

# Mortality: A Time to Learn through Experience

## Lesson 5

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<b>Purpose</b>	To help class members understand that mortality is a part of God's plan, a time for us to receive a physical body and learn by experience.
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<b>Preparation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Prayerfully study 2 Peter 1:5–7; 2 Nephi 31:16; Alma 34:32; Doctrine and Covenants 4:2; 88:123; 121:9; 130:18–19.</li><li>2. Make a poster of the following quotation (from <i>The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball</i>, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 25):  <i>"God has given us a plan. He has sent us all to earth to obtain bodies and to gain experience and growth." —President Spencer W. Kimball</i>  If it is not feasible to make a poster, plan to read the quotation aloud during the lesson.</li><li>3. Materials needed:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. The plan of salvation chart from lesson 2.</li><li>b. A set of scriptures and a scripture marking pencil for each class member. Continue to encourage class members to bring their own scriptures to class each week.</li></ol></li></ol>
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<i>Note to the teacher</i>	<i>With the many pressures of daily life, it is sometimes easy to lose sight of the significance of mortality. Earth life is a time to learn. We obtain our bodies, tabernacles for our spirits, and then learn to control them. Help class members understand that "this life is the time . . . to prepare to meet God" (Alma 34:32).</i>
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### Suggested Lesson Development

#### Earth Life Is a School

Chart and poster discussion	Display the chart of the plan of salvation. Also display the poster containing the quotation from President Kimball, but turn it away from class members so they cannot see the quotation. Referring to the chart, ask:
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- What stage of the plan of salvation are we in right now?

Have a class member point out mortality, or earth life.

- Why are we here on earth? Why is mortality an important part of the plan of salvation?

After class members have had a few moments to respond, turn over the poster and have a class member read President Kimball's statement (if you did not make a poster, read the quotation out of the manual). Remind class members that President Kimball was the twelfth President of the Church. Explain that as President Kimball said, two important reasons we have come to earth are to

receive a body and to gain experience. As spirits in the pre-earth life we had learned much, but to continue to progress we needed to come to earth and receive bodies.

#### Quotation

Have a class member read the following statement by President Kimball:

“My brothers and sisters, we’re away from home. We’re off to school. Our lessons will not be easy. The way we react to them, the way we conquer and accomplish and live will determine our rewards, and they will be permanent and eternal. . . .

“You are sent to this world with a very serious purpose. You are sent to school, for that matter, to begin as a human infant and grow to unbelievable proportions in wisdom, judgment, knowledge, and power” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 28, 31).

#### Chalkboard discussion

- What home is President Kimball referring to when he says “we’re away from home”? (Our home with our Father in Heaven.)
- What is the school President Kimball is referring to? (Mortality.)
- What have you learned already in your years in this school?

Have class members take turns naming things they have learned, and list their answers in a column on the chalkboard. Continue for two or three minutes or until class members cannot think of any more answers.

Refer again to the poster containing President Kimball’s statement. Explain that some of the things we need to learn and some of the experiences we have on earth are directly related to having a body. Our bodies are great blessings to us, but we must learn to control them and use them righteously.

Point out a few physical skills listed on the chalkboard, such as walking and talking.

- How can these skills be used righteously? (We should use our physical abilities in keeping with God’s commandments. For example, we should not use our ability to walk to take us into places where we should not be, and we should not use our ability to talk to lie or take the Lord’s name in vain.)

Explain that learning to control our bodies and use them righteously also includes learning to control our appetites and desires. Commandments such as the Word of Wisdom and the law of chastity help us use our bodies righteously.

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#### **We Must Prepare to Meet God**

#### Chalkboard discussion

Explain that we have much to learn in this earthly school before we will be ready to return home to Heavenly Father. Have class members turn to Alma 34:32, and ask a class member to read it aloud.

- What do you think we need to learn to be prepared to meet God?

List class members’ answers on the chalkboard next to the list of what they have already learned. (If class members have difficulty thinking of answers, have them look up 2 Peter 1:5–7 and 2 Nephi 31:16 and use the qualities mentioned in these verses to begin the list.)

## Scripture discussion

Explain that the different circumstances and situations we experience in life help us learn different things to prepare us to live with Heavenly Father again. List on the chalkboard the four situations below and the corresponding scripture references. Have class members find and read the scriptures to discover things those situations can teach us. (You may want to divide class members into four groups and have each group look up one scripture.)

For example, being part of a family helps us learn love and unselfishness (note that the answers in parentheses are not the only appropriate answers; class members may think of other things these situations can teach us).

