

Forty Days to Christ

Many of you have wondered, and some of you have asked, why do we have Stake Goals? What is the purpose of them, and is it important that I participate in making them part of my personal life and part of our family activities? In order for each of us to know the answer to these questions we must truly come to know Christ.

This year the greatest gift that we could receive for Christmas is the knowledge that Jesus is the Christ and the Savior of the World. Jesus, prior to beginning His Ministry, fasted forty days and nights. He did this to prepare Himself to resist the temptations of Satan. We too need to fortify our homes, families, and personal lives so that we will have the spiritual strength to resist the temptations of the World. To help us in this quest we are recommending that each of us take a few minutes each day to know Christ our Savior better by studying the outline provided. There are forty days from today until December 25th. During the next forty days make it part of your day to know Christ.

It is my testimony to you, that as we study and ponder on the material in this outline provided by our Ward Mission Leader, we will come to know Christ, our resistance against temptation will be strengthened, and greater love and harmony will abide in our homes. Our homes will become a sacred place where the spirit of the Lord will be felt.

Bishop Watts
BYU 171st Ward

Sunday November 16th

Prayer

Thought/Quote

“Believe in prayer and in the power of prayer. Pray to the Lord with the expectation of answers. I suppose there is not a man or woman in this congregation who does not pray. I hope that is so. The trouble with most of our prayers is that we give them as if we were picking up the telephone and ordering groceries—we place our order and hang up. We need to meditate, contemplate, think of what we are praying about and for and then speak to the Lord as one man speaketh to another. ‘Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord’ (Isa. 1:18). That is the invitation. Believe in the power of prayer—it is real, it is wonderful, it is tremendous.”

Gordon B. Hinckley, Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley, page 469.

Reference Scripture

- BD Prayer pages 752-753
- James 1:5
- 2nd Nephi 32:8-9
- Alma 37:37
- D&C 9:7-9
- 3rd Nephi 18:15-21
- Alma 34:17-27
- Romans 8:26
- D&C 10:5
- James 4:3
- D&C 8:9-12

Reference Article

- Henry B. Eyring, "Write upon My Heart," Ensign, Nov. 2000, 85.

Activity

- Prayerfully consider how your family will fulfill this 40 day challenge.
- Plan Family Counsel. Review Stake Plan. Plan/prepare FHE.

Additional Resources

- Spencer W. Kimball, "Pray Always," Ensign, Oct. 1981, 3.
- James E. Faust, "The Lifeline of Prayer," Ensign, May 2002, 59.
- Keith B. McMullin, "Words of Jesus: Prayer," Ensign, Jan. 2003, 48.
- H. Kent Rappleye, "No Substitute for Family Prayer," Ensign, Feb. 2001, 25.
- Boyd K. Packer, "Prayers and Answers," Ensign, Nov. 1979, 19.
- Dallin H. Oaks, "The Language of Prayer," Ensign, May 1993, 15.

Monday November 17th

Scripture Study

Thought/Quote

"The Savior's voice comes to us on many ways. He may speak audibly to attuned ears. His voice may come by the power of the Spirit. It may also be given by the mouths of his servants as they recite the words revealed to them. All of the Saints are entitled to hear his voice in each of these ways. But there is another way to hear the voice of the Lord, and, almost universally, it should be our first approach in seeking revelation. It is available to us all, but sadly is overlooked or ignored by many of us...There are certain blessings that attend the study of the scriptures which are denied those whose studies and interests are in different fields. It is the study of the scriptures that enables men [and women] to gain revelations for themselves...let us now highly resolve that we will study the scriptures and make them a part of all we do. And of such be our course, we shall surely receive peace and joy in this life and inherit eternal life in the realms ahead."

Bruce R. McConkie, Ensign, Dec. 1985, page 59.

Reference Scriptures

- BD "Scripture," page 770
- 1st Nephi 15:23-25
- 2nd Nephi 31:20
- Alma 12:9-11
- D&C 18:34-36
- D&C 84:54-59

Reference Article

- Howard W. Hunter, "Reading the Scriptures," Ensign, Nov. 1979, 64.

Process

1. Ask: Pray your way through the scriptures. Commentaries and stories will not teach the doctrine which is essential for you to glean from the scriptures. That can only come through revelation.
2. Search: The "pearls of great price" do not come from a casual perusal of the pages of scriptures. They only come to those willing to diligently search their way through the scriptures.

3. Ponder: Stop. Listen. Feel. Make time to be alone in quiet places where the whisperings of the spirit can come to you.
4. Write: “Knowledge carefully recorded is knowledge available in a time of need.” Elder Scott, “Acquiring spiritual knowledge,” Ensign, Nov 1993.
5. Thank: Develop an attitude of gratitude for the things learned from the scriptures.

Activity

- Family counsel and FHE.

Additional Resources

- Dallin H. Oaks, “Scripture Reading and Revelation,” Ensign, Jan. 1995, 6.
- Richard G. Scott, “Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge,” Ensign, Nov. 1993, 86.
- Gordon B. Hinckley, “Feasting upon the Scriptures,” Ensign, Dec. 1985, 42.
- Anne G. Wirthlin, “Teaching Our Children to Love the Scriptures,” Ensign, May 1998, 9.
- L. Lionel Kendrick, “Search the Scriptures,” Ensign, May 1993, 13.

Tuesday November 18th

Premortal Existence: Premortality

Thought/Quote

“One day we will understand fully how complete our commitment was in our first estate in accepting the very conditions of challenge in our second estate about which we sometimes complain in this school of stress. Our collective and personal premortal promises will then be laid clearly before us.”

Neal A. Maxwell, “Taking up the Cross,” 1976 Devotional Speeches of the Year, BYU, 1977, p.253.

Reference Article

- Neal A. Maxwell, “Premortality, a Glorious Reality,” Ensign, Nov. 1985, 15.

Additional Resources

- Joseph Fielding Smith, The Way to Perfection, pp.45-46.
- Brent L. Top, What was it like?, chapter 5 in The Life Before, SLC: Bookcraft, 1988.
- First Presidency, “The Origin of Man,” Ensign, Feb. 2002, 26.
- Boyd K Packer, “The Play and the Plan,” 1997 CES Symposium Address. **Available only on Ward Website.**

Wednesday November 19th

Premortal Existence: Moral Agency

Thought/Quote

“Four great principles must be in force if there is to be agency: First, laws must exist...laws ordained by an omnipotent power, laws which can be obeyed or disobeyed; Second, opposites must exist—good and evil, virtue and vice, right and wrong—that is, there must be an opposition, one force pulling the other; Third, a knowledge of good and evil must be had by those who are to enjoy the agency, that is, they must know the difference between the opposites; and forth, an unfettered power of choice must prevail.”

Reference Scriptures

- D&C 93:31-32
- D&C 101:78
- 2nd Nephi 2:27
- 2nd Nephi 10:23
- Helaman 14:30-31

Additional Resources

- L. Lionel Kendrick, "Our Moral Agency," Ensign, Mar. 1996, 28.
- Lynn G. Robbins, "Agency and Anger," Ensign, May 1998, 80.
- Dallin H. Oaks, "Free Agency and Freedom," in The Book of Mormon: Second Nephi, The Doctrinal Structure (Papers from the Third Annual Book of Mormon Symposium held October 1987), edited by Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr. BYU, 1989.

Thursday November 20th

Premortal Existence: Foreordination

Thought/Quote

"Foreordination is like any other blessing—it is a conditional bestowal subject to our faithfulness. Prophecies foreshadow events without determining the outcomes, because of a divine foreseeing of outcomes. So foreordination is a conditional bestowal of a role, a responsibility, or a blessing which, likewise, foresees but does not fix the outcome."

Neal A Maxwell, "Meeting the Challenges of Today," 1978 Devotional Speeches of the Year, BYU, 1979 p.152.

Reference Scriptures

- 1st Peter 1:1-2
- Deuteronomy 32:7-8
- Jeremiah 1:5
- Abraham 3:22-27
- Alma 13:3-9

Reference Article

- Neal A. Maxwell, "Foreordination," District Sacrament Meeting in Jerusalem, October, 1978. **Available only on Ward Website.**

Activity

- If you have not been HT/VT, contact them and set-up appointments.

Additional Resources

- Joseph Anderson, "A Testimony of Christ," Ensign, Nov. 1974, 101.

Friday November 21st

Premortal Existence: War in Heaven

Thought/Quote

"[After Satan's plan of compulsion was rejected], the humble offer of Jesus the Firstborn—to assume mortality and live among men as their Exemplar and Teacher, observing the sanctity of man's agency but teaching men to use aright that divine heritage—was accepted. The decision brought war, which resulted in the vanquishment of Satan and his angels, who were cast out and deprived of the boundless privileges incident to the mortal or second estate."

James E. Talmage, Jesus the Christ, p.8-9.

Reference Scriptures

- JST Revelation 12
- D&C 29:36-38
- D&C 76:25-28
- Moses 4:1-4

Activity

- Quality date night with spouse.

