

A New Creature

Hymn	"All Things Bright and Beautiful," Children's Songbook, 231
Alma 30:44	"All things denote there is a God; yea, even the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it..."
2 Cor. 5:17	"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."
Joseph Smith	"You have got to learn how to be a god yourself." (Gospel Topics Essay)
John Taylor	"But as an intelligent being, if I have a mind capable of reflection, I wish to contemplate the works of nature, and to know something of nature's God, and my destiny." Journal of Discourses 1:151-2

Latter-day Saints stand unique in our belief that we all have the potential to become like our Heavenly Parents. The way towards that progression is through trial and error, practicing our faith, and gaining new experiences. Gratefully, God has created a world that shows and teaches us those principles. Many things in nature can instruct us about our relationship to God.

Elder Neil L. Andersen has a wonderful lesson on the principles we learn from butterflies (see additional resources). Here, he expresses the frustration we can feel when we are in the beginning stages of our progression:

"Sometimes when you feel like you are a caterpillar and say to yourself: 'I'm not smart, I'm not very coordinated, I'm different, I don't have this, I don't have that'—keep in mind who you are. We don't all have to be the same. We come in different sizes, different shapes, different colors. Some have some talents, some have others; we don't have to be exactly like someone else. ... Individuals must look on their potential and think, 'One day I will fly.'"

Like the caterpillar, we have the potential to advance. We can grow and become "new creatures." There are many examples in nature of magnificent transformation: an acorn to an oak tree, a tadpole to a frog, a tiny mustard seed to a large bush. Because Heavenly Father has given us these natural tools to learn by, we should reverence them and care for their preservation.

Activity Ideas

For young children:

Teach the life cycle of a butterfly or a frog. Have the child act each of the roles in the progression of the cycle. *For example, for a butterfly, curl into a ball and “hatch” from an egg, wriggle and crawl like a caterpillar, wrap up in a chrysalis blanket and “nap,” then shed the cocoon and reveal beautiful wings.* Explain that each of these steps is important for the progression of the creature.

For older children:

Have the child pick an aspect in nature that undergoes change and have them explain what gospel principles we can learn from it. (Examples might be an acorn to an oak tree, a tadpole to a frog, the rising and setting sun, the changes in seasons.)

For all:

Visit a local butterfly sanctuary in your area. [Here's one in Utah.](#)

Treat Ideas

Easy:

Make [butterfly pretzels](#) or [peanut butter and chocolate acorns](#).

Advanced:

If you're feeling ambitious (or, ahem, *amphibious*) make some of [these gelatin dots](#) and pretend they're tadpole eggs!

Additional Resources

Elder Neil L. Andersen gives a beautiful lesson on gospel principles we can [learn from a butterfly](#).

This Ensign article explains why [the mustard seed](#) is a good symbol for exponential growth.

This complementary lesson called [Nature—Evidence of Heavenly Father's Love](#) is from the Family Home Evening Resource Book.

Here's an remarkable story from 1993 when [BYU researchers brought a species of frog back](#) from the brink of extinction.

Here's an explanation of [the life-cycle of a frog](#).

Learn here about [the life-cycle of a butterfly](#).