

JANUARY

Weeks 1 & 2: Agency is the gift to choose for ourselves.

Father Lehi, the first prophet recorded in the Book of Mormon, chose to follow the Lord. He was instructed to “take his family and depart into the wilderness.” Despite hard traveling conditions and Laman and Lemuel's complaining, Lehi led his family to a land of promise. But it was not a place of peace. As Laman and Lemuel used their agency to disobey the Lord, Lehi became sad (for them). Before his death, Lehi gathered his children around him, blessed them, and counseled them. He urged them to repent and be faithful.

The gift of agency actually began in the pre-earth life. Heavenly Father explained that an earth would be prepared for us and that we would each receive a physical body. While on earth, we would have our agency, the freedom to choose between right and wrong. Of course, Heavenly Father knew we would be happier if we chose the right, but agency meant that we would also have the ability to choose the wrong. To help us make right choices, we would be taught gospel principles so that we would know how we should live.

You and I were among those who used their agency to accept Heavenly Father's plan to come to earth and to progress. Now we are here on earth, where opportunities to use our agency are everywhere. Our use of agency determines who we are and what we will be. Agency is strengthened by our faith and obedience. As we use our agency to choose the right, we are following Jesus Christ and can return to live with Him and Heavenly Father.

Week 3: In the pre-mortal life, I chose to follow God's plan.

Before this earth was organized so that we could live on it, we lived very happily as spirit children of our heavenly parents. Our spirits looked like the physical bodies that we have now, and each spirit had a distinct personality with strengths and weaknesses. While in this spirit world, we grew until we could no longer progress without a physical body. We wanted to prove our worthiness and become more like our Heavenly Father. We were anxious to receive a physical body and undergo a time of testing.

Heavenly Father knew we would all make mistakes, and He explained that we would need a savior, a person who would be willing to atone for our sins so that we could receive forgiveness when we repent. One of the spirits offered to serve Heavenly Father and be a savior for all the spirit children. This was Jesus. Because of His great love for us, His brothers and sisters, He offered to give His life to atone for our sins.

Lucifer, another of God's spirit sons, proposed, “Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem (save) all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor.”

Some of God's children liked Lucifer's idea, and one-third of them decided to follow him. Heavenly Father loved Lucifer and these spirit children, but because they refused to follow His plan, they were no longer worthy to remain with Him. Therefore they were cast out of heaven and could not be born on the earth and receive physical bodies.

Many of those who followed Heavenly Father's plan were ordained to do important things on earth. Each of us has received special talents and abilities that can be increased when we use them to help each other. Heavenly Father has provided everything we need to return to Him.

Week 4: Jesus Christ created the earth as a place where I can learn to choose the right.

*My life has a purpose; in heav'n it began.
My choice was to come to this lovely home on earth
And seek for God's light to direct me from birth.*

These words teach us that we lived with Heavenly Father before we came to earth. We are His children. Heavenly Father asked His Son, Jesus Christ, to create the earth. The earth was prepared so we could come and receive bodies. We were also given agency, and we chose to come to earth and learn to follow Heavenly Father's plan.

Heavenly Father loves us. He has given us this beautiful world in which we live. He created this world to give us a place to learn about His plan. Why did he do this? Because He wants us to make correct choices and return to Him. If we follow His plan, you will be happy here on earth and return to live with Him someday.

FEBRUARY

Week 1: Noah was blessed for choosing the right.

Noah was a righteous man who lived amid great wickedness. Almost all the people on the earth spent their time doing evil things, and they would not listen when Noah taught them the gospel. Noah warned the people that if they did not repent, a mighty flood would come upon the earth and destroy them. But they paid no attention to his words, and Noah's heart ached with sorrow because he knew that their evil ways would lead to their destruction.

For one hundred twenty years Noah tried to convince the people to repent. At that time many men who lived on the earth were so tall and powerful that they were called giants. They and others tried to kill Noah, but the Lord was with him and protected him. The people laughed and teased Noah's family building the ark, and they jeered at the sight of the animals being guided into it. Though Noah grieved at seeing how wicked the people had become, he knew that he was doing the right thing in obeying the Lord's commandment.

The laughter soon faded as the sky grew dark and the low rumblings of thunder could be heard. Drops of rain began to fall, and then a great storm arose that continued for many days. Water covered the whole earth, even the highest mountains; there was nothing visible but water as far as the eye could see. The Lord protected them in the safety of the ark.

After forty days and forty nights, the rain finally stopped. After another one hundred fifty days, the waters began to dry up. After many more days, Noah and his family were able to leave with the animals and settle upon the land. Noah gave thanks to the Lord for protecting his family. Noah and his family were blessed for choosing the right.

Week 2: Jesus's disciples were blessed by choosing the right.

Peter, Andrew, James, John, Phillip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James, Thaddaeus, Simon and Judas Iscariot. Do you recognize these names? They are the names of Jesus' original twelve apostles. They did not have easy lives. Many of them made good money and provided well for their families. Then they met Jesus. They loved Him and wanted to anything to be with Him. Jesus called these men to be His disciples and to follow Him. This meant they had to give up their jobs and worldly things, but they did it willingly. As they followed Him, they learned and gained stronger testimonies of the gospel. They grew to love Jesus even more and in turn their lives were blessed. We too, like the disciples are blessed when we do the things Jesus Christ asks of us. He wants us to choose the right and to be happy.

