

THE New Era

KEYS TO



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(BATTERY) LIFE

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Getting TOGETHER
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YOU'VE GOT
TALENT

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BE-GRINNING TODAY!

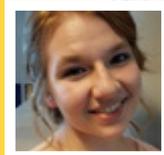


WHAT MAKES YOU GRIN?

Is it making odd-shaped pancakes? Singing in the car like nobody's watching? Creating beautiful music, art, or poetry? Animals? Let other youth know what makes you smile.

"When life gets me down, I just start drawing. Not only does it make me smile, but it makes others smile as well."

Madeline K., New Mexico, USA



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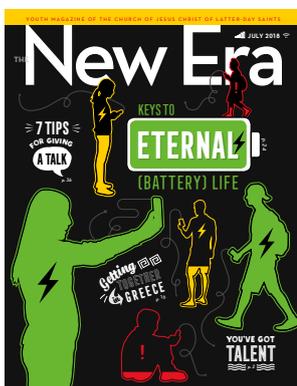
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THE MONTHLY YOUTH MAGAZINE OF
THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

July 2018 • Volume 48 • Number 7

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**By Elder
Ronald A. Rasband**

Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

YOU'VE GOT

*Let me reassure you my young brothers and sisters,
each one of you has been blessed with special talents.*

I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE with you a message on talents and abilities. Now, before you say, “I don’t have any talents,” or “I don’t know what my talents are,” let me share with you that everyone has been blessed with many marvelous capabilities and talents. One of the great objectives of our journey through mortality is to improve upon them. The Savior powerfully taught this lesson in His parable of the talents.

A master gave each of his three servants a sum of money. The amounts were set according to each servant’s previously demonstrated capabilities. The man then left for a long time. When he returned, he asked each of these servants to report what he had done with the money.

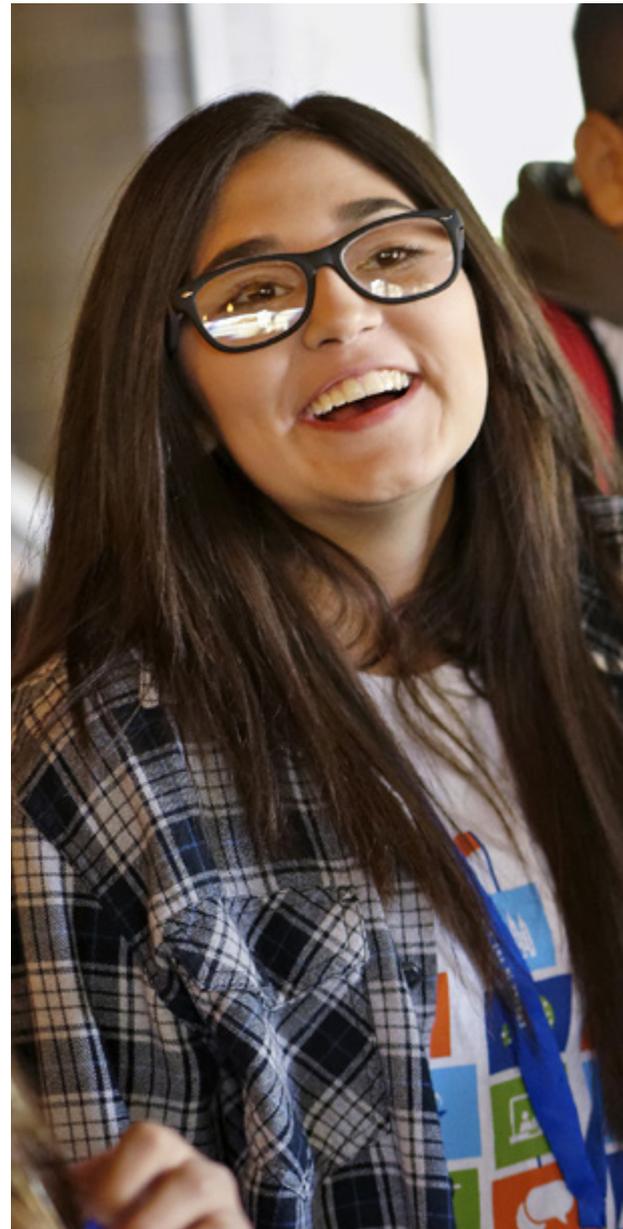
The first two servants revealed they had doubled his investment. “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord” (Matthew 25:21; see also Matthew 25:23) was the master’s reply.

The third servant then came trembling before his master. He had already heard what the others had reported and knew that he could not give a similar report. “I was afraid,” the servant said, “and went and hid thy talent in the earth” (Matthew 25:25). The master was upset. “Thou wicked and slothful servant,” he said. Then he commanded, “Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents” (Matthew 25:26, 28).

IMPROVE AND ADD TO YOUR TALENTS

In modern revelation the Lord affirmed the principles in this parable: “But with some I am not well pleased, for . . . they hide the talent which I have given unto them, because of the fear of man. . . .

“ . . . Thou shalt not idle away thy time, neither shalt thou bury thy talent



TALENT



IDENTIFY AND PUT INTO PRACTICE EACH DAY THE TALENTS [YOU] HAVE BEEN BLESSED WITH.

that it may not be known” (D&C 60:2, 13).

Sometimes we have a fear of using our talents. We use excuses such as “I know I can’t do that,” or “Someone else can do it much better than I can,” or “those listening to me, or watching me, will criticize and judge me.”

The Lord has made it clear that it is not good enough for us simply to return to Him the talents He has given us. We are to improve upon and add to our talents. He has promised that if we multiply our talents, we will receive eternal joy.

It is so important to identify and put into practice each day the talents we have each been blessed with. However, we must also be cautious and use our talents wisely in building up the kingdom of God here upon the earth. We need to engage in the activities, service, and lifestyle that will help to strengthen and protect our talents to be used righteously.

3 WAYS TO STRENGTHEN TALENTS

Applying the teachings of the parable of the talents has been a challenge and a great blessing in my life. I would like to share with you three principles which have been a great help to me in my efforts with this process.

1. Seek earnestly to discover the talents the Lord has given you. The talents God has given us first become apparent in the interests we pursue. If you are wondering about your talents, make a list of the things you like to do. Include all the activities you enjoy from different dimensions of your life—spiritual, musical, dramatic, academic, athletic, and so on. If you have received your patriarchal blessing, study and ponder it for insights and inspiration. Consult family members, trusted friends, teachers, and leaders; others often can see in us what we find difficult to see in ourselves.

Let me reassure you, my young brothers and sisters, each one of you has been



How can you
use your talents
to minister
to others?

blessed with special talents. Each of you has been blessed with divine talents by our Father in Heaven. He is waiting for you to identify, develop, and magnify those talents He has blessed you with.

2. Use your talents to build up the kingdom of God, and I don't mean just the Church. Our first priority in building the kingdom is in helping others in our own family. Parents are in a unique and powerful position to encourage and support their children in developing their talents. Siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, extended family members—we all have many opportunities to help others identify their talents. I am grateful for the many people who have helped me add to my talents. The successes in life of those we assist, sponsor, mentor, and lift as they pursue their own talents can bring us great joy and satisfaction.

Focusing on serving the Savior can guide us toward making proper decisions in our daily lives. This perspective prepares us to do whatever the Lord may ask of us at any time.

**EXPERIENCES YOU
HAVE EACH DAY . . .
WILL BE STEPPING-
STONES THAT WILL
HELP TO SHAPE
EACH OF YOUR LIVES.**

3. Acknowledge God's hand in your success.

We must never forget or stop acknowledging that all talents and abilities come from God. Some were given to us before our birth, while others have been acquired as we have developed. However, in both cases, they are gifts from a benevolent Heavenly Father, whose gracious blessings are also the means for improving our talents and obtaining others. The Lord has said, "And in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is His wrath kindled, save those who confess not His hand in all things" (D&C 59:21).

PONDER AND PRAY

I am thankful for the knowledge the Lord has given us—that we are His children and that we are to magnify and multiply our talents to our fullest potential.

The experiences you have each day, if you will allow them to be, can and will be stepping-stones that will help to shape each of your lives, as they have mine. They will assist you in finding your gifts and talents that will be used as you progress through mortality here upon the earth.

It is my humble prayer that we will seriously ponder and pray to find our talents, that we may use them in building up the kingdom of God here on the earth, that we may be found worthy to stand before the Lord at the last day and in His presence hear Him say: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matthew 25:21). **NE**

From a BYU-Idaho Devotional given on January 25, 2011.



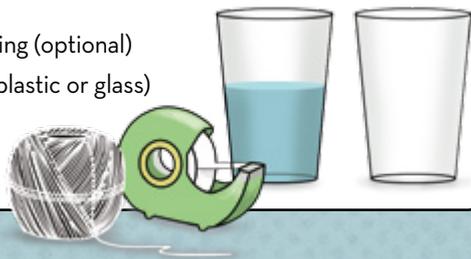
Conquering the IMPOSSIBLE

By David Dickson
Church Magazines

When we stick together and trust in God, impossible things become possible.

SUPPLIES

- Water
- Food coloring (optional)
- Two cups (plastic or glass)
- String
- Tape



You can accomplish a lot on your own in this life—ace your next test, beat the school record at the mile run, collect every action figure from your favorite fandom. But some things can be done only when we work together.

Sister Sharon Eubank, First Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, shared a story in conference about two children who were caught in an ocean current. When family and onlookers tried to help, they too became trapped in the rip current and were being pulled out to sea. The ultimate rescue required several powerful swimmers on boogie boards, some seriously out-of-the-box thinking, and an *80-person human chain*!¹

When we stick together, the impossible suddenly becomes possible.

Object lesson time!

1. SETUP

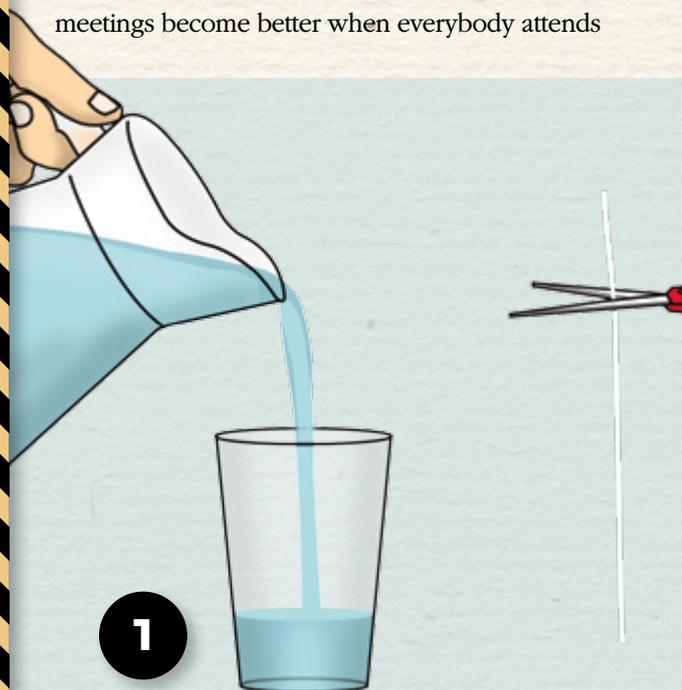
Pouring water from one cup into another is a snap. Trying to make the water fall *diagonally*, though, is a different matter. Sound impossible? It's not! At least, not with a few basic supplies and some physics on your side.

To set up, fill one cup with water (which you can dye with food coloring for effect if you like). Cut a length of string about as long as your forearm and have some tape handy.

2. HELPING EACH OTHER

Ask for examples of activities that are easier or better when done as a group. This could be anything from cleaning a Church meetinghouse to harvesting watermelons.

At some point, try to steer the conversation beyond the “many hands make light work” activities. For instance, is it easier to keep your standards when you have good friends who try to keep those standards? Or, how do Church meetings become better when everybody attends



and participates? And what about a Church dance?! Not much fun if you're the only one who shows up.

Explain that the water in the cup represents a group of people working together to do something incredible.

Soak the string in the water for a few seconds. Then squeeze some of the water out by pinching it between your fingers and pulling it from one end to the other. It should be damp but not soaked.

3. COMBINING YOUR STRENGTHS

Tape one end to the inside bottom of the empty cup. Stretch the string to the full cup and pinch it over the rim of the cup. As you do so, ask somebody to read the following quote from President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency: "The Saints can accomplish any purpose of the Lord when fully united in righteousness."²

Tell your family you're going to demonstrate what's possible with unity.

4. TAKING THE PLUNGE!

Remembering to pinch the string over the rim of the upper cup, hold the cup of water above and

to the side. Make sure the string doesn't touch the rim of the lower cup. A taut, downward diagonal string should stretch from the rim of the upper cup to the taped-inside bottom of the lower cup.

