

1. In the first meeting of the Relief Society, Sister Emma Smith said, “We are going to do something extraordinary.” She was right.
2. Our General Relief Society President, Sister Julie Beck has said, “When I was newly married . . . My parents . . . announced that they would be moving to another part of the world. This was before e-mail . . . and cell phones . . . and mail delivery was slow. One day before my mother left, I sat weeping with her and asked, ‘Who will be my mother?’ Mother said to me, ‘If I never come back, if you never see me again, if I’m never able to teach you another thing, you tie yourself to Relief Society. Relief Society will be your mother.’ “Mother knew that if I was sick, the sisters would take care of me, and when I had my babies, they would help me. But my mother’s greatest hope was that the sisters in Relief Society would be spiritual leaders for me. I began from that time to learn abundantly from women of faith.”
3. Eliza R. Snow said, “Although the name of Relief Society may be of modern date, the institution is of ancient origin. We were told by Joseph Smith that the same organization existed in the church anciently.”
4. In the book of Acts there is an account of a woman named Tabitha, who lived in Joppa, where she made clothes for women in need. It came to pass . . . that Tabitha was sick and died . . . When the Apostle Peter came to Joppa all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which [Tabitha] made for them. “Peter . . . kneeled down, and prayed; and turning to the body said, “Tabitha, arise.” She opened her eyes . . . sat up.” Tabitha’s example of service is one we can follow today.

5. In the early days of the church, it was a popular practice for women to form their own organizations, often with constitutions and by-laws. A group of Latter-day Saint women met and decided to establish such a group. Eliza R. Snow wrote the constitution and by-laws. Then the women asked Joseph Smith to review them and give his opinion. After the Prophet read them, he said they were “the best he had ever seen . . . , but [the Lord] has something better for [you] than a written constitution.’ He invited them all to meet with him and said, “I will organize the women under the priesthood after the pattern of the priesthood.” \* In what ways do you think the Relief Society is organized ‘after the pattern of the priesthood’?
6. That next Thursday twenty women assembled. Joseph told the sisters that they were to . . . look to the wants of the poor . . . and in administer to their wants—to assist by correcting the morals and strengthening the virtues of the female community.”
7. What is it we are to give relief from? John A. Widtsoe: “Relief of poverty, relief of illness; relief of doubt, relief of ignorance—relief of all that hinders the joy and progress of woman.”
8. The Relief Society of Nauvoo grew rapidly, reaching a membership of more than 1,100 in August 1842. Initially, membership in the society was not automatic for all female members of the Church. Women had to petition to belong, and they were accepted based on their goodness and virtue. Sisters were excited to join, to give temporal and spiritual aid . They also recognized the great opportunity to be taught by a prophet.
9. The sisters were blessed to be taught by the Prophet Joseph Smith in six of their meetings. Sister Snow recorded, “The Spirit of the Lord

- was poured out in a very powerful manner, never to be forgotten. . .” The prophet taught them about the purposes of Relief Society.
10. What are the 3 purposes of Relief Society?
  11. (Read slide.)
  12. The prophet Joseph Smith encouraged Relief Society sisters to be at peace with the Lord, with those around them, and with themselves: “Sisters . . . , shall there be strife among you? I will not have it—you must repent and get the love of God.”
  13. When Relief Society sisters discussed ways to help people in their community, they often focused on families and homes. The minutes of their meetings are full of expressions such as the following: “P. M. Wheeler . . . would recommend to the charity of this society Sister Francis Lew Law, who is sick and without a home, an aged widow lady at present destitute of money.”
  14. \* The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “Nothing is so much calculated to lead people to forsake sin as to take them by the hand and watch over them with tenderness. When persons manifest the least kindness and love to me, O what power it has over my mind, while the opposite course has a tendency to harrow up all the harsh feelings and depress the human mind.”
  15. Can you think of a time when someone’s love for your changed your life?
  16. Polly Angell recalled a comment by Joseph “The sisters are always first and foremost in all good works . . . Mary Magdalene was first at the resurrection; and the sisters now are the first to work on the inside of the temple.”

