

# glyph *notes*

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## 2015-16 Book of Mormon Tour of the Yucatán

By Sherrie Kline Smith

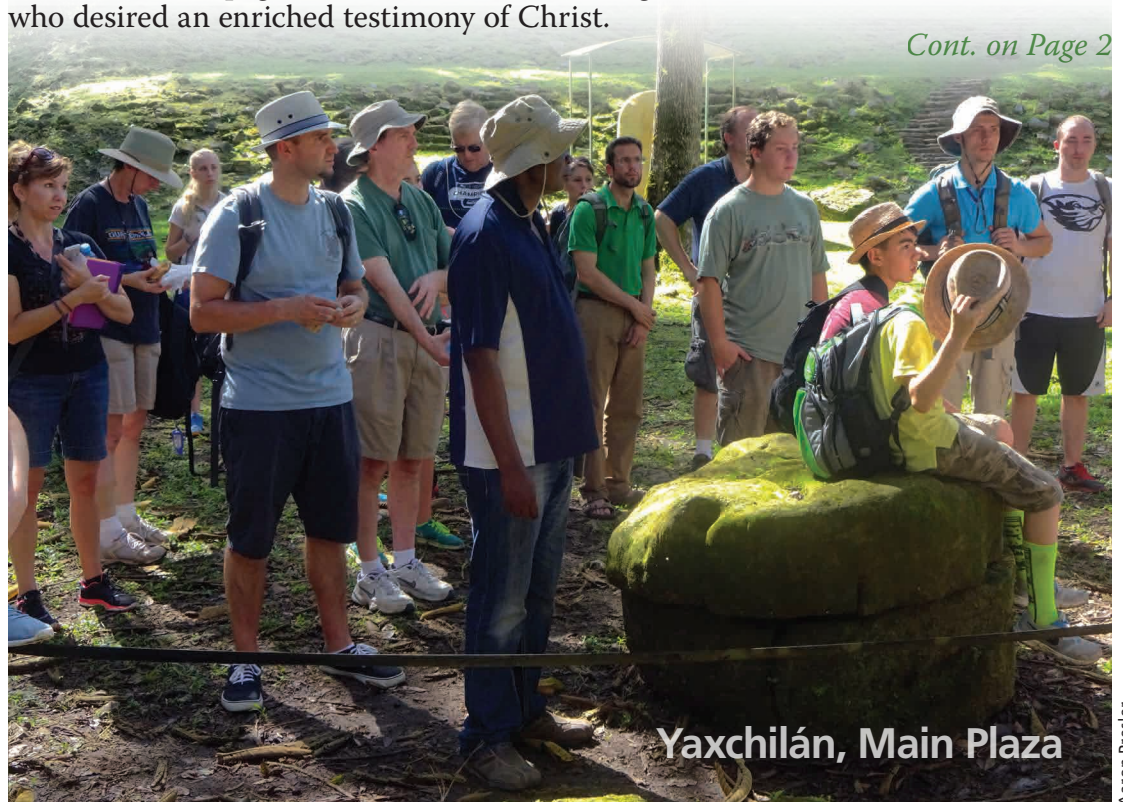
*On the day after Christmas 2015, 34 of us began our journey through lands where peoples of The Book of Mormon had lived.*

We explored nine sites and enjoyed three museums. Of all the tours Lyle and I have led since 1987, this one had several firsts.

- A large group (23) from someplace other than the Independence area (the Northwest) formed the core group of travelers.
- This group was the best prepared, having studied for two years beforehand.
- There were more men than women.
- This one had the greatest number of youth at one time.
- One of the tour members came from Africa.
- It stormed so hard while on the river returning from visiting Yaxchilán we couldn't see in front of us!

On the next pages are testimonies and thoughts from some of those travelers who desired an enriched testimony of Christ.

*Cont. on Page 2*



Yaxchilán, Main Plaza

Aaron Presler

*The trip to Mexico was, of course, absolutely amazing and beyond my highest expectations. The sites were spectacular, and the knowledge and experiences gained cannot be measured.*

*Deanne Murnieks*



2015-16 Tour (Cont. from Page 1)

**Brian Herren**

Salem, Oregon

**Even the Stones Bear Record of Him**

And when he [Jesus] was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice, and praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had seen; Saying, Blessed is the King who cometh in the name of the Lord, peace in heaven, and glory in the highest!

