

Raising An Army of Helaman's Warriors: Helping Our Youth Prepare for Missionary Service



The Role of Teaching the Gospel in the Home

*"We want you teaching effectively from the first day
onward, and that will require preparation which
starts long before you get your call to serve"*

*(Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, Missionary Press
Conference, October 2012).*

Lifeguards



In the September 1993 issue of the Nelson Family Newsletter, Elder Nelson shared with extended family members the feelings he had while attending a recent testimony meeting with the other members of the Quorum of the Twelve: **“To be taught by the Twelve is one thing, but to feel the inspiration that comes to each as he stands to speak is another. The world can never know, nor can we explain, but the faithful Saints will perceive the mutual love and the divine direction that we feel.”**

As a father, father-in-law, and grandfather, he then closed with this gentle exhortation: “In a way, I understand that each member of the family is subject to extra scrutiny because of the position to which I have been called. I, too, am to live out the final scenes of my life in full public view. Together we sustain each other with fidelity, love, and gratitude to the Lord for all the blessings that we have received. **May we never take any of them for granted, or be timid about expressing our reliance on the Lord, from whom all blessings flow. And when difficult days that lie ahead come upon us, we need all the more to be resolute and unwavering in our faith. We are to be the examples. We no longer can afford the luxury of anonymity in going along with the crowd in ordinary behavior. If we are to be lifeguards, we can't resemble all the other swimmers on the beach. As the world is awash in spiritual drift and apathy, Mother and I pray for each of you to be steadfast and strong – well anchored to the everlasting gospel and to the teachings of prophets and Apostles, past and present.”** (Elder Russell M. Nelson, as cited in S.J. Condie, *Russell M. Nelson: Father, Surgeon, Apostle*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003], 100).

