

JANUARY 2013

WEEK 1: God is my Heavenly Father. He knows me and loves me.

Elder Russell M. Ballard has said, “God expresses his love for us by providing the guidance we need to progress and reach our potential. (Heavenly Father) has given us divine counsel and commandments in his instruction manuals—the holy scriptures. When we understand and follow these instructions, ... we learn that our Maker loves us and desires our happiness. He sent his Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ. All the marvels of nature are glimpses of his divine power and expressions of his love.”

We are all important to our Heavenly Father. He loves each of us. He doesn't measure our talents or our looks; He doesn't measure our money or how much stuff we have.

Heavenly Father wants us to remember that He is the Father of our spirits; He created us. We need to remember that we are His children and He loves each of us. His greatest desire is for us to be happy and to return to live with Him forever.

WEEKS 2 & 3: Heavenly Father's plan is a plan of happiness.

Questions like “Where did we come from?” “Why are we here?” and “Where are we going?” are answered in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Prophets have called it the Plan of Salvation and “the great plan of happiness”. When we understand the Plan of Salvation, we also understand the reason God has given us commandments. We can learn about this great plan of happiness by studying the scriptures and by listening to our prophet.

After we die, we will all live again because of Jesus Christ. He overcame death through the Resurrection, and everyone will be resurrected. He also overcame sin, and those who have faith, repent, are baptized, receive the Holy Ghost, and keep the commandments will return to live with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. They will have the gift of eternal life, which is what the plan of happiness is all about.

WEEK 4: I have agency, and I am responsible for my choices.

Heavenly Father knew when He sent us to earth that we would need to become accountable for our choices. Being accountable helps us learn to make wise choices. Heavenly Father knew that we would not always choose the right. He and Jesus Christ have provided a way for us to correct our mistakes so that we can be happy here on earth and one day return to live with Them forever. The way is repentance.

When we repent, we accept responsibility for our wrong choices, feel sorry, ask forgiveness, and correct our wrongs. Then we try very hard to not repeat that sin.

Heavenly Father has given us commandments to help us to be happy. He has promised us blessings—happy consequences—if we obey. If we choose to break the commandments of God, then we must suffer the consequences. This includes not receiving the blessings that come from keeping the commandments. Choosing to be baptized and then choosing to listen to and follow the promptings of the Holy Ghost after you have been confirmed are two very important, right choices. When you make these choices and are baptized and confirmed, you become a member of Jesus Christ’s own church; and when you choose to keep Heavenly Father’s commandments and always remember Jesus Christ, you will always have His Spirit to be with you. Those are very happy consequences!

FEBRUARY 2013

WEEK 1: Jesus Christ created the earth under the direction of Heavenly Father.

Jesus Christ, under the direction of Heavenly Father, created the world for us so that we would have a place to gain our bodies and prove ourselves worthy to return to Them. The creation took six days.

First, Jesus divided the light from the darkness to make day and night. On the second day, He organized the heaven and the earth. On the third day, He divided the land from the waters and created grass, flowers, trees, fruit, and herbs. On the fourth day, He created the sun, moon, and stars. On the fifth day, He created the fish and birds. On the sixth day, Jesus created the animals. Then, most important of all, Heavenly Father created man “in his own image. Adam and Eve were the first man and woman to live on the earth and care for it.

The beautiful world we live in is a gift from our loving Heavenly Father. We can thank Him in our prayers for its many blessings. We can also show our thankfulness by caring for the plants and animals on the earth. Our bodies are also a gift from Heavenly Father. We should especially take care of our bodies and always remember to show gratitude and reverence for their creation.

WEEK 2: The Fall was part of God’s plan.

The fall of Adam and Eve was known by Heavenly Father and “was a necessary step in the plan of life and a great blessing to all of us”. We accepted this condition in the spirit world when we supported Heavenly Father’s plan.

Because of the Fall, we are blessed with physical bodies, the right to choose between good and evil, and the opportunity to gain eternal life. None of these privileges would have been ours had Adam and Eve remained in the garden”

Because Adam and Eve “fell” from the presence of God and became mortal having physical bodies. We have the privilege of choice, being separated from God, and being subject to death were all part of Heavenly Father’s plan for us to become like Him.

WEEK 3: I have been sent to earth to gain a body and to be tested.

