

The Gospel News

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Vacation Bible School

By Sister Carolynn O'Connor

Think back to your happiest church-related memories as a young child. For many, those memories will include the experiences and excitement shared at Vacation Bible School.

Vacation Bible School (VBS) is an excellent place to start your spiritual journey as a child. It also serves as one of the greatest outreach programs that the Church participates in each year. We asked the branches to complete a survey and 17 responded to our request with results. Thank you for sharing your information with us!

We asked about attendance.

The results are exciting. Over 390 children were reported to have attended days of fun and exciting spiritual guidance at The Church of Jesus Christ. Of those 390, 245 were children that do not regularly attend our Church. We had 245 young, impressionable souls in our hands! Whether this is just their first exposure or even if it is the only time they will be with us, they had the opportunity to learn from and be nurtured by the servants of God. What a blessing!

If all of the branches and missions in the Church were to hold a VBS, based on the averages from those that responded, we could potentially provide spiritual guidance to over 1,800 children next year.

When asked how they marketed the VBS to those who might attend, some contributed great ideas to share with the rest of the Church.

The Irvine, CA Branch answered, "We canvassed the neighborhoods (the brothers on the extended YIA tour really helped with this). We also participated in the town's Fourth of July parade, and we handed out 1,000 fliers there."

Albuquerque, NM: "YIA came to Albuquerque as a summer tour function; they were of great help in making our VBS a success."

The McKees Rocks, PA Branch advertised on the local cable station.

The Mesa, AZ Branch said, "We had an online website for registration; we distributed fliers to a foster care organization that we serve; and mailed out fliers to those who do not attend Church regularly but enroll in VBS annually."

We asked what they taught the children.

The branches reported a wide variety of themes presented for the week. From Bible stories about Saul of Tarsus, to David and Goliath, and Jonah; to topic based themes such as God's Backyard Bible Camp; Mighty Kingdom; Fishers of Men; God the Builder; Taking Time For the Lord; Serving Family, Friends, and Neighbors; and Kingdom Rock, which several branches used and even shared the literature and props with one another to save effort and funds.

We asked each branch to share blessings, experiences, or other information regarding their VBS and received the following answers:

The Bronx, NY Mission said, "This was our 27th year of VBS. Students that we have had have become teachers of the classes."

Irvine, CA wrote, "It was such a blessing to see so many kids enjoying themselves. It also gave our members a chance to get to know each other better and interact and work with each other. Thank God." Irvine also reported that at the Friday night program, 150 people attended and over half of them were visitors from the community who were there for the very first time.

The Liberty, OH Branch shared that they served hot lunch to the kids each day after VBS. "We have had VBS in our Branch for eight years and it is such a blessing to watch these kids praise God!"

The Muncey, Ontario Mission reported, "We had a wonderful week; sometimes it seems that our VBS is what carries

(Continued on Page 6)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
February 2014 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28	April 2014 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	25	26	27	28	1 Are you keeping up with your spiritual goals this year?
2	3 Plan Bible School for your Branch	4	5	6 Pray for the Mesa Branch -Pg 4	7	8
9 Visit a mission in your area	10	11 Praise God all day	12	13	14 Start a Pin Program at your MBA	15
16 Send in a Blessing Bit!!!	17	18	19 Plan to go to Campout this year	20	21	22 Spring clean your spiritual life
23	24 Use your Liahona (the Holy Spirit) to guide you today	25	26	27 Share your testimony	28	29
30	31	1				

"That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thessalonians 1:12).

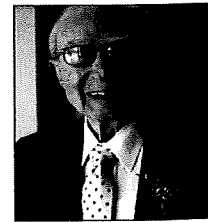
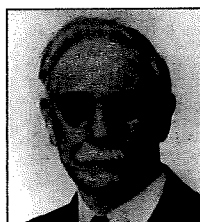
March 2014

BTP Blast From The Past

The General Church Mission Board

Fifty-five years ago this month, March 21, 1959, leaders of the Church met in Monongahela to coordinate what was fast becoming the expanding missionary work of the Church. From this meeting a proposal to "establish a mission board to get pertinent data on methods of control" emerged for submission to the upcoming April General Church Conference. It would be from this group, as well, that missionaries were elected to oversee the burgeoning work in Africa; the Grand River (Six Nations) Indian Mission in Ontario, Canada; the Muncey, Ontario Indian Mission; the work among the Indians of Wakpala, South Dakota; and the spreading of the Gospel in Italy.

Pictured are: Brothers William H. Cadman and Joseph Bittinger (Africa); Clifford Burgess (Grand River); Querino "Reno" Bologna (Muncey); Thurman Furnier (Wakpala, South Dakota); and Anthony Corrado and Rocco Biscotti (Italy).



Purpose • Mission • Vision

Purpose Statement

- To fulfill the plan of God by bringing salvation through Christ to all people.

Mission Statement

- The Church of Jesus Christ will teach the Gospel to all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things commanded by Jesus Christ.
- To draw Israel to Christ through an effort focused on the Native Americans of North and South America.

Vision Statement

- The full manifestations of God's Spirit and power among the Saints, resulting from living and worshipping in unity and righteousness, stimulate continuous growth of the Domestic Church—even at a rate of doubling over a five year period—while strengthening the International Church.

THE CHURCH OF
Jesus Christ

Don't you enjoy hearing the brothers and sisters stand up in testimony and share God's blessings each week?

Don't you wish you could be at every branch and hear these blessings each week?

We know God is blessing His people but we need to hear about them.

We are not running low on blessings but we are running low on Blessing Bits!

Please send them in and encourage others to do the same.

Word Up

The Case For Christ: Holding The "Word Up" By Elder Doug Obradovich

Is reading scripture difficult for you?

Do the "thees" and "thous" make Christ's words seem irrelevant, even losing their potency in translation? Let's take a deeper dive into Jesus' message and see if we can make sense of it all. If successful, let's agree to hold the "Word Up"!

