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# Literacy Sponsorship and Official Paratexts: Promoting Character Literacy through the For the Strength of Youth Booklets (1965-2011)

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# Thesis of
# Daniel S. Malinconico

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**Abstract**

Literacy sponsors continue to play a dynamic and integral role in acquiring and learning literacy knowledge and skills (fluency) within discourse communities. This thesis examines how a religious literacy sponsor, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, utilizes the *For the Strength of Youth (FSOY)* publications and official paratexts to actively promote religious literacy and character development in the lives of adolescents. This thesis focuses specifically on the 2011 edition of the *FSOY* to explore the impact that recent advancements in digital technology have had on the evolution of the main-body text and official paratexts. A textual and paratextual analysis serves to illustrate how the Church promotes literacy acquisition and learning within the religious discourse community.

## Introduction

"I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves."[1]

"It's critical that young men and young women who are on the *threshold of life* understand very clearly that the Church has the strongest values. There is no question where we stand."[2]

"True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior. The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior."[3]

"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."[4]

 

The acquisition, learning, and practical application of literacy involves choice and the employment of personal agency. Given the surrounding complexities relating to power and application, the term "literacy" lacks a single defined and accepted definition.[5] Different definitions of literacy impact the opportunities provided to both literacy sponsors and sponsees, individiuals seeking to aquire and learn literacy. However, at its core, literacy is a set of knowledge and skills accepted and promoted within a specific discourse community in a given time and place.[6] As James Paul Gee argues, since there exists multiple discourses and discourse communities, therein lies the recognition of multiple literacies that expand the conventional definition of literacy, as the "ability to

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[1] Joseph Smith, "The Organization of the Church," 339.

[2] Margaret D. Nadauld, "Personal Progress: Temple Preparation."

[3] Boyd K. Packer, "Do Not Fear," 79.

[4] Luke 2: 52 (KJV).

[5] Keefe and Copeland, "What Is Literacy? The Power of a Definition," 96.

[6] Ibid, 93.

read and write" often found in composition classrooms.[7]  Religious literacy, for example,

promotes a dynamic set of knowledge and skills required to actively engage in a

discourse about different religious institutions, customs, texts, and their accompanying

structures and power dynamics.[8] At its core, religious literacy promotes the continued

validiation and importance of religious discoures in both academia and in communities.

Character literacy encapsulates the values, ethics, and standards associated with

individual and collective character development.[9] Schools, communties, religious (faith-

based) institutions actively sponsor dynamic character education programs and texts,

which provide direction, support, and justification for both the aqusition and learning of

ethical standards.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints functions as a literacy sponsor to

promote ethical standards of thinking and behavior. The Church utilizes the 2011 edition

of the *For the Strength of Youth (FSOY)* booklet to recognize the choice and agency that

youth have and provides them with the guidance and skills to more fully exercise their

own agency. In his article "What is Literacy?" James Paul Gee argues that individuals

obtain literacy mastery through a combined process of acquisition and learning. Gee

distinguishes acquisition, a subconscious and informal process, from learning, which

promotes a process of formal and deliberate explanation and analysis.[10] The *FSOY*

booklets provides formal counsel, examples and directives to reinforce the efforts of

parents and local Church leaders. In other words, the Church as a literacy sponsor utilizes

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[7] Gee, "What is literacy?" 21-22.

[8] Moore, "Overcoming Religious Illiteracy: A Cultural Studies Approach," 1-14.

[9] Winder, "Incorporating Character Education into a BYU Engineering Department," 212.

[10] Gee, "What is literacy?" 20.

the *FSOY* texts in conjunction with local literacy sponsors, including families, friends, and local Church leaders, to promote and reinforce individual habits based on a pattern of high moral standards. Taken in isolation, the *FSOY* texts alone lack the functional ability to assist youth develop character literacy, but when paried with local sponsors, and official paratexts, the *For the Strength of Youth* serves as a powerful resource to reinforce and expand the Church's efforts. Paratexts provide context, introduction, and compelling commentary to understand the function and intended goal of th *For the Strength of Youth* booklets.

This thesis examines two questions: "How does a literacy sponsor create and utilize official paratexts to expand the functionality, accessibility, and versatility of a text?" and "How does the Church promote character development, i.e. character literacy, and what advantages does the Church gain because of such sponsorship?" In other words, this thesis explores how a religious literacy sponsor promote different sets of knoweldge and skills associated with religious and character literacies. This thesis seeks to complicate the ongoing discussion surrounding religious literacy and character development to promote the inclusion and application of different literacies in both academic and community-based discourses.

The *FSOY* booklets constitute a series of official teachings and declarations from the leadership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to youth of the Church about establishing a pattern of high moral standards as individuals and a collective community. According to the Church's *Newsroom*, "For the Strength of Youth is a booklet produced by the Church that addresses issues and challenges youth face today

and provides instruction for youth to build a foundation for a happy life."[11]  By

responding to the contexts present at the time of publication, each edition of the *FSOY*

seeks to clarify, edify and strengthen the moral foundation of youth of the day by

cultivating virtues and ethical behaviors.[12] To date, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-

day Saints has published ten editions of the *FSOY* with the most current being published

in 2011. The themes of choice and agency,[13] in addition to Habits of Mind[14] will situate

the analysis of the *FSOY* publications within the larger movement of character education.

Agency and Habits of Mind recognizes an individuals's freedom of choice and their

personal responsibility to develop patterns of ethical thinking and behavior.

    The *FSOY* booklets have textually and paratextually radically changed over time.

First published in 1965 as a sixteen-page treatise on appropriate behavior, the text has

evolved and dramatically increased in volume, accessibility, and function. The 2011

edition of the *FSOY* booklet contains forty-four pages with compelling internal and

corresponding external paratexts. A paratext is any element which exists inside or outside

of a main-body text which provides context to generate interest and focus

interpretations.[15] A shift from behavior-based instruction, an emphasis on proscribed rules

and socially accepted external actions in the earlier editions to principle-based

instruction, an emphasis on guidelines and examples to encourage personal agency in the

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[11] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "*For the Strength of Youth.*"

[12] Note: The Church considers members between the ages of twelve to eighteen as youth.

[13] Cooper, "Rhetorical Agency as Emergent and Enacted," 420-421.

[14] Costa and Bena, *Learning and Leading with Habits of Mind,* 1-3.

[15] Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, 4.

2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklet highlights the Church's changing role as a literacy

sponsor to promote both choice and Habits of Mind.

Textual and paratextual analysis will serve to demonstrate the deliberate changes

the Church made to the *FSOY* booklet to better meet the needs of the youth of the Church

in promoting character development. Employing Gérard Genette's formula, *paratext =*

*peritext + epitext* will serve as an analytical framework to evaluate the function of the

official paratexts (i.e., visuals, scriptural references, and website) inside and outside of

the main-body text. Genette's framework will also be used to examine how the paratexts

and epitexts interact with each other and provide additional insight to highlight the

intentional updates.[16] In short, this thesis seeks to explore how a literacy sponsor creates

and utilizes official paratexts to expand the functionality, accessibility, and versatility of a

main-body text in the context of character education. Official paratexts support and

expand the efforts of a literacy sponsor beyond the production and use of a single text.

Jared Jepson's[17] and Brent D. Fillmore's[18] work on the textual and contextual

changes of the *FSOY* /booklets have proven indispensable to understanding the existing

scholarship surrounding the *FSOY* texts from 1965-2001. However, neither Jepson (2005)

nor Filmore (2007) included the 2011 edition of the *FSOY* in their work since it had not

yet been published by the Church and therefore not available for analysis. Analyzing the

2011 edition expands Jepson's and Filmore's earlier studies by connecting the *FSOY* to

the fields of Composition and Rhetoric by employing the frameworks of rhetorical

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[16] Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, 5.

[17] Jepson, "A Study of the *For the Strength of Youth* Pamphlet, 1965-2004."

[18] Fillmore, "Promoting Peculiarity—Different Editions of *For the Strength of Youth*," 75–88.

situation, [19] discourse communities, [20] and literacy sponsorship.[21] By identifying the discourse community (i.e., the Church), the medium used by literacy sponsor (i.e., *FSOY* publications), and the rhetorical situation (i.e., appealing to the international audience of adolescents in the 21st century), situates the 2011 edition as a compelling example to assess the actions of a literacy sponsor on a dynamic discourse community. In other words, Church leadership functions as a literacy sponsor within the larger discourse community to promote character development. This thesis explores the role ethics and values should play in the sponsorship and development of literacy knowledge and skills.

An analysis of the main-body text, pocket-version card, website, and visual elements of the 2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklet contain dynamic and compelling textual and paratextual elements which provides guidelines to assist the youth of the Church make ethical decisions. Jared Jepson argues that the first seven editions of the *FSOY* booklet (1965-1972) focused predominately on the youths' outward behaviors or what he calls "instructional do's and don'ts."[22] The latest three editions of the *FSOY* booklet,-(1990-2011), however, incorporate increased doctrinal justification and employ principle-based guidelines to contextualize the Church's stance on standards of morality to empower the youth to make ethical decisions. As Manuel Velasquez et al. state in "Issues and Virtues,"  "the fundamental question of ethics is not 'What should I do?' but 'What kind of person should I be?'."[23] The Church aims to utilize the transformative

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[19] Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation."

[20] Swales, *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*, 21-32.

[21] Brandt, "Sponsors of Literacy."

[22] Jepson, "A Study of the *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet," 11.

[23] Velasquez, Andre, Shanks, and Meyer, "Ethics and Virtue."

power of character development to recognize and support the agency of the youth of the

Church and their ability to make moral decisions in a vast array of rhetorical situations.

      To be clear, my textual and paratextual analysis of the *FSOY* booklets is not

exhaustive. In other words, this paper does not seek to analyze *all* of the existing internal

and external textual or official paratextual elements, but rather utilizes several

representative examples to demonstrate how word choice, structure, and the

interconnected elements of the 2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklet promote character

development and personal agency and responsibility.  The paper's conclusion will argue

for additional scholarship focusing on religious discourse communities, and the texts and

paratexts they produce to promote literacy development.

## Literature Review

Deborah Brandt's work on community literacy famously led to the conceptualization of literacy sponsors.[24] According to Brandt, "Sponsors, as I have come to think of them, are any agents, local or distant, concrete or abstract, who enable, support, teach, or model, as well as recruit, regulate, suppress, or withhold literacy—and gain advantage by it in some way."[25] Brandt's definition situates parents, families, schools, religious institutions, etc. as partners or combatants who help or inhibit the development of various literacies in youth. In other words, individuals have competing literacy sponsors which directly and indirectly influence the development of literacy. Acknowledging the literacy "agents," contextualizes literacy as an engaged and dynamic process of acting and (re)acting on individuals and whole communities. In addition, recognizing that sponsors at times regulate, suppress, and withhold literacy knowledge and skills for their own benefit illustrates the complex relationship between sponsors and sponsees. Likewise, unpacking the advantages that literacy sponsors obtain through promoting literacy acquisition and learning reveals intention and audience. The existence of multiple literacies, which expands beyond the knowledge and ability to read and write, reveals the potential for community-based literacy projects to engage with various discourse communities and the "texts" they produce.

Literacy acquisition and learning thrive outside of the confines of formal academia  as illustrated by the work of out-of-school-time (OST) youth development

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[24] Brandt, "Sponsors of Literacy," 165.

[25] Brandt, *Literacy in American Lives*, 19.

programs.[26] OST programs in part seek to "follow evidence-based practices aimed at improving personal and social skills of youths are linked with positive social behaviors."[27] Literacy sponsorship situates OST youth development programs and resources as meaningful contributors to the ongoing conversation regarding character education and its goal to assist individuals and groups develop virtues and ethical behaviors.[28] An analysis of literacy sponsors and the programs and texts they produce remains essential to understand the sponsor's rationale and justification to promote literacy development.

Literacy sponsors produce meaningful discourse based to address current rhetorical situations. Lloyd Bitzer conceptualization of the rhetorical situation provides the framework to analyze how and why a community seeks to utilize rhetorical discourse, to alter reality through the mediation of thought and action.[29] Bitzer argues that a rhetorical situation is "a natural context of persons, events, objects, relations, and an exigence which strongly invites utterance."[30] By acknowledging the specific exigence, audience and constraints of a rhetorical situation, a scholar can then analyze and understand the type of discourse which emerges because of the rhetorical situation. In other words, the rhetorical situation allows individuals to generate discourses based on a sense of need or urgency grounded in specific times and places. Focusing on an audience who are capable of being influenced by discourse or in other words, who are willing and

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[26] National Institute on Out-of-School Time, "OST Research."

[27] Durlak and Weissberg, "Afterschool programs that follow evidence-based practices."

[28] Center for Disease Control, "Out of School Time: Supports Student Health and Learning."

[29] Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," 4.

[30] Ibid, 5.

able to change, makes the identification of such persons essential for the discourse's

intended function or success. Learning to create a fitting response to meet the needs of

the specific rhetorical situation requires the recognition of the existing constraints that a

rhetorical situation places on the rhetorical discourse produced.

Literacy sponsors promote literacy development within specific discourse

communities. According to John Swales, discourse communities are "groups that have

goals or purposes, and use communication [discourse] to achieve these goals."[31] Swales

identifies six characteristics of a discourse community, among which the first

characteristic, a community that utilizes discourse to accomplish an agreed upon

aspiration. Schools, families, religious faith-based institutions, etc., are all considered

discourse communities.[32] Identifying the goals and purposes of a specific discourse

community proves essential when analyzing the type of discourse the community

produces. Combined with Deborah Brandt's work on literacy sponsorship[33] and James

Paul Gee's work on literacy discourse,[34] the model of discourse community provides a

lens to determine how groups communicate with its members and with those outside of

the community to achieve specific goals and purposes. Without an understanding of

literacy and literacy sponsors, all conversations about discourse communities would lack

essential elements and terminology to actively participate in the ongoing discourse.

Scholarship surrounding literacy cannot be separated from the discourse

communities which sponsor specific literacy mastery. James Paul Gee argues that all

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[31] Swales, *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*, 21-32.

[32] Gee, "Literacy Discourse, and Linguistics: Introduction," 5.

[33] Brandt, "Sponsors of Literacy."

