

# Liahona



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Revelatory  
Events OF  
1829

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Is My Child with a Disability  
Ready to Be Baptized?  
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Food Allergies: Making  
Church a Safer Place,  
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Defined by Ability,  
Not Disability,  
page 28

THE  
CHURCH  
IS HERE

# Oakland Township Pennsylvania,



# USA

This home at the Priesthood Restoration Site is a reconstruction of Joseph and Emma's home in Harmony, now known as Oakland Township.



10 Wards and branches, including the Susquehanna Branch, in the Scranton Pennsylvania Stake.

Miles (260 km) from the Priesthood Restoration Site to the Palmyra New York Temple.



15 Revelations received in Harmony, Pennsylvania, that are included in the Doctrine and Covenants.

Approximate percentage of the Book of Mormon translated in Joseph and Emma's home.



**1804** Emma Hale (later to marry Joseph Smith) is born in Harmony.

**1829** John the Baptist confers the Aaronic Priesthood on Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. Later, Peter, James, and John confer on them the Melchizedek Priesthood.

**1960** Monument honoring the restoration of the priesthood is placed at the site.

**2015** President Russell M. Nelson dedicates the Priesthood Restoration Site.



Learn more about Church history sites at [history.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.history.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

PHOTOGRAPH BY LESLIE NILSSON

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## The Baptism Decision

Recently, my husband and I were trying to decide if our seven-year-old son was ready to be baptized. He has autism, so we weren't sure if he understood enough to be accountable for this decision. On page 18, you can read about the many things we considered as we tried to make the right decision.

As a Church disabilities specialist, I know that many wonderful people with disabilities desire to feel included at church. To all our brothers and sisters who have disabilities of one kind or another and to their families, we say: We love you, we need you, and we want to learn how to better minister to you.

Several articles in this issue help us understand disabilities and how we can better foster inclusion in our wards and communities:

- Page 28: Elder Paul B. Pieper of the Seventy and his wife, Melissa, who have

a child with disabilities, give hope and encouragement to parents.

- Page 21: At the end of my article, you can find ideas on how to better accommodate members with disabilities in Church lessons and callings.
- Page F16: Parents can use this story in the *Friend* to help their children see an example of being a friend to someone with a disability.

As you read this issue, remember that "the worth of souls is great in the sight of God" (Doctrine and Covenants 18:10). We can help foster loving, inclusive home and Church environments so that all who want to come and be like Jesus have that opportunity.

With love,  
Katie Edna Steed  
Disabilities Specialist, Priesthood and  
Family Department

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By Marie Netzler

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### Being Single Reminds Me to Trust God's Whole Plan for Me

By Christina Cotterall

A young single adult shares how she found new hopes for her life when things didn't turn out as she planned.

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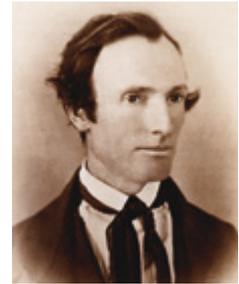


# The Restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood

On May 15, 1829, John the Baptist gave the Aaronic Priesthood to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. These excerpts of their recollections of that important day show what an amazing event it was.

“**T**he messenger who visited us on this occasion and conferred this Priesthood upon us, said that **his name was John, the same that is called John the Baptist in the New Testament**, and that he acted under the direction of Peter, James, and John, who held the keys of the Priesthood of Melchizedek.”

Joseph Smith, in Joseph Smith—History 1:72; emphasis added



Oliver Cowdery was also with Joseph Smith in 1836 when priesthood keys were restored in the Kirtland Temple.

“As from the midst of eternity, **the voice of the Redeemer spake peace to us, while the veil was parted and the angel of God came down clothed with glory**, and delivered the anxiously looked for message, and the keys of the Gospel of repentance. What joy! what wonder! what amazement!”

Oliver Cowdery, in Joseph Smith—History 1:71, note; emphasis added



Bible video depiction of John the Baptist baptizing Jesus Christ.



The Susquehanna River at Harmony, Pennsylvania, near where Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were baptized on May 15, 1829.

To learn more about the restoration of the priesthood and its essential role, see Elder Gary E. Stevenson’s article “The Priesthood’s Vital Role in the Restoration” on page 12.

## Lini Uilaau

Savai'i, Samoa



*Lini once struggled with feelings of anger and impatience. But when she and her husband joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Lini felt those feelings disappear as she lived the gospel.*

**LESLIE NILSSON, PHOTOGRAPHER**

I started studying the gospel and learned through the teachings of the Church how Jesus loved the children. He was always so kind to them.

I started trying to be more like Jesus. I now try to love all of my family members better. I spend more time with them and more time getting to know their needs. We read the scriptures as a family and pray together every night.

My heart is now much softer. I feel more love and peace and happiness in our home as we follow the teachings of Jesus Christ. I'm grateful for how the gospel helps me learn how to be a better wife, mother, and grandmother.





**DISCOVER MORE**

See more about Lini's journey of faith, including additional photos, in the online or Gospel Library version of this article at [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/6206](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/6206).

Read how Elder Neil L. Andersen teaches how our love for the Lord inspires us to become better: [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/6207](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/6207).

# Ministering Principles

# MINISTERING THROUGH SACRAMENT MEETING

*Sacrament meeting provides opportunities to connect with and minister to others.*

**S**acrament meeting is a time for spiritual nourishment and personal reflection on the Savior and His Atonement. As we partake of the sacrament each week, we are edified together (see Doctrine and Covenants 84:110). But some in our wards and branches bring with them heavy burdens or aren't there at all.

Here are a few opportunities for how we might use that sacred hour to minister to others and make a difference in their lives.

## **HELP MAKE SACRAMENT MEETING BETTER FOR THOSE YOU MINISTER TO**

The first step in learning how to minister is getting to know the individuals or families and their needs. There may be ways you can help make their sacrament worship experience better simply by learning more about them.



For Mindy, a young mother of twin toddlers, the simple efforts of her ministering sister made a huge difference in her sacrament meeting experience every week.

“Because of my husband’s work schedule, I take our twin daughters to church by myself every week,” Mindy explains. “It’s really overwhelming to try to make it through all of sacrament meeting with two busy toddlers, but



my ministering sister has taken it upon herself to help me.

“She sits with us and helps me take care of my girls every week. Just having her next to me means so much and really eases my anxiety in their moments of

tantrums or fussiness. I don’t think she’ll ever know how much her actions have impacted me at this time in my life. She saw my need as a young, anxiety-filled mother, and she helps make church a peaceful and happy place for all of us.”

### Ideas to Help Those with Specific Needs

- Counsel with elders quorum and Relief Society leaders about the needs of members.
- Leaders plan sacrament meeting talks to help meet members’ needs. If those you minister to would benefit from hearing a certain message, share the idea with your leaders.
- If you know that someone has a disability or food allergy that prevents them from enjoying the blessings of the sacrament, ask them for details and what accommodations could be made to improve their worship experience. Share this information with your leaders.<sup>1</sup>
- If someone you minister to or know about is homebound, either permanently or temporarily, ask your bishop if the sacrament can be given to them at home. You could even take notes during sacrament meeting and share them over the phone, through email, or in person.
- If someone you minister to has young children, you can offer to help them during sacrament meeting.
- If those you minister to don’t often come to sacrament meeting, try to understand and consider ways you can help. If they need transportation, you could offer them a ride. If they feel unsupported by their family, you could invite them to sit with you. You could make special invitations to help them feel welcome and wanted at sacrament meeting.

### REMEMBER, SIMPLE GESTURES GO A LONG WAY

Speaking about ministering, Sister Jean B. Bingham, Relief Society General President, taught: “Sometimes we think we have to do something grand and heroic to ‘count’ as serving our neighbors. Yet simple acts of service can have profound effects on others—as well as on ourselves.”<sup>2</sup>

In a small ward in Belgium, Evita often offers to translate for Spanish-speaking visitors and members during Church meetings. One time, Evita was introduced to someone from the Dominican Republic who was learning about the Church. He did know some English, but Spanish was his native language. So Evita offered to quietly translate for him in sacrament meeting so he felt more comfortable.

“Translating can sometimes make my Sabbath a little more hectic,” Evita says. “But following promptings to ask others if they need an interpreter definitely gives me a feeling of joy and warmth in knowing that I’m able to help them feel the Spirit and enjoy their meetings.”





### Ideas to Help through Simple Gestures

- Talk to your leaders to see who might need a little extra service during sacrament meeting. Or if you know of someone who does, make sure your leaders are aware of them.
- Sit quietly as you wait for the meeting to start. This will help “the other broken hearts and sorrowing spirits that surround us”<sup>3</sup> who need the peace that can come through reverence in a holy place.
- On fast Sunday, consider dedicating your fasting and prayers to someone you minister to who may need extra comfort.
- Pray to know if there is somebody who could benefit from you sitting next to or near them during sacrament meeting or if there is some other way you can help.

*It’s important to make sure that all who attend sacrament meeting feel welcome and spiritually fed.*

### SACRAMENT MEETING CAN BE A WELCOMING PLACE FOR ALL

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) taught, “Sacrament meeting is the most sacred, the most holy, of all the meetings of the Church.”<sup>4</sup> In which case, it’s important to make sure all who are attending sacrament meeting feel welcome and spiritually fed—especially new members or members who have not attended for a while.

Merania from New South Wales, Australia, befriended a woman who was learning about the Church in her ward. “She has become one of my dear friends now,” Merania says. “I love sitting with her in sacrament meeting every week, and I always ask how she’s doing and if there is anything I can do to help her.” After a while, Merania’s friend was baptized. The efforts of ward members, as well as the welcoming atmosphere in sacrament meeting, played a huge part in her decision.

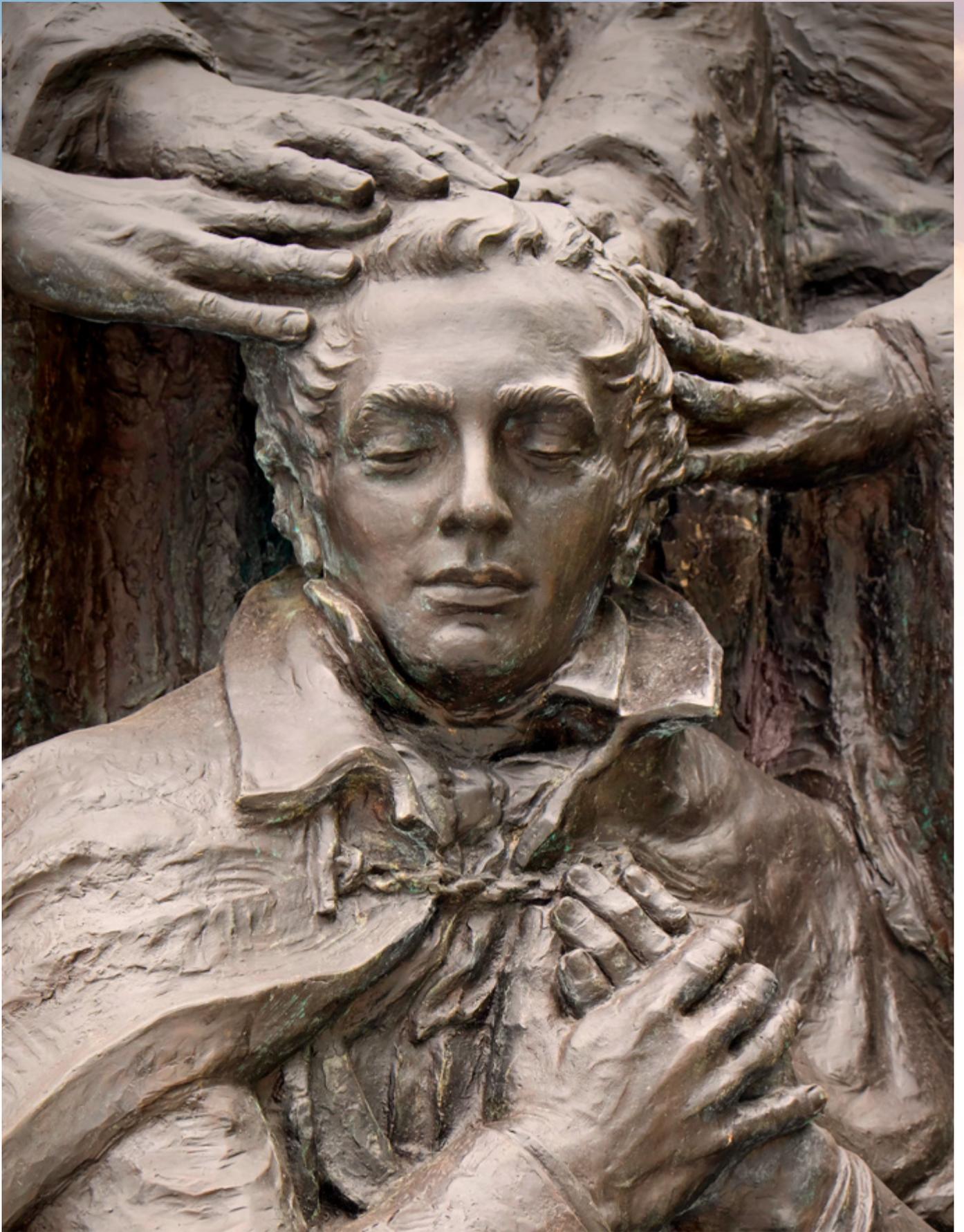
### Ideas to Minister to Returning or New Members

- When you are going to be speaking in sacrament meeting, you could invite friends, family, and others to come hear your message.
- You can look for and welcome those who are alone or who may need help. Ask if you can sit by them or invite them to sit with you.
- When the meeting ends, you could invite those you minister to and others to upcoming Church activities, to the temple, or to a social event.
- If someone you minister to attends sacrament meeting but hasn’t been for a while, you can ask them if they had any questions about what was taught. Tell them they’re always welcome to approach you if there was a term, story, or piece of doctrine they didn’t understand. You can look up the answers together if necessary. ■



#### NOTES

1. Consider reading “4 Ways to Serve Families with Disabilities” (digital-only article), *Ensign* or *Liahona*, June 2018; or “Managing Food Allergies at Church” in this issue on page 22.
2. Jean B. Bingham, “Ministering as the Savior Does,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 104.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Behold the Lamb of God,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2019, 46.
4. Joseph Fielding Smith, in Conference Report, Oct. 1929, 60–61.





**By Elder Gary E. Stevenson**

Of the Quorum  
of the Twelve  
Apostles

# THE *Priesthood's Vital Role* IN THE RESTORATION

---

Without the return of the priesthood to the earth, the Restoration would not have been possible.

**B**y April 1829, Joseph Smith had been receiving divine visitations for nearly a decade. The Father and the Son appeared to him in 1820 in a grove of trees near his home when he was 14 years old (see Joseph Smith—History 1:5–17).<sup>1</sup> The angel Moroni’s first visit occurred in 1823, followed by annual visits during which Joseph was taught and mentored until 1827, when he received the ancient record written upon plates that would become the Book of Mormon (see Joseph Smith—History 1:30–54).

For 18 months after obtaining the plates, however, Joseph struggled to translate the record because of harassment from locals, revolving scribes, and the loss of a portion of the manuscript. It was a frustrating and painful time for Joseph. (See Joseph Smith—History 1:58–62; Doctrine and Covenants 3.)

But everything changed in April 1829 with the arrival of a schoolteacher named Oliver Cowdery, who became Joseph’s full-time scribe. The translation of the Book of Mormon then accelerated at a rapid pace.

After spending much of his time during the fall of 1828 working his farm in Harmony, Pennsylvania, to provide for his family, Joseph turned his full attention in 1829 to the translation of the Book of Mormon. For a brief period, Joseph’s wife, Emma, and his brother Samuel acted as scribes. At the same time, Oliver Cowdery was boarding at the home of Joseph’s parents in New York.

Having heard about the plates and their translation, Oliver became intrigued and desired to know if these things were of God. “One night after he retired to bed he called upon the Lord to know if these things were so,” Joseph recorded, “and the Lord manifested to him that they were true.”<sup>2</sup>

Oliver immediately traveled the 140 miles (225 km) to Harmony to meet Joseph. Oliver was an answer to Joseph's prayers. Two days after they met in April, the translation of the Book of Mormon resumed at a rapid pace, nearing completion in an astounding 60 to 65 estimated working days. The whole translation was complete by June 30.

The Prophet Joseph may have considered that his whole work was nearing completion, having performed his divine mandate prescribed by the angel messenger to translate and publish the ancient record. Little did the

*While translating the Book of Mormon, Joseph and Oliver encountered numerous passages regarding baptism and authority.*

Prophet know then that he was not completing but rather just beginning his fundamental role in the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Few events in history compare in significance to what occurred in the spring of 1829. Oliver described this remarkable chapter of the Restoration as

“days never to be forgotten” (Joseph Smith—History 1:71, note). Beyond the miracle of the translation of the Book of Mormon, angels soon appeared and conferred priesthood authority on Joseph and Oliver. This revelatory season of translation and restoration redirected and expanded Joseph's view and paved the way for the formal organization of the Church one year later.

### Restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood

While translating the Book of Mormon, Joseph and Oliver encountered numerous passages regarding baptism and authority. Joseph had previously been told that “the Lord [would] give the holy priesthood to some.”<sup>3</sup> On May 15, 1829, Joseph and Oliver retreated to a secluded spot in a nearby sugar maple grove “to inquire of the Lord, by prayer, His will concerning me.”<sup>4</sup>

As they prayed, the voice of the Redeemer spoke peace to them “while the veil was parted and the angel of God came down clothed with glory, and delivered the anxiously looked for message, and the keys of the Gospel of repentance” (Joseph Smith—History 1:71, note). The angel introduced himself as John, “the same that is called John the Baptist in the New Testament, and that he acted under the direction of Peter, James and John” (Joseph Smith—History 1:72).

Joseph and Oliver knelt as the resurrected John placed his hands upon their heads and conferred on them the Aaronic Priesthood, “which holds the

keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins” (Joseph Smith—History 1:69; see also Doctrine and Covenants 13:1). They were promised that additional priesthood authority would be conferred upon them “in due time.” Joseph was named “the first Elder of the Church, and he (Oliver Cowdery) the second” (Joseph Smith—History 1:72). They were also instructed to baptize one another—Joseph to baptize Oliver first and then Oliver to baptize Joseph.

At some point that day, the two “repaired to the water” along the banks of the Susquehanna River to be baptized. They “were forced to keep secret the circumstances of having received the Priesthood and [their] having been baptized, owing to a spirit of persecution which had already manifested itself in the neighborhood” (Joseph



Smith—History 1:74). The river served as a main thoroughfare for commerce and transportation during the spring floods, with a steady flow of watercraft. It is possible that Joseph and Oliver waited until after dusk or took advantage of higher waters and found a more secluded spot on the floodplain.<sup>5</sup>

After baptizing each other, Joseph ordained Oliver to the Aaronic Priesthood. Oliver then ordained Joseph as the angel had commanded them. President Joseph Fielding Smith taught that it was necessary to reconfirm the initial ordination received under the hands of John the Baptist following their baptisms to “*reseat* those blessings in the proper order.”<sup>6</sup>

### Restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood

We have less detail regarding the visitation of Peter, James, and John to Joseph and Oliver to restore the Melchizedek Priesthood. Various interpretations based upon reminiscent accounts place the event from the spring of 1829, perhaps late May or June, to months later.<sup>7</sup> Joseph and Oliver never dated the appearance of Peter, James, and John, as they did for John the Baptist and the restoration for the Aaronic Priesthood. They may not have fully comprehended the nature of the priesthood or its divisions early on. Joseph’s understanding of the priesthood came incrementally.

From 1830 to 1835, priesthood offices were clarified, and quorums, councils, presidencies, and bishoprics were formed. Even the term *Melchizedek Priesthood* was not used as a name for the “High Priesthood” or “greater priesthood” (Doctrine and Covenants 107:9; 84:19) until 1835 (see Doctrine and Covenants 107:2–4).

Joseph did provide rough details about the location. In 1842, he recalled hearing “the voice of Peter, James, and John in the wilderness between Harmony . . . and Colesville . . . on the Susquehanna river, declaring themselves as possessing the keys of the kingdom” (Doctrine and Covenants 128:20).

This suggests that the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood occurred somewhere along a 28-mile (45 km) stretch of road between the Smith home in Harmony, Pennsylvania, and the town of Colesville, New York, where the Joseph Knight family lived. The Knight family were early Church members and devoted friends of Joseph Smith. They supplied paper and provisions during the translation of the Book of Mormon and later formed the core of the Colesville Branch of the Church.

