

# Patriarchal Blessings

## Lesson 19

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<b>Purpose</b>	To teach class members basic principles about preparing for and receiving a patriarchal blessing.
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<b>Preparation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Prayerfully study 1 Nephi 16:10, 16, 28–29; 18:11–12, 20–21.</li><li>Make five cards, each containing one of the following words: <i>WHAT, WHO, WHY, WHEN, HOW</i>. On the back of each card, write the corresponding question or questions below: <p>WHAT: What is a patriarchal blessing?</p><p>WHO: Who can receive a patriarchal blessing? Who gives a patriarchal blessing?</p><p>WHY: Why should a person seek a patriarchal blessing?</p><p>WHEN: When can a person receive a patriarchal blessing?</p><p>HOW: How can a person prepare to receive a patriarchal blessing?</p><p>Stick these cards to the bottom of five chairs for class members to find during the lesson, or pass them out to five class members as they come into class.</p></li><li>Materials needed:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>The picture The Liahona (picture 7 in the picture section of the manual; 62041; Gospel Art Picture Kit 302).</li><li>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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*Note to the teacher*      *We are all children of God, and he desires to guide us so that we can return to him. One guide he makes available to us is a patriarchal blessing. A patriarchal blessing can help a person understand what the Lord expects of him or her and can motivate the person to live for the promised blessings. Help class members realize that each of them is promised a patriarchal blessing, and encourage them to live worthily so they can receive it when the time is right.*

*If any class members have already received a patriarchal blessing, encourage them to tell about their experiences (information such as who the patriarch in your stake is, why they decided to seek a patriarchal blessing, or how they prepared for the blessing) as appropriate during the lesson.*

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<b>Suggested Lesson Development</b>	<b>A Patriarchal Blessing Is like a Personal Liahona</b>
Picture discussion	Display the picture of the Liahona and ask class members to tell you about it. If they do not know the answers to the following questions, help them find the answers in the scriptures listed.

- Who is the man kneeling in the picture? (The prophet Lehi.) What is he holding? (The Liahona.)
- What was the Liahona? (See 1 Nephi 16:10.) What did it do? (See 1 Nephi 16:16.)
- What was required for the Liahona to work properly? (See 1 Nephi 16:28–29.)

Help class members understand that the Liahona was a kind of compass given by the Lord to Lehi and his family when they were in the wilderness. It showed them the way they should go, but only when they were faithful and obedient.

- Would you like to have a personalized compass, like the Liahona, to show you which way you should go in life?

Quotation

Read or have a class member read the following statement from President Thomas S. Monson of the First Presidency:

“The same Lord who provided a Liahona to Lehi provides for you and for me today a rare and valuable gift to give direction to our lives, to mark the hazards to our safety, and to chart the way, even safe passage—not to a promised land, but to our heavenly home. The gift to which I refer is known as your patriarchal blessing. Every worthy member of the Church is entitled to receive such a precious and priceless personal treasure” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 81; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 65).

Teacher presentation

Write on the chalkboard *A Patriarchal Blessing: Your Personal Liahona*.

Explain that a patriarchal blessing is similar to the Liahona in several ways. Write the following on the chalkboard below the heading:

*Gift from Heavenly Father.*

*Works according to faith.*

*Leads you in the right direction.*

Explain that in this lesson class members will learn what a patriarchal blessing is, how they can receive one, and how it can be a guide to them as they make decisions throughout their lives.

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### **Patriarchal Blessings Contain God’s Counsel to Us**

Card 1 discussion

If you put the five cards under chairs, have class members look under their chairs and remove any card they find.

Ask the class member who has the card labeled “WHAT” to read the question on the back of the card:

- What is a patriarchal blessing?

Ask class members to tell all they know about what a patriarchal blessing is. Make sure the following points are covered (have a class member read aloud the quotation from President Monson at the appropriate time in the discussion):

1. A patriarchal blessing is an inspired blessing declaring a person’s lineage (the tribe of Israel to which he or she belongs) and giving insight about his or her life.