[34] Gee, "Literacy Discourse, and Linguistics: Introduction."

conversations about literacy should be connected to social practices and grounded in what he calls primary and secondary discourses which encompass the literacies that different discourse communities generate and utilize.[35] Gee supports the concept that multiple discourse communities and multiple literacies are constantly interacting with each and individuals learn to navigate the areas of tension and conflict by developing literacy fluency, which is the ability to utilize and apply the knowledge and skills connected to a specific literacy. Different literacies promote different "values, beliefs, attitudes, interactional styles, uses of language, and ways of being in the world which two or more Discourses represent."[36] Gee's argument that literacy fluency cannot occur without social practices or values legitimizes the role of character development[37] in a rhetorical discourse community.

The framework of discourse community provides a critical lens to analyze a group's use of rhetorical communication to achieve a set of shared goals or purpose. Swales promotes the lens of discourse community, which helps to situate and contextualize the continued relevance of Lloyd Bitzer's "The Rhetorical Situation" by exploring the overlapping pressures and constraints of individuals and rhetorical discourse within a specific community.[38] Families and religious institutions act as their own discourse communities and scholars, such as Thomas Lickona[39] and James Arthur[40],

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[35] Gee, "Literacy Discourse, and Linguistics," 6.

[36] Ibid, 7.

[37] Lickona, "Character Education: The Cultivation of Virtue," 1-18.

[38] Swales, *Genre Analysis*, 466-467.

[39] Lickona, "Character Education: The Cultivation of Virtue," 1-18.

[40] Arthur, *Education with Character: The Moral Economy of Schooling*, 30.

argue for the cooperation of different discourse communities on the development of character education. The emphasis on discourse communities highlights how specific groups of people create and utilize texts to spread meaning and reinforce social practices and expectations.

Religious literacy seeks to assist individuals develop a critical understanding of various religious communities and traditions, as well as the contexts in which they emerge and change over time. According to Diane Moore, the Founding Director of the *Religious Literacy Project* and the Certificate in Religious Studies and Education at the Harvard Divinity School,

> Religious literacy entails the ability to discern and analyze the fundamental intersections of religion and social/political/cultural life through multiple lenses. Specifically, a religiously literate person will possess 1) a basic understanding of the history, central texts (where applicable), beliefs, practices and contemporary manifestations of several of the world's religious traditions as they arose out of and continue to be shaped by particular social, historical and cultural contexts; and 2) the ability to discern and explore the religious dimensions of political, social and cultural expressions across time and place.[41]

A religiously literate person cultivates the knowledge and skills required to engage in religious discourse by creating connections between religion, value systems, and power dynamics. Religious expression is integrally linked to many facets of human society including character education. Encapsulating religious literacy as part of a large

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[41] Moore, "Overcoming Religious Illiteracy," 1-14.

movement within cultural studies, which emphasizes the power dynamics surrounding

societal factors, reveals how religions traditions and institutions and religious texts need

to be studied "*in context* and as *inextricably woven into all dimensions of human*

*experience*" since literacy functions as a set of cultural practices.[42] The knowledge and

skills required to read and analyze religious texts require an understanding of the larger

context or rhetorical situation which includes character development for individuals and

discourse communities. Religious texts and other dynamic texts exist only within

networks of intertextual relations. As John Storey argues, to study a "text" means to

locate it across a range of competing comments of inscription, representation and

struggle."[43] Religious texts and religious literacy deal heavily with character education

and the programs and resources designed to assist individuals cultivate values to make

ethical decisions.

Character development focuses on the transformations of individuals and society

focused on values, behaviors, perspectives, and consequences. Daniel R. Winder argues

that character education ought to focus on the change of people's very nature and not

merely on their outward behavior.[44] Winder explores a framework  that includes which

illustrates the cognitive, affective, and behavioral, aspects of character development and

extends this triad by arguing that spirituality, or actively seeking for divine help and

grace, leads to the successful cultivation of virtues. Winder's emphasis on character

development's potential to change individuals extends beyond the scope of simply

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[42] Harvard Literacy Project, "What is Religious Literacy?"

[43] Storey, "Cultural Studies: An Introduction," 2.

[44] Winder, "Incorporating Character Education," 205.

learning good appropriate behavior and includes a shift to ethical thinking. As James

Arthur states, "Character development involved *being* a certain kind of person and not

merely *doing* certain kinds of things."[45] In other words, by focusing on a fundamental

change of nature, disposition and worldview of individuals and communities character

development provides the opportunity for individuals to choose to cultivate virtues.

Winder's argument[46] for a spiritual component to character education invites religious

literacy and institutions to actively participate in character development. Winder draws

heavily from Thomas Lickona's "Character Education: The Cultivation of Virtue," and

echo's Lickona argument that without a spiritual component, any attempts at changing

one's nature would lack a pivotal philosophical engine within a religious discourse

community. Discourse communities promote beliefs, values, and practices to establish

membership and advance means of communication.

Thomas Lickona stands as one of the premier scholars currently producing

scholarship regarding character development in both schools and in the larger

community.[47] He argues that character education strives to produce, good people, good

schools, and good society on a continuum of character development. Character

development remains a paramount priority for healthy and productive communities.

Lickona's emphasis on moral thinking, moral feeling and moral action connects the

theoretical underpinnings of character education to a practical application involving

community service projects.[48] In other words, embedding character development into

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[45] Arthur, *Education with Character*, 30.

[46] Winder, "Incorporating Character Education," 204.

[47] Lickona, "Character Education: The Cultivation of Virtue," 4.

[48] Ibid, 1-18.

existing programs, like community youth programs or homeroom in schools, Lickona echoes the call of religious institutions for parents, educators and religious/communities leaders to assist the youth (re)turn to worthwhile objectives as individuals and as a collective community. Lickona and Berreth argue that "good character consists of knowing the good, desiring the good and doing the good" which relates to Winder's framework centered on moral knowledge, moral feeling and moral action.[49] The cultivation of virtues require the free exercise of agency as individuals choose to accept or reject a system of character education. Defining and sponsoring good character, challenges schools, parents, and community institutions to establish shared values in a multicultural and multireligious world.

Character development establishes patterns of ethical thinking and behavior for individuals and communities. Habits of Mind provide useful terminology and scholarship to identify, describe and analyze different texts and programs connected to character education. Arthur L. Costa and Bena Kalli argue that character development should not focus solely on behaviors, but rather on sixteen interconnected habits with the intent to situate values and ethics within a continuum of habitual thinking and behavior.[50] For example, individuals must develop self-reflective practices to enjoy the opportunities provided by work, school, family communities and religious institutions. Robert Nash equates ethical patterns of good learn and teaching to religious values and practices to establish a spiritual-like commitment to life-long learning.[51] Nash illustrates character

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[49] Lickona and Berreth, "The return of character education," 9.

[50] Costa and Kallick, *Learning and Leading*, xvii.

[51] Nash, "Constructing A Spirituality of Teaching: A Personal Perspective," 1-20.

education's pedagogical aim to transform the heart and soul, before seeking to shape the intellectual development of the mind. In "Teaching Adolescents Religious Literacy in a Post-9/11 World," Nash and Bishop expand on Nash's "Spirituality of Teaching" by situating religious literacy and learning within the realm of character development.[52] Both the religious organization and the individual's choices, responsibilities, interpretation, and application are essential lenses needed to consider the impact of character development on discourse communities.

The conversations surround rhetorical situations, discourse communities, and the application of character development have changed over time. James Arthur challenges readers to consider the historical transformations, virtues, theological insights, theories, political connections and social foundations of character development in both the classroom and the community.[53] Arthur argues that families, schools and religious institutions stand at the heart of a country's moral economy. These "agents" acts as literacy sponsors to actively promote character education throughout the formative years of adolescence. Character development require common foundations and language within a specific discourse community to meet the needs, expectations, and goals to recognize and enable choice. Constraints and limitations exist that limit choice but recognizing the agency that individuals have allows them to negotiate the pressures established by literacy sponsors, discourse communities, and the rhetorical situation.

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[52] Nash and Bishop. *Teaching Adolescents Religious Literacy in a Post-9/11 World*. 23.

[53] Arthur, *Education with Character*.

**Methods**

Textual analysis and paratextual analysis will serve as the main methods employed in this paper. The process of my textual analysis is as follows: gaining access to the digital copies of the ten editions of the *FSOY* booklets from the Church History Library.[54] A close reading of the ten editions focusing on topics addressed, language use, specific rules or expectations vs. guidelines and examples to highlight change over time in terms of character development. Textual analysis focuses on the unpacking and contextualization of the main-body text, while paratextual analysis situates paratexts by their proximity and function to the text proper.

Alan McKee[55] and Mike Allen[56] both argue that textual analysis as a methodology serves to validate multiple interpretations of a text and generate more critical discourse within different fields of scholarship.[57] McKee, argues that textual analysis provides scholars with the knowledge and skills to interpret texts "in order to try and obtain a sense of the ways in which, in particular cultures at particular times, people make sense of the world around them."[58] His book provide the language, tools, and examples of case studies to employ a close reading of a text focusing on interpretation, context, and application. Jonathan Gray, a scholar in media and cultural studies, emphasis on paratextual analysis focuses on the relation between texts (intertextual), McKee's work on textual analysis invites scholars to note the complexities and nuances within a text

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[54] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "Church History Library."

[55] McKee, *Textual Analysis: A Beginner's Guide.*

[56] Allen, *Textual Analysis.*

[57] Ibid.

[58] McKee, *Textual Analysis: A Beginner's Guide,* 8.

(intratextual) to draw connections to different sections of a main-body text. Textual analysis provides the terminology and scholarly lenses to unpack a series of textual publications to highlight change over time and the deliberate choices made by authors and publishers.

Paratexts exist within and alongside main-body texts. According to Jonathan Gray, "paratexts surround texts, audiences and industry, as organic and naturally occurring a part of our mediated environment as are movies and television themselves."[59] Paratexts both mediate a viewer's entrance to a main-body text (story-world) and influence their perspectives during and after initial exposure. Paratextual analysis identifies and contextualizes the nature and function of paratexts through a process of interpretation. The process of my paratextual analysis is as follows: identifying internal paratexts within the ten physical *FSOY* booklets and evaluate how they modify the reading of booklets. In addition, utilizing Internet Archive to gain access to the original *For the Strength of Youth* website[60] to identifying external official paratexts to assess how they expand the ethical guidelines first introduced in the ten physical *FSOY* booklets.

Like complex satellites, paratexts initially appear to simply orbit a main/body text, but upon closure examination, the satellites have a profound impact on each other and the text proper.[61] Genette provides a useful formula to analyze different types of paratexts: *"paratext = peritext + epitext"* which serves as one of the main frameworks utilized to structure the paper.[62] Chris Koenig-Woodyard explains that "The peritext

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[59] Gray, *Show Sold Separately,* 23.

[60] Internet Archive, "*For the Strength of Youth*."

[61] Desrochers and Apollon, *Examining Paratextual Theory*, xxxii.

[62] Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, 5.

includes elements 'inside' the confines of a bound volume—everything between and on the covers, as it were."[63] For example, the title, subtitle, forward, acknowledgement, copyright, images, etc. are all *peritexts. "*The epitext, then, denotes elements 'outside' the bound volume—public or private elements such as interviews, reviews, correspondence, diaries etc."[64] In addition, all of the articles, videos, broadcasts, merchandise, symbols etc. which will be analyzed throughout the paper should be classified as epitexts, since they are not spatially or physically connected to the material text.

Gérard Genette, in his groundbreaking book, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*[65] coins the term paratexts and challenges scholars to recognize both internal (peritexts) and external (epitexts) paratexts as key elements that expand the initial work begun by textual analysis. By noticing the rhetorical elements hiding in plain sight, Genette deconstructs the text and analyzes each element and its importance and history within the main-body text. Latter scholars like Jonathan Gray, Robert Brookey,[66] and Nadine Desrochers, and Daniel Apollon,[67] expand Genette's initial definition and application of paratexts by challenging the authority and power dynamics of the physical text and author to mediate official paratexts. Employing both a textual and paratextual analysis will serve to trace the origins of the *FSOY* booklets and highlight change over

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[63] Koenig-Woodyard, "Gérard Genette, Paratexts."

[64] Ibid.

[65] Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*.

[66] Brookey and Gray, ""Not merely para": continuing steps in paratextual research," 101-110.

[67] Desrochers and Apollon, *Examining Paratextual Theory*, xxix.

time sought in an effort to anticipate and meet the needs of the youth of the Church by

recognizing their agency and providing clear guidelines.

**Literacy Sponsors**

Deborah Brandt's initial conceptualization of literacy sponsorship proves instrumental in establishing the scholarly foundation upon which this paper seeks to expand to include a religious discourse community as a literacy sponsor. Throughout her research Brandt observes,

> The field of writing studies has had much to say about individual literacy development… to enhance the literate potentials of ordinary citizens as they have tried to cope with life as they find it…Sponsors, as I have come to think of them, are any agents, local or distant, concrete or abstract, who enable, support, teach, model, as well as recruit, regulate, suppress, or withhold literacy—and gain advantage by it in some way.[68]

Brandt's definition highlights the actions of literacy sponsors and acknowledges the advantages gained by promoting a specific literacy.  The advantages gained serve as a motivation for the sponsors to actively participate in the process acquiring and learning literacy knowledge and skills. Brandt analyzes various case studies to highlight the impact that multiple sponsors, role models, authority figures, institutions, etc., have in the lives of individuals in terms of their reading and writing mastery.

The relationship between the sponsor and the sponsee, the nature of accessibility, and the economic benefits associated with successful literacy learning squarely situates literacy as a series of choices and social practices.  Brandt argues,

> Sponsors. . .set the terms for access to literacy and wield powerful incentives for compliance and loyalty. Sponsors are a tangible reminder

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[68] Brandt, "Sponsors of Literacy," 166.

that literacy learning throughout history has always required permission,

sanction, assistance, coercion, or, at minimum, contact with existing trade

routes. Sponsors are delivery systems for the economies of literacy, the

means by which these forces present themselves to— and through—

individual learners.[69]

Sponsors acts as gatekeepers by establishing the parameters of literacy acquisition and

learning and actively seek to establish a mutually beneficial relationship with sponsees.

