

ADDING GOSPEL ELEMENTS TO YOUR CUB SCOUT PROGRAM

Cub Scouting is an important part of the Primary organization, and as Cub Scout leaders, we should do our part in fulfilling the objectives of Primary, which are to:

1. Teach children that they are children of God and that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ love them.
2. Help children learn to love Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.
3. Help children prepare to be baptized, to receive the Holy Ghost, and to keep their baptismal covenants.
4. Help children grow in their understanding of the gospel plan and provide opportunities for them to live gospel principles.
5. Help boys prepare to receive the priesthood and be worthy to use this power to bless and serve others.

By making your den meetings gospel-centered, you will have a much greater influence in the lives of these choice young boys. As we learn in an online video, "Timeless values, fun and meaningful activities, and a gospel focus: that's what LDS Scouting is all about." (lds.org)

The pages attached are to be used with the 2007-2008 *Cub Scout Program Helps* and are to help you have a gospel centered den meeting. They are not intended to turn your activity into a Primary or Sunday School class, but they are intended to include gospel-related elements in your den meeting so the boys realize just how much everything they learn, everything they do, and everything they're involved in has gospel application. Many of these stories and gospel-centered additions can be used to enhance your pack meetings as well.

Another essential element to your Cub Scout Program is using the *Faith in God* guidebook as you plan, prepare, and help boys fulfill requirements. All this, along with your personal testimony, will enhance your program and greatly increase the boys' chances of remaining true and faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Wherefore, be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great. (D&C 64:33)

September 2007 CUB SCOUT EXPRESS

**Purposes of Theme: character development, personal achievement
Character Development: compassion, faith**

Elder Richard G. Scott:

"God uses your faith to mold your character. Character is the manifestation of what you are becoming. Strong moral character results from consistent correct choices in the trials and testing of life. Your faith can guide you to those correct choices. Clearly, it is what you do and what you think about that determine what you are and what you will become. Therefore, the choices you make need to be inspired by the Lord."

Pres. Thomas S. Monson:

"In about my tenth year, as Christmas approached, I yearned, as only a boy can yearn, for an electric train. My desire was not to receive the economical and everywhere-to-be-found windup train, but rather one that operated through the miracle of electricity."

The times were those of economic depression, yet Mother and Dad, through some sacrifice, presented to me on Christmas morning a beautiful electric train. For hours I operated the transformer, watching the engine first pull its cars forward, then push them backward around the track.

Mother entered the living room and told me that she had purchased a windup train for Widow Hansen's boy Mark, who lived down the lane. I asked if I could see it. The engine was short and blocky, not long and sleek like the expensive one I had received.

However, I did take notice of the oil tanker that was part of his inexpensive set. My train had no such car, and I began to feel pangs of envy. I put up such a fuss that Mother succumbed to my pleadings and handed me the oil tanker and said, "If you need it more than Mark, you take it." I put it with my train set and felt pleased with the result.

Mother and I took the remaining cars and the engine to the Hansens. Mark was a year or two older than I, but he had never anticipated such a gift and was thrilled beyond words. He would up his engine, and was overjoyed as the engine, two cars, and the caboose went around the track.

Then Mother glanced at me and wisely asked, "What do you think of Mark's train, Tommy?"

I felt a keen sense of guilt as I became very much aware of my selfishness. I said to Mother, "Wait just a minute, I'll be right back."

As swiftly as my legs could carry me, I ran home, picked up the oil tanker plus another car of my own, ran back down the lane to the Hansen home, and said joyfully to Mark, "We forgot to bring two cars that should go with your train!"

Mark excitedly coupled the two cars to his set. I watched the engine make its labored way around the track, and as I did I felt a joy difficult to describe and impossible to forget."

Pres. James E. Faust:

"I first heard the wonderful story of *The Little Engine That Could* when I was about 10 years old. As a child, I was interested in the story because the train cars were filled with toy animals, toy clowns, jackknives, puzzles, and books as well as delicious things to eat. However, the engine that was pulling the train over the mountain broke down. The story relates that a big passenger engine came by and was asked to pull the cars over the mountain, but he wouldn't [lower himself] to pull the little train. Another engine came by, but he wouldn't stoop to help the little train over the mountain because he was a freight engine. An old engine came by, but he would not help because, he said, "I am so tired. ... I can not. I can not. I can not."

Then a little blue engine came down the track, and she was asked to pull the cars over the mountain to the children on the other side. The little engine responded, "I'm not very big. ... They use me only for switching in the yard. I have never been over the mountain." But she was concerned about disappointing the children on the other side of the mountain if they didn't get all of the goodies in the cars. So she said, "I think I can. I think I can. I think I can." And she hooked herself to the little train. "Puff, puff, chug, chug, went the Little Blue Engine. 'I think I can—I think I can.' " With this attitude, the little engine reached the top of the mountain and went down the other side, saying, "I thought I could. I thought I could."

At times all of us are called upon to stretch ourselves and do more than we think we can. Like the "Little Engine That Could," we need to be on the right track and develop our talents. To stay on the right track, we must honor and sustain [our priesthood leaders].

I hope we will not be like the big passenger engine, too proud to accept the assignments we are given. I also hope that we will not be like the freight engine, unwilling to go the “extra mile” in service.

I hope we can all be like the “Little Engine That Could.” It wasn’t very big, had only been used for switching cars, and had never been over a mountain, but it was willing. That little engine hooked on to the stranded train, chugged up to the top of the mountain, and puffed down the mountain, saying, “I thought I could.” Each of us must climb mountains that we have never climbed before.”

Additional stories, puzzles, games, scriptures, etc. can be found through your own search on lds.org.

Don’t forget to look for correlation and application from the *Faith in God* basic requirements (p. 4), activities (pgs. 6-11), and gospel standards (back cover).

October 2007 DOWN ON THE FARM

Purposes of Theme: friendly service, respectful relationships
Character Development: resourcefulness, positive attitude

Elder M. Russell Ballard:

“Attitude is an important part of the foundation upon which we build a productive life. In appraising our present attitude, we might ask: “Am I working to become my best self? Do I set worthy and attainable goals? Do I look toward the positive in life? Am I alert to ways that I can render more and better service? Am I doing more than is required of me?”

