

Christ-Centered Family Tree Resource Packet 2010

Finding & Feasting for Families, Spiritual Strength & Safety for Our Families, and the the Joy is in the Journey

By Claudia Gibb Sudweeks

“Those of you who have worked at your genealogies, who realize the importance of the work and have felt the excitement that comes from tying families together and learning of your noble heritage, need to share that excitement with others. Help them to see the joy and fulfillment you see in the work.” (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, pp.161-162)

Finding

1. Find our family members who we do not yet know about, in order to provide them with the ordinances & covenants and give them full access to the atonement of Jesus Christ.
2. We should want to find out everything we can about the lives of our ancestors and their families.
3. We must find out more about the doctrines that support this work.
4. We need to find those lessons the Lord wants us to learn while searching for our family members.
5. All of this should lead us to find Christ.

Feasting on Gospel Principles

1. “Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.” (2 Nephi 31:20)
2. “Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ. Wherefore, I said unto you, feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.” (2 Nephi 32:3)

Personal Revelation*

Go to sudweeksfamily.com. Click on “Class Handouts” and then choose “Personal Revelation in Family History & Temple Service” (There are too many verses & quotes to add into this packet. They are sorted into 2 lists: seeking revelation & recognizing answers. And there a few general quotes about revelation in family history.)

We Learn through Symbols

1. A good article on understanding why we have symbolism in the temple is: “Why Symbols?,” *Ensign*, Feb 2007, 12–17

2. "...temples are of great value to us because they help us express our core theology, that of coming to Christ. **Temples** do this in at least two ways. First, they **symbolically and literally remind us and teach us about Christ and His Father**. We know that **Christ** spent key parts of His ministry at the temple in Jerusalem (see John 7–8; Matt. 21–23; Mark 11–12; Luke 20), and **drew frequently on temple symbolism in His teachings**, often comparing Himself to symbols used in the temple, such as light and water (see, for example, John 7:38; John 8:12). Our temple worship today includes many symbolic references to Christ, from the spires on the outside that point our minds heavenward, to the white clothing we wear inside the temple to symbolize that, as the book of Revelation says, we have come "out of great tribulation, and have washed [our] robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14)." (David E. Sorensen, "Small Temples—Large Blessings," *Ensign*, Nov 1998, 64) – READ THE WHOLE ARTICLE.

3. William O. Nelson, "Symbols from the Scriptures That Testify of Christ," *Ensign*, Jun 1973, 25

4. Look for the many symbols, allegories, & parables in the scriptures

The Symbolism of the Tree

1. "Famous *Roots* author, Alex Haley, once said: 'In all of us there is a hunger, marrow-deep, to know our heritage—to know who we are and where we have come from. Without this enriching knowledge, there is a hollow yearning. No matter what our attainments in life, there is still ... an emptiness, and the most disquieting loneliness.'

"Through family history we discover the most beautiful tree in the forest of creation—our family tree. Its numerous roots reach back through history, and its branches extend throughout eternity. Family history is the expansive expression of eternal love. It is born of selflessness. It provides opportunity to secure the family unit forever." (J. Richard Clarke, "Our Kindred Family—Expression of Eternal Love," *Ensign*, May 1989, 60)

2. "The love of God for His children is most profoundly expressed in his gift of Jesus as our redeemer." (Neal A. Maxwell, *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, p.8)

3. "And it came to pass that I beheld that the rod of iron, which my father had seen, was the word of God, which led to the fountain of living waters, or to the tree of life; which waters are a representation of the love of God; and I also beheld that the **tree of life was a representation of the love of God**. (1 Nephi 11:25)

4. Jacob 5, The Allegory of the Olive Tree: In this case the tree represents the House of Israel. This story covers the full three-fold mission of the church: caring for and nurturing each other, the greater missionary effort to gather God's children from all corners of the Earth, as well as those who are on the other side of the veil waiting to be gathered. All of God's children need the opportunity to accept the covenants which will graft them into the House of Israel, and make it so that we can all return to our Father in Heaven.

5. In the October 2009 *Ensign*, a ward prepared a plan to increase family history and temple work. They used the family tree to symbolize the unity this work would provide.

"The ward could represent the family tree as the trunk, with every family being a branch, and individuals and their family names being the leaves. The whole enterprise would be rooted in gospel teaching about salvation. Members would feel connected to their families and to each other through the great effort of temple work." (Perkey, Joshua J., "Temple Worship: A Contagious Fire," *Ensign*, Oct. 2009, pp.53-54)

All of these trees are Christ-centered examples.

Faith

1. “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” (Hebrews 11:1,6) (See also Alma 32)

2. “Wherefore, by the ministering of angels, and by every word which proceeded forth out of the mouth of God, men began to exercise **faith** in Christ; and thus by **faith**, they did lay hold upon every good thing; and thus it was until the coming of Christ.

“And after that he came men also were saved by **faith** in his name; and by **faith**, they become the sons of God. And as surely as Christ liveth he spake these words unto our fathers, saying: Whatsoever thing ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is good, in **faith** believing that ye shall receive, behold, it shall be done unto you.” (Moroni 7:25-26)

3. “...There is a much greater key—a key which each one of us earnestly seeks to obtain and which **will open the locks to the treasure houses of the knowledge which we desire to acquire**. That key is **the key of faith**. In this work, no lock will open without it.

