

THE New Era



The First Vision:
COMMEMORATING
and **LEARNING**

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**YOU
CAN DO
THIS**

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RESURRECTION *and the*
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reserved. The *New Era* (ISSN 0164-5285) is published monthly by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 50 E. North Temple St., Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA. Periodicals Postage Paid at Salt Lake City, Utah.

To subscribe:

By phone: Call 1-800-537-5971 to order using Visa, MasterCard, Discover Card, or American Express.

Online: Go to store.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

By mail: Send \$8 U.S. check or money order to Distribution Services, P.O. Box 26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368, USA.

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POSTMASTER: Send all UAA to CFS (see DMM 507.1.5.2).

NON-POSTAL AND MILITARY

FACILITIES: Send address corrections to Distribution Services, Church Magazines, P.O. Box 26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368, USA.

Canada Post Information: Publication Agreement #40017431.



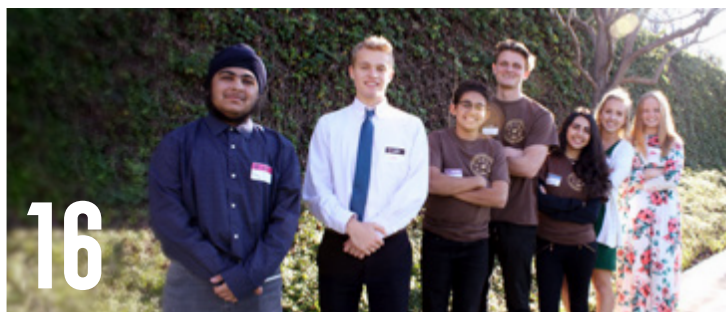
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**By Elder
Neil L. Andersen**
Of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles

STRENGTHEN YOUR FAITH THROUGH THE FIRST VISION

WHEN I WAS 16 YEARS OLD, I traveled from my home in Idaho to a conference on the East Coast of the United States, attended by young men and young women from all 50 states and nearly 40 nations. Before then, I had rarely been in a situation where my beliefs and convictions set me apart.

One evening in an informal group setting, a discussion arose about some of the beliefs and practices of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. A large group of students suddenly turned their attention to me and started asking questions, some of which were critical of our beliefs.

That caught me off guard. But after I had reflected for a moment, I began sharing some basic gospel principles. I explained that we have a Heavenly Father, that we are His sons and daughters, and that we are on earth to develop faith in Jesus Christ and to prove ourselves by choosing good over evil.

Sharing these principles led me to Joseph Smith's testimony. The other students had not asked about Joseph Smith, but I found myself going to the origins of why I

believed what I believed. As I told of the appearance of the Father and the Son in the Sacred Grove, suddenly everyone fell silent. A piercing feeling of holiness entered the room, and an enormous feeling of spiritual power rested upon me and my words.

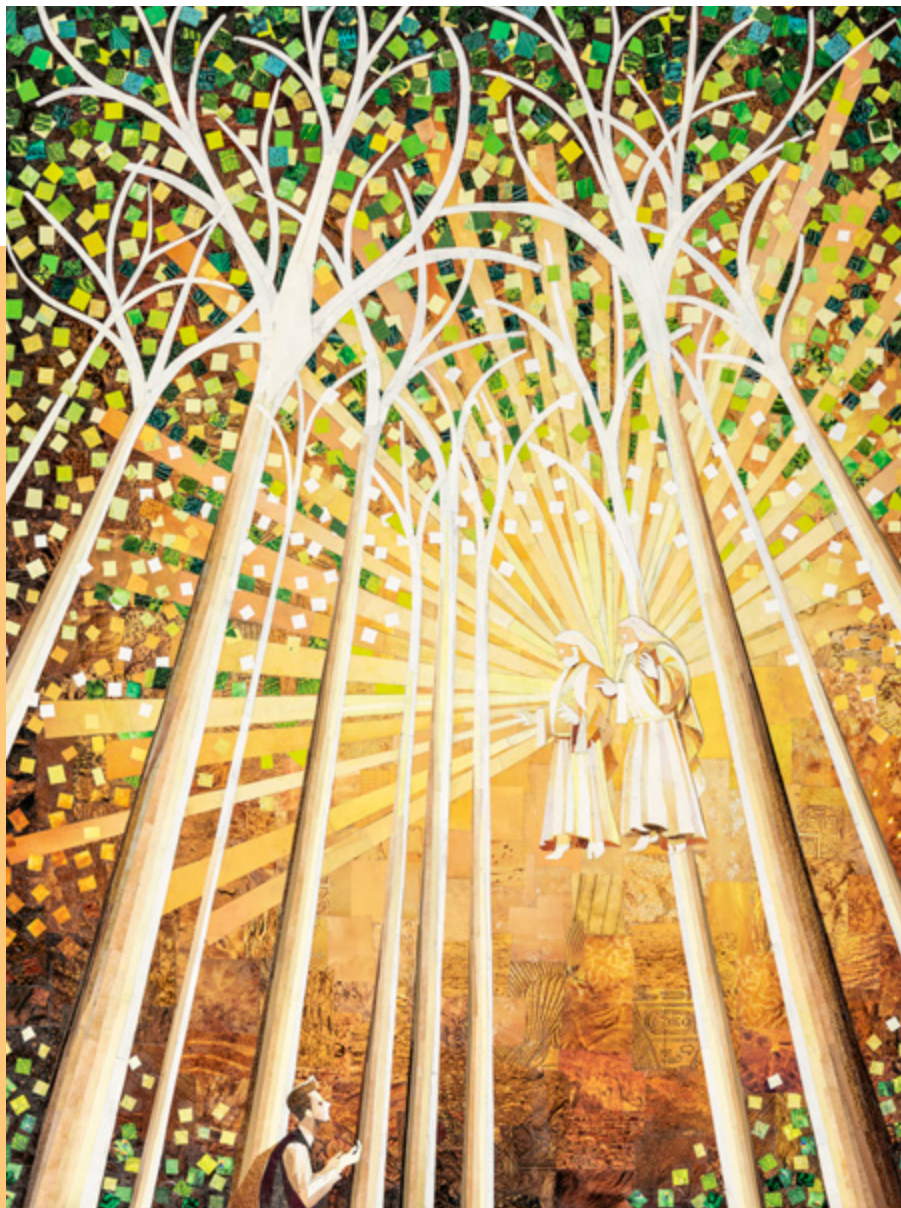
Afterward, several students thanked me for my strong convictions. Some even asked for more information about the Church. As I returned to my room that night, I realized that the person this experience had the greatest impact on was me. I had felt for myself the power of bearing testimony of God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the First Vision.

Since that experience more than 50 years ago, I have testified hundreds of times of the Father, the Son, and the Prophet Joseph Smith. In these experiences, I have constantly felt the confirming witness of the Holy Ghost.

I would like to share five principles I have learned from my spiritual understanding of the First Vision. These principles have strengthened my faith in and my desire to follow our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son. I hope they strengthen you too.



I pray that you will follow Joseph's pattern of prayer, learn the truths he learned, and strengthen your faith in your Heavenly Father and in His Son, Jesus Christ.



FROM THE FIRST
VISION, WE LEARN
THAT THESE
CELESTIAL BEINGS
KNOW US PERSONALLY,
JUST AS THEY KNEW
JOSEPH.

1. THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY GHOST ARE DISTINCT BEINGS

For centuries, religious scholars and philosophers had debated the nature of God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost. Many believed They were one being. Because of Joseph's experience in the Sacred Grove 200 years ago, we know the absolute truth about the nature of God.

First of all, He lives! Second, the Father and the Son are two separate, glorious,

resurrected beings, unique from each other. Later, Joseph learned that "the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us" (Doctrine and Covenants 130:22).

2. WE ARE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF GOD

Through the First Vision and other experiences, the Prophet Joseph Smith learned that God is not some distant

power who created the world and its inhabitants and then forgot about them. In reality, each of us is "a beloved daughter [or son] of heavenly parents."¹

The proclamation on the family states: "All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny."² Our Father has clearly declared that destiny: "This is my work and my

glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39).

Our identity is with God, and we are here on earth to become more like Him. This understanding from the First Vision allowed me as a young man to know that I had a personal Heavenly Father who loved me and wanted me to return to Him.

3. WE CAN BE FORGIVEN OF OUR SINS

One of Joseph’s deep concerns was to be forgiven of his sins. In one account of the First Vision, the Lord addressed the young seeker of truth with these words: “Joseph, my son, thy sins are forgiven thee. Go thy way, walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments. Behold, I am the Lord of glory. I was crucified for the world, that all those who believe on my name may have eternal life.”³

Joseph learned that through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, he could be forgiven of his sins and become clean and pure before God. He was given a sure knowledge that Jesus Christ took upon Himself the sins and burdens of all who have ever and will ever live on earth.

