
Purpose To encourage class members to be receptive to the influence of the Holy Ghost and to draw nearer to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

Preparation

1. Read, ponder, and pray about the following scriptures:
 - a. John 16:1–15. Jesus prepares his Apostles for the difficult times that will follow his crucifixion. He teaches them about the mission of the Holy Ghost and promises that they will receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.
 - b. John 16:16–33. Jesus foretells his death and resurrection and counsels the Apostles to “be of good cheer.”
 - c. John 17. Jesus offers the great intercessory prayer for his Apostles and all others who believe in him.
2. Additional reading: John 14:16–31; 15:18–27; 3 Nephi 19:19–36; Doctrine and Covenants 132:21–24; Bible Dictionary, “Comforter,” 648; “Holy Ghost,” 704.
3. If you use the attention activity, bring to class two gift boxes (or draw on the chalkboard a picture of two gift boxes). Prepare two wordstrips to place on the boxes during the lesson: one that says *Gift of the Holy Ghost* and one that says *Eternal Life*.
4. Suggestion for teaching: In addition to praying that you may teach with the Spirit, pray that class members may learn by the Spirit and receive his confirmation of the truths that are being taught (see *Teaching—No Greater Call*, 13–14).

Suggested Lesson Development

Attention Activity As appropriate, use the following activity or one of your own to begin the lesson.

Display two gift boxes (or draw on the chalkboard a picture of two gift boxes). Invite class members to talk briefly about gifts they would like to receive.

Explain that one of the gift boxes you have displayed represents one of the greatest gifts we can receive in this life. The other box represents what the Lord called “the greatest of all the gifts of God” (D&C 14:7).

Explain that in this lesson class members will discover what these two gifts are and will learn how to receive them.

Scripture Discussion As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how the Savior’s words to his Apostles apply to all of us. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the lesson.

1. Jesus promises his Apostles that they will receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Discuss John 16:1–15. Invite class members to read selected verses aloud.

- In the final hours of his mortal ministry, Jesus taught and strengthened his Apostles. Why did the Apostles need to be strengthened at this time? (See John 16:1–6; see also John 15:18–20.)
- The Savior told the Apostles that he would send the Comforter (the Holy Ghost) to them (John 16:7). What is the mission of the Holy Ghost? (See John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7–14. List answers on the chalkboard as shown below.)

The Holy Ghost:

- a. Comforts (John 14:26).
 - b. Teaches (John 14:26).
 - c. Brings truths to our remembrance (John 14:26).
 - d. Testifies of the Savior (John 15:26).
 - e. Reproves the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8–11).
 - f. Guides us into all truth (John 16:13).
 - g. Shows us things to come (John 16:13).
 - h. Glorifies the Savior (John 16:14).
- The Twelve Apostles experienced manifestations of the Holy Ghost during Jesus' mortal ministry, but they did not receive the gift of the Holy Ghost until after his death and resurrection (John 20:22). What is the difference between a manifestation of the Holy Ghost and the gift of the Holy Ghost? (See the quotation below.) How has receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost helped you?

Elder Dallin H. Oaks taught:

“Manifestations of the Holy Ghost are given to lead sincere seekers to gospel truths that will persuade them to repentance and baptism. The gift of the Holy Ghost is more comprehensive. . . . [It] includes the right to constant companionship, that we may ‘always have his Spirit to be with [us]’ (D&C 20:77).

“A newly baptized member told me what she felt when she received that gift. This was a faithful Christian woman who had spent her life in service to others. She knew and loved the Lord, and she had felt the manifestations of His Spirit. When she received the added light of the restored gospel, she was baptized and the elders placed their hands upon her head and gave her the gift of the Holy Ghost. She recalled, ‘I felt the influence of the Holy Ghost settle upon me with greater intensity than I had ever felt before. He was like an old friend who had guided me in the past but now had come to stay’” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 80; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 60).

If you used the attention activity, place on one of the gift boxes the wordstrip that says *Gift of the Holy Ghost*.

- After we have received the gift of the Holy Ghost, how can we be worthy of the Holy Ghost's constant companionship? (See Acts 5:32; D&C 6:14; 20:77, 79; 76:116; 121:45–46.) How can we recognize the influence of the Holy Ghost? (See Galatians 5:22–23; D&C 6:15, 23; 11:13.)

President Boyd K. Packer taught: “The Holy Ghost speaks with a voice that you *feel* more than you *hear*. It is described as a ‘still small voice.’ And while

we speak of ‘listening’ to the whisperings of the Spirit, most often one describes a spiritual prompting by saying, ‘I had a *feeling* . . .’ . . . Revelation comes as words we *feel* more than *hear*” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 77; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 60).

