

Answering DIFFICULT Questions ABOUT THE CHURCH

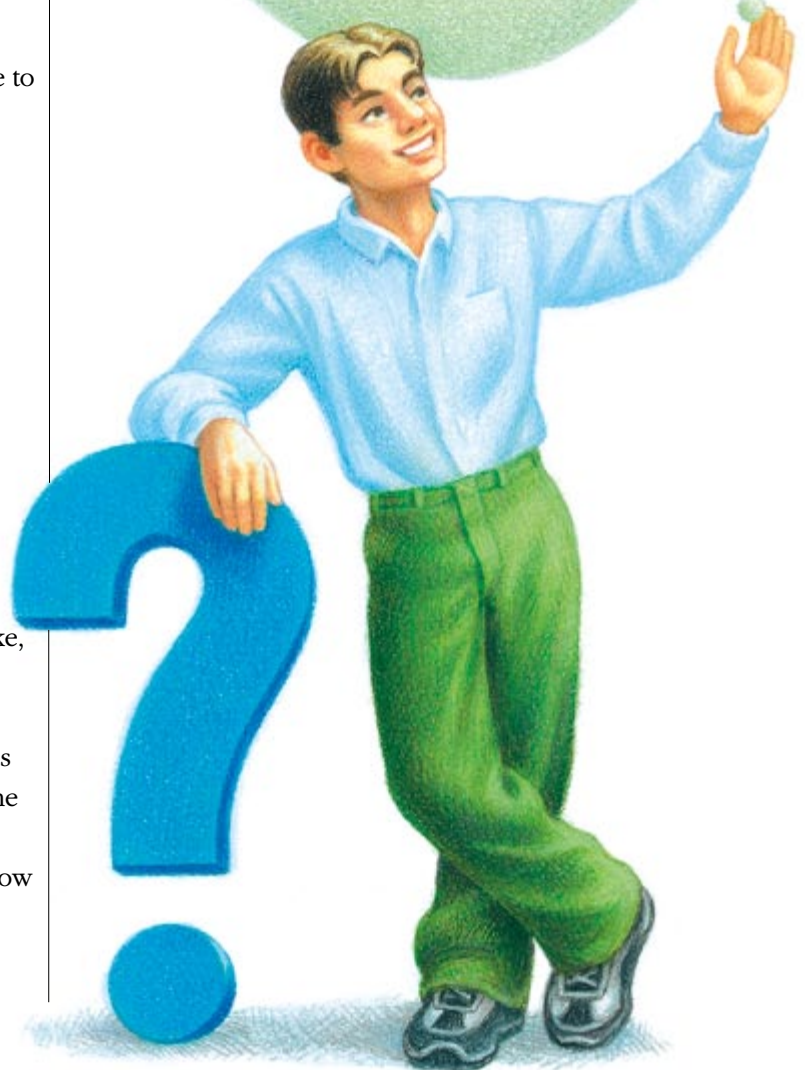
*Have you ever been
asked a tough question
about the Church by one
of your friends?*

It can be an intimidating experience to be asked questions about the Church. Imagine you are eating lunch at school with a group of friends when one of them turns to you and says, “I heard Mormons are not Christians. Is that true?” You explain that “Mormon” is just a nickname and that the real name of the Church is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. “I believe in and follow Jesus Christ,” you add. Then someone asks another question. This time the question sounds more like an attack, and you’re not so sure you have the right answer. Suddenly you feel singled out, as if you’re being interrogated. These moments may seem a little scary, but they can be a great learning experience for you and a chance to share the truthfulness of the gospel with others.

Five Principles of Sharing

Questions are at the heart of learning, and sincere gospel questions can lead to understanding and testimony for you and your friends. Consider the following principles as you share answers to gospel questions. Remember that how you react to the question and how you live your life can have just as great an influence as the actual words you say.

1 Be grateful. When others ask questions, realize you have been given the opportunity to share gospel truths. Before responding, consider saying something like, “That’s a great question.” Using kindness will help bring the Spirit into the situation and avoid contention. Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has stated, “We should also remember that sometimes the best way to answer people’s interest can be by how we live, how we radiate the joy of the gospel in our lives, how we treat others, and how sincerely we follow the teachings of Christ” (“Faith, Family, Facts, and Fruits,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 27).





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2 Be comfortable not knowing all of the answers.

If you don't know the answer, it's OK to say so. Tell the person you would like to follow up after you study more about the question. Not knowing the answer to a gospel question does not mean you don't have a testimony. Stay anchored in the things you believe. Share your experiences in the gospel.

Look at how the prophet Nephi answered a question he did not know the answer to. He was asked, "Knowest thou the condescension of God?"

To which he replied, "And I said unto him: I know that he loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things" (1 Nephi 11:16–17).

Nephi's faith was not shaken because he couldn't answer this question. He responded by sharing something he had experienced. Being aware of the fact that he did "not know the meaning of all things" actually opened the way for Nephi to be an excellent student of the gospel as the Spirit of the Lord taught him.

As you search for answers, go to sources you can trust (see the list at bottom right). Avoid reading the inaccurate literature produced by those who are trying to tear down the Church.

3 Keep answers clear and simple. Most people do not expect or want long, complicated answers. Stick to the point and make sure to use plain language and avoid words or phrases that are not understood or mean something different outside of the Church. Keep your answers focused on gospel doctrine rather than speculation or rumor.

4 Learn from each other. When answering questions, it may also be helpful to find out what your friends believe about the topic. Share your beliefs in a kind and gentle way, and listen to your friends with attention and respect.

When you seek to understand others first, they will often do the same in return.

5 Testify of Jesus Christ. When you share what you know to be true, the Spirit carries your message to the hearts of your friends (see 2 Nephi 33:1). Share your testimony of the Savior and how living the gospel has blessed your life. On this topic, Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, "We must be bold in our declaration of Jesus Christ. We want others to know that we believe He is the central figure in all human history" ("Perfect Love Casteth Out Fear," *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 42).

Be Not Ashamed

As chosen sons and daughters of God, you stand out from your peers. You have an inner light that shines forth for good. I pray you will feel the confidence that comes from living the gospel every day. You need not fear when others ask you questions about the Church:

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord" (2 Timothy 1:7–8). **NE**

WHERE TO FIND ANSWERS

Where can you find answers to gospel questions? Here are several great resources:

- The scriptures
- General conference talks on **conference.lds.org**
- Parents and other Church leaders
- *True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference*
- "Gospel Topics" on **youth.lds.org**
- **Mormon.org**

