

Small & Simple Things

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

IN THE WORDS OF THE PROPHETS

A Christmas Memory

By President Thomas S. Monson

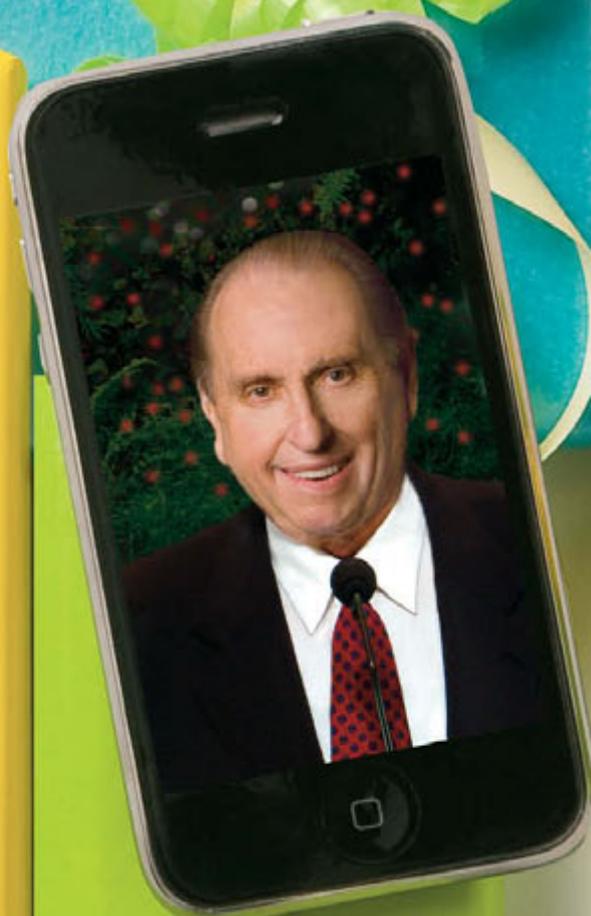
At home in a hidden-away corner, I have a small black walking stick with an imitation silver handle. It once belonged to a distant relative. Why do I keep it for a period now spanning more than 70 years? There is a special reason. As a small boy I participated in a Christmas pageant in our ward. I was privileged to be one of the three Wise Men. With a bandanna about my head, Mother's piano bench cover

draped over my shoulder, and the black cane in my hand, I spoke my assigned lines: "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). I vividly remember the feelings of my heart as the three of us "Wise Men" looked upward and saw a star, journeyed across the stage, found Mary with the young child Jesus, then fell down and worshipped Him and opened our treasures and presented gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

I especially liked the fact that we did not return to the evil Herod to betray the baby Jesus but obeyed God and departed another way.

The years have flown by, but the Christmas cane continues to occupy a special place in my home; and in my heart is a commitment to Christ.

From "Treasured Gifts," Liahona, Dec. 2006, 3-4; Ensign, Dec. 2006, 5-6.



ON THE CALENDAR

December 5, 2010, is the date of the First Presidency Christmas Devotional. It features messages from the First Presidency and music from the Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra at Temple Square. Check with your local priesthood leader or at www.lds.org for information about broadcast times and locations. It can also be viewed online at www.broadcast.lds.org.



The Power of Family Home Evening

My husband, Luiz Antonio, and I have a great testimony of the power of family home evening and its ability to make our families stronger in the gospel. It hasn't always been easy to make the attempt, but over time it has made all the difference for us and our four children.

One of the most special moments that took place at family home evening was when our son, Renan, was preparing to be baptized. Our two older daughters, Cynthia and Lilian, offered to teach the lessons for the month preceding his eighth birthday. My husband and I loved watching them teach the meaning and purpose of baptism—the same lessons we had taught them as they prepared for baptism. Four years later Renan followed the examples of his older sisters and taught lessons about baptism to his younger sister, Ellen.

Family home evening continued to bless us and our children through the challenges of their teenage years. It helped them maintain their testimonies and stay faithful in the gospel. Today our son is a returned missionary, and our daughters have married in the temple and have children of their own.

Our testimony is that family home evening is one of the best programs of the Church. We know that following prophetic direction to consistently hold family home evening has brought great blessings to our lives, and we know it can bring blessings to any who are willing to follow that direction. We acknowledge that it requires a lot of work and planning, but for us the blessings of eternity will be worth every minute of those efforts.

Walkiria Santana Cairo, Brazil



THE CHRISTMAS STORY

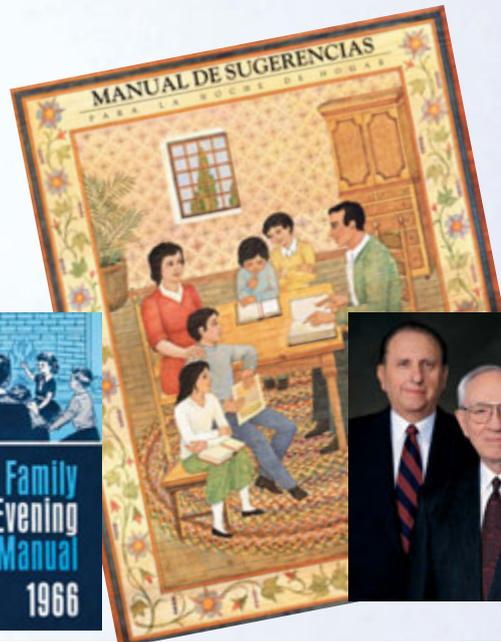
Many people are familiar with the Nativity story as told in Luke 1–2. But there are many other places in the scriptures that talk about the miraculous birth of the Savior Jesus Christ. Consider including these verses in your personal scripture study this month:

OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT	BOOK OF MORMON	DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS	PEARL OF GREAT PRICE
Isaiah 7:14; 9:6–7	Matthew 1–2	1 Nephi 10:4–6; 11:13–21	D&C 76:41	Moses 5:57
Micah 5:2	John 1:1–14	Alma 7:9–13	D&C 93:1–4	
		Helaman 14:1–9		
		3 Nephi 1		

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TIME FOR FAMILY HOME EVENING

For members of the Church, Monday night is synonymous with family home evening. But how did it all start? This time line tells the story.



1909

The Granite Utah Stake develops a formal family home evening program.

1915

President Joseph F. Smith and his counselors in the First Presidency call on parents in the Church to gather their children once each week for a "Home Evening."

1935

President David O. McKay reminds parents that "no other success can compensate for failure in the home."¹

1965

The first official family home evening manual is released; revised versions are released annually until 1984.

1970

The First Presidency designates Monday evening as the time for family home evening.

1985

The *Family Home Evening Resource Book* is introduced with broader source material and application.

1999

The First Presidency publishes a letter reminding members not to plan ward or stake activities on Monday nights or—where practical—not to have community activities on Monday nights.

NOTE

1. David O. McKay, quoted from J. E. McCulloch, *Home: The Savior of Civilization* (1924), 42; in Conference Report, Apr. 1935, 116.



FAMILY HOME EVENING IDEAS FOR THOSE WHO ARE SINGLE OR WITHOUT CHILDREN

- Study the scriptures, Relief Society or priesthood manuals, or articles from Church magazines.
- Work on your family history.
- Invite members of your ward or branch to share family home evening with you.
- Write letters to family members who live far away or to missionaries serving from your ward or branch.
- Serve others. Consider taking a meal to someone in need, visiting residents in a nursing home, or volunteering for a community project.