

## Episode 4

# Stories from General Young Women Meetings

## FAITH

[BEG MUSIC]

**NARRATOR:** From the Conference Center in Salt Lake City we welcome you to “stories from the General Young Women Meetings”. Today we’ll be sharing stories of faith demonstrated by women of the church. History documents many examples of faith from early members of the church. First, Sister Julie B. Beck shares a story about the faith of one of these early pioneers. This is from the 2007 General Young Women Meeting.

[END MUSIC]

Julie B. Beck, April 2007, General Young Women Meeting

I think I can best express what is in my heart by telling you about three women and then discussing some lessons I have learned from their stories. I will begin with Ruth May Fox, who was a Young Women general president many years ago. She served in that calling until she was 84 years old. Sister Fox was born in England, and when she was 13, she walked almost every step to the Salt Lake Valley with a group of pioneers. Her mother died when she was a baby, so she spent the first dozen years of her life living with a number of different families. She must have been a difficult child to manage, because her grandmother called her a "bad maid" and refused to take care of her.

Eventually, Ruth married and had 12 children. She shared her firm testimony with her children and taught gospel lessons while she worked beside them, but she admitted that her older children sometimes received harsh discipline because she had a quick temper and she did not always "count [to] ten" when she was provoked. She worked hard to master this weakness and came to be known for her kind heart and service to others.

Sister Fox lived to be 104 years old. In her long life she experienced great joys and difficult trials, and she taught that "life brings some hard lessons. The sturdiest plants are not grown under glass, and strength of character is not derived from the avoidance of problems."

Last year I climbed Independence Rock in Wyoming to find where Sister Fox had carved her name at age 13 when she was on her journey to the Salt Lake Valley. The weather from the last 140 years has almost erased it, but I was able to just make out "Ruth May 1867." I wanted to know more about this great leader and disciple of Jesus Christ who worked all her life to improve herself and whose motto was "the Kingdom of God or nothing"!

**[BEG MUSIC]**

**NARRATOR: We have many examples of faith from the lives of the pioneers. We can also learn a lot from today's pioneers who are paving the way for others to receive the Gospel. Sister Janette Hales Beckham gives us some examples of modern pioneers in her 1997 General Young Women Meeting address.**

**[END MUSIC]**

(President Janette Hales Beckham, April 1997 General Young Women Meeting)

The courage to take a step of faith is needed today as never before. For many of you, the first step of faith was baptism. LeeAnn was 15 years old when she read the Book of Mormon, prayed about it, and gained a testimony of the gospel. She wanted to join the Church, but her mother said no. LeeAnn and the missionaries fasted and prayed. That same day her mother agreed she could join the Church, so LeeAnn was baptized. When her friends found out, they laughed at her and deserted her. Even the principal of the religious school she was attending called her in and told her that she had made a foolish mistake. But she stayed faithful to the Lord. She understood the eternal perspective, and eventually she had the wonderful blessing of marrying a righteous young man in the temple. Her mother eventually joined the Church.

Kara also became a pioneer in her family. She came from a family that never attended church meetings. Her eighth birthday came and went, and she was not baptized. But with the same courage of those faithful pioneers, she approached her father when she turned 12 and asked if she could be baptized. He said yes. Now she has been married in the temple, and she can instill her pioneering strength, her integrity, and her faith in her own children. What a wonderful pioneer heritage she has given to them!

Just as the early pioneers sacrificed to make their way to the Rocky Mountains, modern pioneers like LeeAnn, Kara, and all of you are also on the trail to a mountain--"the mountain of the Lord's house" (Isa. 2:2). That's the way the prophet Isaiah referred to latter-day temples, where we make sacred covenants with our Heavenly Father. It is the most important destination we have here on earth. As we make sacred covenants with our

Heavenly Father in the temple, He promises us that we will be able to live with Him again. As you plan and prepare for the temple, your example can make you a pioneer to your friends and also your family members.

**[BEG MUSIC]**

**NARRATOR:** **Like the early pioneers, we also must press forward with a faith as we deal with the issues of our day. Sister Beckham continues with a reference to a young woman who shares her gratitude for a modern pioneer in her life.**

**[END MUSIC]**

*(President Janette Hales Beckham, April 1997 General Young Women Meeting)*

One young woman said, "I am so grateful for my modern pioneer mother. She broke the tradition of alcoholism in her family. She joined the Church at age 15 after spending a summer with Latter-day Saint relatives. She worked hard in school. She developed a commitment that has brought the blessings of gospel living to our family."