Additional Resources

- James E Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, Chapter 2 (pages 6-16.)
- Bruce R McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, “War in Heaven,” page 828.

Saturday November 22nd

Pre-mortal Existence: Physical creation of all things

Thought/Quote

“This earth, and man, and life in all its forms and varieties existed in physical form, but none of these had the same nature they now possess. The Great Creator had created a paradisiacal earth, an Edenic earth, an earth of the kind and nature that will exist during the Millennium, when it will be renewed and receive again its paradisiacal glory. There was as yet neither procreation nor death. These would enter the scheme of things only after the fall. The Earth, man, and all created things were in a deathless state of immortality, but they were so organized that they could become mortal through the Fall...there is no revealed account of the Spirit creation, simply an explanation that all things were created in Heaven before they were created naturally on Earth.”

Bruce R McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, p.84.

Reference Scriptures

- Genesis 1-2
- Moses 2
- Moses 3:9, 16-17
- Abraham 3
- 2nd Nephi 2:14-17
- D&C 138:55-56
- D&C 29:31-35

Reference Article

- Keith Meservy, “Four Accounts of the Creation,” *Ensign*, Jan 1986, p.50.

Activity

- Prepare for on time attendance to church.

Additional Resources

- Bruce R. McConkie, “Christ and the Creation,” *Ensign*, June 1982, 9.
- Russell M. Nelson, “The Creation,” *Ensign*, May 2000, 84.
- Robert J. Woodford, “In the Beginning: A Latter-day Perspective,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1998, 12.

Sunday November 23rd

The Fall

Thought/Quote

“Can anyone...believe that all Christ did was to point out the way of salvation and bid men walk therein? What about the construction of the way? There was no way till he made one.

Walking in it, however difficult at times, is a mere [trifle] by comparison...It was [Jesus Christ's] death, his sacrificial offering, that gave vitality to the gospel plan and rendered effectual man's faith and works in his own behalf. Without the Atonement, to offset and nullify the fatal effects of the original transgression, all man's self-help would count for nothing, and the very Gospel itself would be mere machinery without the power. When Adam fell, it was as if the human race had fallen into a pit, from which they were powerless, by any act of their own, to emerge; having no means whereby to climb up and out, and not even knowing how to climb. But a Friend, all-wise and all-powerful, comes to the mouth of the pit, compassionates its wretched inmates, and proposes to rescue them from their unhappy situation. *He makes of his own life a ladder*; lets it down into the pit and says: 'Now climb!' They who climb, get out of the pit. They who refuse to climb, remain in the pit-and who is to blame but themselves?"

Orson F. Whitney, Conference Report 1927 p148-149

"Just why the Lord would say to Adam that he forbade him to partake of the fruit of that tree is not made clear in the Bible account, but in the original as it comes to us in the Book of Moses it is made definitely clear. It is that the Lord said to Adam that if he wished to remain as he was in the garden, then he was not to eat the fruit but if he desired to eat it and partake of death he was at liberty to do so. So really it was not in the true sense a transgression of a divine commandment. Adam made the wise decision, in fact the only decision that he could make."

Joseph Fielding Smith, Answers to Gospel Questions, Vol.4, p.81

Reference Scriptures

- Genesis 3
- Moses 2:27-28
- Moses 3:15-17
- Moses 4:5-32

Reference Article

- Jess L. Christensen, "The Choice That Began Mortality," *Ensign*, Jan. 2002, 36.

Activity

- Plan Family Counsel. Review Stake Plan. Plan/prepare FHE.

Additional Resources

- Gerald N. Lund, "The Fall of Man and His Redemption," *Ensign*, Jan. 1990, 22.

Monday November 24th

The Fall

Thought/Quote

"(The Fall) was as universal as the creation. It included man, the earth, and all forms of life. Through the Fall, all things passed downward to a lower status; they lost the station and dignity that once were theirs and were changed from the primeval and paradisiacal state to their present mortal state. This change from a deathless to a mortal state brought with it all things that appertain to mortality, including procreation, disease, suffering, and death. None of these existed on this earth prior to the fall."

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, A New Witness for the Articles of Faith, p.84-85.

“When the earth was framed and brought into existence and man was placed upon it, it was near the throne of our Father in Heaven...but when man fell, the earth fell into space, and took up its abode in this planetary system...this is the glory the earth came from, and when it is glorified it will return again unto the presence of the Father, and it will dwell there, and these intelligent beings that I am looking at, if they live worthy of it, will dwell upon this earth.”

Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, vol. 17 page 143.

Reference Scriptures

- 2nd Nephi 2:18-23
- Alma 12:21-26
- D&C 20:17-20
- D&C 29:36-45

Reference Article

- Elder Dallin H. Oaks, “The Great Plan of Happiness,” *Ensign*, Nov. ‘93, p.73.

Activity

- Family counsel and FHE.

Additional Resources

- Robert L. Millet, “The Man Adam,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1994, 8
- Russell M. Nelson, “Lessons from Eve,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 86.

Tuesday November 25th

Mortality: Advent of Christ predicted

Thought/Quote

“The coming of Christ to earth to tabernacle in the flesh was no unexpected or unheralded event. For centuries prior to the great occurrence the Jews had professed to be looking for the advent of Their King; and in the appointed ceremonials of worship as in private devotions, the coming of the promised Messiah was prominent...fundamentally established in the beliefs and hopes of the Hebrew nation.”

James E Talmage, Jesus the Christ, page 42.

Reference Scriptures

- Moses 5:6-9
- Gen 49:10
- Job 19:25-27
- Isa 7:14
- Luke 24:44,46
- Matt 3:11
- 1st Nephi 10:4-11
- 2nd Nephi 9:5-6
- Mosiah 13:33-35
- Alma 39:15

Additional Resources

- John P. Pratt, “Passover– Was It Symbolic of His Coming?” *Ensign*, Jan. 1994, 38.
- James E Talmage, Jesus the Christ, pages 42-56.
- Keith H Pryor, “The Greatest Story Ever Foretold,” *Ensign*, Dec 1991.

Thought/Quote

“Anciently the Lord’s covenant people were commanded to build sanctuaries—sacred places that were not regarded as ordinary places of assembly but as sacred enclosures, consecrated for solemn ceremonies.”

Boyd K Packer, The Holy Temple.

Reference Scriptures

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st Kings 7:48-50 • 2nd Chronicles 3:3-7, 15-17 • 2nd Chronicles 4:1, 4-10 • 1st Kings 6:3, 10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st Kings 7:48-50 • 2nd Chronicles 3:3-7, 15-17 • 2nd Chronicles 4:1, 4-10 • 1st Kings 6:3, 10
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Reference Article

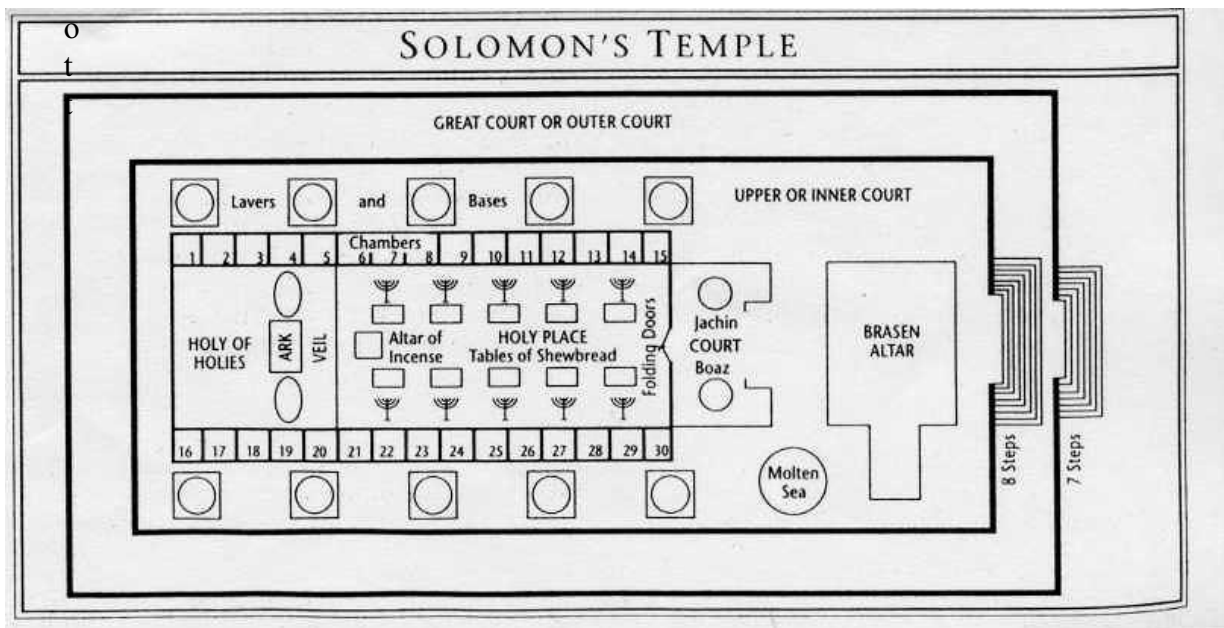
- Hugh Nibley, “Ancient Temples: What Do They Signify?” *Ensign*, Sept. 1972, 47.