Remember, a good attitude produces good results, a fair attitude fair results, a poor attitude poor results. We each shape our own life, and the shape of it is determined largely by our attitude. George Bernard Shaw wrote: “People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are. I don’t believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and, if they can’t find them, make them.” (*Mrs. Warren’s Profession*, in *Plays by George Bernard Shaw*, New York: New American Library, 1960, p. 82.)”

Moses 5:1:

And it came to pass that after I, the Lord God, had driven them out, that Adam began to till the earth, and to have dominion over all the beasts of the field, and to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow, as I the Lord had commanded him. And Eve, also, his wife, did labor with him.

Mosiah 6:7:

And king Mosiah did cause his people that they should till the earth. And he also, himself, did till the earth, that thereby he might not become burdensome to his people, that he might do according to that which his father had done in all things.

Elder Robert D. Hales:

“Skull Valley, Utah—that was where I spent two summers as a youth. I lived on Long Island, New York, but my father, who had grown up on a farm in Idaho, told me, “You’re never going to learn how to work until you work on a ranch.” My uncle had a ranch in Skull Valley, and so I, a city boy, was sent to live and work there.

The first few days I spent on the ranch left me exhausted. My entire body ached, and I wondered how I could get through each day. I was discouraged and wanted to go home, but I didn't tell this to my relatives.

One day I was moving bales of hay with my cousin, and I was having a hard time because I was so tired. My cousin gave me a little push and said, "You aren't lazy—you just don't know how to work." I decided then that I'd learn how to work—and I did. And as I worked on the ranch that summer, I came to enjoy it and my body thrived on it.

I had many aunts and uncles who lived in the Utah area, and I stayed in their various homes throughout the summer months. I helped round up wild horses, bale hay, care for the animals, and do other tasks. We worked from before sunrise until sundown, and as time wore on, I became very close to my cousins. I loved the joy of just sitting and talking with them in the evenings when our chores were through.

During those two summers, I came to appreciate all the work it takes to plant and irrigate, and then, after all of that is done, how hard it is to harvest. The first summer I spent at the ranch was during a very dry year, and the fields were swarming with crickets. The farmers didn't give up, however, and they didn't blame God that things were not going well. They just prepared to plant the next year.

Even if conditions are perfect for farmers, there still is an incredible amount of work to do. They know that you don't get something for nothing. My experience in Skull Valley helped me understand the law of the harvest, as described in Galatians 6:7: "For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." We reach most of our important goals only after a great deal of effort and hard work."

Joanne F. Christensen, "President Ezra Taft Benson," *Friend*, Aug 1988:

Thirteenth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Ezra Taft Benson was born in Whitney, Idaho. As a boy he learned to play the piano, and he sang solos both at school and in the community—but he says that he loved his trombone best.

Young Ezra loved horses, and he rode three miles each day to his high school, the Oneida Stake Academy. He also loved to swim, camp with his family, and play baseball and basketball. In fact, he starred on both his high school and his college (Utah State University) basketball teams. Among his many favorite foods are corn, fish, buttermilk, raspberries, homemade ice cream, and whole wheat bread.

His father received a mission call when Ezra was thirteen, and he ran their farm during the time his father was gone. (By the time he was sixteen, Ezra could thin an entire acre of sugar beets in a day!) The oldest child in the family, Ezra had only six brothers and sisters when his father left, but a seventh was born four months later, and eventually there were eleven children in the family.

He always loved farming, and he helped other farmers in any way that he could. When Dwight D. Eisenhower was elected president of the United States, he asked Ezra Taft Benson to be his Secretary of Agriculture, and Ezra served in that cabinet position for all eight years of Eisenhower's presidency.

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November 2007 INDIAN NATIONS

Purposes of Theme: spiritual growth, good citizenship

Character Development: respect, courage

“Mission to the Lamanites,” *Friend*, Apr 1985:

1 Indians in the Western Hemisphere are often called Lamanites by Church members because these Indians are descendants of the Nephites and Lamanites in the Book of Mormon. Oliver Cowdery and Peter Whitmer, Jr., were called to go on a mission to the Lamanites. Other men wanted to go with them. The Lord indicated that Ziba Peterson and Parley P. Pratt were to accompany Oliver and Peter.

2 First the missionaries went to the Catteraugus Indians in New York. Finding a few Indians who could read, the missionaries gave them two copies of the Book of Mormon.

3 Near the Ohio border the missionaries preached to the Wyandot Indians, who were happy to learn about their ancestors in the Book of Mormon.

4 In Missouri the missionaries preached the gospel to the Delaware Indians. These Indians were also given the Book of Mormon. They thanked the missionaries for traveling so far and for caring enough to give them the Book of Mormon.

5 Other people in Missouri did not believe the gospel, nor did they believe the Book of Mormon. They told the missionaries to stay away from the Indians.

6 When told that soldiers would force the missionaries to stay away from the Indians, the missionaries were sorry, but they obeyed the authorities and left the Indian settlements.

7 One of the missionaries, Parley P. Pratt, went to tell the Prophet Joseph about their mission to the Lamanites. The mission had been a good one; the gospel had been taken to three great Indian tribes.

Vivian Paulsen, “President Spencer W. Kimball,” *Friend*, Mar 1984:

“Spencer was the kind of person you just knew was doing the right thing,” Henry Eyring once said of his brother-in-law. The twelfth President of the Church, Spencer W. Kimball has always tried to be kind to others, to make the right choices, and to be an example to those around him.

One time as he visited in a ward and sat on the stand, he noticed that five boys sitting on the front row would all do the same thing at the same time. They crossed their legs, put their hands on their faces, uncrossed their legs, folded their arms. After a while he realized that they were copying him—doing everything they saw him do. It reminded him to always do what is right, to be a good example in serving others.

One group of people he has especially loved and served in his lifetime are the descendants of Lehi.