Week 3: Nephi was blessed for choosing the right.

After Nephi's father, the prophet Lehi, told Nephi and his brothers they needed to leave their home and live in the wilderness, Nephi continued to be faithful and obedient because he knew the Lord would help him.

He was asked to go back to Jerusalem and obtain the plates of brass from Laban. He didn't know how to do this but he knew the Lord would help him.

After Lehi and his family had camped by the sea for many days, the Lord told Nephi to build a ship to carry them to the promised land. Nephi did not know how to build a ship, but he knew the Lord would help and teach him.

He didn't know how the Lord would provide their family food after His bow broke, but He knew the Lord would bless him and his family.

Even though he had many trials, Nephi became a great leader because of his faith in the Lord. Many times Nephi prayed for help and the Lord taught him. Nephi was blessed for choosing the right. Just like Nephi, we can receive blessings and be taught from the Lord during difficult times.

Week 4: Church members today are blessed for choosing the right.

Carlos was a 10-year-old who liked to run, jump, and play. He also liked to ask lots of questions. His Primary teacher loved him. She would often say to him, "It is very important for you to learn the things we are teaching in Primary. Someday you will grow up to be a priesthood holder, a father, and a leader in the Church, and you will need to know these things." Carlos thought that his teacher was telling him that just so he would be reverent. However, he began to listen and learn. When Carlos grew up, he did receive the priesthood, he became a father, and he was called to be a leader in the Church. He remembered what his Primary teacher had said to him, and he was glad that he had listened and learned.

Just like Carlos, we will make many important choices in our lives. We will each have to decide if we are going to keep the commandments...or if we are going to obey our parents. We will choose our friends and the activities we want to participate in and how we how we treat others. All these choices are important, and we are accountable for them. Just like in times of old, we too are blessed today when we choose the right. Heavenly Father loves all His children and wants us to be happy.

MARCH

Week 1: God speaks through living prophets.

Pretend that it's a beautiful summer evening and you have been playing outside with your brothers and sisters. Now imagine that 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?

The scriptures tell us about the prophets who were called by Father in Heaven to speak for Him. Noah was asked by the Lord to warn the people that if they didn't repent, a terrible flood would come and cover the earth. Noah's family was the only one who listened, and they were saved from the flood.

The prophet Lehi was shown that Jesus Christ would come and be the Savior of the world. Lehi's son Nephi prayed to know if the words of his father were true. The Lord visited Nephi, and he believed all the words of his father. Later, Nephi also spoke for the Lord.

We have a living prophet today, 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. President Hinckley 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, if we listen.

Week 2: The First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles are prophets.

Apostles and prophets who lived long ago led the Church and taught people about Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. Today prophets and apostles also lead Jesus Christ's Church. The Church today is organized the same way Jesus organized His Church when He was on the earth. The prophet is the President of the Church and teaches what Heavenly Father and Jesus want us to do. Apostles and other Church leaders help him lead the Church.

The sixth Article of Faith states, "We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth." Through Joseph Smith, Jesus Christ has restored His church with a prophet and his counselors, the First Presidency, as well as twelve apostles.

The prophet is the only person on earth who receives revelation to guide the entire Church. However, there are apostles on earth today who are special witnesses of Jesus Christ. They serve in the Quorum of the Twelve and the First Presidency. They teach us the gospel of Jesus Christ and testify of truth.

Week 3: God's prophets and apostles speak to us in General Conference.

Through the ages, Heavenly Father has given His children "watchmen." These watchmen are called prophets and apostles. They have been called by Heavenly Father to watch over His children. They are given a better view of the dangers that lie ahead of us. They warn us about how we can be prepared and

defend ourselves against those dangers, including those that are sometimes hard to recognize, such as temptations and evil influences.

In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we are led by a prophet who is the President of the Church, and his two counselors in the First Presidency of the Church. We also have twelve Apostles whom we sustain as prophets, seers, and revelators. They are our watchmen today. While they don't stand on a tower, they do receive direction and inspiration from Heavenly Father to know what dangers, problems, and challenges await us. They teach us how to prepare to face them as we try to keep our covenants and the commandments. If we listen to and obey their words, we can be prepared. We hear their counsel during general conference. They teach us what Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ want us to do to be happy. We can also read their words in the Friend and the Ensign magazines. The prophets and apostles are our watchmen on the tower today. If we heed their words, we will be safe.

Week 4: I am blessed when I choose to follow the prophet.

In the scriptures, we read the words of many prophets. They told the people of their times the things the Lord wanted them to know and do. Some people listened and were blessed. Others didn't, and their lives were not as happy. Noah, an Old Testament prophet, warned the people of his day to repent. Only his family listened and obeyed. Because they did, they were safe on the Ark when the floods came and destroyed everyone else.

Joseph, who was sold into Egypt by his brothers, told Pharaoh that Egypt should save food during the coming seven years, when food would grow in abundance, because in the seven years following them, there would be a famine. Pharaoh listened to Joseph, and all of Egypt had food to eat during the famine.

