

# Liahona

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THE  
CHURCH  
IS HERE

# Taxco Mexico





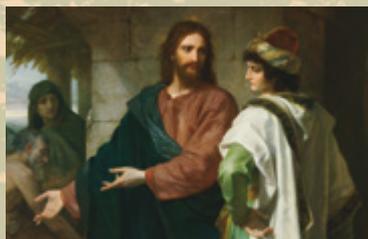
PHOTOGRAPH FROM GETTY IMAGES

Once a mining town, Taxco de Alarcon, Guerrero, Mexico, is known today as one of the country's *pueblos magicos* (magic towns), famed for its silver jewelry production, Spanish colonial architecture, and the beauty of the surrounding countryside. The city lies on rugged terrain and has steep, irregular streets. Its main landmark is the 18th-century Santa Prisca church.

Taxco is also home to the Taxco Branch of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which meets each Sunday in a building on *avenida de los Plateros*. The branch, part of the Iguala Mexico Stake, is one of 1,987 Latter-day Saint congregations in Mexico, where the Church has more than 1.4 million members, 34 missions, and 13 temples. Mexico is also home to the Mexico City Missionary Training Center, the second largest MTC in the Church. The center can accommodate more than 1,000 missionaries at a time.

- The first five members in Mexico were baptized in 1876.
- Mexico was the first country outside the United States to have 100 stakes.
- The Mexico City Mexico Temple, the first in Mexico, was dedicated in 1983. The most recently dedicated is the Tijuana Mexico Temple, dedicated in 2015. The Puebla Mexico Temple was announced in October 2018.
- When President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) visited Mexico in 1994, he created the Mexico City Contreras Stake, the Church's 2,000th stake.





Ministering Is  
Seeing Others  
as the Savior  
Does  
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# Can Our Ministering Help Others Heal?

One Sunday, I was sitting in sacrament meeting pondering when I read in my scriptures that we are to do the works that the Savior did (see 3 Nephi 27:21). I thought to myself, “What were Christ’s works upon the earth?” I thought primarily of two things: service and healing. Service I could do, but healing?

The concept of healing has been one I have pondered often. I have had 16 surgeries so far in my life and have had to do a *lot* of healing! But I wondered how I could be like Jesus Christ and help others heal. Certainly I did not have the healing powers He possessed. So how did He want me to do His works of healing on the earth? What *could* I do?

As I pondered how others had helped me to heal, my mind was opened to the incredible works of healing—comforting, serving, and ministering—that others had performed for me in my life. With our focus on ministering to others in ways the Savior would, this concept of helping others heal is a powerful one.

All of us suffer during our mortal journey on earth. So many have physical or mental illnesses or are suffering spiritually. All of us are in need of healing. As I explain in my article (page 20) and as Elder Neil L. Andersen teaches in his article (page 12), all of us can participate in ministering to others in ways that will help them heal.

Sincerely,  
Merrilee Boyack



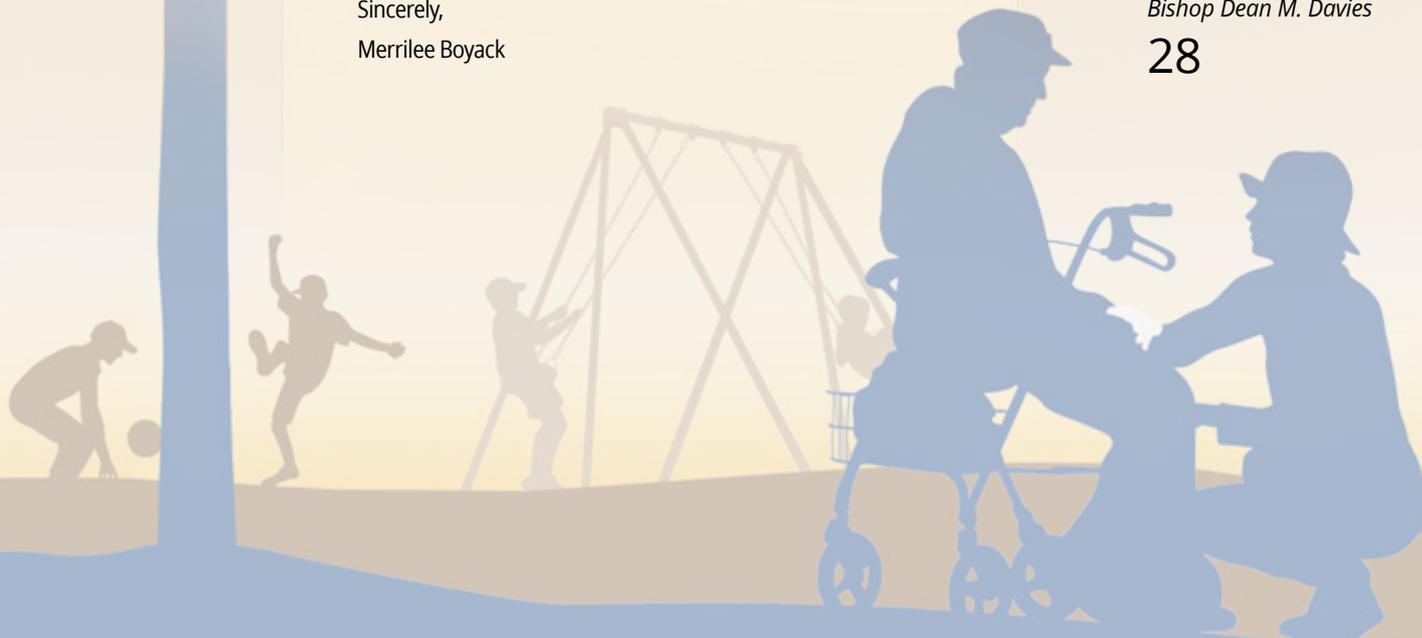
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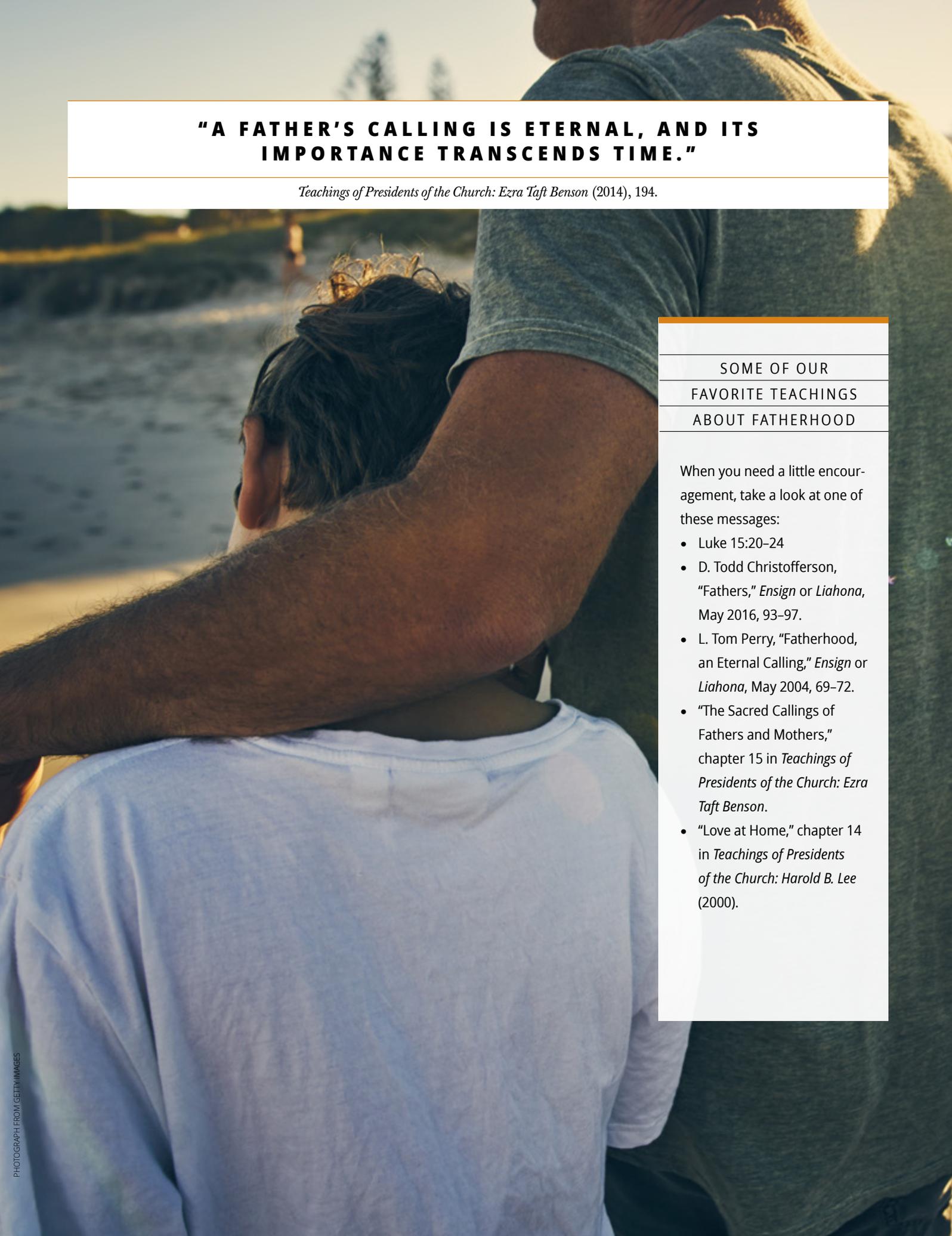
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**“A FATHER’S CALLING IS ETERNAL, AND ITS IMPORTANCE TRANSCENDS TIME.”**

*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson (2014), 194.*

SOME OF OUR  
FAVORITE TEACHINGS  
ABOUT FATHERHOOD

When you need a little encouragement, take a look at one of these messages:

- Luke 15:20–24
- D. Todd Christofferson, “Fathers,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2016, 93–97.
- L. Tom Perry, “Fatherhood, an Eternal Calling,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2004, 69–72.
- “The Sacred Callings of Fathers and Mothers,” chapter 15 in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson*.
- “Love at Home,” chapter 14 in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee (2000)*.

## Rodrigo Quintanilla

Valparaíso, Chile



*When a construction accident left him unable to walk, Rodrigo Quintanilla could no longer work as a welder—or do a lot of other things. But he decided to move forward with faith, trusting in Heavenly Father’s plan for him and his family.*

LESLIE NILSSON, PHOTOGRAPHER

When something really bad happens to us, we can respond in one of two ways. We can get angry with God and leave the Church, having nothing more to do with it. Or we can get on our knees, pray, and continue to grow.

I didn’t lose my faith, nor did I ask myself, “Why did this happen to me?” I refused to go down that road.

When a trial comes to us, I know our Father in Heaven provides a way through that trial. As I recuperated, having the company of the Holy Ghost was essential. I had to reinvent myself professionally, so I prayed for the Spirit’s guidance. God answered me.

To those who have suffered a life-changing accident or event, I would say, “Things can be difficult, but stay in the Church. Stay with the gospel. Life is more difficult without it. Put forth as much effort as you can, and Heavenly Father will do the rest.”



### FIND MORE

Find out how Libuletswe Gofrey Mokgatle from South Africa trusted God and moved forward with a disability at [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/6196](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/6196).

Learn about the Church’s disability resources at [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/9184](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/9184).

You can find more Portraits of Faith at [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/18](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/18).



## Ministering Principles

# MINISTERING IS SEEING OTHERS AS THE SAVIOR DOES

*Jesus spent much of His time with those who were seen as different;  
He saw their divine potential.*

In our efforts to minister like the Savior, we may be asked to minister to someone who is different from us. This presents an opportunity for us to learn and grow.

Cultural, educational, racial, economic, age, past or present behaviors, or other differences can make it easy to judge someone before we even know them. This pre-judging is at the heart of

prejudice, and the Savior warned against it (see 1 Samuel 16:7; John 7:24).

Can we look past differences and see others as the Savior does? How can we learn to love others for who they are and who they can become?

### **Beholding and Loving**

The Bible tells the familiar story of the rich young man who asked how to obtain



eternal life: “Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me” (Mark 10:21).

When Elder S. Mark Palmer of the Seventy studied this scripture some years ago, a new part of the story suddenly stood out to him.

“*Then Jesus beholding him loved him.*”

“As I heard these words, a vivid image filled my mind of our Lord pausing and *beholding* this young man. *Beholding*—as in looking deeply and penetratingly into his soul, recognizing his goodness and also his potential, as well as discerning his greatest need.

“Then the simple words—Jesus *loved him*. He felt an overwhelming love and compassion for this good young man, and *because* of this love and *with* this love, Jesus asked even more of him. I pictured what it must have felt like for this young man to be enveloped by such love even while being asked to do something so supremely hard as selling all he owned and giving it to the poor. . . .

“[I asked myself] ‘How can I be filled with Christlike love so [others] can feel the love of God through me and desire to change?’ How can I *behold* [the individuals around me] in the same way the Lord beheld the rich young man, seeing them for who they really are and who they can become, rather than just for what they are doing or not doing? How can I be more like the Savior?”<sup>1</sup>

## Learning to See Others

Learning to see others as the Savior does brings rich rewards. Here are some suggestions that can help as we work toward this goal.

### GET TO KNOW THEM

Make the effort to get to know people beyond superficial details. Recognize that building relationships takes time and sincere effort. (See the August 2018 Ministering Principles article “Building Meaningful Relationships” for help.)

### EXAMINE YOURSELF

Pay attention to judgments you may be making consciously or subconsciously. Take note of the assumptions you are making about others and try to understand why you feel about them the way you do.

### WITHHOLD JUDGMENT

Realize that circumstances don't define the worth of an individual. Put yourself in their shoes and consider how you would want someone to see you if you were in the same circumstances. Separating someone's choices and behavior from their intrinsic value and divine potential can help us see them as the Savior would.

### PRAY TO LOVE THEM

Pray for them regularly by name and for the patience to develop a true friendship. Take a prayerful look at your service. Is there a gap between what you are doing and what they really need?



Jesus spent His time with people from many different walks of life: the rich, the poor, rulers, and common people. He was often the victim of incorrect judgment by others when they looked upon Him and His apparently poor or insignificant circumstances. “When we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. . . . He was despised, and we esteemed him not” (Isaiah 53:2–3).

### INVITATION TO ACT

Whom do you need to look at differently? What will you do to change how you see them?

## SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES

Send us your experiences as you have ministered to others or have been ministered to. Go to [liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) and click "Submit an Article or Feedback."

### Christlike Vision

A sister shares this story of learning to see a neighbor with Christlike eyes:

"Julia (name has been changed) lived by me and seemed to not have any friends. She always looked upset and angry. Despite that, I decided to be a friend to her. Not just a casual friend in passing, but a true friend. I spoke to her whenever I saw her and showed interest in whatever she was doing. Slowly, I created a bond of friendship with her, bringing joy in my heart.

"One day, I decided to visit Julia and ask her about her decision to not attend church.

"I learned that she has no family or relatives nearby. Her only sibling, a brother who lives far away, communicates with her only once a year by phone. As I listened to her pour out her bitterness, anger, and frustrations about her family and the Church, an undeniable feeling of compassion and love for this sister came over me so strongly. I felt her pain and frustrations. I realized just how lonely her life was. It was as though I heard a quiet phrase behind me: 'I love her too. Love and respect her.'

"I sat and listened until she had no more to say. I felt love and compassion for her. This is a sister who has never known what it is like to be loved. Suddenly I understood her more deeply. I thanked her for allowing me to visit with her, and I



left her with a hug and with my love and respect for her. She will never know how much she touched me with that visit. Heavenly Father has opened my eyes and taught me that I had a capacity to love with increased compassion. I am determined in my resolve to not only be a friend to her but also to be family to her."

It's a sacred thing to be invited into someone else's life. With prayer, patience, and help from the Spirit, we can learn to do so with a more Christlike vision. ■

#### NOTE

1. S. Mark Palmer, "Then Jesus Beholding Him Loved Him," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2017, 115.

### DISCOVER MORE

Learn more about being more welcoming:

- Read "We Can Do Better: Welcoming Others into the Fold" in the September 2017 *Ensign* or *Liahona*.
- Watch Church leaders explain these principles at [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/61911](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/61911).





**By Elder  
Neil L. Andersen**  
Of the Quorum  
of the Twelve  
Apostles

# Ministering in a Holier Way

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I promise that as you love God with all your heart and pray to be an instrument in His hands, the Lord will put His special sons and daughters in your path.

**T**he book titled *The Narcissism Epidemic* begins with exaggerated examples of modern American culture:

“On a reality TV show, a girl planning her 16th birthday party wants a major road blocked off so a marching band can precede her grand entrance on a red carpet. A book called *My Beautiful Mommy* explains plastic surgery to young children whose mothers are going under the knife for the trendy ‘Mommy Makeover.’ It is now possible to hire fake paparazzi to follow you around snapping your photograph when you go out at night—you can even take home a faux celebrity magazine cover featuring the pictures. A popular song declares, with no apparent sarcasm, ‘I believe that the world should revolve around me!’ . . . Babies wear bibs embroidered with ‘Supermodel’ . . . and suck on ‘Bling’ pacifiers while their parents read modernized nursery rhymes from *This Little Piggy Went to Prada*.<sup>21</sup>

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we strongly reject the notion that our lives are all about ourselves. Rather, we follow the Savior, who said:

“Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

“And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

“ . . . The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:26–28).



We treasure His words:

“Love one another; as I have loved you” (John 13:34; see also John 15:12).

“Feed my lambs. . . . Feed my sheep” (John 21:15, 16).

“When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:32).

“Succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees” (Doctrine and Covenants 81:5).

Here is an example of the kind of Christlike ministering that happens among members of the Lord’s Church. A student at Brigham Young University recently wrote:

“I was going through a really rough time. One day I was really struggling and on the verge of tears. I pleaded and prayed silently for strength to continue. In that exact moment, my roommate sent me a text expressing her love for me. She shared a scripture and bore a testimony. It brought me so much strength and comfort and hope in that moment of despair.”

Let me share a few thoughts that I hope will strengthen the already outstanding way you minister to one another. My first point is this: Remember the first commandment before you exercise the second. One young man came to the Savior and asked Him:

“Master, which is the great commandment in the law?”

“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

“This is the first and great commandment.

“And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matthew 22:36–39).

Your ability to bring a holier approach to loving your neighbor, to caring for and ministering to others, will rest upon how strongly you keep the first commandment.

### Another Kind of Ministering

There is a unique and divine gift of ministering that can come from someone who loves God with all his or her heart; who is settled, grounded, steadfast, and immovable in his or her faith in Jesus Christ and in the restored gospel (see Ephesians 3:17; Colossians 1:23; 1 Nephi 2:10; Mosiah 5:15; Alma 1:25; 3 Nephi 6:14); and who keeps the commandments with exactness.

Let me give you some context you already know. Across the world, the younger generation is slipping in its faith and especially in its belief in a specific religion. When I graduated from BYU in 1975, the number of young adults (ages 18 to 24) with an affiliation with a religion was near 90 percent. It is now at 66 percent. “A full third of young adults do not affiliate with any organized religion.”<sup>2</sup>

In 2001, religious scholar Robert C. Fuller wrote a book called *Spiritual, But Not Religious*.<sup>3</sup> A trend toward personal spirituality outside formal religious organizations may have been true 20 years ago, but it is less true today. Young adults in the United States today pray with less frequency, believe less in God, believe less in the Bible, and believe less in the commandments.<sup>4</sup> It is naïve to believe that the trends of the world are not able to influence all of us—even the very elect.

Caring for others, physically and emotionally, requires an unselfish and sensitive heart. This caring is an important part of the gospel. It is done in and out of the Church by good people, believers and nonbelievers. There are many wonderful, kind people all over the world, and we can learn from them.

However, unique to a converted member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is another kind of ministering. As disciples of the Savior, we have opportunities to minister in a way that helps keep a friend's faith from faltering, that reminds a roommate in a kind way that reading the Book of Mormon every day really does bring miracles, and that shows a ward member that the standards of the Church are not just a set of rules but rather a way to keep us close to God and bring us happiness.

A person with a good heart can help someone fix a tire, take a neighbor to the doctor, have lunch with someone who is sad, or smile and say hello to brighten a day. But a follower of the first commandment will naturally add to these important acts of service, encouraging the person who is doing well in keeping the commandments and sharing wise counsel to strengthen the faith of someone who is slipping or who needs help in moving back onto the path once traveled.



I challenge you to strengthen your efforts to spiritually minister to one another. To minister spiritually can begin with baking cookies or playing a basketball game. But eventually, this holier way of ministering requires opening your heart and your faith, taking courage in encouraging the positive growth you are seeing in a friend, and expressing concerns about things you see and feel are not consistent with discipleship.

Let us not be self-righteous, but let us be spiritually courageous in ministering in a holier way, specifically by strengthening the faith of others. To stir your thinking, consider these possible situations:

- You notice that a friend spends an inordinate amount of time playing games on a smartphone but rarely engages in conversations relating to gospel topics.
- You sense that a ward member may have a problem with pornography.
- Your friends are spending enormous amounts of time taking and posting pictures of themselves that move to the edge of immodesty.
- You notice that someone who once seemed to love to talk about the Book of Mormon now never mentions it.
- You notice that a family member who once seemed to love to go to the temple now is not going.
- You notice that a friend who once spoke with faith about the prophet's counsel now speaks critically.
- You know a returned missionary who has become casual in wearing clothing that reflects temple covenants.
- You notice that a ward member finds reasons to go places on Sunday other than to church.

