

Know Who You Are -- Daughters of God Week

The idea to help young women know and understand their true identity as daughters of God came about after listening to a talk by Sheri Dew. Sister Dew spoke about her experience in a ward YW presidency where all of the YW, their parents, and the Bishopric had a special fast for the girls to KNOW and gain a testimony that they are literal daughters of God. Sister Dew talked about how important that knowledge and testimony is, and that if a young woman knows and understands that truth, everything else in their lives will fall into place.

Taking inspiration from Sister Dew's experience, our YW presidency sought to help the girls in our ward to **know who they are** and gain a testimony of that knowledge. We hoped that once they had this testimony, everything else about living the gospel would make sense: dressing modestly, keeping the Sabbath day holy, morality, etc. Knowing all of our YW were unique, we knew that not all of our YW would have the same experiences or feel the same or gain the same testimony, but we wanted the week to be memorable for each of them, no matter where they were on the spiritual spectrum. We hoped to plant a seed so that someday, later on in life, if they ever did want a testimony of who they are, they would hopefully remember this week and what took place.

The culmination of the experience is a fast. We coordinated a fast for all the YW, as well as inviting all of their parents, all the YW leaders, the bishopric, ward council, stake presidency, and stake YW presidency. The purpose of the fast for all participants was for the young women to gain a testimony for themselves—to KNOW WHO THEY ARE, that they are a literal daughter of Heavenly Father, who loves them. We recognized that there were some of our girls who had never fasted a full fast before, and many who had not fasted for such a specific purpose. But we knew that there was great power in having the girls fast together, in addition to the fasts of those who loved them.

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Ahead of time:

Temple

Attend the temple as a YW board to be prepared for this week.

Mail Parent Letter

Send a letter to the parents explaining what you are trying to do for their daughters. Send the letter about a week ahead of time (attached) outlining the purpose and activities of the, Daughter of God week. It is also nice to include a FHE lesson that can help them reiterate what we are trying to help the YW learn. (attached idea)

Envelopes / Packets

Choose 7 leaders to be assigned a day. Example: Kelly – Sunday; Nicole – Monday; etc. The person in charge of that day will fill enough envelopes for all the YW for that day with something to read, listen to, or ponder about being a daughter of God (a story, conference talk, scripture, song, poem, etc...), and then a question for their journal. The question is to have them “act” upon what they have just read / heard.

Some ideas:

A CD of a song could be placed in the envelope and then the question could be, “How do the words in this song make you feel?”, “How do you feel when you are choosing the right and are confident in who you are?”

Or

A story with a scripture to look up. Then the question could be, “After reading the scriptures, kneel in prayer and ask Heavenly Father if HE is there. Wait on your knees for as long as you can. Record in your journal how you felt.”

The leaders should really take time to pray, plan, and prepare what to put in the envelope for her day. I will include a “Letter from Heavenly Father” that I used for my day. If the leader really takes the time to ponder and pray and hopefully spend time in the temple she will know exactly what to put in.

You will want to make one envelope for each YW and leader so you can all participate and each envelope is marked with the day on the front. Then all of the 7 envelopes are placed in one packet—one for each girl / leader. The girls will be encouraged to take the packet home after the kick-off Sunday lesson and each morning/night open the envelope for that day and do what is inside.

Invite Fast Participants

Explain what you are doing and invite the bishopric, ward council, stake presidency and stake YW presidency to all join in your fast on the second Sunday.

Slideshow

Have a leader put together a slideshow ahead of time for use on the fast Sunday meeting. Without the girls knowing, we had each parent send in a picture of their daughter on her blessing day, her baptism day and then a picture of her parent's on their wedding day in front of the temple if you can get that. Just make this work. Some of our girls were not blessed, fine - just do a baby picture. Some girls were baptized older than eight – no big deal, use that photo. Some parents were not married in the temple – that's okay – you can just do a picture of the mother in her dress or just a photo of them in their wedding clothes. Some parents were divorced and didn't want photos in – don't put them in.

The slideshow went to the song, "What Heaven Sees in You".

Here is a version of the song we used:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwAYjTmCVNU>

At the beginning of the slideshow we had a picture of the Newport Beach temple with the words, What Heaven Sees in You. We then had all of the blessing photos together, then the baptism photos and then the wedding photos. We then ended the slideshow with a picture of Christ. The slideshow was set perfectly to go with the song. Did this in iphoto.

Plan your "Break the Fast" Dinner

Find a home in the ward to have a dinner. Set up the day before. We just had half of the families bring salads and the other half bring

soups. The YW presidency brought rolls and brownies. Remember to invite the Bishop to offer the prayer to break the fast.

Week Activities

The entire activity is Sunday to Sunday. It works well if you have this end on a regular fast Sunday.

First Sunday:

We had a combined YW lesson. The YW president taught and the theme was “You are a daughter of Heavenly Father and He loves you.” The girls were then sent home with their packets for the week with the instruction to open one envelope each day. (lesson ideas attached with quotes)

Mutual Night:

You could have a special guest speaker come and speak on the topic “Daughter of God.” We listened to a talk on CD by Laurel Christensen entitled, “Who’s That Girl.” We had the girls come in their pj’s and bring blankets and pillows and we turned the lights down low and they just laid on the ground and listened and ate healthy treats. Link to CD <http://deseretbook.com/Whos-Girl-What-God-Knows-Each-His-Daughters-Laurel-Christensen/i/5005475>

Saturday Night:

We all gathered together at a leader’s home for a pizza dinner with the YW leaders and girls and our Bishop. And then our Bishop offered a prayer to start our fast. We made sure we did this 24 hours before we would be breaking our fast together.

Second Sunday:

During the 3rd hour, we had all of the YW and their parents meet in the chapel. Special arrangements did need to be made for the parents who were primary teachers, but we did our best to make sure they all attended. We also invited the bishopric. The YW sat together in the first few rows of the chapel and the parents sat at the back.

We had an opening song, prayer, YW theme and then the president and 2 counselors took a few moments to give a VERY brief testimony. We then showed the slideshow. Then each YW got up and bore testimony OR spoke about her feelings from the week OR read from one of the nights she wrote in her journal. Then we had the Bishop close the meeting and ended in prayer.

After this meeting all YW and their entire families, the bishopric and their families and the YW board and their families all went to a home in the ward and the bishop said a prayer to break the fast and then we all ate together.