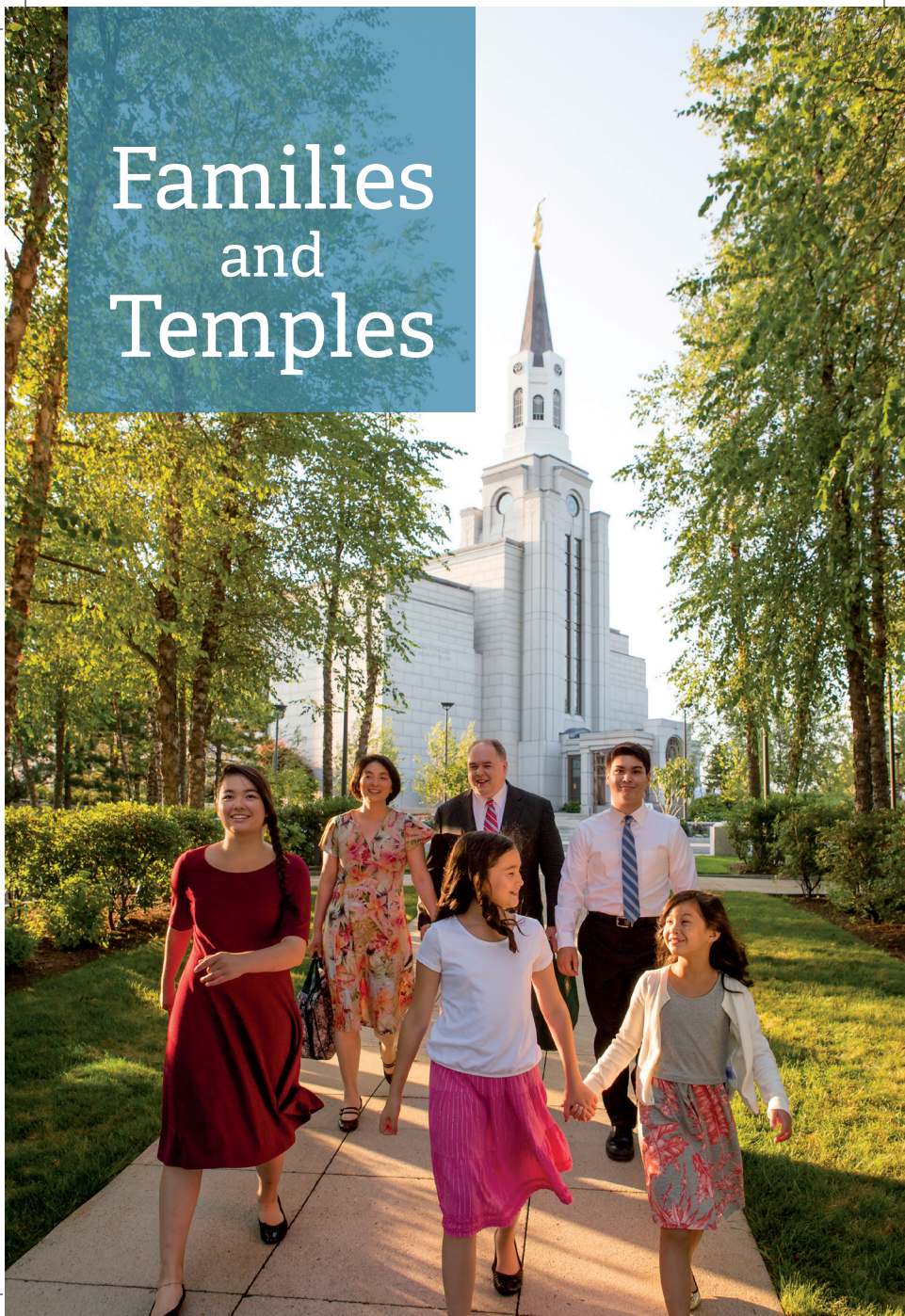
