

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • JULY 2015

Liahona



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*"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them,
I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:
"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and
beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock."*

Matthew 7:24–25



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Family Home Evening Ideas

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



“The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon,” page 20: Despite his personal weaknesses, Joseph Smith became an instrument in the Lord’s hands as he strove to follow the Savior. We too can be instruments in the Lord’s hands when we strive to improve and become more like Jesus Christ. Think about prayerfully setting some goals individually and as a family. You could discuss the strengths and talents of each family member and discuss how you can use your strengths to help one another accomplish each goal. Talk about how you

can each use your strengths to further the work of the Lord, just as the Prophet Joseph did.

“Anna’s Journey,” page 66: Consider helping your family discover and preserve stories from your family history. You might make plans to interview a grandparent, read family journals and other documents, or browse FamilySearch.org. In a following family home evening, share the stories and discuss how your ancestors were heroes. Consider adding the stories to the “Memories” section on FamilySearch.org.

IN YOUR LANGUAGE

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

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By President
Dieter F. Uchtdorf

Second Counselor in
the First Presidency

ALL IS Well

As I think about our pioneer heritage, one of the most moving things that come to mind is the hymn “Come, Come, Ye Saints” (*Hymns*, no. 30). Those who made the long journey to the Salt Lake Valley often sang this hymn during their trek.

I am very much aware that all was not well with these Saints. They were plagued by sickness, heat, fatigue, cold, fear, hunger, pain, doubt, and even death.

But despite having every reason to shout, “All is not well,” they cultivated an attitude we cannot help but admire today. They looked beyond their troubles to eternal blessings. They were grateful in their circumstances. Despite evidence to the contrary, they sang with all the conviction of their souls, “All is well!”

Our praise for the pioneers is empty if it does not cause inner reflection on our part. I mention a few of their attributes that inspire me as I contemplate their sacrifice and commitment.

Compassion

The pioneers cared for each other irrespective of social, economic, or political background. Even when it slowed their progress, caused inconvenience, or meant personal sacrifice and toil, they helped each other.

In our goal-driven and partisan world, individual or party objectives can take precedence over taking care of

others or strengthening the kingdom of God. In today’s society, reaching certain ideological goals can appear to be a measure of our worth.

Setting and achieving goals can be a wonderful thing. But when success in reaching goals comes at the expense of disregarding, ignoring, or hurting others, the cost of that success may be too precious.

The pioneers looked after those in their company, but they also considered those who came after them, planting crops for the wagon trains that followed.

They knew the strength of family and friends. And because they depended on each other, they became strong. Friends became family.

The pioneers serve as a good reminder of why we must break away from the temptation to isolate ourselves and, instead, reach out to help each other and have compassion and love for one another.

Work

“Come, come, ye Saints, no toil nor labor fear.”

This phrase became an anthem to the weary travelers. It is difficult to imagine how hard these great souls worked. Walking was one of the easiest things they did. They all had to pull together to provide food, repair wagons, tend animals, minister to the sick and feeble, seek and collect water, and protect themselves from the



pressing dangers of the elements and the many hazards of the wilderness.

They woke up each morning with clearly defined purposes and goals that everyone understood: to serve God and their fellowmen and to arrive in the Salt Lake Valley. Every day those purposes and goals were clear to them; they knew what they needed to do and that each day's progress mattered.

In our time—when so much of what we desire is so easily within our reach—it is tempting to turn aside or give up whenever the road ahead seems a little bumpy or the slope tends to rise steeply before us. In those moments, it might inspire us to reflect on those men, women, and children who did not allow sickness, hardship, pain, and even death to deter them from their chosen path.

The pioneers learned that doing hard things deepened and strengthened body, mind, and spirit; magnified their understanding of their divine nature; and heightened their compassion for others. This habit firmed their souls and became a blessing to them long after their trek across the plains and mountains had ended.

Optimism

When the pioneers sang, they voiced a third lesson: “But with joy wend your way.”

It is one of the great ironies of our age that we are blessed with so much and yet we can be so unhappy. The wonders of prosperity and technology overwhelm us and shower us with security, entertainment, instant gratification, and convenience. And yet all around us we see so much unhappiness.

The pioneers, who sacrificed so much, went without and hungered for even the most basic of necessities to survive. They understood that happiness doesn't come as a result of luck or accident. It most certainly doesn't come from having all of our wishes come true. Happiness doesn't come from external circumstances. It comes from the inside—regardless of what is happening around us.

The pioneers knew that, and with that spirit they found happiness in every circumstance and in every trial—even in those trials that reached down and troubled the deep waters of their very souls.

Trials

We sometimes look back on what the pioneers endured and with relief say, “Thank goodness I didn't live in that time.” But I wonder if those courageous pioneers, had they been able to see us today, might not have voiced the same concern.

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

You may want to begin by singing “Come, Come, Ye Saints” (*Hymns*, no. 30) with those you visit. You could share an experience when you or someone you know has applied the principles of compassion, work, or optimism. If prompted, you could testify of the blessings that come from living these principles and promise those you visit that they can receive similar blessings.

Though times and circumstances have changed, the principles for facing trials and successfully living together as a caring and prospering community under God have not changed.

From the pioneers we can learn to have faith and trust in God. We can learn to have compassion for others. We can learn that work and industry bless us not only temporarily but also spiritually. We can learn that happiness is available to us no matter our circumstances.

YOUTH

Keeping a Record

President Uchtdorf compares our day to the times of the pioneers. While you may not have crossed the plains, you are more like the pioneers than you may think! You also can show compassion, hard work, and optimism. And just as we know that the pioneers demonstrated these qualities because of the records they kept, your posterity can get to know you through your journal too.

Take a few minutes to record a little about yourself in your journal. You can write about spiritual things, like how you gained your testimony or overcame challenges with Heavenly Father's help. You can also help your great-great-grandchildren (who might read your journal someday!) to know what your daily life was like. What projects are you doing in school? What does your room look like? What's your favorite memory of your family?

As you begin writing a little bit every day, you will not only be able to see more clearly how Heavenly Father helps you through your daily life, just as He guided the pioneers, but you will also be leaving a legacy for your own future posterity.

The best way we can honor and show gratitude to the pioneers is by incorporating into our own lives faithfulness to God's commandments, compassion and love for our fellowmen, and the industry, optimism, and joy the pioneers demonstrated so well in their own lives.

As we do so, we can reach across the decades of time, take the hands of those noble pioneers in ours, and add our own voices to theirs as we sing with them: "All is well! All is well!" ■

CHILDREN

Following the Pioneers' Example

President Uchtdorf shares a few ways that the pioneers showed love for Heavenly Father. You can follow their example. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

COMPASSION

- Write a kind note or make a treat for someone who is sad.
- Help a classmate with his or her homework.

WORK

- Set a goal. Do something every day this month to help you reach your goal.
- Help your parents make dinner.

OPTIMISM

- Make a list of 10 happy things in your life.
- Smile at everyone you see.

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

Divine Attributes of Jesus Christ: Forgiving and Merciful

This is part of a series of Visiting Teaching Messages featuring divine attributes of the Savior.

Understanding that Jesus Christ has been forgiving and merciful to us can help us forgive and extend mercy to others. “Jesus Christ is our Exemplar,” said President Thomas S. Monson. “His life was a legacy of love. The sick He healed; the downtrodden He lifted; the sinner He saved. At the end the angry mob took His life. And yet there rings from Golgotha’s hill the words: ‘Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do’—a crowning expression in mortality of compassion and love.”¹

If we forgive others their trespasses, our Heavenly Father will also forgive us. Jesus asks us to “be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful” (Luke 6:36). “Forgiveness for *our* sins comes with conditions,” said President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency. “We



must repent. . . . Haven’t we all, at one time or another, meekly approached the mercy seat and pleaded for grace? Haven’t we wished with all the energy of our souls for mercy—to be forgiven for the mistakes we have made and the sins we have committed? . . . Allow Christ’s Atonement to change and heal your heart. Love one another. Forgive one another.”²

Additional Scriptures

Matthew 6:14–15; Luke 6:36–37; Alma 34:14–16

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Love, the Essence of the Gospel,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2014, 91.
2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Merciful Obtain Mercy,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2012, 70, 75, 77; emphasis in original.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Peaceable Things of the Kingdom,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 83.

Faith, Family, Relief



From the Scriptures

“We are to forgive even as we are forgiven,” said Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.³ The story of the prodigal son shows us both sides of forgiveness: one son is forgiven and the other son struggles to forgive.

The younger son took his inheritance, quickly spent it, and when a famine arose, he worked feeding swine. The scriptures say “when he came to himself,” he returned home and said to his father he was not worthy to be his son. But his father forgave him and killed a fatted calf for a feast. The older son returned from working in the fields and became angry. He reminded his father that he had served many years, never transgressed the commandments, yet “thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry.” The father replied, “Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found” (see Luke 15:11–32).

Consider This

How can forgiveness benefit the one forgiving?

APRIL 2015 CONFERENCE NOTEBOOK

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

As you review the April 2015 general conference, you can use these pages (and Conference Notebooks in future issues) to help you study and apply the recent teachings of the living prophets and apostles and other Church leaders.

PROPHETIC PROMISE



Priceless Temple Blessings

“As we go to the temple, as we remember the covenants we make there, we will be better able to overcome [our] temptations and to bear our trials. In the temple we can find peace.

“The blessings of the temple are priceless. One for which I am grateful every day of my life is that which my beloved wife, Frances, and I received as we knelt at a sacred altar and made covenants binding us together for all eternity. There is no blessing

more precious to me than the peace and comfort I receive from the knowledge I have that she and I will be together again.

“May our Heavenly Father bless us that we may have the spirit of temple worship, that we may be obedient to His commandments, and that we may follow carefully the steps of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Blessings of the Temple,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2015, 93.

DOCTRINAL HIGHLIGHT



Cornerstones of Religious Liberty

“As we walk the path of spiritual liberty in these last days, we must understand that the faithful use of our agency depends upon our having religious freedom. . . .

“There are four cornerstones of religious freedom that we as Latter-day Saints must rely upon and protect.

“The first is freedom to believe. No one should be criticized, persecuted, or attacked by individuals, or governments either, for what he or she believes about God. . . .

“The second . . . is the freedom to share our faith and our beliefs with others. . . .

“The third . . . is the freedom to form a religious organization, a church, to worship peacefully with others. . . .

“The fourth . . . is the freedom to live our faith—free exercise of faith not just in the home and chapel but also in public places.”

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Preserving Agency, Protecting Religious Freedom,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2015, 112.

“THE FAMILY: A PROCLAMATION TO THE WORLD”

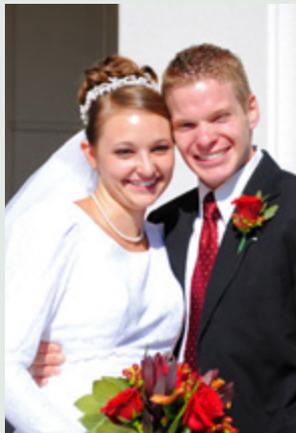


“There are three principles taught in the proclamation which I think are especially in need of steadfast defenders. . . .

“ . . . Let us help build the kingdom of God by standing up boldly and being defenders of marriage, parenthood, and the home. The Lord needs us to be brave, steadfast, and immovable warriors who will defend His plan and teach the upcoming generations His truths.”

Bonnie L. Oscarson, Young Women general president, “Defenders of the Family Proclamation,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 15, 16.

For more articles on marriage and family from the general women’s session of the April 2015 conference, see Cheryl A. Esplin, “Filling Our Homes with Light and Truth,” 8, and Carole M. Stephens, “The Family Is of God,” 11.



1. Marriage between a man and a woman.



2. The roles of mothers and fathers.



3. The sanctity of the home.



GREAT STORIES FROM CONFERENCE

What catches our attention better than a great story?

Following are three of many stories shared during conference:

- In the parable of the sower, which type of soil are you? How can recognizing that change your life? —See Dallin H. Oaks, “The Parable of the Sower,” 32.
- What poignant experiences helped one young mother return to the gospel of Jesus Christ? —See Rosemary M. Wixom, “Returning to Faith,” 93.
- How does the dramatic story of two brothers who become stranded on a sheer canyon wall enhance our understanding of the Atonement of Jesus Christ? —See Jeffrey R. Holland, “Where Justice, Love, and Mercy Meet,” 104.

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

CHURCH ORGANIZATION IS DIVINE

New members of the Church often hear terms they have not heard before: priesthood keys, setting apart, laying on of hands, baptisms for the dead, Mutual, Relief Society, and so on. And they hear familiar terms used in unfamiliar ways: deacon, patriarch, bishop, counselors, sacrament, calling, release, testimony, ordinance, and many others.

If you find yourself in that situation, don't worry. The more you attend church, study the scriptures and lesson materials, and interact with Church members, the better you will

come to understand these terms. In the meantime, don't hesitate to ask members of your ward or branch; they would be glad to explain anything that doesn't make sense to you.

Terms like these are important because they reflect Church doctrine, policies, practices, and organization, which come from the scriptures and by revelation to modern prophets. The Savior leads His Church today by revealing His will to the First Presidency (the President of the Church and his two counselors) and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. The Church is organized today essentially the same way the Lord organized it when He was on the earth (see Articles of Faith 1:6). Just as in biblical times, we have prophets,

apostles, members of the Seventy, missionaries who go out two by two, and bishops and other local leaders.

All who serve in the Church are volunteers. They are called (asked to serve) by inspiration of their leaders. In time you will be given a calling—a responsibility, an opportunity to serve. As you accept it willingly and fulfill it to the best of your ability, the Lord will bless your efforts to serve His children. No matter your background, you can contribute valuable spiritual gifts. As a Church member, you are part of the “body of Christ” (see 1 Corinthians 12). Your contribution is important to the functioning of the Church. ■

For more information, see Moroni 6; Doctrine and Covenants 20; and “Church Organization” at [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics).

FOUNDATION OF APOSTLES AND PROPHETS

“Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.”

Ephesians 2:19–20

Leaders in your ward serve in a presidency (a president and two counselors):



The bishop and his two counselors form the bishopric and preside over the ward.



The Relief Society presidency serves the women in the ward and helps strengthen their families.



The elders quorum presidency and the high priests group leaders serve the men in the ward and help strengthen their families.



The Primary presidency serves the children, and the Young Men and Young Women presidencies serve the youth ages 12–18.



The Sunday School presidency oversees Sunday School classes and helps improve gospel learning and teaching in the ward.

NEWS OF THE CHURCH

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



LDS Charities: 30 Years of Service

The principle of serving our fellowmen is not new. In all dispensations, the Church has been dedicated to helping the poor and needy.

Thirty years ago, on January 27, 1985, that dedication was exemplified during a special fast where Church members donated U.S. \$6 million to help famine victims in Ethiopia. This marked the beginning of what would become LDS Charities. That same year, a fast in November raised another \$5 million for hunger relief. Those two fasts greatly accelerated the work in our time.

In the 30 years since those fasts, the Church has delivered \$1.2 billion in assistance to people who are suffering. That includes food, shelter,

medical supplies, clothing, and relief items. In addition, LDS Charities has offered long-term aid through initiatives that provide wheelchairs, immunizations, clean water, family nutrition, vision care, and maternal and newborn care. The Church partners with other reputable humanitarian organizations to make the most of all donations.

President Thomas S. Monson has often taught that, as members of the Church, we have a responsibility to help the hungry, homeless, and downtrodden. Members of the Church have risen to the challenge. Without much fanfare or formal thanks, they have quietly contributed millions of hours of service and hundreds of millions of dollars. In

addition to contributing to the humanitarian fund on the donation slip, members have given to LDS Philanthropies, served missions, been good friends and neighbors, volunteered labor in welfare facilities or communities, and given their time and love to hundreds of thousands of trustworthy local organizations.

As they do so, they begin to fulfill what the Savior taught about taking care of the poor and needy:

“For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: . . .

“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:35, 40). ■



Temples Offer Family Time

In order to help families attend the temple together, there is now a specific time set aside each week in temple baptisteries for families to schedule proxy baptisms without a long wait. Call your local temple to find out times and to make appointments. ■

Help for Families

Family home evening lessons are now available to help parents teach their children about dealing with pornography.

The lessons, found at overcomingpornography.org/resources, include “My body is from God,” “The Spirit can help me choose good media,” “What should I do if I see pornography?” “The Savior desires to forgive and heal the wounds of pornography,” and “Sexual intimacy is sacred and beautiful.”

These resources provide ideas for discussion and do not need to be taught in any particular order. ■

LDS.org Improves Functions

In addition to a new white background and blue menus, LDS.org initiated functional improvements earlier this year.

A country and language selector replaced the language selector, making it easier for members to find local content on their country communication pages.

Country communication pages now feature the same navigation menus found on LDS.org: Scriptures, Teachings, Resources, and News. This will allow members to access local content and Church resources without opening LDS.org and to choose between local content and LDS.org content when searching. ■



Family Home Evening Milestones

Family home evening celebrates two major events in its history in 2015.

One hundred years ago, President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) and his counselors urged members of the Church to set aside an evening to grow and learn together. They promised that those who did would witness greater love at home and increased obedience to parents. The concept of home evening was not entirely new, but this encouragement from the First Presidency on April 27, 1915, helped the practice to become more widespread.

Fifty years ago, President David O. McKay (1873–1970) renewed emphasis on family home evening. In January 1965, he commissioned the first family home evening manual, with weekly lessons to be taught in each home. In 1970 Monday night became the suggested night for family home evening.

Today, 100 years after its implementation and 50 years after its importance was emphasized again, family home evening remains important in the lives of Church members. ■



By Elder
Marcus B. Nash
Of the Seventy

Pioneers

AN ANCHOR FOR TODAY

Remember the pioneers, their stories, and the sustaining, saving, delivering power of God that came as a result of their faith and hope.



Moved by the power of his faith in God, Isaac Bartlett Nash (photo above and painting at right), left his Welsh homeland, sailed the Atlantic Ocean, and crossed the plains to join the Saints in Salt Lake City.

In 1832, Weltha Bradford Hatch—an ancestor of my wife, Shelley—and her husband, Ira, lived in the tiny town of Farmersville, New York, USA, near Lake Seneca. When missionaries Oliver Cowdery and Parley P. Pratt called at the Hatch home, Weltha purchased a Book of Mormon and read it right away. Convinced of its truthfulness, she asked for baptism.

Her husband, however, cautioned her to wait due to mounting persecutions and an approaching baby. Shortly after the delivery, Weltha was baptized—but only after a hole was cut in the ice on the river in which the ordinance was performed!¹

Ira was intrigued by the gospel message. He wanted to know more and also felt impressed to make a contribution to the building of the Kirtland Temple. So he and Weltha traveled by buggy to Kirtland, Ohio, USA, to meet the Prophet Joseph Smith. Upon arriving, they were told the Prophet could be found with a group of men cutting trees in a nearby grove.

After they reached the grove, one of the men set his axe into a tree, strode over to them, and said, “Brother Hatch, I have been expecting you for three days; the money which you have brought will be used to help build the pulpit in the temple.”

This man was Joseph Smith. Needless to say, Ira was baptized, and he and Weltha returned to their home, gathered their belongings, and joined the Saints in Kirtland.²

One of my ancestors, Isaac Bartlett Nash, joined the Church in Wales and crossed the Atlantic and the plains before joining the Saints in Salt Lake City. After his arrival he heard one of the presiding elders of the Church denounce the use of tobacco in these words: “There are Elders in this assembly who now have tobacco in their mouths, though even a hog would not chew the vile weed.” Isaac, with a chew of tobacco in his mouth, quietly slipped it out, dropped it to the ground, and said to the tobacco, “Now stay there until I come for you.” He never did.³

What drove Weltha to seek baptism in a frozen-over river rather than wait until summer? What motivated Ira to travel from New York to Ohio and then to donate money for a temple to be built by a church of which he was not yet a member? What enabled Isaac to abandon his homeland, sail the Atlantic Ocean, cross the plains, and then add chewing tobacco to the list of things he had given up?

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) observed: “The power that moved our gospel forebears was the power of faith in God. It





Convinced of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon, Weltha Bradford Hatch asked for baptism in a frozen-over river rather than wait until summer.

was the same power which made possible the exodus from Egypt, the passage through the Red Sea, the long journey through the wilderness, and the establishment of Israel in the Promised Land.”⁴

Faith is both a principle of action and of power.⁵ It “is not to have a perfect knowledge of things” (Alma 32:21). Rather, it is an “assurance” of the Spirit (see Hebrews 11:1, footnote *b*) that moves us to act (see James 2:17–26; 2 Nephi 25:23; Alma 34:15–17), to follow the Savior, and to keep all of His commandments, even through times of sacrifice and trial (see Ether 12:4–6).⁶ As surely as the sun rises in the morning, faith produces hope—the expectation of good things to come (see Moroni 7:40–42)—and brings us the power of the Lord to sustain us.⁷

If faith was the power that moved our pioneer forebears, it was the hope produced by their faith that anchored them. Moroni wrote: “By faith all things are fulfilled—
“Wherefore, whoso believeth in God might

with surety hope for a better world, yea, even a place at the right hand of God, which hope cometh of faith, maketh an anchor to the souls of men, which would make them sure and steadfast, always abounding in good works, being led to glorify God” (Ether 12:3–4).

