

Lesson
11

Faith in Jesus Christ

Purpose To teach class members that faith in Jesus Christ is essential to salvation and to encourage them to increase their faith in him.

- Preparation**
1. Prayerfully study Genesis 22:2–3, 9–13; 2 Kings 5:1–3, 10–14; John 14:6, 12; Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11; 1 Nephi 17:7–8, 17–18; 2 Nephi 9:23; Mosiah 3:17; Alma 32:21; Articles of Faith 1:4.
 2. Additional reading: Bible Dictionary, “Faith,” 669.
 3. Make a poster of Alma 32:21, replacing words with blanks as indicated below (if you are unable to make a poster, write the words and blanks on the chalkboard before class begins):

“ _____ is not to have a perfect knowledge of things; therefore if ye have _____ ye _____ for things which are _____ _____ , which are _____ ” (Alma 32: ____).
 4. Materials needed:
 - a. A marker to fill in the blanks on the poster.
 - b. A picture of Jesus Christ (picture 2 in the picture section of the manual; 62572; Gospel Art Picture Kit 240).
 - c. 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.

Note to the teacher *Faith in Jesus Christ is the first principle of the gospel. It is a principle of power, motivating us to act on true principles even when we cannot see immediate results for our actions. The role of the Savior is at the core of the gospel, so faith in him is essential. Help class members understand how they can increase their faith in Jesus Christ.*

Suggested Lesson Development

What Is Faith?

Poster and discussion

Display the poster (or refer to the words and blanks on the chalkboard). Without telling class members the topic of the lesson, tell them that the Prophet Joseph Smith taught that the word that goes in the first two blanks of this statement is “the moving cause of all action” and a “principle of power” (*Lectures on Faith*, 1:10, 15).

- Which principle do you think Joseph Smith was referring to?

When class members have guessed (or you have told them) the principle is faith, write *faith* in the first two blanks on the poster.

Help class members use their scriptures to find the verse on the poster. Invite a class member to fill in the remaining blanks on the poster, or invite five class members to each fill in one of the blanks.

- What is faith?

Help class members understand that faith is a trust or confidence in someone or something, even though that person or thing is not seen. Faith is more than just a belief that something is real and true; it is a feeling that motivates us to do something based on our belief.

- Why do you think Joseph Smith called faith a “principle of power” and “the moving cause of all action”?

Discuss some ways faith is a necessary “moving cause” of ordinary actions. For example, farmers plant seeds because they have faith that the seeds, if properly cared for, will grow. Students study for a test because they have faith that studying will help them do well on the test. People buy bus tickets because they have faith that the bus will take them where they want to go. Allow class members to come up with some examples of their own.

Point out the last phrase of the scripture on the poster. Remind class members that faith must be based on truth. Farmers who hope for crops to grow but who do not plant seeds first are not exhibiting real faith. People who buy tickets on a northbound bus while hoping to travel south are not showing faith.

Faith in Jesus Christ Is Essential to Exaltation

Note to the teacher

Teachers must live by the principles they teach. Elder Bruce R. McConkie said: “We must be doers of the word and not hearers only. It is more than lip service; it is not simply confessing with the mouth the divine Sonship of the Savior. It is obedience and conformity and personal righteousness” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1974, 46; or Ensign, Nov. 1974, 35). Your daily actions should demonstrate to class members your own faith in Jesus Christ. (See Teaching—No Greater Call, 9.)

Scripture discussion

Have class members recite the fourth article of faith. (If no one in the class has it memorized, have class members find it in the scriptures and read it aloud. The Articles of Faith are located at the end of the Pearl of Great Price.)

- What two things does this scripture teach us about faith? (That it is the first principle of the gospel and that it must be centered in Jesus Christ.)

