

Ensign



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Our Ancestors, p. 42**

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Now, p. 57**



I Have a Family Here on Earth, by Lorie Heaton Burningham

Families can have hope in the future. The Savior has said that in the last days, the Church will flourish and the Lord will show His people great mercy and tenderness:

“And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.

“In righteousness shalt thou be established; thou shalt be far from oppression for thou shalt not fear, and from terror for it shall not come near thee” (3 Nephi 22:13–14).



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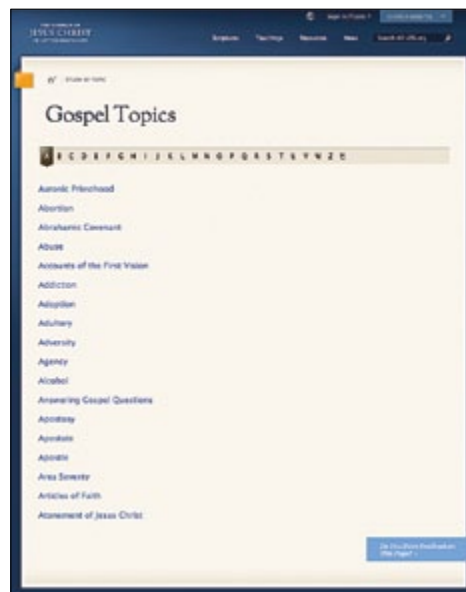
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By President
Dieter F. Uchtdorf

Second Counselor in
the First Presidency

ONE KEY TO A Happy Family

The great Russian author Leo Tolstoy began his novel *Anna Karenina* with these words: “Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.”¹ While I do not have Tolstoy’s certainty that happy families are all alike, I have discovered one thing that most have in common: they have a way of forgiving and forgetting the imperfections of others and of looking for the good.

Those in unhappy families, on the other hand, often find fault, hold grudges, and can’t seem to let go of past offenses.

“Yes, but . . .” begin those who are unhappy. “Yes, but you don’t know how badly she hurt me,” says one. “Yes, but you don’t know how terrible he is,” says another.

Perhaps both are right; perhaps neither.

There are many degrees of offense. There are many degrees of hurt. But what I have noticed is that often we justify our anger and satisfy our consciences by telling ourselves stories about the motives of others that condemn their actions as unforgivable and egoistic while, at the same time, lifting our own motives as pure and innocent.

The Prince’s Dog

There is an old Welsh story from the 13th century about a prince who returned home to find his dog with blood

dripping down its face. The man rushed inside and, to his horror, saw that his baby boy was missing and his cradle overturned. In anger the prince pulled out his sword and killed his dog. Shortly thereafter, he heard the cry of his son—the babe was alive! By the infant’s side lay a dead wolf. The dog had, in reality, defended the prince’s baby from a murderous wolf.

Though this story is dramatic, it demonstrates a point. It opens the possibility that the story we tell ourselves about why others behave a certain way does not always agree with the facts—sometimes we don’t even want to know the facts. We would rather feel self-justified in our anger by holding onto our bitterness and resentment. Sometimes these grudges can last months or years. Sometimes they can last a lifetime.

A Family Divided

One father could not forgive his son for departing from the path he had been taught. The boy had friends the father did not approve of, and he did many things contrary to what his father thought he should do. This caused a rift between father and son, and as soon as the boy could, he left home and never returned. They rarely spoke again.

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

“As you prepare each lesson, ask yourself how the principle is like something family members have experienced in their own lives” (*Teaching, No Greater Call* [1999], 171). Consider inviting family members to share positive experiences they have had or observed with forgiveness. Discuss these experiences, emphasizing the blessings of forgiveness. Conclude by bearing testimony of the importance of forgiving one another.

Did the father feel justified? Perhaps.

Did the son feel justified? Perhaps.

All I know is that this family was divided and unhappy because neither father nor son could forgive each other. They could not look past the bitter memories they had about each other. They filled their hearts with anger instead of love and forgiveness. Each robbed himself of the opportunity to influence the other's life for good. The divide between them appeared so deep and so wide that each became a spiritual prisoner on his own emotional island.

Fortunately, our loving and wise Eternal Father in Heaven has provided the means to overcome this prideful gap. The great and infinite Atonement is the supreme act of forgiveness and reconciliation. Its magnitude is beyond my understanding, but I testify with all my heart and soul of its reality and ultimate power. The Savior offered Himself as ransom for our sins. Through Him we gain forgiveness.

No Family Is Perfect

None of us is without sin. Every one of us makes mistakes, including you and me. We have all been wounded. We all have wounded others.

It is through our Savior's sacrifice that we can gain exaltation and eternal life. As we accept His ways and overcome our pride by softening our hearts, we can bring reconciliation and forgiveness into our families and our personal lives. God will help us to be more forgiving, to be more willing to walk the second mile, to be first to apologize even if something wasn't our fault, to lay aside old grudges and nurture them no more. Thanks be to God, who gave His Only Begotten Son, and to the Son, who gave His life for us.

We can feel God's love for us every day. Shouldn't we be able to give a little more of ourselves to our fellowmen as taught in the beloved hymn “Because I Have Been Given Much”?² The Lord has opened the door for us to be forgiven. Wouldn't it be only right to put aside our own egotism and pride and begin to open that blessed door of forgiveness to those with whom we struggle—especially to all of our own family?

In the end, happiness does not spring from perfection but from applying divine principles, even in small steps. The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles have declared: “Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, *forgiveness*, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities.”³

Forgiveness is positioned right in the middle of these simple truths, founded on our Heavenly Father's plan of happiness. Because forgiveness connects principles, it connects people. It is a key, it opens locked doors, it is the beginning of an honest path, and it is one of our best hopes for a happy family.

May God help us to be a little more forgiving in our families, more forgiving of each other, and perhaps more forgiving even with ourselves. I pray that we may experience forgiveness as one wonderful way in which most happy families are alike. ■

NOTES

1. Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*, trans. Constance Garnett (2008), 2.
2. “Because I Have Been Given Much,” *Hymns*, no. 219.
3. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129; emphasis added.

Prayer and Peace

By Lauren W.

One evening I argued with my mom and felt pretty bad. So I decided I would pray. Although I was in a bad mood and didn't want to be "spiritual," I knew praying would help me feel happier and less argumentative. After my mom left the room, I started my prayer. "Dear Heavenly Father, I've come to Thee tonight because . . ." No. I opened my eyes and unfolded my arms; that sounded awkward. I tried again. "Heavenly Father, I need . . ." That also sounded strange. I felt Satan urging me to give up my prayer of asking Heavenly Father for help.

Suddenly I had a prompting to say thank you! So I did, and thoughts started spilling from my mind of all the many things I could thank my Father in Heaven for. When I was done thanking Him, I discussed the problem at hand.

Afterward I felt a wonderful peace inside me, the warm spiritual feeling that I know our Heavenly Father and my parents love me and that I am a child of God. I was able to apologize to my mother and accept her apology.

Forgiveness Brings Happiness

President Uchtdorf teaches that we should forgive our family members. See how Joseph's and Anna's choices affect their family.



Joseph and his little sister, Anna, are playing together. Anna snatches Joseph's toy away from him. What should Joseph do?

Joseph gets angry at Anna. Anna cries. Joseph's mother disciplines him for fighting with his sister. Joseph is sorry that he made a poor choice.

Joseph forgives Anna and finds another toy to play with. They play together happily. Their mother is glad that Joseph was kind to his sister and kept peace in the family. Joseph feels happy for choosing to forgive.



Later, Joseph and Anna need to help their mother prepare dinner. Joseph doesn't help. What should Anna do?

Anna complains to her mother. Anna argues about having to do the work alone. At dinner everyone is unhappy because of the arguing.

Anna forgives Joseph and helps with dinner. Their mother is grateful for Anna's help. The family enjoys being together at dinner. Anna feels good that she chose to forgive.

How do *your* choices to forgive affect your family's happiness?

Prayerfully study this material and, as appropriate, discuss it with the sisters you visit. Use the questions to help you strengthen your sisters and to make Relief Society an active part of your own life.

Honoring Our Covenants

Visiting teaching is an expression of our discipleship and a way to honor our covenants as we serve and strengthen one another. A covenant is a sacred and enduring promise between God and His children. “When we realize that we are children of the covenant, we know who we are and what God expects of us,” said Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “His law is written in our hearts. He is our God and we are His people.”¹

As visiting teachers we can strengthen those we visit in their efforts to keep their sacred covenants. By doing so, we help them prepare for the blessings of eternal life. “Every sister in this Church who has made covenants with the Lord has a divine mandate to help save souls, to lead the women of the world, to strengthen the homes of Zion, and to build the kingdom of God,”² said Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

As we make and keep sacred covenants, we become instruments in the hands of God. We will be able to articulate our beliefs and strengthen each other’s faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.



From the Scriptures

1 Nephi 14:14; Mosiah 5:5–7; 18:8–13;
Doctrine and Covenants 42:78; 84:106

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Covenants,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 88.
2. M. Russell Ballard, “Women of Righteousness,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2002, 70.
3. *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 133.

What Can I Do?

1. How do my covenants strengthen me?
2. How am I helping the sisters I watch over to keep their covenants?

Faith, Family, Relief



From Our History

The temple is “a place of thanksgiving for all saints,” the Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1833. It is “a place of instruction for all those who are called to the work of the ministry in all their several callings and offices; that they may be perfected in the understanding of their ministry, in theory, in principle, and in doctrine, in all things pertaining to the kingdom of God on the earth” (D&C 97:13–14).

Relief Society sisters in Nauvoo, Illinois, USA, in the early 1840s helped each other prepare for temple ordinances. In the ordinances of the higher priesthood that Latter-day Saints received in the Nauvoo Temple, “the power of godliness [was] manifest” (D&C 84:20). “As the Saints kept their covenants, this power strengthened and sustained them through their trials in the days and years ahead.”³

In the Church today, faithful women and men all over the world serve in the temple and continue to find strength in the blessings that can be received only through temple covenants.

For more information, go to reliefsociety.lds.org.

DRESS AND APPEARANCE

In today's world, many do not understand or respect the sacred nature of our bodies. Latter-day Saints stand out by dressing in a way that shows we know how precious our bodies are (see *For the Strength of Youth* [booklet, 2011], 6–8). On pages 20–21 of this month's *New Era*, Mary N. Cook, first counselor in the Young Women general presidency, discusses this standard:

“As a temple is built, great care is taken to ensure it is protected and beautifully adorned, inside and out. A key to planning temples is the understanding that a temple *represents* the Lord—it is His house. We *respect* temples as sacred structures where only those who are worthy may enter. We *revere* temples because the sacred ordinances and covenants in which we participate make it possible for us to return to our Heavenly Father.

“Your body is more precious than the most exquisite temple on earth. You are God's beloved son or daughter! These same principles—representation, respect, and reverence—apply even more so to the care and protection you give your body.”

The following suggestions can help you teach your children correct principles about dress and appearance. Also remember that your example in modest dress will teach your children how important appropriate dress is.

Suggestions for Teaching Youth

- Read with your teen the section on dress and appearance in *For the Strength of Youth*. Doing so will give you an opportunity to discuss the doctrines, warnings, and blessings of this standard and to answer any questions your son or daughter may have.
- Consider holding a family home evening on the importance of dress and appearance. You could ask your family: If the Lord were at church with you, how would you want to be dressed? How would you want to present yourself to Him? How do you feel when you are dressed modestly? You could also discuss how to dress appropriately for other occasions, such as school, work, or social events.

Suggestions for Teaching Children

- Our dress represents what is important to us. To illustrate this principle, consider holding a family home evening in which everyone dresses like a missionary or wears Sunday-best clothing.
- Even at a young age, children can start dressing modestly. Review with your children the guidelines on page 7 of *For the Strength of Youth* and provide clothing that adheres to those guidelines. ■



SCRIPTURES ON DRESS AND APPEARANCE

Genesis 1:27

1 Corinthians 6:19

Alma 1:27

October Conference Notebook

“What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken; . . . whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38).

Clearing Our Calendar for Conference

By Cheryl Burr

Since our time was not cluttered with extra activities, we could feel the Spirit more as we listened to general conference.

Years ago, when our six children were young, we decided we wanted to make general conference more meaningful to us. We talked about how important it is to watch conference with clear minds and rested bodies. Conference is an important time to receive instruction from our current prophets. So we set a goal not to plan anything extra for a few days before conference or during conference weekend. We blocked out those days on our calendar, and each of us committed not to schedule extra activities on those days.

If you choose to take a similar approach, it will be unique to your family and your situation, but our family defined “extra activities” as attending school activities, having neighborhood children come over, doing things with friends away from the house, having parties or dinners with friends or relatives, doing projects or yard work in between or during conference sessions, saving school projects until the last minute, and accepting extra assignments at work.

When the week before general conference arrived, it was sometimes hard to say no to these activities, but most of the time our family members cheerfully made the right choices to meet our goal. We found that our younger children wanted to be part of general conference. I think it was because we talked about the importance of conference over and over throughout the week before.

I am happy to report that keeping our schedule simple the days before and during general conference completely changed our family’s experience. Our hearts and minds were prepared for conference. Our time was not cluttered with extra activities, so we could feel the Spirit as we sat and listened to the words of counsel from our leaders.

We have stuck to our goal conference after conference because it fills our home with peace. Though several of our children no longer live at home, we encourage them to still clear their calendar the few days before and during conference, as we do at home. We also try to schedule a time to watch a session of conference together as an entire family. I am hoping that as our children marry and have children of their own, they will continue to place a high importance on protecting their conference experience by clearing their calendars. ■



MAKE CONFERENCE A PRIORITY

“Decide now to make general conference a priority in your life. Decide to listen carefully and follow the teachings that are given.”

Elder Paul V. Johnson of the Seventy, “The Blessings of General Conference,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 52.



SUNDAY SCHOOL ANSWERS

By Emma Addams

I have a tendency to look for grand answers to my challenges—to ask the Lord to help me find that one thing that will fix everything. I’ve learned that such an approach can over-complicate things.

As I was teaching the Gospel Doctrine class in my ward, I was determined to ask profound questions that would require contemplation and big, new, insightful answers. In other words, I wanted to avoid a recitation of the same old “Sunday School answers” that ward members seemed to offer each week.

As I pored over the New Testament in preparation, I was struck by the use of the word *abide*, which appears over and over. For example, John 15:10 says, “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall *abide* in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and *abide* in his love” (emphasis added).

In His great Intercessory Prayer, the Savior prays that His disciples “may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us” and “I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one” (John 17:21, 23).

Much of what I searched for was how I could be one with the Lord, how I could *abide* in His love, and how, as a result, I could develop extra patience—patience I so desperately needed to turn my experiences from ones that exhausted me to ones that invigorated and sanctified me.

Ironically, as I searched for both an understanding of the word *abide* and answers to the difficult challenges I faced on a daily basis, I was ultimately led back to the precise Sunday School answers I had been trying to avoid. I found the answers to my challenges by reading the scriptures, praying daily, serving my family and others, and attending the temple and my Sunday meetings. I learned that those simple things make the difference between enduring and enduring well and with patience.

The Sunday School answers really are the best answers. ■



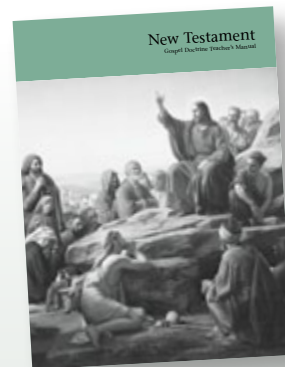
NURTURING OUR FAITH

“Serving, studying, praying, and worshiping are four fundamentals in perfecting ‘that which is lacking in [our] faith.’ (1 Thes.

3:10.) If we cease nurturing our faith in any of these four specific ways, we are vulnerable. . . .

“In a hardening world, the Lord can pierce our consciousness by using ‘the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.’ (Eph. 6:17; see also Jarom 1:12.) However, hearing must be ‘mixed with faith’ (Heb. 4:2) and with Christian service, as we have heard again and again.”

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Lest Ye Be Wearied and Faint in Your Minds,” *Ensign*, May 1991, 88.



USING CHURCH-APPROVED MATERIALS

“Teachers and leaders use the scriptures, the teachings of latter-day prophets, and approved curriculum materials to teach and testify of the doctrines of the gospel. Approved curriculum materials for each class or quorum are listed in the current *Instructions for Curriculum*. As needed, teachers and leaders supplement curriculum materials with Church magazines, particularly the general conference issues of the *Ensign*.”

Handbook 2: Administering the Church (2010), 5.5.4.

Provident Living

PREPARES US FOR THE FUTURE

Latter-day Saints believe in being prepared and self-reliant. We believe in preparing educationally for employment, in preparing financially for a rainy day, and in preparing temporally for natural disasters or other challenges. Most important, we believe in preparing spiritually for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and for living with our Father in Heaven again. This approach to preparedness is called provident living.

Living providently reflects our true eternal nature: we are “to act for [ourselves] and not to be acted upon” (2 Nephi 2:26). The Lord wants us to be responsible and independent (see D&C 78:14). He wants us to live providently because of who we become in the process: responsible, generous, mature, kind. For the more self-reliant we are, the better we can help our families and others. How can we feed the hungry if we ourselves are hungry? How can we impart knowledge if we ourselves lack knowledge? How

can we build others’ faith if we ourselves lack faith?

Principles of provident living include the following:

- Preparation. “Prepare ye for that which is to come, for the Lord is nigh” (D&C 1:12).
- Industry. “Thou shalt not be idle” (D&C 42:42).
- “Learning, even by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118).

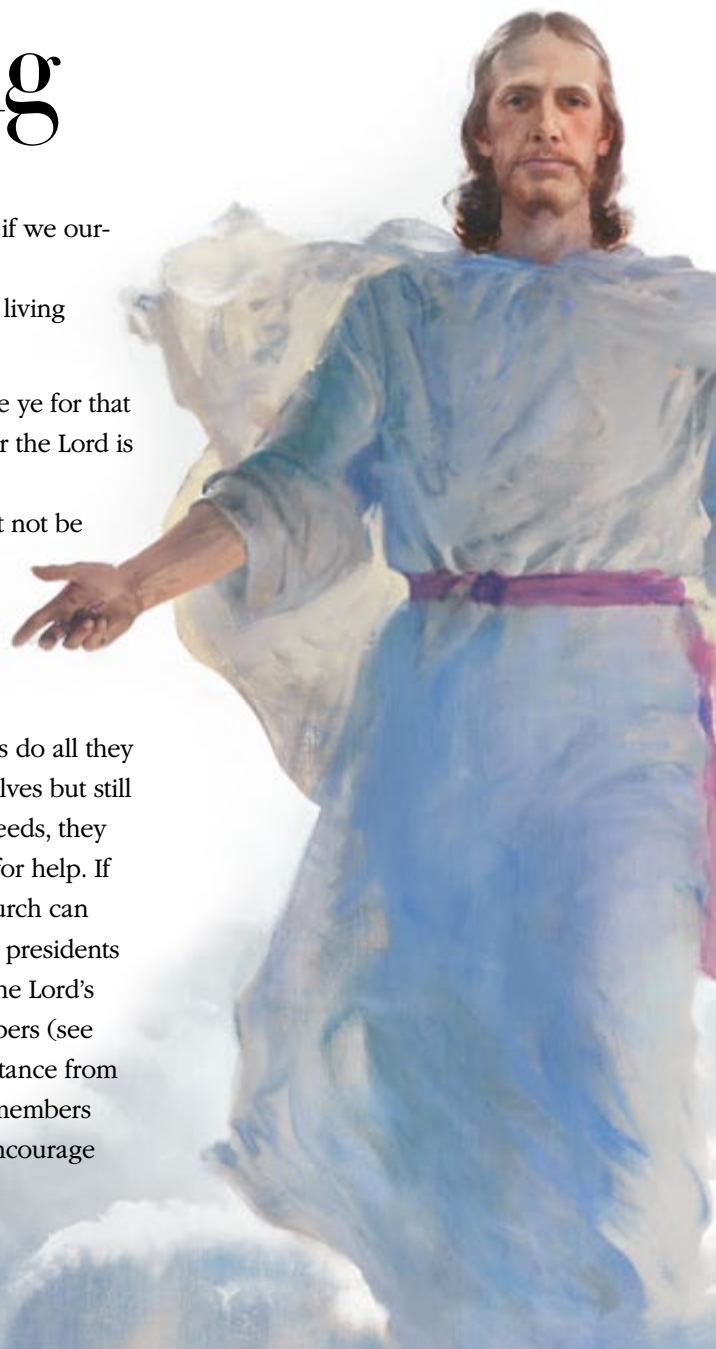
When Church members do all they can to provide for themselves but still cannot meet their basic needs, they turn first to their families for help. If this is insufficient, the Church can help. Bishops and branch presidents can use resources from “the Lord’s storehouse” to help members (see D&C 82:18–19). Any assistance from the Church aims to help members help themselves and to encourage work in their lives. ■

For more information, see Genesis 41; D&C 38:30.



“All of us are responsible to provide for ourselves and our families in both temporal and spiritual ways. To provide providently, we must practice the principles of provident living: joyfully living within our means, being content with what we have, avoiding excessive debt, and diligently saving and preparing for rainy-day emergencies.”

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Becoming Provident Providers Temporally and Spiritually,” *Ensign*, May 2009, 8.