In addition to receiving the Melchizedek Priesthood from Peter, James, and John, Joseph and Oliver were ordained “to be apostles, and especial witnesses” of the Lord (Doctrine and Covenants 27:12) and received the



*The restoration of the priesthood was central to the divine call of Joseph Smith as the first prophet of this dispensation.*

keys necessary to usher in the dispensation of the fulness of times. They now had the authority to administer all priesthood ordinances, including the bestowal of the gift of the Holy Ghost.

They also received “the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church” (Doctrine and Covenants 107:18) essential to organize the Church in April 1830 and received revelation to restore all things in their proper order. Spiritual blessings were manifested through miracles, healings, and ordinances performed by the authority of the priesthood. In 1836, additional angelic messengers delivered priesthood keys related to the gathering of Israel and temple work (see Doctrine and Covenants 110).

### Implications of Priesthood Restoration

President David O. McKay (1873–1970) taught that the most distinguishing feature of the Savior’s restored Church is “divine authority

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*May each of us be willing  
participants in the  
ongoing Restoration of  
the gospel by enthusiastically  
embracing and practicing  
what has been revealed  
to modern-day prophets.*

by direct revelation.”<sup>8</sup> Without the return of the priesthood to the earth, the Restoration would not have been possible. The priesthood authorizes the performing of ordinances and provides the framework for governing the Lord’s Church on earth.

Joseph formally organized the Church on April 6, 1830. Over the next few years, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles were organized. Under the direction of the President of the Church, priesthood keys are delegated to local leaders worldwide, allowing the gospel to “roll forth unto the ends of the earth” (Doctrine and Covenants 65:2).

The restoration of the priesthood was central to the divine call of Joseph Smith as the first prophet of this dispensation. In the preface of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord explained, “Wherefore, I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments” (Doctrine and Covenants 1:17).

Before the visit of John the Baptist in May 1829, Joseph focused on translating the Book of Mormon. With the restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods, he realized that his call included much more. Receiving authority from heaven further prepared Joseph to shoulder his responsibilities as “a seer, a translator, a prophet, [and] an apostle of Jesus Christ” (Doctrine and Covenants 21:1).

Elder Robert D. Hales (1932–2017) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles described what our lives would be like without the priesthood: “If the power of the priesthood were not upon the earth, the adversary would have freedom to roam and reign without restraint. There would be no gift of the Holy Ghost to direct and enlighten us; no prophets to speak in the name of the Lord; no temples where we could make sacred, eternal covenants; no authority to bless or baptize, to heal or comfort. Without the power of the priesthood, ‘the whole earth would be utterly wasted’ (see Doctrine and Covenants 2:1–3). There would be no light, no hope—only darkness.”<sup>9</sup>

Receiving priesthood ordinances is central to the Lord’s work in “bring[ing] to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). Baptism and confirmation, the temple endowment, and sealing for time and eternity are essential to our salvation. The ability to bind

and seal families in temples for those on both sides of the veil is possible only through priesthood authority and keys as directed by the President of the Church.

### **The Ongoing Restoration**

How might priesthood authority inspire your participation in the ongoing Restoration of the Church? We may not know what the future holds, but it is clear that the Restoration is ongoing. The Lord did not reveal every doctrine or ordinance, or impart all instructions to Joseph in the Sacred Grove, through Moroni on Cumorah, or at the organizational meeting of the Church. The Restoration did not occur as a single event. Rather, the Lord revealed things “line upon line” (2 Nephi 28:30) to Joseph just as He continues to reveal things to His prophets today according to His purposes and timing.

An unbroken line of prophets since the days of Joseph Smith has spoken on behalf of the Lord and continues to make known His will. Prophets see the wider view and receive specific direction for the challenges of their day. President Russell M. Nelson proclaims that we are all “witnesses to a process of restoration. If you think the Church has been fully restored, you’re just seeing the beginning. There is much more to come.”<sup>10</sup>

### **The Restoration and You**

May each of us be willing participants in the ongoing Restoration of the gospel by enthusiastically embracing and practicing what has been revealed to modern-day prophets. Examples include living the higher and holier law of ministering to our brothers and sisters.<sup>11</sup> And may each of us find enduring gospel joy through the home-centered, Church-supported plan to learn doctrine, strengthen faith, keep the

commandments, and foster greater personal worship, including a home evening that meets individual and family needs.<sup>12</sup>

We can prepare for the Second Coming of the Savior by accelerating the gathering of Israel on both sides of the veil.<sup>13</sup> We can do better at making the Sabbath day a delight both in our Sunday worship services and at home.<sup>14</sup> We can stay more closely attuned to the Holy Ghost by doing the spiritual work necessary to receive daily personal revelation.<sup>15</sup>

I testify that the heavens remain open and that there is much more to come as the Lord prepares us for the exciting days ahead. The restoration of the priesthood allows God’s children to administer and receive saving ordinances, and it authorizes modern prophets, seers, and revelators to direct the Lord’s kingdom.

Countless blessings come daily to the Church and its members because of the accessibility of the Lord’s priesthood. May we express our gratitude daily for the appearances of John the Baptist and of Peter, James, and John and for the return of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods in this last and final dispensation preparatory for the return of our Lord and Savior, even Jesus Christ. ■

#### NOTES

1. Joseph Smith, History, 1838–1856, vol. A-1, created June 11, 1839–Aug. 24, 1843, 15, Church History Library.
2. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 1:35.
3. Oliver Cowdery, letter to W. W. Phelps, in *Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate*, Oct. 1835, 199.
4. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 85. While long-held tradition placed them along the banks of the Susquehanna River, contemporaneous records indicate that they retreated to a grove of sugar maple trees on the north end of the property (see Mark Lyman Staker, “Where Was the Aaronic Priesthood Restored? Identifying the Location of John the Baptist’s Appearance, May 15, 1829,” *Mormon Historical Studies* 12, no. 2 [Fall 2011]: 142–59).
5. See Mark L. Staker, “Where Was the Aaronic Priesthood Restored?” 153.
6. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie (1955), 1:197.
7. See Larry C. Porter, “Dating the Restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood,” *Ensign*, June 1979, 5–9; Larry C. Porter, “The Restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1996, 42–44.
8. David O. McKay, “The Mission of the Church and Its Members,” *Improvement Era*, Nov. 1956, 781.
9. Robert D. Hales, “Blessings of the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 32.
10. “Latter-day Saint Prophet, Wife and Apostle Share Insights of Global Ministry,” newsroom.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
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12. See Russell M. Nelson, “Opening Remarks,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 6–8; Quentin L. Cook, “Deep and Lasting Conversion to Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 8–12.
13. See Russell M. Nelson, “Hope of Israel” (worldwide youth devotional, Jun. 3, 2018), HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org; Russell M. Nelson, “Sisters’ Participation in the Gathering of Israel,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 69–70.
14. See Russel M. Nelson, “The Sabbath Is a Delight,” *Liahona*, May 2015, 129–132.
15. See Russell M. Nelson, “Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,” *Liahona*, May 2018, 93–96.





# Is My Child with a Disability Ready to Be Baptized?

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Our son's eighth birthday was approaching. But how could we be sure he was ready for baptism?

By Katie Edna Steed

Our son, David, would be turning eight in less than a year. My husband and I wanted him to be prepared to make the sacred covenants of baptism. That meant doing things like reading the Book of Mormon, studying the baptismal covenants, and reviewing the baptismal interview questions. We had done all this before with David's older sister, but David has autism, so deciding if he should be baptized was not as straightforward for us.

Yes, we knew what to do to help him prepare, but looming over all of this preparation were the questions: *Should* David be baptized? Was he ready? Did he need to be baptized? Did he understand what he would be committing to? How could we know for sure that we were doing the right thing?

Like many parents who have a child with a disability, these questions led us on a journey of seeking doctrinal insights and personal revelation.

### The Age of Accountability vs. Accountability

Doctrine and Covenants 68:27 reads, "And their children shall be baptized for the remission of their sins when eight years old, and receive the laying on of the hands."

If we relied solely on this scripture, we would conclude that any eight-year-old is ready to be baptized. However, the scriptures also teach:

"Little children are redeemed . . . through mine Only Begotten;

"Wherefore, they cannot sin . . . until they begin to become accountable before me" (Doctrine and Covenants 29:46–47; see also Moroni 8:7–22).

How could my husband and I understand if David was accountable? We continued to search.

We learned from Church policy that the individual's accountability depends on both his wishes and his level of understanding; if David was worthy and desirous to be baptized and demonstrated that he could be held accountable, we should not withhold baptism from him.

We also learned that if David's disability limited his intellectual capacity to that of a little child, he would not be held accountable and would not need saving ordinances (see *Handbook 1: Stake Presidents and Bishops* [2010], 16.1.8; members who have questions about Church policies can consult with their bishops).

David's intellectual capacity was actually quite typical. However, I still found myself questioning whether David had reached an appropriate level of accountability. I continued to prayerfully search and hope for direction that would bring me peace.

### Disabilities and Innocence

I know some parents who have a child with a disability who take great comfort from reading that those who pass through mortality without having become accountable retain the status of innocence: "All little children are alive in Christ. . . . For the

power of redemption cometh on all them that have no law; . . . and unto such baptism availeth nothing” (Moroni 8:22).

The Prophet Joseph Smith also described the condition of children who die and have not become accountable: “And I also beheld that all children who die before they arrive at the years of accountability are saved in the celestial kingdom of heaven” (Doctrine and Covenants 137:10).

I know that for these individuals, baptism is not necessary in this life. I also knew that God would help us to know what would be best for David.

### Seeking Divine Guidance

For those with disabilities, there is a large range of abilities. Many individuals with disabilities are above the mental level of eight years and may be baptized and confirmed if they become accountable (see *Handbook 1*, 16.3.5). Other individuals will not be accountable. I knew my husband and I could consult with our son, with God, and with our bishop, who stands as a “judge in Israel,” to help make the inspired decision concerning David’s readiness to be baptized (see Doctrine and Covenants 107:76).

These words from Alma brought me great peace: “And now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, . . . what have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered into a covenant with him, that ye will serve him and keep his commandments, that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you?” (Mosiah 18:8, 10).

After all of our preparation, all of our lessons at home and in Primary, I started to ask David questions I knew he would be asked in his baptismal interview.

Sometimes his responses demonstrated understanding, but sometimes he didn’t know how to respond. I found myself wondering if we were doing the right thing.

Finally, the Spirit whispered to my heart, “Why don’t you ask David what he thinks?”

I turned to David and asked, “David, do you want to be baptized?”

He looked right up at me and said, “Yes!”

When I asked him why he wanted to be baptized, he said, “To be like Jesus.”

I was overcome with peace and direction. I knew right then that even if David didn’t understand every question perfectly, he was ready to be baptized and confirmed. He knew what he needed to know, and most importantly, he knowingly had a desire to enter God’s kingdom through baptism.

The day David was baptized and confirmed a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was full of love, friendship, and peace. The room was filled with family, ward members, school friends, and even teachers from David’s school. The example David set that day of choosing to follow Jesus and be baptized was an example that influenced many for good. Our family is stronger because we had the opportunity to learn how the works of God would be made manifest through our son, David (see John 9:3). ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

## HOW CAN WE HELP MEMBERS WITH DISABILITIES?

As leaders lovingly follow the Savior's example of helping others feel included, members with disabilities and their families will feel His love and understand their important place within the body of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 12:12, 18). As you lead and serve, consider the following:

**1. Don't be afraid to ask questions.**

Sometimes we are afraid to address differences, but as you ask questions respectfully, individuals will appreciate your sincere desire to understand their circumstances. Frame questions in a loving way, such as: "How can I help make your experience at church more meaningful?" Members with disabilities and their families are often the best resource on their disability and can tell you where help is needed.

**2. Foster understanding.** After consulting with members about their disabilities, discuss with them what they would feel comfortable having you share with others. Then, as appropriate, help ward leaders and other members understand the individual's disabilities and needs. This can foster greater compassion and understanding as well as inspiration about how to provide support.

**3. Provide accommodations.** There are many simple adjustments you can make to promote learning and involvement for everyone, including allowing extra time

to respond to questions, using closed captions with videos, allowing those with limited hearing or sight to sit where they can hear or see better, and using a variety of media to present lessons. You can also consult a ward or stake disability specialist about specific accommodations you can make.

**4. Create service opportunities.** Meet with individuals and their caregivers to identify what their skills and talents are. Then prayerfully identify meaningful ways for them to serve. Everyone has something that they can contribute to the work.

**5. Reach out with love.** Seek to emulate the open acceptance in Elder Jeffrey R. Holland's words: "As members of the Church, we are all on this journey. . . . Whatever your circumstances, we welcome you" ("What I Wish Every New Member Knew—and Every Longtime Member Remembered," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Oct. 2006, 10). Of all the Church's resources, one of the greatest will always be individuals who minister to one another in love and friendship.

# Managing **FOOD** **ALLERGIES** at Church

By Lisa Ann Thomson

A youth activity on a chilly night in January 2017 changed the Sorenson family forever. Terry and Jenilyn’s son Tanner was 14 years old. The combined activity was wrapping up. A leader was offering the last of the refreshments. Tanner, who was allergic to peanuts, grabbed a cookie and bit into it. He shouldn’t have. It was a peanut butter cookie.

“He was usually so careful,” Terry says.

Tanner managed to get home—his house was just down the street from their meetinghouse. But he lost consciousness quickly after. He stopped breathing. Paramedics and emergency room staff fought valiantly for him. But unfortunately their efforts were not successful.

Tanner passed away that night because of his food allergy.



## A Worldwide Issue

Globally, about five percent of children have a food allergy.<sup>1</sup> In the United States, approximately four percent of adults and up to eight percent of children have an allergy,<sup>2</sup> with similar numbers reported in European and some Asian countries.<sup>3</sup> In a ward of 200 adults, that’s about 8 people, and in a Primary of 50, that’s 4 children.

More than 170 foods have been identified as potential allergens, but in the United States the “Big 8” account for the majority of food allergies: milk, egg, peanut, tree nuts, wheat, soy, fish, and crustacean shellfish.<sup>4</sup> Regionally, other foods top the list of allergens, such as chickpeas in India, buckwheat in South Korea and Japan, and ant eggs in Northern Thailand. Cow’s milk and eggs are



consistently among the most prevalent food allergens worldwide.<sup>5</sup>

An allergic reaction occurs when the body's immune system overreacts to a substance it perceives as a threat. The most severe of these reactions is anaphylaxis, which is a rapid, systemic response that can cause death.<sup>6</sup> Symptoms can include tingling or itching in the mouth; swelling of the lips, face, tongue, or other body parts; nausea or vomiting; constriction of the airways; rapid pulse and dizziness; and shock.<sup>7</sup>

"It is as serious as, if not more serious than, someone having a stroke or heart attack in church," points out Dr. Jonathan Olson, an allergist and a member of the Church. "A person having an allergic reaction could die more quickly than a person having a heart attack."

Although potential therapies are showing promise, there is currently no cure for food allergies. The standard of care continues to be "avoidance of the allergen and recognizing and treating anaphylaxis," says Dr. Olson.

### Food Is Love

Food is often the centerpiece of gatherings. It represents cultures, traditions, and holidays. Food is used to fuel our bodies, but it is also used to nourish our souls, show love and concern, and entice people to gather and connect.

Nowhere is this more true than in the Church. Treats are handed out in classes to encourage attendance or to reinforce a lesson. Ward potlucks, chili cook-offs, and other

***"A person having an allergic reaction could die more quickly than a person having a heart attack."***

activities give the Saints a reason to congregate and socialize. We make meals for new mothers and for funerals as a heartfelt service. We leave treats on doorsteps to say we are thinking of you.

Even the Savior taught a powerful lesson by feeding the 5,000 who had gathered to hear Him teach.<sup>8</sup>

These examples help illustrate why food allergies can be so challenging to manage and so hard for some to understand, even—and especially—at church. So often food is love. But if ward members view food allergies as an opportunity



to minister, then making accommodations for those with allergies, and even the *lack of food*, can also be an expression of love.

### **Making the Sacrament Sacred—and Safe**

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “The sacrament of the Lord’s Supper [is] the sacred, acknowledged focal point of our weekly worship experience. . . .

“ . . . This hour ordained of the Lord is the most sacred hour of our week.”<sup>9</sup>

However, as noted in the Church’s recently

Following these guidelines can ensure a safe sacrament experience for most members.

Members with allergies can discuss with their bishop adaptations that are appropriate for the sacrament. Members

*Members with allergies can discuss with leaders safe options for their sacrament bread.*



published guidelines on food allergies and cross-contamination training, “Food allergies and reactions to food can have a significant effect on a person’s . . . emotional health and ability to participate in Church meetings and activities.”<sup>10</sup>

The Church’s food allergy guidelines include instructions on providing safe sacrament bread as well as how to avoid cross contact on the sacrament table. (Detailed information can be found at [disability.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://disability.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).)

may provide their own allergen-free bread in a sealed plastic bag.

Additionally, families with food allergies face challenges when others bring food or snacks into sacrament meeting. Because some allergic reactions can happen by simply breathing in or touching an allergen, families with food allergies navigate sacrament meeting by switching seats or moving to the foyer when food is present.

In speaking about the sacrament meeting experience in general, President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of

the Twelve Apostles, suggested, “Our primary goal is for everyone to have a spiritual experience and a strengthening faith in our Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ through Sabbath day observance.” He added, “Surely we can expect that cell phones and iPads, games and food can be set aside for one precious hour out of 168 hours in a week for the sacrament meeting that is devoted to Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>11</sup>

For various reasons, not everyone can set aside food during church. But with the shortened schedule, perhaps some can consider President Ballard's suggestion and evaluate if we really need to bring food into sacrament meeting.

### **Bear One Another's Burdens**

While the physical impact of food allergies can be severe, the spiritual impact can be equally profound—for good or bad.

Francesca's daughter has a severe milk allergy. While her daughter was in Primary, one of her teachers loved to bring homemade cupcakes to class for birthdays. Francesca offered to bring safe cupcakes whenever there was a birthday. The teacher declined the offer and instead sent the six-year-old girl to sit in the hallway when birthday treats were shared.

"This was so hurtful on many levels," Francesca recalls. "I wish the teacher would have taken the opportunity to teach the children to 'be like Jesus' and care enough to include everyone."

Inclusion and exclusion are common themes when you speak to families with food allergies. Cynthia's nine-year-old son, who is allergic to peanuts and tree nuts, was anticipating attending a day camp. However, on the morning of the camp, a call came from a leader asking him not to attend. They could not accommodate his allergies.

"I hung up with her and sobbed," Cynthia recalls, "the sorrowful, bottom-of-my-heart tears for my little guy who was excluded again."

Katie Edna Steed, disability specialist manager for the Church, notes: "The Savior would leave the 99 and seek after the one. We need to remember that example—to see the one and be aware of the one."

### **We Can Help**

There is much that members with food allergies and their ward families can do to show love and make church participation safe and inclusive.

*What can families with food allergies do?*

Families with allergies can explain their needs to leaders and teachers—and communicate again as leaders and teachers change. They can offer to

### ***Questions to Ask When Planning an Activity or Lesson***

1. Would including food in my lesson or activity support my message, or could it distract from my message? Could I eliminate food from my lesson or activity?
2. If food is an important part of my activity, how can I minister to those with food allergies? Are there food options that will serve my purpose while being safe for all involved? Could I ask individuals or parents to provide a safe treat or help me identify safe options?
3. If there is no way to provide something that everyone can have, can I provide an alternative for those with allergies? Can I coordinate directly with those with allergies to make a plan with which they feel comfortable?





supply safe food and help plan menus and activities. They can provide simple, life-saving training and emergency plans. They will be understanding when members express fear or

***“The Savior would leave the 99 and seek after the one. Remember to see the one and be aware of the one.”***

reservations, but they will patiently educate members and work together to find safe and inclusive options. They should ask for reasonable accommodations that the ward can make and sustain.

*What can ward members do?*

Ward members can seek to understand individual situations. Ward members should defer to parental instruction about giving food to a child. If food is necessary for an activity or lesson, teachers and leaders can ask individuals and parents if the food will be safe. Ward members can invite individuals and parents to participate and problem solve as circumstances require.

Suzanne has several food allergies. She has been particularly touched by the sensitivity of the priests in her ward as they prepare the sacrament. “I am so humbled by the young men who have made it safe for me to take the sacrament,” she says.

One Sunday, the sacrament was not passed to her. The priests preparing it had noticed that her bread had been cross contaminated by the other bread on the table.