From the First Vision, we learn that because of the grace of our Savior, Jesus Christ, we too can be forgiven of our sins and one day stand clean before the Father.

4. OUR HEAVENLY FATHER HEARS AND ANSWERS OUR PRAYERS

In the grove that day in 1820, Joseph learned that Heavenly Father hears and answers prayer. Later, Joseph said, “I had full confidence in obtaining a divine manifestation, as I previously had one” (Joseph Smith—History 1:29). His example teaches us that we can approach our

Heavenly Father in prayer to receive our own answers.

Joseph repeated this pattern of prayer over and over. He had confidence that the Lord would hear and answer his prayers. He prayed about things you have likely prayed about.

He prayed for wisdom (see Joseph Smith—History 1:12–13).

He prayed about baptism (see Joseph Smith—History 1:68).

He prayed for deliverance (see Doctrine and Covenants 121:1–4).

He prayed for the missionaries (see Doctrine and Covenants 109:22).

He prayed for the Church, its members, and its leaders (see Doctrine and Covenants 109:71–76).

And he prayed for his family (see Doctrine and Covenants 109:68–69).

This is a pattern for us. Joseph showed us that we can all go to our Father in prayer.

5. THE FATHER AND SON KNOW US PERSONALLY

From the First Vision, we learn that these celestial Beings know us personally, just as they knew Joseph. The Father called Joseph by name and, “pointing to the other,” said, “*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*” (Joseph Smith—History 1:17).

The Father and Son knew Joseph’s needs, worries, and longings, just as They know ours. They also know our successes and sorrows.

In my youth, I prayed for many things. As I look back now, some of those things don’t seem that important. But they were important to me then, and I understood from an early age that I had a Father in Heaven who listened to me. I didn’t

always receive an immediate answer, but I felt that in His own time and in His own way He would honor my petition in the way that was right for me.

Have confidence and trust that God will speak to you. Believe in those feelings that come deep into your heart. I came to believe in prayer and understand its power because I knew the experiences of the Prophet Joseph Smith. I knew that God knew my name and that He would answer me, just as He knows your name and will answer you.

TESTIMONY

For many of the 68 years I have lived upon the earth, I have put Joseph’s pattern of prayer to the test. Like all true disciples of the Savior, I also have received answers from heaven. I know that Jesus is the Christ. He is the Son of God. He was resurrected and lives today. He has the power to forgive our sins. Through our faith, obedience, and repentance, He can bring us safely back to our heavenly home.

As an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ and as His ordained witness, I testify with a sureness and conviction confirmed by the Holy Spirit that the Father and the Son appeared to Joseph Smith in the Sacred Grove. I pray that you will follow Joseph’s pattern of prayer, learn the truths he learned, and strengthen your faith in your Heavenly Father and in His Son, Jesus Christ. **NE**

NOTES

1. “Young Women Theme,” youngwomen.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
2. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2017, 145.
3. “Joseph Smith’s Accounts of the First Vision,” josephsmithpapers.org.

A TAXI, a SCHOOLBOY, and an ANSWER TO PRAYER

*We had a prompting that
we would find him, so why
wasn't it working out?*

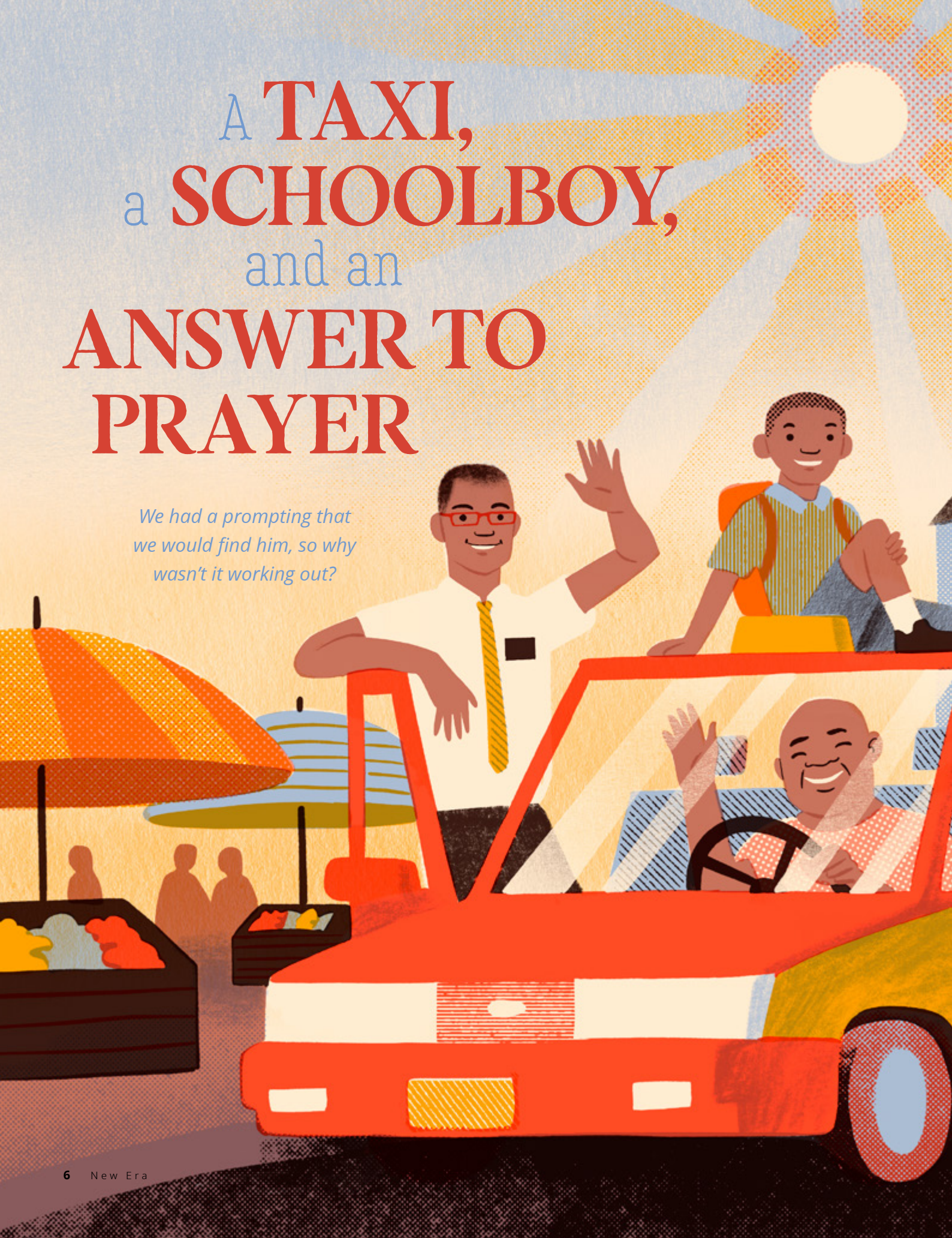




ILLUSTRATION BY COREY EGBERT

By Sydney Chime Ihunwo

One day my missionary companion and I were given a referral to teach a man who lived in a village called Tema, near the beautiful city of Accra, Ghana. The numbering of the houses in that village was not quite accurate, so we were given a written description to help us locate the house.

When we arrived in the village, we followed the directions but could not find the man because there seemed to be many houses that fit that same description. Feeling confused, we decided to knock on doors in the neighborhood to ask, but no one seemed to know the man we were looking for. I had the prompting to ask Heavenly Father for help.

After we prayed, I had the feeling that we would find the man we were looking for, so we intensified our efforts. Still, we did not find him. We got tired and decided to return to our proselyting area because we had other appointments. When we got to the taxi park, the taxi driver who had brought us to the village saw the disappointed looks on our faces and asked if we had found who we were looking for. Our answer was, of course, no.

He suggested we go inside a school that stood on the corner and ask there. We told him that was not the description we had been given, but he insisted. We got out of the taxi and headed to the school—not because we thought we would find anyone, but just to please our concerned friend.

As we started walking toward the administration building at the school, a little boy came running in our direction. He smiled and told us that he and his brother were the only members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints living in this area and that he could help us.

My companion and I looked at each other in disbelief. It was a miracle. The boy helped us find the man we were looking for, and eventually he accepted the gospel and was baptized.

This experience taught me that Heavenly Father answers prayers in His own time and in His own way. When we do not get immediate answers to our prayers, we can exercise faith in Him and learn to be patient. **NE**

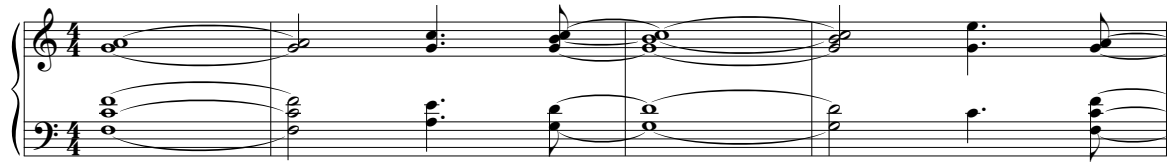
The author lives in Rivers State, Nigeria.