2. It may include promises of blessings the person may receive, warnings about particular temptations or weaknesses, or counsel about how the person should live.
3. It is given once in a person's lifetime by a stake patriarch.
4. It is recorded, and a copy is given to the person receiving the blessing. A copy is also kept in the archives of the Church.
5. It is a sacred and personal document that should be read and studied often but should not be shared casually with others.

## Quotation

President Monson said: "Your patriarchal blessing is yours and yours alone. It may be brief or lengthy, simple or profound. Length and language do not a patriarchal blessing make. It is the Spirit that conveys the true meaning. Your blessing is not to be folded neatly and tucked away. It is not to be framed or published. Rather, it is to be read. It is to be loved. It is to be followed. Your patriarchal blessing will see you through the darkest night. It will guide you through life's dangers" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 82–83; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 66).

## Card 2 discussion

Ask the class member who has the card labeled "WHO" to read the questions on the back of the card:

- Who can receive a patriarchal blessing? Who gives a patriarchal blessing?

If class members do not know, explain that any worthy member of the Church can receive a patriarchal blessing when he or she is old enough to understand the opportunities and responsibilities that accompany it. Patriarchal blessings are given by stake patriarchs, priesthood holders who have been ordained to the office of patriarch. (These and subsequent questions may be discussed very briefly if they were mentioned during the discussion of what a patriarchal blessing is; they should be discussed in more detail if they were not previously mentioned.)

- What is the name of our stake patriarch? What are his duties as a patriarch?

## Quotation

Have a class member read the following statement from President Joseph F. Smith, sixth President of the Church:

"It is [a stake patriarch's] business and right to bestow blessings upon the people, to make promises unto them in the name of the Lord, . . . by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to comfort them in the hours of sorrow and trouble, to strengthen their faith by the promises that shall be made to them through the Spirit of God" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [1939], 181).

## Card 3 discussion

Ask the class member who has the card labeled "WHY" to read the question on the back of the card:

- Why should a person seek a patriarchal blessing? (To know God's will, promises, and warnings for him or her.)

## Quotation

Have a class member read the following statement from Elder John A. Widtsoe, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“Those who seek patriarchal blessings should ask for them with faith in the reality of the power of the Priesthood. They should seek them with an earnest, prayerful desire to become, through the blessings, more completely happy in their lives, and more perfectly serviceable in the work of the Lord” (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, arr. G. Homer Durham, 3 vols. in 1 [1960], 323).

- How can a patriarchal blessing help us become happier?
- How can a patriarchal blessing help us be more diligent servants of the Lord?

Card 4 discussion

Ask the class member who has the card labeled “WHEN” to read the question on the back of the card:

- When can a person receive a patriarchal blessing?

Explain that a patriarchal blessing is given when a person is mature enough spiritually to appreciate the significance of the blessing and desires to receive it. People often receive a patriarchal blessing during their teenage years, when they are old enough to understand the importance of the blessing yet young enough to use it as a guide in making important decisions in life. Encourage class members to counsel with their parents regarding when it would be appropriate for them to receive a patriarchal blessing.

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#### **Fulfillment of a Patriarchal Blessing Is Conditional on Righteousness**

Discussion

Remind class members that the usefulness of the Liahona was dependent on the faith and righteousness of Lehi and his family.

- What happened when some of Lehi’s family members were unrighteous? (See 1 Nephi 18:11–12, 20–21.)

Point out that patriarchal blessings are similarly conditional on faith and righteousness. We can receive the promised blessings only when we follow the counsel and commandments we are given by the Lord and his servants.

Explain that it is also important to realize that the promises made in a patriarchal blessing may not all be fulfilled during our earth life. If we are righteous, however, we will eventually receive all the blessings promised us.

Quotation

Have a class member read the following statement by Elder Widtsoe:

“Men [and women] have stumbled at times because promised blessings have not occurred in this life. They have failed to remember that, in the gospel, life with all its activities continues forever and that the labors of earth may be continued in heaven” (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, 323).

Discussion

Point out that a patriarchal blessing will not answer every question about our lives. Patriarchal blessings vary widely in length and detail; some are very long and some are quite short. Through the patriarch, Heavenly Father will tell each of us what He knows we need to know. The length or detail of a patriarchal blessing is in no way an indication of the recipient’s worthiness or Heavenly Father’s love for him or her.

