

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • FEBRUARY 2013

Liahona

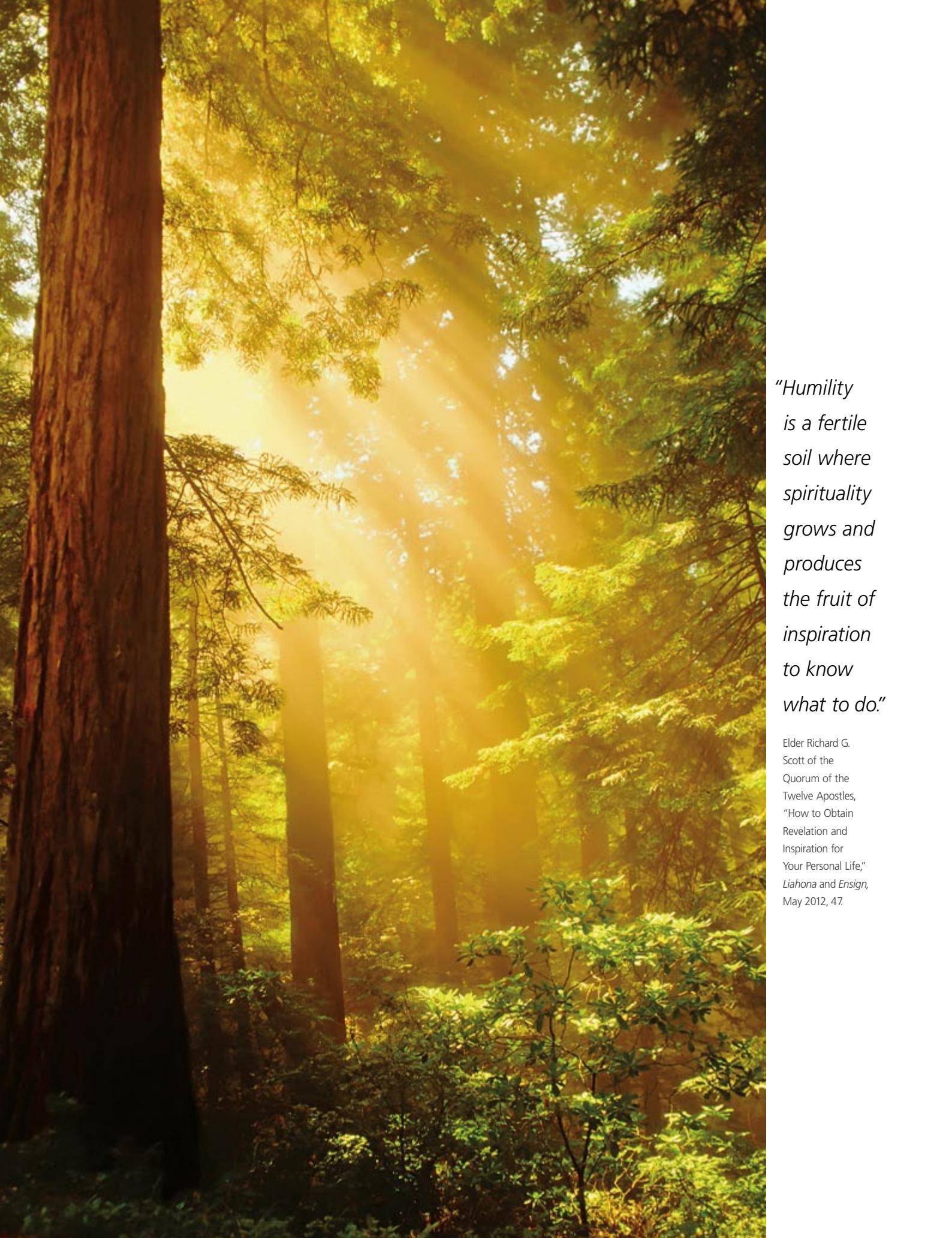
A photograph of a woman with dark skin and short hair, wearing a white headwrap and a yellow t-shirt. She is holding a baby wrapped in a light-colored blanket. The woman is looking down at the baby. The title 'Liahona' is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif letters across the upper portion of the image.

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**Why We Need Organized
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**How Do I Get Over the
Hurt? p. 46**

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A photograph of a dense forest, likely redwoods or sequoias, with tall, thin trunks and a canopy of green leaves. Sunlight filters through the trees, creating bright rays and a warm glow. The forest floor is covered in green undergrowth and small plants.

*"Humility
is a fertile
soil where
spirituality
grows and
produces
the fruit of
inspiration
to know
what to do."*

Elder Richard G.
Scott of the
Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles,
"How to Obtain
Revelation and
Inspiration for
Your Personal Life,"
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May 2012, 47.



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Front: Photograph of a mother caring for her baby after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, by Jeffrey D. Allred © Deseret News.
Back: Photograph by Howard Collett © IRI.
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© Flickr/Getty Images.



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More Online

Liahona.lds.org

FOR ADULTS

What We Believe (page 14) teaches basic doctrines in simple language. Many other simple explanations of various doctrines and principles can be found online at lds.org/topics.



FOR YOUTH

On page 48, Adrián Ochoa, second counselor in the Young Men general presidency, teaches why it's important to choose wisely the media we look at and listen to. You can learn more about media and entertainment standards in *For the Strength of Youth* at youth.lds.org.

On page 52, Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles comments on all eight of the Young Women values. Young women can learn more about those values and work on Personal Progress online at PersonalProgress.lds.org.

IN YOUR LANGUAGE

The *Liahona* and other Church materials are available in many languages at languages.lds.org.

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By President
Dieter F. Uchtdorf
Second Counselor
in the First Presidency

A WORD FOR THE Hesitant Missionary

Disciples of Jesus Christ have always been under the obligation to take His gospel to the world (see Mark 16:15–16). Nevertheless, sometimes it is difficult to open our mouths and speak about our faith to those around us. While some members of the Church have a natural gift for talking to others about religion, others are a little hesitant or may feel awkward, embarrassed, or even fearful of doing so.

To that end, may I suggest four things that anyone can do to follow the commission of the Savior to preach the gospel “unto every creature” (D&C 58:64).

Be a Light

A favorite saying of mine often attributed to St. Francis of Assisi reads, “Preach the gospel at all times and if necessary, use words.”¹ Implicit in this saying is the understanding that often the most powerful sermons are unspoken.

When we have integrity and live consistently by our standards, people notice. When we radiate joy and happiness, they notice even more.

Everyone wants to be happy. When we members of the Church radiate the light of the gospel, people can see our happiness and sense the love of God filling and overflowing in our lives. They want to know why. They want to understand our secret.

That leads them to ask questions such as “Why are you so happy?” or “Why do you always have such a positive

attitude?” The answers to these questions, of course, lead perfectly into a conversation about the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

Be Conversational

Bringing up the subject of religion—particularly to our friends and loved ones—can seem daunting and challenging. It doesn’t have to be. Mentioning spiritual experiences or talking about Church activities or events in casual conversation can be easy and pleasant if we invest a little courage and common sense.

My wife, Harriet, is a wonderful example of this. When we were living in Germany, she would find a way to work Church-related topics into her conversations with friends and acquaintances. For example, when someone asked about her weekend, she would say, “This Sunday we had an impressive experience in our church! A 16-year-old young man gave a beautiful talk in front of 200 people of our congregation about living a clean life.” Or, “I learned about a 90-year-old woman who knitted more than 500 blankets and gave them to our Church’s humanitarian program to be shipped to people in need all around the world.”

More often than not, the people who heard this wanted to know more. They asked questions. And that led to opportunities to talk about the gospel in a natural, confident, nonpushy way.



TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

One effective way to teach is to “encourage those you teach to set . . . goals that can help them live the principle you have taught” (*Teaching, No Greater Call* [1999], 159). Consider inviting those you teach to prayerfully set a goal to share the gospel with one or more people this month. Parents can discuss ways younger children could help. You could also help family members brainstorm or role-play ways to bring up the gospel in regular conversation and think of upcoming Church activities to which they could invite a friend.

With the advent of the Internet and social media, it is easier today to talk about these things in a conversational way than ever before. What we need is simply the courage to do so.

Be Full of Grace

Unfortunately, it is so easy to be disagreeable. It happens too often that we argue, belittle, and condemn. When we become angry, rude, or hurtful with people, the last thing they want is to learn more about us. It is impossible to know how many people have either left the Church or never joined because someone said something that hurt or offended them.

There is so much incivility in the world today. Because of the anonymity of the Internet, it is easier than ever to say toxic or grating things online. Shouldn’t we, the hopeful disciples of our gentle Christ, have a higher, more charitable standard? The scriptures teach, “Let your speech be alway[s] with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (Colossians 4:6).

I like the idea of our words being clear as a sunny sky and full of grace. Can you imagine what our families, wards, nations, and even the world would be like if we could adopt this simple principle?

Be Filled with Faith

Sometimes we take upon ourselves too much credit or too much blame when it comes to others accepting the gospel. It’s important to remember that the Lord doesn’t expect us to do the converting.

Conversion comes not through our words but through the heavenly ministrations of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes all it takes is one single phrase of our testimony or about an

experience to set in motion the softening of a heart or the opening of a door that can lead others to experience sublime truths through the promptings of the Spirit.

President Brigham Young (1801–77) said he knew the gospel was true when he “saw a man without eloquence, or talents for public speaking, who could only say, ‘I know, by the power of the Holy Ghost, that the Book of Mormon is true, that Joseph Smith is a Prophet of the Lord.’” President Young said when he heard that humble testimony, “The Holy Ghost proceeding from that individual illuminate[d] my understanding, and light, glory, and immortality [were] before me.”²

Brothers and sisters, have faith. The Lord can magnify the words you speak and make them mighty. God doesn’t ask you to convert but rather to open your mouths. The task of converting is not yours—that belongs to the person hearing and to the Holy Spirit.

Every Member a Missionary

My dear friends, today there are more ways than ever for us to open our mouths and share with others the joyful news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. There is a way for everyone—even the hesitant missionary—to participate in this great work. We can each find a way to use our own particular talents and interests in support of the great work of filling the world with light and truth. As we do so, we will find the joy that comes to those who are faithful and courageous enough “to stand as witnesses of God at all times” (Mosiah 18:9). ■

NOTES

1. St. Francis of Assisi, in William Fay and Linda Evans Shepherd, *Share Jesus without Fear* (1999), 22.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (1997), 67.

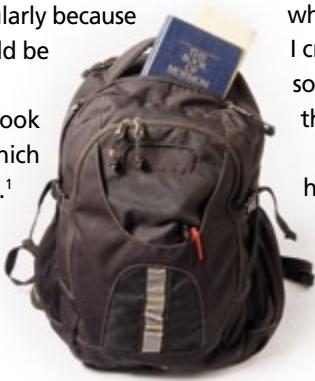
Sharing with a Friend

By Adriana Vásquez, Colombia

One day while studying for my seminary class, I had a beautiful and distinct impression. As I was reading over the lesson for the next day, I saw the face of a friend from school and had the strong feeling that I should share my testimony with her.

Despite the clarity of this impression, I was afraid. I was worried that my friend might reject me, particularly because she didn't seem to be the kind of girl who would be interested in joining the Church.

I thought back to a talk by Sister Mary N. Cook of the Young Women general presidency in which she challenged us to work hard and be valiant.¹ I wanted to be like this, so I wrote this girl a letter and testified of the truthfulness of the Church and of my love for the Book of Mormon. The next day I slipped a copy of the



Book of Mormon, together with my letter, into her bag.

To my surprise, my friend was very receptive to the gospel. Starting that day, she would tell me about what she had learned in her study of the Book of Mormon. A few weeks later, I introduced her to the missionaries. Almost immediately, she received a confirmation from the Holy Ghost that what she was learning was true. The missionaries and I cried as she told us of her feelings. My friend was soon baptized, and her parents were amazed to see the changes that had occurred in her.

I am so happy I was able to overcome my fears and help bring the gospel into her life.

NOTE

1. See Mary N. Cook, "Never, Never, Never Give Up!" *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2010, 117–19.

CHILDREN

I Can Be a Light to Others

President Uchtdorf says that to be a light to others, our words should be "clear as a sunny sky and full of grace." Our words should be happy, honest, and kind. What can you do or say to be a light to others? To find a hidden message in the boxes below, color in black the boxes that say or do things that are mean or hurtful.

You could write in your journal five nice things you plan to say to family members or friends.

"Thank you"	Be happy	Be a peacemaker	"I'll share with you"	Be polite
"I'm sorry"	Argue	"It's good to see you"	Fight	"I'd love to help"
"Please"	Be kind	"Get out of my way"	"I love you"	"You're welcome"
Get angry	"Good job"	Give a compliment	"Let's be friends"	Ignore
Help someone	Insult	Gossip	Bully	Be gentle

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

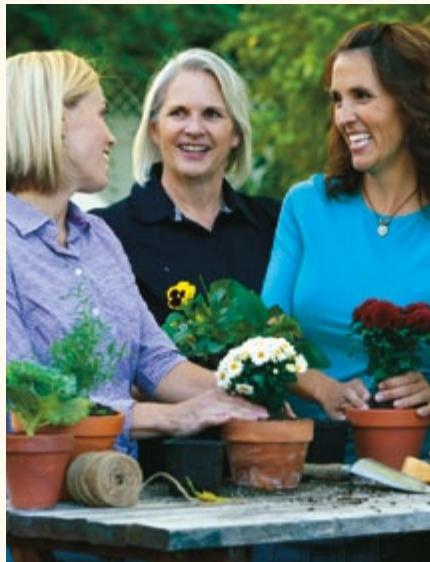
Converted unto the Lord

New sisters of the Church—including Young Women entering Relief Society, sisters returning to activity, and new converts—need the support and friendship of visiting teachers. “Member involvement is vital to convert retention and in bringing less-active members back into full activity,” said Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Capture the vision that the Relief Society . . . can become [one of] the most powerful friendshipping resource[s] we have in the Church. Reach out early to those being taught and reactivated, and love them into the Church through your organization.”¹

As members of Relief Society, we can help new members learn basic Church practices, such as:

- Giving a talk.
- Bearing testimony.
- Living the law of the fast.
- Paying tithing and other offerings.
- Participating in family history work.
- Performing baptisms and confirmations for their deceased ancestors.

“It takes attentive friends to make new members feel comfortable and welcomed at church,” said Elder



Ballard.² All of us, but especially visiting teachers, have important responsibilities to establish friendships with new members as a way of helping them become firmly “converted unto the Lord” (*Alma 23:6*).

From the Scriptures

2 Nephi 31:19–20; Moroni 6:4

NOTES

1. M. Russell Ballard, “Members Are the Key,” *Liahona*, Sept. 2000, 18; *Ensign*, Sept. 2000, 13.
2. M. Russell Ballard, *Liahona*, Sept. 2000, 17; *Ensign*, Sept. 2000, 14.
3. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Every Convert Is Precious,” *Liahona*, Feb. 1999, 9; “Converts and Young Men,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 47.
4. Joseph Fielding Smith, in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 97.

Faith, Family, Relief



From Our History

“With the ever-increasing number of converts,” said President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), “we must make an increasingly substantial effort to assist them as they find their way. Every one of them needs three things: a friend, a responsibility, and nurturing with ‘the good word of God’ (*Moroni 6:4*).”³

Visiting teachers are in a position to help those they watch over. Friendship often comes first, as it did for a young Relief Society sister who was the visiting teacher of an older sister. They had been slow in building a friendship until they worked side by side on a cleaning project. They became friends, and as they talked about the Visiting Teaching Message, they were both nurtured by “the good word of God.”

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) said Relief Society “is a vital part of the kingdom of God on earth and . . . helps its faithful members to gain eternal life in our Father’s kingdom.”⁴

What Can I Do?

1. Do I pray for my companion and ask that the Spirit will guide us as we minister to our sisters?

2. In what ways do we serve each sister we watch over so that she knows we truly care about her?

ENTERTAINMENT AND MEDIA

Our society is full of media choices. We must be careful about what images and thoughts we allow in our minds because “whatever [we] read, listen to, or look at has an effect on [us]” (*For the Strength of Youth* [booklet, 2011], 11). Adrián Ochoa, second counselor in the general Young Men presidency, writes about entertainment and media on page 48 of this issue.

“Remember that in reality you are here in this life to develop your faith, to be tested, and to learn and be happy,” he writes. “As a member of Christ’s true Church, you have great power to help you. You have the power of the Holy Ghost to warn you when something in front of you is not right. You also have the power of agency, so you can choose what you will and will not do.”

Suggestions for Teaching Youth

- Discuss with your teens the movies you watch as a family. Listen to the music they have. Reflect together on how that media measures up against the standards in *For the Strength of Youth*.
- Go to youth.lds.org and click on “For the Strength of Youth” under the Youth Menu. There

you will find videos, scriptural references, Mormon Channel radio programs, questions and answers, and articles (see, for example, “Getting Real”), including talks by General Authorities.

- Consider holding a family home evening on the importance of choosing good media (a good resource is David A. Bednar, “Things as They Really Are,” *Liahona*, June 2010, 22–31; *Ensign*, June 2010, 16–25).

Suggestions for Teaching Children

In the story “The Ratings Rule,” found on page 70, Ethan knew what media was safe for him to use because his family had talked about it. You could read this article with your children and start a conversation of your own using these questions:

- *Who* can help us make good media and entertainment decisions?
- *What* media is good for us to watch, read, or listen to?
- *When* is it OK to use media?
- *Where* should we use media?
- *Why* is it important to be careful about entertainment?



“If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things” (Articles of Faith 1:13).

Consider making a family media guide by folding blank papers in half and stapling them together in the crease to form a booklet. On each page, you could write a type of media used in your home, along with family standards and prophetic counsel that apply to that media.

You could also read “Crash and Tell” by Danielle Kennington (*Liahona*, June 2011, 64) to help you start a conversation about appropriate media use. ■

OCTOBER CONFERENCE NOTEBOOK

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

As you review the October 2012 general conference, you can use these pages (and Conference Notebooks in future issues) to help you study and apply the recent teachings of the living prophets and apostles and other Church leaders.

STORIES FROM CONFERENCE

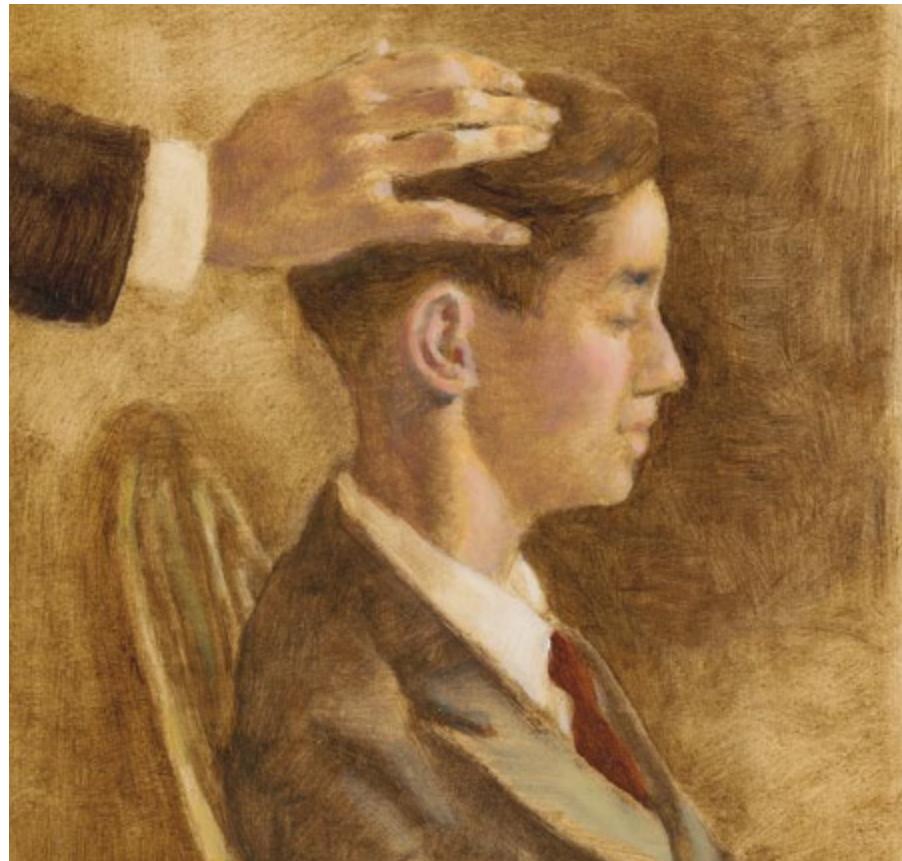
God Knows Our Gifts

When I became a deacon at the age of 12, I lived in New Jersey, 50 miles (80 km) from New York City. I dreamed of being a great baseball player. My father agreed to

take me to see a game played in the old and storied Yankee Stadium, in the Bronx. I can still see the swing of the bat as Joe DiMaggio hit a home run into the center field stands with

my father sitting beside me, the only time we ever went to a major league baseball game together.

But another day with my father shaped my life forever. He took me from New Jersey to the home of an ordained patriarch in Salt Lake City. I had never seen the man before. My father left me at the doorstep. The patriarch led me to a chair, placed his hands on my head, and pronounced a blessing as a gift from God that



Prophetic Promise

"I can promise you that you will bless [others] to help them recognize the spiritual gifts with which they were born. Every person is different and has a different contribution to make. No one is destined to fail."

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "Help Them Aim High," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 60.

included a declaration of the great desire of my heart.