"Judge not. . ." (Matthew 7:13).

"No brussels sprouts" is a terrific rule! "No chocolate" is absolutely unbearable!

"No skinny jeans for anyone over 50 years old" might elicit my shouting, "Hallelujah!" But take my outdated Converse Chuck Taylor canvas hi-tops from my closet and I might throw a full-blown temper tantrum. Some rules are easy for me to accept (e.g., No white pants after Labor Day) while others seem so challenging (e.g., No dessert before dinner). So it is with God's rules and regulations. "Judge not" is one of the toughest demands ever made by Jesus Christ. For most of us, "Thou shalt not steal" is easily digested as we aren't a den of thieves and "Thou shalt not kill" is even less encumbering.

"Judge not" has been interpreted as our not coming to harsh conclusions when viewing others, as we're simply not qualified. It's seemingly impossible to know another's mindset and motivation, so it's reasonable we're not able to adequately surmise their guilt. While this seems the primary purpose of Christ's counsel, there is another facet to judging that can also be harmful. We are equally incorrect in judging others as good. For the reasons already given, we're ill-equipped to determine the goodness of another, evidenced by Christ's words, "No one is good" (Luke 18:19).

The immediate risk to both judgments is simply being wrong; but they also leave us vulnerable to longer-lasting effects. In judging someone as bad, one becomes subject to pride and a sense of superiority. By judging someone as good, one can be left with feelings of inadequacy, likened to Nephi's lamenting in II Nephi 4:17, "Oh, wretched man that I am." Both can be spiritually and emotionally debilitating. The better decision: "Judge not."

This type of judging should not be confused with exercising the gift of discernment. Mormon taught in Moroni 7:16, "...the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil, wherefore, I show unto you the way to judge..." There is absolutely no conflict in Christ's earlier instructions to refrain from judging one another, while empowering us to judge between healthy and unhealthy situations.

We are wise to stay out of the people judgment business and let God do what He does best; and what is it that God does best? Judging us fairly! Our personal business at hand is to judge our own situations, and God has even aided us in accomplishing this task by giving us His best, the Spirit of His own Son! Now, can someone please pass me the chocolate-covered brussels sprouts?

Do you have a favorite verse you'd like us to dissect? Please send it in to: "Word Up"

MB Meet the Branch

Mesa, AZ Branch

The Mesa, Arizona Branch was established in 1961 when a handful of families from San Fernando Valley, California moved to Phoenix to help out at the San Carlos mission. The members converted a home in Phoenix to a church in 1963, and built a new one in 1970. Our current building in Mesa, about 15 miles east of Phoenix, was dedicated in 2004.

Our branch has members from Ohio, Pennsylvania, California, Michigan, New Jersey, and Florida, besides Arizona. Six of our eight ministers are evangelists who regularly visit throughout the region. We currently have a membership of 120, with many visitors, and 15-20 children. Being a larger congregation has its advantages and presents its own challenges as we continue bringing souls to Christ.

We hold annual Mothers' and Fathers' Day breakfasts, a Sunday School picnic, and Vacation Bible School, which has been a great success. We also hold pot luck dinners and young people's activities throughout the year. For the past three years our fall clothing giveaway has drawn hundreds of people from the local area. In addition to clothes, they get Bibles, an invitation to worship with us, and lunch. We engage in other community outreach activities as well, and have an active music ministry.



Our Ladies' Circle stays very busy with fundraising, Little Ladies' Circle, and monthly meetings. We hold MBA on alternate Wednesdays, with branch meetings and Ladies' Circle/Men's' meeting on the other Wednesdays, and regular fasting and prayer meetings.

"Do I Want the Blessings of God?": Supporting Muncey's VBS By Sister Jacqui King

A brother from my branch often shares a quote that he heard from one of the pillars in the Church: "Don't ask yourself, 'Can I do this?' (Referring to rendering obedience to God). Ask yourself, 'Do I want the blessings of God?'" I think that advice also works when contemplating working among the Seed of Joseph, or for that matter, any missionary outreach of the Church. I have had the opportunity to support the Muncey Vacation Bible School (VBS) for over 15 years and I wanted to relay some of what our week is like and also the blessings that have accompanied the work.

VBS in Muncey has been held the first full week in August for many years now. Those of us who are able to volunteer know the dates and plan our vacation accordingly. Most of us travel there the Saturday before. Coming from Pennsylvania, it takes us the better part of a day, so this allows us to arrive safely, get situated, and enjoy the Sabbath Day with the Saints in Muncey before the work begins. Monday is dedicated to orientation and preparations. Although we receive our lesson materials well before we arrive, the sister in charge locally reviews the material, shows us the crafts associated with the lessons, and answers any questions we may have. The dining area turns into "VBS Central" and everywhere you look, teachers are drawing, cutting, laughing, giggling, and of course nibbling on the snacks provided by the Muncey sisters. Three tents are put up outside to accommodate the three oldest VBS classes.

Tuesday morning, the men and children of the VBS staff begin taking tables and chairs out to the tents. Teachers hang the poster needed for that day and get teaching supplies ready while the day's craft materials are prepared. At 8:30, we assemble to start the day in prayer and then wait for the bus driver to arrive around 9:00 with the kids. Additional children are dropped off by their parents as well. We start with singing, and all ages participate in lively versions of "Hallelu, Hallelu" and "Father Abraham." After classes, we reconvene later in the morning, sing a few more songs, and then each group provides a "recap" of the day's lesson. We close in prayer, then return to our class area where the kitchen crew has delivered a nice lunch. The bus returns around noon to pick up our VBS kiddos and

we start bringing the chairs and tables back inside. Everyone has a "clean up" task in addition to the teaching/kitchen duties, and we get the mission back in shape for our evening get-together.