“I do not know when I began to love the children of Lehi,” said Elder Kimball in general conference in April 1947. “It may have come to me at birth, because those years preceding and after I was born, were spent by my father on missions among the Indians in Indian territory. He was president of the mission. This love may have come in those first years of my childhood, when my father used to sing the Indian chants to us children and show us souvenirs from and pictures

of his Indian friends. It may have come from my patriarchal blessing which was given to me ... when I was nine years of age. One line of the blessing reads:

“ ‘You will preach the gospel to many people, but more especially to the Lamanites.’ ”

In 1945 the President of the Church, George Albert Smith, called Elder Kimball into his office. “I want you to look after the Indians,” he said. “They are neglected. Take charge and watch after the Indians in all the world.”

Elder Kimball traveled thousands of miles to visit the Indians, to teach them, and to bless them. Discovering they needed and wanted more schools, he tried to help. Finding them sick or sad, he blessed them and taught them how important they were to their Father in Heaven. Finding them cold and hungry, he went to those who could help.

In 1947 the Navajo Indians on the reservation needed help desperately. Many had little to eat and nothing warm to wear. Elder Kimball spoke to the Church Welfare Committee, and truckloads of food and warm clothing were sent. Then he called a newspaper. A reporter and a photographer were sent to check the situation. When the article they wrote was printed, an Indian Aid Caravan was organized. Elder Kimball wrote to a senator in Washington, D.C., as well. He wrote to service clubs and mailed out pamphlets asking for aid.

His friends were helped, and they were grateful. One said, “Thank you. I will not freeze now.”

Traveling throughout the world to help these people he loved, Elder Kimball also spent weeks and months visiting Lehi’s children in Central and South America and in the Pacific Islands. He taught them about the Savior, Jesus Christ, and helped them with their problems. No matter how tired he was, he was never too tired to help.

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

Through his actions President Spencer W. Kimball has shown his love for his brothers and sisters. To follow him is to always be “doing the right thing.”

Laird Roberts, “Spirit of the Black Hills,” *New Era*, Jun 1981:

The dark, curved form of a mountain range rises up out of the dry flatlands of Wyoming and South Dakota. The name for this mountain range is ancient. The Lakota Indians (the Sioux are members of the Lakota tribes) called it Pahasapa, the Black Hills. And from a distance, out in the flatlands, the mountains do look black, but up close the Black Hills aren’t black; they’re green.

In the spring the warm winds come up from the lowlands, melting the deep covering of snow. The melted snow slips over the rich, dark earth, flowing down into mountain streams. The green comes with the water and the wind, and it comes in a thousand different shades and colors. The air then is fragrant with the smells of melting snow, decaying leaves and grasses.

The old Lakota saw this coming of spring, the changing of seasons, all the variations that come to the earth, as a mystery, a miracle. They watched them come with awe and wonder.

“When a man does a piece of work that is admired by all, we say that it is wonderful; but when we see the changes of day and night, the sun, the moon, and the stars in the sky, and the changing seasons upon the earth, with their ripening fruits, anyone must realize that it is the work of someone more powerful than man.” Mato-Kupwapi, a Santee-Yanktonai Sioux, said this in 1915, just before his death.

For the old Lakota the seasons were evidences of the Great Spirit. They believed that the earth and all living creatures were His creations. To them all life was sacred. To respect the earth and the living creatures on it was to show respect to the Creator.

“The Lakota was a true naturalist—a lover of nature. He loved the earth and all things of the earth, the attachment growing with age. For him to sit or lie on the ground is to be able to think more clearly into life and come closer to kinship with other lives about him,” said Chief Luther Standing Bear, a member of the Sioux tribe.

The entire earth was honored and respected by the old Lakota, but the Black Hills were an especially sacred place. In the summer it was a place of refuge, where cool water ran in the streams even on the hottest days, where the mountains were forested heavily with oak, pine, and maple, and where the hills were covered deep with sweet grasses. It was a place abundant with life, a place to become close to the Creator.

“And all things denote there is a God; yea, even the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it, yea, and its motion, yea, and also all the planets which move in their regular form do witness that there is a Supreme Creator”(Alma 30:44).

For Richard Piper, 16, a member of the Church in Rapid City, South Dakota, for a little more than a year, the Black Hills are also a place to become close to the Creator. His involvement in the Church and his closeness to nature have helped him better understand the meaning of his life and his relationship to his Father in Heaven.

“I love the hills,” he explained. “When you see how beautiful they are, you can’t help but feel the presence of God. I know that he cares. A lot of people in the Church have helped me. I know they care. The more I am involved in the Church, the more I understand and know where I’m going. It all fits together.”

The Lakota believed that being close to nature was important to being close to man.

“The old Lakota was wise. He knew that man’s heart away from nature becomes hard; he knew that lack of respect for growing, living things soon led to lack of respect for humans too. So he kept his youth close to its softening influence,” said Chief Luther Standing Bear.

Living in the Black Hills, feeling kinship with nature, with each other, with our Father in Heaven, has brought the members of the Church there even closer to each other. There is a strong feeling of family in the wards and branches.

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December 2007 CELEBRATIONS AROUND THE WORLD

Purposes of Theme: family understanding, fun and adventure
Character Development: faith, honesty

Pres. Thomas S. Monson:

“There is no better time than now, this very Christmas season, for all of us to rededicate ourselves to the principles taught by Jesus the Christ. It is the time to love the Lord our God with

all our heart—and our neighbors as ourselves. It is well to remember that he who gives money gives much, he who gives time gives more, but he who gives of himself gives all. Let this be a description of our Christmas gifts.”

“Christmas Around the World,” *Friend*, Dec 1971:

Merry Christmas: Christmas is a time for singing carols, wrapping gifts, cutting star cookies, decorating the Christmas tree, and sharing with family, neighbors, and friends. Children all over the world love Christmas!

Happy Christmas: In England an immense yule log or block of wood that nearly fills the fireplace is pulled into the house by the family. According to custom, the log is lighted with a piece of yule log left from the Christmas before. This is thought to bring good luck to the household in the coming new year.

Groups of carolers called “waits” gather on Christmas Eve to sing carols and hymns.

In the homes, trees are decorated and stockings are hung in anticipation of Father Christmas. Christmas Day dinner includes roast beef or goose, and plum pudding.