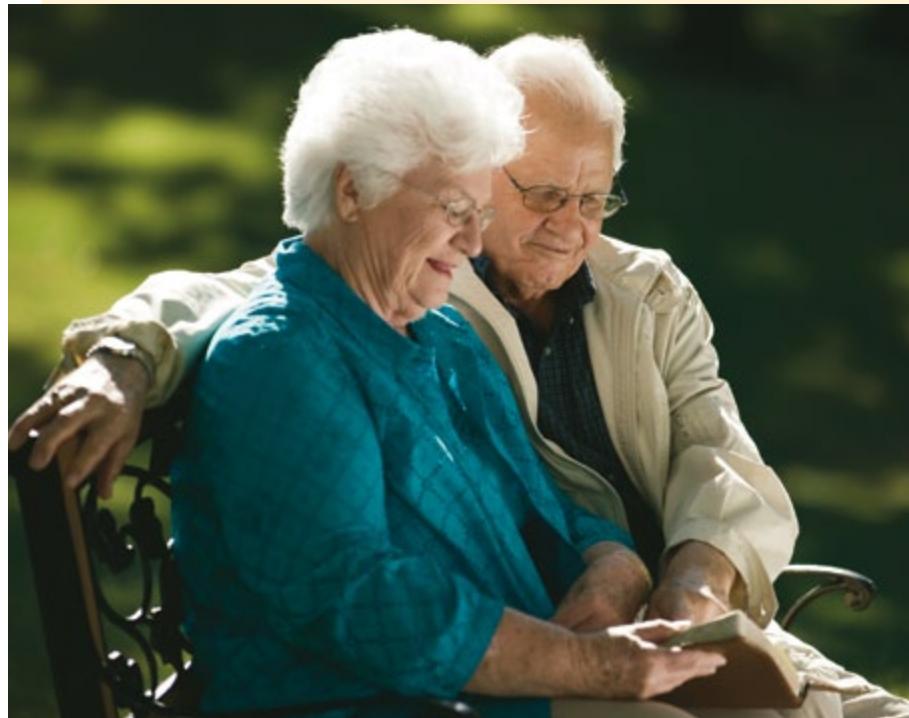
He said that I was one of those of whom it had been said, “Blessed are the peacemakers.” [Matthew 5:9.] I was so surprised that a perfect stranger could know my heart that I opened my eyes to see the room where such a miracle was happening. That blessing of my possibilities has shaped my life, my marriage, and my priesthood service.

From that experience and what has followed it, I can testify, “For all have not every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God” (D&C 46:11).

By the Lord revealing to me a gift, I have been able to recognize and prepare for opportunities to exercise it to the blessing of those I love and serve.

God knows our gifts. My challenge to you and to me is to pray to know the gifts we have been given, to know how to develop them, and to recognize the opportunities to serve others that God provides us. But most of all, I pray that you will be inspired to help others discover their special gifts from God to serve.

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Help Them Aim High,” Liahona and Ensign, Nov. 2012, 67.



Applying This Message

- As you read and ponder Doctrine and Covenants 46:11–26, pray to know what spiritual gifts you may have.
- How can serving others help you develop your spiritual gifts?
- If you have not received a patriarchal blessing, consider getting one.

Consider writing your thoughts in your journal or discussing them with others.

Additional resources on this topic: *True to the Faith* (2004), “Spiritual Gifts,” 165–67; “Spiritual Gifts” in *Gospel Topics* on *LDS.org*.

FINDING STRENGTH DURING TRIALS

“How do you remain ‘steadfast and immovable’ [Alma 1:25] during a trial of faith? You immerse yourself in the very things that helped build your core of faith:

- you exercise faith in Christ,
- you pray,
- you ponder the scriptures,
- you repent,
- you keep the commandments,
- and you serve others.”

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Trial of Your Faith,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 40; bullets added.

FILL IN THE BLANK

1. "The decision to serve a mission will shape the ____ of the missionary, his or her spouse, and their posterity for generations to come" (Russell M. Nelson, "Ask the Missionaries! They Can Help You!" *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 18).
2. "To help us better ____ , I would like to suggest four words to remember: 'First observe, then serve'" (Linda K. Burton, "First Observe, Then Serve," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 78).
3. "Temple and ____ work is one work divided into two parts" (Richard G. Scott, "The Joy of Redeeming the Dead," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 93).
4. "The crowning characteristic of love is always ____ " (Jeffrey R. Holland, "The First Great Commandment," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 84).

Answers: 1. spiritual destiny; 2. love one another; 3. family history; 4. loyalty



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CODY BELL ©IRI

CREATING FAMILY CULTURES

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught five things parents can do to create stronger family cultures. He said: "These suggestions for creating stronger *family cultures* work in tandem with the culture of the Church. Our strengthened family cultures will be a protection for our children."

1. "Parents can pray in earnest, asking our Eternal Father to help them."
2. "They can hold family prayer, scripture study, and family home evenings and eat together as often as possible."
3. "Parents can fully avail themselves of the Church's support network."
4. "Parents can share their testimonies often with their children."
5. "We can organize our families based on clear, simple family rules and expectations, wholesome family traditions and rituals, and 'family economics.'"

From "Becoming Goodly Parents," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 28.

To read, watch, or listen to general conference addresses, visit conference.lds.org.

MY DAD'S APOLOGY

It was more powerful than a thousand sermons.

By David Hixon

I was 16 and playing my new rock-and-roll album for the first time. Unfortunately, as I listened, I was disappointed to hear a vulgar word in the last song. I was embarrassed. I knew my parents would not approve—the record didn't meet our family's standards. But I liked the rest of the songs, so whenever I played the record, I turned down the volume just before the offensive word was sung.

My well-meaning sister told my father about my album. Later, when he and I were in the dining room, he shared his concern about the inappropriate word. Although his comment was said in a kind manner, I dug in and stubbornly defended my position.

I used every argument I could think of to convince my dad that I should keep the record. "I didn't know that word was on the album when I bought it," I said, "and when that song plays, I turn it down."

When he said I should still get rid of the record, I said, "If you think that, then I should quit school too! I hear that word—and worse ones—every day at school!"



He began to get frustrated. He reemphasized that we shouldn't have vulgar music in our home. The argument escalated as I said there were worse sins I could commit and that I never used that word.

I tried to turn the tables: "I try so hard to be good, and then you focus on this one little thing and think I'm an evil sinner!"

Even so, my father wouldn't back down. Neither would I. I marched upstairs to my room, slammed the door, and lay on my bed, seething. I rehearsed my argument over and over in my head, entrenching myself deeper in my flawed logic and convincing myself I was right.

Ten minutes later, there was a soft knock at the door. It was Dad. His countenance had changed. He wasn't there to argue. "I'm sorry I got angry," he said. "Will you forgive me?" He told me how much he loved me and that he thought highly of me. He didn't preach. He didn't give me

counsel. Then he turned and quietly left the room.

A thousand sermons on humility could never have been more powerful to me. I was no longer angry with him, just with myself for being so stubborn and difficult. I fetched the record, snapped it in two, and threw it away. I don't know if I ever told Dad what I did, but it didn't matter. What mattered was that I had learned that my dad valued our relationship more than his own pride, even when he had been in the right. ■

David Hixon lives in Texas, USA.

A SOFT ANSWER

"A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger."

Proverbs 15:1

WE MUST BE BORN OF WATER AND OF THE SPIRIT

We believe we must be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (through an ordinance called confirmation) to be saved in the kingdom of heaven. The Savior taught, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).

The Lord also taught that the ordinance of baptism—like all other gospel ordinances—must be performed by a worthy priesthood holder: “The person who is called of God and has authority from Jesus Christ to baptize, shall go down into the water with the person. . . . Then shall he immerse him or her in the water, and come forth again out of the water” (D&C 20:73–74).

Baptism by immersion symbolizes the burial of the sinner and the

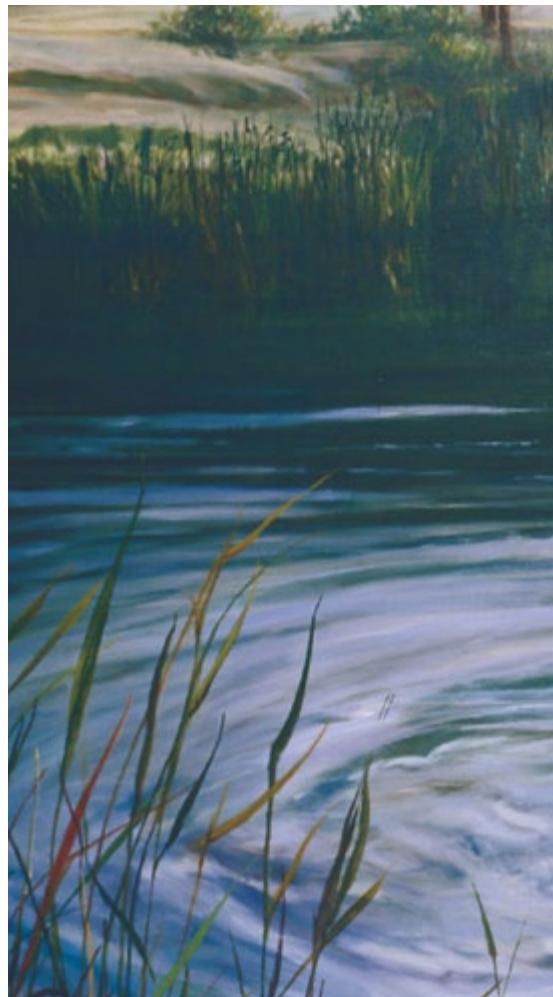
spiritual rebirth of the person to live in “newness of life” (Romans 6:4). By baptism we leave behind our old life and start a new life as disciples of Jesus Christ. When we are confirmed, we become members of His Church.

Baptism also includes a sacred covenant, a promise, between Heavenly Father and the individual who is baptized. We covenant to keep His commandments, serve Him and His children, and take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ. He promises to forgive our sins, “pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon [us]” (Mosiah 18:10), and offer us eternal life.

The Savior Himself kept the commandment to be baptized, even though He was sinless (see Matthew 3:13–17). He was baptized to be

obedient, to set the example for us, and to “fulfil all righteousness” (see 2 Nephi 31:5–9). Thus, those who are baptized are following the Savior’s example. ■

For more information, see chapter 2 in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow* (2012).



A SACRED COVENANT

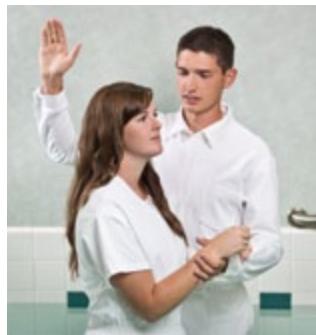
“Baptism . . . is an ordinance denoting entry into a sacred and binding covenant between God and man. Men promise to forsake the world, love and serve their fellowmen, visit the fatherless and the widows in their afflictions, proclaim peace, preach the gospel, serve the Lord, and keep His commandments. The Lord promises to ‘pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon [us]’ (Mosiah 18:10), redeem His Saints both temporally and spiritually, number them with those of the First Resurrection, and offer life eternal.”

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Gospel of Jesus Christ,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2008, 46.

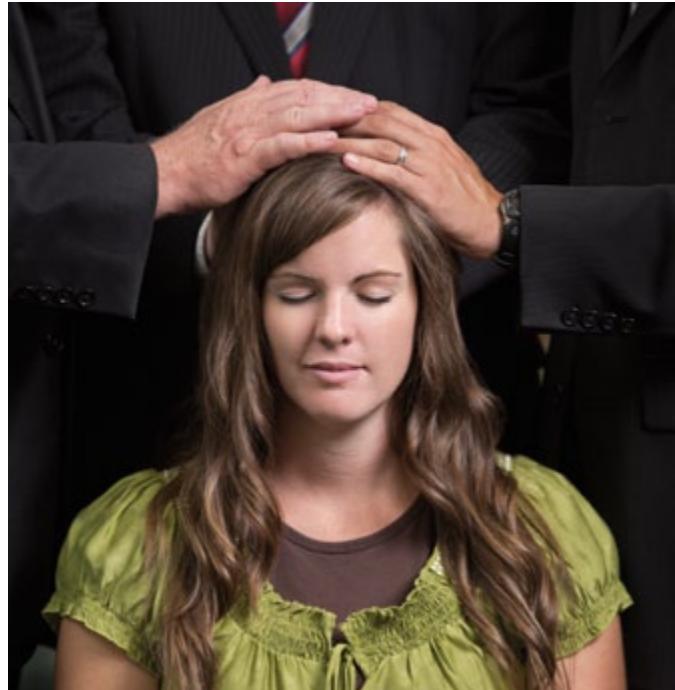
Those who desire to be baptized must "humble themselves before God, . . . witness before the church that they have truly repented of all their sins, and [be] willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ" (D&C 20:37).



"We believe [in] . . . baptism by immersion" (Articles of Faith 1:4).



Following baptism, we are confirmed members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Baptism and confirmation allow the Atonement of Jesus Christ to bring about a spiritual cleansing in our lives, including "a remission of . . . sins" (D&C 33:11).



By baptism and confirmation we become "fellowcitizens with the saints" in the "household of God" (Ephesians 2:19).



By Elder
Tad R. Callister

Of the Presidency
of the Seventy

Robert Bolt's classic play *A Man for All Seasons* is the story of Sir Thomas More. He had distinguished himself as a scholar, lawyer, ambassador, and, finally, as Lord Chancellor of England. He was a man of absolute integrity. The play opens with these words of Sir Richard Rich: "Every man has his price! . . . In money too. . . . Or pleasure. Titles, women, bricks-and-mortar, there's always something."¹

That is the theme of the play. It is also the theme of life. Is there a man or woman in this world who cannot be bought, whose integrity is beyond price?

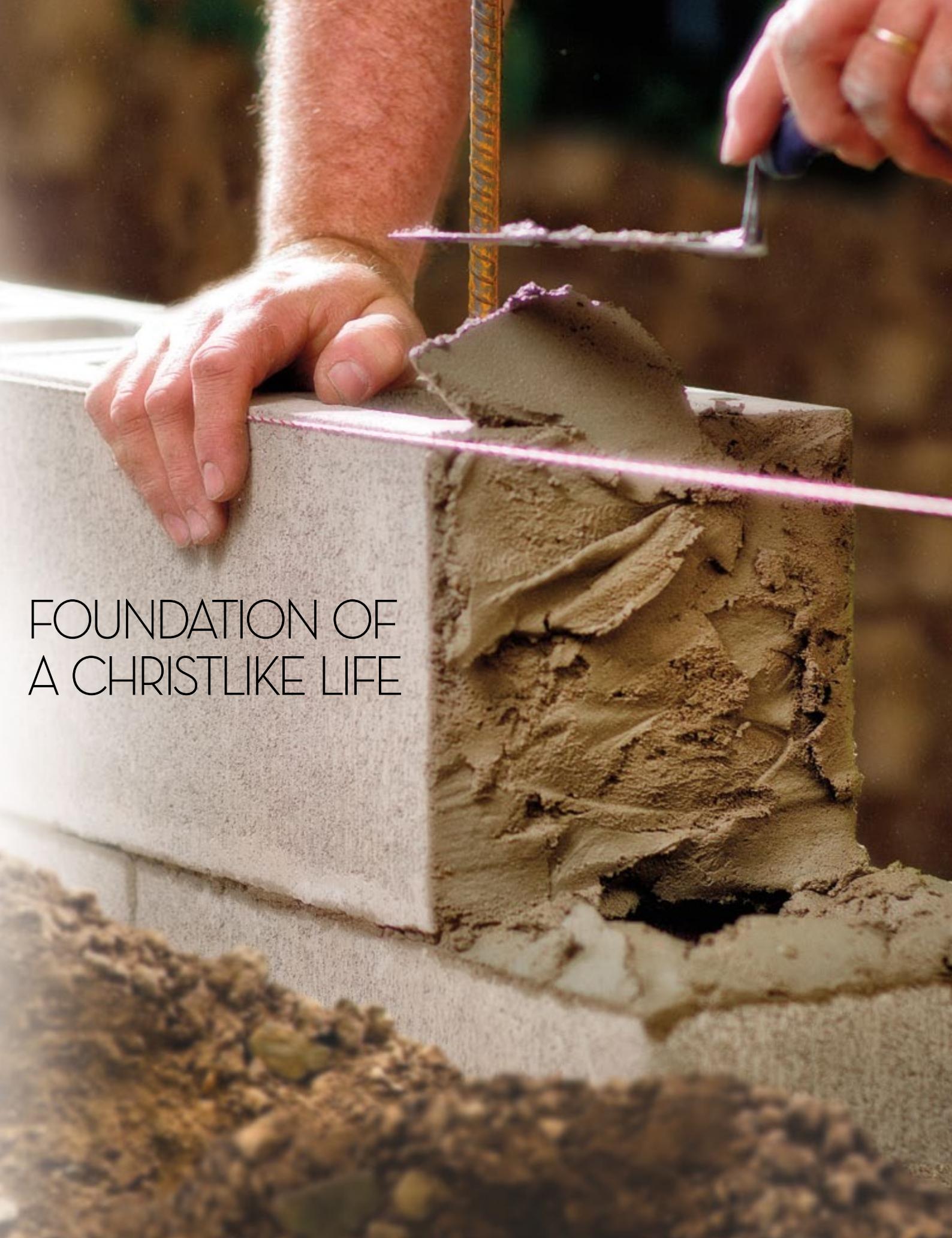
Integrity

Integrity is the courage to do right regardless of the consequences and the inconvenience.

As the play unfolds, King

Henry VIII desires to divorce Queen Catherine and marry Anne Boleyn. But there is a catch: divorce is forbidden by the Catholic Church. And so King Henry VIII, not to be thwarted in his desires, demands of his subjects the taking of an oath that will support him in his divorce. But there is a further problem.

Sir Thomas More, who is loved and admired by the common people, is a holdout—his conscience will not let him sign the oath. He is unwilling to submit, even at the king's personal request. Then come the tests. His friends apply their personal charm and pressure, but he will not yield. He is stripped of his wealth, his position, and his family, but he will not sign. Finally, he is falsely



A close-up photograph showing a person's hands working on a construction site. One hand holds a concrete block, while the other uses a string line to ensure it is level. In the background, a vertical rebar and some concrete blocks are visible.

FOUNDATION OF
A CHRISTLIKE LIFE

tried for his life, but still he will not succumb.

They have taken from him his money, his political power, his friends, and his family—and will yet take his life—but they cannot take from him his integrity. It is not for sale at any price.

At the climax of the play, Sir Thomas More is falsely tried for treason. Sir Richard Rich commits the perjury necessary to convict him. As Sir Richard exits the courtroom, Sir Thomas More asks him, “That’s a chain of office you are wearing. . . . What [is it]? ”

Prosecutor Thomas Cromwell replies, “Sir Richard is appointed Attorney-General for Wales.”

More then looks into Rich’s face with great disdain and retorts, “For Wales? Why, Richard, it profits a man nothing to give his soul for the whole world. . . . But for Wales!”²

In the life to come, no doubt many will look back amidst uncontrollable sobs and repeat again and again, “Why did I trade my soul for Wales or temporary physical pleasure or fame or a grade or the approval of my friends? Why did I sell my integrity for a price?”

Principles of Integrity

I would like to address seven principles of integrity that I hope will inspire us to make this Christlike attribute a fundamental character trait in our personal lives.

1. Integrity is the foundation of our character and all other virtues. In 1853 the Saints commenced the construction of the Salt Lake Temple. For the better part of two long, hard years the Saints dug the excavations and laid the foundation: over eight feet (2.4 m) deep, made of sandstone. One day the foreman came to President Brigham Young with this devastating news: there were cracks in the blocks of sandstone. Brigham Young was faced with this dilemma: (1) do the best they could to patch up the cracks and build a temple of much less weight and grandeur than anticipated or (2) rip out two years of work and replace it with a granite foundation that could support the magnificent temple God envisioned



for them. Fortunately, President Young chose the latter course.³

Integrity is the foundation upon which character and a Christlike life are built. If there are cracks in that foundation, then it will not support the weight of other Christlike attributes that must be built upon it. How can we be humble if we lack the integrity to acknowledge our own weaknesses? How can we develop charity for others if we are not totally honest in our dealings with them? How can we repent and be clean if we only partially disclose the truth to our bishop? At the root of every virtue is integrity.

Christian author C. S. Lewis noted that once we make a mistake in a mathematical equation, we cannot just keep on going: “When I have started a sum the wrong way, the sooner I admit this and go back and start over again, the faster I shall get on.”⁴

Likewise, we cannot continue to fully acquire other Christlike virtues until we first make integrity the granite foundation of our lives. In some cases this may require us to go through the painful process of ripping out an existing foundation built upon deceit and replacing it stone by stone with a foundation of integrity. But it can be done.



2. Integrity is not doing just that which is legal but that which is moral or Christlike. It may be legal to commit adultery, it may be legal to have premarital physical relations, it may be legal to gossip, but none of those actions is moral or Christlike. Integrity is not just adherence to the legal code; it is also adherence to the higher moral code. It is as U.S. president Abraham Lincoln suggested: living in accord with “the better angels of our nature.”⁵

Every young man has the moral duty to protect and preserve the virtue of his date, and every young woman has the reciprocal moral duty for her date. It is a test of his or her integrity. The man or woman who is striving for integrity will develop a resolve and a discipline that transcend even the powerful passions of physical emotions. It is that integrity to God and to self and to others that sustains them and empowers them even when Satan unleashes his arsenal of moral temptations upon them. To this generation the Lord said, “I will raise up unto myself a pure people” (D&C 100:16). God is counting on us to be that generation.

