

CHRISTMAS WITH THE PROPHETS

A UNIT STUDY BY MONTSERRAT WADSWORTH
[CHOCOLATE ON MY CRANIUM](#)

Christmas is such a wonderful time of year! There are so many happy traditions that have been passed on through the ages. As you study about how each prophet celebrated Christmas you will learn that they were men who loved their families, enjoyed serving others, and were especial witnesses of Jesus Christ. Some Christmases there were no presents but lots of love. Other Christmases were spent giving and serving sharing of their excess.

The unit study is set up so a prophet is taught each day. For every day of study there is a timeline, a story or two about how they celebrated Christmas, an activity suggestion, their favorite food, and then a quote or two about Christmas or Jesus Christ given by that prophet.

As with any unit study do as much or as little as your circumstances permit. Change things around to suit your individual taste.

There are no pictures of the prophets included in this study. Use the ones contained in the Gospel Art Kit or download your own online at [Gospel Art Kit – Prophets](#).

Some suggestions for incorporating subjects –

Geography – locate places mentioned in the stories or timelines on a map.

Math – There is a recipe containing recipes for each prophet. Most came from a church news article. Involve everyone in the cooking process!

Writing – use the quotes from the prophets about Jesus Christ as copywork.

You can listen to a Mormon Channel episode with Laura F. Willes, “[Christmas With the Prophets](#)” at any time during the unit study. It would be a great family home evening!

JOSEPH SMITH

Timeline:

- 1805 December 23, is born in Sharon, Vermont
- 1813 (age 7) Leg is nearly amputated but saved by taking out pieces of bone
- 1820 (age 14) Receives the First Vision
- 1823 (age 17) Is visited by the Angel Moroni; is told of the Nephite records
- 1827 (age 21) Marries Emma Hale; receives and begins translating the golden plates
- 1829 (age 23) Receives the Aaronic Priesthood and later the Melchizedek Priesthood
- 1830 (age 24) Publishes the Book of Mormon; organizes the Church
- 1831 (age 25) Moves to Kirtland, Ohio; dedicates the temple site in Independence, Missouri
- 1832 (age 26) Is sustained as President of the high priesthood
- 1833 (age 27) Organizes the First Presidency; continues to receive many revelations, including the Word of Wisdom
- 1834 (age 28) Walks with Zion's Camp from Ohio to Missouri
- 1835 (age 29) The Twelve Apostles and the Seventy are ordained; the Doctrine and Covenants is accepted by the Saints
- 1836 (age 30) Dedicates the Kirtland Temple; Jesus, [Moses](#), Elias, and Elijah appear
- 1838 (age 32) Moves to Missouri; imprisoned in Liberty Jail
- 1839 (age 33) Directs the Church from Liberty Jail; begins to build Nauvoo
- 1841 (age 35) Calls the Saints to gather at Nauvoo; plans an immigration agency to help them
- 1842 (age 36) Publishes the Book of Abraham; prophecies the trek to the Rocky Mountains
- 1843 (age 37) Records the revelation on eternal marriage
- 1844 (age 38) June 27, is martyred with Hyrum at Carthage Jail shortly after 5:15 P.M.

While we now celebrate the birth of the Savior during December, it is also the month when the Prophet Joseph Smith was born—December 23, 1805. Here from Joseph Smith's journal are recollections of how he spent several Christmases after he became Prophet and President of the Church:

1835 *Enjoyed myself at home with my family, all day, it being Christmas; the only time I have had this privilege so satisfactorily for a long period.*

1838 *My brother Don Carlos and my cousin George A. Smith returned [from missions through Kentucky and Tennessee], having traveled fifteen hundred miles—nine hundred on foot, and the remainder by steamboat and otherwise. They visited several branches, and would have accomplished the object of their mission had it not been for the troubles at Far West.*

When nearly home they were known and pursued by the mob, which compelled them to travel one hundred miles in two days and nights. The ground at the time was slippery, and a severe northwest wind was blowing in their faces; they had but little to eat and narrowly escaped freezing both nights.

1841 *Being Christmas, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Orson Pratt, Wilford Woodruff, John Taylor and their wives, and Willard Richards spent the evening at Hiram Kimball's; and after supper Mr. Kimball gave each of the Twelve Apostles a fractional lot of land lying on the west side of his second addition to Nauvoo.*

1843 *This morning, about one o'clock, I was aroused by an English sister, Lettice Rushton (who, ten years ago, lost her sight) accompanied by three of her sons with their wives and her two daughters with*

their husbands, and several of the neighbors, singing, "Mortals, awake! with angels join," etc., which caused a thrill of pleasure to run through my soul. All of my family and boarders arose to hear the serenade, and I felt to thank my Heavenly Father for their visit, and blessed them in the name of the Lord. They also visited my brother Hyrum, who was awakened from his sleep. He arose and went out of doors. He shook hands with and blessed each one of them in the name of the Lord, and said that he thought at first that a cohort of angels had come to visit him, it was such heavenly music to him . . . At two o'clock, about fifty couples sat down at my table to dine.

Craft: [Draw the Prophet Joseph Smith](#)

Food: Joseph Smith's family had cornmeal Johnny Cakes so often that one of his children, in asking the blessing on the food, made a special request: "Something better, please, for the next meal." (Feasting With the Prophets, Church News, Oct. 1 1988)

Quote:

“And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

“For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

“That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God.” (D&C 76:22-23)

Other sources or ideas:

[Joseph Smith's Childhood](#) – Primary 3 Manual

[Christmas With the Prophet Joseph](#) – Liahona Magazine, December 1989

BRIGHAM YOUNG

Timeline

- 1801 Born on 1 June to John Young and Abigail Howe Young in Whitingham, Vermont
- 1824 Age 23, marries Miriam Works on 8 October; she dies in 1832
- 1832 Age 30, baptized on 14 April in his own millpond near Mendon, New York
- 1832-33 Ages 31-32, serves a mission to Canada and leads a small company of converts to Kirtland, Ohio
- 1834 Age 32, marries Mary Ann Angell on 18 February; she dies in 1882
- 1835 Age 33, ordained on 14 February as one of the original members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles by the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon: Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris
- 1839-41 Ages 38-40, serves a mission to Great Britain
- 1840 Age 38, sustained as President of the Quorum of the Twelve on 14 April
- 1844 Age 43, becomes leader of the Church as President of the Quorum of the Twelve at Joseph Smith's death on 27 June
- 1846-47 Ages 44-46, leads the exodus west to the Salt Lake Valley and then returns to Winter Quarters
- 1847 Age 46, sustained as President of the Church on 27 December, with Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards as counselors
- 1853 Age 51, lays the cornerstone for the Salt Lake Temple
- 1877 Age 76, dies on 29 August in Salt Lake City after presiding over the Church for more than 30 years

Story:

Father loved children very much and made our home entertainments and holidays just as delightful as the facilities of the day would permit. The Christmas celebrations of my childhood hold memories that are especially dear to me. No one in the entire household was ever forgotten, and this meant providing Christmas cheer for a great many people when one included the help and pensioners on the estate as well as the family.

Simple as our celebrations were, our elders were fond of reminding us how very much more fortunate we were than the children of two decades earlier when a good square meal was ample cause for celebrating any day in the year. The first Christmas in the valley—so we were told—everyone worked as usual. The men gathered sagebrush and some of them even plowed, for there was little snow and the ground was still soft. Christmas came on Saturday, but Saturday being a workday not even Christmas could interfere with the usual labors, and so the celebration was held on the Sabbath. Nearly everyone was still living in the old fort, and they all gathered around the flagpole in the center of the square, sang, prayed, shook hands, and joined around a sagebrush fire. They were completely filled with joy that their lives had been preserved in the great trek and that they had found a home where they might enjoy peace. They asked for nothing more.

Within the short space of three years the population of the city had increased to thousands, and the Christmas celebration took on a still greater air of gaiety. A brass band paraded up and down the streets, with the players mounted on horseback. They serenaded at Father's house as well as the homes of other Church leaders. All the toys were home made, the ads in the paper carrying no mention of commercial playthings. However, if a husband wished to delight his wife with a new bonnet on Christmas morning,

there was Mrs. A. Smith, "Late of St. Louis," who advertised a superior assortment of velvet, silk, satin, and straw bonnets, and a variety of fancy goods and millinery. (*Brigham Young at Home* by Clarissa Young Spencer, daughter of Brigham Young)

President Brigham Young loved to dance. "Besides my own problems, I have the whole people's burdens and I get rid of them by kicking them off my toes." Dancing, which was held in the Social Hall in Salt Lake City, was also an important part of all early pioneer Christmas celebrations. In 1849, President Young held a large Christmas party and sent out invitations. Everyone expected there would be dancing. Susan Wells and her sister made dresses from the fabric wagon cover that had protected their family during the journey to the Salt Lake Valley. The Christmas dance would become the most popular dance of the entire year.

"I well remember Brother Brigham's Christmas party of 1849. Like the girls of today, on receiving my invitation the first thought was "nothing to wear." This was literally true, as all our clothing was shabby and patched.

Necessity is the mother of invention, so, after careful consideration, the wagon cover that had done such a faithful service during our journey across the plains, was brought out. We couldn't afford canvas and our cover consisted of several thicknesses of unbleached factory cloth. This was carefully dyed and as good luck would have it, it turned out a very pretty brown.

We made this into dresses for myself and sister, trimmed with silk from an old cape of mother's. This cape, black, lined with light brown, not only furnished trimming for our dresses, but I made poke bonnets from the black with quilting lining of the light brown. I had embroidered buckskin mocassins with ravellings from a piece of silk, but I believe for this occasion father, who was a shoemaker, made me a pair of slippers from his old boot legs. I tell you my first ball dress was stunning!" (Susan Wells, Juvenile Instructor, December 1918)

Craft: Pioneer Paper Dolls – Print dolls from these sites. Color their clothes, then have a pioneer ball (dance). [Pioneer Girl](#) [Pioneer Boy](#)

Food: Brigham Young, a borderline vegetarian, ate amply from garden produce; he especially liked strawberries.

He ate only two meals a day, but they were substantial. At breakfast, for example, he often downed cornmeal mush, hot doughnuts with syrup, codfish gravy, and a roasted squab from the pigeon house. He gave popcorn an original twist by burying it in a bowl of rich milk and eating it like cereal. (Feasting With the Prophets, Church News, Oct. 1 1988)

Quote: "I testify that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of the world; I have obeyed his sayings, and realized his promise, and the knowledge I have of him, the wisdom of this world cannot give, neither can it take away. ...

"Our Lord Jesus Christ—the Savior, who has redeemed the world and all things pertaining to it, is the Only Begotten of the Father pertaining to the flesh. ... He has tasted death for every man, and has paid the debt contracted by our first parents."

