Making the Sacrament More Meaningful to the Individual

Each week the Lord has given us the privilege of accessing His Atonement through the covenants we make as we partake of the Sacrament. Because of the frequency of this opportunity, at times the Sacrament can become rote and lack meaning for the individual. I did a small survey and asked a question to friends and family. This was the question, “How do you ensure the Sacrament is meaningful to you?” I was amazed at the different ideas that people shared. I feel that we can all learn from each other. Here are some ideas that each of us can use to better personalize our partaking of the Sacrament and make it more meaningful (names have been removed).

“How I make the Sacrament meaningful for me kind of changes each week. Sometimes I seem to require different things from my Sacrament experience and so the first thing I do after the Sacrament prayer is say my own prayer. This is where I think of the Atonement and how it might help me with whatever I am needing that week or how I am thankful for the Atonement in my life. After I finish my prayer I sit and listen to the Spirit for inspiration. Sometimes I read favorite hymns, especially about our Savior and the Atonement and look for individual inspiration. I use the Sacrament as a very personal, contemplative time to discuss and listen with my Heavenly Father. So many of my answers, or just peace come during this time. It’s amazing how even if there are children screaming around me, I still can have a very sacred experience because it is a private experience with my Father. I know that he loves me and waits for me to come to him to receive guidance to best apply the Atonement in my life. The Atonement is meant for so much more than just repenting of our sins. It is for ALL pain and suffering that we go through. So many of us, I feel, have a hard time utilizing this part of the Atonement. I know it took time for me to learn about it and apply it this way. I still have to remind myself. After my miscarriage, this was the most peaceful truth that came to me during the Sacrament. He was reminding me of the full scope of the Atonement and how much it is meant to be part of our lives. We are not left alone ever and as women I think that is something that is important to always remember.”

“I love to re-read the Sacrament hymn. I try to take the meaning or the point of the song and apply it to my life.”

“I read and ponder the Sacrament hymn. I sometimes pray to have a better understanding of the covenant I am making and the other covenants I am renewing including my temple covenants, baptism, etc. Sometimes I read significant parts of the scriptures. I have written in my journal during the Sacrament to focus on my blessings and goals. I try to analyze the Sacrament prayers and consider how they apply to me and my covenants.”

“To ensure the Sacrament is meaningful I try to prep for it before church by praying and listening to Sunday worthy music. I also like to have small pictures of Christ in my scriptures, Gethsemane, last supper, etc. It helps me to remember where my focus needs to be. Having more than one is great so I can let my young children hold one when they want to talk. This works for us, because I’ve found that sometimes the simple things work better than giving too much to do. Also whenever the chapel is empty while we are there I like to step in and feel the stillness that is there. I guess it reaffirms to my mind how I need to be when I take the Sacrament, even when there is a busy hum of children around me.”
“The things I do to make the Sacrament meaningful for me are reflecting on my week on the things I have done. Reflecting, then reading the scriptures or reading my patriarchal blessing. These remind me of my potential through our Savior. I am grateful for the Atonement and what Jesus Christ did for me so I can become pure. I like to look at it on a personal level of everything He did for me. I am so grateful for the love that my Savior has for me.”

“One of the things that has helped me at times is to imagine myself taking a walk with the Savior. Sometimes I imagine we are in the pre-existence, sometimes we are in a scene from the scriptures, and sometimes we are in my life over the past week. I try to think about His example, His words, His acts and the relevance that they have for me. I think of the things I could learn if He were my personal friend, and we were experiencing the world together. I consider the things he would have me notice or attend to. When I do this, I have more of a sense of the Atonement in my life and in the ways that I can connect with things bigger than myself. I see myself as an integral part of the Plan of Salvation, and understand more fully the impact that the Savior's sacrifice has for me individually. One of the other things that have been important for me is that ever since my children were born, we have not allowed them to be distracted by anything at Church until the Sacrament is over. Even as little babies, we have taught them to wait for treats and activities until after that sacred ordinance has been completed. Not just for us, (since we usually sit in the back and are served first) but for the entire ward. We don't respond to them in any way until after we have partaken of the Sacrament. We don't shush them or talk to them; we are just reverent examples. Now that they are older, it is clear that the Sacrament time is for individual, personal reflection. I am grateful that my children understand that sacred Spiritual times are important to them in their lives. My dad often says, "I find myself in very good company." I'm glad that my children have learned this, too. They don't need to be entertained. That they can sit quietly and find themselves and the Savior in their thoughts is so important to me. Plus it allows me to ponder the Sacrament and the gospel in its fullness without my children distracting me.”

