



strengthening
our home
and family

Deseret Book®

Family Home Evening Materials

Theme: Joseph Smith

Packet #070204

5 tips for successful Family Home Evenings

- 1. Pray.** Pray about the needs of your family as you consider topics for home evenings, and pray as you prepare.
- 2. Prioritize.** Make Family Home Evening a priority; learn to say no to other activities.
- 3. Involvement.** Involve everyone in the family; help little children take part.
- 4. Commitment.** Be committed and be consistent. Set a designated time and stick to it. Holding Family Home Evening on a weekly basis takes dedication and planning on the part of all family members.
- 5. Relax** and enjoy it. The most important thing your children will remember is the spirit they feel in your family home evenings and activities. Be sure the atmosphere is one of love, understanding, and enjoyment.

Joseph Smith

Thought:

To my mind one of the strongest testimonies of the divinity of the life of our Savior is the testimony of Joseph Smith who laid down his life as a witness of the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

(President George Albert Smith, *Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 19 Dec. 1926, 4a)

Purpose:

Help our families understand that Joseph Smith was called of God as a prophet to restore the Church for our time.

Song:

“Praise to the Man,” *Hymns*, 27.

Scripture:

Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it. . . . He lived great, and he died great in the eyes of God and his people; and like most of the Lord’s anointed in ancient times, has sealed his mission and his works with his own blood . . .

(D&C 135: 3)

Lesson:

Family members try to guess which important event you are thinking of by listening carefully to the clues (listed below) and writing down, after each clue, what they think the event is. No answers are given aloud until all of the clues have been given. When all of the clues have been given, the winner is the person who wrote down the correct answer the earliest and did not change his or her answer with future clues. The clues are difficult at first but get progressively easier. (The event is the First Vision.)

1. It is one of the most important events that has ever taken place.
2. It did not happen in a building.
3. It took great faith and effort.
4. The Bible played a part in this event.
5. It involved prayer.
6. It has something to do with Joseph Smith.
7. Joseph Smith was fourteen years old at the time.
8. Jesus and Heavenly Father were involved.
9. This event is called the First _____.

(Max H. Molgard and Allan K. Burgess, *The Best of Fun for Family Night*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003], p. 31.)

Story:

A Surprising Message

Day after day Joseph went on with the work of translating the golden plates. Using the Urim and Thummim, he was able to translate the meaning of the engravings. Oliver wrote down everything Joseph said.

Their friend Joseph Knight continued to bring supplies for them and Emma. Joseph's younger brother Samuel, who had brought Oliver to Harmony, helped by doing much of the work on the farm. Before long, however, he returned to Palmyra.

Life became difficult for Joseph. He needed to work on the translation, but he had to support Emma and now Oliver too. The supplies he received were generous but not enough to allow them to work without worrying. Also, there were still people lurking about, looking for ways to prevent Joseph from going on with the translation.

One day Joseph received inspiration through the Urim and Thummim that he should send a letter to a man by the name of David Whitmer in Fayette, near Palmyra. He was to ask Mr. Whitmer to come to Harmony immediately with a team of horses and a wagon to carry Joseph and Oliver to the Whitmer home, where they would finish the translation. Otherwise, evil men might take Joseph's life to keep him from completing his work. Oliver wrote the letter, as they had been instructed, and sent it off.

When David Whitmer received the letter asking him to come to Pennsylvania, he showed it to his family. "What do you think I should do about it?" he asked.

"Why, David, you're right in the midst of a big job," his father said. "You know you have sowed as much wheat as you can harrow in tomorrow and the next day, and then you have a quantity of plaster of paris to spread that is much needed on your land."

David's father, being a very religious man, also said that David could not do what Joseph asked unless God gave him evidence that he should.

This suggestion made good sense to David. He prayed, asking the Lord for a testimony about what was asked of him. He was told by the voice of the Spirit to harrow in his wheat, then go immediately to Pennsylvania.

The next morning David gazed out over the field and estimated that it would take at least two days of heavy work to finish what needed to be done. He told himself that if he was able to do this work faster than it had ever been done before, that would be a sure sign it was the Lord's will that he help Joseph Smith.

Hitching his horses to the harrow, he began working. At noon, when he stopped for dinner, he discovered to his surprise that half the field was done. After dinner he went on as before, and by evening he had completed what should have taken two days to accomplish.

When his father saw that the work was finished, he exclaimed, "There must be an overruling hand in this. I think you had better go down to Pennsylvania as soon as the plaster of paris is spread."

The next morning when David went out to spread the plaster, he discovered it was gone. Two days before, he had left two large heaps of it near his sister's house. But now there was nothing but bare ground.

He ran inside the house to find his sister. "What happened to the piles of plaster of paris that I left here?" he asked. "Did someone take it?"

Her eyebrows went up. "Why do you ask me?" she said. "Wasn't it all spread yesterday?"

"Not to my knowledge," David said.

His sister went to the window and looked out where the piles had been. "I am astonished at that," his sister said. "The children came in yesterday morning and begged me to go out and see the men in the field. They said they had never seen anyone spread plaster so fast in all their lives."

Bewildered, David asked if she had gone out to look.

She nodded. "I saw three men at work, just as the children said. I supposed that you had hired someone to help since I knew you were in a hurry to get it done. So I thought no more about it."

"I hired no one," David said. "Perhaps some of the neighbors did it for me."

But when he went around the neighborhood to thank whoever had done it, he found that no one knew a thing about it.

David marveled at the miraculous way his work had been done. It convinced both him and his father even more that he should do what Joseph had asked.