Other Sources:

[Brigham Young](#) – Friend, June 1971

JOHN TAYLOR

Timeline:

- 1808 Born on 1 November at Milnthorpe, England, to James and Agnes Taylor
- 1833 Age 24, marries Leonora Cannon on 28 January; she dies in 1868
- 1836 Age 27, baptized with Leonora in Black Creek at Georgetown, Ontario, Canada, on 9 May
- 1838 Age 30, ordained an Apostle by Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball on 19 December
- 1839-41 Ages 30-32, serves a mission to England
- 1844 Age 35, seriously wounded in Carthage Jail when Joseph and Hyrum Smith were killed on 27 June
- 1846-47 Ages 37-38, serves a second mission to England
- 1849-52 Ages 40-43, serves a mission to France and Germany; has the Book of Mormon published in French and German
- 1854-57 Ages 45-48, presides over the Eastern States Mission
- 1877 Age 68, leads the Church as President of the Quorum of the Twelve at Brigham Young's death on 29 August
- 1880 Age 71, sustained as President of the Church on 10 October, with George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith as counselors
- 1884 Age 75, dedicates the Logan Temple on 17 May
- 1887 Age 78, dies on 25 July in Kaysville, Utah, after nearly seven years as President of the Church

Story: Print out this one from the Friend, Dec. 2003 – [Money for a Mission](#) This Christmas, in 1839, was *not* celebrated.

At a time when the U.S. government sought to punish the Church for its practice of polygamy Pres. Taylor had to go into hiding and live “underground” meaning he moved a lot to avoid being arrested. During the holiday season of 1885, President Taylor stayed with Bishop Charles Adams and family. He freed himself from the stresses of underground life by taking part in caring for the children of the home. In the evenings he would put them in his lap, tell them stories, and sing to them. On Christmas morning as the children were unwrapping their gifts, he was elated to find that Sister Adams had knitted him a pair of socks from wool that she had washed, carded, and spun. "See! I have the best present of all!" he teased. Removing his shoes and socks, he exclaimed, "A pair of nice warm stockings to keep my tootsie wootsies warm!" Gaping at his long, bony, bunion-ridden feet, the children giggled and blushed. Giggling all the more they retorted that "tootsie wootsies" were baby feet. Chuckling in reply, he rejoined, "Well, I'm being babied here, aren't I?"

Activity: Have an indoor “snowball” fight. Everyone grab several pairs of sock folded into balls and start throwing!

Food: President John Taylor was known to have a sweet tooth. The recipe in the recipe section came from a Church News article.

Quote: “Anointed, indeed, with the oil of gladness above His fellows, He struggled with and overcame the powers of men and devils, of earth and hell combined; and aided by this superior power of the Godhead, He vanquished death, hell and the grave, and arose triumphant as the Son of God, the very eternal Father, the Messiah, the Prince of peace, the Redeemer, the Savior of the world; having finished and completed the work pertaining to the atonement, which His Father had given Him to do as the Son of God and the Son of man.”

WILDFORD WOODRUFF

Timeline:

- 1807 March 1, is born in Farmington, Connecticut
- 1821 (age 14) Works as a miller
- 1833 (age 26) Is baptized
- 1834–36 (age 27–29) Serves a mission to the Southern States
- 1837 (age 30) Marries Phoebe Carter
- 1837–38 (age 30–31) Serves a mission to the Eastern States and the Fox Islands
- 1839 (age 32) Is ordained an Apostle
- 1839–41 (age 32–34) Serves a mission to Great Britain
- 1842 (age 35) Serves as business manager for the Times and Seasons
- 1844–46 (age 37–39) Serves as president of the European Mission
- 1848–50 (age 41–43) Presides over the Church in the Eastern States
- 1856 (age 49) Is appointed Church historian
- 1877 (age 70) Becomes president of the St. George Temple
- 1879 (age 72) While in exile, does [missionary work](#) among the Indians
- 1887 (age 80) At the death of John Taylor, becomes the leader of the Church as President of the Quorum of the Twelve
- 1888 (age 81) Dedicates the Manti Temple in private services
- 1889 (age 82) Is sustained as President of the Church
- 1890 (age 83) Issues the Manifesto stopping plural marriage
- 1893 (age 86) Dedicates the Salt Lake Temple
- 1898 (age 91) September 2, dies in San Francisco

Story: In 1841 Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Orson Pratt, Wilford Woodruff, John Taylor, and their wives and Willard Richards spent the evening at Hiram Kimball's home in Nauvoo, and after supper, Hiram Kimball gave each of the Twelve Apostles a fractional lot of land lying on the west side of his two additions.

Dec 25, 1843 - 25 CHRISTMAS DAY A large Party met at the Nauvoo Mansion & had A splendid dinner and supper and spent a long evening.

I was invited By Elder R. Allexander to meet the Tennessee Saints at his house in company with my own family. I did so & found Br Smoot & family Br Allexander & family & Sister Petty & family. We had a social interesting time together. We had a good feast & spent the evening in conversing about the things of God. (Wilford Woodruff's Journal)

Dec 25, 1876 – Was Christmas but spent the day husking corn

Dec 25, 1883, St. George – I wrote a letter to A Hinckley . . . I was sealed for 13 dead couples. I ordained Cheroques Erastus to the office of a Seventy I think *the first Lamanite ever* ordained to that office in this dispensation. There were 316 baptisms to day which is called Christmas.

In 1892 Christmas fell on a Sunday so they celebrated the next day: “This day [December 26] was spent for Christmas. We had our Christmas dinner. I had a large company of children and grandchildren and a pleasant day.

Activity: Most of Pres. Woodruff's Christmases were spent in visiting with friends and family. Make some treats to take to a friend.

Food: President Wilford Woodruff related in his journals that crumbled cheese and green onions were most frequently used to top his bread and milk, but apple chunks or green grapes sometimes topped the bread for variety. (Feasting With the Prophets, Church News, Oct. 1 1988)

Quote: "The object of Christ's mission to the earth was to offer himself as a sacrifice to redeem mankind from eternal death. ... He acted strictly in obedience to his Father's will in all things from the beginning, and drank of the bitter cup given him. Herein is brought to light, glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life, with that charity which is greater than faith or hope, for the Lamb of God has hereby performed that for man which [man] could not accomplish for himself. ...

"There is no being that has power to save the souls of men and give them eternal life, except the Lord Jesus Christ, under the command of His Father."

Other Articles:

[From a Nauvoo Pantry](#) – New Era, December 1973

[Listen to President Woodruff](#) bear his testimony! He was the first prophet to have his voice recorded.

LORENZO SNOW

Timeline:

- 1814 April 3, is born in Mantua, Ohio
- 1831 (age 17) Hears [Joseph Smith](#) speak after his (Lorenzo's) mother joins the Church
- 1835 (age 21) Enters Oberlin College; his sister, Eliza R., joins the Church
- 1836 (age 22) Is baptized
- 1837 (age 23) Serves a mission to Ohio
- 1838–39 (age 24–25) Moves to Far West; Serves a mission in the Midwestern States
- 1839–40 (age 25–26) Teaches school
- 1840–43 (age 26–29) Serves a mission to Great Britain; presents a copy of the Book of Mormon to Queen Victoria
- 1845 (age 31) Marries
- 1846–48 (age 32–34) Crosses the plains
- 1849 (age 35) Is ordained an Apostle
- 1849–52 (age 35–38) Serves a mission to Europe
- 1853 (age 39) Presides over the colonization of Brigham City
- 1872–82 (age 58–68) Serves as president of the Utah Territorial Council
- 1873–77 (age 59–63) Serves as counselor to Brigham Young
- 1885 (age 71) Serves a mission to the Indians in the northwestern United States
- 1886–87 (age 72–73) Serves an eleven-month prison term on a plural marriage charge
- 1889 (age 75) Becomes the President of the Quorum of the Twelve
- 1893 (age 79) Becomes the president of the Salt Lake Temple
- 1898 (age 84) After the death of Wilford Woodruff, is sustained as President of the Church
- 1899 (age 85) Receives revelation to stress payment of tithing
- 1901 (age 87) October 10, Dies

Story: Because of the intense persecution of the antibigamy laws by federal officers, President Snow went on the “underground” for an extended period of time. He was eventually caught and incarcerated in the Utah Territorial Prison in Sugar House. He spent Christmas 1886 in prison. He received a special surprise that day with the delivery of “a beautifully ornamented raisin cake” by Minna Cannon. There was also “a nice silk handkerchief, the S.L. Temple woven on each corner,” which came from Lorenzo Snow’s daughter and granddaughter.

President Lorenzo Snow, who presided over the Church at the turn of the century, used to write poetry, which he sent to his friends as his seasons' greetings.

Activity: Create your own Christmas poetry. It can be an acrostic poem using the letters of Christmas or try different forms of poetry.

Food: Lorenzo Snow, in the deprivation of winter Quarters, learned extraordinary resourcefulness. He organized groups of men to find work in adjoining communities. The men worked, not for monetary wage, but for any sort of food staple they could gather. (Feasting With the Prophets, Church News, Oct. 1 1988)

Quote: “That Being who dwelt in Heaven, who reigned there before the world was, who created the earth, and who, in the meridian of time, came down to perfect and save that which He had created, has appeared to men in this age.

“We testify to the whole world that we know, by divine revelation, even through the manifestations of the Holy Ghost, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and that he revealed himself to Joseph Smith as personally as he did to his apostles anciently, after he arose from the tomb, and that he made known unto him [the] heavenly truths by which alone mankind can be saved.”

JOSEPH F. SMITH

Timeline:

- 1838 November 13, is born in Far West, Missouri
- 1844 (age 5) Father, Hyrum Smith, is martyred at Carthage
- 1848 (age 9) Drives an ox team across the plains
- 1852 (age 13) He becomes an orphan when his mother, Mary Fielding Smith, dies;
- 1854–58 (age 15–19) Serves a mission to Hawaii
- 1859 (age 20) Marries Levira A. Smith; is called to the Salt Lake Stake high council
- 1860–63 (age 21–24) Serves a mission to Great Britain
- 1864–74 (age 26–36) Serves as a member of the Utah Territorial House of Representatives
- 1866 (age 27) Is ordained an Apostle and a counselor to the First Presidency
- 1867 (age 28) Is called to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
- 1874–75 (age 35–37) Serves as President of the European Mission
- 1877 (age 38) Serves a second term as President of the European Mission
- 1878 (age 39) Is called to gather Church history records and data in the eastern states
- 1880 (age 41) Becomes Second Counselor to John Taylor in the First Presidency, then to Wilford Woodruff (1889) and to Lorenzo Snow (1898)
- 1884–91 (age 45–52) Lives in exile because of antipolygamy laws; labors in the southwest United States, Mexico, Hawaii, Canada, and the eastern United States
- 1893 (age 54) Is present at the dedication of the Salt Lake Temple
- 1901 (age 62) Is sustained as President of the Church
- 1906 (age 67) Becomes the first President of the Church to tour Europe
- 1915 (age 76) Dedicates the temple site at Laie, Hawaii
- 1918 (age 80) November 19, dies

Story: [This letter was written by Pres. Smith to one of his sons on December 29, 1914]

My Beloved Son: Your most refreshing and welcome letter of Christmas Eve came to my hand yesterday, and I read and reread it with pleasure mingled with grateful tears.

Your letter also took me back not only to the boyhood days of my own boys and girls, but also to those of my very own. From 1846 to 1848 and 9 I knew no Christmas, and no holiday; and, indeed, if we had a Christmas or a New Year celebration at all before 1846 — or until after I was married — for the life of me, at this moment, I cannot remember it. I was teamster, herdboy, ployboy, irrigator, harvester, with scythe or cradle, wood-hauler, thresher, winnower (by the half-bushel measure or fanning-mill, later), general roustabout, and a fatherless, motherless, and almost friendless missionary, and withal, always penniless.

