**Faith & Belief Forum – Schools Speaker**

**Jonathan Mace – Primary & Secondary School Stories**

*Primary School*

My name is Jonathan and I’m a Christian and a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Being a Christian means I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God and that I should follow his teachings, many of which are found in a book of scripture called the Bible. As for my personal background, I'm 30 years old. I grew up in the Midlands but I moved to London just over 2 years ago, and I absolutely love it. I spend my spare time seeing every theatre show available in London, with some of my favourites being *Matilda*, *Wicked* and *Les Miserables*. Have any of you seen any of those?

My family is really important to me. I grew up with my Mum and Dad and three sisters. My Dad was raised in Birmingham by my Grandad and Nanny Mace, and my Mum was raised in Wakefield (in Yorkshire) by my Grandad and Nana Warriner. I have lots of aunts and uncles and over 20 cousins. I now also have 15 nieces and nephews. My family is big!

But on a day to day basis, my immediate family is small. It's my wife and me. We got married in February 2017. We had a big ceremony with all our family and friends (over 200 people) and a party afterwards to celebrate. It was a really special day.

* Photo – Wedding day (see bottom)

At the end of our wedding day, we went to a very special building called a temple.

* Photo – London temple (see bottom)

There are only two such buildings in the UK. As a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I believe that these temples are the house of God on the earth and we can feel especially close to Him in them. We go to temples to participate in holy ceremonies and rituals which are so special we can’t do them in a regular church building. I also believe we can make promises to Him in them and He’ll in turn make promises to us.

* Question - Who knows what a promise is?

On my wedding day, my wife and I promised to love each other and to do whatever God asks of us. In return He promised us that we could be together forever, even after we die. My Mum and Dad also made the same promises when they got married, and so did their parents. So in that way, we're all linked together and I believe these links mean I can live with all my family forever.

I believe God is my Father in Heaven and He loves me very much.

* Question - How do your mum and Dad show you that they love you?

I feel the love of my Heavenly Father because of the guidance I feel from Him when I pray or read the scriptures. I believe He loves everybody and that He has a perfect plan that will eventually mean that everyone will be able to have this same joy of living with their families forever if they follow what He asks of us.

My Grandad died 10 years ago, but I know that I can see him again because of this perfect plan which God has for me, which includes linking families together through the special promises we make in temples.

To help us keep our side of the promise we made in temples, to do what God asks, I believe He communicates to me in a few different ways. I believe He speaks to me through the Holy Ghost (also known as the Holy Spirit) which can help me feel if a decision I'm making is right through a warm, happy feeling, or inspire me with thoughts in my mind.

I also believe God talks to me through His representative on the Earth today, a prophet.

* Question - Has anyone heard of prophets like Moses? Or Muhammad?

I believe that our prophet today, a man called Russell M Nelson, talks directly to God and then tells us things that the world needs to know. For example, he might encourage us to read the scriptures more often, or more practical things like being kind to our brothers and sisters and avoiding things that are bad for our bodies.

It is a great blessing for me to believe that God is a loving Heavenly Father, that He wants us to return to Him in our families, and He will give us guidance to achieve this, both individually through prayer and the scriptures, and as a community through a prophet.

 