

THE **New Era**

JUNE 2013



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Cover: Family time, see page 16.

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By Elder D. Todd Christofferson

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



STRONG

A testimony can come to any ordinary person, wherever he or she may be, because our Heavenly Father and the Holy Ghost know each one of us intimately.

Seeking for an Answer in the Sacred Grove

As a young person, I had the opportunity to be in Palmyra, New York, one summer evening. I found myself in the Sacred Grove, alone. I knelt down to pray, asking Heavenly Father to provide me some manifestation or indication about what I truly already knew had occurred in that sacred place. I prayed with great sincerity, for a long time, in an attitude of reverence. And I did not receive any answer or any prompting from the Holy Ghost. Nothing came. Finally, I gave up and left disappointed, wondering, “What didn’t I do right? Why? What more was needed?” It seemed to me that with the surroundings, there could not be any better place to receive an answer to such a prayer.

I learned from that experience that we cannot demand things from God.

We cannot say, “You have to answer me in this way, right this moment.” It is up to Him to decide how and when and what He will communicate to us. Our responsibility is to always be in the right condition to receive the promptings or whisperings, the revelation, the inspiration of the Spirit. But He makes the decision of how and when.

Receiving an Answer at Home

What I was seeking at that time—which did not come then—did indeed come to me five or six weeks later. I was at home reading the Book of Mormon. And without my asking, there came upon me a strong impression, feeling, and communication through the Holy Ghost that confirmed my belief and testimony.

It was such a strong communication that it made me cry. It was also such a pure communication that it had no



IMPRESSIONS OF THE SPIRIT

need for words. The Spirit does not need to be limited to words; He can communicate Spirit to spirit with a language that is unmistakable because it has no words. It is a communication of pure knowledge and intelligence from the Spirit, and I have come to know that it truly is the best way to acquire knowledge. It is stronger and longer lasting than touching or seeing; we can come to doubt the physical senses, but we cannot doubt when the Holy Spirit speaks to us. It is the surest witness. Because of this, the unforgivable sin is to deny the Holy Ghost or the testimony of the Holy Ghost.

Feeling God's Love and Understanding

I truly feel fine that the Lord did not give me an answer in the Sacred Grove because I might have come to think that one must make



a pilgrimage to Palmyra in order to be able to receive a testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Now I know that it can come at any place. You don't have to go to Jerusalem in order to receive a testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. That testimony can come to any ordinary person, wherever he or she may be, because our Heavenly Father and the Holy Ghost know each one of us intimately. They know where we are and how to find us. And They don't need visas. In fact, They are acquainted with the entire world! They already know.

I promise you, young people, that if you will continue faithful, asking, the Lord is going to give you the same answer, the same testimony, the same confirmation that He gave me, because I know that He loves all of you as much as He does me or President Thomas S. Monson or any one of His children.

God's love is for everyone, and it is infinite. He knows how to communicate with each person. He knows where you are and how to reach your heart and spirit through the Holy Spirit. Do not stop praying. Do not stop asking. Do not stop obeying the commandments. The time will come, if it has not already, when you will receive this strong testimony. And it will not be just once. But rather, through the Lord's mercy, it will come time after time after time throughout your life.

Continuing to Receive a Witness

Thus it happened to me. While I was serving a mission in Tucumán, Argentina, I was teaching a family and bearing testimony about the First Vision of the Prophet Joseph Smith. The family did not believe it. However, in the moment I bore my testimony, I

received another confirmation of my testimony. The Spirit said, "Your words of testimony are true." He was testifying to me about my testimony.

Throughout your life you are going to repeatedly receive confirmations that God is there, that He is our Heavenly Father, that He lives, that He called the Prophet Joseph Smith to serve as the Prophet of the Restoration, that His Son lives, and that His grace is sufficient to save us, cleanse us, and forgive us all. That testimony comes time after time throughout our lives.

I know of these things. I am a special witness of them. I know that our Lord lives, that He is literally a resurrected being, that He guides and is at the head of this Church that bears His name, that it is His, and that you are His sheep. **NE**

From an address given to youth in Salta, Argentina, in November 2011.



Danielle's

CARD



I was so surprised when an older girl reached out to me and showed that she cared.

By Diane Ferguson

When I was a Beehive, I always went to church on Sundays, but I didn't always go to Mutual. I had a good friend my own age, but I felt like I didn't really fit in with the older girls, especially at combined Young Women activities. On top of that, I was frequently busy with homework and other responsibilities. Sometimes I would go for several weeks without attending Mutual.

Then one day I got a card in the mail. It was from Danielle, the Laurel class president. I opened the card and read the note inside. It said:

Wow. One of the other girls—a Laurel, no less—actually cared that I hadn't been going to Mutual. I was a little embarrassed that she had taken the trouble to write me a note, but more than that, I was grateful that she had shown me Christlike love in such a thoughtful way. Danielle was trying to help me realize that I could contribute something to Mutual activities and that she was truly interested in getting to know me.

It had an effect on me. I started going to activities more frequently—and I started enjoying them too. As I got to know the other girls, we

learned more about each other and became friends. I learned to enjoy spending time with people who have different interests than I have as we learned about the gospel, served others, and participated in lots of fun activities together.

Years later, when I was called to be the Laurel class president, I remembered Danielle's example and tried to help everyone feel welcome and included. I know that reaching out to others can be difficult, especially if you don't know them very well. However, I also know that extending a hand of friendship can be exactly what someone else needs to feel valued and included. **NE**

Diane Ferguson lives in Utah, USA.

Dear Diane,
I hope you're doing well. You are an amazing girl, and I've had so much fun getting to know you at camp and at church. I've missed seeing you at Young Women activities. I hope you will be able to come to more activities soon. You have so much to share. Good luck with everything!

Love, Danielle



FELLOWSHIP OF THE SAINTS

"May we ever watch over one another, assisting in times

of need. Let us not be critical and judgmental but let us be tolerant, ever emulating the Savior's example of loving-kindness. In that vein, may we willingly serve one another."

President Thomas S. Monson, "God Be with You Till We Meet Again," *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 110.



By David L. Beck
Young Men
General President

GRATITUDE

EACH OF US WILL BE HAPPIER IF WE ARE FULL OF GRATITUDE.

In the summer of 2011, I had the privilege of meeting Josh L. at the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico, USA. A few months later, Josh was helping his father clean out a warehouse. Without warning, a chain transporting a 1,480 pound (670 kg) beam suddenly snapped, dropping the beam onto Josh, crushing him from his neck to his legs. Miraculously, Josh's father was able to move the beam off his son's body. He performed CPR until emergency personnel arrived to transport Josh, who was still not breathing, to the hospital.

Josh spent days in critical condition. Doctors worked fervently to repair his cracked skull, shattered sinuses, and other severe injuries. After numerous operations, Josh was eventually stabilized. He then began the long, slow road to recovery.

Today Josh still experiences many of the effects of his accident. He has a damaged eye, is partially deaf in one ear, and has a metal plate in his head. Yet he chooses to look at his ordeal as a blessing. He knows that he owes his life and his recovery to Heavenly Father and the support of those

around him. Gratitude fills his heart.

Gratitude during Adversity

At a recent conference for youth, Josh talked about the prayers and fasting offered by family, friends, neighbors, and ward and stake leaders: "I am counting my blessings. Prayers have been answered. I think this has been more of a blessing than a trial. I love all you guys."

Josh is an example of the teaching in *For the Strength of Youth*: "Live with a spirit of thanksgiving and you



Josh's recovery has been long and slow. He still experiences many of the effects of his accident but considers the accident to be more of a blessing than a trial.





KEY IDEAS ABOUT GRATITUDE

“The Lord wants you to have a spirit of gratitude in all you do and say. . . .

“In your prayers, pour out your heart to your Father in Heaven in thanks for the blessings you have received. . . .

“ . . . Express your gratitude to others for the many ways they bless your life.”

For the Strength of Youth (2011), 18.

will have greater happiness and satisfaction. . . . Even in your most difficult times, you can find much to be grateful for.”¹

Gratitude can turn trials, even as serious as the one Josh faced, into blessings. It takes effort to exercise gratitude and have an optimistic approach to life. Yet the Lord truly blesses us, and His tender mercies should not go unnoticed or unappreciated. The Book of Mormon prophet Moroni reminds us of the importance of gratitude and encourages us to “remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts” (Moroni 10:3).

Help of the Holy Ghost

In our busy lives, it can be easy to overlook and forget Heavenly Father’s guidance in our daily

activities. The Holy Ghost helps us remember that we have much to be grateful for. President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, taught, “It is the Holy Ghost who helps us see what God has done for us.” He urged us “to find ways to recognize and remember God’s kindness.”²

FEELINGS OF GRATITUDE WILL INSPIRE US TO FOLLOW THE LORD AND LIVE A LIFE OF SERVICE.

As we allow the Holy Ghost to remind us of God’s kindness and love for us, we will be filled with feelings of gratitude. These feelings will move us to thank our Father in Heaven. *True to the Faith* teaches: “Thank your Heavenly Father for His goodness to you. You can express your gratitude to God by acknowledging His hand in all things,

thanking Him for all that He gives you, keeping His commandments, and serving others. . . . Work at being grateful. You will find that it yields wonderful results.”³

As we recognize our blessings, our testimonies increase. The more we are able to see the Lord’s hand in our lives, the closer we come to Him. One of the best ways we can show our gratitude to our Father in Heaven is by expressing thanks to Him and to others for the ways they touch our lives.⁴

These feelings of gratitude will inspire us to follow the Lord and live a life of service—a life that inspires those around us and promotes positive change. **NE**

NOTES

1. *For the Strength of Youth* (2011), 18.
2. Henry B. Eyring, “O Remember, Remember,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 67–68.
3. *True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* (2004), 79.
4. See *For the Strength of Youth*, 18.

Feel It and Live It

GRATITUDE

You can show gratitude by the way you live.



Emily

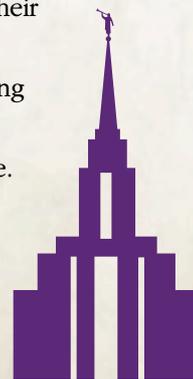
Gratitude for Family—Present and Past

I'm so grateful for my family, and that includes my ancestors. One way I like to show gratitude for all of my family is by doing family history work.

This all started with my Personal Progress project for Individual Worth, value experience 6. I wanted to learn how to do family history work. At first I began with indexing and then tried looking for names on FamilySearch.org. It was so cool to start finding names of my own ancestors. Recently, I went to the temple with several names I'd found. I was able to do the baptisms and the confirmations. I loved it! The whole experience reminded me of my own baptism. It made me feel good to imagine that my ancestors were watching and that they were excited to have their ordinances done.

I've done temple baptisms before, but doing my own family names brought a whole new meaning to the names and ordinances for me.

After the baptisms were complete, I then sent the names to other family members to complete the remaining ordinances. My aunt and uncle have done 12 names so far. Sometimes I even babysit for them so they can go to the temple together.



The scriptures teach that we are to “live in thanksgiving daily” (Alma 34:38). But how do we do that? Certainly, we can and should start by expressing sincere gratitude to Heavenly Father in prayer and by saying “thank you” to others. Beyond expressing verbal thanks, there’s perhaps an even more powerful way to show our sincere gratitude. President Thomas S. Monson has taught, “To express gratitude is gracious and honorable, to enact gratitude is generous and noble, but to live with gratitude ever in our hearts is to touch heaven” (“The Divine Gift of Gratitude,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 90). Here’s how a few youth show thanksgiving by *how they live*.

At first I used to do family history research mostly on Sundays, but lately I’ve been squeezing it in during the week whenever I can. My grandfather is a convert to the Church and the only member in his family, so there’s a lot of opportunity to do temple ordinances for my ancestors on that side. I’m excited to research and work on their names as I hear stories about them from my grandfather.

I’m so thankful to have a loving family, and I know my ancestors are a big part of that family. I’m glad I can do this sacred work for them.

Emily H., 15, Arizona, USA

Editor’s note: Watch video tutorials to learn how to do your family history at lds.org/go/fh.

Gratitude for Physical Health

When I was a kid, I had problems with asthma. I knew what it was like to struggle for breath all the time. I always had an inhaler around.

