

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • JANUARY 2018

Liahona




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ONE OF GOD'S
GREATEST GIFTS
TO US IS THE **JOY OF**
TRYING AGAIN,
FOR **NO FAILURE**
EVER NEED BE FINAL.

PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON

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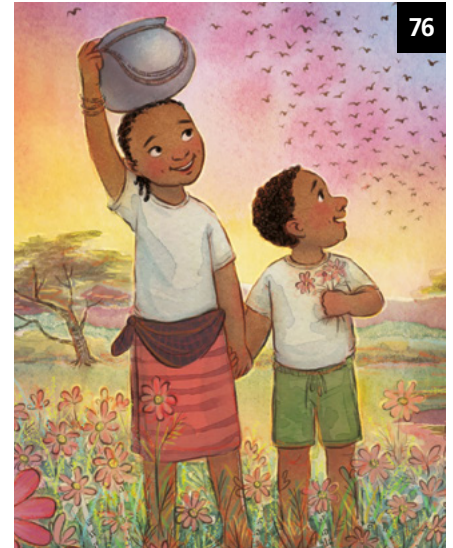
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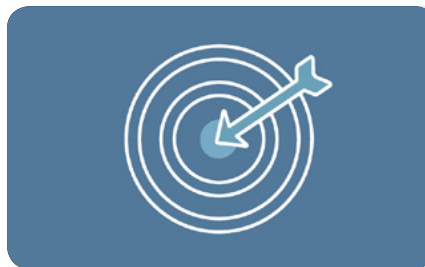
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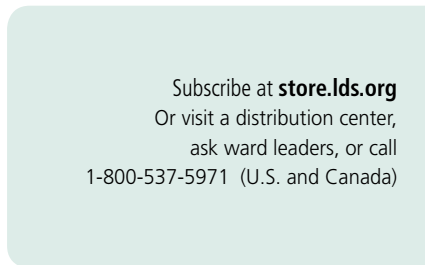
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By President
Thomas S. Monson

THE GIFT OF REPENTANCE

“Our responsibility is to rise from mediocrity to competence, from failure to achievement,” President Thomas S. Monson has taught. “Our task is to become our best selves. One of God’s greatest gifts to us is the joy of trying again, for no failure ever need be final.”¹

We often associate the advent of a new year with resolutions and goals. We resolve to improve, to change, to try again. Perhaps the most important way we can try again is by embracing what President Monson has called “the gift of repentance.”²

In the following excerpts from his teachings since he became President of the Church, President Monson counsels us to “apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified.”³

The Miracle of Forgiveness

“We have all made incorrect choices. If we have not already corrected such choices, I assure you that there is a way to do so. The process is called repentance. I plead with you to correct your mistakes. Our Savior died to provide you and me that blessed gift. Although the path is not easy, the promise is real: ‘Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow’ [Isaiah 1:18]. ‘And I, the Lord, remember them no more’ [D&C 58:42]. Don’t put your eternal life at risk. If you have sinned, the sooner you begin to make your way back, the sooner you will

find the sweet peace and joy that come with the miracle of forgiveness.”⁴

Return to the Path

“Although it is imperative that we choose wisely, there are times when we will make foolish choices. The gift of repentance, provided by our Savior, enables us to correct our course settings, that we might return to the path which will lead us to that celestial glory we seek.”⁵

The Way Back

“If any of you has stumbled in his journey, I assure you that there is a way back. The process is called repentance. Although the path is difficult, your eternal salvation depends on it. What could be more worthy of your efforts? I plead with you to determine right here and now to take the steps necessary to fully repent. The sooner you do so, the sooner you will be able to experience the peace and the quietness and the assurance spoken of by Isaiah [see Isaiah 1:18].”⁶

People Can Change

“We need to bear in mind that people can change. They can put behind them bad habits. They can repent from transgressions. They can bear the priesthood worthily. And they can serve the Lord diligently.”⁷



TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

All of us are imperfect—only through the gift of repentance made possible by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ can we be cleansed from sin and improve our lives. Consider discussing with those you teach how we “correct our course settings” through repentance. How have they felt nearer to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ through positive changes they have made in their lives? You could invite those you teach to write spiritual resolutions for the new year and to be accountable to a friend, spouse, or other family member for their progress.

Become Clean Again

“Should there be anything amiss in your life, there is open to you a way out. Cease any unrighteousness. Talk with your bishop. Whatever the problem, it can be worked out through proper repentance. You can become clean once again.”⁸

The Savior’s Essential Role

“Essential to the plan [of salvation] is our Savior, Jesus Christ. Without His atoning sacrifice, all would be lost. It is not enough, however, merely to believe in Him and His mission. We need to work and learn, search and pray, repent and improve. We need to know God’s laws and live them. We need to receive His saving ordinances. Only by so doing will we obtain true, eternal happiness.”⁹ ■

NOTES

1. “The Will Within,” *Ensign*, May 1987, 68.
2. “Choices,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2016, 86.
3. Mosiah 4:2.
4. “The Three Rs of Choice,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 69.
5. “Choices,” 86.
6. “Keep the Commandments,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 85.
7. “See Others as They May Become,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 68.
8. “Priesthood Power,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 67.
9. “The Perfect Path to Happiness,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 80–81.



Resolve to Repent

While goals for the new year can help us grow, the best way to change is through repentance.



See also “Eight Myths about Repentance” at lds.org/go/1186.

President Monson explains that “our responsibility is to rise from mediocrity to competence, from failure to achievement. Our task is to become our best selves.” Many people dedicate January to making goals and resolutions of improvement: to smile more, eat healthier, or learn a new skill. While these goals can help you change for the better, the best way to change is through repentance.

Though repentance can be hard, it is a gift! As we rely on Jesus Christ by repenting of our sins, we are able to grow and progress. President Monson said, “Essential to the plan [of salvation] is our Savior, Jesus Christ. Without His atoning sacrifice, all would be lost.” Through repentance, you can be washed clean of your sins and progress to become more like Him.

Think of something that may be keeping you from becoming like the Savior. Is it your language? How you treat your friends or family? After thinking of what you could improve, pray to Heavenly Father and express your desire to change. Remember that through the power of His Atonement, Jesus Christ can help you overcome your weakness. As President Monson taught, “The gift of repentance, provided by our Savior, enables us to correct our course settings.”

CHILDREN

Repentance Is a Gift

The gift of repentance isn’t a gift that you can see or touch. Instead, it’s a gift that you can feel. This means that when we make a wrong choice, we can repent and feel peace and happiness again.

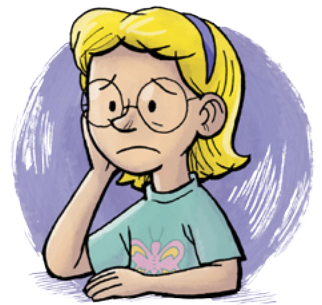
Heavenly Father and Jesus will always help us repent. Match each picture with a different step of repentance.

We feel sorry.

We pray to Heavenly Father, tell Him what happened, and ask for His help to make a better choice next time.

We apologize and try to make it better.

We feel peace and know that we have been forgiven.



Keep In Touch with Her Anytime, Anywhere, Any Way

Visiting teaching is about ministering. Jesus ministered anytime and anywhere. We can do the same.



Faith, Family, Relief

To “minister” is to give service, care, or aid that contributes to the comfort or happiness of another. Visiting teaching is about discovering ways to minister to those we visit. Jesus Christ ministered to all—anytime and anywhere. He fed the 5,000, comforted Mary and Martha at the death of their brother, and taught His gospel to the woman at the well. He did it because of His sincere love.

Following His example, as visiting teachers we can come to know and love each sister we visit, remembering that love is the foundation of all we do. When we pray for inspiration to know how to serve her and help her strengthen her faith, “the angels

cannot be restrained from being [our] associates.”¹

From the organization of Relief Society in 1842 to today, the ministering of women has blessed lives. For example, Joan Johnson, an 82-year-old widow, and her visiting teaching companion visit their neighbor who is 89 and has pneumonia. They could see that their neighbor didn’t just need them once a month, so they began checking in on her every week in person or by phone.

For other visiting teachers, sending a text or email giving encouragement might be the best thing to do for a sister that month. Making personal

connections and listening with an attitude of love is the essence of visiting teaching. Modern technology and time-honored face-to-face visits help us do it anytime, anywhere, and in many ways.² That is ministering as Jesus did.

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 454.
2. See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 9.5.1.



Consider This

How do we stop worrying about “what counts” for visiting teaching and instead focus on what each sister needs from her visiting teachers?

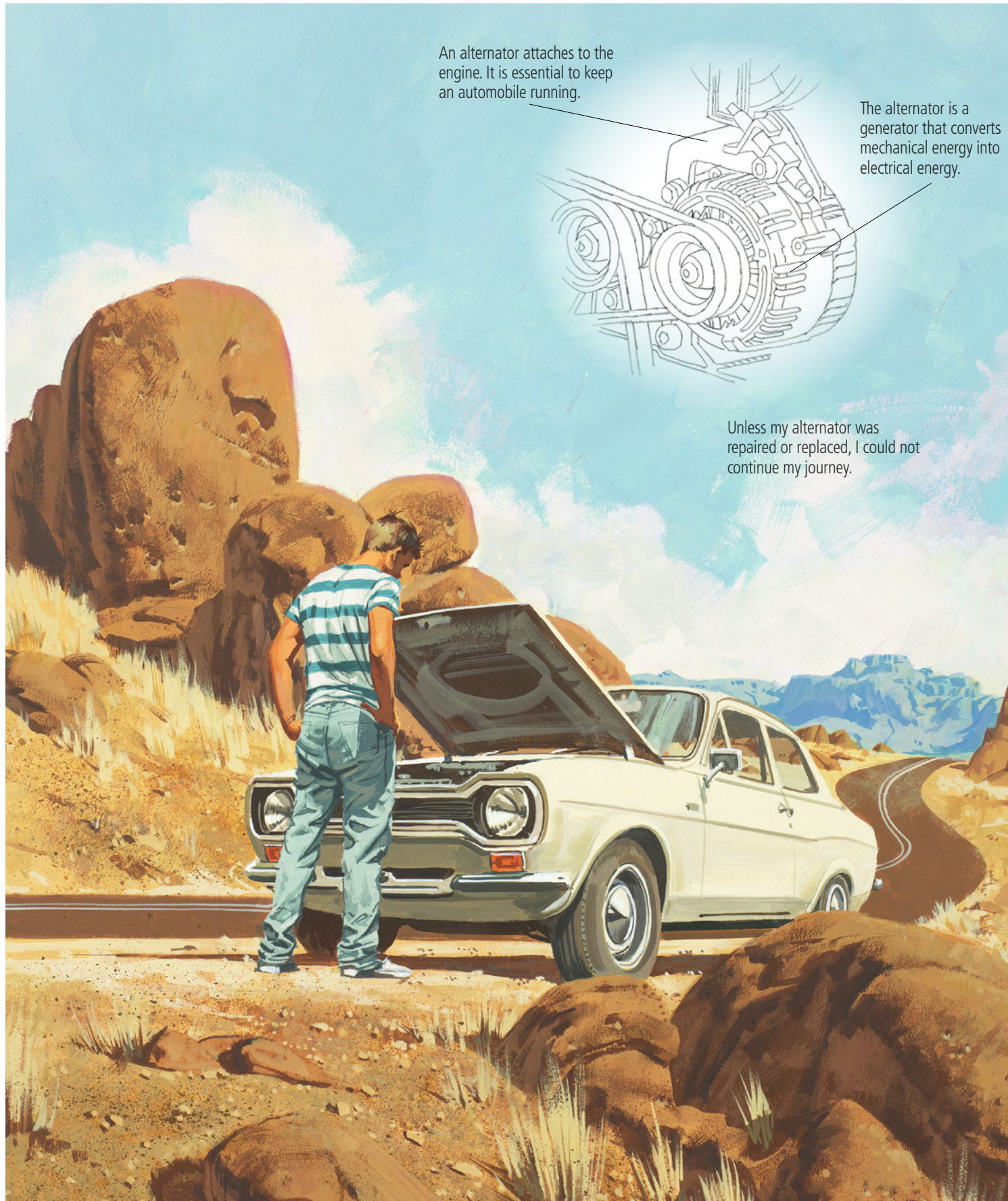
Ministering

Rather than provide a specific message, each month this page will feature a different principle to help us minister more effectively to each other. As you pray and seek inspiration, you will know the spiritual message and service each sister needs.

An alternator attaches to the engine. It is essential to keep an automobile running.

The alternator is a generator that converts mechanical energy into electrical energy.

Unless my alternator was repaired or replaced, I could not continue my journey.





By Elder
W. Mark Bassett
Of the Seventy

Look and Live

*When we turn toward God,
we generate a constant source
of spiritual renewal.*

As I was growing up, it was a regular event for my family to drive between Northern California and Utah, USA. It wasn't the journey through the desert we enjoyed; it was the arrival at the destination and the joy of visits with family members there.

The summer before I left for my full-time mission, I traveled once again to visit relatives in Utah. But this time my younger brother David and I traveled alone. We were 16 and 18 at the time. We had made the 10-hour journey often enough with our family that we had high confidence in our ability to travel well.

We visited our Uncle Kay, Aunt Dianne, and cousin Michelle. Then, while David extended his visit, I had to return to California on my own for a dental appointment.

Nightfall was approaching when I left Spanish Fork, Utah, to begin an overnight drive. Everything went well in the beginning. I soon left the highway that goes south and north and took the one that goes east and west. I turned on my headlights and hurried across western Utah. As the miles passed and the desert night became darker and darker, I noticed that I was having more and more difficulty seeing the road. Finally, I realized my headlights were becoming increasingly dim. They finally went out, the engine stalled, and the car rolled to a halt on the side of the interstate.

The battery was dead. The car could not go any farther. Although I had been careful to make sure I had plenty of fuel and had even noted where I would stop for gas, I was not prepared for the complete loss of electrical power.

What Is an Alternator?

I was raised by a father who prided himself in personally maintaining our family automobiles. He taught us about auto mechanics, so I knew that a good battery would not die while the car was running unless there was a problem with the alternator. An alternator is an electrical generator that converts mechanical energy into electrical energy. It uses the kinetic energy of the running engine to produce magnetic energy that is transformed into electric current that continually recharges the battery. This allows the headlights, radio, air conditioning, and other electrical devices to operate without interruption. It also keeps the engine running.

Now something was wrong with my car's alternator. It needed to be repaired or replaced before my journey could continue.

In an age before cell phones, my only choice was to begin walking. Eventually, a man picked me up and drove me to the next town. At a pay phone I called for a tow truck. I sat in the cab with the driver during the one-hour

trip back to the car. Then I sat with him again as we drove back to the small town with my car in tow. Finally, four hours after first leaving my car, I was back inside it, sleeping in front of a service station until it opened.

When the manager arrived, he laughed at the idea that his small town would have the part I needed. He could place an order, but it wouldn't arrive for two or three days. Then he took pity on me. He told me he could put my battery on a charger for about three hours. That might give me enough power to drive the car to the next town. Perhaps they would have the part I needed.

With the battery charged, I set off without turning on anything that would waste precious electricity. I made it to the next town, but they didn't have the part I needed either. This cycle continued—a three-hour charge for a two-hour drive from one town to the next. After finding kind people in towns all along the way, I finally pulled in my parents' driveway, exhausted after a 30-hour journey but safely home.

Spiritual Manna

There's a parallel between my journey and the desert journey of the Israelites in Old Testament times. For 40 years the Israelites were constantly replenished by food from heaven called *manna*. (See Exodus chapter 16 and Numbers chapter 11.)

In our day we have a similar need for food from heaven, spiritual food. Fortunately, we can create a “spiritual alternator” that will “generate” the “spiritual manna” we need. Since our spiritual needs are met through maintaining our relationship with our Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ, then just as the Israelites spent time each day gathering physical manna, we today must gather spiritual manna through prayer, gospel study, and striving for the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost.

The Israelites eventually tired of gathering physical manna and “fell a lusting” for things they left behind (Numbers 11:4). If we allow ourselves to tire of gathering spiritual manna, we may find ourselves longing for things that aren't

in our best spiritual interest. Like the frustrated Israelites, we risk losing sight of our original purpose—to arrive at the promised land. We might even wish we had never left our “Egypt” (see Numbers 11:5–6). Eventually, our spiritual alternator stops generating, and we are unable to progress. We find ourselves stranded, starving, and longing for rescue.

Seeing the Miracle

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) taught, “Sometimes it seems we take the scriptures too much for granted because we do not fully appreciate how rare a thing it is to possess them, and how blessed we are because we do have them. We seem to have settled so comfortably into our experiences in this world and become so accustomed to hearing the gospel taught among us that it is hard for us to imagine it could ever have been otherwise.”¹

We should never take for granted our need for consistent scripture study, prayer, and obedience because they help us maintain the companionship of the Holy Ghost. If we neglect the spiritually charging activities in life, become bored with them, or merely perform them routinely, then our spiritual alternator isn't fully functioning. We can slowly become spiritually discharged, perhaps so gradually that we hardly perceive it. At such a time, the only way to recover is to turn



to Jesus Christ and repent. Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ and sincere repentance, all things can be restored.

Look and Live

When the Israelites complained, they lost their gratitude for the blessing of nourishment. As punishment, “the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died” (Numbers 21:6).

Finally, “the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

“And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived” (Numbers 21:7–9).

Modern Serpents of Brass

The brass, or brazen, serpent is a symbol of Christ being raised up on the cross (see John 3:14–15). As we look to the counsel of modern-day prophets, we are looking toward Christ because they direct our focus back to our Father’s plan and to Jesus Christ’s central role. Like the kindhearted people who allowed me to recharge my battery, living prophets, seers, and revelators recharge us spiritually by reminding us that we are children of our Father in Heaven and that it is His “work and . . . glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). They have specifically counseled us that as we more effectively worship on the Sabbath day, we will increase our faith in Heavenly Father, in His plan of happiness, and in Jesus Christ and His Atonement.

The story of Moses and the serpent of brass is also referred to in the Book of Mormon, where we are told that “many did look and live” (Alma 33:19; see also verses 20–22). Others, however, refused to look. “The labor



which they had to perform was to look; and because of the simpleness of the way, or the easiness of it, there were many who perished” (1 Nephi 17:41). Could it be said of us someday that we refused to look to prophets and their counsel because of the easiness of the way?

“If ye could be healed by merely casting about your eyes that ye might be healed, would ye not behold quickly[?] . . .

“ . . . Then cast about your eyes and begin to believe in the Son of God” (Alma 33:21, 22).

I am grateful for the blessings that come to us as we continue along our “highway to heaven” and encourage others to do the same. I am equally grateful for the opportunity, when we stray, to repent, leave behind bad habits, and return to an appropriate path. The blessings are immeasurable.

Another passage in the Book of Mormon that talks of the Israelites’ experience concludes, “And as many as should look upon that serpent should live, even so as many as should look upon the Son of God with faith, having a contrite spirit, might live, even unto that life which is eternal” (Helaman 8:15).

Heeding the counsel of modern prophets trains our hearts in faith. It strengthens us to overcome obstacles along our journey, just as I had to press forward on that summer night in the desert. I testify that as we look to our Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ, we will find meaning and purpose in our journey. ■

You can find family home evening ideas for this article at lds.org/go/11811.

NOTE

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 61.



By Jean B. Bingham
Relief Society
General President

THE Temple Gives US *Higher Vision*

Some of our most vivid and significant memories of living in the Midwestern United States as young parents are of yearly visits to the temple in Washington, D.C. At the time, it was the only temple in operation east of the Mississippi River. Knowing that temple ordinances are essential for all of Heavenly Father's children gave a sense of urgency to our efforts.

Like many of you, we arranged for friends to care for our small children, traveled through the night with a busload of fellow members, spent a couple of precious days doing as much temple work as we could, and then rode the bus home through the night so we could attend our Church meetings on Sunday. Those trips did not seem to be sacrifices; they were cherished because of the spiritual uplift that fed our souls for months afterward.

A few years later, we were thrilled to welcome the Chicago Illinois Temple, the first temple built in the North America Central Area since the Cardston Alberta Canada Temple 62 years earlier. With a temple only 45 minutes from our home, it was a joy for us to attend more often than once a year and to receive that spiritual food on a regular basis.

