

Lesson
14

The Gift of the Holy Ghost

Purpose To teach class members to recognize and follow the promptings of the Holy Ghost.

Preparation

1. Prayerfully study John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13; 1 John 5:7; 2 Nephi 32:5; Moroni 10:5; Doctrine and Covenants 6:23; 8:2; 11:12–13; 42:17; 75:27; 76:53; 84:46; 130:22; Articles of Faith 1:1.
2. Additional reading: Bible Dictionary, “Holy Ghost,” 704.
3. Number four pieces of paper from 1 to 4, and write on each one the corresponding portion of the quotation found on page 78.
4. Materials needed: 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 *One of the choicest blessings we will ever receive comes to each of us shortly after baptism, when bearers of the Melchizedek Priesthood place their hands on our head and say, “Receive the Holy Ghost.” We are then entitled to guidance from the Holy Ghost as long as we remain worthy. All of us face daily decisions—some small, some monumental—involving eternal blessings. The Holy Ghost can impress on our hearts and minds the direction the Lord would have us go. Help class members understand that this gift from Heavenly Father is one of our greatest resources.*

As you teach this lesson, be sensitive to the feelings of class members who have not yet been baptized and confirmed.

Suggested Lesson Development

Being Born of the Spirit

Scripture discussion Write on the chalkboard *We must be born of _____ and of _____ to enter the kingdom of God.* Remind class members that you discussed being born again in the previous lesson, and ask them to fill in the blanks in the statement. (If they need help in doing so, have them find and read John 3:5.)

- How do we become born of water? (By being baptized.)
- How do we become born of the Spirit? (By receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost after baptism.)

Explain that before Jesus was crucified, he promised his Apostles that after he died Heavenly Father would send a Comforter to be with them (see John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13). This Comforter, who is the Holy Ghost, would testify of Jesus Christ. He would also comfort the Apostles and help them know what to do when Jesus was gone. Tell class members that this lesson will help them understand how they, like Jesus’ Apostles, can be blessed and strengthened by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Receiving the Gift of the Holy Ghost

Note to the teacher Ask questions that encourage thought and discussion rather than questions that can be answered with a single word or statement. Pause for a few moments after asking a question so that class members have time to think about their answers. (See Teaching—No Greater Call, 106.)

Discussion • Who is the Holy Ghost?

Have class members share what they know about the Holy Ghost. If class members do not mention the following points, bring them up yourself:

1. The Holy Ghost is the third member of the Godhead. (See 1 John 5:7; Articles of Faith 1:1.)
2. He is a personage of Spirit. He is a person, but he does not have a body of flesh and bones as Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ do. (See D&C 130:22.)
3. He is also known as the Comforter, the Spirit, the Spirit of God, or the Holy Spirit. (See D&C 75:27; 84:46; 76:53.)

Scripture activity Assign each class member or pair of class members to look up and read one of the following scriptures: John 14:26; 2 Nephi 32:5; Moroni 10:5; Doctrine and Covenants 11:12; Doctrine and Covenants 42:17.

Then have class members read their assigned scriptures aloud and tell what each scripture says about what the Holy Ghost does. List the responses on the chalkboard.

- What must we do to have the Holy Ghost help us with all these things? (We must receive the gift of the Holy Ghost through the laying on of hands after we are baptized, and then we must live worthy of that gift.)

Teacher presentation Explain that a person can be influenced by the Holy Ghost before baptism. The Holy Ghost helps people know that Jesus Christ is our Savior and Redeemer and that the gospel is true. But the gift of the Holy Ghost can only be received after baptism. The gift of the Holy Ghost is the privilege and right to have the companionship of the Holy Ghost at all times. This gift is given through the laying on of hands by those who have proper Melchizedek Priesthood authority, and it remains in effect as long as we are trying to live righteously. The Holy Ghost can bring us comfort, help us choose between right and wrong, and direct us in what Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ want us to do. (You may want to mention also that answers to our prayers often come through promptings from the Holy Ghost.)

Recognizing the Promptings of the Holy Ghost

Story and discussion Explain that if we are worthy to receive help from the Holy Ghost and willing to listen to him, he will always help us. Sometimes, however, it takes experience and practice to learn how to recognize the promptings of the Holy Ghost.

Read or tell the following account by Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“One of our sons has always been interested in radio. When he was a little fellow, his Christmas present was a very elementary radio construction set.