“They found me after sacrament meeting, explained what happened, and told me they had received special permission

from the bishop to administer the sacrament to me in a classroom,” Suzanne says. “I cried as they blessed and passed the sacrament in that small room. I could feel the Savior’s love so strongly and His knowledge of how much I had struggled with this challenge.”

“Showing willingness to make a safe environment at church for people with severe allergies is also showing a willingness to bear one another’s burdens,” says Suzanne.

Francesca’s daughter is now in Young Women. Her Young Women president felt



prompted to help this family in their burden. “I felt like we needed to do what it took to make sure she was not forced to choose between her safety and her worship,” she said. “I prayed about how we needed to face this situation and felt firmly that we needed to embrace this family and make sure they were fully included.”

Youth leaders accepted the challenge to plan an overnight youth conference that Francesca’s daughter could safely attend. Francesca helped plan the menu and shop for food.

The young men power washed the griddles before cooking on them.

“It was wonderful!” says Francesca. “I cried and felt God’s love through their kind, inclusive actions. So did my daughter.”



*Families, teachers, and leaders can work together to make church a safer place for everyone to learn and grow.*

### The Works of God Made Manifest

Tanner’s family has felt many miracles, large and small, since losing their son. They hope increased awareness of food allergies is one of them.

“It’s not that these kids with allergies are irresponsible. It’s

not that they aren’t paying attention. But they are kids,” says Tanner’s father, Terry. “It just takes one second of letting your guard down.”

But ministering can help them keep their guard up. “Ministering, by definition, means attending to the needs of others,” says Dr. Olson. “Everything about the Church is based on the needs of the one and making sure their spiritual and physical needs are being met.”

Sharon Eubank, First Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, taught: “Christ tenderly told the Nephites, ‘I have commanded that *none of you* should go away.’ . . .

It is an unwavering requirement of Christian disciples and Latter-day Saints to show true love to one another.”<sup>12</sup>

For Francesca, after a personal struggle to understand why her child faced the challenge of a food allergy, she came to realize, “Sometimes God heals someone with a disability to show forth His glorious works, and sometimes He allows someone to keep their disability because He wants His works to be made manifest in how others treat that person. God gives us all opportunities to learn to be kind and learn to be

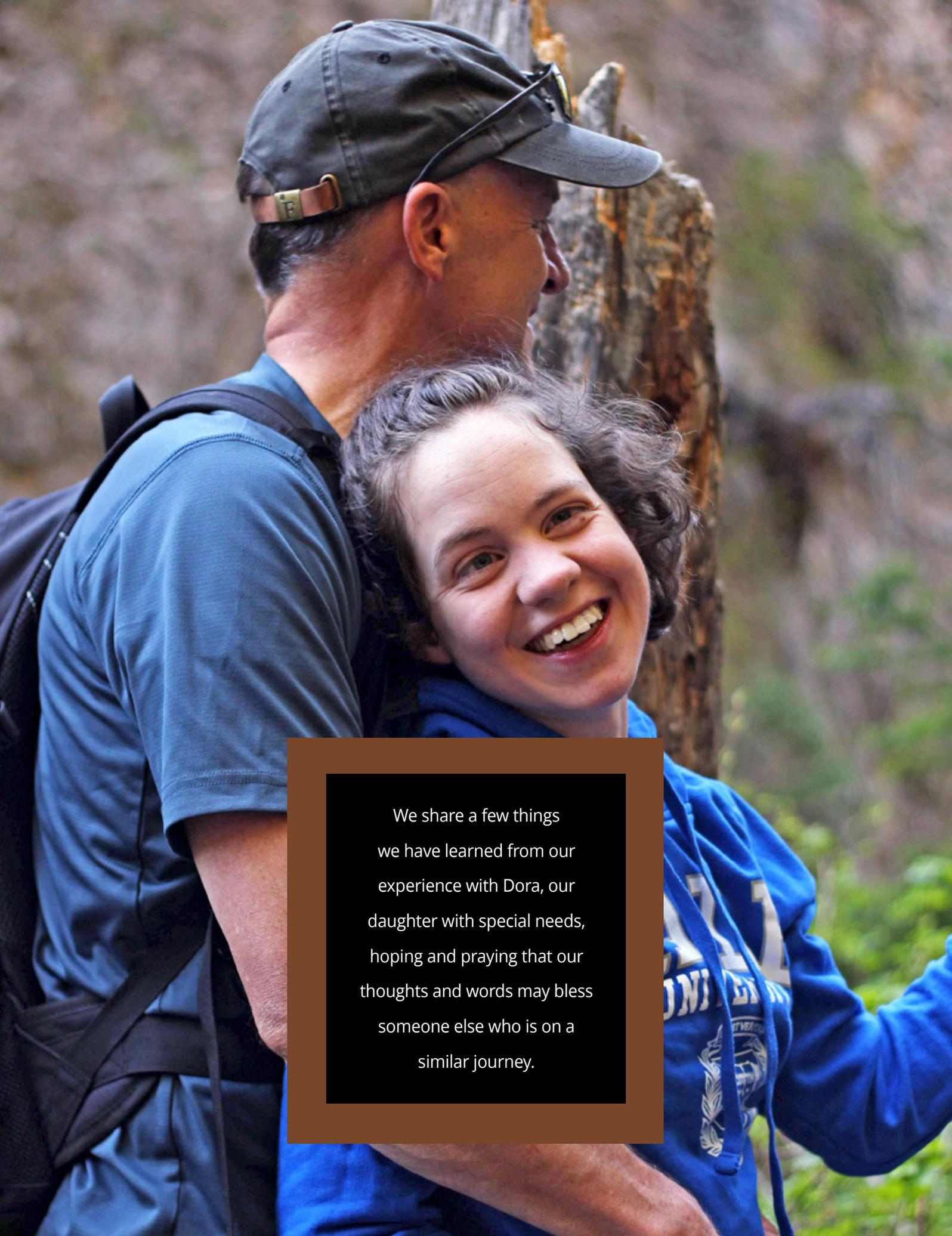
like Him by allowing us to be a miracle for someone in their suffering.” ■

#### NOTES

1. See “Food Allergies: Global Burden, Causes, Treatment, Prevention and Public Policy” (consensus study by the U.S. Institute of Medicine, 2017), National Academies of Science.
2. See Wenyin Loh and Mimi L. K. Tang, “The Epidemiology of Food Allergy in the Global Context,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, vol. 15, no. 9 (Sept. 18, 2018), 2043, [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6163515](https://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6163515).
3. See Alison Joanne Lee, Meera Thalayasingam, and Bee Wah Lee, “Food Allergy in Asia: How Does It Compare?” *Asia Pacific Allergy*, vol. 3, no. 1 (Jan. 2013), 3–14, [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3563019/](https://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3563019/); FARE: Food Allergy Research & Education. “Food Allergy Facts and Statistics for the U.S.,” [foodallergy.org/sites/default/files/migrated-files/file/Final-FARE-Food-Allergy-Facts-Statistics.pdf](https://foodallergy.org/sites/default/files/migrated-files/file/Final-FARE-Food-Allergy-Facts-Statistics.pdf). Some food allergies are outgrown, which accounts for the larger percentage in childhood versus adulthood.
4. See FARE, “Food Allergy Facts and Statistics for the U.S.”
5. See Loh and Tang, “The Epidemiology of Food Allergy in the Global Context.”
6. See “Signs and Symptoms,” [anaphylaxis.org.uk/hcp/what-is-anaphylaxis/signs-and-symptoms](https://anaphylaxis.org.uk/hcp/what-is-anaphylaxis/signs-and-symptoms).
7. See Mayo Clinic, “Food allergy,” [mayoclinic.org](https://mayoclinic.org).
8. See Mark 6:37–44; Luke 9:10–17.
9. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Behold the Lamb of God,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2019, 45, 46.
10. “Food Allergies,” in the Policies and Guidelines section of disability. [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://ChurchofJesusChrist.org).
11. M. Russell Ballard, in “April 2015: Sabbath Day Observance” (video), [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/media-library](https://ChurchofJesusChrist.org/media-library).
12. Sharon Eubank, “Christ: The Light That Shines in Darkness,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2019, 74; emphasis added.

### How Can I Learn More?

Visit [disability.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://disability.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) and select “Policies and Guidelines” to learn more about making church a safer place for those with food allergies, including how to reduce the chances for allergic reactions, how to recognize them, and how to respond.



We share a few things we have learned from our experience with Dora, our daughter with special needs, hoping and praying that our thoughts and words may bless someone else who is on a similar journey.



**By Elder Paul B. Pieper**  
Of the Seventy  
**And by Melissa T. Pieper**

# Special Needs, Special Lessons

In the days that followed our daughter Dora's scheduled birth by Caesarean section, we knew that something was different about her. But it was not until she was rushed directly to the hospital from a doctor's checkup three weeks later that we began to understand what a life-changing event her birth would be for our family.

The weeks and months that followed took us on a roller-coaster ride of hopes and fears as dedicated professionals tried to diagnose Dora's condition. Each new theory brought its own set of anxieties.

"Oh please, not *that*. We could not bear to lose her," we responded to one possible diagnosis. "If it is *this*, we are not sure how we can deal with it," we responded to another.

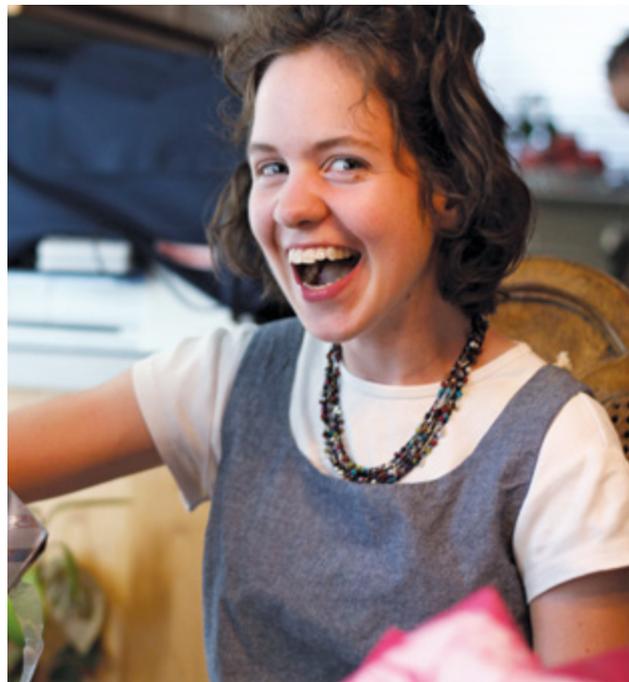
Diagnosis is a two-edged sword. It can bring closure

and help one understand what the future may be like, but it can also create expectations or define limitations that may not even be real. In our case, we are grateful that after all the theories and tests, doctors could never come to a specific diagnosis for Dora.

"She is physiologically normal in every way," they told us, "but she suffers from low muscle tone and seizures."

We have lived the past 28 years with that statement—its uncertainties, its twists and turns, its challenges, and its joys and possibilities. We did not know what the road would be like, but we never felt limited by a specific medical diagnosis.

*We love to define Dora by her abilities rather than by her limitations.*



## Defining a Person with Special Needs

Some of the most frequent questions we have received over the years about Dora are “What does she have?” and “What is her disability?” We generally answer by saying something like, “Well, she doesn’t talk, walk without aid, or feed or dress herself, but she is so much more than that.”

We have learned not to define her by her inabilities or her limitations. Rather, we love to define her by her abilities.

For example, Dora can smile. Her smile makes those around her smile. Total strangers have stopped us in the airport to ask if they can take a picture with Dora simply because they have been overwhelmed by the light of her radiant smile.

She can give hugs. If you are lucky enough to get a hug from Dora, it will change your life. Once, when we were walking out of a sporting event, Dora passed a homeless man on the sidewalk and spontaneously reached out and hugged him. It was obvious from his expression that her hug was one of the most amazing things he had experienced that day.

Dora helps you feel loved. If Dora locks eyes with you, even for a second, you will feel a love and sweetness that might cause tears to well up in your eyes. With those



## FRAIL FRAME, DIVINE DESTINY

“A perfect body is not required to achieve a divine destiny. In fact, some of the sweetest spirits are housed in frail frames. Great spiritual strength is often developed by those with physical challenges—precisely because they are challenged. Such individuals are entitled to all the blessings that God has in store for His faithful and obedient children.”

President Russell M. Nelson, “Your Body: A Magnificent Gift to Cherish,” *Liahona*, Aug. 2019, 53; *New Era*, Aug. 2019, 5.

amazing gifts, why would we ever want to define her as “disabled” or “handicapped”? She has influenced hundreds of lives for good simply by being who she is and doing what she does.

## One Day at a Time

It is easy for parents to become overwhelmed when they realize that their child will depend on them for a lifetime. Feeling overwhelmed is even more pronounced when that child requires constant physical, emotional, and perhaps medical support. The prospect of feeding, dressing, bathing, caring for, and supporting a child every day can appear as a mountain that is just too tall and steep to climb.

In those moments, it is important to step back and say, “I just need to do this today.” We have found that by focusing just on the needs and opportunities of each day, the task seems more manageable. We can live just one day at a time, and we can look for the joy and growth that come with that day.

## Capable of Enlargement

Each spirit sent to earth is capable of “enlargement.”<sup>1</sup> All of us are expected to exercise our agency to the degree that we are able. We caregivers are responsible to help those under our care to grow and progress physically, emotionally, and spiritually to the extent they are able. That can mean helping them to have opportunities to serve—such as Dora giving hugs or smiles. It can also mean helping them to use and, if possible, enlarge their physical and mental capacities through therapy and activity.

In doing so, we need to be realistic. If we are constantly frustrated, we may be pushing too hard. The Lord can help us and guide us through His Spirit to do those things that are possible and appropriate. In some cases, He will give us miracles, small as they may seem.

We will always remember being told by a leading orthopedic specialist that Dora would never walk. But after several years of much prayer and hard work, Dora can now walk with assistance. Her overall condition hasn’t changed, but the Lord gave us a small miracle to help her grow and find more enjoyment in life.

## Faith Not to Be Healed

It is only natural to ask *why?* when a precious, challenged child of God is sent to our home. Our faith naturally leads us to ask God whether it would be possible to heal or remove the child’s condition. We have the certain faith that God can heal our daughter, but He has also made it clear that it is not His will to do so now.

Heavenly Father has His own purposes for sending Dora to us, and He will heal her—if and when He wills

to do so. That day may not come until the time of ultimate healing—the Resurrection. It takes as much faith to accept God’s will that these precious ones not be healed now as it does to believe that He can heal them now. Dora was sent to us with a purpose, and we have felt cautioned not to seek *why* but to ask Heavenly Father *what* He wants us to learn.

“To ask, Why does this have to happen to me? Why do I have to suffer this, now? What have I done to cause this? will lead you into blind alleys,” said Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Instead, he said, “Ask, What am I to do? What am I to learn from this experience? . . . When you pray with real conviction, ‘Please let me know Thy will’ and ‘May Thy will be done,’ you are in the strongest position to receive the maximum help from your loving Father.”<sup>2</sup>

At times we think of the parents of those children the Savior healed during His mortal ministry. Perhaps, like us, those parents wondered for what purpose their children were sent to them. After the Savior had healed them, the parents could understand that it would have been impossible

for Him to demonstrate His healing power and divinity had there been no one to heal. We have the faith that a time of healing will come for all of God’s children.<sup>3</sup>

We look forward to that day. ■

### NOTES

1. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “All the minds and spirits that God ever sent into the world are susceptible of enlargement” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 210).
2. Richard G. Scott, “Trust in the Lord,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 17.
3. For insights into having “the faith not to be healed,” see David A. Bednar, “Accepting the Lord’s Will and Timing,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2016, 28–35; *Liahona*, Aug. 2016, 16–23.

We caregivers  
are responsible to help  
those under our care to  
grow and progress  
physically, emotionally,  
and spiritually to the  
extent they are able.

# The Prophet's Words for Everyone

*I didn't expect to see a quote from a prophet of God on the walls of the school.*

I awoke early one morning to get ready for work. While I usually love my job as a teacher, I was out of sorts and just wanted to crawl back under the covers and pretend it was bedtime again.

When I arrived at the high school, I tried to get my mind ready for work. I knew I needed to teach a math class soon, but my heart and head both felt dull and depressed. My emotions were all negative.

I decided to visit the restroom before class. Every once in a while, someone will post fliers in the restrooms with information for students and staff. Out

of the corner of my eye, a flier caught my attention. It had a nice quote on it that read, “If you want to give a light to others, you have to glow yourself.”<sup>1</sup> I was surprised to see that this quote came from President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018).

I didn't expect to see a quote from a prophet of God on the walls of the school. I live in a small town in Pennsylvania, USA, and I'm sure I'm one of a few, or possibly the only, member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the school. I knew I was one of a few who would

understand the importance of the words of President Monson—a man I had sustained for many years as the prophet. I felt that this message was meant for me. It softened my heart and lifted my mood. Gratitude for my testimony filled my heart, and Heavenly Father's love surrounded me.

I wanted to pull the flier off the wall and keep it in my pocket all day to uplift me, but I had a quick realization. President Monson wasn't just the prophet for me and other members of the Church—he was the prophet for the world. His words, like the words of President Russell M. Nelson today, are for everyone. A prophet's words help and uplift *all* who will hear them. I took a picture of the quote with my phone and left the flier up for anyone else who might need it.

I'm grateful Heavenly Father put this message in my path. I want to give light to others. Through obedience and a closeness with our Savior, I can glow even on days when darkness would have me lose my way. ■

**Katherine Furgeson, Pennsylvania, USA**

## NOTE

1. Thomas S. Monson, “For I Was Blind, but Now I See,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 56; *Liahona*, July 1999, 69.



## “I Will Not Reject My Faith”

*I became the object of mocking and contempt at work. Why was I hanging on to a job that had become a danger to my spiritual well-being?*

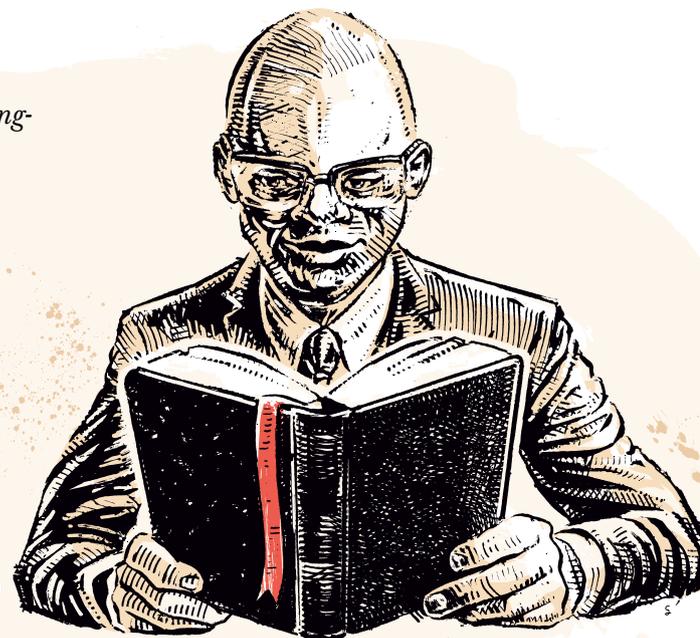
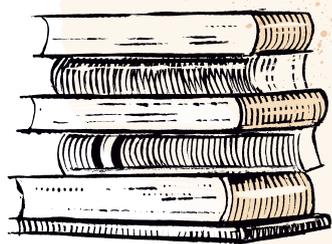
Shortly after I was hired as the assistant director of a large library, my team and I began an ambitious project to digitize 37,000 books. One day my supervisor called me into his office.

“Edouard,” he said, “I’ve been invited to present our book digitization project in the United States and to solicit some new acquisitions. I’ve been asked to bring a trusted co-worker with me. I have confidence in you but not in your church. If you renounce your faith, you can come with me.”

Before I could say anything, he told me to think about it and then dismissed me.

That evening, I shared with my wife what had happened. She encouraged me to have faith. The next day, I told my supervisor that I would keep my faith. He was angry and said he’d just travel alone.

A year later, I had an opportunity to travel to France to receive training in library funding, acquisitions, and management. I just needed my supervisor’s approval. He said he would approve only if I denounced my faith. I again declined. He then tore up the document and threw it in my face. Some time later my supervisor approached me again.



“I am about to leave on another trip,” he said. “You can come with me, but the condition remains the same. I will never travel with a member of your church.”

“I will not reject my faith,” I said. He left without saying a word. Soon he began to talk about me to my colleagues.

“I have offered him opportunities,” he’d say. “But he has exhausted them all because of his blind faith. He is a fool.”

