

# **“Teaching our Children to Prepare for the Temple”**

**By Kathleen C. Perrin**

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On February 15, 2023, my husband and I had just arrived in Madrid, Spain. We have traveled often and extensively and feel we are pretty savvy about security. Because of his work, my husband has been to over 100 countries and his number one concern is security and safety and to always be aware of his surroundings to avoid thefts or injury. We had just rented a car at the airport, had opened the back hatch and had loaded our suitcases, and on top of them, our two carry-on bags with all of our important items. I went to sit in the front seat to start planning our route, and my husband came to the front to look at the kind of cable we needed to hook up our smart phone so we could navigate with my smart phone. He had left the back hatch open because he needed to retrieve the required cord. He leaned into the car to look at the connection, and once he saw what kind of cord he needed, he returned to the back of the car. It must have taken at most fifteen seconds. When he returned to the opened hatch back, our carry-on bags were gone. They had been stolen and removed without us seeing anything or hearing anything. We did not even see movement in our peripheral vision. It was shocking. In our carry-on bags, we had our passports, our money, credit cards, our French telephones, our computers, an iPad, and all of my sundries and makeup. It was an absolutely horrible feeling. Yves ran to get the police, and after looking all over the parking lot to see if I could find anything, and having no luck I got back into the car. Not knowing what to do, except to offer a fervent prayer to our Heavenly Father, I prayed that He would help us find a solution to this overwhelming problem.

We were lucky enough to have our American phones with us, and my husband texted me to say that he was at the airport police station making a claim and to wait where I was. Trying to distract myself and keep calm, I started to browse through my emails, and found the email from the organizers of Women’s Conference, inviting me to speak about preparing our children for the Temple. My first reaction was: “Are you kidding me, I’ve just lost all my important stuff, and now I have to worry about speaking at Women’s Conference on top of that?”

Then, it was like Heavenly Father shook me, and helped me realize two important truths. Tears came to my eyes as I realized that the “important stuff” was not what I had in my carry-on bags but were the covenants I had made in the temple. Nothing was more important than my temple covenants, and I realized that nothing is more important for us as parents or grandparents than to help our children to learn to love the temple. And secondly, in spite of feeling nervous about the invitation to speak at Women’s Conference, I said to myself, “how can I expect Heavenly Father to bless me if I’m not willing to accept any opportunity to serve Him?” I immediately responded to the email accepting the assignment. A tangible feeling of peace and calm came over me as I felt the confirmation that we could handle whatever this situation would require.

When I was a young bride-to-be many, many years ago, my parents and even my local Church leaders were reluctant to say much about the temple, perhaps for fear of saying too much. Other than knowing about the worthiness questions that went along with procuring a temple recommend, I knew nothing about what actually happened in temples.

I had always been led to believe that the rites, ceremonies, and symbolism that were seen in the worship services of churches other than our own were vain repetitions and that such ritualism missed the mark. Consequently, I had no preparation for the symbolic rites and ceremonies, nor for the special clothing found in our own temples. I didn’t understand anything about the temple. I appreciate a quote from Elder John A. Widtsoe, which would have helped me a great deal to be prepared for the temple.

“The endowment and the temple work as revealed by the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith ... fall clearly into four distinct parts: The preparatory ordinances; the giving of instruction by lectures and representations; covenants; and, finally, tests of knowledge. I doubt that the Prophet Joseph, unlearned and untrained in logic, could of himself have made the thing so logically complete... We live in a world of symbols. We know nothing, except by symbols ... No man or woman can come out of the temple endowed as he should be, unless he has seen, beyond the symbol, the mighty realities for which the symbols stand.”<sup>1</sup>

Consequently, my first temple experience was troubling and confusing. Thus, I began a lifelong quest to try to better understand the temple myself and to better prepare others for the symbolism and ceremonies of the temple. I have been careful to fully understand what we can and cannot talk about outside of the temple to help prepare our young people to go to the temple. I am not going to talk about worthiness, today. That is another discussion. Rather, I would like to talk about how we can prepare our children to understand what will happen when they go to the temple for the first time.

## **Resources**

Here are three rules of thumb that you can use to know what you can talk about with your children:

1. What has been written or said by members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in public outside of the temple.

2. Anything published on the official website or publications of the Church. There are so many fabulous resources on the website, including a booklet you can download called *Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple*, as well as a wonderful presentation about the temple garment.

3. Any scriptures in our standard works.

We never talk about the specific wording used in the temple or share anything about the sacred signs and tokens.

### **Teach Our Children That Temples Have Always Been a Part of Heavenly Father’s Plan**

In my own temple journey of understanding, it has been helpful for me to learn that temples have always been part of our Heavenly Father’s plan. In other words, temple rites are not something that Joseph Smith just made up.