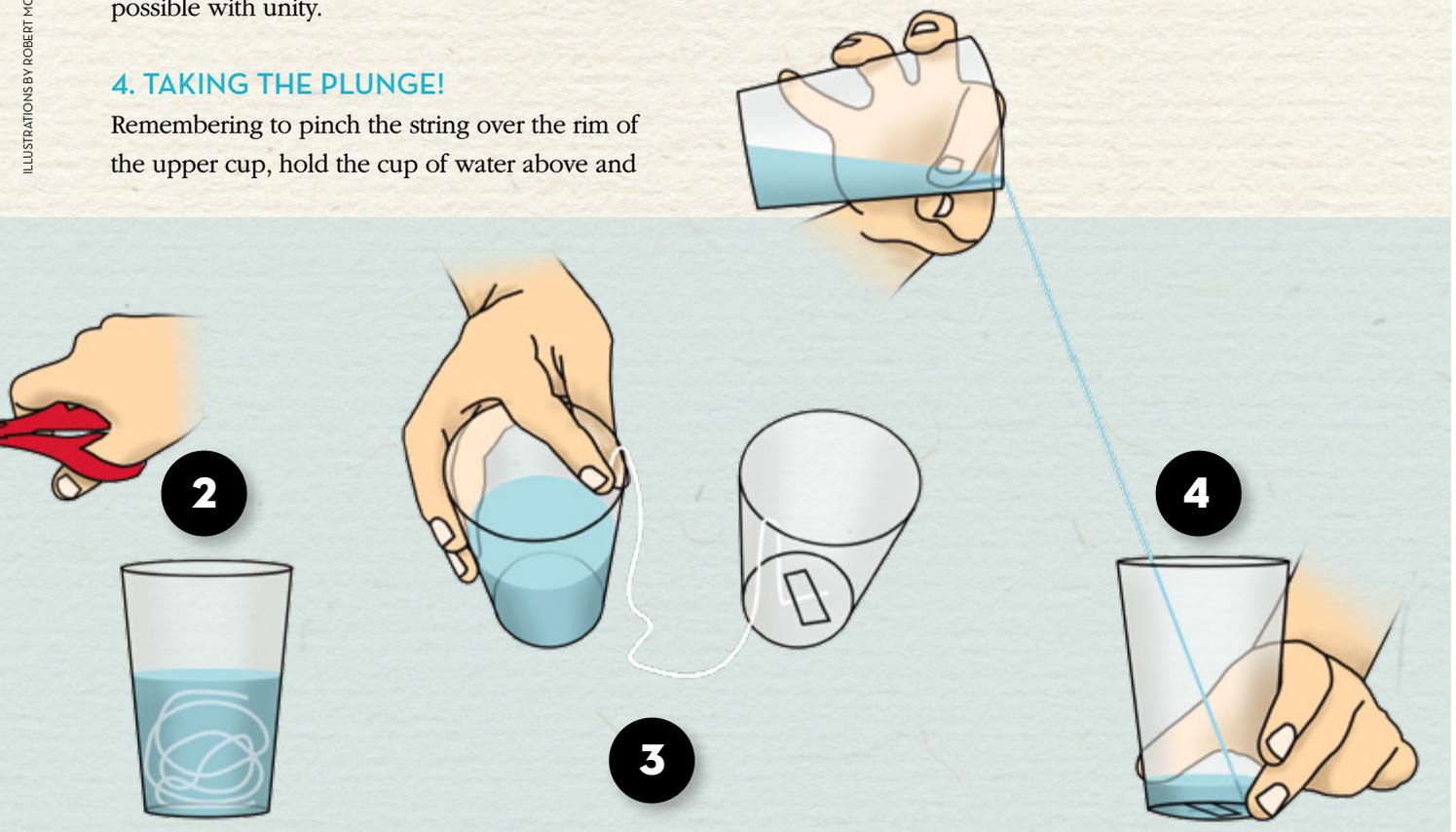
Now, *slowly* start to pour. If you keep the string taut, the water will travel down the string and into the empty cup. It's a jaw-dropping feat. Explain that the water travels along the string because of cohesion, which means sticking together tightly. Or, in other words, because of unity. A single drop of water couldn't do this alone.

Alma the Elder taught that we should have "no contention . . . but . . . look forward with one eye, . . . having [our] hearts knit together in unity and in love one towards another" (Mosiah 18:21).

When we stick together, we can do anything! **NE**

NOTES

1. See Sharon Eubank, Oct. 2017 general conference.
2. Henry B. Eyring, "Our Hearts Knit as One," Oct. 2008 general conference.





COURAGE

— around the —

Campfire

MY FRIEND WAS GOING TO YOUNG WOMEN CAMP WITH ME.
I WONDERED HOW SHE WOULD LIKE IT.

Name Withheld

It was finally here. My favorite time of the summer: Young Women camp. I was super excited because I was bringing my best friend, who was of another faith.

A few weeks earlier I had started bringing my friend to Mutual. She enjoyed the first activity and wanted to keep coming back. The other girls and I talked a lot about Young Women camp, so when it was almost time for camp, she asked if she could come. I said yes, of course, but the problem was convincing her parents. They weren't keen on the Mormon religion and had denied her going with me to church before.

I went over to their house to bring the papers for camp and talked to her parents about letting her come, but I wasn't sure they would let her go. That night I prayed earnestly to Heavenly Father that her parents' hearts would be softened. I called back the next day and they had agreed to let her go!

I was glad my friend was coming to camp but nervous at the same time. I was scared that she would feel out of place when we played gospel-oriented games or sang hymns around the campfire. I was also scared because I felt like my friend didn't really care for religion. I spent a lot of time praying that things would all go well at camp.

It turned out that I hadn't needed to worry. All of us, including my friend, had fun playing games, hiking, and laughing. It was the night hike and testimony meeting, however, that were my favorite parts of camp.

It was stake camp, and every ward had their own campsite. For the night hike, the girls were separated into several groups and then each group took turns going from one campsite to another, where they had different speakers talk on women who had "lived as they believed" (that year's camp theme). As we sat around the campfires and listened to the different speakers talk about courageous women, we felt the Spirit so strongly.

I glanced from time to time at my friend but couldn't read her expression and couldn't tell if she was paying attention to anything the speakers said. As we neared the

end of the night hike however, my friend turned to me and the first words out of her mouth touched me deeply.

"I'm going to camp every year."

I smiled and silently thanked Heavenly Father that my friend had been able to feel the Spirit. She had enjoyed the games and having fun, but she had felt the Spirit, and it was what made her want to come back again.

The next night was our last night at camp and our testimony meeting. My friend was confused as to what a testimony was so I quickly explained as best I could. She didn't look too excited. After the opening prayer, the bishop and several young women bore beautiful testimonies and the Spirit was very strong.

"BUT BEHOLD, THAT WHICH IS OF GOD INVITETH AND ENTICETH TO DO GOOD CONTINUALLY; WHEREFORE EVERY THING WHICH INVITETH AND ENTICETH TO DO GOOD, AND TO LOVE GOD, AND TO SERVE HIM, IS INSPIRED OF GOD." MORONI 7:13

My friend, who never liked to talk in public, stood up to share her feelings. She explained that even though she was of a different religion, watching us girls read our scriptures and pray had touched her. She said that after being here at camp, she wanted to start being a better person and was going to try to be nicer to her family. She also said that coming to camp was probably the best decision she had ever made. She sat down and I glanced over at her and saw there were tears in her eyes. I had never seen her become emotional or cry, but the Spirit of the Lord touched her so deeply it moved her to tears.

This experience at camp taught me a lot about how the Spirit touches the lives of others and about the power of testimonies. The Spirit can speak to everyone regardless of who they are. I now better understand the importance of having a strong testimony and sharing it with others. The gospel can touch the lives of those you would never expect. **NE**

TEENS

of the Plains



Were pioneer teenagers anything like me?

By Charlotte Larcabal
Church Magazines

When we think of pioneers, we often think about bravery and sacrifice, handcarts and oxen, and lots and lots of walking.

Do you ever think about the teenagers who crossed the plains? Sure they didn't have Facebook or cellphones, but those teenage pioneers weren't so different from you. They loved laughing and having a good time, they had crushes and heartbreaks, they made mistakes, got into embarrassing scrapes, felt alone in the world, and stood strong in their testimonies. Just like you.

FALLING IN (and out of) (and in) (and back out of) LOVE

"The night before we left, . . . Henry Ridgeley, came to bid me farewell," wrote Margaret. "Under our trysting tree we each vowed eternal constancy—for four years, at least."

Eternal constancy gets hard when there are several nice young men in your company. Soon Margaret, who was 17, was eying another boy.

"He used to say such lovely things to me—told me that I was beautiful and intelligent, and even went so far as to say that I was amiable, something I had never been accused of before.

He told me that I was the only woman he ever loved and that we were just suited to each other. I began to believe him, and when he proposed, what could I say but 'yes.' Well, the course of true love did run smooth, at least until we got into the Valley. Then we had the usual lovers' quarrel but not the usual making up. In a short time he let me know that another girl appreciated him, if I did not."¹





*Margaret
Judd Clawson*
(pictured at age 18)



George Staples
(pictured as an adult)

BECOMING AN HONORARY SIOUX (*What, that never happened to you?*)

George Staples left his home and family in England to travel to Utah. When he was 16, he joined a company of Saints in the United States, but as they crossed the plains, George was separated from the group. The company had to keep moving or risk running into warring Sioux Indians. As the story goes, he stayed behind. George later joined a Sioux tribe and lived as an honorary Sioux for years.

People in the Salt Lake Valley heard about a white boy living as a Sioux. Eventually, a group came looking for him. As the group neared the tribe, George recognized someone. With a wild whoop, he ran to his father. They were thrilled to see each other, but George's Sioux mother was devastated to lose her adopted son. So, before leaving with his father, George promised to return and visit his Sioux family. He kept his promise.²



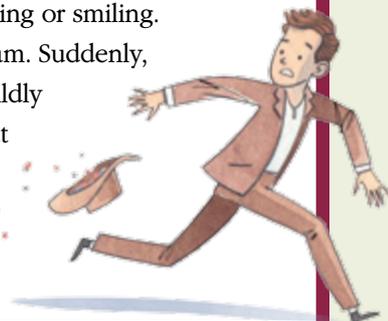
COMPLETELY LOSING YOUR COOL



Brigham Henry Roberts
(pictured at age 27)

Have you ever missed your bus? When Brigham Henry Roberts was nine, he and his friend missed their wagon train! They spent a little too much time picking berries, and the company took off without them. The boys made a mad dash for the disappearing wagon train, but stopped short when they saw three Native Americans on horses directly in their path. As the terrified boys inched forward, the three men just watched them without moving or smiling.

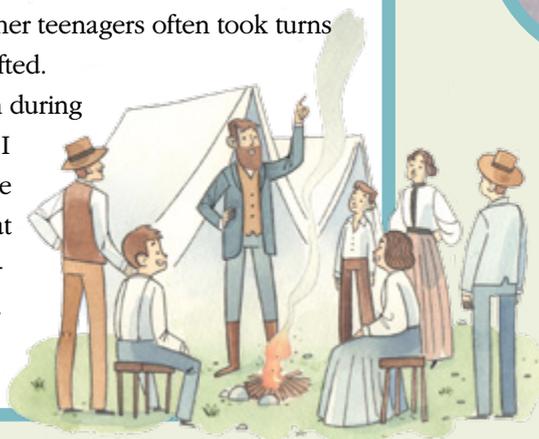
The pressure must have been a little much for Brigham. Suddenly, with a wild yell, he flung his berry-filled cap and ran wildly past them. “They say [Native Americans] never laugh, but I learned differently,” he later said. “As the race for the train continued, I saw they were bending double over their horses with their screams of laughter.”³



BEARING AND STRENGTHENING YOUR TESTIMONY

Susan Noble Grant left for Zion when she was 15 years old. She loved sitting around the campfire and listening to the adults talk about their experiences with the Prophet Joseph Smith. She and the other teenagers often took turns bearing their own testimonies to keep spirits lifted.

“You do not know how happy we were, even during these severe days of hardest trials. As young as I was, I knew the gospel had been restored. More than once I had heard Joseph Smith declare that our Heavenly Father and His Son Jesus, the resurrected Savior, had come and talked with him. To this day this testimony has never left me.”⁴



Susan Noble Grant

PIONEERS OF TODAY

Sure they pushed handcarts and hauled water and would probably flip out if they saw a smartphone, but were the teens of the plains really so different from youth today?

No! And as today’s pioneers, “we need to believe as they believed,” said President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “We need to work as they worked. We need to serve as they served. And we need to overcome as they overcame.”⁵ **NE**

NOTES

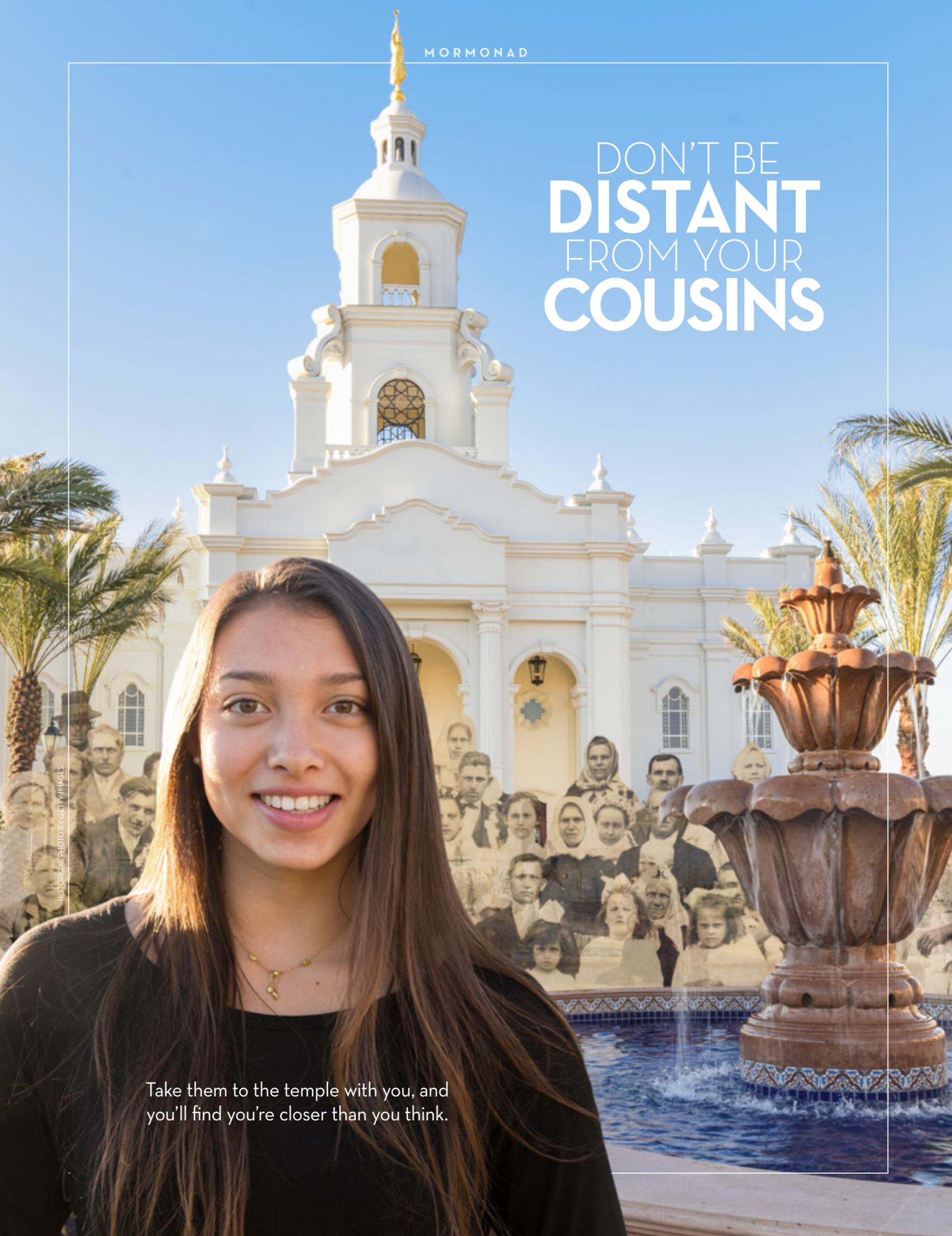
1. Margaret Clawson, “Reminiscences of Margaret Clawson,” *Relief Society Magazine*, June 1919, 324–25.
2. Maurine Jensen Proctor, *The Gathering: Mormon Pioneers on the Trail to Zion* (1996).
3. B. H. Roberts, *The Autobiography of B. H. Roberts*, ed. Gary James Bergera (1990), 26–27.
4. Carter E. Grant, “Robbed by Wolves, a True Story,” *Relief Society Magazine*, July 1928, 357–58.
5. M. Russell Ballard, Oct. 2008 general conference.

