

Sunday Lesson: Family History Stories

This outline is for a Sunday lesson to be taught by the bishop in a combined group of Melchizedek Priesthood holders, Relief Society sisters, and youth and singles 12 years and older.

In preparing for the lesson, it will be helpful to watch the videos suggested for this lesson.

Download those you will use.

- *Now I'm Converted*
- *He Was a Blacksmith*
- *It's about the Dash*
- *Watching My Grandson Play Ball*

It will also be helpful to:

- Read the *New York Times* article, "[The Stories That Bind Us.](#)"
- Review the booklet, *My Family: Stories That Bring Us Together.*
- Prayerfully decide which discussion questions you would like to use.

1. INTRODUCTION

Begin with prayer.

Explain that the family history experience has changed. The objective of today's class is to introduce members to a new approach that includes:

- Working together as families in their homes on their family history.
- Using the Church's website FamilySearch.org that has been redesigned to be easier to use anywhere on any device.
- Using the booklet *My Family: Stories That Bring Us Together*, which is an easier way for families and youth to get started doing family history.
- Receiving help from the ward family history consultant and high priests group leader. Introduce these leaders to the class.

2. USING FAMILY HISTORY TO INVOLVE YOUTH

Watch: *Now I'm Converted*

Discussion Questions:

- Q: What insights does this video provide concerning our youth’s ability to organize and carry out family history efforts?
A: Youth are very capable of organizing and conducting family history activities. The program shown in the video was run by youth and for youth.
- Q: How did the youth influence their families?
A: The youths’ involvement motivated their families to get involved with family history.
- Q: What was the effect on the youth, parents, and the stake?
A: The youth gained testimonies and became converted to the gospel. Adult family history involvement and temple attendance increased. The stake president reported it improved missionary efforts and strengthened families.

3. FAMILY HISTORY CAN STRENGTHEN FAMILIES

Watch: *He Was a Blacksmith*

Discussion Questions:

- Q: Where did the family work on their family history?
A: In the home.
- Q: What did you observe about the family history consultants?
A: The consultants involved the entire family. They focused on helping the Morrisons bond with their ancestors instead of emphasizing genealogical research.
- Q: How did the consultants help the Morrisons get involved in family history work?
A: By having the children act out a play about one of their ancestors.
- Q: What changes did you notice in Brother Morrison by the end of the video?
A: His heart was turned, and he truly wanted to do temple work for his ancestor.
- Q: How can stories help with family history?
A: They can help us understand who our ancestors were and in return help us understand who we are. This can inspire us to do temple work for our ancestors.

Share and Discuss: *New York Times* article, “[The Stories That Bind Us](#)”

Discussion Questions:

- Q: Fill in the blank. When a team of psychologists measured children’s resilience, they found that kids who _____ were best able to handle stress:
 - a. Ate breakfast together every day
 - b. Knew the most about their family’s history
 - c. Played team sports
 - d. Attended regular religious services

A: The correct answer is b. These children understand that they belong to something bigger than themselves.

- Q: The stories of our ancestors can convey important messages about life. Which of the following messages is the healthiest for a child to understand?
 - a. Our ancestors were poor when they came to this country. They worked hard and prospered. So will you.
 - b. Our family was well off until they were swindled in a business deal. They lost everything, and our family has struggled ever since.
 - c. Over the years our family has had its ups and downs. But through it all, we've stuck together.

A: The correct answer is c. The most resilient children are those that understand that families naturally experience both highs and lows.

- Q: What can your family do to build a “strong family narrative”?
- A: Tell family history stories as often as possible to your children.

Invite a participant to share a family story.

4. TOOLS TO CAPTURE FAMILY HISTORY AND STORIES

FamilySearch.org Photos and Stories

Note: During this activity, members may ask questions about how to sign in to FamilySearch.org or how to recover forgotten IDs. See page 11 of this outline for detailed instructions.

Watch: *It's about the Dash*

Discussion Questions:

- Q: According to Elder Foster, what is the difference between family history and genealogy?

A: Genealogy tends to be about the information relating to places, lineage, and such milestones as birth, marriage, and death. Family history is the "dash"—the stories, memories, and family traits that make us feel connected to our ancestors and often turn our hearts.
- Q: What impressed you most about the photos and stories experience?

A: The updated experience on FamilySearch.org is now easier and allows people of all ages to participate. The experience is collaborative, and you can share photos and stories with other family members.

- Q: What effect did the photos and stories of his ancestors have on Elder Foster?
A: They helped turn his heart and connect him to his great-grandfather. They inspired him to think about what he wants his children and great-grandchildren to know about him.

My Family Stories That Bring Us Together Booklet

Watch: *Watching My Grandson Play Ball*

Discussion Questions:

- Q: What did you learn from Elder Callister about recording stories about your ancestors?
A: Stories can make our ancestors seem more real. Our children can learn from our ancestors' examples and experiences.

