

TEACHING AND



BY RICHARD G. MOORE

The Lord's injunction to "teach one another" requires each of us to be both teacher and student.

Some of the great blessings of being a parent or Church leader or teacher are the personal learning and spiritual growth that occur when we take the time to prepare and present our lessons well. I have learned that a great deal of enlightenment can also come during a lesson when our children or students participate. A wealth of wisdom, insight, and experience can be gleaned when all share their thoughts, feelings, and knowledge of the gospel. What a blessing it is to be taught when one is the teacher!

As a Teacher

Some years ago during a lesson on prayer, a student commented on how much the Bible Dictionary had helped him develop a greater understanding about prayer. He read an excerpt of it to the class. At the time I was not familiar with the entry on prayer. As I listened to him read, some of the questions and confusion I had about prayer were suddenly illuminated and eliminated. I sincerely thanked him for sharing what he had found. His comments changed the way I think of prayer and the way I teach it.

During a lesson about the incident in the New Testament when Jesus invited Peter to walk on the water, I led a discussion about having faith and keeping focused on the Savior. A sister in the class raised her hand and said something like this: "I see in this experience of Peter an analogy for our mortal lives. We are placed in

the midst of a fallen world where we are tossed about by the waves of life. Like Peter, we have been invited by Jesus to come unto Him. Peter learned, as all of us must, that we can't make it without the help of our Savior. Like Peter, we need to remember that our best efforts will fall short, but the Savior is there to save us." As she finished her comment, there was a sweet feeling in the room. Her insight changed the way I look at and teach that story from the life of Christ.

During a discussion about little children who die before age eight being "saved in the celestial kingdom of heaven" (D&C 137:10), a student suggested these children die while under "celestial warranty."

I liked that thought.

In addition to the doctrinal insights of class members, I have often been moved by their personal experiences and testimonies. Many times students have volunteered a powerful example of how to live a gospel principle. When moved by the Holy Ghost to impart their thoughts, students often provide a clearer way of explaining the principle under discussion.

