

AFRICA SOUTHEAST LOCAL PAGES

AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE



“The Teachers of This Church”

By Elder Kevin S. Hamilton
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*“And again, the elders, priests and **teachers of this church** shall teach the principles of my gospel” (D&C 42:12; emphasis added).*

We Are All Teachers

Every member of this Church is a teacher in some way or another. Without a paid clergy, the Church relies on individual members who are called for a season to teach classes, quorums, and auxiliaries. In addition, every Church leader is a teacher. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) has said: “Effective teaching is the very essence of leadership in the Church.”¹

And of course parents—fathers and mothers—are teachers, consistently teaching and preaching to their children “to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old” (D&C 68:25).

As members of a church full of gospel teachers, we all have a responsibility to learn to teach effectively. We should have a desire to be the best possible teachers that we can be.

Becoming an Effective Teacher

Teaching is more than just dispensing information to a class or quorum of more or less attentive students. Effective teaching happens when we invite the learner to understand doctrines and principles and then ask them to apply what they learned by inviting them to act.

Our missionaries quickly learn that in order to touch the hearts of their investigators, they must ask inspired questions.² This helps the learners think for themselves as they ponder and wrestle with the questions. Effective questions generally are not “yes/no” questions but rather encourage the student to look inside and try to understand the doctrine. Often, these inspired questions will start with “Why . . .?” or “How . . .?” For example:

- Why do we “walk by faith, not by sight” during our mortal lives?
- How does the Atonement of Jesus Christ bring peace to our lives?

Asking effective questions does not come naturally to most people. It is a skill that must be developed by practice and by prayer. Write down the questions that you might ask in advance of the actual lesson, and then practice asking them. During the class, you will be inspired to ask the question that best helps the students to learn. Remember, the Holy Ghost is the teacher. Our job is to provide the setting and the stimulus so that the Holy

We are all teachers.





**Becoming
an effective
teacher**

Ghost can teach and testify. Inspired questions can help do that.

Inviting our students to act for themselves will help them acquire personal knowledge or revelation that the doctrine is true. We receive a testimony of tithing as we pay tithing. We receive a testimony of the Book of Mormon as we read and pray about the Book of Mormon. Action invites revelation. Moroni taught in Ether 12:6, “Ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith.” Faith is strengthened and fortified as we act in faith on the doctrines and principles that we are taught. We must invite our students to act.

**Follow the Example of the Master Teacher,
Jesus Christ**

The perfect example, the Master Teacher, is the Savior Jesus Christ. We would do well to study His

teaching patterns and methods and to try to emulate them as closely as possible. From the Savior’s life, teachings, and revelations, we learn:

He asked questions. Jesus frequently asked His disciples questions to help them learn the lessons that He wanted them to learn. He understood that we need to think and ponder and arrive at answers for ourselves in order to truly know the doctrine.

- “Lovest thou me?” (John 21:15)
- “What manner of men ought ye be?” (3 Nephi 27:27)
- “Whom do men say I . . . am?” (Matthew 16:13)

He used stories and parables. In order to relate the message of His teaching to those being taught, He used stories and illustrations by way of parable that they could understand and relate to. He used simple backgrounds and common, everyday objects. He helped His students to understand the doctrine by using stories that they could understand.

- “A certain man had two sons” (Matthew 21:28).
- The prodigal son (see Luke 15:11–32).
- The lost sheep and the ninety and nine (see Luke 15:4–7).

He taught from the scriptures. Our Lord was familiar with and used the scriptures to teach and testify. From the day when He stood in the synagogue and testified of His divine mission after having read the messianic prophecies of Isaiah (see Luke 4:16–21) to the unforgettable experience when He “expounded the scriptures” to the two disciples while on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:27), He taught and testified from the scriptures.

- He quotes Isaiah 54 (see 3 Nephi 22).
- He quotes Malachi 3 (see 3 Nephi 24).
- He quotes Malachi 4 (see 3 Nephi 25).

He bore testimony. Jesus frequently bore testimony of truth to His disciples. He testified of Himself and His Father. He testified of the plan of salvation and the requirements to be saved. He testified frequently about what He knew to be true and let the Holy Ghost bear witness to those who heard His testimony. He understood that the Holy Ghost is the teacher and is able to “edify all” (see D&C 88:122).

- “I am the way” (John 14:6).
- I am the living water (see John 4:5–14).
- “I am the resurrection, and the life” (John 11:25).

He expressed love. The Savior not only loved His disciples and students, but He also expressed

His love directly and frequently. He was free with His expressions of love and respect, and others loved Him in return.

- “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13–14).
- “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you” (John 13:34).
- “Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!” (John 11:35–36).

He invited people to act. Jesus Christ understands that agency is the key to learning. We need to “act for [ourselves] and not . . . be acted upon” (2 Nephi 2:26). By inviting His students to do something, to walk by faith (see 2 Corinthians 5:7), He was in essence inviting them to act and in the process to grow in faith and testimony. He was the

The perfect example, the Master Teacher, is the Savior Jesus Christ.



perfect example of directly asking the question, “Will you . . .?”³

- “Come, follow me” (Luke 18:22).
- “Go, and sin no more” (John 8:11).
- “Go ye unto your homes, and ponder . . . and prepare” (3 Nephi 17:3).