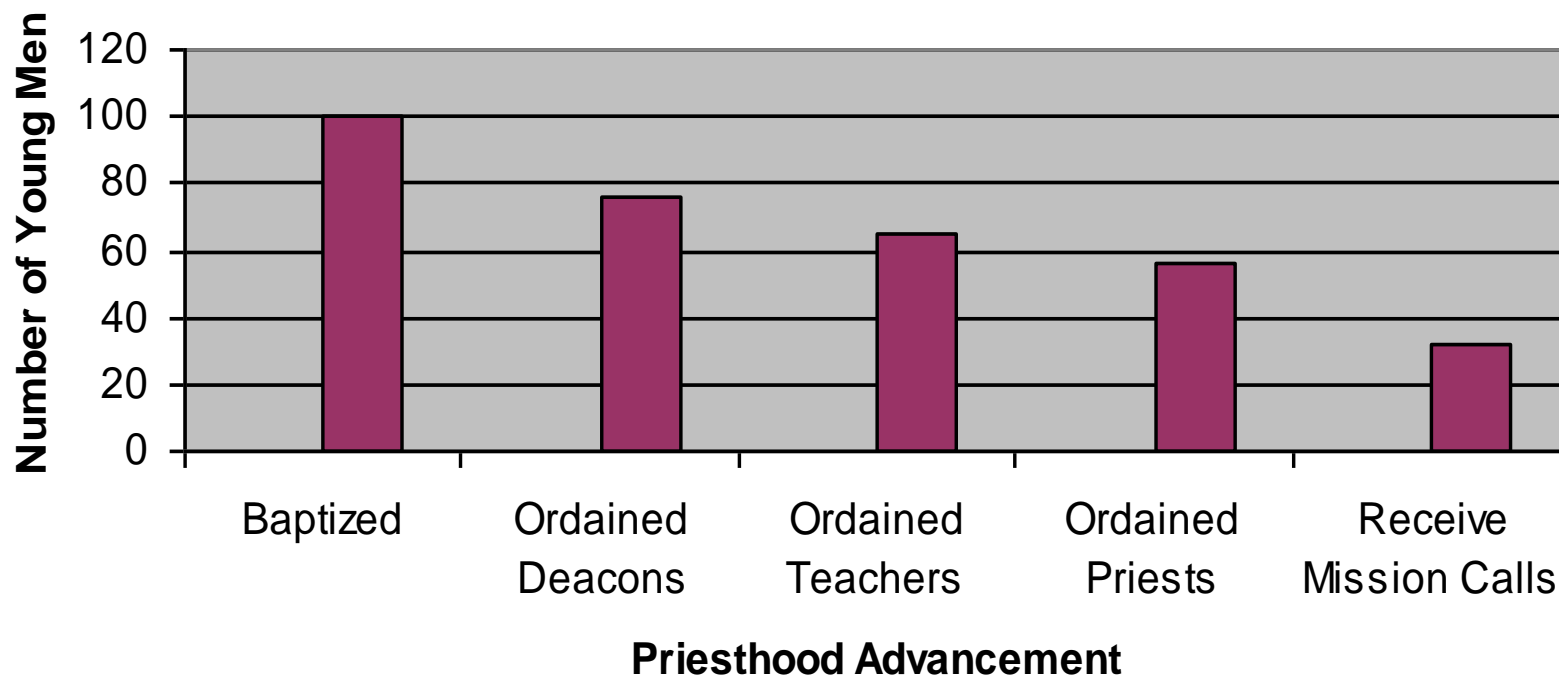
A Problem



- ☞ **“There is a hemorrhage among our youth, and we’ve got to stop it”** (President Gordon B. Hinckley, as told to Elder Melvin J. Hammond).
- ☞ “We live in a wicked world. Never in our memory have the forces of evil been arrayed in such a deadly formation. The devil is well organized and has many emissaries working for him. **His satanic majesty has proclaimed his intention to destroy our young people, to weaken the home and the family, and to defeat the purposes of the Lord Jesus Christ through his great Church**” (Ezra Taft Benson, *Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, 413).
- ☞ “Satan, our enemy, is making an all-out assault upon righteousness. His well-marshaled forces are legion. **Our children and youth are the targets of his main thrust. They are everywhere subjected to wicked and vicious propaganda. Every place they turn, they are buffeted with evil, cunningly devised to deceive and to destroy every sacred thing and every righteous principle**.... If our children are to be sufficiently strengthened to stand against this satanic onslaught, they must be taught and trained in the home, as the Lord has directed” (Elder Marion G. Romney, “Home Teaching and Family Home Evening,” *Improvement Era*, June 1969, 97).

Did You Know?

Aaronic Priesthood Transitions-- United States and Canada



Less Converted = Less Converts



- ☞ Only 1 out of 3 eligible young men are accepting mission calls.
- ☞ As a result, Worldwide conversions are flattening out.
- ☞ In 1999, there were only 1,800 more conversions than in 1995, yet there were 10,000 more missionaries

(Elder Gerald Lund, "Personal Revelation and the Process of Conversion," *The Religious Educator*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2002, 17).

Missionary Milestones



Mormon Missionary Milestones: Numbers Serving

As of October 2012, young men can begin missionary service at age 18 (formerly 19) and young women at age 19 (formerly 21). As a result, the "wave" of members choosing to serve has steadily grown.



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THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Deseret News, August 15, **2013**

- ☞ Since President Thomas S. Monson's announcement in October regarding age requirements for missionary service, a surge of young men and women in the LDS church have applied to serve a mission, **pushing the numbers from 58,500 in October to the newly announced 75,000.**
- ☞ The Deseret News previously reported that the **number of young men and women applying to serve missions jumped nearly 500 percent soon after the change, which led to the opening of 58 new missions, now totaling 405.** The growing numbers also prompted the opening of a Missionary Training Center in Mexico.
- ☞ In May, LDS Church Spokeswoman Ruth Todd said the church **estimated more than 85,000 full-time missionaries would be serving by Fall.**

III John 1:4



“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”

“The home and family have vital roles in cultivating personal faith and testimony. **The family is the basic unit of society; the best place for individuals to build faith and strong testimonies is in righteous homes filled with love..... Strong, faithful families have the best opportunity to produce strong, faithful members of the Church**” (Elder M. Russell Ballard, “Feasting at the Lord’s Table,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 81).



