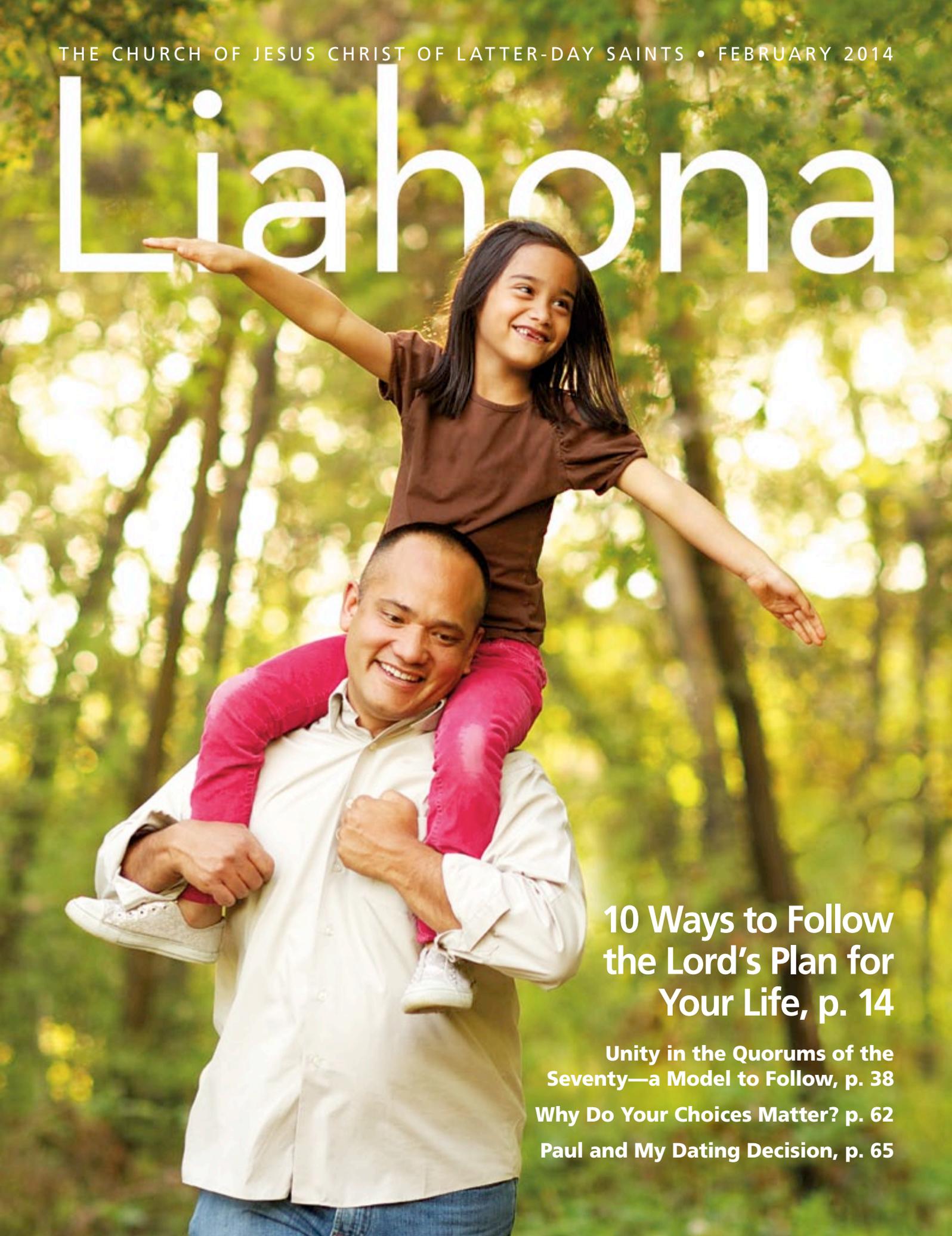


# Liahona

A photograph of a man in a white button-down shirt carrying a young girl on his shoulders. The girl is wearing a brown t-shirt and pink pants, and she has her arms outstretched. They are in a park-like setting with many trees and sunlight filtering through the leaves, creating a bokeh effect in the background.

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*"Blessed is the man  
that trusteth in the  
Lord, and whose  
hope the Lord is.*

*"For he shall be as  
a tree planted  
by the waters,  
and that spreadeth  
out her roots  
by the river,  
and . . . her leaf  
shall be green."*

Jeremiah 17:7-8



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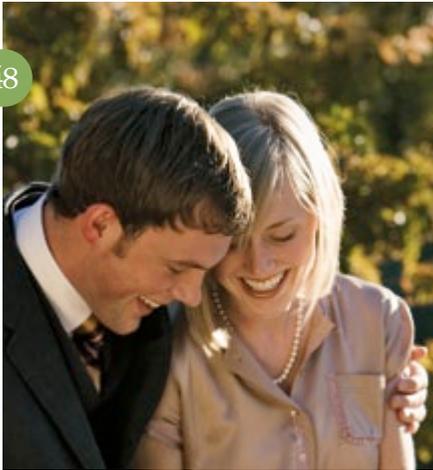
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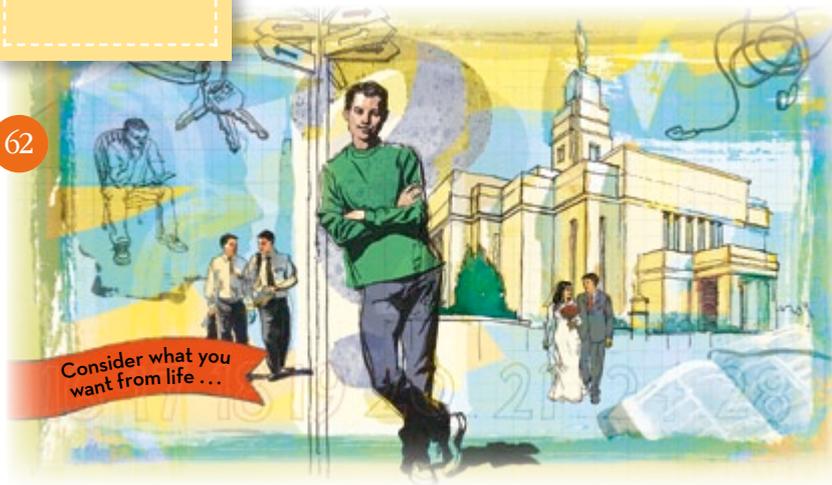
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# Family Home Evening Ideas

*This issue contains articles and activities that could be used for family home evening. The following are two ideas.*



**"Noah,"** page 10: Consider telling the story of Noah using shadow puppets. In a dark room, shine a light (such as a flashlight) on the wall. You and your family can use your arms and hands to make shadow shapes on the wall to tell about the boat, animals, rain, dove, and rainbow. Considering finishing the activity by discussing ways we can follow our living prophets today and singing "Follow the Prophet" (*Children's Songbook*, 110–11) or another song about prophets.

**"Best Family Forever,"** page 68: Consider holding an activity that will strengthen the friendships among family members. You might paint, like Olivia and Jane did, or work on another project. Afterwards, you could discuss how to deal with peer pressure and reflect on the blessings of building strong friendships within your family. You might talk about people from the scriptures who were strengthened by their friendships with family members: Mary and Elisabeth, Nephi and Sam, and Joseph and Hyrum Smith, for example.

## IN YOUR LANGUAGE

The *Liahona* and other Church materials are available in many languages at [languages.lds.org](http://languages.lds.org).

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By President  
Thomas S. Monson

# SERVE THE LORD WITH Love

**T**he Lord Jesus Christ taught, “Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it” (Luke 9:24).

“I believe,” said President Thomas S. Monson, “the Savior is telling us that unless we lose ourselves in service to others, there is little purpose to our own lives. Those who live only for themselves eventually shrivel up and figuratively lose their lives, while those who lose themselves in service to others grow and flourish—and in effect save their lives.”<sup>1</sup>

In the following excerpts from President Monson’s ministry, he reminds Latter-day Saints that they are the Lord’s hands and that the blessings of eternity await those who faithfully serve others.

## Service in the Temple

“Great service is given when we perform vicarious ordinances for those who have gone beyond the veil. In many cases we do not know those for whom we perform the work. We expect no thanks, nor do we have the assurance that they will accept that which we offer. However, we serve, and in that process we attain that which comes of no other effort: we literally become saviors on Mount Zion. As our Savior gave His life as a vicarious sacrifice for us, so we, in some small measure, do the same when we perform

proxy work in the temple for those who have no means of moving forward unless something is done for them by those of us here on the earth.”<sup>2</sup>

## We Are the Lord’s Hands

“My brothers and sisters, we are surrounded by those in need of our attention, our encouragement, our support, our comfort, our kindness—be they family members, friends, acquaintances, or strangers. We are the Lord’s hands here upon the earth, with the mandate to serve and to lift His children. He is dependent upon each of us. . . .

“That service to which all of us have been called is the service of the Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>3</sup>

## Serving in the Savior’s Shadow

“In the New World, the resurrected Lord declared, ‘Ye know the things that ye must do in my church; for the works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do; for that which ye have seen me do even that shall ye do’ [3 Nephi 27:21].

“We bless others as we serve in the shadow of ‘Jesus of Nazareth . . . who went about doing good’ [Acts 10:38]. God bless us to find joy in serving our Father in Heaven as we serve His children on earth.”<sup>4</sup>



## The Need to Serve

“We need to be given a chance to serve. For those members who have slipped from activity or who hold back and remain noncommittal, we can prayerfully seek for some way to reach them. Asking them to serve in some capacity may just be the incentive they need to return to full activity. But those leaders who could help in this regard are sometimes reluctant to do so. We need to bear in mind that people can change. They can put behind them bad habits. They can repent from transgressions. They can bear the priesthood worthily. And they can serve the Lord diligently.”<sup>5</sup>

## Are We Doing All We Should?

“The world is in need of our help. Are we doing all we should? Do we remember the words of President John Taylor: ‘If you do not magnify your

callings, God will hold you responsible for those whom you might have saved had you done your duty?’ [*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: John Taylor* (2001), 164]. There are feet to steady, hands to grasp, minds to encourage, hearts to inspire, and souls to save. The blessings of eternity await you. Yours is the privilege to be not spectators but participants on the stage of . . . service.”<sup>6</sup> ■

## NOTES

1. “What Have I Done for Someone Today?” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 85.
2. “Until We Meet Again,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 113–14.
3. “What Have I Done for Someone Today?” 86, 87.
4. “The Savior’s Call to Serve,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Aug. 2012, 5.
5. “See Others as They May Become,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 68.
6. “Willing and Worthy to Serve,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2012, 69.
7. *Teaching, No Greater Call: A Resource Guide for Gospel Teaching* (1999), 12.

## TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

“If you have Christlike love, you will be better prepared to teach the gospel. You will be inspired to help others know the Savior and follow Him.”<sup>7</sup> Consider praying for increased charity for those you visit. As you develop Christlike love for them, you will be better able to serve in meaningful ways both the Lord and those you teach.

## Summer of Service

By Elizabeth Blight

One summer I spent time in a foreign country working with children with special needs. When I first met the children, I was incredibly nervous. I did not speak their language, but I trusted that the Spirit would guide me in my interactions. As I got to know each child, I realized that language is not a barrier to love. I played, laughed, and did crafts with the children and could not help but feel complete love for them. I glimpsed the love that Heavenly Father has for His children, and the joy that filled my heart defied description.

Whenever I serve others, I feel love not only for those that I serve but also for Heavenly Father. I truly have come to know that “when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17). The purpose of my service, whether in big service projects or through small acts of kindness, has been to glorify God (see Matthew 5:16). I hope that as I serve others, people will recognize my love for Heavenly Father and the Light of Christ that burns within me.

*The author lives in Virginia, USA.*

## Links of Love

Have an adult help you cut out 28 thin strips of paper, each about 1 inch (2.5 cm) wide and about 8 inches (20 cm) long. Each day this month, perform an act of service to show your love for someone. You might help your parents clean your home or write a kind note to a neighbor.

Write down how you served each day on one of your paper strips, and then tape or glue the ends of the strip together to make a circle. You can connect your circles by sliding one end of a new paper strip through the circle from the previous day before you tape or glue the ends of the new strip together. Watch your links of love grow! You could even continue adding to your service chain after February is over.



## VISITING TEACHING MESSAGE

Prayerfully study this material and seek to know what to share. How will understanding the life and mission of the Savior increase your faith in Him and bless those you watch over through visiting teaching? For more information, go to [reliefsociety.lds.org](http://reliefsociety.lds.org).

# The Divine Mission of Jesus Christ: Good Shepherd

This is part of a series of Visiting Teaching Messages featuring aspects of the mission of the Savior.

Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, taught:

“What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? . . .

“I say unto you, that . . . joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth” (Luke 15:4, 7).

As we come to understand that Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd, our desire increases to follow His example and serve those in need. Jesus said: “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. . . . And I lay down my life for the sheep” (John 10:14–15). Because of Christ’s Atonement, none of us will ever be so lost that we cannot find our way home (see Luke 15).

President Thomas S. Monson said, “Ours is the responsibility to care for



the flock. . . . May we each step up to serve.”<sup>1</sup>

### From the Scriptures

Psalm 23; Isaiah 40:11; Mosiah 26:21

#### NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Heavenly Homes, Forever Families,” *Ensign*, June 2006, 102; *Liahona*, June 2006, 70.
2. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 128.
3. Thomas S. Monson, “What Have I Done for Someone Today?” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 86.
4. James E. Faust, “Dear Are the Sheep That Have Wandered,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2003, 68.

### What Can I Do?

1. How does knowing that the Savior is the Good Shepherd bring peace into our lives?
2. How can I support parents whose children have wandered from living the gospel?

Faith, Family, Relief



### From Our History

Elizabeth Ann Whitney, who attended the first Relief Society meeting, said of her conversion in 1830: “As soon as I heard the Gospel as the Elders preached it, I knew it to be the voice of the Good Shepherd.”<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth followed the voice of the Good Shepherd and was baptized and confirmed.

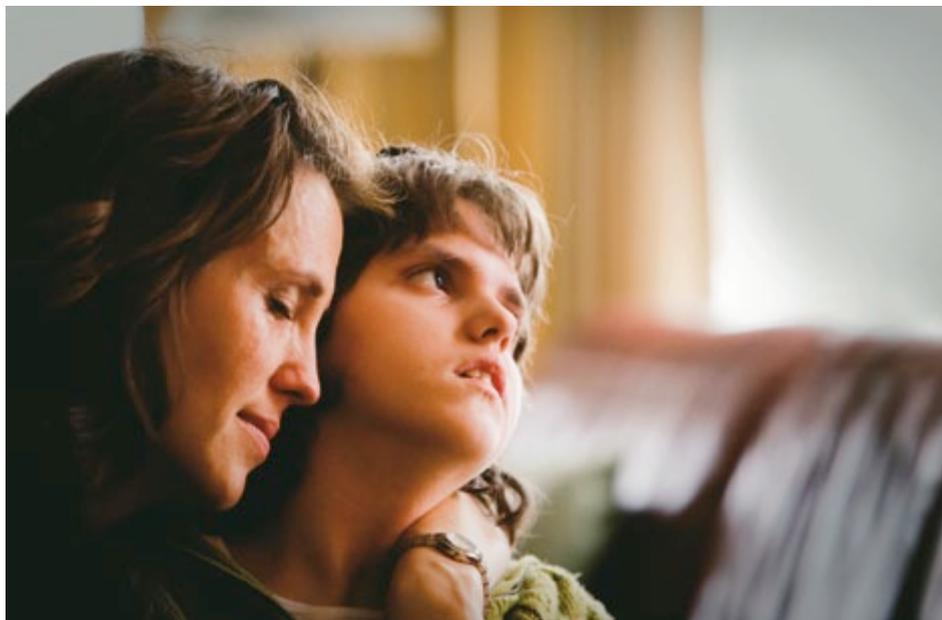
We too can hear the voice of the Good Shepherd and share His teachings with others. President Monson said, “We are the Lord’s hands here upon the earth, with the mandate to serve and to lift His children.”<sup>3</sup>

Just as a shepherd seeks out a lost sheep, parents may seek after a child who has wandered. President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said: “To those brokenhearted parents who have been righteous, diligent, and prayerful in the teaching of their disobedient children, we say to you, the Good Shepherd is watching over them. God knows and understands your deep sorrow. There is hope.”<sup>4</sup>

# OCTOBER 2013 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 2013 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.*



## Prophetic Words on Mental and Emotional Challenges

**H**ow do you best respond when mental or emotional challenges confront you or those you love? Above all, never lose faith in your Father in Heaven, who loves you more than you can comprehend. . . . Never, ever doubt that, and never harden your heart. Faithfully pursue the time-tested devotional practices that bring the Spirit of the Lord into your life. Seek the

counsel of those who hold keys for your spiritual well-being. Ask for and cherish priesthood blessings. Take the sacrament every week, and hold fast to the perfecting promises of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Believe in miracles. I have seen so many of them come when every other indication would say that hope was lost. Hope is *never* lost. If those miracles do not come soon or fully or seemingly at all, remember the Savior's own anguished example: if the bitter cup does not pass, drink it and be strong, trusting in happier days ahead. . . .

“ . . . I bear witness of that day when loved ones whom we knew to

## Answers for You

Each conference, Church leaders give inspired answers to questions Church members may have. Use your November 2013 issue or visit [conference.lds.org](http://conference.lds.org) to find answers to these questions:

- Why does God put so much emphasis on the law of chastity? See Dallin H. Oaks, “No Other Gods.”
- How can we draw closer to God? See Terence M. Vinson, “Drawing Closer to God.”
- How can we avoid being deceived? See Adrián Ochoa, “Look Up.”

have disabilities in mortality will stand before us glorified and grand, breathtakingly perfect in body and mind.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Like a Broken Vessel,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 40–41, 42.

To read, watch, or listen to general conference addresses, visit [conference.lds.org](http://conference.lds.org).

## DRAWING PARALLELS: REPENTANCE

Some of the most important topics are addressed by more than one general conference speaker. Here is what three speakers said about repentance:

- “There is an important difference between the sorrow for sin that leads to repentance and the sorrow that leads to despair. The Apostle Paul taught that “*godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation . . . but the sorrow of the world worketh death* [2 Corinthians 7:10; emphasis added].”<sup>1</sup> —President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency
- “Remember, repentance is not punishment. It is the hope-filled path to a more glorious future.”<sup>2</sup> —Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
- “The Savior’s atoning sacrifice makes possible our future salvation and exaltation through the principle of repentance. If we honestly and sincerely repent, the Atonement can help us become clean, change our nature, and successfully endure our challenges.”<sup>3</sup> —Elder Richard J. Maynes of the Seventy

### NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “You Can Do It Now!” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 56.
2. Richard G. Scott, “Personal Strength through the Atonement of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 84.
3. Richard J. Maynes, “The Strength to Endure,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 79.



## Prophetic Promise

“We cannot force God’s children to choose the way to happiness. God cannot do that because of the agency He has given us.

“Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son love all of God’s children no matter what they choose to do or what they

become. The Savior paid the price of all sins, no matter how heinous. Even though there must be justice, the opportunity for mercy is extended which will not rob justice. . . . We can always take courage from the assurance that we all once felt the joy of being



### BY THE NUMBERS\*

**50 years** since President Thomas S. Monson became an Apostle

**15 million** members of the Church

**197 countries** where conference was available

**80,333** full-time missionaries

*\*As of the October 2013 general conference*



together as a member of the beloved family of our Heavenly Father. With God’s help we can all feel that hope and that joy again.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “To My Grandchildren,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 71, 72.

# NOAH

*"[Noah] stands next in authority to Adam in the Priesthood; he was called of God to this office, and was the father of all living in his day."*<sup>1</sup>—*The Prophet Joseph Smith*

**M**y father gave me the name Noah, which means “rest,” because he believed I would bring comfort to my family. I lived during a dark time plagued with violence, hate, and other sins.<sup>2</sup>

God, warning me that a flood would destroy the wicked, instructed me to build a ship and gather food and animals. With the help of my three sons and through the inspiration of God, I worked on the ship for the next 120 years. There wasn’t even evidence of rain.<sup>3</sup>

I also preached repentance, hoping that some would listen and escape the Flood. From the translation of Enoch until the Flood, many faithful people were taken into heaven without tasting death, but others refused to repent.<sup>4</sup>

When my family finally boarded the ark, we sealed the door and did not open it again until the rains ceased and the ground dried, close to a year later.<sup>5</sup> When we disembarked, God covenanted never to flood the earth again.

A rainbow arced across the sky as a symbol of His promise. He commanded us to expand our families and to continue living the gospel, and I became the second father of the human race.<sup>6</sup>

Centuries later, as an angel named Gabriel,<sup>7</sup> I announced to the priest Zacharias that he would be the father of John the Baptist, and I appeared to Mary and told her that she would give birth to the Savior.<sup>8</sup>

My life demonstrates that, even during difficult times, you will never stand alone if you follow God. The floods of life will eventually settle, and you will see the beauty of the gospel in your life, just like the rainbow that crosses the sky. ■

## NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 104.
2. See Genesis 6:11; Moses 8:9; Bible Dictionary, “Noah.”
3. See Genesis 6:14–22; Moses 8:17; *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 140–41.
4. See Moses 7:21, 27; 8:15–24.
5. See Genesis 7:11; 8:13–14.
6. See Genesis 9:1–17.
7. See Guide to the Scriptures, “Gabriel,” scriptures.lds.org.
8. See Luke 1:11–20, 26–33.
9. See Genesis 5:3–28.
10. See Genesis 9:29.
11. See Daniel 8:15–19; 9:21–23.

## FACT BOX: NOAH

- Names:** Noah, Gabriel
- Birth date:** about 1,056 years after Adam<sup>9</sup>
- Age at time of death:** 950 years<sup>10</sup>
- Genealogy:** son of Lamech, grandson of Methuselah, ninth generation after Adam
- Mortal roles:** preacher of righteousness before the Flood; savior of family and animals from the Flood; second father of the human race
- Postmortal role:** as Gabriel, he appeared to Daniel to teach him about the Second Coming;<sup>11</sup> to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist; and to Mary, the mother of Jesus



# SERVICE

On pages 58–59 of this issue Carol F. McConkie, first counselor in the Young Women general presidency, explains that service is the gospel of Jesus Christ in action: “When we serve others, we are engaged in the work of salvation. As King Benjamin taught, ‘When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God’ (Mosiah 2:17).” The suggestions below will help you teach youth and children about service and its role in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## Suggestions for Teaching Youth

- The Mormon Messages for Youth video “Extraordinary Gift” (online at [lds.org/go/E24service](http://lds.org/go/E24service)) shares the story of a blind young man who uses his talents to bless others. You may want to watch the video with your family and talk about the extraordinary gifts each family member has been given. How can these gifts be used to serve others?
- In *For the Strength of Youth*, we read, “Some of the most important service you can give will be within your own home” (32). With your youth, discuss the importance of serving in

the home. What blessings come when family members serve one another? Plan a way that your youth can give more meaningful service at home.

- “Often the most meaningful service is expressed through simple, everyday acts of kindness” (*For the Strength of Youth*, 32). Invite your youth to create a service activity that consists of “everyday acts of kindness.” Discuss how service relates to the covenants we make at baptism (see Mosiah 18:8–10).
- Consider having a general conference scavenger hunt for family home evening in which family members use clues to look for statements on service from the most recent general conference. Share what you find and discuss how you can follow the counsel our leaders have given.

## Suggestions for Teaching Children

- Help your children understand that there are opportunities to serve everywhere. Have family members look for ways they can serve during their daily activities, and then meet together and talk about your experiences.