The pioneers’ bedrock faith in Christ moved them to act with the hope, the expectation of better things to come—not only for themselves but also for their posterity. Because of this hope, they were sure and steadfast, led to glorify God through any privation. For those who were steadfastly faithful, the power of God was manifest in miraculous ways.

How can those pioneers become an anchor for us today? I have three suggestions.

Remember the Pioneers

Remember the pioneers, their stories, and the sustaining, saving, delivering power of God that came as a result of their faith and hope. Our pioneer fathers and mothers help us know who we are as a covenant people

and confirm that our God—with whom we have covenanted and who “changeth not” (Mormon 9:19)—will bless us in times of difficulty and trial, just as He did our pioneer fathers and mothers.

Alma taught that God “will fulfil all his promises which he shall make unto [us], for he has fulfilled his promises which he has made unto our fathers” (Alma 37:17). Knowing this, we will be inspired by the pioneers to likewise act in faith and be anchored by hope.

This is the anchor we seek in our morally, spiritually, and temporally tumultuous world: living, moving faith in Christ and the hope that anchors us in His ways.

The story of the Willie and Martin handcart companies has become symbolic of the faith and hope of the early pioneers. It is a miracle that only about 200 of approximately 1,000 company members died.⁸ The faith-filled and hope-filled effort of their rescuers, accompanied by divine assistance, saved the handcart companies.⁹

After leaving the Salt Lake Valley, the rescuers were hit by the same early, severe, and unrelenting winter storms that engulfed the handcart companies. In the face of nature’s ferocity, some of the rescuers faltered in their faith, lost hope, and turned back.

In contrast, Reddick Allred steadfastly manned a rescue station for three weeks in hazardous winter weather. When another rescuer tried to persuade Brother Allred to join him in turning back, Reddick refused:

“I declined his proposition, and . . . advised him to stay, for the lives of the company depended up[on] us,” he wrote in his journal. “He then . . . moved that as I was president of the station, they center their faith in me, that I

should get the word of the Lord to know what we must do. To this I objected as [the Lord] already said what he would [have us] do.”¹⁰

Such unwavering faith in times of trial creates steadfast men and women and gives sure, steady direction when potentially disorienting storms rage. One of the fruits of such faith is that those who possess it will be in a position to nurture, rescue, and bless others. Imagine the warmth Reddick Allred felt as he saw the handcart company come into his station. Imagine the joy the company felt when they saw him!

Remember Their Unity

Remember that the pioneers, in general, were unified. Historians have observed that the western migration of the Latter-day Saints was different from other migrations of the American West.

“They were literally villages on the march, villages of a sobriety, solidarity, and discipline unheard of anywhere else on the western trails. . . .

“Few California or Oregon emigrants gave a thought to people coming after them. . . . Not so the Mormons. The first thought of the pioneer company was to note good campgrounds, wood, water, grass, to measure distances and set up mileposts. They and succeeding companies bent their backs to build bridges and dig down the steep approaches of fords. They made rafts and ferry boats and left them for the use of later companies.”¹¹

The reason for this difference was that members of the Church came to build up Zion. In practical terms, Zion is “every man esteem[ing] his brother as himself, and practic[ing] virtue and holiness before [the



THE WORLD NEEDS PIONEERS

“Can we somehow muster the courage and steadfastness of purpose that characterized the pioneers of a former generation? Can you and I, in actual fact, be pioneers? I know we can be. Oh, how the world needs pioneers today!”

President Thomas S. Monson, “The World Needs Pioneers Today,” *Ensign or Liahona*, July 2013, 5.



“The money which you have brought will be used to help build the pulpit in the temple,” the Prophet Joseph Smith told Ira Hatch upon their first meeting. Impressed by the Prophet, Ira was baptized and moved with his wife from New York to Kirtland, Ohio.

Lord]” (D&C 38:24). Zion—a society with people of one heart and one mind, dwelling in righteousness, with no poor among them (see Moses 7:18)—was and is to be the result of “every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God” (D&C 82:19).

This sense of community and mutually shared responsibility produced a unified effort to follow God’s prophet. That is a major reason the pioneers succeeded as they did, and it is an important part of the legacy they pass to us. They whisper that we too will prosper through the Lord’s power only to the degree we act as one with a sense of community and mutual responsibility in following the Lord’s prophet.

Pass On the Pioneer Spirit

We are responsible to instill in our children and grandchildren the same spirit that drove the footsteps of the pioneers. A simple lesson of how this is done can be seen in the Muñoz family of Otavalo, Ecuador. In March 2013,

I met with Brother Juan José Muñoz Otavalo, his wife, Laura, and one of their sons, Juan Amado, to learn about their time in the Church. I learned that Brother Muñoz was one of the earliest converts in Otavalo.

When he was a boy, Brother Muñoz was given a copy of the Book of Mormon in Spanish. He could not read it, but he felt a profound power and spirit when he held it. He hid it in his home, for he knew that his brothers would destroy it.

From time to time he would take the book from its hiding place, just to hold it and feel its power. Enduring significant adversity and opposition, he joined the Church and became one of the very first missionaries called from the village of Otavalo. Later he married a returned sister missionary, and together they raised a faithful, gospel-centered family. He served faithfully as a leader in the Church and helped translate the Book of Mormon and the temple ordinances into his native language of Quichua.



Pioneers like Juan José Muñoz Otavalo and his wife, Laura, of Otavalo, Ecuador, teach us that we pass along a pioneer legacy by opening, showing, and living the gospel way for others to follow.

Juan Amado, a returned missionary, wept as we listened to Brother Muñoz recount his story of faith. When his father concluded, this good son said: “I have always appreciated the early pioneers who crossed the plains with their handcarts in North America. Their faith and devotion and dedication have inspired me and touched me deeply throughout my life. But until today, I did not realize that there are also pioneers here in Otavalo, and they are my parents! This fills me with joy.”

Brother and Sister Muñoz teach us that we pass along a pioneer legacy of faith by *being* a pioneer—by opening, showing, and living the gospel way for others to follow. When we consistently exercise faith in the Lord and anchor our souls with hope in Him, we become “sure and steadfast, always abounding in good works, being led to glorify God” (Ether 12:4). Then, like Reddick Allred, we will minister to those lost on the trail of life, and they—including future generations—will learn from us the power and peace of such a life.

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has observed:

“Packing a few belongings into wagons or handcarts and walking 1,300 miles (2,090 km) isn’t the way most of us will be asked to demonstrate our faith and courage. We face different challenges today—different mountains to climb, different rivers to ford, different valleys to make ‘blossom as the rose’ (Isaiah 35:1). . . .

“Our struggle is found in living in a world steeped in sin and spiritual indifference, where self-indulgence, dishonesty, and greed seem to be present everywhere.

Today’s wilderness is one of confusion and conflicting messages.”

We must not be casual regarding God’s commandments, Elder Ballard added. “Avoiding the temptations and evils of the world requires the faith and fortitude of a real modern-day pioneer.”¹²

May each of us likewise resolve to be a pioneer and to go before and open the way for others who are buffeted by a world steeped in sin, confusion, and doubt. May we remember the pioneers and their stories, remember that they came to build Zion in a united effort, and then accept the responsibility to instill such faith

in all we meet—especially in the rising generation—and to do so through offering our own “living sacrifice” (Romans 12:1) of a life moved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and anchored by the hope of good things to come through Him.

To be a pioneer means that we “be not weary in well-doing” (D&C 64:33). Weltha Hatch doubtless felt no special significance in being baptized in an icy river. Nor did Isaac Nash think it all that momentous to throw a chew of tobacco to the ground. And as for Reddick Allred, he simply did what the Lord said he should do.

From all of these small and simple things has come something great! So let us remember that there are no small things in great endeavors. As we live the gospel, follow the prophet, choose faith over doubt, and do the little things that grow faith and produce soul-anchoring hope, each of us will be a pioneer, preparing the way for others to follow. ■

From an address, “Pioneers—Anchors for the Future,” delivered in Salt Lake City at the Sons of Utah Pioneers Sunrise Service on July 24, 2013.

NOTES

1. See *Wandering Home: Stories and Memories of the Hatch Family* (1988), 3.
2. See *Wandering Home*, 3.
3. Isaac Bartlett Nash, *The Life-Story of Isaac B. Nash* [nd], 2.

4. Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Faith of the Pioneers,” *Ensign*, July 1984, 5.
5. See *Lectures on Faith* (1985); Hebrews 11:4–40; Jacob 4:6; Ether 12:7–22.
6. See also *Lectures on*

Faith (1985), 69.

7. See Bible Dictionary, “Faith”; see also Alma 57:19–27; 58:10–13; Mormon 9:8–21; Moroni 7:33–37; Doctrine and Covenants 27:17.
8. See Andrew D. Olsen, *The Price We Paid: The*

Extraordinary Story of the Willie and Martin Handcart Pioneers (2006), 470.

9. See Olsen, *The Price We Paid*, 473–74.
10. In Olsen, *The Price We Paid*, 160.
11. Wallace Stegner, *The*

Gathering of Zion: The Story of the Mormon Trail (1964), 11.

12. M. Russell Ballard, “Pioneer Faith and Fortitude Then and Now,” *Ensign*, July 2013, 28, 29; *Liahona*, July 2013, 20, 21.

The Coming Forth of the

BOOK OF MORMION



*Like Joseph Smith, you need not lead
a perfect life in order to be a powerful
instrument in God's hands.*



By Matthew S. Holland

This is the second article in a two-part series about the Prophet Joseph Smith. The first article, "The Path to Palmyra," appeared in the June 2015 issue of the Liahona.

Just as Joseph Smith's path to Palmyra was strewn with trials and grief and testing, so too was his effort to bring forth the Book of Mormon—a process that, at one point, took him to one of his deepest troughs of despair.

On the night of September 21, 1823, Joseph was restless. It had been three years since his grand theophany, seeing God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, face to face in response to his heartfelt plea to know which church was right. Since that day, he had "frequently [fallen] into many foolish errors, and displayed the weakness of youth, and the foibles of human nature" (Joseph Smith—History 1:28).

Conscious of these shortcomings, 17-year-old Joseph pleaded "for forgiveness of all [his] sins and follies" (Joseph Smith—History 1:29). In response, an angel appeared at his bedside, Joseph reported, "and he said the Lord had forgiven me my sins."¹

The angel, who called himself Moroni, told Joseph that a book "written upon gold plates" and containing "the fulness of the everlasting Gospel" had been deposited in a hill near his home in Palmyra, New York. With that book "were two stones in silver bows—and these stones, fastened to a breastplate, constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim," which "God had prepared . . . for the purpose of translating the book" (Joseph Smith—History 1:34, 35).

Two more times that night Moroni visited the increasingly astonished young man, carefully repeating all he had said before. Each time, he added a caution, "telling me," Joseph said, "that Satan would try to tempt me (in consequence of the indigent circumstances of my father's family), to get the plates for the purpose of getting rich. This he forbade me, saying that I must have no other object in view in getting the plates but to glorify God, and must not be influenced by any other motive than that of building his kingdom; otherwise I could not get them" (Joseph Smith—History 1:46).

The next day Joseph was exhausted from the experiences of the night before. His father excused him from farm work, and as Joseph headed home to rest, Moroni visited him a fourth time. The angel instructed Joseph to return to his

father and tell him of the vision, which Joseph did. Then he headed for the nearby hill (see Joseph Smith—History 1:49–50).

After arriving at the hill, Joseph pried open a buried stone box in which the plates lay and reached in to take them. As he did so, a strong shock threw him backward and sapped him of his strength. When he cried out, asking why he could not obtain the plates, Moroni told him, “Because you have not kept the commandments of the Lord.”²

Despite the angel’s explicit warning, Joseph harbored thoughts that the plates might solve his family’s financial woes.³ Consequently, Moroni established a four-year probationary period for Joseph to mature and prepare his heart and mind to approach his calling with the purity of purpose required for such a sacred work.

Obstacles to Translation

Four years later Joseph was finally ready. Obstacles to translating the plates, however, were immense. Newly

married, Joseph needed to work to provide for Emma and himself, as well as for his extended family members, who still relied heavily on his contribution. Perhaps even more distracting, Joseph faced sweeping community opposition and avarice that threatened exposure and loss of the plates.

When a Palmyra mob demanded that Joseph show them the plates or be tarred and feathered, he knew he had to leave.⁴ So, in late 1827, Joseph placed the plates in a barrel of beans, packed up some belongings, borrowed \$50 from his friend and early believer Martin Harris, and took his pregnant wife more than 100 miles (161 km) south to Harmony, Pennsylvania, to live with Emma’s parents. He hoped the change would ease their daily labors and free them of the cauldron of greed and animosity that gripped Palmyra.

Conditions improved enough that winter that Joseph was able to translate a few Book of Mormon characters. In April, Martin Harris moved to Harmony to assist Joseph as scribe, and the work of translation began in earnest. By the middle of June—roughly five years since the fateful day Joseph had first been directed to the Hill Cumorah to obtain the plates—they had produced 116 manuscript pages of translation.⁵

At this point Martin pleaded with Joseph for permission to take the manuscript to Palmyra to show his wife, Lucy, who quite understandably wanted to see some evidence of what was taking up so much of her husband’s time and treasure. Yet, after inquiring of the Lord, Joseph was told twice not to let Martin take the manuscript.⁶

Desperate to placate the skepticism and increasingly shrill demands of his wife, Martin badgered Joseph again. In agony, Joseph went to the Lord a third time. In response, the Lord told Joseph that Martin could take the manuscript if he would show it only to five designated people and then promptly return it. Reluctantly, Joseph gave the manuscript to him, but only after Martin signed a written covenant to do as the Lord had instructed.⁷

This began a cascade of events that would bring Joseph as low as anything that would ever happen to him. Shortly after Martin departed, Emma gave birth to a baby boy. She



As Joseph headed home to rest from his farm work, Moroni visited him a fourth time.

Martin Harris stopped at the gate to the Smith home, got on the fence, pulled his hat over his eyes, and just sat there.



and Joseph named their first child Alvin, a comforting tribute to Joseph's dearly departed brother, who had died five years earlier. Tragically, rather than fill a void, young Alvin enlarged it when he passed away the day of his birth, June 15, 1828.

As if that were not enough to bear, between the exhaustion of a long and intense labor and the emotional distress of losing her child, Emma moved perilously close to death herself. For two weeks Joseph worried over Emma, nursing her back to health even as he worked through his own grief over baby Alvin. When Emma finally showed signs of

After Joseph arrived and finally took a little nourishment, Martin was summoned. He was to join the Smiths for breakfast but did not show up until noon. Walking slowly, he stopped at the gate to the home, got on the fence, pulled his hat over his eyes, and just sat there.¹⁰

"All Is Lost!"

Finally, Martin made his way into the home. Without speaking a word, he took up his utensils to eat. But before taking a bite, he cried out, "Oh, I have lost my soul!"¹¹

With this, Joseph jumped up and burst out: "Martin, have you lost that manuscript? [H]ave you broken your oath, and brought down condemnation upon my head, as well as your own?"

Martin somberly replied, "Yes, it is gone, and I know not where."¹² (Martin had shown the manuscript pages to others besides the five, "and by stratagem," Joseph later recounted, "they were taken from him."¹³)

Joseph exploded into a wail, crying out: "All is lost! [A]ll is lost! What shall I do? I have sinned—it is I who tempted the wrath of God." With this, "sobs and groans, and the most bitter lamentations filled the house," Joseph showing the greatest distress of them all.¹⁴

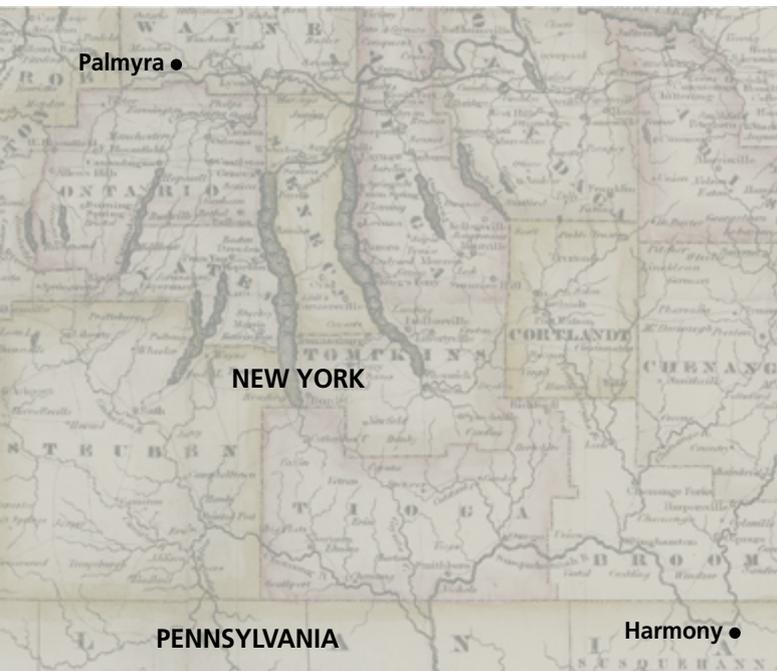
The translation work ceased for a season, and the plates and interpreters were taken from Joseph until September 22—a poignant reminder of his earlier probational period. He also suffered this stern rebuke from the Lord:

"And behold, how oft you have transgressed the commandments and the laws of God, and have gone on in the persuasions of men.

"For, behold, you should not have feared man more than God. Although men set at naught the counsels of God, and despise his words—

"Yet you should have been faithful; and he would have extended his arm and supported you against all the fiery darts of the adversary; and he would have been with you in every time of trouble" (D&C 3:6–8).

Imagine the difficulty of receiving such a revelation. Joseph had just lost his firstborn son. He had nearly lost his



stabilizing health, Joseph's thoughts turned to Martin and the manuscript.⁸

Sensing Joseph's anxiety, Emma encouraged him to return to Palmyra to check on Martin and the manuscript. With a visible gloom, he took a stagecoach north. Unable to eat or sleep on the journey, Joseph made it to his parents' home—still a good 20-mile (32 km) walk through the dead of night from where the stage let him off—only by the steadying hand of a worried fellow passenger (a "stranger") who took pity on him.⁹

wife. And his decision to give Martin the manuscript was driven by an earnest desire to help a friend who was helping him in a sacred work. Yes, however distraught Joseph was, and however dependent upon Martin Harris he thought he was, he had missed one thing God fully expects of His disciples: always trust in the arm of the Lord and not in the arm of the flesh. To Joseph's everlasting credit, he learned this lesson in such a deep and profound way that he never made the mistake again and, not long after again receiving the plates and interpreters, he began a pace of religious contribution the likes of which the world had not seen since



In the midst of translating the Book of Mormon, Joseph and Oliver preached sermons, received and recorded revelations, and got baptized.

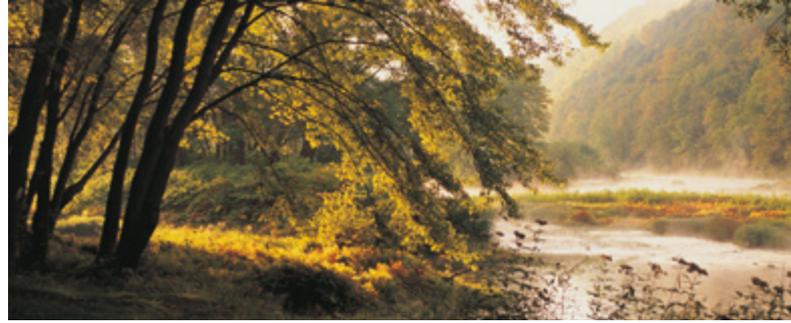
the personal ministry of Jesus Christ. Starting in the spring of 1829, now with Oliver Cowdery at his side, Joseph translated an astonishing 588 pages of the Book of Mormon in what was, at most, 65 working days.¹⁵ This is truly blinding speed when compared with his previous efforts. It is also instructive to note that the translation of the King James Bible took 47 trained scholars, working in languages they already knew, seven years to complete.¹⁶

Furthermore, in the midst of this monumental production, Joseph and Oliver also preached sermons, received and recorded revelations, participated in the restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods, got baptized, attended to home duties, and moved to Fayette, New York, to get the manuscript published. But the greatest miracle in all of this is not found in how fast things were accomplished but in the complexity of what was produced in that highly demanding time frame.