President Nelson has said, “Temple patterns are as old as human life on earth. Actually, the plan for temples was established even before the foundation of the world . . .”<sup>2</sup>

That doesn’t mean that Old Testament temple ceremonies were exactly like our ceremonies. Old Testament rites under the Law of Moses helped the covenant people of Israel look forward to a coming Messiah and to His coming sacrifice and Atonement. Latter-day temple rites and ceremonies are completely focused on the exalted Savior and on the fact that through His sacrifice, resurrection and Atonement, we can receive all the blessings our Heavenly Father has for us.

Nonetheless, ancient and modern temple rites are based on the same eternal principles. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “Ordinances instituted in the heavens before the foundation of the world, in the priesthood, for the salvation of men, are not to be altered or changed. All must be saved on the same principles.”<sup>3</sup>

Adjustments may be made in the presentation of the ordinances, but the ordinances do not change.

It was enlightening to me when several years ago, passages of ancient scripture from the Book of Exodus were added to the initiatory ordinances. We can read this ourselves and to our children in the Book of Exodus in several places: chapters 28, 29, and 40. Let me highlight chapter 40:12-13. It says, “And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and wash them with water. And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him, and sanctify him; that he may minister unto me in the priest’s office.”

These passages helped me to more clearly understand that these ordinances are part of temple worship and that for any of us to enter into the presence of God, we need to be purified and sanctified by being washed, anointed and having holy garments and other special clothing placed upon us.

May I share an experience my husband and I had with some Jewish converts to the Church while serving in the Papeete, Tahiti Temple. Brother and Sister Levy had come to Tahiti working for an

American company. They made friends with some Church members, and joined the Church. One year after their baptism, they came to the temple for their endowments and temple sealing, and my husband and I were blessed to give them instruction individually. Brother Levy told my husband how excited he was because his faithful Jewish mother had taught him a lot about Solomon and Herod's Temple in the Old Testament and that the Jews were anxiously waiting for the Third Temple to be built in Jerusalem. She had taught him to look forward to that day. After their endowments, they visited with my husband and me in my husband's office and Brother Levy told us that their experience was beyond even what they could have imagined. They were just glowing.

President Nelson recounted the following experience at a Temple Presidents' Seminar and at a Church Educational fireside, "Several years ago, Sister Nelson and I were in Jerusalem being guided through recent excavations in a tunnel to the left of the present 'wailing wall' of the old temple. In that tunnel we saw Jewish rabbis praying for the day that the third temple would be built in Jerusalem. We were told that someone had asked Israel's famous archeologist, Yigael Yadin, what would they do in the temple if rebuilt. His reply: 'I don't know. Ask the Mormons. They'll know.'"<sup>4</sup>

We know that temple rites also existed in New Testament times. We recently studied the account of the Mount of Transfiguration in Matthew 17, where the Savior took Peter, James and John up to a high mountain, where they saw the transfigured Christ, saw a vision of Moses and Elijah both translated beings with physical bodies, and heard the voice of God the Father. President Joseph Fielding Smith stated that he was convinced that "[Jesus] there gave unto them the ordinances that pertain to the house of the Lord and that they were endowed. That was the only place they could go. That place became holy and sacred for the rites of salvation which were performed on that occasion."<sup>5</sup>

We also know from 1 Corinthians 15:29 that after the Savior's death, baptisms for the dead were being performed. "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?" As a temple matron, I would encourage the young people who came to the temple to perform baptisms for the dead to memorize this scripture so they could share with their friends who were not members of our church that baptisms for the dead took place in New Testament times, and are not something that Joseph Smith just invented.

### **Our Children That Christ is at the Center of Temple Worship**

We should teach our children that everything in the temple leads to Jesus Christ. President Nelson has said, "The basis for every temple ordinance and covenant—the heart of the plan of salvation—is the Atonement of Jesus Christ."<sup>6</sup> (Russell M. Nelson, *Personal Preparation for Temple Blessings*, April 2001 General Conference)

Elder Bednar has also emphasized that it is in the temple where we more fully take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ. He said, "Elder Dallin H. Oaks has explained that in renewing our baptismal covenants by partaking of the emblems of the sacrament 'we do not witness that we take upon us the name of Jesus Christ. Rather, we witness that we are willing to do so' . . . The process of taking upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ that is commenced in the waters of baptism is

continued and enlarged in the house of the Lord... In the ordinances of the holy temple, we more completely and fully take upon us the name of Jesus Christ.”<sup>7</sup>

