





OBEDIENCE BRINGS BLESSINGS

By Diane Nichols



*I will . . .
open you the
windows of
heaven, and
pour you out a
blessing that
there shall not
be room enough
to receive it
(3 Nephi 24:10).*

Have you
ever
been by

a lake or an ocean during a bad storm? The waves and the wind can become ferocious! One night a family watched a terrible storm from the window of their home near a beach. Huge waves crashed against the shore. They battered the family's wooden boat dock, breaking it apart. The next morning they found pieces of the dock all along the shoreline. But their boat was floating peacefully and unharmed in the water. It was held in place by the strong anchor they had tied to the night before. The anchor had held the boat and kept it from crashing into the shore and being destroyed.

Just as the boat was safe in the storm because it was held by an anchor, we can be kept safe when we listen to and follow the prophet. Listening to and obeying his counsel is like an anchor in our lives. The prophet tells us the things Heavenly Father wants us to do. He tells us things that will guide us. He tells us how we can have peace, even during times of fear and worry.

For example, the Lord told Moses, a prophet of the Old Testament, to lead his people out of



Egypt. The people followed Moses out of Egypt. Because they did not obey God's commandments, they had to wander in the wilderness for many years. Finally Heavenly Father had His prophet lead the people to safety in the promised land.

Another time, the Lord told the Prophet Joseph Smith to warn the people about eating and drinking things that would harm them. We call this counsel the Word of Wisdom (see Doctrine and Covenants 89). If we obey it, we will be blessed with better health.

President Gordon B. Hinckley has asked us to study the scriptures and to pray daily. As we do so, we will feel great peace. The Spirit will testify to us that Heavenly Father loves us and answers our prayers.

Listen to the prophet. He speaks for Heavenly Father. If we are obedient, we will feel peace. And like the boat tied to the anchor, even though there are storms all around us, we will be safe.

FOLLOW THE PROPHET

1. Mount page 34 on heavy paper or lightweight cardboard, then cut out the picture frames.
2. Color the pictures of children doing things to follow the prophet.
3. Write in the blank under each picture how *you* can follow the prophet as the child in the picture is.
4. Hang the pictures in your bedroom or someplace else where they will be a daily reminder of some of the things you can do to follow the prophet.

SHARING TIME IDEAS

(Note: *CS* = *Children's Songbook*; *GAK* = *Gospel Art Kit*)

1. To help the children understand how important it is to listen to and obey the prophet, tell them the story of the Prophet Joseph Smith and Jacob Haun (see *The Haun's Mill Massacre*, *Primary 5* manual, page 176). Explain that the Prophet counseled Jacob Haun to tell the people at his settlement, Haun's Mill, to come to Far West where they would be safe from the mobs. Brother Haun did not deliver the Prophet's message, and many lives were lost. Whenever we follow the prophet's counsel, we move toward safety (see *Friend*, Aug. 1998, IFC).

Cut out several paper circles. On half of them draw a smiling face. On the others draw a frowning face. Display pictures of people doing things that the prophets have told us to do (for example, *GAK* pictures 601, 602, 604–606, 609, 612, 615, 617). Also display pictures you have cut out of magazines or newspapers of people doing things the prophet has told us to not do (arguing; fighting; stealing; smoking; drinking coffee, tea, or alcohol; not sharing; leaving someone out; etc.). Have the children take turns telling what the people are doing in one of the pictures. Have them place a smiling or frowning face by the picture, depending on whether it is something the prophet wants us to do or not do. Continue until all the pictures have been done. Sing songs related to the pictures with smiling faces. Examples from *CS* (page numbers are in parentheses) are "Baptism" (100–101), "Listen, Listen" (107), "To Think about Jesus" (71), "A Child's Prayer" (12–13), "Families Can Be Together Forever" (188), "The Church of Jesus Christ" (77), "I'm Trying to Be like Jesus" (78–79), "The Sacrament" (72), "When We're Helping" (198), "Family Prayer" (189), and "Search, Ponder, and Pray" (109).