- Q: How can the *My Family: Stories That Bring Us Together* booklet help you with family history?
A: The booklet is an easy way to start recording your family stories. The stories can be added to FamilySearch, and information in them can lead to temple ordinances.

Pass out the *My Family: Stories That Bring Us Together* booklets to those who would like them.

5. CONCLUSION

Share your testimony about the spiritual strength families can receive through temple and family history work. Encourage members to return home and record their family stories and photographs for future generations.

Close with prayer.

ADDITIONAL TEACHING RESOURCES

Depending on the needs of your ward, you may want to show and discuss the following videos:

Watch: *Because of James* (recommended for wards with a large primary)

Discussion Questions:

- Q: What insights does this video provide on the ability of young children to understand and participate in temple and family history work?
A: Children are capable of understanding family history principles and can organize and carry out family history efforts.
- Q: How did James' parents support him in his efforts?
A: James' parents took his desire to do family history work seriously and arranged for the family history consultants to come to their house. The parents also ensured that the temple work was completed for the ancestors that James identified.
- Q: How can we help young children in our ward become involved in family history work?
A: Primary and Cub Scout leaders can prepare activities and sharing time lessons on family history topics. Youth family history consultants can be called and assigned to help younger children. Parents can use family home evening time to share family stories.

Watch: *Including Me* (recommended for wards with a large number of blended families)

Discussion Questions:

- Q: Heavenly Father answers the prayers of young children. How did Hanna's prayers influence her father? Her family as a whole?
A: Her father's heart was touched, and he decided to partake of temple blessings. Her brothers and sisters also started praying that their family could be sealed. The family was sealed together in the temple.
- Q: Hanna's father mentioned that when children learn about their ancestors, it gives them "a sense of who they are." What do you think this means, and why is it important to children?
A: During trying situations, children can draw strength from stories of their ancestors who met difficult challenges.

Watch: *Remembering My Brother* (recommended for wards with a large number of Spanish speakers)

Discussion questions:

- Q: How can the *My Family: Stories That Bring Us Together* booklet help you with family history?
A: The booklet is an easy way to start recording family stories without requiring computer skills. The booklet also provides one place to collect information about many ancestors.
- Q: How can our ancestors benefit when we record their stories?

A: Information contained in their stories, such as names and dates, can be used to submit names to the temple.

Summary: “The Stories That Bind Us”

In a recent article in the *New York Times* entitled “The Stories That Bind Us,” Bruce Feiler reports on research into children’s ability to deal with stress and their overall resiliency.

Research Findings

Children who knew a lot about their families:

- Tended to do better than other children when they faced challenges.
- Proved to be more resilient and able to moderate the effects of stress.
- Had a stronger sense of control over their lives.
- Had higher self-esteem.
- Believed that their family functions successfully.
- Felt that they belonged to something larger than themselves.

Why Do Stories Help Children?

By listening to family stories, children gain insights into how to deal with the situations they encounter in life. A family’s stories tend to support a “unifying narrative.” The healthiest narratives reinforce that family members persevered through many ups and downs as best they could with varying degrees of success.

How to Improve Children’s Resiliency

- Tell stories to children whenever possible (at the dinner table, in the car, and so on).
- Tell stories that reflect life’s ups and downs.
- Tell all types of stories from simple or humorous (our family’s worst vacation ever) to profound (my grandmother’s struggle with cancer).

For the Full Article, See:

“The Stories That Bind Us”

New York Times, March 15, 2013

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/17/fashion/the-family-stories-that-bind-us-this-life.html>

By Bruce Feiler

Live Demonstration of Photos and Stories Feature at FamilySearch

Elder David A. Bednar has said that the first step in learning something is to “act upon it.” When members do so, they learn more quickly and become deeply engaged in the subject. The following is a learn-by-doing activity where members can discover and “act upon” information about their ancestors on FamilySearch.org.

During this activity, you will ask a volunteer from the audience to sign in to FamilySearch.org and discover photos and stories that have been posted about his or her ancestors. You will also invite class members to follow along on their mobile devices. This demonstration is a powerful way to help members connect with their ancestors and begin turning their hearts towards them.

Preparation for the Activity

Prior to the lesson, encourage members to bring a mobile device (laptop, tablet, phone, etc.) to the class. Remind them to get an LDS Account and password and bring them to the meeting.

Ask a ward or stake technology specialist to attend the class and help volunteers connect their devices to the video projector. This activity works best in facilities where multiple members can connect to the Internet at the same time.

Introduction

Begin by showing the video *It's about the Dash*. Afterwards, explain that you would like members to have a heart-turning experience, just like Elder Foster did.