Abinadi, a Book of Mormon prophet, warned wicked King Noah and his people that they needed to repent of their sins. Alma listened and obeyed. He repented and helped others to learn the gospel as well. Their lives were happier because they listened to and followed the prophet. Those who didn't listen were destroyed or captured by their enemies.

Because of the great love Heavenly Father has for us, He has sent a prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley, to teach and guide us today. Like the people in the scriptures, we, too, can choose whether or not to listen to his words and do the things he asks us to do. If we do listen and follow his counsel, we will be blessed. Our lives will be happier, we will be safer, and one day we will return to and live with Heavenly Father.

APRIL

Week 1: Jesus Christ is the perfect example for me.

When Jesus lived on the earth, He set a perfect example for us to follow in treating other people. He said, "For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you". He showed us at least three things that each of us can do: He was kind. He loved everyone. He served others.

I can be kind. Jesus taught that we can share what we have with others. We can visit people who are sick. We can make someone who is new feel welcome. Jesus did these things, and we can, too. He said that when we do these things for others, we are doing it for Him. When we share with others, we are not just sharing with them—we are sharing with Him. When we visit others, it is as if we are also visiting Him. When we

make others feel welcome, we are making Him feel welcome, too. Surely that is why being kind helps us to have a good feeling and to feel close to our Savior.

I can love everyone. When Jesus knew that He was about to be crucified, He gave His disciples a most important commandment—to love one another the same way He loved them. He told them that people would know that they were His disciples if they followed this commandment. People will know that we are followers of Jesus Christ when they see that we are trying to love everyone.

I can serve others. Jesus spent His whole life serving others. He even gave His life for others—for us. He taught that the greatest among us would be those who serve others as He did. That is hard for some people to understand. They think that if everyone serves them, it means that they are very important. Jesus Christ taught a better way—to serve others by helping them, by comforting them, by treating them as He treated others.

“Come, follow me,” Jesus said. Let us follow Him forever!

Weeks 2 & 3: Jesus Christ taught me the right way to live.

Jesus Christ instructed His Apostles at the beginning of His mortal ministry, “Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men”. We need to “follow Him,” and as we do this, the Savior will bless us beyond our own capacity to become what He wants us to be.

To follow Christ is to become more like Him. It is to learn from His character. The Savior invites us to learn His gospel by living His teachings. Ancient and modern prophets described it with three words: “Keep the commandments”—nothing more, nothing less.

CTR rings can help us do this. They help us remember to “Choose the right”. Jesus Christ taught us that there is a right way to live. Just like the Primary song that says “There’s a right way to live and be happy...it is choosing the right every day. I am learning the teachings of Jesus; they will help me and show me the way.”

When we follow the teachings of Jesus, they will help us all to be happy and help us return to live with Him.

Week 4: I feel my Savior's love when I try to be like Jesus Christ.

The scriptures teach us of the many blessings made possible by Jesus Christ. Do you remember the story of Lehi’s dream? Lehi saw a tree. The tree represents the love of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. On the tree was fruit that would make people happy. Lehi tasted the fruit, and it filled him with great joy. Lehi wanted his whole family to taste the fruit. The fruit of the tree represents the blessings we receive because of Jesus Christ and His Atonement. We taste of the fruit when we trust in Jesus Christ, when we are baptized and receive the Holy Ghost, and when we live the gospel and feel our Savior’s love.

By choosing the right, we will have the companionship of the Holy Ghost and feel of the Savior’s love more often.

MAY

Week 1: As I repent, I can be forgiven.

There was a girl who got a splinter in her finger. Her dad took his pocketknife, cleaned it, and gently scraped it across her finger to catch the end of the splinter and pull it out. Even though her dad was gentle, it hurt to have the splinter removed! The next time the girl got a splinter, she didn't tell anyone. After a few days, her finger became infected. It hurt so much that she wanted the splinter removed no matter what. Her dad gently removed it. After the splinter was gone, her finger began to heal.

When we do something wrong, it always hurts us and it often hurts others. We may think the hurt will go away if we ignore it. But left alone, the wrong will continue to hurt us and make us sad.

Heavenly Father loves us. He wants us to be happy. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to make it possible for us to repent. Through His Atonement, Jesus paid the price for our sins so that we can repent and be forgiven.

Week 2: When I am baptized and confirmed, I am following Jesus' example.

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 3: The Holy Ghost can help me.

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 4: 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.

JUNE

Week 1: I pray to Heavenly Father for strength to do what is right.

A long time ago there lived a man named Alma. He was the ruler over his people, the Nephites. He was also the high priest over the Church. Alma was worried because the Church members cared more about their fine clothes, gold, and silver, than they did about Jesus Christ and Heavenly Father. And they did not take care of those who were hungry, poor, or sick. Alma wanted to preach to his people in hopes that they would repent, so he selected another man to take his place as chief judge. Then he traveled to towns and cities throughout the land and preached the gospel. In one city, the Lord called a righteous man, Amulek, to accompany Alma.

