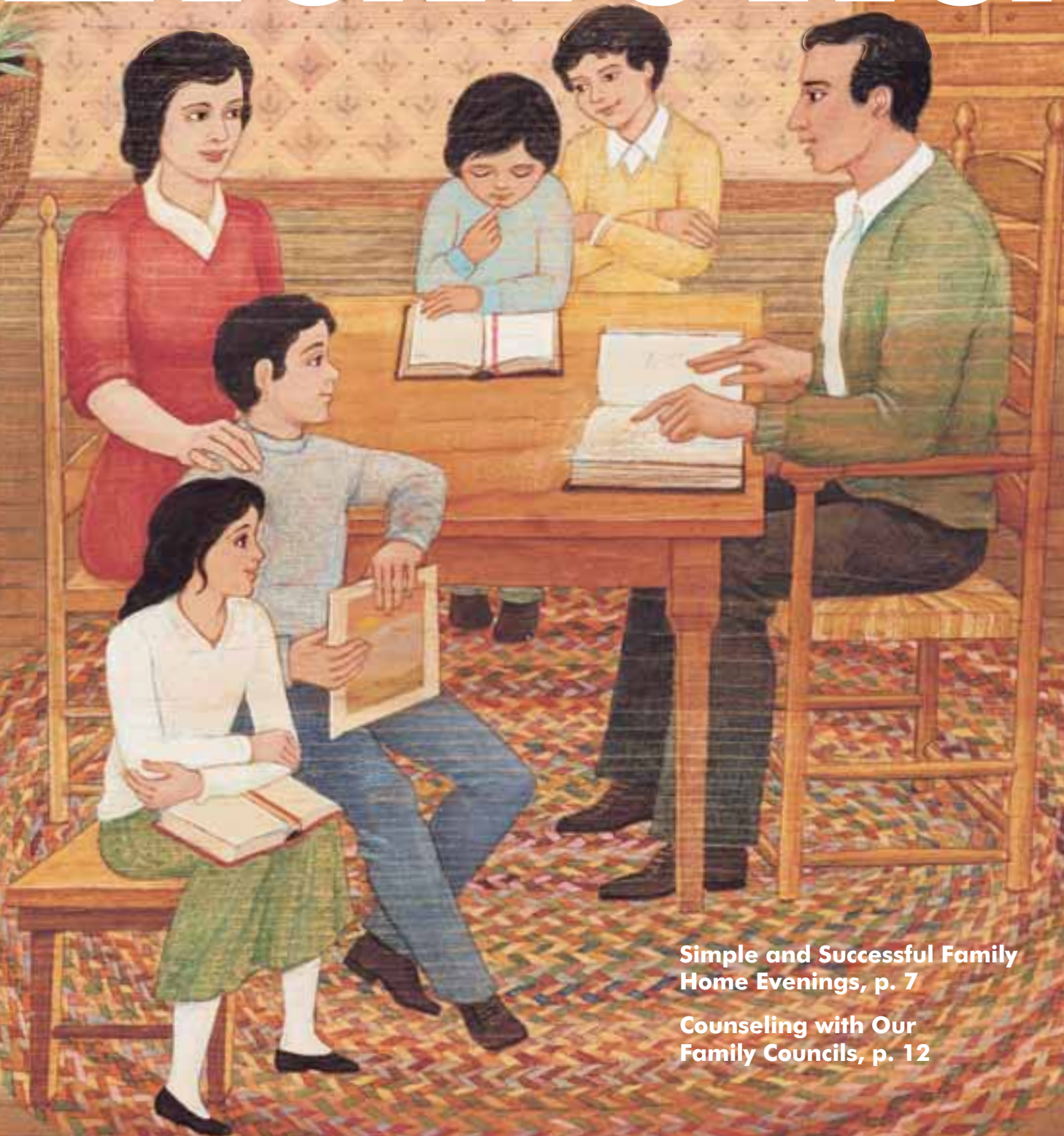


THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • JUNE 2003

Liahona



**Simple and Successful Family
Home Evenings, p. 7**

**Counseling with Our
Family Councils, p. 12**

Liahona



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Front: Illustration by Phyllis Luch. *Back:* Photographs by Welden C. Andersen, Steve Bunderson, Craig Dimond, Lana Leishman, and Marty Mayo, posed by models. See "Enriching Our Lives through Family Home Evening," p. 2.



THE FRIEND COVER

Photograph © 1999 Eyewire, Inc., posed by model.



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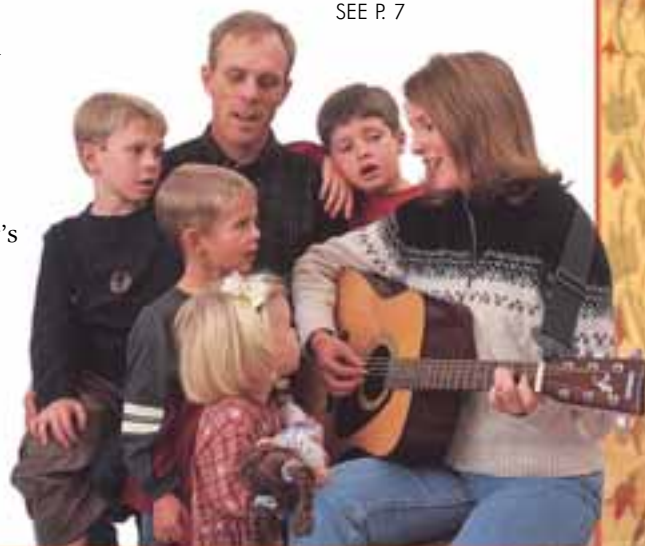
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ERADICATING THE BLIGHT OF PORNOGRAPHY

The *Liabona* (Spanish) is magnificent
 and inspiring. It brings light and under-
 standing and helps us change attitudes,
 since many people who are not mem-
 bers of the Church read it.

The November 2001 First Presidency
 Message by President Thomas S. Monson,
 "Pornography—the Deadly Carrier,"
 contained excellent counsel on how to
 eradicate this blight from the world. I
 pray for all our leaders and thank
 Heavenly Father for their counsel.

Jacinto Felipe Amutio,
Orán Branch,
Orán Argentina District

HAPPINESS

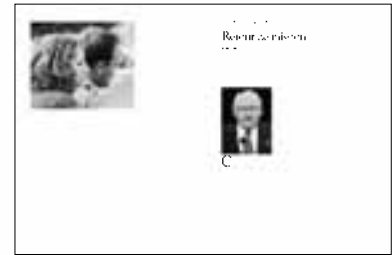
When we are sad, we should pray
 to Heavenly Father, who gives to all
 liberally. I always pray for happiness. I
 am very happy I was baptized a member
 of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-
 day Saints. I know that even though I
 may have many trials in this earth life,
 I will have eternal happiness if I am
 obedient to our Heavenly Father's laws.

It is an immense joy to be able to
 help those around me. I am also very
 happy to serve as ward mission leader.

When I submitted my mother's name
 to the temple to have her baptismal
 work done, I discovered that great hap-
 piness comes from helping those who
 have died receive gospel ordinances.

If we live the gospel, we will ulti-
 mately be happy.

Geraldo Magela Pinto,
Contagem First Ward,
Contagem Brazil Stake



"THE RETURNED MISSIONARY"

While I was serving a full-time mis-
 sion, I consistently used *Le Liabona*
 (French) to prepare for the day and to
 teach. It gave me encouragement during
 difficult times. Now it continues to help
 me. The talk by Elder L. Tom Perry, "The
 Returned Missionary," in the January
 2002 issue has had a profound impact
 on my life. It taught me that I have
 the responsibility to contribute to the
 growth of the Church locally by fulfilling
 my calling as a home teacher.

Justin Mukuna,
Gecamines First Ward,
Lubumbashi Democratic Republic
of Congo Stake



Enriching Our Lives through Family Home Evening

BY PRESIDENT JAMES E. FAUST

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

As a young man I heard President J. Reuben Clark (1871–1961), a member of the First Presidency, plead time after time that there be unity in the Church. He would quote frequently the message of the Lord: “I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27). Unity in the Church will always be a reflection of the unity in our homes. One of the most important ways to foster unity in the home is holding family home evening regularly. Whether we are young or old, single or married, whether we have children at home or have become empty nesters, family home evening can increase unity and love in our homes. Family home evening is for everyone.

Stable, Strong Families

One wonders why so many homes are now being weakened and why so many families are disintegrating. The reasons are complex. No doubt it has much to do with the social disorders of the day. We are all subjected to sparkling, enticing, false advertising. Violence is powerfully portrayed everywhere. Our society is permeated with the suggestion

that selfishness and instant gratification are acceptable and even respectable conduct. The tragic consequences of alcoholism have exploded and been magnified by other forms of drug abuse. The sexual revolution has been crippling to the spiritual, mental, and physical health of families.

Why is one family strong, yet another family weak? The reasons are infinitely complex. Yet there are answers. Abundant evidence shows that the presence of a firm, loving father in the home is far more likely to produce responsible, law-abiding children than if the father is not there or if he does not fulfill his duties as a father at home. In either case an ineffective father throws a double burden on the mother.

The active presence of the father in the home—along with one or both of the parents being active in church and with discipline and gospel teaching in the home—seems to produce stable, strong families.

When I hear of a family breaking up, I question if family home evening and family prayers have been regularly held in that home. Surely, the most important ingredient in producing happiness at home for members of this Church is a deep religious



Devotion to God developed in family home evening seems to forge the spiritual moorings and stability that can help families and individuals cope with the complexities of life.

commitment to God and His gospel. In family home evening, such commitment can be nurtured in children by the wise, mature supervision of parents. Couples can strengthen and sustain each other in living and understanding gospel principles. Single members can gather under the direction of their priesthood leaders in small groups for gospel discussions and appropriate activities. Devotion to God developed in these settings seems to forge the spiritual moorings and stability that can help families and individuals cope with the complexities of life. Some may say this is an oversimplification of a very complex problem, yet I believe the answers lie within the framework of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

Family Home Evening Builds Unity

May I suggest ways to strengthen our commitment to God and build unity and love during our family home evenings:

1. Pray. The source of our enormous individual and family strength is no mystery. It is an endowment from God.

We need not consume
addicting chemicals



T*ime together
is precious—
time needed
to encourage and
to show how to do
things.*

found in drugs and alcohol to make us capable of meeting life's problems. We need only draw constantly from the divine power source through humble prayer.

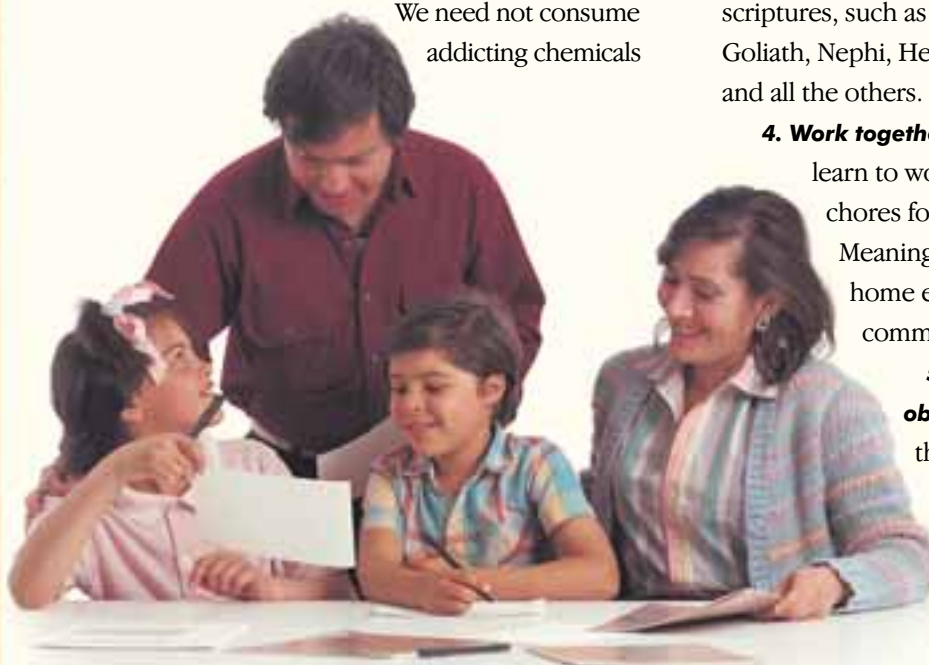
It often takes a seemingly superhuman effort to get everyone together for family home evening. You may not always feel like praying when you finally do get together, but it will pay great dividends if you persevere.

2. Sing or listen to sacred music. Church hymns and children's songs can invite the Holy Spirit into family home evening. The Lord has said that "the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads" (D&C 25:12).

3. Study the scriptures. All of us need the strength that comes from reading the scriptures. Parents must obtain a knowledge of the standard works to teach them to their children. Those who lead family home evening discussions should be adequately prepared to use the scriptures in the lesson. A child who has been taught from the scriptures has a priceless legacy. We are all fortified when we become acquainted with the heroic figures and stories of the scriptures, such as Daniel in the lions' den, David and Goliath, Nephi, Helaman and the stripling warriors, and all the others.

4. Work together and serve others. Children need to learn to work. Every household has routine daily chores for which children can be responsible. Meaningful service can be given during family home evenings through well-planned home or community work projects.

5. Focus on developing discipline and obedience. If parents do not discipline their children and teach them to obey, society may have to discipline them in ways neither the parents nor the children will like. If adults do not discipline themselves, setting the proper example for others, the consequences





can be devastating for themselves and society. Without discipline and obedience in the home and in our personal lives, unity within a family collapses.

6. Place a high priority on loyalty to each other. The dictionary defines the word *loyal* as being “faithful to a private person to whom fidelity is due.”¹ If family members are not loyal to each other, they cannot be loyal to themselves.

7. Build self-worth. One of the main problems in society today is that we spend less and less time together. Some, even when they are together, spend an extraordinary amount of time in front of the television, which robs them of personal time for reinforcing feelings of self-worth. Family home evenings give individuals and families important time to talk and listen as parents and children, brothers and sisters, spouses, and friends. Time together is precious—time needed to encourage and to show how to do things. Less time together can result in loneliness, which may produce feelings of being unsupported, untreasured, and inadequate.

8. Develop traditions. Some of the great strength of families can be found in the traditions they have

established. Traditions can include making special occasions of the blessing of children, baptisms, ordinations to the priesthood, or birthdays. Traditional activities such as fishing trips or skits on Christmas Eve can help create fond memories of times together. Weekly family home evenings can also be a time for traditions. Home evening groups of any kind can likewise establish traditions by the activities they choose to continue on a regular basis and the way they celebrate special occasions and accomplishments.

9. Do everything in the spirit of love. Elder LeGrand Richards (1886–1983) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shared a tender relationship with his father. Said he: “I walked into my father’s apartment when he was just about 90 . . . , and as I opened the door, he stood up and walked toward me and took me in his arms and hugged me and kissed me. He always did that. . . . Taking me in his arms and calling me by my kid name, he said, ‘Grandy, my boy, I love you.’”²

Some parents have difficulty expressing their love through words or actions. I do not ever recall my own father using the words “Son, I love you,” but he showed it in a thousand ways that were more eloquent than words.

He rarely missed a practice, a game, a race, or any activity in which his children participated.

The touch and time of the mother in the home make it warm, comfortable, and pleasant. Wives and mothers deserve special support from husbands and children. President George Albert Smith (1870–1951), addressing husbands and fathers, said: “Some seem to think that the woman’s responsibility is to take care of the home and everything else while the man goes to his meetings. I want to tell you that your chief responsibility is in your own home.”³

Family home evening is a time for patience and mutual respect. Let there be no ill will or anger between parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, and kinsmen. Let there be unity and love between all members of the ward or branch. Lingering feelings of hurt or disagreement should be settled quickly. I pray that the rich humanness of warm, loving family life will prevail in all our relationships.

For Everyone

I wonder if having unplanned and infrequent family home evenings will be enough to fortify ourselves and our children with sufficient moral strength to meet the complexities of our day. Infrequent family scripture study may be inadequate to arm ourselves and our children with the virtue necessary to withstand the moral decay of the environment in which we live. Where in the world will we learn chastity, integrity, honesty, and basic human decency if not at home? These values will, of course, be reinforced at church, but teaching them in family home evening can be particularly consistent and effective. To combat the world’s evil influences, we need the strength that comes from family home evening.

The First Presidency stated in 1976:

“Family home evening is for everyone. It is for families with parents and children, for families with just one parent, and for parents who have no children at home. It is



In family home evening, couples can strengthen and sustain each other in living and understanding gospel principles.

for home evening groups of single adults and for those who live alone or with roommates. . . .

“Regular participation in family home evening will develop increased personal worth, family unity, love for our fellowmen, and trust in our Father in heaven. It is our promise that great blessings will come to all who conscientiously plan and hold weekly family home evenings.”⁴ I testify that this is as true today as it was almost 30 years ago.

If we go forward with our family home evenings, our homes will be enriched, our wards and branches will grow and prosper, our lives will be purified, and the gates of hell will not prevail against us. ■

NOTES

1. *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th ed. (1996), 691.
2. In Conference Report, Oct. 1967, 111–12.
3. Seventies and stake missionary conference, 4 Oct. 1941, 8.
4. *Family Home Evening: Happiness through Faith in Jesus Christ* (1976), 3.

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

After prayerful preparation, share this message using a method that encourages the participation of those you teach. A few examples follow:

1. Tell about a favorite family home evening you have participated in. Invite those you teach to do the same. Review together President Faust’s nine guidelines. Help those you teach identify ways their family home evenings are successful and what they would like to improve about them.
2. Write “Family home evening is for everyone” on a piece of paper, and show it to family members. Read together President Faust’s message, looking for reasons everyone should participate in family home evening. Bear testimony of the blessings you have received from family home evening.
3. You may want to point out and discuss other articles in this issue relating to family home evening.

SUCCESSFUL



We can create simple yet effective family home evening lessons from a variety of gospel resources around us.

When you begin planning family home evening, is your first question “What will I do for a lesson?” If it is, then read on.

