

Lesson
30

The Blessings of Work

Purpose To help class members understand that work builds character, enriches our lives, and helps us become self-reliant.

Preparation

1. Prayerfully study Proverbs 14:23; Words of Mormon 1:18; Mosiah 2:14; 27:5–7; Moses 4:25.
2. Make a copy of the quotations numbered 1 through 4 on page 176. Then cut the copy in four pieces so each quotation is on a separate piece of paper. (If you do not have access to a copy machine, write the quotations on four separate pieces of paper.)
3. Ask a few class members to bring to class an object that represents work they have done. For example, a class member who has worked with her family to paint their house could bring a paint brush. A class member who has worked to develop artistic talent could bring a picture he has drawn or a poem he has written. Have these class members prepare to answer the questions on page 177 of this lesson under the subheading “Presentations by class members.”
4. Materials needed:
 - a. The picture A Family Working Together (62313).
 - b. 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 Many people do not understand that work is a blessing. More and more, the modern world emphasizes ease and play. Help class members see the value of work in building character and improving our lives. Few things compare to the sense of accomplishment and well-being that comes to a person who has worked hard and done a job well.

Suggested Lesson Development

Work Is Essential

Discussion Ask class members the following questions:

- Do you like to work? Why or why not?

Class members’ responses may be negative or even humorous. Accept whatever they say, using the discussion to get their attention and promote participation.

- What would the world be like if everyone stopped working?

Let class members have fun with this discussion. Answers might include the following: Garbage and dirty dishes would pile up; there would be no teachers;

we would have to wear dirty clothes; we would have little or no food. Help class members see that although a world without work might seem attractive at first, without work the world would not be a very pleasant place.

God Expects Us to Work

Scripture discussion

Have class members read and mark Proverbs 14:23 through the word *profit*.

- What do you think the statement “In all labour there is profit” means? (We benefit from our work.)

Have class members read and mark Moses 4:25 through the word *bread*. Explain that this verse contains some of the Lord’s words to Adam just before Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden of Eden.

- What did the Lord mean when he said this to Adam? (He meant that Adam would have to work to obtain food.) How would this help Adam and Eve? How does work help us?

Quotation

Read the following statement by President Marion G. Romney, who was a First Counselor in the First Presidency:

“In Eden the Lord said to Adam:

“ . . . Because thou hast . . . eaten of the fruit of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying—Thou shalt not eat of it, cursed shall be the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.

“By the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, until thou shalt return unto the ground. . . .’ (Moses 4:23, 25.)

“Now this was not a vindictive decree. The Lord was not retaliating against Adam. He was simply placing Adam in a situation where he would have to work to live.

“The ground was cursed in the manner prescribed for Adam’s sake, not to his disadvantage. Had Adam and his posterity been able to live without working, the human race would never have survived” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1973, 105; or *Ensign*, Jan. 1974, 89).

Scripture discussion

Point out that God expects all his children to work. Righteous political and religious leaders in the Book of Mormon worked to support themselves even though kings and other leaders traditionally lived off taxes paid by their people. Have class members read and mark Mosiah 2:14, which contains words of King Benjamin, and Mosiah 27:5, which is about Nephite priests and teachers.

- How do you think the people responded when they saw their leaders working with them?
- What do you think were the results of these leaders’ efforts? (See Words of Mormon 1:18; Mosiah 27:6–7. Note that although there were many reasons for the peace and prosperity of the people, the leaders’ willingness to work with the people contributed greatly to the Nephites’ success at the time.)

Work Builds Character

Quotation and discussion

Read the following statement by President Spencer W. Kimball, twelfth President of the Church:

“Few miracles in our [Church] history exceed that of establishing our settlements in a desolate land no one else wanted and then making the desert blossom as a rose. Our people not only survived but flourished because of their faith and their family solidarity. Our pioneer character was molded [by] hard work, sacrifice, pulling together, and depending upon the Lord.

“How well I remember my boyhood years in Arizona. Our living came from the soil. There was little money and seldom enough to go around. Going without and making do was our way of life. We learned to share: we shared the work” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1981, 107; or *Ensign*, May 1981, 79).