PILLAR OF LIGHT

2020 YOUTH ALBUM

With conviction ♩ = 95

Words and music by Nik Day



5

Dark - ness co - vered the earth. Peo - ple were look - ing for truth, But it was ta - ken a - way
Shin - ing bright as the sun, — Hea - ven - ly rays of love — Start - ed drown - ing out —

5

Musical notation for the first vocal line and piano accompaniment, starting at measure 5.

8

— so long a - go. God was pre - par - ing their hearts — So He could light up the dark,
— the dark - ness. — And e - very - thing that was lost — Was gi - ven back — to us

8

Musical notation for the second vocal line and piano accompaniment, starting at measure 8.

11

'Cause it was time for a new — be - gin - ning. — There was a
— In a spi - ri - tual rest o - ra - tion. — God showed us

11

Musical notation for the third vocal line and piano accompaniment, starting at measure 11.

14

boy who need - ed an - swers, — One that was cho - sen by — God,
we were not for - got - ten, — And He pro - vi - ded a — way,

14

Musical notation for the fourth vocal line and piano accompaniment, starting at measure 14.

ILLUSTRATION BY BEN SIMONSEN

17
8

So he went and found a place to ____ pray. ____ And when he prayed, ____
All be - cause a boy knelt ____ to ____ pray. ____

20
8

A pil - lar of light ____ rest - ed on him. ____ The win - dows of hea -

23
8

ven were o - pened a - gain. ____ They called him by name. ____ Cho - sen by God, ____

26
8

To Coda ☺

____ he was part ____ of a big - ger plan. ____ It all be - gan ____ with a pil - lar of light. ____

29
8

1.



32 2.

God the Fa - ther and the Son ap - peared

35

To place a lit - tle piece of hea - ven here.

38

They showed their per - fect love for us With a pil - lar of light.

41

44

A pil - lar of light.

D.S. al Coda

47

8

A pil - lar of light ____

47

CODA

49

8

49

52

8

A pil - lar of light. ____

52

54

8

54

57

8

57



YOU CAN DO THIS

Watch the full broadcast at
[ChurchofJesusChrist.org/
broadcasts/face-to-face](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/broadcasts/face-to-face).

Involve the Lord in your goal setting, and He will help you learn what He wants you to become.

By President Dallin H. Oaks
First Counselor in the First Presidency

When I was young, I had an experience with heavenly help and goals. There was a radio repair shop close to where I lived, and I got a job there to sweep out the shop. While there, I became fascinated with radio. The owner of the shop showed me how to do some basic radio repair, and my interest increased. I continued to learn more by reading books, and soon I discovered that I could be certified as a transmitter engineer if I took an exam. Now I was developing a goal.

I studied, took the exam, passed, and was licensed as a transmitter engineer while I was still in high school. When I got a little older, I became a radio announcer, which allowed me to introduce records and interview people. I kept that job all through high school and college. Even after I got married, that was my source of support for my family. It affected my life a great deal to have a goal and have heavenly help in pursuing that goal.

SET EFFECTIVE GOALS

The Children and Youth program is designed to help you set goals and become more like our Savior in four areas: spiritual, social, physical, and intellectual.

When we set goals, we often make the mistake of setting a very long-range goal. A student once told me that he was studying to be a brain surgeon. I said, “That’s all right, but shouldn’t your first goal be to pass a course in biology?” You can take the long view, but remember that the most effective goals are short-term goals that get you toward your destination.

Some of you may wonder how to know when one goal is done and when to start a new one. The completion of one goal naturally leads you to others. And that’s part of the process of revelation. Don’t wonder when you’re going to complete a goal—just listen for a new one. Be prepared for what the Lord may inspire you to do.



PREPARE TO RECEIVE REVELATION

To receive revelation, we need to prepare ourselves. I have found in my personal scripture study that I should always pray before I read the scriptures. And then I’m patient. The Lord gives us revelation in His own time, in His own way, and according to His own will. So sometimes we just have to wait.

There’s one other thing about personal revelation we should keep in mind: the Lord never shouts; He whispers (see Helaman 5:30). Some people think they’ve never received revelation because they’ve never heard a loud voice or seen an angel. But the Lord whispers. So when you seek revelation, listen for a whisper.

HELP OTHERS WITH THEIR GOALS

Be a leader and help others with their goals. We’re all at a different place on the road to eternal life. And you may be further down the road, more committed, or more faithful in keeping your commitments than someone else.

You need to seek the inspiration of the Lord on how to get close to those who are in a different place than you, and especially to those you lead and teach. Getting next to a person and encouraging them is an important part of that. Seek to know what words to share with them that will sink into their hearts and motivate them.

OVERCOME OBSTACLES WITH PATIENCE

Life is full of challenges. As you set goals and work on them, you will come across these obstacles. And often when you get a challenge, you don't see the way around it. Sometimes you just have to be patient and try when it doesn't seem possible.

Attaining our goals does not mean that we'll be free of opposition. Overcoming opposition is a process of growth, and growth is why we were put here on earth.

MOVE FORWARD WITH THE LORD'S HELP

You can do this. And God will help you. He wants you to succeed. Your leaders and your parents want you to succeed. Setting goals and accumulating the desire to do what the Lord wants you to do is something that only you can do. The Lord will help.

Involve the Lord in your plans, in your goal setting, and seek His help as you go forward with your efforts. As you learn more about personal revelation, and as you learn that the Lord doesn't shout but whispers, you will increase in your confidence that you can be guided personally by the Lord.

Growing spiritually, socially, physically, and intellectually is all part of the wholeness that your Heavenly Father wants you to have and will help you to attain. Remember that this mortal experience is an experience in which we learn to become what God our Heavenly Father wants us to become and what He has made possible by giving us His Only Begotten Son, whose Atonement assures us of immortality and gives us the opportunity for eternal life.

I testify of Jesus Christ, our Savior, and of this, His Church, with the fullness of His doctrine and the power of His priesthood, established on this earth to guide you and me as children of God, as we move toward the destiny that our Heavenly Father's plan makes possible: eternal life, the greatest of all the gifts of God. **NE**

Adapted from a February 23, 2020, Face to Face event.



COUNSEL FROM SISTER KRISTEN M. OAKS

"You're all so unique, and you have different capabilities and talents. And each one of you is going to build the kingdom of God in a different way. We're all coming to Christ in our very own way. You all have a different work to do, every single one of you. But Heavenly Father knows who you are, and He wants to make you the very best person you can be. And He'll enable you to reach that destination, which is ultimately to enter the holy temple and to be with our families forever."

THE INTERFAITH EXPERIENCE

By Karen A. Kimball and David A. Edwards

What are some of the best ways to gain a better understanding of someone else's faith? You could go to official online sources, and that's pretty good. But if you only search online, that won't always give you the whole picture. When it comes to really understanding a faith, you can learn a lot by talking to the people who practice it.

And that's just what some young people in California, USA, are doing.

The mission statement of the Interfaith Youth Council of Orange County (IYCOC) says their goal is to help youth "come together to promote respect, understanding, and appreciation for the integrity of each other's beliefs, cultures, and traditions." One way it does this is by hosting an annual Faith Forum and Festival.

UNDERSTANDING AND CELEBRATING FAITH

Last year's festival was held on a beautiful Sunday afternoon near the grounds of the Newport Beach California Temple. Over 150 youth from more than a dozen different faiths were able to take a tour of the temple grounds and ask questions about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Missionaries from the California Irvine Mission served as tour guides. They fielded questions from the youth about the basic



Youth of various faiths in California, USA, are learning to build bridges of understanding and respect.



beliefs of the Church and about the temple. These youth were seeking greater understanding of Latter-day Saints' faith, and they knew this was a great way to get it.

"It's better to understand other people's faiths and not just think of them the way you think they are," said Mohammed, a Muslim. "You need to actually know what their religion is."

Nazee, a Zoroastrian, agreed. "These interfaith events bring people together and promote respect and understanding for all religions.



I want to reach out to more people to help them to learn about other faiths."

SHARING FEELINGS AND BELIEFS

After the tour, the youth met in a nearby stake center to talk about and share their beliefs. Youth from various faiths were seated at tables together. They asked each other about their traditions and beliefs, their struggles in practicing their faith, and how their faith affects their views of current social issues.

As the youth expressed their beliefs, the conversations became

more open. Latter-day Saint youth were able to share their feelings about being sealed together as families for eternity in temples, helping and serving others, why we emphasize the full name of the Church, and even what it's like walking for miles and miles on a pioneer trek.

In the same discussions, youth of other faiths shared their own beliefs, values, and challenges.

One young man of the Sikh faith said he has to live his faith stronger since he is no longer in India surrounded by others of his faith. A Jewish young man expressed the challenge of keeping the Sabbath day holy in today's society. A young



woman shared what it's like to be one of only three students of her faith at her school.