Then the Lord blessed me with greater health. The asthma problems became much better. I still needed to be careful, but I could do more than ever before. I was so grateful for that gift of physical health. After about five years, I started really getting into sports. At that point some of the asthma came back to where I still need to have an inhaler on hand. But I’ve learned that I can still do many things, including sports. I actually play on my high school basketball team. I’m so grateful to be able to stay this active.



One of the ways I try to show my gratitude for physical health is by helping others. Last summer I had an opportunity to volunteer at a basketball camp for younger kids.

We helped fourth and fifth graders one week, then sixth and seventh graders the next week. I got to know the participants really well. There were 25 attendees and 5 counselors. We worked on things like basic basketball skills, sportsmanship, and the importance of playing as a team. The participants had a fun time learning, and I definitely had a great time teaching them.

Joshua M., 16, California, USA





GRATITUDE THROUGH PRAYER

“Through expression of prayerful gratitude and thanksgiving, we show our dependence upon a higher source of wisdom and knowledge— God the Father and his Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are taught to ‘live in thanksgiving daily.’ (Alma 34:38.)”

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Gratitude for the Goodness of God,” *Ensign*, May 1992, 64.



Lexi



Gratitude for the Young Women Organization

I’m so grateful that the Young Women organization is such a big part of my life. I try to show my gratitude by helping it be successful. Whenever there’s a service project or activity planned, for example, I show up.

I also help plan some of the Mutual activities. In planning, I try to think about what the other young women like to do. I want to make sure the activities are well attended and that we’re learning and having fun together.

Some of the service projects have been my favorite way to show gratitude. For example, there was a young woman in our ward who ended up sick in the hospital. I went along with the young women to visit her in the hospital to help lift her spirits. It felt nice to do something to brighten her day. We also go on temple trips as a group. Other times we visit some of the young women who don’t come to church as often.

Young Women teaches me so much. Whether I’m learning how to sew, performing service, or just having a great time with the other girls, Young Women has been a big blessing in my life.

Lexi T., 14, California, USA

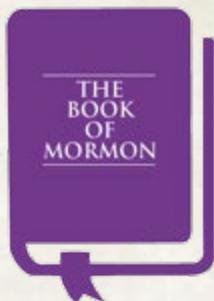
An Attitude of Gratitude

Living with an attitude of gratitude can influence for better our decisions, thoughts, and habits. Is there any part of your life where you can more fully live with a thankful heart? You can start showing such gratitude today.



Dallin

Gratitude for Missionary Work



Something I'm very grateful for is missionary work. I try to help the missionaries any way that I can. I like to take opportunities at school to talk about the Church and what I believe. Sometimes I give out a

copy of the Book of Mormon. One of the best ways to help missionaries is to be one! Also, working with the missionaries is wonderful and fun. Making contacts with them and going with them to teach others is a great way to help.

In Brazil, a lot of my friends don't understand our beliefs or standards. For example, I get asked all the time why I don't drink coffee. These questions often lead to an opportunity to be a missionary. Not long ago I was able to explain to a young woman about the plan of salvation. Even if your friends don't join the Church right away, they may still remember what you share with them. I'm grateful for missionary work, especially for the chance to be a missionary every day with my friends.

Dallin C., 15, Brazil

Gratitude for the Ability to Learn



One of the things I'm most grateful for is my mind. I know Heavenly Father gave us the ability to think and learn throughout our lives. For example, I have loved studying music and learning to play the guitar, piano, and organ. I like to show my gratitude for this opportunity by sharing music with others around me.

The young men and young women in our ward have an ongoing service project at a nearby home for Alzheimer's patients. About 20 of us show up once a month and sing songs for the residents. We also just sit and visit with them afterward, sometimes eating treats together. I'm amazed at how much the residents enjoy and appreciate these short visits. Their faces just light up! They're so happy to see us when we walk through the doors.

Sometimes when we go on the monthly visits, my older sister Grace and I play our guitars while all of the youth sing songs—often hymns—in the main room. I also play the piano on some of our visits. A few times when I've played songs that the residents know, they will sing along.

It's a simple thing we're doing, but I can tell it makes a big difference in their lives as well as ours. It's nice knowing I can help brighten their day by spending time with them and sharing something I've learned.

Serving others is a great way to put my own problems in perspective. By sharing my talents and time, I'm reminded how blessed I am. I feel good making others happier.

Madeleine H., 15, Maryland, USA



Madeleine



A GIFT FOR GRANDMA

By Kimberly Sabin Plumb

A simple letter to say thanks meant so much to my grandmother.

When I was young, my grandma often had get-togethers for my cousins and me. There were about 14 of us, and we were always excited when Grandma invited us over for dinners, sleepovers, game nights, and holidays. Grandma's house was the place to be!

Every activity at Grandma's house was fun. But I never thought about all of the time and work that went into each activity. I just thought that was what grandmas did, and I loved it!

After years of fun cousin memories at Grandma's house, our family moved away. Later my grandma came to spend a special holiday with us in our new home. My family thought long and hard to find the perfect gift for her. She has more stuff than anyone I know. What could we get the grandma who has everything?

I asked my dad for ideas, and he told me the same thing he says every year: "Why don't you write her a really nice letter?" I was out of ideas, and so early the next morning, before anyone else was awake, I sat at the kitchen table with my feet on the cold tile and wrote my grandma a special letter.

At first I wondered what I could write besides, "You are so wonderful.

Thanks for everything." As I looked out the kitchen window at the palm trees and the sky, I thought of the many things Grandma had done for us over the years. I remembered that I had never told my grandma how much those times spent together as a family meant to me.

In my letter, I told my grandma that I love her, and I thanked her for all of the special memories. I let her know how important they still were to me, even years later. Then I put the letter in an envelope and went back into my warm, carpeted room.

When the time came to give Grandma her gifts, I slowly pulled out

my letter. I didn't know how to feel about my gift to her.

She looked surprised when I gave her the envelope. I watched closely as she carefully tore off the end of the envelope and pulled out the letter on narrow pink paper. As she read it, she started to smile and tears filled her eyes. I had never seen my grandma cry before. She slowly looked up and turned toward me with warm, brown eyes. She whispered, "Thank you, thank you. I didn't think anyone remembered."

Grandma, who had done so much to build strong family relationships, had no idea that I remembered or was grateful for those times together. She wiped her eyes and said, "Kimberly, thank you. That was the best present anyone could ever give me."

I gave Grandma a big hug, feeling her soft skin against my cheek and smelling her "grandma" smell that was a mix of baby powder and musk. I was so grateful for my dad's idea to write her a letter. I didn't know that words of gratitude and love would mean more to my grandma than all of the knickknacks, perfume, and gifts that money could buy. **NE**

Kimberly Sabin Plumb lives in California, USA.



EXPRESS LOVE IN WORD AND DEED

"With gratitude in our hearts, may we fill our days—as much as we can—with those things which matter most. May we cherish those we hold dear and express our love to them in word and in deed."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Finding Joy in the Journey," *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 87.

“My brother has a problem with pornography. He is working with our bishop on it, so I want to support him, but it has affected my trust in him. How do I deal with this?”

It's great that you want to support your brother. He'll need your encouragement. Since your brother has made you aware of this challenge in his life and you know that he is diligently addressing it, he has already taken a huge step toward regaining your trust. Overcoming the secrecy and deceit so often associated with this challenge is evidence of major progress. This can help you begin to place more trust in him. It will take time for that trust to fully mature. But that doesn't mean you can't still love him. You can pray for him, be a good example to him, and do other things to help him.

Try not to judge him. If he feels judged, he will probably feel worse about his struggles, and that will make it harder for him to change. Everyone has weaknesses; that's one reason the Savior provided the Atonement. Trust in the Lord and in the fact that, through repentance, your brother can change and be forgiven.

Since you know that your brother is working with your bishop on this issue, you could talk to your bishop about this situation. He and your parents can help you know what to do. As a family you can work together to help your brother. You could have a family fast to help him (see Matthew 17:21), which will provide a shield against temptation. **NE**

Note: Many young women also struggle with addictions to pornography. The same advice would apply in relationships with sisters.

Express Sorrow but Not Rejection



Pornography is no small thing, and it hurts a lot to find out that someone you care about has a problem with it. Try to forgive him, no matter how long it takes. Also remember that forgiveness and trust are separate. By his actions your brother can earn your trust back. Express sorrow but never rejection. He needs to feel that he is not alone, and he needs to be held accountable for his actions. When you love him despite the addiction, he will see hope and find the strength to overcome the problem.

Bethany A., 18, Arizona, USA

Encourage Him



I know it's hard when you invest so much trust in someone and then he abuses it. The first thing I would do is pray and ask Heavenly Father for strength to talk to your brother. You can talk to him weekly about how he is doing and find scriptures in your personal scripture study that will encourage him to get help. Supporting him, even though he has lost your trust, is important. Let him know that the Lord loves him and will forgive him. Remind him of hymn 187, "God Loved Us, So He Sent His Son." Let him know that Jesus Christ atoned for our sins, and if we repent, we can improve a little bit every day.

Naomi B., 16, Minnesota, USA

Support Him

Show him that you love him no matter what his choices have been. Support him every step of the way and let him know how glad you are that he's working at it. The trust won't come rushing back all at once, but he's trying to earn it back. He's on the right track, and as he learns how he can become better, you can learn how to trust him again.

Kirstin M., 17, North Carolina, USA

Be Forgiving

The power of the Atonement, if he applies it, will help your brother have the strength to repent. The Atonement also provides healing for those who have been injured, as well as for those who have made hurtful choices. Be forgiving always and look to love instead of turning to anger.

Seth B., 18, Missouri, USA

Pray for Guidance

Kneel down and ask for guidance from our Heavenly Father and speak with your brother and pray with him. As we humble ourselves before our Heavenly Father, He "will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13). He will help your brother be strong against temptation and always choose the right.

Alejandra B., 22, California, USA

Don't Lose Hope

Don't lose hope in your brother, because this is the time when he

needs his family most. Overcoming a problem with pornography is hard enough for him without the worry of losing his family's confidence in him. I've had the same problem, and I'm working to repent to be worthy to go to the temple to be sealed to my family. I was always afraid of what my parents would say or how they would treat me. I was surprised when I found out how supportive they were and how eager they were to offer solutions to help me become better. If your brother is consulting with his bishop and making an honest effort, he's making progress.

Young man from Alaska, USA

Trust the Lord



The Atonement is not just for our sins but also for our hardships and struggles. Jesus Christ knows exactly how you feel—He has felt it before. Reach out to Him, and you'll find His hand waiting to lift you up. Pray for His help and the healing power of the Atonement. Tell Heavenly Father all your concerns, worries, and hopes for



A WAY TO MAKE CORRECTIONS

"Our Heavenly Father knew before we came to this mortal

existence that negative forces would tempt us to drift from our course, 'for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' [Romans 3:23]. That is why He prepared a way for us to make corrections. Through the merciful process of true repentance and the Atonement of Jesus Christ, our sins can be forgiven and we will 'not perish, but have everlasting life' [John 3:16]."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "A Matter of a Few Degrees," *Ensign*, May 2008, 60.

the situation. Most importantly, don't just wait for a miracle to happen—do something. Study the scriptures, search for wisdom that will help you, and keep faith that everything will work out.

Megan A., 19, Arizona, USA

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

UPCOMING QUESTION

"What am I supposed to think about during the sacrament?"

Send your answer and photo by July 15, 2013.

Go to newera.lds.org and click "Submit Your Work."

You can also write to us at newera@ldschurch.org

or

New Era, Q&A, sacrament
50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.

By Sarah Petersen

YOU CAN CREATE
FUN FAMILY ACTIVITIES
AT HOME.



PLAY TOGETHER, STAY TOGETHER

The Inside Beach Party

It was the middle of winter, and I was in my beach clothes. My little sister had been planning this for weeks, and it was finally here: the family *inside* beach party! We'd all helped prepare by drawing decorations, hanging lights inside, and covering the floor with beach towels. My dad even joked about putting sunscreen on! We listened to beach music and ate our dinner on the floor. After eating we played our own version of volleyball by tying a string across the room for the "net" while each team tried to blow a feather over the string rather than hitting a ball. Laughing together at the different faces each of us made was the best part of the night. But doing something together as a family—something really fun and different—made it even better.