Every evening, the VBS staff and all the brothers and sisters come back and enjoy dinner together. On Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings we enjoy meetings conducting by the elder in charge and the region. Our last day includes field activities for the kids and a family picnic for the children and their families.

In between and after the meetings, we enjoy catching up on our how our families are doing, sharing testimonies, and recounting the blessings of God. The week of non-stop running, staying up late visiting, and the stress of being away from home can be tiring, and by the end of the week, we are usually exhausted. So why would we keep going? Simply stated, we LOVE the blessings we receive from going. There have been so many blessings, I could fill pages upon pages, but here are just a few: One is the feeling you get when the kids see you again and hug you and tell you how much they have missed you. Another is seeing the teenage class filled with kids because they know how much the brothers who teach them love and care about them. Having a young man who first came as part of the preschool class come back and assist teaching the teenage class is yet another blessing. My son feeling the calling of the Lord while we were there and getting baptized in the Thames River is an incredible gift that meant the world to me. We have been privileged to see many of our former attendees render obedience to the Gospel and have seen many of them bring their babies to the mission to be blessed. I have witnessed the gifts of the Lord POUR forth during our Sunday and evening meetings and have learned countless testimonies of the Muncey saints. Our friendships have grown beyond measure and we are all now family. Yes, we have been "adopted in." If you are considering whether you would have the strength or ability to do this wonderful type of missionary work, I would pose this to you: Don't ask yourself, "Am I able?" Ask yourself, "Do I want the blessings of God?" There are VBS projects throughout the Church, and there is a work for everyone.

We Are Able

By Elder Duane Lovalvo

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Have you ever wondered if it's possible for you to keep God's commandments and endure until the end, serving Him until the day that you take your last breath? Surely, our modern society is fraught with sin and temptations; so much so that it may sometimes feel impossible to navigate the challenges of this life without failing God. Many a potential convert has shrunk from a commitment to serve the Lord because they felt they would fall short in their service. But, our fear is unfounded.

God has indeed prepared us for the journey through this life. We have to look no further than the scriptures for examples of how the Lord has watched over His people. Regarding this topic, the account of Lehi's family as they traveled through the wilderness in search of the Promised Land (see 1 Nephi) is of particular interest. This small group departed Jerusalem with little preparation or training for living off the land or for cross-country travel on foot. Very shortly into their journey, however, the Lord gave them a tool that would be of critical importance to the success of their quest.

One morning, Lehi found at the door of his tent a brass ball or compass of "curious workmanship" which contained spindles that pointed the way that they should go into the wilderness. They soon discovered that the compass, which they called the Liahona, only worked according to their faith and diligence in obeying God's commandments. The ball or director guided them to the more fertile parts of the land where they could find safety, food, and water. Whenever they began to complain and disobey God, however, the compass ceased working and very quickly they became lost in these wild lands. Clearly, the Liahona serves as a metaphor for the Holy Ghost, which keeps us in paths of righteousness. It gives us guidance and wisdom, leading us to places of safety, comfort, and joy. But, like the Liahona, it will cease to function within us if we turn our back on the Lord.

As they made their way for thousands of miles across unknown lands, Lehi's family discovered something else: A change had come over their bodies. They were able to consume raw meat, which God made sweet for them. The women also became strong, like the men, and they gave birth to their children in the wild. Nephi tells us that they bore their burdens without complaint. This is nothing short of miraculous and serves as a second example. When we begin our journey with the Lord, He gives us the strength and ability that we will need to finish our mission. We will face hardships and sorrows, but like the Nephite travelers, our minds and spirits have been altered and strengthened. We have been transformed. We have the word of God and know His commandments. We CAN bear life's burdens without complaint!

After eight years in the wilderness, Lehi's family finally arrived at the place they called Bountiful, named for its abundant fruit and honey. They were overcome with joy because of God's mercy in delivering them. I'll let Nephi finish the message:

"And thus we see that the commandments of God must be fulfilled. And if it so be that the children of men keep the commandments of God he doth nourish them, and strengthen them, and provide means whereby they can accomplish the thing which he has commanded them: wherefore, he did provide means for us while we did sojourn in the wilderness" (1 Nephi 17:3).

VALUES By Sister Colleen Moore

Value: Empathy

Definition: The ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

Vital Verses:

- "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32).
- "But ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another" (Mosiah 4:15).

Scriptural Example:

Christ wants us to be kind and to love each other as He loves us. It's so important that we follow this! What better example do we have than Christ? He showed nothing but kindness and empathy towards others, and we should follow in His footsteps.

Have you ever heard that saying, "Walk a mile in someone else's shoes before you judge their journey?" We all have a different walk in life, different trials to endure, and many ups and downs. What do your shoes look like? Are they dirty? Do they have holes in them? I guarantee that while we all may have different sizes and colors, they all have dirt and holes upon them. We have all sinned in our lives and we have all experienced hardships.

Life Application:

The next time you encounter a rude cashier, remind yourself of the shoes she's wearing. Hers may look different for a reason. Maybe her husband just asked her for a divorce or her child is ill in the hospital. Love her as Christ loves you. Try her shoes on for size.

The next time you see a young mother struggling to gain control of her rowdy children, remind yourself of the shoes she's wearing. Hers may look different for a reason. Maybe she has no support from her husband and she lives far away from family. Love her as Christ loves you. Try her shoes on for size.

The next time you see a young man trying to be all tough, remind yourself of the shoes he's wearing. His may look different for a reason. Maybe he grew up without a father and his mother had to work and was too tired to spend any time with him. Love him as Christ loves you. Try his shoes on for size.

Every day when we wake up, we should be reminded to not judge others. We need to strive to be empathetic towards others and the trials they endure. We need to love them, pray for them, and show them God's love. What better way to do this than to follow in His footsteps? Remind yourself of that the next time you want to judge someone. You have NO idea the shoes they've been wearing, but God does. Show them love and kindness and try their shoes on for size—you may be surprised by the journey they've been on.