Some from other countries remembered the joy of celebrating their traditions back home and how it's different in America, where they're not as widely celebrated. Others expressed hope that someday there wouldn't be so many negative stereotypes about their faith.

SHARING HOPES

Representatives of various religions from the youth council stood at the front of the meeting and lit an electric candle as they stated their hope about religion.

"I light this candle in hopes of peace and unity," Mohammed said.

"I light this candle to support faith education," Lizzie, a Hindu, said.

"My hope is that we can all find respect for each other that we didn't have before," Jessie, a Protestant, said.

Daniel C., who served as the vice president of the interfaith youth council, represented The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and said he hopes "that we can find similarities between our faiths."

All youth participants took a moment of silence in unity and respect for each other.

FRIENDS OF **VARIOUS** FAITHS

"Religion brings people together. You definitely make more friends. And you shouldn't be ignorant about other religions. You learn, and the more you know, the better."



Hobby/Interest: Legos & Gymnastics

Name: **MOHAMMED**

Religion: **MUSLIM**



Hobby/Interest: Building 3D origami

Name: **NAZEE**

Religion: **ZOROASTRIAN**

"I believe that religion sets people on the right path and deters them from following paths that are not that good. They can follow the practices and teachings that are the same in most religions—to be a good human being. If we can continue to work together and serve others, we'll be able to achieve, hopefully, a better world that's filled with more happiness and peace."

HOW WE RELATE TO PEOPLE OF OTHER FAITHS

"The spiritual and physical needs of the world require goodwill and cooperation among different faiths. Each of them makes a valuable contribution to the larger community of believers. . . . Thus, members of [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints] do not view fellow believers around the world as adversaries or competitors, but as partners in the many causes for good in the world."

"Interfaith Relations," newsroom.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

"We want there to be more respect and less alienation," Daniel said. He has attended many "house of worship" tours with the council over the last few years, visiting places such as the local Jain Center, Sikh Center, Buddhist Temple, Islamic institution, and Zoroastrian Center.

"I have much more respect now that I have made friends with people of other faiths and have seen what's important to them," Daniel said. "I learned that all religions are rooted in the values of doing good to others and serving your fellowmen. Most religions have beliefs similar to the Golden Rule."

SEEKING UNITY AND PEACE

Daniel's friends who have participated on the interfaith youth council expressed similar understandings and desires. Raj, of the Sikh faith, said, "I think that these experiences have shown us a lot of the similarities between our faiths, and as a result of that, it's comforting to see that people are feeling the same way you do."

"At the end of the day, everyone wants peace, unity," Mohammed said. "No one wants terrorism; no one wants to hurt others. They just want to have a good society and a good community."

Learning about different faiths and cultures helped him get rid of misconceptions, Raj said. "There's so much more to it than what I previously thought. I want to reach out to more people for them to learn about other faiths as well."

Paige M., one of the Latter-day Saint participants, said, "I think if we can join together with other religions and realize our commonalities instead of our differences, then we can help protect religious freedom and be able to come to understand what everyone else is talking about, gaining a respect for what they believe."

Understanding, respect, friendship, and love. These are things that people of all faiths strive for. And when we strive for them together, it can be a very powerful thing. **NE**

"We face different problems. The mindsets and the tools that religion gives us to be able to answer questions are forever, because they're applicable to the future problems. Having that toolbox provides an advantage over those who don't have that understanding or that faith."



Name: **RAJ**

Religion: **SIKH**

Free-time Activity: Normal stuff. "I like sleeping. Well... yeah, I'll stick with that."



Name: **DANIEL C.**

Hobby/Interest: Going to the gym

"Being on the interfaith youth council has motivated me to learn more about my faith so I can answer questions and explain to others what I believe and why. This has given me a greater appreciation for what I believe. And I think it will make me a better missionary, because I'll have a better understanding of people."

Religion: **MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS**

3 THINGS *the First Vision* Teaches Us about REPENTANCE

*In the Sacred Grove,
Joseph Smith learned
about repentance.
See what you can learn
from his experience.*



By Brooke E. Anderson

Church Magazines

The First Vision teaches us a lot about Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and Their plan for us. But did you know that the First Vision also teaches us about forgiveness of sins? One of the first things that the Savior told Joseph when he appeared to him was “Joseph, my son, thy sins are forgiven thee.”¹ For many days after, Joseph experienced great joy and love. Here are three things we learn from Joseph’s experience with the Savior.

1 The First Vision Teaches Us That the Savior Has Power to Forgive Us

Joseph’s experience teaches us that the Savior has the power to forgive sins. Christ is eager to forgive us when we humbly seek Him as Joseph did. He wants us to be able to repent and return to live with Him. In fact, that is the whole purpose of Heavenly Father’s plan. As He taught, “Behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39).

2 The First Vision Shows Us the Blessings of Repentance

Imagine how Joseph must have felt to have the Savior Himself appear and forgive his sins! Joseph wrote that his “soul was filled with love” and that “for many days [he] could rejoice with great joy.”² Although the Savior Himself may not appear to us as He did to Joseph, we too can experience the love and joy of repentance that come through the Holy Ghost.

REPENT AND BE BLESSED

“All hearts must repent and be pure, and God will regard them and bless them in a manner that they could not be blessed in any other way.”

Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (2007), 73.

3 The First Vision Sets the Stage for Future Blessings Related to the Atonement of Jesus Christ

When He appeared to Joseph Smith, Jesus Christ testified that He had been “crucified for the world.”³ He forgave Joseph’s sins, which set the stage for the full Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ, including the priesthood and saving ordinances that help us to repent and be forgiven. We can experience these blessings when we are baptized, when we worthily partake of the sacrament each week, when we attend the temple, and as we keep our covenants.

What Does This Mean for You?

Just as the Savior knew and loved Joseph, He knows and loves you. The Savior wants to forgive, no matter what our sins may be. Joseph was a good, honest man wanting to come closer to Christ. “No one need suppose me guilty of any great or malignant sins,” he wrote (Joseph Smith—History 1:28). In comparison, the sons of Mosiah in the Book of Mormon were described as “the very vilest of sinners” (Mosiah 28:4). Yet both were able to experience

the blessings of the Atonement of Jesus Christ and were forgiven of their sins.

No matter where you are, you are never too far gone. As you exercise faith unto repentance, you too can experience the great love and joy that Joseph felt when he came to know his Savior and the blessings of His Atonement. **NE**

NOTES

1. Joseph Smith, “History, circa Summer 1832,” page 3, josephsmithpapers.org, punctuation standardized.
2. Joseph Smith, “History, circa Summer 1832,” page 3, josephsmithpapers.org, capitalization standardized.
3. Joseph Smith, “History, circa Summer 1832,” page 3, josephsmithpapers.org, spelling standardized.



YOU ARE NEVER TOO FAR GONE

“However late you think you are, however many chances you think you have missed, however many mistakes you feel you have made or talents you think you don’t have, or however far from home and family and God you feel you have traveled, I testify that you have not traveled beyond the reach of divine love. It is not possible for you to sink lower than the infinite light of Christ’s Atonement shines.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 2012 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2012, 33).

Keeping

MY WORD

WRITTEN BY
NATASHA
ANDERSEN
ILLUSTRATED BY
KAYELA LARSEN



"When you are honest, you build strength of character that will allow you to be of great service to God and others."

For the Strength of Youth (2011), 19.

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goal

THESE YOUTH CHOSE TO PLAN
A YOUTH CONFERENCE THAT
WOULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE
FOR OTHERS.

WE WANT TO SERVE!

plan

When it came time to plan youth conference, leaders of a stake in northern Utah, USA, asked the youth what they thought would make it memorable.

After some discussion, their answer was simple: "We want to serve!" They decided they wanted to make a difference where they live. They wanted to help the hungry and the homeless, the lonely and the elderly. They also wanted to hold workshops in which professionals could help people struggling with serious issues like suicide and depression.

They adopted the theme, "You Love, You Serve." And during the three-day youth conference, they did just that.

By Eric B. Murdock and Richard M. Romney
Church Magazines



FOOD BANK



CLEAN PARK



FOR THE
HOMELESS



SELF-HELP
WORKSHOP



TALENT SHOW



GRANT WISHES



SUPERHERO 5K

THE YOUTH
SERVED IN A
FOOD BANK
AND SORTED
CANNED FOOD
DONATIONS.



“

“KNOWING THAT JESUS CHRIST SERVED THOSE AROUND HIM
MAKES ME FEEL LIKE I’M EMULATING THE SAVIOR,” SAID
STEPHEN J., 13. “TAKING HIS NAME UPON ME, THAT’S WHAT’S
GREAT ABOUT BEING ABLE TO SERVE OTHERS—WE’RE BEING LIKE
JESUS, AND THAT’S WHO I WANT TO BE LIKE THE MOST.”



