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children

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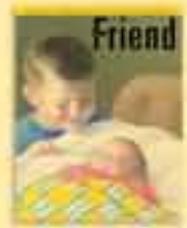
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THE FRIEND COVER
Illustration by Steve
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See if you can find
the Bulgarian CTR
ring hidden in this
issue. Choose the
right page!

comment

I Made My New Branch "Home"

I recently became employed in Bengaluru, India, a city that is far from my hometown of Chennai. I enjoyed my new job; however, going to a new branch was a different feeling. I felt like a stranger, and I missed my home branch. Then I read the article "Making Any Ward 'Home'" in the January 2008 *Liahona*. I felt comforted, and I started introducing myself to many members. I received a calling and made new friends. Most importantly, I know better why I come to church. Now I look for new faces and reach out to them. Thank you for the article.

Joseph Isaac, India

The *Liahona* Helps Me Preach the Gospel

I always carry the *Liahona* with me. Because of this, I have been able to get many referrals for the missionaries. When I have to wait for my turn at the hospital, I read it, and people are curious, so I take advantage of the opportunity to talk to them about the gospel of Jesus Christ and the plan of salvation God taught to us. Carrying the *Liahona* with me wherever I go has helped me to talk about Jesus Christ and preach the gospel to people.

Margarita Herrera de Bello, Mexico



Let Us Raise Our Voice of Warning

BY PRESIDENT HENRY B. EYRING

First Counselor in the First Presidency

Because the Lord is kind, He calls servants to warn people of danger. That call to warn is made harder and more important by the fact that the warnings of most worth are about dangers that people don't yet think are real. Think of Jonah. He fled at first from the Lord's call to warn the people of Nineveh who were blinded to the danger by sin. He knew that wicked people through the ages have rejected prophets and sometimes killed them. Yet when Jonah went forward with faith, the Lord blessed him with safety and success.

We can also learn from our experiences as parents and as children. Those of us who are parents have felt the anxiety of sensing danger our children cannot yet see. Few prayers are so fervent as those of a parent asking to know how to touch a child to move away from danger. Most of us have felt the blessing of hearing and heeding the warning voice of a parent.

I can still remember my mother speaking softly to me one Saturday afternoon when, as a little boy, I asked her for permission to do something I thought was perfectly reasonable and which she knew was dangerous. I still am amazed at the power she was granted, I believe from the Lord, to turn me around

with so few words. As I remember them, they were: "Oh, I suppose you *could* do that. But the *choice* is yours." The only warning was in the emphasis she put on the words *could* and *choice*. Yet that was enough for me.

Her power to warn with so few words sprang from three things I knew about her. First, I knew she loved me. Second, I knew she had faced similar situations and had been blessed by making the right choice. And third, she had conveyed to me her sure testimony that the choice I had to make was so important that the Lord would tell me what to do if I asked Him. Love, example, and testimony: those were keys that day, and they have been whenever I have been blessed to hear and then heed the warning of a servant of the Lord.

Our ability to touch others with our warning voice matters to all who are covenant disciples of Jesus Christ. Here is the charge given to each of the members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: "Behold, I sent you out to testify and warn the people, and it becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor" (D&C 88:81).

Our Duty to Warn

The duty to warn our neighbor falls on all of us who have accepted the covenant



The Lord's words are true for the missionaries and for all of us: "And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!"

When you invite others to choose to be taught by the missionaries, you will be able to bear testimony that they will teach the truth and that they offer the choices which lead to happiness.

of baptism. We are to talk with nonmember friends and relatives about the gospel. Our purpose is to invite them to be taught by the full-time missionaries, who are called and set apart to teach. When a person has chosen to accept our invitation to be taught, a “referral” of great promise has been created, one far more likely to enter the waters of baptism and then to remain faithful.

As a member of the Church, you can expect that the full-time or the ward or branch missionaries will ask for the opportunity to help you make a list of people with whom you could share the gospel. The missionaries may suggest you think of relatives, neighbors, and acquaintances. They may ask you to set a date by which you will try to have the person or family prepared to be taught by the missionaries. I’ve had that experience. Because we in our family accepted that invitation from the missionaries, I was blessed to perform the baptism of a widow in her 80s, taught by sister missionaries.

When I placed my hands on her head to confirm her a member of the Church, I felt impressed to say that her choice to be baptized would bless generations of her family, after and before her. Even after she passed away, I was able to be in the temple with her son as he was sealed to her.

You may have had such experiences with people you have invited to be taught, and so you know that few moments in life are sweeter. The Lord’s words are true for the missionaries and for all of us: “And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!” (D&C 18:16).

The missionaries will help and encourage us, but whether such moments at the baptismal font and in the temple come more often will depend largely on how we see our charge and what we choose to do about it. The Lord would not use the word *warn* if there was no danger. Yet not many people we know sense it. They have learned to ignore the increasing evidence that society is unraveling and that their lives and family lack the peace they once thought was possible. That willingness to ignore the signs of danger can make it easy for you to think: “Why should I speak to anyone about the gospel who seems content? What danger is there to them or to me if I do or say nothing?”

Well, the danger may be hard to see, but it is real, both for them and for us. For instance, at some moment in the world to come, everyone you met in this life will know what you know now. They will know that the only way to live forever in association with our families and in the presence of our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, is to choose to enter into the gate by baptism at the hands of those with authority from God. They will know that the only way families can be together forever is to accept and keep sacred covenants offered in the temples of God on this earth. They will know that you knew. And they will remember whether you offered them what someone had offered you.

It’s easy to say, “The time isn’t right.” But there is danger in procrastination. Years ago I worked for a man in California. He hired me; he was kind to me; he seemed to regard me highly. I may have been the only Latter-day Saint he ever knew well. I don’t know all the reasons I found to wait for a better moment to talk with him about the gospel. I



just remember my feeling of sorrow when I learned, after he had retired and I lived far away, that he and his wife had been killed in a late-night drive to their home in Carmel, California. He loved his wife. He loved his children. He had loved his parents. He loved his grandchildren, and he will love their children and will want to be with them forever.

Now, I don't know how the crowds will be handled in the world to come. But I suppose that I will meet him, that he will look into my eyes, and that I will see in them the question: "Hal, you knew. Why didn't you tell me?"

When I think of him and when I think of the widow I baptized and her family who will now be sealed to her and to each other, I want to do better. I want to increase my power to invite people to be taught. With that desire and with faith that God will help us, we will do better.

Love Comes First

Love always comes first. A single act of kindness will seldom be enough. The Lord described the love we must feel, and that those we invite must recognize in us, with words like these: "Charity suffereth long," and it "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (1 Corinthians 13:4, 7).

I've seen what "suffereth long" and "endureth all things" mean. A family moved into a house near us. The home was new, so I was part of the crew of Latter-day Saints

who spent a number of nights putting in landscaping. I remember the last night, standing next to the husband of the family as we finished. He surveyed our work and said to us standing nearby, "This is the third yard you Mormons have put in for us, and I think this is the best." And then he quietly but firmly told me of the great satisfaction he got from membership in his own church, a conversation we had often in the years he lived there.

In all that time, the acts of kindness extended to him and his family never ceased, because the neighbors really came to love them. One evening I came home to see a truck in their driveway. I had been told they were moving to another state. I approached to see if I could help. I didn't recognize the man I saw loading household things into the truck. He said quietly as I drew near, "Hello, Brother Eyring." I hadn't recognized him because he was the son, now grown older, who had lived there, married, and moved away. And because of the love of many for him, he was now a baptized member of the Church. I don't know the end of that story because it will have no end. But I know that it began with love.

Second, we will need to be better examples of what we invite others to do. In a darkening world, this command of the Savior will become more important: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

Most of us are modest enough to think that our small candle of example might be too dim to be noticed. But you and your family are watched more than you may realize. Some time ago I had the chance to attend and speak at meetings with nearly 300 ministers and leaders of other churches. I visited alone with as many as I could. I asked them why they had been so attentive to my message, which was to recount the origins of the Church, to tell of the young Joseph Smith's First Vision and of living prophets. In every case, they gave essentially the same answer. They told a story of a person or a family—Church members they knew. Often I heard, "They were the finest family I have ever known." Often they spoke of some community effort or disaster response in which Church members worked in a remarkable way.

The people I met at those meetings could not yet recognize the truth in the doctrine, but they had seen its fruit in members' lives, and so they were ready to listen. They were ready to hear truths of the Restoration—that families can be sealed forever and that the gospel can change our very natures. They were ready because of your examples.

The third thing we must do better is to invite with testimony. Love and example will open the way, but we still have to open our mouths and bear testimony. We are helped by a simple fact: truth and choice are inseparably

connected. There are some choices all children of our Heavenly Father must make to qualify for a testimony of spiritual truths, and once we know a spiritual truth, we must choose whether we will conform our lives to it. When we bear testimony of truth to our loved ones or friends, we must convey to them the choices they must make once they know that truth for themselves. There are two important examples: inviting someone to read the Book of Mormon and inviting someone to agree to be taught by the missionaries.

For us to know that the Book of Mormon is true, we must read it and make the choice found in Moroni: pray to know if it is true (see Moroni 10:3–5). When we have done that, we can testify from personal experience to our friends that they can make that choice and know the same truth. When they know the Book of Mormon is the word of God, they will face another choice: whether to accept your invitation to be taught by the missionaries. To make that invitation with testimony, you will need to know that the missionaries are called as servants of God.

You can gain that testimony by choosing to invite the missionaries into your home to teach your family or friends. Missionaries will welcome the opportunity. When you sit with them as they teach, as I have, you will know they are inspired with power beyond their years and their

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

After prayerfully studying this message, share it using a method that encourages the participation of those you teach. Following are some examples:

1. Create three keys made of paper, and label them "Love," "Example," and "Testimony." Tell President Eyring's story about his mother. Display the keys, and ask the family how these three keys worked in the story. Using examples from the article, explain the importance of warning our neighbors. Ask the family to comment on how the three keys can help us in warning our

neighbors. End by reading President Eyring's testimony in the final paragraph.

2. Consider bringing some sweets or cookies for the family you are visiting. Place them where all can see, but don't offer to share them. Tell the story of the man in California for whom President Eyring worked. Discuss how President Eyring felt after learning of his death. Ask the family how they would feel if you left without sharing the sweets with them. Discuss ways we can share the gospel with others.

education. Then, when you invite others to choose to be taught by the missionaries, you will be able to bear testimony that they will teach the truth and that they offer the choices which lead to happiness.

An Assurance

Perhaps some of us may find it hard to believe that we love enough or that our lives are good enough or that our power to testify is sufficient for our invitations to our neighbors to be accepted. But the Lord knew we might feel that way. Listen to His encouraging words, which He directed to be placed at the first of the Doctrine and Covenants, when He gave us our charge: “And the voice of warning shall be unto all people, by the mouths of my disciples, whom I have chosen in these last days” (D&C 1:4).

And then listen to His description of the qualifications of those disciples—of us: “The weak things of the world shall come forth and break down the mighty and strong ones” (D&C 1:19).

And then later: “That the fulness of my gospel might be proclaimed by the weak and the simple unto the ends of the world” (D&C 1:23).

And then again: “And inasmuch as they [are] humble they might be made strong, and blessed from on high” (D&C 1:28).

That assurance was given to the first missionaries in the Church and to missionaries today. But it is given to all of us as well. We must have the faith that we can love enough and that the gospel has touched our lives enough that our invitation to choose can be heard as coming from the Master whose invitation it is.

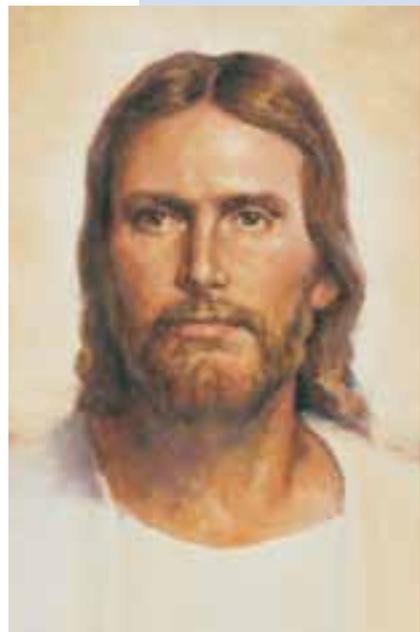
His is the perfect example for what we are to do. You have felt His love and His caring

even when you did not respond, as those you approach with the gospel may not respond. Time after time He has invited you to be taught by His servants. You may not have recognized that in the visits of home teachers and visiting teachers or in a bishop’s phone call, but those were His invitations to be helped and taught. And the Lord has always made consequences clear and then allowed us to choose for ourselves.

What the Lord’s servant Lehi taught his sons has always been true for all of us: “And now, my sons, I would that ye should look to the great Mediator, and hearken unto his great commandments; and be faithful unto his words, and choose eternal life, according to the will of his Holy Spirit” (2 Nephi 2:28).

And then from Jacob we receive this encouragement to meet our obligation to testify, as we must, that choosing to be taught by the missionaries is choosing to enter the way toward eternal life, the greatest of all the gifts of God: “Therefore, cheer up your hearts, and remember that ye are free to act for yourselves—to choose the way of everlasting death or the way of eternal life” (2 Nephi 10:23).

I testify that only accepting and living the restored gospel of Jesus Christ brings the peace the Lord promised in this life and the hope of eternal life in the world to come. I testify that we have been given the privilege and the obligation to offer the truth and the choices which lead to those blessings to our Heavenly Father’s children, who are our brothers and our sisters. Jesus is the Christ, He lives, and this is His work. ■



We must have the faith that we can love enough and that the gospel has touched our lives enough that our invitation to choose can be heard as coming from the Master whose invitation it is.



Discovering God

BY MARY WEENIG

When I was almost 18, I flew to a small town called Soldotna, Alaska, to work for the summer. This was my first experience living away from home. My parents had arranged for me to work for and live with their good friends the Wrights, who owned the local grocery store. I hoped to earn enough money for college. I also hoped to return home with an answer to a question that repeatedly entered my mind: Is there really a God?

I needed to obtain an answer for myself. So I resolved to pray every night and ask God if He was real. Somehow I felt that if God existed, He would answer my prayer. If I never received an answer, then I would know He didn't exist. Simple, I thought.

At the Wrights' home, I shared a bedroom with their daughter Lisa. She was home from Brigham Young University for the summer and worked at the grocery store with me. I admired Lisa from the start. She was beautiful, intelligent, confident, and enthusiastic about life. That summer we spent nearly every hour of every day together.

I loved listening to Lisa tell me about college life. Her life sounded fun and very independent. Lisa had her life organized and balanced, with the right priorities firmly in place.

My admiration for Lisa grew as I observed her reading the scriptures daily and praying each morning and night. I wanted to ask Lisa how she had obtained her faith in God but felt ashamed of my lack of faith. I remember lying in bed, wondering what Lisa talked to God about in her prayers.

Every night I knelt by my bed and said a quick prayer, asking God if He was there. Yet I didn't feel anything

special or spiritual. I did not hear a voice. I felt the same after my prayers as I did before them. This nightly routine went on for two months. Discouraged, I found my doubts in God increasing.

One night, when I was feeling deeply homesick, tears welled in my eyes. I desperately wanted to be near my family, friends, and familiar surroundings. Aching to talk to someone who knew and loved me, I knelt in prayer. "God, I really need You right now," I began. For the next several minutes, I released my true feelings to my Father in Heaven. I told Him everything. I talked with Him as though I believed He was there.

A warmth wrapped around me. I began to feel as though Heavenly Father had come down and taken me in His arms. I was no longer alone. Love and peace embraced me. I knew there was a God.

I wondered why receiving an answer to my prayer took more than two months. Jeremiah 29:13 gave me the answer: "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."

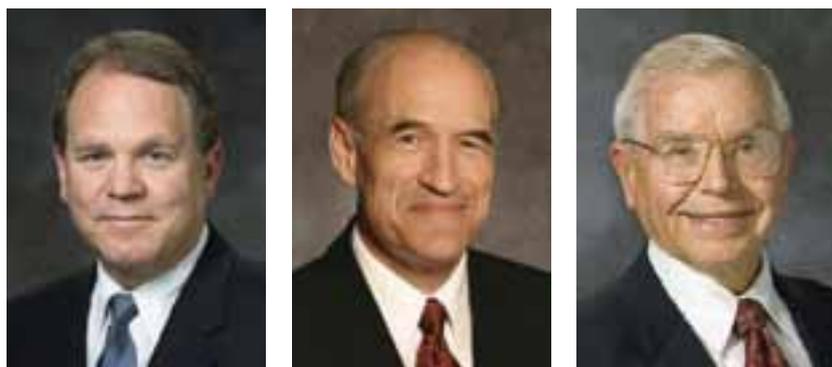
I finally received an answer to my prayer after I dug deep into my heart. I placed faith in God's existence. I searched high into the heavens with my words and tears.

My life has changed because of that one night. I served a mission and married in the temple. My faith in God's existence continues to increase.

I often think back to that summer in Alaska. Without Lisa's example, I might not have persevered through those months of praying. I might have quit and never discovered the love of my Heavenly Father. I will forever be grateful to Lisa and her example. She helped me come to know God and feel His love for me. ■



Enriching Your Study of the Doctrine and Covenants



A. Roger Merrill (center), president; Daniel K Judd (left), first counselor; and William D. Oswald, second counselor.

This year presents the wonderful opportunity for each of us to receive great blessings by studying the Doctrine and Covenants—a marvelous book of revelation that was written in our day and for our day.

BY THE SUNDAY SCHOOL GENERAL PRESIDENCY

Sometimes referred to as the Lord's handbook of the Restoration, the Doctrine and Covenants contains "the tender but firm voice of the Lord Jesus Christ, speaking anew in the dispensation of the fulness of times."¹

Many members have already discovered a great love for this book. One sister said, "The specific revelations to individuals in the Doctrine and Covenants are helpful. I feel I can relate to them." Another commented, "The Doctrine

and Covenants helps me relate to situations I'm facing because it is not so ancient." One brother said, "I like the Doctrine and Covenants because it helps me understand the priesthood."

We testify that the Doctrine and Covenants is truly the Lord's voice in our time to each child of God and that great blessings come to those who study it. We also offer four suggestions to make your study this year a rewarding experience and suggest some ways in which Sunday School can help.

Read the Book from Cover to Cover

The *Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Class Member Study Guide* encourages members to "read the Doctrine and Covenants from beginning to end"² during 2009, as well as to complete each Sunday's reading assignments, which are arranged by topic.

Studying in this manner helps us understand the context of the sections studied as well as the sections themselves. It also prepares us to participate in a rich discussion in Sunday School class—which, in turn, will provide added insight and inspiration for us to use in our personal and family lives.

In your daily scripture study, you may find it helpful to set aside one or two days each week to preview specifically what will be discussed in class and then continue your reading of the Doctrine and Covenants from beginning to end.

Read with Questions in Mind

Brother Renzo Molly Barrios Matias, of Guatemala, learned the power of using scripture study to receive personal revelation for his own life.



Powerful gospel teaching and inspired learning occur when teachers and learners understand that the real teacher in any Church class is the Holy Ghost and that classroom participation invites the Spirit to bear witness.

“After Hurricane Mitch passed through Central America in 2001 and left everything in desolation, I had many questions,” he says. “Seeking answers, I went to a friend I greatly respect. He said, ‘Read the scriptures. You will find the best answers to your questions in them.’”