Additional Resources

- Boyd K Packer, The Holy Temple, Chapter 8: Ancient Temples, pages 91-96.
- Richard O Cowan, Temples to Dot the Earth, Chapter 1: Background from former dispensations, pages 1-20.
- BD *Tabernacle* pages 778-780.
- BD *Temple of...* pages 780-784.

Thought/Quote

“It is unfortunate that many people, some even in the Church, think of the Mosaic law as a substitute for the higher law of the gospel. We call it the lesser law, and so it was, if the word lesser is used in the sense of progressive steps. But some people assume lesser means of lower importance and significance, or if a lesser level of truth and righteousness. Such is n



he case...when you study the law of Moses you can expect to find (1) a witness of Jesus Christ and his atoning sacrifice and (2) gospel principles illustrated in the laws given.”

Old Testament Student Manual page 137.

Reference Scriptures

- D&C 84:23-27
- Mosiah 13:29-30
- Jarom 1:1; Mosiah 3:13-14
- Mosiah 13:31; 16:14
- Alma 25:15; 34:14
- JST Galatians 3:19-27
- Alma 25:16
- Revelation 19:10

Reference Article

- Bruce R. McConkie, The Promised Messiah, pages 435-437.

Additional Resources

- Gib Kocherhans, “Reflections on the Law of Moses: Old Testament Apostasy in Context,” *Ensign*, June 1981, 15.
- Todd B. Parker and Robert Norman, “Moses: Witness of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1998, 24.
- Edward J. Brandt, “Journeys and Events in the Life of Moses,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1973, 36-37.

Friday November 28th

Mortality: John the Forerunner

Thought/Quote

“The priesthood was given to Aaron and his posterity throughout all generations. We can trace the lineage down to Zacharias, he being the only lawful administrator in his day. And the Jews knew of well, for they always acknowledged the priesthood. Zacharias, having no children, knew that the promise of God must fail. Consequently, he went into the temple to wrestle with God, according to the order of the priesthood, to obtain a promise of a son. And when the angel told him that his promise was granted, he, because of his unbelief, was struck dumb.”

Discourse by Joseph Smith, 23 July 1843, recorded by James Burgess; WJS, p. 235

Reference Scriptures

- BD *John the Baptist* pages 714-715
- 1st Nephi 10:7-10; 11:27
- 2nd Nephi 31:4
- Luke 1:5-25
- D&C 84:26-28
- John 1:15-34

Reference Quote

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section Five 1842–43, p.275.

"Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." How is it that John was considered one of the greatest prophets? His miracles could not have constituted his greatness.

First. He was entrusted with a divine mission of preparing the way before the face of the Lord. Whoever had such a trust committed to him before or since? No man.

Secondly. He was entrusted with the important mission, and it was required at his hands, to baptize the Son of Man. Whoever had the honor of doing that? Whoever had so great a privilege and glory? Whoever led the Son of God into the waters of baptism, and had the privilege of beholding the Holy Ghost descend in the form of a dove, or rather in the sign of the dove, in witness of that administration? The sign of the dove was instituted before the creation of the world, a witness for the Holy Ghost, and the devil cannot come in the sign of a dove. The Holy

Ghost is a personage, and is in the form of a personage. It does not confine itself to the form of the dove, but in sign of the dove. The Holy Ghost cannot be transformed into a dove; but the sign of a dove was given to John to signify the truth of the deed, as the dove is an emblem or token of truth and innocence.

Thirdly. John, at that time, was the only legal administrator in the affairs of the kingdom there was then on the earth, and holding the keys of power. The Jews had to obey his instructions or be damned, by their own law; and Christ Himself fulfilled all righteousness in becoming obedient to the law which he had given to Moses on the mount, and thereby magnified it and made it honorable, instead of destroying it. The son of Zacharias wrested the

keys, the kingdom, the power, the glory from the Jews, by the holy anointing and decree of heaven, and these three reasons constitute him the greatest prophet born of a woman.

Second question:—How was the least in the kingdom of heaven greater than he?

In reply I asked—Whom did Jesus have reference to as being the least? Jesus was looked upon as having the least claim in God's kingdom, and [seemingly] was least entitled to their credulity as a prophet; as though He had said—"He that is considered the least among you is greater than John—that is I myself."

Activity

- Quality date night with spouse.

Additional Resources

- Robert J. Matthews, "There is not a Greater Prophet: The Ministry of John the Baptist," *Ensign*, Jan 1991, page 13.

Saturday November 29th

Mortality: Birth of Jesus Christ

Thought/Quote

"The birth of Christ our Lord was more than an incident, it was an epoch in the history of the world to which prophets had looked forward, of which poets had sung and in which angels joined their voices with mortals in praise to God. It was the day decreed and foreordained by our father who is in heaven when he would manifest himself to his children, who are here upon earth, in the person of his Only Begotten son. Whether or not the 25th day of December is the proper date of the birth of Christ, our Lord, matters little. We join with other Christian people in celebrating it as such and if we observe it in the true spirit of the Master, renewing the covenant which we have made that we are willing to take upon us his name, and keep the commandments which he has given, our offering will be accepted. He came that man might see and know God as he is, for he bore witness that whoever had seen him had seen the father, for he was the express image of his person. He came to teach us the character of God, and by example and precept pointed out the path which, if we walk in it, will lead us back into his presence. He came to break the bands of death with which man was bound, and made possible the resurrection by which the grave is robbed of its victory and death of its sting."

Heber J. Grant "First Presidency Christmas Pastoral Epistle", December 1925.

Reference Scriptures

- Isa 7:14
- Micah 5:2
- 1st Nephi 11:13-20
- Hel 14:2-6

Reference Article

- Paul Thomas Smith, "Birth of the Messiah," *Ensign*, Dec 1997, 35.

Activity

- Prepare for on-time church attendance..

Additional Resources

- Robert J. Matthews, “Mary and Joseph,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1974, 13.
- Susan Easton Black, “Mary, His Mother,” *Ensign*, Jan 1991, 10.
- Mary Pratt Parrish, “Mary,” *Ensign*, Dec 1971, 12.

Sunday November 30th

Mortality: Birth of Jesus Christ

Thought/Quote

“When Jesus lay in the manger, a helpless infant. He knew not that He was the Son of God, and that formerly He created the earth. When the edict of Herod was issued, He knew nothing of it; He had not power to save Himself; and His father and mother had to take Him and fly into Egypt to preserve Him from the effects of that edict. Well, He grew up to manhood, and during His progress it was revealed unto Him who He was, and for what purpose He was in the world. The glory and power He possessed before He came into the world was made known unto Him.”

Lorenzo Snow, Conference Report, April 1901, page 3.

Reference Scriptures

Luke 1:26-56 ⇔ Matthew 1:18-25 ⇔ Luke 2:1-5 ⇔ 3 Nephi 1:4-14 ⇔ Luke 2:6-20 ⇔ 3 Nephi 1:15-20 ⇔ Luke 2:21-39 ⇔ Matthew 2:1-12 ⇔ 3 Nephi 1:21 ⇔ Matthew 2:13-23 ⇔ Luke 2:40-52 ⇔ Matthew 2:23 (footnote c) ⇔ D&C 93:11-14

Activity

- Plan Family Counsel. Review Stake Plan. Plan/prepare FHE. Set-up HT/VT for Dec.

Additional Resources

- D Kelly Ogden, “The Road to Bethlehem,” *Ensign*, Dec 1995, 13.
- Gordon B Hinckley, “To do Good Always,” *Ensign*, Dec 1994, 2.

Monday December 1st

Mortality: His Public Ministry

Thought/Quote

“The narrative of this interview between Nicodemus and the Christ constitutes one of our most instructive and precious scriptures relating to the absolute necessity of unreserved compliance with the laws and ordinances of the gospel, as the means indispensable to salvation. Faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, through whom alone men may gain eternal life; the forsaking of sin by resolute turning away from the gross darkness of evil to the saving light of righteousness; the unqualified requirement of a new birth through baptism in water, and this of necessity by the mode of immersion, since otherwise the figure of a birth would be meaningless; and the completion of the new birth through baptism by the Spirit -- all these principles are taught herein in such simplicity and plainness as to make plausible no man's excuse for ignorance.”

James E Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, page 162.

Reference Scriptures

- Matthew 4
- John 3

Reference Article

- Jeffrey R. Holland, "Teaching, Preaching, Healing," *Ensign*, Jan. 2003, 33.

Activity

- Family Counsel and FHE.