FAMILY
FUN:

MORE IDEAS

Need some ideas to start your own list of family activities? Try one of these:

FAMILY
TALENT
SHOW

PING-PONG
CRICKET
TENNIS
BADMINTON



ILLUSTRATIONS BY SCOTT GREER

It's shared activities like these—ones that allow family time together regardless of whether it's a planned party or a simple, everyday happening—that help us grow closer to our family members. We know that spending time with our family is important, but not every family gathering can be a planned, themed event. So we need to know how to spend time with our parents and siblings from day to day. You can get to know your siblings much better just by doing little things together, such as talking to them at dinner, sharing your headphones to listen to music together, or helping them with a project. Even if your siblings have different interests, trying out new things together may help you find some common ground.

MUSEUM VISITS

ORIGAMI TUTORIALS

WRITING LETTERS TO EACH OTHER

MAKING FORTS

**KICKBALL
FOUR SQUARE
JUMP ROPE**

FINGER-PAINTING COMPETITIONS

HIKING

KARAOKE NIGHT

TIE-DYE PARTY

FAMILY COOKOUT

TEMPLE TRIPS

READ-A-THONS OR A BOOK CLUB

BIKE RIDES

CHALK MURAL DRAWING

TIC-TAC-TOE CHALLENGE

MAKING PLAY-DOUGH ACTION FIGURES

PAPIER-MÂCHÉ NIGHT

STARGAZING

Favorite Youth Experiences

Check out what these youth enjoy doing with their families.

- Connor and his family love to play board games together, so they have made one night a week a game night for their family.
- Cassandra's family likes to go watch the trains that pass near their house. She loves this time because while they wait for the trains to come, she gets to hear stories from her parents about when they were kids.
- Blythe enjoys participating in her family's annual theater production. They pick a movie or story they're familiar with and then create their own funny version of it, with commercials and other clips to accompany it. This is a time she looks forward to, where they can all laugh and have fun together.
- Ben's family has a tradition for birthdays. Even though most of his siblings are married and have moved away, they all come together to celebrate birthdays. They each say something great about the birthday person. Doing this has become really special to Ben and his family.
- Michaylo loves going on trips with his family because the outings bring his family together. They spend most of their time just laughing and having fun.
- Matt says it doesn't really matter what he is doing with his family, because they always have fun together and love to goof around. Because they have developed this friendship, they have become really close.



Start with What You Already Do

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said we can create family bonds “through family traditions for birthdays, for holidays, for dinnertime, and for Sundays” (“What Matters Most Is What Lasts Longest,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 43). If your family has a busy schedule, start by working on something you do already, such as dinner, scripture study, or prayer. Help your family be consistent. Then talk to your parents about planning an easy family activity. **NE**

Sarah Petersen lives in Utah, USA.

MORE IDEAS

Need some ideas to start your own list of family activities? Try one of these:

CAMPOUT IN
THE BACKYARD
OR LIVING ROOM

WATCH
AIRPLANES
TAKE OFF AND LAND

GARDENING

FRISBEE

PUZZLE
PARTY

SUMMER
WATER
FIGHT

WALKS AT
A PARK

PICNICS

ROLLER
SKATING

HOME
MOVIE
NIGHT

MAKE
SNOW OR
SAND
SCULPTURES

LIBRARY
VISITS

FAMILY
SLUMBER
PARTY

PIE-MAKING
NIGHT



FAMILY TIME

“Family time is sacred time and should be protected and respected. We urge our members to show devotion to their families.”

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “And a Little Child Shall Lead Them,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 9.

YOU'RE COVERED

A family that stands together can weather any storm.

(See *For the Strength of Youth* [2011], 14–15.)





**By Elder
Steven E. Snow**
Church Historian
and Member of
the Seventy

The overwhelming evidence of Church history is positive and faith-promoting. In its full context, it is absolutely inspiring.

I enjoy reading historical accounts of the early Church members who left their homes and, with great sacrifice, gathered with the Saints. I find their stories compelling, and I draw great strength from learning what they went through to live and demonstrate their faith by following the prophets and doing hard things. When you read what *they* did, somehow *your* lot in life doesn't seem quite so difficult.

I love Church history. I'm reading more of it now than ever, and I find it fascinating and faith-promoting. For instance, it is absolutely astounding what the early missionaries accomplished, having no resources other

than a burning faith and testimony that caused them to do remarkable things. Those examples help me understand that I can do hard things if I continue to feed my faith and testimony. Time after time, my testimony is strengthened as I see what has happened with this great work as it has rolled forward.

Viewing the Past from the Present

History is a great way to be inspired to prepare yourself spiritually. In our history we can see those who prepared themselves spiritually and overcame and those who fell away because they weren't spiritually prepared for what

BALANCING CHURCH HISTORY

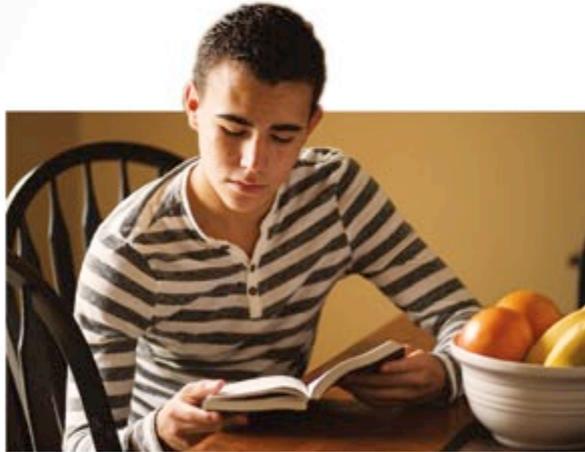




came. We can learn that dedication to the gospel, prayer, and testimony can help us do great things and that we've got to spend time developing our spiritual side or we'll pay the price.

The people in our history were regular people like us, many of whom did extraordinary things. While they were all seeking for perfection, they weren't perfect. Those early Church members had their difficulties and struggled with things just as we do today. But I find strength in knowing that those challenges, those strivings for perfection, have been around for a long time.

Certainly, the world has changed in the last generation or two. The



Like anything, you have to approach Church history with balance.

ANSWERING QUESTIONS

How do I answer my friends who say that some of our history, like angels and buried gold plates, is hard to believe?

If our history falls outside what people imagine to be possible, it's normal that they would be skeptical. We would simply point out that it is consistent with other miraculous events in God's dealings with man throughout history, and we would bear our testimony to them and ask them to study it for themselves. Then we would invite them to ponder it and pray to Heavenly Father about it, "with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ" (Moroni 10:4).

If they are willing to perform this "experiment," to "exercise a particle of faith" (Alma 32:27) and ask God, the Holy Ghost will reveal the truth to them.

Internet has put all kinds of information at our fingertips—good, bad, truthful, untruthful—including information on Church history. You can read a great deal about our history, but it's important to read about it and understand it in context. The difficulty with some information online is that it's out of context and you don't really see the whole picture.

Information that tries to embarrass the Church is generally very subjective and unfair. We should seek sources that more objectively describe our beliefs and our history. Some websites are very mean-spirited and can be sensational in how they present the information. Look for sources by recognized and respected historians, whether they're members of the Church or not.

Some young people are surprised and shocked by anti-Mormon material

on the Internet because they haven't fortified themselves against it. They may not have spent enough time on the spiritual side to prepare and strengthen themselves for whatever may come. When life experiences come to knock their legs out from under them, it's important that they do those basic things we always talk about: continuing to study the scriptures and having meaningful prayer with our Heavenly Father. Those basic things prepare people for all kinds of adversity, including anti-Mormon articles they'll come across online.

The Need for Balance

Like anything, you have to approach Church history with balance. The true Church has always been a minority, and it seems like we've always had a target on our back. We'll always face adversity, and we might as well get used to that. The best way to deal with it is to make sure we're personally worthy and that our



If you choose to spend much of your time studying only the controversial chapters of our history, you'll see a few threads, but you'll miss the whole quilt.

testimony is strong. If you're spending time on websites that criticize the Church and its history but aren't spending time in the scriptures, you're going to be out of balance, and those negative things may have an unduly strong effect on you. If you were in proper balance, they wouldn't.

In my own teenage years I didn't completely understand the importance of developing spiritually. I was probably more interested in becoming a good football player than in becoming a good student of the Book of Mormon. It wasn't until I reached the mission field that, like many young men, I had that transformation and understood what happiness is really about. It's the joy, the peace that comes from serving the Lord, from studying and from praying, from loving and helping others. I find if I ignore those aspects of my life, things don't go as well as they should. If I do those things, everything seems a little more in balance.

As I keep my life in balance, I can look at history objectively and understand that while most of our ancestors are to be admired, they were human and made mistakes. There are sad or confusing episodes in our history that we seek to understand better, but some of these questions might not be answered on this side of the veil. And that's fine.

If a friend came to me with an honest question about a controversial issue from Church history, I'd do my best to answer it. And if I found that he was spending a lot of time in that area, the first questions I'd want to ask him are: "Are you reading the Book of Mormon? Are you saying your prayers?"

Are you keeping your life in balance so that you can protect yourself against the storms of life?"

The overwhelming evidence of Church history is positive and faith-promoting. If you choose to spend much of your time studying only the controversial chapters of our history, you'll see a few threads, but you'll miss the whole quilt. And you need to understand the whole picture of our

The Internet has put all kinds of information at our fingertips. . . . You can read a great deal about our history, but it's important to read about it and understand it in context.

history. In its full context, it is absolutely inspiring.

For example, Joseph Smith was a remarkable person. Was he perfect? No. We're all mortal. But to read the Book of Mormon and the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants and to see what he did in restoring the Church in a short period of time is a remarkable testimony. All prophets have challenges and difficulties, and it shouldn't surprise us that Joseph Smith saw adversity and offended a few people. But he clearly was a prophet of God.

No Time Like the Present

I can't imagine a greater time to be a member of the Church. When my wife and I were married, there were 13 temples in the entire Church, and we had a goal to visit every one of them. Now there are around 140 temples, and we're never going to visit them all. All of these fruits of

the Restoration—prophets and apostles, temples, priesthood, the Book of Mormon, the revelations—are a great blessing in our lives. And it was all made possible by the Savior, by His gospel, by our Father's plan.

I may be a simple guy in many respects, but I'm smart enough to know that my Heavenly Father loves me. He loves us all. We really are His sons and daughters. He really wants

us to return to Him. He doesn't micromanage our lives. That's part of our growing process. He wants us to learn and exercise agency and deal with adversity. But, truly, I can see His hand in my life and in my family's life. And I'm grateful that we get this mortal experience, because I love life. A lot of stuff goes wrong, but there are a lot of great things in life, and I'm grateful we as spiritual beings have a chance to come to earth and gain a body and learn things that are going to help us through the eternities.

History blesses our lives because it gives us a chance to look back. Sometimes it's hard to look back on our own lives, but through history we can look back in the lives of others and learn things that have blessed them. And we can help ourselves avoid mistakes by doing the things that have blessed our ancestors. **NE**

MAKE THE CHOICE:

ATTITUDE

So, How Was Your Day?

Choose your path to your preferred day.

By David Dickson
Church Magazines



As soon as you get up in the morning, you know it's coming. Somebody is going to ask how your day is going. You'll want to answer that it's going well, but the trouble is, how do you really handle all those curveballs life keeps throwing at you? Well, when you choose to make the most of whatever comes along, your attitude may make all the difference. You can choose to act—in a positive way—rather than be acted upon (see 2 Nephi 2:26).

Start Your Day
It's Saturday! You've been looking forward to today all week long. You and some friends have big plans to go mountain biking. However, despite the sunny forecast that had been predicted, it's raining buckets outside. What do you do?

Contact your friends and see if they'd be up for something different. They now want to go roller-skating, but you've never tried that before. It sounds kind of boring. What do you do?

Go back to bed and pull the covers over your head. Life's not fair!

You head to the roller rink, and skating is actually kind of fun. You're about to go home when your cell phone buzzes. Your ward needs help with a last-

Tell them

no thanks. Spend the rest of the day complaining about the weather.

minute service project to help a family moving to the area.
Can you come?

Sure thing. You spend the next hour helping the family unload their moving truck. You notice the teenager in the family has hardly said 10 words the whole time you were there. He seems kind of shy. What do you do?

You invite the new guy over to shoot some hoops. You plan on it being a quick visit, but you soon realize he's pretty cool once you get to know him. You spend the next two hours talking while you play ball.

You'd rather not. Normally you like service projects, but your plans were already thrown out of whack offer and head home.

While you know it can't be easy moving to a new area, you could really use some time to just relax. You say good-bye and spend the rest of the night watching a movie on your own.