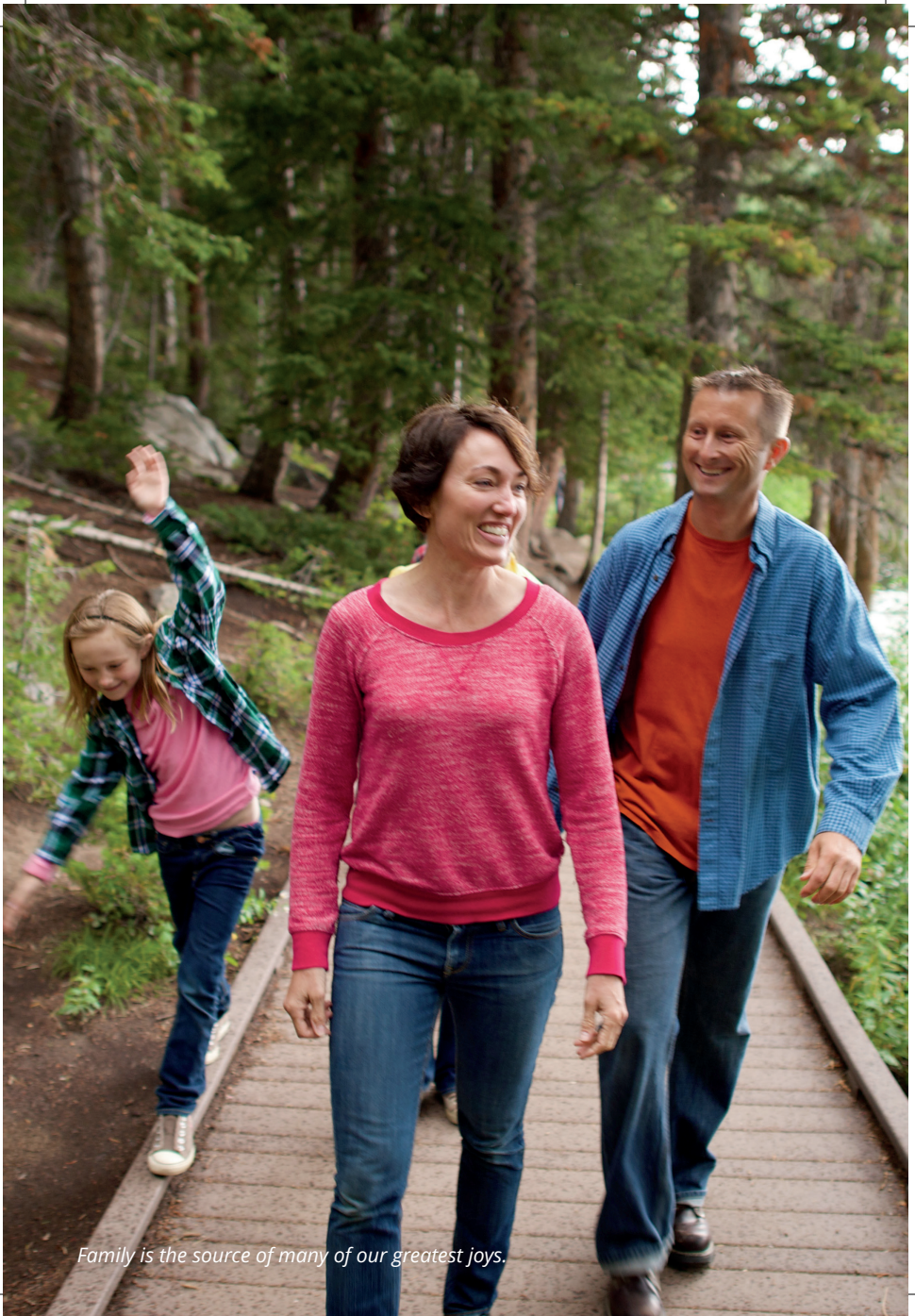


