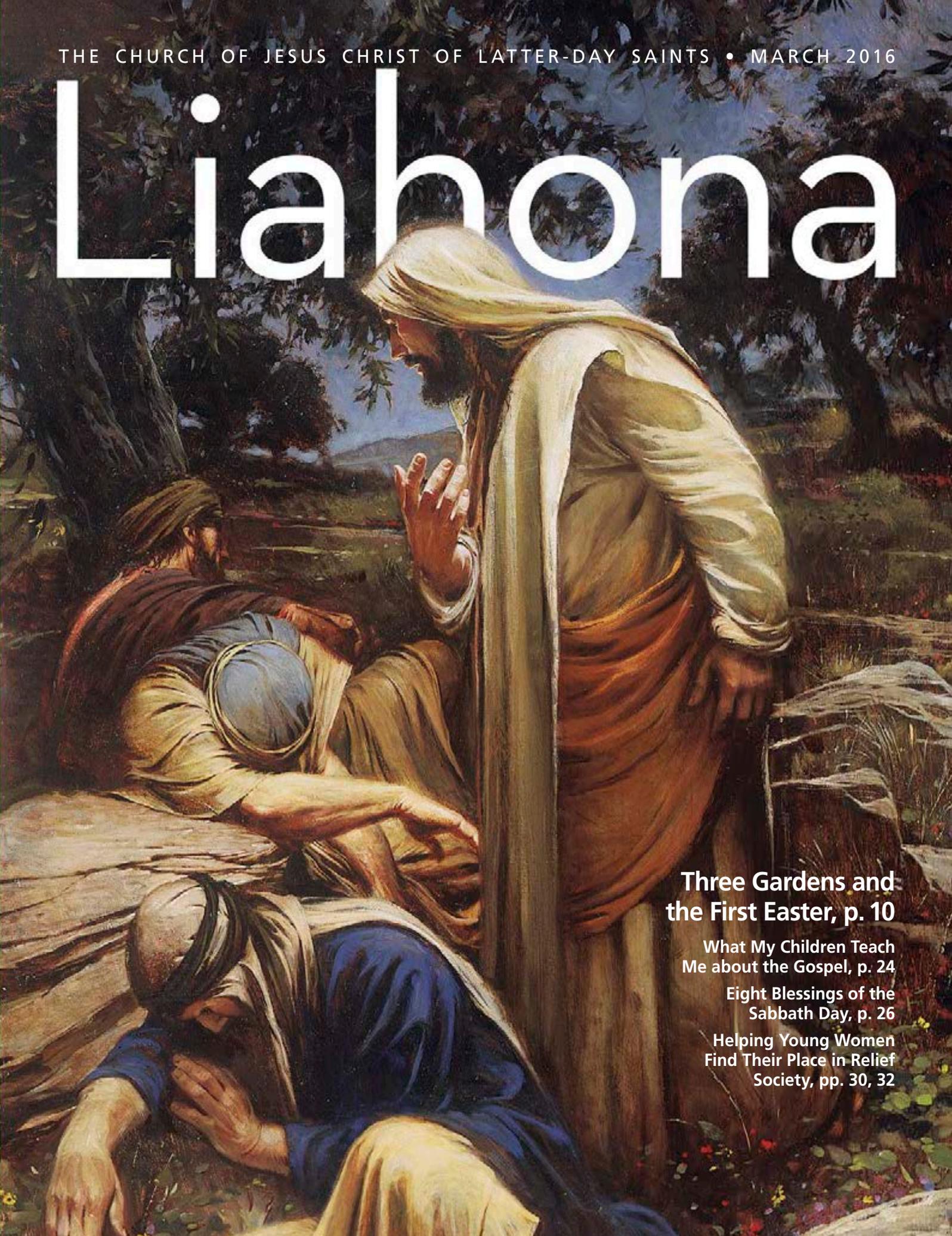


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*"God has delivered  
me from prison,  
and from bonds,  
and from death;  
yea, and I do put my  
trust in him, and he  
will still deliver me."*

**Alma 36:27**



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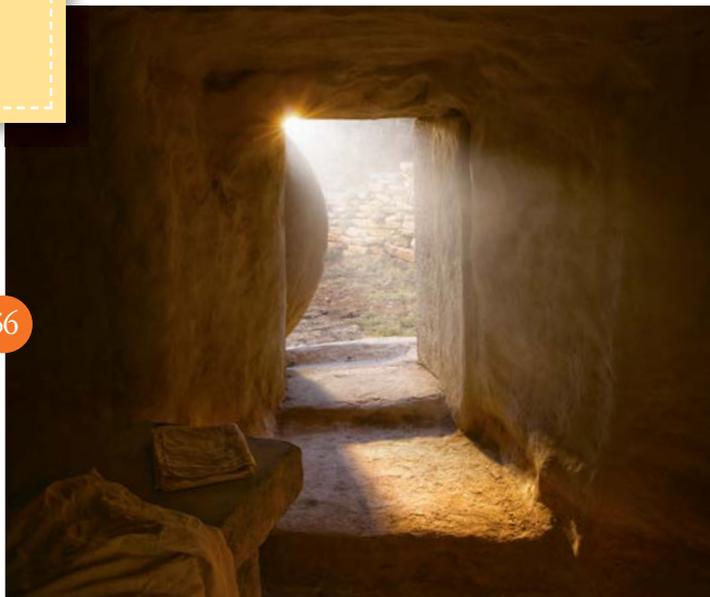
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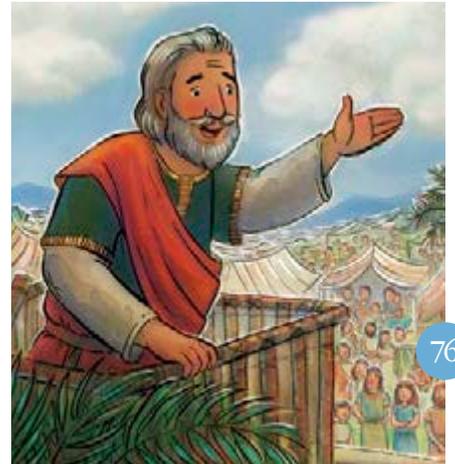
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# Family Home Evening Ideas

*This issue contains articles and activities that could be used for family home evening. The following are two examples.*



**“How to Build Unity,”** page 61: President Eyring reminds us that one way we can create unity is by speaking well of one another. You could practice speaking kindly by role-playing situations in which family members are asked to give their opinion about others. You can use questions like “How is your brother doing?” or “How do you like your Sunday School teacher?” Talk about ways you can speak more kindly of one another and improve family unity. You might close your family home evening by singing “Let Us Oft Speak Kind Words” (*Hymns*, no. 232).

**“A True Pearl,”** page 66: Consider creating a family talent inventory. You can list talents that family members have developed or would like to develop. You might also brainstorm ideas for improving and using those talents. You could ask, “Who in our family, ward, or neighborhood could benefit from our family’s talents?” Consider making plans to develop and use your talents to serve Heavenly Father as Jetta did in the story.

## MORE ONLINE

The *Liahona* and other Church materials are available in many languages at [languages.lds.org](http://languages.lds.org). Visit [facebook.com/liahona.magazine](http://facebook.com/liahona.magazine) (available in English, Portuguese, and Spanish) to find family home evening ideas, Sunday lesson helps, and content you can share with friends and family.

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By President  
Thomas S.  
Monson

# “LEARN OF ME”

**I**n The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we are all teachers and we are all learners. To all comes this gentle invitation from our Lord: “Learn of me . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”<sup>1</sup>

I invite all Latter-day Saints to ponder their efforts to teach and to learn and to look to the Savior as our Guide in doing so. We know that this “teacher come from God”<sup>2</sup> was more than a mere teacher. He who taught us to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, all our souls, all our strength, and all our minds, and to love our neighbor as ourselves, is the Master Teacher and the Exemplar of the perfect life.

He it was who declared: “Come, follow me.”<sup>3</sup> “I have set an example for you.”<sup>4</sup>

## Except Ye Be Converted

Jesus taught a simple yet profound truth as recorded in Matthew. After He and His disciples had descended from the Mount of Transfiguration, they paused at Galilee and then went to Capernaum. There the disciples came unto Jesus, asking:

“Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

“And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

“And said, Verily I say unto you, *Except ye be converted*, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”<sup>5</sup>

In the Church, the goal of gospel teaching is not to pour information into the minds of God’s children, whether at home, in the classroom, or in the mission field. It is not to

show how much the parent, teacher, or missionary knows. Nor is it merely to increase knowledge about the Savior and His Church.

The basic goal of teaching is to help the sons and daughters of Heavenly Father return to His presence and enjoy eternal life with Him. To do this, gospel teaching must encourage them along the path of daily discipleship and sacred covenants. The aim is to inspire individuals to think about, feel about, and then do something about living gospel principles. The objective is to develop faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and to become *converted* to His gospel.

Teaching which blesses and converts and saves is teaching which emulates the Savior’s example. Teachers who emulate the Savior’s example love and serve those they teach. They inspire their listeners with eternal lessons of divine truth. They live lives worth emulating.

## Love and Serve

The Savior’s entire ministry exemplified love of neighbor. Indeed, His love and service were often His lesson. In like manner, the teachers I remember best are the teachers who knew, loved, and cared about their students. They sought the lost sheep. They taught life lessons which I shall always remember.

One such teacher was Lucy Gertsch. She knew each of her students. She unfailingly called on those who missed a Sunday or who just didn’t come. We knew she cared about us. None of us has ever forgotten her or the lessons she taught.



### Offer Hope and Truth

The Apostle Peter counseled, “Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.”<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps the greatest hope a teacher can offer is the hope found in the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

“And what is it that ye shall hope for?” Mormon asked. “Behold I say unto you that ye shall have hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised unto life eternal, and this because of your faith in him.”<sup>8</sup>

Teachers, 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. Use Church-approved materials, especially the scriptures, to teach the truths of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ in their purity and simplicity. Remember the Savior’s injunction to “search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”<sup>9</sup>

Many years later, when Lucy was nearing the end of her life, I visited with her. We reminisced concerning those days so long before when she had been our teacher. We spoke of each member of our class and discussed what each one was now doing. Her love and caring spanned a lifetime.

I love the Lord’s injunction found in the Doctrine and Covenants:

“I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom.

“Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you.”<sup>6</sup>

Lucy Gertsch taught diligently because she loved untiringly.

### TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

President Monson invites us to “ponder [our] efforts to teach and to learn and to look to the Savior as our Guide in doing so.” You might consider searching the scriptures with those you visit to find insights into the ways that Jesus Christ taught and learned.

You could start with some of the scriptures President Monson referenced, such as Matthew 11:29, John 5:30, and Mark 4:2. You could discuss how what you have learned about Christ can help you “become partakers of His divine power.”

Help God’s children understand what is genuine and important in this life. Help them develop the strength to choose paths that will keep them safely on the way to eternal life.

Teach truth, and the Holy Ghost will attend your efforts.

### “Learn of Me”

Because Jesus Christ was perfectly obedient and submissive to His Father, He “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.”<sup>10</sup> Do we have the determination to do likewise? Just as Jesus “received grace for grace,”<sup>11</sup> we must patiently and persistently seek light and knowledge from God in our efforts to learn the gospel.

Listening is an essential element of learning. When preparing to be taught, we prayerfully seek inspiration and confirmation from the Holy Ghost. We ponder, we pray, we

apply gospel lessons, and we seek the Father’s will for us.<sup>12</sup>

Jesus “taught . . . many things by parables,”<sup>13</sup> which require ears to hear, eyes to see, and hearts to understand. As we live worthily, we can better hear the whisperings of the Holy Ghost, which can “teach [us] all things, and bring all things to [our] remembrance.”<sup>14</sup>

When we respond to the Lord’s gentle invitation, “Learn of me,” we become partakers of His divine power. Let us, therefore, go forward in the spirit of obedience, following our Exemplar by teaching as He would have us teach and learning as He would have us learn. ■

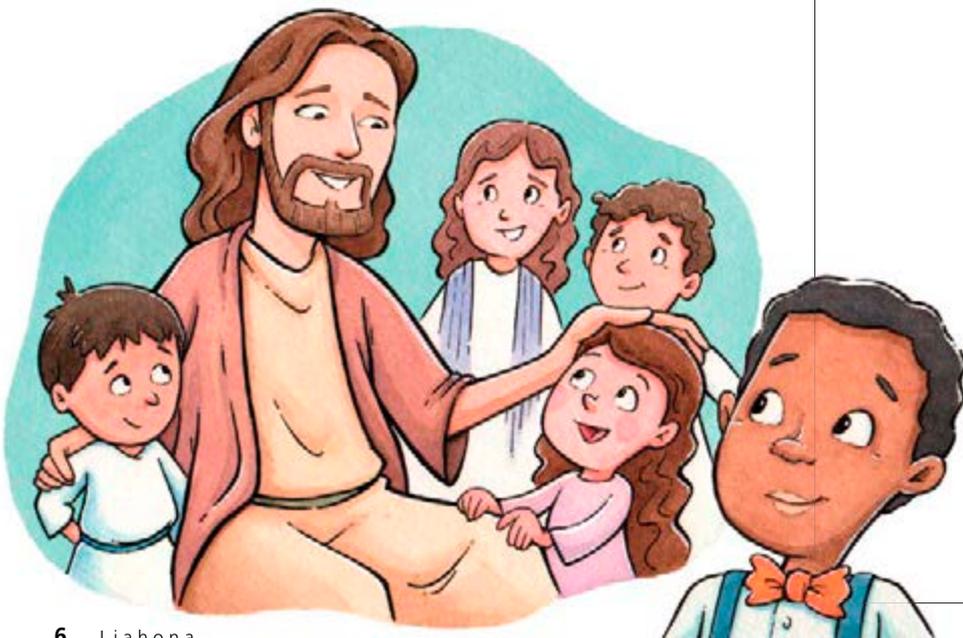
#### NOTES

1. Matthew 11:29.
2. John 3:2.
3. Luke 18:22.
4. 3 Nephi 18:16.
5. Matthew 18:1–3; emphasis added.
6. Doctrine and Covenants 88:77–78.
7. 1 Peter 3:15.
8. Moroni 7:41.
9. John 5:39.
10. Luke 2:52.
11. Doctrine and Covenants 93:12.
12. See John 5:30.
13. Mark 4:2.
14. John 14:26.

## CHILDREN

### Learning about Jesus

**T**he Holy Ghost gives us peaceful feelings to help us know that Jesus is real and loves us. Write or draw something that you have learned about Jesus.



Prayerfully study this material and seek to know what to share. How will understanding “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” increase your faith in God and bless those you watch over through visiting teaching? For more information, go to [reliefsociety.lds.org](http://reliefsociety.lds.org).

## Created in the Image of God

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . .

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Genesis 1:26–27).

God is our Heavenly Father, and He created us in His image. Of this truth, President Thomas S. Monson said: “God our Father has ears with which to hear our prayers. He has eyes with which to see our actions. He has a mouth with which to speak to us. He has a heart with which to feel compassion and love. He is real. He is living. We are his children made in his image. We look like him and he looks like us.”<sup>1</sup>

“Latter-day Saints see all people as children of God in a full and complete sense; they consider every person divine in origin, nature, and potential.”<sup>2</sup> Each is “a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents.”<sup>3</sup>

“[The Prophet] Joseph Smith also learned that God desires that His children receive the same kind of exalted



existence of which He partakes.”<sup>4</sup> As God said, “For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39).

### Additional Scriptures

Genesis 1:26–27; 1 Corinthians 3:17; Doctrine and Covenants 130:1

### NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “I Know That My Redeemer Lives,” in Conference Report, Apr. 1966, 63.
2. Gospel Topics, “Becoming Like God,” [topics.lds.org](http://topics.lds.org); see also Moses 7:31–37.
3. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129.
4. Gospel Topics, “Becoming Like God,” [topics.lds.org](http://topics.lds.org); see also *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 221.

### Consider This

How does knowing that each person is created in God’s image help us in our association with others?

Faith, Family, Relief



### From the Scriptures

The brother of Jared in the Book of Mormon sought for a way to light the eight barges designed to carry the Jaredites across the waters to the promised land. He “did molten out of a rock sixteen small stones” and prayed that God would “touch these stones” with His finger “that they may shine forth in darkness.” And God “stretched forth his hand and touched the stones one by one.” The veil was taken from the eyes of the brother of Jared, and “he saw the finger of the Lord; and it was as the finger of a man. . . .

“And the Lord said unto him: Believest thou the words which I shall speak?

“And he answered: Yea, Lord.”

And “the Lord showed himself unto [the brother of Jared]” and said, “Seest thou that ye are created after mine own image? Yea, even all men were created in the beginning after mine own image.” (See Ether 3:1–17.)

# OCTOBER 2015 CONFERENCE NOTEBOOK

*“What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken; . . . whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38).*

*As you review the October 2015 general conference, you can use these pages (and Conference Notebooks in future issues) to help you study and apply the recent teachings of the living prophets and apostles and other Church leaders.*

## DOCTRINAL HIGHLIGHT



## Our Savior's Atonement

“Our Savior's Atonement does more than assure us of immortality by a universal resurrection and give us the opportunity for us to be cleansed from sin by repentance and baptism. His Atonement also provides the opportunity to call upon Him who has experienced all of our mortal infirmities to give us the strength to bear the burdens of mortality. He knows of our

anguish, and He is there for us. Like the good Samaritan, when He finds us wounded at the wayside, He will bind up our wounds and care for us (see Luke 10:34). The healing and strengthening power of Jesus Christ and His Atonement is for all of us who will ask.”

**Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Strengthened by the Atonement of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 64.**

## PROPHETIC PROMISE



## We Can Choose to Believe

“I testify that even in the toughest of times, the Savior will say to you as He said to an anxious father on a crowded street in Galilee, ‘Be not afraid, only believe.’

“We can choose to believe.

“For in belief, we discover the dawn of light.

“We will discover truth.

“We will find peace.

“Because of our belief, we will never hunger, never thirst. The gifts of God's grace will enable us to be true to our faith and will fill our soul like ‘a well of water springing up into everlasting life’ [John 4:14]. We will experience true and lasting joy.”

**President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Be Not Afraid, Only Believe,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 79.**

To read, watch, or listen to general conference addresses, visit [conference.lds.org](http://conference.lds.org).

## CREATE A FAMILY MOTTO

Based on their “knowledge of the Lord’s mercy and power,” Sister Neill F. Marriott’s family chose “It will all work out” as their family motto. In your own family, you could discuss how the Savior strengthens you, and then create your own family motto. (See Neill F. Marriott, “Yielding Our Hearts to God,” 30.)



## ANSWERS FOR WOMEN

Each conference, prophets and apostles give inspired answers to questions Church members may have. Use your November 2015 issue or visit conference.lds.org to find answers to these questions:

- Why are covenant-keeping latter-day women vital to the Church? —See Russell M. Nelson, “A Plea to My Sisters,” 95.
- Why is motherhood such a sacred and ennobling responsibility? —See Jeffrey R. Holland, “Behold Thy Mother,” 47.
- What is your purpose as a woman in the work of salvation? —See Carol F. McConkie, “Here to Serve a Righteous Cause,” 12.
- Why is it important that we know we have a divine nature and destiny? —See Rosemary M. Wixom, “Discovering the Divinity Within,” 6.



