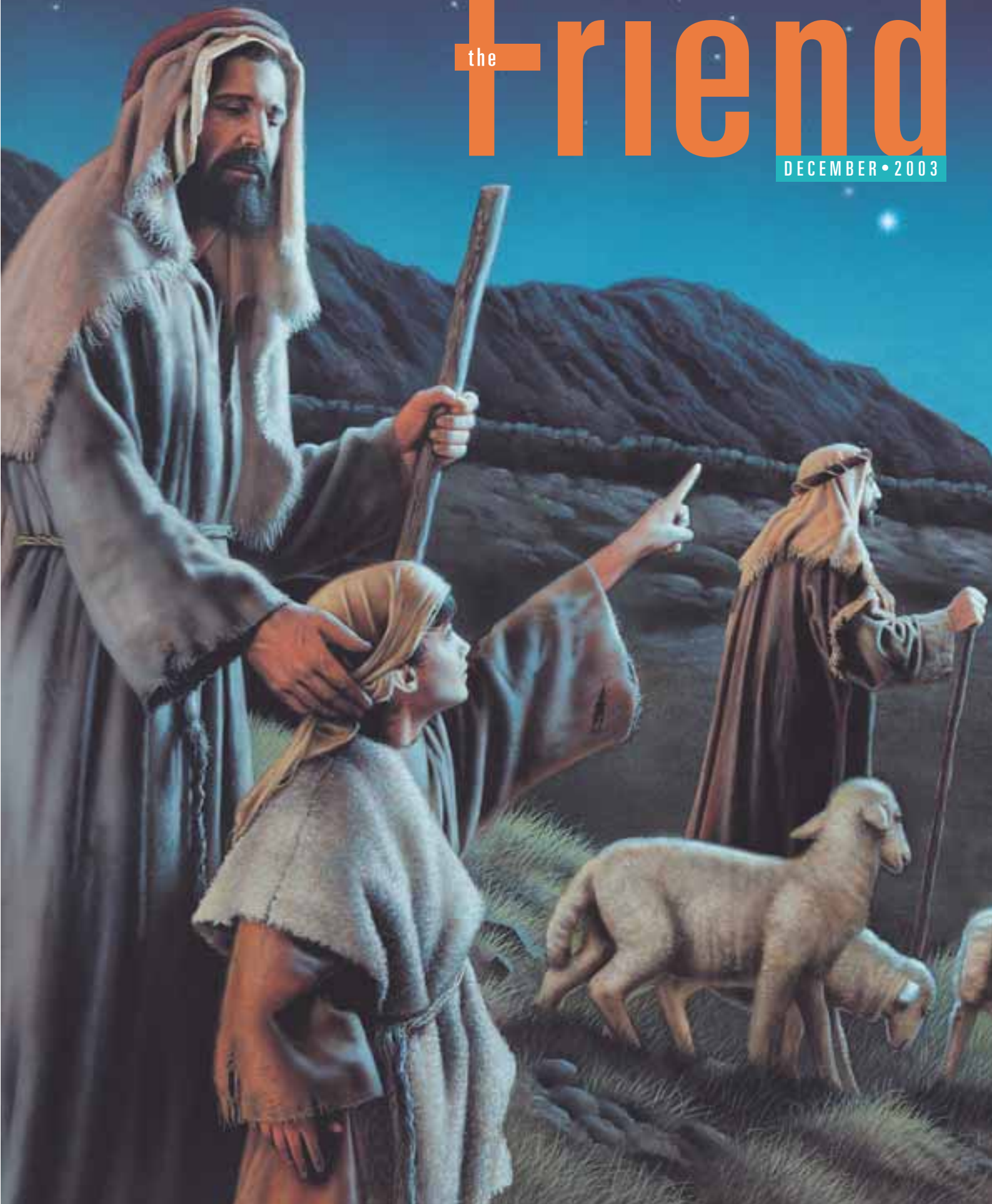


the Friend

DECEMBER • 2003





Staying Home

One Sunday I was so sick that I had to stay home from church so I wouldn't get everybody there sick. Before my mom and my brothers went to church, they gave me a short lesson on the Word of Wisdom.

My dad stayed home from church with me, and we had our own lessons from the *Friend*. We read the stories to each other, and I did the activities. Even though I missed church, I still learned about Jesus with my dad. It felt good to have a lesson and do the reverent activities.

I think that by doing these things I learned to choose the right even when I was sick and missed church.

Rachel Lyn Cox, age 8
Hyde Park, Utah



Lost Ring

One night after I came out of the church, my new silver CTR ring fell out of my pocket. My dad and uncle shined the headlights of their cars into the bushes, but I still couldn't find it. I was feeling sad. My mom said we should have a family prayer. After the prayer, I walked through the bushes and felt a prompting to look down. There was my ring under a bush! I know that my prayer was answered and that yours can be, too.

Brian Seegmiller, age 10
Fairfield, California



Nannie's Kindness

I wrote this talk myself and gave it in Primary the week after Nannie died:

"My grandma—we call her Nannie. She was a great example to the family. We always went to her house every Sunday. I always thought that her birthday and Christmas presents were the best. Every time we went to her house, we learned a lesson about what Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ would do. She was so kind to everyone. Every Christmas she took cookies to the neighbors. Nannie let people stay at her house. It was like a hotel (it was open to anyone). Nannie and Pappie took care of the handicapped in their home. Nannie died Monday, August 12, 2002. She gave me a picture of the temple before she died. She taught me about the temple. I want to try to be

like her in all the ways I can, and I say these things in the name of Jesus Christ, amen."

Mallory Murdoch, age 8 (with Nannie)
Rigby, Idaho



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Stories and Features

IFC Childviews

2 A Christmas Message from the First Presidency to the Children of the World:
Light of the World

4 Christmas Gift

8 Friend to Friend: Live Worthy to Return Home / Elder Wayne S. Peterson

10 New Testament Stories: Paul Finishes His Mission

15 Friends in the News

16 A Bed for Nils

20 From the Life of President John Taylor: Money for a Mission

22 Our Creative Friends

26 Trying to Be Like Jesus

29 They Spoke to Us

34 Sharing Time: What Is Christmas?

37 Special Witness: Being a Witness for God / Elder Henry B. Eyring

38 The Light House

42 Poster Article: Testimony of Truth

44 *Friend* Index 2003

IBC Guide to the *Friend*

For Little Friends

30 Tegan's Question

31 Remember Jesus

32 Merry Christmas! Game

Things to Make and Do

18 Christmas Workshop

24 Advent Calendar: What Is Christmas?

41 Funstuff

Music

28 Sing of Christmas

See page 41.



Cover by Simon Dewey, courtesy of Altus Fine Art,
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the friend

A children's magazine published by
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

HIDDEN CTR RING

As we choose the right
each day, we will be exam-
ples of the truth and will be
able to share the gospel
with others. Find the CTR
ring hidden in this issue of
the *Friend* to remind you to
always follow the Savior's
example.





Light of the World



**A Christmas Message from the First Presidency
to the Children of the World**

Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him” (Matthew 2:2). So spoke the Wise Men long ago when they followed the heavenly light which led them to the Savior of mankind.

Jesus Christ, born in humble surroundings, crucified and resurrected, is our source of light to guide us in the paths we should follow. As we look to Him, following His light and doing what He would want us to do, we will find peace and happiness.

We testify that Jesus Christ is our Redeemer and our Friend. He is the Light of the World. He lives and because He lives, we shall live eternally (see John 14:19).

With love,

The First Presidency

*Thomas S. Monson
James E. Faust*





Christmas

BY NYCOLE S. LARSEN

(Based on a true story)

Therefore . . . saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart (Joel 2:12).

The Christmas I remember best happened when I was 12 years old. It all started one evening about a month before Christmas. The room had fallen totally silent. We all stood staring at Father, our jaws dropped in shock.

Just moments before, my three brothers and I had been wrestling with our two big dogs. My mother had watched, smiling, from the nearby kitchen table. But now, even her hands had gone perfectly still, stopping in midair as she sewed buttons back on a blue Scout uniform.

“What do you mean ‘No presents this year?’” my 16-year-old brother Mick asked slowly.

“Just what I said,” Father answered calmly. He sat



Gift

down across the table from Mother. “Christmas has become all about ‘things.’ We worry too much about what we’re getting, how many presents are under the tree. Your mother and I have always taught you children the real reason we celebrate Christmas.”

“It’s Jesus’ birthday!” I piped up.

Father nodded. “That’s right, Nellie. But even though we all know the story of baby Jesus and can recite Luke chapter 2 by heart, I just feel that our home doesn’t have the right spirit in it during the holiday season. I think that if we forget about buying presents and really concentrate on the true meaning of Christmas, we’ll be more in tune with Jesus Christ and His gospel.”

“But, Dad,” I said, “we’ve always talked about how giving each other presents at Christmas is symbolic of Heavenly Father giving Jesus Christ to the world. Isn’t that true?”

Father considered this. “You’re right, Nellie. OK, let’s do this. No gift given in this family may be store-bought. Whatever you give each other must come from you,” he put his hand on his chest, “from inside you. You figure it out.” He got up and left the room.

“This is going to be the worst Christmas ever,” I thought.

“Is he serious?” Tyler asked Mother.

“He sure sounded like it.” She had already resumed her uniform mending.

“No presents . . .” Mick seemed in a daze.

Neil, my eight-year-old brother, looked like he was going to cry.

“So, what are we supposed to give each other?” I asked.

“Well, you all have about a month to ‘figure it out,’ as your father said,” Mother replied. She stood up with the finished shirt and left the room, humming a Christmas song.

Over the next four weeks, our house slowly filled with the Christmas spirit. We were all very secretive about what we were planning for everyone else, and we were excited about what we were giving. I never even thought about what I was getting.

Christmas morning dawned, chilly and white outside. For the first time since they had become teenagers, Mick and Tyler were the first ones up.

“Come on! Come on—get up!” They ran from room to room, waking up the rest of us.



Mother laughed. "I can't believe you two. This alone has made my Christmas!"

Right after family prayers, the gift-giving started. What a wonderful, spirit-filled morning! We exchanged original poetry and songs. Neil had made "I'll-do-you-a-favor" coupons for everyone. Mother had made copies of black-and-white photos of both sets of grandparents and framed them by hand for each of us.

All the gifts were truly given with love. But the one I remember the most was the one my father gave to me.

He handed me a plastic bag. Inside, I could see a slightly browned paper folded in thirds. All eyes were on me as I took the paper out and unfolded it. I gasped. It was the letter Father's mother had written to him when he was 14 years old and she was dying of cancer. Her name was Nell, and I'm named after her. I had heard

about this letter but had never seen it. I knew how precious it was to my father. And now he was giving it to me.

I started to read. The faith and spiritual strength of my grandmother radiated from her words. I read the six-page letter over and over again. The love she expressed for my father made me cry. The part that touched me the most was when she talked about leaving her family to join the Church:

"You'll probably never get to meet your grandparents, Son. They're in Hickory County, Missouri, with all eight of my brothers and sisters. I still remember the last time I saw them. It was during a summer rainstorm, and the humidity wrapped around me like a wool blanket as I stood there on the front porch, facing my parents. They wouldn't even come out the door to say



good-bye. Nor did they let any of my siblings come outside that house to hug me—not even my twin sister, Nora.

“‘The day a body puts some crazy fool church before her own family is the day that body loses herself. She loses her family,’ my daddy told me through the screen door. My mama was behind him. I could see she was crying. Then he said, right before he slammed the door, ‘You are no longer my daughter.’ I’ve never seen any of them since.

“Now, Son, I don’t tell you this story to make you feel sorry for me. I tell you this because I want you to know how firmly I believe this church is the one true Church on the earth. I was willing to sacrifice my family to come here to Utah because of the truth.

“Was it hard? It was very hard! Did I ever feel lonely? Absolutely. Have I ever for one single minute regretted it? No, Son, I have not. The gospel is true. I would never deny it. If I hadn’t followed my heart and joined the Church, it would have driven me insane. I knew the Book of Mormon was true the first time I read it. Sometimes, Son, you have to do the right thing, even though everyone around you is telling you otherwise.

“One night when I was feeling very discouraged, I was kneeling to say my prayers and felt myself embraced by strong, warm arms. I suddenly felt safe and reassured. There was no one there—it was our Father in Heaven letting me know that He was there and that He loved me.

“When you have children of your own someday,

you be sure to tell them how much their grandmother loves them. You tell them that the gospel is true and that it’s worth all the sacrifices they will have to make. Oh, and tell them that I’ll always be right there beside them, watching out for them—just as I will be for you.”

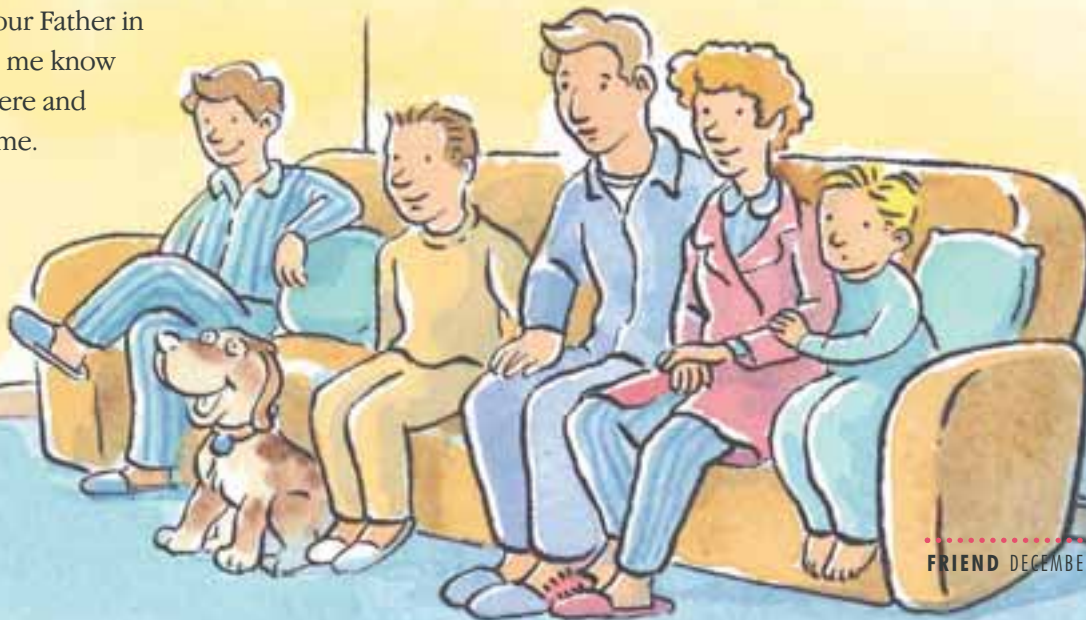
I shared the letter with my brothers so that they could know Grandma, too. We’ve all grown up now, served missions, and been married in the temple. Every now and then, I pull out my father’s letter and read it again. Ever since my father gave it to me that Christmas long ago, it has been a source of strength for me. And I know, without a doubt, that my grandmother kept her promise to my father and has always been “right there beside” us. ●

Nycole S. Larsen is a member of the Oak Hills Fourth Ward, Provo Utah Oak Hills Stake.



“Now is the time for each of us to work toward . . . becoming what our Heavenly Father desires us to become. . . . Exaltation is an eternal family experience.”

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Challenge to Become,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 33.



Live Worthy to Return Home

Thou shalt live together in love. . . . And it shall come to pass that those that die in me shall not taste of death (D&C 42:45–46).

I was born and raised on my father’s cattle ranch in Roy, Utah, with very few neighbors nearby. I was the youngest of six children, and as a boy I was shy around people who were not in my family. On my first day at school, my brother Lowell, just two years older than I, took me to my first-grade classroom. Surrounded by children I did not know, I felt lonesome and the day seemed long until I could return home with my brother.

Soon I made friends at school and looked forward to seeing them each day. One friend, Larry Dawson, lived about a mile from my home. Larry invited me to his house for a birthday party. I had never been to a birthday party before. It was so much fun! I still remember some of the special toys Larry received—especially his new toy fire engine.

Larry and I rode the bus to school because we lived too far from school to walk. Larry got off the bus at the bus stop on the main highway just before I got off. He then had to cross the highway and walk half a mile (about 1 km) to his home. At that time cars did not stop when a school bus was loading or unloading students.

One day as we were returning home from school, a car speeding by the bus hit and killed my friend. I felt very



From an interview with Elder Wayne S. Peterson of the Seventy, currently serving in the Europe West Area Presidency; by Hilary Hendricks

sad. I missed being with Larry at school and on the bus. My mother and father comforted me by explaining that even though I wouldn’t see Larry anymore in this life, his spirit continued to live in the spirit world. Larry was so kind and good that I knew he would be worthy to live with our Heavenly Father. As I grew, I learned more about our Father’s plan for His children.

My brother Darrell, who was five years older than I, was a special friend to me. Darrell let me ride on his bike with him from our home on the ranch to the barn where he often worked. I rode the bike back to the house, then returned to the barn at the end of the day to accompany him on his ride home. I loved Darrell very much.

One day Darrell was coming home in our family car from driving my sister to her piano lesson. He stopped at the railroad tracks to wait while a long freight train passed. He did not see another train coming from the other direction. When Darrell started over the tracks, the train struck the car and my brother was killed. I was sweeping our driveway when my father pulled up in his pickup truck shortly after it happened, and I still remember the sadness we felt when he told my mother and our family of the accident.