We can work to become self-reliant in the following areas:

Spiritual strength: Trust in the Lord; obey the commandments; pray and study the scriptures daily; serve others.



Physical health: Obey the Word of Wisdom; exercise; get adequate sleep; practice good sanitation and hygiene.



Education: Become literate; obtain job skills; study “the best books” (D&C 88:118).



Employment: Work to provide for your own and your family’s needs.



Home storage: Store clean drinking water and gradually build a supply of foods you eat on a regular basis and a longer-lasting supply of foods, such as grains and beans.



Finances: Pay tithes and offerings; avoid unnecessary debt; gradually build a financial reserve.

ANSWERING QUESTIONS

Some may wonder if Latter-day Saints hoard food. In truth, we store food and water to prepare for times when food and clean water may be scarce or inaccessible or when family finances are tight. In emergencies, those who have stored food will feel more secure and will be better able to help their families and neighbors through the crisis.

FROM LEFT: THE SECOND COMING. BY GRANT ROMNEY CLAWSON © IRI; PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY CRAIG DIMOND, CHRISTINA SMITH, JOHN LUKE, AND ROBERT CASEY © IRI; PHOTOGRAPH OF CHERRIES BY DAVID STOKER © 2008

For these families who live in England, surrounded by thousands of years of history and examples of endurance and fortitude, there are reminders that they, too, can survive hardship.



Loss and Childlessness:

FINDING HOPE AMID THE PAIN

On a sandstone bluff at a bend in the River Avon in England lies Warwick Castle. Centuries old, once home to nobles and kingmakers, Warwick has been built and rebuilt, fallen into disrepair and been rebuilt again.

Just a few miles north stands Kenilworth, a castle with equal prestige. In contrast to Warwick, it lies mostly in ruin. Hundreds of castles like these dot the countryside, from the white cliffs of Dover to the northern reaches of Scotland. Many have been smashed and broken through war or disaster.

Like the castles whose once-sturdy walls were breached by opposition, at times we find ourselves assailed by trials that threaten our spiritual fortifications. Those who have suffered the pain of losing a child know the power that grief has to strike at the foundations of faith.

But these castles teach a story of hope, too, to those who have lost a child. Many British castles have found new life as they have been reshaped by a master's hand, just as we are when we turn to the Savior to rebuild after a loss. For example, Warwick Castle with its renewed vitality is open to the public and reminds us of the resilience of the English people. Windsor Castle near London has served as a home and fortress for over 900 years and still serves as one of the residences of Her Majesty, the Queen of England.

Just as these mighty castles have been renewed, we too can survive when our spiritual fortresses are threatened. Even after

we are stricken, we can find newness of life as our Heavenly Father, through the Atonement of His Son, Jesus Christ, helps us restore our spiritual walls.

Trials of Faith: Barren Years

No matter our trials, it is easy to oversimplify how difficult it is to remain steady in the face of adversity. When we are in pain, we can be blind to relief. What's more, the pain can be so great it can cause us to question our faith in the source of all hope, wisdom, and joy—our Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ.

Such was the case with Simon Mason, a bishop serving near Reading, England. Although Simon was raised as a member of the Church and developed a strong testimony, he has faced periods of loss that have challenged his faith. One such challenge happened a few years after he courted and married Jennifer Martin.

Simon and Jennifer were filled with a desire to have



Left: Warwick Castle. Left, inset: The Leece family. Above: The Mason family.



The London England Temple.

DOCTRINAL POINTS

- Heavenly Father knows our pains and sufferings.
- The Atonement of Jesus Christ brings healing to our souls as we strive to follow Him.
- Hope, healing, and joy come as we turn to the Lord in faith.

children, yet none came. Seeking help, they went to doctors, who could find no medical reason for their infertility. Year after year their hopes to start a family met with disappointment.

After six years, Simon began to lose hope. Confused and discouraged, he sought his Heavenly Father's help, asking, "Father, what is your plan for my life? Do you understand the pain we feel? Do you really know me?"

Through prayer, Simon decided that no matter what trials he was called to endure, he would remain faithful. "From that day forward," he says, "I decided I would live the gospel to the best of my ability; I would be true to the testimony which I had already received."

For Simon, "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7) did not come immediately, but it did

come. The Spirit confirmed his resolution. Heavenly Father applied the healing balm of Gilead¹ to a child in spiritual crisis.

"For me, that experience has built an absolutely solid foundation, an assurance of who I am," Simon shares. "Heavenly Father knows me as an individual."

The Father had not forgotten him; the walls of Simon's faith, once crumbling, had been restored.

Having passed through the trial with the love of a Father in Heaven who did in fact know them, Simon and Jenny Mason soon discovered that they were expecting not one child but two.

Trials of Faith: Childlessness

For the Masons, the blessings came in the form of peace, strength, and, finally, children. For many others, no children will come. They too may ask, "What is God's plan for my life? Where is the balm of Gilead for me?"

They may wonder how they are meant to grow through trials that seem too hard to bear. Greg and Sharon Leece of Reading, England, know the pain of this adversity. About a year after their marriage, Sharon contracted cancer. Although she survived the treatments, her ability to have children was compromised.

But Greg and Sharon were not left alone. "Throughout the heartache and suffering," Greg relates, "priesthood blessings, fasting, and prayer helped get us through. One blessing not long after the cancer treatment promised that Sharon would be a mother."

Sharon did become a mother—though not in the way anticipated. Through adoption, she and Greg eventually had two wonderful children sealed to them. Again, peace came through faithful perseverance.

Trials of Faith: The Loss of a Child

There may be times, though, when we feel overwhelmed by hardship. When this happens we can draw upon the love and strength of the Lord. As King David of old said, “The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer;

“The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour” (2 Samuel 22:2–3).

For David and Helen McLukey of Oxford, England, it was prayer and feeling God’s love for them while they were in the temple that gave them strength in a time of great distress. Their first son, Oliver, was born without incident. But their second son, Rowan, underwent a tremendous journey. At 20 weeks into the pregnancy, a doctor discovered that their baby had a serious heart condition. Rowan’s aortic valve was too tight, which prevented blood from escaping the left ventricle. As a result, the left ventricle was enlarged and losing its strength.

The doctor explained their options: they could perform an abortion immediately or let the baby die naturally in a week or two—as he surely would. David and Helen sat stunned as they felt the crushing weight of what they had heard.

Almost before they had time to think, the doctor hesitantly offered a third option: an experimental surgery that had been performed only three times before and never successfully. If they chose this option, there was a high probability Rowan would die from the surgery itself; and even if he didn’t die, the surgery might not be successful.

After prayer, the McLukeys chose the third option, which involved open-heart



David and Helen McLukey with their son Oliver.

surgery through the womb. To their joy, the surgery was successful. But Rowan’s condition was fragile, requiring that Helen make weekly visits to the doctor. The anxious months passed. Three weeks before Rowan’s due date, his condition deteriorated and an emergency delivery was required—at great risk to the baby.

Again, Rowan survived, but he had to be put on a ventilator immediately and undergo another heart operation. A week later he needed another operation. Other complications ensued. Two months later, Rowan was moved to Southampton on the south coast for yet another open-heart surgery. More surgeries followed.

Over the course of these trials, Helen began to feel an increasing sense of guilt as she split her time between Rowan at the hospital an hour away and David and Oliver back home. They brought Rowan back to the local hospital to relieve stress on the family. The guilt, fear, and stress were at times unbearable for Helen and her family. There were times when they felt despair.

After giving a valiant fight, Rowan passed away when he was just six months old. It was a terrible experience for the McLukeys, but they had sought the Lord’s guidance in the temple just a few

Children Are Alive in Christ¹

In 1958 my brother Steven died, 13 years before I was born. He had suffered from Wilms' tumor, a type of kidney cancer, and had undergone the body-racking pain of radiation therapy, a brand-new treatment in the 1950s. He was not yet two years old.

This loss caused unending grief to my dear mother. She loved her son; she wanted him to have a future as bright as his smile before he became sick. Her heart was crushed as she watched him waste away in agony. Although she has had many joys in her life, and the joy of five other children, the pain has never fully healed.

In the face of such pain I share this testimony: that Steven will live again, that his release from pain at such an early age was a sign of his great purity.

The Prophet Joseph Smith declared: "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" (D&C 137:10).



My mother, Jane Anne, with my brother Steven.

These words have brought great hope to me, though I have never seen my older brother, and I hope they bring peace to my mother and to all who grieve such loss.

Joshua J. Perkey

NOTE

1. Moroni 8:12.

days before Rowan died, and something remarkable happened.

"I felt God's love for me," David explains, "and a kind of empathy. I felt that God was in control regardless of what I could or couldn't see in those moments."

They rejoiced that Rowan had been a part of their lives. "It was a miracle that he survived at all," Helen explains, "and that we had six months with him. That was an answer to prayer."

David and Helen were also granted that peace "which passeth all understanding" from the Lord, who promised, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. . . . Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (Philippians 4:7; John 14:18, 27).

Helen and David have taken courage in that peace. "We believe in an afterlife," Helen affirms. "We believe in the Resurrection. We believe in our Savior."

David's views of mortality have changed, and his understanding of the Atonement has deepened.

"Immortality and triumph over physical death is much

more significant than it used to be because I know I will see my son again in his physical body," he says. "That is something that I cling to."

Where Can I Turn for Peace?²

Those who build fortifications do so for good reason—they are aware of opposing forces and expect them to attack. But even those with the best-fortified locations must expect to suffer some loss, sorrow, and grief.

What, then, are we to make of this? If pain and sorrow do come, how are we to find solace?

Thousands of miles away from Great Britain's castles lie walls built thousands of years ago in the Holy City, Jerusalem. Isaiah, prophesying the words of the Savior, wrote,

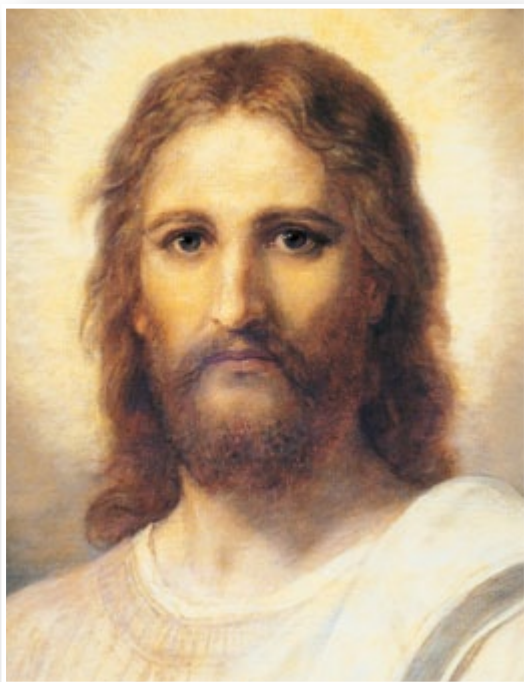
"Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.

"Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me" (Isaiah 49:15–16; see also 1 Nephi 21:15–16).

The Savior has not forgotten us. He knows our pains and sufferings and has provided a healing balm through His grace to bring us peace. We, like ancient castles, can find new purpose as we are rebuilt through faith in the gospel. And if we make and keep our temple covenants, our loved ones may be with us again in the Resurrection and in heaven. ■

NOTES

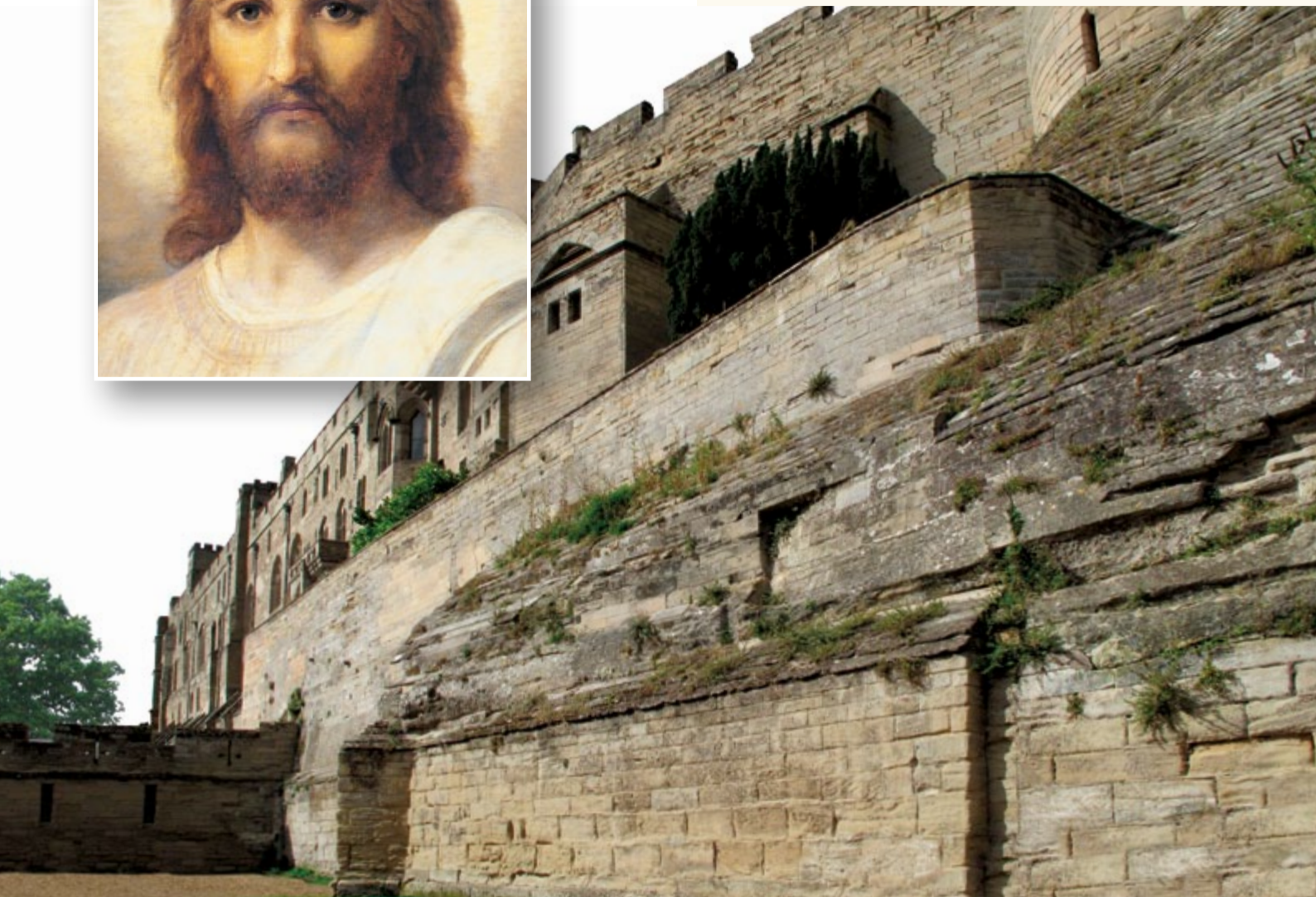
1. See Boyd K. Packer, "Balm of Gilead," *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 16–18.
2. See "Where Can I Turn for Peace?" *Hymns*, no. 129.



ANSWERING QUESTIONS

You or someone you know may wonder what happens to the spirits of children who die without having received the saving ordinance of baptism. The Book of Mormon teaches us that "all little children are alive in Christ" and are innocent. They are not capable of committing sin and are not accountable, therefore they "need no repentance, neither baptism" and come under no condemnation. (See Moroni 8:5–26.)

Modern-day revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith has set forth that "children shall be baptized for the remission of their sins when eight years old" (D&C 68:27), which is the age when they are considered accountable for sins. "All children who die before they arrive at the years of accountability are saved in the celestial kingdom of heaven" (D&C 137:10).



Teaching

CHASTITY AND VIRTUE



By Matthew O. Richardson

Second Counselor in the Sunday School General Presidency

Parents can use these six strategies to teach their children about sexual intimacy.

I have been privileged to meet with youth and young adults from every walk of life and from all over the world. On one occasion I spoke with a group of particularly impressive teenagers about virtue, chastity, and moral living. After telling them how impressed I was with their comments, confidence, appearance, and demeanor, I asked, “How did you become so articulate, assured in your responses, and so comfortable with a sensitive topic like this?” One young woman said without any hesitation, “I have parents who teach.” The others nodded their heads in agreement. This simple yet profound experience emphasizes the influence parents have in the lives of their children—especially in their role of teaching virtue, chastity, sexual intimacy, and proper relationships.

Unfortunately, many parents may not be teaching their children about sexual issues as well as they could. For example, in surveying over 200 active young single Latter-day Saints, I found that only 15 percent considered their parents to be the primary source of information regarding sexual issues. These young members said they learned about this important topic primarily from friends or peers, the Internet, media, entertainment, textbooks, extended family, or their Church leaders.

Of course, it’s not an easy subject to teach. But I believe parents are the best teachers to convey such sacred principles. The following strategies will help you develop simple, effective, and lasting principles and practices that promote effective learning and teaching—especially in teaching your children how to live virtuous and chaste lives.

Teaching and learning should begin early. Parents who effectively teach their children about sexual topics understand that most children encounter such topics at far younger ages than they or their parents expect or desire. Many children become exposed to sexual content on the Internet as young as 11 years old and some even younger. Entertainment venues, sporting events, advertising, and even social media are increasingly saturated with sexual images and innuendo.

Some parents rightly ask, “When should I begin talking about sexually related issues?” It depends on the age and maturity of the child and the specific situation. Spiritual guidance will come as parents prayerfully and carefully observe their children’s behavior, intentionally listen to their children, and take time to consider and discern when and what to teach. For example, I recall my son asking me questions about anatomy when he was barely five years old. While it was a little unnerving, it was obvious that it was the right time to talk. However, as I thought about how to respond, it seemed clear that this was *not* the right time to talk with my son about every sexually related topic.

Teaching and learning should occur often. Learning is a process rather than a single event. When it comes to teaching children about sexual intimacy or other related matters,



people often refer to it as “the talk.” Whether intended or not, this term implies that parents teach this topic in a single conversation. That is not the most effective way for a child to learn. The Savior taught that we learn “line upon line, precept upon precept” (2 Nephi 28:30). We will have more success teaching as we revisit the topic with our children as they age and mature. Parents who understand this principle prepare themselves mentally, emotionally, and spiritually to teach their children about sexually related topics during their children’s childhood and adolescence.

Effective learning and teaching hinges on the relationship between the teacher and learner. When it comes to teaching children about sexually related topics, most parents worry almost exclusively about *what* they should say. While this is important, effective teaching and learning goes well beyond talking and telling about content. In fact, the

way parents approach teaching their children may be more important than what they might actually say. Research supports the conclusion that parents who influence their children most when dealing with sexual issues are those who communicate openly, express love and concern, and are actively engaged in the lives of their children.¹

Comments from my informal survey of young Latter-day Saints repeatedly centered on wishing their parents were more open or willing to talk about sexually related topics. These young adults expressed that they not only wanted their parents to be involved in the process, but they also wished their parents would “talk *with* them rather than talk *at* them.” They longed for conversations that were “natural,” “normal,” “comfortable,” and far less “awkward.” This should motivate parents to work harder in being approachable, available, natural, and unruffled by a topic,

Parents who influence their children most when dealing with sexual issues are those who communicate openly, express love and concern, and are actively engaged in the lives of their children.

situation, or even timing. If there is a price to be paid for parents to effectively teach their children about things that matter most, it is for parents to act in ways that help their children feel comfortable and safe in talking about all subjects—especially the more personal ones.

Teaching and learning are most effective when the subject is relevant and real. Depending on our approach, teaching about sexual intimacy can feel awkward, unrealistic, impractical, or even preachy. A key to success is to realize that most questions and concerns children have are reactions to real-life situations and observations. As we pay attention to, listen to, and observe our children, we will discern what we need to teach.

For example, movies, styles, fads, television programs, advertisements, or music lyrics provide ample opportunity to talk about moral standards. Other opportunities will come as we observe our children's relationships and interactions with others, the way they and their peers dress, the language they use, how dependent they feel on the opposite sex, as well as varying interpretations of chastity and moral standards in the community. There are plenty of real-life opportunities to talk *with* children about morality and virtue.

Perhaps the most important aspect of real-life teaching is done as parents model chastity, modesty, and virtue in their own lives. Children will more readily listen to and follow the counsel of their parents when such counsel is based on their parents' good examples.

The opposite is also true. As Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: "In many ways, our actions speak louder than our words. President Brigham Young (1801–77) taught: 'We should

As we pay attention to, listen to, and observe our children, we will discern what we need to teach.

set [our children] an example that we wish them to imitate. Do we realize this? How often we see parents demand obedience, good behavior, kind words, pleasant looks, a sweet voice and a bright eye from a child or children when they themselves are full of bitterness and scolding! How inconsistent and unreasonable this is! Our children will notice such inconsistencies in us and perhaps find justification for acting in similar ways."²

Learners learn best when they understand what teachers are teaching. Too many youth and young adults express frustration that their parents and even Church leaders tend to use "code words" and implicit messages that actually render more questions than answers and more tension than relief. This is especially true when it comes to sexual topics.

While serving as a bishop of a young single adult ward, I was often asked what "petting" meant. My faithful ward members had been taught that they shouldn't be involved in petting, but they were never taught what petting actually means. It was difficult for them to keep instruction they didn't understand.

