

We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet

Lesson 17

Purpose	To inspire class members to listen to, follow, and sustain the prophet.
Preparation	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Prayerfully study Amos 3:7; Matthew 16:19; Ephesians 2:19–20; 1 Nephi 22:2; Mosiah 8:17; Doctrine and Covenants 1:14, 38; 21:4–6; 58:18; 68:3.2. Make a copy of the crossword puzzle found at the end of the lesson (page 97) for each class member. If it is not feasible to make copies, draw the puzzle on a poster or on the chalkboard.3. Materials needed:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. A pen or pencil for each class member.b. A picture of the current President of the Church.c. Several copies of recent conference issues of the <i>Ensign</i> or the International Magazines for the activity on page 94. (Conference issues are published in May and November for the <i>Ensign</i> and July and January for the International Magazines.)d. Hymnbooks for class members to use in singing the hymn at the end of the lesson (see page 96).e. 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 *The Lord in his love and wisdom has called prophets to guide us and help us meet the challenges of our time. It is a blessing to know that the counsel we receive from the prophet is the same as if it came directly from the Lord. Emphasize to class members the importance of having a living prophet today. We sustain all the members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as prophets, but this lesson focuses on the President of the Church, the Lord's spokesman on the earth.*

Suggested Lesson Development

Messages Come from the Lord through the Prophet

Story and discussion

Read or tell the following story:

Many years ago, before there was a temple on the island of Tahiti, 30 Tahitian members of the Church had planned for a long time to make a trip to the Hawaii Temple. They had worked hard to repair a boat and to save the money necessary for their journey. They had also requested and received permission for the journey from their government and from President David O. McKay, who was President of the Church at that time.

Shortly before the voyage was to begin, the Church members who would be making the trip were asked to gather at the mission home for a meeting. There they were informed that a special message had arrived that day from President McKay. He was asking them not to make the trip to Hawaii.

- How would you feel if you had made all these preparations and then you were counseled not to go?
- Would your feelings be different knowing that the prophet of God had asked you to stop the voyage? Why or why not?

Share the conclusion of the story:

The Church members did not understand why they could not make the trip, but they had testimonies that President McKay was a prophet, so they followed his counsel.

A few days later the skipper of the boat the Saints had planned to use received a call from the harbor where the boat was kept. He was told to come quickly because his boat was sinking. When he examined his boat, he found that the repairmen who had been hired earlier had painted over some rotten wood and rusty pipe, which had then broken, causing the boat to sink. If the Church members had begun the trip, the boat would have sunk while they were on their way to Hawaii.

The Church members had accepted the prophet's counsel without knowing why it was given, but now they understood why they had been advised not to make the journey. They were thankful that they had followed the prophet's counsel. (See R. Lanier and JoAnn M. Britsch, "A Prophet's Warning," *New Era*, Mar. 1976, 12–14.)

Activity

Display a picture of the current President of the Church.

Hand out copies of the *Ensign* (or the International Magazines) containing recent conference addresses. You may separate class members into small groups and give a copy to each group, or you may give a copy to each class member. Have class members find talks by the current President of the Church and look for specific things he has counseled us to do.

- What counsel has the Lord recently given us through the prophet?

List class members' responses on the chalkboard. Testify that just as the people in the story were protected because they followed President David O. McKay, we will be blessed when we follow the counsel of the prophet.

We Can Know That the Prophet Represents God

Story and discussion

- Why is it important to have a testimony that the Lord speaks through the prophet?

Have someone read the following story told by Elder Boyd K. Packer:

"I left the office one Friday afternoon . . . [and] waited for the elevator to come down from the fifth floor.

"As the elevator doors quietly opened, there stood President Joseph Fielding Smith. There was a moment of surprise in seeing him, since his office is on a lower floor.

"As I saw him framed in the doorway, there fell upon me a powerful witness—there stands the prophet of God. That sweet voice of Spirit . . . affirmed to me that this was the prophet of God.

“I need not try to define that experience to Latter-day Saints. That kind of witness is characteristic of this church. It is not something reserved to those in high office. It is a witness, not only available but vital, to every member” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1971, 122–23; or *Ensign*, June 1971, 87).

- How did Elder Packer know that President Smith was the prophet of God?

Emphasize that Elder Packer’s testimony was confirmed by the Holy Ghost, not by the sight of President Smith. As appropriate, tell class members about how you have received the witness of the Holy Ghost that the President of the Church is God’s prophet. Invite class members to tell how they gained a testimony of the prophet.

Chalkboard discussion

- What can we do to receive a witness from the Holy Ghost that the President of the Church is a prophet of God?

List class members’ responses on the chalkboard. Some possible responses include praying, fasting, reading the prophet’s messages, watching or listening to general conference, and following the prophet’s counsel.

The Scriptures Teach Us to Follow the Prophet

Scripture activity

Give each class member a pen or pencil and a copy of the crossword puzzle. (If you did not make copies of the puzzle, draw it on the chalkboard or on a poster, read the questions aloud, and have class members work together to complete the puzzle.) Encourage class members to mark the scripture passages as they read them. Allow enough time for everyone to complete the puzzle. After the class members have finished, read and discuss each completed statement. Below are the completed statements:

Across

1. God reveals his secrets to his servants the prophets. (See Amos 3:7.)
6. The prophet holds the keys of the kingdom of heaven. (See Matthew 16:19.)
7. Those who do not heed the words of the prophets will be cut off. (See D&C 1:14.)
9. We should receive the counsel of the prophet with all patience and faith. (See D&C 21:4–5.)