In a dream given to President Brigham Young, the Prophet Joseph Smith instructed him to teach the Saints that “the Spirit of the Lord . . . will whisper peace and joy to their souls; it will take malice, hatred, strife and all evil from their hearts; and their whole desire will be to do good, bring forth righteousness and build up the kingdom of God” (*Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, comp. Elden J. Watson [1971], 529).

2. Jesus foretells his death and resurrection.

Read and discuss selected verses from John 16:16–33.

- After Jesus taught the Apostles about the Holy Ghost, he told them that he would soon die and be resurrected (John 16:16–20). Then he said, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace” (John 16:33). What do you think it means to have peace in him? What can we learn from Jesus’ teachings in John 16 that can help us have peace in him? (See also Philippians 4:7–9; D&C 59:23.)
- Jesus said to his Apostles, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). How can the knowledge that Jesus has overcome the world help us be of good cheer when we are faced with tribulation? Why is it important to be of good cheer?

3. Jesus offers the great intercessory prayer.

Read and discuss John 17, which contains a prayer that Jesus offered just before his suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross. This prayer is often called the great intercessory prayer because as Jesus prayed, he interceded, or stood between us and Heavenly Father, to plead for our salvation. Seek the Spirit’s guidance in selecting verses to read and discuss.

- As Jesus began his prayer, how did he describe his mission on earth? (See John 17:1–2; see also Moses 1:39.) How did he accomplish this mission?
- In his prayer, the Savior said, “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). How is knowing Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ different from merely knowing *about* them? How can we come to know them? (See 1 John 4:7–8; Mosiah 5:10–13; Alma 22:18; D&C 18:33–36; 132:21–24.)

If you used the attention activity, place the wordstrip that says *Eternal Life* on the second gift box. Invite a class member to read Doctrine and Covenants 14:7.

- In the first part of his prayer, Jesus described the things he had done toward fulfilling his mission (John 17:4–8). How do we report our efforts to Heavenly Father? How might it affect our actions if each night we included in our prayers a report of our efforts to serve him during that day?
- Even though Jesus knew that he was about to suffer intensely, for whom did he pray? (See John 17:6–9, 20.) What can we learn from this?

- How can we, like Jesus and his Apostles, live in the world and be “not of the world”? (John 17:14; see also verses 15–16).

Elder M. Russell Ballard said:

“In the Church, we often state the couplet, ‘Be in the world but not of the world.’ As we observe television shows that make profanity, violence, and infidelity commonplace and even glamorous, we often wish we could lock out the world in some way and isolate our families from it all. . . .

“Perhaps we should state the couplet previously mentioned as two separate admonitions. First, ‘*Be in the world.*’ Be involved; be informed. Try to be understanding and tolerant and to appreciate diversity. Make meaningful contributions to society through service and involvement. Second, ‘*Be not of the world.*’ Do not follow wrong paths or bend to accommodate or accept what is not right.

“We should strive to change the corrupt and immoral tendencies in television and in society by keeping things that offend and debase out of our homes. In spite of all of the wickedness in the world, and in spite of all the opposition to good that we find on every hand, we should not try to take ourselves or our children *out* of the world. Jesus said, ‘The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven,’ or yeast (Matthew 13:33). We are to lift the world and help all to rise above the wickedness that surrounds us. The Savior prayed to the Father:

“ ‘I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil’ (John 17:15)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1989, 101; or *Ensign*, May 1989, 80).

- How are Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ “one,” as stated in John 17:21–22?

Speaking of Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, President Gordon B. Hinckley said: “They are distinct beings, but they are one in purpose and effort. They are united as one in bringing to pass the grand, divine plan for the salvation and exaltation of the children of God. . . . It is that perfect unity between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost that binds these three into the oneness of the divine Godhead” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 69; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 51).

- Why was it important for the Apostles to be one? (See John 17:22–23.) Why do we need unity with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ? with other Church members? within our families? How can we help increase unity in these relationships? (See John 17:26; Mosiah 18:21; D&C 35:2.)

Conclusion

Ask class members to think about how they feel when they know someone is praying for them. Invite them to ponder how they might have felt if they had been with Jesus when he offered the intercessory prayer. Explain that the intercessory prayer can help us appreciate the precious gift of eternal life that the Savior offers us. Testify that we will be blessed as we strive to follow the promptings of the Holy Ghost and become one with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

**Additional
Teaching Idea**

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use this idea during the lesson.

Inviting the Spirit

To help class members feel and recognize the influence of the Holy Ghost, speak with a few of them in advance, inviting each of them to choose one of the following presentations to do as part of the lesson:

- a. Read a favorite scripture passage.
- b. Bear testimony.
- c. Sing a hymn or Primary song about the Savior.
- d. Express love for Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.
- e. Share a spiritual experience (as appropriate).

In class, invite class members to describe how they felt during the presentations. Read the statement by President Boyd K. Packer on pages 99–100, and help class members recognize feelings that come from the Holy Ghost. Talk about how you feel when you receive guidance from the Holy Ghost.