

## Heavenly Mother Handout

By Missy McConkie

*“I am a daughter of Heavenly Parents, who love me and I love them.”*

**Myth #1:** Church leaders do not speak of Her, so we should not.

**Reality:** This is cultural, not doctrinal.

**Myth #2:** She exists, but we know nothing else about her

**Reality:** Leaders of our church have spoken about her roles since the days of Joseph Smith.

**Myth #3:** Our silence protects her against being blasphemed and slandered as the Father and Son are.

**Reality:** evidence from David Paulsen’s article makes it clear: there is *no* authorized mandate of silence from church leaders.

Family Proclamation: “Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of *heavenly parents*”

In 1909, the First Presidency of the Church wrote: “All men and women are in the similitude of the universal Father and Mother and are literally the sons and daughters of Deity.” Paulsen, 73. From “The Origin and Destiny of Man,” *Improvement Era* 12 (Nov. 1909):78.

President Gordon B. Hinckley said, “Logic and reason would certainly suggest that if we have a Father in Heaven, we have a Mother in Heaven. That doctrine rests well with me.” Paulsen, 73 (Gordon B. Hinckley, “Daughters of God” *Ensign*, 31 (Nov. 1991)

“The Church is bold enough to go so far as to declare that man has an Eternal Mother in the Heavens as well as an Eternal Father.” James E. Talmage, *Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake: Deseret News, 1901), 461. Quoted by Fiona Givens

“What,” says one, “do you mean we should understand that Deity consists of man and woman?” Most certainly I do. If I believe anything that God has ever said about himself... I must believe that deity consists of man and woman . . . there can be no God except he is composed of the man and woman united, and there is not in all the eternities that exist, or ever will be a God in any other way.” Erastus Snow, Quorum of the Twelve. 1878

One day the Prophet Joseph Smith asked [Zebedee Coltrin] and Sidney Rigdon to accompany him into the woods to pray. When they had reached a secluded spot Joseph laid down on his back and stretched out his arms. He told the brethren to lie one on each arm and then shut their eyes. After they had prayed he told them to open their eyes. They did so and they saw a brilliant light surrounding a pedestal which seemed to rest on the earth. They closed their eyes and again prayed. They then saw, on opening them, the Father seated upon a throne; they prayed again and on looking saw the Mother also; after

praying and looking the fourth time they saw the Savior added to the group. (Abraham H. Cannon Journal, Aug. 25, 1890, LDS Church Archives)

Roles we will talk about tonight:

1. Procreator, Parent, Wife
2. Divine Parent
3. Co-creator of the worlds
4. Co-creator in the Plan of Salvation with Heavenly Father
5. Concerned and Loving Parent who guides us in mortality

Orson F. Whitney: “there was a time when that being whom we now worship—that our eternal Father and Mother were once man and woman in mortality.” The soul-making trials of her earthly experience, coupled with continuing growth after a celestial resurrection, helped her hone the qualities of divinity to move her from “womanhood to Godhood.” (Paulsen, 77)

Spencer W. Kimball taught that “God made women in the image of his wife-partner.” (Paulsen, 77)

George Q. Cannon “God is a married being, has a wife. . . . We are the offspring of Him and His wife.” (Paulsen, p. 77)

Boyd K. Packer: each of us “lived in a premortal existence as an individual spirit child of heavenly parents,” where we were reared and nurtured. (Paulsen, 76)

For either to be fully God, each must have a partner with whom to share the power of endless lives. From Erastus Snow: “There can be no God except he is composed of the man and woman united, and there is not in all the eternities that exist, or ever will be a God in any other way.” (Paulsen, 79. See footnote 46!)

D&C 131:1-3 no person can reach the highest degree of the celestial kingdom without being sealed to a spouse.

“We are to emulate the family structure exemplified by our Father and Mother, because, as Sister Susa Young Gates [member of the YLMIA general board] taught, ‘the home is patterned after the heavenly dwelling of our Divine parents.’” (Paulsen, 77) ***This is why we need to study all that we can. If we are patterning our lives off God, we need to know Them!***

Joseph F. Smith published a declaration titled “The Father and the Son,” in which they assert that our heavenly parents passed through “several stages or estates by which [they] have attained exaltation” and *together* “propagate[d] that higher order of beings called spirits.” (Paulsen, 76.)

Susa Young Gates: “the divine Mother, side by side with the divine Father, [has] the equal sharing of equal rights, privileges and responsibilities. (Paulsen, 37)

M. Russell Ballard: “We are part of a divine plan designed by Heavenly Parents who love us.” (Paulsen, 81. 2001)

1978 *Gospel Principles* manual: Christ “was chosen to be our Savior when we all attended the great council with our heavenly parents.” (Paulsen, 81)

Our heavenly parents watch over us from heaven and help us in our trials. In 1963, HBL taught: “Sometimes we think the whole job is up to us, forgetful that there are loved ones beyond our sight who are thinking about us and our children. We forget that we have a Heavenly Father and a Heavenly Mother who are even more concerned, probably, than our earthly father and mother, and that influences from beyond are constantly working to try to help us when we do all we can.” (Paulsen, 83. “The Influence and Responsibility of Women,” he was an apostle at this time and gave the address during a general RS meeting.)

“It doesn’t take from our worship of the Eternal Father, to adore our Eternal Mother, any more than it diminishes the love we bear our earthly fathers, to include our earthly mothers in our affections.” Rather, “we honor woman when we acknowledge Godhood in her eternal prototype.” (Paulsen, 79. Rudger Clawson, Quorum of the 12, 1910)

“Heavenly Mother possesses all the attributes of Godhood. She and Heavenly Father reared and taught us in the pre-earth life. She helped create this earth and formulate the Plan of Salvation. Both President Harold B. Lee and President Spencer W. Kimball indicated that she can guide us here in mortality. **In other words, she stands beside the Father, as an equal partner and companion, not behind him.** She and Heavenly Father together are the great role model for every couple who hope for an eternity together.” (Warren Aston, see reference below)

#### Useful references:

“A Mother There”: A Survey of Historical Teachings About Mother in Heaven,  
David Paulsen and Martin Pulido *BYU Studies* 50, no. 1 (2011): 70-97

Link: <https://byustudies.byu.edu/showtitle.aspx?title=8669>

“The Other Half of Heaven: Debunking Myths about Heavenly Mother”

By Warren Aston, *LDS Meridian Magazine*, Nov. 29, 2012

Link: <http://ldsmag.com/article-1-11842/>

*The Mother of the Lord Vol. 1: The Lady in the Temple* by Margaret Barker

*Did God Have a Wife? Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel*

By William Dever