



Overcoming Come Follow Me Obstacles | An Interview with Shannon Foster

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Hey, hey, any youth leaders out there? Serving with youth in the church is probably one of the most enjoyable callings, but it brings with it a lot of responsibility. How do we effectively lead this rising generation? Well, I have good news for you. Leading saints is organized the young saints virtual library where we have 20 plus hours of presentations all about how to lead youth. We cover topics like how to help youth transition into adulthood, how to help them avoid loneliness, how to handle smartphones in class, and we even go over scientific data about how latter day saint youth differ from other youth. If you'd like to review the young saints library at no cost for 14 days, simply go to [leading saints dot org slash 14](https://leading-saints.org/14). That's [leading saints dot org slash one four](https://leading-saints.org/14). While you're at it, we'll give you access to all of our virtual libraries that cover several leadership related topics. So click the link in the show notes or simply visit [leading saints dot org slash one four](https://leading-saints.org/14). Hey, welcome to the leading saints podcast. Now, for many of you that are brand new to leading saints, it's important to know that leading saints is a nonprofit organization 501c3, dedicated to helping Latter day Saints, be better prepared to lead, and we do that through content creation. We get so much positive feedback on the podcast, our virtual conferences, the articles on our website. You definitely got to check it out at [leading saints dot org](https://leading-saints.org). And on their homepage at [leading saints](https://leading-saints.org) that are, you can actually find the top 6 most downloaded episodes to the podcast. So if you're new, like the content wanna jump in to some of the most popular episodes head there after you listen to this episode. Well, this is an episode a long time coming. That's right. We are bringing in Shannon Foster, also known as the red headed hostess. I mean, such remarkable Come Follow Me and just all things teaching

resources that she creates and does a remarkable job and I've known about Shannon for years now and appreciated so much of the content and resources that she makes available to families across the world. And if you're not familiar with Shannon let me tell you, as her website says, Shannon is a wife and a mother. She taught seminary for 13 years full-time in Salt Lake before retiring. While teaching, she went through the process of learning how to have a meaningful scripture study and find the scriptures as her great source of strength. She also learned the importance of teaching with power by constantly coming up with ways for the students to learn for themselves. While teaching she was continually searching for great visual aids to help teach important doctrines. She found that they were hard to find so she ended the website in order to produce these things for teachers and parents all over the world and has she ever done that. She is so helpful and expert when it comes to the simple things we can do in our day to day lives to not only teach them the home, but also teach at church. So here's my interview with Shannon Foster, the red headed hostess. Shannon Foster, welcome to leading saints podcast. Thank you. This is I mean, you are most people know you as the redheaded hostess. Yeah. Is that like a you are red headed? Yes. I'm right here. I'm seeing that. Where did that name come from? Friends, I had some friends that nickname knew that back in the day and when I started my blog years ago, I was thinking, can you name it? And I was just trying to think of something clever and nothing was working. And I didn't want to have a church name. And I just brought that up because they'd made me a logo. I didn't use it, but that's how intense they named me that. Yeah, that's why. And do you have a history of being a hostess in your home or that's why it's because I was constantly hosting people and I love gathering people and I love just that bringing people together. And it does fit for what I'm doing because I look at that as bringing our family to the scriptures and there's ways to do it effectively. So it does fit, but sometimes I'm like, if I would have known what it would have turned into, would I have used that name? Yeah. So here's the first left turn here. So as far as gathering people, because that's something that doesn't happen as much as it should, maybe in 2023, especially in our church community. So what's the best advice you have as far as gathering people? Whether it's award activity or just like in your home or I think preparation makes a big difference. And so I try to think whenever I gather, I try to think of what will make those special. And what will make people feel comfortable. And whether I have worked a lot with youth and every activity is basically a gathering, right? And so, but I want them to leave feeling loved and supported.

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And I don't know if that even answers your question, but I think people naturally go where they feel like they're loved. In fact, I remember when I was called as youngman's president and I had somebody tell me the laurels at the time it was Laurel's. They don't come to activities. And I had worked with youth enough because I taught seminary for 13 years. I knew I said youth go where they want to go. They vote with their feet. They show up if they want to be there. And I know they're busy, but to expect that they don't go to activities, and I didn't believe that. And I just said, so I just turned my hosting hat on. And I'm going to bring them together. And provide