President Marion G. Romney (1897–1988), First Counselor in the First Presidency, explained that it is not enough to teach in a way so others will understand, but we must also teach in such a way that no one will misunderstand.³ Rather than speaking in code or even slang, we will have more success if we use correct and appropriate terms. This promotes understanding and cultivates respect.

Consider how Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles effectively taught moral principles and standards. He said: "Any sexual intimacy outside of the bonds of marriage—I mean any intentional



contact with the sacred, private parts of another’s body, with or without clothing—is a sin and is forbidden by God. It is also a transgression to intentionally stimulate these emotions within your own body.”⁴

To teach effectively, we have to ensure that those we teach understand the message. Simple questions like “Does this answer your question?” or “Did I explain that very well?” or “Do you have any other questions?” are very helpful.

Learners are converted when teachers connect the message with everlasting principles and standards. Rather than focusing only on the relevant “facts of life,” effective gospel instruction occurs when we connect those facts with the “facts of eternal life.” When talking about our bodies, for example, we can talk about how a loving Heavenly Father created our bodies and how we should approach His creations with respect and according to His expectations.

As the world drowns in immorality, there is still hope for future generations. This hope centers on parents devoting their best efforts to teaching the rising generation to be virtuous and chaste. Parents who teach their children to live virtuous and chaste lives strive to increase their understanding and improve their teaching skills. In doing this, they come to know that “the Lord will magnify [them] as [they] teach in the way He has commanded.” After all, this “is a labor of love—an opportunity to help others exercise their agency righteously, come unto Christ, and receive the blessings of eternal life.”⁵ ■

NOTES

1. See Bonita F. Stanton and James Burns, “Sustaining and Broadening Intervention Effect: Social Norms, Core Values, and Parents,” in *Reducing Adolescent Risk: Toward an Integrated Approach*, ed. Daniel Romer (2003), 193–200.
2. Robert D. Hales, “Our Parental Duty to God and to the Rising Generation,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2010, 32.
3. See Jacob de Jager, “Let There Be No Misunderstanding,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 67.
4. Richard G. Scott, “Serious Questions, Serious Answers,” *New Era*, Oct. 1995, 6.
5. *Teaching, No Greater Call* (1999), 4.

Perhaps the most important aspect of real-life teaching is done as parents model chastity, modesty, and virtue in their own lives.

Chastity

IN AN UNCHASTE WORLD

Church magazines met with a group of young adults from various parts of the world to discuss the challenges and blessings of remaining chaste in a world that does not value—and even mocks—chastity. We found their open, honest, and heartfelt discussion uplifting and inspiring and hope that you might also discover in their comments something to help you value the sacredness of marriage and physical intimacy.

With so many people justifying immoral behavior, what gospel truths help you remain sexually pure?

Martin Isaksen, Norway: It says in the scriptures to be chaste. That's good enough for me.

Lizzie Jenkins, California, USA: Chastity is a commitment. You live it. It's a way of life.

Liz West, England: Understanding who I am, understanding that there is more to life than right now and just this one night helps me a lot. The plan of salvation—even though when I was a teenager I couldn't have explained it specifically—is very helpful. The concept of eternal marriage is wonderful! When people understand this commitment, they realize how incredible it is that God has put us here in families and has given us

commandments so that we will not only be safe but so that we will be happy. As I live these principles and share them with my friends, saying, "I'm not going to drink" or "I'm not going to go to this party" or "I'm not going to do this," they respect me. Eventually they actually stick up for me. Understanding that I have worth as a child of God and that Heavenly Father knows who I am and actually cares about me is a great strength.

Anna (Anya) Vlasova, Russia: It helps me a lot when I think about being part of a heavenly family. I love and respect God and don't want Him to feel ashamed of the choices I make.

Kaylie Whittemore, Florida, USA: I definitely think understanding the sanctity of families has given me a strong resolve to live the law

of chastity. Another thing is realizing that when we break commandments, there are negative consequences I don't want to experience.

Falande (Fae) Thomas, Haiti: I have really thought about how people say, "Why wait when you could have everything now?" But I've wondered about how long that kind of happiness would last. I'd rather live the law of chastity and, at the end of the day, have peace.

Hippolyte (Hip) Kouadio, Ivory Coast: One of the things that helps me a lot is the family proclamation: "We . . . declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife."¹

The other thing that helps is how the Brethren explain chastity to us. They warn us how immorality starts and teach that when we abuse the body, we abuse the soul. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland taught that the Savior paid a price for us to one day have a resurrected body. The way we can be grateful for the price He paid is to keep our bodies clean.²

Liz: I remember a very specific



“The Savior paid a price for us to one day have a resurrected body. The way we can be grateful for the price He paid is to keep our bodies clean.”

conversation I had with someone when I was about 15. We talked about how I don’t believe in intimacy before marriage, and I remember her saying, “Yeah, but what if it just happens? What if one night, you just . . . ?” But I knew that I had a choice. Nothing just “happens.”

It’s incredible to me that Heavenly Father has given us agency and commandments to liberate us and that Satan does everything he can to bind or restrict us. The times my friend was talking about when something could “happen” were at parties where people had been drinking and were paired off. So I don’t put myself in those situations. The choice shouldn’t be made at the end when you say yes or no. Choice is made before, when you ask yourself, “Do I go to the party?”

Lots of people, if they don’t think things through ahead of time and don’t think of consequences, will do whatever they want in the moment. But if you say, “I want this as my end result; therefore I’m going to make these choices,” then you’ll avoid a lot of trouble.

You mentioned agency and commandments. But do covenants—baptismal covenants or temple covenants—help you live your standards?

Fae: I think about my life before I was baptized and how much more sense life makes now that I’ve made covenants. It’s amazing how we can be forgiven because of the Atonement. When I remember my

covenants, I think about how I can repent, become better, and keep moving forward.

Anya: Especially at the temple you see an eternal perspective. The temple helps you think about your eternity and not just about today, so you make wiser choices.

Lizzie: A lot of times we believe that intimacy is bad, but it’s not. It just has to be sanctioned by the right authority, at the right time, and with the right person. That’s what covenants are about. You’re making commitments. You’re saying, “I’m really ready for this step in my life.” Covenants help me because I know I’m doing things in the order that I’m supposed to. And I know if I do what Heavenly Father wants, I’ll be happier.

Jonathan Tomasini, France: I wouldn’t be true to myself and I wouldn’t be true to God if I broke my covenants. Marriage covenants help me see that I want to be able to offer to my wife someone who has self-control, has prepared himself to be a good husband, and has kept himself pure.

There are a lot of arguments in the world—many of them seem persuasive and complex—about why the law of chastity is outdated. What arguments have you heard, and how have you responded to those who challenge your standards?

Lizzie: My senior year of high school, I remember a teacher giving us some “advice.” She had married right out of high school, and it ended



THE STANDARD AND THE KEY

“The standard remains abstinence before marriage and total fidelity in marriage. However out of step we may seem, however much the standards are belittled, however much others yield, we will not yield, we cannot yield. . . .

“You had conferred upon you the gift of the Holy Ghost. There will be whisperings of approval or warning when you have decisions to make. The Holy Ghost can guide you away from evil and bring you back if you have wandered and lost your path. Never forget that you are sons and daughters of God. Satan cannot forever imprison you. You always hold the key of repentance to unlock the prison door.”

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Standard of Truth Has Been Erected,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 26.

badly, so she basically told us that “there are a lot of fish in the sea.” She meant that there are a lot of things for us to try, a lot of candidates to try out. I remember being shocked that my teacher would say that. Since that time I have thought that, yes, there are a lot of people, but I don’t want a lot of people!

Jonathan: Someone I know said that when she is in a relationship, she wants to see if she is sexually compatible with that person. She gave the example of dating a guy she liked, and after they were intimate, she didn’t feel they were compatible and the relationship didn’t work out. She used that experience to make her argument, and it seemed pretty persuasive. Ultimately, I explained to her that I believe you can get to know each other really well in other ways, and if you do so and build trust while living the law of chastity, there will be greater compatibility when you get married.

Any: The most common argument I always hear is that when two people love each other, it’s OK; intimacy is just an expression of love.

Martin: Something that comes to my mind when I hear the excuse “We love each other” is a quote from President Spencer W. Kimball. He says that too often lust sneaks in the door when people think they’re in love.³ That’s the case for many people when they are intimate before marriage: it’s lust even though they think they love each other. If they really did love each other, they’d respect each other more,

support each other, and understand that there’s a time for intimacy. And, to me, intimacy before marriage shows that you’re not really going to support each other as much as you think you will. Because if you’re not able to help each other in living your standards now, then how are you going to support each other later?

Kaylie: Some people who don’t believe in God feel that the Bible and the law of chastity are out of date. I had some friends in high school who were basically atheist or agnostic—and I had one friend who didn’t really believe in the teachings of her religion. She just lived according to what she wanted, what she felt was right for her. Physical intimacy, from her point of view, is self-gratifying, and anything that would restrict that gratification is undesirable.

I think my friend was surprised that I believed in the Bible and God’s commandments, but I tried to help her understand that I don’t view the commandments as restrictions; I live them because they make me happier. Although we disagreed, she respected me, and we remained great friends.

Liz: All of these arguments have responses in basic gospel principles. When you believe that there is a God, when you believe that there is a greater plan, when you believe that there is accountability, when you believe that there is someone who loves you and cares about you, and when you believe that you have

intrinsic worth because you are a child of God—then you're much more likely to consider yourself worthwhile and respect your body. When people don't know or believe these principles, they look to other people and places to see what they're worth.

What influences or examples have helped you commit to live the law of chastity?

Hip: I had a roommate who was engaged. One day we were talking about his upcoming marriage, and someone asked, "What are the commitments you two think will help you stay strong?" His answer was, "Not keeping the law of chastity could destroy our relationship. So we decided that we wouldn't do anything

"I don't view the commandments as restrictions; I live them because they make me happier."

we would not feel comfortable doing in front of the bishop or our parents." That still has an influence on me.

Jonathan: Now that I'm a young adult, it's easier to listen to the prophets and ponder about the things Church leaders say. Before that though, I think a lot of responsibility rests with our parents and families. The Church can provide information and a lot of great things, but the examples of my family really helped me realize that the gospel is a good thing and that it makes us happy.

Liz: When I was growing up, the closest Church member my age lived an hour and a half away, so there were no other members at school. But something I really appreciated was that even though there was just me, my leaders always came to Mutual; they always came to seminary; they always came to teach my lesson—every single time. They never said, "Well, we've got just one student so we're not going to have class today." I'm sure I learned a lot, but what I really remember is that my leaders were consistent. And because of them, I had opportunities to feel the Spirit.

I think we can never fully appreciate the gift of the Holy Ghost. Even though I had my parents and my family and my leaders, when I was at school I was by myself. But the Spirit was with me. So whatever keeps the Spirit in someone's life will be a great influence in helping that person keep the law of chastity.

Lizzie: One of my biggest influences was gaining a testimony for myself. If you are not rooted strongly in the gospel, it's really easy to take a different path. But if you start with making sure you have a strong gospel foundation, everything else will follow.

Hip: When you want to be physically strong, you work out, and when you work out, you get results. If we apply that in a spiritual way, we have to work out spiritually. There are many things we have to do for a spiritual workout, such as reading the scriptures and doing everything we can to have the Spirit. We also have to set righteous goals and work toward those goals. But to reach those goals, we cannot go it alone. We have to have the Lord with us. From Him we get the strength and the Spirit to overcome our challenges. Then we can follow President Thomas S. Monson's plea:

"Do not let your passions destroy your dreams. Withstand temptation.

"Remember the words from the Book of Mormon: 'Wickedness never was happiness.'"⁴ ■

NOTES

1. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
2. See Jeffrey R. Holland, "Of Souls, Symbols, and Sacraments," in *Brigham Young University 1987–88 Devotional and Fireside Speeches* (1988), 77–79.
3. "At the hour of sin, pure love is pushed out of one door while lust sneaks in the other. Affection has then been replaced with desire of the flesh and uncontrolled passion. Accepted has been the doctrine which the devil is so eager to establish, that illicit sex relations are justified" (*Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 279).
4. Thomas S. Monson, "Be Thou an Example," *Ensign*, May 2005, 113.




HOW TO SURVIVE IN ENEMY TERRITORY



**By President
Boyd K. Packer**

President of
the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles



We celebrate 100 years of seminary in the Church. I hold on to a thread that goes back to the early days when the resources for this program were very scarce.

From those humble beginnings, we now have 375,008 students in seminary classes in 143 countries with over 38,000 volunteer and full-time teachers worldwide. We invest much in our youth. We know of your worth and your potential.

Wisdom Will Help You Combat the Enemy

I speak as one who has seen the past and would prepare you for the future.

You are growing up in enemy territory. When you become mature spiritually, you will understand how the adversary has infiltrated the world around you. He is in homes, entertainment, the media, language—everything around you. In most cases, his presence is undetected.

I want to tell you that which will be of most worth and most desirable. The scriptures say, “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom,” and I would add, “with all [your] getting get [going!]” (Proverbs 4:7). I do not have time to waste and neither do you. So listen up!

The moment I decided to be a teacher is very clear in my mind. During World War II, I was in my early 20s and a pilot in the Air Force. I was stationed on the little island of Ie Shima. This island, a small, lonely one about as big as a postage stamp, is just off the northern tip of Okinawa.

One lonely summer evening, I sat on a cliff to watch the sun go down. I was pondering what I would do with my life after the war, if I was fortunate enough to survive. What did I want to be? It was on that night that I decided I wanted to be a teacher. I reasoned that teachers are always learning. Learning is a basic purpose of life.

I first taught seminary in 1949 in Brigham City. I had been a student in that seminary in my high school days.

There were three courses originally taught in seminary: Old Testament, New Testament, and Church History. It was my privilege to add an early-morning class on the Book of Mormon. I had returned from the war with a testimony of the Book of Mormon and an understanding of how the gift of the Holy Ghost operates.

The Gift of the Holy Ghost Will Protect You in Enemy Territory

You have been taught all of your lives about the gift of the Holy Ghost, but teaching can only go so far. You can and, in fact, you must go the rest of the way alone to discover within yourself how the Holy Ghost can be a guiding and protective influence.

For young men and young women, the process is the same. Discovering how the Holy Ghost operates in your life is the quest of a lifetime. Once you have made that discovery for yourself, you can live in enemy territory and will not be deceived or destroyed. No member of this Church—and that means each of you—will ever make a serious mistake without first being warned by the promptings of the Holy Ghost.

Sometimes when you have made a mistake, you may

have said afterward, “I knew I should not have done that. It did not feel right,” or perhaps, “I knew I *should* have done that. I just did not have the courage to act!” Those impressions are the Holy Ghost attempting to direct you toward good or warning you away from harm.

There are certain things that you must not do if the lines of communication are to remain open. You cannot lie or cheat or steal or act immorally and have those channels remain free from disruption. Do not go where the environment resists spiritual communication.

You must learn to seek the power and direction that is available to you, and then follow that course no matter what.

First on your “to do” list, put the word *prayer*. Most of the time, your prayers will be silent. You can think a prayer.

You can always have a direct line of communication with your Father in Heaven. Do not allow the adversary to convince you that no one is listening on the other end. Your prayers are always heard. You are never alone!

Take care of your body. Be clean. “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16).

Read carefully the promises found in section 89 of the Doctrine and Covenants. The Word of Wisdom does not promise perfect health but that the spiritual receptors within you might be strengthened.

Stay away from tattoos and similar things which deface your body. Your body was created in God’s image.

Prophetic Counsel Teaches What Is True

I want to speak now in the pattern of straight talk about another matter.

We know that gender was set in the premortal world.¹ “The spirit and the body are the soul of man” (D&C 88:15). This matter of gender is of great concern to the Brethren, as are all matters of morality.

A few of you may have felt or been told that you were born with troubling feelings and that you are not guilty if you act on those temptations. Doctrinally we know that if that were true, your agency would have been erased, and that cannot happen. You always have a choice to follow

the promptings of the Holy Ghost and live a morally pure and chaste life, one filled with virtue.

President Gordon B. Hinckley announced the following in general conference: “People inquire about our position on those who consider themselves . . . gays and lesbians. My response is that we love them as sons and daughters of God. They may have certain inclinations which are powerful and which may be difficult to control. Most people have [temptations] of one kind or another at various times. If they do not act upon these inclinations, then they can go forward as do all other members of the Church. If they violate the law of chastity and the moral standards of the Church, then they are subject to the discipline of the Church, just as others are.

“We want to help . . . strengthen them, to assist them with their problems and to help them with their difficulties. But we cannot stand idle if they indulge in immoral activity, if they try to uphold and defend and live in a so-called same-sex marriage situation. To permit such would be to make light of the very serious and sacred foundation of God-sanctioned marriage and its very purpose, the rearing of families.”²

President Hinckley was speaking for the Church.

Use Your Agency to Keep or Regain Safe Ground

The first gift that Adam and Eve received was agency: “Thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee” (Moses 3:17).

You have that same agency. Use it wisely to deny acting on any impure impulse or unholy temptation that may come into your mind. Just do not go there, and if you are already there, come back out of it. “Deny yourselves of all ungodliness” (Moroni 10:32).

Do not tamper with the life-giving powers in your body alone or with members of either gender. That is the standard of the Church, and it will not change. As you mature, there is a temptation to experiment or explore immoral activities. Do not do that!

The key word is *discipline*—self-discipline. The word *discipline* comes from the word *disciple* or *follower*. Be a disciple-follower of the Savior, and you will be safe.

One or two of you may be thinking, “I am already guilty of this or that serious mistake. It is too late for me.” It is never too late.

You have been taught at home and in seminary about the Atonement of Jesus Christ. The Atonement is like an eraser. It can wipe away guilt and the effect of whatever it is that is causing you to feel guilty.

Guilt is spiritual pain. Do not suffer from chronic pain. Get rid of it. Be done with it. Repent and, if necessary, repent again and again and again and again until you—not the enemy—are in charge of you.

Lasting Peace Comes by Repenting Often

Life turns out to be a succession of trials and errors. Add “repent often” to your list of things to do. This will bring you lasting peace that cannot be purchased at any earthly price. Understanding the Atonement may be the one most important truth that you can learn in your youth.

If you are associating with others who drag you down instead of building you up, stop and change company. You may be alone and lonely at times. The important question may be asked then, “When you are alone, are you in good company?”

Unwinding a habit that you have allowed to entangle you can be difficult. But the power is in you. Do not despair. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that “all beings who have bodies have power over those who have not.”³ You can resist temptation!

It is not likely that you will ever have a personal encounter with the adversary; he does not show himself that way. But even if he came personally to you to test and tempt you, you have an advantage. You can assert your agency, and he will have to leave you alone.

Take Advantage of the Blessings of Seminary

You are not ordinary. You are very special. You are exceptional. How do I know that? I know that because you were born at a time and in a place where the gospel of Jesus Christ can come into your life through the teachings and activities of your home and of The Church of

Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is, as the Lord Himself has said, “the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth” (D&C 1:30).

There are other things we could add to the list, but you know what you should and should not be doing in your life. You know right and wrong and do not need to be commanded in all things.

Do not squander these years of seminary instruction. Take advantage of the great blessing you have to learn the doctrines of the Church and the teachings of the prophets. Learn that which is of most worth. It will bless you and your posterity for many generations to come.

Not many years will pass until you are married and have children, a marriage that should be sealed in the temple. Our prayer is that you will find yourself, in due time, safely settled in a family ward or branch.

Go Forward with Hope and Faith

Do not fear the future. Go forward with hope and faith. Remember that supernal gift of the Holy Ghost. Learn to be taught by it. Learn to seek it. Learn to live by it. Learn to pray always in the name of Jesus Christ (see 3 Nephi 18:19–20). The Spirit of the Lord will attend you, and you will be blessed.

We have deep and profound faith in you.

I bear my testimony to you—a witness that came to me in my youth. And you are no different from anyone else than I am. You have as much right to that testimony and witness as anyone. It will come to you if you earn it. I invoke the blessings of the Lord upon you—the blessings of that witness to be in your life, to guide you as you make a happy future. ■

From a seminary centennial broadcast address given on January 22, 2012.

NOTES

1. See “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129; see also Moses 3:5; Abraham 3:22–23.
2. Gordon B. Hinckley, “What Are People Asking about Us?” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 71.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 211.