17. “The women would churn and cheerfully send their butter to the workmen on the Temple and eat without any butter on their own tables.” The sisters also made carpets and draperies for the temple.
18. Joseph Smith also taught, “Relief Society is not only to relieve the poor, but to save souls.”
19. In 1844, the prophet Joseph Smith was killed by a mob. The martyrdom of Joseph did not put an end to the Saints’ faith and devotion. It also did not signal an end to persecution. Because of continuing persecution the Saints were counseled to leave Nauvoo, for a new home, where they hoped to live and worship in peace.
20. Before embarking on their journey into an unknown future, more than 5,000 Saints thronged the Nauvoo Temple so they could receive the endowment and the sealing ordinance. They came to the temple all day and long into the night. President Brigham Young wrote “I have given myself up entirely to the work of the Lord in the Temple night and day, not taking more than four hours sleep . . . per day, and going home but once a week.”
21. \* Like many Relief Society sisters, Sarah Rich was buoyed by temple blessings as she faced the challenges of the exodus. She wrote, “. . . if it had not been for the faith and knowledge that was bestowed upon us in that temple . . . our journey would have been like taking a leap in the dark. To start out . . . in the winter . . . and in our state of poverty, it would seem like walking into the jaws of death. But we had faith in our Heavenly Father, and we put our trust in Him.”
22. Before leaving Nauvoo, a group of Latter-day Saints wrote a message on the wall of their abandoned temple: “The Lord has beheld our sacrifice: come after us.” “When the Saints left Nauvoo

and during their journeyings, the Relief Society meetings were necessarily discontinued, though the sisters never lost sight of the institution . . . but continued their benevolent work wherever and whenever an opportunity presented itself . . .”

23. A prominent non–Latter-day Saint historian wrote: “That I do not accept the faith that possessed them does not mean I doubt their devotion. Especially their women. Their women were incredible.” Though sickness was often rampant and the death rate was high, sisters found ways to serve. In 1854, Sister Dudley sensed needs among local American Indians and organized sisters to make clothing for them.
24. At the October 1856 general conference, President Brigham Young announced that handcart pioneers were stranded hundreds of miles away. He declared: “Your faith and profession of religion, will never save one soul of you, unless you carry out just such principles as I am now teaching you. Go and bring in those people now on the plains, . . . otherwise your faith will be in vain.” Women “stripped off their petticoats, stockings, and everything they could spare, right there in the Tabernacle, and piled them into the wagons to send to the Saints in the mountains.”
25. Do you have examples from your pioneer heritage . . . or ancestors . . . of women who served?
26. In 1866 . . . President Brigham Young counseled bishops to: “Let the sisters organize Relief Societies. We have many talented women among us, and we wish their help in this matter. Some may think this is a trifling thing, but it is not; and you will find that the sisters will be the mainspring of the movement . . . they will find rooms for

the poor and obtain the means for supporting them ten times quicker than even the Bishop could.”

27. President Young called Sister Eliza R. Snow to travel throughout the territory, helping bishops organize Relief Societies. He also said, “I want you to instruct the sisters.” . . . she was given the same responsibilities the Lord had given Sister Emma Smith: “to expound scriptures, and to exhort the church, according as it shall be given thee by my Spirit.”
28. Eliza R. Snow taught that if sisters would continually seek guidance and comfort from the Holy Ghost, they could enjoy peace even in the midst of adversity.
29. \* President Brigham Young instructed sisters to “retrench in everything that is bad and worthless, and improve in everything that is good and beautiful.” He counseled sisters to reform their eating and housekeeping patterns.
30. Sister Eliza R. Snow frequently shared her knowledge and her testimony, and she encouraged Latter-day Saint women to do the same—not to depend on others to always teach them. Some women felt reluctant and unprepared to speak in public. Sister Snow counseled: “Do not let your president have to say all. . . . Has not God endowed you with the gift of speech? . . . If you are endowed with the Spirit of God, no matter how simple your thoughts may be, they will be edifying to those who hear you.” Emily S. Richards said: “The first time [Sister Snow] asked me to speak in meeting, I could not, and she said, ‘Never mind, but when you are asked to speak again, try and have something to say,’ and I did.” Sister Richards continued to improve in her ability as a public speaker, and in 1889

she spoke at the National Woman Suffrage convention in Washington, D. C. seeking the right for women to vote.