Families and Temples





Family is the source of many of our greatest joys.

WHY IS FAMILY SO IMPORTANT?

Even before you were born, you were part of a family. You lived with God before this life. You are a child of heavenly parents and an important part of Their eternal family. They love you and want you to be happy. When your life on earth is over, They want you and your loved ones to return to live with Them forever. The opportunity to return to God is made possible by the atoning sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ.

The family is ordained of God and is central to His plan for our eternal happiness. Families are intended to help God's children learn and grow in righteousness. Marriage between a man and a woman is also ordained of God. Husband and wife have a sacred responsibility

to love and care for each other and for their children. As you follow the teachings of Jesus Christ, God will bless you and your family.

"All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny"

("The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129).

HOW CAN MY FAMILY RETURN TO LIVE WITH GOD?

God has provided a clear plan for you and your family to return to Him. This plan is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Because God loves all of His children, every person will eventually have the opportunity to hear and accept the gospel, whether in this life or the next. You accept the gospel by exercising faith in Jesus Christ, repenting, and receiving sacred ordinances like baptism and confirmation. An **ordinance** is a sacred religious ceremony performed by someone who has authority from God. When you receive an ordinance, you show your love for God as you make sacred promises to Him and He makes sacred promises to you. The promises you make when you receive an ordinance are called **covenants**. Receiving ordinances and keeping covenants are necessary to return to God's presence.

Baptism and confirmation are the first ordinances you receive when you become a member of His Church. When you are baptized and confirmed by someone with proper authority, you promise to live a Christlike life, keep the commandments, and remember Christ in all you do. If you faithfully keep these covenants, God promises you forgiveness of your sins and the companionship of the Holy Ghost. Baptism and confirmation are the first ordinances on your path toward **eternal life** with God.

Some ordinances, such as baptism and confirmation, are essential for you to return to God. Other essential ordinances include receiving the Melchizedek Priesthood (for men), receiving your temple endowment, and being sealed as part of an eternal family in the temple. Through these ordinances and covenants, you



Jesus is baptized by John the Baptist.



The ordinance of the sacrament is administered by priesthood authority.

will learn more about God's plan and experience more of His power in your life (see D&C 84:20). These ordinances and covenants are personal milestones that mark the path to eternal life. You **endure to the end** of this path by continually exercising faith in Jesus Christ, repenting, following the inspiration of

the Holy Ghost, and keeping your covenants. Covenants with God will give you strength and a sense of purpose. You will also enjoy greater happiness in this life, feel increased spiritual strength, receive protection and guidance, and be prepared to eventually live with God and your family forever.

"After ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay. . . . 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 31:19–20).

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE ORDAINED TO THE PRIESTHOOD?

The **priesthood** is God's power and authority that He gives to His children to act in His name. Through the priesthood, we receive the ordinances of salvation. Men are ordained to offices in the priesthood, and both men and women can experience the power and blessings of the priesthood in their lives. Women access the power of the priesthood in their responsibilities in the Church and in God's plan.

To be **ordained** to the priesthood means to receive authority for a specific priesthood office. To ordain someone, a man with the proper authority places his hands on the person's head that is to be ordained and says a special prayer that gives authority to act in that office.

Soon after baptism and confirmation, worthy boys and men ages 12 and older can receive the priesthood. The initial or preparatory priesthood is called the **Aaronic Priesthood**. Those ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood can prepare, bless, and pass the sacrament and baptize others. The Aaronic Priesthood helps prepare men to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood. Those ordained to the **Melchizedek Priesthood**, or higher priesthood, can give priesthood blessings and perform ordinances such as confirming new members of the Church and ordaining others to the Melchizedek Priesthood.

"No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; by kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile"
(D&C 121:41–42).