President David O. McKay and Elder Spencer W. Kimball came to speak at my brother’s funeral. President McKay, then President of the Church, was related to my

1



2



1. With his parents and siblings at age 7 (center front)

2. At age 11 at a livestock show

3. With his wife, Joan

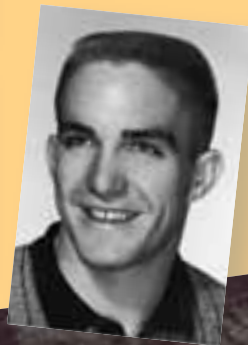
4. As a freshman at Utah State University

5. Elder and Sister Peterson with their children and grandchildren

3



4



5

father. Elder Kimball, who later became President of the Church, had recently visited our stake conference and had stayed in our home because my father was the stake president. President McKay and Elder Kimball taught us about our Heavenly Father's plan and said that we would be together again as a family. They said that we should not be afraid of death, and they taught us about the resurrection. They promised that my brother would live again and that our family could live together for the one thousand years of peace called the Millennium.

I was grateful to know that my friend Larry and my brother Darrell had kept the commandments so they could enjoy every blessing from our Heavenly Father. We do not know when we are going to die, so we should live every day so we will not be sorry if our time comes to return home. We need to speak in kind ways to our brothers and sisters and friends. We should not argue or treat others unkindly. We should follow the example of Jesus Christ. One of my favorite Primary songs reminds me of the things we need to do.

I'm trying to be like Jesus; I'm following in his ways.

I'm trying to love as he did, in all that I do and say.

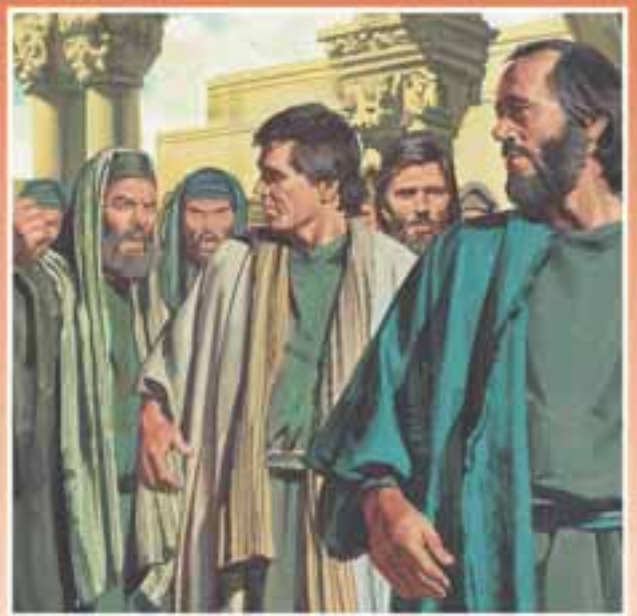
*At times I am tempted to make a wrong choice,
But I try to listen as the still small voice whispers,*

*"Love one another as Jesus loves you.
Try to show kindness in all that you do.
Be gentle and loving in deed and in thought,
For these are the things Jesus taught."
(Children's Songbook, 78-79)*

When we keep all of our Heavenly Father's commandments, we will be happy now and in the life to come. It also takes away our fear of dying because we know that if we are good, we will one day go home to live with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ forever. ●

PAUL FINISHES HIS MISSION

Chapter 63



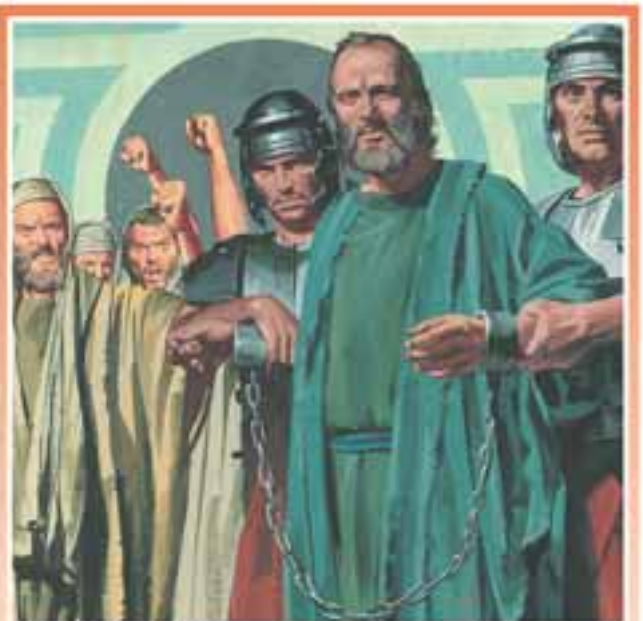
When Paul went to the temple in Jerusalem, he took with him some people who were not Jews. This made the Jewish people angry. They took him out of the temple and beat him.

Acts 21:26-32



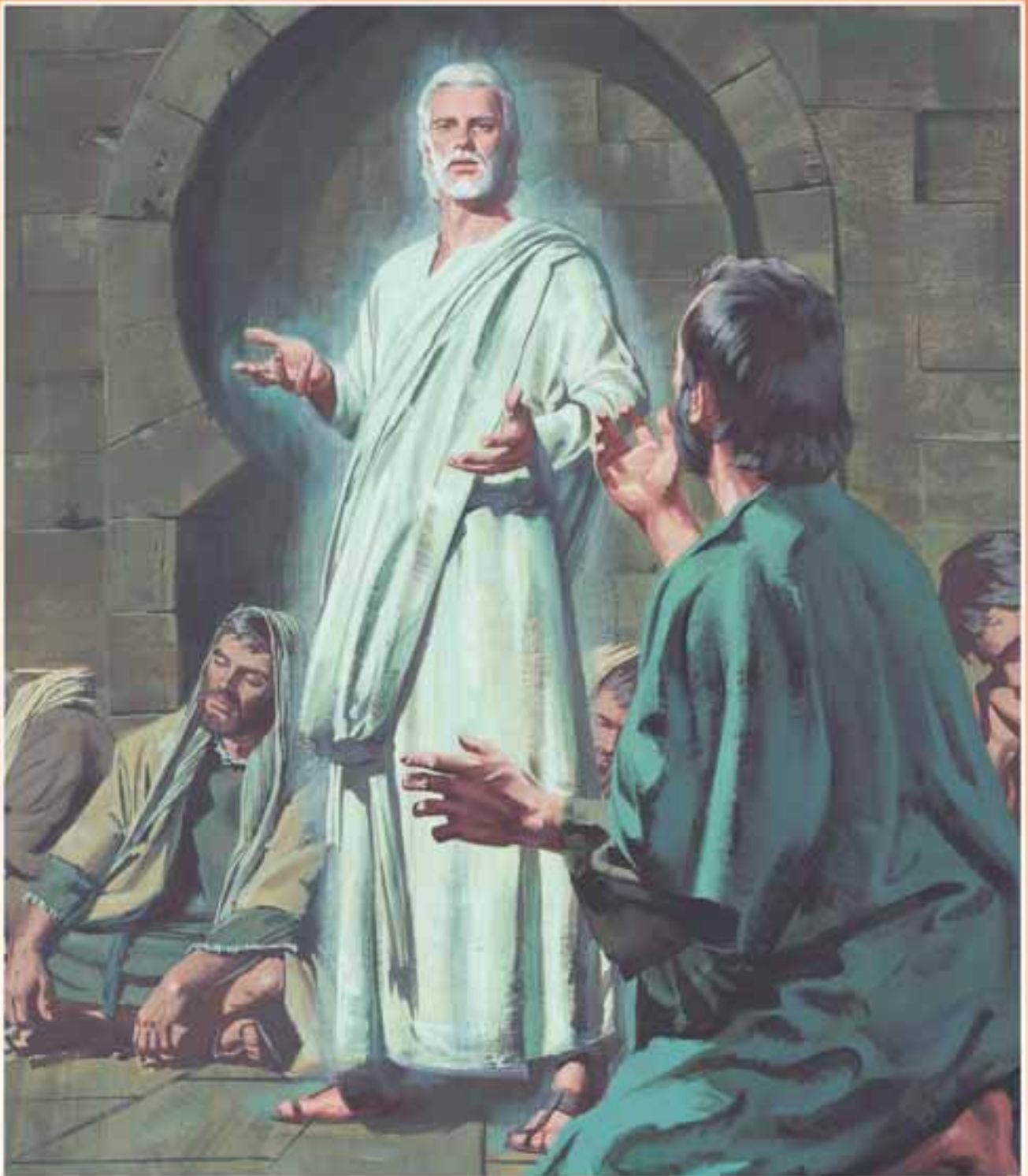
Roman soldiers took Paul away from the Jewish people but let him talk to them first. He told them that he was a missionary teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. He had seen a light from heaven and had heard the Savior's voice.

Acts 21:31-40; 22:1-21



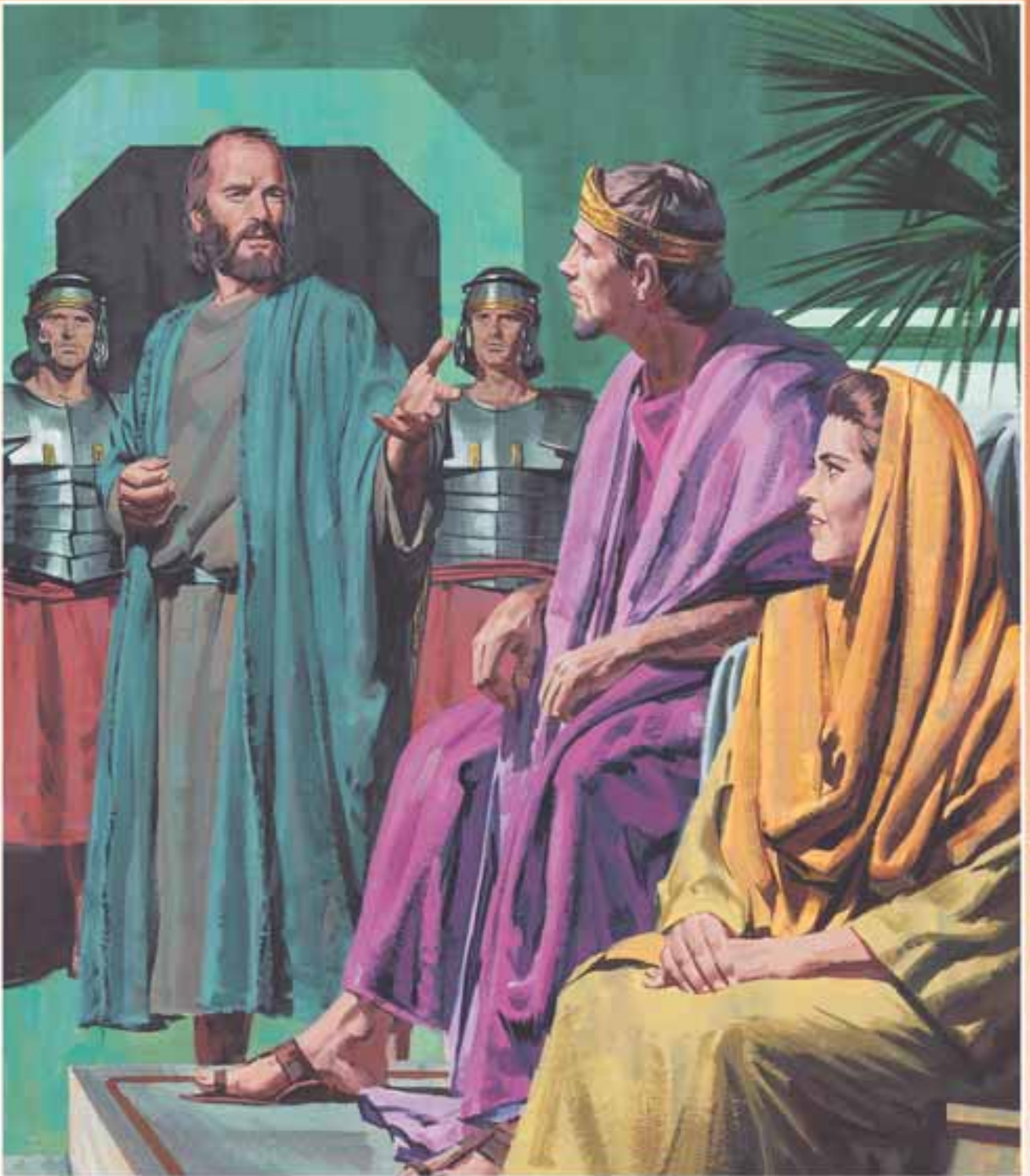
The Jewish people did not believe him. They shouted at him and wanted to kill him. The soldiers put Paul in prison for the night.

Acts 22:22-30; 23:1-10



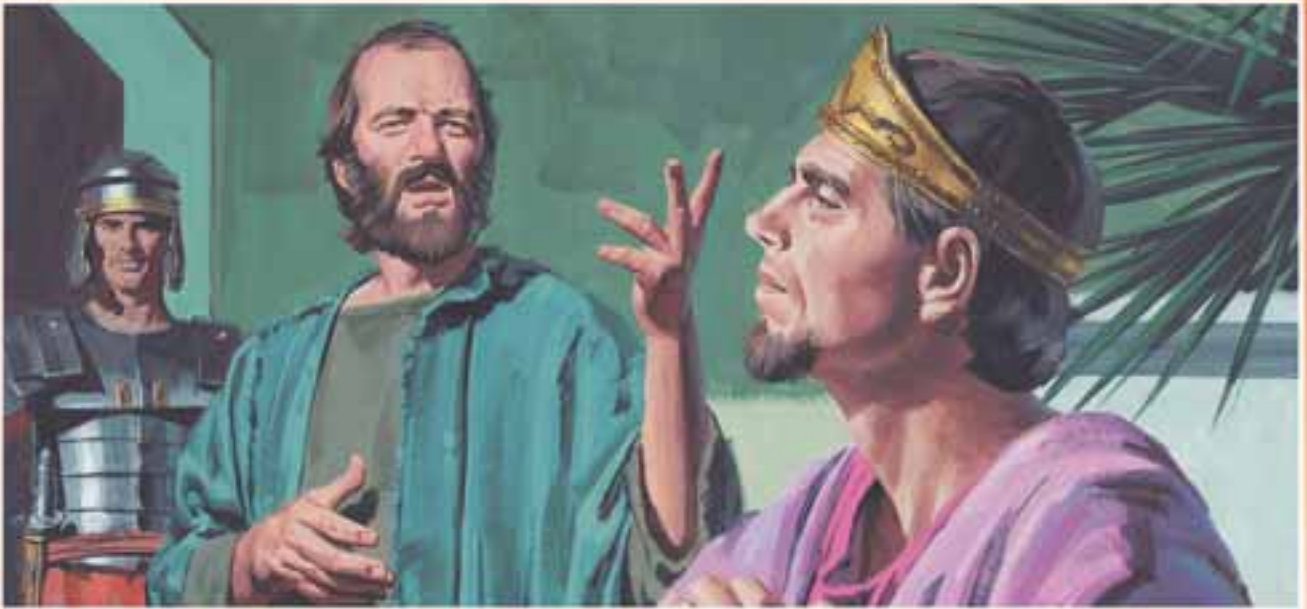
That night, the Savior visited Paul and told him not to be afraid. Jesus said that Paul would go to Rome and teach the gospel there.

Acts 23:11



Some of the Jewish people wanted the Romans to kill Paul, so the Romans sent him to their king, Agrippa. When King Agrippa asked what Paul had done, Paul said that he had been a Pharisee and had hated the people who believed in Jesus. He had even put them into prison. Then he had seen a light from heaven and heard the Savior's voice. Now he believed in Jesus.

Acts 23:12-35; 25:13-23; 26:1-15



Paul told King Agrippa that the gospel was true, that Jesus was resurrected, and that He had told Paul to teach His gospel. Because he obeyed Jesus Christ and taught about Him, many of the people hated Paul.

Acts 26:16-26



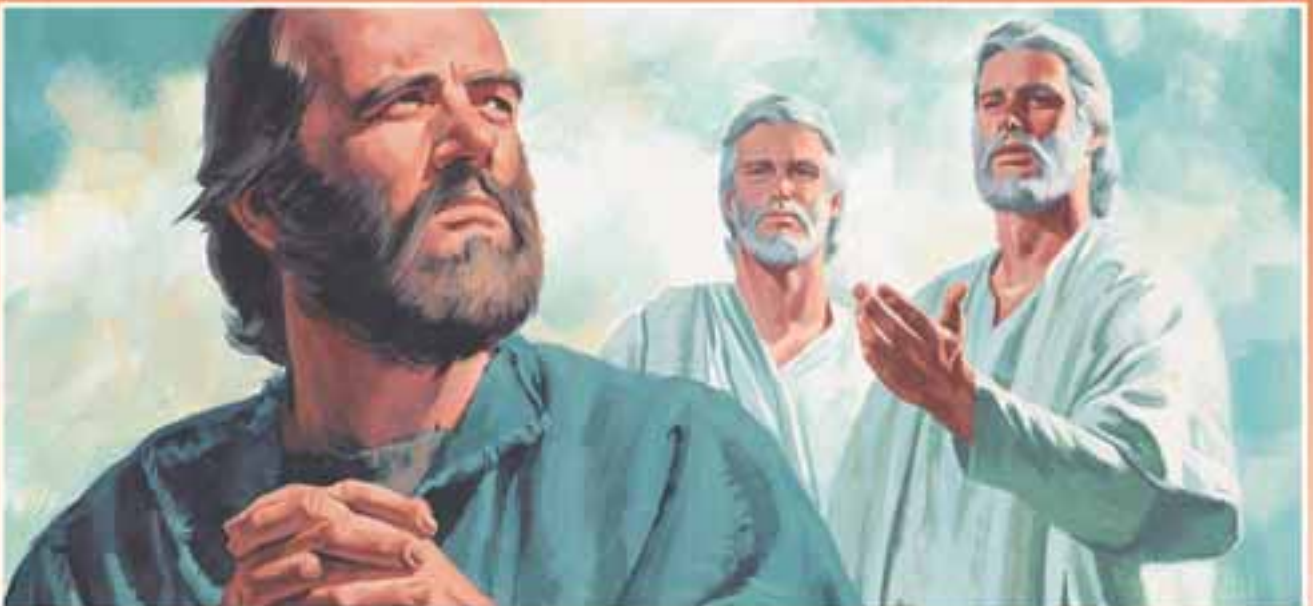
King Agrippa said that he almost believed in Jesus because of what Paul said. The king did not think Paul should be killed. He sent Paul to Rome.