Emphasize that this article of faith teaches us that “faith in the Lord Jesus Christ,” rather than faith in general, is the first principle of the gospel. (Display the picture of Jesus Christ.) We can have faith in other things, such as seeds growing and busses getting to their destinations, but faith in Jesus Christ is the only faith that will lead us to exaltation (see 2 Nephi 9:23; Mosiah 3:17).

Quotation

Have a class member read aloud the following statement from Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“The need to exercise faith in Jesus Christ is absolutely essential. It is the foundation of the plan of salvation” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 119; or Ensign, Nov. 1993, 87; italics in original).

Discussion

- Why do you think faith in Jesus Christ is the first principle of the gospel?

To help answer this question, review with class members Jesus Christ's role in the plan of salvation:

1. In the premortal world, he was chosen to be our Savior and Redeemer.
2. He came to earth and lived a sinless life, setting a perfect example for us.
3. He atoned for our sins.

Teach class members that only through faith in Jesus Christ and his Atonement can we return to dwell with him and with our Heavenly Father. Since Jesus Christ makes exaltation possible, we must have faith that through his Atonement we will be resurrected and can be forgiven of the sins we have committed. Point out that faith in Jesus Christ is the first principle of the gospel because it is the basis for understanding and accepting other principles and ordinances of the gospel. For example, if we do not have faith in Jesus Christ, we will not understand why we need to be baptized in his name.

Faith in the Savior Brings Great Blessings

Scripture discussion

Remind class members that faith is a principle of power. Many great blessings have come to people because of this power. Have class members turn to Hebrews 11 and quickly look through the chapter for blessings that resulted from faith. Ask them to report the results, and list their responses on the chalkboard. The list may include the following:

1. Enoch was translated (taken from the earth without dying; see verse 5).
2. Noah and his family were saved from the flood (see verse 7).
3. Sarah conceived Isaac in her old age (see verse 11).
4. The walls of Jericho fell (see verse 30).

Ask the following question about each example on the chalkboard:

- How did the person (or people) who received this blessing demonstrate faith? (For example, Noah built an ark as the Lord had commanded.)

Point out that because of their faith, these people obeyed the Lord's instructions. They were then blessed for their obedience.

Story

Tell the following story:

Randall Ellsworth was a missionary in Guatemala when that country suffered a terrible earthquake. Eighteen thousand people were killed. Elder Ellsworth survived, but he was severely injured and his legs were paralyzed. He received some medical treatment in Guatemala and then was sent back to his home in the United States. Those who knew how severe his injuries were thought he would never walk again, but Randall Ellsworth had faith that the Lord would not only help him walk again but would also help him finish his mission.

Randall and his family and friends continued praying, and Randall worked hard at regaining strength in his legs. He went to physical therapy twice as often as the doctors asked him to. Eventually he was able to walk again, with the help

of two canes, and the Missionary Department approved his return to Guatemala to finish his mission. When Randall heard that he would be able to finish his mission in Guatemala, the first thing he did was say a prayer thanking Heavenly Father for this great blessing.

Randall Ellsworth returned to Guatemala, and one day he was talking with his mission president. “You have been the recipient of a miracle,” the president said. “Your faith has been rewarded. If you have the necessary confidence, if you have abiding faith, if you have supreme courage, place those two canes on my desk and walk.” Slowly Elder Ellsworth placed his canes on the desk and took a few steps. It was not easy for him to walk at first, but he never used the canes again. He finished his mission and later graduated from medical school. (See Thomas S. Monson, in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 53–54; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 41–42. See also Thomas S. Monson, “Which Road Will You Travel?” *Ensign*, Mar. 1991, 4–5.)

Discussion

- How was faith involved in this healing? How did Randall Ellsworth and his friends and family members demonstrate their faith?

Point out that exercising faith does not always result in miracles. Part of having faith is accepting God’s will, even when it is not what we want. Remind class members of Diane Ellingson, whose story was told in lesson 6. Diane initially thought that because she had faith, she would be healed. When she realized it was not God’s will that she be healed, her faith in Jesus Christ gave her comfort and the strength to succeed in life despite her difficulties. (See Kendra Kasl Phair, “A Champion Again,” *New Era*, Nov. 1988, 21–25.)