From then on, I became the object of mockery and contempt at work. I felt beaten down. One evening, preoccupied with this problem, I opened the Bible and read, “If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not

that thy whole body should be cast into hell” (Matthew 5:29).

If the Lord says we should get rid of something in order to save ourselves, why was I hanging on to a job that had become a danger to my spiritual well-being? The next day, I handed in my resignation.

Today, I rejoice in this choice. With courage and faith in Jesus Christ, I faced humiliation at work and temporary unemployment. My new job now provides opportunities unavailable to me before. The Lord has blessed me, and I thank Him for His kindness and His love toward me. ■

**Edouard Ngindu, Katoka, Democratic Republic of the Congo**

# We Needed a Second Miracle

*We had already had one miracle with my wife's pregnancy. Now we needed another one.*

**M**y wife, Sarah, was 24 weeks pregnant when she started having a lot of pain. I gave her a blessing and then left for work. I was still at work when she called me home to take her to the hospital.

“Your baby’s coming,” we were told when we arrived. Since Sarah was only 24 weeks along, the baby’s best chance of survival was an emergency C-section.

“Your wife doesn’t need to go through any additional trauma,” the doctor told me. “She’s going to lose the baby anyway.”

Sarah and I talked and prayed about what the doctor had said. We felt that if there was any chance our baby could survive, we needed to take that chance. We had experienced difficulty having children. Our oldest son, Taylor, is adopted. When Sarah got pregnant two years after we adopted Taylor, we felt that it was a miracle. Now we needed a second miracle.

A little while later, a specialist came to us and said, “I think we may have time to get your wife to a children’s hospital in El Paso, Texas, that is equipped to care for premature and critically ill newborns. The baby will have a chance there!”

An ambulance pulled away from our local hospital with Sarah and sped toward the children’s hospital 45 minutes away. I followed close behind, pleading with the Lord in prayer to give us a miracle. I promised Him that I would stay on the gospel path and try to be better.

At the hospital, I told the doctor in the neonatal intensive care unit: “We know we have already had one miracle with my wife’s pregnancy. Now we expect another one.”

The birth went well, and our baby survived. After she spent four and a half months in the neonatal intensive care unit, we brought Shanna home. *We had* received a second miracle. Not many years later, we received yet another miracle—the Lord blessed us with twins.

Shanna has a slightly low IQ, and she’s in a wheelchair, but she’s full of joy, always positive, and a friend to everyone. She loves to tell you about her day, and she’s excited about life. She keeps us smiling and teaches us to be happy. We love her and are grateful for her. Shanna is truly a blessing. ■

**Daniel Payne, New Mexico, USA**

ILLUSTRATION BY BRADLEY CLARK





## A Temple Open House Opened My Heart

*With the announcement of the temple open house, I felt as if the Lord was personally inviting me to enter His house.*

I was baptized when I was 15 years old. A lot of people didn't understand my new faith. Some, including my friends, even made fun of me for my decision to join the Church. My parents weren't members of the Church, so I didn't have their support.

As a result, it became difficult for me to continue attending church and to keep living the gospel. By the time I was 19, I had stopped going to church.

Ten years later, I heard that a temple would be built in El Salvador. I was surprised to hear that a house of the Lord would be built in my country! Four years later, the San Salvador El Salvador Temple was completed, and a temple open house was announced. When I found out that the open house would give me the opportunity to enter the temple, I felt as if the Lord was personally inviting me to enter His house.

The day I walked through the temple was one of the best days of my life. During the open house, I learned more about what happens inside dedicated temples. I also learned about sacred temple covenants that individuals make with God.

As I walked through each room of the temple, I felt God's presence. I felt at peace. Visiting the temple gave me the desire to come back to the Church and to live the gospel again. When I realized I could take part in God's great work, I wanted to complete temple work for my ancestors and to exercise the priesthood.

My experience in the temple that day changed me. Now I help members in my ward prepare for the temple and assist them with family history so they can do temple work for their ancestors.

It is never too late to return to the Church. It is never too late to do good. The Lord, with His infinite love, is always with us. The temple is a place that unites us with Him and allows us to one day return to live with Him. ■

**Ricardo Matamoros, Ahuachapán,  
El Salvador**

# A Gift of Love

By Faith S. Watson

*As my husband blessed our baby daughter, I began to glimpse the depth and breadth of Heavenly Father's gift of love—the priesthood.*

I was a new member of the Church, a new wife, and now a new mother.

It was fast Sunday, and our tiny daughter was about to receive a name and a blessing. I had never seen a baby blessing before because we lived in a ward with few young families. I didn't know what to expect. Yet I felt by the Spirit that this was something very special and significant.

My husband, joined by other reverent priesthood holders, carefully cradled our precious little daughter. The sweetness of the Spirit filled me with joy. Tears ran down my cheeks, and myriad impressions flooded my mind. I knew I was only beginning to glimpse the depth and breadth of Heavenly Father's magnificent gift of love to us—the priesthood.

When the missionaries taught me the discussions, I had sensed how honored they felt to bear the priesthood. I had heard it in their words and in their prayers, including when they blessed me to overcome a challenge with the Word of Wisdom. I felt their hands, gently laid on my head, begin to tremble as they spoke words I knew were

coming from the Lord—words of love and of healing.

Soon I was baptized, and priesthood holders' hands were again laid upon my head. I was confirmed a member of the Lord's Church, and the gift of the Holy Ghost was conferred upon me. I was cleansed and born anew. I felt the power of the priesthood throughout my entire body, and for the first time in my life, I knew joy.

Shortly after my baptism, my husband and I were married. His parents were members of the Church and his home was centered in the gospel, but I knew his testimony was not well rooted. I was not worried, though. My young faith brimmed with optimism. I would simply love him and be patient and prayerful.

During the months I carried our first-born, I felt as mothers do—so close to my little one, so full of the wonder at this new life within me. When our daughter was born, my bond with her had become a cord of love, strong and sweet.

But I was concerned for my husband. He hadn't had the blessing of this intense closeness to our daughter

that I had enjoyed. Of course he loved her, but I wondered and worried about whether a strong bond would develop between him and her. I worried as I spent time nursing her, bathing her, and holding her, while most of my husband's time was occupied with working to support our family.

Now, a few weeks after her birth, there we were in our chapel. A miracle was unfolding before my eyes and in my heart. My tentative husband humbly smiled at his brethren in the circle, his eyes full of light and a glint of tears. In return, love and support flowed from those brethren to him as they placed hands on shoulders and helped cradle our baby, forming a little circle bathed in pure and sacred love. As my husband began the blessing, I heard trembling in his voice, and I knew that he was feeling the Lord's power and the honor of holding His priesthood.

I felt a great love welling up in him for our little girl, and I knew he had tried hard to prepare himself to give her the blessing Heavenly Father intended for her. My joy was full as I realized that he now felt tightly bonded to our



daughter. It was a bond that was never to weaken.

Years have passed since that experience. Countless times I have witnessed and felt the power and beauty of the priesthood exercised in so many ways, in so many places, and for so many of Heavenly Father's children. I have watched beautiful saving ordinances bestowed and hearts filled. I have

observed cleansing, healing, comforting, and teaching. I have seen and felt burdens lifted.

I know I still don't understand the full magnificence of the priesthood, but every baby blessing I have viewed has filled me with the same awe I felt during my firstborn's blessing. I am awed at the love Heavenly Father has shown by sharing His power with us, and I am

filled with gratitude beyond words for my testimony of Him, His Beloved Son, and our beautiful restored gospel. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*



# How Can Alma's Questions Help Us Grow Spiritually?

## HOW AM I DOING?

Alma asked the people of Zarahemla 36 questions to help them evaluate their spiritual progress. President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained that a spiritual evaluation is helpful. He said, “As a guide for me during this [evaluation] . . . , I like to read and ponder the introspective words found in the fifth chapter of Alma.”<sup>1</sup>

## What Do I Need to Change?

As you read Alma 5:7–13, look for what Alma taught about how we can change and come closer to Christ. Consider what things you can change, and make a plan to act.

## How Has the Lord Blessed Me?

Alma also invited the people to remember how the Lord delivered their fathers and to recall their conversion. Consider writing your conversion story to remember how the Lord has blessed you. You could also read the conversion stories of your ancestors or early Church members.

“It would be a wonderful thing if every Latter-day Saint knew the conversion stories of their forefathers. . . . Each of us will be greatly blessed if we know the stories of faith and sacrifice that led our forefathers to join the Lord’s Church.”<sup>2</sup>

### NOTES

1. M. Russell Ballard, “Return and Receive,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2017, 64.
2. William R. Walker, “Live True to the Faith,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2014, 97, 99.





## Alma 8–12

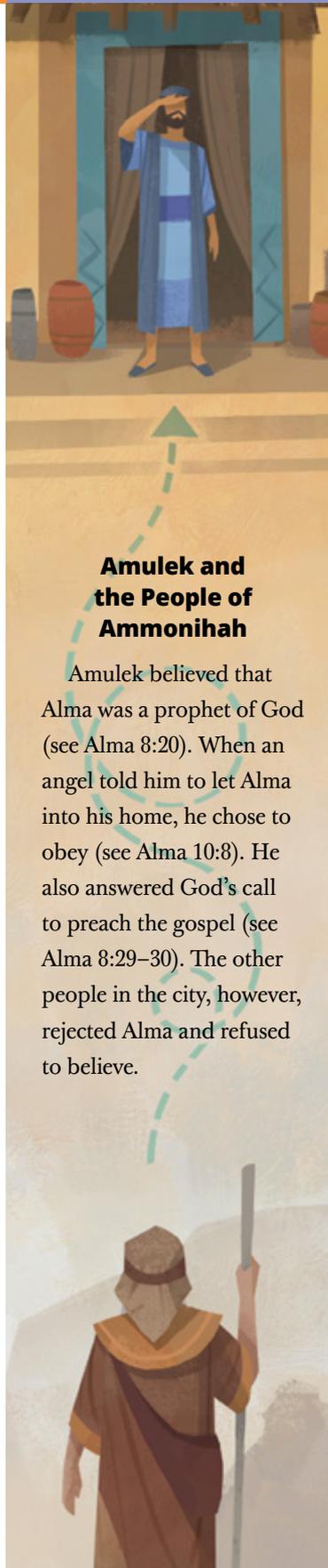
JUNE 8–14

# How Does Developing a Soft Heart Help Us Gain Spiritual Knowledge?

**W**hen Alma preached the gospel in Ammonihah, most of the people rejected him, but Amulek listened and believed. The difference between Amulek and the rest of Ammonihah shows us the consequences of having a softened heart or hardened heart to the things of God (see Alma 12:10). You can choose to have a soft heart.

### DISCUSSION

- What characteristics did Amulek have? How can you develop his good characteristics?
- If you're seeking answers to a specific question, what can you do to be more receptive to revelation from Heavenly Father?
- By choosing to have a soft and obedient heart, what blessings might the Lord have in store for you and your family?

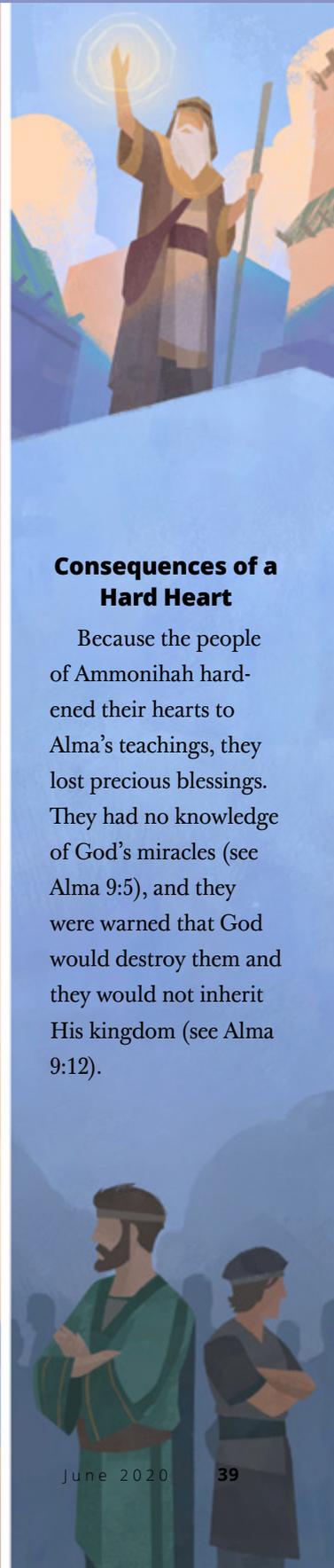
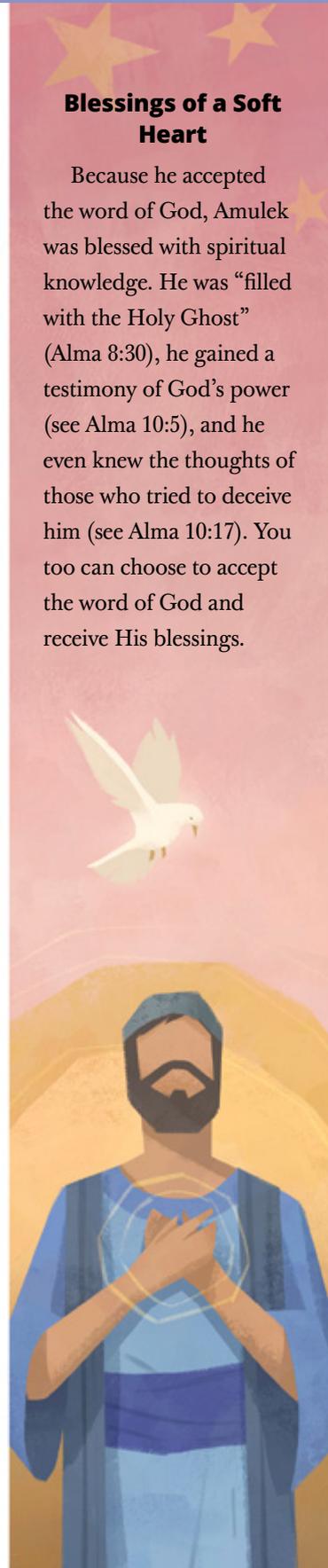


### Amulek and the People of Ammonihah

Amulek believed that Alma was a prophet of God (see Alma 8:20). When an angel told him to let Alma into his home, he chose to obey (see Alma 10:8). He also answered God's call to preach the gospel (see Alma 8:29–30). The other people in the city, however, rejected Alma and refused to believe.

### Blessings of a Soft Heart

Because he accepted the word of God, Amulek was blessed with spiritual knowledge. He was “filled with the Holy Ghost” (Alma 8:30), he gained a testimony of God's power (see Alma 10:5), and he even knew the thoughts of those who tried to deceive him (see Alma 10:17). You too can choose to accept the word of God and receive His blessings.



### Consequences of a Hard Heart

Because the people of Ammonihah hardened their hearts to Alma's teachings, they lost precious blessings. They had no knowledge of God's miracles (see Alma 9:5), and they were warned that God would destroy them and they would not inherit His kingdom (see Alma 9:12).



## Alma 13–16

JUNE 15–21

# How Do Saving Ordinances Point Me to Christ?

“**G**ood conduct without the ordinances of the gospel will neither redeem nor exalt mankind.”<sup>1</sup>

### PREPARE

Alma and Amulek were called and prepared by the Lord to teach His commandments (see Alma 13:3). They were also “ordained with a holy ordinance” (Alma 13:8). This and other ordinances are given that we may know where to look for a remission of our sins (see Alma 13:16). All ordinances point us to Jesus Christ.

How can you prepare to receive the saving ordinances of the gospel?

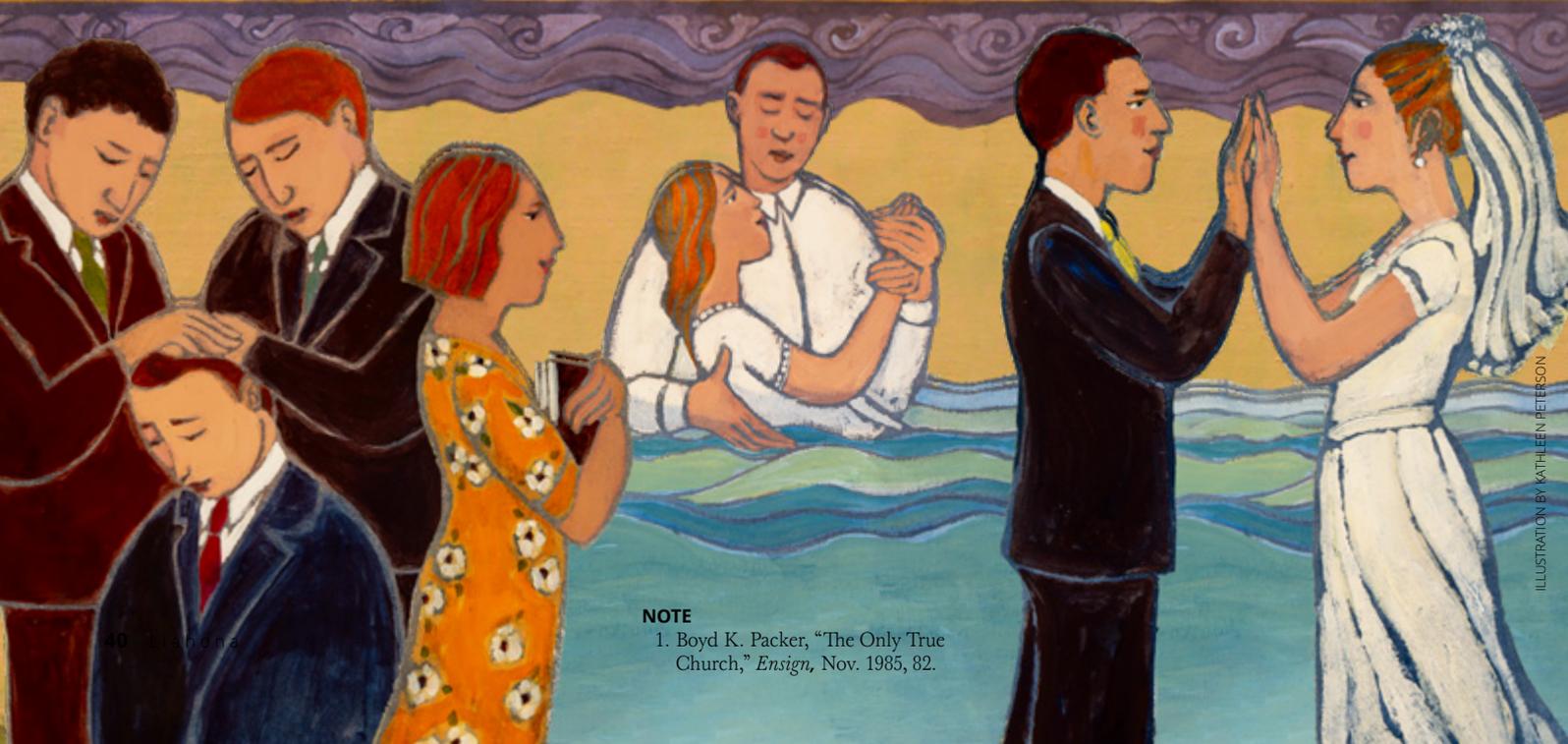
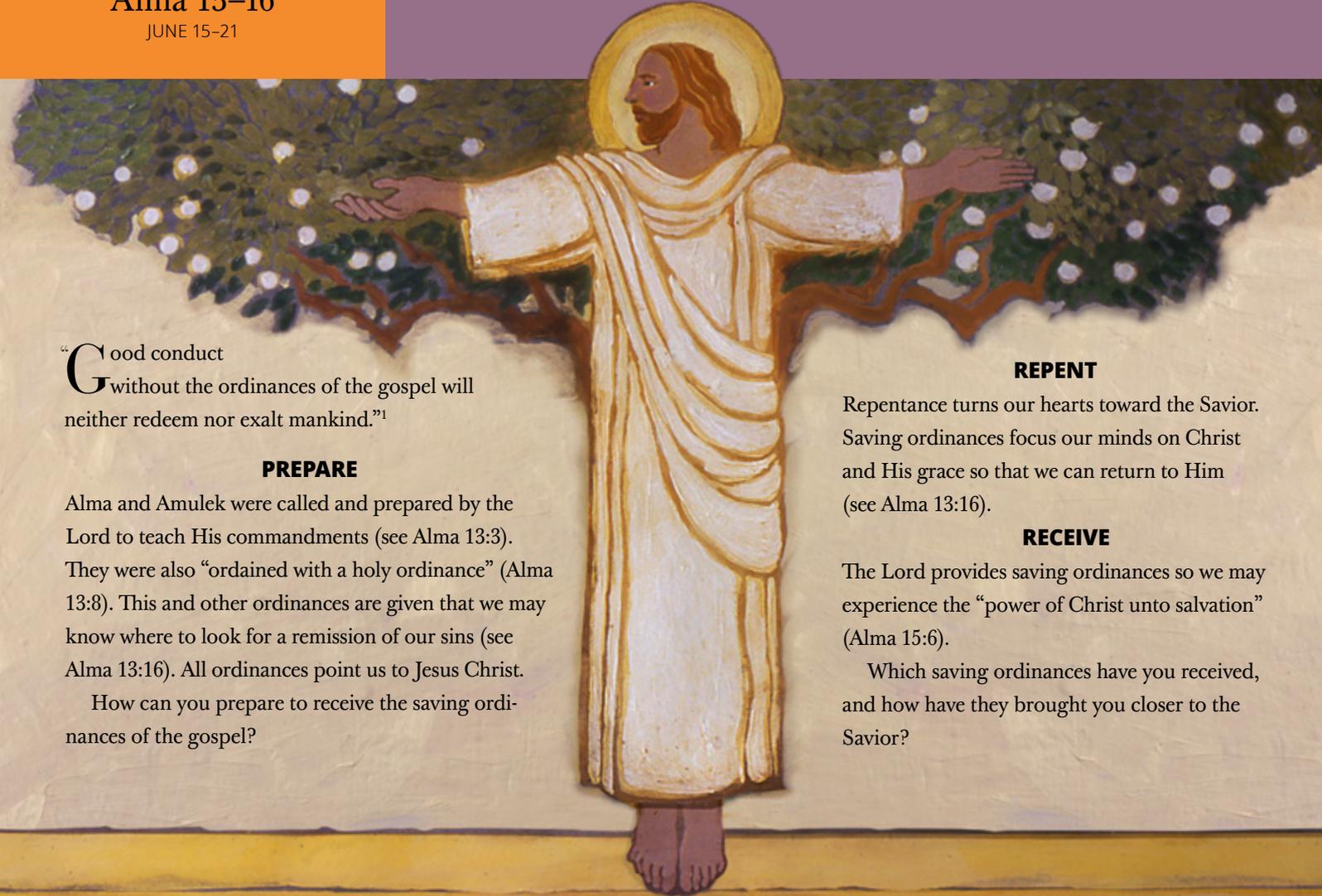
### REPENT

Repentance turns our hearts toward the Savior. Saving ordinances focus our minds on Christ and His grace so that we can return to Him (see Alma 13:16).