Some years ago my business partner and I needed to terminate an employee. After some discussions we reached a settlement to compensate him for his services. I felt that the settlement was more than fair, but some strained relationships resulted from the negotiations nonetheless. That night I felt a gloom come over me. I tried to dispel it by reasoning within myself that I had been fair, but the feeling would not leave. Then this impression came: “It’s not enough to be fair; you must also strive to be Christlike.” Adherence to the

highest moral code is a hallmark of a man or a woman of integrity.

3. Integrity makes decisions based on eternal implications. One of the young women in our ward was taking a test at the local high school. As she looked up, she saw one of her friends cheating. Their eyes made contact. Embarrassed, the friend shrugged her shoulders and mouthed the words “I need the grade.” Somehow this young lady had lost her eternal vision—it is not grades but godhood that is our destination. What good does it do to be accepted to the most prestigious university but forfeit our exaltation in the process? Every time someone cheats, he trades his spiritual birthright for a mess of pottage (see Genesis 25:29–34). In his shortsightedness he has opted for a dollar today rather than infinite wealth in the life to come.

A disappointed father once told me that his teenage daughter wanted to “live it up” and then, three months before her intended marriage, clean up her act so she could receive a temple recommend. I do not know of any stake president who would give a recommend under such circumstances. But even if it were given, it would be a curse, not a blessing. Integrity is not shortsighted—it is not just a temporary change of behavior; it is a permanent change of nature.

King Benjamin told us how we might change our natures from a natural man to a spiritual man: “For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and

We cannot continue to fully acquire other Christlike virtues until we first make integrity the granite foundation of our lives. In some cases this may require us to go through the painful process of ripping out an existing foundation built upon deceit and replacing it stone by stone with a foundation of integrity.



Changing our natures, not just our behaviors, is facilitated by an eternal perspective that we are the children of God, that we have His spark of divinity within us, and that through the Atonement we can become like Him—the perfect model of integrity.

becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father” (Mosiah 3:19; emphasis added).

Changing our natures, not just our behaviors, is facilitated by an eternal perspective that we are the children of God, that we have His spark of divinity within us, and that through the Atonement we can become like Him—the perfect model of integrity.

4. Integrity is disclosing the whole truth and nothing but the truth. I believe the Lord can live with our weaknesses and mistakes, provided we demonstrate a desire and effort to repent. That is what the Atonement is all about. But I do not believe He can easily tolerate a deceitful heart or a lying tongue.

A few years ago I conducted a mission tour. Some of the missionaries were struggling with obedience. That evening the mission president and I conducted interviews with some of the missionaries. The next morning the mission president commenced our zone conference by giving a masterful talk on integrity. I felt impressed to speak further on that subject. We observed that in a few moments we would be conducting additional interviews. We requested that the missionaries not play the game in which someone only discloses the truth if he is asked the perfect, pointed question.

The Spirit was there, and four missionaries from the night before privately stepped forward and said, “We have something else to disclose.” One of them said, “I want to be

an honest man.” That day he changed his foundation of sand for a granite foundation of integrity.

5. Integrity knows no alibis or excuses. There is something ennobling about the man or woman who admits his or her weaknesses and takes the blame square on without excuse or alibi. On multiple occasions Joseph Smith recorded his weaknesses in the Doctrine and Covenants for all to read. This tells us he was not perfect, but it also tells us he had nothing to hide—he was a man of integrity. What does this do for his credibility when he tells the story of the First Vision or the account of Moroni’s visitations? It tells us that we can trust him, that we can believe his every word because he is, indeed, a man of integrity.

6. Integrity is keeping our covenants and our commitments, even in times of inconvenience. Integrity is the courage to do right regardless of the consequences and the inconvenience. President N. Eldon Tanner (1898–1982), former First Counselor in the First Presidency, told the following experience:

“A young man came to me not long ago and said, ‘I made an agreement with a man that requires me to make certain payments each year. I am in arrears, and I can’t make those payments, for if I do, it is going to cause me to lose my home. What shall I do?’

“I looked at him and said, ‘Keep your agreement.’

“‘Even if it costs me my home?’

“I said, ‘I am not talking about your home. I am talking about your agreement; and I think your wife would rather have a husband who



would keep his word, meet his obligations, keep his pledges or his covenants, and have to rent a home than to have a home with a husband who will not keep his covenants and his pledges.”⁶

He had a difficult choice: his home or his integrity. A man or woman of integrity does not yield or succumb merely because it is hard or expensive or inconvenient. In this respect the Lord has a perfect sense of integrity. He has said, “Who am I . . . that have promised and have not fulfilled?” (D&C 58:31).

One of the acid tests of our integrity is whether we keep the commitments and promises we have made or whether there are loopholes in our word.

7. Integrity is not governed by the presence of others. It is internally, not externally, driven. Elder Marion D. Hanks (1921–2011) of the Seventy told of the man and his small son who “stopped at an isolated cornfield on a remote country road” and eyed the delicious corn beyond the fence. The father, after looking in front of him, behind him, to the left of him, and to the right of him, “started to climb the fence” to take some ears of corn. His son looked at him and said reproachfully, “Dad, you forgot to look up.”⁷

In Shakespeare’s play *Hamlet*, Polonius says to his son Laertes:

*To thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.⁸*

What wonderful counsel! We have a choice. We can either seize the moment and take control of our lives or become mere puppets to our environment and our peers.

Would you watch pornography in front of your mother, your date, your spouse, or your bishop? If it is wrong in the presence of others, it is just as wrong in their absence. The man of integrity who is true to self and to God will choose the right whether or not anyone is looking because he is self-driven, not externally controlled.

May the integrity of our souls have a sign that reads in bold black letters “NOT FOR SALE AT ANY PRICE” so that it might be said of us, as it was of Hyrum Smith, “Blessed is my servant Hyrum Smith; for I, the Lord, love him because of the integrity of his heart” (D&C 124:15).

May we all become men and women of integrity—not because we have to but because we want to. The Lord announced the reward for those who do so: “Verily I say unto you, all among them who know their hearts are honest . . . and are willing to observe their covenants by sacrifice . . . *are accepted of me*” (D&C 97:8; emphasis added).

May we all be accepted of God because we are striving to become men and women of integrity. ■

From a devotional address delivered on December 6, 2011, at Brigham Young University. For the full text in English, go to speeches.byu.edu.

NOTES

1. Robert Bolt, *A Man for All Seasons: A Play of Sir Thomas More* (1960), 2.
2. Bolt, *A Man for All Seasons*, 95.
3. See Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, “Every Window, Every Spire ‘Speaks of the Things of God,’” *Ensign*, Mar. 1993, 9.
4. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (1960), 22.
5. Abraham Lincoln, first inaugural address, Mar. 4, 1861.
6. N. Eldon Tanner, in Conference Report, Oct. 1966, 99.
7. Marion D. Hanks, in Conference Report, Oct. 1968, 116.
8. William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. W. J. Craig (1914), act 1, scene 3, lines 85–87.

Seeking to serve others as the Savior did, one busy mother realized that she had many opportunities to serve—not outside the home but inside.



Discipleship

AT ALL TIMES,
IN ALL THINGS,
IN ALL PLACES

By Melissa Merrill

When Alma explained the covenant of baptism at the Waters of Mormon, he taught that it involves standing as a witness of God “at all times and in all things, and in all places” (Mosiah 18:9). It’s a standard the Savior’s disciples still strive to live today and a covenant renewed each week during the sacrament, when Church members promise to “always remember” the Savior (D&C 20:77).

What exactly does such discipleship look like? Church Magazines invited Latter-day Saints around the world to participate in what we called a “discipleship experiment.” In essence, we invited these members to focus on a particular teaching of or story about Jesus Christ, consistently study and ponder that selection of scripture for a week, and report on how a dedicated study of the Savior’s life and teachings affected how they followed Him “at all times” in their lives.

Discipleship at All Times

Kara Laszczyk of Utah, USA, had long seen discipleship as a desire to emulate and become more like Jesus Christ and as a willingness to

sacrifice and serve in sharing His gospel. But she felt somewhat hampered by her introverted personality.

“I have a tendency to think only within my sphere because it is uncomfortable for me to put myself out there for others,” she explains. “I worry too much about what other people think of me rather than what I think of myself and what my Savior thinks of me.”

But Sister Laszczyk says her weeklong experiment of studying Luke 7, which discusses the Savior ministering to several people, caused her to reconsider her motives. She asked herself: “Are my actions driven from a genuine desire to become like the Savior and care for others, or am I just checking items off my list so that I can feel good knowing that I have completed an assignment? Am I more concerned about the well-being of others or about what others will think about my actions?”

She says she came to realize that part of following the Savior—doing what He would do in a given situation—meant loving and serving *when she was needed*, not just when it was convenient.



THE CHALLENGES OF DISCIPLESHIP

"When we promise to follow the Savior, to walk in His footsteps, and be His disciples, we are promising to go where that divine path leads us. And the path of salvation has always led one way or another through Gethsemane. So if the Savior faced such injustices and discouragements, such persecutions, unrighteousness, and suffering, we cannot expect that we are not going to face some of that if we still intend to call ourselves His true disciples and faithful followers."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Lessons from Liberty Jail," *Ensign*, Sept. 2009, 31.

"Discipleship is not passive," she says. "It is not always easy. The time, energy, and means that we sacrifice in genuine loving service toward others will help us to come closer to the Savior." And, she adds, she takes heart in knowing that the Lord asks us neither to run faster than we are able (see Mosiah 4:27) nor to do things we could not do without His help.

Knowing those principles helped Sister Laszczyk participate in a fast for family members, even though fasting has been a weak area for her in the past. That knowledge has also motivated her to change at a more general level.

"I want to be more proactive about giving service instead of just waiting until a sign-up sheet is passed around," she says. "I want to be a better visiting teacher. I want to look for some way that I can serve outside of the Church in my community. I want my first thought to be 'What can I do for them?' or 'What do they need?' not 'Do I have time?' or 'How will this affect me?'

"We need our Savior," she concludes, "but our Savior also needs us. He needs us to help and lift each other."

Francisco Samuel Cabrera Perez of Chihuahua, Mexico, says he doesn't consider himself a bad person; he has sought to obey the commandments and fulfill his duties to his family and to his fellowman since he was baptized at 16. But the experiment involving studying the Savior's life helped him shift his understanding of discipleship from theoretical to practical.

In studying John 6:27–63, the sermon where the Savior calls Himself the Bread of Life, Brother Cabrera came to recognize in himself a tendency that many have: to see to his personal comfort first.

"I always find one or more 'reasons'—excuses—to postpone my duties," he explains. Thoughts like "In a while" or "Tomorrow" or "There's no rush" come into his mind, he says, "hovering like vultures that block my family, economic, social, and, above all, eternal progress."

Following the Savior only after doing what we like makes us "nearly disciples," not true ones, he says. Reading about the Savior's commitment to submitting to the will of the Father increased Brother Cabrera's own commitment, and he came to better understand how taking the sacrament each week helps him "[put] off the natural man" (Mosiah 3:19).

"I submit to the influence of the Holy Spirit and allow the power of the Atonement to make me a saint," explains Brother Cabrera. "For this to happen, I need to develop the attributes of Christ: becoming like a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, loving, being willing to submit to the will of the Lord" (see Mosiah 3:19).

As Brother Cabrera made a concerted effort to put off the natural man, he found an increased love for Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, his family, his leaders, and other associates. He found that his work performance increased. And most of all, he found that he enjoyed—not suffered in—doing things to build the kingdom of God.

"While I used to see discipleship of the Savior as a burden, I now see that His yoke is easy and His burden is light" (see Matthew 11:30), Brother Cabrera says. "That's what the great plan of happiness is: to follow Jesus Christ and to rejoice with Him now and in the eternities."

Being a disciple of Jesus Christ isn't simply a periodic activity but a way of life.

Discipleship in All Things

Chioma N., age 15, of Nigeria, studied John 7 and 3 Nephi 14 as part of a desire to be more obedient. She admits that it's difficult to "do some things I hate doing—especially tidying up the kitchen when I am tired." But she also has a desire to "love people around her," and obedience, she found, was one way to show that love (see John 14:15).

As Chioma studied the Savior's teachings about obedience and read about His submission to Heavenly Father's will, she recognized that because Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ knew that we would sin and go astray, They gave us commandments to help us stay on the strait and narrow path. She also learned that without obedience, we cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

"I learned that nobody is perfect, but with obedience, we can all strive toward perfection," she said. "And I have learned that we should be obedient so that Heavenly Father can bless us."

She found an opportunity to exhibit obedience at school when she was asked to sweep the classroom when it wasn't her turn.

"I humbly obeyed as I listened to the Holy Ghost telling me to obey and sweep the classroom. My fellow students were surprised, and our teacher also. Because of this incident, people now know me as an obedient and humble girl. I felt happy throughout the week because I was obedient."

Michelle Kielmann Hansen grew up in Greenland and now lives in Denmark, both places that have a culture of "showing kindness and being helpful," she says. In many aspects, she says, the places where she has



lived have helped make leading a Christlike life easier.

In other ways, though, she says it's difficult to help people understand that being a disciple of Jesus Christ isn't simply a periodic activity but rather a way of life. She said that her peers, including two nonmember roommates, often have difficulty understanding a lifestyle that involves "all those hours at church," temple attendance, scripture study, and monthly fasting. Living a disciple's life becomes even more difficult when she encounters bad media, crude language, or other negative external influences. "With those influences," she says, "it can be very challenging to remember that I'm actually a disciple of Jesus Christ."

Sister Hansen admits that it's hard to be a young adult in a world whose morals seem to be constantly shifting. In some cases, the decision between right and wrong is clear-cut. In other cases, it's not. But, she says, even though the situations she encounters are sometimes complex, the scriptures are simple.

"It's more difficult to be a disciple of Jesus Christ if you don't know Him," Sister Hansen says. "The scriptures are tools for us to get to know Him. Every time I didn't know how to act, I automatically turned to what I had been studying in the mornings and evenings," she says. "Studying [the Savior's] life and teachings helped me to better understand

*One member said,
"We can find some
new way to be like
the Savior every
time we study His
life. And then we
continue to learn
it by following His
example."*



that He did what He did because He loves every one of us.

"As I learned more about Him, I understood that being a disciple of Jesus Christ means knowing who He is. And that helped me act in ways that He taught. Discipleship is to know [and choose] what Jesus Christ would do in any situation—therefore, it's important to study His teachings frequently."

Discipleship in All Places

Stacey White, a mother of four in Indiana, USA, was longing for an opportunity to help a neighbor, friend, or even a stranger during the week she studied Matthew 25:35–40, where the Savior teaches that serving "the least of these" is, in fact, serving Him (verse 40).

"Because I am a busy stay-at-home mom of four young children, I sometimes feel frustrated that I'm not able to be of service as often as I would like," Sister White explained. "I am so busy taking care of my own family's needs that I have little time for anything extra."

Sister White noted that as she continued to study, cross-reference, and ponder these scriptures, praying for opportunities to serve, "the week seemed to take on a higher level of stress than what normally comes with motherhood"—certainly not what she had hoped for.

"There were school projects to help with, more than the usual messes to

clean up, sibling fights to referee, and a mountain of laundry that seemed to regenerate itself. The to-do list seemed to never come close to being completed. My prayer seemed to go unanswered as I longed for the free time and energy to serve someone other than my husband and children."

But then, partway through the week, Sister White came to a realization: just because she didn't have the opportunity to serve outside her home did not mean that the Lord had let her prayer go unanswered, and it didn't mean that she hadn't been serving in meaningful ways.

"The Lord *was* answering my prayer by giving me those opportunities within my own family," she says. "At times I feel that the service within my own family somehow doesn't count, that in order to be classified as service, it must be outside the home, rendered to someone other than a family member. But with my new understanding, while I was making beds, doing laundry, chauffeuring kids, and doing all my daily duties as a mother, I did them more joyfully. My tasks didn't seem quite so mundane, and I realized I was making a difference for my family."

For Dima Ivanov of Vladivostok, Russia, the invitation to participate in the "discipleship experiment" came at a hectic time. Brother Ivanov had recently left his job to begin his own business, and because he had so many work-related responsibilities to

consider, he wondered if he would have difficulty keeping discipleship at the forefront of his thoughts.

Still, he agreed to participate, and since discipleship meant to him "obeying and following the direction or advice of a teacher," he delved into the Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew 5 and 3 Nephi 12.

What Brother Ivanov found as he studied the characteristics of that sermon, he said, were his own weaknesses. But knowing that the Savior had promised that those who humble themselves would have weak things made strong (see Ether 12:27), Brother Ivanov turned to Him, seeking opportunities to grow.

"I felt the Savior closer to me," reported Brother Ivanov. "I learned that He is the greatest Teacher, and I learned ways I could become more like Him. As I studied about the nature of discipleship, I learned that we can find some new way to be like the Savior every time we study His life. And then we continue to learn it by following His example. We have to practice what we learn."

He said his understanding of discipleship changed over the week. "Following the Savior is not just studying gospel principles or obeying His commandments," he explained. "Wherever we are or whatever we are doing, we can have the 'real desire to follow His example and to have the intention to become like Him.' ■

Melissa Merrill lives in Idaho, USA.



By Elder
Dallin H. Oaks
Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles



Balancing TRUTH & TOLERANCE

The existence and nature of truth is one of the fundamental questions of mortal life. Jesus told the Roman governor Pilate that He came into the world to “bear witness unto the truth.” That unbeliever responded, “What is truth?” (John 18:37–38). Earlier the Savior had declared, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). In modern revelation, He declared, “Truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come” (D&C 93:24).

We believe in *absolute truth*, including the existence of God and the right and wrong established by His commandments. We know that the existence of God and the existence of absolute truth are fundamental to life on this earth, whether they are believed in or not.

We also know that evil exists and that some things are simply, seriously, and everlasting wrong.

Shocking reports of large-scale thievery and lying in civilized societies suggest a moral vacuum in which many have little sense of right and wrong. Widespread rioting, pillaging, and cheating have caused many to wonder whether we are losing the

moral foundation Western countries have received from their Judeo-Christian heritage.¹

It is well to worry about our moral foundation. We live in a world where more and more persons of influence are teaching and acting out a belief that there is no absolute right and wrong—that all authority and all rules of behavior are man-made choices that can prevail over the commandments of God. Many even question whether there is a God.

The philosophy of moral relativism, which holds that each person is free to choose for him or herself what is right and wrong, is becoming the unofficial creed for many in the United States and other Western nations. At the extreme level, evil acts that used to be localized and covered up like a boil are now legalized and paraded like a banner.

Persuaded by this philosophy, many of the rising generation are caught up in self-serving pleasures, pornography, dishonesty, foul language, revealing attire, pagan painting and piercing of body parts, and degrading sexual indulgence.

Many religious leaders teach the existence of God as the ultimate lawgiver, by whose command certain behavior is absolutely right and true and other behavior is absolutely wrong and untrue.² Bible and Book of Mormon prophets foresaw this time, when men would be “lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God” (2 Timothy 3:4) and, indeed, when men would deny God (see Jude 1:4; 2 Nephi 28:5; Moroni 7:17; D&C 29:22).

We must stand up for truth, even while we practice tolerance and respect for beliefs and ideas different from our own.

In this troubled circumstance, we who believe in God and the corollary truth of absolute right and wrong have the challenge of living in a godless and increasingly amoral world. In this circumstance, all of us—especially the rising generation—have a duty to stand up and speak out to affirm that God exists and that there are absolute truths that His commandments establish.

Many teachers in schools, colleges, and universities are teaching and practicing relative morality. This is shaping the attitudes of many young people who are taking their places as the teachers of our children and the shapers of

public attitudes through the media and popular entertainment. This philosophy of moral relativism denies what millions of believing Christians, Jews, and Muslims consider fundamental, and this denial creates serious problems for all of us. What believers should do about this introduces the second of my twin subjects, tolerance.

Tolerance is defined as a friendly and fair attitude toward unfamiliar or different opinions and practices or toward the persons who hold or practice them. As modern transportation and communication have brought all of us into closer proximity to different peoples and different ideas, we have greater need for tolerance.

This greater exposure to diversity both enriches our lives and complicates them. We are enriched by associations with different peoples, which remind us of the wonderful diversity of the children of God. But diversity in cultures and values also challenges us to identify what can be embraced as consistent with our gospel culture and values and what cannot be. In this way, diversity increases the potential for conflict and requires us to be more thoughtful about the nature of tolerance. What is tolerance, when does it apply, and when does it not apply?

These are harder questions for those who affirm the existence of God and absolute truth than for those who believe in moral relativism. The weaker one's belief in God and the fewer one's moral absolutes, the fewer the occasions when the ideas or practices of others will confront one with the challenge to be tolerant. For example, an atheist has no need to decide what kinds and occasions of profanity or blasphemy can be tolerated and what kinds should be confronted. Persons who don't believe in God or in absolute truth in moral matters can see themselves as the most tolerant of persons. For them, almost anything goes. This belief system can tolerate almost any behavior and almost any person. Unfortunately, some who believe in moral relativism seem to have difficulty tolerating those who insist that there is a God who should be respected and that there are certain moral absolutes that should be observed.



Because followers of Jesus Christ are to be in the world but not of the world, we must seek tolerance from those who hate us for not being of the world.

Three Absolute Truths

So what does tolerance mean to us and other believers, and what are our special challenges in applying it? I begin with three absolute truths. I express them as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, but I believe that most of these ideas are shared by believers generally.