One day Alma and Amulek went to the Zoramites. Among other things, the Zoramites had forgotten how to pray reverently. They had built synagogues, or churches, and in the middle of each was a tall stand, the top of which was high above the congregation. One day each week, the people took turns climbing to the top. As each person reached the very top, he would raise his hands toward heaven and in a loud

voice repeat a boastful prayer. Each person said exactly the same prayer, then climbed down, went home, and never prayed or thought about God during the rest of the week.

Alma and Amulek taught the Zoramites who would listen to them that they could pray anytime, anywhere, that they could pray silently in their hearts, or out loud, and that they should not wait until they went to church on Sunday to pray. Amulek told them that they should pray continually—in their fields, in their homes, alone in their closets. Amulek taught them that they could pray to Heavenly Father about everything and that they should not just repeat the same words over and over again. He said that they should thank Heavenly Father for all the good things He had given them, that they should ask for the help and strength they needed, and that they should pray for others. He knew that if they did this, they would feel more reverent toward Heavenly Father and it would give them strength to choose the right.

Week 2: When I pay my tithing, Heavenly Father will bless me.

Father in Heaven loves you and has given you many blessings. He asks you to return to Him one tenth of all you earn. The one tenth you give to the Lord is called tithing. Tithing is used to build up Heavenly Father's kingdom on the earth. It pays for building and taking care of chapels and temples, for translating and printing the Book of Mormon, and for missionary work. In countries all over the world, tithing also pays for Seminary and Institute of Religion classes.

Father in Heaven loves all His children, and He wants you to love and help care for one another. To help do this, He asks you to fast one day a month and give the money you would have spent on food to the Church to help people who are in need. This is called a fast offering.

Father in Heaven has provided another way for you to help people all over the earth who are suffering from floods, wars, famine, earthquakes, and other disasters. You can do this by giving money to Church Humanitarian Services.

When you love Father in Heaven and understand all that He has done for you, you are filled with a spirit of love and giving. You want to build up His kingdom and help the poor, the needy, and all who suffer. When you do this cheerfully, He is very pleased and will open the windows of heaven and pour out His blessings upon you.

Week 3: I obey the Word of Wisdom by eating and drinking that which is good and avoiding that which is bad.

*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.

Week 4: When I dress modestly, I respect my body as a gift from God.

Imagine that you are watching a play. An actor comes on stage dressed as a clown but starts playing the serious part of the lead. You might react by thinking that this is inappropriate—there must be some mistake in the costuming or casting. Now think of how inappropriate it is to go out into the world dressed in clothes that do not represent who you really are in spirit. Our outward appearance and behavior give a message.

In the “For the Strength of Youth” pamphlet it reminds us that our bodies are sacred and that we should respect them. Through our dress and appearance, we can show that we know how precious our bodies are. We can also show that we are disciples of Jesus Christ and that we love Him.

Prophets of God have continually counseled us to dress modestly. When we are well groomed and modestly dressed, we invite the companionship of the Spirit and we can be a good influence on others. Our dress and grooming influence the way we act.

Never lower your standards of dress. Do not use a special occasion as an excuse to be immodest. As we do so, we will show respect for ourselves, our parents, our Church leaders, and others, and we will show reverence to our Heavenly Father and invite the Spirit to be with us always.

JULY

Week 1: Fasting and prayer can strengthen my testimony.

When the king of Persia was looking for a new queen, he asked that all the fair young women of the kingdom come to the palace. Mordecai, a Jew who served in the palace, brought his niece, Esther. She was beautiful, and “the king loved Esther above all the women”. She became his new queen.

The king placed a man named Haman over all the princes in his kingdom and ordered all the servants to bow before Haman. Mordecai refused to bow. This angered Haman, and when he discovered that Mordecai was a Jew, he decided to destroy all of the Jews.

Haman told the king that there was a people in his land who would not obey the laws and who, therefore, should be destroyed. The king agreed and offered a reward to those who would kill the Jews.

Esther and Mordecai realized that to save their people, Esther would have to go before the king and plead for them. This was a dangerous thing to do, because no one was to go before the king without being called. Esther asked that her people fast and pray for three days for her.

The fasting and prayers of her people gave the queen the courage to do what she needed to do. When she told the king of the wickedness of Haman, the king had him destroyed instead of Esther and her people. We, too, can pray to Father in Heaven for the strength to do those things that are good and great. He loves us and will listen to our prayers, just as He did to Queen Esther's. Fasting and prayer can strengthen us and our testimonies.

Week 2: Being kind is doing and saying nice things to others.

What is kindness?

Kindness looks for ways to help.
Kindness lets a friend go first.
Kindness tries to keep the peace.
Kindness never thinks the worst.
Kindness plays with everyone.
Kindness gives a loving touch.
Kindness speaks with gentle words.
Kindness never takes too much.
Kindness cares and kindness knows.
Kindness shares and kindness shows.

Being kind to everyone isn't always easy, especially if someone makes us feel bad or treats us unkindly. When we've been wronged, we can think of the words to the song "Jesus Said Love Everyone" when they need to remember how to treat someone and notice what happens when you choose to be kind. We can also pay attention to how we feel. When we are kind to others we are choosing the right. When we love others and are kind to them, we show that we are disciples of Jesus Christ.

Week 3: Reverence is deep respect and love toward God.

