so.

Alma was asked to return and preach to the same people who had totally rejected his message the first time. He “returned speedily” and “entered . . . by another way” (Alma 8:18). I don’t believe Alma said anything like, “This won’t

work.” I believe he began looking for a different way to be more effective. Perhaps he was wondering if his approach needed to be different. Maybe he thought he could find someone in a different part of the city.

Actually, the Lord *had* prepared someone to listen. His name was Amulek, someone we might refer to today as a “less-active” member (see Alma 10:5–6).

### How Amulek Was Blessed

Alma “tarried many days” with Amulek (Alma 8:27). But what did Alma do during that time? Amulek later explains, “[Alma] hath blessed mine house, he hath blessed me, and my women, and my children, and my father and my kinsfolk; yea, even all my kindred hath he blessed, and the blessing of the Lord hath rested upon us according to the words which he spake” (Alma 10:11).

Imagine what this event might look like today. Alma would begin his conversation with Amulek and, finding that Amulek was less-active would ask to teach Amulek’s family. He would then teach Amulek, his wife, and their children. Alma would help the whole family to prepare to enter the covenant path. Alma wouldn’t stop with just one family, either. He would probably ask, “Amulek, do you have other family members we can teach?” And Amulek would respond, “Well, my father lives next door.” Then Alma would ask Amulek to invite his father to come listen.

Now think about what would happen to the less-active member, Amulek. Amulek would have already received the lessons with his own family. Now he would receive them again as Alma taught Amulek’s father. The fire of the gospel would grow deeper and deeper within Amulek’s soul. Then what would this good



missionary Alma do? He would teach Amulek's kinsfolk and kindred.

### Working Together

Let's return to the scriptural account. After this success with Amulek and his family, when Alma is ready to preach again, the Lord tells Alma to take Amulek with him. Note that Alma, the missionary, is now going out with Amulek, the member. Do you see how the Lord is asking for the missionary and the member to work together?

And what happens now? When Alma speaks, the people reject the message again. But then Amulek, the newly active member, shares his testimony. "And now, when Amulek had spoken these words the people began to be astonished" (Alma 10:12).

Whose words astonished the people of Ammonihah? Was it Alma, the missionary, or Amulek, the member? It was the member! Does that mean that Amulek was a better teacher than Alma? No! Many of the people that missionaries teach think, "These young missionaries just don't understand." For example, someone learning about tithing might say, "They don't have to pay the rent, buy the food, and deal with all the bills like I have to. How can I pay 10 percent to the Lord?"

But when the missionaries have an Amulek with them, a member with whom the person being taught can relate, and the member testifies about tithing, then the person being taught is "astonished."

### An Example to Follow

The experience of Alma and Amulek creates an example for us:

- A member teaches (or ministers to) a less-active member.
- The member invites the less-active member to share what he has learned with his family.

- As the less-active member shares the gospel, his own testimony catches fire.
- He wants to share what he has felt, not only with his family but with others as well.
- The member continues to seek and receive multiple referrals.

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) said that a friend is one "to whom [the investigator or new member] can constantly turn, who will walk beside him, who will answer his questions, who will understand his problems."<sup>3</sup>

It is my testimony to you that there is not a more effective way of bringing less-active members back on the covenant path than by inviting them to participate in the missionary lessons and then encouraging them to share what they have learned. When members testify to those the missionaries teach, it is the member who will often astonish or touch those being taught. ■

#### NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 330.
2. Russell M. Nelson, in Jason Swensen, "President Nelson Invokes Five Hopes, Blessings upon New Mission Leaders," Church News section of ChurchofJesusChrist.org, June 24, 2019, news.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
3. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep," *Ensign*, May 1999, 108.

## SIX QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU BE LIKE AMULEK

As you ponder these questions, ask what you can do to become like Amulek as you share the gospel:

1. Do we give up the first time someone does not accept our invitation?
2. Whom could we invite this month?
3. Whom do we know who is not currently active in the Church and who could be blessed by taking the missionary lessons?
4. When those to whom we minister feel the Holy Ghost, do we ask them who else we could teach with the missionaries?
5. How could we befriend people the missionaries are teaching?
6. Could we invite the missionaries to teach in our home?



# Teaching Your Children about Money

*Use these seven gospel-related principles to help your children stand on firm financial footing.*

**By Ashley B. LeBaron, MS**

PhD candidate in Family Studies and Human Development, University of Arizona

**And by E. Jeffrey Hill, PhD**

School of Family Life, Brigham Young University

**M**oney affects nearly every facet of mortal life: physical and mental health, educational success, marriage and family relationships—even spiritual health. If we want our children to succeed, they must learn to manage money well.

Research reveals that parents are the number-one source of kids' financial education.<sup>1</sup> Kids learn more about money from their parents than from school, media, peers, and work experience combined.

You might be thinking, "I am not qualified to be a financial educator." Well, to be frank, you are a financial educator whether you like it or not! No financial course can replace your ongoing influence.

"Too many of our youth get into financial difficulty because they never learned proper principles of financial common sense at home," noted Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "Teach your children while they are young. Teach them that they cannot have something merely because they want it. Teach them the principles of hard work, frugality, and saving."<sup>2</sup>

Here are seven proven principles and practices that will help you as you teach your kids about money.<sup>3</sup>







## 1. FIRST THINGS FIRST

*Use tithing to teach spiritual and financial principles.*

Some of the most sacred gospel principles can be taught to our children through tithing:

**First, consecration.** Elder Robert D. Hales (1932–2017) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “The law of tithing prepares us to live the higher law of consecration—to dedicate and give all our time, talents, and resources to the work of the Lord. Until the day when we are required to live this higher law, we are commanded to live the law of the tithes.”<sup>4</sup>

**Second, accountability.** God gives us everything we have, including our money and material possessions, and we are accountable to Him. He is the owner, and we are merely the managers. This knowledge should inspire us to be better money managers and more generous.

**Third, obedience.** In our baptismal covenant we promise to keep the commandments (see Mosiah 18:10). Through tithing, the Church can use our money to bless God’s children. But it’s not just about money; it’s about the two great commandments: love of God and love of neighbor (see Matthew 22:37–39).

Paying tithing is also a great opportunity for children to practice their first financial calculations. Parents can help young children figure out 10 percent of various amounts—a penny from every 10 cents, 10 cents from every dollar—until it becomes automatic.



## 2. HARD WORK

*Teach children to earn their own money.*

To combat a sense of entitlement, it is vital to teach children to work hard. This will help them provide financially for themselves and their future family. There are many ways kids can practice hard work, such as chores, part-time employment, academic rigor, entrepreneurial endeavors (such as mowing lawns), and so on.

Much of the work we do in life is never compensated, at least not monetarily. Children should be encouraged to contribute to the home (such as by completing certain chores) simply because they are a member of the family. However, it is important for kids to learn the connection between work and compensation. Parents may consider giving kids the option to do extra chores for money.

Parents can also teach their children the spiritual value of work. Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said that “work is always a spiritual necessity even if, for some, work is not an economic necessity. . . . I have not seen any perspiration-free shortcuts to the celestial kingdom.”<sup>5</sup>





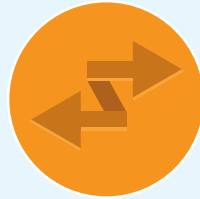


### 3. BUDGETING

*Even five-year-olds can learn to live within their means.*

The creation, implementation, and review of a budget is a critical financial skill that even toddlers can begin to make a habit. Parents can teach young children to use a basic budget: giving (tithing), saving, and spending. You can use a simple homemade bank with three slots. The *giving* money is paid as tithing, the *saving* money is deposited in a real bank account, and the *spending* money is used to buy something the child has been wanting—all with the child as involved as possible until he or she is old enough to do it independently. As children grow into adolescents with more financial goals, budgets will likely also grow in terms of amount and number of categories.

Budgets teach children to save and sacrifice for what they need and want. Whether it's a new toy or a college education, kids should learn to make and reach both short- and long-term financial goals. The best budgets are those that reflect the person's priorities. Talk with your kids about what they value, and help them develop their own budget accordingly.



### 4. CHOICES

*Give children autonomy in managing their own money.*

Children need both limits and latitude. For example, you might require them to save a certain portion of their money, but you might let them choose what to do with the rest.

It is inevitable that when you give kids opportunities to handle money, they will make financial mistakes. However, it is better for them to make those mistakes—and learn from them—at a young age when the consequences are not as big. It is very possible, for example, that 5-year-olds may make \$5 mistakes; 10-year-olds may make \$50 mistakes; 15-year-olds may make \$500 mistakes; and 20-year-olds may make \$5,000 mistakes.<sup>6</sup> Which would you rather have them make? Apply Joseph Smith's principle: "I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves."<sup>7</sup>





## 5. COMMUNICATION

*Talk openly and regularly with children about finances.*

Some parents may be reluctant to talk to their kids about money, especially about their family's financial situation. However, frequent and open parent-child discussion about finances is one of the primary ways children learn about money. When sharing sensitive information such as the family's income, make sure the kids are of appropriate age and maturity, explain to them why this information should not be shared with others, and then trust them. Share your financial experiences—good and bad—with them. Plan lessons and conversations and also teach impromptu (at the grocery store, at the bank, when filing taxes, and so on).

A good forum for financial discussion is family financial council meetings. These are great opportunities to create and review the family budget, teach children the costs associated with everyday life and running a home, and involve children in financial decisions (such as planning family vacations). Encourage questions about finances, and if your kids ask a question you don't know the answer to, find out answers together.

As you talk about money with your kids, remind yourself and them of the sacred gospel principles related to money. Money itself is neither good nor evil, but what we do with money can be either good or evil. Even taxes, investments, and insurance can become sacred when viewed through a gospel lens.



## 6. TO THE BANK

*Facilitate real-world financial experiences for children.*

We can't shield kids from money and then turn them loose at age 18 with a shiny new credit card and the prospect of student loans and expect them to succeed. We need to give our kids age-appropriate responsibilities and let them learn through their own experience. Whatever financial value or habit you want them to internalize, you can facilitate experiences where they can practice it now while still at home.

Here are some experiences you might facilitate for your kids:

- Help your children open a savings account.
- Show your children how to compare prices.
- Let children invest in or borrow from a “family bank” (that is, with parents acting as the bank); use a high interest rate, such as 10 percent, so kids can experience how interest builds.
- Help your adolescent children set up a custodial investment account.
- Let your children accompany you as you conduct your financial business (budgeting, going to the bank, grocery shopping, checking on investments, buying a car, and so on) so they can learn through observation and through your instruction.







## 7. RELAX AND LET THE SPIRIT GUIDE YOU

Happily, you don't have to be perfect with money to be a good financial educator to your kids. Do your best and invite the perfect teacher—the Spirit—to partner with you as you teach your children. They are not only your children; they are also children of a loving Heavenly Father. The Spirit will guide you as you teach these precious souls. Your righteous efforts will be an immeasurable blessing to them throughout their lives. ■



### NOTES

1. See Antonia Grohmann and others, "Childhood Roots of Financial Literacy," *Journal of Economic Psychology*, vol. 51 (Dec. 2015), 114–33; Mary Beth Pinto and others, "Information Learned from Socialization Agents: Its Relationship to Credit Card Use," *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, vol. 33, no. 4 (June 2005), 357–67; Soyeon Shim and others, "Financial Socialization of First-Year College Students: The Roles of Parents, Work, and Education," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, vol. 39, no. 12 (Dec. 2010), 1457–70.
2. Joseph B. Wirthlin, "Earthly Debts, Heavenly Debts," *Ensign*, May 2004, 42–43.
3. These points are based on our research interviewing 128 emerging adults, 17 of their parents, and 8 of their grandparents about the teaching of finances in the home.
4. Robert D. Hales, "Tithing: A Test of Faith with Eternal Blessings," *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 27.
5. Neal A. Maxwell, "Put Your Shoulder to The Wheel," *Ensign*, May 1998, 38, 39.
6. See Ashley B. LeBaron and others, "Whats and Hows of Family Financial Socialization: Retrospective Reports of Emerging Adults, Parents, and Grandparents," *Family Relations: Interdisciplinary Journal of Applied Family Science*, vol. 67, no. 4 (Oct. 2018), 497–509.
7. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 284.