### RECEIVE

The Lord provides saving ordinances so we may experience the “power of Christ unto salvation” (Alma 15:6).

Which saving ordinances have you received, and how have they brought you closer to the Savior?



### NOTE

1. Boyd K. Packer, “The Only True Church,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 82.



Alma 17–22  
JUNE 22–28

## How Can I Act Immediately with Faith?

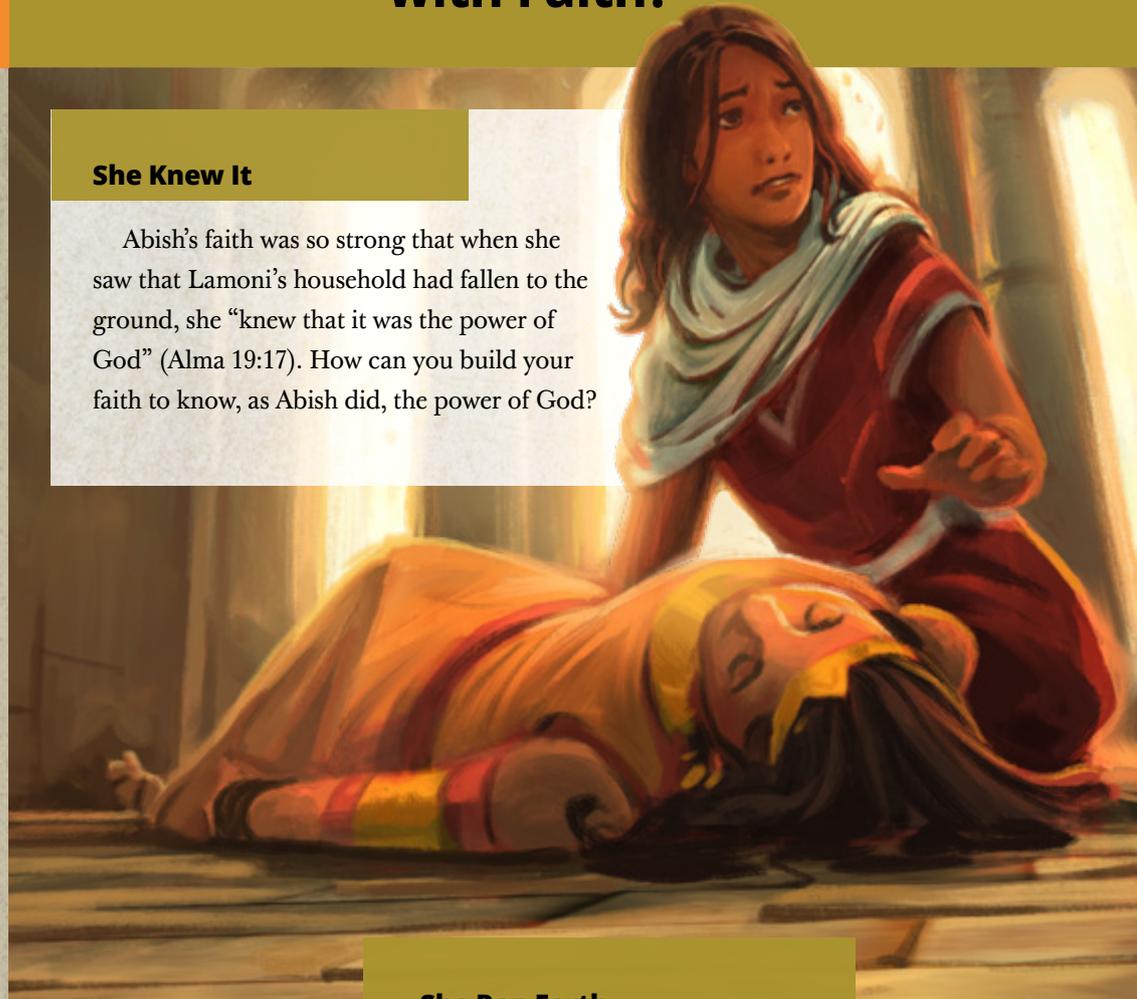
The faithful and immediate actions of Abish in the Book of Mormon demonstrate how faith can help bring others to Christ. Consider how she is fully “converted unto the Lord” (Alma 19:16).

### DISCUSSION

How can you strengthen your faith in the Lord so that you, and perhaps others, will feel empowered to act immediately and fully on the will of God?

### She Knew It

Abish’s faith was so strong that when she saw that Lamoni’s household had fallen to the ground, she “knew that it was the power of God” (Alma 19:17). How can you build your faith to know, as Abish did, the power of God?



### She Ran Forth

Once Abish recognized the power of God she “ran forth from house to house” and told the people to come see the miracle (Alma 19:17). Her faith empowered her to act immediately. Are there areas of the gospel where you are walking instead of running to act on God’s will in faith?

### She Took Others by the Hand

Abish “took the queen by the hand” with faith that it would make the queen stand (Alma 19:29). She did what seemed impossible because of her faith in God. How can you strengthen your faith in God and accomplish the impossible in your life?

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANDREW BOSLEY; BACKGROUND FROM GETTY IMAGES



# Young Adults

## In This Section

- 44 Taking the Pressure Out of Finding an Eternal Companion  
By Dominika Stoica
- 48 Learning to Be Happy While I'm Single  
By Landon Hawes

## Digital Only

### 10 Things to Ask Your Future Spouse

### Trusting in Second Impressions and in the Spirit's Guidance

By Marie Netzler

### Being Single Reminds Me to Trust God's *Whole* Plan for Me

By Christina Cotterall

### 7 Tips for Staying Connected in a Long-Distance Relationship

#### Find these articles and more:

- At [liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)
- In **YA Weekly** (under the Young Adults section in the Gospel Library)

## Searching for a Spouse— and the Savior's Grace

The Lord promises that “[His] grace is sufficient for the meek” (Ether 12:26). These words should give all of us young single adults hope and comfort, especially when it comes to finding an eternal companion. Trusting disciples of Christ often search for love with open hearts, only to be disappointed by unmet hopes or upset by bad behavior from those they date. This search can produce fear, anger, bitterness, and stress, especially if it continues for years beyond your expected marriage date!

But, as you can imagine, these emotions are not what God intends us to constantly feel as we follow His command to marry and raise righteous, happy families. In fact, **God wants us to feel joyful** during that search!

With this in mind, the articles in this section are designed to help you **take the stress out of finding your eternal companion**. You'll find stories about **how to progress in life** regardless of your marital status and **advice that can help prepare you** for an eventual loving, nurturing, and deep-rooted marriage.

As you search for the one who will give you their whole heart as you give them yours, take a moment to read these articles. I promise that one of them will lighten your heart and help you to trust that **the Savior's grace really is sufficient for you**.

Sincerely,  
Landon Hawes

## Share Your Story

Do you have an amazing story to share? Or do you want to see articles about certain topics? If so, we want to hear from you! You can submit your articles or your feedback at [liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).



PHOTOGRAPH FROM GETTY IMAGES





# Taking the **PRESSURE** out of Finding an Eternal Companion

By **Dominika Stoica**

**T**he Church is very small in Poland. Actually, it's small everywhere in Eastern Europe. We often don't have a lot of Church members our age in our whole country, let alone our ward or stake. Luckily there are conferences for young single adults held each year in many European countries.

These conferences are organized not necessarily to help you find your “perfect match,” but mostly to help young adults make new friends who share their values and strengthen them in their faith by talking to others about their spiritual experiences.

### **Focusing on Friendship**

During one conference in Poland in 2010, I met Radu. He was from Romania. We talked briefly, but he soon left on his mission and our paths didn't cross again until another YSA conference three years later. There we had the time to actually get to know each other a little bit, but I was leaving on my own mission a month later. Radu wished me all the best and said, “Let's keep in touch.” I didn't really think he would, but he did. He wrote me letters throughout my mission. There was nothing romantic in his letters, but he became one of my dear friends.

And I loved the respect he had for me and for missionary work in general.

When I returned home, Radu and I were both very excited to properly get to know each other—we could finally make it happen after so many years! We picked an affordable place for both of us to meet (which was Belgium at the

Life isn't about getting married, but rather becoming the best version of ourselves and letting God work His plan in our lives.

time) to spend some time together. We talked and talked and talked some more.

We didn't put any pressure on our relationship. We focused on building a friendship and simply getting to know each other. We always had so much fun together, but we also had very meaningful and profound discussions about the things that matter most. Over the next while, our friendship grew stronger. We Skyped almost daily, and over time we started saying nightly prayers together. We eventually started visiting each other's country every few months.

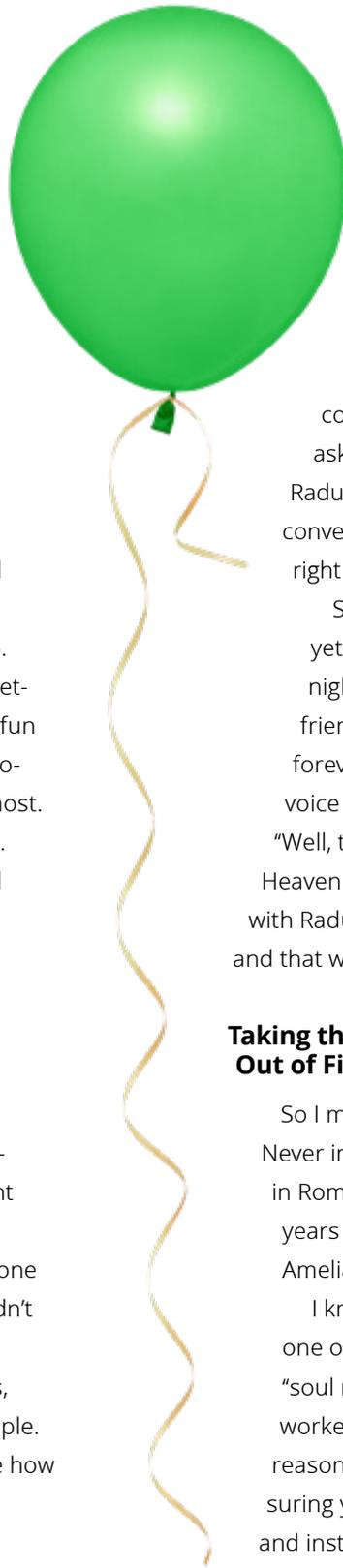
### **"Let's Pray about It"**

After a while, I started feeling anxious because I felt like our friendship was developing into something more. But he was from Romania! I didn't want to get into a long-distance relationship because a relationship could lead to marriage, which meant one of us would have to move to another country. I didn't feel ready for that.

One day when I was feeling particularly anxious, Radu reminded me of a simple yet powerful principle. He said, "Let's pray about our relationship and see how we feel."

I didn't know why I hadn't thought about praying about our relationship earlier. But that was the best advice I received at the time. So I prayed for guidance.

I didn't expect any specific answer at that moment, but I decided to keep moving forward with getting to know Radu. I hoped Heavenly Father would give me a warning if our relationship wasn't something I should



continue. But over time, the answer I had asked for *did* come. I had conversations about Radu with my family and friends, and in every conversation I was reassured I was going in the right direction.

Soon I had a funny realization. After having yet another great Skype call with Radu one night, I said to myself, "He really is the best friend I've ever had. I want to be his friend forever!" That's when it hit me. Immediately a voice in my head replied to my own comment, "Well, then you need to marry him!" I knew that Heavenly Father was smiling upon my relationship with Radu. I could see that he was my best friend and that we could be happy together.

### **Taking the Pressure Out of Finding a Spouse**

So I moved to Romania and married Radu. Never in my mind had I thought I would end up in Romania. But we've been married for four years now, and we have a wonderful daughter, Amelia.

I know what you're thinking—I'm just another one of those young single adults who met my "soul mate" at a YSA conference and things worked out effortlessly. But that's not true. The reason I tell you this story is for you to stop pressuring yourself to find your eternal companion and instead let God guide you.

Did I go to those YSA conferences to find a husband? No.

Did I think that one of the guys I met there would become my husband? Not really.

Instead I took the pressure off finding whom I wanted to marry and I simply went to these conferences to connect with others and build

friendships—which was exactly what Radu and I did in the beginning.

The pressure to find our eternal companion as soon as possible can be so real sometimes. But there is no time limit on eternal relationships. There's no need to stress over it. Life isn't about getting married, but rather becoming the best version of ourselves and letting God work His plan in our lives. Yes, we should all go out there, show up, meet people, make new friends, and get out of our comfort zones. But we should do so with the thought, "I'm going to have fun and meet some great friends" rather than "I have to keep my eyes open to find 'the one' or I'm going to mess up my entire life plan!"

One thing Radu told me when we were engaged was that although he usually felt a bit stressed around girls he liked, he didn't feel that way with me. He said because of our friendship, he always felt relaxed and like he could always be himself.

So look for good people to surround yourself with and enjoy where you are now. Because honestly, when you stop stressing out and just choose to build friendships and learn to love who and where you are, that's when life becomes much more enjoyable.

### Trusting in God's Plan for Our Future

Radu and I aren't perfect. We weren't really looking for the "perfect" person—we were just being ourselves. What I've observed is that who you truly are and how you live is what is most attractive to others. When you strive to follow Jesus Christ, you will attract others who are doing their best to follow Him as well.

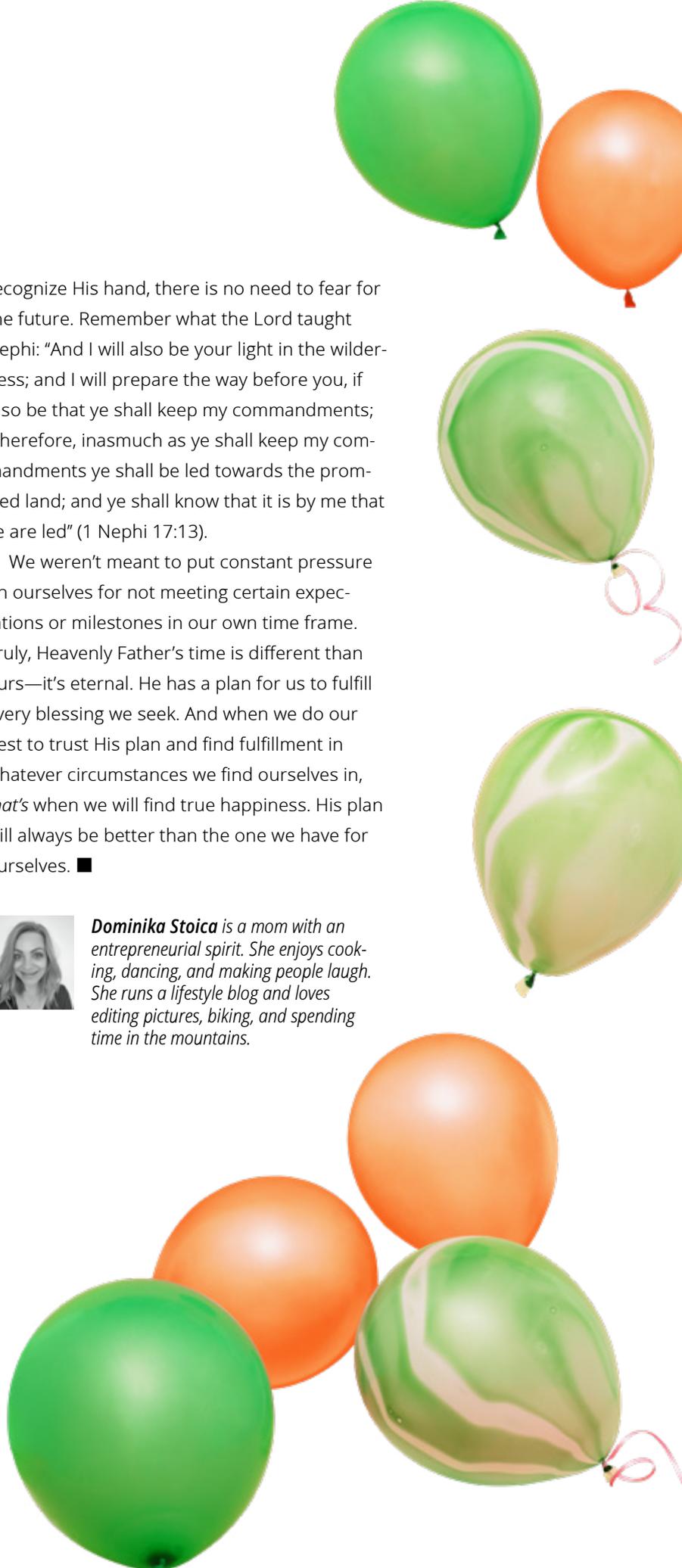
I've also learned that as we become better and have full faith that God is in charge, we will invite His hand into our lives—and when we

recognize His hand, there is no need to fear for the future. Remember what the Lord taught Nephi: "And I will also be your light in the wilderness; and I will prepare the way before you, if it so be that ye shall keep my commandments; wherefore, inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments ye shall be led towards the promised land; and ye shall know that it is by me that ye are led" (1 Nephi 17:13).

We weren't meant to put constant pressure on ourselves for not meeting certain expectations or milestones in our own time frame. Truly, Heavenly Father's time is different than ours—it's eternal. He has a plan for us to fulfill every blessing we seek. And when we do our best to trust His plan and find fulfillment in whatever circumstances we find ourselves in, *that's* when we will find true happiness. His plan will always be better than the one we have for ourselves. ■



**Dominika Stoica** is a mom with an entrepreneurial spirit. She enjoys cooking, dancing, and making people laugh. She runs a lifestyle blog and loves editing pictures, biking, and spending time in the mountains.



By Landon Hawes

# LEARNING TO BE HAPPY WHILE I'M SINGLE



I realized I had been going about dating the wrong way.

**W**hy is everyone else dating and having fun?"  
"Why am I not married?"  
"What's wrong with me?"

Most single young adults have probably asked themselves these questions at least once! The challenge of seeking an eternal companion can take a toll on the faith and hope of even the most dedicated Latter-day Saints. And yes, also in my case, dating has been particularly difficult.

