

Area Family History Adviser Binder

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USING FAMILY HISTORY AS A RESOURCE

Area Family History Adviser



THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

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Your goal as an area family history adviser is to build relationships with stake presidents and other priesthood leaders, understand the needs and objectives of their stakes, and advise leaders on how temple and family history work can be used as a resource to bless the lives of Church members.

This binder is a tool to help you plan and conduct visits with priesthood leaders. It contains resources to help you:

- **Discover** the needs and concerns of priesthood leaders.
- **Share** the principle of family history as a resource in the work of salvation.
- **Enable** priesthood leaders to organize the work.

The binder is organized into sections that address the most common needs and concerns of priesthood leaders. These sections include:

Temple Worthiness
Strengthening Youth
Strengthening Families
Missionary Work
Convert Retention
Activation
Member Involvement

Each section includes the following elements:

1. **A planning page.** Use this page to help plan your visits with priesthood leaders. It describes what you should listen for in order to identify the needs of priesthood leaders, a suggested video that relates to their particular area of interest, and principles to keep in mind before, during, and after your visits.
2. **A resource page.** Leave a copy of this page with priesthood leaders at the conclusion of your visit. It contains a summary of blessings that can occur when members engage in temple and family history work and a list of additional resources that can be used to facilitate teaching, testifying, and organizing the work.
3. **An implementation page.** Leave a copy of this page with priesthood leaders at the conclusion of your visit. It contains ideas for next steps, a list of best practices, and suggestions on how to measure success.



Take the time to prayerfully study each section of the binder so that you are familiar with the specific family history resources that can be used to address the most common needs and concerns of priesthood leaders. As you meet with priesthood leaders, cultivate the capacity of being “quick to observe” (see Mormon 1:1–5), so that you can understand their needs and connect them to the appropriate resources.

Discover

Your first goal when meeting with priesthood leaders is to identify their needs and concerns. Listen and observe so that you understand what is important to them. Consider these guidelines:

- Resist the urge to work from your own agenda. You are there to listen.
- Invite the priesthood leader to share his needs and concerns. Ask about goals and objectives.
- Use a notebook to record your thoughts and impressions.
- Ask clarifying questions to make sure that you understand the leader's priorities.
- Paraphrase the top 1 or 2 objectives and restate them back to the leader for confirmation.



Share

When you clearly understand a priesthood leader's needs and objectives, you will be able to guide him to the appropriate family history resources. Consider these guidelines:

- Turn to the binder section that most closely matches the leader's needs and objectives.
- Share the case study, and find out if the leader has similar goals.
- Share a brief video from the *To Turn the Hearts* DVD that pertains to the local need. Invite priesthood leaders to consider the impact on a ward or stake when members have spiritual experiences like those shown in the video.

Enable

Once a priesthood leader has a vision of how family history can be used as a resource to help accomplish ward or stake objectives, he may be ready to discuss the next steps. Since the specific steps may vary based on local needs and objectives, you should counsel with the priesthood leader about how he would like to proceed. Be respectful of his time. You may need to schedule additional visits. You could arrange time to:

- Share the "Featured Version" of the *To Turn the Hearts* DVD.
- Provide additional instruction to stake and ward leaders.
- Further discuss family history resources and answer questions.

Provide copies

You may want to provide the priesthood leader with copies of the following items:

- The Resource pages from the binder section you have been discussing.
- The Implementation page from that section.
- The conference talk or handout from that section.
- A copy of *To Turn the Hearts: Leader's Guide to Temple and Family History Work* with relevant pages marked or annotated.

Discover

Listen carefully in order to match a priesthood leader's goals and objectives with the appropriate family history resources. You will recognize temple-related needs when leaders express a desire to:

- Help more individuals and families receive their own temple ordinances.
- Increase the number of endowed members with current temple recommends.
- Encourage active members to worship in the temple more frequently.
- Inspire youth to make the temple an important part of their lives.



When priesthood leaders express concerns about temple worthiness and temple attendance, you might suggest that involvement in family history work often motivates members to obtain a temple recommend and to use it more frequently.

Case Study: The Springfield, Illinois, stake's emphasis on family history work resulted in a 10 percent increase in endowed members holding current temple recommends.

Share

To help priesthood leaders discover how family history can inspire members to make the temple an important part of their lives, you might share the "Focus on the Temple" segment from the *To Turn the*



Hearts DVD.

Invite priesthood leaders to consider the following questions:

- What would be the impact on your ward or stake if more members were worthy to hold temple recommends?
- What did you see that might be helpful to your own stake?
- What do you feel would be some appropriate next steps?"

Enable

Here are some things you can do before, during, and after your visits with priesthood leaders:

- Prepare spiritually for your meetings with priesthood leaders by prayerfully studying the resources available in the leader's guide and DVD.
- Listen and observe during your interviews so that you can discern what resources to share (see D&C 84:85).
- At the invitation of priesthood leaders, arrange a time to conduct follow-up discussions, provide additional instruction, and help leaders organize their efforts for success.
- Leave copies of the Resources and Implementation pages with leaders.
- Take time to reflect on each meeting. Consider what went well and how to improve next time.

Temple and family history work is an essential resource to the work of salvation in the Church. “Members who engage in this work are inspired to live gospel-centered lives and are more likely to participate in personal and family prayer, personal and family scripture study, and regular family home evening. Typically, when members participate in temple and family history work, they are more likely to participate in all other Church meetings.” (*To Turn the Hearts*, page 1).

Case Study: The Springfield Illinois, Stake’s emphasis on family history work resulted in a 10 percent increase in endowed members holding current temple recommends.

Below are some resources for priesthood leaders that may help motivate members to make the temple an important part of their lives.

Videos

- The “Featured Version” segment from the *To Turn the Hearts* DVD. From the main menu, select **Featured Version**.
- “Focus on the Temple” segment from the *To Turn the Hearts* DVD. From the main menu, select **Bonus Video Features** and then **Individual Stories and Topics**.
Note: You can also find these videos online. Go to LDS.org and click **Menu**, then **Serving in the Church**, then **Temple and Family History**, and then **Leader Resources**.
- “Blessings of Temple and Family History Work” from the *Temple and Family History Course* DVD. From the main menu, select **Providing Temple Ordinances**.

Conference Talks

- Thomas S. Monson, “The Holy Temple—a Beacon to the World,” *Ensign*, May 2011, pages 90–93.
- Russell M. Nelson, “Generations Linked in Love,” *Ensign*, May 2010, pages 91–94.
- David A. Bednar, “Honorably Hold a Name and Standing,” *Ensign*, May 2009, pages 97–100.
- Elaine S. Dalton, “Guardians of Virtue,” *Ensign*, May 2011, pages 121–124 .

Websites

- Temple and Family History website. Go to LDS.org and click **Menu**, then **Family History**, and then **Getting Started**. This site provides tutorials to help members prepare names for temple ordinances.
- FamilySearch Serve Portal. Go to FamilySearch.org/serve and sign in with your LDS Account. This portal provides instruction and resources for priesthood leaders and members with family history callings.

Guides

- *To Turn the Hearts: Leader’s Guide to Temple and Family History Work* provides suggestions on how to encourage participation in temple and family history work. See *To Turn the Hearts*, page 16.
- *Member’s Guide to Temple and Family History Work* provides guidelines on preparing names for temple work, policies on temple work, and teachings about the blessings of temple work.

Below are some suggestions for priesthood leaders on how to use family history to help members focus on the temple.

Ideas for Next Steps

- View the “Springfield Leaders’ Secrets of Success” video segment from the *To Turn the Hearts* DVD. From the main menu, select **Bonus Video Features** and then **Springfield Leaders’ Secrets of Success**.
- Review *o Turn the Hearts*, pages 16–17.
- Schedule time on upcoming council meeting agendas to discuss temple and family history work. See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church*, 2010, section 4.6.2.
- Share your plans with your priesthood leaders, and receive counsel and direction from them.
- Follow up with the area family history adviser to plan the next steps and arrange additional instruction.

Best Practices

- The high councilor assigned to oversee family history instructs high priests group leaders in their responsibilities.
- The high councilor coordinates with the area family history adviser and reports regularly to the stake presidency.
- Family history work is included as an agenda item in stake and ward councils.
- Family history activities are planned that will help members stay active in the gospel.

Measuring Success

Take time to consider how you will measure success. You may want to counsel with your priesthood leaders about which measures are important in your area. Some information can be captured through unit statistics, while other information may need to be tracked manually. Here are some measurements to consider:

- Number of endowed adults
- Percentage of endowed adults with current temple recommends
- Number of families who have received sealing ordinances
- Attendance at ward and stake temple trips
- Attendance at youth temple trips

Don’t be dissuaded if your efforts don’t seem to bear immediate fruit. Continue to move forward with faith. It often takes a sustained effort over time before results become visible.



The Holy Temple—a Beacon to the World

By President Thomas S. Monson

April 2011, General Conference



The all-important and crowning blessings of membership in the Church are those blessings which we receive in the temples of God

My beloved brothers and sisters, I extend my love and greetings to each of you and pray that our Heavenly Father will guide my thoughts and inspire my words as I speak to you today.

May I begin by making a comment or two concerning the fine messages we have heard this morning from Sister Allred and Bishop Burton and others pertaining to the Church's welfare program. As indicated, this year marks the 75th anniversary of this inspired program, which has blessed the lives of so many. It was my privilege to know personally some of those who pioneered this great endeavor—men of compassion and foresight.

As both Bishop Burton and Sister Allred and others mentioned, the bishop of the ward is given the responsibility to care for those in need who reside within the boundaries of his ward. Such was my privilege when I presided as a very young bishop in Salt Lake City over a ward of 1,080 members, including 84 widows. There were many who needed assistance. How grateful I was for the welfare program of the Church and for the help of the Relief Society and the priesthood quorums.

I declare that the welfare program of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is inspired of Almighty God.

Now, my brothers and sisters, this conference marks three years since I was sustained as President of the Church. Of course they have been busy years, filled with many challenges but also with countless blessings. The opportunity I have had to dedicate and rededicate temples has been among the most enjoyable and sacred of these blessings, and it is concerning the temple that I wish to speak to you today.

During the October general conference in 1902, Church President Joseph F. Smith expressed in his opening address the hope that one day we would "have temples built in the various parts of the [world] where they are needed for the convenience of the people."¹

During the first 150 years following the organization of the Church, from 1830 to 1980, 21 temples were built, including the temples in Kirtland, Ohio, and Nauvoo, Illinois. Contrast that with the 30 years since 1980, during which 115 temples were built and dedicated. With the announcement yesterday of 3 new temples, there are additionally 26 temples either under construction or in preconstruction stages. These numbers will continue to grow.

The goal President Joseph F. Smith hoped for in 1902 is becoming a reality. Our desire is to make the temple as accessible as possible to our members.

One of the temples currently under construction is in Manaus, Brazil. Many years ago I read of a group of over a hundred members who left Manaus, located in the heart of the Amazon rain forest, to travel to what was then the closest temple, located in São Paulo, Brazil—nearly 2,500 miles (4,000 km) from Manaus. Those faithful Saints journeyed by boat for four days on the Amazon River and its tributaries. After completing this journey by water, they boarded buses for another three days of travel—over bumpy roads, with very little to eat, and with nowhere comfortable to sleep. After seven days and nights, they arrived at the temple in São Paulo, where ordinances eternal in nature were performed. Of course their return journey was just as difficult. However, they had received the ordinances and blessings of the temple, and although their purses were empty, they themselves were filled with the spirit of the temple and with gratitude for the blessings they had received.² Now, many years later, our members in Manaus are rejoicing as they watch their own temple take shape on the banks of the Rio Negro. Temples bring joy to our faithful members wherever they are built.