Down

2. The prophet speaks as prompted by the Holy Ghost. (See D&C 68:3.)
3. We sustain the President of the Church as a prophet, seer, and revelator. A seer knows about the past and about things to come. (See Mosiah 8:17.)
4. The Lord’s voice and the voice of the prophet to the Church are the same. (See D&C 1:38.)
5. The organization of the Church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone. (See Ephesians 2:19–20.)
8. The laws of the kingdom (the Church) are given by prophets. (See D&C 58:18.)

“We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet”

Hymn

Explain that William Fowler, a British convert baptized in 1849, was so moved by the thought of a prophet of God living among the people that he wrote the words to the hymn “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet” (*Hymns*, no. 19).

Distribute hymnbooks and have class members sing or read the words to this hymn.

- Why are you thankful to be led by a prophet?

Testimony

Share with class members your testimony of the current President of the Church. Encourage them to follow his counsel.

Enrichment Activities

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

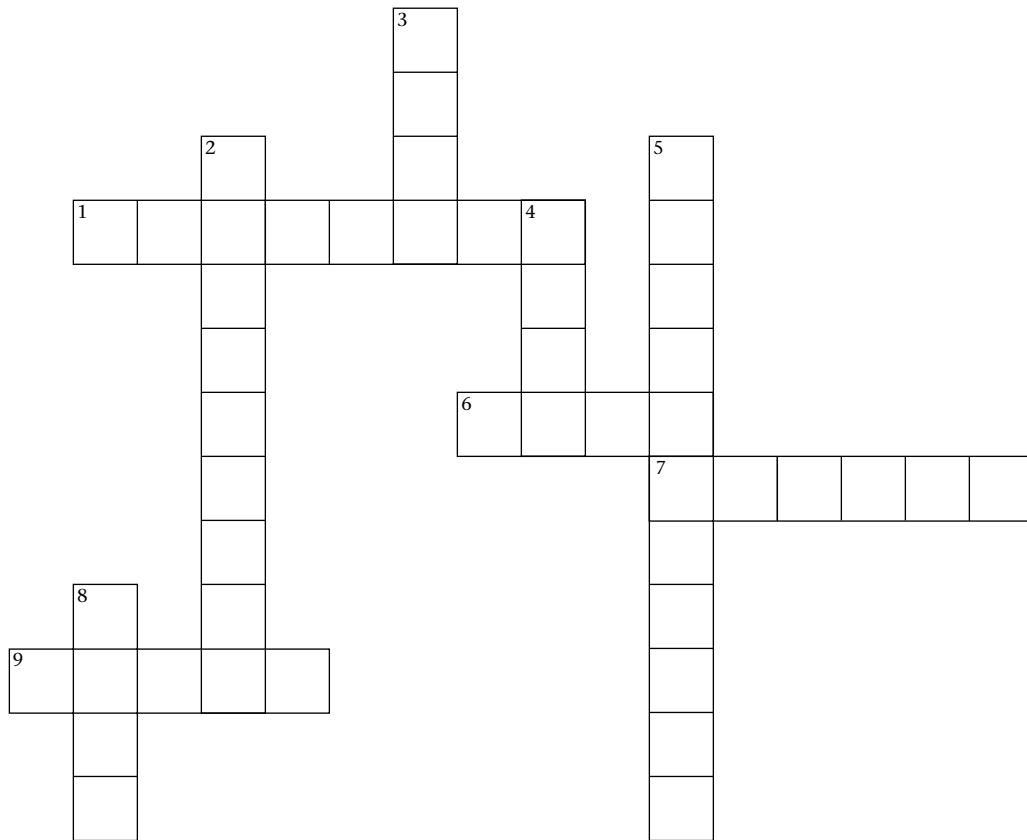
1. Ask class members to raise their hands if they can recite the ninth article of faith. Invite those who raise their hands to recite it. If no one volunteers to repeat the article of faith, help class members review and memorize it by doing the following exercise:

Write the article of faith on the chalkboard and have class members repeat it several times. Each time they repeat it, erase one of the key words. Do this until they can repeat the entire article of faith from memory.

- Why is it important to believe that God “will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God”?
 - To whom does God reveal his will concerning the Church, or his kingdom? (The President of the Church.)
2. Display the picture Latter-day Prophets (62575; Gospel Art Picture Kit 506). Use a piece of paper to cover the names under the first row of pictures, and see how many of the prophets class members can identify. Then do the same with each of the other rows of pictures.

To help class members learn the names of the latter-day prophets, you may want to use the song “Latter-day Prophets” (*Children’s Songbook*, 134).

Crossword Puzzle



Complete the crossword puzzle by filling in the blanks in the following statements.

Across

1. God reveals his secrets to his servants the _____. (See Amos 3:7.)
6. The prophet holds the _____ of the kingdom of heaven. (See Matthew 16:19.)
7. Those who do not heed the words of the prophets will be _____ . (See D&C 1:14.)
9. We should receive the counsel of the prophet with all patience and _____. (See D&C 21:4–5.)

Down

2. The prophet speaks as prompted by the _____ . (See D&C 68:3.)
3. We sustain the President of the Church as a prophet, seer, and revelator. A seer knows about the past and about things to _____. (See Mosiah 8:17.)
4. The Lord's voice and the voice of the prophet to the Church are the _____. (See D&C 1:38.)
5. The organization of the Church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with _____ as the chief cornerstone. (See Ephesians 2:19–20.)
8. The _____ of the kingdom (the Church) are given by prophets. (See D&C 58:18.)