Points to Ponder:

- Do you find yourself judging people too quickly?
- Have you ever truly put yourself in someone else's shoes?
- Who in your life do you need to have more empathy for?

Presented originally on the Gospel Blog

Vacation Bible School *Continued from Page 1*

through the rest of the year. We had tongues in, the word of the Lord, and many other experiences from the Lord."

Youngstown, OH explained, "They were all strangers when we got there but when we left on the second day, they had all become friends." They held the VBS at a nursing home. "Both the residents and the staff loved having us there. It goes to show that God is not the respecter of ages, but that He loves all His children."

The Windsor, Ontario Branch took a different approach and got the children working for the Lord. "The first day, the children delivered 200 fliers for our branch's Baby Blessing Day. The second day, we visited the Humane Society, where the children tended the community garden and learned how the Society helps animals. The third day, we took the children to the Downtown Mission, an organization that aids the homeless. The children knew they were working for Jesus, and we were all very blessed by the activities."

Detroit, MI Branch #2 wrote, "We are in the process of relocating, so we just did a smaller version of VBS for the kids in our branch this year. They really enjoy it every year, and we did not want them to miss out. They had a wonderful time and many of our young helped teach the classes. It is a bonding time for all ages and an opportunity to work together."

The Cincinnati-Morrow, OH Mission wrote, "The children learned about various stories in the Bible

that related to the armor of God and living in God's mighty kingdom, as well as played games and made crafts—and of course everyone's favorite, singing! A dinner was held afterward for everyone to enjoy and fellowship."

A San Carlos, AZ Mission volunteer wrote, "We would go out on sightseeing tours every morning, and pack lunch to take with us. Then in the afternoon when we came back, we would eat dinner then have Bible school in the evenings! I loved this schedule; we were busy all day!"

The McKees Rocks, PA Branch shared, "We might not have had many, but the children that participated had a wonderful time and that is why we do what we do."

Albuquerque, NM reported, "The last day of the VBS, we invited the parents of the children to attend all of the rotations with their children and participate in the activities. Then we hosted a lunch for the families on Friday where we could interact with the parents and socialize a bit."

Mesa, AZ Branch shared, "Each day we asked the children for prayer requests. One child requested that we pray for her nanny, and the next day she had a praise report of a healing. Our preschool teacher (a sister) had an infection in her eye which prevented her from attending the first two days, and I (VBS director) asked the children to pray, and immediately she was better and able to attend the rest of the VBS. When children pray, amazing things happen—many

of our prayer requests turned into praise reports."

Quincy, FL Branch included classes for adults. "We had two youth classes and at the same time had adult classes. We used a variety of videos, workshops, discussion, crafts, activities, and songs. It was very nice and a great effort by many of the brothers and sisters who consistently participate as well as others who don't! Everyone was happy to do their part for the kids, and it was a successful event."

Columbus, Ohio Mission shared, "It was our first VBS; what a blessing. One family attended another activity following, which was sponsored by our Ladies' Circle."

Lakeside, AZ reports, "This is an annual event for our branch and a huge outreach to the White Mountain Apache children that our branch serves. There is nothing more faith-affirming or uplifting than a building full of children learning about God's plan and singing praises to the Lord."

VBS does not just provide blessings to the children. Those who take part in assisting, teaching, preparing are blessed as well. Turn back to page 4 to learn more about how God's blessings are shared with those who dedicate part of their time and efforts in service to the Lord through VBS.

If your branch or mission does not usually provide this great service to your children or the community, please consider doing so this summer, and be prepared to be blessed.

Two Baptisms at Saugeen Shores, Ontario, Canada

By Sister Mona Ogden

On October 6, 2013, we walked out onto the beautiful shores of Lake Huron at Saugeen First Nation to witness the baptisms of Lorie Mandawaub and her daughter, Holly. The sky was overcast, and except for a strong breeze, the weather was remarkably warm for this time of year. First Lorie was led out into the waters, supported on one side by Brother Matthew Collison and on the other by her husband, Lorne. As we watched from the shore her husband kissed her gently on the brow, and Brother Matt immersed her into the lake water. When she was lifted out of the water she had a beautiful smile on her face, and her husband again gently kissed her. Many of us shed tears of joy at the tenderness of the moment.

Lorie's baptism was different than most because she is blind. She had also just been released from the hospital three days earlier. In the hospital, she had an experience where her

room became exceedingly bright and Jesus spoke to her saying, "It is time!" At first she felt fearful, but the fear was quickly replaced by an overwhelming sense of peace. Lorie had planned so many times before to ask for her baptism, but again and again she would become very sick and end up in the hospital. This time she was not going to let anyone or anything deter her.

Holly, her daughter, had also been contemplating baptism, but didn't think it was her time. Because of Lorie's determination, Holly decided that it was her time too! Brother Matthew next led Holly into the waters, where she emerged smiling and rejoicing with those of us on the shore.

Our group returned to the church where we had a wonderful service and time of fellowship. May God bless our new sisters as they begin their walk with our Lord and Savior!

GMBA News

GMBA Pin Recognition Program

By Elder Jason Monaghan, GMBA Vice President

This month, the GMBA Officers would like to highlight another of our fantastic youth ministry projects available to EVERY branch and mission, THE GMBA PIN RECOGNITION PROGRAM!

First, a little history: The "Pin Program" was brought to our youth organization by Sister Alice Suska in 1995. The program was originally put together because she saw an opportunity for the GMBA to assist with our kids who were in the Girl Scouts or Boy Scouts. She noted that these "scouts" were often given a task to learn about their church, and when they finished this exercise, they were permitted to put their corresponding church pin on their uniform. The problem was that we neither had a pin nor a program book! So, under the inspiration of God, the team was assembled, booklets printed, and pins were cast!