Yet today, though some of us live within closer reach of a temple, we may still find it difficult to attend frequently. It may be that the easier availability of a temple lulls us into thinking, "I'll go tomorrow, when I have more time." It is easy to become distracted by immediate pressures and let more important opportunities slide away. Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, "I encourage you to establish your own goal of how frequently you will avail yourself of the ordinances offered in our operating temples."¹

Left: Hartford Connecticut Temple celestial room

At 288 feet (88 m), the Washington D.C. Temple is the tallest temple.



*Like a telescope focused
on the stars beyond our
sight, the temple opens our
minds to a higher and
broader vision.*



Above: Gilbert Arizona
Temple stained-glass
window; Provo City
Center Temple doors
and windows; Salt Lake
Temple door knob

Background: Kyiv Ukraine
Temple celestial room



Freiberg Germany Temple
stained-glass windows



Kansas City
Missouri Temple



If we neglect the opportunity to attend as often as our circumstances allow, if we take lightly the opportunity to go to the temple when it is right in our backyard, so to speak, we may forfeit future blessings and opportunities our Father and His Son have in store for us. “I, the Lord,” He said, “am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise” (D&C 82:10).

When it seems that events conspire to prevent us from going to the temple, we can remember Jesus Christ’s assurance: “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). As we persevere and attend the temple despite stumbling blocks, we’ll have the Savior’s help to overcome the world in which *we* live. One time as my husband and I were preparing to leave for the temple, one problem after another cropped up. Finally, as we were nearly out the door, we had a strained “marital moment.” As the two of us walked silently to the car, we could hear our oldest daughter reassure her sister, “Don’t worry; they always come home happy from the temple.” And she was right!

Temples Remind Us of the Span of Eternity

Whether we come to the temple with hearts full of joy or heavy with sorrow, the temple is the place for *every* worthy member with an open heart to be lifted and strengthened.

I have come to the temple almost floating in deep gratitude for a blessing granted to a struggling loved one; I have also shed quiet tears of great sorrow for my own failures. I have received promptings and instruction

From left: staircase in the Nauvoo Illinois Temple, which was dedicated on the 158th anniversary of the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith; Idaho Falls Idaho Temple garden room; Calgary Alberta Canada Temple door handle; Hartford Connecticut Temple interior (background)



Left: President David O. McKay, Sister Emma McKay, and other Church leaders attended the 1955 dedication of the Bern Switzerland Temple, the first temple constructed in Europe.



Below: Star Valley Wyoming Temple stained-glass window

and even rebukes from the Spirit while serving as proxy for someone receiving the ordinances that will allow her to progress through eternity. All of those experiences have lifted and strengthened me. And yes, I've sat through many an hour in the temple as a "duty," simply fulfilling my obligation, and I even found myself dozing off during temple sessions in my years as an early-morning seminary teacher! But every single time I've gone to the temple, I have been blessed. Whether we are granted an immediate blessing or our efforts accrue toward later blessings, every bit of time we spend in the temple results in some personal increase.

Being in the temple reminds us of the span of eternity, both looking back at our ancestors and forward to our children. Our children are also strengthened in their eternal perspective when they focus on the temple. How can we best prepare them for the temple—a vital step in their eternal progression? President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, counseled, "Parents should teach the importance of the temple from a child's earliest days."² President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) advised parents to put a picture of the temple in their children's bedroom so they can look at that sacred reminder every day until it becomes part of them.³ You can also share with your children the blessings you receive from attending the temple as well as your testimony of the joy you anticipate in eternal

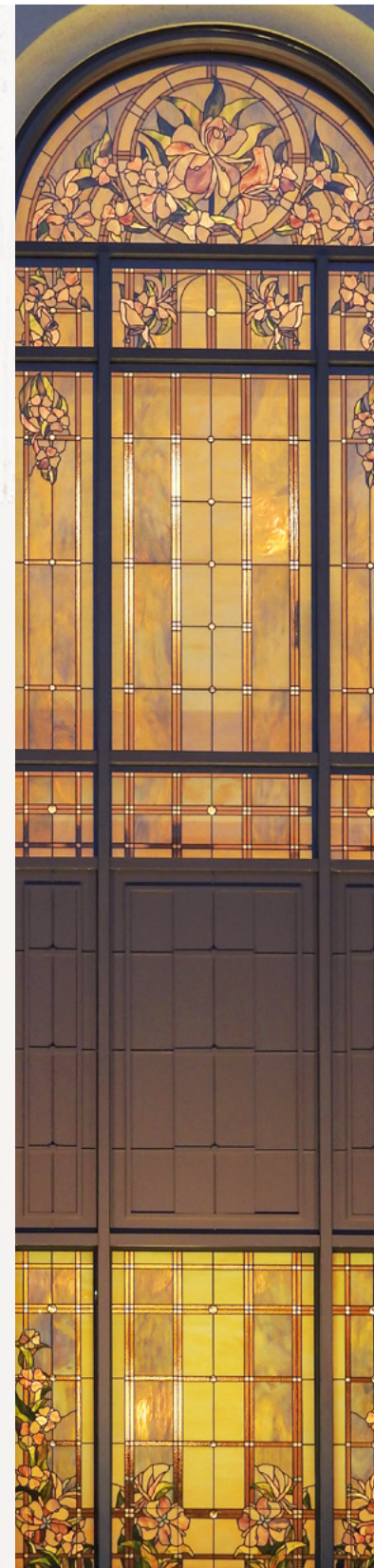
relationships with them. And you can support your teenagers in their desire to perform baptisms for the dead.

Remember in your family home evening lessons and teaching moments that "the temple is the object of every activity, every lesson, every progressive step in the Church."⁴

As you sing with your children, "I love to see the temple. I'll go inside someday. I'll cov'nant with my Father; I'll promise to obey,"⁵ you will help them feel a desire to enter the Lord's holy house. And your own heart will swell with gratitude for Heavenly Father, for His plan of salvation, for the Savior and His Atonement, which have made it possible for you to be with your loved ones forever. The Savior's "way is the path that leads to happiness in this life and eternal life in the world to come."⁶ That path leads to and through the temple!

Temples Are a Refuge from the World

Worldly influences can pull us away from the temple. A dear young friend has been troubled by opinions and speculations about the Church that he read on the internet. He decided to forego attending the temple until his questions are resolved. With all my heart, I plead with you who may have questions that affect your testimony to continue participating in personal prayer and scripture study and to continue attending the temple while you work to find the answers that will bring you peace. Stay focused on the gospel to avoid being

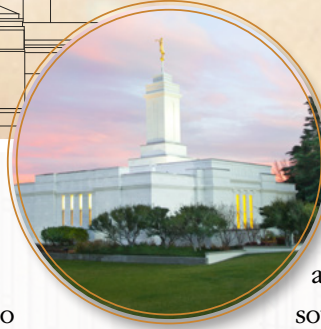


The 156th operating temple, the Paris France Temple, was dedicated on May 21, 2017. Below: Star Valley Wyoming Temple stained-glass window



Right: carving in the Papeete Tahiti Temple; Fort Lauderdale Florida Temple; Hartford Connecticut Temple interior

Below, left: The smallest temple is the Colonia Juárez Chihuahua Mexico Temple.



distracted by clever but false ideologies. One wouldn't seek to heal a physical ailment by asking a star football player for medical advice any more than significant spiritual questions can be correctly resolved by someone who has a limited understanding of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. The Holy Ghost, who bears witness of "the truth of all things" (Moroni 10:5), "will tell you in your mind and in your heart" (D&C 8:2) what is eternal truth.

One of the places to access that Spirit most abundantly is in the temple. If you are worthy to enter the house of the Lord (as determined by you and your bishop), please come to the temple with your questions and receive the assurance that even if you do not understand all things now, the Lord does. Remember all that you *do* know and understand. The things you *do* know and have received a spiritual witness of will lead you to "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, [and will] keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7). I testify that the understanding and peace you seek will come as you continue to have faith that your Father in Heaven will lead and guide you to the truth.

Isaiah reminds us that the temple is "a place of refuge . . . from [the] storm" (Isaiah 4:6). President Thomas S. Monson's words are equally reassuring: "As we enter through the doors of the temple, we leave behind us the distractions and confusion of the world. Inside this sacred sanctuary, we find beauty

and order. There is rest for our souls and a respite from the cares of our lives."⁷

As troubles in the world increase and the pressures of daily life build up, we must keep our focus on the things that really matter. It is easy to focus on the negative and on worldly woes, as if we were looking at our failures and problems through a microscope. Being in the temple reminds us to keep an eternal perspective. Like a massive telescope focused on stars beyond our immediate sight, the temple opens our minds to a higher and broader vision. It allows us to see, hope for, and work toward becoming all that Heavenly Father has designed us to be. It helps us focus on eternal truths—on Heavenly Parents who love us and desire to help us, on our true worth as Their children, and on what we are capable of becoming as "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17). In the temple, the plan of God is taught and eternal covenants are made. In the temple, we are given the tools to become our highest and best eternal selves.

"As we attend the temple," counseled President Monson, "there can come to us a dimension of spirituality and a feeling of peace which will transcend any other feeling which could come into the human heart. We will grasp the true meaning of the words of the Savior when He said: 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid' [John 14:27]."⁸





Your Temple Service Will Touch Others

The spirit you bring from your service in the temple will touch many within your circles of influence—some you may not have even considered. At the conclusion of one of our visits to the temple in Washington, D.C., the group of members shared testimonies as the bus rolled across the miles toward home. One after another, participants shared their joy and gratitude for the immediate and eternal blessings of the temple. Our nonmember bus driver finally couldn't stand it any longer. He grabbed the microphone and expressed appreciation for being with us. He then said, "I don't know what you people have, but I feel something different here." Of course, a ward mission leader on the bus got his contact information and later gave it to the missionaries.

May I invite you to take advantage of the gift of the temple near you as often as your circumstances allow. You will be strengthened and find peace in the house of the Lord Jesus Christ, for He is the light and the life and the hope of the world. As these latter days progress toward His promised return, may you receive His light and feel the hope that is offered in His holy temples. ■

NOTES

1. Richard G. Scott, "Temple Worship: The Source of Strength and Power in Times of Need," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 43–45.
2. Russell M. Nelson, "Prepare for Blessings of the Temple," *Ensign*, Mar. 2002, 17.
3. See *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball* (1982), 301.
4. Russell M. Nelson, "Prepare for Blessings of the Temple," 17.
5. "I Love to See the Temple," *Children's Songbook*, 95.
6. "The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Apr. 2000, 2.
7. Thomas S. Monson, "Blessings of the Temple," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 91.
8. Thomas S. Monson, "Blessings of the Temple," 91–92.
9. Thomas S. Monson, "Blessings of the Temple," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Oct. 2010, 15; emphasis added.
10. "Excerpts from Recent Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley," *Ensign*, July 1997, 73; emphasis added.
11. Richard G. Scott, "Receive the Temple Blessings," *Ensign*, May 1999, 26; emphasis added.

SPECIFIC PROMISES

Prophets and apostles have given specific promises to those who attend the temple. Remember that God is bound when we do what He says, but when we do not do what He says, we have no promise (see D&C 82:10).

- President Thomas S. Monson has promised: "As we go to the holy house, as we remember the covenants we make therein, we will be able to *bear every trial and overcome each temptation.*"⁹
- President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) promised: "If you will go to the house of the Lord, you will be blessed, *life will be better for you.* . . . Avail yourselves of the great opportunity to go to the Lord's house and thereby partake of all the marvelous blessings that are yours to be received there."¹⁰
- Elder Richard G. Scott promised: "Regular [temple] attendance will enrich your life with *greater purpose.*"¹¹

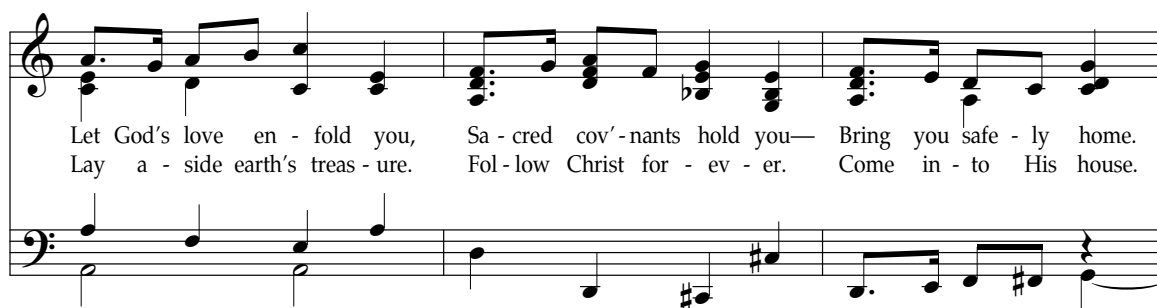
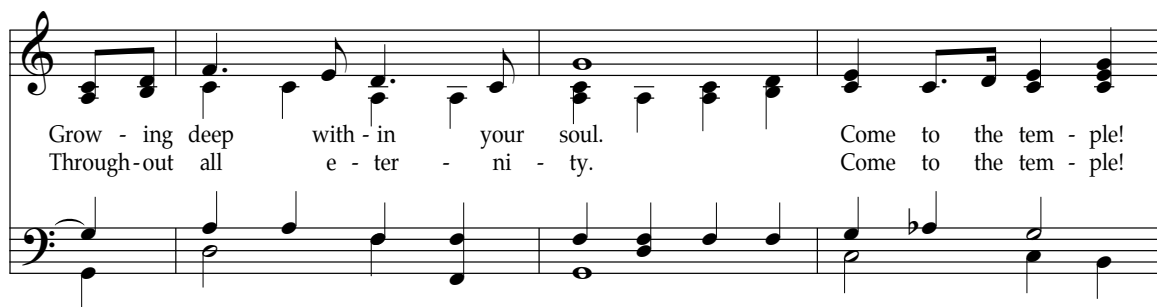
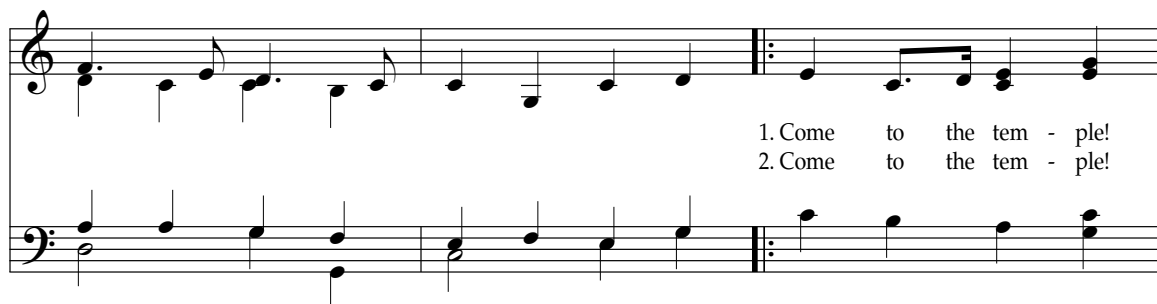
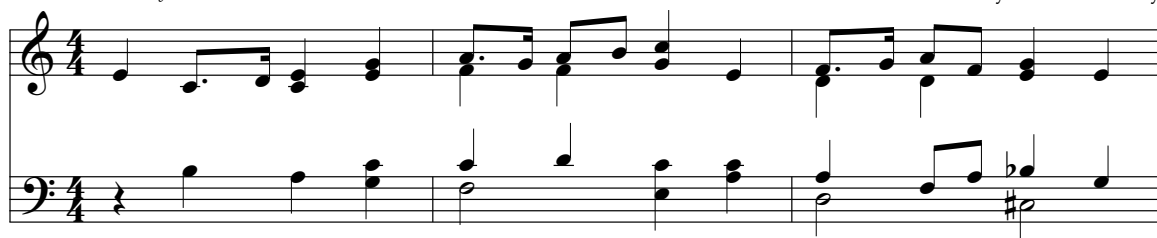


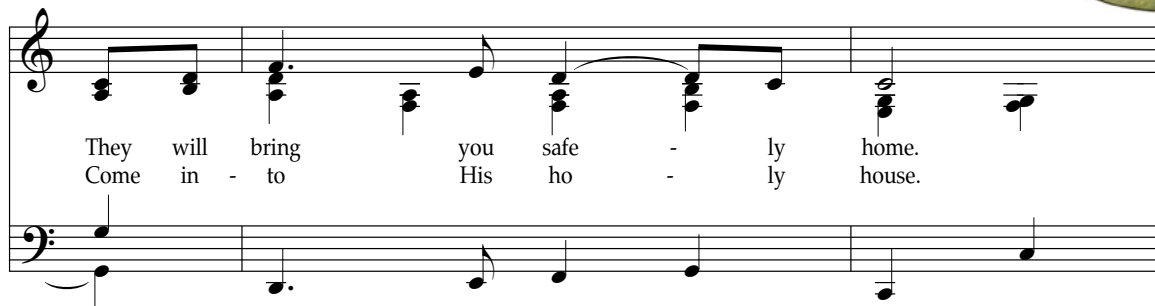
Five temples feature an angel Moroni statue holding the golden plates: the Los Angeles California Temple (left), the Washington D.C. Temple, the Seattle Washington Temple, the Jordan River Utah Temple, and the Mexico City Mexico Temple. For more information, visit temples.lds.org.

Come to the Temple

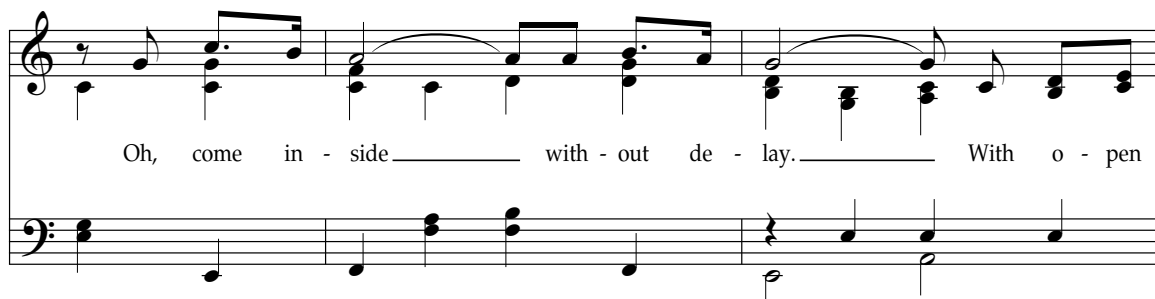
With nobility ♩ = 63-69

Words by Jan Pinborough
Music by Michael F. Moody

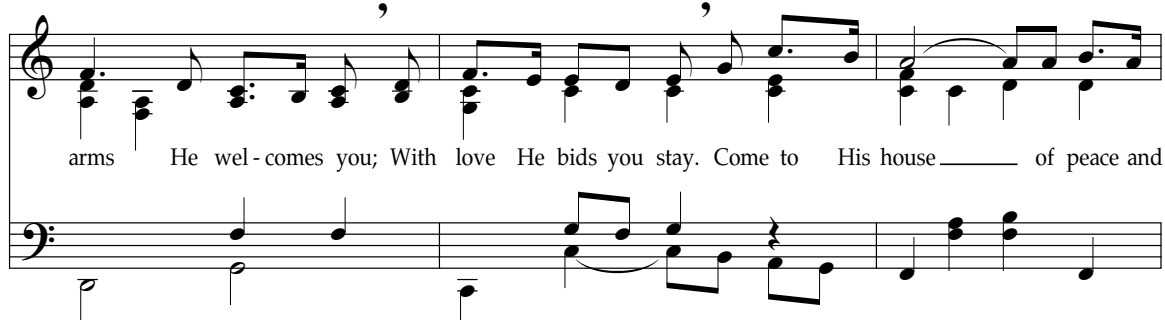




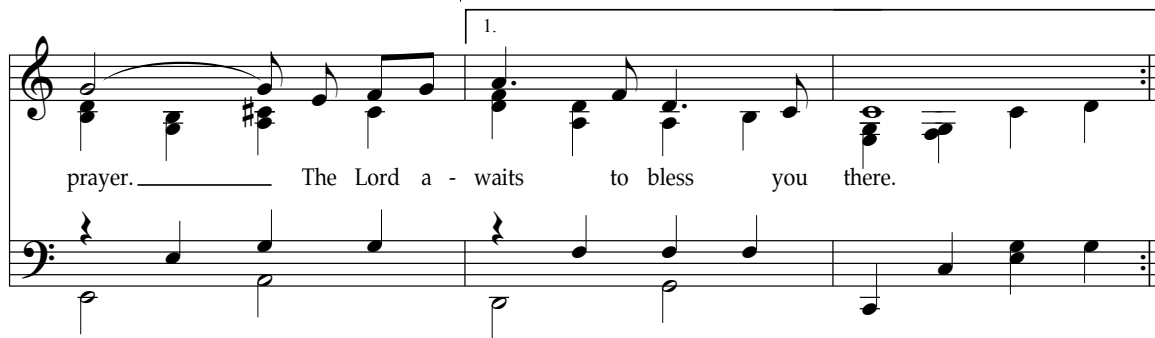
They will bring you safe - ly home.
Come in - to His ho - ly house.