activities more than that when they come, they feel loved. And we didn't have that experience with the world's not coming. They came. And of course, they were busy and they had things on their list, but I think, especially with you. And this applies to teaching scriptures as opposed to every classroom, they go where they want to go. And so if they're not coming, that means they don't want to come. Typically, unless they have schedule conflicts, but yeah, so they're not just, I think a lot of people, especially with you, they think they're maybe lazy, too strong, but they're just there's apathy there. They don't want to come. We just need to light a fire under him and get them there, but oftentimes what we're offering that isn't appealing. Youth are amazing. I have been these youth were safe for these days. And one thing I learned with youth, and this happened in every classroom, I taught in, is if they feel like you will strengthen them and that you care about them, they'll return again and again and again. And if they know that you have their best interests in mind, and I think we often make the mistake of they want to be entertained or if I have a really good treat or something like we try to entice them. And I've done all that too, but that is a low part of the equation. They will come if they feel like you love them and that you will strengthen them. Then they don't want to miss because they'll feel like they're missing out on something important. And these I just, my experience with the youth in these days is that stand back and watch what they become. And so we need to meet the bar that they need. We need to raise that bar for ourselves. Yeah. I mean, every year I just stood in the office. Yeah, I agree. So when did you always had a knack for teaching? Or where did this start? That's so funny because as a youth, I grew up in a home where my dad was not a member of the church. And so gospel conversations were not a regular thing in our home. And I learned a lot in church, and then as I grew up, he became more against the church, and he didn't even let me take seminary. In my 9th grade year. And were you in a Utah or were there? Then my tenth grade year, he let me take it. And I sat in the back row. I did not want to be called upon and this is why I think I'm really grateful for this experience because I walked this path. Anybody who says, I don't know the scriptures. I'm like, oh, I've been there. I did not want to be called on. I didn't want especially to have to read a scripture and then say, what does that mean? Yeah. I don't know. And if they were reading up and down a row, I would for sure count and look in my scriptures and get ahead. I'm not listening, what's going on? Because I'm trying to figure out if I know how to say those words. Yeah. And I think we've probably all done that, right? But I had this burning in my bones that I was a daughter of God. So even with that, a lot of knowledge that was a real foundation for me as a youth and kept me wanting to choose the right, even though I didn't have a lot of knowledge yet. And then I went, I went to EFY, I wasn't any of my counselor later, and I went to BYU Jerusalem and I did all these things that started just really educating me on both doctrine, but also the love I had for teaching. I didn't know it was there. And I was at the institute of the U one day. And the director came up to me. And I keep thinking, I need to contact him and tell him, thank you for this day because I didn't know what that moment was going to mean, but he stalked me in the hall. And he said, Shannon, you need to take an introduction to teaching seminary class. And I was like, I'm a girl because at those times I have never even heard of a female teacher. Wow. And he's like, yeah, you need to take it. And it's here and here and I don't know why I did because there was not one part of me that thought I'd be good at that. And I took the course and I started and I was in the second week of the course and they placed me as a part time teacher, but which was like, you're supposed to be in it for a lot longer.

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And I was shocked by it. And then it was just like doors opening after that. And I had to do a lot of work and a lot of studying. But what was so wonderful is that as I studied and studied and these lightbulbs were going off, I could take that into the classroom. And did you know this? Did you see this? But the thing that I learned was when I was hired, they did not ask me. I mean, we had to take certain doctrinal, like we had to have certain classes taken doctrinally. So there were things I knew, of course. But they weren't concerned about whether or not I would be able to read Isaiah and teach it. They knew that we all have the capacity to learn that. What they wanted to know if it was if I could handle classroom of teenagers. And so that was like the big test because that's the learning curve, right? You have to get by. Right. And they had to know, can she hold that space and get their respect? And so that was kind of the big. I know, I did. Yeah. So I obviously want to underscore just that leadership moment that institute director had in that moment of and even if you didn't end up taking the class or going in the seminary, like those little moments of saying, basically he was saying, Shannon, I believe in you. And it's connected. Your divine identity comes alive in that moment of like, oh wait, I can do something remarkable. And how doors open at the right time? Because right now what I'm doing with our business didn't exist back then. Yeah. And when I was teaching seminary and I got married and we were starting our family and we were I knew I wouldn't be teaching after that. And we were kind of looking to the future of what our future would look like. And I just, for the last part of my career, I was on something called training council. So I would help train other seminary teachers as well. And that experience really helped me become super focused on the principles of teaching and all summer teachers are trained on teaching. But when you're having to train the seminary teachers and come up with the program that over the summer, we train them, you're diving into all the stuff and we're going to meetings about teaching and we're getting communication from downtown about all these things. And I just fell in love with these teaching principles. When I was retiring and I was looking at this point where I won't be teaching the classroom anymore, I just started having this burning desire to get this information to parents. Because the vision I could see at this moment was the classroom is not the ideal learning circumstance. And I knew that. Because you know what do you mean by that? Expand on that. It's a good learning place. It's a good thing to have in your life. But I have 30 students, they will some will speak some won't. I don't know what's going on in their lives. Unless they choose to share with me and that's a small percentage, I can try to pick up on things, but I usually, I don't know, they are socially interacting with each other, which can be good, or it can not be good, depending on the situation. Like maybe they're sitting next to somebody who makes them nervous. And so they're not going to share in class. They might, if that person wasn't there, and it might be because they like them. You have all those things happening in these bathrooms. Just saw the boy they like in the hall at school and they come over and they can't even focus it. There's so many things happening. And as great as a learning environment, as that can be, to be with peers and testifying in front of peers. I mean, it does do that. But parents know their children so much better. And they can recognize what's going on in their lives, and they can.

They have the mantle of having the responsibility to teach their children and the spirit will guide them and direct them individually for each kid. And I would usually have a 120 or more students at one time. So even with the best seminary teacher and the whole world, the home is still the better place to learn. So hopefully in that classroom, you're propelling them into another classroom and takes them to the next level. Right. We're just a tool. And I could see that. This is just a tool, but there were so many times I would get a student in the classroom, and they didn't even know where to find books of scripture. And I don't mean obscure books of scripture. I mean, let's turn to Matthew, and they don't know that some in the intestine. And so I was like, how do we get some of these skills into the home? And I started this log, the redheaded hostess. We used to be just in the bloggers menu. I was doing leadership. Yeah. Here we are. And it was so against my personality, too, because I'm really private. I don't like to I don't like to show a lot about my life. And so it was totally against my personality, but I just started with hand drawn things and it just grew and now we have a staff of 15 people and that's cool. How would you summarize as far as what the redhead hostess is and what you do? We provide scriptures study helps to families for all ages.

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And everything we do is really focused on good teaching principles. I don't want to give you something that you can check a box for a lesson. I want to give you something that will allow you to and your children to be in the scriptures having experiences in the scriptures and that they come alive. And so we have an artist that's just all in and creating works of art every week. But that's my passion and we accuracy is a big deal. I've got full-time institute and so I'm going to teach us on our staff. I have homeschooling moms and our staff because they look at it differently and I want everyone's perspective. So I don't want to just give people something to teach descriptions with. I want to give you something that helps you strengthen your children. And it's a tool you can use in your teaching in the home. Because you are the teacher. I mean, the parents are the teacher and the spirit is the teacher, but sometimes you need good tools to help. And then I also want to help people learn these teaching principles that I've been learning. And put them into what we create, but also teach people what those things are so that they're more successful. If you're going to spend ten minutes teaching your children, let's make those ten minutes. Awesome. And instead of just maybe going through the motions. I love it. And I want to jump in all that and let's start with because just like with leadership type of topics, I've got a good pulse on what's happening in the church and with leaders non leaders and whatnot. What are some of the obstacles you hear in this world of Come Follow Me? Because there's that sort of pressure, everybody wants to do Come Follow Me in a way that's going to bless their families. Obviously it's an at home initiative first and then maybe we'll take it to church and discuss some things there. So what are some common obstacles you hear when it comes to Come Follow Me or just teaching in the home? Okay, there's so many. But first I want to say, I mean, I've spoken all over on this topic and the same obstacles come up everywhere. And it's so comforting to hear that because people think they're alone and they're obstacles. And they're

not. And the first thing I would say is to expect obstacles. I mean, this is so important. There's going to be obstacles, right? My husband and I just went to the temple and we got a text message from somebody right before we were going to leave and it was okay, can you call me? And it was a really important phone call. We weren't expecting. And my husband said, there's our obstacles. It's going to keep us from our session. And it didn't. But that same principle, because I think we joke about don't say how loud you're going to the temple. People say stuff like that. That is just as relevant in teaching the gospel in our home because it is so important. And there will be obstacles. And there will be obstacles that seem humongous and there's always solutions. So some common obstacles I hear a lot are probably the first one is we don't have time. Why not home together enough? And that is such a hard one, but there's a way around it. And the first thing I would say with that one in particular is to gather your family together and use family councils, elder Ballard said, I believe counsels are the most effective way to get real results. So if you think about, okay, if I gather my family together and I've done this and we gather them together and we say, what are our most important priorities? What will we look back on and be so glad we did? And enlist those. And it can't be anything you're currently prioritizing in your life because we can be blinded by them. But just take a step back and what are most important family priorities that when we're in 30 years, we'll look back and say, oh, I'm so glad we did that. And list those and make sure that there's eternal priorities on that list. And then hold up everything else to that and say, are we willing to sacrifice these most important priorities for these things there? Only good. And elder Oaks gave do you remember that talk good, better best? Classic. Yeah, and he talked about Sears Rebecca catalog and how there was good better best and on shoes would be a good pair. And he said so often we sacrifice things that are best for things that are good. And he specifically mentioned. Tom scripture study. And family prayer being just not room for it. Yeah. And so I think we gather found me together. We all get on the same page. They understand. We don't just say we're having family scripture study because then I look at it like I'm pulling the wagon alone. I'll push. But if we can all come together and they're all a part of our family and the light that they can bring into the family. Everybody is a part of it.

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And so what can they do to assist? What can they do to help? I mean, there are many times I actually have my 11 year old read to my 5 year old. And because I want her teaching. At age 11. And so there's just getting everybody on the same page and then adjusting schedules, but then also I would say you get together and you say, what is the best time of the day where we can receive revelation? So we're not also pushing scripture study to the time where we're rushed or tired, et cetera, right? In a bad mood. But you identify what time of day you are most likely to receive the revelation needed or that you're hoping to get a revelatory experience while you're studying the scriptures as a family. And then how do we make that happen in our home or a time close to it? And it's kind of a paradigm shift because I think sometimes we push it into a bad time of day. The early morning's family scriptures today, right? I think we all have memories

of that. And it might be a good time for some families. And the other thing is it will change. And to teach that, I think one of the other obstacles we often get as a family or individual is if something stops working, we take it personally and we think it's a failure. Oh yeah. But we can't look at it that way because any teacher in a classroom knows that things will only work for a certain amount of time and then you have to shift. And that's the same with the family. You have to, this will work, and it might work for a long time, and it might only work for a week. But then it will shift, and we'll keep changing, and I've called it before, like, thinking like a coach. If I'm a coach of a basketball team, I'm not going to get mad. If we lose a game or if there's fouls or if there's, that's part of the whole game, and that's part of being a coach, is that there will be ups and downs. There will be wins and losses. And that is just as relevant with family scripture study. And so to be wise and to pull back and to not let not to call things failures aren't a failure. They worked, be glad they worked and now shift. Yeah. Do any examples either in your personal life or others that other individual that you've heard as far as what that looks like? Because I think we all want that picturesque living room sitting and little Jimmy has his Bible open on his lap, right? But what does that look like? What are the shifts look like? Well, let me just address that. I think that that is such a disservice that we kind of have this idea of what perfect study looks like. And I've called it the enzyme. And of course, if they're going to take a picture of a scripture study and put it in a church magazine, it's going to look great. And it needs to, and he's being inspiring. But if we interpret that as the norm, and if we're not meeting that, then we're failing. And we're the only ones. And everybody else is doing it. That is so far from the truth. In fact, I would even say, sometimes there's other ways, like sometimes you don't want your whole family together. Sometimes I'll grab my daughter and pull her off to the side and we'll have scripture study with her and she'll open up in a way she would never do in front of everyone. And so we can get really specific with her. And so there's not like this doctrinal way, right? But sometimes we tell ourselves that it's sitting around a table or sitting around. And also, I had this experience when I was teaching my very first year. No, maybe second year. And I used to give a plan of Salvation test to my students at the beginning of the year. And I wanted to learn what they knew about the plan of Salvation is like an assessment for myself. The church actually does assessments now that this was before they did that. And I would look at him and say, okay, they're pretty strong here. And we need to nobody knew this. And so it would just help me know, doctrinally, where to focus. And it was the beginning of the year, and then we had a parent teacher conferences, and I had this couple come in. And I handed them their daughter's test. And she had probably one of the worst grades and all of my classes. And they were shocked. I mean, the dad and they're just looking at each other and the title's like, we have scripture study every day. And he's like, my wife's a scriptorium. And they were just like, bewildered. And we couldn't have parent teacher conference because they were completely focused on this test sitting in front of them. And this darling daughter. And I mean, she was so good in class. And the dad said, I know what's happened. And he said, we've been teaching to the older kids. And she's never caught on. And I think that's so easily done. Especially when he sit around and we discuss scripture and the younger kids aren't catching on to the doctrines that are on their level, and so that's, I just wanted to address that perfect idea in our head that it's a little more messy than that. And it's supposed to be. I think even that's something that holds us up is this perfection idea.

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And it's not supposed to be perfect. It's supposed to be messy. And one of the first scripture journals I ever made was this book of Mormon study guide and all I did was I went through the book of Mormon and I divided it up by similar versus like firstly if I won one through three and I went through and I was like, okay, this is a good section of earth to study together. This is an all I did in this book was go through and divide up scriptures like that. So I broke it, I broke a chapter down into smaller shocks. And I did do some little maps and stuff in there. But I can not tell you how many people contacted me or have stopped me in a store or something and said that was the first time I ever interested the book of Mormon. Wow. And they thank me. And I'm like, oh, this is not me. This is you slowed down. You had the capacity all along that we read too quickly. You always have that capacity. Yeah. We were trying to understand the full first DeFi story rather than the four versus and the doctrines within those, right? But one of the biggest concerns I get when people buy a book, they'll be like, what if I mess up in it? What if I heard this so many times? And what if I am writing and I said if that is your concern, then I want you to open up that page and scribble on it. Because it's supposed to be messy. This is you figuring it out. Your scripture study at home is going to be messy and your kids will learn from that because they're going to be parents one day and they're going to have the same obstacles you're having. All that we're too busy, we're too tired. I don't know the scriptures well enough. All those things that all the families say are going to be repeated in the next generation and you can show them how to overcome those. And it's going to be messy. And it's supposed to be. Yeah. So your question. Kind of derailed there. I was like, that's right. This is why this is fun. It's one of my, I wish we could just take that perfect idea and toss it away because I think it holds us back. And I think it's one of Satan's tools like you're not measuring up. So I just wanted to dress up. The question was going back to the I think you answered, I was asking, what does it look like? Adjusting to different ways that we're in the season and that season may be three weeks where we can gather everybody, but then you know what that soccer term is coming up and explodes the fantasy schedule. And so it's going to look different. And I would say expect all that. Yeah. And plan for it. And also, so my daughter of his piano and she practices 30 minutes most days. But there are days we miss and sometimes there's consecutive days she misses, but she's still progressing. And so I don't ever get upset if we miss a day because I know we're going to get back in scripture study because it's too important. The biggest deal is to get everybody on board that this is something we won't sacrifice. And why it's important. And monthly family councils, if you have those every month and you're gathering together and you're saying, okay, how are we doing? And you have your list of things that maybe you go over. Whatever. But these are top priorities. Our top eternal priorities, how are we doing? And you just keep bringing people like everybody comes back together to that spot. It's going to be so much easier to overcome these obstacles together and say, yeah, we had that soccer tournament. Now we're back home and we're going to get back in, or maybe your kids will come up with solutions. Well, let's take this in the car. Let's do this. Because they'll also start recognizing the joy, the fruits of what happens when they're increasing relationship with Christ. Yeah, and really

what you describe there is repentance, right? That's what we should be doing all aspects of life. Yeah, that's true. We're just constantly coming back to the covenant path, right? Every time they go to church, take that Zachary and here we go, reset. Yeah. And that's part of the process instead of something's wrong. Yeah. And I think that's really important because we so easily feel shame. I just say, oh no, this is normal. This is life. We're in the messy part of life and we're in it. We're not going to let up on this gas pedal. Yeah. And so and sometimes we will. Sometimes we'll go through ups and downs, but just make sure that we pop up. As quickly as possible. In any other obstacles that you hear a lot as you go around and engage with those that are striving to teach in their homes. Oh, yes. One of the biggest ones I get is that they don't understand the scriptures. And if my answer to this is so simple, that we have to be first. We as parents have to be first. I am not going to want to teach my children unless my heart is lit on fire. So if I have just read about a miracle that Jesus did, and I was touched by it, I'm going to naturally want to teach my family. But if I haven't read those chapters or any stories, it's going to feel like a chore to kind of put myself in that space. And I always think of so my brother played baseball at BYU and he was a really good player.

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And loved baseball and still does. And I went to all the games. And so I knew a lot more about baseball than I would have otherwise. And so I could probably hold a pretty good conversation about baseball, but not like him. And when he starts talking about baseball, you learn things. And I think that that is something that we can apply to our relationship with the scriptures. If the more we are in them, then it's going to come into my bones. And then I can not teach my children. But if I'm not in them, then it's going to be hard. And so when they say to understand the scriptures, I just want to say you can't understand the scriptures. You have the capacity. God didn't give us his word in a way you can't, but he does require some sweat. Some brain sweat in that. Yeah. And so, but the reward on the other side of that is so far greater than the work it took. That you can also model that for your children because they are going to go through that same obstacle. There are going to feel like the scriptures are really hard to understand. I don't think you would ever find a script orient that didn't go through that process. And then say, oh, just keep going. And then you are like a fire that wants to share what you have. And so that obstacle comes with work, the part was like, I don't know the scriptures. But that is the most invigorating work. And president Nelson is constantly inviting us to do that work. He wants us to be the kind of saints that no scriptures. And it will show in your homes and your kids will fail your testimony differently than if we're just giving a lesson. Yeah. I agree. And the temptation there is some scriptures can be daunting depending on where you're at in the scriptures, some more than others. But the temptation is like, well, I need to go find a good commentary or I need to be able to listen to this podcast or the YouTube channel and they're going to break it down for me. And then when they do break it down and think, I would have never come up with that because I don't have four years of Hebrew studies or whatever it is. So how would you coach someone just beginning to engage with the scriptures when the temptation is the commentaries and

someone to tell me and explain it to me in modern day language? That's easy. Well, at first I use a lot of commentary. But there is no replacement for the scripture journal that I have. My knowledge of the scripture is scriptures is because of my scripture journals because if I slow down and read the scriptures and context, and so I want to start impression if I won one and then go slow. And let the spirit reveal, the biggest thing is that we go too fast. The spirit will reveal to us line upon line. And we often, if our goal is a chapter and we've moved too quickly, how's the spirit of hosted? Reveal to us unless we're writing and slowing down. And I have so many instances in my scripture journals where it's a while in the writing. That I get the answers. I'm not just writing down an answer or something that's coming to me. It's in the writing. And so that's one thing I would respond to that is use those commentaries, use those things, but go to the scriptures first and maybe you might need some commentaries to understand some are harder than others, but it gets easier. And it will get a lot easier. As you go on. But everybody has to flush it out. And that's why they're giving these YouTube they flushed it out and they have something to share. But so can you, you can get to a place where you have something to share that's just from your own perspective. Yeah. And there's something about that experience of I've had this where you're reading through and I'm trying to go slow and you find this verbiage or these words and then you start cross referencing of where else is that found and then sort of this bigger picture opens up of, oh my goodness and that knowledge and understanding is just like so much more precious to me than you gave it to you. Someone told me that, right? Yeah. And so it's really powerful. Well, and also, as you learn to do that, then you can also model that for your children. And the younger children are that can learn to do that to slow down. If a teenager is doing that, they're going to start learning how to recognize the voice of the spirit a lot easier because they're constantly being guided by the spirit. And I just think we don't often trust the youth to have those experiences, but they can. In fact, I had this experience once. I was teaching and I just said, I just felt impressed to say, I want everyone to just open up your scripture somewhere and start writing. And I always made them have a scripture journal in class. And I would teach them how to keep one. And I'm like, I just want you to write about what you're learning. And they started writing, and I'm sitting there watching, you know, waiting until they're done.

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And they wrote almost the entire class period. And this was the 90 minute class period thing. And we're talking like 30 students. And I remember just sitting there going, oh, we underestimated. Yeah. They have the gift of the holy ghost. And a lot of them that day were having an experience I've never had before. So the sooner we can do that. Or are you? What a gift? Yeah. Isn't it? It's totally takes the pressure off the teacher. Right now I'm subbing for seminary and there's sort of this I've got to get it together and what am I going to talk about in this? Once I get in there, I'm like, oh, actually there's a lot of knowledge that's already in the seats that I don't need to bring it to them. You just need to discuss it and then let the spirit do the work there. And I would say in a classroom setting to use time to let the spirit teach them and

then discuss that's a really good practice. So let's say you want to discuss a certain story or principle, give them time to flush it out on a piece of paper. And you will get so much more participation because the sphere had a chance to instruct them and now they can teach each other. I typically don't like to get called on in the class. That's happened a lot like Shannon, what do you think? And I'm like, I don't have any thoughts right now. But if I've had this chance to ponder about it, then that's form. And then the spirit can use everybody in the class as teachers. Instead of just the person in the front. And so when you're teaching, give them time to write, and then have a discussion after they write. Any advice you give as far as journaling with scriptures, because I get the idea of the concept, but it just read for versus do I just write what comes to mind, is there a questions? I could ask myself or advice. So the way I've kept to different kinds of scripture journals, I've kept a topical journal and then a chronological journal. So top culture journal, I got from a story I heard about president packer. And that he had kept, I don't even know if this is true. Be promoting rumors. I typically don't talk like this. But it's changed how I let's pretend it's true. So I heard that he had binders in his office and then topically. And then as he heard a story or a scripture, he would add it in. And then we'd give a talk on that. He would know if it was ready because the talk had kind of written itself. Oh, interesting. By gathering over many years. And I thought that's brilliant because how often do we hear that perfect quote? And then it's gone. And so I started by keeping a topical scripture journal. So I would just write a topic at the top, and I'd fill that page with things I didn't want to forget about that. And it could be a personal experience. It could be a list of scriptures. It could be a quote story, and then so I had my topical journal, but I also have a chronological journal, which is where I am just writing as I'm studying. And starting with first new 5 one, I'd write thoughts I had and you just stop when a thought comes. And that's basically, it's that simple. Stop when a thought comes. I can do that. Yeah. Everyone can. And we'll take you a lot longer to get through a chapter, but it won't feel like that. If you say I'm going to study for 20 minutes, you might go far past that. Yeah. Because of the experience you're having. So with the topical journal, is it is a one journal that each page has a different topic on it, or I've done a different ways. I've done it, so I assign topics. So it was seminary kids. I've done that before, so we'd go in and we put all these doctrines at the top. And then as we learned about that doctrine, then they would turn to that page and add to it. And I would go through and I would keep eternal with them. And so I could flip through my journal and see, oh, we haven't talked about this. So it's actually a good method in a home because then you know you're covering these important topics with your kids. And I mean, how do you is it alphabetical or how do you find like I've done it all the ways, but in the front I make a table of contents. So I number all the pages, and I quickly looked. And then if you fill up a page, so let's say faith gets filled up. And the faith is on page 26, and you have a blank page on page 76, you just go continued on pages, at least 6. All connects together. Just like the newspaper. And then all my handouts could be a small handout so they could tape into their journals. So it got to the point when I was teaching. I never needed a folder because everything was journal centered. And it was so fun because every Friday afternoon as I'm cleaning up, I could come in to grab their journal because I had to speak at church, and they knew there were resources for them in there that they did. And I still get messages all the time through Instagram, from former students. I still have nice work shows right now. Oh, that is so good. Yeah. And then your chronological journal is because sometimes the benefit of journaling is actually in the act of

journaling, not because you're going to come back 5 years, read this thing, this profound, so just keep reminding yourself that it doesn't matter what you remember or refer back to.

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It's just this act of getting deeper into your soul. The act is far more important. And what you're actually writing, except you're actually also leaving a record for your children. And that's a huge gift. What if you had your great grandfather's scripture? It would be the first thing I grabbed out of a burning building. And also to recognize the spirit can actually direct you into 2023 or something that needs to be read in 25 years. Through someone else. So there's a lot of benefits. It's actually leading the most valuable kind of heirloom behind. Yeah. So that's been, I mean, even before I had children, I had that thought when I was keeping him, and it becomes a journal loving counsel, and when you're writing that way, when you think I might be ready to my children. Our grandchildren. Who I like that reframe. Yeah, you've really focused. And you pull out really important principles. Yeah. And I'm a pretty good journal or day to today. I'm going to have a whole system which doesn't matter right now. But sometimes being in that state of mind of my little 8 year old Taysom, he's reading this as a 65 year old man. And I'm going to write a note to him here. This is what I feel about you. And I know it will be so profound when he finds that someday. I do that in my kids scriptures. I'll open them up and leave them out. So good. All right, but I'm just going to go here because it's on my mind. Moving, I feel like it's really been just from my experience of Sunday school. And Come Follow Me like it's been a rough transition at times from a Come Follow Me at home or personal study to right now we're at church and Sunday school. Any advice on that transition or what a teacher can do, the students can do of just making Sunday school second hour a more profound experience. The advice I have is for everyone. So it's not just for that. Because I think teaching principles apply everywhere. And what I would say to a teacher, I also say to a parent, one advice I would say is to look back, first of all, at what worked when you were youth, and then expect more than that. And I want to share that this is a quote that elder iron gave in 2001. So think about how different the world is from that time. And I think I started teaching seminary and I was already teaching seminary. And I might have been here at this because he was teaching to educators. And he talked about how the world is changing rapidly and how soon when older brothers and sisters go to the same schools, it'll be a rapidly different climate. And so this was a long time ago. He said this. So this is we're here. What he's talking about. And he said this, the spiritual strength sufficient for our youth to stand firm just a few years ago will soon not be enough, even the best of them are sorely tested and the testing will become more severe. The youth are responsible for their own choices, but as faithful parents, teachers, leaders, and Friends, we shore up the faith of young people. And we must raise our sights. And then he goes through and he's like, a lot of them are saying next year is a long time away. I'll see the bishop when I need to and they're putting off these preparation. They need to have. And he said, they say to themselves for now, I'll go with the flow, and then he said this. And I remember, like hearing this the first time, he said, well, the flow has become a flood. And soon will be a torrent. So this is in 2001. What do we know? I

know. He said it will become a torrent of sounds and sights and sensations that invite temptation within this and the spirit of God. Swimming back upstream to purity against the tides of the world was never easy. It is getting harder and may soon be frighteningly difficult. And it was that same year that the iPod came out. And think of the technology and we as teachers, as soon as the iPod came out, we were talking about how do we handle this? Then it was, how do we handle this? We had all this because we're this torrent of sights and sounds and sensations. And are you hands and other places too? But it was prophetic. Yeah. And this idea, he just like, we have to raise our sites like what we're doing now. We have to do better. And so that's why I said, okay, look back at what worked for you and now raise the bar. And we can't say, well, this is what my son is called teacher did, and I loved it. I loved it when he did hangman on the board. Very profound. All right, we have to think, what will shore up their faith? So that when they walk through those halls at school, they will be able to handle it. And not just be pure, but also be a great warrior. And to gather Israel and to fulfill whatever responsibilities God has for them.

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And so I learned this from elder bednar. And it's changed how I teach in my home. And in the classroom. And so he said he talks about this sequence of teaching that we need to go through. And he was a cod a sequence. He said, we need to teach and then invite them to act so that they will receive evidences. And so I think often we focus on the teaching part, like what am I going to teach? So, you know, like you're stepping in seminary, so what am I going to, how am I going to teach this lesson? And we often talk about teaching by the spirit and often we interpret that to mean one of my supposed to say this, share this, do this. But it's much broader the spirit is much broader than just telling you what to say or do. So the way I look at it is I want to teach so clearly that my children or the students do not misunderstand the doctor. And give the spirit this large surface area to work with and time. I'm not going too quickly and we're outlining the doctrines if they need visuals. They have visuals if they need definitions. What did I need to do to understand this? How do I replicate that to them? Do we need to draw a diagram? Do we need this quill was really enlightening. This series of scriptures have them draw the scripture. So they have to work through it. I mean, there's so many ways to teach. But the goal is, is that they're absorbing the truth. And the spirit is giving you're giving the spirit a chance and the spirit now has a room to reveal. Line upon line. And then as they learn these truth, then they will act upon them. And the spirit can invite them to act, but we can also show them ways to act. So in our home with our children, we can be inspired on specific invitations. And elder bedner said, I think we talked too much and invite too little. And so for example, if I'm teaching about tithing, there's these scriptures, there's these stories, and then invite them to act by telling them this is maybe they don't know how to pay timing. It might be someone who doesn't. And these are the promises given. And this is what it looks like when I do it. And this is how it can look like when you do it. And I wouldn't say, now you need to make sure to write heading check on the first of each month, because that's not doctor in, right? I'm not going to be prescriptive and telling them how to live the doctrine. But to show them what it is to live it. And then the evidence is will come.

And they will then receive witnesses or answers or understanding or miracles or evidence has come in many ways. But if we aren't inviting them to act, so they're receiving evidences, then we're just teaching a lesson. But if they can get to the evidences and the witnesses, their faith is growing and growing and he gave a talk a long time ago and it was just seminary in this two teachers and he had this spiral on the screen and he was talking about acting like we act in faith and then we see these evidences and he's like, and as you repeat this process over and over and over in your life is like a spiral that gets greater like a tornado space like shape. And we want them up towards we want their growing faith. I think this creator, this greater spiral. And that we start at the bottom by acting in faith and little things like this, like the mustard seed, but then it grows. And the way our faith grows is by learning, then acting, and then receiving witnesses. And so your testimony is growing, and all these principles, the spirit has all this room to give you evidences, and then when the hurricanes come at them, which they will. The spiritual whirlwinds will come. There is no doubt that all of our children will have tons of just everything that will shake their faith. But if they have evidences, it's going to be a lot harder for saying to deceive them. Yeah. And so we want to move to evidences. But we can't give evidences. That's the spirit's job. But we have to recognize that this is how they learn. And so as a parent, I might recognize an evidence. And point it out to my kids. A teacher probably won't, usually, have that kind of insight, like I said, a school teacher or a seminary teacher. But that's why we're all working together on this. And so that is one great thing about the company, all being aligned. I kind of know what they're learning at church. And so we're all kind of inviting the same things and I might be at home going, okay, look at all these miracles happening. Jesus life. And president Nelson said to expect miracles in our own life and how can we be like that and then all we're all working together with these older bed number model was teach invite teach that invite and then the evidence is. Okay. Right. So because the temptation is that teaching part, right? And I saw this a lot. There's even more tempting and maybe the Old Testament where it's there's so much there.

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So such long timeline you can break down the political dynamics in Israel. You can get lost in that. And by the end of the lesson, you're like, well, now you understand that. And it's maybe a little intimidating to bring in invitation in a classroom setting and even maybe a home. And any advice on how to formulate an invitation or anything like that. I would look ahead of time at the lesson. And I mean, there's going to be times when maybe the political background is going to take the whole lesson, but it's vital enough that it gives you greater understanding for the future. If it's not relax on that a little bit, like we're building faith and just touch on it enough, but don't get too deep into it. Get into the stuff that will change lives that's doctrinal. And if they want to, they can go dive into those things. I love that kind of stuff. So I could I could talk about that stuff all day, but if I'm teaching youth, I'm not going to go deep into that. We're going to go find a story that's going to change their lives. The Old Testament was one of my favorite years. I mean, one of the four favorite years in seminary. It is so full of things applicable to teens. But with

invitations, it's not hard. You look at the teaching, what am I teaching about? And how will this change their lives? And then we get the often they're together. The teaching is also the inviting. It's not like one, two, three. We're talking about tithing, for example, or prayer. And we're looking at the scriptures and seeing the promises. And we're telling stories. And we're sharing personal experiences. That's all the teaching is also inviting. Because a spirit can touch their hearts to invite. And I would be careful. Like I said, just to not be too prescriptive. But with my children, I might be a little more bold sometimes than with somebody else's children, like that's their parents job. But it's all connected. The teaching is also inviting. And letting them know that this can be theirs, and we're not just talking about a topic. This will change there's promises attached to this doctrine. What are those? What happens when we pray and effectively pray? You know, I might pull out elder bednar's talk about morning and evening prayer and how they work together. It's a creation of the day. And teaching that principle, they might be way more likely to pray in the morning just because they learn that. Yeah. And I guess the point being is driving them to action, right? Prevailing them from that room to action. And it can be tricky and maybe I'm just repeating myself, but I'm just thinking like even you can go to a scholar speaking. And it's really intriguing information that they're giving. And you can sit through 90 minutes of maybe a lecture. And it's like, wow, that was so cool. But, you know, I'm not going to act any different the rest of the day. And so just having that in mind, how can we propel them to action and maybe the invitation is just inviting them to invite themselves to do something with this doctor and not knowledge, right? Well, in the spirit, it's so good. If they're sitting there wanting to learn, they will always receive promptings of things to just tweak or improve. And general conference is a really good time to even see that model over the pulpit because they teach and then they usually invite. Yeah. And president Nelson is a master at it. He is. Watch his invitations and the teaching that happens before it and then the promise is given. And then when we partake of a prophetic invitation, it's always miraculous. Yeah. For sure. Awesome. All right, I've taken you too far off your outline. Anything else you need to cover before we wrap up. And I'm sure this won't be your last time on the podcast. If I have anything to say. We don't need to do it all. One thing that I have thought about a lot lately is how blessed we are to have the scriptures. And I know that sounds like, of course we are. But if you think about when this dispensation opened, we were blessed with so much scripture for the last days, we got the book of Mormon. We got the periphery price. And we got the doctrine of evidence. And the guidance that comes through those for our lives and these last days, they are priceless in our lives. And I just think if we can teach our families to just look at them and hold them and be so grateful for them. It's like manna from heaven for us. We are the Israelites in the last days and it is our manner from heaven. And as our children are growing and they're learning how to read the scriptures and they and it's not always easy. It's so important to normalize that because they'll tell themselves something's wrong with them. I've seen this happen through thousands of youth. If they can't read the scriptures and understand, they think they're the only ones. And I think we need to go to a great effort to normalize the process of we have to put in the effort.

And this is that the reward is so wonderful. On the other end, and to also not underestimate the power of the scriptures in our children's lives. And to break it down and let them see how beautiful. I think we often look at the scriptures and we touch on them and they stay on a topic. Like we were almost afraid to dive into the scripture story. And I think it's getting better, but I compare it off into holding it to the Grand Canyon and focusing on a tree. And then leaving. But if just the unfolding of a scripture together as a family, a story, like the first vision, for example, it's so loaded with doctrines and principles that can bless her families. But we might use it only as asking each other receive or risk this gospel was restored. But there's so much more in there. There's so much Satan coming after Joseph. I mean, that story is something I want my kids to know. Or when he said, I've learned for myself. I want my kids to know that phrase. Or the way he was treated after. Or, I mean, we can dive into that and just pull out so many doctrines and principles and one piece of advice I'd give to families is this is manna from heaven, these stories go in and just abide in the stories. Just be in them, see what you can pull out and you don't know which of those lessons, your children might see, and the longer you stay in it, like standing at the Grand Canyon, the longer you're there, the more you'll see. And as you do that, the screws will become more familiar to your children and they'll start to learn how to do that for themselves. And instead of saying this is the tree that I thought was important, they might say, no, that tree over there. I really needed. And the spirit might bring back to their mind at the exact right time. So that's one of the biggest pieces of advice I give is a slowdown in the scriptures and just drink, drink from them. And I know we have like this Come Follow Me chapters, but we don't always have to get through everything either. And so it's okay to slow down and know that in four years we'll be back around to it. For sure. I got a few more questions for you. But anything else, any other concept you want to make sure we hit before we wrap up? You can get over here. I think they can do that. I think families can do this. I think there's a lot of obstacles and we were sent here at this time. To do this. And so we can. Cool. If people want to find more about the details of your products and things that the resources you have available, or do you send them? The red headed hostess dot com. And what would you say? Obviously, especially in this day of Come Follow Me, there's lots of different resources, both the books are videos or whatnot. How do yours differ? My number one goal is accuracy, first of all, and to make sure everything's accurate, but also we really study teaching principles and then give tools for that. So if I really want to help children come into the scriptures at the youngest age possible and start to understand them on their level and then increase that skill and abilities slowly. And so we'd give things at all age levels. And then that's all meant to help bring them up and then they'll transition into different things as they grow. So we offer things for young children and that they're all scripture centered. Everything is scripture focused and it's to bring the scriptures alive and to get them into the scriptures. Awesome. Perfect. All right, last question I have for you is as you've reflected on your time as a teacher, I was being a teacher helped to become a better follower of Jesus Christ. One thing that always amazed me when I was teaching seminary. And still in the home now. Is when you are studying to teach youth or anyone, anyone you teach. You can feel the love of the lord for those people, and you become just like I can't do it for that. And you're like this in between. And my motivation to study when it was for that increased. It's sometimes it's hard to want to study for yourself. But if you study because you love your students and you love your family, then it's a different, it's like a different level. And I learned that over and over again. And it helped me know how to minister to my students and my children. So

when I'm when I think of being a follower of Jesus Christ, I think of being a disciple and trying to do as he would do. And do what he say what he would want me to say and minister at how he'd want me to minister. And as you're gaining this knowledge and people are dealing with life, you know the promise is given from the scriptures. Like you might not say, well, nephi said. But you know, it's not your best guess. It's not your unwise counsel or your, I don't know what to do, right? This is what the scriptures teach. And you've seen all these stories come alive in the scriptures and how the lord works on his people.

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And it changes how you can respond to help people in their individual lives. And I would use it all the time in my own home and in my own life. But it's the teaching has brought me to the scriptures. Which has changed everything. That concludes this episode of the leading saints podcast. We'd love to hear from you about your questions or thoughts or comments. You can either leave a comment on the post related to this episode. [Leading saints dot org](http://LeadingSaints.org) or go to [leading saints dot org slash contact](http://LeadingSaints.org/contact) and send us your perspective or questions. If there's other episodes or topics you'd like to hear on the leading saints podcast, go to [leading saints dot org](http://LeadingSaints.org) slash contact and share with us the information there. And we would love for you to share this with any individual you think this would apply to, especially maybe individuals in your ward council or other leaders that you may know who would really appreciate the perspectives that we discussed. And remember, go to [leading saints dot org slash 14](http://LeadingSaints.org/14) to access our full young saints virtual library. It came as a result of a position of leadership, which was imposed upon us by the God of heaven who brought forth a restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and when the declaration was made concerning the only true and living church upon the face of the earth. We were immediately put in a position of loneliness. The loneliness of leadership from which we can not shrink nor run away. And to which we must face up with boldness and courage and ability