# Family Study fun

Consider these activities during family scripture study or home evening.



## Songs Of Love

### Alma 5 (June 1–7)

Read Alma 5:9, 26 together. Talk about what you think it means to sing songs of “redeeming love.”

- 1 If possible, find a picture of Jesus to look at together.
- 2 Ask each family member to pick a favorite verse from a Church hymn or children’s song to sing together.
- 3 After singing, take turns sharing thoughts and feelings about Jesus.

**Discussion:** What change could each of us make to better follow Jesus this week? How does good music help us draw closer to God?



## Drawing Friendship

### Alma 8 (June 8–14)

Read Alma 8:19–27 together and talk about how Amulek and Alma became friends.

- 1 Invite someone to start a game by drawing a picture of an activity they enjoy. (For example, watching a movie.)
- 2 The rest of the family tries to guess what activity is portrayed in the picture. Then talk about how you could use that activity to build friendships. (For example, inviting someone to watch a wholesome movie with you.)
- 3 Take turns drawing pictures and guessing the activities shown in the pictures until everyone has had a turn.

**Discussion:** How can you help a friend this week? What could you do if you’re having trouble making friends?



## FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

Find more home evening ideas in this month's *Friend*.



### Scripture Prison Break

#### Alma 14 (June 15–21)

Read Alma 14:17–18, 26–28 together. After Alma and Amulek were wrongly imprisoned, God gave them strength to break free.

- 1 Build a pretend prison with blankets, cushions, or pillows.
- 2 Let each family member take a turn acting out the scripture story by being in prison and breaking free.
- 3 After each person breaks free, have them share one way God has helped them in real life.

**Discussion:** Alma and Amulek used their freedom to continue teaching people about the gospel. How can we help others with what God has given us?



### Scattered Flocks

#### Alma 17 (June 22–28)

Read Alma 17:27–39 together. Talk about how Ammon agreed to serve King Lamoni and saved the king's flocks that had been scattered.

- 1 Sit around a table or in a circle on the floor. Put 5–10 cotton balls in the center to represent flocks, such as sheep.
- 2 On the count of three, everyone tries to “scatter” the sheep by blowing on the cotton balls for about 10 seconds.
- 3 To “gather” the sheep, go around the circle and have each person put the cotton ball nearest to them back in the center. As they do, ask them to share one act of service they could do for someone this week. Keep going until all the cotton balls are returned.

**Discussion:** What can we learn from Ammon's example of humility? What blessings can we experience as we serve others?

*Idea contributed by Lisa Thomas and Brenda Slade*

# Managing **FOOD** **ALLERGIES** at Church

By Lisa Ann Thomson

**A**youth activity on a chilly night in January 2017 changed the Sorenson family forever. Terry and Jenilyn's son Tanner was 14 years old. The combined activity was wrapping up. A leader was offering the last of the refreshments. Tanner, who was allergic to peanuts, grabbed a cookie and bit into it. He shouldn't have. It was a peanut butter cookie.

"He was usually so careful," Terry says.

Tanner managed to get home—his house was just down the street from their meetinghouse. But he lost consciousness quickly after. He stopped breathing. Paramedics and emergency room staff fought valiantly for him. But unfortunately their efforts were not successful.

Tanner passed away that night because of his food allergy.



## **A Worldwide Issue**

Globally, about five percent of children have a food allergy.<sup>1</sup> In the United States, approximately four percent of adults and up to eight percent of children have an allergy,<sup>2</sup> with similar numbers reported in European and some Asian countries.<sup>3</sup> In a ward of 200 adults, that's about 8 people, and in a Primary of 50, that's 4 children.

More than 170 foods have been identified as potential allergens, but in the United States the "Big 8" account for the majority of food allergies: milk, egg, peanut, tree nuts, wheat, soy, fish, and crustacean shellfish.<sup>4</sup> Regionally, other foods top the list of allergens, such as chickpeas in India, buckwheat in South Korea and Japan, and ant eggs in Northern Thailand. Cow's milk and eggs are consistently among the most prevalent food allergens worldwide.<sup>5</sup>





An allergic reaction occurs when the body's immune system overreacts to a substance it perceives as a threat. The most severe of these reactions is anaphylaxis, which is a rapid, systemic response that can cause death.<sup>6</sup> Symptoms can include tingling or itching in the mouth; swelling of the lips, face, tongue, or other body parts; nausea or vomiting; constriction of the airways; rapid pulse and dizziness; and shock.<sup>7</sup>

"It is as serious as, if not more serious than, someone having a stroke or heart attack in church," points out Dr. Jonathan Olson, an allergist and a member of the Church. "A person having an allergic reaction could die more quickly than a person having a heart attack."

Although potential therapies are showing promise, there is currently no cure for food allergies. The standard of care continues to be "avoidance of the allergen and recognizing and treating anaphylaxis," says Dr. Olson.

### Food Is Love

Food is often the centerpiece of gatherings. It represents cultures, traditions, and holidays. Food is used to fuel our bodies, but it is also used to nourish our souls, show love and concern, and entice people to gather and connect.

Nowhere is this more true than in the Church. Treats are handed out in classes to encourage attendance or to reinforce a lesson. Ward potlucks, chili cook-offs, and

***"A person having an allergic reaction could die more quickly than a person having a heart attack."***

other activities give the Saints a reason to congregate and socialize. We make meals for new mothers and for funerals as a heartfelt service. We leave treats on doorsteps to say we are thinking of you.

Even the Savior taught a powerful lesson by feeding the 5,000 who had gathered to hear Him teach.<sup>8</sup>

These examples help illustrate why food allergies can be so challenging to manage and so hard for some to understand, even—and especially—at church. So often food is love. But if ward members view food allergies as an opportunity to minister, then making accommodations



for those with allergies, and even the *lack of food*, can also be an expression of love.

### **Making the Sacrament Sacred—and Safe**

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “The sacrament of the Lord’s Supper [is] the sacred, acknowledged focal point of our weekly worship experience. . . .

“ . . . This hour ordained of the Lord is the most sacred hour of our week.”<sup>9</sup>

However, as noted in the Church’s recently published guidelines on food allergies and cross-

contamination training, “Food allergies and reactions to food can have a significant effect on a person’s . . . emotional health and ability to participate in Church meetings and activities.”<sup>10</sup>

can ensure a safe sacrament experience for most members. Members with allergies can discuss with their bishop adaptations that are appropriate for the sacrament. Members may provide their own allergen-free bread in a

***Members with allergies can discuss with leaders safe options for their sacrament bread.***



sealed plastic bag.

Additionally, families with food allergies face challenges when others bring food or snacks into sacrament meeting. Because some allergic reactions can happen by simply breathing in or touching an allergen, families with food allergies navigate sacrament meeting by switching seats or moving to the foyer when food is present.

In speaking about the sacrament meeting experience in general, President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, suggested, “Our primary goal is for everyone to have a spiritual experience and a strengthening faith in our Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ through Sabbath day observance.” He added, “Surely we can expect that cell phones and iPads, games and food can be set aside for one precious hour out of 168 hours in a week for the sacrament meeting that is devoted to Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>11</sup>



For various reasons, not everyone can set aside food during church. But with the shortened schedule, perhaps some can consider President Ballard's suggestion and evaluate if we really need to bring food into sacrament meeting.

### **Bear One Another's Burdens**

While the physical impact of food allergies can be severe, the spiritual impact can be equally profound—for good or bad.

Francesca's daughter has a severe milk allergy. While her daughter was in Primary, one of her teachers loved to bring homemade cupcakes to class for birthdays. Francesca offered to bring safe cupcakes whenever there was a birthday. The teacher declined the offer and instead sent the six-year-old girl to sit in the hallway when birthday treats were shared.

"This was so hurtful on many levels," Francesca recalls. "I wish the teacher would have taken the opportunity to teach the children to 'be like Jesus' and care enough to include everyone."

Inclusion and exclusion are common themes when you speak to families with food allergies. Cynthia's nine-year-old son, who is allergic to peanuts and tree nuts, was anticipating attending a day camp. However, on the morning of the camp, a call came from a leader asking him not to attend. They could not accommodate his allergies.

"I hung up with her and sobbed," Cynthia recalls, "the sorrowful, bottom-of-my-heart tears for my little guy who was excluded again."

Katie Edna Steed, disability specialist manager for the Church, notes: "The Savior would leave the 99 and seek after the one. We need to remember that example—to see the one and be aware of the one."

### **We Can Help**

There is much that members with food allergies and their ward families can do to show love and make church participation safe and inclusive.

*What can families with food allergies do?*

Families with allergies can explain their needs to leaders and teachers—and communicate again as leaders and teachers change.

### **QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN PLANNING AN ACTIVITY OR LESSON**

1. Would including food in my lesson or activity support my message, or could it distract from my message? Could I eliminate food from my lesson or activity?
2. If food is an important part of my activity, how can I minister to those with food allergies? Are there food options that will serve my purpose while being safe for all involved? Could I ask individuals or parents to provide a safe treat or help me identify safe options?
3. If there is no way to provide something that everyone can have, can I provide an alternative for those with allergies? Can I coordinate directly with those with allergies to make a plan with which they feel comfortable?





They can offer to supply safe food and help plan menus and activities. They can provide simple, life-saving training and emergency plans. They will be understanding

***“The Savior would leave the 99 and seek after the one. Remember to see the one and be aware of the one.”***

when members express fear or reservations, but they will patiently educate members and work together to find safe and inclusive options. They should ask for reasonable accommodations that the ward can make and sustain.

*What can ward members do?*

Ward members can seek to understand individual situations. Ward members should defer to parental instruction about giving food to a child. If food is necessary for an activity or lesson, teachers and leaders can ask individuals and parents if the food will be safe. Ward members can invite individuals and parents to participate and problem solve as circumstances require.

Suzanne has several food allergies. She has been particularly touched by the sensitivity of the priests in her ward as they prepare the sacrament. “I am so humbled by the young men who have made it safe for me to take the sacrament,” she says.

One Sunday, the sacrament was not passed to her. The priests preparing it had noticed that her bread had been cross contaminated by the other bread on the table.

“They found me after sacrament meeting, explained what happened, and told me they had received special

permission from the bishop to administer the sacrament to me in a classroom,” Suzanne says. “I cried as they blessed and passed the sacrament in that small room. I

could feel the Savior’s love so strongly and His knowledge of how much I had struggled with this challenge.”

“Showing willingness to make a safe environment at church for people with severe allergies is also showing a willingness to bear one another’s burdens,” says Suzanne.