Gledelig Jul: According to old tradition in Norway, church bells chime to call the people to church on Christmas Eve. The beautiful Scandinavian custom of remembering the animals and birds is kept each Christmas. The farm beasts are carefully tended and the cows are given extra hay. A sheaf of wheat is saved to place on the top of a tall pole in the yard for the birds. On Christmas morning every rooftop and every door is decorated with a bundle of grain for the birds’ Christmas dinner.

As the family Christmas dinner is being prepared, an almond is put into the Christmas porridge. The lucky person who finds the almond in his porridge gets an extra gift.

Hauskaa Joulua: People in Finland prepare for the holiday celebrations weeks before Christmas. False ceilings in their homes have frameworks of straw. The ceilings are decorated with hanging paper stars. Straw is piled on the floor, and the children sleep on mangerlike beds to remind them of the birth of the Christ Child.

Families visit with their friends on Christmas Eve, but the children beg to return home early to see if Father Christmas has left any presents for them.

Feliz Navidad: Pinatas are hung from beams at Christmastime in Mexico. A pinata is a large earthenware bowl decorated to resemble a face or an animal, and filled with fruits, candy, nuts, and small toys. Children take turns being blindfolded and trying to hit the pinata with a large stick. When someone finally succeeds in breaking it, all the children scramble to pick up the goodies and each child can keep what he finds. On the eve before Epiphany, children place their shoes in windows or at the foot of their beds. If they have been good, the next morning their shoes are full of gifts from the Magi on their way to see the Christ Child.

Kala Hrystoughena: Following a custom of long ago in Greece, mothers make fried cakes while their children watch in wonder. Christmas is a time of family get-togethers and a time for listening to stories and folk legends. December 25 is a happy day for everyone.

Froehliche Weihnachten: The Christmas tree—the tannenbaum—is the great Christmas contribution from Germany, where the tree is decorated in total secrecy and then lighted on Christmas Eve to the surprise and excitement of all.

Christmas in Germany is celebrated from December 6 to January 6. St. Nicholas comes on December 6 and gives candy, nuts, and cookies to all good children.

On the evening of January 6, after the Christmas trees are taken down, groups go “star singing.” One person carries a star on a long pole while others follow carrying lanterns. They walk through the city or village, stopping now and then to sing a carol. These star singers are symbolic of the wise men who followed the Star of Bethlehem in search of the Christ Child.

Joyeux Noel: December 6 begins the holiday season in France. Watersoaked wheat is placed in dishes and the dishes are then set aside for the grain to germinate. An old folk legend says that if the grain grows fast, the farmers will have good crops for the coming year.

French children arrange a miniature nativity scene, called a *creche*, in their living rooms. The families sing hymns and Christmas carols, and after midnight they enjoy a special meal of oysters and sausages.

On Twelfth Night, the end of the holiday season, Twelfth Night cakes are baked with a bean or china figure inside. Whoever finds the token in his or her piece of cake is the king or queen of the party.

Glaedig Jul: A kindly little man in Denmark who tends the farm animals and is responsible for mysterious happenings around the house is called Julnisse. The family cat is the only one able to see this little man who lives in the attic. Children take bowls of porridge and pitchers of milk to their attic doors before going to sleep on Christmas Eve. When they get up in the morning, they find that the food has mysteriously disappeared and that Julnisse has left gifts for everyone.

Boun Natale: Befana is a kind ragged old witch in Italy who rides from house to house on a broomstick on Twelfth Night. She leaves presents beside the hearths for the children who have been good. If the children have been bad, Befana will leave only birch rods or charcoal ashes.

Prettige Kerstdagen: Children in the Netherlands stuff clean wooden shoes with carrots and hay and place the stuffed shoes with a dish of water on the window sill. These treats are for St. Nick's good white horse on Christmas Eve. If boys and girls have been good, they are pleasantly surprised on Christmas morning to find that St. Nick has removed the straw and carrots and placed small gifts, toys, and other surprises in their wooden shoes. If the children have been bad, they only find rods of birch in their wooden shoes.

Ann Stacey, "Christmas Cookies around the World," *Friend*, Dec 1973:

Christmas and cookies go together. For weeks before Christmas the wonderful smells of sugar and spice come from kitchens around the world as cookies in all shapes and sizes are baked. What girl or boy is not delighted to help roll and cut the dough into stars, soldiers, reindeer, trees, and gingerbread men? And who can resist adding the extra touch of the raisin eyes, snow icing, or tiny candy decorations? Each fresh batch of colorful Christmas cookies adds to the excitement of the Christmas holidays.

In Norway the goal of each *fru* (wife) is to have fourteen varieties of cookies on hand at Christmas, one representing each day of the holidays.

In Holland December 5 is called Strewing Day. On this day St. Nicholas and his companion Black Peter visit every home in the Netherlands. Just before their expected arrival, a loud bell rings, a door opens, and Black Peter's black-gloved hand reaches in and throws a handful of *pepernoten* (spicy cookies) across the floor for the children. This is the sign that St. Nicholas has arrived and will return later that night to leave presents for good boys and girls and a switch or a stone for naughty children.

Lebkuchen is the well-known cookie of Germany. During Christmastime cookies can be bought in the open markets at the children's fairs held early in December, where the aroma of *lebkuchen* mingles with sizzling sausages, salty pretzels, and other delicious foods.

In Sweden gingerbread cookies are made in the shape of goats. *Jultomten* (Santa Claus) arrives on Christmas Eve in a sleigh pulled by goats.

The Danes are famous for their delicious pastries. At Christmas baking shifts into high gear as hundreds of thousands of *klejner* are baked to fill cookie jars throughout Denmark. *Klejner* is a sweet pastry cut into strips about four inches long, tied in a knot, deep-fried, and then dusted in powdered sugar.

A cookie similar to the *klejner* is made in Italy and called *struffoli*. Here children and grown-ups dip them in thin honey and eat them with their fingers.

Oplatek, a thin round waferlike cookie stamped with figures of the nativity scene, is the center of an interesting tradition in Poland. On Christmas Eve the father of the house breaks and shares an *oplatek* with each member of his family. The farmers even break cookies and share with their farm animals as a symbol of peace and goodwill to all on this holy night.