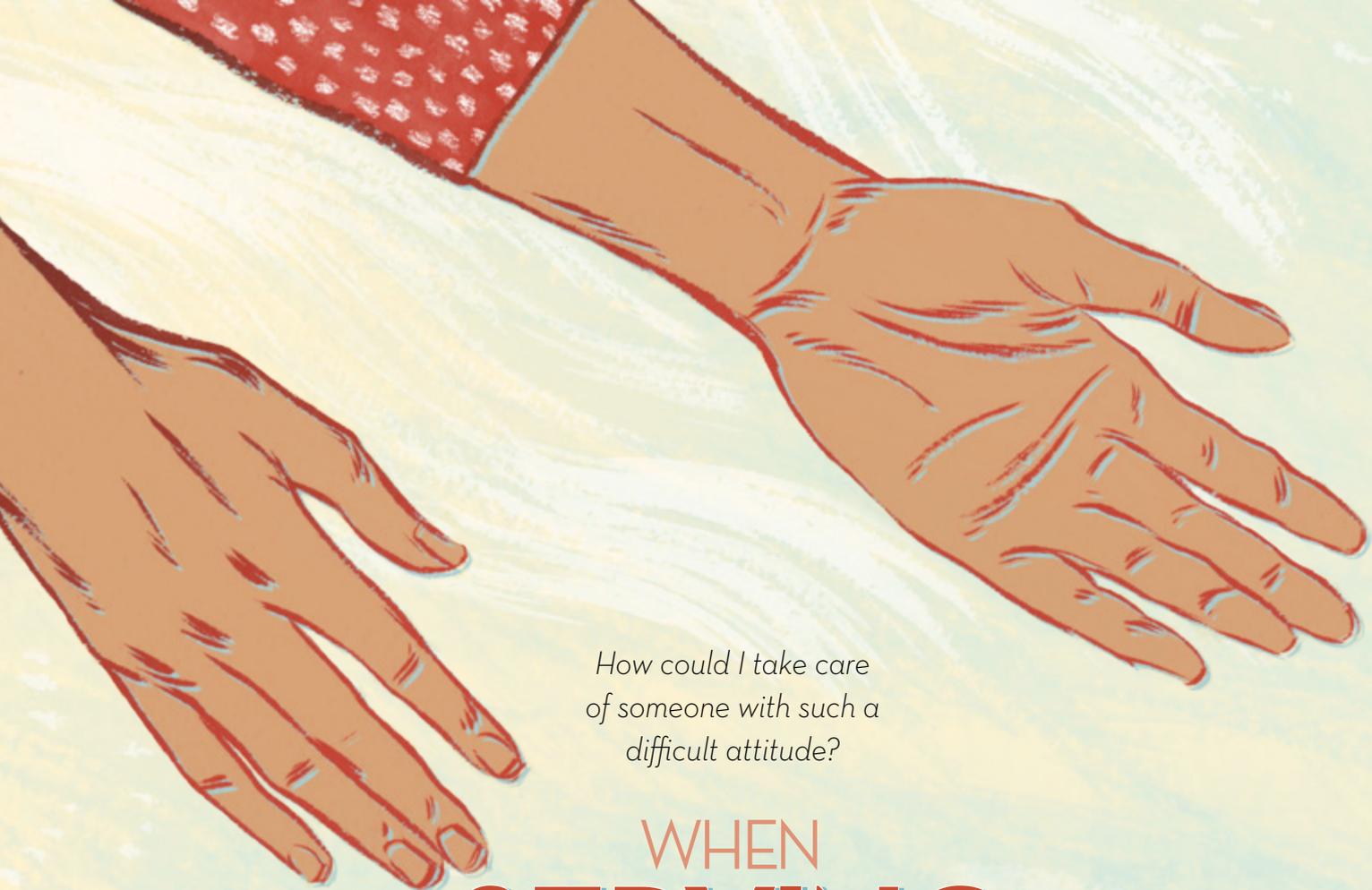
MORMONAD

DON'T BE
DISTANT
FROM YOUR
COUSINS

Take them to the temple with you, and
you'll find you're closer than you think.

HISTORICAL PHOTO BY GETTY IMAGES





*How could I take care
of someone with such a
difficult attitude?*

WHEN SERVING WAS HARD

By Lyka T. Valdez

One of the most challenging things I've ever overcome was my "I don't care" attitude. If I wasn't passionate about what I was doing, I was cold and impatient with people.

This all changed one school break when I was asked to care for my 76-year-old grandfather. "Dadi," as we called him, had suffered a stroke, which left him half-paralyzed. When my family asked me to care for him for two months, I couldn't even imagine how!

I had to wake up early to prepare his breakfast, his bath, and his medicine. I helped him walk around for his daily exercise. Since he had difficulty moving, I was by his side at all times, including during his bath and his toilet. As an 18-year-old girl, this was the hardest part.

Aside from all this, he was difficult to be with. He is not a member of the Church and has different principles than I do. He was a man full of regrets—always shouting, never smiling, and constantly saying, "I'm dying!" Because of this attitude, it was hard for us to share a good bond.

At first, I did all I could to avoid my tasks, but that didn't work. So I decided to change my attitude and give my best effort.

After a week of this new attitude, serving Dadi became a joy to me. My patience grew, and I came to understand his affliction. As I served him, I stopped thinking of being with him as a burden but rather as an opportunity to create good times with him.

Dadi changed too. This frowning old man became a smiling, gentle grandpa. He even came to like listening to Especially for Youth songs!

One night I heard him making some noise, so I looked into his room to find out what he was doing. He was praying for the first time. I'm inspired every day by this change.

Now I'm back at college, but I still go twice a month to visit Dadi with my family. We eat with him and sing for him. His health has worsened, so now the most powerful help that I can give is prayers on his behalf.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to watch over Dadi because it helped me see what I'm capable of giving. Love is a very powerful thing—it softened both my heart and Dadi's. I have learned the meaning of sacrifice and compassion. Truly, charity enlightens every heart! **NE**

The author lives in Santiago, Philippines.



SERVING YOUR FAMILY

“Begin your service in your own homes and within your own families. These are the relationships that can be eternal. Even if—and maybe especially if—your family situation is less than perfect, you can find ways to serve, lift, and strengthen. Begin where you are, love them as they are, and prepare for the family you want to have in the future.”

Bonnie L. Oscarson, former Young Women General President, Oct. 2017 general conference.





Youth in GR



These young Latter-day Saints live today where the Apostle Paul lived during New Testament times. And they live by his words.

By Sally Johnson Odekirk

Church Magazines

A few months ago, a seminary class met at Mars Hill, near Athens, Greece, where the Apostle Paul once delivered a powerful sermon (see Acts 17:22–34). The students talked about the influence of seminary in their lives, including the teachings of Paul.

“Living in Greece makes the New Testament come alive,” says Alexis H., 18. “My father likes to go to different ruins where Paul taught and will share a scripture or tell us a story about where the event happened.”

Just as Paul faced challenges in his time, youth in Greece also deal with social, political, and economic issues. Youth conferences and Young Women camp are rare events in Greece, and even attending seminary can be difficult. Despite these and other challenges, youth in Greece put into practice Paul’s encouragement to “stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Philippians 1:27).

Living in Greece means these young members get to enjoy warm weather, beaches, food, and dancing. They also really enjoy getting together with each other. As they meet in seminary and branch activities, they have become stronger in faith and friendship.



"I have learned that the gospel is the same everywhere. Living overseas, I have learned to focus on the gospel truths and to feel the spirit instead of getting distracted by culture."

—Bryana W., 15



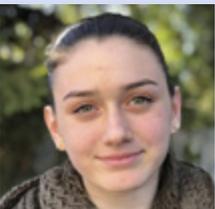
"I wrote the word "remember" on my mirror to remember all that's happened this year: FSJ, Young Women camp, seminary. It helps me remember where I came from."

—Marie H., 17



"I know that when I go to seminary I can feel satisfaction knowing that I'm doing what I need to do, and I know that everything will be OK."

—Lizzie T., 17



Loukia C., 15, bore her testimony for the first time at Young Women camp and was later baptized.



A seminary lesson on Mars Hill in Athens, Greece.



The seminary group in front of the Athens meetinghouse.

Seminary on Mars Hill

When seminary began in Greece a few years ago, there were only 5 students. Now the class has grown to 13. They meet on Monday, Tuesday, and Friday mornings, with some joining via online video conferencing. They also meet on Wednesday afternoons for seminary, followed by an activity. Through all of this, they have drawn close to each other. They've also become a light to their friends, who notice their example and ask questions, so the LDS youth bring them to seminary and Mutual activities.

One young man, Pavlos K., 15, says: "Going to seminary is a good way to start the day and helps me to stay strong. It puts me in the mindset of being an example to others. It helps to begin the day thinking about Jesus Christ."

As the youth grow in strength and unity, blessings and opportunities come. For example, in 2017 they were blessed to attend FSJ, a large regional youth conference. The young women also participated in the first-ever Young Women camp in Greece. As a result, they have grown even closer as a group, and two young women were baptized.

International FSY Youth Conference

The international FSY conference, held in Stuttgart, Germany, brought together young Latter-day Saints from across Europe. Youth from Greece and Cyprus came from hundreds of miles away, and the conference experience had a profound impact on them. For Maximos A., 14, “the most memorable thing at FSY was when we shared our testimonies. Everybody felt the Spirit, and it inspired me to develop my own testimony.”

“At first only four youth were going to go, but in the end, we had 15 attend—a record for Greece—including 3 nonmember friends,” Loukia C., 15, adds. “It was so nice to be together somewhere where you share the same gospel and you’re not the different one. We were all together, and we were feeling the same Spirit. These things help me.”

“My father isn’t a member and wouldn’t let me go to FSY or be baptized,” says Jesiana, 16. “But then branch members fasted for me, and my grandmother talked with my father. After that he said I could go!”

At FSY, she experienced many firsts, such as, “participating in the lessons and activities and bearing my testimony helped me understand what it is really like to feel the Holy Ghost. I had never felt the Spirit like that before, and I was so happy and excited. I bore my testimony for the first time.”

In addition to being spiritually fed, the youth were able to relax and have fun together at the conference. Haig T., 14, came to the conference from Cyprus. “I learned to be more social, to have real friendships, and to have fun, even in the hard times.”



On the way to FSY in Stuttgart, Germany.



At the FSY conference.

“Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind.”

Philippians 1:27



“At FSY, we started becoming a group and it strengthened us. It helped shape and influence the youth program in Greece because now we know each other much better.”—Alexis H., 18



“Singing on the stage at FSY was one of the most courageous things I’ve ever done in my life, and one of the most magical moments I’ve ever had. At the moment that I did that, I learned how important we are in this beautiful world.”—Irini S., 17

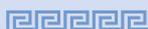


Irini S. performs at FSY.



“My favorite part of FSY were sports, dance, and the group meetings which were morning devotionals and review. It helped me be more helpful, patient, and to appreciate the scriptures more.”

—Haig T., 14





“At Young Women camp I learned that life is like a marathon. It helped me grow my faith, knowing that we have to continue in the right path, just like we are running a marathon. That experience helps me grow my testimony and continue to have faith and stay on the right path.”
 —Winifred K., 14

“Life is a marathon, not a sprint.”

Young Women camp theme



Young women at Marathon, Greece.



“We are all unique, just like the pebbles on the beach are each unique.”—Bryana W.

Young Women Camp

The Young Women camp had a similar effect. Twelve young women met with their leaders near the ancient battle site of Marathon. They spent three days together, learning to rely on each other for strength and encouragement.

“When I was 12,” says Loukia, “I went to church for the first time and was so happy, but then I realized that I was the only one my age. Now, two years later, we have so many young women that for the first time we were able to have Young Women Camp.” As they met together, she says, “I realized what it means to be a Latter-day Saint. When we live the gospel, a light surrounds us.”

For Bryana W., 15, FSJ and Young Women camp helped her open up and talk to others. “My family moves often, and I had a hard time bonding with others because I was shy,” she says. “But because I became close with our group at FSJ, I made some really good friends. During testimony meeting, we shared our feelings, and I realized that others felt the same way that I did.”

Marie H., 17, remembers the camp theme, “Life is a marathon, not a sprint.” The young women and their leaders discussed the importance of enduring and finishing the race, she says. “It reminded me that I can endure, pace myself, and stay focused on the finish line. Then I can accomplish the things that Heavenly Father needs me to do.”

One of the highlights of the camp was a sunrise devotional at the beach on their last morning. Lizzie T., 17, says, “We took our scriptures, had our devotional, and watched the sun rise. We all felt the love of God. It was a wonderful ending to the time we spent with each other.”



“Watching the sunrise brought a calming, beautiful spirit.”—Lizzie T.



Young Women camp, 2017—the first ever in Greece.