David started out immediately. His horses were sturdy and energetic, and he was able to travel more than forty miles the first day. He also made good time on the second day of travel. On the third day, to his surprise, he met Joseph and Oliver on the road.

"We have come to greet you," they told him.

As the three of them headed on to Joseph's house, Oliver took David aside when they stopped to rest the horses. "Joseph told me the exact time you left your house," he said. "He also told me where you stopped to water your horses and where you ate lunch."

David was puzzled. "How did Joseph know these things?"

Oliver replied, "I do not know, but I kept a record of what he said." He showed the record to David. Everything was accurate. This miracle increased David's faith that Joseph Smith was indeed a prophet. He was happy to have Joseph and Oliver come to his father's house to live while they worked on the translation.

Joseph was pleased to be able to go there and said he and Oliver would pack up immediately. As he prepared to go, he asked the Lord what he should do with the golden plates. He received the answer that he should give them to an angel, who would return them to him at the Whitmer farm. The angel came, and Joseph delivered the plates to him.

After saying good-bye to Emma, who would follow them soon, David, Joseph, and Oliver started on their journey to New York. On the way they saw an aged man walking along the road. The man raised his hat and rubbed his brow as if he were too warm. "Good morning," he said to them.

"Good morning," they replied.

They noticed that he carried a knapsack on his back, and from the way he walked, it seemed very heavy.

"Ask him to ride," Joseph told David.

David politely asked the man if he would like to come and ride in the wagon.

"No," he said. "I am just going over to Cumorah."

Puzzled, David turned to Joseph and said, "Cumorah? I know all the country around here, but I've never heard of Cumorah. What's he talking about?"

When he turned back, the man was gone. "What does this mean?" he demanded.

Joseph looked a little pale. "The man was a Nephite. The bundle he carried contained the golden plates." It was the angel who had taken the plates from Joseph for safekeeping.

David Whitmer marveled that he should be part of this miraculous work.

When they reached the Whitmer farm, the angel returned the plates as promised. The very next day, Joseph and Oliver continued the translation. Oliver served as scribe most of the time, although other people helped.

It was a great relief to work among friendly people. Joseph and Oliver hoped they could stay there with the Whitmers until the translation was complete.

Activity:

Play stick pulling, one of Joseph Smith's favorite games. Contestants sit on the ground facing one another with their feet braced sole to sole. Grasp a round stick, a 1 1/4-inch hardwood dowel, between them, parallel to the ground and lengthwise over their braced feet. On a given signal they begin to pull against each other until one is lifted off the ground enough to see daylight beneath him. The best out of three pulls determines the winner of the contest.

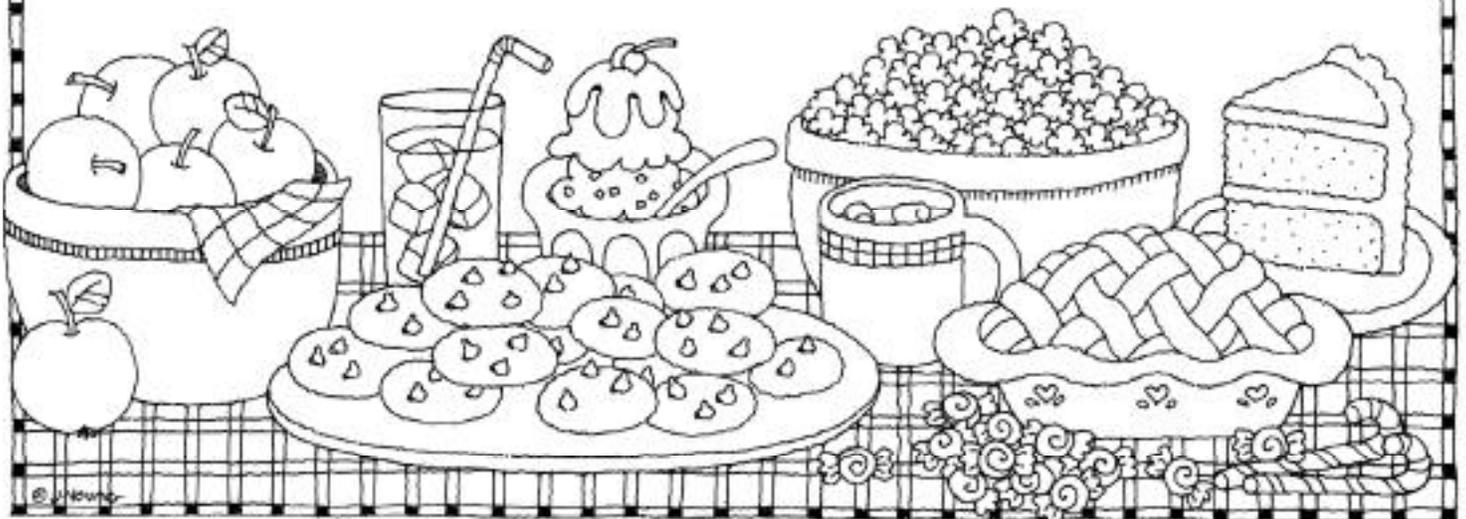
Refreshment

Peanut Butter Balls

1/4 cup smooth peanut butter
1/4 cup honey
1/2 cup nonfat dry milk
chopped nuts or coconut

Mix honey and peanut butter; add powdered milk. Roll dough into small balls and roll in nuts or coconut.

(Peggy Hughes, *30 Days to a Healthier Family*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003], p.123.)



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