“This revolutionized my life,” says Brother Matias. “After studying the scriptures for quite a long time, I began to find answers to my questions. I was able to see that my life did have meaning. It was then that I decided to serve a full-time mission.”

Soon Elder Matias was serving in the Honduras Tegucigalpa Mission, helping others discover the power of scripture study.

Reading with specific questions

in mind invites the Lord to inspire and direct us in our challenges and opportunities. You may want to write down questions to prayerfully include in your scripture study. As you receive answers, you may feel inspired to share that insight in Sunday School. Class members are edified as they hear one another appropriately bear witness of how the Lord uses the scriptures to provide personal guidance and inspiration.

Search for Connections, Patterns, and Themes

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has suggested that in all our scripture study, we seek for *connections*, *patterns*, and *themes*.³

An example of a *connection* in the Doctrine and Covenants is the link between our obedience and promised blessings. “I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise” (D&C 82:10). Our scripture study becomes more meaningful as we recognize this connection and resolve to act on what the Lord has commanded us to do.

One *pattern* in the Doctrine and Covenants is woven into the very nature of the book itself. As the introduction indicates, “These sacred revelations were received in answer to prayer, in times of need, and came out of real-life situations involving real people.”⁴ The revelations were personal and answer specific questions concerning things that Heavenly Father knew would “be of the most worth” (D&C 15:6; 16:6) to each individual.⁵ This pattern of seeking and receiving personal revelation is one that we can follow in our own lives.

One of the most common *themes* in all of scripture is “Seek me diligently and ye shall find me; ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (D&C 88:63). Themes such as this encourage us to accept greater responsibility for our own learning as we read and ponder God’s words.

While the Doctrine and Covenants doesn’t always read as a story, it is woven together with connections, patterns, and themes. One of the blessings of discussing scripture together in Sunday School is that we

become more aware of these insights as we share our own and listen to the insights of others.

Seek to Be Edified and Rejoice Together

The Lord has said that when Church members both learn and teach one another by the Spirit, “both are edified and rejoice together” (D&C 50:22). Powerful gospel teaching and inspired learning occur when teachers and learners understand that the real teacher in any Church class is the Holy Ghost and that classroom participation invites the Spirit to bear witness.

In the February 2007 worldwide leadership training on teaching and learning, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles invited us to assume greater responsibility for learning the gospel. He then demonstrated how inspired teachers can invite class members to become active rather than passive participants in class discussions.

Elder Holland said, “If we will help the learner assume responsibility for learning, and if we will testify of the truths that we have taught, God will confirm to our hearts and to the hearts of our students the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”⁶

As class members prayerfully study during the week and then together read from the scriptures and share insights, the Holy Ghost will bear witness and carry “unto the hearts” (2 Nephi 33:1) of each class member specifically what he or she needs to know and do (see 2 Nephi 32:3–5).

A Personal Invitation

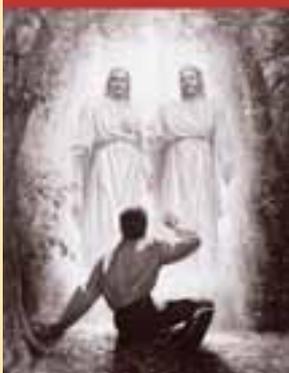
As we study and learn from the Doctrine and Covenants this year, our faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ will be strengthened and our testimony of Joseph Smith as God’s prophet of the Restoration will increase. The Lord will open our understanding, and the scriptures will become an even more integral part of our lives.⁷

At the beginning of this new year, we invite you to join with us as we joyfully “search these commandments [in the Doctrine and Covenants], for they are true and faithful, and the prophecies and promises which are in them shall all be fulfilled” (D&C 1:37). ■

NOTES

1. Explanatory Introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants.
2. *Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Class Member Study Guide* (1999), Introduction, 3.
3. See David A. Bednar, “A Reservoir of Living Water” (Church Educational System fireside for young adults, Feb. 4, 2007), www.ldsces.org.
4. Explanatory Introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants.
5. For other examples of specific personal revelation, see D&C 7–9; 11–12; 14–17.
6. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Teaching and Learning in the Church,” *Liahona*, June 2007, 73; *Ensign*, June 2007, 105. The broadcast is available in several languages at www.lds.org. Click on “Gospel Library,” “Additional Addresses,” then “Worldwide Leadership Training: Teaching and Learning.”
7. See Joseph Smith—History 1:73–74. After being baptized, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were “filled with the Holy Ghost.” Their minds were then “enlightened, [and they] began to have the scriptures laid open to [their] understandings.”

Doctrine and Covenants
and Church History
Class Member Study Guide



STUDYING THE STUDY GUIDE

As we use the *Class Member Study Guide* in our studies before coming to Sunday School, it will help us be better prepared to “teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom” (D&C 88:77). The study guide contains a variety of study resources:

- An introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants.
- The weekly scripture reading assignments and scripture study chains.
- A brief Church history chronology.
- Maps showing the location of important places in Church history.
- Faith-promoting questions to encourage gospel discussions.
- A copy of “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.”



Confidence in the Presence of God

BY ELDER MICHAEL JOHN U. TEH

Of the Seventy



As we increase our faith and commitment, we will draw nearer to our Father in Heaven.

The story of the Prophet Joseph Smith seeking to know which church to join amid the “contests of . . . parties of religionists” (Joseph Smith—History 1:11) is a story of inspiration and hope for all honest seekers of truth. What a relief it must have been to Joseph—an obscure boy of 14 with a simple question and an honest desire—to read the following passage from the Bible: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (James 1:5).

This passage provides a great insight into the kind of relationship each of us should have with our Father in Heaven. Indeed, this verse expresses the tender mercies and inclinations of our loving Father toward a son who came to Him with a question. The Father does not generally answer prayers with visions, as He did in the Sacred Grove, but He does provide answers that bring much comfort and peace. Such is His promise to us—to give liberally and not upbraid, or chastise.

As a young boy, I had several opportunities to put this promise to the test. I testify

that the promise is sure. Whether I lost a toy or a coin or any other precious possession that may seem of no consequence to adults, Heavenly Father answered my prayers and put my mind at ease. I recall distinctly the confidence I had that an answer would come. Such is the faith of a young boy. Such was the faith of the young Joseph Smith.

Such faith is consistent with the conditions under which prayers are answered, as the following passage outlines: “Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering” (James 1:6).

As I grew older, I found that unwavering faith became increasingly difficult to exercise. The world plants seeds of doubt and prejudice in our minds and hearts. Hence, the Savior’s admonition that we “become as little children” (Matthew 18:3) has for me become a lifelong quest. I find that faith “as a grain of mustard seed” (Matthew 17:20) is within my reach at times but far from my reach at other times.

How can we consistently exercise this kind of faith? The following counsel provides insight into this righteous pursuit: “That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more



light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day” (D&C 50:24).

This is the process that the Prophet Joseph Smith went through. Like others before him, he proved himself by consistently exercising faith and the righteous use of agency over time. He continued in God, received more light, and that light grew brighter and brighter until the perfect day.

One incident in the Prophet’s life had a powerful influence on me as a young man:

“At a late hour of the night Joseph was lying down and slumbering heavily from weariness. . . . A few moments later an infuriated mob burst the door open and . . . seized him and were dragging him from the house when Emma screamed. . . .

“ . . . A group gathered . . . to hold a council. . . . After the council was concluded, the leading mobocrats declared that they would not kill him but would strip him naked and whip and tear his flesh. . . . They thrust a reeking tar paddle into his face and attempted to force it down his throat. . . .

“After they left Joseph, he attempted to rise, but fell back again from pain and exhaustion. He succeeded, however, in tearing the tar away from his face so that he could breathe freely. . . .

“Securing some covering for his person, the Prophet entered the house, and spent the night in cleansing his body and dressing his wounds. . . .

“The next morning, being the Sabbath,

T*he Savior’s admonition that we “become as little children” has for me become a life-long quest.*



Because Joseph Smith sought wisdom in the Sacred Grove and exercised diligence afterward, we enjoy the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

the people assembled at the usual hour of worship. With them came some of the mobbers. . . .

“With his flesh all bruised and scarred, Joseph went to the meeting and stood before the congregation, facing his assailants of the previous night calmly and manfully. He preached a powerful sermon and on the same day baptized three believers into the Church.”¹

I cannot begin to imagine the pain and discomfort the Prophet Joseph must have endured. He had ample excuse not to preach the following morning, but this and many other experiences of similar or worse consequence did not cause him to shrink from his responsibility. How, then, can we feel justified if we shrink from our duty because of a minor discomfort or inconvenience?

As we increase our faith and commitment, we will draw nearer to our Father in Heaven.

“Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall answer, Here I am” (Isaiah 58:9).

“Then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.

“. . . And without compulsory means it

shall flow unto thee forever and ever” (D&C 121:45–46).

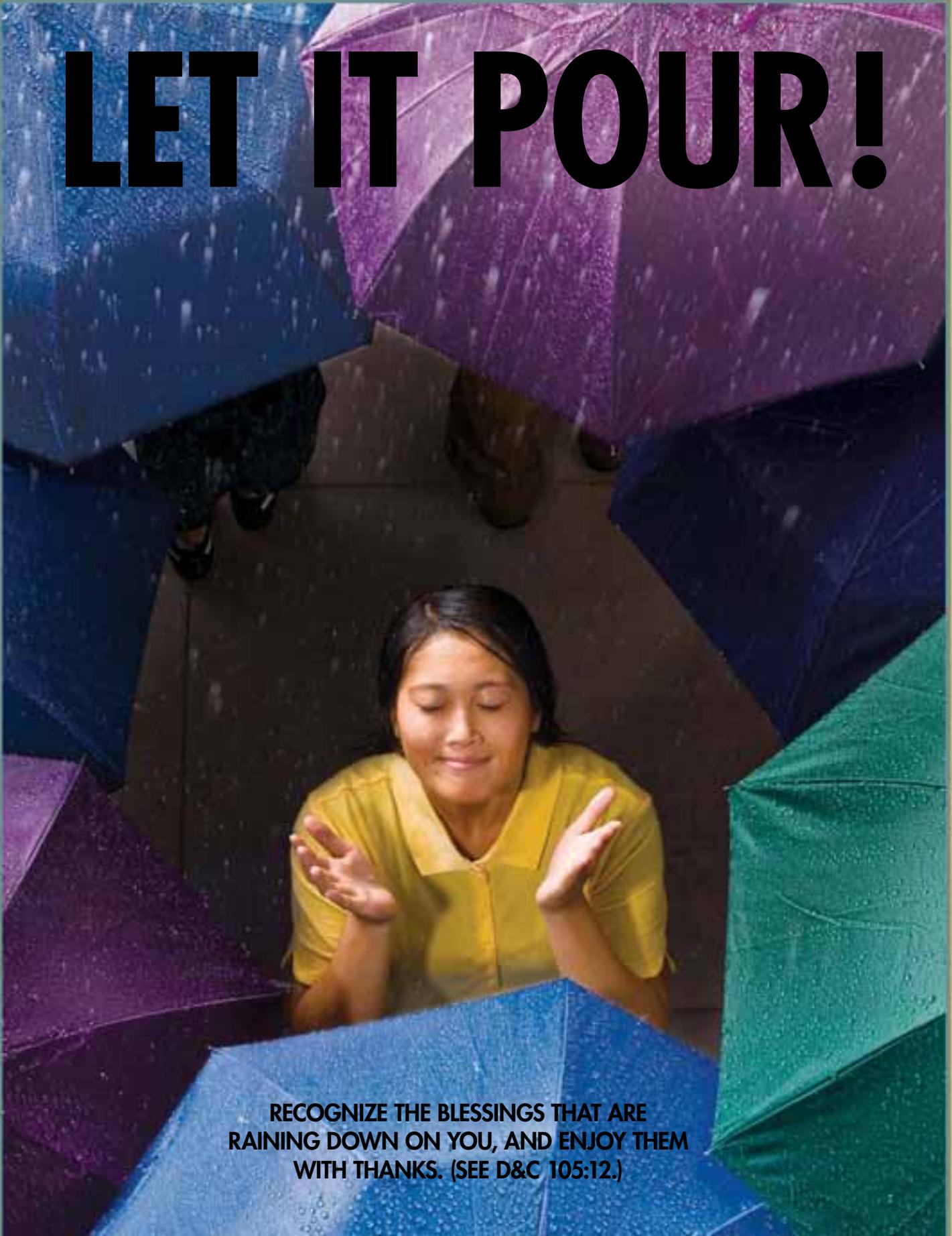
It is a privilege for me to testify that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God. Because he sought wisdom in the Sacred Grove and exercised diligence afterward, we enjoy the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The following tribute by President John Taylor (1808–87), written when he was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, eloquently describes what the Prophet Joseph Smith did for all of us: “Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it. . . . He lived great, and he died great in the eyes of God and his people; and like most of the Lord’s anointed in ancient times, has sealed his mission and his works with his own blood” (D&C 135:3).

May we consistently use our agency wisely and, like the Prophet Joseph Smith, exercise unwavering faith regardless of our circumstances so that our confidence may “wax strong in the presence of God.” ■

NOTE

1. George Q. Cannon, *Life of Joseph Smith the Prophet* (1986), 133–35; see also *History of the Church*, 1:261–64.

LET IT POUR!



**RECOGNIZE THE BLESSINGS THAT ARE
RAINING DOWN ON YOU, AND ENJOY THEM
WITH THANKS. (SEE D&C 105:12.)**

Nourishing the Soul through Institute

By helping students draw closer to Heavenly Father, make friends, and set priorities, institute strengthens testimonies and changes lives.

STRENGTHENING MY TESTIMONY

I am frequently surprised at what I can learn at institute. I don't remember ever attending class without coming away having learned something new or understanding some

Institute is a great place to learn the gospel and build friendships with other Latter-day Saints.

gospel principle better. As a result, my life has changed.

Among the many blessings I have received by attending institute are improved family relationships and an increased interest in the scriptures. It has also increased my testimony. Before attending institute, I wasn't sure that I wanted to serve a mission. Now I know that serving a mission is what I need to do.

Institute has been a wonderful experience for me. It has helped me understand and obey the Church's standards. The doctrines of the Church are the means of salvation and exaltation, and I am grateful to be able to be learning about them at institute.

Alberto Avilez Rodríguez, Mexico





CHANGING MY GOALS

In sacrament meeting one Sunday, I listened intently to a speaker talk about institute. He shared the words of Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, saying, “[Institute] has enriched my life, and I know it will do the same for you. It will put a shield of protection around you to keep you free from the temptations and trials of the world.”¹ It was then I realized that the truth of Elder Perry’s words had manifested itself to me already. How grateful I was for the blessings that had come to me because I attended institute.

Not long before, I had begun an institute class on the teachings of Isaiah. To this day it remains the most life-altering class I have ever taken. That semester had been a confusing time for me; not all of my goals and priorities were in line with the principles of the gospel. However, I attended institute regularly and participated in numerous one-on-one discussions about Church doctrine with the institute instructor. Over time, as my ideas changed, I slowly and carefully altered my goals to fit the Lord’s plan for me.

It wasn’t until hearing Elder Perry’s quote in sacrament meeting that Sunday that I realized exactly how these new goals were blessing me. My entire life was significantly better when I attended institute. I was much more receptive to the Spirit and succumbed to temptations far less frequently. My attitude and my outlook had improved because of my attendance.

Krista Wren, Arizona, USA

NOTE

1. L. Tom Perry, “Receive Truth,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 61–62.



A PROPHETIC PROMISE

“Don’t neglect the opportunity of attending seminary and institute classes.

Participate and gain all you can from the scriptures taught in these great religious-education settings. They will

prepare you to present the message of the restored gospel to those you have opportunity to meet.”

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Raising the Bar,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 48.

SHOWING FAITH

My love for institute started back in seminary. I joined the Church at age 14, and I had a thirst for knowledge. I enjoyed learning about the gospel and loved the admirable friends and teachers I met along the way.

At times attending seminary was difficult. My family, who are not members of the Church, weren’t supportive of my attendance. But with help from other Latter-day Saints, I was able to go to early-morning seminary. My family could see that I was serious about my membership in the Church. It was my way of going the extra mile.

Just as seminary enriched my life when I was a teenager, institute has enriched my life during my



Institute is for single and married students, generally ages 18 to 30.

FINDING NEW FRIENDS

A few years after my mission, I moved to a city where I didn't know anybody. I went to institute expecting to make new friends and begin socializing with other young single adults in the area, as I had previously done.

Initially, however, I found this difficult. No one was unkind, but there seemed to be little going on, and I sometimes felt lonely and distanced from those who already knew each other well. In contrast, I quickly made good friends outside of the Church.

It sometimes seemed that not going to institute would be easier than going. I didn't have a ride, so I would have to walk or cycle each week to get there. I had found good friends with similar interests elsewhere. Besides, I had already graduated from institute.

However, as I thought about all of these reasons not to go, I remembered how much I had grown in the past because of the lessons I learned and friends I made at institute. Institute had nurtured my testimony and helped me better understand the Lord's plan for me. I decided to keep attending, and I am glad I did. Gradually during that year I did make good friends at institute. I received invitations to social events and over time became much more involved.

young adult years. I have treasured up the words of Christ in my heart and in my mind (see D&C 6:20; 84:85). These teachings helped me serve the Lord more effectively as a missionary.

I am grateful for institute and know that it is an inspired program because I have seen its blessings in my life and in the lives of others.

Malinda Morrison, Western Australia, Australia

GROWING CLOSER TO THE LORD

Ever since I began to attend institute regularly, tremendous spiritual blessings have entered my life. I have developed Christlike love for my fellow institute students, my faith in the Lord is growing stronger, and I have drawn closer to Jesus Christ through scripture study.

The lessons give me direction by helping me understand better how to use my agency. They help me face challenges with a positive viewpoint, and I have learned that God is always near to help me overcome my struggles. When I attend institute, I find answers to my questions. Each time I put into practice the teachings from my classes, other things in my life seem to fall into their proper places a little more easily.

I feel that participating in institute is one of the best ways I can use my time while I am young.

Ngozichi Okwandu, Abia, Nigeria



It was hard to attend institute in a new area at first, but because I kept going anyway, I have received many spiritual and social blessings that I could not have received otherwise.

Dave J. Green, England, United Kingdom

COMING HOME

I was living away from home for the first time when my parents separated. It was only my first month of college, and as my family life shifted, I struggled to understand the meaning of the word *home*. When my parents divorced and my family moved out of the home I had lived in for the last 18 years, I was especially confused. I knew I wasn't homeless, but I certainly felt that way.

I have often heard the Church described as a "refuge from the storm" (D&C 115:6). Institute became that refuge for me as I battled this new storm in my life. I enrolled in institute, and while I don't recall the exact words spoken in the lessons, I will never forget the feelings of peace and comfort that came to me as I listened. I began to discover the love my Heavenly Father has for me, and I became much more closely acquainted with the best counselor I have ever found: Jesus Christ.

I have to pay for my college education, yet I learn the most valuable lessons from institute classes, which are available to me for free. I see now that the definition of *home* isn't necessarily the house in which you grow up but a place where life's lessons are taught and love abounds. Because of what I learned and the Spirit I felt, institute has become a new home for me. It is wonderful having a place where I feel loved and welcome. ■

Suzanne Goble, Utah, USA



Alberto



Krista



Malinda



Ngozichi



Dave



Suzanne

HOW DO I FIND AN INSTITUTE PROGRAM NEAR ME?

Visit <http://institute.lds.org> for information about any of the more than 500 institute locations worldwide. In many cases, you can register for classes online.

