

# Learning from General Conference Messages (2018 and 2019)

The teachings of living prophets, seers, and revelators can provide inspired guidance for the work of elders quorums and Relief Societies. For the weeks when conference messages will be studied, the elders quorum or Relief Society presidency will select a conference message to use, based on the needs of the members. On occasion, the bishop or stake president may also suggest a message. Leaders should emphasize messages from members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. However, presidency members may select any message from the most recent conference, based on the needs of local Saints and inspiration from the Spirit.

Leaders and teachers should find ways to encourage members to read the selected message in advance. They should encourage members to come to meetings prepared to share gospel truths they have learned and their ideas about how to act on those truths. The suggested learning activities below, which are based on principles taught in *Teaching in the Savior's Way*, can help members learn from general conference messages.



Consider bringing a rope and a checklist to display. Invite members to discuss the difference between viewing gospel truths and Church programs as a rope and viewing them as a checklist of individual topics and tasks. Encourage members to look for insights in the examples in Elder Bednar's message. What does it mean to "gather together in one all things in Christ"? (Ephesians 1:10). What can we do to receive the promise at the conclusion of Elder Bednar's message?

## **Quentin L. Cook**, *"Deep and Lasting Conversion to Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"*

Members might be interested to hear from each other what their first reactions were when they heard about the changes described in Elder Cook's message. If a friend of another faith were to ask them why the Church is making these adjustments, what would they say? Encourage them to look for possible answers in Elder Cook's message. What can we do as individuals and families, and as a quorum or Relief Society, to ensure that the changes accomplish what the Lord intends? As part of this discussion, you could also share insights from President Nelson's opening remarks that inspire members to

"enthusiastically embrace" these changes.

## **Ronald A. Rasband**, *"Be Not Troubled"*

Elder Rasband's message highlights several scriptures that can help us dispel any fears we may have about the perilous times we live in. Ask members to search these scriptures for counsel that they could share with someone who is fearful about the future. What else could they share from Elder Rasband's message? How can fear "[limit] the perspective of God's children"? Invite members to share how they have learned to overcome their fears and live with faith.

## **David A. Bednar**, *"Gather Together in One All Things in Christ"*

## **Dallin H. Oaks**, *"Truth and the Plan"*

How does understanding "restored gospel truths" help us when we face opposition to our beliefs and practices? To answer this question, members could review examples of fundamental truths in section II of President Oaks's message. They could also review examples of how these truths are applied (see section III). It might be helpful for members to role-play how they would use some of these fundamental truths to respond to criticisms of a Church teaching or practice.

## **D. Todd Christofferson**, *"Firm and Steadfast in the Faith of Christ"*

You could begin a discussion of this message by drawing a line on the board with *Socially Motivated* on one end and *Christlike*

*Commitment* on the other. Invite members to read the paragraph that begins “Most of us find ourselves at this moment on a continuum . . .” and ponder where they feel they are on this continuum. What do we learn from the examples in Elder Christofferson’s message that inspires us to be firm and steadfast in affliction? (see also Alma 36:27–28). Encourage members to share examples of people they know who have shown Christlike commitment to the gospel, even when facing affliction.

**Ulisses Soares, “One in Christ”**

According to Elder Soares, how does the Amazon River represent members of the restored Church of Jesus Christ? What does this comparison teach us about the influence new members can have on the Church? How can we as a quorum or Relief Society follow Elder Soares’s counsel to encourage, support, and love new converts? (see Moroni 6:4–5). Perhaps a few members could share some challenges they faced as new members of the Church and how other members helped them. You could also discuss ways that new members have strengthened your ward or branch.

**Gerrit W. Gong, “Our Campfire of Faith”**

Consider displaying a picture of a campfire and inviting someone to share an experience

when he or she was grateful to have a campfire. Ask members to discuss what Elder Gong meant when he talked about a “campfire of faith.” Then you could divide members into groups and invite each group to review and share one of the five ways that Elder Gong suggests a “campfire of faith” can encourage us. Give members time to ponder how they might strengthen their own faith or the faith of someone they know.

**Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Believe, Love, Do”**

You could begin a discussion of this message by writing on the board *Hopelessness* and *Happiness*. Invite members to search the message for attitudes and beliefs that lead to hopelessness and happiness and list them on the board. Invite members to share ways they’ve experienced the happiness that comes from believing, loving, and doing, as Elder Uchtdorf teaches. Encourage members to find an encouraging quotation from the message to display in their home or share with a friend.

**Joy D. Jones, “For Him”**

Consider sharing the story at the beginning of Sister Jones’s message and asking members to think about times when their service and ministering efforts may have seemed “unnoticed or . . . unappreciated

or even unwanted.” After discussing the story, consider writing on the board *Why should we serve?* Invite members to answer this question by reviewing the rest of Sister Jones’s message, looking for insights (see also Doctrine and Covenants 59:5). How can Sister Jones’s counsel change the way we care for and minister to each other?

**Michelle D. Craig, “Divine Discontent”**

Sister Craig speaks of “a gap between where and who we are, and where and who we want to become.” How does God want us to feel about this gap? How does Satan want us to feel about it? Each member could search one of the three sections in Sister Craig’s message to find answers to these questions. What can we do to ensure that our “divine discontent” does not become “paralyzing discouragement”?