- You sense that a friend has started to be dishonest in small things.
- You know someone who had a light in her eyes after returning from a mission, but now that light seems to have faded.
- You have a friend who jokes about sacred things.
- You have a friend whose discouragement with dating has moved to “God doesn’t love me.”
- You see a friend’s faith being affected by compromised worthiness and a need to repent.

Can you envision these situations or others like them? Have specific names come into your mind? The Apostle Paul said, “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12). One of the greatest needs throughout the world is to have more faith in our Heavenly Father and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and to have a greater willingness to follow the commandments.

### Ministering to the One

If we follow the pattern of the Savior, most of our ministering will be from one person to another. To the Samaritan woman at the well, the Savior said:

“Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

“But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst. . . .

“The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not. . . .

“[Then she said,] I know that [the] Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

“Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he” (see John 4:13–15, 25–26).

Even in declaring His own divinity, Jesus ministered to the one.

Unlike changing a flat tire, just one ministering experience rarely fixes a spiritual problem. It takes time, conversations, and encouraging experiences that will help rebuild faith. It



comes more like the dew from heaven than a one-time blast from a fire hose. You have to minister again and again as you help someone turn back to God and again rely on the Savior and His Atonement.

To minister in the Lord’s way, we need the help of the Holy Ghost. President Russell M. Nelson spoke powerfully on this subject during general conference in April 2018: “In coming days, it will not be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, directing, comforting, and constant influence of the Holy Ghost.”<sup>5</sup>

President Nelson added, “I urge you to stretch beyond your current spiritual ability to receive personal revelation.”<sup>6</sup> He counseled us to pray, to listen, to write down our thoughts, and to take action.

Can we apply this to ministering in a holier way? Let us pray, listen, record our thoughts, and take action regarding those to whom we can minister.

Pray for opportunities to build faith in others. Not all of those you help will be people you know. When Jesus ministered to the widow of Nain, He was on His way to the city.

However, He saw her, had compassion for her, and raised her son from the dead. His ministry changed her life (see Luke 7:11–15).

Pray that ministering opportunities will come to you, listen, write down your thoughts, and then be ready to take action as people are put in your way.

I have always been moved by the Psalmist’s cry: “I looked on my right hand, . . . but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man [or woman] cared for my soul” (Psalm 142:4). Let’s help those who feel this way.

### **Make Time for the Spirit**

To have the help of the Holy Ghost, we have to prepare our minds and hearts. In our generation, we need discipline and restraint in how we use our technological devices. Adam Alter, in his book *Irresistible*, spoke about the addictive behavior of technology and social media. He quoted Greg Hochmuth, one of Instagram’s founding engineers, who commented, “There’s always another hashtag to click on. Then it takes on its own life, like an organism, and people can become obsessive.”<sup>7</sup>

Mr. Alter added: “Instagram, like so many other social media platforms, is bottomless. Facebook has an endless feed; Netflix automatically moves on to the next episode in a series; Tinder encourages users to keep swiping in search of a better option. . . . According to Tristan Harris, a ‘design ethicist,’ the problem isn’t that people lack willpower; it’s that ‘there are a thousand people on the other side of the screen whose job it is to break down the self-regulation you have.’”<sup>8</sup>

Mr. Alter continued: “A like on Facebook and Instagram strikes one of [the right neurological] notes, as does the reward of completing a World

of Warcraft mission, or seeing one of your tweets shared by hundreds of Twitter users. The people who create and refine tech, games, and interactive experiences are very good at what they do. They run thousands of tests with millions of users to learn which tweaks work and which ones don’t—which background colors, fonts, and audio tones maximize engagement and minimize frustration. As an experience evolves, it becomes an irresistible, weaponized version of the experience it once was. In 2004, Facebook was fun; [today,] it’s addictive.”<sup>9</sup>

For the Spirit to dwell in us, we have to have time and space. Learn to put your smartphones down. Schedule time when your technology is intentionally not accessible.

During general conference in April 2018, President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: “Too many allow themselves to almost live online with their smart devices—screens illuminating their faces day and night and earbuds in their ears blocking out the still, small voice of the Spirit. If we do not find time to unplug, we may miss opportunities to hear the voice of Him who said, ‘Be still, and know that I am God’ [Psalm 46:10]. Now, there is nothing wrong with taking advantage of the advances in the technologies inspired by the Lord, but we must be wise in their use.”<sup>10</sup>



## Strengthening Each Other

During my undergraduate days at BYU, other than my wife, Kathy, whose eternal influence is impossible to measure, two roommates—one before my mission and one after—greatly shaped my spiritual foundation. One was Reid Robison, now a professor at BYU in organizational behavior. I met him on my mission, and we were roommates afterward. Reid’s exactness in following the commandments, his love for the prophet, and his unwavering testimony of the Savior strengthened me and all those around him. And he has continued to be an example to me for the past 45 years.



The other roommate I mention is Terrel Bird, who now lives in St. George, Utah, USA. I met Terrel as we attended high school together in Pocatello, Idaho, USA. Although we played basketball together, our friendship came as I observed his spiritual maturity. He would openly share spiritual insights he was having and principles of life he was reading about and learning. I was surprised to hear these things from a 17-year-old. We decided to room together at BYU.

In those days, we didn’t have computers; we had typewriters. Terrel would take scriptures that were meaningful to him and quotations that instilled character, type them, and then store them in a small box so he could draw from them frequently. It was not uncommon for him to have more than a thousand scriptures and quotations, many of which he would memorize. Although I was working—cleaning the library every morning from 4:00 to 7:00—and carrying a full load of classes, in watching Terrel, I began to build my own file box.

Here is one of the quotes I still remember from almost 50 years ago:

*Mind is the Master power that moulds and makes,  
And Man is Mind, and evermore he takes  
The tool of Thought, and, shaping what he wills,  
Brings forth a thousand joys, a thousand ills:—  
He thinks in secret, and it comes to pass:  
Environment is but his looking-glass.<sup>11</sup>*

I also remember, of course, powerful scriptures like this one:

“I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

“And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die” (John 11:25–26).

Terrel helped me put into my mind as a freshman at BYU words of scripture and words of wisdom that have influenced me all of my life. I thank Reid Robison and Terrel Bird for caring about me spiritually at a time when it made a difference.

Here is some poetry written by my neighbor Thomas L. Kay:

*Thank God for all who give relief  
for those who really care  
Who put their arms around the weak  
and plead for them in prayer  
Thank God for those who hear the heart*



*and listen to the words  
 Who know a look or gentle touch  
 mean more than all the world  
 Thank God for those who lift the hands  
 and strengthen feeble knees  
 Who go about restoring souls  
 in quiet ministry.<sup>12</sup>*

My dear friends and fellow disciples, I give you my sure witness that I know the Savior lives. He is resurrected. He guides this holy work. President Nelson is His anointed prophet upon the earth. Our time upon the earth is eternally important.

I promise that as you love God with all your heart, pray to be an instrument in His hands, minister to individuals, build your capacity to receive revelation, and trust in the influence of the Holy Ghost, the Lord will put His special sons and daughters in your path and you will become their ministering angels, blessing their lives eternally. You will minister in a holier way.

I pray that this can be something that is important to you as you continue along this most important pathway of our mortality. I give you my firm and sure witness of the Savior and of your eternal worth to Him and that He will come again and will embrace us as His sons and daughters, as His disciples. ■

*From a devotional address, “A Holier Approach to Ministering,” delivered at Brigham Young University on April 10, 2018.*

#### NOTES

1. Jean M. Twenge and W. Keith Campbell, *The Narcissism Epidemic: Living in the Age of Entitlement* (2009), 1.
2. Jean M. Twenge, *iGen: Why Today’s Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy—and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood* (2017), 121; see also Figure 5.1, 121.
3. See Robert C. Fuller, *Spiritual, But Not Religious: Understanding Unchurched America* (2001).
4. See Jean M. Twenge, *iGen*, 119–42.
5. Russell M. Nelson, “Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 96.
6. Russell M. Nelson, “Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,” 95.
7. Greg Hochmuth, in Adam Alter, *Irresistible: The Rise of Addictive Technology and the Business of Keeping Us Hooked* (2017), 3; see also Greg Hochmuth, in Natasha Singer, “Can’t Put Down Your Device? That’s by Design,” *The New York Times*, Dec. 5, 2015, nytimes.com.
8. Adam Alter, *Irresistible*, 3; see also Tristan Harris, in Natasha Singer, “Can’t Put Down Your Device? That’s by Design.”
9. Adam Alter, *Irresistible*, 5.
10. M. Russell Ballard, “Precious Gifts from God,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 10.
11. James Allen, *As a Man Thinketh* (1902), frontispiece.
12. Thomas L. Kay, “Saints,” in *The Road I’ve Taken* (2016), 16; see also “Saints,” music by Rachel Bastian, *New Era*, Sept. 1999, 51.



# Helping Others Receive the Lord's Healing

By Merrilee Browne Boyack

One Sunday I read the scripture, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, this is my gospel; and ye know the things that ye must do in my church; *for the works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do*” (3 Nephi 27:21; emphasis added).

I thought to myself, “What were Christ’s works upon the earth?” I thought primarily of two things: service and healing. Service I could do, but healing? Certainly I wasn’t capable of healing others—or was I?

I was recently in the process of recovering from a surgery that had been followed by a severe allergic reaction. I immediately thought of those who had helped me in my healing process, and the list was long. If they could help me heal, couldn't I do the same for others?

Each of us can learn the healer's art.<sup>1</sup> We are surrounded by those suffering from physical, mental, and spiritual sicknesses who would be blessed by our help.

### Visiting the Sick

Mosiah 4:26 states, "I would that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants."

Being sick—whether physically, mentally, or spiritually—can be very isolating. People spend many lonely hours in bedrooms or hospital rooms trying to recuperate, and it is easy for their spirits to become depressed. As the darkness accumulates, the visit of a caring friend or family member can bring light into their lives.

*How* we visit the sick can also be important. Several women responded to my query asking how others have helped them through the healing process. Judi of Arizona, USA, commented, "Listening . . . [is] such a great help in troubled times. Listening and *not* judging." Listening patiently, sincerely, and lovingly is a valuable support to those who are trying to heal.

We practice the healer's art when we help bring the Lord's healing blessings to those suffering from physical, mental, and spiritual sicknesses.

Linda of California, USA, shared how a friend's visits helped her: "I remember those special people in my life—especially those who really listened and conveyed the Spirit's sweet counsel. After being widowed at 30 years old with five young children, I felt my Heavenly Father's

and Savior's love more deeply because of my good friend Karen. She was always in tune and had her 'listening ears' on. I never felt alone as she consistently reminded me of the beautiful bond I have as a daughter of God."

Ministering brothers and sisters especially can perform this healer's art. It is important to tune in to the needs of those who are suffering. Sometimes a short visit is in order because they are very tired. Sometimes they are lonely and bored and a longer visit will meet their needs. It's also important to tune in to their personalities. Some want privacy and quiet while others want lots of interaction and support. We should first determine their needs and then reach out accordingly.

### Bearing One Another's Burdens

Alma described most eloquently our commitment to follow the Savior's example when he asked the believers in the Book of Mormon if they were willing "to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and [be] willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light" (Mosiah 18:8).

We each carry burdens of many kinds. These are most difficult to handle when we are sick or struggling with mental



### WE ARE THE LORD'S HANDS

“Christ knows how to minister to others perfectly. When the Savior stretches

out His hands, those He touches are uplifted and become greater, stronger, and better people as a result.

“If we are His hands, should we not do the same?”

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “You Are My Hands,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2010, 70.

illness or spiritual difficulties. One of the healer’s arts is to help bear the burdens of others when they are suffering.

Shannon from Utah, USA, shared how her neighbors helped her: “The day we buried our young son, we returned from the cemetery to find our neighborhood had come together in those hours while we were at his funeral to completely re-landscape our yard. They had planted beautiful shrubs, trees, and flowers, and even new sod. In the midst of our unimaginable sadness, their thoughtful demonstration of love and support began the healing process for us. We were reminded that love and life are eternal every year when our beautiful yard came back to life again. [It was] truly a sacred and symbolic experience that we will never forget.”

When I was diagnosed with breast cancer, I was serving as Relief Society president and running for reelection to our city council. My husband had lost his job, and we were hit with many other serious trials during this time. My counselors took to heart “bearing one another’s burdens” and helped spread the load I was carrying. My bishop took on some of my responsibilities.

My husband took over many duties of cooking and homemaking. It was truly humbling to see that my burdens were not taken away but instead were shared by many, many people who exercised the healer’s art.

### Comforting

Alma also taught that Christ’s followers “are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort” (Mosiah 18:9).

Giving comfort encompasses empathy, kindness, thoughtfulness, caring, love, and charity. It is wrapping those who are sick or afflicted in loving arms to help them face their suffering.

Luann (name has been changed) faced a spiritual and moral struggle and reflected on her experience with others who comforted her: “They looked past my present person and saw my promising potential, the potential to become someone greater, wiser, kinder. I look back on my former self and sometimes cringe with a bit of embarrassment for my ignorance—a bit of shame for my transgressions and sinful ways. But the sting of embarrassment and shame is always followed by the healing

balm that is grace, mercy, forgiveness, and love. When I see there were people around me, showering me with those things, the sting goes away. And I see they were helping me heal. Maybe it’s more accurate to say they were creating a safe environment around

“They were creating a safe environment around me where the Savior, the Master Healer, could work on me.”

me—a cocoon of grace, maybe—where, within, the Savior, the Master Healer, could work on me. Changing me. Changing my heart.”

An important part of comforting the sick is turning them toward the Master Healer. Sabrina from Utah, USA, said, “There is no better healing than that of anyone who helps you search out or go back to God. It may be just a reminder of what you already know—that you’re trying to be tougher



than need be, taking it all on your own, and not truly relying on God.”

Comforting the sick and helping them be positive takes sensitivity to the Spirit. At one point in my life, I had not slept well in many months, usually averaging about two to three hours per night of disrupted sleep. I was suffering greatly from anxiety and exhaustion; I had been to many doctors to no avail. Finally, a friend referred me to a Latter-day Saint doctor who immediately gave me a proper diagnosis. But what he said next was a surprise: “Merrilee, the most important thing you need to do is to turn your anxiety over to God.” He then encouraged me to meditate each day for a short time on “The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles.”

I had tried this meditation a few times without success, but I was desperate for healing. The next day, I quietly meditated on the powerful words, “We offer our testimony of the reality of His matchless life and the infinite virtue of His great atoning sacrifice.”<sup>2</sup> A thrill ran through me as I began to ponder the testimony of our great Healer and knew that I had found comfort and peace in my soul.

### **Paying Attention**

As we study the scriptures in order to emulate Jesus in His works of healing, we read of Jesus doing one thing over and over: He paid attention to those around Him.

Christ noticed people. He spoke with the Samaritan woman despite cultural taboos. He took time to bless the children. He ate with publicans and sinners and ministered to lepers and outcasts. He gave His attention to each.

As followers of Christ seeking to learn His healer’s art, we can begin to look upon people with the eyes of Christ. We can take the time to say hello, to smile, to ask about their day. We may never know the healing balm that our efforts may be to those around us who are lonely, depressed, sick, weak, or suffering. Even simple gestures of love can have a powerful influence.

As we do the works of Christ and participate in the healing of others, great blessings will flow. As Christ stated, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40). To Him who healed each of us, to Him who has wrapped us in His loving arms more times than we even know, to Him who has offered us the healing balm of His Atonement, we can offer our small efforts to help heal our brothers and sisters. This is truly the healer’s art. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

### **NOTES**

1. See “Lord, I Would Follow Thee,” *Hymns*, no. 220.
2. “The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2017, inside front cover.

# Flowers and Financial Security

By Mechel Wall

The Lord has increased my capacity, enlarged my abilities, and made much more of me than I would have become on my own.

**T**he fact that I had never graduated from college always bothered me. I knew that if anything happened to my husband, I wasn't prepared financially to provide for our family.

Then the unthinkable happened. I received a gut-wrenching, life-shattering phone call.

"Call 911!" my distressed husband yelled. "I'm pinned under the tractor!"

I called for help and then made it in record time to the land he had been clearing, passing a long line of emergency vehicles on the gravel road to our property in Pea Ridge, Arkansas, USA. Barry was alive, but he was indeed pinned beneath the engine of a tractor that had flipped.

Using hydraulic rescue tools, emergency workers lifted the tractor and pulled Barry free. His legs, soaked in diesel fuel, looked broken in several places. He was rushed to a trauma center, where he received a priesthood blessing before having his legs X-rayed.



We were surprised that not one bone was broken, but the back of one of Barry's legs had been severely burned by diesel fuel. The crush injury had also led to toxification of his kidneys. His life was in jeopardy.

After Barry spent five tense days in the hospital, his toxin levels finally began to drop. Months of dressing changes, skin grafts, surgeries, and hyperbaric oxygen therapy followed. Once he felt well enough, Barry resumed his sales job from home.

### **"No One Would Hire Me"**

This experience was a wake-up call. As I spent the next few years contemplating what I could do if I lost Barry, I did volunteer work, attended workshops, and applied for several part-time jobs. But I had no marketable skills, and no one would hire me.

We live on a farm, with pastureland for a few animals, so I began to research farming as a living. One day an idea came to me: flowers. After researching flower farming, I decided to give it a try. I went to a conference for flower growers and prepared to transition from pastureland to row crops. Then, in November 2016, I signed up for a

Self-Reliance Services class on how to start and grow my own business.

### **Our Own Flower Shop**

The 12-week course was exactly what I needed. I had a basic business plan and lots of fun ideas, but I lacked organization. Ideas came up in class that I hadn't considered before. I acted on each one. As I worked that first year growing and selling flowers, the suggestions and principles I learned in the class came into play:

- I found a low-interest business loan.
- I expanded my market to include farmers markets and flower shops.
- I booked several events on our farm as an expansion of my services.

In late 2017, after my first year of farming, I realized that selling to flower shops was taking too much time. "What if I opened my own flower shop?" I wondered. The local flower shop had closed, and the building had become an eyesore. So my husband and I bought it, fixed it up, and opened a flower shop that also sells art and local crafts. In addition, I opened a plant rental and interior plant design business.

I sell my flowers through our shop and at coffee shops, boutique stores, and a kiosk at the local airport. Each day, I harvest what I need.

### **The Lord Cares**

I have a testimony that the Lord cares about my business. He has helped me create financial security for myself *and* part-time jobs for several women who want to work flexible hours and for students working their way through school. One of our daughters manages the flower farm, and two of our sons do much of the farm work, including helping to build a greenhouse. Barry helps in the evenings and on weekends, doing the heavy lifting.

We all support each other and work together. It has been a blessing for everyone involved. I keep busy but still have time for my family, Church callings, ministering duties, and volunteer work.

Working from the time I plant a seed or a bulb to when I present a flower to a customer gives me a tremendous sense of accomplishment. I have no doubt that the Lord has enlarged my abilities and made much more of me than I would have become on my own. ■

*The author lives in Arkansas, USA.*

# Martha and Mary

By **Camille Fronk Olson**

Emeritus Professor of Ancient Scripture,  
Brigham Young University

*Regardless of the way we choose to serve, it is essential to accept and follow Christ with all our heart and mind.*

At a time when many in Jerusalem expressed confusion over the Savior’s identity, Jesus taught, “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine” (John 7:17). If we want to go beyond simply learning doctrine and learn who Jesus Christ is and become His disciple, we must put our faith into action. The story of Martha and Mary shows there is more than one way to serve the Savior in our own lives.

Shortly after this sermon, Jesus and some of His disciples went to Martha’s home in Bethany to teach the gospel. Martha took the primary responsibility for responding as a gracious host, perhaps providing food and shelter for her guests, while her sister, Mary, sat at Jesus’s feet and listened to Him speak. (See Luke 10:38–42.) The sisters’ different approaches to serving the Master teach us to respect and honor those who manifest discipleship in different ways. Jesus’s teachings in this story also show His perspective that women were free to

choose how to serve and how to show discipleship, just as men could choose.

## Service through Giving

Immediately before Luke introduces Martha and Mary, he records the parable of the good Samaritan. In this story, the Savior taught us to show mercy to others, such as feeding, sheltering, and caring for anyone who stands in need (see Luke 10:30–37). Martha’s attempts in “much serving” (Luke 10:40) indicate her acceptance and interpretation of this principle as she put faith into action.

Illustrating His teaching that he who is greatest ministers to others (see Matthew 20:26–28; Luke 22:26–27), Jesus spent His life in service. Martha responded with her desire to serve Him. The account of Martha and Mary shows two women who exemplify true belief and discipleship through serving and learning. Just as Martha showed her love for Christ through service, we can

provide service to those around us that is centered in our love for our Savior and our willingness to learn and follow His gospel.