And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude, said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them. If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out (Luke 19:36-39).

As we explored the garden places of Quintana Roo, Chiapas, and Campeche, the unadulterated beauty was exceeded only by the testimony of Jesus

Christ which gave meaning to the beauty. If ever the stones would cry out, they surely bear record today of a loving Savior whose work and presence is etched in the collective cultural record and archeological trail of a people descended from those who received ministry from Christ himself. To pass through the expansive ball court at Chichén Itza and find a stone tribute made to “the bearded white God” leaves little question about the Pre-Columbian exposure of the indigenous populous to our Lord and Savior. Even the stones bear record of him! To see the cenote where inscriptions on metal plates had been discovered (Chichén Itza), a stone box with rounded top just as Joseph Smith had once described (Chichén Itza), and pyramids built in triadic formation (Palenque) reminded us again and again that the Spanish did not bring Christ to the Pre-Columbian peoples—he had already been there! Even the stones bear record of him.

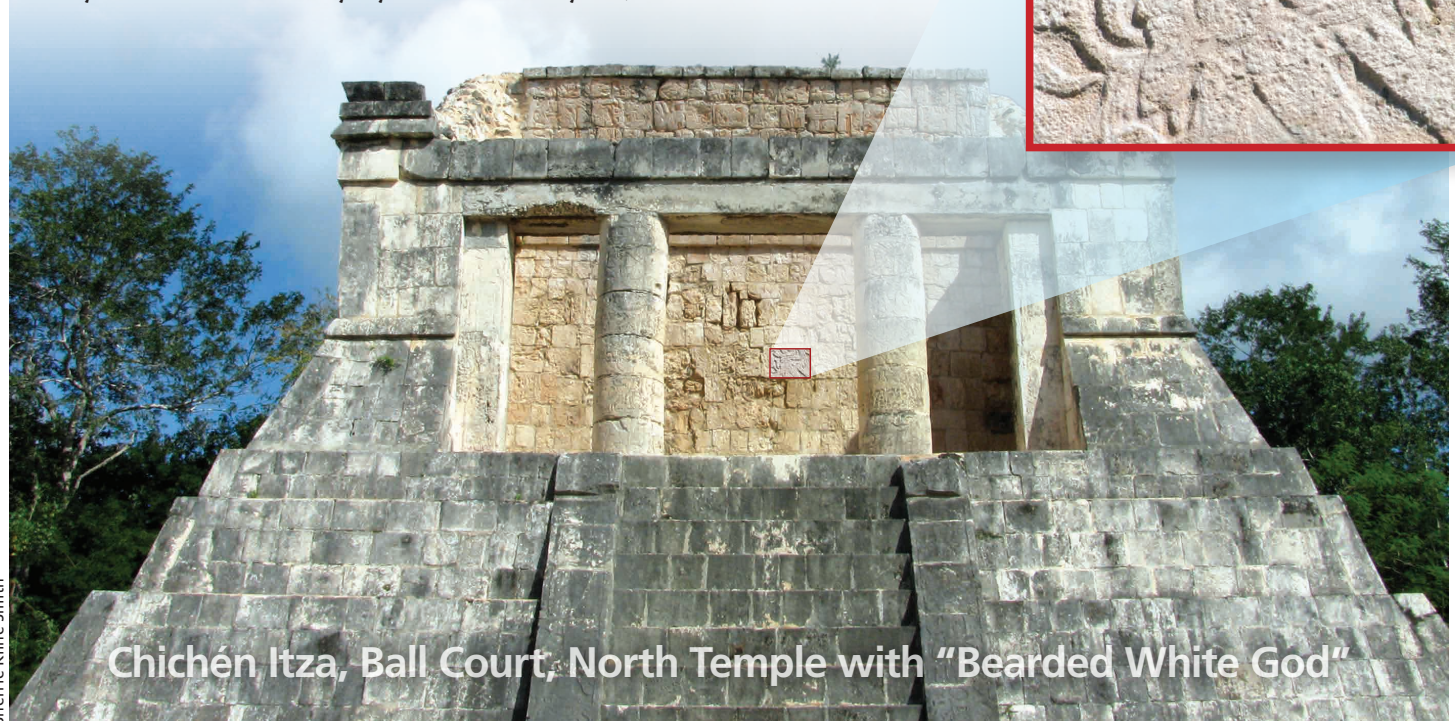
The Temple of the Cross at Palenque remains a monument to his sacrifice and a promise to his chosen peoples. The moat and fortification at Becan brought to memory the scriptures found in Alma 21 and the imagery of Captain Moroni. To walk amongst these ancient stones held a beauty of its own, rising stunningly and unexpectedly from jungle canopy, but to see them bear record of Jesus Christ stirs something deep within a believer’s heart.