Ask for a volunteer to help with the presentation. Make sure the volunteer--

- Has an LDS Account and password.
- Has not been to FamilySearch.org in the past 4 or 5 weeks.
- Has multiple generations in Family Tree.

Have the ward or stake technology specialist help the volunteer connect his or her device to the video projector.

Ask the volunteer and class to sign in to FamilySearch.org with their devices.

Note: If the volunteer has problems signing in, you may need to ask some of the class members to log off and try signing in after the volunteer gets on.

Signing in to FamilySearch.org

1. Log on to: www.LDS.org.



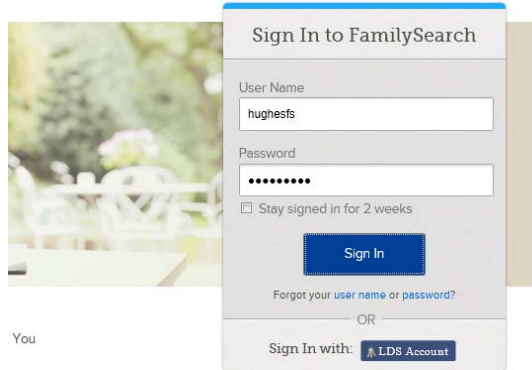
2. Find and click on the **FamilySearch.org** link.



3. At FamilySearch.org, click on the **Photos** icon.



4. Sign in to FamilySearch.org. This requires an LDS Account and password.



Photos of our Ancestors

5. Have the volunteer and class click on the **People** link.

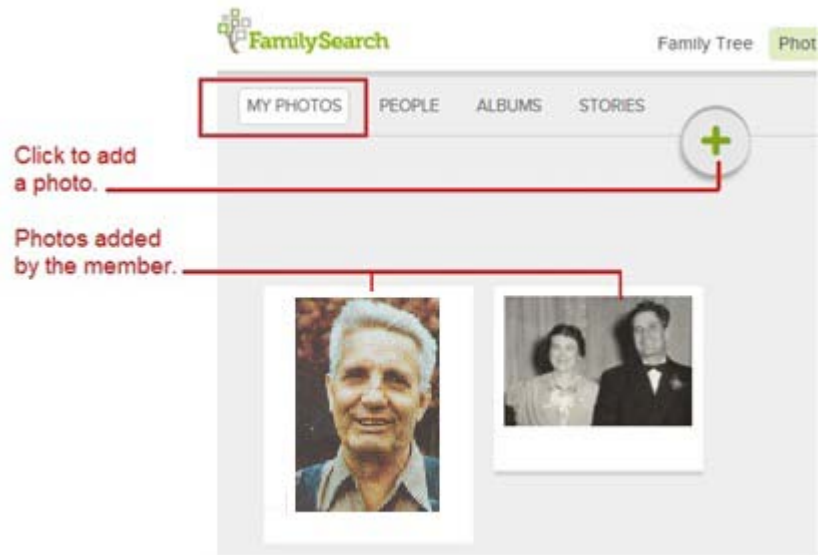
Explain that this is where a member can see all the photos of people that have been added to the member's family tree.

6. Discuss the features in red.
7. Encourage the volunteer and class members to take a few minutes to explore this feature.
8. Ask the volunteer to share his or her feelings about the photos.



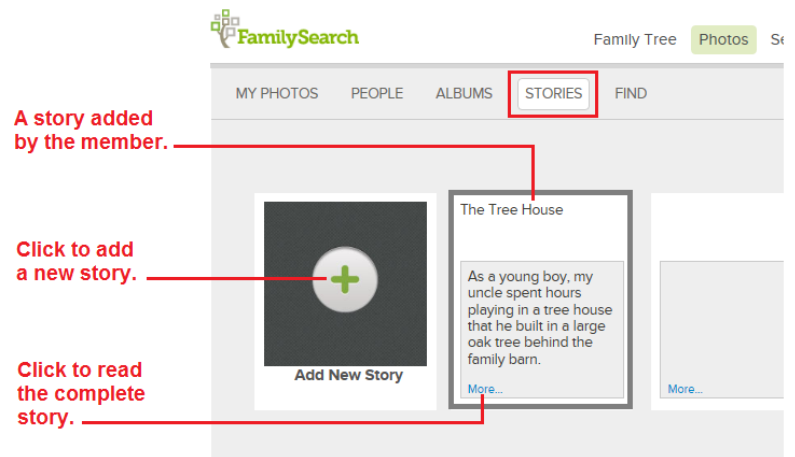
- Q: Are you surprised at the number of photos that are on FamilySearch?
- Q: How do you feel when you see a photo of an ancestor?
- Q: Are you glad that people have posted these photos? Why?
- Q: Do you have any photos at home that you could post of FamilySearch and share them with others?