A Remarkable, Complex Book

According to one recent scholarly summary, here is what Joseph effectively produced in those 65 working days of translation: “Not only are there more than a thousand years of history [in the Book of Mormon] involving some two hundred named individuals and nearly a hundred distinct places, but the narrative itself is presented as the work of three primary editor/historians—Nephi, Mormon, and Moroni. These figures, in turn, claim to have based their accounts on dozens of preexisting records. The result is a complex mix that incorporates multiple genres ranging from straightforward narration to inserted sermons and letters to scriptural commentary and poetry. It requires considerable patience to work out all the details of chronology, geography, genealogy, and source records, but the Book of Mormon is remarkably consistent on all this. The chronology is handled virtually without glitches, despite several flashbacks and temporally overlapping narratives; . . . and the narrators keep straight both the order and family connections among the twenty-six Nephite record keepers and forty-one Jaredite kings (including rival lines). The complexity is such that one would assume the author worked from charts and maps, though Joseph Smith’s wife . . . explicitly denied that he had written something out beforehand that he either had memorized or consulted as he translated, and indeed she claimed that Joseph began sessions of dictation without looking at the manuscript or having the last passage read back to him.”¹⁷

Joseph and Oliver participated in the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood in the Susquehanna Valley in the spring of 1829.



And this is to say nothing of the presence of highly sophisticated literary structures and striking parallels with ancient customs and forms of communication, among other things, associated with the book and its translation.¹⁸

In the face of this, one simply has to ask, how did a man—especially one with practically no formal education—accomplish such a feat? To my mind, at least, Joseph Smith did not make up the Book of Mormon because he could not have made it up. But this logic, as strong as it may seem, is not, finally, decisive proof of the book’s veracity; nor does it stand as the foundation of my testimony. What it does do is give added weight to that which the Spirit taught me not so long ago as a full-time missionary. In the hallowed halls of the Provo Missionary Training Center and in the verdant hills and valleys of Scotland, I experienced spiritual witness after spiritual witness that Joseph Smith was called of God, that he was His instrument in these latter days, and that he brought forth a book that existed long before he was born, a book that is true and without peer—the unparalleled keystone of a godly life of happiness.

I also declare that Joseph Smith’s life is a searing testimony of what may be the unifying message of the book itself. As the Book of Mormon opens, Nephi declares, “Behold, I, Nephi, will show unto you that the tender *mercies* of the Lord are over all those whom he hath chosen, because of their faith” (1 Nephi 1:20; emphasis added). As the book closes, Moroni pleads, “Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things . . . that ye would

remember how *merciful* the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things” (Moroni 10:3; emphasis added).¹⁹

From beginning to end, Book of Mormon testimony and history show that God is anxiously willing to work with, heal, and bless those who—despite their sins and imperfections—turn to Him in genuine contrition and faith.

Put Your Trust in God

Like Joseph Smith, you need not lead a perfect life in order to be a powerful instrument in God’s hands. Mistakes, failure, and confusion were part of Joseph’s life and mission, and they are going to be part of yours too. But do not despair. Do not be tempted to think that “all is lost.” All is not lost and will never be lost for those who look to the God of mercy and live. You have a Brother who watches over you, ready to rescue you and advance your service with arms far stronger than your arms—far stronger, in fact, than all other arms of the flesh combined. Those arms are there to sustain and bless you, “in every time of trouble” (D&C 3:8), no matter how alone and discouraged you may feel. Therefore, as you move forward with your life, trust in those arms and “be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid . . . for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee” (Deuteronomy 31:6).

Joseph discovered this and changed the world. You can too. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. In *Histories, Volume 1: 1832–1844*, vol. 1 of the Histories series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, (2012), 14; see also josephsmithpapers.org.
2. In *Histories, Vol. 1: 1832–44*, 83.
3. See Oliver Cowdery, “A Remarkable Vision,” *The Latter-day Saints Millennial Star*, Nov. 1840, 175.
4. See Martin Harris, in *Tiffany’s Monthly*, June 1859, 170.
5. See *Histories, Vol. 1: 1832–44*, 244; see also Gospel Topics, “Book of Mormon Translation,” lds.org/topics.
6. See *Histories, Vol. 1: 1832–44*, 245.
7. See *Histories, Vol. 1: 1832–44*, 245–46.
8. See Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations* (1853), 118.
9. See Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 119–20.
10. See Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 120.
11. In Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 121.
12. In Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 121.
13. In *Histories, Vol. 1: 1832–44*, 247.
14. In Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 121–22.
15. See John W. Welch, “How Long Did It Take Joseph Smith to Translate the Book of Mormon?” *Ensign*, Jan. 1988, 47.
16. See “King James I of England,” kingjamesbibleonline.org/King-James.php.
17. Grant Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader’s Guide* (2010), 6–7.
18. See Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture that Launched a New World Religion* (2002), 156.
19. See Grant Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon*, 8.



Reaping

THE REWARDS OF

Righteousness



By Elder
Quentin L. Cook
Of the Quorum
of the Twelve
Apostles

*No good thing will be withheld from them
that walk uprightly.*

The world is literally in commotion (see D&C 45:26). Many of our challenges are in the spiritual realm. They are societal issues we as individuals cannot necessarily resolve. Nevertheless, there are practical rewards we *can* achieve as individuals, even at a time when righteousness across the world is in decline.

The very idea of “rewards of righteousness” is a concept that is under siege in today’s world. Convincing people to choose righteousness is an age-old challenge. “The natural man is an enemy to God” (Mosiah 3:19). There has always been “opposition in all things” (2 Nephi 2:11).

The difference today is that the “great and spacious building” (1 Nephi 8:31) skeptics are louder, more contentious, and less tolerant than at any time during my life. They evidence their diminished faith when, on many issues, they are more concerned with being on the wrong side of history than on the wrong side of God. There was a time when the vast majority of people understood that they would be judged by God’s commandments, not by the prevailing views or dominant philosophies of the day. Some are more concerned about being mocked by others than they are about being judged by God.

The battle between good and evil is not new. But today a much higher percentage of people mistakenly concludes that there is not a moral, righteous standard to which all people should adhere.

Nevertheless, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has never had more faithful members. Members of the Church, together with others who have similar moral values, represent an island of faith in a sea of doubt and disbelief. We know, as the prophet Alma declared, that “wickedness never was happiness” (Alma 41:10) and that the Father’s plan for His children is a “plan of happiness” (Alma 42:8, 16).



If we’re not careful, the world can cause us to focus on things that pull us away from deep spiritual commitment.

My desire is to offer some suggestions that may help you individually and your families collectively to better understand and achieve the rewards of righteousness.

The Reward of Spirituality

“How do I put material concerns in proper perspective as I attempt to achieve spiritual progress?”

We are so much a part of this world. The material aspects of day-to-day living are a specific challenge. Society tends to look at everything through the lens of worldly rewards.

The preface to the Doctrine and Covenants highlights this very problem to warn us of dangers, give us guidance to prepare and protect ourselves now and in the future, and provide significant insight on this subject: “They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god, whose image is in the likeness of the world, and whose substance is that of an idol” (see D&C 1:16).

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) taught that idols can include credentials, degrees, property, homes, furnishings, and other material objects. He said that when we elevate these otherwise worthy objectives in a way that diminishes our worship of

the Lord and weakens our efforts to establish His righteousness and perform the work of salvation among Father in Heaven’s children, we have created idols.¹

Sometimes the lens of the world causes us to focus on issues not quite as dramatic as aspiring to great wealth but that nonetheless take us away from deep spiritual commitment.

Many years ago I was made aware of an interesting display that had several unique scenes. The different scenes appeared underneath a large banner that read, “If Christ came tonight, to whom would He come?” If I remember the depictions correctly, they contained the following scenes:

- An ill, elderly woman in bed being attended by a nurse.
- A joyful young mother with a newborn baby.
- A family with hungry, crying children.
- A wealthy family.
- A sweet but humble family with many children joyously singing together.

We know that when the Savior comes again, we will not know the day or the hour. We also know that as Christians, we care for the poor and the needy and for the widow and the orphan. Nevertheless, the banner would have been more accurate had it read, “If Christ came tonight, who would be prepared to greet Him?”

My second thought was that the scenes told us everything about the physical condition of the people but nothing about their spiritual condition and commitment to Christ.

The starting point for reviewing our life and commitment to the Savior and His gospel is baptism. Except for new converts and the very young, our baptisms occurred years ago.

The great prophet Alma speaks eloquently to us when he states: “And now behold, I say unto you,

The world is focused on temporal day-to-day economic issues, but our focus needs to be on spiritual matters.





We need to focus our lives and increase our emphasis on spiritual matters.

my brethren, if ye have experienced a change of heart, and if ye have felt to sing the song of redeeming love, I would ask, can ye feel so now?" (Alma 5:26).

Alma then continues with his profound message, which is relevant to our day. He essentially asks the Saints, were they to die, if they would be prepared to meet God. Alma then emphasizes four qualities we need in order to be blameless before God:

First, "have [we] been sufficiently humble?" In a sense, this is a return to the requirement for baptism—humbling ourselves and having broken hearts and contrite spirits.

Second, "are [we] stripped of pride?" Alma warns against trampling the Holy One under our feet and being puffed up in pride—setting our hearts upon the vain things of the world and supposing we are better than others.

Third, are we "stripped of envy?" For those who have great blessings but do not feel gratitude because they focus only on what others have, envy can be most pernicious. "Lifestyle envy"² has increased as fame and fortune have replaced faith and family as core aspirations for much of society.

Fourth, do we mock or persecute our brothers and sisters? In today's world we would probably call this bullying (see Alma 5:27–30, 53–54).

Could anything be more relevant to the issues of our own day than this message about humility, pride, envy, and persecution? The great debate across much of the world is about temporal day-to-day economic issues. Yet there is little discussion about returning to Christlike principles

focused on preparation to meet God and on the condition of our spirits. We need to focus our lives and increase our emphasis on spiritual matters.

The Reward of Righteous Families

"Should we be raising our families in areas where there are few members of the Church and we are surrounded by much evil, contention, and opposition to righteousness?"

My wife, Mary, and I had these concerns as we were beginning to raise our children in the San Francisco Bay Area in California, USA, in the late 1960s. The Latter-day Saint population was relatively small. But while the vast majority of people were wonderful, the Bay Area had become a magnet for drug usage and all manner of promiscuous and sinful conduct.

The change in society was significant enough that a concerned stake president asked the leadership of the Church if he should encourage Church members to remain in the Bay Area. Elder Harold B. Lee (1899–1973), then a senior member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, was assigned to address the issue. He explained that the Lord had not inspired the construction of a temple in our area only to have the members leave. His counsel to us was simple but profound:

1. Create Zion in our hearts and homes.
2. Be a light to those among whom we live.
3. Focus on the ordinances of the temple and the principles taught there.

We cherished Elder Lee's counsel and tried to follow it in our family.

In building Zion in our hearts and homes, we need to emphasize religious observance in the home by having daily family prayer and scripture study and by holding weekly family home evening. In this context we can teach and train our children. We do this with love and kindness, avoiding undue criticism of our children and our spouse.

Regardless of where we live and even if we do everything right, some children may make unwise choices that lead to forbidden paths. Accordingly, it is important to help our young people determine in advance what they will say or do when others propose improper or immoral conduct.

Our children attended schools where there were only two or three LDS children. At the beginning of each school year and before school activities, we discussed in family home evening appropriate responses if they found themselves in compromising situations. We asked them what they would say to friends who might tell them, "Don't be

silly; everyone does it," "Your parents won't know," or "Just once won't matter."

We talked about our accountability to the Lord.

We pointed out that we follow Christ's example when we dress modestly, use clean and appropriate language, and avoid pornography, which now needs to be taught to Primary-age children so that they can have pure lives.

We talked about Joseph of Egypt, who fled when confronted with inappropriate attention from Potiphar's wife (see Genesis 39:7–12).

Each of our children had at least one experience in which this preparation was essential, but most of the time their friends protected them because they knew their standards and beliefs.

When our daughter, Kathryn, called her mother after going away to college, Mary would tell her things she loved about the Savior. Mary constantly used His example and character to help with the problem Kathryn had called to discuss.

We can raise righteous children in almost any part of the world if they have a firm foundation in Jesus Christ and His gospel.



I believe we can raise righteous children in almost any part of the world if they have a firm foundation in Jesus Christ and His gospel. Nephi described teaching his family and people, saying, “We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins” (2 Nephi 25:26).

If we do this, when our children make unwise choices, they will know that all is not lost and that they can find their way home. I want to assure you that you and your family will be blessed as you strive to strengthen each member of your family through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

If we follow Elder Lee’s counsel to be a light to those among whom we live, we cannot be in camouflage as to who we are. Our conduct should reflect our values and beliefs. Where appropriate, we should participate in the public square.

Living worthy of a temple recommend, receiving temple ordinances, and being true to our covenants gives us the focus and vision to stay on the covenant path. When our youth live worthy to perform baptisms for the dead, their lives will be in order.

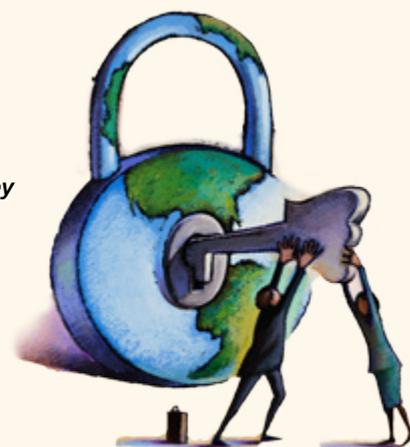
We need to focus our energy on strengthening our families by talking, rejoicing, preaching, and prophesying of Christ so that we may enjoy the reward of righteous families and become eternal families.

For those who are single but living righteous lives, our doctrine is reassuring: “Faithful members whose circumstances do not allow them to receive the blessings of eternal marriage and parenthood in this life will receive all promised blessings in the eternities, provided they keep the covenants they have made with God.”³

The Reward of Happiness

“What advantages should I provide for my children to be happy and successful in life?”

Love is the key ingredient to happiness in this world.



Lucifer has created a counterfeit or illusion of happiness that is inconsistent with righteousness and will mislead us if we are not vigilant. Many of our problems today occur because the secular world has been pursuing an incorrect definition of happiness. We know from the Book of Mormon that this problem has existed throughout all generations. We also know the blessings that come from living the commandments.

King Benjamin states, “I would desire that ye should consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, they are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual; and if they hold out faithful to the end they are received into heaven, that thereby they may dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness. O remember, remember that these things are true; for the Lord God hath spoken it” (Mosiah 2:41).

Over many years I have followed a research project that commenced in the 1930s. Initially, the study involved 268 men at a premier university who were periodically studied over their entire lives. Later, women became part of the study. The study covered approximately 70 years. The goal of the original study was to find out as much as possible about success and happiness.

The study showed that college entrance scores and grade averages did not predict either success or happiness in later life. But one area where there was a high correlation was childhood family happiness. Happy, successful adults usually reported that

their mother in particular verbally expressed love and affection and did not use severe discipline. Both of their parents were demonstratively affectionate with each other and available and accessible to their children, with whom they had warm and emotionally expressive relationships. The parents created a stable family environment and were believed to have respected the autonomy of their children.

A concluding book on the study published in 2012 reports: “Many measures of success throughout life are predicted less reliably by early financial and social advantage than by a loved and loving childhood.” A warm childhood correlates with achievement more than intelligence, social class, or athleticism. The study also found that “what goes right in childhood predicts the future far better than what goes wrong.”⁴

The study as a whole indicates that even when there are significant challenges and some things go very wrong, most children are resilient, and the trust that is built by loving relationships with parents, especially the mother, can result in lasting, lifetime happiness. What was interesting to me, but not surprising, was that the study was completely in line with what the scriptures and the Church teach about

the family. The Church emphasizes family home evening, family prayer, expressions of love, family togetherness, and family traditions, which are the very kinds of activities that the study indicated would produce happy, successful adults.

Nephi begins the Book of Mormon expressing gratitude for “goodly parents” (1 Nephi 1:1), but the real lesson is that we each determine what kind of parent we will be so that our posterity can happily report that they too were born of goodly parents.

The most important thing you can do is to make sure your children and those you nurture know that you love them. Love is the key ingredient to happiness.

The Reward of Prospering in the Land

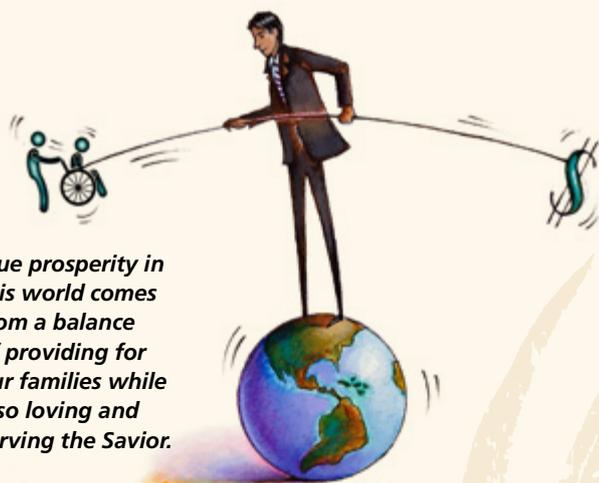
“Our family is not achieving significant material success. Is that because we are not righteous enough?”

The scriptures are clear that living the commandments allows us to prosper in the land. But let me assure you that prospering in the land is not defined by the size of your bank account. It has a much fuller meaning than that.

Speaking to his son Helaman, the prophet Alma teaches, “Inasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall prosper in the land; and ye ought to know also, that inasmuch as ye will not keep the commandments of God ye shall be cut off from his presence” (Alma 36:30).

Accordingly, having the Spirit in our lives is the primary ingredient in prospering in the land. If we keep the commandments, we also have certain specific promises (see Ephesians 6:1–3). Doctrine and Covenants section 89, for example, promises that by living the Word of Wisdom, we will enjoy health blessings and great treasures of knowledge.

Isolating one element of the Word of Wisdom, avoiding alcohol, is instructional. The longitudinal



True prosperity in this world comes from a balance of providing for our families while also loving and serving the Savior.



The ultimate reward of righteousness is “peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come.”

study I mentioned earlier found that alcohol abuse touches one American family in three, is involved in a quarter of all admissions to general hospitals, and plays a major role in death, divorce, bad health, and diminished accomplishment.

A long-term study of active Church members in California found that women live on average 5.6 years and men 9.8 years longer than comparable U.S. females and males. The physicians conducting the study indicated at least one reason was adherence to the Word of Wisdom. Living the Word of Wisdom allows us to prosper in the land.⁵

In a conversation I had with President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) on a flight to a temple dedication, he joyfully reported that the Church had funds to increase the number of temples because Latter-day Saints had prospered in the land. As faithful tithe payers, they had provided the resources to build temples.

Prospering and being wealthy are not necessarily synonymous. A much better gospel definition of prospering in the land is having sufficient for our needs while having the abundant blessing of the Spirit in our lives. When we provide for our families and love and serve the Savior, we will enjoy the reward of having the Spirit and prospering in the land.

The Reward of Peace

The ultimate promised reward of righteousness is set forth clearly in Doctrine and Covenants 59:23: “But learn that he [or she] who doeth the works of righteousness shall

receive his [or her] reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come.”

More than 35 years ago, President Kimball taught that major growth would occur in the Church because many “good women . . . will be drawn to the Church in large numbers.” He declared, “This will happen to the degree that the women of the Church reflect righteousness and articulateness in their lives and . . . are seen as distinct and different—in happy ways—from the women of the world.”⁶

This has truly happened and will continue to do so in the future.

The Lord God is indeed a sun and shield and will give grace and glory. No good thing will be withheld from them that walk uprightly (see Psalm 84:11). My prayer is that you may reap the rewards of righteousness as you faithfully follow our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. ■

From an address, “The Rewards of Righteousness,” delivered at BYU Women’s Conference on May 2, 2014.

NOTES

1. See Spencer W. Kimball, “The False Gods We Worship,” *Ensign*, June 1976, 2–6.
2. See Lane Anderson, *Deseret News*, “The Instagram Effect: How the Psychology of Envy Drives Consumerism,” Apr. 15, 2014, C7.
3. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 1.3.3. President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, reaffirmed this in his April 2014 general conference talk, “The Witness,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 94–97.
4. George E. Vaillant, *Triumphs of Experience: The Men of the Harvard Grant Study* (2012), 108–9.
5. See James E. Enstrom and Lester Breslow, “Lifestyle and Reduced Mortality among Active California Mormons, 1980–2004,” *Preventive Medicine* 46 (2008), 135.
6. See Spencer W. Kimball, “The Role of Righteous Women,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 103–4; see also *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 223.



*Religion and government travel
different but parallel tracks.
They are most successful and
most effective when they protect
and encourage one another.*

By Elder
Wilford W. Andersen
Of the Seventy



Religion & Government

Religion and government are like a couple who sometimes have a hard time living together but who find they simply cannot live apart. Religion and government both need their independence in order to flourish, but history has shown that a complete divorce is healthy for neither. They travel different but parallel tracks. They are most successful and most effective when they protect and encourage one another.