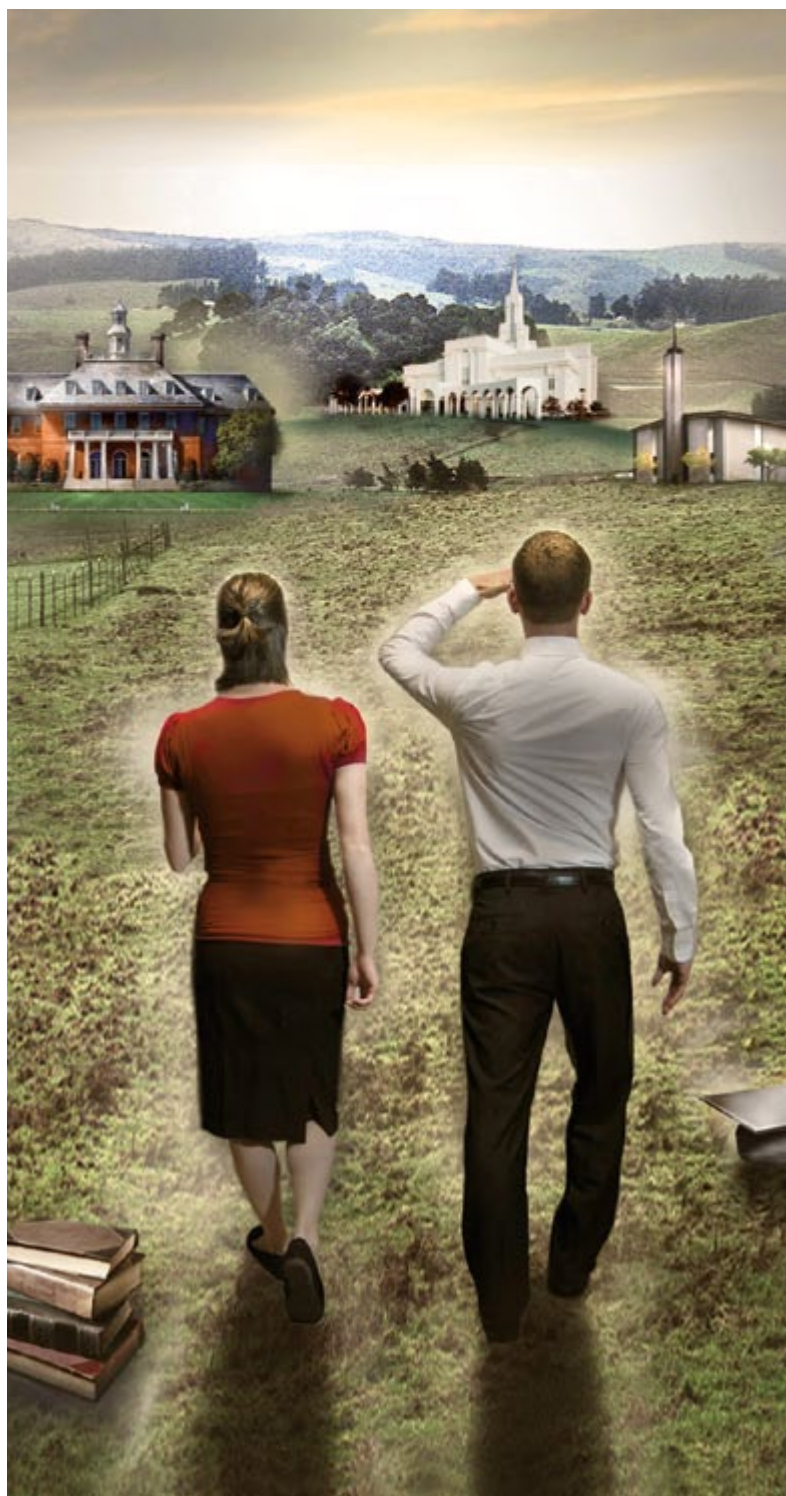


See the Full Address

Watch or listen to all of President Packer’s address at seminary.lds.org/history/centennial.



Do not squander these years of seminary instruction. Take advantage of the great blessing you have to learn the doctrines of the Church and the teachings of the prophets. Learn that which is of most worth.





HELPING YOUTH HAVE SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

No one can force youth to have spiritual experiences, but as these parents and leaders discovered, there are lots of ways to foster experiences that lead to conversion.

When Vyacheslav and Zoya Gulko of Ukraine began investigating the Church, their 13-year-old daughter, Kira, wasn't thrilled. She refused to participate in missionary lessons, and when she knew the elders were coming to their home, she "demonstratively shut the door of her room," her mother remembers.

Brother and Sister Gulko, who decided to join the Church, suspected that if they could just provide an opportunity for Kira to feel the Spirit, her heart might be touched. Because Sister Gulko's own testimony had begun when she attended another person's baptism, she asked Kira to come to *her* baptism—just to help her change into dry clothes afterward. To Sister Gulko's surprise, Kira agreed.

"It happened!" Sister Gulko remembers. "Heavenly Father was working in a very miraculous way." Kira *did* feel the Spirit, and a week after her parents' baptism, she agreed to meet with the missionaries. She began reading the Book of Mormon. A few weeks later,

Sister Gulko noticed a piece of paper hanging above Kira's desk; written on it were the words of 2 Nephi 2:25. Two and a half months after their own baptism, the Gulkos attended their daughter's baptism. Now, 20 years later, Kira is married. She and her husband, Dave, have been sealed in the temple and are raising their two sons in the gospel. She has served faithfully in a number of callings and has remained active in the Church.

Through that experience, Zoya says she learned a crucial lesson that is as applicable to parents who are lifelong members of the Church as it was for her and her husband as new members: parents and leaders cannot force their children into the gospel, but they *can* invite them to places and create experiences where youth can have spiritual experiences of their own. Those experiences can, in turn, lead to conversion.

But just what is the best way to go about creating these kinds of experiences? Parents and leaders from around the world share what has worked for them.

Give Youth Opportunities to Serve

The Granja Viana Ward in the São Paulo Brazil Cotia Stake had a high activity rate among its young men. But their leaders noticed that some of them were facing personal

Relate modern-day examples to the word of God and to the lives of the youth.



challenges and having difficulty fulfilling their priesthood duties.

After the bishopric and Young Men leaders counseled together, they decided to focus more of their activities on service and not as many on entertainment or amusement. This included visiting less-active quorum members, participating in proselyting with the full-time missionaries, and administering the sacrament to homebound ward members. These activities gave the young men an opportunity to act on the principles they were learning in seminary and on Sundays (see 2 Nephi 2:26).

Over time, “these spiritual activities made all the difference,” reports one priesthood leader.

“We were amazed when on a particular fast Sunday, all of our young men bore their testimonies,” he says. “As they did so, many of them recalled in tears the good spirit they had felt on those occasions. One young man shared the experience of administering the

sacrament to an older member of our ward who has been bedridden for three years. His wife, a faithful sister, received our young men with joy and hope. After the ordinance, she shared with them the happiness she feels in her life because of the gospel despite the huge problems and challenges she faces. They felt the Spirit and realized the difference the gospel makes in people’s lives. This experience was so powerful that they will recall it for years to come—perhaps for their entire lives.”

He notes that he had never seen that kind of response from any “football game or funny Mutual night.” Rather, he says, the experience taught him the importance of promoting the kinds of experiences in which youth can feel the Spirit.

“Social activities are important,” he continues. “But spiritual experiences are critical in helping youth build their own testimonies.”

Each Sunday in the Rennes Ward, Angers France Stake, Sister Delphine Letort, as Young Women president, provided a card to each young woman in attendance and asked her to select a peer who wasn’t at church and write to her. The young women wrote about the lesson that week—what they learned or what inspired them—as well as a friendly, personal note. Then Sister Letort or one of her counselors sent the cards in the mail to those who weren’t at church.

The activity was simple but effective, she says, not only as a way for those who weren’t attending to know that they were remembered but also for those who were writing the notes to be more mindful of each other.

“By small things great miracles come about,” she says (see Alma 37:6). “We have seen it manifested. The young women have

Teach using the words of living as well as ancient prophets.

been encouraged, and this experience has contributed to increasing their testimonies.”

Connect Youth with the Word of God

Alma taught that the preaching of the word of God has a powerful effect (see Alma 31:5). David Elmer, a Young Men leader in Texas, USA, knew this and wanted to provide the young men he led on a high-adventure Scouting trip with a meaningful experience that would help prepare them for the future.

Brother Elmer prayerfully considered what he might share and felt directed to a talk by Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. On the trip, Brother Elmer taught from that message, including the story Elder Andersen shared of Sidney Going, a New Zealand rugby star who put a sports career on hold to serve a mission. “Your mission will be a sacred opportunity to bring others to Christ and help prepare for the Second Coming of the Savior,” Elder Andersen said.¹

The experience was powerful, Brother Elmer says, because he taught from the words of a living prophet. At the end of the devotional, all of the young men and leaders signed their names on rugby balls as a pledge to serve missions and as a tangible reminder of what they had learned and felt. Many of the fathers and leaders stayed up that night talking with the young men about how their missions affected their lives.

“Ours is a personal God; He knows His youth,” Brother Elmer says. “He is aware of their lives and challenges and of what is going on with these kids. You never know how



He’s been working in their lives. So we as leaders prepare and provide the atmosphere for them to feel the Spirit. You can do that through the scriptures and through the words of the prophets, but it’s the Lord, not us, who is working in their hearts.”

Be Consistent

Brother Elmer says he wants the young men to remember something else about the trip: their gospel study was consistent.

“I felt that part of my responsibility was to give them experiences to feel the Spirit, and if I wanted that to happen, I had to do my part to plan for it,” he says. “Elder David A. Bednar has taught about creating spiritual patterns in our lives, patterns like scripture study and prayer and family home evening.² And as we were gone that week, we maintained our spiritual patterns. We had prayer as a group. We assigned young men to share a 10-minute devotional in the morning, and their leaders and fathers prepared devotionals for the evening.

“The point was that even though we were away from

TEENS AND RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOR

To read studies about the influence of religious behavior in teens’ lives, please see these two articles, available online:

- Brent L. Top and Bruce A. Chadwick, “Helping Teens Stay Strong,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1999, 26–34.
- Jamshid Askar, “‘Sacred Sacrifices’ Bless Religious Youth,” *Church News*, Nov. 28, 2009, 14–15.

Find natural teaching moments in everyday activities.



home and our activities were different than they normally are, our spiritual patterns didn't get interrupted. The young men may or may not remember specific lessons, but I hope they'll remember the pattern we maintained of having devotionals and prayer and scripture study."

Myra Bocobo Garcia of the Philippines also knows the value of consistency, and she knows teaching it begins at home. Sister Garcia and her husband, Edwin, have three sons and six daughters ranging in age from 8 to 22, each involved in various good activities. While that can mean lots of people going in a lot of different directions, the family works hard to consistently eat dinner together.

"Cooking and happily preparing food and eating together is one of the best ways we gather our children," Sister Garcia says. She notes that mealtime is a time to refresh, connect with each other, and acknowledge the Lord's blessings.

Tap into Existing Opportunities to Teach and Listen

Jocelyn Fielden of Nova Scotia, Canada, says that the most crucial lessons she learned from raising six children, who now range in age from 20 to 30, have to do not only with direct teaching but also with "creating an environment where children can learn truths for themselves."

"Don't be quick to make all their choices or answer all their questions," she says. Instead, she recommends directing children "to the scriptures or counsel from our prophet for guidance and answers." She adds, "And be ready to discuss their findings." In addition, when she gets questions from her children, she sometimes answers by asking a question of her own: "What do you think you should do?"

"Have confidence that they will make right choices," she says. "When we help our children learn to recognize the Spirit in their lives during the many teaching moments we have every day with them and when they know what the Spirit feels like, it will be a catalyst for them to seek for more spiritual experiences, thereby strengthening their testimonies of the reality of our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. It causes a ripple effect: the more they feel the light and comfort the Spirit brings, the more they will desire it and strive to do the things that will make the Spirit more abundant in their lives."

She is quick to point out that the principles that have been effective in family life for her are the ones that Church leaders have repeatedly taught. For instance, she says what while some teaching can occur during formal discussions like the ones that happen in family home evening, family scripture study, and family prayer, parents can be guided by the Spirit to watch for teaching moments.³

How I Stayed Strong in the Gospel

By Tua Rogers

I was baptized when I was 12, and for many years I was the only member of the Church in my family. That wasn't always easy, but fortunately I was blessed with good leaders who helped me in my journey of learning the doctrines of the gospel and using those doctrines to strengthen and improve my life. Because of my decision to stay true to what I believed, I have seen great blessings come into my life and, much later, into the lives of family members as well.

Here are some things that helped me stay strong:

- Stay close to Heavenly Father through activities like prayer and scripture study. He is aware of the situations we face. Staying close to Him helped me remember who I am.
- Follow the counsel of Church leaders. I have seen in my own life the truth of counsel from the prophets and apostles.
- Know that living the gospel creates a better life now and eternally. This has helped me

maintain my standards and faith. Leaders encouraged me to attend the temple, which helped me envision eternal life.

- Surround yourself with good friends who share your standards. I was blessed with good friends who made it easy to make good decisions and keep my faith.
- Stay close to your family. I loved my family and wanted to build strong relationships with them.
- Live the life. Follow the standards and participate in Church programs. They will help you exhibit faith and make good choices. Good choices often make life easier, and they always make life happier.

“Going for a walk, driving to activities, shooting some hoops [playing basketball], having family mealtimes, working together, singing, and serving others are just a few of the activities where gospel teaching has taken place in our family,” she says. “Talking about gospel topics often happens naturally when we are engaged in other activities.”

Work Together toward a Common Goal

Soon after graduating from Brigham Young University–Hawaii, KaYan Danise Mok returned home to Hong Kong and received a calling as Young Women president. While she adjusted to being home, starting a career, and continuing with graduate studies, she prayed earnestly for inspiration to help the young women she worked with develop testimonies to prepare them for the future.

One Sunday while she was teaching about eternal perspective, Sister Mok recognized a prompting to read the Book of Mormon with a particular young woman, who happened to be the only one at church that day.

“My counselor and I responded quickly by setting goals to complete the Book of Mormon as a team with the young woman,” Sister Mok says. “She accepted the challenge without hesitation since we would be completing the goal together.”

Since that time, Sister Mok, her counselor, and this young woman have set up a “buddy system” on Facebook and via text messages to remind each other of the reading and to share with each other what they are learning.

Sister Mok says she saw evidence of remarkable change in this young woman’s life stemming from her scripture study. And as Sister Mok read the scriptures on her daily commute on the train, she too found blessings for herself. “I also felt the Spirit and received answers to my prayers as I continued to move forward in life,” she says.

“In my experience, some youth worry and feel unsure about whether they can receive a testimony and have spiritual experiences as others have,” she continues. “By working together, we assure them with our action that this works and that we’re there to support them every step of the way.” ■

NOTES

1. Neil L. Andersen, “Preparing the World for the Second Coming,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 50.
2. See David A. Bednar, “More Diligent and Concerned at Home,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 17–20.
3. See, for example, Robert D. Hales, “Our Duty to God: The Mission of Parents and Leaders to the Rising Generation,” *Ensign*, May 2010, 95–98; David A. Bednar, “More Diligent and Concerned at Home,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 17–20.

THE **Voice** OF THE **People**

May we be a part of “the voice of the people” that chooses right and blesses our communities and families as a result.

By Michael A. Neider

It happens almost every time. Even when I have to wait in line for more than an hour and am late for an appointment, I still feel the honor, privilege, and joy of voting. The Spirit has always witnessed to me the virtue of participating in local and national elections.

Voting in government elections and performing other civic duties when we have the opportunity is a sacred responsibility, a God-given blessing, and a duty to be carried out with honor and trust.

I have a testimony of the importance of “being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law” (Articles of Faith 1:12). Because we are subject to rulers, we must do all we can in diplomatic, legal, and supportive ways to select and help elect officials who are honest, wise, and good (see D&C 98:10). We should also consider running for office ourselves and support laws that observe the “principle of freedom in maintaining rights and privileges, [which belong] to all mankind, and [are] justifiable before me” (D&C 98:5).

I am always pleased when a First Presidency

letter is read in sacrament meeting just before each election encouraging Latter-day Saints to be involved in the election process and to choose able and honest political and governmental leaders. The First Presidency reminds us that “as citizens we have the privilege and duty of electing office holders and influencing public policy. . . . We urge you to register to vote, to study the issues and candidates carefully and prayerfully, and then to vote.”¹

Our elected officials are obligated to God and to the electorate to work for and to preserve peace, order, security, and prosperity so that God can bless His children. For its part, the electorate is obligated to direct its desires toward righteousness. The Book of Mormon teaches:

“It is not common that the voice of the people desireth anything contrary to that which is right. . . .

“And if the time comes that the voice of the people doth choose iniquity, then is the time that the judgments of God will come upon you” (Mosiah 29:26–27).

As in the times of the Book of Mormon judges, today many people have the freedom to



Voting in government elections and performing other civic duties when we have the opportunity is a sacred responsibility.

express their voice by their actions and votes. But if the people of our day choose iniquity, we too can expect “the judgments of God” to come upon us, which may result in a reduction of our freedom and security.

The Spirit of Service

I believe that the Holy Ghost can inspire God’s children to become positive, contributing members of the community and to work toward orderly government. On many occasions I have

felt the Spirit while engaged in Church and community service.

As a teacher in the Aaronic Priesthood, I felt the Spirit’s confirmation as I thinned sugar beets on our stake farm in Tyhee, Idaho, USA. We teachers found the work hard, but when we had finished, we felt joy in having done our duty. The feeling was like a quiet whisper to me, saying, “Mike, you are a good boy for having done your work.” When our teachers quorum president encouraged us to do extra rows because “the bishop is not able to do all this work alone,” we mustered our strength and got back to work. By the time we had finished, we were especially tired and hungry. But by doing more than our assigned rows, we felt God’s approbation even more strongly.

I have felt the same confirming spirit of service while working in a Church cannery, at a pea vinery, in a bishops’ storehouse, and while helping a neighbor in need. I have felt the Spirit while working on school district committees, on fund-raising committees for medical institutions, and on other civic and governmental committees and commissions seeking to advance opportunities for children, address medical needs, and find solutions for community challenges.

I attended a school luncheon where my 83-year-old mother was recognized as School Volunteer of the Year. After my sister Julie had passed away, my mother moved closer to Julie’s family in order to be closer to Julie’s children. My mother served as a school volunteer almost every day, assisting a teacher and helping children learn to read and complete their assignments. I was grateful that the president of the Parent-Teacher Association and school leaders recognized her tireless efforts.

Through her example my mother inspired



The Lord will help us achieve surprising results when we act in appropriate and diplomatic ways to accomplish good causes.

many others, including members of her own family, to serve and strengthen individuals and families, friends and neighbors.

God has instructed us to “be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of [our] own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness” (D&C 58:27). The Lord will help us achieve surprising results when we act in appropriate and diplomatic ways to accomplish good causes.

Making a Difference

During a visit to Japan, I learned that in one area the academic emphasis to prepare students for higher education opportunities created scheduling problems for Latter-day Saint youth who wanted to participate in seminary, Mutual, and even Sunday worship services. Local Church members prayed for solutions and then united with parents from various faiths and approached school officials. They patiently explained the need to adjust schedules, explaining how children, families, and the community would benefit as a result. Even then, many thought a solution would be impossible.

A new schedule was proposed and refined so that students could become more involved in family and church responsibilities while still attending classes and athletic events. The new schedule

was approved through the diligent, tireless, and diplomatic efforts of all, bringing the sought-for blessings and opportunities. The impossible had been achieved!

“We urge our members to do their civic duty and to assume their responsibilities as individual citizens in seeking solutions to the problems which beset our cities and communities,” the First Presidency has counseled. “Church members cannot ignore the many practical problems that require solution if our families are to live in an environment conducive to spirituality.”

The First Presidency added, “Where solutions to these practical problems require cooperative action with those not of our faith, members should not be reticent in doing their part in joining and leading in those efforts where they can make an individual contribution to those causes which are consistent with the standards of the Church.”²

In working in the community, we should make sure that people understand we represent only ourselves. *Handbook 1* states: “Candidates for public office should not imply that their candidacy is endorsed by the Church or its leaders. Church leaders and members should also avoid statements or conduct that might be interpreted as Church endorsement of any political party, platform, policy, or candidate.”³

May we follow the counsel of our leaders as we seek through the Spirit ways to support good public policy. And may we be part of “the voice of the people” that works for what is right, blessing our families, communities, and nations as a result. ■

NOTES

1. First Presidency letter, September 11, 2008; see also “Members Encouraged to Register, Study, Vote,” *Church News*, Sept. 27, 2008, 7.
2. In Spencer W. Kimball, “Living the Gospel in the Home,” *Ensign*, May 1978, 100.
3. *Handbook 1: Stake Presidents and Bishops* (2010), 17.1.33.

ANSWERING QUESTIONS: POLITICAL NEUTRALITY¹

The Church's mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, not to elect politicians. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is neutral in matters of party politics. This applies in all of the many nations in which it is established.

The Church does not:

- Endorse, promote, or oppose political parties, candidates, or platforms.
- Allow its Church buildings, membership lists, or other resources to be used for partisan political purposes.
- Attempt to direct its members as to which candidate or party they should give their votes to. This policy applies whether or not a candidate for office is a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
- Attempt to direct or dictate to a government leader.

The Church does:

- Encourage its members to play a role as responsible citizens in their communities, including becoming informed about issues and voting in elections.
- Expect its members to engage in the political process in an informed and civil manner, respecting the fact that members of the Church come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences and may have differences of opinion in partisan political matters.
- Request candidates for office not to imply that their candidacy or platforms are endorsed by the Church.
- Reserve the right as an institution to address, in a nonpartisan way, issues that it believes have significant community or moral consequences or that directly affect the interests of the Church.

In the United States, where nearly half of the world's Latter-day Saints live, it is customary for the Church at each national election to issue a letter to be read to all congregations encouraging its members to vote but emphasizing the Church's neutrality in partisan political matters.