As we serve, we need to remember that there are other ways to serve and that we are not to judge those participating in them. When Martha became “cumbered about” (Luke 10:40), her reaction introduced contention and threatened the goodwill of the Savior’s visit.

Although hospitable and responsible, Martha was also harried and absorbed with her busyness. She complained to Jesus, “Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me” (Luke 10:40). Her protest implies her perception that she alone was serving. She was blind to differing modes of service rendered by others at the time, including Mary and the Savior Himself. Martha depicted the principle of giving but with an attitude that



*We can take Martha's and Mary's examples into our lives and ask for the Spirit's guidance to serve in the best way.*

wasn't conducive to the Spirit. In our lives today, we can also demonstrate our love for others by our actions *and* our attitude.

### Service through Receiving

With a voice of caution, Jesus acknowledged Martha's efforts to serve and her resultant frustration: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things" (Luke 10:41). The Savior's words were meant not to devalue Martha's chosen way to show hospitality but to acknowledge the right that Mary had to serve through listening and learning. Mary's actions show us what is essential for all those who

desire to follow Him, independent of their chosen manner of service.

Mary allowed the Savior to serve her by receiving His word. Her example demonstrates that we can show love for the Savior through sitting at His feet to learn and grow in the Spirit.

### One Thing Is Needful

The answer to Martha's conflict was recognizing that "one thing is needful" (Luke 10:42). The profound power of simplicity is implied, but *simple* can mean something different to each of us. The standard of "needful" is found in our motives. Regardless of the way we choose to serve, what is important is

accepting and following Christ with all our heart and mind.

It may be that serving in a "Martha manner" may be the best in some moments, while other situations will seem to suggest a "Mary response"—or even one that doesn't fit those two categories. We can take Martha's and Mary's examples into our lives and ask for the Spirit's guidance to serve in the best way.

Let us look at our attitudes while serving in our own chosen way, remembering that our conviction to follow Him is what matters most. May we always find ourselves at the feet of the Savior. ■



**By Bishop  
Dean M. Davies**

First Counselor  
in the Presiding  
Bishopric

# Divinely Directed Discipleship

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If you will seek to become true disciples of our beloved Savior,  
the Lord God of heaven will direct your paths.

I want to address two questions I myself wanted answers to when I was young.

First, if you dedicate your life to God's service, will He direct your steps and use you for His righteous purposes? Second, if you choose to follow the Savior and walk in the path of discipleship, will the Lord watch over you, guide you, bless you, and fill you with a spirit of joy and fulfillment as He uses you for His purposes?

My beloved brothers and sisters, if you give your hearts to the Savior and strive to walk in faith and compassion on the path He has commanded, I know the Lord will use you in ways you cannot now imagine.

"But I'm no one special," you say. "I'm average in every way. I'm not particularly smart, eloquent, well-dressed, or even well-behaved. How could God use me?"

Since the beginning of time, our Heavenly Father has reached out to those who are average and used them for His purposes. The Apostle Paul wrote to you today, just as he did to the ancient Corinthians:

"God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

"And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

"That no flesh should glory in his presence" (1 Corinthians 1:27–29).

When it came time for our Savior to restore His Church to the earth, why do you suppose He chose a humble boy with little formal schooling?

Why do you think God told Gideon, a farmer, to keep sending troops home until he had only 300 men left to face an innumerable enemy? (see Judges 7:1–25).

Why do you suppose our Savior chose a fisherman to be His chief Apostle and to lead the Church after He was gone? (see Matthew 16:18).

First, because "the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

Second, because God is able to take the most humble clay and create of it a masterpiece. Truly, "if God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31).

Third, God chooses the weak so that no one can boast and say, "I have done this out of my own ability."





When Peter, a humble fisherman, takes a small group of believers and then shepherds them into a mighty Church, people lift up their voices and give thanks to God.

When an army of thousands is routed by a band of 300, people give praise to God.

When a frontier boy leaves the plow and translates the most inspiring and life-changing text since the Bible, people glory not in the intellect of man but in the power of God.

Heavenly Father does not need you to be mighty, intelligent, or well-spoken. He needs you to incline your heart to Him and seek to honor Him by serving Him and reaching out in compassion to those around you.

### **Ministerings of the Holy Spirit**

The second thing I want to impress upon you is that if you will follow God in truth and might, He will bless you in ways you cannot comprehend.

In 2006, President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) and the First Presidency determined that there should be a temple considered for San Salvador, El Salvador. We visited a number of properties, including a full city block located in the older central part of the city. As we drove from property to property, nothing seemed right.

Eventually, we passed by an emerging area in the west part of the city. I felt something in that area and walked around a number of blocks. One property surrounded by a wall was of particular interest. I reached out to the owners and received word that the property was not available, so I went home.

But the prophet had said a temple would be built in San Salvador, so I returned to look at other properties. Once again I found myself drawn to the property with the wall, and I made contact again. They repeated that the property was unavailable.

I returned home again but couldn't shake the feeling that this was where the temple should be. I contacted the family and asked if they would at least meet with me. They agreed to do so. Once again, I traveled to San Salvador, accompanied by Robert Fox, a friend and employee in the Church's real estate division. That morning we knelt in prayer in my room before beginning the day and asked for the Lord's assistance.

As we drove through the gate to the home, it was almost like entering a sacred garden. There were trees and flowers, and the busy noise from outside stopped at the gate. Mr. Miguel Dueñas, his brother, and two of Miguel's sons were awaiting us. They greeted us and escorted us into their ancestral home—which was large and spacious.

We told them we were there by assignment of the president of our Church and that he wanted to bless the country and Church members by building a temple there. I showed pictures of other temples. I said we felt that their property, their ancestral home, was the right place.

It was no surprise when they once again declined, but we had to make the attempt. And so for almost an hour we tried every avenue of approach, such as a straight outright purchase, an exchange of property, and every other option we could think of. But they were firm in their resolve and said no to every offer.

We had done everything we could do. We had prepared. We had done the best we knew how. But it simply was not enough.

My heart was filled with an urgent prayer: “Father, please help us to know what to say or do.”

At last it became evident that our trip had been in vain. It appeared that nothing would change their minds. But as we began to prepare to leave, something happened. The Spirit of the Lord entered the room. It was tangible. Everyone in the room felt it. It was one of the most powerful spiritual experiences I have ever felt.

Miguel Dueñas, who was not a member of the Church, was clearly touched. With tears in his eyes, he turned to his brother and said, “If we can’t sell our ancestral home, couldn’t we sell the very best of the property we have across the street?”

His brother responded affirmatively. We then talked about the other property. They owned several hundred acres across the main road from their ancestral home, with the heart of the property jutting out slightly so that every car that traveled the road would see the temple.

That was the property they offered for the temple of the Lord. It truly was a miracle. From that moment forward, the blessings of the Lord attended the process. On August 21, 2011, President Henry B. Eyring, then-First Counselor in the First Presidency, dedicated the temple to the Lord’s service.

I testify that a beautiful temple graces the hills of San Salvador not as a result of anything Brother Fox or I said or

did. It stands there today because of the powerful ministrings of the Holy Spirit of our Almighty God.

### **Our Merciful Father**

If the Lord cares enough to send His Spirit and make available a site for a temple, do you not suppose He will send His Spirit and prepare your heart and guide your steps?

You are inexpressibly more precious than a plot of land. You are a beloved child of your Eternal Father. You are the offspring of the God of the universe!

Do you not suppose that He is mindful of you? Do you not suppose that He will use you and bless you in ways more glorious than are possible for you to imagine?

The scriptures tell us that if we “trust in the Lord with all [our] heart; and lean not unto [our] own understanding,” if in all our ways we “acknowledge him, . . . he shall direct [our] paths” (Proverbs 3:5–6).

King Benjamin perfectly summarized the message I wish to leave with you. He said: “I would desire that ye should consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, they are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual; and if they hold out faithful to the end they are received into heaven, that thereby they may dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness” (Mosiah 2:41).

I raise my voice in praise of and witness to this truth. I testify that I have seen the promised blessings of God fulfilled over and over in my own life and in the lives of many others.

I promise that if you will but incline your hearts to your Father in Heaven, if you will strive each day to love and follow Jesus Christ more perfectly, if you will in compassion and kindness share the burdens and lift up the hands of those around you who are struggling, if you will seek to become true disciples of our beloved Savior, the Lord God of heaven, will direct your paths. He will use you for His sublime purposes. He will bless you in ways you cannot imagine. ■

*From a devotional address, “God Will Use You, God Will Bless You,” delivered at Brigham Young University on November 3, 2015.*

## Change of Heart, Change of Friends

**A**s a teenager, I had a rebellious streak a mile wide, and I acted in ways that were contrary to how I was raised. I began drinking alcohol when I was 13, and by my senior year of high school, I drank every weekend.

I attended church on occasion to reduce confrontations with my parents, but I would sleep through sacrament meeting and then head to the beach before Sunday School. To say my parents were unhappy with my behavior would be an understatement. To their credit, they respected my agency while continuing to encourage me to live the gospel. Still, I had no intention of staying active in the Church, and I certainly didn't see a mission in my future.

After high school, I attended a community college and continued my rebellious ways. But late one night,

I remember lying on my couch wondering about my future. What type of girl would I marry? If I turned my back on the Lord, would I ever find my way back? As important as these decisions were, I wasn't motivated to change.

A short time later, I attended a friend's backyard party with alcohol and a blazing bonfire. After joking around with my buddies for a while, I stepped away for a moment and closed my eyes.

When I opened my eyes again, I had a moment of clarity. I watched my friends acting foolishly and no longer saw myself belonging to that group. I left and decided to stop drinking and going to parties. That meant I would need to change my group of friends, which was not easy. But I did it.

Those decisions have blessed my life. I eventually served a mission and

have fulfilled many callings. Most importantly, I married a wonderful woman in the temple. This has led to the choicest blessings of my life.

I recently read about the conversion of Alma and the sons of Mosiah (see Mosiah 27) and how they experienced a mighty change of heart (see Alma 5:12–14), brought about in part by the faithful prayers of Alma's father. Then I thought of my parents and realized, over 30 years later, that my sobering experience at that party was a direct result of their prayers.

Now, as a parent of a struggling child, I find myself in a similar place as Alma's father and my parents. But likening the scriptures unto myself, I have faith and hope that one day my child will also experience a change of heart. ■

**Name withheld, California, USA**

*At a party, I watched my friends acting foolishly and no longer saw myself belonging to that group.*



# My Missionary Dream Fulfilled at Last

For many years, I dreamed of serving a full-time mission. But when I returned home after university graduation, I saw how badly my family needed me. My father's health was challenged, and the family needed financial help. As the eldest of four children, I felt I should stay home and help. Heavenly Father blessed me with a decent job. Though it didn't pay much, it was enough to get by.

Whenever I was asked about serving a full-time mission, I answered that I would. Every time I said this, however, my mother would look at me with a mixture of excitement and sadness in her eyes. I knew that if I asked to go, she would say yes and quietly keep in her heart her apprehension of losing family income.

A few years passed, and a worthy priesthood holder asked me to marry him in the temple. I said yes, and we were later blessed with three children—two girls and one boy. One of our greatest joys was when our son left for his mission. A spirit of comfort

and peace filled our home. It seemed to me that a portion of my longing to serve a mission had been filled.

I was excited when my eldest daughter said she also wanted to serve a mission. Every week in the mission field, she sent me stories of her work. Her testimony inspired me and filled me with the missionary spirit. I prayed for missionary opportunities every day.

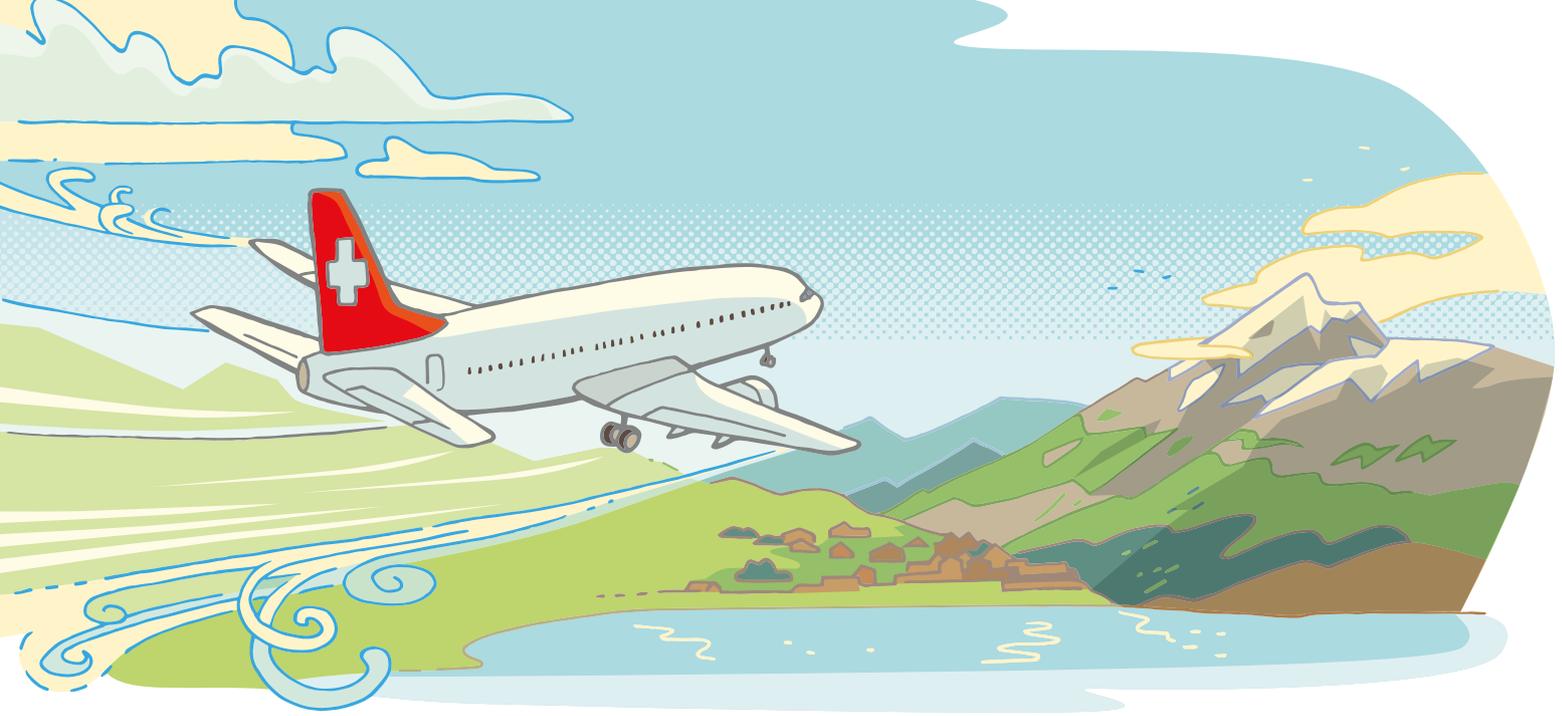
One day, I was inspired to ask a friend through a private message on social media if she would be interested in meeting with the missionaries. She said, "Yes!" I filled out an online referral form on LDS.org, and soon the missionaries began to teach her. In three months she joined the Church. Her children followed a few months later. As the Spirit directed me, I invited other friends to listen to the missionaries. When my daughter came home, I too felt that I had completed 18 months of missionary service.

Heavenly Father knew the desires of my heart and what was best for my family and me. I am grateful He granted my desire to serve as a missionary, which had dwelt in my heart for so long. ■

**Jean Daniel Daroy, Ontario, Canada**



*Reading my daughter's stories from her mission filled me with the missionary spirit. I prayed for missionary opportunities and felt prompted to send my friend a message.*



## Our 30-Year Journey to the Temple

**B**efore my brother left for Switzerland, the Spirit whispered to my heart that this journey would bring him closer to the Savior and His Church.

Several months after my baptism, my younger brother, Oswaldo, joined another church and actively participated in its congregation. But I wanted Oswaldo to know what I knew to be true. In particular, I wanted him to connect with the words of the prophets.

Each month, when I received the *Liahona* magazine, I would share it with Oswaldo. I suggested that some of the topics in the magazine could help him prepare for meetings in his church. I was pleased when he accepted my suggestion. Many years went by, however, and I was saddened to see that my brother would not accept the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

One morning, Oswaldo told our family that he was planning to leave our home in Ecuador and travel to Switzerland. He accepted a blessing from me the day he departed. It was an emotional moment for me because the Spirit whispered to my heart that this journey would bring Oswaldo closer to the Savior and to His Church.

In Switzerland, Oswaldo met the missionaries and eventually invited them to his home. Over time he established a close friendship with

them. But he told me that if the missionaries brought up the topic of baptism, he would no longer receive them. Imagine my surprise and joy when I received an email from him telling me that he was getting baptized. I had joined the Church in 1981. Oswaldo was baptized 20 years later, in May 2001. He received his endowment in July 2002, and he was sealed to his wife in February 2003.

When Oswaldo returned to Ecuador, he bore his testimony in a sacrament meeting. With tears in his eyes, he said, “My brother shared the words of the prophets with me. These words inspired me as I prepared for meetings in the church I attended before, and many people were edified this way. The words of the prophets changed my life. Through them, I came to know that the gospel of Jesus Christ is again upon the earth in its fulness, with power and authority.”

In February 2011, Oswaldo and I were sealed to our parents in the Guayaquil Ecuador Temple. The words of prophets have blessed our family for eternity. ■

**Francisco W. Fierro, Lima, Peru**



# Martyrs and My Testimony

I was skeptical when the missionaries taught me about Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon. My first thought was that Joseph Smith, like many other so-called “prophets,” may have brought a false book into the world seeking to become wealthy, famous, or heroic.

I had no intention of reading the Book of Mormon. But over time the missionaries’ friendship and their enthusiasm for the gospel allowed my curiosity toward their message to grow.

As I read the verses the missionaries gave me in the Book of Mormon, I found Moroni’s invitation to ask God with a sincere heart, real intent, and faith in Christ if the Book of Mormon is true (see Moroni 10:4–5). I thought, “Who, knowing the book was fake, would dare challenge us to ask God with real intent and sincerity if the Book of Mormon is true?”

Then one day the missionaries explained that Joseph Smith and his brother, Hyrum, were martyred for their testimony. Suddenly, a thought came to me that they would never have given up their own lives for something they knew was false. At that moment, a warm feeling, like a burning fire, spread through me. It was a witness of the Holy Spirit confirming to my heart that Joseph Smith was a true prophet. With this witness, I was baptized and confirmed.

I was reminded of this experience 25 years later when I read a talk by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. In his talk, Elder Holland asked if, in the critical moment of their martyrdom, Joseph and Hyrum would continue to blaspheme before God by fixing their lives, their honor, and

their eternal salvation on a book they knew was false.

“*They would not do that!*” Elder Holland said. “They were willing to die rather than deny the divine origin and the eternal truthfulness of the Book of Mormon.”<sup>1</sup>

Elder Holland’s words made so much sense to me and further strengthened my testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the power of the Book of Mormon.

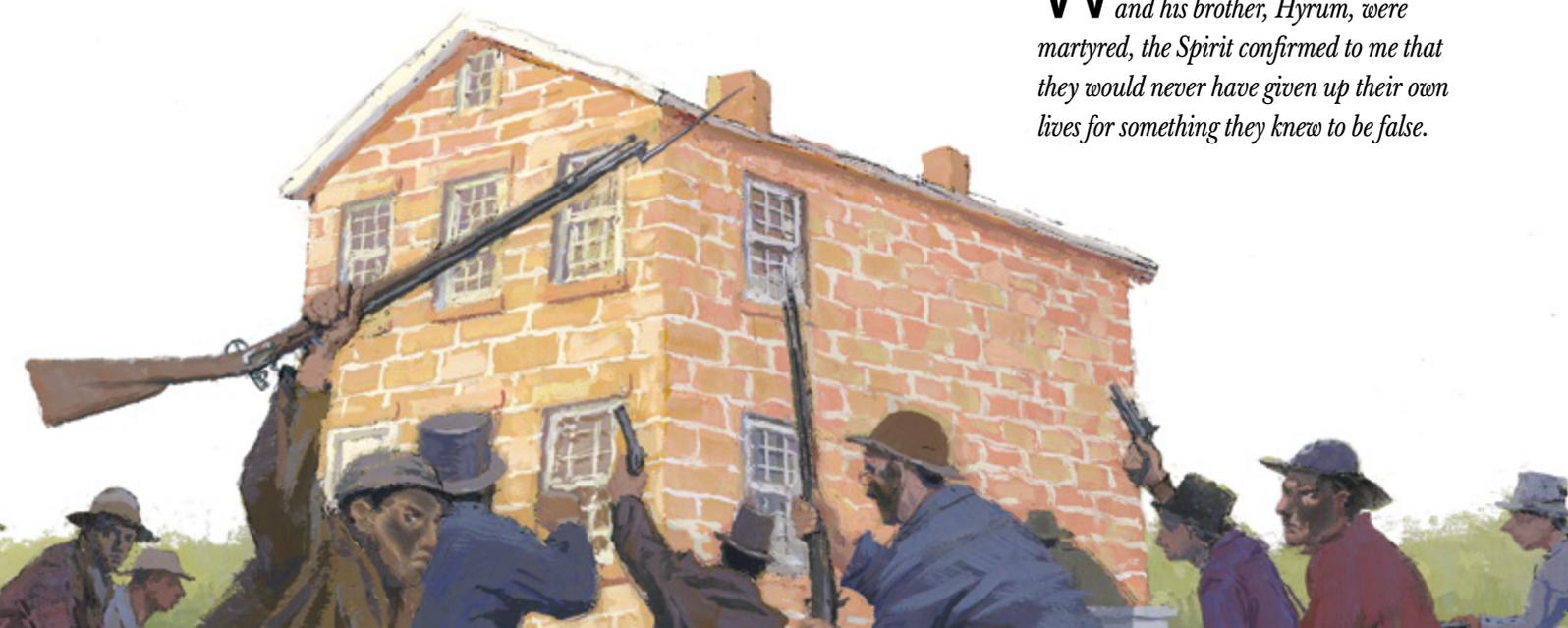
I am grateful for the Prophet Joseph Smith. He brought forth the Book of Mormon and willingly gave his life to be a witness of Jesus Christ. Through the Book of Mormon, I have come to know of God’s existence and of His love for me. ■

**Sunju Kim Muir, Maryland, USA**

#### NOTE

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Safety for the Soul,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 89.