Don't have Internet access? Your bishop or branch president has a list of institute locations.



The Most Useful

BY ELDER CLAYTON M. CHRISTENSEN

Area Seventy
North America Northeast Area

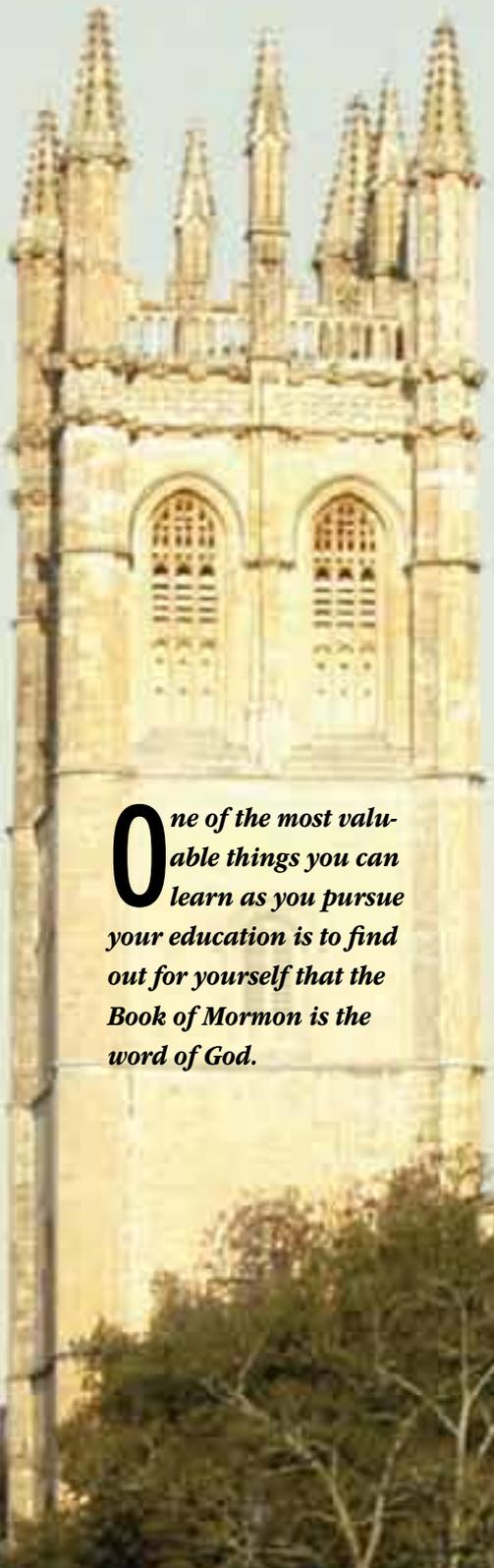


Some of you who are familiar with Oxford University may know that it's the world's oldest university. The building that I lived in as a student was built in 1410—beautiful to look at, uncomfortable to live in. When I arrived at Oxford, I realized it was going to be difficult to be an active member of the Church. The Rhodes Scholarship Trust, which had given me my scholarship, had a lot of activities for the recipients of the scholarship.

As I looked at the extent to which I wanted to be involved in church, I realized that I didn't know the Book of Mormon was true. I had read it several times but usually as an assignment—from my parents or a Brigham Young University instructor. But this time I desperately needed to know if the Book of Mormon was true. So I decided that I would commit every evening from 11:00 to 12:00 to reading the Book of Mormon to find out if it was true.

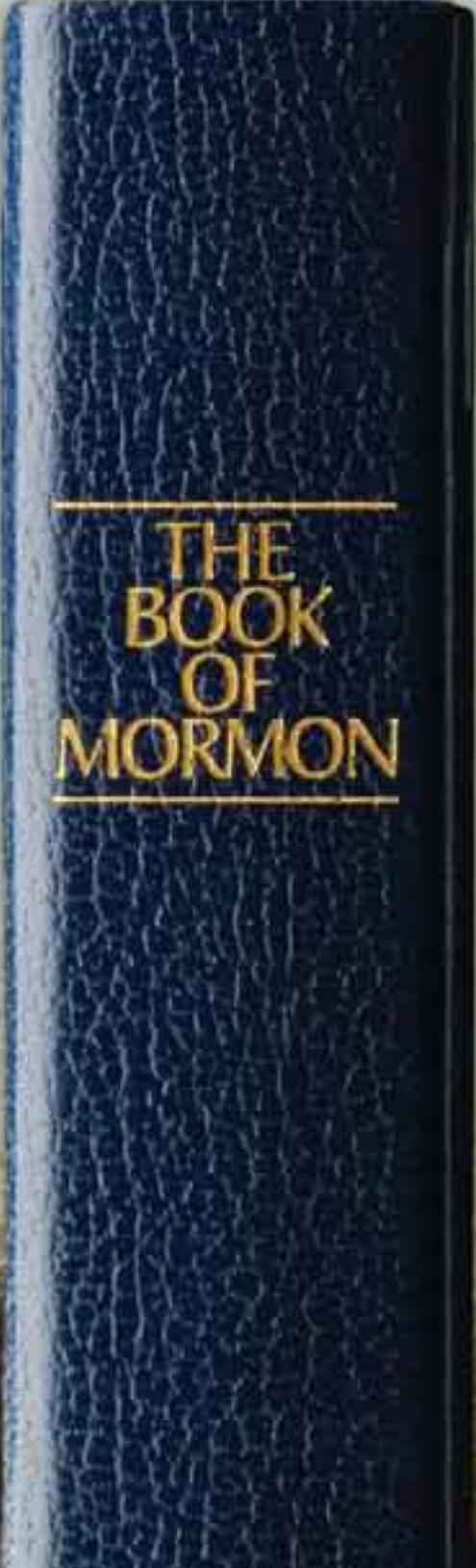
I wondered if I dared spend that much time because I was in a very demanding academic program, studying applied econometrics. I was going to try to finish the program in two years, whereas most people in the program finished it in three. I didn't know if I could afford allocating an hour a day to this effort.

But nonetheless I did. I began at 11:00 by kneeling in prayer near a little heater in the stone wall, and I prayed out loud. I told God how desperate I was to find out if the Book of Mormon was true. I told Him that if He would reveal to me that it was true, I then intended to dedicate my life to building His kingdom. I told Him

A tall, ornate stone tower with multiple spires and arched windows, likely a part of a university building in Oxford, England. The tower is illuminated by warm, golden light, possibly from the setting or rising sun. The background shows a clear blue sky and some trees in the foreground.

One of the most valuable things you can learn as you pursue your education is to find out for yourself that the Book of Mormon is the word of God.

Piece of Knowledge



THE
BOOK
OF
MORMON

that if it wasn't true, I needed to know that for certain too because then I would dedicate my life to finding out what was true.

I read the first page of the Book of Mormon. When I got down to the bottom of the page, I stopped. I thought about what I had read on that page, and I asked myself, "Could this have been written by a charlatan who was trying to deceive people, or was this really written by a prophet of God? And what did it mean for me in my life?" Then I put the book down and knelt in prayer and asked God again, "Please tell me if this is a true book." Then I sat in the chair, picked up the book, turned the page, read it, paused at the bottom, and did the same thing. I did this for an hour every night, night after night, in that cold, damp room at Oxford.

One evening, by the time I got to the chapters at the end of 2 Nephi, I said my prayer, sat in my chair, and opened the book. All of a sudden there came into that room a beautiful, warm, loving Spirit that surrounded me and permeated my soul, enveloping me in a feeling of love that I had not imagined I could feel. I began to cry. As I looked through my tears at the words in the Book of Mormon, I could see truth in those words that I never imagined I could comprehend before. I could see the glories of eternity, and I could see what God had in store for me as one of His sons. That Spirit stayed with me the whole hour and every other evening as I prayed and read the Book of Mormon in my room. That same Spirit

I invite you to set aside an hour every day and find out for yourself if the Book of Mormon is true, because it will change your heart.



would always return, and it changed my heart and my life forever.

I look back at the conflict I had experienced, wondering whether I could afford to spend an hour every day apart from the study of applied econometrics to find out if the Book of Mormon was true. I use applied econometrics maybe once a year, but I use my knowledge that the Book of Mormon is the word of God many times every day of my life. Of all the education I have ever pursued, that is the single most useful piece of knowledge I ever gained.

For those of you who may still be living on the testimonies of others, I invite you to set aside an hour every day and find out

for yourself if the Book of Mormon is true, because it will change your heart as it has changed mine. Then someday you'll be able to go to the place where you lived at the time that God revealed this to you and point at it for your children and spouse and say, "That's a sacred place because that's where I learned that Jesus is the Christ."

As I have sought to magnify my calling and to know Jesus Christ, I can testify that I know with a surety that He is the Son of God, that He lives. I know of a surety that He knows and loves every one of us. ■

From a Brigham Young University–Idaho devotional address given on June 8, 2004. For the full text of the address in English, visit www.byui.edu/Presentations/transcripts/devotionals/2004_06_08_christensen.htm.

Stand Strong and Immovable in Faith



Teach the scriptures and quotations that meet the needs of the sisters you visit. Bear testimony of the doctrine. Invite those you teach to share what they have felt and learned.



Mosiah 5:15: “Be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in good works, that Christ, the Lord God Omnipotent, may seal you his, that you may be brought to heaven, that ye may have everlasting salvation and eternal life.”

How Can I Stand Strong and Immovable in Faith?

3 Nephi 6:14: “The church was broken up in all the land save it were among a few of the Lamanites who were converted unto the true faith; and they would not depart from it, for they were firm, and steadfast, and immovable, willing with all diligence to keep the commandments of the Lord.”

Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president: “Latter-day Saint women must be strong and immovable in their faith. They can and should excel in living and sharing their testimonies of the Lord Jesus Christ and His restored gospel. We do this as we:

- “1. Make and keep covenants with Him.
- “2. Are worthy and worship in His temples.
- “3. Study His doctrine in the scriptures and the words of prophets.
- “4. Qualify for, recognize, and follow the Holy Ghost.
- “5. Share and defend His gospel.
- “6. Participate in sincere personal and family prayer.
- “7. Have family home evening.
- “8. Live principles of self-reliance and provident living.

“These are *essential* things which must be done before *nonessential* things. These are simple, indispensable practices that almost seem mundane. . . . No one can do these things for us—these are *personal* practices and habits that set us apart as strong and immovable for that which is correct” (“What Latter-day Saint Women Do Best: Stand Strong and Immovable,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 109–10).

Cheryl C. Lant, Primary general president: “Our personal conversion comes as we begin to live the way

the Lord wants us to live—steadfast and immovable in keeping all of the commandments, not just those that are convenient. This then becomes a process of refinement as we strive to make each day a little better than the last” (“Righteous Traditions,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2008, 14).

Why Should I Be Strong and Immovable in Faith?

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Your faith and your knowledge of the restoration of the gospel will give you the strength to be faithful and true to the covenants you have made with the Lord, and to share your strengths and talents gladly to build up the kingdom of God here on the earth! Your testimony of Jesus Christ is the most important anchor that you can have to help hold you, steadfast and immovable, to principles of righteousness, regardless of the challenges and temptations that may come in the future” (“Steadfast in Christ,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1993, 52).

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “You cannot today remotely imagine what that decision to be unwaveringly obedient to the Lord will allow you to accomplish in life. Your quiet, uncompromising determination to live a righteous life will couple you to *inspiration* and *power* beyond your capacity now to understand” (“Making the Right Decisions,” *Ensign*, May 1991, 34). ■

Faith to Ford the

“He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy” (Psalm 18:16–17).

BY ADAM C. OLSON
Church Magazines

Rafael Mateo and his son, Whalincon (known as “Whally”), paused in the darkness of a stormy afternoon and eyed the rushing waters of the rain-swollen river. Rafael, first counselor in the branch presidency, and Whally, the branch elders quorum president, were returning home after a Sunday full of meetings at their chapel in San José de Ocoa in the Dominican Republic.

They were already drenched from trudging through the downpour and crossing the flooded Río Ocoa that created a dangerous barrier between the chapel and their home. During the dry season, the 6-kilometer (4-mile) hike descending from the chapel on one side of the valley then up to their home on the heights of the other side usually takes an hour. But when the river floods during the rainy season, Rafael and his family have to take a three-hour, 15-kilometer (9-mile) detour to find a place where they can ford the river with some degree of safety.

Rafael had completed the journey countless times before. He had crossed the river every day for 12 years to get to work. Being called two months after his baptism to serve as branch president, a calling he held for six years, only increased the number of trips. After that it was a call as elders quorum president. Then he was called back into the branch presidency.

But familiarity with the river didn’t diminish its danger, and the swift water of the flooded rivers could be as deadly as the wide river they fed. Not long before, an overflowing river had swept a neighbor off his feet, killing him in a mad rush down its narrow course.

Father and son hesitated at the water’s edge; then Rafael stepped in. The river was not wide, but because it

channeled so much water, it was cut surprisingly deep. The cold, swift water first pulled at his knees, then his waist, and soon swirled about his chest.

Rafael knew he was in trouble. The streambed was slippery and uneven, and the powerful current threatened to steal his footing. Halfway across, he used all his strength to stay upright, and he found himself powerless to move forward or backward.

Just when he thought he was too weak to fight the flood any longer, he felt a push from behind that thrust him toward the opposite bank. It wasn’t until after he had reached the other side that he realized his savior hadn’t been Whally, who was still on the opposite side.

He attributes his rescue to the power of the same Savior who has helped him survive the threatening pull of other trials, both physical and spiritual.

“I’ve had to throw myself many times into the river up to my chest in the service of the Lord,” says Brother Mateo. “But I feel a great debt to the Lord. He has given me not only the opportunity to serve Him but the endurance.”

Like King David, Brother Mateo knows the Savior “took me, he drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy” (Psalm 18:16–17).

That testimony has carried him through trials more subtle than, but just as real as, crossing the river that stormy afternoon with Whally.

Despite the cost of the trip, Brother Mateo; his wife, Altagracia; and three of their children were sealed in the temple in 2001. Since then they have sacrificed to save enough to visit the temple at least twice each year.

The work and the sacrifices, both physical and spiritual, are worth it to Brother Mateo.

“It’s not hard when you know what the purpose is,” he says. “We’re fighting for something more sublime than wordly things.” ■

River

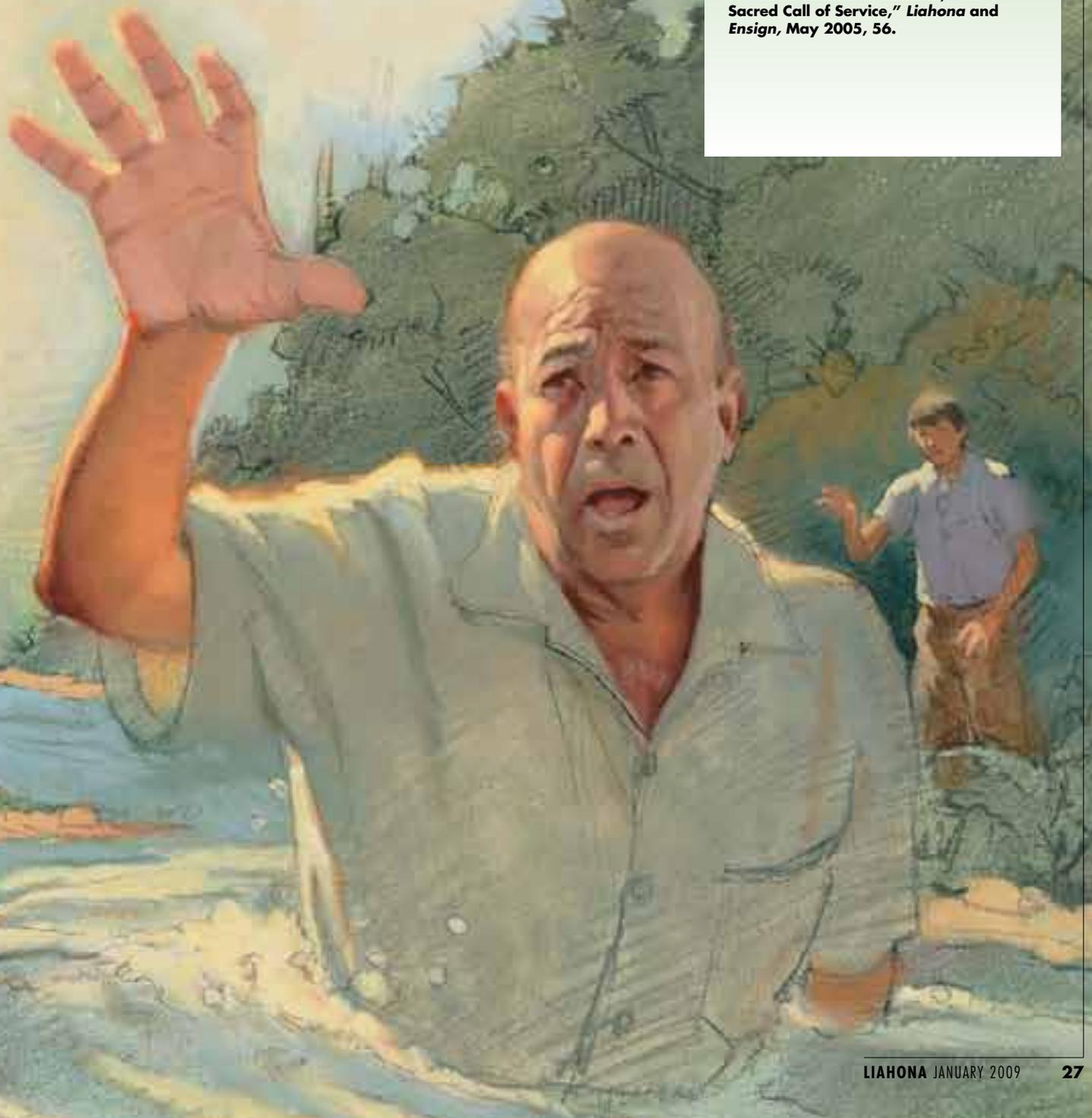


ENTITLED TO THE LORD'S HELP

*"Remember that
this work is not
yours and mine
alone. It is the*

*Lord's work, and when we are on the
Lord's errand, . . . we are entitled to
the Lord's help."*

**President Thomas S. Monson, "The
Sacred Call of Service," *Liahona* and
Ensign, May 2005, 56.**





Joseph Smith

An Apostle of Jesus Christ

BY ELDER DENNIS B. NEUENSCHWANDER
Of the Seventy

In the Doctrine and Covenants we read that Joseph Smith was “called of God, and ordained an apostle of Jesus Christ” (D&C 20:2). The call of an Apostle is first to witness or testify of Jesus Christ. Old Testament prophets testified of His coming. The New Testament Apostles bore personal witness of Christ’s being and of the absolute reality of His Resurrection. This apostolic witness was the basis of their teaching. “Ye shall be witnesses unto me” (Acts 1:8) was Jesus’s instruction to the original Twelve. Peter testified on the day of Pentecost to the Jews who had gathered “out of every nation” (Acts 2:5) that “this Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses” (Acts 2:32). Similarly, Paul wrote to the Corinthians that Jesus “was seen of me also” (1 Corinthians 15:8). The sure witness of Christ’s being and the reality of His Resurrection is the first pillar of apostolic testimony.

The second pillar is centered on the Savior’s redemptive and saving power. Peter teaches that to the Lord “give all the Prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:43).