Oh, come in - side with - out de - lay. With o - pen



arms He wel - comes you; With love He bids you stay. Come to His house of peace and



prayer. The Lord a - waits to bless you there.



waits to bless you there. *molto rit.*



A Promised Blessing for Attending the Temple

*I had wanted to attend the
temple more—little did I know how much
it was going to bless my family.*

By Cheri Evans

A few years ago, President Oldroyd, a member of the stake presidency, visited my ward and said something I will never forget: “I promise you that if you attend the temple, *every* part of your life will be blessed.”

As I thought about it, I couldn’t imagine how attending the temple could touch every part of my life. But after church, I decided I would take his challenge anyway and attend the temple on a more regular basis. I wanted to test his promise. My husband had wanted to go to the temple more often, but I was reluctant because we had young children. We would have to drive an hour and a half to the temple in San Antonio, Texas, USA, complete an endowment session, and then drive home. It didn’t work to ask someone to watch our kids for seven or eight hours.

The Beginning of a Blessing

At first we tried trading babysitting with another family, but someone inevitably got sick or had something come up. We decided that we just needed to set the dates for the entire year and go! We then came up with the “pizza and play” method. We would drive to the temple together. One parent would go to a temple session while the other would take the kids to get pizza. Then we would

switch: the second parent would do temple work while the other parent walked the temple grounds with the kids. This worked well. Our kids knew the temple was important to us—they knew all the other things we could have been doing on a Saturday—and we got to spend time as a family.

Little did I know how much going to the temple was going to bless my family. After we had been going more

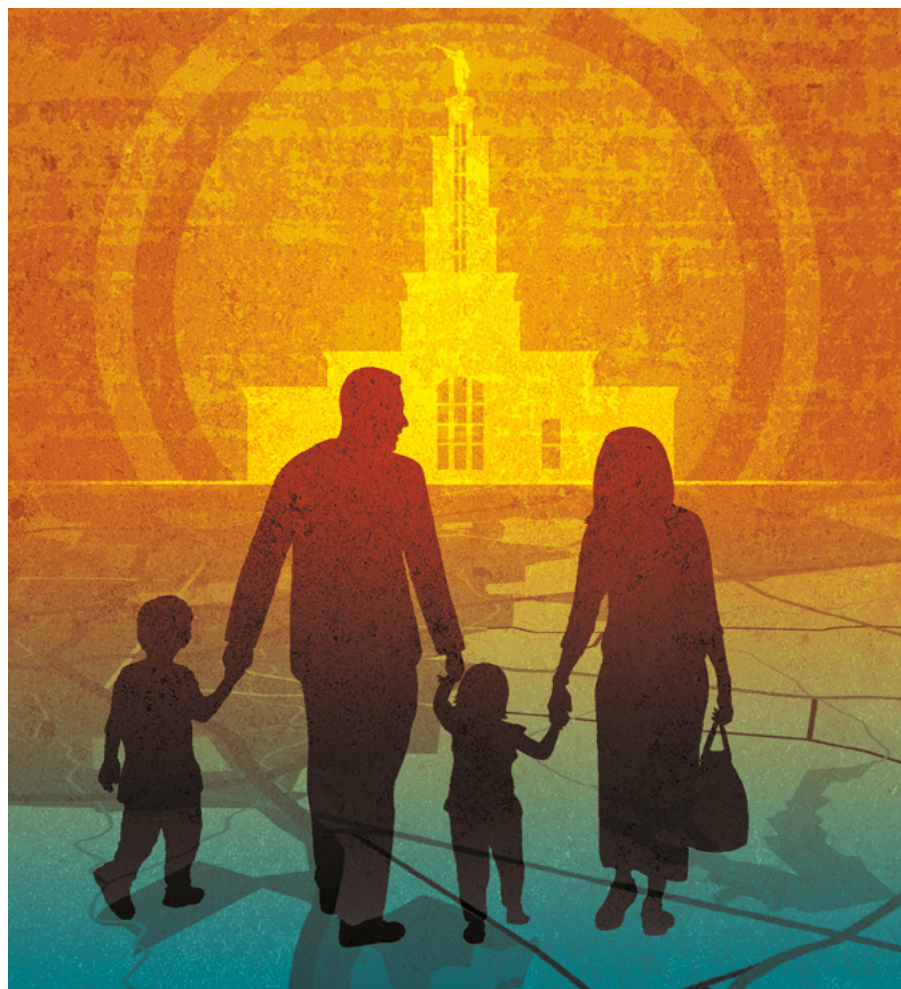
often for over a year, I was sitting in a session when I noticed a quadriplegic man. I thought it was amazing that he was there. On the way out of the temple, I saw him sitting near the parking lot, so my husband and I thought we would say hi.

The man asked my husband, Chad, and I if we could help him make a phone call. We agreed to help, and the man told Chad where his phone was. Chad dialed the number for him and then handed him the phone. The man could not reach out for it, though he smiled kindly. Chad looked down at the man’s arms, which were strapped to his wheelchair, and quickly realized he needed to hold the phone up to his ear. The city bus service that was supposed to pick the man up was late. We stayed with him and talked until his bus came. We were amazed that, despite his challenges, he was at the temple. He had such a great attitude. He had a bright smile. Before he left, we exchanged contact information and learned that his name was Max Para.

If Brother Para could get himself to the temple, we could get ourselves to the temple—no excuses!

Brother Para’s Example

We decided to visit him the next month as part of our visit to the temple. We called ahead, and he said we could come in when we got to his home. We drove into San Antonio and found Brother Para’s small home.





Gonzales, he again saw Brother Para at the temple waiting for a van to come get him. Brother Para had been waiting for a long time. Chad and Brother Gonzales decided to take Brother Para home themselves. Brother Gonzales had a big black truck. Just then, a carload of priests from our stake pulled up, and they helped put the heavy wheelchair in the back of the truck. Then they carried Brother Para into the truck, buckled him up, and held on to him so he would not fall over. I bet that day was awesome for Brother Para—how could he even imagine that he would be riding home from the temple in his dream truck!

He was lying on his bed with a white sheet covering his body up to his chin. He moved his head to the side and talked with us, his smile still beaming. He told us how he became quadriplegic after falling off a roof when he was in his 30s. He shared his struggle and his testimony.

A one-time visit to Brother Para turned into years of visits. He became a special part of our lives. We didn't know what to do for him—his challenges were huge. What we did know is that we could be his friends. We could bring him small gifts: a picture of the Savior, a Book of Mormon CD in Spanish, a picture of the temple, a bag of fresh oranges. We could visit him, sing Primary songs, and listen to him. What an incredible experience this

was—you cannot give a crumb to the Lord without receiving a loaf in return.¹

He taught us gratitude, which changed *every* part of our lives. We learned to have gratitude for our knowledge of the gospel, for our relationship with God; for our knowledge of the plan of salvation; for our home, cars, food, and clothing; for our ability to use our bodies; for the chance to do good for our community; and for good people around us. Brother Para changed our definition of the words *hard* and *trial*. We had reason to rejoice in our many blessings and used those blessings to uplift others.

Learning to Serve

Once when Chad was at the temple with one of our friends, Brother

Blessed in Every Way

On our last visit to the San Antonio Temple before we moved, we were able to visit Brother Para. On this special last visit, Brother Para had our whole family over for dinner.

I am very grateful that I put President Oldroyd's promise to the test. My family would never have met Brother Para if we had not attended the temple. I am a different person—I am becoming who the Lord wants me to be. As we put the Lord first and attended the temple, our lives were blessed in *every* way. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTE

1. See Melvin J. Ballard, in Marion G. Romney, "Welfare Services: The Savior's Program," *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 93.

You, the Youth, AND THE Mutual Theme



*How can the Mutual
theme unite us?*

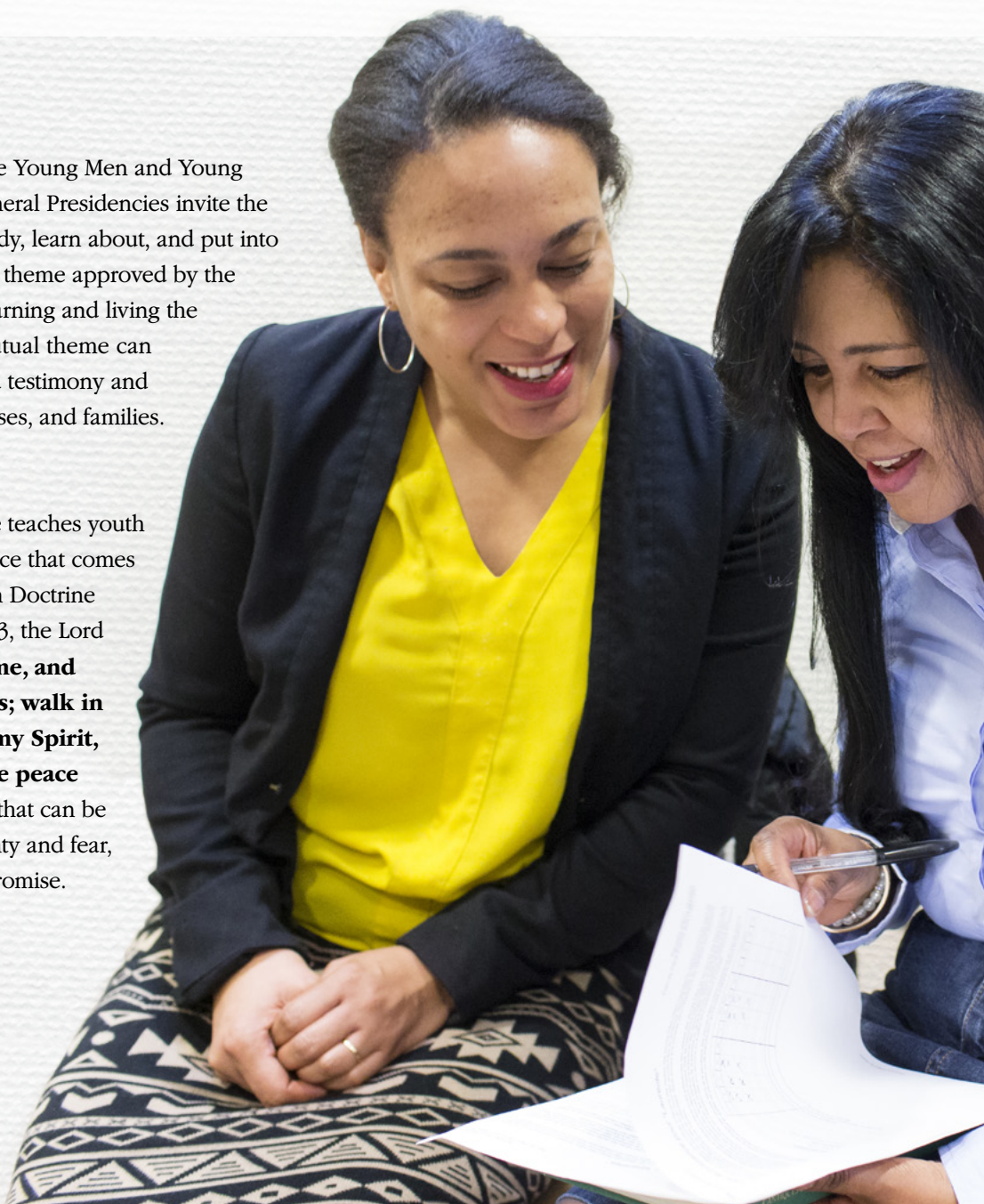
By Jessica Griffith

Church Magazines

Every year the Young Men and Young Women General Presidencies invite the youth to study, learn about, and put into practice a scriptural theme approved by the First Presidency. Learning and living the teachings in the Mutual theme can strengthen faith and testimony and unite quorums, classes, and families.

The 2018 Theme

This year's theme teaches youth how to find the peace that comes from Jesus Christ. In Doctrine and Covenants 19:23, the Lord invites, **“Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me.”** In a world that can be filled with uncertainty and fear, this is a powerful promise.



This scripture provides parents, leaders, mentors, and teachers an opportunity to teach patterns that can strengthen the youth through challenging times.

How Can I Use the Theme?

The Young Women and Young Men General Presidencies have invited us to memorize the scripture, study the doctrine, and apply the principles in our lives. Although these things can be done individually, doing them together can help unite and strengthen the youth and their families.

There are many opportunities to incorporate the theme into the lives of our youth. It can be used in family home evening, in lessons at church and in seminary, as a topic for youth sacrament meeting talks, to enrich Mutual opening exercises, and to provide focus for youth activities, including camps, youth conferences, combined activities, New Beginnings, and devotionals.

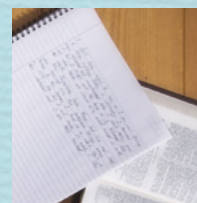
A Few Activity Ideas

The following are a few ideas for incorporating the Mutual theme throughout the year.

For more ideas, visit youth.lds.org.

"Learn of Me"

Learning about Jesus Christ is important to finding peace in Him. There is peace and assurance in knowing what He is like, learning how He lived, and understanding what He does for us.



When he was 14 years old, President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) was asked whether he had read the Bible all the way through. "I had read many books by that time, the funny papers, and light books, but my accusing heart said to me, 'You, Spencer Kimball, you have never read that holy book. Why?'"¹ From that point on, President Kimball made it a point to "feast upon the words of Christ" (2 Nephi 32:3).



- Consider asking the youth to keep a study notebook to record what they are learning about Jesus Christ and His gospel.
- You might invite the youth to commit to take President Russell M. Nelson's challenge to "consecrate a portion of [their] time each week to studying *everything* Jesus said and did as recorded in the [scriptures]."² In class or in family home evening, you could ask them to report on what they're learning and how they're applying it in their own lives.

Resources

- James 1:22; Moses 1
- "The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Apr. 2000, 2.
- Russell M. Nelson, "Drawing the Power of Jesus Christ into Our Lives," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2017, 39–42.
- David A. Bednar, "A Christlike Character," *New Era*, Oct. 2017, 2–5; *Liahona*, Oct. 2017, 50–53.

"Listen to My Words"

Listening to the Savior's words includes not just hearing but hearkening (or obeying). Great peace and assurance can come from knowing that we are living in harmony with His teachings.



When he was eight years old, President Thomas S. Monson decided to have a campfire with his friend Danny. There was just one problem—the field they wanted to use was dry, prickly, and full of weeds. It was then that young President Monson had an idea: “I said to Danny, ‘All we need is to set these weeds on fire. We’ll just *burn* a circle in the weeds!’ He readily agreed, and I ran to our cabin to get a few matches. . . .

“ . . . I recall thinking that the fire would burn only as far as we wanted and then would somehow magically extinguish itself.

“I struck a match on a rock and set the parched June grass ablaze.” Soon realizing the fire would not go out on its own, the boys ran for help, and the blaze was put out after several hours of work.

“Danny and I learned several difficult but important lessons that day,” said President Monson, “not the least of which was the importance of obedience.”³

- Ask the youth to study obedience in chapter 6 of *Preach My Gospel*, including the obedience section of the attribute activity at the end of the chapter.
- Talk about things that could distract us from listening to the Lord’s words. For example, you could invite the youth to replace 10 minutes of screen time with 10 minutes of scripture study.
- Take regular opportunities to ask youth what they will do because of what they have learned.

Resources

- Exodus 20; Matthew 5:1–12
- “Obedience,” *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 122.
- Hadley Griggs, “Ten Minutes a Day,” *New Era*, Sept. 2017, 26–29; *Liahona*, Sept. 2017, 58–61.
- Robert D. Hales, “If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 35–38.



“Walk in the Meekness of My Spirit”

Learning and listening describe what we need to do. Walking in the meekness of His Spirit is how we need to do it.

Being meek means “enduring injury with patience and without resentment,”⁴ something that takes both strength and humility. In 1838, Thomas B. Marsh, the first President of the Quorum of the Twelve, left the Church, in part because of his resentment that Church leaders didn’t side with his wife in a dispute over milk. In his later years, he lamented the blessings he had lost and returned to the Church, saying: “I have frequently wanted to know how my apostasy [*sic*] began, and I have come to the conclusion that I must have lost the Spirit of the Lord out of my heart. . . .

“ . . . I felt angry and wrathful; and the Spirit of the Lord being gone, as the Scriptures say, I was blinded.”⁵

- The Savior’s life wasn’t easy. Find examples in the scriptures of times when Jesus demonstrated meekness in the face of challenges. Discuss how we can apply the Savior’s example in situations we might face today.
- One way to become meek is by serving others. Consider different acts of service the youth could do individually or as a group.

Resources

- Titus 3:2–5; Moroni 8:26; Doctrine and Covenants 112:13
- Ulisses Soares, “Be Meek and Lowly of Heart,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 9–11.
- Neal A. Maxwell, “Meekness—A Dimension of True Discipleship,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1983, 70–74.



“You Shall Have Peace in Me”

Peace can mean different things to different people—hope that healing is possible, certainty that there is a way through hard times, or reassurance that we’re on the right path.



- Find stories about how others have found peace in Christ at **Mormon.org/easter** and on pages 60 and 63 of this issue. How have you found peace?
- Consider watching the 2017 Easter video, “Prince of Peace,” at **Mormon.org/easter**. You might invite the youth to share the video online with a testimony of how they’ve found peace in Christ.

Resources

- John 14:27; Philippians 4:7
- W. Christopher Waddell, “A Pattern for Peace,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2016, 90–93.
- Quentin L. Cook, “Personal Peace: The Reward of Righteousness,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 32–36. ■

NOTES

1. Spencer W. Kimball, “Read the Scriptures,” *Friend*, Dec. 1985, inside front cover; see also “What I Read as a Boy,” *Children’s Friend*, Nov. 1943, 508.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “Prophets, Leadership, and Divine Law” (worldwide devotional for young adults, Jan. 8, 2017), broadcasts.lds.org.
3. Thomas S. Monson, “Obedience Brings Blessings,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 89–90.
4. *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. (2003), “meekness,” [merriam-webster.com](https://www.merriam-webster.com).
5. Thomas B. Marsh, in *Journal of Discourses*, 5:206–7 (see also “The Faith and Fall of Thomas Marsh,” in *Revelations in Context: The Stories behind the Sections of the Doctrine and Covenants*, Matthew McBride and James Goldberg, eds. [2016], 57–59).



TO SIT IN Council

BRINGING GREATER
POWER TO MELCHIZEDEK
PRIESTHOOD AND
RELIEF SOCIETY

Foreword by Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

During my apostolic ministry, I have consistently emphasized the power and importance of councils, including stake, ward, auxiliary, and family councils. I believe that working through councils is the most effective way to get real results.

This month, we implement some simple but important changes in the curriculum that members of Melchizedek Priesthood quorums and Relief Societies study when they meet in their respective organizations each Sunday. In addition to studying the words of living prophets from the most recent conference, we will also “sit in council” (D&C 107:89) together to discuss issues we face and needs we have.

As we learn to counsel together more effectively, God will bless us with an increased flow of revelation and understanding and greater power to accomplish His work.

By Michael Magleby

Director of Curriculum, Priesthood and Family Department

Before this world was created, Heavenly Father accomplished His work through councils (see D&C 121:32). Beginning with Adam and Eve, God’s people have sought His counsel in councils. In fact, God referred to Himself as “Man of Counsel” (Moses 7:35). Early in this dispensation, Joseph Smith began restoring “the order of Councils in ancient days.”¹ Today, the Church is governed by councils at every level.

In recent months, general Church leaders have counseled together about strengthening Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society Sunday meetings. The result is a new



curriculum titled *Come, Follow Me—For Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society*, which increases the use of general conference messages and extends the power of counseling into our priesthood quorums and Relief Societies.

“Where we were, we’ve done much good,” said Elder Christoffel Golden of the Seventy, who helped direct this change. “But the Lord wants us to move forward. Progress will come as a result of this shift to studying the words of living prophets and sitting in council.”

Recently, the Relief Society General Presidency and members of the Seventy met in council to discuss how counseling invites revelation, increases unity, and brings power. They offer

the following principles, knowing that you will build on these ideas as you discover solutions that are right for you, your ward or branch, and your quorum or Relief Society.