Acts 26:27-32; 27:1-2



Paul was in prison in Rome for two years. Many people came to see him and to be taught the gospel. He wrote letters to the Saints in other lands. Many of these letters are called epistles in the New Testament.

Acts 28:16-31



Paul knew that he would be killed, but he was not afraid. He had obeyed God's commandments; he had taught the gospel; he had finished his mission. He knew that Heavenly Father loved him and that after he died, he would live with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 4:6-8

Friends in the News



Jonah Lee Robison, 5, Budapest, Hungary, likes to make his younger brother and sister laugh. He enjoys swimming and tennis. His favorite Primary song is "Follow the Prophet."



Kendyl Boyd, 10, Monticello, Utah, likes to play with her friends, draw, and color. Her favorite colors are blue, yellow, and purple, and her favorite Primary song is "We'll Bring the World His Truth."



Josh Scow, 7, Phoenix, Arizona, enjoys playing soccer and camping with his family. He is looking forward to being baptized and someday going on a mission, just like his cousin, Jordan.



Heidi Hibbard, 8, Des Moines, Iowa, has enjoyed Friends in the News since she was two years old. She likes to ride her bike, read, sing, and color. She often writes notes to members of her family.



Eric Grossarth, 5, Las Vegas, Nevada, has a way of making others smile with his wonderful imagination. He sings Primary songs with enthusiasm and brings love and joy to his family.



Sydney Blaser, 9, Kennewick, Washington, loves animals—she enjoys taking care of the family pets and watching the wildlife in her yard. She also likes to read, ski, and camp with her family.



Jordan Shoae, 7, Aliso Viejo, California, is excited about being baptized by his father, who recently joined the Church, and he looks forward to going to the temple to be sealed to his parents.



Bonnie-Paige Byers, 6, Melbourne, Australia, enjoys dancing and singing. She likes attending school and Primary, and plans to be married in the temple someday.



Andrew Robinson, 10, Richland, Washington, has been reading the Book of Mormon on his own. He enjoys soccer, baseball, swimming, cooking, and going to Scouts. He is considerate of others.



Brooke Alessandria Waite, 3, Bryan, Texas, shares the gospel by giving pass-along cards to her neighbors. She loves the outdoors and enjoys swimming, cooking, and playing with her friends and sister, Brielle.



McKay Mitchell Wilson, 5, Belmont, California, likes to read about the children in Friends in the News and find where they live on his map. He enjoys attending Primary and reading Book of Mormon stories.



Kristina Marie Nugent, 6, Marshalltown, Iowa, likes to write in her journal every day. She also enjoys dancing and swimming, and often volunteers to give the prayer in Primary.



Daniel LaMar Anderson, 8, Castaic, California, was excited to be baptized on his grandma's birthday. He loves his family and pets, and he likes dinosaurs, sports, and singing.



Alayna Graham, 11, Orem, Utah, recently completed learning the Articles of Faith. She enjoys singing and drawing, and she loves to help the little children in the neighborhood.



Trent South, 8, Surprise, Arizona, likes to play soccer and football, and he also enjoys art. He looks forward to Primary every week.



A happy girl, **Khrysten Ettinger, 6**, Newman Lake, Washington, helps make her home "a little bit of heaven." She likes Primary and enjoys rollerblading, singing, dancing, and riding her horse, Prince.



Taylor James Miskin, 4, Salt Lake City, Utah, loves to pray and bear his testimony. He enjoys pretending to be different superheroes. He is a great help to his family.



Emmalee Hurst, 8, Aurora, Colorado, is a wonderful pianist. She likes to sing Primary songs and attend church. She is a good missionary to her friends, and helps remind her family to keep the commandments.



Aaron Corral, 6, Odessa, Texas, is a creative boy who likes to make pictures and cards for people. He enjoys serving others, and he is good at keeping his room clean. He also likes to dance and play the piano.



Carriel Smith, 7, Provo, Utah, enjoys school and learning. She also plays the piano. She tries hard to keep the commandments and follow the prophet, and is looking forward to being baptized.



Steven Anderson, 11, Woodland, California, is already working toward his Eagle Scout Award. He plays the clarinet, swims, and plays soccer and basketball. He is loyal to his family and friends.



Renee Dionne, 6, Gainesville, Virginia, has three sisters. She enjoys reading Book of Mormon stories and books about animals. She also likes to swim, ride her bike, and go on hikes with Dad.



A generous boy, **Isaiha Creek, 6**, Independence, Missouri, loves to share. He likes to draw and build with plastic blocks. He is developing a testimony of the gospel and looks forward to being a missionary.



Jensen Argyle, 7, Carrollton, Texas, likes to read, swim, and sing. She helps take care of her younger sisters and brother and always has a smile on her face.



A Bed for Nils

BY DIANE L. MANGUM
(Based on a true story)

Every one that hath forsaken houses, . . . or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life (Matthew 19:29).

Nils heard creaking, cracking, and then a great big crash! Everyone in the house jumped up to find the two missionaries buried in a pile of blankets and boards that had been Nils's bed. His bed had been too small for these two grown men who were in Sweden preaching the gospel.

They had come just after supper and had stayed so late that Mama had insisted they stay the night. She had let them sleep in Nils's bed while he slept on the floor.

Dismayed, Nils looked at his broken bed. Mama whispered, "Don't worry. Papa will make you a new one."

But Papa didn't seem to have time. He worked all day and talked to the missionaries in the evenings. He said that the Book of Mormon explained everything he hadn't understood in the Bible.

Soon Mama, Papa, Peter, Botilla, and Bengt were baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Nils and his baby sister would have to wait for their eighth birthdays. Even though they were happy, everyone else in town seemed angry—especially Grandmother and Grandfather. Nils's family decided to go to America where they could be with other Church members.

"You will like America, Nils," Mama said, "and when we get there, we will get you a new bed."

The ship to America was crowded with other Swedish and Danish members of the Church. Nils slept on top of two giant water barrels. He was afraid that when the ship rocked back and forth he would roll off! He could hardly wait to see land and sleep in a bed that held still.

But Nils's first bed in America *didn't* hold still. After leaving the ship, they got on a train. Nils fell asleep listening to the clacking of the wheels. When they got

off the train at a place called Council Bluffs, they loaded their belongings in wagons pulled by oxen. Nils had thought the ship was crowded, but this was worse!

"No room for mattresses or pillows," shouted the man in charge. "Pack only your clothes and blankets!"

"No pillow, no mattress, and no bed," Nils sighed.

His family shared a wagon with a widow and a newly married couple. Every night Nils and his family slept on the ground, and day after dusty day they walked until they made it to Salt Lake City. Once there, they shared a house with another family.

The family's first home of their own in the valley was a little room dug from a hillside, with a dirt floor. They slept in blankets that could be rolled up during the day. They longed for a more permanent home.

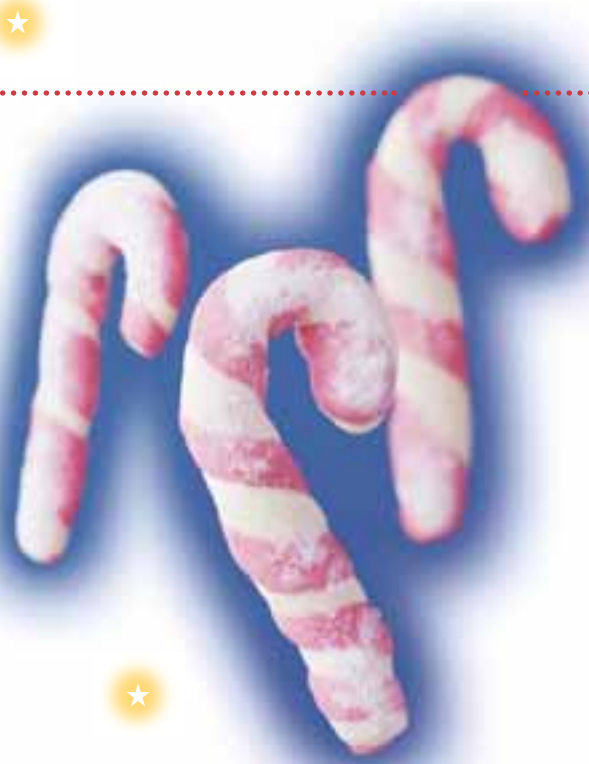
Finally Papa found them some land for a place of their own. Once again, they packed everything into their wagon and rode to Huntsville, Utah. The valley there was green and full of tall grass, and the hillsides were covered with trees. Their second home was a rough cabin with a leaky willow-branch roof and corn-husk mattresses on the floor.

Finally, on Christmas Day, they moved into a real log home with a wood floor, pine shingles on the roof, and real beds! Four and a half years after leaving Sweden, Nils snuggled under his quilt in his own new bed. It creaked a little when he moved, reminding him of the night his old bed broke. How much had changed! Nils smiled. Maybe someday he would grow up to be a missionary in Sweden, too. If he did, he would watch out for little beds! ●

Years later, Nils P. Lofgren did return to Sweden as a missionary.

Diane L. Mangum is a member of the East Millcreek Fourth Ward, Salt Lake East Millcreek Stake.





Almond Toffee Bars ▼

- 12 graham crackers (2 1/2" x 5" / 6 cm x 13 cm)
- 1 1/2 cups butter (no substitutes)
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 cups sliced almonds

Optional: 1/2 cup chocolate chips, melted

1. Line a cookie sheet with aluminum foil and arrange the graham crackers on the foil.
2. Place the butter and brown sugar in a saucepan over medium

heat. Stirring constantly, bring to a boil. Pour the mixture evenly over the graham crackers. Sprinkle the almonds on top.

3. Bake at 400° F for 3–6 minutes or until bubbly. Cool in the pan for 4 minutes. Cut each cracker into four pieces, then cool completely on wire racks.

4. Optional: Lightly drizzle the melted chocolate over the cooled almond toffee bars.



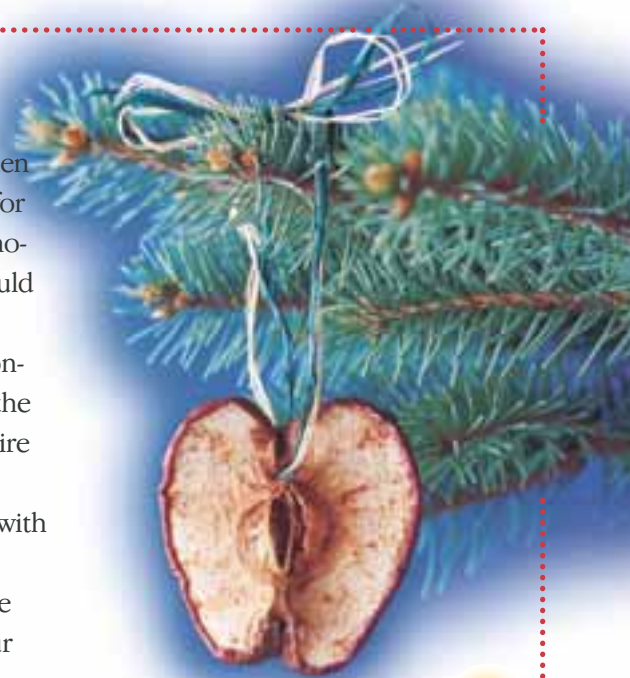
Candy Cane Cookies ▲

- 1/2 cup crushed peppermint candy
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 cups margarine, softened
- 2 cups sifted powdered sugar
- 2 eggs
- 3 teaspoons almond extract
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 1 teaspoon red food coloring
- 5 cups sifted flour
- 1 teaspoon salt

1. In a small bowl, mix the crushed peppermint candy and sugar. Set aside.

2. In two medium bowls, mix the following ingredients (1 batch per bowl): 1 cup margarine, 1 cup sifted powdered sugar, 1 egg, 1 1/2 teaspoons almond extract, and 1 teaspoon vanilla. Add red food coloring to one batch and leave the other white.

3. Sift 2 1/2 cups flour and 1/2 teaspoon salt into each bowl and mix well. (The red dough may require extra flour to compensate for the food coloring.) Chill the dough for one hour.



4. Shape both the white and red dough into 1/2" (1 cm) balls. Roll the balls into strips 4" (10 cm) long. Twist a red strip with a white strip to form a rope, then shape like a candy cane and place it on an ungreased cookie sheet. Repeat with the remaining strips.

5. Bake at 375° F for 8–9 minutes or until the edges are slightly browned. Remove the cookies from the cookie sheet while still warm and place on wire racks. Sprinkle cookies with peppermint candy mixture. (For easier cleanup, place waxed paper underneath the wire racks beforehand.)

Christmas Gift Box ▼

To make a gift box, you will need: a clean round container with a lid (a peanut can, trimmed-down oatmeal box, or a glass jar works well); scissors; magazines, photos (with permission to use), stickers, stamps, and/or construction paper; white glue; paintbrush; tissue paper; and wrapped treats.

1. Think about the person to

whom you'll be giving the gift. Then cut out decorations appropriate for their gift box from magazines, photos, stickers, stamps, etc. You could also draw your own decorations.

2. Remove the lid from the container. Glue the decorations on the can and the lid, covering the entire surface. Let dry.

3. Paint the container and lid with white glue and let dry.

4. Fill the container with tissue paper and wrapped treats of your choice before delivering.

Apple Ornaments ►

BY SHARON A. SOFFE

These apple slices make pretty Christmas tree decorations and add a spicy scent to the room.

To make apple ornaments, you will need: 1/2 cup bottled lemon juice, 1/2 cup water, 1 tablespoon salt, 5 Red Delicious apples, a plastic straw, newspaper, wire racks, ground cinnamon, and string or very narrow ribbon.

1. Stir the lemon juice, water, and salt in a bowl until the salt dissolves.

2. Slice the unpeeled apples to a thickness of 1/4" (0.6 cm) or less.

You can slice vertically to get the shape of an apple or horizontally to get a circle shape with a star design in the center.

3. Using a plastic straw, cut a hole 1/4" (0.6 cm) below the top of each apple slice.

4. Cover the work area with newspaper. Then put the wire racks on the newspaper.

5. Soak the apple slices, a few at a time, in lemon juice for 4–5 minutes and stir well. Gently shake off the lemon mixture and place the slices on the wire racks to drain. Sprinkle both sides with cinnamon.

6. Carefully place the wire racks with the apples in the oven at 200° F for 2–3 hours, turning the slices occasionally, until they are dry and leathery.

7. Thread string or narrow ribbon through the hole in each apple slice. Tie the ends together to form a loop for hanging. Hang the slices on the tree and enjoy the look and smell of a country Christmas!





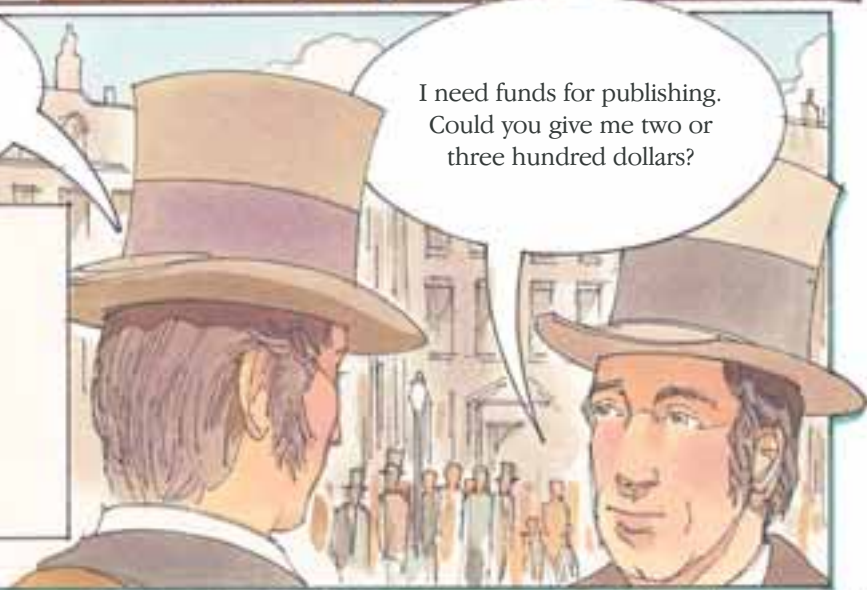
When John Taylor was called to serve a mission in England with Wilford Woodruff, he was very poor. He arrived in New York with only one cent left.



I have plenty of money.

I need funds for publishing. Could you give me two or three hundred dollars?

Parley Pratt, who wanted to publish information about the Church, asked John if he had any money.



Well, Brother Parley, you are welcome to anything I have, if it will be of service to you.





I thought you said you had plenty of money!