Family: Doctrine and Covenants 88:123 (love and unselfishness)

Church callings: Doctrine and Covenants 4:2 (service)

Friends: Doctrine and Covenants 121:9 (loyalty)

School, Church, and seminary classes: Doctrine and Covenants 130:18–19 (knowledge and understanding)

Have class members look again at the list of things necessary to be prepared to meet God, and have them think of a situation or experience that has helped them learn one of these lessons. (For example, caring for a younger sibling may have helped them learn patience; dealing with a disability may have helped them learn compassion; experiencing disappointment or failure may have helped them learn persistence.) Invite them to tell the other class members about the experience and what they learned.

Whether class members share the experience or not, encourage them to record the experience and what they learned from it in their journals when they get home, if they have not done so already.

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### Our Vision Is Limited

## Story and discussion

Remind class members that our earthly experiences are a part of our eternal life. We have a limited vision of eternity right now, but after we die, we will better understand the importance of mortality as a time to learn.

Ask students to imagine that they are standing inside a lighted room, looking out a window into the night.

- What can you see?

Read or tell the following story told by President Kimball about an experience he had before he became President of the Church:

“While in the city of Honolulu, we stayed in a room which was enclosed in glass on three sides. The light in the room illumined it and we could see the shining glass, the beautiful furniture, ceiling, floor, walls, the vases and other ornaments, everything in the room only. Our vision was limited to the small room and its contents. And then we turned out the lights and went to the window and through that window, which before had been the end of our vision, now we could see clearly over the housetops, over the trees, to the thoroughfares beneath with their many street lights, studded with the lights of automobiles, and beyond that we could see the seashore and the great hotels

and Waikiki Beach, the Punchbowl and Old Diamond Head with their craters, and the great ocean with its ships carrying the commerce of the world.

“[This] is like eternity. Here [on earth] we are limited in our visions. With our eyes we can see but a few miles. With our ears we can hear but a few years. We are encased, enclosed, as it were, in a room, but when our light goes out of this life, then we see beyond mortal limitations. . . .

“The walls go down, time ends and distance fades and vanishes as we go into eternity . . . and we immediately emerge into a great world in which there are no earthly limitations comparable to ours as to time, distance, or speed” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 40–41).

- How can the knowledge that we have of eternal life help us use mortality as a time to learn and gain experience?

Remind class members that President Kimball said that “our lessons [in this life] will not be easy,” but point out that the reward we can gain from learning these lessons—exaltation—is worth the effort required.

#### Testimony

Express your gratitude for the experiences you have had in life and what they have taught you. Testify that Heavenly Father made mortality a time to learn and grow because he loves us.

Encourage class members to look at all their experiences as challenging opportunities to learn and grow.

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#### Enrichment Activities

You may want to use one or more of these activities during the lesson.

1. Teach class members that both good and bad experiences help us learn and grow. Ask class members to think of the worst thing that happened to them in the past week. Then ask them to think of one lesson, however small, that they could learn from that experience.

Then have class members think of the best thing that happened to them in the past week and what they could learn from that experience. Invite class members to share, if appropriate, their worst or best experience and what they learned from it.

2. With class members, sing or read the words to “Teach Me to Walk in the Light” (*Hymns*, no. 304). Discuss with class members how parents and teachers can help us learn and gain experience.

*Note to the teacher: Singing hymns or Primary songs with your class can help bring the Spirit, and the Spirit will witness to the truths you have taught. (See Teaching—No Greater Call, 137–38.)*

3. Before class, write each phrase from the following list on a separate card. In class, mix the cards up and lay them face down on a table or the floor. Divide class members into teams. Have the teams take turns trying to choose two cards that match (make a complete and accurate statement). If the cards match, the team keeps the cards and takes another turn. If the cards do not

match, the team turns them face down in the same places, and the next team takes a turn. Continue until all the matches have been made.

Matches:

This life is the time	to prepare to meet God.
We have come to earth to receive	a body and gain experience.
Earth life is but a part	of our eternal existence.
Our experiences on earth	help us learn.
Mortality is also called	our second estate.
The plan of salvation was designed by	Heavenly Father.
Heavenly Father chose Jesus Christ	to be our Savior.
Agency is	the power to choose.
The Fall brought about spiritual	and physical death.

4. Ask class members:

- Have you ever watched the Olympics (or another prestigious athletic competition), in person or on television?

Let class members share their experiences for a few moments. Then explain that while it is exciting to watch skillful athletic performances, few spectators realize the years of dedication, discipline, and training that each athlete must experience before he or she is ready for competition. An athlete's performance is a direct result of step-by-step progress toward an ultimate goal.

- How is life like the Olympics? (Answers may include that both require preparation and hard work for success or that both involve persistence in the face of failure.)
- How is life unlike the Olympics? (One possible answer is that in the Olympics very few athletes can receive gold medals, but each of us can receive life's highest reward.)

Explain that like Olympic athletes, we are training to reach an important goal. The "gold medal" we are seeking is exaltation in the celestial kingdom, and we can receive this reward only after showing dedication and discipline in keeping the commandments and covenants God has given us.