MAXIMUM HAPPINESS

"So much in life depends on our attitude. . . . We can't direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails. For maximum happiness, peace, and contentment, may we choose a positive attitude."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Living the Abundant Life," *Ensign*, Jan. 2012, 4.

"LOUSY. Worst Saturday ever."

"It was OK. Could have been better."

"PRETTY GOOD, overall."

"Today was GREAT!"

DEACONS IN ACTION

By Sam Duvall

I am the deacons quorum president in my ward. I stayed after church with two friends to tidy up, emptying trash and putting up chairs. After we were done, we started to walk home.

It was a hot, sunny day. As we were walking home, a woman called to us from her doorway. She asked if we were missionaries. We said we were not. She said, “But you are Mormons, aren’t you?” We told her that we

We were too young to offer a priesthood blessing, but there was something we could do.

were and asked what we could do for her. She told us that her husband was very ill and they were heading to California the next day for surgery on some blood clots in his lungs. She asked us to come in and wondered if we could give a prayer. One of the other deacons said that if she meant a priesthood blessing, then we were not able to do that. The lady asked if we could at least give a prayer. I said that would be fine and that we would. I felt nervous about saying a prayer in a stranger’s home, but I felt like it was the right thing to do. I then offered a prayer. I prayed for this man’s safety and comfort and that he would feel better after his operation. The family thanked us, and we went home.

I really felt like the Holy Ghost was with us and helped us know what to do. Even though we don’t yet have the Melchizedek Priesthood and cannot give priesthood

blessings, we were still able to help this family. When I got home I told my parents what had happened. We decided that the family probably did want and need a priesthood blessing.

I called the bishop and told him the story. He thanked me for what we had done. The bishop called the high priests group leader and sent him to check on the family. The sick man was given a priesthood blessing, and the family was very grateful.

One of the high priests called me later and asked if I could please organize the deacons to mow the family’s lawn. Since they were leaving town for the operation, they needed our help with their lawn.

I would check on the lawn to see if it needed to be mowed and get the deacons together when it did.

This was one of the neatest and most spiritual experiences I have ever had. Our bishop said he thinks the Lord placed us in the right place at the right time for someone to show her faith and for the young men to respond as the Lord has designed (see D&C 84:111). He said this is an awesome example of the Aaronic Priesthood in action.

I will remember this experience for a long time. It helps me remember that I need to be an example of Christ at all times and in all places (see Mosiah 18:9). I could be called upon at any time to help or serve others, whether they are members of the Church or not. I don’t know if this family will ask more about the Church. I do know that they will remember that when they asked us to help them, we were able to give comfort and hope. It feels good to help others in any way I can! **NE**

Sam Duvall lives in Utah, USA.

SERVICE: PART OF YOUR DUTY TO GOD

“List some specific things your quorum will do to give service. Also plan several things you will do on your own to give service, including service to members of your family.”

Fulfilling My Duty to God: For Aaronic Priesthood Holders (2010), 26.





The Priesthood in Action

This month, your Sunday lessons will focus on the priesthood and priesthood keys (see lds.org/youth/learn). One of the Sunday School questions is “How Can I Use Stories to Teach Others about the Priesthood?” As you look for stories to share, consider Young Men general president David L. Beck’s address “Your Sacred Duty to Minister” from the April 2013 general conference. In it, he shares stories of two young men fulfilling their priesthood role to minister to others:

- A starting quarterback helps a young woman being bullied at school.
- A new deacon in India is the only active member of his quorum and so he helps bring all of his other quorum members back into Church activity.

Read more from Brother Beck about the role of the priesthood in ministering to others at lds.org/go/63A.

“
*Everyone you know could be
 blessed in some way by your*
MINISTERING.
*The Lord is counting on you
 to reach out to them.*
 ”

David L. Beck, Young Men general president,
“Your Sacred Duty to Minister,” April 2013 general conference

— THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THIS —

PRIESTHOOD POWER

IS TO

BLESS, SANCTIFY, AND PURIFY US SO WE CAN LIVE TOGETHER WITH OUR FAMILIES

IN THE PRESENCE OF OUR HEAVENLY PARENTS.

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,
“‘This Is My Work and Glory,’” April 2013 general conference

The Priesthood—A Gift to All

There’s a common misconception that the power of the priesthood is only for men. In “This Is My Work and Glory,” Elder M. Russell Ballard teaches that the priesthood is given to bless everyone—men, women, and children:

“The power of the priesthood is a sacred and essential gift of God. It is different from priesthood authority, which is the authorization to act in God’s name. . . . Heavenly Father has provided a way for all of His sons and His daughters to have access to the blessings of and be strengthened by the power of the priesthood.”

This month, think about how your life has been blessed by the priesthood, how you are living to be worthy to partake of the fullest blessings of the priesthood—temple covenants—and, for young men, how you can better serve in the priesthood.

Read more from Elder Ballard’s address at lds.org/go/63B.



Share These Cards Online

As you talk about the priesthood this month, consider using these cards in your classes and quorums, at family home evening, or with other youth on social media. You can even hang them in your bedroom or locker to remind you about your gospel study throughout the month. Download or share them online at lds.org/go/63C.

How Great the Plan **OF OUR GOD!**



At a time when there was so much hurt and loneliness in my heart, my knowledge of the gospel gave me the confidence to move forward.

By Amarsanaa E.

I was raised in a place where the Church was not well known—a town now called Berkh, in northern Mongolia. I am the middle child of three boys, and growing up, we were together all the time. When my older brother went to the city to go to school, I missed him a lot. Two years later he came home for his summer vacation. That summer our family went hunting for three months in the rocky hills. It was one of the best summer vacations of my life.

My brother started telling me about a church he had joined called The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. At that time I didn't like Christian churches, so I didn't pay much attention to what he was telling me.

One autumn day we arrived home from hunting to discover some visitors from the city. They were from the Church that my brother had been talking about. He returned to the city with them that night. Later we heard

why he had left: he had received a mission call. He hadn't even told us he had sent in his application! My older brother left for his mission to the United States of America soon after.

Converted to the Gospel

The next year, when I finished high school, I went to the city to attend a university. The family I stayed with turned out to be members of the Church. On Sunday morning they invited me to come to church with



EVEN THE HARDEST TIMES CAN BE A BLESSING

"If we have faith in Jesus Christ, the hardest as well as the easiest times in life can be a blessing. In all conditions, we can choose the right with the guidance of the Spirit. We have the gospel of Jesus Christ to shape and guide our lives if we choose it. And with prophets revealing to us our place in the plan of salvation, we can live with perfect hope and a feeling of peace."

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "Mountains to Climb," *Ensign*, May 2012, 26.

▶ Hope after Losing Loved Ones

Learn how another young man found strength after several members of his family were killed; see the short video at lds.org/go/63D.

them. Since I'd heard a lot about this Church, I decided that I would try going once.

I ended up attending church many times. I couldn't help but feel peaceful every time I was there. People there were nice, always shaking hands with me. The Church was different from what I had thought. Soon I started taking discussions from the missionaries. I met with the missionaries for almost two years.

I knew I wanted to be baptized, but my baptism had to be postponed because of my struggles with the Word of Wisdom. It was difficult for me, but eventually I was ready for baptism. I was fortunate to be baptized by my older brother, who had returned from his mission only months earlier. When I remember that moment now, I cry sometimes. It was the happiest moment of my life.

After I joined the Church, my brother talked about missionary work almost every day. He always encouraged me to go on a mission. With his help, I filled out my mission application. I will never forget how happy my older brother and I were then.

POLICE WERE THERE, BUT THE DEMONSTRATION WAS GETTING VIOLENT AND SCARY, ESCALATING INTO A RIOT.

A Frightening Experience

One evening my brother called me to come and meet with him after work. He wanted to talk with me about some things relating to my mission. We set a time to meet at the central square.

Around this time parliamentary elections were happening in Mongolia. When we met at the central square, citizens were holding a demonstration because of the election. Police were there, but the demonstration was getting violent and scary, escalating into a riot. A big building and several cars were on fire, and people were screaming. It was frightening.

My brother and I had met far away from the demonstration, but he was worried. He gave me money for a taxi and told me to go straight home. He



told me that I would see him the next day. He planned to go back to his home, which was close to where he worked. The taxi arrived, and we said a quick good-bye before I rode away.

I soon found out that the government had closed all the roads because of the rioting. Unable to get to my home, which was in the outskirts of the city, I spent the night at work instead. Armored cars and armed soldiers were everywhere. The fighting worsened, and that night a state of emergency was called. It lasted for four days.

When the state of emergency ended, my brother-in-law came to pick me up. We got to his home to find all our relatives waiting there. They were all crying. I learned that my older brother had been shot as he was walking home.

My heart felt like it was going to burst. My brother died when he was 24 because of that demonstration. The days following my brother's death were among the most horrible of my life.

It was during this difficult time that I received my mission call. After having

been through my conversion, baptism, and mission paper preparation with my brother, I was left to open my mission call alone. To my surprise, I was called to serve in my own country.

Since I was alone, I knelt down right there and thanked my Heavenly Father in prayer. And I prayed for my brother. I cried and cried while I prayed. At this time, when there was so much hurt and loneliness in my heart, I felt the Spirit witness of the plan of salvation more deeply to me, and my faith was strengthened.

A Testimony of His Plan

Even though my brother was not there to open my mission call with me, I will always be grateful to him. I am also very grateful that God has given us the plan of salvation through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. It is the most amazing plan. If we follow this

plan, we will feel peace in our hearts.

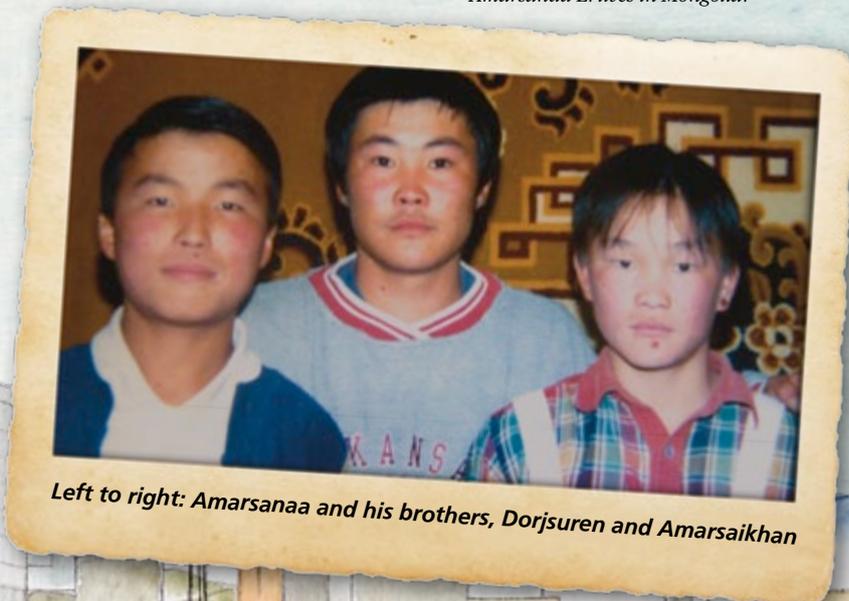
The scriptures tell us: "O how great the plan of our God! For . . . the paradise of God must deliver up the spirits of the righteous, and the grave deliver

I PRAYED FOR MY BROTHER. I CRIED AND CRIED WHILE I PRAYED.

