



Our Heavenly Family

Chapter 2

We Are Children of Our Heavenly Father

- What do scriptures and latter-day prophets teach us about our relationship to God?

God is not only our Ruler and Creator; He is also our Heavenly Father. All men and women are literally the sons and daughters of God. “Man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents, and reared to maturity in the eternal mansions of the Father, prior to coming upon the earth in a temporal [physical] body” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* [1998], 335).

Every person who was ever born on earth is our spirit brother or sister. Because we are the spirit children of God, we have inherited the potential to develop His divine qualities. Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we can become like our Heavenly Father and receive a fulness of joy.

- How does your knowledge that you are a child of God influence your thoughts, words, and actions?

We Developed Personalities and Talents While We Lived in Heaven

- Think about talents and gifts you have been blessed with.

The scriptures teach us that the prophets prepared themselves to become leaders on earth while they were still spirits in heaven (see Alma 13:1–3). Before they were born into mortal bodies, God foreordained (chose) them to be leaders on earth. Jesus, Adam, and Abraham were some of these leaders. (See Abraham 3:22–23.)

For teachers: You do not need to teach everything in each chapter. As you prayerfully prepare to teach, seek the Spirit’s guidance to know which portions of the chapter you should cover and which questions you should ask.

Joseph Smith taught that “every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was [fore]ordained to that very purpose” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 511). However, everyone on earth is free to accept or reject any opportunity to serve.

We were not all alike in heaven. We know, for example, that we were sons and daughters of heavenly parents—males and females (see “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102). We possessed different talents and abilities, and we were called to do different things on earth. We can learn more about our “eternal possibilities” when we receive our patriarchal blessings (see Thomas S. Monson, in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 82; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 66).

A veil covers our memories of our premortal life, but our Father in Heaven knows who we are and what we did before we came here. He has chosen the time and place for each of us to be born so we can learn the lessons we personally need and do the most good with our individual talents and personalities.

- How have other people’s talents blessed you? How can your talents and gifts bless others?

Our Heavenly Father Presented a Plan for Us to Become Like Him

- How does earth life help prepare us to become like our Heavenly Father?

Our Heavenly Father knew we could not progress beyond a certain point unless we left Him for a time. He wanted us to develop the godlike qualities that He has. To do this, we needed to leave our premortal home to be tested and to gain experience. Our spirits needed to be clothed with physical bodies. We would need to leave our physical bodies at death and reunite with them in the Resurrection. Then we would receive immortal bodies like that of our

For teachers: Class members or family members are more likely to give a thoughtful answer to a question if they are given time to ponder their response. For example, after asking a question, you could say, “Please take a minute to think about your response, and then I’ll ask for answers.” Then give them time to ponder.

Heavenly Father. If we passed our tests, we would receive the fulness of joy that our Heavenly Father has received. (See D&C 93:30–34.)

Our Heavenly Father called a Grand Council to present His plan for our progression (see *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith*, 209, 511). We learned that if we followed His plan, we would become like Him. We would be resurrected; we would have all power in heaven and on earth; we would become heavenly parents and have spirit children just as He does (see D&C 132:19–20).

We learned that He would provide an earth for us where we would prove ourselves (see Abraham 3:24–26). A veil would cover our memories, and we would forget our heavenly home. This would be necessary so we could exercise our agency to choose good or evil without being influenced by the memory of living with our Heavenly Father. Thus we could obey Him because of our faith in Him, not because of our knowledge or memory of Him. He would help us recognize the truth when we heard it again on earth (see John 18:37).

At the Grand Council we also learned the purpose for our progression: to have a fulness of joy. However, we also learned that some would be deceived, choose other paths, and lose their way. We learned that all of us would have trials in our lives: sickness, disappointment, pain, sorrow, and death. But we understood that these would be given to us for our experience and our good (see D&C 122:7). If we allowed them to, these trials would purify us rather than defeat us. They would teach us to have endurance, patience, and charity (see *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* [2006], 15–16).

At this council we also learned that because of our weakness, all of us except little children would sin (see D&C 29:46–47). We learned that a Savior would be provided for us so we could overcome our sins and overcome death with resurrection. We learned that if we placed our faith in Him, obeying His word and following His example, we would be exalted and become like our Heavenly Father. We would receive a fulness of joy.

- List some of Heavenly Father's attributes. How does the plan of salvation help us develop these attributes?

Additional Scriptures

- Hebrews 12:9 (God is the Father of our spirits)
- Job 38:4–7 (premortal life implied)
- Abraham 3:22–28 (vision of premortal life)
- Jeremiah 1:5 (vision of premortal life)
- D&C 29:31–38 (vision of premortal life)
- Moses 3:4–7 (spiritual and temporal creations)
- 1 Corinthians 15:44 (spiritual and temporal creations)
- D&C 76:23–24 (begotten sons and daughters)
- D&C 132:11–26 (plan for progression)