### YOU ARE NOT A LOST CAUSE

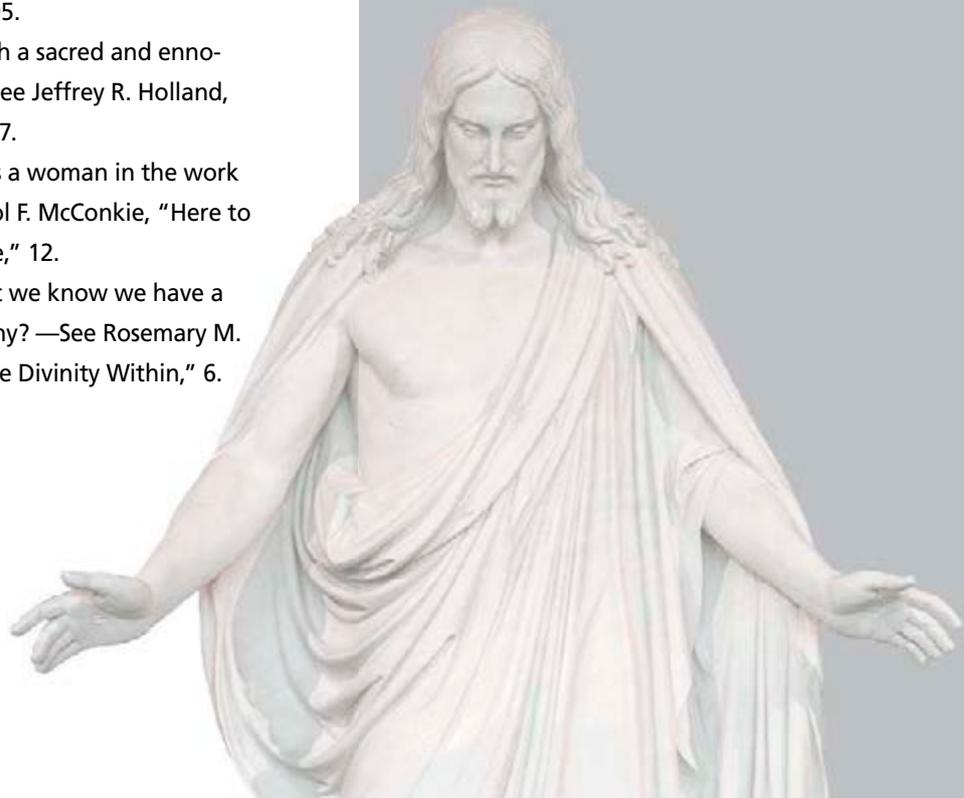
“It matters not what sins we have committed or how deep we have sunk into that proverbial pit. . . .

“ . . . What does matter is that Christ is pleading our case before the Father . . . That is what really matters and what should give all of us renewed hope and a determination to try one more time, because He has not forgotten us.

“I testify that the Savior will never turn away from us when we humbly seek Him in order to repent; will never consider us to be a lost cause; will never say, ‘Oh no, not you again’; will never reject us because of a failure to understand how hard it is to avoid sin. He understands it all perfectly. . . .

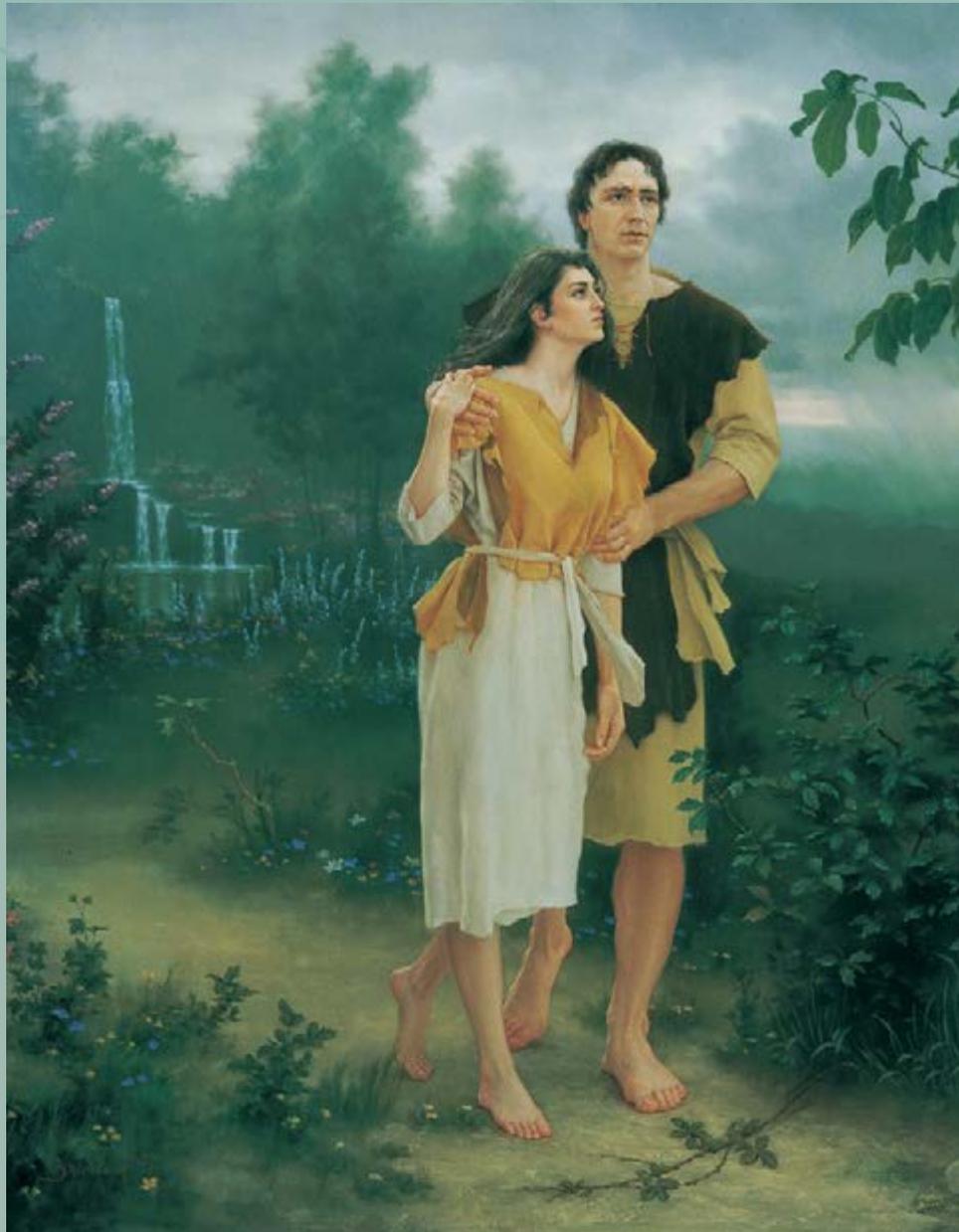
“Repentance . . . has the power to lift burdens and replace them with hope.”

**Elder Allen D. Haynie of the Seventy, “Remembering in Whom We Have Trusted,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 122–23.**





*In Eden all things were created in a paradisiacal state—without death, without procreation, without mortal probationary experiences.*



*Adam and Eve stepped down from their state of immortal and paradisiacal glory to one of trial and testing on earth. This is known as the Fall.*



# THE Three Gardens OF GOD

*Join with me in gaining  
a sound and  
sure knowledge of  
the Atonement.*

I feel, and the Spirit seems to accord, that the most important doctrine I can declare, and the most powerful testimony I can bear, is of the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

His Atonement is the most transcendent event that ever has or ever will occur from Creation's dawn through all the ages of a never-ending eternity.

It is the supreme act of goodness and grace that only a god could perform. Through it, all of the terms and conditions of the Father's eternal plan of salvation became operative. . . .

In speaking of these wondrous things I shall use my own words, though you may think they are the words of scripture, words spoken by other Apostles and prophets.

True it is they were first proclaimed by others, but they are now mine, for the Holy Spirit of God has borne witness to me that they are true, and it is now as though the Lord had revealed them to me in the first instance. I have thereby heard His voice and know His word. . . .

May I invite you to join with me in gaining a sound and sure knowledge of the Atonement.

**By Elder Bruce R.  
McConkie  
(1915–1985)**

Of the Quorum  
of the Twelve  
Apostles

*Christ's disciples waited nearby and soon fell asleep as Jesus went into Gethsemane alone. Jesus "cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners" (Mark 14:41).*



*In Gethsemane (above) and at Golgotha (below), Jesus Christ shed His blood and died on the cross. He atoned for the sins of the world and ransomed us from the Fall.*



We must cast aside the philosophies of men and the wisdom of the wise and hearken to that Spirit which is given to us to guide us into all truth.

We must search the scriptures, accepting them as the mind and will and voice of the Lord and the very power of God unto salvation.

As we read, ponder, and pray, there will come into our minds a view of the three gardens of God—the Garden of Eden, the Garden of Gethsemane, and the Garden of the Empty Tomb where Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene.

In Eden we will see all things created in a paradisiacal state—without death, without procreation, without probationary experiences.

We will come to know that such a creation, now unknown to man, was the only way to provide for the Fall.

We will then see Adam and Eve, the first man and the first woman, step down from their state of immortal and paradisiacal glory to become the first mortal flesh on earth.

Mortality, including as it does procreation and death, will enter the world. And because of transgression a probationary estate of trial and testing will begin.

Then in Gethsemane we will see the Son of God ransom man from the temporal and spiritual death that came to us because of the Fall.

*The body of  
Jesus Christ was laid in  
a tomb in a garden.*



*Three days later Christ arose from the tomb, leaving it empty. He had burst the bands of death and stood triumphant over the grave—thus completing the perfect Atonement.*



*At the empty tomb, the resurrected Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene and asked, “Why weepest thou? . . . She, supposing him to be the gardener, . . . turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master” (John 20: 15–16).*

TOP LEFT: HE LIVES, BY SIMON DEWEY; BOTTOM LEFT: JESUS SAID TO MARY, BY WILLIAM WHITAKER; COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM; RIGHT: THE APPARITION OF CHRIST TO MARY, MAGDALENE (NOLI ME TANGERE), BY ALEXANDER IVANOV/STATE RUSSIAN MUSEUM, ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA/SCALA/ART RESOURCE, NY

And finally, before an empty tomb, we will come to know that Christ our Lord has burst the bands of death and stands forever triumphant over the grave.

Thus, Creation is father to the Fall; and by the Fall came mortality and death; and by Christ came immortality and eternal life.

If there had been no fall of Adam, by which cometh death, there could have been no Atonement of Christ, by which cometh life.

And now, as pertaining to this perfect Atonement, wrought by the shedding of the blood of God—I testify that it took place in Gethsemane and at Golgotha, and as pertaining to Jesus Christ, I testify that He is the Son of the Living God and was crucified for the sins of the world. He is our Lord, our God, and our King. This I know of myself independent of any other person.

I am one of His witnesses, and in a coming day I shall feel the nail marks in His hands and in His feet and shall wet His feet with my tears.

But I shall not know any better than I know now that He is God's Almighty Son, that He is our Savior and Redeemer, and that salvation comes in and through His atoning blood and in no other way.

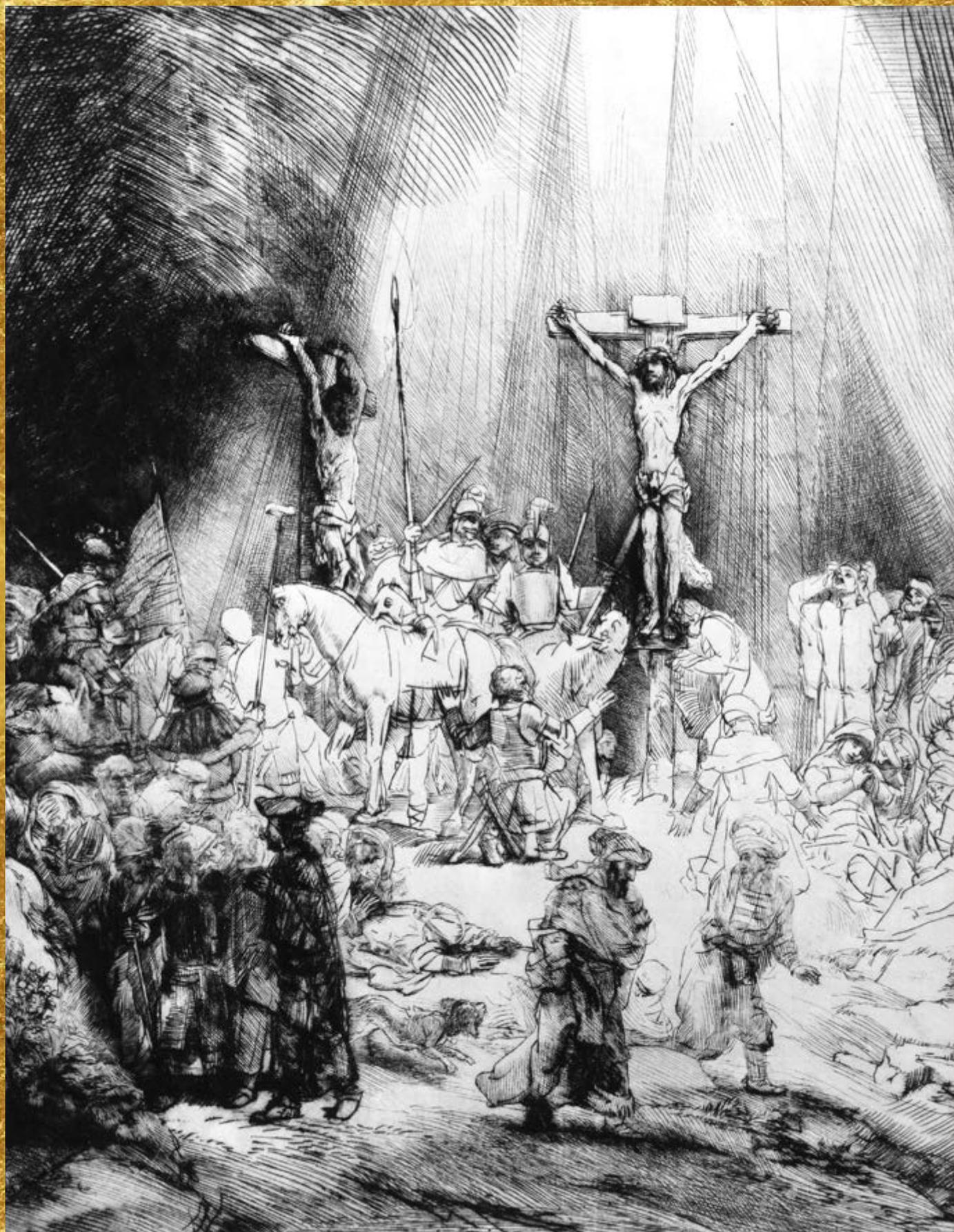
God grant that all of us may walk in the light as God our Father is in the light so that, according to the promises, the blood of Jesus Christ His Son will cleanse us from all sin. ■

*From "The Purifying Power of Gethsemane," Ensign, May 1985, 9–11; punctuation and capitalization standardized.*

*This was Elder McConkie's last apostolic witness in mortality; he passed away two weeks later.*

*Then Jesus said to Mary, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father" (John 20:17).*







**By Elder D. Todd Christofferson**

Of the Quorum  
of the Twelve  
Apostles

# Finding Your Life

*In giving His life, Christ saved not only His own life but our lives as well. He made it possible for us to exchange what would otherwise have been an ultimately futile mortal life for eternal life.*

**W**hen Jesus and His Apostles were together in Caesarea Philippi, He asked them this question, “Whom say ye that I am?” (Matthew 16:15). Peter, with reverent eloquence and power, responded, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16; see also Mark 8:29; Luke 9:20).

It thrills me to read those words; it thrills me to say them. Shortly after this sacred moment, when Jesus spoke to the Apostles about His impending death and Resurrection, Peter contradicted Him. This earned Peter a stinging rebuke—for not being in tune with, or not savoring, the things of God “but those that be of men” (Matthew 16:21–23; see also Mark 8:33). Then Jesus, “showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom [He had] reproved” (D&C 121:43), kindly instructed Peter and his Brethren about taking up one’s cross and losing one’s life as the way to find an abundant and eternal life, He being the perfect example (see Matthew 16:24–25).

I want to talk about the Lord’s seemingly paradoxical declaration that “He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it” (Matthew 10:39; see also Matthew 10:32–41; 16:24–28; Mark 8:34–38; Luke 9:23–26; 17:33). It teaches a powerful, far-reaching doctrine we need to understand and apply.

A thoughtful professor offered this insight: “As the heavens are higher than the earth, God’s work in your life is bigger than the story you’d like that life to tell. His

life is bigger than your plans, goals, or fears. To save your life, you'll have to lay down your stories and, minute by minute, day by day, give your life back to him."<sup>1</sup>

The more I think about it, the more amazed I am at how consistently Jesus gave His life to the Father, how perfectly He lost His life in the will of the Father—in life and in death. This is precisely the opposite of Satan's attitude and approach, which have been widely adopted in today's self-centered world.

In the premortal council, in volunteering to fill the role of Savior in the Father's divine plan, Jesus said, "Father, *thy* will be done, and the glory be *thine* forever" (Moses 4:2; emphasis added). Lucifer, on the other hand, declared, "Behold, here am I, send me, *I* will be thy son, and *I* will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely *I* will do it; wherefore give *me* thine honor" (Moses 4:1; emphasis added).

Christ's commandment to follow Him is a commandment to reject once again the Satanic model and to lose our life in favor of the real life, the authentic life, the celestial kingdom-enabled life that God envisions for each of us. That life will bless everyone we touch and will make saints of us. With our current, limited vision, it is a life that is beyond comprehension. Indeed, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

I wish we had more of the conversation between Jesus and His disciples. It would have been helpful to have some additional light about what it means, in practice, to lose one's life for His sake and thereby find it. But as I pondered it, I realized that the Savior's comments just before and after His declaration provide valuable guidance. Let's consider three of these contextual comments.

### Take Up Your Cross Daily

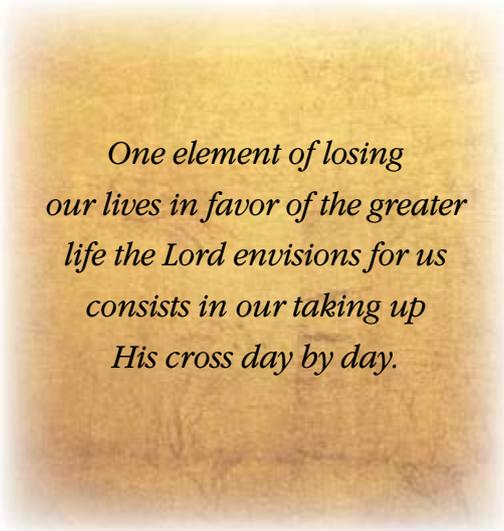
First are the Lord's words spoken just before He said, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it" (Matthew 16:25). As recorded in each of the synoptic Gospels, Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). Luke adds the word *daily*—"let him . . . take up his cross daily" (Luke 9:23). In Matthew, the Joseph Smith Translation expands this statement with the Lord's definition of what it means to take up one's cross: "And now for a man to take up his cross, is to deny himself all ungodliness, and every worldly lust, and keep my commandments" (Matthew 16:24, footnote *e*).

This accords with James's declaration: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, . . . to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). Taking up one's cross is a daily life of avoiding all that is unclean while affirmatively keeping the two great commandments—love of God and love of fellow man—on which all other commandments hang (see Matthew 22:37–40). Thus, one element of losing our lives in favor of the greater life the Lord envisions for us consists in our taking up His cross day by day.

### Confess Christ before Others

A second accompanying statement suggests that finding our life by losing it for the Savior's sake and the gospel's sake entails a willingness to make our discipleship open and public. "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38; see also Luke 9:26).

Elsewhere in Matthew, we find a companion statement:



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our lives in favor of the greater  
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“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

“But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 10:32–33).

One obvious and rather sobering meaning of losing your life by confessing Christ is to lose it literally in sustaining and defending your belief in Him. We have grown accustomed to thinking of this extreme requirement as applying in history as we read about the martyrs of the past, including most of the ancient Apostles. Now we see, however, that what was historical is moving into the present.<sup>2</sup>

We know not what may come in the future, but if any of us should face the trauma of literally losing our life in the Master’s cause, I trust that we would show courage and loyalty.

The more common (and sometimes more difficult) application of the Savior’s teaching, however, has to do with how we live day by day. It concerns the words we speak, the example we set. Our lives should be a confession of Christ and, together with our words, testify of our faith in and devotion to Him. And this testimony must be stoutly defended in the face of ridicule, discrimination, or defamation on the part of those who oppose Him “in this adulterous and sinful generation” (Mark 8:38).

On a different occasion the Lord added this remarkable statement about our loyalty to Him: “Think not that I am come to send peace on [the] earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

“For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against

***Our lives should be a confession of Christ and, together with our words, testify of our faith in and devotion to Him.***

her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

“And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.