Reports of the sacrifices made in order to receive the blessings found only in temples of God never fail to touch my heart and bring to me a renewed sense of thankfulness for temples.

May I share with you the account of Tihi and Tararaina Mou Tham and their 10 children. The entire family except for one daughter joined the Church in the early 1960s, when missionaries came to their island, located about 100 miles (160 km) south of Tahiti. Soon they began to desire the blessings of an eternal family sealing in the temple.

At that time the nearest temple to the Mou Tham family was the Hamilton New Zealand Temple, more than 2,500 miles (4,000 km) to the southwest, accessible only by expensive airplane travel. The large Mou Tham family, which eked out a meager living on a small plantation, had no money for airplane fare, nor was there any opportunity for employment on their Pacific island. So Brother Mou Tham and his son Gérard made the difficult decision to travel 3,000 miles (4,800 km) to work in New Caledonia, where another son was already employed.

The three Mou Tham men labored for four years. Brother Mou Tham alone returned home only once during that time, for the marriage of a daughter.

After four years, Brother Mou Tham and his sons had saved enough money to take the family to the New Zealand Temple. All who were members went except for one daughter, who was expecting a baby. They were sealed for time and eternity, an indescribable and joyful experience.

Brother Mou Tham returned from the temple directly to New Caledonia, where he worked for two more years to pay for the passage of the one daughter who had not been at the temple with them—a married daughter and her child and husband.

In their later years Brother and Sister Mou Tham desired to serve in the temple. By that time the Papeete Tahiti Temple had been constructed and dedicated, and they served four missions there.³

My brothers and sisters, temples are more than stone and mortar. They are filled with faith and fasting. They are built of trials and testimonies. They are sanctified by sacrifice and service.

The first temple to be built in this dispensation was the temple at Kirtland, Ohio. The Saints at the time were impoverished, and yet the Lord had commanded that a temple be built, so build it they did. Wrote Elder Heber C. Kimball of the experience “The Lord only knows the scenes of poverty, tribulation and distress which we passed through to accomplish it.”⁴ And then, after all that had been painstakingly completed, the Saints were forced to leave Ohio and their beloved temple. They eventually found refuge—although it would be temporary—on the banks of the Mississippi River in the state of Illinois. They named their settlement Nauvoo, and willing to give their all once again and with their faith intact, they erected another temple to their God. Persecutions raged, however, and with the Nauvoo Temple barely completed, they were driven from their homes once again, seeking refuge in a desert.

The struggle and the sacrifice began once again as they labored for 40 years to erect the Salt Lake Temple, which stands majestically on the block just south of those of us who are here today in the Conference Center.

Some degree of sacrifice has ever been associated with temple building and with temple attendance. Countless are those who have labored and struggled in order to obtain for themselves and for their families the blessings which are found in the temples of God.

Why are so many willing to give so much in order to receive the blessings of the temple? Those who understand the eternal blessings which come from the temple know that no sacrifice is too great, no price too heavy, no struggle too difficult in order to receive those blessings. There are never too many miles to travel, too many obstacles to overcome, or too much discomfort to endure. They understand that the saving ordinances received in the temple that permit us to someday return to our Heavenly Father in an eternal family relationship and to be endowed with blessings and power from on high are worth every sacrifice and every effort.

Today most of us do not have to suffer great hardships in order to attend the temple. Eighty-five percent of the membership of the Church now live within 200 miles (320 km) of a temple, and for a great many of us, that distance is much shorter.

If you have been to the temple for yourselves and if you live within relatively close proximity to a temple, your sacrifice could be setting aside the time in your busy lives to visit the temple regularly. There is

much to be done in our temples in behalf of those who wait beyond the veil. As we do the work for them, we will know that we have accomplished what they cannot do for themselves. President Joseph F. Smith, in a mighty declaration, stated, "Through our efforts in their behalf their chains of bondage will fall from them, and the darkness surrounding them will clear away, that light may shine upon them and they shall hear in the spirit world of the work that has been done for them by their children here, and will rejoice with you in your performance of these duties."⁵ My brothers and sisters, the work is ours to do.

In my own family, some of our most sacred and treasured experiences have occurred when we have joined together in the temple to perform sealing ordinances for our deceased ancestors.

If you have not yet been to the temple or if you *have* been but currently do not qualify for a recommend, there is no more important goal for you to work toward than being worthy to go to the temple. Your sacrifice may be bringing your life into compliance with what is required to receive a recommend, perhaps by forsaking long-held habits which disqualify you. It may be having the faith and the discipline to pay your tithing. Whatever it is, qualify to enter the temple of God. Secure a temple recommend and regard it as a precious possession, for such it is.

Until you have entered the house of the Lord and have received all the blessings which await you there, you have not obtained everything the Church has to offer. The all-important and crowning blessings of membership in the Church are those blessings which we receive in the temples of God.

Now, my young friends who are in your teenage years, always have the temple in your sights. Do nothing which will keep you from entering its doors and partaking of the sacred and eternal blessings there. I commend those of you who already go to the temple regularly to perform baptisms for the dead, arising in the very early hours of the morning so you can participate in such baptisms before school begins. I can think of no better way to start a day.

To you parents of young children, may I share with you some sage advice from President Spencer W. Kimball. Said he: "It would be a fine thing if . . . parents would have in every bedroom in their house a picture of the temple so [their children] from the time [they are] infant[s] could look at the picture every day [until] it becomes a part of [their lives]. When [they reach] the age that [they need] to make [the] very important decision [concerning going to the temple], it will have already been made."⁶

Our children sing in Primary:

*I love to see the temple.
I'll go inside someday.
I'll cov'nant with my Father;
I'll promise to obey.⁷*

I plead with you to teach your children of the temple's importance.

The world can be a challenging and difficult place in which to live. We are often surrounded by that which would drag us down. As you and I go to the holy houses of God, as we remember the covenants we make

within, we will be more able to bear every trial and to overcome each temptation. In this sacred sanctuary we will find peace; we will be renewed and fortified.

Now, my brothers and sisters, may I mention one more temple before I close. In the not-too-distant future as new temples take shape around the world, one will rise in a city which came into being over 2,500 years ago. I speak of the temple which is now being built in Rome, Italy.

Every temple is a house of God, filling the same functions and with identical blessings and ordinances. The Rome Italy Temple, uniquely, is being built in one of the most historic locations in the world, a city where the ancient Apostles Peter and Paul preached the gospel of Christ and where each was martyred.

Last October, as we gathered on a lovely pastoral site in the northeast corner of Rome, it was my opportunity to offer a prayer of dedication as we prepared to break the ground. I felt impressed to call upon Italian senator Lucio Malan and Rome's vice-mayor Giuseppe Ciardi to be among the first to turn a shovelful of earth. Each had been a part of the decision to allow us to build a temple in their city.

The day was overcast but warm, and although rain threatened, not more than a drop or two fell. As the magnificent choir sang in Italian the beautiful strains of "The Spirit of God," one felt as though heaven and earth were joined in a glorious hymn of praise and gratitude to Almighty God. Tears could not be restrained.

In a coming day, the faithful in this, the Eternal City, will receive ordinances eternal in nature in a holy house of God. I express my undying gratitude to my Heavenly Father for the temple now being built in Rome and for all of our temples, wherever they are. Each one stands as a beacon to the world, an expression of our testimony that God, our Eternal Father, lives, that He desires to bless us and, indeed, to bless His sons and daughters of all generations. Each of our temples is an expression of our testimony that life beyond the grave is as real and as certain as is our life here on earth. I so testify.

My beloved brothers and sisters, may we make whatever sacrifices are necessary to attend the temple and to have the spirit of the temple in our hearts and in our homes. May we follow in the footsteps of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who made the ultimate sacrifice for us, that we might have eternal life and exaltation in our Heavenly Father's kingdom. This is my sincere prayer, and I offer it in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ the Lord, amen.

NOTES

1. Joseph F. Smith, in Conference Report, Oct. 1902, 3.
2. See Vilson Felipe Santiago and Linda Ritchie Archibald, "From Amazon Basin to Temple," *Church News*, Mar. 13, 1993, 6.
3. See C. Jay Larson, "Temple Moments: Impossible Desire," *Church News*, Mar. 16, 1996, 16.
4. Heber C. Kimball, in Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* (1945), 67.
5. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 247.
6. *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (1982), 301.

Discover

Listen carefully in order to match a priesthood leader's goals and objectives with the appropriate family history resources. You will recognize youth-related needs when leaders express a desire to:

- Help more young men prepare for and choose to serve full-time missions.
- Fortify youth against the intensifying influence of the adversary.
- Provide opportunities for youth to give service and build up the kingdom.
- Inspire youth to make the temple an important part of their lives.



When priesthood leaders express concerns about youth activity and worthiness, you might suggest that involvement in family history work can provide opportunities for youth to have spiritual experiences, strengthen their testimonies, use their computer skills, and provide meaningful service.

Share

To help priesthood leaders discover the power that family history can have in the lives of their youth, you might share the “Involve the Youth” video segment from the *To Turn the Hearts* DVD.



Invite priesthood leaders to consider the following questions:

- What thoughts or impressions did you have while watching the video?
- What did you see that might be helpful to your own stake?
- What do you feel would be some appropriate next steps?

Enable

Here are some things you can do before, during, and after your visits with priesthood leaders:

- Prepare spiritually for your meetings with priesthood leaders by prayerfully studying the resources available in the leader's guide and DVD.
- Listen and observe during your interviews so that you can discern what resources to share (see D&C 84:85).
- At the invitation of priesthood leaders, arrange a time to conduct follow-up discussions, provide additional instruction, and help leaders organize their efforts for success.
- Leave copies of the Resources and Implementation pages with the leaders.
- Take time to reflect on each meeting. Consider what went well and how to improve next time.

“Temple and family history work can strengthen youth and young adults by giving them service opportunities, positive activities on which to spend their time, opportunities for spiritual growth, and a testimony of the work. Youth often have technical and social networking skills that are well suited for this work. They can become natural leaders in this work because of those skills. The family history skills that youth develop will serve them during their full-time missions and throughout their lives” (*To Turn the Hearts*, page 16).

Below are some resources for priesthood leaders that may help motivate youth to get involved in temple and family history work.

Videos

- The “Featured Version” video segment from the *To Turn the Hearts* DVD. From the main menu, select **Featured Version**.
- “Involve the Youth” video segment from the *To Turn the Hearts* DVD. From the main menu, select **Bonus Video Features** and then **Springfield Leaders’ Secrets of Success**.
Note: You can also find these videos online. Go to LDS.org and click **Menu**, then **Serving in the Church**, then **Temple and Family History**, and then **Leader Resources**.
- “The Time is Now: Youth on Family History.” Go to LDS.org and click **Menu**, then **Youth**, then **Youth and Family History**.

Conference Talks

- David A. Bednar, “The Hearts of the Children Shall Turn,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, pages 24–27.
- Russell M. Nelson, “Generations Linked in Love,” *Ensign*, May. 2010, pages 91–94.
- Elaine S. Dalton, “We Did This for You,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, pages 89–91.

Websites

- Youth and Family History website. Go to LDS.org and click **Menu**, and then **Youth**, and then **Youth and Family History**. This site provides tutorials to help youth get started with family history and prepare names for temple ordinances.
- FamilySearch Serve portal. Go to FamilySearch.org/serve and sign in with your LDS Account. This portal provides instruction and resources for priesthood leaders and members with family history callings.