Before we were born, we lived with Heavenly Father as His spirit children. We accepted His plan so we could be born on earth, have a body, and be tested. Heavenly Father would send His Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, to overcome death and to atone for our sins. By faithfully following Heavenly Father's plan, we can return to Him.

When we come to earth, we gain bodies, live in families, and experience joy as we follow Heavenly Father's plan for us. While we are here, we need to receive the ordinances that will help us return to Heavenly Father: baptism, confirmation, priesthood ordinations for young men, and temple ordinances, including celestial marriage.

We are here to be tested and to prove we can make good choices. The Holy Ghost helps guide us to do what is right while we are away from our heavenly home.

WEEK 4: If I keep the commandments, I can live with Heavenly Father again.

We have a loving Heavenly Father who has given us the gift of agency, or the right to choose. Each of us has come to this earth with all the tools necessary to make correct choices. The prophet Mormon tells us, "The Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil".

We are surrounded by the messages of the adversary: "Just this once won't matter." "Don't worry; no one will know." Decisions are constantly before us. To make them wisely, courage is needed — the courage to say no, the courage to say yes. Decisions do determine destiny.

It is easier to keep the commandments 100 percent of the time than it is 98 percent of the time. We can decide right now that we will not deviate from the path which will lead to our goal: eternal life with our Father in Heaven.

MARCH 2013

WEEK 1: Jesus Christ taught the gospel and set an example for us.

Before Heavenly Father sent us to earth, He chose Jesus Christ to be our leader and Savior. You chose to follow Jesus Christ before you were born.

When Jesus came to earth, He taught the gospel and set up His Church. He kept His promise to be our Savior. He suffered and died and was resurrected so that we could be resurrected and live again with Heavenly Father and our families. He did this because He loves all of us.

Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ have promised us that when we choose the right, we will be blessed. We have righteous examples to follow in the scriptures. One of the greatest examples is that of our Savior. He has shown us what we need to do to return to live with Him forever.

WEEK 2: Because of Christ's Atonement, I can repent and live with God again.

The Lord has commanded us to repent, to change our ways, to come unto Him, and be more like Him. First we must recognize a mistake, remorse and then confess. Confession is to be made to the person who has been wronged. Confession should be sincere and not merely an admission of guilt.

The next step is restitution—to repair damage done. Then come steps to resolve to do better. Thanks to the Atonement of Jesus Christ, full forgiveness is given to those who repent and remain free from sin.

The Atonement has two parts. One part requires no effort from us to receive it. But we must work if we are to have the other part. It is important to learn the meaning of immortality - the gift of the Resurrection, which Jesus Christ gives to all people and eternal life -the gift to live forever as families in God's presence if we repent.

I am grateful for the Savior's Atonement and the chance to live with Him again.

WEEK 3: Because Jesus Christ was resurrected, I will be too.

Nathan and his cousins were playing by a large irrigation ditch. They knew that they shouldn't play so close to it, but it was fun to throw rocks into the water, and it was cooler near the water on this hot summer day. Suddenly Nathan slipped and fell in. His cousins yelled for help. Fortunately the aunts and uncles were not far away. Uncle Gary jumped the pasture fence, ran to the ditch, and pulled Nathan from the water just before he went into a culvert under the road. Uncle Gary saved Nathan's life that day.

Nathan *will* die someday. Everyone will die someday. But Jesus Christ made it possible for us to live again. He gave His life for us. Three days later He was resurrected—His spirit body reunited with His body of flesh and bones, to never again be parted. He lives today! He said, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live". Because He did this for us, each of us will be resurrected. He is our Savior.

You can probably imagine how grateful Nathan's family was to Uncle Gary that summer day. How much more grateful we ought to be to Jesus Christ! His Atonement made it possible for us to live again forever. Because of Jesus Christ, we will all be resurrected.

WEEK 4: Jesus Christ is our Savior.

Jesus Himself said that He was the Light of the World and that "he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life". When we see the sun rise each day to give light to our world, we can remember Jesus Christ's shining example. He always chose the right. Jesus taught, "Hold up your light that it may shine unto the world. Behold I am the light which ye shall hold up—that which ye have seen me do." When we follow the example of Jesus and choose the right, we are following His light and we remember Him.