“When I take the Sacrament I want each time to be meaningful. I have 4 kids that would like to be doing other things besides sitting and being quiet. I get out the gospel picture books for them. They settle down and look at them. As I look with them I reflect on my week. Questions come into my mind about what have I done this week that has brought the Savior into my life, Have I borne my testimony to my kids about the Savior this last week? And have I served someone in any way? Sometimes I may reread the Sacrament song to study and ponder on the words. I feel sometimes like I have failed in one way or another. I want to be more like my Savior. I want to strive to always be the best I can be. Because I take the Sacrament I feel restored. I feel that my mistakes are forgotten and I do feel that love that is promised to us as I remember what I am supposed to be doing. Staying positive will allow the Spirit to speak to me and knowing what Christ did for me I want to make what I do in life worth His sacrifice. I look forward to the Sacrament each week. I love to talk to my kids about it and tell them beforehand how important it is to take every week. I love looking at the pictures of Christ. It’s a good reminder of what he did for us. My favorite stories are retold in my mind and I love the feeling I receive as I ponder on these moments. I testify that my brother Jesus Christ lives and loves us and I am thankful for the Sacrament and the blessing I receive when I take it.”
“I was thinking about the question you asked and I had a hard time putting into words how I make the Sacrament meaningful to me. What I've found, with five children in tow on Sunday, is that I need to prepare myself long before Sacrament meeting. The best way is to remind myself of all the covenants I have made. When I strive to go to the Temple during the week, I find myself much more prepared to take the Sacrament on Sunday. I'm reminded of the covenants that I'm striving to keep and I'm excited to take the Sacrament to keep me close to the Savior in my progression. After attending the Temple I am reminded that partaking of the Sacrament is the only ordinance in which we can renew our own covenants we have made and I find myself eagerly waiting for the opportunity.”

“To help make the Sacrament more meaningful to me I try to remember what it represents and all that I know about it. Each Sunday, as I take the bread and water I remember the lessons that I have been taught. I remember the way I felt when I learned of the meaning of renewing my baptismal covenants. I love to think of the blessings that come to me if I honestly keep my covenants. I am promised a remission of my sins and promised to always have His Spirit with me. What a comfort that I am never alone. I definitely need the influence of the Spirit in everything I do. I love to read Mosiah 18: 8-10. In these scriptures Alma is teaching the people about baptism. I love to read about "lifting one another's burdens, that they may be light." And to really think about "mourn with those that mourn and comfort those that need comfort." This helps me realize that Heavenly Father sent us all here to Earth to love each other and help each other, not to make life harder and to be unkind. This also reminds me of Visiting Teaching and its importance to Heavenly Father. I also love that these verses contain the Young Women’s theme. By keeping our baptismal covenants we can stand as a witness of God at all times and in all things and all places. We are promised such great things. To be numbered with those of the first resurrection if this is the desire of our hearts. It is the desire of mine and I am so grateful for a weekly reminder of the Sacrament.”

“I look forward each week to the Sacrament & the opportunity to partake of the Spiritual sustenance" - bread for heaven & living water! I get to recapture each time I partake, I am washed clean- the feeling I felt at my baptism - I love the scripture-John 6:51-58--it has wonderful symbolism & depth- When we remember Him, literally, this way gives us light & life for each day. We become really alive through Christ - how wonderful is that!!! I'm so thankful each day for Heavenly Father & his son, Jesus Christ for their unconditional love continually for me -this is why Sacrament is always meaningful to me each week.”

“Throughout my life, the Sacrament and my Savior have varied in meaning to me. I find the more I personally serve Him through obedience in my study, and thoughts, actions, and service the greater and much more personal he is to me. It’s my routine that determines the meaning. Do I stop and take time to reflect on Him amongst the busy world and calling as a mother? Or do I just continue “doing things” in the moment that ensure me to be the “world’s greatest house keeper,” etc. His promise is that he will never leave me comfortless, but I must be open to his comfort and worthy of His Spirit. Sundays are my days I love because through the Sacrament I can receive any and all the strength I need to brave the world and draw His Spirit in so I can reflect it to my family. It’s not always a perfect road but at least it’s His road. I love listening to the
words of the Sacrament hymns and pondering their meaning. I imagine the warmth of my Savior flooding over me when I partake of the bread and water. Then, after my personal thoughts, I love looking around at my fellow brothers and sisters and trying to see what the Savior might do to lighten their load, then I serve; because the only way to thank Him is to serve others continually.”

There are some amazing examples of making the Sacrament meaningful in your life. Do not take the Sacrament as a snack, or because it is routine, make it meaningful by trying one of these ideas. We are promised to have His Spirit to be with us, which we need every day in our lives to make right choices. We need to challenge ourselves every Sunday to remember Jesus while we partake of the Sacrament.