Governments play an essential role in protecting and maintaining religious freedom and in fostering the role of churches in society. Fortunately, most governments in the world today recognize at least some degree of religious freedom and ensure to their citizens the right to worship and to practice their religion according to the dictates of their own conscience. That has not always been the case.

Many generations have seen the stifling loss of freedom that results when government imposes a state religion. Others have experienced the moral collapse that accompanies governmental prohibition of religion altogether. We are thankful that a growing majority of the constitutions of countries in today's world envision a society where religious belief and observance, though separate from government, should be protected and safeguarded against persecution.¹

The heaven-inspired government described in the Book of Mormon afforded this freedom of religious belief and practice to its people:

“Now if a man desired to serve God, it was his privilege; or rather, if he believed in God it was his privilege to serve him; but if he did not believe in him there was no law to punish him. . . .

“For there was a law that men should be judged according to their crimes. Nevertheless, there was no law against a man’s belief” (Alma 30:9, 11).

As people of faith we should be thankful for governmental protections that allow us to embrace and practice our religious beliefs as we desire.

The Essential Role of Religion

It is perhaps less obvious to some that religion and morality play an essential role in maintaining and promoting good and effective government. The only real solutions to many of the serious problems facing our world today are spiritual, not political or economic. Racism, violence, and hate crimes, for example, are spiritual problems, and their only real solution is spiritual. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught:

“Many of the most significant moral advances in Western society have been motivated by religious principles and persuaded to official adoption by pulpit preaching. Examples include the abolition of the slave trade in England and the Emancipation Proclamation in [the United States]. The same is true of the Civil Rights movement of the last half-century.”²



THE VITAL INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF

“Our society is not held together primarily by law and its enforcement, but most importantly by those who voluntarily obey the unenforceable because of their internalized norms

of righteous or correct behavior. Religious belief in right and wrong is a vital influence to produce such voluntary compliance by a large number of our citizens.”

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Strengthening the Free Exercise of Religion,” address given at The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty Canterbury Medal Dinner, New York City, May 16, 2013, 1; available at mormonnewsroom.org.

Societies depend in large part upon religion and churches to establish moral order. Government can never build enough jails to house the criminals produced by a society lacking in morality, character, and faith. These attributes are better encouraged by religious observance than by legislative decree or police force. It is impossible for government to control the attitudes, desires, and hopes that spring from the human heart. And yet these are the seeds that grow into the conduct government must regulate.

French historian and statesman Alexis de Tocqueville wrote, “Despotism may govern without faith, but liberty cannot.”³ And even despotism cannot govern indefinitely without faith. For as Boris Yeltsin, first president of the Russian Federation, observed, “You can build a throne with bayonets, but it’s difficult to sit on it.”⁴

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus contrasted the law written on the books with the law written in the heart.

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

“But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment” (Matthew 5:21–22).

While governments enforce the law written on the books, religion teaches and encourages adherence to the law written in the heart. Those who abide the latter will seldom if ever violate the former. As we read in the Doctrine and Covenants, “He that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land” (58:21).

But where matters of the heart are ignored, the black letter law and the legal machinery of government will eventually bog down. Civility in society is achieved when the majority of people do what is moral because they believe they should, not because they are compelled by law or by police force.

Government oversees the conduct of its citizens. It tries to get them to behave in a decent and moral way. Religion, on the other hand, tries to get them to *desire* to behave in a decent and moral way. President Ezra



Taft Benson (1899–1994), a cabinet member under U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, taught this most important distinction:

“The Lord works from the inside out. The world works from the outside in. The world would take people out of the slums. Christ takes the slums out of people, and then they take themselves out of the slums. The world would mold men by changing their environment. Christ changes men, who then change their environment. The world would shape human behavior, but Christ can change human nature.”⁵

Over time all free governments must ultimately depend on the voluntary goodness and support of their citizens. As legendary statesman and political philosopher Edmund Burke said, “It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters.”⁶

To that end, good government protects religion and fosters religious freedom. And good religion encourages good citizenship and adherence to the law of the land.

Good government need not take sides. It should not foster or favor one religion over another. Its representatives must be free to believe and practice according to

We are encouraged to study issues and candidates carefully and to vote for individuals who we believe will act with integrity.

the dictates of their own conscience. By the same token, good religion should neither endorse nor oppose any political party or candidate. And its believers must be free and even encouraged to participate in the political process and to support whichever party or candidate they think best.

Make Your Voice Heard

While the Church, as an institution, has repeatedly affirmed its political neutrality, Latter-day Saints are encouraged to engage in the political process and to add their voices to the public debate. It is part of our religion to be good citizens wherever we live.

Handbook 2: Administering the Church states, “In accordance with the laws of their respective governments, members are encouraged to register to vote, to study issues and candidates carefully, and to vote for individuals who they believe will act with integrity and sound judgment. Latter-day Saints have a special obligation to seek out, vote for, and uphold leaders who are honest, good, and wise (see D&C 98:10).”⁷

One day the Savior will come again. It is His right to rule and to reign as the King of kings *and* as our great High Priest. Then the scepter of government and the power of the priesthood will be combined into one.

Until that great day, religion and government must walk down the path of human history hand in hand—each respecting the other’s independence, each appreciating the other’s essential contribution. ■

NOTES

1. See W. Cole Durham Jr., Silvio Ferrari, Cristiana Cianitto, Donlu Thayer, eds., *Law, Religion, Constitution: Freedom of Religion, Equal Treatment, and the Law* (2013), 3–5.
2. Dallin H. Oaks, “Strengthening the Free Exercise of Religion,” address given at The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty Canterbury Medal Dinner, New York City, May 16, 2013, 1; available at mormonnewsroom.org.
3. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 2 vols. (1835–40), 1:306.
4. Boris Yeltsin, in Donald Murray, *A Democracy of Despots* (1995), 8.
5. Ezra Taft Benson, “Born of God,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 6.
6. Edmund Burke, *A Letter from Mr. Burke, to a Member of the National Assembly; in Answer to Some Objections to His Book on French Affairs*, 2nd ed. (1791), 69.
7. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 21.1.29.

I WOULD NOT CHEAT

As a freshman in college, I was often disappointed with my classmates. That's because many of them would cheat during exams. Some would sneak their notes into class. Some would text test answers to others. A few would even copy off the exams of their classmates.

Those who cheated always got higher scores than I did. Nevertheless, I was not tempted to join them. I always put into my mind and heart that it's better to have an honest 0 percent than a stolen 100 percent.

If I cheated, I wouldn't be setting an example for them. I wouldn't be living in a way that I could share the gospel of Jesus Christ with them. I wouldn't be showing them that the Church is true.

One afternoon I went to the college cashier office to ask about my remaining tuition balance. I had to pay all my fees before I could take final exams the following week. As I was walking, I worried about where I would get the money I needed. For a self-supporting student like me, finances were tight.

When I reached the office, I asked the cashier how much I still owed.

"You pay no more until you graduate," she said.

Shocked, I asked her if she was sure or if she was pulling a prank.

"Yes, I'm sure, and I'm serious," she said. "The guidance counselor processed an application for you to get a scholarship from a senator. You are now a scholar."

Hearing those words made me very happy. I thanked her and ran to the guidance counselor's office to thank the person responsible.

"You don't have to thank me," the counselor said after I told her how thankful and happy I was. "I was only an instrument."

As I left, I remembered the scripture I always love to share: "And blessed is he that is found faithful unto my name at the last day, for he shall be lifted up to dwell in the kingdom prepared for him from the foundation of the world. And behold it is I [Jesus Christ] that hath spoken it" (Ether 4:19).

By doing right, I had shown my faithfulness in keeping the commandments of our Heavenly Father—even in a situation where dishonesty was common. I know that by standing firm in my faith, He will never leave me.

I am happy that I can now study with no payments to worry about. I'm also encouraged to continue doing what's right, not because of the rewards and blessings I could receive but because I love Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, who set an example for me. ■

Joanna Mae Rangga, Southern Leyte, Philippines

My classmates who cheated always got higher scores than I did. Nevertheless, I was not tempted to join them.





I wanted so much to wear my mother's wedding dress when the day of my marriage arrived.

MY MOTHER'S WEDDING DRESS

I was a girl when I first saw my mother's wedding dress. It was carefully wrapped inside a box, and I remember my mother unwrapping it tenderly so I could see it. How beautiful it was! I so much wanted to wear that dress when the day of my marriage arrived.

My mother gently put it back and promised to lend it to me in the future. She said the dress had been a special gift from my father. She looked so in love and beautiful in her wedding photographs. My parents, not members of the Church, were wonderful people.

I learned about the Church when I met the man who would become my husband. That meeting was unusual because, though he was not active in the Church, our meeting led to the story of the First Vision. I found the story amazing, but I was not ready to accept it.

After we had dated for 16 months, my dreams came true when I put on my mother's wedding dress with its

long tail and walked down the aisle toward my fiancé. I also was so in love. Many people said I looked just like my mother when she married.

Years passed, and we had two sons. When my husband tried to return to church, I hindered his efforts. Though I wasn't active in the church of my youth, I had a hard time accepting another church.

That finally changed after 19 years of marriage. My husband returned to church, and a few weeks later I began to attend with him. My testimony grew rapidly, and I was baptized and confirmed. Soon afterward my greatest desire was to prepare myself to be sealed to my husband in the temple.

When the happy day of our sealing arrived, I wore my mother's white dress again. A friend from church had adjusted it so it would be proper to wear in the temple. I have worn it there ever since.

By the time my father had passed away and my mother had entered her last days, she still wasn't ready to accept the restored Church. But I told her many wonderful things about the Restoration. I also told her that when she crossed the veil, she was going to hear the message of the true gospel. I promised her that after a year, I would wear our dress in her behalf so she could vicariously receive temple ordinances and be sealed to my father. And I did.

My dress is old now, and I know that one day I will have to retire it. Until that day comes, I will continue to wear it with love—for my husband, for my mother and father, for family members I have served vicariously in the temple, for the true gospel, for my sacred covenants, and for my Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. ■

Angélica Flores Algaba, Querétaro, Mexico

THE LORD SPOKE PEACE TO ME

Our daughter Carlie had been sick for a few days, and I thought all she had was a cold. But as her symptoms progressed, I began to think it might be more serious.

My fears were confirmed and intensified at her doctor's appointment—Carlie was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. She was slipping into a diabetic coma and needed to get to the hospital quickly. I prayed in my heart that I would be calm and that the doctors would be able to help her.

When we arrived at the emergency room, the doctors and nurses quickly went to work trying to save her. I pled with my Heavenly Father for comfort and peace.

In a moment of quiet, my husband and his father gave Carlie a priesthood blessing. In his blessing, my husband assured her that it was the will of her Heavenly Father that she

live. I began to feel peace.

After several more hours of watching doctors poke, test, and check Carlie for improvement, I was exhausted. Her room became less hectic around 1:00 a.m. I didn't know what to expect, I couldn't sleep, and I felt alone.

I pulled out a copy of the Book of Mormon my sister had brought to the hospital and prayed that the scriptures would bring me the reassurance I needed. The book fell open to Alma 36:3. As I read, I felt that the Lord was speaking to me: "I do know that whosoever shall put their trust in God shall be supported in their trials, and their troubles, and their afflictions, and shall be lifted up at the last day."

For the second time that night, I felt peace. I knew Heavenly Father was aware of us. He wanted me to know that He was there and that I needed to have faith in Him.

As I reflected on the day's events, I thought of how the Lord had blessed us. I had felt an urgency to take Carlie to the doctor. We had arrived at the hospital safely. Priesthood holders had arrived quickly to administer a blessing.

Since that day we have settled into a routine of checking blood sugar and keeping snacks on hand. We have learned how diabetes management can affect the body. Carlie's disease continues to be a trial, but we have learned to trust in our Heavenly Father every day.

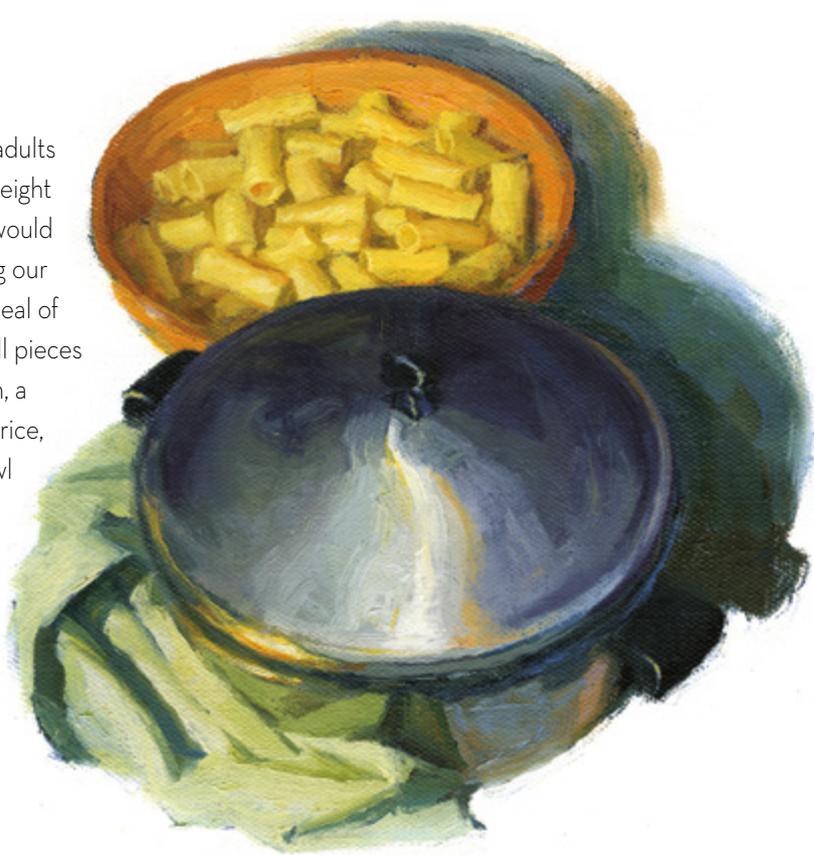
That day in the hospital is not one I want to relive, but it is one I will be forever grateful for. It was a day of learning, of exercising faith, of feeling gratitude. I learned that Heavenly Father is aware of each of His children and that He will truly support us in our trials. ■

Trisha Tomkinson Riggs, Arizona, USA

When we arrived at the emergency room, the doctors and nurses quickly went to work trying to save Carlie.



Nine adults and eight children would be sharing our meager meal of eight small pieces of chicken, a platter of rice, and a bowl of pasta.



EIGHT SMALL PIECES OF CHICKEN

With my husband temporarily out of work, making ends meet for a family with five growing children was challenging. A day before the broadcast of the October 2013 general conference, we checked our food supplies and decided we would prepare a simple lunch of fried chicken and rice during the break between conference sessions.

Sunday came, and we were all set. The rest of our extended family, composed of my parents and my sisters and their families, met at the stake center half an hour before the broadcast started.

What a joy and a blessing it was to hear prophets, seers, and revelators share messages specifically for our generation. As I listened to the counsel and basked in the wonderful spirit of peace and love I felt from

my Heavenly Father, I received the assurance that everything would be all right, that my family's spiritual and temporal needs would be addressed, and that if I continued to exercise faith and let my Savior take the reins, we would be released from the grips of poverty and other hardships.

Enjoying the beautiful spirit of that Sabbath day, I had forgotten about lunch. Only when the break between sessions arrived did I realize there would be 17 of us. Nine adults and eight children would be sharing our meager meal of eight small pieces of chicken and a platter of rice, along with a bowl of pasta one of my sisters had brought.

Eight-year-old Henry offered a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing on our food, asking that all who partook would be filled. Then I broke each

piece of chicken into smaller portions and handed these to the children as my sister placed pasta and rice on their plates. I could not keep tears from falling as I realized we had enough for one small serving for everyone and one extra serving after all the pieces were broken and the pasta and rice were divided among us. All of us then ate—and were filled.

I told my parents and husband that I knew of a surety that the Savior had indeed divided five loaves of bread and two fish and fed a multitude of “five thousand men, beside women and children” (see Matthew 14:14–21). Some critics and nonbelievers claim that the miracle was metaphorical, exaggerated, or impossible. But to my family and me, the account is true as written.

Heavenly Father had heard the prayer of a faithful child who gave thanks and requested the blessing that all who would partake would be filled and receive nourishment.

As we returned to the hall for general conference, I was feasting in my heart. I felt as though I were there with the multitude Jesus had fed, yearning to stay and learn from Him who promises that if we heed and hearken, we will never hunger or thirst (see John 6:35).

With our children we quietly took our seats inside the chapel and prepared to listen to Heavenly Father's chosen servants. It was an occasion we will always remember. ■

Abigail Almeria, Cebu, Philippines

FILLED WITH
LIFE & ENERGY



By Randal A. Wright

Imagine for a moment that a friend comes to you seeking advice on ways to receive personal revelation. If you could offer only one idea, what would it be?

As a new General Authority, Elder Marion G. Romney (1897–1988) felt inadequate in fulfilling his important calling, so he sought advice from his friend Elder Harold B.

Lee (1899–1973) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. The counsel offered that day both surprised and motivated Elder Romney.

Elder Lee said: “If you are to be successful as a General Authority, you will need to be inspired. You will need to receive revelation. I will give you one piece of advice: *Go to bed early and get up early.* If you do, your body and mind will become rested and then in the quiet of those early morning hours, you will receive more flashes of inspiration and insight than at any other time of the day.”

Years later, reflecting back on that experience, then-President Romney said: “From that day on, I put that counsel into practice, and I know it works. Whenever I have a serious problem, or some assignment of a creative nature with which I hope to receive the influence of the Spirit, I always receive more assistance in the early morning hours than at any other time of the day.”¹

When I first read this account, I too was surprised by the advice Elder Lee gave. I would never have connected an early daily schedule with revelation. However, I now know that there is a direct correlation. I have also learned that actions traditionally associated with receiving revelation like prayer, scripture study, fasting, temple attendance, and service are greatly enhanced when I go to bed early and get up early.

What one practice, if followed consistently and with discipline, would help you have better health, energy, and inspiration?

• • • • •

Scriptural Examples

Inspired men and women of all ages have followed this divine counsel concerning sleep. “Abraham *got up early in the morning* to the place where he stood before the Lord” (Genesis 19:27; emphasis added). “Moses *rose up early in the morning*, and went up unto mount Sinai, *as the Lord had commanded him*, and took in his hand the two tables of stone” (Exodus 34:4; emphasis added). “And Joshua *rose early in the morning*, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord” (Joshua 6:12; emphasis added).

How did the Lord begin His day during His mortal ministry? Mark records, “In the morning, *rising up a great while before day*, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed” (Mark 1:35). Mary, a devoted



disciple, followed His example and in doing so taught us a powerful lesson: “The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene *early, when it was yet dark*, unto the sepulchre” (John 20:1). In the early morning she became the first mortal to see the resurrected Lord.

Blessings of Arising Early

Great leaders in our day also use the early-morning hours to receive revelation. Some time ago I heard a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy mention in a stake conference talk that he was an early riser. After the meeting, I spoke to him briefly about his early-morning ritual, then asked how many of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve kept a similar schedule. He replied, “They all do!” It was a powerful moment, and the Spirit testified to me that going to bed early and getting up early can be indeed connected to receiving revelation.

Additional blessings are pledged to those who follow the Lord’s counsel on sleep. Consider these incredible promises: “Cease to sleep longer than is needful; retire to thy bed early, that ye may *not be weary*; arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be *invigorated*” (D&C 88:124; emphasis added). *Invigorate* means “to fill with life and energy.”

The ancient philosopher Aristotle suggested other benefits to those who keep an early schedule: “It is well to be up before day-break, for such a habit contributes to health, wealth and wisdom.”² Early U.S. statesman Benjamin Franklin later put that thought into his well-known maxim: “Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.”³ Most people put health, wealth, and wisdom toward the top of things most desired in life.

Health

The average age of a chief executive officer in America is 55 years old.⁴ Would it surprise you to discover that the

CEO of an international organization was a 97-year-old man? What if you also learned that he still traveled the world giving speeches, training leaders, meeting with government officials, and being interviewed by major media organizations at this advanced age? What if his two top VPs were very active 79- and 87-year-olds? And yet that was exactly the situation toward the end of the administration of President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) as President of the Church. It seems likely that an early schedule, while not the only contributor, is among the factors leading to the longevity of our Church leaders.