There is Too Little Religious Devotion in the Home



In 1904, President Joseph F. Smith commented on this problem by stating: “There **is too little religious devotion, love, and fear of God in the home; too much worldliness, selfishness, indifference, and lack of reverence in the family, or these never would exist so abundantly on the outside.** Then, the home is what needs reforming... **teach them [your children] by your own precept and example, by your own fireside**” (President Joseph F. Smith, “Worship in the Home,” *Improvement Era*, December 1904, 135).

Distracted?



- ☞ We as parents, have our own responsibilities in the Kingdom. We must **lead the youth, or teach in different organizations.** In fact, we may well spend **more hours each week** preparing lessons for **other children in the ward than we do for our own.**
- ☞ It may take **several hours to prepare a Sunday school lesson.** However, when was the last time you took more than **10 minutes to “whip-up” a Family Home Evening lesson?**
- ☞ **When was the last time you spent more time preparing something for family scripture study than you did for a responsibility you have in the Church?**
- ☞ **As it turns out, too many of us as parents are preparing a banquet for strangers while leaving the crumbs for those who we will be with eternally, our own children!** Sadly, therefore, too many parents seem to give their best efforts to everyone else’s children except their own.

Remember....



- Remember, when Alma the Younger was in the darkest abyss of sin, it wasn't the words of his seminary teacher that came to his mind, but the teachings of his father.
- And when Enos' soul hungered, it wasn't the teachings from a Young Men's President that sunk deep into his heart; instead, it was the spiritual teachings of his father.
- And although the stripling warriors did not doubt, it was not because of what they learned in Primary, or Sunday School; it was the words of their mothers that strengthened their faith.

Reclaiming Our Children



- ❧ As parents, we must reduce and simplify.
- ❧ We need reconstruct our lives so that we can focus on our *number one* priority: **Teaching our Children the Gospel**

“We have the greatest opportunity with the young. The best time to teach is early, while children are still immune to the temptations of their mortal enemy, and long before the words of truth may be harder for them to hear in the noise of their personal struggles” (Elder Henry B. Eyring, “The Power of Teaching Doctrine, Ensign, May 1999, 74).

Never Miss An Opportunity to Teach

“A wise parent would never miss a chance to gather children together to learn the doctrine of Jesus Christ. Such moments are so rare in comparison with the efforts of the enemy. **For every hour the power of the doctrine is introduced into a child’s life, there may be hundreds of hours of messages and images denying or ignoring the saving truths”** (Elder Henry B. Eyring, “The Power of Teaching Doctrine,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 74).



D&C 68:25-32:
Mosiah 4:14-15:

Loving and Inspired Instruction in the Home



- ☞ Years ago, Jeffrey R. Holland, then the President of Brigham Young University, spoke in General Conference about the roles and responsibilities that parents have in teaching the gospel to their children. He declared,
- ☞ “A recent study conducted by the Church has forcefully confirmed statistically what we have been told again and again. **That is, if loving, inspired instruction and example are not provided at home, then our related efforts for success in and around Church programs are severely limited. It is increasingly clear that we must teach the gospel to our families personally, live those teachings in our homes, or run the risk of discovering too late that a primary teacher or priesthood advisor or seminary instructor could not do for our children what we would not do for them**” (Jeffrey R. Holland, *Ensign*, May 1983, 36).

Pitching Our Tents Towards the Temple

☞ Mosiah 2:5-6

☞ The imagery of these verses is powerful. Parents, are the doors of our figurative tents facing the temple? Do they also face the prophet and the brethren? Are our tent doors open to receive instruction, or closed – rejecting the words of living prophets? Which way does your tent face as a family? Nevertheless, King Benjamin's sermon appeared to be extremely effective.

☞ Mosiah 26:1-4



How Much Would You're Children Know?



Elder A. Theodore Tuttle asked, “**How would you pass the test, parents, if your family was isolated from the Church and you had to supply all religious training? Have you become so dependent on others that you do little or nothing at home?**”

“Tell me, how much of the gospel would your children know if all they knew were what they had been taught at home? Ponder that. **I repeat, how much of the gospel would your children know if all they knew is what they had been taught at home?**” (A. Theodore Tuttle, “Therefore I was Taught,” *Ensign*, November 1979, 27).