Fearlessly Facing the Future

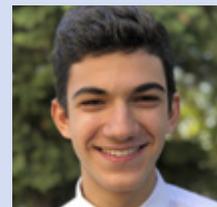
“From FSJ and Young Women camp, I learned a lot about the gospel and how it can help me in my life,” says Irimi S., 17. “I made a lot of friends and learned how important it is to express my thoughts and feelings. I felt the Holy Ghost deeply and the love of our Savior, Jesus Christ.”

Being around other Latter-day Saint youth, she says, strengthened her confidence. “Before FSJ I couldn’t see the good and

beautiful things that God made for us and the plans that He is still making for us.”

“We shouldn’t be affected by anyone or anything else around us that would try to pull us away from living the gospel,” Manasseh A., 17, says. “The gospel is the same everywhere and we should always stay on the right path.”

And whether it’s in Greece or elsewhere in the world, sharing that path together allows us to be one in spirit. **NE**



“I really liked to see what it is like to be around youth who have the same beliefs. I felt like we were all connected in some special way, more than just knowing each other’s names.”
—Pavlos K., 15



Read more about Joshua on p. 38.



“I’m glad that I had the opportunity to meet other youth that go through the same things that I do every day.”—Joshua K., 17



“FSJ and Young Women camp have the same feeling no matter where you go in the world. I enjoyed the smaller Young Women camp because it was easier to connect with each other.”
—Olivia H., 15



“I am not a member of the Church, but I come every week I can. I adore what the young women stand for.”
—Irene C., 14

The Church in Greece



In the early 1900s, Rigas Pofantis, a printer from Athens, sent a request to leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for information. The president of the Church’s mission in Turkey taught Pofantis, who was baptized in October 1905.



The Church experienced little growth in Greece until the 1950s, when Greek-American Church members in Salt Lake City, Utah, organized the Hellenic Latter-day Saint Society to retain their heritage and maintain ties with their homelands.



Church leaders organized a small congregation in Athens in 1965 and reorganized it in 1967. They established the Greece Athens Mission in July 1990 and completed construction of the first meetinghouse in Greece in May 1999.



Athens, Greece, meetinghouse in Halandri



Total Church Membership: 802
Congregations: 3

A Case of the SABBATH

I knew I should love the Sabbath, but I didn't know how.

By Alyssa Nielsen

The scriptures say the Sabbath day is a holy day, a joyful and delightful day, a day of rest, a day to celebrate.¹ But a few years ago, while in my late teens, I found Sundays miserable. Instead of peace, I felt stress. Instead of joy, sadness. Instead of hope, guilt. I had a full-on case of the Sabbath blues.

Each Sunday morning, after an embarrassing amount of time hiding under my covers, I'd finally admit it

was indeed Sunday and get dressed for church. At church, I'd review my past week. During the sacrament, I would add up all my failures, never finishing before the first speaker got up. The rest of church became a battle of staving off tears as the guilt intensified with the new regret of feeling so rotten at church.

The afternoon was much the same. I'd feel guilt about past choices, stress about future choices, and sadness

about present circumstances. Without school and extracurricular activities to distract me, I would spend my time dwelling on negative thoughts.

After listening to, reading, and then re-reading President Russell M. Nelson's April 2015 general conference talk about how the Sabbath is a delight, I prayed for peace and love for the Sabbath rather than the misery I currently felt.² And an answer came.



BLUES

Focus on Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ

I felt prompted to shift my focus from my woes to my relationship with Heavenly Father and the Savior. Rather than ponder my failures, I took time to ponder Their involvement in my life.

When negative thoughts came, I repeated to myself what I knew and believed about God and Jesus Christ: I am a child of God. He loves me. Jesus

Christ is my Brother, and He atoned for me. They want me to be happy and return to Them. The Sabbath is a gift from God.

I began to exercise faith in this testimony.

Actively Accept the Sacrament

Changing my focus led me to also reconsider how I approached the sacrament. For so long I had treated the sacrament as time to punish

myself. But that's not its purpose. The sacrament is a sacred ordinance to renew our covenants. It is a chance to become clean again through the atoning power of Jesus Christ. Focusing on the ordinance and the covenant with faith and a repentant heart, I realized that the sacrament offered peace as I accepted the gift of forgiveness, kept my covenants, and received the Lord's Spirit (see D&C 20:77, 79).

Thinking of Christ's Atonement during the sacrament brought another gift to my mind. Not only could I be forgiven, but I could also receive healing because my Savior took upon Himself my pain and infirmities (see Alma 7:11–12).

Through His Atonement and the sacrament, I could find peace and strength on the Sabbath—or on any other day—rather than stress and sadness.

And I found that peace. My Savior is there for me on Sundays and always!

Practice Patient Faith

This wasn't a one-week fix. It was a struggle, and it took time. "But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Romans 8:25). I kept working on my focus and praying to feel love for the Sabbath.

In time, I did find peace and delight on that holy day, but I couldn't quit there or I'd again slide into the Sabbath slumps. Each week requires diligent focus on the Savior and the purpose of the Sabbath, but I know the promise of peace and joy is true. **NE**

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. See Exodus 20:11; Exodus 31:15; Leviticus 23:32; Isaiah 58:13; Doctrine and Covenants 59:13.
2. See Russell M. Nelson, "The Sabbath Is a Delight," Apr. 2015 general conference.

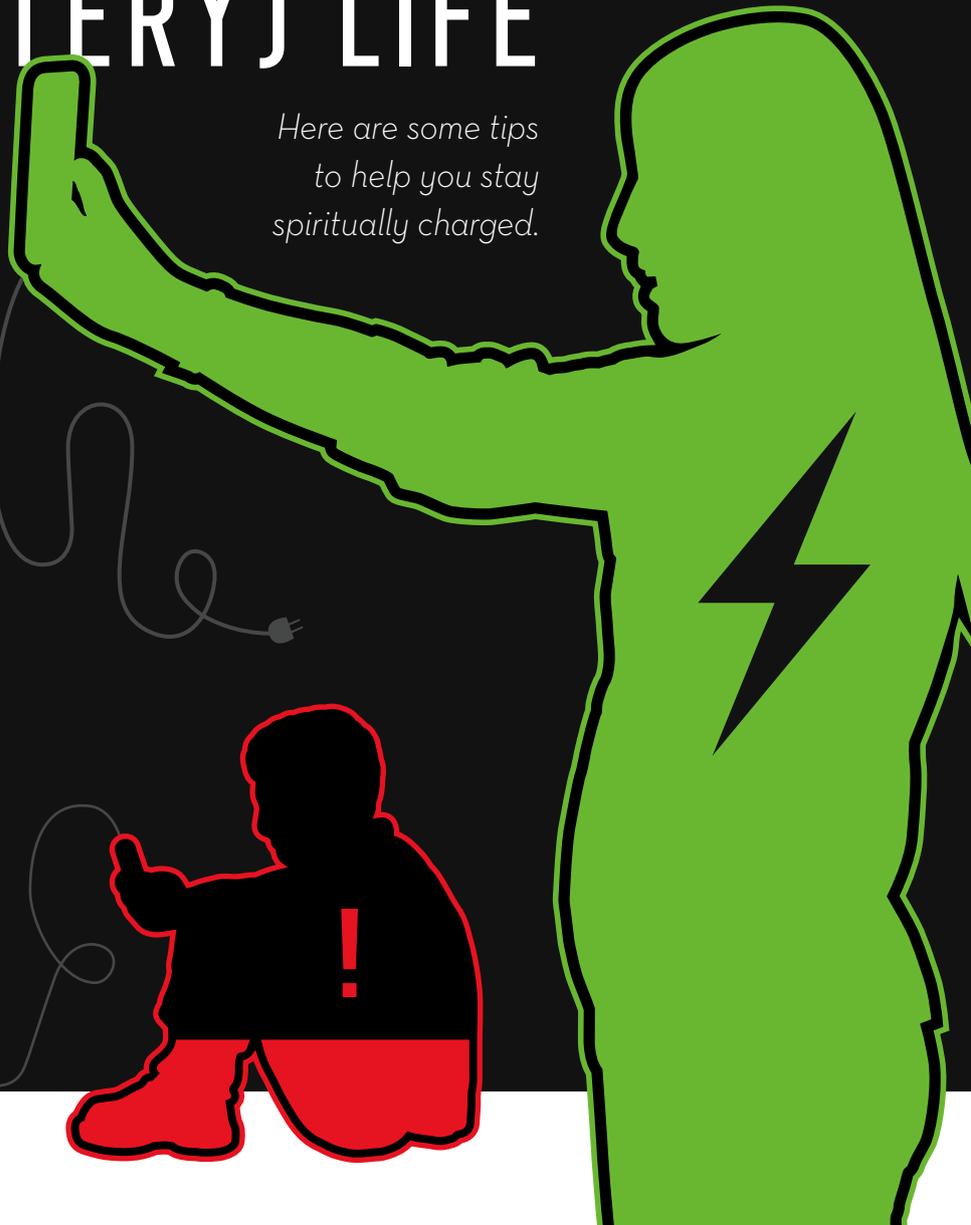


KEYS TO

ETERNAL

(BATTERY) LIFE

*Here are some tips
to help you stay
spiritually charged.*



By Eric B. Murdock

Church Magazines

We all know the Savior's parable of the 10 virgins who were invited to a wedding feast. Five were prepared and brought extra oil for their lamps. The other five only brought the oil that was already in their lamps. (See Matthew 25:1–4.)

While waiting for the bridegroom, the five who were unprepared ran out of oil and hurried to buy more. While they were gone, the bridegroom came and the five who were prepared entered the wedding feast. But when the others returned, the door was shut, and they were denied entrance. (See Matthew 25:6–12.)

No one really uses oil lamps anymore, but the Savior's parable is still important! It teaches us the importance of being spiritually prepared.

SPIRITUALLY CHARGED

To make the parable apply today, think of your cell phone instead of an oil lamp. What happens if you neglect to charge your phone? Eventually, it will die.

Imagine how inconvenient it would be if you got separated from your friends at a crowded school event and you couldn't get in touch with them. Or what if you lost your keys and you were locked out of your house or car? Having a dead cell phone battery then could leave you in an uncomfortable situation. What if you're faced with an emergency? It's important to have some battery life in your phone so you could call for help if you needed to. Otherwise, you could be in trouble.

So, here's the parable of the cell phone: the batteries in our phones are like our spirituality. Our "spiritual batteries" need to be fully charged so that when challenges or questions come, we will have the faith to face them. Otherwise, there will come a time when we really need the power of faith and testimony, and we won't have it.

Whether we're talking about filling lamps with oil or charging a phone battery, we need to be wise and do all we can to be spiritually prepared. The Lord told the Prophet Joseph Smith: "For they that are wise and have received the truth, and have taken the Holy Spirit for their

guide, and have not been deceived—verily I say unto you, they shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire, but shall abide the day" (D&C 45:57).

RECEIVE THE TRUTH

There's no question that the world is full of confusion. It can be hard to know what's true and what's false. But President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said: "There is one source of truth that is complete, correct, and incorruptible. That source is our infinitely wise and all-knowing Heavenly Father. He knows truth as it was, as it is, and as it yet will be [see D&C 93:24]."¹

Heavenly Father doesn't keep that truth from us. He offers it to us through the gospel of Jesus Christ. He sent His Son to be "the way, the truth, and the life" for us (John 14:6). We charge our spiritual batteries as we receive the truth by doing our best to follow the Savior, live His gospel, and listen to the words of living prophets and apostles. The Savior said, "For he that receiveth my servants receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth my Father" (D&C 84:36–37).



TAKE THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR OUR GUIDE

Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “Our Father in Heaven knew that in mortality we would face challenges, tribulation, and turmoil; He knew we would wrestle with questions, disappointments, temptations, and weaknesses. To give us mortal strength and divine guidance, He provided the Holy Spirit, another name for the Holy Ghost.”²

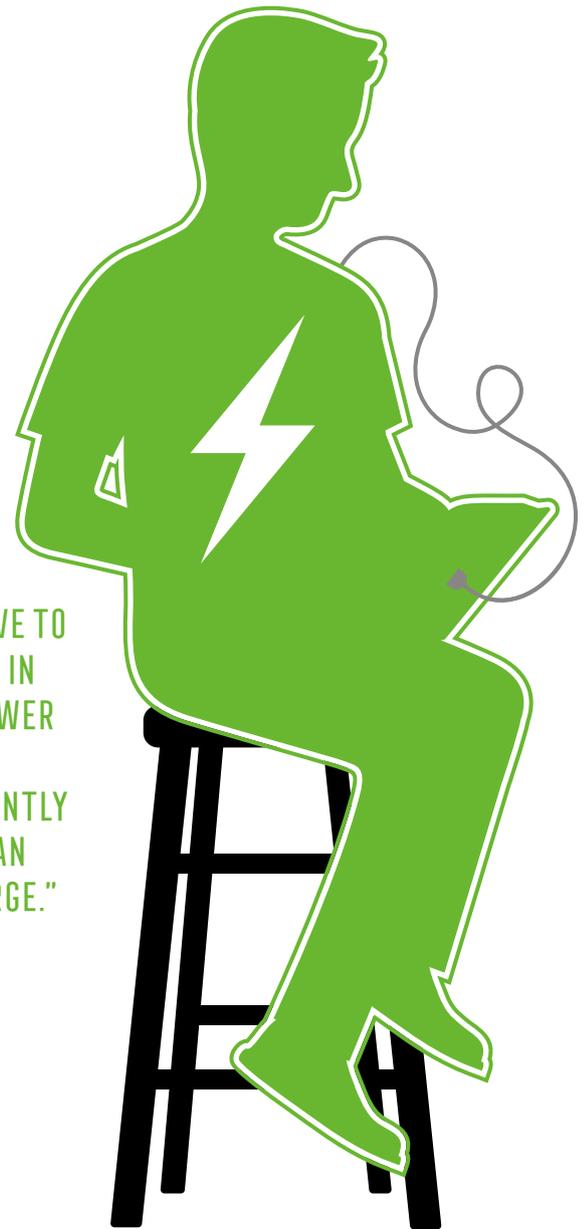
The Holy Ghost is the best guide we can have, but President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency has said, “It is your choice whether to receive Him and welcome Him into your heart and mind.”³ When we take the sacrament, we’re reminded that if we keep the commandments, take the name of Jesus Christ upon us, and always remember Him, we may always have His Spirit to be with us. With the Spirit as our guide, we are spiritually prepared with direction, instruction, and protection.