“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

“And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me” (Matthew 10:34–38).

Saying that He came not to send peace but rather a sword seems at first impression a contradiction to the scriptures that refer to Christ as “The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6), the proclamation at His birth—“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14)—and other well-known

references, such as “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you” (John 14:27).

“It is true that Christ came to bring peace—peace between the believer and God, and peace among men. Yet the inevitable result of Christ’s coming is conflict—between Christ and the antichrist, between light and darkness, between Christ’s children and the devil’s children. This conflict can occur even between members of the same family.”<sup>3</sup>

I’m confident that a number of you have been rejected and ostracized by father and mother, brothers and sisters as you accepted the gospel of Jesus Christ and entered into His covenant. In one way or another, your superior love of Christ has required the sacrifice of relationships that were dear to you, and you have shed many tears. Yet with your own love undiminished, you hold steady under this cross, showing yourself unashamed of the Son of God.

### The Cost of Discipleship

A few years ago a member of the Church shared a copy of the Book of Mormon with an Amish friend in Ohio, USA. The friend began to read the book and could not put it down. He and his wife were baptized, and within seven months two more Amish couples were converted and baptized members of the Church. Their children were baptized several months later.

These three families decided to remain in their community and continue their Amish lifestyle even though they had left the Amish faith. However, they were subjected to “shunning” by their close-knit Amish neighbors. Shunning means that no one in their Amish community will talk to them, work with

***We can and must love one another as Jesus loves us. As He said, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”***



them, do business with them, or associate with them in any way. This includes not just friends but also family members.

Initially, these Amish Saints felt alone and isolated as even their children were subjected to shunning and were removed from their Amish schools. Their children have endured shunning by grandparents, cousins, and close neighbors. Even some of the older children of these Amish families, who did not accept the gospel, will not talk to or even acknowledge their parents. These families have struggled to recover from the social and economic effects of shunning, but they are succeeding.

Their faith remains strong. The adversity and opposition of shunning has caused them to be steadfast and immovable. A year after being baptized, the families were sealed in the temple and continue faithfully attending the temple on a weekly basis. They have found strength through receiving ordinances and entering into and honoring covenants. They are all active in their Church group and continue searching for ways to share the light and knowledge of the gospel with their extended families and community through acts of kindness and service.

Yes, the cost of joining The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints can be very high, but the admonition to prefer Christ above all others, even our closest family members, applies also to those who may have been born in the covenant. Many of us became members of the Church without opposition, perhaps as children. The challenge we may confront is remaining loyal to the Savior and His Church in the face of parents, in-laws, brothers or sisters, or even our children whose conduct, beliefs, or choices make it impossible to support both Him and them.

It is not a question of love. We can and must love one another as Jesus loves us. As He said, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to

another” (John 13:35). So although familial love continues, relationships may be interrupted and, according to the circumstances, even support or tolerance at times may be suspended for the sake of our higher love (see Matthew 10:37).

In reality, the best way to help those we love—the best

way to love them—is to continue to put the Savior first. If we cast ourselves adrift from the Lord out of sympathy for loved ones who are suffering or distressed, then we lose the means by which we might have helped them. If, however, we remain firmly rooted in faith in Christ, we are in a position both to receive and to offer divine help.

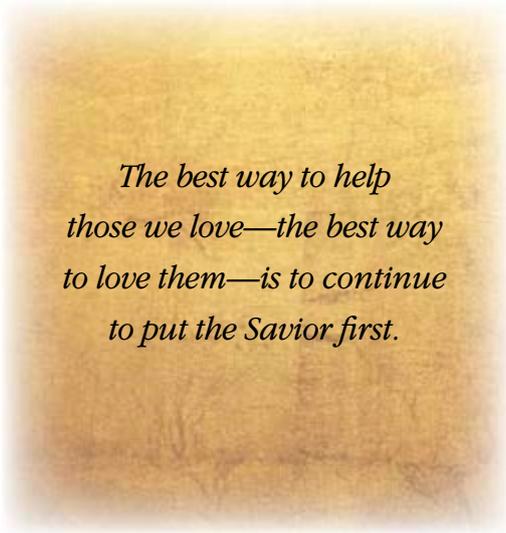
When the moment comes that a beloved family member wants desperately to turn to the only true and lasting source of help, he or she will know whom to trust as a

guide and a companion. In the meantime, with the gift of the Holy Spirit to guide, we can perform a steady ministry to lessen the pain of poor choices and bind up the wounds insofar as we are permitted. Otherwise, we serve neither those we love nor ourselves.

### **Forsake the World**

The third element of losing our lives for the Lord’s sake is found in His words: “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26). As given in the Joseph Smith Translation, His words read: “For what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and yet he receive him not whom God hath ordained, and he lose his own soul, and he himself be a castaway?” (Luke 9:25 [in the Bible appendix]).

To say that forsaking the world in favor of receiving “him . . . whom God hath ordained” is countercultural in today’s world is certainly an understatement. The priorities



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and interests we most often see on display around us (and sometimes in us) are intensely selfish: a hunger to be recognized; an insistent demand that one's rights be respected; a consuming desire for money, things, and power; a sense of entitlement to a life of comfort and pleasure; a goal to minimize responsibility and avoid altogether any personal sacrifice for the good of another—to name a few.

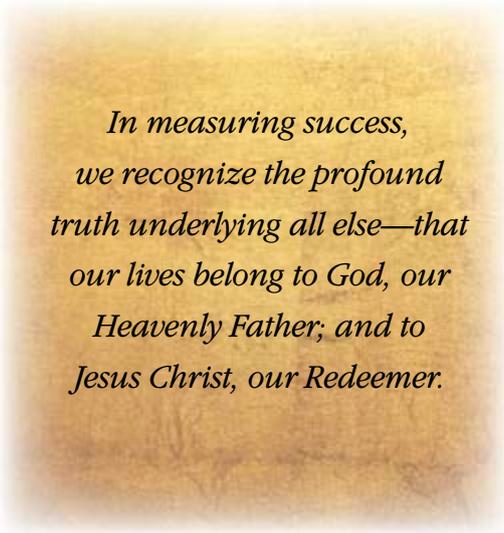
This is not to say that we should not seek to succeed, even excel, in worthy endeavors, including education and honorable work. Certainly, worthwhile achievements are laudable. But if we are to save our lives, we must always remember that such attainments are not ends in themselves but means to a higher end. With our faith in Christ, we must see political, business, academic, and similar forms of success not as defining us but as making possible our service to God and fellow man—beginning at home and extending as far as possible in the world.

Personal development has value as it contributes to development of a Christlike character. In measuring success, we recognize the profound truth underlying all else—that our lives belong to God, our Heavenly Father; and to Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Success means living in harmony with Their will.

In contrast to the narcissistic life, President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) offered a simple expression of the more excellent way:

“When we are engaged in the service of our fellowmen, not only do our deeds assist them, but we put our own problems in a fresher perspective. When we concern ourselves more with others, there is less time to be concerned with ourselves! In the midst of the miracle of serving, there is the promise of Jesus that by losing ourselves, we find ourselves! [See Matthew 10:39.]

“Not only do we ‘find’ ourselves in terms of acknowledging divine guidance in our lives, but the more we serve our fellowmen in appropriate ways, the more substance there is to our souls. . . . We become more substantive as we serve others—indeed, it is easier to ‘find’ ourselves because there is so much more of us to find!”<sup>4</sup>



*In measuring success,  
we recognize the profound  
truth underlying all else—that  
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Jesus Christ, our Redeemer.*

### **Lose Your Life in His Service**

I recently learned of a particular young adult sister who decided to serve a full-time mission. She had developed a capacity to connect with and relate to people from almost every belief system, political persuasion, and nationality, and she worried that wearing a missionary name tag all day, every day, might become an identifier that could impede her exceptional ability to establish relationships. Just a few

weeks into her mission, she wrote home about a simple but meaningful experience:

“Sister Lee and I rubbed salve into an old lady’s arthritic hands—one of us on either side—while we sat in her living room. She didn’t want to listen to any spoken messages, but let us sing, loved us to sing. Thank you, black missionary name tag, for giving me license to have intimate experiences with complete strangers.”

By the things he suffered, the Prophet Joseph Smith learned to lose his life in the service of his Master and Friend. He once said, “I made this my rule: *When the Lord commands, do it.*”<sup>5</sup>

I think we would all be content to match Brother Joseph’s level of faithfulness. Even so, he was once forced to languish for months in the jail at Liberty, Missouri, suffering physically but probably more emotionally and spiritually because he was unable to help his beloved wife, his children, and the Saints while they were being abused and persecuted. His revelations and direction had brought



them to Missouri to establish Zion, and now they were being driven from their homes, in winter, across the entire state.

Despite it all, in those conditions in that jail, he composed an inspired letter to the Church of the most elegant and uplifting prose, parts of which now comprise sections 121, 122, and 123 of the Doctrine and Covenants, concluding with these words: “Let us cheerfully do all things that lie in our power; and then may we stand still, with the utmost assurance, to see the salvation of God, and for his arm to be revealed” (D&C 123:17).

Of course, the greatest illustration of saving one’s life by losing it is this: “O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done” (Matthew 26:42). In giving His life, Christ saved not only His own life but our lives as well. He

made it possible for us to exchange what would otherwise have been an ultimately futile mortal life for eternal life.

The theme of the Savior’s life was “I do always those things that please [the Father]” (John 8:29). I pray that you will make it the theme of your life. If you do, you will save your life. ■

*From a Church Educational System devotional address, “Saving Your Life,” delivered at Brigham Young University on September 14, 2014. For the full address, go to [devotionals.lds.org](http://devotionals.lds.org).*

#### NOTES

1. Adam S. Miller, *Letters to a Young Mormon* (2014), 17–18.
2. See Martin Chulov, “Iraq’s Largest Christian Town Abandoned as ISIS Advance Continues,” *The Guardian*, Aug. 7, 2014, [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com).
3. Kenneth Barker, ed., *The NIV Study Bible*, 10th anniversary ed. (1995), 1453.
4. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 85–86.
5. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 160.

***The greatest illustration of saving one’s life by losing it is this: “O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.”***

# GAINING GOSPEL INSIGHTS THROUGH MOTHERHOOD

*Motherhood can give us unique opportunities  
to learn of the Lord's doctrine through the Spirit.*

**By Katy McGee**

Any mother knows that time management changes drastically after children come to the family. In relearning how to manage my time with four little ones, I've experienced discouraging moments—especially when it comes to gospel study. It's tricky to schedule scripture study and be sure it's meaningful. But a few experiences have taught me that as I am obedient and prayerful, the Lord will teach me in other ways.



## Our Heavenly Parent

One day while I was ironing, one-year-old Claire began to cry in her crib. It was naptime, and I knew that if I could quickly give her a pacifier, she would fall back to sleep. Three-year-old Lucy was playing in the room where I was ironing. I debated for a moment and then decided to keep the iron on, knowing I'd be out of the room for only a few moments. "Lucy, do you see that iron on my tall table?" I asked. "It's VERY hot. I need to give Claire her pacifier. Please don't touch the iron while I'm gone, or it will hurt you."

I was sure Lucy understood, so I quickly slipped out of the room. I returned a moment later, and I heard a whimper from behind a chair.

"Lucy?" I asked. "Where are you?"

She didn't reply.

"Are you OK? Why are you hiding?"

I walked over behind the chair and sat on the floor. Her face was buried in her hands. After a few refusals to tell me what happened, she finally said, "Mommy, I touched your iron."

At first I was confused that she hadn't heeded my warning. Then I felt heartbroken that she would hide from me after making a small mistake, afraid she had lost my love and confidence. I knew she was powerless to take the pain away, and only I could help her burned finger feel better. I comforted Lucy, and as I rushed her to the bathroom sink to ease the pain, the Spirit whispered to my heart: "This is how Heavenly Father feels when His children fail to heed His warnings and won't allow Him to ease their pain when they need it most." In that moment I felt such joy at this knowledge and a confidence in the Lord's willingness to teach me.

## Pure Charity

A few years later I was called to be a counselor in my ward Relief Society presidency. I felt inadequate to fulfill this calling. I began to study the principle of charity. I prayed to develop more Christlike

charity for the sisters I served. But I wasn't quite sure what this spiritual gift would look or feel like.

My anxiety was weighing on my mind as I made lunch one day. My third daughter, Annie, was sitting on the middle landing of our stairs, engrossed in her two-year-old imagination. I watched as she leaned forward to grab a toy, lost her balance, and tumbled down four or five stairs. I ran to her and tried to calm her as she cried. I quieted her enough to hear a little sob coming from the kitchen table. I looked over to see five-year-old Claire crying.

"Come here." I said. "What's wrong?"

She ran to join Annie and me in a family hug. The words she spoke were a direct answer to my prayerful question about charity.

"I saw Annie start to fall, and then I watched her and saw how sad she felt," she said. "I would rather fall down the stairs for Annie than watch her have to fall down."

The thought immediately came to my mind through the Spirit, "*That* is charity."

## Growing in Faith

Most recently, my husband taught our children about the story of Moses. I said, "I think the faith of Moses's mother is amazing! She sent him down the river and prayed that Heavenly Father would keep him safe. Can you imagine the great faith it took for her to trust Heavenly Father with her baby?"

Lucy asked, "Mom, do you have that much faith?"

It was a profound question. I thought about it for a moment and then shared a few experiences that I have had when I successfully relied on the Lord with faith. The discussion that followed was edifying for the entire family. Her question comes to my mind all the time. It is strengthening to know that I can have faith like Moses's mother.

As I walk by faith, ask in prayer, and obediently study, the Lord uses my experiences as a mother to teach me His doctrine through the Spirit. And He teaches me often, regardless of the time constraints of parenthood. ■

*The author lives in Idaho, USA.*

# Blessings

## OF THE SABBATH DAY

*Saints around the world talk about how their lives have been blessed in unique ways by this special, holy day.*

**By Marissa A. Widdison**

Church Magazines

**P**icture yourself receiving the most important invitation of your life: a chance to spend a day with Jesus Christ. How would you prepare spiritually and physically for such a day? What blessings might you hope would come from such a visit?

The Lord has invited each of us to set aside a day to commune with Him—the Sabbath day, which He has blessed and made holy (see Exodus 20:11). What blessings do you enjoy when you keep the Sabbath day holy? Here are some thoughts from Saints around the world that might prompt ideas and impressions of your own.

### **Closeness to God and Christ**

Sister Andrea Julião, from São Paulo, Brazil, discovered that just as relationships with earthly friends grow stronger when we spend time together, our relationship with Heavenly Father becomes stronger when we focus on Him through Sabbath worship.

While visiting family who weren't members of the Church, Sister Julião decided to wake up early Sunday and try to find a Latter-day Saint church building in the area. As her family prepared for a day of adventurous recreation,

Sister Julião searched the neighborhood until she met someone who pointed out a steeple in the distance. Sister Julião was able to attend worship services. "I had the most amazing Sabbath day," she said. "I felt Heavenly Father's love so strongly. I felt that He enjoys when His children obey His teachings. I gained a stronger testimony of the Church of Jesus Christ."

### **Healing and Relief**

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, spoke about how the Sabbath day blessed his life as a young professional: "I first found delight in the Sabbath many years ago when, as a busy surgeon, I knew that the Sabbath became a day for personal healing. By the end of each week, my hands were sore from repeatedly scrubbing them with soap, water, and a bristle brush. I also needed a breather from the burden of a demanding profession. Sunday provided much-needed relief."<sup>1</sup>

### **Time for Family History**

Not long ago, 10-year-old Eliza from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, gave a talk in sacrament meeting about one way



ILLUSTRATIONS BY PASCAL CAMPION



that focusing on Sabbath-appropriate activities has blessed her life. Because Eliza sometimes struggled with boredom on Sundays, she and her family decided that indexing would be a good activity to try. Eliza soon discovered that she loved working with the names and records. “When I start, I just want to keep doing it forever,” she shared with the congregation.

When Eliza’s great-grandma heard how much she enjoyed family history, she taught Eliza how to add stories and pictures to their family tree online. “It is so much fun, I love it!” Eliza said. “When I do family history work, I feel the spirit of Elijah. It is an awesome feeling.”

### **A Lifted Soul**

Sister Cheryl A. Esplin, first counselor in the Primary general presidency, testified of the blessing of taking the

sacrament on the Sabbath day: “When I partake of the sacrament, I sometimes picture in my mind a painting that depicts the resurrected Savior with His arms outstretched, as if He is ready to receive us into His loving embrace. I love this painting. When I think about it during the administration of the sacrament, my soul is lifted as I can almost hear the Savior’s words: ‘Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you, and whosoever will come, him will I receive; and blessed are those who come unto me’ [3 Nephi 9:14].”<sup>2</sup>

### **Chances to Minister**

Elder L. Tom Perry (1922–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that one of the reasons why we need to rest from our labors on Sunday is that they take us away from “the opportunity to minister to others.”<sup>3</sup>

Ministering on the Sabbath is something Sister Zola Adjei came to love while growing up in the Kpong Branch in Ghana. While home from boarding school during the summers, she and other youth would go in groups to visit members of their branch they hadn't seen in a while. "It was a sacrifice because most of us felt very hungry after church, and we were so far from our homes that we didn't have time to eat and gather again," Sister Adjei said. But the sacrifice was worth it, as they were able to pray and sing hymns with their fellow branch members and invite them to church and activities. One of the youth would offer to walk with them to church the next Sunday.

"This practice formed a bond amongst us," Sister Adjei said. "Some of us have stayed strong friends from the decisions we made to go out and bring back our lost friends by giving up a few hours of our Sabbath day."

### Missionary Opportunities

In today's world, making Sunday a holy day will surely set us apart—giving us chances to share the gospel in a natural way as others notice the difference in our weekly routine. The Davies family experienced this while living on the island of Grenada with their young daughter, Adrielle. "None of Adrielle's friends are members of the Church, and while many of them believe in God, Sunday to them is simply another day of the weekend," explained Sister McKenzie Lawyer Davies, Adrielle's mother.

A few months ago, Adrielle was invited to a birthday party at a movie theater on Sunday. Her family decided to drop off a gift instead of going to the movie and party. "Because we simply stopped by to wish them well, we were able to share our beliefs about the Sabbath with them in a friendly and open way," Sister Lawyer Davies said. "It made me happy that my little girl was already sharing the gospel."

### Protection from Worldliness

Doctrine and Covenants 59:9 states, "And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments

upon my holy day." Modern prophets and apostles have taught that the idea of keeping ourselves "unspotted from the world" is both an invitation and a promised blessing that work hand in hand.

For example, President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, taught that as we avoid worldly distractions on the Sabbath day, we are blessed with protection from obsession with worldly things: "In this day of increasing access to and preoccupation with materialism, there is a sure protection for ourselves and our children against the plagues of our day. The key to that sure protection surprisingly can be found in Sabbath observance."<sup>4</sup>

### Quality Family Time

The Olson family in Brigham City, Utah, USA, found that even changing one small aspect of their Sabbath day brings about great blessings. Instead of watching regular television on Sunday, they focus on Church-sponsored media. They found that watching the Bible videos (see BibleVideos.org) with their children invites the Spirit as well as questions from the kids that prompt good family discussions.

"Not watching TV on the Sabbath led to the biggest shift in focus for me," said Sister Lacey Olson. "We might feel like there are so many rules with regards to Sunday, but I think the Sabbath is a day unrestricted with regards to service and charity. If we choose, the Sabbath day can arm us with rejuvenation to face the world in the following week."

The Lord teaches us in the scriptures that we should "remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8). When we recognize the Sabbath as a precious opportunity to claim spiritual blessings, those words become an invitation from Him. How will we respond? What promises are in store for ourselves and our families? ■

#### NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, "The Sabbath Is a Delight," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 129.
2. Cheryl A. Esplin, "The Sacrament—a Renewal for the Soul," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 13.
3. L. Tom Perry, "The Sabbath and the Sacrament," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 9.
4. James E. Faust, "The Lord's Day," *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 35.