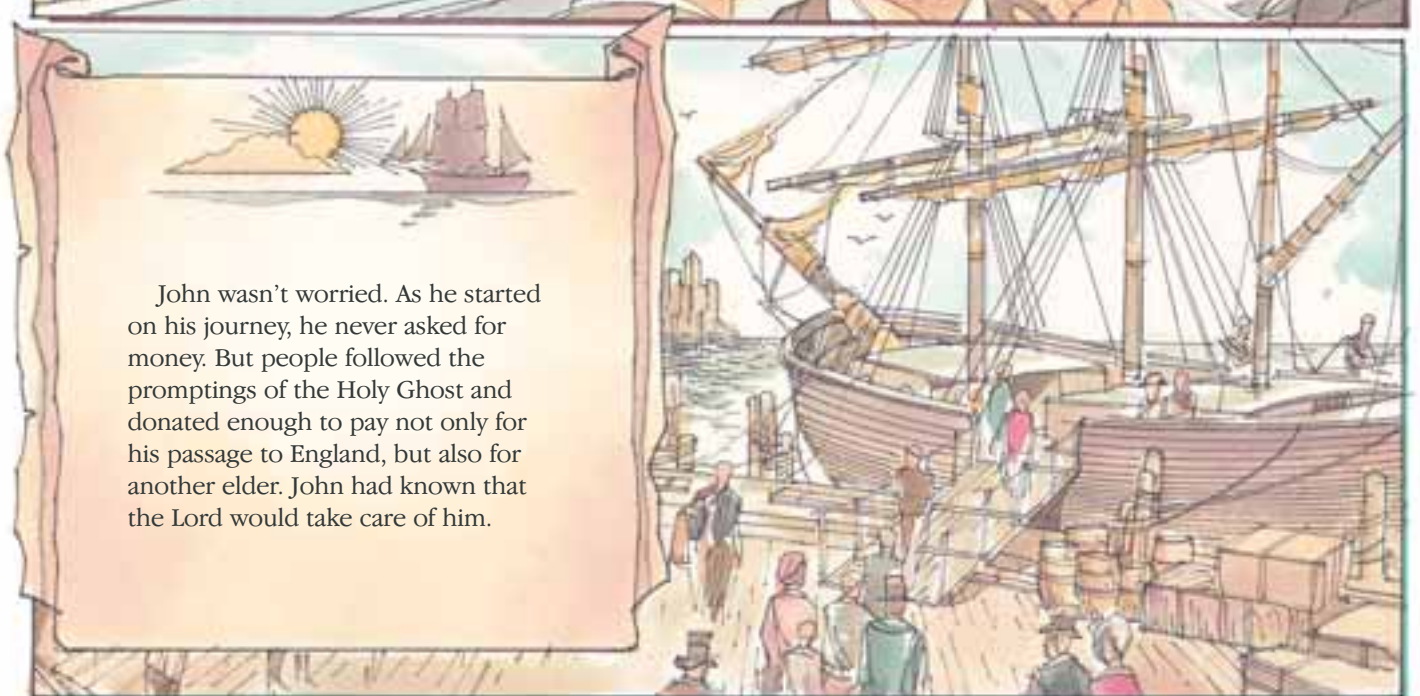
I have clothes to wear, and you give me food and a place to stay. With a penny over, I owe nothing. Is that not plenty?



Some of the brethren preparing to go to England had a meeting and decided that they should help John pay for his passage to England.

But how will you get to England without money?

No! If you have any extra money, give it to Parley to help support his family and publish his pamphlets.



John wasn't worried. As he started on his journey, he never asked for money. But people followed the promptings of the Holy Ghost and donated enough to pay not only for his passage to England, but also for another elder. John had known that the Lord would take care of him.

Our Creative Friends



Grandpa's Star

On every Thanksgiving since I was born,
We've gone to eat a feast
At the house of my grandparents
With food not bad in the least!

And on those nights when we drove home
I'd look up oh so far,
And see placed on a hilltop
Grandpa's famous Christmas star.

But this year on the hilltop,
Though we looked long and far,
On the hilltop only darkness,
Not Grandpa's Christmas star.

For God called them on a mission
To leave their family,
To give the Lord His service.
That means so much more to me.

So this year at Christmas,
Though there is no Christmas star,
The Lord gives us a special feeling
That is better by far.

And though that lighted Christmas star
Is not shining wide,
It is nothing compared to Grandpa's
Christmas star—feeling inside.

*Kristal Kay Chamberlain, age 10
Washington, Utah*

Choose the Right

God loves us.
We must follow Him because
We must do what is right.
Choose the right.

*Cate Mitki, age 6
Briggs, Texas*

From the Heart

Some people think that Christmas is about
the getting
But soon they'll be regretting
That they don't get the true Spirit.
They won't even get near it.

It's knowing you were giving,
And then you'll be living
For the next Christmas.

It's not the best gift in the shopping cart;
It's the art of knowing it came from the heart.

*Bryce Williams, age 10
Skyforest, California*

*1 Dixie Danielle Ray, age 7
Santa Clara, Utah*

*2 Riley Sew Affonso, age 6
Antelope, California*

*3 Lyndsey Ford, age 8
St. Cloud, Minnesota*

*4 William Guajardo, age 9
Houston, Texas*

*5 Adara Dillabaugh, age 6
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada*

*6 Kole Halladay, age 8
Santa Clara, Utah*

*7 Sydney Suitter, age 9
Jerome, Idaho*

*8 Marcus Crooks, age 6
West Linn, Oregon*

*9 Toria Dance, age 8
Las Vegas, Nevada*

*10 Jared Dangerfield, age 10
Hunter, Utah*

*11 Clara Christensen, age 8
Keewatin, Ontario, Canada*

*12 Carver Anglin, age 6
Longview, Washington*

*13 Deichae Nelson, age 7
Hurricane, Utah*

*14 Hikari Skabelund, age 4
Dover, Delaware*

*15 Alicia Carton, age 10
Everett, Washington*

*16 Tanner Millett, age 6
Round Rock, Texas*

*17 Lindsy Michelle Anglesey, age 11
Guatemala City, Guatemala*

*18 Taylor Volle, age 6
Las Vegas, Nevada*

*19 McKinzie Norton, age 6
Mesquite, Texas*

*20 Holden Reoch, age 5
South Jordan, Utah*



Follow the Prophet

Joseph was a prophet in the latter days.
He had a heav'nly vision on a spring day.
The Father and the Son
Revealed their glorious plan.
The Prophet Joseph was Heavenly Father's
chosen man.

*Asbley LiCausi, age 10 (and her dad)
Fernandina Beach, Georgia*

Pray Always

Pray at day,
Pray at night.
He's always there.
Pray to Him day and night.

*Matson Alan Strain, age 8
Salt Lake City, Utah*

One Starry Night

In the dark of the night,
Only a beautiful star
Made the light.
Mary, Joseph, and the newborn King
Asleep on the hay.
The shepherds at work,
Guarding their flock,
Under the bright light
Of the glistening star.

*Anastasia Alice Klein, age 9
Chandlers Ford, England*



Winter Fun

Sleds fly;
People skate by.
Snowballs sail;
People duck and wail.
Snowmen rise out of the snow,
While chimney smoke goes and blows.
Children cheer;
Christmas is near.
Oh, what a wonderful time of the year!

*Marianne Owen, age 11
Okemos, Michigan*

My Heroes

I have two heroes
Who are as simple as can be.
They guide me when I am off track;
They are a he and a she.

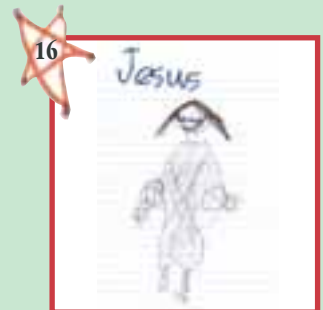
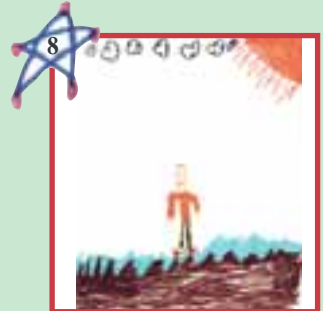
One of them is my father
Who works hard to support us.
The next is my mother
Who keeps the house so clean.

My heroes love and support me.
I try to love them more,
But they always beat me to it.

My heroes may be simple,
But they're the best I've ever seen.
Of course, I knew it since the beginning,
Since they're my mom and dad!

*Nicholas Willis, age 10
Mesa, Arizona*





What Is Christmas?

For activity and instructions, see pages 34–35.



PHOTOGRAPH BY RON READ





Trying to Be Like Jesus

He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life (John 8:12).



semifinals, Taylor tied with another boy for a spot in the finals. The tiebreaker was a “spell-off” in which each student wrote a series of words, which was then checked by a judge. On the last word of the series, the judge ruled that the other boy had spelled the word incorrectly. Taylor was declared the winner and awarded the final spot in the evening competition.

The judges congratulated the winners and were handing out certificates when I saw Taylor’s hand go up. He informed a judge that he, too, had misspelled the last word. The judge had misread his handwriting.

The judges met and announced another spell-off. Taylor didn’t win this time. The principal and Taylor’s teacher saw me crying and thought it was because Taylor had lost. I quickly explained that I could not be more pleased with my son. He had chosen to be honest regardless of the cost. I am grateful that Taylor had the courage to be like Jesus Christ and choose the right.



Taylor Drennan, age 10, is a member of the Eatonville First Ward, Gresham Washington Stake.

The Spell-off

By Laylene Drennan

While in fourth grade, my son, Taylor, was one of 12 semi-finalists in a spelling bee. In the

Something Good

By Emily Shelton

A few months before my eighth birthday, my mom and I were cleaning out my bedroom. We noticed how much stuff I had that



Emily Shelton, age 8, is a member of the Grant Butte Ward, Gresham Oregon Stake.

I didn’t really use, and my mom asked me where I would put the new things I was going to get for my birthday. After talking about it, I said, “I don’t need gifts for my birthday. Let’s find someone who doesn’t have anything and give him or her the gifts.”

On my birthday, I invited my friends over for a party. I asked that instead of bringing a gift for me, they bring one for a seven-year-old girl who was living in a homeless shelter. A fire at the shelter had burned all of her belongings.

During the party we took our gifts to the girl. Because of a death in the family, she wasn’t at the shelter, so we left the gifts on her bed. It was sad to see how little this family had. We all left feeling very grateful for what we have. When my mom asked me later how I thought the party had gone, I said, “It was fun. We did something good today.”





Cookies

By Christopher Steven Busco

One day my friend got sick. Mom and I baked him some cookies, and I made him a card. I took the cookies and card to his house and told him that I loved him. It made me feel good to do something nice for my friend.



Christopher Steven Busco, age 4, is a member of the Simi First Ward, Simi Valley California Stake.

A Great Example

By Maria Atkin

Mariah Atkin is a great example of listening to the Holy Ghost. Mariah loves the animals Heavenly Father has given us to enjoy. One day Mariah's rabbit, Licorice, had babies. For some reason, Licorice didn't know how to be a good mother. She didn't keep her babies warm or let them nurse. Mariah tried everything she could think of to help the babies, but four of them died.

Mariah was so upset that she ran to a private spot in the yard and started to cry. Then she began to pray, asking Heavenly Father to please bless the babies that were still alive. Mariah went back and found the tiny babies huddled together, trying to stay warm.

A thought came into Mariah's mind: "Take Licorice out of her cage, place a towel over her face and front paws, and hold the babies up to nurse."

Mariah felt that the thought was from the Holy Ghost, and she was careful to obey. It worked! Mariah helped the babies nurse for three weeks, twice during the day and once in the middle of the night. They are now healthy bunnies with wonderful homes.

Mariah has learned that Heavenly Father loves everything and knows what is happening in our lives. He hears our prayers and helps us make a difference for good when we listen to the Holy Ghost.



Mariah Atkin, age 10, is a member of the Chico Fourth Ward, Chico California Stake.





Sing of Christmas

Joyfully ♩ = 66-80

Words and music by
Vanja Y. Watkins

mp Sing of Christ-mas, sing of love, Sing in thanks to

God a - bove. Gra - cious - ly He sent His Son to bring good news to ev - 'ry - one.

mf Sing of Christ - mas, sing of joy, Sing to praise the Heav'n - ly Boy. May the songs of

ritard Christ - mas bring a deep - er love of Christ, our King.

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They Spoke to Us

Report from the 173rd Semiannual General Conference, October 4–5, 2003

President Gordon B. Hinckley: “To our young people, the glorious youth of this generation, I say, be true. Hold to the faith. Stand firmly for what you know to be right. . . .

“ . . . Live by your standards. Pray for the guidance and protection of the Lord. He will never leave you alone. He will comfort you. He will sustain you. He will bless and magnify you and make your reward sweet and beautiful. And you will discover that your example will attract others who will take courage from your strength.”

Decide now to live by My Gospel Standards, found on the back of your Faith in God guidebook. Read through them each week and check your progress.

President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency: “As our youngest son, Clark, was approaching his 12th birthday, he and I were leaving the Church Administration Building when President Harold B. Lee approached and greeted us. I mentioned that Clark would soon be 12, whereupon President Lee turned to him and asked, ‘What happens to you when you turn 12?’

“ . . . Clark, without hesitation, said to President Lee, ‘I will be ordained a deacon!’

“The answer was the one President Lee had sought. He then counseled our son, ‘Remember, it is a great blessing to hold the priesthood.’ ”

Find the talk “The Bridge Builder” in the November 2003 Ensign. Read about the service President Monson gave to a ward member when he was a deacon. What can you do to serve a neighbor or ward member?

President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency: “My grandparents have had a great influence on my life. Even though they have been

dead for many years, I still feel their confirming love. One grandfather, James Akerley Faust, died before I was born. I knew him only through the stories my grandmother and my parents told about him. However, I feel a strong kinship with him because I am in part what he was. Among other things, he was a cowboy, a rancher, and a postmaster in a small town in central Utah. On one occasion Grandfather took a trip in the winter to Idaho, where he met an acquaintance who had fallen on hard times. It was cold, and Grandfather’s friend had no coat. Grandfather took off his coat and gave it to him.

“This evening I encourage you . . . to begin to unlock the knowledge of who you really are by learning more about your forebears.”

Begin your family history. Ask your parents to tell a favorite story about their parents, and write it down.

President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Remember the First Vision, when young Joseph knelt in the grove. Immediately thick darkness gathered around him. He was seized by the power of the enemy, an actual being from the unseen world. He

did what every one of you can do. He called upon God, and the evil power left him.

“There is great power in prayer. As a son or a daughter of God, you can, as Joseph did, pray to God in the name of Jesus Christ for strength.”

Learn about the rest of Joseph Smith’s experience in the Sacred Grove by reading Joseph Smith—History 1:14–20.





Tegan's Question

BY REBECCA CHRISTIE
(Based on a true story)

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man (Luke 2:52).

Christmas was over. The new toys were put away. Boxes and wrapping paper were waiting at the curb for the garbage truck.

Mom was busy storing decorations for next year, and Sara was helping her. Dad was taking down the outside lights with Derek's help. Mark was in his baby swing, kicking his feet. Six-year-old Tegan stood by the nativity set, looking at baby Jesus. A question was growing in her mind, but everyone was too busy to answer it.

"Tegan, please pick up your toys," Mom said. "We'd like to have the house nice for family home evening." Tegan thought about her question as she laid her dolls carefully in their beds. She thought some more as she put away the doll clothes and the small dishes that had been Christmas gifts. At dinner she barely noticed what she was eating. She was struggling with her question.

The family home evening lesson that night was about Jesus feeding 5,000 people with just five loaves of bread and two fishes. Tegan liked hearing stories about Jesus, but her question was just too big to bear any longer. She raised her hand and waved it.

Mom smiled. "What is it, dear?"

Tegan's question came bursting out. "Which one is the real one?"

Dad looked puzzled. "What do you mean?"

"Well, there's baby Jesus we talk about at Christmas, and then there's grown-up Jesus we hear about the rest of the year. Which one is the real one?"

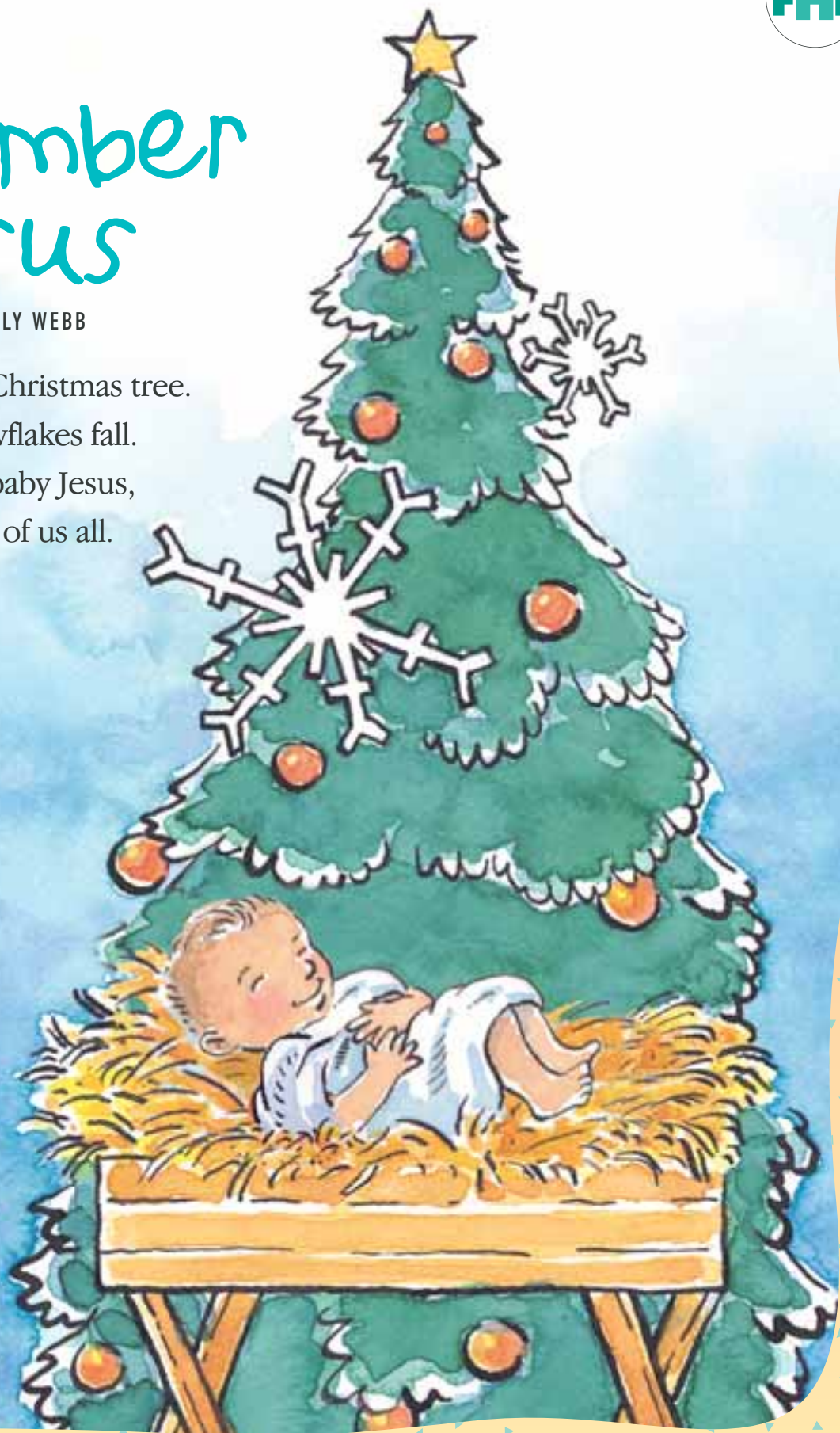
Dad looked at Mom and then at Tegan. "That's a good question," he said. "The answer is that they're the same person. Not much has been written about Jesus as a child or a teenager, but He had to grow up like everyone else. He probably learned to be a carpenter from Joseph. And we know that He read the scriptures, so he must have learned to read when he was young, just like you're doing. In time, the Christ child grew into a man and became our Savior. At Christmas we remember His birth, but He's not a baby anymore. There is only one Jesus Christ, and He is the Son of God."