A few weeks ago, in our *Come Follow Me* curriculum, we studied Matthew 11:29-30, where the Savior states, ‘Take my yoke upon you . . . for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.’ I think you all know what a yoke is. This is a photo (*photo not available*) of an actual cattle harness that is connected to a wooden bar, which in turn connects to a second animal’s harness, making a pair of animals pulling a load. Does this look light to you? And this doesn’t even count for the weight of the load the cattle might be pulling. I could never really understand this passage of scripture, for the Savior’s load is anything but light. He paid for all of the sins of humanity. However, I finally looked at this scripture from a different vantage point. I believe that when He talks about taking His yoke upon us, He means that the portion of the yoke and the burden He offers to us, is incredibly lighter than the yoke and burden He carries for us through His atoning sacrifice. It is called *His* yoke and *His* burden, because it is *His* gift to us. He is offering to be on our team and to be yoked together with us, but he will give us the lightest weight possible. *He* carries the heaviest part of the yoke and burden, if we agree to be yoked together with Him. This is what we do in the temple. We are yoked to the Savior, and the other benefit we receive, besides not being obliged to pay for the entire weight of our sins, is that we are assured that as long as we stay yoked to Him, He will never lead us astray. That leaves the onus upon us never to unyoke ourselves. This is what the temple covenants and ordinances do for us: they are the yoke that connect us firmly and completely to the Savior. If we stay yoked to him by keeping our covenants and by continually repenting, Jesus Christ will keep us on the covenant path.

Elder Bednar just recently explained, “We begin to abide in the Lord by exercising our moral agency to take upon ourselves His yoke through the covenants and ordinances of the restored gospel.”<sup>8</sup>

In a recent podcast, Elder Bednar elaborated further, “The Savior said, ‘Come unto me, all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’ That is beautiful imagery, and it is lovely language. It is also a spiritual reality. So, the question is: How do we take upon ourselves the yoke of Christ? ‘Take my yoke upon you, for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’ Is that all just symbolism? Or is there something real in that? We literally take upon ourselves the yoke of Christ by preparing for, understanding, and worthily receiving the covenants and ordinances of the gospel and in the house of the Lord. So, we are placed in a position of being yoked to and with Him. Now, we have all seen pictures of two animals that are yoked together, and they pull in unison. He invited us to take His yoke upon us so that we are connected by covenant with Him.”<sup>9</sup>

Recent modifications in the endowment presentation emphasize that the temple is Christ-centered, and have also helped us better understand temple ordinances and covenants. As a recent temple matron, I have personally witnessed many adjustments in temple procedures that have come to the temple under President Nelson’s administration. I think our prophet is fully aware of our needs as members to better understand and love the temple. He is particularly aware of the special concerns women have had after going to the temple. May I testify to you that I know he is a living prophet.

If anyone here with a temple recommend has not participated in a temple endowment since February of 2023, please go. You will see that the Savior’s role in the temple ordinances and

covenants is made even clearer. *He is the center of all we do in the temple.* Understanding this has helped me to look for the symbolism that points to the Savior in everything we do in the temple, and I have encouraged others to look for that symbolism as they prepare to go to the temple, and as they participate in temple ordinances.

### **Teach our Children About the Nature of Covenants and Ordinances**

One of the biggest helps for me in understanding the rites of the temple was to better understand the nature of covenants and ordinances.

I know that you all understand what a covenant is, but just let me review it in simple terms. A covenant is a two-way promise that each individual can make with the Lord. We promise to do something, and He promises to bless us in return with specific blessings, if we keep our part of the covenant. In the secular world, we would call a covenant an agreement or a legal contract.

An ordinance is different than a covenant. When we go to the temple, we make covenants with the Lord and these covenants are validated by an ordinance. So, an ordinance is a physical ceremony that seals or validates a covenant. Both parts are necessary to make the covenant valid. D. Todd Christofferson explained: “We enter into covenants by priesthood ordinances, sacred rituals that God has ordained for us to manifest our commitment.”<sup>10</sup>

A perfect example of the covenant/ordinance relationship is baptism, and consequently, the Sacrament, where we renew our baptismal covenants. The covenants we make at baptism are stated in the Sacrament Prayer on the Bread:

1. We are willing to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ,
2. We covenant to always remember him,
3. We promise to keep his commandments.

Heavenly Father’s promise if we keep our covenants is: to always have His Spirit, or the Holy Ghost, with us. These covenants are validated by the physical act of being immersed in water, in the case of baptism, and in the ordinance of the sacrament, which is a weekly reminder of our baptismal covenants, the physical action of partaking of the bread and water. Both physical actions are symbolic of Jesus Christ.