Jesus is the Savior. Jesus loves us so much that He suffered and died for us. On the third day after His body was laid in the tomb, He arose—was resurrected. He said, "I have laid down my life,

and have taken it up again; therefore repent, and come unto me ye ends of the earth, and be saved". We come unto Him when we remember Him and keep His commandments. Because He made it possible for us to be forgiven of our sins and be resurrected and return to live with Heavenly Father, Jesus is the light and life of the world.

APRIL 2013

WEEK 1: After Jesus Christ and His Apostles died, gospel truths were lost.

When Jesus was on the earth, He taught us what we need to do to be able to return to live with Him again. He showed us how to be baptized. He taught the gospel and asked us to obey His commandments. He organized His Church and ordained Apostles.

After Jesus Christ was crucified, His Apostles led the Church. They taught the people everything that Jesus had taught. But many people did not like them, just as they did not like Jesus. Some of the Apostles were killed because they believed and served Jesus Christ. After the Apostles had died, many gospel truths were lost, and priesthood authority was taken from the earth. This was called the Apostasy. New Testament prophets and apostles knew that the Apostasy would take place. They also testified of the Restoration—that gospel truths and priesthood authority would one day be restored to the earth.

The First Vision, in 1820, was the beginning of the Restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ. Gospel truths were restored by revelation and are found in the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price. Joseph Smith was called of God to be the first latter-day prophet and President of the Church. The Restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ is a great blessing to all of us.

WEEK 2: Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph Smith.

Have you ever really wondered about what to do in a certain situation? Or really wanted to know the answer to a question? Perhaps you asked your parents or your friends or your teachers about it but were still not sure what you should do. When Joseph Smith was fourteen years old, he had a question. He asked himself which church was true. One day Joseph read in the Bible, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him". Joseph decided to do what the scripture said. He decided to ask Heavenly Father which church was right so that he would know which one he should join.

Joseph had never prayed out loud before. He decided to go to a grove of trees near his home to ask Heavenly Father his question. On a beautiful spring morning, he walked into the grove, looked around to be sure that he was alone, and knelt in prayer. As he began his prayer, a terrible feeling of darkness surrounded him. It was so strong that he thought it was going to destroy him! He prayed with all his heart to Heavenly Father for help. At that moment, a pillar of light appeared over his head and came down and rested on him. The darkness left him, and he saw two Heavenly Beings standing above him in the air. One spoke to him, saying, "This is My

Beloved Son. Hear Him!” The two Heavenly Beings were Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

We, too, can go to Heavenly Father in prayer and receive answers to important questions in our lives. Through prayer we can also receive a testimony from Heavenly Father that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God and that he saw and testified of Jesus Christ.

WEEK 3: Priesthood authority was restored by heavenly messengers.

In 1829, under the direction of the ancient apostles Peter, James, and John, John the Baptist appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. He laid his hands upon their heads and conferred the Aaronic Priesthood upon them. Oliver Cowdery said, “Think for a moment, what joy filled our hearts, and with what surprise we must have bowed, when we received under his hand the Holy Priesthood”.

Later, along the banks of the Susquehanna River in New York or Pennsylvania, Peter, James, and John, the same apostles who had received their authority from Jesus Christ, conferred the Melchizedek Priesthood on Joseph and Oliver. Without the priesthood, the Church could not have been organized, no one could be baptized or receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, no one could receive the blessings of the temple, and no one could return to live with Heavenly Father. How wonderful it is that a kind and loving Heavenly Father restored the priesthood so that His servants on the earth could have the power to act in His name!

WEEK 4: Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon and restored gospel truths.

The Lord called Joseph Smith to be a prophet when he was just a young man. The true Church of Jesus Christ was no longer on the earth, and the Prophet Joseph was called to restore it. He received the priesthood—the power and authority of God—and all the priesthood keys needed to restore the Church. He translated the Book of Mormon, the story of Lehi’s people and another testament of Jesus Christ.

One of the promises the Lord made to us is that in the last days He would combine two records, or accounts, of people who have lived on this earth. These records, the Bible and the Book of Mormon, both testify that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Together they teach us the fullness of the gospel and tell us the commandments that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ want us to keep.

MAY 2013

WEEKS 1 & 2: The living prophet leads the Church under the direction of Jesus Christ.