31. *Seek for a testimony, as you would, my dear sisters, for a diamond concealed.*
32. President Spencer W. Kimball said: “I stress . . . the deep need each woman has to study the scriptures. We want our homes to be blessed with sister scriptorians . . . After all, who has any greater need to ‘treasure up’ the truths of the gospel on which they may call in their moments of need than do women and mothers who do so much nurturing and teaching?” \* What are some study methods that keep you motivated to learn from the scriptures?
33. We are also taught to be self-reliant. What are some things we can do to become self-reliant?
34. Learn to love work and avoid idleness.
35. Acquire a spirit of self-sacrifice.
36. Accept personal responsibility for spiritual strength.
37. Accept personal responsibility for health, education, employment, finances, food, and other life-sustaining necessities.
38. Pray for faith and courage to meet challenges that come.
39. Strengthen others who need assistance.
40. President Young counseled the sisters, “Learn to sustain yourselves; lay up grain and flour, and save it against a day of scarcity.”
41. Emmeline B. Wells, was assigned to be in charge of the central wheat committee. . . . Women were motivated by their motherly desire to protect their families from hunger. Sister Wells said: “Who is there that can feel these things as deeply as a mother can? Think what it would be to hear your little one cry for bread.” Sarah M.

Kimball, who served as a ward Relief Society president, already had a storage plan in mind when she came to one meeting. In the first year of the project, her ward Relief Society built a fireproof granary with a capacity to store 1,000 bushels of wheat.

42. Brigham Young . . . wanted the saints to be independent from worldly influences, both temporally and spiritually. This meant that they needed to learn skills that would allow them to take care of all their needs.
43. The Deseret Silk Association raised silkworms for over 20 years. The sisters were able to spin lovely silk for themselves.
44. Relief Society wheat was sent to survivors of a terrible earthquake and fire in San Francisco and to people in China who were suffering from a famine. The wheat also provided nourishment for thousands during World War I, when the Relief Society sold 200,000 bushels to the United States government.
45. President Brigham Young also wanted “a good many sisters to . . . get a degree [in] medicine.” With this encouragement, some Relief Society sisters studied medicine in the eastern United States. They came back to Utah as doctors and taught classes in midwifery and home nursing. Emma Liljenquist said, “after being set apart . . . I was promised by the Apostles that if I lived right I should always know what to do in case of any difficulties . . . . “That promise has been fulfilled to the very letter . . . One in particular was a lady who had just given birth to a baby and hemorrhage set in. The husband called the doctor, but he did not realize that it was so serious. I . . . asked the Lord to help us. The hemorrhage ceased . . . When the doctor arrived, he said he could hardly believe what had happened, but said I had done exactly what he would have done. . . . I have brought over

one thousand babies into the world. Once again I give thanks to my Heavenly Father for His help.”

46. “Charity never faileth.” These three words embraced the charge that the Prophet Joseph Smith had given the Relief Society sisters: to “relieve the poor” and to “save souls.” In the past, pioneer women had practiced charity for close neighbors. Now Relief Society sisters extend charity worldwide. Sister Wells and her counselors established this motto in a time of relative peace and prosperity. Little did they know how events in the coming years would put their motto to the test.
47. \* War broke out in Europe in 1914 . . . when bitterness and intolerance could have threatened the charitable feelings expected from Relief Society sisters, Sister Wells taught, “Administer in the spirit of love and patience to your husbands and to your children; guard the little ones; do not permit them to imbibe the spirit of intolerance or hatred to any nation or to any people . . . do not allow them to play at war nor to find amusement in imitating death in battle; inculcate the spirit of loyalty to country and flag, but help them to feel that if they must needs take up arms in the defense of liberty, of country and homes they shall do so without rancor or bitterness. . . . This love would sustain them through seasons of war and peace.
48. \* During World War I, the Relief Society in the United States cooperated with community organizations such as the American Red Cross. The sisters participated in food production, fund-raising, sanitation, and child welfare work. However, President Joseph F. Smith said that while worldly organizations “are men-made, or women-made,” the Relief Society “is divinely made, divinely