### **The Ordinances of Salvation and Exaltation**

In the Church, we have certain ordinances that are required and necessary for our exaltation. Our children should be familiar with the following ordinances so there are no surprises for them. The Church website states, “Only in the temple can we make sacred covenants that include the promise of eternal life in the kingdom of God, which is ‘the greatest of all the gifts of God’<sup>11</sup>. Temple ordinances and covenants have always been part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. They strengthen a divine relationship and help us focus on the Savior, His Atonement, and our commitment to follow Him.”<sup>12</sup>

Elder D. Todd Christofferson has said, “If we are faithful to the covenants made there [in the temple], we become inheritors not only of the celestial kingdom but of exaltation, the highest glory within the heavenly kingdom, and we obtain all the divine possibilities God can give.”<sup>13</sup>

## **1. Baptism**

As I mentioned, the Sacrament is a weekly reminder of the covenants we make at baptism. The ordinance of baptism is performed outside the temple for the living and in the temple for the dead.<sup>14</sup> Elder Christofferson has stated, “Our foundational covenant, for example, the one in which we first pledge our willingness to take upon us the name of Christ, is confirmed by the ordinance of baptism. It is done individually, by name. By this ordinance, we become part of the covenant people of the Lord and heirs of the celestial kingdom of God.”<sup>15</sup>

## **2. Confirmation**

The ordinance of confirmation is one of the fundamental doctrines of Christ, and one of the First Principles of the Gospel. “We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.”<sup>16</sup>

The person receiving this ordinance is confirmed as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the gift of the Holy Ghost is given. After the required portion of the confirmation is pronounced *for the living*, the rest of the confirmation is not scripted. This ordinance is performed outside the temple for the living, and in the temple for the dead.

## **3. Priesthood (Males)**

“[The priesthood] is nothing more nor less than the power of God delegated to man by which man can act in the earth for the salvation of the human family, in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, and act legitimately.”<sup>17</sup> This ordinance is performed outside the temple for the living, and in the temple for the dead. The Melchizedek Priesthood (office of Elder) is required for exaltation.

## **4. Initiatory Ordinances**

Although these ordinances are considered to be part of the endowment, I would like to list them separately so that our children will be prepared to receive them.

“The ordinances of washing and anointing are referred to often in the temple as initiatory ordinances [because they begin the endowment] ... It will be sufficient for our purposes to say only the following: Associated with the endowment are washings and anointing—mostly symbolic in nature, but promising definite, immediate blessings as well as future blessings. In connection with these ordinances, in the temple you will be officially clothed in the garment and promised marvelous blessings in connection with it”<sup>18</sup> These ordinances are meant to purify us to enter into God’s presence and give us additional special blessings.<sup>19</sup> There are four separate parts: washing,

anointing, dressing in the holy garment, and then special confidential information will be given.<sup>20</sup> These ordinances are performed only in the temple for both the living and the dead.

## **5. Endowment<sup>21</sup>**

The endowment, which is performed in the temple for both the living and the dead, is a symbolic journey through the pre-existence, creation and mortality to teach us of God's plan of happiness and how to return to His presence. Brigham Young stated, "Your endowment is, to receive all those ordinances in the house of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being enabled to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the holy Priesthood, and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell."<sup>22</sup>

In the endowment, we make covenants to obey the following five laws: the Law of Obedience, the Law of Sacrifice, the Law of the Gospel, the Law of Chastity, and the Law of Consecration. You can read more about these covenants on the Church website.<sup>23</sup>

## **6. Temple Sealing**

This is the pinnacle of temple ordinances and indeed the purpose of temples, to seal couples and families together. President Nelson has stated, "Simply summarized, the earth was created that families might be. And as part of the planned destiny of the earth and its inhabitants, here our kindred dead are also to be redeemed. Families are to be sealed together for all eternity. A welding link is to be forged between the fathers and the children. In our time, a whole, complete, and perfect union of all dispensations, keys, and powers is to be welded together. For these sacred purposes, holy temples now dot the earth."<sup>24</sup>

We need to teach our children what BIC (born in the covenant) means, and about the important work of family history so that the saving ordinances of the temple can be performed for their kindred dead.

Furthermore, in the sealing ordinance between a man and a woman, we receive everything necessary to return to God's presence and become Gods and Goddesses. In DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS 131:1-2 we read, "In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; and in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood" [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage].<sup>25</sup>

## **12 Characteristics of the Ordinances of Salvation and Exaltation**

As I have worked in the temple, I have made a list of some of the characteristics of the ordinances of salvation and exaltation. I believe that sharing these characteristics with our children will help them to better understand the rituals and symbolism of the temple. By using the ordinances of baptism and the sacrament, we can better explain these characteristics to them.