First Presidency Letter



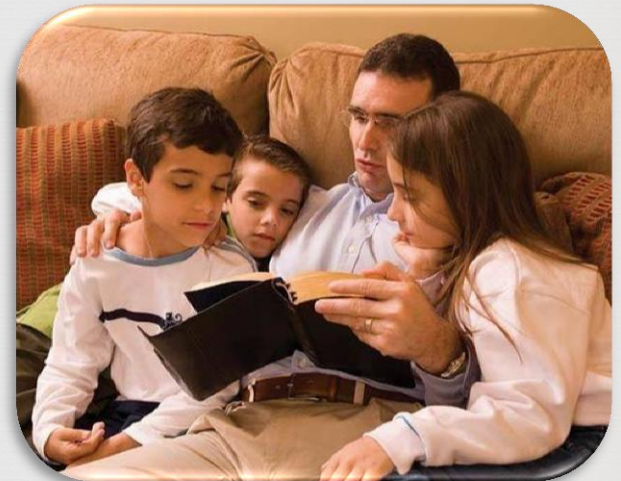
“We call upon parents to devote their best efforts to the teaching and rearing of their children in gospel principles which will keep them close to the Church. The home is the basis of a righteous life, and no other instrumentality can take its place or fulfill its essential functions in carrying forward this God-given responsibility.

“We counsel parents and children to give highest priority to family prayer, family home evening, gospel study and instruction, and wholesome family activities. However worthy and appropriate other demands or activities may be, they must not be permitted to displace the divinely-appointed duties that only parents and families can adequately perform” (*First Presidency Letter*, 11 Feb. 1999).

What to Teach?



“Teach your children gospel principles. Teach them it pays to be good. Teach them there is no safety in sin. **Teach them a love for the gospel of Jesus Christ and a testimony of its divinity. Teach your sons and daughters modesty and teach them to respect manhood and womanhood.** Teach your children sexual purity, proper dating standards, temple marriage, missionary service, and the importance of accepting and magnifying Church callings. Teach them a love for work and the value of a good education. **Teach them the importance of the right kind of entertainment, including appropriate movies, videos, music, books, and magazines. Discuss the evils of pornography and drugs and teach them the value of living a clean life”** (Ezra Taft Benson, *Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, 517).



“In the Lord’s plan, parents are to teach their children during the impressionable and formative years when they develop attitudes and habits that last a lifetime.”
--Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

What?



- ❧ Love and Service (Mosiah 4:15)
- ❧ Gratitude (Alma 34:38)
- ❧ Agency and Accountability (2 Nephi 10:23)
- ❧ Kindness and Charity (I Corinthians 13)
- ❧ Meekness (Alma 7:21-23)
- ❧ Reverence (D&C 88:121; D&C 100:7-8; D&C 6:32)
- ❧ Scripture Power (Alma 31:5)
- ❧ Power of Prayer (2 Nephi 32:9; Alma 34:27; Enos)
- ❧ Obedience (1 Nephi 2:2-3; 17:14)
- ❧ Work (2 Nephi 5:15, 17, 27)

When to Teach...



“I have heard men and women say that they were going to let their sons and daughters grow to maturity before they sought to teach them the principles of the gospel, that they were not going to cram the gospel down them in their childhood, before they were able to comprehend it.

“When I hear men and women say this, I think they are lacking faith in the principles of the gospel and do not comprehend it as they should. **The Lord has said it is our duty to teach our children in their youth, and I prefer to take His word for it rather than the words of those who are not obeying His commandments. *It is a folly to imagine that our children will grow up with a knowledge of the gospel without teaching.***

When to Teach...



“Some men and women argue, ‘Well, I am a Latter-day Saint, and we were married in the temple, and were sealed over the alter by one having the Priesthood of God; **according to the new and everlasting covenant, and our children are bound to grow up and be good Latter-day Saints; they cannot help it; it is born in them’**... I want to tell you that our children will not know that the gospel is true, unless they study it and gain a testimony for themselves.