Our priesthood leaders seated on the stand tonight are fathers and grandfathers. Their children and grandchildren surely see them as pioneers. A young woman named Tarynn told us that her grandpa was the pioneer in her life. His life was hard and he had many trials and tribulations, but no matter how hard it was, he always stayed faithful. A pioneer, she said, is someone who has touched another's life.

**[BEG MUSIC]**

**NARRATOR:** **We can learn from the examples of those faithful women who've gone before us. In the 2001 General Young Women Meeting, Sister Julie B. Beck tells us how her grandmother taught her to have hope.**

**[END MUSIC]**

*(Julie B. Beck, April 2003 General Young Women Meeting)*

A few years ago, I was with my noble 97-year-old grandmother. As she sat curled in her wheelchair, weak and nearly blind, she talked quietly of her life. I said: "This is a wicked world. There are so many temptations and challenges. Is it possible to stay worthy and

return to our Heavenly Father?" She slowly raised herself tall and erect and said in a commanding voice: "Yes! You must! That's why you're here!" Thank you, Grandma, for teaching me about hope.

Like Katie, my mother, and five-year-old Hope, you can wake up every day looking forward to new adventures with hope smiling brightly before you because you have a Savior. You are baptized in His Church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. You just need to stay in, pressing forward with a brightness of hope to your heavenly home.

[BEG MUSIC]

**NARRATOR:** **From the hymn "Press Forward Saints" we are admonished: 'Press forward, Saints, with steadfast faith in Christ, with hope's bright flame, alight in heart and mind. With love of God and love of all mankind.' Sister Kristin Banner, a guest speaker in the 1997 General Young Women Meeting, now shares how she pressed forward with faith.**

[END MUSIC]

(Kristin Banner, April 1997 General Young Women Meeting)

Like each of you, I have had to use faith and be a pioneer in my life. My first real experience happened when I was in the second grade. My teacher came to our class and told us how a "special" girl would soon join us. I remember imagining the girl to see what she would be like.

The first day Jenny walked in, I knew I would love her. The fact that she was handicapped urged me to learn more about her. I had never really been around children with disabilities. Although I had many anxieties, I knew I needed to be her friend. I was faced with the unknown; I accepted the challenge.

I decided to go to Jenny's house after school one day. I remember being a little nervous but felt it was the right thing to do. Her mom was very nice and helped me get to know more about Jenny.

Soon I found myself always with Jenny. She became one of my very best friends. We loved to go to the store, play on her trampoline, and have sleep overs. I made up for Jenny's physical handicaps, and she made up for my spiritual handicaps. Jenny is a

wonderful example of Christlike love and forgiveness. I truly believe we helped each other overcome both of our handicaps.

When we grew older, I had another test of being a pioneer. I had many friends, and a lot of them didn't know Jenny. Although they were never rude, I always felt torn between Jenny and my other friends. It was hard and definitely a conscious effort, but I decided to help them get to know her. In time my other friends felt more comfortable with Jenny.

To this day, I am still friends with Jenny. She goes to my same high school, and I see her almost every day. I truly feel proud to walk around the halls with her. I know we can all have the faith to do what is right. Like the pioneers, we can all overcome our challenges and press forward.

[BEG MUSIC]

**NARRATOR: There will be times in our lives when it may be difficult to live the Gospel. But as we press forward with faith like the pioneers, we will be blessed. Things always seem to work for our benefit. Next, in the 2002 General Young Women Meeting, President Thomas S. Monson tells a personal story about some faithful members who lived in communist Germany.**

[END MUSIC]

(President Thomas S. Monson, April 2002 General Young Women Meeting)

Let me illustrate with a personal and treasured experience. For many years my assignments took me into that part of Germany which was behind what was called the Iron Curtain. Under Communist control, those who lived in that area of Germany had lost nearly all of their freedoms. Activities of youth were restricted; all actions were monitored.