## SCRIPTURES ON THIS TOPIC

Matthew 25:35–45

Luke 10:25–37

James 2:14–17

- Share stories about service from your family history, a Church magazine, or a general conference talk. Read Mosiah 2:17 and talk about how we can serve Heavenly Father by serving others.
- Have your children draw pictures that show how they serve others. Ask them what things they can do to serve their siblings, friends, teachers, or parents. ■

# PREPARING TO BE AN ETERNAL FAMILY

By Marco Castro Castro

*There is no magic recipe for success in marriage, but the ingredients are always the same.*

My wife and I observed with sadness and amazement as some of our friends went through the process of divorce. The first thing we felt was the fear that this would happen to us if we found ourselves facing difficult challenges in our marriage. When a serious crisis did arise in our marriage, we decided to give ourselves one last chance—but to do it in the right way. We had already been trying for some time to solve our problems by taking one another's thoughts and feelings into consideration. Our relationship would improve temporarily, but after a time our problems always returned.

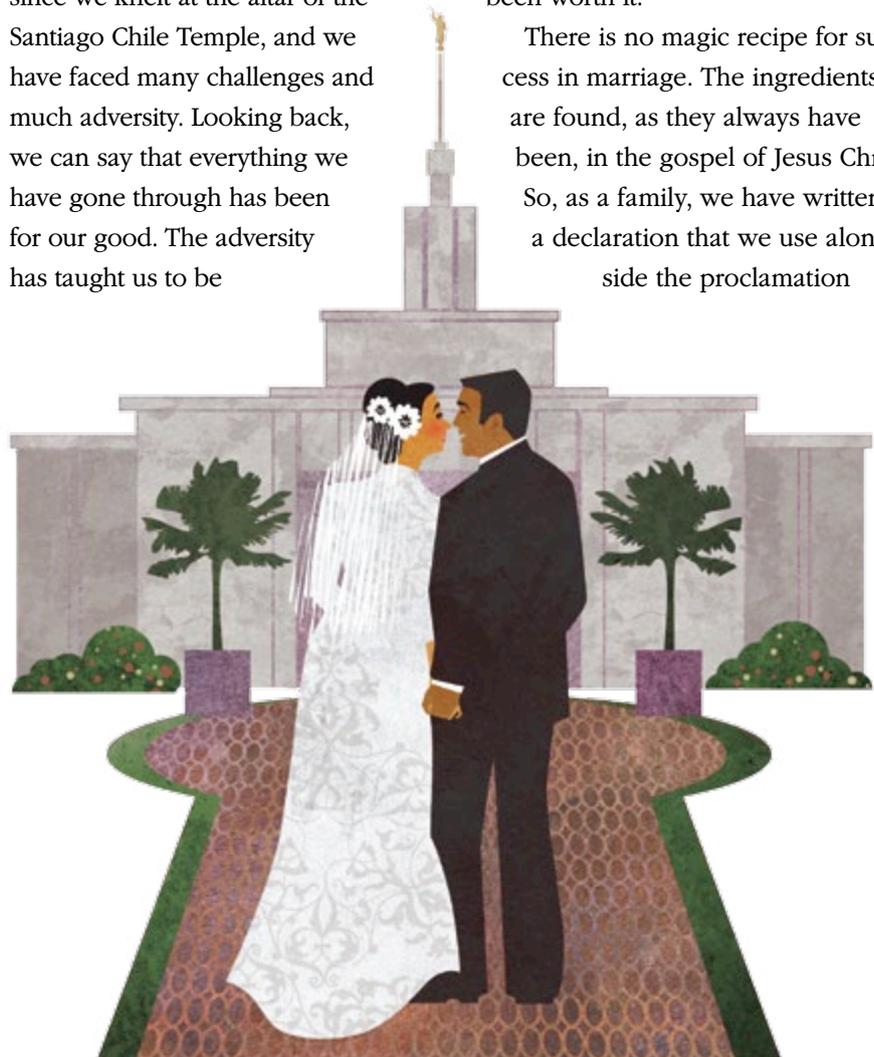
Not until we realized that the Lord needed to play a prominent role in our marriage did our marriage begin to change. We realized that we were never going to be able to work through, much less solve, our conflicts by ourselves. Putting aside our pride, we did something we hadn't done before. We forgot our own opinions and asked the Lord what He wanted

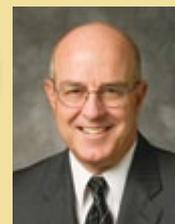
of us. Only when we included Him did our marriage start to improve—gradually and in His way and in His own due time.

It has now been several years since we knelt at the altar of the Santiago Chile Temple, and we have faced many challenges and much adversity. Looking back, we can say that everything we have gone through has been for our good. The adversity has taught us to be

humble and has made us stronger. We are still learning how to put our lives in order—both of us learning to work together as equal partners in love and understanding—and the effort has been worth it.

There is no magic recipe for success in marriage. The ingredients are found, as they always have been, in the gospel of Jesus Christ. So, as a family, we have written a declaration that we use alongside the proclamation





**BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION OF FAITH**

“Successful eternal marriages are built on the foundation of

faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and adherence to His teachings [see “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129]. I have observed that couples who have made their marriages priceless practice the patterns of faith: they attend sacrament and other meetings every week, hold family home evening, pray and study the scriptures together and as individuals, and pay an honest tithing. Their mutual quest is to be obedient and good.”

**Elder L. Whitney Clayton of the Presidency of the Seventy, “Marriage: Watch and Learn,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2013, 83.**

on the family issued by the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.<sup>1</sup> Our declaration, titled “Preparing to Be an Eternal Family,” begins with these words: “We, the Castro Martínez family, testify that marriage is ordained of God and that family relationships can be eternal through the Atonement of Jesus Christ if we are obedient to the laws and ordinances of the gospel.”

What follows are 17 principles that in our judgment encompass the basic gospel values that will give us the greatest chance for success in our marriage and in our family. Our list is by no means revolutionary; it includes

things such as personal and family prayer, scripture study, weekly family home evenings, attendance at Sunday meetings, regular temple attendance, treating one another with love and respect, and giving service. We also realize that principles by themselves have no effect whatsoever—we have to put them into practice.

Putting aside our pride and incorporating the Lord and His will into our marriage have put us on the path to becoming an eternal family. ■

*The author lives in Valparaíso, Chile.*

**NOTE**

1. See “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129.



By Elder  
Richard G. Scott  
Of the Quorum of the  
Twelve Apostles



# Living

A LIFE OF PEACE,  
JOY, AND PURPOSE

*May the Lord strengthen your resolve, your exercise of faith,  
and your growing character so that you may be the  
instrument of good He wants you to be.*

**T**his world is in serious trouble. The fundamental values of the United States and other Western nations are being undermined. There is a continual crumbling of principle, virtue, integrity, and religious values—the foundation stones of civilization and definitive ingredients of peace and happiness. I will share with you as simply and as clearly as I am able a pattern for success and happiness in life despite these conditions.

God has given you the capacity to exercise faith so that you may find peace, joy, and purpose in life. However, to employ its power, that faith must be rooted in something secure. There is no more solid foundation than faith in the love Heavenly Father has for you, faith in His plan of happiness, and faith in the willingness and power of Jesus Christ to fulfill all His promises.



Some of the principles upon which faith is based include:

- Trust in God and in His desire to provide help when needed, no matter how challenging the circumstance.
- Obedience to His commandments and a life that demonstrates that He can trust you.
- Sensitivity to the quiet promptings of the Spirit and courageous implementation of the resulting impressions.
- Patience and understanding when God lets you struggle to grow and when answers come a piece at a time over an extended period.

It will be helpful to you to understand and use the power of the interaction of faith and character. God uses your faith to mold your character. Character is woven patiently from threads of doctrine, principle, and obedience. Character is the manifestation of what you are becoming. Your character will be the yardstick that God will use to determine how well you have used your mortal life. Strong moral character results from consistent correct choices in the trials and testing of life. Such choices are made with trust in things that are believed and, when acted upon, will be confirmed as true.

### **Worthy Character**

As you walk to the boundary of your understanding into the twilight of uncertainty while exercising faith, you will be led to find solutions to the challenges of life you would not obtain otherwise. Even if you have the strongest faith, God will not always reward you immediately according to your desires. Rather, He will respond a piece at a time

with what in His eternal plan is best for you. Your continuing exercise of faith will forge strength of character available to you in times of critical need. Such character is not developed in moments of great challenge or temptation. That is when it is used.

The bedrock of character is integrity. Worthy character will strengthen your capacity to recognize the direction of the Spirit and be obedient to it. Strong character is more important than what you own, what you have learned, or what goals you have accomplished. Your consistent exercise of faith builds strong character. In turn, fortified character expands your ability to exercise faith, thereby enhancing your capacity and confidence in conquering the trials of life. This strengthening cycle continues, for the more your character is fortified, the more capable you are to exercise the power of faith.

Wherever you live, whatever your occupation or focus in life, you will be drawn into the battle for the souls of men and women. Be valiant in that struggle. It is waged on the basis of character. Satan and his troops have defined their character by resolute opposition to the will of our Father and consistent violation of His commandments. Your character is being solidified by consistent correct choices. Throughout life you will be rewarded from the efforts you expend to choose correctly.

Neither Satan nor any other power can weaken or destroy your growing character. Only you can do that through disobedience. That is why Satan is so intently focused on tempting you to make decisions that will undermine your character. Satan is an accomplished master at making devastating choices

*Keep the gospel light burning brightly in your home through scripture study, prayer, and the other things you know how to do. Drink deeply from the fountain of the revealed word of God. Hold fast to His word.*



appear attractive, even reasonable. So be careful. At this critical time of life, you will be faced with many choices. The decisions you will make will profoundly affect life now and for eternity. Make them wisely and prayerfully.

### **Making Decisions Based on Eternal Truths**

There are two patterns for making decisions in life: (1) decisions based upon circumstance and (2) decisions based upon eternal truth. Satan encourages choices to be made according to the circumstances: What are others doing? What seems to be socially or politically acceptable? What will bring the quickest, most satisfying response? That pattern gives Lucifer the broadest opportunity to tempt an individual to make decisions that will be harmful and destructive even though they may appear most appealing when a decision is made.

With this approach there is no underlying set of values or standards to consistently guide decisions. Each decision is made for what appears to be the most attractive choice at the moment. One who chooses this path cannot expect the help of the Lord but is left to his or her own strength and that of others who want to help. Sadly, most of God's children make decisions this way. That is why the world is in such turmoil.

The pattern of the Lord is for His children to make decisions based upon eternal truth. This requires that your life continue to be centered in the commandments of God. Thus, decisions are made in accordance with unchanging truths aided by prayer and the guidance of the Holy Ghost. In addition to your own strength and capacity, you will enjoy divine inspiration and power when needed. Your

actions will be predictable and bless the lives of all in the circle of your influence. You will have a meaningful life of purpose, peace, and happiness.

There is no guarantee that life will be easy for anyone. We grow and learn more rapidly by facing and overcoming challenges. You are here to prove yourself, to develop, and to overcome. There will be constant challenges that cause you to think, to make proper judgments, and to act righteously. You will grow from them. However, there are some challenges you never need to encounter. They are those associated with serious transgression. As you continue to avoid such tragedy, your life will be simpler and happier. You will see others around you who don't make that choice, who do things that are wrong and evil and bring sadness. Thank your Father in Heaven that your pattern of life is different and that you have been helped to make choices guided by the Holy Ghost. That prompting will keep you on the right path.

The gospel teaches us to make decisions based upon eternal truth. Please never allow yourself to make an exception to that pattern of life to gain a temporary, appealing advantage or to participate in an experience you know to be unworthy. I have seen so many young couples and individuals fumble the ball of life because they look to the wrong sources for how to live. They become distracted from true principles by being tempted to compromise just a little bit to gain influence, position, or acceptability. They justify those deviations, rationalizing that later a greater good could be accomplished. In the long run that pattern of life will take you where you definitely do not want to be.

*We need mothers and fathers who will preserve the sanctity and safety of the home and the integrity of the family in which faith in God and obedience to His commandments are taught as the foundation of a productive life.*



### **Keeping Your Resolve**

How can you keep your resolve to live worthily? How can you be sure that determination in your heart will not be eroded by the pressures around you? If you are blessed to be married, rejoice in that companionship with your spouse and your children. Let there be absolutely no secrets kept from each other. That will provide powerful insurance for continuing righteousness and happiness. Decide issues together.

Keep the gospel light burning brightly in your home through scripture study, prayer, and the other things you know how to do. Honor and live temple covenants as you receive them. Drink deeply from the fountain of the revealed word of God. Hold fast to His word. Keep the Sabbath day holy. In short, continue to do what you know you should do. Wherever you go, stay tightly connected to the Church and consistently serve in it. While single, keep these same objectives as they apply.

As an exceptional son or daughter of God, you are sorely needed. There is an urgent need for more men and women like you who will stand for principles against the growing pressures to compromise those very principles. Men and women are needed who will act nobly and courageously for what the Lord has defined as right—not for what is politically correct or socially acceptable. We need individuals who have the spiritual, righteous influence that will motivate others to live honorably. We need statesmen with integrity,

businessmen who are honest and morally clean, attorneys who defend justice and the legal system, and government officials who preserve principle because it is right. Above all, we need mothers and fathers who will preserve the sanctity and safety of the home and the integrity of the family in which faith in God and obedience to His commandments are taught as the foundation of a productive life.

You can be an essential part of that shining light, that righteous influence to increase the moral fiber of your nation and its homes. Many of your friends live their life for the moment. They do not understand the need for principles, eternal laws, and truth. They have been brought up in an environment in which decisions are made on the basis of today's circumstances or tomorrow's opportunities for gain. Show them a better life—a better way. There are some things that are wrong because God decreed they are wrong. Truth is not determined by what men think, no matter how influential they may be. Truth was determined by an Almighty God before the Creation of this earth. Truth will exist unchanged forever.

Oh, there can be transitory euphoria from power, influence, or material wealth, but true, lasting happiness, the kind that is felt in the early hours of the morning when you are truly honest with yourself, is won only by obedience to the teachings of God. You must have honesty, integrity, chastity, virtue, and a willingness to forgo something

attractive—even apparently desirable for the moment—for a greater good in the future. I speak of our willingness when circumstance demands to lay everything on the altar to follow true principles.

### **Success in Following the Plan**

I would like to suggest 10 specific things to help you be successful in the plan the Lord would have you follow in your life.

*First, establish a set of principles by which you will guide every aspect of your life—in your home, in your Church service, in your profession, in your community.* Many people try to compartmentalize their life and have a standard for Church and another standard for what they do in business and in other aspects of their life. I very strongly counsel you not to do that. There really is only one set of standards that makes sense. Those are the teachings of Jesus Christ, which signal to us the importance of faith, service, obedience, and integrity.

*Second, don't make exceptions to your standards.* Never compromise them. One of the ways the Lord protects us is to give us guidance in life. One of the ways Satan tries to destroy us is to subtly lead us away from what we know is centrally important in our life. I lived in Washington, D.C., for much of my life, and I recall on occasion men coming to that city who had been elected as representatives of the government and who were members of the Church. Some of them used the teachings of the Savior throughout their careers and became great servants. Others early in their careers began to reason, “If we were better friends with others and were better understood, we would receive positions

that would put us in a place where we could serve better.” They began to make small exceptions to the standards by which they knew they should guide their lives. Few even remember them. They lost because they made exceptions to standards. Don't make that mistake.

Be loyal to the teachings you have received from your parents and Church leaders. They are the things of greatest worth. If you integrate your formal education with what you know about the teachings of the Lord and the examples of those worthy people who are role models to you, you will have a solid foundation. You will be productive and do things that are worthwhile for others.

*Third, be loyal.* Be loyal to your parents and your loved ones. Above all, be loyal to Jesus Christ, the Savior. Success comes when your actions are consistent with the teachings of the Lord. When you seek work, find something that challenges you, that raises you to higher levels of performance. It may be harder, but you will grow, develop better, and contribute more good. You really have no idea yet who you are and what you can accomplish in life. You have great potential far beyond what you can imagine today.

*Fourth, live so that the Lord can guide you to where He wants you to be and to serve.* He can do that if you live His commandments worthily and strive in every way to be obedient to His teachings.

*Fifth, serve others.* Sharing what you know with others will bring you happiness and bless their lives.

*Sixth, smile.* I don't mean that you need to be cracking jokes every day, but a good joke now and then is an escape valve. Life is not all that bad. You will soon learn that





*Put aside your problems and smile. Have a good sense of humor, as the prophets do.*

everybody has problems and nobody wants to hear about yours. Put those things aside and smile. Have a good sense of humor, as the prophets do. I wish I could tell you some of the things that we talk about. Not flippant things, not things that are inappropriate—just a good sense of humor. I will tell you a secret of how to wake up in the morning with a smile on your face no matter how you feel: go to bed with a coat hanger in your mouth. Remember, a good sense of humor helps you greatly.

*Seventh, don't complain.* Life isn't always fair. That's a fact. But it's always charged with marvelous opportunities if you know how to find them. I remember once when I was working as hard as I knew how. I happened to be working for a man who took all of the ideas and suggestions and work that I did and passed them on to his superior as though they were his own suggestions. For a while I was really upset about that. As I pondered it, a thought came to me, and I decided from then on I would write reports to him of everything that I was doing or trying to do, and I sent a copy to his boss. He didn't like that, but it worked beautifully.

*Eighth, always have a Church assignment.* I don't mean that you should ask for a particular calling, but wherever you go in the world, wherever the Lord takes you, always offer your service to the presiding authority. Leave it to that authority to decide where and how. Be connected with the things of God and the ways to serve Him.

The last two are the most important.

*Ninth, go to the temple.* Carry a current temple recommend. There may be a few young adults who will want to wait to go to the temple for their endowment when they go with their companion to be sealed. But virtually everyone

can obtain and keep a temple recommend. It will keep you spiritually in tune, will allow you to remember the most important things of life, and will encourage you to give great service to others.

*Tenth, use the Savior Jesus Christ as your example for life.* Use His teachings as your handbook for life. Never make exceptions to them.

Will you prayerfully consider the things we have discussed? There are many willing to be led by your righteous example. Because you have been enlightened, you owe to those who follow you the best example you are capable of giving. Not only will they be blessed, but your life will be enriched as well. Come to know of the great influence for good that flows from individual acts born of conscience and principle rooted in truth. Resolve that each moment of your life will reflect your determination to humbly be an example of righteousness, integrity, and conviction. With such a life you will surely succeed in the purpose for which you came to earth.

### **Do What Is Right**

I began this message indicating that I have validated in my personal life the truth of the principles shared. There have been times when my choice to stand for principle against strong forces implied that there would be significant personal loss by taking that action. But that did not deter me. I was determined to do what was right. The anticipated loss, however, never came. Somehow, doing what was right in time opened far greater and more meaningful opportunities. I testify that you will never go wrong when you trust in the Lord and in His promises, no matter how severe the challenge.

May I share an experience with you? I served in the U.S. Navy with Admiral Hyman G. Rickover, a very demanding individual. When I was called to be a mission president, he tried to dissuade me from going. When I said it was a prophet of God who had called me, he said, "If that's the way Mormons are, I'm not going to have any of them working in my program." I knew there were many families in Idaho, USA, depending on work in that program, and I was concerned about it.

As I prayed, a song came to my mind: “Do what is right; let the consequence follow” (“Do What Is Right,” *Hymns*, no. 237). I did that. I couldn’t see how some of the challenges we faced would be worked out the way I hoped they would be with the individual who would come to replace me, but “do what is right; let the consequence follow.” It all worked out very well.

When Admiral Rickover knew I was going to leave on a mission, he had said he never wanted to see me again and never wanted to talk to me again. On the final day of my working with him, I asked for an appointment. The secretary gasped, expecting that there was going to be an explosion.

I went in, and he said, “Scott, sit down. What do you have? I’ve tried every way I can to change your decision. What is it that you’ve got?”

I handed him a copy of the Book of Mormon and said, “Admiral, I believe in God. And I believe that when we do the best we can, He will help us.”

Then Admiral Rickover said something that I didn’t ever expect to hear. He said, “When you finish your mission, I want you to come back and work with me.”

“Do what is right; let the consequence follow.”

May the Lord strengthen your resolve, your exercise of faith, and your growing character so that you may be the instrument of good He wants you to be. I testify that He lives. As you worthily seek His help, He will guide you in your life. I testify of that with every capacity I possess. Jesus Christ lives. He guides His work on earth.

As Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have experiences that are very sacred that allow us to bear our testimony of His name and of His power. I do that with deep conviction. Jesus Christ loves you. He will guide you in your life. In times of great challenge, when you are perplexed about which turn to take, kneel down and ask your Father in Heaven to bless you and let your faith in the Savior and His Atonement be the rock and foundation of your successful life. ■

*From a commencement address delivered at Brigham Young University on April 21, 2011. For the full address in English, go to [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu).*

## TO SUCCEED IN LIFE

1. Establish principles to guide your life.
2. Don’t make exceptions to your standards.
3. Be loyal.
4. Live so that the Lord can guide you.
5. Serve others.
6. Smile.
7. Don’t complain.
8. Always have a Church assignment.
9. Worship in the temple.
10. Follow the Savior’s example.

## TIMES AT A GLANCE

Part 1 of 2

From Abraham until Jesus Christ  
(Part 2 to be published later in 2014)

Abraham—the great patriarch of the Old Testament—is inextricably linked to all who join The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. An understanding of his life and the covenant God made with him and his posterity will help you see your life and the covenants you make with God as a disciple of Jesus Christ in a more complete way (see Guide to the Scriptures, “Abrahamic Covenant,” scriptures.lds.org).

About 4,000 years ago Jehovah, the premortal name for Jesus Christ, promised Abraham that his posterity would be a blessing to all people and that because of this covenant, great things would take place in the latter days (see Abraham 2:9–11). Jesus Christ reaffirmed this covenant with many others through the centuries. In modern times He renewed the Abrahamic covenant with the Prophet Joseph Smith (see D&C 124:58; 132:30–31). By entering into this restored covenant, you are blessed with the everlasting gospel and enabled, as were they of old, to receive all the ordinances of the holy priesthood, including marriage for eternity (see Guide to the Scriptures, “Covenant,” scriptures.lds.org). Your patriarchal blessing includes an inspired declaration of the lineage through which you may claim these blessings by exercising faith, repenting, receiving priesthood ordinances, and enduring to the end in keeping your covenants.

As you study this chart, you will more clearly see your place in God’s plan of happiness.

# ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

**1** Abraham was born in Ur, in the land of the Chaldeans. His father worshipped false gods.  
**Abraham 1:1, 5–7, 27**

**2** Abraham was baptized; he received the priesthood from Melchizedek.  
**Doctrine and Covenants 84:14; Abraham 1:2–4**

**3** Jehovah (Jesus Christ) appeared to Abraham, saving him from death as a sacrifice to false gods.  
**Abraham 1:8–16**

**4** Jehovah commanded Abraham to leave Ur, promising that through Abraham’s ministry His name would be known in the earth forever.  
**Abraham 1:16–19**

DISPENSATIONS

Eastern Hemisphere

Western Hemisphere

\*2025 B.C.

\*2000 B.C.



1 2 3 4 5



Sarah

ABRAHAM

GATHERING

**12 PROPHECY**  
Some of Abraham’s posterity would be a “stranger” in Egypt.  
**Genesis 15:13–14**

**13** Commanded of God, Sarah gave her handmaid, Hagar, to Abraham in marriage.  
**Genesis 16:1–4; Doctrine and Covenants 132:28–35**

**14** An angel of God appeared to Hagar. Her posterity would also be greatly blessed as descendants of Abraham. Ishmael was born.  
**Genesis 16:7–16**

**15** Jehovah appeared to Abraham, again confirming His promises. Abraham circumcised all the males in his household as a covenantal sign.  
**Genesis 17:1–27**

\*Dates are approximate

Event Prophecy

**5** Abraham, Sarah (his wife), and other family members settled in the land of Haran.

**Abraham 2:1-5**

**6** Jehovah established His covenant with Abraham; Abraham's descendants would be a blessing to all the families of the earth.