Power in Purpose

“As ye have assembled yourselves together . . . , and are agreed as touching this one thing, and have asked the Father in my name, even so ye shall receive” (D&C 42:3).

Councils are an avenue through which we “collectively seek the Lord’s will.”² In other words, it’s not enough just to share ideas; by counseling together, we invite revelation so we can learn what the Lord wants us to do in our situation. We will have more success in having such a revelatory experience as we remember the following:

1. *Focus—start with a specific, meaningful issue or need.* Focusing on a single issue or need increases our ability to make meaningful progress. Focus also helps us to see beyond visible symptoms (what is happening) and seek for understanding about root causes (why and how something affects people). For example, we might counsel about how to mentor and connect our youth with heaven rather than discussing the time youth spend looking at screens.

2. *Perspectives—frame the issue or need as a question.* A topic phrased as a question can draw out doctrinal insight. We might ask, “How can we address the situation in a helpful and

healing way?” or “What doctrine, if better understood, would help resolve the issue?”

3. *Power—seek revelation.* While councils may brainstorm solutions, the purpose of the council is to discover God’s will, not just to list best practices or to say, “This is how it was done in my last ward.” As Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, we don’t need meetings; we need revelatory experiences.³ Counseling together reveals powerful solutions leading to action.

Power in Participation

“Appoint among yourselves a teacher, and let not all be spokesmen at once; but let one speak at a time and let all listen unto his sayings, that when all have spoken that all may be edified of all, and that every man may have an equal privilege” (D&C 88:122).

In councils, the interests of individuals and the organization—the ward or branch—come together in a unique way, especially if participants understand the following:

1. *Each council member has a vital role.* Council members should actively participate in but not dominate the council. As Paul taught, “The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary” (1 Corinthians 12:21–22).

2. *Council members seek to add light.* The Prophet Joseph Smith taught “that every man, before he makes an objection to any item that is brought before a council for consideration, should be sure that he can throw light upon the subject rather than spread darkness, and that his objection be founded in righteousness.”⁴

3. *Council members seek to be unified.* Despite different perspectives, council members unite in seeking to “receive guidance from the Holy Ghost.”⁵ Joseph Smith once said during a council that “to receive revelation and the blessings of heaven it was necessary to have our minds on God and exercise faith and become of one heart and of one mind.”⁶

Power in Action Plans

“Every man may act in doctrine and principle pertaining to futurity, according to the moral agency which I have given unto him” (D&C 101:78).

A council is incomplete without plans to act on revelation received. Council participants should be invited to make specific commitments that they will act upon. “At the end of your council, you need to have assignments,” said Sister Jean B. Bingham, Relief Society General President. “The most important work happens between meetings.”

The leader guides the council toward understanding and consensus.

Then he or she leads out in making and recording assignments for later follow-up. Sister Sharon Eubank, First Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, adds: “The power is in us. As we bind ourselves to act, the Lord will sanctify our efforts (see D&C 43:9). Volunteering for and reporting back on assignments is the meat of covenant action.”

Role of the Leader

“The preacher was no better than the hearer, neither was the teacher any better than the learner; and thus they were all equal” (Alma 1:26).

To improve our councils, we avoid worldly concepts of leadership. In the Lord’s kingdom, the leader is “servant of all” (Mark 10:44). Similarly, the council leader, whether a presiding authority or a teacher, provides focus but is not the focal point. He or she avoids being the dominant voice or taking a position before hearing from the council.

The council leader plays an important role in framing the purpose, facilitating discussion, and inviting participants to make commitments to act. The council functions better as the council leader listens, guides, invites, protects, and validates.

1. *Listen.* Good leaders listen to the speaker and to the Holy Ghost. “I believe the gift of discernment operates more effectively,” said Elder Bednar, “when we’re listening as opposed to when we’re talking.”⁷



2. *Guide.* A council leader guides the conversation, allowing ideas to build. As necessary, the leader reframes the discussion or lovingly redirects it.

3. *Invite.* The Lord scatters revelation among members of a council. Inviting everyone—including the reticent—to offer ideas increases the potential of learning the will of the Lord.

4. *Protect.* A council leader creates an environment for sharing safely and appropriately by caring for those who share and protecting against criticism and judgment. Sensitive topics require careful guidance. Matters that are confidential remain so.

5. *Validate.* As participants share thoughts and ideas, a leader validates input by offering appreciation and connecting related ideas. This



validation helps participants feel part of the revelatory process and stretch themselves to ensure that their input is helpful.

New Curriculum, New Commitment

With this new year and new curriculum comes an era of new commitment. We are blessed with the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. It is our responsibility and privilege to seek for His guidance and do His work. This step forward in our Sunday Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society meetings isn't about just having a lesson about the work; rather we "sit in council" and promote righteous action—action that will "push many people to Zion with songs of everlasting joy" (D&C 66:11). ■

NOTES

1. Joseph Smith, in "Minutes, 17 February 1834," josephsmithpapers.org.
2. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 2.4.4.
3. See David A. Bednar, "Panel Discussion" (worldwide leadership training meeting, Nov. 2010), broadcasts.lds.org.
4. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 94.
5. *Handbook 2*, 3.3.2.
6. Joseph Smith, in "Minutes, 27–28 December 1832," 3, josephsmithpapers.org.
7. David A. Bednar, "Panel Discussion."

WHAT IS DIFFERENT IN MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD AND RELIEF SOCIETY MEETINGS?

On the first Sunday of each month, discussions in Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society meetings are led by a presidency member or group leader. These meetings are councils in which we "instruct and edify" (D&C 43:8) as we counsel together about issues and needs. These discussions lead to action—both individual and collective.

On other Sundays, we report and follow up on our discussion and assignments. As needed, we make and record new assignments. Discussions during these meetings focus on doctrine taught in general conference messages and special topics selected by general Church leaders and are led by a presidency member, a group leader, or a called teacher. The feelings we have in these discussions inspire us to individual action and change.



By Elder
M. Russell Ballard
Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles



THE ETERNAL IMPORTANCE OF Family

Temples are very important to Latter-day Saints because in them, couples are married for time and eternity, not just till death do they part. As the Church proclaimed in “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” 23 years ago, “Marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and . . . the family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children.”¹

This doctrine explains our strong position on the family. We also believe we are to reach out to all people with understanding, love, and compassion. My remarks will first focus on the doctrinal reasons that traditional families play such an important role in our Church. Second, I will explain the relationship between religious sensitivities surrounding the family and religious freedom. Finally, I will suggest some guiding principles on reaching out to those around us, despite any misunderstandings or disagreements.

In his address delivered during the ninth World Congress of Families in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, Elder M. Russell Ballard said that those who believe in traditional marriage must rally all the support they can to strengthen and protect their faith, family, and freedom.

The Church’s Beliefs on the Family

To provide context on our Church’s beliefs on the family, I would like to quote lyrics from a song frequently sung by our children called “I Lived in Heaven.” This song outlines where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going. It is what Latter-day Saints call the plan of salvation—an eternal plan of our Heavenly Father.

*I lived in heaven a long time ago, it is true;
Lived there and loved there with people I know. So did you.
Then Heav'nly Father presented a beautiful plan,
All about earth and eternal salvation for man.*

*Father said he needed someone who had enough love
To give his life so we all could return there above.
There was another who sought for the honor divine.
Jesus said, "Father, send me, and the glory be thine."*

*Jesus was chosen, and as the Messiah he came,
Conquering evil and death through his glorious name,
Giving us hope of a wonderful life yet to be—
Home in that heaven where Father is waiting for me.²*

With this song in mind, let me explain a few important elements of the plan of salvation that will emphasize our immortality and eternal nature and that of our families.

Before this life, we lived with God, who is our Heavenly Father. He is the literal Father of our spirits, and we are His spirit children. Therefore, all who are born into this life are spiritual brothers and sisters.

"God's whole purpose—His work and His glory—is to enable each of us to enjoy all His blessings." Our choice to obey or disobey His commandments determines our eternal destiny. "Jesus Christ is central to God's plan. Through His Atonement, Jesus Christ fulfilled His Father's purpose and made it possible for each of us to enjoy immortality and eternal life."³ Marriage and family ties are bound by priesthood authority to endure beyond the grave if we are married "for time and for all eternity" in the temple (D&C 132:7).

I hope this brief overview will help you understand how completely linked our theology is to the traditional family. Society, law, and popular opinion may change, but society's version of the family cannot and will not substitute for God's purpose and plan for His children.

In today's world, where marriage and children are increasingly marginalized, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints does not stand alone in identifying the

traditional family as one of its most important doctrinal elements.

Pope Francis has said, "He [God] made men and women for happiness, to share their journey with someone who complements them, to live the wondrous experience of love: to love and to be loved, and to see their love bear fruit in children."⁴

The Southern Baptist Church proclaims: "Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. . . . The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image."⁵

Our doctrinal beliefs about the eternal family and statements by other prominent Christian leaders make it easier to understand why we are so dedicated to nurturing, protecting, and promoting traditional families.

Secular Support for Religious Views

There are those who think that such doctrine and statements are irrational religious voices. However, the U.S. Supreme Court went out of its way in June 2015 to acknowledge that sincere and reasonable people could hold a different opinion, even when recognizing same-sex marriage:

"Marriage is sacred to those who live by their religions. . . .

". . . There are untold references to the beauty of marriage in religious and philosophical texts spanning time, cultures, and faiths, as well as in art and literature in all their forms. It is fair and necessary to say these references were based on the understanding that marriage is a union between two persons of the opposite sex. . . .

". . . Marriage, in their view, is by its nature a gender-differentiated union of man and woman. This view long has been held—and continues to be held—in good faith by reasonable and sincere people here and throughout the world."⁶

The Supreme Court correctly recognized that many sincere and reasonable people in the world continue to recognize traditional marriage.



Faith, Family, and Freedom

Understanding that reasonable and sincere people may view marriage as only between individuals of opposite gender, the public square must accommodate, and religious freedom must protect, such views. Indeed, because religious beliefs can affect how believers view the very purpose of life, such views will inform how they interact with society.

I am reminded of the news story about young children whose schoolteacher read a story to them about two princes falling in love. The teacher presented this material with no warning or notification. When parents asked to be notified if this story was to be read again in the future, the school refused.⁷

Would it really have harmed school administrators to let parents withdraw their children when the material being taught was contrary to their beliefs? The school's decision seems like a direct assault on the role of parents in raising their children.

We live in a time of extremes. Often compromise seems difficult and distant. We hear stories of people who have tried to be true to their standards, only to be accused of bigotry or intolerance or to be punished on a seemingly unreasonable scale.

Most of the world's nearly 200 nations, including the United States, acknowledged parents' prerogative in teaching their children when they signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Article 18 of this treaty states, "The . . . Parties . . . undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents . . . to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions."⁸

This international human rights protection is consistent with the Church's position, which states in the family proclamation: "Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness . . . and to teach them to love and serve one another, [and] observe the commandments of God. . . . Husbands and wives—mothers and fathers—will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations."⁹

It may feel like the tide is against us, but we have plenty of support to continue holding our views of traditional marriage. I have identified only a few sources. Many more exist.

We must rally all the support we can to strengthen and protect our faiths, families, and freedoms. Some individuals are actively trying to strip us of these rights. One news

story reported that millions of dollars have been poured into defeating religious freedom protections in the United States.¹⁰

To these kinds of threats, I believe that my colleague Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has put it best: “Even as we seek to be meek and to avoid contention, we must not compromise or dilute our commitment to the truths we understand. We must not surrender our positions or our values.”¹¹

If those who oppose us are genuine in their commitment to the values of diversity and equality, we should be able to work together to find compassion and peace. Forcing the beliefs of one onto another, as happened with the children being read material contrary to their parents’ wishes, diminishes diversity and skews the scales of equality. By engaging in compromise and extending love to all of God’s children, who are our brothers and sisters, we can create a peaceful, diverse tapestry of ideals and beliefs.

Guiding Principles on Loving One Another

Now that I have described the importance of traditional marriage and that we must defend our rights, let me explain why we should extend a hand of fellowship to those with whom we disagree. Jesus Christ commanded:

“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

“That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:44–45).

Just as we do not and should not shun family members with whom we disagree, we cannot and should not shun those who look or think or act differently than we do. We demonstrate our best humanity when we show love and kindness to all of God’s children. We demonstrate our discipleship when we refuse strident tones, when we refuse derisive labels, and when we enter the public square seeking fair outcomes through understanding and mutual respect.

The Church recently supported legislation that balanced the concerns of the LGBT community with the



concerns of those who have traditional religious sensitivities. The legislation protects LGBT people from being fired or denied housing because of their sexual orientation or identity. At the same time, religious conscience and the right to practice deeply held religious beliefs are protected by this robust legislation.¹²

None of the parties achieved all they wanted, but our work with the LGBT community and the Utah Legislature lessened the divisiveness in our communities without compromising on key principles.¹³ We can love one another without compromising personal divine ideals. And we can speak of those ideals without marginalizing others.

Jesus Christ was the ultimate example of loving others. Just hours before He began the painful process of paying for the sins of each of us, He met with His Apostles to partake of the Feast of the Passover—His Last Supper—and to give them the final instructions He would offer in mortality. Among His teachings is the stirring, life-changing declaration “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another” (John 13:34).



We can be specific and passionate about the benefits of man-woman marriage without disrespecting or injuring those who think otherwise. Regardless of belief or practice, as brothers and sisters we should strive to understand one another. Remember that in the end, married or single, we are each a unique part of God's grand plan.

Conclusion

The Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were murdered on June 27, 1844, by a mob while they were held in state custody. After their martyrdom, persecution and mobs threatened to destroy members of the Church while they were building the Nauvoo Temple. But they pressed on even while knowing they would have to abandon it. Before being driven out by mobs, they attended the temple day and night to make sacred promises that would unite them eternally as families.¹⁴

In making the trek to the Salt Lake Valley, great-grandparents on both my mother's and my father's sides paid a monumental price in suffering and privation. Pioneer families were separated by death, and despite burying children,

spouses, parents, grandparents, and friends along their barren trek west, they pressed forward.

Their faith in a divine plan designed by Heavenly Parents who love us gave them courage in the face of tremendous challenges. They sought a place where, without persecution, they could raise their families to love God and to serve Him. I thank them for leading the way.

The doctrine and theology of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints literally start and end with family. I repeat what I said earlier: we believe that we lived prior to this earth life as members of the spiritual, premortal family of God; and that as children of Heavenly Parents, we are to prepare while on earth to return to receive the blessings promised to those who keep God's commandments.

This knowledge will prepare each of us for that day when we die and then surely know, upon our return to God's holy presence, the true purpose of His plan for us. And so, as noted in the family proclamation, "We call upon responsible citizens and officers of government everywhere to promote those measures designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society."¹⁵ ■

From an address delivered on October 27, 2015.

NOTES

1. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129.
2. "I Lived in Heaven," *Children's Songbook*, 4.
3. *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 48.
4. "Pope Francis's Homily at the Family Synod's Opening Mass," *Catholic Herald*, Oct. 4, 2015, catholicherald.co.uk.
5. "Basic Beliefs: Family," Southern Baptists Convention, sbc.net/aboutus/basicbeliefs.asp.
6. *Obergefell et al. v. Hodges*, 576 U.S. (2015), supremecourt.gov.
7. See "Teacher, School Sued over Gay Fairy Tale," NPR, Apr. 27, 2006, npr.org.
8. "International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights," Article 18, United Nations Human Rights, ohchr.org.
9. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," 129.
10. See Kevin Jones, "LGBT Grant-maker Wants to Win Religious Liberty Fight within Three Years," Catholic News Agency, July 29, 2015, catholicnewsagency.com.
11. Dallin H. Oaks, "Loving Others and Living with Differences," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 26.
12. See Dennis Romboy, "LDS Church, LGBT Advocates Back Anti-Discrimination, Religious Rights Bill," *Deseret News*, Mar. 4, 2015.
13. See "Utah Lawmakers Introduce Bill Balancing Religious Freedom and Nondiscrimination Protections," Mar. 4, 2015, mormonnewsroom.org.
14. See *Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual*, 2nd ed. (Church Educational System Manual, 2003), 302–04.
15. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," 129.



As life became challenging in Amanda's teenage years, she fell away from the Church looking for new experiences. After several years, Amanda felt empty. Finding happiness began with an important question.

CODY BELL, PHOTOGRAPHER

Amanda Jiri

Cape Town, South Africa

I was inactive for about eight years. During this time, I got mixed up with the wrong friends. My mom was terminally ill. I was quite down. I felt an emptiness in me. I started wondering, "When was I last truly happy?"

Then I thought about when I was in Young Women. I realized that's when I last felt true happiness. I decided to go back to church the following Sunday. I met with the branch president and began my journey of repentance.

A short time later, I was called to work with the Young Women. When we recited the Young Women theme, I remembered it instantly! Today, each time I recite the theme, I receive a confirmation that the Church is where I belong.

FIND MORE

See more about Amanda's search for happiness at liahona.lds.org.

Learn more about how to find happiness from President Thomas S. Monson at lds.org/go/11839.

ANSWERS TO EACH OTHER'S PRAYERS

I was finishing my mission in the Illinois Chicago South Mission when I received special permission to visit a previous area and have dinner with the Tremillo family. I had served in their ward for a whole year and had grown close to them.

During dinner, Brother Tremillo encouraged me to share at least one message of happiness on my way home. He said the Lord would put someone on my flight who would need my help. I promised him that I would.

From that time to the time I left Chicago, I was also praying to receive confirmation that the Lord would accept my sacrifice of serving as a full-time missionary.

Three weeks later, I boarded the

plane that would take me home. As I approached my seat, the person in the seat next to mine looked up. “No way!” she said. “I can’t believe it!”

My first thought was, “Great, she hates Mormons!” When I sat down, she told me that her name was Kelly and that she was a recent convert. She expressed how happy she was that a missionary was sitting next to her. Kelly told me that the last person she had sat next to was anti-Mormon and unkind in how she expressed her opinion of Kelly’s newfound faith. Kelly was distraught and had questions. She had been praying for answers and comfort.

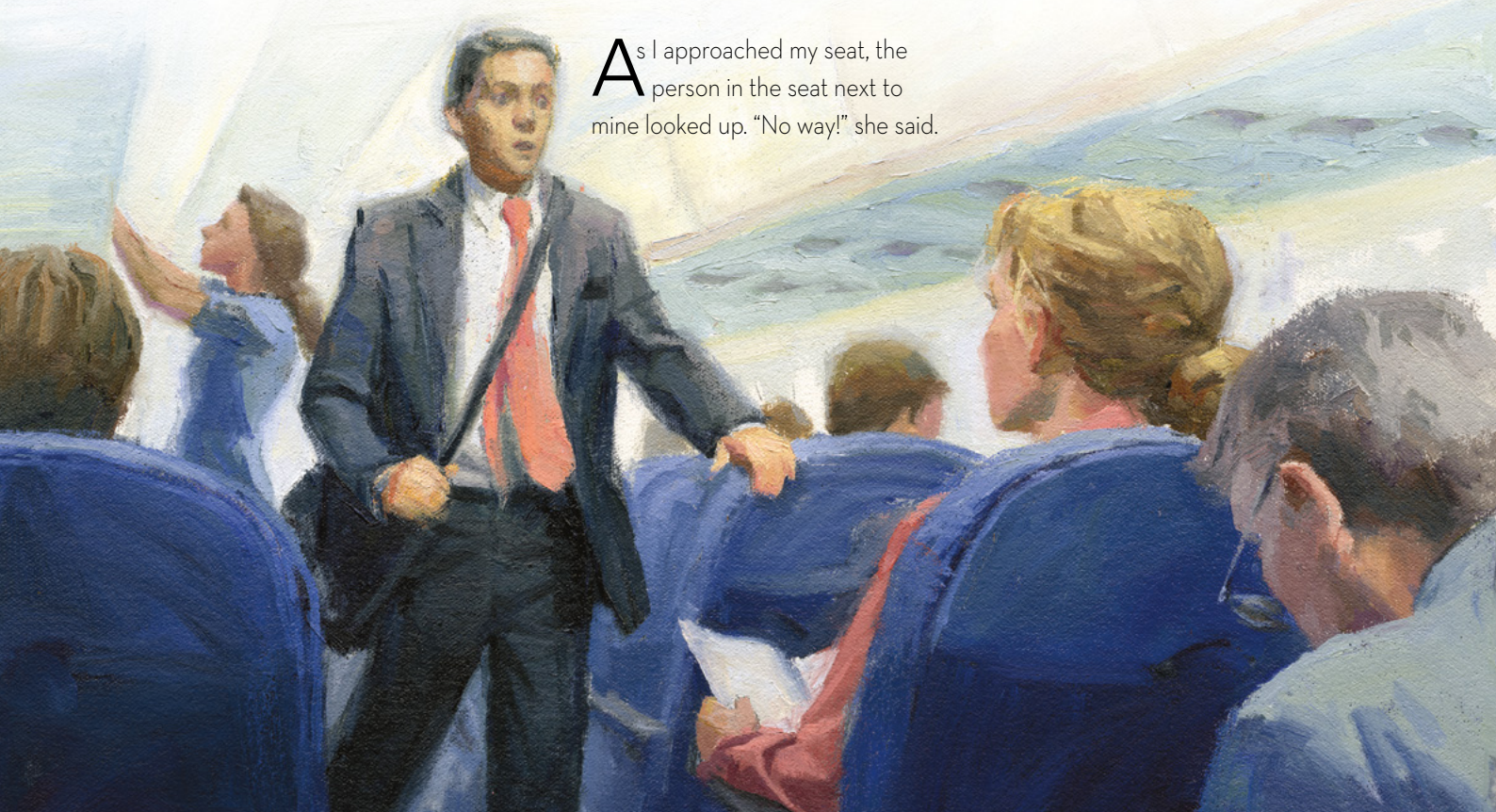
I said a prayer in my heart and testified of the truth of the gospel and of God’s love for His children, including

her. I told her about the advice I had received from Brother Tremillo. I said that God had prepared this special moment just for her.