Currently, our lesson topics are: Family, Spiritual Family, Baptism, The Lord's Supper, Feet Washing, Laying on of Hands, and Jesus. These lessons are designed for ages 5-12 years and may be completed by anyone.

To highlight the beauty of this awesome program, the GMBA Officers interviewed one of our young people, Grace Gibson from Detroit Michigan. We hope you enjoy her wonderful responses!

Question: *How long did it take you to complete the program and who taught you?*

Answer: *It took my branch about three to four months for us to complete the Pin Program. We had about 15-20 classes. Most of the lessons were taught through "Kids Church" by my mom (Sister Julie) and Sister Kim, but occasionally we had a few of the brothers and sisters from the branch teach, such as elders, teachers, deacons, and deaconesses!*

Question: *Was there anything that you learned, that maybe you did not know before?*

Answer: *One thing that I learned was why the elders use oil when they are praying for people. They only use the oil if the person is physically sick. If they are praying for someone that needs spiritual uplifting, the oil is not used.*

Question: *Describe the pin program in one word.*

Answer: *If I had to describe the pin program in one word, it would be—EXCITING!*

Question: *What is the "funnest" part of the program and did you have a favorite topic?*

Answer: *The "funnest" part of the program was doing the activities that followed along with the lesson. My favorite lesson topic was the seventh part, Jesus. I liked this part the best because I got to learn about some of the many miracles Jesus performed.*

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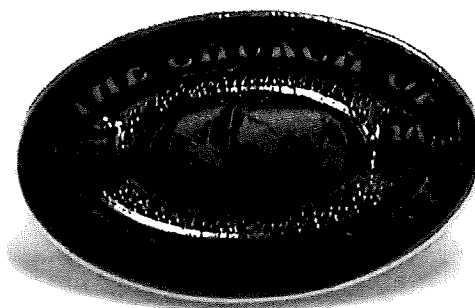
GMBA Pin Recognition Program Continued from Page 7

Question: *How did you feel when you finished the program and got your pin and certificate?*

Answer: *I felt very HAPPY and PROUD of myself. It took a lot of hard work!*

Question: *Do you think we should keep doing the pin program?*

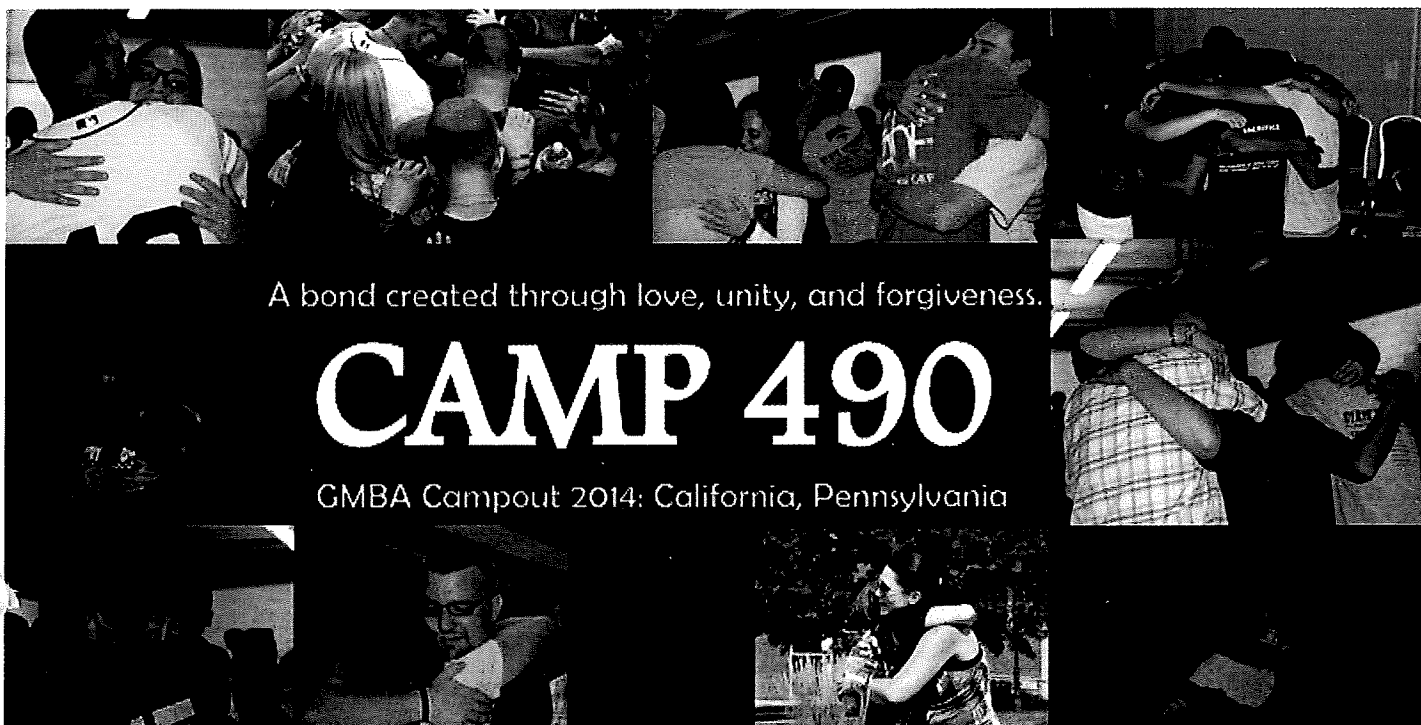
Answer: *I think you definitely should! I learned a lot of new things that I did not know about the Church, and I had so much fun learning all of the lessons. I'm very thankful that we could do it!*



The GMBA Officers would like to thank Grace for her wonderful answers! We are proud of not only her, but of the 150 kids who have all completed this fantastic program!