### **1. Require Priesthood Authority and Keys<sup>26</sup>**



The Church website explains that “An ordinance is a sacred, formal act or ceremony performed by the authority of the priesthood.”<sup>27</sup> Elder D. Todd Christofferson further explains: “I testify that in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is found the priesthood authority to administer the ordinances by which we can enter into binding covenants with our Heavenly Father in the name of His Holy Son.”<sup>28</sup>

It is important to teach our children that in the temple, sister temple workers are set apart, and although they do not receive the priesthood, they receive the authority to act on behalf of the priesthood to perform and administer certain ordinances. President Nelson has stated, “In the holy temple you [women] are authorized to perform and officiate in priesthood ordinances *every time* you attend. Your temple endowment prepares you to do so.”<sup>29</sup>

## **2. Require a Physical Body to Perform or Receive an Ordinance**

All the ordinances for the dead are performed in the temple by proxy by mortals who have physical bodies. Our Heavenly Father always intended sacred priesthood ordinances to be performed with physical bodies, which is one of the reasons we as members of the Church are so grateful for our mortal bodies. In the premortal Council in Heaven, one third of our Heavenly Father’s children followed Lucifer’s plan and were cast out of heaven. Satan and his followers will never have physical bodies, and thus can never give or receive any ordinance. Satan and his minions do everything in their power to appeal to our physical appetites and weaknesses because of their anger at forever being barred from participating in giving or receiving the ordinances of salvation and exaltation. Dallin H. Oaks taught, “Although Satan and his followers have lost their opportunity to have a physical body, they are permitted to use their spirit powers to try to frustrate God’s plan.”<sup>30</sup>

Because we have physical bodies, this is why we perform work for the dead in temples. Those who have passed from mortality to the Spirit World have not yet been resurrected and do not currently have physical bodies. Thus, we perform the ordinances for them by proxy. In a 2019 *Ensign* article, Aspen Stander wrote, “We need our bodies to receive the ordinances of the temple, where we can also learn beautiful truths about the purpose and potential of our bodies. Our physical participation in priesthood ordinances is necessary to prepare us for eternal life. That’s why we must perform temple work for the dead, whose spirits are currently separated from their bodies—they cannot do it themselves.”<sup>31</sup>

## **3. Require a Physical Action with a Symbolic Meaning Leading to Christ**

As I mentioned at the beginning of my address, Elder John A. Widtsoe stated, “We live in a world of symbols. No man or woman can come out of the temple endowed as he should be, unless he has seen, beyond the symbol, the mighty realities for which the symbols stand.”<sup>32</sup>

Again, by using the ordinances of baptism and the sacrament, we can easily teach this principle to children. The physical action of being immersed in the water is symbolic of our rebirth and cleansing through the Savior’s Atonement. It is also a perfect illustration of following the Savior’s example. Furthermore, the physical action of partaking of the Sacrament is symbolic of us remembering his flesh and blood spilt and broken for us through His atoning sacrifice, crucifixion,

and resurrection. Likewise, in the temple, we will perform symbolic physical actions associated with the temple ordinances that help us remember the Savior’s atoning sacrifice.

We should also remind our children that resurrected or translated beings came to Joseph Smith to give priesthood authority by the laying on of hands – a physical action requiring a physical body.

#### **4. Complete, Seal, or Validate the Covenants we Make in the Temple.**

Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander has explained that “Ordinances and covenants can hardly be understood apart from each other. By ordinances we enter into covenants, and by covenants we receive the ordinances—there is no eternal covenant that is not connected to an ordinance.”<sup>33</sup>

In other words, both the covenant and ordinance are required to be valid. When we perform ordinances on behalf of the deceased, they must make the covenants to complete the process. We can teach our children that in response to our critics who criticize us for “forcing” the dead into our Church, we can explain to them that we perform only the physical ordinance by proxy, and that the dead must enter into the covenant themselves for the ordinance to be valid. If they don’t choose to do so, there is no valid covenant or ordinance.

#### **5. Are Performed for Ourselves only One Time.**

Every other time we go to the temple, we perform those ordinances for the dead.

#### **6. Have Fixed Ceremonies and Wording**

Like the Sacrament prayers or the baptismal prayer, the other ordinances of salvation have fixed ceremonies and wording. The only exception is the confirmation prayer and priesthood ordinations for the living, performed outside of the temple, where the required wording must be pronounced and then an individualized blessing may be given. Elder David A. Bednar has explained that “Repetition is one of the Lord’s patterns for our learning. We hear sacramental prayers every week and they are word for word the same. We participate in temple ordinances and the language is the same. Each time we hear it—if we are asking, seeking, and knocking—new things will come to our minds and hearts by the power of the Holy Ghost, about how that repeated statement, principle, or illustration applies to us. So, even though it is the same, [the experience] should be different every time... We should review repeatedly [President Nelson’s] invitations to us and the promised blessings. Because each time we do, we will learn something new. Sometimes I think, ‘I have heard this before.’ I think we need to be cautious if we have that attitude. You cannot read it too many times because, by the power of the Holy Ghost, it will be different each time.”<sup>34</sup>

When I began my service in the Papeete, Tahiti Temple, I listened to the endowment in French, and for the first time, a short phrase I had never paid attention to in English caught my attention. I learned something powerful that day.