Literacy sponsors promote expectations, powerful incentives, and grant permission to

control literacy development to expand their own advantages. However, sponsees also

have agency and choice and their actions serve to check and challenge the pressures

created by sponsors. Like character development, literacy learning is an individual

endeavor assisted first by parents and families who function as the primary discourse

which establishes initial exposure to systems of knowledge and skills. Literacy sponsors,

like the Church utilize text often specific to their discourse community to encourage and

direct the individual development of literacy knowledge and skills. The *FSOY* texts and

official paratexts function as the medium by which the Church functions, in conjunction

with parents, schools, local Church leaders, etc., as a literacy sponsor to promote

character development.

Deborah Brandt's initial definition of literacy sponorship reveals the dynamic

relationship bewteen the sponsor and the sponsees, those individuals being sponsored.

Sponors seek to promote, model, and teach literacy knowledge and skills to receptive

individuals within a discourse community. However, as Brandt's notes, no matter how

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[69] Ibid, 166-167.

noble the endeavor, literacy sponors, like the Church gain certain advantages through the process of literacy acquisition and formal learning. Through the *FSOY* booklets and the corresponding official paratexts, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints seeks to assist members from around the world learn and practice character literacy by forming certain Habits of Mind. By seeking to enstill the youth of the Church will common values and behaviors, the Church gains several key advantages: full-time misssionaies, full-tithe payers, and individuals prepared to serve in a variety of local Church leadership positions, all of which are essential for the survival of the Church as a functioning religious institution.

Missionary work stands as one of the core missions of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Generally serving between the ages of 18-26, the youth of the Church comprise the vast majority of the volunteer missionary force of the Church. As of December 2019, 67,021 full-time missionaries were serving in 399 missions around the world.[70] The Church's emaphsis on missionary work i.e., proselyting and evangelization, strictly follows the Savior's Jesus Christ injunction to the apostles as recorded in Matthew 28: 19-20, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."[71]  Missionaries of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints actively preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and assist individuals to join the Church through the waters of baptism and the confirmation of the Holy Ghost. In other words,

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[70] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "2019 Statistical Report for April 2020."

[71] Matthew 28: 19-20 (KJV).

through the efforts of the young missionaries, the Church gained 248,835 converts in

2019 alone, thereby increasing the overall membership of the Church. Literacy sponsors

gain power and influence by increasing membership and loyalty.

In addition to directing the efforts of a substantial missionary force, the Church

gains financial advantages from active members who consistantly pay tithes and fast

offerings to the Church. In Malachi 3: 8-10 it states,

> Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have
>
> we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings . . . Bring ye all the tithes into the
>
> storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now
>
> herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of
>
> heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall* not *be*
>
> *room* enough *to receive it.*[72]

Since the Restoration of the Church in 1830, Church leaders have consistently taught that

the law of the tithe, giving 10% of your income and the law of the fast, abstaining for

food and drink for a specific time period and then donating the money saved directly to

the Church, must be followed by active and faithful members of the Church.[73] By

voluntarily giving 10% of all of their income to the Church the members provide a

substanial amount of the Church's income as a financial organization and promotes

loyalty to the Church as a religious organization. The Church in turn utilizes the tithing

funds to finance local Church buildings and activities and support missionary efforts

around the world. Fast offerings are used exclusivly to fulfil the sacred charge of caring

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[72] Malachi 3: 8-10 (KJV).

[73] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Gospel Principles*, 185-188.

for the poor, needy, and underepresented. Literacy sponsors require financial backing to support their initiatives, programs, and publications.

Lastly, through promoting shared values, standards, and ethical habits, the Church prepares youth to serve in local leadership positions as part of a lay clergy. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints does not have a professional clergy and instead members of local congregations are called and expected to serve in a variety of Church responsibilities without financial compensation. Literacy sponsors empower individuals with the knowledge and skills required to then in turn, futher promote literacy development in others. Elder Henry B. Eyring, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles states, "Thousands of members of the Church across the earth are called every week to serve, many of them recent converts. The variety in their callings is great, and the variety of their previous Church experience is even greater."[74] Callings in the Church often require a large time commitment in addition to professional, family, and personal responsibilities which illustrates the continous process of literacy development. Youth are prepared to serve in leadership positions in their local congregations by developing the common and shared values and behaviors espoused by the Church's youth programs and publications like the *FSOY* booklets. Through the *FSOY* publications and the corresponding official paratexts, the Church promotes both the acquisition and formal learning of character literacy.

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[74] Eyring, "Rise to Your Call."

**Character Development and Character Literacy**

The Church as a literacy sponsor provides youth with guidelines to make ethical

decisions to learn and then develop behaviors based on a pattern of high moral standards.

According to Pete Paciorek author of "Character Loves Company–Defining the

'Teachable Moments' in Sports: A Guidebook to Character Literacy Development" and

the founder of the non-profit "Character Loves Company, Inc.", "Character Literacy

is demonstrable proof that one has learned the requisite character values in order

to understand how to morally and ethically respond to a given situation. More

importantly, an advanced level of Character Literacy will assure that one's actions are in

accordance with these learned character values."[75] As Paciorek highlights, patterns of

moral standards are established and measurable based on discourse and behavioral

analysis and the construction and reconstruction of community dynamics.

The ten editions of the *FSOY* promote a pattern of high moral standards as taught

by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As Penny Bishop and Robert J. Nash

remind students and teachers alike, "For thousands of years, religion has been a

fundamental part of human existence. To exclude, minimize, or trivialize religion's vast

role in society is an act of. . .neglect. . .particularly when young adolescents are so ready

to engage in meaningful dialogue about the world that surrounds them."[76] Legitimizing

and studying the impact of religious institutions with regard to textual production, and

literacy sponsorship, allow scholars to apply a more holistic, well-rounded analysis of

character development and the cultivation of virtues.

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[75] Paciorek, "Character Literacy Development."

[76] Bishop and Nash, "Teaching for Religious Literacy in Public Middle Schools," 31.

Thomas Lickona and Diane Berreth remind readers that "Down through history, education has had two great goals: to help people become smart and to help them become good."[77] Character development provides individuals with the language, skills, and perspective to make conscious choices based on values. Debra Hawhee echoes the sentiment with her definition of the Greek word, *melete*, which "implies a formation of character though intensive attention and discipline, painful repeated exercise."[78] The process of defining, developing, and reinforcing "good" standards of behavior represents one of the initial goals of the Church through the *FSOY* booklets and the corresponding official internal and external paratexts.

The intended function of the different editions of the *FSOY* booklets is to assist the youth of the Church in developing character literacy by making small, but consistent choices based on a pattern of high moral standards. In defining "good character," or virtues, Thomas Lickona argues, "are objectively good human qualities, good for the development and well-being of the individual and good for the whole human community. Because they are intrinsically good, virtues transcend time and culture; justice, honesty, and kindness always have been and always will be virtues."[79] Lickona's definition, neglects the complexity that surrounds cultural diversity or changing rhetorical situations, but does prove useful in highlighting the impact of character development on ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving. Put in another way, "virtues are attitudes, dispositions, or character traits that enable us to be and to act in ways that develop. . .potential. They

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[77] Lickona and Berreth, "The return of character education," 6.

[78] Hawhee, *Bodily Arts: Rhetoric and Athletics in Ancient Greece*, 146.

[79] Lickona, "Character Education," 1.

enable us to pursue the ideals we have adopted. Honesty, courage, compassion, generosity, fidelity, integrity, fairness, self-control, and prudence are all examples of virtues."[80] Character development focus on the patterns or habits of behavior as a measurement or indication of internal beliefs or ideology. Like Habits of Mind, virtues are not simply expressed through verbal discourse, but also through the analysis of texts and the exchange of actions between individuals within discourse communities.

Ethical standards function as Habits of Mind to promote, model, teach and reinforce values accepted by the discourse community. Thomas Lickona and Diane Berreth state that virtue "consists of knowing the good, desiring the good and doing the good."[81] By first learning and developing good traits or qualities, youth are then empowered to make choices grounded in firm values or principles and ultimately cultivate a habit, or a consistent disposition, to act in a morally good way. Thomas Lickona, Eric Schaps, and Catherine Lewis maintain that "to develop character, [youth] need opportunities for moral action. . .Through repeated moral experience, [youth] can also develop and practice the moral skills and behavioral habits that make up the action side of character."[82] The term *moral action* encapsulates the argument that character development is a type of literacy that requires specific skills, Habits of Mind and a common vernacular for members of the same discourse community to address the internal and external traits of virtues. In one of the Church's manuals, *Teaching the Gospel: A Handbook for CES Teachers and Leaders*, it states, "When a person comes to

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[80] Velasquez, Andre, Shanks, and Meyer, "Ethics and Virtue."

[81] Lickona and Berreth, "The return of character education," 9.

[82] Lickona, Schaps and Lewis, "Eleven Principles of Character Development," 95.

believe in and care about a principle to the point it changes or directs his or her behavior, that principle becomes a value."[83] The affective or emotional element of standards, values and traits constitutes a humanizing reminder that although values are directly and indirectly taught within a discourse community, individuals have the opportunity to choose to either accept or reject such systems of character development.

Just as producing rigorous academic scholarship requires time and struggle, the development of character or virtues require consistent effort and re-correction to make such worldview and behaviors habitual. Manuel Velasquez, Claire Andre, Thomas Shanks, and Michael J. Meyer note, "As the ancient philosopher Aristotle suggested, a person can improve his or her character by practicing self-discipline, while a good character can be corrupted by repeated self-indulgence. Just as the ability to run a marathon develops through much training and practice, so too does our capacity to be fair, to be courageous, or to be compassionate."[84] The virtues of self-control and understanding the consequences of one's actions are essential to making deliberate ethical choices. Virtues are habit forming and as Plutarch wrote, "Character is simply habit long continued."[85] However, just as texts do not exist in a vacuum alone, but are instead surrounded and affected by nearby texts and paratexts, character development or the cultivation of virtues do not occur in isolation. Ethical thinking and behaviors are modeled and reinforced by sponsors who actively recognize the agency of youth and provide guidelines to establish one's life on a pattern of high moral standards.

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[83] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Teaching the Gospel*, 6.

[84] Velasquez, Andre, Shanks, and Meyer, "Ethics and Virtue."

[85] Plutarch, *The Life of Alexander the Great*, 54.

Character development focuses on self-control, self-expression, and self-discipline through bridling and controlling passions and impulses.[86] As youth utilize their agency they have the ability to develop ethical habits and dispositions while receiving guidance from literacy sponsors. Character development internally developed and reinforced by a literacy sponsor remains relevant and functionally applicable in a vast array of rhetorical situations. Genette acknowledges the importance of context to determine the creation, nature, use and/or reception of various texts and paratexts. Genette states, "The ways and means of the paratext change continually, depending on period, culture, genre, author, work, and edition, with varying degrees of pressure, sometimes widely varying."[87] Recent changes and advancements in digital technology, media, printing, mobile devices have expanded Genette's original usage of the term paratexts serves useful in analyzing the official paratexts of the 2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklet. An understanding of the conversations surrounding character development provides a context to consider the textual and paratextual elements of the first seven editions of the *FSOY* texts in preparation to analyze the continued impact of the 2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklet.

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[86] Alma 38: 12 (Book of Mormon).

[87] Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, 4.

**1965-2001 Editions of the *FSOY* Booklets**

A brief consideration of the textual structure of the first seven editions of the

*FSOY* booklet will service to provide a foundation for the subsequent textual and

paratextual analysis. Titled *For the Strength of Youth. . .LDS Standards* the first seven

editions contain instructions from Church leaders to youth on the following topics:

"Dress, "Grubbies, Curlers, Hair Fashions, Good Grooming, Dating, Acceptable

Dancing, [Literature, TV, Entertainment] and Clean Living."[88] With a clear emphasis on

acceptable practices and behaviors, the content of the first editions focuses primarily on a

bonified list of "do's" and don'ts." In what Jared Jepson calls "Instructional Do's" and

"Instructional Don'ts," Church leaders highlight appropriate and socially accepted

behaviors for Latter-day Saint youth.[89] For example, in the section titled "Dress" the

brethren give the following counsel, "A 'real lady' does not go out in public, to the

market, or to shops with her hair in curlers. . .Pants for young women are not desirable

attire for shopping, at school, in the library, in cafeterias or restaurants."[90] In 2020, such

direction appears almost humorous, but as a product of a specific rhetorical situation,

such advice highlights the pressures of changing fashions and social expectations within

the Church and the larger United States.

On the last page of each edition of the *FSOY* booklet, the Church leaders in their

role as literacy sponsors provide a small rhetorical justification which answers at least in

part the question, "Why were the different edition of the *FSOY* booklet written?" The

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[88] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *For the Strength of Youth-1965.*

[89] Jepson, "A Content and Textual Analysis," 11.

[90] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *For the Strength of Youth-1965*, 4, 6.

Brethren challenge the youth to remember the importance of their individuals choices since "the world often judges the whole Church by the actions of its youth."[91] In this sense, young people act as religious discourse community members by assuming the role of unofficial representatives of the Church and its doctrine, history, reputations and community involvement. With a healthy concern for the Church's image and standing within society, youth are counseled to accept responsibility for their role as unofficial ambassadors of the Church and change and mold their behavior to act in accordance with the proscribed standards.

The youth of the Church historically, have acted as a "receptive audiences," defined by Lloyd Bitzer as individuals which "can be changed in belief or action by means of speech" by choosing to making ethical decisions based on the guidelines that Church leaders provided.[92] The *FSOY* publications provides youth with an accessible and straightforward text that seeks to change and modify certain patterns of behavior. The early editions of the *FSOY* booklet sends a clear message *how* youth should conduct themselves on certain key topics, but does little to explore the *why* youth "are being asked to follow such standards of living" by not including the principles or doctrinal justification.[93] Omitting an explanation to rationalize the established ethical standards of thinking and behavior does not recognizes the choice and agency that youth possess. Howerver, the textual and paratextual elements of the 2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklet provide youth with clear guidelines and reasoning to support the standards.

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[91] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *For the Strength of Youth-1965*, 16.

[92] Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," 3.

[93] Jepson, "A Content and Textual Analysis," 24.