authorized, divinely ordained of God to minister for the salvation of the souls of women and of men.” He did not want “to see the time when our Relief Societies will follow, or co-mingle and lose their own identity by mixing up with these woman-made organizations. It is for you,” he told Relief Society sisters, “to lead in everything that is praise-worthy, everything that is God-like, everything that is uplifting and that is purifying to the children of men. You are the head, not the tail.”

49. To help those in need some sisters made and sold clothing, aprons, quilts, hats and rugs. Some raised and sold cattle and sheep. A sister in Tooele, Utah, made a quilt in 1906, tucked a note inside it, and sent it to San Francisco to help victims of a terrible earthquake. Eleven years later, the quilt was given to the Red Cross and sent to Great Britain. When the British recipient found the note, she sent a personal thank-you letter, saying that the quilt “came in very useful, as I lost my husband at the front.” She had been left with eight children and no possibility of working.
50. \* The Relief Society general presidency sponsored a program for training nurses. This one-year course, which began at LDS Hospital in Salt Lake City did not charge tuition. Instead, the students were required to give 30 days of free nursing service in their communities. After 4 years, in which 46 aides were trained, the Relief Society discontinued the program and transferred their support to Red Cross home-nursing courses. Later, concerned about the high mortality rate of mothers and infants, the Cottonwood Stake Relief Society established a maternity hospital.
51. In 1928, President Heber J. Grant called Sister Louise Robison to serve as the General Relief Society President. One year later, with

little warning, the world plunged into a great economic depression. Challenges were not new to Sister Robison. She had grown up in a humble log home in rural Scipio, Utah, where she had learned to farm, garden, sew, work hard, live on little, and be of good cheer. She understood the struggle to live on a meager budget, and yet she knew the importance of a mother's influence in the home. So she encouraged mothers to do all they could to stay at home with their children rather than leave them for the workplace.

52. In 1936, the First Presidency introduced a Church-wide welfare program. President Heber J. Grant explained the purpose of the program . . . "The aim of the Church is to help the people to help themselves. Work is to be re-enthroned . . ." Relief Societies provided dried and preserved fruits and vegetables, clothing, and bedding. For a time, sisters who bottled fruit were asked to give up every tenth jar to the welfare program.

53. \* From 1939 to 1945, World War II engulfed much of the world. Leaders were concerned that the war was fragmenting homes and families. As men went to war, women had to sustain their families without immediate help from their husbands and older sons. Church leaders again encouraged mothers with children at home to find ways, if possible, to provide for the children without working outside the home full-time. These leaders encouraged Relief Society sisters to develop foundational skills of self-reliance: quilting, sewing clothing, growing gardens, and preserving and storing fruits and vegetables. They also emphasized the mother's spiritual role in the home. Nations torn by war needed good young citizens who learned lessons of morality and uprightness from their mothers.