“As he grew, and as we could afford it, and as he could earn it, he received more sophisticated equipment.

“There have been many times over the years, some very recently, when I have sat with him as he talked with someone in a distant part of the world.

“I could hear static and interference and catch a word or two, or sometimes several voices at once.

“Yet he can understand, for he has trained himself to tune out the interference.

“It is difficult to separate from the confusion of life that quiet voice of inspiration. Unless you attune yourself, you will miss it. . . . You can train yourself to hear what you want to hear, to see and feel what you desire, but it takes some conditioning.

“There are so many of us who go through life and seldom, if ever, hear that voice of inspiration, because ‘the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned’ (1 Cor. 2:14)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, 27–28; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 19–20).

- How are the promptings of the Holy Ghost like the radio signal in this story? (Answers may include that we must pay close attention to hear the promptings of the Holy Ghost; other things can cause interference and distract us from listening to the Holy Ghost; as we gain experience in listening to the Holy Ghost, we are better able to hear and understand him.)

Chalkboard
and scripture
discussion

Point out that although we talk about “hearing” or “listening to” the Holy Ghost, he rarely speaks to us in an audible voice, like another person speaks to us. His promptings usually come in other ways.

Explain that the scriptures teach us several ways in which promptings from the Holy Ghost may come. Write *D&C 6:23* on the chalkboard, and have class members read and mark this verse.

- What is one way the Holy Ghost communicates with us?

Write *Peace* on the chalkboard following *D&C 6:23*. Explain that if we feel peaceful about a question or decision, that is usually the Holy Ghost telling us that what we have decided is right.

Write *D&C 8:2* on the chalkboard, and have class members read and mark this verse.

- What does this scripture tell us about how the Holy Ghost communicates with us?

Write *Knowledge in our minds and hearts* on the chalkboard following *D&C 8:2*. Explain that sometimes the Holy Ghost gives us thoughts or feelings that we could not receive from any other source. For example, we may know that a friend needs encouragement, even though he or she appears happy and has not said anything about feeling discouraged. This knowledge is an example

of communication from the Holy Ghost. A knowledge that the gospel is true also comes this way.

Write *D&C 11:13* on the chalkboard, and have class members read and mark this verse.

- What does this scripture tell us about how the Holy Ghost communicates with us?

Write *Enlightenment and joy* on the chalkboard following *D&C 11:13*. Explain that the Holy Ghost can enlighten our minds by helping us understand things, such as the meaning of a passage of scripture we have read. He can also give us feelings of joy to help us know we are doing what is right.

Following the Promptings of the Holy Ghost

Discussion

- What should we do when we receive promptings from the Holy Ghost?

Point out that we should follow the promptings we receive from the Holy Ghost, even if it is sometimes difficult to do so.

- Why does it sometimes take courage to follow the promptings of the Holy Ghost?

Quotation

Have a class member read the following statement from Elder F. Enzo Busche of the Seventy:

“It takes courage and commitment to follow the promptings of the Spirit because they may frighten us as they lead us to walk along new paths, sometimes paths that no one has walked before, paths of the second mile, of acting totally differently from how worldly people act. For instance, we may be prompted to smile when someone offends us, to give love where others give hate, to say thank you where others would not find anything to be thankful for, to accept jobs that others would be too proud to do, to apologize where others would defend themselves, and to do all the seemingly crazy things that the Spirit prompts a righteous, honest, listening heart to do” (“The Only Real Treasure,” *New Era*, Dec. 1979, 5).

Explain that promptings from the Holy Ghost tell us things Heavenly Father wants us to know or do. The blessings we receive from following these promptings outweigh any difficulty or inconvenience we may experience from doing so.

Quotation and discussion

Read the following comments from a man who was a convert to the Church. Do not reveal the man’s identity until after the questions have been discussed.

“I cannot help but think back to the day when I, as an investigator of the Church, was confronted with the missionaries’ challenge to prepare for my baptism. This step seemed to be too big for me to take, but . . . I already had a testimony burning within me of the truthfulness of this work. . . .

“So I accepted the challenge for baptism, with a fearful heart, but I told the missionaries that I would do it only on two conditions: First, that I would never be called to any Church position, and second, that I would never have to give a talk.”