Conclusion

As we come to understand that we are all “teachers in this church,” let us also come to understand how to be more effective teachers. We can ask inspired questions to help our students to think deeply. We can invite them to act and in so doing to receive revelation and testimony. And we can strive to follow the example of the

Savior and try to teach in the way that He taught.

As we teach in the Savior’s way, we will find that our learners—be they students, family members, or ward and stake members—will be edified and blessed with greater testimony and deeper understanding of the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ. At the conclusion of our lessons, meetings, and family councils, they will say, as did the disciples on the road to Emmaus, “Did not our heart burn within us . . .?” (Luke 24:32) This is our ultimate objective as “teachers in this church.” ■

NOTES

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, “How to Be a Teacher When Your Role as a Leader Requires You to Teach,” General Authority Priesthood Board Meeting, 5 Feb. 1969.
2. See chapter 10 of *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004).
3. See *Preach My Gospel*, 197.

LOCAL PRIESTHOOD LEADERS



My Family: Stories That Bring Us Together

By Elder Mabaya

“We learn from latter-day revelation that Elijah held the sealing power of the Melchizedek Priesthood¹ and was the last prophet to do so before the time of Jesus Christ. God said:

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:

“And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children,

and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse” (Malachi 4:5–6).

This is the promise of the Lord in order to prepare for the Second Coming of Christ and to spark interest in family history work.

To fulfill the promises made by Jesus Christ, the Prophet Elijah conferred the keys of this vicarious work upon Joseph Smith in the Kirtland Temple (see

D&C 110). Today, these keys are conferred upon worthy priesthood holders who preside in the temple. Latter-day prophets urge every one of us to participate in this work to obtain all the promised blessings.

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught: “Family history work has the power to do something *for* the dead. It has an equal power to do something

to the living. Family history work of Church members has a refining, spiritualizing, tempering influence on those who are engaged in it.”²

Everything has to start within the family. If we tell our children the stories and experiences of our ancestors, they will develop love toward them; the spirit of Elijah will dwell in them and motivate them to turn their hearts to their ancestors. Their testimonies will grow, and they will be committed to work for their salvation.

The booklet *My Family* was produced by the Church to help the Saints get to know and identify the living and deceased members of their families for several generations. Clearly this work consists in looking for their names, birth dates, and places of birth and death. Members can also attach photos of their ancestors and share personal experiences, memories, and short stories about them. These short stories and photos bind us to our ancestors and make up what we call family history.

Elder Allan F. Packer of the Seventy said that family history includes not only genealogy, but also “the past, present, and the future. Family history includes the past stories and histories,

the present history that is being made as we live our lives, and then it will include the future from what we do to shape the lives of our children, just as the lives of our ancestors have shaped our lives.”³ We and our ancestors make up the extended family. “The family is ordained of God;” “Each [of us] is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, [with] a divine nature and destiny.”⁴

When we come to earth, we automatically have an earthly family, relatives and ancestors, just as Jesus Christ had His genealogy declared in the scriptures: “So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations” (Matthew 1:17).

Our ancestors are the roots, we are the tree, and our children and grandchildren are the branches. Our central position on this tree allows us to play the most important role, that of bringing together, preparing, and accomplishing what our ancestors cannot do for themselves and what our grandchildren can do to bless their ancestors’ lives.



The fundamental purpose of preaching the gospel is to invite everyone to change their hearts and come unto Christ (see Alma 5:12–14) and to provide the ordinances of salvation for those who, in mortality, did not have the opportunity to receive them. That is why we need to open our hearts to Christ, accept His gospel, obey His laws, and perform these saving ordinances.

**Johannesburg
Temple**



One brother told of his great-grandfather, who lived around 1870 as a servant in the king's court. One day while he was going to fetch game in the forest, he met an old woman and her little girl. They had been lost in the bush for several days. He brought them to the king, and they became his slaves and stayed in his court for several years. When the little girl grew up, the king gave her to this member's great-grandfather to be his wife.

Nine children were born to this woman, one of whom was the member's grandfather. Today, after five generations, the family contains 100 wonderful people. The member filled three *My Family* booklets with photos, testimonies, and short stories. Those stories are often told to current generations at their family gatherings, such as marriages, bereavements, and other family events.

With heartfelt humility, this family values the relationships that bind them to each other; they glory in the Lord's goodness toward them, and they acknowledge that they are descendants of a little girl who was a slave to the king. To show his love for his ancestors, this member

has already submitted some of their names to the temple so that sacred ordinances can be performed on their behalf.

Family history is a prelude to temple work. It changes the hearts of men and turns them to their fathers. It purifies them through covenants and ordinances performed by priesthood authority. Thus, it allows them to form generational links that bring them to Jesus Christ and to Heavenly Father.