- What positive effects did hard work have on the pioneers and on young Spencer Kimball?
- How is our character “molded [by] hard work”? (Answers may include that hard work helps us learn to discipline ourselves, finish tasks we have begun, and make wise decisions.)

Quotations and chalkboard discussion

Display the picture of the family working together. Then hand out the papers containing the quotations below. Explain that they are statements made by four brothers who often worked together with their family (quoted by Dean Jarman, in Conference Report, Oct. 1982, 126; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 87). As a class member reads each quotation, have another class member list on the chalkboard the benefits of work that are mentioned.

1. “An eighteen-year-old boy writes, ‘Since I can remember, I have been taught the value of hard work and honoring all of your responsibilities and your family name. As I look back to my experience in family projects, I can see how they have shaped my character and personality by letting me make many important decisions. I have gained confidence by meeting new people and am better able to express myself. But the most important thing about family work projects is that your family comes closer together in love and respect.’”
2. “A thirteen-year-old who has been mowing lawns for four years writes, ‘Family projects have really helped me to understand how to work. The harder you work, the better you feel. I am grateful for a closer relationship with my brothers and parents.’”
3. “A sixteen-year-old said, ‘Working on family projects has taught us the importance of being honest and dependable. It has taught us to make a lot of sacrifices in order to keep our name in good standing.’”
4. “A fifteen-year-old said, ‘The family work projects have helped me manage my money. When I buy my clothes and other things, I take care of them because I know how much they cost and how much work it takes to buy them. When my parents bought my things, I honestly thought there was an endless supply of money, so I wouldn’t take care of them. Also, work gives me a feeling of satisfaction.’”

Have class members look at the list on the chalkboard and talk about work experiences that have helped them reap the same benefits. To begin this discussion, you may want to ask the following questions:

- How has work helped you be a better person? How have your relationships with friends and family members been affected by working with them to accomplish a common goal?

Work Gives a Sense of Accomplishment

Presentations by class members

Invite the assigned class members to show and briefly discuss the objects they have brought to class. Then ask them the following questions:

- What was the hardest thing to do as you worked on this project?
- What was the most rewarding part of working on this project? (Note that the answer to this question may be the same as the answer to the previous question.)
- As you worked on this, did you ever get frustrated or tired of working? How did you overcome those feelings?
- How would your feelings about this project be different if someone had done it all for you?

Quotation and discussion

Read the following statement by Brigham Young:

“I have believed all my life that, that which was worth doing was worth doing well, and have considered it as much a part of my religion to do honest, reliable work, such as would endure, for those who employed me, as to attend to the services of God’s worship on the Sabbath” (quoted by Dean C. Jessee, in “The Prophet’s Letters to His Sons,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1974, 68).

- What did President Young say about the importance of the quality of our work? How would work done with this attitude bring us a sense of accomplishment?

Testimony

Tell the class about work you have done that has brought joy and a sense of accomplishment to your life.

Encourage class members to each pick a job that they have been doing only out of duty and do their best to have a good attitude about doing that job in the coming week. Encourage them to remember the value of work, always making an effort to do their best.

Enrichment Activities

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

1. Several hymns, such as “Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel” (*Hymns*, no. 252), teach the necessity and joy of work. Sing or read the words to one or more of these hymns with class members.
2. Tell the following story related by Elder Loren C. Dunn of the Seventy:

“While we were growing up in a small community, my father saw the need for my brother and me to learn the principle of work. As a result, he put us

to work on a small farm on the edge of town where he had been raised. He ran the local newspaper, so he could not spend much time with us. . . . And sometimes we made mistakes.

“Our small farm was surrounded by other farms, and one of the farmers went in to see my father one day to tell him the things he thought we were doing wrong. My father listened to him carefully and then said, ‘Jim, you don’t understand. You see, I’m raising boys and not cows’” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1974, 12; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1974, 11).

- What did Elder Dunn’s father mean when he said, “I’m raising boys and not cows”? (His primary purpose for having a farm was to give his sons the opportunity to work.) What do you think his sons might have gained from this experience?