Long ago there lived a man named Moses. One day while he was taking a flock of sheep to a mountain to graze, he saw a bush that was on fire. To his surprise, the bush did not burn up. When Moses walked over to see this great sight, a voice called to him from the bush, saying, "Moses, Moses. ... put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." When Moses had done this, Jesus Christ, whose voice Moses had heard, told him that He wanted Moses to go to Egypt and lead the children of Israel out of captivity and into the promised land. Moses was promised that as he did this difficult thing, the Lord would be there to help him.

Moses must have felt great reverence knowing that he was in the presence of and was receiving instruction from Jesus Christ. When the Lord told Moses to take off his shoes, He was teaching Moses that when we are in holy places we must show reverence.

Our meetinghouses belong to Heavenly Father, and they, too, are holy places. We are not asked to take off our shoes to show reverence when we go into a meetinghouse, but we should dress carefully to show our respect. We should also sing and pray reverently, think of Jesus Christ when we take the sacrament, and listen quietly to our teachers and the speakers. If we behave irreverently—running, talking loudly, littering, or distracting others—we cannot hear and feel what Jesus Christ wants the Holy Ghost to tell us. We also keep others from feeling His Spirit. When we are reverent at church, the Holy Ghost will help us know and feel the things that the Savior wants to teach us. Reverence begins with me.

Week 4: Honesty is telling the truth regardless of the consequences.

Being honest means many things. The dictionary suggests that an honest person will not lie, cheat, or steal. Some words associated with honesty are honorable, truthful, fair, trustworthy, and genuine. The Book of Mormon tells us about a special group of people who were honest and true to their faith. They were Lamanites who heard the gospel of Jesus Christ, had faith in Him, repented of their sins, and were baptized members of His Church. They called themselves Anti-Nephi-Lehies. Because they learned that it was wrong to fight, they buried their weapons of war in the ground and made a covenant with Heavenly Father that they "never would use weapons again". They kept this covenant and all the commandments so faithfully that they were known for being "perfectly honest and upright in all things".

The Anti-Nephi-Lehies taught their children to be honest. They wanted their sons and daughters to be true to the gospel and righteous in their dealings with each other and with Heavenly Father. Because the example of their parents was so great, the children wanted to be just as honest and just as true to the gospel themselves, regardless of the consequences.

The Book of Mormon says this about the boys when they grew up: "And they were all young men, and they were exceedingly valiant for courage, and also for strength and activity; but behold, this was not all—they were men who were true at all times in whatsoever thing they were entrusted". These young Anti-Nephi-Lehies became famous as "Helaman's stripling warriors." Because of their honesty and their spiritual strength, they were a great help to their people. You can be like the army of Helaman. We can follow the example of these righteous Lamanites and be honest and true.

AUGUST

Week 1: Having good friends will help me choose the right.

Think about your very best friend. Do you know your friend really well? Do you know if your friend likes to read or to sing or is kind to others? Do you spend time together? You probably like to do many of the same things. Even if best friends don't look alike, they often think alike. Sometimes a good friend lives so far away you have to write letters or phone long distance, but you can still be friends.

Everyone needs good and true friends. They will be a great strength and blessing to you. They will influence how you think and act, and even help determine the person you will become. They will help you be a better person and will make it easier for you to live the gospel of Jesus Christ.

To have good friends, be a good friend. Show genuine interest in others; smile and let them know you care about them. Treat everyone with kindness and respect, and refrain from judging and criticizing those around you. Do not participate in any form of bullying. Make a special effort to be a friend to those who are shy or lonely, have special needs, or do not feel included.

As you seek to be a friend to others, do not compromise your standards. If your friends urge you to do things that are wrong, be the one to stand for the right, even if you stand alone. You may need to find other friends who will support you in keeping the commandments. We should choose friends who share

your values so you can strengthen and encourage each other in living high standards.

Week 2: I should read, listen to, and look at things that are pleasing to Heavenly Father.

Heavenly Father has given each of us agency, the power to choose between right and wrong. When we decide to choose the right, now and in the future, we are setting a standard for ourselves. A standard is a pattern that guides our lives. Good standards will help us keep the commandments of God and be obedient.

We live in a time of technology. It gives us easy access to a lot of media, including the Internet, mobile devices, video games, television, movies, music, books, and magazines. They can help us learn, communicate, and do good. However, some things can lead us away from the Spirit. We need to choose wisely when using media because whatever we read, listen to, or look at has an effect on us. Select only media that uplifts you.

Satan uses media to deceive you by making what is wrong and evil look normal, humorous, or exciting. He tries to trick us into thinking that breaking God's commandments is acceptable and has no negative consequences. We need to have the courage to walk out of a movie, change your music, or turn off a computer, television, or mobile device if what you see or hear drives away the Spirit. If you are clean in mind and body, we can receive great blessings.

Weeks 3 & 4: I should do things on the Sabbath that will help me stay close to Heavenly Father.

"I'm impressed with the five goals you scored in today's game." Collin turned around and realized the man was talking to him. "I'm starting a new soccer team and want to know if you would like to be on it."

"Would I ever!" Collin thought. Collin was nine, and he enjoyed playing soccer. When he and his parents attended the first planning meeting for the new team, the coach explained that they would be playing in many tournaments on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. "Not on Sunday," Collin thought.