Consider the changing rhetorical situation and the youth demographic of the last fifty-five years. In 1965, the total membership of the Church was 2,395,932 worldwide and President David O. McKay had just recently dedicated the Church's thirteenth temple in Oakland, California; by the end of 2004, the estimated total membership of the Church was 12,207,000 worldwide and President Gordon B. Hinckley dedicated the 119th temple in June of 2004 in Manhattan, New York. [94] According to the 2019 Statistical Report the total membership of the Church is currently 16,565,036 with 167 temples in operation at the end of 2019.[95] The changing demographic of members requires Church leaders to clarify and expand texts to increase relevance and efficacy.

Unlike the first seven editions of the *FSOY* booklet, the 2011 edition utilizes both canonical scriptures and prophetic statements made by modern-day prophets to provide consistent guidelines to assist youth make ethical decisions. Elder D. Todd Christofferson argues, "it is only an internal moral compass in each individual that can effectively deal with the root causes as well as the symptoms of societal decay."[96] Individual choice and agency remain paramount in the development of ethical habits within a discourse community. The latest edition serves as the Church's medium for addressing the changing rhetorical situation, i.e., the decaying moral fiber of 21$^{st}$ century society and empower youth to make ethical decisions on a day-to-day basis.

Commenting on the textual change of the 2001 edition of the *FSOY* booklet, the one immediately preceding the 2011 edition, Jepson argues,

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[94] Avant, *Deseret Morning News 2005 Church Almanac*, 245.

[95] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "2019 Statistical Report."

[96] Christofferson, "Moral Discipline."

No longer was the *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet focused on

identifying extensive lists of what did or did not constitute good manners

or behavior; instead, the pamphlet focused on doctrinal principles with

their attendant consequences for good and ill. The instructional statements

were now being linked to prophetic promises or warning statements on a

more equal basis, whereas in the six previous editions instructional

statements dominated the pamphlet with fewer ties to the principles.[97]

The principles contained in "holy scripture and modern revelation" provide the doctrinal

foundation which contextualizes the Church's commitment to the individual and

collective growth of religious literacy and character development amongst its members.[98]

Character literacy at its core provides guiding principles, but does not seek to create a

proscribed and ridge system of do's and don'ts. Like attribtues contained in the Habits of

Mind, the Church's creation and vast proliferation of official paratextual elements seeks

to educate, edify and mold the youth of the Church as free agent by making the 2011

edition of the *FSOY* booklet more functional, accessible and versatile.

Brandt observes that "literacy takes its shape from the interests of its sponsors,

obligations toward one's sponsors run deep, affecting what, why, and how people write

and read."[99] In other words, the expectations of both the sponsors and sponsees determine

the nature of literacy acquisition and learning. Over time The Church of Jesus Christ of

Latter-day Saints has become increasingly committed to the development of character

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[97] Jepson, "A Content and Textual Analysis," 42.

[98] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "Latter-day Saints 101."

[99] Brandt, "Sponsors of Literacy," 168.

literacy, the pattern of values and moral behaviors, in the youth of the Church. The 2011 edition expanded the textual and paratextual elements of the 2001 edition to optimize functionality, accessibility, and versatility. Dennis Leffereth commenting on the internal structure of each section of the 2001 edition of the *FSOY* booklet reports that Church leaders "wanted to clearly state the principle, the standard, then the underlying doctrine and principle behind that statement. So when you read each of those standards, you will see that the first couple of sentences state the standard. Following that is the principle or the doctrine to sustain it with an example at the end and a scripture."[100] An emphasis on the principles behind the standards recognizes the youth's agency and provides guidelines, not exclusively commands, to assist them develop habits of ethical thinking and behaviors. Jepson observes, "Not only was the pamphlet designed to strengthen the youth programs, but it was designed to strengthen parents' and leaders' abilities to implement those programs on solid principles."[101] The recognition of parents and local Church leaders as literacy sponsors provides additional support and explanation for the guidelines set by general leadership. The Church embedded various textual and paratextual elements into the 2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklet to optimize the established power relationship between the Church, the youth, and their parents.

The Church utilizes its liminal position to affect the formal and informal literacy practices of its members by recognizing both their religious devotion and the ability to make ethical decisions. According to Adam Loretto, a writing professor at Grove City College, "Religious practice [and institutions] may be the most salient example of agents

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[100] Lifferth, "*For the Strength of* Youth" interview by Jared A. Jepson, 65-70.

[101] Jepson, "A Content and Textual Analysis," 71.

of literacy sponsorship that are both intimate and removed."[102] In other words, religions promote the literacy development of individuals and whole societies. The Church as a religious discourse community has official means of communication, approved policies, and promotes its teachings as a means to extend its influence. However, the day-to-day actions and practices of members of the Church also receive much attention from Church leadership with a special emphasis on the personal character development of the youth of the Church.

The youth not only represent the future of Church leadership but are also the heirs of the blessings and responsibilities which come from making and keeping sacred covenants in the holy temple. The shift away from exclusively focusing on social behavior in the earlier editions, in favor of embracing a more principle-based holistic model highlights, not just the change of the texts, but also the growth of the Church as a literacy sponsor updating and expanding their efforts to promote character development for youth of the Church. An analysis of the 2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklet will demonstrate that the Church became increasingly aware of the needs of the youth, their ability to make ethical choices with guidance and made deliberately made updates to the text to optimize functionality, accessibility and versatility with the expressed intent of having the *FSOY* booklet become part of the everyday lives of Church members.

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[102] Loretto, "How Sponsors Influence Students," 14.

## 2011 Edition of the *FSOY* Booklet

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints utilizes the 2011 edition of the

*For the Strength of Youth (FSOY)* booklet to  provide youth with the guidance and skills

to more fully exercise their own agency in making ehtical decisions. An analysis of

several visual elements of the 2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklet reveals the Church's

argument that with guidance, youth have the capability to make conscious ethical

decisions. Visual rhetoric highlights how visuals make an argument in relation to the

surrounding text.[103] In other words, visual rhetoric often utilizes a combination of images

and text to introduce, explain, and change a reader's experience with a main-body text.

Sonja Foss argues that "visual rhetoric is a product individuals create as they use visual

symbols for the purpose of communicating. . .[and] a perspective scholars apply that

focuses on the symbolic processes by which visual artifacts perform communication."[104]

Visual rhetoric is both the product and analytical lens through which readers can gain

additional insight into the arguments being communicated by the text. The Church's

guidelines and standards are represented and communicated through the collaboration of

visuals and text.

The front cover of the 2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklet showcases a photo of the

Salt Lake Temple to connect the Church's focus on character development within the

context of religious worship and learning (fig. 1).[105] Unlike the front covers of the first

eight editions, which depicted a group of idealized and two dimensional youth, the 2011

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[103] Purdue Online Writing Lab, "Visual Rhetoric: Overview."

[104] Foss, Sonja K., "Framing the Study of Visual Rhetoric," 304.

[105] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *For the Strength of Youth*-2011, Front Cover.

cover connects the booklet with the larger goal of the Church, to the prepare youth to be

worthy to enter the holy temple through a cultivation of ethical beliefs and practices

(appendix one). High moral values endow individuals with a level of worthiness or

ethical standards required to enter and actively participate in the learning opportunities

only available in the temples of the Lord. The temple stands as a recognizable symbol of

the youth and as a physical manifestation of the Church's expressed mission to provide

Church members with needed assistance in their own personal development to develop

Christ-like Attributes and Habits of Mind to bridle passions and impulsivity as taught in
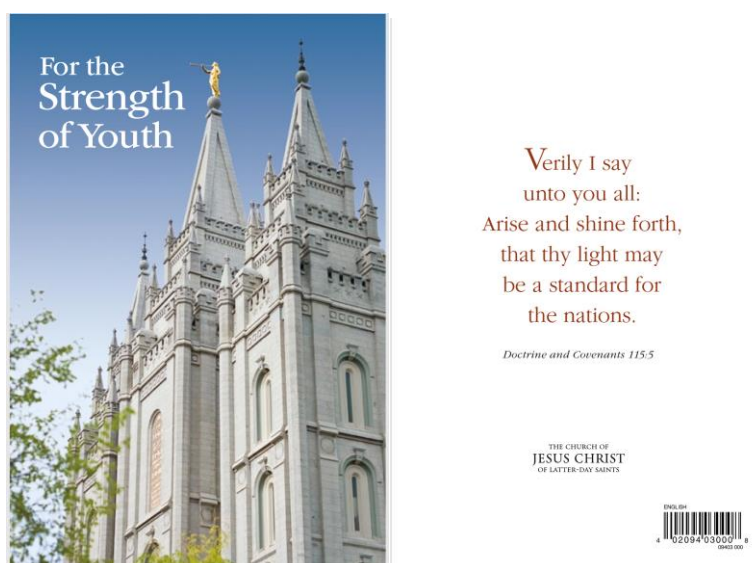
Church meetings and publications.



*Figure 1. Front Cover and Back Cover of the 2011 edition of the FSOY booklet.*

Literacy as social practice reveals the commitment of many literacy sponsors to

empower individuals to apply their literacy knowledge and skills for personal growth and

real-world application.[106] The image of the Salt Lake Temple stands as a visual reminder

of the Church's commitment to its members' as they prepare to qualify themselves to

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[106] Gee, "Literacy Discourse, and Linguistics," 5.

enter the holy edifice (fig. 1). The re-centering and re-focus on the temple serve as a

reminder to assist youth realign their attention and actions, to prepare to enter the temple

and make additional sacred covenants. The imagery of the temple, the literal house of

God on the front cover of the 2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklet foreshadows the

Church's shift to situate the temple, the principle site of worship and learning for Latter-

day Saints, as both the symbol, goal, and destination for youth of the Church.

The 2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklet, continuing as a medium through which the

Church promotes character development, contains a scriptural passage on the back cover

which is the first time in the editions that any religious text, beyond the full-name of the

Church has been included on the back cover (fig. 1). The quote acts as an invitation to the

youth, "Verily I say unto all: Arise and shine forth, that thy light may be a standard for

the nations."[107] The religious implications are clear: a direct call to the youth of the

Church to "arise" and make a difference in the worlds through their thoughts, words and

deeds. The cultivation of ethical beliefs and practices set the Church and Church

members apart from other communities which uphold a different value system. The

command for "all" to arise acts as the reminder that individual actions affect the entire

discourse community.

The imagery of "light" in the Doctrine and Covenants 115: 5 and the injunction to

"shine forth" harkens to the teachings of the Savior, Jesus Christ write after His

presentation of the *Beatitudes*, "Ye are the light of the world. . .Let your light so shine

before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in

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[107] D&C 115: 5 (Doctrine and Covenants).

heaven."[108] In other words, the actions or "works" of faithful disciplines reflect the goodness of God and brings Him additional glory. The final phrase of Doctrine and Covenants 115: 5 relates directly to the name of the booklet for the youth of the Church to "be a standard for the nations." The imagery of a military standard or flag acts as a rallying point for soldiers in an army. As President Russell M. Nelson teaches quoting Numbers 1: 52, "Standards of the Lord may be tangible or intangible. In Old Testament days, the children of Israel were told to "pitch their tents, every man by his own camp, and every man by his own standard.""[109] The visible actions and decisions of the Lord's people stand as a witness of personal character development. The tangible and intangible standards of the Lord stand provide context as the 2011 edition addresses not only moral behavior, but more importantly, the doctrine or principles which justify and support the behaviors.

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[108] Matthew 5: 14-16 (KJV).

[109] Nelson, "Standards of Standard-Bearers of the Lord."

**The Physical Booklet- 2011 Edition of the *FSOY* Booklet**

The universal application of Christian values, no matter the cultural expectations or constraints, highlights the versality of the *FSOY* booklet on youth from around the world. Character education, like literacy requires a change of thinking and behavior. Adam Loretto argues, "Literacy is thus something that changes people in the same way across cultures, because the qualities of literacy are its own… Embedded within the teaching of any literacy is the purpose for which the sponsor would have it be used, which is a way of controlling both the literacy and the user of the literacy."[110] Literacy development provides opportunities for change within individuals and communities. The Church exerts a large influence on its members while recognizes their agency and capacity to make ethical decisions through the visuals and text of the 2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklet.

The inclusion of a painting of the Savior, Jesus Christ situates the conversation about agency within a religious context. Although cultural, linguistic, and individual differences are important, members of the Church acknowledge the figure of Jesus Christ as a unifying force which promotes shared values and language. Upon opening the front cover of the 2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklet a reader first encounters a copy of Heinrich Hofmann's painting of the Savior, Jesus Christ (fig. 2).[111]

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[110] Loretto, "How Sponsors Influence Students," 16-17.
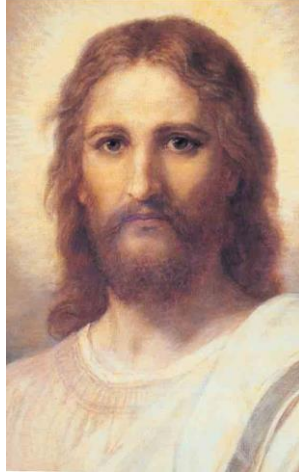
[111] Hofmann, *Christ's Image.*

*Figure 2. "Christ's Image" Heinrich Hofmann 1894.*

The painting, a personal favorite of President Thomas S Monson, the 16th President of the Church, depicts a calm and stately Savior, surrounded by a halo of light with His eyes staring straight into those of the reader.[112] The painting constitutes the first visual depicting a member of the Godhead in the development of the *FSOY* booklets. Functionally the painting of Christ act as a paratext to navigate and mediate a reader's experience to focus on the Savior and His example while engaging with the additional visual and textual elements in the booklet.

Rhetorically, by adding the image of the Savior, Jesus Christ, Church leaders deliberately shift the focus of the *FSOY* away from idealized two-dimensional depiction of youth or even the Church itself as the ultimate authority on morality, and instead situate Christ as the ideal role model and exemplar. The perfect, resurrected and living Jesus Christ stands as the ultimate symbol of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and His teachings act as a beacon to the youth. In addition, the painting informs the reader that the standards contained with the 2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklet are His

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[112] Madsen, "The New *Gospel Art* Book."

standards. In effect, the inclusion of the paining situates Jesus Christ as an ideal example,

especially when promoting a pattern of high moral values which He emulated throughout

His moral ministry. The *FSOY* is His booklet and He has given his approval through His

authorized representatives, the First Presidency. Literacy sponsorship requires the

consent of sponsors and the willingness of sponsees to promote literacy development.