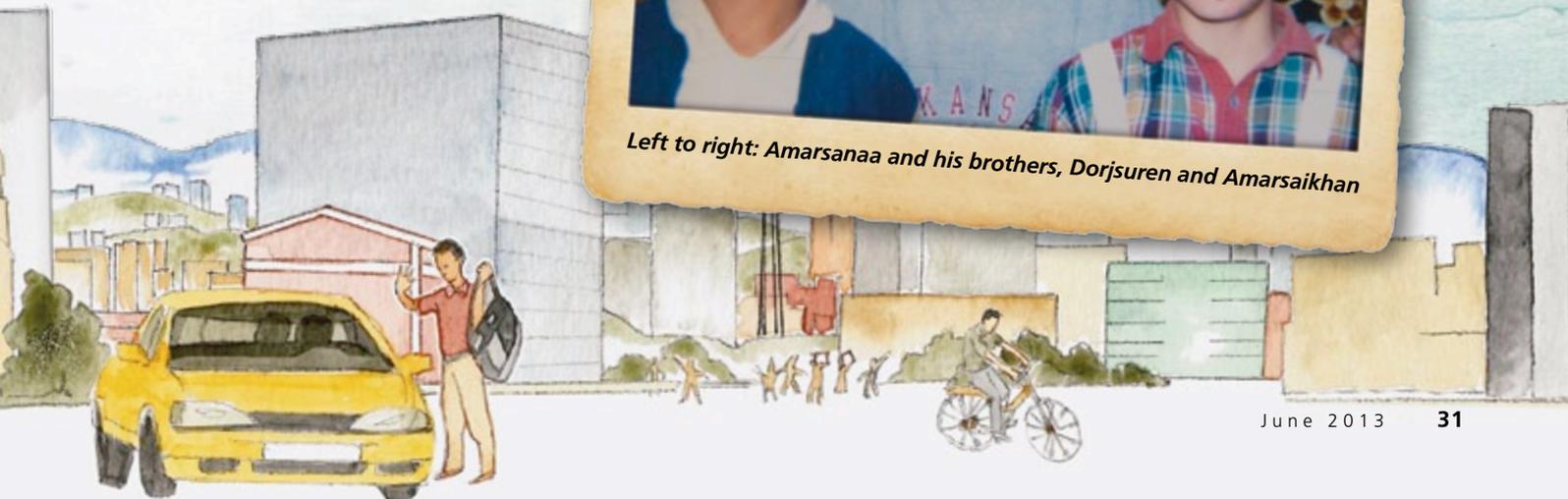
up the body of the righteous; and the spirit and the body is restored to itself again, and all men become incorruptible, and immortal, and they are living souls" (2 Nephi 9:13).

I know that my brother is alive in the spirit world. This knowledge gives me the confidence I need to do well on my mission. I know he will be with me during the difficult times—and so will the Lord. **NE**

Amarsanaa E. lives in Mongolia.



Left to right: Amarsanaa and his brothers, Dorjsuren and Amarsaikhan



THE SALT OF THE EARTH

This common chemical compound has something to teach us about our covenants with God.

BIBLE FACTS

- Under the law of Moses, priests put salt on all of the offerings of grains and meats before placing them on the altar (see Leviticus 2:13; Ezekiel 43:23–24).
- The temple in Jerusalem required huge amounts of salt for preparing offerings and tanning hides. Jewish tradition says salt was sprinkled on the ramp leading to the altar so that the priests would not slip. Herod's temple included a salt chamber to store all the necessary salt.
- The phrase "covenant of salt" is used in the Old Testament to signify the desirable and everlasting nature of covenants between God and man (see Numbers 18:19; 2 Chronicles 13:5).
- Anciently, salt was not scarce in the Holy Land. There was a large mine near the Dead Sea and shallow evaporation pools along the Mediterranean coast.

COMMON SALT



Chemical Makeup: Sodium chloride (NaCl), a crystalline compound formed when sodium hydroxide (NaOH)—a base—reacts with hydrogen chloride (HCl)—an acid—to form an ionic bond ($\text{Na}^+ + \text{Cl}^-$).



Major Uses: Food preservative, food seasoning.

Other Uses: Cleanser, ingredient in soap, aid in leavening, ice-melting agent, agent for tanning animal hides, color-fixing agent in dyeing of textiles, and many others.



How It Works: Salt preserves food by stopping the growth of bacteria and destructive enzymes. When salt comes in contact with the surface of food, the salt molecules try to achieve a balance between the number of salt molecules inside and outside the food. It does this by drawing water molecules out of the food and inserting salt molecules into the food through osmosis across semipermeable cell membranes. As a result, the number of free water molecules is reduced to a point where most bacteria cannot survive and most enzymes cannot operate because, basically, they get dehydrated.





OUR COVENANT DUTY AS THE SALT OF THE EARTH

"Those who are baptized in the Church of Jesus Christ make covenants. In modern revelation the Lord declared, 'When men are called unto mine everlasting

gospel, and covenant with an everlasting covenant, they are accounted as the salt of the earth and the savor of men' (D&C 101:39). To perform our covenant duty as the salt of the earth, we must be different from those around us. . . .

"This requires us to make some changes from our family culture, our ethnic culture, or our national culture. We must change all elements of our behavior that are in conflict with gospel commandments, covenants, and culture."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Repentance and Change," *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 39.

LOSING SAVOR

When the Savior talked about salt that has "lost his savor" (Matthew 5:13), He was talking about what happens when salt is mixed with other substances: it becomes corrupted and therefore cannot be used in the accustomed ways. So we must keep ourselves pure and unstained by sin and worldly things. The Lord has also said



that when we disobey and do not fulfill our duty to be "saviors of men," we "are as salt that has lost its savor" (D&C 103:10; see also verses 8–9).

HISTORICAL FACT

For a time, the Roman Empire gave its soldiers a ration of salt but eventually replaced it with a fixed sum of money for purchasing salt. This is where the word *salary* comes from (Latin for "salt money").



"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men."

Matthew 5:13

WHAT WE CAN LEARN



SALT:

- **Prevents decay.** As individuals, we can be personally sanctified through covenants. As a group, those who make and keep sacred covenants can halt the spread of moral decay by living righteously and being a force for good. They also sometimes help prevent the judgments of God from falling on societies that have ripened in iniquity—or over-ripened and rotted (see, for instance, Helaman 13:14).
- **Makes things last.** Throughout the scriptures, God refers to His "everlasting covenant," promising us eternal blessings (see Topical Guide, "New and Everlasting Covenant"). Those who make and keep covenants also work to spread those covenants throughout the world, extending eternal blessings to more and more of Heavenly Father's children. As Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, "The key to this work is the keeping of covenants by individuals" ("Keeping Covenants: A Message for Those Who Will Serve a Mission," *New Era*, Jan. 2012, 4).
- **Enhances flavor.** Our covenants allow us to have the gift of the Holy Ghost, which enhances our spiritual capabilities and purifies our natural feelings. Righteous covenant keepers who are spread throughout the world make the world a better place to live in and are pleasing to Heavenly Father, because they help bring salvation to His children.



At a new school packed with people, I felt alone and in need of comfort.

ALONE

among
1,500

By Carolyn Lund

Students flooded the hallways going every which way to get to their classes. There were 1,500 students crowded into a high school built for 1,000. Ironically, every time the bell rang I found myself trudging through the masses but feeling completely alone.

As an 11th-grader at a new school, I was growing to hate high school. At the beginning of the year, I had put forth great effort to introduce myself to people and initiate conversations with others. But as the weeks passed, I began to feel invisible. I sat alone in my classes, never spoke, and eventually stopped smiling.

I had been the class president and a cheerleader just the year before at my old school, and my family began to worry as they saw my demeanor change from bubbly and enthusiastic to sad and distressed. My dad would ask, "How was school?" and all I could mutter was, "Fine," before heading upstairs to my room to cry. Ashamed of my failed attempts at making friends, I lied to my parents, not telling them that instead of eating lunch with my classmates I went and studied in the library by myself.

Toward the end of the school year, I reached my breaking point, surprising myself at the response I gave one day to my dad's usual question. "I don't want to go back," I told him. "I hate my life." Seeing the hurt and concern on his face only made me feel worse. That night as I got ready for bed, I knelt down and poured out my heart to the Lord, praying longer and harder than I ever had before. Instead of praying that I would find friends at school, I

prayed that I would simply find worth and joy in my life again.

The next morning at school I found myself silently praying that I would be comforted. As the bell rang for the first class and the hallways began to fill up, I focused on my prayer. Surprisingly, my nervous anxiety seemed to melt away and was immediately replaced by a sense of calm. It was at that moment, in the midst of the bustling hallway, that I felt closer to the Savior than I ever had before. I felt His arms seemingly wrap around me in a warm embrace of understanding and reassurance.

I turned to the Lord often during the rest of that year, and I continue to rely on Him now. Although I did not have a huge group of friends, I did make several close friends that year—friends that have become some of my best friends in the years since. Looking back, I am grateful for that difficult experience, because it helped make the transition to college an easy one. I learned that the Lord saw me, one of His precious daughters, as having infinite worth. He will always be there to help us through moments of desperation, and we can recognize His presence with us if we pray to feel His loving embrace. **NE**

Carolyn Lund lives in Arizona, USA.



THE FIRST PRESIDENCY ON LONELINESS



"Heavenly Father wants you to check in with Him through sincere and fervent prayer. Remember, you are never alone. Never forget that you are loved. Never doubt that someone surely cares for you."

President Thomas S. Monson, "A Time to Choose," *Ensign*, May 1995, 98.



"We never need to feel that we are alone or unloved in the Lord's service because we never are. We can feel the love of God. The Savior has promised angels on our left and our right to bear us up [see D&C 84:88]. And He always keeps His word."

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "Mountains to Climb," *Ensign*, May 2012, 26.



"You will not feel loneliness, sorrow, pain, or discouragement forever. We have the faithful promise of God that He will neither forget nor forsake those who incline their hearts to Him [see Hebrews 13:5]. Have hope and faith in that promise. Learn to love your Heavenly Father and become His disciple in word and in deed."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "You Matter to Him," *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 22.



More Online
For more on this topic,
visit lds.org/go/63E.

On the field and in life, gospel teachings and priesthood responsibilities help these young men from Alaska know who they want to be.



FOOTBALL, CHOICES, AND FAITH

By Joshua J. Perkey
Church Magazines

Football season begins early in Alaska, USA. For seniors Vili T. and his twin brother, Josh, the first regular season game in 2012 took place on August 11. The regular season ended at the end of September. That's because in this far-northern state, winter comes early. Just a few miles from the high school, blue-white glaciers reach right down into the ocean. And bald eagles and bears feast on the salmon.

Holding practice in 55-degree (12.8°C) weather is not uncommon, even in the summer. Vili and Josh do it because they love athletics.

"We're always near each other," says Vili, referring to the fact that he plays quarterback and Josh plays running back. But the two of them are leaders off the field too. There are only 15 or so members of the Church in their school, so they really stand out. Setting the example for others means constantly making choices to be strong—and humble—and the rewards have been tangible.

"People here are pretty accepting of Latter-day Saints," Josh says. "Sometimes they make jokes, or they try to get us to do stuff on Sundays. But they all know we have Mutual on Tuesdays so they shouldn't expect us at football."

Vili adds, "Sometimes they try to get us to do things we shouldn't do. We just say no. Sometimes we teach them the gospel or share the Book of Mormon with them. It's pretty fun to share the gospel."

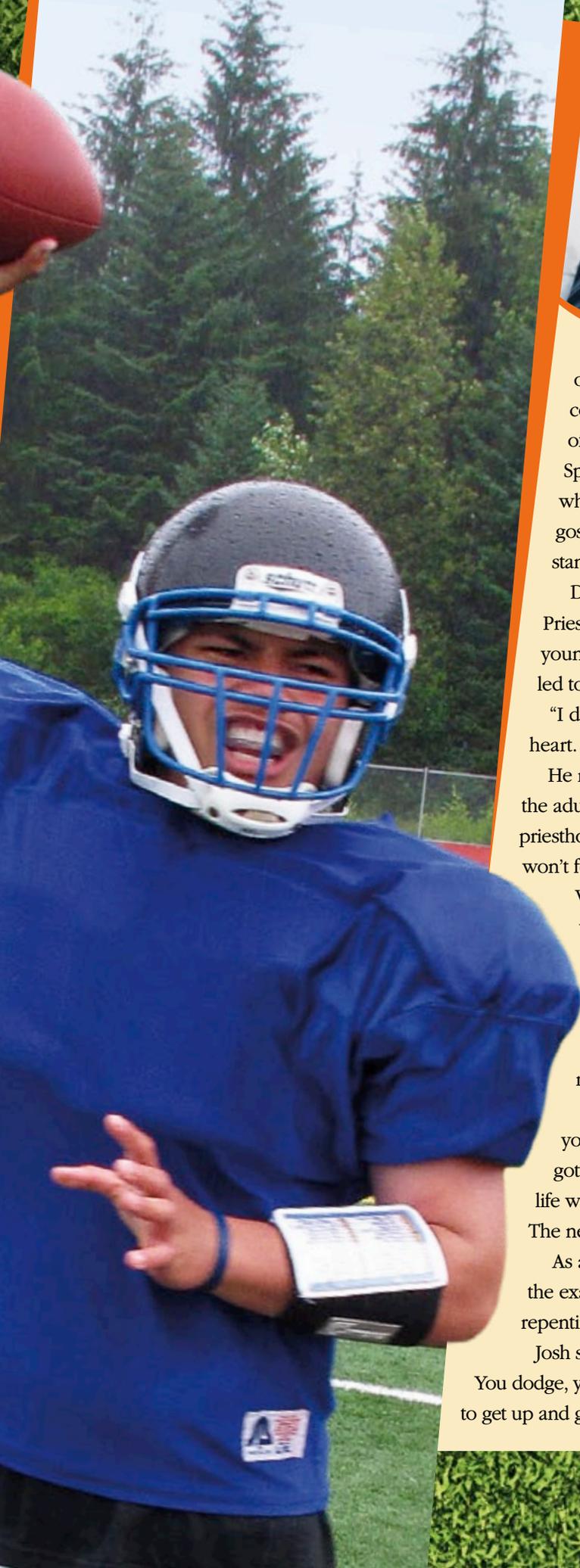
The brothers learned early on that it's not always easy being different. "In middle school, our friends started making choices" to do things that weren't in keeping with the gospel, Josh explains. "We had to separate

BUILDING CHARACTER

"Strong moral character results from consistent correct choices in the trials and testing of

life. Such choices are made with trust in things that are believed and when acted upon are confirmed."