First, all persons are brothers and sisters under God, taught within their various religions to love and do good to one another. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) expressed this idea for Latter-day Saints: “Each of us [from various religious denominations] believes in the fatherhood of God, although we may differ in our interpretations of Him. Each of us is part of a great family, the human family, sons and daughters of God, and therefore brothers and sisters. We must work harder to build mutual respect, an attitude of forbearance, with tolerance one for another regardless of the doctrines and philosophies which we may espouse.”³

Note that President Hinckley spoke of mutual respect *as well as* tolerance. Living together with mutual respect for one another’s differences is a challenge in today’s world. However—and here I express a *second* absolute truth—this living with differences is what the gospel of Jesus Christ teaches us we must do.

The kingdom of God is like leaven, Jesus taught (see Matthew 13:33). Leaven—yeast—is hidden away in the larger mass until the whole is leavened, which means

raised by its influence. Our Savior also taught that His followers will have tribulation in the world (see John 16:33), that their numbers and dominions will be small (see 1 Nephi 14:12), and that they will be hated because they are not of the world (see John 17:14). But that is our role. We are called to live with other children of God who do not share our faith or our values and who do not have the covenant obligations we have assumed. We are to be *in* the world but not *of* the world.

Because followers of Jesus Christ are commanded to be leaven, we must seek tolerance from those who hate us for not being of the world. As part of this, we will sometimes need to challenge laws that would impair our freedom to practice our faith, doing so in reliance on our constitutional rights to the free exercise of religion. The big concern is “the ability of people of all faiths to work out their relationship with God and one another without the government looking over their shoulder.”⁴ That is why we need understanding and support when we must contend for religious freedom.

We must also practice tolerance and respect toward others. As the Apostle Paul taught, Christians should “follow after the things which make for peace” (Romans 14:19) and, as much as possible, “live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12:18). Consequently, we should be alert to honor the good we should see in all people and in many opinions and practices that differ from our own. As the Book of Mormon teaches:

"All things which are good cometh of God; . . .

" . . . wherefore, every thing which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God.

"Wherefore, take heed . . . that ye do not judge . . . that which is good and of God to be of the devil" (Moroni 7:12–14).

That approach to differences will yield tolerance and also respect toward us.

Our tolerance and respect for others and their beliefs does not cause us to abandon our commitment to the truths we understand and the covenants we have made. That is a *third* absolute truth. We are cast as combatants in the war between truth and error. There is no middle ground. We must stand up for truth, even while we practice tolerance and respect for beliefs and ideas different from our own and for the people who hold them.

Tolerance for Behavior

While we must practice tolerance and respect for others and their beliefs, including their right to explain and advocate their positions, we are not required to respect and tolerate wrong *behavior*. Our duty to truth requires us to seek relief from behavior that is wrong. This is easy with extreme behaviors that most believers and nonbelievers recognize as wrong or unacceptable.

As to less-extreme behaviors, where even believers disagree on whether they are wrong, the nature and extent of what we should tolerate is much more difficult to define. Thus, a thoughtful Latter-day Saint woman wrote me about her concern that "the world's definition of 'tolerance' seems to be increasingly used in relation to tolerating wicked lifestyles." She asked how the Lord would define *tolerance*.⁵

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has said: "The word *tolerance* does not stand alone. It requires an object and a response to qualify it as a virtue. . . . Tolerance is often demanded but seldom returned. Beware of the word *tolerance*. It is a very unstable virtue."⁶



As the Apostle Paul taught, Christians should "follow after the things which make for peace" and, as much as possible, "live peaceably with all men."

This inspired caution reminds us that for persons who believe in absolute truth, tolerance for behavior is like a two-sided coin. Tolerance or respect is on one side of the coin, but truth is always on the other. You cannot possess or use the coin of tolerance without being conscious of both sides.

Our Savior applied this principle. When He faced the woman taken in adultery, Jesus spoke the comforting words of tolerance: "Neither do I condemn thee." Then, as He sent her away, He spoke the commanding words of truth: "Go, and sin no more" (John 8:11). We should all be edified and strengthened by this example of speaking both tolerance and truth: kindness in the communication but firmness in the truth.

Another thoughtful Latter-day Saint wrote: "I often hear the name of the Lord taken in vain, and I also have acquaintances who tell me that they are living with their boyfriends. I have found that observance of the Sabbath is almost obsolete. How can I keep my covenant to stand as a witness and not offend these people?"⁷

I begin with our personal conduct. In applying the sometimes-competing demands of truth and tolerance to these three behaviors—profanity, cohabitation, and Sabbath breaking—and many others, we should not be tolerant with ourselves. We should be ruled by the demands of truth. We should be strong in keeping the commandments

and our covenants, and we should repent and improve when we fall short.

President Thomas S. Monson has taught: “The face of sin today often wears the mask of tolerance. Do not be deceived; behind that facade is heartache, unhappiness, and pain. . . . If your so-called friends urge you to do anything you know to be wrong, *you* be the one to make a stand for right, even if you stand alone.”⁸

Similarly, with our children and others whom we have a duty to teach, our duty to truth is paramount. Of course, teaching efforts bear fruit only through the agency of others, so our teaching must always be done with love, patience, and persuasion.

I turn now to the obligations of truth and tolerance in our personal relations with associates who use profanity in our presence, live with a partner out of wedlock, or do not observe the Sabbath day appropriately.

Our obligation to tolerance means that none of these behaviors—or others we consider deviations from the truth—should ever cause us to react with hateful communications or unkind actions. But our obligation to truth has its own set of requirements and its own set of blessings. When we “speak every man truth with his neighbour” and when we “[speak] the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15, 25), we are acting as servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, doing His work. Angels will stand with us, and He will send His Holy Spirit to guide us.

In this sensitive matter we should first consider whether—or the extent to which—we should communicate to our associates what we know to be true about their behavior. In most cases this decision can depend on how directly we are personally affected by it.

Profanity consistently used in our presence is an appropriate cause for us to communicate the fact that this is offensive to us. Profanity used out of our presence by nonbelievers probably would not be an occasion for us to confront the offenders.

Cohabitation we know to be a serious sin, in which Latter-day Saints must not engage. When practiced by those around us, it can be private behavior or something we are

asked to condone, sponsor, or facilitate. In the balance between truth and tolerance, tolerance can be dominant where the behavior does not involve us personally. But if the cohabitation does involve us personally, we should be governed by our duty to truth. For example, it is one thing to ignore serious sins when they are private; it is quite another thing to be asked to sponsor or implicitly endorse them, such as by housing them in our own homes.

On Sabbath observance, we should perhaps explain our belief that our observance of the Sabbath, including our partaking of the sacrament, restores us spiritually and makes us better people for the rest of the week. Then, to other believers, we might express appreciation for

While we must practice tolerance and respect for others and their beliefs, including their right to explain and advocate their positions, we are not required to respect and tolerate wrong behavior.

the fact that we share common ground on what is most vital: each of us believes in God and in the existence of absolute truth, even though we differ in our definitions of those fundamentals. Beyond that, we should remember the Savior’s teaching that we should avoid contention (see 3 Nephi 11:29–30) and that our example and our preaching should “be the warning voice, every man to his



We should all be edified and strengthened by the Savior's example of speaking both tolerance and truth: kindness in the communication but firmness in the truth.

neighbor, in mildness and in meekness" (D&C 38:41).

In all of this we should not presume to judge our neighbors or associates on the ultimate effect of their behaviors. That judgment is the Lord's, not ours.

Principles in the Public Square

When believers enter the public square to try to influence the making or the administration of laws motivated by their beliefs, they should apply some different principles.

First, they must seek the inspiration of the Lord to be selective and wise in choosing which true principles they seek to promote by law or executive action. Generally, they should refrain from seeking laws or administrative action to facilitate beliefs that are distinctive to believers, such as the

enforcement of acts of worship, even by implication. Believers can be less cautious in seeking government action that would serve principles broader than merely facilitating the practice of their beliefs, such as laws concerning public health, safety, and morals.

Believers can and must seek laws that will preserve religious freedom. Along with the ascendancy of moral relativism, the United States and other nations are experiencing a disturbing reduction in overall public esteem for religion. Once an accepted part of American life, religion is now suspect in the minds of many. Some influential voices even question the extent to which our constitutions should protect the free exercise of religion, including the right to practice and preach religious principles.

This is a vital matter on which we who believe in a Supreme Being who has established absolute right and wrong in human behavior must unite to insist on our time-honored rights to exercise our religion, to vote our consciences on public issues, and to participate in elections and debates in the public square and the halls of justice. We must stand shoulder to shoulder with other believers to preserve and strengthen the freedom to advocate and practice our religious beliefs, whatever they are. For this purpose we must walk together on the same path in order to secure our freedom to pursue our separate ways when that is necessary according to our separate beliefs.

Second, when believers promote their positions in the public square, they should always be tolerant of the opinions and positions of those who do not share their beliefs. Believers must always speak with love and show patience, understanding, and compassion toward their adversaries. Christian believers are under command to love their neighbors (see Luke 10:27) and to forgive (see Matthew 18:21–35).

They should also remember the Savior's teaching to "bless them that curse [them], do good to them that hate [them], and pray for them which despitefully use [them], and persecute [them]" (Matthew 5:44).

We must stand shoulder to shoulder with other believers to preserve and strengthen the freedom to advocate and practice our religious beliefs.

Third, believers should not be deterred by the familiar charge that they are trying to legislate morality. Many areas of the law are based on Judeo-Christian morality and have been for centuries. Western civilization is based on morality and cannot exist without it. As the second U.S. president, John Adams, declared: "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."⁹

Fourth, believers should not shrink from seeking laws to maintain public conditions or policies that assist them in practicing the requirements of their faith where those conditions or policies are also favorable to the public health, safety, or morals. For example, even though religious beliefs are behind many criminal laws and some family laws, such laws have a long-standing history of appropriateness in democratic societies. But where believers are in the majority, they should always be sensitive to the views of the minority.

Finally, the spirit of our balance of truth and tolerance is

applied in these words of President Hinckley: "Let us reach out to those in our community who are not of our faith. Let us be good neighbors, kind and generous and gracious. Let us be involved in good community causes. There may be situations where, with serious moral issues involved, we cannot bend on matters of principle. But in such instances we can politely disagree without being disagreeable. We can acknowledge the sincerity of those whose positions we cannot accept. We can speak of principles rather than personalities."¹⁰

Watchman on the Tower

The Bible teaches that one of the functions of a prophet is to be a "watchman" to warn Israel (see Ezekiel 3:17; 33:7). In revelation the Lord added this counsel for modern Zion: "Set . . . a watchman upon the tower," who will "[see] the enemy while he [is] yet afar off" and give warning to save the vineyard "from the hands of the destroyer" (D&C 101:45, 54).

I speak as one of those watchmen. I assure you that my message is true. I proclaim my knowledge that God lives! I testify that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, crucified for the sins of the world, and that He reaches out to each of us with the timeless invitation to receive His peace by learning of Him and walking in His way (see D&C 19:23). ■

From a Church Educational System fireside address delivered on September 11, 2011. For the full text in English, go to mormonnewsroom.org/article/truth-and-tolerance-elder-dallin-h-oaks.

NOTES

1. "Is US a Nation of Liars? Casey Anthony Isn't the Only One," *The Christian Science Monitor*, July 19, 2011, 20; "Anarchy in the UK," *The Economist*, Aug. 13, 2011, 144.
2. See, for example, Joseph G. Donders, ed., *John Paul II: The Encyclicals in Everyday Language* (2005), 212–13; see also Rabbi Harold Kushner, *Who Needs God* (2002), 78.
3. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 665.
4. Eric Rassbach, in William McGurn, "Religion and the Cult of Tolerance," *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 16, 2011, A11.
5. Letter to Dallin H. Oaks, May 14, 1998.
6. Boyd K. Packer, "Be Not Afraid" (address at the Ogden Utah Institute of Religion, Nov. 16, 2008), 5; see also Bruce D. Porter, "Defending the Family in a Troubled World," *Ensign*, June 2011, 12–18.
7. Letter to Dallin H. Oaks, Dec. 22, 1987.
8. Thomas S. Monson, "Examples of Righteousness," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2008, 65.
9. In Charles Francis Adams, ed., *The Works of John Adams, Second President of the United States*, 10 vols. (1850–56), 9:229.
10. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 131.

TEMPTED TO LIE

The chapel I worship at in Nigeria is close to a school whose principal wants nothing to do with the Church. On one occasion the principal told a teacher never to return to the school after learning that the teacher was a Latter-day Saint. A Church member who volunteered to visit and explain the mission of the Church was rebuffed.

As a salesman for laboratory and

medical equipment, I often visit schools and hospitals to make sales. After one unsuccessful month, I had no choice but to visit this school. My plan was to sell my product and leave, hoping the principal would not find out I was a member of the Church. The Spirit, however, told me that she *would* want to know about my religion.

My business with the head of the school's science department went

smoothly, and he took me to the principal for payment. After filling out the check, she started asking questions to get to know me better. When her questions became personal, I began to feel uncomfortable. Then she asked the question I had been praying she would not ask: "Which denomination are you a member of?"

I was tempted to lie, collect my check, and go because I badly needed the sale. But I felt I should tell her the truth. After all, the early Saints had experienced worse than this minor test of my faith.

With renewed courage, I looked her straight in the eye and said, "I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." Then I bore my testimony. To my surprise she smiled, said we all worship the same God, and handed me the check.

As I left, a scripture came to my mind: "Now this was a great trial to those that did stand fast in the faith; nevertheless, they were steadfast and immovable in keeping the commandments of God, and they bore with patience the persecution which was heaped upon them" (Alma 1:25).

I was happy not to have disappointed Heavenly Father or myself. Because of this experience, I made a commitment to always be a good sales representative. More important, I committed to always be a good representative of the gospel of Jesus Christ. ■

Aderogba Aderemi, Nigeria



The principal asked me the question I had been praying she would not ask: "Which denomination are you a member of?"

OUR FOOD STORAGE BLESSING

My wife, Brittney, and I began purchasing food storage early in our marriage. In the first months after our wedding, we bought a few storable items each time we went grocery shopping. By adding a little bit at a time, we accumulated a useful store of food. We didn't know when we would need to use it, but we knew it was important.

A year into our marriage, we moved across the country for graduate school, and we brought our food storage with us. Financially, things were difficult. We had used all of our savings to secure housing, and Brittney received no income as a student teacher. We relied on my graduate school assistantship to pay the bills, but it didn't go far.

Our finances took another turn for the worse the second night in our new home. Brittney woke up with severe stomach pain, and when it didn't subside after several hours, we went to the hospital. She had her appendix removed later that day.

After she recovered, we sat down to budget our money. As we calculated the next four months' bills—which included the emergency surgery—we discovered we could still get by without going into debt. In order to do so, however, we could spend no more than \$25 each month on groceries. That was about one-fourth of what we were used to spending.

The food storage we had accumulated over the past year became invaluable. It was enough to cover our basic needs for four months, and we used the budgeted \$25 to buy milk and other perishables. We didn't eat fancy food, but we didn't go hungry.

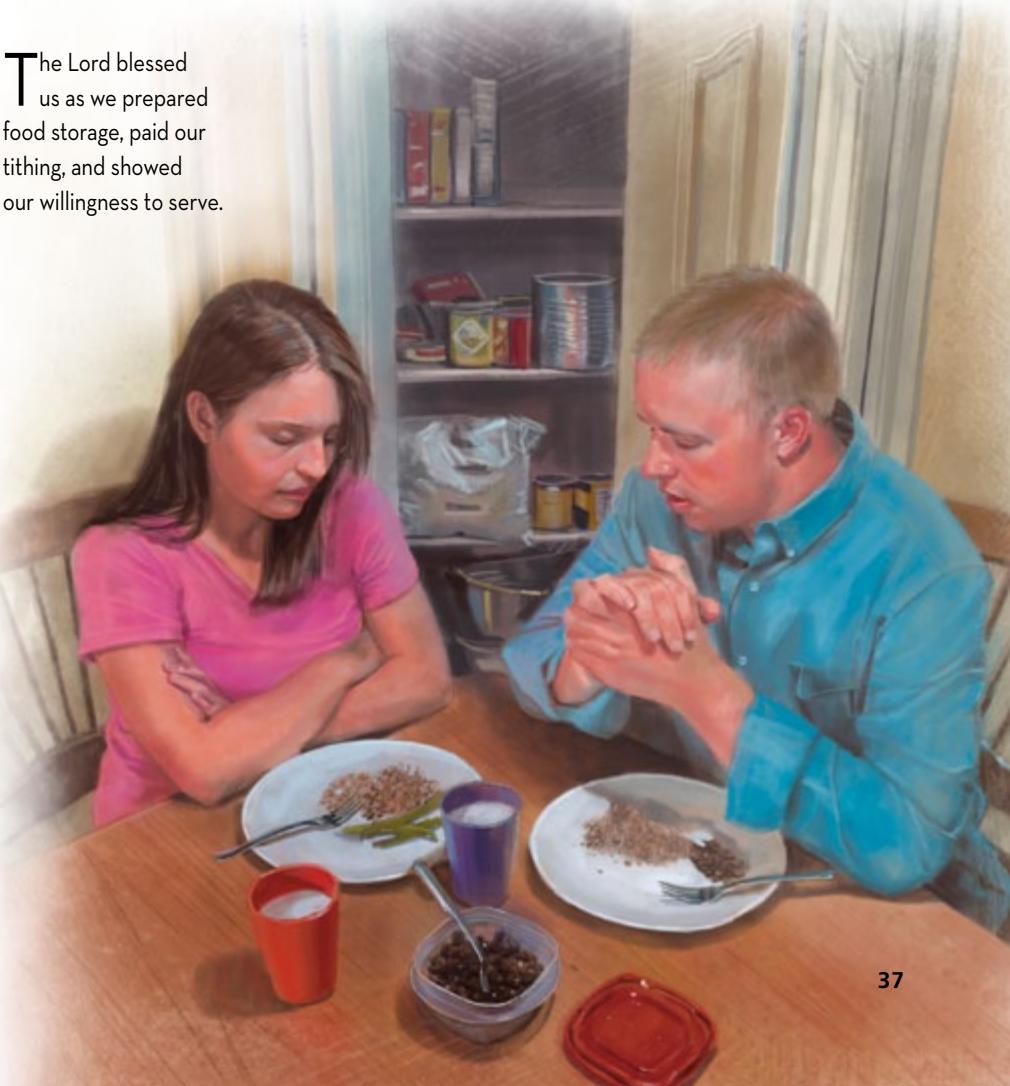
As we lived frugally and served others willingly, we received added blessings. One of my fellow students finished his degree and asked us to help his family move. While we were helping, he asked if we would like to take the food left in their freezer.

Because of his kindness, we now had meat to supplement our food storage.

The Lord blessed us as we prepared food storage, paid our tithing, and showed willingness to serve. We made it through those months without borrowing any money. After that semester, my wife found a full-time job, and we could afford to spend more money on groceries. We built up our food storage again, and we continue to be blessed as we obey the Lord's commandments. ■

Bruce Richards, Illinois, USA

The Lord blessed us as we prepared food storage, paid our tithing, and showed our willingness to serve.



WE JOINED IN

We moved from a large city with a large Latter-day Saint population to a town of 5,000 in the rural Deep South region of the United States, where we lived for more than seven years. As I was leaving the local hardware store our first day there, a teenage clerk said, "Have a good day, Mrs. Grant."

I asked, "How do you know my name?"

He replied, "Y'all are the only new people in town."

We found a house across the street from one Protestant church and a block from another, but we lived 45 minutes from the nearest LDS meetinghouse. Every Sunday, as well as a couple of times during the week, we made the trek to our meetinghouse. During those seven years, my husband served in the bishopric, and I served as Primary president and then as Young Women president.

We knew that the social life and heartbeat of small towns exist in the local churches. To be accepted, we knew we had to get involved. Our three young children soon bonded with other ward children, but we also wanted them to feel a sense of belonging to our neighborhood. We encouraged them to become involved during the week in local church activities, including family suppers on Wednesday nights at one church.

We put our son and our girls in local youth programs. Our children

also attended Vacation Bible School at both nearby churches. Our girls sang in a local church youth choir; one daughter even became a soloist in the choir. Our son attended a local church youth group.

Often a visiting revival minister preached against the "Mormons," but our neighbors knew we were nothing

like the people the preachers warned them about.

Every summer the regional churches of one Protestant sect sponsored a youth camp on St. Simons Island, Georgia. After one such camp, the minister said from the pulpit, "The only youth to go to camp this summer was our good

We knew that the social life and heartbeat of small towns exist in the local churches. To be accepted, we knew we had to get involved.



DID THE GUIDELINES APPLY TO ME?

little Mormon girl, Kelly Grant."

Our Protestant neighbors embraced us because we had embraced them. We never had to compromise our standards or principles.

As our children grew, so did their testimonies of the restored Church. What they learned from the other churches' Bible stories enabled them to make a better correlation between the Bible and the Book of Mormon. In addition, they saw the priesthood's vital role in our Church, and they could feel the difference.

When our children were approaching dating age, my husband's company transferred him to Atlanta, Georgia. I wept as we signed our house deed over to the new owners. Our lawyer hugged me and tenderly said, "No one can ever say the Mormons haven't been here."

Our children's small-town Protestant experience taught them tolerance, patience, and understanding. They found common ground with those of other faiths, which helped them serve as ambassadors for the Church. And they came to appreciate the value of the Holy Ghost, the priesthood, and the great love the Savior has for all of us.

We converted no one in those seven years, but we planted seeds. We are blessed today because the people in that small town came into our lives. I hope they are blessed because we came into theirs. ■

Nancy Grant, Georgia, USA

Choosing to be modest has always been easy for me. I grew up in a house where standards were high, and when I married in the temple, my garments reminded me to dress modestly.