DO NOT BE DECEIVED

The scriptures tell us that Satan is “the father of lies” (2 Nephi 9:9). He’ll do all he can to confuse and deceive us, to make us “miserable like unto himself” (2 Nephi 2:27). Although Satan will lie to us, Elder Robert D. Hales (1932–2017) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “Faithfulness in obeying the commandments and keeping our covenants will protect us from being deceived.”⁴ If we keep our spiritual batteries charged, we will be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit, which will help us know what to do and lead us to truth.

NEVER STOP TRYING!

It takes faith and diligence to be spiritually prepared. It’s like a battery. It can’t charge itself, and you can’t just charge it once and forget about it. You have to plug it in to a power source frequently so it can recharge. Spiritual preparation is the same way. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught that we should prepare ourselves “patiently and persistently. No shortcut is available; no last-minute flurry of preparation is possible.”⁵



“YOU HAVE TO
PLUG IT IN
TO A POWER
SOURCE
FREQUENTLY
SO IT CAN
RECHARGE.”

Being spiritually prepared will usually take more than we might think. In the Savior’s parable, those who were prepared had *extra* oil with them, so we should do all we can to keep our spiritual batteries full. We do so as we work on receiving the truth, taking the Holy Spirit for our guide, and avoiding Satan’s deceptions. With our spiritual batteries full, our faith can be strengthened, we can find peace, and we can have the assurance that we will make it through life’s challenges with Heavenly Father’s help. **NE**

NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “What Is Truth?” (Church Educational System devotional for young adults, Jan. 13, 2013), broadcasts.lds.org.
2. Ronald A. Rasband, Apr. 2017 general conference.
3. Henry B. Eyring, “His Spirit to Be with You,” Apr. 2018 general conference.
4. Robert D. Hales, Apr. 2016 general conference.
5. David A. Bednar, Oct. 2012 general conference.



MORE *than* WORDS

ILLUSTRATED BY ROSALIE LEDEZMA



“How you communicate should reflect who you are as a son or daughter of God. Clean and intelligent language is evidence of a bright and wholesome mind. Good language that uplifts, encourages, and compliments others invites the Spirit to be with you. Our words, like our deeds, should be filled with faith, hope, and charity.”

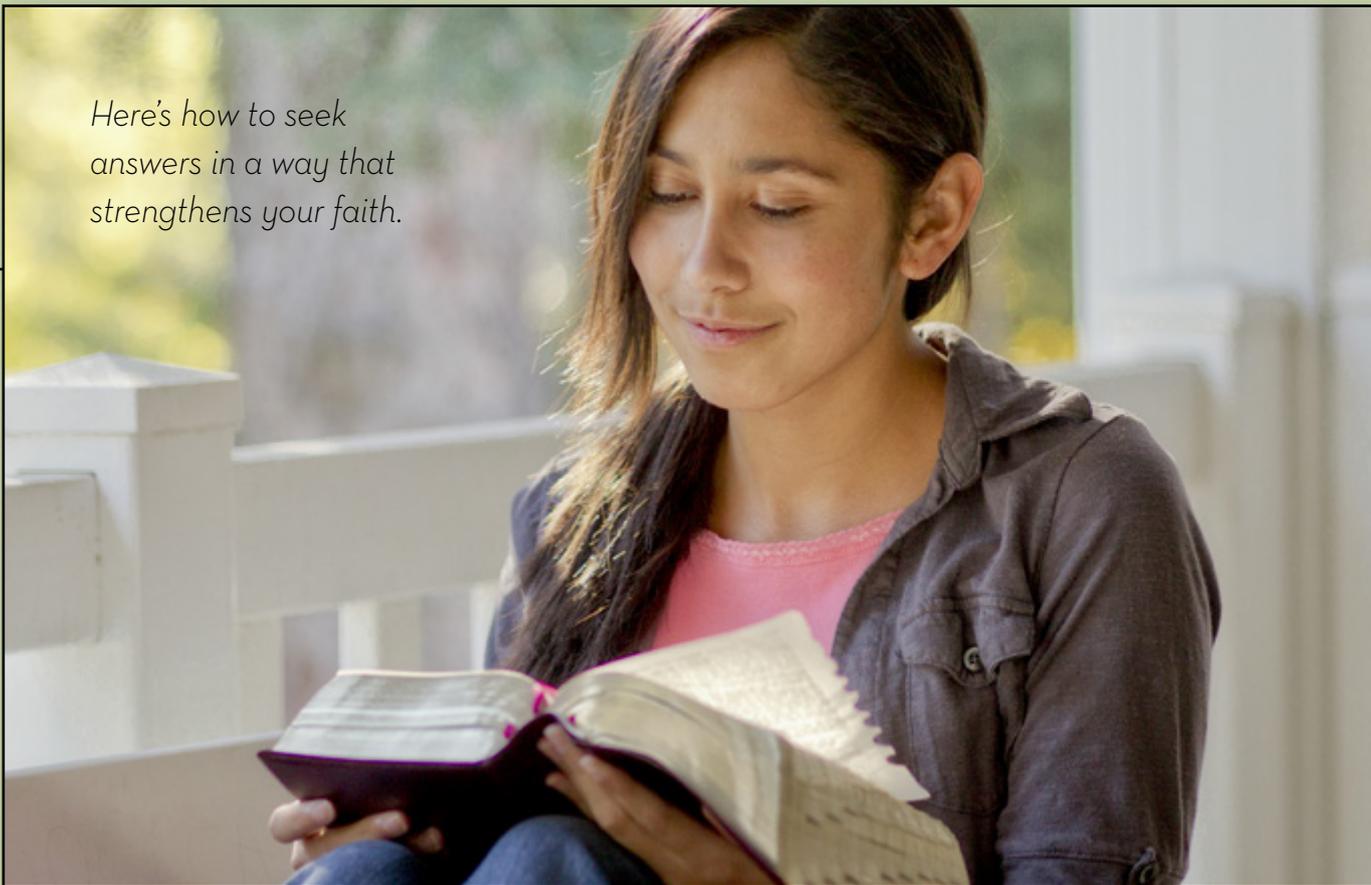
For the Strength of Youth (2011), 20.



Dealing with Difficult Questions:

3 PRINCIPLES THAT CAN HELP

Here's how to seek answers in a way that strengthens your faith.



By Sarah Hanson

Have you ever had a question about the gospel or the Church? Have you ever worried whether your question means that you don't have enough faith or that your testimony isn't strong enough?

Questions are a normal and necessary part of your journey through mortality. They can lead you to greater insight and faith. However, your attitude, motivation, and process for finding answers affect the outcome. In seminary you will learn these three doctrinal mastery principles that can help guide you to eternal truths.

1. Act in Faith

When you have a question, you can act in faith by choosing to trust God and turn to Him first for answers. God gives answers “line upon line, precept upon precept” (2 Nephi 28:30). It is important to rely on the testimony you already have in times of doubt.

“Doubt your doubts before you doubt your faith.”¹
—Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf

“Hold fast to what you already know and stand strong until additional knowledge comes.”²
—Elder Jeffrey R. Holland

2. Examine Concepts and Questions with a Gospel Perspective

If you consider questions in the context of the plan of salvation and the teachings of the Savior, you can begin to see things the way God sees them. This will help you reexamine your questions using God’s standard of truth rather than the world’s.

“Being anchored to eternal truth . . . will give us the peace that comes from faith in Jesus Christ and the knowledge that we are on the pathway to

eternal life.”³ —President Dallin H. Oaks

“If you discover anything that seems to be blocking the light and joy of the gospel in *your* life, I invite you to place it in a gospel perspective. Look through a gospel lens and be vigilant not to allow insignificant and inconsequential matters in life to obscure your eternal view of the great plan of happiness.”⁴ —Elder Gary E. Stevenson

3. Seek Further Understanding through Divinely Appointed Sources

God has given you multiple sources to use as you seek truth. These include the Holy Ghost, the scriptures, your family, Church leaders, and even sources outside the Church that strengthen your faith in Jesus Christ. When looking for answers, be sure to distinguish between unreliable sources and reliable sources, which will strengthen your faith and invite the Holy Ghost into your life.

“Rich benefits . . . come from your efforts to

enlarge, extend, and increase your understanding of truth. Use the scriptures and the declarations of the prophets to expand your knowledge.”⁵
—Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015)

“We continually seek truth from all good books and other wholesome sources. ‘If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things’ [Articles of Faith 1:13].”⁶
—Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf

Try it for yourself!

The following examples show how it can be done. Note that these aren't complete answers, just examples of how a young man or young woman might try to answer these questions for themselves. You'll want to continue studying and praying about the topics you have questions about to find answers and strengthen your testimony.

Why does a loving Heavenly Father let bad things happen?

Act in faith: I have felt God's love for me and know that He exists, even though I don't understand why God lets bad things happen.

Examine concepts and questions from a gospel perspective: Agency is an important part of the plan of salvation. God sent us to down to earth to experience trials, make decisions, and receive a physical body. But allowing people to make decisions means that sometimes people will make wrong choices and affect other people's lives. And trials that are not a result of poor choices—such as natural disasters, disability, and death—can provide opportunities for us to strengthen our testimonies and trust in God.

Seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources: What do the scriptures and modern prophets say about why we go through difficult things? "Thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment; and then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high" (D&C 121:7–8). Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, "God never leaves us alone, never leaves us unaided in the challenges that we face."⁷ I don't know the reasons for all of my trials, but I believe that Jesus Christ performed the Atonement for me and for everyone. I can turn to

Him and to Heavenly Father for peace, strength, and support during my trials (see Alma 7:11–12).

How can I tell when the Holy Ghost is talking to me?

Act in faith: Even though it is sometimes hard for me to tell when I am receiving inspiration, I know from hearing the testimonies of others and reading the scriptures that the Spirit will help me understand if I keep trying to hear His counsel.

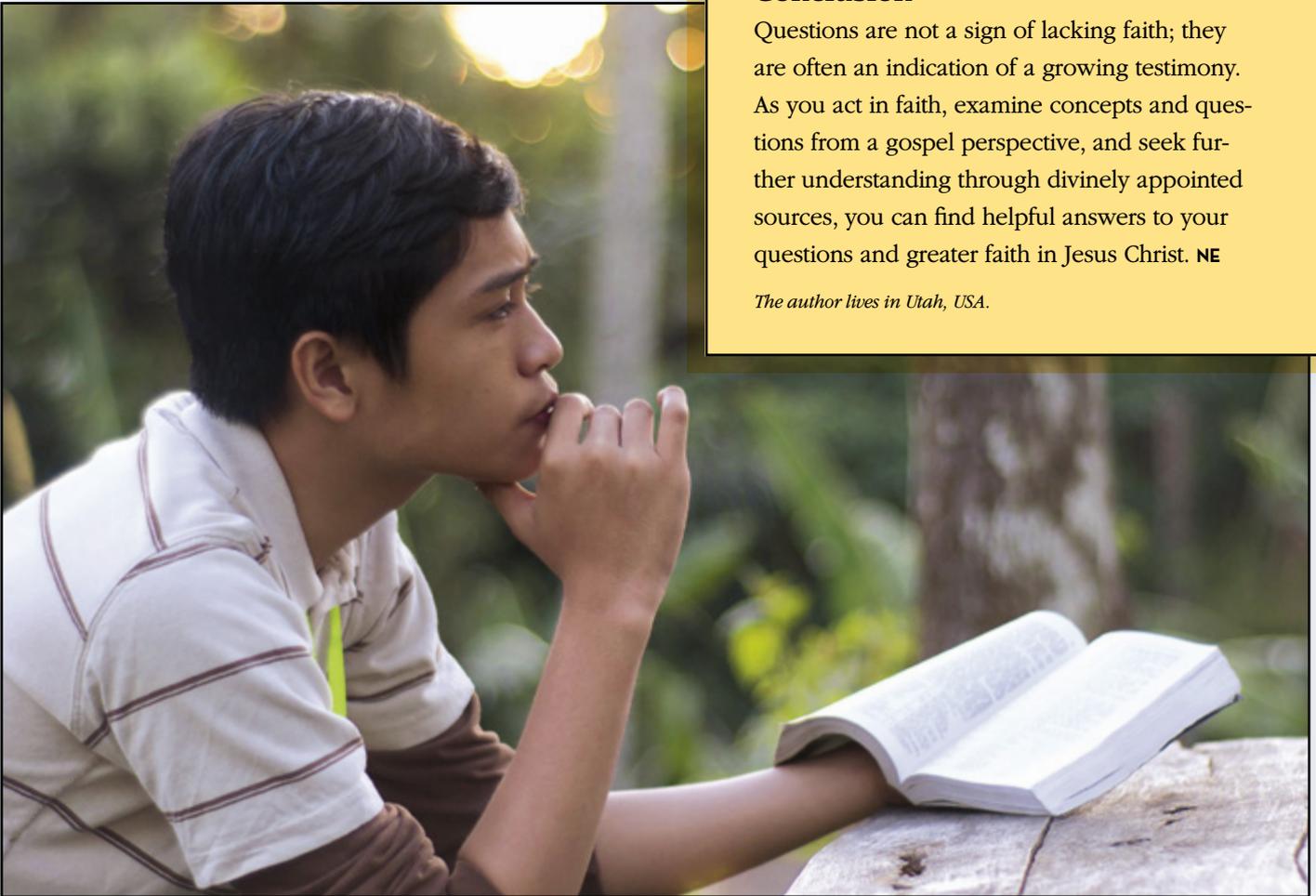
Examine concepts and questions from a gospel perspective: God gives us the gift of the Holy Ghost so we can receive inspiration to do what is right. If I am getting a prompting to do something good, I can know that it is from the Spirit, even if it sounds like my own thoughts.

Seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources: The scriptures teach: "Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers" (D&C 112:10). Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that "sincere desire and worthiness invite the spirit of revelation into our lives."⁸ If I am trying to be humble and doing my best to be worthy of the Spirit, the Lord will help direct me to answers. He will teach me how the Spirit speaks to me specifically.