“I testify that when we do all we can to accomplish the work that is before us, the Lord will make available to us the sacred key needed to unlock the treasure which we so much seek.

“The oft-quoted epistle of James was not meant exclusively for investigators. It was meant for you and me as well: **“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God**, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

“But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

“Should any obstacles be encountered, one must seek the companionship of the Holy Spirit for guidance to solve the problem faced. I testify that the Spirit will come, the way will be opened, and the key will be provided. ...

“We need the key of faith. No locked door can withstand its opening capacity. Faith is a requisite to this work. There is within our grasp the key which will unlock to our view that which we earnestly seek. ...

“The key of faith can be ours. May we use it wisely, thus opening to the view of those who have gone before us that great vision of their opportunity in the kingdom of our Heavenly Father.” (Thomas S. Monson, “The Key of Faith,” *Ensign*, Feb 1994, 2)

4. **“Faith is acting on a promise.”** (My dear friend, Reesa Boren)

SECTION 2: Spiritual Strength & Safety for Our Families

Spirit of Elijah/Mission of Elijah

1. “This restoration was accompanied by what is sometimes called the **Spirit of Elijah — a manifestation of the Holy Ghost bearing witness of the divine nature of the family**.” (Russell M. Nelson, “A New Harvest Time,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 34)

[Longer version of the quote] “Today we are reaping a harvest of family love from seeds sown years ago. Preparations to strengthen family ties came in 1823, when the angel Moroni first appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith. Moroni announced the coming of Elijah, who would cause the hearts of children to be turned to their fathers.

“Elijah’s return to earth occurred at the first temple built in this dispensation, where he and other heavenly messengers, under direction of the Lord, entrusted special keys of priesthood authority to the restored Church:

- Moses committed the keys of the gathering of Israel;
- Elias committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham; and
- Elijah came to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the children to the fathers.

“With that, natural affection between generations began to be enriched. This restoration was accompanied by what is sometimes called **the Spirit of Elijah—a manifestation of the Holy Ghost bearing witness of the divine nature of the family**. Hence, people throughout the world, regardless of religious affiliation, are gathering records of deceased relatives at an ever-increasing rate.

“Elijah came not only to stimulate research for ancestors. He also enabled families to be eternally linked beyond the bounds of mortality. Indeed, the opportunity for families to be sealed forever is the real reason for our research.” (Russell M. Nelson, “A New Harvest Time,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 34)

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT ELIJAH?

* **Taught by the still small voice:** [Elijah’s answer wasn’t in the strong wind, the earthquake or the fire.] “And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.” (1 Kings 19:12)

* **Dealt with King Ahab & Queen Jezebel:** 1 Kings 17-2 Kings 2

* **Sealed the heavens** – the sealing power: 1 Kings 17:1, 7

* **Fed by ravens:** 1 Kings 17:2-6

* **Visited & helped the Widow of Zarephath :** 1 Kings 17:8-24

[In our day our equivalent to the widow’s offering to Elijah is often time when doing Elijah’s work.] “[The Lord] has promised you this: 'But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.' That is a true promise. When we put God's purposes first, He will give us miracles. If we **pray to know what He would have us do next**, He will multiply the effects of what we do in such a way that **time seems to be expanded**.” (Henry B. Eyring, "Education for Real Life," CES Broadcast 6 May 2001, p. 4-5)

* **Challenge to the priests of Baal:** 1 Kings 18:21-39: Faith (choose the Lord or Baal), Repentance (rebuilt altar of Jehovah with 12 stones), Immersion (12 jars of water to immerse the offering and fill the ditch surrounding the altar), Holy Ghost (Called down the Fire which is symbolic of the Holy Ghost or the great witness of Jehovah) – 4th Article of Faith

* **Fasted for 40 days and nights:** 1 Kings 19:8

* **Went to Mount Horeb** (Mount Sinai – see Bible Dictionary) **to converse with the Lord:** 1 Kings 19:8-18

* **Translated** – taken in the chariot: 2 Kings 2:11-12

* **Mantle & Spirit of Elijah fell on Elisha:** 2 Kings 2:13-15

* **Foreshadowed Christ:** “Elijah and Elisha: The lives and ministries of these two mighty prophets foreshadowed the life of Christ in many impressive ways. Both Elijah and Elisha multiplied a widow’s food supply to sustain her family (see 1 Kgs. 17:10–16; 2 Kgs. 4:1–7), episodes that foreshadowed two of Christ’s great miracles, the feeding of the 5,000 and the 4,000. Elisha fed 100 men with only 20 loaves and some grain, with food left over, much like Christ (see 2 Kgs. 4:42–44; Mark 6:33–44; Mark 8:1–9). Like Christ, Elisha healed the sick (see 2 Kgs. 5). Elijah and Elisha raised young boys from the dead (see 1 Kgs. 17:21–22; 2 Kgs. 4:32–35) as Jesus raised a widow’s son (see Luke 7:11–17).” (Andrew C. Skinner, “Finding Jesus Christ in the Old Testament,” *Ensign*, Jun 2002, 24) ... Many more examples as you study Elijah’s ministry...