Guides

- *To Turn the Hearts: Leader’s Guide to Temple and Family History Work* provides suggestions on how to encourage youth to participate in temple and family history work. See *To Turn the Hearts*, pages 16–17.
- *Member’s Guide to Temple and Family History Work* provides guidelines on preparing names for temple work, policies on temple work, and teachings about the blessings of temple work. See *Member’s Guide*, pages 29–36.

Here are some suggestions for priesthood leaders on how to use family history to strengthen youth.

Ideas for Next Steps

- View the “Springfield Leaders’ Secrets of Success” video segment from the *To Turn the Hearts* DVD. From the main menu, select **Bonus Video Features** and then **Springfield Leaders’ Secrets of Success**.
- Review *To Turn the Hearts*, pages 16–17.
- Schedule time on upcoming council meeting agendas to discuss how temple and family history work can strengthen youth. See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church*, 2010, section 4.6.2.
- Share your plans with your priesthood leaders and receive counsel and direction from them.
- Follow up with the area family history adviser to plan the next steps and arrange additional instruction.

Best Practices

- The high councilor assigned to oversee family history instructs high priests group leaders in their responsibilities.
- The high councilor coordinates with the area family history adviser and reports regularly to the stake presidency.
- Family history work is included as an agenda item in stake and ward councils and youth committee meetings.
- Family history efforts are included in youth activities such as pioneer treks and temple trips.
- Youth may serve as family history consultants.
- Youth are encouraged to volunteer their time as indexers.
- Opportunities are provided for youth to use their computer skills and to help older members use Church websites.
- Youth leaders encourage youth to do family history activities to fulfill requirements for Duty to God and Personal Progress.

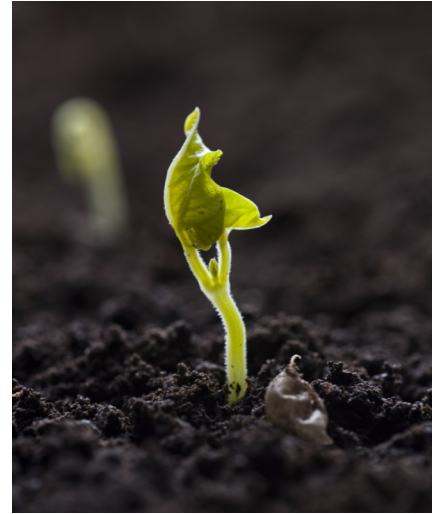
Measuring Success

Take time to consider how you will measure success. You may want to counsel with your priesthood leaders about which measures are important in your area. Some information can be captured through unit statistics, while other information may need to be tracked manually. Here are some measurements to consider:

- Number of full-time missionaries serving.
- Number of prospective full-time missionaries.
- Number of youth and young adults who hold limited-use temple recommends.
- Number of youth serving in family history callings.

- Number of youth registered on new.FamilySearch.org.
- Attendance at youth temple trips.

Don't be dissuaded if your efforts don't seem to bear immediate fruit. Continue to move forward with faith. It often takes a sustained effort over time before the results become visible.



The Hearts of the Children Shall Turn

By Elder David A. Bednar

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

October 2011, General Conference



I invite the young people of the Church to learn about and experience the Spirit of Elijah.

As we study, learn, and live the gospel of Jesus Christ, sequence often is instructive. Consider, for example, the lessons we learn about spiritual priorities from the order of the major events that occurred as the fulness of the Savior’s gospel was restored in these latter days.

In the Sacred Grove, Joseph Smith saw and talked with the Eternal Father and Jesus Christ. Among other things, Joseph learned about the true nature of the Godhead and of continuing revelation. This majestic vision ushered in “the dispensation of the fulness of times” (Ephesians 1:10) and is one of the signal events in the history of the world.

Approximately three years later, in response to earnest prayer on the evening of September 21, 1823, Joseph’s bedroom filled with light until it “was lighter than at noonday” (Joseph Smith—History 1:30). A personage appeared at his bedside, called the young boy by name, and declared “he was a messenger sent from the presence of God ... and that his name was Moroni” (verse 33). He instructed Joseph about the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. And then Moroni quoted from the book of Malachi in the Old Testament, with a little variation in the language used in the King James Version:

“Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

“... And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming” (verses 38, 39).

Moroni’s instructions to the young prophet ultimately included two primary themes: (1) the Book of Mormon and (2) the words of Malachi foretelling the role of Elijah in the Restoration “of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:21). Thus, the

introductory events of the Restoration revealed a correct understanding of the Godhead, emphasized the importance of the Book of Mormon, and anticipated the work of salvation and exaltation for both the living and the dead. This inspiring sequence is instructive about the spiritual matters of highest priority to Deity.

My message focuses upon the ministry and Spirit of Elijah foretold by Moroni in his initial instructions to Joseph Smith. I earnestly pray for the assistance of the Holy Ghost.

The Ministry of Elijah

Elijah was an Old Testament prophet through whom mighty miracles were performed. He sealed the heavens, and no rain fell in ancient Israel for 3½ years. He multiplied a widow’s meal and oil. He raised a young boy from the dead, and he called down fire from heaven in a challenge to the prophets of Baal. (See 1 Kings 17–18.) At the conclusion of Elijah’s mortal ministry, he “went up by a whirlwind into heaven” (2 Kings 2:11) and was translated.

“We learn from latter-day revelation that Elijah held the sealing power of the Melchizedek Priesthood and was the last prophet to do so before the time of Jesus Christ” (Bible Dictionary, “Elijah”). The Prophet Joseph Smith explained, “The spirit, power, and calling of Elijah is, that ye have power to hold the key of the ... *fullness of the Melchizedek Priesthood* ... ; and to ... obtain ... all the ordinances belonging to the kingdom of God” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 311; emphasis added). This sacred sealing authority is essential for priesthood ordinances to be valid and binding both on earth and in heaven.

Elijah appeared with Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration (see Matthew 17:3) and conferred this authority upon Peter, James, and John. Elijah appeared again with Moses and others on April 3, 1836, in the Kirtland Temple and conferred the same keys upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.

Scripture records that Elijah the prophet stood before Joseph and Oliver and said:

“Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi—testifying that he [Elijah] should be sent, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come—

“To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse—

“Therefore, the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors” (D&C 110:14–16).

The restoration of the sealing authority by Elijah in 1836 was necessary to prepare the world for the Savior’s Second Coming and initiated a greatly increased and worldwide interest in family history research.

The Spirit and Work of Elijah

The Prophet Joseph Smith declared: “The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead. ... For it is necessary that the sealing power should be in our hands to seal our children and our dead for the fullness of the dispensation of times—a dispensation to meet the promises made by Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world for the salvation of man. ... Hence, God said, ‘I will send you Elijah the prophet’” (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 475).

Joseph further explained:

“But what is the object of [the coming of Elijah]? or how is it to be fulfilled? The keys are to be delivered, the spirit of Elijah is to come, the Gospel to be established, the Saints of God gathered, Zion built up, and the Saints to come up as saviors on Mount Zion [see Obadiah 1:21].

“But how are they to become saviors on Mount Zion? By building their temples ... and going forth and receiving all the ordinances ... in behalf of all their progenitors who are dead ... ; and herein is the chain that binds the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, which fulfills the mission of Elijah” (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 472–73).

Elder Russell M. Nelson has taught that the Spirit of Elijah is “a manifestation of the Holy Ghost bearing witness of the divine nature of the family” (“A New Harvest Time,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 34). This distinctive influence of the Holy Ghost draws people to identify, document, and cherish their ancestors and family members—both past and present.

The Spirit of Elijah affects people inside and outside of the Church. However, as members of Christ’s restored Church, we have the covenant responsibility to search out our ancestors and provide for them the saving ordinances of the gospel. “They without us should not be made perfect” (Hebrews 11:40; see also *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 475). And “neither can we without our dead be made perfect” (D&C 128:15).

For these reasons we do family history research, build temples, and perform vicarious ordinances. For these reasons Elijah was sent to restore the sealing authority that binds on earth and in heaven. We are the Lord’s agents in the work of salvation and exaltation that will prevent “the whole earth [from being] smitten with a curse” (D&C 110:15) when He returns again. This is our duty and great blessing.

An Invitation to the Rising Generation

I now invite the attention of the young women, young men, and children of the rising generation as I emphasize the importance of the Spirit of Elijah in your lives today. My message is intended for the entire Church in general—but for you in particular. Many of you may think family history work is to be performed primarily by older people. But I know of no age limit described in the scriptures or guidelines announced by Church leaders restricting this important service to mature adults. You are sons and

daughters of God, children of the covenant, and builders of the kingdom. You need not wait until you reach an arbitrary age to fulfill your responsibility to assist in the work of salvation for the human family.

The Lord has made available in our day remarkable resources that enable you to learn about and love this work that is sparked by the Spirit of Elijah. For example, FamilySearch is a collection of records, resources, and services easily accessible with personal computers and a variety of handheld devices, designed to help people discover and document their family history. These resources also are available in the family history centers located in many of our Church buildings throughout the world.

It is no coincidence that FamilySearch and other tools have come forth at a time when young people are so familiar with a wide range of information and communication technologies. Your fingers have been trained to text and tweet to accelerate and advance the work of the Lord—not just to communicate quickly with your friends. The skills and aptitude evident among many young people today are a preparation to contribute to the work of salvation.

I invite the young people of the Church to learn about and experience the Spirit of Elijah. I encourage you to study, to search out your ancestors, and to prepare yourselves to perform proxy baptisms in the house of the Lord for *your* kindred dead (see D&C 124:28–36). And I urge you to help other people identify their family histories.

As you respond in faith to this invitation, your hearts shall turn to the fathers. The promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will be implanted in your hearts. Your patriarchal blessing, with its declaration of lineage, will link you to these fathers and be more meaningful to you. Your love and gratitude for your ancestors will increase. Your testimony of and conversion to the Savior will become deep and abiding. And I promise you will be protected against the intensifying influence of the adversary. As you participate in and love this holy work, you will be safeguarded in your youth and throughout your lives.

Parents and leaders, please help your children and youth to learn about and experience the Spirit of Elijah. But do not overly program this endeavor or provide too much detailed information or training. Invite young people to explore, to experiment, and to learn for themselves (see Joseph Smith—History 1:20). Any young person can do what I am suggesting, using the modules available at lds.org/familyhistoryyouth. Aaronic Priesthood quorum and Young Women class presidencies can play an important role in helping all youth become acquainted with these basic resources. Young people increasingly need to be learners who act and thereby receive additional light and knowledge by the power of the Holy Ghost—and not merely passive students who primarily are acted upon (see 2 Nephi 2:26).

Parents and leaders, you will stand all amazed at how rapidly your children and the youth of the Church become highly skilled with these tools. In fact, you will learn valuable lessons from these young people

about effectively using these resources. The youth can offer much to older individuals who are uncomfortable with or intimidated by technology or are unfamiliar with FamilySearch. You also will count your many blessings as young people devote more time to family history work and temple service and less time to video games, surfing the Internet, and Facebooking.

Troy Jackson, Jaren Hope, and Andrew Allan are bearers of the Aaronic Priesthood who were called by an inspired bishop to team teach a family history class in their ward. These young men are representative of so many of you in their eagerness to learn and desire to serve.

Troy stated, "I used to come to church and just sit there, but now I realize that I need to go home and do something. We can all do family history."

Jaren reported that as he learned more about family history, he realized "that these were not just names but real people. I became more and more excited about taking the names to the temple."