# More Alike Than Different

*As young women progress into Relief Society and those sisters welcome them, both groups will quickly discover they have much in common.*

During a joint Young Women and Relief Society activity, an 18-year-old Laurel and an 81-year-old woman were asked to discuss their first dates. “Both were pleasantly surprised to learn the similarities between two experiences that were decades apart.”<sup>1</sup> They discovered that they had more in common than they thought they did.

Progressing from Young Women into Relief Society can often seem intimidating, and at times, even scary. As a young woman, you may find yourself asking, “Do I have anything in common with these older women? Is there a place for me in Relief Society?”<sup>2</sup>

The answer to those questions is a resounding yes! Like the two women in the story above, you may find you have more in common with each other than you thought. And “yes” there is a place for you in Relief Society. But, like all progressions in life from one stage to another, we need to work together to be successful.



## YOUNG WOMEN



**By Bonnie L. Oscarson**  
Young Women General President

I promise you young women that as you make the effort to get to know the sisters in your ward, they will bless your life and you will

be a blessing to them. Jump in with both feet and let it be known that you are ready to be an active member of one of the oldest and largest women's organizations in the world. You are an essential part of the work of salvation in the latter days, and as a covenant-keeping daughter of your Heavenly Father, you are ready to do your part in building the kingdom of God on the earth. Prepare yourself to experience something wonderful.

### What Can 18-Year-Old Laurels Do?

As you look around the Relief Society room full of sisters of all ages, ask the question, "What can I learn from these remarkable women?" As you open your mind and your heart, you will be surprised at the friendships you will form with sisters who are older than you but who have much to share in the way of experience and wisdom.

### What Can Young Women Leaders Do?

Your attitudes about being an active member of Relief Society can have a big influence on how the young women in your classes feel about it. You can share personal experiences that show how you have been blessed or how the lives of others have been blessed through participation in Relief Society. You should encourage and assist the 18-year-old Laurels to make the progression joyfully into Relief Society.

## RELIEF SOCIETY



**By Linda K. Burton**  
Relief Society General President

How can you as Relief Society sisters help mentor "new sisters" to succeed in our essential part of the work of salvation? You can help

them understand that they are a vital part of the sacred work in God's kingdom. Sharing the book or online link to *Daughters in My Kingdom* can help describe our sacred work in Relief Society.

You can link arms and open your heart to young women as we prepare together for the blessing of eternal life. You can expand your circles to include young women. By so doing, you will be fulfilling Lucy Mack Smith's desire to her first Relief Society sisters: "We must cherish one another, watch over one another, comfort one another and gain instruction, that we may all sit down in heaven together."<sup>3</sup>

### What Can Relief Society Leaders and Sisters Do?

Recognize that young women bring with them talents, gifts, and an eagerness to share. Make sure that as young women enter Relief Society, they have a friend to sit with. Give them opportunities to add their enthusiastic spark to Relief Society. Realize that you not only have a powerful influence on these younger sisters, but that they can be loving examples to you. If you teach Relief Society lessons, make sure to include the situations of all age groups you are teaching—not just mothers. Young women can even be given opportunities to teach Relief Society. You can try pairing younger sisters and older sisters in visiting teaching and service opportunities. You can be a blessing and help eliminate age barriers. ■

#### NOTES

1. See Carole L. Clark, "Knit Together in Love," *Ensign*, Oct. 1993, 25.
2. See Bonnie L. Oscarson, "Help Young Women Embrace Move to Relief Society," *Church News*, Aug. 20, 2014.
3. Lucy Mack Smith, in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 25.

# Progression

## INTO RELIEF SOCIETY



Last year Sister Bonnie L. Oscarson, Young Women general president, and Sister Linda K. Burton, Relief Society general president, posted requests on their Church Facebook pages. They asked young women and Relief Society sisters, as well as parents, leaders, and teachers involved with helping young women, to share their experiences about progressing from Young Women into Relief Society. The two presidents received comments from around the world.

Many young women expressed excitement about being surrounded by strong women, while others held back.

Following are some of the comments about making the progression from Young Women into Relief Society easier. They are arranged into two groups: (1) What can we do in Young Women? and (2) what can we do in Relief Society?



## In Young Women:

### **1. ATTEND RELIEF SOCIETY OPENING EXERCISES.**

Many Relief Society leaders invited the young women to opening exercises once a month and the Laurels to a lesson occasionally.

Jill, a Relief Society leader, shared what her ward does. She wrote: “We challenge young women to sit next to a Relief Society sister before the meeting and ask her about her life. It helps young women see that Relief Society sisters aren’t that different from them.”

### **2. GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER IN SOCIAL SETTINGS.**

“I distinctly remember helping do the dishes at a funeral luncheon,” wrote Rachel, a young woman. “I got to talk and laugh with the other sisters who were in the kitchen, and I felt like part of the group. They expressed their confidence in me. That was a huge moment for me.”

Bekah, a Relief Society sister, took the initiative to get to know the young women. She wrote: “I use social media to befriend the youth and get to know

the things they love. As a result, we became friends.”

### **3. LEARN FROM WOMEN WHO LOVE RELIEF SOCIETY.**

“I grew up in a town outside Stockholm, Sweden. My mother was single,” wrote Britt-Marie. “I was almost 13 the year my mother and I were baptized. When Mom attended Relief Society night meetings, she brought me along so I wouldn’t be at home alone. When I finally turned 18, I knew and loved every sister.”

Paula wrote, “As a convert at 14, I made an effort to serve the widows, single mothers, and less-active sisters. Soon they were inviting me into their homes for family activities. As a result, on my first Sunday in Relief Society, I felt I had a roomful of mothers.”

“My mother, grandmother, and aunts shared their testimonies through their examples,” wrote Lindsey. “They included me in service projects. I couldn’t wait to officially join Relief Society. The transition wasn’t abrupt. Relief Society is where I felt I was always going.”

### **4. SET THE EXAMPLE.**

“I was super excited to go to Relief Society,” said Emily. “I think it was in part due to the fact that I always felt close to my Young Women leaders. They treated me with a lot of respect. I didn’t have any hesitations joining the Relief Society sisters because I assumed it would be the same way with them, and it was.”

“I wish my Young Women leaders had talked to me more about Relief Society and the love and sisterhood found there,” wrote Marisa.

“The leaders have a big impact on the way young women see Relief Society as a whole,” wrote Tessa. “I think it is important for Young Women leaders to encourage young women toward Relief Society and for Relief Society sisters to be welcoming.”

“I wish my Young Women leaders hadn’t made Relief Society sound like a boring place,” wrote Amanda. “As a result, that is how I felt going into it.”

## In Relief Society:

### **5. MAKE THE TRANSITION MORE THAN A ONE-TIME EVENT.**

While many Relief Society presidents do something special to acknowledge a young woman on her first day in Relief Society, comments showed that leaders also realized that the progression into Relief Society is ongoing.

Raquel, a Relief Society leader in Brazil, shared what her presidency did: “(1) We gave each young woman a welcome kit on her first Sunday. This was always a happy moment. (2) As a presidency we did some training with them so they knew they could come to us. (3) We suggested that young women not be

called to Primary or Young Women immediately.”

### **6. MAKE LESSONS APPLICABLE TO ALL SISTERS.**

“I had grown up engaging in deep gospel conversations with my mother,” wrote Christy, “and I found that Relief Society was often closer to those kinds of conversations.”

Jillian wrote: “I had yearned for spiritual insight and appreciated getting it.”

“I struggled to relate to the lessons and with sisters who seemed so much older than me,” wrote Marisa.

“I was excited to hear perspectives of women who could share with me a vision of our mortal purpose that I hadn’t seen yet,” wrote Emily.

### **7. SIT BY A FRIEND ON SUNDAY.**

“I didn’t have a family member to sit with,” wrote Lacey, a young woman. “Having sisters just say ‘Hi’ to me or sit with me made a huge difference.”

Kelly, a Relief Society sister, stated it simply. She wrote: “If someone doesn’t feel welcome, it’s hard to continue attending.”



Sadly, Nikki was one sister who felt uncomfortable. What she wrote reminds us that there is always more we can do. “In situations like mine, some are lost to inactivity. Relief Society needs to be a place where we can embrace sisters of all ages, regardless of who they are or what they’ve done.”

Crystal cried on her first day. She wrote: “My former Young Women leader put her arm around me and invited me to sit with her. I was with wives, mothers, and grandmothers. I shared my feelings, and they listened. For the first time I felt the strength of being part of a group of women striving to be more like Christ. I felt so blessed to be a part of this worldwide organization.”

## **8. GIVE YOUNG WOMEN OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE.**

“I was asked to play the piano for our Sunday meetings,” wrote Amy. “Knowing I was needed helped me develop a bond with the sisters. It’s like what President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) said about new members in the Church needing a friend, an assignment, and nourishment by the good word of God [see ‘Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep,’ *Ensign*, May 1999, 108]. I needed the same things.”

A new Relief Society sister, Cate, wrote: “I came to learn that I had an important role in Relief Society after I was called as an instructor. I have learned a lot. I am not married yet, but I feel I am ready for marriage and motherhood thanks to Relief Society.”

Charlotte, a young woman, took the initiative. She wrote: “I have looked for service opportunities because I rarely have the opportunity to attend Sunday Relief Society meetings. However, service opportunities have been abundant and taught me the meaning of Relief Society.”

## **9. KNOW THAT YOU ARE WELCOME AND WANTED.**

Brooke wrote, “The simple desire of the women in my ward to ask us questions about what was important to us was huge. I realized that although these women had different life experiences than I did, we still had the same basic hopes, dreams, and fears.”

Robyn, however, had a difficult time. “I was new and the only one my age that was in Relief Society,” she wrote. “At first I felt I didn’t belong.” But Robyn kept going with her mom. “Slowly I got to know the women and grew to love Relief Society and visiting teaching.”



Deborah wrote:

“I knew I was a Relief Society sister when Bonnie, my Relief Society president, asked me to assist her in cleaning a sister’s apartment. The sister had lived in poverty and then died unexpectedly. As we gently sifted through what had been a difficult end to her life, we came across the sister’s bridal portrait. There, smiling up at us, was a stunning, bright-eyed brunette in her white satin bridal gown. Quietly Bonnie said, ‘This is how we’ll remember her.’ I felt a love for a sister that I had not met in mortality. We were Relief Society sisters. Bonnie and I finished the day with tears and a hug.”

Let us truly become a “circle of sisters,” as President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, tenderly referred to us as sisters in Relief Society. Let us build on what we have in common. Our progression from Young Women to Relief Society is God’s path for us as His daughters to grow and develop. Truly, as the Relief Society motto says: “Charity Never Faileth” (see 1 Corinthians 13:8). ■



By Elder Larry R.  
Lawrence  
Of the Seventy

# The Light

## OF THE PERFECT DAY

*Accumulating as much light as we can is the key  
to successfully passing the test of mortal life.*

**W**ould you be surprised to learn that your success in life depends upon how much light you gain while you are here? Success is not about how much money you make or how many medals you win or how much fame you achieve. The real objective of our existence is to gain light.

Our physical bodies grow bigger when we feed them nourishing food. Our spirits grow brighter when we feed them light. “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). Our Father in Heaven was once a mortal man who gradually progressed until He became a being with a fulness of light. He wants the same for you and me because a fulness of light means a fulness of joy.

Our Heavenly Father loves us so much that when we left our premortal life to come to earth, He gave each of us a parting gift: the Light of Christ, our conscience. As the scriptures state, “The Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world” (D&C 84:46).

Heavenly Father’s greatest desire is that we follow the light we were born with so we can receive more light. As we continue to follow the light our Father sheds on us, we receive more light and we become more like Him.

The gift of the Holy Ghost—in addition to the light we were born with—gives



## WE OBTAIN MORE LIGHT AS WE:

- Love others.
- Study the scriptures.
- Obey the commandments.
- Hearken to the Holy Ghost.
- Serve in the temple.

us a great advantage. It is one of the greatest gifts we can receive in mortality because it brings more opportunities for obtaining light and truth. Without the Holy Ghost, we are like a person walking slowly home in the dark with only a flashlight as a guide. When we accept the gospel of Jesus Christ and are baptized, we are offered a floodlight and a guide who knows the way. Now we can walk faster and see our way during our homeward journey.

### Increasing in Light

“That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day” (D&C 50:24).

This verse perfectly summarizes our

purpose on earth. Eternal progress simply means increasing in light. As our spirits become brighter and brighter, we are working toward that “perfect day” when we can be *like God* and *with God*.

Think of this concept of light the next time you attend an endowment session in the temple. You start in a dimly lit room. As you increase in knowledge, the room becomes brighter. At last your journey of light takes you to the glorious celestial room. Our experience in the temple is symbolic of our journey on earth. Things get brighter and brighter until we finally reenter the Lord’s presence.

Exceeding light is an attribute of every resurrected celestial being. When the angel Moroni appeared to Joseph in his room, the young prophet observed that the angel’s “countenance [was] truly like lightning”

(Joseph Smith—History 1:32).

Matthew used the same words to describe the angels at the Lord’s tomb, recording that their “countenance was like lightning” (Matthew 28:3 [see also Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 28:3, footnote *a*]).

When it comes time for each of us to be resurrected, how will the Lord determine whether we receive a telestial body, a terrestrial body, or a celestial body? The answer is easier than you may think. If we have accumulated enough celestial light in our spirits, we will be resurrected with celestial bodies. If we have accumulated only enough light to qualify for terrestrial or telestial



bodies, that is the glory we will receive in the Resurrection.

The Doctrine and Covenants explains:

“Your glory shall be that glory by which your bodies are quickened.



“Ye who are quickened by a portion of the celestial glory shall then receive of the same, even a fulness” (D&C 88:28–29).

As long as we stay on the strait and narrow path, trying to live the commandments and improve ourselves, we are accumulating light. But what happens when we stray from the path and break the commandments? What happens to our light?

The scriptures are clear about this: “He that repents not, from him shall be taken even the light which he *has* received” (D&C 1:33; emphasis added). In other words, while some people are gaining light, others are losing it. Satan can take away light whenever we disobey truth (see D&C 93:39).

The important thing to ask is, how can we obtain more light so that it “groweth brighter and brighter” within us? I suggest five ways.

## Love Others

One of the best ways to gain light is to learn to love as our Father in Heaven loves. We call this kind of love *charity*. Mormon exhorts us to “pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love” (Moroni 7:48) Love rapidly brings more light into our spirits; contention and jealousy take light away.

Remember, the first commandment is to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, and mind (see Matthew 22:37–38). The reward for loving God and for putting Him first in our lives is huge. Jesus taught, “If your eye be single to *my* glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light” (D&C 88:67; emphasis added).

The second commandment is to love our neighbor as ourselves (see Matthew 22:39). This may be more difficult to do because our neighbors are not perfect. The real secret for learning to love others is found in serving them. That’s why it comes natural to love our

children, even though they too are far from perfect.

The more you serve, the more you love, and the more you love, the more light you receive. Missionaries—both old and young—develop a glow about them that is visible to others. Full-time service is rewarded by lots of spiritual light.

## Study the Scriptures

There is no shortcut to learning truth. You have to invest time in reading the scriptures and the teachings of the prophets. If you want to grow spiritually, you have to feed your spirit by feasting on the word every day. According to the Doctrine and Covenants, truth is just another name for light (see D&C 84:45).

Before you open your scriptures each day, pray that you will learn something new to add light to your spirit. Then search for new insights and understanding. Also ask

yourself, “How do these things I am reading apply to my life?” You have to be willing to invest time if you want to gain more light.

A related source of light to our spirits is found in memorizing scriptures. Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of



the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “Scriptures are like packets of light that illuminate our minds” and that “great power can come from memorizing scriptures.”<sup>1</sup> Memorized scriptures become a gift you give to yourself—a gift that keeps on giving more and more light.

### **Obey the Commandments**

As you discover the commandments in the scriptures, go and do them. For example, if you read the divine counsel to “retire to thy bed early” and “arise early” (D&C 88:124), you had better obey. If you are reading the Doctrine and Covenants and come across the commandment “Thou shalt not speak evil of thy neighbor” (D&C 42:27), then you better watch what you say from now on. As you learn truth, you must apply it to accumulate light.

If you gain light but don’t use it, you may lose it.

### **Hearken to the Holy Ghost**

Hearkening to the Spirit is one way President Thomas S. Monson has gained so much light. He has learned to follow the promptings and impressions that come to him. The scriptures teach, “Every one that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit cometh unto God” (D&C 84:47).

If you expect spiritual promptings, they will come. If you act on them, you will receive more. If the Holy Ghost asks you to do something that is difficult (like break a bad habit), and you listen and obey the prompting, you will experience a spurt of spiritual growth and a big infusion of light.

### **Serve in the Temple**

When we consider the Lord’s temples, we naturally think of light. For example, consider what the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote about the dedication of the Kirtland Temple in 1836: “The people of the neighborhood came running together (hearing an unusual sound within, and seeing a bright light like a pillar of fire resting upon the Temple).”<sup>2</sup>

There is so much light and truth to be gained from temple service that the temple may be referred to as the University of the Lord. Temple light is even more beneficial to your spirit than sunlight is to your body. Consider yourself blessed if you are able to bask in this heavenly light on a regular basis.

### **Be a Light**

Every temple, every chapel, every mission office, every Latter-day Saint home, and every Church member should be a light to the world. As Peter reminded the Saints in his day, God “hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

That we may spend our entire lives accumulating as much light as we can in our spirits is my prayer. That doing so is the key to successfully passing the test of mortal life is my testimony. That we can obtain light by following the suggestions above is my witness. ■

#### **NOTES**

1. Richard G. Scott, “The Power of Scripture,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 6.
2. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 2:428.

# A Sinless Man

Fervently ♩ = 104-120

Words by David B. Larsen  
Music by Janice Kapp Perry

1. A sin - less, pure, and ho - ly man did what none else could do. The  
 2. A sin - less, pure, and ho - ly man, o - bed - ient to God's plan, Sub -  
 3. A sin - less, pure, and ho - ly man with hum - ble, bro - ken heart Then  
 4. A sin - less, pure, and ho - ly man the third day rose to save Em -

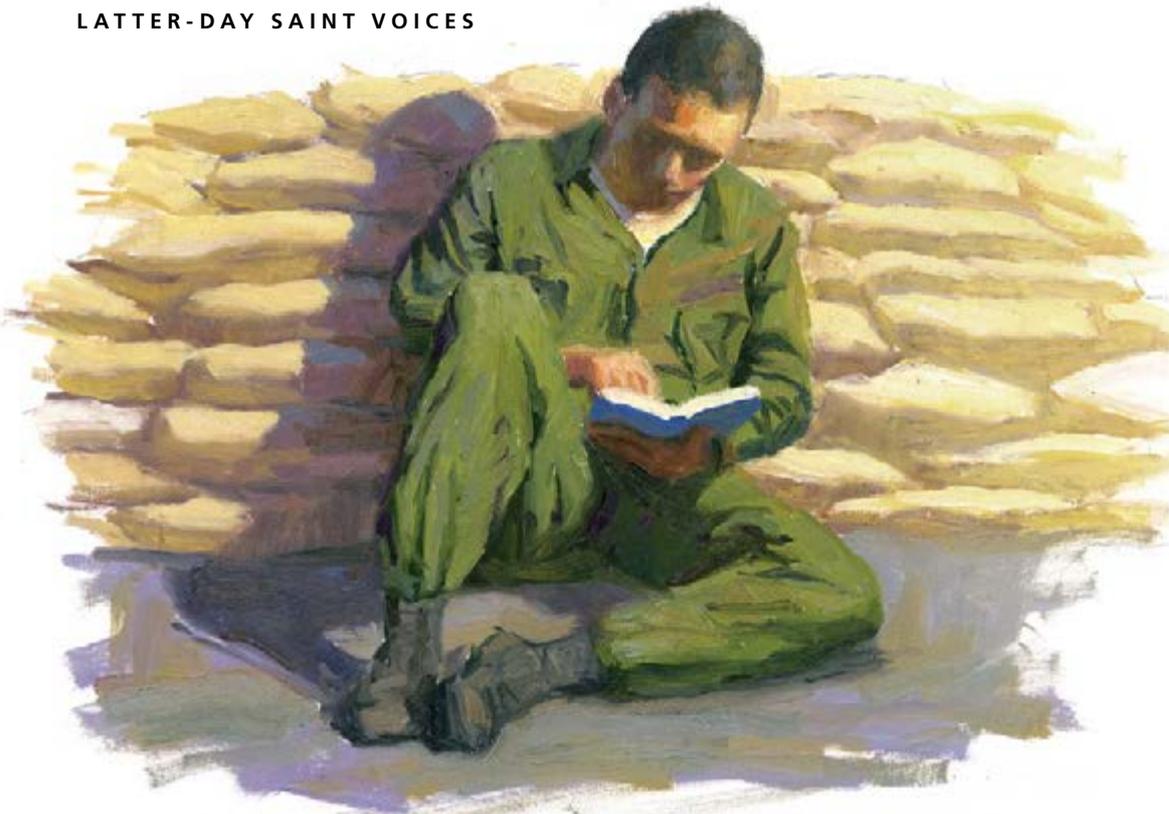
ver - y Son of God Him - self faced this e - ter - nal truth: With -  
 mit - ted in all things to Him be - fore the world be - gan. For  
 suf - fered more than man could bear to pay re - demp - tion's part. His  
 pow' - ring us to do the same, He burst forth from the grave. In

out His great a - ton - ing gift man - kind would all be lost; With -  
 on - ly His pure of - fer - ing could con - quer sin and death— His  
 lov - ing off' - ring, so com - plete, lacked yet the fin - al cost— His  
 Christ shall all be made a - live, like spring - time flow'rs that bloom. We

out His sac - ri - fice for sin God's works would come to naught.  
 guilt - less blood would ran - som us and all man - kind would bless.  
 spir - it left Gol - go - tha's cross that no one would be lost.  
 praise His vict' - ry o'er the cross— His glor - ious emp - ty tomb.