The Church magazines asked readers to share ideas for successful family home evenings. Following are several simple lesson ideas or procedures that can help your family.

Express Gratitude

Simply giving thanks for the good things in our lives makes a wonderful family home evening and can be used successfully several times a year. James and Kelly Peterson of the Burley 10th Ward, Burley Idaho Stake, enjoyed such a lesson. “One week we had some unexpected challenges and some extraordinary blessings,” writes Sister Peterson. “So we sat as a family and talked about the things we were grateful for. We started with simple things like a home and food. Then we began to notice many things we had taken for granted, and we realized how much the Lord had blessed us. As we expressed gratitude, warmth filled our home; it was a spirit of thankfulness, a feeling of comfort and peace.

We felt so close to our Heavenly Father and to each other that night. It was one of our most memorable family home evenings.”

Read a Scripture

When we combine scripture reading with sharing personal testimony, we always have an inspiring family home evening lesson. Jules and Judith Kon Bofanga of the Ngaba Ward, Kinshasa Democratic Republic of Congo Masina Stake, have had success unifying their family using the scriptures. “It is in our home that we have come to know our Heavenly Father better, thanks to our family home evenings,” writes Sister Bofanga. “Since challenges are never lacking, we turn to our Heavenly Father through prayer and scripture reading. We have gained knowledge, and we have also learned to love and serve one another.”

Sing Hymns Together

A familiar hymn can easily become the basis for a family home evening lesson. After singing a hymn as a family, we can read and discuss the text of the hymn and the



scriptures listed with it. Music tapes of Church hymns (item no. 52175) or hymns and songs (item no. 52052), available at distribution centers, can help us learn and sing the hymns.

Wendy M. Mitosinka of the Bradshaw Ward, Prescott Arizona Stake, remembers one such lesson from her childhood: “My mother played our piano, and we sang and sang. When we sang ‘The Lord Is My Shepherd,’ I felt the Spirit strongly, and tears came to my eyes. The melody stayed with me, and later I learned to play it on my guitar. Today when things get rough, the hymns I learned as a child bring me peace and happiness.”

Share Journal Entries

Everyone benefits from hearing uplifting personal experiences and testimonies found in the journals of family members and ancestors. We can use family home evening to write in our journals and, when appropriate, to share entries with each other.

Ramona Morreale of the Cannonville Ward, Escalante Utah Stake, writes of a special family home evening when she read from her journal: “I found entries about our children and humorous things they said and did when they were younger. Before long we were all laughing. Our children often ask to have a ‘journal’ lesson again. Sometimes we also read spiritual entries from an ancestor’s journal. This brings great joy and helps us get to know them.”

Use Church Magazines

Church magazines provide many gospel materials and ideas for

family home evening lessons. “The First Presidency Message and Visiting Teaching Message, with their many quotes and questions, make great lessons,” writes one reader. “Our family also likes to read and discuss stories in Latter-day Saint Voices and talk about the questions in Questions and Answers.”

An index of gospel topics can be found near the end of each magazine. Families can choose a topic, then read and discuss articles on that topic. Families with small children can find other activity ideas in Sharing Time articles. Teenagers might try making posters like the ones in the *Liabona* by using the same words and creating their own art.

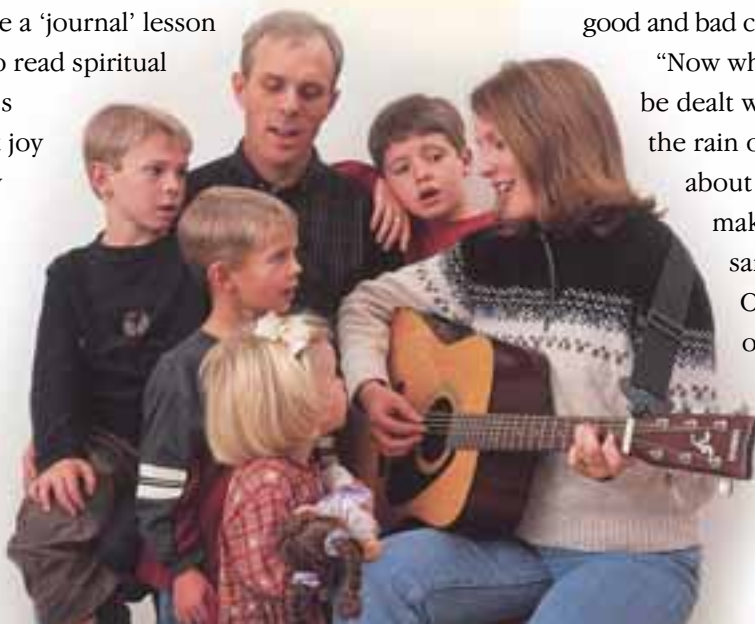


A familiar hymn can easily become the basis for a family home evening lesson, as can acting out a scripture story.

Tell Stories

Kathryn Marrett of the Camp Hill Ward, Brisbane Australia Stake, discovered the power of storytelling. “As a mum with small children, I found it a challenge to keep them interested in family home evening,” writes Sister Marrett. “After praying for inspiration, I decided to focus on a different value every month. I chose honesty as the first topic. Soon ideas began to flow, and the children and I began making up stories together about honesty. We made up imaginary children and used them in every story. It was fun to create different situations and explore the results of good and bad choices.

“Now when something needs to be dealt with, such as a bike left in the rain or bad language, we talk about the appropriate value and make up stories featuring the same imaginary children. Of course, these stories are only one way we teach good values. The scriptures and other



Church materials provide the foundation for our gospel teachings.”

Take Turns

Victor and Susana Mendoza of the Ramona (Spanish) Branch, Hemet California Stake, have found that rotating the opportunity to teach is an excellent way to come up with innovative lessons. “Our family home evenings are truly exciting,” writes Sister Mendoza. “Our children each take a turn and invent ways to make family home evening different and interesting. For example, Victor Daniel makes invitations and gives them to us in advance so we can be on time. When Jasmin finishes her lesson, she gives us a certificate of achievement for paying attention. Melissa tells us interesting stories she has learned in seminary.

“It wasn’t easy at first, but we put our faith in the Lord, and He has helped us. I testify that holding family home evenings has strengthened our marriage as well as our family. Our bonds of love grow stronger each week. We’re grateful to Jesus Christ for showing

us the way and for giving us His Spirit in our home and in our hearts.”

Meet Weekly

Family unity comes from getting together often. Alfredo and Tita Obial of the Quirino Second Ward, Quezon City Philippines South Stake, are the parents of five sons. “We want to be a forever family,” writes Sister Obial. “We have

regular family home evenings to share our talents, learn gospel principles, and have fun. Sometimes we have family councils to discuss our needs and make family decisions. We are grateful for the family home evening program of the Church, which not only brings our family closer together but also brings us closer to our Heavenly Father.”

Family home evening can be a blessing in all our lives, just as it has been in the lives of these families, if we will pray for inspiration; “be of good cheer” (D&C 78:18); meet regularly; and invite the Spirit with music, prayer, and personal testimony. Above all, we shouldn’t let lesson preparation become a barrier to holding family home evening. Sometimes the simplest lessons are the best. ■



Everyone benefits from hearing uplifting personal experiences and testimonies found in the journals of family members and ancestors.





EASY TO PREPARE

EASY TO PRESENT

Any gospel topic can become a family home evening lesson when you follow these three simple steps:

1. Choose one of the gospel resources listed in column A.
2. Focus on a single topic or idea to keep your lesson simple.
3. Select any of the teaching methods listed in column B to develop the topic into a lesson.

A

The following items and many other gospel resources are available from Church distribution centers.

1. Scriptures
2. General conference talks (see Church magazines and www.lds.org)
3. Articles in Church magazines
4. *Hymns* (item no. 31243)
5. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" (see *Liahona*, Oct. 1998, 24)
6. Relief Society declaration (see *Liahona*, Jan. 2000, 112)
7. *For the Strength of Youth* (item no. 36550)
8. Young Women theme (item no. 35224)
9. The purposes of the Aaronic Priesthood in *Aaronic Priesthood: Fulfilling Our Duty to God* (item nos. 36676, 36677, 36678)
10. "My Gospel Standards" in *My Achievement Days* (item no. 35317; see *Liahona*, Apr. 1999, F8–9)

B

For additional ideas, see *Teaching, No Greater Call* (item no. 36123) or *Teaching Guidebook* (item no. 34595).

1. Ask questions (who, what, where, when, why, how).
2. Show a picture, chart, or object.
3. Sing a song.
4. Give a writing assignment.
5. Bear your testimony or share a personal experience.
6. Write important points on a chalkboard or piece of paper and discuss them.
7. Memorize a scripture.
8. Draw a picture.
9. Act out a story.
10. Show a Church video.

Family Councils



A CONVERSATION WITH ELDER AND SISTER BALLARD

Elder M. Russell Ballard and his wife, Barbara, discuss how councils can help families grow spiritually, gain unity, and function successfully.

In an April 1994 general conference address, Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “Before I was called as a General Authority, I was in the automobile business, as was my father before me. Through the years, I learned to appreciate the sound and the performance of a well-tuned engine. To me it is almost musical, from the gentle purring of an idling motor to the vibrant roar of a throttle that is fully open. The power that sound represents is even more exciting. . . .

“On the other hand, nothing is more frustrating than a car engine that is not running properly. No matter how beautiful the

paint or comfortable the furnishings inside are, a car with an engine that is not operating as it should is just a shell of unrealized potential. An automobile engine will run on only a part of its cylinders, but it never will go as far or as fast, nor will the ride be as smooth, as when it is tuned properly.”

Elder Ballard then likened a properly tuned car to a ward or stake that is functioning well. He urged Church leaders “to harness and channel spiritual power through councils.”¹

The Church magazines recently met with Elder Ballard and his wife, Barbara, to talk about how the council system can be applied to families, some of which, Elder Ballard said, are hitting on only a few cylinders.

Question: Why do you feel so strongly about family councils?

Elder Ballard: There has never been a time when the world was in greater need of the strength and security that are best sown and cultivated in the deep, fertile soil of family love. The family is under heavy attack from antagonists bent on extinguishing this powerful source of light in a darkening world. Successful families have a wide assortment of tools, and one of the most useful tools is the family council.

Question: How might a family council differ from a family home evening?



An engine that is running on only a few cylinders will never go as far or as fast, nor will the ride be as smooth, as when it is tuned properly. The same can be said of families.



Elder Ballard: Family home evening is a social and teaching time. In a family council we talk about the needs of the family and the needs of individual members of the family. It is a time to solve problems, make family decisions, plan day-to-day and long-range family activities and goals. It is a time to share one another's burdens and joys and counsel together, to keep each family member on the right track spiritually. It is the time when we discuss family matters, much as a bishop or branch president does with his ward or branch leaders. It is when parents use the tremendous powers of the council system. A family council could certainly be part of family home evening, but it could also take place at any time.

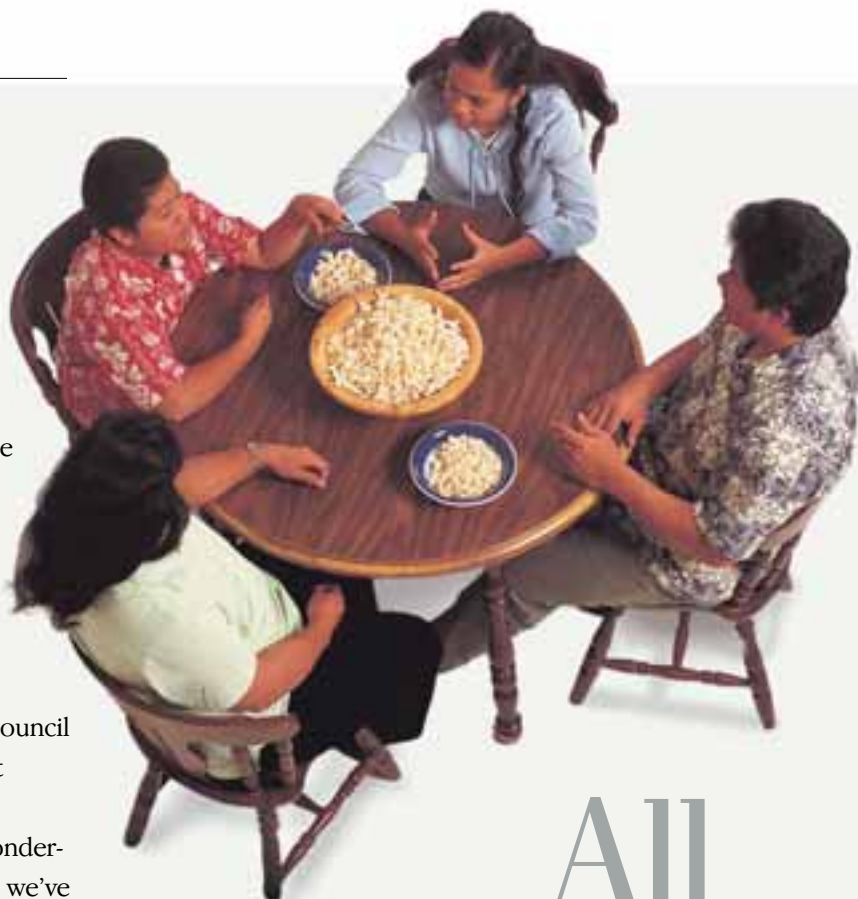
Sister Ballard: Our seven children have been wonderful to raise, but we've had worries and concerns, and we've had to go through the normal anxieties and problems. This is why we needed family councils—and why we had lots of discussions and prayers. For example, when my husband was called to serve as mission president in Toronto, Canada, some of the children were not happy about moving there.

Elder Ballard: They cried all the way to Toronto. They cried for two months after we were there.

Sister Ballard: Yes, but they were good sports. It was harder for the ones in high school, but we discussed their feelings in many family councils. In time, they realized it was a wonderful opportunity.

Question: So how would you define a family council?

Elder Ballard: Whenever there are two or more members of a family together and a discussion is going on, that is a council! Family councils can be held in one-on-one talks



All Together

between a parent and a child or among parents and several children. When a husband and wife talk to each other, they are holding a family council.

I think of the traditional definition that says a family council is a time when a father and mother sit down and go through a list of dos and don'ts with their children. I was never able to make it work that way. I found that when the list came out, it turned the children off. So I tried bringing up a specific problem—such as the garden needs weeding—and then simply asked the family, “What can we do about it? What are your ideas?”

A council is when parents let their children help solve the problem. And when everyone agrees to a solution, everyone will have ownership of the problem. If I tell the family, “You go out and pull the weeds,” there may be complaining or hurt feelings. But if I can help them to feel, “We all decided this,” then the family council is truly working. Before you know it, family members will be organizing themselves, saying, “You do this and I'll do that.” That's the power of a council.



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Question: What are some ways parents can begin to make family councils work?

Elder Ballard: First, parents need to draw the children into the problem-solving process by letting them be heard. For example, I came home at times to find that the children had not cleaned their rooms or done other things they were supposed to do. My wife had her hands full with seven children to raise. So I called the children together for a short council meeting. We talked about what needed to be done and decided on a course of action. Talking about the course of action makes all the difference. If it's mandated or dictated, there will usually be resistance. But if parents will establish a climate conducive to openness, where every person is important and every opinion is valued, they can create a kind of spiritual synergism in the home, where the combined action or cooperation that results is greater than the sum of the individual parts.

Sister Ballard: Informal communication among parents and children is crucial. If children are old enough to talk, we should be showing them we care by listening to them. We should be asking them how they are and what they would change about their lives. It seems that one of the best times for a family council is right before children fall asleep. It may be just one child with a father or mother, but it can be a very important family council. You don't have to have everyone sitting together in order to have a family council.

Elder Ballard: My feeling is that the more fluid, the more nonthreatening, the more natural a family council is, the more effective it is. Let children tell their perception of what needs to happen. Point out why you feel the way you feel. You can then start to connect and teach. But the exchange can't be phony or staged. If it is fabricated, the council system doesn't work. Communication has to be open and candid.

Question: How might a father and a mother work together in family councils?

Elder Ballard: A father, who is the priesthood bearer and patriarch in a home, has the responsibility to make the decisions. I emphasize the term *responsibility*—not the

term *authority*. But it is far better if those decisions are made in a spirit of unity of purpose and pulling together as a family.

I think a mother is probably the key to making councils work. I say that because she is often more sensitive and gentle than her husband.

I remember a time when one of our daughters came home and I had a dialogue with her. I don't remember the subject, but afterward she went up to her room. Later Sister Ballard came to me and lovingly said, "I don't think you realize the impact of what you said to her. You've hurt her feelings."

I said, "I did? How did I do that?" I didn't have a clue, so Sister Ballard explained.

I went upstairs and sat down with my little girl. She was on her bed, crying. We had another family council. I asked her to forgive me. It was a great moment for us, and it was all done as we counseled together.

My wife has also been great at keeping even our formal family councils more relaxed and fun.

Sister Ballard: My husband and I made a pact long ago. If he

Couples



Extended Family

disagrees with me or I disagree with him, we talk about it, whatever it is.

Elder Ballard: It seems to me that whoever is in charge of a council needs to have some idea of a desired outcome—perhaps a change in behavior—before discussion starts. Then both parents need to work with the children until things change for the better.

Question: How about single parents? Any advice for them?

Sister Ballard: I have compassion for single mothers and fathers. I don't know how they do all they need to do.

Elder Ballard: Single parents often come home tired after a day at work. Then they've got to prepare dinner and help children with homework. They stretch themselves emotionally to the point that they may not have the energy or time to sit down and have a family council in a formal way. But the more stress there is on a family, the more important family councils become.

The key for a single parent—and other parents as well—is to take advantage of informal counseling opportunities with a child. They might be while driving in the car, doing the dishes, or in the morning and evening just before prayers. As tired as you may be, it's wise to invest the time and attention it takes to make an effective connection with your children. It is far better to lovingly communicate in the beginning, while they are young, than to try and hammer it into them later when behavior changes more slowly.

Question: How about extended family councils?