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Transforming Power of Faith and Character," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 43.



ourselves a little bit. In high school, I saw my friends make bad choices. That's when I realized I'm grateful for who I am and the choices I've made."

"As a freshman," Vili adds, "I looked

to some of the older football players as my heroes. After they graduated, I saw some of them make some really wrong choices. But one of them, my cousin Paul, served a mission." When Vili compared the two types of examples set by the older players, he had a moment where the Spirit gave him understanding about who he wanted to be and what he wanted to do with his life. "Then I knew for sure that the gospel is true. I knew that if I stick with the gospel and keep my standards, then I can live with Heavenly Father again."

During the summer of 2012, Vili and Josh attended an Aaronic Priesthood camp sponsored by their stake. The twins' cousin, a young deacon, started teasing one of the older young men, which led to a scuffle. Vili quickly ran over and pulled them apart.

"I didn't know the whole story," Vili says. "I had a hardness in my heart. I was so mad."

He nearly lost his temper and hit the other young man, but one of the adult leaders intervened. Vili recalls, "He said to me, 'You hold the priesthood. You are an example. What happens if you hit him? You won't feel the same and the others won't look at you the same.'"

Vili had been asked to be a leader at the camp, where the theme was missionary preparation. Vili had prayed that the young men in his ward would feel the Spirit and want to serve missions.

To help them commit, Vili had encouraged them to sign their names on a banner testifying that they would serve missions. All of them, including Vili, had signed it. Because of his commitment, he knew he had a responsibility to uphold.

"That night I prayed about [how I had reacted to the older young man] for a long time," he says. "I realized that if I had gotten in a fight, I would have been kicked out of camp, and my life would have gone down from there. I didn't want that. I repented. The next day, I was side-by-side with that boy—as friends."

As a Church member, you have to focus on what it means to set the example. Sometimes that means choosing to be humble and repenting, even when you don't want to.

Josh says, "It's like football. People come at you, like temptations.

You dodge, you go forward. And if you get hit, just as it is with sin, you have to get up and get ready for the next play." **NE**



YOU CAN SUSTAIN LOCAL LEADERS BY:

- Accepting the call to serve.
- Helping when asked.
- Preparing for lessons by reading them ahead of time.
- Praying for your leaders.
- Participating in class.

FIVE WAYS TO FOLLOW THE COUNSEL OF PRIESTHOOD LEADERS

The Lord spoke to His disciples and taught the people in His day.
Today He continues to do so.

Although the Savior isn't physically among us, He calls members of His Church to lead and guide us, and He asks us to follow their counsel as they receive it through the Holy Spirit.

Who can receive revelation that applies to me?

Revelation can come to you personally through the Spirit, and it can also come through priesthood leaders set apart for specific callings to help them receive guidance for those entrusted to their care.

The prophet receives revelation for the entire Church; your Area Presidency receives it for your area; your stake president for your stake; and your bishop for your ward. Revelation comes to these individuals in their callings, but it all comes from the same source: Heavenly Father.

What does it mean to sustain our leaders?

Raising our right arm to the square when we sustain people is a physical demonstration that we promise to honor, respect, and support them as

they seek to magnify their callings. Following the counsel of our leaders is one way we can sustain them. Leaders have wisdom and perspective, and their instruction is meant to help us live the gospel. By being obedient to their counsel, we will increase in faith and strengthen our testimony.

Here are five ways you can follow the counsel of your priesthood leaders:

- 1. Attend general, stake, and ward conferences.** You might want to bring paper and a pen to take notes. As you listen to your priesthood leaders, write down any impressions you feel, things you should do, or changes you should make in your life. Make sure to take notes when they speak to you in other Church meetings or interviews as well.
- 2. Pray to receive a testimony of the counsel they give.** The Holy Ghost can testify to you that the counsel given is Heavenly Father's will.
- 3. Make specific plans on how you will incorporate the counsel into your life.** For example, prophets

have counseled members of the Church to get an education. What are your plans? Will you go to college or a vocational school? What will you study? When will you go? What are you doing now to prepare so you're accepted into the program you desire?

4. Keep yourself informed. Learn the current counsel of Church leaders by reading Church materials. *For the Strength of Youth* is a great resource. The *New Era*, *Ensign*, and LDS.org

contain the words of the prophets and apostles. If your ward or branch has a newsletter, read any messages given by your local priesthood leaders. Most important, review what leaders have said in recent general conferences.

5. Start right away. Sometimes we can be tempted to delay following the counsel of our leaders. After you make specific plans to incorporate that counsel, act immediately. **NE**



JOIN THE CONVERSATION



Throughout June you'll be studying about the priesthood in your Young Women and Sunday School classes and priesthood quorums. Consider what questions you have about the priesthood, how it affects your life, and how you can support priesthood leaders. Share your questions with your parents or youth leaders so they can help you better understand the doctrines of the priesthood in your lessons this month. You may also want to think about experiences you've had where the priesthood blessed your life. Write down your feelings, and consider sharing them with others at home, at church, or on social media. You can share your thoughts and experiences in following the counsel of priesthood leaders online at lds.org/go/63F.



I TOOK THE BISHOPRIC'S CHALLENGE

As I neared the end of seventh grade, I began to feel like I was missing something. I prayed each night and was involved at church, but it just wasn't enough. I had thought about reading the Book of Mormon and seeing if the Church really is true, but I was too afraid to step out of my comfort zone to make sure.

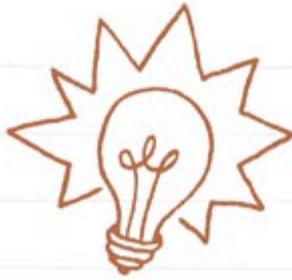
My bishopric challenged our youth group to regularly read the scriptures on our own. I meant to, but I felt that I just didn't have time.

I then had such a strong feeling that I *needed* to read the Book of Mormon and see if it is true. I felt as though I could never find peace if I didn't.

I started reading and was barely halfway through the first chapter when I felt the Spirit so strong, like I had never felt it before. It was so peaceful; I wanted it to stay with me forever.

I'm grateful my leaders were inspired to challenge us to read the Book of Mormon. They are always ready to help when I have a spiritual problem. I know the gospel is true, for it has blessed me so much.

Camryn G., Utah, USA



TRY THESE SEVEN IDEAS
TO HELP YOU LEARN
MORE FROM THE WORDS
OF THE PROPHETS.

STUDYING GENERAL CONFERENCE

By Matthew Garrett

Have you ever found yourself holding a conference issue of the *Ensign* or visiting conference.lds.org and wondering how to even begin reading it with so many talks to choose from? Our Church leaders have counseled us often to study the words from general conference. In fact, President Thomas S. Monson has said, “I urge you to study the messages, to ponder their teachings, and then to apply them in your life.”¹ He has also promised, “As we read and study [the conference issues], we will be additionally taught and inspired. May we incorporate into our daily lives the truths found therein.”²

But that doesn’t mean it’s easy to just dive into the conference issue. The following tips can help make studying the conference talks in the *Ensign* more meaningful.

1 LOOK FOR INVITATIONS AND ENCOURAGEMENTS

General conference is one way the prophets and apostles invite us to do things to change our lives. Each time you encounter one of these invitations, jot it down (for some examples, see the box at bottom right). As you make a list, you'll get a clearer idea of ways you can become better.

Also look for words of encouragement. Something a Church leader has said may be just what you or a friend needs to hear in a particular situation.

2 WATCH FOR CAUSE-AND-EFFECT STATEMENTS

Cause-and-effect statements include an action and the blessings that come by following it. For example, President Thomas S. Monson said, "A knowledge of truth and the answers to our greatest questions come to us as we are obedient to the commandments of God."³ In other words, if you are asking Heavenly Father for answers to questions you have, then you will receive them more readily when you show obedience to His commandments.

Such statements that show cause and effect help us because they tell us how to receive specific blessings we need. As you review conference, make a list of the blessings you read about and the things you need to do to receive them (see D&C 130:21 and D&C 59:23). As you do so, take notice of the blessings Heavenly Father wants us to enjoy.

3 PREPARE QUESTIONS

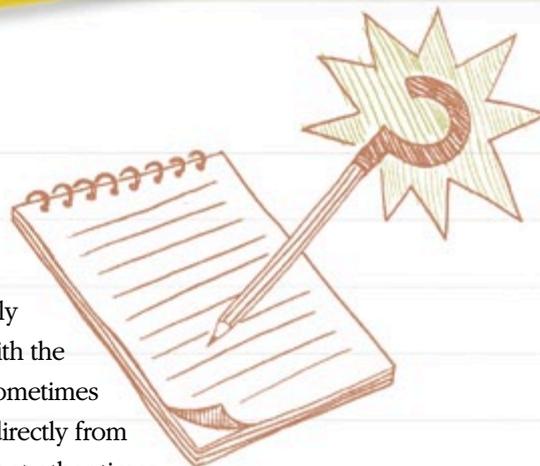
Think of the deep questions you have—about life, your family, friends, your calling,

school, or anything else on your mind. As you study Church leaders' messages, prayerfully ask the Lord for help with the issues you are facing. Sometimes the answer may come directly from the words you read, but at other times the Spirit may prompt you with the guidance or strength you need to deal with your situation because you've studied the words of prophets. Either way, you'll discover that God communicates to us through Church leaders (see D&C 1:38). As you receive answers and promptings, be sure to write them down and apply them in your life.

4 LOOK FOR LISTS

Church leaders frequently explain a series of steps or principles we can follow to accomplish goals or improve our lives. Sometimes these lists are easy to find because they are numbered or bulleted. Sometimes, however, lists may occur as a series in a sentence or spread out over several paragraphs.

For example, President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, recently listed several roles of



Your Conference Experiences

We want to hear about your successes in reviewing general conference as well as any other study tips you may have. Or share with us what you've done to make a specific conference talk part of your life. Write to us by going to newera.lds.org and clicking "Submit Your Work" or by emailing us at newera@ldschurch.org.

RECENT INVITATIONS

Here are some invitations from President Monson's April 2013 address "Come, All Ye Sons of God."

★ "To each of us comes the mandate to share the gospel of Christ. . . . Lift up your voices and testify to the true nature of the Godhead. Declare your witness concerning the Book of Mormon. Convey the glorious and beautiful truths contained in the plan of salvation."

★ "Study the scriptures each day both individually and with our families."

★ "Young men, I hope you appreciate the sacrifices which your parents so willingly make in order for you to serve [a mission]."

What other invitations can you find in the April 2013 general conference?

YOUR PERSONAL COPY

"I hope you will get your copy of the [*Ensign*] and underline the pertinent thoughts and keep it with you for continual reference. No text or volume outside the standard works of the Church should have such a prominent place on your personal library shelves."

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985), "In the World But Not of It" [devotional address at Brigham Young University, May 14, 1968], speeches.byu.edu.



missionaries: "The elders came as comforters, as teachers, as servants of the Lord, as authorized ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ."⁴

A deeper understanding of these roles could come from prayerfully studying each one listed, including finding scriptures about them. You can gain a deeper understanding of the gospel by studying other such lists given at conference.