I say almost friendless. I had one true friend, a widow, frail, aged — but oh! so true! She was my never-to-be-forgotten and ever-to-be-loved and remembered Aunt Mercy R. Thompson. She, like my own precious mother, never forgot me while she lived. But in their time, they had very little, and it was a continuous struggle just to live.

Then when, after these dreary experiences, my own precious little cherubs began to come along, we were existing on \$3 per day for each working day employed, and that in tithing products at high prices. Well, I cannot tell you how we managed to live at all, but we did! God must have helped us, for I did not steal or defraud my neighbor. I did not owe any man, woman, or child one cent, except it was my gracious Aunt

Mercy who, as often as she could, slipped a favor in my way. I owed no man through all those days, and I had to work — I could not be idle.

Now again to the Christmas holidays: There [was] ... not a dollar in cash, with which to buy one thing for Christmas. I could draw a few pounds of flour, or meat, a little molasses, or something of that kind, ahead, at the General Tithing Office and pay up at the end of the month with tithing scrip, received in payment of my labor which more than often began at 6 a.m. and ended at 11 p.m., at \$3 per day in tithing pay, which was not cash.

I saw many reveling in luxuries, with means to lavish on their every want, which were far more than their needs — riding in buggies, on prancing horses, enjoying their leisure, while I — we all! — were on foot and of necessity tugging away with all our mights to keep soul and body together. Under these spiritless conditions, one day just before Christmas, I left the old home with feelings I cannot describe. I wanted to do something for my chicks. I wanted something to please them, and to mark the Christmas day from all other days — but not a cent to do it with! I walked up and down Main Street, looking into the shop windows — into Amussen's jewelry store, into every store — everywhere — and then slunk out of sight of humanity and sat down and wept like a child, until my poured-out grief relieved my aching heart; and after awhile returned home, as empty as when I left, and played with my children, grateful and happy ... for them ...

After these trials, my pathway became more smooth. I began to pick up; by hard work, rigid economy, self-denial, and the love of God, I prospered. Little openings were presented, and I improved them.... Oh! let God be praised. I bless you, my son, and all of you. May the Lord God bless my sons.

Joseph F. Smith (Improvement Era, January 1919, pp. 266-67)

Also see the second story for George Albert Smith. Their Christmas was spent together.

Activity: Choose one of the suggestions given in The First Presidency message (below) to do as a family.

Food: Anchoring the supper menu at the Beehive House when Joseph F. Smith was prophet, was bread and milk, this time with a slice of cheese. The House served this dinner to frequent guests, tourists and dignitaries alike. (Feasting With the Prophets, Church News, Oct. 1 1988)

Quote: “Bless the children; provide for the poor; comfort the distressed; visit the widow and the fatherless; forgive those who may be regarded as enemies; be filled with the spirit of blessing; have charity for all; promote peace and goodwill, and spread abroad the light and intelligence which flow down from heaven in the gospel of the Son of God; recognize His divine hand in all that is good and useful and that promotes the welfare of humanity.” (First Presidency, December 25, 1905, Deseret News)

“The Holy Spirit of God has spoken to me—not through the ear, not through the eye, but to my spirit, to my living and eternal part,—and has revealed unto me that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. I testify to you that I know that my Redeemer lives. Furthermore, I know that I shall see Him on this earth, and that I shall see Him as He is. ... The Lord has revealed this to me. He has filled my whole spirit with this testimony, until there is no room for doubt.”

Other Articles:

[Listen to the Voice of Joseph F. Smith](#)

HEBER J. GRANT

Timeline:

- 1856 November 22, is born in Salt Lake City
- 1856 (age 8 days) Father, Jedediah M. Grant, Second Counselor to Brigham Young and first mayor of Salt Lake City, dies
- 1875 (age 19) Becomes superintendent of the first (ward) YMMIA (Young Men)
- 1877 (age 21) Marries Lucy Stringham
- 1880 (age 23) Serves as secretary to the general superintendency of the YMMIA; becomes president of the Tooele Stake
- 1882 (age 25) Is ordained an Apostle
- 1897 (age 41) Is appointed business manager of the Improvement Era, which he helped found
- 1901–03 (age 45–47) Organizes and presides over the Japanese Mission
- 1904–06 (age 48–50) Serves as president of the British and European missions
- 1918 (age 62) Is sustained as President of the Church
- 1919 (age 63) Dedicates the Hawaii Temple
- 1923 (age 67) Dedicates the Alberta (Canada) Temple
- 1927 (age 71) Dedicates the Arizona Temple
- 1936 (age 80) The Church Security Plan (later the [Welfare Program](#)) begins
- 1945 (age 88) May 14, dies

Story:

President Grant was extremely generous his whole life and passed that trait on to his family. When leaders of the church suggested Primary children forget about Christmas presents and give the money to the temple, Pres. Grant's children and grandchildren were more than happy to do it. The following are memories from Pres. Grant's daughter, Lucy:

“The Salt Lake Temple was nearing completion, and as a project for all Sunday School and Primary children, it was suggested that they forget their Christmas presents and give the money to the temple. Our family was enthusiastic about the idea, so we immediately told Father that we wanted the equivalent of our Christmas gifts in money to pay on the temple. Father gave each of us \$100.00, which, of course, was far in excess of the usual Christmas check, and how proudly little Heber handed his to the bishop! Some years later, just a week or so before his passing, the bishop was in, and Heber felt under his pillow for his purse and handed the bishop \$8.00 which he had saved to add to other gifts for the temple.”

“An artist came to sell him a picture,” his daughter related. “Father did not have space on his walls to hang a picture, but the artist needed the money, so Father told him he had always been very sorry he let him sell his last picture so cheap, so he gave him an extra \$50.00 for the previous picture and suggested that the artist sell the picture he had to someone else.”

She continued: “It was a few days before Christmas, and I was preparing some little gifts for a needy family. Father walked in, and I showed him the things, telling him about the family, as I had gathered the story from the mother, and I mentioned that I must get my temple clothes ready as I was lending them to the woman to use the next morning. The next day when she came to return my clothing, she told me that when she went to the temple gate, Father was there waiting. He had never seen her before, only knowing her by my description. He stopped her and handed her an envelope as he wished the family a happy Christmas. The envelope contained \$20.00.

“A typist who worked in his office for many years, was able to use only one hand. That very handicap was a factor in his employing her. She had married and was living in a poor and very inexpensive place. One evening when he was out driving with some of his daughters, they pointed out the place where she lived. At the following Christmas time he suggested to each of his children, that rather than write a check to them for his Christmas gift, he would ask them in turn, to write a check to him, and he was going to add to their checks the equivalent of what he had usually given them. This amount he was going to pay on this girl’s house. On the following Christmas day the President called at her home and gave them a turkey for their Christmas dinner and presented them with a check for several hundred dollars to pay on their house.”

Almost the last time the President was able to attend a meeting of the directors of one of the banks over which he presided, he asked the cashier if there were any widows owing obligations to the bank which they could not meet. At first the cashier thought not, but finally said, “There is one woman who is having great difficulty in paying the mortgage on her home, and it looks as if she might lose it.” Then the great-hearted and generous President asked how much the obligation was. He was informed that the amount was several hundred dollars. He directed the cashier to pay the mortgage, to cancel it, and send it to the widow and charge it to his account. He did not know her personally.

Taken from: Bryant S. Hinckley, Heber J. Grant: Highlights in the Life of a Great Leader [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1951], 207.)

Activity: Think of someone who could use a little extra love and attention. Make a list of ways you can serve them. Choose at least three things to do.

Food: Heber J. Grant's widowed mother could afford few luxuries but even her limited pantry included the making for molasses candy, a taffy-type confection. President Grant became so accustomed to the molasses flavor, he could not enjoy any chocolate dessert. (Feasting With the Prophets, Church News, Oct. 1 1988)

If you don't feel like making the fig pudding in the recipe section from Pres. Grant's daughter try this recipe for [homemade molasses candy](#) instead.

Quote: “As Christmas tide approaches our minds revert to that never to be forgotten night when shepherds who were watching their flocks on the hills of Judea were startled as the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and the angel of the Lord stood before them and said:

"Fear not, for behold I bring you good, tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

"For unto you is born this day, in the City of David, a Savior which is Christ the Lord.

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

It was a night which was distinct from all other nights which had come and gone since the creation of the earth. The birth of Christ our Lord was more than an incident, it was an epoch in the history of the world to which prophets had looked forward, of which poets had sung, and in which angels joined their voices with mortals in praise to God. It was the day decreed and foreordained by our Father who is in heaven when he would manifest himself to his children, who are here upon earth, in the person of his Only Begotten Son.

Whether or not the 25th day of December is the proper date of the birth of Christ, our Lord, matters little. We join with other Christian people in celebrating it as such and if we observe it in the true spirit of the Master, renewing the covenant which we have made that we are willing to take upon us his name, and keep the commandments which he has given, our offering will be accepted.”

Other Articles:

[Listen to Heber J. Grant](#) bear his testimony.

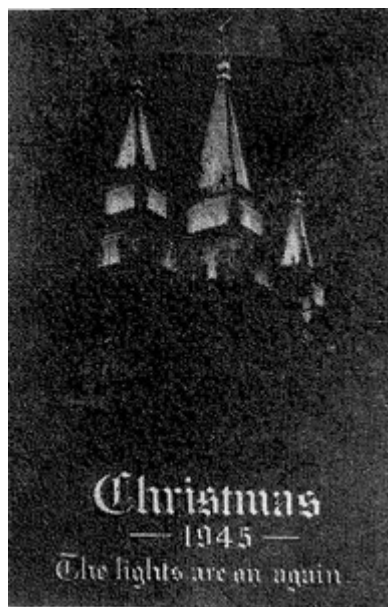
GEORGE ALBERT SMITH

Timeline:

- 1870 April 4, is born in Salt Lake City
- 1880 (age 10) Father is ordained an Apostle
- 1883 (age 13) Works in ZCMI overall factory
- 1891 (age 21) Serves a mission to Southern Utah in the interests of the YMMIA (Young Men)
- 1892 (age 22) Marries Lucy Emily Woodruff
- 1892–94 (age 22–24) Serves a mission to the Southern States
- 1898 (age 28) Is appointed Receiver for the U.S. Land Office and special Disbursing Agent for Utah by U.S. President William McKinley
- 1903 (age 33) Is ordained an Apostle
- 1909–12 (age 39–42) Is very ill
- 1916 (age 46) Is elected president of the International Irrigation Congress
- 1917 (age 47) Is elected president of the International Dry Farm Congress
- 1919–21 (age 49–51) Serves as president of the European Mission
- 1921 (age 51) Is appointed general superintendent of the YMMIA
- 1922 (age 52) Is elected vice president of the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution
- 1931 (age 61) Is elected a member of the National Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America
- 1938 (age 68) Tours the missions of the South Pacific
- 1945 (age 75) Is sustained as President of the Church; dedicates the Idaho Falls (Idaho) Temple
- 1951 (age 81) April 4, dies

Story: As a father, George Albert Smith tried earnestly to help his children experience the joy he felt by living the gospel. One Christmas Day, after the gifts had been opened, he asked his young daughters how they would feel about giving away some of their toys to children who had not received any Christmas presents. Since they had just received new toys, the girls agreed that they could give away some of their old toys to the needy children.