*When I learned that Joseph Smith and his brother, Hyrum, were martyred, the Spirit confirmed to me that they would never have given up their own lives for something they knew to be false.*



# We Believe in Being Perfect—in Christ

During of His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave us the challenging command to be perfect (see Matthew 5:48). But since we are all bound to make mistakes, how does God expect us to keep this commandment? By gaining a correct understanding of God’s expectations for us, we can come to know what the prophet Moroni meant when he said we can become “perfect in Christ” (see Moroni 10:32–33).

## What Does It Mean to Be Perfect?

“The Greek word for *perfect* can be translated as ‘complete, finished, fully developed’ (in Matthew 5:48, footnote *b*). Our Savior asks us to become complete, finished, fully developed—to be perfected in the virtues and attributes He and our Father in Heaven exemplify.”<sup>1</sup>

“The perfection that the Savior envisions for us is much more than errorless performance. It is the eternal expectation as expressed by the Lord in his great intercessory prayer to his Father—that we

might be made perfect and be able to dwell with them in the eternities ahead.”<sup>2</sup>

“I believe that Jesus did not intend His sermon on this subject to be a verbal hammer for battering us about our shortcomings. No, I believe He intended it to be a tribute to who and what God the Eternal Father is and what we can achieve with Him in eternity.”<sup>3</sup> ■

## NOTES

1. Gerrit W. Gong, “Becoming Perfect in Christ,” *Ensign*, July 2014, 17; *Liahona*, July 2014, 45.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “Perfection Pending,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 86.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Be Ye Therefore Perfect—Eventually,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 41.



“Understanding the Savior’s freely given atoning love can

free us from self-imposed, incorrect, and unrealistic expectations of what perfection is.”

Elder Gerrit W. Gong of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Becoming Perfect in Christ,” *Ensign*, July 2014, 14; *Liahona*, July 2014, 42.

## What God Expects

“Deny yourselves of all ungodliness . . . and love God with all your might, mind and strength” (Moroni 10:32).

With faith in Jesus Christ, repent when we fall short.

Keep the covenants, or promises, we have made with God.

Do our best to keep the commandments throughout our lives.

“Continue in patience until ye are perfected” (Doctrine and Covenants 67:13).



## What God *Doesn't* Expect

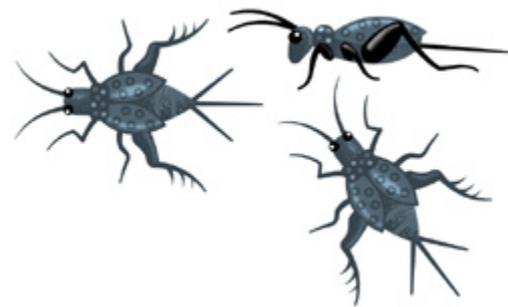
Be perfect *now!* Never make mistakes.

Be burdened by an attitude of perfectionism.

Be constantly busy—all work and no play.

Be critical of self for lack of progress.

Try to “earn” your way into heaven.



# Geckos, Crickets, and Time with Children

By Nancy Thomas

*I never imagined that reptiles would have a lasting effect on my relationship with my son.*

My son Dallin has always loved reptiles. I, on the other hand, have never liked them. He was allowed to own a reptile on the condition that whatever he chose was able to fit in the hose of a vacuum, just in case it got out of its cage while he was at school. We went through several options, from frogs to iguanas, before settling on two velvety leopard geckos named Fuzz and Diane.

Dallin's new buddies joined our family when he was seven years old. One aspect of owning geckos that I did not anticipate was the need to feed them crickets—live crickets—once a week. For years Dallin and I made “cricket runs.” They were rarely convenient, usually happening late at night while trying to beat the clock before the pet store closed.

Diane only lived for three years, but Fuzz lived for many years, healthy

and happy. Toward the end of Dallin's senior year in high school, he was assigned to give a demonstration for his public speaking class. He prodded my husband and me for ideas. We suggested he discuss leopard geckos because he already knew so much about them and could bring Fuzz in as a prop. Dallin then told us that Fuzz had died.

“Are you serious? When did he die?” I asked in disbelief.

Dallin told us that Fuzz had died a week before.

“He's in my room, but don't worry. He won't stink. He's double-bagged.”

After seeing our astonishment, Dallin explained, “I'm doing an experiment—I want to watch him decay.”

Dallin's experiment turned out to be more than watching him decay. He would stall the process by putting Fuzz in the freezer for a couple of weeks and

then bring him out to thaw and decay some more.

A year later, when Dallin was on his mission, I was cleaning out the freezer and found Fuzz, still double-bagged, in the back. Since I was preparing a package to send to Dallin, I thought it would be funny to pass on his little experiment. I carefully put Fuzz in a box, wrapped it in beautiful black and white polka-dot paper, and tucked it neatly into Dallin's care package with a note that read, “There is a surprise in your package.” Then I anxiously waited for his response.

“I've thought about that gecko since getting it back,” he wrote. “Not so much about the actual gecko, but about all of the time spent on car rides every week to get crickets and run other errands, listening to your ideas, stories, and your testimony while in the car. It was a good excuse to have to go and get



to talk to you (not that I talked much, but I did listen).”

Buying crickets. Who knew? As parents we can't always plan the timing of our influence. It often just happens. It may be when we are tucking our kids in bed at night, riding a ski lift together, or just running errands in the car. We have to take time to be with our children.

The Savior showed the greatest example of taking time for children. After a long day of teaching the

Nephites, Christ commanded the people to bring their little ones to Him. He knelt among the little children and prayed. After the prayer, He wept. And then “he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them” (3 Nephi 17:21).

Those children knew that Jesus loved them. He willingly took time for them. He listened to them, prayed for them, and blessed them. Those who witnessed this were filled with such

power that the account records, “The eye hath never seen, neither hath the ear heard, before, so great and marvelous things as we saw and heard Jesus speak unto the Father” (3 Nephi 17:16).

The influence that Jesus Christ had on those children lasted for generations. As we invest our interest and time in our children, even if we're just going with them to buy crickets, hopefully our influence will last for generations as well. ■

*The author lives in Maine, USA.*

# When One or Both Parents Don't Attend Church

By Karmel Newell

President Russell M. Nelson grew up in a loving home with parents he adored. Yet as a child he went to church without his mother or father, and he longed to be sealed to his family in the temple.<sup>1</sup> But no child needs to walk the covenant path alone. The love and care of family and ward members can fill gaps for children who might not have gospel support at home. Ultimately, sound gospel teachings and good experiences at home and at church can help every child feel Heavenly Father's love.

## For Parents Who Attend Church without a Spouse

1. **Share the blessings of living the gospel.** Help your children see that living the gospel can bring peace—and lift burdens. Explain why you choose to participate in the Church, without speaking ill of a parent who chooses not to attend. Share your feelings about how keeping your baptismal covenant gives you comfort and guidance.
2. **Cultivate a positive attitude.** Help children see the good in their family. You can also help them see the good in their Church teachers, leaders, and ward members. Talk about what



*Talking to children about the good they experience at home and at church can help them feel Heavenly Father's love.*

- your children learned at church. Don't dwell on the weaknesses or insensitive remarks of others. Instead, speak positively and show a willingness to learn from others.
3. **Work through negative emotions.** Help children label negative emotions, such as fear, loneliness, disappointment, and anger. Then you can help them process their emotions

- through drawing, playing, or talking. When needed, you can also seek professional help. Healing wounded hearts will help everyone be more receptive to spiritual feelings and have better experiences at church.
4. **Ask for help when necessary.** If you need help, don't wait for someone to offer. Sometimes Church leaders and ward members may not notice

a need, or they may hesitate to help without an invitation. If a child needs a blessing, prayerfully consider who might be able to help, and then ask. Also consider who you might help.

### For All Adults

1. **Notice and love children who attend church without one or both parents.** Learn their names and greet them with warmth and kindness. Withhold judgment about their circumstances, and don't ask questions about absent parents. As children feel sincere love from fellow Church members, they are more likely to relax, learn, and feel the Spirit.
2. **Be sensitive to special needs.** When children attend church without one or both parents, be mindful of how specific teachings or activities might affect them. In a lesson on priesthood blessings, teach that everyone has access to these blessings. If an activity involves parents, include all parents. Be aware of children who might have sensitive feelings on special days like Father's Day or Mother's Day.
3. **Help them love and strengthen their family.** Teach children that the family is ordained of God.<sup>2</sup> Encourage them to appreciate the good in their

families. Family history work can help children realize that their family began before they were born. And doing family history work can bless them "with more closeness and joy in [their] family."<sup>3</sup>

4. **Teach them true doctrine.** Agency is a key doctrine in the plan of salvation, and children are not responsible for their parents' choices and sins (see Moses 6:54). Parents' problems are neither their children's fault nor their children's responsibility to repair. Knowing this can help children worry less about things they cannot change and appreciate the many daily blessings of family.  
President Henry B. Eyring, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, taught: "Our Heavenly Father is anxious to gather and bless all of His family. . . . His plan gives each of His children the opportunity to accept or reject His invitation. And families are at the heart of this plan."<sup>4</sup> ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

### NOTES

1. See Russell M. Nelson, "Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 93–96.
2. See "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2017, 145.
3. Quentin L. Cook, "The Joy of Family History Work," *Ensign*, Feb. 2016, 33; *Liahona*, Feb. 2016, 27.
4. Henry B. Eyring, "Gathering the Family of God," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2017, 20–21.

### FOR CHILDREN

In the *Friend*:

- President Nelson's childhood experience: "Grateful for Parents" (June 2019, page F2)
- "A New Chapter" (June 2019, page F4)
- "Steven's First Future Father's Day" (*Liahona*, June 2015, page 72)

### FOR YOUTH

In the *Liahona*:

- "Life Is a Marathon" (Apr. 2019, page 54)



## The Perfect Plan

**W**hen was the last time your plans fell through? Last week? Mine did. No matter how perfect our plans, **unexpected twists and turns through life** seem to be a fact of mortality. I never planned to have four miscarriages between my two children, but I did. When prayerfully laid plans surprise us in unexpected ways—or come crashing down all together—**what do we do?** In this issue, young adults from a variety of circumstances share the answers they have found to this question when their family planning didn't go as planned.

For me and my husband, miscarriages stopped our tracks and broke our hearts (see page 44). For Katherine and her husband, sorting through the opinions of society to find the voice of the Lord proved an obstacle in their path (see page 48).

In additional digital-only articles, Christina shares her fears and hesitations about becoming a mother, and Brian details how deployment almost derailed

his and his wife's family plans. Katie, a wise young single adult, provides insight into the eternal nature of our identity as parents.

Whether you are waiting for children to bless your home, have more children than you originally planned, or are simply waiting for marriage, one thing is certain: **Heavenly Father has the perfect plan**, and He is ever guiding and sustaining us in personal, one-on-one ways as we seek to align our will with His.

Regardless of the outcome, simply **aspiring to bring children into this world** will bless us with a more profound perspective of Heavenly Father's great plan of happiness. Wherever you are on your family-growing journey, as you read our stories, I sincerely hope the Holy Ghost will guide you to insights or answers that may help you along your way.

Happy reading!

*Marionne M. Bricht*

## BEST ADVICE . . .

*Young adults share the best advice they've ever received about having children:*

"When we were first married, a wonderful teacher said that it's a decision between you, your spouse, and the Lord. He warned us that often people say it's between husband and wife but leave the Lord out. Keeping the Lord in our decisions has blessed us more than I can say."

—**Bonnie Cornick, Idaho, USA**

"Don't wait for the 'perfect time' to have children—you'll be waiting forever."

—**Annie Hall, Queensland, Australia**

"Don't worry about what others say! It's between you and your spouse and Heavenly Father."

—**Kulani Walters, Auckland, New Zealand**

*What's the best advice you've ever received about overcoming adversity? Send us your response at [liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) by June 30, 2019.*

## SHARE YOUR STORY

Do you have an amazing story to share? Or do you want to see articles about certain topics? If so, we want to hear from you! You can submit your articles or your feedback at [liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

## ABOUT THE YOUNG ADULT AUTHORS

**Marianne von Bracht** delights in family time, music, and sunlight. As a native to Michigan, USA, where the sun doesn't always shine, she knows the Light of Christ can brighten any day, no matter how thick the clouds.



**Katherine Ramirez de Pineda** is from Managua, Nicaragua, and joined the Church when she was 18 years old. She studied how to teach English as a foreign language and works as an elementary school teacher. She and her husband were sealed in the Guatemala City Guatemala Temple and have three beautiful children.



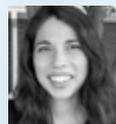
**Katie Sue Embley** thinks the world is full of beautiful people whose stories should be shared. She studies journalism and Spanish, with the goal to #sharegoodness.



**Brian Morrill**, his wife, and their two girls are stationed at Naval Station Norfolk in Virginia, USA. As a lieutenant, he works as a naval flight officer on the E-2 Hawkeye.



**Christina Crosland** recently graduated from Brigham Young University. She spends her free time reading and collecting books for her future dream library. She and her husband are now enjoying their new home in Texas, USA, with their baby girl.



## IN THIS SECTION

**44** **Waiting at the Stoplights of Life**  
By Marianne von Bracht

**48** **Blessed by Having Children**  
By Katherine Ramirez de Pineda



## DIGITAL ONLY

**Our Eternal Identity as Parents**  
By Katie Sue Embley

**The Needs of the Navy—and Our Family**  
By Brian Morrill

**Overcoming My Fear of Having Children**  
By Christina Crosland

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- At [liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)
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# Waiting at the Stoplights of Life

Experiencing one miscarriage after another felt like a series of stoplights in my life, but as I turned to the Lord, I found that each loss was accompanied by peace, perspective, and growth.





**By Marianne von Bracht**

**M**y fingers clenched the steering wheel as I stared anxiously at the red light. When it finally changed to green, I sped forward only to wait at another seemingly endless stoplight. I was still 10 minutes away from the lesson with the sister missionaries that was supposed to have started 5 minutes ago. If I had been a wiser mother, I would have predicted the 15-minute tantrum my almost-three-year-old daughter erupted into as we headed out the door, but I hadn't. Yes, the world would go on if I was late, but since I was trying to do something good, didn't I deserve at least *some* of the traffic lights to work in my favor? As I waited impatiently at yet another stoplight, I could feel my frustration tightening into anger. "I'm trying to do something good; trying my best! Where is the help I need?"

Twenty months earlier, I had found myself asking parallel questions in a parallel situation, only in a place with all the peace and serenity that my stoplight moment lacked.

In the Sacred Grove, in Palmyra, New York, the leaves were barely budding on the brown branches surrounding me. The newly green shrubbery sprinkling the ground seemed to breathe life into the air. Only the rustles of a gentle breeze, our stroller, and my footsteps reached my ears—no cars, no roads, no loud conversations. Yet despite the serenity, my mind swayed with questions and uncertainty. My husband, Lance, and I had been waiting 72 painstaking hours for my doctor to call with results of a last-minute ultrasound and blood test. I was desperate for answers and consolation.

### **Receiving Comfort**

*"The Lord did visit them with his Spirit, and said unto them: Be comforted. And they were comforted" (Alma 17:10).*

I found myself staring at the winter-worn flower beds outside the Palmyra New York Temple. My mind fully articulated the questions weighing on it: "If I lose this pregnancy, why? What then?" As gentle as the spring breeze around me, the Lord spoke to my mind the comfort I had been yearning for. I no longer needed the doctor to let me know; I knew I would lose this pregnancy, but I suddenly understood that this tiny soul was in the perfect, loving hands of Heavenly Father. All at once, the desperation that had consumed me was replaced with a reassuring peace that sustained me through the following weeks and months.

## Waiting for the Green Light

*"I have been thankful for the many ways the Lord has visited me with the Comforter when I needed peace. Yet our Father in Heaven is concerned not just about our comfort but even more about our upward progress."<sup>1</sup> —President Henry B. Eyring*

Several days after visiting Palmyra, I experienced a traumatic miscarriage. Although a sense of peace continued to sustain me, I felt physically and emotionally weak from the loss and unprepared for the waiting that followed. I first waited for lab results, which indicated a rare, partial molar pregnancy. I then waited for blood tests weekly, biweekly, and finally monthly to ensure no signs of a possible resultant cancer. Even through the long months of waiting, Lance and I could easily see the Lord's hand comforting and reassuring us through that time. The partial molar pregnancy had no lasting effects, and after only six months my doctor said we could try to have another baby. I was back on the path to progress in my life; the light had finally changed from red to green.

But just under three months and several blood tests later, I miscarried again—this time only a week before Christmas. Another three months passed and my hopes soared after another positive pregnancy test, only to miscarry a week later—yet another stoplight.

## Putting Faith to the Test

*"Even if we have strong faith, many mountains will not be moved. . . . If all opposition were curtailed, if all maladies were removed, then the primary purposes of the Father's plan would be frustrated."<sup>2</sup> —Elder David A. Bednar*

I got pregnant again, and my next due date was going to land right around the following Christmas. I had a good feeling about this

pregnancy. We had seen the heartbeat on an early ultrasound and knew that family members were praying for us. While we were sitting in an endowment session in the temple one day, I had a distinct stream of thoughts: "If I were to lose this pregnancy, would my faith hold up? Of course it would. But of course I won't have another miscarriage because this time I am ready to accept the Lord's will no matter what."

Despite my positive attitude, several weeks later I saw the signs, went in for the ultrasounds, and began the painful process that I felt all too familiar with. My faith did not hold up quite like I had expected. The answers that had sustained me through my previous miscarriages no longer seemed adequate. A wave of depression set in. I felt broken, empty, and even slightly betrayed. My husband and I weren't the only ones waiting on the Lord; our daughter frequently told us how much she wanted a baby brother or sister. Our hearts ached for her as well. As I turned my vulnerable emotions over to the Lord in fervent prayer, I again received a clear witness that Heavenly Father was very aware of my pain and circumstances and that He loved me. Although my circumstances remained the same, this sweet and simple experience miraculously lightened the burden I felt and gave me the ability to cope and even feel happy as I continued through my day-to-day life. Whatever the future held, I would be OK.

When genetic testing came back several months later with no answers, we again felt confused about the purpose of these setbacks in our lives. I tried my best to set my own desires aside and align my will with the Lord's, but during the difficult moments my heart would cry out, "What am I supposed to learn from this? I'm trying to do something good! Where is the help I need?"





## Changing My Reaction

*“Hard is the constant! We all have challenges. The variable is our reaction to the hard.”<sup>3</sup> —Elder Stanley G. Ellis*

Eight months after my fourth miscarriage and just several weeks after my stressful drive to meet the sister missionaries, I was peacefully waiting at a stoplight on my way home when my answers came. As I watched the cars stopped next to me and the cars making their way down the road ahead of me, I caught an eternal perspective of my life. I suddenly realized that all that mattered in my journey was that I stay on the path that would take me back to my heavenly home. How many “stoplights” I waited at would have no effect on my destination. How I responded to them would.

I began to cherish every stoplight in my life, both metaphorical and literal. Instead of wasted time, each became an opportunity to acquire patience and to gain perspective that comes only through waiting. Just as every red traffic light is paired with a green light in a different direction, I found that every stoplight in my life opened an avenue for growth, just not necessarily in the way I had been planning to grow right then. Instead of dwelling on the disappointments, I began to delight in the opportunity for progress that every unexpected turn of events provided.