Marriage has always seemed like a grand adventure to me, and I've looked forward to it from a young age. But I got discouraged when it seemed like I was failing at dating during my college years. Though I went on many dates, had several serious relationships, and met accomplished and interesting women, I didn't marry. And to me, those failed relationships felt like a sign that I was inferior and unattractive.

My feelings toward my singleness only got worse after a few more breakups when I began my career. It was easy for me to ask what was wrong with me and right with everyone else who was getting married. My patriarchal blessing, along with several priesthood blessings, strongly and specifically indicated that I would be sealed in mortality to a righteous woman. So why wasn't it happening?

I started to wonder, "Have I done something to derail God's plan for me?"

Finally, after "wrestling" before God for years through prayer, scripture study, and temple attendance, I received revelation regarding my situation through my friend and counselor, Brad (name has been changed). During one of our counseling sessions, he said: "Your happiness depends on you—not on someone else. When you're happy when you're single, you can be happy in any circumstances." Likewise, President Russell M. Nelson taught, "The joy we feel has little to do with the circumstances of our lives and everything to do with the focus of our lives" ("Joy and Spiritual Survival," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 82).

My entire perspective changed as the Spirit impressed these words firmly upon my soul. And I realized that I had always dated to fulfill a need—in my case, the need to be married simply so I wouldn't be alone.

This definitely wasn't a way of thinking that would lead to an eternally loving companion!

Through Brad, the Lord gently taught me that His plan for His sons and daughters is not for them to marry based on need or cultural pressure or fear. Marriage is based on Christlike love. Then He taught me that my unmarried status could continue to teach me to live life and seek marriage based on pure love and not utility. To seek marriage for the right reasons.

Through this experience, I've learned three truths that I look to whenever I'm feeling discouraged about dating:

**1. Your worth doesn't depend on your marital status.**

Isaiah taught that "[God's] thoughts are not [our] thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8).

I thought that being single was a reflection on my lack of worth.

However, God helped me see that being single is preparing me for a better marriage than I could have had if I'd gotten married on my timetable. It didn't have anything to do with my worth.

**2. Preparation dispels anxiety and worry.**

The Lord tells us that "if [we] are prepared [we] shall not fear" (Doctrine and Covenants 38:30). Seeking and then following God's will has helped me let go of previous fears and frustrations about my marriage status. It has also helped me focus on preparing myself for whatever comes my way in the future.

**3. There is joy in being single.**

Being single has blessed me with exciting travel opportunities, professional development, and ways to serve in the Church. While I still deeply desire marriage and children, God has helped me to appreciate how much there is to do in His kingdom right now, whether I have a companion by my side or not.

I'm still not married! My wife hasn't magically appeared now that I've had a paradigm shift about dating and marriage, and I know I'll still be frustrated sometimes with dating in the future. But a lot of fear and anxiety about my marital status is gone. And I now know that it's totally fine to be single while the Lord and I work together to fulfill the eternal promises and blessings that He has made to me—both those in mortality and in eternity. ■



*Landon Hawes is a globe-trotting urban planner who loves good writing, great books, and exploring the world. You can find him at his local library, cheering on his team at the baseball diamond, or on a backcountry road finding beautiful places where no one else thought to look.*



**Fofoa V.,** (left) age 18  
**Etuale V.,** (right) age 16, Savali, Samoa

In our family, everyone helps.

**Fofoa:** Our family believes in working together. My brother Etuale and I gather firewood for cooking. We also help make food to sell. I remember one time when our family didn't make enough money to pay an expensive water bill, so we all did our part to help. My sister sold barbecue. Etuale and I gathered coconuts and other food and then helped sell the food to raise money. By working hard as a family and trusting God, we were able to get the water turned back on.

**Etuale:** God helps me with everything in my life. He gives me strength and blesses me every day. I love living in Samoa. It's very peaceful here. My biggest dream is to serve a full-time mission! I want to offer my two years to God.



# YOUTH

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PHOTOGRAPH BY LESLIE NILSSON

# Gaining a Testimony *around the World*

By Wilmer Amaya Munoz

I was born in Spain and lived there for eight years. We didn't go to church a lot, so I wasn't baptized when I turned eight, but I really wanted to be. One day I asked my parents why we weren't going to church anymore and why I wasn't baptized.

As I explained to them my desire to be baptized, it touched their hearts, and we started going to church again. It felt good. My mom was such a good example and an inspiration to me. She had a strong testimony and often read the scriptures.

Later on, we moved to Venezuela, where my dad is from. We lived there for two years, and because of the difficulties in the economy, we faced a lot of challenges. But there were good things too. I loved the food, and I had family there who were anxious to meet me. They were such humble people, and we all went to church together and felt the Spirit.

Even though we were going to church and I could feel the Spirit, I knew my family and I were missing something. I really felt that we needed to be sealed as an eternal family. One Sunday morning, the bishop invited everyone in the congregation to read the Book of Mormon before the end of the year. I knew this would help my parents and me more fully



ILLUSTRATION BY PAULINE GRAYSON

*This is the story of how I joined the Church and my family became active in the gospel.*



live the gospel of the Lord. Little by little, as we read the Book of Mormon, the Savior started giving us more knowledge and blessings, and we continued to read the scriptures regularly.

Soon I got baptized. I could really feel the Spirit in my life, and my parents did too. My testimony started growing more. We moved to Florida, USA, and we had to make a lot of changes and sacrifices again, just like when we left Spain. But our testimonies were growing stronger. We went to church every week and kept reading the scriptures.

After a lot of effort and a lot of reading the scriptures, praying, and choosing the right, we wanted to get sealed as an eternal family. We talked to our bishop, and even though it took some time, the day finally arrived. We were so excited to go inside the temple.

I got to do baptisms while I waited for my parents to complete the temple work for themselves. I felt like I was getting baptized again. I was really happy I could help people beyond the veil. Now my family and I go to the temple every week. I regularly do baptisms because I love helping there. I am so glad I got to be sealed in the temple to my parents for eternity and have the opportunity to live forever with them. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA*



*Heavenly Father has a great work for you to perform in preparation for the Second Coming of our Savior.*

# 150TH ANNIVERSARY

\_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_

## Young Women Organization

**By Sister Bonnie H. Cordon**

Young Women General President

**A**s I think of all the marvelous things our Heavenly Father has done for His children, my heart is filled with absolute amazement and gratitude at how much the Lord loves His daughters. He loves YOU!

And because He loves you, 150 years ago He inspired Church leaders to create the Young Women organization to help you become the person God wants you to become. The prophet Brigham Young (1801–77) encouraged us to strengthen our testimonies by living the gospel: “There is a need for the young daughters of Israel to get a living testimony of the truth. . . . I wish our girls to obtain a knowledge of the gospel for themselves.”<sup>1</sup> He also said, “More testimonies are obtained on the feet than on the knees.”<sup>2</sup>

The Young Women organization has adapted through the years to meet the needs of the time. But even as the program adapted, its objective

for the young women has not changed—to help you gain a living testimony and, with faith, move forward on the covenant path. As you come to know who you are and act in faith, you will receive the blessings Heavenly Father has in store for you.

### **Young Women Classes through the Years**

When Young Women first began, it was called a “Retrenchment Association” with the goal to “improve in everything that is good and beautiful.” By the early 1900s, it became the Young Ladies’ Mutual Improvement Association, and classes soon included young women ages 12 to 24. The names of classes changed over the years and included Camp Fire Girls, Beehives, Guardians, and Gleaners. As the Church grew and young women met in other countries and languages, they did their best to adapt, with names like Mia

Maid becoming “Rosenmädchen” (Rose Girls) in German, for example.

Today, with young women in almost every country, classes are organized according to the needs of each ward or branch, and all are known by the unifying name of Young Women.

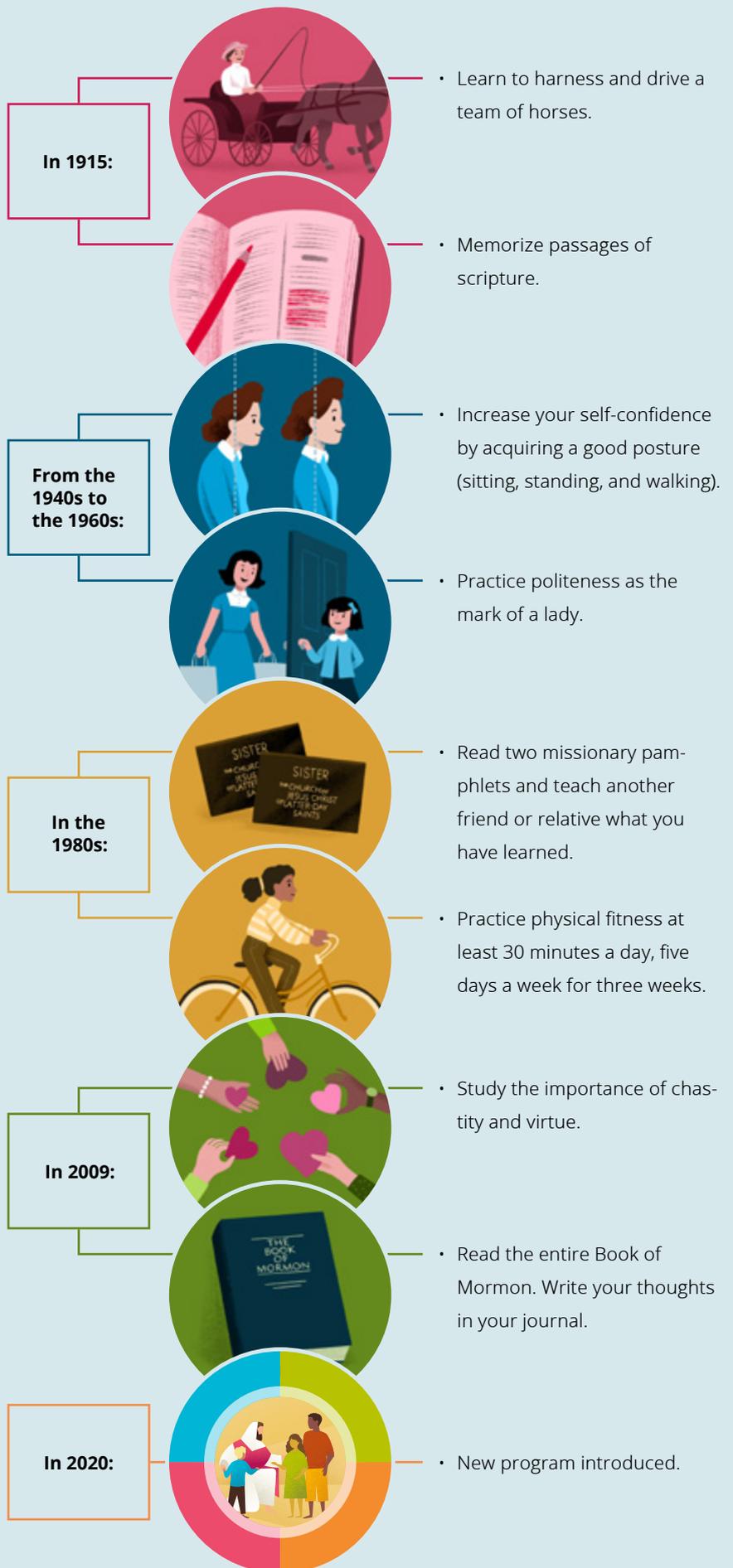
Requirements for the Young Women programs have also changed over the years. At right are a few of them.

### The Children and Youth Program

As you look at these requirements through spiritual eyes, you will notice that they have a common thread. The past and the present come together, unified in helping young women draw closer to Jesus Christ and develop spiritually, intellectually, socially, and physically.

In 2019, a new personal development program was introduced that invites you to be both self-reliant and Savior-reliant. You are invited to seek the Holy Ghost and set your own goals as you strive to become more like our Savior, Jesus Christ! I love the trust this shows in you, the remarkable young women of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

With the support of your bishopric and Young Women presidencies, you are also led by class presidencies—your peers who are called and set apart to plan and implement the Young Women program. There are over half a million young women around the world today being led by their peers!



All young women are unified by a theme, which includes these foundational principles: you are a beloved daughter of heavenly parents; you are a covenant disciple of Jesus Christ; you seek and act upon personal revelation that comes through the Holy Ghost; and you are a shining witness of God as you strive to become like our Savior, Jesus Christ, and minister to others in His Holy name.

### **You Are Loved and Needed!**

As beloved daughters of a living and loving Heavenly Father, you have been uniquely prepared to be “saviors on Mount Zion.”<sup>3</sup> As President Russell M. Nelson has said: “Every prophet has talked about *our* day, when Israel would be gathered and the world would be prepared for the Second Coming of the Savior. Think of it! Of all the people who have ever lived on planet earth, *we* are the ones who get to participate in this final, great gathering event.”<sup>4</sup>

This is a sacred invitation to participate in temple and family history work, serve in leadership positions, minister to your fellow sisters, and share your testimony with your family and friends. You are loved, and you are needed!

My dear friends, Heavenly Father has a great work for you to perform in preparation for the Second Coming of our Savior Jesus Christ! You are a vital part of that work. He loves you; He wants you to take part in His work; He trusts you!

I add my faith and trust in you to that of our dear prophet, President Nelson, who declared: “You are among the best the Lord has *ever* sent to this world. You have the capacity to be smarter and wiser and have more impact on the world than any previous generation!”<sup>5</sup>

I pray that you will let the words of the Young Women theme sink deep into your heart and jump into the new program with both feet, embracing every opportunity to draw closer to the Savior and learn more of Him. Become the person He wants you to be. I know that as you do this, your life will be filled with opportunities to share His light and His love

with your families, friends, and everyone around you. As you strive to follow Him, your testimony will become firm and unshakable. ■

#### **NOTES**

1. Brigham Young, in *A Century of Sisterhood: Chronological Collage, 1869–1969* (1969), 8.
2. Brigham Young, in Susa Young Gates, *History of the Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from November 1869 to June 1910* (1911), 9.
3. Quentin L. Cook, Apr. 2014 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 48).
4. Russell M. Nelson, “Hope of Israel” (worldwide devotional for youth, June 3, 2018), 8, [HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).
5. Russell M. Nelson, “Hope of Israel,” 16–17.



# Young Women

## CELEBRATING 150 YEARS

By Amanda Dunn

Church Magazines

The Young Women organization is turning 150 this year, and it's time to celebrate! Check out these facts about how the organization has evolved from 1870 to today, what youth like you are doing to participate in Young Women now, and how you can be inspired by women in history who showed courage and faith.

### 1870–1920



**Name:** The Young Ladies' Department of the Ladies' Cooperative Retrenchment Association is officially organized on May 27, 1870, under the direction of Brigham Young.<sup>1</sup> The name is changed to Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association in 1877.<sup>2</sup>

#### Organization and

**Classes:** The Bee-Hive Girls program is created as a summer program for girls age 14 and older.



#### Improvement and

**Recognition:** The Bee-Hive Handbook is published in 1915, outlining seven "fields" of personal improvement: Religion, Home, Health, Domestic Arts, Out-of-Doors, Business, and Public Service.<sup>3</sup>

#### Magazines and Journals:

The first issue of *Young Woman's Journal* is published in 1889.<sup>4</sup> Many local Mutual Improvement Associations (or MIAs) produce their own handwritten newspapers with only one or two copies for the girls to pass around.

### 1920–1970



**Name:** The Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association changes to the Young Women's Mutual Improvement Association in 1934.<sup>5</sup>

#### Organization and

**Classes:** There are two classes, Bee-Hive Girls for the younger girls and Gleaners for the older girls. The age of entry into the program changes from 14 to 12. In 1950, the Mia Maid class is introduced.



#### Improvement and

**Recognition:** The Golden Gleaner recognition marks the highest achievement young women can earn in the program.





## 1970–2019



**Magazines and Journals:** The *Young Woman's Journal* merges with the *Improvement Era* magazine for all youth in 1929.<sup>6</sup>



**Name:** The Young Women's Mutual Improvement Association changes to the Young Women organization in 1974.<sup>7</sup>



**Organization and Classes:** By 1972, the Young Women organization has three classes: Beehives (ages 12–13), Mia Maids (ages 14–15), and Laurels (ages 16–17). Beginning 2019, young women enter Beehives in January of the year they turn 12.

**Improvement and Recognition:** The Personal Progress program and medallion are introduced in 1977. The Young Women values of Faith, Divine Nature, Individual Worth, Knowledge, Choice and Accountability, Good Works, and Integrity are added in 1987.<sup>8</sup> Virtue is added to the values in 2008.<sup>9</sup>

**Magazines and Journals:** The *New Era* magazine for youth begins publication in English in 1971, and the *Liahona* provides articles for youth in many languages.<sup>10</sup>





## Fun Facts

1. The 1915 Bee-Hive handbook allowed young women to choose projects from over 300 different options. Some of those projects included caring for a hive of bees for a whole season, keeping the house free from flies for two weeks, or clearing sage-brush from at least one-half acre of land.<sup>12</sup>



## 2020



**Name:** The name remains Young Women organization.

### Organization and

**Classes:** Classes are organized in each ward or branch according to its needs and identified by the unifying label “Young Women” (for example, “Young Women 12,” “Young Women 12–15,” or just “Young Women” if they all meet together).



### Improvement and

**Recognition:** Children and Youth replaces the Personal Progress program. The new program encourages personalized opportunities to grow in the areas of Personal Development, Gospel Learning, and Service and Activities.<sup>11</sup>



### Magazines and Journals:

The *New Era* magazine for youth nears its 50th anniversary. ■

## NOTES

1. See “A Brief Timeline of Young Women History,” history.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/landing/a-brief-timeline-of-young-women-history.
2. See “Young Women’s Timeline,” *Mormon Women’s Studies Resource*, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, mormonwomen.lib.byu.edu/young-womens-portal/young-women-timeline.
3. See “History of Young Women Recognition,” history.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
4. See “Young Women’s Timeline.”
5. See “Young Women’s Timeline.”
6. See “Young Women’s Timeline.”
7. See “Young Women’s Timeline.”
8. See “Young Women’s Timeline.”
9. See “New Young Women Value: Virtue,” Dec. 9, 2008, thechurchnews.com.
10. See “Young Women’s Timeline.”
11. See ChildrenAndYouth.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
12. See “History of Young Women Recognition.”
13. See “History of Young Women Recognition.”
14. See “Young Women Classes and Symbols,” ChurchofJesusChrist.org/young-women/personal-progress.
15. See “History of Young Women Recognition.”
16. See “The Annual Report of the Church,” *Ensign*, July 1972, 131–33.
17. See “Worldwide Statistics,” newsroom.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/facts-and-statistics.



2. Early Bee-Hive Girls wore uniforms designed by each local association, and in 1922, the official colors of the Mutual Improvement Association became gold and green.<sup>13</sup>



3. The name Beehive came from the pioneers, who saw the beehive as a symbol of work and harmony. Mia Maid came from the Mutual Improvement Association acronym, MIA. The name Laurel referred to the laurel wreath, which means honor and achievement.<sup>14</sup>



4. Between the 1940s and 1960s, young women could earn emblems they sewed onto a felt band called a bandelo, which they wore across their chest. One requirement to earn an emblem was to “strive to get your full nine hours’ beauty sleep each night this month.”<sup>15</sup>



5. General Church membership increased from about 110,000 people in 1870<sup>16</sup> to more than 16 million people by 2020<sup>17</sup>—think of how many young women there are around the world now!

## Haven’s Helping Hand

Haven, a 14-year-old from Utah, USA, decided to celebrate being a young woman in the Church by serving others.

“It started as a small idea,” she says. “My uncle went to Bangladesh on a humanitarian trip and learned about difficult things the people there were experiencing. I wanted to help them—so I looked on the JustServe app and got the idea to make homemade kits for the refugees there.”

Haven collected donations at her school, created a GoFundMe page, and even took out neighbors’ garbage cans to help raise money for the kits. “I take out about 22 garbage cans and 11 recycle cans every Monday and Tuesday,” she says. “I normally use the money I earn for my choir program and to save for a mission, but I decided to use my funds that month to help buy supplies instead.”

Haven then went out and bought all the materials she needed for the kits, including socks, gloves, scarfs, and hats. She assembled each kit and also got in contact with the director of Lifting Hands International to coordinate the delivery of the kits in Bangladesh.

“Putting the kits together took up the most time in my project. But every time I put a piece into the kit, I knew that it would go to someone in need and that they would be blessed for a long time by it.”



By the end of her project, Haven felt her confidence build in her ability to serve. “I learned from this how much help I can be if I try my hardest. I also felt compassion for the people I was helping, which helped me feel closer to the Savior and feel some of what He feels for us.”