- How have you or your family members been blessed because of faith in Jesus Christ? (You may want to share an example from your own life.)

We Can Increase Our Faith in Jesus Christ

Scripture discussion

As you discuss the following scripture passages, remind class members that faith is demonstrated by obeying the Lord’s commandments (you may need to point out that showing faith in Jesus Christ includes showing faith in his chosen servants, the prophets).

Have class members read 1 Nephi 17:7–8, 17–18.

- Did Laman and Lemuel exhibit faith?

Next read 2 Kings 5:1–3, 10–14.

- Did Naaman exhibit faith?

Point out that Naaman initially showed a lack of faith by refusing to do what the prophet Elisha had instructed him to do. But he did eventually act on faith by bathing in the Jordan River, and he was healed as Elisha had promised.

Next read Genesis 22:2–3, 9–12.

- Did Abraham exhibit faith?

Point out that Abraham set out to obey the Lord immediately and without question, even though the Lord commanded him to do a very difficult thing.

Because the Lord was pleased with Abraham's obedience, he provided a ram to be sacrificed instead of Isaac (see Genesis 22:13).

- Which of these people should we strive to be like? How can we develop faith as strong as Abraham's?

Scripture discussion

Have class members read and mark Romans 10:17.

- Where can we hear or find the word of God? (Answers may include in the scriptures, the words of latter-day prophets, Church magazines, and Church meetings.)
- How does studying the word of God increase our faith?
- What are some additional ways to increase our faith in Jesus Christ? (Answers may include prayer, fasting, and serving others.)

Explain that increasing our faith in Jesus Christ is similar to developing any other characteristic or skill. If we want to improve our ability to play soccer, compose music, or cook, we must study and practice and consciously try to better our ability. The same holds true for increasing our faith in the Savior. Our faith in Jesus Christ increases as we put it into practice by following his example (see John 14:12).

Testimony

Testify that faith in Jesus Christ is essential to our salvation. You may want to tell class members how your faith in Jesus Christ has affected your life.

Encourage class members to increase their faith in Jesus Christ through study, prayer, and obedience to his commandments.

Enrichment Activities

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

1. Explain that faith begins small, like a seed, but with proper nourishment and care it will grow to be very great. Provide paper and crayons or colored markers, and let class members creatively describe the present status of their faith in terms of a growing plant. Encourage class members to take their drawings home and put them in their journals.
2. Discuss with class members the following statement from President Ezra Taft Benson, thirteenth President of the Church:

“Faith in [Jesus Christ] is more than mere acknowledgment that He lives. It is more than professing belief.

“Faith in Jesus Christ consists of complete reliance on Him. As God, He has infinite power, intelligence, and love. There is no human problem beyond His capacity to solve. Because He descended below all things (see D&C 122:8), He knows how to help us rise above our daily difficulties.

“Faith in Him means believing that even though we do not understand all things, He does. We, therefore, must look to Him ‘in every thought; doubt not, fear not’ (D&C 6:36.)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1983, 7; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1983, 8).

- How can your faith in Jesus Christ help you with your daily problems and difficulties?
3. Have one class member leave the room (or close his or her eyes) for a moment. Hide a small object somewhere in the classroom. Have the class member come back in (or open his or her eyes).

The class members who saw where you hid the object are to help the other class member find it. They may do this only by saying “faith” as the person approaches the hidden object or “doubt” as the person moves away from the object. Point out that this game illustrates the idea that faith is believing in things one cannot see. The class member who left the room believes the hidden object exists and is willing to put effort toward finding it, even though he or she has not actually seen the object.

4. Sing with class members or play a recording of “Faith” (*Children’s Songbook*, 96) or “I Know That My Redeemer Lives” (*Hymns*, no. 136).