Sherrie Kline Smith



Sherrie Kline Smith



Sherrie Kline Smith

Chichén Itza, Ball Court, North Temple with “Bearded White God”



Beyond the monuments, a people emerged in my imagination as I walked through courtyards and kitchens, temples and tombs. This is where it happened. I looked upon a great wall at Kohunlich and began to picture how King Benjamin might have delivered the word of God to a people filling the courtyard below. It made sense. The peacefulness at Dzibanché and the raw beauty was so breathtaking that I could not help but bow in reverence to the God of Israel, the one who had inspired the ancestral inhabitants of these sacred places. God spoke to men there. He speaks to them still.

We traveled in a group of 34, God going before us, guarding our flanks, keeping our rearward. He delivered us, instructed us, and molded us. To match the record of a thousand years, God made of us his living temples. As the stones bore record of Christ in their own way, we bore record of him in song, worshipping morning and night and singing with exuberance from the tops of pyramids 200 feet tall. The young helped the old, and the old loved the young. God made of us living stones, the kind by which his church is built, and brought into perfect harmony the past and the promised future. I could

feel his Holy Spirit at work in our quiet times. We walked in the garden places of the Lord, moved in awe up the Usumacinta River [most likely the River Sidon] worshipped in the Land of Zarahemla, and found in every place the everlasting testimony of Jesus Christ.

God ministered to the native children at the hands of our own. We gave and received in fellowship and love. What a blessed respite to hold the hands of the humble, the jewels of the earth, and those poorest in resource. I will never forget when a boy— who looked to have nothing—delivered into my hand a precious rice paper candy. I realized that he had been given the treat by one of our children,

and having nothing of his own, still thought it better to give into my hand than to delight himself in the prize. How precious our brothers and sisters in faraway lands! How holy the God that brings us together! How great are the humble in the eyes of the Lord!

We did not travel to gain a reason to believe or to evidence the substance of a faith firmly felt, but to exercise it all in the presence of our Lord, for his glory and honor and the vouchsafed

*Cont. on Page 4*



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**Dzibanché, Temple of the Owl**

Sherrie Kline Smith



2015-16 Tour (Cont. from Page 3)

testimony which neither fades in time or falls with fear, "Saying, Blessed is the King who cometh in the name of the Lord, peace in heaven, and glory in the highest!" (Luke 19:37). We add our record to that of the stones and cry out in unison, the dead and living, "Blessed is the King."

**Aaron Presler**

Independence, Missouri

**Excerpt from Memories of Yucatán**

**Day 4, December 29 - Calakmul**

Calakmul was a large, politically powerful Maya

city, probably the reason it contains one of the largest pyramids in Mesoamerica. It's a unique pyramid. Most tall pyramids were added to, layer upon layer over several centuries, meaning the tallest layers were built long after Book of Mormon times. This



Above: Aaron Presler (far left) shares a moment with the Grain Valley saints at the summit of a pyramid in Calakmul.

one in Calakmul, however, was built to its current height during its original construction. Therefore, it existed, as it stands today, when Christ appeared in the New World, giving it special meaning for Book of Mormon believers.

We all looked forward to our climb to the summit. No evidence has yet been uncovered suggesting Christ actually walked on this particular pyramid. It was, however, a major city in his time and may well have been a place he visited. It's speculation to assume so. Still, climbing it evokes a reverential feeling knowing it's at least possible. However, my most precious memory of Calakmul is not about the stones, but about the people climbing the stones.

During my extensive climb to the top, I was winded much of the time. I climbed steadily, although cautiously, fairly certain I would make it if I paced myself. Being 61 years old has its downside.

About three quarters of the way up, I passed Steve and Traci Scuito, a couple from the Salem, Oregon, congregation. They were struggling much more than I was. Others in our group were encouraging them along their climb, but by this time, Traci was in tears, a combination of pain from climbing, certainty she could go no further, and deep disappointment in failing to achieve the summit. I offered that she had climbed enough. Certainly, she was on the portion of the pyramid found in Jesus' time, and she could take comfort in knowing that. I left them, headed to the summit, assuming their climbing was over.