Additional Resources

- Jeffrey R. Holland, "Come unto Me," *Ensign*, Apr. 1998, 16.
- Spencer W. Kimball, "An interview with Nicodemus," *Ensign*, April 1958
- Jonathan H. Stephenson, "I Am He," *Ensign*, Apr. 1999, 7.
- Thomas F. Olmstead, "The Savior's Use of the Old Testament," *Ensign*, July 2002, 47.
- Jay M. Todd, "Our New Light on Jesus' Mortal Life and Teachings," *Ensign*, Jan. 1995, 33.

Tuesday December 2nd

Mortality: Temptation

Thought/Quote

"No man knows how bad he is till he has tried very hard to be good. A silly idea is current that good people do not know what temptation means. This is an obvious lie. Only those who try to resist temptation know how strong it is...you find out the strength of a wind by trying to walk against it, not by lying down. A man who gives in to temptation after five minutes simply does not know what it would have been like an hour later. That is why bad people, in one sense, know very little about badness. They have lived a sheltered life by always giving in. We never find out the strength of the evil impulse inside us until we try to fight it: and Christ, because He was the only man who never yielded to temptation, is also the only man who knows to the full what temptation means."

C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, page 25.

Reference Scriptures

- Matthew 4:1-11
- Luke 4:1-13

Reference Article

- Howard W. Hunter, "The Temptations of Christ," *Ensign*, Nov. 1976, 17.

Additional Resources

- Jeffrey R. Holland, "The Inconvenient Messiah," *Ensign*, Feb 1984, p. 68-74
- N. Eldon Tanner, "Obeying the Right Voice," *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 42.
- Neal A. Maxwell, "Overcome... Even As I Also Overcame," *Ensign*, May 1987, 70.
- L. Lionel Kendrick, "Strength During Struggles," *Ensign*, Oct. 2001, 24.
- Robert J. Matthews, "Searching the Scriptures: How to Face Temptation," *Ensign*, Aug. 1973, 68.
- Howard W. Hunter, "God Will Have a Tried People," *Ensign*, May 1980, 24.

Wednesday December 3rd

Mortality: Twelve Chosen and Sent Forth

Thought/Quote

“At the commencement of His ministry, the Master chose those twelve men whom he separated from the rest by the name, Apostles. These were to be special witnesses of the sanctity of His life, and of His divine mission, and to be responsible for transmitting to the latest posterity, a genuine account of His doctrines, and principles, and ordinances essential to the salvation of the human soul. History records that these men, as judged by worldly standards, were illiterate, poor, and of mean extraction. It would seem that He avoided using in this ministry, persons endowed with the advantages of fortune or birth or enriched with the treasures of eloquence or learning, lest ‘the fruits of their embassy, and the progress of the gospel should be attributed to human and natural causes.’ True servants in the Kingdom of God, when properly authorized, received an endowment of holy power except for which their ministry would be as the ‘tinkling of brass and the sounding of cymbals.’ This heavenly endowment to His chosen Twelve, came as a result of three sacred experiences. First, they were baptized of water, maybe by John the Baptist, or possibly as the only ones He did baptize, by the Master, himself, for John records that He and His disciples were in Judea ‘and there He tarried with them, (John 3:22) Then He them and said unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost,’ (John 20:22) which in all likelihood was the confirmation and the commission to receive the Holy Ghost, or the baptism of the Spirit, by the laying on of hands for that was the procedure followed thereafter by His disciples. The meaning of this baptism of water and of the Holy Ghost by one who comes In the name of the Lord, is best understood by the words of a prophet on the Western Continent. Addressing a group of baptized converts he said this: ‘There is no other name given whereby salvation cometh; therefore I would that you should take upon you the name of Christ, all of you that have entered into the covenant with God that ye should, be obedient unto the end of your lives.’ (Mosiah 5:8) The third of the remarkable spiritual experiences to which the disciples were privileged is thus described by the Master, himself: ‘Ye have not chosen me but I have chosen you and ordained you,—that whatsoever ye should ask the Father in my name He may give it you.’ (John 15:16) Try to imagine if you can, be ‘called’ by the Master and ‘ordained’ under His hands. That these ordinations resulted in an endowment of power from on high as well as giving authority to act officially as the Lord’s representatives, is well attested by the miraculous events that followed, which made of them, men different because of that divine commission. Not alone were these special apostolic witnesses to receive and enjoy these heavenly gifts. They were commissioned to transmit them by ordinations to others who had received the witness of the divine mission of the risen Lord.”

Harold B Lee, Conference Report 1955, p. 18-19.

“They were fishermen before they heard the call. Casting their nets into the Sea of Galilee, Peter and Andrew stopped as Jesus of Nazareth approached, looked into their eyes, and spoke the simple words, ‘Follow me.’ Matthew writes that the two fishermen ‘straightway left their nets and followed him... If the Savior were to call you today, would you be just as willing to leave your nets and follow Him?... As Jesus the Christ stood on the shores of the Sea of Galilee 2,000 years ago, so stands He today, issuing the same call He gave to those faithful fishermen and now to all who will hear His voice: ‘Follow me!’ We have nets that must be tended and nets that must be mended. But when the Master of ocean, earth, and sky calls to us, ‘Follow me,’ we should leave the entangling, worldly nets behind and follow His footsteps.”

Joseph B. Wirthlin, “Follow Me”, *Ensign*, May 2002

Reference Scriptures

- Matthew 10:2-4
- Mark 3:13-21
- Luke 6:12-16
- Matthew 10:1, 5-42; 11:1
- Mark 6:7-13
- Luke 9:1-6

Reference Article

- Boyd K Packer, “The Twelve Apostles,” *Ensign*, Nov 1996, p. 6.
- Joseph B. Wirthlin, “Follow Me”, *Ensign*, May 2002,

Thursday December 4th

Mortality: Sermon on the Mount

Thought/Quote

“Christ came not only into the world to make an atonement for the sins of mankind, but to set an example before the world of the standard of perfection of God's law and of obedience to the Father. In His Sermon on the Mount the Master has given us somewhat of a revelation of His own character, which was perfect, or what might be said to be ‘an autobiography, every syllable of which He had written down in deeds,’ and in so doing has given us a blueprint for our own lives.”

Harold B. Lee, Stand Ye in Holy Places, p.341-342.

“The commandment that we be perfect may seem difficult, but through the purifying influence of the Holy Ghost, it is a goal that is not only attainable, but necessary to our salvation. Elder Bruce R. McConkie has given comfort and encouragement to those who try to become perfect in an imperfect world: ‘We have to become perfect to be saved in the celestial kingdom. But nobody becomes perfect in this life. Only the Lord Jesus attained that state...becoming perfect in Christ is a process. We begin to keep the commandments today, and we keep more of them tomorrow, and we go from grace to grace, up the steps of the ladder, and thus improve and perfect our souls. We can become perfect in some minor things. We can be perfect in the payment of tithing. As members of the Church, if we chart a course leading to eternal life; if we begin the processes of spiritual rebirth, and are going in the right direction; if we chart a course of sanctifying our souls, and degree by degree are going in that direction; and if we chart a course of becoming perfect, and step by step and phase by phase, are perfecting our souls by overcoming the world, then it is absolutely guaranteed-there is no question whatever about it – we shall gain eternal life.”

Robert Wells, The Mount and the Master, p. 133-134

Reference Scriptures

- Matthew 5-7
- Luke 6:17-49

Reference Article

- David H Yarn, “The Sermon on the Mount,” *Ensign*, Dec 1972, p.53.

Additional Resources

- S. Michael Wilcox, “The Beatitudes–Pathway to the Savior,” *Ensign*, Jan 1991.
- Paul K. Browning, “Your Marriage and the Sermon on the Mount,” *Ensign*, Aug 1991.
- Robert E Wells, “The Beatitudes, Pattern for Coming unto Christ,” *Ensign*, Dec 1987.

Friday December 5th

Mortality: Bread of Life Sermon

Thought/Quote

“There was little excuse for the Jews pretending to understand that our Lord meant an actual eating and drinking of His material flesh and blood. The utterances to which they objected were far more readily understood by them than they are by us on first reading; for the representation of the law and of truth in general as bread, and the acceptance thereof as a process of eating and drinking, were figures in every-day use by the rabbis of that time. Their failure to comprehend the symbolism of Christ's doctrine was an act of will, not the natural consequence of innocent ignorance. To eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ was and is to believe in and accept Him as the literal Son of God and Savior of the world, and to obey His commandments. By these means only may the Spirit of God become an abiding part of man's individual being, even as the substance of the food he eats is assimilated with the tissues of his body.

James E Talmage, Jesus the Christ, page 342.

Reference Scriptures

- John 6:22-71

Reference Article

- David O McKay, "Whither Shall We Go?," Byu Speeches of the Year, 1961, p.2-7.

Activity

- Quality date night with spouse.

Additional Resources

- Thomas R Valletta, "The True Bread of Life," *Ensign*, March 1999.