With tears in her eyes, Kelly thanked me. She also said, “I can tell that you were a good missionary and that the Lord accepts your sacrifice.” At that moment, I felt God’s deep love for me. It was my turn to cry. With tears in my eyes, I thanked Kelly and told her that she had been an answer to my prayer. I answered a few more of her questions, and we exchanged email addresses.

Our flight landed and we waved goodbye as she walked to her next flight. I will always be grateful that Heavenly Father was willing to bless us in such a tender way. ■
Levi Kempton, Arizona, USA

As I approached my seat, the person in the seat next to mine looked up. “No way!” she said.



TAKING CARE OF MY SICK BABY AND MY CALLING

When I was called to serve as a counselor in my ward's Young Women organization, I accepted the call, but I was concerned about how to do it. I felt unprepared, and I was struggling with a trial.

Three months before receiving this calling, following a high-risk pregnancy, my baby boy, Nicolas, had been born. He needed constant medical care. A few weeks after his birth, a small red spot appeared on his eyelid and began to grow gradually. Our pediatrician explained that it was a benign tumor and would disappear after Nicolas was a year old. But the tumor developed rapidly. It occupied his ocular cavity and would eventually cause permanent damage to his vision if not treated.

We made the difficult decision to start chemotherapy. Nicolas's fragile body reacted negatively to the treatment. He had daily fevers, constant infections, and low weight. The process made him cry a lot. My calling became harder and harder to fulfill under these conditions. I didn't know how I could do it.

Thankfully, my husband supported me. Together, we felt I should continue.

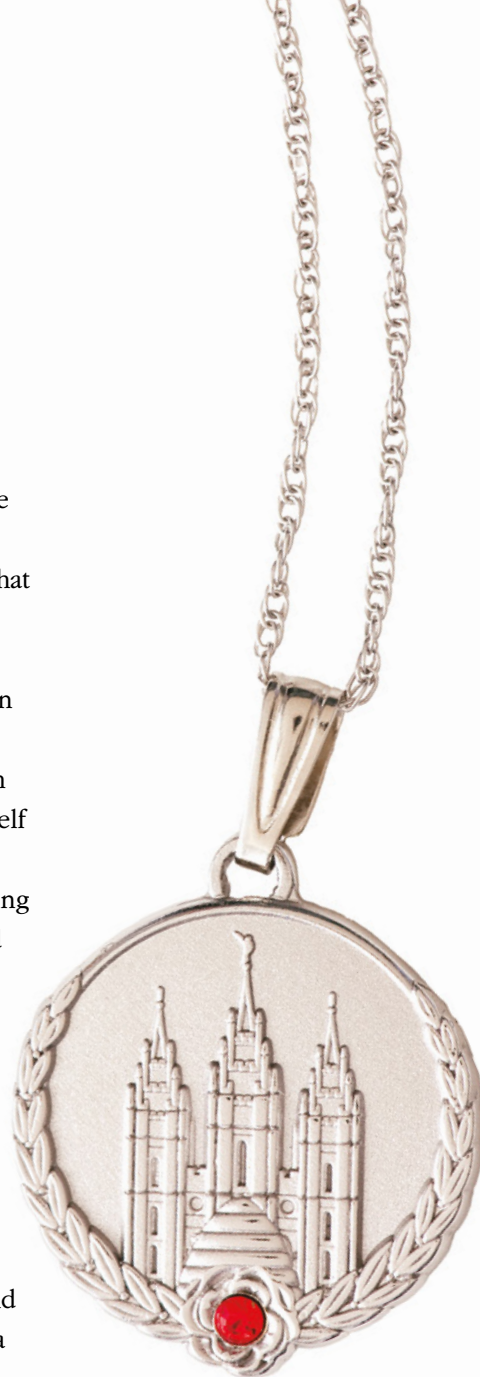
The Young Women president also supported me. She was a faithful and patient sister. She helped me see qualities I did not know I had and helped me find ways I could serve that I hadn't thought of.

Being with the young women each week helped me not fixate on the routine of injections, examinations, and doctors. It kept me from wasting time feeling sorry for myself or questioning why this was happening to my small angel. My calling was a blessing, and before I realized it, Nicolas was growing and the treatment had concluded. Nicolas became a happy and healthy boy who was full of energy.

Serving those valiant daughters of our Heavenly Father has helped me overcome feelings of inadequacy, develop eternal bonds of friendship, discover my talents, and improve in my responsibilities as a mother and wife.

The Lord does not always take trials from us, but I know with all my heart that He is always willing to help us have the strength to confront them. ■

Ariele Queiroz Meyer Fischer, Santa Catarina, Brazil



My calling in Young Women became harder and harder to fulfill. I didn't know how I could do it.

MY ROOFTOP PRAYER

One rainy fall day, I went into my attic and noticed a leak. Water dripped off the ends of roofing nails between two sets of rafters. Years before, I had done many repairs to my home and wasn't afraid to attempt new projects. But at this time I was facing personal struggles and lacked confidence. I didn't feel like I had the emotional strength to deal with the leak, even though I knew something needed to be done before winter came.

A week or two later, I got on my roof with a utility knife, a putty knife, and a caulking gun loaded with roofing tar. I figured I just needed to find the source of the leak and cover it with gooey tar. But I had no idea where the source was. I felt discouraged. I paused and said a prayer, asking the

Lord to direct me to the right spot so I could fix the leak. I expected Him to just show me the spot. Instead, one word came to my mind: *investigate*.

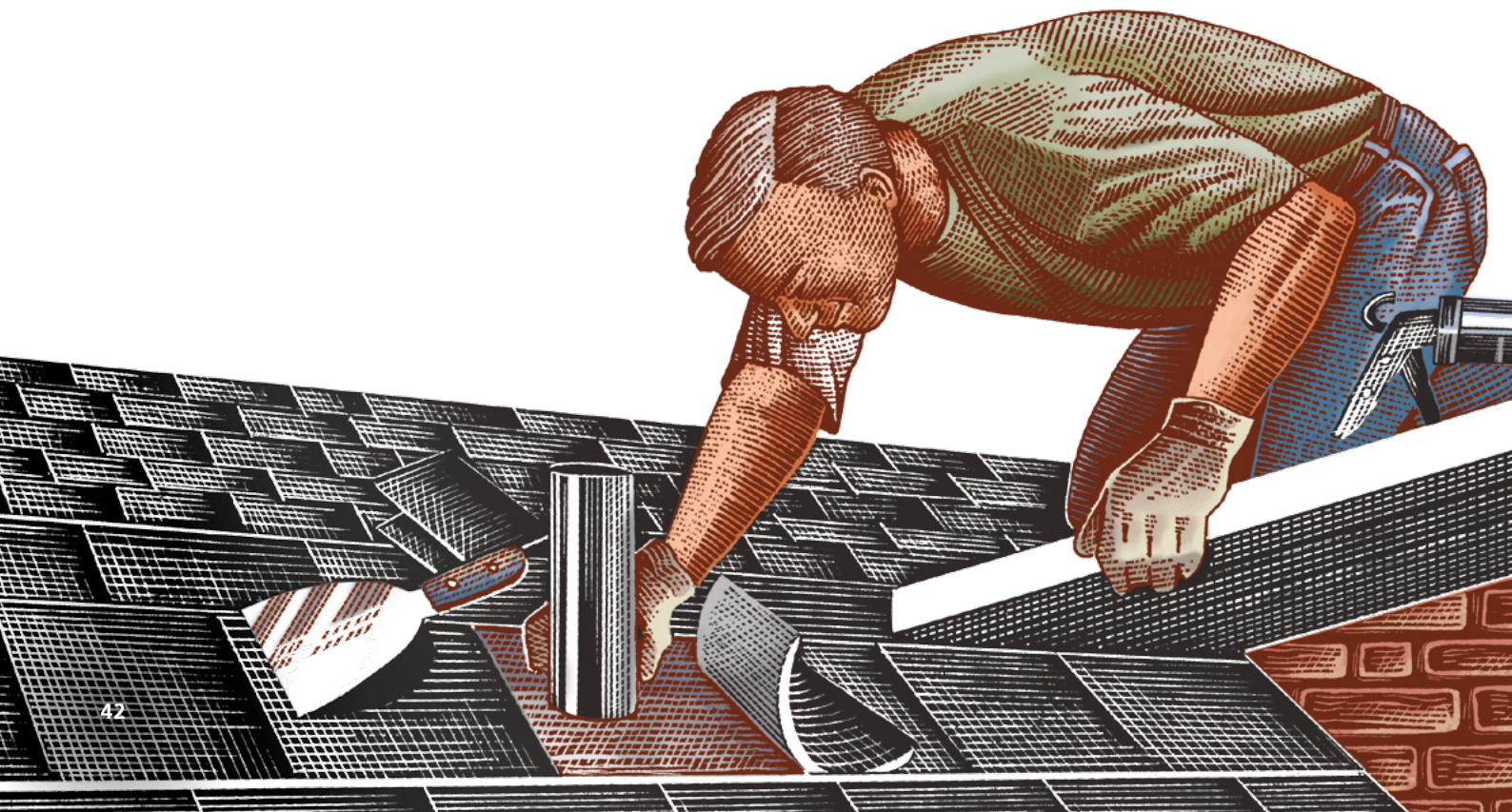
This wasn't the answer I wanted, but I began to look around. My eyes focused on a vent. I tore off two small shingles by the vent and saw what looked like the source of a leak. I cut out old, dry tar and applied a liberal amount of new tar. I replaced the shingles, and in less than one hour I had completed the job. My depressed spirits were lifted, and I felt good about myself for what I had done to solve the problem. During the next rain, I looked in the attic for leaks and found it dry!

I thought of Oliver Cowdery, who had "[taken] no thought save it was

to ask" (D&C 9:7). Like him, I had expected the Lord to simply give me a quick answer to my prayer with no effort on my part. And I thought about how much my spirits were lifted when I had to put forth my own effort to "study it out" (D&C 9:8)—to investigate. I learned that the Lord will not do everything for us. He will help and guide us, but we are also expected to do what we can on our own because this brings personal growth. ■

Valiant K. Jones, Michigan, USA

I just needed to find the source of the leak, but I had no idea where it was, so I paused and said a prayer.



WAS THIS THE END OF MY LIFE?

I was the healthy father of two beautiful children and the husband to a wonderful and hardworking wife. I had a good job with a stable income. Life seemed to be perfect, but my world started to fall apart when I was diagnosed with nasopharyngeal cancer, a rare type of head and neck cancer.

I was serving as a counselor to the bishop at the time, and we were holding our annual basketball tournament at the church when I began to feel very sick. I went to see the doctor, and after many lab tests, he announced that I had stage 4 nasopharyngeal cancer. I was worried and scared. I wondered if this was the end of my life and what would happen to my family if I died. The only thing I could really depend on for guidance and

comfort was prayer to Heavenly Father.

After three days of constant prayer, I felt as if a soft voice whispered, “Fear not.”

From that moment on, the fear of death was no longer on my mind. Things were still difficult for me. There was a time I couldn’t swallow any food and I was too sick to sleep, but I never gave up or turned away from God—and He has helped me.

My cancer has been in remission for more than 18 years. I don’t know how long God will allow me to live, but I’m glad that I can still serve my brothers and sisters. I know that our Heavenly Father never abandons us. And if we want to receive blessings from God, we can’t abandon Him. ■

Samson Ho, Hong Kong, China



Home Earlier Than Planned

By Destiny Yarbro

Both of my parents served missions. At a young age I heard their mission stories and dreamt of the day when I would be able to serve the Lord as a full-time missionary.

Preparing for my mission was one of the most precious times of my life. I was closer to the Lord than ever before. I received my mission call to the Budapest Hungary Mission and entered the Provo Missionary Training Center (MTC), determined to give my all to my Heavenly Father.

Being at the MTC was an incredibly spiritual experience for me. As I grew closer to the Lord, I sincerely prayed that I was willing to do anything He asked and promised that I would love the Hungarians with my whole heart.

Near the end of my MTC experience, I became ill. After a short stint at home to recoup, I was given the

opportunity to continue my mission to Hungary. I was placed with a wonderful trainer, Sister Sunshine Nestor, who taught me how to recognize the daily tender mercies and miracles of the Lord.

After a few months, I became ill again. Although Sister Nestor and I continued to work the best we could, I had to return home yet again.

In my mind I had let the Lord down because I had not served a “full” mission. I was convinced that there were still Hungarians that I “should have” taught if I hadn’t become sick. I wondered if I did not have enough faith to be healed because, after all, the Lord protects His missionaries. I had *never* considered that my sacrifice to the Lord would not be to give a year and a half of my life, but rather to sacrifice the kind of mission that I had anticipated.

There are many ways to continue to serve the Lord and find meaning after returning home early from a mission.

My Search for Meaning at Home

As I walked off the plane coming home, I couldn’t help but think that I had left the most important work of my life behind in the mission field. It took time, but I learned that there was work at home that would bring my life meaning as well.

No matter your reason for returning from your mission earlier than

anticipated, decide today to make this experience a step *forward* in your progression, not a step back. I came home for medical reasons, but others come home for a variety of reasons, including transgression. As a result, some of the ideas below may not apply to your situation. Pray to the Lord to find ways to serve Him from home. For example, if you came home for transgression and are not yet worthy to attend the temple, you can still find meaning as you regularly walk around temple grounds and commit to one day return to His holy house.

Besides reading my scriptures, praying, and attending church, each of the following steps on my journey was vital to my healing.

1. *Staying Connected*

My first step to finding meaning in my life was to stay connected with the Saints and missionaries in Hungary.

For some time, I lived for preparation days when I would receive emails from Sister Nestor and my MTC companions. I have to admit; sometimes it wasn't easy to read about my companions' missions or to speak with the Hungarians that I missed so badly. But as I look back now, I realize that it was critical to my healing to hear about the miracles happening there.

2. *Indexing Online*

My little brother, gently prompted by my intuitive mother, convinced me to start indexing. Initially I did batches

of names to appease him, but one day a registry of Hungarian names popped up on my screen. The Spirit swept over me and taught me that I was still able to help bring Hungarian souls to Christ—just on the *other* side of the veil!

3. *Setting Goals*

After the mission, all of my pre-mission life goals seemed unattainable with my new health condition. But with time I realized that there were goals I could accomplish while lying down. I called goals such as reading



Jesus the Christ “horizontal goals” and worked on them daily.

4. Going Back to School

One of my pre-mission life goals was to graduate from college. While attending classes would have been difficult with my illness and the constant doctor appointments, my dad encouraged me to take online classes from Brigham Young University Independent Study. Not only was this an achievable horizontal goal, but I also realized that maybe I was capable of doing more pre-mission goals than I had previously thought possible.

5. Serving an Online Mission

One day at church, a sister walked up to my mom and said, “Do you know that Destiny can serve an online indexing mission?” This unexpected question was an answer to my

prayers. I was able to serve the Lord for nine months as an indexing support Church-service missionary. This was a mission I *could* do!*

6. Teaching Mission Preparation

As I became better at managing my health condition, I began studying at a community college while doing my online mission. I was asked to teach mission preparation at the nearby institute. Teaching helped me realize that my enthusiasm for missionary work had not waned and that even my short mission had provided me with many experiences that could be valuable for my students.

7. Volunteering at the MTC

After successfully attending a semester of college near my home, I moved to Utah, USA, to attend BYU. At first, I could hardly walk by the Provo MTC without feeling a rush of conflicting

emotions. But I started volunteering weekly at the MTC and found that it was healing to meet the wonderful missionaries being sent to my beloved Hungary.

8. Performing Temple Work

A Hungarian sister, Edit, who has prepared nearly 150,000 names for the temple asked me to take some of her names to the temple. It was a joy to do the saving ordinances for these Hungarians!

Gradual Healing Through His Work

Serving a mission was my most important life dream and, understandably, I felt a loss when I came home earlier than anticipated. For a time, I struggled to talk about my mission. I had to work through feelings of failure. I had to learn how to judge the value of my mission by my desire to



serve rather than the length. Although I didn't realize it at the time, each of these steps toward meaning in my life also brought healing.

For years I was nervous that returning to Hungary would be difficult for me emotionally. When I eventually traveled there, it wasn't until the second day that I realized that not only was I not feeling any pain, I was also feeling overwhelming joy to be back. I knew then that Heavenly Father had given me the opportunity to experience the healing power of the Savior's Atonement. I now know that through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, all things will be made right in the end. ■

The author lives in Arizona, USA.

*Many early returned missionaries continue to serve as young Church-service missionaries. See lds.org/ycsm or meet with your bishop or branch president for more information.



AN ACCEPTABLE OFFERING

"When I give a commandment to any of the sons [or daughters] of men to do a work unto my name, and [they] go with all their might and with all they have to perform that work, and cease not their diligence, and their enemies come upon them and hinder them from performing that work, behold, it behooveth me to require that work no more at the hands of those sons [and daughters] of men, but to accept of their offerings."

—Doctrine and Covenants 124:49

TIPS FOR PARENTS

The following is a list of things to consider:

- Allow your missionary time to grieve and heal.
- Tell your missionary often how much you love him or her.
- Encourage him or her to meet regularly with your stake president and bishop.
- Ask your missionary how much he or she would like others to know about the reason he or she is home.
- Let others know that your missionary is home and that you are excited to see him or her again.
- Give your missionary time to talk with you about the mission, sharing both wonderful and hard experiences.
- Encourage your missionary to pray about what to do next in life and then support his or her decision of whether to return to the mission.

TIPS FOR WARD MEMBERS

It can be hard to know what to say when missionaries come home earlier than expected. You can help their transition to home life by welcoming them home, expressing your love for them, and thanking them for serving a mission.

You may not know why that missionary is home, and the reason may be very different from what you expect. Keep in mind that their healing process is between them and the Lord and that they only need to know of your support.

It can be good for missionaries to share their experiences from the mission in a safe environment. Recognize that they may need some time before they can talk about their missions. If you want a missionary to share a story in class, call them ahead of time to ask if they would be comfortable sharing.

MINISTERING RESOURCES

Leaders can find understanding and ways to help early returning missionaries online at ministering.lds.org.

How Institute Helps You Learn the Gospel

Try these three ways to get more from your institute of religion classes.

By Po Nien (Felipe) Chou
Seminaries and Institutes

The world today is more challenging than it was . . . years ago,” said Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Our young men and young women have many more distractions to sidetrack them in their preparations for both a mission and a future happy life.” Now, more than ever, we

need to learn “how to listen to and respond to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit.”¹

To help you become more spiritually in tune, the Church has provided institutes of religion. Institute can give you hands-on “meaningful experiences with the word of God.”²

When you attend institute, you can choose from numerous classes. Teachers who understand the needs and questions of young adults will help you learn from the scriptures and teachings of latter-day prophets.

A recent change in institute now gives you the opportunity to use (1) course study journals, (2) course questions, and (3) personal learning projects to elevate your learning and strengthen your faith in Jesus Christ. These three study options will help you personalize your gospel study and learn firsthand how the Spirit works with you.

