
THE FAMILY

A PROCLAMATION TO THE WORLD

THE FIRST PRESIDENCY AND COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

WE, THE FIRST PRESIDENCY and the Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children.

ALL HUMAN BEINGS—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.

IN THE PREMORTAL REALM, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshipped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize their divine destiny as heirs of eternal life. The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God's commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.

WE DECLARE the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed. We affirm the sanctity of life and of its importance in God's eternal plan.

HUSBAND AND WIFE have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. "Children are an heritage of the Lord" (Psalm 127:3). Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness,

to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, and to teach them to love and serve one another, observe the commandments of God, and be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. Husbands and wives—mothers and fathers—will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations.

THE FAMILY is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity. Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities. By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. Extended families should lend support when needed.

WE WARN that individuals who violate covenants of chastity, who abuse spouse or offspring, or who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God. Further, we warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.

WE CALL UPON responsible citizens and officers of government everywhere to promote those measures designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society.

This proclamation was read by President Gordon B. Hinckley as part of his message at the General Relief Society Meeting held September 23, 1995, in Salt Lake City, Utah.

We Believe the Family Is Ordained of God



The family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World").

BY CHERYL ESPLIN



Amalickiah was a wicked man. He promised the Nephites many things if they would make him the king. Many people believed him and turned away from righteousness.

Moroni was the captain over the Nephite armies. He was righteous and believed in Jesus Christ. When Moroni heard that many people were being led away by Amalickiah, Moroni became angry with him. He knew the people were in danger of losing their freedom.

Moroni tore off a piece of his coat and wrote on it, "In memory of our God, our religion, and freedom, and our peace, our wives, and our children" (Alma 46:12). He fastened the fabric to the end of a pole and called it the title of liberty. Then he prayed for the people and visited them, waving the title of liberty and calling on

the Nephites to join him in protecting their freedom (see Alma 46:1–21).

You live in a day when there are people like Amalickiah who want to lead us away from following Heavenly Father's plan. One of the most important parts of that plan is families.

Heavenly Father wants members of the Church to understand His plan for families. The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles wrote "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" to declare what we believe about families. Like the title of liberty, the proclamation can encourage us to remember and explain what we believe. ●

Activity

Remove page 14, and mount it on heavier paper. Hang the proclamation in a place where your family can see it and remember the importance of strengthening each other.

SHARING TIME IDEAS

October Theme: “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” teaches me about families. (Note: All songs are from *Children’s Songbook* unless otherwise noted; GAK = Gospel Art Picture Kit, TNGC = Teaching, No Greater Call. Gospel art can also be found at gospelart.lds.org.)

1. **“The Family: A Proclamation to the World” is modern-day revelation.** Have the children listen for how many times they hear the words “reveal” or “revealed” as they repeat the ninth article of faith together. Teach that God continues to reveal His will to His children. This communication from God is called revelation. Give a copy of “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” to each child, and explain that the proclamation is revelation given in our day through God’s chosen servants. Have the boys read the title while the girls listen for what this proclamation is about (the family). Next, have the girls read the title while the boys listen for whom the revelation is to (the world). Tell the children that the proclamation teaches us what Heavenly Father wants us to know about families. It teaches us how we can strengthen our families and how to prepare to live in an eternal family.

Provide each class with a different sentence or phrase from the proclamation with some words missing. Have them work together to fill in the blanks with the correct words. You may want to include the paragraph number and provide the answers in scrambled order. For example: “The _____ is _____ to the Creator’s _____ for the eternal destiny of His children” (paragraph 1: plan, family, central). Invite each class to stand and recite their completed phrase or sentence. Sing the first verse of “The Family Is of God” (*Friend*, Oct. 2008, 28–29). Emphasize that the proclamation on the family is revelation from God and that we need to understand and live its teachings. Gather the copies of the proclamation; you will use them again in week three.

