

The Sculpting of Our Souls

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SATURDAY MORNING SESSION · SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2026 · OCTOBER 2026 GENERAL CONFERENCE

THE BIG IDEA

Even when I can't fix it or understand it, God loves me and is shaping me, with Jesus Christ's help, into someone only He knows I can become.

You'll need: A LEGO kit or puzzle (hide the box picture), a lump of play dough or clay (optional).

1 HOOK

2 MIN

OBJECT QUESTION Hold up a LEGO bag or puzzle with the box picture hidden. Ask: would you still build it if you had only the instructions and no picture of how it ends? Everyone answers.

Then: Sister Runia's son Ryan died suddenly, leaving four young children. At the funeral, his 7-year-old son Jaac was asked that same question by his mom. His answer, as Sister Runia shared: "Yes, because you can trust the one who designed it, and it always turns out."

2 KEY TEACHINGS FROM SISTER RUNIA

8–10 MIN

1 Some things you can only learn by going through them

"God's answer implies that experience is valuable, and I'm learning the only way to get it is to go through it."

— Sister Tamara W. Runia · exact words

FOR AGES 8–11: MAKE IT CONCRETE

Sister Runia loves fixing things: knots, stains, you name it. But some things she can't fix. You can't learn to ride a bike by watching videos; wobbles and scraped knees are part of learning. Life is like that too.

DEEP CUT · AGES 12–16

In Liberty Jail, Joseph Smith begged for a break. The Lord answered that all these things would give him experience and be for his good (D&C 122:7). Sister Runia moved from why-questions to this one: "I know that God loves me, so what is supposed to be happening here?" Try that question on something hard in your life right now.

2 Not understanding is not the same as not believing

"Not understanding is not the same as not believing."

— Sister Runia's words at her son Ryan's funeral, as she shared them

"I may not understand everything, but I absolutely believe God sees you, loves you, and knows your story—a story that is both personal and purposeful!"

— Sister Tamara W. Runia · exact words

FOR AGES 8–11: MAKE IT CONCRETE

You can trust a parent driving at night even when you can't see the road ahead. Sister Runia didn't understand why her son died, and she said so. She believed anyway.

DEEP CUT · AGES 12–16

She said your story is personal, so you don't need to look sideways and ask why your life doesn't look like someone else's. And it's purposeful: "It's not a detour from the path; it gives purpose to our path." Which is harder for you: not comparing, or believing the hard part has a purpose?

3 The Master Sculptor waits for our invitation

“God is shaping us into something only He knows we can become.”

— Sister Tamara W. Runia · exact words

“He’ll lovingly chasten us to get our attention, but He waits for an invitation before He can really go to work.”

— Sister Tamara W. Runia · exact words

FOR AGES 8–11: MAKE IT CONCRETE

Her brother Kent had to sculpt a clay bust of himself, but he couldn’t get the eyes right. He didn’t want help. When he finally asked, the teacher dug deep into the clay, and in minutes the eyes came to life. It was still Kent, but a master’s hand had shaped what his couldn’t.

DEEP CUT · AGES 12–16

Pride is what kept Kent from asking. The day before Ryan died, he told a struggling neighbor he could blame God or turn to Him and let Him heal. Sister Runia’s invitation to us: “Let’s choose Christ, who can heal the wounds of this world while carving out room for joy!”

3 INTERACTIVE MOMENT

2–3 MIN

TRICK QUESTION Vote: Is the gospel like a big umbrella? If you keep the commandments well enough, does it keep all the rain off? A) Yes B) No

Reveal: Sister Runia used to think so. Then she said: “But I’ve learned from experience that we’re all going to get rained on.” The gospel isn’t the umbrella. It’s the solid rock you stand on during the storm (Helaman 5:12).

4 TALK ABOUT IT

3 MIN

YOUNGER (8–11)

Think of something hard that taught you something (a sport, a school subject, a hard week). What did it teach you?

OLDER (12–16)

Sister Runia said a godlike life is carved from the very things that make it hard. Does that feel true, unfair, or both? Why?

5 RECAP: THE KIDS EXPLAIN IT

2 MIN

Ask the kids to explain in their own words: Umbrella or rock, which one is the gospel, and why? And what does the Sculptor wait for before He really goes to work?

Listen for: Experience is how we grow. Not understanding is not the same as not believing. The gospel is a rock, not an umbrella. Jesus waits for our invitation, then shapes us.

6 TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST

1 MIN

Sister Runia said: “Christ’s work in your life and His love for you are bigger than your present story.” A parent shares a time they didn’t understand something hard but still believed, and how Jesus Christ helped them through it.

7 THIS WEEK, AS A FAMILY

1 MIN

ONE THING TO DO This week, each person picks one hard thing and says a short prayer inviting Jesus Christ to help shape them through it. At Sunday dinner, share one thing you noticed.

☐ Mon ☐ Tue ☐ Wed ☐ Thu ☐ Fri ☐ Sat ☐ Sun

Scripture: Doctrine and Covenants 122:7; Helaman 5:12; 1 John 3:2 · **Full talk:** churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2026/10/13runia

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