Francesca’s daughter is now in Young Women. Her Young Women president felt prompted to help this family in their burden. “I felt like we needed to do what it took to make sure she was not forced to choose between her safety and her worship,” she said. “I prayed about how we needed to face this situation and felt firmly that we needed to embrace this family and make sure they were fully included.”

Youth leaders accepted the challenge to plan an overnight youth conference that Francesca’s daughter could



safely attend. Francesca helped plan the menu and shop for food. The young men power washed the griddles before cooking on them.

“It was wonderful!” says Francesca. “I cried and felt God’s love through their kind, inclusive actions. So did my daughter.”



*Families, teachers, and leaders can work together to make church a safer place for everyone to learn and grow.*

### The Works of God Made Manifest

Tanner’s family has felt many miracles, large and small, since losing their son. They hope increased awareness of food allergies is one of them.

“It’s not that these kids with allergies are irresponsible. It’s not that they aren’t paying attention. But they are kids,” says Tanner’s father, Terry. “It just takes one second of letting your guard down.”

But ministering can help them keep their guard up. “Ministering, by definition, means attending to the needs of others,” says Dr. Olson. “Everything about the Church is based on the needs of the one and making sure their spiritual and physical needs are being met.”

Sharon Eubank, First Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, taught: “Christ tenderly told the Nephites, ‘I have commanded that *none of you* should go away.’ . . . It is an unwavering requirement of Christian disciples and Latter-day Saints to show true love to one another.”<sup>12</sup>

For Francesca, after a personal struggle to understand why her child faced the challenge of a food allergy, she came to realize, “Sometimes God heals someone with a disability to show forth His glorious works, and sometimes He allows someone to keep their disability because He wants His works to be made manifest in how others treat that person. God gives us all opportunities to learn

to be kind and learn to be like Him by allowing us to be a miracle for someone in their suffering.” ■

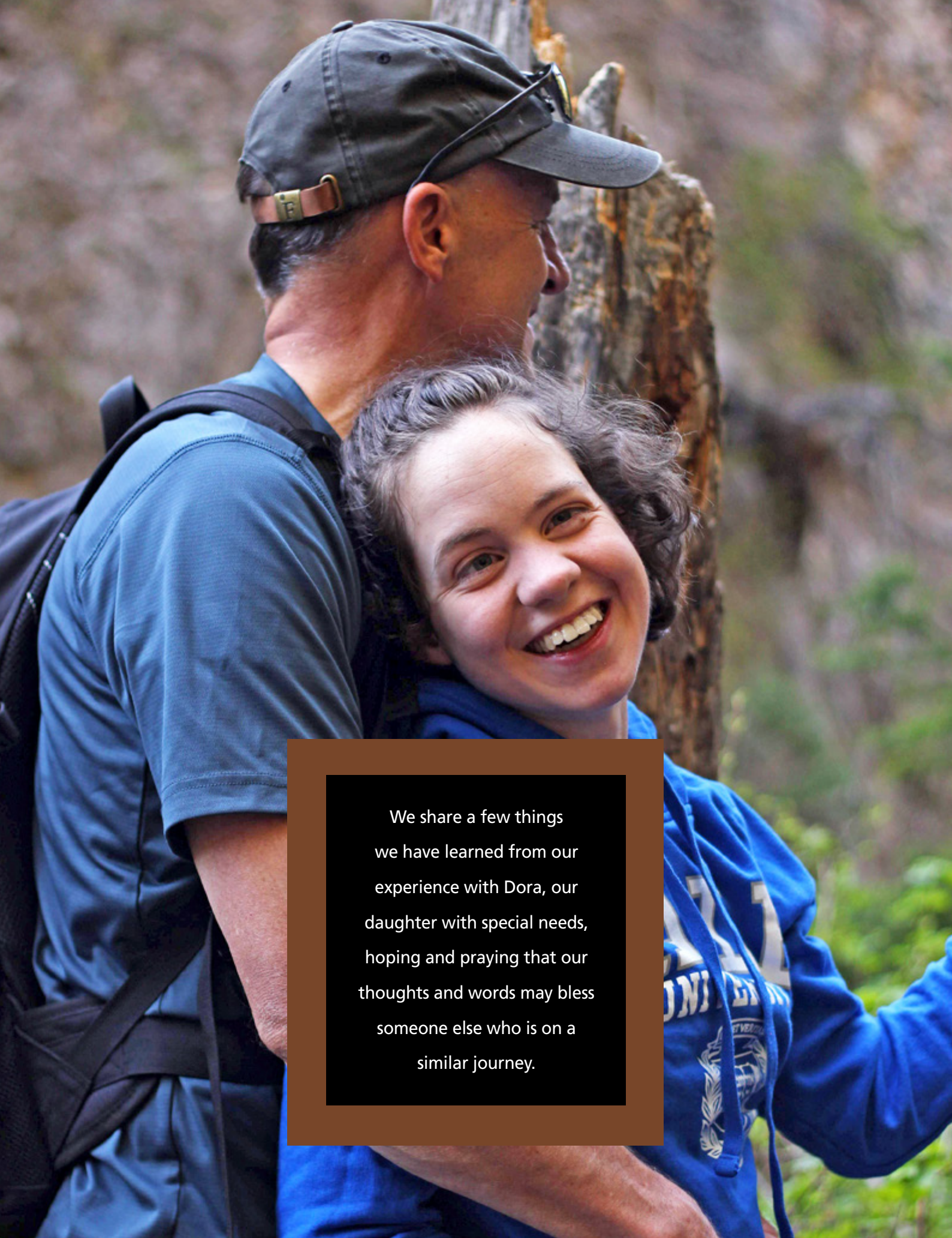
#### NOTES

1. See “Food Allergies: Global Burden, Causes, Treatment, Prevention and Public Policy” (consensus study by the U.S. Institute of Medicine, 2017), National Academies of Science.
2. See Wenyin Loh and Mimi L. K. Tang, “The Epidemiology of Food Allergy in the Global Context,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, vol. 15, no. 9 (Sept. 18, 2018), 2043, [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6163515](https://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6163515).
3. See Alison Joanne Lee, Meera Thalayasingam, and Bee Wah Lee, “Food Allergy in Asia: How Does It Compare?” *Asia Pacific Allergy*, vol. 3, no. 1 (Jan. 2013), 3–14, [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3563019/](https://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3563019/); FARE: Food Allergy Research & Education, “Food Allergy Facts and Statistics for the U.S.,” [foodallergy.org/resources/food-allergy-facts-and-statistics-us](https://foodallergy.org/resources/food-allergy-facts-and-statistics-us). Some food allergies are outgrown, which accounts for the larger percentage in childhood versus adulthood.
4. See FARE, “Food Allergy Facts and Statistics for the U.S.”
5. See Loh and Tang, “The Epidemiology of Food Allergy in the Global Context.”
6. See “Signs and Symptoms,” [anaphylaxis.org.uk/hcp/what-is-anaphylaxis/signs-and-symptoms](https://anaphylaxis.org.uk/hcp/what-is-anaphylaxis/signs-and-symptoms).
7. See Mayo Clinic, “Food allergy,” [mayoclinic.org](https://mayoclinic.org).
8. See Mark 6:37–44; Luke 9:10–17.
9. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Behold the Lamb of God,” *Ensign*, May 2019, 45, 46.
10. “Food Allergies,” in the Policies and Guidelines section of [disability.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://disability.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).
11. M. Russell Ballard, in “April 2015: Sabbath Day Observance” (video), [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/media-library](https://ChurchofJesusChrist.org/media-library).
12. Sharon Eubank, “Christ: The Light That Shines in Darkness,” *Ensign*, May 2019, 74; emphasis added.

#### HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

Visit [disability.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://disability.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) and select “Policies and Guidelines” to learn more about making church a safer place for those with food allergies, including how to reduce the chances for allergic reactions, how to recognize them, and how to respond.





We share a few things we have learned from our experience with Dora, our daughter with special needs, hoping and praying that our thoughts and words may bless someone else who is on a similar journey.





By Elder Paul B. Pieper  
Of the Seventy  
And by Melissa T. Pieper

# Special Needs, Special Lessons

In the days that followed our daughter Dora's scheduled birth by Caesarean section, we knew that something was different about her. But it was not until she was rushed directly to the hospital from a doctor's checkup three weeks later that we began to understand what a life-changing event her birth would be for our family.

The weeks and months that followed took us on a roller-coaster ride of hopes and fears as dedicated professionals tried to diagnose Dora's condition. Each new theory brought its own set of anxieties.

"Oh please, not *that*. We could not bear to lose her," we responded to one possible diagnosis. "If it is *this*, we are not sure how we can deal with it," we responded to another.

Diagnosis is a two-edged sword. It can bring closure

and help one understand what the future may be like, but it can also create expectations or define limitations that may not even be real. In our case, we are grateful that after all the theories and tests, doctors could never come to a specific diagnosis for Dora.



"She is physiologically normal in every way," they told us, "but she suffers from low muscle tone and seizures."

We have lived the past 28 years with that statement—its uncertainties, its twists and turns, its challenges, and its joys and possibilities. We did not know what the road would be like, but we never felt limited by a specific medical diagnosis.

***We love to define Dora by her abilities rather than by her limitations.***

## Defining a Person with Special Needs

Some of the most frequent questions we have received over the years about Dora are “What does she have?” and “What is her disability?” We generally answer by saying something like, “Well, she doesn’t talk, walk without aid, or feed or dress herself, but she is so much more than that.”

We have learned not to define her by her inabilities or her limitations. Rather, we love to define her by her abilities.

For example, Dora can smile. Her smile makes those around her smile. Total strangers have stopped us in the airport to ask if they can take a picture with Dora simply because they have been overwhelmed by the light of her radiant smile.

She can give hugs. If you are lucky enough to get a hug from Dora, it will change your life. Once, when we were walking out of a sporting event, Dora passed a homeless man on the sidewalk and spontaneously reached out and hugged him. It was obvious from his expression that her hug was one of the most amazing things he had experienced that day.

Dora helps you feel loved. If Dora locks eyes with you, even for a second, you will feel a love and sweetness that



## FRAIL FRAME, DIVINE DESTINY



“A perfect body is not required to achieve a divine destiny. In fact, some of the sweetest spirits are housed in frail frames. Great spiritual strength is often developed by those with physical challenges—precisely because they are challenged. Such individuals are entitled to all the blessings that God has in store for His faithful and obedient children.”

President Russell M. Nelson, “Your Body: A Magnificent Gift to Cherish,” *New Era*, Aug. 2019, 5.

might cause tears to well up in your eyes. With those amazing gifts, why would we ever want to define her as “disabled” or “handicapped”? She has influenced hundreds of lives for good simply by being who she is and doing what she does.

## One Day at a Time

It is easy for parents to become overwhelmed when they realize that their child will depend on them for a lifetime. Feeling overwhelmed is even more pronounced when that child requires constant physical, emotional, and perhaps medical support. The prospect of feeding, dressing, bathing, caring for, and supporting a child every day can appear as a mountain that is just too tall and steep to climb.

In those moments, it is important to step back and say, “I just need to do this today.” We have found that by focusing just on the needs and opportunities of each day, the task seems more manageable. We can live just one day at a time, and we can look for the joy and growth that come with that day.



## Capable of Enlargement

Each spirit sent to earth is capable of “enlargement.”<sup>1</sup> All of us are expected to exercise our agency to the degree that we are able. We caregivers are responsible to help those under our care to grow and progress physically, emotionally, and spiritually to the extent they are able. That can mean helping them to have opportunities to serve—such as Dora giving hugs or smiles. It can also mean helping them to use and, if possible, enlarge their physical and mental capacities through therapy and activity.