54. 1942: more than 10,000 Relief Society sisters completed Red Cross courses in home nursing, first aid, and nutrition
55. 1947: American Indian Placement Program was established. Youth were brought on a temporary basis to live with families in areas where education was available and the Church was established. Many sisters nurtured them as if they were their own children.
56. Relief Society sisters in Europe experienced great devastation from World War II. Gertrude Zipro, a convert to the church, was called to be a District Relief Society President in the Netherlands. On May 1<sup>0th</sup> of 1940 the Netherlands surrendered to the invading German army. With a peace agreement signed, there was no cause for what happened three days later when the German air force bombed Rotterdam. 30,000 Dutch citizens died and an 800-acre area was obliterated. Sister Zipro felt a need to get from her home in Amsterdam to Rotterdam to check on the saints living there. War had disrupted train travel, so she rode her bicycle, alone, 60 miles through the chaos and destruction of war. She found the LDS chapel had been destroyed, along with the homes of the members. Sister Zipro helped coordinate efforts for their relief.
- The emergency trip to Rotterdam was only the first of many such rides made by Sister Zipro during the war years. Eventually her bicycle tires wore out and couldn't be patched any longer. Replacement tires were impossible to find. So her husband cut strips from an old rubber garden hose and wired it onto the rims of her wheels. Sister Zipro's work continued.
57. When the Prophet Joseph Smith met with Relief Society sisters in Nauvoo, he taught that in addition to giving temporal service, they

were to strengthen people spiritually. As the world suffered the effects of wars and natural disasters, the general Relief Society presidency taught, “Ours is a healing mission . . .” At that time, some governments established political restrictions and even built some physical barriers, such as the Iron Curtain and the Berlin Wall. In contrast, Relief Society sisters built spiritual walls of refuge designed to protect and include. They came together in a worldwide circle of sisterhood. Even in countries with political boundaries and laws that prevented open participation in religion, members of Relief Societies felt a connection to their sisters throughout the world.

58. In 1980, President Boyd K. Packer visited a Relief Society in Czechoslovakia. He recalled: “It was not easy to obtain visas, and we used great care so as not to jeopardize the safety of our members, who for generations had struggled to keep their faith alive under conditions of unspeakable oppression. “The most memorable meeting was held in an upper room. The blinds were drawn. Even at night, those attending came at different times, one from one direction and one from another, so as to not call attention to themselves. “There were in attendance twelve sisters. We sang hymns from songbooks printed more than 50 years before. A lesson was given from the pages of a handmade manual. . . .“I told those sisters that they belonged to the largest and by all measure the greatest women’s organization on earth . . . “The Spirit was there. The lovely sister who had conducted wept openly. “I told them that upon our return I was assigned to speak at a Relief Society conference; could I deliver a message from them? Several of them made notes; each expression was in the spirit of giving—not of asking for anything. I shall never forget what one sister wrote: ‘A

small circle of sisters send their own hearts and thoughts to all the sisters and begs the Lord to help us go forward.'

59. President Packer said, "How consoling it is to know that no matter where a family may go, a Church family awaits them. From the day they arrive, he will belong to a quorum of the priesthood and she will belong to Relief Society." \*Have you had this experience when you have traveled or moved to a new area?
60. Sister Belle Spafford was called to be the General Relief Society President. As president she also participated in the National Council of Women and the International Council of Women and held leadership positions in those organizations for years.

Every time Sister Spafford went to the International Council of Women, she was assigned to the "social and moral welfare" committee. She recounted: "At one time I was very friendly with the president and I said, 'I go all the time to this session, and . . . I'd like a change.' She said, 'Well, you're certainly entitled to one, and I'll see that you get it.' "Then she came back and said, 'We can't grant your request because the council insists that you remain. . . . You always stand by the position of your Church and they feel there is safety in having you there.'"

In 1954 Sister Spafford was chosen as the leader of the United States delegation at the International Council of Women in Helsinki, Finland. As she led a grand march at the opening of the conference, her thoughts went back in time: "As I looked out at the glittering audience made up of people of many nations . . . , my mind suddenly flashed back to the words of our pioneer Relief Society leaders . . . 'standing as we do at the head of the women of the world for the rights of the women of Zion and the rights of the women of all

nations.’ . . . I knew that our pioneer women leaders had been given by divine insight a knowledge of the destiny of Relief Society. . . . It is my conviction that the time had come for Relief Society’s influence to be felt worldwide among womankind.