When a man is ordained to the priesthood, he covenants to fulfill his sacred duties, serve others, and help build up the Church. Priesthood power is always intended to be used to bless and serve others and can be used only in righteousness and love.

After being baptized (and, if you are a man, after being ordained

to the priesthood), you can prepare to enter the temple. There you will have the opportunity to receive additional gospel ordinances and blessings as you continue along your path back to God.



A young man is ordained to the priesthood.



The temple is the house of the Lord.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE TEMPLE?

Some gospel ordinances and covenants are so sacred that God permits us to receive them only in special places called temples. A temple is literally a house of the Lord—a holy place set apart from the rest of the world. In the temple, you learn more about the plan of salvation and how to follow Christ's perfect example. God's greatest blessings are available in His temples.

"Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths" (Isaiah 2:3).

The scriptures teach that God has commanded His people to worship in temples since ancient times. When the Lord restored His Church through the Prophet Joseph Smith, He directed that temples once again be built. Having temples on the earth is a witness of God's love for us. Everything in the temple testifies that God is our Father and that Jesus Christ is His Son and the Savior of the world.

For members of the Church, a temple is the most sacred place of worship on the earth. It is unique from all other places of worship. It is designated as the only place where families can be united forever and where the most sacred gospel ordinances are performed. It is also a place where you can feel closer to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, a place of peace and revelation, a place where family relationships are strengthened, and a place to seek direction concerning life's challenges.

Although all people are invited to attend worship services in Church meetinghouses, a temple is different. After a temple is dedicated, visitors are welcome to enjoy the beautiful and peaceful temple grounds, but entrance into the temple is reserved for faithful members of the Church—those who are willing and prepared to receive these special ordinances, covenants, and blessings.

Because the temple is the house of the Lord and the place where His most sacred ordinances are performed, God has established a standard that His children must meet before entering. As you prepare to go to the temple, you will have an interview similar to your baptismal interview. This interview is called a temple recommend interview. In this interview, your bishop or branch president will ask you some questions to confirm that you are keeping the commandments. If you are worthy and prepared, you will receive a temple recommend that will allow you to enter the temple.

In addition to receiving your own temple ordinances, in temples you can receive ordinances on behalf of your ancestors and others who have died without the opportunity to receive them. These include baptism, confirmation, and every other ordinance necessary for salvation.



The temple is a place of peace, happiness, and inspiration.

WHAT ARE BAPTISMS FOR DECEASED ANCESTORS?

Jesus taught that baptism by proper authority was required to enter into heaven. He further demonstrated its importance when He was Himself baptized. Many people have the opportunity to be baptized while they are alive. But there are also many who die without being baptized or even knowing about Jesus Christ. Heavenly Father also wants each of them to return to live with Him.

Heavenly Father knew that many of His children would not have a chance to be baptized in this life, so He provided another way for them to receive this ordinance. In the temple, those who are deceased can receive baptism and other ordinances by proxy (meaning that someone living receives these ordinances on their behalf). **Proxy baptism for deceased ancestors** (baptism by proxy) is a sacred gift you can offer to your family members and others who have died. Those who have died can then choose whether to accept the baptism and other ordinances performed for them. Proxy ordinances extend the saving grace of Jesus Christ to all people.

If you are a worthy Church member and at least 12 years old, you can receive a temple recommend that allows you to enter the temple to be baptized and confirmed on behalf of others who have died without receiving those ordinances. Receiving ordinances on behalf of others who have passed away can be done only in God's holy temples and is an important family responsibility.



Baptistry in the Oquirrh Mountain Utah Temple



Youth visit the Manila Philippines Temple to do baptisms for deceased ancestors.

WHAT IS FAMILY HISTORY?

Providing ordinances for your own deceased family members begins with researching your family history. When you join the Church, you may feel an increased love and concern for members of your family who have died without knowing about the gospel of Jesus Christ. Your fellow Church members can help you prepare to be baptized in the temple on behalf of your deceased family members. The Church collects historical and biographical records from all over the world to help people identify their ancestors. You can get started by writing down what you already know about your family.