It’s a beautiful summer evening and you have been playing outside with your brothers and sisters. Your mom calls to you and asks you to tell them to come in for dinner. You are speaking for your mom, delivering a message for her to your family. Will they listen? Throughout the ages,

Father in Heaven has chosen certain men to speak for Him. These men are called prophets. They teach us what Heavenly Father wants us to know. They warn us about what will happen if we disobey. They also tell us about the wonderful blessings that will come when we do obey. Will we listen?

We have a living prophet today...President Thomas S. Monson. He is the President of the Church, and he speaks to us for the Lord. He was chosen by God and called through proper priesthood authority. He testifies that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and he teaches us the gospel. All the prophets testify of Jesus Christ and teach us what He wants us to do. When we pray to Heavenly Father, we can know that the words of the prophets are true. Prophets are men who "walk with God". They keep His commandments and are obedient to the things He tells them to do. When we hear the prophet, we will know that he speaks to us for the Savior.

WEEK 3: Prophets teach me to pay tithing.

Daniel stared at the coin on his dresser. It didn't look like very much. Daniel, are you ready for church?

Yes, Dad. I'll be right there.

Daniel stuck the coin in his pocket and ran to catch up with his family. When Daniel arrived at church, he got a tithing slip and an envelope from outside the bishop's office. Dad, can you help me fill this out?

Of course. How much tithing are you paying today?

Not very much. Just this.

Daniel, is this 10 percent of the money you earned?

Yes.

Then this is perfect.

Daniel sealed the envelope and gave the tithing to the bishop. The bishop shook his hand. Daniel wondered if the bishop would have been disappointed if he knew there was only one coin in the envelope.

I'm proud of you, Daniel. Paying tithing is a good choice.

I know, Dad, but it was just one coin.

You never know what that one coin will pay for. Maybe it will pay to print one page in a Book of Mormon, or maybe it will help pay for one of the stones that is used to build a temple.

Daniel started to think of all the ways his tithing could help others.

I guess you're right, Dad. I'm glad I can pay tithing—even if it is just one coin.

WEEK 4: Prophets teach me to live the Word of Wisdom.

*If I keep my body clean and pure and habit-free,
I may in Father's temple claim blessings promised me.
On resurrection morning, I'll take my body bright
And in celestial glory forever live in light.*
(Children's Songbook, page 153.)

One of the great blessings we received when we came to earth was a physical body. It is so important that the Lord calls it a "temple of God." Because our bodies are holy, Heavenly Father wants us to take care of them. He knows that we can be happier, better people if we are healthy, and He knows that we face temptations to treat our bodies unwisely or take harmful things into them. For this reason He has told us of things that are good for our health, and things that are harmful. Much of this information is found in Doctrine and Covenants 89. This revelation is called the Word of Wisdom. If we live the Word of Wisdom, we can enjoy the Spirit of the Lord. If we mistreat the temples of God—our bodies—we hurt ourselves not only physically but spiritually. We must obey the Word of Wisdom to be worthy to enter the temple and receive the special blessings that await us there. When we keep the Lord's law of health and obey His other commandments, the Lord promises to bless us physically and spiritually.

JUNE 2013

WEEK 1: I will follow Jesus Christ by being baptized and confirmed and keeping my baptismal covenants.

In the Book of Mormon, we learn that King Noah and his priests did not keep the commandments. The Lord sent Abinadi to warn them that they must repent. Abinadi also taught them about Jesus Christ. King Noah put Abinadi to death. But one of King Noah's priests, Alma, believed everything Abinadi taught. Alma "repented of his sins and iniquities, and went about privately among the people, and began to teach the words of Abinadi". Alma knew this would make King Noah angry, so Alma's people hid. Alma taught the people that they could be baptized and that if they kept the commandments, God would give them His Spirit. "When the people had heard these words, they clapped their hands for joy".

We begin our journey back to Him by making a covenant and being baptized. When Jesus was baptized, He made a covenant that He would be obedient to Heavenly Father's commandments. When you are baptized, you make that same covenant to serve Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. Then, when you are confirmed a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, you covenant to take His name upon you, to always remember Him, and to keep His commandments. Just like the people of Alma, you promise to be a witness of the Savior—to tell

others about, or testify of, Him. When you keep your part of the baptismal covenant, you will always have His Spirit to be with you. That is God's promise to you.

WEEK 2: If I live worthily, the Holy Ghost will help me choose the right.