Former Brigham Young University president Ernest L. Wilkinson suggested that keeping an early schedule is associated with health benefits. Referring to President David O. McKay (1873–1970), President of the Church at the time, he said: “One of the great reasons, I am sure, why President McKay has lived to such a good, ripe, and vigorous old age has been the fact that as a young man he developed habits of retiring to bed early, arising early, generally before sun up, when his mind was clear and his body vigorous, to do the day’s work.”⁵

Connections have also been made between keeping an early schedule and mental and emotional health. Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “To those who feel defeated and downtrodden, look to the early hours of the day for your rescue.”⁶

Wisdom

The connection between sleep patterns and wisdom is not just a theory. A study conducted by researchers at Brigham Young University states: “Students who habitually go to bed late and sleep late the next day have lower grade point averages (GPAs) than students with early-to-bed and early-to-rise sleeping habits. The later students slept in the morning, the lower their grades tended to



be. Out of all the factors studied, weekday and weekend wakeup times had the strongest association with students' GPAs. Each hour over the average that students slept in on weekdays was associated with a 0.13-point drop on the GPA (0.0–4.0 scale).⁷

Not long ago I surveyed 203 Latter-day Saint college students about their sleep patterns. On average these students awoke at 7:30 a.m. on school days and 9:15 a.m. on weekends. Their average bedtime was midnight on school nights and 1:00 a.m. on weekends. These students are going directly against the research connecting an early schedule with knowledge acquisition. Perhaps the finding that a higher GPA is the result of an early schedule is too simple to believe. Have we become like the children of Israel, who refused to follow the Lord's antidote for snakebites "because of the simpleness of the way"? (1 Nephi 17:41; see also Helaman 8:14–15).

Consider the counsel President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, gave related to gaining wisdom: "I counsel our children to do their critical studying in the early hours of the morning when they're fresh and alert, rather than to fight physical weariness and mental exhaustion at night. I've learned the power of the dictum, 'Early to bed, early to rise.'⁸ Perhaps this is one reason full-time missionaries follow an early-to-bed and early-to-rise schedule.

Other Blessings

Writing with his wife, Barbara, Elder Joe J. Christensen, emeritus member of the Seventy, suggested even more blessings to those who follow the Lord's counsel on sleep: "There must be an excellent reason for the injunction to retire and arise early [see D&C 88:124]. . . . The world is a more beautiful place early in the morning. Life is so much more calm. Much more can be accomplished in a shorter

amount of time."⁹ During a fireside address at Brigham Young University, Elder Christensen further stated: "Some of you are not getting the rest that you need. Some are habituated to going to bed late and sleeping much longer than your system really needs, thus missing out on some of the personal inspiration you could be receiving."¹⁰

President Hinckley added another promise to the obedient: "If you go to bed at 10:00 and get up by 6:00 a.m., things will work out for you."¹¹

Following the Lord's counsel on sleep may seem like a small thing, yet "by small means the Lord can bring about great things" (1 Nephi 16:29). I have a testimony that following an early schedule brings many blessings into our lives, including revelation. It's amazing how much more I get accomplished in a day when I retire early and arise early. The benefits of this self-discipline far exceed the effort required. When we win the first battle of the day against the mattress, we are far more likely to win more battles during the day. We are also more likely to be filled with life and energy. ■

The author lives in Texas, USA.

NOTES

1. See Joe J. Christensen, *To Grow in Spirit: A Ten-Point Plan for Becoming More Spiritual* (1989), 27–28.
2. Aristotle, in *Wisdom of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle*, ed. N. B. Sen (1967), 100.
3. *Selections from the Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. U. Waldo Cutler (1905), 16.
4. See *Forbes* magazine, "Emerging Culture, Worldwide Success," Oct. 25, 2012.
5. Ernest L. Wilkinson, *Lifting One's Sights*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year (Oct. 1, 1963), 4.
6. Russell M. Nelson, "Joy Cometh in the Morning," *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 70.
7. *Journal of American College Health* 49 (2000): 125–30.
8. Boyd K. Packer, *Teach Ye Diligently* (1975), 205.
9. Joe J. and Barbara K. Christensen, *Making Your Home a Missionary Training Center* (1985), 33.
10. Joe J. Christensen, "Resolutions" (Brigham Young University fireside, Jan. 9, 1994), 5, speeches.byu.edu.
11. Gordon B. Hinckley, in Sheri L. Dew, *Go Forward with Faith: The Biography of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1996), 166–67.

Pillars of Strength in Hungary

By McKelle George

Hungarian young adult Krisztian Eszther* says the gospel strengthens her faith—not only in God but also in an optimistic and fulfilling life. “Hungarians tend to think of our dark past instead of our bright future,” she says. The past Eszther refers to is a period of time in Hungary’s history (1949–56) when the words of the national anthem—*Isten, áldd meg a magyart*, which means “God bless the Hungarians”—were never sung.

The Gospel Comes to Hungary

Hungary officially recognized the Church in 1988, one year after Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles gave a dedicatory prayer atop Mt. Gellért, overlooking Budapest. In 1990 a mission was opened in Budapest, in a country emerging from 40 years without religious freedom. Now God’s influence is strong, particularly in the hearts of its Latter-day Saint young adults.

Institute Outreach Centers

Outreach centers are a big part of helping young adults in Central and Eastern Europe. The night before Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles visited Central Europe, he awoke to a powerful revelation. He felt that the strength of the Church in that part of the world would be among the young adults. Now outreach centers are a welcoming place where young adults can find classes, activities, and friends with the same beliefs. “Here we can have fun without worrying about having our standards challenged,” Eszther says.

Eszther met the missionaries in her hometown of Újfehértó and attended their free weekly English class. Soon the missionaries invited her to branch activities. “From the beginning I attended every game night, family home evening, and dance,” she says. “I was baptized three weeks before I turned 18. Now I know I’m a daughter of God, and Heavenly Father would never leave His daughter alone.”

Hungary has been ravaged by war and oppression, but the young single adults of the Church are filled with hope.

Young Adult Activities

Eszther still goes to young adult activities in her branch in Nyíregyháza. There are no young adult wards or branches yet in Hungary, but “we still get together,” Eszther says. “We’ve gone to the Flower Festival, a frog festival, and the zoo.”

As Elder Perry predicted, the young adult members in Hungary offer a source of light to all. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

** In Hungary, family names come before given names.*

MORE ABOUT ESZTHER***What is dating like in Hungary?***

Young adult members create occasions to meet each other, but it's hard because they could live on two different sides of the country.

How often do you go to the temple?

I'm one of the luckiest members because I can visit the Freiberg Germany Temple once a year.

Is education important in Hungary?

Yes, but it was hard to believe because my parents have several diplomas and our family still struggled. Now I see the advantages, and I started college in January 2014.

HUNGARY BY THE NUMBERS

9,877,365 people (as of 2014)

35,919 square miles (93,030 km²)
of land

Known for its thermal springs, Hungary
has 450 public baths

14 vowels in the Hungarian language

THE CHURCH IN HUNGARY

5,050 Latter-day Saints

22 wards and branches

1 stake (formed in 2006)

6 family history centers

1 mission (Budapest)

FACTS ABOUT HUNGARY

Capital: Budapest

Language: Hungarian (*Magyar*)



Jesus Christ—Our Prince of Peace

Peace can come to all who earnestly seek the Prince of Peace.



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

Focusing on the Lord and everlasting life can help us through all the challenges of mortality. Imperfect people share planet earth with other imperfect people. Ours is a fallen world marred by excessive debt, wars, natural disasters, disease, and death.

Personal challenges come. Whatever may cause the worry, each of us yearns to find inner peace.

My message pertains to the only source of true and lasting peace, Jesus the Christ—our Prince of Peace.¹

Jesus said, “Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”²

He can bring peace to those whose lives have been ravaged by war. Families disrupted by military duty bear memories of war, which in my mind were embedded during the Korean War.

Wars of our present era are more sophisticated but are still as wrenching to families. Those who so suffer can turn to the Lord. His

is the consoling message of peace on earth and good will among men.³

Peace can come to those who are not feeling well. Some bodies are wounded. Others ache spiritually because of missing loved ones or other emotional trauma. Brothers and sisters, peace can come to your soul as you build faith in the Prince of Peace.

“Have ye any that are sick among you? Bring them hither. Have ye any that are lame, or blind, or halt, or maimed, . . . or that are afflicted in any manner? Bring them hither and I will heal them.”⁴

“I see that your faith is sufficient that I should heal you.”⁵

Peace can come to one who suffers in sorrow. Whether sorrow stems from a mistake or a sin, all the Lord requires is real repentance. Scripture pleads with us to “flee [from] youthful lusts: . . . [and] call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”⁶ Then His soothing “balm in Gilead” can heal even a sin-sick soul.⁷

Think of the change in John Newton, born in London in 1725. He repented from his

sinful life as a slave trader to become an Anglican clergyman. With that mighty change of heart, John wrote words to the hymn “Amazing Grace.”

*Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.*⁸

“Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.”⁹

Peace can come to those whose labors are heavy:

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

“For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”¹⁰

Peace can come to those who mourn. The Lord said, “Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.”¹¹ As we endure the passing of a loved one, we can be filled with the peace of the Lord through the whisperings of the Spirit.

“Those that die in me shall not taste of death, for it shall be sweet unto them.”¹²

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”¹³

“I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

“And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.”¹⁴



Peace can come to all who earnestly seek the Prince of Peace. His is the sweet and saving message our missionaries take throughout the world. They preach the gospel of Jesus Christ as restored by Him through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Missionaries teach these life-changing words of the Lord: “If ye love me, keep my commandments.”¹⁵

Peace can come to all who choose to walk in the ways of the Master. His invitation is expressed in three loving words: “Come, follow me.”¹⁶

We’ll sing all hail to the Prince of Peace,¹⁷ for He will come again. Then “the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.”¹⁸ As the millennial Messiah, He will reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.¹⁹

As we follow Jesus Christ, He will lead us to live with Him and our Heavenly Father, with our families. Through our many challenges of mortality, if we remain faithful to covenants made, if we endure to the end, we will qualify for that greatest of all the gifts of God, eternal life.²⁰ In His holy presence, our families can be together forever.

God bless you, my dear brothers and sisters. May you and your loved ones enjoy forever all the blessings of our Lord—our Prince of Peace. ■

From a 2013 Christmas Devotional address.

NOTES

1. See Isaiah 9:6; 2 Nephi 19:6.
2. Matthew 19:14.
3. See Luke 2:14.
4. 3 Nephi 17:7.
5. 3 Nephi 17:8; see also Matthew 13:15; 3 Nephi 18:32; Doctrine and Covenants 112:13.
6. 2 Timothy 2:22; see also 3 Nephi 9:13.
7. See Jeremiah 8:22; see also “Did You Think to Pray?” *Hymns*, no. 140; “There Is a Balm in Gilead,” *Recreational Songs* (1949), 130.
8. “Amazing Grace,” *Olney Hymns* (1779), no. 41; see also John 9:25.
9. Luke 15:7; see also verse 10.
10. Matthew 11:28–30.
11. Matthew 5:4; see also 3 Nephi 12:4; Doctrine and Covenants 101:14.
12. Doctrine and Covenants 42:46.
13. John 14:27.
14. John 11:25–26.
15. John 14:15.
16. Luke 18:22.
17. See “We’ll Sing All Hail to Jesus’ Name,” *Hymns*, no. 182.
18. Isaiah 40:5.
19. See Revelation 19:16.
20. See Doctrine and Covenants 14:7.



DETAIL FROM WOMAN TOUCHING THE HEM OF SAVIOR'S GARMENT, BY JUDITH A. MEHR

TO THE POINT



As a **14-year-old** teacher, what can I really **contribute** to **home teaching?**

According to the scriptures, the purpose of home teachers is to “visit the house of each member, exhorting them to pray vocally and in secret and attend to all family duties” (D&C 20:51). Home teachers “watch over . . . and be with and strengthen” the people they are assigned to teach (D&C 20:53). They “warn, expound, exhort, and teach, and invite all to come unto Christ” (D&C 20:59).

Now ask yourself, “Can I do those things?” The answer is yes. Ask your companion how you can contribute. He can help you learn to make appointments, bear testimony, give lessons, and more. Then you can see for yourself how you can bless the lives of those you visit, and you’ll feel confident about using the gifts God has given you to fulfill this and many other priesthood duties throughout your life. ■

Why must I forgive someone who is **responsible** for causing me **pain**?

The commandment to forgive all people is one that many of us struggle with. But the Lord has said that we must forgive them or we’re committing the greater sin (see D&C 64:9–11). That may not

make much sense to us at first, but the Lord is trying to help us become more like Him and find greater joy. If we cast our burden on Him and let go of anger, bitterness, and hurt, we will obtain peace in this life and

great blessings in the eternities. It may take time, tears, fasting, prayer, counseling with priesthood leaders, and visits to the temple, but it will be worth it.

As President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has taught:

“We must let go of our grievances. Part of the purpose of mortality is to learn how to let go of such things. *That is the Lord’s way.*

“Remember, heaven is

filled with those who have this in common: They are forgiven. And they forgive” (“The Merciful Obtain Mercy,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2012, 77). ■

For more on forgiving others, see Gordon B. Hinckley, “Forgiveness,” Ensign or Liahona, Nov. 2005, 81–84; James E. Faust, “The Healing Power of Forgiveness,” Ensign or Liahona, May 2007, 67–69.



SUNDAY LESSONS

This Month's Topic:
**Ordinances and
Covenants**

READY TO RECEIVE THE **MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD?**

*"All those who receive the priesthood,
receive this oath and covenant of
my Father, which he cannot break"
(D&C 84:40).*

Unlike the Aaronic Priesthood, which is received without an oath, the Melchizedek Priesthood is received with an oath made by Heavenly Father and with a covenant made between you and Him. The following ideas will help you understand key phrases in Doctrine and Covenants 84:33–44, where the Lord revealed the oath and covenant of the priesthood.

WHAT IS THE OATH MADE BY OUR HEAVENLY FATHER?

“Rising to the possibilities of the oath and covenant brings the greatest of all the gifts of God: eternal life. That is a purpose of the Melchizedek Priesthood. Through keeping the covenants as we receive the priesthood and renewing them in the temple ceremonies, we are promised by an oath made by our Heavenly Father, Elohim, that we will gain the fulness of His glory and live as He lives.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Faith and the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood,” Ensign or Liahona, May 2008, 61.

WHAT IS YOUR PART IN THE COVENANT?

“The covenant on man’s part is that he will magnify his calling in the priesthood [see D&C 84:33], and that he will live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God, and that he will keep the commandments.”

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972), “Magnifying Our Callings in the Priesthood,” in Conference Report, Apr. 1970, 59.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE YOUR BODY RENEWED?

“I have seen that promise fulfilled in my own life and in the lives of others. A friend of mine served as a mission president. He told me that at the end of every day while he was serving, he could barely make it upstairs to bed at night wondering if he would have the strength to face another day. Then in the morning, he would find his strength and his courage restored. You have seen it in the lives of aged prophets who seemed to be renewed each time they stood to testify of the Lord Jesus Christ and the restored gospel. That is a promise for those who go forward in faith in their priesthood service.”

President Henry B. Eyring, “Faith and the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood,” Ensign or Liahona, May 2008, 62.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO RECEIVE THE LORD?

“Men who worthily receive the priesthood receive the Lord Jesus Christ, and those who receive the Lord receive God the Father. And those who receive the Father receive all that He has. Incredible blessings flow from this oath and covenant to worthy men, women, and children in all the world.”

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Covenants,” Ensign or Liahona, Nov. 2011, 88.

Scripture Chain: Receiving the Lord

Receiving the priesthood is one way to receive the Lord. Read these verses to learn two more: John 13:20 and Doctrine and Covenants 112:20.

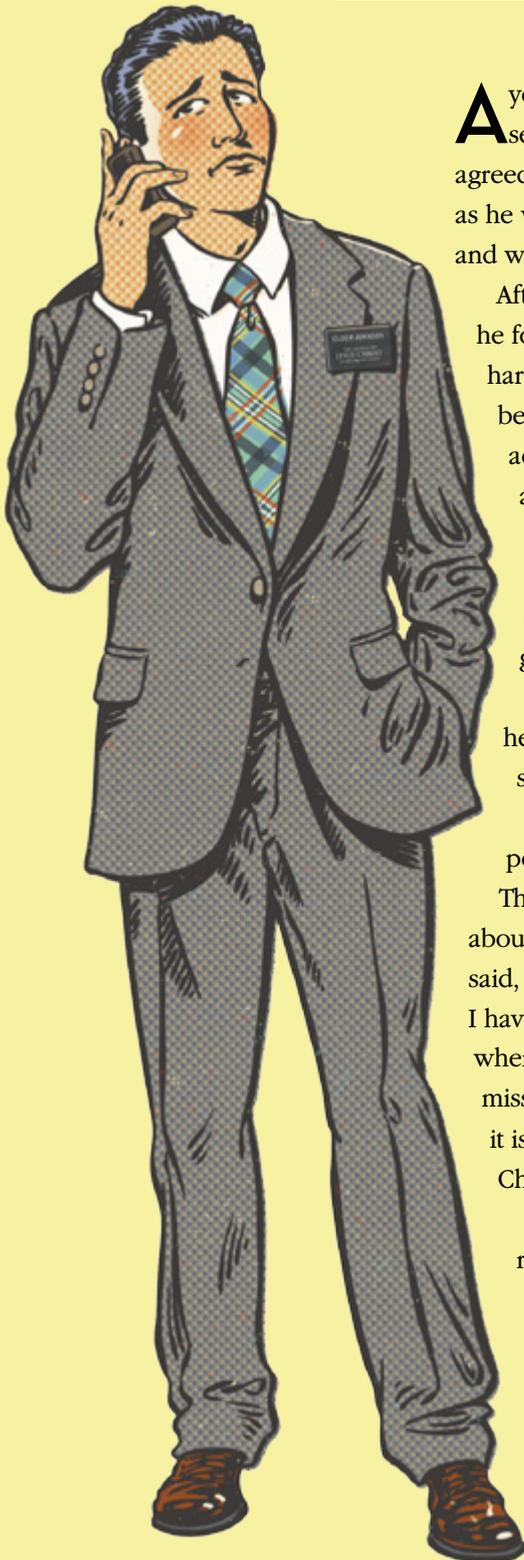


CAN YOUNG WOMEN RECEIVE THESE BLESSINGS TOO?

“The blessings of the priesthood are not confined to men alone. These blessings are also poured out upon our wives and daughters and upon all the faithful women of the Church. These good sisters can prepare themselves, by keeping the commandments and by serving in the Church, for the blessings of the house of the Lord. The Lord offers to his daughters every spiritual gift and blessing that can be obtained by his sons.”

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972), “Magnifying Our Callings in the Priesthood,” in Conference Report, Apr. 1970, 59.

RECEIVING ALL THE FATHER HAS: A MODERN PARABLE



A young man was preparing to serve a mission. His parents agreed to pay for his mission as long as he would keep the mission rules and work hard. He agreed.

After entering the mission field, he found missionary work much harder than he thought it would be. Learning a new language, adjusting to a different culture, and facing rejection discouraged him. His companion and mission president tried to encourage him, but he still felt like giving up.

He told his mission president he wanted to go home. His mission president called the young man's father and gave him permission to call his son.

The missionary told his father about his discouragement. His father said, "For years your mother and I have looked forward to the day when you would serve a full-time mission. We know how important it is to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ to those who don't have it."

The son replied, "Dad, I didn't realize that a mission meant so much to you."

"It means everything to me," the father declared. "All my life I have worked, built up my business, and saved with one person in mind: you. My goal has been to provide you an abundant inheritance."

"But, Dad," the son interjected, "that doesn't change the fact that I don't enjoy . . ."

The father interrupted, "How can I trust my business to your care if you can't prove yourself by serving the Lord for two short years?"

There was a pause as the son pondered the father's question.

Then the father said, "My son, if you will be faithful in this calling and prove yourself worthy, all that I possess will be yours."

Touched by this promise, the son courageously told his father, "I will stay."