Saturday December 6th

Mortality: Parables

Thought/Quote

"Our Lord used parables on frequent occasions during his ministry to teach gospel truths. His purpose, however, in telling these short stories was not to present the truths of his gospel in plainness so that all his hearers would understand. Rather it was so to phrase and hide the doctrine involved that only the spiritually literate would understand it, while those whose understandings were darkened would remain in darkness."

Bruce R McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, "Parables" p. 553.

Reference Scriptures

- BD "Parables" page 740-41
- Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43
- Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23

Reference Article

- Richard Lloyd Anderson, "How to Read a Parable," *Ensign*, Sept. 1974, 58.

Activity

- Prepare for on-time church attendance.

Additional Resources

- Richard Lloyd Anderson, "Parables of Mercy," *Ensign*, Feb 1987.
- James E. Faust, "Of Seeds and Soils," *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 46.
- L Tom Perry, "For Whatsoever a Man Soweth, That Shall He Also Reap," *Ensign*, Nov 1980, 7.
- Carl B. Pratt, "Parables of Jesus: Prophecy for Our Day," *Ensign*, Jan. 2003, 60.
- Frank F. Judd Jr., "Parables of Jesus: The Priceless Parables," *Ensign*, Jan. 2003, 56.

Sunday December 7th

Mortality: Transfiguration

Thought/Quote

"Now on the Mount of Transfiguration, a heavenly voice -- that of the Almighty Father who is visiting his Son on planet earth -- bears holy witness of the same divine Sonship. And now Jesus and angelic visitants, who do his bidding, join in conferring upon Peter, James, and John the promised keys of the kingdom with their sealing powers."

Bruce R. McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah*, Vol.3, p.54 - p.55

Reference Scriptures

- BD "Mount of Transfiguration" p.786
- Matthew 17:1-13

- Mark 9:2-13
- Luke 9:28-36

Reference Article

- David B. Haight, “We Beheld His Glory,” *Ensign*, May 1977, 7.

Activity

- Plan Family Counsel. Review Stake Plan. Plan/prepare FHE.

Additional Resources

- Larry E. Dahl, “I Have a Question,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1983, 21.

Monday December 8th

Mortality: Last Week Overview

Reference Scriptures

Day One: Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Followers meet Him with palm fronds, proclaiming Him King of the Jews. Mark indicates He went to the Temple grounds, and John records a conversation with Greeks who “would see Jesus.” He spends the night in Bethany.

Day Two: Jesus cleanses the Temple, throwing out the moneychangers and merchants. He returns again to Bethany to spend the night.

Day Three: This is the last day that Jesus teaches in public. He returns to the Temple where the priests challenge his authority. He Gives parables of the two sons, wicked husbandmen, and marriage of the King’s son. He teaches men about the first commandment, to pay tribute to Caesar and God, and tells of the widow’s mite. All of these teachings further offend the religious leaders. The chief priests and scribes plot how they might kill Him. Meanwhile He continues to teach His disciples about the calamities to precede His Second Coming, gives the parables of the ten virgins, the talents, and the sheep and goats.

Day Four: No scriptural account of this day.

Day Five: Jesus arranges for the Passover meal with His Apostles. He washes the Apostles’ feet, institutes the Sacrament, and foretells His death. Taking Peter, James and John with Him into the Garden of Gethsemane, He prays and suffers the ‘pain of all men’, an agony that caused Him to ‘bleed from every pore’. He is betrayed by Judas Iscariot.

Day Six: Religious leaders charge Him with blasphemy. Roman law was the only law that could apply the death penalty, so they also charged Him with sedition. Pilate offers Jesus as the prisoner to be freed at Passover, but the people demand He be crucified. Jesus is crucified and voluntarily gives up His Spirit. The body is removed from the cross and buried in a sealed tomb by two disciples.

Day Seven: Jesus teaches in the Spirit world.

First Day: Tomb opened and visited by Mary and others. Jesus appears to Mary. Mary tells Peter and John, then the other Apostles. Christ appears: to other women, on the road to Emmaus, to Peter, and finally to all of the other disciples, except Thomas.

Reference Article

- Andrew C Skinner, “Restored Light on the Savior’s Last Week in Mortality,” *Ensign*, June 1999.

Activity

- Family Counsel and FHE.

Additional Resources

- Howard W. Hunter, “His Final Hours,” *Ensign*, May 1974, 17.

Tuesday December 9th

Mortality: Last Supper

Thought/Quote

“The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper dates from the night of the Passover feast immediately preceding the crucifixion of the Savior. On that solemn occasion Christ and the apostles were assembled in Jerusalem, keeping the feast in an upper room, which had been made ready by His express command. As a Jew Christ appears to have been loyal to the established usages of His people; and it must have been with extraordinary feelings that He entered upon this commemorative feast, the last of its kind bearing the significance of the type of a future sacrifice as well as a reminder of the Lord's blessings to Israel in the past. Knowing well the terrible experiences immediately awaiting Him, Jesus communed with the Twelve in anguish of soul at the paschal board, prophesying concerning His betrayal, which was soon to be accomplished by the agency of one who there ate with Him. Then He took bread, blessed it and gave it to the others, saying: ‘Take, eat; this is my body’. ‘This do in remembrance of me.’ Afterward, taking the cup, He blessed its contents and administered it to them with the words: ‘Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.’ It is enlightening to note that the account of the sacrament and its purport as given by Paul resembles so closely as to be almost identical with the descriptions recorded by the evangelists. The designation of the sacrament as the Lord's Supper is used by no Biblical writer other than Paul.”

James E. Talmage, Articles of Faith, p.171 - p.172.

Reference Scriptures

Arrangements for Passover meal	Matt. 26:17-19	Mark 14:12-16	Luke 22:7-13	
Precedence in Chamber; washing of Apostles feet	Matt. 26:20	Mark 14:17	Luke 22:14; Luke 24:30	John 13:1-20
Passover meal; introduction of sacrament	Matt. 26:26-29	Mark 14:22-25	Luke 22:15-20	
Betrayer indicated; Jesus foretells death	Matt. 26:21-25	Mark 14:18-21	Luke 22:21-23	John 13:21-35
Apostles express loyalty	Matt. 26:31-35	Mark 14:27-31	Luke 22:31-38	John 13:36-38

Reference Article

- Jeffrey R. Holland, “This Do in Remembrance of Me,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 67.

Additional Resources

- Howard W. Hunter, “Christ, Our Passover,” *Ensign*, May 1985, 17.
- Robert D. Hales, “In Remembrance of Jesus,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 24.
- Terry W. Treseder, “Passover Promises Fulfilled in the Last Supper,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1990, 19.
- L. Tom Perry, “Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 53.
- James E Talmage, Jesus the Christ, pages 591-610.
- David B. Haight, “The Sacrament and the Sacrifice,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 59.

Wednesday December 10th

Mortality: Gethsemane

Thought/Quote

“Perhaps the very reason Peter, James, and John slept was to enable a divine providence to withhold from their ears, and seal up their eyes, those things which only God can comprehend.”

Bruce R McConkie, Mortal Messiah, 4:124.

Reference Scriptures

- Matthew 26:36-46
- Luke 22:39-46
- Mark 14:32-42
- John 18:1

Reference Article

- Bruce R McConkie, “The Purifying Power of Gethsemane,” *Ensign*, May 1985, p. 9.

Additional Resources

- James E Talmage, Jesus the Christ, pages 610-614.

Thursday December 11th

Mortality: Betrayal and Trial

Thought/Quote

“By this Atonement of the Messiah's there is especially one fact thrown out into bold relief, that is, the great love of God and Christ for mankind. When you come to think of the unspeakable agony, of the anguish of heart, of the pains that racked the body and distressed the mind of the Savior at the time of his betrayal, and during his trial and crucifixion, you may begin to see how great the love of the Father for mankind must be, when he would consent for his only begotten Son to pass through this great humiliation and affliction, in order to redeem mankind from the bonds of death.”

B. H. Roberts, The Gospel and Man's Relationship to Deity, p.16

Reference Scriptures

Judas' Betrayal	Matt. 26:47-50	Mark 14:43-36	Luke 22:47-48	John 18:2-3
Arresting Officers				John 18:4-9
Peter defends Jesus	Matt. 26:51-54	Mark 14:47	Luke 22:49-53	John 18:10-11
Disciples Flee	Matt. 26:56	Mark 14 50		
Jesus Arrested	Matt. 26:55-57	Mark 14:46-52	Luke 22:52-54	John 18:12

Before Chief Priests	Matt. 26:57-68	Mark 14:53-65	Luke 22:54	John 18:13, 19-24
Peter's denial	Matt. 26:69-75	Mark 14:66-72	Luke 22:55-62	John 18:15-18, 25-27
Soldier's mock			Luke 22:63-65	
Next morning	Matt. 27:1	Mark 15:1	Luke 22:66	John 18:28
Before Caiaphas	Matt. 27:1	Mark 15:1	Luke 22:66-71	John 18:24, 28
Before Pilate	Matt. 27:2, 11-14	Mark 15:1-5	Luke 23:1-6	John 18:28-38
Judas' remorse	Matt. 27:3-10			
Before Herod			Luke 23:7-10	
Mockery of Jesus			Luke 23:11-12	
2 nd time before Pilate	Matt. 27:15-31	Mark 15:6-15	Luke 23:11-17	
A murderer released	Matt. 27:15-21, 26	Mark 15:6-15	Luke 23:18-25	John 18:39-40
Blood guiltiness	Matt. 27:24-25		Luke 23:4, 14, 22	John 19:4
Scourged and mocked	Matt. 27:27-31	Mark 15:15-20		John 19:1-12

Additional Resources

- James E Talmage, Jesus the Christ, pages 614-617, 621-643.