- Why did it take courage for this man to join the Church? (Joining the Church would require him to make changes in his life.)
- Why did he decide to be baptized? (The Holy Ghost had helped him gain a testimony of the gospel.)
- What might have happened to this convert if he had followed the promptings of the Holy Ghost to be baptized, then rejected later promptings by refusing to accept a calling or give a talk?

Explain to class members that this man did follow the guidance of the Holy Ghost after baptism as well as before. He is Elder F. Enzo Busche of the First Quorum of the Seventy, the same man who made the statement that was read aloud by a class member a few minutes ago. Elder Busche told about his baptism in general conference, concluding with the following remarks:

“Without the loving influence and the power and security of the Holy Ghost, which I received by the laying on of hands after baptism to help me, I could not have done anything in my various Church assignments” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1980, 37; or *Ensign*, May 1980, 27).

Quotation

Give the four papers containing the quotation below to four class members. Explain that after the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Brigham Young had a dream in which Joseph Smith appeared to him and gave him some instructions. (See *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, comp. Elden J. Watson [1971], 529–30.) Have the four class members share those instructions with the class by reading their papers in numerical order.

1. *“Tell the people to be humble and faithful, and be sure to keep the spirit of the Lord and it will lead them right. Be careful and not turn away the small still voice; it will teach you what to do and where to go. . . .”*
2. *“Tell the brethren to keep their hearts open to conviction, so that when the Holy Ghost comes to them, their hearts will be ready to receive it. They can tell the Spirit of the Lord from all other spirits; it 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.”*
3. *“Tell the brethren if they will follow the spirit of the Lord they will go right.”*
4. *“Be sure to tell the people to keep the Spirit of the Lord.”*

Testimony

Testify of the value of the gift of the Holy Ghost in your life, and express your gratitude that Heavenly Father has given this gift to help us. As appropriate, you may want to tell class members about a time when you were prompted by the Holy Ghost.

Encourage class members to learn to listen to the promptings of the Holy Ghost and to follow those promptings when they receive them.

Enrichment Activities

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

1. Tell in your own words the following account from the journal of Wilford Woodruff, who later became the fourth President of the Church:

“When I got back to Winter Quarters from [a mission to England], President Young said to me, ‘Brother Woodruff, I want you to take your wife and children and go to Boston, and stay there until you can gather every Saint of God in New England and Canada and send them up to Zion.’ I did as he told me. It took me two years to gather up everybody, and I brought up the rear with a company. When I got into Pittsburg with this company it was dusk, and I saw a steamer just preparing to go out. I walked right up to the captain and asked him if he was ready to go out. He said he was. ‘How many passengers have you?’ ‘Two hundred and fifty.’ ‘Can you take another hundred?’ ‘I can.’ ‘Then,’ said I, ‘I would like to go aboard with you.’ The words were hardly out of my mouth when the Holy Ghost said to me, ‘Don’t you, nor your company go aboard that steamer.’ . . . I turned and told the captain that I had made up my mind not to go at present. That steamer started out. It was a dark night, and before the steamer had gone far she took fire, and all on board were lost. We should probably have shared the same fate, had it not been for that monitor within me” (*Collected Discourses Delivered by President Wilford Woodruff, His Two Counselors, the Twelve Apostles, and Others*, comp. Brian H. Stuy, 5 vols. [1987–92], 5:239).

Invite class members to share, as appropriate, experiences when they or someone they know has been made safe because of a prompting from the Holy Ghost.

2. Bring to class a treat, such as a piece of candy, or a useful item, such as a pencil. Present this item to a class member, saying it is a gift from you. Then tell the class member to put the item in a pocket or under a chair and not pay any more attention to it. After the class member has done so, ask him or her:
 - How much use is this gift to you right now? Are you glad you were given this gift? Have you really received this gift?
 - What would you rather do with this gift?

Explain that the gift of the Holy Ghost is given to all members of the Church when they are confirmed after baptism. This is a very valuable gift from our Father in Heaven. But often we do the spiritual equivalent of sticking our gift in a pocket or under a chair, ignoring it. For this gift to be useful and valuable to us, we must truly “receive the Holy Ghost” by seeking and listening to his promptings.

3. If *Family Home Evening Video Supplement* (53276) is available, show “Following the Spirit,” a six-minute segment.
4. Sing with class members “The Still Small Voice” (*Children’s Songbook*, 106) or “Listen, Listen” (*Children’s Songbook*, 107).