In doing so, we need to be realistic. If we are constantly frustrated, we may be pushing too hard. The Lord can help us and guide us through His Spirit to do those things that are possible and appropriate. In some cases, He will give us miracles, small as they may seem.

We will always remember being told by a leading orthopedic specialist that Dora would never walk. But after several years of much prayer and hard work, Dora can now walk with assistance. Her overall condition hasn't changed, but the Lord gave us a small miracle to help her grow and find more enjoyment in life.

## Faith Not to Be Healed

It is only natural to ask *why?* when a precious, challenged child of God is sent to our home. Our faith naturally leads us to ask God whether it would be possible to heal or remove the child's condition. We have the certain faith that God can heal our daughter, but He has also made it clear that it is not His will to do so now.

Heavenly Father has His own purposes for sending Dora to us, and He will heal her—if and when He wills

to do so. That day may not come until the time of ultimate healing—the Resurrection. It takes as much faith to accept God's will that these precious ones not be healed now as it does to believe that He can heal them now. Dora was sent to us with a purpose, and we have felt cautioned not to seek *why* but to ask Heavenly Father *what* He wants us to learn.

“To ask, Why does this have to happen to me? Why do I have to suffer this, now? What have I done to cause this? will lead you into blind alleys,” said Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Instead, he said, “Ask, What am I to do? What am I to learn from this experience? . . . When you pray with real conviction, ‘Please let me know Thy will’ and ‘May Thy will be done,’ you are in the strongest position to receive the maximum help from your loving Father.”<sup>2</sup>

At times we think of the parents of those children the Savior healed during His mortal ministry. Perhaps, like us, those parents wondered for what purpose their children were sent to them. After the Savior had healed them, the parents could understand that it would have been impossible for Him to demonstrate His healing power


and divinity had there been no one to heal. We have the faith that a time of healing will come for all of God's children.<sup>3</sup>

We look forward to that day. ■



## NOTES

1. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “All the minds and spirits that God ever sent into the world are susceptible of enlargement” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 210).
2. Richard G. Scott, “Trust in the Lord,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 17.
3. For insights into having “the faith not to be healed,” see David A. Bednar, “Accepting the Lord's Will and Timing,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2016, 28–35.



# Is My Child with a Disability Ready to Be Baptized?

*Our son's eighth birthday was approaching. But how could we be sure he was ready for baptism?*



By Katie Edna Steed

Our son, David, would be turning eight in less than a year. My husband and I wanted him to be prepared to make the sacred covenants of baptism. That meant doing things like reading the Book of Mormon, studying the baptismal covenants, and reviewing the baptismal interview questions. We had done all this before with David's older sister, but David has autism, so deciding if he should be baptized was not as straightforward for us.

Yes, we knew what to do to help him prepare, but looming over all of this preparation were the questions: *Should* David be baptized? Was he ready? Did he need to be baptized? Did he understand what he would be committing to? How could we know for sure that we were doing the right thing?

Like many parents who have a child with a disability, these questions led us on a journey of seeking doctrinal insights and personal revelation.

### The Age of Accountability vs. Accountability

Doctrine and Covenants 68:27 reads, "And their children shall be baptized for the remission of their sins when eight years old, and receive the laying on of the hands."

If we relied solely on this scripture, we would conclude that any eight-year-old is ready to be baptized. However, the scriptures also teach:

"Little children are redeemed . . . through mine Only Begotten;

"Wherefore, they cannot sin . . . until they begin to become accountable before me" (Doctrine and Covenants 29:46–47; see also Moroni 8:7–22).

How could my husband and I understand if David was accountable? We continued to search.

We learned from Church policy that the individual's accountability depends on both his wishes and his level of understanding: if David was worthy and desirous to be baptized and demonstrated that he could be held accountable, we should not withhold baptism from him.

We also learned that if David's disability limited his intellectual capacity to that of a little child, he would not be held accountable and would not need saving ordinances (see *General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* [2020], 38.2.1.8, ChurchofJesusChrist.org; members who have questions about Church policies can consult with their bishops).

David's intellectual capacity was actually quite typical. However, I still found myself questioning whether David had reached an appropriate level of accountability. I continued to prayerfully search and hope for direction that would bring me peace.

### Disabilities and Innocence

I know some parents who have a child with a disability who take great comfort from reading that those who pass through mortality without

having become accountable retain the status of innocence: “All little children are alive in Christ. . . . For the power of redemption cometh on all them that have no law; . . . and unto such baptism availeth nothing” (Moroni 8:22).

The Prophet Joseph Smith also described the condition of children who die and have not become accountable: “And I also beheld that all children who die before they arrive at the years of accountability are saved in the celestial kingdom of heaven” (Doctrine and Covenants 137:10).

I know that for these individuals, baptism is not necessary in this life. I also knew that God would help us to know what would be best for David.

### Seeking Divine Guidance

For those with disabilities, there is a large range of abilities. Many individuals with disabilities are above the mental level of eight years and may be baptized and confirmed if they become accountable (see *General Handbook*, 38.2.3.5, ChurchofJesusChrist.org). Other individuals will not be accountable. I knew my husband and I could consult with our son, with God, and with our bishop, who stands as a “judge in Israel,” to help make the inspired decision concerning David’s readiness to be baptized (see Doctrine and Covenants 107:76).

These words from Alma brought me great peace: “And now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, . . . what have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered into a covenant with him, that ye will serve him and keep

his commandments, that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you?” (Mosiah 18:8, 10).

After all of our preparation, all of our lessons at home and in Primary, I started to ask David questions I knew he would be asked in his baptismal interview.

Sometimes his responses demonstrated understanding, but sometimes he didn’t know how to respond. I found myself wondering if we were doing the right thing.

Finally, the Spirit whispered to my heart, “Why don’t you ask David what he thinks?”

I turned to David and asked, “David, do you want to be baptized?”

He looked right up at me and said, “Yes!”

When I asked him why he wanted to be baptized, he said, “To be like Jesus.”

I was overcome with peace and direction. I knew right then that even if David didn’t understand every question perfectly, he was ready to be baptized and confirmed. He knew what he needed to know, and most importantly, he knowingly had a desire to enter God’s kingdom through baptism.

The day David was baptized and confirmed a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was full of love, friendship, and peace. The room was filled with family, ward members, school friends, and even teachers from David’s school. The example David set that day of choosing to follow Jesus and be baptized was an example that influenced many for good. Our family is stronger because we had the opportunity to learn how the works of God would be made manifest through our son, David (see John 9:3). ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*



## HOW CAN WE HELP MEMBERS WITH DISABILITIES?

As leaders lovingly follow the Savior's example of helping others feel included, members with disabilities and their families will feel His love and understand their important place within the body of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 12:12, 18). As you lead and serve, consider the following:

**1. Don't be afraid to ask questions.**

Sometimes we are afraid to address differences, but as you ask questions respectfully, individuals will appreciate your sincere desire to understand their circumstances. Frame questions in a loving way, such as: "How can I help make your experience at church more meaningful?" Members with disabilities and their families are often the best resource on their disability and can tell you where help is needed.

**2. Foster understanding.** After consulting with members about their disabilities, discuss with them what they would feel comfortable having you share with others. Then, as appropriate, help ward leaders and other members understand the individual's disabilities and needs. This can foster greater compassion and understanding as well as inspiration about how to provide support.

**3. Provide accommodations.** There are many simple adjustments you can make to promote learning and involvement for everyone, including allowing extra time

to respond to questions, using closed captions with videos, allowing those with limited hearing or sight to sit where they can hear or see better, and using a variety of media to present lessons. You can also consult a ward or stake disability specialist about specific accommodations you can make.

**4. Create service opportunities.** Meet with individuals and their caregivers to identify what their skills and talents are. Then prayerfully identify meaningful ways for them to serve. Everyone has something that they can contribute to the work.

**5. Reach out with love.** Seek to emulate the open acceptance in Elder Jeffrey R. Holland's words: "As members of the Church, we are all on this journey. . . . Whatever your circumstances, we welcome you" ("What I Wish Every New Member Knew—and Every Longtime Member Remembered," *Ensign*, Oct. 2006, 10). Of all the Church's resources, one of the greatest will always be individuals who minister to one another in love and friendship.

## What Church Leaders Are Saying

# about Disabilities

### The Priceless Gift of a Body

“For reasons usually unknown, some people are born with physical limitations. Specific parts of the body may be abnormal. Regulatory systems may be out of balance. And all of our bodies are subject to disease and death. Nevertheless, *the gift of a physical body is priceless*. Without it, we cannot attain a fullness of joy.”<sup>1</sup>

—President Russell M. Nelson, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

### Our Differences Make Us Stronger

“The longer I live, the more I realize that everyone has felt different from the ‘regular’ members of the Church. That’s because our challenges add a level of uniqueness that sometimes makes us feel different. . . .

“ . . . Members of the Church have more in common as disciples of Jesus Christ than those things that make us feel ‘different.’

“We have been ‘baptized into one body’ (1 Corinthians 12:13). It’s our differences that make up the body of Christ. . . .

“So if you find yourself placing labels on others or on yourself, *try to remember that it is our differences that make us stronger.*”<sup>2</sup>

—Sister Reyna I. Aburto, Second Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency



*May we all understand  
the hope and strength of  
our Savior’s Atonement.*



### The Savior Knows Our Struggles

“Our Savior experienced and suffered the fulness of all mortal challenges ‘according to the flesh’ so He could know ‘according to the flesh’ how to ‘succor [which means to give relief or aid to] his people according to their infirmities’ [Alma 7:12]. **He therefore knows our struggles, our heartaches, our temptations, and our suffering, for He willingly experienced them all as an essential part of His Atonement.** And because of this, His Atonement empowers Him to succor us—to give us the strength to bear it all. . . .

“ . . . Some are born with physical or mental disabilities that cause personal suffering for them and struggles for those who love and care for them. . . .

“One day all of these mortal burdens will pass away and there will be no more pain (see Revelation 21:4). I pray that we will all understand the hope and strength of our Savior’s Atonement: the assurance of immortality, the opportunity for eternal life, and the sustaining strength we can receive if only we will ask.”<sup>3</sup>

—President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency

### All Things to Be Made Right

“The Savior makes all things right. No injustice in mortality is permanent, even death, for He restores life again. **No injury, disability, betrayal, or abuse goes uncompensated in the end** because of His ultimate justice and mercy.”<sup>4</sup>

—Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



### Choices Are More Important Than Abilities

“Often, when we look at ourselves, we see only our limitations and deficiencies. We might think we have to be ‘more’ of something for God to use us—more intelligent, more wealthy, more charismatic, more talented, more spiritual. **Blessings will come not so much because of your abilities but because of your choices.** And the God of the universe will work within and through you, magnifying your humble efforts for His purposes.

“His work has always advanced on this important principle: ‘Out of small things proceedeth that which is great’ [Doctrine and Covenants 64:33].”<sup>5</sup>

—Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



### Being Careful about Labels

“There is a need to use great care in choosing how you label or think of yourselves. **Most important, we must remember that each of us is a child of God with a potential destiny of eternal life.**”

“Every other label, even including occupation, citizenship, physical characteristics, or honors, is temporary or trivial in eternal terms. Don’t choose to label yourselves or think of yourselves in terms that put a limit on your eternal journey and goals.”<sup>6</sup>

—President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency



### Seeing beyond Mortal Limitations

“My oldest sister was born with cataracts. She was legally blind from birth. When she was 15 months old, she got her first pair of tiny glasses with thick, heavy lenses. . . .