Friday December 12th

Atonement: Crucifixion and Spirit World

Thought/Quote

“In Gethsemane he bowed beneath a load none other could bear. There he sweat great goutts of blood from every pore as he bore the sins of us all on conditions of repentance. Again, on Calvary, during the last three hours of his mortal passion, the sufferings of Gethsemane returned, and he drank to the full the cup which his Heavenly Father had given him. In the garden and on the cross he paid the ransom and finished his atoning work.”

Bruce R. McConkie, “The Seven Christs,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 32.

Reference Scriptures

- Matthew 27:31-33
- Matthew 27:34-50
- Matthew 27:57-61
- D&C 138:1-27

Reference Article

- Spencer J. Condie, “The Savior’s Visit to the Spirit World,” *Ensign*, July 2003, 32.

Activity

- Quality Date night with spouse

Additional Resources

- Richard Lloyd Anderson, “The Ancient Practice of Crucifixion,” *Ensign*, July 1975, 32.
- James E Talmage, Jesus the Christ, pages 652-666.
- James E Talmage, Jesus the Chirst, pages 670-676.
- Theodore M. Burton, “Neither Cryptic Nor Hidden,” *Ensign*, May 1977, 28.

Saturday December 13th

Atonement: Faith

Thought/Quote

“Faith is the assurance which men have of the existence of things which they have not seen, and the principle of action in all intelligent beings...and as faith is the moving cause of all action in temporal concerns so it is in spiritual...but faith is not only the principle of action, but of power also, in all intelligent beings, whether in heaven or earth...faith, then, is the first great governing principle which has power, dominion, and authority over all things; by it they exist, by it they are upheld, by it they are changed, or by it they remain, agreeable to the will of God. Without it there is no power, and without power there could be no creation nor existence...how would you define faith in its most unlimited sense? It is the first great governing principle which has power, dominion, and authority over all things.”

Joseph Smith, Jr., *Lectures on Faith*, ed. B.H. Roberts, pp.1-8

Reference Scriptures

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • BD <i>Faith</i> page 669 | • Ephesians 6:16 |
| • Alma 32:21 | • Romans 10:17 |
| • Hebrews 11:1 | • Mark 9:23 |
| • Ether 12:6 | • 1 st Peter 1:9 |
| • James 2:17-19, 26 | |

Reference Article

- Henry B. Eyring, “To Touch a Life with Faith,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 37.

Activity

- Prepare for on-time church attendance.

Additional Resources

- Dallin H. Oaks, “Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ,” *Ensign*, May 1994, 98.
- James E. Faust, “The Shield of Faith,” *Ensign*, May 2000, 17.
- A. Theodore Tuttle, “Developing Faith,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 72.
- Howard W. Hunter, “Faith: The First Step,” *Ensign*, May 1975, 37.
- M. Russell Ballard, “You Have Nothing to Fear from the Journey,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 59.
- Richard G. Scott, “The Sustaining Power of Faith in Times of Uncertainty and Testing,” *Ensign*, May 2003, 75.
- John K. Carmack, “Lord, Increase Our Faith,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2002, 53.
- James O. Mason, “Faith in Jesus Christ,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2001, 22.

Sunday December 14th

Atonement: Repentance

Thought/Quote

“If your life is in disarray and you feel uncomfortable and unworthy to pray because you are not clean, don’t worry. He already knows about all of that. He is waiting for you to kneel in humility and take the first few steps. Pray for strength. Pray for others to be led to support you and guide you and lift you. Pray that the love of the Savior will pour into your heart. Pray that the miracle of the Atonement will bring forgiveness because you are willing to change. I know that those prayers will be answered, for God loves you. His Son gave his life for you. I know they will help you”

Richard G. Scott, “True Friends That Lift,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 76.

“All that has been said and written on this subject should warn the worthy from the beginning not to get entangled in iniquity, but it should not be construed to suggest that it is futile to start again when one has reverted to sin. Being a god in embryo with the seeds of godhood neatly tucked away in him, and with the power to become a god eventually, man need not despair. He should not give up. If he has had problems and slipped from the path of rectitude and right, he must stop in his headlong slipping and turn and transform himself. He must begin again. If he slips, he must regain his footing and protect himself from further slipping and return to the sin no more. If in his weakness he fails time and time again, he still should not despair but should make each new effort stronger than the last.”

Spencer W. Kimball, The Miracle of Forgiveness, p.173-174

Reference Scriptures

- BD *Repentance* page 760
- Alma 34:33
- Alma 7:14
- D&C 20:71
- Helaman 14:13
- 2nd Nephi 9:23-24
- Moroni 8:10-11
- Moses 6:67
- Alma 34:34-36
- D&C 19:16-21

Reference Article

- Richard G. Scott, “To Be Free of Heavy Burdens,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 86.

Activity

- Call HT/VT to set-up appointments if they have not visited you this month already.
- Plan Family Counsel. Review Stake Plan. Plan/prepare FHE.

Additional Resources

- Neal A. Maxwell, “Repentance,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 30.
- Spencer W. Kimball, “The Gospel of Repentance,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1982, 2.
- Marion G. Romney, “Repentance,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 47.
- Dallin H. Oaks, “Sin and Suffering,” *Ensign*, July 1992, 70.
- F. Burton Howard, “Repentance,” *Ensign*, May 1991, 12.
- Boyd K. Packer, “Washed Clean,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 9.
- Dallin H. Oaks, “Repentance and Change,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 37.
- Dallin H. Oaks, “Sins and Mistakes,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1996, 62.
- Keith Crockett, “Retaining a Remission of Sin,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 77

Monday December 15th

Thought/Quote

“Baptism means immersion in water, and is to be administered by one having authority, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Baptism without divine authority is not valid. It is a symbol of the burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and must be done in the likeness thereof, by one commissioned of God, in the manner prescribed, otherwise it is illegal and will not be accepted by him, nor will it effect a remission of sins, the object for which it is designed, but whosoever hath faith, truly repents and is ‘buried with Christ in baptism,’ by one having divine authority, shall receive a remission of sins, and is entitled to the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands.”

Journal of Discourses, Vol.19, p.191, Joseph F. Smith, September 30, 1877

Reference Scriptures

- BD *Baptism* page 618
- 2nd Nephi 31:5, 13
- Matthew 28:19
- D&C 18:42
- Romans 6:4
- D&C 20:37

Reference Article

- Robert D. Hales, “The Covenant of Baptism: To Be in the Kingdom and of the Kingdom,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 6.

Activity

- Family Counsel and FHE.

Additional Resources

- Bruce R McConkie, A New Witness for the Articles of Faith, pages 242-243.
- Dwan J. Young, “Keeping the Covenants We Make at Baptism,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 94.
- James E. Faust, “Born Again,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 54.
- Travis T. Anderson, “Naaman, Baptism, and Cleansing,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1994, 28.
- LeGrand Richards, “One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism,” *Ensign*, May 1975, 95.
- Carol B. Thomas, “Spiritual Power of Our Baptism,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 91.

Tuesday December 16th

Atonement: Gift of the Holy Ghost

Thought/Quote

“The companionship of the Holy Ghost is cultivated in much the same manner. To obtain his influence and companionship, we must be our best; we must be worthy of his presence. I see five things we must do to attract and retain the Holy Spirit.

1. We must keep our bodies clean. We must not pollute our mortal tabernacles in any way. We must live the Word of Wisdom; we must not misuse our powers of procreation; we must do whatever is possible to avoid disease or other enemies of our physical bodies. “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” (1st Cor. 3:16-17)

2. We must keep our minds clean. We must guard against all suggestive and carnal notions and other satanic influences. From the Doctrine and Covenants, we receive this advice and promise: “Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven. The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion.”(D&C 121:45-46)

3. We must exercise faith and reserve a place in our hearts for the Holy Spirit. Manifestations of the Spirit of God, we are told, are forfeited in the absence of faith. Moroni spoke openly of the gifts of the Spirit, including healing and tongues, then cautioned: “All these gifts of which I have spoken, which are spiritual, never will be done away, even as long as the world shall stand, only according to the unbelief of the children of men.” (Moro. 10:19) It is imperative that we understand “that the Holy Ghost may have place in [our] hearts” only when we exercise faith in Christ. (Moro. 7:32) How can we be acceptable to the Holy Ghost without recognizing and acknowledging those whom he represents—those of whom he testifies and bears record? Loving and seeking the Christlike life is true worship—the kind of worship that opens our lives to the power of the Holy Ghost.

