

# STRENGTHENING LDS YOUNG PEOPLE

## Research Information Division

To become faithful Latter-day Saints, young people need to develop a strong religious identity consisting of the following three parts:

### THINKING

- Understanding of gospel principles and that Jesus Christ is their Redeemer.
- Seeing themselves as capable of becoming faithful Latter-day Saints.

### FEELING

- Sensing the influence of the Spirit in their lives.
- Feeling that they belong to and enjoy being a part of the community of Saints.
- Valuing Church service, including going to the temple and serving a mission.

### DOING

- Living a gospel lifestyle, including prayer, scripture study, chastity, and the Word of Wisdom
- Living in peace and cooperation with others.

Based on our studies of LDS youth and families, the following principles can guide parents and leaders in their efforts to help and support young people develop into strong, faithful Latter-day Saints.

### COMMITMENT

- Learning to be a strong Latter-day Saint comes primarily through relationships with others.
- Parents and leaders who want to have an impact on young people must make a commitment to spend time with them, *especially unhurried, informal time*.
- The ability to positively influence young people requires a commitment to Christ and to becoming a strong Latter-day Saint. Parents and leaders who are examples of Christ-like living, including Church activity, service to others, repentance, and private religious practice give young people a beacon to follow.

### CONNECTION

- Parents and leaders have the best chance to lead young people in the paths of righteousness when they develop warm, close relationships with them. Approval, affection, and acceptance in large doses are essential.
- Young people develop their ideas about what is true, what is good, and what is right by interacting with others. Through experiences with the spirit and conversations with adults and friends, young people fashion a religious identity. Parents and leaders who want to be a part of this dialogue must be willing to spend *more time listening* and less time preaching.

## COMMUNITY

- Much of the influence that parents have on their children comes through helping them build friendships with friends and caring adults who reinforce the values being taught at home.
- Helping young people participate in wholesome church and community activities where they can associate with righteous peers and adults is one of the most important things that parents and leaders can do.
- Parents can help their children by developing relationships with families whose children would be good friends for their own.
- Parents who get to know their children's friends' parents can support one another in good parenting practices.

## COMMUNICATION

- Young people need to know what their parents and leaders think, and especially, how they feel about them and about the gospel. Although a good example speaks volumes, young people also need to hear what the gospel means to the important adults in their lives, how adults use gospel principles to help them in their life journeys, and how they stay connected to God.
- *One-on-one or small group settings are the most conducive to spiritual sharing.* Working, playing, praying, and “hanging out” together provide adults and young people opportunities to learn and grow.
- Structured settings such as family home evening or church classes can provide opportunities for sharing spiritual ideas and feelings if care is taken to avoid the situation where one person does most of the talking and the discussion focuses on abstract concepts to the exclusion of personal experiences and feelings.
- Parents and leaders would benefit from participation in classes, workshops, or discussion groups designed to help them improve their ability to communicate in constructive ways.

## CONTROL

- Young people develop competence and faith in families where parents know what their children are doing, who they are with, and where they are. *Effective parents consistently but kindly enforce guidelines.*