

What I've taught my older children about LDS truth claims

I have talked a few times with my older children about the evidence that suggests the Church might not be what it claims. These talks are in proportion with their interest and age but typically have not been particularly long or in great depth. I have tried to strike a balance between explaining my decision to leave the Church and simultaneously respecting the right of my children to form/develop their own beliefs. I believe I have a moral obligation to discuss problematic issues with my children who are old enough to grasp the import of these issues so that they can fully exercise their agency in choosing what they want to believe and with what religious organizations they want to affiliate, if any.

Main Points

These are the main points I've shared over the past two years:

1. Some data calls into question [the accuracy of spiritual methods in determining objective truth](#).
2. "Mormon and non-Mormon Egyptologists agree that the characters on the fragments do not match the translation given in the book of Abraham" [see "Translation and Historicity of the Book of Abraham" on lds.org](#).
3. The way in which Joseph Smith practiced and instituted polygamy is ethically/morally problematic [see "Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo" on lds.org](#).
4. [The Lowry Nelson letters](#) and [The Stewart Udall letters](#) demonstrate the unwavering confidence Church leaders of that time had in the divinity of the Black Priesthood/Temple ban and the doctrines supporting it as well as the manner in which dissent is often treated in the Church.

I also typically present both sides when I'm discussing these issues with my children—I'll simultaneously present the apologetic response when I'm discussing an issue.

General Considerations

In addition, we've discussed these somewhat broader-issues:

1. The differences between [a totalistic and individual-growth mindset](#).
2. The problematic issues with [indoctrinating children and youth](#) (e.g., we've watched the Jehovah's Witness video "[Jehovah thinks magic is bad](#)")

Finally, it should be noted that the tenor of my conversations are generally positive, and I am hope and goodness affirming (see [an outline of my beliefs](#)). In addition, there are compelling arguments suggesting that [morality transcends religious belief](#), so I speak freely about the merit and satisfaction of living a moral life.

Notes

In order to verify that I've described my teaching accurately, I've read through this document with my second son, and he says that I got it "exactly right."