4. We must avoid all iniquity, all manner of wickedness. As stated previously, gifts of the Lord cease when faith is missing. The same applies, and the problem is compounded, when iniquity is present. Alma said, “No unclean thing can inherit the kingdom of heaven.” (Alma 11:37) Similarly, no unclean person can achieve a lasting relationship with the Spirit of God.

5. We must pray, feast upon the words of Christ, and walk uprightly before God. The Spirit of the Lord teaches and entices a man to pray. (See 2nd Nephi 32:8-9) The words of Christ help us to understand who the Holy Spirit is and how he may be invited into our presence. (See 2nd Nephi 32:1-3) The Spirit of God persuades men to do good and to believe in Christ. (See Ether 4:11-12, Moro, 7:16-17) So prayer, scripture study, and righteous living are musts.

Carlos E. Asay, “The Companionship of the Holy Ghost,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1988, 15

Reference Scriptures

- BD *Holy Ghost* page 704
- John 14:26; 15:26
- D&C 33:15
- 1st Corinthians 6:19
- Acts 8:14-17
- Acts 19:6

Reference Article

- Joseph B. Wirthlin, “The Unspeakable Gift,” *Ensign*, May 2003, 26.

Activity

- Enrichment night for Sisters.

Additional Resources

- Marion G. Romney, “The Holy Ghost,” *Ensign*, May 1974, 90.
- James E. Faust, “The Gift of the Holy Ghost: A Sure Compass,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1996, 2.
- LeGrand Richards, “The Gift of the Holy Ghost,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 76.
- Margaret D. Nadauld, “A Comforter, a Guide, a Testifier,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 90.

Wednesday December 17th

Atonement: Enduring to the End

Thought/Quote

“I do believe that the children of God who receive the ordinances of salvation and then seek with all their might to keep their promises and remain in covenant—even though they may have been far from perfect along the way and as they passed through death—will go into paradise, continue to progress and develop and improve, and eventually enjoy celestial, resurrected glory.”

Robert L. Millet, *Within Reach*, 1995.

Reference Scriptures

- 2nd Nephi 10:20
- D&C 6:13
- Mosiah 24:14-15
- D&C 123:17

Reference Article

- Stephen E. Robinson, “Enduring to the End,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1993, 12.

Additional Resources

- Robert D. Hales, “Behold, We Count Them Happy Which Endure,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 75.
- Marvin J. Ashton, “If Thou Endure It Well,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 20.
- Russell M. Nelson, “Endure and Be Lifted Up,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 70.
- Neal A. Maxwell, “Enduring Well,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1997, 7.
- Henry D. Taylor, “Man Cannot Endure on Borrowed Light,” *Ensign*, June 1971, 108.
- Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Marriage That Endures,” *Ensign*, May 1974, 22.

Thursday December 18th

Atonement: Missionary Work

Thought/Quote

“This is the reason why we are inspired to build these temples . . . because the day has come when they are needed. Joseph Smith went into the spirit world to unlock the prison doors in this dispensation or generation. He stayed here long enough to lay the foundation of this kingdom and obtain the keys belonging to it. The last time he ever met with the Quorum of the Twelve was when he gave them their endowments, and when they left him he had a presentiment that it was the last time they would ever meet. He had something to do the other side of the veil. He had a thousand to preach to there, where you and I have one in the flesh. And this is the great word of the last dispensation—the redemption of the living and the dead.”

Wilford Woodruff, JD 21:194, July 3, 1880.

Reference Scriptures

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| • D&C 138:28-37 | • D&C 18:10 |
| • D&C 4 | • D&C 123:12 |
| • Isaiah 61:1-3 | • D&C 112:28 |
| • Matthew 4:16, 23 | • D&C 88:80, 88 |
| • Mosiah 28:3 | |
| • Alma 29:9-10 | |

Reference Article

- M Russell Ballard, “The Essential Role of Member Missionary Work,” *Ensign*, May 2003, 37.

Additional Resources

- James E. Faust, “What I Want My Son to Know before He Leaves on His Mission,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 40.
- Earl C. Tingey, “Missionary Service,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 39.
- Jeffrey R. Holland, “Witnesses unto Me,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 14.
- Robert C. Oaks, “Sharing the Gospel,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 81.
- Ezra Taft Benson, “Keys to Successful Member-Missionary Work,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1990, 2.
- Gene R. Cook, “Are You a Member Missionary?” *Ensign*, May 1976, 103.
- Richard G. Scott, “Why Every Member a Missionary?” *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 35.
- Gordon B. Hinckley, “Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 104.
- Dallin H. Oaks, “Sharing the Gospel,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 7.

Friday December 19th

Atonement: Judgement

Thought/Quote

“It is written that Jesus will judge not after the sight of the eye, or after the hearing of the ear, but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity the meek of the earth. It is not because somebody has seen things, or heard anything by which a man will be judged and condemned, but it is because that record that is written by the man himself in the tablets of his own mind--that record that cannot lie--will in that day be unfolded before God and angels, and those who shall sit as judges.”

Journal of Discourses, Vol.11, p.77-78, John Taylor, February 5, 1865

Reference Scriptures

- D&C 45:3-5
- John 5:22
- 3rd Nephi 27:14
- D&C 19:1-3; 38:1-6
- Revelation 20:12
- D&C 128:7
- 2nd Nephi 29:11-14
- 3rd Nephi 27:23-25

Reference Article

- James E. Faust, “Search Me, O God, and Know My Heart,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 17.

Activity

- Quality date night with spouse.

Additional Resources

- Dallin H. Oaks, “‘Judge Not’ and Judging,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1999, 7.
- James A. Cullimore, “Justice and Mercy,” *Ensign*, May 1974, 29.
- Mark E. Petersen, “Do unto Others...,” *Ensign*, May 1977, 73.

Saturday December 20th

Atonement: Resurrection

Thought/Quote

“In spite of the great importance we place upon the Resurrection in our doctrine, perhaps many of us may not yet have fully glimpsed its spiritual significance and eternal grandeur. If we had, we would marvel at its beauty as did Jacob, the brother of Nephi, and we would shudder at the alternative we would have faced had we not received this divine gift.”

Howard W. Hunter, “He Is Risen,” *Ensign*, May 1988, 16

Reference Scriptures

- BD *Resurrection* page 761
- John 20:1-17
- Matthew 28:1-8
- Luke 24:3-11
- Alma 42:9, 23
- Helaman 14:17-18

Reference Article

- Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Victory over Death,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1997, 2.

Activity

- Prepare for on-time attendance at church.

Additional Resources

- Alexander B Morrison, "I am the Resurrection and the Life," *Ensign*, Apr 1995.
- Dallin H. Oaks, "Resurrection," *Ensign*, May 2000, 14.
- Howard W. Hunter, "Evidences of the Resurrection," *Ensign*, May 1983, 15.
- Hartman Rector Jr., "The Resurrection," *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 76.
- Walter F. González, "Words of Jesus: Death and Resurrection," *Ensign*, Apr. 2003, 22.

Who Christ Visited	Reference
Mary Magdalene.	Mark 16:9, 10; John 20:14
Other women between sepulcher and Jerusalem.	Matthew 28:9
Two disciples on road to Emmaus.	Mark 16:12; Luke 24:13
Peter, near Jerusalem.	Luke 24:34; 1 st Corinthians 15:5
Ten of the apostles and others in Jerusalem.	Luke 24:36; John 20:19
Eleven apostles at Jerusalem.	Mark 16:14; John 20:26
Apostles at Sea of Tiberias.	John 21
Eleven apostles on a mountain in Galilee.	Matthew 28:16
500 Brethren at once.	1 st Corinthians 15:6
James.	1 st Corinthians 15:7
Eleven apostles at time of ascension.	Mark 16:19; Luke 24:50-51

Sunday December 21st

He has Risen: Visit to the Americas...The Book of Mormon

Thought/Quote

"Take away the Book of Mormon and the revelations and where is our religion? We have none."

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, page 71.

Reference Scriptures

- Ezekiel 37:15-19
- John 10:16
- 3rd Nephi 15:21-24
- 2nd Nephi 29:3, 6-10
- D&C 20:8-9
- 2nd Nephi 33:10-12
- 1st Nephi 13:40-41
- D&C 3:16-20; D&C 10:45

Reference Article

- Ezra Taft Benson, "The Savior's visit to America," *Ensign*, May 1987, p.4.

Activity

- Plan Family Counsel. Review Stake Plan. Plan/prepare FHE.