Tegan smiled. Her question was answered. ●

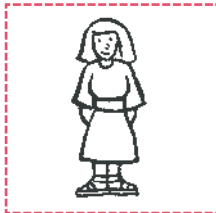
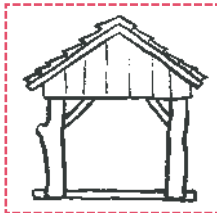
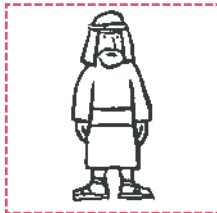
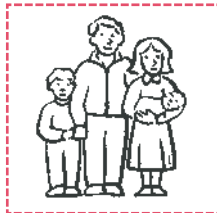
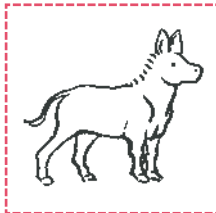
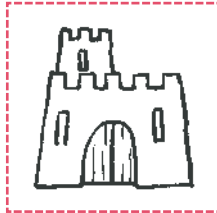
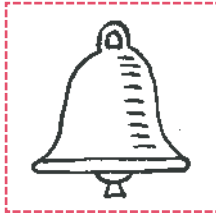
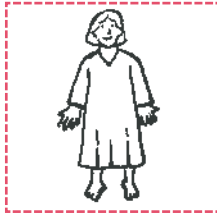
Remember Jesus

BY KIMBERLY WEBB

See the shining Christmas tree.
 See the snowflakes fall.
 Remember baby Jesus,
 The Savior of us all.



Merry Christmas! Game



BY JANET PETERSON

This game will provide hours of holiday fun for you and your family.

1. Photocopy or trace the game boards and pieces on these two pages. Make as many copies as there will be players in the game. Then glue pages 32–33 and the copies to heavy paper.

2. Color the pictures.

3. Cut out each game card and its set of picture squares.

4. Glue the Merry Christmas! picture from each set to the center square of each game card.

5. Give each player a game card, a set of pictures, and 25 buttons, dried beans, or other small objects to use as markers.

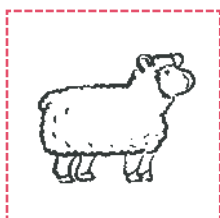
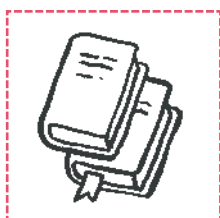
How to Play

1. A player is chosen to be the caller. He or she puts a set of pictures into a bowl.

2. Each of the other players puts a picture on each of the remaining squares of his or her game card in whatever order he or she chooses.

3. Each player puts a marker on the free Merry Christmas! square on his or her game card. The caller draws a picture from the bowl, holds it up, and calls it out. Each player puts a marker on that picture on his or her game card.

4. The caller continues drawing out one picture at a time until a player covers five pictures in a row—vertically, horizontally, or diagonally. That player calls out, “Merry Christmas!” and wins the round. A different player then takes a turn as caller, and a new round begins. Pictures can be rearranged at the beginning of each round, if desired.



Merry
Christmas!



What Is Christmas?

BY VICKI F. MATSUMORI



And are willing to . . . stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places (Mosiah 18:9).



What is Christmas? President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency, said that Christmas is children, remembering, giving, and prophecy fulfilled (see “What Is Christmas?” *Ensign*, Dec. 1998, 2–5).

Christmas is children. It is joy, excitement, and hope.

Christmas is remembering. It is a time to remember and show the love Jesus asked us to have for everyone.

Christmas is giving. Sometimes we give things. Other times we give service. President Monson said we “give to our Lord and Savior the gift of gratitude by living His teachings” (*Ensign*, Dec. 1998, 5).

Christmas is prophecy fulfilled. The angel declared, “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11).

When Jesus Christ was born, a new star appeared.

But not everyone understood what it meant. The Wise Men from the East knew what the star meant. They came to worship Jesus. We can be like the Wise Men. We can learn about Jesus Christ and follow Him.

What is Christmas? It is when we celebrate the gift our Heavenly Father gave to each of us: the birth of His Son, Jesus Christ. We can give thanks for this gift by showing through our example that we will always follow Him.

Advent Calendar

Remove pages 24–25, and mount them on light-weight cardboard. Cut out the numbered stars on page 35. Each day in December, read the scripture listed on the star for that date. Answer the question or do the activity. Then glue the star in the scene. Place the scene where it will remind you to follow Jesus’ example.

1

Luke 1:26-33

Who told Mary that she would have a baby?

10

Matthew 2:7-10

Where did Herod send the Wise Men?

16

Matthew 5:43-44
Jesus Christ taught that we should love our enemies. In your personal prayers, ask a blessing for someone who has been unkind to you.

2

Matthew 1:18-21
Why did Mary and Joseph name the baby "Jesus"?

21

Mark 10:13-14

Jesus Christ showed that children are very important to Him. Show your love for a brother, sister, or parent by reading a story to him or her.

3

Luke 2:3-6

Why did Joseph and Mary go to Bethlehem before Jesus was born?

11

Matthew 2:11

How did the Wise Men show that they knew the young child was the Savior?

4

Luke 2:7

Why did Mary lay baby Jesus in a manger?

22

Matthew 22:37-39
Jesus Christ taught us to love our neighbors. Work with your family to do something nice for a neighbor.

5

Luke 2:8-11

To whom did the angel announce the Savior's birth?

17

Matthew 6:3-4
Jesus Christ taught that we should help other people. Perform a secret act of service for a member of your family.

12

Matthew 2:13-15
Why did Joseph take Mary and Jesus to Egypt?

23

John 13:34

Jesus Christ told us that we should love one another. Show your love to your parents by helping without being asked.

6

Luke 2:12

What was used for a cradle for baby Jesus?

24

Isaiah 9:6

The celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ is a time for joy. Write in your journal the feelings you have for Him.

7

Luke 2:13-14

Who joined the angel in praising God?

13

Matthew 5:6

Jesus Christ taught that we will be blessed for seeking righteousness. Spend at least 10 minutes reading scriptures or scripture stories.

18

Matthew 7:7-8

Jesus Christ taught us that our prayers will be answered. Volunteer to say the family prayer.

19

Matthew 7:12

Jesus Christ taught us to treat others as we would like to be treated. Write a letter to someone who is far away, such as a missionary or grandparent.

8

Luke 2:15-17

Where did the shepherds go after the angels left?

14

Matthew 5:9

Jesus Christ taught that we should be peacemakers. Be a peacemaker in your family by not arguing with others.

20

Luke 17:12-19

Jesus Christ praised the leper who thanked Him. Write a note or draw a picture to thank your Primary teacher for what he or she has taught you.

9

Matthew 2:1-2

How did the Wise Men know that Jesus had been born?

15

Matthew 5:16

Jesus Christ taught that we should be good examples to others. Set an example by choosing the right.

Sharing Time Ideas

(Note: All songs are from *Children's Songbook (CS)* unless otherwise indicated; GAK = Gospel Art Kit; TNGC = Teaching, No Greater Call)

1. Use the song "The Church of Jesus Christ" (p. 77) to review principles taught in 2003. On pieces of paper, write phrases from the song. As you display the papers one by one, have children stand around the perimeter of the room and hold them. Discuss some of the principles—for example, belonging to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints means knowing that the Church was restored by Joseph Smith, who translated the Book of Mormon, and that we are led by a prophet today. Sing a song or hymn about the Restoration. Repeat the process for the other phrases on the papers. Ask the other children to stand by one of the papers that represents something they feel strongly about. Sing "The Church of Jesus Christ," and have the children turn to face each phrase as it is sung. Ask them to sing as if they were bearing their testimonies to others about these truths. Repeat the process by having the children choose different phrases. Bear your own testimony.

2. Help the children see how being a missionary now can help spread the gospel more quickly. Choose a child to be a member missionary, and ask him or her to contact as many people in Primary as possible in half a minute in the following manner. He or she approaches another child or adult, who stands. The member missionary shakes the other person's hand and says, "Hello, my name is _____, and I'm a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." How many people did the member missionary contact? Repeat the activity with this difference: as soon as someone has shaken hands, that person becomes another member missionary and begins introducing himself or herself and shaking hands with others. Now how many people were contacted? How long did it take to contact everyone in the room? Explain that by living gospel principles, we will be good examples as member missionaries. Have the children locate and read Matthew 7:24–27; Mark 12:41–44; Luke 10:25–27; and John 5:39. List on the chalkboard some of these ways of becoming good member missionaries. Divide into groups, and have each group present a role play demonstrating something they can do now to be good missionaries. Sing songs or hymns about missionary work.

3. Help the children understand how they can develop stronger testimonies. Before sharing time, make a puzzle. On one side of a large piece of paper, write the word *TESTIMONY*. Cut the paper into eight puzzle pieces. On the reverse of four pieces, write parts of a testimony, such as (1) I know that Heavenly Father lives and that His Son, Jesus Christ, is my Savior; (2) I know that Joseph Smith was the prophet who restored The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; (3) I know that the Book of Mormon is the word of God; (4) I know that we are led by a living prophet today, President Gordon B. Hinckley. On the reverse of the other four pieces, write ways that testimonies can be developed, such as (1) My testimony grows when I read the scriptures; (2) My testimony grows when I pray and listen; (3) My testimony grows when I keep the commandments; (4) My testimony grows when I share it. Hide the puzzle pieces in the Primary room.

Sing "I Want to Be a Missionary Now" (p. 168). The song suggests that the children have testimonies of their own. Discuss how a testimony is a feeling given by the Holy Ghost that gospel principles are true. This testimony does not stay the same. It gets weaker if we do not nourish it. It grows as we do things that help us gain a better understanding of gospel principles.

Have children take turns finding puzzle pieces. Post the first one, and discuss the principle or way in which children can help their testimonies grow. Sing songs that reinforce the principles, such as "He Sent His Son" (pp. 34–35), "The Church of Jesus Christ" (p. 77), "The Golden Plates" (p. 86), or "Follow the Prophet" (pp. 110–11). For

puzzle pieces about strengthening a testimony, sing songs from the songs listed in the *CS* index under "Testimony."

After all the pieces have been found, have some children turn the pieces over and put the *TESTIMONY* side together. Bear your testimony of gospel principles that have special meaning in your life.

4. To help the children review the Articles of Faith, which tell some of the beliefs that they can share with others, make a simple paper doll to represent someone interested in learning about the Church. Write numbers 1–13 on separate pieces of paper to indicate numbers of the Articles of Faith. Divide the children into 13 groups, and have each group choose a paper (smaller Primaries may need to give the groups more than one paper). Give the children crayons and square-shaped papers to decorate with information about their chosen article of faith—e.g., key words, pictures that relate to the principle expressed, the number of the article, song titles that reflect the principles of the article. Place the completed squares in a container.

Invite someone to share an experience in which they repeated an article of faith to help another person understand more about the Church, or tell the experience Sister Michaelene P. Grassli had of sharing articles of faith with a taxi driver (*Friend*, Jan. 1995, IFC).

Affix the paper doll to a chair at the front of the room so it looks like a person sitting there. Discuss giving others one special gift, the joy of the gospel. Have the children take turns choosing a square from the container. If the child can remember the chosen article of faith, have him or her say the article of faith and place the square on the doll's lap. (For younger children, have his or her entire group help by saying the article together.) If the child is unable to remember the article, have his or her group or a leader help. Sing songs listed on the square or others that help reinforce that article.

Invite the children to share their favorite articles of faith with their families.

5. Before sharing time, place a small star in a less obvious place but where everyone can see it. Sing a Christmas song from the *CS*. Ask the children to keep their eyes on you; then tell them the color of the star you placed in the room and point to it. Discuss how the star was not noticed by many until it was pointed out and they looked for it.

Have the children locate and read Matt. 2:1–2 and 3 Ne. 1:21. Discuss how the Wise Men and some of the Nephites saw a star but how others who were not looking did not see it or understand its significance. Explain that many people and things testify of Jesus Christ but that some people do not notice them because they are not looking for them. Talk about some of the people and things that testify of the Savior, such as the beauties of nature, the shepherds in the field near Bethlehem, answers to prayer, prophets of old (see Sharing Time, *Friend*, Dec. 1997, 14–15, 23), and our prophet today (see also "Little Testimonies," *Friend*, Mar. 1997, 16–18).

Give the children crayons and pieces of paper. Have the children decorate their papers with stars, making one star larger and brighter to remind them to look for things that strengthen their testimonies. Challenge them to watch for things and people who testify of the Savior. Bear your testimony of Jesus Christ, and express gratitude for this season that allows us to celebrate His birth.

6. Additional *Friend* resources: Sharing Times—Sep. 1999, 46–47, 35, and Oct. 1998, 14–15, 43; "Gunnar's Testimony," May 2000, 30–31; "Sandy's Missionary Chart," Oct. 1998, 36–37. *Ensign* resources: "Pure Testimony," Nov. 2000, 22–24; "Your Own Personal Testimony," May 2000, 41–42; "Why Every Member a Missionary," Nov. 1997, 35–37.

Being a Witness for God

BY ELDER HENRY B. EYRING
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Every member has made the covenant in the waters of baptism to be a witness for God. Every member has made a covenant to do works of kindness as the Savior would do.

The power of that covenant to love and to witness should transform [change for the better] what members do across the world.

Thousands of times every day members of the Church are watched by people curious to know something about our lives. Because we are under covenant to be a witness, we will try to tell them how the gospel has brought us happiness. What they think of what we say may depend largely on how much they sense we care for them.

I can make two promises to those who offer the gospel to others. The first is that even those who reject it will someday thank us. More than once I have asked missionaries



to visit friends far from where I lived, learned that the missionaries had been rejected, and then received a letter from my friend with words like this: “I was honored that you would offer to me something that I knew meant so much to you.” My second

promise is that as you offer the gospel to others it will go down more deeply into your own heart. It becomes the well of water springing up into eternal life for us as we offer it to others.

Each of us who has made covenants with God faces challenges unique to us. But each of us shares some common assurances [promises]. Our Heavenly Father knows us and our circumstances and even what faces us in the future. His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior, has suffered and paid for our sins and those of all the people we will ever meet. ●

From an October 1996 general conference address.