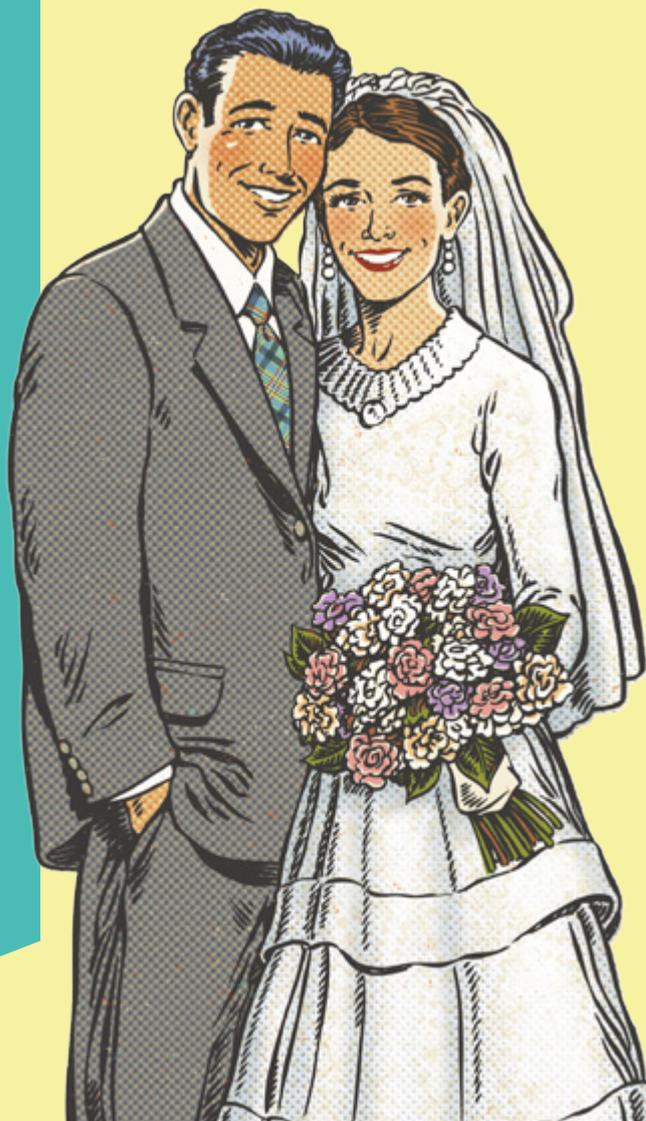
The son did stay, and he served faithfully. He followed the mission rules and worked hard. And yes, sometime after his mission, he received from his father the promised inheritance, even all that his father had to share.

From Elder Carlos E. Asay (1926–1999) of the Seventy, "The Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood," Ensign, Nov. 1985, 45.

BLESSINGS I RECEIVE THROUGH THE PRIESTHOOD

As I live righteously as a daughter of God, I can receive many blessings through His priesthood. I can be a member of Jesus Christ's Church, which was restored through the priesthood. I can partake of the sacrament that was blessed by the priesthood power of Jesus Christ to renew my covenants and help me repent more fully. I receive personal direction from Heavenly Father through priesthood blessings. I can be set apart under the direction of someone holding priesthood keys and be given authority to act in callings. I can use that authority to bless the lives of others. I can make more covenants with Heavenly Father through priesthood power found in temples. I can marry a worthy priesthood holder in the temple, and together we can raise a family in righteousness. With my eternal family, I can receive all that my Heavenly Father has (see D&C 84:38).

Melissa Hart, Utah, USA



JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Things to Ponder for Sunday

- How do you think keeping your covenants prepares you to receive all the Father has?
- What do you think is the difference between “obtaining” the priesthood (D&C 84:33) and “receiving” the priesthood (see verse 35)?
- How can the teachings in Doctrine and Covenants 98:11-12 help you “live by every word ... of God” (D&C 84:44)?

Things You Might Do

- Seek to be worthy of the Holy Ghost. Inspiration will help you better understand the doctrine of the priesthood.
- Memorize the oath and covenant of the priesthood, found in Doctrine and Covenants 84:33-44.
- Prayerfully study additional scriptures about the priesthood, such as Alma 13 and Doctrine and Covenants 13; 20; 107; 121.



**By Elder
Kent F. Richards**
Of the Seventy and
Executive Director
of the Temple
Department

PREPARING TO ENTER THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

*Smile when you think of the temple.
It is a place of power and blessing.*

At a temple open house, I noticed some girls file behind their parents through the temple. They smiled as they found their reflections in brides' room mirrors. "Remember," their grandmother whispered, "how special you are and how much Heavenly Father loves you." Each girl imagined the time when she would return to the temple as a woman of faith, with maturing loveliness and capacity, ready to fulfill her mission on the earth. Boys who attended the open house also had glimpses of their future blessings and responsibilities.

What these children felt in the temple was right. Heavenly Father wants to bless you. His greatest blessings come as you enter the temple to receive sacred ordinances and to make and keep sacred covenants. You are responsible to prepare and be ready.

The temple is important in your life, especially when you're young: "The young man needs his place in

the temple even more than his father and his grandfather, who are steadied by a life of experience; and the young girl just entering life, needs the spirit, influence and direction that come from participation in the temple ordinances."¹ Begin now to prepare your heart and mind to be able to fully *receive* and *understand* these blessings (see Matthew 13:23; Mark 4:20).

Receiving the Fulness of the Gospel

If you will prepare yourself to enter the temple, you will be "*ready* to receive the fulness of [His] gospel" in the temple (D&C 35:12; emphasis added). The temple is a place of power and blessing. The Lord instructed the Prophet Joseph Smith and the early Saints to gather to Kirtland, Ohio, USA, where they would eventually build a temple. "There you shall be *endowed with power* from on high" (D&C 38:32; emphasis added).

At a recent temple open house, an Apostle gathered his family around

the holy altar in a sealing room. He taught them that everything we do in the Church—classes, activities, programs, and meetings—prepares us to come to the temple altar to receive the sealing ordinance. The temple represents the very essence of your Heavenly Father's plan for your eternal happiness and progression.

Preparing to Make Covenants with God

Your preparation to enter the temple and make covenants doesn't happen quickly. It began with your baptism and the confirming gift of the Holy Ghost and then grows with prayer, scripture study, obedience, and service. It invites cleanliness weekly as you participate in the sacrament. It happens as you learn to seek forgiveness through repentance, as you keep standards, and as you worthily carry a limited-use temple recommend. Youth programs will help you, but your preparation is personal; you are developing *your* worthiness,



KEY POINTS

- In the temple you receive ordinances essential to your salvation.
- You must enter the temple clean and pure, free from any unforgiven transgression.
- As in the scriptures, many of the teachings and ordinances in the temple are symbolic, allowing you to learn more and more each time you return to the temple.

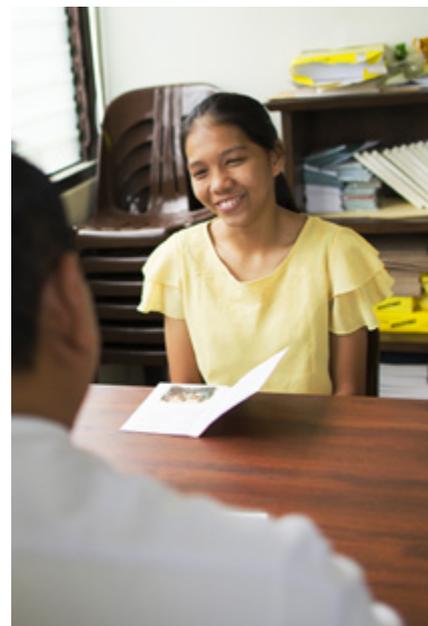
your testimony, *your* conversion. The Savior's Atonement applies to you personally.

As you increase your level of spiritual maturity, you will desire to prepare for and enter the temple. There you will receive ordinances and make covenants, which are necessary steps to draw closer to your Heavenly Father. Temple ordinances are "the most exalted . . . ordinances that have been revealed to mankind."²

As you receive temple ordinances, you make solemn covenants with your Father only one time for yourself, and then you will strive to abide by them throughout your life. Each time you enter the temple, you can feel of His Spirit and receive additional revelation and understanding while providing the necessary ordinances for others. You will understand and receive assurance of your eternal existence and the unending power of your covenants. If we were not eternal beings, the temple would have no significance. You enter the temple and make covenants *because* you will exist eternally and want to be with your Heavenly Father and your family in "never-ending happiness" (Mosiah 2:41). This assurance grows in your own soul and is confirmed by the Holy Ghost.

Being Worthy

The role of the Holy Ghost is real. He teaches you, purifies you, and conveys the Father's love (see Romans



5:5). The Holy Spirit of Promise is the ratifying power of the Holy Ghost, which validates each covenant eternally.

In order to receive the Spirit, you must enter the temple clean and pure, free from any unforgiven transgression. If the adversary could succeed in any way to overcome you, it would be to keep you from the temple or to entice you to go there unworthily.

For this reason, you will be invited to sit in a personal interview with your bishop or branch president, to consider your worthiness and readiness to receive a recommend to enter the temple. Be honest and trust him to help you. In reality, you are determining your own standing before the Lord (see D&C 109:24). You will sign your own recommend first. You are witnessing your worthiness before the Lord.³

To be worthy does not mean you are perfect yet. It means that your heart is right, that you are living the commandments, and that you desire to be better each day.

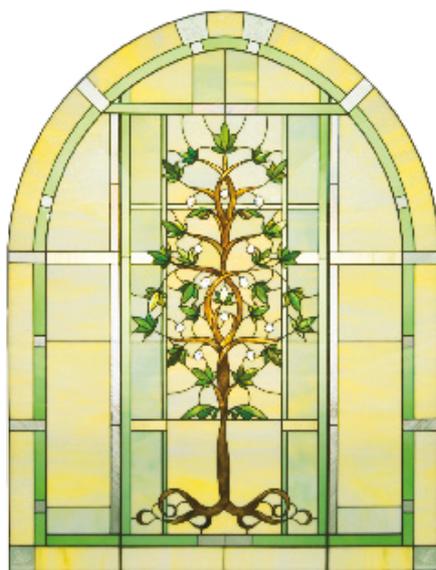
Learning from Symbols

In the temple, as in the scriptures, the Lord teaches using symbols. You can find many symbols in the scriptures, such as the rock, the seed, the fruit, the tree of life, and the bread and water of the sacrament (see, for example, 1 Nephi 11; Alma 32; Helaman 5:12). Baptism by immersion symbolizes new life, rebirth, and cleanliness (see Romans 6:3–5). In the temple we all wear white, symbolizing purity, holiness, light, and equality.

Some symbols in the temple are both physical and spiritual. For example, wearing the garment is a physical daily reminder of the temple covenants and the promised blessings. If respected and honored, the garment protects us from temptations and unrighteous influences.

Each of the temple ordinances is symbolic. “In a sacred ceremony, an individual may be washed and anointed,”⁴ reminiscent of the kings and priests of ancient Israel being prepared to take their positions (see 1 Samuel 10:1; 16:13). The instruction and covenants in the endowment signify being clothed or invested with additional power and promises from God (see Luke 24:49). Perhaps the most beautiful symbol is the sealing ordinance, in which a couple is united in an unbreakable bond which can last through all eternity.

The promises in the temple are rich and noble. They are the “great favors” and “great blessings” (3 Nephi 10:18)



that our Father has reserved for you personally. So smile when you think of the temple.

No matter your age, do whatever is necessary to be ready to receive the greatest blessings your Father in Heaven offers to you. Trust how it felt when you were a child and sang, “I love to see the temple. I’m going there someday. . . . I’ll prepare myself while I am young. This is my sacred duty.”⁵ It can be true for you. ■

NOTES

1. John A. Widtsoe, “Temple Worship,” *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, Apr. 1921, 91–92.
2. *Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple* (booklet, 2002), 1.
3. See Joshua 24:22, 27: “Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the Lord, to serve him. And they said, we are witnesses.” Then Joshua took a large stone and placed it beneath an oak, saying, “This stone [like our personal temple recommend] shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words.”
4. *Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple*, 1.
5. “I Love to See the Temple,” *Children’s Songbook*, 95.

WHY DO WE BUILD TEMPLES?

“We must gain some feeling for why we build temples, and why the ordinances are required of us. Thereafter we are continually instructed and enlightened on matters of spiritual importance. It comes line upon line, precept upon precept, until we gain a fullness of light and knowledge. This becomes a great protection to us—to each of us personally. . . .

“... No work is more spiritually refining. No work we do gives us more power. No work requires a higher standard of righteousness.

“Our labors in the temple cover us with a shield and a protection. . . .

“... If we will enter into our covenants without reservation or apology, the Lord will protect us. We will receive inspiration sufficient for the challenges of life. . . .

“So come to the temple—come and claim your blessings.”

Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple (booklet, 2002), 37.



Finding a Way to **FORGIVE**

By Bonnie Brown

We will all face a time when someone does something that hurts us. Sometimes it feels impossible to let go of the pain. But even when the offense is great, the Savior taught us to forgive all people. Forgiveness can be hard work, but by doing things that bring us closer to Christ, we can access the peace that forgiveness provides. Below, two young women share their experiences with forgiving others.

Forgiving a Friend

When Renee* moved to a new school in Belgium, she was happy to make new friends. Then one friend did something to make things difficult. Renee explains:

“My friend Nora created a Facebook account using another friend’s name, Kate. She started harassing people using that profile, and everyone accused Kate of being the bully. Nora even made fun of me at school, picking on my religion and

my personality. I tried to avoid these attacks but I couldn’t, so I started hanging out with other people.

“When Nora confessed about the fake profile, everyone was mad at her. Nora gave me a letter of apology, but I didn’t think I could forgive her. I was so angry.

“One day I was reading the scriptures, and I came across Doctrine and Covenants 64:9–10: ‘Wherefore, I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not

his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin. I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men.’

“Instantly I thought about Nora. I knew it wasn’t right for me to feel so angry. I prayed and asked Heavenly Father if He would help me forgive her. It wasn’t easy, but I still managed to do it. I started by sending her messages asking her about her day, and occasionally we talked at lunch. I learned that Nora’s father had died four years earlier. Her life was hard, and she thought everyone disliked her. I was glad I hadn’t stayed mad at her. Kate and some others didn’t understand how I could forgive Nora, but I knew that what I had done was right, and I knew that Heavenly Father was proud of me.”

Renee learned that God commands us to forgive all. By following that commandment, she gained compassion and understanding for Nora and was able to completely forgive.

Finding Peace in My Brother’s Death

When Janet’s brother was killed in a car accident caused by a drunk teenage driver and his passengers, she knew she needed to let go of the bitterness she felt, but she didn’t know how.

“It was hard to tell what pained me most—my anger toward these

mindless teenagers or my sincere yearning to have my brother back. I couldn’t bear to think of the huge void in my life. I remember praying fervently for what seemed like hours. All I wanted was to have Nathan back.

“I felt pity for the boys responsible for Nathan’s death because I knew that they felt a tremendous guilt. But I also felt anger and resentment. It was easy to blame them. I said in my mind that I forgave these young men, but anger still flooded my thoughts when I dwelt on the accident. I frequently asked myself, ‘How will I ever truly forgive these young men, and how will I know when I have?’

“It wasn’t until after hundreds of prayers, earnest fasts, and much studying and reflection that I finally felt I had truly forgiven them. I remember pondering one day. I thought, ‘I forgive them. How could I not? Everyone makes mistakes, and who am I to judge? I will never solve anything by holding on, so I am letting go.’ The feeling was amazing! I’d constantly yearned to know that I’d truly forgiven the young men, and in time it came. I cannot change what happened to Nathan, but I can choose to react with forgiveness and love rather than anger.”

Janet learned that truly forgiving can take time and effort. The Savior said, “Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you” (D&C 88:63). Janet drew closer to the Lord through fasting, prayer, scripture study, and

other efforts. As we do the same, we can let our anger and hurt be replaced with feelings of peace and forgiveness.

Filled with Love

Just like with Janet and Renee, forgiveness helps us feel compassion, understanding, and patience. As we forgive others, the Lord will fill us with His pure love and we will become more like Him. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

**Names have been changed.*



PURE LOVE

“The pure love of Christ can remove the scales of resentment and wrath from our eyes, allowing us to see others the way our Heavenly Father sees us: as flawed and imperfect mortals who have potential and worth far beyond our capacity to imagine. Because God loves us so much, we too must love and forgive each other.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “The Merciful Obtain Mercy,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2012, 76.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID STOKER

SCATTER SUNSHINE

A smile can do a world of good.
Brighten someone's day.

(See Matthew 5:14-16.)

MUSIC *in My Life*

I quit playing the piano because I was afraid of making a mistake. Now I had a chance to overcome my fear.

By Sabrina de Sousa Teixeira

My dream since childhood had been to play the piano. When I was 12, a beloved member of the Church taught me to play. Later I received a keyboard as a present from my father. However, the enchantment of playing began to diminish because I became nervous when trying to play in sacrament meeting. I made many mistakes, felt ashamed, and did not want to play anymore. I told myself that I would try it again only after I had practiced a lot and could play almost perfectly. But I became discouraged and ended up selling my keyboard and hiding this talent.

Years later, one Sunday there was no accompanist. The sister who played the piano in our ward had moved. When I saw the members singing without a piano or organ to accompany them, I felt the Spirit encourage me to talk to the bishop. I said, "Is it all right if I play?" He accepted.

After years of avoiding the piano, I conquered my fear of making

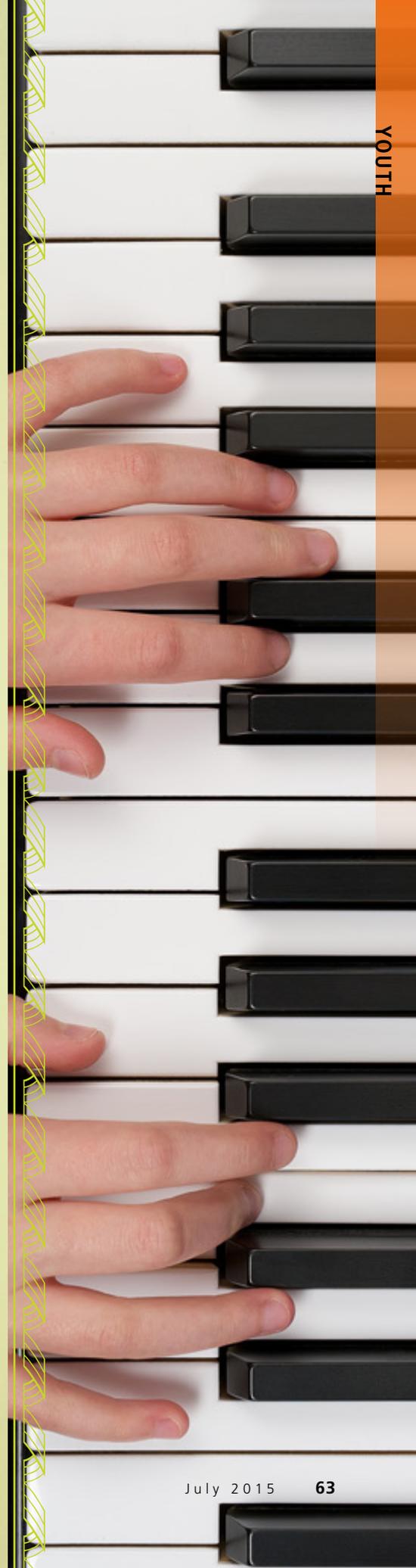
mistakes. To my surprise, I began to play as though there had not been much time since I stopped. I made mistakes on some notes but not many. That experience gave me the strength to suggest to my bishop that I would commit to play every Sunday.

I practice every week, and I have learned to love the piano again. Whenever I practice, I feel the Spirit strongly in my home. Sometimes when I play, my family members who are doing housework join in singing. We become one, singing the same hymn.

Many members of the ward have noticed my progress and congratulate me. I am grateful to contribute to the spirituality of my ward's meetings and grateful that I went back to a talent that I had left behind.

I have learned to appreciate piano music; the calmness it brings is marvelous. I hope that in heaven we will hear this style of music, and who knows, I might be there playing in the celestial choirs! ■

The author lives in Brazil.





By Elder
Juan A. Uceda
Of the Seventy

I Talked to God as a Friend

“Pray, He is there; speak, He is list’ning”
(Children’s Songbook, 12).

When I was young, I was very shy, and it was hard for me to make friends. I prayed a lot to God about overcoming my fears and my shyness. I prayed to Him as a friend. Nobody taught me how to do it—I just really needed to talk to someone. I didn’t have friends, so I found one by talking to Him.

Then I met the missionaries. They gave me a Book of Mormon, and I started to read it. When I read 3 Nephi 17, I was truly impressed by the way Jesus took the little children and prayed for them. I knew that this was the right way to pray.

I decided to read all the scriptures about Jesus Christ praying. In Luke 3:21, after John baptized Him, Jesus prayed to Heavenly Father and the heavens were opened. When I read that, I knew that I





wanted to pray in a way that would open the heavens too.

Sometimes I feel tired and don't feel like praying. But then I remember how Jesus prayed. I try to be honest and sincere in my prayer so that the heavens will be opened for me too.

Sometimes my prayers are short because I can't find the words to express myself well. I just have a bunch of feelings inside, and I say, "Thou know what I'm trying to say. Please just help me."

Sometimes when I pray to bless the food, I remember that even in that small prayer, the heavens can be opened. I try to forget about the world and connect with Heavenly Father. And in a very humble way, I say things that come from my heart.

When I feel peace and comfort, I know that the heavens are open to me.

After the missionaries taught my family about the gospel, my mother, sister, and I were baptized. But my father, my brother, and my other sister didn't join the Church. I really wanted my father to be a member of the Church. I fasted, and every day I prayed for my father to accept the gospel and be baptized.

I knew that I needed to pray for my father, but I also knew I needed to wait for God's answer. Sometimes He says, "No, not yet." Eventually my

father did listen and understand, and he was baptized.