## Focusing on the Savior

*“A critical question to ponder is ‘Where do we place our faith?’ Is our faith focused on simply wanting to be relieved of pain and suffering, or is it firmly centered on God the Father and His holy plan and in Jesus the Christ and His Atonement?”<sup>4</sup> —Elder Donald L. Hallstrom*

Two long years after my first miscarriage, I gave birth to a beautiful, healthy baby boy. In the time leading up to that joyful day for our family, I came to realize that Jesus Christ did not suffer for me in order to remove all suffering from my life. Rather, He suffered so that I could be strengthened through and grow from the challenges I face. Although the heartbreaking moments of loss and the long months of waiting are still painful to remember, they have become a treasure in my life. In those sacred moments, I came to understand how individually the Savior knows my suffering. He succored me in a way that only one who knows my personal sorrows could succor. While the opposition in our lives often seems to thwart our plans for progress, as we turn to the Lord, that opposition can function as the friction that propels us to a higher end: knowing and abiding in the Savior’s perfect love. ■

*The author lives in Texas, USA.*

### NOTES

1. Henry B. Eyring, “My Peace I Leave with You,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2017, 17.
2. David A. Bednar, “Accepting the Lord’s Will and Timing,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2016, 34; *Liahona*, Aug. 2016, 22.
3. Stanley G. Ellis, “Do We Trust Him? Hard Is Good,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 113.
4. Donald L. Hallstrom, “Has the Day of Miracles Ceased?” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 90.

People questioned us for having more children, but through our posterity, we are able to better understand Heavenly Father's love and develop our divine potential.

# Blessed by Having Children

By Katherine Ramirez de Pineda

Is this your last child?" When I was pregnant with my third child, already having two other kids under age five, people often seemed to have an opinion about my children. "Is this your last one?" "Don't you think you're going too fast?" "What are you going to do with three kids?" were questions I would normally hear. Although it was understandable, since people in my country usually have only one or two children because of economic issues, what people didn't know is that when my husband and I were dating, we talked about how many children we wanted and when to have them. Family planning was an important and serious decision to us, so it had to be made between the two of us, always

seeking for God's guidance. We listened to the Spirit rather than the voices of those around us, and we have been blessed by having children.

When the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, He promised him a numerous posterity (see Genesis 17:5-6; 22:17). From that passage of scripture, we get the sense that to our Heavenly Father, having children is one of the greatest blessings we can receive. Through our posterity, we are able to better understand our Heavenly Father's love, and we develop our divine and eternal potential. When you have children, you not only help those spirits that are in the premortal life to come to the earth and get a body, but you also have the privilege of teaching them the gospel.





I believe that few things in life prepare us better for eternal life than having children. Our families are where we best learn to apply the Lord's attributes. Now that I'm a mom, I'm reminded daily of how important it is to stay close to my Heavenly Father. I pray all the time, asking for guidance, strength, and patience and thanking Him for the many blessings that come along with having children.

Parenthood is a life-changing experience filled with some challenges but lots of joy. Every time I listen to my oldest daughter singing a Primary song, or watch my two-year-old son trying to keep his eyes closed during our family prayer, or when I hold my sleeping baby boy in my arms, I feel my heart fill with

indescribable joy. Our children are the fuel that keeps us enduring until the end, no matter how many challenges we face in life. I'm really thankful to my Heavenly Father for giving me the opportunity to be my children's mother.

I know that our Heavenly Father loves us. I have felt His love during those sweet little moments full of real everlasting happiness as well as during trials. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to show us the way back to our heavenly home. I love my family, and I know that families can be together forever. ■

*The author lives in Managua, Nicaragua.*

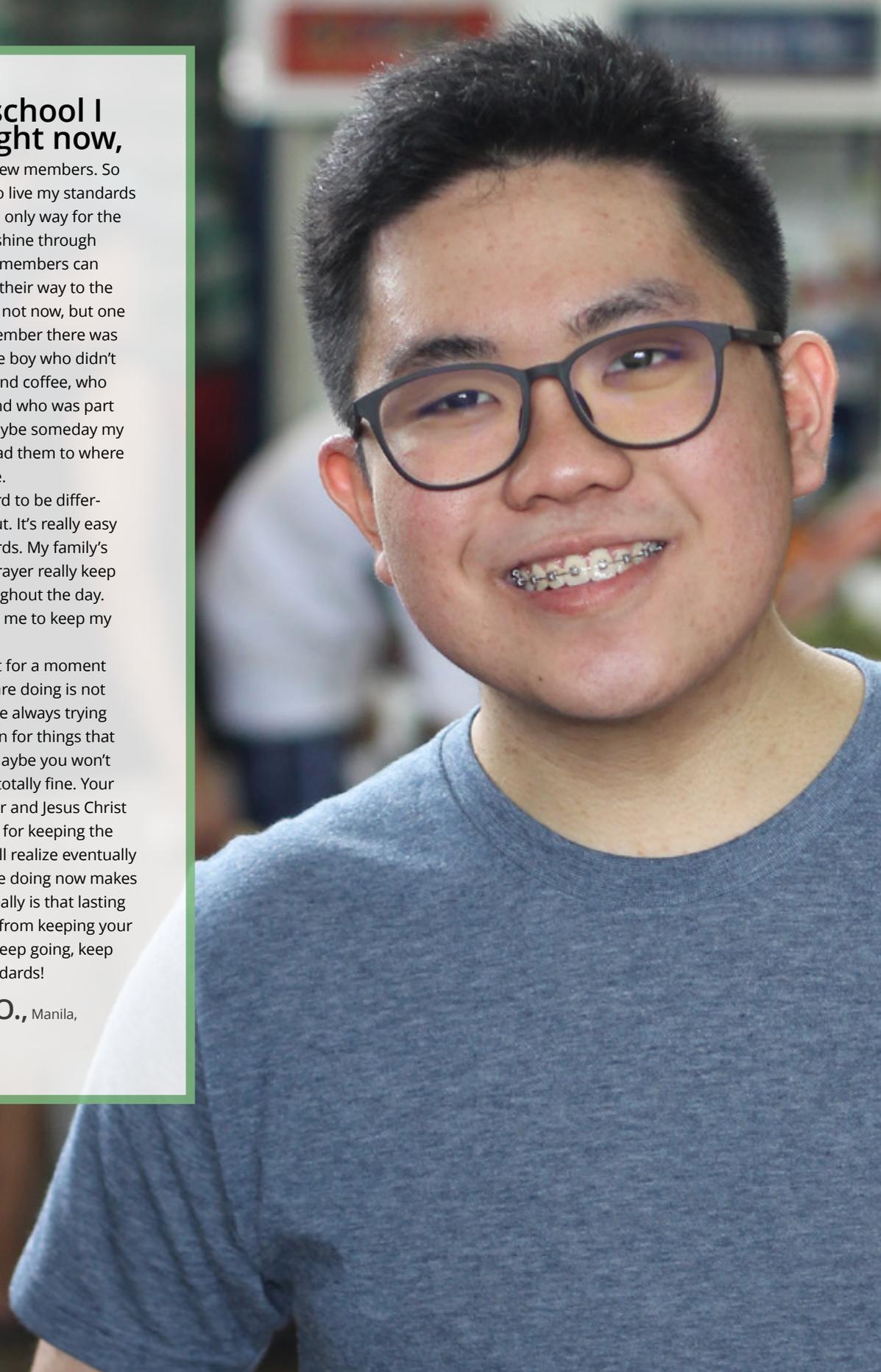
## At the school I go to right now,

there are very few members. So it's important to live my standards because it's the only way for the gospel light to shine through me so that nonmembers can eventually find their way to the Church. Maybe not now, but one day they'll remember there was this one strange boy who didn't drink iced tea and coffee, who didn't swear, and who was part of a church. Maybe someday my example will lead them to where they need to be.

It can be hard to be different, to stand out. It's really easy to drop standards. My family's example and prayer really keep me going throughout the day. Prayer reminds me to keep my standards.

Never doubt for a moment that what you are doing is not right. People are always trying to put you down for things that you don't do. Maybe you won't be cool. That's totally fine. Your Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ see you as cool for keeping the standards. You'll realize eventually that what you're doing now makes you happy. It really is that lasting joy that comes from keeping your standards. So keep going, keep living your standards!

**Nathan O.,** Manila,  
Philippines



# YOUTH

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# SETTING REALISTIC GOALS

## *You Can Accomplish*

*Do you want to improve? become better at a specific skill? learn something entirely new? You'll most likely have to set some goals to get there.*

**By Chakell Wardleigh**  
Church Magazines

Sometimes we write down long lists of goals and try really hard to reach them, but then we forget about them or give up on them. Sound familiar? Why is it that when we want to change and become better, sometimes we just can't stick with the goals we set? Well, it's all determined by how realistic our goals are and how much work we're willing to put in!

Here are a few tips on how to set realistic goals:

- **Set well-rounded goals.** Focus on strengthening many aspects of your life, not just one. The Savior set a perfect example: "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52). That is, He grew mentally, physically, socially, and spiritually. You can set goals to do the same. Knowing that your goals are helping you become a better person can motivate you to keep working on them.
- **Write your goals down.** Keep your goals somewhere you can see them every day! Whether they are on a bulletin board in your room, in your locker at school, or even on your phone, review them often. The more you're reminded of the goals you've set, the more likely you are to keep working toward them.

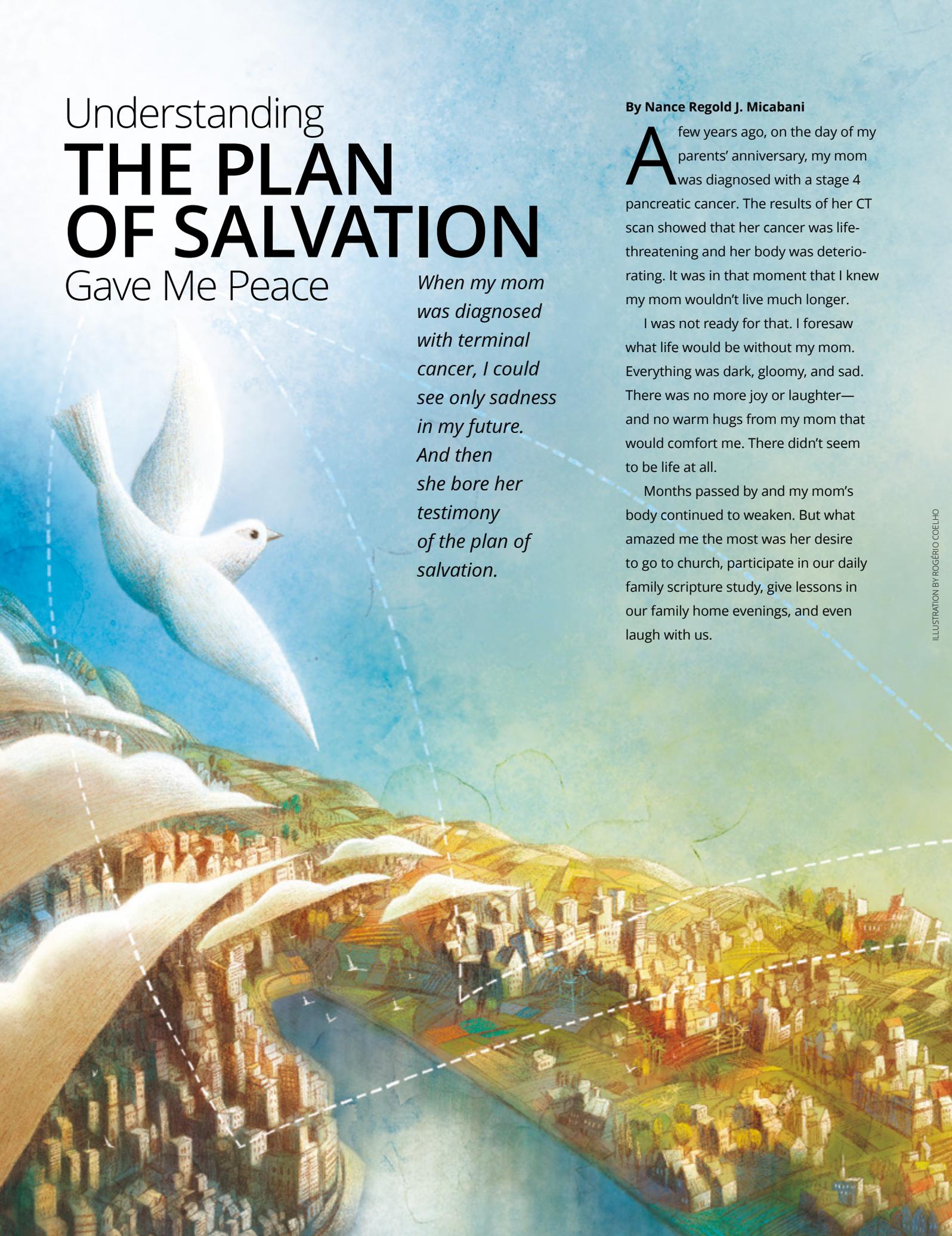


### THE MOST IMPORTANT GOALS

*“To return to [God’s] presence and to receive the eternal blessings that come from making and keeping covenants are the most important goals we can set.”*

President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Return and Receive,” Apr. 2017 general conference.

- **Be specific.** If you have “Learn something new” on your list of goals, it’s definitely a realistic goal, but it’s not specific. What sort of thing do you want to learn? A new instrument? A new recipe? Maybe a new hobby altogether? Be specific about what you want to accomplish!
- **Set short-term goals.** You can set a major goal for yourself, but in order to achieve that goal, you need to hit little milestones on the way to achieving it. Basically, you need a plan. For example, say you want to run a marathon this year. In order to work up to being able to run 26 miles (42 km), you need to start small. Set a goal to run a few miles every week, and slowly increase your distance each week. When we make plans to achieve our goals, God will help us accomplish them (see Proverbs 16:9).
- **Make time for your goals.** Because life gets so busy, it can be easy for your goals to get lost among school, jobs, friends, and family. But if you set aside a specific time to work on your goal each day, each week, or however often you would like, you are more likely to stick with it.
- **Don’t do too much.** Don’t set so many goals that you can hardly remember everything that you’ve planned to do. If you start with only a couple of important goals instead of throwing yourself headfirst into 40 at a time, you will feel less overwhelmed and more confident in your efforts to reach them. We need to do things “in wisdom and order; for it is not requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength” (Mosiah 4:27). And when you achieve one goal, you’re more likely to achieve another! Small things lead to big things. ■

A white dove is shown in flight, carrying an olive branch, against a blue sky. Below the dove, a detailed illustration of a city is visible, with a river winding through it. The city is rendered in a style that suggests depth and perspective, with buildings and streets clearly defined. The overall scene is peaceful and hopeful, with the dove's presence suggesting a message of peace and salvation.

# Understanding THE PLAN OF SALVATION

## Gave Me Peace

*When my mom was diagnosed with terminal cancer, I could see only sadness in my future. And then she bore her testimony of the plan of salvation.*

By Nance Regold J. Micabani

A few years ago, on the day of my parents' anniversary, my mom was diagnosed with a stage 4 pancreatic cancer. The results of her CT scan showed that her cancer was life-threatening and her body was deteriorating. It was in that moment that I knew my mom wouldn't live much longer.

I was not ready for that. I foresaw what life would be without my mom. Everything was dark, gloomy, and sad. There was no more joy or laughter—and no warm hugs from my mom that would comfort me. There didn't seem to be life at all.

Months passed by and my mom's body continued to weaken. But what amazed me the most was her desire to go to church, participate in our daily family scripture study, give lessons in our family home evenings, and even laugh with us.

One day, I asked her, “Haven’t you questioned Heavenly Father? Haven’t you wondered why *you* have to have cancer?” My mom smiled and shared her testimony about the plan of salvation. She told me that I needed to understand the plan of salvation to feel the genuine happiness that it gives. She said if I understood where we come from, what our purpose in this life is, and where we are going, I would understand that we will always be together, that I would never really lose her. She encouraged me to continue preparing for a mission and to share the gospel of Jesus Christ and the plan of salvation with others so that they could receive the blessings of comfort and happiness as well.

I realized that my mom was right. Why would I fear losing her here on earth if I knew that as long as I kept my covenants and completed the will of the Father that I would see her in the next life? I felt peaceful.

A little while later, my mom passed away. During my mom’s wake—a celebration of her life we held before her

burial—even though it was hard and I was sad, everything seemed peaceful, and I could still feel my mom’s presence. Even the people around me seemed to be uplifted. I knew that I was feeling the true blessing of understanding God’s divine plan.

Later, when it was time to take my mom to the cemetery, a young boy came up to me and asked me why I wasn’t crying. I remembered how I thought of my mom’s death before and how I had only seen a lot of sadness and grief. I smiled and knelt down to his level. I told him, “I know that I will see my mom again if I continue to follow God’s commandments.” The boy smiled too, and I knew that he felt the same peace I was feeling.

My mom was gone, but the darkness, gloom, and sadness I thought would fill my life weren’t present. I said goodbye to her and told her that we would see each other in the next life. I felt comforted despite our loss. It was a blessing that came from understanding the plan of salvation. ■

*The author lives in the Philippines.*

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To learn more about life after death, read Doctrine and Covenants section 76, in which the Lord describes those who inherit the celestial, terrestrial, and telestial kingdoms and compares the glory of those kingdoms to the sun, moon, and stars.

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# People of GALILEE



**Breanna Call Herbert**  
Church Magazines

**W**hile the Savior was on the earth, He taught and ministered to many. These are some of the people who Jesus Christ ministered to in Galilee. What would these people have said if they could tell their own stories found in the scriptures? Here are some ideas.



**CHILD:** I was standing close to Jesus Christ and His Apostles. The Apostles

were arguing about something, and Jesus Christ asked them about it. The Apostles got really quiet, and no one spoke up because they were arguing about which of them would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. The Savior then motioned to me. I stood in the middle of them, and He took me in His arms. He told them that whoever is humble like a little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (See Mark 9:33-37; Matthew 18:1-5.)



**LAD:** I had heard of Jesus Christ and the miracles He had performed for

the sick. So when He came to Tiberias, I joined the crowd that followed Him. There were a lot of us, around 5,000 people. I had five barley loaves and two fish. Jesus Christ took them and blessed them. Miraculously, everyone was fed from the food I had with me. But it didn't end there. When everyone was full, the disciples gathered up the leftovers. They filled 12 baskets. (See John 6:5-14.)



**MAN:** I was sick with palsy, so I couldn't move. And on top of that, I had involuntary tremors. It was horrible. My friends had heard that Jesus Christ was teaching at a house. They knew He could help me, so they tried to bring me to Him. The house was crowded, so they decided to lower me through the roof. They uncovered it and then lowered me down in front of Jesus Christ. When He saw me, He told me my sins were forgiven. He told me to arise and to take up my bed and walk. So I did—and everybody was amazed! (See Mark 2:1–12.)



**NOBLEMAN:** I was in Cana at the time. And my son, who was in Capernaum, was dying. I heard that Jesus was in the area, so I went to Him. When I did, I asked Him to go to Capernaum to heal my son. He told me to go home because my son was alive. I believed Him. As I arrived home, my servants came out to greet me. They told me that my son was alive. I asked them when he started to get better. They told me yesterday at the seventh hour. It was the same time that Christ had told me my son was alive! (See John 4:46–53.)



**MARY MAGDALENE:** Jesus Christ cast seven devils out of me. I followed Him as He traveled to many villages preaching the gospel. (See Luke 8:1–3.) When Christ was crucified, I was at the cross (see John 19:25). I visited the tomb where His body was laid. I was the first person to see Him after His Resurrection. At first I thought He was a gardener, but when He called my name, I knew it was my Savior. (See John 20:11–16.)



**SALOME:** I am the wife of Zebedee and the mother of James and John, who

were two of Jesus Christ's Apostles. I followed and served Him while He was in Galilee. I was at Golgotha when He was crucified. (See Mark 15:37–41.) I brought sweet spices to His tomb to anoint His body, but when I arrived, He wasn't there. Instead, I saw a man in long white clothes. At first, I was scared, but he told me not to be. He said that Jesus Christ had risen and that I should tell the Apostles. (See Mark 16:1–8.)



**SIMON PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW:** I was very sick with a horrible fever. When

Jesus Christ heard about it, He came to me. He took my hand and lifted me up. Immediately the fever left me. I felt so well that I even ministered to those around me. (See Mark 1:29–31.)



**WIDOW OF NAIN:** My son had just passed away. I had already lost my

husband. I was grieving deeply. Even though there were a lot of people with me, I couldn't stop crying. As we carried my son's body outside the city gates, a man came up to me. It was Jesus Christ. He had compassion on me and told me not to weep. Then He went to my son. The people who carried him stood still. Jesus Christ told my son to arise. And he did! He sat up and began to speak and he came to me. He was alive! We all glorified God and knew that there was a great prophet among us. (See Luke 7:11–17.)



**MARY:** I had heard of the Messiah who would come. I just didn't expect to

be a part of it. I was engaged to Joseph when an angel told me I would bear a child who would be the Son of God and to name Him Jesus. (See Luke 1:26–38.) And the Messiah did come. I gave birth to Him in a stable. Shepherds and Wise Men visited Him and gave Him gifts. (See Matthew 2:1–12; Luke 2:1–20.) Joseph and I raised Him, but He always amazed us. One time He went missing for three days. We finally found Him at the temple. Learned men were listening to Him and asking Him questions. (See Luke 2:40–52.)



**PHILIP:** I am one of Christ's Apostles. He sent us to preach His gospel. He told us

to focus on the lost sheep of Israel. He also gave us the power to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out devils. He told us not to bring money or clothing, but He did warn us that we would be persecuted. But we trusted in Him because we knew that if we endured unto the end that we would be saved. (See Matthew 10:1–10, 17–18, 22–23.)