2. **“The Family: A Proclamation to the World” teaches the importance of marriage.** Invite a few members of the ward or branch approved by the bishop or branch president to participate in a panel discussion on the importance of marriage (see “Panel Discussions,” TNGC, 175–76). Ahead of time, give them the questions you will ask. Examples: How has Heavenly Father blessed you and your spouse? Could you share a story about a gospel teaching that has helped you be a good wife (or husband)? What can children do now to prepare for being married someday? You may want to suggest that the participants review “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.”

Begin sharing time by showing GAK 609 (Young Couple Going to the Temple) and asking the children what they think sharing time is about (marriage). Introduce the panel. Let the children take turns choosing and reading a question. Have the panel members volunteer their answers. Sing the second verse of “Families Can Be Together Forever” (p. 188). Bear testimony of the importance of marriage in Heavenly Father’s plan.

3. **“The Family: A Proclamation to the World” teaches my family how to be happy.** Invite two children to stand back to back. Have one child smile and the other frown. While the Primary sings “Smiles” (p. 267), have the two children turn so that the one facing the

Primary is the one representing the words being sung. Hand out copies of “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” to each child. Have the children look in paragraph 7 and circle the word *happiness*. (Teachers or older children can help the younger children.) Read paragraph 7, beginning with “Happiness in family life” and ending with “wholesome recreational activities.”

On each of nine pieces of paper, write one of the following principles: faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, family activities. In random order, display pictures that correspond to the principles. (Examples: faith: GAK 318 [The Brother of Jared Sees the Finger of the Lord]; prayer: GAK 605 [Young Boy Praying]; repentance: GAK 321 [Conversion of Alma the Younger]; forgiveness: GAK 230 [The Crucifixion]; respect: GAK 611 [The Bishop]; love: GAK 213 [Christ Healing a Blind Man]; compassion: GAK 420 [The Prophet Joseph Loved Children]; work: GAK 615 [Serving One Another]; family activities: GAK 616 [Family Togetherness].) Let each class choose one of the papers. Have them work together with their teacher’s help to tell the Primary how the principle can bring happiness to their families. Then let all of the children suggest which picture illustrates the principle. Bear testimony that we can help our families when we follow the teachings of Jesus Christ.

4. **“The Family: A Proclamation to the World” teaches my family the importance of work.** Have the children hold up fingers to count each of the nine principles while you read paragraph 7 from “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” beginning with “Successful marriages and families” and ending with “wholesome recreational activities.” See if they can remember the eighth principle (work). To teach the importance and value of work, tell the following story about President Dieter F. Uchtdorf. As a young boy, he worked at his parents’ laundry business, delivering laundry before and after school. For many years he had to ride a big, heavy bicycle, pulling a laundry cart up and down the streets of their town. He said, “Sometimes the cart seemed so heavy and the work so tiring that I thought my lungs would burst, and I often had to stop to catch my breath. Nevertheless, I did my part because I knew we desperately needed the income as a family, and it was my way to contribute.” Dieter knew his hard work as a delivery boy was helping his family. But it wasn’t until many years later that he learned how his hard work helped cure him of a lung disease he never knew he had. He said, “My regular exercise in fresh air as a laundry boy had been a key factor in my healing from this illness” (“See the End from the Beginning,” *Ensign*, May 2006, 43).

Ask: How do you think delivering laundry helped President Uchtdorf’s family? What are some things you do to help your family? President Uchtdorf said riding the bike and pulling the laundry cart was hard work. What work do you do that is hard? Besides helping his family, how did the hard work help President Uchtdorf? How does working hard help you?

5. *Friend* references: “Heavenly Father’s Plan,” June 2003, 7; “The Family,” Feb. 2004, 24–25; “My Family Can Be Together Forever,” Apr. 2005, 40–41; “The Shield of Faith,” July 2003, 39; “Together Forever,” Feb. 2002, 31; “Choose the Right Way and Be Happy,” Sept. 2005, 20–21; “Prayer and Work,” Nov. 2007, 8–9.