Relationships with Government

Elected officials who are Latter-day Saints make their own decisions and may not necessarily be in agreement with one another or even with a publicly stated Church position. While the Church may communicate its views to them, as it may to any other elected official, it recognizes that these officials still must make their own choices based on their best judgment and with consideration of the constituencies whom they were elected to represent. (See D&C 134.)

Political Party Participation of Presiding Church Officers

In addition, the First Presidency letter issued on June 16, 2011, is a restatement and further clarification of the Church's position on political neutrality at the start of another political season. It applies to all full-time General Authorities, general auxiliary leaders, mission presidents, and temple presidents. The policy is not directed to full-time Church employees:

“General Authorities and general officers of the Church and their spouses and other ecclesiastical leaders serving full-time should not personally partici-

pate in political campaigns, including promoting candidates, fund-raising, speaking in behalf of or otherwise endorsing candidates, and making financial contributions.

“Since they are not full-time officers of the Church, Area Seventies, stake presidents, and bishops are free to contribute, serve on campaign committees, and otherwise support candidates of their choice with the understanding they:

“Are acting solely as individual citizens in the democratic process and that they do not imply, or allow others to infer, that their actions or support in any way represent the Church.

“Will not use Church stationery, Church-generated address lists or e-mail systems, or Church buildings for political promotional purposes.

“Will not engage in fund-raising or other types of campaigning focused on fellow Church members under their ecclesiastical supervision.”

NOTE

1. This statement can be found online at newsroom.lds.org.



What Have You Done for **THEM?**

A prompting in the temple helped me realize I could no longer ignore my duty to get started on my family history work.

By Aleta Goodman Breakwell

I had never done family history work. It sounded tedious and frustrating, so I avoided it. I told myself that my genealogical contribution was doing temple work for the names other people had identified. I also rationalized that since my mother is an avid genealogist, I was off the hook in terms of the hunting and gathering.



One day I was in the temple doing what I considered my part for the genealogical cause when I strongly felt it was time for me to learn how to do family history work. For the first time it occurred to me that although my mother had done a lot of research for my family, I had married into another family. I felt a distinct impression from the Spirit: “What have you done for *them*?”

Soon after that experience I somewhat grudgingly signed up for the basic family history course at church. While I was taking the class, my husband and I received an unexpected opportunity to go to England. It was not something we could have afforded ordinarily, and the circumstances were not likely to come again. We were thrilled with our good fortune!

After my husband’s parents accepted the gospel years ago, they began doing their family history work but had a very hard time with the Breakwell family line. They couldn’t find a certain grandfather, and 20 years of searching had led to nothing. When my husband and I planned our trip to England, we imagined how

wonderful it would be to find information on Grandpa, who we knew had been born in England; however, with nowhere to begin and not much time, the idea was appealing but seemingly impossible. Instead, we planned to fill our days with things we could manage.

Something I wanted to do while in England was visit the church where my husband’s parents were married. My mother-in-law thought I shouldn’t waste my travel time on something that didn’t have any sentimental meaning for them; they hadn’t lived in the area long and had chosen that church only because it was convenient. However, I thought the idea sounded romantic and insisted that we make the trip.

On the day we rode the bus to where my in-laws had been married, we found the church closed, and no one was around to speak with. We would have left immediately, except that we had to wait for a return bus, so we wandered around the churchyard for a bit.

The church was old and surrounded by a high wall. The grounds had once been a cemetery; however, the graves had

ANSWERING QUESTIONS

What are the Church's policies on submitting names for proxy baptisms and other vicarious temple ordinances?

1. Members are to seek out and identify their own ancestors. Those whose names are submitted for proxy temple ordinances should be related to the submitter.¹
2. Without exception, members must not submit any names from unauthorized groups, such as celebrities or Jewish Holocaust victims.²
3. Vicarious ordinances become effective only when the deceased persons for whom the ordinances were performed accept them in the spirit world and honor the related covenants.³

For more information, see *Member's Guide to Temple and Family History Work* (2009), 30–32.

been leveled to make a beautiful lawn, and someone had taken up the gravestones and temporarily stacked them along the wall. We strolled around the wall, idly reading names. At one place there was a large willow tree growing against the wall, and we ducked beneath it into the inviting shade. There were some gravestones behind the tree as well, which we read. And there was Grandpa's name! Grandpa was buried in the churchyard where my in-laws had married, and no one in the family knew it. We gathered all his needed information and upon returning home completed his saving ordinances in the temple.

I believe that my willingness to listen to

the Spirit's prompting to get involved with family history work, however unwelcome at first, is what led us to Grandpa. Even though I didn't actually use my new skills in the experience, I believe my obedience qualified me to help find the grandfather whose family I had joined. I testify that we each have a contribution to make to family history work, and the Spirit will guide us in our efforts. All we need to do is get started. ■

NOTES

1. See First Presidency letter, Feb. 29, 2012, available at <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/first-presidency-issues-direction-members-names-ordinances>.
2. See First Presidency letter, Feb. 29, 2012.
3. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 2.1.2.



THE LORD WAS WAITING FOR US TO BEGIN



“Several years ago Sister Packer and I determined that we should get our records in order. However, under the pressure of Church responsibilities with my travels about the world, and the obligations with our large family

and a home to keep up both indoors and outdoors, there just was not enough time. But we were restless about this family history responsibility, and finally we determined that somehow we would have to make more time in the day.

“During the Christmas holidays when we had a little extra time, we started. Then as we moved back to a regular schedule after the holidays, we adopted the practice of getting up an hour or two earlier each day.

“We gathered together everything we had, and in the course of a few weeks we were amazed at what we were able to accomplish. The thing that was most impressive, however, was the fact that we began to have experiences that told us somehow that we were being guided, that there were those beyond the veil who were interested in what we were doing. Things began to fall into place.

“As I have traveled about the Church and paid particular attention to this subject, many testimonies have come to light. Others who assemble their records together are likewise having similar experiences. It was as though the Lord was waiting for us to begin.

“We found things we had wondered about for a long time. It seemed as though they came to us almost too easily. More than this, things that we never dreamed existed began to show up. We began to learn by personal experience that this research into our families is an inspired work. We came to know that an inspiration will follow those who move into it. It is just a matter of getting started.”

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Your Family History: Getting Started,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2003, 12.





By Elder
Paul B. Pieper
Of the Seventy

THE BOOK OF ALMA: LESSONS FOR TODAY

The Nephites faithfully endured the trials of their day and are a witness that the Lord will provide the blessings and protection we need to successfully meet the challenges of our day.

At the conclusion of his reign, King Mosiah proposed that the monarchy be replaced with a system of judges chosen by the people. The proposed system was to be based on God-given laws administered by judges who were to be selected by the people.

The principle of agency was the foundation of the proposed system—individuals, rather than a king, would accept responsibility and accountability to act in accordance with the law. Because “it is not common that the voice of the people desireth anything contrary to that which is right” (Mosiah 29:26), this system would provide greater protection for the rights of individuals and the collective righteousness of the society.

In response to Mosiah’s proposal, the people “became exceedingly anxious that every man should have an equal chance throughout all the land; yea, and every man expressed

a willingness to answer for his own sins” (Mosiah 29:38).

The book of Alma contains the history of the people during the 40-year period after the proposed system was adopted by the people. The last chapters of Alma’s record, chapters 43 to 62, recount a period of intense challenges and testing. During this short 19-year period, the people faced internal political challenges, external threats, and almost constant armed conflict.

Twice the governmental system was threatened internally by men who sought to establish themselves as kings and deprive the people of the right to select their leaders and to worship freely. Simultaneously, the people had to defend themselves from multiple external attacks by Lamanites who were determined to destroy the Nephite government and subject the Nephites to bondage.



Through all their challenges, righteous Nephites were able to take strength from the fact that they were acting with proper motives. Their sole intent was “to defend themselves, and their families, and their lands, their country, and their rights, and their religion.”

The economic disruption of these multiple challenges, though not specifically mentioned, was likely a significant challenge for the people. Mormon, in compiling the sacred record, felt impressed to provide a detailed account of this period. In fact, had he provided similar detail for the rest of the 1,000-year history of the Nephites, the Book of Mormon would contain more than 2,500 pages!

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) taught:

“The Book of Mormon . . . was written for our day. The Nephites never had the book; neither did the Lamanites of ancient times. It was meant for us. . . . Under the inspiration of God, who sees all things from the beginning, [Mormon] abridged centuries of records, choosing the stories, speeches, and events that would be most helpful to us. . . .

“We should constantly ask ourselves, ‘Why did the Lord inspire Mormon (or Moroni or Alma) to include that in his record? What lesson can I learn from that to help me live in this day and age?’”¹

Today Latter-day Saints throughout the world find themselves facing many of the same challenges the Nephites faced during this period of their history, including efforts to deprive members of the right to worship and speak out on issues important to the societies in which we live. Some Latter-day Saints have felt the threat of external attack and conflict with forces committed to the destruction of their nations and freedoms.

Fortunately, the Nephites were able to overcome their challenges by supreme effort, sacrifice, and help from the Lord. A few lessons about how they successfully responded to their challenges may give us guidance and courage to face our challenges today.

1. Maintain proper desires and motives.

Through all of their challenges, righteous Nephites were able to take strength from the fact that they were acting with proper motives. Their sole intent was “to defend themselves, and their families, and their lands, their country, and their rights, and their religion” (Alma 43:47). Their desire was to preserve their agency—the right to act in righteousness and to answer for their own

conduct—rather than have a king prescribe their conduct. Their motive was to preserve equality under the law, specifically their liberty to worship God and maintain their church (see Alma 43:9, 45).

There are and always will be in societies forces seeking to manipulate public opinion to obtain power for personal gain. There is a temptation to adopt their motives and turn the conflict into a power struggle. The Lord’s way is to always act based only on pure desires and motives, as did the Nephites. Doing so allowed them to draw upon the powers of heaven to overcome their challenges “in the strength of the Lord” (Alma 46:20; see also Alma 60:16; 61:18).

Similarly, in our responses to the challenges we face today, we must constantly check our hearts to be sure that our desires and motives are pure and based on the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. If we act (or manipulate others to act) out of selfishness, for personal gain, or to demean others, we will not have the needed heavenly help to withstand our challenges.

2. Be kind and generous to the less fortunate.

When their former enemies, the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi, were threatened with destruction, the Nephites voted to give them a place to live and build new lives and provided them with protection (see Alma 27:21–22; 43:11–12). Because the Anti-Nephi-Lehies had taken an oath never to take up their weapons of war again, they provided instead “a large portion of their substance to support” (Alma 43:13) the Nephite armies during these critical times. Nevertheless, there is no record that the Nephites treated these immigrants with anything other than respect and love, even though they must have been an easy political target for those who wanted to stir up dissension.

The kind treatment the Nephites gave to the people of Ammon, as they came to be called, was reciprocated and eventually contributed to the formation of one of the most inspiring military brigades in recorded history—the 2,000 stripling warriors. Ironically, the service of these young men may have been the key to



A willingness to be kind and generous to the needy was an important factor in the preservation of the Nephite nation and entitled the Nephites to the blessings of heaven in their time of extremity. The kind treatment the Nephites gave to the people of Ammon was reciprocated and eventually contributed to the formation of the 2,000 stripling warriors.

preserving Nephite society from an early destruction.

In times of internal dissension, external attack, and economic challenges, there is a tendency to become negative toward those who are “not like us.” It becomes easy to become critical of them and make judgments. One might question their loyalty to and value in society and their impact on our economic well-being. These negative responses are inconsistent with the Savior’s charge to love our neighbors as ourselves, and they create polarization, contention, and isolation. Had the people of Ammon not been welcomed into Nephite society, it could have perhaps created resentment rather than gratitude in the rising generation. Instead of producing 2,000 faithful warriors, the new generation could have become alienated and rejoined the Lamanites.

A willingness to be kind and generous to the needy was an important factor in the preservation of the Nephite nation and entitled the Nephites to the blessings of heaven in their time of extremity. God’s people need such blessings today.

3. Listen to and follow inspired leaders.

The Lord knew the challenges the Nephites would face, and He raised up inspired leaders to help them meet those challenges. Captain Moroni was a warrior but was inspired to prepare breastplates, arm shields, head plates, and thick clothing to protect his people (see Alma 43:19). As a result, the Nephites fared much better in battle than did the Lamanites (see Alma 43:37–38). Later, Moroni directed the people to dig up heaps of dirt around their cities and to top those heaps of dirt with works of timbers and frames of pickets (see Alma 50:1–3). These inspired preparations helped preserve the Nephites from destruction.

While Moroni was preparing for war, Helaman and his brethren were preaching the word of God and urging the people to righteousness so that the Lord’s Spirit could guide and preserve them. By listening to the temporal and spiritual direction of inspired leaders, the Nephites were preserved. Only when internal dissensions arose and the

people refused to heed inspired warnings did setbacks and suffering result.

We are blessed to live in a day when the Lord has called living prophets, seers, and revelators to warn us and guide us to prepare for today’s challenges. In 1998, President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) gave inspired instruction and warning to Church members:

“The time has come to get our houses in order.

“So many of our people are living on the very edge of their incomes. In fact, some are living on borrowings. . . .

“The economy is a fragile thing. . . . There is a portent of stormy weather ahead to which we had better give heed.”²

Recently I spoke with a man who heard the words of President Hinckley and the promptings of the Spirit. He and his wife decided to liquidate their investments, pay off their home, and get out of debt.

Today that man is self-reliant. The economic downturn that followed had minimum impact on his family. In fact, his self-reliance made it possible for him and his wife to serve a mission.

President Thomas S. Monson has been raised up for our time. His life and teachings are the message God has sent to protect and bless us today. At a time when many worry about what they don’t have, President Monson teaches us to be grateful for the many blessings the Lord has given us. And at a time when many focus on their own problems, President Monson urges us to reach out and rescue, forgetting ourselves in blessing others. Heeding the direction of President Monson will provide our families with the spiritual protection and blessings needed in our day.

I am grateful to live in a day when the gospel has been restored. I am grateful the Lord prepared the Book of Mormon for our day. The Nephites faithfully endured the trials of their day and are a witness that the Lord will provide the blessings and protection we need to successfully meet the challenges of our day. ■

NOTES

1. Ezra Taft Benson, “The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 6.
2. Gordon B. Hinckley, “To the Boys and to the Men,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 53.



By listening to the temporal and spiritual direction of inspired leaders like Moroni, the Nephites were preserved. Only when internal dissensions arose and the people refused to heed inspired warnings did setbacks and suffering result.



By Larry M. Gibson

First Counselor in the
Young Men General Presidency



INSTRUCTING YOUNG MEN

“MORE PERFECTLY”

God honors priesthood leaders who sacrifice, and He will bless them with increased capacity to bring young men unto Christ.

When I was 12 or 13, I remember lying out one night during a campout looking up at the stars. We had a wonderful priesthood adviser who asked us, “Who do you think put those stars there? Who do you think is the architect of all you see?”

Our adviser told us that there is a Creator who knows each of His creations, including us. He encouraged us to come unto Him and to find out how much He loves us. He inspired me to find out what my Father in Heaven wanted me to do.

Many stake leaders who attend the annual Priesthood Leadership Conference on Scouting at the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico, USA, have a similar experience. They leave the conference inspired and desirous to find out what their Father in Heaven would have them do—especially when it comes to blessing the lives of young men and helping them survive and thrive in a world that is deviating from God’s patterns.

Left, inset: Scouts, leaders, and parents salute during a morning flag ceremony at the Priesthood Leadership Conference on Scouting. Background: The Tooth of Time, a signature landmark at Philmont Scout Ranch.

HIGH IDEALS

“Put a boy in touch with nature, and the job of inspiring him with high ideals is an easier one than in any other environment.”

Waite Phillips, benefactor of the Philmont Scout Ranch, in Stephen Zimmer and Larry Walker, *Philmont: A Brief History of the New Mexico Scout Ranch* (2000), 68.



Left: Conference participants Kevin Kovach, Norm Bird, and Brandon Bodily put their knot-tying skills to the test. The conference “really does have power to change the lives of leaders and young men in our stakes,” says M. Tim Welch, pictured right.

of salvation and how to utilize Scouting to strengthen capacity, character, and confidence, helping young men to become better servants in their families, their quorums, and the Church.

An Outpouring of the Spirit

The Church has a long and wonderful tradition of priesthood leaders gathering from around the country every summer to receive training at Philmont. Next year, 2013, marks not only the 100th anniversary of Scouting within the Church but also the 50th anniversary of the Priesthood Leadership Conference.

This conference gives stake presidents an opportunity to be edified by the Young Men and Primary general presidencies and to learn from each other. Depending on available space, a stake president may bring one of his counselors, a member of the stake Young Men presidency, or a high counselor. The conference focuses on the Aaronic Priesthood and on how wards and stakes can implement Scouting to help young men develop as priesthood holders. It also helps participants develop a better understanding of why the Church has an activity program for the young men.

The conference is an experience of deep spiritual learning and motivation. Many who attend feel an outpouring of the Spirit and receive inspiration regarding how to utilize the Aaronic Priesthood in the work

The conference focuses on priesthood and on how Scouting can function within the priesthood to help young men learn their duties and “go and do” them (1 Nephi 3:7).

Scouting and the Aaronic Priesthood

Young men need Church and Scouting activities for a lot of reasons. One reason is to help them develop leadership skills, brotherhood within their quorums, and relationships with adult shepherds who love them and are constantly inspiring, motivating, and watching over them. Another reason is that Scouting gives them opportunities to invite others into their brotherhood and also to invite others to come unto Christ, which is one of their duties as Aaronic Priesthood holders.¹ Typically a young man will invite a friend to a Scouting activity before he will invite him to a priesthood meeting.

At the Priesthood Leadership Conference we focus on how to utilize Scouting within the Aaronic Priesthood. We hope participants leave with a better understanding of the Aaronic Priesthood’s role in a young man’s life and with an urgency to ensure that appropriate Scouting activities are held that can round out a young man in physical,

CHANGING LEADERS, CHANGING LIVES

By M. Tim Welch

The Priesthood Leadership Conference at Philmont was not something I had ever planned on attending. I am embarrassed to admit it, but an outdoor camping experience at my age scores modestly below a tooth extraction on the *enjoyability* index. In contrast, during dinner the first evening, I heard a number of wide-eyed fellow participants speak in reverent tones about fulfilling a life's dream of finally arriving at the premier BSA venue in North America.

"They have the same excitement about Philmont as I did about walking down Magnolia Lane at the Augusta National Golf Club during the Masters last year," I told my wife, Michele. She smiled, but I knew she had serious doubts about whether I was fully committed to making the conference a positive leadership experience.

I am not entirely sure at what moment during the conference it happened, but it *did* happen. The spirit of Philmont became overwhelming, and the experience of spending time, shoulder to shoulder, with wonderful men and women consecrated to helping bring young men to Christ was transforming.

I felt the spirit of Philmont during the morning flag ceremony while wearing the Scout uniform and as feelings of gratitude washed over me for the privilege of living in a free country. I felt it during every training session as I listened to inspired leaders teach with great insight and clarity about how Scouting can assist parents and priesthood leaders to help young men fulfill their duty to God. I felt it during meals in quiet, intimate conversations with new friends. And I felt it kneeling in prayer on a wooden floor in a tent while the wind whirled around our encampment.

In the process I learned that this extraordinary conference really does have power to change the lives of leaders and young men in our stakes. I also learned that if you are willing to give your heart to the experience, even reluctantly at first, there is something at Philmont that will change you.

Part of it is in the sheer enormousness of its 137,500 acres. Part of it is in sharing the experience with your spouse. Part of it is in the laughter and the tears. And part of it is in recognizing that God's hand is in this work and that He can perform miracles in our lives—especially in a mountain setting where the splendor of His creations evidences His work in rich abundance.

While I may always feel more comfortable at Augusta National than in a walled tent on a desert plateau, I will never be the same. I will forever cherish this shared experience with remarkable people, inspired leaders, gifted teachers, and a humble tent that surprisingly started to feel like home.





Youth return to camp following a weeklong backpacking trek.

[them] to understand” (D&C 88:78).

We also feel very good about Duty to God, which helps young men learn their priesthood duties, strengthen their testimony and relationship with their Heavenly Father, and prepare them for life’s journey as a disciple of Christ.

spiritual, social, and educational areas—areas that will prepare him for the Melchizedek Priesthood, the temple, a mission, marriage, work, and life.

The Priesthood Leadership Conference helps stake presidents catch the vision of how to best utilize Scouting in their stakes according to the inspiration they receive at the conference and afterward as a result of attending. They come to realize that once the light turns on for Young Men leaders regarding the importance of becoming trained and using available resources, those leaders will say, “Wow, this is really easy. All the work’s already been done for me.”

Many Young Men leaders in the Church understand the Scouting program; fewer understand the Varsity and Venture programs. We encourage Varsity and Venture leaders to implement these excellent programs. They have been well developed and are some of the best tools anywhere for teaching leadership and self-reliance. Because we use the sacred funds of the Church to register our young men as Scouts, we need to make sure the Lord is pleased with how we use what we purchase.

In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord admonishes us to “teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom,” including “things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth” (D&C 88:77, 79). What might interest a young man in the heavens and on the earth? How about archaeology, astronomy, chemistry, environmental science, geology, nature, oceanography, space exploration, and weather? These things are all taught through merit badges, which help young men to “be instructed more perfectly . . . in all things . . . that are expedient for

The Best Vacation We’ve Ever Had

The Priesthood Leadership Conference can accept about 165 participants, plus their families, which means as many as 700 people may attend each week of the two-week conference.

