

Lesson
28

Remember the Sabbath Day, to Keep It Holy

Purpose To encourage class members to keep the Sabbath day holy.

Preparation

1. Prayerfully study Exodus 20:8–11; Isaiah 58:13–14; Luke 24:1–3; Doctrine and Covenants 59:9–12.
2. Make a copy of the “Personal Sabbath Survey,” found at the end of the lesson (page 168), for each class member.
3. Materials needed:
 - a. A pen or pencil for each class member.
 - b. The pictures Passing the Sacrament (62021; Gospel Art Picture Kit 604) and Family Prayer (62275; Gospel Art Picture Kit 606).
 - 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 It is sometimes difficult for young people to feel gratitude for the Sabbath. Too often they associate it only with rules and restrictions and forget that it is a blessing from a loving Father in Heaven. Understanding why Heavenly Father has commanded us to keep the Sabbath day holy can help us enjoy the Sabbath and be grateful for it. Help class members see that honoring the Lord on the Sabbath day brings us great blessings.

**Suggested Lesson
Development**

The Sabbath Is a Day of Rest and Worship

Story Read or tell the following story:

Eli Herring was a football player on the Springville (Utah) High School team. The team had just won the state championship, and Eli appeared to be headed for a college and even professional football career. As Eli talked with his parents about the possibilities, they cautioned him to remember the values he had been taught.

Several universities invited Eli to play for them after high school, but he chose to attend Brigham Young University, in part because the coaches there would allow him to leave on a mission after his freshman year. After Eli returned from his mission, he rejoined the team and became one of the best college football players in the United States.

As Eli realized that he had a good chance at a career playing professional football, he thought about how much he would enjoy it and how much money he could make. But he also realized that as a professional football player, he would have to play football on the Sabbath.

Eli knew he could do good things with the money he could earn as a professional football player. He could pay his children's college and mission expenses; he could

go on missions with his wife; he could do whatever he wanted after his football career was over without worrying about money.

As Eli struggled to make his decision, he remembered reading about Erroll Bennett (see lesson 27). When Erroll joined the Church, he decided to stop playing soccer on Sunday, even though he was a top soccer star in Tahiti and not playing on Sunday would mean he would have to quit his team. Eli Herring was very impressed by Erroll Bennett. Eli said, "I knew I wanted to be a man like that, with that kind of commitment and dedication to what I knew was right."

Eli's parents and wife let him know they would support him in whatever he decided. Eli talked to many people and then fasted and prayed about his decision. He also read the scriptures intensively. It took him six months to come to a final decision.

Ultimately Eli decided that for him, keeping the Sabbath day holy was more important than playing professional football and making lots of money. "I read my scriptures, and time after time I would see more and more and more reasons that I felt in my heart that I needed to observe the Sabbath more than I needed to play football," Eli said. He turned down the offers from the professional teams and now teaches and coaches at a high school. He does not make a lot of money, but he is happy. He said: "The paychecks now, in spite of being low, are more than we were making when we were students. We're happy to have more than we had before. Occasionally I think we could have a brand-new car or a nice house, but I have never had any serious doubts about the decision." (See Joseph Richardson, "To Keep It Holy," *New Era*, Oct. 1997, 34–37.)

Explain that this lesson is about the blessings we receive when we obey the Lord's commandment to keep the Sabbath day holy.

Honoring the Sabbath Day

Scripture
discussion

Have class members read and mark Exodus 20:9–11.

- When was the Sabbath day first made holy?

Explain that after the Lord made "heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is" in six days, he rested on the seventh day. He hallowed the seventh day. In other words, he made it holy. Explain that until the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Sabbath was observed on the seventh day (Saturday). Today the Sabbath is observed on Sunday in remembrance of the Savior's Resurrection on that day (see Luke 24:1–3).

- What does it mean to keep something holy? (To honor it, to dedicate it to righteous use, to keep it sacred and deserving of reverence.)
- Why should we keep the Sabbath day holy?

Quotation and
chalkboard
discussion

Have a class member read the following statement by Elder James E. Faust, who was at the time a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"Why has God asked us to honor the Sabbath day? The reasons I think are at least threefold. The first has to do with the physical need for rest and renewing. Obviously God, who created us, would know more than we do of the limits of our physical and nervous energy and strength."