The Holy Ghost is a member of the Godhead. He has a body of spirit rather than of flesh and bones. Because He is a spirit, you cannot see Him. But you can feel Him with you. The Holy Ghost has many names. Some of them are the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of the Lord, and the Comforter. After you are baptized, you are confirmed a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and you receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Having this glorious gift means that if you live righteously, you can have the Holy Ghost with you always.

When you have special friends, you want to be with them. You might invite them to your home. You might prepare for their visit by cleaning your house. You might plan to do things to make them feel comfortable and welcome. When your friends arrive, you listen carefully to them. You probably tell them how glad you are to be with them. The Holy Ghost is a special friend to you. To invite the Holy Ghost to be with you, you can sincerely pray and ask Heavenly Father to send Him. You can prepare for Him by remembering Jesus Christ, choosing the right, keeping the commandments. The Holy Ghost can bring feelings of warmth, love, peace, joy, and wanting to do good. When you feel the Holy Ghost with you, thank Heavenly Father for this blessing. The Holy Ghost is one of the greatest gifts Father in Heaven can give you.

WEEK 3: When I take the sacrament, I renew my baptismal covenants.

What is a covenant? In the Church, a covenant is a mutual promise that we make with Heavenly Father. To covenant means to "come together," or to be bound together by promises. Sometimes it is a promise that we make in our hearts. Even when we make a covenant in our hearts with Heavenly Father, there are things we do to show that we have made those promises. Baptism is one of the first covenants we make. Being baptized shows that we want to keep His commandments. Some of the promises we make when we are baptized are that we are willing to take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ, that we will always remember Him, and that we will keep His commandments.

The Lord promises us that He will give us His Spirit to always be with us. When we are baptized, we promise to remember Jesus and keep His commandments. He knew that we would need help to keep that promise, and the sacrament helps us do it. Each week when we take the sacrament, we renew the covenant we made at baptism. Each day as we choose the right and follow Jesus, we are keeping our covenant and growing in faith. As we keep the covenant we have made, the Lord's Spirit will be with us, and one day we will be worthy to go to the temple and make other very important covenants with Heavenly Father.

WEEK 4: When I repent, I can be forgiven.

Heavenly Father knew when He sent us to earth that we would need to become accountable for our choices. Being accountable helps us learn to make wise choices. Heavenly Father knew that we would not always choose the right. He and Jesus Christ have provided a way for us to

correct our mistakes so that we can be happy here on earth and one day return to live with Them forever. The way is repentance. When we repent, we accept responsibility for our wrong choices, feel sorry, ask forgiveness, and correct our wrongs. Then we try very hard to not repeat that sin.

Heavenly Father has given us commandments to help us to be happy. He has promised us blessings—happy consequences—if we obey. Giving us the chance to repent and be forgiven is one way Heavenly Father shows us He loves us.

JULY 2013

WEEK 1: Heavenly Father planned for me to come to a family.

Before we came to earth, we lived in pre-mortal life together. While there, we waited anxiously for our turn to come to earth. Our life on earth is like a school. We are here to learn and be tested. If we make right choices, we will be able to return to Heavenly Father. However, He didn't want us to be alone so he designed for us to come to a family.

Heavenly Father wants members of the Church to understand His plan for families. The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles wrote "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" to declare what we believe about families. Like the title of liberty, the proclamation can encourage us to remember and explain what we believe. The family is central to His plan. Because He loves us, He has given us families so that we can love and learn from one another. Those relationships are so special, Heavenly Father has given us the opportunity to be together as families forever if we live worthy and follow His plan.

WEEK 2: Family prayer, family scripture study, and family home evening can strengthen my family.

For many years, prophets have shared how important it is that we work, serve and play together. One of the ways we can do this is to hold regular Family Home evenings.

We can learn about the gospel together and strengthen our testimonies. Prophets have promised us that our families will grow stronger when we use this time to study gospel principles and enjoy being together.

We have also been instructed to study the scriptures as a family and to have family prayer. When we study and pray together as a family, we grow closer to the Lord. We are able to discuss what we are learning and how, as a family we can apply the teachings of the scriptures in our lives.

I know that when we do these things, our family is blessed and that I can feel the warmth of the Holy Ghost.

WEEK 3: The priesthood can bless and strengthen my family.

How much light does a light bulb give when it is not screwed in? How much work does a windmill do when there is no wind? How much energy does a waterwheel produce when there is no water to make it move? These man-made inventions need a source of power in order to function.