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January 2008 CUB SCOUT CAR SHOW

**Purposes of Theme: respectful relations, sportsmanship
Character Development: positive attitude, perseverance**

Pres. Heber J. Grant:

"As I was an only child, my mother reared me very carefully. Indeed, I grew up more or less under the principles of a hothouse plant, a growth which is long and lengthy but not substantial. I learned to sweep and to wash and wipe dishes but did little stone throwing and little indulgence in works which are interesting to boys, which develop their physical frames. Therefore, when I joined the baseball club the boys of my own age and a little older played in the first nine [players], those younger than I played in the second, and those still younger, in the third, and I played with them. One of the reasons for this was that I could not throw the ball from one base to another, and another reason was that I lacked the strength to run or bat the ball. When I picked up the ball, the boys would generally shout, "Throw it here, sissy!" So much fun was engendered on my account by my youthful companions that I solemnly vowed that I would play baseball in the nine [team] that would win the championship in the territory of Utah. ... I shined ... boots until I saved a dollar which I invested in a baseball and spent hours and hours throwing the ball at Bishop Edwin D. Woolley's barn, which caused him to refer to me as the laziest boy in the Thirteenth Ward. Often my arm would ache so that I could scarcely go to sleep at night, but I kept on practicing and finally succeeded in getting into the second nine of our club. Subsequently, I joined a better club and eventually played in the nine that won the championship in California, Colorado, and Wyoming, and thus made good my promise to myself and retired from the baseball arena"

I believe that we can accomplish any object that we make up our minds to, and no boy or girl ought to sit down and say, because they cannot do as well as somebody else, that they will not do anything. God has given to some people ten talents; to others, he has given one; but they who improve the one talent will live to see the day when they will far outshine those who have ten talents but fail to improve them.

Trustworthiness, stick-to-it-iveness, and determination are the qualities that will help you to win the battle of life.

I believe unless we have ambition to accomplish things and to do things that we amount to but very little in the battle of life. I know of nothing at the present time that seems to me sadder than to find the number of our people who are losing the spirit of integrity and devotion and ambition to do things. It seems to me all wrong. Every individual should have a desire to grow and increase in capacity and in ability to do things. Certainly by mere exertion of the will, by mere desire, we accomplish nothing. We must put with that desire the labor to accomplish the things we desire. I am sure that a young man who is perfectly satisfied with what he is doing, although he may be doing very little, and has no ambition to do more, will stand still. But I am convinced that every individual can improve from day to day, from year to year, and have greater capacity to do things as the years come and the years go. I believe in that with all my heart.

It is by exercise and by practice that we become proficient in any of the vocations or avocations of life, whether it be of a religious or of a secular character.

I know of no easy formula to success. Persist, persist, PERSIST; work, work, WORK—is what counts in the battle of life.

“This New Era Won’t Fit in Your Mailbox,” *New Era*, Feb 1973:

Believe it or not, the New Era was in production in 1902. It was called by its producers “simple, reliable, efficient, and practically noiseless.” It did not come by mail but was found in a few garages, and it used gasoline. The first New Era was an automobile.

Karl Benz was probably the first man to successfully adapt the gasoline engine to a motor vehicle. He achieved this in 1885. Gottlieb Daimler, a man working independently of Benz in the very same city, produced a four-wheeled car in 1886. By the time Henry Ford built his first car in 1896, both Daimler and Benz (later Mercedes) automobiles had been produced in five different models each. A new era was still dawning in the automotive industry six years later. A New Era car was produced in 1902, and to call a car “New Era” in 1902 was entirely proper.

What was a gasoline automobile like in 1902? Using the New Era motorcar as our guide, we see that a seven horsepower engine found under the seat drove the rear wheels through double chains and could propel its weight of 950 pounds up to a speed of twenty-five miles per hour. Steering was by tiller, which you turned to the left if you wanted to go right. Unless you lived near Camden, New Jersey, or were fortunate enough to have an agent in your area, you probably had to do without the New Era motorcar. If you were in the right area, however, a New Era car could be bought, including all the extras, from the Automobile and Marine Power Company for \$850.

Besides being among the first of the American automobiles to go into circulation, the New Era was among the first of the American automobiles to go out of circulation. This happened in 1903, even before the Ford Motor Company was founded.

The Model T Ford was introduced in October 1908, also at a price of \$850. It became one of the biggest success stories the automotive industry has ever known. It featured four cylinders, twenty horsepower, and a light overall weight. To capture a little of the Model T’s success, in 1916 a group of men set out to build a second New Era car, similar to the Ford but with a few improvements. They formed the New Era Engineering Company and placed the name New Era on their product because they thought its exceptional light weight of only 1,760 pounds was a forerunner of things to come. Among the features of their five-passenger touring car was a four cylinder engine of twenty-seven horsepower, an Allis-Chalmers starting motor (an extra on the Ford), a sturdy frame, and brakes that externally contracted and internally expanded on the rear wheel drums. A three-speed transmission and multiple disc clutch drove the power to the rear wheels, which were 30 inches in diameter and 3 1/2 inches wide. The New Era Light Four could be bought for the ridiculously low price of \$660 in Joliet, Illinois.

The name of the company was changed in 1917 to the New Era Motors, Incorporated. That is the last we know of the corporation and its cars. Most automobile companies that went out of business during this period did so because of lack of sales, lack of capital, or both.

Fifty-three years later, the *New Era* name was again revived. This time it was used on a product that achieved wider circulation and traveled many more miles than the previous New Eras' combined production ever did.

Today the *New Era* is your magazine, produced under the direction of the First Presidency for the youth and young adults of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The *New Era* currently travels to more than 150,000 subscribers in some 75 countries.

Our goal is to be a witness for Christ while capturing the joy of being young, alive, and LDS.

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February 2008 CHINESE NEW YEAR

Purposes of Theme: fun and adventure, respectful relationships

Character Development: cooperation, compassion

“I Can Walk!,” *Friend*, Sep 1973:

Grant was only six weeks old when his father, H. Grant Heaton, was called to preside over the Southern Far East Mission. Unlike most children in the United States, Grant spoke his first words in Chinese. His little sister, Lisa Lee, who was born a year and a half after the family moved to Hong Kong, also learned Chinese first.