**Abraham 2:6-11**

**7** Abraham and his family settled in the land of Canaan. Jehovah promised the land to his descendants when they are righteous. They then traveled to Egypt.

**Abraham 2:6, 12-25**

**8** Through the Urim and Thummim, Abraham saw the throne of God, the premortal world, and the creation of the earth.

**Abraham 3-5**

**9** In Egypt, Abraham became a great preacher of the gospel and prospered.

**A Facsimile from the Book of Abraham, No. 3**

**10** Abraham and his family returned to Canaan. Jehovah confirmed His everlasting covenant with Abraham.

**Genesis 13:1-4, 12-18**

**11** Jehovah spoke with Abraham in a vision, and Abraham expressed a desire to have children. The Lord reaffirmed His covenant.

**Genesis 15:1-21**

**Abraham**

**Brother of Jared (Jaredites)**

**\*1950 B.C.**

**\*1900 B.C.**

**\*1825 B.C.**

6 7 8 9



9

10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18



11



17

19 20 21 22



21



10



14

**ISAAC**



19

**Rebekah (wife of Isaac)**

**Hagar**

**ISHMAEL**

**ISHMAELITES**

**Keturah**

**MIDIANITES**

**SCATTERING**

**GATHERING**

**16 PROPHECY** Sarah would have a son named Isaac and in him the Abrahamic covenant would be established.  
**Genesis 17:15-21**

**17** Isaac was born. Jehovah told Abraham that He would bless both Ishmael and Isaac. (See prophecy 16.)  
**Genesis 21:1-5, 12-13**

**18 PROPHECY** Hagar's son Ishmael would be the father of "a great nation." His descendants became 12 nations or tribes.  
**Genesis 21:17-20; 25:12-16**

**19** Jehovah confirmed His covenant with Abraham after he showed his willingness to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice.  
**Genesis 22:1-19; Jacob 4:5**

**20** Commanded of God, Abraham married Keturah. Their six sons would also be greatly blessed.  
**Genesis 25:1-4; Doctrine and Covenants 132:28-35**

**21** Abraham blessed and gave gifts to all His sons, then died at age 175.  
**Genesis 25:5-10**

**22** Jehovah appeared to Isaac, affirming the Abrahamic covenant with him, his wife, Rebekah, and their posterity.  
**Genesis 26:2-5, 24-25; Doctrine and Covenants 132:37**

**23** Jehovah appeared to Jacob, affirming the Abrahamic covenant with him and his posterity.

**Genesis 28:10-22**

**24** Commanded of God, Jacob married Leah, then Rachel, then Bilhah, and then Zilpah. Twelve sons and one daughter were born.

**Genesis 29-30; Doctrine and Covenants 132:37**

**25** Jehovah commanded Jacob to return to the promised land of Canaan. Jacob's name was changed to Israel.

**Genesis 31-32**

**26** Jehovah appeared to Jacob (Israel) at Bethel, renewing the Abrahamic covenant.

**Genesis 35:1-13**

**27** Jehovah appeared to Israel and commanded him to take his family into Egypt.

**Genesis 46:1-7**

**28** Israel blessed his sons and grandsons Ephraim and Manasseh and their families. He promised them that God would help them return someday to the land of Canaan.

**Genesis 48:21**

**29 PROPHECY** As part of his patriarchal blessing, Joseph was promised that he would have a fruitful posterity.

**Genesis 48:19; 49:22-26**

**DISPENSATIONS**

**Eastern Hemisphere**

**Western Hemisphere**

**Moses**

**Brother of Jared (Jaredites)**

**\*1800 B.C.**

**1600 B.C.**

**1300 B.C.**

**23**

**24**

**25**

**26**

**27**

**28**

**30**

**31**

**29**

**32**

**33**

**34**

**35**

**36**

**37**

**38**

**ESAU**

**Judith**

**Bashemath**

**EDOMITES**

**Leah**

**REUBEN**

**SIMEON**

**LEVI**

**JUDAH**

**ISSACHAR**

**ZEBULUN**

**JACOB**

**Zilpah**

**GAD**

**ASHER**

**Bilhah**

**DAN**

**Rachel**

**JOSEPH**

**Ephraim and Manasseh**

**BENJAMIN**

**ISHMAELITES**

**MIDIANITES**

**Moses, Aaron**



**GATHERING**

**SCATTERING**

**GATHERING**

**37** Jehovah appeared to Joshua, renewing His covenant and commanding the children of Israel to enter the land of Canaan as an inheritance.

**Joshua 1:1-9**

**38** After many years in Canaan, the children of Israel stopped keeping the covenant. They were persecuted by their enemies.

**Judges 2-3**

**39** Through the prophet Nathan, Jehovah made an everlasting covenant with King David and his posterity.

**2 Samuel 7:1-17; Doctrine and Covenants 132:38**

**40 PROPHECY** The people of the Northern Kingdom (referred to as Israel) and Southern Kingdom (Judah) would be scattered among all nations.

**Amos 9:5-10; Micah 3:9-12**

**41 PROPHECY** The Messiah (Jesus Christ) would suffer and atone for the sins of the world.

**Isaiah 53**

**42 PROPHECY** The Lord would recover a remnant of His people and set up an ensign for all nations.

**Isaiah 11:11-12; Amos 9:9**

**43 PROPHECY** The Lord would comfort His people, redeem Jerusalem, and show His power to all nations.

**Isaiah 40:1-2, 11; 41:10; 52:9-10**

**30** In Egypt the descendants of Israel multiplied and became known as the children of Israel (also called house of Israel). (See prophecy 12.)

**Genesis 50**

**31 PROPHECY**  
God would "raise up" a prophet (Moses) to deliver Israel from bondage in Egypt.

**Joseph Smith Translation (JST), Genesis 50:24, 34-36 (in Bible appendix); 2 Nephi 3:10, 17**

**32 PROPHECY**  
The family of Israel would be scattered, with a "branch" living in the Americas.

**JST, Genesis 50:25 (in Bible appendix); 2 Nephi 3:3-5, 16**

**33 PROPHECY**  
A "choice seer" (Joseph Smith) would restore knowledge of God's covenant with Abraham.

**JST, Genesis 50:25-33 (in Bible appendix); 2 Nephi 3:6-15**

**34** Jehovah appeared to Moses, who had received the priesthood from Jethro. The children of Israel left Egypt. (See prophecy 31.)

**Exodus 3:1-10; 13:17-22; Doctrine and Covenants 84:6**

**35** At Mount Sinai the children of Israel promised they would keep the Abrahamic covenant.

**Exodus 19:3-9; 24:3**

**36** Because the children of Israel broke their promise, they received a lesser law of carnal commandments.

**Exodus 32-34; Galatians 3:19-24; Doctrine and Covenants 84:19-26**

1000 B.C.

700 B.C.

400 B.C.

100 B.C.

39



**King David**

40 41 42  
43 44

**Isaiah\*\***

45



45

46 47 48



47

49



49

**Nehemiah**

50



50

**PROPHECY: ALLEGORY OF ZENOS (ABOUT 1800-400 B.C.)**

The house of Israel is like a tame olive tree that began to decay, so the master of the vineyard cared for it until new natural branches began to sprout. He removed these branches and grafted them onto other trees throughout his vineyard. He pruned the bad main branches from the tame tree and burned them, then grafted in wild olive tree branches onto the tree.

**Jacob 5:3-14 (to be continued in part 2)**



**Lehi (Nephites and Lamanites)**

**Some peoples of Arabia**

**Northern Kingdom** (see 1 Kings 12:2-20)

Northern Kingdom **SCATTERING** (lost tribes of Israel)

**Southern Kingdom**

Southern Kingdom **SCATTERING**

**44 PROPHECY**  
During a great millennial era the earth would be renewed, and all sickness and sorrow would end.

**Isaiah 25:6-9; 33:20-24; 35; 61:2-5**

**45** The people of the Northern Kingdom were scattered by the Assyrians because of wickedness. (See prophecy 40.)

**2 Kings 17:5-18**

**46 PROPHECY**  
Some Jews (a remnant) would be gathered back to Jerusalem to serve the Lord.

**Jeremiah 24:4-7**

**47** Jehovah established the Abrahamic covenant with Lehi and his family. They left Jerusalem and became a nation in the Americas. (See prophecies 29, 32.)

**1 Nephi 1-2; 18**

**48** The people of the Southern Kingdom rejected the Abrahamic covenant and were scattered by the Babylonians. (See prophecy 40.)

**2 Kings 25:1-10**

**49** Some of the children of Israel called "Jews" returned to Jerusalem, rebuilding the temple. Ezra exhorted the people to keep their covenant with God. (See prophecy 46.)

**Nehemiah 8-10**

**50** The Hasmoneans (Maccabees) established an independent Jewish state, called Judea, in the land of Canaan.



# “That Vast Empire”

## THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH IN RUSSIA

*Russian Latter-day Saints have built on a foundation of prophecy to establish the Church in their country.*

**By James A. Miller**

Church History Department

**L**atter-day Saints in Russia reached an important milestone in 2011 as their country’s first stake was created in Moscow. More than a thousand Church members, missionaries, and friends excitedly gathered together to sustain their new leaders and express their gratitude that their nation’s capital would take its place among the stakes of Zion spread across the globe. Anticipation grew as Yakov Boyko was called and sustained as stake president with Vladimir Astashov and Viktor Kremenchuk as his counselors.

A wave of emotion swept over the congregation as Vyacheslav Protopopov was presented as the stake patriarch, the first native Russian patriarch in Russia. Hands shot up in the air as his name was read for a sustaining vote, and some almost started clapping for joy. For the first time, Russian priesthood leaders received the keys and authority that Latter-day Saints in stakes elsewhere in the world enjoy. A new chapter in Russian Church history began as the leadership of the Church in Moscow was now firmly in Russian hands.

### Prophecy

The path to this significant day in Russian Church history traces back to the early days of the Restoration. In 1843 the Prophet Joseph Smith called Elder Orson Hyde of the

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and George J. Adams on a mission to Russia “to introduce the fullness of the Gospel to the people of that vast empire, and [to this] is attached some of the most important things concerning the advancement and building up of the kingdom of God in the last days, which cannot be explained at this time.”<sup>1</sup> However, the Prophet’s Martyrdom in 1844 interrupted plans to complete the mission, and the Prophet’s plans regarding the gospel destiny of “that vast empire” remained unfulfilled.<sup>2</sup>

### Preparation

Still, in the 168 years between that first mission call and the creation of the first stake in Russia, Latter-day Saints from different backgrounds helped prepare the way to share the gospel with the people of Russia. In 1895, Swedish missionary August Höglund arrived in St. Petersburg to teach Johan Lindlöf, who had corresponded with the Scandinavian Mission and asked for missionaries after learning about the Church in his native Finland. Two days after meeting Elder Höglund and talking with him through the night, Johan and his wife, Alma, asked to be baptized. On June 11, 1895, Elder Höglund accompanied them to the banks of the Neva River. Unable to find a quiet, secluded location for the baptism, the group knelt in prayer to ask for the Lord’s help. Miraculously the boats and people began to leave



*Depiction by a Russian artist of Elder Francis M. Lyman's 1903 dedicatory prayer in the Summer Garden in St. Petersburg.*

the area. After the baptism, Sister Lindlöf said, “I feel so happy! I know that the Lord has forgiven me.”<sup>3</sup> Johan and Alma thus became the first converts to be baptized in Russia.

Several years later, encouraged by the Lindlöfs’ conversion and social reforms planned by the Russian government, Elder Francis M. Lyman (1840–1916) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles initiated plans to send missionaries to the Russian Empire. In 1903, while serving as president of the European Mission, Elder Lyman traveled to the Russian Empire and dedicated the land for the preaching of the gospel. He offered prayers in St. Petersburg and in Moscow on August 6 and 9, asking the Lord to bless the rulers of the land and the many peoples of the empire, “in whose veins the blood of Israel flows generously.”<sup>4</sup> He also prayed that “the hearts of the sincere and honest might be turned to seek for the truth, and petitioned the Lord to send servants full of wisdom and faith to declare the Gospel to the Russians in their own language.”<sup>5</sup>

Elder Lyman sent missionary Mikhail Markov to Riga, Latvia—then part of the Russian Empire—and wrote to Church headquarters expressing his hope to call missionaries to Russia soon. Church leaders in Salt Lake City, however, felt that more careful consideration was needed before sending missionaries to Russia, where it was illegal

to preach anything that contradicted Russian orthodoxy. Brother Markov soon left Riga at the order of local officials.<sup>6</sup> Eventually, social and political tensions in Russia, exacerbated by the strain of World War I, led to a series of revolutions and a civil war that engulfed Russia in violence. The formation of the Soviet Union and the eventual Cold War made any further attempt to send missionaries to Russia impossible.

However, even during the Soviet period, Latter-day Saints continued the preparation to introduce the restored gospel in Russia. One such individual was Andre Anastasion, an emigrant from Odessa, Ukraine, who began translating the Book of Mormon into Russian after his baptism in 1918. After visiting Moscow in 1970, Andre wrote, “Twice in the night I stood on Red Square and implored the Lord to open the way for the Gospel to be taken to the Russian people, whom I saw everywhere moving in masses, poorly clad, sombre, with heads down.”<sup>7</sup> The first edition of the Russian Book of Mormon, based largely on Andre’s work, was published in 1981. In time, many Russians would accept the message of the Book of Mormon, becoming pioneers in their own land to help fulfill the hopes and prayers of others on their behalf.

## Pioneers

In 1989, Yuri and Liudmila Terebenin of St. Petersburg (then called Leningrad) and their daughter, Anna, were visiting friends in Budapest, Hungary. A Latter-day Saint friend invited them to church, where they felt the Spirit and decided to meet with the missionaries. They were eventually baptized. Though initially the only members of the Church in St. Petersburg, the Terebenins were not left alone for long. Members of the Church from Finland were already sharing the gospel with Russians, including Anton Skripko, who became the first Russian baptized in Russia.

At the time, Russia was experiencing political change, and Americans living and working in Moscow began to reach out to their Russian friends and acquaintances. Dohn Thornton met Galina Goncharova in 1989, and religion became a topic of discussion between them. Brother Thornton later recalled,

## PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE CHURCH IN RUSSIA

“As I gave [Galina] the Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith pamphlet, the most incredible thing happened. It was [as] if all the light in the room at that moment focused on the book. The Spirit came over us and [she] started to cry.”<sup>8</sup> Galina told him that she felt the book was from God. She began attending church and was baptized in June 1990, becoming the first convert baptized in Moscow.

As Russians from St. Petersburg, Vyborg, Moscow, and other cities joined the Church, a new chapter opened in the history of the Church in Russia. On April 26, 1990, Elder

his Son Jesus Christ, and each of us will be resurrected.”<sup>9</sup> In June, Vyacheslav, Galina (his wife), and Tamara were baptized. From 1995 to 1998, Brother Efimov served as Russia’s first native mission president.

### Growth

Led by leaders of “wisdom and faith,” in fulfillment of Elder Lyman’s 1903 dedicatory prayers, the Church grew steadily after missionaries entered Russia in early 1990. Faithful Russians accepted the responsibility to serve their friends and neighbors. As



**1930:**  
“I bear witness that there are thousands of the blood of Israel in that land [Russia], and God is preparing the way for them.” —Elder Melvin J. Ballard (1873–1939) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles<sup>15</sup>



**1922:** *The Soviet Union is formally organized.*

**1843:** *Joseph Smith calls missionaries to take the gospel to Russia. His martyrdom in 1844 interrupts these plans.*



**1903:** *Elder Francis M. Lyman of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles dedicates the Russian Empire for the preaching of the gospel.*

**1917:** *The Bolsheviks topple the Provisional Government that followed the abdication of the tsar, sparking the 1917–22 Russian Civil War.*

TIME LINE

Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve offered a prayer of rededication for Russia in St. Petersburg, reaffirming the dedication that Elder Lyman performed nearly a century earlier and asking the Lord to extend the blessings of the gospel to the people.

Also in the spring of 1990, Tamara Efimova of St. Petersburg brought the missionaries to her home after meeting them at a friend’s home. Her father, Vyacheslav Efimov, was skeptical at first that these young men could teach him anything new about God. However, he became impressed by their gospel message. He wrote: “[It] gave me the opportunity to receive answers to my own questions and, most important, to understand that God loves each of us—we are his children and he has given us a Savior,

districts were established in many cities, leaders such as Fidrus Khasbiulin instructed, inspired, and supported the Saints. Brother Khasbiulin, who joined the Church in 1994, served as the first branch president in Rostov-na-Donu, from 1995 to 1997, when he was called as president of the Rostov Russia District. As district president, he emphasized strengthening families and took a special interest in serving the youth, helping them prepare to serve missions and eventually marry in the temple.<sup>10</sup>

### Temples

Russian Latter-day Saints did not let the lack of a temple in their own country prevent them from participating in the ordinances of the house of the Lord. For more



**1995:**  
“You meet where you can now, but you will live to see chapels and stakes. You will see a temple in the Lord’s time.” —President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles<sup>16</sup>

FROM LEFT: DETAIL FROM DEDICATION OF RUSSIA, BY EMIN ZULFUGAROV, MAY NOT BE COPIED; MELVIN J. BALLARD, BY LEE GREENE RICHARDS; THE STORMING OF THE WINTER PALACE, ST. PETERSBURG, OCTOBER 1917, BY VLADIMIR SEROV, FROM PHOTOS.COM/THINKSTOCK; PHOTOGRAPH OF PRESIDENT BOYD K. PACKER BY JED CLARK



than 15 years, the nearest temples were the Stockholm Sweden and Freiberg Germany Temples, although members in the Russian Far East continue to attend the Seoul Korea Temple. Difficulties with visas, long distances, and cost of travel made temple attendance no frequent experience.

In December 1991, the family of Andrei and Marina Semionov of Vyborg became the first Russian family to be sealed in the temple. Brother Semionov said, “A special joy came into our lives after we were sealed for eternity in the Stockholm Sweden Temple.”<sup>11</sup> For several years

she recalled. “They were small testimonies received individually by each person. But as a whole they helped us and gave momentum for further spiritual growth.”<sup>12</sup>

Eventually, a temple came closer to Russia when President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) dedicated the Helsinki Finland Temple in 2006. Then in 2010, Latter-day Saints throughout Russia rejoiced as President Thomas S. Monson dedicated the Kyiv Ukraine Temple, the first in the former Soviet Union, making temple blessings more accessible to faithful Russian Latter-day Saints.



1981: *The Book of Mormon is published in Russian.*



1991: *The Mormon Tabernacle Choir visits the Soviet Union. After their concert, the Russian authorities announce that the Church received national recognition on May 28.*

1991: *In December the Soviet Union officially dissolves, and the Russian Republic becomes the Russian Federation.*



he accompanied every group from Russia that attended the temple in Sweden.

Later, mission leaders began organizing groups to make the trip. The first such group from Moscow traveled to Stockholm in September 1993. These visits to the temple became highlights of devotion for Russian members across the country.

The Vershinin family from Nizhniy Novgorod first visited the Stockholm Sweden Temple in 2000. After traveling to St. Petersburg, Sergey, Vera, and their daughter, Irina, joined a group of Russian Latter-day Saints from various cities and traveled by bus and ferry to reach the temple. At the temple, Irina participated in baptisms for the dead and was sealed to her parents. “The trip gave us testimonies and many blessings,”



Russian Latter-day Saints, organized as “Mormon Helping Hands,” help clean up the grounds of a school and lake near Moscow in 2013.



## A Russian Church

The dedication of the temple in Ukraine strengthened the hopes of Russian members for the future of the Church in their country. After the dedication, Vladimir Kabanovy from Moscow said that “the Church will continue to grow—I envision the stakes of Zion here [in Russia].”<sup>13</sup> Less than a year later, that vision became reality when Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles organized the Moscow Russia Stake. The next year, in September 2012, Elder Nelson organized a second stake, in St. Petersburg.

While these moments represented the culmination of 20 years of pioneering service and progress by the Russian Latter-day Saints, this is only the beginning of a new chapter

## GROWTH IN MEMBERSHIP

1989: 20  
1998: 9,179  
2008: 19,946  
2013: 21,888



## CHURCH STATISTICS FOR RUSSIA\*

Stakes: 2  
Districts: 3  
Wards and Branches: 98  
Missions: 7  
Nearest Temples: Kyiv Ukraine, Helsinki Finland, and Seoul Korea

\*As of June 2013



2002: In September, President Gordon B. Hinckley becomes the first President of the Church to visit Russia.



2008: Anatoly Reshetnikov is called as the first native Russian Area Seventy.

2011: On June 5, the Moscow Russia Stake, the first stake in Russia, is organized.



2012: On September 9, the St. Petersburg Russia Stake is organized.

in the history of the Church in their country. After visiting in June 2012 with the Saints in the Europe East Area (which includes Russia), Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles bore witness that the Lord is guiding His work there: “His Spirit is brooding over this area. We will see things that we would never have supposed.”<sup>14</sup> As Russian Latter-day Saint pioneers continue their service, live and embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ, and focus on the temple, additional stakes will form and the Church will continue to progress in their country. Perhaps we are seeing the fulfillment of what the Prophet Joseph Smith envisioned for the Latter-day kingdom of God in this vast empire. ■

### NOTES

1. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 6:41. It is unclear what “important things” the Prophet was referring to “which cannot be explained at this time”; he could have been referring to Russia itself, to the mission, or to the missionaries’ message.
2. George J. Adams chose not to accept the leadership of Brigham Young as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles following Joseph Smith’s death and left the Church.
3. August Höglund to Scandinavian Mission President, July 9, 1895,

Scandinavian Mission manuscript history, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, quoted in Kahlile Mehr, “Johan and Alma Lindlöf: Early Saints in Russia,” *Ensign*, July 1981, 23.