“Although she was bright intellectually, because of her poor eyesight she missed visual cues, and some of those things affected her social development. For example, she was never able to clearly see facial expressions. Gaps in understanding caused her to misunderstand situations, which sometimes created challenges for her and others.

“Despite these challenges, she learned to play the piano and organ. She graduated from college with a degree in education, and for many years she has used her skills as a special education teacher to help struggling students. **Her spiritual vision allowed her to see beyond her mortal limitations.** . . .

“Let us each strive to live according to clear and distinct gospel truth, so that we can open our spiritual eyes to the beauty, joy, and divine potential our Heavenly Father sees in each of us.”<sup>7</sup>

—President Jean B. Bingham, Relief Society General President

### Limitless Potential

“Let me tell you of a man we met in a small village outside of Hyderabad, India, in 2006. This man exemplified a willingness to change. Appa Rao Nulu was born in rural India. When he was three years old, he contracted polio and was left physically disabled. His society taught him that his





potential was severely limited. However, as a young adult he met our missionaries. *They taught him of a greater potential, both in this life and in the eternity to come.* He was baptized and confirmed a member of the Church. With a significantly raised vision, he set a goal to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood and to serve a full-time mission. In 1986 he was ordained an elder and called to serve in India. Walking was not easy—he did his best, using a cane in each hand, and he fell often—but quitting was never an option. He made a commitment to honorably and devotedly serve a mission, and he did.”<sup>8</sup>

—Elder Donald L. Hallstrom, emeritus member of the Seventy

### Faith in the Reality of God’s Love

“There is a woman who suffers with a debilitating, chronic illness that persists despite medical attention, priesthood blessings, and fasting and prayers. Nevertheless, *her faith in the power of prayer and the reality of God’s love for her is undiminished.* She presses ahead day by day (and sometimes hour by hour) serving as called in the Church and, together with her husband, looking after her young family, smiling as much as she can. Her compassion for others runs deep, refined by her own suffering, and she often loses herself in ministering to others. She continues steadfast, and people feel happy being around her.”<sup>9</sup>

—Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

### God Loves Us and Our Afflicted Ones

“To all of you who have challenges, concerns, disappointments, or heartaches with a dear one, know this: *with infinite love and everlasting compassion, God our Heavenly Father loves your afflicted one, and He loves you!*”<sup>10</sup>

—Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

### NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “We Are Children of God,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 86.
2. Reyna I. Aburto, Facebook post, Nov. 25, 2019.
3. Dallin H. Oaks, “Strengthened by the Atonement of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 61–64.
4. D. Todd Christofferson, “The Resurrection of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 112.
5. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “A Yearning for Home,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2017, 23.
6. Dallin H. Oaks, Facebook post, June 13, 2019.
7. Jean B. Bingham, “Catch the Vision, Share the Vision!” *Ensign*, Aug. 2019, 40–41, 43.
8. Donald L. Hallstrom, “What Manner of Men?” *Ensign*, May 2014, 54.
9. D. Todd Christofferson, “Firm and Steadfast in the Faith of Christ,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2018, 32.
10. Ronald A. Rasband, “Special Lessons,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 80.



How Do I Talk  
to My Kids about

# DISABILITIES?

Written with input from Church Disability Services

## 7

### THINGS EVERY CHILD SHOULD KNOW

- We all have different abilities. Sometimes these differences are obvious and sometimes they aren't. We can learn a lot from our differences.
- While it's OK to notice differences, we should also take time to find out what we have in common. People are more alike than we are different.
- A person with a disability is a child of God, just like you and me.
- Don't be afraid of someone with a disability. You can't "catch" a disability like a cold.
- One good thing we can do when we meet someone with a disability is to ask them, "Tell me more about yourself." It's nice to give others a chance to share. (Find more "Tips for Talking with Someone with a Disability" on the next page.)
- Probably the best thing we can do for anyone is to be their friend. Find things you enjoy doing together.
- If you have a question about someone with a disability, talk to your parents about it. Even if they don't know all the answers, you can learn more about it together.



## ACTIVITY IDEAS



Help your child think of someone who has a different level of ability. Come up with a list of things that are different about that person and things that are the same. Be sure to point out how many things your child has in common with them.



Again, help your child think of someone who has a different level of ability. Ask your child, “What are three ideas you have for how you can be their friend?” (It would be great to come up with some activities that your child could invite the person to join!)



Read and talk about articles from the *Friend* on the topic of disabilities (some examples are listed under “Additional Helpful Resources”).



Practice using some of the “Tips for Talking with Someone with a Disability” on this page.



## TIPS FOR TALKING WITH SOMEONE WITH A DISABILITY

- Ask before helping them with something.
- Talk directly to them, not whoever is with them.
- Avoid talking louder or shouting at them.
- If they don’t communicate with words, look for other ways to communicate.
- If you hear someone saying something mean to them—sometimes our own children can be rude without meaning to—use it as an opportunity to model an empathetic reaction. You could say something like this to the person with a disability: “I’m sorry they said that. Some of us are still learning.” ■



### Additional Helpful Resources

- The Church’s site for disability resources is [disability.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://disability.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).
- For child-friendly stories, activities, and media, visit [lessonhelps.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://lessonhelps.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) and click on the topic “Disabilities.”
- “Eli’s Helping Hands,” *Friend*, June 2020, 4–5.
- “Katie and Quincy,” *Friend*, Oct. 2018, 8–9.

# The Prophet's Words for Everyone

*I didn't expect to see a quote from a prophet of God on the walls of the school.*

I awoke early one morning to get ready for work. While I usually love my job as a teacher, I was out of sorts and just wanted to crawl back under the covers and pretend it was bedtime again.

When I arrived at the high school, I tried to get my mind ready for work. I knew I needed to teach a math class soon, but my heart and head both felt dull and depressed. My emotions were all negative.

I decided to visit the restroom before class. Every once in a while, someone will post fliers in the restrooms with

information for students and staff. Out of the corner of my eye, a flier caught my attention. It had a nice quote on it that read, “If you want to give a light to others, you have to glow yourself.”<sup>1</sup> I was surprised to see that this quote came from President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018).

I didn't expect to see a quote from a prophet of God on the walls of the school. I live in a small town in Pennsylvania, USA, and I'm sure I'm one of a few, or possibly the only, member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in

the school. I knew I was one of a few who would understand the importance of the words of President Monson—a man I had sustained for many years as the prophet. I felt that this message was meant for me. It softened my heart and lifted my mood. Gratitude for my testimony filled my heart, and Heavenly Father's love surrounded me.

I wanted to pull the flier off the wall and keep it in my pocket all day to uplift me, but I had a quick realization. President Monson wasn't just the prophet for me and other members of the Church—he was the prophet for the world. His words, like the words of President Russell M. Nelson today, are for everyone. A prophet's words help and uplift *all* who will hear them. I took a picture of the quote with my phone and left the flier up for anyone else who might need it.

I'm grateful Heavenly Father put this message in my path. I want to give light to others. Through obedience and a closeness with our Savior, I can glow even on days when darkness would have me lose my way. ■ Katherine Furgeson, Pennsylvania, USA

#### NOTE

1. Thomas S. Monson, “For I Was Blind, but Now I See,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 56.





# “I Will Not Reject My Faith”

*I became the object of mocking and contempt at work. Why was I hanging on to a job that had become a danger to my spiritual well-being?*

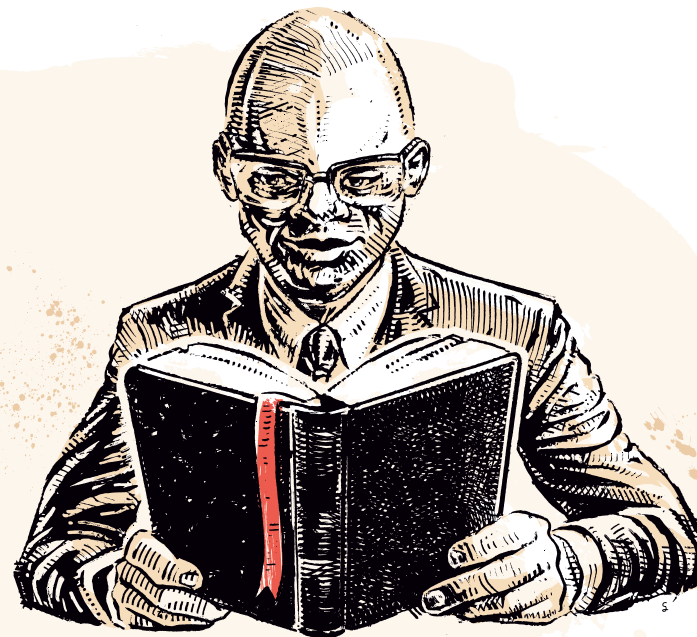
Shortly after I was hired as the assistant director of a large library, my team and I began an ambitious project to digitize 37,000 books. One day my supervisor called me into his office.

“Edouard,” he said, “I’ve been invited to present our book digitization project in the United States and to solicit some new acquisitions. I’ve been asked to bring a trusted co-worker with me. I have confidence in you but not in your church. If you renounce your faith, you can come with me.”

Before I could say anything, he told me to think about it and then dismissed me.

That evening, I shared with my wife what had happened. She encouraged me to have faith. The next day, I told my supervisor that I would keep my faith. He was angry and said he’d just travel alone.

A year later, I had an opportunity to travel to France to receive training in library funding, acquisitions, and management. I just needed my supervisor’s approval. He said he would approve only if I denounced my faith. I again declined. He then tore up the document and threw it in my face. Some time later my



supervisor approached me again.

“I am about to leave on another trip,” he said. “You can come with me, but the condition remains the same. I will never travel with a member of your church.”

“I will not reject my faith,” I said. He left without saying a word. Soon he began to talk about me to my colleagues.

“I have offered him opportunities,” he’d say. “But he has exhausted them all because of his blind faith. He is a fool.”

From then on, I became the object of mockery and contempt at work. I felt beaten down. One evening, preoccupied with this problem, I opened the Bible and read, “If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee:

for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell” (Matthew 5:29).

If the Lord says we should get rid of something in order to save ourselves, why was I hanging on to a job that had become a danger to my spiritual well-being? The next day, I handed in my resignation.

Today, I rejoice in this choice. With courage and faith in Jesus Christ, I faced humiliation at work and temporary unemployment. My new job now provides opportunities unavailable to me before. The Lord has blessed me, and I thank Him for His kindness and His love toward me. ■ Edouard Ngindu, Katoka, Democratic Republic of the Congo

# We Needed a Second Miracle

*We had already had one miracle with my wife's pregnancy. Now we needed another one.*

**M**y wife, Sarah, was 24 weeks pregnant when she started having a lot of pain. I gave her a blessing and then left for work. I was still at work when she called me home to take her to the hospital.

"Your baby's coming," we were told when we arrived. Since Sarah was only 24 weeks along, the baby's best chance of survival was an emergency C-section.

"Your wife doesn't need to go through any additional trauma," the doctor told me. "She's going to lose the baby anyway."

Sarah and I talked and prayed about what the doctor had said. We felt that if there was any chance our baby could survive, we needed to take that chance. We had experienced difficulty having children. Our oldest son, Taylor, is adopted. When Sarah got pregnant two years after we adopted Taylor, we felt that it was a miracle. Now we needed a second miracle.