* **Appeared in the Kirtland temple to restore keys:** “It was ... on the third day of April, 1836,” said President Joseph Fielding Smith, “that the [Jewish people], in their homes at the Paschal [**Passover**] feast, opened their doors for Elijah to enter. [However,] on that very day Elijah did enter—not in the home of the Jews to partake of the Passover with them, but he appeared in the House of the Lord ... in Kirtland, and there bestowed his keys.” ((In Conference Report, Apr. 1936, p. 75.) David B. Haight, “Temples and Work Therein,” *Ensign*, Nov 1990, 59)

* **Turning the hearts and planting the promises are the verses most quoted in the scriptures.** (Malachi 4:6, Luke 1:17; 3 Nephi 25:6, D&C 2:2; D&C 27:9; D&C 98:16; D&C 110:15; D&C 128:17; JS-H 1:39) – They were so important that the Lord repeated them to the Nephites who had left Jerusalem before the time Malachi made the prophecy.

“...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.” (JSH 1:38-39)

“It is tremendously significant to me that this declaration, this repetition of the wondrous words of Malachi concerning the work for the dead, was given to the boy Joseph four years before he was allowed to take the plates from the hill. It was given before he received either the Aaronic or Melchizedek Priesthood, before he was baptized, and well before the Church was organized.

“It says much concerning the **priority of this work** in the plan of the Lord.”...

“And without this work, the Lord indicated the whole purpose of creating and peopling the earth would be frustrated, would be wasted.” (Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, Mar 1995, p.61)

Blessings of Family History & Temple Service*

Go to sudweeksfamily.com. Click on “Class Handouts” and then choose “Blessings of Family History & Temple Service” (There are too many quotes to add into this packet. The quotes are sorted by the blessing promised.)

Watch for lessons about:

- Protection
- The Plan of Salvation or the Plan of Happiness
- How we are helped in all affairs of life

- How much more we are blessed for performing temple ordinances for our own kindred dead (also listen at the veil of the endowment)
- And so much more!

The Importance of Making and Keeping Sacred Covenants

(See also “Keep Our Covenants” in the Personal Revelation document)

1. “What is the source of such moral and spiritual power, and how do we obtain it? The source is God. **Our access to that power is through our covenants with Him.** A covenant is an agreement between God and man, an accord whose terms are set by God (see Bible Dictionary, “Covenant,” 651). In these divine agreements, God binds Himself to sustain, sanctify, and exalt us in return for our commitment to serve Him and keep His commandments.

“We enter into covenants by priesthood ordinances, sacred rituals that God has ordained for us to manifest our commitment. Our foundational covenant, for example, the one in which we first pledge our willingness to take upon us the name of Christ, is confirmed by the ordinance of baptism. It is done individually, by name. By this ordinance, we become part of the covenant people of the Lord and heirs of the celestial kingdom of God.

“Other sacred ordinances are performed in temples built for that very purpose. If we are faithful to the covenants made there, we become inheritors not only of the celestial kingdom but of exaltation, the highest glory within the heavenly kingdom, and we obtain all the divine possibilities God can give (see D&C 132:20).

...

“I testify that in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is found the priesthood authority to administer the ordinances by which we can enter into binding covenants with our Heavenly Father in the name of His Holy Son. I testify that God will keep His promises to you as you honor your covenants with Him. He will bless you in “good measure, pressed down, ... shaken together, and running over” (Luke 6:38). He will strengthen and finish your faith. He will, by His Holy Spirit, fill you with godly power. I pray that you will always have His Spirit to be with you to guide you and deliver you from want, anxiety, and distress. **I pray that through your covenants, you may become a powerful instrument for good in the hands of Him who is our Lord and Redeemer,** in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.” (D. Todd Christofferson, “The Power of Covenants,” *Ensign*, May 2009, 19–23)

2. “In the temple we receive an endowment, which is, literally speaking, a gift. In receiving this gift, **we should understand its significance and the importance of keeping sacred covenants.** Each temple ordinance ‘is not just a ritual to go through, it is an act of solemn promising.’ (Gordon B. Hinckley, Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley (1997), 638)” (Russell M. Nelson, “Personal Preparation for Temple Blessings,” *Liahona*, Jul 2001, 37–40)

3. “Many of you were baptized when you were eight years old, and you may not realize that this is the promise you made to your Heavenly Father when you were baptized. Always remember that you are under this covenant. Your Heavenly Father has promised in return that He will give marvelous blessings to those who honor their covenants, keep His commandments, and endure faithfully to the end. They will be sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise and will be “given all things” (D&C 76:55; see also D&C 76:50–54, 70), including an inheritance in the celestial kingdom (see 2 Ne. 31:16–20).” (M. Russell Ballard, “Keeping Covenants,” *Ensign*, May 1993, 6) – READ WHOLE ARTICLE.

4. “Helaman and his young stripling soldiers **understood the importance of making covenants** with the Lord. They were also recipients of the blessings that come to those who faithfully keep their covenants.