61. President Spencer W. Kimball: “Much of the major growth that is coming to the Church in the last days will come because many of the good women of the world will be drawn to the Church in large numbers . . .
62. This will happen to the degree that the women of the Church reflect righteousness and articulateness in their lives and to the degree that the women of the Church are seen as distinct and different—in happy ways—from the women of the world.”
63. In 1992, sisters all over the world celebrated the 150th anniversary of the Relief Society by participating in service projects in their communities. One Relief Society president went to a city council in California and asked, ‘What are the things that you feel are needed in this community?’ And the men said, ‘You mean 20,000 groups throughout this world are going to be doing this same thing?’ And she said yes. And one of the council members said, ‘You’ll change the world.’ And I think we did . . . Sisters made lap rugs for the elderly in South Africa . . . . They planted flowers in Samoa. They helped with homeless shelters, provided books for children, and painted homes for unwed mothers.” \*What Relief Society service projects have you been involved in and how did they touched your life? (100 dresses)
64. Sister Elaine Jack, general Relief Society president, focused on a worldwide service effort: helping sisters learn to read. “We felt that

women throughout the world needed to be able to read, and there were many who could not,” she said. “Can you imagine—if they didn’t know how to read, how could they teach their children, how could they improve their circumstances, how could they study the gospel?

Once a woman in an airport in Monroe, Louisiana approached President Monson and said: “Before I joined the Church and became a member of the Relief Society, I could not read. I could not write. None of my family could.” She told President Monson that Relief Society sisters had taught her to read and that now she helped others. After talking with her, President Monson “reflected on the supreme happiness she must have felt when she opened her Bible and read for the first time. . . That day in Monroe, Louisiana,” he said, “I received a confirmation by the Spirit of your exalted objective of improving literacy among your sisters.” \* Did any of you take part in the Relief Society literacy effort? (Michigan- Sister Jack’s visit)

65. \* President Monson taught, “I consider charity—or ‘the pure love of Christ’—to be the opposite of criticism and judging. In speaking of charity, I do not at this moment have in mind the relief of the suffering through the giving of our substance. That, of course, is necessary and proper. Tonight, however, I have in mind the charity that manifests itself when we are tolerant of others, the kind of charity that forgives, the kind of charity that is patient.

66. \* “There is a serious need for the charity that gives attention to those who are unnoticed, hope to those who are discouraged, aid to those who are afflicted. True charity is love in action. “Charity is having patience with someone who has let us down. It is resisting

the impulse to become offended easily. It is accepting people as they truly are.

67. \* “Charity is shown when devoted visiting teachers return month after month, year after year to the same uninterested, somewhat critical sister. It is evident when an elderly widow is remembered and taken to ward functions and to Relief Society activities. It is felt when the sister sitting alone in Relief Society receives the invitation, ‘Come—sit by us.’
68. The foundation of visiting teaching was laid in the early days of the church. The sisters most visible responsibilities were to assess needs and collect donations. They went with baskets in hand, receiving items such as matches, rice, baking soda, and bottles of fruit. Most donations were used to help with local needs, but some were used to meet needs thousands of miles away. For example, after World War II, Relief Society sisters in the United States gathered, sorted, mended, and packed more than 500,000 articles of clothing and sent them to Europe.
69. President Joseph F. Smith said, “It was my privilege to visit one of our settlements where a great deal of sickness prevailed. In one of the homes a sister was in a very critical condition. Her husband sat by her bedside distracted at the dreadful illness of his wife and a number of little children were clustered around. “A woman soon came into the house, carrying a basket of food. She had been sent by the Relief Society to watch over the sick woman through the night. She was prepared to see that the little children were properly washed, fed and put to bed; to tidy up the house. We learned that another good sister would relieve her the following day; and so on, from day to day.

"We also learned that this Relief Society was so organized that all the sick in the settlement were receiving similar attention. Never before had I seen so clearly exemplified the beauty of this grand organization and I thought what a gracious thing it was that the Lord inspired the Prophet Joseph Smith to establish such an organization." \*Have you or your family ever been cared for by the Relief Society during an illness or trial?

