



HOME TEACHING AND VISITING TEACHING: A WORK OF **Ministering**

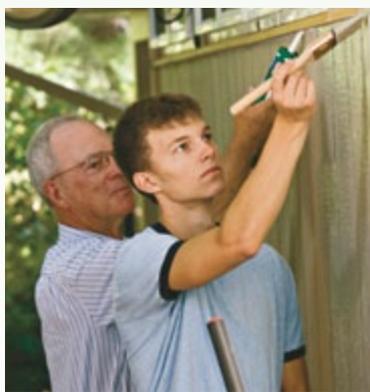
- : *New to home or*
- : *visiting teaching?*
- : *Consider these*
- : *nine suggestions.*

I know it's the end of the month, and I'm so sorry we haven't had a chance to discuss the Visiting Teaching Message," said Sister Julie B. Beck's visiting teacher. But even as she made this statement, she was leaving the home of the general Relief Society president with a basket of ironing to complete and return to Sister Beck. "Do you think we could count this?" she asked Sister Beck hesitantly.

When Sister Beck recounts this incident, tears come to her eyes as she asks, "How could this dear friend and dedicated visiting teacher ever feel that I had *not* been visit taught and watched over? This wasn't the first time she'd stopped in to meet a need that month. How could she not realize that she was constantly ministering to me and blessing my family? Her care and concern for me are the epitome of visiting teaching. Of course, she could report that I had been visit taught!"

As Sister Beck's experience illustrates, inspired visiting and home teaching are more than a formal visit and aren't ever complete. Home and visiting teaching are about taking care of people more than completing processes, and when done correctly, they represent caring and not counting. These assignments are to provide watchcare and to minister to each other as the Savior ministered. Here are some ideas that may help you:

- **Know whom you are assigned to visit and who your companion is.** The priesthood or Relief Society leaders in your ward or branch should provide you with the name and contact information of each family or individual you are assigned to visit. Introduce yourself to your companion and to the people you visit and start building a relationship.
- **Visit.** Meet in the person's home when possible. If that's not feasible, you might consider meeting near the person's workplace, taking a walk together, or gathering before or after Sunday meetings. Teach and inspire each other—perhaps by starting with the First Presidency or Visiting Teaching Message. Share your testimony. Share what's going on in your lives. Develop love by being friendly and caring. Listen sincerely. Keep the confidences others entrust to you. Continue to be a friend, as time often leads to greater trust.
- **Pray with and for those you teach.** It might be appropriate to ask at the end of your visit, "Can we pray with you?" The head of the household should choose someone to say the prayer. In the days and weeks between visits, continue to pray for those you home or visit teach. Ask Heavenly Father for help to know how to watch over and love them.



YOUR FAITH WILL GROW



“I received a phone call from a distraught mother in a state far away from where I was. She told me that her unmarried daughter had moved to another city far from her home. She sensed from the little contact she had with her daughter that something was terribly wrong. The mother feared for the moral safety of her daughter. She pleaded with me to help her daughter.

“I found out who the daughter’s home teacher was. I called him. He was young. And yet he and his companion both had been awakened in the night with not only concern for the girl but with inspiration that she was about to make choices that would bring sadness and misery. With only the inspiration of the Spirit, they went to see her. She did not at first want to tell them anything about her

situation. They pleaded with her to repent and to choose to follow the path the Lord had set out for her and that her mother and father had taught her to follow. She realized as she listened that the only way they could have known what they knew about her life was from God. A mother’s prayer had gone to Heavenly Father, and the Holy Ghost had been sent to home teachers with an errand.

“... Your faith will grow as you serve the Lord in caring for Heavenly Father’s children as the Lord’s teacher to their home. You will have your prayers answered. You will come to know for yourself that He lives, that He loves us, and that He sends inspiration to those with even the beginnings of faith in Him and with the desire to serve Him in His Church.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Gifts of the Spirit for Hard Times” (Church Educational System fireside for young adults, Sept. 10, 2006), lds.org/broadcast.