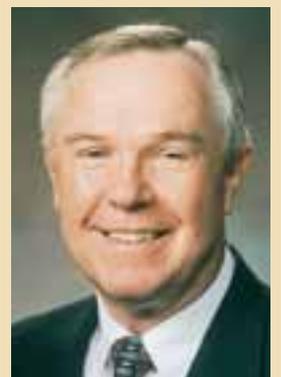
Without these twin pillars of testimony

concerning Christ, there could be no Apostle. Such testimonies are born of experience, divine command, and instruction. For example, Luke writes that Christ showed Himself to the Apostles “alive after his passion . . . being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3).

How does the Prophet Joseph Smith fit into these apostolic requirements? The answer is “Perfectly.”

The First Vision

Joseph Smith’s apostolic instruction began in 1820. Pondering the questions of religion, he soon found that there was no way to reason or argue one’s opinion to an authoritative conclusion concerning the correctness of the various churches or their doctrines.



The Prophet Joseph Smith was called of God as a witness of Christ’s reality and Resurrection and of His redemptive and saving power.

Joseph's questions on religion were answered by the personal and physical manifestation of God the Father and His divine and living Son, Jesus Christ.

Short of a divine manifestation, young Joseph could add only one more opinion to the already existing “war of words and tumult of opinions” (Joseph Smith—History 1:10). But Joseph’s questions on religion were answered by the personal and physical manifestation of God the Father and His divine and living Son, Jesus Christ—an experience referred to as the First Vision.

Like that of the original Apostles, Joseph’s experience with Deity was direct and personal. There was no need for the opinion of others or the deliberations of a council to define what he saw or what it came to

mean to him. Joseph’s vision was at first an intensely personal experience—an answer to a specific question. Over time, however, illuminated by additional experience and instruction, it became the founding revelation of the Restoration.

As apostolic as this manifestation of Christ’s being, existence, and Resurrection was to Joseph Smith, it was not the only thing Jesus wanted to teach him. The boy Joseph’s first lesson arose from the manifestation of Christ’s absolute, omnipotent, and divine power. Joseph learned firsthand at least one meaning of the redeeming and saving power of Christ when he



prayed in the grove. As he began to pray, “Thick darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction” (Joseph Smith—History 1:15). With every bit of energy Joseph had, he began to call upon God to deliver him from the grasp of this enemy.

“At the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction . . . , I saw a pillar of light. . . .

“It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound” (Joseph Smith—History 1:16–17).

Joseph Smith’s confrontation with the adversary is reminiscent of an experience Moses had, about which the Prophet would learn some few years later. Unlike the boy Joseph, however, Moses saw God’s greatness first and then was confronted with the power of the adversary before being delivered from his influence. (See Moses 1.)

The difference in the order of events is significant. Moses was already far into maturity and had much knowledge and influence prior to this event. By displaying His magnificent power to Moses before he faced the adversary, the Lord helped Moses put his life into perspective. After experiencing God’s glory, Moses said, “Now, for this cause I know that man is nothing, which thing I never had supposed” (Moses 1:10). This incident enabled Moses to withstand the temptations of the adversary that followed.

Joseph Smith, on the other hand, was an inexperienced young man, who in his lifetime would repeatedly face adversarial power and the overwhelming problems it brings. By facing the adversary first, then being saved from his assault by the appearance of the Father and the Son, Joseph learned this indelible lesson: as great as the power of evil might be, it must always withdraw with the appearance of righteousness.

This lesson was critical in Joseph’s apostolic education. He needed this knowledge not only because of the personal trials that lay ahead of him but also because of the overwhelming opposition he would face in founding and directing the Church.

The boy Joseph went into the grove seeking wisdom, and wisdom he received. His apostolic instruction had begun. Among the great apostolic lessons of this First Vision were both the physical nature of the Savior and Heavenly Father and the initial and fundamental lessons relating to Their power—each a pillar of apostolic testimony.

The Book of Mormon

Joseph Smith’s early apostolic instruction continued with his translation of the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon gave Joseph access to “the fulness of the everlasting Gospel” (Joseph Smith—History 1:34), principles that were necessary to understand even prior to the organization of the Church. The Prophet was introduced to numerous “plain and most precious” (1 Nephi 13:26) prophetic and apostolic testimonies regarding the Savior, all of which served as models for him.

Indeed, the Book of Mormon prophets employ over 100 titles in their teachings of Christ, each of which helped Joseph understand the Savior’s divine role.¹ By virtue of these teachings, Joseph Smith became intimately acquainted with ancient prophets, giving him insight into the divine purpose of his responsibilities.

The Book of Mormon illuminates the universality of Christ’s Atonement. The Savior’s holy sacrifice is not confined to the borders of the Holy Land of His day or even restricted to the apostolic world of the original Twelve. The Atonement encompasses all of God’s creations—past, present, and future. What an impression Jacob’s teaching of the “infinite atonement” (2 Nephi 9:7) must have made on the mind of young Joseph, especially in contrast to Christian teachings at the time.

The Book of Mormon also introduces the universality of the Resurrection and other doctrines relating to it. Discourses on this doctrine by Lehi, Jacob, King Benjamin, Abinadi, Alma, Amulek, Samuel the Lamanite, and Moroni are all rich sources of instruction.

During the translation of the Book of Mormon, the Prophet received additional valuable personal instruction

The Book of Mormon is the “keystone of our religion” because it contains so many prophetic testimonies of Christ and stands as a tangible witness of the Restoration.

concerning the redemptive and saving power of Christ. In 1828 Martin Harris persuaded Joseph to lend him the first 116 pages of the Book of Mormon manuscript. When Martin Harris lost those pages, the Prophet felt an enormous despair.² His mother, Lucy Mack Smith, recorded that Joseph exclaimed: “Oh, my God! . . . All is lost! all is lost! What shall I do? I have sinned—it is I who tempted the wrath of God. . . . How shall I appear before the Lord? Of what rebuke am I not worthy from the angel of the Most High?”³

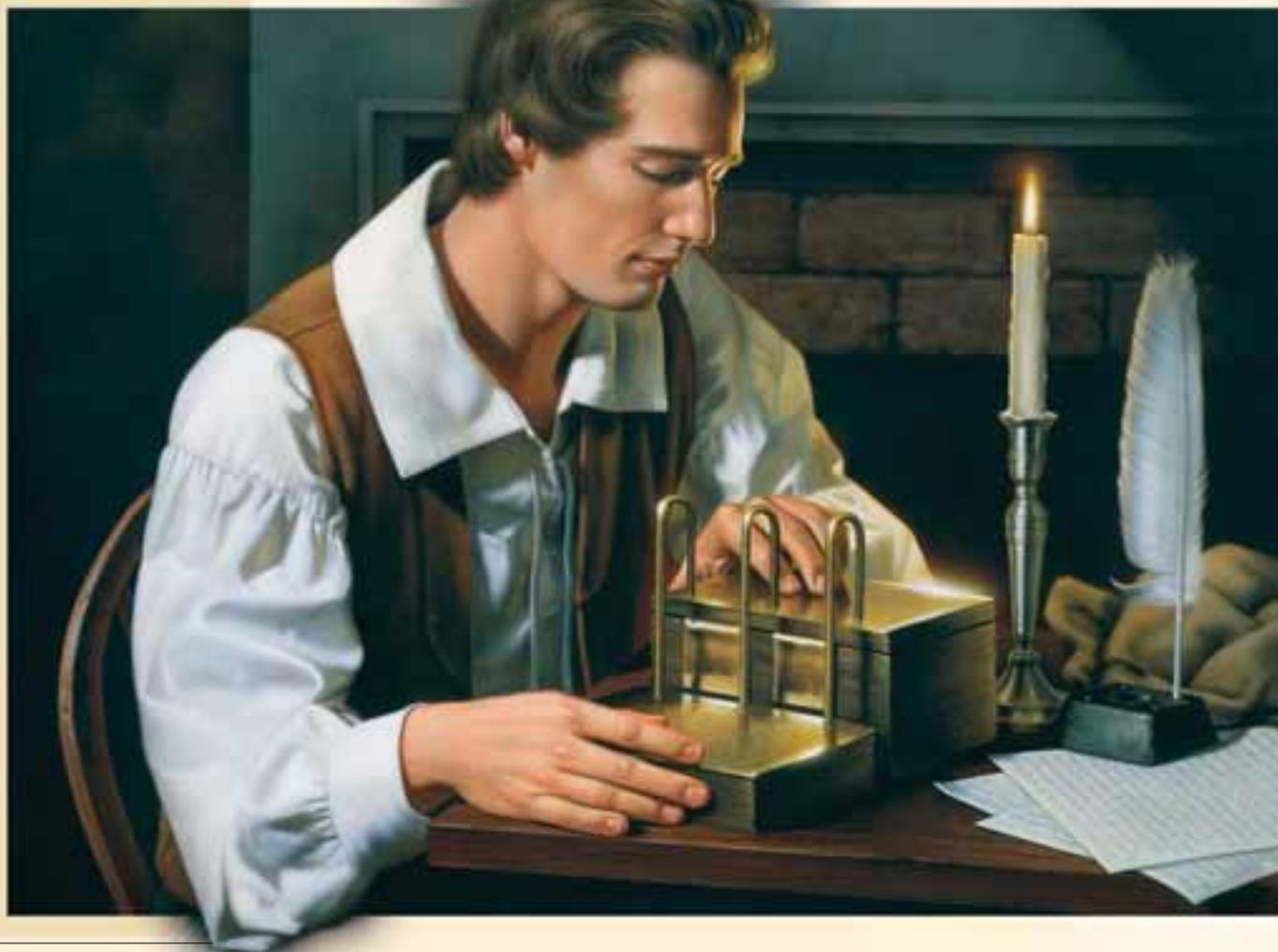
For well over a month the Lord left Joseph in this terrible condition of remorse.⁴

Then came relief and the apostolic lesson. The Lord told Joseph:

“The works, and the designs, and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated, neither can they come to naught. . . .

“For although a man may have many revelations, and have power to do many mighty works, yet if he boasts in his own strength, and sets at naught the counsels of God, and follows after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires, he must fall and incur the vengeance of a just God upon him” (D&C 3:1, 4).

These words carefully describe what Joseph Smith had been experiencing. He had learned the exacting nature of the apostolic



call and to whom the Apostle, at all cost, owes his loyalty. “Although men set at naught the counsels of God, and despise his words,” Joseph was told, “yet you should have been faithful” (D&C 3:7–8). Joseph Smith had lost access to the plates for a season and had been taught an invaluable lesson. Subsequently, the plates were returned, and his position as translator restored.

How critical were the lessons provided by the translation of the Book of Mormon as Joseph Smith grew in his apostolic calling! The Book of Mormon is the “keystone of our religion”⁵ because it contains so many prophetic testimonies of Christ and stands as a tangible witness of the Restoration.

Continuing Revelation and Scripture

After finishing the translation of the Book of Mormon in 1829 and organizing the Church in 1830, Joseph Smith had the opportunity to receive continuing apostolic education through the process of translating other scripture. This included three years of translating the Bible and, beginning in 1835, translating the book of Abraham. Joseph Smith’s translation of the Bible expanded his understanding of the role of Old Testament prophets and New Testament Apostles. It also resulted in additional revelation, namely the book of Moses.

The book of Moses provided the Prophet with important knowledge about the Savior’s ministry, including His role in the Creation. “The Lord spake unto Moses, saying: . . . I am the Beginning and the End, the Almighty God; by mine Only Begotten I created these things” (Moses 2:1). Further, He said, “And worlds without number have I created; . . . and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten” (Moses 1:33).

The book of Moses clarified Christ’s relationship to the Father in the premortal existence and reinforced the Prophet’s understanding of the ascendant power of righteousness. One of the most beautiful of all the apostolic lessons that came to Joseph Smith in this revelation was the confirmation of God’s love. It was so different from the harsh, unforgiving, and judgmental personage

so many believed God to be; the book of Moses reveals a God of infinite compassion. Enoch saw that the “God of heaven . . . wept” (Moses 7:28) over those who would not receive Him. Wishing to know how it was possible, Enoch was given an answer that has a familiar biblical feel to it: “I [have] given commandment, that they should love one another, and that they should choose me, their Father. . . . Wherefore should not the heavens weep, seeing these shall suffer?” (Moses 7:33, 37; see also Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:37–39).

Through the translation of the book of Moses, the Prophet also became more acquainted with the redeeming and saving power of the Savior. As the Lord said, this earth was created “by the word of my power” (Moses 1:32) for the purpose of bringing “to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). Many long years before the Savior taught Thomas and the Twelve that “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6), He revealed to Moses that “this is the plan of salvation unto all men, through the blood of mine Only Begotten, who shall come in the meridian of time” (Moses 6:62).

The First Vision in the grove, the translation of the Book of Mormon, the revision of the Bible, the revelation of the book of Moses, and the translation of the book of Abraham laid the basic foundation of the Church, largely through the rapidly expanding knowledge and testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith relating to Jesus Christ.

Revelations given to him and compiled in the Doctrine and Covenants contain a wealth of knowledge concerning the Savior. One could research the numerous topics and cross-references of the Topical Guide and Guide to the Scriptures referring to Jesus Christ and still not understand the breadth of information on the Savior that the Prophet Joseph Smith brought to the world. I am grateful to know that Jesus was “in the beginning with the Father” (D&C 93:21). I am grateful to know that He “suffered these things for [me], that [I] might not suffer if [I] would repent” (D&C 19:16).

I am so grateful for the revelations that teach me that the Savior's Atonement reaches to those who have lived, loved, served, and hoped for a better day yet never heard of Jesus or had the opportunity to embrace His gospel.

My Testimony of What the Prophet Revealed

I am grateful for yet one other thing about the Savior's ministry that stirs my soul deeply. From studying the promises of Malachi, Moroni's initial visit with Joseph, the Savior's words to the Nephites, and the visit of Elijah in the Kirtland Temple, I learn that God loves His children and has provided a way for each to return to Him. I know of no doctrine more just, no teaching that gives more hope than that of redemption of the dead. I am so grateful for the revelations that teach me that the



Savior's Atonement reaches to those who have lived, loved, served, and hoped for a better day yet never heard of Jesus or had the opportunity to embrace His gospel. This knowledge alone would be sufficient to convert me to the gospel if I knew nothing else at all. Here, at least for me, is the ultimate testimony of Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice.

What, then, can be said of the incomparable saving power of Christ? That which Joseph Smith learned in the Sacred Grove about the power of righteousness overcoming evil foreshadows the final scene. So reveals the Lord:

"I, having accomplished and finished the will of him whose I am, even the Father, concerning me—having done this that I might subdue all things unto myself—

"Retaining all power, even to the destroying of Satan and his works at the end of the

world, and the last great day of judgment" (D&C 19:2–3).

Our own testimonies of the Savior are framed by the testimony and teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Is it any wonder then that the Prophet taught that "the fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it."⁶

Joseph Smith's apostolic testimony of the divine reality and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, as well as his knowledge of the redemptive and saving power of the Savior, can best be seen by the Prophet's own beautiful, powerful, and succinct witness:

"And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

"For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

"That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God" (D&C 76:22–24).

How grateful I am for the apostolic call of Joseph Smith. ■

Adapted from a presentation to the Seventy.

NOTES

1. See *Book of Mormon Reference Companion*, ed. Dennis L. Largey (2003), 457–58.
2. See Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, ed. Preston Nibley (1958), 128–29.
3. *History of Joseph Smith*, 128, 129.
4. The 116 pages were lost in June 1828. In July Joseph Smith received what is now section 3 of the Doctrine and Covenants. In September the plates were returned to the Prophet. See the historical introductions to D&C 3; 10.
5. *History of the Church*, 4:461.
6. *History of the Church*, 3:30.

A YOUNG MISSIONARY

By Laukau Mokofisi

It was my best friend's birthday, and she was turning 13. I rushed to find a present for her before school, but I couldn't find anything. Then I saw the Book of Mormon. I decided to challenge myself by giving it to her as a gift. I felt good inside but sort of scared because I had never given anyone the Book of Mormon before. I was afraid she might not accept it.

When I arrived at school, I looked for her and told her that I had a special book for her. She took the book and saw a picture of my family in the front. I told her that it was the Book of Mormon, a book that tells the truth of why we are here on earth. I also told her that I was sorry for not giving her a better gift.

She looked me in the eye and said it was the greatest thing I could have given her. Her words touched my heart, and I nearly cried. I felt like a missionary already! I can't wait until I'm old enough to go on a mission so I can share the gospel with other people like my friend. ■

SEARCHING FOR A FAVORITE HYMN

By Michael Paul Inyang

Our mission president had been admonishing the missionaries in the Ghana Accra Mission to "stay focused." He was famous for using this phrase. At one of our zone conferences, he suggested ways we could do this, and a key point in his list was having a favorite hymn.

He told us to select a favorite hymn, memorize it, and sing it at times we may be tempted or down. This statement echoed in my memory throughout the day.

I was homesick. Nobody in my family had written to me recently, and I felt depressed. I had been less focused.

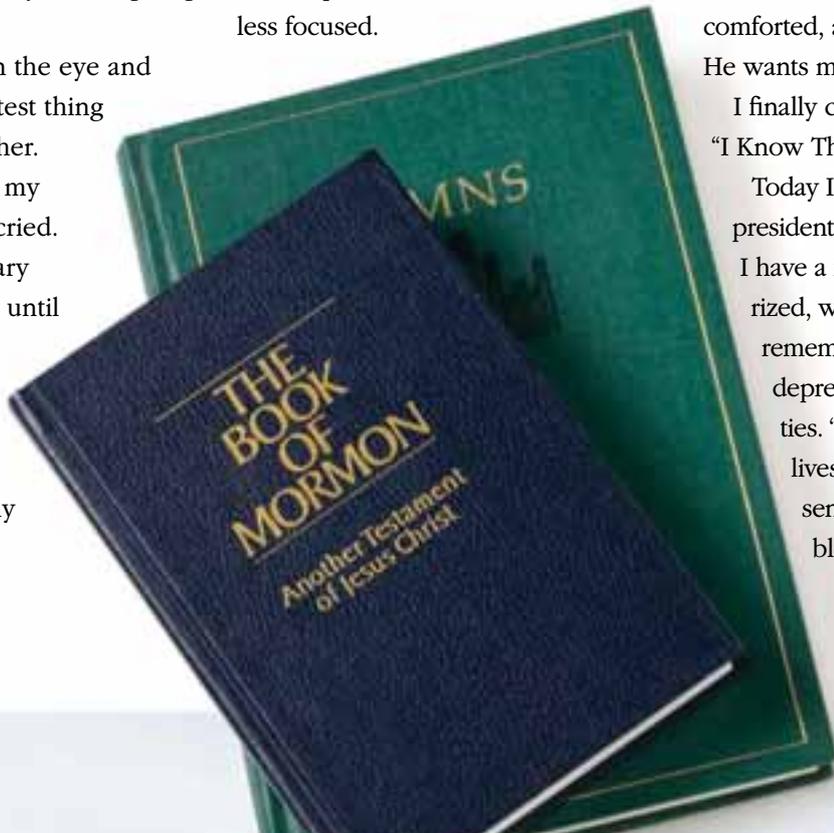
This was the moment I needed to select a hymn to uplift my spirit. I was familiar with many hymns in our green hymnbook, but which did I love the most?