Course Study Journals

Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles recommended capturing spiritual impressions in a journal: “Write down in a secure place the important things you learn from the Spirit. You will find that as you write down precious impressions, often more will come.”³

Students use a journal (whether on paper or in the Gospel Library app) in class and at home to record impressions as they study the scriptures. Jayme Dhennz, an institute student in the Philippines, has seen the benefits of keeping a study journal: “I can’t really pass up writing passages and messages from the scriptures or talks of the prophets because it widens my gospel learning.”

Brother Seiichi Takahashi’s institute students in Nagoya, Japan, like journaling because it allows “the learning process to flow smoothly” and helps



students come to class more prepared to learn and participate.

Taisia Bartolomeo of southern Italy says, “By writing down what I learned, I am able to better recall the concepts when I need them.” Her classmate, Mariaterasa Santoro, adds, “My journal is something I can look upon to recall a specific spiritual concept or personal revelation.”

Course Questions

Questions, given at the beginning of the course, give students topics to ponder and study throughout the course. At the end, students submit their personal, Spirit-guided answers to their teacher.

Ilaria Bellomo, a student in southern Italy, explains, “The questions made me reflect on my life and on the fact that what I study for institute helps me know Jesus Christ better.”

Jinseop Jeong, an institute student in Korea, says,

“The questions helped me think deeply about and review what I learned. It was an important time to review, contemplate, and internalize what I learned.”

The students’ spiritual growth becomes evident in their answers. Sister Seonsim Kang, a stake institute teacher in Korea, says, “It was a great experience for me to read and learn the testimonies and thoughts of the students.”

Personal Learning Projects

Many institute students prayerfully choose to do a meaningful project. Depending on their interests, students around the world have created gospel-related art, music, videos, and social media posts. These projects invite the

students to act on the things they have learned in class. For instance, one student chose to paint a portrait of the Savior to accompany the course “Jesus Christ and the Everlasting Gospel.”

One student attending an “Eternal Family” course created a temple and family history project that “culminated in a temple trip with my grandmother and immediate family members in which we completed together over 40 temple sealings that had been prepared throughout the semester. This brought our family closer together.”

As Cenía Avila Organig, an institute student in Bicol, Philippines, points out, working on a personal learning project “provides flexibility,” giving students the freedom to learn the word of God and feel the Spirit using their own talents.

Elevated Results

Using these learning approaches can improve your gospel study and deepen your testimony. By diving deeper into gospel study through institute courses, you can better understand how to apply the word of God in your own life and how to bless the lives of others. ■

NOTES

1. M. Russell Ballard, “The Greatest Generation of Young Adults,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 67.
2. “Teaching with Power,” [lds.org/si/objective/elevate-learning/teaching-with-power](https://www.lds.org/si/objective/elevate-learning/teaching-with-power).
3. Richard G. Scott, “To Acquire Knowledge and the Strength to Use It Wisely,” *Ensign*, June 2002, 32; *Liahona*, Aug. 2002, 12.





2018 MUTUAL THEME

PEACE IN CHRIST



Bonnie L. Oscarson, President (center); Carol F. McConkie, First Counselor (left); Neill F. Marriott, Second Counselor (right)



Stephen W. Owen, President (center); Douglas D. Holmes, First Counselor (left); M. Joseph Brough, Second Counselor (right)

No matter your circumstances, you can always find peace in Jesus Christ.

By the Young Women and Young Men General Presidencies

In a world filled with commotion, competing ideals, temptations, and confusing philosophies, finding peace is not always easy. But the Savior's promise found in Doctrine and Covenants 19:23 (the 2018 Mutual theme) provides a certain path to peace: "Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me."

As the Young Women and Young Men General Presidencies, we testify that is true. We have seen it in our own lives, and if you follow this pattern, God will fulfill His promise of peace in your life as well.

Many of you may feel anxious and concerned about what the future holds for you. Many of you wonder about your looks, your abilities, your potential. But no matter what you face, you can find peace. That doesn't mean all those questions or concerns will immediately vanish, but you can feel the quiet assurance that things will work out. Most importantly, you can feel the love of Jesus Christ for you personally, and that brings great peace.

Let's talk about each of the elements of this verse.

LEARN OF ME

Coming to know Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ is a critical

part of your life journey. The Lord said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). As you come to know Christ better, you can understand how good, wise, kind, and loving He is. Your faith in Him will grow, and you will have a greater desire to follow Him and Heavenly Father.

LISTEN TO MY WORDS

Jesus Christ speaks to us through the scriptures, living prophets, and the Holy Ghost. We need to feast on, ponder, and apply these words in our life. In your study of the Savior's words, focus on the Book of Mormon because it is "the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion," taught Joseph Smith, "and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book."¹ President Thomas S. Monson's powerful invitation in the April 2017 general conference for us to read the Book of Mormon every day will help us listen to and understand the words of Christ.²

WALK IN THE MEEKNESS OF MY SPIRIT

Listening to the Savior's words only begins to change us when

we are willing to obey them. This requires meekness on our part. It requires us to give up our own way and walk in His way. Sometimes we think our way is better. But when we are meek and follow Him wherever He leads us, we will always be on the best path.

YOU SHALL HAVE PEACE IN ME

This is the great promise: if you will do these three things—learn, listen, and walk with the Savior—you will have peace in your life. You will have the assurance that God is by your side and that He will watch over you, despite any fears, uncertainties, or weaknesses you may have. You can have confidence—not just in yourself but also in Jesus Christ and His love and power.

We invite all the youth of the Church to memorize this verse. Use it as a guide in your life. When the mists of darkness swirl about you and seem overwhelming, you will be able to bring this verse to mind, follow its pattern, and anchor yourself to the sure and certain foundation of Jesus Christ. ■

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 64.
2. See Thomas S. Monson, "The Power of the Book of Mormon," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2017, 86.



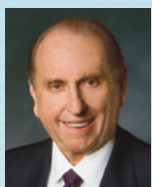
PEACE IN CHRIST

LEARN OF ME, AND LISTEN TO MY WORDS;
WALK IN THE MEEKNESS OF MY SPIRIT,
AND YOU SHALL HAVE PEACE IN ME.

DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS 19:23

Doctrine and Covenants 19:23

The Lord revealed to Joseph Smith some keys to receiving peace in Jesus Christ.



1 LEARN OF ME

“We know that this ‘teacher come from God’ [John 3:2] was more than a mere teacher. He who taught us to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, all our souls, all our strength, and all our minds, and to love our neighbor as ourselves, is the Master Teacher and the Exemplar of the perfect life. . . .

“When we respond to the Lord’s gentle invitation, ‘Learn of me,’ we become partakers of His divine power.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Learn of Me,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Mar. 2016, 4, 6.

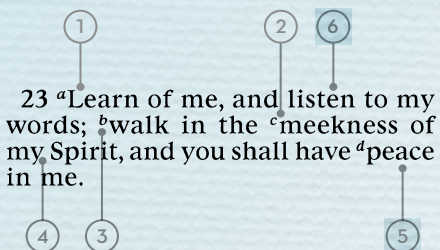
2 MEEKNESS

Being meek includes being “patient under suffering” (Guide to the Scriptures, “Meek, Meekness,” scriptures.lds.org). If we meekly endure our trials without resenting God, not only will we be converted, but He will also heal us (see D&C 112:13).

3 WALK

Learning and listening are necessary to truly follow Jesus Christ. But they are not enough by themselves. We must also walk, or act, in accordance with what we learn and hear.

“It is always the right time to walk in His way. It is never too late” (President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “The Way of the Disciple,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 78).



4 MY SPIRIT

Meekness brings “the visitation of the Holy Ghost” (Moroni 8:26) and is a “fruit of the Spirit” (see Galatians 5:22–23).



5 PEACE IN ME

“Peace is not found by attaining great wealth, power, or prominence. Peace is not found in the pursuit of pleasure, entertainment, or leisure. None of these can, even when attained in abundance, create any lasting happiness or peace.

“... The Savior ... is the source and author of peace. He is the ‘Prince of Peace’ [Isaiah 9:6].”

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Personal Peace: The Reward of Righteousness,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 34.

6 LISTEN TO MY WORDS

Listening is important in developing faith in Jesus Christ. “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17).

“God’s children should learn to listen, then listen to learn from the Lord” (President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Listen to Learn,” *Ensign*, May 1991, 24).

PEACE IN CHRIST

Thoughtfully ♩ = 72

Words and music by
Nik Day

The musical score is written for piano and voice. It begins with a piano introduction in 4/4 time, marked 'Thoughtfully' with a tempo of 72 beats per minute. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb). The piano part features a melody in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand, with various chords indicated above the staff.

The vocal part enters at measure 5. It consists of two lines of lyrics: a first line and a second line. The lyrics are:

1. There is peace in Christ When we learn of Him. Feel the love He

2. There is peace in Christ When we walk with Him Through the streets of

The piano accompaniment continues with chords and a bass line, with a note to '(play smaller notes second time)' at measure 10.

The second system of the vocal part begins at measure 8. The lyrics are:

felt for us — When He bore our sins. Lis - ten to His words. Let them come a -

Gal - i - lee — To Je - ru - sa - lem. Mend the bro - ken hearts. Dry the tear - filled

The piano accompaniment continues with chords and a bass line.

The third system of the vocal part begins at measure 11. The lyrics are:

live. If we know Him as He is, — There is peace in Christ. He gives us

eyes. When we live the way He lived, — There is peace in Christ.

The piano accompaniment continues with chords and a bass line.

The fourth system of the vocal part begins at measure 14. The lyrics are:

hope — When hope is gone. He gives us strength — When we can't go

The piano accompaniment continues with chords and a bass line.

17 on. He gives us shel - ter In the storms of life. When there's no peace on

17 B \flat E \flat A \flat B \flat Cm 7

20 To Coda Φ 1. 2.

earth, There is peace in Christ. Christ.

20 A \flat B \flat E \flat A \flat E \flat

23 A \flat B \flat E \flat A \flat B \flat E \flat A \flat B \flat

28 D.S. al Coda

He gives us

28 Cm E \flat A \flat B \flat E \flat

31 Φ CODA

Christ. When there's no peace on

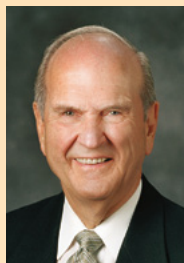
31 Cm E \flat

32 earth, There is peace in Christ.

32 A \flat B \flat E \flat A \flat Cm A \flat B \flat A \flat E \flat

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By President Russell M. Nelson

President of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

Study the SAVIOR'S WORDS

Not only do I now have a greater testimony of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, but I also have a reaffirmation of my absolute conviction that the system Joseph Smith had for translating the Book of Mormon was a gift from God.

During the January 2017 worldwide devotional for young adults, I challenged those watching to increase their testimony of the Savior by taking time each week to:

- Study everything Jesus said and did as recorded in the Old Testament.
- Study His laws as recorded in the New Testament.
- Study His doctrine as recorded in the Book of Mormon.
- Study His words as recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants.

I promised those listening that if they would proceed to learn all they can about Jesus Christ, their love for Him and for God's laws would grow beyond what they could currently imagine.

What I didn't mention during this address was that I knew this promise was true because I was in the midst of completing this very same assignment myself for the first time.

On December 1, 2016, I obtained a new set of scriptures and proceeded to begin the same assignment that I would later extend to young adults in January. When I finished the assignment six weeks later, I had looked up and marked more than 2,200 citations from the four books of scripture.¹



After six weeks of study, President Nelson completed his assignment.

"I have devoted much of my 93 years to learning about the Savior, but rare are the occasions when I have been able to learn as much as I did over this six-week study period."

You can watch or read President Nelson's January 2017 devotional by clicking on "worldwide devotional" at lds.org/broadcasts.

For me, to be able to accomplish this assignment was just thrilling!

Something I found to be most insightful was that the Savior was telling us about Himself through these various periods of time—Old Testament, New Testament, the Restoration period, and our day. In all books of scripture, the story is the same and the Storyteller is the same.

I have devoted much of my 93 years to learning about the Savior, but rare are the occasions when I have been able to learn as much as I did over this six-week study period. In fact, I learned so much about Him from this study that I am planning to share much of it in other upcoming addresses that I am currently preparing.²

Upon beginning this assignment, I didn't expect that this study would help me to receive a new testimony of the divinity of the work of Joseph Smith—but it did! The revelations recorded by Joseph Smith and the insights found in the Bible are amazingly consistent. It was so enlightening for me to see this in my study.

Joseph Smith wouldn't have possibly had time to correlate and cross-reference with the Bible at the rapid rate at which he was translating the Book of Mormon—but it's all here!

So not only do I now have a greater testimony of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, but I also have a reaffirmation of my absolute conviction that the system Joseph Smith had for translating the Book of Mormon was a gift from God.

Now, I realize some of you are probably thinking to yourselves that you couldn't possibly have time to complete an assignment like this.

I know how you feel. I thought the same thing of myself—that there's no way I can have time to do all of this. I needed to remind myself that a comment like this is not a faith-promoted comment. A faith-promoted

comment would be “I know I don’t have time for this, but I’m going to make time for it. And I’ll fulfill it with what time I have.”

Each of us who takes this challenge will finish in our own time frames. For me, much of the joy of this came from getting it all done in just six weeks. This intense study over a relatively short period of time allowed me to appreciate the complementary nature of the learnings to be found in the Old Testament, the Book of Mormon, the New Testament, and the Doctrine and Covenants.

To those of you who feel you don’t have time, if you will make a sacrifice, you will be well rewarded and very, very grateful for the change of perspective, increased knowledge, and improved depth of your conversion. I know this is true because I have seen the same rewards in my own life.

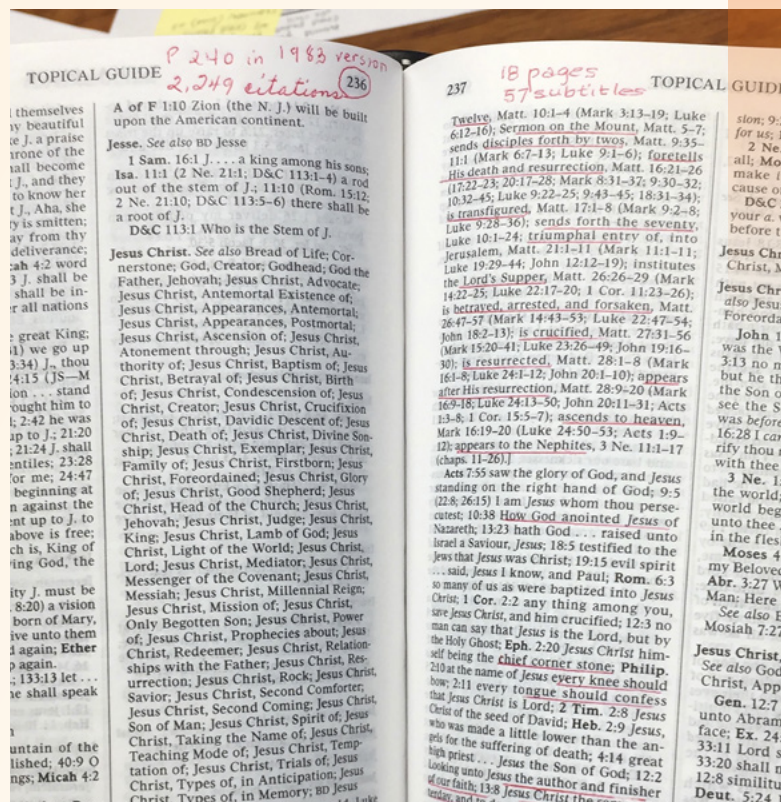
As I mentioned at the devotional, in a coming day, you will present yourself before the Savior. You will be overwhelmed to the point of tears to be in His holy presence. You will struggle to find words to thank Him for paying for your sins, for forgiving you of any unkindness toward others, for healing you from the injuries and injustices of this life.

You will thank Him for strengthening you to do the impossible, for turning your weaknesses into strengths, and for making it possible for you to live with Him and your family forever. His identity, His Atonement, and His attributes will become personal and real to you.

But you don’t have to wait until then. Choose to be one of His true disciples now. Be one who truly loves Him, who truly wants to serve and lead as He did. I promise you that if you will study His words, your ability to be more like Him will increase. I know this is true. ■

From an article on lds.org/blog.

“To those of you who feel you don’t have time, if you will make a sacrifice, you will be well rewarded.”



President Nelson studied over 2,200 scriptures about Jesus Christ and His teachings.

NOTES

1. As President Nelson suggested in his devotional, you can refer to the Guide to the Scriptures for references under the topic “Jesus Christ.”
2. See President Nelson’s April 2017 general conference address, “Drawing the Power of Jesus Christ into Our Lives.”

For Will, choosing not to play football on Sundays could mean choosing not to play on one of the best teams.





FOOTBALL, SUNDAYS, AND SPIRITUAL BELLY FLOPS

By Charlotte Larcabal
Church Magazines

When I was a kid, my friends and I played a game called “Jump or Dive.” Basically, all you need is a deep pool or lake and something to jump off of, like a diving board. To play, you launch yourself off the diving board. Right as you do, someone yells, “jump,” which means you need to enter the water feet first, or “dive,” which means you need to enter the water hands first, in a dive.

When you try to react in midair, you usually end up resembling a flapping pretzel or doing a very painful belly flop.

Life doesn’t have to be a game of “Jump or Dive.” You can make a lot of decisions much earlier and avoid a lot of spiritual belly flops. The Old Testament prophet Joshua didn’t say, “Choose just before it’s too late.” He said, “Choose you *this day* whom ye will serve” (Joshua 24:15; emphasis added).

Will W., 14, from San Francisco, California, USA, probably doesn’t do many spiritual belly flops because he believes in making choices before the last minute.

“If you make the choice to do or not to do something before it even comes up, it makes things a lot easier,” he says. “Say you went to a party and someone offered you a drink. If you had to choose right then to take it or not, you might be tempted to take it. But if you had decided a long time ago to say no if anyone ever offered you a drink, you’d feel a lot surer of yourself. You wouldn’t even have time to be tempted. You’d say no because you had already decided to a long time ago.”



The 2018 Mutual theme says, “Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me” (D&C 19:23). For Will, peace means feeling confident as he chooses the right and not worrying about negative comments from others. That peace comes to Will from making the decision to listen to—and obey—Jesus Christ’s words in advance.

“Sometimes kids give me a hard time for what I do or don’t do, but it doesn’t really bother me because I decided a long time ago that that is how I would live,” he says.

One thing Will and his family decided a long time ago was to keep the Sabbath day holy. That got a little tricky when Will made an elite soccer team. But, like Nephi, his family believes that “the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them” (1 Nephi 3:7).

To Will, football is just about everything. As his mom says, “He eats, drinks, sleeps, and just loves, loves football. It’s his passion and he’s very good.”

So when Will made one of the highest-ranking teams in the area, he was thrilled. The only problem: the team played many of its games on Sundays. Most teams wouldn’t accept a player who would miss every Sunday game. Choosing not to play on Sundays could mean losing his spot on the team.

But Will had made that decision a long time ago. He would keep the Sabbath day holy.

Will and his family prayed together and told Heavenly

Father of their desire to keep His commandments and asked for His help. Then Will and his mother talked to the coaches of the team about their beliefs. To their surprise, the coaches wanted Will on the team even if he didn’t play on Sundays!

“I know that when I honor the Sabbath, I am blessed,” Will says. “I may not get to play as many games as the others, but I’ve seen blessings, like Sunday games suddenly getting changed to another day. I also think I play better because I have a day of rest.”

It gets better. Will soon found out that one of his teammates was also member of the Church. After a few months of playing together, the other boy followed Will’s example and stopped playing on Sunday too.

If you feel like you are not receiving the blessings of obedience, that might be because you can’t see all that Heavenly Father has in store for you. Deciding to listen to Christ’s words and to serve the Lord is always the right decision, so make it now!

“I plead with you to make a determination right here, right now, not to deviate from the path which will lead to our goal: eternal life with our Father in Heaven,” said President Thomas S. Monson (“The Three Rs of Choice,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 68).

Don’t make your life a game of “Jump or Dive.” Don’t risk spiritual or any other kinds of belly flops. Decide right now to follow Jesus Christ and enjoy the peace He brings into your life. ■





My STRANGE NEIGHBOR

By Samantha Best

A few years ago I was depressed because I felt like I had no one to talk to. My family was distant and I had no friends, so I couldn't fathom the idea of living anymore.