“As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we have also taken upon ourselves sacred obligations. We have done this in the waters of baptism and in the temples of the Lord. We call these obligations covenants. Covenants are promises we make to the Lord. They are extremely sacred in nature. **The most important thing we can do in this life is to keep the promises or covenants we have made with the Lord. When we keep our promises to the Lord, He allows us to progress spiritually.**” (Richard J. Maynes, “Keeping Our Covenants,” *Liahona*, Nov 2004, 92–94)

5. As a result of his request for an interpretation of Lehi’s tree of life dream, Nephi was shown the broad sweep of history leading to this present day (See 1 Nephi 12-14). Central to all of it were the covenants of the Lord with his people. In vision Nephi beheld the discovery of America and “multitudes of the Gentiles upon the land of promise” (1 Nephi 13:14). They brought with them a book (the Holy Bible) “which contains the covenants of the Lord, which he hath made unto the house of Israel” (1 Nephi 13:23). But the “great and abominable church” had “taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away” (1 Nephi 13:36). Through Nephi’s seed, however, would come a record that would restore many of these plain and precious things, including truths concerning the covenants; “these last records . . . shall establish the truth of the first, . . . and shall make known the plain and precious things which have been taken away from them” (1 Nephi 13:40; see also 1 Nephi 13:34-35). (Lance B. Wickman, “Of Compasses and Covenants,” *Ensign*, Jun 1996, 37–43)

5. “King Benjamin taught: ‘Because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called **the children of Christ**. . .

“Therefore, I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ, all you that have entered into the covenant with God that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives.

“And it shall come to pass that whosoever doeth this shall be found at the right hand of God’ (Mosiah 5:7–9).

“Giving careful attention to covenant making is critical to our eternal salvation. Covenants are agreements we make with our Heavenly Father in which we commit our hearts, minds, and behavior to keeping the commandments defined by the Lord. As we are faithful in keeping our agreement, He covenants, or promises, to bless us, ultimately with all that He has.” . . .

“We are not only responsible to make covenants for ourselves, but **additionally we have been given the responsibility to search out our kindred dead and open the door for all who desire to make covenants and worthily receive the gospel ordinances.**” (Paul E. Koelliker, “Gospel Covenants Bring Promised Blessings,” *Liahona*, Nov 2005, 94–95)

6. Ideas for children: Cheryl Esplin, “I Will Make and Keep My Baptismal Covenant,” *Friend*, May 2009, 10–12

The Abrahamic Covenant

Why are we promised these blessings? The Lord covenanted with Abraham and promised him great blessings.

In Genesis we are told the promises are:

1. A promised land

2. A great posterity
3. Priesthood & gospel blessings
4. A mission of salvation to others (Christ)

Promise 1: “Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward:

“For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever” (Gen. 13:14-15).

Promise 2: “I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered” (Gen.13:16).

Promise 3: “I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee” (Gen. 17:7).

Promise 4: “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 22:18). (Kent P. Jackson, “The Abrahamic Covenant: A Blessing for All People,” *Tambuli*, Feb 1994, 43)

Also in Abraham 2:8-11:

“My name is Jehovah, and I know the end from the beginning; **therefore my hand shall be over thee.**

“ And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee above measure, and make thy name great among all nations, and thou shalt be a blessing unto thy seed after thee, that in their hands they shall bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations;

“And I will bless them through thy name; for as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall be accounted thy seed, and shall rise up and bless thee, as their father;

“And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; and in thee (that is, in thy Priesthood) and in thy seed (that is, thy Priesthood), for I give unto thee a promise that this right shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee (that is to say, the literal seed, or the seed of the body) **shall all the families of the earth be blessed**, even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal.

Brigham Young reminds us that the priesthood is for this purpose.

“There must be this chain in the holy Priesthood; it must be welded together **from the latest generation that lives on the earth back to Father Adam**, to bring back all that can be saved and placed where they can receive salvation and a glory in some kingdom. This Priesthood has to do it; **this Priesthood is for this purpose.**”
(*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p.623)

Bruce R. McConkie said, “The promises are the provisions of the Abrahamic covenant whereby the seed of the ancient patriarchs are entitled to receive the priesthood, the gospel, and eternal life (including celestial marriage). **We are the children**, and after we receive these blessings for ourselves, our attention turns almost by **instinct** to the **well-being of our ancestors** who died without a knowledge of the gospel. We are Abraham’s seed, and they were Abraham’s seed ... through Jacob, and through the house of Israel. It thus becomes our privilege, on the basis of salvation for the dead, to search out our ancestors—to whom the same blessings have been promised as have come to us—and to make these blessings available to them through the vicarious

ordinances of the house of the Lord.” (Robert L. Millet, “The Ancient Covenant Restored,” *Ensign*, Mar 1998, 36.)