70. Sister Elaine L. Jack taught: "In visiting teaching we reach out to each other. Hands often speak as voices can't. A warm embrace conveys volumes. One woman summed up her feelings, saying, "I knew that I was more than just a number on the record books for her to visit. I knew that she cared about me."
71. Cathie Humphrey related: "When I was first called to be a visiting teacher, I was assigned a young woman who never came to church. . . . I faithfully went every month and knocked on her door. She would open the inside door but leave the screen door shut. . . . She would not say anything. She would just stand there. I would look cheerful and say, 'Hi, I'm Cathie, your visiting teacher.' And as she would say nothing, I would say, 'Well, our lesson today is on . . .' and try briefly to say something uplifting and friendly. When I was through, she would say, 'Thank you,' and shut the door. "I did not like going there. . . . But I went because I wanted to be obedient. After about seven or eight months of this, I got a phone call from the bishop. "'Cathie,' he said, 'the young woman you visit teach just had a baby who lived only a few days. She and her husband are going to have a graveside service, and she asked me to see if you would come and be there with her. She said you are her only friend.' I went to the cemetery. The young woman, her husband, the bishop, and I were at

the graveside. That was all. “I had seen her only once a month for a few minutes at a time. I hadn’t even been able to tell through the screen door that she was expecting a baby, yet even my inept but hopeful visiting had blessed us both.”

72. Men and women in the Church need each other’s help in the work. Sister Winder said, “I learned that when you are invited to a meeting you are not invited to come and complain about all your problems, but you are invited to come with solutions. Then together you can talk about ideas to see what will work. The priesthood brethren expect and need the perspective of the women of the Church.”
73. President Thomas S. Monson shared an example of what can happen when Relief Society sisters and priesthood brethren work together in the Lord’s service. He said, “In 1992 Hurricane Andrew slammed into the Florida coast. Wind gusts exceeded two hundred miles per hour. . . . Eighty-seven thousand homes were destroyed, leaving 150,000 homeless. . . . “Local priesthood and Relief Society leaders organized rapidly . . . Over five thousand member volunteers, labored shoulder to shoulder with disaster-stricken residents, helping to repair three thousand homes, a Jewish synagogue, a Pentecostal church, and two schools.”
74. President Spencer W. Kimball: “To be a righteous woman is a glorious thing in any age. To be a righteous woman during the winding up scenes on this earth, before the second coming of our Savior, is an especially noble calling. The righteous woman’s strength and influence today can be tenfold what it might be in more tranquil times. She has been placed here to help to enrich, to protect, and to guard the home—which is society’s basic and most noble institution.

Other institutions in society may falter and even fail, but the righteous woman can help to save the home, which may be the last and only sanctuary some mortals know in the midst of storm and strife.”

75. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” declares: “marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God” and “husbands and wives have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children.” President Hinckley said: “Why do we have this proclamation on the family now? Because the family is under attack. All across the world families are falling apart. The place to begin to improve society is in the home.”
76. Why did the First Presidency choose to announce the proclamation on the family in a general Relief Society meeting? President Hinckley said, “You are they who nurture the children and establish within them the habits of their lives. No other work reaches so close to divinity as does the nurturing of the sons and daughters of God.”
77. *“We call upon parents to devote their best efforts to the teaching and rearing of their children in gospel principles which will keep them close to the Church.*
78. Elder M. Russell Ballard taught: “Sisters, we, your brethren, cannot do what you were divinely designated to do from before the foundation of the world. We may try, but we cannot ever hope to replicate your unique gifts. There is nothing in this world as personal, as nurturing, or as life changing as the influence of a righteous woman. . . . *All women have within* their divine nature both the inherent talent and the stewardship to mother.”

Sister Julie B. Beck taught: “To nurture means to cultivate, care for, and make grow. Therefore, mothers should create a climate for spiritual and temporal growth in their homes. Another word for *nurturing* is *homemaking*. *Homemaking* includes cooking, washing clothes and dishes, and keeping an orderly home. . . . make a home that creates a climate for spiritual growth.