And Andrew commented, "I have taken to family history with a love and vigor I did not know I could muster. As I prepared each week to teach, I was often nudged by the Holy Spirit to act and try some of the methods taught in the lesson. Before, family history was a scary thing. But aided by the Spirit I was able to step up to my calling and help many people in our ward."

My beloved young brothers and sisters, family history is not simply an interesting program or activity sponsored by the Church; rather, it is a vital part of the work of salvation and exaltation. You have been prepared for this day and to build up the kingdom of God. You are here upon the earth now to assist in this glorious work.

I testify Elijah returned to the earth and restored the sacred sealing authority. I witness that what is bound on earth can be bound in heaven. And I know the youth of the rising generation have a key role to play in this great endeavor. I so testify in the sacred name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

Discover

Listen carefully in order to match a priesthood leader's goals and objectives with the appropriate family history resources. You will recognize family-related needs when leaders express a desire to:

- Strengthen the relationships of husbands, wives, and children.
- Prepare families for sealing ordinances.
- Fortify families against the outside pressures of the world.
- Provide positive activities that bring families together.



When priesthood leaders express concerns about strengthening families, you might suggest that involvement in family history work can provide a focus on the temple that helps members to strengthen their immediate and extended family relationships.

Share

To help priesthood leaders discover how family history can strengthen families, you might share the “Strengthen Families” video segment with the story of the Jess family from the *To Turn the Hearts* DVD.



Invite priesthood leaders to consider the following questions:

- What thoughts or impressions did you have while watching the video?
- What did you see that might be helpful to your own stake?
- What do you feel would be some appropriate next steps?

Enable

Here are some things you can do before, during, and after your visits with priesthood leaders:

- Prepare spiritually for your meetings with priesthood leaders by prayerfully studying the resources available in the leader's guide and DVD.
- Listen and observe during your interviews so that you can discern what resources to share (see D&C 84:85).
- At the invitation of priesthood leaders, arrange a time to conduct follow-up discussions, provide additional instruction, and help leaders organize their efforts for success.
- Leave copies of the Resources and Implementation pages with the leaders.
- Take time to reflect on each meeting. Consider what went well and how to improve next time.

“Members who engage in this work are inspired to live gospel-centered lives and are more likely to participate in personal and family prayer, personal and family scripture study, and regular family home evening. Typically, when members participate in temple and family history work, they are more likely to participate in all other Church meetings” (*To Turn the Hearts*, page 1).

Below are some resources for priesthood leaders that may help motivate families to get involved in temple and family history work.

Videos

- The “Featured Version” video segment from the *To Turn the Hearts* DVD. From the main menu, select **Featured Version**.
- The “Strengthen Families” video segment from the *To Turn the Hearts* DVD. From the main menu, select **Bonus Video Features** and then **Individual Stories and Topics**.
Note: You can also find these videos online. Go to LDS.org and click **Menu**, then **Serving in the Church**, then **Temple and Family History** and then **Leader Resources**.
- “The Time Is Now: Youth on Family History.” Go to LDS.org and click **Menu**, and then **Youth** and then **Youth and Family History**.

Articles

- Thomas S. Monson, “The Holy Temple—A Beacon to the World,” *Ensign*, May 2011, page 90–93.
- Boyd K. Packer, “Your Family History: Getting Started,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2003, pages 12–17.
- Russell M. Nelson, “Generations Linked in Love,” *Ensign*, May, 2010, pages 91–94.

Websites

- Temple and Family History website. Go to LDS.org and click **Menu**, then **Serving in the Church**, and then **Temple and Family History**. This site provides resources for priesthood leaders, members with family history callings, and youth.
- FamilySearch Serve portal. Go to FamilySearch.org/serve and sign in with your LDS Account. This portal provides instruction and resources for priesthood leaders and members with family history callings.

Guides

- *To Turn the Hearts: Leader’s Guide to Temple and Family History Work* provides suggestions on how to involve adults, youth, and children in temple and family history work. See *To Turn the Hearts*, pages 16–17.
- *Member’s Guide to Temple and Family History Work* provides guidelines on preparing names for temple work, policies on temple work, and teachings about the blessings of temple work. See the *Member’s Guide*, pages 29–36.

Here are some suggestions for priesthood leaders on how to use family history to help strengthen families.

Ideas for Next Steps

- View the “Springfield Leaders’ Secrets of Success” video segment from the *To Turn the Hearts* DVD. From the main menu, select **Bonus Video Features** and then **Springfield Leaders’ Secrets of Success**.
- Review *To Turn the Hearts*, pages 16–17.
- Schedule time on upcoming council meeting agendas to discuss how temple and family history work can strengthen families. See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church*, 2010, section 4.6.2.
- Share your plans with your priesthood leaders, and receive counsel and direction from them.
- Follow up with the area family history adviser to plan the next steps and arrange additional instruction.

Best Practices

- The high councilor assigned to oversee family history instructs high priests group leaders in their responsibilities.
- The high councilor coordinates with the area family history adviser and reports regularly to the stake presidency.
- Family history work is included as an agenda item in stake and ward councils and youth committees.
- Set goals, and plan family history activities.

Measuring Success

Take time to consider how you will measure success. You may want to counsel with your priesthood leaders about which measures are important in your area. Some information can be captured through unit statistics, while other information may need to be tracked manually. Here are some measurements to consider:

- Family attendance at Church meetings
- Percentage of members participating in personal and family prayer
- Percentage of members participating in family scripture study
- Percentage of members participating in family home evening

Don’t be dissuaded if your efforts don’t seem to bear immediate fruit. Continue to move forward with faith. It often takes a sustained effort over time before results become visible.



Your Family History: Getting Started

By President Boyd K. Packer

Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



This article consists of extracts from President Packer's book *The Holy Temple*.

If you don't know where to start, start with yourself. If you don't know what records to get, and how to get them, start with what you have.

Several years ago Sister Packer and I determined that we should get our records in order. However, under the pressure of Church responsibilities with my travels about the world, and the obligations with our large family and a home to keep up both indoors and outdoors, there just was not enough time. But we were restless about this family history responsibility, and finally we determined that somehow we would have to make more time in the day.

During the Christmas holidays when we had a little extra time, we started. Then as we moved back to a regular schedule after the holidays, we adopted the practice of getting up an hour or two earlier each day.

We gathered together everything we had, and in the course of a few weeks we were amazed at what we were able to accomplish. The thing that was most impressive, however, was the fact that we began to have experiences that told us somehow that we were being guided, that there were those beyond the veil who were interested in what we were doing. Things began to fall into place.

As I have traveled about the Church and paid particular attention to this subject, many testimonies have come to light. Others who assemble their records together are likewise having similar experiences. It was as though the Lord was waiting for us to begin.

We found things we had wondered about for a long time. It seemed as though they came to us almost too easily. More than this, things that we never dreamed existed began to show up. We began to learn by personal experience that this research into our families is an inspired work. We came to know that an inspiration will follow those who move into it. It is just a matter of getting started.

Once we started, we found the time. Somehow we were able to carry on all of the other responsibilities.

There seemed to be an increased inspiration in our lives because of this work.

Paths Open When We Start

But the decision, the action, must begin with the individual. The Lord will not tamper with our agency. If we want a testimony of family history and temple work, we must do something about that work. Here is an example of what can happen when you do.

I once attended a conference in the Hartford Connecticut Stake. An assignment had been made three months earlier to all members of the stake presidency to speak on this subject of family history work. One had been a counselor in the stake presidency but became stake patriarch at that conference. He told this interesting incident.

He had not been able to get started in family history work, although he was “converted” to it. He just didn’t know where to start. When he received the assignment to prepare a life history from his own records, he was unable to find anything about his childhood and youth except his birth certificate. He was one of 11 children born to Italian immigrants. He is the only member of his family in the Church.

In fulfilling the assignment he tried to put together everything he could find on his life. At least he was starting, but there just didn’t seem to be anywhere to go. He could get his own life story put together from his own memory and from what few records he had.

Then a very interesting thing happened. His aged mother, who was in a rest home, had a great yearning to return once more to her homeland in Italy. Finally, because she was obsessed with this desire, the doctors felt nothing would be gained by denying her this request, and the family decided to grant their mother her dying wish. And for some reason they all decided that this brother (the only member of the family in the Church) should be the one to accompany his mother to Italy.

All at once, then, he found himself returning to the ancestral home. A door was opening! While in Italy he visited the parish church where his mother was baptized and also the parish church where his father was baptized. He met many relatives. He learned that the records in the parish go back for 500 years. He visited the town hall to look into the records and found people very cooperative there. The town clerk told him that the previous summer a seminarian and a nun had been there together looking for records of this brother’s family name, and they had said they were collecting the family history of the family. He was given the name of the city where they lived, and he now could follow that lead. He learned also that there is a city in Italy bearing the family name.

But this is not all. When he came to Salt Lake City to general conference he returned by way of Colorado, where many of his family live. There, with very little persuasion, a family organization was effected and a family reunion was planned, which soon afterwards was held.

And then, as always happens, some of his relatives—his aunts and uncles, his brothers and sisters—began to provide the pictures and information about *his* life that he never knew existed. And, as always happens, he learned that this is a work of inspiration.

The Lord will bless you once you begin this work. This has been very evident to my family. Since the time we decided that we would start where we were, with what we had, many things have opened to us.

On one occasion I took to the Genealogical Society eight large volumes, manuscript family history work, consisting of 6,000 family group records of very professional family history work, all on the Packer family. All of it was compiled by Warren Packer, originally from Ohio, a schoolteacher, a Lutheran. He has spent 30 years doing this work, not really knowing why. There are two more volumes now added to the others. He senses now why he has been involved in this work over the years and very much has the spirit of the work.

We have had the opportunity, too, of locating and visiting the ancestral Packer home in England. Many of the large manor houses in England in recent years have been opened to the public. This one is not. It is about a 15-minute drive from the London England Temple, and it is built on the site of an ancient castle, with a moat around it. It stands just as it was finished in the early 1600s. The portraits of our ancestors are hanging where they were placed nearly 300 years ago. On the estate is a little chapel. In it is a stained glass window with the Packer coat of arms, put there in 1625.

Things began to emerge once we got to work. We still are not, by any means, experts in family history research. We are, however, dedicated to our family. And it is my testimony that if we start where we are—each of us with ourselves, with such records as we have—and begin putting those in order, things will fall into place as they should.

How to Begin

It is a matter of getting started. You may come to know the principle that Nephi knew when he said, “And I was led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things which I should do” (1 Nephi 4:6).

If you don’t know where to start, start with *yourself*. If you don’t know what records to get, and how to get them, start with what you have.

There are two very simple instructions for those who are waiting for a place to begin. Here’s what you might do:

Get a cardboard box. Any kind of a box will do. Put it someplace where it is in the way, perhaps on the couch or on the counter in the kitchen—anywhere where it cannot go unnoticed. Then, over a period of a few weeks, collect and put into the box every record of your life, such as your birth certificate, your certificate of blessing, your certificate of baptism, your certificate of ordination, and your certificate of graduation. Collect diplomas, all of the photographs, honors, or awards, a diary if you have kept one, everything that you can find pertaining to *your* life; anything that is written, or registered, or recorded that testifies that you are alive and what you have done.

Don't try to do this in a day. Take some time on it. Most of us have these things scattered around here and there. Some of them are in a box in the garage under that stack of newspapers; others are stored away in drawers, or in the attic, or one place or another. Perhaps some have been tucked in the leaves of the Bible or elsewhere.

Gather all these papers together and put them in the box. Keep it there until you have collected everything you think you have. Then make some space on a table, or even on the floor, and sort out all that you have collected. Divide your life into three periods. The Church does it that way. All of our programming in the Church is divided into three general categories—children, youth, and adult.