A little while later, a specialist came to us and said, "I think we may have time to get your wife to a children's hospital in El Paso, Texas, that is equipped to care for premature and critically ill newborns. The baby

will have a chance there!"

An ambulance pulled away from our local hospital with Sarah and sped toward the children's hospital 45 minutes away. I followed close behind, pleading with the Lord in prayer to give us a miracle. I promised Him that I would stay on the gospel path and try to be better.

At the hospital, I told the doctor in the neonatal intensive care unit: "We know we have already had one miracle with my wife's pregnancy. Now we expect another one."

The birth went well, and our baby survived. After she spent four and a half months in the neonatal intensive care unit, we brought Shanna home. We *had* received a second miracle. Not many years later, we received yet another miracle—the Lord blessed us with twins.

Shanna has a slightly low IQ, and she's in a wheelchair, but she's full of joy, always positive, and a friend to everyone. She loves to tell you about her day, and she's excited about life. She keeps us smiling and teaches us to be happy. We love her and are grateful for her. Shanna is truly a blessing. ■

Daniel Payne, New Mexico, USA

ILLUSTRATION BY BRADLEY CLARK







# A Temple Open House Opened My Heart

*With the announcement of the temple open house, I felt as if the Lord was personally inviting me to enter His house.*

I was baptized when I was 15 years old. A lot of people didn't understand my new faith. Some, including my friends, even made fun of me for my decision to join the Church. My parents weren't members of the Church, so I didn't have their support.

As a result, it became difficult for me to continue attending church and to keep living the gospel. By the time I was 19, I had stopped going to church.

Ten years later, I heard that a temple would be built in El Salvador. I was surprised to hear that a house of the Lord would be built in my country! Four years later, the San Salvador El Salvador Temple was completed, and a temple open house was announced. When I found out that the open house would give me the opportunity to enter the temple,

I felt as if the Lord was personally inviting me to enter His house.

The day I walked through the temple was one of the best days of my life. During the open house, I learned more about what happens inside dedicated temples. I also learned about sacred temple covenants that individuals make with God.

As I walked through each room of the temple, I felt God's presence. I felt at peace. Visiting the temple gave me the desire to come back to the Church and to live the gospel again. When I realized I could take part in God's great work, I wanted to complete temple work for my ancestors and to exercise the priesthood.

My experience in the temple that day changed me. Now I help members in my ward prepare for the temple and assist them with family history so they can do temple work for their ancestors.

It is never too late to return to the Church. It is never too late to do good. The Lord, with His infinite love, is always with us. The temple is a place that unites us with Him and allows us to one day return to live with Him. ■

Ricardo Matamoros, Ahuachapán, El Salvador

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### 3 Tips for Having Crucial Conversations While Dating

By Camille Dayton

## Searching for a Spouse— and the Savior's Grace

The Lord promises that “[His] grace is sufficient for the meek” (Ether 12:26). These words should give all of us young single adults hope and comfort, especially when it comes to finding an eternal companion. Trusting disciples of Christ often search for love with open hearts, only to be disappointed by unmet hopes or upset by bad behavior from those they date. This search can produce fear, anger, bitterness, and stress, especially if it continues for years beyond your expected marriage date!

But, as you can imagine, these emotions are not what God intends us to constantly feel as we follow His command to marry and raise righteous, happy families. In fact, **God wants us to feel joyful** during that search!

With this in mind, the articles in this section are designed to help you **take the stress out of finding your eternal companion**. You'll find stories about **how to progress in life** regardless of your marital status and **advice that can help prepare you** for an eventual loving, nurturing, and deep-rooted marriage.

As you search for the one who will give you their whole heart as you give them yours, take a moment to read these articles. I promise that one of them will lighten your heart and help you to trust that **the Savior's grace really is sufficient for you**.

Sincerely,  
Landon Hawes

Find these articles and more:

- At [ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)
- In **YA Weekly** (under the Young Adults section in the Gospel Library)

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PHOTOGRAPH FROM GETTY IMAGES









# Taking the Pressure out of Finding an Eternal Companion

By Dominika Stoica

**T**he Church is very small in Poland. Actually, it's small everywhere in Eastern Europe. We often don't have a lot of Church members our age in our whole country, let alone our ward or stake. Luckily there are conferences for young single adults held each year in many European countries.

These conferences are organized not necessarily to help you find your "perfect match," but mostly to help young adults make new friends who share their values and strengthen them in their faith by talking to others about their spiritual experiences.

## Focusing on Friendship

During one conference in Poland in 2010, I met Radu. He was from Romania. We talked briefly, but he soon left on his mission and our paths didn't cross again until another YSA conference three years later. There we had the time to actually get to know each other a little bit, but I was leaving on my own mission a month later.

Radu wished me all the best and said, "Let's keep in touch." I didn't really think he would, but he did. He wrote me letters throughout my mission. There was nothing romantic in his letters, but he became one of my dear friends. And I loved the respect he had for me and for missionary work in general.

When I returned home, Radu and I were both very excited to properly get to know each other—we could finally make it happen after so many years! We picked an affordable place for both of us to meet (which was Belgium at the time) to spend some time together. We talked and talked and talked some more.

Life isn't about getting married but rather becoming the best version of ourselves and letting God work His plan in our lives.

We didn't put any pressure on our relationship. We focused on building a friendship and simply getting to know each other. We always had so much fun together, but we also had very meaningful and profound discussions about the things that matter most. Over the next while, our friendship grew stronger. We Skyped almost daily, and over time we started saying nightly prayers together. We eventually started visiting each other's country every few months.

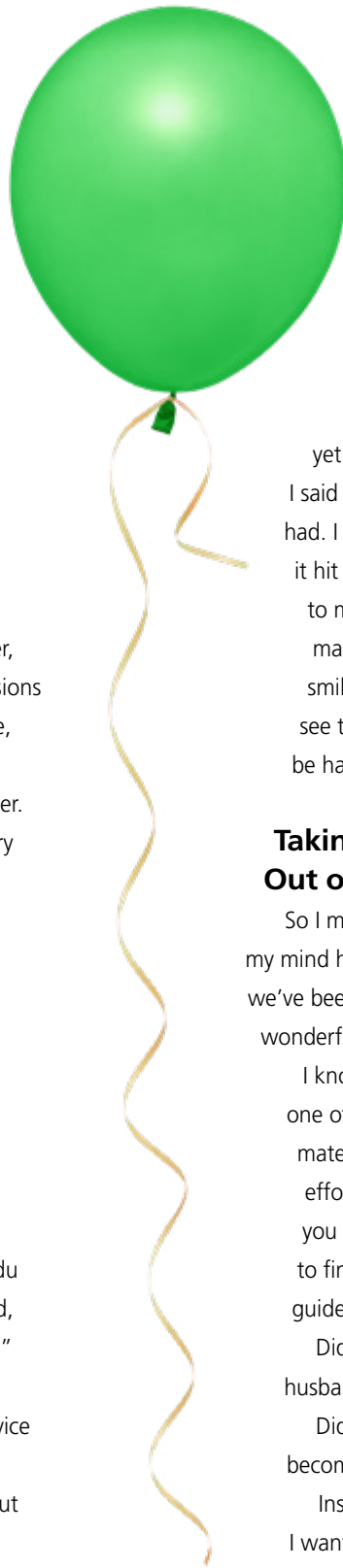
### **"Let's Pray about It"**

After a while, I started feeling anxious because I felt like our friendship was developing into something more. But he was from Romania! I didn't want to get into a long-distance relationship because a relationship could lead to marriage, which meant one of us would have to move to another country. I didn't feel ready for that.

One day when I was feeling particularly anxious, Radu reminded me of a simple yet powerful principle. He said, "Let's pray about our relationship and see how we feel."

I didn't know why I hadn't thought about praying about our relationship earlier. But that was the best advice I received at the time. So I prayed for guidance.

I didn't expect any specific answer at that moment, but I decided to keep moving forward with getting to know Radu. I hoped Heavenly Father would give me a warning if our relationship wasn't something I should continue. But over time, the answer I had asked for *did* come. I had conversations about Radu with my family and friends, and in every conversation I was reassured I was going in the right direction.



Soon I had a funny realization. After having yet another great Skype call with Radu one night, I said to myself, "He really is the best friend I've ever had. I want to be his friend forever!" That's when it hit me. Immediately a voice in my head replied to my own comment, "Well, then you need to marry him!" I knew that Heavenly Father was smiling upon my relationship with Radu. I could see that he was my best friend and that we could be happy together.

### **Taking the Pressure Out of Finding a Spouse**

So I moved to Romania and married Radu. Never in my mind had I thought I would end up in Romania. But we've been married for four years now, and we have a wonderful daughter, Amelia.

I know what you're thinking—I'm just another one of those young single adults who met my "soul mate" at a YSA conference and things worked out effortlessly. But that's not true. The reason I tell you this story is for you to stop pressuring yourself to find your eternal companion and instead let God guide you.

Did I go to those YSA conferences to find a husband? No.

Did I think that one of the guys I met there would become my husband? Not really.

Instead I took the pressure off finding whom I wanted to marry and I simply went to these conferences to connect with others and build friendships—which was exactly what Radu and I did in the beginning.

The pressure to find our eternal companion as soon as possible can be so real sometimes. But there



is no time limit on eternal relationships. There's no need to stress over it. Life isn't about getting married but rather becoming the best version of ourselves and letting God work His plan in our lives. Yes, we should all go out there, show up, meet people, make new friends, and get out of our comfort zones. But we should do so with the thought, "I'm going to have fun and meet some great friends" rather than "I have to keep my eyes open to find 'the one' or I'm going to mess up my entire life plan!"

One thing Radu told me when we were engaged was that although he usually felt a bit stressed around girls he liked, he didn't feel that way with me. He said because of our friendship, he always felt relaxed and like he could always be himself.

So look for good people to surround yourself with and enjoy where you are now. Because honestly, when you stop stressing out and just choose to build friendships and learn to love who and where you are, that's when life becomes much more enjoyable.

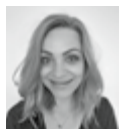
## Trusting in God's Plan for Our Future

Radu and I aren't perfect. We weren't really looking for the "perfect" person—we were just being ourselves. What I've observed is that who you truly are and how you live is what is most attractive to others. When you strive to follow Jesus Christ, you will attract others who are doing their best to follow Him as well.