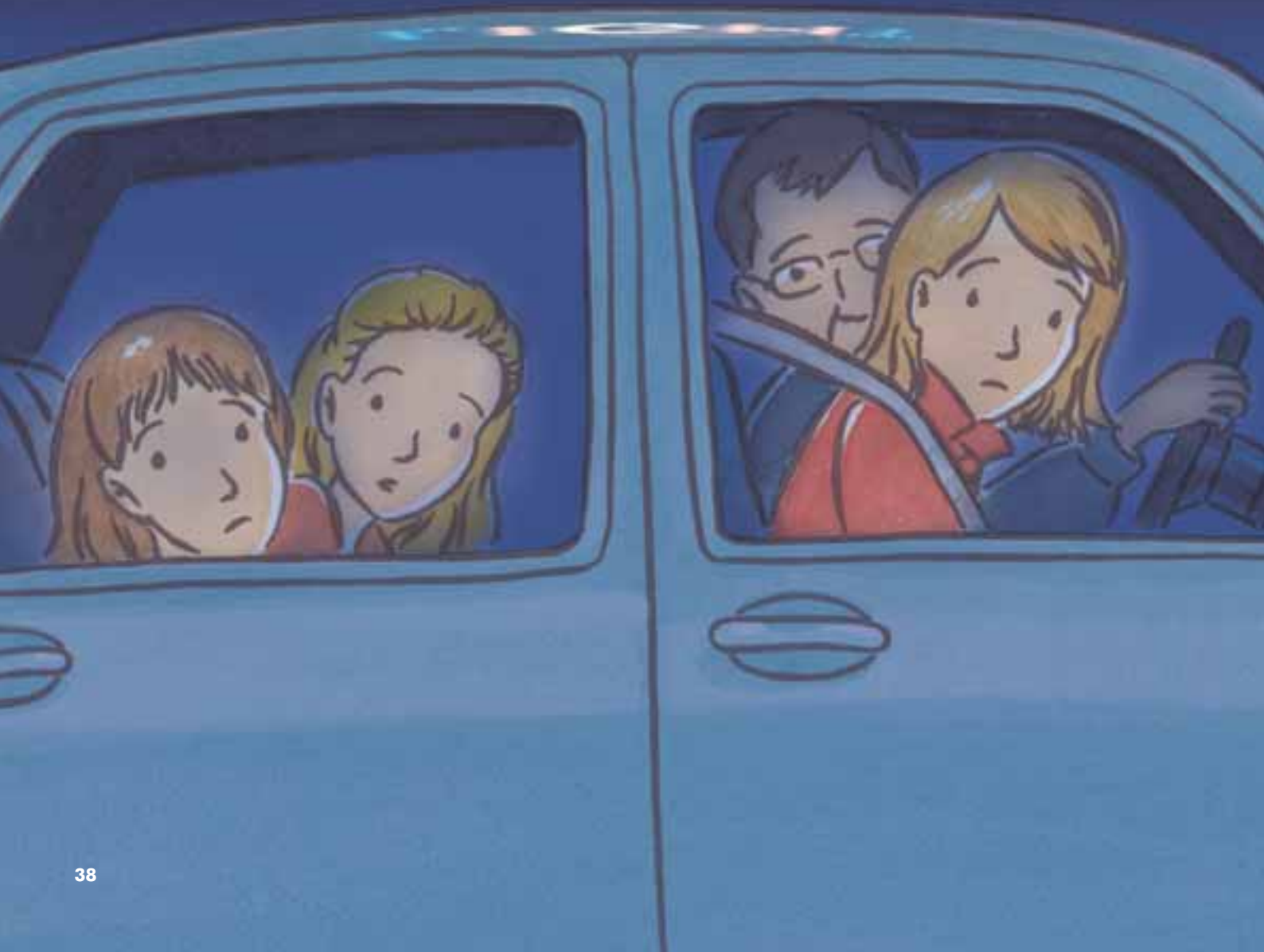


Did you know that when Elder Henry B. Eyring was growing up, his branch held Church meetings in a hotel? Later the meetings were held in his home. He and his brothers were the only members of the Church in their schools. During this time, he learned about standing as a witness for God. He teaches us about being a witness.

THE



HOUSE



BY KAREN K. BJORK
(Based on a true story)



When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God (Mosiah 2:17).

Each Christmas season Anna and Rose looked forward to the family tradition of driving to the “light house,” a farmhouse that was covered from top to bottom with Christmas lights. When it came into view, they would cry, “Drive slower!” “Turn around!” “Go back!” One drive past all the lights that blinked and winked and flashed and chased was never enough.

On the first day of December the girls were eager to see the light house again.

“Can we go to the light house tonight?” Anna asked.

“It’s a little too early,” Mom said.

“We’ll go there when it’s a bit closer to Christmas,” Dad said.

Rose and Anna decided to go to their room and practice saying “ooh!” and “aah!” They wanted to be ready when the time came.

Finally, it was time to see the lights. The girls eagerly climbed into the car with their parents. As Dad drove, Anna leaned forward and sang, “‘Jingle bells, jingle bells,’” in his right ear while Rose belted out, “‘Now bring us some figgy pudding,’” in Mom’s left ear.

“How about a little ‘Silent Night?’” Dad asked with a smile.

Looking down the street, Mom frowned and asked, “Are you sure you turned on the right road?”

“Of course,” Dad replied.

“But I can’t see any lights up ahead,” Anna said.

“It’s dark!” Rose cried.

“I wonder what could be wrong,” Mom said.

“Maybe they got tired of stringing up all those lights,” Dad said.

“I don’t think so,” Mom replied. “Just last week my friend Marsha said she saw Mr. and Mrs. Watt outside, and Mr. Watt was climbing up a ladder with some lights.”

“I wanted to say, ‘Ooh,’” Rose said disappointedly.

“And I wanted to say ‘Aah,’” Anna said.

“Maybe they forgot to turn them on or they had to go away tonight. We’ll come back tomorrow night,” Dad said.

When the family drove to the farmhouse the next

night, it was still dark.

Mom frowned. “I don’t like this. I think there might be something wrong.”

“Maybe they went away for the holidays.” Rose sighed.

“Or maybe the light bill was too expensive,” Dad suggested.

Anna whispered, “What if they died?”

Mom smiled and said, “I don’t think so, dear.”

The next day Anna and Rose were sifting through the newspaper to find the comics. Suddenly Rose exclaimed, “Look!” She pointed to a picture of the light house.

“Let me see,” Dad said. Everyone gathered around



him as he read, “‘Families will have to miss the much anticipated tradition of viewing the thousands of lights at the country home of Mr. and Mrs. Watt. Mr. Watt is recovering from surgery at a local hospital. Mrs. Watt said, ‘Christmas won’t be the same without all the folks driving by our place this year.’”

Disappointed, Rose and Anna went to their room.



But a while later they came rushing back with smiles on their faces.

“Remember when you and Dad helped build the school playground?” Anna asked Mom.

“And a bunch of other moms and dads helped?” Rose added.

With puzzled looks, Mom and Dad nodded their heads in agreement. Then, slowly, big smiles spread across their faces, too.

“Wouldn’t that be a wonderful surprise!” Mom declared. “I’ll call around and see if I can get us some help.”

On the long drive home from the hospital on Christmas Eve, Mrs. Watt sighed as she caught sight of several light displays.

“Next year will be different, dear. We’ll get the lights up for sure next Christmas,” Mr. Watt promised.

“Oh, my,” said Mrs. Watt, “there’s a lot of traffic on our road tonight. Word must not have reached everyone that there are no lights this year.”

As their house came into view, Mrs. Watt gasped. Every window, every door, and even the garden gate were strung with colored lights. Birdhouses, doghouses, pine trees, big barns, little barns, toolsheds, and even the silo were aglow with lights. Nestled in the snow, from the mailbox to the garage, paper sacks filled with candles lighted the pathway home. And a giant Christmas card hung from the front door that read:

“Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!
From your friends.” ●

“Christmas is a time of giving and receiving. It is a time when we express our love for others through thoughtful gifts or acts of kindness and service.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley, President Thomas S. Monson, President James E. Faust, “The Savior’s Gift of Love,” *Friend*, Dec. 2002, 2.

The Shepherds' Example

BY WILLIAM SCHLEGL

The shepherds were the first to visit the newborn Savior. Immediately after visiting the baby Jesus, they set a wonderful example for us to follow. To discover what the shepherds did, write the letter that comes in alphabetical order between each pair of letters on the blank. For example, if the combination of letters is AC, the letter B would be written in the space below them, since B follows A and comes before C. (For this puzzle, A follows Z.)

Check your answer in the scripture.

ZB MO CE VX GI DF MO SU GI DF XZ GI ZB CE

RT DF DF MO HJ SU SU GI DF XZ LN ZB CE DF

JL MO NP VX MO ZB AC QS NP ZB CE SU GI DF

RT ZB XZ HJ MO FH VX GI HJ BD GI VX ZB RT

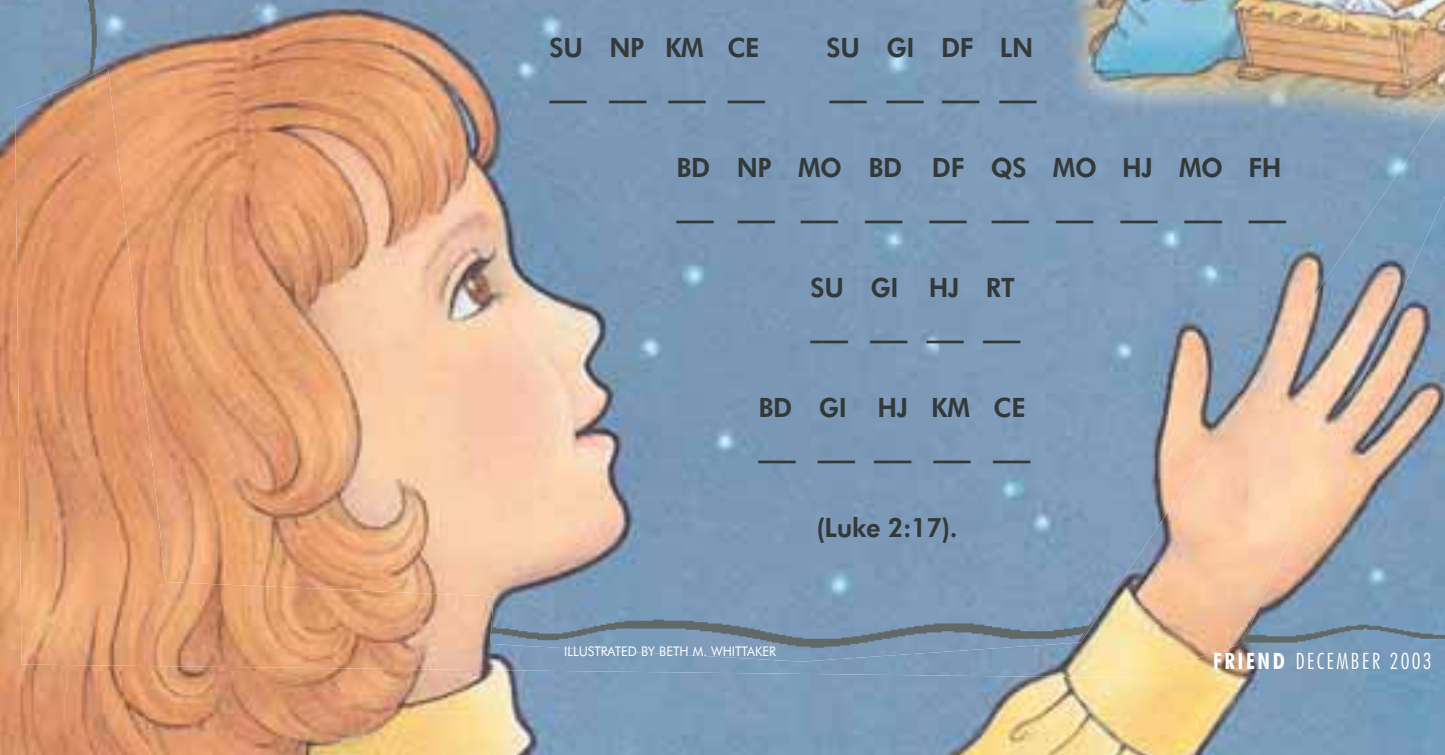
SU NP KM CE SU GI DF LN

BD NP MO BD DF QS MO HJ MO FH

SU GI HJ RT

BD GI HJ KM CE

(Luke 2:17).



Testimony of Truth

And are willing to . . . stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places (Mosiah 18:9).

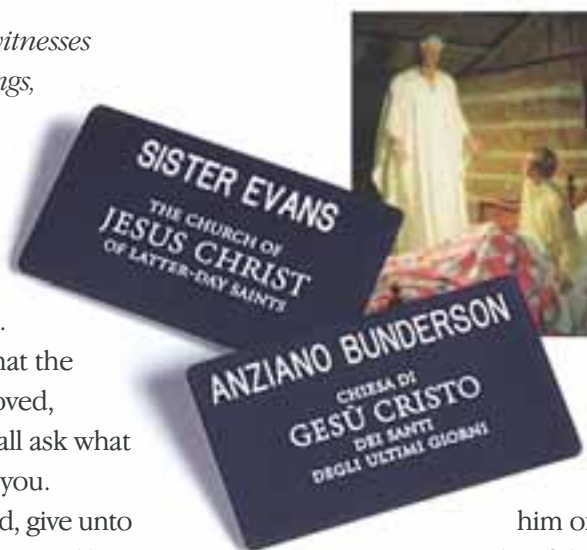
The Apostle John was also known as John the Revelator. Unlike all the other Apostles, he was not killed. We learn in latter-day scripture that the Savior asked him: “John, my beloved, what desirest thou? For if you shall ask what you will, it shall be granted unto you.

“And [John] said unto him: Lord, give unto me power over death, that I may live and bring souls unto thee.

“And the Lord said unto [John]: Verily, . . . because thou desirest this thou shalt tarry until I come in my glory [His Second Coming]” (D&C 7:1–3).

Although he was not killed, he was exiled (forced to live away from his country) on the Isle of Patmos. It was there that he wrote the last book of the Bible, Revelation. Many believe it to be the hardest book of scripture to understand. However, the Bible Dictionary explains that the “message of Revelation is the same as that of all scripture: there will be an eventual triumph on this earth of God over the devil; a permanent victory of good over evil, . . . of the kingdom of God over the kingdoms of men and of Satan” (Bible Dictionary—Revelation of John).

In Revelation, John talked much about what would happen before and during the Second Coming of Jesus



Christ. One vision he described was this: “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” (Revelation 14:6).

A fulfillment of this prophecy came when the angel Moroni appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and told

him of the Book of Mormon, which contains the “fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles and to the Jews also” (D&C 20:9). *Gentiles*, here, means anyone who is not a Jew. In other words, with the publishing of the Book of Mormon and the restoration of the Savior’s Church, the gospel was to be taught to all people everywhere. Those who teach the gospel are called witnesses of God, or missionaries.

All young men—and young women who wish to—should prepare to go on a full-time mission. Older people are asked to go on missions, too, if they can. Missionary work is very important and must be done before the Second Coming of the Savior. President David O. McKay (1873–1970) said that *all* members—that includes children—of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints should be missionaries by example and by sharing the gospel to anyone who is sincerely interested in it. All of us must be witnesses of God. ●

Picture to Color



the Friend Index 2003



January



February



March



April



May



June



July



August



September



October



November



December

KEY

- (FF) Friend to Friend
- IBC inside back cover
- IFC inside front cover
- (m) music
- (p) poster
- (pa) poster article/
activity
- (PV) Come Listen to a
Prophet's Voice
- (ST) Sharing Time
- (SW) Special Witness

A

- Aaron and Peter Zimmerman of Southeast Texas, *Christine Rappleye*, Mar, 21
- ACCEPTANCE
Gobo Fango, *Tess Hilmo*, Mar, 28
- ACTIVATION
Allysa and Teylor Stailey of Las Cruces, New Mexico, *Melvin Leavitt*, May, 13
- Adams, Kellene Ricks
Callings and Prophets, Stephen A. West (FF), May, 8
- ADVERSITY
To Do His Best, *Viann Prestwich*, Jan, 27
- All By Myself, *Gail Rosenberg*, Mar, 35
- All Over the World: A Matching Game, *Jan Pinborough*, Sep, 24
- Allen, John
Silo, The, Sep, 30
- Allysa and Teylor Stailey of Las Cruces, New Mexico, *Melvin Leavitt*, May, 13
- Answer to Prayer, Feb, 18
- APOSTLES
Apostles Do What Is Right, The (pa), Sep, 34
- Apostles Lead the Church, The, Jul, 10
- Being a Disciple of Jesus Christ (SW), *L. Tom Perry*, Sep, 7
- Follow the Light (pa), Oct, 34
- Paul Finishes His Mission, Dec, 10
- Paul Learns about Jesus, Sep, 12
- Peter Heals a Man, Jul, 13
- Wicked Men Kill Stephen, Sep, 10
- Apostles Do What Is Right, The (pa), Sep, 34
- Apostles Lead the Church, The, Jul, 10
- As I Have Loved You, *Ray Goldrup*, May, 42

ATONEMENT

- Atonement, The (SW), *Neal A. Maxwell*, Aug, 41
- Jesus Suffers in the Garden of Gethsemane, Mar, 10
- Our Lord and Savior (SW), *Joseph B. Wirtblin*, Apr, 7
- Atonement, The (SW), *Neal A. Maxwell*, Aug, 41
- ATTITUDE
Derby Day, *T. S. Hettinger*, Feb, 30

B

- Ballard, M. Russell
Our Living Prophet (SW), May, 7
- BAPTISM
Baptism (SW), *Robert D. Hales*, Jan, 7
- Change of Heart, *Demise Page*, Aug, 4
- Choosing Sides, *Kimberly Webb*, Apr, 20
- Covenants (PV), *James E. Faust*, Jan, 2
- Mary's Baptism in the Cimarron River, *Spirley Bock Testi*, Jun, 4
- Members of the Savior's Church (pa), Jan, 42
- Baptism (SW), *Robert D. Hales*, Jan, 7
- Baughman, Dorothy
Just One Egg, Apr, 40
- Be Kind, Robert C. Oaks (FF), *Jan Pinborough*, Aug, 8
- Bearing Testimony of the Prophet, May, 34
- Bed for Nils, A, *Diane L. Mangum*, Dec, 16
- Being a Disciple of Jesus Christ (SW), *L. Tom Perry*, Sep, 7
- Being a Witness for God (SW), *Henry B. Eyring*, Dec, 57
- Believing in Jesus Christ (pa), Apr, 16
- Ben's Gift, *Howard R. Driggs*, Jul, 46
- Birthday Present, The, *Jane McBride Choate*, Nov, 4
- Bjork, Karen K.
Light House, The, Dec, 38

Blessed for Following the Prophet, *Douglas J. Vermeeren*, May, 24

BOOK OF MORMON

- Enos Prays, *Joany Erickson*, Jul, 18
- Remember, Walter F. González (FF), *Christine Rappleye*, Mar, 8
- Bowden, Cynthia Rakes
Singing Time, Jul, 24
- Brierley, Kaye
Heavenly Father Answers Prayers, Robert F. Orton (FF), Oct, 8
- Broken Taillight, *Sbeila Kindred*, Aug, 38
- Brother Dan, *Patricia Reece Roper*, Jan, 4
- Budge, Vicki H.
New Best Friend, A, Nov, 38
- Butterflies and Prayer, *Jane McBride Choate*, Oct, 14
- Button, The, *Pamela M. Moody*, May, 36