Family history refers to identifying and learning about your ancestors. Researching your family history with other family members can strengthen your understanding of who you are and help you feel closer to one another. Doing family history also helps you identify ancestors who need the opportunity to receive saving gospel ordinances. As you learn about your ancestors, you will be able to feel the Holy Ghost confirm the eternal nature and importance of families.

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers”
(Malachi 4:5–6).

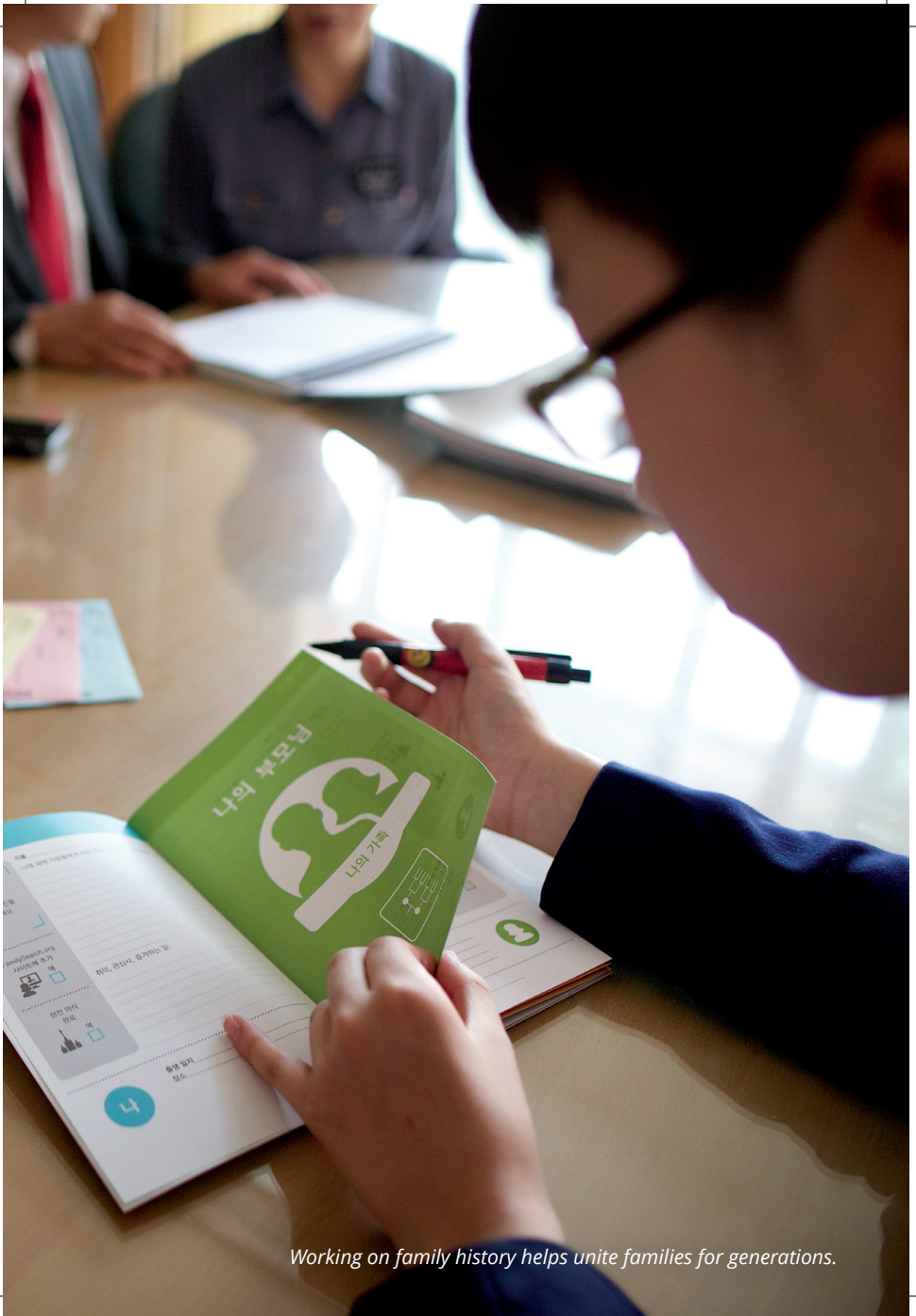
HOW CAN I START MY FAMILY HISTORY AND TEMPLE SERVICE?

