

Welcome to Family Home Evening!!

Family Home Evening is a special time set aside each week to bring us closer to one another and strengthen our loving bonds as members of this family. Through this we will be drawn closer to Heavenly Father and will live and lead righteously for our time on Earth. Remember, life as we know it only lasts for the blink of an eye in the grand scheme of things.

Tonight, on our very first day of this special new family tradition, we will look inside ourselves and explore our family and faith in a brand new light. This will be a great way for us all to reconnect and get on the same page now that we've begun this new adventure together. Let's rediscover the joys of life that have been clouded over by recent events. It's in us. LOVE is in us. We will lead together on our path to the Heavenly Kingdom!

First, I'll begin by laying out a basic structure for each meeting:

1. **Gathering and Meditation.** This is our chance to center ourselves. In a circle we will sit, stand, lay down – whatever your body needs to focus itself – in complete silence. Close your eyes. Take in your surroundings. Breathe. Feel your heart beat. Listen to the snow hitting the windows. Connect.
2. **Check-In.** Open your eyes. Now we'll talk openly for a few minutes. How was your day? What have you accomplished? What are your goals for the week? Have you smiled today?
3. **Scripture Study.** For each Family Home Evening I'll pick a book or a few verses for us to study. Sometimes I'll give someone else the duty of finding some inspiring scripture for us to look at.
4. **Lesson of the Day.** Each week we will explore and learn a new topic essential to leading a righteous lifestyle. Forgiveness, honesty, gratitude, sacrament, and repentance are only a few of the topics that we'll discover.
5. **Activity of the Day.** This is where it gets fun (well, even MORE fun!) I'll let a different family member pick a new activity each week, and it can be ANYTHING! Board games, puzzles, talent shows, karaoke, cooking: all great ideas for fun ways to connect and have a great time together.
6. **Check-Out.** Reassure yourself for the coming week. Now, having looked inside yourself to reconnect with your family and faith, you will live your life with more purpose and direction each day.

Themes

Each week we'll have a different theme for Family Home Evening, and it will be incorporated into everything we do!! To start out, I think it would be fun to do a tropical theme to transport us out of this winter wonderland we've been in. And Valentine's Day is right around the corner; that'll be a fun one, too. Make sure to speak up and let me know what themes YOU want. This is a group effort!

Remember these couple things, too:

- ◆ **Stick together!** We need all hands on deck to keep this boat rowing forward. With each other's guidance, we will prevail.
- ◆ **Communicate!** I think everyone knows how difficult our family can be if we don't communicate our feelings. Talk to each other. Lying and hiding will not get us anywhere.
- ◆ **Love each other!** We are the best family ever! We wouldn't be here today if it weren't for our big, big love for each other, and we can't move forward without it.

History of Family Home Evening (source: wikipedia.com)

In a letter dated April 27, 1915 and distributed to local leaders of the LDS Church, President Joseph F. Smith encouraged a church-wide practice of a weekly "Family Home Evening". The letter described the event as being a time set apart for "prayer ... hymns ... family topics ... and specific instruction on the principles of the gospel." In 1970, President Joseph Fielding Smith, son of Joseph F. Smith, designated Monday night as the preferred time for Family Home Evening, asking local church units not to hold other church related meetings or activities on that night. That tradition continues today. In the October 2002 LDS General Conference, LDS Church President Gordon B. Hinckley encouraged local businesses and organizations to keep Monday night free of activities and other obstructions, so that members might more easily hold the FHE.

Let's get into some scripture!

Scripture gives such great guidance; it's amazing how just a few sacred words can answer so many questions and make any worries go away. This line from Jacob always reminds me that life as we know it only lasts for the blink of an eye in the grand scheme of things:

"...our lives passed away like as it were unto us a dream..." (Jacob 7:26)

Jacob goes on to say that life here on Earth may very well involve loneliness, wars, mourning, other tribulations, you name it. But if we lead a righteous life battling those endeavors, and if all is said and done in the name of the Lord, then we are promised to be rewarded handsomely. Jacob speaks these words on his deathbed just before ascending to the Heavenly Kingdom with the knowledge that, after a lifetime of being tested, he has paid his dues and it is his time to finally achieve eternal salvation. And once he's up there in Heaven, he'll look back at his life and realize that it was all so insignificant compared to what lies ahead.

This is just an introduction to FHE. There's plenty more to come! We will lead together as a family and better one another toward salvation. I love you all, and I only want what's best for all of us. So let's get to it!