Jesus knew that men could not direct His church on earth without power from God. He said that this power would be given by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority.

Our Heavenly Father gave his authority to certain men so that his work could be done. It is called the priesthood. Priesthood means the power and authority to act for our Heavenly Father. The priesthood can bless my family in many ways. I can request a blessing when I am sick or need comfort. However, some of the greatest blessings come from ordinances such as baptism, confirmation, temple marriage and even the sacrament. All of these ordinances require the priesthood and allow us to progress and grow in the gospel. The priesthood helps to strengthen and bless all families.

WEEK 4: Heavenly Father wants me to marry in the temple and have an eternal family.

President Uchtdorf shared an experience he had as a youth and being sealed in the temple. He said, "I can still remember when my parents took our family to the newly built Swiss Temple, the first in Europe, to become a forever family. I was 16 then and the youngest of four children. We knelt together at the altar to be sealed on earth by the power of the priesthood, with a wonderful promise that we could be sealed for eternity. I will never forget this magnificent moment. As a boy I was quite impressed that we crossed country borders to be sealed as a family. To me it symbolizes the way temple work crosses worldly boundaries to bring eternal blessings to everyone on earth. Temples are truly built for the benefit of the entire world."

Our family relationships are so special to Heavenly Father that he has given us the ability, through temple ordinances, to be with our families forever.

AUGUST 2013

WEEK 1: The scriptures teach me how to pray.

In the scriptures there are many stories of answers to prayer. Do you remember these? Nephi was told how to build a ship and where to find food; Daniel prayed for protection from the lions; Enos prayed all day and into the night that his sins would be forgiven; Hannah prayed that she could have a baby. There's another story about prayer of a young boy who wanted to know something. He wanted to know which church he should join. His friends and his family were finding churches to join. He just didn't know which church was right. He was only 14 years old. We, too, can pray to our Heavenly Father anytime, anywhere for any reason. We are His children and He loves us a lot. He wants us to come to Him in prayer often.

WEEK 2: Heavenly Father wants me to pray to Him often.

When you need to know an answer to a question, who do you ask? When you are hurt, who can help you? When you are sad, who can comfort you? In the scriptures, we read of men, women, and children who prayed to Heavenly Father when they had questions or needed help.

A great example of prayer is Daniel. He lived in a busy city near the king's palace. He prayed daily for guidance even though the law said that people who prayed would be thrown into a den of hungry lions. However, he knew the importance of prayer and decided to keep praying. Even though he was thrown into the lion's den, Heavenly Father protected him from the lions.

We can pray to Heavenly Father anytime, anywhere. Just as Heavenly Father heard the prayers of the people in the scriptures, Heavenly Father hears our prayers today, and He answers them in ways that will be for the best.

WEEKS 3 & 4: Answers to prayers come from Heavenly Father in many ways.

We are all children of God. He loves us and knows our needs, and He wants us to communicate with Him through prayer. We should pray to Him and no one else. The Lord Jesus Christ commanded, "Ye must always pray unto the Father in my name".

As we close our prayers, we should take time to pause and listen. At times, Heavenly Father will counsel, guide, or comfort us while we are on our knees. He may not always answer as we expect, but He does answer—in His own time and according to His will. Because He knows what is best for us, He may sometimes answer no, even when our prayers are sincere.

As we continue to pray to our Heavenly Father we will learn to strengthen our relationship with Him and learn how much He loves us.

SEPTEMBER 2013

WEEK 1: Jesus Christ taught us how to serve others.

Jesus Christ taught about serving one another in the story of the good Samaritan. He told of a man who was traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho. On the way, he was attacked by thieves who took his clothes, beat him, and left him nearly dead. A priest came along and, seeing the injured man, passed by on the other side of the road. Then a Levite, a man who helped priests in their duties, came by, but he also passed on the other side of the road to avoid the man.

Finally, a Samaritan, a group of people hated by the Jews, came by and stopped to help the hurt man, washing and wrapping his wounds. The Samaritan put the man on his own animal, took him to an inn, and stayed with him through the night. The next day, the Samaritan paid the innkeeper and told him that if the injured man needed more care than the money would cover, he would return and pay more.

There are many people in the Church who serve Jesus Christ by helping others every week, such as Primary teachers, choristers, organists, priests and deacons who administer the sacrament, and many others. Jesus is pleased when we love and serve others willingly.

