

Lesson 10: Supporting Family Members

Ask the young women to think about a time when they were talking with their friends and they felt as if their friends weren't listening to what they were saying. Then ask them to think of a time when their friends did pay attention and cared about what they were saying.

- How did you feel when your friends seemed to ignore you?
- What difference did it make when your friends listened and showed interest in what you were saying?

Point out that each of us needs the approval of people who will give us support, loyalty, and encouragement. A family can provide this kind of strength, enthusiasm, and security when all its members unite to support each other.

To enable our families to reach their eternal destination, we must work together and support each other.

“Be one who nurtures and builds. Be one who has an understanding and a forgiving heart, who looks for the best in people. Leave people better than you found them” (Marvin J. Ashton, in Conference Report, Apr. 1992, p. 26; or Ensign, May 1992, p. 20).

- Who are some of our supporters who we can see? (Parents, brothers, sisters, other relatives, teachers, friends, and Church leaders.)
- Who might our unseen supporters be? (Heavenly parents, loved ones who have gone before us, and those who are yet to come.)

Quote 1 from *The Family: A Proclamation to the World*

“Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World”).

- Can we make a difference in the happiness of our family life?

It is important for us to learn how and when to give support to members of our families. A good way to begin is to become acquainted with what each member of our family does in church, work, school, and at home. We need to be aware of when they face special challenges.

Quote 2 from *The Family: A Proclamation to the World*

By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners.

Quote 3 from *The Family: A Proclamation to the World*

Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. Extended families should lend support when needed.

Supporting Your Father

As head of a family, a father is responsible for the family's spiritual and temporal welfare.

- What different kinds of responsibilities does your father have in your family? (Individual circumstances vary, and answers could include a number of situations where fathers provide for a combination of physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual needs.)

- How can you learn what your father's daily work and Church calling require of him? What can you do to support your father in these important duties?

prays for him each day

give her a blessing

- When might you need divine help and a special blessing? (When taking an important test, beginning a new school year, giving a talk, moving, and so on.)

- How could asking for a father's blessing be a way of supporting your father? Explain that although a father who does not hold the priesthood would not be able to give a priesthood blessing, he could give help in many other ways.

“I've never been so proud as I was when my daughter sought my advice.”

daughter wrote a special note to her father

Supporting your Mother

- What kinds of responsibilities do your mothers have in your families? (Answers could include a number of situations where mothers provide for a combination of physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual needs.)

Help the young women understand how much work it takes for parents to raise a family and the many sacrifices their parents make.

- What is your mother's daily schedule? How much work does her Church calling require? What can you do to support your mother in her important responsibilities?

Explain that many of the things they can do to support their fathers will also help them support their mothers.

- How do you think a mother feels when her children thank her for the things she does? Do you think she notices when they don't thank her?

Supporting Your Parents

Parents need more than verbal expressions of support from their children. Every family has unique circumstances that add to the responsibilities the parents have.

Share the following situations with the young women and ask what they could do in each situation to help their parents or show their love and concern for them.

1. Your grandmother is ill and requires extra care in her own home.
2. Your grandfather has had a stroke and must come to your home to live.
3. It is your parents' wedding anniversary.
4. Fast day is next Sunday, and you know of some special challenges facing your mother right now.
5. Your father needs your help, but you have a friend visiting after school and want to be with her.
6. Both your father and your mother are away from home during the day, and your younger brothers and sisters get home from school at the same time you do.

Supporting Each Brother and Sister

- Why is it sometimes difficult to express affection and support for your brothers and sisters?

One daughter recalls that her father demonstrated how children can fill each other's needs within the family. "One time [dad] brought two buckets into the family room—one filled with water, one empty. Then he had each of us think of something that made us upset or frustrated or discouraged that day. For each thing we named, he took a cup of water out of the full bucket. Then he told us that we are like that bucket, and when things happen during the day that disturb us, a cup of self-esteem is taken out. Gradually we get closer and closer to ... the bottom [until the bucket is completely empty]. Then he turned to the other bucket. He asked us for suggestions on how we could help a person whose bucket was empty to fill it up again. With each suggestion, he had us step up and dip a cup of water back into the empty bucket. Then dad concluded that home is the place where we come to get our buckets filled, and that we should watch for and be sensitive to others, because we are responsible for helping to fill our brothers' and sisters' needs" (Eric G. Stephan and Judith Stephan Smith, *What Happy Families Are Doing* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981], pp. 57–58).

- What can you do to build and support your brothers and sisters?
- What are your feelings when another family member wins an award or achieves something? Are you willing to share what belongs to you with others? When was the last time you went out of your way to support a brother or sister? How did this affect your relationship with that person? Do you wait for someone to do something nice for you before offering your support to him or her?
- What could a young woman do in the following situations to show support?

1. A brother is serving a mission.
2. A married sister and her husband do not get out much because they have several small children.
3. A younger sister has been assigned to give her first prayer in Primary.
4. A brother is receiving a priesthood advancement.
5. A sister is performing in a piano recital next Thursday night. You have an important test at school on Friday.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 108:7

Supportive attitudes can be contagious. These attitudes can spread from you to every member of your families, fostering feelings of warmth and unity in the family.

- How does supporting your family members improve your relationship with Christ?