Additional Resources

- Jeffrey R Holland, “For a Wise Purpose,” *Ensign*, Jan 1996, p 12.
- C. Max Caldwell, “The Path That Leads to Christ,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1996, 27.
- Ezra Taft Benson, “Flooding the Earth with the Book of Mormon,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 4.
- Ezra Taft Benson, “The Keystone of Our Religion,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1992, 2.
- N. Eldon Tanner, “Christ in America,” *Ensign*, May 1975, 34.
- Jeffrey R Holland, “The ‘Mission’ of the Book of Mormon,” 1997 Mission President’s Seminar, Thursday, June 26th, 1997. **Available only on Ward Website.**

Monday December 22nd

He has Risen: Temples...Preparation for Temple Blessings

Thought/Quote

“I would hope that every Latter-day Saint who is old enough would have a temple recommend. It says something. It is a priceless, priceless thing to have a temple recommend. It says that we are faithful, that we are doing what we ought to be doing, that we are living the gospel, that we are sustaining our authorities, that we are observing the Word of Wisdom, that we are paying our tithing, that we are treating our families properly, that we are treating our neighbors properly, that we are the kind of people we ought to be...go to your Bishops and get a temple recommend and carry it with you and regard it as a precious and true thing. It is a credit card, if you please, with the Lord.””

Gordon B Hinckley, Teachings of Gordon B Hinckley, page 631-632.

Reference Scriptures

- D&C 42:22-24
- D&C 121:45
- 1st Timothy 4:12
- 1st Nephi 10:21
- Article of Faith 1:13
- D&C 119:4
- D&C 89
- Exodus 20:8-11
- D&C 59:9-13
- D&C 97:10-16
- 2nd Chronicles 23:19
- D&C 78:7

Reference Article

- Russell M. Nelson, “Personal Preparation for Temple Blessings,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 32.

Activity

- Family Counsel and FHE.

Additional Resources

- Gordon B Hinckley, “Keeping the Temple Holy,” *Ensign*, May 1990, 49.
- Carol B. Thomas, “Preparing Our Families for the Temple,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 12.
- Russell M Nelson, “Prepare for Blessings of the Temple,” *Ensign*, March 2002, p.17.

Tuesday December 23rd

He has Risen: Temples...Blessings of the Temple

Thought/Quote

“Now let me say something else to all who can worthily go to the House of the Lord. When you attend the temple and perform the ordinances that pertain to the House of the Lord, certain blessings will come to you:

- You will receive the spirit of Elijah, which will turn your hearts to your spouse, to your children, and to your forebears.
- You will love your family with a deeper love than you have loved before.
- Your hearts will be turned to your fathers and theirs to you.
- You will be endowed with power from on high as the Lord has promised.
- You will receive the key of the knowledge of God. (See D&C 84:19) You will learn how you can be like Him. Even the power of godliness will be manifest to you. (See D&C 84:20).
- You will be doing a great service to those who have passed to the other side of the veil in order that they might be ‘judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.’ (D&C 138:34).

Such are the blessings of the temple and the blessings of frequently attending the temple.

Ezra Taft Benson, “What I Hope You Will Teach Your Children about the Temple,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1985, 10.

Reference Scriptures

- D&C 105:10-12
- D&C 109:10-12, 22-23, 59, 67, 72, 75.
- D&C 97:15-21
- D&C 38:4; Moses 7:18-21, 69.

Reference Article

- Richard G. Scott, “Receive the Temple Blessings,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 25.

Additional Resources

- Howard W. Hunter, “The Great Symbol of Our Membership,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1994, 2.
- L. Lionel Kendrick, “Enhancing Our Temple Experience,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 78.
- David B. Haight, “Personal Temple Worship,” *Ensign*, May 1993, 23.

Wednesday December 24th

He has Risen: Second Coming

Thought/Quote

“His first appearance will be to the righteous Saints who have gathered to the New Jerusalem. In this place of refuge they will be safe from the wrath of the Lord, which will be poured out without measure on all nations. Modern revelation provides this description: ‘And the glory of the Lord shall be there, and the terror of the Lord also shall be there, insomuch that the wicked will not come unto it, and it shall be called

Zion. And it shall come to pass among the wicked, that every man that will not take his sword against his neighbor must needs flee unto Zion for safety. And there shall be gathered unto it out of every nation under heaven; and it shall be the only people that shall not be at war one with another' (D&C 45:67-69).

The second appearance of the Lord will be to the Jews. To these beleaguered sons of Judah, surrounded by hostile Gentile armies, who again threaten to overrun Jerusalem, the Savior—their Messiah—will appear and set His feet on the Mount of Olives, 'and it shall cleave in twain, and the earth shall tremble, and reel to and fro, and the heavens also shall shake' (D&C 45:48). The Lord Himself will then rout the Gentile armies, decimating their forces (see Ezek. 38-39). Judah will be spared, no longer to be the persecuted and scattered. The Jews will then approach their Deliverer and ask: 'What are these wounds in thine hands and in thy feet?... I will say unto them: These wounds are the wounds with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. I am he who was lifted up. I am Jesus that was crucified. I am the Son of God. And then shall they weep because of their iniquities; then shall they lament because they persecuted their king' (D&C 45:51-53).

What a touching drama this will be! Jesus—Prophet, Messiah, King—will be welcomed in His own country! Jerusalem will become an eternal city of peace! The sons of Judah will then realize this promise: 'The tribe of Judah, after their pain, shall be sanctified in holiness before the Lord, to dwell in his presence day and night, forever and ever' (D&C 133:35).

The third appearance of Christ will be to the rest of the world. Here is His description of His coming: 'And the Lord shall be red in his apparel, and his garments like him that treadeth in the wine-vat. And so great shall be the glory of his presence that the sun shall hide his face in shame, and the moon shall withhold its light, and the stars shall be hurled from their places' (D&C 133:48-49).

All nations will see Him 'in the clouds of heaven, clothed with power and great glory; with all the holy angels... And the Lord shall utter his voice, and all the ends of the earth shall hear it; and the nations of the earth shall mourn, and they that have laughed shall see their folly. And calamity shall cover the mocker, and the scorner shall be consumed; and they that have watched for iniquity shall be hewn down and cast into the fire' (D&C 45:44, 49-50).

Yes, come He will!"

Ezra Taft Benson, "Five Marks of the Divinity of Jesus Christ," *Ensign*, Dec. 2001, 15.

Reference Scriptures

- Matthew 24
- Joseph Smith Matthew
- D&C 45
- D&C 101
- D&C 133
- D&C 38

Reference Article

- M. Russell Ballard, "When Shall These Things Be?" *Ensign*, Dec. 1996, 56.

Additional Resources

- LeGrand Richards, "The Second Coming of Christ," *Ensign*, May 1978, 74.
- Gordon B Hinckley, "We need not fear His coming," *BYU Devotional Speeches of the Year*, March 25th, 1979, pp 82-83.
- Alvin R. Dyer, "Ye Shall Not Fear," *Ensign*, June 1971, 89.
- Bernard P. Brockbank, "The Leaves Are Commencing to Show on the Fig Tree," *Ensign*, May 1976, 74.
- M. Russell Ballard, "Beware of False Prophets and False Teachers," *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 62.

Thursday December 25th

He has Risen: Second Comforter

Thought/Quote

“When a man has ‘his calling and election made sure, then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter,’ the Second Comforter, the Prophet Joseph Smith tells us. Then he asks: ‘Now what is this other Comforter?’ His answer: ‘It is no more nor less than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; and this is the sum and substance of the whole matter; that when any man obtains this last Comforter, he will have the personage of Jesus Christ to attend him, or appear unto him from time to time, and even He will manifest the Father unto him, and they will take up their abode with him, and the visions of the heavens will be opened unto him, and the Lord will teach him face to face, and he may have a perfect knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God; and this is the state and place the ancient Saints arrived at when they had such glorious visions -- Isaiah, Ezekiel, John upon the Isle of Patmos, St. Paul in the three heavens, and all the Saints who held communion with the general assembly and Church of the Firstborn.”

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pp. 150-51.

Reference Scriptures

- John 14:16, 23
- D&C 67:10
- Heb 12:21-24
- 2nd Peter 1:10-11, 19
- 2nd Nephi 31:14-21
- D&C 76:53-54, 67
- D&C 88:3-4
- D&C 93:1

Reference Article

- Roy W. Doxey, “Accepted of the Lord: The Doctrine of Making Your Calling and Election Sure,” *Ensign*, July 1976, 50.

Activity

- Pray for the ability and desire to continue living the Stake Plan, then counsel together as a family how you will accomplish that fulfillment over the coming year.

Additional Resources

- Joseph B. Wirthlin, “There Am I in the Midst of Them,” *Ensign*, May 1976, 55.
- Neal A. Maxwell, “Encircled in the Arms of His Love,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 16.
- Dennis E. Simmons, “His Peace,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 31.
- James E. Faust, “A Personal Relationship with the Savior,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1976, 58.