Blessings of Visiting Teaching

By Silvia H. Allred

First Counselor in the
General Relief Society Presidency

As an adult sister in the Church, you are given the opportunity and responsibility to serve as a visiting teacher. In this capacity you have the potential to do much good. As you visit your assigned sisters, you will:

- Know and love the sisters you visit teach and make new friends.
- Have the opportunity to share and testify of gospel doctrines.

- Be an influence for good and strength to the sisters.
- Have the opportunity to offer and give assistance when needed.
- Feel the Spirit guide your work.
- Experience joy through your service.
- Grow spiritually as a covenant daughter of God.



- **Minister.** Observe and anticipate needs. For instance, if a sister you visit has an upcoming test at school, perhaps you could make her dinner sometime during the week so she can have more study time. If the brother you home teach is looking for a job, introduce him to people who might be able to help.
- **Ask helpful questions.** Questions can lead to opportunities to give comfort, share relevant gospel principles, and provide meaningful service. You might ask: “What worries or concerns you?” “What questions do you have about the gospel?” Or you could be specific: “Could we help you with a household task?” “Would you like a ride to the store or a doctor’s appointment?” Questions will often bring better results than simply saying, “Call us if you need anything.”
- **Seek inspiration.** The Spirit can help you know how to help those you are assigned to teach. You might be prompted about topics to discuss or assistance to offer. As you get to know them better, you may even be prompted to encourage those you visit to receive further ordinances and covenants of the gospel or to further participate in all the blessings the gospel offers.
- **Report the right information.** Report on the temporal and spiritual well-being of those you visit, any service you have given, and any needs. Report confidential concerns directly to the Relief Society or quorum president.
- **Coordinate with your partner.** With your partner, divide assignments as necessary to make contact and to provide watchcare. You might need to take turns visiting, providing service, and reporting the well-being of those you teach.
- **Remember.** Keep track of important events in the lives of those you teach, such as birthdays and even day-to-day happenings that might be important to them. ■

The Fire of Teaching the Gospel

My home teaching companion and I visited an elderly couple. I had been home from my mission only a matter of weeks, but I was already starting to forget the feeling of teaching the gospel. But that visit and the

lesson we taught rekindled the fire. The Spirit burned strong in my heart, and all I could do was smile and try to hold back my tears.

Home teaching is important for young adults because all of us, whatever

our circumstances, need to be strengthened by the Spirit. The pull of the world is strong, and teaching the restored gospel is one of the best ways to avoid straying onto dangerous paths.

Ramon Kaspers, Netherlands



The Joy of the Lord

I face challenges, and when things don't go my way, it is easy to complain. But my perspective changed when my companion and I were assigned to home teach a family who had not attended church in a long time.

During one visit, I realized that this family's challenges made my problems seem like a raindrop in the ocean. Their attending church seemed unlikely, but my companion and I continued to work with them.

One Sunday morning before sacrament meeting, I felt impressed to stand at the door. To my great astonishment, I saw this family entering the chapel! Words cannot explain the joy I felt. My own challenges were swallowed up in the joy of the Lord (see Alma 31:38).

Rati Mogotsi, South Africa

Tomorrow's Friends

After I left home to study abroad in France, visiting teaching took on new meaning. The sisters I was assigned did not remain simply names to which I could vaguely associate a face; they became friends close to my heart. Several times I was touched by the Holy Ghost at specific moments

to pray and sometimes fast for them or to call, console, listen, write, go see, or just put my arm around them. These small gestures made a difference in their lives, but they also made a difference in mine.

All of the sisters were different. Some were my age; others were older. Some were young, married

Perfect at Any Age

When I was assigned to visit teach an elderly woman, I wondered whether we would have anything in common because of our age difference. I came to realize, however, that the Lord knew my companion and I were uniquely suited to visit this sister, who needed someone to talk with and to listen.

I came to find that I could be an instrument in the Lord's hands in serving this sister. I also discovered that I had a lot to learn from her. Spending time together brought happiness to *both* of our lives.

Teboho Ndaba, South Africa

mothers; others were single. Our visits allowed us to see beyond our differences.

Recently I moved to a new town. My heart rejoiced when I received an assignment to visit teach some sisters. Today they are just names. Tomorrow they will be friends.

Nirina J-Randriamiharisoa, Madagascar