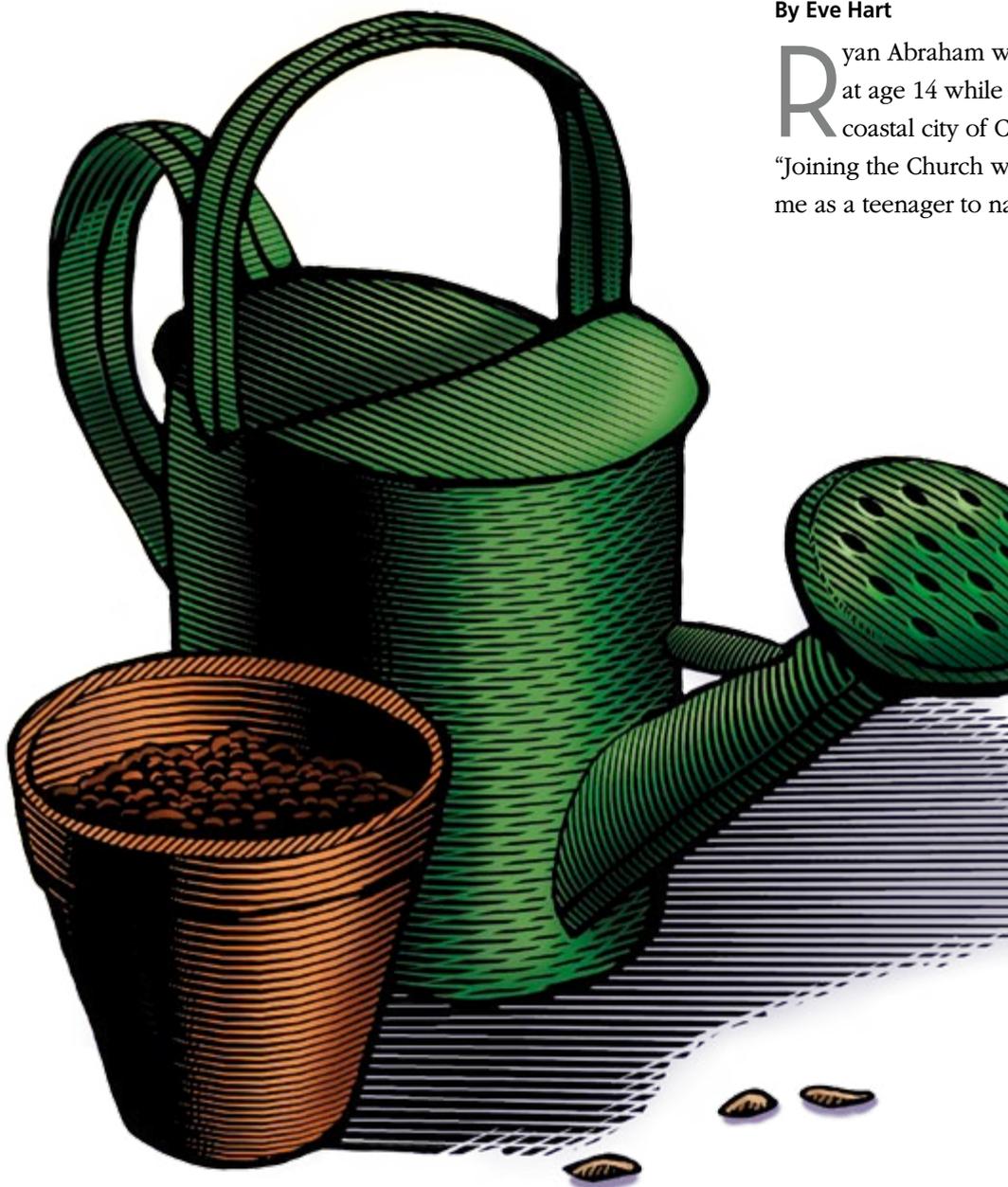
4. Joseph J. Cannon, “President Lyman’s Travels and Ministry: Praying in St. Petersburg for the Land of Russia,” *Millennial Star*, Aug. 20, 1903, 532.
5. Joseph J. Cannon, “President Lyman’s Travels and Ministry: The Visit to Moscow, the City of Churches,” *Millennial Star*, Aug. 27, 1903, 548.
6. See William Hale Kehr, “Mischa Markow: Missionary to the Balkans,” *Ensign*, June 1980, 29.
7. Andre Anastasion letter to the Council of the Twelve Apostles, Nov. 8, 1970, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
8. Dohn Thornton, “The Beginnings of the Moscow Branch,” in *Papers and Photographs Relating to the Beginning of the Church in Moscow, Russia* (1990–92), Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
9. Vyacheslav Efimov, in Gary L. Browning, *Russia and the Restored Gospel* (1997), 73.
10. See Allison Thorpe Pond, oral history of Fidrux Khabrakhmanovich Khasbiulin, Aug. 18, 2010, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
11. Andrei Semionov, in Gary Browning, “Pioneering in Russia,” *Ensign*, June 1997, 27; *Liahona*, Apr. 1998, 36.
12. From an interview with Irina Borodina, Mar. 6, 2013.
13. Vladimir Kabanovy, in Jason Swenson, “Russia’s first stake a powerful symbol of country’s growth,” *Church News*, July 9, 2011, ldschurchnews.com.
14. D. Todd Christofferson, in video in “Spirit Attentive to Eastern European Pioneers,” Prophets and Apostles Speak Today, lds.org/prophets-and-apostles/unto-all-the-world/spirit-attentive-to-eastern-europe-pioneers.
15. Melvin J. Ballard, in Conference Report, Apr. 1930, 157.
16. Boyd K. Packer, as recorded by Dennis B. Neuenschwander in a Church meeting in St. Petersburg, Nov. 18, 1995.

# Nurturing

## OUR NEW LIVES

By Eve Hart

Ryan Abraham was baptized into the Church at age 14 while living in the mountainous coastal city of Cape Town, South Africa. “Joining the Church was a great blessing—it helped me as a teenager to navigate those years,” he



### THE SEED OF FAITH

“One of the purposes of the Church is to nurture and cultivate the seed of faith—even in the sometimes sandy soil of doubt and uncertainty. Faith is to hope for things which are not seen but which are true [see Alma 32:21].

“Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters—my dear friends—please, first doubt your doubts before you doubt your faith.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Come, Join with Us,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 21.

explains. “But after I joined the Church, I learned that you don’t just change where you go to church; you change your life.”

Ryan’s journey has been much like other converts’ journeys: he believed in the truthfulness of the gospel but faced the difficult task of transitioning into a new culture with new expectations. “Sometimes I found myself asking, ‘Can I really do this?’” Ryan says. “But when we live what we know, more knowledge and strength will come. The Lord will make of us what we could never make of ourselves.”

This article is a compilation of converts’ testimonies and experiences. We hope you will find among these seven topics the encouragement you need to stay involved in the Church and nurture your new faith until it can “get root, and grow up, and bring forth fruit” (Alma 32:37).

## Overcoming Trials

When we live by the light of the restored gospel, we can endure the turbulence of our mortal existence and live with God again. Our Heavenly Father is waiting to say to us, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21). That is His promise, and He will certainly fulfill it if we do our part.

**Elson Carlos Ferreira, baptized in Brazil in 1982**

Whenever you feel as if you are the only one who has struggles, you can stop and think about what Christ did for you and how He suffered for you. He will always be there to help us find out who we are and what we are meant to be. He knows us better than we know ourselves.

**Mikiko O’Bannon, baptized in Japan in 1993**

## Working on the Basics

I haven’t done anything extraordinary to remain faithful in the Church. I haven’t walked 50 miles (80 km) to get to sacrament meeting or been thrown into a fiery furnace. But consistently doing simple things—attending Church meetings, studying the scriptures, praying, and serving in callings—has helped me nourish my testimony (see Alma 37:6–7).

**Alcenir de Souza, baptized in Brazil in 1991**

When I first joined the Church at age 19, I was excited about the gospel, and reading my scriptures daily was an amazing adventure.

However, after some years of membership in the Church, I felt tired physically and spiritually. I dragged myself to church each Sunday, getting little out of the meetings and feeling keen to return home for my Sunday nap.

A conversation with a friend shed some light on my situation. I took inventory of my spiritual habits, and I realized that my prayers had become insincere, and reading the scriptures every morning was a chore—not a pleasure. I realized I needed to add some spiritual nourishment and exercise to my day.

I started praying every morning before reading the scriptures, asking specifically that I would be guided and directed in my study. I worked part-time and had a 15-minute break in the morning that I used to read a few pages of the *Ensign*—my spirit’s midday snack. In the evenings I read uplifting books. On Sundays I read the *Teachings of Presidents of the Church* manual.

Each night as I went to bed, I felt peaceful because I had satisfied my spiritual hunger throughout the day. Because I decided to follow a spiritual regimen every day, I’ve become a more positive person and my testimony has grown.

**Tess Hocking, baptized in California, USA, in 1976**

## Going to the Temple

From the first time I learned about the temple, I really wanted to go there. I learned that the temple is a place where we can perform baptisms for the dead, be sealed as families, and make higher covenants with Heavenly Father. I have prepared myself and kept myself worthy so that I can go to the temple.

**Yashinta Wulandari, baptized in Indonesia in 2012**

After I got baptized, my boyfriend, JP (who was already a member of the Church), and I planned to get married, but we delayed our wedding day because I wanted to have a big celebration.

On Tuesday, January 12, 2010, my fiancé and I went to school to attend our classes. As I sat at my computer waiting for the professor to start class, the building started to shake. I didn't dare run outside because the shaking was so terrible.

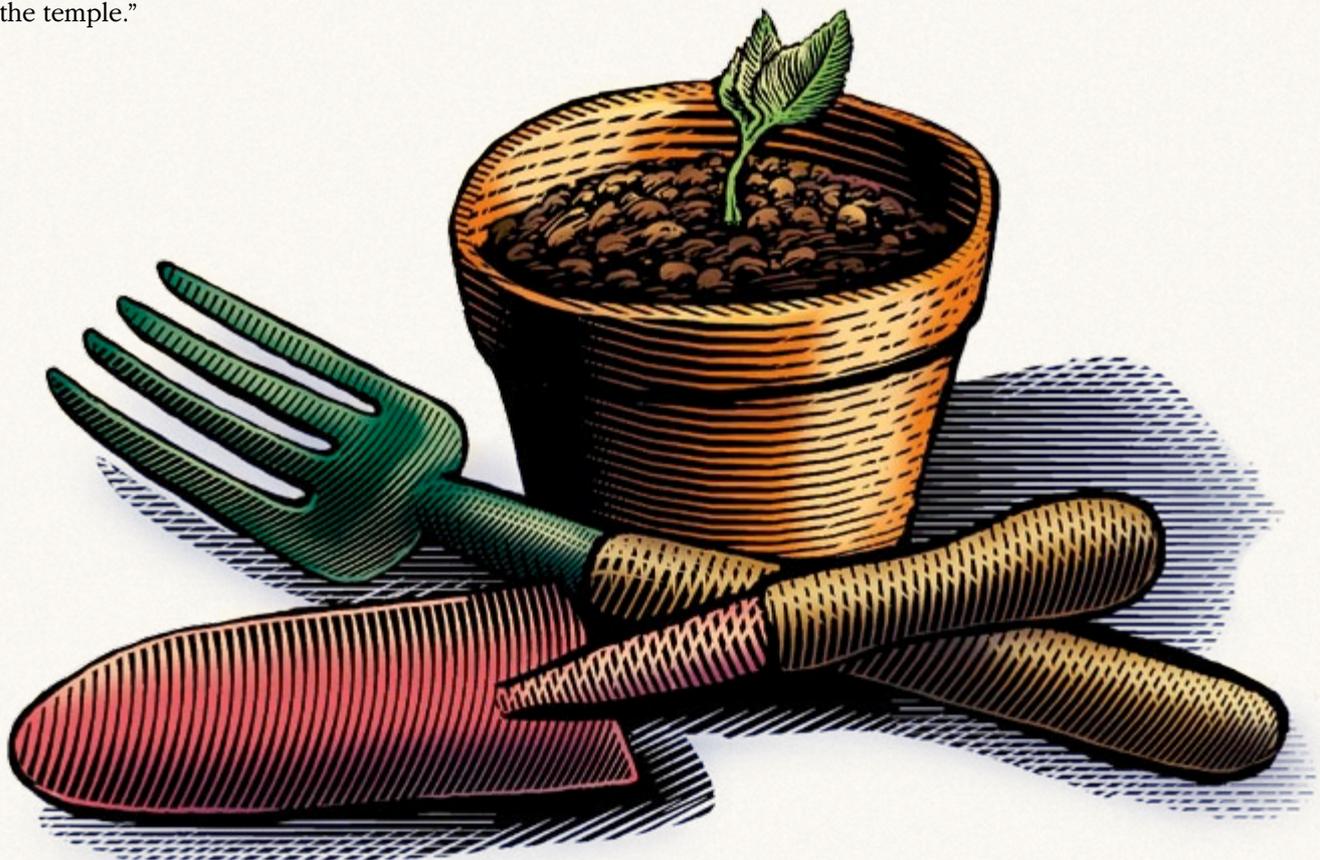
I stood in a corner and closed my eyes, praying to Heavenly Father in my heart: "Please give me a chance to marry JP in the temple."

Moments later, the shaking stopped and I looked around. I couldn't see anything because dust was raining down. I cannot remember how I got out of the room, but I eventually found myself outside. With tears in my eyes, I started screaming JP's name.

I soon found JP's sister. "He is OK!" she shouted. "He's trying to help some students who are stuck under the rubble."

I am not more special than others who were unable to escape, but I know that Heavenly Father answered my prayer. JP and I were married in the temple on April 6, 2010, a little more than a year after my baptism and almost three months after the earthquake. It was a day of peace and joy that I will never forget. We didn't have a big party, but it was the most wonderful thing to me.

**Marie Marjorie Labbe, baptized in Haiti in 2009**





## Sharing the Gospel

As a new member of the Church, I love missionary work. Everyone can be a missionary. Every time you share the gospel with someone, it changes his or her life, but it also helps you strengthen your testimony. People can see the light in your eyes, and they will want to know why you have such an amazing spirit. Doing missionary work not only gives people a chance to learn about the Church but also helps them feel the Spirit and have personal spiritual experiences.

**Elena Hunt, baptized in Arizona, USA, in 2008**

I love missionary work! Three months after my baptism, I traveled to Martinique to spend time with my family for summer break. I spoke to my brother every day about the Book of Mormon and the gospel.

I invited him to church the first Sunday, but he declined. The second Sunday, he followed me to church. At the end of the meetings, he was mostly indifferent, as if he hadn't experienced anything special during those three hours.

Even though I continued to speak to him about the gospel the following week, I didn't invite him to come to church this time.

A miracle happened Saturday evening: while ironing my Sunday clothes for the next day, I noticed he was doing the same thing.

"What are you doing?" I asked.

He answered, "I'm going to church with you tomorrow."

"I'm not forcing you to come," I said.

But he responded, "I want to come."

He continued coming to church each Sunday after that.

After I returned to southern France, where I was going to school, my brother told me over the telephone that he was going to be baptized. I told him I would like to be present at his baptism but that the most important thing was that he would still be in the Church when I returned to Martinique.

One year later, I visited again. During sacrament meeting, my brother testified with great strength of the truth of the gospel. I shed tears when I think that my brother, with whom I have shared the most beautiful moments of my life, can also share with me the gospel of our Lord (see Alma 26:11–16).

**Ludovic Christophe Occolier, baptized in France in 2004**

To learn more about how you can share the gospel with your friends and family, consider reading the following: Elder M. Russell Ballard, "Put Your Trust in the Lord," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 43; Elder Neil L. Andersen, "It's A Miracle," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 77; Elder Dallin H. Oaks, "Sharing the Gospel," *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 7; *Liahona*, Jan. 2002, 7. See also [www.lds.org/training/wwlt/2013/hastening](http://www.lds.org/training/wwlt/2013/hastening).

## FIRST-TIME FAMILY HISTORIAN?

You can extend the joy you felt at your baptism to others by working on your family history and helping your ancestors come unto Christ. FamilySearch.org is a great place to start. You can build your family tree by adding family members with their birth and death dates. Family history consultants in your ward or branch can help you find your ancestors and their information, including censuses and marriage certificates. As you collect information, you and others can perform temple ordinances for your deceased relatives.

## Doing Family History Work

After I received the missionary lessons, I prayed to know whether the gospel was true. My beloved grandfather came to me in a dream and testified of its truth. At this point, I began to understand my divine obligation to my ancestors. President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, said it this way: “When you were baptized, your ancestors looked down on you with hope. Perhaps after centuries, they rejoiced to see one of their descendants make a covenant to find them and to offer them freedom. . . . Their hearts are bound to you. Their hope is in your hands.”<sup>1</sup>

**Steven E. Nabor, baptized in Utah, USA, in 1979**

My wife, Laura, and I were heartbroken when our first child, our four-month-old daughter, Cynthia Marie, died because of complications with spina bifida. This tragedy caused us, two grieving young parents, to search for a way to be with our daughter again someday. We were not members of the Church at the time.

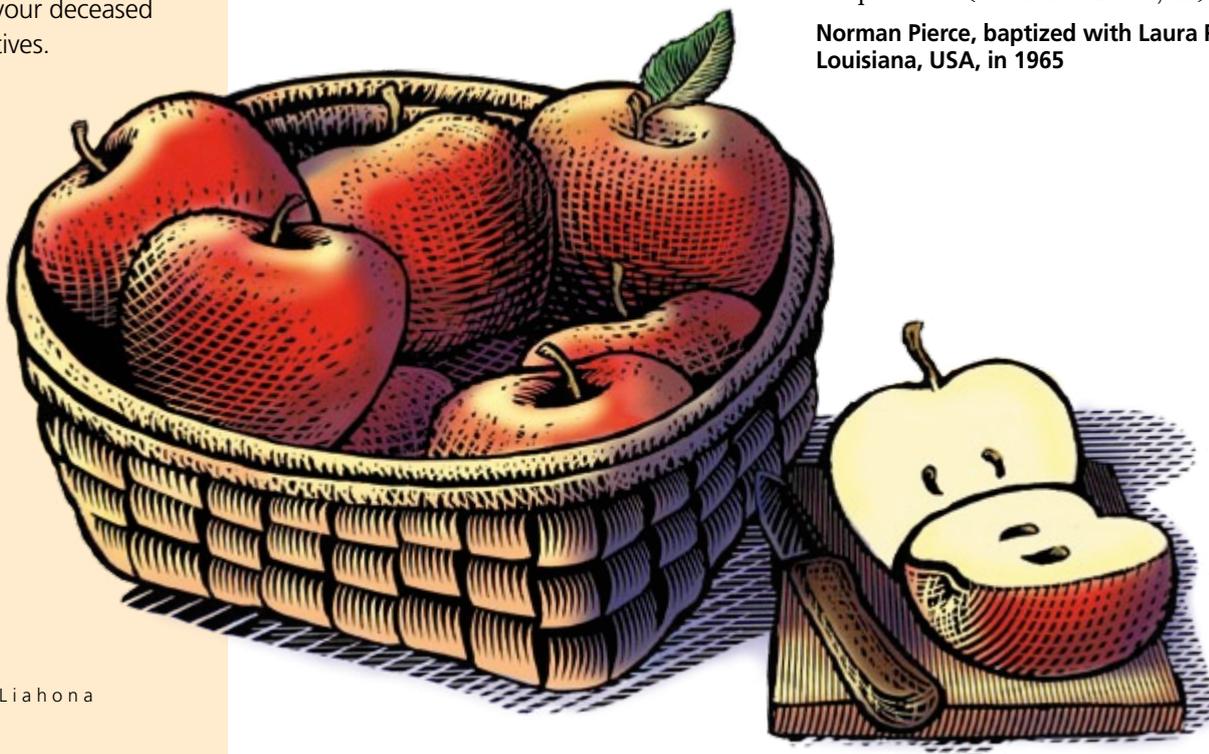
One morning Laura poured out her heart to Heavenly Father, pleading, “Dear Father, I want to be with my daughter again someday, but I don’t know how. Please show me how.”

At that moment there was a knock on our door. Laura went to answer it with tears still streaming down her face. There stood two missionaries. Eventually, Laura and I both gained a testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon and were baptized.

Laura wanted to make sure that all our family members had the chance to receive the gospel. For the first 15 years after our baptism, Laura prepared names for the temple, and then we took them to the temple together. After a while Laura’s arthritis got so bad that I took the names to the temple unaccompanied.

Laura passed away three years ago after a long battle with arthritis. Searching for a way to be with our little girl has brought about the temple work of thousands of our beloved ancestors. We have experienced many miracles while doing family history research and temple work (see D&C 128:18, 22).

**Norman Pierce, baptized with Laura Pierce in Louisiana, USA, in 1965**



## Participating during Church Meetings

Praying at church, commenting during lessons, and speaking in sacrament meeting bless both you and those listening. When you speak in the name of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit works through you. Heavenly Father not only speaks through the scriptures and prophets and apostles but also speaks through you in order to answer someone's questions, strengthen someone's weaknesses, or ease someone's doubts.

When the bishop asked me to share my testimony in the sacrament meeting after my baptism, I felt scared and inadequate. I had never spoken in front of a congregation.

"Is this really necessary?" I asked the bishop.

"Yes!" he said.

In sacrament meeting, I testified about how Heavenly Father loves me and how He answered my prayers by helping me find the restored gospel. When I stood at the podium, I felt the Holy Spirit so strongly. I felt blessed to

be a member of Christ's true Church. My heart was full of happiness and peace. Heavenly Father turned my fear of speaking into a beautiful experience.

The next month I had the opportunity to give a talk in sacrament meeting. I felt scared again—who was I to teach those who knew more about the gospel? But I prayed for the Holy Spirit to help me speak. Once again I felt the Spirit touch me, and I received the impression that Heavenly Father was pleased with my baptism and that my sins were forgiven.

I know from my experiences that I am a precious child of God and He loves me. Speaking in sacrament meeting was a valuable opportunity for me to serve God by testifying that Jesus Christ has restored His Church upon the earth.

**Pamella Sari, baptized in Indonesia in 2012**

## Serving in the Church

A Church calling helps you learn the gospel and gives you a responsibility that will get you to church and help you to serve others, even when you are struggling.

**Su'e Tervola, baptized in Hawaii, USA, in 2008**

Visiting teaching and home teaching provide opportunities to feel and to see true Christlike compassion. They provide experiences in humility and love that can forever change you. As Heavenly Father's children, our services are needed to help spread acts of kindness throughout His vineyard.<sup>2</sup>

**Cheryl Allen, baptized in Michigan, USA, in 1980**

Soon after I was baptized, the branch president called me as the Young Men president. It was excellent to be with the youth and to help them learn about the gospel.

At the same time I was teaching, I was learning. This was the first in a series of callings that I received. With each of my responsibilities, I felt joy and pleasure for the new challenges. President Thomas S. Monson has taught: "Remember that whom the Lord calls, the Lord qualifies."<sup>3</sup> I had to trust and believe with humility that I would be capable. And in less than six months as a member, I had the great opportunity to become familiar with the programs in the Church.

**Germano Lopes, baptized in Brazil in 2004 ■**

### NOTES

1. Henry B. Eyring, "Hearts Bound Together," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2005, 80.
2. See *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 103–124; Thomas S. Monson, "Home Teaching—a Divine Service," *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 46.
3. Thomas S. Monson, "Duty Calls," *Ensign*, May 1996, 44.



By Elder  
Ronald A. Rasband  
Senior President of  
the Seventy



# Building Spiritual Power in Priesthood Quorums

*The Lord has blessed us with priesthood quorums to help tutor us in “having [our] hearts knit together in unity and in love one towards another.”*

Some time ago Elder Paul V. Johnson of the Seventy, with his wife, was serving in an Area Presidency in Chile. One Friday he needed to travel 900 miles (1,450 km) from their home in Santiago to reorganize a stake presidency.

After he arrived at his destination on Friday night, he received a call telling him that his wife was in the hospital. When he spoke with Sister Johnson, she explained that she had fallen down some stairs and shattered her kneecap. Assuring him that she was being well cared for and wouldn't be in surgery until Monday or Tuesday, she encouraged him to finish his assignment to reorganize the stake and preside at the stake conference.

Calmed by her words, Elder Johnson immediately sent an email to his quorum leader in Salt Lake City to report the situation. Then he made plans to continue his assignment. There is a lesson to be learned in his response: first, he reported the situation to his quorum leader, and *then* he went ahead with his assignment.

The Quorums of the Seventy are organized in such a way that each member has specific stewardship over others, including tender watchcare for emeritus members of the quorum. Because of assignments around the world, quorum members normally cannot visit in person; however, they keep in contact through telephone calls, emails, texts, and other electronic means. Each member is asked to advise his quorum leader immediately of any significant changes in personal or family situations, which is exactly what Elder Johnson did.

In Elder Johnson's case, his priesthood leader was Elder Claudio R. M. Costa, who was then serving as a member of the Presidency of the Seventy. Elder Costa called Elder Johnson the next morning while Elder Johnson was in the middle of interviewing local leaders. Elder Costa felt that Elder Johnson should return home but listened carefully as Elder Johnson explained why he felt his wife was all right and he could finish the stake reorganization. Elder Costa told Elder Johnson to continue while he did some checking.



*When all members of an Aaronic or Melchizedek Priesthood quorum are included, a strength and a spirit of brotherhood develop.*

About two hours later Elder Costa called Elder Johnson and told him that he had talked with quorum leaders about the situation and that they felt he needed to be with Sister Johnson. Elder Johnson was advised that a ticket was waiting for him at the airport and that Elder Carlos H. Amado was on his way to finish the reorganization of the stake presidency.

When Elder Johnson arrived at the hospital, he found his wife in a great deal of pain. Adding to her distress was the fact that she didn't speak the language of the medical staff that surrounded her. She needed her husband. The inspired, brotherly concern of his quorum leaders had brought Elder Johnson to her side.