Elder Ballard: I hope parents will not overlook the potentially powerful asset grandparents can be. Grandparents

can be welcomed and listened to in formal councils or on informal occasions. They've walked the road of life 30 or more years longer than anyone else in the council. Even if grandparents live far away, grandchildren can call or e-mail; I know ours do. A single parent may have this resource and may not be utilizing it. Grandparents can be a tremendous resource.

Question: What other factors can make a family council successful?

Elder Ballard: We have to understand the circumstances of family members. Each child is different. All the counseling in the world won't solve a problem if there's a medical challenge. For example, one of our children has struggled with attention deficit disorder. When we were younger, we didn't know what that was. Nobody knew what it was. We have grandchildren with dyslexia. That can be very tough for a child to deal with. Parents have got to counsel together about such issues, then hold a family council to discuss how to best deal with the situation. It is not enough just to tell them, "You can do it. Just try harder." Additional outside help may be needed.

Siblings can also be a great help. Older children can become mentors, tremendous assets, if the father and mother will use the council system. In this way, a family is much like a ward. If a bishop knows how to involve his Relief Society, elders quorum, and Young Women president, they can make a huge difference in getting the work done in a ward. Father and mother need to see their children as mentors to each other. That way, the power of the family council is put to work.

Question: The relationship between a husband and wife is crucial to the success of family councils, isn't it?

Sister Ballard: I've been very fortunate to have a husband with whom I could talk. Raising a family is hard enough when parents get along. If a father and mother disagree all the time, children learn to pit one parent against the other.



Take advantage of informal counseling opportunities with a child. They might be while driving in the car, doing the dishes, or in the morning and evening just before prayers.

And couples need to spend time together away from their children. When our children were little and my husband was serving as bishop, we would get a baby-sitter and go out at least once a week—nothing fancy but we spent some time together. We would sit down and try to talk objectively about our lives. I would ask, “How do you think we’re doing?”

Elder Ballard: And I would ask what I should be doing. They were great councils.

Sister Ballard: I still remember those times. All couples should take advantage of those opportunities. There won’t be many surprises, but once in a while there might be.

Elder Ballard: Let me share the advice I give to couples when I perform a sealing in the temple: Never retire without kneeling together and holding hands and saying your prayers. And those prayers should be prayers of gratitude. There is something that happens, even when a husband and a wife are upset with each other, if they kneel at the end of the day and pray together. I do a lot of counseling with people troubled in their marriages. I always ask, “Do you kneel and hold hands at the end of the day, praying for Heavenly Father’s blessings in your home?” Not once in a struggling

marriage is the couple still doing that. So I send them home, saying, “Why don’t you do that for 30 days and then come see me?” Almost always, they return and comment, “Elder Ballard, we’re going to make it; we’re going to work it out.” When communication with Heavenly Father breaks down, communication between spouses also breaks down. And Heavenly Father will not interfere. He doesn’t generally intrude where He is not invited. But if we ask, great blessings will flow.

Question: Any final thoughts?

Elder Ballard: Let me say that leadership based on love brings incredible power.² In these perilous times, we need the cooperative efforts of parents and children in the family because absolute vigilance is required on the part of all.

God never intended that His children should stand alone. We have the gospel, the scriptures, living prophets and apostles, and the Holy Ghost to help us. This is not man’s work nor woman’s work; it is God’s work, which is centered on the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

May God bless us all to find inspired consensus and unity as we counsel together in our families. Only in so doing can our families begin to approach their full potential. ■

NOTES

1. “Counseling with Our Councils,” *Ensign*, May 1994, 24.
2. See “Strength in Counsel,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 76–78.

One-on-One



WORDS
OF
JESUS

On the Cross

As we ponder the lessons contained in Jesus' final words, we exclaim with the centurion, "Truly this man is the Son of God" (see Mark 15:39).



To appreciate our Redeemer's last precious sayings, one needs to remember that the Crucifixion was the final act in a series of profound and difficult events.

BY ELDER ALAIN A. PETION

Area Authority Seventy

While driving alone for long distances, I enjoy listening to Handel's *Messiah* and other sacred music that uses the scriptures as the text. This music has always brought deep emotions for the Savior to my heart.

Many years ago, a friend presented me with a recording of Franz Joseph Haydn's oratorio called *The Seven Last Words of Christ on the Cross*. This oratorio came to my mind again more recently as I was reading and pondering anew the gospel accounts of the Savior's Crucifixion, attempting to better understand His death. I gained further appreciation for the final earthly moments of our beloved Redeemer while reading Psalms 115–18, which Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles suggested must have been sung by the Savior in His last Passover. Both Haydn and Elder McConkie organize the last mortal utterings of the Son of God in the same chronological order, which I will follow here.¹

The Painful Prologue

To appreciate our Redeemer's last precious sayings, one needs to remember that the Crucifixion was the final act in a series of profound and difficult events. First was the Passover meal, followed by the mental, physical, and spiritual agony of Gethsemane. Then came the arrest and subsequent illegal trials. Pilate and Herod questioned Him. He was scourged with leathern thongs weighted with jagged edges of bone and lead. The derision of soldiers rang in His ears as they dressed Him in a purple war robe, crowned Him with thorns, and placed a reed as a scepter in His bound hands. He then bore His cross to Golgotha with the help of Simon of Cyrene. At the third hour, they crucified Him (see Mark 15:25).

Securely fastened to the infamous cross between two crucified thieves, stripped of His outer garments that were parted between the soldiers, tortured by pain with each breath in this unnatural position, the Son of God was publicly and ignominiously exposed before the chief priests, the scribes and the elders,

LEFT: DETAIL FROM THE CRUCIFIXION, BY GUSTAVE DORÉ; RIGHT: THE RAISING OF THE CROSS, BY JAMES J. TISSOT



the soldiers, passersby, and a handful of friends and relatives. Even then and there, His last words are a reflection of His divine nature.

“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

The Prophet Joseph Smith provided significant insight by clarifying that *them* and *they* in this statement refer to the soldiers who crucified Him (see Joseph Smith Translation, Luke 23:35).

The soldiers who whipped, mocked, and nailed Jesus to the cross were obeying orders. Their choice was to do the will of Pilate or be

punished. Jesus’ teachings had likely never come to their ears. To them He was but one more man from a strange and difficult-to-manage nation. Our Savior pled with His Father that their acts not be counted as sins upon their heads. The responsibility for His death rightly rested upon those who had said, “His blood be on us, and on our children” (Matthew 27:25).

He who taught, “Love your enemies, . . . do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which . . . persecute you” (Matthew 5:44) was concerned for the spiritual well-being of the persons who pierced Him. What a lesson for us! Looking beyond their

The Savior was publicly and ignominiously exposed before the chief priests, the scribes and the elders, the soldiers, passersby, and a handful of friends and relatives. Even then, His last words are a reflection of His divine nature.

apparent motives, we must show concern for those who do not know what they are doing.

“To day shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43).

One thief who was crucified recognized that he was like a sheep who had gone astray and turned to his own way (see Isaiah 53:6). His inner light was rekindled in the presence of “the true Light, which lighteth every man” (John 1:9). He did not join in the mocking. Instead he appealed to the Good Shepherd, seizing upon the tenuous hope that he might be saved: “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom” (Luke 23:42). The Savior graciously answered and gave him hope. This criminal likely did not understand that the gospel would be preached to him in the spirit world or that he would be given an opportunity to live according to God in the spirit (see 1 Peter 4:6; D&C 138:18–34). Truly the Savior cared for the thief who hung beside Him; surely He cares greatly for those who love Him and strive to keep His commandments!

“Woman, behold thy son!” (John 19:26).

The Savior’s mother, Mary, stood there by the cross. Perhaps at that moment, as she suffered to see the infinite burden placed upon her son, the Son of God, she recalled Simeon’s prophecy: “Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel. . . . Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also” (Luke 2:34–35). Yet in her own pain, she must have sensed He was fulfilling the will of God, His Father, for it was she who had responded to the angel, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word” (Luke 1:38).

“Behold thy mother!” (John 19:27).

Now as He was about to exit this earthly stage, the Savior’s attention and ministering words turned to His mother, Mary. Joseph, her husband, had passed away. John the Beloved would now see to her needs. These words teach an everlasting lesson from the Firstborn on family responsibilities: honor God’s will from generation

to generation, honor parents, and see to each other’s needs.

The preceding words from the cross were uttered between the third and the sixth hour. At the sixth hour, darkness covered the whole land for three hours as the “God of nature” suffered (see 1 Nephi 19:10–12). “It seems, that in addition to the fearful suffering incident to crucifixion, the agony of Gethsemane had recurred, intensified beyond human power to endure.”²

“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34).

In Gethsemane, an angel had appeared to strengthen the Savior (see Luke 22:43). Now He had to tread the winepress alone. No answer. No angel. Alone. To which hiding pavilion had the Father withdrawn (see D&C 121:1)? It is difficult to consider these words from His dying lips without experiencing deep emotion.

Golgotha’s excruciating public suffering reaffirmed the private agony of Gethsemane, allowing Jesus henceforth and forever to address the Father thus: “Behold the sufferings and death of him who did no sin, in whom thou wast well pleased; behold the blood of thy Son which was shed” (D&C 45:4).

Jesus’ loneliness in suffering reminds us that in His infinite love and respect for His children, God our Father may at times be silent so as to allow our meager efforts to gain the humble victory and to represent the “all we can do,” after which He will save us by His almighty grace (see 2 Nephi 25:23).

“I thirst” (John 19:28).

These words confirm in part the awfulness of Jesus’ physical agony on the cross. His bodily needs cried out for relief. His tongue struggled to articulate as it clung to His parched lips. In terms of physical suffering, we have a God who has “descended below them all” (D&C 122:8).

A sponge soaked in vinegar was raised to His mouth. Jesus received it and gave His final statements in mortality.

“It is finished” (John 19:30).

The perfect Atonement had been wrought! His suffering for the sins of the world was completed. Could there be a more glorious moment in all eternity? The Prophet Joseph’s inspired additions to the Bible teach us that before the Son said, “It is finished,” He addressed the Father. He then announced that the will of the Father had been done (see Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 27:54).

From the first words of His prayer in Gethsemane to His last words on the cross, Jesus did the will of His Father. He drank out of the bitter cup that the Father had given Him, bringing glory to the Father and salvation to all humankind (see 3 Nephi 11:11). May we be so submissive, humble, and selfless in our mortal victories and successes!

“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit” (Luke 23:46).

The Son of the Almighty gave His life voluntarily. He had inherited mortality from His mother, Mary, and He had inherited the ability to live forever in a mortal state from God, the Father of His mortal body. He gave His life to bring to pass the Resurrection of all humankind. The righteous spirits in prison “were filled with joy and gladness” (D&C 138:15) at the news of His death, for His death and Resurrection guaranteed their deliverance from the chains of death. And so can we, every day of our lives, be filled with joy and gladness because of the gift of His sacrifice and Resurrection.

The Book of Mormon prophet Jacob expressed a hope “that all men would believe in Christ, and view his death”



(Jacob 1:8). The Savior’s atoning sacrifice provides the means for all men to repent and thus obtain eternal life. As we marvel at the events of His death and ponder the depth and fulness of the lessons contained in His words while on the cross, may we exclaim with the centurion, “Truly this man [is] the Son of God” (Mark 15:39). ■

NOTES

1. See *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. (1966–73), 1:744, 818.
2. See James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. (1916), 661.

Elder Alain A. Petion is an Area Authority Seventy serving in the Europe West Area.

The Book of Mormon prophet Jacob expressed a hope “that all men would believe in Christ, and view his death.”





MY Fathers

Kind and caring leaders taught me what a father could be.

BY ROSEMARIE DEPPE

Most of our family's struggles were because of my father. He was angry and bitter. I was very scared of him. Everything was uncertain and unpredictable when he was around.

Our world at home was a dark place. I could feel darkness surrounding me, even at a young age. It was hard to be home. I wanted a father who loved me, who took care of me and protected me. But I felt none of those things from my earthly father.

I sought refuge by going to church whenever he would let me. I loved to be in the chapel because it seemed like such a safe place. But I was nervous, hesitant, and unsure about being close to my Heavenly Father because I wasn't sure what He was really like. I learned in church that I had another heavenly friend who loved me. So I focused on Jesus Christ and His love for

me. I loved Him because my Young Women leaders loved Him. I saw how happy they were when they talked about Him. I tried hard to keep the commandments and do all that He wanted me to do.

When our youth group was planning to do baptisms for the dead, I wondered what it would be like in my Heavenly Father's house. With great anticipation, I stepped inside the Los Angeles California Temple. I was overwhelmed at the feeling of peace there. Nothing could have been more opposite from my earthly home. I almost didn't dare breathe for fear the feeling would go away. But it was constant and calm.

I loved being in the temple. In His house, I did not need to be afraid. It was safe, calm, peaceful, and comforting. I wanted to live there. Heavenly Father's house was full of love. I was so happy. I promised myself I would be worthy to come back to His house again.

Through my church and temple experiences, I learned that Heavenly Father is a

I wanted a father who loved me, who took care of me, and who protected me. I was missing that in my home. But at church I found "fathers" who, in the special times of my life, filled that role.



loving father. He cares about me and is aware of my needs—both physical and spiritual.

Even though I lived with a father who didn't follow God's teachings, God placed others in my life to support me as a good father should. I had a wonderful bishop who always took a minute to say hello and see how I was doing. Bishop Hicken treated me the same way he did all the youth in our ward. He held interviews with us, went to our activities, and had us in his home for firesides. He was loving, kind, and patient. I watched how he treated his wife and children, and it helped me believe that my Heavenly Father was like that. Bishop Hicken was a happy man—full of life and love. I tried to live better because he expected us to.

I was a late bloomer when it came to dating, and it seemed that when I went on my first date, everyone knew about it—even my bishop. The big day arrived and the young man picked me up. While we were at a stoplight, someone very carefully bumped into the back of my date's truck. As we turned around to see who had done this, I saw a man marching up to the driver's side of the truck. It was my bishop! As my date rolled down his window, my bishop said, "That's my girl you have in there, and I want her home by 10 o'clock."

I don't remember much about that night except that I was home by 10:00. But I will never forget that

I was "his girl" and that he loved and cared about me. I knew then that my Heavenly Father cared about me too.

Another "father" in my life was a member of my stake presidency. President Merrill was always at our stake dances, Young Women camps, and youth conferences.

As I was preparing to leave for college, President Merrill felt I needed some fatherly advice before heading into the world. His voice was gentle and soothing. I could feel his concern. I knew he loved me. He told me he would go as far as the Salt Lake Temple to attend my wedding.

A few years later, I called my father to announce my engagement. He was cold and indifferent. Nothing had changed. I tried not to cry. I turned to my Heavenly Father in prayer, and the Spirit reminded me of President Merrill's promise. I wondered if he would remember what he had told me several years before. Did he really mean it? I picked up the phone and dialed his number. President Merrill answered. I stumbled through telling him of my engagement and asked if he remembered his promise to me. "What temple are you getting married in?" he asked.

"The Salt Lake Temple," I answered.

"Then I will be there," he said. He drove 13 hours in the snow to be there for me. When I walked into the sealing room with my soon-to-be husband, President Merrill was the first person I saw. He was my father that day!

Years later, these "fathers" continue to be a part of my life. Their callings and circumstances have changed, but they have not. They are constant in their faith, their testimonies, and their love and interest in me. From them I learned I could trust my Heavenly Father. These great men were a link so I could feel of my Heavenly Father's love and concern for me. ■

Rosemarie Deppe is a member of the Jennings Lane Ward, Centerville Utah North Stake.



Prepare Youth to Meet Opposition in the World

Prayerfully select and read from this message the scriptures and teachings that meet the needs of the sisters you visit. Share your experiences and testimony. Invite those you teach to do the same.

What tools can help parents and leaders prepare youth?

President Gordon B. Hinckley: “My heart reaches out to our youth. . . . I hope they can share their burden with you, their fathers and mothers. I hope that you will listen, that you will be patient and understanding, that you will draw them to you and comfort and sustain them in their loneliness. Pray for direction. Pray for patience. Pray for the strength to love even though the offense may have been serious. Pray for understanding and kindness and, above all, for wisdom and inspiration” (“Great Shall Be the Peace of Thy Children,” *Liabona*, Jan. 2001, 67).

President N. Eldon Tanner (1898–1982), First Counselor in the First Presidency: “Parents must themselves read and then encourage their children to read and study the scriptures and seek for the right answers in the right places. Youth must be fortified in the home in order to meet the challenges and opposition they will face”

(“Right Answers,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1973, 6).

Gayle M. Clegg, second counselor in the Primary general presidency:

“Whatever your mother tongue, learn to teach and speak in the language of heartfelt prayers and joyful testimony so that angels, earthly and heavenly, can encircle and minister to us. We need gospel mentors who speak the language of praise and friendship. . . . We should smile upon [children] and wrap them in the blanket of our affection throughout the great journey in the universal language of love” (“The Language of Love,” *Liabona*, July 2002, 76).

How can a testimony help youth take their gospel knowledge from principle to practice?

Moroni 7:33: “If ye will have faith in me ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing is expedient in me.”

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “To gain unshakable faith in Jesus Christ is to flood your life with brilliant light. You are no longer alone to struggle with challenges you know you cannot resolve or control yourself” (“Obtaining Help from the Lord,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 86).