That night, I took an old hymnbook and flipped through the dog-eared pages, searching for a hymn that had a comforting meaning to me. Immediately, I had an idea. Elder Sheldon F. Child of the Seventy, then Africa West Area President, had visited our group in the missionary training center and spoken about the Atonement. He concluded, "If all you young missionaries understood the Atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ, there would be no need of mission rules."

That was the kind of hymn I needed. I was no longer confused. If I had a hymn about the Atonement, I would feel the love of my Savior, be comforted, and stay focused on what He wants me to do.

I finally chose hymn number 136, "I Know That My Redeemer Lives."

Today I am grateful to my mission president for his wise counsel. Now I have a favorite hymn memorized, which I ponder always and remember to sing in times of depression, trials, and difficulties. "I know that my Redeemer lives. What comfort this sweet sentence gives. . . . He lives to bless in time of need." ■



“Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12).

An Example of the Believers

BY THE YOUNG MEN AND YOUNG WOMEN GENERAL PRESIDENCIES

Can the influence of one righteous young man or young woman make a difference in the world? The answer is *yes!*

The Savior Jesus Christ trusts you with His name, which you received at baptism. He trusts you to represent the Church and your family by gratefully living a good life. He asks you to be “an example of the believers,” someone who will draw others to Him, work miracles, and help Him build the kingdom of God on earth.

The 2009 Mutual theme is found in 1 Timothy 4:12, where the Apostle Paul gives advice to his young friend Timothy. What Paul taught Timothy also applies to you today because you, like Timothy, are a believer! “You are choice spirits who have come forth in this day” when the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored. You are part of a generation of destiny with “responsibilities of building the kingdom of God.”¹ You can influence

the entire world through the power of your faith and your righteous example. Paul knew that of Timothy, and we know that of you!

President Thomas S. Monson gave excellent counsel on how we can be an “example of the believers.” He said: “Make every decision you contemplate pass this test: What does it do to me? What does it do for me? And let your code of conduct emphasize not, ‘What will others think?’ but rather, ‘What will I think of myself?’ Be influenced by that still, small voice. Remember that one with authority placed his hands on your head at the time of your confirmation and said, ‘Receive the Holy Ghost.’ Open your hearts, even your very souls, to the sound of that special voice which testifies of truth.”²

Believers have a growing personal testimony of Jesus Christ, they recognize the great blessing of personal testimony, and they desire to share

their knowledge with others. You can share your testimony by your words and your example.

President Monson also taught: “When firmly planted, your testimony . . . will influence all that you do throughout your life. It will help to determine how you spend your time and with whom you choose to associate. It will affect the way you treat your family, how you interact with others. It will bring love, peace, and joy into your life.”³

You live in a world that is competing for your time and attention. You face many pressures and are bombarded with many voices. Sometimes you can become confused about what to do and what is right. Each week you have the opportunity to partake of the sacrament and renew your covenant to “always remember [the Savior] and keep his commandments” (D&C 20:77). When you do this, you show Heavenly Father your



AN INVITATION TO YOUNG WOMEN

willingness to take upon yourself His Son's holy name. Your words and actions show others that you really are keeping your covenants. As you renew and keep your covenants, the Holy Ghost will guide you and "tell you all things what ye should do" (2 Nephi 32:3).

The standards in *For the Strength of Youth* will also strengthen you and help you stand firm as an example. As you live these standards, you will have the guidance and the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost. Your thoughts and actions will be different from the world's, and your example will influence others. "You will feel good about yourself

Being an "example of the believers" is not easy. It takes daily effort to remember who we are and what believers do. We would like to invite you to do three things every day that can give you strength and help you be an example to your family and friends. As a presidency, we are doing these things—100 percent of the time. Would you be willing to join with us?

First, pray *every day*.

Second, read the Book of Mormon *every day* for at least five minutes.

Third, smile *every day*.

We invite you to smile because you are on the earth at this incredible time when the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored. You have been taught by a prophet of God that the good people of the world will be drawn to you to the degree that you "are seen as distinct and different—in happy ways."¹

Think what would happen if thousands of young women like yourself did these three things daily!

Many of life's lasting successes are built on a foundation of doing small



Elaine S. Dalton (center), president; Mary N. Cook (left), first counselor; and Ann M. Dibb, second counselor.

things consistently over a long period of time. These three things are small and simple, but remember, "by small and simple things are great things brought to pass" (Alma 37:6). We know you will discover the blessings of doing these three things daily. And if you forget one day, you can start again the next day.

We testify that if you will pray, read the Book of Mormon, and smile daily, you will be blessed for your efforts and you will be an example of the believers—a young woman who *can* make a difference in the world.

NOTE

1. Spencer W. Kimball, "The Role of Righteous Women," *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 104.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY CRAIG DIMOND, JOHN LUKE, AND CHRISTINA SMITH



and will be a positive influence in the lives of others.”⁴ You will be happy, and your friends and family will be drawn to you by the light and happiness you radiate.

So we ask you, “Can one young man or young woman striving to live the gospel and be a worthy example

of the believers make a difference in the world?” We know with all our hearts that the answer is a resounding *yes!* We believe that as you are pure in your thoughts, conversation, and actions, you will make a difference. We believe in *you!* ■

NOTES

1. *For the Strength of Youth* (2001), 2–3.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “Be Thou an Example,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2005, 113.
3. *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2005, 114.
4. *For the Strength of Youth*, 2.

TO YOUNG MEN OF THE AARONIC PRIESTHOOD

Paul reminded Timothy of something very important—important to Timothy and to each bearer of the Aaronic Priesthood: “Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands” (1 Timothy 4:14). Paul was speaking of the importance of the priesthood.

What does it mean to “neglect not” our priesthood? First, it means to live worthy of the blessings that flow through the priesthood. We ensure that our thoughts, words, and actions are pure. We live so as to be “an example of the believers” in all that we do: praying and reading the

scriptures daily, attending seminary, paying tithing, and, where possible, attending the temple to perform baptisms for the dead.

Second, it means to magnify the priesthood—to use the priesthood to serve and bless the lives of others. We can do this by fulfilling priesthood assignments; providing personal and quorum service; or reaching out to someone at home, school, or work who needs a kind word, a smile, or a pat on the back.

Third, it means learning about the priesthood and its duties. Read and ponder the scriptures about the priesthood, specifically Alma 13 and Doctrine and Covenants sections 13,



Charles W. Dahlquist II (center), president; Dean R. Burgess (left), first counselor; and Michael A. Neider, second counselor.

20, 84, 107, and 121. Read the talks given in the priesthood session at the most recent general conference, and then ask yourself, “How can I apply what I learned to help me magnify the priesthood?”

We love you. We have confidence in you. As you strive to magnify your priesthood, you will be better prepared to serve the Lord as a full-time missionary, and as Paul promised Timothy, your service and your example will bless your life and those around you. May God bless you in your efforts.

1 Timothy 4:12

This year's Mutual theme tells us how we are to set an example to the world.

Let No Man Despise Thy Youth

Paul told Timothy that his relatively young age shouldn't matter when it comes to living the gospel and serving in the Church. Many young people have had powerful spiritual experiences. Look up these references to read about some of them: 1 Samuel 17:12–49 (David), 2 Nephi 2:4 (Jacob), Mormon 1:15 (Mormon), and Joseph Smith—History 1:7–20 (Joseph Smith).

How can you show your dedication to the gospel at this time in your life? Write about it in your journal.



Example

“We need not wait for a cataclysmic event, a dramatic occurrence in the world in which we live, or a special invitation to be an example—even a model to follow. Our opportunities lie before us here and now. But they are perishable. Likely they will be found in our own homes and in the everyday actions of our lives. Our Lord and Master marked the way: ‘[He] went about doing good.’ (Acts 10:38.) He in very deed was a model to follow—even an example of the believers.

“Are we?”

President Thomas S. Monson, “An Example of the Believers,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 98.

Faith

To be an example in faith, follow the Apostle James's teaching: “I will shew thee my faith by my works” (James 2:18).

Word

We show great self-discipline when we master our words (see James 3:2). Rather than tearing others down, our words should uplift (see Ephesians 4:29; D&C 108:7). To improve in this area, you might, for example, write down specific goals to give compliments, speak more kindly to family members, use more pleasant tones and expressions, and avoid profanity and offensive language.

Conversation

The Greek word means conduct or behavior.

Charity

“We should sow within our hearts the seed of charity, the



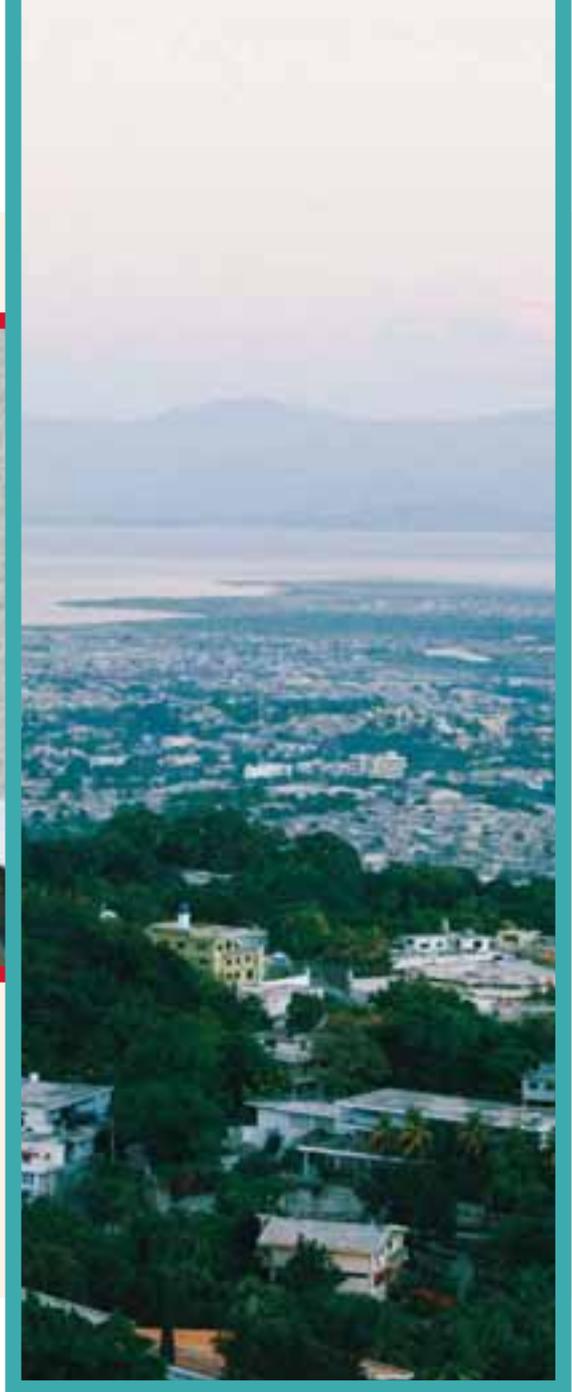
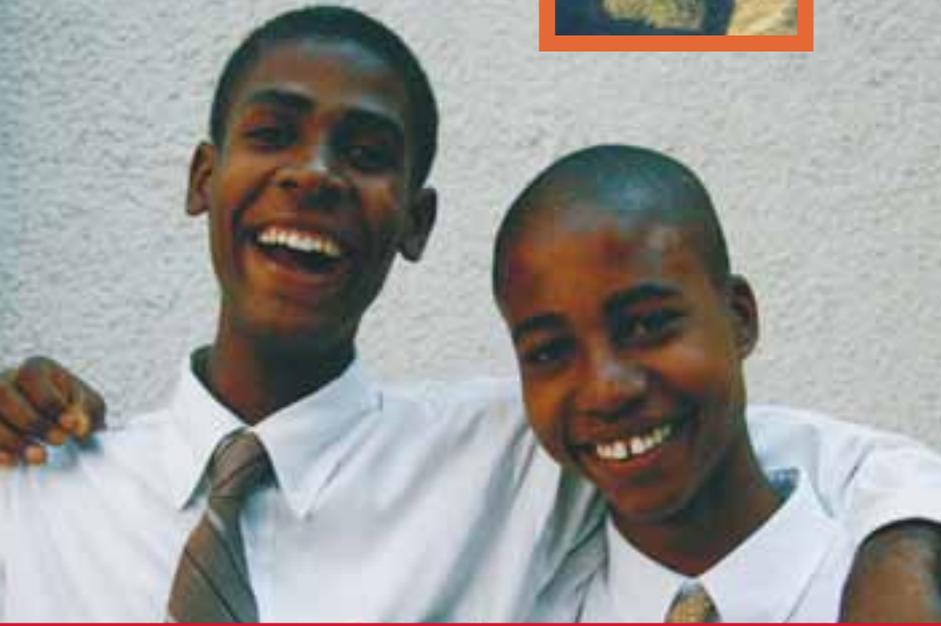
pure love of Christ. He is the perfect model of charity. His total life, particularly his atoning sacrifice, is a lesson in charity. His every act reflects absolute, unequivocal love for all mankind and for each one of us. His example teaches us that charity means subordinating personal interests willingly and gladly for the good of others. I believe our progress toward exaltation and eternal life depends upon how well we learn and live the principle of charity.”

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Seeds of Renewal,” *Ensign*, May 1989, 8.

Purity

Read the words of the hymn “More Holiness Give Me” (*Hymns*, no. 131), and ponder what it means to be an example of purity.

those that believe.
11 These things command and teach.
12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.
13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.
14 Neglect not the gift that is in us



There Is **HOPE** in Haiti

The missionary spirit is alive and well in this island nation, and the rising generation is determined to keep it that way.



BY RICHARD M. ROMNEY

Church Magazines

Editors' note: Because of political instability, all missionaries from other countries were evacuated from Haiti in 2005. Today all 67 missionaries serving in the Haiti Port-au-Prince Mission are from Haiti, and the Church is thriving here.

Dieuveut Demosthène, 18, and Robenson Marcel Laroque Jean, 19, are the best of friends. And they intend to keep it that way. Forever.

“We were neighbors, and we played basketball together,” Robenson explains. “I joined the Church when I was 16, and after a while I suggested to Dieuveut that he should come too. I prayed a lot, and I persisted. Now look at him, a strong member of the Church. I’m proud of him.”

“Robenson invited me many times,” Dieuveut says, “and over time I accepted. He has always spoken with superb words, like he understands everything. So his invitation wasn’t worrisome; it was extraordinary. After a while I started having lessons with the missionaries, and I joined the Church when I was 17.”

The Ideal

That’s the ideal way for missionary work to be done—friends sharing the gospel with



friends and giving referrals to the missionaries to teach them. “From me—one person in the Church—now we are two, and we continue the same work together,” Robenson says. As a result of their efforts, one of Dieuveut’s big brothers and another friend have also joined the Church. One became two, and two became four.

Robenson and Dieuveut, from the Centrale Ward, Port-au-Prince Haiti North Stake, typify what is happening with missionary work in Haiti since missionaries from other countries were evacuated in 2005 because of political turmoil. The Haiti Port-au-Prince Mission has looked to itself for strength and found it. Today only Haitians serve missions in Haiti, and teens expect to serve when they come of age. Even before they’re called to full-time missions, they’re already reaching out to neighbors and friends.

“Everywhere that you see The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Haiti, you know the members are Haitians,” says Farah

Hope is blossoming for Latter-day Saint youth like Robenson Jean, Dieuveut Demosthène, Nathalie LaGuerre, and Farah Jean-Baptiste, who believe the gospel can transform their lives as well as their country. From a hilltop in Port-au-Prince where the land was dedicated for the preaching of the gospel and throughout the nation, Latter-day Saint Haitians are sharing smiles and preparing for the future.



Top: The mission president and his wife chat with elders serving in the mission office. President Pierre-Nau encourages Latter-day Saint youth to begin now to share the gospel. "You are already missionaries," he says.

Above: President Francillon of the Port-au-Prince Haiti North Stake enjoys time with his wife and children. He says the Church blesses the youth in many ways.

Jean-Baptiste, 18, a young woman also in the Centrale Ward. "It's a real motivation for the youth to see that we are responsible for the future of the Church here."

"The young men and young women in the Church here are motivated to follow the Savior," says Farah's 17-year-old friend from the same ward, Nathalie LaGuerre. "We wish to walk in His path, to see His work advance. And so we are filled with joy when we see Haitian missionaries working in Haiti. They are enthusiastic and happy, and after their missions they tell us what a good experience they had. Then they invite us to have the same experience and to start today by sharing the gospel with our friends."

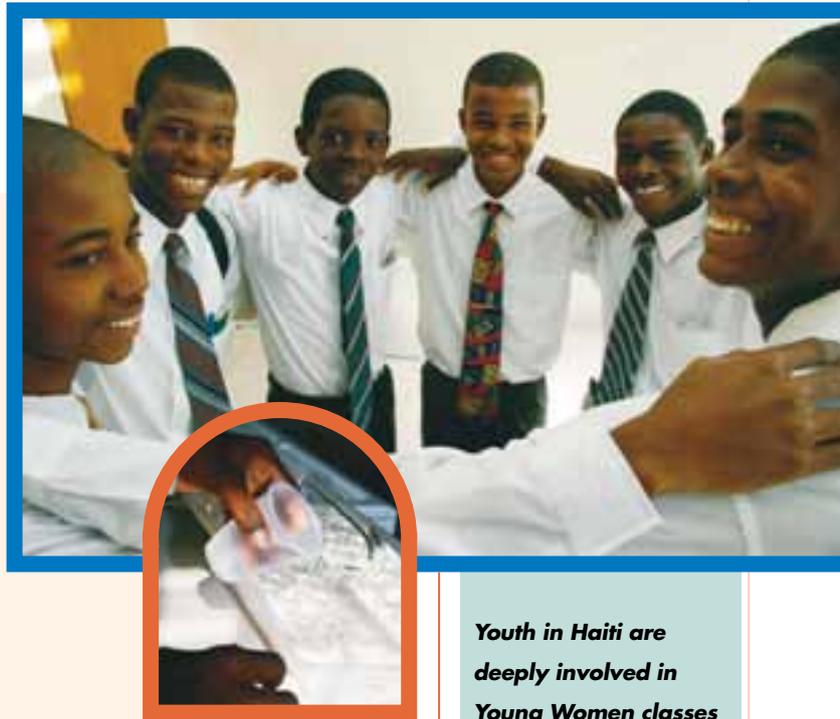
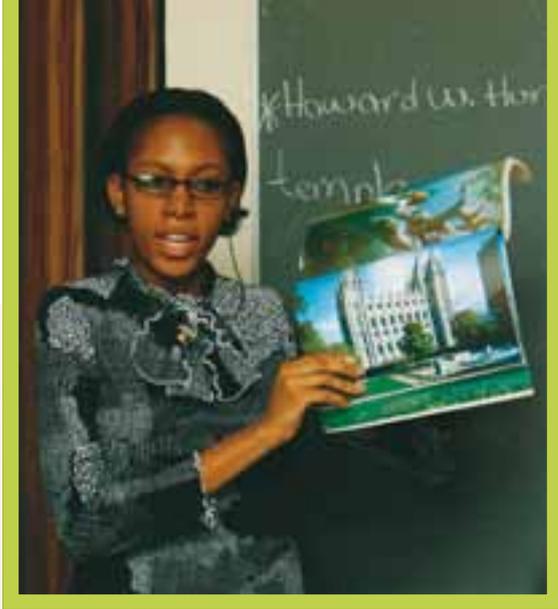
She says that although young women don't have the same priesthood obligation to serve a full-time mission as young men, "we also see that there are many blessings that come to those who serve. You are able to bless others, and it edifies you. It strengthens you for the challenges you will face in life, and it anchors you in the gospel. It shows that you are truly a disciple of Jesus Christ,

that you are a witness for Him, and that you follow His example."