Becán Guides

Aaron Presler



Later, I sat on top of the world (or so it seemed), admiring the view and enjoying songs of praise from our tour group. Suddenly, two heads peeked above the topmost step of the mighty pyramid. Steve and Traci came into full view as they conquered the final step. An enthusiastic cheer arose from this tallest of vantage points. The two had made it!

The joy in their faces was immense. Just as joyful were the faces of those who had encouraged them and in some small way shared in their accomplishment. This seems like a story of perseverance, tenacity, or even enduring till the end. But on this day, from this summit, God allowed me to glimpse the kingdom.

The kingdom? Let me explain.

While each of us joy in a personal success, there is deeper joy in shared success. Our relationship with Jesus parallels this. We find deep joy in a personal relationship with him and his promise of salvation, but the fullness of the gospel also includes his kingdom. The Restoration's vision of Zion suggests that our joy is not complete simply knowing our own individual salvation is sure in him. As important as personal salvation is, in Zion, joy is only fully complete when that joy is shared with others and we rejoice in the ascent of all.

I found more joy in Steve and Traci's ascent than in my own. I rather expected I would make it, though I had occasional doubts. Their ascent, on the other hand, was unexpected and completely joyful for all of us who had some small part in it.

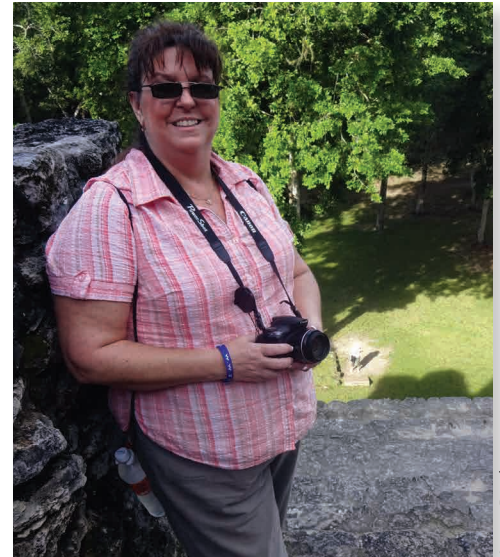
That is the nature of the kingdom.

**Traci Scuito**  
Salem, Oregon

The trip was so wonderful. There are so many testimonies that could be shared. I was so blessed with the kindness of my brothers and sisters assisting me along the way. Calakmul was a favorite for me because I wanted to climb the highest pyramid, and if that was all I could do, then I would be happy. The climbing of the Structure 2 pyramid at Calakmul, though, did take its toll on me.

I was in tears when I got to the top (or what I thought was the top!). But Brother Aaron said there were a few more steps to go. I honestly didn't think I would make it, but if I didn't try, I would regret it. So I climbed/crawled up the last 20-25 steps with a helping hand for the last step. The view was amazing—seeing the tops of the pyramids—and being above the rain forest. The Lord blessed me that day and each day after, because I was able to

*Cont. on Page 6*



Aaron Presler



**Return from Yaxchilán, Soaking Wet from Storm**

Sallie Presler



**2015-16 Tour** (Cont. from Page 5)

climb many more pyramids, including one of the longest staircases in the Yucatán at Ek Balam.

**Steve Scuito**

Salem, Oregon

The part of the trip I noticed was seeing how our youth did everything they could to help others.

The amazing thing for me was climbing the 20-story pyramid and the 15-story stairway with my brothers and sisters. Only Traci and I knew that three weeks earlier I had fallen off the ladder while putting up Christmas lights. I had hurt

my right knee, and Traci had to help me get up and into the house. I did not go to the doctor because I was afraid of what he would say. I used Traci's brace for several days and then the ace bandage. I prayed to our Lord several times. It felt better by the trip. We bought a walking stick for Traci, but it was really for me. The Lord is always with us, and we have

such a strong church group. I would not trade our fellowship for anything. I thank everyone so much for letting me be part of this church family.

**Isaiah Wilton**

Buckner, Missouri

The testimony I am sharing is not about the sites or pyramids. When we arrived in the Hotel Mision in Palenque, we learned they did not have our reserved rooms. Most people in this situation would have been angry or upset, but the people in our group started to pray and ask God to meet our needs for that night, which he did.