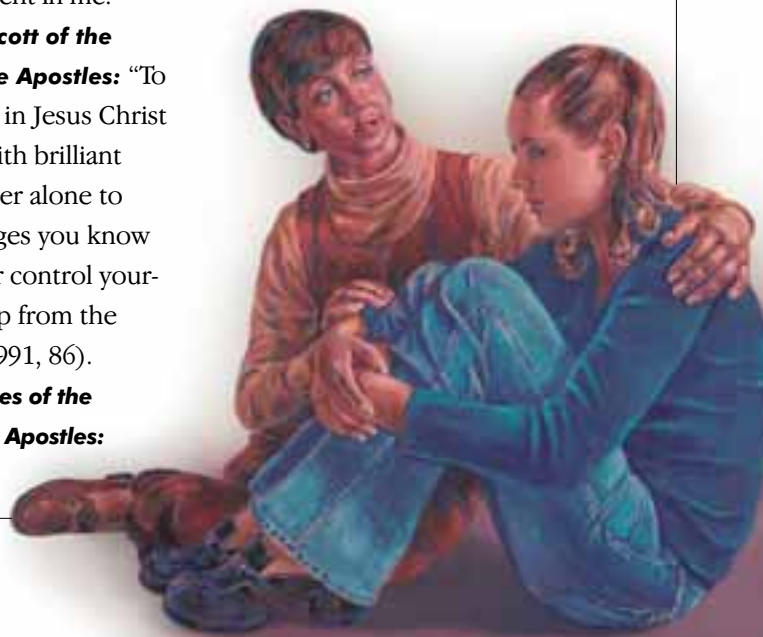
Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “When I was a boy, I

used to ride my bicycle home from basketball practice at night. I would connect a small pear-shaped generator to my bicycle tire. Then as I pedaled, the tire would turn a tiny rotor, which produced electricity and emitted a single, welcome beam of light. It was a simple but effective mechanism. But I had to pedal to make it work! . . .

“The generation of spiritual light comes from daily spiritual pedaling. It comes from praying, studying the scriptures, fasting, and serving—from living the gospel. . . .

“The covenant we make at baptism and renew as we partake of the sacrament—to take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ, always remember Him, and keep His commandments—includes the promise that we will always have His Spirit, that we will always have that light to be with us” (“Out of Darkness into His Marvelous Light,” *Liabona*, July 2002, 78). ■

For additional information, see For the Strength of Youth (item no. 36550).



OUR GREATEST HAPPINESS

Sometimes we give the least to those who should matter most in our lives—our families. Here's what the modern-day prophets have said to help us turn our hearts toward our greatest joy.

All of the modern-day prophets have taught the importance of families. They understood that our greatest happiness in this life comes from our families. But to achieve this happiness, we have to work to strengthen our families each day. Here are some suggestions from each of the modern-day prophets on how to make your family a happy one.

KEEP AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

Joseph Smith (1805–44)

First President of the Church

“A man filled with the love of God, is not content with blessing his family alone, but ranges through the whole world, anxious to bless the whole human race.”¹

Harold B. Lee (1899–1973)

Eleventh President of the Church

“The most important of the Lord’s work you will ever do will be within the walls of your own homes.”²

Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994)

Thirteenth President of the Church

“There can be no genuine happiness separate and apart from the home. The sweetest influences and associations of life are there.”³





Joseph Smith



Brigham Young



John Taylor



Wilford Woodruff



Lorenzo Snow



Joseph F. Smith



Heber J. Grant



George Albert Smith



David O. McKay



Joseph Fielding Smith

HONOR YOUR PARENTS

Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901)

Fifth President of the Church

“I would plead with you, my young brethren and sisters, to honor your fathers and your mothers, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord hath given to them and to you. Be obedient and loving to them.”⁴

Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985)

Twelfth President of the Church

“If we truly honor our parents as we are commanded to do, we will seek to emulate their best characteristics and to fulfill their highest aspirations for us. Nothing we could give them materially would be more prized than our righteous living.”⁵

PARTICIPATE IN FAMILY PRAYER

John Taylor (1808–87)

Third President of the Church

“Do not forget to call upon the Lord in your family circles, dedicating yourselves and all you have to God every day of your lives; and seek to do right, and cultivate the spirit of union and love, and the peace and blessing of the Living God will be with us, and He will lead us in the paths of life.”⁶

Heber J. Grant (1856–1945)

Seventh President of the Church

“I am convinced that one of the greatest things that can come into any home to cause the boys and girls in that home to grow up in a love of God, and in a love of the gospel of Jesus Christ, is to have family prayer.”⁷

George Albert Smith (1870–1951)

Eighth President of the Church

“[Do] we want our homes to be happy[?] If we do, let them be the abiding place of prayer, thanksgiving and gratitude.”⁸

READ SCRIPTURES TOGETHER

Howard W. Hunter (1907–95)

Fourteenth President of the Church

“Families are greatly blessed when wise fathers and mothers bring their children about them, read from the pages of the scriptural library together, and then discuss freely the beautiful stories and thoughts according to the understanding of all.”⁹

COMMUNICATE WITH LOVE

Brigham Young (1801–77)

Second President of the Church

“The greatest difficulty that exists in the little bickerings and strifes of [families] . . . arises from the want of rightly understanding each other.”¹⁰

“Anger should never be permitted to rise in our bosoms, and words suggested by angry feelings should never be permitted to pass our lips.”¹¹

David O. McKay (1873–1970)

Ninth President of the Church

“We contribute to an ideal home by our character, by controlling our passions, our temper, by guarding our speech, because those things will make our homes what they are.”¹²

Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–)

Fifteenth President of the Church

“There are good families everywhere. But there are too many who are in trouble. This is a malady with a cure. The prescription is simple and wonderfully effective. It is love.”¹³



LIVE FOR ETERNITY

Wilford Woodruff (1807–98)

Fourth President of the Church

“We want the Latter-day Saints from this time to trace their genealogies as far as they can, and to be sealed to their fathers and mothers. Have children sealed to their parents, and run this chain through as far as you can get it.”¹⁴

Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918)

Sixth President of the Church

“We are living for eternity and not merely for the moment. Death does not part us from one another, if we have entered into sacred relationships with each other by virtue of the authority that God has revealed to the children of men. Our relationships are formed for eternity.”¹⁵

Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972)

Tenth President of the Church

“The primary function of a Latter-day Saint home is to insure that every member of the family works to create the climate and conditions in which all can grow toward perfection.”¹⁶ ■

NOTES

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Harold B. Lee



Spencer W. Kimball



Ezra Taft Benson



Howard W. Hunter



Gordon B. Hinckley



SPANNING THE Generations



BY SHANNA GHAZNAVI

Every family is different. And each of us has his or her own ideas about what an ideal family should be.

Stephanie Spann loves and appreciates her family just the way it is—even as she works to make it, and herself, a little better.

At 17, Stephanie is the youngest in her family. Her brothers, Wayne and John, have grown and left home. Her parents, LaRee and Ed, are great examples to her and a big support in her endeavors. Stephanie loves her family, and one of her biggest role models where family is concerned is her grandpa, Frank Arrowchis. “Of all the things my grandpa has taught me,”

Stephanie says, “family is probably the biggest thing.”

Stephanie’s mom and grandma are members of the Church, but her dad and grandpa are not. For Stephanie, having a part-member family has its challenges. “I think it would make it a lot easier to know I would live with my family forever. I’ve always planned on a temple marriage,” Stephanie says.

Stephanie’s dad makes time for family home evening with his family and supports her in her schoolwork and at sporting events. She loves that he is always there for her, and she hopes her family will be sealed



At Delicate Arch
Stephanie was handed
the Olympic torch by her
grandfather, a leader in
the Northern Ute tribe.



Above: Stephanie practices running the torch along the slick rock at Arches National Park. Right: Stephanie with her parents and grandparents.

in the temple someday. “I think he’s coming around,” she smiles.

The Spanns’ extended family is also close, even though they don’t live very close together. “Everyone’s always there for each other. We’re always calling each other to check up on each other,” says Stephanie. “If anyone has anything, like a program or sports, we all always go to it.” Another way she likes to stay close to her family is hanging out with her nieces and nephews. It doesn’t have to be anything big. “We go to

the park and feed the ducks. I just enjoy spending time with them.”

Passing the Torch

Stephanie has a special relationship with her grandpa. “He’s a good guy. He’s my hero,” she says. Stephanie and her grandpa do as much as they can together and with the rest of the family—ice fishing, hunting, camping, and working together on her grandfather’s ranch in Whiterocks, Utah. From her grandfather, Stephanie has learned not only the importance of family but also respect for others and for her Native American heritage.

As part of that respect for heritage, Stephanie, her mom, and her grandmother all work on genealogy together at the Bennion Utah Stake Family History Center. Stephanie has done the research and submitted many family names for temple work, and she is getting better all the time at doing research on her Northern Ute ancestry.

Recently her grandfather was chosen to represent the Northern Ute tribe in the Salt Lake City 2002 Olympic torch relay. When officials asked Frank, Stephanie’s grandpa, to suggest someone for him to pass the torch on to, Stephanie was the first to come to his mind. “She’s really involved in sports,” her grandpa told them,

“and I know she’s in good shape. I know she can do it.”

Stephanie smiles. “He’s always taught me that girls can do anything guys can do.”

Stephanie is a soccer player for her high school, so she was in great shape to run the torch. She credits her grandfather with helping her succeed there too: “My grandpa has the best work ethic of anyone I know. This work ethic has helped me in my commitment to sports, to my religion, and to my personal goals.”

When Stephanie received the Olympic torch from her grandfather under the picturesque Delicate Arch in southern Utah’s Arches National Park, it seemed more symbolic than real. More important than giving her the torch is the legacy of love her grandfather and family have passed on. She wants to continue that legacy in her own family.

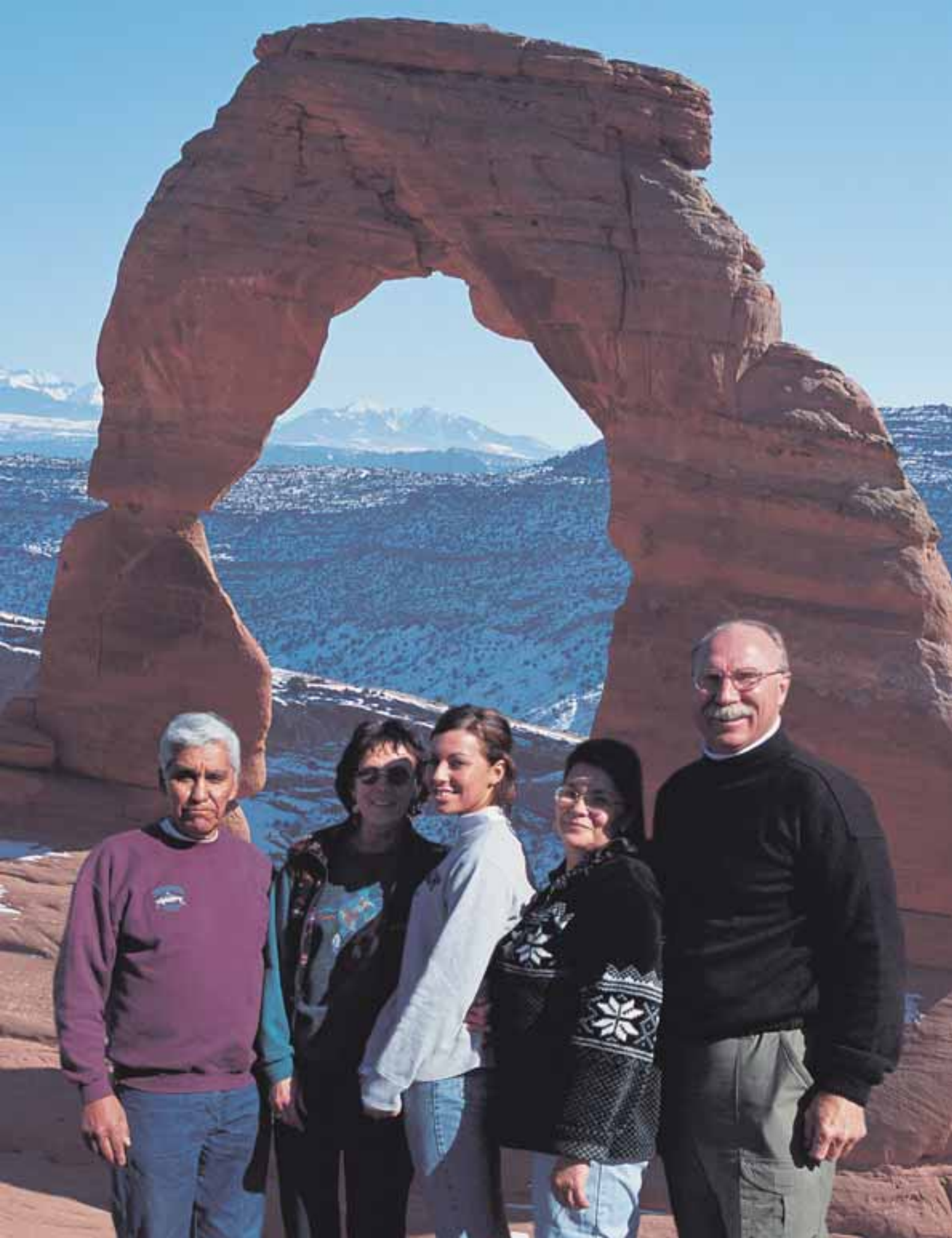
The Ideal Family

Stephanie realizes her family might not exactly fit the mold of the ideal family many of us picture. But she also knows her family is a good family, doing the best they can to love each other and to stay close to God.

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said: “Throughout your life on earth, seek diligently to fulfill the fundamental purposes of this life *through the ideal family*. While you may not have yet reached that ideal, do all you can through obedience and faith in the Lord to consistently draw as close to it as you are able. Let nothing dissuade you from that objective. . . . Do not be discouraged. Living a pattern of life as close as possible to the ideal will provide much happiness, great satisfaction, and impressive growth while here on earth regardless of your current life circumstances” (“First Things First,” *Liabona*, July 2001, 7).

That’s what the Spann family is striving for. Just as Stephanie was prepared to accept the torch from her grandfather and run with it, she’s prepared to carry on her family’s tradition of love and togetherness. The Spanns are a great family trying their hardest. Stephanie knows if they continue doing their best, they will continue to be blessed. ■

Shanna Ghaznavi is a member of the Church magazines staff.



A Rock-Solid Foundation for Marriage

In Helaman 5:12, every couple and individual can find solid counsel for building a lasting marriage relationship.

BY BRENT A. BARLOW

Toward the end of Jesus Christ's mortal ministry, some disciples inquired about the last days and His Second Coming. The Lord spoke of some of the conditions that would exist prior to His return. Of particular interest with regard to marriage and family relationships were these words: "And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. . . . And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matthew 24:10, 12).

The Apostle Paul taught that in the last days some would "be lovers of their own selves, . . . without natural affection" (2 Timothy 3:2–3) and "that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry" (1 Timothy 4:1–3).

The Lord has revealed that we are now living in the last days, even "the eleventh hour" (D&C 33:3), and we can easily see some of those prophesied conditions in our



world, particularly with regard to marital relationships. A report from Rutgers University released in July 1999 summarized the current status of marriage in the United States. It seems readily apparent that many other countries are experiencing similar trends. The report said: "Key social indicators suggest a substantial weakening of the institution of marriage. Americans have become less likely to marry. When they do marry their marriages are less happy. And married couples face a high likelihood of divorce.

Over the past four decades, marriage has declined as the first living together experience for couples and as a status of parenthood." The report concluded, "Persistent long-term trends suggest a steady weakening of marriage as a lasting union, a major stage in the adult life course, and as the primary institution governing childbearing and parenthood."¹

We have been taught that "marriage is ordained of God" (D&C 49:15). Yet in the face of such reports, some Latter-day Saints might wonder, along with other people in the world, how to build marriages that can survive amid contemporary social turmoil and upheaval.

The good news is that our marriages can not only survive but thrive when we follow principles and teachings of the gospel. Revelations, both ancient and modern,





Just as the foundation of the Salt Lake Temple provides a solid structural base, the stability of a marriage is dependent on the depth and strength of its foundation.

provide guidelines that can help people of any age or geographical area build enduring marriages. Even when his or her spouse is not a member of the Church or is less active, a husband or wife can still seek divine guidance to build a stronger foundation for the relationship by following these principles.

Secure Foundations

In attempting to secure or stabilize our marriages, we should first look to our foundations. Architects and builders know that the stability of a building is dependent on the depth and strength of its foundation.

Those who built the Salt Lake Temple realized the truth of this statement while the temple was under construction. Work on the temple began on 14 February 1853 but was interrupted during several years of difficulty for the Saints. When the work resumed, the builders found they needed to lay a new foundation. President Brigham Young (1801–77) stated that he expected the temple to stand through the Millennium, “and this is the reason why I am having the foundation of the temple taken up.”² The new foundation, 16 feet (4.9 m) deep and 16 feet (4.9 m) wide, was built strong enough to withstand the weight of the granite walls and roof that followed.

A solid foundation is also essential for lasting marital relationships. Husbands and wives need to plan from the beginning to give their marriages a strong foundation. Sometimes, like the builders of the Salt Lake Temple, they may need to go back and rebuild the marriage on a more stable foundation, committing anew to guide their relationship by gospel principles. At the end of the Sermon on the

Mount, our Savior used the analogy of foundations: “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).

The prophet Helaman in the Book of Mormon spoke of the sure foundation upon which we might build our lives and relationships with spouses and family members: “And now . . . remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall” (Helaman 5:12).

Foundation Principles

What would a marriage look like if it were built on the rock of Christ? The gospel offers many solid building stones. Following are a few of the principles to consider if we want to build on the sure foundation that will support not only present happiness but also lasting joy.

1. Keep the commandments Jesus Christ taught. A large number of marriages end because one or both spouses feel they are unhappy. How can people attain happiness in marriage? We are taught in “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” that “happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.”³

King Benjamin admonished, “Moreover, I would desire that ye should consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God” (Mosiah 2:41). Captain Moroni spoke “of the sacred word of God, to which we owe all our happiness” (Alma 44:5). And Mormon said of the Nephites who lived what the resurrected Christ had taught them, “Surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had

been created by the hand of God” (4 Nephi 1:16). No lasting happiness is attained without obedience to the commandments of God.

Prayer is one of the building blocks that support long-term happiness and joy. Numerous scriptures encourage disciples of Christ to pray frequently. One such verse has particular relevance for husbands and wives at the present time: “Pray always, lest you enter into temptation” (D&C 31:12). By kneeling together as husband and wife to say vocal prayers, we invite the Holy Ghost to remain in or reenter our lives. Then when the times of temptation or stress occur, we can better deal with them. The Holy Ghost can offer comfort and bring to our minds inspired solutions to help us deal with challenges.