"I feel cared for in this quorum," said Elder Johnson, "and there is a lot of faith and energy behind that care. I

truly feel part of a quorum. I think that if I were ever called into the presidency of an elders quorum, I would be a better president because of my experience in this one."

I agree. The unity and love I see among my brethren could serve as a model for all priesthood quorums. If that model were emulated, quorums and members throughout the Church would be greatly blessed.

### **The Source of a Quorum's Strength**

There is great power in Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood quorums—or there can be! This power draws upon the God-given authority to act in His name and embodies the testimony, strength,

and whole-souled devotion of individual members.

The result is magnificent: members of quorums and their families become stronger spiritually, more secure personally, and more effective disciples of Jesus Christ. I have seen this synergy at work shaping a remarkable brotherhood unlike anything that exists outside the Lord's Church.

I am reminded of an insight President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, once shared. He said: "I have learned over the years that the strength in a quorum doesn't come from the number of priesthood holders in it. Nor does it come automatically from the age and maturity of the members. Rather, the strength of a quorum comes in large measure from how completely its members are united in righteousness."<sup>1</sup>

When quorum members unite in righteousness, the powers of heaven flow unimpeded into their lives and are magnified in the service they extend to one another, to their families, to the Church, and to the communities in which they live.

Seventy-six years ago, Elder Stephen L Richards, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, defined a quorum as "first, a class; second, a fraternity; and third, a service unit."<sup>2</sup> That classic definition is powerfully illustrated by the Quorums of the Seventy.

## The Quorum as a Class

Each week the members of the Seventy who are living in the Salt Lake City area meet in a quorum meeting at Church headquarters. There they take turns instructing one another in Church doctrine, practices, and policy in accordance with the 88th section of the Doctrine and Covenants: “Appoint among yourselves a teacher, and let not all be spokesmen at once; but let one speak at a time and let all listen unto his sayings, that when all have spoken that all may be edified of all” (D&C 88:122).

These meetings are treasured experiences in which inspiration comes and brotherhood is strengthened. A spirit of camaraderie and a feeling of mutual support and love permeate these meetings. Because not all members of the Seventy can attend, the meetings are recorded and made available through the Internet for members serving away from Church headquarters.

My quorum brother Elder Don R. Clarke describes these meetings as “spiritual feasts of doctrine and application.” When he served in an international Area Presidency, he said, “We looked forward to reviewing [the videos] weekly in our Area Presidency meeting. There were times when the subject was exactly what we needed to have addressed.”

Thanks to these recorded quorum meetings and the watchcare the Seventy and their families feel from leaders of the Church and their quorum brothers, “we never feel isolated,” Elder Kevin R. Duncan said. “No matter where we serve in the world, we never feel alone.”

When all members of an Aaronic or Melchizedek Priesthood quorum are included, a strength and a spirit of

brotherhood develop as quorum members teach one another and share a variety of insights. Many quorums have multiple teachers, which is a good practice.

Quorum leaders throughout the Church could follow the example of the Seventy. For those who cannot attend quorum meetings, find ways to include them. Just imagine what impact a phone call could have on a high priest who might be homebound or confined to a care facility. Would he not appreciate a call from his quorum brother sharing what was discussed in their quorum meeting? Technology can easily facilitate that sharing.

## The Quorum as a Fraternity

Quorum meetings can also be improved by agendas that focus on truly important matters. Too often quorum business and announcements take up time that could be better spent on giving watchcare and building brotherhood. An effective quorum agenda might well focus on the three aspects Elder Richards mentioned in his definition—class instruction, brotherhood, and service.

In our quorum we share minutes and announcements by email. In our presidency meetings the first thing on our agenda is the welfare of our quorum members. We ask who is in need. We pray by name for quorum members—current and released—their children, and their grandchildren. Often our agenda is adjusted to discuss what we can do to help.

Quorum business and service assignments



*For those who cannot attend quorum meetings, find ways to include them.*





*Wise quorum leaders will spend more time on doctrine, on building brotherhood, and on how the quorum can reach out to others.*



need attention, but wise quorum leaders will spend less time on dates and announcements (send those in an email, or list them on a handout) and more time on doctrine, on building brotherhood, and on how the quorum can reach out to others.

As fraternities, priesthood quorums have no equal in the world. Years ago President

Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained that “in ancient days when a man was appointed to a select body, his

commission, always written in Latin, outlined the responsibility of the organization, defined who should be members, and then invariably contained the words: *quorum vos unum*, meaning ‘of whom we will that you be one.’”<sup>3</sup>

Nothing unites human hearts better than the Spirit of God. Under the influence of the Spirit, encouraged by the righteousness of quorum members and a spirit of mutual concern, quorums can be sources of great spiritual power for quorum members and their families, as well as others they serve.

In addition, social interactions are important. A strong quorum will meet together occasionally in social activities that present opportunities for quorum members and their families to interact in a relaxed, enjoyable way. Sociality is an important part of building and maintaining brotherhood.

### **The Quorum as a Service Unit**

In many ways the brotherhood in priesthood quorums powers the service that

quorums provide. Priesthood quorums, working together as one in the spirit of brotherhood and love, can perform miracles.

I again think of Elder Paul and Sister Jill Johnson. They have experienced a number of serious family challenges. They have a daughter and a young grandson who have struggled with cancer. In both cases the prayers and fasting of Elder Johnson’s quorum members have made a miraculous difference.

The Church and the communities in which Church units exist are blessed many times over by the faithful service of priesthood quorums. That service becomes powerful when quorum members unite their strength in righteous, Christlike love.

Often I have observed that strength and love come at the cost of sacrifice, shared in large part by the wives of the Seventy. A number of years ago I visited Elder Claudio and Sister Margareth Costa while they served in Bogotá, Colombia. After dinner one evening the Costas had an online video conversation with some of their grandchildren. As Elder Costa was translating for me, I learned that the grandchildren were referring to Sister Costa as “Computer Grandma.” At the end of the conversation, two grandchildren ages two and four embraced the computer monitor, giving Sister Costa a hug. Sister Costa later informed me that those grandchildren thought she and Elder Costa lived inside the computer.

Not being close to children and grandchildren for important events is particularly hard on mothers and grandmothers. However, they serve because they love the Lord and feel vested in their husbands’ calling.

“Our wives contribute in significant ways,” Elder Duncan observes. “Not only do they

support their husbands with the heavy loads they bear, but they also interact with the members and leaders throughout the world in inspiring ways. Our wives are true examples of cheerful consecration.”

That kind of unity among the Seventy and their wives has great power. I remember being on assignment in Japan and traveling between cities with Elder Yoon Hwan and Sister Bon Choi, then serving in the Asia North Area Presidency. I knew of a problem in their home country of Korea, and I brought it up. After I prodded her a little, Sister Choi told me of the serious nature of the problem. She then made suggestions that proved extremely helpful in finding a solution.

President Thomas S. Monson has reminded us, “Brethren, the world is in need of your help. There are feet to steady, hands to grasp, minds to encourage, hearts to inspire, and souls to save. The blessings of eternity await you. Yours is the privilege to be not spectators but participants on the stage of priesthood service.”<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, true brotherhood is a measure of godliness. The closer we approach that ideal, the closer we approach the divine. So united are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost in love, spiritual power, and knowledge that the

scriptures refer to Them as being one (see John 17:21–23; 2 Nephi 31:21; 3 Nephi 11:27, 36). The Lord has blessed us with priesthood quorums to help tutor us in the kind of unity tenderly described in the book of Mosiah: “having their hearts knit together in unity and in love one towards another” (Mosiah 18:21).

It is my prayer that every quorum leader and member will reach out to each brother and learn of his and his family’s needs. Designating a specific Sunday each month to prayerfully hold discussions in quorum meetings would assist in accomplishing this vital task. With knowledge of needs, quorum members will be able to find ways to bless lives and partake of the powers of heaven in greater abundance, thus increasing spiritual power in priesthood quorums. ■

*For more ideas on strengthening your quorum, see Henry B. Eyring, “Bind Up Their Wounds,” Ensign or Liahona, Nov. 2013, 58.*

#### NOTES

1. Henry B. Eyring, “A Priesthood Quorum,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2006, 43.
2. Stephen L Richards, in Conference Report, Oct. 1938, 118.
3. Boyd K. Packer, “The Quorum,” in *A Royal Priesthood* (Melchizedek Priesthood personal study guide, 1975–76), 131.
4. Thomas S. Monson, “To the Rescue,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 48; *Liahona*, July 2001, 57.

## THE SEVENTY: A HERITAGE OF SERVICE

The Seventy is a priesthood calling to be a witness of Jesus Christ and to assist the Lord’s prophets.

When the burden of leadership overwhelmed Moses, the Lord told him to gather “seventy men of the elders of Israel, . . . and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee” (Numbers 11:16–17).



Later, during His mortal ministry, the Savior “appointed . . . seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face” (Luke 10:1).

Today, the Lord again calls Seventy “to act in the name of the Lord, under the direction of the Twelve . . . , in building up the church and regulating all the affairs . . . in all nations” (D&C 107:34). They are presided over by seven presidents. The Lord indicates that as many Seventy can be called as the needs of the Church require. (See D&C 107:93–96.)

## A MINUTE AND A HALF IN THE RAIN

Growing up, I was the kid you didn't have to worry about. I had been active in the Church all my life. I had been the president of my priesthood quorums and seminary classes. I went to every youth conference, temple trip, Scouting event, and Mutual night. I also had a testimony of the gospel. Yet when I became a member of my priests quorum, I struggled, though no one knew it. After all, I was the kid you didn't have to worry about.

Those first few weeks and months in the quorum I did what I always did:

I went to church, Mutual, and Scouting activities. Inwardly, however, I was battling. I didn't feel that I was a part of the group or that the other young men wanted me there. I wanted desperately to belong.

As time went on, I had questions and doubts about whether I wanted to be a part of the quorum. But I remained active, silently suffering and hoping that something or someone would help me feel welcome.

My father and I had just finished fixing up my first car, a beautiful 1967

Ford Mustang. Brother Stay, my Young Men president, asked about it from time to time. I thought his questions showed his interest in a classic car—not in a young man.

All this changed one rainy evening after Mutual. Because of the down-pour, Brother Stay drove us all home from the church, dropping me off last. When he saw my blue Mustang in the driveway, he again asked about it. I offered to let him see the engine I had spent hours and hours repairing.

Brother Stay knew little about cars, and he had a wife and young son at home waiting for him. Yet there he stood in the dark, in the rain, looking at a barely visible car engine. At that moment I realized that he wasn't doing what he was doing to see a classic car—he was doing it because he cared about me.

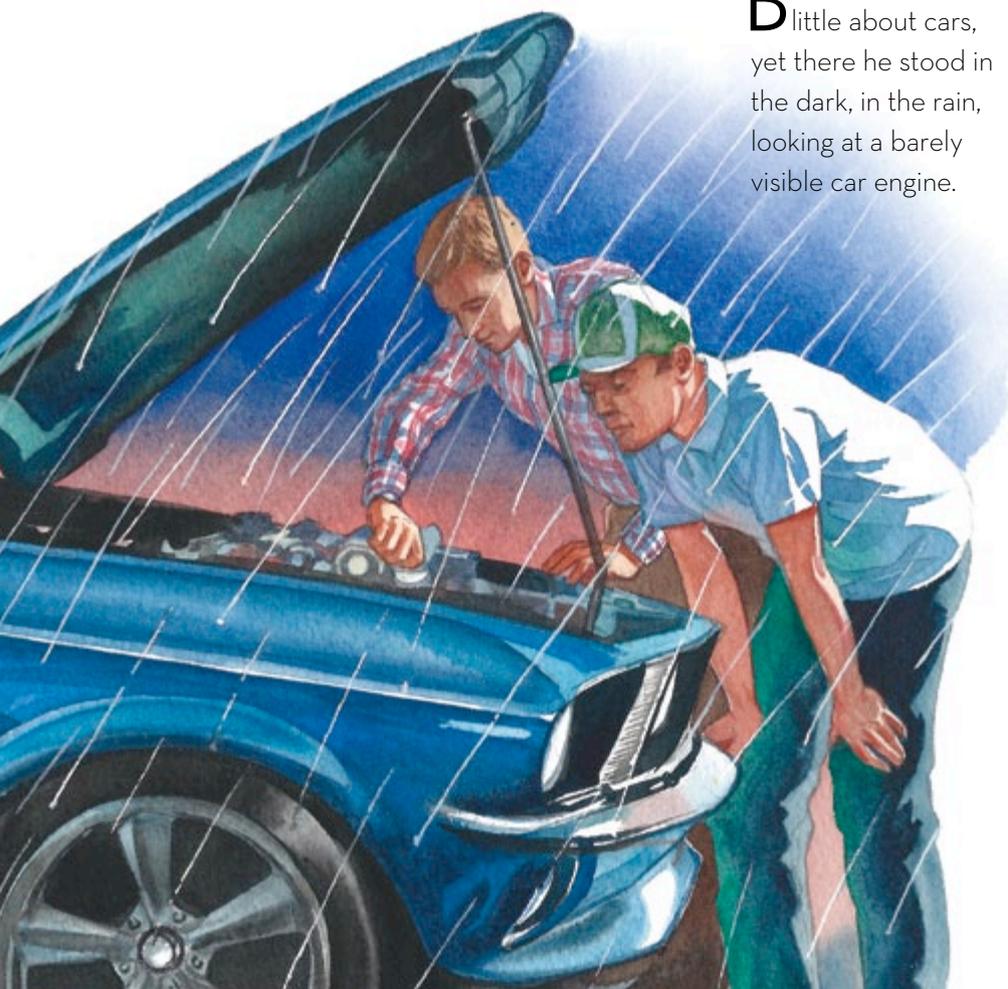
Because of that minute and a half standing in the rain, I found what I needed. I finally felt welcomed. My silent prayers had been answered.

Since then I have been to the temple, served a mission, graduated from college, and tried to keep my covenants. Brother Stay may not remember that moment, but I will never forget it.

We all have struggles, but we all can find an extra minute and a half each day to show love to one of God's children. It just might make all the difference—even to the one we think we don't have to worry about. ■

Jason Bosen, Utah, USA

Brother Stay knew little about cars, yet there he stood in the dark, in the rain, looking at a barely visible car engine.



## OUR LIGHT IN DARKNESS

Our family had just experienced a devastating house fire, and all eight of us were living in a temporary three-bedroom mobile home in our front yard. Our family faced challenges and discord.

My husband was not active in the Church at the time. Our two teenage sons were making choices that would lead only to sorrow. Simultaneously, I was serving as Young Women president in our ward, and several of the young women were struggling with serious temptations. Some of their parents also faced struggles and therefore were not assisting their daughters at this critical time.

I knew these young women needed me to help them through their spiritual land mines. I knew my six sons needed me. I knew my good

husband depended on my strength. Yet there seemed to be nothing but darkness around me, and I felt empty, weak, and incapable of leading these loved ones to safety.

Late one night as I rocked our infant son in the stillness of our temporary home, my thoughts turned to those who needed me to be strong. I felt the pervasive darkness that surrounded them. In my anguish I prayed with all my heart that Heavenly Father would show me the way to help them despite my inadequacies. He answered immediately and showed me the way.

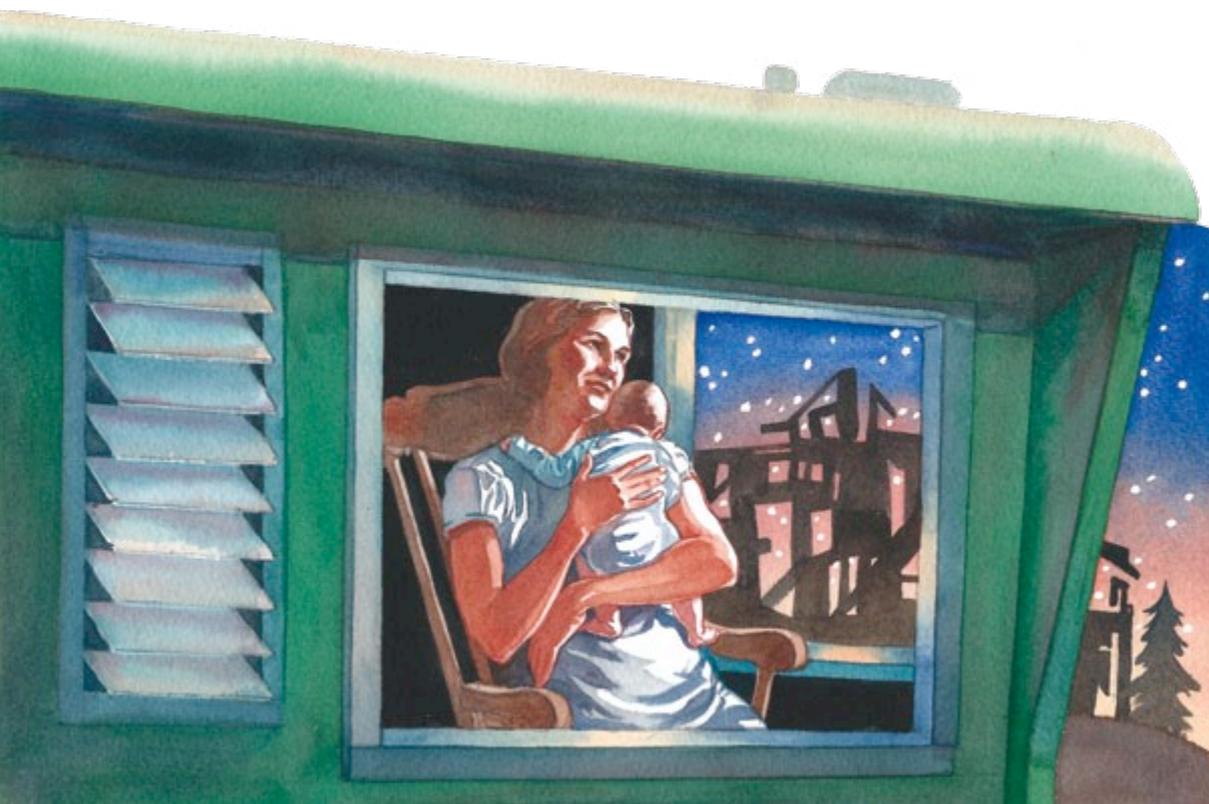
I seemed to see myself in our ward's large cultural hall, which had no windows. It was late at night, and there was not even a glimmer of light. Then I lit a tiny birthday candle. It seemed so insignificant, yet the power

of that miniscule light was enough to displace the blackness.

That was my answer! The *quantity* of darkness surrounding us in the world simply does not matter. Light is eternal and is vastly more powerful than darkness (see 2 Corinthians 4:6; Mosiah 16:9; D&C 14:9). If we remain worthy of the constant companionship of the Holy Spirit, our souls can reflect sufficient light to displace any amount of darkness, and others will be drawn to that light within us.

This was all I needed to know. This simple insight has carried me through the past 25 years with the knowledge that with the Lord's help and guidance, we can do—and be—all that He needs us to do and be in this world of darkness. ■

Susan Wyman, Georgia, USA



Late one night as I rocked our infant son in the stillness of our temporary home, my thoughts turned to those who needed me to be strong.

# MY MESSAGE FROM HEAVENLY FATHER

As a newlywed and a fairly new member of the Church, I moved to England with my husband. Although I had learned some English in school, my heavy Japanese accent made my English difficult to understand, and the British accent was difficult for me to decipher.

My husband and I were members of the Church, but we were not fully converted when we got married. We always went home after sacrament meeting instead of remaining at church for the other meetings. We did not want to receive any Church callings.

One day, to help me become more involved in Church activities, a Relief Society leader called and asked if I would share some things about myself at the next weeknight

Relief Society meeting. I agreed to participate, but because of my limited English, I did not understand that I was supposed to bring some things to display.

When I arrived at the meeting, I immediately realized what I had been expected to do. Three tables were set up with tablecloths and flowers on them. An overhead sign read, “Getting to Know Sisters.” One of the tables was labeled “Sister Tuckett.” But I had brought nothing to put on my table. I tried to hide the tears forming in my eyes.

I already felt sad whenever I attended sacrament meeting because I did not fully understand what was being spoken. I often thought, “Why am I here?” So when I arrived at that

Relief Society meeting and realized my mistake, I felt that I should not attend church anymore. I wished I could disappear, but I had to tell the Relief Society leader I wasn’t prepared.

“Excuse me,” I said. “I didn’t understand, and I don’t have anything to put on my table.”

She looked at me with the kindest expression and said, “It doesn’t matter—I’m just glad you are here.” Then she gave me a hug.

I felt comforted, and the Spirit told me that what she had said was a message from Heavenly Father—that He loved me and was glad I was there. I didn’t understand English very well, but the Spirit enabled me to understand her message.

Because of this feeling, my resolve immediately changed. I told myself, “If Heavenly Father loves me that much and wants me to come to church, I will, no matter how difficult it is.”

From that point on, my husband and I attended every Church meeting. I also determined to learn English. Gradually, I understood English better and learned to speak it.

I am grateful for the sister who delivered a message from Heavenly Father at that crucial point in my life. Now, 15 years later, I serve in the district Relief Society presidency in an English-speaking district in Japan and have received training by the Church to become an interpreter. ■

Terumi Tuckett (with Jill Campbell), Japan

When the Relief Society leader gave me a hug, I felt comforted.



# I DEFENDED MY FAITH

During my freshman year of college, my eyes were opened to the fact that my life as a student would not be as sheltered as before. Nor would what I held dear be accepted.

I found that I stuck out like a sore thumb when I refused to engage in activities that I knew would harm me physically or harm my relationship with Heavenly Father. However, I feared criticism for being a member of the Church and therefore avoided the topic.

One day in an afternoon class, the professor was leading a discussion on how youth develop amid constant discrimination. A girl behind me replied that the discussion made her think of Mormons. I cringed because when the Church was brought up in a class, inappropriate comments usually followed.

As I braced myself for derogatory statements, the teacher asked if any Latter-day Saints were in the class. Stunned at the inquiry, I scanned the room only to find everyone else doing the same. Before I could think twice, my hand was rising from its comfortable position on the desk. I heard an eruption of whispers from across the room.

“One,” the teacher said. The word rang in my ears. After a long silence, I was asked to respond to the debate regarding whether Latter-day Saints are Christians. I was no stranger to the question and was prepared to answer.

“We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, [and] we preach of Christ’”

(2 Nephi 25:26), I confidently replied. “We are indeed Christian.”

The whispering ceased, but I felt everyone staring at me. I thought I would feel alone. Instead, I felt as if the Savior had sat down next to me and put His hand in mine. Nothing else mattered, for I was filled with joy that strengthened my testimony of Him. I had defended my faith.

I shared more with the class about why Latter-day Saints are Christians. Then I thought of the time President Thomas S. Monson shared the gospel on a bus ride. From this experience he encouraged members to “be

courageous and prepared to stand for what we believe.”<sup>1</sup> As I thought of his words, I realized I had done the thing I was most afraid to do.