Start with the childhood section and begin with your birth certificate. Put together every record in chronological order: the pictures, the record of your baptism, and so on, up to the time you were 12 years of age.

Next assemble all that which pertains to your youth, from 12 to 18, or up until the time you were married. Put all of that together in chronological order. Line up the records—the certificates, the photographs, and so on—and put them in another box or envelope. Do the same with the records on the rest of your life.

Once you have done this, you have what is necessary to complete your life story. Simply take your birth certificate and begin writing: "I was born September 10, 1924, the son of Ira W. Packer and Emma Jensen Packer, at Brigham City, Utah. I was the tenth child and the fifth son in the family."

It really won't take you long to write, or dictate into a tape recorder, the account of your life, and it will have an accuracy because you have collected those records.

What then? After you've made the outline of your life history to date, what do you do with all of the materials you have collected?

That, of course, brings you to your book of remembrance. Simply paste them lightly on the pages so that they can be taken out if necessary from time to time, and you have your book of remembrance.

Once you begin this project, very interesting and inspiring things will happen. You cannot do this much without getting something of the spirit of it, and without talking about it, at least in your family circle. Some very interesting things will start to happen once you show some interest in your own family history work. It is a firm principle. There are many, many testimonies about it. It will happen to you.

Aunt Clara will tell you that she has a picture of you with your great-grandfather. You know that cannot be so, because he died the year before you were born. But Aunt Clara produces the picture. There is your great-grandfather holding you as a tiny baby. As you check through the records you find that he died the year *after* you were born, an important detail in your family history.

That accurate data means something. The middle name written on the back of the picture means something too. You may not know it at the moment, but it is a key; the beginning of ordinance work in the temple for some of your ancestors.

You believe in the Resurrection. You must know that baptism for someone who is dead is quite as essential as baptism for someone who is living. There is no difference in the importance of it. One by one it must happen. They must do it here while living, or it must be done for them here after they die.

The whole New Testament centers on the Resurrection of the Lord. The message is that *all* are to be resurrected. Every scripture and every motivation that apply to missionary work have their application to ordinance work for the dead.

Now you have your own family history written, and you have your book of remembrance assembled. It sounds too easy—well it is, almost. But it does mean that you have to get started. Like Nephi, you will be “led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things which [you] should do” (1 Nephi 4:6).

So find a cardboard box and put it in the way and begin to put things in it, and as the things unfold you will sense something spiritual happening and not be too surprised at that.

As the Heart Turns

Family history work has the power to do something *for* the dead. It has an equal power to do something *to* the living. Family history work of Church members has a refining, spiritualizing, tempering influence on those who are engaged in it. They understand that they are tying their family together, their living family here with those who have gone before.

Family history work in one sense would justify itself even if one were not successful in clearing names for temple work. The process of searching, the means of going after those names, would be worth all the effort you could invest. The reason: You cannot find names without knowing that they represent people. You begin to find out things about people. When we research our own lines we become interested in more than just names or the number of names going through the temple. Our interest turns our hearts to our fathers—we seek to find them and to know them and to serve them.

In doing so we store up treasures in heaven.

Family History Basics

There are several basic component parts to family history and temple work. Over the years, they may be rearranged somewhat in emphasis, or the approach in programming Church participation may change somewhat. But the responsibilities stay about the same.

1. Each of us is to compile his or her own life history.
2. Each of us is to keep a book of remembrance.
3. As individuals and families we are each to seek out our kindred dead, beginning first with the four most recent generations on each line, and then going back as far as we can.
4. We are each to participate in other programs such as name extraction when asked to do so.
5. We are to organize our families and hold meetings and reunions.
6. If we have access to a temple, each of us should go to the temple as often as possible to do ordinance work—first for ourselves, then for our progenitors, then for all the names that have been gathered by means other than our own.

Discover

Listen carefully in order to match a priesthood leader's goals and objectives with the appropriate family history resources. You will recognize missionary-related needs when leaders express a desire to:

- Bring the blessings of the gospel and the plan of salvation to nonmembers within their stake.
- Increase the number of convert baptisms in the stake.
- Support the efforts of full-time and ward missionaries serving in the stake.
- Increase goodwill with nonmembers in the stake.
- Assist youth and recently called missionaries as they prepare for their missions.



When priesthood leaders express concerns about missionary work, you might suggest that family history work can provide a nonthreatening way of introducing a nonmember to the Church. Understanding your background and being part of a family is a common concern across all cultures. Discussion about family history can lead to discussion about eternal families and the reasons why we do family history work.

Share

To help priesthood leaders discover how family history can support missionary work within their stake or wards, you might share the “Missionary Work and Retention” [video segment](#) in the *To Turn the Hearts* DVD.



Invite priesthood leaders to consider the following questions:

- What thoughts or impressions did you have while watching the video?
- What did you see that might be helpful to your own stake?
- What do you feel would be some appropriate next steps?

Enable

Here are some things you can do before, during, and after your visits with priesthood leaders:

- Prepare spiritually for your meetings with priesthood leaders by prayerfully studying the resources available in the Leader's Guide and DVD.
- Listen and observe during your interviews so that you can discern what resources to share (see D&C 84:85).
- At the invitation of priesthood leaders, arrange a time to conduct follow-up discussions, provide additional instruction, and help leaders organize their efforts for success.
- Leave copies of the Resources and Implementation pages with the leaders.
- Take time to reflect on each meeting. Consider what went well and how to improve next time.

“Family history allows Church members to share a gospel topic with friends and neighbors of other faiths in a nonthreatening way. Most people have a natural interest in families. Throughout the world, the hearts of millions of people have turned to their ancestors” (*To Turn the Hearts*, page 13).

Below are some resources you can use to understand how family history can support missionary work.

Videos

- The “Featured Version” video segment from the *To Turn the Hearts* DVD. From the main menu, select **Featured Version**.
- The “Missionary Work and Retention” video segment from the *To Turn the Hearts* DVD. From the main menu, select **Bonus Video Features** and then **Individual Stories and Topics**.
Note: You can also find these videos online. Go to LDS.org and click **Menu**, then **Serving in the Church**, then **Temple and Family History**, and then **Leader Resources**.

Conference Talks

- Dennis B. Neuenschwander, “Bridges and Eternal Keepsakes,” *Ensign*, May 1999, pages 83–85.
- Christopher K. Bigelow, “Using Family History as a Missionary Tool,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2000, 29–31.

Websites

- ELearning lesson. “Family History and Missionary Work.” Go to FamilySearch.org/serve and sign in with your LDS Account. Then click on **Family History and Missionary Work**. The lesson teaches how family history can be used to support missionary work within a stake and how members can assist the full-time missionaries in their efforts to use family history as a resource.
- Family history page at Mormon.org. Go to mormon.org, and click **Our Values** and then **Family History**. This page explains why family history is so important to members of the LDS faith.

Guides

- The missionary teaching guide, *Preach My Gospel*, contains doctrine and principles about how to use family history to share the message of the restored gospel. See *Preach My Gospel*, pages 86, 163–64.
- *To Turn the Hearts: Leader’s Guide to Temple and Family History Work* provides specific suggestions on how family history can allow members to share the gospel in a nonthreatening way. See *To Turn the Hearts*, pages 13–15.

Here are some suggestions on how family history can be used to support missionary work within a stake.

Ideas for Next Steps

- View the “Secrets of Success” video segment from the *To Turn the Hearts* DVD. From the main menu, select **Bonus Video Features** and then **Springfield Leaders’ Secrets of Success**.
- Review *To Turn the Hearts* pages 13–14.
- Schedule time on upcoming council meeting agendas to discuss how temple and family history work can help support missionary work in your stake. See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church*, 2010, section 4.6.2.
- Share your plans with your priesthood leaders, and receive counsel and direction from them.
- Follow up with the area family history adviser to plan the next steps and arrange additional instruction.

Best Practices

- Ask the high councilors who oversee missionary work and family history work to counsel together and consider how family history work can be used to support missionary efforts in the stake. Have them review the Resources handout for ideas.
- Include temple and family history work as an agenda item in stake missionary meetings and stake and ward councils.
- Have the high counselors assigned to oversee family history instruct high priests group leaders in their responsibilities.
- Have ward family history consultants work with youth who are preparing for missions to fill out a pedigree chart and fulfill other required family history activities prior to beginning their missions.
- Coordinate with the mission president in your area to implement family history oriented missionary approaches. Support these efforts by training stake and ward missionaries to find investigators using family history–oriented approaches.
- If the stake operates a family history center, have the center director work with the full–time and ward missionaries to provide facilities, training, and activities that are family history based.
- Provide family history pass–along cards to members so they can give them to prospective members.
- Sponsor family history open houses so prospective members can become familiar with family history and the Church.

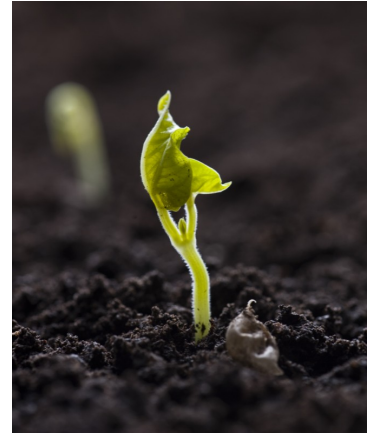
Measuring Success

Take time to consider how you will measure success. You may want to counsel with your priesthood leaders about which measures are important in your area. Some information can be captured through

unit statistics, while other information may need to be tracked manually. Here are some measurements to consider:

- Number of investigators that are approached by full-time and ward missionaries using a family history approach.
- Number of family history activities conducted in the stake each month that have a missionary focus.
- Attendance at family history centers.
- Number of convert baptisms.

Don't be dissuaded if your efforts don't seem to bear immediate fruit. Continue to move forward with faith. It often takes a sustained effort over time before the results become visible.



Using Family History as a Missionary Tool

By Christopher K. Bigelow

October 2000 *Ensign*

Members in the Huntsville Alabama Stake are finding rich blessings as they share the gospel with others through family history.

“Religion is personal to people and many times closely held,” says Charles Wight, a stake missionary in the Huntsville Alabama Stake. “On the other hand, nearly anybody will sit down and talk to you about their ancestors. You can ask people questions about where they’re from, and they enjoy letting you know about their heritage.”

Brother Wight is among numerous members, leaders, and missionaries in Huntsville who are excited about helping people explore family history. As members participate in the North America Southeast Area’s “Tell Me about Your Family” approach, the stake is experiencing not only increased enthusiasm for missionary and family history work but also measurable results.

The main goal is to make new, genuine friends and help them understand the Church’s emphasis on the family. Along the way, people sometimes become interested in the Church, but giving them an understanding and excitement about family history work is the focus.

“Family history is a nonthreatening way to have members of other faiths come into our homes and meetinghouses and build relationships with us,” says stake president Michael D. Knight, a Huntsville native and a dentist. “Sharing the gospel is not as simple as inviting somebody over to hear the missionaries or watch a Church video. We’ve struggled to involve members in missionary work. But we’ve had more member participation in this family history approach than anything else we’ve tried.”

“Tell Me about Your Family”

A family history approach to missionary work is in line with what Church leaders would like to see members doing. “We do not use our family history work for missionary work nearly so much as we could,” said President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, at a 1998 family history satellite broadcast. During the same broadcast, Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Presidency of the Seventy said: “Family history is obviously a crucial tool in redeeming the dead, but it can also play an important role in proclaiming the gospel and strengthening members of the Church. With even minimal coordination between priesthood leaders, family history workers, and missionaries, it will not be difficult to use family history as a tool for conversion and and retention of new members and activation of less-active” (“Using Family History Centers for Missionary and Activation Efforts,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1999, 77).