So now what??? Why did we write this article??? Well, we know there are MANY more kids out there that would enjoy and benefit from the program just like Grace and the other 149 kids who have already received their pins! We would like to ALERT each branch and mission that you will be receiving a package (that includes instructions) from the GMBA Pin Program Team that will enable you to begin sharing this program with YOUR young people in MBA or even in SUNDAY SCHOOL! Yes, we said even in your SUNDAY SCHOOL! The GMBA doesn't care how or when it is done, we are simply asking you to get the information in front of and into the hearts of our tender, precious children! THEY MATTER! They also, like Grace, could feel "HAPPY" and "PROUD" of themselves upon completion of the program! If you need any assistance, please contact our Pin Program Chair, Sister Stefanie Callens at Stefanie.Callens@live.com. In the near future, we also plan to post all materials on the GMBA website.

So, please keep checking the mailbox at your branch or mission. Once you receive the materials, we would ask you to please start sharing the program with YOUR kids ages 5-12 years! The GMBA Officers would like to ask for your continued prayers and support as we zealously pursue the hearts and souls of our youth! They are indeed a critical part to "the great work of the Lord."

A collage of several black and white photographs showing children and adults in various interactions. Some photos show children hugging adults, while others show children playing or interacting with each other. The overall theme is one of love, unity, and forgiveness.

A bond created through love, unity, and forgiveness.

CAMP 490

GMBA Campout 2014: California, Pennsylvania

Liahona By Brother Kerry Carlini

A lone in the wilderness, Lehi and his family had been promised of God that if they kept His commandments they would prosper and be led to a land of promise, a land choice above all other lands. Arising one morning Lehi found much to his astonishment *"a round ball of curious workmanship"* made of fine brass having within two spindles—one of which pointed the way they should go into the wilderness—and writing which was plain to read and gave understanding concerning the ways of the Lord. Highly valued on the journey, here are five amazing facts regarding this compass, which they called the Liahona:

- 1 It gave a specific course of direction that led the family into the more fertile parts of the wilderness to hunt game for meat.
- 2 However, when Nephi's bow had broken and no food could be obtained, his family began to murmur against the Lord, thus preventing the Liahona to work.
- 3 But once Nephi's father and brethren were humbled and petitioned the Lord, they discovered that the Liahona gave new direction and writing. This demonstrated that the Liahona worked according to the faith and diligence given it.
- 4 Once more, because of their exceeding rudeness and merriment while at sea, the Lord caused a great storm to arise that the family might again be humbled and that the Liahona might again be used to deliver them.
- 5 So highly regarded was the Liahona by the Nephites that it, along with the brass plates and sword of Laban, was cherished and passed down from generation to generation among their leadership.

I Nephi 2:20; I Nephi 16:10-31; I Nephi 18:9-21; Mosiah 1:16



Ladies' Uplift Circle News

"... God is the Same Yesterday, Today, and Forever"

(Mormon 9:9)

By Sister Marian Yoder

While reflecting on our time spent together in our Ladies' Circle gatherings, I was rehearsing in my mind how the Lord truly remains the same in what He expects of us and also in His promises to us. His teachings are the same—His expectations are the same.

The Lord brought to my mind how women are also the same today as they were yesterday. We face the same family situations and the same obstacles, and we are blessed to receive the same spiritual blessings. We serve the same God.

I thought about Esther and how she used wisdom and discernment. Above all, she had to be open to the Lord's spirit and to His guidance. We do the same today in all walks of life. Whether you are married, single, young or old, we all have to use wisdom and discernment to overcome the trials and obstacles that we face in today's world.

In the past, we have Priscilla and Aquila, a missionary couple and close friends with the Apostle Paul. They traveled with him and spoke to others of the way of God more perfectly. Priscilla left her home to travel as a missionary and we have the same today. We have sisters traveling to missionary fields. There were many women back then who may not have traveled many miles, but were still instrumental in spreading the Gospel. We have sisters today who boldly tell of God's goodness to others; people they meet in the workplace, their friends, neighbors and all with whom they come into contact.

I'm sure we are all familiar with the story of Hannah and how she dedicated her son, Samuel, to the Lord. Hannah was

thankful to God for her son and she wanted him to always put the Lord first in all things. In our time, we have the same desires for our sons and daughters.

Yesterday, women taught their sons to keep the commandments of God and walk uprightly before Him. They instructed them never to doubt the Lord and to be true at all times in whatsoever things they were entrusted. They taught their sons to have compassion when they witnessed afflictions and tribulations and to love their country. These women watched their sons go off to war to defend their country knowing they might never see them again. The two thousand young stripling soldiers are a great example of this. *"Yea, and they did obey and observe to perform every word of command with exactness; yea, and even according to their faith it was done unto them; and I did remember the words which they said unto me that their mothers had taught them"* (Alma 57:21). Women today of The Church of Jesus Christ raise their sons with the same convictions and they also see their sons go to battle to protect our country.

God told us Yesterday what we need to be doing Today so we will be prepared for Tomorrow! We must pray nonstop for the women of tomorrow. They will experience the same desires, goals, joys, trials, and obstacles. They will need to have wisdom and discernment and to be bold when speaking to their children concerning the ways of the Lord. The Lord is trusting us today to inspire our young women of tomorrow to serve the Lord and to always put their trust in Him. The role of the righteous woman is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.



Our God Saves a Nation

We are so blessed to know about God! My neighbors from another country are very kind, nice people but they worship many, many gods and do not really expect any help in times of trouble. When I see trouble I pray. We beg God for help and He gives it to us. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever; He and His precious Son, our friend Jesus, see us, hear us, and care about us. God, who is the Creator, truly has all power over the whole universe and He cares for us.

In the old, old days of the Bible there was a king of Judah named Jehoshaphat who loved God. (See II Chronicles 19 and 20.) He had taught his people to serve God and things were going good. Then there was big trouble. Two of the surrounding countries decided to attack and destroy Judah! Huge armies were marching to war and even had hired another group to fight with them. King Jehoshaphat's army was not big enough to win. God was their only hope.