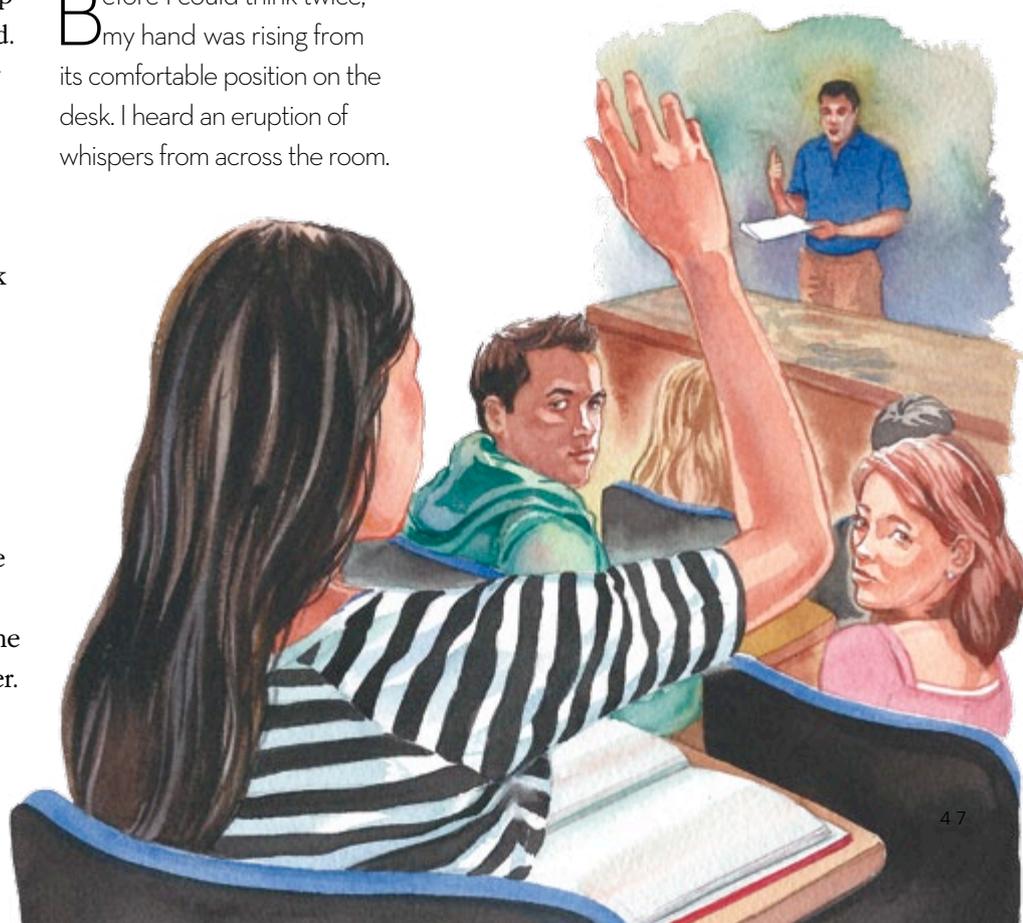
I do not know whether the things I said changed anybody’s opinion of the Church, but we need not fear to stand up and share the gospel—wherever we are. Even if we do not bless anybody else, we will always strengthen our testimony and our relationship with Heavenly Father. ■

Karlina Peterson, Idaho, USA

## NOTE

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Dare to Stand Alone,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 67.

Before I could think twice, my hand was rising from its comfortable position on the desk. I heard an eruption of whispers from across the room.



Do you communicate effectively with your spouse? Understanding these three types of conversations can help you fortify your relationship.

# SPEAK, LISTEN, & **LOVE**



By Mark Ogletree

**A**s a marriage and family counselor, I often visit with couples to help them repair or strengthen their relationships. In one instance, I met with a woman who had been married to her husband for only a few months, and she told me that they were having major communication problems. After talking to her husband, I noticed that he was actually a skilled communicator—just not with his wife.

I have learned over the years that healthy communication affects both the heart and the mind. If we can communicate better—meaning more clearly and concisely—then we can forge deeper emotional connections, resolve conflicts, and strengthen the bonds in our marital relationship. Following are some ways that each of us can improve the quality of communication in our relationships.

### Engage in Meaningful Conversations

Dr. Douglas E. Brinley, a Church member who is a marriage and parenting specialist, wrote about three levels of communication in relationships: superficial, personal, and validating. In order for a deep bond to form between a husband and a wife, there needs to be a balance between all three.<sup>1</sup>

#### Superficial

Communication that falls in the superficial level is informative and

nonconfrontational, and it involves a low level of risk. Every married couple spends some time at this level as they coordinate schedules, discuss the weather, or comment on gas prices. Although this type of communication is necessary, individuals cannot become deeply connected and bound together if the majority of communication remains here.

Superficial communication can supplant deep and meaningful conversations. If couples tiptoe around deeper issues that should be discussed, they will never learn to resolve conflict or connect with each other. Couples bond as they discuss things that matter—not things that don't. I have seen many couples in my practice who have tried to preserve their relationship by keeping their communication at the superficial level. By avoiding the "weightier matters" (Matthew 23:23), they have actually destroyed their marriage.

#### Personal

During personal communication, you share your interests, dreams, passions, beliefs, and goals. You also are open to sharing your fears and inadequacies. Communicating all these issues in a Christlike manner is one way couples connect and strengthen the relationship. Elder Marvin J. Ashton (1915–1994) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught, "Communication is more than a sharing of words. It is the *wise* sharing of

emotions, feelings, and concerns. It is the sharing of oneself totally."<sup>2</sup>

You probably engaged in this level of communication as you were dating. This is the level where men and women fall in love with each other. As you continue to share what is important, you and your spouse will feel mutually appreciated, wanted, valued, and needed. As you learn to validate what your spouse shares—showing that what he or she says is important to you—you will progress to the next level of communication.

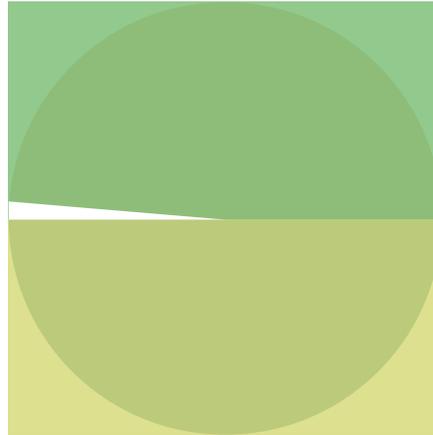
#### Validating

Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to nurture and provide comfort to each other.<sup>3</sup> Marriage experts Sandra Blakeslee and Judith S. Wallerstein have written: "A marriage that does not provide nurturance and restorative comfort can die of emotional malnutrition."<sup>4</sup> Communication that validates is edifying, healing, nurturing, and complimentary. In this level of communication, we express praise and compliments to those we care about. Almost every relationship will thrive if there is a healthy dose of validation.

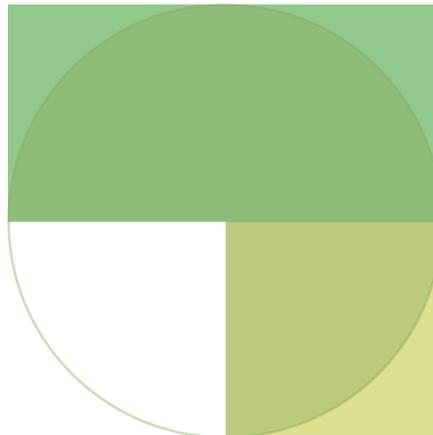
Validation begins with paying attention to what your spouse is saying and includes expressing ideas and thoughts that are edifying and healing. Look for the good in your spouse and tell him or her. If your spouse had a difficult day, you could validate

When I counsel with couples, I draw a circle on a white-board and ask them to make a pie chart based on how much time they spend in superficial, personal, and validating communication. Most couples whose marriages are in trouble spend close to 50 percent of their time in superficial communication and less than 5 percent of their time validating. A healthy balance is to have 25 percent of communication at the superficial level, 50 percent at the personal level, and 25 percent at the validating level.

**Unhealthy Communication**



**Healthy Communication**



him or her by listening and offering comfort. You could say, "I'm sorry you had a hard day; tell me more about what happened" or "What can I do to make the rest of your day better?" Perhaps you could say, "I can see why your day was so difficult, but I have confidence in your intelligence and work ethic. I know you will be able to solve that problem." Statements such as these demonstrate that you have sympathy for your spouse's distress and care about him or her. By verbally acknowledging your spouse's emotions, fears, thoughts, or concerns, you are communicating validation and conveying appreciation, love, and respect.<sup>5</sup>

**Practice the Art of Listening**

The greatest communication skill is being an effective listener. One of the most charitable demonstrations in marriage is to truly focus on your spouse and listen to him or her—really listen—regardless of what we want to say. Being heard is akin to being loved; in fact, being listened to is one of the highest forms of respect and validation. By listening, we are saying to our spouse, "You matter to me, I love you, and what you have to say is important."

In marriage the goal of listening should not be to acquire information but to gain understanding. To truly understand your spouse is to see an issue the way your spouse

sees it. Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that husbands and wives should “learn to listen, and listen to learn from one another.”<sup>6</sup> Effective listening helps us to set aside our own will and pride and connect soul-to-soul with our spouse.

Elder Joe J. Christensen, formerly of the Seventy, counseled: “Make the time to listen to your spouse; even schedule it regularly. Visit with each other and assess how you are doing as a marriage partner.”<sup>7</sup> Setting aside time to talk where there are no distractions will help to solve problems. Make sure to be positive, maintain a Christlike demeanor, and avoid interrupting your spouse when he or she is talking to you.

### Nonverbal Cues

Another aspect of communication that is sometimes overlooked is nonverbal communication. What you say and how you say it is important, but so is your body language. Do you look your spouse in the eye when she talks

to you? Do you roll your eyes when he tells you that he had a hard time at work? Does your facial expression show interest and sincerity, or does it display boredom and irritation? Do you express your love with physical affection? Sometimes a hug or a smile can convey your love more than words can. Regardless of the type of conversation—whether it’s about the latest news article or your life ambitions—positive body language can reinforce validation and strengthen your relationship.

### Emulate the Savior’s Communication

As you engage in meaningful conversations with your spouse, guide your actions and words by following the example of Jesus Christ. His communication with others radiated love, care, and concern. He spoke gently and loved purely. He showed compassion and granted forgiveness. He listened attentively and demonstrated charity. Likewise, if we want our relationships to improve, we must

learn to speak in positive ways that edify and build those around us.

When I meet with couples, I often ask them to analyze their communication patterns and improve upon them. As they have applied the principles of meaningful conversations in their relationships, I have seen changes toward a healthier marriage. Understanding your spouse, creating an environment that fosters open communication and expression, and demonstrating fondness and admiration are keys to a stronger relationship and a happier marriage. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

### NOTES

1. See Douglas E. Brinley and Mark D. Ogletree, *First Comes Love* (2002), 123–26.
2. Marvin J. Ashton, “Family Communications,” *Ensign*, May 1976, 52.
3. See “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129.
4. Sandra Blakeslee and Judith S. Wallerstein, *The Good Marriage: How and Why Love Lasts* (1995), 240.
5. Douglas E. Brinley, *Strengthening Your Marriage and Family* (1994), 153–54.
6. Russell M. Nelson, “Listen to Learn,” *Ensign*, May 1991, 23.
7. Joe J. Christensen, “Marriage and the Great Plan of Happiness,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 64.
8. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 23–24.

## IMPROVING YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HEAVENLY FATHER

As you incorporate these communication principles in your marriage, you may also want to apply them to your relationship with Heavenly Father. Many people communicate with God at a superficial level. If you pray out of duty or use habitual phrases, you may find it difficult to connect with Heavenly Father and He will feel distant. Communicating with God is different from just talking to Him. President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) taught: “We do not have to cry unto him with many words. We do not have to weary him with long prayers. . . . Let the prayer come from the heart, let it not be in words that are worn into ruts in the beaten tracks of common

use, without thought or feeling in the use of those words.”<sup>8</sup> Do you share with your Heavenly Father your innermost beliefs, feelings, and desires? Have you shared with Him the secret ambitions that lie in your heart? Can you pour out your heart to Him? And do you practice listening for His responses?

Sincere words spoken in humble prayer will allow you to develop a deeper connection with Heavenly Father. Listening for and implementing His counsel will enrich and strengthen the relationship. As you express gratitude for specific blessings, live the gospel, and become more like Jesus Christ, you will demonstrate your love for Heavenly Father.



**By Elder  
Robert D. Hales**  
Of the Quorum  
of the Twelve  
Apostles

# TEMPLE BLESSINGS

*The temple's saving ordinances are essential to—and even the central focus of—the eternal plan of happiness.*

**T**he temple endowment blessings are as essential for each of us as was our baptism. For this reason we are to prepare ourselves that we may be clean to enter into the temple of God. Temple work is an opportunity to perform our personal endowments and covenants for the living and also perform these same ordinances for the redemption of the dead. It is for this reason we are instructed in the scriptures to build temples and prepare our lives to be worthy to partake of the sacred temple ordinances and covenants.

We have been taught in the scriptures that the personal worthiness required of us by the Lord to enter the temple and to take upon us the sacred covenants therein is one of the greatest blessings available to us in mortality. Then, after taking upon us the covenants in the temple, our obedience in living the covenants daily



is a demonstration of our faith, love, devotion, and spiritual commitment to honor our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and prepares us to live with Them in the eternities. The temple's saving ordinances are essential to—and even the central focus of—the eternal plan of happiness.

### The Holy Temple

We need to acquire a testimony of and a reverent feeling for the temple being the house of the Lord. The temple is truly a place where you are “in the world and not of the world.” When you are troubled and when you have crucial decisions that weigh heavily on your mind and soul, you can take your cares to the temple and receive spiritual guidance.

To preserve the sanctity of the temple so that the temple may be kept pure and to invite the Spirit to bless those who enter the holy temple

for their ordinances and covenants, we are taught that no unclean thing should enter the temple. Reverence in the temple is a vital element in inviting the Spirit to reside within it every hour of every day.

When I was a boy, my father brought me from Long Island, New York, USA, to walk on the Salt Lake Temple grounds in Salt Lake City, to touch the temple, and to discuss the importance of the temple in my life. It was on that occasion that I made up my mind that someday I would return to enter the temple and receive the ordinances.

The temple is a sacred edifice, a holy place where essential saving ceremonies and ordinances are performed to prepare us for exaltation. It is important that we gain a sure knowledge that our preparation to enter the holy house and our participation in these ceremonies and covenants are some of the most significant events we will experience in our mortal lives.

appeared in glory and accepted the Kirtland Temple as His house. On that occasion Moses, Elias, and Elijah each appeared to commit to Joseph Smith the keys held from their dispensations. Elijah restored the keys of his dispensation as promised by Malachi so that we could enjoy the blessings of the temple in our lives. (See D&C 110.)

The Nauvoo Temple was the first latter-day temple in which endowments and sealings were performed, which proved a great strength to the pioneers as they endured the hardships crossing the plains to Zion in the Salt Lake Valley.

When Joseph Smith was taken to Carthage, it was clear why the



***Our preparation to enter the holy house and our participation in these ceremonies and covenants are some of the most significant events we will experience in our mortal lives.***

### Temple Blessings throughout History

Throughout history, in every dispensation of time, the Lord has commanded prophets that temples should be built so that His people could receive temple ordinances.

The Kirtland Temple was the first temple in these latter days, and it played an important role in the restoration of priesthood keys. The Savior

completion of the temple had meant so much to him. He knew what was going to be required of the Saints and that to have the strength to endure what was ahead of them they had to be endowed with power—the power of the priesthood.

Our pioneer ancestors were sealed together as families in Nauvoo. Their covenants with the Lord in the Nauvoo Temple were a protection for them during their journey westward, as it is for each of us today and throughout our lives. The ordinances and covenants of the temple are the protection for us in our trials and tribulations in our day and for what we will face in the future. It is our heritage. It is who we are.

For these early Saints, their participation in the ordinances of the temple was essential to their testimonies as

they faced the hardships, the angry mobs, being driven from comfortable homes in Nauvoo, and the long and difficult journey ahead. They had been endowed with power in the holy temple. Husband and wife were sealed to each other. Children were sealed to their parents. Many lost

family members to death along the way, but they knew that wasn't the end for them. They had been sealed in the temple for all eternity.

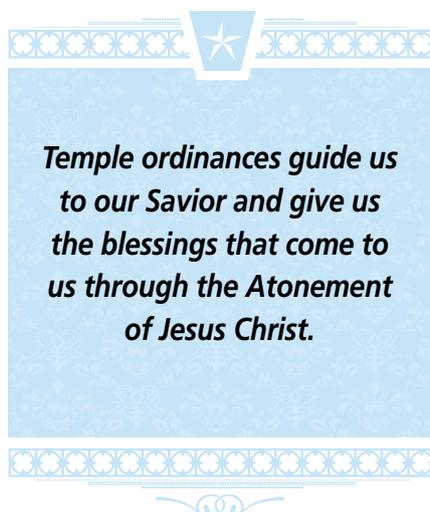
### The Temple Ordinances— Endowments and Sealings

Temples are the greatest university of learning known to man, giving us knowledge and wisdom about the Creation of the world. Washings and anointings tell us who we are. Endowment instructions give guidance as to how we should conduct our lives here in mortality (see D&C 97:13–14).

The primary purpose of the temple is to provide the ordinances necessary for our exaltation in the celestial kingdom. Temple ordinances guide us to our Savior and give us the blessings that come to us through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. The meaning of the word *endowment* is “gift.” The ordinance consists of a series of instructions on how we should live and covenants we make to live righteously by following our Savior.

Another important ordinance is being sealed for eternity in celestial marriage. This covenant allows children to be sealed to their parents and children born in the covenant to become part of an eternal family.

The Doctrine and Covenants teaches us: “Whatsoever you seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever you bind on earth, in my name and by my word, saith the Lord,

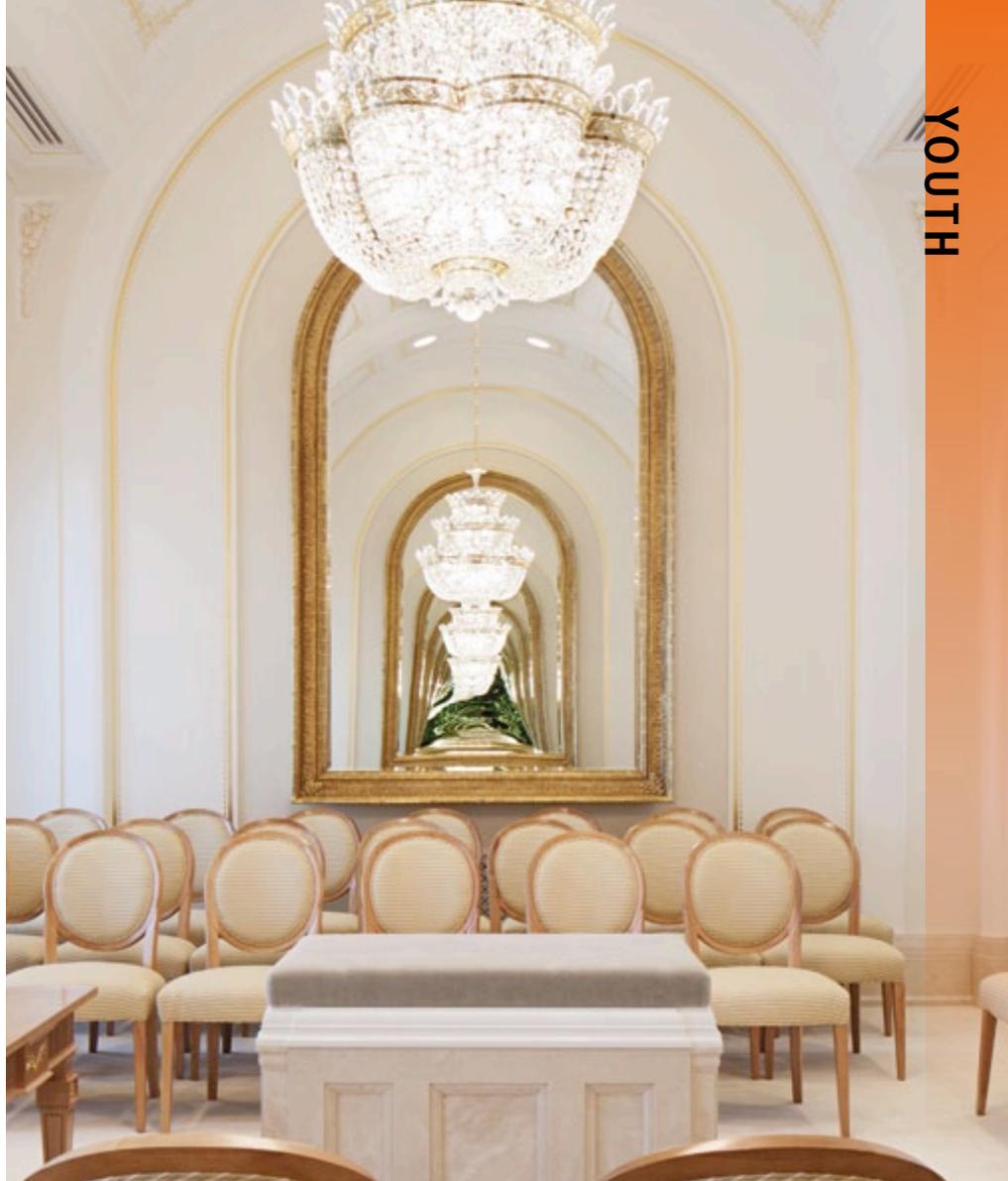


it shall be eternally bound in the heavens; and whosoever sins you remit on earth shall be remitted eternally in the heavens; and whosoever sins you retain on earth shall be retained in heaven” (D&C 132:46).

When a couple is kneeling at the altar, as a sealer I am aware of my role as a representative of the Lord. I know that what is sealed on earth is literally sealed in heaven—never to be broken if those being sealed remain faithful and endure to the end.

The mirrors on opposite walls in the temple sealing room are angled to create the visual impression of endless images. Looking into these mirrors on one side of the room represents the eternities of time that we have traveled to come to earth. As we turn to the opposite side of the room, we look into the seemingly endless images symbolizing the eternities after we leave this frail existence on earth. The sealing room itself represents our mortal probation here on earth. The lesson to be learned from this temple experience is that we have made the right choices to come to earth and experience mortality and that how we live our life in this brief period will determine how we will live in all the eternities to come.

You are preparing to meet the tests of mortal life. We voluntarily came from the presence of God the Father to this mortal probation with agency, knowing we would have “opposition



in all things” (2 Nephi 2:11). Our objective (see 1 Nephi 15:14) is to take upon us the whole armor of God and withstand “the fiery darts of the adversary” (D&C 3:8) with our sword of the Spirit and shield of faith (see D&C 27:15–18), to endure to the end, and to be worthy to stand and live in the presence of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, for all eternity—to achieve what is called eternal life.

I give you my testimony that God lives; that Jesus is the Christ; and that Joseph Smith, the Prophet of our dispensation, restored the priesthood blessings that allow us to partake of the temple blessings. ■

***The ordinances and covenants of the temple are the protection for us in our trials and tribulations in our day and for what we will face in the future.***

*From a devotional address, “Temple Blessings,” delivered at Brigham Young University on November 15, 2005. For the full text in English, go to [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu).*

## “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?”

If you do your best to attend as often as you can, the Lord will be pleased with your efforts. When you can’t attend the temple, there are many things you can do to make the temple a bigger part of your life:

- **Live worthy to enter the temple.** Living up to the standards needed to enter the Lord’s house means we are always ready to be in His presence.
- **Plan to receive your own endowment and be married in the temple.** Setting a goal to receive these essential ordinances will keep you focused on the temple.
- **Dress modestly.** This will help prepare you to receive your own endowment.
- **Study scriptures relevant to the temple** (for example, Exodus 26–29; Leviticus 8; D&C 97; 109; 110; 124:25–42; Moses 2–5). The October 2010 *Liahona* was all about the temple too.
- **Learn about your ancestors** (visit FamilySearch.org) and see that temple ordinances are performed for them.
- **Ask others what the temple means to them** and share your testimony that the temple truly is the house of the Lord.
- **Help make your home like the temple:** “Establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God” (D&C 109:8).

You could prayerfully choose one or two of these ideas to try this month. They will help you feel the Spirit and learn more about the temple.

### Think How Temples Bless Your Life



If we take temples for granted, they are far from our hearts. We need to think of the blessings the temple can bring us and go when we can. Even if you are only able to make a few visits a year, you can make them more meaningful by bringing family

names or fasting. The Spirit in the Lord’s house is special—you want to make your visit count.