C

- Caliana McMurtrey of Loveland, Colorado, *Jane McBride Choate*, Jun, 20
- Callings and Prophets, Stephen A. West (FF), *Kellene Ricks Adams*, May, 8
- Carl's Messy Room, *Kimberly Webb*, Sep, 20
- Castor, Rachelle P.
Just for Now, Apr, 4
- Change of Heart, *Demise Page*, Aug, 5
- Chien, Emily and Tiffany E. Lewis
Tam Hoi Hoon of Hong Kong, Aug, 27
- CHILDREN
Show You Know, *Coleen K. Menlove*, Jun, 16
- Word of Wisdom: A Blessing of Strength, The, Darwin B. Christenson (FF), *Jan Pinborough*, Feb, 8

Nesha Bowman of El Paso, Texas, *Melvin Leavitt*, Sep, 27
 Shawn Gándola of Rochester, New York, *Kimberly Webb*, Oct, 27
 Tam Hoi Hoon of Hong Kong, *Emily Chien and Tiffany E. Lewis*, Aug, 27
 Travis Trahan of Cameron, Louisiana, *Christine Rappleye*, Jul, 27
 Mangum, Diane L.
 Bed for Nils, A, Dec, 16
 Mary's Baptism in the Cimarron River, *Shirley Bock Testi*, Jun, 4
 Maskel, Jane Wilson
 Sidewalk Chalk, Aug, 33
 Matsumori, Vicki F.
 Do What Is Right (ST), Sep, 16
 Example of the Believers (ST), Aug, 46
 "Follow Me" (ST), Jul, 36
 Follow the Prophet (ST), Nov, 14
 Gospel Is Restored (ST), The, Feb, 46
 I Am a Child of God (ST), Mar, 18
 I Belong to the Church of Jesus Christ (ST), Jan, 32
 I Can Follow the Prophet Today (ST), May, 20
 I Know God's Plan (ST), Jun, 32
 Light of Christ, The (ST), Oct, 30
 Thou Art the Christ (ST), Apr, 34
 What Is Christmas? (ST), Dec, 24, 34
 Maxwell, Neal A.
 Atonement, The (SW), Aug, 41
 McNamara, Julie
 Debbie, My Friend, Feb, 34
 Members of the Savior's Church (pa), Jan, 42
 Menlove, Coleen K.
 Show You Know, Jun, 16
 Miracle of the Fishes, *Cindy Law*, Jul, 4
 MIRACLES
 Miracle of the Fishes, *Cindy Law*, Jul, 4
 Peter Heals a Man, Jul, 13
 Missionary to His Family, Jun, 42
 MISSIONARY WORK
 Being a Witness for God (SW), *Henry B. Eyring*, Dec, 37
 Change of Heart, *Denise Page*, Aug, 4
 Cornelius and Peter (pa), Nov, 36
 Great-grandma's Funeral, *Jane McBride Choate*, Jan, 38
 Honoring Our Parents, H. Aldridge Gillespie (FF), *Jan Pinborough*, Jun, 8
 I Have a Testimony, *Lana Krumwiede*, Feb, 4
 Mary's Baptism in the Cimarron River, *Shirley Bock Testi*, Jun, 4
 Missionary to His Family, Jun, 42
 Missions to Europe, Oct, 42
 Money for a Mission, Dec, 20
 Nesha Bowman of El Paso, Texas, *Melvin Leavitt*, Sep, 27
 Paul Finishes His Mission, Dec, 10
 Quiet Times, R. Conrad Schultz (FF), *Hilary M. Hendricks*, Nov, 8
 Testimony of Truth (pa), Dec, 42
 Tracks in the Snow (PV), *Thomas S. Monson*, Sep, 2
 Missions to Europe, Oct, 42
 Missouri Skies, *Susan B. Mitchell*, Nov, 10
 Mitchell, Susan B.
 Missouri Skies, Nov, 10
 MODESTY
 Birthday Present, The, *Jane McBride Choate*, Nov, 4
 Money for a Mission, Dec, 20
 Monson, Thomas S.
 Love One Another (PV), Jun, 2
 Path, The (PV), Mar, 2
 Tracks in the Snow (PV), Sep, 2
 Moody, Pamela M.
 Button, The, May, 36
 Mother's Day Mistake, *Jane McBride Choate*, May, 30
 Murdock, Rachel C.
 Penguins Don't Fly, Oct, 4
 Murphy, Judy
 Great Day, A, Apr, 30
 MUSIC
 Butterflies and Prayer, *Jane McBride Choate*, Oct, 14
 Family History: I Am Doing It (m), *Jeanne P. Lawler*, Jul, 15
 I'll Follow Him in Faith (m), *Janice Kapp Perry*, Jan, 24
 Prophet Lives Today, A (m), *Clive Romney*, Oct, 24
 Sing of Christmas (m), *Vanja Y. Watkins*, Dec, 28

Singing Time, *Cynthia Rakes Bowden*, Jul, 24
 My Greatest Hero, *Pennie Terry*, Jun, 48

N
 Name of the Church, The (SW), *Russell M. Nelson*, Feb, 7
 Nelson, Dawn
 Isaac's Talk, Jun, 28
 Nelson, Russell M.
 Name of the Church, The (SW), Feb, 7
 Nesha Bowman of El Paso, Texas, *Melvin Leavitt*, Sep, 27
 New Best Friend, A, *Vicki H. Budge*, Nov, 38
 NEW TESTAMENT STORIES
 Apostles Lead the Church, The, Jul, 10
 First Sacrament, The, Feb, 10
 Jesus Is Crucified, Apr, 13
 Jesus Is Risen, Jun, 10
 Jesus Suffers in the Garden of Gethsemane, Mar, 10
 Other Teachings at the Last Supper, Feb, 13
 Paul and Silas in Prison, Oct, 10
 Paul Finishes His Mission, Dec, 10
 Paul Learns about Jesus, Sep, 12
 Paul Obeys the Holy Ghost, Oct, 13
 Peter Brings Tabitha Back to Life, Aug, 12
 Peter Heals a Man, Jul, 13
 Simon and the Priesthood, Aug, 10
 Talents, The, Jan, 13
 Ten Virgins, The, Jan, 10
 Trials of Jesus, Apr, 10
 Wicked Men Kill Stephen, Sep, 10
 Nielsen, Laura F.
 Danny's Butterfly, Apr, 46
 Note, The, *M. L. Pearson*, Sep, 4

O
 Oaks, Dallin H.
 Powerful Ideas (SW), Mar, 17
 OAKS, ROBERT C.
 Be Kind (FF), *Jan Pinborough*, Aug, 8
 OBEDIENCE
 David's Lesson, *Pamela M. Hinkler*, May, 18
 Do What Is Right (ST), *Vicki F. Matsumori*, Sep, 16
 Growing Up in the Church, Stephen B. Oveson (FF), *Janet Peterson*, Apr, 8
 Our Living Prophet (SW), *M. Russell Ballard*, May, 7
 Paul Obeys the Holy Ghost, Oct, 13
 Word of Wisdom: A Blessing of Strength, The, Darwin B. Christenson (FF), *Jan Pinborough*, Feb, 8
 Olds, Sara V.
 I Want to See the Prophet, Oct, 38
 ORTON, ROBERT F.
 Heavenly Father Answers Prayers (FF), *Kaye Brierley*, Oct, 8
 Other Teachings at the Last Supper, Feb, 13
 OUR CREATIVE FRIENDS
 Jan, 40; Feb, 40; Mar, 38; Apr, 38; May, 46; Jun, 36; Jul, 34; Aug, 36; Sep, 36; Oct, 36; Nov, 22; Dec, 22
 Our Living Prophet (SW), *M. Russell Ballard*, May, 7
 Our Lord and Savior (SW), *Joseph B. Wirthlin*, Apr, 7
 OUT OF THE BEST BOOKS
 Summer Reading Fun, May, 27
 OVESON, STEPHEN B.
 Growing Up in the Church (FF), *Janet Peterson*, Apr, 8

P
 Packer, Boyd K.
 Shield of Faith, The (SW), Jul, 39
 Page, Denise
 Change of Heart, Aug, 5
 PARENTS
 Honoring Our Parents, H. Aldridge Gillespie (FF), *Jan Pinborough*, Jun, 8
 Path, The (PV), *Thomas S. Monson*, Mar, 2
 PATIENCE
 Danny's Butterfly, *Laura F. Nielsen*, Apr, 46
 Paul and Silas in Prison, Oct, 10
 Paul Finishes His Mission, Dec, 10

Paul Learns about Jesus, Sep, 12
 Paul Obeys the Holy Ghost, Oct, 13
 Pearson, M. L.
 Note, The, Sep, 4
 Pebble of Forgiveness, *Jane McBride Choate*, Feb, 42
 Penguins Don't Fly, *Rachel C. Murdock*, Oct, 4
 Perry, Janice Kapp
 I'll Follow Him in Faith (m), Jan, 24
 Perry, L. Tom
 Being a Disciple of Jesus Christ (SW), Sep, 7
 PERSISTENCE
 Little Engine That Could, The (PV), *James E. Faust*, Oct, 2
 Peter Brings Tabitha Back to Life, Aug, 12
 Peter Heals a Man, Jul, 13
 Peterson, Janet
 Growing Up in the Church, Stephen B. Oveson (FF), Apr, 8
 Peterson, Phyllis
 You Are Never Alone, Nov, 28
 PETERSON, WAYNE S.
 Live Worthily to Return Home (FF), *Hilary Hendricks*, Dec, 8
 Pinborough, Jan
 All Over the World, Sep, 24
 Be Kind, Robert C. Oaks (FF), Aug, 8
 Honoring Our Parents, H. Aldridge Gillespie (FF), Jun, 8
 If We Do What's Right, All Will Be Well, L. Whitney Clayton (FF), Jan, 8
 Word of Wisdom: A Blessing of Strength, The, Darwin B. Christenson (FF), Feb, 8
 PIONEERS
 Bed for Nils, A, *Diane L. Mangum*, Dec, 16
 To Do His Best, *Viann Prestwich*, Jan, 27
 PLAN OF SALVATION
 Heavenly Father's Plan (pa), Jun, 46
 Heavenly Father's Plan (SW), *Richard G. Scott*, Jun, 7
 I Know God's Plan (ST), *Vicki F. Matsumori*, Jun, 32
 POETRY
 All By Myself, *Gail Rosenberg*, Mar, 35
 Choose Today, *Elizabeth Giles*, Sep, 19
 Crayon Month, The, *Julia White*, Oct, 20
 Family Home Evening, *Lafond P. Hall*, Feb, 27
 Gifts, *Ruth R. Harmon*, Jun, 41
 Grandma's Gift, *Suzanne F. Holmes*, Jan, 17
 I Believe in Jesus, *Kimberly Webb*, Oct, 17
 I Can Have Faith, *Shauney Ernst*, Nov, 44
 I Like Spring, *O. J. Robertson*, Apr, 37
 In November, *Sandra Liatso*, Nov, 31
 My Greatest Hero, *Pennie Terry*, Jun, 48
 Remember Jesus, *Kimberly Webb*, Dec, 31
 Sidewalk Chalk, *Jane Wilson Maskel*, Aug, 33
 Singing Time, *Cynthia Rakes Bowden*, Jul, 24
 When Peter Went Fishing, *Bonnie Compton Hanson*, Jan, 6
 World Turned Upside-Down, A, *Bonnie Compton Hanson*, Apr, 33
 POSTER ARTICLE
 Apostles Do What Is Right, The, Sep, 34
 Believing in Jesus Christ, Apr, 16
 Cornelius and Peter, Nov, 36
 Follow the Light, Oct, 34
 Gifts from God, Mar, 36
 Heavenly Father's Plan, Jun, 46
 John the Baptist Followed Jesus Christ, Jul, 16
 Members of the Savior's Church, Jan, 42
 Prophets, May, 32
 Savior's Church, Then and Now, The, Feb, 38
 Taking the Sacrament, Aug, 34
 Testimony of Truth, Dec, 42
 Powerful Ideas (SW), *Dallin H. Oaks*, Mar, 17
 Pratt, Linda
 Look Up, Oct, 18
 PRAYER
 Answer to Prayer, Feb, 18
 Butterflies and Prayer, *Jane McBride Choate*, Oct, 14
 Button, The, *Pamela M. Moody*, May, 36
 Enos Prays, *Joany Erickson*, Jul, 18
 Follow the Light (pa), Oct, 34
 Growing Testimony (PV), A, *James E. Faust*, Apr, 2
 Heavenly Father Answers Prayers, Robert F. Orton (FF), *Kaye Brierley*, Oct, 8
 Hunter's New Hat, *Lana Krumwiede*, Jun, 38
 I Can Pray to Heavenly Father Anytime, Anywhere, *Sydney S. Reynolds*, Aug, 24
 Lifeline of Prayer, The (PV), *James E. Faust*, Jul, 2
 Miracle of the Fishes, *Cindy Law*, Jul, 4

New Best Friend, A, *Vicki H. Budge*, Nov, 38
 Note, The, *M. L. Pearson*, Sep, 4
 Summer Serenade, *Alma J. Yates*, Jul, 30
 Unexpected Answer, *Alison L. Randall*, May, 10
 Where Are They? *Sarah L. Sorensen*, Jul, 42
 You Are a Child of God (PV), *Gordon B. Hinckley*, May, 2
 You Are Never Alone, *Phyllis Peterson*, Nov, 28
 PREPARATION
 Katie's Peaches, *Diana Faught*, Aug, 18
 Preparing for the Call, Jan, 36
 Ten Virgins, The, Jan, 10
 Preparing for the Call, Jan, 36
 Prestwich, Viann
 To Do His Best, Jan, 27
 PRIESTHOOD
 Peter Brings Tabitha Back to Life, Aug, 12
 Restoration of the Priesthood, The, *Gordon B. Hinckley*, May, 39
 Simon and the Priesthood, Aug, 10
 PRIMARY
 As I Have Loved You, *Ray Goldrup*, May, 42
 Brother Dan, *Patricia Reece Roper*, Jan, 4
 Do What Is Right (ST), *Vicki F. Matsumori*, Sep, 16
 Example of the Believers (ST), *Vicki F. Matsumori*, Aug, 46
 Growing Up in the Church, Stephen B. Oveson (FF), *Janet Peterson*, Apr, 8
 I Belong to the Church of Jesus Christ (ST), *Vicki F. Matsumori*, Jan, 32
 Isaac's Talk, *Dawn Nelson*, Jun, 28
 Primary Then and Now, *Christine Rappleye*, Aug, 14
 Show You Know, *Coleen K. Menlove*, Jun, 16
 We're Going to Primary, Robert R. Steuer (FF), *Hilary M. Hendricks*, Sep, 8
 Why I Like Primary . . . , Aug, 16
 You Are a Child of God (PV), *Gordon B. Hinckley*, May, 2
 Primary General Presidency
 Faith in God Guidebooks, The (FF), Jul, 7
 Primary Then and Now, *Christine Rappleye*, Aug, 14
 Printing the Voice of the Church, Jul, 40
 Prophet Lives Today, A (m), *Clive Romney*, Oct, 24
 PROPHETS
 Bearing Testimony of the Prophet, May, 34
 Birthday Present, The, *Jane McBride Choate*, Nov, 4
 Blessed for Following the Prophet, *Douglas J. Vermeeren*, May, 24
 Callings and Prophets, Stephen A. West (FF), *Kellene Ricks Adams*, May, 8
 Conference Messages, *Hilary Hendricks*, Apr, 24
 Cornelius and Peter (pa), Nov, 36
 Excellence (PV), *Gordon B. Hinckley*, Nov, 2
 Faith of Our Prophets (SW), *David B. Haight*, Nov, 27
 Follow the Prophet (ST), *Vicki F. Matsumori*, Nov, 14
 Growing Testimony, A (PV), *James E. Faust*, Apr, 2
 Guests for General Conference, *Kimberly Webb*, Nov, 32
 I Belong to the Church of Jesus Christ (ST), *Vicki F. Matsumori*, Jan, 32
 I Can Follow the Prophet Today (ST), *Vicki F. Matsumori*, May, 20
 I Want to See the Prophet, *Sara V. Olds*, Oct, 38
 Lifeline of Prayer, The (PV), *James E. Faust*, Jul, 2
 Our Living Prophet (SW), *M. Russell Ballard*, May, 7
 Prophets (pa), May, 32
 Savior's Church, Then and Now, The (pa), Feb, 38
 We Bear Witness of Him (PV), *Gordon B. Hinckley*, Feb, 2
 With the Prophet Joseph in Carthage Jail, Sep, 38
 You Are a Child of God (PV), *Gordon B. Hinckley*, May, 2
 Prophets (pa), May, 32
 PUBLIC SPEAKING
 Isaac's Talk, *Dawn Nelson*, Jun, 28

Q
 Quiet Times, R. Conrad Schultz (FF), *Hilary M. Hendricks*, Nov, 8

R

Randall, Alison L.
Unexpected Answer, May, 10

Rappleye, Christine
Aaron and Peter Zimmerman of Southeast Texas, Mar, 21
Primary Then and Now, Aug, 14
Remember, Walter F. González (FF), Mar, 8
Travis Trahan of Cameron, Louisiana, Jul, 27
Remember, Walter F. González (FF), *Christine Rappleye*, Mar, 8
Remember Jesus, *Kimberly Webb*, Dec, 31