5 WATCH FOR REPEATED PHRASES AND OVERALL THEMES

Repetition is a great teacher. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, taught, "Prophets have always taught by repetition; it is a law of learning. . . . We continue to hear messages on similar issues because the Lord is teaching and impressing upon our minds and hearts certain foundational principles of great eternal importance that must be understood and acted upon before we can move on to other things."⁵

Often, the more something is repeated, the more important it is for us at that moment. As you study conference, look for recurring doctrines, themes, and ideas. You might even review notes from

previous conferences to identify topics that are emphasized over time.

6 STUDY PARTICULAR WORDS, SCRIPTURE REFERENCES, AND NOTES

If a word seems unusual or sticks out in your mind, study it. Try to figure out why the speaker chose that specific word and what deeper meaning it has. To study a topic in more depth, read the scripture references and any notes listed at the end of a talk, or look in the "Topic Index" at the front of the *Ensign* to find more talks on the subject. In each May and November *New Era*, you'll also find a list of frequently used scriptures from each conference.

7 SET GOALS TO PRACTICE WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED

As you study the words of the prophets, set goals that will help you grow. Then keep track of how you're doing by writing in your journal. Measuring your development will make a huge difference in your success. **NE** *Matthew Garrett lives in Washington, USA.*

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, "A Word at Closing," *Ensign*, May 2010, 113.
2. Thomas S. Monson, "Closing Remarks," *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 109.
3. Thomas S. Monson, "Obedience Brings Blessings," *Ensign*, May 2013, 89.
4. Boyd K. Packer, "And a Little Child Shall Lead Them," *Ensign*, May 2012, 7.
5. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "General Conference—No Ordinary Blessing," *Ensign*, Sept. 2011, 4–5.





Summer of Service

Young women in one Michigan ward decided to take things up a notch with regard to providing service. They chose to focus their activities on service projects during the entire summer, calling it the “Summer of Service,” and they completed 11 projects in all. Their activities included baby-sitting, making blueberry jam for new members in the ward,

packing food at the bishops’ storehouse, scraping wallpaper in a member’s home, picking up garbage at a local playground, and more. “I thought it would be exhausting,” says Ann M., “but it was really fun!”

While the young women certainly helped plenty of people in their ward, they also looked for others to serve. For one service project, they ran a cupcake walk as part of an annual fund-raising event that provides inner-city school children with free school

supplies. “It felt good to help people outside the Church,” says Sara V.

The young women learned to love service and are still on the lookout for more service opportunities. “It was one of the most memorable and life-changing experiences for me spiritually,” says Ashley J.

 **Send in Your Ideas**
Now it’s your turn. What service projects have you participated in recently? You can share your activities with us by going online to newera.lds.org and clicking “Submit Your Work.”

5

Fun Ways to Cook Outdoors

(You Know Dad Wants To!)

1. The ever-popular barbecue grill. You can’t go wrong with a classic.
2. Two words: Dutch oven.
3. Shish kebabs cooked over a campfire on a metal marshmallow roaster. Layer cuts of meat with veggies (such as a bell pepper and onion) and cook over a contained flame.
4. Tinfoil dinners cooked in a campfire.
5. Anything in a cardboard oven. Completely line the inside of a box with two layers of tinfoil, place bricks and hot coals on the bottom, and then bake anything you would cook inside a normal oven.

Self-reliance tip: Not only are these ideas fun, but they’ll also help you learn skills you can use in times of natural disasters or power outages.



Quote from Conference

“We will be blessed as we feel gratitude for the Atonement of Jesus Christ, renew our baptismal covenants, feel forgiveness, and receive inspiration from the Holy Ghost as we partake of the sacrament each week. It will always be a great sacrament meeting if the sacrament is the center of our worship.”

Elder Don R. Clarke of the Seventy, “Blessings of the Sacrament,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 106.



My Favorite Scripture

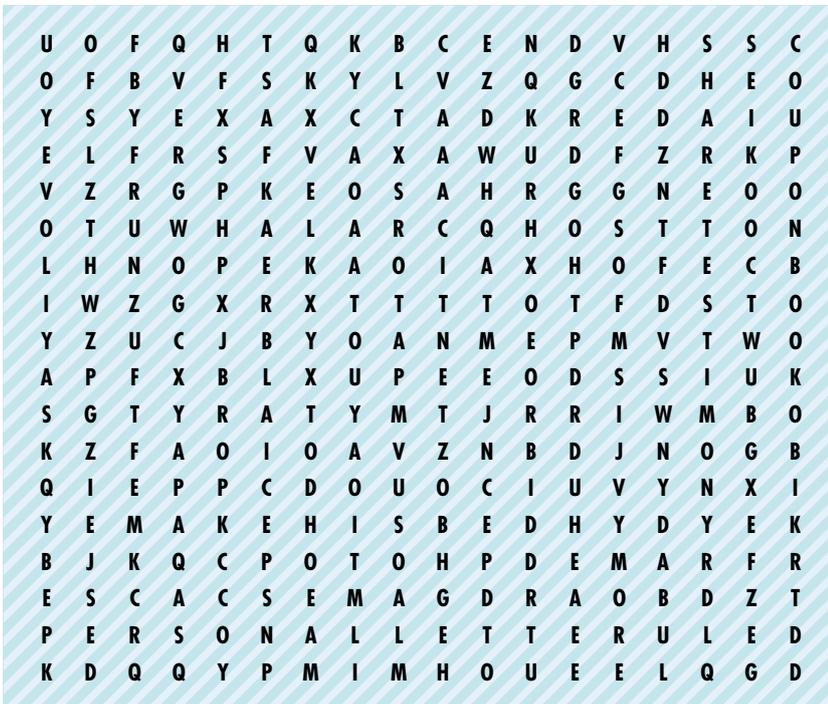
Enos 1:27 *“And I rejoice in the day when my mortal shall put on immortality, and shall stand before him; then shall I see his face with pleasure, and he will say unto me: Come unto me, ye blessed, there is a place prepared for you in the mansions of my Father.”*

This scripture is one of my favorites because it gives me hope and strength to be good, so that I might hear the Lord tell me, “Come unto me, ye blessed.”

Max B., 17, Massachusetts, USA

Father's Day Fun

Not sure how to make your dad feel special on Father's Day? See if you can find several ideas you could offer him by looking in the word search below.



- Homemade card
- Cookies
- Special breakfast
- Hugs
- Personal letter
- Make his bed
- Framed photo
- DVD rental
- Coupon book
- Be early to church
- Board games
- Favorite dinner
- Outdoor walk
- Share testimony
- Say “I love you”



Disciples of Christ

I appreciated the article “How to Be a Disciple of Christ” by President Dieter F. Uchtdorf (August 2012). After I read it, I started thinking that I need to do more to share the gospel. Then an opportunity came. While on a field trip with my school band, a friend and I started to talk about my religion and how it started. He said, “I believe in God and that there is a right church, but how will I know which is the right one?” I told him about Joseph Smith and ended up telling him the story of the Book of Mormon and also the history of the Church up to when the Saints moved to Utah. The whole time, my friend was asking me questions about specific people and wanted me to tell him more stories of people in the Book of Mormon.

None of this would have happened if I hadn't told him that I was a Latter-day Saint. We must always have the Spirit burning within us so that others may take notice of us and want the happiness that we have because of the gospel in our lives.

Thomas A., 17, New York, USA

What Do You Think?
We love hearing from you, whether it's sending us a message or leaving a comment online. Write to us by going online to newera.lds.org and clicking “Submit Your Work.” Or leave a comment on any article at youth.lds.org.

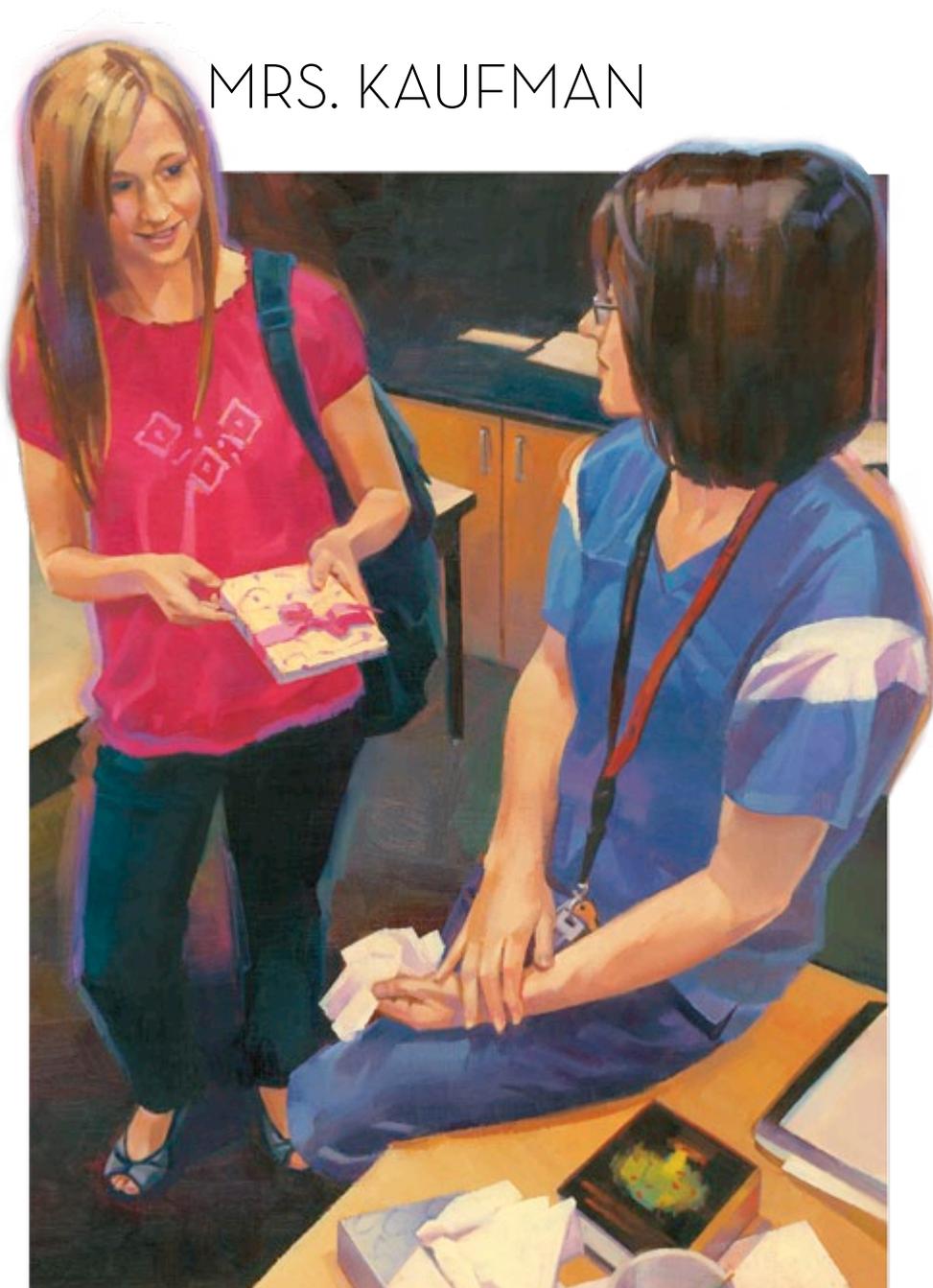
COMFORTING MRS. KAUFMAN

Mrs. Kaufman, my German teacher, was late as usual. Normally I wouldn't care, but I was particularly frustrated with grammar and needed the extra instruction time. Another 10 minutes passed. I was annoyed when she finally appeared. Several students had already left, assuming class was cancelled.

When the bell rang for break, Mrs. Kaufman apologized, saying that class would be cut short. She would postpone the upcoming exam another week to give us time to study. Relieved, I began to pack up my books when another classmate asked, "Mrs. Kaufman, is everything all right?" Mrs. Kaufman choked back tears as she explained that her father had just passed away. I felt horrible. Mrs. Kaufman was dealing with something on a spiritual level and I hadn't even noticed.

That night I thought of Mrs. Kaufman and her father. As I read my scriptures, I felt peace knowing that Heavenly Father had a plan. I wondered how sad I would be if I didn't know about the plan of salvation. I could feel the Spirit prompting me to share the peace I felt with Mrs. Kaufman and give her a copy of the Book of Mormon.