*Benjamin S., age 18, Utah, USA*

### Remain Pure and Worthy



The temple brings happiness in my life today. As I go to the temple, I learn more about our Heavenly Father and

Jesus Christ. My labors in the temple strengthen and refine my spirituality. I gain a better understanding of our purpose in life. The temple brings me courage in handling trials and temptations and gives me strength to overcome my weaknesses. The temple is the only place where we can be sealed together as eternal families, so I will prepare to enter the temple and remain pure and worthy.

*Mickaella B., age 16, Philippines*

### Keep the Spirit of the Temple

It takes seven hours for me to get to the Frankfurt Germany Temple, so my family and I can go only twice a year for one week at a time. But when I have an additional opportunity to go, I take it because I know that it will be a great blessing. I keep the spirit of the temple by reading my scriptures every day. I use my temple recommend as a bookmark. Each time I see my recommend, I ask myself questions to make sure I am worthy of attending the temple. This strengthens me and helps me feel

the Spirit. Even though the temple is far from home, I can still strive to live as if I could enter every day.

*Lise G., age 17, France*

### Prepare Yourself



Attending the temple two or three times a year is good, so long as we do so with a sincere and pure heart. We can

encourage our Church leaders to organize trips to the temple. When we are not able to attend, let's try to prepare ourselves so that when the time comes, we can go with great joy. Our lives are busy, but prophets have promised that if we go to the house of the Lord, we will be blessed.

*Krista L., age 16, Paraguay*

### Display a Picture of the Temple

Try framing your favorite picture of the temple with the words "I will go inside someday!" Put it in your room so you can see it every day. Make a list of things you will do and not do so you can be worthy to enter the temple. Put the list next to the picture.

*Christian J., age 13, Idaho, USA*

### Read in Your Journal about Past Temple Visits

Write in your journal about your time at the temple and then read these pages when you are home. This will help you remember the feelings you had. It is especially important to record personal

revelation. When I was attending the temple, I tried to listen to the Spirit very carefully because He is always ready to help us learn. Every time I listened, I discovered new truths about Jesus Christ and Heavenly Father as well as about temple work. When I focus on spiritual things while in the temple, I value it even more and the temple becomes very meaningful in my life.

*Ol'ga Z., age 18, Belarus*

### Do Family History



I think that doing family history work is about as close as you can get to being in the temple without being in the

temple. You can give the names that you find to people in your family or ward to take to the temple. If you do family history and keep your house a holy place, you are going to be close to the temple while you are still miles away from it.

*Katelyn B., age 13, Utah, USA*



### BE TEMPLE WORTHY

"May we always be worthy of holding a temple recommend. May that be one of our objectives in life,

to consistently and regularly sit before our priesthood leader and declare our worthiness to have this tangible evidence that the Lord approves of the type of life we are living and finds us worthy to enter His holy house.

"... If we are always worthy of that recommend and can truthfully answer the qualifying questions, we are on our way to the greatest gift the Lord has given us. May the Lord bless us that we may firmly resolve to always be temple worthy."

**Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "My First Temple Recommend," *New Era*, Apr. 2013, 4.**

For more on this topic, see "Temple Blessings" by Elder Robert D. Hales in this issue on page 52.

## UPCOMING QUESTION

"I lost a dear friend recently. How do I deal with the grief?"

Submit your answer and, if desired, a high-resolution photograph by March 15, 2014, at [liahona.lds.org](http://liahona.lds.org), by email to [liahona@ldschurch.org](mailto:liahona@ldschurch.org), or by mail (see address on page 3).

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.

The following information and permission must be included in your email 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 (email is acceptable) to publish your response and photograph.

# FAITHFUL, LOVING SERVICE



*Christlike service invites the Holy Ghost and brings the promise of peace.*

witnessed the joy of pure, selfless service shown in these pictures of a boy named Elijah giving his shirt to a new friend he met in a remote village of Africa. Elijah saw an immediate need, and then he responded. Like young Elijah, we have the opportunity to render service to others in many ways. We may not need to give others the shirts off our backs, but if we are listening to the promptings of the Holy Ghost, we will know whom to serve and how to help those who are in need.

“Service is synonymous with keeping the commandments of God,” and it represents our love for the Lord.<sup>1</sup> The Savior taught, “If thou lovest me

thou shalt serve me and keep all my commandments” (D&C 42:29); “thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy might, mind, and strength; and in the name of Jesus Christ thou shalt serve him” (D&C 59:5). At baptism we covenanted that we would serve God and keep His commandments (see Mosiah 18:10). As followers of Christ, we always strive to participate in His work, and that involves serving.

### **Service: The Gospel in Action**

Service is the gospel of Jesus Christ in action, and it’s evident in a story I love about Brigham Young. Upon learning that hundreds of handcart

pioneers were stranded on the plains in unbearable conditions, he taught with power in this simple sermon at the October 1856 general conference: “I will now give this people the subject and the text for the Elders who may speak, . . . it is this, . . . many of our brethren and sisters are on the plains with hand-carts, and probably many are now 700 miles from this place, and they must be brought here, we must send assistance to them. The text will be, ‘to get them here.’ . . .

“That is my religion; that is the dictation of the Holy Ghost that I possess, it is to save the people. . . .

“I shall call upon the Bishops this day, I shall not wait until to-morrow,



**By Carol F. McConkie**  
 First Counselor in the  
 Young Women General  
 Presidency

nor until next day, for 60 good mule teams and 12 or 15 wagons. I do not want to send oxen, I want good horses and mules. They are in this Territory, and we must have them; also 12 tons of flour and 40 good teamsters, besides those that drive the teams. . . .

“I will tell you all that your faith, religion, and profession of religion, will never save one soul of you in the celestial kingdom of our God, unless you carry out just such principles as I am now teaching you. Go and bring in those people now on the plains.”<sup>2</sup>

“*Save the people*”—that is the command. When we serve others, we are engaged in the work of salvation. As King Benjamin taught, “When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17).

### Opportunities All Around

We do not need to look very far to find opportunities to serve. Our living prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, taught, “We are surrounded by those in need of our attention, our encouragement, our support, our comfort, our kindness—be they family members, friends, acquaintances, or strangers. We are the Lord’s hands here upon the earth, with the mandate

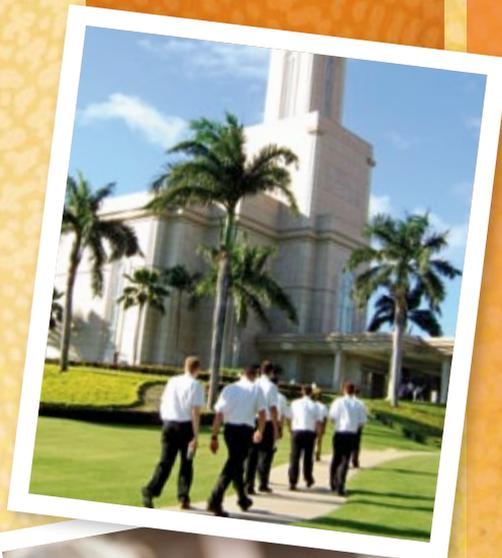
to serve and to lift His children. He is dependent upon each of us.”<sup>3</sup>

Our Father in Heaven needs us to administer to the relief of others spiritually and temporally (see Mosiah 4:26). “The greatest service we can provide to others in this life . . . is to bring them to Christ through faith and repentance.”<sup>4</sup> We set an example of living gospel standards. We share the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We do family history and take family names to the temple for our ancestors. Oftentimes, small and compassionate acts of service like a simple smile, a friendly hello, a warm embrace, or a note of gratitude are all that is needed to lift the heart and cheer the soul. On other occasions, a great sacrifice of time and energy may be required.

But in every instance, faithful, loving, Christlike service invites the companionship of the Holy Ghost and brings to each one of us the promise of “peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come” (D&C 59:23). ■

### NOTES

1. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (1966), 706.
2. Brigham Young, “Remarks,” *Deseret News*, Oct. 15, 1856, 252.
3. Thomas S. Monson, “What Have I Done for Someone Today?” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 86.
4. D. Todd Christofferson, “Redemption,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2013, 110.



# SHARING Home-Return Kits



By Olivet Gasang

Rain poured as a cold wind blew. I saw trees that had been uprooted and lost all their leaves. The power was off in some areas due to damaged electrical lines. The scene before me was now like a haunted place. Everything had been blown away. People were starving for food and longing for shelter.

My heart was filled with the desire to serve. My family and other members of the Church had traveled to a poor community where a typhoon had devastated thousands of homes

and taken thousands of lives. We were there to give relief goods to the victims.

When we first arrived, I had seen the mourning in people's faces. I realized then how blessed we were that our homes hadn't been destroyed.

It was still raining when we started handing out relief packs at a muddy, roofless gym, but that didn't matter to us. The relief packs—sets of plastic trays, kettles, plates, spoons, forks, glasses, and flasks—we nicknamed “home-return kits.” As my family and I handed relief packs to the people, they gave us warm smiles and thank-yous.

The priceless gratitude of the people uplifted me, and I felt the influence of the Spirit. Their smiles manifested that there is hope and that

Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ will never leave us and will always bring light to our dark days.

I know that if we serve and love one another, we will gain eternal blessings and inherit Christlike attributes. The blessings of serving do not always come right away, but they will come if we continue to serve others with a sincere heart. I know that “when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17). ■

*The author lives in Mindanao, Philippines.*



## AN INSTRUMENT IN GOD'S HANDS

“Often Heavenly Father will meet the needs of others through you. . . . As you devote yourself to serving others, . . . you will enjoy happiness that comes only from giving service. . . . Your capacities will increase, and you will be an instrument in God's hands to bless the lives of His children.”

*For the Strength of Youth*  
(booklet, 2011), 32, 33.



By Elder  
L. Tom Perry

Of the Quorum of the  
Twelve Apostles

## HOW TO FILL YOUR BOOK OF LIFE

Come to you with a question about eternal memories you are building in your lives. Are they followed by the comment “I wish I had,” or can you say, “I’m glad I did”?

Reaching back into history, if we could select just one principle that would especially contribute to the “I’m glad I did” memories, what would it be? It would be the principle of obedience.<sup>1</sup>

We all make daily entries in our book of life. Occasionally we examine the entries we are making. What kind of memories will flood your mind as you examine the pages of your personal entries? How many pages will contain “I wish I had” entries? Will there be entries of procrastination and failure to take advantage of special opportunities? Will you find entries of thoughtlessness in treatment of family, friends, or even strangers? Will there be

those of remorse resulting from acts of unrighteousness and disobedience?

Fortunately, each day brings a clean, white page on which to change entries from “I wish I had” to “I’m glad I did” through the process of recognition, remorse, repentance, and restitution. Feelings of depression for past acts or missed opportunities will be outshone by memory banks filled with exhilaration, enthusiasm, and the joy of living.

As you examine the memorabilia you have put into your book of life, will you find the ones prescribed by the Lord in being obedient to His laws? Will there be baptismal certificates, priesthood ordinations for both the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods for the young men and Young Womanhood Recognition certificates for the young women, and, of course, a letter of honorable release from a full-time mission? Will there be current temple recommends, tithing receipts, a marriage performed in the holy temple, and acceptance of priesthood and auxiliary calls?

My counsel to you is to fill up your memory bank and your book of life with as many “I’m glad I did” activities as you possibly can (see Mosiah 2:41).

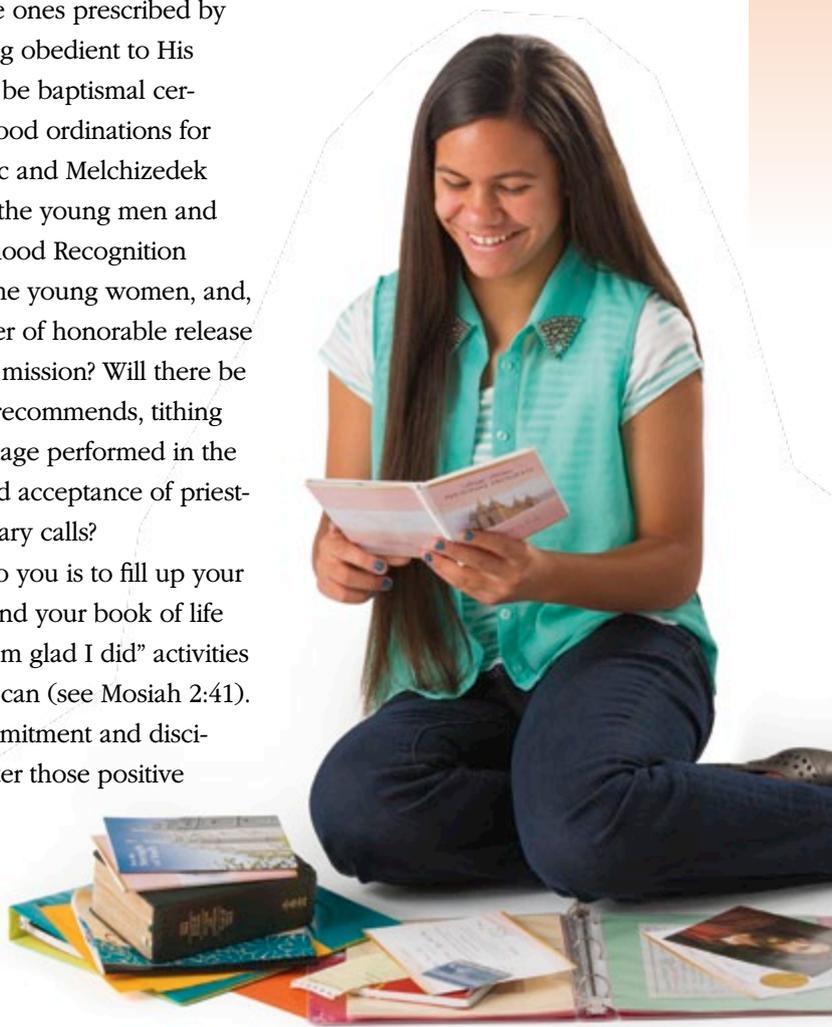
Find the commitment and discipline to seek after those positive

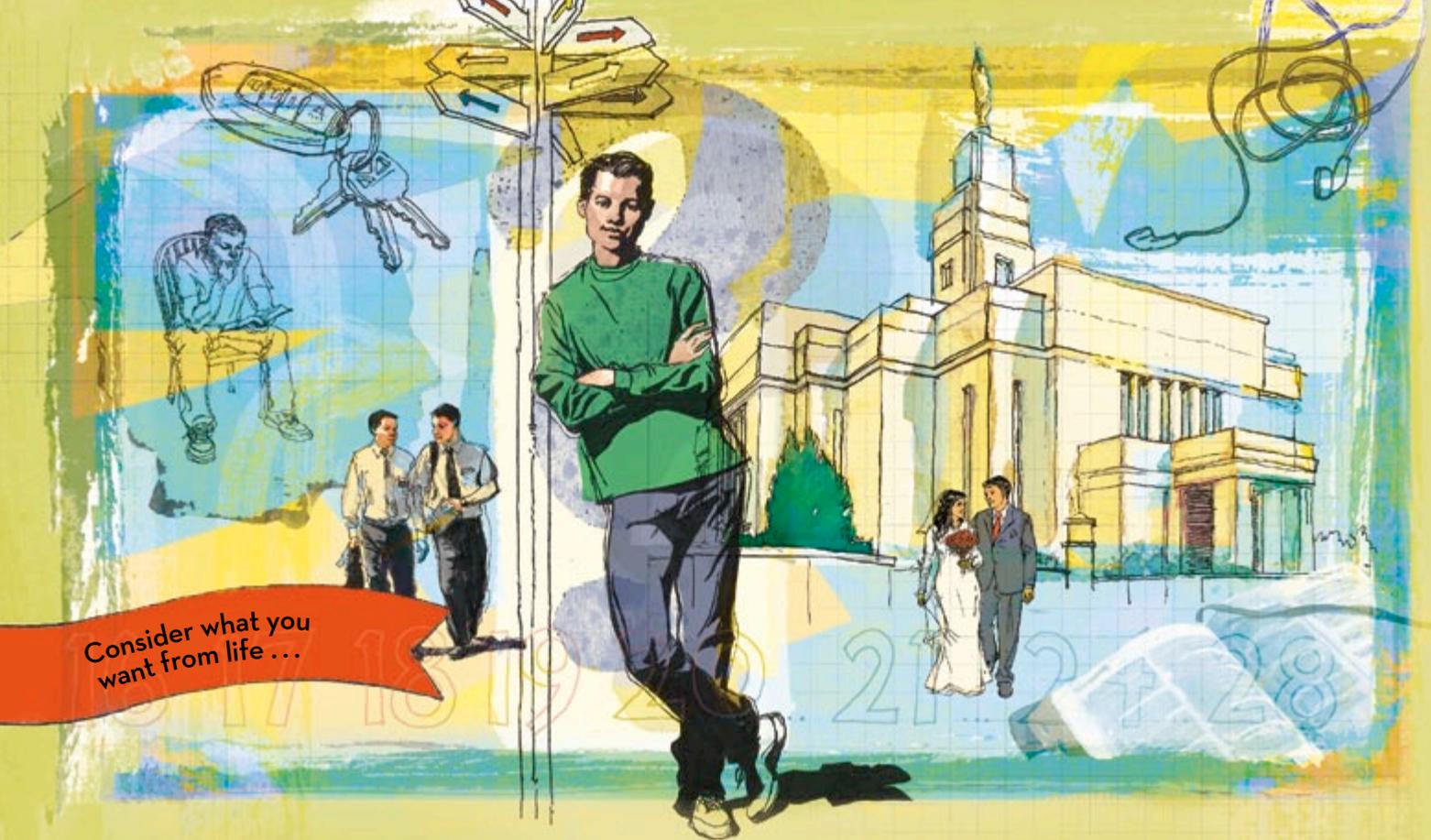
experiences that will lead to liberty and eternal life. It is my witness to you that God lives. It is by conforming our lives to His law that we will find true happiness here and eternal opportunities in the life to come. ■

*From a Church Educational System fireside given on November 1, 1992.*

### NOTE

1. See the accounts of Alma the Younger (Mosiah 27; Alma 29, 36), Adam and Eve (Moses 5:4–11), Samuel and Saul (1 Samuel 15:9–11, 13–14, 20–24), and Nephi (1 Nephi 3–5). See also D&C 130:20–21.





Consider what you  
want from life ...

# Why Making Choices MATTERS

By Mindy Raye Friedman  
Church Magazines

Every day you have choices to make. Some of those choices don't have much to do with your eternal salvation ("What color shirt should I wear?"), and some of them have everything to do with it ("Should I break this commandment?"). You may sometimes wonder, "Do my choices really matter?" Or you may even think, "If no one knows what I'm doing, do my decisions really affect anyone?" The answer is yes! Decisions *do* matter.

## Why They Matter

In order to understand why your choices matter, let's go back to the premortal life. When Heavenly Father presented His plan of salvation, not everyone agreed. Lucifer objected to the plan and "sought to destroy the agency of man" (Moses 4:3). Because of this, he became Satan and he and those who followed him were cast out of heaven and denied the opportunity to progress by experiencing mortality. Agency was so important in God's

plan that those who wanted to destroy it were cast out of heaven!

Heavenly Father's plan gives us the opportunity to choose for ourselves because that's the only way we can learn, grow, and become more like Him. One of the purposes of life is to learn to use our agency wisely. But we weren't given agency just to do whatever we want. *For the Strength of Youth* teaches, "While here on earth, you are being proven to see if you will use your agency to show your

love for God by keeping His commandments.”<sup>1</sup> Choosing to keep the commandments shows God that we love Him and are willing to follow Him. The choices we make—including our attitude in making those decisions—are a big part of the test of mortality.

### Choosing Good

You’ve been taught repeatedly that choosing to disobey God’s commandments brings consequences. But have you considered that the same is true for good choices? *For the Strength of Youth* teaches: “While you are free to choose your course of action, you are not free to choose the consequences. Whether for *good* or

bad, consequences follow as a natural result of the choices you make.”<sup>2</sup>

So what are the consequences of good choices? You could probably come up with a large list of blessings that come from making righteous choices. A good place to look for these blessings is in the scriptures and your *For the Strength of Youth* booklet. For example: “If you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life” (D&C 14:7); “Observing the Sabbath will bring you closer to the Lord and to your family”<sup>3</sup>; or “When you are obedient to [the Word of Wisdom], you remain free from harmful addictions and have control over your life.”<sup>4</sup> Those sound like pretty great blessings, and there are many more you can find.

The Lord said that we “should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of [our] own free will,” and He promised that we can “bring to pass much righteousness” when we do (D&C 58:27). So we should not only avoid bad things but also actively seek to do good things.

Sometimes we get so worried about all the things that we are *not* supposed to do that we forget that obedience also includes doing things we *are* supposed to do. You can probably understand how choosing to break commandments negatively affects your life, but do you understand how choosing to do good things can



### DECISIONS DETERMINE DESTINY

“Each of us has the responsibility to choose. You may ask, ‘Are decisions really that important?’ I say to you, decisions determine destiny. You can’t make eternal decisions without eternal consequences.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Pathways to Perfection,” *Ensign*, May 2002, 100; *Liahona*, July 2002, 112.



## JOIN THE CONVERSATION

### Things to Ponder for Sunday

- What is the role of agency in the plan of salvation?
- How do your good choices affect your life and the lives of others?
- How can small decisions help you achieve your larger goals?

### Things You Might Do

- Write a list of goals you want to achieve now and in the future.
- Look at your list of goals when you have a choice to make.
- Share your experiences at church, at home, or online at [youth.lds.org](http://youth.lds.org).

positively affect your life and the lives of others?

### Live Intentionally

So how can you make sure you are making good choices? First, consider what you want from your life. Do you want eternal life? Do you want to



### MAKE DECISIONS IN ADVANCE

“When I was a young woman, I learned that some decisions need to be made only once. I wrote my list of things I would *always* do and things I would *never* do in a small tablet. It included things like obeying the Word of Wisdom, praying daily, paying my tithing, and committing to never miss church. I made those decisions once, and then in the moment of decision, I knew exactly what to do because I had decided beforehand. When my high school friends said, ‘Just one drink won’t hurt,’ I laughed and said, ‘I decided when I was 12 not to do that.’ Making decisions in advance will help you be guardians of virtue. I hope each of you will write a list of things you will *always* do and things you will *never* do. Then live your list.”

**Elaine S. Dalton, former Young Women general president, “Guardians of Virtue,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 123.**

be sealed in the temple? Do you want to serve a full-time mission? Do you want to graduate from college and get a good job? If so, how do you get there? Just like builders need a blueprint to make a skyscraper, you need a plan to build a righteous life.

Write down some of your goals and how you plan to achieve them. Keep that list where you can see it often. Then when you do have to make a choice, you can think about your list to make sure you don’t give up what you want *most* for something you want *now*. Setting goals also makes your choices deliberate and intentional instead of being haphazard, random, or based on circumstances.

How does this really work? Let’s say one of your goals is to serve a full-time mission. And every morning

you have the choice to get up for early-morning seminary or to sleep in an extra hour. Which of those choices will help you to reach your goal? Or maybe you have a goal to read the Book of Mormon by the end of the school year. Then, when you get home from school or before you go to bed, you have the choice of reading your scriptures or doing another activity, like watching your favorite TV show. Which do you choose? Choices like this are before you every day. Keeping your goals in mind will help you make the decisions that will lead you to the things you really want. ■

#### NOTES

1. *For the Strength of Youth* (booklet, 2011), 2.
2. *For the Strength of Youth*, 2; emphasis added.
3. *For the Strength of Youth*, 31.
4. *For the Strength of Youth*, 25.





# TO DATE *or* NOT TO DATE

By Savannah M. Smithson

At my school a lot of people have boyfriends and girlfriends. On my first day of school as an eighth grader, I met someone named Paul. We got along well together. Paul was a great friend.