**THADDEUS JUDAS:** I am an Apostle of Christ. One day, when He was

teaching us—He did that often—He told us that He wouldn't be on earth much longer. He told us that if we kept His commandments and loved Him, He would come and manifest Himself unto us. He said He would send the Holy Ghost to help us remember what He had taught us. (See John 14:19–27.) ■

# “How do I keep my electronics from distracting me at church and seminary?”

*“Handheld devices, such as smartphones, are a blessing, but they can also distract us from hearing the ‘still, small voice.’ They need to be our servants, not our masters. . . .*

*“ . . . When smartphones begin to interfere with our relationships with friends and family—and even more importantly, with God—we need to make a change.”*

President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Be Still, and Know That I Am God” (Church Educational System devotional for young adults, May 4, 2014), broadcasts.Churchofjesus Christ.org.



## Out of Sight, Out of Mind

I recently noticed my tendency to use electronics during church and youth

activities. It had become a habit. Anytime I saw my phone, I immediately had to grab it and check to see if I had any new notifications or text messages. The solution? Hiding my phone from myself. Whether it was in a bag, under a chair, or even with a friend—if I couldn’t see my phone, I wouldn’t be tempted to use it.

*Taryn M., age 15, Florida, USA*



## Prepare Your Devices to Minimize Distraction

Prepare your devices the same way you prepare your

mind and body for the Sabbath. Silence cell phone notifications during class. You could place the Gospel Library app separately from other apps so that if you need to use the scriptures or the notebook, you don’t get distracted by those apps.

*Delguimar S., age 21, São Paulo, Brazil*

## Pray for Help

I look for the Spirit by praying. This helps me to be able to give up my electronic devices on the Sabbath day and during seminary. Whenever I pray to my Heavenly Father and read the Book of Mormon, I receive a way to give up my devices.

*Desire M., age 18, Comoé District, Ivory Coast*

### **Don't Forget about Hard Copies!**

Using electronics for gospel study is OK, but sometimes it can get out of hand. To keep yourself from getting distracted, try using hard copies of the scriptures. The Lord will guide you. You'll learn so much more and feel the Spirit.

*Aiyana A., age 13, Laguna, Philippines*

### **Put It Away**

At church, I turn the sound off on my phone and keep it in my pocket unless I'm using it for scriptures. During the sacrament, I don't use it at all. I keep it out of my hands to avoid the temptation to use it.

*William W., age 17, Virginia, USA*



## **What should I say when my friends question our beliefs about marriage and family?**

In "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles proclaimed that "marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children" ([familyproclamation.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://familyproclamation.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)).

This proclamation "is a statement of eternal truth" that came through a "revelatory process" and is not "just a statement of policy" (Dallin H. Oaks, "The Plan and the Proclamation," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 30, 29). You can share your personal belief that this is so, and you can share the blessings these truths bring you.

In responding to others, we need to avoid being self-righteous or contentious. We should seek to love them. Those who are open and sincere deserve a sincere answer. But if it's obvious that someone isn't serious and just wants to mock or belittle your views, or if they just want to pick a fight, it's best to avoid the discussion (see Matthew 7:6).

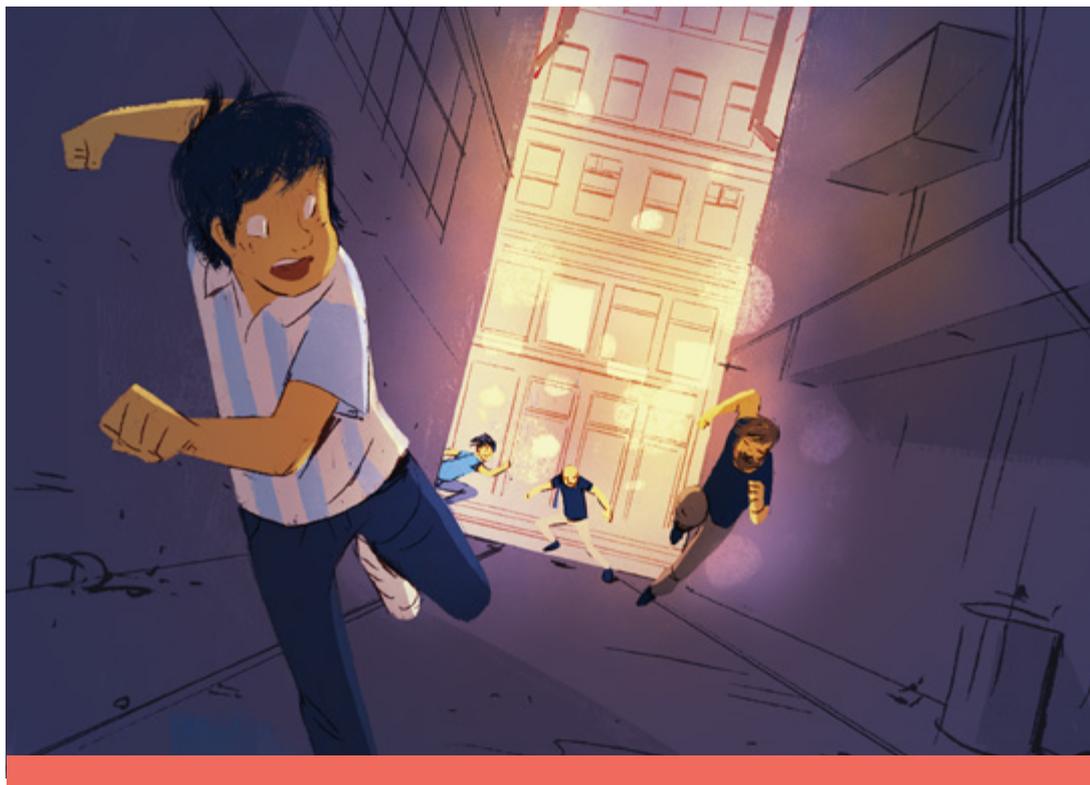
*Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as official pronouncements of Church doctrine.*

### **What Do You Think?**

**"How can I be positive around my friends who seem depressed?"**

Submit your answer and, if desired, a high-resolution photograph by July 15, 2019, at [liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) (click "Submit an Article or Feedback").

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.



## RUN!

ONE EVENING, I was walking to my house. It was only a few blocks away from where I had met up with some friends earlier, but now it was completely dark. I could barely see where I was walking.

I noticed that three young men were following me. I began walking faster to distance myself from them, but they kept following me. I felt a heavy feeling inside me. Then a clear thought came to me: run! I began running up the hill. The hill was really steep, but I felt a strength that wasn't mine. It was beyond my own.

Now the young men were running too and catching up. I wasn't sure what to do next. Again,

.....  
 "You can learn how to follow the best guide of all—the whisperings of the Holy Spirit. That is individual revelation. There is a process through which we can be alerted to spiritual dangers."

President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Spiritual Crocodiles," *Ensign*, May 1976, 31.

a clear thought came to my mind that told me to go down a narrow passageway. When I did, much to my surprise, I saw a police officer. Exhausted from running all those blocks and almost out of breath, I asked him for help. When the young men saw me talking to the police officer, they stopped chasing me and eventually walked away. To make sure I was safe, the police officer walked me home.

That night I kept thinking about the promptings I had received. I felt at peace knowing that Heavenly Father had helped me. I said a prayer thanking Him for His guidance. I know that if we obey the voice of the Spirit, we will be safe.

*Martín S., Puerto Madryn, Argentina*

### How can I be ready to hear and follow promptings?

1. **Be still.**

Taking quiet time to ponder and reflect will help you hear the Spirit (see Psalm 46:10).

2. **Repent.**

Repentance makes you clean so that the Spirit can be your companion (see Alma 34:36).

3. **Study.**

When you know the words of the Lord, it can be easier to recognize His voice (see Doctrine and Covenants 1:38).

## GETTING UP IS UP TO ME

**ON SUNDAYS** my mom usually woke me up so I could get ready for church and get there before the meetings began. But one Sunday my mom didn't wake me up. I woke up by myself and noticed that I didn't hear the usual noise of my family getting ready for church. I nervously looked at the clock and realized I was half an hour late for church.

I had missed the sacrament. I probably would miss Sunday School too.

I felt confused and abandoned. Why didn't my mom wake me up this morning? She always woke me up. But then it hit me: It wasn't my mom's responsibility to wake me up so I could get to church on time—it was mine. I had made my own covenants with Heavenly Father, and it was my responsibility to keep them.

Later that day my mom commented on not waking me up for church. She said that she wouldn't wake me up again. She told me that I should put in my own effort and gain my own testimony.

During that week, I found myself thinking about how I couldn't live on my parents' testimonies forever and how I should try harder to strengthen my own testimony. Since then, I have worked hard to wake up early every Sunday so that I can make it to church on time and take the sacrament. I am learning to be spiritually self-sufficient.

*Lia Alves, Ceará, Brazil*



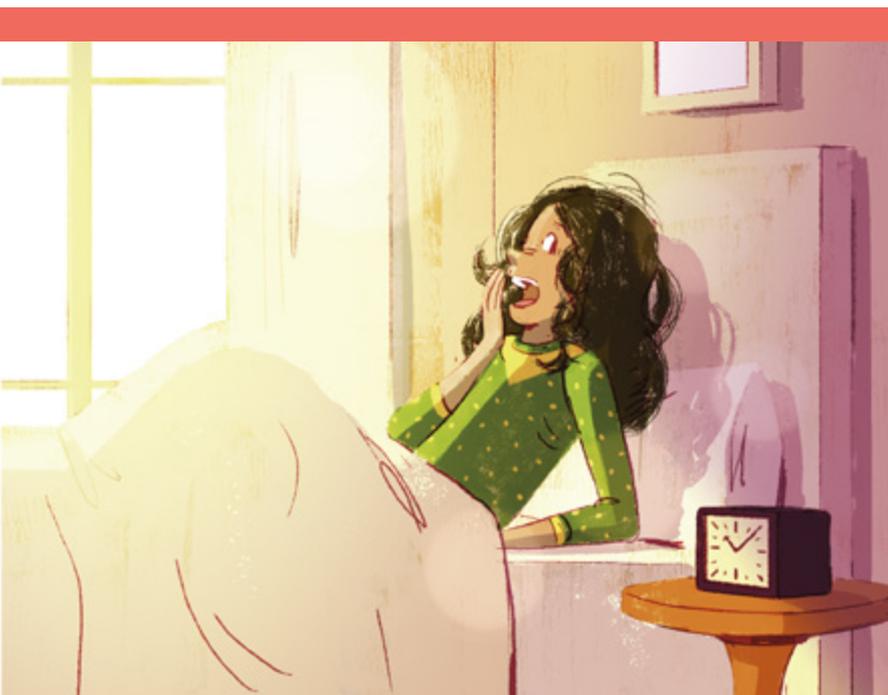
## FROM KICKED TO KIND

**I WAS STANDING** in line with my mom to pay for our groceries. The line was crowded, so my mom had to bend over this little boy in front of us to buy our things. The little boy started to kick her. The second time he kicked her, she backed away and said, "Will you please stop kicking?"

The boy's mom turned around and told my mom it was her fault she got kicked. She said all sorts of insulting things to us. I started to glare at her as she turned back around and was rude to the cashier too! I acted calm, but inside I was angry. It bugged me. I knew that what happened wasn't my mom's fault or mine, but I still felt hurt.

When we got home, I went to my room and pulled out my scriptures. After reading for a minute, I felt a need to pray. I hardly felt in the mood, but I knelt down and started to pray. Eventually, I found myself praying for this woman who had treated us so awfully. The calmest feeling I've ever felt settled all over me. I couldn't find room in my heart to be angry at her anymore. I felt love.

*Teresa G., Idaho, USA*



# “Fear Not, I Am with Thee”

By Elder David A. Bednar  
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

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A famous military leader once stated emphatically: “Never take counsel [from] your fears.”<sup>1</sup>

As we consider the things that are occurring all around us today, we might find many reasons to be afraid, to hesitate, and to wonder if things in our lives can indeed turn out the way we have long hoped.

Some of you may question or lack confidence in your own ability to succeed temporally and spiritually. Perhaps you wonder if the Lord’s promises of support and guidance—which you readily recognize and acknowledge in the lives of so many other people—will likewise be evident in your life. You may be uncertain about pursuing an opportunity because you cannot foresee all of the details about how things will work out, and thus you are reticent to start and take the first steps on that path. Or you may be so concerned about making a mistake that you fail to act in faith and press forward and thereby increase the likelihood of the very failure you fear.

To not take counsel from our fears simply means that we do not permit fear and uncertainty to determine our course in life, to affect negatively our attitudes and behavior, to influence improperly our important decisions, or to divert or distract us from all in this world that is virtuous, lovely, or of good report. To not take counsel from our fears means that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ overrules our fears

and that we press forward with a steadfastness in Him. To not take counsel from our fears means that we trust in God’s guidance, assurance, and timing in our lives. I promise each of us can and will be blessed with direction, protection, and lasting joy as we learn to not take counsel from our fears.

As we exercise faith in Christ and trust in His promises, we can walk into the dark with the absolute assurance that our pathway will be illuminated—at least far enough to take the next step—and then the next step—and the next step.

Joseph Smith declared, “We have nothing to fear if we are faithful.”<sup>2</sup>

President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) counseled, “Fear not. Be of good cheer. The future is as bright as your faith.”<sup>3</sup>

As you face your future in faith, the Savior will go before your face, will be on your right hand and on your left, and His Spirit shall be in your hearts (see Doctrine and Covenants 84:88) in all of your righteous endeavors and throughout all the days of your life. ■

*From a devotional given at Brigham Young University-Hawaii on December 15, 2012.*

#### NOTES

1. In Mary Anna Jackson, *Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson* (1895), 264.
2. *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, rev. ed. (2002), 338.
3. Thomas S. Monson, “Be of Good Cheer,” April 2009 general conference.

Born in  
**San Leandro,  
California,**  
on June 15, 1952



Served a  
**mission**  
in Southern  
Germany

Served as president of  
**BYU-Idaho**  
from 1997 to 2004



# Elder **DAVID A. BEDNAR**



Married  
Susan Robinson  
in 1975 in the  
**Salt Lake  
Temple**



As a boy, he  
**helped  
his family  
can fruit.**  
He jokes that he ate  
more of the fruit  
than what ended up  
in the jars.



Was the  
quarterback of his  
**high school  
football  
team**

Met his wife at a flag football game.  
**She impressed him**  
when she caught his long pass.



Was a  
**professor**  
at Texas Tech  
University and  
the University of  
Arkansas

Graduated from  
**Brigham Young University**

**Received a PhD**

in organizational behavior from Purdue  
University



Has **three sons**



One of his favorite hymns is  
**“Redeemer  
of Israel”**  
(Hymns, no. 6)



Sustained as a  
member of the  
**Quorum  
of the  
Twelve  
Apostles**  
on October 7, 2004





YOUNG ADULTS

**PLANNING ON CHILDREN?**

*Sometimes our best-laid plans for growing our families don't go as planned.*

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YOUTH  
**A GUIDE TO GOAL SETTING**

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**MEET THE PEOPLE OF GALILEE**

26, 56

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THE CHURCH OF  
**JESUS CHRIST**  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

# the Friend



Hello from the  
**Dominican Republic!**  
See pages F8–F11



By President  
Russell M. Nelson

# Grateful for Parents

Have you ever had to wait for something good to happen? What can help you while you wait?



All eight of my great-grandparents joined the Church in Europe. They were very faithful in the Church. After that, some of my ancestors didn't keep living the gospel. Because of this, my parents didn't go to church very much when I was a child.

I loved my parents. They taught me very important lessons. I can't thank them enough for our happy home. But even as a boy, I knew I was missing something because our family didn't go to church very much. One day I rode a streetcar to a bookstore to find a book about the Church. I loved learning about the gospel.

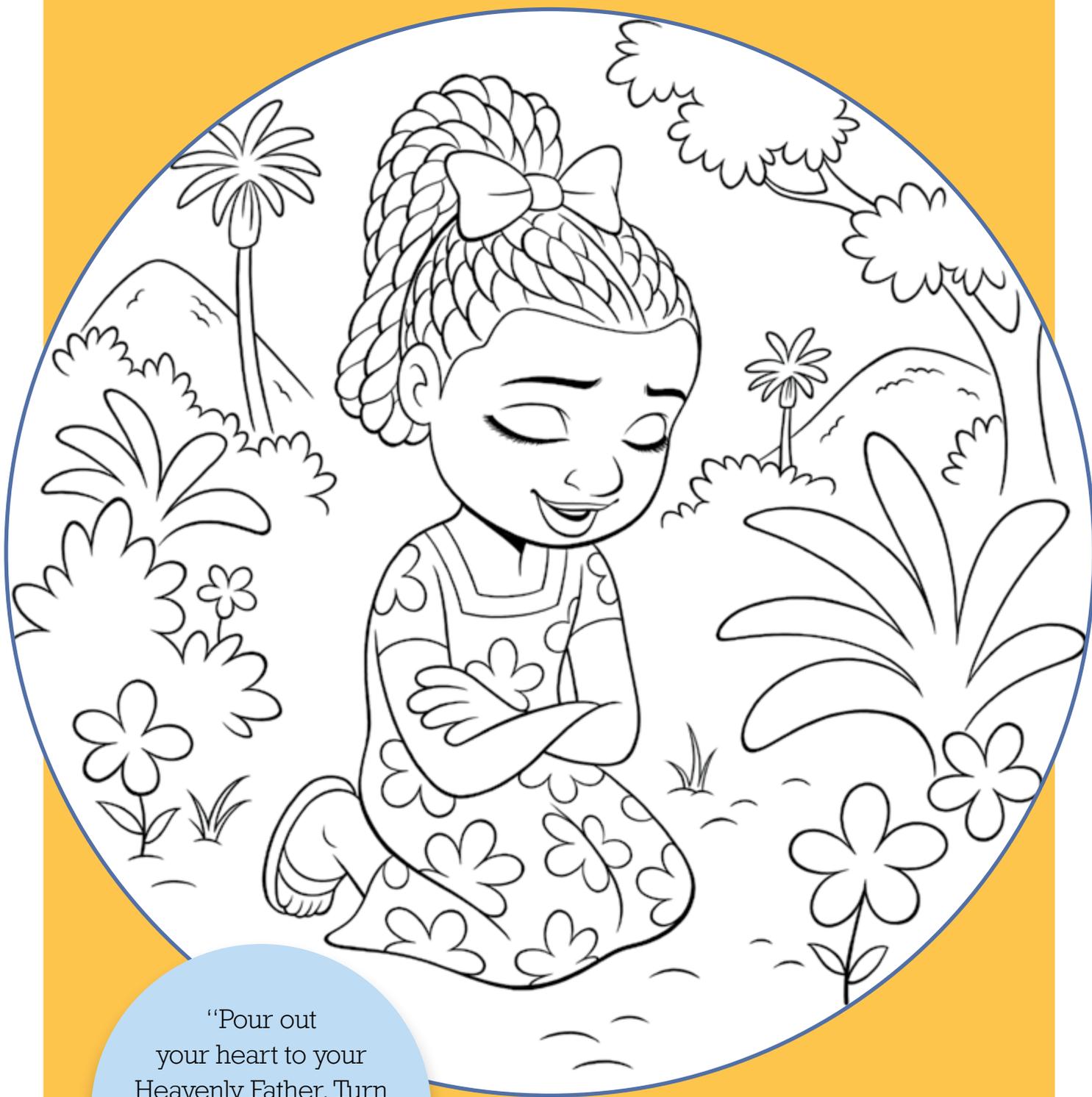
When I learned about the Word of Wisdom, I realized my parents weren't living the way it teaches us to live. But I wanted them to! So one day, I broke every bottle

of alcohol in my home on the concrete floor! I thought my father would punish me, but he never said anything to me about it.

As I got older, I kept learning about the gospel. I began to understand Heavenly Father's beautiful plan. I got baptized when I was 16 years old. At Christmastime, I often said to myself, "I don't want one more Christmas present! I just want to be sealed to my parents in the temple." I waited many years for that dream to come true. When my parents were over 80 years old, we were finally sealed as a family! I felt great joy that day. Each day, I still feel so happy that they were sealed together and that I was sealed to them. ●

*Adapted from "Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives," April 2018 general conference.*

## Coloring Page



“Pour out  
your heart to your  
Heavenly Father. Turn  
to Him for answers and  
for comfort.”

—President  
Russell M. Nelson

# A New Chapter

By Jane McBride

Based on a true story

*"These many blessings make me feel so thankful to be me" (Children's Songbook, 11).*

Sarah was unpacking a box in her room when Mom walked in.

"Can we paint the walls yellow?" she asked Mom.

They had just moved into a different house. Sarah had been able to pick out a quilt and curtains for her new room!

"I think so," Mom said. "Yellow is a happy color."

Sarah put a few books on a little shelf by her bed. Mom didn't always feel *happy* lately, not since Dad had died in the accident. Sarah carefully put her favorite picture of Dad next to the

books, where she could see it every morning when she woke up.

She heard a snuffle and saw tears in the corners of Mom's eyes.

"I love you, Mom," Sarah said, wrapping her arms around Mom's waist and squeezing tight.

"I love you more."