The Hope

"There is much hope for the kingdom of God here in Haiti," says President Gh. Ghammald Francillon of the Port-au-Prince Haiti North Stake. "The youth are truly motivated to serve missions. It is part of their natural growing up to include a mission in their priorities, even ahead of college. If you see the missionaries in the street, you only have to ask, and they will tell you they left their studies behind because they are called to the work of the Lord."

He notes the blessings he feels in his own home because his wife is a returned missionary. He says that stronger families and stronger leaders are direct results of missionary service. "Imagine," he says, "in 15 to 20 years, if so many Haitians serve missions in Haiti, the kind of Church we're going to have here!" He says members "feel the love and support of so many, from the prophet and the General Authorities and from the returned missionaries from other countries who served here in the past. But right now it is 100 percent Haitian, including the mission president, Fouchard Pierre-Nau, a returned missionary who served in Haiti about 10 years ago."



The Future

Some people thought the Church here might have trouble without help from outside. “But I was never worried,” says a missionary currently serving in the Haiti Port-au-Prince Mission, Elder J. Henry Michel. “The Church will never fail. It is the Church of Jesus Christ, and so it can’t fail.”

Rather, Dieuveut says, as people realize the happiness the gospel brings, the Church in Haiti will keep growing. “I am truly grateful to Robenson for sharing the gospel with me,” he says, “and that’s why I want to share the gospel with others. Last week I asked myself, in the past did I know what joy was? Because today, even if I don’t have everything materially that I want, I always feel at peace with myself. I have a great hope that I will be close to my Heavenly Father.”

“I’m already trying to be a missionary,” Robenson says. “Each day I carry my backpack with several copies of the Book of Mormon in it, just to share with others. Many of them know I’m a member of the Church, and I’m eager to share my testimony. To go on a full-time mission will be a great

opportunity to serve God by serving His children. It is my great desire to go.”

Dieuveut says he often talks with returned missionaries. “They have told me how the Lord was able to bless people through the missionaries, and I would like to share in such blessings. They have told me how they lived in the mission field, how much they enjoyed it. Also, after their missions, they are worthy, good examples. I want to be like that.”

What will the future bring? “Heavenly Father has His plan for Haiti,” Dieuveut says. “He is giving members here the opportunity to become strong. It is Haitians teaching Haitians, and that will bless us.”

Robenson will soon receive his mission call, and he hopes it’s to Haiti. Dieuveut won’t be far behind and also hopes to serve in his native land. But whether they’re called to Haiti or to some other country, they know that they will make many more friends in the Church and that their own friendship will continue. Because when you’re friends in the gospel, you’re friends for eternity. ■

Youth in Haiti are deeply involved in Young Women classes and in priesthood quorums. They not only remember the promises they made when they were baptized, but they live according to those promises every day.



Never Forget That You Are a Mormon

By Hildo Rosillo Flores

Whenever we fall, whenever we do less than we ought, in a very real way we forget mother,” declared President Thomas S. Monson. He added, “Men turn from evil and yield to their better natures when mother is remembered.”¹

President Monson’s message has been a strength to me, so much so that when I first read his words, they brought to mind my mother and the wise counsel she gave

me years ago, shortly after I joined the Church.

My mother was a member of another Christian church, but she was kind to the missionaries who taught me the gospel. Once I decided to become

a Latter-day

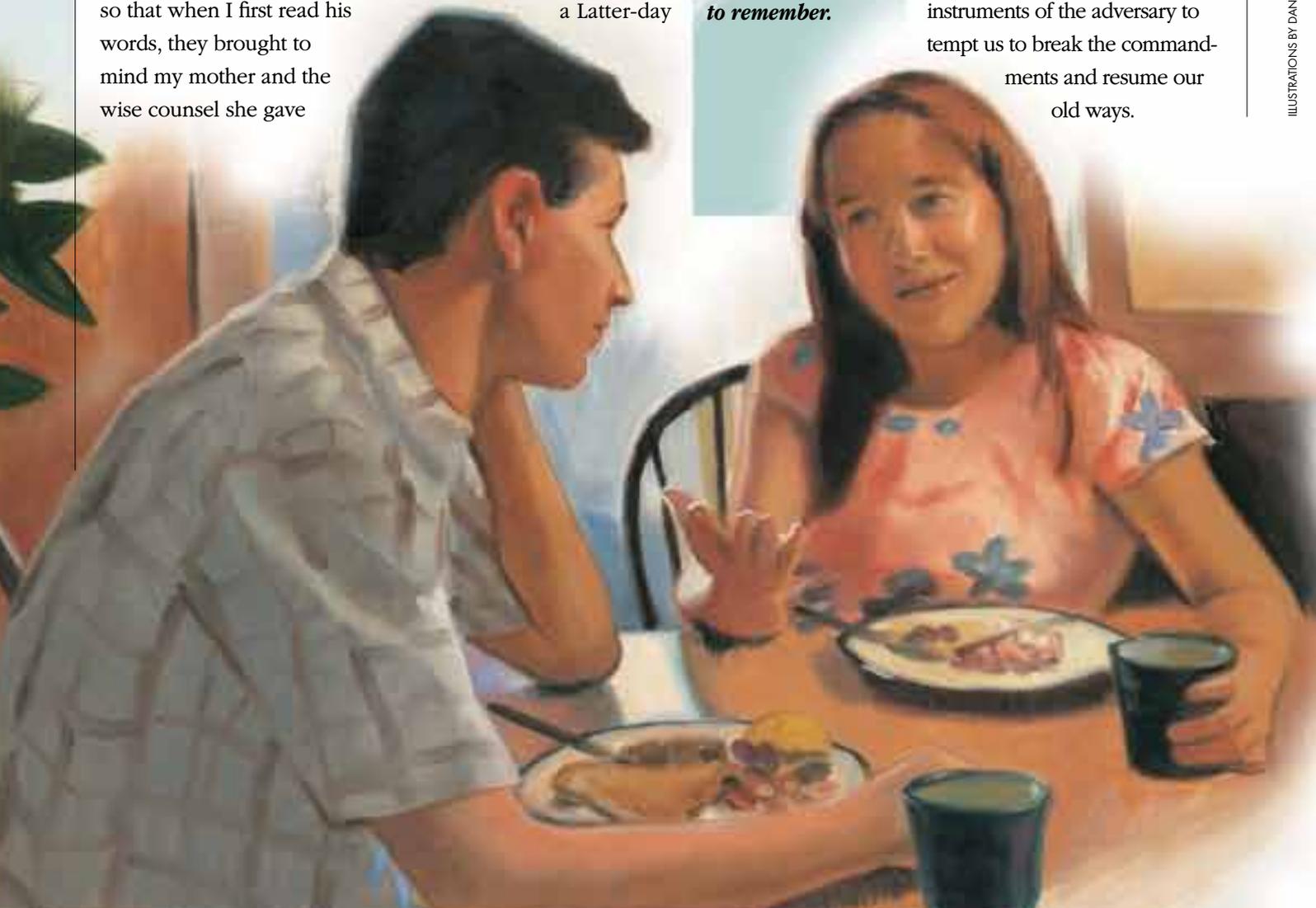
I decided to quit attending church. A week later my mother looked me straight in the eye and told me something I have always tried to remember.

Saint, she always supported me.

Everything had been going well in my new life as a member of the Church until I joined in Journalism Day observances in my home country of Peru. At a party I attended, talks and complimentary words filled the

air. Toasts then followed. As the party grew, so did the temptation to drink with my friends.

The change that converts to the Church make when they accept the gospel often means that they must make new friends. In some circumstances, as I learned, former friends can be instruments of the adversary to tempt us to break the commandments and resume our old ways.



When my co-workers offered me a glass of beer, I took it, drank it, and kept on drinking. At the end of the party, my conscience convicted me. I had fallen. What would my mother say?

When I arrived home, I entered quietly and immediately went to bed.

My mother said nothing, but I felt ashamed and decided to quit attending church.

A week later, as we sat at the table eating lunch, she looked me straight in the eye and said, "Son, never forget that you are a Mormon."

To go to and from work, I rode my bicycle by the Church meetinghouse. Every time I did so, my conscience bothered me. One evening I decided I could no longer live with my guilt. I parked my bicycle directly in front of the branch president's office, went in, and requested an interview.

I told the branch president what I had done and asked for forgiveness, after which he counseled with me. From that moment on, I have never broken the Word of Wisdom.

My mother died more than 20 years ago, but I have always tried to remember what she told me never to forget: I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. ■

NOTE

1. "Behold Thy Mother," *Liahona*, Apr. 1998, 4; *Ensign*, Apr. 1998, 2, 4.

I didn't know if our babies would live or die, but I knew if I turned to the Lord, He would help carry my burden.

Twice Blessed

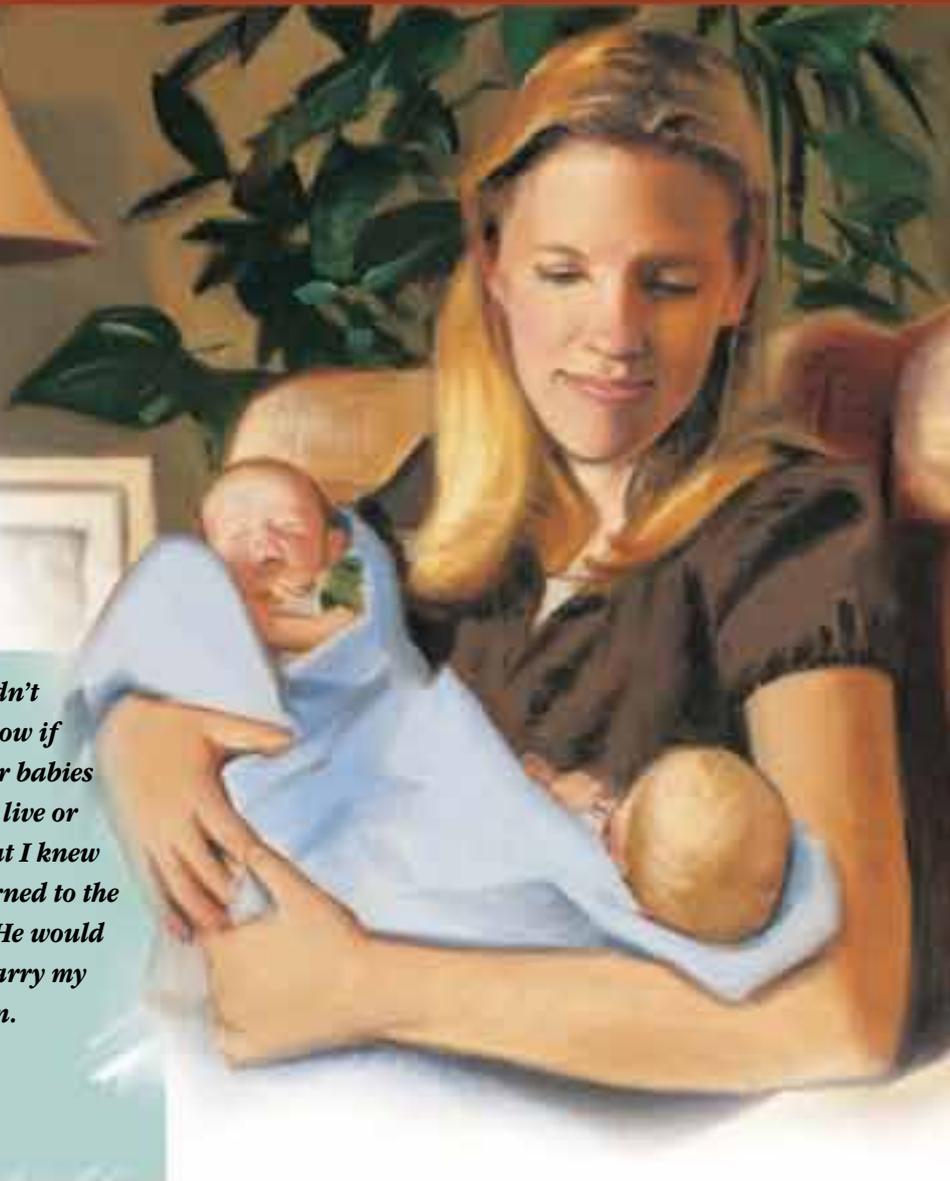
By Angela Lee

My life changed forever when my husband and I went to the doctor to check the gender and development of our unborn baby. I cried with joy when we discovered that I was expecting twins. But my tears turned to ones of despair as the doctor explained that a series of complications made it unlikely that the twins would survive until birth. The doctor suggested

terminating the pregnancy. She said proceeding would be risky and that I would have to be hospitalized at some point.

Despite the dangers, we decided to continue the pregnancy.

On the drive home I realized the severity of the situation. I wondered how I could leave my husband and our three children and stay for an extended period in the hospital. Knowing that our babies would likely be delivered prematurely—and might not live—became overwhelming for me. I wasn't sure I could endure this trial.



Only after I received a priesthood blessing from my husband and father-in-law did I feel peace. I realized that no matter what the outcome was, my family and I would be all right. I felt my Savior's love and knew that He would be with us in joy or in sorrow.

Some time later, I said good-bye to my family and entered the hospital for an indefinite stay. The babies' heart rates were monitored constantly to make sure the babies were safe. It was difficult for me to see their heart rates drop, and I wondered if they would make it to the delivery goal of 34 weeks. At 25½ weeks, one baby's heart rate dropped to a critical level, nearly stopping. The doctors decided that if his heart didn't start beating normally, both babies would be delivered by emergency cesarean section within minutes. I panicked when I heard the nurse call my husband and tell him that I was being prepared for surgery and that the neonatal team was standing by.

I knew that to get through this trial, I needed Heavenly Father's help. I prayed silently, pleading that

our baby would recover, thus allowing both twins the much-needed time to develop in utero. I also prayed for comfort. Once again I felt peace, just as I had when I received the priesthood blessing. I didn't know if our babies would live or die, but I knew that no matter what, if I turned to the Lord, He would help carry my burden. As it turned out, the baby's heartbeat returned to normal, and surgery was no longer necessary.

My stay at the hospital continued for the next two months, and there were many times we worried about our babies' fluctuating heart rates. But fortunately, neither of the twins' heart rates dropped as low as before. Our sons, John and Jacob, were born at 33 weeks. Their cords were intertwined with eight knots, and John—the son whose heart rate had dropped so low—had his cord wrapped around his neck twice. Our twins stayed in the hospital's intensive care unit so their body temperatures and breathing could be regulated. Despite the potential problems associated with

premature births, John and Jacob were able to come home after only 19 days.

Our twins are now toddlers, and

they have no negative effects from being born prematurely. I am grateful that what began as a trial became one of the greatest blessings of my life. I was given two healthy sons, and my testimony of the power of priesthood blessings and prayer was strengthened. I am also grateful to be able to recall the peace and love I felt in knowing that the Lord was aware of my situation. I learned then that, with the Lord's help, we will have the strength to endure our trials. ■

Could I Let Go of My Past?

By Marcos A. Walker

A positive and happy attitude is indispensable for people working in sales, as I do. Yet several years ago I was feeling discouraged and had no desire to talk to anyone. This was especially true one afternoon.

My countenance must have betrayed my poor spirits because one of my co-workers, with whom I had talked on many occasions, inquired about my situation. I explained that after being married for six years, my wife and I had divorced. This month marked the six-year anniversary of the divorce, so I had now been divorced for the same amount of time I had been married. My mind and heart were troubled, and my soul was filled with pain and sorrow. I





knew I was missing many of my children's experiences, and that realization was constant torture. Loneliness consumed me, and I saw no solution—or even hope—on the horizon. This, I told my co-worker, was the price I had to pay for my mistakes.

My colleague, who was a member of another Christian church, then responded. "What price are you talking about?" he asked. "Jesus Christ has paid the price, if you have truly repented of your sins. Or do you not remember why He came to earth?"

I was astonished by his reply, and his words left me speechless. They resonated inside me all afternoon. Yes—even though I lived with the

My soul was filled with pain and sorrow. This, I told my co-worker, was the price I had to pay for my mistakes.

consequences of my mistakes, Jesus Christ had paid the price. Why had I not realized this? I knew the doctrine, and I knew that it was true.

Recognizing that the Atonement had power in my life filled me with a feeling of peace and comfort that I still remember today.

Years have passed since this experience at work. I have learned that some consequences of our actions remain with us all of our lives. Many of them affect the lives of our loved ones. The loneliness has not been

easy, but it has helped me recognize my weaknesses and ask forgiveness of my Heavenly Father and the people who were most affected—my children and their mother.

In contrast with how I felt that afternoon, I can say that I now have peace and hope. I know that Jesus Christ has paid the price, and I have no doubt of this because I have repented. He has sustained me during these years of trials. Although my trials continue, I know that as I repent, turn to the Lord, and keep the commandments, He will continue to sustain me. ■

FAMILY HOME EVENING IDEAS

These teaching suggestions can be used in the classroom as well as in the home. You may tailor these ideas to your family or class.

“Enriching Your Study of the Doctrine and Covenants,”

p. 10: Discuss with older children different ways to go to Sunday School prepared to learn and participate. Invite them to set a specific goal to be better prepared for Sunday School this year, or set a family goal to work on together. Help younger children set goals that fit their abilities, such as bringing their scriptures to class, being on time, praying for the teacher, or raising their hands. Discuss ways you can help one another meet your goals.



“An Example of the Believers,”

p. 36: Have family members write down ways they have seen others be “an example of the believers.” Share your lists, and discuss ways each family member can be a good example. Set some goals to do so.

“The Talent Show,”

p. F8: Read the article, and point out what talent Marie discovered she had. To help family members discover their hidden talents, have each person describe a talent of the person on his or her left. If time permits, you may continue this process several times. Conclude by reading Moroni 7:47 and the sidebar quotation by Elder L. Tom Perry.

“Ben’s Week,” p. F14: Read the article, noting the courage Ben needed

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when asking his grandfather not to go shopping on Sunday. Discuss how family members can be brave when striving to keep the commandments. Role-play some situations that require courage to choose the right.

One Lesson That Changed Our Family Home Evenings

We have three young children, ages five, three, and one. Initially our family home evenings were disasters. The children would disruptively keep the attention on themselves. My wife and I felt almost defeated.

Then one Monday night, my wife taught about Samuel the Lamanite using flannel-board pictures as visuals. We all took turns posting the pictures on the board to correspond with the

characters in the account as they were mentioned. The children enjoyed the activity so much that we had our first peaceful and Spirit-filled family home evening in many months.

This lesson revolutionized our family home evenings. We began preparing more interactive lessons, and the children volunteered to do all sorts of things to make family home evening work. We also began devoting more time to planning our family home

evenings. We made sure that no two home evenings had the same agenda. The variety of activities helped to keep our children’s interest.