Children of the Covenant

The gifts belonging to our youth

1. REMEMBER: “The home is to be God’s laboratory of love and service.” (Russell M. Nelson, “Salvation and Exaltation,” *Ensign*, May 2008, 7–10)

2. President Hinckley explained that the youth of today are fulfilling prophecy.

“The hearts of men have turned to their fathers in fulfillment of the words of Malachi. The vision of Joel has been fulfilled wherein he declared:

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

"And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.” (Joel 2:28-29) (Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, November 2001)

3. President Benson reminded us that our youth are well-prepared in the latter-days.

“I believe the youth are not only willing and able to do genealogical research, but they are a good means of giving life to the whole program. How often have the youth actually been driven away by those who would close the door on genealogy to them, or at the best, insist that they must “drink milk” when they are ready for the “meat”.” (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p. 163)

4. Archibald F. Bennett addressed the youth:

“You, as Latter-day Saint youth, have a rich and unique inheritance. You are a spirit child of our Father in heaven, beloved and nurtured and instructed of him in premortal experiences. By him you were especially reserved to come to earth at a time when a particularly important mission must be performed. Undoubtedly you were selected for this important assignment because the Father knew you could be depended upon to achieve that high objective regardless of temptations or obstacles. He relies upon you.”

...“Your chosen mission is to bring the blessings of life eternal to ‘all the kindreds of the earth’.”

...“You should begin now to train yourself in record keeping, research and temple work. Youth is the ideal age to begin. It is part of your birthright as a Church youth to become skilled in these activities and be prepared for the great mission awaiting you. Engaging in this labor will bring you many soul-enriching experiences...

“**Blessed with youthful vigor, mental alertness, and scholastic training** denied many of their parents and grandparents, there is much that can be done by youth....

“**The future of genealogical research rests squarely upon the shoulders of youth.**” (Archibald F. Bennett, *Saviors on Mount Zion*, pp. 143-145)

5. “We need converts to temple work, drawn from all ages, from the young, from the middle-aged, and from the rich and poor, from among the busy and those of leisure. The time has come, I verily believe, in this new temple movement, to bring into active service all the people, of all ages. From the children doing baptisms, to the aged grandparents doing endowments for the dead, all the members of the family, if we do our duty well, must be

brought to the work. Temple work is quite of as much benefit to the young and the active, as it is to the aged, who have laid behind them many of the burdens of life. The young man needs his place in the temple even more than his father and grandfather, who are steadied by a life of experience; and the young girl just entering life, needs the spirit, influence and direction that come from participation in the temple ordinances. If I say nothing else that will linger, I hope you will remember that temple work is for the young and for the middle-aged and for the aged-for all-and not for one specialized, separated class within the Church organization.” (John A. Widstoe, from Archibald F. Bennett’s *Saviors on Mount Zion*, pp. 147-148)

6. Referring back to teaching the gospel principle of faith, I want to share a definition of faith given by a dear friend, Reesa Boren. “**Faith is acting on a promise.**” Children of the covenant act in faith.

7. “We as **children of the covenant** are highly favored. In our hearts have been planted the promises made to Fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Lord has said: “Ye are lawful heirs, according to the flesh, and have been hid from the world with Christ in God. . . .“Therefore, blessed are ye if ye continue in my goodness, a light unto the Gentiles, and through this priesthood, a savior unto my people Israel.” D&C 86:9, 11. This life is the time to prepare for salvation and exaltation. **In God’s eternal plan, salvation is an individual matter; exaltation is a family matter.** (Russell M. Nelson, “Salvation and Exaltation,” *Ensign*, May 2008, 7–10)

8. “Get a notebook, my young folks, a **journal** that will last through all time, and maybe the **angels may quote from it for eternity.** Begin today and write in it your goings and comings, your deepest thoughts, your achievements and your failures, your associations and your triumphs, your impressions and your testimonies.” (Spencer W. Kimball, “‘The Angels May Quote from It’,” *New Era*, Oct 1975, 4)

Miracles of Today

Technology – Our God is a god of miracles

The Lord is making it easier and easier to accomplish this great task of finding our kindred dead. He is providing opportunities to strengthen our families by being able to do this together and from our own homes.

1. Brigham Young prophesied that great labor-saving devices would come.

Archibald F. Bennett, a prominent genealogist, said: “Sister Susan Young Gates...once asked her father [Brigham Young] how it would ever be possible to accomplish the great amount of temple work that must be done. He told her that there would be many inventors of labor-saving devices, so that our daily duties could be performed in a short time, leaving us more and more time for temple work. The inventions have come, and are still coming but many simply divert the time gained to other channels, and not for the purpose intended by the Lord.” (Brigham Young quote, *Improvement Era*, Oct 1952)

2. “In recent years we have begun using information technology to hasten the sacred work of providing ordinances for the deceased. The role of technology in this work has been accelerated by the Lord himself, who has had a guiding hand in its development and will continue to do so.

“However, we stand only on the threshold of what we can do with these tools. I feel that our most enthusiastic projections can capture only a tiny glimpse of how these tools can help us -- and of the eternal consequences of these efforts.” (Howard W. Hunter, *Ensign*, Mar 1995, p. 65)

3. “Going hand in hand with this increased temple activity is an increase in our family history work. The computer in its various ramifications is accelerating the work, and people are taking advantage of the new techniques being offered to them. **How can one escape the conclusion that the Lord is in all of this? As computer facilities improve, the number of temples grows to accommodate the accelerated family history work.**” (Gordon B. Hinckley, “Welcome to Conference”, *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 4-5)

4. “The Lord has poured out knowledge about how to make that information available worldwide through technology that **a few years ago would have seemed a miracle.**” (Henry B. Eyring, “Hearts Bound Together,” *Ensign*, May 2005, 77)