Deborah Brandt and Katie Clinton argue that through a close analysis of texts

produced by an effective literacy sponsor allows researchers to see "literacy-in-

action."[113] Literacy is a system of social practices and literacy knowledge and skills are

never stagnate, but rather are constantly in flux. In other words, the textual products of a

literacy sponsor like the Church serves to increase the presence and accessibility of

literacy knowledge and skills. Just as the front and back covers of the ten editions of the

*FSOY* booklet have changed over time, literacy development requires constant changes

and reevaluation to remain relevant.

In the 2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklet, immediately following the painting of

Christ, the First Presidency decided to include a preface titled "Message to the Youth

from The First Presidency." The preface provides indispensable textual and paratextual

elements, gives introduction, reveals structure, highlights intended purpose, necessary to

contextualize the internal elements found throughout the booklet. Jacques Derrida poses

the question, "But what do prefaces actually do?"[114] To answer the Derrida's question,

Genette remarks, "The original assumptive authorial preface, which we will thus shorten

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[113] Brandt and Clinton, "Limits of the local: Expanding perspectives," 345.

[114] Derrida, *La Dissemination*, 14.

to *original preface*, has as its chief function *to ensure that the text is read properly."*[115] A preface provides needed justification for the text's existence, its intended audience and often the main or overarching argument. Without the preface, a reader may lack the needed direction or lens to fully grasp the impact of the text in larger scholarly conversations.

In the "Message to the Youth from The First Presidency," The First Presidency, the highest presiding governing council, composed of the President of the Church and his two counselors, utilize their role as the main literacy sponsors to emphasize and clarify the goal, function, and importance of the *FSOY* text. The addition of the statement "to the youth" again clarifies the intended audience of the 2011 edition and removes any ambiguity established by earlier editions by focusing on the youth of the Church. In the preface, the First Presidency writes, "The standards in this booklet will help you with the important choices you are making now and will yet make in the future. . .In all that you do, stay focused on the temple."[116] In other words, the acceptance or rejection of the standards contained in the *FSOY* booklet and other addresses by Church leaders will in large part determine youths' future opportunities and challenges in both personal and professional aspirations. In addition, the preface situates the commandments and the teaching of both ancient and modern prophets within the lens that God loves His children, to provide youth with a sense of continuity as they strive to make ethical decisions.

Devoid of practical application, learning the knowledge and skills associated with the Church's standards of character development is not sufficient. Literacy development

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[115] Genette, Paratexts: *Thresholds of Interpretation*, 197.

[116] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *For the Strength of Youth-2011*, ii.

requiring learning the values associated with a specific type of literacy. Adam Loretto argues, "Part of literacy learning…is learning the values that should attend the practice of the literacy."[117] In other words, the knowledge, skills, and values of a specific discourse community clarifies the importance of practicing ethical thinking and behavior. In the concluding paragraph of the preface, the First President writes, "It is our fervent prayer that you will remain steadfast and valiant throughout your lives and that you will trust in the Savior and His promises. As you do this, you will be an influence for good in helping to build the kingdom of God and prepare the world for the Second Coming of the Savior."[118] Ethical living requires habits of thinking and behavior that reflects the example, of the Savior, Jesus Christ. The phrase echoes the promise of spiritual confirmation given at the end of the "Introduction" of The Book of Mormon "that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Lord's kingdom once again established on the earth, preparatory to the Second Coming of the Messiah."[119] The 2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklet utilizes further scriptural quotes and references from the Book of Mormon to provide youth with consistent guidelines across different religious texts.

The online capability of the 2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklets serves as an indispensable element of analysis to understand the function of the text. Directly following the preface, the reader discovers one of the most important, engaging, dynamic, and exciting paratexts of the 2011 edition of the *FSOY* on the publication page (fig. 3).

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[117] Lorretto, "How Sponsors Influence Students," 19.

[118] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *For the Strength of Youth-2011*, iii.

[119] *The Book of Mormon,* vii.

Learn more by visiting the
*For the Strength of Youth* website:
standards.lds.org

The doors of the Salt Lake Temple



*Figure 3. Publication page of the 2011 edition of the FSOY booklet.*

Surrounded by the publication information and a picture of the doors of the Salt Lake

Temple, a short announcement revolutionizes the literacy dynamics within 2011 edition

and allows it to functionally and paratextually transcend the previous nine publications:

"*Learn more by visiting the* For the Strength of Youth *website: standards.lds.org*."[120] The

2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklet was first made available online at the official *For the*

*Strength of Youth* website before being physically distributed to Church members in

January 2012.[121] In addition to containing the full text of the 2011 edition, the website,

standards.lds.org includes an assortment of articles, videos, images, commentary, etc.

which all which functionally serve to expand the reach, application and significance of

the *FSOY* booklet to more fully meet the needs of the youth of the Church. The inclusion

of the *FSOY* website allows the Church to publish and circulate new materials relating to

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[120] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *For the Strength of Youth-2011*, iv. (emphasis added).

[121] Weaver, "For the Strength of Youth booklet updated with additional counsel."

the standards contained within the *FSOY* text to recognize the youth's agency and reemphasize the importance of ethical thinking and behaviors.

Below the announcement of the official *FSOY* website a small picture of the doorknobs of the Salt Lake Temple challenges the reader to consider the implied question, "How is the *FSOY* booklet the doorway or portal to help youth prepare to enter the holy temple?" The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints promotes and enables moral behaviors while actively suppressing vices and the immoral behaviors they produce. By promising blessing for moral behaviors and warning of harmful consequences for immoral behaviors, the Church both promises and warns youth of the ensuing results of their actions. The image of doorways represents a liminal time and space, one of transition that moves the individual into somewhere in-between inside and outside. Paratexts act as doors leading towards and away from the main-body text.  As the Savior, Jesus Christ states in Matthew 7: 7-8 "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."[122] and in Revelations 3: 20, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."[123]  As youth put forth constant and deliberate effort to think and act morally, the become a receptive audience prepared to directly engage with character development.

To increase functionality and accessibility, the 2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklet contains a comprehensive alphabetized Table of Contents which highlights the changing

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[122] Matthew 7: 7-8 (KJV).

[123] Revelations 3: 20 (KJV).

structure and organization of the text.  In terms of the Table of Contents Genette argues,

"But let us not overestimate these effects of positioning: nothing is easier or more

common, at least for readers who take an intellectual type of approach, than to cast a

preliminary glance at a table of contents placed at the back of the volume."[124] Placement

and the structure of a text emphasizes the overarching argument and highlights key

details.  With currently twenty-one sections including the preface and a separate

appendix, a textual analysis reveals deliberate changes to engage with an increasingly

diverse audience of adolescents and highlight their choice and agency. Compared to the

2001 edition for example, the topic on "Sexual Purity" in the 2011 edition no longer

directly precedes the topic on "Repentance."  This serves as a doctrinal reminder that

repentance is not confined to sexual sins or transgressions, but that personal growth and

development belong to all aspects of the personal life of each youth. Small changes such

as the organization of the topics, the addition of "Integrity" to the section on "Honesty,"

the addition of "Emotional Health" to "Physical Health" and an entirely new section

titled "Work and Self-Reliance" highlight the evolution the Church to use current

language and examples to meet the present needs of the youth of the Church.

 The first section titled, "Agency and Accountability" illustrates the power and

responsibility surrounding the ability to distinguish right from wrong and to make ethical

decisions. In the section on agency, choice is conceptualized as a gift from a loving

Heavenly Father: "Next to the bestowal of life itself, the right to direct your life is one of

God's greatest gifts to you."[125] Virtues and moral standards only become essential

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[124] Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, 317.

[125] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *For the Strength of Youth-2011*, 2.

components of character development when an individual's agency is both respected and allowed to be freely exercised. All of the subsequence sections of the 2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklet provides counsel, direction, and examples of *how* and *why* youth should make choices based on their commitment to follow established moral standards. In other words, the short conversation on agency and accountability clearly establishes that the standards must be voluntarily followed, and no individual nor institute should exhibit unrighteous dominion or pressure to restrict one's ability to choose as in the case of dating.[126]

Dating is one social practice which serves as an intriguing example to highlight the choices that youth must make in order to participate in any form of courtship based on standards of moral thinking and behavior (fig. 4).



*Figure 4. Section on Dating 2011 Edition of the FSOY Booklet.*

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[126] D&C 121: 39 (Doctrine and Covenants).

From the 1965 edition, the topic of "Dating" has remained one of only four topics (Preface, Dress, Dancing) to be addressed in each of the ten editions of *FSOY*.[127] In the 2011 edition, the topic has been endowed and imbued with additional textual and paratextual elements which greatly increases the application, functionality, and personal engagement of youth with dating. In the 2011 edition, the section contains two different images, one of the temple, and another of a group of youth talking around a campfire. The picture of temple reiterates the importance of dating only those individuals with high moral standards that can enter the temple and be sealed and married for time and all eternity. The second image demonstrates that dating initially should be done in groups and that it can be a fun and enjoyable experience to follow the Church's counsel, "When you begin dating, go with one or more additional couples."[128] In addition to the images, several scriptures are quoted or referenced to connect the Church's teachings on dating to the holy scriptures.

The pattern of utilizing scriptures first established in the 2001 edition of the *FSOY* booklet is expanded by the number of scriptures included in each section. For example, in the section on "Dating," the scriptural quote comes from Doctrine and Covenants 88:40, "Virtue loveth virtue; light cleaveth unto light."[129] Sister Elaine S. Dalton, General Young Women President, in a talk titled, "Guardians of Virtue", defines virtues as "a pattern of thought and behavior based on high moral standards."[130] As youth with high moral

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[127] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *For the Strength of Youth-2011*, 4-5.

[128] Ibid.

[129] D&C 88:40 (Doctrine and Covenants).

[130] Dalton, "Guardians of Virtue," 122.

standards seek for likeminded youth, they have the practical opportunity to date, grow, learn and eventually prepare for marriage when both parties feel ready and prepared.

Doctrinal justification connects the 2011 edition to other religious texts by utilizing internal paratexts to promote further research. Two other scriptures, 1 Corinthians 11:11 and Doctrine and Covenants 46:33, are referenced at the end of the section on "Dating." The inclusion of two, not just one scriptural reference in multiple books of scripture expands and extends the reach and application of the *FSOY* booklet as a dynamic text. In other words, by including scriptural references, the Church invites readers to temporally detaching from the main text, locate the scriptural passage, consider their individual context and then reattach to the main text with a more holistic understanding of the doctrinal principles of the corresponding topic. For example, in Doctrine and Covenants 46:33, one of the scriptures references in the "Dating" section, the Lord states, "And ye must practice virtue and holiness before me continually. Even so. Amen.[131] By connecting virtue to holiness, while harkening back to the image of the temple at the beginning of the section, Church leaders clearly argue that morally clean youth need both virtue and holiness in order to prepare to enter the temple.

In terms of connecting dating with marriage, Church leaders counsel in the 2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklet, "Seek a companion who is worthy to go to the temple to be sealed to you for time and all eternity. Marrying in the temple and creating an eternal family are essential in God's plan of happiness."[132] Dating leads to marriage which constitutes one of life's most important decisions. Along the same lines and following the

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[131] D&C 46:33 (Doctrine and Covenants).

[132] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *For the Strength of Youth-2011*, 5.

pattern of scriptural justification, the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:11 teaches,

"Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man,

in the Lord."[133] This scripture references Adam and Eve, our first parents, which provides

the Church the opportunity to promote the argument that men and women complete each

other, especially in their roles and responsibilities within marriage, family, and society

revealing the importance of making ethical decisions within dating.

One of the most significant addition in the 2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklet is

the short, but thought-provoking question found at the end of each section (fig. 4).

Literacy and character development require both mindfulness and personal reflection to

assess the personal growth of an individual.[134] In the "Dating" section, the explicit

question, "What can I do to be a righteous influence on those I date?" invites youth of the

Church to reflect on their own actions and responsibilities in terms of dating to assess

their choices and use of agency. In other words, youth must utilize their own judgment to

self-monitor their thinking and behaviors to determine whether or not they faithfully

follow the counsel of Church leaders. The inclusion of such a self-reflective question

greatly increases the level of metacognition and thoughtfulness which stand as needed

and useful practices for Habits-of-Minds.[135] Self-reflective questions provided in different

sections of the 2011 edition reveals the varied application as youth are no longer just

invited to learn the standards, i.e., the literacy knowledge and skills, but are commanded

to act, armed with practical skills, such as who to date and appropriate dating activities, to

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[133] 1 Corinthians 11:11 (KJV).

[134] Paciorek, "Character Literacy Development."

[135] Peary, "The Role of Mindfulness in *Kairos*," 22-34.

make conscious and deliberate choices. The self-reflective questions allow the youth of the Church to transcend the confines of the text and apply the principles to their individual lives. Sister Mary N. Cook first counselor in the Young Women general presidency commenting on the self-reflection questions states, "A wonderful addition is the inclusion of relevant questions that will help parents and leaders initiate discussions and personal reflection on the part of our youth."[136] Questions stimulate discourse and like rhetorical situations, they have the potential to generate fitting responses to address a specific exigence.

The other eighteen topics within the 2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklet follow the same textual and paratextual pattern as the section on "Dating:" scriptural quotes, the text proper, scriptural references, images, and rhetorical self-reflective questions. Over time and with the addition of more paratexts¸ each section of *FSOY* more directly meets the youths' needs Church by recognizing their choice and agency to direct their own lives. The emphasis on the doctrine or principles justifying the high moral standards of behaviors in the 2011 edition transcend the earlier editions of *FSOY* which focused almost exclusively on the instructional do's and instructional don'ts and lack dynamic and engaging internal and external paratexts. Through the 2011 edition of *FSOY,* the Church provides guidelines to adolescents as they cultivate the high morals connected to character development and then apply those standards in their individual lives while consciously recognizing the consequences of their actions.

In the last section of the 2011 edition of *FSOY*, "Go Forward with Faith," Church leaders state, "The standards presented in this booklet are a guide to help you make

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[136] Weaver, "*For the Strength of Youth* booklet updated with additional counsel."

choices. Review the standards often and ask yourself, 'Am I living the way the Lord

wants me to live?' and 'How have I been blessed in living these standards?'"[137] The

injunction to review the standards often establishes a habit of repetitive learning whereby

the Church seeks to assist youth develop ethical habits of thinking and behavior.