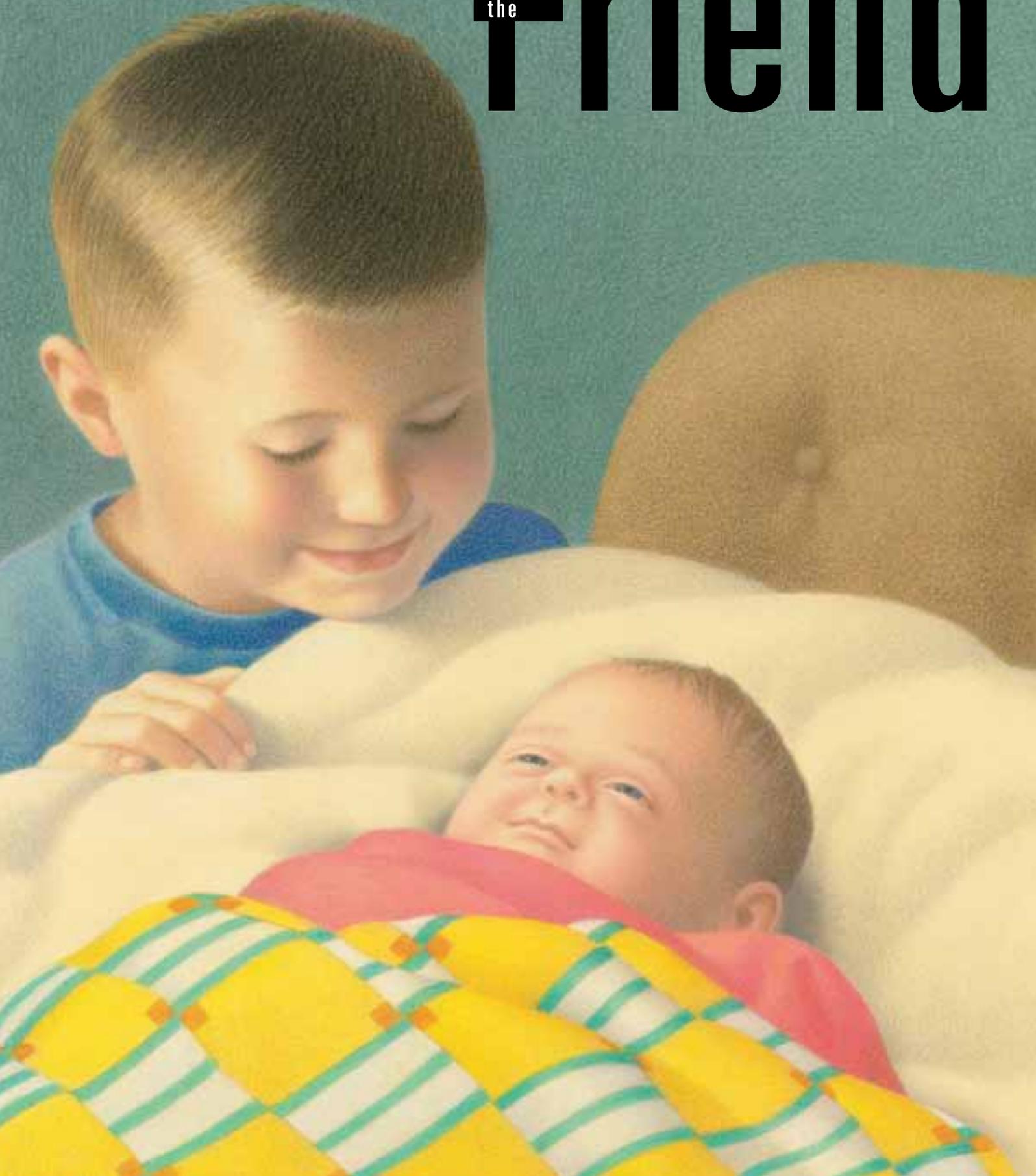
It has taken deliberate efforts on our part to institute and sustain these elements in our family home evenings. But our children now anticipate family home evening and participate in more constructive ways.

Francis O. and Ada U. Nmeribe, Abuja, Nigeria

YOUR FAVORITE HOME EVENING

Send a description of *your* favorite family home evening to liahona@ldschurch.org.

the Friend



Becoming Like Jesus Christ



President Uchtdorf explains what it means to develop Christlike qualities.

BY PRESIDENT DIETER F. UCHTDORF

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

Jesus Christ instructed His Apostles at the beginning of His mortal ministry, “[Come,] follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19). We need to “follow Him,” and as we do this, the Savior will bless us beyond our own capacity to become what He wants us to be.

To follow Christ is to become more like Him. It is to learn from His character. The Savior invites us to learn His gospel by living His teachings. Ancient and modern prophets described it with three words: “Keep the commandments”—nothing more, nothing less.

The scriptures describe a number of Christlike attributes we need to develop during the course of our lives. They include knowledge and humility, charity and love, obedience and diligence, faith and hope. Christlike attributes are gifts from God. They cannot be developed without His help. The one help we all need is given to us freely through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

Having faith in Jesus Christ and in His Atonement means relying completely on Him—trusting in His infinite power,

intelligence, and love. When we have faith in Christ, we trust the Lord enough to follow His commandments—even when we do not completely understand the reasons for them. In seeking to become more like the Savior, we need to rely, through the path of true repentance, upon the merits of Jesus Christ and the blessings of His Atonement.

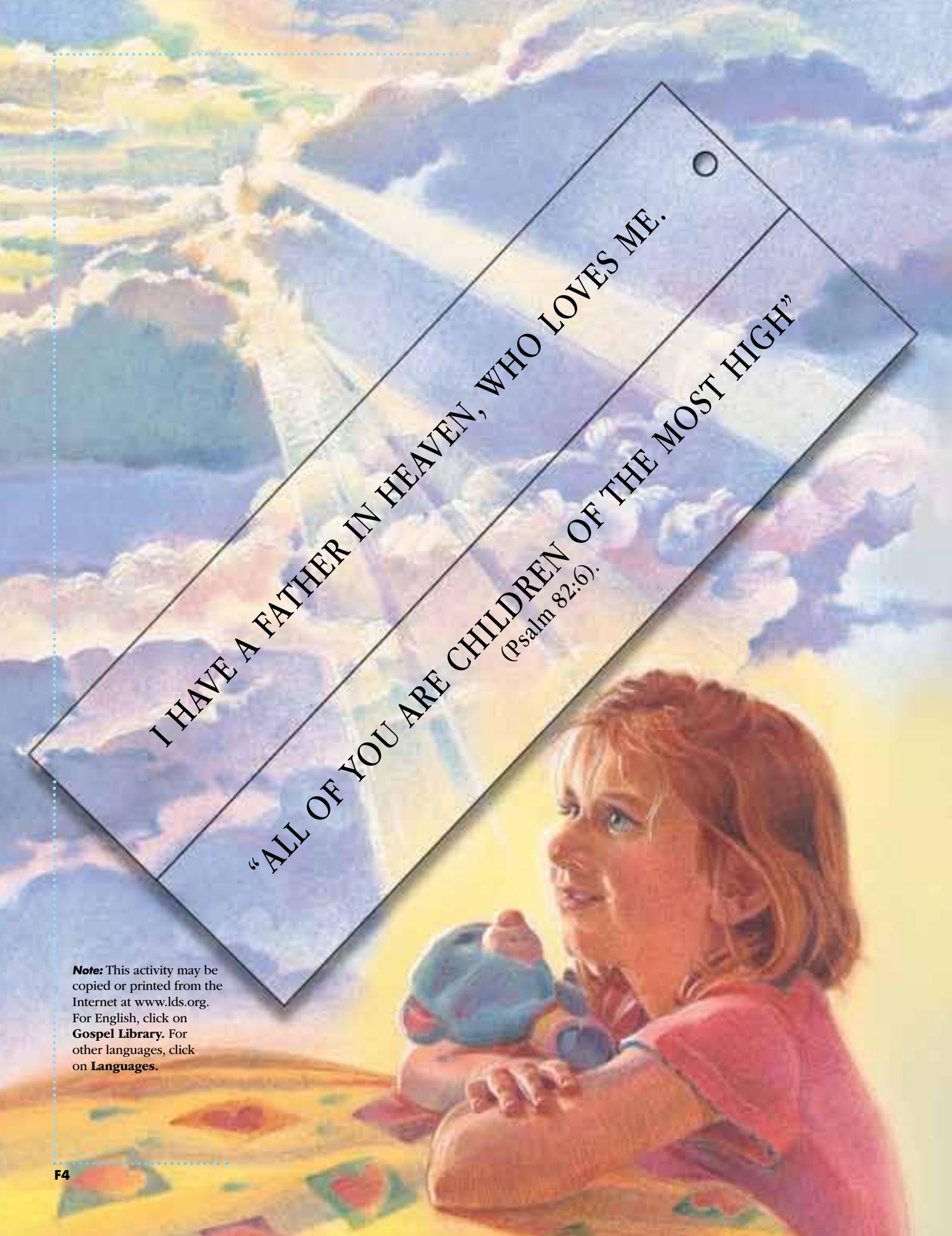
As we develop Christlike attributes in our own lives, step-by-step, they will “bear [us] up as on eagles’ wings” (D&C 124:18). Both faith and hope will carry us across oceans of temptations, over mountains of afflictions, and bring us safely back to our eternal home and destination. ●

From an October 2005 general conference address.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. The scriptures help us learn what Jesus is like. What is one of your favorite scripture stories about Jesus?
2. Jesus was humble and faithful. What are some other words that describe Him?
3. We learn to be like Jesus step-by-step. What is one thing you can do to show your love for a friend or a member of your family?





I HAVE A FATHER IN HEAVEN, WHO LOVES ME.

“ALL OF YOU ARE CHILDREN OF THE MOST HIGH”
(Psalm 82:6).

Note: This activity may be copied or printed from the Internet at www.lds.org. For English, click on **Gospel Library**. For other languages, click on **Languages**.

I Have a Father in Heaven, Who Loves Me

**“All of you are children of the most High”
(Psalm 82:6).**

BY CHERYL ESPLIN



How can you really know that you are a child of God? Many children do not know that they have a Father in Heaven, who loves them and who can help them. Many children do not know they lived with Heavenly Father before they came to earth. They do not know they can pray to Him. Like you, they have forgotten what it was like to live in heaven.

You have scriptures, prophets, the Holy Ghost, and a family to teach and remind you what it was like to live with Heavenly Father as His child. The scriptures teach that in heaven you received your first lessons and were prepared to come to earth (see D&C 138:56). They also teach that the Holy Ghost “beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Romans 8:16). The songs “I Am a Child of God” and “I Lived in Heaven” (*Children’s Songbook*, 2–3, 4) can remind you of who you are and where you came from.

Heavenly Father wants you to remember that He is the Father of your spirit; He created you. When you say your prayers, ask Heavenly Father to help you remember that you are His child. The Holy Ghost can help you think and act as a child of God.

Activity

Cut out the bookmark on page F4, and mount it on heavier paper. Fold it in half. Glue the backs together, and punch a hole at the top. Tie ribbon or yarn through the hole. Use this bookmark in your scriptures to remind you that you have a Heavenly Father, who knows you, loves you, and will always hear and answer your prayers.

Sharing Time Ideas

1. Using Primary 6, page 2, prepare drawings and wordstrips of the plan of salvation figures and display them in order. Begin by telling the children that Heavenly Father loves us and

has given us a perfect plan. Jesus Christ is the central figure in the plan, and if we follow Him, we can return to live with our Father in Heaven. Divide the Primary into four groups, and assign each a different phase of existence.

Hand out paper, pencils or crayons, scripture references, and a song or action (listed below). Have each group read their scriptures, then draw one thing that happens in that phase of the plan. When the groups are ready, teach the plan of salvation in order, using the groups to help you teach each part. **Premortal life:** D&C 138:56; Moses 4:2; Abraham 3:22–23 (action: raising hands and whispering, “Hurrah!”). **Earth life:** Abraham 3:24–25; Articles of Faith 1:3 (song: “Keep the Commandments,” *Children’s Songbook*, 146–47). **Spirit world:** Alma 40:11–14; D&C 138:30–32.

Kingdoms of glory: *testial*—D&C 76:81; *terrestrial*—D&C 76:71; *celestial*—D&C 76:92–96 (song: “Families Can Be Together Forever,” *Children’s Songbook*, 188).

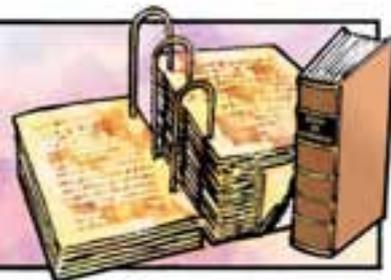
2. Show a picture of a temple. Ask: “What do you think about when you see a temple or a picture of one? Why do you think people work so hard to keep the temple beautiful and clean?” Explain that a temple is a sacred, holy place. Help the children memorize 1 Corinthians 3:16. Explain that just like the temple, our bodies are sacred and holy. We need to take good care of them. Show Gospel Art Picture Kit 114 (*Daniel Refusing the King’s Meat and Wine*). Tell what happened to Daniel and his friends when they treated their bodies like temples (see Daniel 1:5–20). Display objects that represent sleep, good food, exercise, cleanliness, and modesty (examples: pillow, fruit, ball, comb, necktie). Have the children pass around the objects while they sing a song about temples. Stop the music frequently, and invite the children holding an object to tell one thing they can do to treat their bodies like temples. Testify that just like the temple, our bodies are sacred and holy. ●





FROM THE LIFE OF THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH

The Publication of the Book of Mormon



In 1829 Joseph Smith, with the help of his scribe Oliver Cowdery, finished translating the Book of Mormon.

Oliver, the Lord is pleased with us.

Now we just need to publish this great book.

Joseph and Oliver went to Palmyra, New York, and spoke to Egbert B. Grandin, a printer.

We need 5,000 copies of this book as soon as possible.

It will cost \$3,000.

Since you want so many copies and this is such a big book, it may take me over a year.

Several months later Mr. Grandin became worried that Joseph would not pay. He stopped the printing of the Book of Mormon until he could be sure.

I mortgaged my farm to print the Book of Mormon. That should put Mr. Grandin at ease.

That's wonderful, Martin!



Mr. Grandin had a new press that made the printing process much faster than earlier presses. Still, it took him a long time.

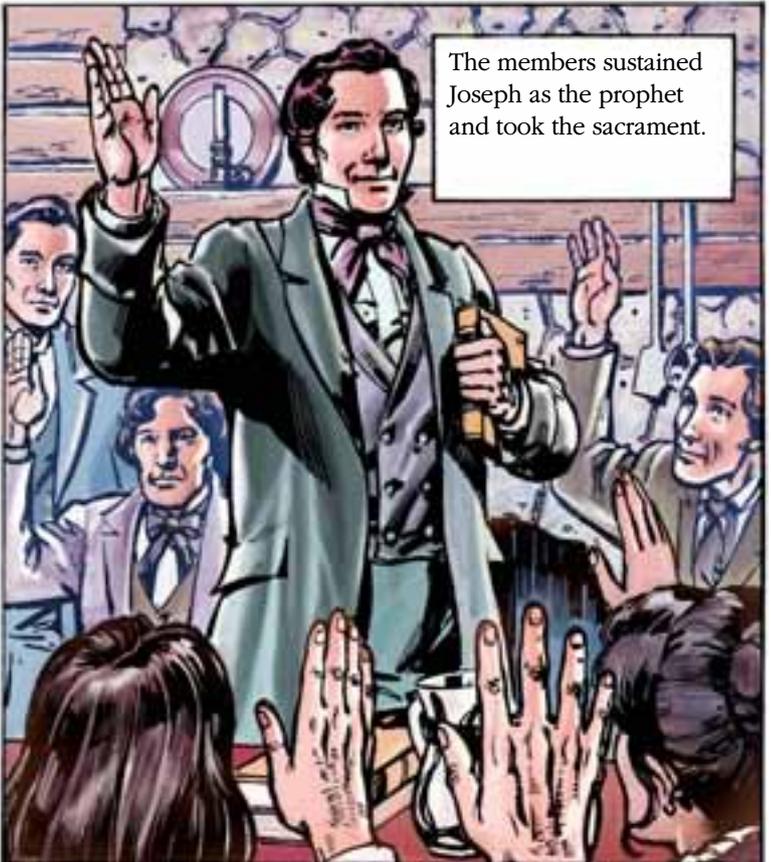
Mr. Grandin, we're almost finished, and it has been only seven months!

I don't completely understand how.

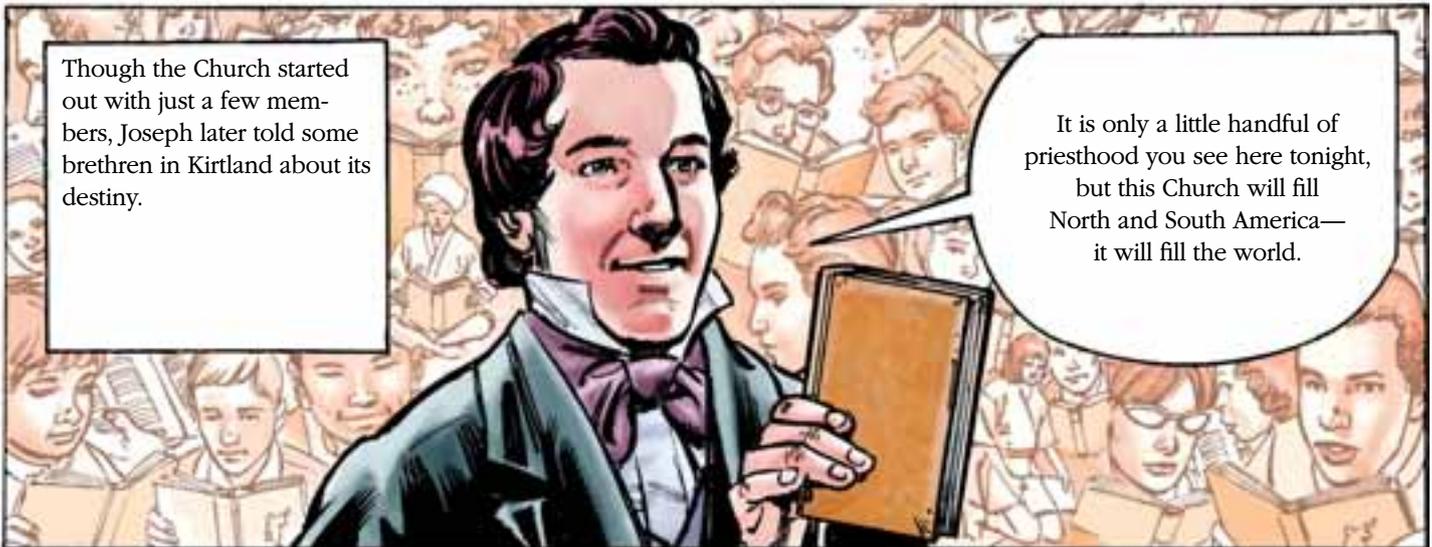


Once the Book of Mormon was published, the Lord commanded Joseph to organize the Church. On April 6, 1830, about 60 people met in the home of Peter Whitmer Sr.

Welcome, brothers and sisters.



The members sustained Joseph as the prophet and took the sacrament.



Though the Church started out with just a few members, Joseph later told some brethren in Kirtland about its destiny.

It is only a little handful of priesthood you see here tonight, but this Church will fill North and South America—it will fill the world.

Adapted from Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society course of study, 2007), 8–9, 135–37; and History of the Church, 1:71–80.

The Talent Show

“But charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him” (Moroni 7:47).

BY ALISON PALMER

Based on a true story

Marie looked out the car window as she and her Primary class drove to the nursing home. She hoped none of the girls noticed the tears that filled her eyes.