“Wouldn’t you like to give them some of the new ones, too?” George Albert gently suggested.



His daughters were hesitant, but eventually they agreed to give up one or two of their new toys. George Albert then took the girls to the home of the children he had in mind, and they delivered the gifts. The experience was so uplifting that as they left, one of the girls said with excitement in her voice, “Now let’s go and get the rest of the toys for them.”

Story: During World War II many cities enforced nightly blackouts, when no exterior lights could be turned on and inside lights could be used only if windows were tightly covered. This was a safety issue to cities close to the fighting but was also meant to conserve fuel. Salt Lake City was no exception. Even the floodlights that normally lit up the exterior of LDS temples were turned off to honor the blackouts. The Salt Lake Temple sat dark in a dark city every night during the war. As almost one of his last acts of his presidency, President Heber J. Grant, nearing his death in May 1945, ordered the floodlights of the temple turned back on after hearing of the cease-fire in Europe. President George Albert Smith, the next

president of the Church, planned a meaningful Christmas card for 1945. The message — "The lights are on again" — reflected the joy President Smith, along with everyone else, was feeling that after long years of death and destruction, the world was finally at peace.

Story: Pres. George Albert Smith (a member of the 12 at the time) was asked to take care of all logistics for a trip to Vermont marking the 100th anniversary of Prophet Joseph Smith's birth where a monument was to be unveiled. See the entire story below.

"Elder Smith received an unusual and rewarding assignment. He and Lucy were invited by the president of the Church to accompany a group from Salt Lake City to Windsor County, Vermont, where a monument honoring Joseph Smith was to be unveiled and dedicated on December 23, 1905, the hundredth anniversary of the Prophet's birth. The party consisted of Church leaders and their companions, including the other members of the Smith family who were General Authorities. Since George Albert was the junior member of the clan in length of service, he was appointed to supervise all physical arrangements before and during the trip.

His task was simplified by chartering several Pullman cars, which avoided the inconvenience of checking and transferring baggage. His main duty, therefore, was to see that the pantry on board was well stocked with provisions and to oversee the work of two porters, Seth Young and Bud Price, who had been assigned by the railroad to prepare and serve the meals and to take care of the other personal needs of the passengers.

The train left the Salt Lake City depot on December 19 for the three-day transcontinental trip. En route, the party followed a relaxed routine. Singing, visiting, sight-seeing, and religious discussions were interspersed with checker playing, President Joseph F. Smith's favorite diversion.

On December 22, the party arrived at South Royalton, where it found a typical white and frigid Vermont winter. Horse-drawn sleighs took the travelers to nearby Tunbridge, where they were able to check the town records for genealogical data about the Smith and Mack families before attending an evening reception at the quaint Tunbridge hotel. Here they were welcomed by civic officials and assorted residents who were curious to meet the leaders of the Church whose founder had bestowed such vicarious fame on their community. For months they had watched with interest as the 38 1/2-foot granite shaft had been put in place on the old Solomon Mack farm. It marked the site where Joseph Smith was born a hundred years before, and its height was symbolic of his short but action-filled life span of 38 1/2 years.

Early on December 23, the visitors, whose breathing etched miniature clouds on the icy air, loaded into sleighs to be driven to the farm site. There, in brief services, the monument, standing stark and tall against the rock-ribbed Vermont hills, was dedicated in memory of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

In returning home, the party stopped in Massachusetts so the Smith clan could trace and savor their family roots. At Topsfield, they visited the ancestral home of Asael Smith, the father of Joseph Smith, Sr., and Uncle John. At the town cemetery, they paid homage at the gravesite of Robert Smith, the first member of the clan to reach American soil. There they also found a monument erected in 1873 to the memory of Robert Smith and the first and second Samuel Smith. What unexpected distinction had come to the progeny of these three who bore such an undistinguished name!

From Massachusetts the chartered train traveled to Palmyra, New York, where the passengers visited the farm once owned by Joseph Smith, Sr., whose son and namesake had received the remarkable vision that opened the drama of the Restoration. A meeting was later held at the nearby Hill Cumorah, where

President Joseph F. Smith offered a prayer of gratitude and benediction. Contacts made during this visit with Avery Chapman, the owner of the Joseph Smith, Sr., farm, and Pliny T. Sexton, the owner of the Hill Cumorah, culminated eventually in the Church's purchase of both of these historic properties. George Albert Smith would later play a key role in these acquisitions.

The last stop on the traveler's itinerary was at Kirtland, Ohio, where they visited the temple and the homes of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Four days later, on December 31, as they sped across the plains of Nebraska, the travelers held a service aboard the chartered train. Each member of the party bore testimony about the reality and goodness of God and the joys of the trip then coming to an end. Following this meeting, "a resolution was passed," wrote George Albert in his diary, "thanking me for my care in looking after the party. It was signed by every member of the party." Elder Smith's official duties ended the following day when, after seeing that his friends were safely off the train with their luggage he tipped the porters thirty dollars each for their attentive service."

Taken from: Francis M. Gibbons, *George Albert Smith: Kind and Caring Christian, Prophet of God* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1990], 51 - 52.

Activity: [Christmas Train Paper Craft](#) from FamilyFun or [Candy Train](#) Craft

Food: President George Albert Smith ate boiled wheat, preferring whole wheat rather than cracked. He ate it like a cereal with cream and honey. His grandson, George, recalled the long supper hour waiting for his grandfather to finish chewing a whole bowl of wheat. (Feasting With the Prophets, Church News, Oct. 1 1988)

Quote: "The Savior died that we might live. He overcame death and the grave and holds out to all who obey His teachings the hope of a glorious resurrection."

"I have found many in the world who have not known that we believe in the divine mission of our Lord, and I have been led to say upon more than one occasion that there are no people in the world who so well understand the divine mission of Jesus Christ, who so thoroughly believe him to have been the Son of God, who are so sanguine [confident] that at the present time he is enthroned in glory at the right hand of his Father, as the Latter-day Saints."

Other Articles:

[Watch and listen](#) to President George Albert Smith bear his testimony.

DAVID O. MCKAY

Timeline:

- 1873 September 8, is born in Huntsville, Utah
- 1897 (age 24) Graduates from the University of Utah; was class president and valedictorian
- 1897–99 (age 24–26) Serves a mission to Great Britain
- 1899 (age 26) Becomes a faculty member at Weber Stake Academy (Utah)
- 1901 (age 27) Marries Emma Ray Riggs
- 1906 (age 32) Is ordained an Apostle; becomes the second assistant superintendent of the Sunday School
- 1917 (age 44) Writes his first book, *Ancient Apostles*
- 1918–34 (age 45–61) Serves as general superintendent of the Sunday School
- 1919–21 (age 46–48) Is Church commissioner of education
- 1920–21 (age 47–48) Makes a tour of missions worldwide
- 1922–24 (age 49–51) Serves as president of the European Mission
- 1934–51 (age 61–77) Serves as Second Counselor in the First Presidency
- 1951 (age 77) Is sustained as President of the Church
- 1955 (age 82) Dedicates the Swiss Temple
- 1956 (age 82) Dedicates the Los Angeles (California) Temple
- 1958 (age 84) Dedicates the New Zealand Temple, the Church College of New Zealand, the London Temple, and the Church College of Hawaii
- 1961 (age 88) Oversees the beginning of the Church correlation effort
- 1964 (age 91) Dedicates the Oakland (California) Temple
- 1970 (age 96) January 18, dies

Story:

David O. McKay's son, David Lawrence, said his parents, "were extraordinarily tender grandparents." The following is an account of a Christmas memory about his father.

"As the grandchildren multiplied, overflowing the dining room at our annual Christmas Eve parties, Mother and Father set up card tables in the hall and the living room for the grandchildren so that we brothers and sisters and spouses could enjoy dinner with them. When Teddy Lyn was about eight (Pres. McKay's granddaughter), she reproached her grandfather after one of these parties: 'What were you laughing about? We couldn't hear.'

"He looked at her keenly. 'Of course, you couldn't. And Christmas is for children, isn't it?'"
"At the next Christmas party, the adults were seated around the card tables and the children surrounded the dining room table with their grandparents."

Taken from: David Lawrence McKay, *My Father*, p. 239.

During every Christmas vacation, even into his 80s, President David O. McKay took his grandchildren riding on a bobsleigh pulled by a team of horses throughout Huntsville, Utah. It was a McKay family tradition. To stay warm, President McKay wore his long, thick raccoon coat and big gloves. The smallest grandchildren rode in the sleigh, and the others whizzed along behind on their own sleds, each one attached to the bobsleigh with a rope of a different length so they wouldn't run into each other. President

McKay's chief responsibility, besides driving the sleigh, was planning the route, which became more difficult as the years went by and the city started scraping the snow off its main streets.

Activity: Invite an older couple from your neighborhood or ward over for dinner.

Get some bells and joyfully sing “Jingle Bells” pretending to ride in a sleigh with Pres. David O. McKay.

Food: Although a fan of bread and milk, President David O. McKay also enjoyed the best of homemade cooking. According to Suzanne McKay Adams, the prophet's granddaughter, President McKay's wife, Emma Ray Riggs McKay, was widely known for her homemade pies and cakes. President McKay's favorite was a custard pie. (Feasting With the Prophets, Church News, Oct. 1 1988)

Quote: “Good old St. Nicholas has long since gone the way of all mortals, but the joy he experienced in doing kindly deeds is now shared by millions who are learning that true happiness comes only by making others happy — the practical application of the Savior’s doctrine of losing one’s life to gain it. In short, the Christmas spirit is the Christ spirit, that makes our hearts glow in brotherly love and friendship and prompts us to kind deeds of service.

It is the spirit of the gospel of Jesus Christ, obedience to which will bring “peace on earth,” because it means — good will toward all men.”

Other Articles:

[Watch and listen](#) to David O. McKay’s testimony.

JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH

Timeline:

- 1876 July 19, is born in Salt Lake City, Utah, son of the sixth president of the Church
- 1896 (age 20) Patriarchal blessing proclaims, “It shall be thy duty to sit in counsel with thy brethren and to preside among the people” (See My Kingdom Shall Roll Forth manual, page 123.)
- 1897 (age 21) Is ordained an elder
- 1898 (age 21) Marries Louie Emyla Shurtliff; she dies in 1908, leaving two daughters
- 1899–1901 (age 22–24) Serves a mission to England
- 1902 (age 25) Becomes a clerk in the Church historian’s office
- 1908 (age 32) Marries Ethel Georgina Reynolds; she bears five sons and four daughters, dies in 1937
- 1910 (age 33) Is ordained an Apostle by his father, Joseph F. Smith, President of the Church
- 1921 (age 44) Becomes the Church historian
- 1934 (age 57) Becomes president of the Church’s Genealogical Society
- 1938 (age 61) Marries Jessie Evans; she dies in 1971
- 1939 (age 62) Tours Europe; is in Germany when World War II breaks out; directs the evacuation of all missionaries from Europe
- 1945 (age 68) Becomes president of the Salt Lake Temple
- 1951 (age 74) Becomes President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
- 1965 (age 89) Becomes a counselor in the First Presidency
- 1970 (age 93) Is sustained as President of the Church
- 1971 (age 95) Presides over the first area general conference of the Church, in Manchester, England
- 1972 (age 95) Dedicates the Ogden Temple and the Provo Temple
- 1972 (age 95) July 2, dies in Salt Lake City

Story: “Though he was a fun-loving child, he could often be found reading the scriptures while his brothers were playing ball. Told he was too young to milk the cow, he did it anyway and inherited the job. When he was older he learned to make bread. He mixed it at night and in the morning put it into pans so his mother would be able to bake it for breakfast. He even learned to make pies. When I was a teenager he wanted to make a "real mincemeat pie" for Christmas. With his shopping list he went to the store, made his purchases and returned home. He began by cooking the meat very slowly and finally ended with the best mincemeat pie we ever had.” (Amelia Smith McConkie, Church News, October 1993)

Story: “Early Christmas morning (or maybe it was the middle of the night), the house was quiet and it was still dark outside when one of the Smith’s daughters, Lois, decided to tiptoe down the stairs and see what Santa had brought. She persuaded her younger brother and sister, who were also wideawake, to go with her. The three of them set out, but in order to reach the stairs they had to creep past the door of their parents’ bedroom. Slowly they inched their way down the hall, trying to be as quiet as mice. Just as they passed the last shut door, they heard a voice from behind the door. It was their father, who said loudly, “Who’s there?” The children knew they’d been caught.