The King knew what to do in this fearful situation. He began to pray to the Lord and called for all the people in the country to fast (not eat or drink), and everyone prayed to God, even the children. The people came together from all over to call upon the Lord. King Jehoshaphat prayed in a beautiful way. First, he talked about all the good, wonderful things God had done over the years for his people. Then he reminded God how God had promised this land to his people. (See Genesis 17:7-8.)

Jehoshaphat said that he believed in God's promises and trusted in God.

When we are having terrible troubles we could pray this way too. Thank God for all He has already done for you. Be grateful. Tell him of your love for Him, and trust that He will somehow get you through when things are so terrible.

God answered Jehoshaphat's prayer. The Spirit of the Lord came upon one of the men praying there and he said, *"Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed (scared) by reason of this great multitude; (of this huge army coming to fight you) for the battle is not yours, but God's. Tomorrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel. Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed (scared); tomorrow go out against them: for the Lord will be with you."* (See II Chronicles 20:15-18.)

King Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground and all of the people fell before the Lord, worshipping the Lord. He did not think he was too good to humble himself. Notice how they prayed, and were so thankful even before they saw their answer? God loves it when we have great faith.

They arose early the next morning and the King put singers at the front of his army instead of warriors. They sang praises to the beauty and holiness of our powerful God as they marched. And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments (traps) against the armies of their enemies. The two big armies began to fight against the army they had hired. They killed them and then turned against each other. Each great army was fighting the other!

When Jehoshaphat's people came to the cliff and looked down, there were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped! God's people went down and picked up the treasures and riches, and precious jewels their dead enemies were wearing. It took three days to gather all of the riches because it was so much.

On the fourth day they returned to their city singing and praising God all the way. Our same God had saved them! Can you imagine the excitement and joy they all felt?

Now the fear of God was on all the kingdoms surrounding them when they learned how the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel. These other countries

stopped attacking God's people and there was peace for God's people for many, many years.

This is the same God we serve. Whatever happens to us in this life of ours, there is a powerful Creator who knows us, loves us, has a plan for us, and can save us. And when we are in trouble He is there to help us. Do as King Jehoshaphat did; pray and ask others to pray also. Praise God's name. Have faith to thank Him in advance and be extra thankful that you know and serve a very real God who will help you in time of trouble.

With Love,
Your friend,
Sister Jan

WORD SEARCH

I	TRUST	IN	SERVE	AND	BELIEVE	IN	THE	ONE	TRUE	GOD	HE
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It was the LOVE of the Saints... (Continued from the February issue)

Before I received my first week of chemotherapy two and a half years ago, our branch called for fasting and prayer on my behalf and sent out a plea for the saints to pray for me that I would have no ill effects from the chemo. That week I felt as if I was floating on air and felt like nothing different had been put into my body. That only happened because of the saints' love for me, whether they knew me or not, and the Lord heard their prayers. I can never thank them enough for the love I was shown during my illness.—Sister Terri Nath, Monongahela, PA Branch

The love of the saints is an integral part of life for me, without them I would be lost. They have always been there for me in so many ways be it prayer, hospitality, friendship—you name it. We are all a part of the same human family and worshipping God together is great. To be able to be there for one another is what makes this life awesome. I have been blessed immeasurably by the saints of God.

The love of the saints is what makes our family want to go to church every Sunday and no matter what happens in our daily lives we feel the love and support of the saints. My parents came here to Canada because they felt that love when the missionaries of the Church visited the Island of Ponza, not far from Naples, Italy. When we truly LOVE one another we continue to PRAY, VISIT, FORGIVE, read and study more, and eventually our family is filled with PEACE.—Sister Rachel Jordan

In May 2007 I had surgery for breast cancer. The evening after my surgery my husband returned home to find a message left by a sister in Ohio that had just heard about my cancer. She said that as she was praying for me the Lord spoke to her and said that His eyes were upon our home that night and I had no fear. When my husband told me this the next morning, both of us felt an immediate peace. Thank God they found the cancer early and I didn't have to go through any chemo or radiation.—Sister KarenJo Pandone

Over 20 years ago, my husband and I were moving to Texas. My husband was driving from Ohio and I was flying down later with our new baby daughter. My husband isn't a member of the Church, but we contacted a brother and sister to let them know he was coming. They opened their home to this young guy they had never met before, and they shared their love in a way that has never been forgotten. Years later, we moved to Georgia, and again a wonderful brother and sister opened their home to us to share their love. Because of the love of so many saints from across the country, my family set up roots in our Church. I could never thank God enough!

Growing up in a large branch, the love of those who helped tutor me was constant and helped shape my values. Since moving to a small branch, the SAME love has filled the void from leaving family and confirmed an experience from God directing us to move.—Brother Paul A. Palmieri Gastonia, NC Branch

The love of the saints is what has kept our small mission together. From New Jersey to Maine, the saintly love has supported us in many ways. Having so many brothers and sisters with the Love of God within their hearts is what makes them saints of God.—Brother Michael McGuire, Dedham, MA Mission