Inspired by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland,  
 "Where Justice, Love, and Mercy  
 Meet," April 2015 general conference.

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While I was sitting in my bunker reading the Book of Mormon, I decided to do as the scriptures direct and ask God if the Book of Mormon was true.

## WAR BROUGHT ME PEACE

Five days after my high school graduation, I enlisted in the military. Just before leaving for Vietnam, I had a distinct impression that my enlistment was the beginning of a spiritual journey.

Two hours after I arrived at my new unit, enemy rockets exploded in the camp. A mortar attack followed that night. It all seemed exciting until the second week, when several men died. Sobered, I started reflecting on the meaning of life.

I soon met a helicopter crew chief named Graig Stephens. One day the subject of religion came up. He told me he was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and asked if I wanted to know more. Although my parents were not members of the Church, they had taught me faith in Jesus Christ.

That evening in an empty bunker, Graig read me the first discussion. What

stood out in my mind was not the logic of the discussion or the manner in which he presented it but rather the sincerity and humility of this young soldier.

In the next few days, Graig taught me the other discussions. After each discussion we would kneel in prayer. He always asked me to pray, but I couldn't seem to do it. I remember becoming distraught over some principle of doctrine and decided I didn't want to hear any more about the Church. Graig spent the next day looking for someone who could answer my questions.

At dusk he brought a helicopter pilot—a returned missionary—from another troop to see me. This brother answered my questions and testified that he knew the Church was true. Then he told me I was as ready for baptism as anyone he had ever seen. I couldn't utter a word. When he

finished speaking, I found myself thinking, "You know something, he's right."

A short while later, while sitting in my bunker reading the Book of Mormon, I decided to do as the scriptures direct and ask God if the Book of Mormon was true (see Moroni 10:4–5). Bowing my head, I took my request to the Lord. No sooner had I done so than I felt an undeniable feeling of warmth and peace such as I had never experienced. I knew that God had answered my prayer. I knew that the Book of Mormon was true. Knowing that the Book of Mormon was true, I knew that Joseph Smith had to be a prophet. Shortly thereafter, I was baptized in the Gulf of Tonkin.

As I came out of the waters of baptism, I had a feeling of being totally clean. Life had never been so sweet. It took traveling thousands of miles to a war zone, but I finally found the peace my soul had been seeking. ■

Robert Swenson, Alabama, USA

## IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO?

I sat in my living room crying. It had been only a few days since I had had a miscarriage, and I couldn't stop thinking about the loss of our baby. So many things reminded me of the tragedy, especially my closet full of maternity clothes.

Every time I went into my room, the clothes seemed to stare at me from their hangers. Most of them were brand new and never worn, reminding me that I was no longer pregnant. I was still too weak to stand up for more than a few seconds to put them away.

Suddenly someone knocked on my door. When I opened it, I saw my visiting teacher standing on the doorstep. It was the same visiting teacher who had been watching my children when my doctor confirmed to my husband and me that I had miscarried.

I lay in bed while she folded my clothes and gently laid them in boxes.

"Is there anything I can do for you?" she asked.

"Yes," I said. "I need your help putting away my maternity clothes."

I led her into the bedroom, emptied drawers, and stripped hangers. Then I lay in bed while she folded my clothes and gently laid them in boxes. After she had taped the boxes and carried them downstairs so I wouldn't have to look at them, I felt my spirits lift.

Afterward she went into the kitchen, loaded the dishwasher, wiped the counters, and tidied up—things I still wasn't able to do. When she left,

my house was clean, my clothes were out of sight, and my heart wasn't quite so heavy anymore.

The Apostle John taught, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4:18). When we reach out to share the Savior's love, we are strengthened by His courage. Because my visiting teacher was filled with the love of Christ, she came immediately when the Spirit prompted her to come.

We received many expressions of love during that terrible time, including flowers, cards, cupcakes, and childcare, all of which we appreciated. But the expression that helped the most was when my visiting teacher, not knowing how badly I needed her, knocked on my door, and asked, "Is there anything I can do for you?" ■  
Loralee Leavitt, Washington, USA



# BLACKBERRY CANES

**B**lackberries grow like weeds on the western coast of Canada. The plants sprout and grow everywhere and will take over everything they can reach—fields, sidewalks, roads, and beaches are lined with blackberry cane. In the fall neighbors work together to pick berries to use in their homes.

As I joined in picking blackberries one year, I was determined that not only would I pick enough to make jam for myself and my family, but I would also make extra to give to the sisters I visit teach. The best place to pick blackberries in my neighborhood was down by the elementary school, where pathways and fields are lined with brambles reaching

eight feet (2.4 m) high. I had already been there picking the week before, and I knew many others had already gone there as well, so it was likely that there wouldn't be much fruit left.

As I prepared to pick berries again, I thought I would try picking in a different place. Out my kitchen window I could see a vacant lot next to the street. Hardly anyone went by there, and canes were spreading out over an acre of land. Surely there would be lots of fruit where no one had picked. I put my buckets in the back of the car and headed over.

Soon I was hot, scratched, and perplexed as I stood in the middle of the acre of brambles. The canes were

barren, full of thorns but without any sign of flowers or fruit. I had found exactly three berries in all that land, and I couldn't understand why. My jam jars, however, still needed to be filled, so I headed over to the school to see if any fruit was left there.

When I got to the school fields, I found even more berries than I needed and more still ripening, even though many people had already picked there. I suddenly recognized what had happened: blackberry canes produce much more when their fruit is picked. Because our neighborhood had shared this patch for years, the canes responded with crops year after year. Where the canes had not been

I headed over to the school to see if any fruit was left there.



## HELP THOU MINE UNBELIEF

used, they had remained dry and fruitless. Through sharing that blackberry patch over the years, we had created abundance—there was more fruit than all of us collectively needed.

This experience reminded me of how tithes and fast offerings work. The Lord has promised us that when we pay tithing, He will open “the windows of heaven, and pour [us] out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (3 Nephi 24:10). In sharing what we have through inspired programs of the Church, we create temporal and spiritual abundance for our families, our communities, and ourselves. ■

Rhiannon Gainor, California, USA

One weekend I woke up and was unable to hear in my left ear. I called an ear, nose, and throat doctor and made an appointment.

The doctor immediately sent me to an audiologist for a hearing test. I began to worry when I could not hear any of the test sounds in my left ear. At the end of the test, the audiologist concluded that I had sensorineural hearing loss, meaning a cranial nerve used in hearing was damaged.

I was shocked. I was only 26 years old and was already discussing the need for a hearing aid. One of my biggest passions is music. Would I still be able to play my instruments and sing?

The doctor prescribed a steroid to see if it would help, but he was positive my hearing loss was permanent.

My emotions soon got the better of me, and tears flooded my eyes. I was afraid of what the future would bring, and I was sad that I would never hear normally again.

That night my husband, Brian, suggested that he give me a priesthood blessing. I expected that the blessing would give me comfort and strength to deal with my hearing loss, but instead Brian promised in his blessing that my hearing would be fully restored. I couldn't believe it.

“My husband must be mistaken,” I thought. The doctor had seen many cases like mine and said that my hearing would not return.

Afterward, I asked Brian if he thought the promised blessing was his will or the Lord's. Brian told me he had felt a strong prompting to make the promise. I wasn't convinced.

As I pondered my condition, I remembered a scripture in the book of Mark where Jesus tells a desperate father that “all things are possible to him that believeth.” The man responded, “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief” (Mark 9:23–24). This was my plea to my Heavenly Father that night. I wanted to believe that I would be healed, but I was unsure. I lacked faith the Lord would help me in my crisis.

After my prayer I thought about a lesson I had taught the young women about the power of priesthood blessings. I had told the class to ask for blessings and that the Lord can heal the sick through blessings. How could I expect them to believe me if I lacked faith? I decided to put my trust in the Lord—He had not lied to me before.

Two weeks later, my hearing completely returned. The audiologist and doctor were shocked.

I will forever be grateful to Heavenly Father that my hearing was restored, but I am even more grateful for the lesson I learned. Even if it's not always in the way we are promised in a blessing, I know the Lord will bless us if we put our faith and trust in Him. ■

Stephanie Hughes, Texas, USA



# FEELING THE **SPIRIT** OF **INSTITUTE**

**The sometimes negative environment of the university weighed on me. As I felt the atmosphere in institute, I knew I was not alone.**

By Jennifer Bohorquez Gomez

When I started college, I loved being part of the educational environment and seeing the enthusiasm of my peers. Thanks to my Father in Heaven, the Perpetual Education Fund, and the support of my family, my dream was unfolding.

During the first weeks of classes, I realized the hard work that awaited me during the next five years: homework,

quizzes, tests, and projects. I started to love my career choice and my college, but I also realized that until then I had lived in a bubble. I saw clearly that I was different from the other college students. They listened to music with obscene lyrics, and their conversations tended to be about being immoral, using illegal drugs, and drinking alcohol on the weekends.

My classmates invited me many times to participate with them in their weekend activities. After I explained my standards and my religion, many respected my views and stopped insisting that I join them, but many more ridiculed my beliefs. I tried to be indifferent to these comments, but I wondered, "Could I live with this all the time?" I prayed constantly to receive strength and not feel alone. But I did not feel that these prayers were answered. Then I realized the things going on around me in the university were not going to change.

Though I was in the university, I continued to attend Young Women, so

I learned about institute one Sunday in sacrament meeting. I decided to go to institute the following Wednesday to ask a question I had about the Perpetual Education Fund.

After a long hectic day at the university, I headed over to institute. I got on public transportation, sat down, and started reading the next chapter for homework. I sighed deeply, wanting a break, and looked up, only to see something inappropriate taking place near me. At my stop I got off and walked to institute, thinking a lot about the homework I needed to turn in the following day.

Though I lived gospel standards, the environment of the university weighed on me as I entered the institute building. I walked in and saw young adult college students dressed modestly and heard them speaking respectfully to each other. Which courses would they take this semester? The Doctrine and Covenants? The Book of Mormon? Missionary preparation?

I approached the clerk, received the answer to the question I had come to ask, and turned to leave. Near the exit I turned around, feeling the atmosphere of institute. I went out the door, and tears flooded my eyes as I felt great joy. I took public transportation back to my house, crying and smiling. An indelible thought came to me: I was not alone.



In that moment I received the answer to my prayers. I felt the Spirit, thought about my experience, and I thanked my Heavenly Father for the joy of believing in the gospel.

When I got home, I hugged my mom and told her about my wonderful experience feeling the love of God. He had never left me and had always been with me, as He is with each of us when we need Him the most. I attended institute throughout my time in college and met many people who remain my good friends. But Jesus Christ is our best source of love and support, and He never leaves us alone. ■

*The author lives in Colombia.*



#### THE POWER OF INSTITUTE

"I know the power that comes from associations in the seminary and institute programs. It has enriched my life, and I know it will do the same for you. It will put

a shield of protection around you to keep you free from the temptations and trials of the world. There is a great blessing in having a knowledge of the gospel. And I know of no better place for the young people of the Church to gain a special knowledge of sacred things than in the institute."

Elder L. Tom Perry (1922–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Receive Truth," *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 61–62.





**By Elder  
M. Russell Ballard**  
Of the Quorum of  
the Twelve Apostles

# *Our Savior's* **ATONEMENT**

*If we could truly understand the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, we would realize how precious is one son or daughter of God.*

**I**n January 2004 our family suffered the tragic loss of our grandson Nathan in an airplane crash. Nathan had served in the Russian-speaking Baltic Mission. He loved the people and knew it was a privilege to serve the Lord. Three months after I officiated at his eternal marriage to his sweetheart, Jennifer, this accident took his life. Nathan's being taken so suddenly from our mortal presence has turned each of our hearts and minds to the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. While it is impossible for me to put into words the full meaning of the Atonement of Christ, I pray that I can explain what His Atonement means to me and our family and what it might also mean to you and yours.

The Savior's precious birth, life, Atonement in the Garden of Gethsemane, suffering on the cross, burial in Joseph's tomb, and glorious Resurrection all became a renewed reality for us. The Savior's Resurrection assures all of us that someday we too will follow Him and experience our own resurrection. What peace, what comfort this great gift is which comes through the loving grace of Jesus Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of all mankind. Because of Him we know we can be with Nathan again.

There is no greater expression of love than the heroic Atonement performed by the Son of God. Were it not for the plan of our Heavenly Father, established before the world began, in a very real sense, all mankind—past, present, and future—would have been left without the hope of eternal progression. As a result

of Adam's transgression, mortals were separated from God (see Romans 6:23) and would be forever unless a way was found to break the bands of death. This would not be easy, for it required the vicarious sacrifice of one who was sinless and who could therefore take upon Himself the sins of all mankind.

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## He knelt among the gnarled olive trees, and in some incredible way that none of us can fully comprehend, the Savior took upon Himself the sins of the world.

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Thankfully, Jesus Christ courageously fulfilled this sacrifice in ancient Jerusalem. There in the quiet isolation of the Garden of Gethsemane, He knelt among the gnarled olive trees, and in some incredible way that none of us can fully comprehend, the Savior took upon Himself the sins of the world. Even though His life was pure and free of sin, He paid the ultimate penalty for sin—yours, mine, and everyone who has ever lived. His mental, emotional, and spiritual anguish were so great they caused Him to bleed from every pore (see Luke 22:44; D&C 19:18). And yet Jesus suffered willingly so that we might all have the opportunity to be washed clean—through having faith in Him, repenting of our sins, being baptized by proper priesthood authority, receiving the purifying gift of the Holy Ghost by confirmation, and accepting all other essential ordinances. Without the Atonement of the Lord, none of these blessings would be available to us, and we could not become worthy and prepared to return to dwell in the presence of God.

I believe that if we could truly understand the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, we would realize how precious is *one* son or daughter of God. I believe our Heavenly Father's everlasting purpose for His children is

generally achieved by the small and simple things we do for one another. At the heart of the English word *atonement* is the word *one*. If all mankind understood this, there would never be anyone with whom we would not be concerned, regardless of age, race, gender, religion, or social or economic standing. We would strive to emulate the Savior and would never be unkind, indifferent, disrespectful, or insensitive to others.

If we truly understood the Atonement and the eternal value of each soul, we would seek out the wayward boy and girl and every other wayward child of God. We would help them to know of the love Christ has for them. We would do all that we can to help prepare them to receive the saving ordinances of the gospel.

When I think of my grandson Nathan and how precious he is to us, I can see and feel more clearly how our Heavenly Father must feel about all of His children. We do not want God to weep because we did not do all we could to share with His children the revealed truths of the gospel. I pray that you will seek to know the blessings of the Atonement and that you will strive to be worthy to serve the Lord in the mission field. It was Jesus who said, "If . . . you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be *one* soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!" (D&C 18:15; emphasis added). Not only that, but great shall be the *Lord's joy* in the soul that repenteth! For precious unto Him is the *one*.

Our Heavenly Father has reached out to us through the Atonement of our Savior. He invites all to "come unto Christ, who is the Holy One of Israel, and partake of his salvation, and the power of his redemption" (Omni 1:26). He has taught us that it is through our faithful adherence to gospel principles, through receiving the saving ordinances that have been restored, through continual service, and by enduring to the end that we can return to His sacred presence. What possible thing in the whole world is remotely as important as to know this?




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If we truly understood the Atonement and the eternal value of each soul, we would seek out the wayward boy and girl and every other wayward child of God. We would help them to know of the love Christ has for them.

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Sadly, in today's world, a person's importance is often judged by the size of the audience before which he or she performs. That is how media and sports programs are rated, how corporate prominence is sometimes determined, and often how governmental rank is obtained. That may be why roles such as father, mother, and missionary seldom receive standing ovations. Fathers, mothers, and missionaries "play" before very small audiences. Yet, in the eyes of the Lord, there may be only *one size* of audience that is of lasting importance—and that is just *one*, each one, you and me, and each *one* of the children of God. The irony of the Atonement is that it is infinite and eternal, yet it is applied individually, one person at a time.

Never, never underestimate how precious is the *one*. Remember always the simple admonition of the Lord: "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Always strive to live worthy of the sacred full blessings of the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. In our sorrow over the separation from our dear Nathan has come the peace that only the Savior and Redeemer can give. Our family has turned to Him, one by one; and we now sing with greater appreciation and understanding:

*Oh, it is wonderful that he should care  
for me*

*Enough to die for me!*

*Oh, it is wonderful, wonderful to me!*

("I Stand All Amazed," *Hymns*, no. 193.)

May you give to others and receive for yourselves every blessing the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ offers. ■

*From an April 2004 general conference address.*



## SUNDAY LESSONS

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This Month's Topic:  
**The Atonement  
of Jesus Christ**

*If you're not sure what you should repent of and when, here are some answers.*

# EIGHT MYTHS about Repentance

**R**epentance isn't easy, and sometimes it's painful. But you are up to the task. It requires change and humility, and you can do it! Here are some common myths about repentance and some really good answers.

**MYTH #1: *I still remember my sin, so I must not have been forgiven.***

“Satan will try to make us believe that our sins are not forgiven because *we* can remember them. Satan is a liar; he tries to blur our vision and lead us away from the path of repentance and forgiveness. God did not promise that *we* would not remember our sins. Remembering will help us avoid making the same mistakes again. But if we stay true and faithful, the memory of our sins will be softened over time.”<sup>1</sup>

—President Dieter F. Uchtdorf

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**MYTH #2: *I still feel guilty, so I must not have been forgiven.***

“For those who are truly repentant but seem unable to feel relief: continue keeping the commandments. I promise you, relief will come in the timetable of the Lord. Healing also requires time.”<sup>2</sup>

—Elder Neil L. Andersen

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**MYTH #3: *Bad thoughts just come into my mind, so there’s nothing I can do about it.***

“Some bad thoughts come by themselves. Others come because we invite them by what we look at and listen to. Talking about or looking at immodest pictures . . . can stimulate powerful emotions. It will tempt you to watch improper [videos] or movies. These things surround you, but you must not participate in them. Work at keeping your thoughts clean by thinking of something good. The mind can think of only one thing at a time. Use that fact to crowd out ugly thoughts. Above all, don’t feed thoughts by reading or watching things that are wrong. If you don’t control your thoughts, Satan will keep tempting you until you eventually act them out.”<sup>3</sup>

—Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015)

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**MYTH #4: *God can’t love me anymore because of my mistakes.***

“God loves all of His children, and He will never cease to love and to hope for us. The plan of our Heavenly Father is clear, and His promises are great: ‘For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world . . . might be saved’ (John 3:17).”<sup>4</sup>

—President Dieter F. Uchtdorf

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**MYTH #5: *My sins are so bad that I can’t be forgiven.***

“However many chances you think you have missed, however many mistakes you feel you have made or talents you think you don’t have, or however far from home and family and God you feel you have traveled, I testify that you have *not* traveled beyond the reach of divine love. It is not possible for you to sink lower than the infinite light of Christ’s Atonement shines.”<sup>5</sup>

—Elder Jeffrey R. Holland

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**MYTH #6: *I’ve stopped committing a serious sin, so I don’t need to see the bishop. I can just pray and be fine, or just tell my parents.***

“The Lord has declared that the bishop is a common judge in Israel (see D&C 107:72, 74). He has the responsibility to determine the worthiness of the members of his ward. By ordination and righteous living, the bishop is entitled to revelation from the Holy Ghost regarding the members of his ward, including you.