“Parents are deceiving themselves in imagining that their children **will be born with a knowledge of the gospel**. Of course, they will have greater claim upon the blessings of God, being born under the new and everlasting covenant, and it will come natural for them to grow up and perform their duties; but the devil realizes this, and is therefore seeking all the harder to lead our children from the truth” (Heber J. Grant, *Gospel Standards*, 155-156).

☞ See Deut. 6:6-7

The Blessings of Parental Teaching



“I just want to make a plea to you people here, you parents who have young families, many of you, in this stake: **Take advantage of the great responsibility and opportunity that you have to teach your children, to rear them in the light of the gospel, to build faith in their hearts, to sit down with them. If you can't do it at the dinner table, and I'm sorry if you can't, then you have a family home evening, and don't miss it. Talk with them about these things. Let them feel of your love for the Lord. Let them hear you testify of the truth of this work. Let them partake of the good that comes from a father and a mother who seek to do the right thing and do it while they're young.**

The Blessings of Parental Teaching

“Parents should talk with their children about the blessing that the Word of Wisdom is, about the good that comes from paying tithes and fast offerings, about missionary work and how they might share the gospel, about the welfare plan and what it seeks to accomplish...

“I want to tell you- I want to promise you – you fathers and mothers, if you will do that, your children will grow up with love for the Lord, and the greatest reward you can have in this life, nothing excepted, will be to see your children walk in truth before the Lord” (President Gordon B. Hinckley, “Special Visitor Attends Stake Conference,” Church News, November 16, 2002; 3; emphasis added).

Parents are Best Teachers

“Children are always learning from us. They are learning what is important by what we choose to do as well as what we choose not to do. **Casual, infrequent family prayers, scripture study, and family home evenings will not be enough to fortify our children. Where will children learn the gospel and standards such as chastity, integrity, and honesty if not at home? These values can be reinforced at church, but parents are the most capable and most effective in teaching them to their children**” (Coleen K. Menlove, “A Voice of Gladness,” *Ensign*, November 2002, 14).