Another key building block is regular attendance at Church meetings and, where possible, at the temple. The Lord has counseled, “And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day” (D&C 59:9). Husbands and wives may sometimes overlook the value of attending Church meetings together. In surveying a national sample of individuals in the United States, researchers found “that those who attend church weekly, regardless of denomination, are slightly more than one-third, or 36 percent, less likely to divorce than those who never attend.”⁴ The many benefits of attending religious services together as husbands and wives include partaking of the sacrament

“that [we] may always have his Spirit to be with [us]” (D&C 20:77).

2. Make marriage a high priority. Many occupational pursuits, outside interests, other concerns, and occasionally even Church activities and callings can relegate a spouse or a marriage to secondary status if we are not careful to arrange our priorities according to gospel principles. In 1831 the Lord revealed that we should keep marriage a high priority in our lives. He declared, “Thou



Building a marriage on the rock of Christ means grounding our lives in the teachings of the Savior and—as husbands and wives—continually approaching our Heavenly Father in prayer.

shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else” (D&C 42:22).

Of this particular verse, President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) noted: “The words *none else* eliminate everyone and everything. The spouse then becomes preeminent in the life of the husband or wife, and neither social life nor occupational life nor political life nor any other interest nor person nor thing shall ever take precedence over the companion spouse. We sometimes find women who absorb and hover over the children at the expense of the husband, sometimes even estranging them from him. This is in direct violation of the command: *None else*.”⁵

3. Practice frequent forgiveness and resolve conflicts quickly. Some believe that marriages are made in heaven, but it should be remembered that mortals choose their partners. Married people soon learn that their spouses, like themselves, have weaknesses and imperfections. For these and other reasons we have been admonished to forgive freely: “Wherefore, I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother [or spouse] . . . 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” (D&C 64:9–10).

Since it is nearly impossible for one spouse to meet all the needs of another, we would be wise to focus on our strengths and try to forgive or pay less attention to our shortcomings. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “It is a time-honored adage that love begets love. . . . I do not dwell upon your faults, and you shall not upon mine.”⁶

PRINCIPLES TO LIVE BY



“As I have performed marriage ceremonies for young couples, I have talked with them about their future and the things

that will go into building an increase of love. . . .

“First, I remind them to keep the covenants which they make as they are married.

“Second, addressing myself to the young man, I tell him to make her happy. If he will do all he can to make her happy, she cannot help but want to reciprocate and do everything she can for his comfort and welfare.

“Third, I stress the importance of clearing up any misunderstandings they may have. I remind them that it does not matter who is right, but what is right. . . .

“Fourth, and very important, I remind them to continue to love one another.”

President N. Eldon Tanner (1898–1982), First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Celestial Marriages and Eternal Families,” Ensign, May 1980, 17.

Another insight on building a marital relationship on the rock of Jesus Christ is found in Ephesians 4:26:

“Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” This particular verse has likely been the source of the advice often given to newlyweds, “Never go to bed angry.” My wife, Susan, and I were given this advice by a well-meaning relative when we were married. I joke that there was one time during our first year of marriage when we went nearly three days without sleep! Many married couples may realize, as we did early in our marriage, that late at night when they are tired is not always the best time to resolve conflicts. But undoubtedly the spirit of Paul’s counsel to the Ephesians would motivate us to resolve conflicts quickly so they do not persist and grow more intense over time. The Savior also admonished His disciples to resolve conflicts with dispatch so they could approach their God with pure hearts (see Matthew 5:23–24).

4. Enjoy wholesome recreation to reduce stress. The proclamation on

the family states that successful marriages and families are built on, among other things, “wholesome recreational activities.” When the early Saints were making the 1,300-mile (2,000-km) trek westward in 1847, the Lord admonished them to “praise the Lord with singing, with music, with dancing” along the way (D&C 136:28). One of President Young’s daughters recalled that he had taught: “Life is best enjoyed when time periods are evenly divided between labour, sleep and recreation. All men, women and children should labour; all must sleep; and if mental and physical balance is to be maintained, all people should spend one-third of their time in recreation which

is rebuilding, voluntary activity—never idleness. ‘Eight hours work, eight hours sleep, and eight hours recreation’ was Brigham Young’s motto.”⁷

Many of today’s marriages end at least in part because of stress, fatigue, and overcommitment. A husband and wife may try to do too much in too little time and with too little opportunity for regeneration. Consequently, spouses and family members often get only leftover time and attention. Perhaps this is one of the reasons we have been admonished not to run faster than we have strength (see Mosiah 4:27). This counsel was even given to the Prophet Joseph Smith in connection with his calling during the early part of his marriage (see D&C 10:4). Brigham Young’s eight-eight-eight formula—eight hours of sleep, eight hours of work, and eight hours of recreation (alone and together)—would likely help many contemporary husbands and wives.

Our House Will Stand

We have divine assistance to help us through difficult times if our lives are founded on the rock of Christ. The rains will descend, the floods will come, and the winds will blow. But if we are obedient and faithful, our house will stand. We have been promised that we will not be dragged “down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which [we] are built” (Helaman 5:12). We have also been promised that the Lord will lead us by the hand and give answers to our prayers if we seek His guidance (see D&C 112:10). Latter-day revelation gives this interesting insight: “I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise” (D&C 82:10). We, like Nephi of old, can be confident that when we make the effort to keep the Lord’s commandments, He will prepare the way that we may accomplish what He commands (see 1 Nephi 3:7).

By building on the foundation of the teachings of Jesus Christ, husbands and wives can make their marriages strong enough to withstand the trials and

tribulations that come during turbulent times. We can avoid having our marriages “go on the rocks,” as so many now do, if we build on the Rock. “And now . . . remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; . . . a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall” (Helaman 5:12). ■

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Brent A. Barlow is a member of the Canyon View Eighth Ward, Orem Utah Canyon View Stake.



The proclamation on the family states that successful marriages and families are built on, among other things, “wholesome recreational activities.”



Because of the rain, our program didn't go as planned. But for others the rain was a great blessing.

The Much Needed Rain

By Juan Carlos Rodríguez

That Sunday was not just any Sunday. It was the day of the annual children's sacrament meeting presentation. As a member of the bishopric I felt responsible to make sure everything went well.

Leaders, teachers, and Primary children had been preparing for months. The children knew the songs and hymns and their parts, and they were excited to share them.

On Saturday, the day of our

rehearsal, it rained all afternoon. Even though we gave rides to many of the children who live far from the meetinghouse, not all were able to attend. We went ahead with the rehearsal, hoping the rain would stop by the next day and more children would make it to Sunday's

presentation.

The storm continued Sunday morning. In fact, it was even windier than the day before. Suddenly I felt downhearted. The bad weather would hurt the attendance in our small ward. “Why doesn’t the Lord stop the rain?” I wondered.

Even though we picked up all the children we could in our cars, we still managed to get only about 60 percent of them. It was hard for me to be satisfied. The Primary president was worried too. We had wanted everything to go as planned, and we hadn’t planned for the unexpected.

But as the program began, with teachers taking the parts of the missing children, the Lord’s Spirit permeated the meeting. The 40 ward members who attended were especially touched by the testimonies of our little ones.

After the presentation a humble, thoughtful brother gave the closing prayer. During the prayer he said, “And Lord, we thank Thee for the rain, for we know it is much needed in many places.”

I kept pondering that phrase: “It is much needed in many places.” Then I realized the Lord knows precisely what He is doing. Our presentation had not gone exactly as we had planned, but it had succeeded in inspiring those present. And the rain that we had seen as such a trial was actually a great blessing to those in the many areas that needed it. ■

Juan Carlos Rodríguez is a member of the Azcuénaga Ward, Rosario Argentina West Stake.

Honoring the Lord’s Day

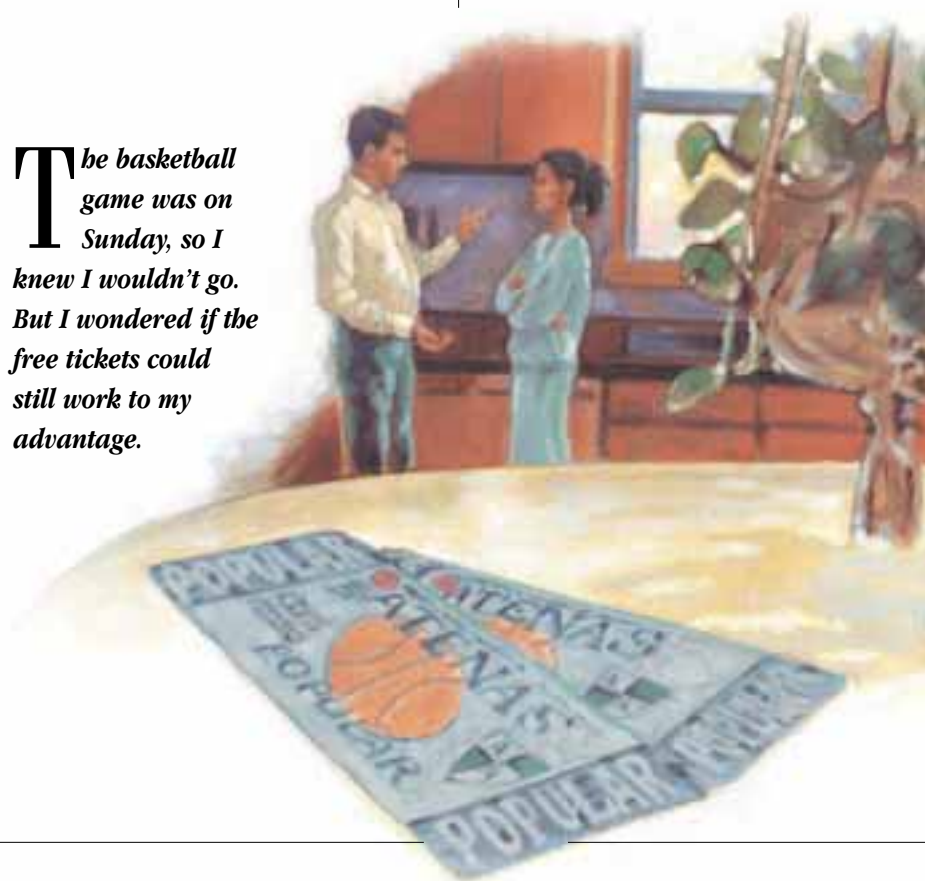
By David Oscar Sarmiento

When we ask ourselves whether we are keeping the Sabbath day holy, we may sometimes answer, “Yes. I attend Church meetings, spend time with

my family, read the scriptures, write in my journal, and refrain from working.” But one particular experience caused me to search my soul, asking, “Is this enough?”

Each week I travel from Octavo, Argentina, to Cordoba to buy merchandise for my business. During one trip, I found that for each purchase I made from one vendor, I could participate in a contest. The contest’s top prize was a ticket to a basketball game played by the top team in Cordoba.

The basketball game was on Sunday, so I knew I wouldn’t go. But I wondered if the free tickets could still work to my advantage.



When I won one of the tickets, I was excited—until I realized there was a problem. The game was on Sunday, so I wouldn't be able to go myself. But I quickly figured out how I could use the ticket. I had some advertising space on a radio station in my city, and I could give this ticket away in a promotion for my business.

The following week I made a purchase from the same vendor and strangely enough won another ticket to the same game. Now I could give away two tickets. I knew my promotion would be even more successful.

A few hours after winning the second ticket, I had an unusual feeling. It was a soft, quiet voice telling me I should not run the promotion. When my wife asked why I was canceling the promotion, I responded that if we couldn't go to a sports event because it would be dishonoring the Sabbath, I felt it would not be right to encourage others to do so through a radio promotion.

This experience helped me understand that honoring the Sabbath is more than just following a list of things we should and should not do. Although prophets have not spoken about the particular situation I found myself in, when I felt the Spirit's prompting, I knew I needed to keep the spirit of the Sabbath by helping others to enjoy it as well.

I am grateful to my wife for supporting this decision and to my Heavenly Father, whose Spirit helped me understand how to better honor

His holy day. ■

David Oscar Sarmiento is a member of the Octavo Branch, Cordoba Argentina South Stake.

He Took My Purse

By Rebecca Thomas

As a single woman, I am used to being careful about safety. But in the weeks before my trip to the Atlanta Georgia Temple, my usual concern escalated into a recurring nightmare in which a man mugged me, getting away with my credit cards, checks, and driver's license. My concern became so great that the day before leaving for the temple, I checked my wallet three times to make sure everything—including my temple recommend—was still there.

That same evening I went to a party with my wallet in my purse, along with a small mirror and the tube of lipstick I am never without. After parking my car and adding my keys to my purse, I started toward the church where the party was underway. I was alone in a big city, but I wasn't afraid. Having asked for the Lord's protection earlier that evening, I felt safe.

As I walked up a path, I sensed someone behind me and turned to see a man running at me with lightning speed. There was a sharp tug on my purse, a strong hand on my arm, and I heard, "Give me your purse!"

As I struggled to free myself, my purse flew across the broad lawn, landing in the nearby bushes. I cried out, but the man ran, retrieving my purse as he left.

After calling the police, I found an empty room in the church where I could send a silent prayer up to Heavenly Father. "I don't understand," I thought, fighting tears. "I was going to the temple tomorrow! Now he has my temple recommend! Father, why wasn't I protected?" Feeling helpless and hopeless, I went out to face the police officers.

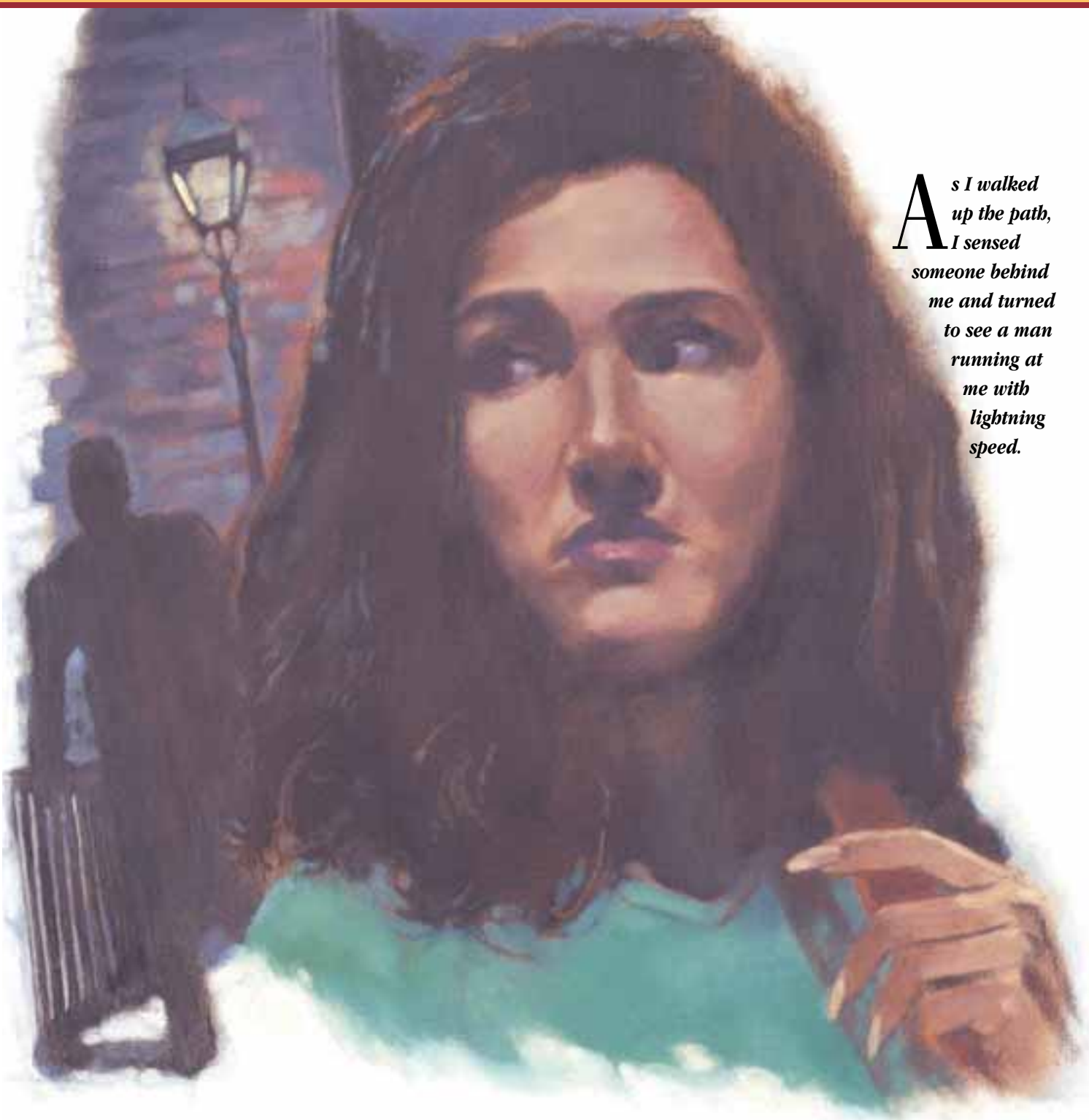
"I'm sorry, Ms. Thomas. The officers didn't find anything—not the thief, not your purse," I was told. But as the police officers and I walked to my car, an impression came to me.

"I'm going to look in the grass to see if anything fell out of my purse, OK?" I tried not to get my hopes up, but when I saw something metallic reflecting light from the streetlamps, I scooped it up triumphantly and shouted, "My keys! My keys are here!" I said a silent prayer of thanks as we started toward my car once again.

"Wait! I want to look in the bushes too."

Shaking his head, the officer escorting me answered with a half-grin, "Go ahead, but no one has that kind of luck."

He was wrong. Unable to contain my tears, I shouted from the bushes, "My wallet!" Inside it, everything—including my temple recommend—was intact. The police officers were



As I walked
up the path,
I sensed
someone behind
me and turned
to see a man
running at
me with
lightning
speed.

dumbfounded.

"I've never seen anyone so lucky,"
one commented.