Swimsuit shopping, however, turned out to be a struggle for me. Without the guideline of garments, I found myself wanting to wear swimsuits that I would be ashamed for anyone I knew to see me in.

My husband and I were planning a cruise for just the two of us. I thought the cruise would be the perfect time to wear such a swimsuit. I wouldn't see anyone I knew, and therefore I wouldn't feel guilty. No one would know I was a Latter-day Saint, and all the other women on the ship would most likely be dressed like me.

Because I was already married, there was no real reason for me to have a modest swimsuit, or so I thought. Modesty guidelines were just for teenagers, right? But I had a nagging feeling in the back of my mind.

Because I was already married, there was no real reason for me to have a modest swimsuit, or so I thought.

I had been married in the temple. I had accomplished my goal to stay worthy and find a worthy husband. And I wanted to continue choosing the right.

I decided to look up "Dress and Appearance" in *For the Strength of Youth*. It had been a while since I had reviewed the booklet, so the words jumped out at me: "Through your dress and appearance, you can show that you know how precious your body is. You can show that you are a disciple of Jesus Christ and that you love Him" ([2011], 6).

Those words echoed in my head. Was I a disciple of Jesus Christ? Was I willing to be true at *all* times and in *all* places (see Mosiah 18:9)?

Since then I have decided that even in my late 20s, I must maintain the principles I learned in my youth. Those principles definitely still apply to me. I want to be a good example to my children. I want them to know that I am a disciple of Jesus Christ. ■

Julie Letner, Arizona, USA



Standards FOR ALL SEASONS

By Lori Fuller

Five young adults share how examples of obedience from the Book of Mormon guide them as they make choices between right and wrong.

Early in our gospel education, we are taught to recognize right from wrong. We learn that choices have consequences, that obedience brings blessings, and that righteous choices bring us closer to God. In our teens we receive the *For the Strength of Youth* booklet, which clearly states the standards of gospel living.

But sometimes for young adults who are struggling to live in the world but not of the world (see John 17:14), choices and standards may no longer seem as clear. Perhaps there appears to be a wide middle ground to choose from, a vast gray area between right and wrong.

While choices might appear more difficult as we get older, the same standards still apply as when we were younger. The principle of obedience is constant. Choosing to be obedient now is as important as it ever was. As we face decisions, principles from the Book of Mormon—which was written for our day—can guide us to make the best choices and remind us that the greatest blessings come from

the greatest obedience. In this article, five young adults comment on how they're applying these principles.

Obedience Brings Us Closer to God

"What shall I do that I may be born of God, . . . that I may be filled with joy, that I may not be cast off at the last day? . . . I will give away all my sins to know [God]" (Alma 22:15, 18).

When King Lamoni's father heard the word of God, he determined to give up all his sins to know Him. As he learned God's standards, he was determined to keep them in order to stay close to God. With the other Anti-Nephi-Lehies, he made and kept his covenants with Heavenly Father and "never did fall away" (Alma 23:6).

The principle of obedience holds true in the lives of young adults today as well. As Vijay Patha of India explains, "Obedience brings us closer to God. It brings peace of mind, faith, happiness, love, and optimism. There is no other way to these but through the gospel."

"When difficult decisions arise," he continues, "the Holy Ghost can



guide us through. When there are no boundaries, we are in increased danger of falling. Keeping my covenants provides me with boundaries. These boundaries protect me from falling away into unknown paths and have helped me many times to represent Christ and abstain from doing things like using profane language. Setting boundaries provides clarity.”

God Will Help Us Obey

“I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them” (1 Nephi 3:7).

Sometimes commandments may seem difficult to follow, but Heavenly Father has promised that He will always provide a way for us to obey. Like Nephi, young adults who are determined to be faithful can turn to Heavenly Father to find the strength and ability to be obedient. Duncan Purser of England tells how this happened for him:

"Tithing is a commandment with set boundaries: we pay 10 percent of what we earn. But with fast offerings we are given a greater degree of flexibility in our obedience.

"While I was saving for university tuition, the idea of paying a fast offering was a challenge for me. I really struggled on fast Sunday, trying to decide whether I should pay and how much constituted a 'generous' offering. I would turn to prayer, and not only did I always feel prompted to pay fast offerings but I also felt an increased desire to do so.

"I know that the Lord blesses those who keep this commandment, and as I obey, I am never without the necessities of life. As we live the gospel, keep the commandments, and realize that we are examples to everyone around us, our desire to become better will increase, and the Lord will show us what to do.

"The Lord has given us standards for our benefit. We can choose to what degree we live these standards and whether or not our obedience will change us. In my experience, I have seen blessings come as I follow the promptings of the Spirit."

The Lord Wants Us to Obey with Exactness

"They did obey and observe to perform every word of command with exactness; yea, and even according to their faith it was done unto them" (Alma 57:21).

Striving for exact obedience, as the stripling warriors did, will help Jesus Christ's followers become like Him. But our Savior and Heavenly Father understand that no one is perfect. For the times when we fall short, They have provided a way for us to repent and do better.

"I lost the girl of my dreams because we were breaking the law of chastity—just a little," said Tyler (name has been changed). "But breaking the law of chastity 'just a little bit' is still breaking the law of chastity. I kept losing the precious blessings of obedience; I wanted the Spirit in my life.

"I didn't want to do any of the little things people think are OK 'as long as we don't have to see the bishop.' I wanted to keep the law 100 percent. But my decision to be obedient was too late to save our relationship; breaking the law of chastity had polluted it.

"The law of chastity is there for our protection. It isn't a limit to our love. Instead, it is the ultimate way of expressing our love. Through keeping it, we say, 'I love you enough to respect you and keep God's commandments. I love you enough to keep our lives Christ-centered.'

"As single adults we are also held to the standards in *For the Strength of Youth*. The law of chastity applies to everyone equally, no matter what your age or situation. I'm grateful for this newfound testimony because it will help me draw closer to the Savior



The Book of Mormon teaches principles of obedience that can help us cling to the iron rod as we face decisions.

and to my eternal companion when I find her."

Strict Obedience Keeps Us from Danger

"And it came to pass that when Lehonti received the message he durst not go down to the foot of the mount. . . And it came to pass that when Amalickiah found that he could not get Lehonti to come down off from the mount, he went up into the mount" (Alma 47:11–12).

Lehonti was determined to hold his ground. But he decided that to go down just a little bit, to meet his enemy halfway, would be all right. Although Lehonti was sure he was in control, Amalickiah began administering "poison by degrees" (Alma 47:18) until Lehonti died, perhaps not realizing the danger until it was too late.

Claudia R. of Colorado, USA, tells how she held her ground:

"I feel like society is moving toward a gray area. For example, people will say about alcohol, 'One sip isn't going to kill you.' That kind of rationalization is essentially playing mind games with yourself. And it's in those situations—the ones that seem harmless—where agency is really tested.

"So you have to learn to stop, to put your foot down. Some people take what starts out as a gray area, and that gray area becomes really dark. And then you're kind of stuck.

"I had gone on several fun dates with someone, but one time we were alone in the car in the dark, and he tried to pull a move on me. I knew that what he wanted to do could lead to other things. I was not going to let that happen, so I jumped out of the car.

"As single adults, when something goes against our standards, we have to take a stand. With dating, of course, you want to hold hands, hug, and kiss. But Satan wants to deceive us into thinking that the law of chastity is a gray area where partial obedience is OK.

"Our standards need to be firmer than ever. We need to decide before the difficult decisions come up. We have to put our foot down when things are wrong. I know our world isn't easy; we have so many things going on. But the prophets and apostles have given us standards and guidelines. I carry a wallet-sized version of *For the Strength of Youth* with me, and it gets me through hard times."

We Can Be Obedient When Others around Us Are Not

"If they have not charity it mattereth not unto thee, thou hast been faithful; wherefore, thy garments shall be made clean" (Ether 12:37).

When Moroni prayed for the Gentiles of the future to be blessed, God told him that what was most important was that he had remained faithful. The world doesn't make it easy for faithful young adults to live

their standards. But even when others are choosing another path, it is possible to choose a higher way.

Like many other young adults, Victor Kim of South Korea has found himself in situations where others didn't share his standards:

"Sometimes at work, my colleagues and I went out to eat as a team, and they always drank. There was a lot of pressure to join in, and it wasn't easy to turn everybody down. I always made sure that they knew beforehand that I don't drink. Even still, I had to be strong and show confidence in my boundaries.

"In my experience, those who don't set clear boundaries can become complacent and can eventually convince themselves that a little sin is OK. They can become numb to the Spirit and no longer see what is wrong and why it's wrong.

"Peer pressure can also be really strong. Those who aren't strong might eventually join in because what their friends are saying seems to make sense, even though it doesn't fit our standards. But there is no middle ground. Eventually you have to choose.

"To stay strong, it helps to have a good friend so you can talk to each other and rely on each other. That way you can stay strong together. When I keep my standards, I feel safe. I'm worthy to ask God to protect me. I have faith that if I am obedient, He will help me." ■

Lori Fuller lives in Utah, USA.

WE NEED CHRIST'S CHURCH

One trendy attitude is a devil of a lie.

By David A. Edwards

Church Magazines

If you could peek inside the devil's toolbox, you'd see precision instruments for leading people astray, as well as a few well-worn tools that are obviously among his go-to gear.

One particular saw he's been reaching for more and more these days comes in the form of this subtle lie: "You don't need organized religion to be a good person, to be spiritual, or to love Jesus. All churches are imperfect and corrupt anyway."

This deception is cunning because it relies on a couple of true ideas to get you to swallow the big lie. It's true that we should strengthen our relationship with God and that people are imperfect, but these facts don't

mean that the very idea of a church is wrong.

This kind of thinking is false, and here are just five reasons why:

1. Christ established His Church. In the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, you'll see that a good deal of the Savior's ministry consisted of calling people, giving them authority, training them for leadership, and teaching them how to act as a group. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, "Those who reject the need for organized religion reject the work of the Master, who established His Church and its officers in the meridian of time and who reestablished them in modern times."¹

2. The Church administers the gospel and its ordinances. The Savior clearly taught that baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost are necessary for salvation (see John 3:5), and the authority to preach the gospel and perform these ordinances was regulated. As Elder Oaks has said, "The Bible is clear that priesthood authority is necessary and that this authority had to be conferred by the laying on of hands by those who held it.

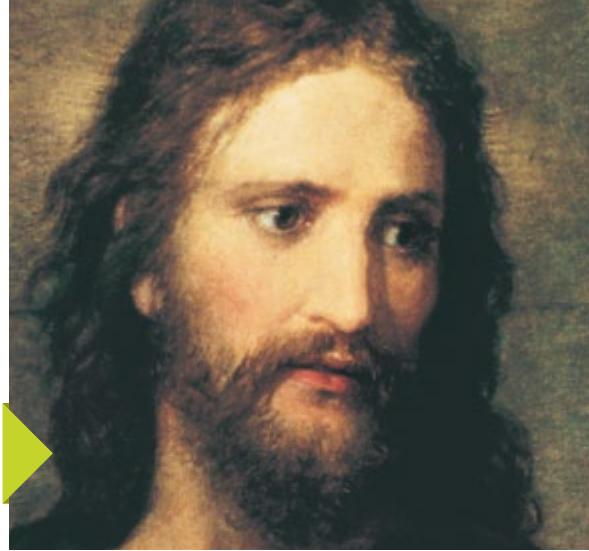
Priesthood authority did not come from a desire to serve or from reading the scriptures."²

3. The Church helps us become better people. Elder Donald L. Hallstrom of the Presidency of the Seventy recently taught: "We need the gospel *and* the Church. In fact, the purpose of the Church is to help us live the gospel."³ Though the Church is made up of imperfect people, it helps us become more like Jesus Christ by teaching us His doctrine, giving us opportunities for service and personal growth, and allowing us to enter into and renew covenants with God.

4. Unity matters. The Lord has commanded us to "be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine" (D&C 38:27). This oneness is an essential part of our Heavenly Father's plan for us. President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has taught:

"We yearn, as spirit children of our Heavenly Father, for that joy which we once had with Him in the life before this one. His desire is to grant us that sacred wish for unity out of His love for us.





"He cannot grant it to us as individuals. The joy of unity He wants so much to give us is not solitary. We must seek it and qualify for it with others. It is not surprising then that God urges us to gather so that He can bless us."⁴

5. "Organized" is not a synonym for "bad" or "corrupt." Usually when people call someone or something "organized," it's a compliment. But somehow in religion it's a put-down. According to Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, one of the reasons Christ organized His Church was "because random, individual

goodness is not enough in the fight against evil."⁵ The Lord spelled out the issue clearly when He said, "Behold, mine house is a house of order, saith the Lord God, and not a house of confusion" (D&C 132:8). Organized is exactly what a religion needs to be.

As you encounter the lies that are the tools of the devil's trade, remember that you have your own set of tools to help you live the gospel—tools available to us through the Church of Jesus Christ: the scriptures, the gift of the Holy Ghost, your testimony, and truths revealed through modern prophets. ■

NOTES

- Dallin H. Oaks, "Two Lines of Communication," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 85.
- Dallin H. Oaks, "The Only True and Living Church," *Liahona*, Aug. 2011, 50; *New Era*, Aug. 2011, 4.
- Donald L. Hallstrom, "Converted to His Gospel through His Church," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2012, 14.
- Henry B. Eyring, "Our Hearts Knit as One," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 69.
- Neal A. Maxwell, "Why Not Now?" *Ensign*, Nov. 1974, 13.

“One of my friends really offended me. I know I’m supposed to be forgiving, but how do I get over the hurt?”

Forgiving your friend and letting go of hurt feelings can be difficult. To forgive *and* to get over the hurt feelings will require mercy—yours and the Lord’s. Your job is not to try to get over the hurt but to forgive: to show mercy to your friend (see D&C 64:8–10). As you do, the Lord, if you seek His help, will show mercy to you. That is, He can replace your hurt feelings with love and peace.

Talk to your friend. Seek to understand what happened. You may find that your friend did not mean to hurt you, which could make it easier to forgive and get over the hurt.

Even if forgiveness is hard or takes a long time, keep trying. Eventually, you will want to let your friend know that you forgive him or her and still want to be friends. Holding a grudge at the cost of a friendship can never lead to the peace that comes from true forgiveness.

Remember that we all depend on the Savior’s Atonement to be forgiven of our sins. Pray to be able to forgive, and have faith that the Lord will help you. He has the power to heal the hurt in your heart.

Let the Lord Judge

Let the Lord be the judge of harmful acts done by others. Remember that the Lord says: “I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men” (D&C 64:10). It is difficult to forget about hurt feelings, but if you pray for help, you will realize that forgiveness can heal terrible wounds and replace hatred with the peace and love that only God can give.

Genesis H., age 16, Antofagasta, Chile

Forgive Everyone



The sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ made Him bleed from every pore, but He overcame the pain and had the strength to forgive while on the cross. Not because He didn’t feel pain but because for Him, the only thing that mattered was the will of the Father. Likewise for us, the only thing that should matter is the will of God, and He requires us to forgive everyone. Even if our wounds heal slowly, we can overcome our pain through prayer and sincere forgiveness of those who wrong us.

Ahou O., age 17, Ivory Coast

Love Them



I’ve found that the best way to deal with hurt is to love the person who offended you. After someone offends me, I try to compliment them and show extra kindness toward them as much as possible. By doing this, the anger doesn’t fester inside you. Instead it goes away completely. You will have a strengthened relationship with whoever offended you.

Katie A., age 18, Utah, USA

See Them through the Lord’s Eyes

Jesus Christ has felt your pain so that you can be forgiven for your sins and also so that you can forgive others. When you pray for the ability to see someone through His eyes, you will

find that you understand them better. As the weeks pass, you will notice that your harsh feelings will go away.

Kimberly B., age 18, Nebraska, USA

Pray to Feel Forgiving



Pray to our loving Heavenly Father that you and your friend will have the courage to forgive one another.

Forgiving someone who has hurt you is a Christlike action. Forgiveness cures even the most hurt feelings.

Lehi E., age 16, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Remember Charity

Nephi taught, "The Lord God hath given a commandment that all men should have charity, which charity is love" (2 Nephi 26:30). For me, charity is the best way to get over the hurt when one of my friends has offended me. Charity means accepting someone's weaknesses; having patience with someone who has let us down; and resisting the impulse to become offended when someone doesn't handle something the way we might have hoped. If we have charity toward our friends, we will be blessed.

Liezcel V., age 21, Negros Occidental, Philippines

Pray to Learn to Forgive

You have to pray to learn how to love and forgive others. Although forgiveness can sometimes be very difficult, our Heavenly Father is always willing

to help us. Remember the example that the Savior set by forgiving all. Colossians 3:13 says, "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." True forgiveness is a process, sometimes a long one. But when we truly forgive, we feel great relief and joy. I know that with effort you will be able to rid yourself of the pain and find true happiness.

Leonardo L., age 20, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Trust in the Atonement

My heart fills with joy when I remember that the atoning power of Jesus Christ can take away our pain. We all have painful experiences from time to time, but by holding tight to Heavenly Father's word, we can receive the strength that we need to endure. Even while the soldiers nailed Him to the cross, Jesus Christ asked the Father to forgive them. His bowels were full of

love and mercy for all men. I know that if we come unto Him and ask for His help, we will be encircled about by His infinite love.

Virginia M., age 20, Peru



FOLLOW THE SAVIOR'S EXAMPLE

"In the most painful hours of the Crucifixion the Savior could say, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do' (Luke 23:34). That is a hard thing to ask when we're hurting or have been offended, are tired or stressed out or suffering innocently. But that is when Christian behavior may matter the most."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Lessons from Liberty Jail," *Ensign*, Sept. 2009, 32.

E-mail your answer by March 15 to liahona@ldschurch.org or send it by mail to:

*Liahona, Questions & Answers 3/2013
50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA*

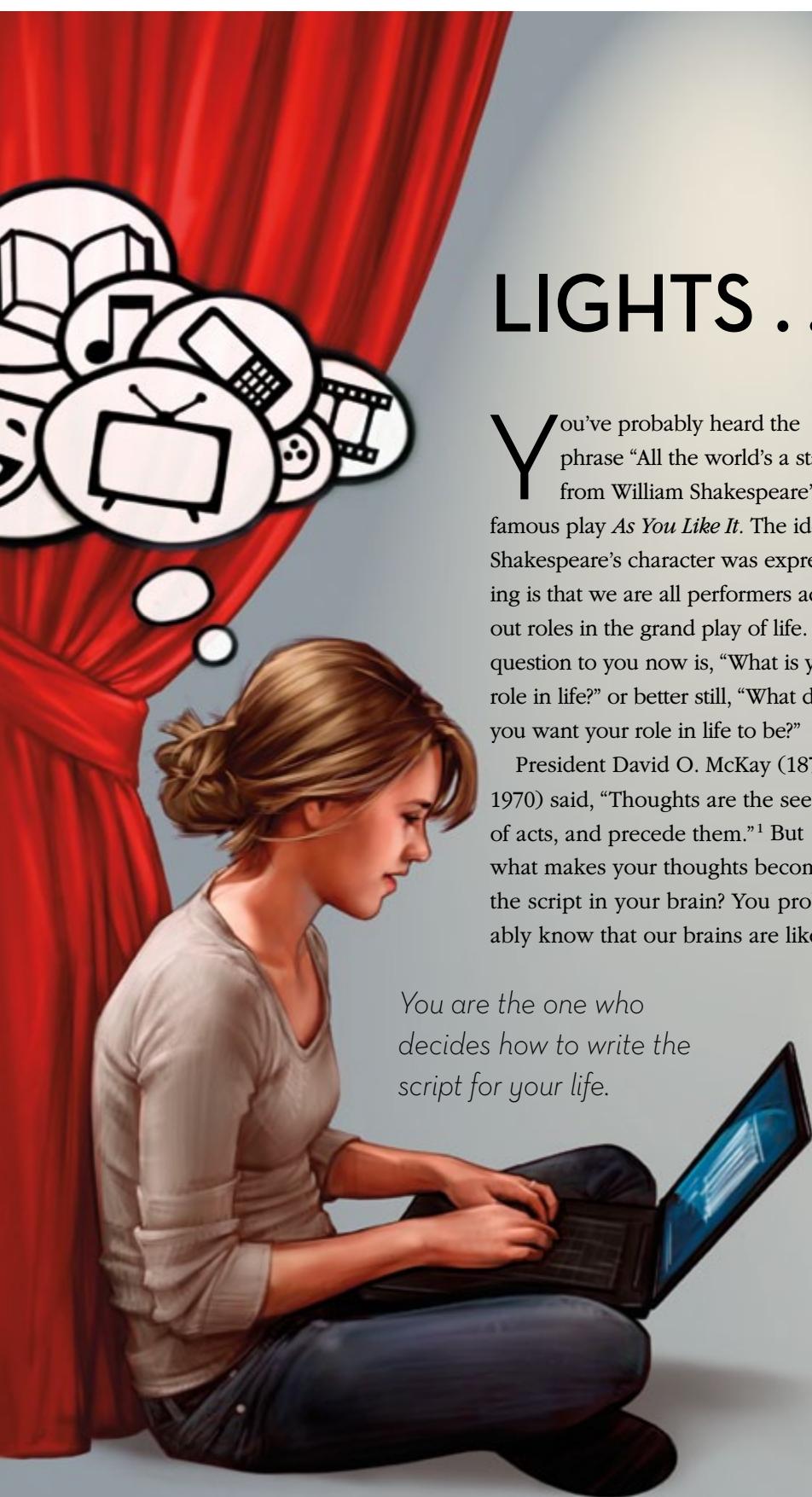
Responses may be edited for length or clarity.