Families are blessed when they’re at Philmont. The experience affords them the unique opportunity of enjoying the company of others who have gathered from around the country while also giving them time to bond and share experiences. Children and spouses have wonderful, fun activities to engage in. A highlight is the way families come together.

Older youth, including young women, can go on week-long backpacking trips. It’s inspiring to see young men and young women do hard things like a 50-mile (80 km) hike up a mountain and then return to their families with increased confidence that they can face challenges. That’s the essence of Scouting—to build self-confidence and the capacity to meet challenges. The reunion of family members and trekkers at the end of the week is priceless.

Some who have attended have told us, “This is the best use of our vacation time we’ve ever had as a family.”

We recognize that it’s a tremendous sacrifice for stake leaders to take a week off and, for many of them, travel a long distance to join us. But I bear witness that God honors priesthood leaders who sacrifice, and He will bless them with increased capacity to bring young men unto Christ and to prepare them for the future. ■

NOTE

1. See *Fulfilling My Duty to God: For Aaronic Priesthood Holders* (booklet, 2010), 28–29, 52–53, 76–77.

GENERAL CONFERENCE THEN & NOW

About 30 members were present at the first conference called by the Prophet Joseph Smith on June 9, 1830. Today 21,000 members fill the Conference Center adjacent to Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA. The words flowing from the Conference Center go far beyond this audience as they are translated into 93 different languages and reach members worldwide via radio, television, satellite, and Internet connections.

Following are photographs of general conference—then and now—since 1848, when members met in an outdoor bowery.

Right: General conference sessions emanate from the Conference Center adjacent to Temple Square.

Center: Every six months, Saints worldwide view conference via satellite, just as these Brazilian Saints did in October 2011.

Bottom: Members in April 1906 gather to attend a session of conference in the Tabernacle.

PHOTOGRAPH BY SANDRA MARIA ROZADOS © IRI

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHARLES ELLIS JOHNSON



PHOTOGRAPH BY LESLIE NILLSON © IRI

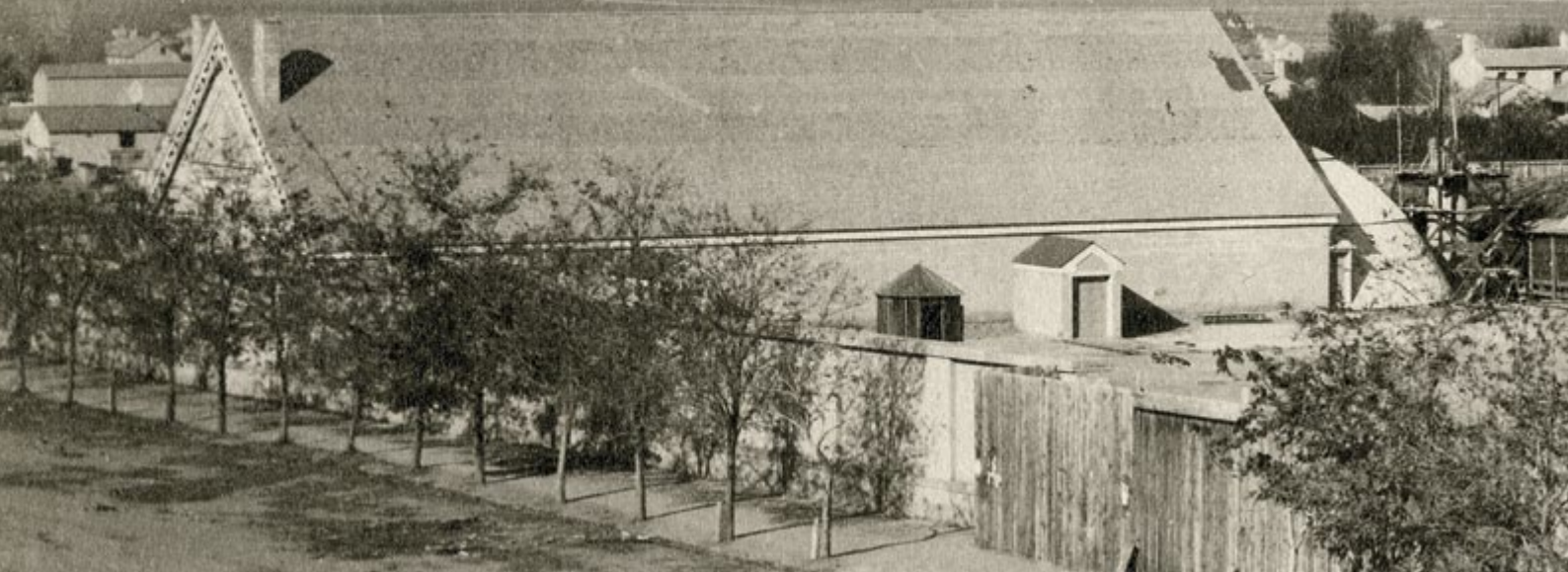




Left: Since April 2000, the Conference Center has accommodated increasing conference crowds. Today, with Church membership more than 14 million, some 100,000 people attend each conference at the Conference Center.

Below: From 1867 to 2000, Latter-day Saints attended conference in the Tabernacle.

Bottom: General conferences began to be held semiannually in 1840. Conferences continued throughout the various migrations of the Saints. Early pioneers in the Salt Lake Valley held their first general conference in 1848 in an open-air bowery, similar to the one shown below (on the right). The Saints then built an adobe tabernacle as a meeting place (below, left), where they met until the Tabernacle was completed in 1867.





PHOTOGRAPH BY WELDEN C. ANDERSEN © IRI



COURTESY OF THE DESERET NEWS



Top, left: At the October 1897 general conference in the Tabernacle, the Saints were still celebrating Utah joining the United States of America the year before.

Center, left: By the October 1954 general conference, 57 years after the 1897 conference (top, left), many changes to the Tabernacle had occurred, including an expanded organ and a larger Tabernacle Choir.

Above: Now, 58 years after the 1954 conference (center, left), the growth of the Church is reflected in the number of Church leaders on the stand in the Conference Center, which now includes the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, all other General Authorities, and the general auxiliary presidencies.

COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY LIBRARY

Patterns of Prayer in the Book of Mormon

How the scriptures taught me to offer more meaningful prayers.

Once I watched a teacher instruct teenagers to chant the word “pots.” They shouted, “Pots, pots, pots, pots, pots.”

Then the teacher asked, “What do you do at a green light?”

“Stop!” everyone shouted.

The teacher laughed and said, “That’s why there are so many accidents with teenage drivers.”

The teacher then pointed out that mindlessly chanting, “pots, pots, pots” (which is “stop” spelled backward) had primed the students to say “stop,” even though it was obviously the wrong answer. If the students had taken time to think, they would have said something different. He then asked, “Are you just chanting in your prayers, or do you really stop to think about what you are saying?”

This question gave me pause. At times I have found myself slipping into prayer routines where I just say the same things and don’t put effort into meaningful prayer. As I pondered on how I could improve the quality of my prayers, I decided to see how people prayed in the Book of Mormon. I was surprised to find that in addition to teaching about prayer, the Book of Mormon also gives many examples of prayer.

I found several patterns as I studied the prayers offered in the Book of Mormon. And as I’ve reflected on my own experiences with

prayer, I have realized that my most powerful prayers have followed these same patterns. For me, five Book of Mormon patterns of prayer have been especially impressive. Implementing these patterns can change the way we pray and consequently change our lives.

Go to a Private Place to Pray

One pattern that consistently appears in the Book of Mormon is that people often go to a private place to pray. We read:

“I arose and *went up into the mountain*, and cried unto the Lord” (1 Nephi 17:7, emphasis added).

“[Nephi] *went out* and bowed himself down upon the earth, and cried mightily to his God in behalf of his people” (3 Nephi 1:11, emphasis added).

“The brother of Jared . . . *went forth unto the mount . . .* and cried again unto the Lord” (Ether 3:1, emphasis added).

When I was in my early 20s, I had to make an important decision about graduate school. I found a secluded place in nature and poured out my heart in prayer. I can still remember the powerful answers that came. There was something about going to a private place to pray that made all the difference. Praying and listening are possible anywhere, but they are best done where one can be alone, such as in a quiet room of one’s house.



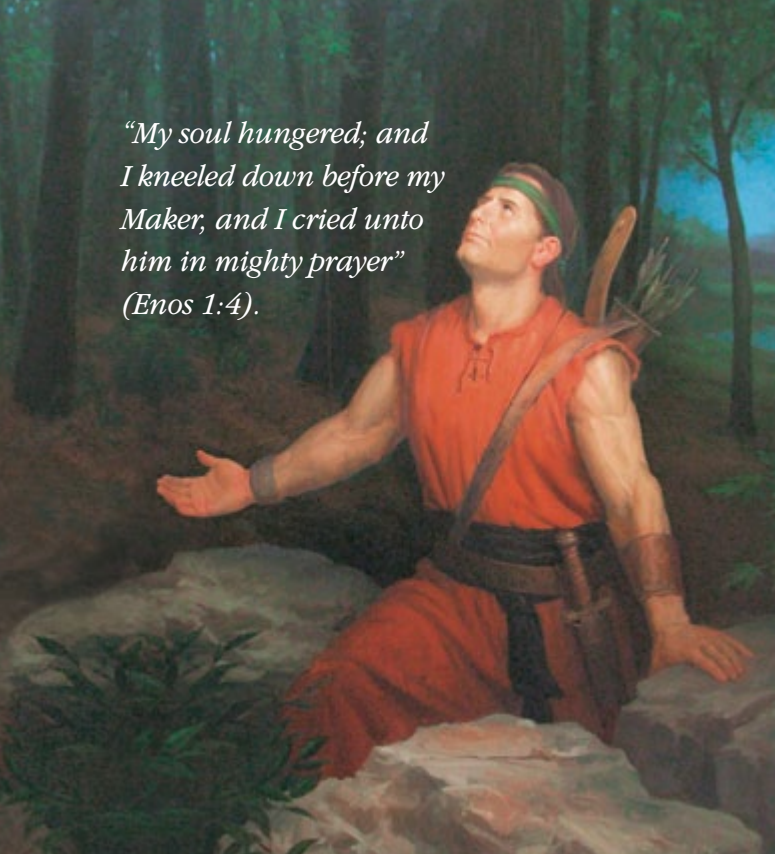
As we study examples of prayer in the Book of Mormon, we can learn to make our own prayers more powerful.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Note how these doctrines are applied in this article:

- The Book of Mormon gives us teachings for our day.
- Through prayer we can speak with our Heavenly Father.
- Jesus Christ set the example of how we come unto God.

“My soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer” (Enos 1:4).



Kneel to Pray

Often when people pray in the Book of Mormon, it explicitly states that they kneel or bow as they pray. Consider these three examples:

“[Moroni] *bowed himself to the earth*, and he prayed mightily unto his God for the blessings of liberty to rest upon his brethren” (Alma 46:13, emphasis added).

“Nephi had *bowed himself* upon the tower which was in his garden” (Helaman 7:10, emphasis added).

“*They knelt again* and prayed to the Father in the name of Jesus” (3 Nephi 19:8, emphasis added).

I pointed out this pattern in a class I was teaching and invited class members to consider kneeling to pray. A few days later, a student wrote me a note that said, “I have been kneeling for the first time and my prayers have been a ton better.” While there are times that we will not be able to kneel as we pray, in many instances we can. As President Thomas S. Monson stated, “Kneel down to pray.”¹

Pray Vocally

Another pattern of prayer that appears throughout the Book of Mormon is people praying out loud. One of the definitions of the word “cry” is “to utter a loud voice, by way of earnest request of prayer.”² Consider these examples of vocal prayer:

“My soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my

Maker, and *I cried unto him* in mighty prayer . . . ; and all the day long *did I cry unto him*; yea, and when the night came *I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens*” (Enos 1:4, emphasis added).

“The king did bow down before the Lord, upon his knees . . . and *cried mightily, saying*: O God, Aaron hath told me that there is a God; . . . Wilt thou make thyself known unto me” (Alma 22:17–18, emphasis added).

“[Alma] lifted up his voice to heaven, *and cried, saying*: O, how long, O Lord, wilt thou suffer that thy servants shall dwell here below in the flesh, to behold such gross wickedness?” (Alma 31:26, emphasis added).

Joseph Smith’s First Vision burst upon him after his first vocal prayer (see Joseph Smith—History 1:14).

As I thought about my prayers, I realized that the majority of them were silent prayers. Unfortunately, my mind tends to wander, and these silent prayers often turned into rambling thoughts not particularly related to prayer. As I began praying vocally, I found that I was able to concentrate more on what I was saying, and my prayers were more meaningful. Perhaps this is part of the reason President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) said, “I hope that not too many of our prayers are silent, even though when we cannot pray vocally, it is good to offer a silent prayer in our hearts and in our minds.”³

Express Gratitude

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shared an experience of when some loved ones had experienced a tragedy. That night, he and Sister Bednar wanted to pray for those who were suffering; however, a General Authority visiting their home, not aware of this tragedy, invited Sister Bednar to express only gratitude in her prayer. She did so. Elder Bednar recounted, “Our family learned from that experience a great lesson about the power of thankfulness in meaningful prayer.”⁴ This same pattern of expressing gratitude in prayer is found in the Book of Mormon. We read:

“Yea, and in the valley of Alma *they poured out their thanks to God*” (Mosiah 24:21, emphasis added).

“Alma ate bread and was filled; and he blessed Amulek and his house, and *he gave thanks unto God*” (Alma 8:22, emphasis added).

“The brother of Jared did sing praises unto the Lord, and *he did thank and praise the Lord all the day long*” (Ether 6:9, emphasis added).

In each of the above situations there was much that the people could have complained about. Alma and his people were not yet completely safe from the Lamanites, Alma had recently been persecuted by the people of Ammonihah, and the Jaredites were stuck on barges for almost an entire year. Yet they still focused on gratitude.

Pray for Others

While I sometimes have a tendency in my prayers to focus on my own needs, several people in the Book of Mormon show through their example the importance of praying for others. We read:

“Laman and Lemuel would not hearken unto my words; and being grieved because of the hardness of their hearts I cried unto the Lord *for them*” (1 Nephi 2:18, emphasis added).

“They began to fast, and to pray to the Lord their God *that he would open the mouth of Alma, that he might speak, and also that his limbs might receive their strength*” (Mosiah 27:22, emphasis added).

“My soul had been poured out in prayer unto my God all the day long *for them*” (Mormon 3:12, emphasis added).

Focusing on praying for others was at first a little difficult for me to apply in my life. I had become accustomed to focusing on my needs during prayer. As I have worked to more frequently pray for others, I have felt that my prayers are more meaningful. I feel a deeper connection with God when I pray for others.

The Savior Set the Example

The Savior’s prayers in the Book of Mormon include all of these five patterns:

“And it came to pass that Jesus departed out of the midst of them, and *went a little way off* from them and *bowed himself to the earth*, and *he said*:

Father, *I thank thee* that thou hast given the Holy Ghost unto these whom I have chosen; and it is because of their belief in me that I have chosen them out of the world. . . .

“And now Father, *I pray unto thee for them*” (3 Nephi 19:19–20, 23, emphasis added).

The teacher who had his students chant “pots” later had them chant the word “roast.” After the students repeated it several times, the teacher asked, “What do you put in a toaster?”

Some students said, “toast,” but many paused to think and correctly said, “bread.” The teacher commended those who had stopped to think about what they were saying.

I have found that implementing these five patterns—going to a private place to pray, kneeling, praying vocally, expressing gratitude, and praying for others—has helped me to pause and ponder on what I say in my prayers and has made the experience more meaningful. The Book of Mormon teaches other patterns of prayer as well, including being consistent and giving sufficient time to prayer and meditation. As we search the Book of Mormon and implement the patterns of prayer it teaches, we will reap great blessings in our lives and in our families. ■

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Heavenly Homes—Forever Families,” *Ensign*, June 1986, 3.
2. *Noah Webster’s First Edition of an American Dictionary of the English Language*, 9th ed. (1996), “cry.”
3. Spencer W. Kimball, “We Need a Listening Ear,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 4.
4. David A. Bednar, “Pray Always,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 42.



The Savior’s prayers in the Book of Mormon give us the perfect example of how to communicate with our Father in Heaven.

Teaching

RIGHTEOUSNESS AT HOME

It is a responsibility and blessing parents have to teach and train their children to live righteously.



**By Elder
Delbert L. Stapley
(1896–1978)**

Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

Delbert L. Stapley was born on December 11, 1896, in Arizona, USA. He was set apart as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles on October 5, 1950, and served in that quorum until his death on August 19, 1978. This devotional address was given at Brigham Young University on February 1, 1977. The full text of this address in English can be found at speeches.byu.edu.

Parents have an opportunity to teach and mold the characters of their little children before Satan has the power to tempt them and before they reach the age of eight, becoming then responsible before God. . . . The Lord has granted parents these precious years, the first years of a child's life, when the children are not accountable for the things they say and do. It is a responsibility and blessing parents have to teach and train their children to live righteously.

The most effective way to teach righteousness and religion in a home is by example.

Hopefully, parents will have kept their own lives sweet and clean and can therefore profitably use the example of their lives in the teaching and training of their own children. [President David O. McKay (1873–1970) taught:] “If you would teach faith in God, show faith in Him yourself; if you would teach prayer, pray yourself; . . . would you have them temperate, then you yourself refrain from intemperance; if you would have your child live a life of virtue, of self-control, of good report, then set him a worthy example in all these things.”¹ To do so will make these teachings more impressive to your children; and they, receiving such guidance from parents, can fortify themselves against the temptations of Satan, whose goal is to destroy their lives when they do reach the age of accountability. Parents have the duty to be what they would have their children become in regard to courtesy, sincerity, temperance, and courage to do right at all times. Example is far more potent than precept.

Daily home life should conform to our Church principles and standards. Our business dealings should agree with our religion. Children are quick to detect insincerity. John Milton said that hypocrisy is the only sin that walks undetected save by God alone. Children, however, are sensitive to things that are wrong, and they resent insincerity and false pretensions. We know that children are influenced far more by the sermons we live than by the sermons we preach. Parents should always be honest with their children, keeping promises made to them and ever



speaking the truth. It is the consistent parent who gains the trust of his child. When a child feels that you honor his trust and reciprocate it, he will not violate it, nor will he bring your name into dishonor. . . .

Parents should never quarrel in the presence of their children. Sometimes quarrels arise out of an attempt to correct or discipline a child. One parent criticizes; the other objects. And the unified influence of the home, so far as the child is concerned, is nullified. Parents need to be united in knowing which way they want a child to go; otherwise, he may walk in wrong paths out of confusion. Richard L. Evans said: "Division between parents is unfair and confusing and weakens the foundations of the family. Those to whom a child should look for guidance must be united in the guidance they give."² We know that children are sensitive to family moods and feelings; they can feel tensions and differences that they can't always understand or define. . . .

A child has the right to feel that in his home he has a place of refuge, a place of protection from the dangers and evils of the outside

world. Family unity and integrity are necessary to supply this need. There is no place other than the home where true and lasting happiness can be found in this life. It is possible to make home a bit of heaven; indeed, I picture heaven to be a continuation of the ideal home life here on earth.³ . . .

The gospel as we teach it is true. Christ lives, God lives, and glorious mansions are being prepared above for all His faithful and devoted children. Plan now the kind of home and family you desire and how you will meet the needs of your children to keep them on a righteous path that will lead the family to eternal life in a celestial home. God bless all of you, my brothers and sisters. I think you can understand that much of what has been said pertains to you. And to organize and carry forward your home in a sacred manner is very important to the young people who come to bless your life. ■

Capitalization and punctuation standardized.

NOTES

1. David O. McKay, *Secrets of a Happy Life*, comp. Llewelyn R. McKay (1967), 11.
2. *Richard Evans' Quote Book* (1975), 23.
3. See David O. McKay, *Gospel Ideals* (1953), 490.

A child has the right to feel that in his home he has a place of refuge, a place of protection from the dangers and evils of the outside world. Family unity and integrity are necessary to supply this need.

I PRAYED FOR COURAGE

My parents are members of the Church, but they're not very active. This sometimes leads to conflicts because they believe family time should come before everything else—before going to church, magnifying my Church callings, and doing other activities.

Because I am a leader in the Primary and a member of the ward choir, my Church meetings sometimes interfere with family duties. One day when I was preparing to attend a general conference broadcast at our meetinghouse in Antananarivo, my parents reminded me that we had guests in our home.

"You'll have to choose between your family and the Church," my mother told me. "Either you stay here with us and miss conference, or you go to conference and face punishment."

I decided not to get into an argument with my mother. Instead, I took a moment to ask Heavenly Father to give me courage and strength. I also asked Him to help me know what to do. Should I stay home with my family or go to church and hear the voice of the prophet?

As soon as I finished my prayer, I could feel the Holy Ghost. I could feel the Spirit encourage me to tell my mother how important it was for me to go and listen to the prophet. I felt that I should tell her that I would receive wise counsel not only for my life today but also for my future.

God can do miraculous things, and He softened my parents' hearts so that they let me go to general conference without being punished. This was a remarkable experience in my

As soon as I finished my prayer, I could feel the Holy Ghost encourage me to tell my mother how important it was for me to go and listen to the prophet.

life. It confirmed to me the truth of the scripture that says, "By the power of the Holy Ghost [we] may know the truth of all things" (Moroni 10:5).