In Huntsville, Alabama, stake and full-time missionaries visit members to motivate them to ask their friends and neighbors about their family history. *Tell Me about Your Family* cards are widely circulated for members to use in helping others begin writing down names, dates, and places.

Once the subject of family history is broached, the next step is for the member to invite the interested person to a family history open house or a family home evening about family history. The open houses take place as frequently as every month in Church meetinghouses, often on the same evening in all units throughout the stake. "We've found more members will invite a friend to an open house or hold a home evening if they are personally invited to do so by stake or full-time missionaries," says President Knight.

After units hold family history open houses, stake mission president Dean Dexter follows up to find out what worked and what didn't. "The most successful open houses include several elements: one, a brief, spiritual presentation on why Latter-day Saints do family history work; two, a demonstration of FamilySearch™ software, with the computer screen projected for everyone to see, if possible; three, an opportunity for each visitor to sit down at a table and be assisted in filling out the *Where Do I Start?* pamphlet and other forms." Many of the units also set up displays of family history work done by members, including pictures and other visuals. "Visitors love seeing what other people have done," Brother Dexter says.

Having full-time missionaries participate "is the most critical and important part of what we are doing at these open houses," he adds. Missionaries give presentations, assist people in filling out family history forms, and help them search for names on computers provided at most of the open houses. "The key is to have the full-time missionaries sit at tables and work with people one-on-one and establish a rapport," says high councilor Robert Swenson. "Otherwise it's just another family history seminar. People naturally ask questions that lead to opportunities to share the gospel."

Stake missionaries and members are vital to the success of open houses. "The helpers don't need to know anything about things like microfiche or Personal Ancestral File," says Brother Dexter. "They just need to help the visitors write down some names. It's facilitating a connection. The visitor knows that Church members are interested in him and his family, and there's a bond created. If the visitor is interested in pursuing family history, we have experts who can help with further research. We don't want to make these first experiences too technical."

President Knight adds: "We don't want the open houses to get too big. The key is that visitors actually get to do things, that it's very hands-on. Smaller groups allow us to give personal attention more effectively and follow up on any teaching opportunities that arise."

Once a person has participated in a family history night or open house, following up is essential, not only to help them continue their family history work but also to give them the opportunity to investigate the

Church. “We want the visitors to leave hungry for more, not overstuffed,” says Brother Dexter. Charles Drake, a member of the Cullman Ward who has invited as many as seven people to an open house, says, “We try to get the same people to come back by having something new for them each time. We want to get well acquainted with them so we can invite them to another Church activity and move them toward investigating.”

In the Fayetteville Branch in nearby Tennessee, members have followed up with prospective investigators by many means. “One brother exchanged e-mail addresses with several of the visitors before they left,” reported branch executive secretary Robert Topp. “A few days after the open house, one of the visitors e-mailed a thank-you note. A continuing exchange of correspondence resulted, and it has led to questions about the Church and its doctrines. An invitation has been extended to the new friend to take part in some Church activities.”

For a family home evening about family history, Byrd Springs Ward members Robert and Mia Swenson invited five families. “We had two yesses, one no, two maybes,” says Brother Swenson. “We showed a five-minute clip from the *Family First* video. Then we sat down and filled out family history sheets.

Missionaries were there to act as consultants. At the end, some of our guests asked questions about the Church. The Spirit was there, and they were receptive.”

Blessings for Members

As a stake missionary, Jeanne Marlow focuses mainly on fellowshipping new members and activating members. “We’re finding that if we can get new or activated members involved in family history work and going to the temple to do baptisms for the dead, we have a much higher retention rate.”

And she finds that family history involvement has a ripple effect in the lives of new converts. “We recently finished the new member discussions with a sister and helped her start her family history,” Sister Marlow says. “Although she hasn’t found many of her African-American ancestors, it has been fun for her to learn to use the tools and the census and plantation records. She’s been sharing this with a lot of her nonmember friends, and one of them is close to taking the missionary discussions.”

For stake missionary Charles Wight, talking with others about family history has helped him reestablish relationships that became strained when he joined the Church. “I was born and raised here, and I know a lot of people in the community,” he says. “When I was baptized in 1997, some of those people were disappointed in me. But the family history approach has allowed me to get back to talking with some of these people, helping them see we follow Christ and we’re interested in making a connection with people in general.”

President Knight points out another way members are blessed by the family history approach: “When members start trying to interest others in family history, it motivates them to show more interest in their *own* family history. We’ve asked all our members to have an ongoing plan to process their own family file cards, and we’re making headway there. We’ve got family history consultants called in every unit who are actively helping members, asking those who don’t do much genealogy to make some effort.”

Brother Drake adds, “I think it’s the best missionary approach we’ve had in some years here and perhaps the best ever to reach southern people, because family is really important to us.” The focus is really to help family and friends become excited about family history work. In the Huntsville Alabama Stake, people are coming to understand why the family is so important to members of the Church, and many of these people are coming to understand why the gospel is so important to the family.

Discover

Listen carefully in order to match a priesthood leader's goals and objectives with the appropriate family history resources. You will recognize convert retention needs when leaders express a desire to help new members:

- Continue to grow in the gospel and receive ordinances.
- Receive the blessings of the temple and the spiritual strength that comes with temple attendance.
- Receive meaningful callings and fellowship.



When priesthood leaders express concerns about convert retention, you might suggest that new members obtain a limited-use recommend and perform baptisms for their deceased ancestors. They might also benefit from receiving a meaningful calling as a family history indexer.

Share

To help priesthood leaders discover how family history work can provide opportunities for strengthening new members, you might share the “Missionary Work and Retention” video segment in the *To Turn the Hearts* DVD.



Invite priesthood leaders to consider the following questions:

- What thoughts or impressions did you have while watching the video?
- What did you see that might be helpful to your own stake?
- What do you feel would be some appropriate next steps?

Enable

Here are some things you can do before, during, and after your visits with priesthood leaders:

- Prepare spiritually for your meetings with priesthood leaders by prayerfully studying the resources available in the leader's guide and DVD.
- Listen and observe during your interviews so that you can discern what resources to share (see D&C 84:85).
- At the invitation of priesthood leaders, arrange a time to conduct follow-up discussions, provide additional instruction, and help leaders organize their efforts for success.
- Leave copies of the Resources and Implementation pages with the leaders.
- Take time to reflect on each meeting. Consider what went well and how to improve next time.

“Temple and family history work is an effective way to help the ward with the retention of new members. Those new members who do temple and family history work will have their testimonies strengthened because of the Spirit that attends the work” (*To Turn the Hearts*, page 14).

Below are some resources for priesthood leaders that may help strengthen recent converts.

Videos

- The “Featured Version” video segment from the *To Turn the Hearts* DVD. From the main menu, select **Featured Version**.
- “Missionary Work and Retention” video segment from the *To Turn the Hearts* DVD. From the main menu, select **Bonus Video Features** and then **Individual Stories and Topics**.
Note: You can also find these videos online. Go to LDS.org and click **Menu**, then **Serving in the Church**, then **Temple and Family History**, and then **Leader Resources**.
- “Blessings of Temple and Family History Work” from the *Temple and Family History Course* DVD. From the main menu, select **Providing Temple Ordinances**.

Articles

- Dennis B. Neuenschwander, “Bridges and Eternal Keepsakes,” *Ensign*, May 1999, pages 83–85
- “Becoming Part of the Fold,” *Ensign*, June 1999, pages 62–67.
- Constance Palmer Lewis, “FamilySearch Indexing,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2007, pages 34–41.

Websites

- Getting Started website. Go to LDS.org and click **Menu**, then **Family History**, and then **Getting Started**. This site provides tutorials to help members prepare names for temple ordinances.
- Temple and Family History website. Go to LDS.org and click **Menu**, then **Serving in the Church**, and then **Temple and Family History**. This site provides resources for priesthood leaders, members with family history callings, and youth.
- FamilySearch indexing. Go to FamilySearch.org and click **Indexing**.

Guides

- *To Turn the Hearts: Leader’s Guide to Temple and Family History Work* provides suggestions on how to foster member retention through family history work. See *To Turn the Hearts*, page 14. Suggestions are also given on how to establish a FamilySearch indexing effort in a stake; see pages 8–9.

Implementation

Here are some suggestions for priesthood leaders on how to use FamilySearch to help new members stay active and be strengthened in the gospel.

Ideas for Next Steps

- View the “Missionary Work and Retention” video segment from the *To Turn the Hearts* DVD. From the main menu, select **Bonus Video Features** and then **Springfield Leaders’ Secrets of Success**.
- Review *To Turn the Hearts*, page 14.
- Schedule time on upcoming council meeting agendas to discuss FamilySearch indexing. See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church*, 2010, section 4.6.2.
- Share your plans with your priesthood leaders, and receive counsel and direction from them.
- Follow up with the area family history adviser to plan the next steps and arrange additional instruction.

Best Practices

- New members are contacted by family history consultants soon after their baptism to help them begin to identify their ancestors.
- New members obtain a limited-use recommend and perform baptisms for their deceased ancestors.
- Prayerfully consider calling new members to be indexers.
- The high councilor assigned to oversee family history work instructs the high priests group leaders in their responsibilities.
- The high councilor coordinates with the area family history adviser and reports regularly to the stake presidency.
- Family history work is included as an agenda item in stake and ward councils and youth committee meetings.
- Family history activities are planned that will help converts stay active in the gospel.

Measuring Success

Take time to consider how you will measure success. You may want to counsel with your priesthood leaders about which measures are important in your area. Some information can be captured through unit statistics, while other information may need to be tracked manually. Here are some measurements to consider from the *New and Returning Member Progress* form (08616):

- Number of new members regularly attending sacrament meeting
- Number of new members who have received a responsibility or calling
- Number of recent converts participating in indexing

- The number of members who have started a family group sheet.
- The number of members who have been issued a limited-use temple recommend and have participated in proxy baptisms in the temple (where feasible).

Don't be dissuaded if your efforts don't seem to bear immediate fruit. Continue to move forward with faith. It often takes a sustained effort over time before the results become visible.



Bridges and Eternal Keepsakes

Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander

Of the Seventy



Genealogies, family stories, historical accounts, and traditions ... form a bridge between past and future and bind generations together in ways that no other keepsake can.

Brethren and sisters, every family has keepsakes. Families collect furniture, books, porcelain, and other valuable things, then pass them on to their posterity. Such beautiful keepsakes remind us of loved ones now gone and turn our minds to loved ones unborn. They form a bridge between family past and family future.

Every family has other, more valuable, keepsakes. These include genealogies, family stories, historical accounts, and traditions. These eternal keepsakes also form a bridge between past and future and bind generations together in ways that no other keepsake can.

I would like to share a few thoughts about family history, bridges, and eternal keepsakes. Family history builds bridges between the generations of our families, builds bridges to activity in the Church, and builds bridges to the temple.

First, family history builds bridges between the generations of our families. Bridges between generations are not built by accident. Each member of this Church has the personal responsibility to be an eternal architect of this bridge for his or her own family. At one of our family gatherings this past Christmas, I watched my father, who is 89 years old, and our oldest grandchild, Ashlin, who is four and a half. They enjoyed being together. This was a bittersweet moment of realization for me. Though Ashlin will retain pleasant but fleeting memories of my father, he will have no memory of my mother, who passed away before his birth. Not one of my children has any recollection of my grandparents. If I want my children and grandchildren to know those who still live in my memory, then I must build the bridge between them. I alone am the link to the generations that stand on either side of me. It is my responsibility to knit their hearts together through love and respect, even though they may never have known each other personally.