5. As family history consultants, we have been told that new.familysearch.org has been created and is being constantly improved in fulfillment of this prophecy:

“A universal system of intelligent cooperation will bring together on one record sheet every fact in existence regarding a particular family. This wealth of data will insure accuracy and banish error. Expensive and time-consuming duplications in research and repetitions in ordinances will be eliminated. No sooner will a new fact be uncovered in any part of the world by a researcher than it will be communicated to the Archives center and be assigned to its proper place, on some family record.” (Archibald F. Bennett, Secretary of Genealogical Society of Utah, Church News, December 20, 1947, p.20)

6. “There are...hundreds of thousands and millions...in the spirit world who long to receive this gospel and have been waiting hundreds of years for their deliverance. They are waiting on you. **They are praying** that the Lord will awaken your hearts in their interest. **They know where their records are....**

“I testify to you that the spirit and influence of your dead will guide those who are interested in finding those records. If there is anywhere on the earth anything concerning them, you will find it. ... If we have done our best and have searched and have discovered all that is available, then the day will come when God will open and part the veil, and **the records ... will be revealed.**” (*Sermons and Missionary Services of Melvin J. Ballard*, 229-231)

7. “And now, my beloved brethren, if this be the case that these things are true which I have spoken unto you, and God will show unto you, with power and great glory at the last day, that they are true, and if they are true **has the day of miracles ceased?**

“Or **have angels ceased to appear** unto the children of men? Or has he withheld the power of the Holy Ghost from them? Or will he, so long as time shall last, or the earth shall stand, or there shall be one man upon the face thereof to be saved?

“**Behold I say unto you, Nay;** for it is by faith that miracles are wrought; and it is by faith that angels appear and minister unto men; wherefore, if these things have ceased wo be unto the children of men, for it is because of unbelief, and all is vain.” (Moroni 7:35-37)

***SECTION 3: The Joy in the Journey**

1. “Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy.” (2 Nephi 2:25)

2. We often hear the phrase having “joy in our posterity”. We are meant to have joy and have it now. In our family history and temple service endeavors, we should be enjoying the research, as well as the miracles. We should be doing this as families – building memories together and learning about our family together.

3. The joy is in the journey, not in its ease, but in the privilege of taking the journey. We need to seek and choose that joy. – paraphrased from some counsel I heard given at a young couple’s temple sealing

Gratitude

(Refer back to the Personal Revelation section (separate handout) to find more scriptures & quotes about expressing gratitude.)

1. [Referring to his own ancestors, Elder Nelson said,] “My debt to them is reflected in these biblical verses: “One soweth, and another reapeth” that “both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.”” (John 4:37, 36) (Russell M. Nelson, “A New Harvest Time,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 34)

2. “I am indebted to my kindred dead who made it possible for me to live in this dispensation and to have the privilege of being a member of the “only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth.” (D&C 1:30.) (David B. Haight, “Temples and Work Therein,” *Ensign*, Nov 1990, 59)

Service

1. “In a spirit of love and consecration, we must extend ourselves in the work of redemption of the dead through service in the temples of the Lord. **This service more nearly approaches the divine work of the Son of God,** who gave his life for others, than does any other work of which I know.” (Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, May 1983, 8)

2. “Through service to others, we develop a Christlike love and we experience joy. Service teaches patience and long-suffering as well as gentleness, goodness, and faith.” (Merrill J. Bateman, “Living a Christ-Centered Life,” *Ensign*, Jan 1999, 7)

3. “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.” (Galatians 5:13)

4. “Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.
“... If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.” (1 John 4:11-12)

5. “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” (John 13:34-35)

Ordinances

1. “Ordinances and covenants become our **credentials for admission into [God’s] presence.** To worthily receive them is the quest of a lifetime; to keep them thereafter is the challenge of mortality. Once we have

received them for ourselves and for our families, we are obliged to provide these ordinances vicariously for our kindred dead, indeed for the whole human family.” (Boyd K. Packer, *Ensign*, May 1987, 24)

2. “The work of seek out our dead and ensuring that the ordinances of exaltation are performed in their behalf is **a mandate** from our Heavenly Father and his Beloved Son. They do not leave us to struggle alone but rather, in ways which are sometimes dramatic, prepare the way and answer our prayers.” (Thomas S. Monson, “Happy Birthday,” *Ensign*, March 1995, 58)

Vicarious Work for the Dead & Saviors on Mt. Zion

1. “The Lord’s revelation that baptism could be performed vicariously for the dead, through proper priesthood authority, preserved the justice of His statement: “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5.)

“Vicarious baptism also mercifully provides this ordinance for all worthy deceased who have not received it through proper priesthood authority.

“This glorious doctrine is **another witness of the all-encompassing nature of the atonement of Jesus Christ**. He has made salvation available to every repentant soul. His was a vicarious atonement that conquered death. He permits the worthy deceased to receive all ordinances of salvation vicariously.” (Richard G. Scott, “Redemption: The Harvest of Love,” *Ensign*, Nov 1990, 5)

2. “The great family of God will be united through the saving ordinances of the gospel. Vicarious work for the dead and ordinances for the living are the purposes of temples. ...