WEEK 2: Prophets and apostles show us how to serve.

“It is only when we love God and Christ with all of our hearts, souls, and minds that we are able to share this love with our neighbors,” says Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. And we demonstrate that love “through acts of kindness and service—the way that the Savior would love and serve all of us if He were among us today.”

When someone is filled with charity, their thoughts, feelings, and actions become more like those of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. Like other prophets and apostles, Elder Ballard counsels us that “in all of our service, we need to be sensitive to the promptings of the Holy Ghost.” He says that “the still, small voice will let us know who needs our help and what we can do to help them.”

WEEKS 3 & 4: When I serve others, I serve God.

Happiness comes when we obey God’s commandments. One way we can do this is by serving others. That means we do something kind for them. When we serve others we can be happy.

President Thomas S. Monson encourages us to serve others. Children around the world serve those in need, and their happiness shines through when they share their stories.

Max said: “At my preschool I helped clean the tables and chairs for my teachers. It made me feel good to help someone without being asked first.”

Carson and Kayleigh said: “When our grandma was in the hospital we decided to give her a special gift by cleaning her house really well before she got home. It made us feel really good to do this for her.”

Brittish said: “When my mom broke her leg she needed to use a wheelchair. I helped with my three brothers and sister at home, and I was able to help my mom get the things she needed. Service makes me feel great!”

When we obey the commandment to love and serve others we are serving God and we are blessed with happiness.

OCTOBER 2013

WEEKS 1 & 2: Living the gospel helps me to be a missionary now.

What makes a good missionary? The best missionaries love the Lord, and they love other people. When we love others, we want to share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We can learn in the Book of Mormon how Ammon became a great missionary. He and his brothers wanted to share the gospel with those who had never heard it. Their father was King Mosiah, and the Nephites expected one of the brothers to be king after him. However, each one said that he wanted to be a missionary more than he wanted to be king.

Ammon traveled to the land of King Lamoni, a Lamanite, and volunteered to be the king's servant. He tended the king's flocks, he fought the king's enemies, and he ended up teaching the gospel to the king and his people. When the king and queen understood Ammon's message that Jesus Christ would come and redeem them from sin, they were very happy.

We can be like Ammon. We can be missionaries right now by living the gospel and showing love to others. We are missionaries when we share our testimony that Heavenly Father loves all His children. Heavenly Father wants us to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with everyone.

WEEK 3: I can share the gospel with my family and friends.

Every year, there is at least one harvest time. In some parts of the world, it is harvest time now. Green vegetables, juicy fruits, and healthy grains, which have been growing for months in good soil and sunlight, are ripe and ready for harvesting. Farmers and gardeners work hard so that everything can be gathered and nothing is lost.

The Lord's harvest is humble people who are ready to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. Like the farmer who has worked in the field or the missionary who has served a full-time mission, you can see the fruits of your labor. You have worked hard to choose the right. What is your harvest? Your friends and family members have noticed your good example and want to come to church with you. Your bishop is happy because you qualify for a recommend to go to a temple dedication. And Heavenly Father is pleased because you have shown your love by keeping His commandments. As you continue to keep the commandments, you shall continue to have many harvests and bless the lives of your family and friends.

WEEK 4: My testimony is strengthened when I share the gospel.

Have you noticed that when you share something like a treat or a toy, you feel good? You can share things other than treats or toys, like knowledge. Sharing knowledge can bring great joy—not just to the receiver but also to the giver. The best kind of knowledge to share is the gospel of Jesus Christ. We can be missionaries to others by being a good example. It helps strengthen our testimonies when we help others know of Jesus Christ and of our Heavenly Father's plan.

NOVEMBER 2013

WEEK 1: I am thankful for my body, and I know that it is a temple.

The temples of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are unique. Even though each temple looks different, all are beautiful and are built for the same purpose. They are places where special ordinances take place that are needed for us to return to Heavenly Father. Temples are also places where Jesus Christ and Heavenly Father can come.

You are like the temple. You are different from everyone else, but you, too, are a house for the Spirit of God or in other words the Holy Ghost. The Apostle Paul said: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? ... For the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." (1 Cor. 3:16–17.)

WEEK 2: I am thankful for temporal blessings.