Shortly after I assumed my responsibilities for that area, I attended a most uplifting conference held in that part of Germany. Following the inspirational songs and the spoken word, I felt the impression to meet briefly outside of the old building with the precious teenage youth. They were relatively few in number but listened to every word I spoke. They had hungered for the word and encouragement of an Apostle of the Lord.

Prior to attending the conference, before leaving the United States, I felt the prompting to buy three cartons of chewing gum. I purchased three flavors: Doublemint, Spearmint, and Juicy Fruit. Now, as the gathering of the youth was concluded, I distributed carefully to

each youth two sticks of gum—something they had never before tasted. They received the gift with joy.

The years went by. I returned to Dresden—the site of our earlier conference. Now we had chapels; now the people had freedom. They had a temple. Germany was no longer separated by political boundaries but had become one nation. The youth were now adults with children of their own.

Following a large and inspirational conference, a mother and her daughter sought me out to speak to me. The daughter, who was about your age and who spoke some English, said to me, "President Monson, do you remember long ago holding a brief gathering of youth following a district conference, where you gave to each boy and each girl two sticks of chewing gum?"

I responded, "Oh, yes, I surely do remember."

She continued, "My mother was one to whom you gave that gift. She told me that she rationed in little pieces one stick of gum. She mentioned how sweet to the taste it was and so precious to her." Then, under the approving smile of her dear mother, she handed to me a small box. As I opened the lid of the box, there I beheld the other stick of gum, still with its wrapper after nearly 20 years. And then she said, "My mother and I want you to have this," she said.

The tears flowed; embraces followed.

The mother then spoke to me: "Before you came to our conference so many years ago, I had prayed to my Heavenly Father to know that He indeed cared about me. I saved that gift so that I might remember and teach my daughter that Heavenly Father does hear our prayers."

I hold before you tonight that gift—even a symbol of faith and assurance of the heavenly help our Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, will provide you.

**[BEG MUSIC]**

**NARRATOR:** **During the 2007 General Young Women Meeting, President Gordon B. Hinckley tells a story from his boyhood and how his family expressed their faith through the payment of tithing... even that left them with no money to buy food.**

[END MUSIC]

(President Gordon B. Hinckley, April 2007, General Young Women Meeting)

When I was a small boy, each December my father would take us all across the street to the home of Bishop Duncan for tithing settlement. The bishop did not have an office in the ward building, and so he had to conduct business in his home. We would all sit in his living room and, one by one, he would invite us into the dining room. Our tithing might be 25 cents, or maybe 50 cents, but it was a full tithing. He wrote out a receipt and recorded the amount in the ward record. The amount may have been so small that it cost more to record it than it was worth. But it established a habit which continued through all of these years. With the payment of tithing have come innumerable blessings as the Lord has promised.

I was married during the Depression, when money was scarce, but we paid our tithing, and somehow we never went hungry or lacked anything we needed.

[BEG MUSIC]

**NARRATOR:**

**In the October 2008 General Conference, President Uchtdorf said “hope is not knowledge, but rather the abiding trust that the lord will fulfill his promise to us. It is confidence that if we live according to God’s laws and the words of his prophets now, we will receive desired blessings in the future.” Sister Julie B. Beck illustrates this point with an experience from her own life. Despite discouraging advice from a counselor, she had faith that god had other plans for her. This is from the 2006 General Young Women Meeting.**

[END MUSIC]

(Julie B. Beck, April 2006, General Young Women Meeting)

When I was in high school, a counselor read the results of my test scores and told me she did not think I would do well in college. But after I prayerfully studied my patriarchal blessing, I felt I should not abandon my lifelong goal. So, because I had insight into the Lord's plan for me, I had hope in my heart, and I was able to move ahead confidently. I discovered that I was successful in that setting, and I earned a university diploma. When we know who we are and what we are supposed to do, it is easier to make important decisions about education, careers, and marriage. It is easier to shine our light in our families, with our friends, and in all other places.