“**It is pleasing to the Lord for our youth to worthily go to the temple and perform vicarious baptism** for those who did not have the opportunity to be baptized in life. It is pleasing to the Lord when we worthily go to the temple to personally make our own covenants with him and to be sealed as couples and as families. And it is pleasing to the Lord when we worthily go to the temple to perform these same saving ordinances for those who have died, many of whom eagerly await the completion of these ordinances in their behalf.” (Howard W. Hunter, “‘The Great Symbol of Our Membership’,” *Tambuli*, Nov 1994, 3)

3. “Several years ago Elder Howard W. Hunter said: ‘Does it seem reasonable that persons who have lived upon the earth and died without the opportunity of baptism should be deprived throughout eternity? Is there anything unreasonable about the living performing the baptisms for the dead? Perhaps **the greatest example of vicarious work for the dead is the Master himself**. He gave his life as a vicarious atonement, that all who die shall live again and have life everlasting. He did for us what we could not do for ourselves. In a similar way we can perform ordinances for those who did not have the opportunity to do them in lifetime.’

“Elder Hunter added: ‘Not only may baptisms be performed for the dead, but endowments; also sealings, by which wives become eternal companions to husbands and their children sealed to them as a family. The sealing of family units can be continued until the family of God is made perfect. This is the great work of the dispensation of the fulness of times. ... The uniting and redemption of the family of God was the divine plan before the foundations of the earth were laid.’

“President Hunter’s classic statement emphasizes the importance of temple work for our own families and helps us to understand the Old Testament prophecy that “saviours shall come up on mount Zion.” **This exalting**

service for others unseen is one of the most noble acts of human kindness.” (Russell M. Nelson, “The Spirit of Elijah,” *Ensign*, Nov 1994, 84)

4. “We believe that our deceased ancestors can also be eternally united with their families when we make covenants in their behalf in the temples. **Our deceased forebears may accept these covenants**, if they choose to do so, in the spirit world.

“The great vicarious work for our kindred dead in our temples **demonstrates both the justice and the fairness of the gospel of Jesus Christ**. The Prophet Joseph Smith explained the terrible dilemma which would face God’s children without temple work for our dead. Said he: “One dies and is buried, having never heard the Gospel of reconciliation; to the other the message of salvation is sent, he hears and embraces it, and is made the heir of eternal life. Shall the one become the partaker of glory and the other be consigned to hopeless perdition? Is there no chance for his escape?” Fortunately our ancestors will have the opportunity to receive and accept the saving ordinances as we identify them and complete these sacred ordinances for them by proxy. We do for them what they cannot do for themselves. It is a very satisfying experience.” (James E. Faust, “The Phenomenon That Is You,” *Ensign*, Nov 2003, 53)

5. Elder Widtsoe said, “**In our preexistent state**, in the day of the great council, **we made a[n] ... agreement with the Almighty**. The Lord proposed a plan. ... We accepted it. Since the plan is intended for all men, we became parties to the salvation of every person under that plan. We agreed, right then and there, to be not only saviors for ourselves but ... saviors for the whole human family. **We went into a partnership with the Lord. The working out of the plan became then not merely the Father’s work, and the Savior’s work, but also our work**. The least of us, the humblest, is in partnership with the Almighty in achieving the purpose of the eternal plan of salvation. ...

“That places us in a very responsible attitude towards the human race. By that doctrine, with the Lord at the head, we become **saviors on Mount Zion**, all committed to the great plan of offering salvation to the untold numbers of spirits. To do this is the Lord’s self-imposed duty, this great labor his highest glory. Likewise, it is man’s duty, self-imposed, his pleasure and joy, his labor, and ultimately his glory.” (“The Worth of Souls,” *The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, Oct. 1934, p. 189.) (David B. Haight, “Temples and Work Therein,” *Ensign*, Nov 1990, 59)

6. The Prophet Joseph wrote: “But how are they to become **saviors on Mount Zion**? By building their temples, ... and receiving all the ordinances, ... ordinations and sealing powers upon their [own] heads, [and] in behalf of all their progenitors who are dead, and redeem them that they may come forth in the first resurrection and be exalted to thrones of glory with them; 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.” (*History of the Church*, 6:184.) (David B. Haight, “Temples and Work Therein,” *Ensign*, Nov 1990, 59)

7. “For me, knowing that **turns my heart** not only to my ancestors who wait but **to the missionaries who teach them**. I will see those missionaries in the spirit world, and so will you. Think of a faithful missionary standing there with those he has loved and taught who are your ancestors. Picture as I do the smile on the face of that missionary as you walk up to him and your ancestors whom he converted but could not baptize or have sealed to family until you came to the rescue. I do not know what the protocol will be in such a place, but I imagine arms thrown around your neck and tears of gratitude. ...