After talking with his parents, Collin told the coach he wanted very much to be on the new team, but he would not play soccer on Sunday. He thought the coach would be mad and not let him be on the team. The coach paused for a moment and told Collin that he still wanted him to play. Collin felt peace in his heart and knew he had made the right decision. He was glad he had made the team. His parents reminded him that even if he had not been allowed to join the team, he had made the right decision.

Just as it is important not to do certain things on the Sabbath day so that we can keep it holy, it is also important to do some things. We should do those things that will help us feel close to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. They have taught us that Sunday is the day we worship Them. The Lord said, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy". We can keep the Sabbath day holy when we go to church, take the sacrament, and do other things that will help us feel the Spirit on the Lord's day.

SEPTEMBER

Week 1: We are blessed when we keep the commandments.

Have you ever tried to play a game that didn't have any rules? You wouldn't know how to start the game, how to play it, or how to know when it was finished. Rules tell us what to do.

Heavenly Father and Jesus have given us rules to help us make right choices. Joseph Smith wrote about how important it is to obey the laws, or rules, of the gospel. These rules are called commandments.

Moses was a faithful prophet of the Lord. One day, after wandering in the desert for two months with the children of Israel, he went up into Mount Sinai and spoke with the Lord. He told Moses that he, the Lord, would make a covenant to bless the children of Israel if they would keep his rules, known as the commandments. Later he wrote them on tables of stone so that the people could learn and remember them better.

All of our prophets have given us commandments from the Lord to help guide our lives. When President Monson became the President of the Church, he talked to us about some of these commandments. He asked us to live more like our Lord Jesus Christ, to show more love, and to treat each other with more kindness. Heavenly Father blesses us when we keep his commandments.

Week 2: I should respect and worship God.

After Jesus died, a great Apostle named Paul wrote to members of the Church about how we can be an example of the believers, or a better follower of the Savior. When we do what the Apostle Paul taught, we honor the Savior and His name and we are an example for other people of the Savior's teachings. Paul wrote, "Let no man look down on thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. When we do this, we are respecting Heavenly Father.

President Gordon B. Hinckley explained that when Paul says to be an example "in word," he "is speaking here of language. ... He is saying that bad words go against one's calling as a believer in Christ. He said that we should use the name of Heavenly Father reverently. When we do this, we are worshipping our Heavenly Father.

In addition to using clean speech, there are other ways to show we are believers in Christ. For example, we meet together weekly to learn about the Savior and about how to be good examples. We are also encouraged to "live the gospel, and receive ... a testimony" for ourselves.

When we follow the Savior, choose the right, and avoid making bad choices, we are an example of the believers.

Week 3: I should honor my parents.

When we respect, honor, and love Heavenly Father, we are showing reverence for Him. And Heavenly Father is pleased when we respect, honor, and love our parents. One of the Ten Commandments tells us to

honor our parents. Nephi begins the Book of Mormon by telling us that he was “born of goodly parents”. They were “goodly” because they taught him to love the Lord and obey His commandments.

Chieko Nishimura Okazaki had goodly parents too. Her grandparents moved from Japan to Hawaii. Her parents worked hard on a plantation. They were Buddhists, Buddhism being the main religion in Japan. They did not know about Jesus Christ. But they knew about goodness. What did they teach Chieko?

She said, “They taught me to be kigatsuku (key-got-sue-koo). That means to do good without being asked. When my mother was sweeping the floor, she would say, ‘Chieko, what would a kigatsuku girl do now?’ I would think for a minute, then run to get the dust pan and hold it for her. Or when she was washing dishes, I would pick up the dishtowel and begin to dry them. She would smile and say, ‘You are a kigatsuku girl.’

“My parents taught me other things. They taught me to work hard and to always do my best. That’s why I could work hard in school, go to the university, and become a school teacher and even a principal. They taught me to always love the truth. That is why, when I found the Church, I loved it and was baptized a Latter-day Saint.”

Chieko respected, honored, and loved her parents by helping without being asked and by following the righteous principles that they taught her. Now she is the first counselor in the General Presidency of the Relief Society. Her father is dead; her mother is still a Buddhist. Sister Okazaki says, “I know that she is proud of me because I still try to be kigatsuku, and I love her very much for teaching me good things.”

Do your parents want you to be kigatsuku too? Do your parents teach you good things? Do they teach you true principles? When you follow the righteous principles that your parents teach you, you are showing respect, honor, and love for them. This is showing reverence for your parents, and it pleases Heavenly Father.

Week 4: I should respect others.

When the Saints began to settle in Nauvoo and surrounding areas, a French Catholic priest by the name of Father John Alleman, who lived in neighboring McDonough County, needed transportation to visit a sick member of his church. The Prophet Joseph Smith provided him with ferry service to cross the river, and a carriage to his destination.

As an expression of respect, Joseph Smith commented, “The priests attend to their people faithfully and mind their own business, whereas others are continually bothering the Latter-day Saints.”