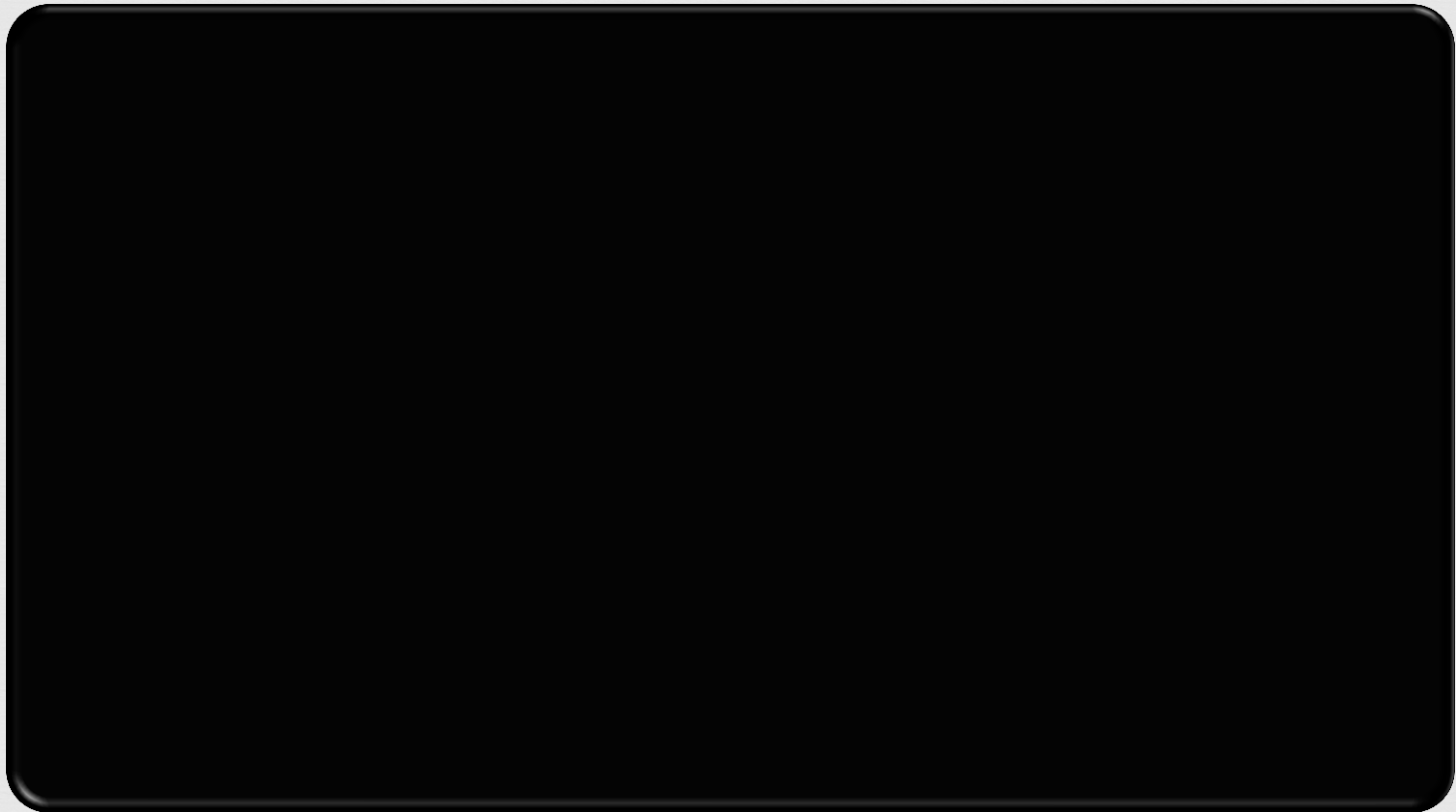
How?



- ❧ Teach by the Spirit (Alma 39-42)
- ❧ Teach with Love (Alma 13:27-30; Alma 31:32-36)
- ❧ Teach with Righteous Family Traditions (Mosiah 1:2-4).
- ❧ Teach with Plainness; not sermons (2 Nephi 31:3)
- ❧ Teach by Example
- ❧ Teach by Committing
- ❧ Teach with Involvement
- ❧ Teach with Examples
- ❧ Teach with Stories
- ❧ Teach with Testimony



Teach the Gospel The Savior's Way



A Prayer for the Children

“Live the gospel as conspicuously as you can. Keep the covenants your children know you have made. Give priesthood blessings. And bear your testimony! Don’t just assume your children will somehow get the drift of your beliefs on their own. The prophet Nephi said near the end of his life that they had written their record of Christ and preserved their convictions regarding His gospel in order “to *persuade* our children ... that our children may *know* ... [and believe] the right way.”