I tried to ignore the prompting. I was afraid to give Mrs. Kaufman a Book of Mormon because she was my teacher. But I decided to move forward anyway. I found a German



copy of the Book of Mormon and also wrote Mrs. Kaufman a letter bearing my testimony. I wrapped them up and placed them in my backpack to give to her.

When I got to class the next day, I squirmed uncomfortably. I thought of the wrapped German copy of the Book of Mormon in my backpack.

I couldn't focus as I thought about whether I should give it to her. I prayed for confidence. At the end of class, I placed the parcel into her hands. I stammered my condolences and began sharing my testimony. As I spoke, I felt the Spirit, and the words came easier. I saw tears in Mrs. Kaufman's eyes as she listened.

A TOPIC OF MY CHOICE

When she unwrapped the gift and read the words “Das Buch Mormon: Ein weiterer Zeuge für Jesus Christus,” she smiled and asked me if this was a book from my church. I nodded. She promised she would read it.

The following Thursday she told me that the Book of Mormon had given her comfort. I was glad I had listened to the promptings of the Holy Ghost and that I was able to give Mrs. Kaufman some peace by sharing my testimony with her. Now when I pick up my German copy of the Book of Mormon, I think about Mrs. Kaufman and feel grateful for Heavenly Father’s plan of salvation.

Ariel C., California, USA

For my English GCSE exam (a qualifying test in specific subjects), I was required to plan and deliver a five-minute presentation on a topic of my choice. I chose to outline the Young Women programme of the Church and some of the standards I keep. I prayed that I would know if this was the right choice, and I felt that this would be the perfect chance for me to share some of my beliefs.

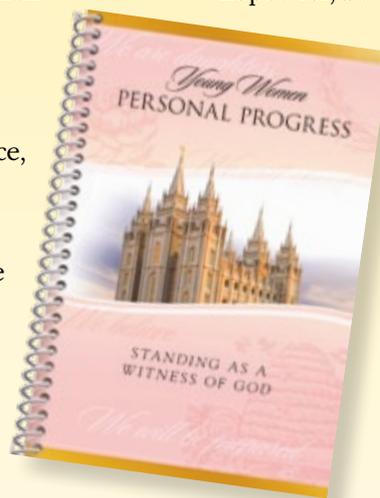
During my presentation I used lots

of visual materials and shared the blessings I have received. The class seemed to genuinely enjoy my talk. My teacher also found it interesting and asked questions afterward. Not only did I get the grade I had hoped for, but more importantly, I

was able to share the gospel with my friends.

**Amy C.,
Great Britain**

*Editor’s note:
British spellings
have been preserved.*



FAITH FOR MY FATHER

I will never forget the day I met the missionaries. As they talked to me about the gospel and the plan of salvation, I felt that their message was something that had been missing in my life. We started to meet, and I knew the messages they shared were true. All was not easy for me, however. At that time my father was an alcoholic, and I was scared that I would be in a lot of trouble if he found out I believed the Church is true.

After meeting with the missionaries

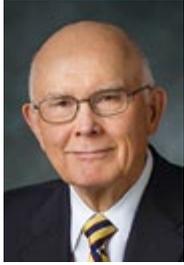
for a few weeks, I knew I needed to be baptized. The missionaries helped me explain to my father that I was planning on being baptized. My father disagreed with my desire to join the Church, and while he did not forbid me from being baptized, he stated that he did not understand the decision I was making. I decided to have faith and hope for a miracle that my dad’s perspective would change.

On the day of my baptism, I kept wishing that my father would be there, even though I knew he disapproved of my decision. Imagine my surprise when the first person I saw after coming out of the waters of baptism was my dad! My dad

told me that a feeling had told him he should come and that he was now experiencing a new feeling that he could not explain. He wanted to know more.

I began to pray to the Lord that my father would open up his heart to the teachings of the gospel. My dad’s lifestyle began to change, and as it did he came to know for himself the Church is true. A month after my own baptism, my father also joined the Church. We have both served faithfully in the Church ever since. I’m thankful the gospel changed my life and my family, and I know that families can be forever.

Fatisolo T., American Samoa



By Elder Dallin H. Oaks

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

HOW TO DEFINE YOURSELF

Be careful how you characterize yourself. Don't characterize or define yourself by some temporary quality. The only *single* quality that should characterize us is that we are a **son or daughter of God**. That fact transcends all other characteristics, including race, occupation, physical characteristics, honors, or even religious affiliation.

Yet there are those among us who choose to define themselves by some other characteristic. It may be the fact that they are “a patriot,” a Cardinal fan, a person from Texas, a red-head, a great basketball player, or an underachiever.

We have our **agency**, and we can choose any characteristic to define us. But we need to know that when we choose to define ourselves or to present ourselves by some characteristic that is temporary or trivial in **eternal terms**, we de-emphasize what is most important about us

and we overemphasize what is relatively unimportant. This can lead us down the wrong path and hinder our eternal progress.

For example, a person who calls himself an “underachiever” tends to look for—or encourage others to look for—things that interpret his behavior in those terms. That has a very different consequence than if he and others looked on his quality of “underachieving” as simply a temporary tendency that needed to be disciplined in the course of seeking graduation, employment, or eternal life. Always remember that you are **a son or daughter of heavenly parents, seeking to qualify for your eternal heirship** under that parentage.

As a positive example of self-characterization, I cite our daughter, Jenny Oaks Baker. As a nationally recognized violinist, she could easily identify and think of herself as a great violinist who is also the mother of three young daughters and a son. I am pleased that she does not do this. She thinks of herself as a mother who happens to be a violinist, and she orders her priorities in that way. **NE**

From a BYU–Idaho devotional given on November 7, 2006.

Share Your Experiences
Share your experiences in applying this principle and read the experiences of other youth by going to lds.org/go/63G.

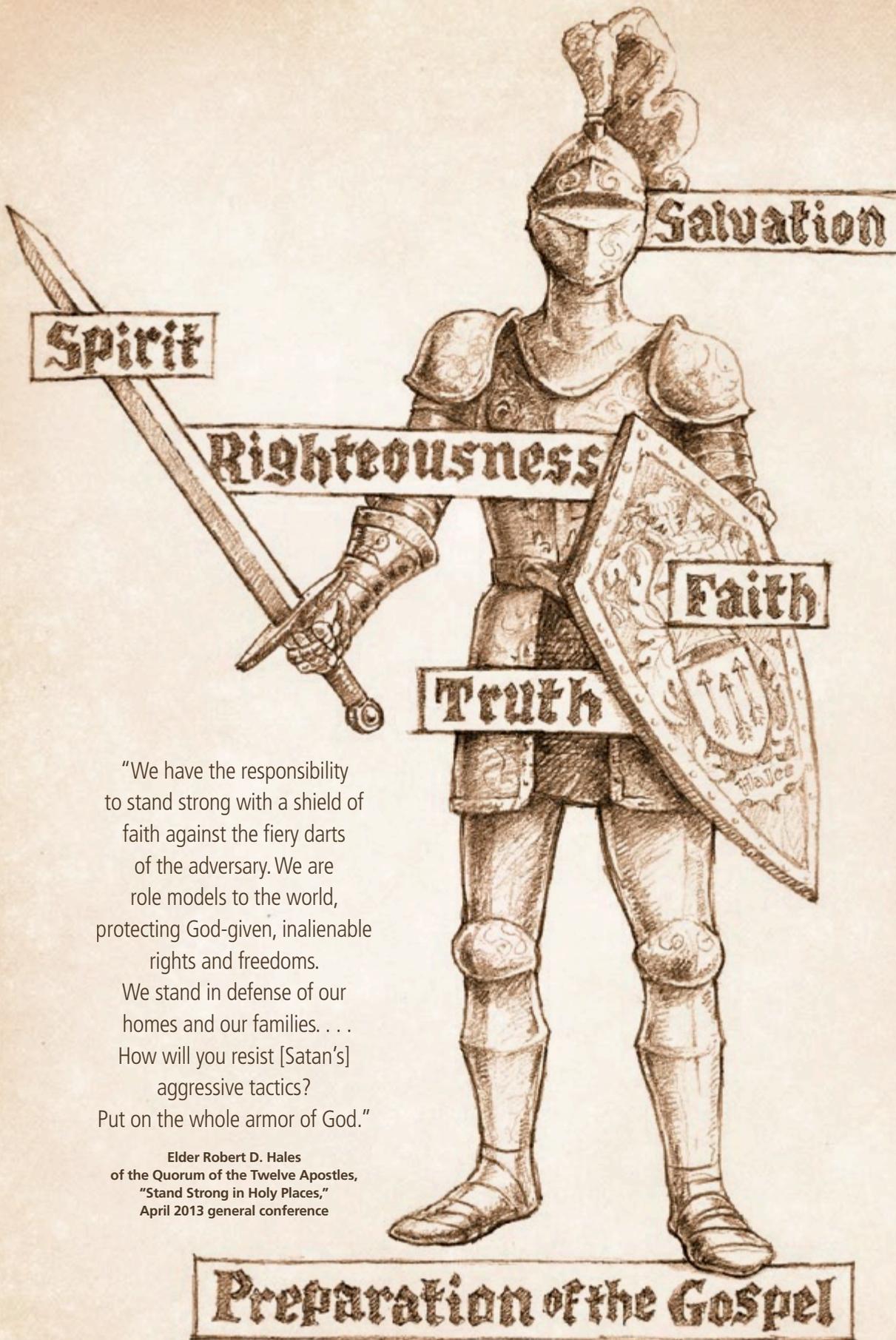


HOW HAVE YOU APPLIED THIS?



“I was born with a cleft lip and palate. Because of it, I’ve had some trouble making friends and having people make fun of how I talk. But I don’t let that define who I am. I could complain about it or blame things

that happen to me because of it, but I don’t. I don’t let people get to me because I know I am a child of God and that He loves me. I don’t let other people decide who I am; I decide who I am because of what I know!”
Rachel W., 15. Arizona, USA



"We have the responsibility to stand strong with a shield of faith against the fiery darts of the adversary. We are role models to the world, protecting God-given, inalienable rights and freedoms.

We stand in defense of our homes and our families. . . .

How will you resist [Satan's] aggressive tactics?

Put on the whole armor of God."

Elder Robert D. Hales
of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,
"Stand Strong in Holy Places,"
April 2013 general conference

Preparation of the Gospel

WHAT'S ONLINE



Watch Videos about the Priesthood

In June, your Sunday lessons focus on the priesthood and its keys. At **youth.lds.org**, you'll find several short videos about priesthood service, including:

- "We Are Brothers!" about a priesthood quorum working to rescue less-active members (**lds.org/go/63E**).
- "Inviting All to Come unto Christ" about a priesthood holder whose efforts took his quorum from one active member—himself—to 26 young men (**lds.org/go/63F**).
- "The Magnificent Priesthood," where Young Men general president David L. Beck talks about how righteous priesthood holders can change lives (**lds.org/go/63G**).



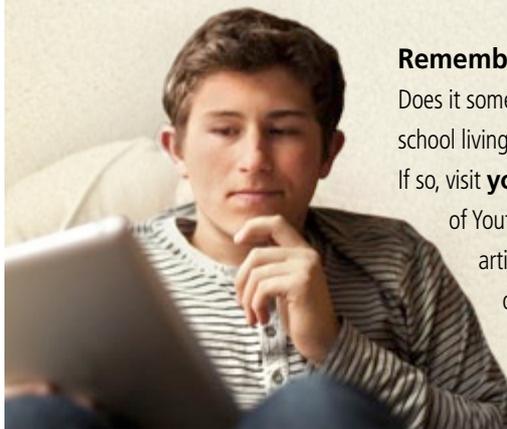
Share Your Stories with Us

The *New Era* loves hearing from you! And we're looking for stories and experiences to publish in future issues. To see a list of current needs, visit **lds.org/go/NEcalls** each month.

In addition, we're always looking for:

- Stories about how you live the gospel.
- Times when the scriptures or teachings of Church leaders helped you.
- Articles that teach a gospel principle.
- Experiences you've had with Mutual, Personal Progress, priesthood service, or *Come, Follow Me* Sunday lessons.

Submit articles anytime at **newera.lds.org** (click on "Submit Your Work").



Remember You're Not Alone

Does it sometimes feel like you're the only one in your school living the standards in *For the Strength of Youth*? If so, visit **youth.lds.org** and click on "For the Strength of Youth." Select a standard, and then look for the articles and videos linked on the page—several of them give stories of other youth living the gospel standards just like you are.