

Student Teacher 2—Alma 37:35–37

Explain to your fellow students that it is common for those who plant trees to tie or strap a young tree to a stake and then to remove the support once the tree matures. Ask them why they think that is done. Then read the following story about a tree that President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) planted in his yard:

President Gordon B. Hinckley planted a young tree near his home soon after he was married. He “paid little attention to it as the years passed.” One day he noticed the tree was misshapen and leaning to the west. He tried to push it upright, but the trunk was too thick. He tried using a rope and pulleys to straighten it, but it would not bend. Finally, he took his saw and cut off the heavy branch on the west side, leaving an ugly scar. He later said of the tree:



“The other day I looked again at the tree. It is large. Its shape is better. It is a great asset to the home. But how serious was the trauma of its youth and how brutal the treatment I used to straighten it.

“When it was first planted, a piece of string would have held it in place against the forces of the wind. I could have and should have supplied that string with ever so little effort. But I did not, and it bent to the forces that came against it” (Gordon B. Hinckley, “Bring Up a Child in the Way He Should Go,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 59).

Invite a student to read aloud Alma’s counsel to Helaman in Alma 37:35. Ask students to think about how this verse relates to President Hinckley’s experience with the tree.

Invite students to summarize the principle in Alma 37:35 in their own words. (Their responses should express that **we should learn in our youth to keep the commandments of God.**) **Ask the following questions:**

- How does this principle relate to President Hinckley’s experience with the tree?
- What difference do you think it makes in a person’s life to learn to keep the commandments of God while still young?
- What are some ways you feel you have been or will be blessed because of your efforts to obey the commandments while you are young?

Invite a student to read Alma 37:36–37 aloud. Ask the rest of the students to follow along, looking for specific counsel that could help them keep the commandments while they are young.

- How could following this counsel daily help you keep the commandments?

Share your feelings and testimony about the importance of learning to keep God’s commandments in our youth. Encourage your fellow students to keep the commandments and to counsel with the Lord in all they do.