Although the 2011edition of *FSOY* is divided into twenty-one sections, all the virtues are

integrated and mutually complementary which follows the argument that values are

habitual ways of thinking and acting. In other words, developing a good work ethic and

become self-reliance will prove instrumental in being a good friend, success in dating and

family, etc. As the youth of the Church seek to expand their personal character

development, they connect themselves with other youth from around the work and make

individual and collective choices to accept, reject, and interpret the guidelines established

by the religious literacy sponsor.

The "Appendix" contains the First and Second Great in the *New Testament* and

the Ten Commandments as recorded in the *Old Testament* (fig. 5). The commandments

replace two texts created by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *The Living

Christ,* an official declaration of the divinity and mission of the Savior, Jesus Christ and

*The Family: A Proclamation to the World,* an official declaration on the importance and

sanctity of marriage and the family. The updated "Appendix" includes scriptural passages

recognizable by Christians around the world as foundational guidance to assist

individuals and communities develop habits of moral thinking and behavior. *The Living

Christ* and *The Family: A Proclamation to the World,* while being doctrinally important

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[137] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *For the Strength of Youth-2011*, 42.

and textually interesting, are unique to the Church, and therefore has limited recognition
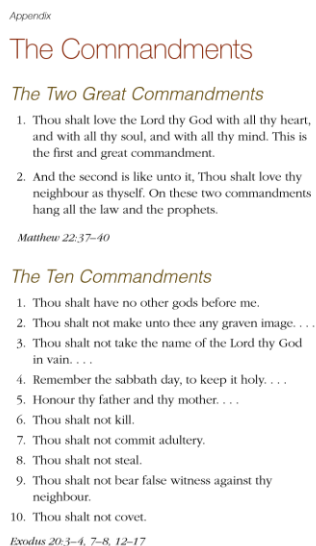
by the larger Christian world.



*Figure 5. Appendix. The Commandments. 2011 edition of the FSOY booklet.*[138]

With the inclusion of the widely recognizable doctrinal passages, self-reflective

questions, and clear guidelines, the 2011 edition of *FSOY* situates the conversation about

choice and agency within the joint doctrinal commands to love and obey. The structure

and paratextual elements contained within the physical booklet enables the Church to

recognize the youth's ability and responsibility to choose and provides clear guidelines,

such as the section on "Dating", to empower youth to freely exercise their agency and

discern the consequences of their actions. Religious doctrine and clear ethical guidelines

establish and reinforce habits based on standards of morality. Literacy and character

development require both sponsors and sponsees to utilize common texts and resources to

promote learning and personal growth.

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[138] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *For the Strength of Youth-2011*, 44.

**Beyond the Physical Text-External Paratextual Elements**

Paratextual elements beyond the confines of the physical *FSOY* provide

opportunities for youth to exercise their agency as they consume, interpret, and create an

array of online multimedia texts connected to character development. Gray situates

paratexts as "greeters, gatekeepers and cheerleaders" which expand contextualize the

impact of the main-body text.[139] Gray emphasizes the power and impact of paratexts to

challenge widespread neglect and lack of serious scholarship within such varied fields of

media studies and popular culture.  As Yra van Dijk notes, "the boundaries between text

and paratext are continually being crossed, both in print and in electronic literature." [140]

In other words, Dijk argues that instead of trying to conceptualizing paratexts as being

separate from texts she states, "Paratext seeps into text and vice versa."[141] The

relationship between texts and paratexts reveal the complex layers of meaning and

application especially in a series of publications which change over time to reflect a

changing rhetorical situation. The *FSOY* booklet focuses on growth in terms of character

development and stresses personal choice and accountability. The 2011 edition of *FSOY*

like the 1990 and the 2001 editions, has a corresponding pocket-edition card which

condenses the main standards and teachings into a small and highly portable text (fig. 6).

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[139] Gray, *Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers, and other Media Paratexts*, 17.

[140] Van Dijk, "The Margins of Bookishness: Paratexts in Digital Literature," 26.

[141] Ibid, 35.

The decisions you make now will set the course for much of what will follow during your mortal life and throughout eternity.

**Agency and Accountability**
The ability to choose is one of God's greatest gifts to you. The Holy Ghost can guide you in using your agency righteously. You are responsible for the choices you make. Righteous choices lead to lasting happiness.

**Dating**
Do not date until you are at least 16 years old. When you begin dating, go with one or more additional couples. Date only those who have high moral standards. Plan activities that help you remain close to the Spirit. As you enter your adult years, make dating and temple marriage a high priority.

**Dress and Appearance**
Your body is sacred. Dress modestly to invite the companionship of the Spirit. Never lower your standards of dress. Avoid being extreme in your clothing and behavior. Do not disfigure yourself with tattoos or body piercings. Dress appropriately for Church meetings.

**Education**
The Lord wants you to educate your mind and develop your skills and talents. Education will prepare you for greater service in the world and in the Church. Be willing to work diligently and make sacrifices to obtain an education. Your education should include spiritual learning. Participate in seminary.

**Entertainment and Media**
Select only entertainment and media that uplift you. Avoid anything that is

*Figure 6. Portion of the pocket version (card) from the 2011 edition of the FSOY Booklet.*

The pocket version's portability allows youth to always have a copy of the condensed text on their person since its small size is deliberately designed to easily fit within wallet, purse, or planner. Due to size constraints, the pocket edition eliminates all the scriptural references, scriptural quotes, and images, and utilizes the space to capture the essence of each section. For example, a condensed preface reiterates the importance of personal choice and agency by stating, "The decisions you make now will set the course for much of what will follow during your mortal life and throughout eternity."[142] The "Dating" section of the 2011 pocket-version only contains a short five sentence paragraph while the same topic is given two pages in the full-size booklet, which provides space for more details, examples and paratextual connections. While recognizing its small size, the pocket version does not seek to provide a comprehensive explanation of the topic, but rather serves as a short, concise reminder of standards learned through the full-sized booklet. The freedom of choice and the responsibilities surrounding the exercise of agency requires constant reminders to create habitual patterns of ethical thinking and behavior.

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[142] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *For the Strength of Youth-2011*, iii.

Literacy sponsors make careful choices to control and guide sponsees' literacy development. Sponsors utilize various types of multimedia to promote literacy knowledge and skills to further recognize the agency of the sponsees. Deborah Brandt states,

> The uses and networks of literacy crisscross through many domains,
> exposing people to multiple, often amalgamated sources of sponsoring
> powers, secular, religious, bureaucratic, commercial, technological. In
> other words, what is so destabilized about contemporary literacy today
> also makes it so available and potentially innovative, ripe for picking, one
> might say, for people suitably positioned.[143]

Multiple literacies sponsors and different types of literacies create a complicated system of opportunities for sponsees to exercise their agency and make deliberate choices in terms of their own literacy development. The accessibility of multimedia, which promotes and challenge different literacy skills allows for the analysis of external paratextual elements not present in the physical booklet.

Transmedia plays an integral role of highlighting the power of paratexts and their role as tools of discourse communities to generate additional dialogue. Transmedia extends, challenges, recontextualizes existing discourses to allow for the presence of agency in terms of production and consumption. Related to literacy learning Meryl Alper and Rebecca Herr-Stephenson argue that "Transmedia experiences invite children to draw upon multiple literacies, including digital, textual, visual, and media literacies, as

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[143] Brandt, "Sponsors of Literacy," 179.

well as social skills and cultural competencies."[144] In other words, transmediated games, websites, and videos, provides children and youth with multiple opportunities for engagement and connections to various learning styles. The accessibility and mobility of multimedia paratextual elements provide increased opportunities for The Church of Jesus Christ to function as a literacy sponsor in the 21st century thanks to an array of digital technological advancements.

Digital media plays an increasingly important role in the production of texts and their corresponding paratexts. As Yra van Dijk states,

> a paratext cannot be seen as simply outside a work but rather collaborates
> with it and helps shape its place in the world. The paratext is in need of
> analysis and interpretation as much as the text itself, and even more so in
> the context of the World Wide Web, in which the paratext has become
> more hybrid and more widespread. It performs the double action of, on the
> one hand, disappearing and merging with the text itself and, on the other
> hand, expanding into an infinite online context.[145]

Paratexts function as doorways and places of entry, interaction, and interpretation, which move a viewer towards and away from a main-body text. Over time and with the unfolding of additional digital technological advances the Church chose to embrace, utilize, and produce various online collections and multimodal databases to connect with members of the Church on a daily basis. The Church's official website,[146] the Gospel

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[144] Alper and Herr-Stephenson, "Transmedia Play: Literacy Across Media," 366-369.

[145] Van Dijk, "The Margins of Bookishness," 24.

[146] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "Official Website."

Library app,[147] YouTube channels, [148] and official Church Newsroom[149] provide a plethora of opportunities and mediums through which members of the Church can actively engage with the literacy content produced by the Church including the 2011 edition of *FSOY*. The expanded capability for youth to access, consume, and interact with the Church's textual productions puts added pressure on the Church, as a publishing organization, to keep materials updated and relevant in order to promote personal agency and Habits of Mind.

With the vast proliferation of personal mobile device, laptops, and desktop computers, accessing the full version of the text, in addition to corresponding articles, videos, and images has become infinitely easier and more accessible. Like other literacy sponsors, the Church is constantly in the process of creating, updating, and even discontinuing texts to provide members with the most up-to-date information and direction. The Church's official website serves as a vast multimedia platform and database that can be constantly updated to meet the needs of the members worldwide by efficiently distributing official paratexts to an international audience.

In March 2019 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in a deliberate effort to emphasize the correct name of the Church, changed the official domain of the Church's website, from lds.org to churchofjesuschrist.org.[150] The shift to a new website domain has several important ramifications for the 2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklet. On the publication of the 2011 edition, Church leaders write, "Learn more by visiting the *For*

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[147] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "Gospel Library App."

[148] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "YouTube Channel."

[149] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "Church Newsroom."

[150] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "Changes to Emphasize the Correct Name."

*the Strength of Youth* website: standards.lds.org."[151] The original website URL provided access to a collection of articles, videos, images and commentary connected to the standards contained with the 2011 edition, but since the shift to the new domain, the URL provided currently brings a viewer only to the digital text of the 2011 edition.[152] The current digital format does allow a reader to click on each section of the booklet separately and a helpful toolbar which promotes increased engagement. Also, on the online format, each of the scriptural quotes and references are hyperlinked to facilitate reviewing and connecting to external texts. However, the link no longer grants users access to the now archived *For the Strength of Youth* website with the corresponding articles, videos, images, and commentary. The interaction with the corresponding paratextual elements proves instrumental in the youth of the Church to understand the additional guidelines, examples, and clarifications provided by Church leaders to consciously exercise their agency. The current website draws into question the continued relevance and of the *FSOY* texts for the youth of the Church in terms of accessibility, functionality, and versatility.

When the official website for the *For the Strength of Youth* 2011 was first made available online, it contained a plethora of engaging and dynamic epitexts designed to further the Church's role as a literacy sponsor of character development. With the use of the "WayBack Machine" (Internet Archive.org) scholars can gain access to the website's original layout, structure, and the corresponding epitexts which provide illustrate' the

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[151] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *For the Strength of Youth-2011*, iv.

[152] Ibid, Digital Format: Full Text).

Church's intended function and goal for the 2011 edition.[153] According to a review of the

website by *Deseret News, "*Each standard listed in the '*For the Strength of Youth*'

pamphlet has its own Web page with supporting stories, examples, videos, talks from

general authorities and answers to questions. It helps leaders and parents introduce youths

to the site in a variety of creative ways."[154] Although specifically addressed to the youth

of the Church, the *FSOY* website contains various paratexts that engage both parents and

Church leaders as they collaborate in helping youth learn the doctrine and principles

behind the *FSOY*.

The *FSOY* website's different multimediated paratextual elements, provide

context as both Church leaders and the youth themselves share stories and examples of

how the guidelines contained within the 2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklet blesses their

lives. Beginning in 2011, new content began to be published on the *FSOY* website every

week, which demonstrates the increased dedication of the Church to continue to meet the

needs of the audience and provide the youth with additional counsel and explanations as

they make their own personal decisions.

The *FSOY* website includes textual, visual, and paratextual elements not present

in the physical booklet to facilitate different connections, applications, and questions for

future consideration. For example, directly below the picture of the temple and the title

can be found the "Message from the First Presidency" which clarifies and contextualizes

the purpose, role, and intended audience of the *FSOY* booklet (fig. 7).

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[153] Internet Archive, "*For the Strength of Youth."*

[154] Morgenegg, "New LDS youth website a wonder."

*Figure 7. Top of the original website for the 2011 edition of the FSOY booklet. Begins with a Message from the First Presidency.[155]*

The addition of a picture of the then-current First Presidency, a seated President Thomas

S. Monson with his two counselors standing behind him, President Henry B. Eyring and

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, adds a personal and humanizing element so youth can

visualize the faces of those sharing the introductory message. The Church, albeit a large

international religious institution, is comprised of individuals making choices to further

the Church's role in the lives of individuals and within larger communities. The

introduction of a text, either in print or digital form, allows viewers to decide to continue

engaging with the text or stop reading and seek another text that better meets their

immediate needs.

    For those members committed to developing further knowledge and skills in both

religious and character literacy, the website serves as a functional and engaging database

of resources. Scrolling down past the "Message from the First Presidency", the viewer

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[155] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "Youth: Official Website."

immediately encounters individualized hyperlinked icons which represent each of the

nineteen topics contained in the 2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklet (fig. 8).
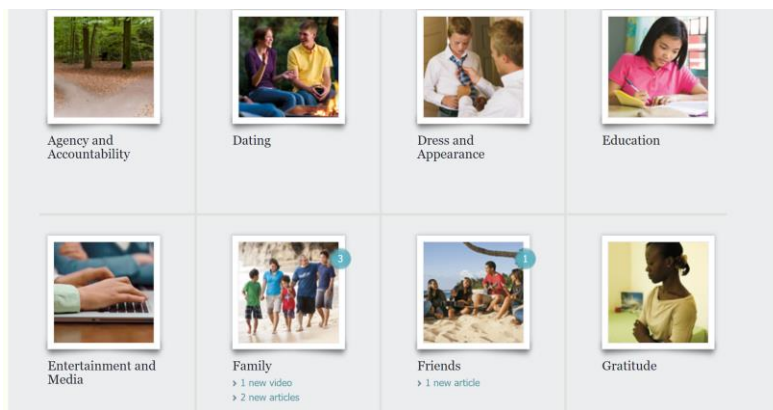


*Figure 8. Highlights four of the nineteen section of topics/sections within the 2011 edition of the FSOY booklet. Attention should be given to the videos and articles under two of the four sections that highlights various epitexts.*

The function of the hyperlinked icons is enormous. By simply clicking on one of the

small icons a viewer can access multiple resources recently added to the website which

connect to videos, articles, and graphics about the different topics not found in the

physical booklet. The *FSOY* website allows the Church to provide additional guidelines

by rapidly adding new material and making it immediately available to youth and not

waiting for a new physical publication. In other words, in addition to the main-body text

of the *FSOY* booklet, the website serves as a literacy and paratextual database connecting

the viewer with various engaging and dynamic epitexts designed to increase the

knowledge, skills, and scope of religious and character literacy. The *FSOY* website is a

reminder that the physical booklet does not exist in isolation, but rather is integrally

connected to and surrounded by other texts generated by both Church leader and local

members.