SOME OF THE YOUTH
SPENT THE AFTERNOON
CLEANING UP TRASH
AND WEEDING GARDENS
IN A COMMUNITY PARK.



WEED



SWEEP



PICK UP TRASH



RAKE



“

“WHEN I WENT TO SCHOOL IN THE SCHOOL NEXT DOOR, THIS PARK WAS TOTALLY TRASHED. IT’S BEEN THAT WAY FOR A LONG TIME,” SAID KARLOS S., 12. “AND NOW WE’RE THE ONES WHO ACTUALLY CLEANED IT UP. I’LL ALWAYS HAVE THAT FEELING THAT IT WAS AMAZING TO CLEAN SOMETHING UP AS WE DID THE WORK OF THE LORD.”

“

“IT WOULD HAVE BEEN HARD TO WEED THIS WHOLE PLACE ALL BY YOURSELF,” SAID GLENN B., 13. “BUT WHEN WE WORKED AT IT TOGETHER, WE GOT IT ALL DONE IN A COUPLE OF HOURS. LOOK WHAT WE DID TOGETHER. THAT’S PRETTY COOL.”



YOUTH
ALSO MADE
HYGIENE
KITS FOR A
HOMELESS
SHELTER FOR
YOUTH.

Help the Homeless



ALONG WITH SORTING FOOD, YOUTH ALSO
BUILT BENCHES FOR A HOMELESS SHELTER.

THE YOUTH WANTED TO PUT ON A TALENT SHOW WHERE SENIORS WERE THE GUESTS OF HONOR.

YOUTH ALSO ASKED SENIORS WHAT THEIR WISHES WERE. ON THE NIGHT OF THE TALENT SHOW, SEVERAL SENIORS HAD THEIR WISHES GRANTED. ONE MAN SIMPLY WANTED A PIZZA. ANOTHER WANTED MEXICAN FOOD.

“

“SERVING TOGETHER GOT US INTO DIFFERENT TYPES OF GROUPS, AND THAT HELPED US TO GET TO KNOW NEW PEOPLE,” SAID ROSEMARY A., 13. “AND THAT’S PART OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS, TO GET TO KNOW OTHER PEOPLE. IT’S NICE TO WORK SIDE-BY-SIDE TO HELP OTHERS, TO GIVE INSTEAD OF JUST ALWAYS RECEIVING.”

SERVING BLESSES YOU

As you devote yourself to serving others, you will draw closer to Heavenly Father. Your heart will be filled with love. You will learn that service and sacrifice are ways to overcome selfishness. You will enjoy happiness that comes only from giving service to God and others. Your capacities will increase, and you will be an instrument in God’s hands to bless the lives of His children.

For the Strength of Youth (2011), 33.





THE YOUTH DID
A WORKSHOP
TO SUPPORT
MENTAL HEALTH.

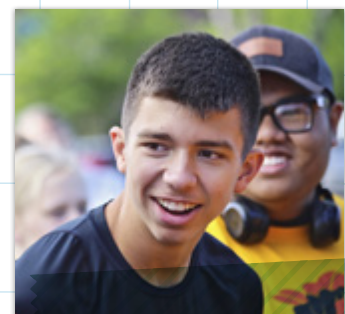
plan
accomplished

Throughout their conference, the youth learned something marvelous about their theme. "You Love, You Serve" works like a cycle—your love for the Lord causes you to serve others as He would. Then as you serve, your love for Him and for others grows, and so does your desire to serve. **NE**

Service Opportunities Near You
Looking for ideas on how you can serve? Check out JustServe.org for volunteer service needs in your area.



ON THE LAST DAY OF THE YOUTH CONFERENCE,
A SUPERHERO 5K RUN WAS HELD TO RAISE
MONEY TO HELP THE HOMELESS.



Workshop

Superhero 5k






By Elder Edward Dube
Of the Seventy

Gaining My Faith

One Step
at a Time

ILLUSTRATIONS BY GREG NEWBOLD



Gaining a testimony takes time. Often it takes small experiences coming together.

One of the defining moments in my life happened for me at the age of 10 when I spent two weeks learning Catholic doctrine at the Loreto Roman Catholic Mission, about 20 miles (32 km) away from my rural home in Silobela, Zimbabwe. I have come to know and love the Savior Jesus Christ and to look up to the Lord through these early lessons and impressions.

While I was in the Catholic chapel, I saw paintings with scenes from the Savior's life pasted on the wall: scenes of Jesus Christ's birth, teaching in the temple, praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, carrying the cross to Calvary, being crucified at Golgotha, and His Resurrection. It really made me feel sad to see those nails and thorns. By the time I got to the painting of the Crucifixion, my eyes were filled with tears. And each time I would cry and say, "Hey, He really went through a lot, just for me."

During the confirmation ceremony, one of the priests looked into my eyes

and said, "You are the light of the world" (see Matthew 5:14). Then, pointing to a burning candle, he quoted the Savior's words: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

As I learned more about Jesus, I wanted to be of service to others. For example, we would have to fetch our water five miles (8 km) away from our village. Often, women in the village, including my mother, carried a 20-liter container on their heads filled with water. After my experience at the Catholic seminary, I often pushed a 200-liter (about 50 gallons) container of water to help my mother, and I helped two other widows who were our neighbors. I had a good feeling each time I helped others.

These experiences helped develop my faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and indirectly prepared me to accept the gospel of Jesus Christ when I was 22 years old.

RECEIVING THE BOOK OF MORMON

I grew up during a time of change in my country. The white-minority led by Ian Smith declared independence from Britain in 1965. That prompted United Nations sanctions and sparked years of civil war that lasted until 1980, which marked Zimbabwe independence. When I finished my schooling, I moved to a city to work and didn't attend any church for several years.

One day I was playing with the sons of my boss. They were nine and seven years old. They said, "You know that our father is the branch president in our Church." They explained what a branch president is and, without thinking, I said, "Your father will not go to heaven." I realized I had made a big mistake, and I thought desperately about what I could say to them to make them forget my comment. At the end of the day, when they saw their father, they ran to him and repeated what I had said. I thought I would lose my job.



GAINING MY TESTIMONY

It took several months to gain courage to go to church. I knew where the church was, but there were no missionaries in our little branch. In February 1984, I walked into the Kwekwe chapel. I wanted to walk back out. I wasn't sure I belonged and sat at the back, ready to bolt. After the opening exercises, the branch president, Mike Allen, bore his testimony about the Savior Jesus Christ and the Book of Mormon. I felt connected. The next person also bore his testimony about the Savior and the Book of Mormon, and so did the third one. I was euphoric. I couldn't get the courage to go to the pulpit, so I stood where I was and said, "I love Jesus. I'm reading the Book of Mormon." And I sat down. That was the beginning of my testimony.

My boss had earlier shown me a jacket from when he had been in the military that showed he had killed. That's why I had said what I did. In a very calm way, he asked me why I said that. I said, "Boss, remember, you told me that you killed in the war. In the Bible it says, 'Thou shalt not kill.'"

He asked me which church I attended. I told him that I used to attend the Catholic Church but hadn't gone for seven years. He shared experiences in the Old Testament about wars and hostilities, and then he gave me a copy of the Book of Mormon. I was so excited that I didn't lose my job.

He gave me the Book of Mormon in 1981, but I did not read it or even open it for two years. One Sunday I was bored when my friends were out of town, so I picked up the book and went to a nearby railway station and read. When I read that day, I could feel the motivation to do


good, but what really touched me later on in my reading was 3 Nephi 11. I read about the surviving Nephites who had come through war and turmoil, and then the Savior Jesus Christ appeared to them.

My country had been through our own war for 15 years. Some of the people I had grown up with in my village had gone to war and did not make it back. Others were crippled for life.

So, while reading about the Nephites, I felt as though the Savior Jesus Christ was reaching out to me when He said, "Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may . . . feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world" (3 Nephi 11:14).

I felt as though He was reaching out to me personally, inviting me to come unto Him. It hit me that I could do this. It changed everything.





Those testimonies were the Lord's way of reaching out to me because it helped me feel that I belonged there. I felt that these were my brothers and sisters.

During the following days I prayed for them and for acceptance. I met members there who were so kind and who helped me.

A lot happened that day when I walked into the chapel. I wonder what would have happened if those members hadn't borne their testimonies. You never know whether there is someone who is struggling. When you stand up and say what you feel, it may be exactly what someone needs to hear.

Bear your testimonies often. When you do, you strengthen yourselves and others around you. Stand for what you know. As you follow the counsel from the Book of Mormon, you will draw closer to the Savior.

DRAW CLOSE TO THE SAVIOR

The time I spent at the Loreto Roman Catholic Mission started me on the road to becoming a disciple of the Savior Jesus Christ. Since then I have learned that being a disciple is a process and we need to keep moving forward regardless of our weaknesses and limitations. When we embrace the invitation: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48), we will progress toward eternal life "line upon line, precept upon precept" (see Doctrine and Covenants 98:12).