Quick as a wink the two younger ones turned around, ran back to their rooms, and jumped in their beds. But Lois had already started down the stairs. When she heard her father get up and walk across the floor, she knew she couldn’t make it back to her bedroom. So instead she flew down the stairs, ran to the basement family room, and crawled under a table, where she couldn’t be seen. Soon her father came walking into the very room where she was hiding. He turned on the light, sat down in his favorite rocking

chair, and began to read. And he read, and he read, and he read! All this time Lois was trapped under the table. Eventually it began to get light outside, and Joseph Fielding Smith finally put down his book and went to wake the children to open their presents. Now Lois could come out from under the table. Christmas had arrived at last, but she had lost her chance to get a head start on knowing what Santa had brought.

Everyone laughed when they found out what had happened, and they asked their father if he had known that his daughter was hiding under the table while he read. "He didn't know, no," he replied. "He hadn't looked underneath the table to see if anything was there." And then they all laughed again. Lois had been stuck for sure. Her escapade became a favorite family story to tell again and again, one of the shared experiences that bond families together in love."

Taken from: Laura Willes, "Christmas with the Prophets", p. 102-103.

Activity: Think of your own family's fun Christmas stories and write them down to give to your family for some fun reminiscing.

Food: Desserts at President Joseph Fielding Smith's home included homemade mincemeat. In a holiday tradition in the Smith family, the prophet ground the meat and fruit to make old-fashioned pie filling.

Amelia Smith McConkie, President Smith's daughter, remembers him filling the children up with a hearty breakfast. "I think Dad got tired of milk and cereal. Every now and again he would get up early and make breakfast. We would have sausage with cream gravy, then biscuits with our cooked cereal. It was a farm-type breakfast, enough to stoke you up for the whole day." (Feasting With the Prophets, Church News, Oct. 1 1988)

Quote: "Salvation is in Christ. It comes because of the infinite and eternal atonement which he wrought by the shedding of his blood. He is the Son of God, and he came into the world to ransom men from the temporal and spiritual death that came because of what we call the fall.

"Through his goodness and grace all men will come forth from the grave, to be judged according to the deeds done in the flesh. ...

"I know that he lives, that he rules in the heavens above and in the earth beneath, and that his purposes shall prevail. He is our Lord and our God. As he himself said to Joseph Smith: 'The Lord is God, and beside him there is no Savior' (D&C 76:1)."

Other Articles:

[Watch and listen](#) to Joseph Fielding Smith bear his testimony.

HAROLD B. LEE

Timeline:

- 1899 March 28, is born in Clifton, Idaho
- 1916 (age 17) Earns a teaching certificate at Albion State Normal School in Idaho
- 1917 (age 18) Is appointed the principal of the one-room Silver Star School at Weston, Idaho; serves also as the teacher, the custodian, and the groundkeeper.
- 1920–22 (age 21–23) Serves a mission to the Western States Mission
- 1923 (age 24) Marries Fern Lucinda Tanner; she dies in 1962
- 1930 (age 31) Is called to be president of Pioneer Stake in Salt Lake City; serves during the Depression
- 1932 (age 32) Is appointed to the Salt Lake City Commission
- 1935 (age 36) Organizes the Church Security Program (later called the Church [Welfare Program](#))
- 1941 (age 42) Is called as an Apostle
- 1961 (age 62) Helps organize the Church Correlation Program
- 1963 (age 64) Marries Freda Joan Jensen
- 1970 (age 70) Is called to serve as a counselor in the First Presidency
- 1972 (age 73) Is sustained as President of the Church; serves only 538 days
- 1973 (age 74) December 26, dies

Story: On December 5, 1973 President and Sister Lee joined several hundred Deseret Industries workers for a Christmas celebration and to dedicate a new DI building in Murray, a suburb south of Salt Lake City. The prophet believed this organization was the best example of applied welfare principles of any agency within the system. Most of the workers were handicapped or aged and unable to compete in the commercial market. Here they worked to the limit of their capacity, performing important service for which they were adequately compensated in cash or commodities. Grateful to be useful and independent, they showed genuine happiness, an attitude that gave a special spark to the evening. President Lee felt uplifted, sensing among these people a spirit in full harmony with the Christmas theme. President Lee died the day after Christmas.

Story: [Harold B. Lee Shares Christmas](#), Friend, December 2001

Activity: Make a sign with the different names of Jesus as talked about in the quote below. The first letters of the names used spell CHRISTMAS!

Food: Cheese was always on the menu at President Harold B. Lee's home. He ate cheese with his ice cream, with his breakfast, with almost everything. His daughter, Helen, recalled, "Mother prepared an elegant white cake smothered with a cream topping and fresh berries. It was a new recipe and she was anxious for his response. After two bites Dad joked, 'It would be just perfect if I had a little piece of cheese to go along with it.'" (Feasting With the Prophets, Church News, Oct. 1 1988)

Quote: "Christmas will soon be here once again--Christmas, that joyous time of year when everyone thinks about giving and receiving gifts.

As your eyes sparkle with the excitement of this happy season and as you sing the lovely Christmas carols, may you remember the beautiful story of the Baby Jesus, who was born in a lowly manger in Bethlehem while shepherds watched their flocks by night on the plains of Judea. This was God's gift to the world.

When the angel Gabriel first visited young Mary in Nazareth, he told her she had been chosen to become the mother of the Son of God and that she should call his name Jesus, a special name meaning *Savior*.

Down through the ages, Jesus has been known by many other names that tell of His greatness and of His work. Among these names are **Christ**, **Holy One**, **Redeemer**, **Immanuel**, **Son of God**, **Teacher**, **Messiah**, **Almighty**, and, of course, **Savior**.

The first letters of these sacred titles spell the name of this season when we celebrate the wondrous birth of the Baby Jesus. As you think about gifts this Christmas, we hope you will think of the meaning of these names given to Jesus by those who knew and loved Him. Then you will be reminded of the blessings of this special holiday.

A few miles from Bethlehem where Jesus was born is the city of Jerusalem where He died for us. This too is part of the Christmas story.

Jesus gave not only His life but His gospel for each of us. His gift of the gospel was freely given to the world. But just as a gift is of little value if you put it on a shelf and never use it, the fulness of the gospel cannot bring the greatest happiness unless you understand its message of hope and gladly live its teachings.

You can make the gospel a wonderful part of your life by listening to your parents and obeying them, by giving thanks to our Heavenly Father for all of your blessings, and by showing your love for Him through caring for and sharing with others all through the year.

When you do this, then in your own small way you too are giving the greatest possible gift--the gift of yourself. And as you do, the sweet spirit of Christmas will glow and grow in your hearts long after exciting new games and presents are lost or worn out.

No matter who you are or where you live, we give you at this Christmastime--and always--our blessing. Each one of you is special in our sight, and we know you are precious to our Heavenly Father and to His Beloved Son, whose birth on that first Christmas long ago was the greatest of all gifts." (Remembering Jesus: A Christmas Message to Children, Harold B. Lee, N. Eldon Tanner, Marion G. Romney, The First Presidency, *Christmas Classics: A Treasury for Latter-day Saints*, p. 18)

Other Articles:

[Watch and listen](#) to Harold B. Lee bear his testimony.

SPENCER W. KIMBALL

Timeline:

- 1895 March 28, is born in Salt Lake City, Utah
- 1898 (age 3) Moves with family to Thatcher, Arizona
- 1898–1905 (age 3–10) Suffers from typhoid fever, facial paralysis, and a near drowning
- 1906 (age 11) Mother dies
- 1909 (age 14) Teaches a Sunday School class
- 1914–16 (age 19–21) Serves a mission in the Central States Mission
- 1917 (age 22) Marries Camilla Eyring
- 1927 (age 32) Establishes insurance and real estate agency in Safford, Arizona
- 1936 (age 41) Is elected leader of the Arizona Rotary Club
- 1938 (age 42) Is called to serve as president of the Mount Graham Stake in Arizona
- 1943 (age 48) Is called to be an Apostle
- 1946 (age 51) Receives the assignment from President George Albert Smith to work with the Indians
- 1946–50 (age 51–55) Supervises missionary work in South America; begins missionary work among the Indians of the Andes
- 1968 (age 73) Is named Supervisor of the missions in Great Britain
- 1973 (age 78) Is sustained as President of the Church
- 1974 (age 79) Dedicates the Washington (D.C.) Temple
- 1978 (age 83) Receives a revelation extending the priesthood to all worthy male members; dedicates the São Paulo Temple
- 1979 (age 84) Oversees publication of the LDS edition of the King James version of the Bible
- 1980 (age 85) Dedicates the Tokyo Temple and the Seattle Temple
- 1981 (age 86) Oversees publication of the new edition of the Triple Combination
- 1985 (age 90) November 5, dies in Salt Lake City, Utah

Story: Sister Camilla Kimball told the following story: “On Christmas Eve we have a special family gathering. It is my pleasure to read the Christmas story as found in Luke, and then the children and grandchildren dramatize the story. The children love to act the parts. Last Christmas President Kimball dressed in a costume we had brought from Palestine, representing Joseph, while I dressed in the typical native dress of a Jewish woman, which we had also brought from Jerusalem, and represented Mary. I am sure our grandchildren and great-grandchildren will long remember the story which they then acted out of the first Christmas Eve” (in Conference Report, Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden Area Conference 1974, p. 58).

Story: [Told by Spencer W. Kimball] It is Christmastime and again my thoughts turn to Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus, and to the first Christmas.

It was a dream come true for Sister Kimball and me to be in Bethlehem one Christmas Eve some years ago. December 24 was a beautiful Sunday there and early that morning we held a sacrament meeting in Baghdad, Iraq, with a family in whose home we were guests. Afterward we flew to Damascus in Syria and then went on to Jerusalem. People from many lands were gathered there on that sacred night, waiting to be taken over the 18 kilometer winding hill road to Bethlehem.

Arriving in Jerusalem, we found the square so crowded with people that it was easy for our thoughts to go back to that first Christmas when Joseph and Mary were told “There was no room for them in the inn.”

