

Missionary Work and Family Mission Plans

Of all the commandments, perhaps none is more repeated or more heavily emphasized than the commandment to participate in missionary work.

“Go ye into all the world and preach my Gospel unto every creature who has not received it” (Doctrine and Covenants 112:28).

“And at all times, and in all places, [you] shall open your mouth and declare my Gospel as with the voice of a trump, both day and night, and I will give unto you strength as is not known among men” (Doctrine and covenants 24:12)

Why does our Father fervently invite us to be missionaries?

Our Heavenly Father is hastening the work before the second coming of His Son Jesus Christ and has a parental love and concern for each of His children, and He desires for all His children to be sealed in eternal families and live in eternal celestial happiness.

Missionary work is important because it is the only way that this great goal of our Father can be achieved, where we are the instruments in His hands.

Additionally, knowing that the end is coming, Satan is working harder and smarter than he ever has to bring about the eternal misery, torment, enslavement, depravation, and destruction of the human family.

Missionary work also represents our battle against the adversary and his purposes in these latter days—one of the final battles in a war that started before the creation of this earth. We cannot stand idly by as he labors to destroy the human family, and missionary work is the greatest effort to thwart his plans.

What if I’m “not very good” at Missionary Work or if I’m not Sure How to Fulfill this Commandment?

Truly we are all weak, by ourselves. But with the Lord, we will be made strong. Grace is the great principle of the Atonement that enables us to be effective missionaries!

“It is ... through the grace of the Lord that individuals, through faith in the Atonement of Jesus Christ and repentance of their sins, receive strength and

assistance to do good works that they otherwise would not be able to maintain if left to their own means. This grace is an enabling power” (Bible Dictionary, Grace).

We are promised strength from the Lord when we do missionary work: *“And at all times, and in all places, [you] shall open your mouth and declare my Gospel as with the voice of a trump, both day and night, and I will give unto you strength as is not known among men” (Doctrine and covenants 24:12)*

We are also promised that God will give us the words we need to speak: *“Open your mouths and they shall be filled, and you shall become even as Nephi of old ... Yea, open your mouths and spare not, and you shall be laden with sheaves upon your backs, for lo, I am with you” (Doctrine and Covenants 33:7-9).*

“Verily I say unto you, lift up your voices unto this people; speak the thoughts that I shall put into your hearts, and you shall not be confounded before men; For it shall be given you in the very hour, yea, in the very moment, what ye shall say ... And I give unto you this promise, that inasmuch as ye do this the Holy Ghost shall be shed forth in bearing record unto all things whatsoever ye shall say. (Doctrine and Covenants 100: 6, 8).

Let us “prove the Lord” and receive this strength and blessing, for it is promised.

Why do we have plans (and family mission plans)?

God leads with a vision, and manages with a plan. Consider his vision: “To bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.” In light of this vision, consider his plan: “We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell; And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them;” (Abraham 3:24-25) Consider the plan of redemption, plan of happiness, plan of Salvation. God uses a plan (see Alma 12).

God did not create this world haphazardly or indiscriminately. God did not simply create the world without thinking it through; he prepared a plan beforehand: he assigned roles (to us), and He identified our strengths and weaknesses and placed us in our current circumstances based on those weaknesses and strengths, knowing that we can be instruments in his hands according to His needs.

We have a role and a place in God's plan; we are part of His plan.

Learning from our Father, and to fulfill our roles and obey the commandment of missionary work, we too should develop a vision and plan in line with his vision and plan! We should plan on how we can be missionaries as a family.

We can prayerfully set goals, evaluate our strengths that we can use in missionary work, prayerfully ask the Father where we can be of most use, learn from others, and grow in our capacity to serve. This is a family mission plan. This is how we can be instruments in the hand of the Lord, become like our savior in developing a vision and plan, and ultimately becoming like Him.