Write *Physical renewal* in the top left corner of the chalkboard. Then have a second class member continue with Elder Faust's statement:

"The second reason is, in my opinion, of far greater significance. It has to do with the need for regeneration and the strengthening of our spiritual being. God knows that left completely to our own devices without regular reminders of our spiritual needs, many would degenerate into the preoccupation of satisfying earthly desires and appetites. This need for physical, mental, and spiritual regeneration is met in large measure by faithful observance of the Sabbath day."

To the right of *Physical renewal*, write *Spiritual strength*.

- Why is the blessing of spiritual strength more important than the blessing of physical rest and renewal?

Have a third class member read the rest of Elder Faust's statement:

"The third reason [for honoring the Sabbath day] may be the most important of the three. It has to do with obedience to commandments as an expression of our love for God. Blessed are those who need no reasons other than their love for the Savior to keep his commandments" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1991, 46–47; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 35).

To the right of *Spiritual strength*, write *Love for God*.

- How is reverent observance of the Sabbath day "an expression of our love for God"? Why might this be the most important reason for honoring the Sabbath?

Scripture and chalkboard discussion

Have class members read and mark Doctrine and Covenants 59:9–12 (explain that the word *oblations* in verse 12 refers to things we do to serve God and other people). As they read these verses, have them look for phrases that fall under each of the three categories you have written on the chalkboard. Write their answers on the chalkboard under the appropriate categories, as shown below:

PHYSICAL RENEWAL	SPIRITUAL STRENGTH	LOVE FOR GOD
"Rest from your labors" (verse 10).	"Keep thyself unspotted from the world" (verse 9). "Confessing thy sins" (verse 12).	"Pay thy devotions unto the Most High" (verse 10). "Offer thine oblations and thy sacraments unto the Most High" (verse 12).

Making the Sabbath a Delight

Scripture discussion

Have class members read and mark Isaiah 58:13–14. Help them discuss the following phrases and questions:

1. “Turn away . . . from doing thy pleasure.”

- What do you think Isaiah meant when he said this?

Explain that Isaiah was not saying that we should not enjoy the Sabbath; he was saying that the Sabbath is a day to forget our own desires and follow God’s will.

2. “Call the sabbath a delight.”

- How is the Sabbath a delight?

3. “Honour him.”

- How might this phrase serve as the standard for all our activities during the Sabbath?

4. “Not doing thine own ways.”

- How can this phrase be a caution to us when we wonder what we should and should not do on the Sabbath?

5. “Delight thyself in the Lord.”

- How does worshiping God make us happy?

Quotation and discussion

Have someone read the following words from President Thomas S. Monson of the First Presidency:

“The Lord has given the Sabbath day for your benefit and has commanded you to keep it holy. Many activities are appropriate for the Sabbath. Bear in mind, however, that Sunday is not a holiday. Sunday is a holy day” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1990, 61; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 47).

- What is the difference between a holiday and a holy day? What can we do to make the Sabbath a holy day and a delight for us?

Chalkboard activity

Show the pictures *Passing the Sacrament* and *Family Prayer*. Ask class members to take turns coming to the chalkboard and listing things they can do at church and at home to keep the Sabbath day holy. If class members have questions about appropriate Sabbath-day activities, refer to the fourth enrichment activity.

Activity

Give each class member a pen or pencil and a copy of the “Personal Sabbath Survey.” Have each class member write his or her answers to the questions on the survey. Allow five to seven minutes, and then discuss class members’ answers to questions 1 through 4 (allow them to keep private their answers to question 5).

Testimony

Bear your testimony of the blessings and joy that have come to you through proper observance of the Sabbath day.

Encourage class members to make each Sunday delightful by putting into practice the commitment or commitments they wrote on their “Personal Sabbath Survey” (question 5).