2. Cut at least thirty-two footsteps out of paper. Mark one side of half of them with the letters *f, o, l, l, o, w, t, h, e, p, r, o, p, h, e, t*. Make certain that the lettering doesn't show through the paper. Mark the remaining footsteps with stars, hearts, or some other design. Before Primary begins, place the footsteps letter-side down in order on the floor, making a path to an object in the room. Place the remaining footsteps on the floor in paths leading from the *f* footprint to other objects. Stand near the *f* footprint. Tell the children that some of the footsteps lead to an object that you want to get to (a picture of the Savior). Have them guess which way they think you need to go. Now turn the footsteps over and have them point out the way you need to go to get to your destination. Explain that following the right path, the one marked by the prophets, will guide us through our lives. Tell President Boyd K. Packer's story that describes the spiritual crocodiles in our lives (*Ensign*, May 1976, pp. 30–32 or *New Era*, Aug. 1976, pp. 4–7). Explain that when we follow the direction of the prophet, he will guide us away from the dangers of life and to safety.

3. Draw three maps. The first one should have a few buildings, including the meetinghouse, on it, but the roads should go in circles that have no destination. The second map should be of the same neighborhood, but with the roads drawn correctly. The third map should show a straight pathway between us and Heavenly Father.

Show the children the first map. Ask them if they could get to church by following the roads on this map. Show them the second map. Have them identify some of the streets and roads on this map. Ask them if they could find their way to church by using this map. Now show them the third map. Have the children help draw or write on the map some of the things along the way that the prophet has asked us to do in order to return to Heavenly Father (i.e., baptism, receiving the Holy Ghost, listening to the prophets, reading the scriptures, praying, being kind, obeying the commandments, temple marriage, etc.). Explain that by following

the prophet and doing the things he has asked us to do, we will be guided safely back to Father in Heaven.

4. Tell the children the story of the first pioneer company to cross the plains from Winter Quarters to the Salt Lake Valley. Explain that the prophet Brigham Young led the first pioneers to the valley where the Lord wanted them to make their homes. As the pioneers followed the prophet to the valley, they marked the trail for other Saints to follow. The prophet continues to lead us today by teaching us the things we should do in order to return to our Father in Heaven.

Thread a button onto a long piece of string, then tie the ends together. Have the children sit in a circle, each holding onto the string with both hands. One child will have the button hidden in his or her hand. Sing "Follow the Prophet" (*CS*, pp. 110–111). Have the children move their hands back and forth along the string, gently bumping their neighbors' hands on both sides. The children should secretly pass the button on in either direction until the leader stops singing. The child with the button at that moment tells one way that he or she can follow the prophet. Continue singing and moving the button. Stop often so that several children can have a turn saying how they can follow the prophet. Conclude by singing the last verse of "Follow the Prophet." Bear your testimony of how following the prophet has guided your life.

5. Tell the children that you have hidden some letters (*p, e, a, c, e*) in the room. If they follow your instructions, they will be able to find the letters quickly. Give one child directions to find the first letter, such as "go to the right side of the room, the first row of chairs, the third chair from the left, and look under the seat." Continue until all five letters have been found. Put the letters on the floor or the chalkboard and spell out the word *peace*. Ask the children how they were able to find all the letters. Tell them that when we are obedient and follow the directions of the prophet, we will find peace. Have the children think of one thing they can do to obey the prophet that begins with each letter in the word *peace* (pray, pay tithing, eat healthy foods, exercise, be a good example, encourage others, attend Primary, choose the right, be cheerful, etc.). Explain that Heavenly Father wants us to be obedient to His commandments. Learning to be obedient and following the prophet will bring great blessings of peace and happiness into our lives.

6. Song presentation. Show a set of scriptures and a bicycle helmet (or other safety device). Ask, "How are these two things alike?" (They can both keep us safe if used correctly.) Explain that the scriptures keep us safe by teaching us God's commandments. Sing the first two lines of "Keep the Commandments" (*CS*, pp. 146–147). Invite the children to sing the first two lines with you, then ask, "In keeping the commandments there is what?" (Safety and peace.) Sing the third line of the song, have the children sing it with you, then have them sing lines one through three. Ask, "When we keep the commandments, what happens?" (We receive blessings because we are obedient.) Tell the children that keeping the commandments is so important that we sing about them again at the end of the song. Sing "Words of a prophet: Keep the commandments," and have the children sing it back to you. Have them sing the entire song up to this point. Ask, "What does the prophet tell us to do? (Keep the commandments.) Sing the last line of the song to the children. Have them repeat this line, then sing the entire song together. As you sing the song again, ask the children to discover how many times the song tells us to "keep the commandments" (three), that "in this there is safety" (two), and that "He will send blessings" (two). Bear your testimony of the importance of keeping God's commandments.

7. Additional *Friend* resources: "The Word of God," (Jan. 1998, IFC), "Finding Safety in Counsel," (Aug. 1998, IFC), and "Prophets and Prophecies," (May 1999, p. 11).