To add to the confusion of the milling throng, Christmas carols blared out from a sound truck, and bells rang from the cupolas of the Church of the Nativity that had been built back in the fourth century. The church is built on the square over a grotto that many believe to be the true site of the manger where the Christ Child was born.

A low door and narrow steps lead into the grotto. With difficulty we made our way there. It was lighted by many candles and hung with rich drapes. With the eager crowd, we tried to meditate and relive, in contemplation, the story of that most important of all births.

Afterwards we were fortunate to find a taxi to take us about 3 km down the hillside to the Shepherd Fields where at last we found a quiet peace on that crisp, clear night. There were only four of us there on the hillside where the shepherds had been watching their flocks on that first Christmas Eve..

The moon shone with unusual brilliance, and the sky was studded with stars. In imagination, we could almost hear the “multitude of heavenly hosts praising God, and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.’”

We looked up the hill to the twinkling lights of Bethlehem and felt impressed to softly sing,

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie ...
How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven.

Afterwards I offered a prayer of thanksgiving for the privilege of that Bethlehem Christmas and for my knowledge of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. My heart was filled with joy to know that He marked for us the plan, the way of life, whereby if we are faithful we may someday see Him and express our gratitude personally for His perfect life and His sacrifice for us.” (Liahona, December 1977)

Activity: Make homemade ice cream! If you live where there is snow try this recipe for [Snow Ice Cream](#). Act out the nativity as a family.

Food: Just perfect for the Kimball children, who grew up under strained economic circumstances, was the family joke about "the meat being sweeter right next to the bones." the children would laugh, then pick the bones cleaner.

Young Spencer Kimball seldom had store-bought candy or ice cream, but he and his wife, Camilla, and their children churned freezer after freezer of homemade ice cream.

The Kimballs were definitely meat and potatoes folks. A pot roast with vegetables was President Kimball's favorite dinner, but a toasted cheese sandwich or dependable bread and milk ran a close second. (Feasting With the Prophets, Church News, Oct. 1 1988)

Quote: “Love involves giving of oneself, as Christ did. Christmastime is a glorious time of happy friendliness and unselfish sacrifice; a time of increased hospitality, devotion, and love; a time of the subduing of selfish impulses; a time of renewing friendships, cementing loosening ties, and the swelling of the heart. It transcends the individual, the family, the community, the nation; it approaches the universal, crosses borders, and touches many nations of the earth.”

Quote: “Sometimes our celebrations of notable occurrences seem to take on earthly color, and we do not fully realize the significance of the reason for the celebration. This is true of Christmas, when too often we celebrate the holiday rather than the deep significance of the birth and resurrection of the Lord. They must be unhappy indeed who ignore the godship of Christ, the sonship of the Master.”

Other Articles:

[Christmas Greetings from the First Presidency](#) – Friend, December, 1983

[Watch and listen](#) to Spencer W. Kimball bear his testimony.

EZRA TAFT BENSON

Timeline

- 1899 August 4, is born in Whitney, Idaho
- 1912–13 (age 12–13) Runs the farm while his father serves a mission
- 1918 (age 18) graduates from Oneida Stake Academy in Preston, Idaho
- 1921–23 (age 22–24) Serves a mission to Great Britain
- 1926 (age 27) Graduates from Brigham Young University; marries Flora Smith Amussen
- 1927 (age 28) Receives a master's degree from Iowa State College; over the years receives eleven honorary degrees from American universities
- 1938–39 (age 39) Serves as president of the Boise Idaho Stake
- 1940 (age 40) Is called to be the president of the Washington D.C. Stake
- 1943 (age 43) Is called to be an Apostle
- 1946 (age 46) Is set apart as president of the European Mission; distributes needed supplies to European Saints after World War II
- 1953–61 (age 53–61) Serves as United States Secretary of Agriculture in President Eisenhower's Cabinet
- 1963–68 (age 64–69) Serves as president of the European Mission
- 1968–71 (age 69–72) Supervises missionary work in Asia
- 1973 (age 74) Becomes president of the Quorum of the Twelve
- 1985 (age 86) Is sustained as President of the Church
- 1986 (age 87) Dedicates the Denver Colorado Temple
- 1987 (age 88) Dedicates the Frankfurt Germany Temple
- 1989 (age 90) Is awarded the United States Presidential Citizens Medal

Story: Before becoming President of the Church, President Ezra Taft Benson, then an apostle, was given



special leave to serve on President Dwight D. Eisenhower's Cabinet as Secretary of Agriculture. Just four days before Christmas in 1954 the family, pictured below, had an unusual opportunity. President Eisenhower was aware of the Benson's usual Monday night family home evening and wanted to see it. The Eisenhowers joined the Benson family "for an evening of holiday fun." "Our sons performed comic skits and other readings, the girls sang, Flora recited a reading and I did my part by leading the whole group in singing 'John Brown's Baby Had a Cold Upon Its Chest,'" wrote President Benson. "The president and his party participated and seemed to enjoy it all."

Story: Enjoy these snippets told by President Ezra Taft Benson in ([Ezra Taft Benson Remembers the Joy of Christmas](#), p.1-13) Click that link to read so many more of his remembrances!

"I love Christmastime! And I find great joy in remembering Christmases past. Perhaps it is the emotion of the season that makes the things we experience during this time of year seem particularly poignant and meaningful. And especially memorable.

“Many events of almost nine decades of Christmases, dating back to my childhood on the Whitney, Idaho farm where I was reared, are still clear in my mind and among some of the most enjoyable memories I have.

WARNING: if your children still believe in Santa don't read this paragraph to them, but you can still get a good chuckle out of it! “As a boy I loved going to the canyon to cut our Christmas tree, and I always tried to get one that reached to the ceiling. Though we received only a few gifts, our stockings were filled with fruit, nuts and candy, and Santa always left something. Like all children, we suffered terrible anticipation at Christmastime-until, that is, we happened onto the Santa Claus costume in the bottom of an old trunk. Suddenly the secret was out. So that was why Father was always out doing chores when Santa came on Christmas morning. The following December it occurred to me that if Father had been playing Santa all those years, he and Mother must be hiding our gifts somewhere on the farm. I couldn't stifle my inquisitive mind, and in no time I'd led my younger brothers on a search that turned up several gifts buried in the wheat in the granary.”

“One of my favorite winter--and especially holiday--activities was taking out the big two-horse bobsleigh with bells on the horses. In those days, "Jingle Bells" was not only a song, it was a thrilling experience. There's nothing quite like riding through country lanes with the sleighbox filled with hay and a group of friends singing Christmas carols. In more recent decades my wife Flora and I have made many happy Christmas trips to visit family in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. The highlight of each visit is a ride in a horse-drawn cutter or bobsleigh. It's exhilarating to get hold of the lines of a good team drawing a bobsleigh or two-seat cutter and riding out into the Canadian open.”

“I'll never forget one Christmas, the Christmas of 1923. I returned home on Christmas Eve to my parents and ten brothers and sisters after serving two-and-a-half years as a missionary in England. Earlier that day, while traveling through Salt Lake City, Church Patriarch Hyrum G. Smith conferred upon me a blessing in which he counseled me to be devoted to the Lord, and then promised that, in turn, the Lord would make me equal to my labors.

Then it was on to Whitney for a joyful reunion with my family. That evening Mother and Father took me into their confidence, letting me help them fill the stockings after going to the granary and elsewhere to gather presents they had hidden. This took a good part of the night. We spent the rest visiting, with me reporting on my mission and Mother and Father telling me about the things that had happened while I was away. It was a choice evening.

My brothers and sisters arose early Christmas morning. After having a glass of milk and a piece of bread in the kitchen, they hurried into the living room to see what goodies Santa had brought them. It was a happy morning. I couldn't hold back the tears as I felt the joy and love in our home. It seemed that we were hugging and kissing each other throughout the day. It was a wonderful reunion. Being away from home had only intensified my deep feelings for my noble parents.”

Activity: Write letters to missionaries who are serving and will be away from their families this Christmas.

Food: Benson family members remember the winter of the plums. After a season when the future Church president found a deal he couldn't pass up, the plum canning began, and every time the family turned around there was a "plum something" to eat.

Recalling the thrifty days of his childhood, President Benson said, "We would come into the kitchen and get the aroma of baking bread, then we would persuade mother to let us take the top off the loaf, put butter on it and consume it in our hands."

Although President Benson's mother baked a dozen loaves at a time, she sometimes ran out of bread and would buy a loaf. The store-bought bread, said President Benson's father, tasted "like cotton." If she didn't buy a loaf to stretch the family's bread supply, she would make what the family called Lumpy Dick by stirring whole wheat flour into hot milk and it would make into a consistency of pudding. She would sometimes put cinnamon and maybe a little sugar on top of it and pour cold milk over it. "This would be our supper, and it was delicious," recalled President Benson.

These days, President Benson has a fondness for burnt almond fudge ice cream. Another of his favorites is his wife Flora's lemon meringue pie. When he was a member of the Council of the Twelve and on assignment in Europe after World War II, he longed for the familiar taste of the pie. He tried to teach the German sisters how to make the pie. Eventually he received the official recipe from Sister Benson.

Luxuries such as lemon meringue pie were limited in the early days of the church, finding food was not always easy. (Feasting With the Prophets, Church News, Oct. 1 1988)

Quote: "The real purpose of Christmas is to worship Him whose birth is commemorated during this season. How might we do that? By giving. Certainly there are genuine feelings of love and friendship wrapped up in the beautiful packages we exchange with those dear to us. But I'm concerned about another kind of giving. Considering all that the Savior has given and continues to give us, is there something we might give Him in return this Christmastime?"

"Christ's great gift to us was His life and sacrifice. Should that not then be our small gift to Him-our lives and sacrifices, not only now but in the future?"

"Men and women who turn their lives over to God will discover that He can make a lot more out of their lives than they can. He will deepen their joys, expand their vision, quicken their minds, strengthen their muscles, lift their spirits, multiply their blessings, increase their opportunities, comfort their souls, raise up friends, and pour out peace. Whoever will lose his life in the service of God will find eternal life."

Other Articles:

[Watch and listen](#) to Ezra Taft Benson bear his testimony.

HOWARD W. HUNTER

Short Biography: Born November 14, 1907, in Boise, Idaho, Howard William Hunter had a love for music in his youth. After high school, his band, 'Hunter's Croonaders,' toured for five months on the SS President Jackson, which gave him the opportunity to see many exotic sites in Asia. Upon his marriage to Clara May Jeffs in 1931, he gave up his music career in favor of a stable family life. President Hunter began to study law and became a successful lawyer in California. Various positions of priesthood leadership helped prepare him for his call to the apostleship in 1959. After 35 years as an Apostle, he became President of the Church on June 5, 1994, at age 86. During his short presidency, he challenged all members of the Church to become temple worthy, prior to a decade of increased temple building, and invited members who had become offended to come back to the Church. He traveled as often as his health would permit, dedicating two temples and commemorating the 150th anniversary of the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. He died March 3, 1995, in Salt Lake City.

Story: In December 1961 Elder Hunter and his wife, Clair, joined Elder and Sister Kimball in the Holy Land. See the story under Pres. Kimball

Activity: Today read the last public address Pres. Hunter gave, [The Gifts of Christmas](#). It was the Christmas devotional of 2002.