Enrichment Activities

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

1. Read the following comments:

“An almost totally deaf sister was once asked how she managed to come to sacrament meeting each week [and remain] genuinely interested in what was being said. . . . [She said]: ‘I look forward to being in the physical presence of those whom I love and who love the gospel. I can share in their spirit without hearing a word, and if I am really in tune, the Lord whispers to me’” (Robert K. Thomas, “Listening with the Spirit,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1978, 40).

- What can we do in sacrament meeting to be “in tune” like this sister was?

2. Read the words to the hymn “Sabbath Day” (*Hymns*, no. 148). Discuss what the hymn says about Sabbath-day observance at church and at home. Since this hymn might be unfamiliar to class members, you may want to play a recording of it.

3. Tell the following story related by Elder James E. Faust:

“A . . . miracle occurred at the Wells Stake Welfare Tannery some years ago where hides of animals were tanned into leather. On regular work days, the hides were removed from the vats and fresh lime placed in the vats, after which the hides were returned to the lime solution. If the hides were not turned on holidays, they would spoil. But the change was never made on Sunday, and there were no spoiled hides on Monday. Explained J. Lowell Fox, the supervisor of the tannery at the time:

“This brought a strange fact to our minds: holidays are determined by man, and on these days just as on every week day, the hides need to have special care every twelve hours. Sunday is the day set aside by the Lord as a day of rest, and He makes it possible for us to rest from our labors as He has commanded. The hides at the tannery never spoil on Sundays. This is a modern-day miracle, a miracle that happens every weekend!” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1991, 46; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 35).

4. Refer to the following statements if class members have questions about appropriate Sabbath-day activities:

Things We Can Do on the Sabbath

President Spencer W. Kimball said: “The Sabbath is a day on which to take inventory—to analyze our weaknesses, to confess our sins to our associates and our Lord. It is a day on which to fast. . . . It is a day on which to read good books, a day to contemplate and ponder, a day to study lessons for priesthood and auxiliary organizations, a day to study the scriptures and to prepare sermons, a day to nap and rest and relax, a day to visit the sick, a day to preach the gospel, a day to proselyte, a day to visit quietly with the family . . . , a day for proper courting, a day to do good, a day to drink at the fountain of knowledge and of instruction, a day to seek forgiveness of our sins, a day for the enrichment of our spirit and our soul, a day to restore us

to our spiritual stature, a day to partake of the emblems of [Jesus'] sacrifice and atonement, a day to contemplate the glories of the gospel and of the eternal realms, a day to climb high on the upward path toward our Heavenly Father" (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 216).

Things We Should Avoid on the Sabbath

Elder Ezra Taft Benson, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said:

"It seems to me that the following should be avoided on the Sabbath:

"Overworking and staying up late Saturday so that you are exhausted the next day.

"Filling the Sabbath so full of extra meetings that there is no time for prayer, meditation, family fellowship, and counseling.

"Doing gardening and odd jobs around the house.

"Taking trips to canyons or resorts, visiting friends socially, joy riding, wasting time, and engaging in other amusements. . . .

"Playing vigorously and going to movies.

"Engaging in sports and hunting 'wild animals' which God made for the use of man only 'in times of famine and excess of hunger.' (See D&C 89:15.) . . .

"Reading material that does not contribute to your spiritual uplift.

"Shopping or supporting with your patronage businesses that operate on Sunday, such as grocery stores, supermarkets, restaurants, and service stations" ("Keeping the Sabbath Day Holy," *Ensign*, May 1971, 6–7).

Working on the Sabbath

Elder Earl C. Tingey of the Seventy said: "We know that there are essential businesses that must be open on Sunday. These are emergency, medical, transportation, and some forms of protective services, such as police and fire" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 12; or *Ensign*, May 1996, 10–11).

Employees of such "essential businesses" can keep the Sabbath day holy even when their services are required on Sunday. For example, they can read the scriptures during breaks at work and attend Church meetings before or after work.

Personal Sabbath Survey

1. Which purposes and blessings of the Sabbath are important to you?
2. What activities seem to take away from the purpose of the Sabbath for you?
3. What activities help you feel the Spirit on the Sabbath?
4. What could you do before Sunday to make the Sabbath a more delightful day?
5. What will you do to keep the Sabbath day holy and enjoy it more?