As we celebrate the anniversary of the Young Women organization, each of us can remember that we are examples of Christ. Like Haven, we can be a big help to others when we try our hardest to serve as He would. ■

# How can I help my friends who seem depressed?



*“So how do you best respond when mental or emotional challenges confront you or those you love? Above all, never lose faith in your Father in Heaven, who loves you more than you can comprehend. . . .*

*“ . . . Whatever else you may or may not be able to provide, you can offer your prayers and you can give ‘love unfeigned.’”*

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



## **Invite Them to Be with You**

Invite them to do fun things with you. Don't be discouraged if they

are not responding the way you want. Sometimes just the invitation to something or even the knowledge that you want to be with them is going to boost them up.

*Alyssa F., age 16, Washington, USA*



## **Reassure Them**

When I am with depressed friends, I don't make light of their problem. But I help lighten their difficulties. I try to be reassuring and loving with them. I give them the opportunity to vent their frustrations.

*Angbo K., age 18, Ivory Coast*

## **Don't Let Yourself Get Roped In**

The best way to help them, and yourself, is by being genuine. Say the things that give you joy. If you're struggling with staying happy, let them know you are there for them, but take care of yourself. It is better for you to be OK than to get roped in too.

*Kira W., age 16, Kansas, USA*



### Think of the Positive

You can stay positive around your friends who seem depressed by thinking of positive things that you have experienced or are going to experience soon in your life. Just think of things you appreciate, such as funny experiences.

*Luke P., age 14, New Mexico, USA*

### Remind Them of the Good

When I have a friend who is depressed, I try to talk to them about something that they are interested in so they can be reminded of some good things about their day or life. Sometimes I'll try to make them laugh or give them a compliment to make them feel good, and sometimes I ask them to do something important so they know that they have a purpose.

*Carson D., age 15, Texas, USA*

*Editors' note: The suggestions offered here are helpful but may not help immediately or heal someone of depression. Professional help may be necessary in more serious cases.*

*Responses may be edited for length or clarity. Published responses are intended for help and perspective, not as official pronouncements of Church doctrine.*

### What Do You Think?

**"How do I keep out of my mind the unclean language that I hear?"**

Email your answer and, if desired, a high-resolution photograph by July 15, 2020, to [liahona@ChurchofJesusChrist.org](mailto:liahona@ChurchofJesusChrist.org).



## What is the Church's stance on racism?

We believe that God is the Father of all humankind and that "he denieth none that come unto him, [both] black and white . . . ; and all are alike unto God" (2 Nephi 26:33). Because all people are equal before God, we believe that no person can rightly claim to be superior to another because of their racial or ethnic background. In addition, we believe that it is sinful to look down upon, denigrate, or discriminate against others because of their race.

Modern prophets and apostles have condemned racism in the strongest possible terms. For instance:

- President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008): "No man who makes disparaging remarks concerning those of another race can consider himself a true disciple of Christ. Nor can he consider himself to be in harmony with the teachings of the Church of Christ."<sup>1</sup>
- President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "We need to embrace God's children compassionately and eliminate any prejudice, including racism, sexism, and nationalism."<sup>2</sup>
- President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency: "Racism is probably the most familiar source of prejudice today, and we are all called to repent of that."<sup>3</sup>

#### NOTES

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Need for Greater Kindness," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2006, 58.
2. M. Russell Ballard, "The Trek Continues!" *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 106.
3. Dallin H. Oaks, "A Cause for Celebration," *Liahona*, Dec. 2018, 49.

# Serving Together with Priesthood Power

**By President M. Russell Ballard**  
Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

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Several years ago, my wife, Barbara, and I looked up in awe at the night sky. The millions of stars seemed especially bright and beautiful. I then turned to the Pearl of Great Price and read what the Lord God said to Moses: “And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten” (Moses 1:33).

The power that created the heavens and earth is the priesthood. The source of this priesthood power is God Almighty and His Son, Jesus Christ. It is the power the Savior used to perform miracles, to provide an infinite Atonement, and to overcome physical death through the Resurrection.

In our Heavenly Father’s plan, men have the unique responsibility to administer the priesthood, but they are not the priesthood. It is crucial for us to understand that Heavenly Father has provided a way for all of His sons and His daughters to have access to the blessings of and be strengthened by the power of the priesthood.

The same priesthood power that created worlds, galaxies, and the universe can and should be part of our lives to comfort, strengthen, and bless our families, our friends, and our neighbors—in other words, to do the things that the Savior would do if He were ministering among us today (see Doctrine and Covenants 81:5).

The primary purpose of this priesthood power is to bless, sanctify, and purify us so we can live together with our families in the presence of our heavenly parents forever. In this way, all men, women, and children—no matter what our circumstances—can participate in the marvelous work of God and Jesus Christ (see Moses 1:39) and enjoy the blessings of the priesthood.

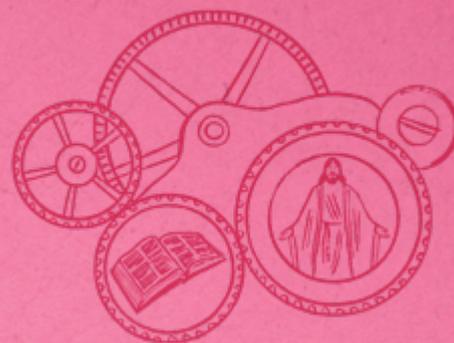
May we be wise and seek to strengthen our own lives, the lives of our families, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints through the power of the priesthood of God. ■

*From an April 2013 general conference address.*

# Abish



Her faithful actions helped bring about the **conversion of many Lamanites.**



Lived about 90 years **before Christ's birth.**



**Kept her faith secret** until the time was right.



A Lamanite woman who **served the queen.**



Was **converted to the gospel** because of "a remarkable vision of her father" (Alma 19:16).



**FEELING STRESSED ABOUT  
BEING SINGLE?**

*Read experiences from other  
young adults on how they took  
the stress out of finding their  
eternal companion.*

42



YOUNG WOMEN

**CELEBRATING 150  
YEARS**

54, 58

YOUTH

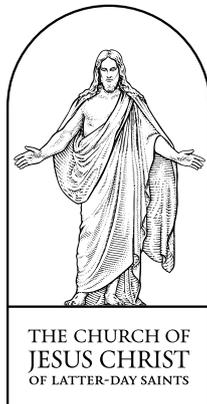
**HELPING FRIENDS  
WHO ARE DEPRESSED**

62

CHILDREN

**PLAY THIS  
BOOK OF MORMON  
MATCHING GAME**

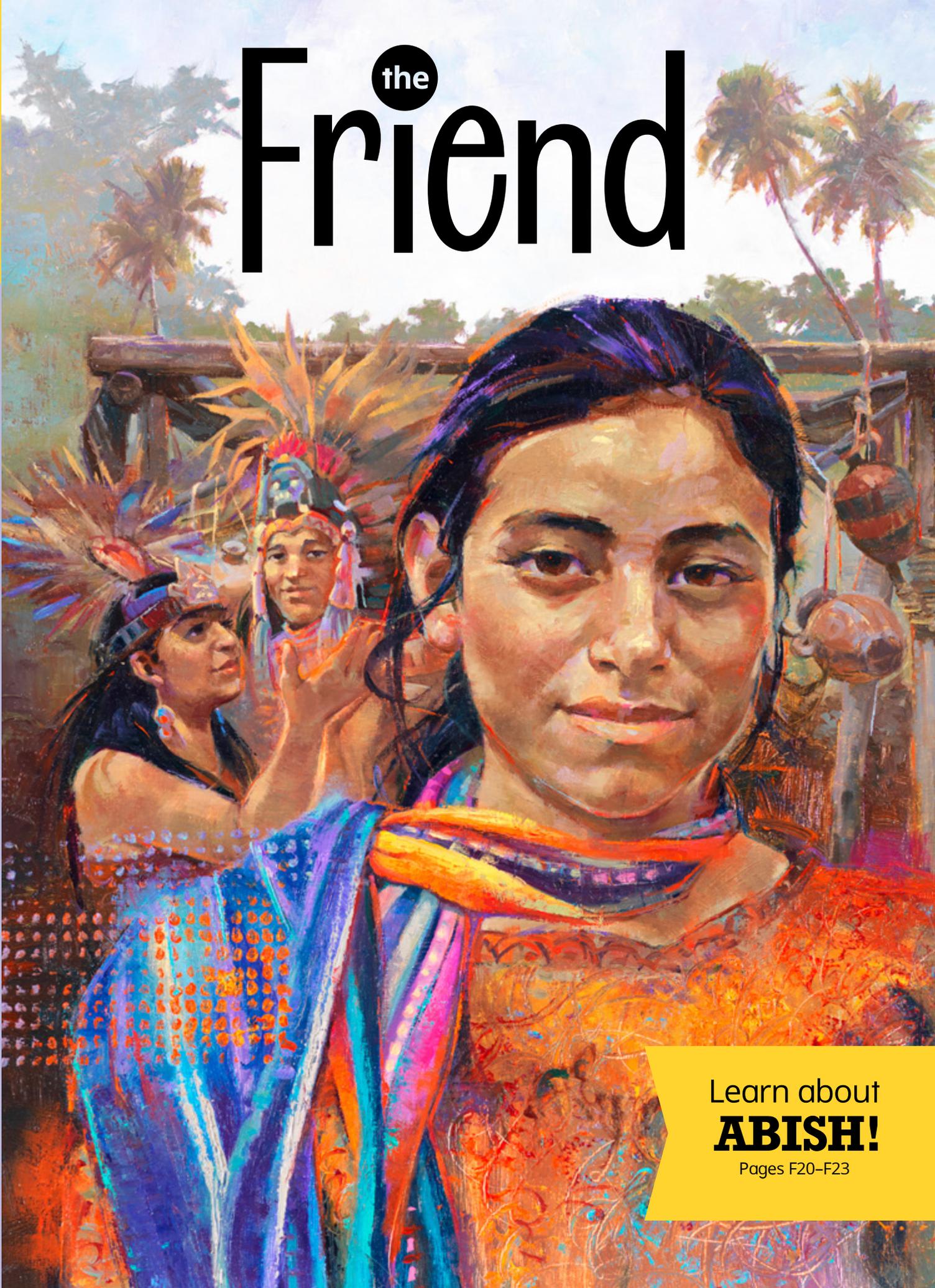
F12



June 2020

# the Friend

The children's section of the *Liahona*, published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints



Learn about  
**ABISH!**

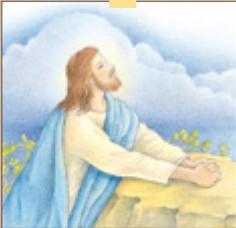
Pages F20–F23



**By President  
Henry B. Eyring**  
Second Counselor  
in the First  
Presidency

# Testimony and the Book of Mormon

Each time I read  
even a few lines in the Book of Mormon,  
I feel my testimony strengthened  
that the book is true,  
that Jesus is the Christ, and  
that we can follow Him home.  
It has been for me the book of books.  
It is the word of God.



*Adapted from "The Book of Mormon as a Personal  
Guide," Ensign, Sept. 2010, 4–6.*



## A Testimony of Your Own

A testimony is a good feeling from the Holy Ghost telling you that something is true. You aren't too young to have a testimony. Cut out the strips and put them in a bowl or jar so you can choose one each day. When you feel a testimony in your heart, tell someone about it!

Sing "I Feel My Savior's Love"  
(Children's Songbook, 74–75).

Sing "Gethsemane"  
(Liahona, Mar. 2018, 74–75).



Look at a picture of the temple.

Listen to a talk by  
President Russell M. Nelson.

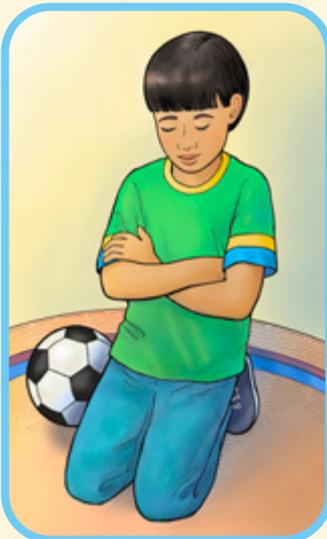
Look at a picture of Jesus,  
or watch a Bible video about Him.

Pray to Heavenly Father and listen  
for feelings from the Holy Ghost.

"Feast upon the words of Christ; . . . the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do" (2 Nephi 32:3).

## I Feel the Holy Ghost When . . .

I pray to  
Heavenly Father.



I think about  
the temple.



I help  
others.



When have you felt a  
testimony from the  
Holy Ghost?

# Kelly's Prayer

By Lori Fuller Sosa

Church Magazines  
(Based on a true story)

Kelly and her mom walked up to the church building and looked around. It was beautiful, with palm trees swaying outside. The sign on the building said, "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." In three different languages: Malay, Chinese, and English!

Kelly didn't know much about Jesus Christ. And she had never been to church before. Her mom's friend, Liza, went to church here. She had invited Kelly and her mom to come with her.

As they went inside, people smiled and said hello. Everyone was so nice. Kelly and Mom followed Liza upstairs to a big room. Liza said it was called a chapel.

Kelly sat down next to Mom and Liza in a row of chairs, and soon church started. She listened to the music. She liked how it made her feel, even though she didn't know the words.

At the end of the meeting, a woman got up to say a prayer. Kelly looked around as everyone else folded their arms and closed their eyes. She still felt something really good inside. What *was* it? It felt different than anything she had felt before!

As they left the church later, Kelly told Mom about the feeling she'd had during the prayer.



"Well," Mom said, "I didn't feel anything special."

But Kelly kept thinking about how she'd felt at church. She had liked the prayer. And she had liked hearing about Jesus.

"Can the missionaries teach me?" Kelly asked Mom. "I want to learn more."

"If that's what you want to do, that's fine," Mom said. The missionaries taught Kelly how to pray and how to read the scriptures. They taught her about Jesus and how He loves us. Kelly liked what she was learning.

One day the missionaries gave her a special challenge. "Will you try to pray during the week?" asked Elder Parker.

Up until now, Kelly had only prayed with the missionaries. But she wanted to try it on her own. She knew Heavenly Father was always listening, and He wanted to hear from her.

"I'll do it," she promised.

The next day at school was a special one. Kelly was going to sing in a competition! She had learned

a beautiful new Chinese song. Learning all the notes and tones had been hard work! She had practiced and practiced and practiced.

Now that it was time to perform, Kelly was nervous. She pulled out the picture of Jesus she had put in the pocket of her school uniform that morning. She decided to say a prayer, like the missionaries had shown her. "Heavenly Father, please help me let go of my nervousness," she prayed. "In the name of Jesus Christ, amen."

Then Kelly stepped out onto the stage. She stared at the audience and the judges. She thought about the picture of Jesus in her pocket and felt a little bit better. She took a deep breath and started to sing.

She sang all the words just like she'd practiced. As she sang the last note and took a bow, Kelly knew Heavenly Father had heard her prayer and helped her.

With a smile, Kelly walked off the stage. She couldn't wait to tell the missionaries about what happened! She knew she wanted to keep praying every day. ●





# Hello from Germany!

Hi,  
we're Margo and  
Paolo.  
Join us as we visit  
Germany!



**Germany**, or *Deutschland*, is a country in central Europe. It has forests and rivers, mountains and beaches, and villages and big cities. Around 13 million children live in Germany.

Germany has about 20,000 castles. Many are hundreds of years old. This is a famous one called Neuschwanstein.



There are two temples in Germany. One is in Freiberg, and the other is in Frankfurt, where this boy is. The sign says, "Tempel der Kirche Jesu Christi der Heiligen der Letzten Tage" (Temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints).

Sauerkraut, sausage, and *Spätzle* (noodles) are popular foods in Germany.



Girls and boys enjoy participating in Primary.



Germany is famous for its Christmas markets. Families love to look at the beautiful lights and eat tasty treats!



Here's what the *Children's Guidebook* looks like in German. Children in Germany are using it to learn and grow. How are you using your guidebook where you live?

### Meet some of our friends from Germany!



**Thanks for exploring Germany with us. See you next time!**



My favorite Book of Mormon story is when Christ visits and teaches the people. I want to follow Christ's commandment to not judge. The more I read about the Savior's teachings, the more I feel His love and peace.

**Lelia A., age 10, Franconia, Germany**



I know if I keep the commandments, I have the assurance and security of staying on the path that leads to God. I can always know that I did something right when I feel the Holy Ghost.

**Kaleb A., age 12, Franconia, Germany**

**Are you from Germany? Write to us! We would love to hear from you.**

On the first day of primary school, each child gets a satchel (backpack), a pencil case, and a "school cone" (*Schultüte* or *Zuckertüte*) filled with sweets and little presents.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY KATIE MCDEE; PHOTOGRAPH OF BOY IN FRONT OF FRANKFURT, GERMANY TEMPLE SIGN BY FERNANDA RUDLOFF; PHOTOGRAPHS OF SPITZLE AND CHRISTMAS MARKETS FROM GETTY IMAGES

# Swimming Like a Seahorse

By David Dickson

Church Magazines

(Based on a true story)

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

Robin stared into the swimming pool. He tried not to think about how far he had to swim. All that mattered was earning the badge. The *seepferdchen* (seahorse) badge would show everybody in Germany that he knew how to swim all by himself.

*I can do this!* Robin thought. He took a deep breath and jumped.

SPLASH!

The cool water felt great on such a hot day.

*Take it one meter at a time,* Dad had told him. *Don't think about all 25 meters at once.*

Robin kept his head down. He moved his arms and legs the way he'd been practicing for months. Every few seconds he pulled up for air.

*Kick. Stroke. Kick. Stroke.*

Suddenly, the swimming teacher blew her whistle.

Robin looked up in surprise.

“Way to go,” his teacher said.

He'd done it!

Robin laughed and did a few underwater somersaults to celebrate. He was a seahorse!

When Robin got home, he hurried to find Dad.

“Dad, look!”

Robin's dad set down his hammer. As soon as Dad saw the *seepferdchen* badge, he smiled wide.

“On your first try?” Dad gave Robin a big hug. “What do you want to do to celebrate?”

Robin thought for a second. “What I would really like is to go to the pool with you. I want to show you what I can do.”





Dad smiled even bigger. “Now *that* would be a celebration for both of us. As soon as I have some time, we’ll go.”

Robin pumped his fist in the air. He couldn’t wait to have the badge sewn on his swimsuit and go swimming with Dad.

Several days passed. Robin kept asking about the pool, but something was always in the way. Dad always seemed to be busy.

One morning Robin knelt by his bed to pray. At the end of the prayer, he added one more thing.

“Please give my dad some extra time so we can go to the pool. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.”

As Robin opened his eyes, he heard Dad knock on the door.

“Let’s head to the pool. I want to see you in action!”

Robin’s jaw dropped. “Dad! You won’t believe this. I *just prayed* that you would get some extra time so we could go.”

Dad folded his arms and leaned against the doorway. “Now, isn’t that interesting? You see, *I* just heard a quiet, clear message from the Holy Ghost that I need to take you to the pool. Sounds like we’d better go!”

They had a fantastic trip. Robin showed Dad how he could swim for 25 meters without stopping. Dad was impressed. And Robin was impressed with Dad’s underwater somersaults. Dad could do five in a row!

“I’m glad Heavenly Father gave you some extra time today,” Robin said.

“Actually,” Dad said, “I think I was just letting myself get too busy. I think the Holy Ghost was reminding me that we have to *make* time for each other, don’t you think? I promise to do my part.”

Robin smiled. “Me too!”

Dad’s eyes crinkled in a smile. “One more thing. Have I ever told you that I’ve never lost a splash fight?”

Robin grinned back.

“The day’s not over yet!” ●

**This story takes place in Germany. Read more about Germany on pages F6–F7.**



# Finish the Pattern

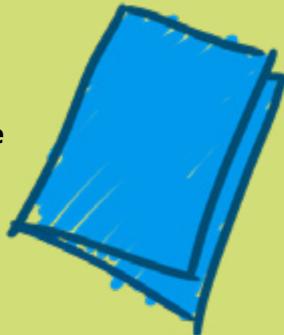
Here are four ways we can invite others to learn about the gospel.  
Draw pictures in the blank spaces to complete the pattern on each row.

Invite a friend to hear you give a talk in Primary.