#### **7. Are Recorded on Church Membership Records**

We are a record-keeping people. “After an ordinance is performed, it is recorded ...”<sup>35</sup>

## 8. Require Witnesses

Elder Loren C. Dunn explained, “The law of witnesses has always been a part of the Lord’s work on earth. This law states that ‘in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.’ This witness confirms that certain events took place and that God-given doctrine and principles are true.”<sup>36</sup>

## 9. Require Special Clothing (*except for priesthood ordination and confirmation*)

As described in the scriptures<sup>37</sup> special clothing is required for most of the ordinances of salvation. As explained on the Church website, “Latter-day Saints wear ceremonial clothing inside temples as part of the most sacred ordinances, or ceremonies of their faith.”<sup>38</sup> Our children should know that they will wear the ceremonial temple clothing during their endowment and sealing.

They should also know that the one item of special clothing that leaves the temple with us and remains on us for the rest of our lives is the sacred temple garment. Those preparing to enter the temple for the first time should be familiar with the First Presidency letter dated October 6, 2019, which states, “Preparing to Enter the Temple, Wearing the Temple Garment: The temple garment is a reminder of covenants made in the temple and, when worn properly throughout life, will serve as a protection against temptation and evil. The garment should be worn beneath the outer clothing. It should not be removed for activities that can reasonably be done while wearing the garment, and it should not be modified to accommodate different styles of clothing. Endowed members should seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to answer personal questions about wearing the garment. It is a sacred privilege to wear the garment and doing so is an outward expression of an inner commitment to follow the Savior Jesus Christ.”

As a child, I thought that garments were simply adult underwear. When I realized that all adults didn’t wear garments, I was so confused. You young mothers, you might think that your children understand what garments are, but consider at some point sitting down with your children and explaining why and how you wear garments, emphasizing that the temple garment is a symbol of the covenants made in the temple. I also encourage any sister going through the temple who is married to someone who is not a member of the Church to do the same thing with your spouse. The Church website (search: temple garments) offers excellent information to help you explain this.

It is important for our children to be prepared to wear garments. I know we can’t always control what our children wear, but we need to be preparing them now. When my own daughters were teens, I encouraged them not to wear sleeveless tops or short shorts. If we start when they are young, it will not be a surprise or a challenge for them to wear garments when they are endowed.

I learned during my temple service that there are so many misconceptions about garments, even among seasoned members of the Church. I was quite surprised as a temple matron to hear from many women coming to the temple for the first time that they had not been taught about what it means to wear the sacred garment. As I met with these women, some young women leaving on missions or getting married, and others, older women who were converts, or who had finally

qualified to come to the temple, I heard just about everything you can imagine. That garments could not be washed in a washing machine but had to be washed by hand, that other white clothing could not be washed with them, that you had to wash your own garments yourself and couldn't even wash your spouse's garments. Some thought you only wore them when you attended the temple, others thought you just wore them on Sundays, and others thought that you have to wear them 24/7 night and day with no exceptions, including while swimming or showering. Some believed that if you dropped your garments on the ground, they must be burned, others thought that when disposing of worn garments, you had to burn the entire garment. Do not assume your children know or understand how the garment is to be worn or handled. Teach them the correct principles and show them by your example that you cherish your temple garments.

One of my biggest concerns after having served as a temple matron is the casualness with which Church members treat the holy garment. As with the new "For the Strength of Youth" pamphlet, our leaders are teaching us a higher law (without letter of the law stipulations) and allowing us to govern ourselves. This, unfortunately, has led to a very casual attitude toward wearing the temple garment. It is a sacred reminder of the covenants we have made in the temple and we should feel it a privilege to wear it and realize that it is truly a protection for us from the fiery darts of the adversary.

#### **10. Require our Faithfulness and Enduring to the End to be Valid.**

We must continue to stay on the covenant path and endure to the end for our covenants to be valid. The scriptures teach us, "And, if you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God."<sup>39</sup> "And whoso taketh upon him my name, and endureth to the end, the same shall be saved..."<sup>40</sup>

During our service at the temple, a bishop in Tahiti came to me with a concern. He and his ward members had embraced a convert couple and their children, helping them prepare to receive the blessings of the temple a year following their baptisms. The couple prepared diligently to go to the temple, and then once they went to the temple, they stopped coming to church. They explained to the bishop that once they had received their temple ordinances, they didn't see any need to come to church any longer. They thought they had "locked in" their exaltation. The bishop told me, "Sister Perrin, please teach people that those temple blessings are dependent upon our continued faithfulness."