Conclusion

Questions are not a sign of lacking faith; they are often an indication of a growing testimony. As you act in faith, examine concepts and questions from a gospel perspective, and seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources, you can find helpful answers to your questions and greater faith in Jesus Christ. **NE**

The author lives in Utah, USA.



WATCH HOW THIS WORKS

Watch the video “Madison’s Story” to see a young woman go through this process to answer her own question. Visit [lds.org/go/71853](https://www.lds.org/go/71853).

NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Come, Join with Us,” Oct. 2013 general conference.
2. Jeffrey R. Holland, Apr. 2013 general conference.
3. Dallin H. Oaks, “As He Thinketh in His Heart” (Church Educational System devotional for young adults, Feb. 8, 2013), [lds.org/prophets-and-apostles](https://www.lds.org/prophets-and-apostles).
4. Gary E. Stevenson, Oct. 2017 general conference.
5. Richard G. Scott, Oct. 1993 general conference.
6. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “What Is Truth?” (Church Educational System devotional for young adults, Jan. 13, 2013), [broadcasts.lds.org](https://www.broadcasts.lds.org).
7. Jeffrey R. Holland, Oct. 2008 general conference.
8. David A. Bednar, Apr. 2011 general conference.

A GUIDE FOR



By Elder Larry J.
Echo Hawk
Of the Seventy

You can find guidance for your life from the words of prophets, both in the scriptures and in the words they speak today.

I was a teenager when the missionaries brought the gospel into my home. I remember listening to their message and thinking that the Father and the Son appearing to 14-year-old Joseph Smith and an angel leading Joseph to golden plates sounded too good to be true. The missionaries also said that there was a living prophet on the earth. That also sounded too good to be true. But I noticed positive changes in our home as the missionaries taught our family. Soon I joined the Church.

Changes in my own life, however, didn't come immediately just because I was baptized. I began attending church on Sundays, but other than that, I still did the same things I was doing before. It wasn't until I was 17 years old that I made a promise to the Lord that I would read at least 10 pages of the Book of Mormon every day.

YOUR LIFE



SPECIAL MESSAGES

One of the first things I read was that the Book of Mormon was “written to the Lamanites,” and I was taught that the Lamanites “are among the ancestors of the American Indians” (Book of Mormon, Title Page and Introduction).

My great-grandfather was a Pawnee Indian born in the mid-1800s in present-day Nebraska, USA. He was the first to carry the name Echo Hawk. Among the Pawnee, the hawk is a symbol of bravery. As the elders of the tribe watched my great-grandfather, they saw many deeds of bravery. They also noticed that he was quiet and reserved and did not speak about the courageous things he had done. The elders also heard about his brave deeds from others.

“It is like an echo,” they said. “We will call him Echo Hawk because he is like the hawk whose deeds are echoed.”



Photo of Elder Echo Hawk's great-grandfather.

I am proud of my name and of my heritage. Because of my heritage, I felt that the Book of Mormon had special messages for me. I was eager to continue reading.

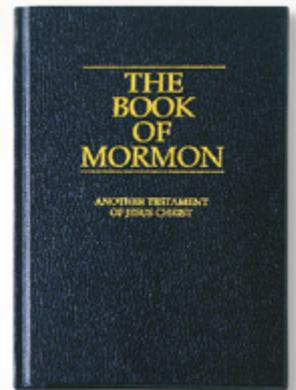
I never missed a day. As I read, I marked in red all the great truths everyone needs to know. Then I marked in yellow the promises the prophets made to the descendants of the Lamanites. As I did so, their words seemed to fly off the page!

After reading the last page, I got on my knees and asked Heavenly Father if the Book of Mormon was true, if Joseph Smith was a prophet, and if the Church had a living prophet. As I prayed, I felt the Spirit powerfully witness to me the truth of these things.

Several years later, I volunteered for service in the United States Marine Corps. At the beginning of basic training, I found myself standing at attention in front of my barrack's bunk along with 54 other Marine Corps recruits. I met my drill instructor, a battle-hardened veteran, when he kicked open the door to the barracks and entered while screaming words laced with profanity.

After this terrifying introduction, he started at one end of the barracks and confronted each recruit with questions. Without exception, the drill instructor found something about each recruit to ridicule with loud, vulgar language. Down the row he came, with each marine shouting back his answer as commanded: “Yes” or “No, Sergeant Instructor.” I could not see exactly what he was doing, because we had been ordered to stand at attention with our eyes looking straight ahead.

“BECAUSE OF MY HERITAGE, I FELT THAT THE BOOK OF MORMON HAD SPECIAL MESSAGES FOR ME.”



AS THE ELDERS OF THE TRIBE WATCHED MY GREAT-GRANDFATHER, THEY SAW MANY DEEDS OF BRAVERY.... [YET] HE WAS QUIET AND ... DID NOT SPEAK ABOUT THE... THINGS HE HAD DONE.

When it was my turn, I could tell he grabbed my duffel bag and emptied the contents onto my mattress behind me. He looked through my belongings, then walked back to face me. I braced myself for his attack. In his hand was my Book of Mormon. I expected that he would yell at me; instead, he moved close to me and whispered, “Are you a Mormon?”

As commanded, I yelled, “Yes, Sergeant Instructor.”

Again I expected the worst. Instead, he paused and raised his hand that held my Book of Mormon and in a very quiet voice said, “Do you believe in this book?”

Again I shouted, “Yes, Sergeant Instructor.”

At this point I was sure he would scream disparaging words about Mormons and the Book of Mormon, but he just stood there in silence. After a moment he walked back to my bunk and carefully laid down my Book of Mormon. He then walked by me and went on to ridicule and disparage all the remaining recruits.

I have often wondered why that tough drill instructor spared me that day. But I am grateful I was able to say without hesitation, “Yes, I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” and “Yes, I know the Book of Mormon is true.” My testimony of the special messages found in the Book of Mormon is a precious gift given to me through the Holy Ghost.

You can find special messages for you from the words of prophets in the Book of Mormon and other books of scripture as you follow Nephi’s teaching to “feast upon the

words of Christ” (2 Nephi 32:3).

We don’t just have the words of prophets in the scriptures—we also have the words of prophets and apostles who speak to us today. Their words have been a wonderful blessing throughout my life.

GUIDANCE FROM A PROPHET, SEER, AND REVELATOR

Shortly after my baptism, I was with other Native Americans at a youth conference near my hometown in Farmington, New Mexico. We were told an Apostle of the Lord, Elder Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985), would be speaking to us. I had never seen him before,

but when he arrived, I remember feeling something special in his presence.

I had that same feeling several years later when Elder Kimball spoke to a group of Native American students at Brigham Young University. He said he could see the progress of the Native American people. He could see them as engineers and builders, owners of industries and factories. He also saw them in political positions and as doc-

tors and lawyers looking after their people.

I remember listening carefully to his words. The Spirit witnessed to me that I should remember them, so I took a copy of this part of Elder Kimball’s talk and put it in my scriptures. I still have it there, and I’ve been prompted to read it again and again. The paper is old now. It looks like an ancient document, but it has been a guide for me.

Before graduating from BYU, I read Elder Kimball’s words again about seeing Native Americans as lawyers looking after their people. I decided to go to law school and become a lawyer. I’m grateful for the opportunities I’ve had to use my education to help others. I have also been elected to several



Elder Spencer W. Kimball, who later became President of the Church, had a great love for Native Americans.



WE DON'T JUST HAVE THE WORDS OF PROPHETS IN THE SCRIPTURES—WE ALSO HAVE THE WORDS OF PROPHETS AND APOSTLES WHO SPEAK TO US TODAY.

President Russell M. Nelson (center) and Elder Jeffrey R. Holland (right) visit District President Dennis Brimhall at the Brigham Young University Jerusalem Center during a global tour of eight countries.

political offices. Growing up, I never thought I would have a university education or run for political office. I probably would have done none of these things without the words of a prophet, seer, and revelator of the Lord to guide me.

The best day of my life, December 20, 1968, was the day my wife and I were sealed in the Salt Lake Temple. The officiator at our temple sealing was Elder Kimball. He gave us wise counsel that day. He told us that we were going to make tens of thousands of decisions in our lives. The most important of those decisions would be deciding to live in accordance with gospel teachings and the covenants we made in the temple. These decisions have been a blessing to us throughout our marriage.

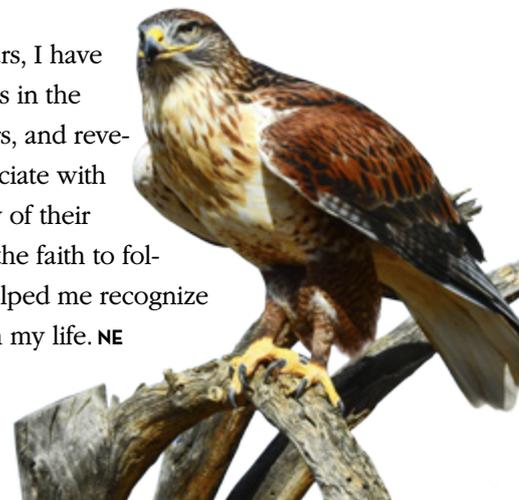
BLESSED AND GUIDED

Have you ever wondered how following the prophets can bless and guide your life? The last time we heard the voice of President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) in general conference, he counseled us to read the Book of Mormon

and to study, ponder, and pray about its message.

In the following conference, President Russell M. Nelson and President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency spoke of the blessings they received as they heeded President Monson's counsel. Through their example, they showed us that it's not just a matter of hearing the prophet's words. We also need to study, ponder, and apply them in our lives. As we take the opportunity to hear and follow the words of living prophets and apostles and study the words of ancient prophets in the scriptures, we will be blessed and guided.

For the past few years, I have worked on a daily basis in the midst of prophets, seers, and revelators. The more I associate with them, the more I know of their divine calling. Having the faith to follow their words has helped me recognize the hand of the Lord in my life. **NE**



PREPARING THE TALK

1. USE THE SCRIPTURES AND TEACHINGS OF MODERN PROPHETS (SEE D&C 52:9).

This is the heart of your talk. After all, that's one of the main reasons we're at church—to teach and learn the gospel of Jesus Christ. You can study your topic with the help of Guide to the Scriptures (at scriptures.lds.org) and general conference talks (search by topic at gc.lds.org). Be sure you understand the scriptures and quotes you are planning to use in your talk. If you need help, ask your parents or Church leaders.

2. INVITE THE SPIRIT.

It's always a good idea to pray and prepare beforehand to have the Spirit with you as you speak. The Spirit not only provides comfort for your nerves, but He also testifies of truth. (See D&C 42:14.) Invite the Spirit into your sacrament meeting by bearing testimony of what you believe to be true.

3. THINK OF A PERSONAL STORY.

One of the best ways to make connections with others is through stories. We like hearing others' experiences and what their lives are like. So try to think of a fun, unique, or challenging experience you've had that relates to the gospel principle you've been assigned to talk about. What did you learn from that experience? How did it help you? This is a great way to open your talk if you're stumped about how to begin.

4. PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!

After you've written your talk, you might want to practice speaking it out loud by yourself, and then in front of family members or friends. You can find out if your talk is within the given time limit and if there are parts you need to clarify. If it's OK with your bishop, you can even try going to your church building beforehand to go through your talk at the podium!

7

TIPS for GIVING A TALK

SPEAKING IN SACRAMENT MEETING SOON? TRY THESE TIPS.

By Sarah Hanson



I don't know about you, but when I'm assigned to give a talk in sacrament meeting, I feel really nervous—not about writing the talk but actually *presenting* the talk. I always worry, “What if I'm too boring? What if I forget to say something? What if I mess up a word?”

Ever felt the same way? (Hopefully I'm not the only one.) If so, it's not the end of the world! Check out these seven tips to improve your speaking skills and give an engaging talk.

GIVING THE TALK

5. AVOID THE “I DON’T WANT TO BE UP HERE” OPENER.

This opener can take many different forms, but most listeners recognize it right away. It’s usually something like, “When the bishop called me to ask if I’d give a talk, I tried to think of some excuse to get out of it.” Most Church members can empathize with how uncomfortable it can be to give a talk, but when you’re basically saying, “I don’t want to be here,” people could hear that as “Please don’t listen to me.” It’s best to avoid this opener altogether—be enthusiastic about your topic!

6. SPEAK CLEARLY.

It isn’t unusual for someone to speak too quickly or too quietly because of nerves. I can totally relate! But it’s important to speak clearly as you give your talk so the congregation can understand you. Make a conscious effort to slow down, pronounce your words, and project your voice (yes, even with a microphone, it’s possible to be too quiet). People want to hear what you have to say!

7. KEEP LOOKING UP.

Eye contact is a very important part of good communication. It shows that you’re sincerely focused on and invested in a conversation. Now, you definitely don’t have to make eye contact with everyone in the congregation as you speak, but even if you frequently look up at the back or front of the room, you’ll be much more interesting as a speaker. Avoid keeping your eyes glued to your notes! Your listeners want to see your smile, not the top of your head.

Even with these seven tips, you still might slip up on a word or notice someone snoozing on the third row. But does that mean you’re a terrible speaker? Of course not!

When we’re a little out of our comfort zone, it’s normal to feel nervous or make small mistakes. But as long as you try your best and invite the Spirit, it doesn’t matter if you stutter or forget to say something. You are doing God’s work and helping His children learn more about the gospel!

If you teach and testify of what you believe, everything will turn out great. **NE**

The author lives in Utah, USA.

“WE MUST ... SPEAK OUT OF [OUR] HEARTS RATHER THAN OUT OF [OUR] BOOKS”

—TEACHINGS OF GORDON B. HINCKLEY [1997], 619.

I LOVE SPORTS!

At my high school, I play soccer, volleyball, tennis, rugby, hockey, and handball. And I swim. I also go everywhere on my bicycle.

To keep up, I have to take care of my body. I get up at 6:30 a.m. and go to bed at 10:00 p.m. To keep my body healthy, especially as an athlete, I need 8 to 10 hours of sleep.

The gospel helps me stay healthy too. The Word of Wisdom warns us against smoking and drinking things like alcohol and coffee. Besides protecting our bodies from harm, the Word of Wisdom is like a contract with the Lord that helps us return to Him.