The following information and permission must be included in your e-mail or letter: (1) full name, (2) birth date, (3) ward or branch, (4) stake or district, (5) your written permission, and, if you are under age 18, your parent's written permission (e-mail is acceptable) to publish your response and photograph.

UPCOMING QUESTION

"The temple is so far away that I don't get to attend very often. How can the temple be a bigger part of my life today?"

LIGHTS . . . CAMERA . . .



You've probably heard the phrase "All the world's a stage" from William Shakespeare's famous play *As You Like It*. The idea Shakespeare's character was expressing is that we are all performers acting out roles in the grand play of life. My question to you now is, "What is your role in life?" or better still, "What do you want your role in life to be?"

President David O. McKay (1873–1970) said, "Thoughts are the seeds of acts, and precede them."¹ But what makes your thoughts become the script in your brain? You probably know that our brains are like a

You are the one who decides how to write the script for your life.

computer: you can only output what you have stored on it. If you put in only garbage, then that is all you will ever get out. You need to realize that everything you watch, read, or listen to will help write the script to your life.

Powerful Images and Thoughts

Since a large part of my professional career was in advertising, I have a lot of experience in seeing how media can create powerful images and thoughts in people's minds. Making a great television commercial can be exactly like making a Hollywood movie, except the "shooting" or filming is usually done over the space of a few days instead of months.

After spending a long time researching and planning a media campaign, I might hire cinematographers from Hollywood, models from Italy, and music producers from New York City. Then the work would begin. Following a frenetic production schedule, we would launch the advertising campaign in all kinds of media. It was mesmerizing, exciting, and fun work.

With this experience I can tell you for a fact that the advertisements you

By Adrián Ochoa

Second Counselor
in the Young Men
General Presidency



ACTION!

see online, on television, or in magazines are not actually real. The images you see are just artistic creations, made purposely to entice people to buy the advertised product. That is why I never agreed to do advertising for products I did not believe in. Most people understand these facts about advertisements, but the same general principle goes for movies, TV shows, web and mobile content, and electronic games: they are all created with calculated messages and motives behind them.

Powerful Protection

Because Satan uses media to try to mislead us into breaking God's commandments, you should follow with unwavering determination the counsel given in *For the Strength of Youth*: "Choose wisely when using media, because whatever you read, listen to, or look at has an effect on you. Select only media that uplifts you."²

Remember that in reality you are here in this life to develop your faith, to be tested, and to learn and be happy. As a member of Christ's true Church, you have great power to help you. You have the power of the Holy Ghost to warn you when

something in front of you is not right. You also have the power of agency, so you can choose what you will and will not do.

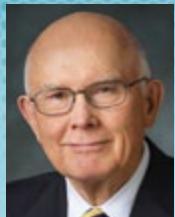
If you have not been wise at times and have occasionally chosen to view or listen to the wrong content, decide now to make a change. If those bad choices have diminished your ability to feel the Spirit, get on your knees and ask Heavenly Father for strength and forgiveness. And if you are still having trouble, ask for help from your parents or bishop. You may feel ashamed or scared to talk to them, but that means you need to do it all the more. With courage and humility you can overcome your challenges, and when you do, you will feel the glorious peace and joy of repentance.

You are not just an actor or actress on a stage; you are a child of God in a probationary world that is filled with good and bad media. If you feed your spirit with the right content, your role in life will be one of happiness, and you will be as a light that shines forth to help and guide others. There is always darkness around us, but there is always an eternal and illuminated path guiding us to the fount of all goodness and light. ■

NOTES

1. David O. McKay, *Stepping Stones to an Abundant Life*, comp. Llewelyn R. McKay (1971), 206.

2. *For the Strength of Youth* (2011), 11.



IS IT WORTH OUR TIME?

"Consider how we use our time in the choices we make in viewing television, playing video games, surfing the Internet, or reading books or magazines. Of course it is good to view wholesome entertainment or to obtain interesting information. But not everything of that sort is worth the portion of our life we give to obtain it. Some things are better, and others are best."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Good, Better, Best," *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 105.

ADDICTED TO VIDEO GAMES

Name withheld

When I was 13, my mother gave me a video game for my birthday. Video games were relatively new for me, and this one had great graphics and was very entertaining. School was on break, and I decided that I would finish the game as soon as possible so that I would have more time to play outside with my friends.

One Thursday afternoon I began playing my new video game. Before I knew it, it was past midnight, and I had not said my evening prayer. But I kept on playing.

Things just got worse. When I woke up the following day, the first thing I did was turn on the game

and start playing again. I hardly even stopped to eat or sleep, and all I thought about was how I was going to reach the next level in my game.

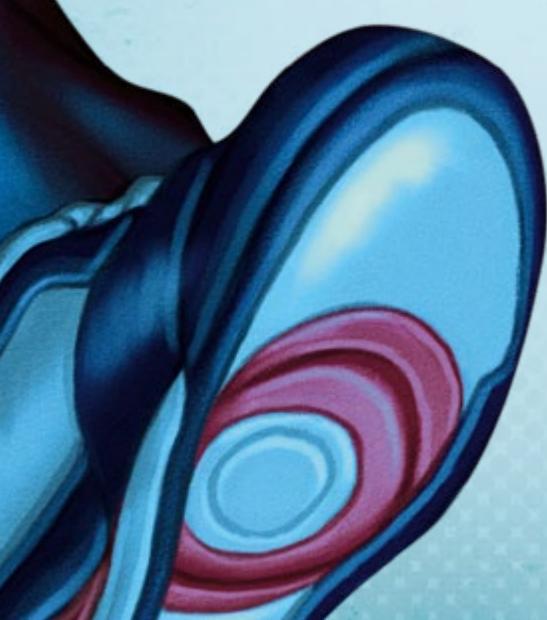
On Saturday evening my mother warned me that if I did not go to sleep early, I would have a hard time waking up the next morning to go to church. But I kept on playing and did not fall asleep until 3:00 in the morning. When I arrived at church, I felt so tired that I had trouble concentrating. I wasn't able to pass the sacrament, and I returned home to sleep, completely exhausted.

I slept all through Sunday and did not wake up until Monday morning, and I only woke up so I could keep playing. That week I knew that I had to get a good night's rest and try to go to bed early, but even then I kept wasting my time on video games. I began spending more time playing video games than reading the scriptures. In fact, I even stopped reading for several days. When school started up again, my mom forbade me to play during the week, so I took advantage of the weekends to play, including Sundays.

By no longer attending Sunday services, I stopped doing what really mattered for something as unimportant as a video game. I was not following the advice of my grandfather, who once said, "Don't ever forsake the things that really matter for something commonplace." This advice has always stuck with me.

I realized I needed to find balance in my life. One thing that helped me was my seminary class. At my middle school, seminary was held as part of the daily curriculum, and it helped me a lot. It gave me the opportunity to learn to set my priorities straight and place the Lord before everything else. If we trust Him and if we ask Him from the bottom of our hearts to help us with some aspect of our lives, the Lord will hear us. If we truly desire to change, we can.

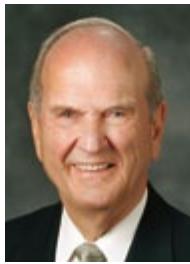
Fortunately, I didn't have to go through a major problem to make me quit gaming. Setting my priorities straight and limiting the time I spent gaming was enough. However, that did not happen until I asked the Lord in prayer for help, and He helped me. ■





FOCUS on VALUES

Developing eternal values will help us become all our Heavenly Father wants us to be.



**By Elder
Russell M. Nelson**
Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

I would like to talk about some of the values you ought to be focused on in your daily lives. You young women will recognize them. And you young men, they are not exclusively for the young women. These values are just as worthy of your attention as they are for the young women.

Faith

The first Young Women value is faith. In fact, faith is the first principle of the gospel. Your faith should be focused on our loving Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. You should also continually strengthen your faith in God's plan of salvation.

It is important to develop faith to keep all of the commandments of God, knowing that they are given to bless you and bring you joy. You will encounter people who pick which commandments they will keep and which they will ignore. This practice of picking and choosing will not work. It will lead to misery. To prepare to meet God, you need to keep all of His commandments. It takes faith to obey them, and keeping His commandments will strengthen that faith.

Divine Nature

The second Young Women value is divine nature. That's a grown-up way of saying, "I am a child of God." You have divinity within you. Our Heavenly Father created you.

Have you ever thought to be thankful for your heart? Look at the job it's doing. It's

pumping enough fluid every day to fill a railroad tank car, about 2,000 gallons (7,570 liters). Inside the heart are four sets of valves that open and close 100,000 times a day, more than 36 million times a year, and they don't break. No man-made material—paper, plastic, metal, or steel—can open and close that many times, with that frequency, without breaking. Every organ in the body is so well designed and so marvelous in its function.

You know if you try to swim underwater without taking a breath, you can go only so long. What is it that drives you up to take a breath? Carbon dioxide is being measured by two small meters in the neck, and they send word up to your brain as if to say, "Your carbon dioxide level is too high. Get rid of it." So you swim up to the surface and exhale, getting rid of the carbon dioxide.

What incredible abilities your body possesses! Take good care of your body. Don't do anything that would defile the natural beauty of this marvelous, God-given creation.

Individual Worth

The next Young Women value is individual worth. A faithful disciple of Jesus Christ will become a devoted son or daughter of God—more concerned with being righteous than with being selfish, more anxious to exercise compassion than to exercise dominion, more committed to integrity than to popularity.

You know of your infinite worth. Indeed, each faithful young woman in the Church proclaims that individual worth is one of her most cherished values. She declares, "I am of infinite worth with my own divine mission, which I will strive to fulfill" (*Young Women Personal Progress* [booklet, 2009], 29). The same applies to young men. Each son and daughter of God is of infinite worth because of his or her divine mission.





Individual worth also includes the development of your faith as an individual. No one else can develop your faith for you. You can wish you had the faith of President Thomas S. Monson or some other hero, but you must develop it yourself. When you make a mistake, as an individual you repent of these past problems. When you were baptized and received the gift of the Holy Ghost, it was done as an individual. So, as an individual, you make covenants. These ordinances of salvation are all an individual matter.

The greatest ordinances and blessings of membership in the Church come in the temple. There we have the ordinances of the endowment and the sealings to parents, spouses, and ancestors. All ordinances of exaltation are a family matter. Do you see that difference? The ordinances of *salvation* are individual; the ordinances of *exaltation* involve more than one person.

Knowledge

The next Young Women value is knowledge. In the Church, obtaining an education and getting knowledge are a religious responsibility. We educate our minds so that one day we can render service of worth to somebody else. Being educated is the difference between wishing you could do some good and being able to do some good.

Often people ask me what it's like to be a doctor. They ask, "How long were you in school?" Well, it was a long time. From the time I got my medical degree until the time I sent my first bill for professional services rendered was 12½ years. It was a long time, but how old would I have been 12½ years later if I weren't doing that? Exactly the same.

So you might as well strive to become all that you can become.

My medical education is what allowed me to perform a heart operation on President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) in 1972. So don't discount knowledge. The glory of God really is intelligence (see D&C 93:36).

Choice and Accountability

The next Young Women value is choice and accountability. This is another way of saying "moral agency." Moral agency is part of life because Heavenly Father wanted each one of us to act for ourselves and to become what we want to be.

Choice and accountability tells you that for every choice you make, you are accountable for the consequences of that choice. So we need to make responsible decisions. It probably doesn't matter much whether you wear a blue tie or a red tie or a purple dress or a green dress, but what does matter is whether your choice draws you closer to or away from the Lord and His way of life. And why do we counsel and plead with you to follow the way of the Lord? It's simply because that is the way to happiness.

Good Works

Next comes the Young Women value of good works. This value is patterned after the life of Jesus Christ, who loved people. To show His love for people, He served them. When we love somebody, we show it by doing something nice. So learn to serve: find a need and fulfill a need. Surprise people with a good deed they hadn't planned on. We have that opportunity at home, at school, and at church.

I remember the first time I went to Africa

as a General Authority. My traveling partner was Elder Russell C. Taylor. Each morning when I woke up, I found that he had shined my shoes. He didn't need to shine my shoes, but that was his way of saying, "I love you."

Integrity

The next Young Women value is integrity. The word *integrity* comes from the word *integer*, meaning "whole" or "intact." In medicine we talk about the structural integrity of the heart. So when something goes wrong—for example, a wound to the heart—we say it has lost its integrity; it no longer does what it's supposed to do. Applied to the human being, integrity means you're dependable—you can be counted on.

In the scriptures we read that the Prophet Joseph Smith's brother Hyrum was loved by the Lord because of the "integrity of his heart" (D&C 124:15). The Lord was not talking about the anatomy of the heart; He was talking about the integrity of Hyrum's spirit.

Virtue

The newest Young Women value is virtue. *Virtue* is a wonderful word. What does it mean to you? *Virtue* means "purity." But there's also another meaning. Do you remember in the New Testament when the woman who had the issue of blood touched the hem of the Savior's garment? The Savior said, "Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me" (Luke 8:46). In that case, *virtue* has a different meaning. In the Greek language it's the word *dunamis*, which is the root from which we get the words *dynamo* and *dynamite*. It means "power." We want both kinds of virtue for you precious young men and young women.

Become All You Can Be

Knowledge brings power; purity brings power; love brings power. We want you to have the power to become all that the Lord wants you to become. You're growing, you're changing, and you are in charge of what you will end up being.

I don't think it makes any difference whether you are a furniture salesman, a surgeon, a lawyer, or an architect. Any worthy occupation, whatever suits you, is wonderful. But what really matters is what you are becoming.

Ask yourself these questions: Do I have integrity? Do I have purity? Do I have love? Do I have compassion? All of these attributes are beyond measure. And as you think about and live by the attributes of the Young Women values, they will help you become all that you can be. ■

From an address given to youth in Nairobi, Kenya, in November 2011.



MY SEMINARY TEACHER WAS JUST AS BUSY

In the Philippines, there are science high schools that have a strong focus on academics. Students in these schools take more subjects, spend more time in class, and have a lot of homework. This is the kind of environment I was in as a young woman.

I gave up many activities upon entering high school because I knew I would be spending so much time studying. I almost never attended Church activities and would occasionally miss church on Sundays because of school events. I also struggled to attend seminary.

One Saturday my seminary teacher told us how busy she was in her high school days.

Despite her schedule, she managed to do her seminary assignments and study scripture mastery at the library. I decided to take up her challenge to do the same. I carried my scripture mastery cards with me all the time and reviewed them during my free time. I prayed for help to balance my seminary study with the demands of school. I memorized scriptures while commuting to school. I took the cards out while I chatted with my friends. During breaks and lunchtime, my friends enjoyed quizzing me on the mastery cards. And then some of them started bringing their scriptures and talking about activities at their churches. I felt the change in atmosphere around me, and school felt lighter and better.

My three younger sisters



followed my lead, and now my family reaps the blessings of the scriptures in our home. Learning my scripture mastery verses was a very simple act, but more important than the memorized words, I learned the difference the scriptures could make in me and the people around me. I know that whatever challenge or trial we face, we will always find strength and guidance in the words of our loving Savior.

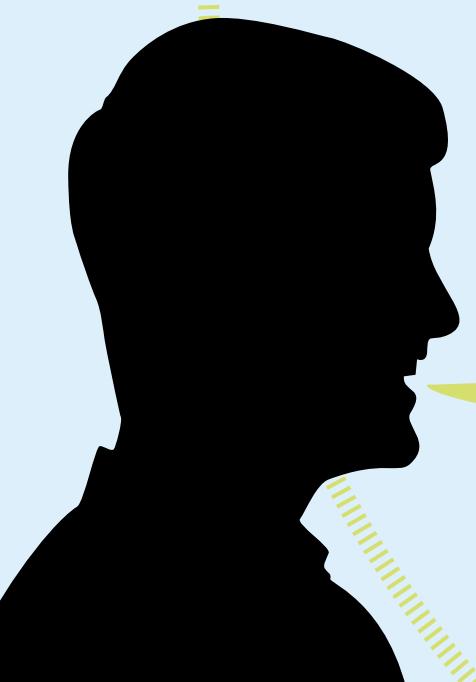
Maria Andaca, Metro Manila, Philippines

THE BEST LANGUAGE

Because we use the same mouth to pray, to share our testimonies, and to bless the holy sacrament as the one we use to speak, we must take care to keep our words clean and pure. The way we talk says a lot about who we are and the style of life we live. The Apostle Paul said, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Ephesians 4:29). It offends our Heavenly Father when we take His name in vain.

The opposite of profanity is prayer. When we pray, we use the best language we can. As we communicate with our Father in Heaven, who loves us, it is essential for us to do so with purity and humility. In this way, we will be guided and be able to see the infinite blessings of the gospel in our lives.

Jared Rodriguez, Maryland, USA



MAKING A NEW FRIEND

I was sitting at a lunch table with my friends when I noticed that a new boy named Michael had transferred into our lunch period. It seemed like he didn't really know anyone but was willing to make some new friends. He decided to sit with a group of older boys, who pretended to be his friends for a while but ended up making a joke out of him. They constantly made fun of him until he started to cry. I watched this happen,

and it really bothered me. I later learned that Michael has autism.

I decided to ask Michael if he wanted to sit by my friends and me. He said no, probably out of fear of people making fun of him again. He decided he'd rather sit alone.

The next day, I went up to him and introduced him to my friends. I could tell he was glad I hadn't given up on him, and we started talking. I learned that he is a tic-tac-toe pro. He is almost undefeatable. I also learned how incredibly smart he is. He knows all of the U.S. presidents and can

tell you what years they served. He is awesome, but not many people were willing to see past his disability. Some of the other students teased me for sitting with him, but I didn't let them bother me. I liked hanging out with Michael.

Each day as we met for lunch, I could tell Michael was becoming a happier person. He looked forward to lunch every day, and so did I. What I thought was simply an act of service was really the beginning of a wonderful friendship.

Laura Potts, Illinois, USA





Answering
Questions
ABOUT

THE PLAN OF SALVATION

By Michael R. Morris
Church Magazines

And what do Mormons believe about marriage?" my high school Spanish teacher asked me.

All of my classmates turned in their seats, listening for my answer. I gulped as I wondered how our class discussion had wandered from Don Quixote and Dulcinea to dating and marriage.

There wasn't another member of the Church in the class. What should I say? How much detail should I give? Would everyone make fun of me if I talked about eternal marriage?

"We, uh . . .," I stammered, still uncertain what to say.

Just then, my friend Denise came to my rescue. "Mormons have a beautiful view of marriage," she said. "They believe that marriages performed in their temples can last forever."

"That *is* beautiful," our teacher replied. Even my classmates seemed satisfied.

With that, class resumed and I was left wondering why I had been sweating over a question that my nonmember friend answered so easily.

As more people hear about the Church, Latter-day Saints will have more opportunities

to answer questions about the gospel. In high school, I learned that we don't have to give long answers, and we don't have to be afraid. The beautiful, simple doctrines of the gospel speak for themselves.

The next time your friends ask questions about what we know as "the plan of salvation," consider using the following short answers. They offer the details most people want to know, so you don't have to feel that you need to diagram the entire plan of salvation in a chart.



Where Did
We Come From?

We are eternal beings. Before we were born, we lived with God, the Father of our spirits. All persons on earth are literally brothers and sisters of the same Father in Heaven. In our pre-earth life, each of us was an individual with a divine nature and destiny. God gave all of us the gift of agency, or the right to choose for ourselves, both in the pre-earth life and here on earth. Because He is the Father of our spirits, we call Him our Heavenly Father.

Why Are We Here?

Earth life is part of God's plan for our eternal happiness. That plan includes gaining a physical body and learning to choose between good and evil. Our living prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, has said: "How grateful we should be that a wise Creator fashioned an earth and placed us here, with a veil of forgetfulness of our previous existence so that we might experience a time of testing, an opportunity to prove ourselves in order to qualify for all that God has prepared for us to receive" ("The Race of Life," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2012, 91).

Where Are We Going after This Life?

Our lives continue after we die, but our future lives are determined by how we live now. If we live the gospel, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ enables us to repent, be forgiven, and become clean before God.

In the Book of Mormon we learn "that the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body, . . . whether they be good or evil, are taken home to that God who gave them life."

"And then it shall come to pass, that the spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow" (Alma 40:11–12).

If we apply the Atonement, or sacrifice, of Jesus Christ, repent of our sins, and strive to live as He lived, His Atonement will cleanse us and allow us to live forever with Heavenly Father.

Those who choose not to follow Christ and accept His gospel will not receive those blessings (see Alma 40:13–14).

What Is the Role of Jesus Christ?

Our Heavenly Father sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to be our

Savior and to show us the way to live according to God's plan. The Savior's Atonement can wash away our sins and make us worthy to return to God's presence. Following the Savior's Crucifixion, His body lay in the tomb for three days until His spirit returned. As a result of Jesus's victory over the grave (see Mormon 7:5), we will be resurrected after we die and live forever in perfected bodies. ■



PREPARED TO TEACH

"If you live the principles of the gospel [rather than] just study them, that special combination of knowledge will allow you to feel comfortable and prepared to teach what you know to be true."

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, in Michael Otterson, "Answering Questions about Our Faith," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Aug. 2012, 78.