Catching the Wave

If you haven't read *The Power of Everyday Missionaries: The What and How of Sharing the Gospel* by Clayton M. Christensen, go to Deseret Book and buy a copy, or come see a member of the ward mission team, we have a case that the ward has purchased. The Brethren have been mentioning the need for the members of the Church to step up to the plate in their efforts to share the Gospel and have mentioned the book on multiple occasions. The spirit of missionary work is infectious. Its effect will permeate into the eternal lives of those with whom you share the Gospel of Christ, so let it infect you! There will be a power beyond your own as you seek to share the message that the Angels of heaven have brought to the earth since the beginning of the world. Here's an excerpt from the book that details the powerful effect that this spirit had on the Christensen family, which we have copied from the book, with permission from Brother Christensen:

Impact on Our Family

The blessings that have come to our family from being missionaries have been incalculable. Several years ago, for example, we invited one of my former students, Sunil, to take the missionary discussions in our home. The missionaries did a wonderful job, and at the close of the first lesson they both testified of the truths they had taught us. Christine and I bore our testimonies as well, and I then asked one of the missionaries to close with prayer. Just then our son Spencer, who had been sitting quietly on the piano bench, raised his hand and asked, "Dad, can I say something?" He then rose to his feet and,

looking at Sunil with a pure gaze, said, “Sunil, I’m only eleven years old. But I want you to know that the things the missionaries have told you tonight are true. I know that God lives. I know that you and I are His sons and that Joseph Smith was truly a prophet of God.” As he shared his feelings, a sweet, powerful spirit came into the room.

The next day Sunil sent an email saying that although he had appreciated the clear explanation of our beliefs that the missionaries had provided during the discussion, “when your young son stood and said those words, I felt something inside that I have never felt before. This must be what you mean when you speak of the Spirit of God.”

Many blessings and friendships have come into our lives from our trying to share the gospel. But this blessing has been one of the best: Having the missionaries regularly help us as a family teach the gospel to new and old friends through the power of the Holy Ghost has profoundly affected the faith of our five children and brought the Spirit of God into our home.

Do we not all want that for our families?

How do we develop a Family Mission Plan?

Here are some simple steps to developing a family mission plan:

1. Begin with a prayer, perhaps even a fast.
2. Discuss as a family strengths and weaknesses, interests and hobbies that can be used for missionary work.
3. Discuss proven ways to effectively share the Gospel and how we can implement those into our family life.
4. Discuss social engagements, work, community involvement, and other venues where the Gospel can be shared—brainstorm how you can share the Gospel in these locations.
5. Discuss service opportunities as missionary work.
6. Discuss social media as missionary work.
7. Set some simple goals that are SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-based); e.g., We will invite one non-member family into our home with the missionaries once per quarter.

8. Pull out a calendar and discuss when you will implement your plan
9. Share your plan, goals, and calendar with others to establish accountability
10. Do it! 😊
11. Update the plan and calendar regularly (plan when you will next review it, perhaps during family council on a weekly, monthly, or quarterly basis); make it a living document; post it on the fridge, on the wall, in your rooms.

The promise of the Lord is given, you shall see His hand revealed in your life as you engage in this great work!

“Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).

Ideas for Inclusion in a Family Mission Plan

Drawing Close the Savior, Experiencing the Power of the Atonement (the first and most important step in missionary work):

- Daily prayer
- Daily scripture study
- Repentance
- Covenant making
- Temple worship
- Sacrament meeting and church callings

Drawing Close as a Family:

- Family home evening
- Family scripture study
- Family prayer
- Date night
- Family outings
- Yard work or house work

Social Media:

- Share “Mormon Messages” or bible videos online
- Share your testimony online
- Create and share your Mormon.org profile

Inviting Neighbors, and incorporating them into our lives:

Visitors' Center

Temple grounds

Dinner

Family Home Evening

Church

Church activities

Family home evening night with the missionaries to which we can invite non-members (family history, emergency preparedness, families)

Community Involvement

School, Sports

Clubs or organizations

Music, Community events

Inviting people to church or to meet with the missionaries--how to Invite:

Invite someone to meet with the missionaries

Give someone a pass-along card, saying simply with a smile, "Can I give this to you?"

Try the "open brief" invitation—"Our church has a wonderful message about [topic], would you be open to a brief 10-minute presentation about [topic]?"

Teach to find people! Somebody's uncle passed away, you ask, "Do you believe in the resurrection?" Someone at work talks constantly about family, you ask them, "I love that family is so important to you, have you ever done much family history work?"