#### **11. Require Repentance, which is only Possible through the Savior's Atonement.**

"Through His Atonement, Jesus Christ offers forgiveness and eternal life to all those who exercise faith in Him and repent of their sins."<sup>41</sup> (Church Website: Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Seminary Teacher Manual, Lesson 36, Doctrine and Covenants 29: 30-50)

We can never be perfectly obedient, and without the Savior having taken upon himself all of our sins, our Heavenly Father's great Plan of Happiness could never be accomplished, including our own exaltation.

Every single one of us here today has a heartbreak in our life from a spouse, child, grandchild or other family member or friend who has broken their temple covenants or who has rejected the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We need to teach our children that through repentance, we can repent of our sins, and even after committing the most terrible of transgressions, except for murder, repentance is possible through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, and we can once again return to the covenant path.

One day while serving in the temple, I had a temple worker come to get me in my office. He told me that there was a pregnant woman touching the wall just outside the main door of the temple, who was sobbing uncontrollably. He didn't know what to do. I went outside to speak with the woman and invited her to come into the temple waiting room, which has a door. No one else was there, and so I closed the door and asked her if there was something I could do to help her. She told me that she had been sealed to her husband in the temple at the time of their marriage, and that after having several children, her husband had left her for another woman. She was devastated, but continued to hold fast to her temple covenants, until she became unable to meet the financial needs of her family. She began living with a man who had promised to support her, but to whom she was not married. He turned out to not only be unable to keep a job, but to be abusive as well. Now, she was expecting this man's child. She felt like she had destroyed her life and that she was beyond help. She had broken her temple covenants and did not know how to turn her life around. I assured her that through sincere repentance, she could once again be worthy and have her temple blessings restored. As I was obviously not her ecclesiastical leader, I invited her to go see her bishop immediately, telling her that he would help her find solutions to her situation and that he held the keys to help her begin the process of repentance.

## **12. Must be “Sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise”<sup>42</sup>**

This scripture from the Doctrine and Covenants may sound confusing, but essentially what it means is that the Holy Ghost must ratify our worthiness and confirm that we have remained faithful to our covenants.

I believe that if our children understand the characteristics of the ordinances of salvation and exaltation, the temple ceremonies, rites and symbolism will also be easier for them to understand and appreciate.

Now sisters, I'm sure you would like to hear the end of the story about our stolen luggage. As my husband was going to the police station at another terminal, he remembered the fact that for the first time in all of our travels, he had purchased and placed Airtags, small electronic markers, in our luggage, which connected directly to his cell phone. When he got to the police station, he opened his cell phone, and he and the police could actually see a map, which showed our luggage moving around, and then it was finally stationary.

The police took a picture of the map and sent it to the police back near me in the rental car parking lot. They came to get me and asked me to come with them. They had found our bags in a dark, covered area of the parking lot stashed behind a metal cage. Of course, I was thrilled that they had at least found our bags, but I was prepared for the worst. They asked me to go through the bags to see what was missing. All of our cash was gone, and so were all of my sundries, my hair products

and makeup, but shockingly, our passports, French phones, credit cards, computers and iPad were still in our bags. The police told us that they almost never recover stolen luggage. In fact, one of the policemen said to me, “Señora, you should play the lottery today because you are the luckiest person I have ever seen.” Well, I looked pretty awful for the rest of our trip without my makeup and hair products, but how grateful we were to have the most critical items returned. I told my husband over and over again, how grateful I was to him for having placed those markers in our luggage. For us, it was a miracle to have our belongings returned, and of course it was a direct answer to our heartfelt prayers. That experience got me thinking a lot about markers.

What about us as parents, grandparents, gospel teachers and leaders? Have we marked our children? Have we taken the necessary steps to place markers in the hearts of our children through our examples and by teaching them the gospel and about temples, so that they will be inspired to come unto the Savior by making and keeping their own sacred temple ordinances? Have we prepared them to take upon themselves the marks of the sacred temple garment and to keep the covenants they make in the temple?

Are we faithful to the marks we have placed on ourselves in the holy temple? Have we marked our children as members of the covenant people by having entered into and keeping our own temple covenants, including the sealing covenants, so that even if they are lost, at some point, they can be found and returned to the fold?

Those who have wayward children who have been sealed to them have the blessing that if those wayward children repent, whether in this life, or the world to come, “And after they have paid the penalty of their transgressions, and are washed clean, [they] shall receive a reward according to their works, for they are heirs of salvation.”<sup>43</sup>

It is my hope and prayer that we may prepare our children to come unto Christ by making and keeping sacred temple covenants, and that we may ourselves stay on the covenant path.