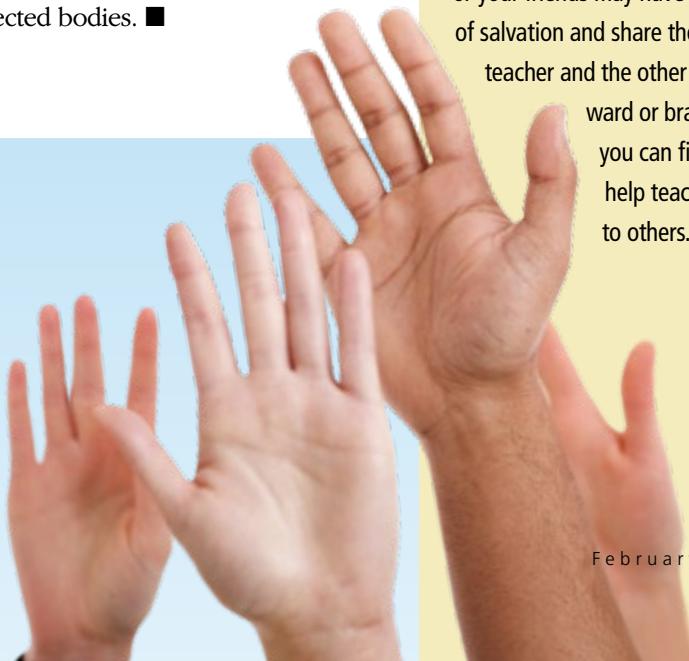
SUNDAY LESSONS

This Month's Topic:
The Plan
of Salvation

JOIN THE CONVERSATION



Throughout February, you'll be studying about the plan of salvation in your priesthood quorums and Young Women and Sunday School classes. Sunday School in particular will focus on how you can teach the plan of salvation. Consider creating a list of additional questions you or your friends may have about the plan of salvation and share them with your teacher and the other youth in your ward or branch. Together, you can find ways to help teach this doctrine to others.



How Do I Conduct a Meeting?

So you've turned 12 and moved from the Primary into Young Women or the Aaronic Priesthood. Things are going great, and you love some of the new things you get to do. You've discovered, though, that this change also brings

new responsibilities. One of those responsibilities that might be a little scary for you is that you may now be asked to conduct meetings.

Depending on what meeting you are conducting (Mutual activity, Sunday meetings, quorum or class presidency meetings), the

requirements and agenda may be a little different, but here are some general suggestions and guidelines to consider as you fulfill this responsibility:

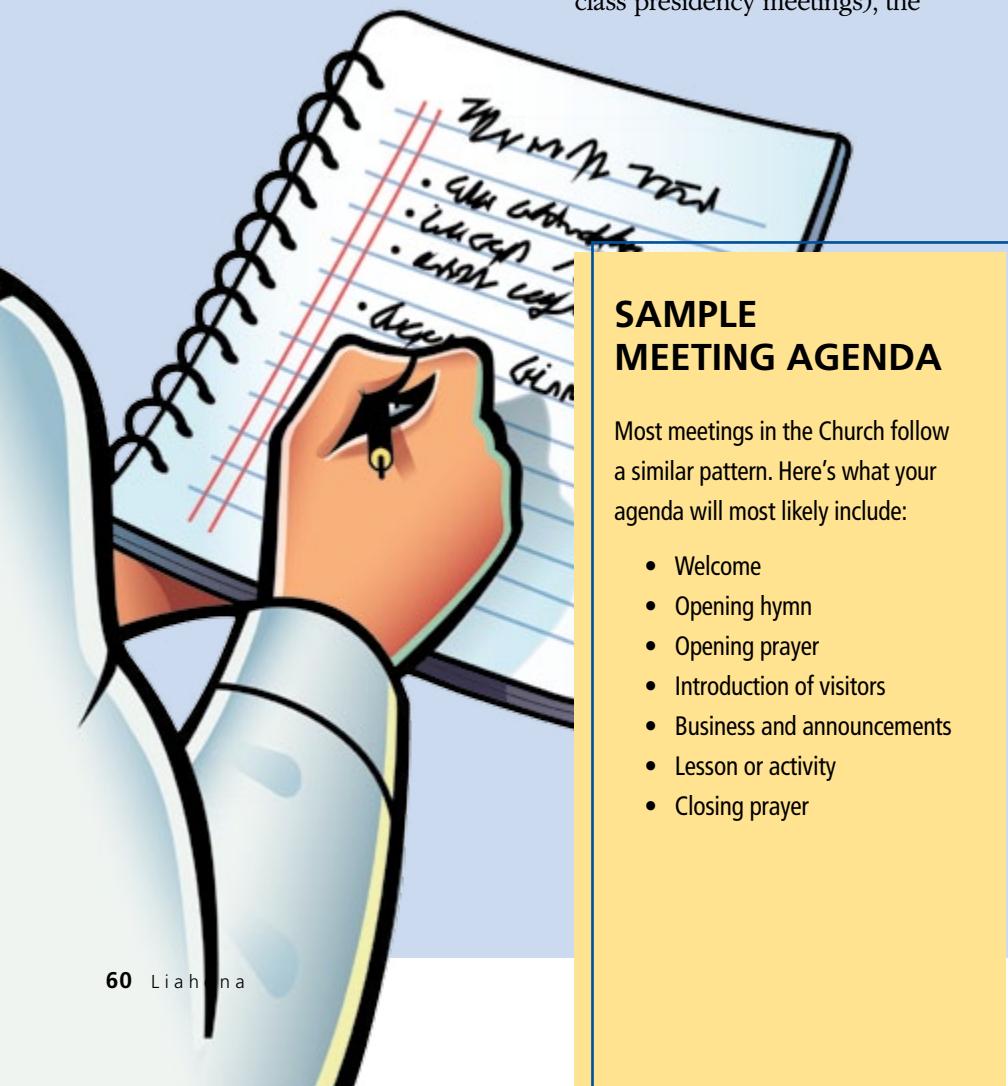
- Use an agenda that outlines what will happen in the meeting. Ask your leaders if they have an agenda template for you to fill out.
- Choose music that will invite the Spirit.
- Plan for opening and closing prayers.
- Make assignments ahead of time if you can.
- Arrive early and make sure everything is ready.
- Announce who will pray, lead the music, teach, and do other things in the meeting.
- Be reverent as you conduct and allow the Spirit to guide you. Be a good example for the other youth attending the meeting.

Learning how to conduct a meeting may be a little scary at first, but it will get easier as you do it more, and it will help you to gain some of the skills you will need as a future leader in the Church. ■

SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA

Most meetings in the Church follow a similar pattern. Here's what your agenda will most likely include:

- Welcome
- Opening hymn
- Opening prayer
- Introduction of visitors
- Business and announcements
- Lesson or activity
- Closing prayer





By Elder Richard G. Scott

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

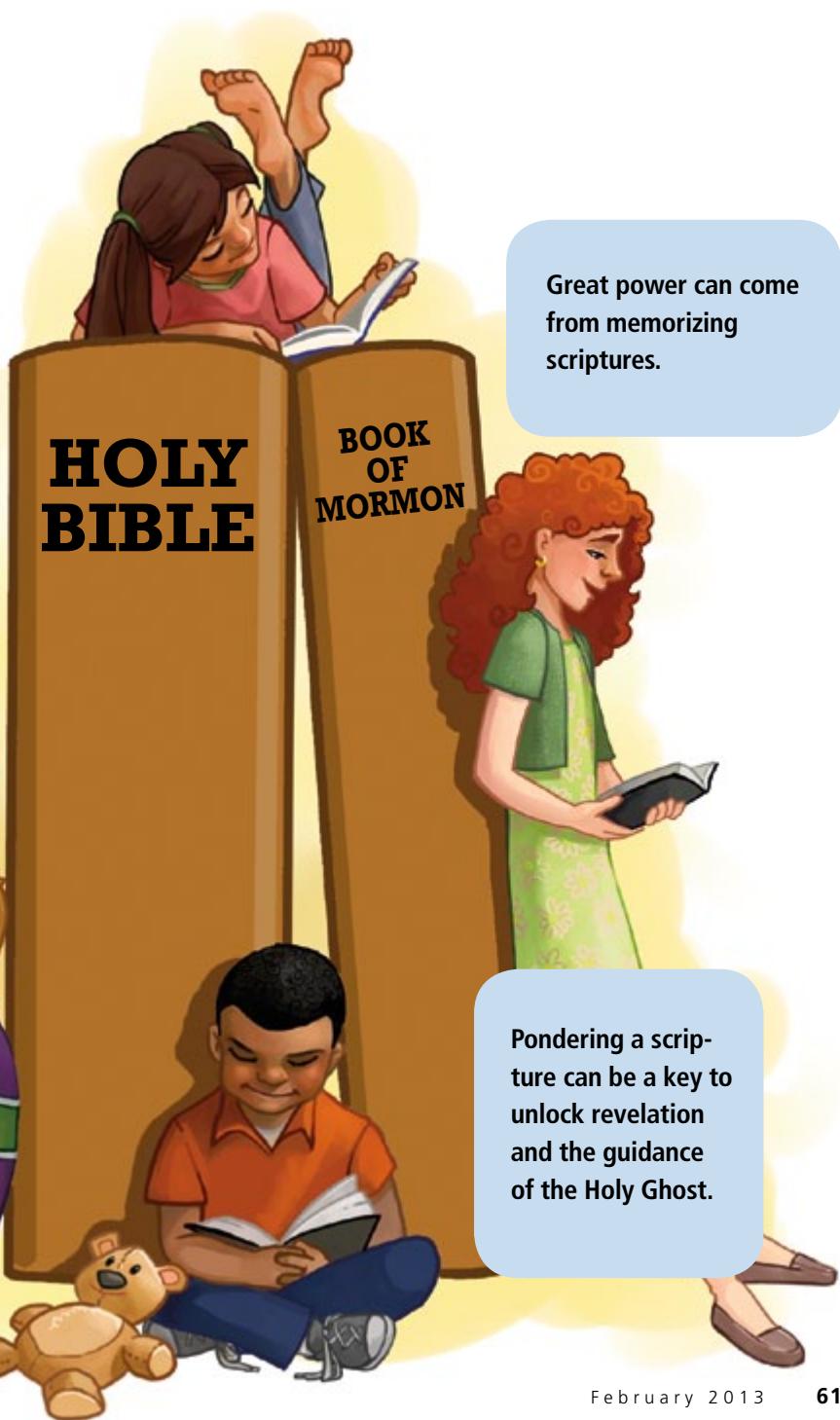
The members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles are special witnesses of Jesus Christ.

Our Father in Heaven understood that we would face difficult challenges. He provided tools to help us be successful. One of those tools is the scriptures.

How can the scriptures help me?

The scriptures open the channel of communication with our Father in Heaven and Jesus Christ.

The scriptures can become faithful friends for us. They are always available when needed.



From "The Power of Scripture," Liahona and Ensign, Nov. 2011, 6–8.

Great power can come from memorizing scriptures.

Pondering a scripture can be a key to unlock revelation and the guidance of the Holy Ghost.

What Really Matters



By Charlotte Wood Wilson

Based on a true story

"I know my Father lives and loves me too. The Spirit whispers this to me and tells me it is true" ("I Know My Father Lives," Children's Songbook, 5).

Fifth grade was a hard year for me. I'd had the same group of friends for several grades, and I thought that we would always be friends. But soon after fifth grade started, my friends started using bad language and acting in ways I knew Heavenly Father wouldn't like. They

also started being mean to other kids in our class and talking about people behind their backs.

Eventually I became one of those kids my friends made fun of. They even gave me a mean nickname: Big-Lip Charlotte, or "BLC" for short. My feelings were so hurt. I started trying to avoid my friends at school, but it was hard because we were in the same class.

"Hey, guys!" I said one day at lunch, trying to be friendly and cheerful.

"Hey, BLC! Big-Lip Charlotte!" they chorused together as they made faces at me.

I ran away, trying to hold back tears. I ate lunch by myself and counted the minutes until I could go home.

"What's wrong, honey?" asked Mom when she noticed my tear-stained cheeks after school.

"The kids who used to be my friends have started calling me a horrible name. I just don't understand why they have to be so mean to me." I started to cry again.

Charlotte in the fifth grade . . .



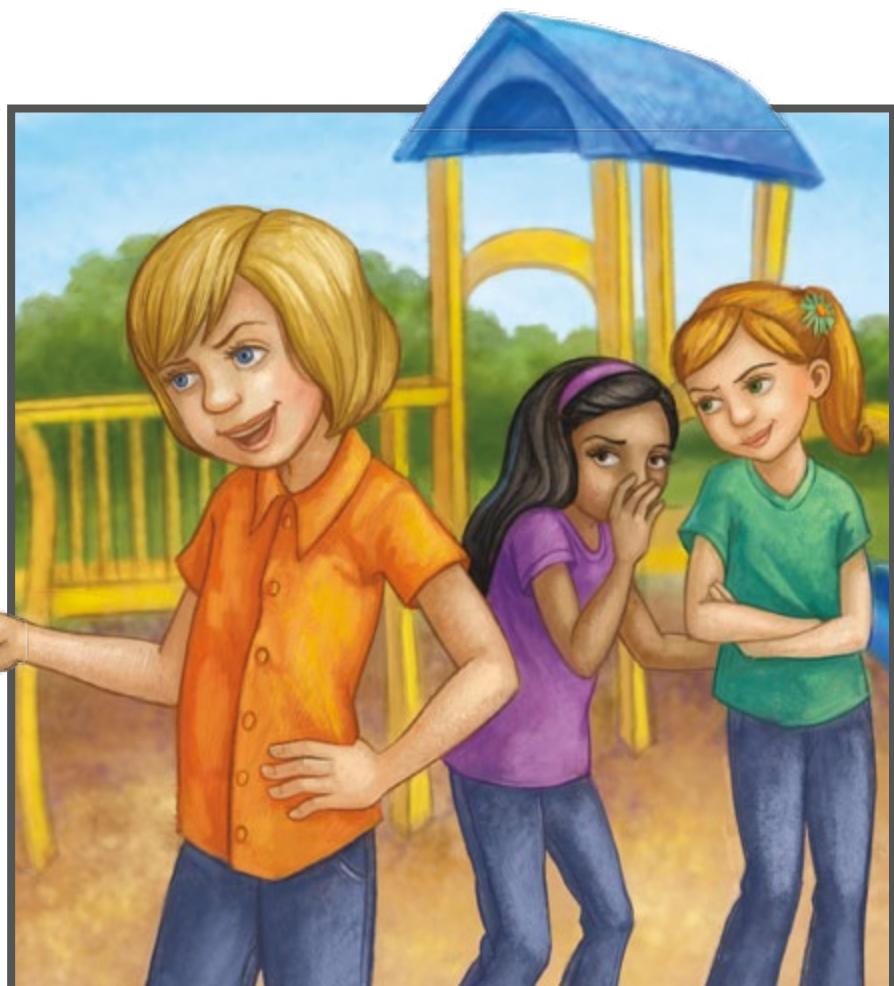
"Those kids shouldn't be acting that way. But it really doesn't matter what other people think of you. You're beautiful, and you have no reason to listen to what those mean kids say."

"But, Mom," I said. "I see them every day. I *do* care what they think of me. And other people listen to what they say about me. How can I just ignore *everyone*?"

"Charlotte, the only opinions that really matter are yours and the Lord's. If you're OK with yourself and what you do, and if Heavenly Father is OK with your choices, it doesn't matter what people call you or say about you. I promise."

As I went to school the next few weeks, my old friends still laughed at me and called me names. But I soon found that I could walk around with peace in my heart. I knew that if Heavenly Father was OK with my big lips, then I could be too.

I was able to get through the rest of fifth grade. I ended up making new friends who didn't



call me names and who helped me feel good about myself. Most important, though, I learned that if Heavenly Father is pleased with who I am, then I don't have to worry about what anyone else thinks. ■

Charlotte Wood Wilson lives in Oregon, USA.



"There is no more beautiful sight than a young woman who glows with the light of the Spirit, who is confident and courageous because she is virtuous."

Elaine S. Dalton, Young Women general president, "Remember Who You Are!"
Liahona and Ensign, May 2010, 122.



and on her wedding day.

Our Page



A close-up photograph of a young girl with blonde hair. She has a blue ribbon or bow in her hair. She is wearing a white shirt with some pink and grey patterns. The background is slightly blurred.

Liza P., age 7, Russia

Josheline and Camila C., ages 5 and 2, from Bolivia, like going to church to learn about Heavenly Father. They get ready for church quickly and help their parents hurry to get there on time. They like to pray, and they love their Primary classes.



I love the stories in the Book of Mormon about Nephi—especially the ones about when he goes into the wilderness with his family and when he builds a boat.

Saúl T., age 11, Mexico



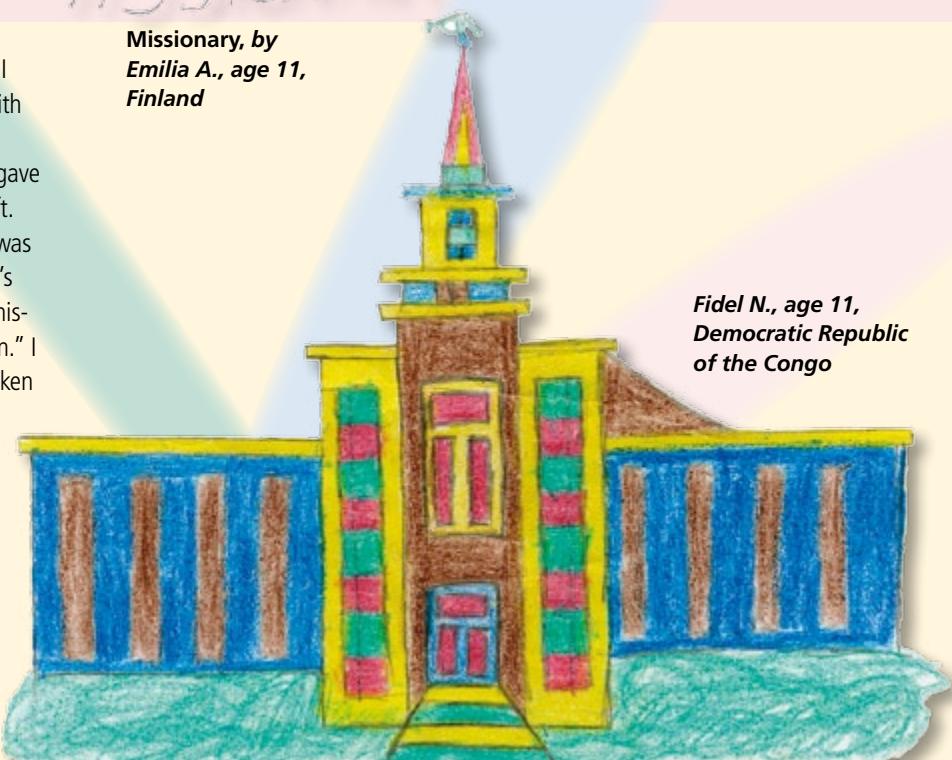
Tomas P., age 5, Argentina



Once my brother and I traveled on a bus with our aunt to her home for a week's holiday. My father gave us a blessing before we left. After a while, a man who was to get off. While the driver's aid him with his luggage, a whisper: "Your luggage has been stolen." I luggage had indeed been taken even in the grass. I cried out again and not the man's. I Ghost who spoke to me,

Vaniala R., age 10, Madagascar

**Missionary, by
Emilia A., age 11,
Finland**



*Fidel N., age 11,
Democratic Republic
of the Congo*

"I'm a Mormon.
I know it. I live it.
I love it."

A group of diverse children, including a boy in a blue shirt, a girl in a green shirt, and another girl in a dark green dress, are standing outdoors under a large white flag. They are smiling and looking towards the camera. The background shows a purple sky and some trees.

Ann M. Dibb, second
counselor in the Young
Women general
presidency

From the October 2012
general conference



The Earth Was Created for Heavenly Father's Children

Wow!" Ana said. "Look at all the stars." Everyone in Ana's family looked up from the campfire. It seemed like there were millions of stars in the dark sky.

"Just think," Mom said, "each of those stars is one of Heavenly Father's creations."

"Let's each name one of our favorite things that Heavenly Father has created for us," Dad suggested.

"I know," Daniel said quickly. "I like those huge waves we saw at the ocean last year."

Ana didn't know what to choose.

She thought about the warm sun, the bright moon, and sweet-smelling flowers. Then she remembered how much she loved all kinds of soft, furry animals. "Animals!" she said.

Ana started to shiver, so Dad wrapped a blanket around her. "After Heavenly Father created all these beautiful things for His children, He saw that they were good," Dad said.

Ana had a warm, happy feeling inside. She pulled the blanket up to her chin and looked back up at the stars. "Thank you, Heavenly Father," she whispered. ■

SONG AND SCRIPTURE

- "My Heavenly Father Loves Me" (*Children's Songbook*, 228–29)
- Moses 2:3–27

IDEAS FOR FAMILY TALK

- You could give each family member a paper sack and invite the family to go outside and collect three things that Heavenly Father created. Or you could draw pictures or make a list of Heavenly Father's creations. Then talk about how those and other creations show Heavenly Father's love for us.
- You could take turns reading aloud the scripture verses on each of the stars and finding the matching stars.

You can use this lesson and activity to learn more about this month's Primary theme.



A SKY FULL OF BLESSINGS

Match each of the scriptures above with a picture showing one of Heavenly Father's creations. Color each matching pair of picture stars and scripture stars the same color.