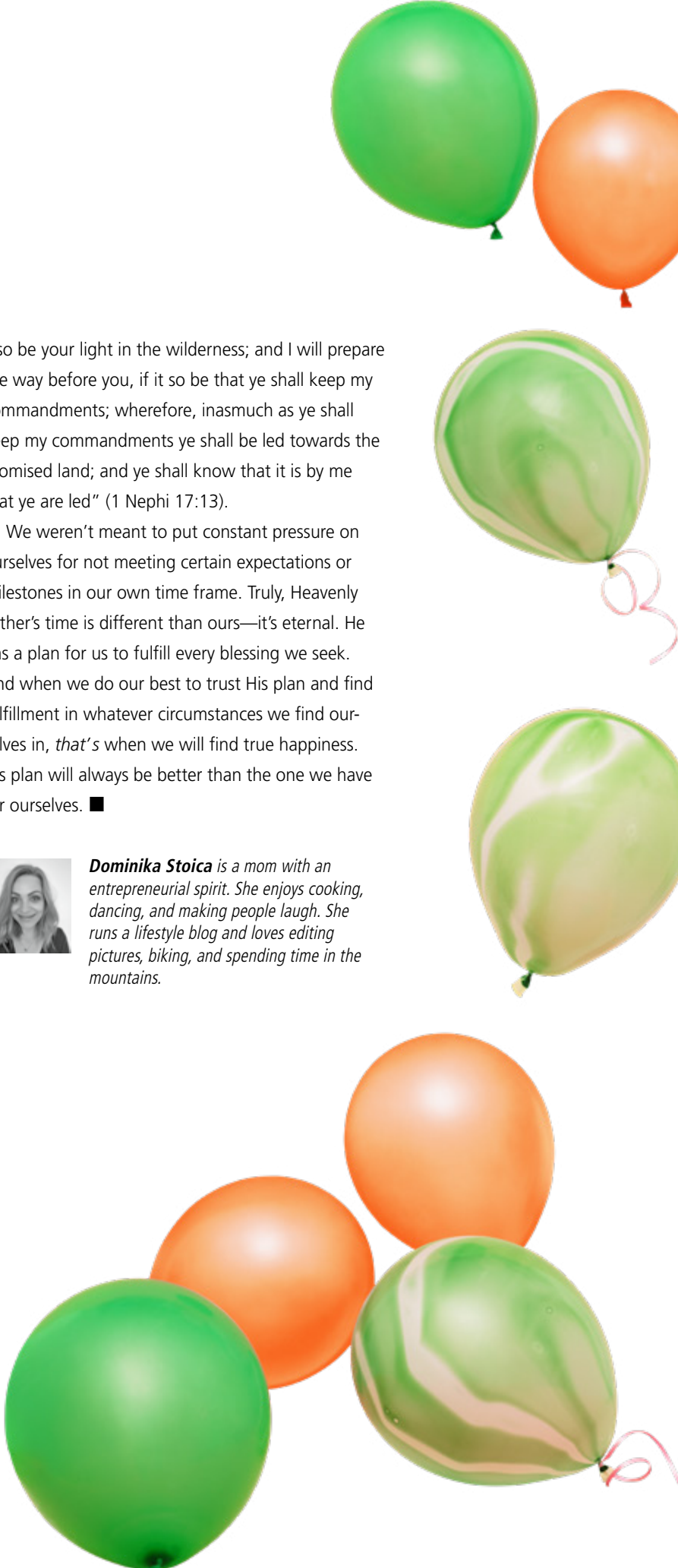
I've also learned that as we become better and have full faith that God is in charge, we will invite His hand into our lives—and when we recognize His hand, there is no need to fear for the future. Remember what the Lord taught Nephi: "And I will

also be your light in the wilderness; and I will prepare the way before you, if it so be that ye shall keep my commandments; wherefore, inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments ye shall be led towards the promised land; and ye shall know that it is by me that ye are led" (1 Nephi 17:13).

We weren't meant to put constant pressure on ourselves for not meeting certain expectations or milestones in our own time frame. Truly, Heavenly Father's time is different than ours—it's eternal. He has a plan for us to fulfill every blessing we seek. And when we do our best to trust His plan and find fulfillment in whatever circumstances we find ourselves in, *that's* when we will find true happiness. His plan will always be better than the one we have for ourselves. ■



**Dominika Stoica** is a mom with an entrepreneurial spirit. She enjoys cooking, dancing, and making people laugh. She runs a lifestyle blog and loves editing pictures, biking, and spending time in the mountains.



By Landon Hawes

# LEARNING TO BE HAPPY WHILE I'M SINGLE



I realized I had been going about dating the wrong way.

**W**hy is everyone else dating and having fun?"  
"Why am I not married?"  
"What's wrong with me?"

Most single young adults have probably asked themselves these questions at least once! The challenge of seeking an eternal companion can take a toll on the faith and hope of even the most dedicated Latter-day Saints. And yes, also in my case, dating has been particularly difficult.



Marriage has always seemed like a grand adventure to me, and I've looked forward to it from a young age. But I got discouraged when it seemed like I was failing at dating during my college years. Though I went on many dates, had several serious relationships, and met accomplished and interesting women, I didn't marry. And to me, those failed relationships felt like a sign that I was inferior and unattractive.

My feelings toward my singleness only got worse after a few more breakups when I began my career. It was easy for me to ask what was wrong with me and right with everyone else who was getting married. My patriarchal blessing, along with several priesthood blessings, strongly and specifically indicated that I would be sealed in mortality to a righteous woman. So why wasn't it happening?

I started to wonder, "Have I done something to derail God's plan for me?"

Finally, after "wrestling" before God for years through prayer, scripture study, and temple attendance, I received revelation regarding my situation through my friend and counselor, Brad (name has been changed). During one of our counseling sessions, he said: "Your happiness depends on you—not on someone else. When you're happy when you're single, you can be happy in any circumstances." Likewise, President Russell M. Nelson taught, "The joy we feel has little to do with the circumstances of our lives and everything to do with the focus of our lives" ("Joy and Spiritual Survival," *Ensign*, Nov. 2016, 82).

My entire perspective changed as the Spirit impressed these words firmly upon my soul. And I realized that I had always dated to fulfill a need—in my case, the need to be married simply so I wouldn't be alone.

This definitely wasn't a way of thinking that would lead to an eternally loving companion! Through Brad, the Lord gently taught me that His plan for His sons

and daughters is not for them to marry based on need or cultural pressure or fear. Marriage is based on Christlike love. Then He taught me that my unmarried status could continue to teach me to live life and seek marriage based on pure love and not utility. To seek marriage for the right reasons.

Through this experience, I've learned three truths that I look to whenever I'm feeling discouraged about dating:

- 1. Your worth doesn't depend on your marital status.** Isaiah taught that "[God's] thoughts are not [our] thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8). I thought that being single was a reflection on my lack of worth. However, God helped me see that being single is preparing me for a better marriage than I could have had if I'd gotten married on my timetable. It didn't have anything to do with my worth.
- 2. Preparation dispels anxiety and worry.** The Lord tells us that "[we] are prepared [we] shall not fear" (Doctrine and Covenants 38:30). Seeking and then following God's will has helped me let go of previous fears and frustrations about my marriage status. It has also helped me focus on preparing myself for whatever comes my way in the future.
- 3. There is joy in being single.** Being single has blessed me with exciting travel opportunities, professional development, and ways to serve in the Church. While I still deeply desire marriage and children, God has helped me to appreciate how much there is to do in His kingdom right now, whether I have a companion by my side or not.

I'm still not married! My wife hasn't magically appeared now that I've had a paradigm shift about dating and marriage, and I know I'll still be frustrated sometimes with dating in the future. But a lot of fear and anxiety about my marital status is gone. And I now know that it's totally fine to be single while the Lord and I work together to fulfill the eternal promises and blessings that He has made to me—both those in mortality and in eternity. ■



*Landon Hawes is a globe-trotting urban planner who loves good writing, great books, and exploring the world. You can find him at his local library, cheering on his team at the baseball diamond, or on a backcountry road finding beautiful places where no one else thought to look.*

# Life Not Turning Out How You Planned? Here's How to Love It Anyway

Your life might not go according to plan. And that can be a good thing.

By Sarah Griggs

I have been a young single adult for more than a decade now and have been doing some reflecting on all of my experiences over the last 10 years. In all of my reflecting, I had an important realization.

I'm friends with one of my former Young Women leaders on social media. I saw recently that it was her birthday, and I figured out that when she was my leader, she was the age I am now. It was a strange realization for me because I looked up to her so much and she seemed so wise when I was a youth. I laughed to think of myself as being her same age and not feeling wise in any way.

But what really shocked me was that when she was in her late 20s

as my leader, she had six kids! Six! I couldn't help but think how far from those circumstances I am and how very different our lives are. I'm single, I've never been married, and I'm working on building a successful career. When I realized how different our lives are, I could have been very frustrated, feeling like I had failed at life. I could have let loneliness and sadness fester into bitter comparison, asking questions like:

Why am I not married yet? It seems so easy for everyone else to find a spouse.

Why can't I have a family now?

What is wrong with me?

But as I thought about it, I wouldn't trade places with her for the world. In fact, I wouldn't trade





Instead of being bitter, angry, and depressed about the life circumstances you find yourself in, why not embrace the here and now and turn it into an incredible journey of growth, fulfillment, and joy?

places with any of my friends who are married and have children. Not because I don't want those things—of course I do! But I also know that I have a unique purpose and role in Heavenly Father's plan and that He is transforming me into the person He wants me to become as I follow Him.

### When My Expectations Were Shattered

I believe one reason why people in their young adult years might feel frustrated by life can be explained in one word: *expectation*. Often what we expect—or what others expect or what a culture expects—doesn't happen, leaving us feeling hurt, alone, betrayed, frustrated, or confused.

Certainly, some of my expectations weren't met in the last decade. I figured I would follow in the same footsteps as my older siblings—meet my spouse while attending college, get married, start a family, and live happily ever after. At one point in college, I thought I had found my husband. I was in love with a wonderful guy I was dating. Marriage had been hinted at a couple of times over our year-long relationship, and I was planning him into my future. It all felt so perfect. We were both graduating from college and applying to graduate schools that spring, and I planned to marry him and go to grad school.

And then all of that suddenly changed when he broke up with me. I was devastated. But I still had the dream of going to grad school—until a few weeks later when the rejection letter came and that dream was shattered too. I remember the day I opened that devastating email. It started with those ominous words “We regret to inform you . . .,” and I immediately felt the salt pouring into my already deeply wounded heart from the breakup.

Tears instantly came to my eyes, and I got up to go to the restroom to cry. When I returned to gather my backpack, there was a small slip of paper on my chair. I picked it up and found the words “Proverbs 3:5–6” scrawled in messy handwriting. I opened my scriptures and read as more tears ran down my cheeks:

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

“In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

### How Unmet Expectations Led to Greater Happiness

I am forever grateful to the “angel” who followed the inspiration to put that scripture reference on my chair that day, because since then I have tried harder to trust God. At that time, I felt like my entire world was crashing down; my expectations for my life had been blown out of the water. I was bitter, angry with God, depressed, and humiliated.

But from my expectations not being met, I have been able to feel more joyful now than I ever have before. Having my heart broken and being rejected by graduate school at my dream university set me on a path to pursue school at another university. I went to that other school very reluctantly. And as a result, I was eventually led to landing my dream job as a collegiate track and cross-country coach. I'm grateful I trusted in the Lord and “leaned not unto my own understanding.”





When my world seemingly fell apart, I had no clue what was waiting for me in the next few years and how my life would completely change. My job is exactly what I need right now. I have the opportunity to invest in and influence dozens of amazing young people. I am able to grow and be challenged every day. I get to see people's dreams become reality. I get to be with my athletes through the ups and downs, to celebrate with them and to cry with them. And above all, coaching has helped me grow closer to my Savior and rely on Him more.

### Find Joy Where You Are Now

I can honestly say I wouldn't rather be anywhere else than where I am right now. I wouldn't rather be married. I wouldn't rather have children. Because wishing for those things is wishing to change the perfect, individual plan God has for me. I know those things will come when the time is right, but right now I am joyfully experiencing the life I have been given.

