

Strengthening Families through Family History

Why this topic?

When the prophet Elijah restored the sealing keys to Joseph Smith, he said that he had come “to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to their fathers” ([D&C 110:15](#)). Elder Russell M. Nelson taught that with this restoration, “natural affection between generations began to be enriched. [It] was accompanied by what is sometimes called the Spirit of Elijah—a manifestation of the Holy Ghost bearing witness of the divine nature of the family” (“[A New Harvest Time](#),” *Ensign*, May 1998, 34). As we learn about our family history and receive temple ordinances for our deceased ancestors, we can strengthen bonds of love between family members across generations.

Prepare for an inspiring meeting

Think about the members you are called to teach. How might their families grow stronger through family history work? How has it blessed your family?

How can you encourage those in your quorum or Relief Society to share their testimonies of the blessings of family history work? How might others be inspired by these testimonies?

As you prayerfully study the resources below, what are you impressed to do to help those you teach strengthen their families through family history work?

Teaching in the Savior's Way

The Savior asked questions of those He taught that caused them to think and feel deeply. Because of His love, they felt safe sharing their thoughts and personal feelings. How can you create an atmosphere that inspires open communication among those you teach?

[D&C 2](#); [110:13–16](#); [128:16–18](#); [138](#)

Elder Richard G. Scott, “[The Joy of Redeeming the Dead](#),” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 93–95

Elder David A. Bednar, “[The Hearts of the Children Shall Turn](#),” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 24–27; see also the video “[The Time Is Now](#)”

Sister Bonnie L. Oscarson, “[Be Ye Converted](#),” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 76–78

“[Uniting Families through Temple and Family History Work](#),” *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Heber J. Grant* (2002), 51–61

[My Family: Stories That Bring Us Together](#) (booklet, 2013)

Videos: “[Because of James](#)” (2:44), “[Now I’m Converted](#)” (4:22), “[Watching My Grandson Play Ball](#)” (2:37)

[FamilySearch.org](#)

Begin the meeting

As you begin the meeting, think about how to help those you teach recognize the spiritual growth happening in their own lives and in their families. You could ask class members to share what they have thought about or done as a result of last week’s meeting. Or you could prepare them for today’s discussion by asking them to talk about blessings their family has received as they have been involved in family history work.

Ideas for learning together

Here are a few suggestions to help those you teach strengthen their families through family history work. As prompted by the Spirit, use one or more of these ideas, or ideas of your own to help meet the needs of those you teach.

- Members could watch “[Because of James](#)” or “[Now I’m Converted](#)” and look for blessings that came to the families in the videos as they participated in family history work. They could then discuss what their own families can do to seek those blessings.
- You could share a story from your family history and talk about why it is meaningful to you and your family. Consider bringing pictures of the people involved. You could also invite members to share stories from their family histories (you may want to ask them to prepare for this beforehand). Invite them to

Weeks 1 and 4: Locally-Selected Topics

share how they feel when they hear or share these stories. Why is it important for their family members to know about these stories?

- Members could listen to the story about Elder Tad R. Callister's grandfather in "[Watching My Grandson Play Ball](#)" or read Sister Bonnie L. Oscarson's story about her great-grandmother in "[Be Ye Converted](#)." Ask members to discuss how stories like these can bless generations, and invite them to think about family stories that could strengthen their families. What can we do to preserve stories for future generations? Consider giving members copies of [My Family: Stories That Bring Us Together](#) and inviting them to begin recording their stories in it.
- Members could read or watch portions of the general conference talks by Elder Richard G. Scott or Elder David A. Bednar that are suggested above. As they do, they could identify blessings promised to those who participate in temple and family history work (members could list these blessings on the board). Consider inviting members to share experiences they have had in which those promises have been fulfilled. As a class, you might discuss the connection between the Holy Ghost and the Spirit of Elijah (see the statement by Elder Russell M. Nelson at the beginning of this outline).
- A family history consultant or another ward member with family history experience could show members how to use [FamilySearch.org](#) and other family history resources. Consider giving time for members to ask any questions they have about how to do family history work. It may be effective to invite one or more of the youth in the ward to lead this presentation.

Take action

Help those you teach think about how to develop a love for family history work individually, in their families, and in your quorum, group, or Relief Society. How could they become more involved in family history? For example, you might ask:

- What obstacles might make it difficult for us to participate in family history work? How can we overcome those obstacles? Who in the ward (including the youth) could help?
- What goals do you feel inspired to set as a result of this discussion? How can we support one another in our efforts?
- What can you do to inspire family members (including children and youth) to become involved in family history work? How can you use the scriptures and other resources listed in this outline?

You may want to ask class members to share specific actions they feel inspired to take, individually or in their families, to become more involved in family history.

During the week, you may want to send out a reminder (through email, text message, or social media) to invite members to act on what they have learned and to share additional learning and teaching resources.