The mission home was filled with happiness until March 1958, when Grant was three years old. One day his neck became stiff, and there was pain in his chest. Soon he could not walk on his legs. President and Sister Heaton asked the missionaries to fast and pray for their son, but still his condition grew worse.

Grant's father gave him a special blessing before taking him to the hospital. After tests, the illness was diagnosed as paralytic polio. The doctors said Grant would soon need an iron lung to help him breathe. Polio is not common among the Chinese, however, and the only iron lung in the country was being used by a British sailor.

By the end of a week in the hospital, Grant was completely paralyzed. Only his eyes moved, and the little body that had seemed healthy just a week before was quickly wasting away.

One morning Sister Heaton was with Grant. It was so hard for him to breathe that she thought surely he would soon return to our Heavenly Father. Two men came to the hospital that morning. They represented the Chinese Saints who had held a special fast and a prayer meeting the day before.

Both men had been members of the Church less than a year and neither held the priesthood, but they wanted to help. They asked permission to pray for Grant. Sister Heaton readily agreed and bowed her head to join them. She felt the faith of these humble Chinese men as they knelt beside Grant's bed and prayed that this little boy's health might be restored.

As they rose to their feet and left the room, Grant's mother followed them down the hall. She thanked them and then went to the refrigerator where special food for Grant was stored.

Just as she opened the door, a familiar little voice called from down the hall and she turned around quickly to see Grant coming toward her.

"Look, Mommy," he exclaimed with a happy smile. "I can walk!"

The doctors were amazed, but when the polio symptoms did not return, they let Grant go home. President and Sister Heaton and the missionaries gratefully acknowledged the power of the Lord and the faith of the Chinese Saints in behalf of their son.

Grant is now eighteen and lives with his family in Salt Lake City, Utah. He doesn't remember his illness in China. His strong legs that helped him make the football team and wrestle for his high school don't remember either!

Not long after the Church was organized in 1830, the General Authorities thought of sending missionaries to China. It was not until October 1852, however, that three elders left Salt Lake and arrived in Hong Kong on April 27, 1853. They had many problems and were not successful in converting anyone. Before long they returned to Utah.

In January 1921 David O. McKay, who was then an apostle, and Elder Hugh J. Cannon visited China. It was at this time that Elder McKay dedicated all of China for the preaching of the gospel. Now there are three missions for the Chinese people: Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan. Although the first missionaries were very discouraged, later ones have had thrilling experiences in China. "I Can Walk!" is one of them that took place in Hong Kong.

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March 2008 LITTER TO GLITTER

Purposes of Theme: citizenship, character development
Character Development: citizenship, resourcefulness

"Using Earth's Resources Well," *Ensign*, Sep 1993:

God gave Adam and Eve an important responsibility when he commanded them to "replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion." We have inherited from our first parents the responsibility to manage and care for the resources of the earth our Heavenly Father created.

The Lord's instructions to "subdue" and "have dominion" imply that we must use well the land, minerals, air, water, plants, and animals in this world. To "replenish" suggests replacing some of what we have taken from the earth and air, so they can continue to bless us.

Robert J. Matthews, "What the Scriptures Say About: Ecology," *New Era*, Mar 1972:

To many people the word is still new—but only to those who neither read the headlines nor listen to the news broadcasts. To all others the message has come through loud and clear: Many places in our world are already in danger of being made unfit for life—any kind of life!

The reason? Man is polluting the environment, destroying the ecological system. Ecology is that branch of biological science that deals with the interrelationships of all living organisms—including man—and their environment. And the scriptures have a great deal to say about life on earth.

Nephi explained that it was never intended that the earth be a barren, lifeless sphere: “Behold, the Lord hath created the earth that it should be inhabited; and he hath created his children that they should possess it.” (1 Ne. 17:36.)

When the Lord prepared the earth for habitation and placed plants and animals therein, he pronounced it all good and gave Adam dominion over it. (Moses 2: 26–31.) In spite of the fact that “all things which [the Lord] had made were very good” (Moses 2:31), and even though it is said that his preparations for the earth were finished (Moses 3:1), it is interesting to note that he put Adam into the garden of Eden “to dress it and to keep it” (Moses 3:15) and to subdue the earth (Moses 2:28). Such phrases suggest that the earth needs to be looked after and that man has the responsibility to dress, to keep, and to maintain the earth as a habitable place. The indication is that in the beginning the Lord placed upon man the responsibility for the use he makes of his environment.

Centuries later, after the waters of the flood had receded, the Lord instructed Noah concerning the conservation of animal life. This was a subject of great importance at a time when the only available animal life was that which had been preserved in the ark. The scripture says that all life upon the earth was delivered into the hand of man, and that the Lord placed man in charge of all things, both moving creatures and green herbs. (Gen. 9:2-3.) These verses signify a reaffirmation and renewal unto Noah of the environmental responsibility that had been placed upon Adam and his posterity.

The instruction to Noah is even more precise in Joseph Smith’s Inspired Version of Genesis:

“Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.

“And surely, blood shall not be shed, only for meat, to save your lives; and the blood of every beast will I require at your hands.” (JST, Gen. 9:9, 11.)

Thus it appears that man will be held responsible to the Lord for animals that he needlessly kills beyond the need for self-defense or for food. A similar expression with reference to “the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air” is given in the Doctrine and Covenants 49:21:

“And wo be unto man that sheddeth blood or that wasteth flesh and hath no need.”

Later the Lord gave instruction to Moses regarding the protection of bird life:

“If a bird’s nest chance to be before thee in the way in any tree, or on the ground, whether they be young ones, or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young:

“But thou shalt in any wise let the dam go, and take the young to thee; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days.” (Deut. 22:6–7.)

The thrust of this passage is that the mother bird should be left free to produce more young; that is, one should not destroy the breeding stock. The counsel to preserve bird life carries the observation, “that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days.” The inference is that prolonging human life on a long-term basis requires wise management of the available resources of the land.