The Saturday before school started, Mom and Sarah put on old clothes, moved the furniture to the middle of Sarah's room, and carefully pushed paint rollers into trays of yellow paint. After a while, the walls were covered in yellow—and so were their faces and clothes!

"You look like you've got



sunshine splattered all over you,” Mom said with a laugh.

Sarah giggled. “And you look like a banana exploded next to you!”

They were still laughing as they cleaned up. But Sarah’s smile faded when she thought about going to Primary tomorrow and school the day after that.

“I’m worried about church and my new school,” she told Mom as they rinsed paintbrushes in the sink. “I won’t know any of the teachers or kids or anybody.”

Mom turned off the water and pulled Sarah into a hug.

“You’ll make friends. You have a kind heart that will draw others to you. Be your wonderful self, and friends will come.”

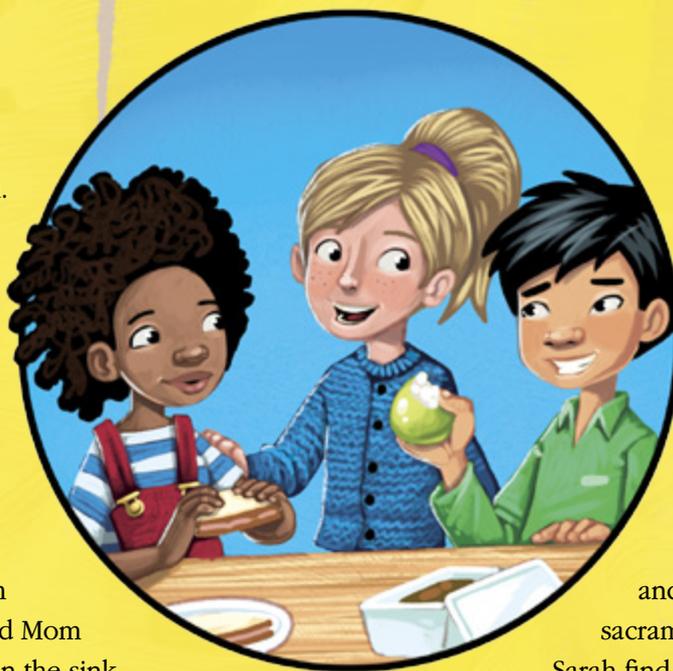
Sarah felt a little better, but she was still nervous.

“I wish Dad were here to give me a blessing,” she said. “Like he always used to before I went back to school.”

Mom was quiet for a minute. “What about Uncle Wyatt?” she said. “I’m sure he’d be happy to give you a blessing.”

Sarah nodded. Maybe a blessing would help.

That night, Sarah’s uncle put his hands on her head to give her a blessing.



“I bless you to know that the Savior is mindful of you as you start this new chapter in life,” he said. “He will not leave you alone.”

Sarah paid special attention to the words *new chapter*. She loved to read and was always excited to start a new chapter in a book.

The next morning Sarah and Mom went to church. After sacrament meeting Mom helped Sarah find the Primary room. A girl inside smiled at her and said hello.

“You can sit here if you want,” she said, patting an empty chair next to her.

“Thanks,” Sarah said. “My name’s Sarah. I’m new here.”

“I’m Melody. And I’m new too! This is only my second week.”

Soon Melody and Sarah were talking with the other Primary kids. Their teacher was really nice.

“I hope school goes this well!” Sarah thought as she went to bed that night.

The next day, Sarah rode the bus to her new school. She was excited to see a few kids from Primary in her third-grade class.

“Thank you, Heavenly Father,” Sarah prayed silently as she ate lunch with her new friends. “Maybe this will be a good chapter, after all.” ●

*The author lives in Colorado, USA.*

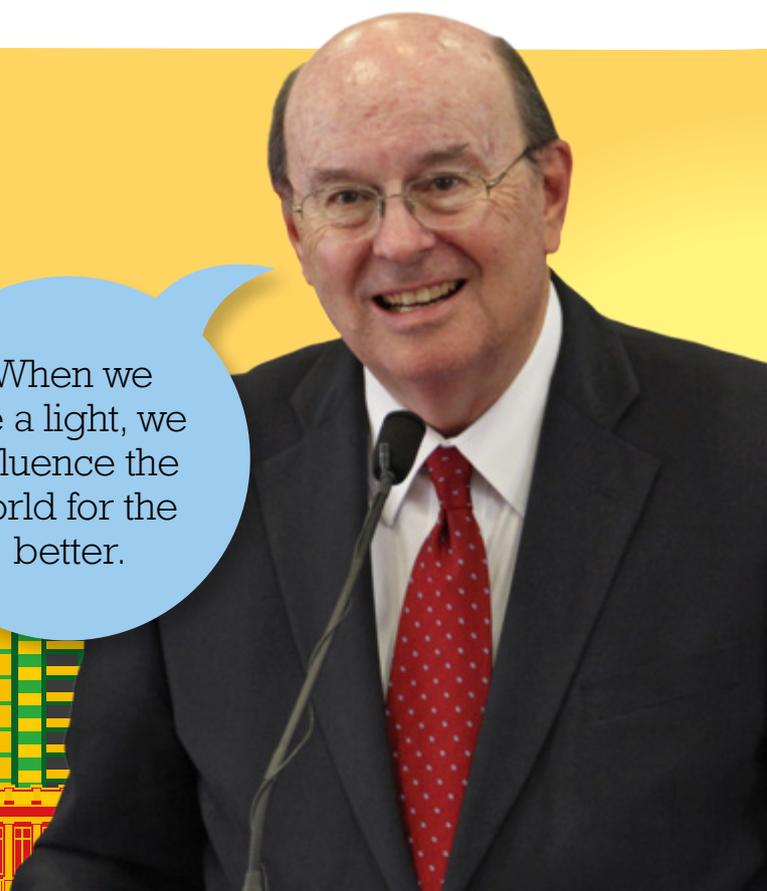
# Elder Cook Visits Brazil



Elder Quentin L. Cook and Sister Mary Cook went to Brazil to visit members of the Church. They went to teach and share the love of Jesus Christ.



They visited the big city of Belo Horizonte. The name of that city means "beautiful horizon." Elder Cook said it has the most beautiful sunsets he has ever seen!



When we are a light, we influence the world for the better.



Elder and Sister Cook visited a missionary training center. Missionaries share the light of Jesus Christ every day!



Children were very happy to meet an Apostle of God!

### WATCH THE SUNSET

Take time to watch and enjoy the sunset as Elder Cook did. Draw a picture of the sunset you saw. Then think of a classmate, neighbor, or family member who could use a friend. Brighten their day by sharing your picture.

## Make a Lantern



paper cup  
hole punch or sharp pencil  
flashlight or glow stick

1. Use the hole punch or pencil to make holes all around the cup. Poke holes in the bottom too, or cut it out entirely (ask an adult for help).
2. Decorate your cup however you want. Then put the light or glow stick under the cup.
3. Turn off the lights and see your lantern glow!

**Tip:** If you don't have paper cups, you can roll up a piece of construction paper and tape the edges together.

How can you be a light at home, in your neighborhood, and at school?

# Waiting for Ian

By Joshua J. Perkey

Church Magazines

Based on a true story



*"We like to be in Primary; we're happy that you came too" (Children's Songbook, 256).*

When Ian woke up, he heard his mother singing. It was "I Feel My Savior's Love." That was Ian's favorite Primary song! He started singing along with her.

"You're awake!" she said. She was smiling and had tears in her eyes. Ian saw his dad sitting next to her. He looked happy too.

"I've been singing your favorite songs to you every day," Mom said.

Ian smiled back—but his head hurt. Actually, his whole body hurt, especially his leg.

He carefully looked around. He wasn't at home. He was lying on a metal bed in a strange room. Then he saw a nurse and lots of other beds nearby. "This must be a hospital," he thought.

"What happened to me?" he asked.

Mom's face turned sad. "You were in a bad accident. A metal gate fell on you. You've been in the hospital for two weeks, but you are going to be OK."

Two weeks! "Wow, that's a long time to be asleep," Ian thought. The last thing he could remember was being at the church building, practicing for the Primary program . . .

Oh no! The program!

"Did I miss the Primary program?" Ian asked. He had been looking forward to it for so long! He loved singing with his friends.

Mom smiled and shook her head. "No, you didn't miss it. The ward decided to postpone it until you woke up so you could be part of it."

"Really?"

“Really,” Dad said. “All the Primary kids asked the bishop to wait. They wanted you to be there. They knew how excited you were for it this year.”

Ian was happy he could still be in the Primary program. But he had to get better first. And that took a long

“Can you walk yet?” Chaís asked.

“I don’t know,” Ian said.

“Here, let’s try,” Chaís said. She helped him stand up. Carefully, Ian put his foot down. He moved his body forward. He was still standing! It was his first step in over



time. He had to stay in the hospital for a while longer. When he finally got to come home, he still couldn’t walk or play.

But his friends got to come visit him. Ian would ask them about school and church. And they would ask him when he was coming back.

“Not until my leg is better,” he would tell them. “I still can’t walk.”

October turned into November, and Ian slowly got better. One day his friends invited him to come over and watch a movie with them. Ian’s mom and dad helped get him there.

“Does your leg still hurt?” his friend Chaís asked him.

“Yes,” Ian said. “But it’s getting better every day.”

a month! Everyone clapped.

“This means you can come back to church!” Chaís said.

And she was right. In a few more weeks, Ian’s leg finally stopped hurting. The doctors took the cast off his leg and put on a brace instead. When Sunday came, it was time for the Primary program.

During sacrament meeting, Ian walked to the front of the chapel with his friends. He stood up straight and smiled at his mom and dad. During the songs, he sang as loud as he could. When it was his turn, he stood at the microphone and shared his testimony. He was grateful for his Primary friends. And he was glad he could be part of the Primary program after all. ●

**The boy in this story lives in the Dominican Republic.  
Read the next article to learn about this country!**

Hello  
from the  
Dominican  
Republic!



Hi!  
I'm Margo.  
This is my  
brother Paolo.



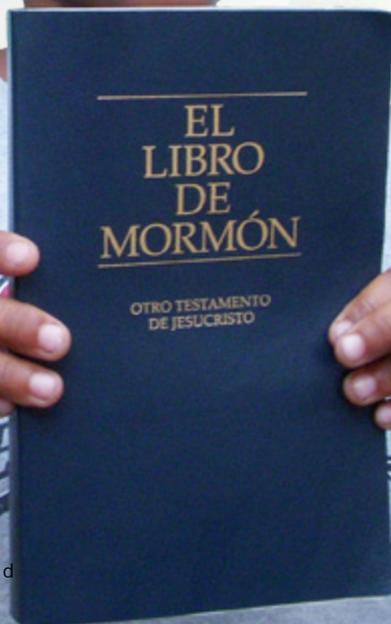
We're visiting the  
Dominican Republic.  
Come along with us!

## Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic is in the Caribbean. It's on an island with the country Haiti. About 10 million people live in the Dominican Republic, including about 130,000 Church members.

**Santo Domingo** ★

In the Dominican Republic, they speak Spanish. Here's a boy with el Libro de Mormón—the Book of Mormon.



Lots of kids in the Dominican Republic like playing baseball. It's the country's most popular sport.



Last year the prophet visited the Dominican Republic and spoke to the people in Spanish.



The Dominican Republic has one temple, in Santo Domingo. The writing says, "Santidad al Señor: La Casa del Señor." That means, "Holiness to the Lord: The House of the Lord."



People in the Dominican Republic eat lots of tropical vegetables and fruits. These boys are drinking from coconuts!

**Are you from the Dominican Republic? Write to us! We'd love to hear from you.**

Thanks for exploring the Dominican Republic with us. Now we're off on our next adventure!



**Meet some friends from the Dominican Republic!**



"I like to help the younger children in Primary when they get noisy. I write the songs on pieces of paper and help them sing. I help them understand when we read scriptures."

**Ambar O., age 11, Dominican Republic**



"I love Jesus, and I feel very close to Him. I also love the hymns and Primary songs."

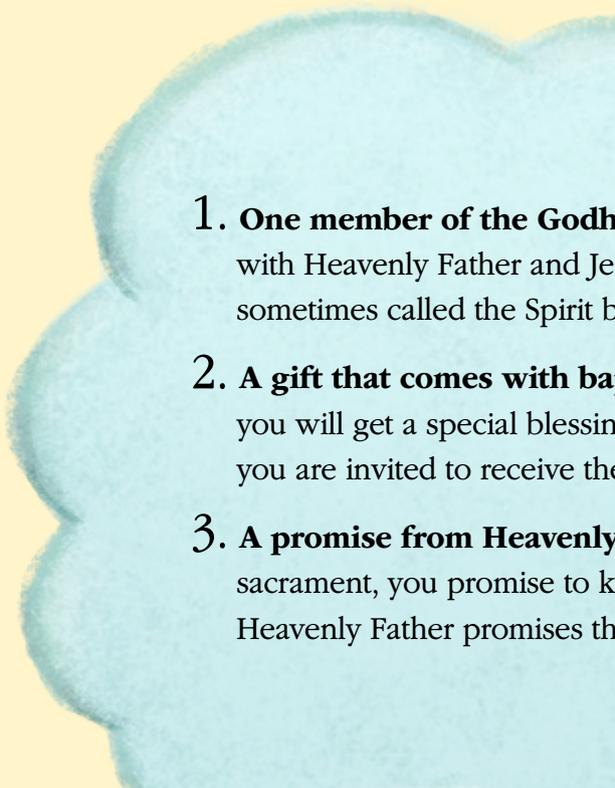
**Ian R., age 8, Dominican Republic**

# The Holy C

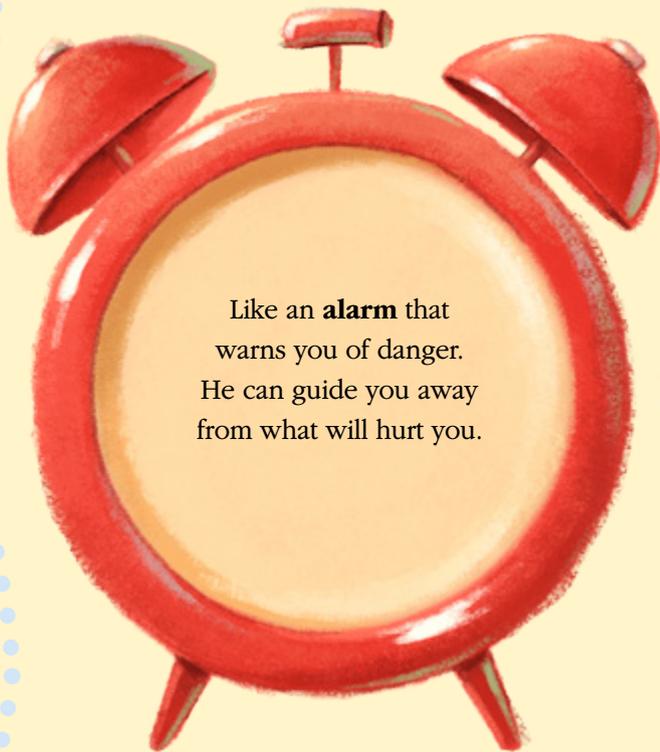
By Marissa  
Church M



Like a warm **blanket** around your heart. He can comfort you when you feel sad or scared.



1. **One member of the Godh**  
with Heavenly Father and Je  
sometimes called the Spirit b
2. **A gift that comes with ba**  
you will get a special blessing  
you are invited to receive the
3. **A promise from Heavenly**  
sacrament, you promise to k  
Heavenly Father promises th



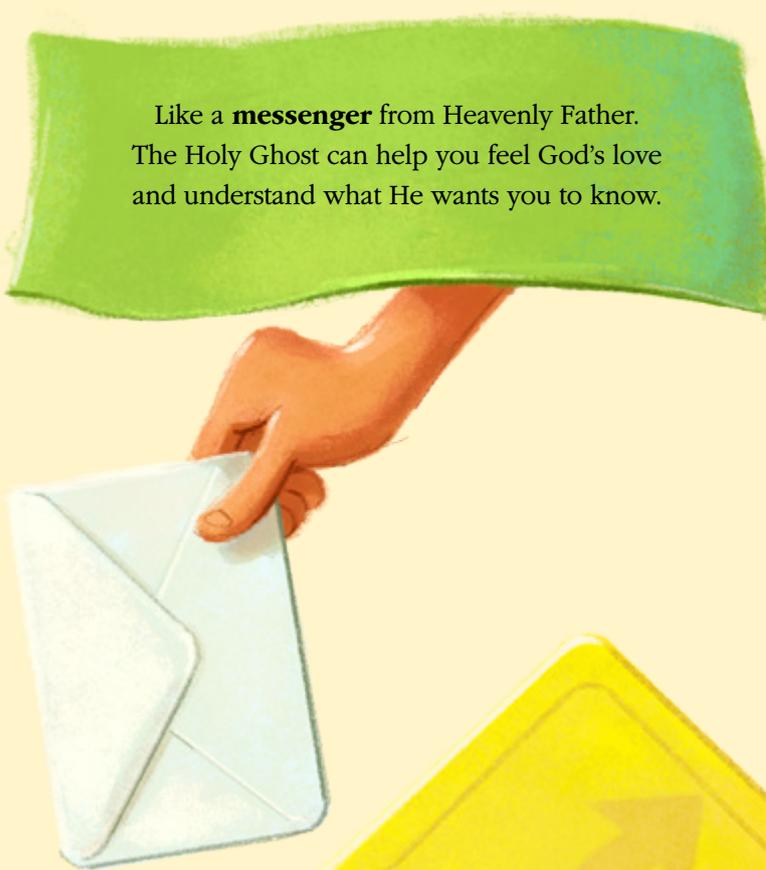
Like an **alarm** that warns you of danger. He can guide you away from what will hurt you.



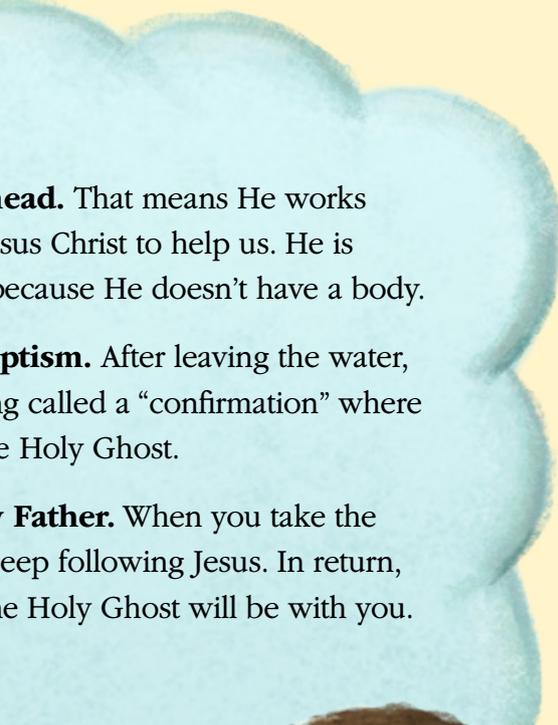
Like a gentle **teacher**. He can tell you what is true and help you remember what you've learned.

# Ghost Is . . .

by  
Magazines



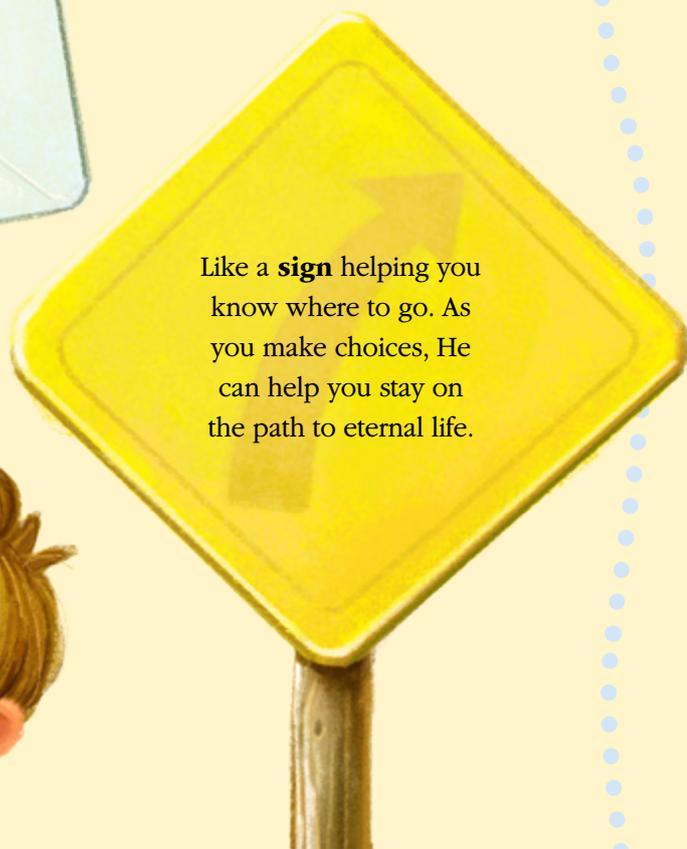
Like a **messenger** from Heavenly Father. The Holy Ghost can help you feel God's love and understand what He wants you to know.