This quality of respect for others, no matter what their belief or religious affiliation, seems to have been a part of the life of the Prophet Joseph Smith. He stood for truth and the restored gospel to his dying day, and he had no patience with those who were deliberately wicked or who tried to exercise unrighteous dominion over the Latter-day Saints or, for that matter, anyone else. Still, he showed a respect and brotherly concern for others, no matter what their beliefs or their backgrounds, which, in many ways, was remarkable, when one considers the persecution that both he and the early Saints underwent.

In his dealings with members and nonmembers, he was committed to the principle that can be found in Doctrine and Covenants 121, verse 45: “Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith.”

Today we live in times of conflict, differences of opinion, disagreements. There is a need for us, perhaps more than ever before, to allow respect, charity, and forgiveness to influence our actions with one another.

OCTOBER

Week 1: Worthy young men receive the priesthood when they are 12 years old.

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.

When He lived on the earth, Jesus laid His hands on the heads of His apostles. He gave them the priesthood, the power and authority to act in God's name, so that they could "preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof." After the apostles died, this authority was eventually taken from the earth.

Joseph Smith helped to restore this priesthood power back to the earth. Now, worthy young men receive the priesthood when they are twelve years old. Through them, we can enjoy the blessings and fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Week 2: We receive the ordinances of salvation through the priesthood.

What is an ordinance? The word has special meaning when we use it in the Church. An ordinance is a sacred ceremony that has a spiritual meaning. When we participate in an ordinance, we often make covenants or promises to obey Heavenly Father's commandments.

Some ordinances are called saving ordinances. These ordinances are necessary for salvation. Jesus described two saving ordinances when He said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God". Being born of water means being baptized, and being born of the Spirit means receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. Other ordinances of salvation and exaltation are sealings and celestial marriage.

Some ordinances are performed only in holy temples. Some of these ordinances include baptism for the dead, celestial marriage, and sealings. There are many other ordinances performed in the Church, such as partaking of the sacrament and the blessing of babies.

Regardless if the ordinances are performed in the temple or not, none of them could be performed without the priesthood. We are particularly blessed to live in a time when we have priesthood upon the face of the earth and are able to receive the blessings of temples ordinances.

Week 3: I can receive strengthening power through priesthood blessings.

A priesthood blessing is sacred. It can be a holy and inspired statement of our wants and needs. If we are in tune spiritually, we can receive a confirming witness of the truth of the promised blessings. Priesthood

blessings can help us in the small and great decisions of our lives. If, through our priesthood blessings, we could perceive (see) only a small part of the person God intends us to be, we would lose our fear and never doubt again.

President Faust shared a story of when he was a small boy. He said, "I remember being interested by my grandmother's magnifying glass which she used in her old age to read and do needlework. When the glass was in focus, everything I looked at was greatly magnified (made larger). But I was most intrigued by what happened when the lens concentrated the sunlight on an object. When it passed through the magnifying glass, the sunlight's power was absolutely amazing.

Blessings strengthen and magnify us. In the Church, blessings are available to all who are worthy through those authorized to give priesthood blessings. Worthy fathers and grandfathers, as well as other Melchizedek Priesthood holders, may give blessings to members in times of sickness and when important events occur. Such individual blessings are part of the continuous revelation that we claim as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Like the images in my grandmother's magnifying glass, through priesthood blessings we can become stronger, our talents and ability can be magnified and multiplied, our understanding can be greatly enlarged, and our spirituality can flower."

Week 4: I can go to the temple to receive ordinances for my ancestors when I am older.

When we look for ancestors' names and do their temple work, we serve them. Sometimes the Spirit tells us that our ancestors know what we have done for them and that they are grateful. Sometimes the Holy Ghost lets us know that we are receiving help from beyond the veil. Elder John A. Widtsoe, a former member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said that "those who give themselves with all their might ... to this work receive help from the other side. ... Whoever seeks to help those on the other side receives help in return."

Family history work is uplifting because we learn about our ancestors and come to love them. We learn that they really are a part of our eternal family, that they know us, and that they love us. Elder J. Richard Clarke, a former member of the Seventy, said, "Through family history we discover the most beautiful tree in the forest of creation—our family tree. ... Family history is the ... expression of eternal love. It is born of selflessness. It provides opportunity to secure the family unit forever."

Even if we cannot enter the temple yet, we can begin working on family history by learning about our ancestors and loving them. We can serve others by keeping our own journals and scrapbooks. Just as we enjoy finding out about our ancestors, our future families will want to learn about us, too.

NOVEMBER

Week 5: I can be a missionary by serving others.

Jesus loved serving others. He was the perfect example of service. He said, "I am among you as he that serveth". He knew that He came to earth to serve others, not to be served. Do you think it is odd that the

Master served others? Master and servant are opposite words. You might think it is surprising that the greatest masters are those who serve.

Jesus taught the importance of service. When He comes to earth again, He will say to the righteous: "I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me".

You do not have to do something big to serve others. A smile can gladden a friend's heart. Speaking a kind word, helping a brother or sister, obeying your parents—all are ways you can serve. When we willingly serve those around us, we are being missionaries.

Week 2: I can be a missionary by setting a good example.

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.

Nine-year-old Ashley felt the joy of sharing the gospel. After Ashley was challenged to share a copy of the Book of Mormon, Ashley's father drove her to her school principal's house, and Ashley gave a Book of Mormon to her. Ashley also gave the full-time missionaries her principal's name. What joy Ashley felt!