Beauty All Around

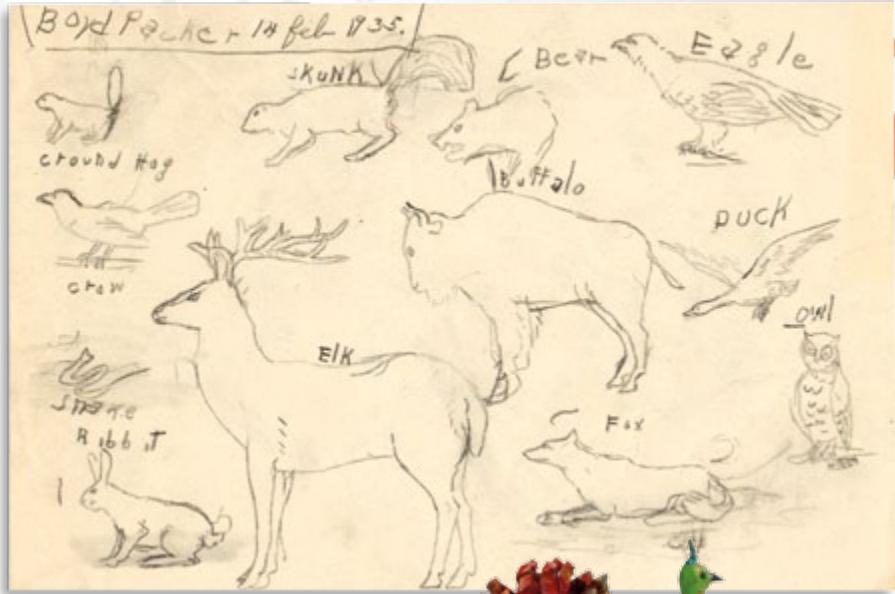
By Marissa Widdison

Church Magazines



Imagine you are visiting Africa. As you look at wild animals through your binoculars, you notice a shape coming toward you. It's an eagle owl! As it gets closer, you hold up your arm to defend yourself. But instead of attacking, the owl gently lands on your arm, making little noises and looking at you for a moment before taking flight once more. This really happened to President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He loves animals and especially birds.

One way President Packer shows how much he loves nature is through art. Ever since he was a child, he has liked to draw, paint, and carve. "All my observations confirm to my soul that there is a God, who created it all," President Packer said. ■



President Packer drew these animals when he was 11 years old. His father would bring home extra paper that the local newspaper didn't use, and President Packer would lie on his stomach and draw. "If drawing is a disease, it seems that I was seriously afflicted," he said.



President Packer was about 10 years old when he made this from pinecones found on a family camping trip.



While serving as a pilot in the military, President Packer sent letters home in envelopes that he decorated during free moments.



President Packer has carved dozens of birds over the years. He said that carving helps him relax and think about what he should say in upcoming talks.

President Packer cut out and painted the wood birds below when he was a child, using wood from old boxes and paint given to him by a neighbor.



By Jennifer Maddy

Based on a true story

"Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord" (Colossians 3:20).

Ethan gazed at the colorful video game covers that lined the shelves. His parents said he could pick one game for a birthday present, and there were so many to choose from! Ethan's eyes jumped from a car racing game to an adventure game to a dance game. Finally, he picked up the racing game and took it to his dad.

"Did you find one you like?" Dad asked.

"I think I want this racing game," Ethan said.

"Looks fun," Dad said. "What is it rated?"

Ethan turned the cover over. He knew he could only play games

with certain ratings. When he first got his computer, his parents talked to him about the importance of following their family's rule about video game ratings. Ethan knew that a lot of games had bad stuff in them, and he wanted to be obedient.

Ethan found the rating on the cover and showed Dad. "It's rated for everyone," he said.

"Great," Dad said. "Let's go pay for it. Happy birthday, Ethan!"

"Thanks, Dad!" Ethan grinned, excited to get home and try out his new game.

A few days later, Ethan went to his friend Chase's house to play. He and Chase were in the same Primary class, and they played

together a lot. Ethan took along his new video game.

"Hi, Ethan," Chase said when he answered the door. "Come on in. I got a new video game we can play!"

"I did too!" Ethan said, holding out his game.

The boys settled in front of the computer, and Chase put in his game. The title flashed across the screen, and so did the rating. Ethan froze. It was a rating that he wasn't allowed to play.

Chase eagerly navigated through the menus with his controller and

THE RATINGS RULE

MY GOSPEL STANDARDS

"I will only read and watch things that are pleasing to Heavenly Father."

started the game. Ethan didn't see anything bad yet. He clicked his own controller to move his character in the game. It was fun, but the longer he played, the more uncomfortable he felt. He still hadn't seen anything bad, but he wanted to follow his family's rule.

"Hey, Chase, I'm not allowed to play games with this rating," Ethan spoke up.

"Oh, it's OK," Chase said. "There isn't anything bad in it."

"Are you sure?" Ethan asked.

"Yeah," Chase said. "My family

plays it. I think it was given the wrong rating."

Just then, Chase's mom stuck her head into the room. "Hi, boys," she said. "Is everything OK?"

Ethan swallowed hard. "Hi, Sister Murphy," he said. "It's just that I'm not allowed to play video games with this rating."

"I told him there wasn't anything bad in it," Chase said.

Chase's mom waved her hand. "Don't worry, Ethan," she said. "I know a lot of the games with that rating aren't good, but I'm sure your

mom would let you play this one." She smiled and then left the room.

Chase continued playing, but Ethan put down his controller. "Chase, how about we play the racing game I brought?" Ethan asked.

Chase shrugged and kept staring at the screen. "Nah, I'd rather play this."

Ethan quietly got up and went to Chase's room, where he found some toy racing cars to play with. They weren't as fun as his video game, but Ethan felt good knowing he was following his family's rule. ■

Jennifer Maddy lives in Utah, USA.



FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Building Together

By Michelle Tripp, Idaho, USA

Based on a true story



VROOM. VROOM. VROOM. Ashley looked out her window. She saw a blue truck. She saw big piles of dirt. The neighbors were building a new house.



"What makes dirt piles?" Ashley asked. "Who makes houses?"

"Trucks make dirt piles," Mom said. "Builders make houses."



"My teacher said Jesus made everything," Ashley said.

"Yes," Mom said. "Jesus made everything they build houses with."



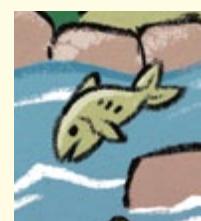
Ashley looked in her yard. "Like trees, and rocks, and dirt?" Ashley asked.
"Yes," Mom said. "Jesus also made our bodies. Our bodies can build things."



Ashley was happy. Jesus helped her neighbors to be able to build a house.
She knew He could help her make things too. ■

A BEAUTIFUL EARTH

Ashley learned that Heavenly Father and Jesus made everything. Look at this beautiful place They created. See if you can find and circle in the picture the images at the bottom of the page.



NEWS OF THE CHURCH

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

Church Encourages Members Worldwide to Serve Locally

By Heather Whittle Wrigley

Church News and Events

In the last year or so, the Welfare Department of the Church has placed a renewed emphasis on members around the world giving aid in their own communities.

The Humanitarian Service section of LDS.org suggests, “What needs or challenges do you see or hear about? . . . If you identify a need in your community but cannot find an established

Members in Chile packaged thousands of hygiene kits following a massive earthquake that devastated their country in 2010.



program that addresses this need, take the initiative to find a solution” (on LDS.org, click on **Resources, Welfare, Humanitarian Service**).

Lynn Samsel, director of emergency response for the Church, pointed out some benefits of humanitarian response at the local level: “It’s faster, we have fewer issues with customs, it allows the Church to purchase local products the members in the area are familiar with, it supports the local economy, and it helps build relationships.”

In 2011, political upheaval in several Arab countries displaced thousands. Instead of assembling hygiene kits in Salt Lake and then shipping them to the Middle East, the Church provided funds to the local area presidency. The 50 members living in Jordan were then able to partner with other local organizations to assemble and distribute 40,000 hygiene kits and food packages in just five days.

Throughout the world, individual members may initiate their own service projects. In other cases the branch, ward, district, or stake can organize opportunities for members and others to serve.

Local solutions, explained Gustavo Estrada of the Welfare Department, often meet needs better than solutions thought up thousands of miles away.

Following the March 11, 2011, earthquake and tsunami that devastated Japan, the Church sped to respond. They sent money to local leaders, who then purchased food and other supplies in-country. Members in Japan who were not directly affected by the earthquake assembled the supplies into kits that addressed the unique needs of the disaster victims better than generic kits may have.

“As members get out and serve in their communities, they can build relationships with their neighbors and enjoy the trust that develops from working together on a common problem,” said Sharon Eubank, director of Church humanitarian services.

In 2012, in an effort to decrease the rate of childhood deaths in developing countries, LDS volunteers in Ghana sent 1.5 million text messages to their fellow Ghanaians, notifying them of an immunization drive sponsored by a Church partner.

“[Now] when some other problem comes along in the future, there is a foundation to cooperate again,” Sister Eubank said. “Serving together builds understanding and develops real Christian brotherhood faster than anything else I can think of.” ■

Apostles Focus on Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ during Visit to Philippines

By the Philippines Area news committee

Elder David A. Bednar and Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, along with other Church leaders, visited the Philippines Area from August 24 to September 2, 2012.

At priesthood leadership conferences, young single adult devotionals, stake conferences, and mission meetings, the Brethren taught doctrine and encouraged the Saints to strengthen their faith in Jesus Christ.

In Laguna, Elder Bednar answered young single adults' questions during a special meeting. He explained, "The Savior used questions as one of His primary teaching tools. If we strive to ask inspired and effective questions as we ponder and pray, you and I can engage in a learning process that enables us to receive inspiration and find our own answers from the Holy Ghost."

On Sunday the chapel, cultural halls, and overflow rooms of the Legazpi Stake Center were packed with members as Elder Cook taught, "Do not let your doubts disturb your faith."

He emphasized the importance of husbands and wives being equal partners in marriage as taught by "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" (*Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129).

Elder Cook greeted the members at the conclusion of the meeting.

Members and missionaries in Iloilo, on Panay



PHOTOGRAPH BY KAYE BAY

Island, traveled as much as five hours by boat and bus to attend meetings where Elder Bednar gave instruction on strengthening their faith in Jesus Christ and assisting others to come unto Christ.

"We are here to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ, but we should always remember that the true teacher is the Holy Ghost," summarized Sister Manguil, a full-time missionary serving in the Philippines Iloilo Mission.

In Cagayan de Oro Elder Cook told local young adults, "Your righteousness is needed, and this nation needs to be stronger. There will be an impact as a result of the Church's strength in the Philippines that will bless people all over Asia."

He encouraged members to focus on what is most important, conquer doubts, exercise faith, and marry in the temple.

"The timing of the teachings of the principles and scripture thoughts they shared was of [great] importance," Iligan Philippines Stake president Carlo V. Crisanto said. "Surely those principles are what we need today. . . . Of all the callings we have, the most important is in the family."

The Apostles ended their visit to the Philippines by meeting with two Philippine senators and attending a cultural event highlighting the local youth. ■

For 10 days in August and September, Elder David A. Bednar and Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles visited cities throughout the Philippines to meet with leaders, members, and missionaries.

Book of Mormon Now in Lao

More than 4,500 Church members in Laos, Thailand, and smaller groups in the United States and Canada now have access to the full Book of Mormon in Lao.

The new language translation is available in softcover through local Church distribution centers and online at store.lds.org (item no. 35607331) and LDS.org.

Leadership Training Library Helps Members in New Callings

More than a year after its launch Leadershiplibrary.lds.org continues to be a valuable resource for members—containing approximately 100 videos in 11 languages that offer help concerning a wide variety of Church callings.

The videos include unscripted footage of real wards and branches in a variety of countries. As Area Presidencies identify additional training needs, new material is added to the library quarterly.

"The purpose of [the Leadership Training Library] is to help local leaders learn, teach, and apply principles and policies from the handbook," Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said.

Leaders Create Second Stake in Russia, Eighth in Italy

On September 9, 2012, the day he turned 88, Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles created the St. Petersburg

Young single adults pose with Elder Russell M. Nelson and Sister Nelson at the Summer Gardens in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Russia Stake—the second stake in Russia.

Seven days later, Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Presidency of the Seventy divided the Milan Italy Stake to create the new Milan Italy East Stake. The Milan Italy Stake was renamed the Milan Italy West Stake.

Church Leaders Visit Heads of State in Croatia and Bosnia

Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Presidency of the Seventy and Elder Kent F. Richards, Second Counselor in the Europe Area Presidency, met with heads of state in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina during September 2012.

In Croatia, Elder Rasband met with President Ivo Josipović and pledged the Church's ongoing commitment to strengthen the family.

On September 12, Elder Rasband met with Željko Komšić, one of the three-person presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the first meeting ever between a Church leader and a head of state from Bosnia.

President Komšić described the diverse religious community that exists in Bosnia and welcomed the Church as a member of that community. Elder Rasband explained that the family is a high priority in the Church and that its members look forward to supporting this shared objective in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Study, Ponder, and Apply

The *Liahona* strengthens my spirit and my testimony of the truths of the gospel. In particular, it protects me from the snares of Satan by helping me turn to the things that are really important. Every month there is a message that seems to be written especially for me. I know it is the Father's will that we study and ponder the messages each month and apply them daily in our lives.

Pamela Ananta Barbosa da Silva, Brazil

A Path of Light

The scriptures are a priceless treasure. But I also consider the *Liahona* to be a treasure. There is a great light that shines from its pages. It provides us opportunities to correct our errors and perfect ourselves through the messages therein, just like the scriptures. On each page there is a valuable teaching, there is an opportunity, there is a path of light.

**Manuel de Araújo Fernandes,
Mozambique**

This issue contains articles and activities that could be used for family home evening. The following are a few examples.



"Discipleship at All Times, in All Things, in All Places," page 22: Consider inviting your family to complete the "discipleship experiment" discussed in this article. For one week, prayerfully study a particular teaching of or story about Jesus Christ. In the next family home evening, family members could report on their experiences and insights.

"Lights . . . Camera . . . Action!", page 48: After reading this article, discuss with your family the importance of choosing good media. Consider inviting family members to share one favorite example of good media and how it has helped them.

You may want to display a picture of Jesus Christ as you discuss how we ought to choose media that we would be comfortable viewing or listening to if the Lord were with us. (More ideas for teaching this topic are found on page 9.)

"Bringing Primary Home," page 64: Consider taking a walk as a family to discover how many things you can see that Heavenly Father created. Family members may like to collect items, draw pictures, or take photographs of their favorite creations. You could close by singing "My Heavenly Father Loves Me" (*Children's Songbook*, 228–29).

My Missionary Family Home Evening

As a new convert to the Church, I always like to help the missionaries in my ward. I've often seen that even when investigators aren't comfortable with hearing the discussions, they are happy to participate in family home evening.

One time I invited the full-time missionaries and an entire nonmember family to my family home evening. Before they arrived, I fasted and prayed that the Spirit would be present and would open their hearts to the gospel. We watched a missionary video about helping families progress and developing trust. Afterward we shared our feelings about the video. The Spirit was so strong.

Now this wonderful family is willing to learn more about the gospel by meeting with the missionaries. We have all been invited to help with missionary work, and I have seen that family home evenings are an effective way to share with others the joy of having the gospel in my life.

Maria de los Angeles Vilca Zeballos, Peru

REMEMBERING HIM ON THE SABBATH

By Michael R. Morris
Church Magazines

Our Sunday School lesson on keeping the Sabbath day holy had gone well—until somebody mentioned television.

As people chimed in with their opinions regarding whether watching television on Sunday was appropriate, some class members became prescriptive. Before long, other class members became offended. The Spirit, which at first had accompanied our discussion, was replaced by a palpable tension.

Observing the growing discord, Kenneth Payne, a member of our stake presidency, asked to speak. He stood and began telling us about his son Brian, who had served in the Japan Tokyo North Mission. When President Payne and his family greeted Brian at the airport upon his return from his mission in March 2003, he complained of a stiff, sore jaw. Within weeks, Brian was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

A month later he began a regimen of chemotherapy and then radiation. President Payne said doctors had planned a bone-marrow transplant for September 22, but just after



If Sunday activities distract us from remembering the Savior and ministering on the Sabbath as He would minister, then perhaps we should reconsider our choice.

the first of that month, “Brian began having difficulty.”

He was hospitalized the second week of September. By then, because of the cancer’s aggressive nature, doctors determined that it was too late for a transplant. The family brought Brian home from the hospital on September 21. He passed away the next morning.

“September 22 is a special day for my family and me,” said President Payne. “On that day we slow down and think about Brian, his contributions to our family, and how he gave the last two years of his life to the Lord and to the Japanese people, whom he loved. We miss him, and on that day we reflect upon his life and honor his memory.”

For all of us, President Payne said, Sunday is a day to slow down and remember.

“We take time out to attend our Church meetings, partake of the sacrament, sorrow for our sins, and ponder the Savior’s suffering on our behalf,” he said. “We serve, we love, and we try not to be distracted by activities that would prevent us from worshipping Him.”

President Payne said that if Sunday activities are in keeping with that spirit, then we can feel right as we engage in them. But if they distract us from remembering the Savior and ministering on the Sabbath as He would minister, then perhaps we should reconsider our choice.

He then sat down and said no more. He didn’t need to. The Spirit had returned to the classroom, and we were all listening. ■

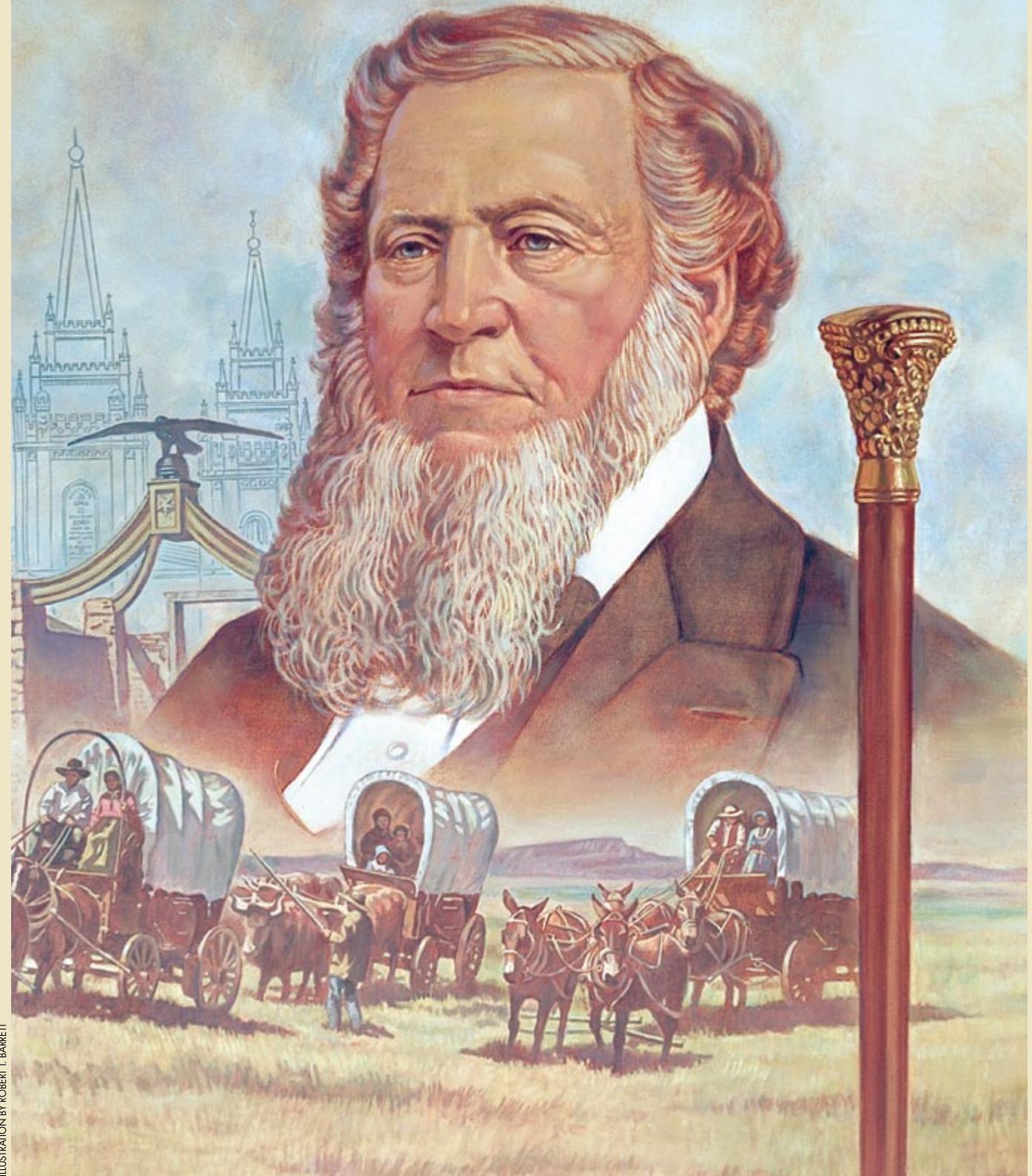


ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT T. BARRETT

BRIGHAM YOUNG

Brigham Young led the **pioneers** from Nauvoo, Illinois, to the Salt Lake Valley. While he was President of the Church, he also served as governor of the Utah Territory. The **Eagle Gate** marked the entrance to his property. Brigham Young used his **cane** to mark the spot where the **Salt Lake Temple** would be built. He was President of the Church for 30 years, longer than any other latter-day prophet.



The Liahona invited Latter-day Saints around the world to participate in a “discipleship experiment.” They were asked to study a particular teaching or story about Jesus Christ for a week and report on how their study affected the way they lived. See page 22 for a report from six members who participated in the experiment. They describe what they learned and how it changed the way they now follow the Savior.