We know the road will not always be easy, and we will experience some hardships and heartaches in the process, but looking up to the Lord is the only way to find peace in our lives.

The Atonement of the Savior Jesus Christ is everything to me. I know that the Savior is reaching out to us. We need to look up, follow Him, and reach out to lift others as He reaches out and lifts us. **NE**

I have learned that being a disciple is a process and we need to keep moving forward.

The PLATES *within* the PLATES

By Charlotte Larcabal
Church Magazines

DID YOU KNOW THE BOOK OF MORMON WAS ACTUALLY TAKEN FROM MULTIPLE SETS OF PLATES?

You probably know that the Book of Mormon is a record of the Nephites, Lamanites, and Jaredites. For hundreds of years, ancient prophets, historians, and leaders diligently wrote down their history,

teachings, and testimonies on thin metal plates. So the Book of Mormon was put together from several different sources. Here are some explanations about them.

WHERE DO THE BOOKS IN THE BOOK OF MORMON COME FROM?

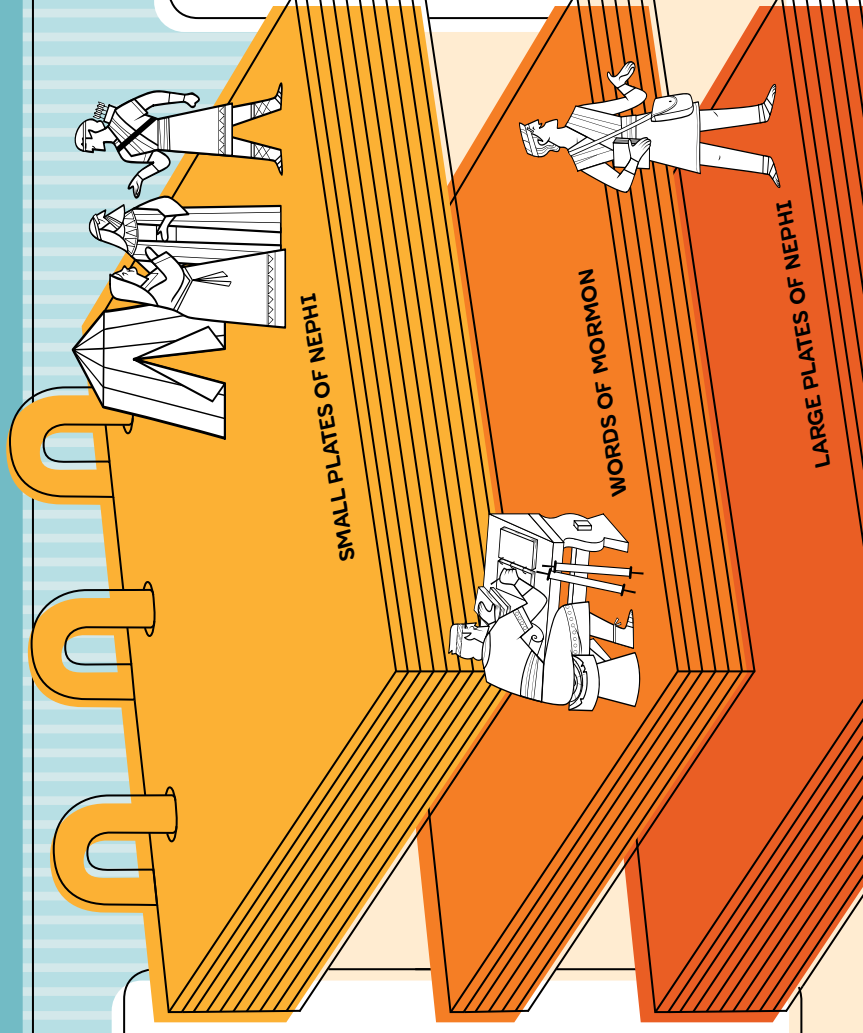
SMALL PLATES OF NEPHI

The small plates of Nephi were actually the second plates Nephi created at the command of the Lord, about 30 years after leaving Jerusalem (see 2 Nephi 5:28–33). They were kept by Nephite prophets and record keepers and were devoted to spiritual matters and the prophets' ministry and teachings. Amaleki was the last person to write on the small plates of Nephi. He then passed them on to King Benjamin (see Omni 1:25), who put them with the large plates (see Words of Mormon 1:10). The first part of today's Book of Mormon (1 Nephi–Omni) is an unabridged translation of the small plates.

Here Mormon added a note connecting the small plates of Nephi with Mormon's abridgment of the large plates of Nephi. He explained his decision to add the small plates and explained the historical gap between the small plates and the abridged large plates.

WORDS OF MORMON

LARGE PLATES OF NEPHI



THE PLATES OF MORMON

Mormon received the Nephite records from Amaron, the last person before Mormon to write on the large plates of Nephi. Mormon then wrote his own record and testimony on the large plates of Nephi. He abridged the large plates of Nephi, which included his own writings. He then passed the record to his son, Moroni, to finish the work (see Mormon 8:1). Like his father, Mormon, Moroni continued writing the history of his people, abridged the Jaredite record known as the book of Ether, and ended with his testimony. Finally, Moroni sealed the record and hid it up unto the Lord for a little over 1,400 years. Then, in the latter days, this same Moroni, then a resurrected being, visited the Prophet Joseph Smith and delivered the plates to him.

THE PLATES OF MORMON

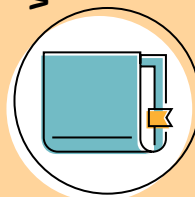
PLATES OF ETHER

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BRYAN BEACH

PLATES OF ETHER

The plates of Ether were written by the Jaredite prophet Ether on 24 plates and contain the history of the Jaredites. These plates were found by the people of Limhi in the days of King Mosiah. Moroni abridged these plates and added them to his father's record.

WHY DO WE CALL IT "THE BOOK OF MORMON"?



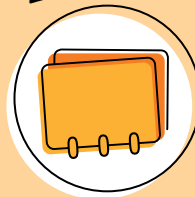
The prophet Mormon gathered writings from both the large and small plates of Nephi together into a single record. He couldn't use everything everyone had written, so "according to the will of God," Mormon abridged (or summarized) the writings on the large plates of Nephi. You can think of him as the main editor of the Nephite record in ancient times.

WHAT IS THE "SEALED PORTION"?

When Moroni finished the Book of Mormon record, the Lord commanded him to seal up some of the plates. This sealed portion contains the full account of the vision of the brother of Jared (see Ether 4:4–5). In the vision, the brother of Jared saw the history and future of mankind, "all things from the foundation of the world unto the end thereof" (see 2 Nephi 27:10).

This portion of the Book of Mormon was sealed when Joseph Smith received the plates and therefore was not translated by him. But the Lord has promised to reveal them in His own due time (see Ether 3:27). (See *To the Point, New Era*, Oct 2011, 31.)

WHAT ABOUT THE BRASS PLATES?



The Book of Mormon mentions the brass plates, which contain writings in the Old Testament (plus some writings from prophets not found there). While scriptures from these plates are quoted in the Book of Mormon, the plates themselves are not actually part of the plates handed down from Mormon to Moroni to Joseph Smith. **NE**

THE BOOK OF MORMON

A WITNESS OF THE RESURRECTION

By **Natasha Andersen and Eric B. Murdock**
Church Magazines

What comes to mind when you think of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ? Do you think of Mary Magdalene seeing the resurrected Savior at the empty tomb? Or the Savior's appearances to His Apostles? What about the Savior's appearance to the Nephites in the Book of Mormon?

Of course, we can learn a lot about the Resurrection in the New Testament. In addition, President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has taught, "The literal and universal nature of the resurrection is vividly described in the Book of Mormon."¹

From the prophecies, witnesses, and teachings in the Book of Mormon, we learn not only about the Savior's Resurrection but also how His Resurrection makes possible the resurrection of all mankind.





Prophecies

From the time of Lehi, prophets in the Book of Mormon continually prophesied of the Savior's birth, death, and Resurrection.

For example, Nephi prophesied that Jesus Christ would appear to the Nephites after His Resurrection (see 2 Nephi 26:1).

Abinadi boldly taught and testified before King Noah that the Redeemer would bring to pass the resurrection of the dead. He said that Jesus Christ "is the light and the life of the world; yea, a light that is endless, that can never be darkened; yea, and also a life which is endless, that there can be no more death" (Mosiah 16:9).

These prophecies, and many others in the Book of Mormon, show us God's love and teach us important truths about this crucial part of the plan of salvation. These teachings also help us learn of the resurrection promised to each of us through the Savior.

Witnesses

Along with the prophecies recorded in the Book of Mormon, there are also first-hand witnesses of the resurrected Savior.

The Nephites saw the Savior descend from the heavens and heard Him declare, "Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world" (3 Nephi 11:10).