When we got back home, I noticed when we would go out to eat or to the movies or even to church, there were people who would get upset or frustrated over small things instead of the things that really matter. When we went out to eat, I noticed that there were people who would complain about their meal. In Mexico, though, there were people who did not know where



Aaron Presler



Sallie Presler



Sherrie Kline Smith

**Ek Balam, Ben Herren,  
Youngest Tour Member**



Sallie Presler

**Calakmul, Grand Plaza**



their next meal would come from. We need to trust the Lord and he will provide. God did provide for our needs that night at Palenque. When we complain, we are telling him that what he blesses us with is not good enough for us.

**Deanne Murnieks**  
Salem, Oregon

God is so good and his blessings are so generous. I will never cease to be amazed by his constant goodness. The trip to Mexico was, of course, absolutely amazing and beyond my highest expectations. The sites were spectacular, and the knowledge and experiences gained cannot be measured. I have always loved Book of Mormon archaeology and was very excited for this opportunity to see The Book of Mormon lands first hand. I was

especially blessed that my children were also able to attend and receive such marvelous testimonies of God's goodness.

Many things were done in preparation for this trip, both spiritual and temporal. One of the things we decided to do as a family was to bring with us enough Spanish copies of The Book of Mormon to be able to give one away each day of the trip. We were extremely touched by all of those to whom we were able to give the books. Their excitement at receiving them was truly a delight to our souls. The word of God is like honey to the soul, and to give it as a gift is a blessing to both the recipient and the giver.

The fellowship among the Saints was also particularly sweet, and I feel that new relationships have been kindled and old ones strengthened in marvelous ways. What a blessing it is whenever we are able to have even a small taste of what it will be like when we are truly of one heart and one mind. All of these things were anticipated and even expected. What was completely unexpected was the way that God used this time to answer many prayers that had been on my heart, large and small; most of them completely unrelated to the purpose of the trip, many of them from years ago, and far too many to be numbered. We had been given time to prepare spiritually for the trip and fully expected to receive a blessing from his merciful hand. Yet, his blessings were so abundant they surpassed any expectation I could have had.

With the busyness of our lives lately, I needed

*Cont. on Page 8*



Sherrie Kline Smith



Sherrie Kline Smith



**Palenque, Temple 19**

Sherrie Kline Smith



**2015-16 Tour** (Cont. from Page 7)

this extended time away to focus on the Lord more than I knew. He strengthened my heart and renewed my faith in ways I didn't even fully realize that I needed or were possible. He remembered prayers that I had offered for my children and our family, long ago, and showed how he is working in our lives to fulfill those promises. He renewed my zeal for the work of his kingdom in these last days, and blessed my children with the satisfaction that comes from sharing the fullness of the gospel to those who have never heard. I feel so humbled and inadequate to receive such abundance from him when I know that I, of myself, am completely unworthy. Yet, he is the most generous and loving of fathers.

**Ginger Murnieks**  
Salem, Oregon  
**Testimony #1**

I was recently privileged to attend a PSI Tours trip to Mesoamerica. On Monday, the first day, we awoke to excitement in the air because

we were to travel to a site dating back to Book of Mormon times. As we traveled to Dzibanché, a site with a pyramid whose base dates back to AD 250-600, the anticipation grew. We arrived at the site and climbed our first pyramid of the trip. As I stood on the top of that pyramid, high above the trees, I knew The Book of Mormon is true. The Book of Mormon talks of many battles that were fought between the Lamanites and the Nephites. A building such as this could have easily been used as a lookout tower in Book of Mormon days. There was a beautiful spirit in that place.

As I thought about the Godly people that could have lived in that city, my mind was drawn to how God was with them. He gave Nephi faith, Captain Moroni courage, King Benjamin wisdom, Ammon and Aaron zeal, and Moroni hope. But that same God is with me giving me everything I need if I will only seek first to bring forth his kingdom. I now read The Book of Mormon with more fervor knowing more fully than I did before that it is true.

**Testimony #2**

Before we left for our trip, my mom purchased nine copies of The Book of Mormon in Spanish to give away to Lamanite descendants in Mesoamerica. We planned to give one away every day of the trip. At first, I was a little unsure about this, because I didn't know how people would receive the books, but I was excited to share the gospel with those who had never heard it before. God blessed us tremendously!