You can research your family history and complete ordinances for your ancestors by doing the following:

Find. Talk to family members to learn information and stories about your ancestors. Write down and then save this information in *My Family: Stories That Bring Us Together*, an interactive booklet available on [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org), a Church-affiliated website.

Take. After you have learned and gathered information about deceased family members (like their names, birth dates and places, death dates and places, and other facts and stories), take these names to the temple and receive ordinances on their behalf. The missionaries or other Church members can teach you how to do this.

Teach. Help others, especially your family members, learn how to find out more about their ancestors. Involving family members in the effort to know and serve your ancestors can bless your family with spiritual protection and strength. Family history and **temple service** can help bind the hearts of family members together.



Working on family history helps unite families for generations.

MY ANCESTOR

Fill in as many names as you can remember. Think about which deceased ancestor you want to be baptized for first. Share a story with the missionaries about that ancestor, or write it below.



father



mother

My deceased ancestor's name: _____

Story or memory about him or her: _____

Birth date: _____ Place: _____



grandfather



great-grandfather



great-grandmother



grandmother



great-grandfather



great-grandmother



grandfather



great-grandfather



great-grandmother



grandmother



great-grandfather



great-grandmother

(You can be baptized for an ancestor of your same sex.)

Death date: _____ Place: _____

Spouse's name: _____

Marriage date: _____ Place: _____

Go to [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org) to enter this information in your online family tree and learn how to prepare the name for temple ordinances.



Kyiv Ukraine Temple celestial room

WHAT IS THE TEMPLE ENDOWMENT?

Performing temple ordinances for your ancestors and others who have died makes salvation possible for all of God's children. But there are also ordinances performed in the temple that are essential for you to receive while on your path back to God's presence.

After baptism and confirmation, you can receive the ordinance of the **temple endowment**. The word *endowment* means "gift," and your temple endowment is a special gift of knowledge and power that God gives to those who are ready to receive it. It is an ordinance needed to return to God's presence. As part of this ordinance, you are taught more about the plan of salvation, the mission and Atonement of Jesus Christ, the love Heavenly Father has for His children, and your divine potential. The covenants you make during the endowment focus on how you can become more like Jesus Christ.

Adults who prepare may receive their temple endowment as soon as one year after their baptism. Your bishop or branch president will help you learn more about the temple and prepare you for your endowment. When you are ready, you can invite others who have a temple recommend, including family and friends, to join you in the temple as you receive this ordinance. Like baptism, after you receive your own endowment, you may receive that same ordinance on behalf of others who have died.

WHAT IS THE TEMPLE SEALING?

The scriptures call the authority to unite families forever the “sealing” power. This is the same authority Jesus gave the Apostle Peter to provide blessings on earth that will continue in heaven (see Matthew 16:19).

“The family is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129).

Heavenly Father’s plan of happiness is ultimately to have you and your family live with Him forever. In sealing rooms within the temple, marriages between a man and a woman are performed. There, a man and a woman kneel and join hands across a sacred altar

to be married for this life and for eternity. This eternal marriage is called a **temple sealing**, and children born into such marriages are also sealed to their families forever. Being sealed as a family is the crowning ordinance of the temple and the greatest of God’s blessings for His children.