I was living with my aunt and uncle, and the only thing they told me not to do was talk to the neighbor. They claimed he was strange, and they made up stories about him to scare me off.

However, one Saturday he and two teenage girls my age asked for my help with building a fence. I agreed and got to work.

After observing these girls, I realized they were nice, so I started talking with them, which led to a conversation about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I had so many questions, which they answered. I became intrigued. My neighbor invited me to go to church with him the next day to see how I liked it. I was at a low point in my life, so I figured I had nothing to lose.

Walking through those doors the following morning, I felt an instant inner peace that I didn't understand, but I knew this church was where I had to be. I was introduced to the missionaries that morning, and I saw how they *knew* the Church to be true.


I began to listen to the various lessons from the missionaries. I couldn't have asked Heavenly Father to send me those two loving, caring, and spiritual missionaries at a better time. Through their help I gained the knowledge they had about the gospel.

After listening to them share how their knowledge of Heavenly Father helped them through trials, I felt like I should pray to see if what they had said was true. After praying, I felt an intense feeling of happiness, peace, and calmness inside me. I knew that I had received my answer that night through the Holy Ghost.

Having this knowledge, my testimony has grown rapidly. Since joining the Church in 2013, I have definitely seen the blessings that the knowledge of our Heavenly Father has given me. I am thankful for those missionaries and for my neighbor inviting me to come unto Christ. ■

The author lives in Victoria, Australia.

I was at a low point in my life, but going to church with my neighbor changed everything.





I PUT MY FAITH TO WORK

My ping-pong match with my friend Erfrey was interrupted by three knocks on his front door. I heard an unfamiliar voice with a strange accent of Hiligaynon, our native dialect.

Erfrey rushed toward the door, apparently expecting them. “Come on!” he said to me. “I want you to meet my friends!”

They were wearing white shirts and ties and had come to teach Erfrey’s younger brother to prepare him for

baptism. I spoke to them in English, and they were impressed enough to ask if I would interpret during their discussion with Erfrey’s brother.

I thought my role would just be the passive interpreter. But I became an active participant as their words took root in my heart. I had an unexplainable feeling, a lingering happy feeling I had never experienced before.

After that experience, I asked the missionaries to teach my family. But when they came, my parents took

a stand that a Mormon would never have a place in our family.

I wanted to be baptized, so I put my faith to work. I fasted and prayed. I strived to be an example to them.

Two years later, through my own simple faith and the loving support of Heavenly Father, my father’s heart was finally softened and he signed my baptismal consent. I am happy to say that my testimony of the restored gospel is my most prized possession. ■

Arnel M., Negros Occidental, Philippines

FROM PRIMARY TO YOUNG WOMEN

I've always found it difficult to adjust to new situations. That's why I was nervous to leave Primary and start Young Women. At first the schedule was strange to me. Young Women was a totally different environment—no singing time, no sharing time. We also had Mutual during the week.

I just wanted to fit in and feel comfortable, so I gave my new schedule a chance. I prayed a lot, and I began to adjust to the new routine and bond with the other young women.

As the weeks went by, I started to realize why I was in the Young Women program. I was learning more about the gospel, I was getting more opportunities to have a little goodness each week, and I was able to go to the temple and feel the Lord's Spirit in His house.

Now I am very thankful for Young Women. I'm happy I gave this change a chance and that my Heavenly Father helped me do so. ■

Bethany W., Florida, USA

A CLEAN SPIRIT: MORE IMPORTANT THAN A COMPETITION

In eighth grade I was in a book club. Each month we met to discuss a book, and at the end of the year we had a competition to see whose team knew the most about each book. One rule we always upheld was to read only clean books.

One month, when I started reading the next book, I felt like it wasn't clean. But I needed to read it if I wanted my team to win the competition. I couldn't let them down. A few chapters later, the book got worse. Finally, I put it down. I knew that I couldn't read it—my spiritual cleanliness was worth more than winning a competition.

But I was so worried about telling my team. The night before our club's meeting, I prayed to Heavenly Father to help me have courage to face them.

The next day I was really worried. I sat down with my team. Once the meeting started, I was about to explain to everyone that I couldn't read the book. But before I could, the leader got up and apologized. She explained that she hadn't read the book before putting it on our booklist and didn't realize what was in it. She said she would take it off the list. When I got home, I thanked Heavenly Father.

I know that when we uphold our standards, the Lord watches over us. He doesn't always take care of the situation as He did for me, but He will always give us the courage to make good decisions. ■

Ashleigh A., Utah, USA



IT'S YOUR TURN

The *Liahona* welcomes your experiences and insights in living the gospel. Submit your story at liahona.lds.org (click "Submit an Article").

Sharing Snacks and Smiles

We're Sam and Anastasia,
and we try to SHINE
OUR LIGHT by
sharing with others!



1

How Could We Help?

Where we live, in Florida, USA, we see lots of people who are homeless. We wondered how we could help them. Jesus fed people who were hungry, and everyone needs to eat! So we decided to make emergency snack kits.



2

Buying Supplies

Our friend Joa helped us shop for supplies at the dollar store.



3

Making the Kits

We put granola bars, bread sticks with cheese, and other yummy snacks in our kits. Sam even tried one!



4

Awesome!

Sharing our kits made us smile. Some people said, "Thank you!" and "Awesome!"



5

Lots More Kits

Our mom put the project online, and the young single adult branch found out about it. They made 100 more

snack kits for our local homeless shelter. The shelter used them to invite people to sign up for a program to help them get homes. That made us really happy!

HOW CAN YOU SHINE?

- Choose a service project you want to do with your family.
- Give a fast offering in your tithing envelope. Your money will go to help someone in need.

SEND US A STAR!

How do you let your light shine, as Jesus asked us to do? Send us a star with your story, photo, and parent's permission. See page 71 for more information.



By Murlene Watkins

Based on a true story

"I love to read the holy scriptures, and, ev'ry time I do, I feel the Spirit start to grow within my heart—a testimony that they're true" (Children's Songbook, 109).

Lucia wiped away a tear. She didn't want the other kids to see. She left the school grounds and hurried toward home.

Lucia lived on a small, beautiful island. She was the only member of the Church at school. Everybody else went to the same church. They teased Lucia and wouldn't play with her because she was different.

That wasn't the only problem. Sometimes the teachers ignored Lucia when she raised her hand.

"But today was the worst!" Lucia thought. She kicked

a pebble down the road. During class, the teacher read some Bible verses that Lucia didn't understand. They made it sound like Heavenly Father, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost were the same person. Then the teacher said there were *some* churches that didn't believe what the Bible taught. She looked straight at Lucia. Everybody in class laughed.

Lucia was confused. Weren't Heavenly Father, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost separate? What was going on?

Suddenly she had a happy thought. She could ask the missionaries! They came to Lucia's village every day. "They'll know how to help!" she thought.

When Lucia got home, she saw Sister Brown and Sister Ruiz. They were helping pump water up to a tank on the roof.

Lucia asked her question right away. "Why does the

An ANSWER



Bible say Heavenly Father and Jesus are the same person?"

Sister Brown smiled. "That's a good question. After lunch let's look for some scriptures to help."

Lucia hardly tasted any of the yummy *ropa vieja* stew Mama had made. All she wanted was the answer!

Finally lunch was over. Lucia and the missionaries opened their scriptures. They read about Joseph Smith's vision. Then they read about Jesus's baptism. Both scriptures showed that Heavenly Father, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost were separate.

"So why do those other scriptures say they're the same?" asked Lucia.

Sister Brown started turning the pages. "Let's read in John 17. That's where Jesus prays to Heavenly Father about His Apostles."

They all took turns reading. In the scriptures, Jesus prayed that His Apostles "may be one" like He and Heavenly Father are one. Lucia counted three different times He said it.

"The Apostles couldn't all become the same person," Sister Ruiz said. "But they *could* become one in how they believed and acted. That's how Heavenly Father, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost are one."

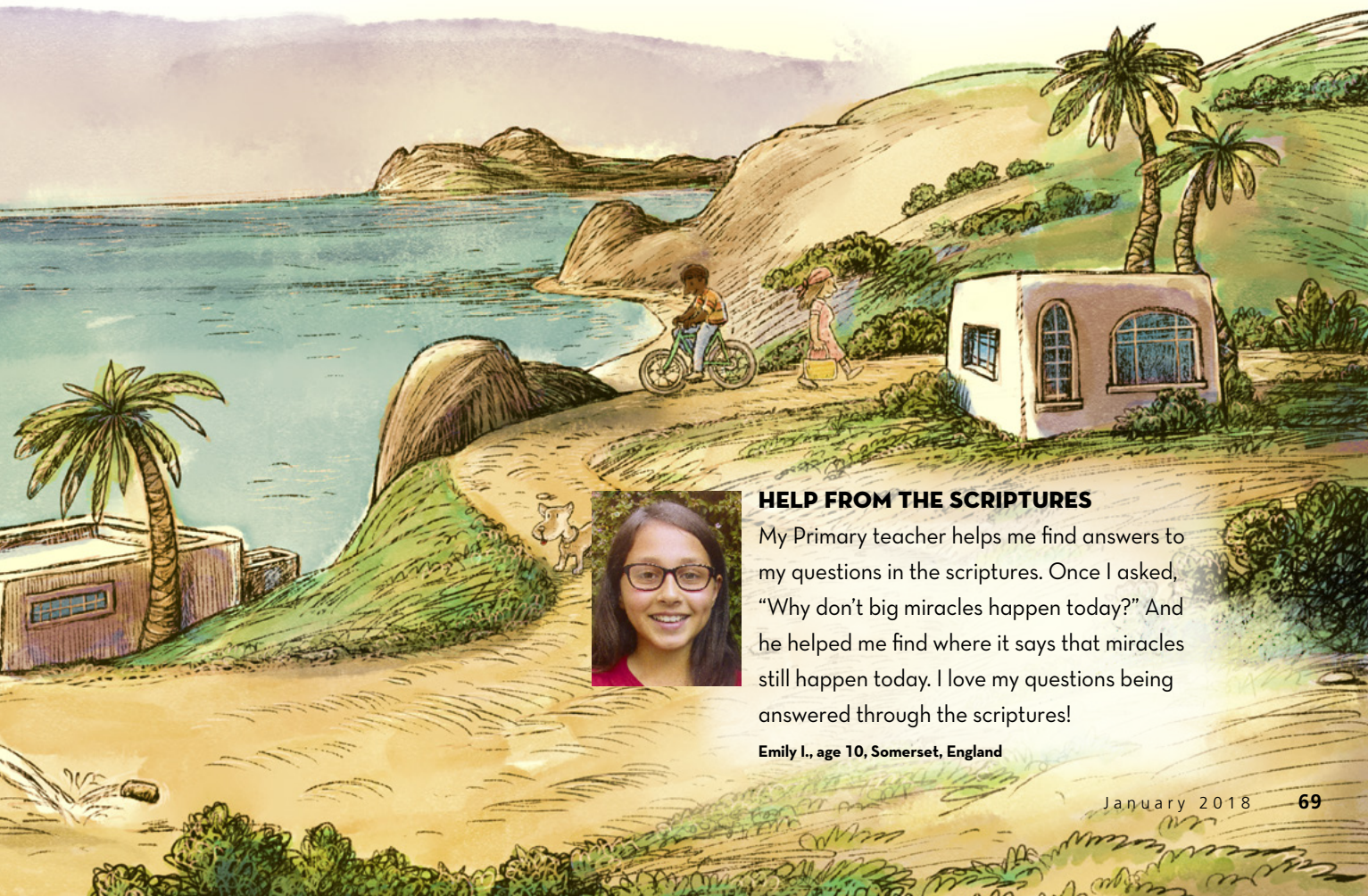
Lucia began to feel warm inside. She knew it was the Holy Ghost. He was telling her that what Sister Ruiz said was true.

Heavenly Father and Jesus weren't the same person. But They *were* the same in what They said and did. And Lucia knew that They both loved her. ■

The author lives in California, USA.

for LUCIA

Lucia was confused about what her teacher said. Who could help?



HELP FROM THE SCRIPTURES

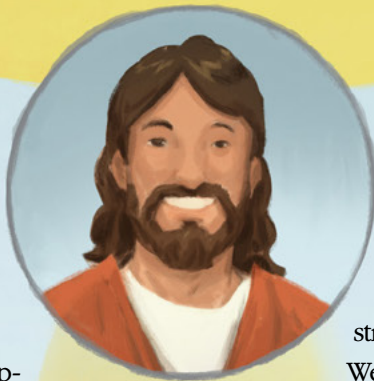
My Primary teacher helps me find answers to my questions in the scriptures. Once I asked, "Why don't big miracles happen today?" And he helped me find where it says that miracles still happen today. I love my questions being answered through the scriptures!

Emily I., age 10, Somerset, England



By President
Thomas S. Monson

Let Your Light SHINE



Each of us came to earth with the **Light** of Christ. It is up to us to keep our **light** burning brightly for others to see and follow. One of the best ways to keep the faith we need is to study the scriptures and to pray.

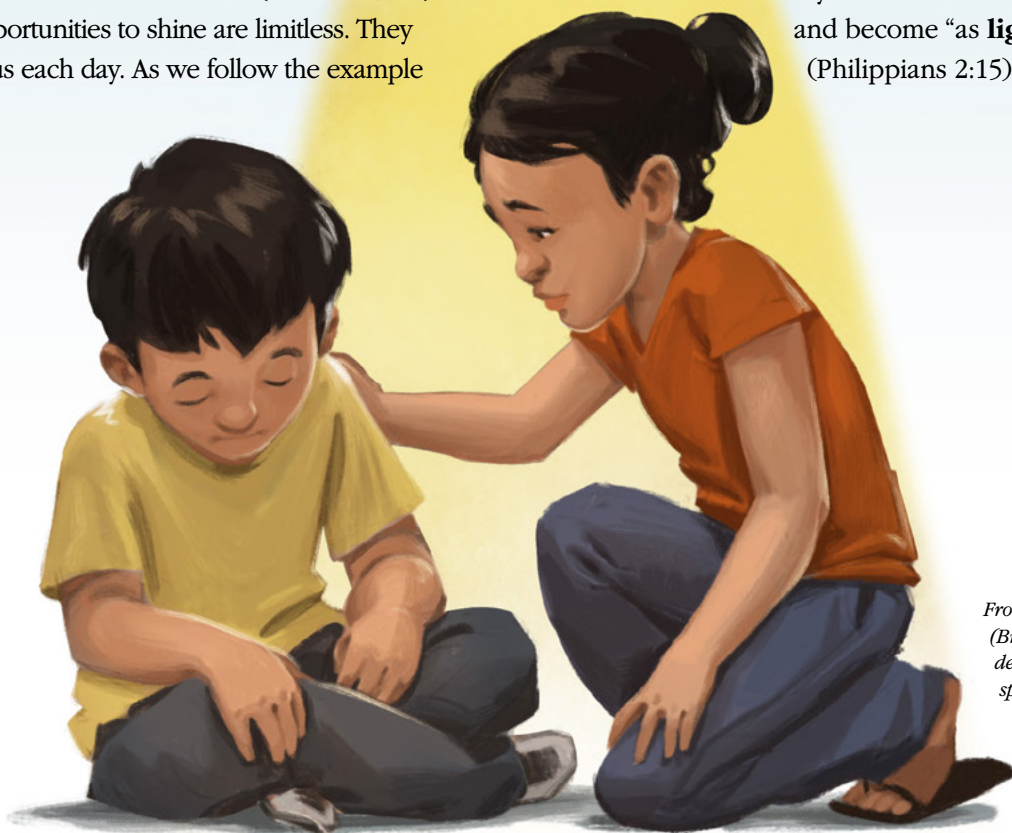
As you keep the flame of testimony burning brightly, you will become a **signal light** of righteousness for all to see. The Savior said, “Let your **light** so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

Our opportunities to shine are limitless. They surround us each day. As we follow the example

of the Savior, we will be a **light** in the lives of those around us—whether they be our own family members, our friends, or total strangers.

We can be a **light** to the world. Just as turning on a **light** switch in a dark room will fill the room with **light**, being an example of righteousness can help **light up** an increasingly dark world.

My friends, we can be, as the Apostle Paul said, “an example of the believers” (1 Timothy 4:12). We can always be known as followers of Christ and become “as **lights** in the world” (Philippians 2:15). ■



*From “Be a Light to the World”
(Brigham Young University
devotional, Nov. 1, 2011),
speeches.byu.edu.*

SEND US YOUR STAR!

How do you let your light shine, as Jesus asked us to do? Do you set a good example, serve your neighbor, or share your testimony? Tell the *Liahona* about it by sending your story and a star!

1. Trace this star and write how you are shining brightly by being a good example or helping others.
2. Cut out the star and take a picture of it. Or have someone take a picture of you holding up your star!
3. With your parent's help, submit it through liahona.lds.org (click "Submit an Article").



3 Nephi 17:7, 9

3 Nephi 17:21

John 8:10-11

SCRIPTURE STARS

Color a star as you read each scripture about Jesus Christ's example.

3 Nephi 11:13-15

John 11:33-44

Mark 10:46-52

Lucas and the Bully

Lucas felt great about what he said . . . until he saw the look on Pedro's face.

By Eric B. Murdock

Church Magazines

Based on a true story

"Let us oft speak kind words to each other at home or where'er we may be" (Hymns, no. 232).

Oh no! Here comes Pedro!" Everyone at school knew that Pedro was a bully. He was big, and he was mean! He called other kids names, took their lunches, and chased them around the school yard. No one wanted to be around him.

Pedro walked by Lucas and his friend, Arthur. He called them "losers" and pushed Arthur.

Lucas was tired of Pedro being so mean. Without even thinking, he shouted, "Stop it, Pedro!"

Lucas couldn't believe it. He'd just stood up to the biggest bully in school!

Pedro stormed up to Lucas and grabbed his shirt. "What did you say?" Lucas's heart beat so fast it felt like it would jump out of his chest! "I'll give you one warning," Pedro said. "But you'd better watch out!" He shoved Lucas and walked away.

After that, Lucas did his best to avoid Pedro, but Pedro always found him. He kept Lucas off the swings, pushed him during dodgeball, tripped him in the cafeteria, and always said mean things.

One day Lucas and Arthur were playing with Arthur's football. Pedro jumped out from behind a tree and grabbed it.

"Please give it back," said Arthur.

"Who's going to make me?" Pedro pushed Lucas into a tree and laughed.

Lucas could feel his stomach twist in knots. He was so angry! "You know what, Pedro?" Lucas said. "You're the meanest

kid I know! Nobody likes you. Everyone wishes you'd go away forever!"

Pedro stopped laughing. Lucas felt great about what he said . . . until he saw the look on Pedro's face. Was he about to cry? Pedro quickly looked down and walked away.



Lucas instantly felt terrible. For the rest of the day, no matter how hard he tried, Lucas couldn't get rid of the terrible feeling. That night, he tossed and turned in bed. He kept thinking about how sad Pedro had looked.

"How could Pedro feel bad?" Lucas thought. "He doesn't care if he's mean to other kids. I had to say something, right?" The more Lucas thought about it, the more he realized he was *right* to stand up for himself and his friend. But he was *wrong* to say those mean things.



Lucas knelt by his bed and asked Heavenly Father to forgive him. He told Heavenly Father that he never wanted to hurt anyone's feelings ever again. He wanted to be kind. When Lucas said "amen," he knew what he had to do.

After lunch the next day, Lucas found Pedro standing against a wall by himself. Lucas was nervous. What would Pedro do? Lucas took a deep breath and walked over.

"Um, I'm sorry about yesterday."

Pedro looked surprised. "You're sorry?"

"Yes. I said some really mean things to you, and I shouldn't have. I'm sorry."

Pedro stared down at his shoes. "It's OK."

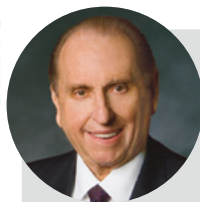
The bell rang. Lucas started walking back to class. He felt so much better. But there was one more thing he wanted to say. He turned back around. "We could play football at recess tomorrow if you want."

A small smile crossed Pedro's face. "That sounds good."

After that, things got better with Pedro. He was still a bully sometimes, but he wasn't as mean. He even played with Lucas a few times at recess. And it was actually fun! At the end of the school year, Pedro told Lucas that he was moving away. Then he said something that really surprised Lucas.

"Thanks for being my friend," Pedro said. "Even when I wasn't nice."