He then invited everyone to feel the marks in His hands, feet, and side so they would know that He is “the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and [was] slain for the sins of the world” (3 Nephi 11:14).

One by one, people came to Him (see 3 Nephi 11:15). He healed the sick, the hurt, and the afflicted (see 3 Nephi 17:7, 9). He also blessed the children and prayed for them (see 3 Nephi 17:21).

Imagine being among those who saw, heard, and even touched the Savior. Months earlier, the people had endured terrifying tempests, earthquakes, fires, and whirlwinds that signaled the Savior’s death (see 3 Nephi 8). Now they gained a personal witness that the Savior lives and is resurrected with a perfect physical body.

The Savior tenderly told the Nephites, “I have commanded that none of you should go away” (3 Nephi 18:25). He says the same to us today. Although we can’t physically see Him or touch His hands and feet, the Savior doesn’t want us to go away. He invites all of us to come to Him and gain our own testimonies of His divinity and Resurrection.

Teachings

The Book of Mormon is full of teachings about the Resurrection. Here are just a few of the truths we can learn:

- **Jesus Christ was the first to rise** (see 2 Nephi 2:8). Lehi taught that Jesus Christ was the first to be resurrected and to receive a glorified, perfected body.
- **Resurrection comes because of the Fall** (see 2 Nephi 9:6). Jacob taught that “resurrection must needs come unto man by reason of the fall” and that death and resurrection are all part of Heavenly Father’s plan.

Although we
can’t physically
see Him or touch
His hands and
feet, the Savior
doesn’t want us
to go away. He
invites all of us
to come to Him
and gain our own
testimonies of
His divinity and
Resurrection.



- **Resurrection brings us back to God’s presence to be judged** (see Alma 33:22; 42:23; Mormon 7:6). After our resurrection, we will be brought back to God’s presence to be judged. Without resurrection, we would not be able to be in God’s presence or have the chance to live with Him eternally.
- **The body and the spirit will be reunited** (see Alma 11:45). Resurrection means our spirit and body will reunite, never to be parted again. Not only will we regain our bodies, but they will be immortal and perfect—not subject to pain, disease, or other problems.
- **Jesus Christ loosed the bands of death for all** (see Alma 11:42–44). Because of Jesus Christ, everyone who has received a physical body—whether they were wicked or righteous—will be resurrected and saved from *physical* death. We learn in the Book of Mormon that it’s up to us if we will repent and escape *spiritual* death.

Our Greatest Hope

President Oaks has said that the Resurrection is the hope that “changes the whole perspective of mortal life.” Because of Jesus Christ and His Resurrection, death is not the end but “merely a necessary step in the destined transition from mortality to immortality.”²

Because of the sacrifice and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, our lives *will* continue after death. We are blessed to have the Book of Mormon to give us this understanding and help us know this truth for ourselves. **NE**

NOTES

1. Dallin H. Oaks, “Resurrection” Apr. 2000 general conference (*Ensign*, May 2000, 15).
2. Dallin H. Oaks, “Resurrection,” Apr. 2000 general conference (*Ensign*, May 2000, 15).

HE IS THE LIGHT.



"When you read the Book of Mormon, concentrate on the principal figure in the book—from its first chapter to the last—the Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God."

President Russell M. Nelson, "A Testimony of the Book of Mormon," Oct. 1999 general conference (*Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 69).



CONNECT

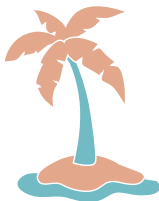


FIJI



LOTS OF ISLANDS

Fiji consists of 333 islands (about 110 are inhabited).



TRADITIONAL COOKING

Traditional Fijian cooking uses underground ovens.

CULTURAL DANCE

Meke is a traditional form of dance that celebrates Fiji's culture by combining dance and storytelling.



MIKAYLA J., 17, Fiji

I'm a convert to the Church. One of the things that first appealed to me was the youth activities. Even now, I still love spending time with Church friends who have the good, uplifting kind of fun. I especially like going to the Suva Fiji Temple with them each week.

In Fiji there's a lot of peer pressure. Shops don't often ask for identification to buy alcohol, cigarettes, and such. Kids buy them all the time. It can be hard to choose the right.

One of the things that keep me strong is my younger siblings. I'm the oldest, so I think of them every time I'm tempted to do something wrong. I don't want them to make any bad decisions because of seeing me do something first. Before my mom died, she made me promise to look after my siblings and always be there for them.

So far I'm the only member of the Church among my siblings. But I pray for them every day. I thank Heavenly Father for giving them another day to live, and I pray that they'll receive knowledge of His gospel. They keep me strong.

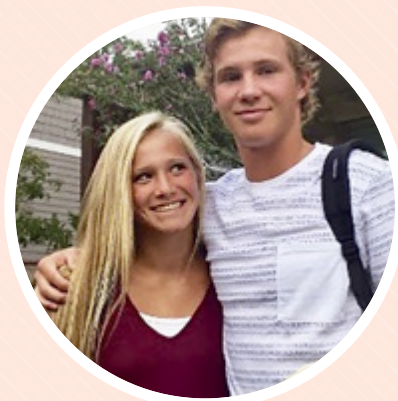


ASHER D.,

15, Washington, USA

I like running, downhill snow skiing, and tennis. I am a forced lefty, so I am actually now ambidextrous.

Back in late winter, I got really sick. I missed a few days of school, and I was running a fever of 103°F (39°C) with medications. My closest friend texted me and reminded me of the power of priesthood and prayer, so I asked my dad for a priesthood blessing. Afterwards I felt better and my temperature dropped a couple of degrees. I know the priesthood can heal us!



ELLIE S.,

16, Utah, USA

Growing up I was shy, and I worried about everything. But every time I was worried, my brother Spencer would say, "Ellie, hunamata," imitating the phrase "hakuna matata" ("no worries") from the movie *The Lion King*. Or he would sing the song "Don't Worry, Be Happy." He helped me see that I was important and that if I let go of my worries, I could find a lot of joy. I try to help others in the way Spencer has helped me.

LANGUAGE

One of few countries to have three official languages: English, Fijian, and Fiji Hindi.



YESTERDAY

TODAY

CROSSES THE INTERNATIONAL DATE LINE

On one island you can stand on the line and have half your body in today and half in yesterday.

1
TEMPLE
Suva Fiji



FUN STOP



Anton-Hymns

Time to test your song knowledge! The main words in each hymn title have been replaced with their antonyms—words or phrases that mean the opposite. Can you figure out the real titles of these “anton-hymns”?

1. Low under the Valley Bottom

2. A Rich Standstill Woman of Joy

3. Less Wickedness Take You

4. You'll Stay Where I Force You to Stay

5. Gather Darkness

6. You Sit Underwhelmed

7. As Brothers Out of Babylon

Easter Egg Life Hack

Want to teach your family a simple trick that'll leave them breathless with wonder (or at least mildly impressed)? Use a white crayon to write or draw designs on your eggs before dying them. Wherever you draw will stay un-dyed. Cool!

The Wondrous World of Stick-Based Youth Activities

WHAT MOOD DO YOU MOST WANT TO CAPTURE DURING YOUR NEXT YOUTH ACTIVITY?

- LIFE-ALTERINGLY AWESOME ☐
- DETECTIVE-ISH ☐
- BOARD GAME-ISH ☐
- ATHLETIC ☐
- COMPETITIVE ☐
- ARTISITC ☐

Play smiley hide and seek. One person uses a stick to draw a large smiley face in the dirt, and then the rest race to find it.

Play hangman or layered tic-tac-toe (see Fun Stop, New Era, Dec. 2019) in the dirt.

Whoa, tall order. Try playing the question game. Take turns handing a stick to someone different in your group. Each handoff, ask a question about their life. Friendships can deepen as you learn more about each other.

Divide into teams. Each team finds a stick about 12 inches long. Run a relay soccer race where each player kicks the team's stick to an agreed-upon point and back.

Are you feeling
PIONEER-ISH?

YES

Hold a "stick pull" contest.

NO

Decorate and hide two sticks; then play "capture the stick (flag)."

Want to work in
TEAMS?

YES

Play a "Pictionary"-type game of drawing pictures in the dirt with sticks and guessing the drawings.

or

Want to work as
INDIVIDUALS?

YES

Hold a drawing-in-the-dirt art contest on a theme of your choice.



What do you say when your friends don't believe that the First Vision could happen?

"Through personal revelation, you can receive your own witness that the Book of Mormon is the word of God, that Joseph Smith is a prophet, and that this is the Lord's Church. Regardless of what others may say or do, no one can ever take away a witness borne to your heart and mind about what is true."

President Russell M. Nelson,
"Revelation for the Church,
Revelation for Our Lives," Apr. 2018
general conference (*Ensign*
or *Liahona*, May 2018, 95).