“The bishop can help you through the repentance process in ways your parents or other leaders are unable to provide. If the sin is serious enough, he may determine that your privileges in the Church should be restricted. For example, as part of your repentance

process, he may ask you to refrain from partaking of the sacrament or exercising the priesthood for a period of time. He will work with you and determine when you are worthy again to resume those sacred activities.”<sup>6</sup>

—Elder C. Scott Grow

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**MYTH #7:** *I can't talk to the bishop because he'll look down on me.*

“I promise you he will not condemn you. As a servant of the Lord, he will be kind and understanding as he listens to you. He will then help you through the repentance process. He is the Lord's messenger of mercy to help you become clean through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.”<sup>7</sup>

—Elder C. Scott Grow

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**MYTH #8:** *I did it again, so I don't deserve to be forgiven. Maybe I can't change.*

“Sometimes in our repentance, in our daily efforts to become more Christlike, we find ourselves repeatedly struggling with the same difficulties. As if we were climbing a tree-covered mountain, at times we don't see our progress until we get closer to the top and look back from the high ridges. Don't be discouraged. If you are striving and working to repent, you are in the process of repenting.”

“At this very moment, someone is saying, ‘Brother Andersen, you don't understand. You can't feel what I have felt. It is too difficult to change.’

“You are correct; I don't fully understand. But there is One who does. He knows. He has felt your pain. He has declared, ‘I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands’ [Isaiah 49:16]. The Savior is there, reaching out to each of us, bidding us: ‘Come unto me’ [3 Nephi 9:14]. We can repent. We can!”<sup>8</sup>

—Elder Neil L. Andersen

### ***After Confessing, You'll Feel Better***

**Y**ou might worry about what your bishop will say, what he will think of you. Your worries won't prove to be true, though. He only wants to help you. He won't judge or condemn you. Your bishop will understand. And after confessing, you'll feel a million times better, and when you're clean, it's amazing. If you have a problem, take care of it now. The sooner you do, the sooner you'll be clean and have joy.

Molly Jeanette T.



### ***Don't Need to See the Bishop?***

**S**ome time ago I sinned, then said a prayer and thought I had truly repented. One day I felt a great feeling in my heart that I should have a very honest conversation with the bishop. I talked to the bishop, and he guided me where I should improve. I fasted and offered fervent prayers. This time I felt I had truly repented. I know Heavenly Father cares for us and that the Atonement of Christ gives us true forgiveness when we repent and confess our sins.

Awrellyano Gomes da S.

### No Matter How Big the Sin, You Can always Repent

Jesus Christ endured the Atonement for us so that we could repent of our sins. The prophets have said countless times that no matter how big or small the sin, you can always repent. The Savior wants you to repent, and He wants to help you. But He can't force His way into your life; you have to let Him in and let Him know through prayer that you want or need Him in your life. Through all my trials I know God loves me.

Madison B.

### You Can Do It

To those who have fallen, pick yourself up. You have leaders and people who love you and want you to be the best you can be. You can do this together. Always remember Jesus Christ loves you and is with you every step.

Michael Lee T.

### Repentance Transforms You

To have the opportunity to feel forgiven is something very precious to me. You literally feel freed from a heavy weight in your heart, and you feel loved and comforted. If it's a challenge to change, it is worth trying. It totally transforms you into another person, the person God wants you to be, the person you came to earth to fight to become, and even better! Have courage!

Rodrigo Octavio A.



### God Wants You to Repent

Repentance—what a marvelous gift from our Father in Heaven. He has given us the chance to become like Him through the Atonement of Christ. He *wants* us to repent, to come unto him. Like Corianton, we will all make mistakes, some more serious than others, but we ALL make them. Also like Corianton, we can repent and change our life. (See Alma 39–42.) Heavenly Father loves us enough that He wants us to return to Him. No matter what you've done, there's a path back to peace and happiness. ■

McKayla J.

#### NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Point of Safe Return," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2007, 101.
2. Neil L. Andersen, "Repent . . . That I May Heal You," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 42.
3. Richard G. Scott, "Making the Right Choices," *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 37.
4. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Point of Safe Return," 99.
5. Jeffrey R. Holland, "The Laborers in the Vineyard," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2012, 33.
6. C. Scott Grow, "Why and What Do I Need to Confess to My Bishop?" *New Era*, Oct. 2013, 28; *Liahona*, Oct. 2013, 58.
7. C. Scott Grow, "Why and What Do I Need to Confess to My Bishop?" *New Era*, 29; *Liahona*, 59.
8. Neil L. Andersen, "Repent . . . That I May Heal You," 41.

# HE CONQUERED DEATH

“Because of the sacrifice of our beloved Redeemer, death has no sting, the grave has no victory, Satan has no lasting power, and we are ‘begotten . . . again unto a lively hope by the *resurrection* of Jesus Christ’” (1 Peter 1:3; emphasis added).

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the First Presidency, April 2015 general conference





# I'm Feeling . . .

These scripture cards can lift you up when you're down.

**N**o matter how you're feeling, God knows you, loves you, and understands what you're going through. In fact, He loves you so much that He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to perform the Atonement so you could overcome challenges, be happy, and return to live with Him again (see John 3:16).

That may not seem easy when you're feeling down, but there's a place you can go to find help: the scriptures.

The following cards describe great examples from the scriptures that show how God is always there for you. So whenever you're feeling sad, lonely, or frustrated, you can pull out these cards, turn to the scriptures listed, and know that God is with you.

## AFRAID

Christ overcame everything, so I have nothing to fear.

**Mark 4:36-41:** The disciples were afraid when they were out at sea and caught in the middle of a wild storm. Christ calmed the storm with the command "Peace, be still." When I am afraid, I call on the Lord, and He will help me feel calm.

.....  
**Additional Scriptures:**  
 Isaiah 41:10  
 John 14:27  
 2 Timothy 1:7  
 Doctrine and Covenants 6:34

## CONFUSED

The Lord knows how to solve every problem I face, so I can rely on His Atonement.

**Joseph Smith—History 1:5-20:** Joseph Smith felt confused about which church he should join. He asked God and got an answer, which led to the Restoration of the Lord's Church. When I'm feeling confused, I pray to God, and He'll answer me.

.....  
**Additional Scriptures:**  
 Luke 1:37  
 Mosiah 26:13  
 Ether 2:16-3:6  
 Doctrine and Covenants 58:4

## SAD

Christ felt all the sadness I will have to experience, so He can comfort me.

**Doctrine and Covenants 121:1-9:** While in Liberty Jail, Joseph Smith felt despair because members of the Church were suffering, and he was too. He prayed and received reassurance. God will be with me when I turn to Him for comfort.

.....  
**Additional Scriptures:**  
 John 14:18  
 John 16:33  
 Alma 17:10  
 Doctrine and Covenants 122



**INSTRUCTIONS:** Cut out these cards and hold them together with a loose-leaf ring, string, or ribbon. You may want to laminate them or keep them in a sheet protector to help them last. You can download more copies for friends or family at [liahona.lds.org](http://liahona.lds.org).

### **GUILTY**

The Savior took my sins upon Himself so that I can be forgiven and freed from sorrow and guilt.

**Alma 36:16-21:** Alma the Younger committed some serious sins, but he was still able to be forgiven and have his burden of guilt taken away. By repenting, I can have the peace Alma describes.

.....  
**Additional Scriptures:**

Revelation 3:19  
 2 Nephi 9:21-22  
 Alma 38:8-9  
 Moroni 10:32-33

### **DISCOURAGED**

I can overcome discouragement as I seek to understand Christ's Atonement and access His power.

**Alma 26:27:** Ammon reminds his brethren that when they were feeling discouraged, the Lord comforted them and promised to give them success. God makes that promise to me if I will turn to Him.

.....  
**Additional Scriptures:**

Matthew 11:28-30  
 Matthew 26:36-46  
 Alma 29:10-13  
 Moroni 7:33

### **OVERWHELMED**

Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, I can receive faith and strength to endure all things.

**Mosiah 24:13-15:** The people of Alma were slaves to a wicked taskmaster. They prayed and received strength to bear their burdens. When I'm overwhelmed, God will strengthen me too.

.....  
**Additional Scriptures:**

Alma 26:27  
 Alma 31:33  
 Alma 36:3  
 Doctrine and Covenants 24:8

### DOUBTING

I can find answers to my questions in the gospel and trust the Savior to help me overcome any doubt.

**James 1:5-6:** James encourages me to ask God if I do not understand, but he gives the admonition to ask in faith. He understood that asking questions leads to a desire to understand, while doubt leads to unbelief.

.....  
**Additional Scriptures:**

- Mosiah 4:9
- Alma 32:28
- Mormon 9:27
- Doctrine and Covenants 6:36

### SICK

The Lord knows how to succor me and because of Him I will one day be healed from all my sicknesses.

**Luke 8:43-48:** While on earth, Christ healed many people. I can be healed too. That healing may not come immediately or in this life, but He'll comfort me (a form of healing) and completely heal me in the Resurrection.

.....  
**Additional Scriptures:**

- Matthew 4:23-24
- Mark 9:14-27
- Alma 7:11-13
- 3 Nephi 17:7-10



### FRUSTRATED

Christ's grace can give me the patience to overcome frustration with myself and others.

**2 Nephi 4:16-35:** Even Nephi, as faithful as he was, got down on himself. When I'm trying to overcome my weaknesses, complete a task, or withstand temptations, I can find comfort in knowing that God will help me and provide peace.

.....  
**Additional Scriptures:**

- Alma 34:41
- Alma 38:4-5
- Doctrine and Covenants 67:13
- Doctrine and Covenants 98:12



### WORTHLESS

Christ suffered for me because He loves me and knows of my infinite worth.

**Luke 15:3-7:** The parable of the lost sheep shows that the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, will do anything to recover one lost sheep. I'm worth so much to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ that They provided a way to return to Them and be like Them.

.....  
**Additional Scriptures:**

- John 3:16
- John 15:13
- Alma 24:14
- Doctrine and Covenants 18:10-13

## LONELY

Because Christ suffered the Atonement for me, I do not have to endure any trial alone.

**Job 1:21-22:** Job suffered terrible things, including the death of his children. He endured by relying on the Lord. When I turn to the Lord by coming to know Him, I will see that I'm never completely alone because He is with me.

.....  
**Additional Scriptures:**

Luke 22:39-44  
John 16:32  
Doctrine and Covenants 121:9-10  
Doctrine and Covenants 121:46



## HURT

Any hurt I feel can be healed through Christ's Atonement, and His love will inspire me to forgive others.

**1 Nephi 7:6-21:** Laman and Lemuel bound Nephi and threatened to leave him in the wilderness. Nephi prayed and, with the Lord's help, was freed and forgave his brothers. I can also pray, feel peace, and find strength to forgive.

.....  
**Additional Scriptures:**

Psalms 147:3  
Isaiah 53:3-5  
Luke 23:1-47  
1 Nephi 19:9

## WEAK

Christ's mercy and grace will give me strength to overcome challenges even when I feel weak.

**Alma 2:27-31:** When the Nephites were in battle, they turned to the Lord and He strengthened them. As I face all kinds of spiritual and emotional attacks, I might feel weak, but the Lord will strengthen me.

.....  
**Additional Scriptures:**

Matthew 7:24-27  
Mosiah 9:17-18  
Helaman 5:12  
Ether 12:27





**By President  
Henry B. Eyring**  
First Counselor in  
the First Presidency

## HOW TO BUILD UNITY

**W**e live in many different circumstances. We will come from every nation and many ethnic backgrounds into the kingdom of God.

We know from experience that joy comes when we are blessed with unity. Heavenly Father cannot grant it to us as individuals. The joy of unity He wants so much to give us is not solitary. **We must seek it and qualify for it** with others. It is not surprising then that God urges us to **gather** so that He can bless us. He wants us to gather into families. He has established classes, wards, and branches and commanded us to meet together often. In those gatherings, which God has designed for us, lies our great opportunity. **We can pray and work for the unity** that will bring us joy and multiply our power to serve.

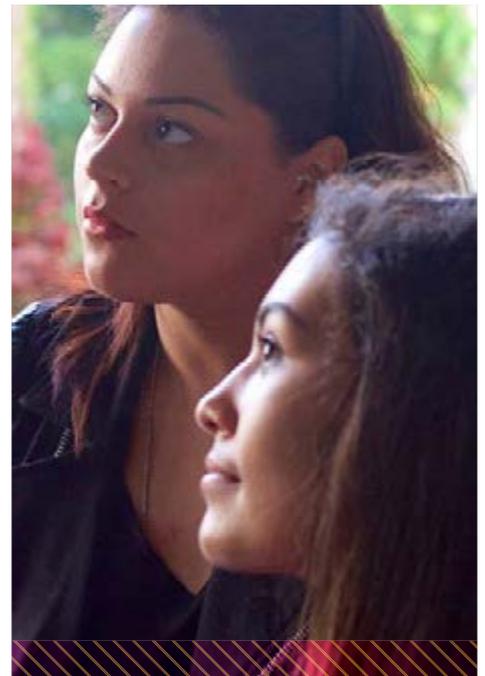
In addition to ordinances, there are principles we are following as a people which are leading to greater unity.

**1. Revelation.** Revelation is the only way we can know how to

follow the will of the Lord together. It requires light from above. The Holy Ghost will testify to our hearts, and to the hearts of those gathered around with us, what He would have us do. And it is by keeping His commandments that we can have our hearts knit together as one.

**2. Be humble.** Pride is the great enemy of unity. You have seen and felt its terrible effects. Happily I am seeing more and more skillful peacemakers who calm troubled waters before harm is done. You could be one of those peacemakers, whether you are in the conflict or an observer. One way I have seen it done is to search for anything on which we agree.

**3. Speak well of each other.** Think of the last time you were asked what you thought about how someone else was doing in their service in your family or in the Church. I can **promise** you a feeling of **peace and joy** when you speak generously of others in the Light of Christ.



### HOW HAVE YOU APPLIED THIS?

The Lord wants us to love our brothers and sisters, even if people are not the same as we are. We need to bring our brothers and sisters back to church. If we love them enough and pray for them, they will come back to church and back into our Lord's arms.

Samuel Z., 16, Arizona, USA

With the unity I see increasing, the Lord will be able to perform what the world will think of as miraculous. The Saints can accomplish any purpose of the Lord when fully united in righteousness. ■

*From an October 2008 general conference address.*



# Why We Do BAPTISMS FOR THE DEAD

*A lot more goes on during baptisms for the dead than we see.*

If you've done baptisms for the dead before, you've probably felt some of the blessings of temple worship: you feel less stressed, more focused, and more filled with peace and faith.

The blessings you can receive from going to the temple are incredible, but temple worship is about more than just the blessings *you* receive. Sometimes it's hard to remember the other person involved in your temple worship, but he or she is more than a name on a blue or pink slip of paper. When you are baptized

or confirmed by proxy for (in behalf of) someone, you are helping a real person.

So what do you know about these people who have died? And why is it so important for you to be baptized and confirmed for them? The scriptures give lots of information about the postmortal life.



## TEMPLE WORK: NO GREATER BLESSING

"What a marvelous thing that is that you, an ordinary boy or girl, can stand in the place of some great man or woman who at one time lived upon the earth but who is now powerless to move forward without the blessing that you can give to him or her. . . . There is no greater blessing. . . . And it will be your privilege and your opportunity and your responsibility to live worthy to go to the temple of the Lord and there be baptized in behalf of someone else."

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910-2008), "Inspirational Thoughts," *Ensign*, Apr. 2002, 4.

- 1 Physical Death**  
Because of the Fall of Adam, everyone born on earth experiences death (see Moses 6:48). At death, a person's spirit is separated from the body, and their spirit goes to the spirit world to await resurrection.

## 2. The Spirit World: Paradise and Spirit Prison

The spirit world is divided into paradise and spirit prison. The people who were baptized and stayed faithful in their mortal life go to paradise. This is a place of rest, peace, and joy. Jesus Christ visited and taught the spirits in paradise between His death and Resurrection (see D&C 138:18–27).

Good people who died without gospel knowledge go to spirit prison. This is also where those who were disobedient or wicked in their mortal lives go. Righteous spirits teach the gospel to these people, and they then have the chance to accept the gospel and repent (see D&C 138:28–37). Without a body, though, they can't get baptized or participate in the other ordinances necessary to receive eternal life. (See Alma 40:14.)



## 3. Proxy Ordinances

Fortunately, Heavenly Father is merciful, loving, and just, so He provides a way for all His children to be saved. This is where you can help. When you perform proxy ordinances for people, they have the chance to accept these ordinances. You can do for them what they can't do for themselves on their path to eternal life. These repentant souls can "be redeemed, through obedience to the ordinances of the house of God" (D&C 138:58; see also verse 59). And you can experience the great joy that comes from helping someone in spirit prison receive these essential ordinances.



## 4. Resurrection

Through Jesus Christ's Resurrection, everyone born on earth will overcome physical death and be resurrected (see 1 Corinthians 15:22). Jesus taught, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19). During the Resurrection, everyone's spirits will be reunited with their bodies. This means everyone—those who lived wickedly, those who lived righteously, and those who repented and received ordinances by proxy after death.



## 5. Judgment

Once everyone has been resurrected, each person will meet with God and be judged "according to their works" (3 Nephi 27:15), including their acceptance of ordinances (see 3 Nephi 27:16–20). Only those who have received the gospel ordinances (whether in person or through temple work) and kept the covenants that go with those ordinances will have eternal life.

Because you are a living mortal and a worthy holder of a temple recommend, you have the incredible opportunity and responsibility to help your fellow children of God on their path to eternal life. *You* are a central part of God's plan. ■



# I KNOW THAT **MY REDEEMER LIVES**



*After our parents abandoned us, we learned that Jesus Christ never would.*

**Name withheld**

**W**hen I was 14, my dad left our family, and my mom was forced to flee the country. I was left with my three younger siblings, Ephraim, age 9; Jonathan, 6; and Grace, 3 (names have been changed). Nothing could have prepared us for this sudden change. For the first time, we were alone.



### HE GIVES US STRENGTH

“Our Savior . . . knows our struggles, our heartaches, our temptations, and our suffering, for He willingly experienced them all as an essential part of His Atonement. And because of this, His Atonement empowers Him to succor us—to give us the strength to bear it all.”

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Strengthened by the Atonement of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 61, 62.

Now, years later, I still have the picture of those words from above my bed in my heart and mind. That message has helped my brother Ephraim and me in our years of service as full-time missionaries and in striving now to live celestial marriages.

I could have missed a lot in my life had I doubted instead of trusting Christ. No matter how difficult life is, it has never been too difficult for the Savior, who suffered in Gethsemane. He can sustain one’s life with one sentence. He knows everything from the beginning to the end. His comfort is more powerful than any heartache this life can bring. Through His Atonement, there is no permanent problem—only constant hope, grace, peace, and love. Believe me, I know! I know that my Redeemer lives! ■

*The author lives in the Philippines.*

Extended family soon offered to take each of us in, but if we went to live with them, we would be separated. It was a difficult decision. How could we reject their well-intentioned help? But at the same time, how could we give up years of playing, laughing, caring for one another, and watching each other grow?

