



strengthening
our home
and family

Deseret Book®

Family Home Evening Materials

Theme: Understanding Death

Packet #050504

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.

Understanding Death

Thought:

Death is the gateway to immortality. The most important part of life is death.
(Stirling W. Sill, *Conference Report*, Oct. 1958, p. 105.)

Purpose:

To help our family understand that life is eternal and that death is just a temporary separation.

Song:

“I Know that My Redeemer Lives,” *Hymns*, 136.

Scripture:

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.
(Romans 8:2)

Lesson:

Share with your family an experience you have had attending the funeral of a loved one or friend. Talk about the emotions you felt and how have you been able to cope with the loss of a loved one. Especially tell about others who may have had a difficult time handling their loss. Ask your family what other emotions those people might have had. Invite your family to share their feelings regarding death.

Have family members read Alma 28:11–12 and look for the reasons some people feared for those who died and for some reasons why other people rejoiced. Why do some mourners fear while others rejoice? Also read D&C 42:45. What does this teach us about death? What will determine whether we end up in “a state of endless wo” or “a state of never-ending happiness”?

(Dennis H. Leavitt and Richard O. Christensen, *Scripture Study for Latter-day Saint Families: Book of Mormon*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003], p. 195.)

Story:**The Lord Doeth All Things Well**

Bryant S. Hinckley

Elder [Marriner W.] Merrill [of the Quorum of the Twelve] was a man of many interests. His business of farming, merchandising, milling, stock-raising, dairying, etc., called for careful supervision and wise management. These latter tasks were largely entrusted to his older sons. His oldest son, and namesake, was the one upon whom he leaned most heavily. In the prime of

his life this oldest son died. The loss Elder Merrill endured with great difficulty and much sorrow. In truth, it seemed that his son's departure caused him to mourn unduly.

Apostle Merrill presided over the Logan Temple. He frequently traveled by horse and carriage from Logan to Richmond where his families were located.

On one occasion soon after the death of his son, as he was returning to his home, he sat in his carriage so deeply lost in thought about this son that he was quite oblivious to things about him. He suddenly came into a state of awareness when his horse stopped in the road. As he looked up, his son stood in the road beside him. His son spoke to him and said, "Father, you are mourning my departure unduly! You are over concerned about my family (his son left a large family of small children) and their welfare. I have much work to do and your grieving gives me much concern. I am in position to render effective service to my family. You should take comfort, for you know there is much work to be done here and it was necessary for me to be called. You know that the Lord doeth all things well." So saying the son departed.

After this experience Elder Merrill was comforted, for he realized that the death of his son was in keeping with God's will.

(as quoted in Jay A. Parry, Jack M. Lyon, and Linda Ririe Gundry, *Best-Loved Stories of the LDS People, Vol. 2*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999], p. 356-7.)

Activity:

To help your child understand death, tell him to pretend that your hand is a spirit (hold up your hand). Tell him that all of us used to live with our Heavenly Father before we came to earth (wiggle your fingers) and that this spirit could move and live all by itself in heaven. Tell your child that this glove (hold up a glove) is like his body. Until the spirit (wiggle your hand) enters the body, the body has no life. Tell your child that when he came to earth, his spirit entered his body (put your hand inside the glove). Then his body became alive (wiggle your hand inside the glove). His spirit will stay in his body until he dies. When he dies, his spirit and body will be separated (take your hand from the glove). His body will be buried (place the glove on the ground) and his spirit will return to the spirit world (hold your hand up high). Tell your child that when we die our spirits are separated from our bodies. Even though a body is dead, the person, or the spirit, is not dead.

(Janene W. Baadsgaard, *The LDS Mother's Almanac*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003], p. 281.)

Extras:

- Visit the cemetery where family members are buried. Read what is written on the stones. Talk about what you would like others to say about you once you have departed.
- Make a family flag to fly outside your home on Memorial Day. Have all help create a design that typifies the family as a whole.

(Kimberly L. Bytheway and Diane H. Loveridge, *Traditions*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003], p. 43, 44.)

Refreshment

Apple Cake

- 1/2 cup butter
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 6 apples, peeled and grated or finely chopped
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup nuts, chopped

Heat oven to 350° F.

In a large mixing bowl, cream together butter, granulated sugar, and eggs. Stir or sift together flour, salt, nutmeg, cinnamon, and baking soda; add to creamed mixture, stirring well. Add apples. Pour into a greased 9 x 13-inch baking pan. Sprinkle top with brown sugar and nuts. Bake for 45 to 50 minutes. Serve hot or cold with whipped cream.

(Paula Julander and Joanne Milner, *Utah State Fare*, [Salt Lake City: Shadow Mountain, 1995], p. 105.)