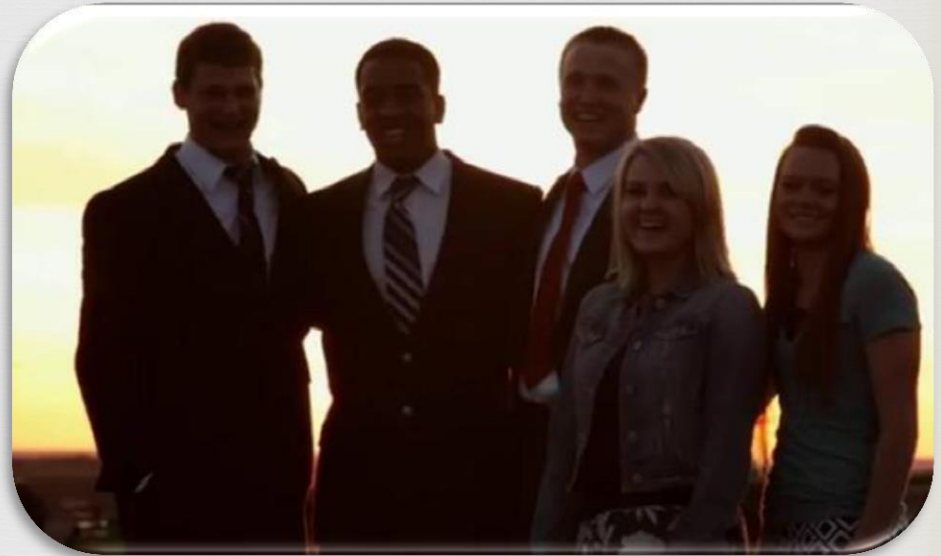
A Prayer for the Children



- ∞ Nephi-like, might we ask ourselves what our children know? From us? Personally?
1. **Do our children know that we love the scriptures?** Do they see us reading them and marking them and clinging to them in daily life?
 2. **Have our children ever unexpectedly opened a closed door and found us on our knees in prayer?** Have they heard us not only pray *with* them but also pray *for* them out of nothing more than sheer parental love?
 3. **Do our children know we believe in fasting as something more than an obligatory first-Sunday-of-the-month hardship?** Do they know that we have fasted for them and for their future on days about which they knew nothing?
 4. **Do they know we love being in the temple, not least because it provides a bond to them that neither death nor the legions of hell can break?**
 5. **Do they know we love and sustain local and general leaders, imperfect as they are, for their willingness to accept callings they did not seek in order to preserve a standard of righteousness they did not create? Do those children know that we love God with all our heart and that we long to see the face – and fall at the feet – of His Only Begotten Son? I pray that they know this** (Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, “A Prayer for the Children,” *Conference Report*, April 2003, 92).

Children Need to Teach the Gospel

- ☞ Youth not only need to be taught, but in order to be truly converted, they need to teach the gospel.
- ☞ They need to teach it formally and informally.
- ☞ They need to take lesson time in FHE.
- ☞ They need the opportunity to direct scripture study.
- ☞ They need to be given opportunities in their own homes to explain and testify of principles of the gospel.



In Doctrine and Covenants 88:77, the Lord taught, "...I give unto you a commandment that ye shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom."

Our Youth Should Be Teaching Now



You Learn Best When Teaching

“Almost everyone acknowledges *you learn best when you teach another* and that your learning is internalized when you *live it*. Why? When you teach you simply learn better. Every student becomes a teacher, and every teacher a student.... “Also when you teach or share what you’re learning with others, you implicitly commit socially to live what you teach. You will naturally be more motivated to live what your learning. This sharing will be a basis for deepening learning, commitment and motivation, making change legitimate, and enrolling a support team. You will also find that sharing creates bonding with people – especially with your [students]....Those who teach what they are learning are, by far, the greatest students”

(Stephen R. Covey, *The 8th Habit* [New York: Simon and Schuster, Free Press, 2004], 32).

Conversion comes through Participation



“Real conversion comes only with personal participation. No one is as fully converted to a thing as the individual who is devoting his time and best efforts to it. Genuine and final conversion comes only through the thrills of knowledge derived from first-hand participation” (Frederick J. Pack, *Improvement Era*, Vol. 32, March 1920, No. 5, 431-432).

“Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand” (D&C 88:78). Or, in other words, as our children teach the gospel, the Lord’s grace shall attend them, and they will learn more deeply the doctrines of the kingdom – as they teach! What a tremendous blessing.

Youth Should Share and Discuss




“The more [children] discuss what the gospel actually means in their lives, the more will be their inspiration, growth, and joy as they try to solve their personal concerns and challenges” (Joseph B. Wirthlin, *Ensign*, January 1989, 15).

We Learn by Doing



- ☞ President Spencer W. Kimball taught, **“We learn by doing. If we study the gospel to teach it we have acquired knowledge, for where we carry the lantern to light the path of others we light our own way.** As we analyze and arrange the scriptures to present an acceptable lesson to others, we have clarified our own minds. As we explain that which we already know there seems to come to us an unfolding of additional truths, and enlargement of our understandings, new connections and applications.” (President Spencer W. Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 530).
- ☞ Just think of the benefits and blessing that will come as your children begin to teach each other the gospel of Jesus Christ!