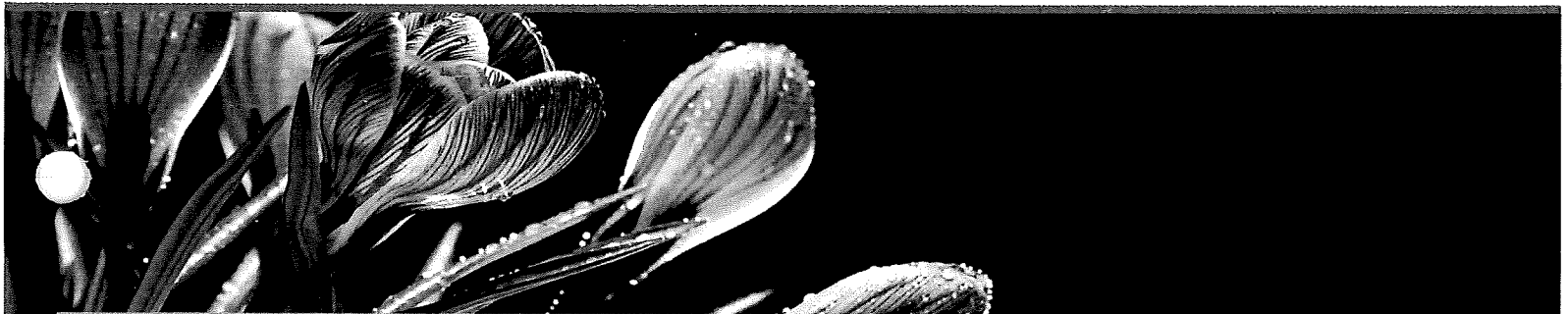
While playing a basketball game with some of the young people, I got hurt pretty badly. They all surrounded me and gave me great comfort, and some of them went to the hospital with me. You won't get that from anyone else.

One of my memories regarding the love of the saints involves the hospitality of a sister in the Great Lakes Region when I was a teenager. I was visiting in the region with my parents and staying with my Uncle Tony and Aunt Ann Lovullo. After church we traveled to visit my Aunt Christina in the nursing home. To say the least, it was rather late in the afternoon and we were very hungry. Well, Uncle Tony remembered there was a sister living in the area and began driving around trying to find her home. He finally found her house and as we waited in the car, he knocked on her door and the next thing I know, we are invited in and led to the basement where this FEAST was put out for us. We were NOT expected to be there. We simply showed up and she fed us like we were kings! I will never forget this as long as I live! Thank God for the love of the saints!

When my family and I suffered the loss of our daughter Alexis a few months ago the outpouring of cards, prayers, and phone calls was overwhelming. I know for sure these prayers reached the throne of God. We never could have gotten this far without the love of the saints.—Brother Tony Micale

The love of the saints has positively affected my life by the inspiration given me by the power of prayer. When I was diagnosed with breast cancer, the love and prayers was so strong among the saints of God that it was like a fresh blanket of snow, comforting and pure. The blessings are immeasurable with the support of our spiritual family. I still feel that love each day that I heal from the surgery.

In November I was blessed to make my 13th missionary trip to South America. Our team visited six different cities, meeting over 50 adults and over 40 teenagers and small children. The love of God was shared in every home we visited. Our meetings reflected the appreciation and love of those who heard the Restored Gospel message for the first time. We were able to pray for many individuals and anoint them for various needs. Invitations to return were given, and their homes were open to us. Although only a few are baptized members, God's love was overpowering.—Brother Richard Scaglione, Sr., Monongahela, PA Branch



Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth... Genesis 27:39

Blessing Bits

BB *God Is Always Watching Us*

My children and I were in the parking lot at a grocery store late one afternoon. I saw a parking space that had two carts in it and I stopped and asked my oldest child Gabrielle, age 10, to get out and move them. She'd always been taught to walk around the rear of the car and not in front. She closed the car door and proceeded to the back when suddenly I heard a loud crunch. I looked back to find that someone had backed into our car. Thankfully Gabrielle had noticed what was happening and wasn't injured, although she was inches from the impact. Thank God!—Sister Angela Jasmin, Lake Worth, Florida Branch

I checked the usual places it would be but found nothing. I said a prayer, and God showed me where it was. I took out the trash, said another prayer, and again God revealed to me exactly where to find it. I reached into my car and pulled it out from between the seat and center console. I began to cry and praise God. I came inside and showed my mom. She asked where I found it and when I told her where it was she said that's exactly where she saw it, too. Praise God!—Brother Andrew DiNardo, Hollywood, Florida Branch

BB *It Is More Blessed to Give Than to Receive*

I had the pleasure of being reminded that there are good people in this world. Our son, Jared, was home sick with the flu and all alone with not many provisions for his illness. He lives 200 miles from us, so we could not help. My husband, Brother Rocco, tried calling a Publix supermarket near Jared and the manager, John, explained that they do not make

deliveries but said he would personally deliver the items requested, considering the situation, and he did NOT want a delivery fee. So we just want to say "Thank You," to God and to John! It is a blessing to know that good people still exist. God is so good! Feeling blessed!—Sister Terri Inman Benyola, Treasure Coast, Florida Branch

BB *The Lord Hears Our Cries*

I recently traveled with my family to another branch to witness some ordinations and when we got home, I offered to help with the cost of the trip. My family wouldn't accept the money, so I put it back in my pocket. When I went to look for it the next day, it wasn't in my wallet or pocket. When I got home

Send us your Blessing Bits [in approximately 150 words] and answer the Question of the Month by contacting us at gospelnewsinfo@gmail.com

Q

Question for this month: *"Do you have a special memory of Vacation Bible School or any Church event from your childhood?"*

A

Answer from last month: *"How do you make time during the day to be 'alone with God'? Is there a specific time or place you have learned that works best for you?"* Working in my yard or walking in the woods is my favorite place to talk to God. Being in His creation among the trees, flowers, birds, grass, sunshine, blue skies, and white puffy clouds or watching His power in the skies during a lightning-filled storm and enjoying the fresh smell of rain brings joy and peace into my heart and soul and makes me feel so close to Him. There are no interruptions—only me and my Lord together in His creation.—Sister Karen Watford, Conroe, TX

I get on the elliptical machine with my iPad and spend 1/2 hour in prayer and devotional reading most weekday mornings prior to getting ready for work. It keeps me from falling asleep, which is a problem when I try to read while seated, and the exercise is so brainless that it does not distract me from spending time with the Lord. Plus I get the benefits of regular exercise without taking time from more important things in my life.—Brother Tim Scolaro, Mesa, AZ Branch



Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth... Genesis 27:39