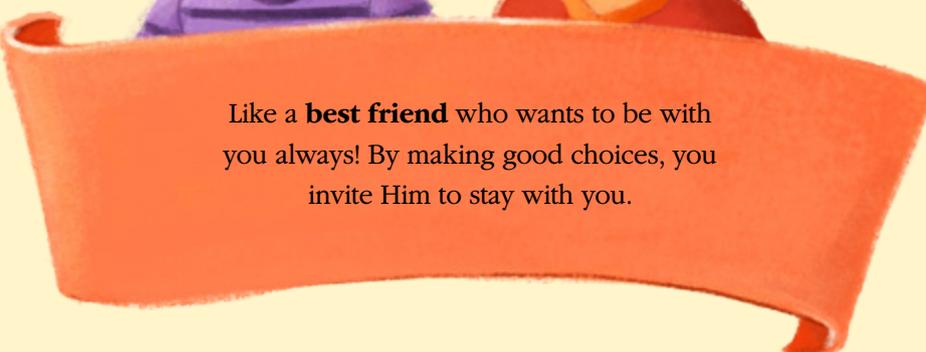
**Lead.** That means He works with Jesus Christ to help us. He is invisible because He doesn't have a body.

**Baptism.** After leaving the water, you are baptized by a priest in a ceremony called a "confirmation" where the Holy Ghost is given to you.

**Friend.** When you take the steps to keep following Jesus. In return, the Holy Ghost will be with you.



Like a **sign** helping you know where to go. As you make choices, He can help you stay on the path to eternal life.



Like a **best friend** who wants to be with you always! By making good choices, you invite Him to stay with you.

#### IN THE SCRIPTURES:

John 14:26

Galatians 5:22

2 Nephi 31:17-18

Doctrine and Covenants 130:22



**By Becky Craven**  
Second Counselor in  
the Young Women  
General Presidency

# Living My Standards

*“Stand as witnesses of God at all times” (Mosiah 18:9).*

**M**y dad was in the army, so we moved a lot when I was young. One of the hardest things about moving was leaving my friends behind. I had trouble making new friends because I was shy.

Thankfully, people were always friendly at school and Primary.

At church it didn't matter how we were different.

We were just all friends.

One way I overcame my shyness was by helping at church. It started with Primary. I shared a scripture in sharing time. I read out loud in class. Little by little, I felt more confident. This helped me to stand up for my beliefs.

When I was in fourth or fifth grade, my family lived in Maryland, USA. There weren't many Church members at my school. I had friends who were members of the Church and friends who were not.

When I was a teenager, some of my friends did things that were against my standards. But they didn't try to get me to do them. I am grateful that my friends respected my beliefs. Sometimes I felt left out because I couldn't do everything my school friends did. But I always felt good about following my standards. I decided I would live the gospel, no matter what. My testimony had grown stronger in Primary and family home evening. I came to know that I am a child of God.

Years later, I found out that two of my school friends had joined the Church. I was so happy! They told me that watching me live the gospel when we were young helped them decide to listen to the missionaries.

My dear young friends, you are children of our Heavenly Father. When you remember this important truth *every day*, living the gospel will be easier. ●



I can be **KIND**.

I can **listen**  
to the  
**Holy**  
**Ghost**.

I can do things  
on the Sabbath  
that help me  
remember  
Jesus Christ.

I can show  
**respect**  
for God, others,  
and myself.

I can  
dress  
and act  
**modestly**.

I can **REPENT** and try again  
when I do something wrong.



I can be  
**honest**.

# I Can Choose the Right

I can talk  
about  
God  
reverently.

I can use  
**good words**.

I can prepare now to go to the temple.

I can  
look for  
**GOOD**  
**FRIENDS**.

I can keep  
my mind  
and body  
**healthy**.

I can **OBEY**  
my parents and  
**HELP**  
my family.

I can read, watch, and  
listen to good things.

Jesus loves me. Little by little, I  
can learn to follow Him.



# Show and Tell



I played with my friend who was lonely.

**Alexis H., age 7, Nova Scotia, Canada**



I look forward to getting the priesthood and going to the temple to do baptisms for the family names

my mum and I have found!

**Brigham W., age 11, Victoria, Australia**



I love learning about Jesus. I am thankful for the sacrifice He has made for us.

**Sara D., age 6, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil**



**Philip W., age 8, Lancashire, England**



At my school, I noticed trash was on the playground. So I asked my principal if I

could pick up the trash with a friend. I am glad I am being a good citizen.

**Ellea D., age 10, Baden-Württemberg, Germany**

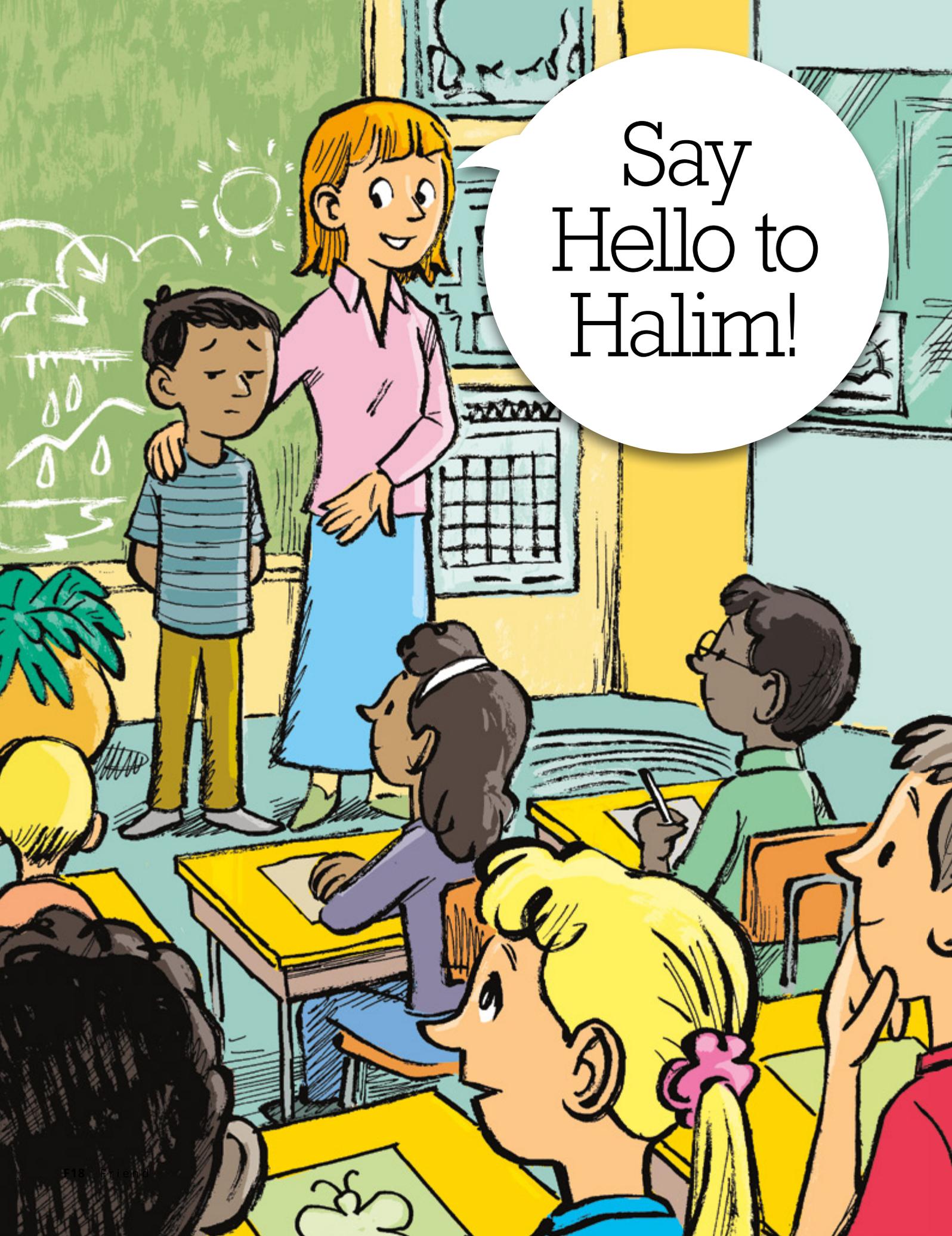


I help my mom with my baby brothers.

**Samantha S., age 8, Berlin, Germany**



**Feranmi F., age 8, Lagos, Nigeria**



Say  
Hello to  
Halim!

**By Katie Richey**

Based on a true story

*“Freely ye have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8).*

At school that morning, Marcus noticed a new boy walk into the classroom.

“Good morning, everyone,” Mrs. Becker said as everyone quieted down. “This is Halim. He is new to our school. In fact, he is new to our country.”

Halim kept looking at the floor as he said hello. Marcus thought his voice sounded kind of different. Mrs. Becker kept talking.

“We are so glad he is here and that he is going to be part of our class. I hope we can all help him feel welcome.”

As Mrs. Becker showed Halim where to sit, Marcus thought about how nervous he would feel if he had to move to a new country and a new school.

After their morning snack, Mrs. Becker told everyone she had a surprise for them. Marcus sat up really straight so he could see what she was pulling out of her bag. They were small buckets. She started passing them out to everyone in the class.

“Each one of us has an imaginary bucket inside of ourselves,” she said as she handed Marcus a yellow bucket. “People fill our buckets when they do nice things for us. And we can fill others’ buckets by being nice to them. For example, when your mom gives you a hug, she is filling your bucket. When you say something nice to someone, you are filling their bucket.”

Marcus looked at his best friend, Caleb. He got a yellow bucket too!

“This week, we’ll keep these buckets on our desks so we can write nice notes for each other,” Mrs. Becker said. She folded up a little piece of



## WE CAN BE KIND

“Each of us can develop brotherly kindness at home, at school, at work, or at play.”

President Russell M. Nelson,  
“These . . . Were Our Examples,”  
*Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 62.

paper and dropped it in a bucket. “And that will help us remember the imaginary buckets everyone has inside. We want to be kind so that we are bucket fillers.”

Marcus pulled out a piece of paper and thought of the things he could write to Caleb, like that he was good at sports. But then he looked at Halim. His shoulders were kind of bent over, like he was sad.

Marcus wondered if Halim had a best friend where he used to live. It must have been hard to say goodbye and scary to move so far away.

Marcus looked down at the blank piece of paper on his desk. He had an idea, then he wrote,

“Dear Halim,

Welcome to our school. If you want, we can play at recess. I will be your friend. And I bet Caleb will be your friend too.

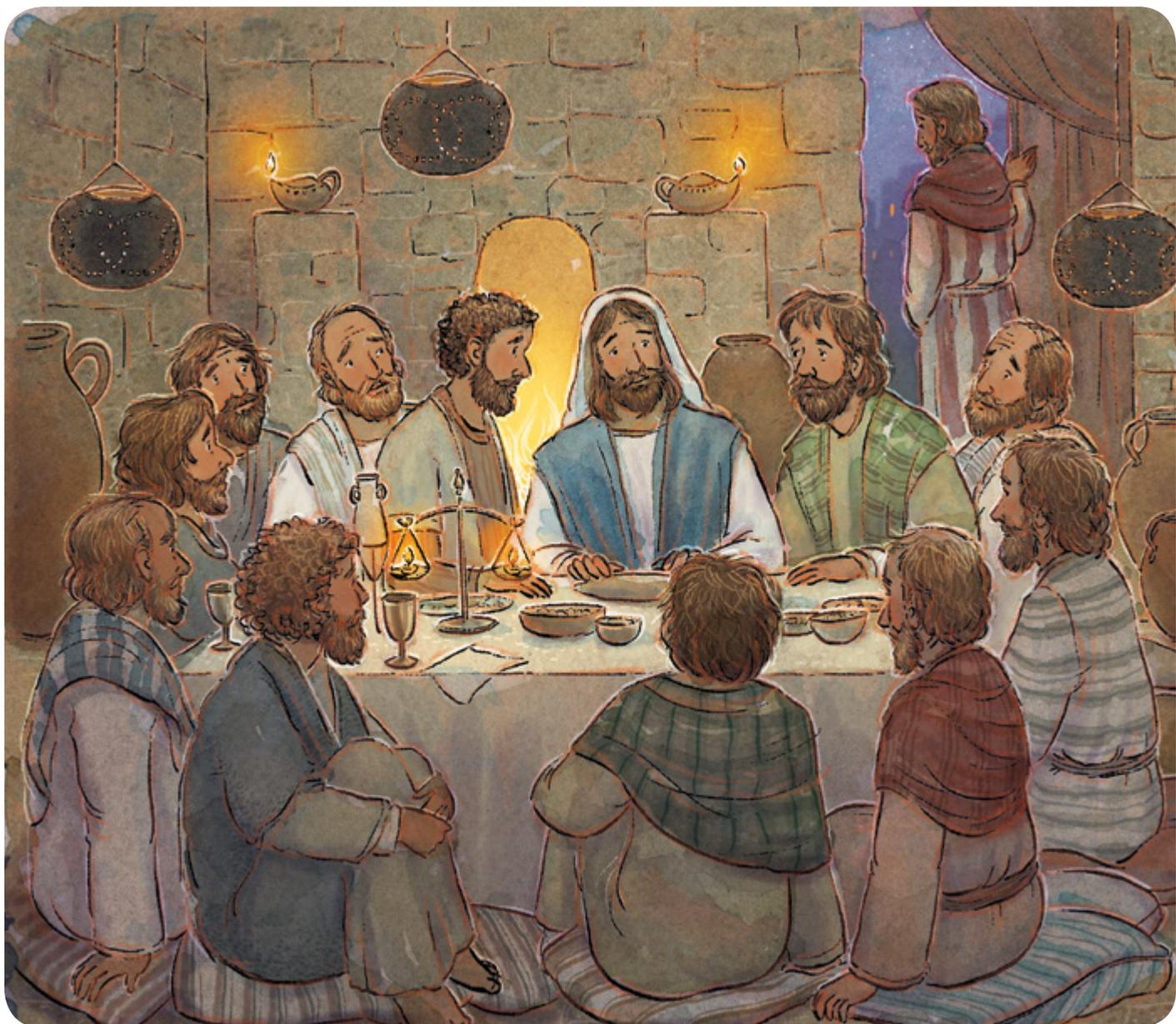
From, Marcus.”

Then he carefully folded the paper up and dropped it in Halim’s bucket. Halim smiled. Marcus felt warm and happy inside. He liked being a bucket filler! ●

*The author lives in Idaho, USA.*

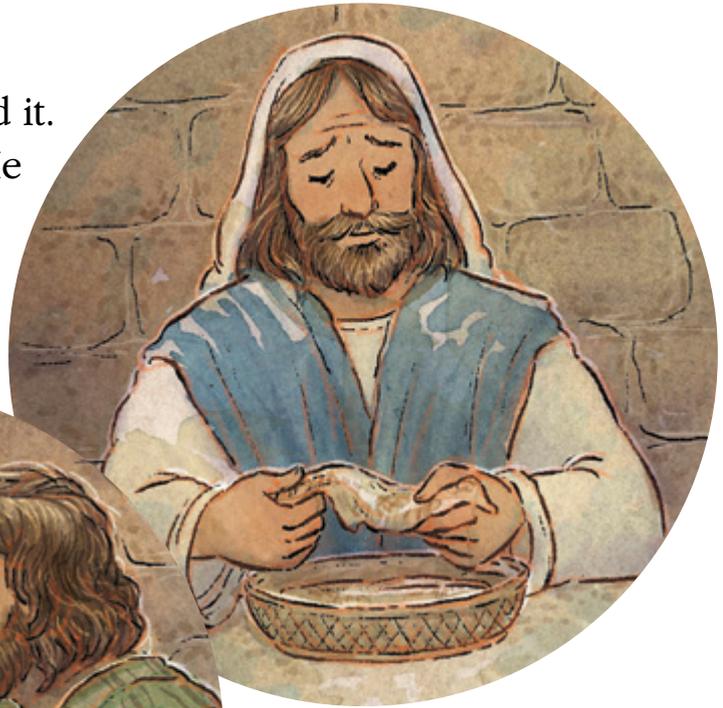


# Jesus Taught about the Sacrament



Before Jesus died, He ate a special meal with His disciples.  
It was called the Last Supper.

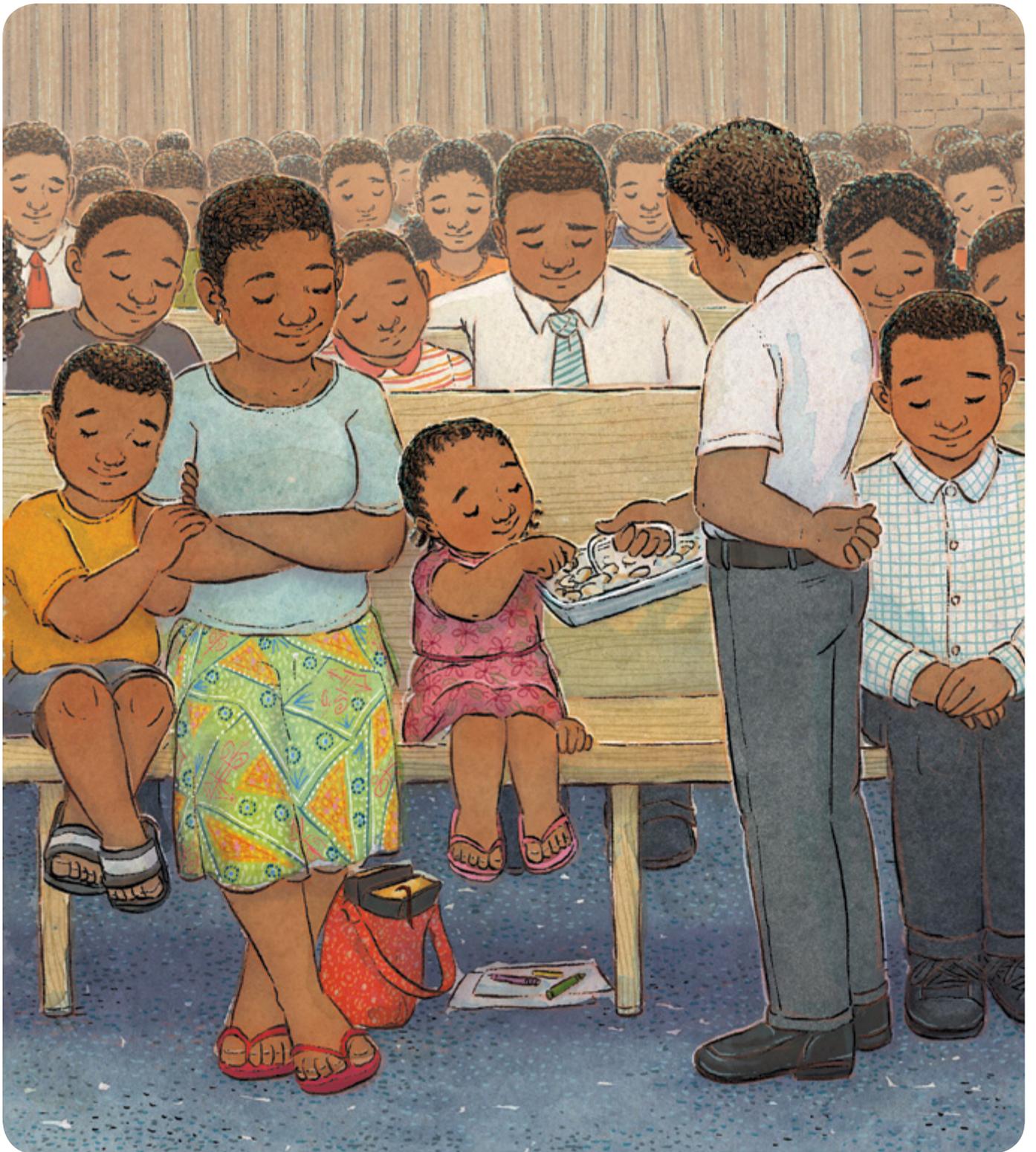
Jesus took bread and blessed it.  
He gave it to His disciples. He  
asked them to eat it to help  
them remember Him.



Jesus took a cup and gave  
it to His disciples. He told  
them to drink it to help  
them remember Him.

Jesus and His  
disciples also  
sang a hymn  
together.





I can remember Jesus by taking the sacrament every week,  
as He asked us to do. ●

*Read what Jesus taught in Joseph Smith Translation,  
Matthew 26:22, 24–25; 1 Corinthians 11:24–25.*

# Jesus Gave Us the Sacrament



# Dear Parents,

**Many families** do not have a father and mother who are sealed in the temple. President Russell M. Nelson grew up in a family like that. Whatever our family situation, we can teach our children to look forward to the great blessings of the temple. And we can help them do family history so our ancestors can have those blessings too. You can read on page F2 about how President Nelson waited for his family to be sealed in the temple.

Please write to let us know how your family used the stories and activities in this month's *Friend*.

With love,  
The *Friend*

P.S. If you don't have a child at home, please consider sharing the *Friend* with someone who does.

**New Friend**  
**50 E. North Temple St.,**  
**Room 2393**  
**Salt Lake City, UT 84150 USA**  
**liahona@ChurchofJesus**  
**Christ.org**



**Find the Liahona hidden inside!**

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**ON THE FRIEND COVER**  
Illustration by Shane Clester