An analysis of the "Friends" hyperlinked icon will serve as a representative

example of how the *FSOY* website provides access to multiple epitexts which augments

the initial function of the 2011 edition of *FSOY* by continuing to promote agency and ethical decision-making (fig. 9).
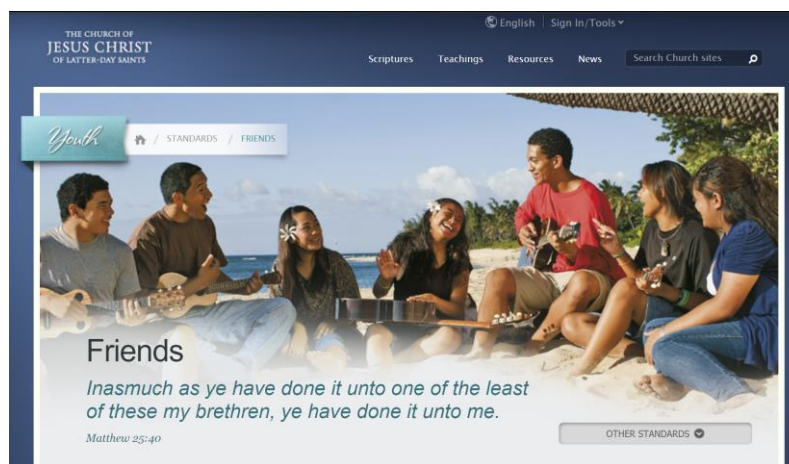


*Figure 9. Screenshot of the top of the webpage on the topic "Friends". Note the paratexts: Image, Scriptural Quote and Search bar.*

As the youth of the Church strive to develop virtues based on a pattern of high moral standards the section on "Friends" serves to remind them that they have peers and fellow youth who serve as organic literacy sponsors to make ethical decisions throughout the trials of daily life. Character development functions when paired to a community of individuals who share and promote similar values.

Just like the physical booklet, the online text begins with a scriptural quote, Matthew 25:40, which establishes the doctrine justification to include section devoted to friendship in a text about high moral behaviors.[156] Beyond providing continuity between religious texts, the *FSOY* website continues to utilize various tools to increase accessibility and functionality for the youth of the Church. For example, the search bar allows the viewer to actively explore "Other Standards" which relate to "Friends" to expand the function of the physical booklet. The search bar clearly demonstrates how one

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[156] Matthew 25:40 (KJV).

standard or principle belongs to an anthology of expansive textual and paratextual visuals

which lead to other opportunities for further engagement from a different angle and

perspective. The sharp increase of epitexts within the "Friends" section of the *FSOY*

website demonstrates how the latest edition of the *FSOY* booklet continues to transcend

the limitations of its predecessors by more fully recognizing the youths ability to choose

and encourages them to make ethical decisions.

The main text of the "Friends" section serves to provide the foundational

guidelines to recognize the youth's agency to make and guide them to make ethical
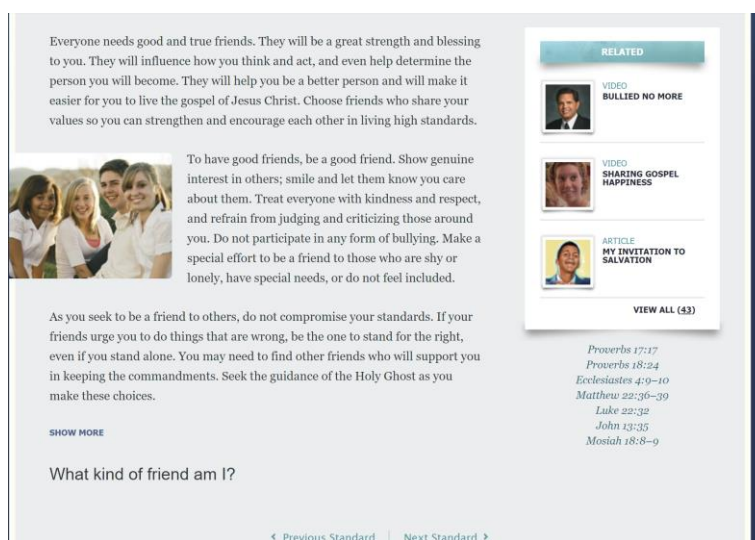
choices about friends (fig. 10).



*Figure 10. Screenshot of the middle of the "Friends" webpage. Note the significant paratexts: Image, Rhetorical Question, Related Videos/Articles and Multiple Scriptural References.*

For example, as stated in both the physical booklet and the digital format Church leaders

recognize the impact that friends make in the lives of members of the Church, "They will

influence how you think and act, and even help determine the person you will become.

They will help you be a better person and will make it easier for you to live the gospel of

Jesus Christ. Choose friends who share your values so that you can strengthen and

encourage each other in living high standards."[157] Just as literacy skills are mutually

complementary, friends' function as local literacy sponsors to either promote or challenge

literacy learning. In other words, the friends that surround the youth of the Church serve

as a powerful authority to affect the character development of individuals and whole

communities. Friends, by nature of their proximity and intimacy, serves as commentators

and confidants to support or challenge habits of ethical thinking and behavior. The

Church recognizes the life changing influence of friends and guides youth to carefully

choose their associates to reinforce their personal character development.

The Church guides the youth to choose friends and form and maintain healthy

social relationships with those that share similar values. Like the physical booklet, the

text ends with a self-reflective question, "What kind of friend am I?" which serves the

function to challenge youth to assess their own words and actions as a friend and not just

outwardly focuses on the choices of other people. As youth consider the attributes,

values, and practices of a good friend they can change and modify their thinking and

behavior to match their values. Challenging the youth to internalize the principles and

values taught in the section and then inviting them to act and change their behavior

connects the scholarship of literacy development to social practices and engagement.

On the right-hand side of original text found in the physical booklet, the viewer

encounters 43 items within a "Related Content" sidebar connected to the topic of

friendship to watch, read, and review. For example, the two videos, "Bullied No More"

and "Sharing Gospel Happiness" and an article "My Invitation to Salvation" highlighted

(fig 10). In other words, the 43 examples of related content act as corresponding epitexts

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[157] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *For the Strength of Youth-2011*, 16.

of the friendship as the scope, commentary and examples move far beyond the main text. The connections to other resources demonstrate that the Church utilizes various multimedia texts, not just one physical booklet, recognize the choice and agency the youth have and provide them with guidance to continuously engage with the knowledge and skills associated with being and having friends. In other words, although functionally important and the focus of this thesis, the 2011 edition of *FSOY* is only one text among many that promote aspects of character development in the members of the Church.

Underneath the related content section, the reader finds seven scriptural references from six different books of scripture in the *Old Testament, New Testament,* and *Book of Mormon.* In the physical version of the 2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklet, only two scriptural references are given, meaning that the website provides greater opportunities to explore the doctrinal justification and scriptural examples in terms of friends in different books of canonical scripture. Together, the main-body text, the related content, and the increased number of scriptural references provide the opportunity for hours of paratextual analysis and exploration to assist youth freely exercise their agency and develop and utilize character development.

Paratextual elements allow youth to receive additional guidelines from Church leaders regarding character development and generate their own commentary. In 2012, Angela Farmer an active youth in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints submitted an article to the August 2012 *New Era* magazine. She writes, "I hope you understand that even when you simply live your standards, you can have a profound effect on the lives of others. Being morally clean is a path to more than just personal

happiness."[158] Both friendship and literacy sponsorship involve members of a discourse community interacting with each other in varied and meaningful ways to support or challenge thinking and behaviors. Such interactions occur both intentionally and unintentionally as youth especially seek to understand the effect that external forces have on their personal growth and development as they learn to make ethical decisions.[159] The cultivation of virtues and the practice of friendship are both complicated processes that provide an array of opportunities for growth and paratextual analysis.

The bottom section of "Friends" webpage on the *For the Strength of Youth* website, is divided into three distinct columns, "More on Friends," "From Church Leaders," and "From Youth" which contain epitexts which expands and deepens the teachings and principles introduced in the main-body text (fig. 11).
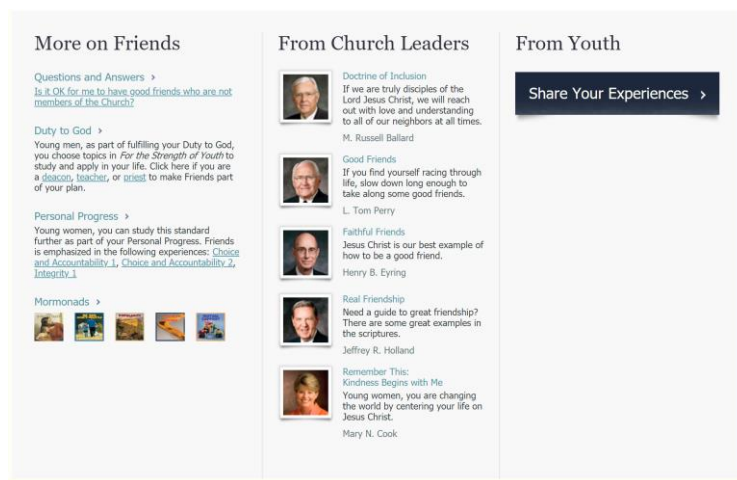


Figure 11. Bottom section of the "Friends" webpage. Highlights three distinctive types/categories of epitexts to expand and deepen the main text provided to create an interactive experience for readers/viewers.

In the left-hand column titled, "More on Friends" viewers discover the connection between the 2011 edition of *FSOY* and the two youth programs of the Church, *Duty to*

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[158] Farmer, "Thank You for Your Example."

[159] Pavia, "Literacy Sponsorship of the "My Online Friends" Discussion Board," 135.

*God* for Young Men *160* and *Personal Program* for Young Women.[161] Choice and

accountability stand as hallmark characteristics of literacy sponsorship and character

development, in addition to the two youth programs and the engaging *FSOY* website. The

Church utilizes different multimedia texts to meet the needs of the audience by promoting

the same standards throughout different mediums. Choice allows youth to exercise their

personal agency to interpret and apply the Church's guidelines in their personal trials and

daily interactions.

The Church guides youth through the *FSOY* booklet and corresponding resources

to form and maintain healthy and happy relationships by making choices based on ethical

decisions. Employing Gee's concept of primary and secondary discourses demonstrates

the collaboration of different literacy sponsors such as family, friends and church

organizations, to promote, challenge, and interpret literacy knowledge and practices.[162]

Alone, Church leaders would lack the manpower, accessibility and means of engagement

to assist members of an international religious discourse community to effectively

develop character literacy. However, when the efforts of Church leaders are paired with

parents, local Church leaders, and friends together they constitute a powerful force as

joint literacy sponsors to promote agency and accountability.

The additional paratexts found on the "Friends" webpage provides youth with

different types of resources to further promote the established guidelines found in the

physical booklet and let the youth pick and choose which digital elements they want to

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[160] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "Duty to God: For Aaronic Priesthood."

[161] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "Personal Progress Young Women."

[162] Gee, "Literacy Discourse," 8.

consume. The resources under "From Church Leaders," provide access to five

hyperlinked icons which lead youth to an additional series of articles and videos by the

General Authorities of the Church (fig. 11). The addition of further commentary and

suggestions by leaders of the Church provides an increased level of legitimacy and

application in term of the practice of friendship from the 2011 edition of *FSOY*. All of the

articles and videos are made available together on the *FSOY* webpage but were

distributed to Church members at different time periods utilizing the several magazines

published by the Church. For example, Elder L. Tom Perry in his address echoes the

same argument found in the 2011 edition of *FSOY*, "The friends we choose to associate

with are main contributing factors in the formation of our character."[163] Friends play a

pivotal role in the formation and continued support of ethical Habits of Minds. Paratexts

can be reused, recycled, repurposed, and reincorporated into new texts to provide

additional commentary and context. The added support and instruction from the

paratextual elements remind viewers that the 2011 edition of *FSOY* functions as an

official and sanctioned text from the general leadership of the Church.

The last right-hand column of the "Friends" webpage, titled "From Youth: Share

Your Experiences" provides a forum for the youth of the Church to post comments and

questions (fig. 11). Instead of simple consuming content, texts and paratexts created by

the Church and Church leaders, youth now have space on the Church's official website to

produce their own commentary which serves to further expand the paratextual

connections to the 2011 edition. In their comments, the youth consistently express

gratitude to Church leaders for the helpful guidelines and ask questions to receive

[163] Perry, "Good Friends."

additional insight to resolve personal challenges. Paratexts, like literacy sponsors

combine the effort of producers (sponsors) and consumers (sponsees) to generate and

analyze official and unofficial paratexts in the context of a main-body text. For example,

the articles and videos in the middle column "From Church Leaders" represent official

content or official paratexts on the topic of friendship as presented in the *FSOY* booklet.

The comments and questions posted by the youth of the Church are immediately

available for viewing and represent unofficial paratexts, although they are made available

on the Church's official website. Acting as an anthology of engaging textual and

paratextual elements, the sections "More on Friends", "From Church Leaders," and

"From Youth" represent a deliberate and skillfully executed plan to provide youth with a

plethora of different multimedia platforms to encounter the standards contained in the

2011 edition of  *FSOY* and then apply the principles to their personal lives.