Aaron Presler



Aaron Presler

**Festivities in Cancún**







2015-16 Tour (Cont. from Page 9)

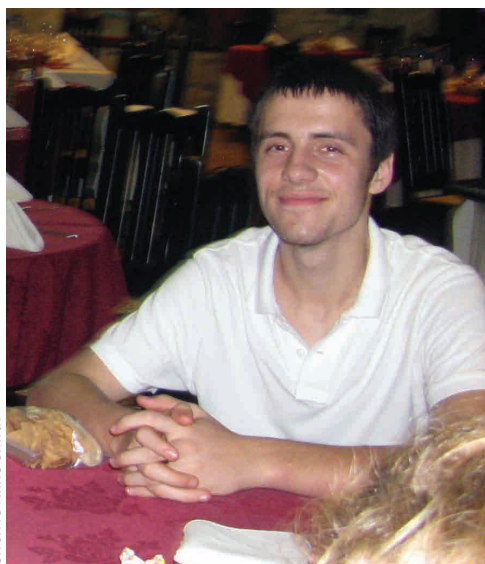
people would like that, because in America certain people dislike The Book of Mormon very much. So I was both excited and a little nervous. However, when we gave a copy to them, they were overjoyed to receive it, taking it with gladness, and were very happy. My sister was talking about the promise in the Scriptures where it says that the descendants of the people that once inhabited that land shall receive the word with joy. I was very happy and thanked the Lord. It was amazing that the scripture was being fulfilled right in front of my eyes.

The trip was amazing. I learned so much and grew closer to the Lord.

**Vitaliy Surova**  
Salem, Oregon

God is so wonderful. There are so many instances in which he captivated and filled my soul on this trip. After many months of worrying about


the trip, the Lord gave me such peace in the weeks and days beforehand. I know that the Saints were praying, so I wish to thank you all for your prayers; I felt them. Even before stepping onto the ancient lands of Mesoamerica, the Lord began



Sherrie Kline Smith

to fix my gaze upon him and his ways. I admired his beauty from an airplane window, his stunning snow-capped mountains, coated with a red sheet of light from the rising sun. My heart overflowed with adoration for our King as I looked upon his gorgeous craftsmanship. This adoration that I felt for him went with me the entire trip.

I remember the stillness that was upon me as I spent the first night by myself. I remember the sweet Spirit that awoke me in the morning. This same Spirit would rise with me each morning and gave me rest each night. Some mornings, the Lord would waken me hours before dawn, leading me in prayers. Some nights, he would lead me in studying his word late in the night. Each day, he grew my faith. Each day, he taught me his ways. Each day, he allowed me to speak with the Saints, to listen to them, to pray with them, to be ministered to by them. How many times he filled me with laughter and with joy. How many times he filled me with calmness.

It was so incredible to stand upon the grounds where the Saints of old stood. I remember the humility that entered into my heart and the portion of the Spirit that I felt as I stood on top of a few structures, as I walked in those jungles, and as I sat on an altar. I am still in amazement at the way his Spirit dwelt with us as we worshiped him. He transformed a poolside into a holy place, the entrance of a hotel into a sanctuary, the corner of a hotel into an upper room, and a beach into sacred ground. Even now, looking back, I am still in awe at the love of our Lord. I can't thank him enough for his goodness, for the brothers and sisters I met from Missouri, for the roommate that blessed me so greatly, for the prayers of the Saints, and for his captivating Spirit that was with us and still abides with me today. How benevolent is our Father. 

Aaron Presler



# Glyph Dwellers

Dwellers - to live and have a home in a particular place



Hi guys!  
I was thinking about all the adventures we've had since we began this journey. God is so good!

## The Adventures of Beezrom

By Mindy Mulheron  
Illustrations by Aaron Presler

When I think about the amazing things I've seen and the blessings we've witnessed, I just have to stop and praise him. No matter where we've been, or what's been going on, God has never left us alone. And maybe that's the most important thing to remember about all of it: God never left us alone.

When Lehi was brave enough to follow God's direction and leave the only home he'd ever known for a journey he didn't understand, God was there. When Nephi got the plates of brass from Laban, God was there. When Nephi built a boat—having never built one, God was there. When the brothers of Nephi, over and over, tried to hurt him, God was there.

God was there when the people faced trials. God was there when bad guys tried to attack. God was there when lives were changed forever and altered the history of the land.

Think about the stories of Alma the Younger and the sons of Mosiah: God was there too. He orchestrated those things to work for the good of the righteous.