The next day after school he asked me out on a date. I told him I couldn't, and he asked why. I told him I was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and that we're not supposed to date until age 16. Paul asked why, and I realized that I didn't actually know.

That night I went home and

pondered Paul's question. I did research on LDS.org and read my scriptures. I found a quote by President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008): “The Lord has made us attractive one to another for a great purpose. But this very attraction becomes as a powder keg unless it is kept under control. . . . It is for this reason that the Church counsels against early dating.”<sup>1</sup>

I also looked in *For the Strength of Youth*. It says dating “can help you learn and practice social skills, develop friendships, have wholesome

fun, and eventually find an eternal companion.”<sup>2</sup>

The next day I showed Paul the *For the Strength of Youth* booklet. Other people saw Paul reading it, and my LDS friends helped me answer my classmates' questions. I was happy to have an answer to Paul's question.

*For the Strength of Youth* says that dating before age 16 and forming serious relationships in our youth can lead to immorality and limit the number of people we meet. My mother also tells me that we shouldn't date before 16 because it can distract us from studies and opportunities that can be vital to success in the future. I've seen friends of mine become depressed because of an emotional breakup at age 13.

I was glad I was able to find out for myself why we shouldn't date before age 16 and then give Paul an answer without hurting his feelings. I've made a great friend, and I hope we will be friends for a long time. I am thankful the Lord has given us friends and the opportunity to date at the appropriate age so that we may all one day find faithful eternal companions. ■

*The author lives in Nevada, USA.*

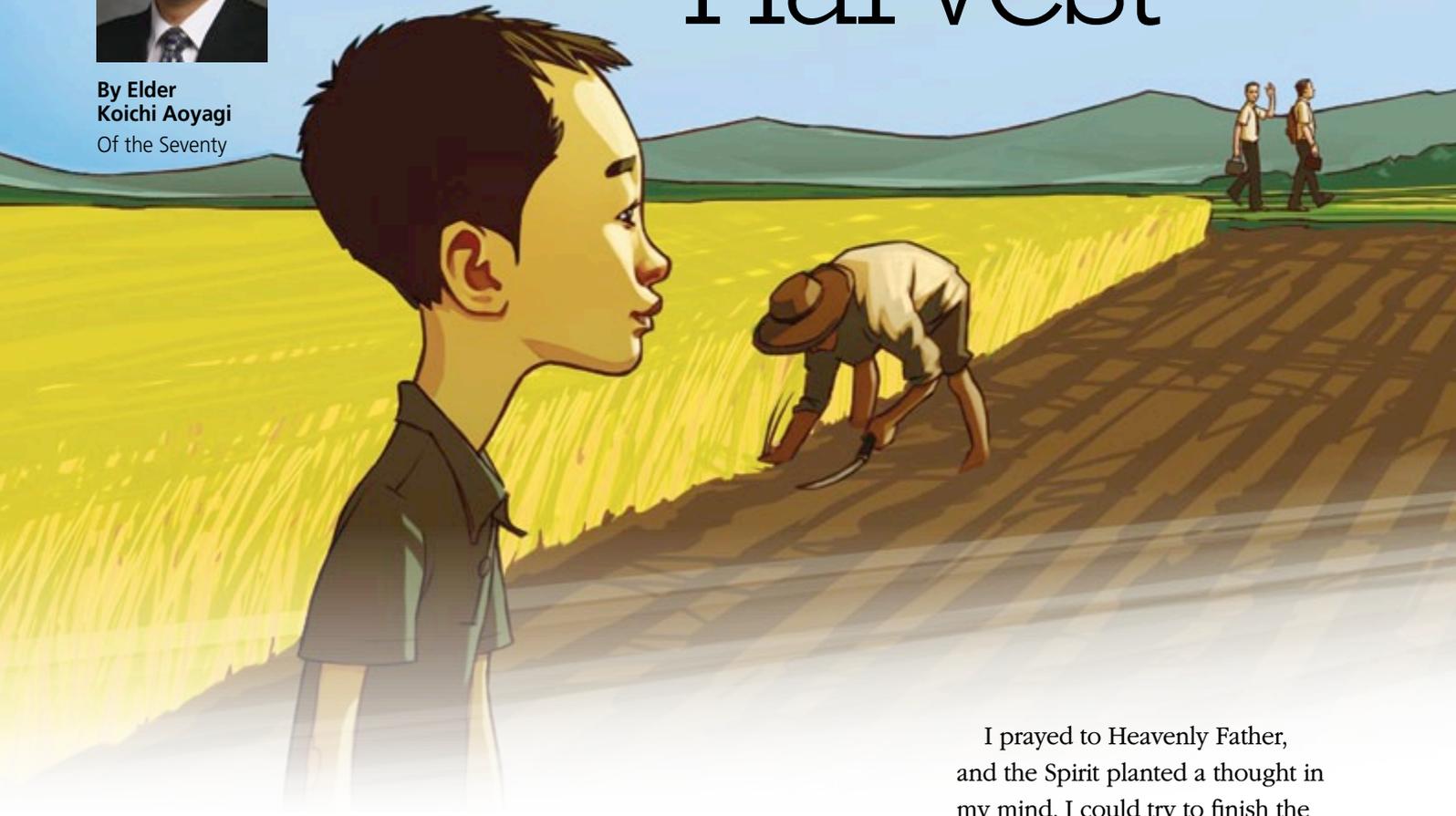
## NOTES

1. “A Prophet's Counsel and Prayer for Youth,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2001, 8; *Liahona*, Apr. 2001, 38.
2. *For the Strength of Youth* (booklet, 2011), 4.



By Elder  
Koichi Aoyagi  
Of the Seventy

# The Harvest



*“The Holy Ghost . . . will show unto you all things what ye should do”*  
(2 Nephi 32:5).

**A**s a boy in Japan, I wanted to learn English. But English lessons were expensive, and I did not have enough money to pay for them.

One day I saw two young men handing out flyers for free English lessons. They were missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I immediately signed up for their English class.

I sensed something special about the missionaries. They were cheerful and positive. I asked them about their church, and my heart was

touched. I did not understand it at the time, but I was feeling the Spirit. Soon I wanted to be baptized.

My parents did not want me to be baptized into a church that was different from theirs. But the missionaries came to my home and lovingly talked with my parents. The Spirit touched my parents’ hearts, and they gave me permission to be baptized.

One Sunday in October, I was assigned to give an important part in a program at church. But in October everyone in my family had to work hard to harvest the rice in my father’s rice fields. That included working on the Sabbath day.

I prayed to Heavenly Father, and the Spirit planted a thought in my mind. I could try to finish the harvest before Sunday. I would get up early and work every morning before school. Then every afternoon I would work after school until dark.

But by Saturday night only half of the harvest was done. I went to bed discouraged that I had not accomplished my goal. Sunday morning I awoke early to go to the fields. My father came to my room and, with a gentle smile, asked why I wasn’t going to church. My heart was full of joy. I could go to church and keep the Sabbath day holy!

I am grateful to know that as we listen to the Lord’s voice and follow Him, He will always bless and guide us. ■



By President  
Thomas S. Monson

# Heavenly Father Loves YOU

Heavenly Father loves  
you—each of you. That love  
never changes.

It is there for you  
when you are sad or  
happy, discouraged  
or hopeful.

It is not influenced by your  
appearance or by your  
possessions.

It is not changed by your  
talents and abilities. It is  
simply there.

God's love is there for you whether  
or not you feel you deserve love. It is  
simply always there. ■

# Best Family Forever

*The other girls were leaving Olivia out. Could a bucket of paint help?*

**By Olivia Corey**

Based on a true story

*"I have a family here on earth. They are so good to me" ("Families Can Be Together Forever," Children's Songbook, 188).*

**O**livia hung her head as she listened to the excited whispers of the girls sitting behind her on the bus.

"I'm so glad your mom said you could get off at my bus stop with me! Did you bring the games?"

"I've got them. My mom let me bring a bag of popcorn too!"

Olivia frowned into the book she was reading. Didn't they know she could hear them?

She definitely didn't like listening to her two friends make plans for something she wasn't invited to.

Stephanie, Rebecca, and Olivia had been friends for a long time. They used to do everything together. But when the new school



"We build deep and loving family relationships by doing simple things together."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "Of Things That Matter Most," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 21.

Usually Dad did those kinds of projects.

"Yep," Mom said. "I want the back door painted by dinner time." And then she turned and went into the house.

The girls looked at each other for a long moment and then grinned. This could be fun. They dipped their brushes in the smooth, green paint and got to work. Olivia liked this job—it didn't seem like doing chores at all. Jane showed her how to move her brush in long, even strokes. Soon the girls were laughing and talking. Olivia started to remember all the fun times she and Jane had spent together. She was glad she would always have her sister for a friend.

A couple of hours later the girls were covered in splotches of green paint and wearing huge smiles. Olivia carefully opened the shiny green door and poked her head inside. "Mom, we're done with the door," she called. "Come see how great it looks!" ■

year started, Stephanie and Rebecca found out they had the same teacher, while Olivia was in a different class! Olivia remembered the sad feeling she had in her stomach as the two girls eagerly talked about sitting next to each other in class and eating together at lunch. She had that same sad feeling now.

The bus rolled to a stop in front of Rebecca's house. Olivia watched miserably from the window as the girls jumped off the bus and ran to the front yard.

By the time the bus finally reached Olivia's stop, she could barely hold the tears back. She hurried into the house.

"How was school?" Mom asked.

Olivia started crying. "It was awful! Rebecca and Stephanie barely even talk to me anymore, and we were supposed to be best friends forever!" she sobbed.

"I'm so sorry, Olivia. It can be hard when friendships start to change," Mom said. She paused for a moment. "Do you remember when we went to the temple to be sealed?" she asked, pointing at the picture hanging on the wall. Olivia looked and saw her family smiling in front of the temple. She had been a lot younger then, but she could still remember being

with her parents and older sister, Jane, in the beautiful sealing room.

"Do you know why we worked so hard to get ready to go to the temple?"

"Because we wanted to be a family forever?" Olivia answered.

"Exactly. Even if you're not best friends with Rebecca and Stephanie forever, you'll still have your family as your friends forever."

"Yeah," Olivia said. "But it's not the same."

"I know your feelings are hurt," Mom said, "but I'm glad you're home. I have a job for you and Jane."

Olivia couldn't believe her ears. Instead of helping her feel better, Mom was giving her chores!

"Go put on some old clothes and meet me on the back porch. Tell Jane to come too."

Olivia went upstairs, stomping her feet a little harder than usual, and put on her work clothes.

When the girls were dressed and outside, they saw Mom walking back from the shed. She was carrying a green can, some paintbrushes, and a wadded-up sheet of plastic. When she got to the porch, she laid down the plastic and handed each of the girls a brush.

"You're going to let us paint something?" Olivia asked skeptically.



# Why is it so important to serve others?

By Elder  
M. Russell Ballard

Of the Quorum of the  
Twelve Apostles

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

Heavenly Father often answers another person's prayers through us—through you and me.

Jesus Christ taught that we should love God and love and care for our neighbors.

If we all perform simple, daily acts of service, we will sweeten and nourish the world with hope and charity.

Pray to Heavenly Father every morning to recognize an opportunity to serve. Then go throughout the day looking for someone to help.



From "Be Anxiously Engaged," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 29–31.

# OUR PAGE



**Joseph Smith's Prayer in the Forest, by Carolina M., age 7, Brazil**



I have a goal to go to the temple to be sealed and have an eternal family. I also want to serve a mission. In 1 Nephi 6:5, Nephi says that he writes the things that are pleasing to God and not to the world. I also want to do the things that please God and not the world. I know that God helps us, and He knows what we need.

**Lis D., age 11, Argentina**



**Jonah Was a Prophet, by Brigham C., age 5, Mexico**



**Noah's Ark, by Ivanhoe C., age 9, Mexico**



**The Tree of Life, by Raquel C., age 7, Bolivia**



The day that I had been waiting for finally arrived. I was the last in my family to be baptized because I am the youngest. My father baptized me because he holds the priesthood; he is also the bishop. Now I am a member of the Church of Jesus Christ.

**Jonathan L., age 8, Ecuador**

My uncle is serving a full-time mission in Guatemala, and I miss him a lot. But I have learned that he is serving Heavenly Father, and when I am big, I want to serve a mission just like him. That is why I like the Primary song "I Hope They Call Me on a Mission."

**Manuel L., age 5, El Salvador**





Privet, droog!\*

# I'm Arina from Russia

From an interview by  
Amie Jane Leavitt

**D**o you like to share your testimony with others? Maybe you share it in church. Or maybe you share it with your family, friends, and teachers by being a good example. This is Arina from Kazan, Russia, and she is seven years old. She wants you to know a little more about her and about the many ways she knows the Church is true. ■

*\*"Hi, friend!" in Russian.*



*Before I go to sleep, I read my scriptures with my mom. My favorite story is in 1 Nephi when Lehi left Jerusalem with his family. Reading the scriptures, saying my prayers, and bearing my testimony help me get ready to be baptized.*





I LOVE TO SEE THE TEMPLE



*At least once a year, my mom and I travel to the Kyiv Ukraine Temple. We ride a train to get there, and the trip usually takes us two days.*

*We have fun looking at the many cities and farmlands that we pass. I love to visit the temple.*



*I love to perform on stage. I must get this from my mom, because she is a professional opera singer. I like to sing and play the violin.*



*I have many chances to talk about the gospel with others. I invite my friends to come to Primary with me. A while ago, I taught my great-grandmother how we bless the food. Now we pray together over meals.*



*The flag of Russia*

READY TO GO!

*Arina's bag is packed with some of her favorite things. Which of these things would you pack in your bag?*



*I have a fun life in Russia. When it's warm outside, my mom and I swim in the Volga River and walk in the park near our house. When it's cold in the wintertime, we like to ice skate. We also like to see the animals perform at the circus and watch the puppet performances at the doll theater.*

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF ARINA'S FAMILY; BACKGROUND BY ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK; ILLUSTRATION BY VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY



# Heavenly Father Has a Plan for His Children

Oliver could smell Granny's brownies baking in the oven, and there was a reverent feeling in Granny and Grandad's house. Oliver had been looking forward to this special family home evening all day.

"Our lesson is about the plan of happiness that Heavenly Father made for all of us," Grandad said. "Tonight the kitchen is going to represent heaven, where we lived with Heavenly Father before we came to live on earth," he said.

"Was I there, Grandad?" asked Archie. Oliver looked around the room at Granny and Grandad, Mum and Dad, and his younger brothers, Archie and Ethan.

"Yes," Grandad said. "We were all there. And when Heavenly Father told us about His plan to create a world and to send a Savior for us, we were so happy that we shouted for joy."

Archie and Ethan laughed and jumped up and down.

"Who was the first person in our family to leave heaven and come to earth?" Grandad asked.

"You were," Oliver said.

Grandad left the kitchen. Next Granny left. Then one by one each member of Oliver's family joined them in the bedroom.

"This room is going to represent the earth," Granny said. "What are some of the things we can do here to help us return to Heavenly Father?" she asked.

"Be baptized," Oliver said.

"Go to the temple," Mum said.

"Choose the right," Archie said.

Granny nodded and smiled. Then she said it was time to leave the earth and return back to Heavenly Father.

"I'll go first," Grandad said.

"Oh, Grandad, don't leave!" Ethan said.

"Don't worry," Grandad said. "Leaving the earth is part of Heavenly Father's plan of happiness. Soon we'll be back together again."

One by one, everyone went back into the kitchen. "We're all back in heaven!" Dad said as Archie and Ethan ran into his arms.

Oliver felt as glad to see his

family as if he had been away from them for a long time. He ran over to hug his brothers and Mum and Dad. Now he understood why Grandad had called it Heavenly Father's plan of *happiness*. ■

## Song and Scripture

- "I Will Follow God's Plan"  
(*Children's Songbook*, 164–65)
- Moses 1:39

## Ideas for Family Talk

You could take turns naming some of the important things members of your family *have already done* to follow Heavenly Father's plan—such as praying, being baptized, receiving the priesthood, going to the temple, and choosing the right. You could give family members a chance to express the happiness they felt at those special times. Then you could name some important things your family *will do in the future* and testify of the happiness that will come as you continue to follow Heavenly Father's wonderful plan.



3 Nephi 17:20
2 Nephi 32:9
Doctrine and Covenants 124:34
2 Nephi 32:5
Doctrine and Covenants 1:32
Doctrine and Covenants 33:11
Doctrine and Covenants 59:9
John 5:39
Doctrine and Covenants 110:7, 9

### I Will Follow God's Plan

Cut out the scripture slips and put them upside-down on a table. Take turns drawing a slip and looking up the scripture. Then glue it beside the word on the step that helps us return back to Heavenly Father.



**RETURNING TO  
HEAVENLY FATHER**

**Temple**

**Priesthood**

**Sacrament**

**Holy Ghost**

**Baptism**

**Repentance**

**Faith**

**Scriptures**

**Prayer**

**OUR LIFE BEFORE BIRTH**



# I'll Walk with You

If you don't walk  
as most people do,  
some people walk  
away from you.



But I won't!  
I won't!



If you don't talk as most people do, some people talk and laugh at you.



But I won't! I won't!  
I'll walk with you.  
I'll talk with you.  
That's how I'll show  
my love for you.



Jesus walked away  
from none. He  
gave His love to  
everyone.



So I will! I will! ■



# Help Ellie Find Jacob

Ellie likes to follow Jesus by giving love to everyone.  
Today she wants to play with her friend Jacob. Help  
Ellie find toys along the path to share with Jacob.



## SIGNS

By Jerry Peak

I usually take one of the local freeways to work. It's the quickest and easiest way to get there. I try to leave early enough in the morning to miss the heavy traffic, when things slow down and accidents can happen.

One morning, however, I got out of the house later than usual and ended up in congested traffic. As I merged onto the freeway, I thought about my scripture study that morning. I had had the impression that I focus too much on worldly things and not enough on spiritual things. As I drove to work, I thought about how I could be more attentive to spiritual things throughout the day.

Then I noticed a message on one of the large electronic signs over the freeway that alert drivers of accidents or road conditions. As I got closer, I read, "Crash ahead at Mesa Drive—center lane blocked." I didn't want to be inconvenienced by having to get off the freeway, so I wondered how long I could stay on the freeway before I *had* to exit.

Then another thought came to my mind:



*I wondered how many times I had pushed aside my spiritual safety because I was focused on worldly things.*

If I ignored the sign, could I be putting myself in a situation that would be dangerous? Was I ignoring a warning just because I didn't want my schedule disrupted? Clearly, I was inclined to ignore warnings of my physical safety; how often I had pushed aside promptings for my spiritual safety?

As I pondered about how to be more attentive to the Spirit, I realized that Heavenly Father probably sends me many messages throughout the day. I wondered how many times I had missed His messages because I wasn't listening for spiritual promptings. I committed to do better.

I checked the traffic, changed lanes, and took the next exit. By using the city roads to get to work, I was able to avoid all the hazards and dangers of staying on the freeway as the accident was cleaned up.

I know that the Lord loves me enough to send me His messages. I simply need to be in tune with the spiritual promptings He sends me. ■

*The author lives in Arizona, USA.*

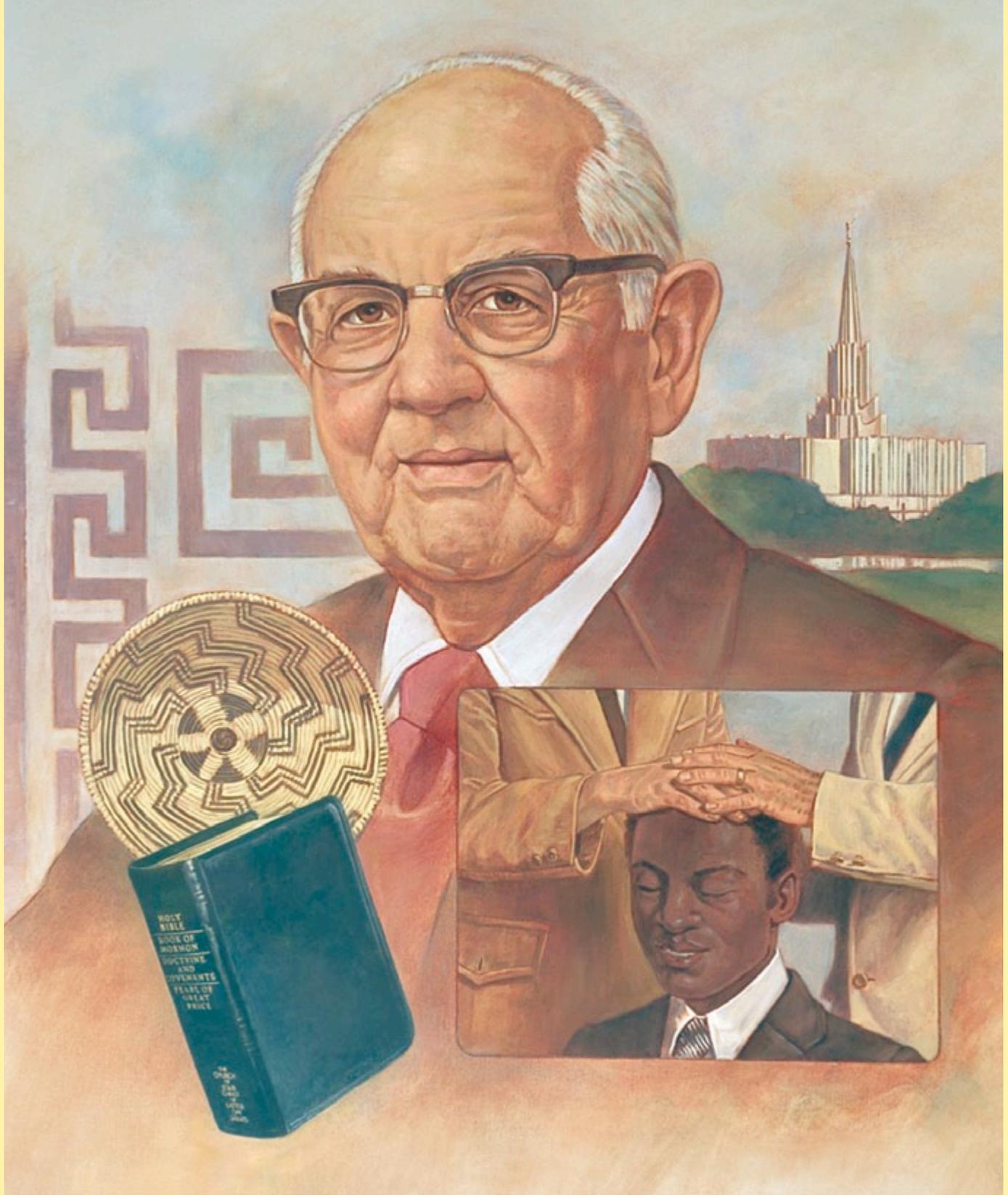


ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT T. BARRETT

## **SPENCER W. KIMBALL**

**Spencer W. Kimball** loved the descendants of the Lamanites. The **basket** and the **background pattern** represent his love for their culture. When he served as Church President, the Church printed new editions of the **scriptures**. He also received the revelation that all worthy men could hold the **priesthood**. More than 20 temples were dedicated or rededicated during his presidency, including the **Jordan River Utah Temple**.

# Also in This Issue

## FOR YOUNG ADULTS

p. 48



### SPEAK, LISTEN & LOVE

Do you communicate effectively with your spouse? Understanding these three types of conversations can help you fortify your relationship.

## FOR YOUTH

### TEMPLE BLESSINGS



When you have crucial decisions that weigh heavily on your mind and soul, you can take your cares to the temple and receive spiritual guidance.

p. 52

## FOR CHILDREN

p. 66



### The Harvest

The Spirit planted a thought in my mind: I could try to finish the harvest before Sunday.