

# PROTECTING OUR YOUTH THROUGH FAMILY HISTORY

By Maggie Stevens

One of the most difficult challenges leaders and parents of today's youth face is watching a child stray from the gospel. The adversary is working overtime to destroy potential families, and to do this he targets our youth. Teenagers are fighting a tough battle. How do we help them turn their hearts to their fathers (see Malachi 4:6) and thus gain added strength to overcome the challenges they face? The answer could be as simple as using the various family history resources now available. Not only can such resources offer an incredible experience for our youth, but they can help unlock promised blessings.

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has counseled adult leaders of youth to provide direction for planning temple and family history activities without taking over: "You have to be there, but you have to get out of the way. . . . Let them act."<sup>1</sup> Many adult advisers are inviting young men and women to take action and are having success by letting youth plan heart-turning activities.

For example, the young women in the Santa Margarita California Stake recently learned about family history

at their annual stake Beehive activity. To prepare for this activity, all of the Beehives in the stake personally prepared a four-generation family chart. For those who were unable to accomplish this task, a family history specialist was on hand to assist. Using a butterfly theme, the young women helped each other transfer their four generations to a 9-by-11-inch canvas they could hang in their rooms. The project was simple enough to complete in one evening.



## TEMPLE CHALLENGE

Watch a video about the challenge that Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles gave to youth to find family names, take them to the temple, and teach others to do the same: [lds.org/topics/family-history/temple-challenge](https://www.lds.org/topics/family-history/temple-challenge).

During the activity, the young women shared facts about their own ancestors, displayed period clothing, and told amazing family stories they had discovered. This activity created a desire among the young women to get involved in using the photos and stories features on [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org).

Meredith K., one of the Beehives who participated, sums up the experience for many of the young women there: "Knowing I can do this FamilySearch stuff makes me happy. I feel valuable. I am not really good at a lot of things, but I am good at this. As a member of the Church, I have taken family history for granted. My eyes have been opened. Wow, this is a great blessing!"

I believe this generation of youth will be less likely to stray if we as their parents, their leaders, and their peers can guide them to their ancestors. From learning about the strength of their ancestors, the youth of this dispensation can gain strong testimonies, learn to love the gospel, and find inspiration to conquer the challenges that cross their paths. ■

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### NOTE

1. David A. Bednar, in "Let Them Act" (video), [lds.org/go/actE1015](https://www.lds.org/go/actE1015).

*Like young plants in a storm, our youth can find protection in doing family history, sinking their roots deep into gospel soil.*



## HOW TO HELP YOUTH PARTICIPATE IN FAMILY HISTORY

- In Cedar City, Utah, leaders from among the youth were taught journal writing, document research, indexing, and how to use [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org). These youth then turned around and taught the same skills to their peers in their quorums and classes.
- In a stake in Mesa, Arizona, missionaries who have recently received their mission calls serve in the local family history center up until the time they report to the missionary training center.
- In San Antonio, Texas, a community Boy Scout troop, along with their parents, were invited to the family history center to complete merit badge requirements.
- In Rio Rancho, New Mexico, youth have been called as family history consultants and assist their peers and ward families.
- In Houston, Texas, youth help plan the stake's annual community family history fair and teach the classes.



## PROTECTION FROM THE ADVERSARY

“Do you young people want a sure way to eliminate the influence of the adversary in your life? Immerse yourself in searching for your ancestors, prepare their names for the sacred vicarious ordinances available in the temple, and then go to the temple to stand as proxy for them to receive the ordinances of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost. As you grow older, you will be able to participate in receiving the other ordinances as well. I can think of no greater protection from the influence of the adversary in your life.”

**Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Joy of Redeeming the Dead,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 94.**