I'm one of the biggest boys in my grade, so everyone always asks me for advice. I try to show others what to do by being a good example. My friends don't smoke, but some of them drink. I tell them I don't drink when they invite me to join them, but we still remain friends.

The gospel doesn't just bless me, it also blesses my family. My brother and sister watch and copy everything I do, so I try to be the best example I can be.

Juan Cruz G.,
14, Córdoba, Argentina





Ashley N., 16, Utah, USA

I caught the vision of family history by realizing I'm not so different from my ancestors. My great-grandma and I have always had a really special connection, so for a Personal Progress project, I decided to compose a family history book dedicated to her. Writing this book was such an amazing experience because it created a closer bond to my ancestors. I'm so grateful for this new perspective of family history work.



Joshua K., 16, Athens, Greece

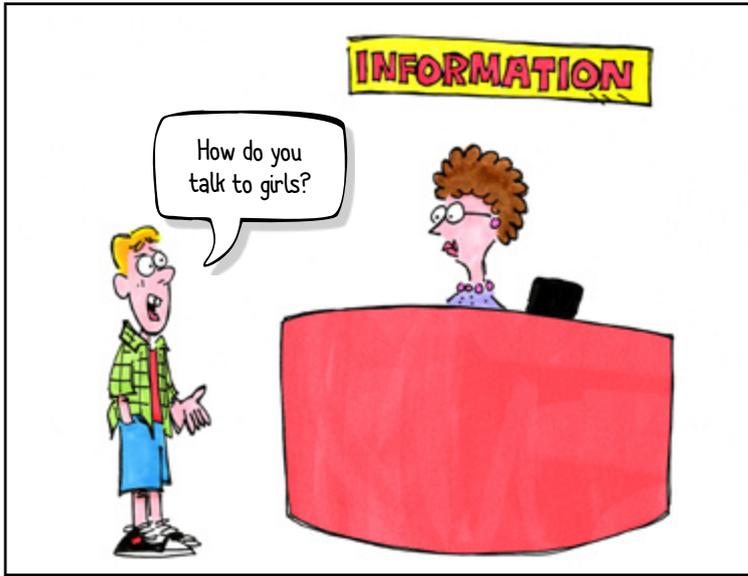
Before I went to FSJ I prayed because I wanted to know what it is like to go on a mission and whether I should go on a mission myself. It didn't take long before we had a lesson on being a missionary and I am glad to say that I really learned a lot. I'm also grateful that I had the opportunity to meet other youth that go through what I do every day.

Look for more on Joshua in the article "Youth in Greece" pages 16-21 .



For more stories about awesome youth from around the world, go to @LDSYouth on Instagram. Send your own photos and testimonies to newera@ldschurch.org.

FUN STOP

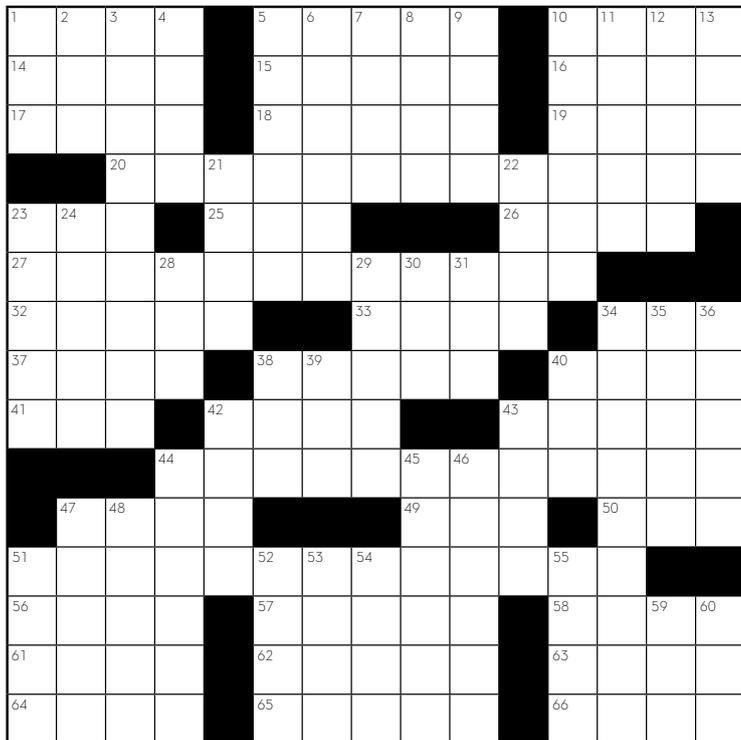


Pioneer Puddle-Jumpers

When the pioneers traveled from Nauvoo to the Salt Lake Valley, they traveled alongside rivers as much as possible (including hundreds of miles on the Platte River alone). These pioneer teens are looking to spend a hot afternoon off in the swimming hole at the other end (marked X). **Can you help them find the best path through?**



Caught in a Crossword



Across

- "I Have Work Enough ___" (*Hymns*, no. 224)
- Elijah challenged ___ priests to a contest
- Sings with closed lips
- A person's sleeping quarters at college
- Metal combination
- Again
- Front lower leg
- "I've ___ itch"
- Words before "boy" or "girl" in a delivery room
- It "fills the immensity of space" (D&C 88:7-13)
- Fifth in a scale
- Consume
- "Then don't stand ___ looking on" (*Hymns*, no. 252)
- Start of Nephi's statement in 1 Nephi 3:7
- Has a meal
- "___ Holiness Give Me" (*Hymns*, no. 131)

- Ocean surrounding Hawaii (abbr.)
- ___ it (runs away)
- Blazing
- Spacious, as a room
- First sound in "sound"
- Shortly
- Urges on
- Opening of most of the Ten Commandments
- Foot protector
- Bad kind of trip?
- Places for urgent care (abbr.)
- Words before "meek," "peacemakers," and others in Matthew 5
- All ___ (listening)
- Twirling stick
- Miner lodes
- Dip ___ in (test out)
- Unseeing
- Paltry
- Repair
- "This ___ bad precedent"
- Genesis garden

Down

- American football scores (abbr.)
- Companion of "aah"
- Borings
- Book after Jarom
- Person with a witch costume made of garbage sacks?
- "That's ___ process" (too much information)
- Lower women's vocal
- Bread's form
- In ___ (together)
- Style for locks
- Up to
- Untidy
- Smack, as a fly
- Coagulates
- Conceal
- Move sneakily (up to)
- Boo-boos
- ___ *Miserables* (Victor Hugo novel)
- Prayer enders
- Neither here ___ there
- Partner of high
- Was a trailblazer
- Enthusiasm
- Abnormal bodily sacs containing fluid
- Egg ___ young
- Debtor's letters
- Craft
- "My mom, ___ the best"
- Piece of ground
- Salad, often
- Long-legged marsh birds
- Plan
- Rock used for chalkboards
- "Don't question ___ this" (she's right)
- "Jesus wants me for a sun, ___"
- Recedes
- Broad valley
- Busy
- "___ Can Be a Heaven on Earth" (*Hymns*, no. 298)
- "___ the sun goes down" (*Hymns*, no. 224)
- Jun.'s father

Mountain Math

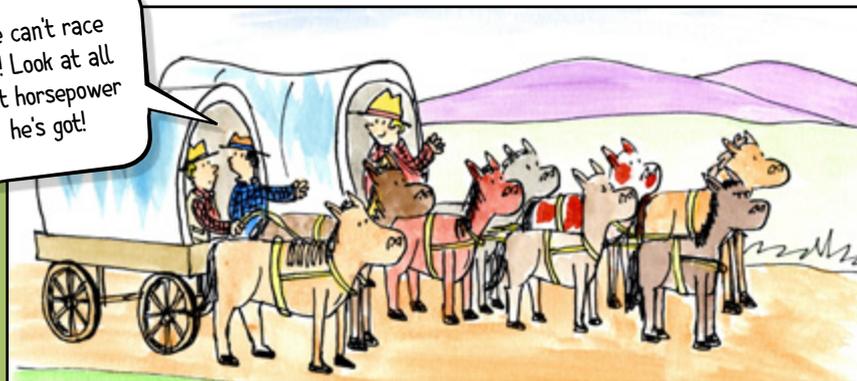
Your Mutual group meets a mystic on a mountaintop hike who promises fame and fortune—or at least the directions to the best viewing area up there—only if you can solve his humble riddle.

CAN YOU ADD A SINGLE STRAIGHT LINE TO THIS EQUATION TO MAKE THE MATH EQUATION TRUE?

$$5 + 4 + 5 = 450$$



We can't race him! Look at all that horsepower he's got!



Answers on page 45.

How can I motivate myself to do the things I ought to—like prayer, scripture study, and homework?

It can seem challenging to complete all the things on your spiritual and temporal to-do lists. But if you change your perspective to focusing on Jesus Christ and drawing closer to Him, then scripture study, prayer, and even homework become meaningful and fulfilling goals. Remember the words of Alma, “By small and simple things are great things brought to pass” (Alma 37:6).



Get Organized

I have a chart with little squares on it that represents the things that I need to do every day.

Whenever I read my scriptures or finish my homework I fill in a square on the chart. When the chart is full, I get to do something I like. After a while, doing those little things just becomes a habit, and then you don't need the chart to motivate you.

Keaton H., 14, Idaho, USA



Choose Good Examples

Choosing my friends wisely, following Church standards, and

going to Church activities help motivate me to do things I should do, like reading my scriptures and working

on Personal Progress. During my first year at Young Women camp, my leaders announced that a second-year girl in a different ward had completed her Personal Progress. Her example motivated me to work on mine more often, and soon we became great friends. The next year, she had moved into my ward and went to camp with us. On the first day, I asked if we could go play tetherball together, but she said she had to read her scriptures first. I was so impressed, I decided I would read with her. She was such a great example to me! Because of our friendship, I've almost finished my Personal Progress and the Book of Mormon. Choosing to follow good examples can start a chain reaction to doing great things and developing your testimony.

Cadence J., 14, Texas, USA



Focus on the Blessings

Motivating yourself to do your personal prayers, scripture study, and all the activities that you should do every day can be hard. And sometimes it can feel overwhelming, like you're just adding more things to do. But focusing on the blessings and the positive aspects of those activities can really help motivate you to do them. I'm motivated to act when I ponder how different my life is when I do and don't complete those tasks. When I don't make time to pray or study (both my scriptures and textbooks), I feel guilt, regret, and overall unhappiness. But when I make those small and simple things a priority, I feel like a weight has been lifted off my shoulders, I feel the Holy Ghost's influence more often, and I become more optimistic. By being diligent and willing to focus on the blessings that come from being obedient, you will have clarity in both your daily decisions and spiritual questions.

Zoie B., 17, Colorado, USA

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



What does it really mean to be tolerant and not judgmental?

Tolerance means respecting others and their freedom to choose. For example, we should “allow all men the . . . privilege [to] worship how, where, or what they may” (Articles of Faith 1:11).

However, tolerance should have limits. President Russell M. Nelson has cautioned that “tolerance, without limit, could lead to spineless permissiveness” and acceptance of sin (Apr. 1994 general conference). We can respect people while frowning upon sin.

As for being judgmental, President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has explained, “We should refrain from anything that seems to be a final judgment of any person” because only the Lord can make those kinds of judgments (“‘Judge Not’ and Judging,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1999, 13).

Of course, we need to make certain kinds of judgments. President Oaks has counseled us to “seek the guidance of the Spirit in our decisions” and to “limit our judgments to our own stewardships.” If possible, we should “refrain from judging people until we have an adequate knowledge of the facts” and “judge circumstances rather than people.” And we should “apply righteous standards” and always “remember the command to forgive” (“‘Judge Not’ and Judging,” 13).

Tell Us What You Think:

My siblings often fight. What can I do to be a peacemaker in my home?

Send your answer and photo by September 15, 2018.

Go to newera.lds.org and click “Submit Your Work.” Sign in with your LDS 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.

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.

What Do We Do in the Temple?

The temple is a sacred place where we can draw closer to our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. In the temple, we are taught important truths, participate in priesthood ordinances, and make covenants (sacred promises) with God that prepare us to return to His presence.

We can receive temple ordinances for ourselves as well as for our ancestors. For example, youth can participate in baptisms in behalf of their ancestors and others who didn't have the chance to be baptized by proper authority when they were alive. For adults, other temple ordinances include the endowment and sealings (such as temple marriage).



GILBERT ARIZONA TEMPLE BAPTISTRY

Baptism and Confirmation for Our Ancestors

Baptism and confirmation are essential to the salvation of everyone who has lived on earth (see John 3:5). However, many people died without having the opportunity of hearing the gospel or receiving these ordinances. Through the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ, a way has been prepared for everyone to receive these blessings. In temples, worthy members of the Church can perform baptisms in behalf of those who have died. In the spirit world, the gospel is preached (see D&C 138), and those who hear it can choose to accept it and the ordinances performed in their behalf.

HOW ARE YOU PREPARING?

How does keeping your baptismal covenants help you prepare to receive temple ordinances?

.....

.....

.....

What else do you need to do to get ready to receive temple ordinances?

.....

.....

.....

Is your temple recommend current? If you don't have a recommend, you can make an appointment with your bishop or branch president.

.....

.....

.....



THE TEMPLE: A SYMBOL OF OUR FAITH

"Each temple is symbolic of our faith in God and an evidence of our faith in life after death. The temple is the object of every activity, every lesson, every progressive step in the Church. All of our efforts in proclaiming the gospel, perfecting the Saints, and redeeming the dead lead to the holy temple."

President Russell M. Nelson, "Prepare for the Blessings of the Temple," *Ensign*, Oct. 2010, 41.

Endowment

The word *endowment* means "gift." The temple endowment is a gift from God whereby He gives special blessings to you, including "power from on high" (D&C 95:8).

When you joined the Church, you received two ordinances: baptism and confirmation. The temple endowment is also received in two parts. First, you receive the initiatory ordinance, where you are symbolically and modestly "washed" clean and receive special blessings regarding your divine heritage and eternal potential. In the second part, you receive the remainder of your endowment as you learn more about the plan of salvation, including the Creation, our purpose on earth, and the mission and Atonement of Jesus Christ.