The most important thing you can share is the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Lord called Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer to preach the gospel. He explained the happiness they would receive:

"And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!

"And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!".

We can be missionaries to others by being a good example. And what great joy we receive when we help others know of Jesus Christ and of our Heavenly Father's plan.

Week 3: I can teach my friends about Jesus Christ and His Church.

The Apostle Paul was a great missionary. He said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ". Paul traveled to many places to share the gospel. He found joy in sharing the gospel and helping people be happy.

The Prophet Joseph Smith's brother Samuel was the first missionary in the latter days. Since that time, more than one million men and women have served missions. Each missionary, like Samuel Smith and Paul, has a testimony of the gospel and wants to share it with others.

President David O. McKay said, "Every member a missionary." That means you can be a missionary now! Sharing the gospel with others will remind you of your baptismal covenant to always remember Jesus Christ. Remember these words:

I can be a missionary now.

I don't have to wait until I'm grown.

I'll live each day the best that I know how,
And they'll see I have a testimony of my own,
A testimony of my very own.

When we teach our friends about Jesus Christ and His Church, we will feel ourselves drawing closer to Heavenly Father, knowing we have done what He has asked of us, because He loves and trusts us.

Week 4: I can prepare now to serve a full-time mission.

Have you ever had an old pair of shoes that suddenly started to hurt your toes, or a pair of pants that seemed to get shorter and tighter every time you put them on? Your shoes and clothes weren't really getting smaller. You were getting bigger and taller! You are growing very quickly now; your body is changing every day. The important choices you make now can help you have a strong, healthy body that can resist disease. A strong, healthy body is a blessing to you now and in the future.

Like your body, your spirit is changing. It is growing in knowledge, understanding, and testimony. Reading the scriptures feeds your spirit. Attending your Sunday meetings, partaking of the Sacrament, praying every day, and following the promptings of the Holy Ghost will help to keep your spirit strong and growing, and will help you prepare now for a full-time mission.

The most important thing you can do to prepare for a call to serve is to become a missionary long before you go on a mission.

Increase in your desire to serve God.
Begin to think as missionaries think.
Read what missionaries read.
Pray as missionaries pray.
Avoid the worldly influences that cause the Holy Ghost to withdraw.
Grow in confidence in recognizing and responding to spiritual promptings.

You are preparing for a lifetime of missionary service. Be a missionary at all times and in all places.

DECEMBER

Week 1: Heavenly Father sent His Son to earth.

As we read the scriptures, we see that the Father and the Son always fulfill Their promises. One of the greatest promises that Heavenly Father made was to send His Son to the earth. In the Grand Council in Heaven, Heavenly Father promised to send a Savior. The Savior would atone for our sins so that we could live with Heavenly Father again.

How did Heavenly Father send His Son to the earth? He sent Him as a newborn baby. He allowed Jesus to learn and grow, just the way that we learn and grow. Because Heavenly Father loves us so much, He allowed His Son to die for us. But then Jesus was resurrected, making it possible for us to live again too.

What a wondrous promise Jesus Christ was to the earth! Heavenly Father had promised to send Him. Heavenly Father kept His promise.

What does Heavenly Father expect from us? The Primary song "He Sent His Son" reminds us:

Have faith, have hope, live like his Son, help others on their way.
What does he ask? Live like his Son.

As we live as Jesus lived, we will qualify for the promises that Heavenly Father has for us.

Week 2: Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.

Baby Jesus surely grew just like we are growing. The scriptures say that He "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man". Our bodies increase in stature when we eat good food and get plenty of exercise. That is surely what Jesus did. He might have played outside, and He must have worked hard when He lived in Nazareth. Children in those days usually walked everywhere they went. That helped them grow physically strong. Think about Jesus playing with friends or learning to work in Joseph's carpenter shop. Can you imagine Jesus growing from a boy to a man?

As Jesus grew taller and wiser, He also grew strong in spirit, and the things He did were pleasing to His Heavenly Father. When He was twelve years old, He went with His family to the temple in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. He had an amazing experience there. His parents thought that He was with their group when they left to travel home, but Jesus had stayed in Jerusalem. When they finally found Him, three days later, He was talking with the learned men in the temple. He was asking them questions and answering theirs. "And all that heard Him were astonished at his understanding and answers".

How did Jesus grow in spirit and in wisdom? He must have studied the scriptures in order to be able to talk with the learned men in the temple. We know that Jesus was obedient to His parents. We know that His family kept the commandments and obeyed the law of the Lord. That is why they were in the temple that day they met Anna and Simeon. And that is why they went to Jerusalem for the Passover. If Jesus found favor with God and man as the scripture says, then we know that He chose the right and was honest and kind to others.

Even as a child, Jesus set an example for us to follow. We can study the gospel, obey our parents, and learn to choose the right. As we do these things, we, too, can grow strong in spirit and in wisdom and in favor with God and man. Jesus lived on earth to show us the way.

Week 3: Jesus Christ is the light and life of the world.

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.

Week 4: Joseph Smith saw and testified of Jesus Christ.

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.