I know that if we base our actions on the principles of the gospel and listen to the Spirit, we can always be happy with our choices. This experience strengthened my testimony that God is there for us and that the Holy Ghost helps us in our lives. ■

Fy Tianarivelo, Madagascar



WHERE I BELONG

Before I joined the Church, my life was full of unhappiness. Following my parents' divorce when I was seven years old, my father went to prison. My mother was an alcoholic and lost everything that was important to her. I was sent to live with a foster family.

Because of these things, I grew up a lot faster than many of my peers. I never quite felt that I could find my place, and consequently I was constantly in a state of rebellion. When I was still very young, I began smoking and doing other things that I now understand are contrary to the Word of Wisdom. I was certain I was doomed to fail in life.

The one thing I did find happiness in was helping people—whether it was cleaning alongside them or listening to their life stories. I desperately wanted people to know they could depend on me. One year I went on vacation and met an elderly woman I decided to serve by listening to her. She was a Christian and started to talk to me about religion.

I had never really believed in God. At times, when I had thought that *maybe* He existed, I blamed Him for the troubling things I had experienced. But as this woman described the importance of faith in God, I found myself intrigued. Before I left, she said something that was particularly interesting: “The Mormons follow God’s commandments.”

I had never heard of the Mormons,

so I went home, got online, and searched. I arrived at Mormon.org and ordered a free copy of the Book of Mormon. Missionaries delivered it a few days later.

I wasn't sure I could start to believe in God, but the missionaries helped me discover that I could not only believe in Him but also know Him. As I began to pray and study the Book of Mormon, I found myself on a beautiful journey of finding happiness. I quit smoking. I stopped blaming God and started thanking Him for the good things in my life. I came to know that His Son had suffered for my sins and for all the pain I had ever felt. On October 28, 2007, I was baptized into His Church.

If I hadn't personally experienced the change from disillusionment to

happiness, I wouldn't believe it is possible. Today I love my calling in Primary and am grateful to have had the opportunity to help organize a service project at a young single adult conference in Poland. To be able to regularly help others through Church service has added to the happiness I have found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Everything I do now, I do with pure love because of Jesus Christ. I believe that life is beautiful and that even when we have challenges, if we follow the Savior, we won't be lost.

The woman I met was right: having faith in God *is* crucial. We cannot find our place in this world if we don't know Him. I am grateful to finally have a place where I know I belong. ■
Dorota Musiał, Poland

She said something that was particularly interesting: “The Mormons follow God’s commandments.”



TELL US ABOUT YOUR CHURCH

On a trip to visit my brother, I was seated in the back of the plane where the flight attendants sit. The two rows of seats in that area face each other.

I introduced myself to the people sitting around me and then mentioned that I would be attending Brigham Young University. A man sitting across from me said his daughter had a good friend who had just left on a full-time mission. His daughter knew a little about the Church, but he knew almost nothing. The flight attendant immediately proclaimed that she wouldn't want to belong to "that church" because it opposed women. The man said he had heard something similar—that Latter-day Saint women were considered less than men, that they couldn't hold the priesthood or preside in meetings, and that the Church was male dominated.

Then, turning to me, he asked, "How do *you* feel about that?" All seven people turned to me and waited.

My heart began pounding. As a child I had memorized the Articles of Faith for just such an encounter, and as a teenager and young adult I had practiced bearing testimony of Joseph Smith's vision and of the Book of Mormon. But I didn't have the faintest idea how to answer the man's question. I prayed silently for Heavenly Father to guide me.

Then I said the first words that came to my mind: "You simply don't know about Relief Society." The looks on their faces indicated that they didn't.

"The priesthood functions in conjunction with the women, all of whom are members of Relief Society," I explained. "We have a woman Relief Society president who guides the activities of the women in the Church all over the world. The responsibility of the women is to bring tenderness and charity into the lives of the members and especially into the lives of their families."

The people around me listened attentively.

"We live in a strange time when some women want women to act and think and be like men. But we believe God divides tasks. We expect women to be leaders among the women and joint leaders in their homes. The men lean heavily on us for counsel in these areas. It is a righteous balance. It makes our Church organizations and our homes successful. And we truly believe that the man is not without the woman, nor is the woman without the man in the Lord (see 1 Corinthians 11:11). We believe we are not whole without each other. We do not believe we were created to compete with one another but to complement one another."

I said the first thing that came to my mind: "You simply don't know about Relief Society."



I felt blessed when I had finished. I knew the words I had spoken were from the Spirit. Every person seemed satisfied with my explanation. Then the man said, "Tell us more about your church."

Then, for the next two hours, I had the joyous opportunity of talking about the Restoration, answering questions, and bearing testimony of the gospel I love. ■

Shauna Moore, Virginia, USA

SHOULD I CHOOSE WORK OR CHURCH?

My wife and I were married in 1981 in the Tokyo Japan Temple. Our life after marriage was not easy at first. I was grateful to have a job, but we had trouble meeting our expenses. We asked Heavenly Father for His help and did all we could to

make ends meet and pay our tithing. We knew that if we trusted in the Lord, He would provide for us.

One week both my wife and my friend brought me the same small clipping out of the newspaper. It was an ad for a full-time English teacher.

I sent my résumé to the

company and was asked to come in for an interview. At the end of the interview, the interviewer said, "You wrote in your résumé that you had been involved in volunteer work as a missionary for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. So that means you go to church on Sundays, don't you? If you had to decide whether to go to church or to work on Sundays, which would you choose?"

It was a difficult question because I needed a better job. But after pondering, I replied, "I would go to church."

With a vague smile, the interviewer said, "Oh, I see." Then he dismissed me with the promise that the company would make a decision by that evening and that I should call to find out the results. As I left the room, I thought I had failed.

Later that evening when it came time to call, I dialed the company's number with great fear.

"What about the results of the interview?" I asked the secretary. "I failed, didn't I?"

I was stunned but happy with her answer.

"We'd like to ask you to work for us," she said.

About a month later I learned why I got the job. The secretary explained that the interviewer lived next door to full-time Latter-day Saint missionaries. He had often watched the missionaries briskly riding their bicycles to their work in the morning.



The interviewer asked me, "If you had to decide whether to go to church or to work on Sundays, which would you choose?"

"He believed that you, belonging to the same church, would work for us just as hard as the missionaries worked for their church," she said. "Lucky you!"

Since then our family has always had what we needed.

Whenever I think of this choice experience, I am encouraged and comforted. I know that God often uses other people to bless His children. I cannot adequately express how grateful I feel for my wife and my friend for their inspiration in bringing that newspaper ad to me, for those hard-working missionaries and their great example, and for our merciful, loving, and caring Heavenly Father, who has miraculous power to consecrate our experiences for our good. ■

Kenya Ishii, Japan

Small & Simple Things

“By small and simple things are great things brought to pass” (Alma 37:6).

GREAT LIVES REMEMBERED

Newel K. Whitney (1795–1850)

Below, left inset: An engraved portrait of Newel K. Whitney. Below, right inset: The upstairs of the Newel K. Whitney store in Kirtland, Ohio, where the School of the Prophets and Church meetings were held. Bottom: The Whitney store.

Newel Kimball Whitney was born in Vermont, USA, on February 5, 1795. He was a talented businessman and started up a friendship and business partnership with Sidney Gilbert. In their early business days, they traveled frequently. On one of these business trips, Newel met Elizabeth Ann Smith in Kirtland, Ohio. Newel and Ann courted for three years and married in 1823.

Together Newel and Ann sought for truth and, for a time, took part in the Campbellite movement, which professed to have restored ancient Christianity. One night Newel and Ann prayed “to know from the Lord

how [they] could obtain the gift of the Holy Ghost.” Ann described the vision they received in answer to their prayer: “The Spirit rested upon us and a cloud overshadowed the house. . . . Then we heard a voice out of the cloud, saying: ‘Prepare to receive the word of the Lord, for it is coming.’”¹

Shortly after this answer to prayer, in October 1830, Latter-day Saint missionaries came to Kirtland. In November, Newel and Ann were baptized. Only months later, Joseph and Emma Smith came knocking on the Whitneys’ door. When Joseph greeted Newel

by name, Newel couldn’t say he knew the Prophet’s name, so Joseph responded, “I am Joseph the Prophet; you have prayed me here, now what do you want of me?”² The Whitneys then housed the Smiths for several weeks and provided a home for them in September 1832.

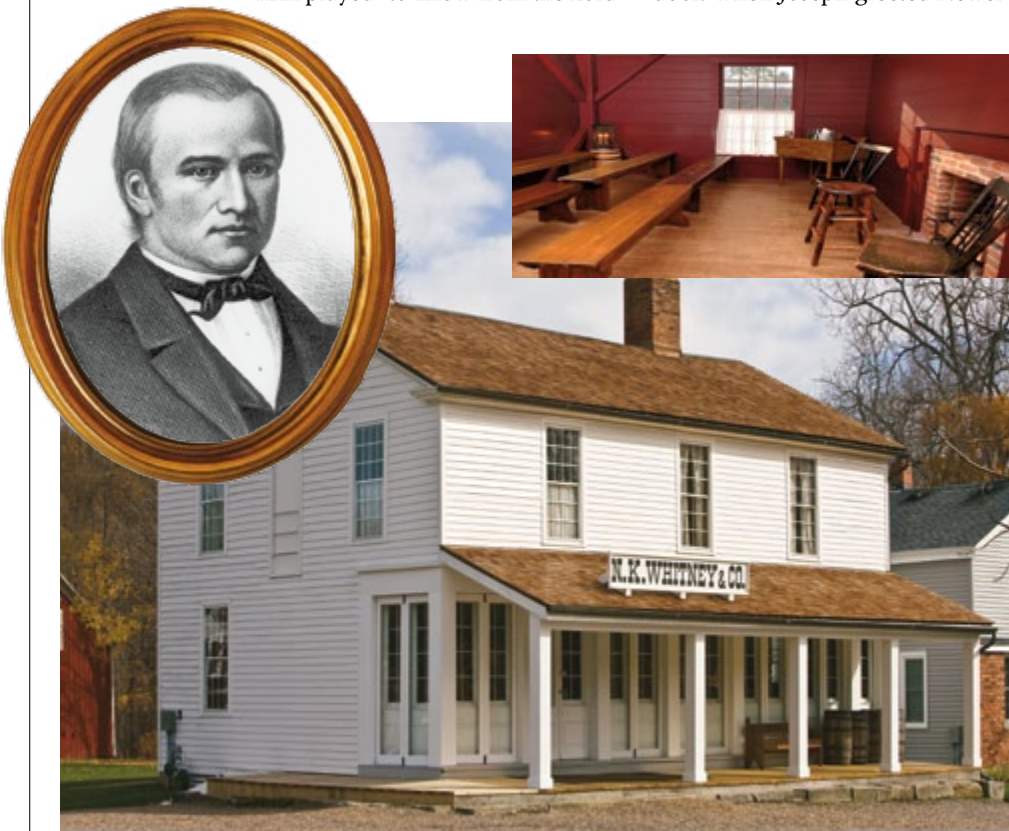
In addition to providing the Smiths a place to stay, Newel also gave the Church full use of the upstairs space in his store. At the Whitney store, Church leaders held meetings and the School of the Prophets.

In December 1831, Newel was called as the second bishop of the Church and later served as the manager of financial operations of the Church, helping the Church manage its funds and get out of debt. In the fall of 1838, the Whitneys moved to Far West, Missouri, where Newel was again called as bishop, and 10 years later, he and his family crossed the plains to Salt Lake City, where he served as Presiding Bishop of the Church.

Newel died on September 24, 1850, in Salt Lake City from a respiratory condition.

NOTES

1. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, quoted in Edward Tullidge, *The Women of Mormondom* (1877), 41–42.
2. Joseph Smith, quoted in Elizabeth Ann Whitney, “A Leaf from an Autobiography,” *Woman’s Exponent*, Aug. 15, 1878, 51.



Dan Jones (1810–62)

More than one million missionaries have been called since the organization of the Church, but Dan Jones was more than just one in a million. Of the Welsh missionary, President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) said, “In terms of the number of converts, Dan Jones must certainly be included in the half dozen or so most productive missionaries in the history of the Church.”¹

Before he was a missionary, Dan emigrated from Wales to the United States and worked on the Mississippi River as captain of a steamboat called the *Maid of Iowa*, which brought many Latter-day Saints to Nauvoo, Illinois. He joined the Church in 1843 and became close friends with the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Dan’s missions fulfilled Joseph Smith’s last recorded prophecy. The night before the Prophet Joseph Smith was killed, he heard gunfire outside the window of Carthage Jail, so he chose to sleep on the floor. Near him was Dan Jones. The Prophet asked Dan if he was afraid to die. He replied, “Has that time come, think you? Engaged in such a cause I do not think that death

would have many terrors.” Then Joseph prophesied, “You will yet see Wales, and fulfill the mission appointed you before you die.”²

The Prophet’s promise was fulfilled in 1845, when Dan and his wife, Jane, were called to serve in Wales. Dan used his talent for speaking to teach the gospel with great conviction. He was fluent in Welsh and English, and witnesses recorded that he spoke so captivately that he could hold his audience’s attention in either language for hours.

While in Wales, Dan published Latter-day Saint periodicals, tracts, and books in Welsh. Under Dan Jones’s direction, missionaries in Wales established 29 branches and baptized nearly 1,000 people each year of his first mission. He was

called on a second mission to Wales in 1852, and despite growing persecution of the Church, some 2,000 people were baptized in four years.

Upon his return to Utah, Dan helped bring many Welsh converts to Utah. When he died at age 51, he had helped bring an estimated 5,000 people to the western United States.

NOTES

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Thing of Most Worth,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1993, 7.
2. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 6:601.



From left: Portrait of the Welsh missionary Dan Jones. A steamboat, like the one Dan Jones captained, approaches the landing at Nauvoo, Illinois. Dan Jones helps Welsh emigrants.

TRUSTING IN THE **Living** Waters

During a family vacation one summer, we visited Cascade Springs, a natural spring near Mount Timpanogos in Utah, USA. The hike around the springs was breathtaking and, for me, life changing.

For the previous year my husband and I had been facing the reality of his pornography addiction. We received help from priesthood leaders and a professional counselor and saw the Lord's tender mercies in our lives. The transformation in our lives and marriage as we worked through his addiction was amazing. The power of the Atonement brought the peace of forgiveness, and trust was growing. Then summer came.

Though my husband was progressing in fortifying his life with virtue, I felt stagnant. I cried often and felt anger, pain, and fear bubble up unexpectedly. Despite continual prayer, gospel study, and temple attendance, I struggled with not only the negative feelings, but also the guilt of experiencing them when my husband was doing so well.

The week of the vacation was one of the most challenging. I had every reason to feel connected with and close to my husband, but instead I felt alone and afraid.

As we toured the springs, we read signs along the trail that explained the remains of a fire there. Years earlier, rangers had initiated a controlled fire that burned more than intended. Though the scarring of the mountain



was significant, the sign explained that it was a cycle of life and actually improved the habitat for plants and animals.

When we reached the top of the springs I felt enveloped by a sense of sacredness. There loomed the charred skeletons of hundreds of trees. At their base, growing thick and strong, were hundreds of new aspens.

I thought of the “fire” of my life that year. The destructive influence of pornography had burned our lives and wounded my heart.

But I had also had opportunities to grow stronger and healthier. As I gazed at the scene, I realized that for the past month I had been focusing on the destruction in my life—not the new growth. Now that I saw them together on the mountain, rooted deeply in the springs of fresh water, I realized that my own soul must look much the same.

Although the repentance process was complete, the healing and regrowth were not. The love I have for my husband and my forgiveness of him for his choices didn't make the effects of those choices go away immediately. But as I stood there I felt Heavenly Father reassure me that His love and healing power were working in our lives. His Son's Atonement was what was allowing us to be cleansed and healed—giving us the strength to come out of this experience stronger than before.

I know it will take time and continual nourishment from the Lord's living water (see John 4:10–14) to fully overcome this issue. But I trust that just as those new trees are growing, so is the new relationship between my husband, me, and our Savior. ■

News of the Church

Visit news.lds.org for more Church news and events.

Traditional Family Championed at World Congress

By **R. Scott Lloyd**

Church News staff writer

The traditional family—father, mother, and children—is in rapid decline, a Church leader warned at the World Congress of Families held in Madrid, Spain, from May 25 through 27, 2012. This trend runs counter to the fact that “children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129).

Elder Erich W. Kopischke of the Seventy made these points at the opening plenary session of the congress. He was introduced by Mary Ellen Smoot, former Relief Society general president.

“Even though many people yearn for traditional family life, fewer and fewer have it,” Elder Kopischke lamented in his speech. “During the second half of the last century, annual marriages in Germany declined by more than 40 percent. Too many young people do not marry anymore. Many foster a variety of personal lifestyles,

often driven by fun, freedom, and self-fulfillment.”

The Church leader observed that the “shareholder value” principle of the business world has crept into individual lives and families. He defined that

said. “And that is exactly what happens—family and children are planned and built around career and personal interests. Sometimes children even become a hobby. The objective is to increase the pleasurable



At the World Congress of Families, held in Madrid, Spain, from May 25 through 27, Elder Erich W. Kopischke of the Seventy warned of the negative effects of the decline of family and marriage.

principle as “low investment, quick and high return.”

“The overall credo seems to be: ‘I am willing to marry and even have one or two children if that does not interfere with my career or personal lifestyle,’” he

life for the individual adults.”

Elder Kopischke said the price is high for such a course of action and explained that the attributes that build successful marriages and families—“sacrifice, love, consideration,

commitment, service, patience, endurance, and fidelity”—are often not found in such relationships.

“Small storms, which everyone has to face in life, cause families to fall apart quickly,” he said. “In today’s world, where almost everybody thinks they should be able to get everything they want, people get more and more selfish and less and less content.”

“The decline of the family is not only reflected in fewer marriages and higher divorce rates but also in far fewer children being born,” he observed. “And those newborns who do come into this world are often born out of wedlock and are being raised by single parents. More than 90 percent of these children live with their mothers and miss the influence of their fathers in their lives.”

This has serious consequences for society, he said, including disoriented and rebellious children whose need for belonging drives them to be attracted to organized gangs, which in turn creates a security issue. “Child poverty and lack of educational opportunities for these children are on the rise. Many of them feel they have

nothing positive to look forward to in life,” he said.

Elder Kopischke said the solution includes promoting religious faith. “Not only do we need to rebuild trust in the value of marriage and family but also faith in God,” he said. “Religion plays a vital role when it comes to values, responsibility, and appropriate use of agency, which is our ability to make choices. Therefore, today I want to make a case for marriage and family, based and centered on a belief in God.”

Identifying marriage as part of the Judeo-Christian tradition, he cited Genesis 2:24, the commandment that a husband and wife “shall be one flesh.” He also quoted from “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” first presented by the Church in September 1995.

“A civilization and society can and will be only as strong as its families,” he said. “A family can and will only be as strong as the marriage on which it is based.”

The World Congress of Families has as its purpose to “stand up for the position of the traditional family, in a time of eroding family life and declining appreciation for families in general.”

Since 1997 the congress has been held in Prague, Czechoslovakia; Geneva, Switzerland; Mexico City, Mexico; Warsaw, Poland; and Amsterdam, Holland. Concurrent with the sessions of the congress, Elder Frerich Görts, former undersecretary of the German federal government and currently the Church’s representative to the European Union institutions, attended the International Parliamentary Forum. The forum gathered the foremost activists and leaders of civic, educational, and research organizations defending the natural family and life as fundamental principles together with government representatives.

While Elder Kopischke was addressing the audience of more than 2,000 delegates at the congress and Elder Görts was engaging with political and civic leaders, Elder Jim Brande and Sister Carol Brande, public affairs missionaries, were managing a booth at the congress with the help of local Church members. The booth featured family home evening and offered a selection of family-related videos visitors could watch about the Church’s support for the traditional family. ■

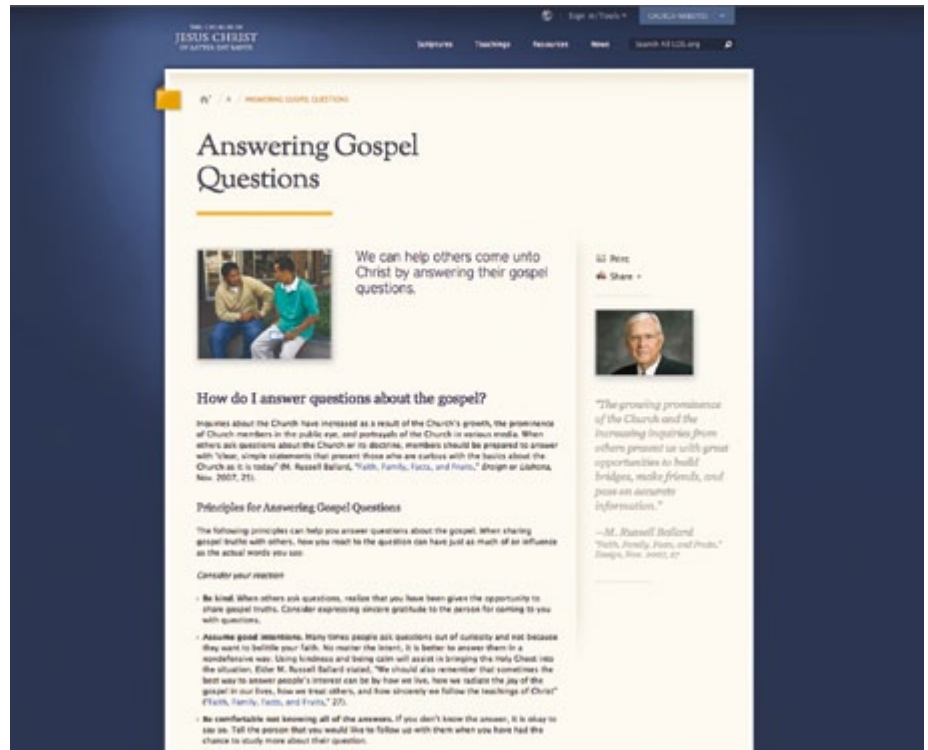
New Resource Helps Members Answer Gospel Questions

By Heather Whittle Wrigley
Church News and Events

Recently the Church launched a new online resource to help members better prepare to answer questions they may be asked about the gospel. “Answering Gospel Questions” is a new Study by Topic page on LDS.org that explains several basic principles members can use to answer questions about their faith. (From the **LDS.org** home page, click on **Teachings, Gospel Topics**, and **Answering Gospel Questions**, or go to lds.org/topics/answering-gospel-questions.)