Forgetting Heavenly Father has been a problem among His children since the world began. Think of the times of Moses when God provided manna and how He protected His children. Still the prophet warned the people to not forget God.

We, too, can remember Heavenly Father by being grateful for what He has given us. There is a hymn that says, "Count your many blessings; name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done".

The Holy Ghost helps us see what God has done for us. He loves us and blesses us more than we realize.

WEEK 3: I am thankful for spiritual blessings.

David was a righteous shepherd boy who fought and killed the giant Goliath. By defeating Goliath, David saved his people, the Israelites, from war. David eventually became the king of Israel. Besides being a good shepherd, warrior, and king, David was a good musician. He became famous for his Psalms, which are songs of praise to the Lord. Many of the Old Testament Psalms were composed by David. They are about times when he was happy, when he was discouraged, when he felt thankful, when he needed help, when he wanted to celebrate, or when he needed to feel peace.

Sometimes when we count our blessings we count "things" or "stuff". Through music, David received spiritual blessings that gave him peace and comfort.

We too should be thankful for our spiritual blessings and talents which has the power to make us and those around us happy.

WEEK 4: We should thank Heavenly Father for all our blessings.

Our Father in Heaven commands us to be thankful in all things, and He requires that we give thanks for the blessings we receive. We know that all of His commandments are intended to make us happy, and we also know that to break commandments leads to misery.

So to be happy and to avoid misery, we must have a grateful heart. It is not easy to be consistently be grateful for everything we have because we usually take good things for granted.

With our Father's help, we can choose to feel more gratitude. We can ask Him to help us see our blessings. We all can make the choice to give thanks in prayer and to ask Heavenly Father for direction to serve others for Him. Giving thanks in prayer can help us to see the all of our other blessings and receive a more grateful heart.

DECEMBER 2013

WEEK 1: The prophets foretold that Jesus Christ would come to earth.

From the time of Adam, righteous men looked forward to the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The prophets taught that Jesus Christ would come to save all of Heavenly Father's children from death. They also taught that through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, men could be forgiven of their sins and return to Heavenly Father. Many of the prophets knew of the birth of the Savior, Jesus Christ, long before it happened. Some of those prophets were Isaiah, Lehi, Nephi and Samuel.

When the Savior, Jesus Christ, was born, the prophecies were fulfilled. The time that all the holy prophets had waited for had finally come. An angel appeared to shepherds while they watched their flocks. The angel spoke to the shepherds, saying, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."

WEEK 2: Jesus Christ will come to the earth again.

It is fun to imagine that we lived long ago and heard Samuel prophesy about the coming of Jesus Christ. Many prophets besides Samuel told the people of their times about the Savior's birth. Those prophecies were fulfilled that night in Bethlehem. Just as the prophets testified of the Savior's birth, they have prophesied that He will come again. At His Second Coming, Jesus Christ will come not as a child but as an adult, and He will then rule and reign forever. All people everywhere will know that He is the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world.

Although we do not know when He will come again, we have been told to prepare for that time. We can prepare for His Second Coming just as the righteous people in Zarahemla prepared for His birth. We can follow the words of the prophets. We can study the scriptures and pray to Heavenly Father. We can keep our baptismal covenant and heed the promptings of the Holy Ghost. Prophets today continue to prophesy that the Savior will come again. If we follow the prophet, we will be prepared. What a joyful day that will be!

WEEK 3: I will prepare to live with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ again.

When we lived with our Heavenly Father, He explained a plan for our progression. We could become like Him. The plan required that we be separated from Him and come to earth. This separation was necessary to prove whether we would obey our Father's commandments even though we were no longer in His presence.

From the scriptures we learn that now is the time to prepare to meet God. We must obey His commandments, have faith in Jesus Christ and repent of our sins.

The plan provided that when earth life ended, we would be judged and rewarded according to the degree of our faith and obedience. We would then be assigned to the place for which we had prepared. We need to make choices that will lead us to live with Heavenly Father and Jesus forever.

WEEK 4: I have a testimony that I am a child of God.

Just as we are members of an earthly family, we are also members of a heavenly family. One way we are like each other and like the members of all other families on the earth is that we are all children of God.

Just as we are similar to our earthly parents, we are, as children of God, similar to him. As we can grow up to be like our earthly parents, so we can also grow spiritually to be like our Heavenly Father.

By knowing we are children of God, it can help us to choose the right and to treat others with love and respect.