My grandchildren will have no knowledge of their family's history if I do nothing to preserve it for them. That which I do not in some way record will be lost at my death, and that which I do not pass on to my posterity, they will never have. The work of gathering and sharing eternal family keepsakes is a personal responsibility. It cannot be passed off or given to another.

A life that is not documented is a life that within a generation or two will largely be lost to memory. What a tragedy this can be in the history of a family. Knowledge of our ancestors shapes us and instills within us values that give direction and meaning to our lives. Some years ago, I met the director of a Russian Orthodox monastery. He showed me volumes of his own extensive family research. He told me that one of the values, perhaps even the main value, of genealogy is the establishment of family tradition and the passing of these traditions on to younger generations. "Knowledge of these traditions and family history," he said, "welds generations together." Further, he told me: "If one knows he comes from honest ancestors, he is duty and honor bound to be honest. One cannot be dishonest without letting each member of his family down."¹

If you are among the first to have embraced the gospel in your family, build bridges to your posterity by recording the events of your life and writing words of encouragement to them. In 1892 sisters of the Kolob Stake in Springville, Utah, wrote letters to their children and sealed them in a time capsule to be opened March 17, 1942, the centennial anniversary of the Relief Society. After recording a brief genealogy of her family reaching back to those who first joined the Church, Mariah Catherine Boyer wrote the following to her two children: "Dear children, when you read this, parents and grandparents will be sleeping in the silent tomb. Those hands that toiled so hard in love for you will toil no more, and those eyes that gazed in love and approbation on your innocent brows will see you no more, until we meet in heaven. Dear children, ... may the bands of a sister and a brother's love entwine your hearts. ... Do right by your fellowmen, follow the dictates of your conscience, ask God to give you power to resist all temptations to do evil, and let it be said of you, 'that the world is better for you having lived in it.' Keep the commandments of God. May your paths in life be strewn with flowers, and may you at all times do right. May you never taste adversity. May the Spirit and blessings of God attend you at all times is the prayer of your mother. I will enclose the photographs of our family. Goodbye my dear children, until we meet."² These tender and beautiful words have now bridged six generations of a faithful family.

Family history and temple work have a great power, which lies in their scriptural and divine promise that the hearts of the fathers will turn to the children and those of the children will turn to their fathers.³ Woodrow Wilson stated: "A nation which does not remember what it was yesterday, does not know what it is today, nor what it is trying to do. We are trying to do a futile thing if we do not know where we came from or what we have been about."⁴ Well might this be said of families also: A *family* "which does not remember what it was yesterday, does not know what it is today, nor what it is trying to do. We are trying to do a futile thing if we do not know where we came from or what we have been about."

Second, family history builds bridges to activity in the Church. Family history work solidifies converts and strengthens all members of the Church. Family history research and the preparation of names for the temple can be most valuable in the retention of new members. Faith and confidence grow as family members are included in the saving ordinances of the gospel. During a recent stake conference, I met John and Carmen Day, who were recently baptized. They told me that they had already prepared family names and were planning to enter the temple as soon as they could. Is retention a question here? A new member of the Church can be introduced to family history and temple work very quickly by missionaries, friends, neighbors, and priesthood and auxiliary leaders. Participation in temple ordinances is, after all, at the center of our gospel experience. No official call is required to participate in family history and the accompanying gospel ordinances.

Recently I read an article in the *Improvement Era* of August 1940. I quote: "A year ago last April Conference, Dr. John A. Widtsoe of the Council of the Twelve asked the mission presidents of the Church what single phase of the Gospel was most responsible in their respective missions for making new friends, new interests, new converts. President Frank Evans of the Eastern States Mission looked into the subject and concluded that genealogy, and its attendant Gospel ordinances and beliefs, was the greatest factor in his mission."⁵

A more recent Church study reveals that early involvement in finding and preparing family names for the temple and, where possible, participating in vicarious baptisms for them are major factors in the retention of new members. The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve have encouraged a much broader use of family history and the family history Centers in the retention of new converts and the activation of those who have fallen out of regular Church activity. Priesthood leaders, missionaries, and family history center directors all play important roles in the expanded use of these centers.

Third, family history builds bridges to the temple. Family history work leads us to the temple. Family history and temple work are one work. The words *family history* should probably never be said without attaching the word *temple* to them. Family history research should be the primary source of names for temple ordinances, and temple ordinances are the primary reason for family history research. President Gordon B. Hinckley has said: "All of our vast family history endeavor is directed to temple work. There is no other purpose for it."⁶

Family history research provides the emotional bridge between the generations. Temple ordinances provide the priesthood bridge. Temple ordinances are the priesthood ratification of the connection that we have already established in our hearts. Mother Teresa said that "loneliness and the feeling of being unwanted is the most terrible poverty."⁷ The thought that this poverty of loneliness—this being unwanted and separated from loved ones—could extend beyond this life is truly sad. The promise of family history and temple work is eternal connection born of both love and priesthood ordinances.

Brethren and sisters, family history and temple work are the eternal family keepsakes that build bridges. They build bridges between the generations of our families, bridges to activity in the Church, and bridges

to the temple. It is my desire that each of us will recognize the great keepsakes we have received from those who preceded us and our own personal responsibility to pass them on to future generations. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. Dennis B. Neuenschwander, personal journal, 14 Aug. 1975.
2. Mariah Catherine Boyer, letter to her two children, Irena B. Mendenhall and Richard Lovell Mendenhall Jr.
3. See Mal. 4:5–6.
4. Quoted in *The Rebirth of America* (1986), 12.
5. *Improvement Era*, Aug. 1940, 495.
6. In Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 115–16; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 88.
7. Quoted in *Church News*, 20 June 1998, 2.

Discover

Listen carefully in order to match a priesthood leader's goals and objectives with the appropriate family history resources. You will recognize activation needs when leaders express a desire to:

- Increase attendance at sacrament meeting and other Church meetings.
- Invite less-active individuals and families to return to activity.
- Encourage prospective elders to return to Church activity.



When priesthood leaders express concerns about less-active members, you might suggest that involvement in family history work can provide a means to help them return to full activity in the Church.

Share

To help priesthood leaders discover how family history can inspire less-active members to return to full activity in the Church, you might share the “Activation” video segment with the story of Paul Felix from the *To Turn the Hearts* DVD.



Invite priesthood leaders to consider the following questions:

- What thoughts or impressions did you have while watching the video?
- What did you see that might be helpful to your own stake?
- What do you feel would be some appropriate next steps?

Enable

Here are some things you can do before, during, and after your visits with priesthood leaders:

- Prepare spiritually for your meetings with priesthood leaders by prayerfully studying the resources available in the leader's guide and DVD.
- Listen and observe during your interviews so that you can discern what resources to share (see D&C 84:85).
- At the invitation of priesthood leaders, arrange a time to conduct follow-up discussions, provide additional instruction, and help leaders to organize for success.
- Leave copies of the Resources and Implementation pages with the leaders.
- Take time to reflect on each meeting. Consider what went well and how to improve next time.

“As ward council members prayerfully identify less-active members who are most likely to return to activity, they use temple and family history work as a ‘means of bringing salvation unto them’ (3 Nephi 18:32). As the hearts of less-active members are turned to their deceased relatives in need of ordinances, they will be motivated to obtain a current temple recommend and go to the temple” (*To Turn the Hearts*, page 15).

Below are some resources that you can use to help less-active members get involved in temple and family history work.

Videos

- The “Featured Version” video segment from the *To Turn the Hearts* DVD. From the main menu, select **Featured Version**.
- The “Activation” video segment from the *To Turn the Hearts* DVD. From the main menu, select **Bonus Video Features** and then **Individual Stories and Topics**.
Note: You can also find these videos online. Go to LDS.org and click **Menu**, then **Serving in the Church**, then **Temple and Family History**, and then **Leader Resources**.

Articles

- Dennis B. Neuenschwander, “Bridges and Eternal Keepsakes,” *Ensign*, May 1999, pages 83–85.
- Christopher K. Bigelow, “Using Family History as a Missionary Tool,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2000, pages 29–31.
- Harold St. Croix, in LaRene Porter Gaunt, “Leading the Way,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1995, pages 54–59.

Websites

- Temple and Family History website. Go to LDS.org and click **Menu**, then **Serving in the Church**, and then **Temple and Family History**. This site provides resources for priesthood leaders, members with family history callings, and youth.
- FamilySearch Serve portal. Go to FamilySearch.org/serve and sign in with your LDS Account. This portal provides instruction and resources for priesthood leaders and members with family history callings.

Guides

- *To Turn the Hearts: Leader’s Guide to Temple and Family History Work*, provides suggestions on how to use family history to minister to less-active members. See *To Turn the Hearts*, page 15.
- *Member’s Guide to Temple and Family History Work* provides guidelines on preparing names for temple work, policies on temple work, and teachings about the blessings of temple work. See *Member’s Guide*, pages 29–36.

Here are some suggestions on how you can use family history to minister to less-active members.

Ideas for Next Steps

- View the “Secrets of Success” video segment from the *To Turn the Hearts* DVD. From the main menu, select **Bonus Video Features** and then **Springfield Leaders’ Secrets of Success**.
- Review *To Turn the Hearts* pages 16–17.
- Schedule time on upcoming council meeting agendas to discuss temple and family history work. See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church*, 2010, section 4.6.2.
- Share your plans with your priesthood leaders, and receive counsel and direction from them.
- Follow up with the area family history adviser to plan the next steps and arrange additional instruction.

Best Practices

- Leaders carefully consider how family history might be used to support other activation efforts in the stake.
- Home and visiting teachers, family history consultants, and other ward members work together to minister to less-active members.
- The high councilor assigned to oversee family history instructs high priests group leaders in their responsibilities.
- The high councilor coordinates with the area family history adviser and reports regularly to the stake presidency.
- Activation and temple and family history work are included as regular agenda items in stake and ward councils.
- Family history activities are planned that will help members stay active in the gospel.

Measuring Success

Take time to consider how you will measure success. You may want to counsel with your priesthood leaders about which measures are important in your area. Some information can be captured through unit statistics, while other information may need to be tracked manually. Here are some measurements to consider:

- Sacrament meeting attendance
- Number of Melchizedek Priesthood holders attending Church meetings
- Number of prospective elders attending Church meetings
- Number of sisters attending Church meetings
- Number of youth attending Church meetings
- Number of children attending Church meetings



Don't be dissuaded if your efforts don't seem to bear immediate fruit. Continue to move forward with faith. It often takes a sustained effort over time before results become visible.

Discover

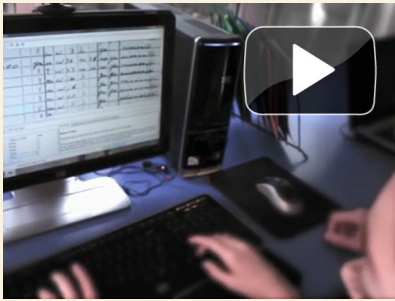
Listen carefully in order to match a priesthood leader's goals and objectives with the appropriate family history resources. You will recognize member involvement needs when leaders express a desire to:

- Provide meaningful service opportunities for members without callings.
- Create opportunities for members to work together toward a common goal.
- Involve multi-generation Church members with large pedigrees where much of the temple work has been completed.