The "Friends" icon on the *FSOY* website serves as a representative example of the

structure, level of engagement and commitment to the accessibility of the Church's

guidelines and doctrinal continuity found in the other eighteen sections of the site. In

other words, each icon contains multiple articles, videos, and images which

revolutionizes the reader's experience with the *FSOY* booklet. The *FSOY* website

provides readers with various options and choices on *how* they will engage with the

textual and paratextual elements to internalize the additional commentary on the 2011

edition of *FSOY*. Three final resources on the homepage of the *FSOY* website provide

context to the Church's on-going efforts to promote character development by increasing

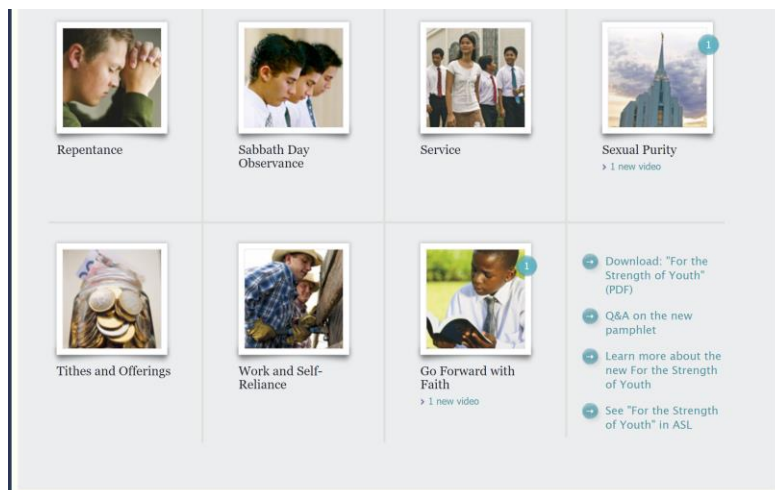functionality, accessibility, and versatility (fig. 12).

*Figure 12. Bottom of the original website for the 2011 edition of the FSOY booklet. Attention should be given to the multiple hyperlinks on the right-side of the image which grants access to additional epitexts.*

The engaging article titled, "Q&A on the new For the Strength of Youth" provides

readers with clear answers, background, and context from the Young Men's President,

David L. Beck and the Young Women's President, Elaine S. Dalton as they discuss eight

questions relating to the 2011 edition.[164]

The second to last resource titled, "Learn more about the new For the Strength of

Youth" brings the reader to an online article titled, "*For the Strength of Youth* Updated

and Refreshed."[165] Sister Elaine S. Dalton states, "The standards have not changed, but

times have changed. *For the Strength of Youth* has been revised to address the issues

youth face today—to teach them the doctrine behind the standards and the promised

blessings of obedience." With a changing rhetorical situation in terms of moral standards

in the general populace part of the Church's response to clarify their position is the

publication of the 2011 edition of *FSOY*. However, a publication of a new edition alone

does not serve to combat the tide of worldly pressures associated with moral decay. By

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[164] Beck and Dalton, "Q&A on the new *For the Strength of Youth*."

[165] Wrigley, "*For the Strength of Youth* Updated and Refreshed."

directly teaching the youth about the doctrine behind the standards, the Church empowers

youth to building their own pattern of high moral behavior based on principles

surrounding religious faith and obedience. Lastly, the blessings of obedience highlights

the Christian position that God, our loving Heavenly Father, wants to bless His children

and that all blessings are predicated on the obedience to a divine law.[166] Together,

learning the doctrine and focusing on the divine consequences of righteous actions

empowers the 2011 edition of the *FSOY* booklet to function as a powerful resource in the

Church's mission to develop character development in youth.

The resource titled, "See "For the Strength of Youth" in ASL" leads to a series of

videos where each section of the 2011 edition for the *FSOY* booklet are signed for the

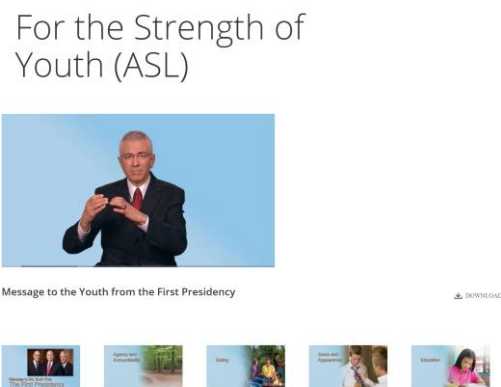deaf or hard-of-hearing community using American Sign Language (fig. 13).[167]



*Figure 13. For the Strength of Youth (ASL) videos.*

From its inception, the 2011 edition of *FSOY* has promoted accessibility and portability

in terms of the main-body text and the corresponding paratexts. However, the addition of

videos of the different sections of the *FSOY* booklet in ASL, allows a whole community,

often marginalized because of their presupposed handicap, increased capability to interact

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[166] D&C 130: 20-21 (Doctrine and Covenants).

[167] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "*For the Strength of Youth* (ASL)."

with the text and paratexts. Just as the Church translates the *FSOY* booklet into dozens of spoken languages, providing the ASL community with their own videos demonstrates inclusion, awareness and highlights the text's versatility to apply to all youth, no matter their background or personal abilities. As a literacy sponsor the Church needs to maintain a reputation for meeting the needs of a diverse audience comprised of members from vastly different backgrounds and abilities.

According to Gérard Genette, "one may doubtless assert that a text without a paratext does not exist and never has existed."[168] From its inception, the *FSOY* has contained both internal and external paratexts that introduce, mediate and change a reader's experience with the main text. However, no matter their importance, Genette at the end of his book devoted to the historical development and impact of paratexts, warns, "the same principle holds (or should hold) for the author as for the reader and is summed up by this simple slogan: *watch out for the paratext!*"[169] Paratexts have the potential to divert a viewer's attention so completely that they forget or ignore the main-body text so they must always be analyzed in context to facilitate interpretation and mean-making.

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[168] Genette, *Paratexts Thresholds of Interpretation,* 3.

[169] Ibid, 410.

## Conclusion

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints utilizes the 2011 edition of the

*For the Strength of Youth* booklet to recognize the choice and agency that youth have and

provides them with the guidance and skills to more fully exercise their own agency. This

thesis examines two questions: "How does a literacy sponsor create and utilize official

paratexts to expand the functionality, accessibility, and versatility of a text?" and "How

does the Church promote character development (character literacy) and what advantages

does the Church gain because of such sponsorship?" In other words, this thesis explores

how literacy sponsors promote multiple literacies and different kinds of literacy mastery

beyond the knowledge and ability to read and write.

The Church continues to create and distribute official paratexts connected to the

*For the Strength of Youth* publications. On July 19, 2019, Church leadership announced

that the regional youth conferences formally titled, *Especially for Youth* (*EFY*) would be

renamed *For the Strength of Youth* (*FSY*) conferences.[170] According to an official article

published in *Church News,* "*FSY* conferences include activities, devotionals, and classes

designed to help strengthen faith in Jesus Christ and provide opportunities for youth to

grow spiritually, socially, physically, and intellectually."[171] The conferences are designed

to facilitate personal development within the larger religious discourse community by

bringing youth together to develop and reinforce patterns of ethical thinking and

behavior. With the rebranding of the annual conferences, the Church continues to utilize

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[170] Eyre, "Church Announces *FSY* for U.S. and Canada."

[171] Walker, "Church Releases More Details about FSY Conferences Starting in 2020."

official paratexts to connect Church programs and publications to an increasingly diverse international audience of adolescents.

This thesis call for more scholarship to be done on different religious discourse communities and their roles as literacy sponsors. To date, the scholarship of literacy sponsorship has rarely analyzed the impact and function of religious institutions in society. In addition, it calls for the analysis of religious texts utilizing the methods connected to the fields of Composition and Rhetoric. When religious texts have been considered, scholars have almost exclusively analyzed canonical texts, such as scriptures, while either ignoring or overlooking other dynamic and interesting texts.[172] In addition, scholars should strive to create deeper connections between academic institutions and religious discourse communities to create more respectful and critical dialogue. Students and faculty often have religious backgrounds and/or connections which should be acknowledge and utilized to produce more holistic scholarship based on both theory and praxis.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints continues to utilize the *FSOY* and the official paratexts it creates to assist the youth of the Church in developing character literacy. The ten editions of the *FSOY* are relatively small in length and have not received much attention from academic scholars or from individuals who do not belong to the Church. However as is taught in the Book of Mormon, "By small and simple things great things are brought to pass…and small means in many instances doth confound the wise."[173] Texts and paratexts often function as "small and simple things" that produce

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[172] Pernot, "The Rhetoric of Religion," 236.

[173] Alma 37: 6-7 (Book of Mormon).

significant and lasting change in the lives of individuals and on entire discourse communities. For example, the front cover of a book, a short movie trailer, or the comments made in response to a new video, have the potential to radically change an individual's expectations, introduction, and reading of a text.

In response to the recent protests stemming from the death of George Floyd, President Russell M. Nelson stated, "Any nation can only be as great as its people. That requires citizens to cultivate a moral compass that helps them distinguish between right and wrong."[174] Character education and literacy sponsorship is grounded in the belief that people can change. Individuals can develop more critical and well-rounded knowledge and skills to solidify their belonging to a discourse community. Habits of applied character development lead to a moral life based on ethical thinking and behavior. "The moral life is also a matter of trying to determine the kind of people we should be and of attending to the development of character within our communities and ourselves."[175] Individual choice and a commitment to help and support the larger discourse community stand as the pillars of successfully character development initiatives. Youth have a profound effect on the moral well-being of communities as they strive to solidify their identities and sense of belonging.

The 2011 edition of *FSOY* situates the Savior, Jesus Christ and the holy temple as the ideal examples of character development. The Savior taught, "Therefore, what manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am."[176] Character

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[174] Nelson, "President Nelson Shares Social Post about Racism and Calls for Respect."

[175] Velasquez, Andre, Shanks, and Meyer, "Ethics and Virtue."

[176] 3 Nephi 27:27 (Book of Mormon).

education is committed to assisting individuals learn and practice the knowledge and

skills associated with values and ethical behavior within a discourse community. As Paul

Fitzgerald states, "ethics thrives exactly where people choose to live in the tension

between that which is and that which ought to be."[177] The struggle within individuals,

discourse communities and larger society, echoes the reality and hope of the

transformative nature of character development. As individuals work to develop the

character traits that they do not yet adequately possess, they strive to cultivate inside

themselves, with the assistance of sponsors, attributes required to live a moral life.

Character development functions on an ever-increasing continuum and the cultivation of

ethical thinking and behaviors requires a lifetime of deliberate decision making.

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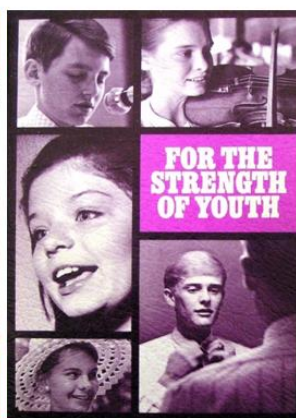[177] Fitzgerald, "Religion Provides a Point of Reference."

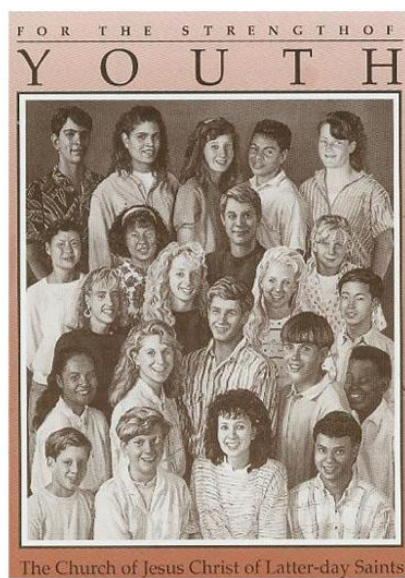**Appendix A: Covers, 1965-2011 Editions for the For the Strength of Youth Booklets**[178]
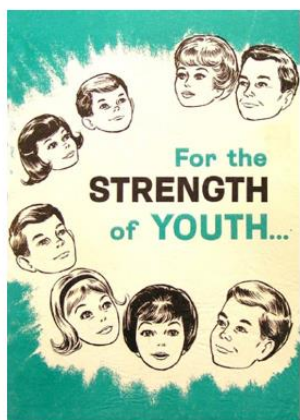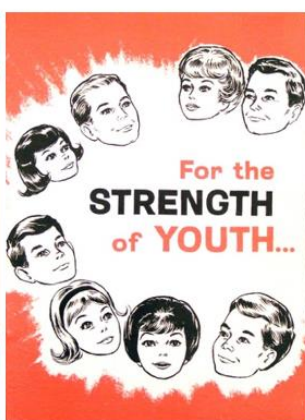


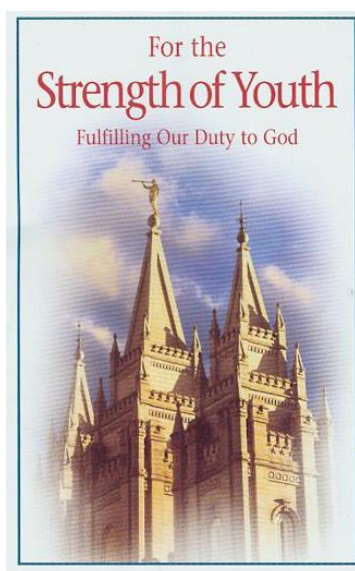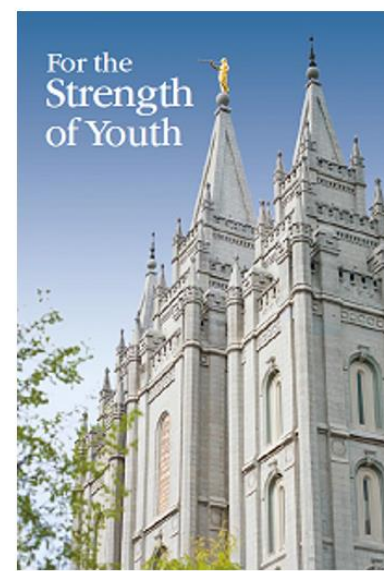| 1965 | 1966-69 | 1972 Front | 1972 Back |



| 1990 | 2001 | 2011 |

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[178] Jepson, "A Content and Textual Analysis," 12.

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