

# Introduction

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## Purpose of the Course

This Sunday School course is designed to help 12- and 13-year-olds understand our Heavenly Father's plan of salvation and apply gospel truths that will lead them to eternal life. It discusses the steps in our eternal journey and the requirements and guides that the Lord has revealed for our progress through mortality. Individual lessons explain the basic doctrines, principles, and ordinances of the gospel.

A chart of the plan of salvation is included at the back of the manual (picture 1 in the picture section). You may want to make a larger copy of the chart so it can be seen more easily by the entire class. Save this chart, and use it often throughout the course as you discuss various aspects of the plan of salvation.

Scan the table of contents and browse through the manual to become familiar with all the lesson subjects. Seeing the overall design will give you better perspective as you prepare and present each lesson.

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## Preparing to Teach

You will always need certain equipment in the classroom: a chalkboard (or whiteboard), chalk (or erasable markers), an eraser, and your own set of scriptures. Therefore, these items have not been listed in the "Preparation" section of the lessons.

Class members should bring their own copies of the scriptures, but you may want to bring a few extra copies (these can be obtained from the meetinghouse library) so those who do not bring their own can participate fully in the lesson. You may also want to bring scripture marking pencils for class members to use (remind class members to mark only in their own copies of the scriptures, not library copies or other borrowed copies).

Each lesson begins with a statement of the purpose of the lesson—what you are trying to help class members know or do. At the end of each "Preparation" section, in italics, is a note to the teacher. These short statements are provided to help you understand the importance of the lesson topic as it relates to youth. Other notes, also in italics, appear intermittently throughout the manual. These notes provide guidance in using various teaching methods suggested in the lessons.

Each lesson has an "Enrichment Activities" section containing additional activities, discussion material, and stories. If class members need added activity to keep their attention, select one or two of these activities to use as part of the lesson.

The picture section at the back of the manual contains several pictures suggested for use in the lessons. Other suggested pictures are available from the meetinghouse library or in the Gospel Art Picture Kit.

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**Presenting  
the Lessons**

Begin and end each lesson with prayer.

Do more than lecture. Invite class members to participate in discussions and activities. Encourage class members to read, mark, and study the scriptures. Let class members discover for themselves the glorious principles that Heavenly Father has given us as part of his plan of salvation.

Remember that the doctrines, principles, and ordinances of the gospel can prepare us for exaltation only when we apply them to our lives. Encourage class members to live according to the principles that are discussed in class.

**Inviting the Spirit**

The Lord has said, “The Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith; and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach” (D&C 42:14). Help class members feel and recognize the influence of the Holy Ghost so they can be prepared to apply the principles they learn. These suggestions can help you invite the Spirit into your class:

1. Pray. While preparing to teach, pray for the Holy Ghost to help you understand the doctrines and principles being taught and the needs of class members. During class, pray in your heart for the Spirit to guide you and to touch class members. Remember that the Holy Spirit is the teacher in your class.
2. Use the scriptures. Encourage class members to bring their scriptures each week, and show them that the doctrines and principles discussed in the lesson are based in scripture. Help class members learn to use footnotes and other study aids in the scriptures.
3. Bear your testimony. Testify whenever the Spirit prompts you, not just at the end of the lesson. Bear testimony of the Savior. As appropriate, invite class members to bear their testimonies.
4. Use sacred music. The hymns of Zion can help prepare class members to feel the Spirit. Youth may be reluctant to sing in class, but you can use other methods to bring the hymns into the classroom. Class members could read and think about the words to a hymn while someone plays it, or you could invite an individual or small group to sing a hymn. You could also play recordings of hymns.
5. Express love. Let class members know that you love them. Express your love for Heavenly Father and for the Savior.
6. Share personal experiences. Demonstrate to class members that your testimony is based in experience with living the gospel. Share simple, everyday experiences that have helped you understand gospel principles such as the importance of prayer or the blessings that come from keeping the commandments. Encourage class members to share, as appropriate, their insights, feelings, and experiences that relate to the doctrines and principles being taught.

Sometimes you or a class member may feel prompted to share a spiritual experience. Remember that these experiences are sacred and should not be shared casually, but “with care, and by constraint of the Spirit” (D&C 63:64). Follow the promptings of the Holy Ghost regarding which experiences you should share, and remind class members to do the same.

- Using the Scriptures** Included in each lesson are suggested scriptures for reading and marking. Read the scriptures aloud, or have class members read them. Class members should follow each verse as it is read, marking words and phrases that you suggest or that they feel are meaningful.
- When you ask class members to read a scripture passage, you may want to write the reference on the chalkboard so that everyone can find it easily and so the person reading will know where to stop.
- Asking and Answering Questions** The success of your lessons will depend largely on your use of questions. As you prepare your lessons, think of ways to help class members go beyond standard, superficial responses. Many questions in the manual encourage class members to consider how a doctrine or principle applies to their lives. Encourage class members to give sincere thought to these questions. Do not be concerned if class members are silent for a few seconds after you ask a question. Allow them time to think of responses. If they do not seem to understand a question, you might need to rephrase it or provide more context.
- Encourage class members to ask questions about the lesson, and create an environment where they can do so without embarrassment or fear of ridicule. You should not feel embarrassed if a class member asks a question that you cannot answer. Instead of making up an answer or giving your own opinion, admit that you do not know and offer to try to find an answer for the class member.
- Using Quotations** Many lessons include quotations from latter-day Church leaders. Use these quotations to direct class discussion, clarify doctrine, and emphasize that the Lord continues to reveal his will in our day. In addition to the quotations in the lessons, you may use other appropriate statements from prophets, apostles, and other Church leaders. The best sources for these are recent general conference issues of the *Ensign* (May and November) or the International Magazines (July and January).

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**Helping Class Members Who Have Disabilities**

Be sensitive to class members who have disabilities. Know their needs and abilities, and include them in class activities as much as possible. Before class, help these members prepare to read or comment. Provide a place for people in wheelchairs, and ask class members to speak loudly so that everyone can hear.