In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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<sup>1</sup> John A. Widtsoe, “Temple Worship,” April 1921. *The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*.

<sup>2</sup> Russell M. Nelson, “Teachings of Russell M. Nelson,” September 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Fielding Smith, “Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith,” 1976.

<sup>4</sup> Russell M. Nelson, “Church Educational System Fireside at the Salt Lake University Institute” May 2003.

[www.thechurchnews.com](http://www.thechurchnews.com)

<sup>5</sup> Joseph Fielding Smith, “Doctrines of Salvation,” 1954.

<sup>6</sup> Russell M. Nelson, “Personal Preparation for Temple Blessings,” April 2001.

<sup>7</sup> David A. Bednar, “Honorably Hold a Name and Standing,” April 2009.

<sup>8</sup> David A. Bednar, “Abide in Me, and I in You; Therefore Walk with Me,” April 2023.

<sup>9</sup> David A. Bednar, *The Church News* Podcast, episode 133. April 2023.

<sup>10</sup> D. Todd Christofferson, “The Power of Covenants,” April 2009.

<sup>11</sup> See Doctrine and Covenants 14:7.

<sup>12</sup> See [www.churchofjesuschrist.org/temples](http://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/temples)

<sup>13</sup> D. Todd Christofferson, “The Power of Covenants,” April 2009. See also DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS 132:20.

<sup>14</sup> See 1 Corinthians 15:29-30 and Doctrine and Covenants 124:39.

<sup>15</sup> D. Todd Christofferson, “The Power of Covenants,” April 2009.

- <sup>16</sup> Articles of Faith 1:4. Pearl of Great Price.
- <sup>17</sup> Joseph F. Smith, "Gospel Doctrine, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition." 1939.
- <sup>18</sup> Temple Preparation, "Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple" 2002. Gospel Library. See also, Doctrine and Covenants 124:39.
- <sup>19</sup> See Exodus 29: 4-9; 40: 12-25; Leviticus 8 : 6-13, 30; 16 :24, 30, 32; Ecclesiastes 9:8; and Doctrine and Covenants 124:37-42.
- <sup>20</sup> See Isaiah 56: 5, Revelations 2:17; 3:12, and Doctrine and Covenants 130: 11.
- <sup>21</sup> See Luke 24:49; Doctrine and Covenants 43:16; 95:8; 105:11,12, 18; 110:9; 124 :39,40.
- <sup>22</sup> John A. Widtsoe, "Discourses of Brigham Young," 1941.
- <sup>23</sup> <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/temples/what-is-temple-endowment?lang=eng>
- <sup>24</sup> Russell M. Nelson, "The Creation," April 2000.
- <sup>25</sup> See also Doctrine and Covenants 132:4, 19, 20; 138:48.
- <sup>26</sup> See Doctrine and Covenants 84:21.
- <sup>27</sup> Topics and Questions, "Ordinances," Gospel Library.
- <sup>28</sup> D. Todd Christofferson, "The Power of Covenants," April 2009.
- <sup>29</sup> Russell M. Nelson, "Spiritual Treasures," October 2019.
- <sup>30</sup> Dallin H. Oaks, "The Great Plan of Happiness," October 1993.
- <sup>31</sup> Aspen Stander, "Created in His Image," August 2019.
- <sup>32</sup> John A. Widtsoe, "Temple Worship," April 1921.
- <sup>33</sup> Dennis B. Neuenschwander, "Ordinances and Covenants," August 2001.
- <sup>34</sup> David A. Bednar, *The Church News* Podcast, episode 133. April 2023.
- <sup>35</sup> Russell M. Nelson, "Generations Linked in Love," April 2010. See also Moses 6:5; Moroni 6:4; Doctrine and Covenants 128:2; Doctrine and Covenants 128:8.
- <sup>36</sup> Loren C. Dunn, "Witnesses," October 1995.
- <sup>37</sup> See Exodus 29: 4-9; 40: 12-25; Numbers 15: 37-4; Revelations 7:13, 15.
- <sup>38</sup> "First Presidency Announces Adjustments in Temple Ceremonial Clothing," Church Newsroom, January 2020.
- <sup>39</sup> Doctrine and Covenants 14:7.
- <sup>40</sup> 3 Nephi 27:6.
- <sup>41</sup> "Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Seminary Teacher Manual," Lesson 36, Doctrine and Covenants 29: 30-50. [www.churchofjesuschrist.org](http://www.churchofjesuschrist.org).
- <sup>42</sup> Doctrine and Covenants 132:7.
- <sup>43</sup> Doctrine and Covenants 138:58–59. See also, David A. Bednar, "Faithful Parents and Wayward Children, Sustaining Hope While Overcoming Misunderstanding," March 2014.