9. Next, ask the class members to share their feelings about the photos they discovered.
10. Have the volunteer and class members click on the **My Photos** link. Explain that this is where the photos that the member posts will be displayed.



Stories about Our Ancestors

11. Have the volunteer and class members click on the **Stories** link. Explain that members can enter stories about their ancestors. Stories are a powerful way to help us turn our hearts to our ancestors.
12. Discuss the points in red.
13. Have the volunteer and members take a few minutes and read some of the stories that are posted. Then ask the volunteer and class members to share their feelings about the stories.



- Q: How do stories make you feel about your ancestor?
- Q: Did you learn anything new about your ancestors from the story?

Q: Do you have stories about you or your ancestors that you could add to FamilySearch?

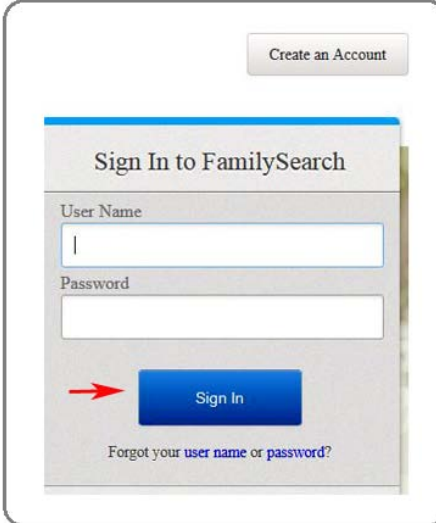
End the activity by encouraging the class to use FamilySearch.org and the Photos and Stories features to preserve information about themselves and their ancestors for future generations.

FAMILYSEARCH SIGN-IN INSTRUCTIONS

How to Sign in to FamilySearch.org

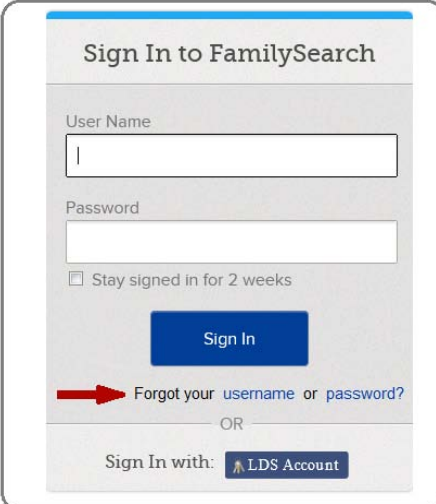
1. Go to FamilySearch at <https://www.FamilySearch.org/>.
2. In the upper right corner, click on **Sign In**.
3. In the window that opens:
 - a. Enter your Username and Password.
 - b. Click the **Sign In** button.

Do not click the Create an Account button unless you have never registered for an account.



How to Recover a Forgotten Password or ID

1. Go to FamilySearch at <https://www.FamilySearch.org/>.
2. In the upper right corner, click on **Sign In**.
3. In the window that opens, click on either the **username** or the **password** link at the bottom of the panel.



4. On the Forgot User Name or Password screen, select **LDS FamilySearch Account**, and then click **Continue**.

Which type of account do you have?

FamilySearch Account (for the general public)

LDS FamilySearch Account (LDS Account for members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)

LDS ACCOUNT

Since you are a member of the Church, you will need to use the LDS Account system to recover your us following pages will help you do this.

On the LDS Account screen, select either: **I don't know my username** for a forgotten username OR **I don't know my password** for a forgotten password.

Having trouble signing in?

I don't know my username

Please choose how to recover your username.

Mobile Phone

Email

Membership Record Number (MRN)

I don't know my password

Forgot User Name Help

When you select **I don't know my username**, the screen will expand. Select one of the following three options, and click **Continue**.

1. **Mobile Phone.** Select this option, and provide the mobile phone number and country that are associated with your account. A text will be sent to your phone that has your username
2. **Email.** Select this option, and enter the email address that is associated with your account. An email will be

sent to that address containing your username.

3. **Membership Record Number (MRN).** You are redirected to a new screen. Click **I don't have or remember my e-mail**, and then enter your MRN and birth date. The program will display your username.

Forgot Password Help

When you select **I don't know my password**, the screen will expand. Enter your username. An e-mail or text will be sent that allows you to change your password.



The screenshot shows the 'LDS Account' login interface. At the top, it says 'THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS' and 'LDS Account' with a key icon. The main heading is 'Having trouble signing in?'. Below this are two radio button options: 'I don't know my username' and 'I don't know my password'. The second option is selected. Below the options is a text input field with the placeholder text 'Enter Your User Name'. A red arrow points to this field. Below the input field is a green 'Continue' button. At the bottom, there is a link that says 'I'm having other problems signing in.'

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