Those who are married civilly before they join the Church or before they are able to go to the temple can also be sealed together as husband and wife. After a couple is sealed, any children they already have can also be sealed to them.



Córdoba Argentina Temple sealing room



The temple brings some of life's greatest blessings.

Knowing that families can be together forever brings peace and hope as you face the challenges of life, including the suffering and death of loved ones. If you are sealed to your family and remain faithful to your covenants, your family relationships will continue after death.

You can also receive the sealing ordinance on behalf of your ancestors. By doing so, you can unite entire generations of your family for eternity. Striving to have an eternal family will bring marvelous blessings in this life and in the life to come.

“The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally”

(“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129).

WHAT ABOUT MY FAMILY?

Many individuals look at their current family circumstances and wonder how they will be able to receive the blessing of an eternal family. God, your Heavenly Father, is aware of your concerns, and He knows and loves your family. All families face challenges and none are perfect, but the gospel of Jesus Christ can heal and help each of us. As families faithfully strive to live the gospel, they can resolve misunderstandings, contentions, and challenges. All of the imperfections and injustices of this life can be overcome through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

God has promised that the blessings of marriage, family, and eternal life will be made available to all of His children who faithfully accept and follow His plan of happiness. Your responsibility is to have faith in this promise and follow the example of Jesus Christ.

The blessings of marriage, family, and eternal life will be made available to all of God's faithful children, regardless of their current family circumstances.

As you continue to keep your covenants and help others do the same, you will feel the peace and power of God in your life. Your family will be blessed by your example, and the Holy Ghost can soften hearts and help you know how

to build better relationships with your family members. Have faith that God is preparing each of your family members, just as He has prepared you. You can also serve your eternal family as you seek out your ancestors and perform temple ordinances for them. In His own time and His own way, God will fulfill your desire for the blessing of an eternal family.



Strive for an eternal family by keeping your covenants.



ADDITIONAL STUDY

How can the gospel of Jesus Christ prepare my family to return to God's presence?

Moses 6:57–59 (Pearl of Great Price, page 19. The missionaries or another member of the Church can help you obtain a copy of this book if you do not have it. You can also go to [LDS.org](https://www.LDS.org) to find it online.)

“The Family: A Proclamation to the World” (See pages 36–37 of this pamphlet.)

What does God expect of those who are baptized?

Luke 22:32 (Bible, New Testament)

2 Nephi 31:19–21 (Book of Mormon, pages 114–15)

Doctrine and Covenants 109:8 (Doctrine and Covenants, page 223. The missionaries or another member of the Church can help you obtain a copy of the Doctrine and Covenants if you do not have it. You can also go to [LDS.org](https://www.LDS.org) to find it online.)



What are the duties and responsibilities of priesthood holders?

Doctrine and Covenants 20:38–59 (pages 37–38)

Doctrine and Covenants 107:1–20 (pages 215–17)

Doctrine and Covenants 121:41–46 (pages 242–43)

What blessings come from receiving temple ordinances such as the endowment? How can I prepare to enter the temple?

Doctrine and Covenants 109:22–26 (page 224)

Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple (The missionaries or another member of the Church can help you obtain a copy of this booklet, or you can find it online at LDS.org.)

Why is it important to be sealed in the temple?

1 Corinthians 11:11 (Bible, New Testament)

Helaman 10:7 (Book of Mormon, page 392)

Doctrine and Covenants 132:15, 18 (page 268)



"Temples," *True to the Faith*, pages 170–74 (The missionaries or another member of the Church can help you obtain a copy of this book, or you can find it online at LDS.org.)

"Marriage," *True to the Faith*, pages 97–101

How can those who have died without a chance to accept the gospel receive eternal life?

1 Corinthians 15:29 (Bible, New Testament)

Doctrine and Covenants 137 (pages 285–86)

Doctrine and Covenants 138:28–35 (pages 288–89)

"Family History Work and Genealogy," *True to the Faith*, pages 61–64

My Family: Stories That Bring Us Together (The missionaries or a member of the Church can help you obtain a copy of this booklet. It is also available online at FamilySearch.org.)