**Cristina B. Franco, “The Joy of Unselfish Service”**

To teach that “love is made sacred through sacrifice,” Sister Franco shares two stories—one about Victoria and one about a widow. You might invite two members to come prepared to share what they learn about love and sacrifice from these stories. What other experiences can we share that teach the same principle? Showing a video that depicts the Savior serving others (such as “Light the World—Follow the Example of Jesus Christ” on LDS.org) could lead to a discussion about how we can follow His example of “service coupled with love and sacrifice.”

**Henry B. Eyring, “Women and Gospel Learning in the Home”**

Scripture passages and quotations from “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” that President Eyring uses in his message provide insights about the importance of women’s influence in the home. Members could work together to find these passages and quotations and discuss what they learn. What invitations does President Eyring extend?



What promises does he make? Consider how singing or reading a hymn about the home, such as “Home Can Be a Heaven on Earth” (*Hymns*, no. 298), could enhance the discussion.

**Dallin H. Oaks**, *“Parents and Children”*

As you prepare to teach, consider which section of President Oaks’s message is most relevant to the people in your quorum or Relief Society. Here are possible questions you could ask to encourage discussion about his message: How do the modern trends mentioned in President Oaks’s message in section I work against Heavenly Father’s plan? What examples of faithful women can we share that exemplify the statements about women in section II? How can we encourage the young women we know to follow President Oaks’s specific counsel to them in section III?

**Russell M. Nelson**, *“Sisters’ Participation in the Gathering of Israel”*

If you teach Relief Society, consider dividing the sisters into four groups and asking each group to read about one of the four invitations in President Nelson’s message. The groups could discuss what impresses them

about the invitation, experiences they’ve had acting on it, and ideas about how to act on it in the future. Then each group could share with everyone what they talked about. If you teach priesthood holders, you might ask them to find statements in President Nelson’s message that indicate how Heavenly Father feels about His daughters. What can we do to support and encourage the sisters’ participation in the gathering of Israel?

**M. Russell Ballard**, *“The Vision of the Redemption of the Dead”*

You could invite members to accept President Ballard’s invitation and read Doctrine and Covenants 138 before your discussion. Ask members to share their experiences with and insights from this section during the meeting. Questions like these could help members understand the importance of this revelation: How does this revelation bring us comfort? What truths does this revelation contain that can affect “the way we live our lives each day”?

**Bonnie H. Cordon**, *“Becoming a Shepherd”*

To help members consider ways they might improve in their ministering efforts, you

could divide them into three groups and ask each group to read one of the three titled sections of Sister Cordon’s message. Invite them to share the principles of ministering that they learned. How can striving to follow these principles help us “become the shepherds the Lord needs us to become”? Invite members to share experiences when another person’s ministering helped them feel known and loved by the Savior.

**Jeffrey R. Holland**, *“The Ministry of Reconciliation”*

You could begin a discussion about Elder Holland’s message by inviting members to think of a relationship in their lives that needs healing or reconciliation. Then they could search Elder Holland’s message, looking for how Brad and Pam Bowen were able to help their father heal. What blessings came from this effort? What insights do members gain that can help them heal their own relationships?

**Neil L. Andersen**, *“Wounded”*

To introduce Elder Andersen’s message, you could read together Luke 10:30–35 or watch the video “Parable of the Good Samaritan” (LDS.org). How are we all like the man who fell among thieves? According to Elder Andersen, in what sense is Jesus Christ “our Good Samaritan”? How can we accept His healing? Perhaps you could invite members to share ways in which the Savior has healed their wounds or the wounds of loved ones. They could also search Elder Andersen’s words to find an encouraging message that they could share with someone who is wounded.

**Russell M. Nelson**, *“The Correct Name of the Church”*

Jesus Christ has commanded that the Church be called after His name. You can help members increase their desire to follow this direction by inviting them to search President Nelson’s message, looking for reasons why



"the name of the Church is not negotiable." Then, invite them to search the end of President Nelson's message for the promises he said will come as we work to "restore the correct name of the Lord's Church." What can we do to help in this effort?

**Henry B. Eyring**, *"Try, Try, Try"*

President Eyring poses "two crucial questions": "What must I be doing to take [the Savior's] name upon me?" and "How will I know when I am making progress?" Perhaps you could write these questions on the board and invite members to share insights they gain about these questions from President Eyring's message and Sister Eyring's example. President Eyring also refers to the song "I'm Trying to Be like Jesus" (*Children's Songbook*, 78–79). What do the words of this song add to the discussion?

**Dale G. Renlund**, *"Choose You This Day"*

Members could think of someone they would like to encourage to follow Heavenly Father's plan, such as a family member or someone to whom they minister. Then they could review Elder Renlund's message to discover how Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ feel about us. How do They help us choose obedience? What does Their example suggest about how we can improve our efforts in our families and our ministering?

**Gary E. Stevenson**, *"Shepherding Souls"*

Those you teach may have asked a question like this one from Elder Stevenson's message: "How do we know we are ministering in the Lord's way?" They might benefit from discussing possible answers to this question that they find in this message. Alternatively, you could bring a picture of the Savior as a shepherd (see *Gospel Art Book* [2009], no. 64) and invite members to share a truth from Elder Stevenson's message that the picture represents. Members could then share things they have been impressed to do as a result of the discussion.