If your mother or father isn't a member of the Church yet, talk to your friend—your Father in Heaven. Ask for Him to touch your mother or father's heart. Talk to Him humbly and honestly, in a sincere way. But then relax. He is in command. He knows how to do things. He knows your father and mother better than you do. He knows how to reach them.

Don't worry. You have a friend. Pray with your heart, and Heavenly Father will listen to you. The heavens will be opened. He knows you, and He will bless you. ■

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

What if someone in your family isn't a member of the Church? Or what if your family hasn't been sealed in the temple? Here are five things Elder Uceda did that you can do too:

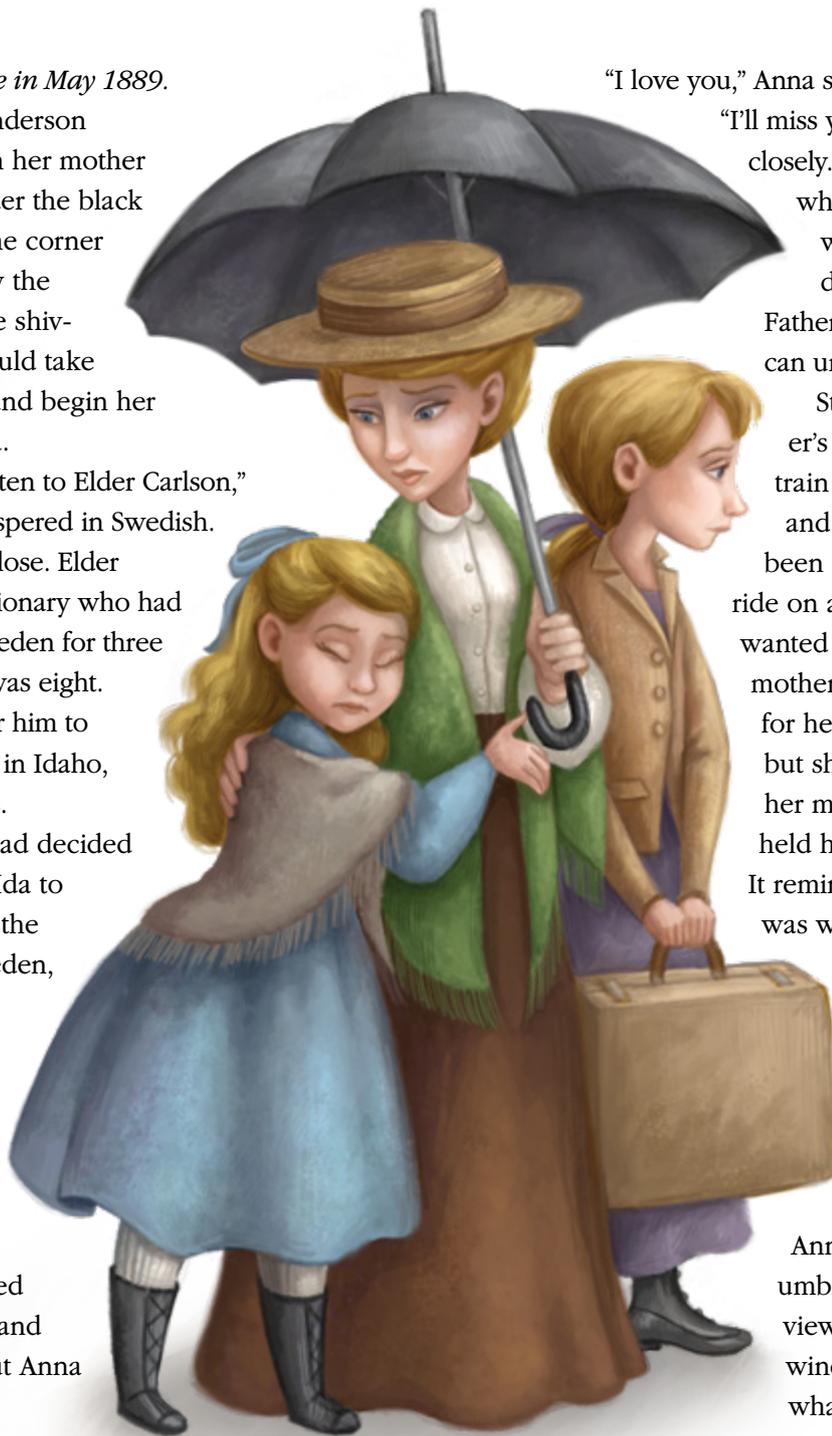
1. Talk to Heavenly Father in prayer. He is your friend.
2. Pray for your family.
3. Trust Heavenly Father. He knows your family, and He knows how to help them.
4. Relax and don't worry. Heavenly Father is in command.
5. Know that Heavenly Father knows you and He will bless you.

This story took place in May 1889.

Anna Matilda Anderson huddled with her mother and sister, Ida, under the black umbrella. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw the train approach. She shivered. This train would take her from Sweden and begin her journey to America.

“Be good and listen to Elder Carlson,” Anna’s mother whispered in Swedish. She held the girls close. Elder Carlson was a missionary who had been serving in Sweden for three years, since Anna was eight. Now it was time for him to return to his family in Idaho, in the United States.

When Mamma had decided to send Anna and Ida to America to escape the persecution in Sweden, Elder Carlson had offered to watch over them. Now he stood by the train. He motioned for the two girls to join him. Ida hugged her mother tightly and moved forward, but Anna stayed behind.



“I love you,” Anna said. “I’ll miss you.”

“I’ll miss you too. Now listen closely. If you come to a place where you can’t understand what the people are saying, don’t forget to pray to your Father in Heaven because *He* can understand you.”

Still thinking of her mother’s words, Anna got on the train and settled next to Ida and Elder Carlson. She had been excited about her first ride on a train, but now she only wanted one last glimpse of her mother. The train was too tall for her to see people’s faces, but she smiled when she saw her mother’s black umbrella held high above the crowd. It reminded her that Mamma was watching.

With a great bellow of smoke, the train lurched forward. At first it moved so slowly that Mamma ran beside the train. The black umbrella waved at Anna. But soon the black umbrella disappeared from view. Anna leaned against the windowpane and wondered what lay in store.

Anna’s Journey

By Jessica Larsen
Based on a true story



Several weeks later, Anna leaned against the window-pane of another train. This one was taking her to Salt Lake City, Utah. “America looks different than Sweden, *ja?*” she said to Ida.

“*Ja,*” Ida whispered back in Swedish. “But America is home now, and if we work hard enough, we can bring Mamma here too.”

There had not been enough money for Mamma to buy her own ticket. A family in Ogden, Utah, had paid for Ida’s passage to America. Ida would stay with them on their farm and work to repay them. But Anna would be staying with her aunt in Salt Lake City. Anna’s aunt had come to Utah several years earlier, and Mamma had written to tell her that Anna was coming.

After the train, they had taken a boat over the North Sea to Denmark. Then they sailed to England and

Ireland before crossing the Atlantic Ocean and landing in New York City. Anna had been seasick for most of the 15-day journey. She had been relieved to board a train in New York headed to Utah.

“Ogden, Utah!” the conductor called. Anna still knew no English, but she recognized the name of the city. Her heart sank. It sank even further when Elder Carlson stood and picked up his and Ida’s bags.

“Do you have to go?” she asked her sister.

“Yes,” Ida said gently. “Don’t worry, Auntie will be there when you get to Salt Lake City.”

Anna watched as Ida and Elder Carlson met his family at the station. They would take Ida in a covered wagon to her new home on the farm and then travel on to Idaho. Now Anna felt truly alone.



The train rumbled through the night until it shuddered to a halt at the station in Salt Lake City. It was nearly midnight. Anna grabbed her bag and leapt down onto the platform. Her tired eyes searched for her aunt.

But there was no one waiting for her.

Fear slid over Anna. She scanned the platform again, hoping she had missed something. Her eyes lingered on the shadows. She tried to make out people's features in the flickering gaslights. But her aunt was not there.

Strangers walked up to her and asked her questions. Anna thought they wanted to help, but she could not understand what they were saying.

She had never felt so scared in her life. Not when her classmates in Sweden had mocked her new faith. Not when she had been sick on the boat to New York. And not even when she had said good-bye to Mamma.

Anna closed her eyes and thought back to her mother's words: "Don't forget to pray to your Father in Heaven because *He* can understand you."

Anna knelt on the platform next to her suitcase and prayed harder than she had ever prayed in her life. She prayed that Heavenly Father would send her someone who spoke Swedish and could understand her.

When she finished the prayer, she looked up. There was still no one waiting for her. But then she saw a German family she recognized from the train ride. The mother motioned for her to follow them. Still crying, Anna grabbed her bag and shuffled after them.

She followed them to the south gate of the Temple Square block. She looked at the spot where the beautiful new temple had been built. Then suddenly Anna heard rapid footsteps nearby. A woman was hurrying

toward them, looking closely at all the arriving immigrants. The woman's gaze passed over the German family. Then she paused on Anna. When Anna looked up, the woman stopped and stared. Anna stared back, hope rising in her.

Anna knew her! It was her Sunday School teacher who had gone to Utah only a year before! She knew her!

The teacher pulled Anna tightly into her arms. She wiped away Anna's tears and whispered in Swedish, "I was awakened over and over again. Images of the arriving immigrants raced through my mind. I could not go back to sleep. I was prompted to come to the temple to see if there was anyone I knew here." She took Anna's hand and led her down the street. "Now come with me."

Later Anna learned that her aunt and uncle had moved from Salt Lake and had not received her mother's letter. Her teacher sent word to them, and they came to pick up Anna four days later. Eventually Ida and Anna were able to bring Mamma to America too.

But for now, none of that mattered. As Anna walked to her teacher's home, she thought, "Heavenly Father *more* than answered my prayer. I only asked for someone who could understand me, and He sent someone I *knew*." ■

The author lives in Arizona, USA.

FIND YOUR FAMILY HEROES

.....
Ask your parents or grandparents to tell you stories about your family. You just might discover a hero from your family's past!



Heavenly Father Answers My Prayers



By George R., age 9, New Mexico, USA

There have been many times that Heavenly Father has heard and answered my prayers. My first memory of this happening was when I was four. I had lost the blocks I wanted to play with. So I went to my room and knelt down to pray. I asked Heavenly Father to help me find my toys. My prayer was immediately answered—I found the blocks in the next room.

One of the most important times I had a prayer answered was with my whole family. A few months after my cousin Christian finished his mission, he was driving late at night on a mountain canyon road. He and another car crashed into each other.

The other driver was fine, but my cousin was taken to the hospital by helicopter.

Christian had serious injuries all over his whole body. He went into a coma, and the doctors didn't think he would wake up. Our family decided to fast. My parents, sisters, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and all my cousins took turns fasting for Christian. I fasted on a school day. I had to explain to my teacher and classmates why I wasn't eating lunch that day. I really didn't mind going without food for a day because I was fasting for my cousin.

Heavenly Father answered our prayers, and Christian eventually woke up from his coma. He still doesn't have his full abilities back, but he has made some progress. I know Christian has a long recovery ahead of him. We still pray for him. Anything is possible with Heavenly Father's help. ■

QUESTION FOR YOU

What are things you need help with? Remember to talk with Heavenly Father!

Come, Follow Me

(Simplified)

Words by John Nicholson
Music by Samuel McBurney

Humbly ♩ = 69-76

System 1: Chords: C, F, C, F, C. Lyrics: 1. "Come, fol - low me," the Sav - ior said. 2. "Come, fol - low me," a sim - ple phrase, 3. Is it e - nough a - lone to know 4. Not on - ly shall we em - u - late

System 2: Chords: A7, Dm, G, C. Lyrics: Then let us in His foot - steps tread, Yet truth's sub - lime, ef - ful - gent rays That we must fol - low Him be - low, His course while in this earth - ly state,

System 3: Chords: Cm, Gm, D7, G. Lyrics: For thus a - lone can we be one Are in these sim - ple words com - bined While trav - 'ling thru this vale of tears? But when we're freed from pres - ent cares,

System 4: Chords: G7, C, D7, G7, C. Lyrics: With God's own loved, be - got - ten Son. To urge, in - spire the hu - man mind. No, this ex - tends to ho - lier spheres. If with our Lord we would be heirs.

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The Parable of the Talents

By Jean Bingham

Jesus told a story, or parable, about a man who lent some coins to three people who worked for him. Then the man went away. While he was gone, two of the people worked hard and used their coins to earn more coins to give back to the man. But one person just buried his coin because he was afraid of losing it. When the man came back, he gave rewards to those who increased the coins he lent them. But he took the coin away from the person who hadn't tried to increase it. (See Matthew 25:14–29.)

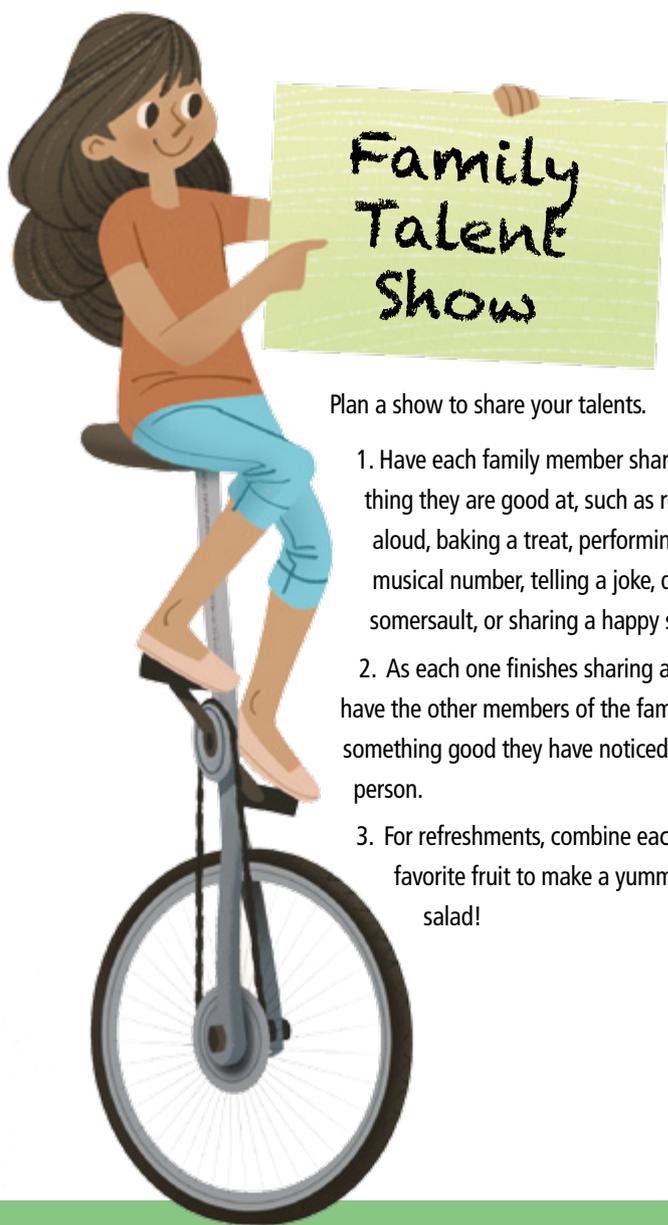
Like the man in the parable, Heavenly Father has given each of us something very valuable—not coins, but special abilities or talents, like singing, showing love, running, or helping others. Like the people in the parable, you have to work hard to make your talents grow!

How can you follow Jesus's teachings by using and improving your talents? You can feel happier and help others when you do. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

LEARN MORE

A talent is a special ability, like a talent for drawing. But in Jesus's time, the word *talent* meant an amount of money that was of great worth. How are these two types of talents alike?



Plan a show to share your talents.

1. Have each family member share something they are good at, such as reading aloud, baking a treat, performing a musical number, telling a joke, doing a somersault, or sharing a happy smile.
2. As each one finishes sharing a talent, have the other members of the family tell something good they have noticed about that person.
3. For refreshments, combine each person's favorite fruit to make a yummy fruit salad!



Place: _____

Day: _____

Time: _____

Bring a piece of fruit to help
make refreshments!

*You can print more invitations
at liahona.lds.org.*

FAMILY TALK

Help each family member name at least one talent he or she has. How can you help each other make your talents grow? Talk about how using your talents helps others and shows Heavenly Father your gratitude. Challenge family members to look for each other's talents and share a sincere compliment each day.

Song: "'Give,' Said the Little Stream" (*Children's Songbook*, 236)

Scripture: Doctrine and Covenants 46:11

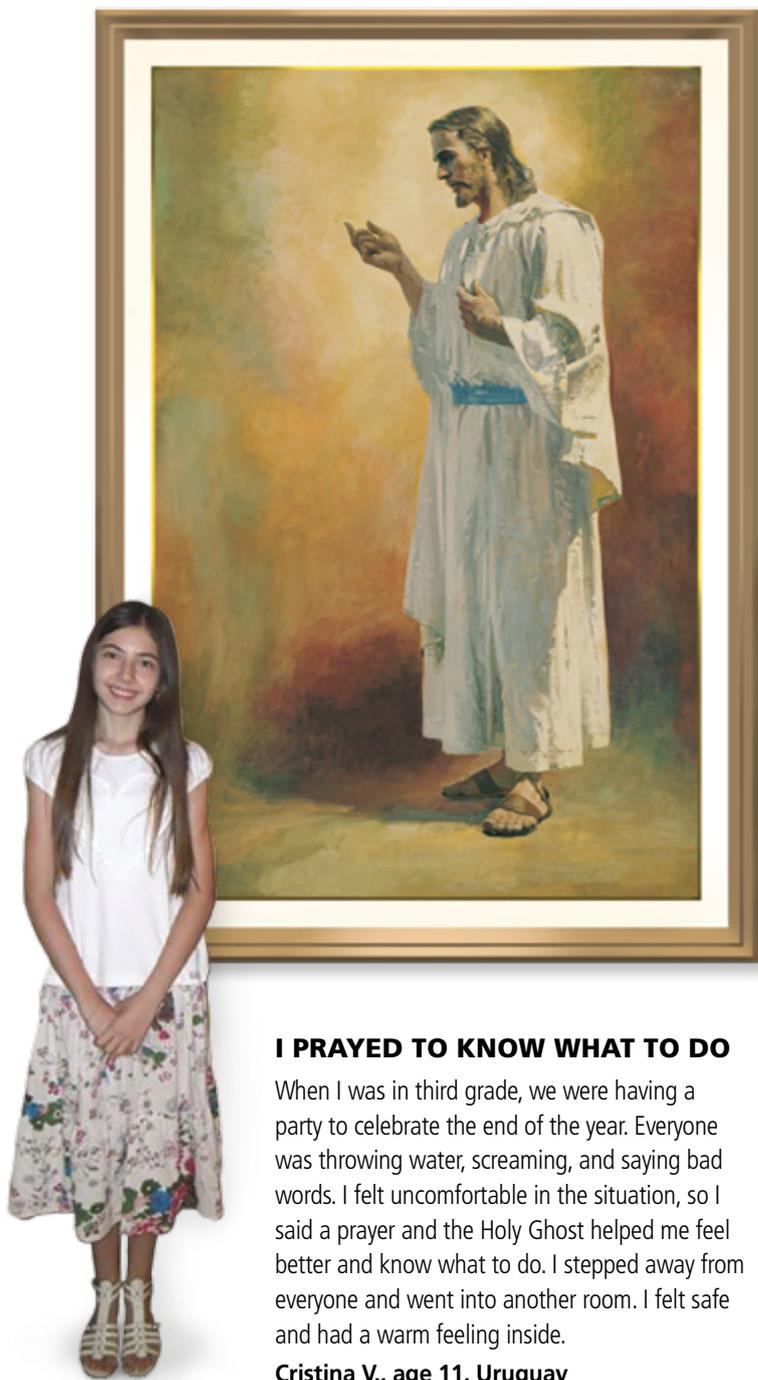
Video: Go to Biblevideos.org to watch "The Parable of the Talents"

SCRIPTURE TIP

Acting out a scripture story is a fun way to learn more about it.

1. Assign someone to play each part in the story. You can use simple costumes and props like bathrobes or paper coins.
2. Have someone read the story, pausing after each verse so the players can act out what was just read.
3. Act out the story again so everyone has a turn.