“If you can imagine the smile of the missionary and your ancestor, think of the Savior when you meet Him. You will have that interview. He paid the price of the sins of you and all of Heavenly Father’s spirit children. He is Jehovah. He sent Elijah. He conferred the powers of the priesthood to seal and to bless out of perfect love. And He has trusted you by letting you hear the gospel in your lifetime, giving you the chance to accept the obligation to offer it to those of your ancestors who did not have your priceless opportunity. Think of the gratitude He has for those who pay the price in work and faith to find the names of their ancestors and who love them and Him enough to offer them eternal life in families, the greatest of all the gifts of God. He offered them an infinite sacrifice. **He will love and appreciate those who paid whatever price they could to allow their ancestors to choose His offer of eternal life.**” (Henry B. Eyring, “Hearts Bound Together,” *Ensign*, May 2005, 77)

8. “Where much is given, much is required. After you find the first few generations, the road will become more difficult. The price will become greater. As you go back in time, the records become less complete. As others of your family search out ancestors, you will discover that the ancestor you find has already been offered the full blessings of the temple. Then you will have a difficult and important choice to make. You will be tempted to stop and leave the hard work of finding to others who are more expert or to another time in your life. But you will also feel a tug on your heart to go on in the work, hard as it will be.

“As you decide, remember that the names which will be so difficult to find are of real people to whom you owe your existence in this world and whom you will meet again in the spirit world. When you were baptized, your ancestors looked down on you with hope. Perhaps after centuries, they rejoiced to see one of their descendants make a covenant to find them and to offer them freedom. In your reunion, you will see in their eyes either gratitude or terrible disappointment. Their hearts are bound to you. **Their hope is in your hands.** You will have more than your own strength as you choose to labor on to find them.” -Henry B. Eyring, “Hearts Bound Together,” *Ensign*, May 2005, 77.

9. “God help us to do all that we can...that when we have finished our labors in life, we may receive a glorious welcome from those whose eyes are turned toward us, who will be full of blessings upon our heads. If you want to have a glorious end to your life, to robe immortality about you, and to lie down to sweet rest with a hope, with joy in your heart, do something for your kindred dead, and I promise you that you will take the sting of death out of your hearts. **You will fill the last days of your life with joy and happiness, and you will be building for your eternal joy and happiness.**” (Bryant S. Hinckley, *Sermons and Missionary Services of Melvin J. Ballard*)

10. I read the book *House of Glory*, by S. Michael Wilcox and was struck by the thoughts he tries to think when proxying for someone. I try to remember these words as I come to love those I am serving.

“Here are my eyes; together we will look upon the beauty of the Lord’s house. Here are my ears; let us hear the words of eternal life. Here are my lips; we will make sacred covenants. Here are my hands; together we will receive the gifts of life everlasting. Here are my knees; kneel with me at the altars of salvation, there to become one with all those we both love. I will remember you.” (S. Michael Wilcox, *House of Glory*, p.96)

Access to the Atonement of Jesus Christ

1. ”By the baptisms we perform in behalf of the dead, we testify that “as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. ... By identifying our ancestors and performing for them the saving ordinances they could not themselves perform, we are testifying of the infinite reach of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Christ “died for

all.” (D. Todd Christofferson, “The Redemption of the Dead and the Testimony of Jesus,” *Ensign*, Nov 2000, 9-11)

2. “We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, **all mankind** may be saved, by obedience to the laws **and ordinances** of the Gospel.” (Articles of Faith 1:3)

3. “[Jesus Christ] died, was buried, and rose on the third day to make the atoning sacrifice **for all mankind so that death would not hold permanent power**. Because of that act, all would rejoice and enjoy mortality.” (L. Tom Perry, “The Great Plan of Our God,” *Ensign*, Feb 2009, 62-66)

4. Everything we do in the gospel leads us to Christ. We should be aimed at the altars of the temple which symbolize Jesus Christ and his atoning sacrifice.

Closing Thoughts: Remember the joy.

1. “God is the designer of the family. He intended the greatest of happiness, the most satisfying aspects of life, the deepest joys should come in our associations together and our concerns one for another as fathers and mothers and children.” (Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, May 1991, 74)

2. “For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.” (Moses 1:39)

3. Do not let anyone (including yourself) discourage you that you do not know enough to do family history or that all has been done, or any of the excuses. It must go forward.

“[The Lord’s] purposes fail not, neither are there any who can stay his hand.” (D&C 76:3)

4. “Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage, brethren; and on, on to the victory! Let your hearts rejoice, and be exceedingly glad. Let the earth break forth into singing. Let the dead speak forth anthems of eternal praise to the King Immanuel, who hath ordained, before the world was, that which would enable us to redeem them out of their prison; for the prisoners shall go free.

“Let the mountains shout for joy, and all ye valleys cry aloud; and all ye seas and dry lands tell the wonders of your Eternal King! And ye rivers, and brooks, and rills, flow down with gladness. Let the woods and all the trees of the field praise the Lord; and ye solid rocks weep for joy! And let the sun, moon, and the morning stars sing together, and let all the sons of God shout for joy! And let the eternal creations declare his name forever and ever! And again I say, how glorious is the voice we hear from heaven, proclaiming in our ears, glory, and salvation, and honor, and immortality, and eternal life; kingdoms, principalities, and powers!” (D&C 128:22-23)

5. “And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!” (D&C 18:16)

6. Make your own family history and temple memories. Tell family stories related to gospel principles (i.e. grandpa’s experience with tithing). Find your own personal stories that teach the principles of Jesus Christ’s gospel and show that He loves and remembers each member of your family, in all of eternity, past, present, and future.