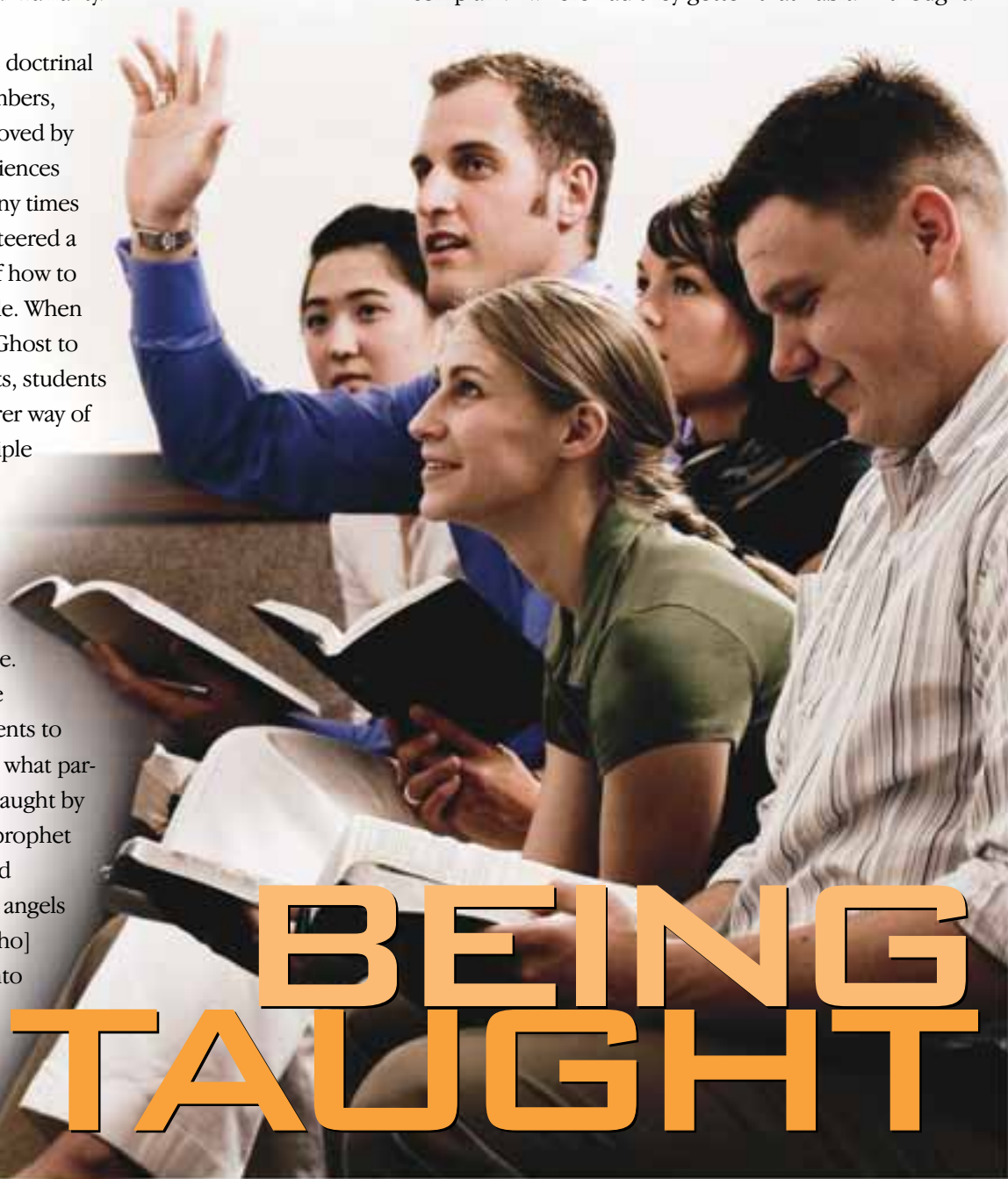
As a Parent

What is true in the classroom is also true in the home. Even though it is the responsibility of parents to teach their children, what parents have not been taught by their children? The prophet Alma taught that God imparts His word by angels to "little children [who] have words given unto them many times, which confound the wise and the learned" (Alma 32:23).

One evening after reviewing some Book of Mormon stories with my five- and three-year-old boys, I suggested they could be like Nephi and Sam. I was startled when my five-year-old replied that they had decided to be like Laman and Lemuel. "You've got the wrong guys," I assured them. "You want to be like Nephi and Sam."

"No, Dad, we've talked about it. Laman and Lemuel like to gripe. We like to gripe, so we've decided we want to be like Laman and Lemuel."

I went to bed that night quite concerned. Was I raising a Laman and Lemuel? I remembered that they did tend to complain. "Where had they gotten that habit?" I thought.



BEING TAUGHT



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

Most *Ensign* articles can be used for family home evening discussions, personal reflection, or teaching the gospel in a variety of settings.

1. Invite family members to share things they have learned from a favorite teacher, classmate, or relative. Consider telling several experiences Brother Moore had as a teacher and a parent. List some things you can do to be better prepared for a lesson and discuss why doing these things will make a difference in the learning experience. Think about setting a goal for family members to be better prepared to learn as well as teach a lesson.

2. Consider applying the suggestions contained in the article as you create a teaching and learning experience in your own family setting. For example, you could ask each family member to teach a simple chore such as tying a shoe, brushing teeth, tying a tie, combing hair, etc. Have them give step-by-step instructions while someone follows their instructions. Discuss what was learned about being a teacher or a student.

I had to admit that my tendency to grumble and complain was influencing my children. This “wise and learned” parent had been confounded.