The warm feeling in Lucas's heart let him know that being kind is always the right choice. ■



ALWAYS SPEAK KIND WORDS

"Use language to build and uplift those around you."

President Thomas S. Monson,
"The Lighthouse of the Lord," *Ensign*,
Nov. 1990, 97.



By Elder
Claudio R. M. Costa
Of the Seventy

Moroni and the Mechanic



*“And a little child shall lead them”
(2 Nephi 30:12).*

Many years ago, our family was driving home to São Paulo, Brazil, after visiting relatives. Just as we drove up a steep road, our car broke down.

We tried to restart the car for several minutes. But it wouldn't start. Car after car passed us. No one stopped to help.

Finally I told my family that we should pray. My six-year-old son, Moroni, said, “Don't worry, Daddy. I already prayed.”

“What did you pray for?” I asked.

“I prayed to Heavenly Father that the *right* person would come by to help us,” he said.

Soon two bright lights appeared behind our car. It was a tow truck. The driver was a mechanic.

“You're very lucky,” he said. “I finished my work for the day and was heading home.”

He fixed our car. Then he followed us to make sure we got home safely.

I asked Moroni if he knew how special this experience was. “Of course,” he said. “Heavenly Father heard my prayer. So now I have my own testimony! I don't have to borrow it from you anymore, Dad.” My heart was touched by Moroni's faithful example.

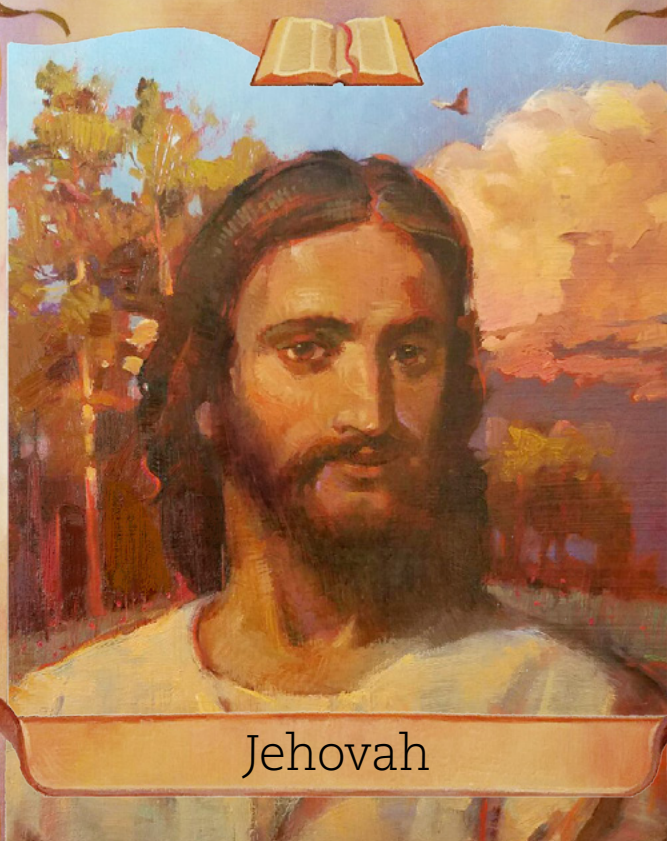
Moroni is grown now, but I still remember his good example from when he was small. Even as a child, you can be an example to your family and friends. ■

I CAN READ THE SCRIPTURES

God's Plan for Me

After you read a scripture passage, color one of the animals in the picture!

1. Abraham 3:24–28
2. Moses 2:1–13
3. Moses 2:14–25
4. Moses 2:26–31
5. Abraham 5:1–7
6. Hebrews 5:8–9; Alma 12:33
7. Moses 1:39
8. Psalm 82:6; Romans 8:16



Jehovah

Jehovah was Jesus's name before the earth was created. He is Heavenly Father's oldest child and our older brother. He helped Heavenly Father create the earth and plants and animals. And He came to earth to help us return back to Heavenly Father.

- ☐ Read and memorize Isaiah 26:4.
- ☐ Watch the Old Testament chapters 1 and 2 at scripturestories.lds.org.
- ☐ Write or draw in your journal about a time you showed love for Heavenly Father and Jehovah's creations.
- ☐ I will take care of God's creations by ...

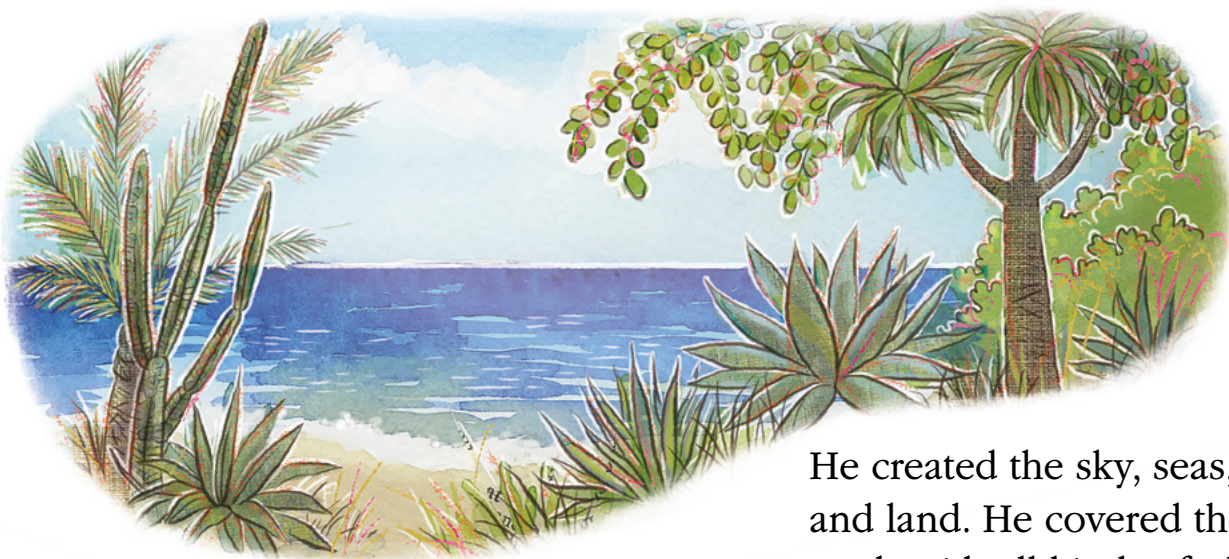
The Creation

By Kim Webb Reid

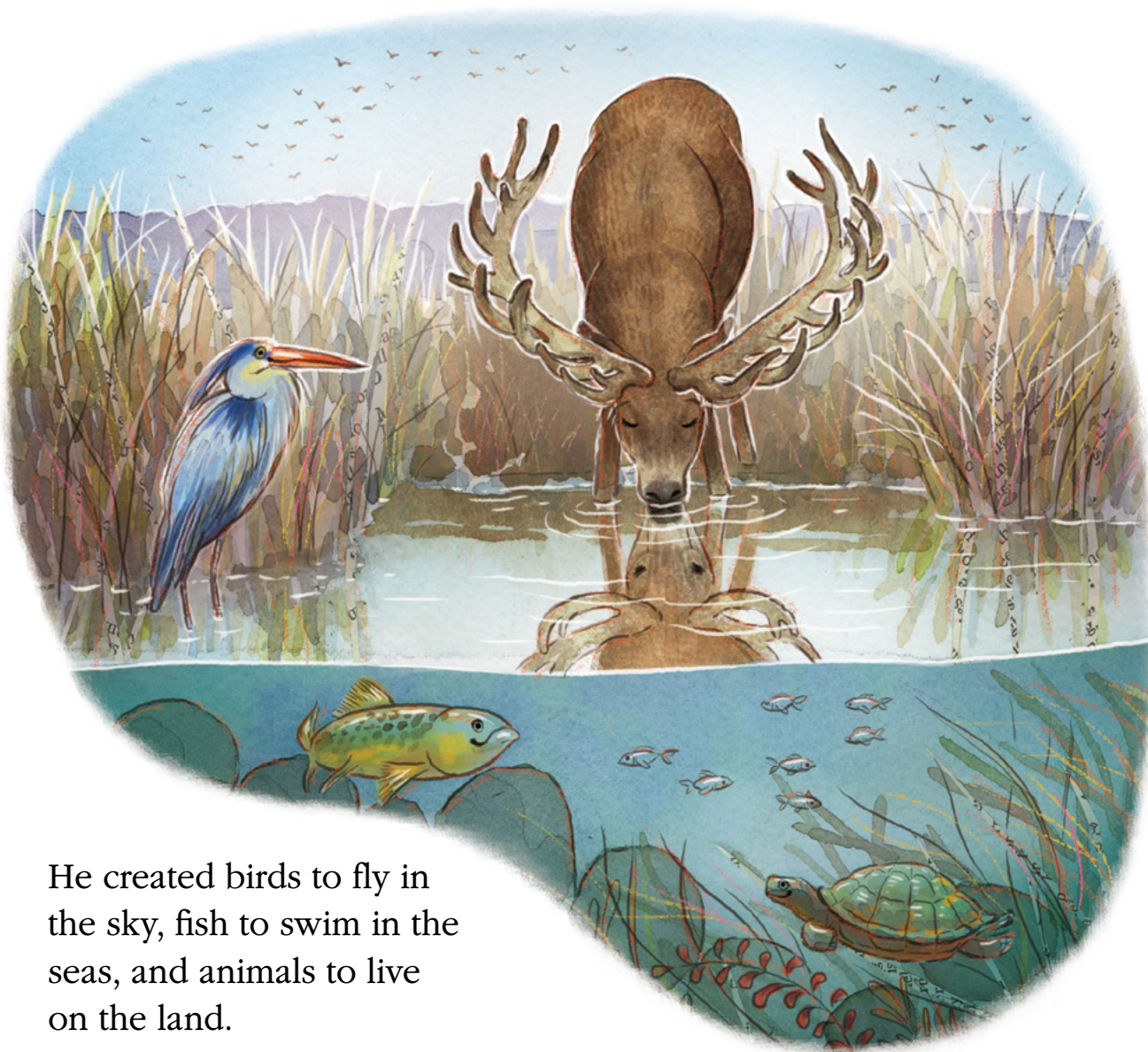
Long before I can
remember, God
created a beautiful
place for me to live.



When He began making the earth, He separated the day from the night. He made the sun, moon, and stars so I would always have light to guide me.



He created the sky, seas,
and land. He covered the
earth with all kinds of plants.



He created birds to fly in
the sky, fish to swim in the
seas, and animals to live
on the land.



Whenever I see God's creations, I feel reverence and love
for Him. I'm grateful He made this earth for me. ■

I Am Part of a Beautiful World

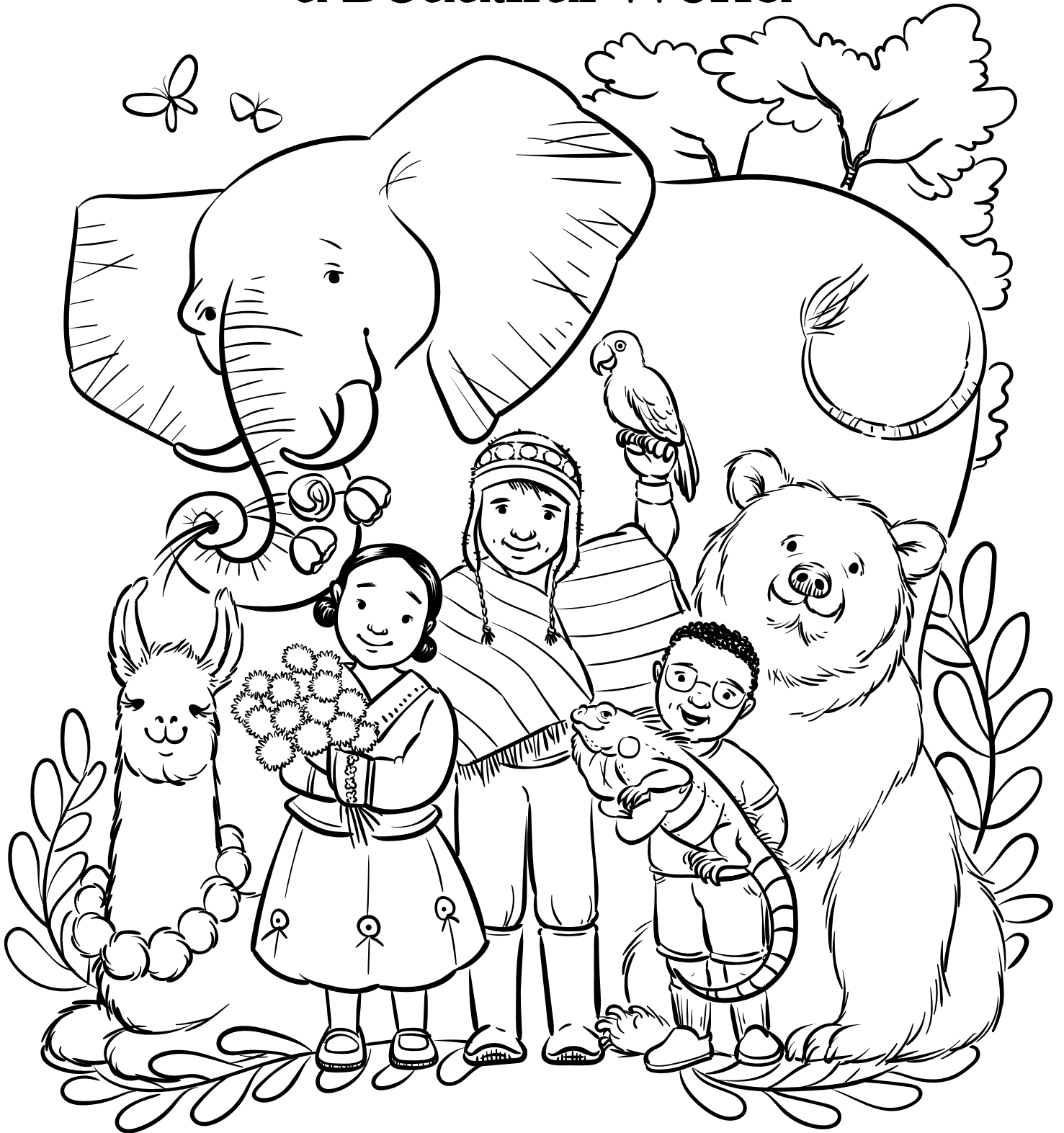


ILLUSTRATION BY APRYL STOTT



By President N. Eldon Tanner (1898–1982)

First Counselor in the First Presidency

THE PURPOSE OF THE CREATION

We can each make of our home a heaven on earth.

Let us consider . . . the purpose of the creation of the earth. The scriptures make it clear that it was . . . to provide a place for the sons and daughters of God to dwell in mortality and prove themselves worthy, through keeping the commandments, to return to the presence of God from whence they came.

Following the creation of the earth, “God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . .

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

“And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it” (Genesis 1:26–28).

When God created woman and brought her to the man, he said:



“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24).

Yes, marriage is ordained of God, and following that first reference to husband and wife, we find recurring scriptures as evidence that men and women became husbands and wives in marriage ceremonies. . . . We are not here just to “eat, drink, and be merry” (2 Nephi 28:7). . . .

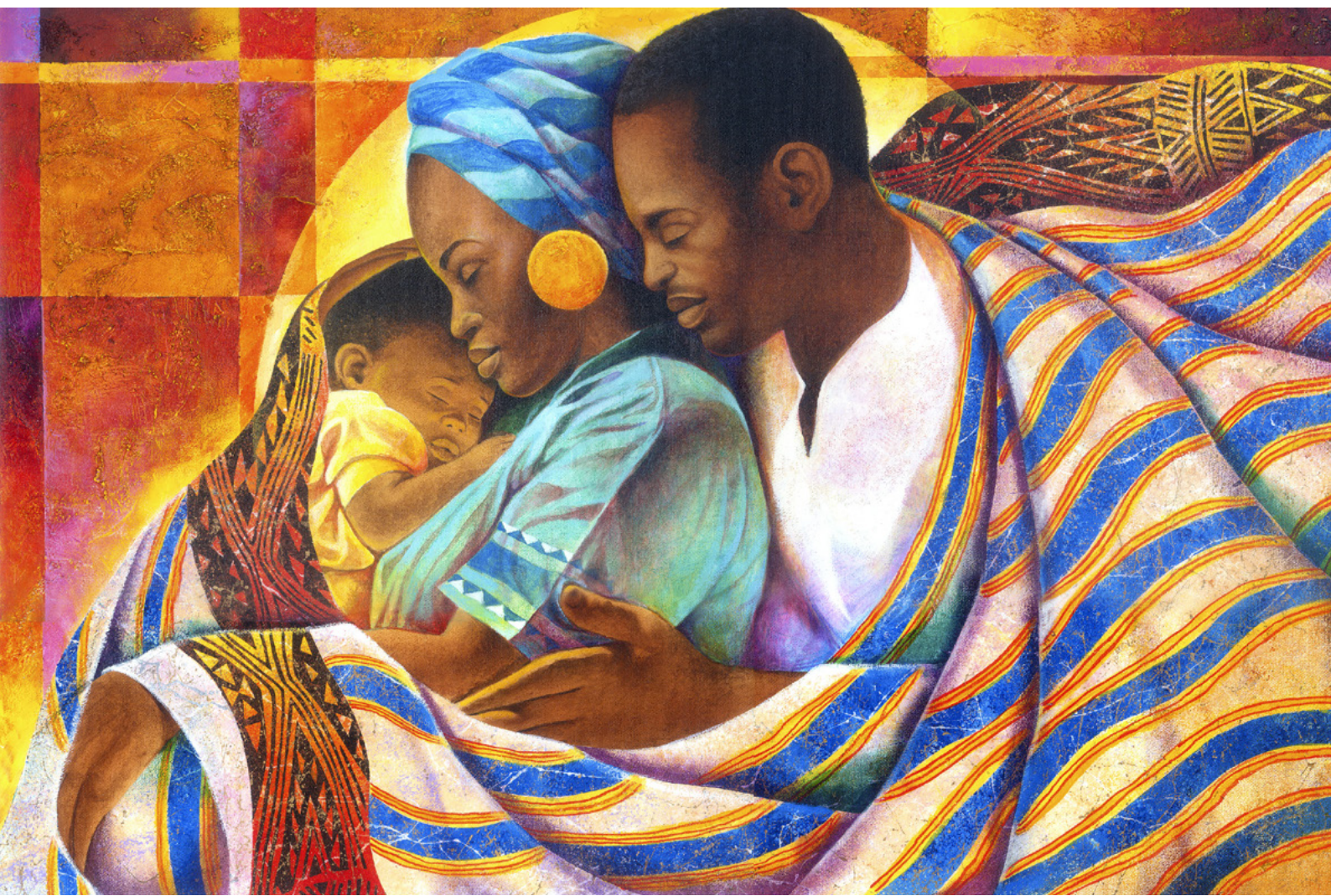
It is important for us to understand, as we can learn from the scriptures, that God is eternal, that His creations are eternal, and that His truths are

eternal. Therefore, when He gave Eve to Adam in marriage, that union would be eternal. . . .

. . . When parents understand the purpose of their existence, that they are literally the spiritual offspring of their Father in Heaven and that they have a responsibility to provide mortal bodies for others, then they rejoice in the miracle of birth as they realize they are copartners with God in the creation of each child who comes into that home. . . .

I know that through the gospel of Jesus Christ, and through keeping the commandments of God and the covenants we make with Him, we can each make of our home a heaven on earth while we prepare ourselves and our children to return to our Heavenly Father. ■

From “Celestial Marriages and Eternal Families,” Ensign, May 1980, 15–18. Spelling and punctuation standardized.



PRECIOUS LOVE,
BY KEITH MALLETT

God's great plan of happiness includes the opportunity for each of us, as His spirit children, to come to earth to gain a mortal body and to live in a family unit where relationships can flourish in unity and love. Within our homes on earth, we can prepare ourselves and our children to return to our Heavenly Father. (See Genesis 1–2; Mosiah 18:21; Alma 42.)

Also in This Issue

FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Home Earlier Than Planned

p. 44



If you've returned home from your mission earlier than expected, here are eight ways to keep serving and progressing.

FOR YOUTH

2018 MUTUAL THEME

You can always find peace in Christ.
Study this year's Mutual theme to find out how.



p. 52

FOR CHILDREN



Let Your Light Shine

This year, share with us how you are letting your light shine!

p. 70



THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS