SHARING THE GOOD NEWS WITH MORMONS

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR GETTING THE CONVERSATION STARTED

This PowerPoint is available at SharingWithMormons.com and TheMiracleOfForgiveness.com
MORMONISM RESEARCH MINISTRY

• Founded by Bill McKeever in 1979

• Many of our resources can be found at mrm.org
TWO-FOLD OBJECTIVES OF MRM

1. To share our faith with Latter-day Saints

2. To equip Christian saints like you so they will feel confident to share with Latter-day Saints
1 PETER 3:15-16

“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, \(^{16}\) keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”
INTRODUCTION: HOW THIS BOOK ORIGINATED

The #1 question people ask about evangelism to Mormons: “What is the best way to show my Mormon friend that Mormonism is wrong?”

What about a book that covered two dozen different ideas?
**BELLS AND WHISTLES**

- Introduction by Eric Johnson: “Should Christians Share the Good News with Mormons?”
- 6 spotlight features on folks in full-time Christian ministry
- Epilogue by Sean McDowell: “Go for It!”
- 2 appendices
  - The Gospel (Good News) According to the Bible
  - 101 Mormon Terms Defined (From Aaronic Priesthood to Zion)
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SHARING THE GOOD NEWS WITH MORMONS:
THE MIRACLE OF FORGIVENESS STRATEGY

Book written by Apostle Spencer W. Kimball in 1969

Kimball spent more than a decade working on the book

A few years later he became the 12th president
THE GOAL OF THIS STRATEGY IS TWO-FOLD:

• 1. Show the Mormon that Spencer W. Kimball got it right in his exegesis (interpretation) of unique LDS scripture

• 2. Show the Mormon that nobody is capable of doing everything that Kimball said must be done
BEGAN THIS STRATEGY IN 2014
I AGREE, IT IS NOT ONE OF THE FOUR SCRIPTURES

HOWEVER...
HOW COULD I USE THIS STRATEGY?

• Many Mormons own the book and have read it
• Explain that you find many of Kimball’s quotes to be interesting
• Ask, “Could I share some of those quotes with you and get your opinion?”
• Or, “Would you be willing to read this book with me so we could discuss it?”
“President Spencer W. Kimball has always been a prolific worker. He spent several summers working on a book which he later entitled *The Miracle of Forgiveness*. As one reads the book, particularly the first portion, one wonders if anyone will make it to the Celestial Kingdom. However, in reading the final portion, it is apparent that, with effort, all can qualify.”

“[T]he book filled a need, as evidenced by the printing of half a million copies in English and sixteen other languages between its publication in 1969 and his death in 1985 .... By 1998 the total in all languages was roughly estimated at 1.6 million copies.”

APOSTLE RICHARD L. EVANS

(6 months after the book was published) “Many of you would be familiar with President Spencer Kimball’s wonderful work on the miracle of forgiveness. I witness to you that God is a loving Father who will forgive and help us find peace and self-respect as we repent and show our sincerity by the lives we live. And there is nothing he asks of us that we cannot do; there is no requirement we cannot keep--if we are willing, if we want to. Repentance is a miracle, if it is sincere.”

--Conference Reports, April 1970, p. 16.
THE AUTHORITY OF GENERAL CONFERENCE

• Held twice a year for leaders to share their teachings
• Official teaching
• “…general conference becomes, in a sense, a supplement to or an extension of the Doctrine and Covenants”—Teachings of the Living Prophets Student Manual Religion 333, 2010, p. 73.
“In The Miracle of Forgiveness, Spencer W. Kimball gives a superb guide to forgiveness through repentance. It has helped many find their way back”

“I suggest that you read President Spencer W. Kimball’s inspired book *The Miracle of Forgiveness*. It continues to help the faithful avoid the pitfalls of serious transgression. It likewise is an excellent handbook for those who have committed serious errors and want to find their way back. Read the last two chapters first to appreciate the full miracle of forgiveness before reading anything else”

Church manual published in 2006 that all members were supposed to read in 2007.

The editors for this manual referenced *The Miracle of Forgiveness* 69 times, which makes up 12 percent of all citations found in the manual!
CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM DISPLAY

Temple Square area, Salt Lake City, UT
COLLECTOR’S EDITION GIVEN OUT IN 1998

“We are pleased to present to you this classic edition of President Spencer W. Kimball’s book The Miracle of Forgiveness. President Kimball’s enlightening teachings on the Atonement of Jesus Christ are a precious treasure for all who would follow the Savior.”
BUT, EVEN IF YOU DON’T USE THIS TACTIC

• Please consider these quotes taken from the book for the rest of the presentation.

• These are authoritative, written by an apostle who later became the president of the church. The pedigree is there
POINTS IN THE MIRACLE OF FORGIVENESS

1. People are responsible to keep the commandments of God (now)
“THIS LIFE IS THE TIME”

- Book of Mormon: Alma 34:32 (pages 1 and 10 of MOF)

- “For behold this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors…”
REGARDING THIS IDEA, KIMBALL WRITES ON PAGE 2:

“It thus becomes the overall responsibility of man to cooperate fully with the Eternal God in accomplishing this objective. To this end God created man to live in mortality and endowed him with the potential to perpetuate the race, to subdue the earth, to perfect himself and to become as God, omniscient and omnipotent.”
AFTER CITING ALMA 34:21-34, HE WRITES:

“...the time to act is now, in this mortal life. One cannot with impunity delay his compliance with God’s commandments” (Italics in original) (p. 10).
AFTER CITING A QUOTE FROM JOSEPH SMITH:

“While in this probation and in this life certainly means the period our mortal lives” (p. 248).
“It must be remembered that vicarious work for the dead is for those who could not do the work for themselves. Men and women who live in mortality and who have heard the gospel here have had their day, their seventy years to put their lives in harmony, to perform the ordinances, to repent and to perfect their lives” (p. 314).
POINTS IN THE MIRACLE OF FORGIVENESS

1. People are responsible to keep the commandments of God (now)
2. Unclean things cannot enter into God’s presence
“NO UNCLEAN THING CAN ENTER”

• “...All men, everywhere, must repent, or they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God, for no unclean thing can dwell there, or dwell in his presence…” (Moses 6:57 in the Pearl of Great Price)

• Kimball writes on page 19:

“But to God who is perfection, cleanliness means moral and personal cleanliness. Less than that is, in one degree or another, uncleanliness and hence cannot dwell with God.”
“Murder, adultery, theft, cursing,...flattery, lustfulness, infidelity, indiscretion, backbiting, whispering, lack of truth, ...quarrelsomeness, unthankfulness, inhospitality, deceitfulness, irreverence, boasting, arrogance, pride, double-tongued talk, profanity, slander, corruptness, ...foolishness, slothfulness, impatience, lack of understanding ...Sabbath breaking, envy, jealousy, malice, ...greediness for filthy lucre, disobedience to parents, anger, hate, covetousness, ...speaking evil of dignitaries, becoming a stumbling block ...”
“Akin to many of the other sins is that of the covenant breaker. The person baptized promises to keep all the laws and commandments of God. He has partaken of the sacrament and re-pledged his allegiance his fidelity, promising and covenanting that he will keep all God’s laws.”

These Things Doth the Lord Hate

COVENANTBREAKERS (P. 57)

thousands of teen-age drug addicts. Despite local, national, and international efforts to curb the distribution of such narcotics, a U. S. Senate crime investigating committee found such drugs easy to get in most of the nation’s cities.

One should shun this habit as he would any deadly plague. Young people as well as older ones should beware of tampering with such injurious habits as glue-sniffing, taking LSD, smoking marijuana cigarettes, and so on. These are not only sinful in and of themselves, but will lead to more serious drug habits and to the addict’s spiritual, moral, and physical downfall. All such narcotic habits should be repented of and ever after shunned. Even sleeping pills, tranquilizers and such which were thought to be harmless have sometimes brought injury and death; these might well be limited or avoided and, if used at all, taken only under the strict supervision of a reputable physician.

Covenantbreakers

Akin to many of the other sins is that of the covenant-breaker. The person baptized promises to keep all the laws and commandments of God. He has partaken of the sacrament and re-pledged his allegiance and his fidelity, promising and covenanting that he will keep all God’s laws. Numerous folks have gone to the temples and have re-covenanted that they would live all the commandments of God, keep their lives clean, devoted, worthy, and serviceable. Yet many there are who forget their covenants and break the commandments, sometimes deliberately tempting the faithful away with them.

Of those who break covenants and promises made in sacred places and in solemn manner, we can apply the Lord’s words as follows:

...a wicked man, who has set at naught the counsel of God, and has broken the most sacred promises which were made before God, and has depended upon his own judgment and boasted in his own wisdom. (D&C 3:12-13.)
POINTS IN THE MIRACLE OF FORGIVENESS

• 1. People are responsible to keep the commandments of God (now)

• 2. Unclean things cannot enter into God’s presence

• 3. It is necessary for people to abandon their sins (now)
“ABANDONMENT OF SIN”

• D&C 58:43: “By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them.” (p. 163)

• “True repentance prods one to action.”
“TRYING IS NOT SUFFICIENT”

“Nor is repentance complete when one merely *tries* to abandon sin. . . . To ‘try’ is weak. To ‘do the best I can’ is not strong. We must always do better than we can. This is true in every walk of life” (pp. 164-165).
“FORGIVENESS CANCELLED ON REVERSION TO SIN”

“Old sins return, says the Lord in his modern revelations. Many people either do not know this or they conveniently forget it. ‘Go your ways and sin no more,’ the Lord warned. And again, ‘...Unto that soul who sinneth shall the former sins return, saith the Lord your God.’ (D&C 82:7.)” (pp. 169-170).
POINTS IN THE MIRACLE OF FORGIVENESS

• 1. People are responsible to keep the commandments of God (now)
• 2. Unclean things cannot enter into God’s presence
• 3. It is necessary for people to abandon their sins (now)
• 4. By abandoning sins (completely), forgiveness is available
“D&C 1:31-32: ‘...I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance; Nevertheless, he that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven.’ (D&C 1:31-32)” (Kimball’s italics) (p. 201)
“One of the most fallacious doctrines originated by Satan and propounded by man is that man is saved by the grace of God; that belief in Jesus Christ alone is all that is needed for salvation. . . . Advancement to perfection can nevertheless be rapid if one resolutely strides toward the goal” (pp. 205-206).
WHAT ABOUT TEMPLE MEMBERS?

“Exaltation is available only to righteous members of the Church of Jesus Christ; only to those who accept the gospel; only to those who have their endowments in holy temples of God and have been sealed for eternity and who then continue to live Righteously throughout their lives. Numerous members of the Church will be disappointed. All will fail of these blessings who fail to live worthy lives, even though the temple ordinances have been done for them” (page 246).
“Too late! The terrestrial for them! It could have been the celestial and it could have been exaltation! But they procrastinated the day of their preparation. The same lamentable cry of ‘Too late!’ will apply to many of today’s Church members who did not heed the warning . . .”
WOULDN’T YOU HAVE TO BE SUPERHUMAN (TO SUCCESSFULLY KEEP COMMANDMENTS)?

• Page 286: “In the context of the spirit of forgiveness, one good brother asked me, ‘Yes, that is what ought to be done, but how do you do it? Doesn’t that take a superman?’ ‘Yes,’ I said, ‘but we are commanded to be supermen. Said the Lord, ‘Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.’ (Matt. 5:48.) We are gods in embryo, and the Lord demands perfection of us.”
HOW DOES ONE GET FORGIVEN?

“Your Heavenly Father has promised forgiveness upon total repentance and meeting all the requirements, but that forgiveness is not granted merely for the asking. There must be works—many works—and an all-out, total surrender, with a great humility and ‘a broken heart and a contrite spirit.’ It depends upon you whether or not you are forgiven, and when. It could be weeks, it could be years, it could be centuries before that happy day when you have the positive assurance that the Lord has forgiven you. That depends on your humility, your sincerity, your works, your attitudes” (pp. 324-325).
POINTS IN THE MIRACLE OF FORGIVENESS

• 1. People are responsible to keep the commandments of God (now)
• 2. Unclean things cannot enter into God’s presence
• 3. It is necessary for people to abandon their sins (now)
• 4. By abandoning sins (completely), forgiveness is available
• 5. A person must completely rid oneself of even the desire to sin
ELIMINATE DESIRE TO SIN

One final quote that I think completes this tactic

(After citing Alma 13:11-12): “It is that the former transgressor must have reached a ‘point of no return’ to sin wherein there is not merely a renunciation, but also a deep abhorrence of the sin—where the sin becomes most distasteful to him and where the desire or urge to sin is cleared out of his life” (pp. 354-355).
FINISH THE CONVERSATION BY ASKING

- Do you believe that Spencer Kimball accurately interpreted the passages that he cited? (If not, please show me any other way they could be interpreted.)
- Do you believe that the LDS Church no longer teaches what Kimball was teaching? (If not, please show me where they have abandoned his book or his teachings.)
- How are you doing at what Kimball said was necessary for a person to receive forgiveness of sins?
ON THE BOOK TABLE

$10 (highlighted ed., with notes)

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$18

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Mormonism contrasted with Christianity

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Simpler (teen) version of 101

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