LIST OF TERMS


Aaronic Priesthood: The preparatory priesthood. This priesthood carries with it the authority to baptize and is named after Aaron in the Old Testament.

Covenant: A promise or agreement between God and His children. God gives the conditions for the covenant, and we agree to those conditions. God promises certain blessings for our obedience to our covenants. Covenants are associated with all ordinances of the gospel.

Endure to the end: To continually exercise faith in Jesus Christ, repent, and strive to keep covenants throughout our lives. Enduring to the end is necessary to obtain eternal life.

Eternal life: Becoming like Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, living with Them forever, and receiving all that They have. One of the blessings of eternal life, or exaltation, is living together as families throughout eternity.

Family history: Learning names, facts, and stories about our ancestors. After doing family history, we can prepare to perform ordinances for our deceased ancestors in the temple.



Melchizedek Priesthood: The higher or greater priesthood. It is named after Melchizedek, who was a righteous high priest and king in the Old Testament. Worthy brethren may receive the Melchizedek Priesthood and be ordained elders when they are at least 18 years old.

Ordained: To receive power and authority to act in a particular office on behalf of the Lord.

Ordinance: A sacred religious ceremony performed by the authority of the priesthood. Examples include baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost (confirmation), the sacrament, the temple endowment, and the temple sealing. Ordinances are a means for entering into covenants with God.

Priesthood: God's power and authority that He gives to His children to act in His name for their salvation. Through the priesthood, we receive the ordinances of salvation, as well as blessings of healing, comfort, and counsel.

Proxy baptism for deceased ancestors: Baptism and confirmation performed in the temple by the living on behalf of their family members or others who died without receiving these ordinances.



Temple endowment: A gift of power and knowledge from God that is received through a temple ordinance that consists of a series of teachings and covenants that are necessary for attaining eternal life with God.

Temple sealing: An ordinance performed in the temple that enables a husband and wife along with their children and their extended families to live forever with God and Jesus Christ.

Temple service: Receiving ordinances in the temple on behalf of those who have died.



THE FAMILY

A PROCLAMATION TO THE WORLD

THE FIRST PRESIDENCY AND COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

*W*E, THE FIRST PRESIDENCY and the Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children.

ALL HUMAN BEINGS—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.

IN THE PREMORTAL REALM, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshipped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize their divine destiny as heirs of eternal life. The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God's commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.

WE DECLARE the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed. We affirm the sanctity of life and of its importance in God's eternal plan.

HUSBAND AND WIFE have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. "Children are an heritage of the Lord" (Psalm 127:3). Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, and to teach them to love and serve one another, observe the commandments of God, and be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. Husbands and wives—mothers and fathers—will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations.

THE FAMILY is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity. Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities. By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. Extended families should lend support when needed.

WE WARN that individuals who violate covenants of chastity, who abuse spouse or offspring, or who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God. Further, we warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.

WE CALL UPON responsible citizens and officers of government everywhere to promote those measures designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society.

This proclamation was read by President Gordon B. Hinckley as part of his message at the General Relief Society Meeting held September 23, 1995, in Salt Lake City, Utah.

WHAT SHOULD I DO NOW?

- Continue to read the Book of Mormon and the other scriptures. Suggested readings:

- Pray to know how you and your family can begin to prepare for the blessings of the temple. Have daily personal and family prayer and scripture study.
- Begin to discover your family history and seek out your ancestors. Prepare to receive ordinances by proxy for them.
- Attend church this Sunday.
- Continue to prepare for baptism. Date: _____
- Visit temples.lds.org to learn more about temples and how you can prepare to attend the temple.
- Continue meeting with missionaries and members to learn more about how you and your family can receive the blessings of the temple.

Next appointment: _____

Missionary names: _____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