Initially, my brothers and I turned down their help, thinking I could work to support us and we could stay together. But we knew that we could not provide the care our youngest sister needed, and so, with tears in our eyes, we let her go.

For the next few months, I worked as a building painter to buy food for my brothers and me. My income was insufficient to pay the bills for electricity and water, so we had to live without them.

Despite this trial and the gossip of others that accompanied it, our faith didn’t waver. Every night, I would gather Ephraim and Jonathan around a lamp to read the Book of Mormon. I would trim the wick so that it would produce less smoke, but we would still have to clean our noses that had turned black by the time we finished reading. But it was worth it.

Reading the Book of Mormon brought us closer to Christ. After we read, we would kneel down together and take turns saying our prayers. We asked for comfort for our problem

that seemed to be without a solution. We finished reading the book, and our faith in Jesus Christ grew stronger.

One day I came home tired from work and threw myself on our lower bunk bed. Looking up, I saw a paper posted under the bed above me. It said: “I Know That My Redeemer Lives!” My brother Jonathan had put it there. How close children are to the heavens that even a Primary child can be an instrument in sending a message from God to comfort a troubled heart and mind!

This testimony sustained me when I realized I just couldn’t provide for our needs and we had to leave our home. Jonathan was taken to live with my mother’s side of the family, but Ephraim and I chose to stay with our other grandparents because they were members of the Church. In their home we arose early to do chores before school, then cared for our grandfather late into the night. It was exhausting. However, the Lord was mindful of us, and we stayed close to the Church.

Every time I felt like giving up, I was reminded of the special moments I had had with my siblings as we read from the Book of Mormon surrounding a lamp. I know Christ was there beside us in those difficult times. From the moment our family members separated from one another, He did not forsake us. “I know that my Redeemer lives!”

# A True Pearl



By Amy M. Morgan

Based on a true story

*“By small and simple things are great things brought to pass”*  
(Alma 37:6).

Jetta Pearl Stewart pulled off her bonnet and plopped down on the porch next to Father. “What’s a pearl?” she asked him.

Eight-year-old Jetta knew what a pearl was, but she loved hearing Father’s answer. Like always, Father explained how pearls grow in oysters, layer upon layer, until they become a bright, shiny jewel.

“Pearls shine like you, my little Jetta Pearl,” he said, smiling. Jetta smiled back. She liked being his Pearl.

At dinner that night, Father told Jetta he had an important question for her.

“Ever since you were little, you have had a special way with music,” Father said. “Would you like to learn the piano?”

Jetta’s eyes widened. “Oh, yes!”

“It would mean traveling far away and staying with your teacher for a while,” Mother said. “No one here in Milburn can teach you.”

Jetta’s smile faded. She had never been away from her family for more than a day. And to be *far* away . . .

*Jetta wanted to play the piano, but could she leave her family?*

“But it’s important for us to develop our talents, even when it’s difficult,” Father said.

Mother nodded. “You must work very hard,” she said.

Jetta *loved* music. And she had always wanted to play the piano. Slowly, a smile crept onto her face. “I’m going to play the piano!”

But the next morning, as Jetta watched Father hitch the horses to the wagon, she didn’t feel excited at all. Today she was just scared. She hadn’t expected to be leaving home so soon.

Jetta slowly climbed up into the wagon next to Father.

“You ready, Jetta Pearl?” he said.

She didn’t feel ready, but Jetta nodded. The wagon lurched forward.

After a while, Father glanced over at her. “Do you know how proud your mother and I are of you?”

Jetta nodded. “But what if you need my help at home?”

Father smiled. “We’ll sure miss you, but this is a way only you can help. You’ll be serving Heavenly Father by developing gifts He gave you.”

She hadn’t thought about it like that. Could her musical talent really be a gift from Heavenly Father?

Father continued. “It will take time, but little by little you’ll get better at playing piano. And then you’ll be able to serve lots of people.”

Jetta felt her fear start to fade. She was going to learn the piano *and* serve Heavenly Father. It would be scary, but she knew that He would help her.

Father winked. “Layer by layer, my little Pearl is getting bright and shiny.”

Just like Father had said, little by little Jetta learned to play the piano. She even learned how to play the organ.

After a few months, Jetta returned home. That Sunday she became Milburn’s very first organist! Her heart raced as she sat at the huge organ the community had worked to buy for her to play. It was so beautiful



that Jetta was almost afraid to touch it. She had to sit on a book to reach the keys.

She took a deep breath and started to play. The notes soared across the room, full and beautiful.

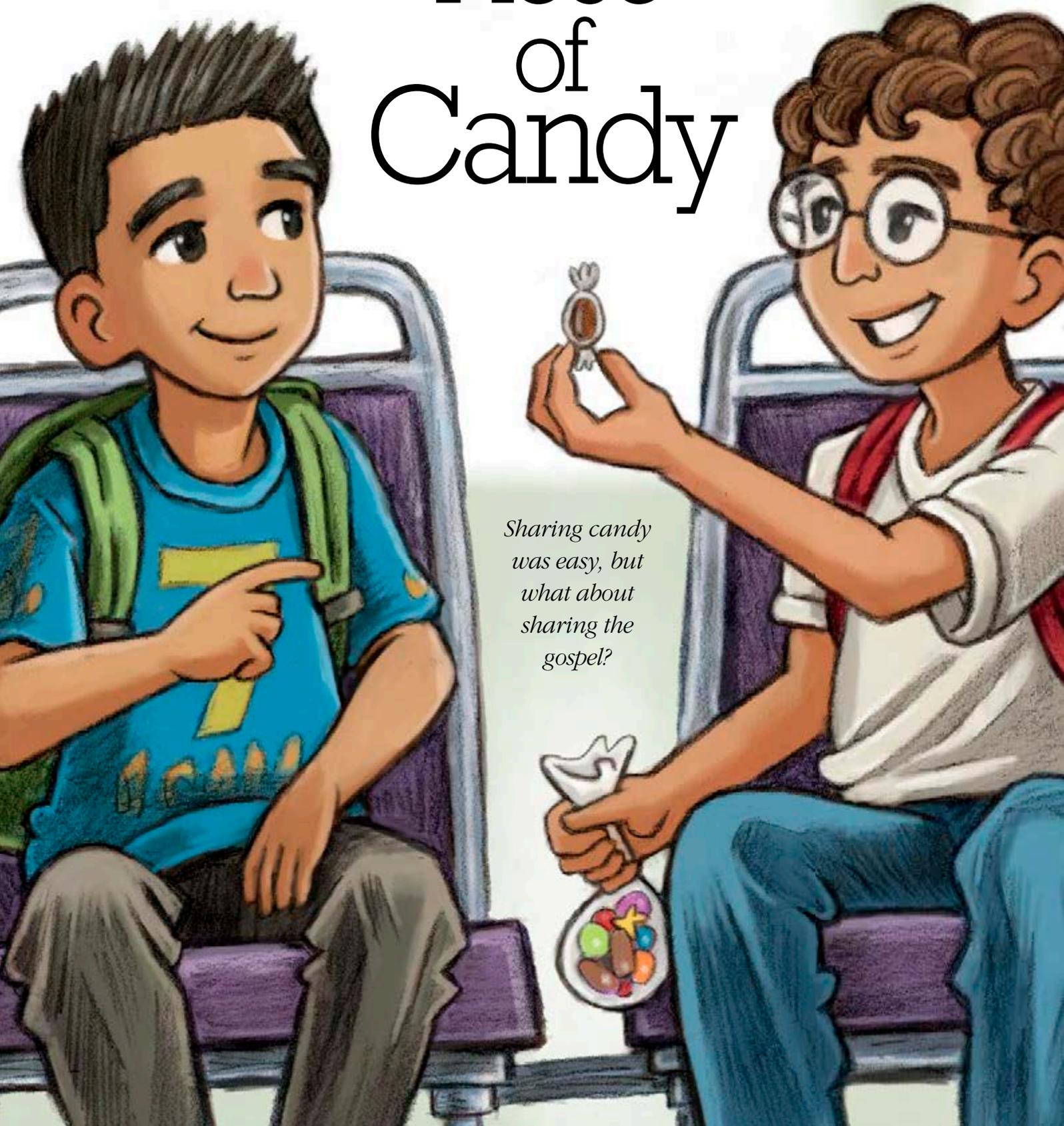
Jetta sneaked a peek at the congregation. People were smiling as they sang. Jetta smiled too. Her playing was far from perfect, but she was using her talents to serve.

She remembered Father's words: "Pearls shine like you, Jetta Pearl."

Little by little, layer by layer, Heavenly Father was making her into a true pearl. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

# One Piece of Candy



*Sharing candy  
was easy, but  
what about  
sharing the  
gospel?*

By Brad Wilcox

Based on a true story

*"I want to be a missionary now"*  
(Children's Songbook, 168).

Want some candy?" José held out a brown piece of candy to his friend Pedro as they rode home from school together on the city bus.

"Sure," Pedro said. He reached out to take the candy and popped it into his mouth.

José picked out a yellow candy from the small bag. The boys were quiet as the bus rumbled along. Their city in Argentina was large. They had a long bus ride each day to get to school. José's mamá always gave him money to buy a little bag of candy to help pass the time.

"Want some more?" José held out a handful of brown candies.

"Yeah, thanks!" Pedro said. "Why don't you like them? They're really good."

José paused for a moment to think and licked his lips. "I guess because they are coffee flavored."

"Why don't you like coffee flavor? It's so good."

"Well, I'm a Mormon, and we don't drink coffee, so I guess I'm not used to the flavor."

Pedro looked confused. "What's a Mormon? And why don't you drink coffee?"

"A Mormon is someone who is a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We believe that God wants us to take care of our bodies, so we don't drink coffee, tea, or alcohol. And we don't smoke."

"But this is just candy," Pedro said. "It's not *real* coffee."

"I know," said José. "But I still don't want to eat it."

Pedro nodded. "Well, you can give me all the brown ones. What else does your Church teach you?"

"Every Sunday we go to

church and learn about Jesus and Heavenly Father. We also learn lots of fun songs. Actually, all of the kids are going to sing and talk in our Church meeting this Sunday. Why don't you ask your mom if you can come to church with me? You can meet the missionaries too."

"OK," Pedro said. "Do they have any coffee-flavored candy they want to get rid of too?"

José laughed. "No, but they have something even better to share!" ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

## WHAT IS THE WORD OF WISDOM?

Jesus Christ gave the Word of Wisdom to the Prophet Joseph Smith to help us keep our bodies healthy and strong. You can read this revelation in Doctrine and Covenants section 89.

The Word of Wisdom tells us what's good and bad for our bodies.

### Good for us:

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Grains
- A little meat

### Bad for us:

- Alcohol
- Tobacco and drugs
- Coffee and tea



By Elder  
**Jeffrey R. Holland**  
Of the Quorum of the  
Twelve Apostles



The coming years  
will be filled with  
wonderful chances  
to do many good  
things.

You have a  
great life ahead  
of you.

# How can I not worry so much?

Try not to  
think about the  
world's troubles  
all the time.

Think the best  
and hope the best  
and have faith in  
the future.

Your  
Heavenly Father  
loves you.

From "Let Virtue Garnish Thy Thoughts  
Unceasingly," *New Era*, Oct. 2007, 4–7.

## OUR PAGE



*I built a model of the Santo Domingo Dominican Republic Temple with toy bricks.*

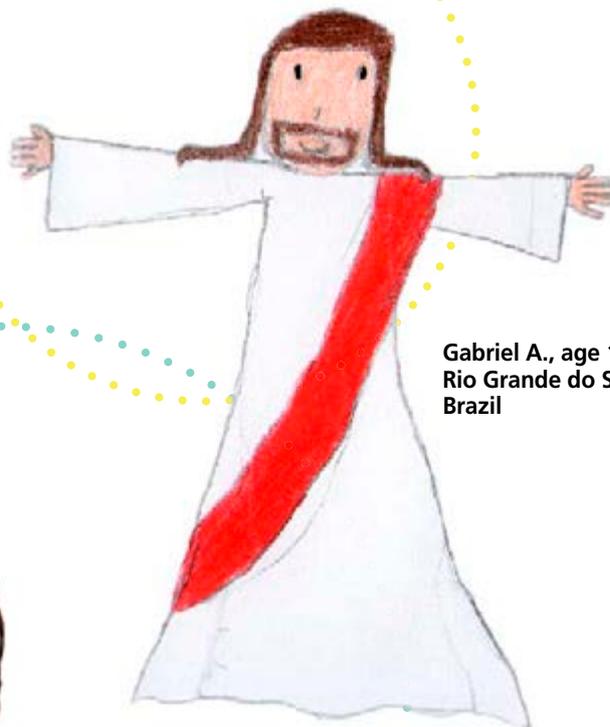
**Daniel U., age 11, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic**



*My cat is named Luz. She always goes out to the sidewalk and returns, but one morning she went out, and I didn't see her. It occurred to me to pray, as it says in Alma 37:37: "Counsel with the Lord in all your doings, and he will direct thee for good."*

*When I finished my prayer, I heard the rattle of her collar. I opened the door and my cat was standing there, waiting to come in. I was amazed and very grateful that our Heavenly Father listens to us even in the smallest things.*

**Bianca R., age 11, Santa Fe, Argentina**



**Gabriel A., age 10,  
Rio Grande do Sul,  
Brazil**

*The Primary music leader taught us a song that teaches that Jesus Christ is my example. If we follow Jesus's example in obeying our parents, He will bless us.*

**Marcha M., age 7, Kananga, Democratic Republic of the Congo**



# One Step Closer to Easter

## Activity for Week 1: Jesus Came to Jerusalem

**Scriptures:** Matthew 21:1, 6–11

**Song:** "Easter Hosanna" (*Liahona*, Apr. 2003; available at LDS.org)

**Hosanna Palm:** Make a palm leaf to remind you of the ones people waved to greet Jesus. Cut five or six handprints out of green paper (or use white paper and color them green). Glue them to a craft stick.

What is one way you can show your love for Jesus?

Each week this month, you and your family can learn more about Jesus and His Resurrection. He lives!

**Week 4:** He Lives Again!

**Week 2:** Jesus Gave Us the Sacrament

**Scriptures:** Luke 22:1, 14, 19–20

**Song:** "In Humility, Our Savior" (*Hymns*, no. 172)

**Sacrament Reminder:** Make a list of words to remind you of the things Jesus has done for us. Put your list in your scriptures where you can look at it during the sacrament.

How can you remember Jesus at home or at school?

S \_\_\_\_\_  
 A \_\_\_\_\_  
 C \_\_\_\_\_  
 R \_\_\_\_\_  
 A \_\_\_\_\_  
 M \_\_\_\_\_  
 E \_\_\_\_\_  
 N \_\_\_\_\_  
 T \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 3:** Jesus Showed Kindness

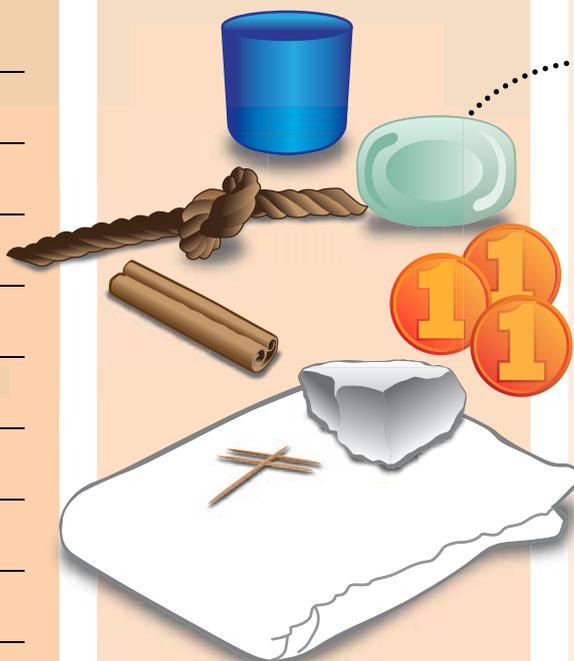
**Scriptures:** Luke 22:47–51; Luke 23:33–34; John 19:25–27

**Song:** "He Sent His Son" (*Children's Songbook*, 34)

**Easter Bag:** Put these items in a bag to open on Easter Sunday. You'll find out what to do with them in next week's activity:

- (1) three coins, (2) small cup, (3) knotted string, (4) soap, (5) small piece of red fabric, (6) small toothpick cross, (7) white cloth, (8) cinnamon stick or other spice, (9) small stone, (10) folded white cloth, (11) picture of Jesus.

How can you follow Jesus by showing kindness?

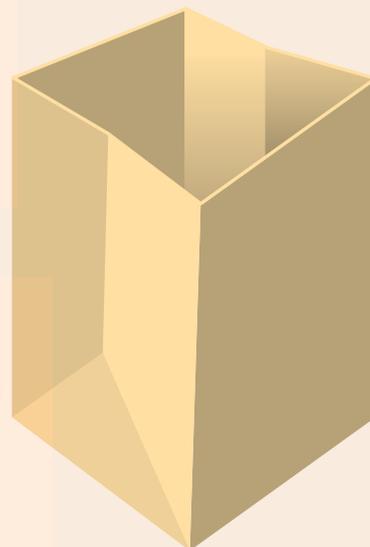


**Song:** "Did Jesus Really Live Again?" (*Children's Songbook*, 64)

**Scriptures and Activity:** As you read these scriptures, take the matching items out of your Easter Bag.

- (1) Matthew 26:14–15; (2) Matthew 26:36, 39; (3) Matthew 27:1–2; (4) Matthew 27:22, 24; (5) Matthew 27:28–29; (6) Matthew 27:31; (7) Matthew 27:59; (8) John 19:40; (9) John 20:1–4; (10) John 20:5–7; (11) John 20:10–20

How does knowing about Jesus's Resurrection make you feel glad? ■



# Abinadi Was Courageous

**A**binadi told the Nephites that Heavenly Father wanted them to repent. King Noah and his priests didn't want to repent, and they threatened to hurt Abinadi. But he obeyed Heavenly Father and kept preaching. How can you be courageous like Abinadi?



After church one Sunday, I took home some pass-along cards. I had some friends at school who weren't LDS, and I wanted to give them a card the next day. That night I started to feel nervous, so I got on my knees and said a prayer. I felt better and braver, and the next day I gave the cards to my friends. They really liked them, and I felt very happy that I gave the cards to them.

**Ava M., age 8, Utah, USA**



**Brooks L., age 8, Florida, USA**

ILLUSTRATION BY JARED BECKSTRAND



Cut, fold, and keep this challenge card!

## I Can Be Courageous!

- Memorize Mosiah 17:9.
- Make a good choice—even if it's a little hard to do.
- Watch chapter 14 of the animated Book of Mormon at [scripturestories.lds.org](http://scripturestories.lds.org).
- I challenge myself to . . .