Share

To help priesthood leaders discover how indexing can provide opportunities for service, you might share the “Member Involvement” video with the story of the Sacramento California Stake indexing project. Go to LDS.org and click **Menu**, then **Serving in the Church**, then **Temple and Family History**, then **Leader Resources**, and then **Individual Stories and Topics**.



Invite priesthood leaders to consider the following questions:

- What thoughts or impressions did you have while watching the video?
- What did you see that might be helpful to your own stake?
- What do you feel would be some appropriate next steps?

Enable

Here are some things you can do before, during, and after your visits with priesthood leaders:

- Prepare spiritually for your meetings with priesthood leaders by prayerfully studying the resources available in the leader's guide and DVD.
- Listen and observe during your interviews so that you can discern what resources to share (see D&C 84:85).
- At the invitation of priesthood leaders, arrange a time to conduct follow-up discussions, provide additional instruction, and help leaders organize their efforts for success.
- Leave copies of the Resources and Implementation pages with the leaders.
- Take time to reflect on each meeting. Consider what went well and how to improve next time.

“Indexing provides service opportunities for many people. . . . FamilySearch indexing is a way for the Church to make its immense collection of genealogical records available to the public Indexing can be done by virtually anyone, young and old. It touches the lives of both those who do the indexing and those who use the indexed records. . . . Indexing provides service opportunities for many people” (*To Turn the Hearts*, pages 8–9).

Below are some resources for priesthood leaders that may help motivate members to get involved in FamilySearch indexing.

Articles

- Brittany Beatie, “Getting into Indexing,” *New Era*, May 2012, pages 42–45.
- Mindy Raye Holmes, “Indexing Mania,” *New Era*, May 2009, pages 18–21.
- Heather F. Christensen, “A Call for Indexers Worldwide,” *Ensign*, Mar 2012, pages 52–55.
- Eric Eames, “FamilySearch Indexing: Anyone Can Help with Family History Anytime, Anywhere,” *Ensign*, Dec. 2008, pages 74–80.
- Constance Palmer Lewis, “FamilySearch Indexing,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2007, pages 34–41.

Websites

- FamilySearch indexing. Go to FamilySearch.org and click **Indexing**.
- Youth and Family History website. Go to LDS.org and click **Menu**, then **Youth**, then **Youth and Family History**, and then **Serve**. This site contains resources to help youth serve others through indexing.
- Temple and Family History website. Go to LDS.org and click **Menu**, then **Serving in the Church**, and then **Temple and Family History**. This site provides resources for priesthood leaders, members with family history callings, and youth.
- FamilySearch Serve portal. Go to FamilySearch.org/serve and sign in with your LDS Account. This portal provides instruction and resources for priesthood leaders and members with family history callings.

Guides

- *To Turn the Hearts: Leader’s Guide to Temple and Family History Work* provides suggestions on how to establish an organized FamilySearch indexing effort in a stake. See *To Turn the Hearts*, pages 8–9.
- A recent First Presidency letter included encouragement for Church members to participate in indexing. Go to FamilySearch.org/serve for a copy of this letter.

Below are suggestions for leaders on how to use FamilySearch indexing to involve members.

Ideas for Next Steps

- Review *To Turn the Hearts* pages 8–9.
- Schedule time on upcoming council meeting agendas to discuss FamilySearch indexing.
- Share your plans with your priesthood leaders, and receive counsel and direction from them.
- Follow up with the area family history adviser to plan the next steps and arrange additional training.

Best Practices

- A stake indexing director is called to oversee the indexing program in the stake.
- Stake and ward councils discuss how indexing can be used as a resource in the work of salvation.
- The high councilor coordinates with the stake indexing director and reports regularly to the stake presidency.
- Family history consultants can provide training and ongoing support to indexers in their wards.
- Members without callings may be called to serve as indexers.
- Members with large pedigrees where much of the temple work has been completed can still be involved in family history by serving as indexers.
- Young men and young women can participate in indexing to fulfill service requirements for Duty to God and Personal Progress awards.
- Recipients of Church welfare assistance can be called as indexers as a way to provide meaningful service opportunities.

Measuring Success

Take time to consider how you will measure success. You may want to counsel with your priesthood leaders about which measures are important in your area. Some information can be captured through unit statistics, while other information may need to be tracked manually. Here are some measurements to consider:

- Number of members without callings who are invited to participate in indexing
- Number of indexers in the stake
- Number of names contributed by stake indexers

Don't be dissuaded if your efforts don't seem to bear immediate fruit. Continue to move forward with faith. It often takes a sustained effort over time before results become visible.



A CALL FOR INDEXERS WORLDWIDE

By Heather F. Christensen

March 2012, *Ensign*

Since the introduction of FamilySearch indexing in 2006, over 800 million records have been digitized. But the work is not done, and the need for indexers worldwide is growing.

When Hilary Lemon of Utah, USA, returned home from her mission, she had a few months before she would start school again. Looking for ways to productively use her time, she began to help with online FamilySearch indexing. She started indexing in English but soon realized there were indexing opportunities in other languages—including Portuguese, the language she had learned on her mission.

“Since I served my mission in Portugal, I was interested in the indexing projects listed for Brazil and Portugal. My interest spiked when I saw a project from Setúbal, Portugal, one of the areas where I served,” says Hilary.

Hilary is one volunteer who is helping meet FamilySearch’s ever-growing need to index records in non-English languages. Like the other 127,000 active volunteers, Hilary is extracting the names and events of those who have passed on so that members can find the information they are seeking and complete their ancestors’ ordinance work in the temple.

What Is Indexing?

FamilySearch indexing is the process of reading digitized versions of physical records—such as census, vital, probate, and church records—and typing the information they contain into an online searchable database. Through this work, indexing volunteers make it possible for members and other family history researchers to easily locate their ancestors’ information on the Internet.

Indexing has brought a simplicity and ease to family history work. “In the past if you were looking for relatives, you had to wind through microfilm. When you found a family member you were looking for, you might be able to find connecting names. So you would rewind and wind the microfilm again and again,” says József Szabadkai, an indexer in Hungary.

Today FamilySearch continues to gather historical records from governments and record custodians all over the world. But instead of simply filming the records and making the films available to researchers,

FamilySearch employees scan them into the indexing program. Volunteers pull up these images on their computers and type in the information as they see it. In this way, the information is digitized and can be found through the search function on FamilySearch.org while researchers sit in the comfort of their own homes.

How Far Has Indexing Come?

Since FamilySearch indexing's introduction in 2006, volunteer indexers have made significant progress—transcribing about 800 million records thus far. But the work is far from done. The Granite Mountain Records Vault in Salt Lake City, where the filmed records are stored and protected, contains some 15 billion records—and more records are constantly being added. These records hold information about billions of people from over 100 countries and include more than 170 languages.

Robert Magnuski, a Church-service missionary and active indexer from Poland, is experiencing firsthand the demand for more non-English volunteers. “Due to partition of the country from 1772 to 1918, Poland’s records were kept in four languages: Russian, German, Latin, and Polish,” he explains. Because most of Poland’s indexers speak Polish, they started by indexing the Polish records. This still leaves work to be done on the Russian, German, and Latin records. With the help of volunteers worldwide who have experience with various languages, family history seekers throughout the world can find their ancestors—no matter the language their vital information was recorded in.

To make these records accessible, the indexing program has been made available online in 11 languages: Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Swedish. People who speak any of these languages—whether it’s a native language or acquired through missionary service, schooling, or other training—are encouraged to sign up and begin indexing records.

How Do I Get Started?

Getting started as a volunteer indexer is quick and easy. Follow the instructions at indexing.familysearch.org to download the program onto your computer. Next, set up an account, and then select a group, or “batch,” of records to index. Records have been grouped into small batches of 20 to 50 names to allow volunteers to spend as little or as much time as they would like indexing. Each batch takes about 30 minutes to complete, but you can stop partway through and return to it later because the program will save the work you have done. If you are unable to finish the batch within a week, it will automatically become available for others to complete.

Batches from countries around the world are being provided for indexing as records from those countries are acquired by FamilySearch. Brother Szabadkai is from Hungary, but he began indexing records in English and Afrikaans until records from his own country were available. “It was one of the happiest moments when the first Hungarian batch was announced in the beginning of 2011,” says Brother Szabadkai. “Many Hungarian members—young and old—have registered and become ‘maniac’ indexers since that time.” Brother Szabadkai’s enthusiasm stems from the hope that many of his own ancestors

will be found as these records are transcribed. “As we build up this fantastic database, we will be able to find more of our family names, saving time and helping our ancestors receive their saving ordinances faster.”

What If I Don't Have the Latest Technology?

In various parts of the world, obtaining a computer and Internet access presents a challenge for some who are eager to index. This is the situation leaders in the Mexico City Zarahemla Stake faced when they decided to get the youth involved in indexing. Because not all of the youth had computers in their homes, stake leaders decided to reserve a local school's computer labs after hours for them to use.

The youth then worked to index Mexican census records from 1930. “As the youth reviewed the documents,” says Bishop Darío Zapata Vivas, “they imagined people moving from house to house collecting all this information without knowing that someday their efforts would assist the Lord's work of bringing ‘to pass the immortality and eternal life of man’” (Moses 1:39).

Through the creative efforts of the stake leaders to obtain the needed technology, the youth and other members of the stake were able to index over 300,000 records within one month.

As demonstrated by the youth of the Zarahemla stake, if you don't own your own computer, you can still participate. The indexing program can run on any computer with Internet access, including at other members' homes, in family history centers, at meetinghouses, and even at schools or libraries where permissible.

The Blessings of Indexing

The Portuguese documents Sister Hilary Lemon indexed were baptismal records from over two centuries ago. The pages were faded and the elaborate handwriting was hard to read, but she persevered through the project as she thought of the names on the page as people waiting for their work to be performed in the temple.

“More than once as I indexed, I felt a sweet, firm impression that one day a Portuguese Latter-day Saint would open up that baptismal record that I had indexed and find his or her ancestor,” says Hilary. “Now that a temple is planned for Lisbon, Portugal, I know that there will come a day when the members there will find their ancestors because of the work that's being done through FamilySearch indexing.”

With the help of volunteers like Sister Lemon, more records will be preserved and the way will be opened for those who have gone before to partake of the full blessings of the gospel.

FamilySearch is Easy to Use

Along with the rest of the youth in the Chorley England Stake, Makenzie, age 15, was invited by her stake presidency to index 200 names. “Two hundred turned into 2,000!” recalls Makenzie. “It's really fast and easy to index. There are prompts to help you understand names and places. I've shared my knowledge of

indexing with my family and friends by showing them how to create their own account and demonstrating how simple and enjoyable it is.”

Finding Time for Family History

Many people can't seem to find time to work on family history. Jonni Sue Schilaty of Utah, USA, found a way to fit indexing into her schedule. "I love indexing!" says Sister Schilaty. "When my husband and I take road trips, I download batches to my laptop, then go offline while I'm in the car. When we arrive, I go online, upload the completed batches, and then download more for the way home. I take advantage of every minute I can to index and find that these car trips work well for me."

Anyone Can Index

Indexing is designed for people in all stages of life—including students, stay-at-home moms, businesspeople, or retirees. David and Bernice Blyde served seven full-time missions and are settled at home in New Zealand, where they continue to serve. "There is always something you can do within the Church to keep busy and active," says Sister Blyde. "Indexing has fulfilled that need for us." Since 2009 Sister Blyde has indexed over 180,000 names. "It's exciting to be engaged in this wonderful resource," she says. "This work is vital to finding our ancestors and giving them the opportunity to progress."

For more information, please visit indexing.familysearch.org or contact your ward or branch family history specialist.