When Sister Gibson had suggested the talent show for an activity day, it seemed like such



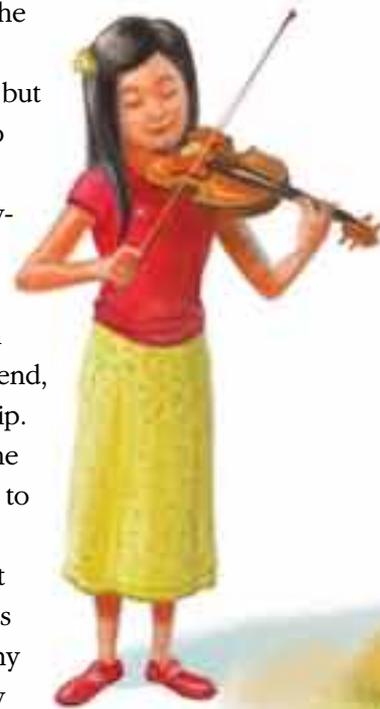
a good idea. Every girl had gone to work planning the talent she would share.

Marie had tried, but she hadn't been able to come up with anything to do.

A couple of the girls were playing the piano. One girl was playing the violin, and one was singing. Another was reciting a poem she'd written, and Marie's best friend, Shelley, was going to do a backflip. Andrea wasn't performing, but she had made cookies for everybody to have after the show.

The more Marie thought about the talent show, the more she was convinced that she didn't have any talents. She wasn't even sure why she had come. Sister Gibson had tried to make her feel better, telling her that she hadn't yet discovered a very special talent that Heavenly Father had given her. But that was hard for Marie to believe. She didn't think she'd ever be good at anything.

The gathering room at the nursing home was quiet. There were old people everywhere, and that made Marie even more nervous. She didn't know what to say to them or how to act. The other girls seemed to feel the same way too. They were huddled together, shyly looking around until Sister Gibson showed them where to sit.



Marie still felt bad as the program started. Then, just after the first piano solo, she heard someone coughing behind her. Marie turned around and saw a gray-haired woman whose body shook with each cough.

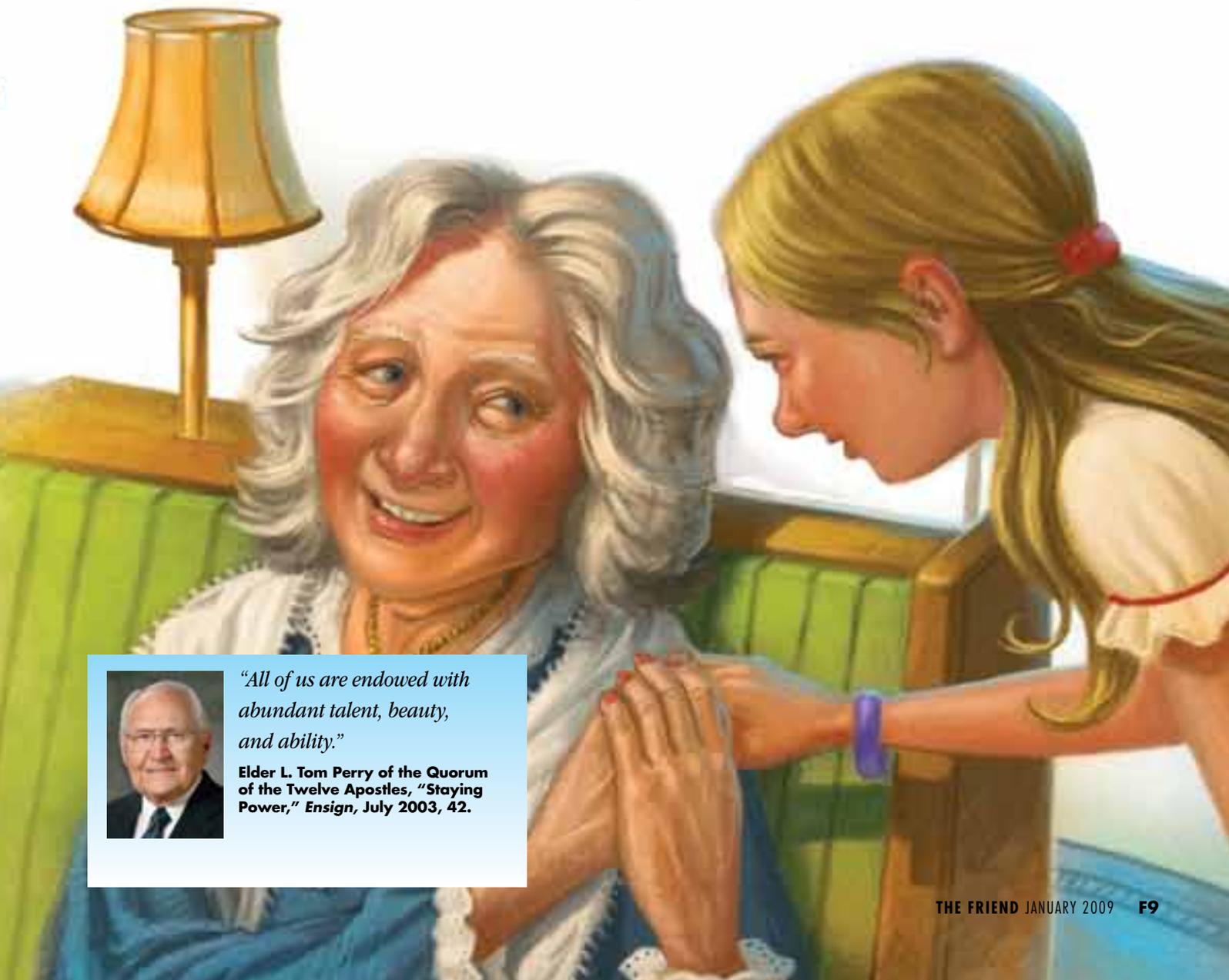
Marie stopped thinking about herself and started to worry about the woman. She quietly dug a hard candy out of her pocket and went to the woman. She put her hand on the woman's shoulder and held out the small gift. When the wrinkled hand reached for it and the woman smiled at her, Marie felt happiness and peace.

Marie stayed by the woman for the rest of the

program. She held her hand and sometimes told her about what was happening. It felt good to be doing something for someone else, and it kept her from feeling sorry for herself.

When it was time to leave, the woman hugged Marie and whispered, "Thank you for talking to me. You have a real talent for making people feel loved."

On the way back to the church, Marie was grateful to know that she did have a talent after all. When she served others, she felt Heavenly Father's love, and she helped others feel His love too. That was a pretty special talent to have. ●



"All of us are endowed with abundant talent, beauty, and ability."

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Staying Power," *Ensign*, July 2003, 42.

With All Your Heart

Children all over the world love and worship Jesus Christ—just like you! This month, let's meet Ricardo Fortuna of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

BY RICHARD M. ROMNEY

Church Magazines

Whatever Ricardo Fortuna does, he does with enthusiasm. This eight-year-old from Santo Domingo in the

Dominican Republic plays baseball with the energy of a professional. He joins his friend and his brother to race toy trucks or stage an imaginary battle between dinosaurs. He gets excited when his mother invites him into the kitchen to cook *tostones* (fried plantains).

Ricardo eagerly joins in during family home evening. He prays earnestly with his family every morning and evening. He reads and reads his scriptures. And he wishes he could go to Primary more than once a week! Whatever Ricardo does, he does with his heart.

There is one thing that Ricardo does with *all* his heart—he loves the Lord. He knows it is a commandment because he read it in the Bible: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” (Matthew 22:37).

“That means you love Him all that you can,” Ricardo says. That love was particularly evident in his family’s apartment as they celebrated Christmas. Each night the family read scriptures about the Savior’s birth. Some told about what happened in the Holy Land. Others told about what happened in the New World.

Ricardo says it is important to remember Jesus Christ at Christmas because that’s when people celebrate His birth. “But it’s important to think about Jesus every day and to follow His example,” he says. “We should remember that He taught us about Heavenly Father and how to worship Him and that He also sent us the Holy Ghost.”

Inside the front door of the Fortuna family’s apartment hangs a large painting of the Savior. No matter where in the room you go, you can



PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICHARD M. ROMNEY, EXCEPT AS NOTED

see Him. “It reminds us to think of Him,” Ricardo says, “not only at Christmas but all through the year.”

Ricardo’s Favorite Scripture

Ricardo loves the Articles of Faith, particularly number five, which he can recite *muy rápidamente* (very quickly). “We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof,” he quotes. “That tells us that the Lord calls the leaders of His Church and that we teach the gospel with authority.”

Fun Food

It takes time to make his favorite treat, *tostones*, but Ricardo thinks it is worth every minute. He and his mother carefully peel and slice the plantains, which look like bananas but are not sweet.

They fry them in hot oil, let them cool, and carefully

pat them dry. Then comes Ricardo’s favorite part. He places each slice in a wooden press and smashes it flat. Then each slice is fried again. He particularly likes to eat *tostones* with sausage.

Good Examples

Ricardo often plays with his little brother, Marcus, and with another friend, Manuel, a Latter-day Saint who lives in a neighboring apartment. He knows that true friends encourage each other to do what is right.



Ricardo says it is important to think about Jesus Christ every day. With his father, he often looks at the painting that hangs in their apartment, and Ricardo reads scriptures about the Savior’s life.

ATLANTIC OCEAN

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS SANTO DOMINGO,
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC?

CUBA

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

PUERTO RICO

HAITI

SANTO DOMINGO



“Because they look to me for an example, I must set a good example for them,” he says.

Ricardo is also close to his mother and father. “I love my mama and my papa,” he says. “They help me, and they play with me. They teach me, and they read with me. They say prayers with me every morning and every night.”

He also looks to President Thomas S. Monson as an example. “I know that he is a prophet of God and that he speaks the word of God,” Ricardo says. “I know he says his prayers and reads his scriptures, so I should too.”

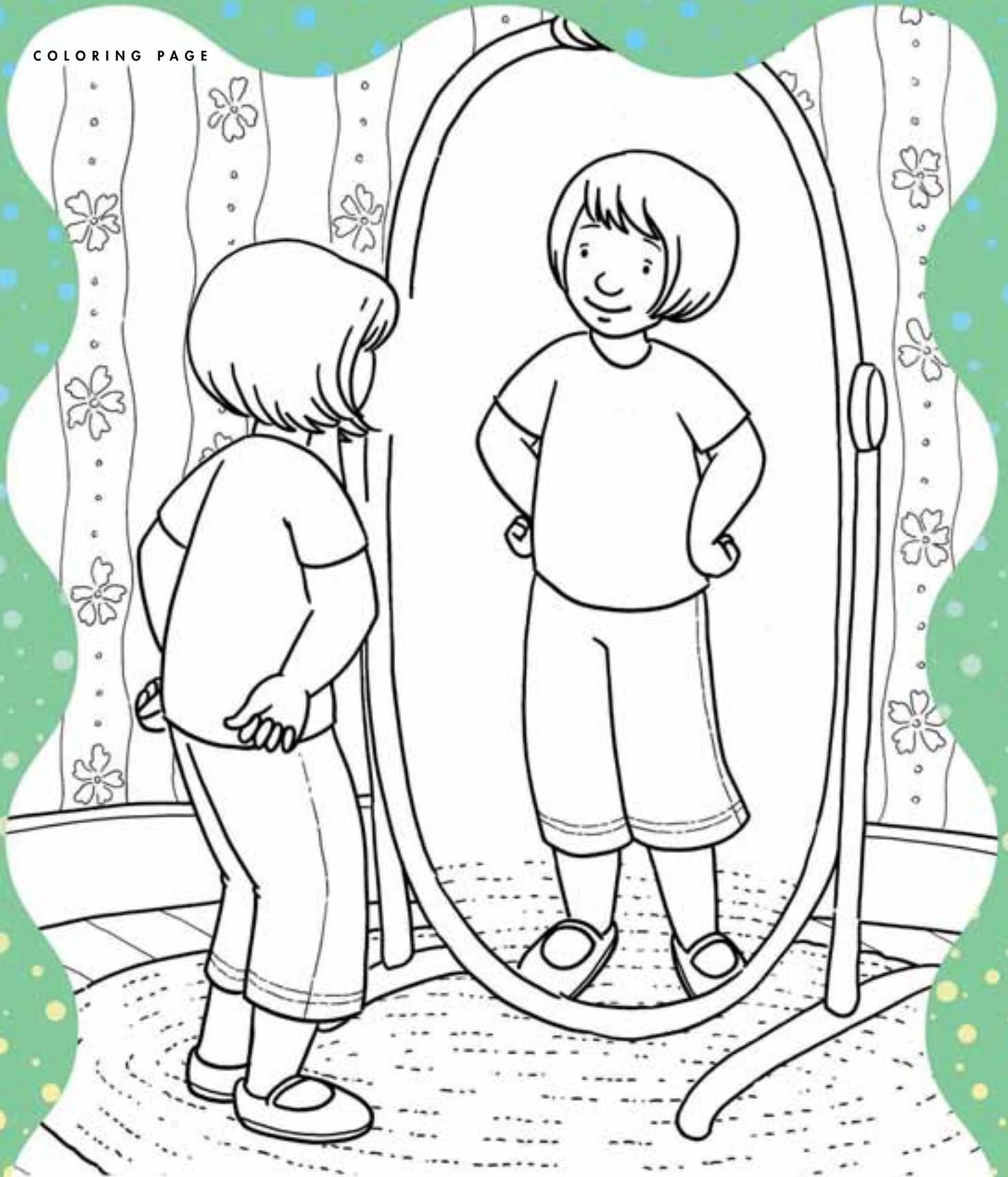
And Ricardo says Jesus Christ is the greatest example. “He teaches us to do what is right, to be obedient, to pray correctly, and to be reverent and respectful.” ●



Ricardo lives in the Dominican Republic, which shares an island with Haiti. He cooks plantains and sausage, enjoys baseball, and plays with toy dinosaurs and trucks.



MAP © MOUNTAIN HIGH MAPS



I AM A SPIRIT CHILD OF HEAVENLY FATHER

“All of you are children of the most High” (Psalm 82:6).

Ben's Week

BY LANA KRUMWIEDE

Based on a true story

"The Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it"
(*Mosiah 13:19*).

Ben rested his arm on the suitcase next to him in the car. Mom and Dad were driving him to Grandpa's house. Ben was going to stay with his grandpa for one whole week. No brothers, no baby sister—just Ben and Grandpa.

Ben had talked to Grandpa about their week together. Grandpa said it was Ben's week and they could do all of Ben's favorite things. Ben looked out the window. Did he remember to pack everything? He had packed his lucky fishing hat, his sunglasses, and his favorite books.

"Now, remember," Mom said from the front seat, "Grandpa isn't a member of our church. He's a good person and a good grandpa. But some things at his house will seem different to you."

"Like what?" Ben knew his grandpa didn't go to church. But he hadn't thought about how that would be different.

"You might have to remind him that you don't drink iced tea," Dad said.

"OK," Ben said.

"You won't be able to go to church on Sunday, but you can keep the Sabbath day holy in other ways," Mom said.

"I will," Ben said.

When they arrived at Grandpa's house, Grandpa was waiting for them on the porch. Ben was the first one out of the car. "Grandpa!"

"How's my favorite seven-year-old?" Grandpa gave Ben a big hug.

"Are you ready for your very own special week? You get to choose what we do together."

"Can we go fishing?" Ben asked. "I brought my lucky fishing hat."

"Sure we can," Grandpa said.

"And can we go to the zoo?" Ben asked. "I brought my sunglasses."

"Sure we can," Grandpa said.

"And can we read together?" Ben asked. "I brought my favorite books."

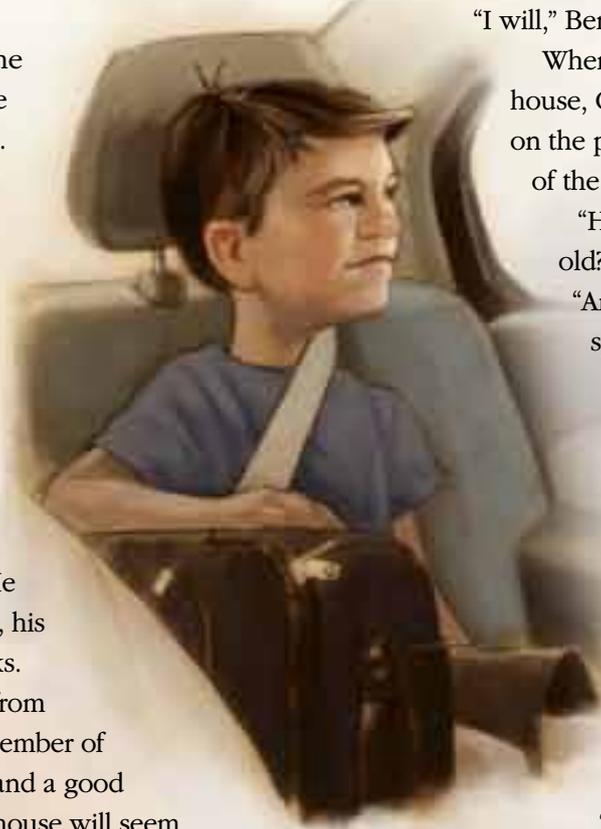
"Sure we can," Grandpa said. "And I think we need a shopping trip so you can pick out a toy at the store."

"Wow," Ben said. "This is going to be a great week!"

On Friday, Grandpa and Ben went fishing.

On Saturday, Grandpa and Ben went to the zoo.

The next day, Grandpa made pancakes for breakfast.





*"Be a true Latter-day Saint.
. . . Keep the Sabbath day
holy."*

**President Ezra Taft Benson
(1899–1994), "To the Children
of the Church," *Ensign*, May
1989, 82.**



"Today is our shopping day," Grandpa said.

"Yippee!" Ben exclaimed. "What kind of toy should I get?"

Then Ben remembered—it was Sunday. How could he explain to Grandpa about not shopping on Sunday?

After breakfast Ben said a prayer in his room. He asked Heavenly Father to help him explain to Grandpa about keeping the Sabbath day holy.

After the prayer Ben sat on his bed. Grandpa called to Ben, "Just let me put on my shoes, and we'll be off."

Ben took a deep breath and stood up. He found Grandpa tying his shoes.

"Grandpa, thank you for taking me fishing and to the zoo. But I think today we should take a rest."

"What do you mean?" Grandpa asked. "I promised to take you shopping."

"I know, but do you think we could go another day?"

"Are you OK? Are you sick?"

"No, Grandpa," Ben said. "Today is Sunday. At my house we don't go shopping on Sunday."

Grandpa didn't say anything.

"Can we stay home today?" Ben asked. "We can take a walk. We can read books."

Grandpa smiled at Ben. "Sure we can," he said. "It's your very own week, so you get to choose."

Ben gave Grandpa a big hug. "I knew this would be a great week," Ben said. ●





"By Small and Simple Things Are Great Things Brought to Pass" (Alma 37:6), by David Koch

Young Lucy Mack Smith reads the Bible to her sons Joseph and Hyrum in the log home near the Sacred Grove, in Palmyra Township, New York. From this humble beginning, Joseph grew to become prophet of the last dispensation, through whom the fulness of the gospel was restored to the earth. On June 27, 1844, these two boys—then grown men—died as martyrs and witnesses to the truthfulness of the Restoration.



“The boy Joseph went into the grove seeking wisdom, and wisdom he received. His apostolic instruction had begun. Among the great apostolic lessons of this First Vision were both the physical nature of the Savior and Heavenly Father and the initial and fundamental lessons relating to Their power—each a pillar of apostolic testimony,” writes Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander. See “Joseph Smith: An Apostle of Jesus Christ,” page 28.