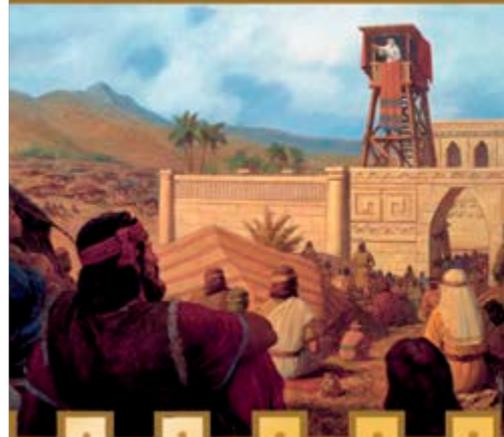
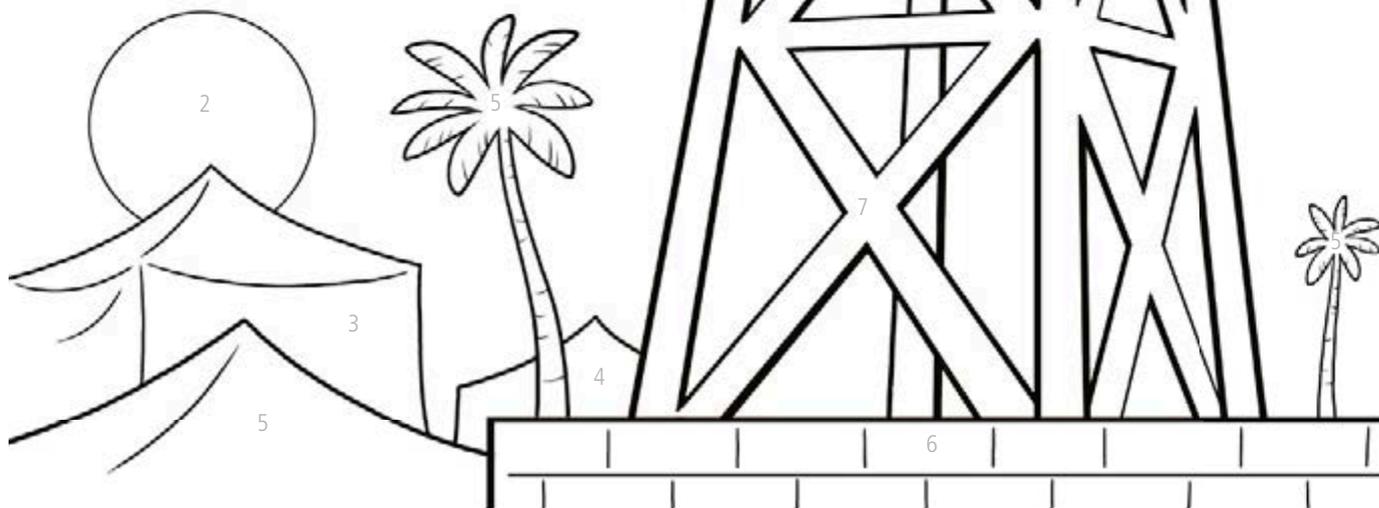
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**ABINADI**

### This Month's Scriptures

After you read these scripture passages, color the matching numbered areas on the tower!

- 1 2 Nephi 31:4–13
- 2 Mosiah 2:5–9, 16–19, 41
- 3 Mosiah 3:5, 8–10, 19
- 4 Mosiah 11:1–3, 20, 27–29
- 5 Mosiah 16:1, 9, 13
- 6 Mosiah 17:1–10
- 7 Alma 11:21, 38–46
- 8 3 Nephi 11:3–11, 13–17

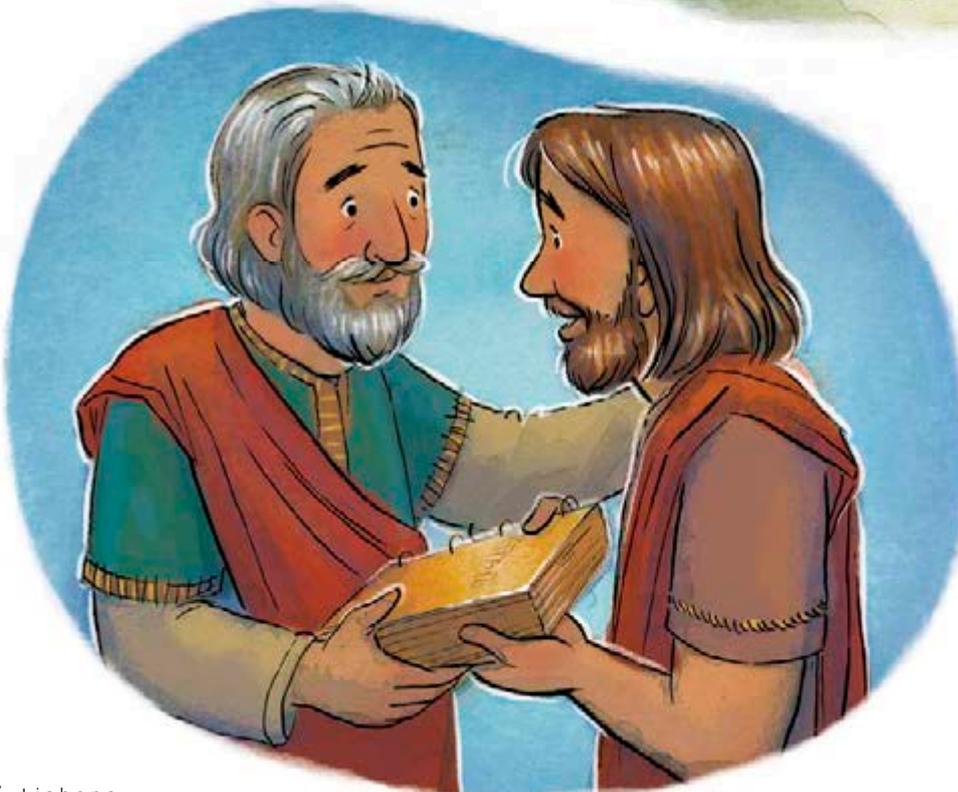
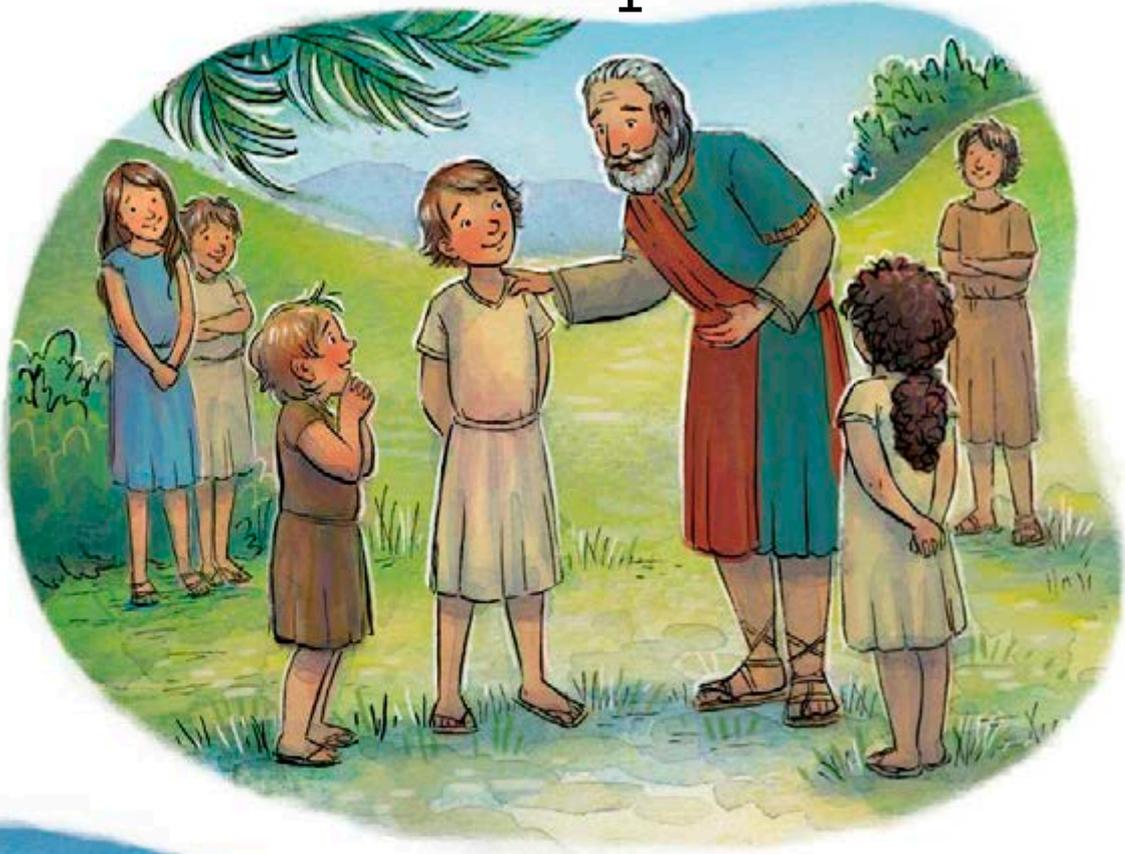


### King Benjamin's Tower

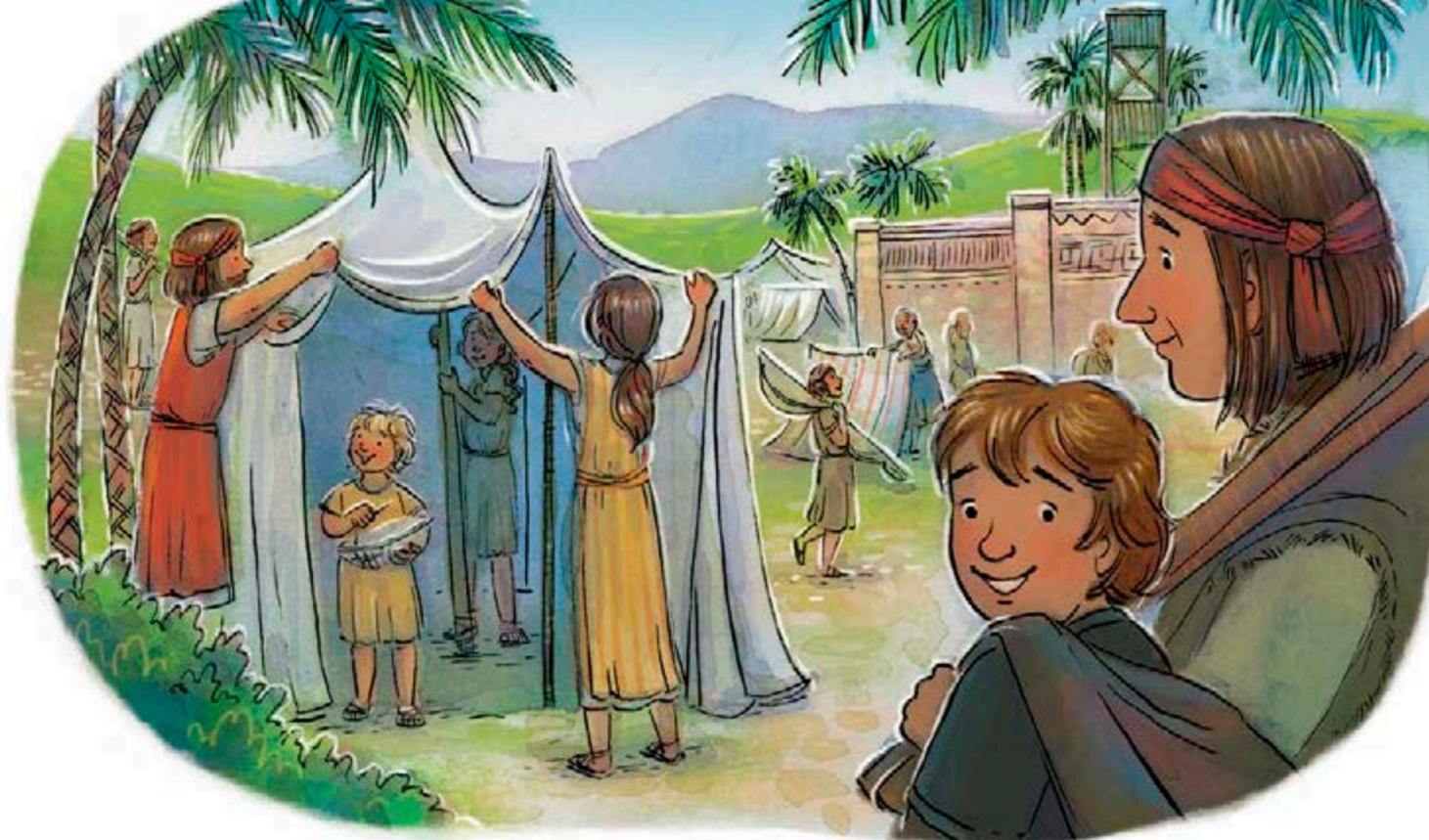
King Benjamin stood on a tall tower so he could speak to many people about repentance, the Atonement of Jesus Christ, and believing in God. Read more about King Benjamin in the next article. Today, prophets speak to many people using TV, computers, and Church magazines. Look for another reading challenge next month! ■

# King Benjamin Teaches His People

Once there was a good king named King Benjamin. He taught his people to follow God so they could have peace.



King Benjamin was getting old. He gave his son Mosiah the scriptures and the compass called the Liahona. He wanted him to take good care of these important things.

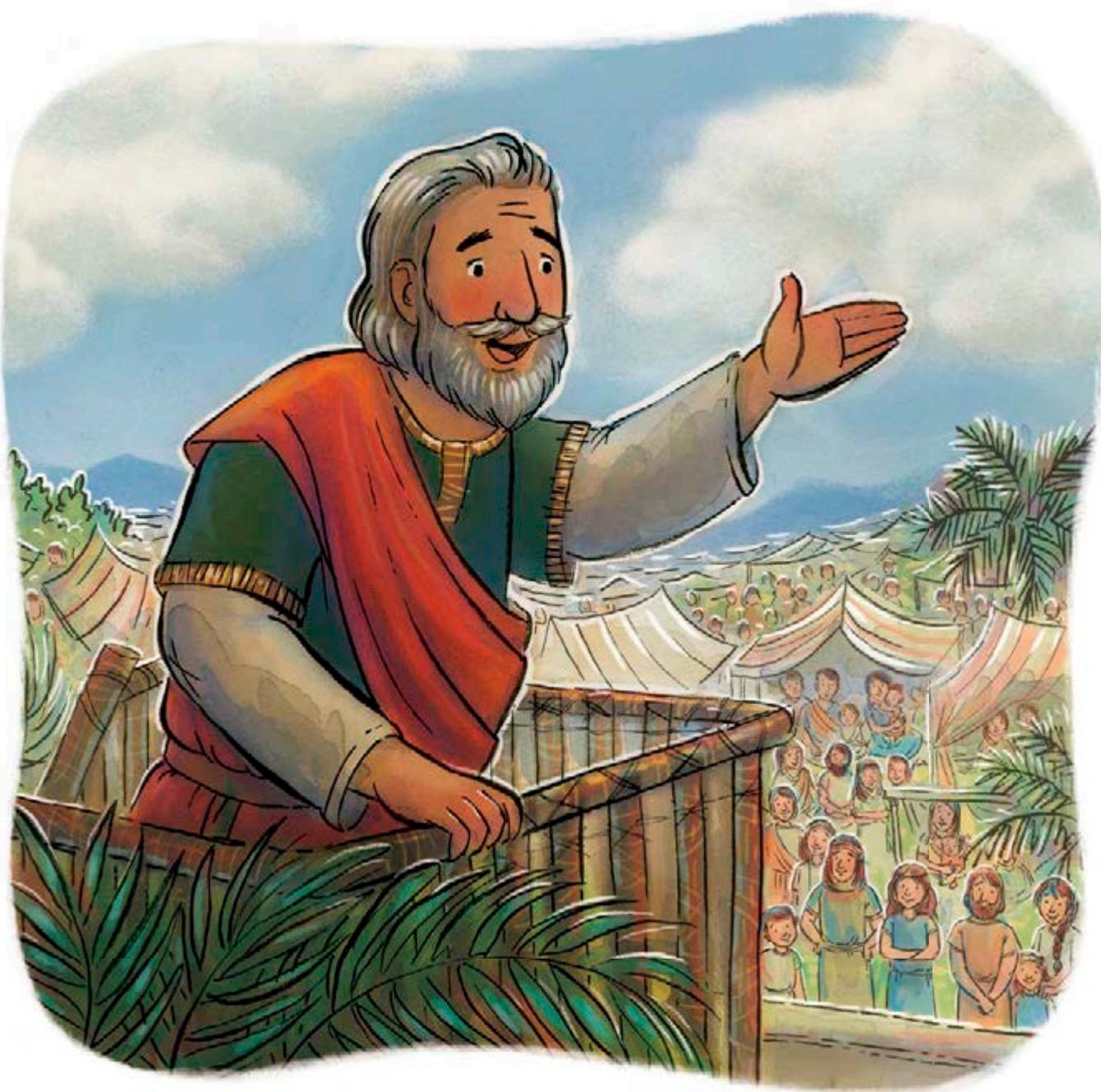


King Benjamin wanted to talk to his people before he died.  
He asked them to come to the temple.

People came from all across the land. They set up their  
tents with their families. What would the king tell them?

The people looked  
up and saw the king  
standing on a tower.  
Then the king  
began to speak.





King Benjamin told the people what Heavenly Father wanted them to know. He told them about Jesus Christ. He told them to keep the commandments and help other people. Then they would be called the followers of Christ. And they would be able to live with Heavenly Father again!

Today our prophet teaches us what Heavenly Father wants us to know so we can live with Him again. ■

*From Mosiah 2–5.*

# We Listen to Our Prophet Today



ILLUSTRATION BY APRYL STOTT



**By Elder  
Dallin H. Oaks**  
Of the Quorum of the  
Twelve Apostles

## RESURRECTION— THE BEGINNING OF IMMORTALITY

*Death is not the conclusion of our identity.*

I wonder if we fully appreciate the enormous significance of our belief in a literal, universal resurrection. . . . The Prophet Joseph Smith declared:

“The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it” [*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 49].

Of all things in that glorious ministry, why did the Prophet Joseph Smith use the testimony of the Savior’s death, burial, and Resurrection as the fundamental principle of our religion . . . ? The answer is found in the fact that the Savior’s Resurrection is central to what the prophets have called “the great and eternal plan of deliverance from death” (2 Nephi 11:5).

In our eternal journey, the resurrection is the mighty milepost that signifies the end of mortality and the



beginning of immortality. . . . We also know, from modern revelation, that without the reuniting of our spirits and our bodies in the resurrection we could not receive a “fulness of joy” (D&C 93:33–34). . . .

The “lively hope” we are given by the resurrection [see 1 Peter 1:3] is our conviction that death is not the conclusion of our identity but merely a necessary step in the destined transition from mortality to immortality. This hope changes the whole perspective of mortal life. . . .

The assurance of resurrection gives us the strength and perspective to endure the mortal challenges faced by each of us and by those we love, such things as the physical, mental, or emotional deficiencies we bring with us at birth or acquire during mortal life.

Because of the resurrection, we know that these mortal deficiencies are only temporary!

The assurance of resurrection also gives us a powerful incentive to keep the commandments of God during our mortal lives. Resurrection is much more than merely reuniting a spirit to a body held captive by the grave. . . . The prophet Amulek taught, “That same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world” (Alma 34:34). . . .

The assurance that the resurrection will include an opportunity to be with our family members—husband, wife, parents, brothers and sisters, children, and grandchildren—is a powerful encouragement for us to fulfill our family responsibilities in mortality. It helps us live together in love in this life in anticipation of joyful reunions and associations in the next. ■

*From “Resurrection,” Ensign, May 2000, 14–16; Liahona, July 2000, 16–19.*



## **How do we avoid being swept along in the strong currents of the adversary's wind and waves?**

"Let us be grateful for the beautiful Old Ship Zion, for without it we are cast adrift, alone and powerless, swept along without rudder or oar, swirling with the strong currents of the adversary's wind and waves.

"Hold tight, brothers and sisters, and sail on within the glorious ship, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and we will reach our eternal destination."

# Also in This Issue

## FOR YOUNG ADULTS

### FEELING THE **SPIRIT** OF **INSTITUTE**

Once I began my university studies, I noticed my standards were so different from my peers'. I prayed to find a place where I wouldn't feel so alone—and I found it.



p. 46

## FOR YOUTH

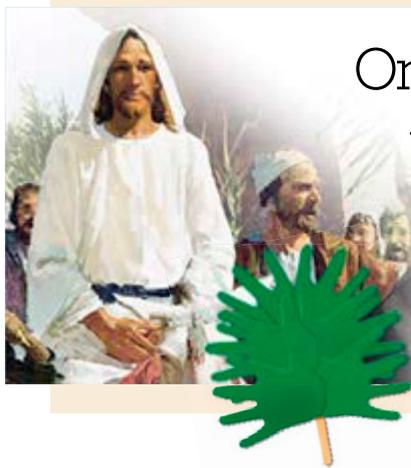


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### **EIGHT MYTHS** about Repentance

Have you repented but still feel guilty? Do you feel like you can't be forgiven or are unworthy of forgiveness? Read this article to better understand truths about repentance.

## FOR CHILDREN



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### One Step Closer to **Easter**

Learn more about Jesus Christ and Easter by doing one of these activities every week this month!