"It's not luck," I answered without
thinking. "It's protection from God."

I doubted the police officers would
understand the importance of my
trip to the temple, so to break the
skeptical silence, I jokingly added,
"The guy did get one thing of value

though—my lipstick!" No one
laughed.

Feeling awkward, I glanced back
at the bush where I had made my last
amazing find. What I saw astonished

Questions & Answers

How Can I Reach Out to My Less-Active Brother Who Isolates Himself from Our Family?

Answers are intended for help and perspective, not as pronouncements of Church doctrine.

LIAHONA'S ANSWER

Behind this question lies the fundamental issue of agency. Sometimes when our loved ones stray from the gospel and the family, we feel so concerned that we may want to pressure

or even force them to return. But this is not only impossible; it is contrary to the Lord's plan.

When we try to compel someone to return to the gospel path, we are

using the exact strategy Lucifer proposed in the premortal world to “redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost” (Moses 4:1). Agency may seem like a difficult principle because it allows for bad choices and for grief and pain. But forced obedience can never build a godlike character; only obedience freely chosen can lead to eternal life.

Understanding the need for agency, however, does not mean there is nothing we can do to try to bring back a lost brother or sister. The parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son suggest there is much we can do (see Luke 15). First and always, we must love those who stray. We must love them enough to serve them selflessly and to reach out to them even when they withdraw from us. Selfless acts of love given freely can build bridges between straying souls and other family members. Sometimes, like the prodigal son, those who have turned away from the gospel and their families



eventually wish for a way back, but they don't know quite how to go about it. If you are patient and non-judgmental, your love can be a bridge.

Don't be afraid to bear your testimony, but don't bear it in a condescending or accusing way. Be sensitive to the Spirit, and when appropriate share your feelings about the gospel, the Church, and your family. Show through your actions and attitude that living the gospel makes you happy.

Sometimes, though, a brother or sister may reject anything you say about the gospel. At these times all you can do is love him or her and make it clear that the choice not to go to church isn't a choice not to be involved with the family. Try to include your brother or sister in family activities that would make him or her feel welcome and valued. Remember that your brother or sister is a child of God and that Heavenly Father is doing everything He can to bring all of His children back into His presence.

READERS' ANSWERS

The first thing I would advise you to do is to pray for guidance. I would also advise you to get closer to your brother and earn his trust. He may tell you why he is not going to church. Then you can help him.



*David C. Vallejo, 16,
Choloma Ward,
Fesitranh Honduras Stake*

You could tell your brother how you feel about his distance from the family. You might also try to talk to him about familiar subjects. If you leave the doors of communication open and help him feel loved and welcome, he may come back to the family and the Church.



*Christine Whatcott, 15,
Salem Fourth Ward,
Salem Utah Stake*

Try to plan family activities your brother would enjoy. Take every opportunity to show him how much you love him. Pray for guidance, and ask Heavenly Father to soften your brother's heart.



*Bill Younkin, 17,
Huntington Beach Ninth Ward,
Huntington Beach California
North Stake*

You cannot force anyone to go to church, but you can fast and pray for your brother. You can talk about the gospel and remind him that he is someone very special—a child of God. It might also help him if you share your testimony. You can do these things, but it is up to him to decide what he will do.



*Madeleine Wable, 13,
Dortmund Ward,
Dortmund Germany Stake*

My brother isolated himself from us. Before I tried to win his friendship,



INSTRUMENTS IN HIS HANDS

All of us have family members or friends who need the gospel but are not now interested. To be effective, our efforts with them must be directed by the Lord so that we act in the way and at the time when they will be most receptive. We must pray for the Lord's help and directions so we can be instruments in His hands for one who is now ready—one He would have us help today. Then, we must be alert to hear and heed the promptings of His Spirit in how we proceed."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Sharing the Gospel," *Liahona*, Jan. 2002, 8.

I prayed for support in this great battle. Then I made a gift for him and wrote a letter telling him how much I love him and how great a love Jesus Christ has for him.



*Oscar L. Mackay López, 16,
Las Colinas Branch,
San Isidro Panama Stake*

Perhaps your brother is confused about who he wants to be and thinks he is satisfied with what he is doing, even though he is searching. The best thing for you to do is pray diligently and search for answers in the scriptures. Then show him how much you care. Try to spend time with him. Do good deeds for him. Even if he rejects your kindness, never give up. The Lord will bless you for your diligence.



*Stephanie O'Brien, 18,
Wichita Falls Ward,
Lawton Oklahoma Stake*

Plan activities that will catch your brother's attention, and encourage him to participate. Introduce him to Church members his age. When he starts feeling at ease with your family and the Church, tell him how much you enjoy being a member and how blessed you are.

*Pamela Kay M. Gica, 18,
Pateros Second Ward,
Pasig Philippines Stake*

I used to be the brother who withdrew from the family. My sisters'

examples of service, love, and charity were some of the many ways they showed me what I was missing. Tell your brother you love and miss him. Those words are powerful from any family member.



*Elder Franco B.
Ciammachilli, 20,
South Africa Cape Town
Mission*

For more than six years I isolated myself from my family. I thought my friends were more interesting, and going to church was not in my plans. Finally the missionaries taught me about goals I could set, about how to grow closer to my family, and most of all about God. They helped me understand that I have great importance in God's eyes.



*Sister Samantha Seiko, 23,
Fiji Suva Mission*

I know what it is like to have a family member isolate himself and not go to church anymore. The way to respond is with pure love, just as Christ loves each of us. You can reach out by sharing your testimony and telling him you love him. Pray for your family members and yourself to have the strength to love and forgive.



*Alyssa Hansen, 17,
Ridgefield Ward,
Vancouver Washington
West Stake*

The principal way to help someone like your brother who is not helping himself is to fast and pray for him. And the best scripture for someone who does not read the scriptures is your example. Ask leaders and friends who care about your brother for help. Sometimes a person outside the situation can see something your troubles do not allow you to see.



*Guerta Zwirter, 20,
Vitória Ward,
Vitória Brazil Stake*

Questions and Answers is a youth feature, and we hope to print a wide selection of youth answers from a variety of countries. Please mail your answer to arrive no later than 15 July 2003. Send it to Questions and Answers 07/03, Liabona, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA; or e-mail to cur-liabona-imag@ldschurch.org. Your answer may be typed or clearly written in your own language. To be considered, your answer must include your full name, age, home address, and ward and stake (or branch and district). Please include a photograph of yourself; this photograph will not be returned.

QUESTION: *I need to earn money for a mission and college. The Church teaches that we shouldn't work on the Sabbath, but almost all the jobs I am qualified for require Sunday work. What should I do? ■*

Did You Know?

Family Home Evening Introduced

In April 1915 the First Presidency—Joseph F. Smith, Anthon H. Lund, and Charles W. Penrose—introduced a formal family home

the Church,” the First Presidency wrote, “at which time fathers and mothers may gather their boys and girls about them in the home and teach them the word of the Lord. . . . This ‘Home Evening’ should be devoted to prayer, singing hymns, songs, instrumental music, scripture-reading, family topics and specific instruction on the principles of the Gospel, and on the ethical problems of life, as well as the duties and obligations of children to parents, the home, the Church, society and the Nation.”

The First Presidency concluded: “If the Saints obey this counsel, we promise that great blessings will result. Love at home and obedience to parents will increase. Faith will be developed in the hearts of the youth of Israel, and they will gain power to combat the evil influences and temptations which beset them.”

evening program. The program was endorsed for the entire Church in the June 1915 *Improvement Era*.

“We advise and urge the inauguration of a ‘Home Evening’ throughout



Test Your Knowledge

The Prophet Joseph Smith’s family was a continual support to him, and they loved each other very much. See how much you know about them.

1. How did the Prophet Joseph’s parents, Lucy Mack and Joseph Smith Sr., meet?

- Joseph worked for Lucy’s father.
- Lucy came to visit her brother in Tunbridge, Vermont, and met Joseph.
- They grew up on neighboring farms in Massachusetts.

2. Which of the Prophet’s immediate family members were witnesses of the gold plates?

- Joseph Sr., Alvin, Hyrum
- Hyrum, Samuel, Don Carlos
- Joseph Sr., Hyrum, Samuel

3. About which brother did the Prophet Joseph Smith say, “[He] possesses the mildness of a lamb, and the integrity of a Job, and in short, the meekness and humility of Christ” (History of the Church, 2:338)?

- Alvin
- Hyrum
- Samuel

Leadership Tip

You might not be in your class presidency or an officer at your school, but chances are there is someone who looks up to you. Make it a goal to be a good example to your friends and your brothers and sisters—an example of obedience, kindness, and Christlike love.



FROM TOP: ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL MANN, DIGITALLY ALTERED BY RANDALL J. PIXTON; PHOTOGRAPH OF FIRST PRESIDENCY COURTESY OF LDS CHURCH ARCHIVES; PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND, POSED BY MODELS

Answers: 1b, 2c, 3b

Using the June 2003 *Liahona*

Family Home Evening Discussion Ideas

- “Family Councils: A Conversation with Elder and Sister Ballard,” p. 12: One important purpose of family councils is to give all members of the family the opportunity to be part of the decision-making process. Discuss specific ways members of your family can avoid merely demanding certain behaviors from each other and instead work together to create solutions.

- “My Fathers,” p. 22: Some youth in the Church experience less-than-ideal home situations. In these circumstances, how can Church leaders help young people feel their Heavenly Father’s love and concern?

- “A Rock-Solid Foundation for Marriage,” p. 34: Discuss four building stones you can use in creating a foundation for happiness in marriage. Then identify ways you can apply these ideas.

- “Love One Another,” p. F2: President Thomas S. Monson tells of a family who could have been offended over a bishop’s forgetfulness but chose instead to forgive. Read the story together; then discuss situations in which you might have the opportunity to forgive instead of harboring grudges.

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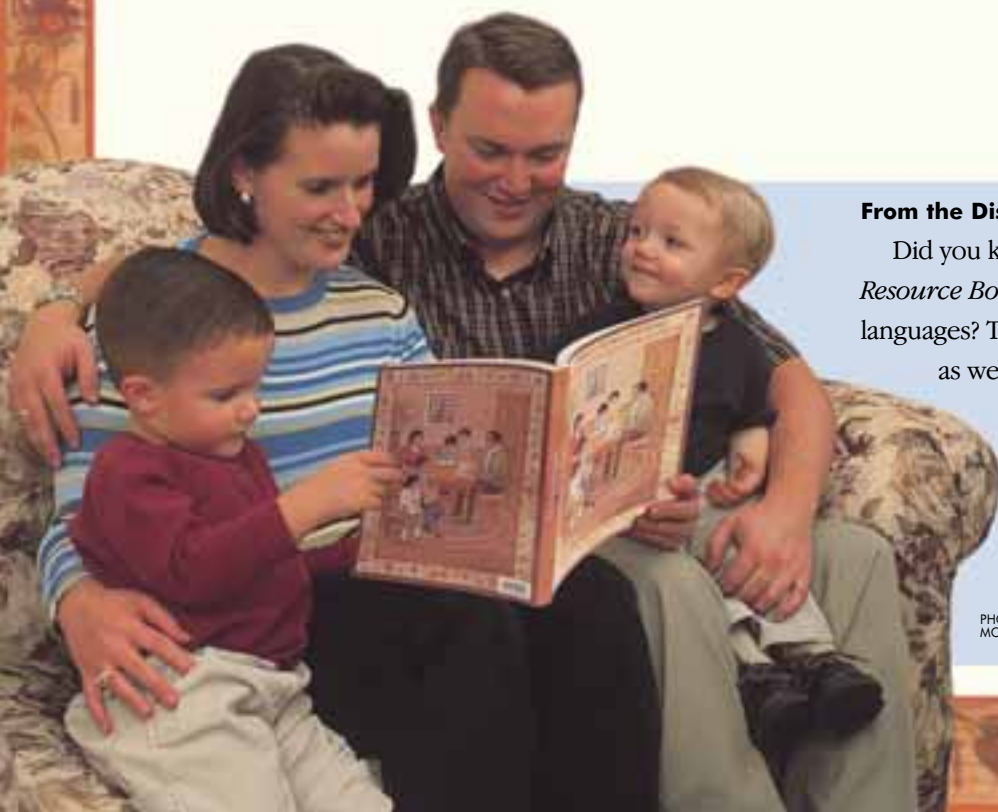
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From the Distribution Center

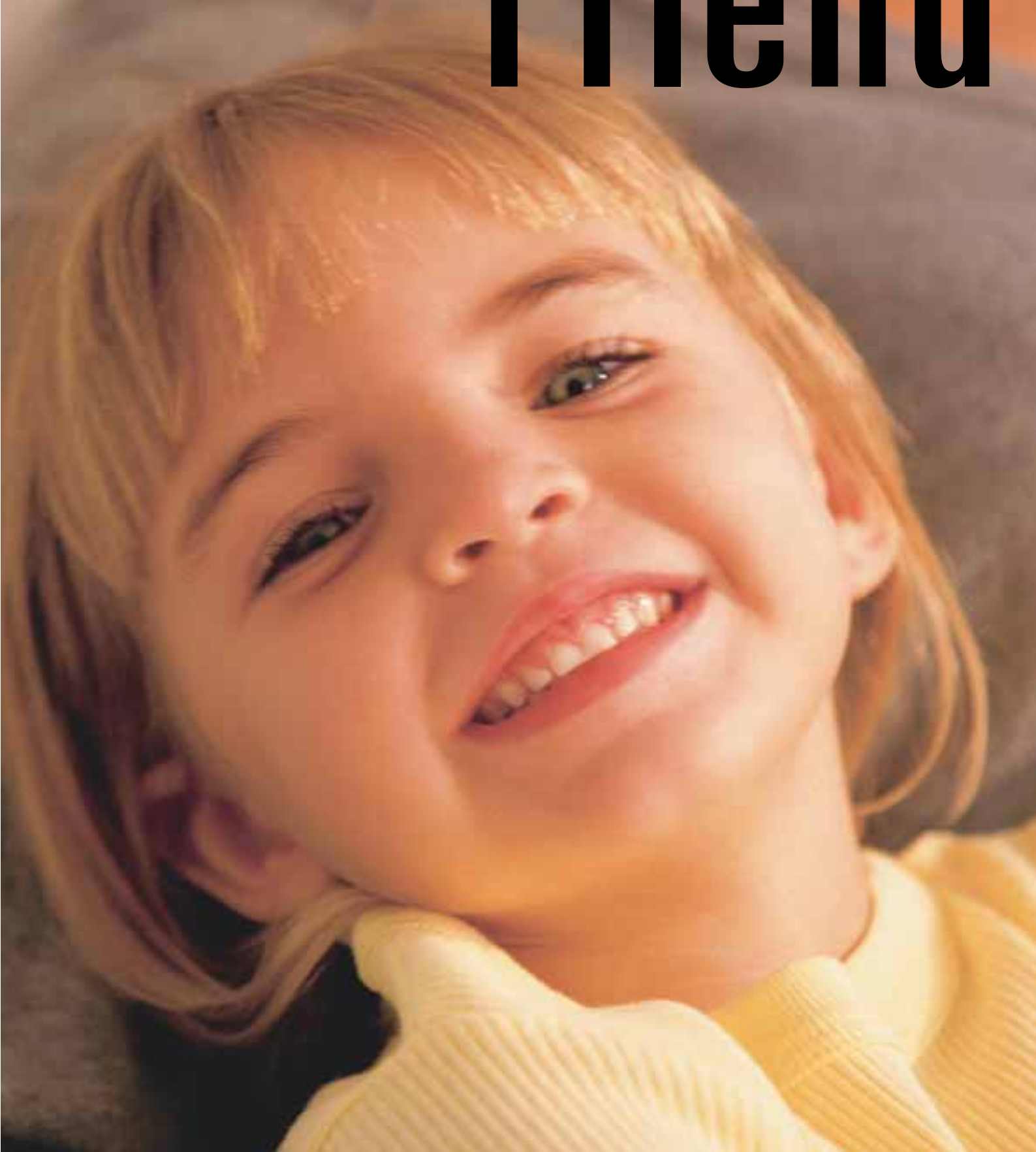
Did you know that the *Family Home Evening Resource Book* (item no. 31106) is available in many languages? This publication contains sample lessons as well as suggestions for activities and for improving family home evenings.

PHOTOGRAPH BY KELLY LARSEN, POSED BY MODELS; BORDER BY PHYLLIS LUCH



FOR CHILDREN OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • JUNE 2003

the Friend



Love One Another



BY PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON

First Counselor in the First Presidency

I am acquainted with a family which came to America from Germany. The English language was difficult for them. They had but little by way of means, but each was blessed with the will to work and with a love of God.

Their third child was born, lived but two months, and then died. Father was a cabinetmaker and fashioned a beautiful casket for the body of his precious child. The day of the funeral was gloomy, thus reflecting the sadness they felt in their loss. As the family walked to the chapel, with Father carrying the tiny casket, a small number of friends had gathered. However, the chapel door was locked. The busy bishop had forgotten the funeral. Attempts to reach him were futile. Not knowing what to do, the father placed the casket under his arm and, with his family beside him, carried it home, walking in a drenching rain.

If the family were of a lesser character, they could have blamed the bishop and harbored ill feelings. When the bishop

discovered the tragedy, he visited the family and apologized. With the hurt still evident in his expression, but with tears in his eyes, the father accepted the apology, and the two embraced in a spirit of understanding. No hidden wedge was left to cause further feelings of anger. Love and acceptance prevailed.

... In many families, there are hurt feelings and a reluctance to forgive. It doesn't really matter what the issue was. It cannot and should not be left to injure. Blame keeps wounds open. Only forgiveness heals. George Herbert, an early 17th-century poet, wrote these lines: "He that cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass if he would ever reach heaven, for everyone has need of forgiveness." ...

May we ... harbor no hidden wedges but rather remember the Savior's counsel: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."¹ ●

From an April 2002 general conference address.