Food: President Hunter loved Alaskan Crab and homemade root beer.

Quote: “This Christmas, mend a quarrel. Seek out a forgotten friend. Dismiss suspicion and replace it with trust. Write a letter. Give a soft answer. Encourage youth. Manifest your loyalty in word and deed. Keep a promise. Forego a grudge. Forgive an enemy. Apologize. Try to understand. Examine your demands on others. Think first of someone else. Be kind. Be gentle. Laugh a little more. Express your gratitude. Welcome a stranger. Gladden the heart of a child. Take pleasure in the beauty and wonder of the earth. Speak your love and speak it again. Christmas is a celebration, and there is no celebration that compares with the realization of its true meaning—with the sudden stirring of the heart that has extended itself unselfishly in the things that matter most.”

Other Articles:

[Howard W. Hunter Learns to Work](#), Friend, November 2001

[Watch and listen](#) to Howard W. Hunter bear his testimony.

GORDON B. HINCKLEY

Timeline:

1910: Born in Salt Lake City

1932: Graduates from the University of Utah

1933-35: Serves a full-time mission to the British Isles

1935: Works on the LDS Church's new Radio, Publicity and Mission Literature Committee

1937: Marries Marjorie Pay in the Salt Lake LDS Temple

1937: Called to the Deseret Sunday School Union Board

1956: Called as president of the East Millcreek Stake

1958: Sustained as an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve

1961: Ordained an LDS apostle at age 51

1981: Called as a counselor to President Spencer W. Kimball

1982: Called as second counselor to President Kimball

1985: Called as first counselor to President Ezra Taft Benson

1994: Called as first counselor to President Howard W. Hunter

1995: Sustained as president of the LDS Church

1996: First Presidency issues Proclamation on the Family

1996: Becomes first president to visit mainland China

1999: Announces reconstruction of the Nauvoo LDS Temple (dedicated in 2002)

2000: Celebrates his 90th birthday; dedicates the Conference Center

2001: Creates the Perpetual Education Fund

2002: Becomes first president to visit Russia and the Ukraine

2004: Marjorie Pay Hinckley, President Hinckley's wife, dies at age 94

2004: Receives the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian award

2005: Commemorates 10 years with Presidents Monson and Faust as a First Presidency

2005: Celebrates his 95th birthday

2006: Has surgery to remove a cancerous growth in his large intestine

2007: Rededicates renovated Salt Lake tabernacle

2007: Gordon B. Hinckley Alumni and Visitors Center dedicated at BYU

2008: Rededicates Utah's renovated state Capitol

2008: He dies at home on Jan. 27

Story: As a youth President Hinckley and his brother Sherm spent a lot of time and effort to make Christmas special for their younger sisters, Ruth, Ramona, and Sylvia. They would usually build things out of wood and keep the gifts in the cellar. The girls were not allowed to go down and snoop! Some of the gifts they made were a pony-cart, a child sized cupboard, a set of table and chairs, and small treasure chests. These were gifts of the heart that are still cherished.

Story: “I remember being in Europe a number of years ago at the time tanks were rolling down the streets of a great city, and students were being slaughtered with machine-gun fire. I stood that December day in the railroad station in Berne, Switzerland. At eleven o’clock in the morning, every church bell in Switzerland began to ring, and at the conclusion of that ringing, every vehicle stopped—every car on the highway, every bus, every railroad train. The great, cavernous railway station became deathly still. I looked out the front door across the plaza. Men working on the hotel opposite stood on the scaffolding with bared heads. Every bicycle stopped. Every man and woman and child dismounted and stood with bared, bowed heads. Then, after three minutes of prayerful silence, trucks, great convoys of them, began to roll from Geneva and Berne and Basel and Zurich toward the suffering nation to the east, laden with supplies—food, clothing, and medicine. The gates of Switzerland were thrown open to refugees.

As I stood there that December morning, I marveled at the miraculous contrast of the oppressive power mowing down students in one nation and the spirit of a Christian people in another who bowed their heads in prayer and reverence, then rolled up their sleeves to provide succor and salvation.” (December, 1983, Ensign)

Story: Christmas was always a festive time for the Hinckley family. Over the years, Marjorie Pay Hinckley, President Hinckley’s wife, held “Grandchildren’s Christmas Parties” or “Cousins Christmas Parties” for the younger generation. These Christmas celebrations included personalized invitations for each child, the gift of a Christmas tree ornament from some foreign country for everyone, decorative tables with delectable food, games, and wonderful Christmas stories told by Sister Hinckley.

Activity: Hold your own Christmas party! It can just be your family or invite friends and extended family. Tell stories or read books about Christmas.

Food: President Hinckley enjoyed good old pie and ice cream!

Quote: “And so at this Christmas season, we sing His praises and speak our words of faith and gratitude and love. It is His influence in our lives that stirs within us more kindness, more respect, more love, more concern. It is because of Him and His teachings that we reach out to those in trouble, distress, and need wherever they may be.

It is proper during this season when we commemorate His birth that we remember the Lord Jesus Christ in reverence and with love. He has done for us what we could not do for ourselves. He has brought meaning to our mortal existence. He has given us the gift of eternal life. He was and is the Son of God, who was “made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” ([John 1:14](#)).

God be thanked for the gift of His Son, the Redeemer of the world, the Savior of mankind, the Prince of Life and Peace, the Holy One.”

Other Articles:

[Watch and listen](#) to Gordon B. Hinckley bear his testimony.

THOMAS S. MONSON

Timeline:

Aug. 21, 1927: Born in Salt Lake City to G. Spencer Monson and Gladys Condie Monson.

1945-46: Served in Navy in San Diego.

1948: Graduated with honors from the University of Utah with a bachelor's of science in marketing.

Oct. 7, 1948: Married Frances Johnson in the Salt Lake Temple.

1949: Named assistant classified advertising manager of the Deseret News.

1950: Named Deseret News classified advertising manager.

March 12, 1950: Sustained as second counselor in the 6th-7th Ward bishopric. Had previously been ward clerk and ward Young Men's president.

May 7, 1950: Sustained as bishop of the 6th-7th Ward.

1953: Appointed sales manager for Deseret News press.

June 26, 1955: Sustained as second counselor in the Temple View Stake presidency.

1958: Named assistant manager of Deseret News press.

1959: Called as president of the Canadian Mission.

Feb. 1, 1962: Sustained as a high councilor in the Valley View Stake.

April 1962: Named supervisor of Area No. 3 of stake missions.

May 1963: Named member of the Priesthood Home Teaching Committee.

Oct. 4, 1963: Called to the Quorum of the Twelve and ordained an apostle.

1974: Received master's of business administration from Brigham Young University.

April 1981: Received honorary doctorate of law from Brigham Young University.

Nov. 10, 1985: Set apart as second counselor in First Presidency to President Ezra Taft Benson.

Jan. 17, 1986: Dedicated the Buenos Aires Temple in Argentina.

June 5, 1994: Set apart as second counselor in First Presidency to President Howard W. Hunter

March 12, 1995: Set apart as first counselor in First Presidency to President Gordon B. Hinckley.

2000: Dedicated the Louisville Kentucky, Reno Nevada, Tampico Mexico, Villahermosa Mexico, Merida Yucatan Mexico and Veracruz Mexico temples.

Jan. 20, 2007: Received the Worldwide Humanitarian Award at the Salt Lake Rotary International convention.

Feb. 4, 2008: Announced as the 16th president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Story: “In about my tenth year, as Christmas approached, I yearned, as only a boy can yearn, for an electric train. My desire was not to receive the economical and everywhere-to-be-found windup train, but rather one that operated through the miracle of electricity.

The times were those of economic depression, yet Mother and Dad, through some sacrifice, presented to me on Christmas morning a beautiful electric train. For hours I operated the transformer, watching the engine first pull its cars forward, then push them backward around the track.

Mother entered the living room and told me that she had purchased a windup train for Widow Hansen’s boy Mark, who lived down the lane. I asked if I could see it. The engine was short and blocky, not long and sleek like the expensive one I had received.

However, I did take notice of the oil tanker that was part of his inexpensive set. My train had no such car, and I began to feel pangs of envy. I put up such a fuss that Mother succumbed to my pleadings and handed me the oil tanker and said, “If you need it more than Mark, you take it.” I put it with my train set and felt pleased with the result.

Mother and I took the remaining cars and the engine to the Hansens. Mark was a year or two older than I, but he had never anticipated such a gift and was thrilled beyond words. He would up his engine, and was overjoyed as the engine, two cars, and the caboose went around the track.

Then Mother glanced at me and wisely asked, “What do you think of Mark’s train, Tommy?”

I felt a keen sense of guilt as I became very much aware of my selfishness. I said to Mother, “Wait just a minute, I’ll be right back.”

As swiftly as my legs could carry me, I ran home, picked up the oil tanker plus another car of my own, ran back down the lane to the Hansen home, and said joyfully to Mark, “We forgot to bring two cars that should go with your train!”

Mark excitedly coupled the two cars to his set. I watched the engine make its labored way around the track, and as I did I felt a joy difficult to describe and impossible to forget.” (Friend, October 1977)

Activity: Are there toys you have that you can give to other children who do not have as much? Sort through your toys and try to be really unselfish. Maybe you could even give a new toy!

Food: President Monson likes turkey dinners, pies, and chocolate.

Quote: "Born in a stable, cradled in a manger, He came forth from heaven to live on earth as mortal man and to establish the kingdom of God. During His earthly ministry, He taught men the higher law. His glorious gospel reshaped the thinking of the world. He blessed the sick. He caused the lame to walk, the blind to see, the deaf to hear. He even raised the dead to life. To us He has said, 'Come, follow me.'

"As we seek Christ, as we find Him, as we follow Him, we shall have the Christmas spirit, not for one

fleeting day each year, but as a companion always. We shall learn to forget ourselves. We shall turn our thoughts to the greater benefit of others"

Other Articles:

[Watch and listen](#) to Thomas S. Monson bear his testimony.

RECIPES

JOHNNY CAKE (JOSEPH SMITH)

3 cups cornmeal
1 cup flour
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons molasses
3 cups buttermilk
2 eggs, well beaten

Sift the dry ingredients, slowly stir in molasses and buttermilk and mix well. Add the eggs and beat hard for 2 minutes. Pour into shallow well greased pans and bake at 350 for 30 minutes (like cornbread) or cook like pancakes on a hot greased griddle. From Salt Lake 18th Ward Cookbook

BUTTERMILK DONUTS (BRIGHAM YOUNG)

This recipe belonged to Emily Dow Partridge Young, wife of Brigham Young. Because there was not a great variety of foods, when something was made it was generally made in large quantities and Grandmother Young's recipe was double this size. You may double the recipe or cut it in half and you'll find the doughnuts are as tender and crispy and delicious as anything made out of a modern cookbook. Nutmeg, incidentally, was the chief spice in the early days and was grated tediously by hand over tiny metal nutmeg graters.

(makes two dozen doughnuts, quoted in Salt Lake 18th Ward Cookbook)

2 cups buttermilk
2 large eggs, beaten
1 cup sugar
5 cups sifted flour
2 teaspoons (baking) soda
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon grated nutmeg
1/4 cup melted butter or shortening

- Combine buttermilk, eggs and sugar and blend well.
- Beat in sifted dry ingredients. Then stir in melted butter.
- Roll or pat dough on floured board about 1/4 inch thick and cut with 2 1/2-inch doughnut cutter.
- Fry in hot fat (375° F) till golden brown on both sides.
- Drain and sprinkle with sugar as desired.