A type of conservation is described among the Nephites when those living in the land of Desolation took great pains to “suffer whatsoever tree should spring up upon the face of the land that it should grow up, that in time they might have timber to build their houses ... and all manner of their buildings.” (Hel. 3:9.) Earlier there had been timber, but much of the area had been rendered desolate and without timber “because of the many inhabitants who had before inherited the land.” (Hel. 3:5.) It appears that the earlier inhabitants had not practiced proper environmental science.

The Lord has made another declaration in our day concerning man’s use and enjoyment of his world:

“... the fulness of the earth is yours, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, and that which climbeth upon the trees and walketh upon the earth;

“Yea, and the herb, and the good things which come of the earth, whether for food or for raiment, or for houses, or for barns, or for orchards, or for gardens, or for vineyards;

“Yea, all things which come of the earth, in the season thereof, are made for the benefit and the use of man, both to please the eye and to gladden the heart;

“Yea, for food and for raiment, for taste and for smell, to strengthen the body and to enliven the soul.” (D&C 59:16–19.)

However, there follows a caution and a warning that the bounties of the earth are not to be exploited:

“And it pleaseth God that he hath given all these things unto man; for unto this end were they made to be used, *with judgment, not to excess, neither by extortion.*” (D&C 59:20. Emphasis added.)

We have been instructed to learn all things pertaining to our globe, “things ... in the earth and under the earth.” (D&C 88:79.) This request easily includes the study of ecology and the conservation of our natural resources, which are vital to the continuation of the good life on earth.

“For it is expedient that I, the Lord, should make every man accountable, as a steward over earthly blessings, which I have made and prepared for my creatures.

“For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare; yea, I prepared all things, and have given unto the children of men to be agents unto themselves.” (D&C 104:13, 17.)

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April 2008 ABRACADABRA

**Purposes of Theme: personal achievement, family understanding
Character Development: courage, responsibility**

Pres. Gordon B. Hinckley:

Be willing to accept new challenges, and trust that the Lord will help you be equal to them. If you get discouraged, ask for help. But don't give up. As you keep trying you will find that your abilities increase.

Pres. Thomas S. Monson:

"Family, friends, and leaders will cheer our courage, will applaud our determination as we rise from our stumblings and pursue our goals."

JaNel Moore, "Snickerdoodles," *Friend*, Jun 1993:

It would be fun to be magic, Brett thought as he snuggled into his warm bed and dreamed of dancing bears and enchanted rabbits. He and his family had just returned from a trip to the circus. They had enjoyed the funny clowns, the animal acts, and the daring acrobats, but Brett thought that the magician was the best part of the evening. He had performed exciting tricks with hoops and ropes and had even pulled a rabbit out of an empty hat.

Brett was still daydreaming about magic the next morning during breakfast. "It's a beautiful day," Brett's big brother, Ryan, said as he helped clear away the dishes. "Do you want to come with me for a walk through the meadow?"

Brett shook his head. "I'm going to try to make some magic of my own." He went to his room and began searching in drawers, cubbyholes, and corners. He rummaged through his toy box and even peered under his bed. Now and then he would stuff something into his backpack. When it was full, he zipped it up. "There's my magic kit," he said. "Now all I need is a magic word. How about ... *snickerdoodles!* They're my favorite cookies, so it's a word that's sure to work magic."

Sitting outside under the big oak tree, he began the test. He remembered Mom telling him often, "Brett, you need to put on your listening ears!" He reached into his magic kit and pulled out a sheet of pink paper and a pair of scissors. Carefully he cut out two very large ears and placed them over his own.

"Snickerdoodles!" Brett whispered with his eyes closed. "Now let's see if these ears have any magic."

He walked into the meadow by his house, then stopped suddenly as he began to hear wonderful things. Close by, a squirrel chattered, bees hummed, and a bird whistled a happy tune. Listening very carefully, Brett could even hear Mom singing as she worked in the kitchen.

"My listening ears are magic!" Brett shouted.

The day was beginning to get warm, so he slipped off his shoes and socks and put them on a big rock where he could find them later. "Snickerdoodles!" he said brightly as he continued his walk barefoot. "Let's see what other magic I can make."

The grass tickled his toes like a tiny forest. The uneven ground became mountains and valleys to his bare feet. "I'm a giant!" he said with a giggle. Suddenly he felt something cool and squishy, and when he looked down, he found that he was standing in mud.

Brett liked all the new feelings—especially the thick, creamy mud oozing up between his toes. "Even my *feet* are magic!" he decided.

Reaching into his magic kit, he took out some toy glasses with a big, funny nose attached. "Snickerdoodles! I bet that with these on I'll be able to see some neat things and sniff all kinds of fantastic smells."

Sure enough, he smelled something wonderful right away and looked up to see a cherry tree covered with snow-white blossoms. A flash of silver caught his eye, and he saw a brook splashing merrily through the meadow. His big fake nose turned toward home as he smelled cookies baking—mmmm!

Filled with excitement, he ran to the top of the hill, where he could see Ryan in the distance. “Hey, Ryan, wait for me! I have something magical to show you!”

Sprinting toward Ryan, Brett tripped and tumbled head over heels down the hill, sprawling in a heap at the bottom—and on top of his now-crumpled magic ears and smashed magic glasses. The rest of his magic kit was scattered all around him.

“Oh no!” he wailed. “I’ve ruined my magic!”

Brett was still crying when Ryan came running up to help him. Between sobs, Brett explained about all the magical things he had discovered and how sad he was to lose them.

Ryan helped Brett to his feet and began gathering up the scattered treasures. “You silly boy,” he said kindly. “The magic isn’t in paper ears or funny glasses. It’s in your own body. Heavenly Father gave us sight and smell and hearing and taste and touch so that we can enjoy His beautiful world. You’ve had them all along.”

Brett sniffled. “Really, Ryan? Are you sure?”

“Look, don’t you still see the brook? Can’t you still smell the wildflowers? Don’t you still feel the wind on your cheek and the ant crawling on your hand? Why, if you listened hard enough, I bet you could hear Mom filling the cookie jar right now. How about trying out your sense of taste on a fresh-baked cookie?”

Brett jumped to his feet. He looked all around and drew in a deep breath. “You’re right, Ryan!” he exclaimed. “I’m the magic! Come on, I’ll race you for the first taste!”