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has emphasized the need for “clear, simple statements that present those who are curious with the basics about the Church as it is today” (“Faith, Family, Facts, and Fruits,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 25).

Events such as the 2002 Winter Olympics, international Church growth, and the emergence of prominent Mormons in arts, athletics, and politics have raised the Church’s profile in the last several years and increased the opportunities for social interaction between members and



The “Answering Gospel Questions” Gospel Topics page on LDS.org helps members prepare to answer questions about the Church and its doctrine.

their neighbors at every level of society.

“As people interact with members of the Church, they are more likely to dismiss stereotypes and receive accurate information about the Church and its doctrines,” said Michael Barber, a product manager who worked on the new topic page. “With that in mind, we wanted to supply members with some simple principles they can apply when addressing questions or comments about the gospel that may arise in their casual conversations with others.”

The main page offers counsel about how to react to gospel questions and what to say.

One section states, “Assume good intentions. Many times people ask questions out of curiosity and not because they want to belittle your faith. No matter the intent, it is better

to answer them in a nondefensive way. Using kindness and being calm will assist in bringing the Holy Ghost into the situation.”

“This effort was accomplished collaboratively with representatives from many departments, including Public Affairs, Church History, Seminaries and Institutes, Missionary, Publishing Services, and Priesthood,” Brother Barber said. “All of us were united in our effort to provide members direction from Church leaders on sharing the gospel and resources to help them form answers.”

The instructions on the site quote advice from the scriptures or General Authorities. Additional resources are listed at the bottom of the page and link to lists of questions and related resources about Church doctrines, Church policies, and the worldwide Church. ■

Church Leaders Address Servicemen and Servicewomen in Military Devotional

By **Melissa Merrill**

Church News and Events

In a prerecorded Middle East/Africa North Military Devotional the Church released in June, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles told Latter-day Saint military servicemen and servicewomen, “We want you to know that we love you, we remember you, and we are proud of you.”

The devotional also included addresses from Elder Donald L. Hallstrom of the Presidency of the Seventy and Linda K. Burton, Relief Society general president.

“My message today is that when you have no other choice, you can have sacred, revelatory, profoundly instructive experience with the Lord in any situation you are in,” Elder Holland said, drawing on lessons learned from Joseph Smith’s experience in Liberty Jail. “Indeed, let me say that even a little stronger: You can have sacred, revelatory, profoundly instructive experience with the Lord in the most miserable experiences of your life—in the worst settings, while enduring the most painful injustices, when facing the most insurmountable odds and opposition you have ever faced.”

Elder Holland closed by leaving an apostolic blessing on those serving their countries as well as on their families.

Elder Hallstrom focused his remarks on the spiritual safety found through making and keeping covenants.

“Whether we live a long or short life upon this earth is of relatively little consequence in the eternities,” he said. “What really matters is our character and how we live. Living the life of a

covenant-maker and covenant-keeper is of highest value, as that is the only way for us to fulfill our eternal purpose.”

Sister Burton also spoke about the importance of covenants—as well as of following the leaders of the Church, emulating the Savior’s example in reaching out to and rescuing others, and turning to the scriptures and hymns for strength.

“I testify we have a loving Father in Heaven who knows and loves you perfectly and individually,” she concluded. “You and your precious families are being prayed for in sacred places by the Lord’s anointed ones. I know those prayers are heard and will be answered in the Lord’s own time and in His own way.”

According to Frank Clawson, director of the Church’s Military Relations Division, resources such as the devotional are created to bless not only members of the Church serving in the armed forces but also those who work in war zones as civil service employees, civilian contractors, embassy personnel, or nonprofit organization representatives. ■

Find a link to video of the devotional by searching “military devotional” at news.lds.org.



Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles told Latter-day Saints serving in the military, “We want you to know that we love you, we remember you, and we are proud of you.”

AROUND THE CHURCH

Boise Idaho Temple Prepares for Open House, Rededication

The Boise Idaho Temple, which closed in July 2011 for extensive renovations, opens for a public open house from Saturday, October 13, through Saturday, November 10, 2012, excluding Sundays. Free reservations for the open house can be made through boisemormontemple.org.

The temple will be formally rededicated on Sunday, November 18, 2012, in three sessions. In conjunction with the rededication of the temple, there will also be a cultural celebration featuring music and dance on Saturday, November 17, 2012.

The variegated marble exterior of the Boise Idaho Temple has been replaced with white granite, and the interior includes new finishes and furnishings.

Church, Red Cross Strengthen Relationship with Memorandum

In June, Gail McGovern, CEO of the American Red Cross, visited Welfare Square to formalize a memorandum signed earlier this year that makes it easier for Church facilities to be used as licensed blood operations centers. It also details how the two organizations will work together in times of disaster relief and in conducting preparedness efforts.

“We are more prepared than ever for when disaster strikes because of the relationship we have with the LDS Church,” Ms. McGovern said.

Following a guided tour of Welfare Square and the Bishops’ Central Storehouse, Ms. McGovern and other Red Cross representatives met with Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and members of the Presiding Bishopric.

Members Celebrate 175 Years of the Church in Britain

On July 7, 2012, more than 1,000 members, friends, and local dignitaries from across the United Kingdom gathered in Lancashire, England, to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the arrival of the Church in Britain.

Following a concert program, Area Seventy Elder Stephen C. Kerr reminded members that the doctrine taught by the first missionaries to England is the same doctrine of faith that the Church proclaims to the world today.

London Chapel Renovation, Rededication Extend the Gospel to Many

The British capital’s most prominent Latter-day Saint meeting-house—the Hyde Park building, located in the heart of London—was rededicated in two sessions in July following renovations, which included a new interactive visitors’ center on the ground floor and a statue inspired by Thorvaldsen’s *Christus*.

The building is now the center for the London England Hyde Park Stake, which comprises seven wards and 2,000 members from 115 countries.

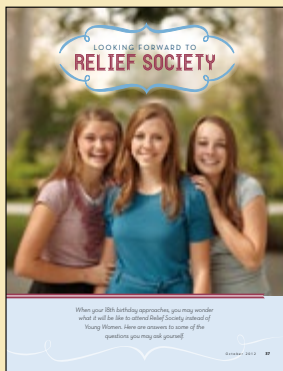


In Other Church Magazines

THE NEW ERA

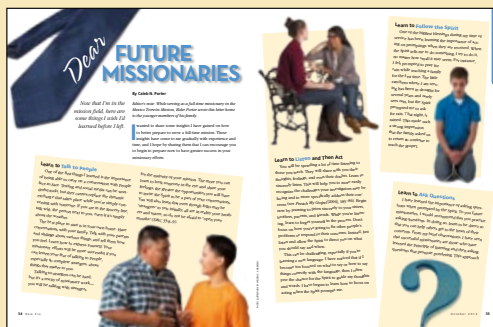
Young Women and Relief Society

When young women prepare for their 18th birthday, they may have questions about what Relief Society will be like. Find answers to commonly asked questions in “Looking Forward to Relief Society” on page 37.



Young Men and Mission Prep

While serving as a full-time missionary in Mexico, Caleb Porter wrote a letter home to his younger family members with tips for preparing for a mission. His counsel in “Dear Future Missionaries” on page 34 may be helpful for all youth preparing to serve a full-time mission.



Good Friends

Friendship is an important part of a young person’s life. In “Be Wise and Be a Friend” on page 2, Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles provides counsel for how to choose friends wisely and how to be a good friend as well.

COMMENT

Conference Comfort

May I share how the general conference audio files have blessed my life? I often awake during the night and can’t get back to sleep. Rather than lying awake, I keep my audio player and some earphones on my nightstand. When I wake up I can listen to talks or hymns until I become sleepy again. The familiar voices and messages are soothing, and by using this otherwise wasted time, I have more fully internalized the words of prophets.

Joanne McCabe
Minnesota, USA

Correction

The home shown on page 58 of the July 2012 issue was built on the site of the Martin Harris home. He did not live in the pictured home.

THE FRIEND

Preparing to Transition

Do you know a girl who is preparing to enter the Young Women organization or a boy who will soon receive the Aaronic Priesthood? The October *Friend* features stories and messages designed to help prepare these children for the next phases in their lives. The issue also includes messages from Young Men general president David L. Beck and Young Women general president Elaine S. Dalton that encourage children to prepare to enter the Young Men and Young Women organizations.

Temple Preparation

Read page 46 of the October *Friend* to find out about a young woman’s experience of visiting the Halifax Nova Scotia Temple for the first time. Then read on to see the tips she gives to others who plan to enter the temple soon.



GOOD THINGS KEEP ON COMING

By Caitlin A. Rush

It was a Friday night much like any other. My closest friends and I were sitting in my apartment after watching a movie, periodically chatting quietly and then laughing loudly. A sense of genuine contentment filled the air, and I couldn't help smiling as stories and ideas swirled through the room. Some of the people I had met only a month before; some I had known all my 25 years.

At one point one of these longtime friends and I got to sharing memories about some of our college friends from a few years earlier. As we talked, I thought of how I missed these friends, of how much fun we had had, and how close we had been. Now we had graduated and moved to places all over the world, finding ourselves in situations we never could have predicted. I sighed with momentary feelings of loss, then glanced around the room at the laughing faces surrounding me at that moment and was struck by the sudden thought: *good things keep on coming*.

That simple thought was actually quite profound for me, especially since I have always had a hard time facing change and am hesitant to let go of good things. I miss the past even while it is still the present, desperate to enjoy fully moments in which I consciously



As someone who regrets the present turning so quickly into the past, I was grateful for the reminder to simply enjoy the moment and look to the future.

and determinedly live. I know when I have a good thing, and I want to hold on and never let go; this lazy and happy Friday night was one of those good moments. Usually when I realize how good things are, I instantly begin thinking of how everything is fleeting, that it will eventually be lost to time or circumstance.

But this night the internal regret didn't come. Sitting quietly, surrounded by people I loved, I knew that even though some good things must naturally come to an end and that there would undoubtedly be many hard things in the future, the good things would keep on coming. And they always would—as long as I let them. Even as those I love moved on, voids would be filled with new and amazing people and experiences I had never even imagined.

Sometimes it is hard to move on, but we must. And moving on doesn't mean forgetting friendships, forcing memories to fade. It means opening our hearts to even more happiness and more experiences.

A few weeks after that Friday, the presidency of my young adult branch was released. As anyone from a small branch can probably attest, it was hard to think of what would happen without our branch being able to rely on these men and their wives, whom we had grown to love and trust. But I closed my eyes and repeated to myself the words that had struck me that Friday: *good things keep on coming*. I was comforted and ready for the change.

Change is the Lord's way. He wants us to be happy and growing, to be excited to move on with our lives. Life is a journey, and while still enjoying the present and preparing for inevitable challenges, we must move forward, remaining optimistic, our hearts open to the experiences and good things that are undoubtedly on their way. ■



Christ in America,
by Jeffrey Hein

When the resurrected Christ visited the Nephites in the Americas, “he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them.

“And when he had done this he wept again;

“And he spake unto the multitude, and said unto them:

Behold your little ones”

(3 Nephi 17:21–23).

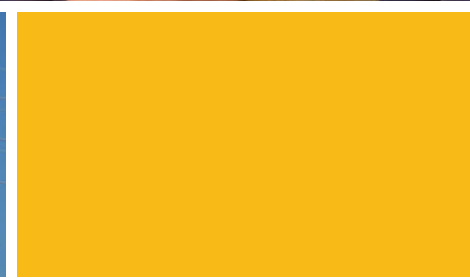
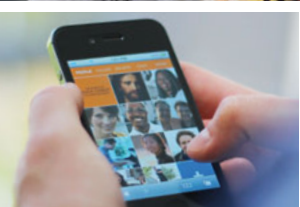


The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles have taught that “successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129).

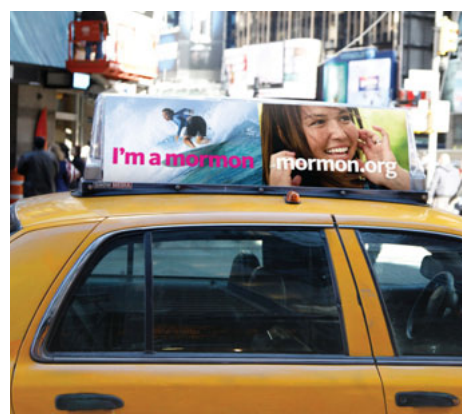
For ideas on applying these principles in your life and family, see pages 4, 20, 32, and 64.



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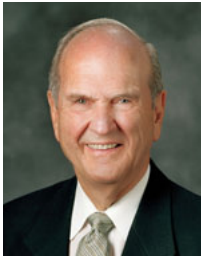
Supplement to Church Magazines



“We believe that using the Internet will open a whole new world of opportunity to share the gospel.”

— Elder Dallin H. Oaks (*Ensign*, Apr. 2002, 52)

Using technology to share the gospel



“Now in this day of the Internet, there are new and exciting ways you can do missionary work. You can invite friends and neighbors to visit the new mormon.org Web site. ...And there you can create your own personal profile. Each profile includes an expression of belief, an experience, and a testimony.”

— Elder Russell M. Nelson (*Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 49)



Using social media to share the gospel

It's easy to share Mormon.org on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Google+, as well as other social media sites. It's easy to share from the comfort of your computer.

1. Like or subscribe to the Mormon.org page on your favorite social media sites.
2. Comment frequently on Mormon.org with thoughts sensitive to those not of our faith.
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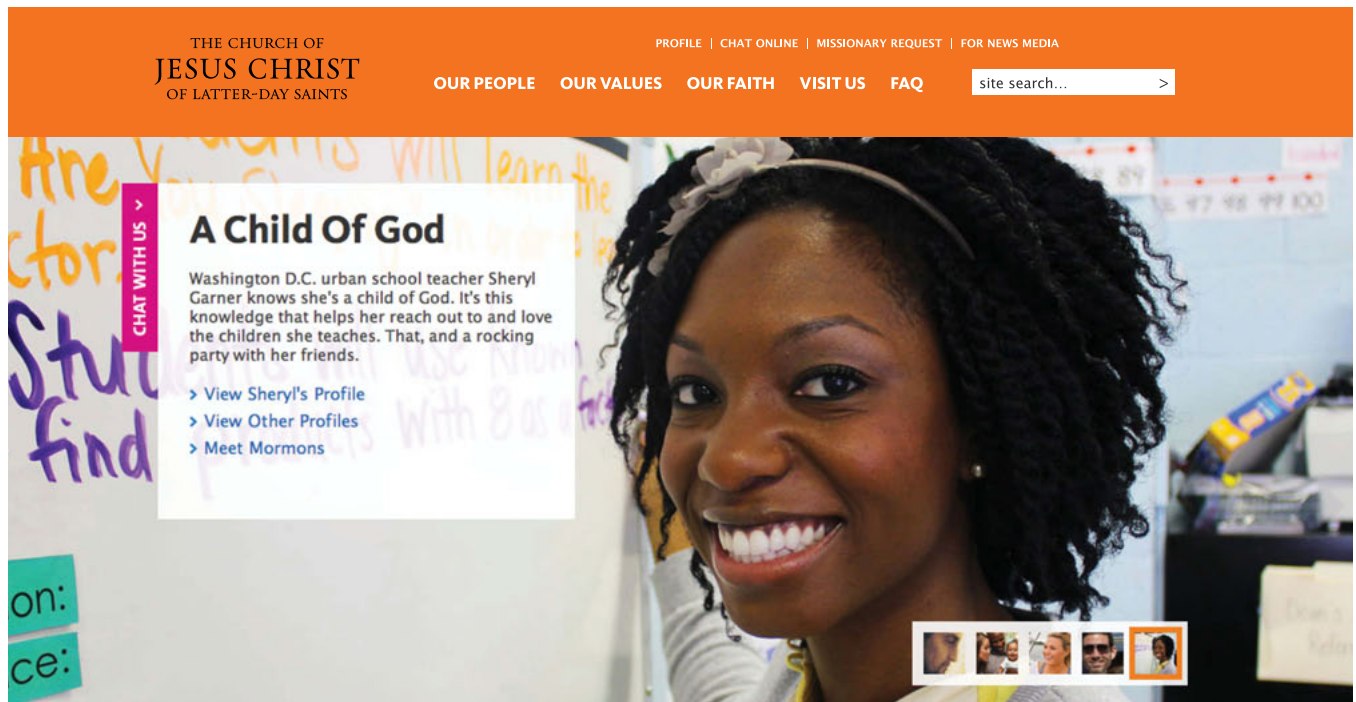
gplus.to/mormon

Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Google+ are trademarks of their respective owners.

“I shared the Mormon.org digital Christmas and Easter cards with my Facebook friends, and this initiated a conversation with them that allowed me to share my beliefs in Christ.” — Matt

What is Mormon.org?

Mormon.org is the official website of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for those not of our faith. It's home to the "I'm a mormon" video series, which features more than a hundred Church members from around the world. In addition, the site includes detailed sections about values and beliefs of Church members, as well as answers to the most frequently asked questions about the Church. The website also offers links to chat live with a missionary representative.



Be a part of Mormon.org

Create your profile, where you can share your testimony about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

1.



Create an LDS Account

Ask your ward clerk for your Church membership number, or find it on your current temple recommend. Go to LDS.org, click **Sign In** and **Register for an LDS Account**.

2.



Create a Profile

Go to Mormon.org/create. Follow the simple steps to create your own personalized page.

3.



Share your Profile

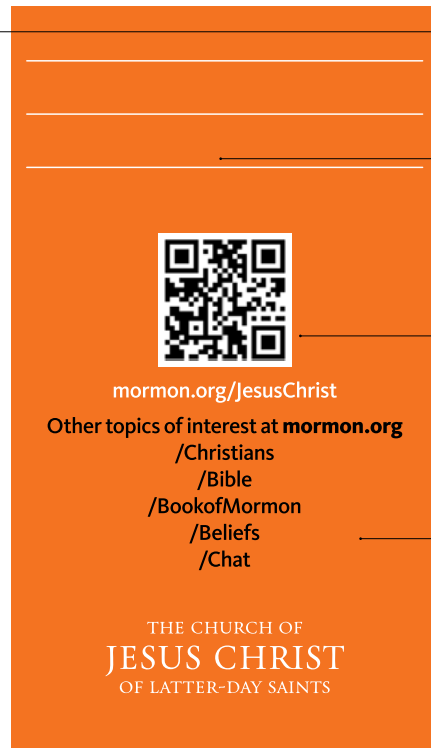
Share your profile on Facebook, Google+, Twitter, and other social media. Capture your profile's URL, and write it on the new pass-along cards as you share them.

The new pass-along card



“We are thrilled to introduce these new, versatile pass-along cards to help you share the gospel. A scan of the QR codes will give your friends instant access to specific topics on Mormon.org. You can use the space at the top to write personal messages or share your Mormon.org profile address. We encourage you to be as creative as you wish in using these new cards.”

— Elder Jeffrey R. Holland



The front of the cards features Church members from Mormon.org.

The back of the cards provides space for a personalized URL, message, or meeting times.

This is a QR code.

This area provides web links to specific gospel topics.

What is a QR code?

A QR code (short for quick response code) is a two-dimensional barcode that, when scanned from a camera-enabled cell phone, provides instant access to digital content.

Follow these three simple steps to set up your device to read QR codes:

1.

Search for QR-code reader apps in the app store for your camera-enabled cell phone. Free apps are usually available.

2.

Install your selected app to your phone and open the app.

3.

Scan the QR code. When the code is read by the app, the web page will launch on your device connected to the Internet. It's that easy!



“When I served as a full-time missionary, we had a great waitress serve us. I left a compliment for her on a pass-along card. I went back in and saw it posted to a bulletin board at the front of the restaurant, where everyone who came in could see it.” — Stephanie



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To share pass-a-long cards, fold and tear along the perforated edge. Additional boxes of cards can be ordered under item number 10035000 from the Distribution Center or online at store.ids.org.

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