Develop Faith

With spiritual questions, it's not only logic that we need; we also need to have faith to know that the

First Vision could actually happen. We can develop that faith by asking Heavenly Father and listening to the Spirit.

Julia B., 17, California, USA

Study the Bible

Ask your friends to study the Bible. If they believe in it as the word of God, then they should believe that God does speak to us today by visions such as the First Vision because He did the same with Adam, Moses, Isaiah, and other prophets in many different ways.

Elder Muanda, 22, Kenya Nairobi Mission



Ask of God

The fact that the apostasy lasted for hundreds of years does not mean that God ceased His visions.

We need to have a humble heart and to ask God with real intent and sincerity of heart, as Joseph Smith did.

Jeremi E., 19, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo



Believe in God

I would ask my friends,
"Do you believe in God?
Do you believe that
He created all things?"

Do you believe that He appeared to prophets in times of old? And if you do, why don't you believe that it's possible now? It is possible."

Sarah M., 16, Utah, USA

Share Your Testimony

I share my testimony with my friends that our Heavenly Father reveals things to His children when they ask Him with a sincere heart to know the truth. Joseph Smith had the desire to know the truth, and he acted according to his faith. You can also enjoy a wonderful experience if you ask Heavenly Father in prayer with all your heart.

Mara C., 20, Lima, Peru

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?

"I find it hard to get along with my parents. How can I improve our relationship?"

Send your answer and photo by May 15, 2020.

Go to newera.ChurchofJesusChrist.org, click "Submit Your Work." Sign in with your Church Account and then select "New Era" under "Choose Magazine." Click "Add File" to select your file and photos, and then click "Submit" to upload and send us your file. **OR** email your response to newera@ChurchofJesusChrist.org.



How did Joseph Smith translate the Book of Mormon?

Before hiding the gold plates, Moroni, the last prophet of the Book of Mormon, wrote on the book's title page that the book would be translated "by the gift and power of God." This remains the best description of the translation of the Book of Mormon.

Joseph Smith dictated the words of the translation to scribes, mostly Oliver Cowdery. Because Joseph was translating a completely unknown language, he needed to rely on the Lord. One way the Lord helped was to provide physical instruments to aid Joseph in translating. Witnesses said Joseph looked into the instruments and that words appeared to him in English. The translation instruments included the "interpreters" or "Urim and Thummim"—two clear stones fastened in a metal rim so that Joseph could look through them. These had been given to Joseph along with the plates. Another instrument Joseph used was a "seer stone" that he would look into, often by placing it in a hat. Joseph had found this stone earlier and had used it to find hidden or lost things. He used both the interpreters and the seer stone as he translated, always relying on the inspiration of heaven.

The translation of the Book of Mormon was truly miraculous and was done "by the gift and power of God."

For more on the translation of the Book of Mormon, see "Book of Mormon Translation" at topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org or in Gospel Topics in the Gospel Library app.



I HEARD WITHOUT A SOUND

FOR YOUTH CONFERENCE one year, we went on a pioneer trek reenactment. I was terrified. It wasn't that I minded walking for miles and miles a day—I was worried that I wouldn't be able to hear anything.

I lost my hearing to meningitis when I was three years old. With technology now, I can hear with a cochlear implant. But just before trek, I broke my good implant playing basketball and had to use a backup processor. It had only one battery, which lasted about 6 hours.

"Heavenly Father loves us more and knows us better than we love or know ourselves. We can trust the Lord and lean not unto our own understanding."

Elder Gerrit W. Gong of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Our Campfire of Faith," Oct. 2018 general conference (*Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 41).

I didn't know what to do—I just wanted to feel peace and comfort. So I asked my dad for a blessing. He blessed me that Heavenly Father would take care of me if I showed faith.

All during trek, I took my implant on and off to preserve battery life. One day we were heading up into a cove, and I felt strongly that I should take off my implant. I was reluctant because my trek pa was sharing a spiritual message and I wanted to hear it. But I remembered my dad's blessing and put the implant in my pocket.

As we walked a little further, I heard a voice in my head. It was so clear. I looked up and realized that the words in my head were the same words my trek pa was saying. I could hear every word of his testimony!

I know that Heavenly Father loves us and cares about our worries. He wants to bless us; He just asks that we show a little faith in Him.

Brody S., Wyoming, USA



How Can I Show Heavenly Father That I Trust Him?

1. Follow the prophet. God calls prophets to establish His word, so we are trusting God when we listen to His servants (see Doctrine and Covenants 1:38).
2. Obey spiritual promptings. God gives us the Spirit to "show unto [us] all things what [we] should do" (2 Nephi 32:5). We show God we trust Him when we do what He tells us through the Spirit.
3. Practice patience. Sometimes things don't work out the way we hoped, even when we've made good choices. Try to be patient and remember that the Lord is directing your paths! (See Proverbs 3:6).

HE MULTIPLIED MY TIME

DURING A PARTICULARLY ROUGH WEEK at school, it seemed like all my classes had assignments due, with tons of readings and quizzes. I just wanted to break down and give up. I didn't have enough time!

One day, I was feeling pretty low when I came across a quote by President Russell M. Nelson. It said, "I promise you that as you consistently give the Lord a generous portion of your time, He will multiply the remainder" ("Stand as True Millennials," *Ensign*, Oct. 2016, 29).

I decided to read the entire talk. After that, I knew exactly what I needed to do. I needed to give more time to the Lord through meaningful prayer and scripture study and by going to the temple more often.

As soon as I started doing that, things began to change. It felt like I had so much more time to get everything done. I got plenty of sleep and even had time to spend with my friends! School hadn't changed—it was still busy. But I had changed.

Now, whenever I need more time, I remember President Nelson's promise. I know if I make my relationship with my Savior my first priority, He will bless me with enough time to do everything else.

Clark D., Utah, USA



A PICTURE OF HOPE

WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, I followed bad examples. I was curious to do the things my friends were doing. But I started feeling lost and sad. To make things worse, my family went through a lot of trials. My mom was diagnosed with a serious illness, and my brother tried to take his own life.

With all of this going on, I lost faith. It was hard to go to church because I didn't feel like I belonged. But after a while, my leaders' lessons made me realize that I still believed, even though my testimony was weak.

I had to work hard to stop doing and even thinking about things I knew were bad for me. I often prayed for the Lord's help as I repented. Then one day, I found a photo of when I was a little girl and President Russell M. Nelson visited our ward. He was carrying me. I knew the photo was a reminder that God was looking out for me.

I know Jesus Christ sacrificed Himself for my sins. He can sustain us through hard things and help us find the right path, even if we get lost for a time.

Maria O., Ecuador



The Sacrament and Taking upon Us the Name of Jesus Christ

By President Dallin H. Oaks
First Counselor in the First Presidency

From an April 1985 general conference address (Ensign, May 1985, 80–82).

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are commanded to partake of the sacrament each week (see Doctrine and Covenants 59:9, 12). In doing so, they witness unto God the Eternal Father that they are “willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given them” (Doctrine and Covenants 20:77; Moroni 4:3).

Our witness that we are willing to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ renews a promise we made when we were baptized. Persons who are baptized “witness before the Church that they have truly repented of all their sins, and are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end” (Doctrine and Covenants 20:37).

We also take upon us our Savior’s name when we become members of His Church which, by His commandment, bears His name (see Doctrine and Covenants 115:4; 3 Nephi 27:7–8). As true believers in Christ, we gladly take His name upon us.

We also take upon us the name of Jesus Christ whenever we publicly proclaim our belief in Him to friends and neighbors, fellow workers, and casual acquaintances. By witnessing our willingness to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ, we also signify our willingness to serve Him and to do the work of His kingdom.

King Benjamin told his people, “There shall be no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent” (Mosiah 3:17).

Those who exercise faith in the sacred name of Jesus Christ and repent of their sins and enter into His covenant and keep His commandments can lay claim on the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Those who do so will be called by His name at the last day.

This is what we should ponder as we partake of the sacred emblems of the sacrament. As we do so, we glory in the mission of the risen Lord, who lived and taught and suffered and died and rose again that all mankind might have immortality and eternal life. **NE**

King Benjamin

"When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the **service of your God**" (Mosiah 2:17).

He was **extremely humble** and worked alongside his people and always tried to serve them.



As king, he led the Nephites through a great war against the Lamanites and **established peace among his people.**



About 124 years before Christ's birth, King Benjamin told his people that the **mother of Christ would be named Mary** (see Mosiah 3:8).



So many people **came to hear him teach** that he used a tower so more of them could hear.






SHARE THE MESSAGE OF THE ONGOING RESTORATION!

As we prepare for and participate in general conference this April, remember President Russell M. Nelson's invitation:



HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO:

	SHARE YOUR FEELINGS about the gospel with a friend or family member.
POST A QUOTE you liked from conference on social media (and tag our Instagram account @StriveToBe).	
	SEND US AN EXPERIENCE you had during conference by emailing us at newera@ChurchofJesusChrist.org .