NOTE

1. John 13:35.

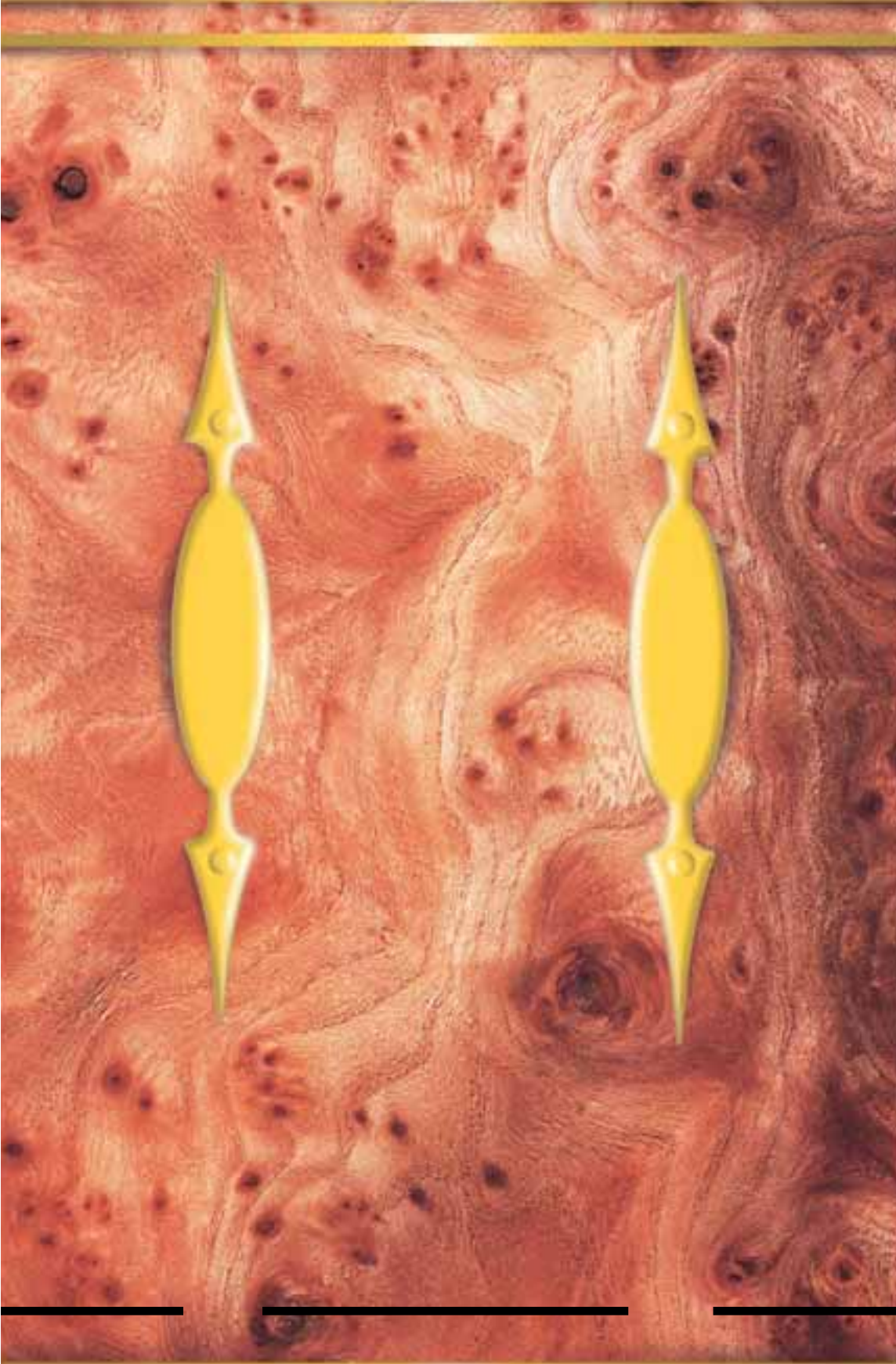
In a general conference talk, President Monson told of a tree destroyed by a metal wedge that had become hidden inside it. He then explained how hidden wedges of anger or resentment can destroy our lives unless we learn to forgive.



GLUE

GLUE

GLUE



I Know God's Plan

BY VICKI F. MATSUMORI

"For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).



Where do you live? In the city? The country? A suburb? Do you live on an island? In the middle of a desert? From your home can you see mountains? An ocean? A forest?

Who lives with you? Are you the only child, or do you have many brothers and sisters? Do your parents, grandparents, or aunts and uncles live with you?

Do you know that before you came to earth to live, you lived in heaven with Heavenly Father? It was there that you, "with many others, received [your] first lessons in the world of spirits and were prepared to come forth [to the earth] in the due time of the Lord" (D&C 138:56).

But there were more than just lessons while we lived in heaven. Elder Gary J. Coleman of the Seventy says, "God's plan included our premortal existence, the creation of this world, a time in the Garden of Eden for Adam and Eve, and the fall of man into mortality" ("O How Great the Plan of Our God!" *Ensign*, Feb. 1996, 15).

Heavenly Father told us during the Council in Heaven about a great plan of happiness. He said an earth would be created; a Savior would be provided; and we would be given agency, or the freedom to choose between good and evil.

Some premortal beings did not want to follow this plan, and there was a war in heaven. However, we chose to support Heavenly Father's plan, so we were given bodies and sent to many different places on earth to learn about the Savior and to keep the commandments.

Because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, if we choose the right, we will one day be able to return to live with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ again.

Plan of Happiness Viewer

1. Mount page 4 on heavy paper; then cut out the large rectangle and the picture strip. Cut slits in the rectangle on the heavy black lines.
2. Roll the rectangle into a tube with the slits at one end, and glue the tube together.
3. Slide the strip through the slits in the tube. Look through the tube to see pictures illustrating Heavenly Father's plan of happiness.

Sharing Time Ideas

1. Cover a painting of the Savior with a large piece of paper cut into puzzle pieces. Label each piece with one of the following: (1) scriptures that testify of Christ, such as Matthew 3:17; Joseph Smith—History 1:17; John 6:69; Matthew 16:15–16; 3 Nephi 11:9–10; John 4:25–26; (2) songs or hymns about the Savior; (3) paragraphs of "The Living Christ—The Testimony of the Apostles" (see Liahona, Apr. 2000, 2–3). Have the children take turns choosing a puzzle piece and reading or singing what it refers to. Challenge the children to think about ways to be like the Savior. Share Moroni 7:48.

2. Explain that knowledge is important to agency. Prepare pieces of paper with instructions written in large letters. Instructions could include "Repeat the first article of faith"; "Sing a solo"; "Lead the Primary in singing 'I Lived in Heaven'" (Liahona, Apr. 1999, F5); and so on. Place the papers so they can be easily read. Blindfold a child and have him or her take a paper, then complete the activity. Invite other children to choose, blindfolding some and letting others choose by reading which activity they wish to do. Discuss how they made a good choice when they knew what they were choosing. Challenge them to listen to parents and leaders to learn about choices that will lead them back to Heavenly Father. ●

JESUS IS RISEN



Mary Magdalene, one of Jesus' friends, went to the tomb and was surprised to see that the stone was not in front of it and that Jesus' body was not in it.

John 20:1-2



ILLUSTRATIONS BY PAUL MANN

The Savior's body was in the tomb until Sunday morning, when two angels came and rolled the stone away from the tomb.

Matthew 28:2; Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 28:2



She ran to tell Peter and John that someone had taken the Savior's body. She did not know where it was.

John 20:2



Peter and John ran to the tomb. They looked into the tomb and saw the cloth Jesus had been buried in, but Jesus' body was not there.

John 20:3-7



Not knowing what had happened to Jesus or what else to do, Peter and John went home. Mary Magdalene stayed by the tomb, crying. When she looked into the tomb, two angels were there.

John 20:9-12



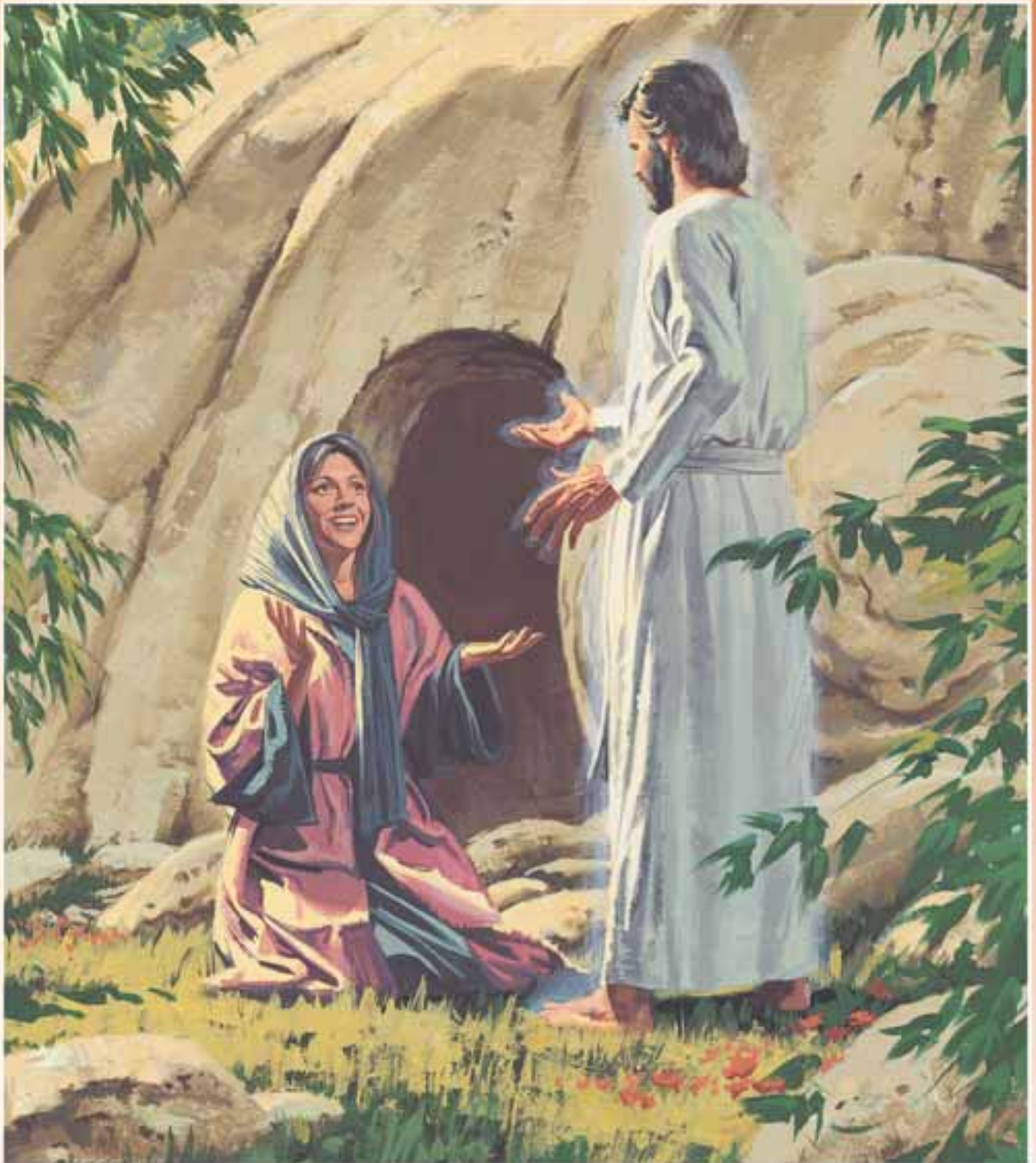
They asked Mary Magdalene why she was crying. She said that someone had taken Jesus' body away. She did not know where it was.

John 20:13



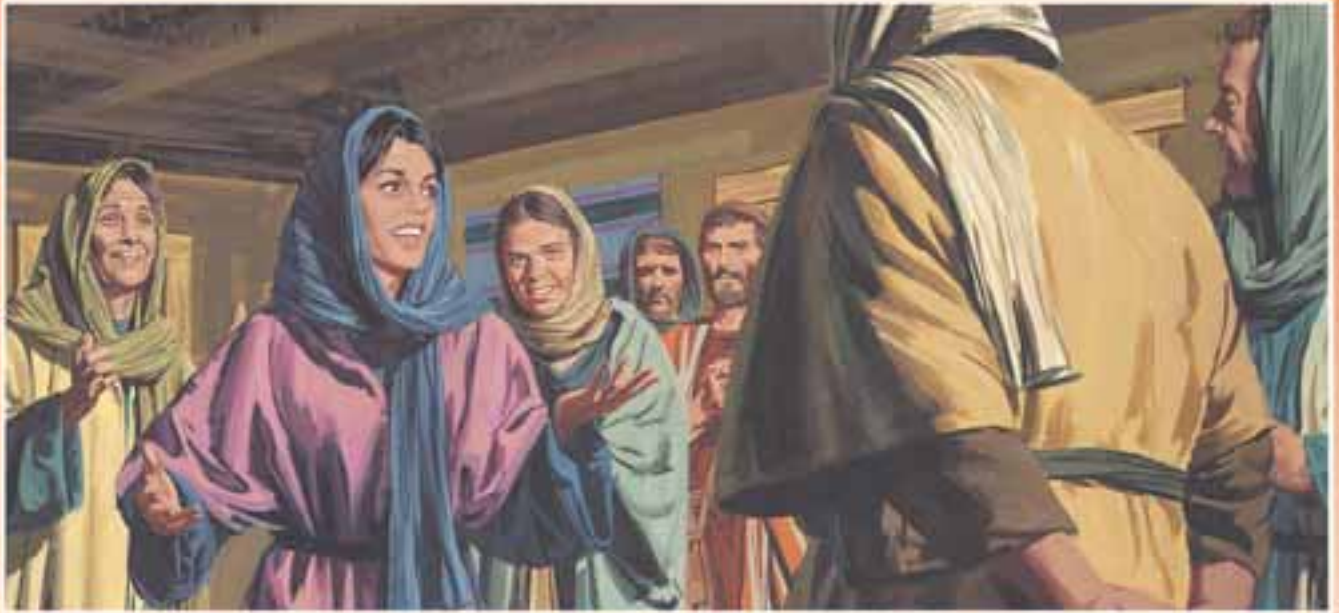
She turned around and saw the Savior but did not recognize Him. She thought He was the gardener. He asked her why she was crying and whom she was looking for.

John 20:14-15



Then Jesus said, "Mary," and she knew who He was. He asked her to tell the Apostles that He was resurrected.

John 20:16-17



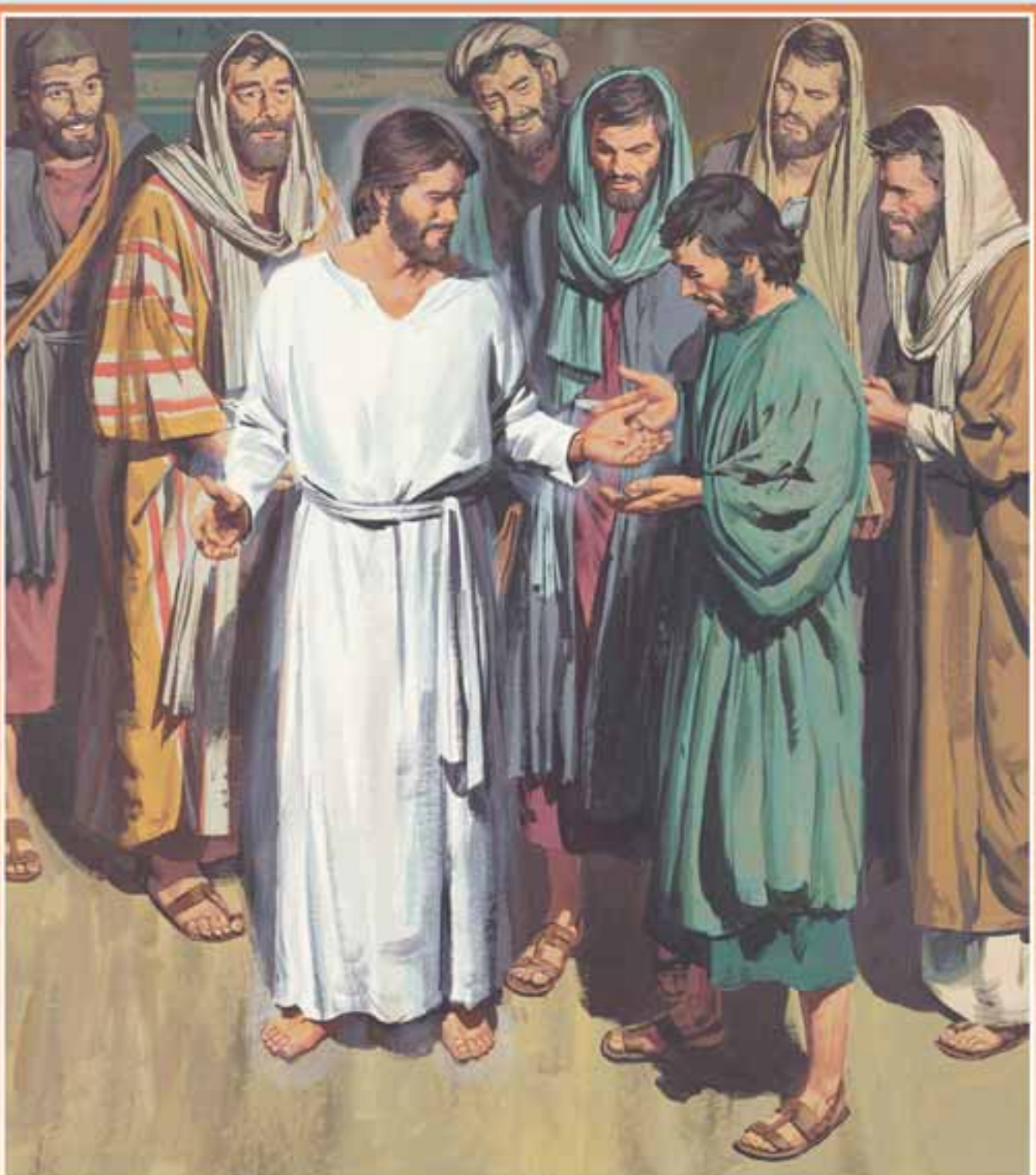
Mary Magdalene and other women went and told the Apostles that Jesus was resurrected. At first, the Apostles did not believe them.