APPLESAUCE CAKE (JOHN TAYLOR)

3 cups sugar	3 teaspoons cinnamon
1 1/2 cups shortening	1 teaspoon cloves
1/4 cup water	1 1/2 teaspoons nutmeg
3 cups applesauce	4 tablespoons cocoa
6 cups flour	2 cups raisins
1 teaspoon salt	1 package gum drops
3 teaspoons soda	1 cup nuts

Cream sugar and shortening. stir soda into cold water and add to applesauce. Let foam up, then add to other ingredients. Mix with flour, spices, cocoa. Fold in raisins, nuts and gumdrops. Bake in loaf tins at 350 degrees for 1 1/2 hours.

From Elenorah D. Taylor, quoted from Winifred Jardine.

CHERRY NUT CAKE OF WILFORD WOODRUFF'S DAY

2 cups sugar
1/2 cup butter
3 egg yolks
1 cup sweet milk
3 cups sifted flour
3 teaspoons baking powder
3 egg whites
1 cup chopped cherries
1 cup blanched and chopped nuts

Cream sugar with butter; add egg yolks and milk. Stir in dry ingredients, then beaten egg white. Add cherries and nuts. Bake in small tins (350 degrees; time depends on pan size). Ice with vanilla icing.

From Women's Exponent during Wilford Woodruff's administration.

YORKSHIRE PUDDING (LORENZO SNOW)

1 egg
1 cup milk
1/2 cup flour
Pinch of salt

Beat egg lightly. Sift flour and salt. Gradually add milk, mixing carefully to prevent lumps. Put about 1 teaspoon drippings from roast in cup of each muffin tin. Place muffin tin in very hot oven until sizzling. Then fill each cup half full with batter and bake 15 minutes at 350 degrees.

CUSTARD PIE (JOSEPH F. SMITH)

1 unbaked pie crust
2 cups milk
4 eggs
1/2 cup sugar
Pinch of salt
Generous sprinkling of nutmeg
(No vanilla)

Put milk in bowl. Beat eggs and strain through fine sieve into bowl of milk. Add sugar, salt and nutmeg. Stir well and pour into pie shell. Bake at 375 degrees until knife just barely comes out clean. Do not overcook or custard becomes watery.

CHRISTMAS FIG PUDDING (HEBER J. GRANT)

2 pounds white dried figs
8 cups soft bread crumbs
4 cups brown sugar
1 cup white sugar
1 pound ground suet
3 tablespoons molasses
4 tablespoons flour
3 teaspoons grated nutmeg
Juice of 4 lemons
8 eggs

Grind figs in meat grinder. Mix with all other ingredients except eggs. Beat egg yolks and egg whites separately. Stir in yolks, then fold in whites at the last. Thoroughly grease five 1-pound cans and fill 2/3 full. Steam for 3 hours.

From Mrs. Frances Grant Bennett, daughter of President Grant.

OYSTER STEW (GEORGE ALBERT SMITH)

1 quart oysters
2 cups oyster liquid
2 cups rich milk
4 tablespoons butter
Salt and pepper to taste
1/2 cup diced celery, partially cooked

Strain oyster liquid, thoroughly wash oysters and add to oyster liquid. Place over heat and cook for 5 minutes. Add milk and heat thoroughly but do not allow to boil. Add butter, salt, pepper and celery. Thicken with a little flour and water, if desired.

From Mrs. Edith Smith Elliot, quoted in Salt Lake 18th Ward Cookbook.

BAKED APPLES (DAVID O. MCKAY)

6 apples, washed and center cored
3/4 cup brown, white or maple sugar
Lemon juice
Cinnamon
Butter

Fill apple centers with tablespoons sugar, sprinkling little of the outside. Then, sprinkle with lemon guice and cinnamon; dot with butter. Place in deep casserole with a lid. Add enough water to cover bottom of baking dish. Cover and bake at 375 degrees, about 35 minutes or until tender. Remove apples and boil remaining syrup until thick. Pour syrup and thick cream over apples when served. (If apples are baked in open pan, uncovered, it is necessary to baste them during cooking.)

Mrs. Emma Rae McKay Ashton, from Suzanne McKay Adams, granddaughter of president McKay

JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH'S SHERBET

2 quarts water
5 cups sugar
1 teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons cornstarch
1 quart whipping cream
2 quarts ruch milk
6 oranges, juiced
2 lemons, juiced
1 1-pound can crushed pinapple
3-4 bananas, mashed

Combine sugar, salt, cornstarch and water. Cook until clear, then cool. Add whipping cream and milk. Add orange juice and lemon juice, also crushed pinapple and mashed bananas. Pour into 6-quart freezer and freeze.

From Amelia Smith McConkie, Daughter of President Smith.

BOILED RAISIN CAKE (HAROLD B. LEE)

2 cups raisins
2 cups water
1 1/2 cups sugar
1/2 cup shortening
1 teaspoon soda
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
3/4 teaspoon cloves
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup nuts, chopped (optional)

Place raisins, water, sugar and shortening in heavy saucepan; bring to a boil and simmer 5 minutes. Cool and add sifted, dry ingredients. Blend in nuts and bake at 350 degrees for 35-40 minutes in a greased 9X13-inch pan. When cool, frost with favorite vanilla frosting.

From Helen Lee Goates, daughter of President Lee.

RASPBERRY CHEESECAKE (SPENCER W. KIMBALL)

1 3-ounce package lemon gelatin powder
1 cup water
1 cup evaporated milk, whipped
1 8-ounce package cream cheese
1 cup sugar
2 teaspoons lemon juice
1/4 pound butter
28 graham crackers, crushed
1 cup whipping cream, whipped and sweetened
1-2 cups fresh or frozen raspberries
Dissolve gelatin in hot water; cool and blend in whipped evaporated milk.

Beat softened cream cheese with sugar. Gently blend gelatin mixture with cream cheese and fold in lemon juice.

Melt butter and blend in with cracker crumbs. Place half crumbs on bottom of 9x13-inch pan. Pour cheesecake mixture on top and sprinkle with remaining crumbs. Chill at least 3 hours to set. Serve with whipped cream and fresh or frozen raspberries. Makes 10-12 servings.

From Olive Kimball Mack, daughter of President Kimball.

LEMON MERINGUE PIE (EZRA TAFT BENSON)

Lemon rind from 2 lemons
3 cups sugar plus 2-3 tablespoons cornstarch
5 eggs, separated
Juice of 2 lemons
4 cups water
1 9-inch baked pie crust

Grate outside rind of two lemons; add sugar, flour and cornstarch. Stir in egg yolks, then water and lemon juice. On medium heat, stir constantly until the mixture is thickened. Pour into pie crust.

Make meringue with stiffly beaten egg whites and 3 tablespoons sugar. Bake at 425-450 degrees for 3-5 minutes, or until lightly browned.

From Flora Benson, wife of President Benson.

HOMEMADE ROOT BEER (Howard W. Hunter liked homemade root beer. This is just a recipe off a root beer extract box)

6 cups white sugar
3 1/3 gallons cold water
1 (2 ounce) bottle root beer extract
4 pounds dry ice

In a large cooler, mix together the sugar and water, stirring to dissolve sugar completely. Stir in the root beer extract. Carefully place the dry ice into the cooler, and cover loosely with the lid. Do not secure the lid, as pressure may build up.

Let the mixture brew for about an hour before serving. Leftover root beer can be stored in one gallon milk jugs.

CARAMEL APPLE PIE (Gordon B. Hinckley liked pies. This is not a recipe affiliated with him. It comes from the Lion House Bakery cookbook)

3/4 cup granulated sugar, plus additional for dusting top crust
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon, plus additional for dusting top crust
1 large pinch nutmeg, plus additional for dusting top crust
8 apples, peeled, cored, and sliced
1 tablespoon vanilla
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into small cubes
2 tablespoons cream
Pie crust (enough for double-crust pie)
1 recipe Caramel Sauce (see below)

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. In a large bowl, mix together sugar, flour, kosher salt, cinnamon, and

nutmeg. Toss in apples, and stir in vanilla. Set aside. Stir the apple mixture every 15 to 20 minutes while making the crust.

Once pastry dough is prepared, roll out pastry for bottom crust 3 inches larger than the pie tin. Ease pastry into pan and cut away so only half an inch is overlapping the edge of the pie tin.

Pour apple filling into the pie pan. Dot the butter over the apples. Brush cream around edges of pie crust.

Roll out pastry for top crust, fold in half, and cut three 1/2-inch slits through both layers of crust. Unfold crust and place over the apples. Trim away extra crust, leaving 1 inch overlapping. Crimp edges. Brush cream over top and sprinkle with cinnamon, sugar, and nutmeg.

Cover the edges of the pie with foil. Bake for 1 hour and 20 minutes or until lightly brown. Remove the tin foil from edges after 30 minutes. Cover the whole pie with tin foil for the last 20 minutes. Cool on a rack for 1 hour. While pie is cooking make the caramel sauce. Drizzle warm sauce over pie before serving.

Caramel Sauce

1/4 cup butter
1 1/2 cups brown sugar
1/2 cup heavy cream
2 tablespoons corn syrup
1 teaspoon vanilla

In a heavy 2-quart saucepan, melt butter on high heat. Add brown sugar, heavy cream, and corn syrup. Bring to a boil, stirring frequently. Reduce heat to medium, until sauce thickens slightly, about 5 to 7 minutes. Remove from heat and add vanilla. Allow to cool in pan for 15 minutes. Drizzle over the warm pie.

SINFUL FUDGE CAKE (Thomas S. Monson likes chocolate. This recipe comes from the Lion House Desserts cookbook)

Ingredients:

10 oz. (10 squares) semi-sweet chocolate or 1 3/4 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips
1/2 cup butter (1 stick)
1/4 cup cake flour, stirred before measuring
1/2 cup sugar
3 eggs
1/2 cup whipping cream
2 tsp. butter

Method:

Oven temperature: 400-degrees. Butter or spray with pan release a 9-inch pan (for easier removal of cake line the bottom of pan with parchment paper, spray the parchment with pan release) then dust with granulated sugar set aside. In a heavy saucepan, over medium heat, melt 4 oz. chocolate (3/4 cup if using chocolate chips) and 1/2 cup butter stirring constantly. Remove from heat. In a large bowl combine cake flour, sugar and eggs. Mix together until well blended. With mixer on high speed pour in the chocolate mixture. Continue beating on high for 5 minutes until batter is light in color. Scrape down sides of bowl

often. Pour batter into prepared pan. Bake for 15-20 minutes or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean. Allow to cool 10 minutes. Loosen sides with a knife. Invert onto cooling rack over a sheet of waxed paper. Allow to cool.

In a saucepan, boil whipping cream 1 minute, stirring. Remove from heat. Stir in remaining chocolate and butter. Leaving the cake on the cooling rack spread the ganache over the top of cake spreading it to the edges and allow it to drape over the sides (or spread it evenly on the sides if you don't like the drape look). Allow chocolate to set 30 minutes. Using a spatula place cake on a serving plate.