[BEG MUSIC]

**NARRATOR:** **Sometimes we'll have to endure great hardships before we're rewarded for our faith. But we should always remember that trials are some of the best faith-building opportunities. In the 2005 General Young Women Meeting, Sister Susan W. Tanner tells us about some friends that suffered a tragic loss. Faith was a key principle in helping them cope.**

[END MUSIC]

(Susan W. Tanner, April 2005, General Young Women Meeting)

The binding and strengthening power of covenants in our lives became very real to me recently as our dear friends experienced a tragic loss in their family. While Catherine and Kimball Herrod and their four young children, ages nine months to seven years, were driving home from a family dinner at their grandparents' place, a double wheel from a huge semi-truck on the opposite side of the freeway suddenly sprang loose, flew across the median, and pounded into the driver's side of the family van. Kimball, the driver, husband, and father, was severely injured and unconscious. Catherine somehow guided the car to the shoulder and called for emergency help. While she watched the paramedics work on her husband and two older children, she sat in a police car with her two little ones on her lap and prayed vocally, "Heavenly Father, we know that Thou hast the power to heal Kimball if it is Thy will, but if not, we have faith that somehow Thou wilt sustain us through this." Kimball was life-flighted to the hospital, but he did not make it there alive.

After the children were treated for cuts, bruises, and other minor injuries, dismissed from the hospital, and safely home in bed, Catherine returned to the hospital to say her final earthly good-bye to her husband. As difficult as it was, she declared to her parents, who were with her, "I know that Kimball and I are sealed by our temple covenants, and we will be together again someday." In the most terrible trial of a young mother's life, her covenants sustained her.

At the funeral, we were reminded of the power of covenants to sustain us in moments of distress and grief. As we joined in the closing song, we all heard above the crowd the voice of Taylor, the five-year-old son, loudly singing, "Families Can Be Together Forever" (*Hymns*, no. 300). It was joyous for the congregation to know that a child had been taught of the sealing covenants that would bind him to his father and mother.

We were also taught the power of covenants in the sermon offered by Catherine's father. He quoted a scripture from the precious record that Moroni had sealed up and then



brought forth to the Prophet Joseph, reminding us that the gospel promises us a rock in the storms and whirlwinds, not an umbrella:

"Remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, . . . it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery . . . , because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation" (Helaman 5:12).

The profound strength the family exhibited comes from the knowledge that they are eternally bound to each other as a family, and they are bound to Heavenly Father and cannot be separated from Him.

**[BEG MUSIC]**

**NARRATOR:** **In the 1999 General Young Women Meeting, President Thomas S. Monson shares a story about another family who suffered a loss. It was their faith that got them through this trial.**

**[END MUSIC]**

(President Thomas S. Monson, April 1999 General Young Women Meeting)

I sought permission from Elder Russell M. Nelson to share with you a lesson of sorrow, tempered by knowledge of our Heavenly Father's plan.

Elder and Sister Nelson have been blessed with nine daughters, followed by one son. They are a happy family, a close-knit family. When the children were younger, they gathered around Mother and Father one evening, and Father proceeded to teach them. He said, "Many couples are being called to serve as missionaries and, in the case of mission presidents, to take their children with them to the areas of their assignment." Then Dad posed the critical question: "If your mother and I were called to such an assignment, would you be willing to go with us?"

He awaited their responses. One daughter said, "Daddy, they wouldn't call you, since I'm a cheerleader at high school!"

An older child added, "I couldn't go. I'm a student at the university."

The teenage responses continued, until little Emily, with the purity of her soul, answered, "Daddy, if you were called, I would go with you."

Actually, each of the children would be willing to go, but Emily brought tender tears with her profound yet simple reply.

The years moved along hurriedly. The children married. Grandchildren arrived. Then dreaded cancer struck Emily, and after a valiant and courageous battle she was called home.

Elder Nelson spoke at the funeral services. I've never heard a finer or more tender message. He spoke of the plan of salvation and described the promises of God pertaining to the eternal nature of the family. Quietly he said, "Emily has just graduated a little early from mortality." What a teaching moment!

As the large family walked behind the casket, Elder Nelson carried in his arms two of Emily's small children. All in attendance became part of truth taught and lessons learned. We were inspired to *gaze heavenward*.

[BEG MUSIC]

**NARRATOR:** We will all face trials. We can either look at them as great burdens, or faith-building experiences. May we all develop faith to help us look forward to a glorious future as well as help us through present trials. Thanks for listening to this episode of "Stories from General Young Women Meetings." Today's topic was on faith. This is the Mormon Channel. To learn more, go to [radio.lds.org](http://radio.lds.org). Then tell others about us!

[END MUSIC]