During the endowment, we make solemn promises to obey God, follow Jesus Christ, be morally chaste, and help build the kingdom of God. If we keep our covenants, we have the promise of receiving all of God's eternal blessings.

Sealings

Families are central to God's plan for our happiness. Uniting families forever is the crowning blessing available in the temple through the sealing authority of the priesthood—the same authority Jesus told His Apostles about (see Matthew 16:19). Temple sealings enable husbands and wives and children and parents to be together forever if they are faithful to their covenants. **NE**



To learn more about going to the temple for the first time, visit "Inside Temples" at lds.org/temples.

FUN STOP ANSWERS (from pages 40-41): Caught in a Crossword: Across: 1. to do 5. Baal's 10. hums 14. dorm 15. alloy 16. anew 17. shin 18. got an 19. it's a 20. Light of Christ 23. sol 25. eat 26. idly 27. I will go and do 32. dime 33. More 34. Pac 37. legs 38. hery 40. airy 41. ess 42. soon 43. prods 44. thou shalt not 47. shoe 49. ego 50. ERs 51. blessed are the 56. ears 57. baton 58. ore 61. a toe 62. blind 63. mere 64. mend 65. sets a 66. Eden Down: 1. TDs 2. ooh 3. drillings 4. Omni 5. bag hag 6. a lot to 7. alto 8. loaf 9. sync 10. hairdo 11. until 12. messy 13. sweat 21. gels 22. hide 23. side 24. owes 28. Les 29. amens 30. nor 31. dry 34. pioneered 35. arbor 36. cysts 38. foo 39. IOU 40. art 42. she's 43. plot 44. tossed 45. herons 46. agenda 47. slate 48. her on 51. beam 52. ebb's 53. dale 54. at it 55. Home 59. ere 60. Sen Mountain Math: Draw a diagonal line on the second plus sign: 5 + 4 4 5 = 4 5 0



FILLED ONE BY ONE

BECAUSE OF THE DROUGHT in the area, sometimes there wasn't any water in the village we were serving in as missionaries.

Since the taps were dry on Sunday, my companion and I had to bring a bottle of water from our apartment for the sacrament.

Before preparing the sacrament, I prayed that the Spirit would be present as I prepared these emblems and throughout sacrament meeting. After placing the cups in the tray, I unscrewed the bottle's lid to begin to fill them. Normally, we would just sweep the tray

"The more we learn about, have faith in, and emulate Jesus Christ, the more we come to understand that He is the source of all healing, peace, and eternal progress."

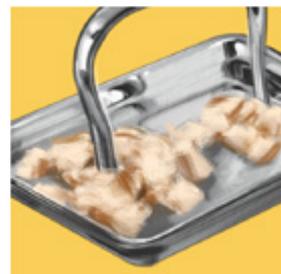
Jean B. Bingham, Relief Society General President, Oct. 2017 general conference.

underneath the steady stream of water from a tap, filling multiple cups at a time. But this time our water was limited, so I had to change the way I filled the cups. I began to fill each cup one by one, doing my best to make sure there was enough in each individual cup. The process took longer and was more tedious, but I was taught a lesson.

When Jesus Christ suffered for our sins, He felt our pains and sins on a very individual and personal basis. He came to understand, know, and love each of us personally. He paid the price for the weaknesses and sins of each one of us, and He did this so we can come to understand, know, love, and even become like Him.

I felt so much joy right there in the back room of the chapel, and I feel it every time I think of Jesus Christ's love for me.

Elder Brigham Jewkes, South Africa Durban Mission



What Is the Role of the Sacrament in Your Life?

1. Represents the body and blood of Jesus Christ (see Luke 22:19-20).
2. Reminds you of the atoning sacrifice of the Savior (see 2 Nephi 2:6-7).
3. Renews your baptismal covenants to keep the commandments and remember Him (see D&C 20:37).
4. Cleanses you from sin and transgression through faith and repentance (see Alma 12:33-34).
5. Promises the Spirit to be with you (see 3 Nephi 18:7, 11).

ON MY PENCIL

WHILE I WAS DAYDREAMING at school, a popular guy invited me to his party. “My parents are out of town,” he said. “I hope you can come!” He winked mischievously.

I knew his wink probably meant there would be alcohol at the party. I also knew that if his parents weren’t going to be there, then I probably shouldn’t be either.

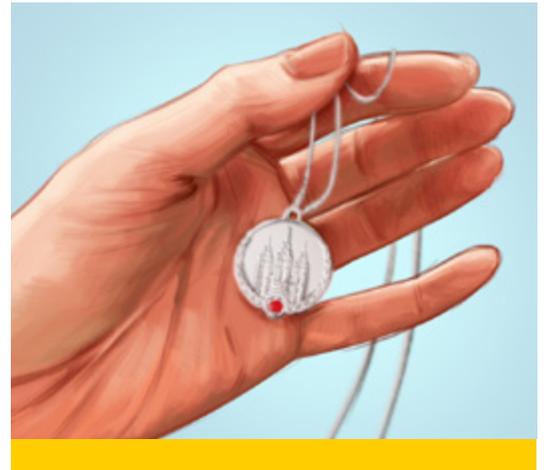
Without hesitation, I said, “No, thanks. I won’t be able to make it.” He furrowed his brow and said, “I don’t get you Mormons. You never have any fun!” Then he turned and walked away.

I knew I had done the right thing. But as the hours ticked by, I began to doubt my decision. I thought, “Why don’t I go? It’s not like my parents would ever know. It’s not like I would drink.”

These thoughts continued until my last class. I tapped my pencil on my desk and asked myself again, “Why don’t I go to the party?” At that moment, I looked down at my pencil. Written on the side was the word *Integrity*. It was the brand name of the pencil I was using, but it was also a little answer to a big prayer in my heart.

I’m grateful Heavenly Father gave me an answer exactly when I needed it, and I’m glad I didn’t go to the party. I know I can make good choices because I am Heavenly Father’s child and I have integrity.

Missy D., Arizona, USA



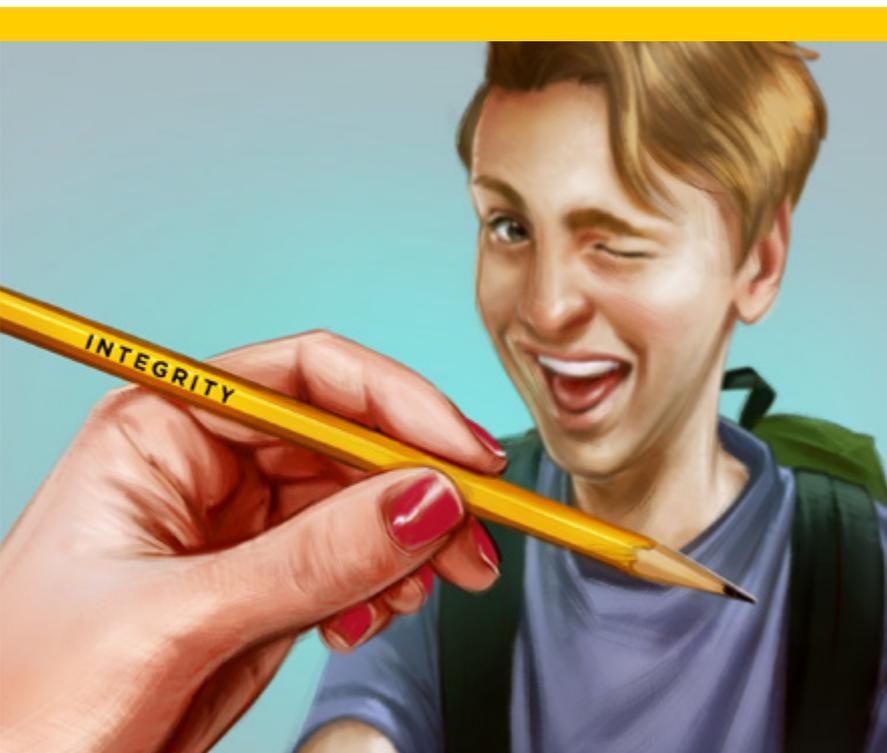
PICKING UP PERSONAL PROGRESS

WHEN I WAS A BEEHIVE, one of my leaders really encouraged me to complete the Personal Progress value experiences. Soon I had finished one value and was looking forward to finishing them all.

But during my junior year of high school, I quit working on Personal Progress. I was going through one of the hardest times in my life, and I began to doubt a lot of things. I just didn’t see how Personal Progress could help me during my trials. But in the past, doing Personal Progress had helped me see my worth and keep me on the straight and narrow path, and I missed that.

As I started Personal Progress again, I realized I was also heading back to the place my Heavenly Father wanted me to be spiritually. Personal Progress helped me see the worth in myself and in others, finish reading the Book of Mormon, gain a testimony of the gospel, and grow closer to God.

Alexis T., California, USA



You Can Be Temple Worthy

By Elder Quentin L. Cook

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

From an April 2016 general conference address.

It is our great desire that members of the Church will live to be worthy of a temple recommend. Please don't see the temple as some distant and perhaps unachievable goal. Working with their bishop, most members can achieve all righteous requirements in a relatively short period of time if they have a determination to qualify and fully repent of transgressions. This includes being willing to forgive ourselves and not focus on our imperfections or sins as disqualifying us from ever entering a sacred temple.

The Savior's Atonement was accomplished for all of God's children. His redeeming sacrifice satisfies the demands of justice for all those who truly repent. The scriptures describe this in a most beautiful fashion:

"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Isaiah 1:18).

"And I will remember [them] no more" (Jeremiah 31:34).

We assure you that living righteous principles will bring you and your family happiness, fulfillment, and peace. Members, both adults and youth, self-certify their worthiness when they answer the temple recommend questions. The essential requirement is to increase our testimony of God the Father; His Son, Jesus Christ; and the Restoration of His gospel and to experience the ministering of the Holy Ghost.

Please know how earnestly we desire that everyone make any necessary changes to qualify for the temple. Prayerfully review where you are in your life, seek the guidance of the Spirit, and talk to your bishop about preparing yourself for the temple. President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) has said, "There is no more important goal for you to work toward than being worthy to go to the temple."¹

I pray that each of us will honor the Savior and make any necessary changes to see ourselves in His sacred temples. In doing so, we can accomplish His holy purposes and prepare ourselves and our families for all the blessings the Lord and His Church can bestow in this life and eternity. **NE**

NOTE

1. Thomas S. Monson, "The Holy Temple—a Beacon to the World," Apr. 2011 general conference.



Born in **Logan, Utah** on September 8, 1940.

Has **3 children** and **11 grandchildren.**



Played in state championship games in both **football** and **basketball** in high school.

Elder **QUENTIN L. COOK**



One of his missionary companions was **Elder Jeffrey R. Holland.**



For every **one ball game** of his choice, he and his wife attend **two cultural activities** of her choice.

He came to particularly **enjoy operas** by Giuseppe Verdi.



When called to be an Apostle, he said he was glad to hear the news in person, because he would have thought it was a **prank call.**

From 1960 to 1962, he served in the **British Mission.**



Played a crucial role in the **rescue of four missionaries** who were abducted in Nigeria in 2007.

As a young lawyer his firm did some legal work for the company that produced the **Charlie Brown holiday TV specials.**



Elder Cook quickly became a fan of the **Peanuts™ gang.**



Married **Mary Gaddie** in the **Logan Utah Temple** on November 30, 1962.

Sustained as a member of the **Quorum of the Twelve Apostles**

on October 6, 2007.



Was **president and CEO** of a health-care system.

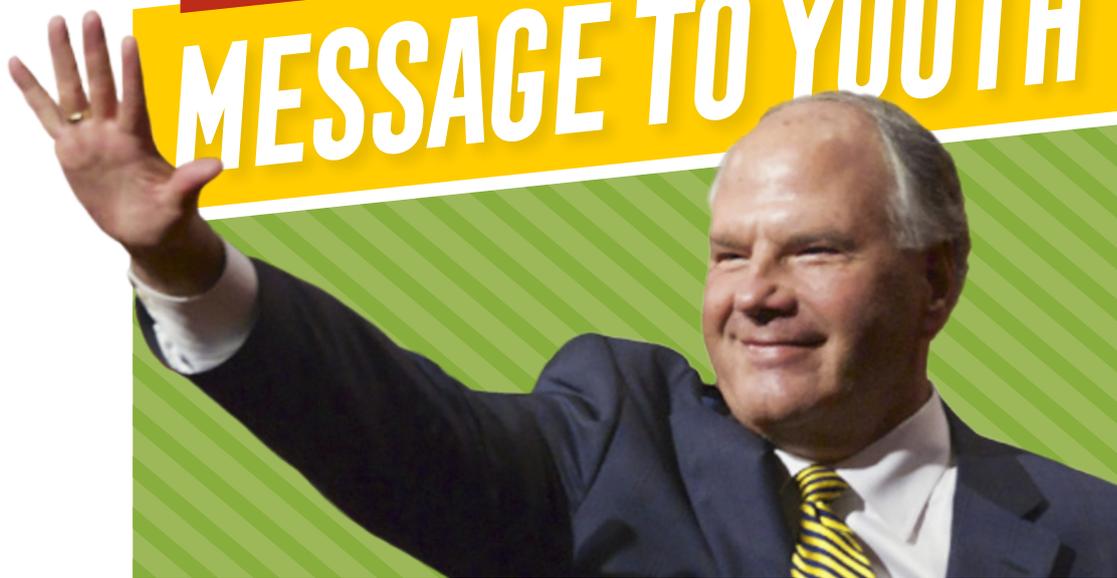
First met his wife, **Mary**, at a **seventh-grade talent assembly.**



He is the **great-great-grandson** of the Apostle **Heber C. Kimball.**

Elder Rasband's

MESSAGE TO YOUTH



An Apostle of the Lord has three messages he wants the youth—**YES, YOU!**—to know.

See what he has to say about these topics:

- * **Reaching the one**
- * **Ministering**
- * **Advice to youth who are struggling**

Go to youth.lds.org

and read Elder Rasband's article "**Your Special Part in Blessing the Lives of Others.**" And watch his short videos about these three messages.



THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS