



**By Elder Gerrit W. Gong**  
Of the Quorum of the  
Twelve Apostles

# STRIVE TO BECOME MORE LIKE OUR SAVIOR

*Adapted from “Children and Youth: A Face-to-Face Event with Elder Gerrit W. Gong” held on November 17, 2019.*

**T**he Children and Youth program of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints comes to you with great love, inspiration, and preparation. Our great desire is for you “to strengthen your faith in Jesus Christ and help you and your family progress along the covenant path as you meet life’s challenges” (*Introductory Guide for Children and Youth of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* [2019]).

Built around a gospel core, the Lord’s program is for all youth and children everywhere. It will help you make your important growing years between ages 8 and 18 fun, happy, meaningful, and full of faith as you become converted to the Lord, stay on His covenant path, and fully participate in the work of salvation and exaltation.

Children and Youth brings together gospel learning, service and activities, and personal development to help you as you choose to grow and serve. It also helps you invite God into all areas of your life.

## GOSPEL LEARNING

You have many opportunities for gospel learning, such as in your home, in seminary, or in a class at church. You also have *Come, Follow Me*. In 2020, we will be studying the Book of Mormon. As you learn the gospel, you will receive spiritual impressions about how you can grow to come closer to the Savior and become more like Him.

## SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES

We learn by doing. Real service and purposeful activities are at the heart of Children and Youth. It will give you many opportunities to gather together and to serve others in Christlike ways.

One purpose of service and activities is to help you grow spiritually, physically, intellectually, and socially to become more like Jesus Christ (see Luke 2:52). Leaders will mentor, guide, and support you along the way, but *you* will be the ones to select, plan, and carry out your service and activities.



*Every aspect of the new Children and Youth program can work together to bring lifelong conversion and joyful gospel living deep into your heart.*



General Officers of the Church help present Children and Youth.



We hope you hold Aaronic Priesthood quorum and Young Women activities regularly, weekly if possible. We also encourage regular combined activities. Those of you in quorum and class presidencies should counsel together on how to best organize these activities.

We also encourage young men and young women to participate in campouts and other outdoor activities where appropriate.

In addition, all young men and young women ages 14 to 18 will now enjoy For the Strength of Youth, or FSJ, conferences. FSJ will bring you together with youth from beyond your ward and stake for classes, devotionals, gospel study, dances, variety shows, and many other fun activities. You will love gathering, meeting, and making new friends with other faithful youth.

Family activities are also important in our home-centered, Church-supported efforts. Whatever your family situation, we hope you share and grow in faith and unity in your family. (To learn more about service and activities for families, children, and youth, go to [childrenandyouth.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://childrenandyouth.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)).



David Archuleta performs the 2020 youth theme song, which you can listen to and download at [ChildrenandYouth.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://ChildrenandYouth.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).



Elder Gong introduces the Gospel Living app, which will be released in early 2020.



## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Your personal development, including goals you set for yourself, is also central to Children and Youth. You can prayerfully decide how many goals you set and when you hope to accomplish them. You will receive a guidebook to help as you choose goals for growth in all aspects of your life.

Prayerfully set personal goals that will open new horizons for you as you explore and discover new talents, interests, and

skills that take you beyond your comfort zone. When appropriate, please consider sharing your plans and goals with your family, Church leaders, and friends so they can support you and celebrate your accomplishments.

## GOSPEL LIVING APP

This world can be noisy, distracting, and consuming. A new app has been designed especially for you called *Gospel Living*. It has many features to give you a safe place to help you focus on what really matters.

The first version of the Gospel Living app will be released in early 2020. If you don't use a phone, no worries! You can use the guidebooks, your journals, and online Gospel Living tools to do many of the same things. Of course, an app can help, but we don't need an app to serve others, help a family member or neighbor, visit someone who can't come to Church, or simply be kind.

## RECOGNITION AND ACHIEVEMENT

Many people have been wondering if there will be any type of recognition for this program, such as badges, certificates, or medallions. The answer is yes! There will be both emblems of belonging and emblems of achievement (see sidebar).

Throughout your time in Aaronic Priesthood quorums or Young Women, you'll meet regularly with your bishop to share your progress. The year you turn 18, you'll review your personal goals and your efforts to fulfill foundational gospel expectations to pray and study scriptures daily, worthily hold a limited-use temple recommend, participate in church and

seminary, and serve God and others with your heart and hands.

You and your bishop will feel confirming joy when you have earned the special emblems of achievement. But please remember that personal gospel growth is not simply a set of requirements to check off. The right goals bring gospel experiences and change your heart. Setting righteous personal goals and establishing disciplined and inspired patterns now can bless you to grow and serve throughout your whole life.

## THIS WILL WORK FOR YOU!

Our Church members live in many places in many family circumstances, but we are united in faith and doctrine. That is how Children and Youth will work for you, no matter your circumstances. Through local priesthood keys, flexibility and adaptability, good judgment, and inspiration, your family, leaders, and friends will help you succeed. The Lord will also help and bless you. I know He will, I promise He will.

We love you. We pray your growing years between ages 8 and 18 will be filled with wonderful memories. We also pray that Heavenly Father's choicest continuing blessings will be yours as you obey His commandments and seek and find revelation from Him to guide, protect, and inspire you. **NE**

### #StrivetoBe

Use the hashtag **#StrivetoBe** when sharing your experiences with Children and Youth through social media to inspire others!

And now find the Church's youth Instagram account **@StrivetoBe**. Come here to be uplifted and to uplift others!

## EMBLEMS OF BELONGING

### THE YEAR YOU TURN 12

**YOUNG WOMEN:** medallion and gemstone to remind you of the Light of Christ and point you to the temple

**YOUNG MEN:** ring to remind you of the Savior and help you focus on preparing to enter the temple

**ALL:** temple recommend holder



### THE YEAR YOU TURN 18

**YOUNG WOMEN:** pendant to remind you to prepare to make and keep temple covenants

**YOUNG MEN:** vial for consecrated oil for blessings you can give after receiving the Melchizedek Priesthood



## EMBLEMS OF ACHIEVEMENT

**ALL:** a *Christus* keepsake; plus a special certificate, signed by the First Presidency, if you have strived to achieve your personal goals and met certain basic gospel expectations