- Why do you think Heavenly Father doesn’t tell us everything about our lives through our patriarchal blessings?

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## We Can Prepare to Receive a Patriarchal Blessing

Card 5 discussion Ask the class member who has the card labeled “HOW” to read the question on the back of the card:

- How can a person prepare to receive a patriarchal blessing?

Explain that the best way class members can prepare now to receive a patriarchal blessing is to continue striving to live righteously. When each class member decides, in counsel with his or her parents, that the time is right to receive a patriarchal blessing, he or she will meet with the bishop to obtain a recommend for the blessing. After the recommend is obtained, an appointment is made with the stake patriarch. Parents and one or two close family members or friends may accompany a person receiving a patriarchal blessing, but large groups should not be invited.

A person who will be receiving a patriarchal blessing may want to spend some time in prayer and fasting before receiving the blessing, although it is not necessary for a person to be fasting at the actual time he or she receives the blessing. Sunday dress is recommended for all those attending the blessing. Everything done in connection with the blessing should invite the Holy Ghost.

Testimony Testify that a patriarchal blessing contains promises and counsel from Heavenly Father. Emphasize that once we have received a patriarchal blessing, we must study it often, follow the counsel it gives, and live worthy of receiving the blessings it promises. If you have received your own patriarchal blessing, you may want to tell class members how you feel about it or how it has helped you (avoid sharing specific revelations given in your blessing).

Encourage class members to be faithful and obedient so that they will be worthy to receive their patriarchal blessing when the time comes.

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### Enrichment Activities

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

1. A patriarchal blessing may be considered personal scripture. Make for each class member a card containing the quotation below. As you pass out the cards during class, have one class member read the quotation aloud. Encourage class members to keep the card in their scriptures.

“Receive a patriarchal blessing. Study it carefully and regard it as personal scripture to you—for that is what it is. A patriarchal blessing is the inspired and prophetic statement of your life’s mission together with blessings, cautions, and admonitions as the patriarch may be prompted to give. . . . Receive your patriarchal blessing under the influence of fasting and prayer, and then read it regularly that you may know God’s will for you” (Ezra Taft Benson, in Conference Report, Apr. 1986, 56; or *Ensign*, May 1986, 43–44).

2. Tell the following story in your own words:

“My whole life I had heard about the importance of getting a patriarchal blessing. . . . To me, it was kind of frightening. What if I didn’t hear anything I wanted to hear? What if there were no great promises for me? I worried about being prepared enough.

“I decided that I needed to have faith and that all would be well. I prayed many times, was interviewed by my bishop, and set up an appointment with the stake patriarch to receive my blessing. Then I waited, while trying to prepare spiritually for this important date.

“On the day I was to receive my blessing, I fasted all day. I thought I would have this super spiritual day, but Satan was working on me and I had a bad day at school. I was a wreck. I came home after school and paced the floor. I thought back . . . to when a man and a woman in our ward whom I admire told us how to prepare, suggesting that we pray for specific things we want to know.

“I went to my room, knelt beside my bed, and prayed that Heavenly Father would tell me what he knew was best for me to hear. I asked that he take away my fears and calm my worried heart.

“Everything turned out fine. In fact, it was a personal miracle. It seemed that the patriarch knew me so completely, even better than I knew myself. I knew he was speaking for Heavenly Father, and when he spoke, I felt the assurance that Heavenly Father did know me. He heard my prayers. . . .

“Now I know why Church leaders are always emphasizing the value of a patriarchal blessing. When we learn the worth of something and pay the price to obtain it, we begin to better understand its value. For me, my blessing and the experience of receiving it was one of the best experiences of my life. I know that my patriarchal blessing will continue to guide me to fulfill its promises” (Rebecca Rose, “My Miracle,” *New Era*, June 1995, 54).

3. If *Family Home Evening Video Supplement 2* (53277) is available, show “The Blessings of the Priesthood,” a seven-minute segment. In this segment Sister Ardeth G. Kapp, former General President of the Young Women, discusses many blessings of the priesthood. You may want to set the videocassette in advance so that you can show only the one-minute portion in which Sister Kapp speaks about patriarchal blessings.