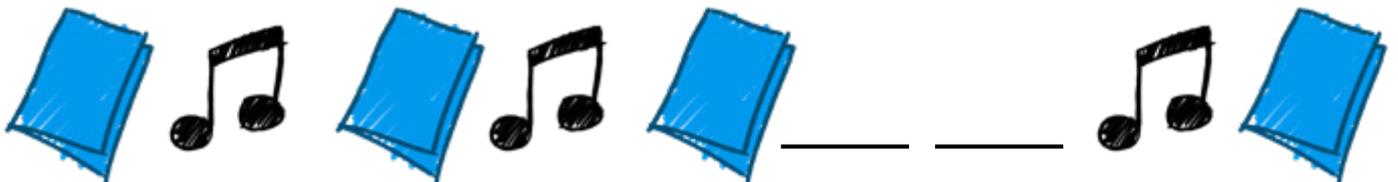


Teach a friend your favorite Primary song and sing it together.

Share a copy of the *Friend* magazine.



Tell someone how much God and Jesus love them.



# Show and Tell



**W**hen I was younger, I had a skin disease. Every day I prayed for Heavenly Father to heal

me. I learned to be patient, and after five years I was healed. I know that Heavenly Father hears our prayers.

**Juyoung K., age 12,  
Gyeonggi, South Korea**



**M**y friend's little sister is afraid of dogs. When some dogs came near us, I shoed them away so

she wouldn't be scared.

**Hyrum F., age 7,  
Maputo, Mozambique**



**I** love having pet stick insects. One of them became very sick. I said a prayer that she would recover.

The next morning, I looked into her cage and she was all better. I know Heavenly Father heard my prayer.

**Tahnee C., age 8,  
Wellington, New Zealand**

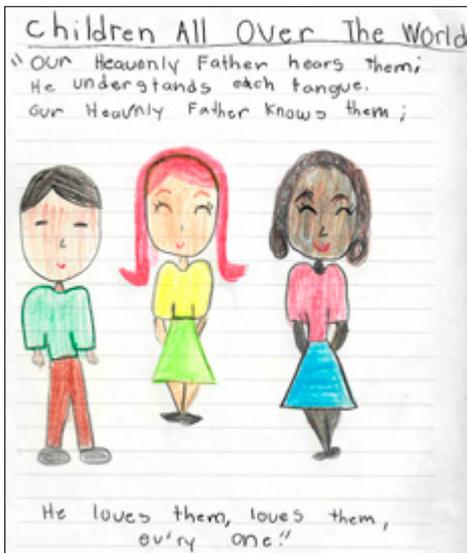


**M**y dad had a stroke and went to the hospital when I was seven years old. He was still in the hospital when I turned eight. I decided to wait until my dad was out of the hospital to be baptized and confirmed. It was one of the happiest days for me.

**William M., age 9, Queensland, Australia**



**Miguel T., age 7, Nuevo León, México**



**"Children All Over the World,"  
Alexia W., age 10,  
Heredia, Costa Rica**



**W**hen I went to school, some of the students liked scary stories. They told one story to me that really started haunting me at night. One night, I decided to pray to Heavenly Father to keep my mind off it, and He helped me sleep every single night. That's when I realized I can pray to Him anywhere and anytime.

**Enerel T., age 11, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia**

# Who Am I?

*Here's a game to play with family or friends. How many people from the book of Alma can you identify?*

1. Cut out the "It's not me!" buttons to the left and the cards on page F15. Don't cut out the pictures to the right.
2. To start playing, pick one of the cards from page F15. Don't show anyone which card you picked! The rest of the group will try to figure it out.
3. To figure out the mystery card, the group looks at the pictures on page F13. Then they take turns asking yes-or-no questions about what the people on the cards look like or what they did.
4. When the group learns something that narrows down who the mystery person is, they can use the "It's not me!" buttons to cover the eliminated pictures. For example, if they ask, "Does your person have brown hair?" and the person with the card says no, they would put "It's not me!" buttons on everyone with brown hair.
5. After figuring out who the mystery person is, read the story from the card out loud to the group. Then play again by clearing off the buttons and having someone else pick a new card.

**Tip:** Before you start, you could read all of page F15 out loud so everyone remembers the stories!

**It's  
not  
me!**



Alma the Younger



Ammon



Anti-Nephi-Lehies



The Queen



King Lamoni



Abish



Aaron



Korihor



Amalickiah



Captain Moroni



The Mayservant



Stripling Warriors



By Elder  
Gary B. Sabin  
Of the Seventy

# No One Was Left Out

*“Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another” (1 Peter 3:8).*

Our son Justin grew up with a difficult disease. Sometimes he was very weak. He couldn’t always do things like everyone else, even though he tried. He knew what it felt like to be different.

One day Justin and his friends got together to play a game. They had to hit a ball with their arms to keep it in the air. One of the girls who came to play had a broken arm.

It would have been easy to say, “OK, we’re all playing, and she’s just going to watch.”

But instead, Justin said, “I have a great idea. We’re all going to play with one arm.” Everybody played the game using just one arm, including the girl who was wearing a cast. No one was left out.

Justin is my hero. He always looked at other people and thought, *How do they feel?* Justin was sick for most of his life, but he was happy because he helped other people and followed Jesus Christ.

We all have challenges, but we have so much to be happy about. Do what you can. Trust God. The greatest happiness comes not from focusing on yourself but from focusing on others. ●





### Abish

I was converted to God years ago, when my father had a vision. While working for King Lamoni, I helped many people learn about the power of God.



### King Lamoni

When I learned about the gospel, I had a vision. I saw Jesus! I shared my testimony with my father and helped rescue missionaries from prison.



### Korihor

I tried to convince people that Jesus wasn't real and demanded proof that there was a God. Suddenly I couldn't talk or hear!



### Ammon

I'm one of the sons of Mosiah. During my mission, I protected King Lamoni's flocks. I taught King Lamoni and the queen about the gospel.



### Anti-Nephi-Lehies

We used to be Lamanites who fought a lot, but we decided to follow God. So we buried our weapons of war and promised never to fight again.



### Alma the Younger

I'm named after my father, the prophet. My friends and I made bad choices. But then we repented and became missionaries.

## Who Am I?—Pick a Card

*Use these cards to play the game on pages F12–F13.*



### The Queen

I protected my husband when others thought he was dead. After I learned about God, my servant Abish helped me stand and teach others.



### Captain Moroni

I was captain of the Nephite army, but I didn't like hurting people. I made the title of liberty to remind people of what was most important to protect.



### Stripling Warriors

We learned about faith from our mothers. When we needed to protect our families, we trusted that God would help us. And He did!



### Aaron

I'm one of the sons of Mosiah. On my mission, I taught the father and mother of King Lamoni. Then they created laws protecting missionaries in their lands.



### Amalickiah

I wanted to be king so badly! I poisoned the Lamanite chief and took over his army. I tried to convince people to fight and hurt each other.



### The Maidservant

When someone hurt me, I was brave enough to tell someone about it and ask for help. I worked with Captain Moroni to protect his people.

# Eli's HELPING Hands

By Rebecca Rice Birkin

(Based on a true story)

*"There is plenty indeed for my two hands to do"* (Children's Songbook, 272).

It was Saturday morning, and Eli was crouched in the goal box, ready to pounce. He jumped and dove, doing his best to keep the football out of the net. But it was hard! Then right before the end of the game, the ball slid past his hands. The other team had scored! Eli's team had lost. He was so sad.

The next day at church, Eli walked slowly to his Primary class, still feeling glum.

Eli saw his friend Kate outside the classroom. Kate's mom pushed Kate's pink wheelchair inside. She hugged Kate before leaving to go to her own class.

"Hi, Kate," Eli said.

Kate couldn't answer or wave back, but she always looked right into Eli's eyes so he knew she heard him.

Usually Kate smiled when Eli said hello, but not today. *Is Kate sad?* Eli wondered. *I know what that feels like.* He still felt sad that he hadn't stopped the other team from scoring the winning goal.

Eli sat by Juan and Makell as Sister Young started class. Then Kate whimpered. Sometimes it was hard for Kate to sit still because her body hurt.



"Kate, are you hurting today?" Sister Young asked.

Kate started to cry.

"Maybe a Primary song will help," Sister Young said.

The class started to sing. Kate loved music. Usually she sang along by making happy sounds. But today, Kate just cried.

*How can we help Kate feel better?* Eli wondered.

Then an idea popped into his mind. "I know!" Eli told Sister Young. "I'll push Kate's wheelchair a little bit."

Eli had seen how Kate's mom gently pushed her chair when Kate needed to feel better. He hurried over to Kate and started rocking her wheelchair slowly back and forth.

Kate stopped crying.

"Can I have a turn?" Juan asked.

"Me too!" Makell said.

As Sister Young taught the lesson, Eli and his friends took turns pushing Kate's wheelchair. Kate smiled. The whole room seemed brighter.

By the end of class, everyone was smiling.

"Helping Kate makes me happy,"

Eli said.

"I'm glad," said Sister Young. "It makes



Heavenly Father happy too. He loves Kate and wants her to feel better. Sometimes we get to be His helpers.”

Eli looked at Kate. “You help me too,” he told her. “Every time you smile.”

Kate grinned.

As Eli headed home from church, he felt as warm as a football field on a sunny summer day. *Maybe I can't catch all the footballs,* he thought. *But I can still use my hands to help people.* ●

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*



“Through our heartfelt kindness and service, we can make friends with those whom we serve.”

President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Finding Joy through Loving Service,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2011, 48.

# Jesus loves everyone!



# My Cooking Goal

By Fernanda G., age 10,  
Paraná, Brazil

I wanted to get better at cooking. So when I got my *Children's Guidebook*, I set a goal to cook with my dad. Whenever my father would cook, I watched him and saw how cool it was. I wanted to learn to cook like him.

My dad and I went to the store to buy ingredients. Then he taught me step by step how to turn flour into a beautiful cake. Later he also taught me how to make other things.

Working on this goal has helped me be closer to my dad. I love spending time with him! He has been a great teacher. One thing he taught me was that when we're cooking, I can't be distracted on my cell phone!

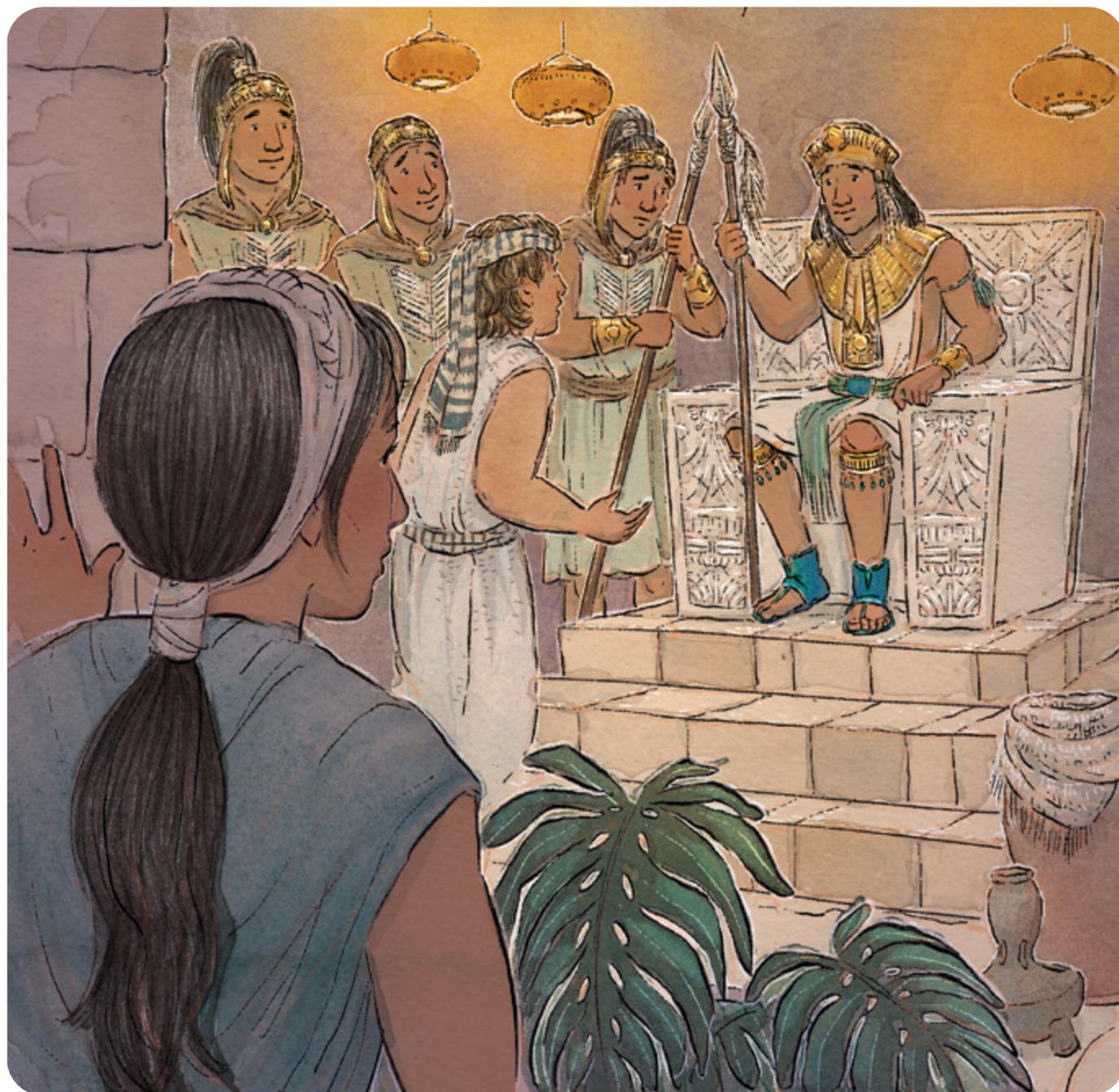
Now when I think of cooking, the feeling that explodes inside me is joy, because I love cooking! This goal helps me not only do something I love but grow spiritually too. I like that I get to choose my own goals. Heavenly Father wants to help me with this goal because He wants me to grow my talents. He wants to help me because He knows it makes me happy. ●



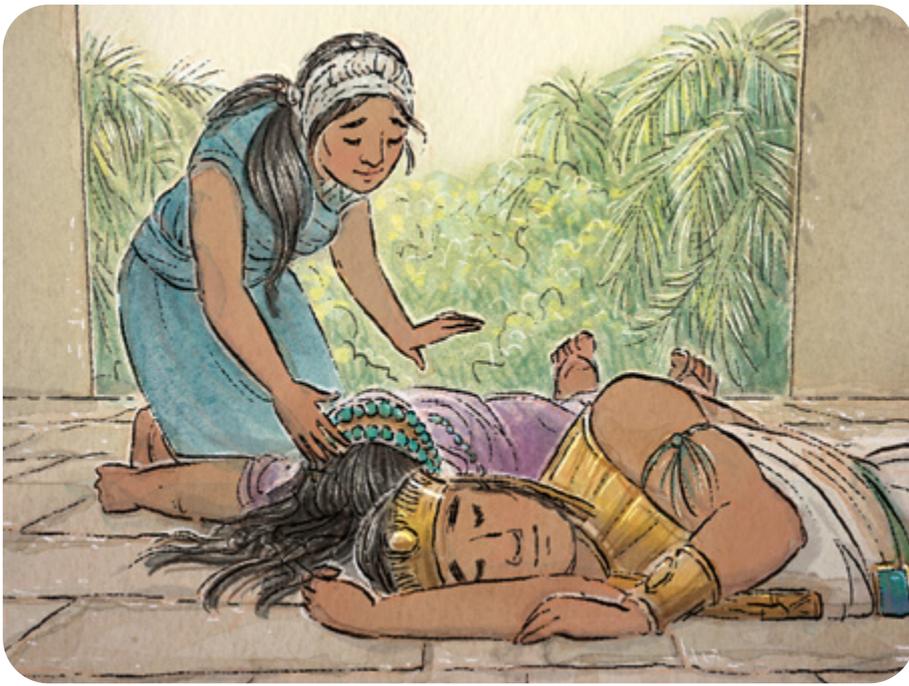
**Your Children's  
Guidebook can  
help you set  
goals to  
grow closer  
to Jesus.**

Ask a parent or another person you admire to teach you something new!

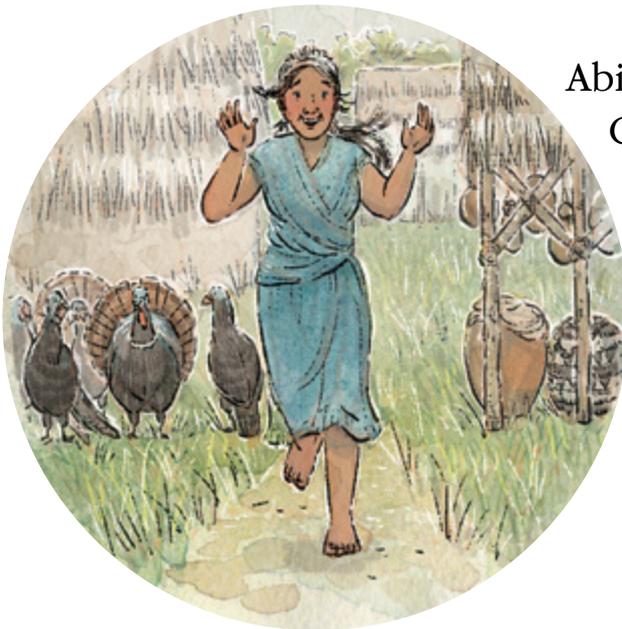
# Abish Shared the Gospel



A woman named Abish worked for the king. She believed in God. Most people around her did not believe in God. One day she saw a missionary named Ammon teaching the king and queen about God and Jesus Christ.

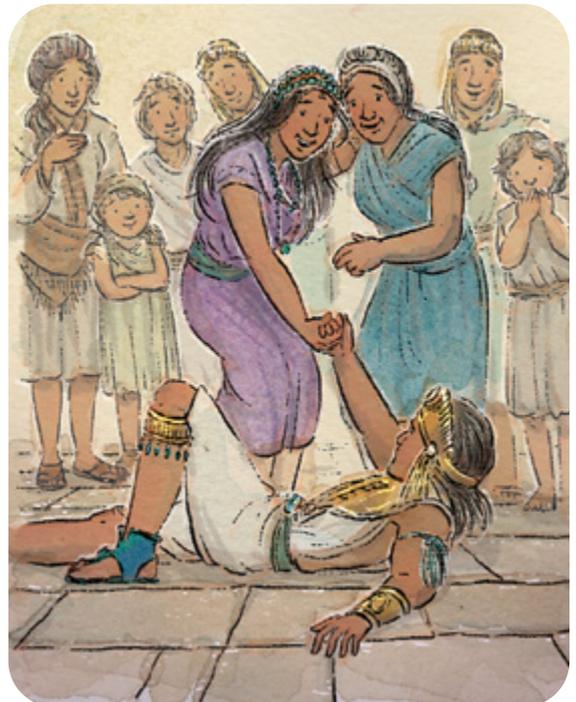


When the king and queen learned about the gospel, they were so happy! They fell down and didn't move. Abish knew that they were feeling the power of God.



Abish wanted everyone to learn about God. So she ran from house to house and told people to come and see what had happened.

After the crowd gathered, Abish helped the queen stand up. Then the queen helped the king stand up. They started teaching people about the gospel.





I can be like Abish. I can help other people learn about  
Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. ●

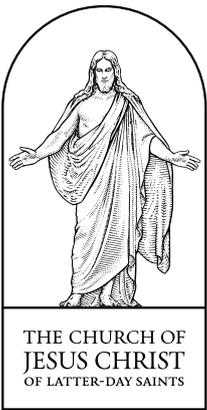
*Read about this story in Alma 18–19.*

# Abish Had Faith in God



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How can you help people learn about God?



THE CHURCH OF  
JESUS CHRIST  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

## Dear Parents,

This month we are reading about missionaries like Alma the Younger, Abish, and the sons of Mosiah. You could use the game on pages F12–13 or the story on F20 to talk about these men and women from the Book of Mormon. They each shared the gospel in different ways. How can your family share the gospel? Write down one missionary goal to try this month—you could even copy your favorite idea from F10.

Keep sharing!  
The *Friend*

### HOW TO SEND YOUR CHILD'S ARTWORK OR EXPERIENCE TO THE *LIAHONA*

Go to [liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) and click "Submit an Article or Feedback." Or email it to us at [liahona@ChurchofJesusChrist.org](mailto:liahona@ChurchofJesusChrist.org) along with your child's name, age, city of residence, and this permission statement: "I, [insert your name], give permission to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to use my child's submission in the Church magazines, on Church websites and social media platforms, and possibly in other Church materials." We can't wait to hear from you!

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**Find the Liahona hidden inside!**

**ON THE *FRIEND* COVER**  
Illustration by Dilleen Marsh

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