

J. Anette Dennis Oct 2025 - Teacher Copy

Quote #1 (love and care)

Important Note for All Quotes: This lesson sometimes takes a candid look at our ward and branch culture. It is essential to set ground rules with the class right from the start and to invite people to avoid the temptation to turn their thoughts outward by analyzing everyone else's guilt. This lesson is meant to be introspective. These ground rules are best delivered with humor or a smile, rather than as a chastisement!

Possible engagement tool: Sister Dennis tackles a sometimes-challenging topic—ward and branch dynamics. See what stands out to you as we read the following quote.

“Our experience at church is meant to provide vital connections with the Lord and with each other that are so needed for our spiritual and emotional well-being. Inherent in the covenants we make with God, beginning with baptism, is our responsibility to love and care for each other as members of the family of God, members of the body of Christ, and not just to check off a box on a list of things we’re expected to do.

“Christlike love and care are higher and holier. The pure love of Christ is charity. As President Nelson taught, “Charity propels us ‘to bear one another’s burdens’ [Mosiah 18:8] rather than heap burdens upon each other.”

Possible discussion questions: What elements of the Church and the Gospel aid you in fostering a deeper connection with the Lord? How does the Church and the Gospel help you connect to others in the ward (or branch)? What programs, teachings or callings help us to love and care for others? (Ministering!) How do you like to do that? When have you felt the most meaningful connections with others? What does the phrase “higher and holier” suggest to you? What happens to us as a people when there is a lot of charity practiced, in place of complaints, tension, and fault-finding?

Quote #2 (belonging)

“One of the priorities of our presidency has been for our sisters to feel a sense of belonging at church and especially in Relief Society. I’ve had occasions to read letters and hear experiences that have saddened me. (Footnote #2)

“The Savior said, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” And President Nelson added: “Charity is the principal characteristic of a true follower of Jesus Christ.” “The Savior’s message is clear: His true disciples build, lift, encourage, persuade, and inspire. ... How we speak to and about others ... really matters.”

Possible activity: Have your class help you pull out what actions President Nelson advised us to do:

Note: the list does not need to be complete; use the exact words or keep the same order. Just go with what your class finds.

- Have charity
- build
- lift
- encourage
- persuade
- inspire
- voice tone and word choices matter

Possible discussion questions: Sister Dennis candidly recognizes a greater need for belonging at Church. How does President Nelson advise us to solve that? What word or words especially stand out for you from the quote today? Play on the answers!

Quote #3 (becoming)

This quote is a banger. It gets right to the root of most of our problems.

“Judgmental thoughts about others can drive the Spirit away as well. When we look down on others with critical thoughts, that is evidence of pride, and President Henry B. Eyring has said that “pride is the great enemy of unity”
Footnote #6

“The Savior’s life was an example of loving, gathering, and lifting even those who society had judged as outcasts and unclean. His is an example we are commanded to follow. We are here to develop Christlike attributes and eventually become like our Savior. His is not a gospel of checklists; it is a gospel of becoming—becoming as He is and loving as He does. He wants us to become a Zion people.”

Possible discussion questions: Do thoughts count? Why do you think that is? How can transforming our thoughts to be charitable or at least not negative – help our efforts to become more like the Savior? How can we overcome critical and negative thoughts when we are surrounded by a sometimes hostile and critical culture? Does negativity settle into families and marriages? What is our responsibility there?

Quote #4 (self-care)

Wonderful reminder!

Note: Please divide between two readers

“Only the Lord fully knows the actual level of difficulty with which each of us is running our race of life—the burdens, the challenges, and the obstacles we face that often cannot be seen by others. Only He fully understands the life-changing wounds and trauma some of us may have experienced in the past that are still affecting us in the present.

“To each one of you who may feel you have lagged far behind in this race of life, this journey of mortality, please keep going. Only the Savior can fully judge where you should be at this point, and He is compassionate and just. He is the Great Judge of the race of life and the only one who fully understands the level of difficulty with which you are running or walking or shuffling.”

Possible discussion question: Why is it important to be patient with ourselves as well as others? Do we sometimes need to forgive ourselves? What helps you hit the reset button and keep going and keep trying?

Quote #5 (closing)

This makes a wonderful closing statement if you have time.

“Keep your eye on the Savior. He is your iron rod. Don’t let go of Him. I testify that He lives and that you can trust Him. I also testify that He is cheering you on.

“May we all follow the Savior’s example and cheer each other on is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.”