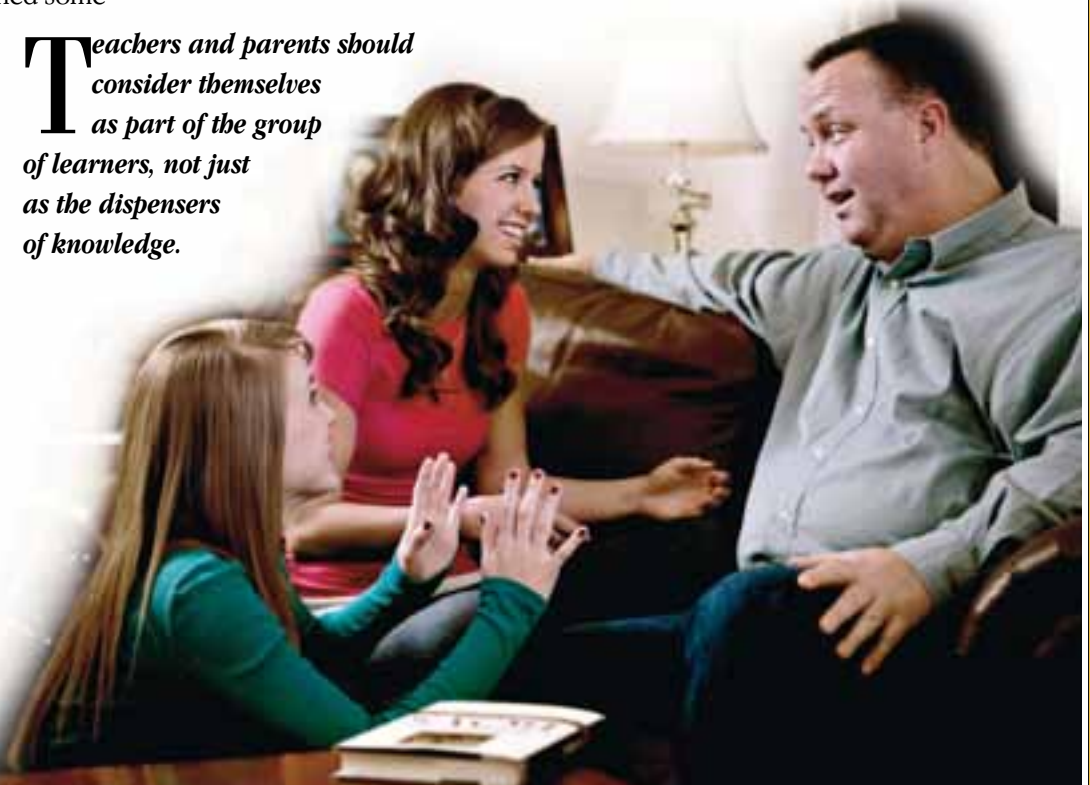
On another occasion I was struggling with writing a draft or even coming up with a topic for a talk in a stake youth conference. I prayed and pondered, but as the day approached I still didn’t know what to say. While I was sharing my dilemma with my wife, my teenage daughter overheard our conversation and said, “Dad, do you want me to help?” I wasn’t trying to be rude, but I said, “No, thanks. I’m sure I’ll be able to come up with something.”

She responded, “I’m a teenager, Dad. I’ll be at the conference with my friends. I know what they’re going through and how they think and feel. I think I have some good ideas of what you could talk about.” I listened and learned some things about my daughter and about how Heavenly Father can answer our prayers through our children.

Being Edified

Teachers and parents should consider themselves as part of the group of learners, not just as the dispensers of knowledge. If there is no discussion or sharing of thoughts and feelings in our classes and homes, we are missing out on many glorious opportunities to learn

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from each other. When we ask sincere questions, we should not be surprised when the particular answer we are looking for does not come. In fact I believe we should hope for the unexpected answer, the one that gives us new insight into something we are struggling to know or better understand.

It is not uncommon for me to write notes in my scriptures during class and family home evening about the things I learn. I seek out opportunities to glean ideas, impressions, and feelings. I am grateful for students who come to class prepared not only to be taught but also to teach. I am grateful to children who tell parents how they feel and share their experiences. As a result, I have been greatly edified by the Holy Ghost (see D&C 88:122). ■