May we, as soon as possible, qualify to go to the house of the Lord to perform saving ordinances for ourselves and for our deceased relatives. "For we without them cannot be

made perfect; neither can they without us be made perfect. Neither can they nor we be made perfect without those who have died in the gospel also" (D&C 128:18). It is by performing all the ordinances of the priesthood that we can achieve our real growth. After that, we endure every day to keep our covenants until we obtain exaltation. ■

NOTES

1. Bible Dictionary, "Elijah."
2. Boyd K. Packer, "Your Family History: Getting Started," *Ensign*, Aug. 2003, 12.
3. In the video "Igniting Interest in Family History: Ward, Quorum, and Groups," from Family Discovery Day at the RootsTech conference held on February 6–8, 2014 in Salt Lake City, Utah.
4. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129.

LOCAL NEWS

The Secret to a Successful Day

By Ed and Ruth Cinquini

When the missionaries came to her door two years ago, Thembi Zwane hid and told the children to tell them she was not there. But she still remembers how patient the missionaries were when they spoke to the children. The next time they came, she decided

to sit down and listen. It took her four months to accept the gospel, but she finally realized she needed to make a change. "I never knew I had this kind of love for my family. I grew up with the word 'love,' but now it is more of a feeling deep inside me. I feel more sensitive to the



The Zwane family group

things of God since joining the Church.”

As she raises 10 children, finding a way to make ends meet becomes a priority for this single mom. Sister Zwane has two children, plus she is raising four nieces and nephews and four orphans, while also caring for her disabled uncle, who has a room in her garage. “I teach my children we must have a life, not a lifestyle,” Sister Zwane affirms. “We have to be resourceful, and at times life is very hard. I knew I had to work out a plan.”

At 38 years old, she decided to go back to school part-time to support her family. Three years later, she received her

degree and became a grade one teacher at a local school. “I used to have someone take care of the house, but as more and more children were added to our family, we had to learn to do things on our own.” Now the family has a garden, where they grow spinach, cabbage, and beets. The children help with the laundry and cooking. They explain, “Before we go to bed, we prepare for tomorrow. That is our secret for a successful morning.” To help save expenses, she drives an older car that is paid for. “I don’t complain. It runs.” The family also cuts back by serving meat only two nights a week, when the missionaries come to dinner.

Sister Zwane credits the Church for the many lessons she has learned about living a self-reliant lifestyle. “The Church has taught me so much. You can be self-reliant even if you are single.”

President Titus Egwuatu of the Ezakhini Branch says, “When Sister Zwane is taught a principle of the gospel, she puts it into practice. She is a good example of self-reliance.”

President Thomas S. Monson has taught that self-reliance is “the ability, commitment, and effort to provide the necessities of life for self and family” (*Providing in the Lord’s Way: Summary of A Leader’s Guide to Welfare* [booklet, 2009]). When you speak with Sister Thembe Zwane, you can feel her sense of peace as she and her family apply these skills in their daily lives. ■





Ben's Shoes

By Wendy Hammond

I have learned that the Lord is aware of our needs and that because He loves us, He helps and blesses us in both large and small ways.

After our business failed, I began teaching again and my husband took employment as an electrician at a hotel in the countryside. Due to a lack of transport, he could only come home once or twice a month. This left me to run the home and look after our five children by myself.

One afternoon I collected our seven-year-old son, Benjamin, from school. As he climbed into our car, which was billowing smoke from the back, he looked very despondent as he showed me his school shoes. The front had a gaping hole. My heart sank. I knew we didn't have the money to replace the shoes, but our school is strict about appearance. Something had to be done. I prayed, "Oh Heavenly Father, what am I going to do? We do not have the necessary money."

I instructed Benjamin to wear his white sports shoes to school and wrote a note to his teacher, telling her that we would buy him school shoes the following week and hoping that by then my husband would be able to solve the problem.

The children and I discussed the matter, and it became clear that we should not buy Benjamin a cheap pair of shoes that would cause him to slip or would be hard and uncomfortable, as he had to wear these shoes every day for most of the time. The following afternoon I went to our shopping centre and had a strong impression to go to a specific shop. I thought of going to a less expensive shop to look at shoes, but this thought was overridden by my first strong impression.

When I went to the shop I had felt impressed to visit, I went straight to the shelf of boys' shoes. I saw only one pair of black school shoes, marked at R120. My heart began to beat a little faster. Were they size five, Benjamin's size? They were! I asked the assistant at customer service to reserve the shoes for me and then phoned my husband, telling him about the shoes.

On Saturday my husband was at home, and we went to collect the shoes. The cashier punched in the code and then looked startled. Without saying anything, she moved to another computer and again punched in the code. I thought, "Oh no. What if the shoes are gone?" But after doing this a third time, she looked at me and said, "This is an end of the range pair and it is no longer showing up in our system. You can have the shoes free of charge."

I stood there in amazement and told her what a blessing it was, and that I must have done something right to deserve such a blessing. I have a testimony that this blessing came from paying our tithing. We were able to use the shoe money to take care of many other family needs. I know Heavenly Father is watching out for His children and blesses us when we keep His commandments. ■