They galloped side by side across the meadow. “Thanks, Heavenly Father! Thanks for my marvelous, magical body!” Brett shouted to the sky.

And guess what? The cookies were snickerdoodles!

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May 2008 LEAF IT TO THE CUBS

**Purposes of Theme: fun and adventure, preparation for Boy Scouts
Character Development: perseverance, respect**

Alma 32: 28, 37, 41:

Now, we will compare the word unto a seed. Now, if ye give place, that a seed may be planted in your heart, behold, if it be a true seed, or a good seed, if ye do not cast it out by your unbelief,

that ye will resist the Spirit of the Lord, behold, it will begin to swell within your breasts; and when you feel these swelling motions, ye will begin to say within yourselves—It must needs be that this is a good seed, or that the word is good, for it beginneth to enlarge my soul; yea, it beginneth to enlighten my understanding, yea, it beginneth to be delicious to me.

And behold, as the tree beginneth to grow, ye will say: Let us nourish it with great care, that it may get root, that it may grow up, and bring forth fruit unto us. And now behold, if ye nourish it with much care it will get root, and grow up, and bring forth fruit.

But if ye will nourish the word, yea, nourish the tree as it beginneth to grow, by your faith with great diligence, and with patience, looking forward to the fruit thereof, it shall take root; and behold it shall be a tree springing up unto everlasting life.

Isabel Pinard-Wojick, “What Is a Tree?,” *Friend*, Jul 1999:

What do you see when you look at a tree—
A big blob of brown and of green?
Or do *you* see what *I* see when I see a tree?
Read on, and you’ll see what I mean:
A live jungle gym, grown for boys and for girls,
A maker of acorns for gray, frisky squirrels,
A snatcher of kites and a gobbler of string,
A strong arm to hold up a black tire swing,
A shaggy-maned lion when storms blow this way,
Or a cool parasol on a warm summer’s day,
And, yes, a safe haven for wing-weary birds,
Where leaves play wind-music without any words.
But the best thing I see when I look at a tree
Is a gift the Creator has given to me.

Sandra L. Keith, “A Tree Named Joshua,” *Friend*, Jul 1981:

Many people know the names of trees such as elm, maple, cedar, walnut, pine, or sycamore. But how many of them have heard of a Joshua tree or know that such trees exist?

It is believed that the Joshua tree was first named by early Mormon pioneers who thought the many outstretched arms or branches of the plant resembled Joshua praying for victory at Jericho. So they called it the Joshua tree or praying plant. However, the Joshua tree is actually a member of the lily family and its scientific name is *Yucca brevifolia*.

The Joshua tree is found in only a few isolated areas of the southwestern United States. Its crazy shape dots the high deserts of Nevada, Utah, and Arizona, growing mostly above the 3,000-foot level where the average rainfall is between eight and ten inches a year. But it is within a small section of southern California in a place where the Colorado River and Mojave Desert quietly slip together that the tree reaches its highest stature and greatest beauty. This is truly Joshua tree country. Here, within the higher elevations of the 870 square miles known as Joshua Tree National Monument, the tree flourishes.

In the warm spring months of March and April plants in every direction begin to liven up. They put forth shiny green leaves and jewel-colored flowers with petals as smooth and fragile as butterfly wings. Yet it is the Joshua tree that dominates the landscape and reigns as king. Reaching as high as forty feet, the tree’s shaggy-armed branches boast a new sight. Huge green and white flowers burst forth and sit like heavy crowns upon the jagged clusters of dark green leaves.

It is fitting that the Joshua tree be allowed this kingly time for boasting, for it is one of the oldest living things on the desert. Yet the exact age of these large trees remains a secret, for the Joshua tree does not form annual growth rings.

Surprisingly, the soft, cork-like bark hides a hollow trunk that ranges from two to five feet in diameter at its base. The tree's rough gray trunk sprouts many long, slim branches or arms. Sometimes a branch is shaped like a pencil with just one group of short leaves upon its tip. Other times a branch will divide into a wishbone-like tip, and each tip holds its own dense cluster of sharp, dagger-shaped leaves.

While other plants bloom each spring, the Joshua tree does not. The time between flowering is probably determined by temperature and rainfall. But its big, pineapple-shaped flowers are important, because they are one of the reasons for the strange shape of the Joshua tree.

The Joshua or yucca tree will not form those many arm-like branches unless the leaf-making bud at the end of a branch is killed, which happens when a branch begins to flower. Another reason for the unusual twisted shape of the Joshua tree is the activity of the yucca boring beetle larvae that live and feed on the ends of the branches, where they destroy the leaf-making buds.

The Joshua tree is useful to man as well as beast. The smallest of the tree's roots are red and were used by Indians for weaving colorful designs into their baskets. The wood from the yucca is soft and easily shaped. It is used to make a special kind of surgeon's splint. It is also cut into thin sheets of veneer from which unusual trinkets are made.

However, it is really the desert birds, mammals, and insects who benefit most from the Joshua tree. The little yucca night lizard relies completely upon this plant and could not survive without it. Living either just under the bark of a growing tree or in the dark hollows of a fallen rotting trunk, this little reptile dines on the insect larvae, ants, and termites it finds there.

A small animal known as the wood rat or pack rat uses the sharp spines or leaves of the Joshua tree when building its nest. It scampers up a living tree and, with great determination, chews off one of the leaves. Hurrying back to its hideaway, the rat will use that pointed leaf end to form a sort of barbwire fencing to keep invaders away from its underground headquarters.

At least twenty-five different birds are known to make their nests in the Joshua tree. Two of these, the cactus woodpecker and the red-shafted flicker, make a nest by digging a hole in a branch or the trunk of the Joshua tree. Sooner or later they will leave this home and a new tenant will move in—a western bluebird, a Pasadena screech owl, an ash-throated flycatcher, or some other kind of bird. In any event, the nest will be used for many years.

The Joshua tree forests continue to thrive. New plants still sprout as the seeds are carried off and dropped by some little desert rodent; or perhaps they are blown away upon the hot, dry winds. The larger trees produce not only seeds but peculiar underground runner-stems that eventually push upward and break through the sunbaked ground, and a new Joshua tree begins to grow.

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