79. “*Motherhood is near to divinity. It is the highest, holiest service to be assumed by mankind.* Pres. David O. McKay
80. Concerned about continuing attacks on the family, President Spencer W. Kimball prophesied and warned: “Many of the social restraints which in the past have helped to reinforce and to shore up the family are dissolving and disappearing. The time will come when only those who believe deeply and actively in the family will be able to preserve their families in the midst of the gathering evil around us.
81. A man once asked President Spencer W. Kimball, “Have you ever been to heaven?”
82. President Kimball said that he had glimpsed heaven that very day when he had performed the sealing . . . “The pure in heart were there.” “Heaven was there.”
83. President Kimball said that he had glimpsed heaven when he had spoken with a couple who had never been able to have children of their own but who had “filled their home” with 18 orphans.
84. A mother in Brazil lived in a home made of red brick in a yard of red soil. The music of Primary songs filled the air, and pictures cut out from the *Liahona* of temples, prophets of God, and the Savior covered the walls. She and her husband sacrificed to be sealed in the temple so their children could be born in the covenant. Her constant

prayer was that the Lord would help her to bring up her children in the light of the gospel.

85. A sister in Ghana maintained her family's farm. She cultivated yarrow plants and kept goats. She raked, cleaned, and swept her yard. Under a mango tree, the family had a homemade bench where they sat for family home evening. Everything in her tidy enclosure demonstrated her love for her family.
86. "Heaven is a place," President Kimball taught, "but also a condition; it is home and family. It is understanding and kindness. It is selflessness. Yes, my dear brother, I've had many glimpses of heaven." \*Have you been in a home that felt heavenly? What was it about that place that made it feel heavenly?
87. When a young adult named Lynne was in her late teens, she and her mother learned that her stepfather had been seriously injured in a distant city. They quickly got on an airplane to visit him, but he died before they could reach him. Lynne told about their return home: "As my mother and I, exhausted and heartsick, walked down the steps from the plane, a man and woman standing on the airstrip walked over and put their arms around us. It was the branch president and the Relief Society president. . . . "Those days were confusing as we struggled to deal with the fact that my stepfather was dead. . . . But there was always a sister there, waiting quietly in the background—to take messages, to answer the door, to hold our hands as we made phone calls to our families and friends. "Through it all, I developed such a sense of gratitude that I couldn't imagine how I could repay those dear sisters. I desperately tried to think of a way, but imagination gave way to exhaustion." Several years later, when Lynne was married with three small children, she was called to

serve in a Relief Society presidency. At times she wondered if she could meet the demands of her calling. But then she remembered the service she had received after her stepfather died. "Now," she thought to herself, "it's my turn."

She shared the following experiences: "A woman in the ward had lost her fourteen-year-old daughter. The mother asked me to buy a beautiful gown and to dress her daughter's body in it in preparation for the burial. I was able to do it—and found it a very tender experience. It was my turn to serve, as other sisters had served me.

"An elderly woman in the ward who lived alone overdosed on her medications and was in a helpless condition for three days. The other counselor and I found her still alive in her apartment and cleaned her up before the ambulance arrived. We then stayed to scrub the apartment—walls and floors—with disinfectant. My turn again.

"A young mother in the ward, one of my friends, suddenly lost her only child, a beautiful three-year-old daughter, to an infection that took her life before the doctors were even aware of how serious her illness was. The other counselor and I went to the house as soon as we heard of little Robin's death. As we approached the screened patio door, we heard the father (who was not a member of the Church) sobbing as he talked long distance to his mother. Looking up, he saw us and, still sobbing, spoke into the phone: 'It will be all right, Mother. The Mormon women are here.' My turn once more."

88. "Now it is our turn—our turn to serve and write a chapter on the pages of Relief Society's history."

89. Joseph Smith taught, “*If you live up to your privilege, the angels cannot be restrained from being your associates. If you will be pure, nothing can hinder.*