Luke 24:10-11



Later, while the Apostles were talking to each other, Jesus came into the room. They were afraid. They still thought He was dead.

Luke 24:36-37



The Savior told them to touch His hands and feet. He was resurrected—His body and spirit had come together again.

Luke 24:38–40



The Apostles were happy to see Him. He asked them for food, and they gave Him some fish and some honey. He ate it.

Luke 24:41-43



Jesus Christ was the first person to be resurrected. Many other people were resurrected after Jesus. Many people saw them. Jesus had said, "I am the resurrection, and the life." Because He overcame death, we will all be resurrected someday.

Matthew 27:52-53; John 11:25

Isaac's Talk

"We speak [what] we do know" (John 3:11).

BY DAWN NELSON

A True Story ILLUSTRATIONS BY BETH M. WHITTAKER

Isaac could tell that his Primary class was almost over because he could hear people moving around outside the door. Sure enough, his teacher asked someone to say the prayer.

As soon as he said, "Amen," Isaac stood up and hurried to the door. He liked his Primary class, but he was always eager to see his mom and dad and little brother, Luke. Before he could get the door opened, however, his teacher said, "Isaac, would you come here for a minute, please?"

"Sure," Isaac answered as Sister Nelson called a few more kids over to her chair. Sister Nelson held out some little pieces of paper to him and the others. "Will you please give a talk in opening exercises next week?" she asked him.

"Oh, OK." Isaac was five now, so he could see that his name was written on the paper with a lot of other words. He didn't try to read them—he was sure they just said stuff about his talk. He had said yes because he always tried to do what his teacher wanted him to do, but he was scared to talk to the whole Primary. He knew that even the youngest children took turns giving talks, scriptures, and prayers, but he couldn't remember doing any of those before.

He thought about the talks other children had given. Sometimes when a really little child got up, he or she ended up being too scared to say anything and his or her mom or dad had to give the talk! Sometimes children read stories for talks, but Isaac couldn't read that well yet.

Some of the other talks were so hard to understand that he forgot to even listen. He couldn't imagine what kind of a talk he could give when he was only five!

"Oh, well," he said to himself, "maybe she'll forget she asked me." He stood in the doorway and soon saw his mom and Luke coming toward him from the nursery room. "Hi, Mom!" he said, giving her a big hug.

"What's this?" Mom asked, taking the paper out of his hand. "Wow! You get to give a talk next week."

Isaac tried to smile, and he nodded his head a little. Maybe Mom would forget too, he hoped.

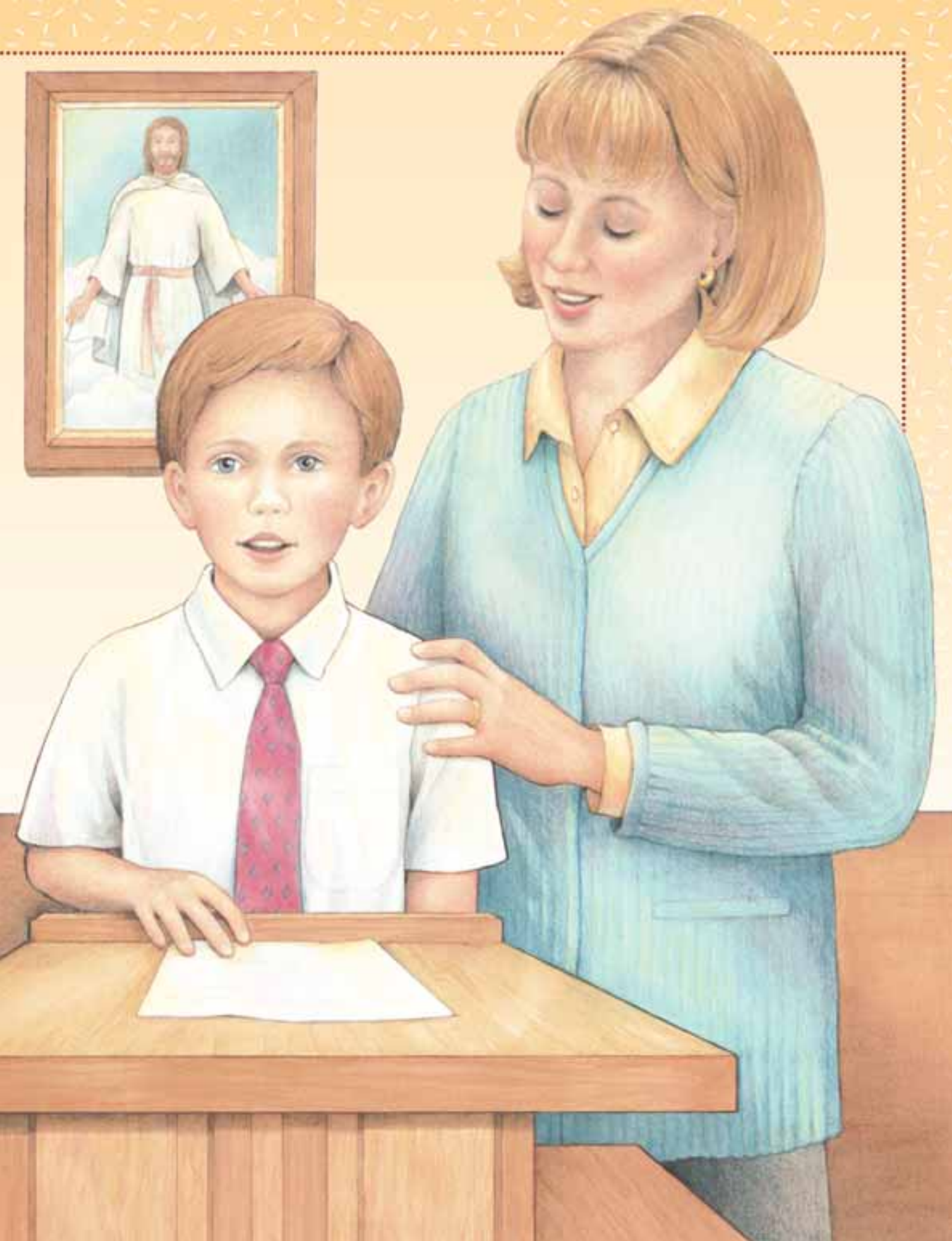
On the way home, Mom told Dad about Isaac's talk. "How exciting!" Dad said. "We'll be sure to come hear you, Isaac. Do you want Mom or me to help you give your talk?"

Somebody could help him with his talk? He suddenly felt a lot better about it. "Mom, I guess," he said.

"OK," Mom answered. "We'll start working on it soon."

Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday went by, and Isaac forgot all about the talk. But on Wednesday,





Mom said, "Isaac, let's get your Primary talk ready!"

"Oh, no!" he said to himself. "She remembered." He walked slowly over to where Mom sat holding a pen and notebook. His stomach felt funny. "I don't really want to give a talk, Mom. I don't know how, and I'm scared."

"It will be all right. Let's just talk about it for a minute." Mom put her arm around his shoulders. "Your talk is supposed to be about faith in Jesus Christ. What do you think faith is?"

Isaac remembered his Primary teacher talking about faith, and Mom and Dad talking about it in family home evening. But he was pretty sure he didn't know enough about it to give a whole talk. "Is it like praying and keeping the commandments?" he asked, his forehead wrinkled with worry.

Mom wrote something in the notebook. "Sure," she said. "Why do we pray and keep the commandments?"

"Because Jesus and Heavenly Father want us to." That was an easy question.

Mom wrote something else down. "What happens to your faith when you pray and keep the commandments?"

"It grows." He remembered his teacher saying that choosing the right helps your faith grow.

"How do you feel when it grows, Isaac? How do you feel when you pray and keep the commandments?"

"Happy!" Isaac wished it was as easy to give a talk about faith as it was to talk with his mom about it.

"Just a few more questions," Mom said. "Do you believe in Jesus Christ?" When he nodded, Mom asked, "Why?"

"Because the scriptures say He lives." Isaac had a nice feeling inside when he talked about Jesus. He could feel Jesus loving him. He smiled and leaned against his mom while she wrote.

Suddenly Mom surprised him by saying, "OK! You've finished writing your talk! Now let's practice giving it."

On Sunday morning, Isaac stepped carefully to the front of the Primary room. He unfolded the paper his

mom had written on when she asked him questions. His answers were his talk! He had practiced giving it to Dad a few times. Now Mom moved to his side and began whispering the questions he had answered before. Isaac gave his talk in his very own words:

"Faith in Jesus Christ means praying and keeping the commandments. We pray and keep the commandments because Heavenly Father and Jesus want us to. When we do, our faith grows. I feel happy when I pray and keep the commandments, and my faith grows. I believe in Jesus Christ because the scriptures say He lives. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen."

He saw Dad smile at him from the back of the room, and everyone was quiet—they had been listening! When he walked past his teacher, he saw that she was happy. He felt really good inside. He had given a talk that was really his, and he was sure that Jesus was happy about it too! ●



"Most people . . . come to church . . . seeking a spiritual experience. . . . Those of us who are called upon to speak . . . have an obligation to help provide that, as best we possibly can. We can only do that if we ourselves are striving to know God, if we ourselves are continually seeking the light of His Only Begotten Son. Then, if our hearts are right, . . . if we have prayed . . . and prepared and worried until we don't know what more we can do, God can say to us as He did to Alma and the sons of Mosiah: 'Lift up thy head and rejoice. . . . I will give unto you success' [Alma 8:15; 26:27]."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "A Teacher Come from God," *Ensign*, May 1998, 26.

Heavenly Father's Plan

BY ELDER RICHARD G. SCOTT
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

One of the most [thrilling] moments of your life—when you were filled with anticipation, excitement, and gratitude—you are not able to remember. That experience occurred in the premortal life when you were informed that finally your time had come to leave the spirit world to dwell on earth with a mortal body. . . .

. . . You had been reserved to come when the fulness of the gospel is on earth. You arrived when His Church and the priesthood authority to perform the sacred temple ordinances are in place. You anticipated being born into a home where parents would be expected to love, nurture, strengthen, and teach you truths. You knew that in time you would have the opportunity to form your own eternal family as husband or wife, father or mother. Oh, how you must have rejoiced with that prospect. . . .

. . . Eve and Adam formed the first family.

God declared, "Therefore shall a man

leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave [cling] unto his wife" (Moses 3:24). They had children who also formed families. "And Adam and Eve, his wife, ceased not to call upon God" (Moses 5:16). The pattern of families essential to Father's plan of happiness was established, and our need to continually "call upon God" emphasized. You are in the midst of living that plan. . . .

Throughout your life on earth, seek diligently to fulfill the fundamental purposes of this life *through the ideal family*. While you may not have yet reached that ideal, do all you can through obedience and faith in the Lord to consistently draw as close to it as you are able. . . .

Put first things first. Do the best you can while on earth to have an *ideal family*. To help you do that, ponder and apply the principles in the proclamation on the family. I testify that the Lord lives. He loves you. As you live worthily and honestly seek His help, He will guide and strengthen you to know His will and to be able to do it. ●

From an April 2001 general conference address.



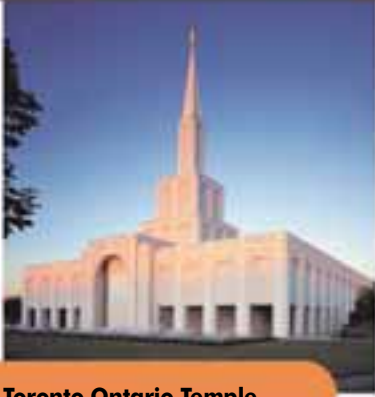
Did you know that Elder Scott is a nuclear engineer and he designed fuel for nuclear submarines for the United States Navy? He also likes to paint pictures. He loves the Lord and teaches us about Heavenly Father's plan.





In 2003 each issue of *The Friend* contains Temple Cards. Remove the Temple Cards from the magazine, glue them to heavy paper, and cut them out. Collect the cards to remind you of the importance of temples.

Temple Cards



PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND

Toronto Ontario Temple

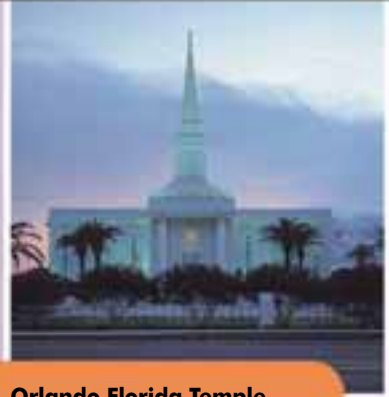
Dedicated on 25 August 1990
by President Gordon B. Hinckley



PHOTOGRAPH BY WELDEN C. ANDERSEN

San Diego California Temple

Dedicated on 25 April 1993
by President Gordon B. Hinckley



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK PHILBRICK

Orlando Florida Temple

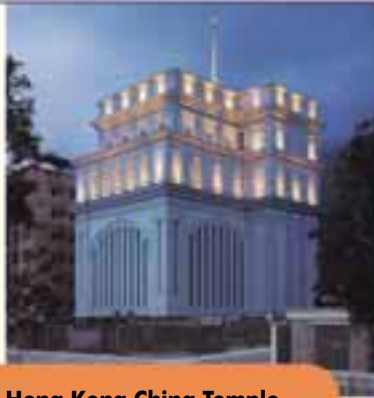
Dedicated on 9 October 1994
by President Howard W. Hunter



PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE TREGGAELE

Bountiful Utah Temple

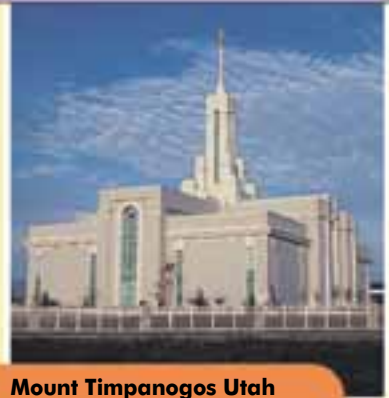
Dedicated on 8 January 1995
by President Howard W. Hunter



PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND

Hong Kong China Temple

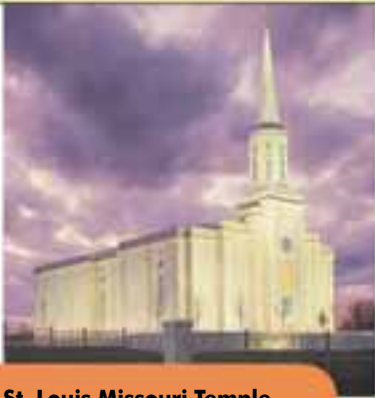
Dedicated on 26 May 1996
by President Gordon B. Hinckley



PHOTOGRAPH BY JED A. CLARK

Mount Timpanogos Utah Temple

Dedicated on 13 October 1996
by President Gordon B. Hinckley



PHOTOGRAPH BY WELDEN C. ANDERSEN

St. Louis Missouri Temple

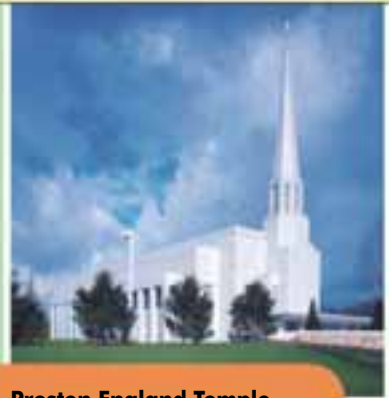
Dedicated on 1 June 1997
by President Gordon B. Hinckley



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN LUXE

Vernal Utah Temple

Dedicated on 2 November 1997
by President Gordon B. Hinckley



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN LUXE

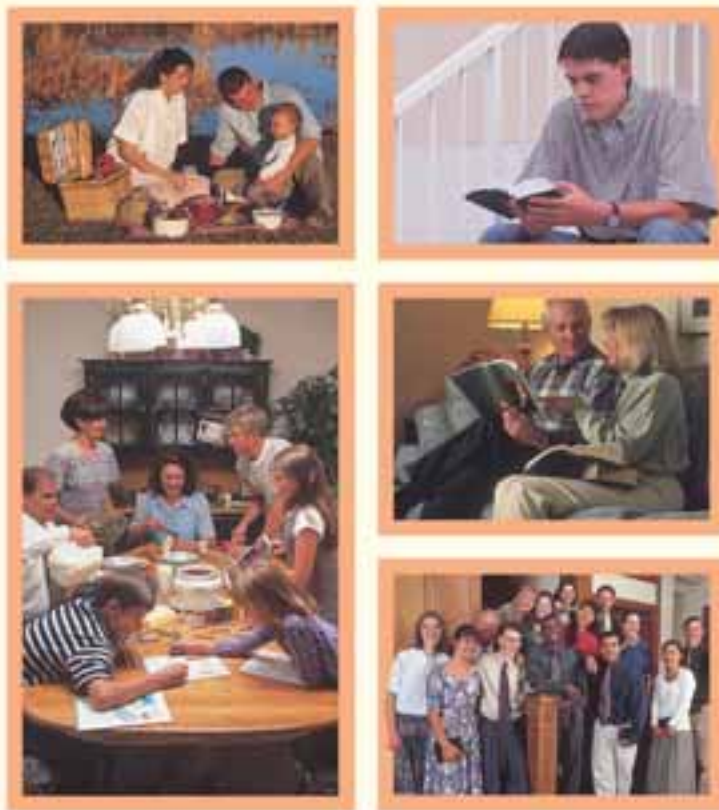
Preston England Temple

Dedicated on 7 June 1998
by President Gordon B. Hinckley



Hearts to the Fathers, by Derek J. Hegsted

“Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi . . . to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers” (D&C 110:14–15).



“Whether we are young or old, single or married, whether we have children at home or have become empty nesters, family home evening can increase unity and love in our homes. Family home evening is for everyone.”

See President James E. Faust, “Enriching Our Lives through Family Home Evening,” p. 2.