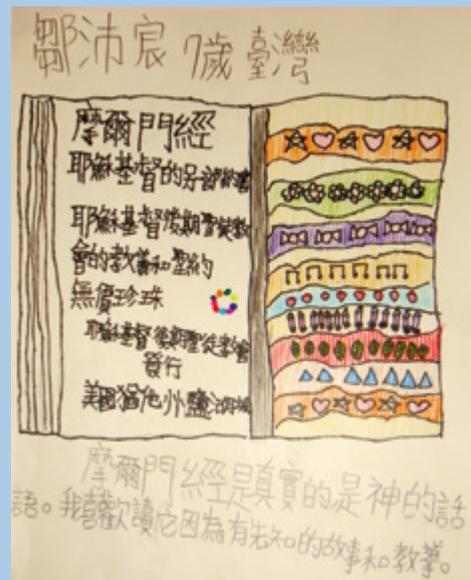
OUR PAGE



I PRAYED TO KNOW WHAT TO DO

When I was in third grade, we were having a party to celebrate the end of the year. Everyone was throwing water, screaming, and saying bad words. I felt uncomfortable in the situation, so I said a prayer and the Holy Ghost helped me feel better and know what to do. I stepped away from everyone and went into another room. I felt safe and had a warm feeling inside.

Cristina V., age 11, Uruguay



The Book of Mormon is true. It is the word of God. I like to read it because it tells the stories and teachings of the prophets.

Z. Pei-chen, age 7, Taiwan



I like the story of Noah's ark in the Bible, and I like to draw, paint, play, and spend time with my family. This is my drawing of the Kirtland Temple.

Leonardo G., age 7, Venezuela

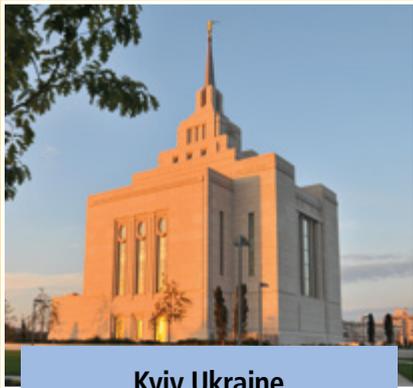


Joaquin V., age 9, California, USA

Temple Cards

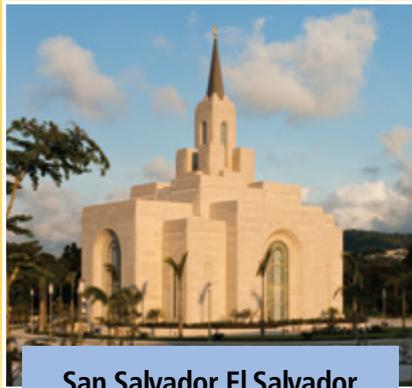
Cut out this page, glue it to heavy paper, and cut out the cards.

Go to liahona.lds.org to print more copies of the cards and to find cards for other temples.



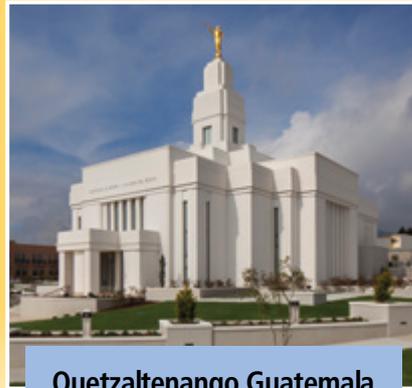
Kyiv Ukraine

Dedicated on August 29, 2010, by
President Thomas S. Monson



San Salvador El Salvador

Dedicated on August 21, 2011, by
President Henry B. Eyring



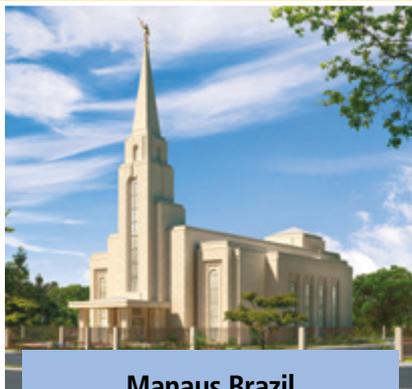
Quetzaltenango Guatemala

Dedicated on December 11, 2011, by
President Dieter F. Uchtdorf



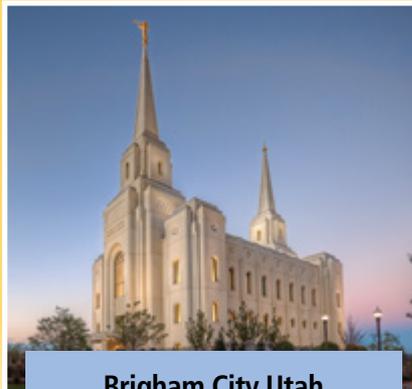
Kansas City Missouri

Dedicated on May 6, 2012, by
President Thomas S. Monson



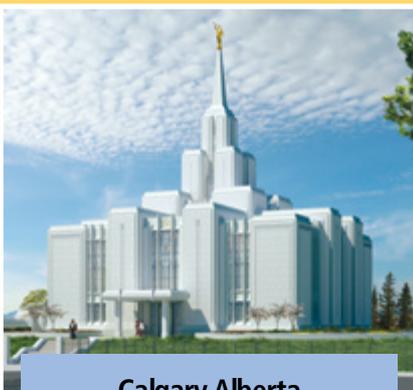
Manaus Brazil

Dedicated on June 10, 2012, by
President Dieter F. Uchtdorf



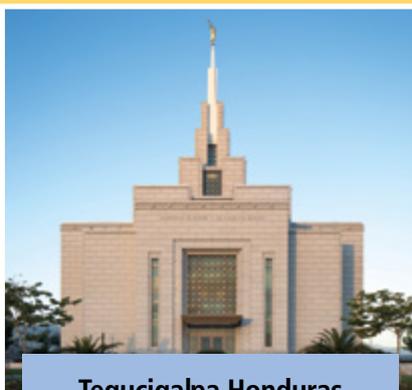
Brigham City Utah

Dedicated on September 23, 2012, by
President Boyd K. Packer



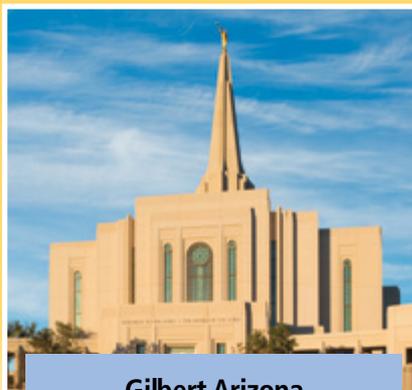
Calgary Alberta

Dedicated on October 28, 2012, by
President Thomas S. Monson



Tegucigalpa Honduras

Dedicated on March 17, 2013, by
President Dieter F. Uchtdorf



Gilbert Arizona

Dedicated on March 2, 2014, by
President Thomas S. Monson

What Do We Do IN THE TEMPLE?

By Carolyn Colton

The temple is the house of the Lord. When we go inside, we feel close to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. We can feel the Holy Ghost. In the temple we take part in sacred *ordinances* like baptism. We also make special promises, or *covenants*, with Heavenly Father. We can help give those who have died the chance to accept the gospel. It will be a very special day when you go inside for the first time! ■



BAPTISMAL FONT

When you turn 12, you can be baptized for people who died without being baptized. The font rests on oxen that represent the twelve tribes of Israel.

CELESTIAL ROOM

The celestial room is beautiful! It reminds us of how peaceful and happy we will be when we live with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ someday.

FAR CENTER RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPH BY SUMMER RACHAEL DERRICK;
ILLUSTRATION BY BRADLEY CLARK



When you turn 12, you can meet with your bishop to get your own temple recommend. Then you can go to the temple to do baptisms.



SEALING ROOM

In rooms like this, families can be sealed together for eternity. This means they can live together as a family forever—not just in this life.



*For the temple is a house
of God,
A place of love and beauty.
I'll prepare myself while
I am young;
This is my sacred duty.*

*(“I Love to See the Temple,”
Children’s Songbook, 95)*

To see pictures of temples around the world, visit temples.lds.org and click on “Gallery.”

PHOTOGRAPHS OF OGDEN UTAH TEMPLE CELESTIAL ROOM, BAPTISMAL FONT, ORDINANCE ROOM,
SEALING ROOM

ORDINANCE ROOM

In rooms like this, we learn about Heavenly Father’s plan for us, and we make covenants that will allow us to live with Him again. We learn about the Creation of the world, about Adam and Eve, and about Jesus Christ. We also learn about the blessings we will receive in the next life if we are faithful.



I'm Going There Someday

By Mary N., age 12, Maryland, USA

When I was almost 12, I was so excited to go to the temple. My family and I talked about what it was going to be like inside, and I looked at pictures of the inside of a temple as well.

A few weeks before I went to do temple baptisms, my family had a special family home evening. We listened to great stories about some of our ancestors and learned about where they lived and what their lives were like. I even found out that my great-great-grandpa was struck by lightning and survived! Some of my ancestors were from England, so my little brothers and I colored pictures of the English flag. I felt like I made a little connection with my ancestors.

The temple was as beautiful inside as it was outside. Everyone there was so nice, and there was a warm and peaceful spirit there. It was different than anything I had felt before. Everything was exactly perfect. My aunt brought names of some family members who hadn't

been baptized yet. As we were waiting, my mom and aunt and I imagined what these women were like when they lived on earth 300 years ago. It was special to have my dad baptize me for them.

Seeing everyone in white made me feel like I was surrounded by angels. The temple is like heaven on earth. ■



5 TIPS FOR YOUR FIRST TEMPLE VISIT

Talk to a parent or teachers about what to expect.

Look at pictures of the rooms inside the temple.

Make an appointment with your bishop to get your recommend. He'll talk with you about your testimony and about keeping the commandments.

Find out about your own ancestors. If possible, find an ancestor you could be baptized for! Visit FamilySearch.org to learn more.

Pray for the Holy Ghost to be with you. Then enjoy your first visit to the temple!

SPECIAL WITNESS

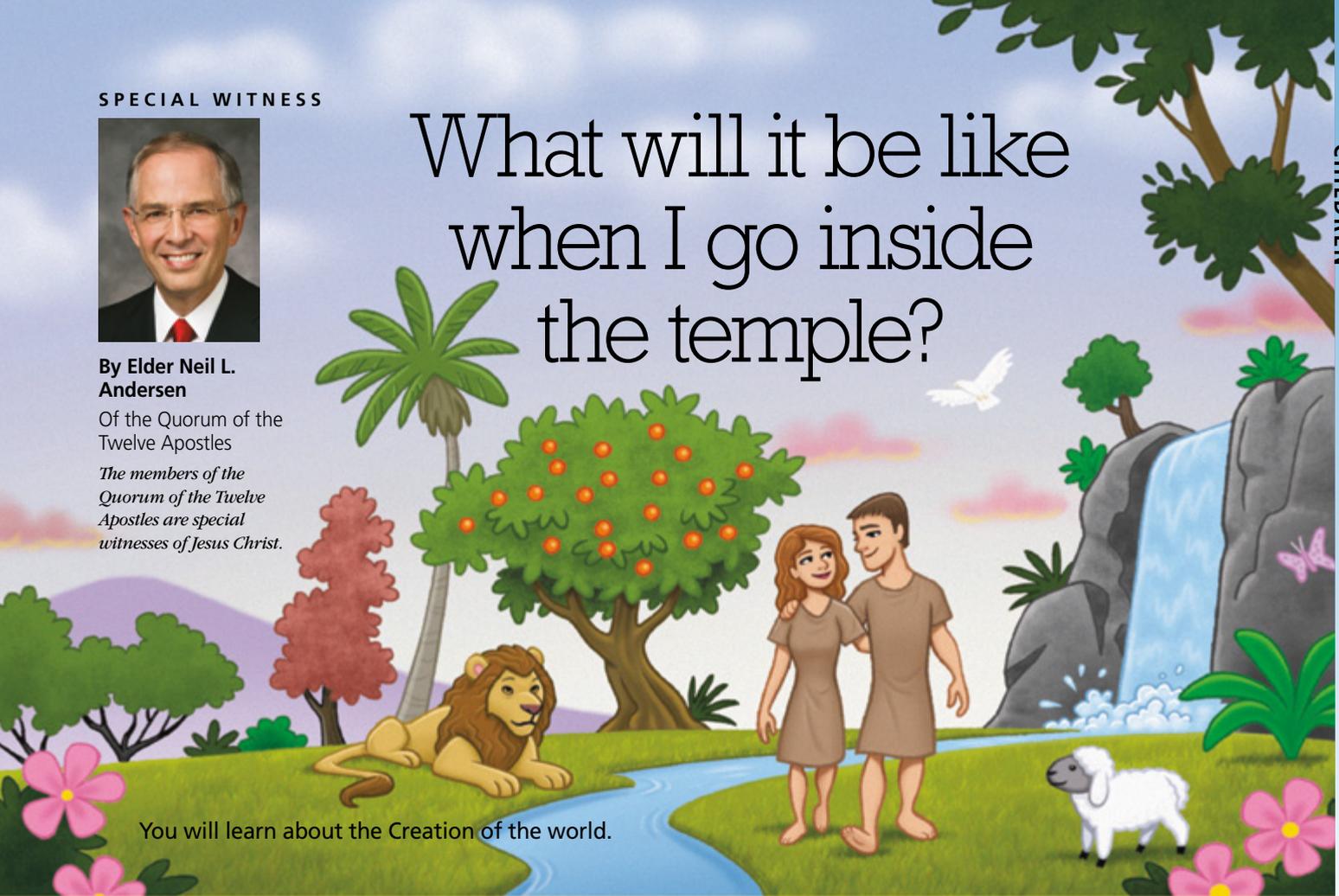


By Elder Neil L. Andersen

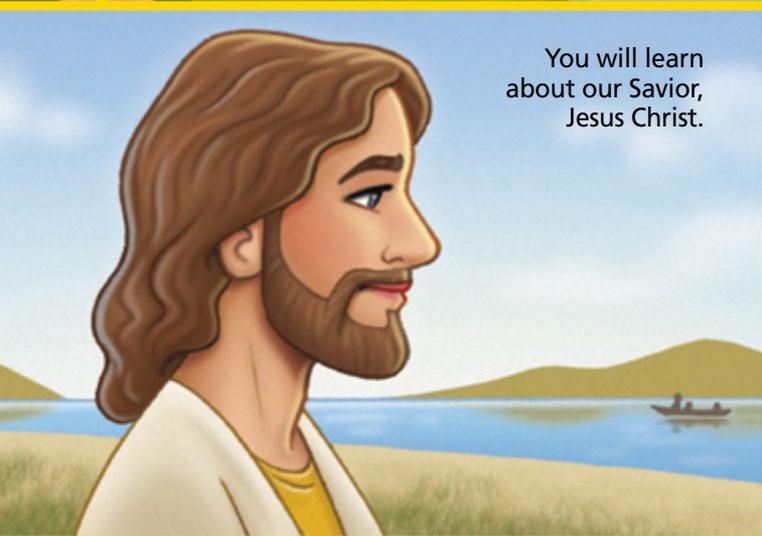
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

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

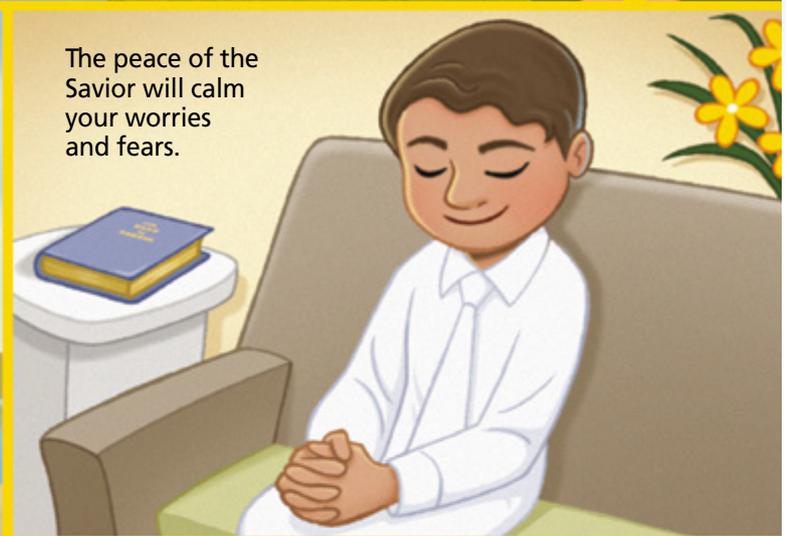
What will it be like when I go inside the temple?



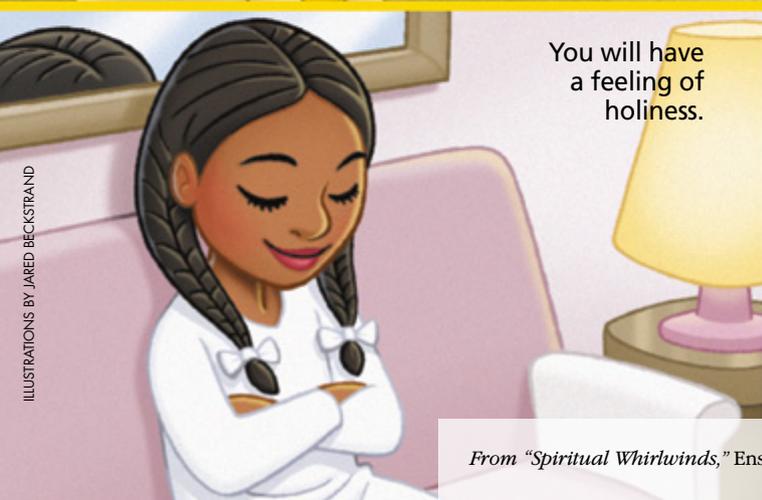
You will learn about the Creation of the world.



You will learn about our Savior, Jesus Christ.



The peace of the Savior will calm your worries and fears.



You will have a feeling of holiness.



It will help you stand strong when life is hard.



**By President
James E. Faust
(1920–2007)**
Second Counselor
in the First Presidency

OF LAMBS AND SHEPHERDS

My little friend was frightened in the storm, and I could hear it bleating.

When I was a very small boy, my father found a lamb all alone out in the desert. The herd of sheep to which its mother belonged had moved on, and somehow the lamb got separated from its mother, and the shepherd must not have known that it was lost. Because it could not survive alone in the desert, my father picked it up and brought it home. To have left the lamb there would have meant certain death, either by falling prey to the coyotes or by starvation because it was so young that it still needed milk. Some sheepmen call these lambs “bummers.” My father gave the lamb to me and I became its shepherd.

For several weeks I warmed cow’s milk in a baby’s bottle and fed the lamb. We became fast friends. I called him Nigh—why I don’t remember. It began to grow. My lamb and I would play on the lawn. Sometimes we would lie together on the grass and I would lay my head on its soft, woolly



side and look up at the blue sky and the white billowing clouds. I did not lock my lamb up during the day. It would not run away. It soon learned to eat grass. I could call my lamb from anywhere in the yard by just imitating as best I could the bleating sound of a sheep: *Baa. Baa.*

One night there came a terrible storm. I forgot to put my lamb in the barn that night as I should have done. I went to bed. My little friend was frightened in the storm, and I could hear it bleating. I knew that I should help my pet, but I wanted to stay safe, warm, and dry in my bed. I didn’t get up as I should have done. The next morning I went out to find

my lamb dead. A dog had also heard its bleating cry and killed it. My heart was broken. I had not been a good shepherd or steward of that which my father had entrusted to me. My father said, “Son, couldn’t I trust you to take care of just one lamb?” My father’s remark hurt me more than losing my woolly friend. I resolved that day, as a little boy, that I would try never again to neglect my stewardship as a shepherd if I were ever placed in that position again. . . .

After more than sixty years, I can still hear in my mind the bleating, frightened cry of the lamb of my boyhood that I did not shepherd as I should have. I can also remember the loving rebuke of my father: “Son, couldn’t I trust you to take care of just one lamb?” If we are not good shepherds, I wonder how we will feel in the eternities. ■

From James E. Faust, “Responsibilities of Shepherds,” Ensign, May, 1995, 46, 48.

INSIGHTS



The Rasolo family of Madagascar are pioneers in their remote community.

What if I don't have pioneer ancestors?

"I love and honor the faith and courage of those early pioneers of the Church. My own ancestors were living an ocean away at the time. None were among those who lived in Nauvoo or Winter Quarters, and none made the journey across the plains. But as a member of the Church, I claim with gratitude and pride this pioneer legacy as my own.

"With the same joy, I claim the legacies of today's modern-day Church pioneers who live in every nation and whose own stories of perseverance, faith, and sacrifice add glorious new verses to the great chorus of the latter-day anthem of the kingdom of God."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "Faith of Our Father," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2008, 70.

Also in This Issue

FOR YOUNG ADULTS

FILLED WITH
LIFE & ENERGY

Here's one habit you can start in order to have better health, more energy, and greater inspiration.



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FOR YOUTH

p. 52



READY TO
RECEIVE THE
**MELCHIZEDEK
PRIESTHOOD?**

These teachings from Church leaders will help you better understand what the oath and covenant of the priesthood really means.

FOR CHILDREN

Anna's Journey

When Anna got off the train in America, she was all alone and no one could understand her language. But then she remembered her mother's reminder that Heavenly Father always hears and understands our prayers.



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THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS