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Dear Children:

Daddy is at it again, becoming more like Grandpa Hall (my father) every day.
Here's an idea for today:

VALUE

When giving a person something of value (particularly in the case of a child), it is important to give instruction to that person pertaining to the value of the thing (gift) that is being bestowed. This is true for both physical and spiritual gifts. In John 4:10, "Jesus answered and said unto her (the Samaritan woman at the well), If you knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." Jesus then proceeded to tell her and many other Samaritans that this woman brought to hear Him and this gift of God. In Matthew 7:9-10, Jesus said, "Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?" Well, it is important to explain the gift or the son may think that he has been given a stone or perhaps even a serpent. My friend Lee Knell whom you may remember from old Pleasant View Ward days had a friend, when a young boy, who was given a Christmas gift in an envelop by his grandfather. Upon opening the envelop, the friend discovered a funny looking piece of paper printed green on one side and black on the other. He had never seen anything like it before and said; "Look at this funny joke my grandfather sent me for Christmas" and he threw it in the fire of the nearby fireplace. Fortunately the boy's father overheard the conversation and was able to rescue the one hundred dollar bill before it was consumed.

I had a similar experience when I was eight years of age and in the third grade at the Marriott School. A boy approached me during recess with a small coin about the size of a dime but of a different color than any money I had seen before. He wanted to trade it to me for a nickel that he knew I had. I did not want to trade because the nickel was larger, but he persuaded me to make the trade anyway. When I got home from school my mother saw me playing with this coin and immediately wanted to know where I had obtained it. I hesitated to tell her and was somewhat evasive because I feared that she would get after me for making such a dumb trade. Mother was agitated, I am sure, because she thought I might have stolen this coin. You see, it was a \$10.00 gold piece. I did not know about \$10.00 gold pieces and neither did the boy who conned me into making the trade. The boy's grandfather had given the boy this gift for his birthday and had failed to tell the boy of its value.

It is, no doubt, easier to tell one the value of currency than of the value of less tangible gifts, and this is all the more reason that we should take pains to tell our children of the value of the gospel gifts—blessings, ordinations, prayer, the priesthood, revelation, marriage, fathers, mothers, brothers & sisters, church leaders, missions, motherhood, heritage, and so on.

LOVE, Dad

Dear Children:

This is a sure sign of old age, and might be labeled Mom & Dad's little sermonettes. Yesterday in sacrament service, however, an idea was given that I thought you might be interested in implementing in your own homes, especially in the light of lack of training in foreign languages in the schools. Brent Barnett told us his mother was studying German at the University, and so to help her remember her vocabulary, she made neat little signs and put them all over the house, labeling the common items, such as doors, windows, tables, etc. with its foreign equivalent. She also posted the daily menu in German. You can see that the children (those who could read, at least) would pick up some basic foreign words. This might also be implemented for preschoolers to have the common things labeled with the English equivalent. Knowledge of a few basic reading words would soon develop in the children.

Tracy and Betsy: I know that Betsy may (at least at first) be dismayed by the coming birth of Jr. #7. Betsy, there may be a reason why the Lord is sending those children so fast. One never knows what the future holds for any of us. I know that I finally decided that the Lord was going to send our children when he wanted to, and it seemed that it happened that way no matter what we did to circumvent or space the arrivals. In addition to your (and Tracy) having them so fast, your children are exceptionally intelligent, and an intelligent child is more of a challenge to raise than one of average intelligence. The Lord must figure you can do it, or he would send those choice spirits somewhere else. In addition, I know the static you will be getting from nonmembers. In Utah at least you get the sustaining approval of church members for large families, and I am sure that for the most part you receive that in California where church members are concerned. Certainly the Lord will bless you and your little ones. And if you want to give any of them away, you can send some to Sherlene. (Ha!) (Fat chance!)

By the way, Josie deHoyos just had her 12th, a girl. She and Ben had their goal set at a dozen, and there have been times in the past when that goal seemed impossible. The doctors have been telling her not to have any more for about five children, but she has gotten along just fine most of the time. About the eighth she did have a bad time during the pregnancy and the delivery but she went right ahead. They take up three of the side rows at church (always at the back, so they can get out with a crying baby), and Ben is always very supportive of Josie. When you have so many, it's almost a full time job to raise them. However, seven did not seem too many when we had them. I can remember when we went to Schenectady, the Hoppers had seven and I thought, "How does she ever manage?" When I look back at it now, I think I managed better than she did. Thank goodness they came one at a time.

May the Lord bless all of you as you raise your little ones. You need all the blessings you can get in this wicked world.

Love, Mom