REPENTANCE
Broken Taillight, *Sheila Kindred*, Aug, 38
Mother's Day Mistake, *Jane McBride Choate*, May, 30
Pebble of Forgiveness, *Jane McBride Choate*, Feb, 42
Penguins Don't Fly, *Rachel C. Murdock*, Oct, 4
Teacher Cared, *A. Tamra Flake Kriser*, Sep, 14

RESPECT
Allysa and Teylor Stailey of Las Cruces, New Mexico, *Melvin Leavitt*, May, 13
We Bear Witness of Him (PV), *Gordon B. Hinckley*, Feb, 2

RESPONSIBILITY
Grandma Emily's Chicken, *Sara Lewis*, Mar, 46

RESTORATION
Gospel Is Restored, The (ST), *Vicki F. Matsumori*, Feb, 46
Restoration of the Priesthood, The, *Gordon B. Hinckley*, May, 39
Restoration of the Priesthood, The, *Gordon B. Hinckley*, May, 39

RESURRECTION
Jesus Is Risen, Jun, 10

REVERENCE
Great Day, *A. Judy Murphy*, Apr, 30
Reynolds, Sydney S.
I Can Pray to Heavenly Father Anytime, Anywhere, Aug, 24

RIGHTFOUSNESS
Path, The (PV), *Thomas S. Monson*, Mar, 2
Robertson, O. J.
I Like Spring, Apr, 37
Romney, Clive
Prophet Lives Today, A (m), Oct, 24
Roper, Patricia Reece
Brother Dan, Jan, 4
Rosenberg, Gail
All By Myself, Mar, 35

S

SABBATH DAY
Tam Hoi Hoon of Hong Kong, *Emily Chien and Tiffany E. Lewis*, Aug, 27

SACRAMENT
Baptism (SW), *Robert D. Hales*, Jan, 7
First Sacrament, The, Feb, 10
Taking the Sacrament (pa), Aug, 34

SACRIFICE
Bed for Nils, *A. Diane L. Mangum*, Dec, 16
Ben's Gift, *Howard R. Driggs*, Jul, 46
Savior's Church, Then and Now, The (pa), Feb, 38

SCHULTZ, R. CONRAD
Quiet Times (FF), *Hilary M. Hendricks*, Nov, 8
Scott, Richard G.
Heavenly Father's Plan (SW), Jun, 7

SERVICE
As I Have Loved You, *Ray Goldrup*, May, 42
Caliana McMurtrey of Loveland, Colorado, *Jane McBride Choate*, Jun, 20
Carl's Messy Room, *Kimberly Webb*, Sep, 20
Heavenly Father's Plan (pa), Jun, 46
Just One Egg, *Dorothy Baughman*, Apr, 40
Light House, The, *Karen K. Bjork*, Dec, 38
Little Engine That Could, The (PV), *James E. Faust*, Oct, 2
Summer Serenade, *Alma J. Yates*, Jul, 30

SHARING TIME
Do What Is Right, *Vicki F. Matsumori*, Sep, 16
Example of the Believers, *Vicki F. Matsumori*, Aug, 46
"Follow Me," *Vicki F. Matsumori*, Jul, 36

Follow the Prophet, *Vicki F. Matsumori*, Nov, 14
Gospel Is Restored, The, *Vicki F. Matsumori*, Feb, 46
I Am a Child of God, *Vicki F. Matsumori*, Mar, 18
I Belong to the Church of Jesus Christ, *Vicki F. Matsumori*, Jan, 32
I Can Follow the Prophet Today, *Vicki F. Matsumori*, May, 20
I Know God's Plan, *Vicki F. Matsumori*, Jun, 32
Light of Christ, The, *Vicki F. Matsumori*, Oct, 30
Thou Art the Christ, *Vicki F. Matsumori*, Apr, 34
What Is Christmas? *Vicki F. Matsumori*, Dec, 24, 34
Shawn Gándola of Rochester, New York, *Kimberly Webb*, Oct, 27
Sheep and Goats Matching Game, *Kimberly Webb*, Jun, 47
Shield of Faith, The (SW), *Boyd K. Packer*, Jul, 39
Show You Know, *Coleen K. Menlove*, Jun, 16
Sidewalk Chalk, *Jane Wilson Maskel*, Aug, 33
Silo, The, *John Allen*, Sep, 30
Simon and the Priesthood, Aug, 10
Sing of Christmas (m), *Vanja Y. Watkins*, Dec, 28
Singing Time, *Cynthia Rakes Bowden*, Jul, 24
Smith, Denise M.
"Love One Another," Feb, 16

SMITH, JOSEPH
Blessed for Following the Prophet, *Douglas J. Vermeeren*, May, 24
I Can Pray to Heavenly Father Anytime, Anywhere, *Sydney S. Reynolds*, Aug, 24
Life of Joseph Smith, The, *Kimberly Webb*, Jun, 24
With the Prophet Joseph in Carthage Jail, Sep, 38
Solving Problems, Nov, 20
Sorensen, Sarah L.
Where Are They? Jul, 42

SPECIAL WITNESS
Atonement, The, *Neal A. Maxwell*, Aug, 41
Baptism, *Robert D. Hales*, Jan, 7
Being a Disciple of Jesus Christ, *L. Tom Perry*, Sep, 7
Being a Witness for God, *Henry B. Eyring*, Dec, 37
Faith of Our Prophets, *David B. Haight*, Nov, 27
Heavenly Father's Plan, *Richard G. Scott*, Jun, 7
Look to the Savior, *Jeffrey R. Holland*, Oct, 33
Name of the Church, The, *Russell M. Nelson*, Feb, 7
Our Living Prophet, *M. Russell Ballard*, May, 7
Our Lord and Savior, *Joseph B. Wirthlin*, Apr, 7
Powerful Ideas, *Dallin H. Oaks*, Mar, 17
Shield of Faith, The, *Boyd K. Packer*, Jul, 39

STEUER, ROBERT R.
We're Going to Primary (FF), *Hilary M. Hendricks*, Sep, 8
Summer Serenade, *Alma J. Yates*, Jul, 30

T

Taking the Sacrament (pa), Aug, 34

TALENTS
Gifts from God (pa), Mar, 36
Hannah, *Margaret Wimmer*, Mar, 34
Hannah Medina of Chula Vista, California, *Arianne B. Cope*, Nov, 17
Talents, *T. S. Hettinger*, Mar, 4
Talents, The, Jan, 13
Talents, *T. S. Hettinger*, Mar, 4
Talents, The, Jan, 13
Tam Hoi Hoon of Hong Kong, *Emily Chien and Tiffany E. Lewis*, Aug, 27

TAYLOR, JOHN
See FROM THE LIFE OF PRESIDENT JOHN TAYLOR
Teacher Cared, *A. Tamra Flake Kriser*, Sep, 14

TEACHING
Teacher Cared, *A. Tamra Flake Kriser*, Sep, 14
Tegan's Question, *Rebecca Christie*, Dec, 30

TEMPLES
Ben's Gift, *Howard R. Driggs*, Jul, 46
Look Up, *Linda Pratt*, Oct, 18
Nesha Bowman of El Paso, Texas, *Melvin Leavitt*, Sep, 27
Word of Wisdom: A Blessing of Strength, The, Darwin B. Christenson (FF), *Jan Pinborough*, Feb, 8
Ten Virgins, The, Jan, 10
Terry, Pennie
My Greatest Hero, Jun, 48
Testi, Shirley Bock

Mary's Baptism in the Cimarron River, Jun, 4

TESTIMONY
Bearing Testimony of the Prophet, May, 34
Being a Disciple of Jesus Christ (SW), *L. Tom Perry*, Sep, 7
Defender of the Faith, Aug, 44
Growing Testimony, A (PV), *James E. Faust*, Apr, 2
How Do You Know It's True? *Paula Hunt*, Jan, 44
I Have a Testimony, *Lana Krumwiede*, Feb, 4
I Want to See the Prophet, *Sara V. Olds*, Oct, 38
Look to the Savior (SW), *Jeffrey R. Holland*, Oct, 33
Our Lord and Savior (SW), *Joseph B. Wirthlin*, Apr, 7
Quiet Times, R. Conrad Schultz (FF), *Hilary M. Hendricks*, Nov, 8
Shawn Gándola of Rochester, New York, *Kimberly Webb*, Oct, 27
Show You Know, *Coleen K. Menlove*, Jun, 16
Testimony of Truth (pa), Dec, 42
Thou Art the Christ (ST), *Vicki F. Matsumori*, Apr, 34
Why I Like Primary . . . , Aug, 16
Testimony of Truth (pa), Dec, 42

THEY SPOKE TO US
Jun, 35; Dec, 29

THOU ART THE CHRIST (ST), *Vicki F. Matsumori*, Apr, 34

TITHING
You Are a Child of God (PV), *Gordon B. Hinckley*, May, 2
To Do His Best, *Viann Prestwich*, Jan, 27

TOLERANCE
We Bear Witness of Him (PV), *Gordon B. Hinckley*, Feb, 2
Tracks in the Snow (PV), *Thomas S. Monson*, Sep, 2
Travis Trahan of Cameron, Louisiana, *Christine Rappleye*, Jul, 27
Treehouse, *Kathy Elliott Zeyer*, Aug, 30
Trials of Jesus, Apr, 10

TRYING TO BE LIKE JESUS
Being Honest, *Eric Steven Eckersley*, Mar, 43
Better than an Amusement Park, *Christopher, Jessica, Brianne, and Amberly Jackson*, Jul, 44
"Broken Boy," The, *Ann Smith*, Aug, 42
Caring for One Another, *Liz Linville*, Jul, 45
Choosing the Right, *Claire Westbrook*, Oct, 44
Comforting Grandma, *Susan F. Blood*, May, 17
Cookies, *Christopher Steven Busco*, Dec, 27
Cookies for Firefighters, *Jolinda Daley*, Oct, 45
Cup of Tea, *Morgan Abbott*, Aug, 42
"Drugs Are Bad for You!" *Becky Kimball*, Sep, 45
Example, *Marissa Mortimer*, Nov, 42
Example for My Little Brother, *Tristan Nault*, Jul, 45
Fasting for Mom, *Jeremy Madsen*, Jul, 45
First, Clean Up, *Welleise Shumway*, Mar, 43
Giving Emily My Candy, *Sierra Pugh*, Sep, 45
Grandpa's Hero, *Brian Belt*, Feb, 28
Great Example, *A. Maria Atkin*, Dec, 27
Helping, *Aura Laineenkare*, Mar, 42
Helping Mom, *Vimny Ken Muramatsu de Oliveira*, Jun, 44
Helping Others, *Donna Nightingale*, Jan, 30
Helping Sveta, *Annon Knaupp*, Sep, 44
I Love Football, *Cason Carrel*, Nov, 43
Joshua's Baptism, *Jarom Lybe*, Feb, 29
Keeping the Sabbath Day Holy, *Liz Peterson*, Jan, 31
Kindergarten Bully, *Hannab Cardall*, Aug, 43
Learning to Forgive, *Jennifer Thomas*, May, 16
Making a Difference, *Berneice Neeley*, Oct, 44
Megan's Best Friend, *Michelle Wasden*, May, 16
Michael's Faith, *Veronica Walker*, Apr, 44
Modest Solution, *A. Brema Priebe*, Nov, 42
My Baptism, *Sean Howard*, Apr, 44
My Brother's Keeper, *Cody Seth Haubard*, Jan, 30
"No She's Not!" *Kaycie Ballif*, Oct, 44
Only "Mormon" in Class, The, *Asbleigh Sberman*, Sep, 44
Red Wagon, *Tyler, Nicole, and Ryan Best*, Mar, 42
Sabbath Day Ballet, *Beth Harper*, Oct, 45
School Race, *Waltere Laineenkare*, May, 17
Selling Cookies, *Connie D. Haas*, Apr, 44
Sharing My Talents, *Michael Abuna*, Aug, 42
Something Good, *Emily Shelton*, Dec, 26
Special Assignment, *Chloe Jarvis*, Apr, 45
Special Day, *Chelsea Bobonis-Schiemann*, Mar, 43
Spell-off, The, *Laylene Drennan*, Dec, 26
Spelling Test, *Tristin Bowers*, Feb, 29
Temple President, *Ashton Carroll*, Feb, 29
Thoughts, *Meri Laineenkare*, Apr, 44
Touching Hearts, *Carolyn Campbell*, Jun, 45
Twenty-dollar Decision, *Colton James Simons*, Nov, 42

U

Unexpected Answer, *Alison L. Randall*, May, 10

V

Vermeeren, Douglas J.
Blessed for Following the Prophet, May, 24

W

Walking Where Jesus Walked, Feb, 24
Watermelon Blessing, *Kimberly Webb*, Sep, 40
Watkins, Vanja Y.
Sing of Christmas (m), Dec, 28
We Bear Witness of Him (PV), *Gordon B. Hinckley*, Feb, 2
Webb, Kimberly
Carl's Messy Room, Sep, 20
Choosing Sides, Apr, 20
Guests for General Conference, Nov, 32
I Believe in Jesus, Oct, 17
Life of Joseph Smith, The, Jun, 24
Remember Jesus, Dec, 31
Shawn Gándola of Rochester, New York, Oct, 27
Watermelon Blessing, Sep, 40
We're Going to Primary, Robert R. Steuer (FF), *Hilary M. Hendricks*, Sep, 8
WEST, STEPHEN A.
Callings and Prophets (FF), *Kellene Ricks Adams*, May, 8
What Is Christmas? (ST), *Vicki F. Matsumori*, Dec, 24, 34
When Peter Went Fishing, *Bonnie Compton Hanson*, Jan, 6
Where Are They? *Sarab L. Sorensen*, Jul, 42
White, Julia
Crayon Month, The, Oct, 20
Why I Like Primary . . . , Aug, 16
Wicked Men Kill Stephen, Sep, 10
Wimmer, Margaret
Hannah, Mar, 34
Wirthlin, Joseph B.
Our Lord and Savior (SW), Apr, 7
With the Prophet Joseph in Carthage Jail, Sep, 38

WORD OF WISDOM
Word of Wisdom: A Blessing of Strength, The, Darwin B. Christenson (FF), *Jan Pinborough*, Feb, 8
Word of Wisdom: A Blessing of Strength, The, Darwin B. Christenson (FF), *Jan Pinborough*, Feb, 8

WORK
Carl's Messy Room, *Kimberly Webb*, Sep, 20
Growing Up in the Church, Stephen B. Oveson (FF), *Janet Peterson*, Apr, 8
World Turned Upside-Down, A, *Bonnie Compton Hanson*, Apr, 33

WORLDWIDE CHURCH
All Over the World, *Jan Pinborough*, Sep, 24
Guests for General Conference, *Kimberly Webb*, Nov, 32
Tam Hoi Hoon of Hong Kong, *Emily Chien and Tiffany E. Lewis*, Aug, 27

Y

Yates, Alma J.
Summer Serenade, Jul, 30
You Are a Child of God (PV), *Gordon B. Hinckley*, May, 2
You Are Never Alone, *Phyllis Peterson*, Nov, 28
Young, Susan R.
Daybreak, Jul, 19

Z

Zeyer, Kathy Elliott
Treehouse, Aug, 30

Guide to the Friend



The Guide to the Friend and the Friend Index 2003 (see pages 44–48) can help you find stories or articles for preparing lessons or talks for church or for family home evening. Look for the FHE symbol on the pages mentioned in the Family Home Evening Ideas. The Primary theme for December is “His truth I will proclaim.”



Family Home Evening Ideas

1. Read the First Presidency’s message “Light of the World” (page 2). Then read “The Light House” (page 38) and discuss ways you can share His light through service this Christmas season. Plan and carry out an act of service for someone in need.

2. Have everyone tell what Christmas gift they remember best and why. Then read “Christmas Gift” (page 4). Discuss how you can make this Christmas more meaningful. Make gifts for loved ones from the Christmas Workshop (page 18).

3. Read “Money for a Mission” (page 20) and Elder Henry B. Eyring’s message “Being a Witness for God” (page 37). One of the ways the Lord helps missionaries is through members of the Church.



Do the activity “The Shepherds’ Example” (page 41). Commit to follow their example by prayerfully choosing someone to share the gospel with this month.

4. Read Elder Wayne S. Peterson’s message “Live Worthy to Return Home” (page 8). Discuss that at Christmas we celebrate not only Jesus’ birth but also His Atonement, which makes it possible for us to return to Heavenly Father someday. Read the poem “Remember Jesus” (page 31) and learn the song “Sing of Christmas” (page 28).

5. Read “A Bed for Nils” (page 16). Nils was grateful on Christmas Day to have a real bed for the first time in over four years! What are you grateful for? Play “Merry Christmas! Game” (page 32) and make Almond Toffee Bars (page 18) for refreshments.

See page 16.



Topical Index to this Issue of the Friend

(FLF) = For Little Friends
(f) = Funstuff
(m) = music
(v) = verse
(IFC) = inside front cover

Baptism 37

Choose the Right IFC, 8, 26

Church History 16

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, The 4, 37

Covenants 37

Family IFC, 4, 16, 30 (FLF)

Family History 16

Heavenly Father 8, 27

Holy Ghost 27

Jesus Christ 2, 4, 8, 10, 24, 28 (m), 30 (FLF), 31 (FLF), 32 (FLF), 34, 41 (f)

Joseph Smith 42

Love and Kindness IFC, 26, 27, 34, 38

Missionary Work 4, 10, 16, 20, 37, 42

New Testament 2, 10, 30 (FLF), 34, 41 (f), 42

Plan of Salvation 8

Prayer IFC

Prophecy 2, 20, 28, 34, 40, 42

Quorum of the Seventy 8, 28

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles 7, 28, 34, 37, 42

Sabbath Day IFC

Temples IFC

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*And [the shepherds] came with
haste, and found Mary, and Joseph,
and the babe lying in a manger
(Luke 2:16).*