My wish is for other young single adults to stop wishing they were in different life circumstances. Life might not go according to the plan you have for yourself. But instead of being bitter, angry, and depressed about the life circumstances you find yourself in, why not embrace the here

and now and turn it into an incredible journey of growth, fulfillment, and joy? President Russell M. Nelson taught that "when the focus of our lives is on God's plan of salvation . . . and Jesus Christ and His gospel, we can feel joy regardless of what is happening—or not happening—in our lives. Joy comes from and because of Him. He is the source of all joy."<sup>1</sup>

Learning to embrace and love the times when my expectations are not met hasn't been easy. But looking for and appreciating the unexpected opportunities and mercy from the Lord has changed my life. And focusing on Heavenly Father's plan for me instead of *my* plan has helped me come to appreciate who I am becoming.

The gospel of Jesus Christ has helped me find joy in the journey of life, even if it's a different journey than the one I once anticipated. I've come to a greater understanding of God's love for me, as well as the importance of trusting in His timing and completely acknowledging that His ways are higher than my ways (see Isaiah 55:9). ■



**Sarah Griggs** grew up in Colorado, USA. She served a mission in Nicaragua and is passionate about coaching, traveling, running, enjoying the outdoors, and spending time with friends and family.

#### NOTE

1. Russell M. Nelson, "Joy and Spiritual Survival," *Ensign*, Nov. 2016, 82.



# Answers

to Seven Questions  
from Young Married Adults



The best answer to any question that threatens faith is to work to increase faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

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**By President Dallin H. Oaks**

First Counselor in the First Presidency

**Q:**

**1. “Does the leadership of the Church know what’s going on in the lives of Church members much younger than they are and in conditions much different than those in which they live?”**

**A:**

We are constantly traveling to be with our members all over the world. Every week we receive reports from the most knowledgeable professionals in every field of concern in a worldwide Church—economics, politics, social sciences, law, diplomacy, and so forth.

But we are even more intensely informed about our own members—the challenges they face in medical care, mental health, public schools, higher education, employment, the marketplace, and retirement; in personal relations such as marriage, childbearing, adoption, and child-rearing; and in challenges to faith such as questions about Church history, same-sex attraction, transgender issues, and so on.

We struggle to be informed. We struggle to be close to our members. We pray for you, just as you pray for your leaders. Most of all, we pray for inspiration in what we teach and what we require by way of Church meetings and policies and programs. We seek to follow our Savior’s great teaching that we leaders should be the servants of all (see Mark 9:35).

**Q:**

**2. “While the Church teaches that the most important thing is family, why are there so many meetings and activities that take us away from our families for a significant amount of time on a regular basis?”**

**A:**

We have spent many hours talking about how we can simplify our Church programs to perform their essential function for a wide variety of family circumstances without posing the problem described in that excellent question. The two-hour Sunday meeting schedule came out of those discussions.

Many years ago, President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015) told the members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles that in all of our meetings we should remember Church members who are in very poor economic circumstances. We should pretend that they are present in our councils and asking us to help them. That same reminder applies to young marrieds with children. We pray for you. We think of you. And we are mindful of your circumstances as we consider Church issues.

Q:

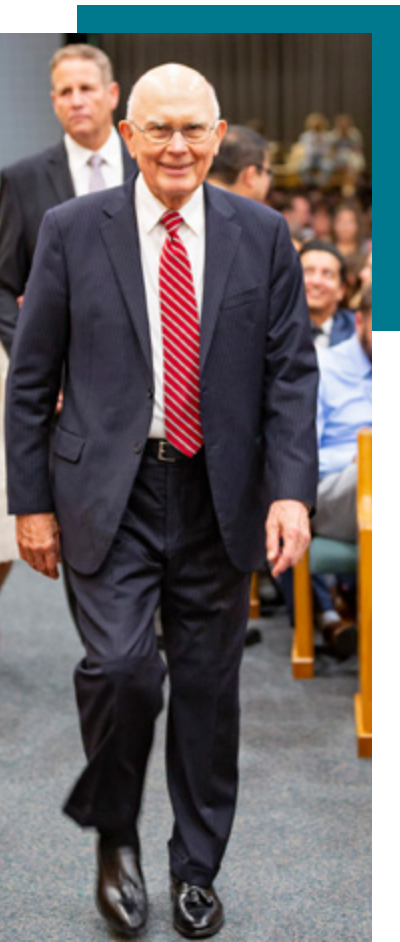
A:

### 3. “What counsel do you have for fathers?”

Recently, I joined several Church leaders in recording a multistake conference broadcast to our members in Chile—73 stakes. Elder D. Todd Christofferson’s talk had an important message about fathers, which I share with my strong endorsement:

“Unfortunately, in some homes it is always the wife and mother who has to suggest—even sometimes plead—that the family gather for prayer or for home evening. This should not be. The women in our lives have the right to look to their husbands to assume their duty and to take the lead. A husband should counsel continually with his wife about the welfare of each of their children. . . . Most sisters are willing and eager to counsel with their husbands and can provide many helpful insights and recommendations, but it will be easier for them if their husband takes the initiative to talk with them and to plan together.”<sup>1</sup>

Brethren, rise up to your responsibilities to lead your families in righteousness.



Q:

A:

### 4. “In a busy world full of demands and distractions, what is our top priority?”

As has been true throughout history, in this life we must choose between Jesus’s way and the world’s way. Of course, we know that we must meet the requirements of the world in many ways, including the need to earn our daily bread and pursue the education and other activities that will allow us to do so. But we should never lose sight of our priority on the things of eternity—the bread of life—that the Savior and His Church will provide us.

Following the Lord’s way is not easy. The Lord has warned us, directly and through His servants, that the world will hate us for doing things differently—the Lord’s way. In the concluding days of His ministry, He told His Apostles, “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (John 15:19).

The world will not only hate us but will also surround us with examples and influences that try to pull us down.<sup>2</sup>





Q:

**5. “My spouse has gone inactive due to doubts regarding Church history and doctrinal issues. How should I go about researching and responding to these issues?”**

A:

I suggest that research is not the answer. References to the Church’s many helps to answer familiar questions, such as the Gospel Topics Essays at [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org), may help one who is sincerely seeking, but the best answer to any question that threatens faith is to work to increase faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Conversion to the Lord precedes conversion to the Church. And conversion to the Lord comes through prayer and study and service, furthered by loving patience on the part of the spouse and other concerned family members.

Q:

**6. “How can we give hope to those with same-sex attraction of living a happy and fulfilling life when they don’t see a traditional marriage while on earth, and how should we talk to our children as they learn about LGBT issues at school?”**

A:

*First*, for those who experience same-sex attraction, consider these inspired assurances:

“You are a son or daughter of God, and our hearts reach out to you in warmth and affection.

Notwithstanding your present same-gender attractions, you can be happy during this life, lead a morally clean life, perform meaningful service in the Church, enjoy full fellowship with your fellow Saints, and ultimately receive all the blessings of eternal life.”<sup>3</sup>

*Second*, “God’s love is so great that He requires His children to obey His laws because only through that obedience can they progress toward the eternal destiny He desires for them. Thus, in the Final Judgment [which follows the universal Resurrection] we will all be assigned to the kingdom of glory that is commensurate with our obedience to His law.”<sup>4</sup>

*Third*, in my persistent prayerful ponderings, I have never found a better, shorter answer to the innumerable questions on this subject than a thorough knowledge of and total faith in the love of our Heavenly Father and the plan of salvation He has established for the blessing of all of His children. The central truth of that plan is the Atonement of His Only Begotten Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. If we trust in the Lord and

His plan, we will have the strength to resist the satanic imitations and satanic temptations to abandon our quest for eternal life, “the greatest of all the gifts of God” (Doctrine and Covenants 14:7).

Children raise questions. Answering their questions in an appropriate way is one of the most important things parents can do. When you are asked a difficult question, such as a puzzler about Church history or doctrine, be honest and positive and tell what you know. If necessary, say you don’t know. But be sure to say what you do know: “I know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God.”<sup>5</sup>

Q:

A:

## 7. “Why is the family preeminent in the Church?”

Our relationship to God and the purpose of earth life are explained in terms of the family. We are the spirit children of heavenly parents. The gospel plan is implemented through earthly families, and our highest aspiration is to perpetuate those family relationships throughout eternity. The ultimate mission of the Church is to help us achieve exaltation in the celestial kingdom, and that can only be accomplished in a family relationship.

Church leaders and teachers should use every possible opportunity to recognize the preeminence and strengthen the position of the home and family. As the First Presidency reminded us in 1999, “The home is the basis of a righteous life, and no other instrumentality can take its place or fulfill its essential functions in carrying forward this God-given responsibility.”<sup>6</sup>

We cannot have a strong Church whose leaders and members come mostly from weak families. Conversely, if most of the families in a ward or stake are strong, the ward or stake will also be strong. ■

*From a devotional address given to young married couples at the Los Angeles California Santa Monica Stake Center on August 24, 2018. To learn what other counsel President Oaks shared, see the full version of his address (under the title “Keeping the Faith on the Front Line”) in the digital version of this issue in the Gospel Library app or at [ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).*

### NOTES

1. D. Todd Christofferson, “To the Brethren of the Priesthood: Your Spiritual Leadership,” Chile multi-stake conference address, Aug. 26, 2018.
2. From Dallin H. Oaks, Utah County multistake conference address, Sept. 16, 2012.
3. *God Loveth His Children* (2007), 1; see also “Same-Sex Attraction,” Gospel Topics, [topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).
4. Dallin H. Oaks, “Fundamental to Our Faith,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2011, 27.
5. See Dallin H. Oaks, “Be Wise” (Brigham Young University–Idaho devotional, Nov. 7, 2006), [byui.edu](https://byui.edu).
6. First Presidency letter, Feb. 11, 1999, in “Policies, Announcements, and Appointments,” *Ensign*, June 1999, 80.





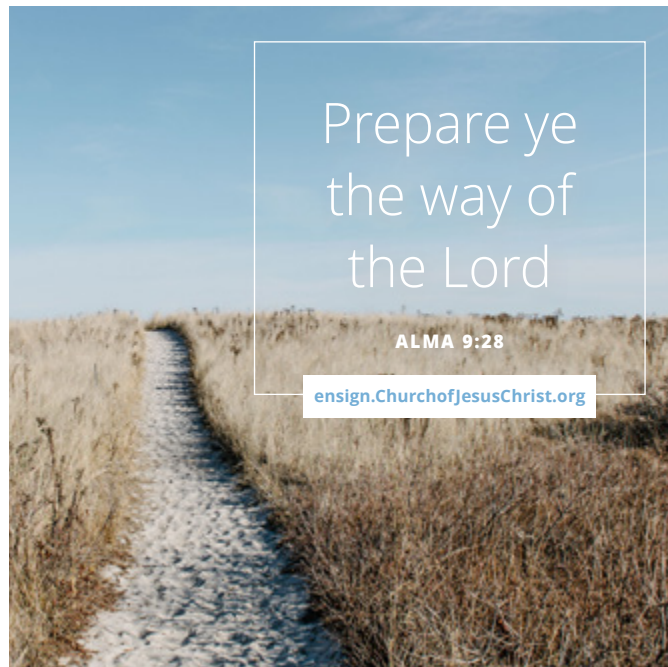
# Come, Follow Me Shareable Scriptures

Download these picture quotes from June's *Come, Follow Me* readings and share them on social media—or send them to those you minister to, your Sunday School class, or your family: [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/62081](https://ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/62081).

JUNE 1–7



JUNE 8–14



JUNE 15–21



JUNE 22–28



**FEELING STRESSED ABOUT  
BEING SINGLE?**

Read experiences from other young adults on how they took the stress out of finding their eternal companion.

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