In the barges underwater with the Jaredites, God was there. In the battle with Helaman's warriors, God was there. In the darkness when all seemed lost, God was there.

And remember the day when God was

physically there?! When Jesus came down and talked with the people? I still get chills when I think about that day. My Lord and Savior—in the flesh, in front of my eyes—God was there.

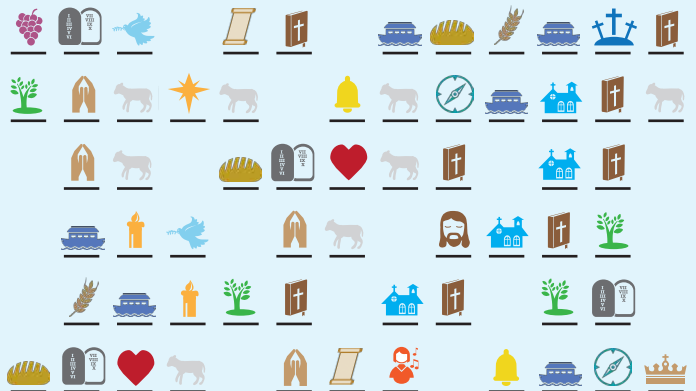
God is always there. Because he loves us. And he just wants us to love him back. Do you know how to love him back? It's easy: just talk to him. Let him be your friend. Involve him in everything you do, because—even if you can't always see or hear him—he's there. He is always there. So always trust that. Always. No matter what you see or what's going on, God is there.

So that's my final message for you, and definitely the most important thing I've ever told you. God was, and is, and always will be, there. Right there. Right next to you. Right with you. Always. Never forget that.

I've had so much fun telling you my stories. Thanks for listening and spending so much time with me. You'll always be so special to me. Take care and stay close to Jesus. You'll always be ok if you're with him. So be strong and courageous. You're a child of the King. Love you guys! See you later!

### Beezrom's Secret Message

To decode the message, fill in the blanks with the letter matching each picture from the alphabet code below.

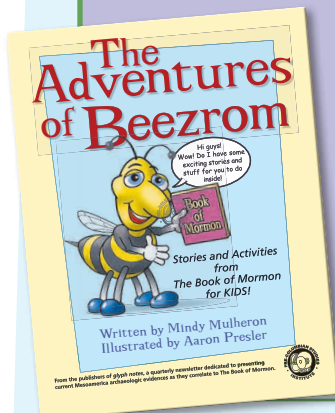


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| S | T | U | V | W | Y |   |   |

Answer on Page 9

## Coming Soon!!!! Beezrom in a book.

*The Adventures of Beezrom* will be a compilation of all his adventures previously published in *glyph notes*. It will be spiral bound in order to facilitate photocopying for classes (Sunday School, retreats, reunion, homeschooling, etc.).





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## glyph quotes

By Eric English

In the days in which we live, there seems to be a lot of confusion of what it means to be a man. Images of men as strong, confident, and courageous are celebrated in the media, but generally interwoven with being violent, disrespectful, or crude. Men are portrayed as having all of the answers. We are rarely presented with examples of men who are humble, loving, transparently broken, patient, or kind.

In stark contrast to what our modern society suggests is the dialog that Jesus had with his disciples in the Americas. Christ had commissioned his disciples to teach the people far and wide, and they had begun to engage in that work. During the course of their work, some questions arose about the church. They decided to gather together to pray about them. As they prayed, Jesus visited them and provided answers to their questions. This was his last documented face to face interaction with the people in this land.

*Therefore what manner of men had ye ought to be?*

—3 Nephi 13:5



Fotolia

He told them that they would be called upon to provide judgment and that they were to rely upon the written word of God for the basis of their judgment. At this point, he asked a rhetorical question. “Therefore what manner of men had ye ought to be?” The answer he gave was that they should be “even as I am.” In this final teaching moment that Christ had with his disciples, he encouraged them to use him as their example and standard by which to determine what it meant to be a man and how they were to conduct themselves—to be just like him. He wanted these few men to deeply consider and continue to consider this question once he departed.

How should we live our lives today? Just like him. How should we make moral judgments with all of the issues and temptations and trials that we’re faced with every day? Just like him. How should we treat others? Just like him. And how do we please the Father? Just like him. Let us look to Jesus as the only and final example by which we are to live. 