

## JAM Correspondence Guidelines

### **Tips for correspondence with the elderly**

- When on the phone, speak clearly and slowly. When writing letters, be neat and use organization.
- Choose a quiet place to talk on the phone, making sure volume is high on your phone. Excessive requests to repeat can make one uncomfortable.
- Be positive and laugh as much as is appropriate and possible.
- Have confidence, persistence, and patience.
- Ask questions and take time to listen. Show interest, empathy, and understanding.
- Give advice sparingly; respect seniority.
- Don't interrupt.
- Be cognizant of sorrows, deceased loved ones, poor health etc.
- Try to keep a schedule of when you call and write, routine helps build trust and affection.
- Send small gifts occasionally: flowers, crossword puzzles, jigsaw puzzles etc.

### **Things to talk about**

- Weather
- Favorite Foods
- Personal hobbies
- Nature
- Literature, movies, music, and poetry.
- Family
- Average, everyday life: trips to the store, the sunset, a novel flower, an interesting fact you discovered...
- Their past: childhood, accomplishments, jobs, trips...
  - +Non-personal things: historical events, styles, music, trends, sports...
- Church and Faith

### **Red flags/Things not to talk about**

- Be cognizant of the bio, for example do not ask about children if they were unable to have them or spouse if they were divorced.
- Do not aim the conversation towards politics, poor health, or depressing topics.
- Do not pursue arguments or disagreements.
- Give advice sparingly; respect seniority.
- Be aware of depression. Signs: excessive tiredness or irritability.
- Be cautious about sharing your or your family's personal information.

-Be aware of their physical and mental state; do not push conversation if they are unwell.