True Disciples Testify

“We are true disciples of Christ; we ought to testify every day in every Latter-day Saint home to our wives/husbands, siblings, and children. These are the people we should love most on this earth. These are those we want to know the truth of this mighty work. Opportunities will come at school, in our work, and in the community to testify to our friends and neighbors not of our faith in a humble and sweet way, as well as to testify to each other and build greater faith.

“For example, a son may say to us, ‘I sure think President [Monson] is a good man.’

“We could say, ‘Indeed, he is wonderful.’

“What if instead we said, ‘Son, I know he is a prophet of God, a seer, and a revelator. He may be one of the greatest prophets that ever lived.’

“Can you see the difference? Can you feel the difference?

“A daughter might say, ‘We have a nice bishop.’

“We could respond, ‘Yes, sweetheart, he is.’

“What if we took this opportunity to say, ‘Sweetheart, he was called by God by revelation. He has the mantle upon him, and he is guided by inspiration in his calling.’

Parents and Children Testify

“Children need to hear their parents testify. Siblings can strengthen each other, and their friends can be lifted spiritually.

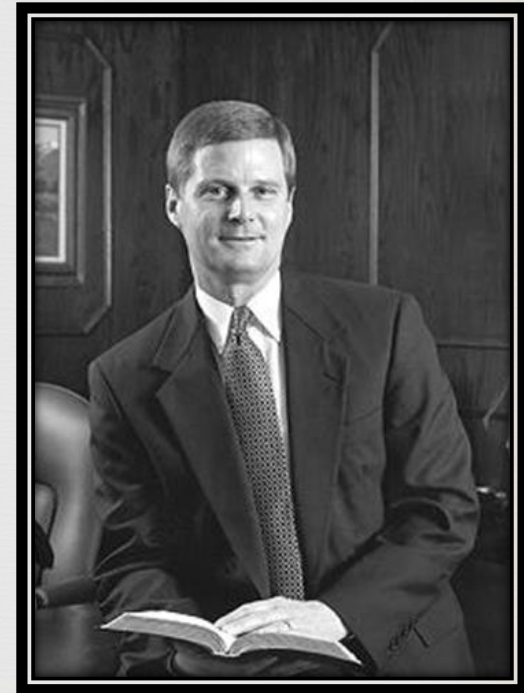
“Can you think of anything in this generation that would affect members of the Church more than living to be worthy of the Holy Ghost constantly and testifying as guided and directed by the Holy Ghost of the truth of this great, majestic, divine work and more especially of Him whose work this is? (Vaughn J. Featherstone, “Things Too Wonderful For Me,” BYU Devotional, 13 Feb. 2001).



More Diligent and Concerned at Home



“We also can become more diligent and concerned at home **by bearing testimony to those whom we love about the things we know to be true by the witness of the Holy Ghost. The bearing of testimony need not be lengthy or eloquent. And we do not need to wait until the first Sunday of the month to declare our witness of things that are true.** Within the walls of our own homes, we can and should bear pure testimony of the divinity and reality of the Father and the Son, of the great plan of happiness, and of the Restoration. **Brethren and sisters, when was the last time you bore testimony to your eternal companion? Parents, when was the last time you declared your witness to your children about the things you know to be true? And children, when was the last time you shared your testimony with your parents and family?**” (Elder David A. Bednar, “More Diligent and Concerned at Home,” *Ensign*, November 2009, 18-19).



Fortifying Our Children with the Armor of God



“The more righteous and upright, pure and undefiled, the Latter-day Saints become, the less power will Satan have over them, for in proportion to your unity and uprightness, honesty, and fidelity to the cause in which you are engaged, in such proportion will the power of the adversary be weakened, and those who are seeking to entice your sons and daughters into haunts of shame, and dens of wickedness, that they might be defiled, corrupted, wicked and like the rest of them will have less power over you, if you will watch your children better, and live better lives yourselves”

(Joseph F. Smith, *Conference Report*, October 1911, 11).

