

The Worth of a Soul

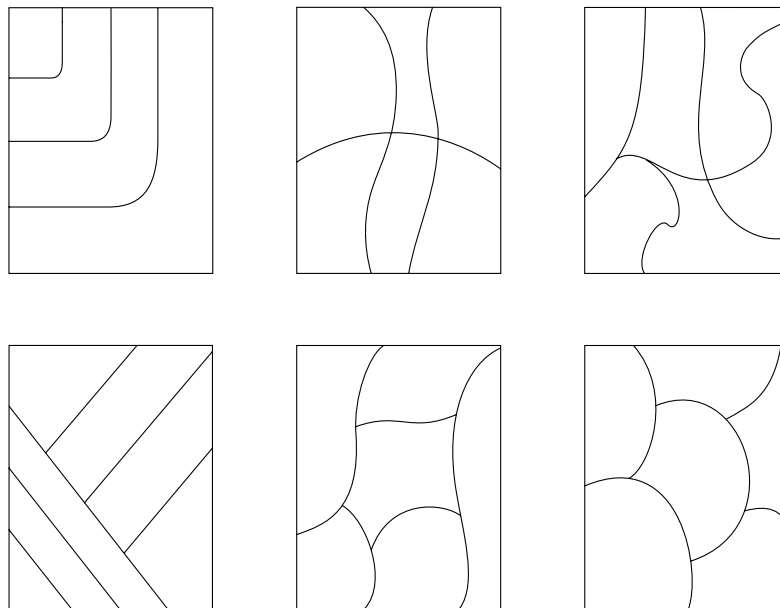
Lesson 32

Purpose To give class members a sense of their infinite worth.

Preparation

1. Prayerfully study Ether 12:27; Doctrine and Covenants 18:10; 46:11–26; Moses 1:39.
2. For each class member, make a copy of the handout containing Doctrine and Covenants 18:10, found at the end of the lesson (if it is not feasible to make copies, write the scripture on a piece of paper for each class member). Cut each copy into six pieces to create a puzzle. Cut the puzzles so that no two puzzles are the same and no piece from one puzzle will fit another puzzle.

Following are some possible ways to cut the puzzles:



Put each puzzle into a separate envelope.

3. Materials needed:
 - a. Several different colors of chalk, if possible, for the chalkboard activity (see page 186).
 - 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

Some young people do not feel that they are valuable or important. In an attempt to feel important, some of them pursue the fads and lifestyles of the world. Help class members recognize and appreciate their worth as children of our Father in Heaven. Help them also recognize that each of them has talents and abilities that can bless their lives and the lives of others.

**Suggested Lesson
Development****Each Child of Heavenly Father Is of Great Worth****Activity**

Give each class member an envelope with six puzzle pieces inside, and explain that each envelope contains a special message from the Lord. Divide the class into groups of three or four people. Have each member of a group put all but two of his or her pieces in a group pile (a separate pile for each group). Have the group members shuffle the pieces in their pile. Then ask them to find their own puzzle pieces and put their puzzles together, starting with the two pieces they kept.

When class members have finished, ask:

- What do you see when you compare your puzzle with the others? (They all have the same message: “Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God.”)
- What does it mean to be of worth? (To be important or valuable.)
- If the message is the same on each puzzle, how did you know which pieces belonged to your puzzle?

Explain that each puzzle had the same message because each of us is of the same infinite worth to our Father in Heaven and our Savior, Jesus Christ. Each puzzle was made of differently-shaped pieces because each of us is a unique individual with different strengths and weaknesses.

Collect the puzzles or have class members put them away if they want to keep them.

Each of Us Has Strengths and Weaknesses**Note to the teacher**

“A word of kindness creates warm, positive feelings. Enthusiasm is contagious. Class members know when you care for them and will respond in a warm, friendly manner” (Teaching—No Greater Call, 171).

Discussion

- What is one thing that makes you unique among the members of the class? (Give each class member a chance to respond.)

Emphasize that though we all look, sound, and act different, we are all important in the sight of God. He has given each of us a unique combination of strengths and weaknesses.

**Scripture
discussion**

Have class members read and mark Doctrine and Covenants 46:11–12.

- Why are we each given different gifts? (So that we can share them and bless each other’s lives.)

Have class members read to themselves Doctrine and Covenants 46:13–26, marking verses that are meaningful to them.

- What are the gifts of the Spirit mentioned in these verses?

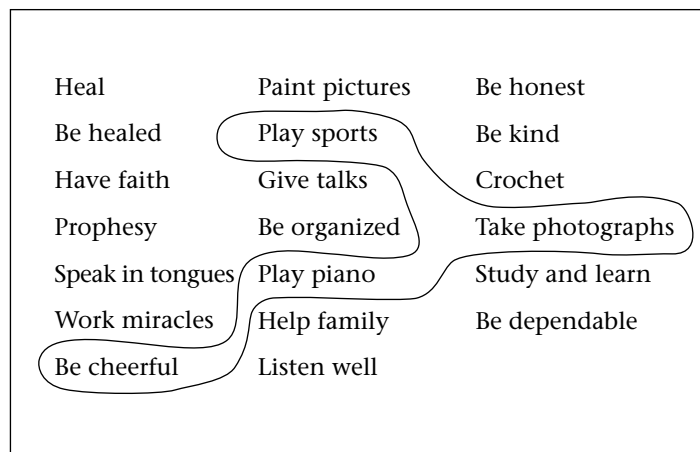
As the gifts are mentioned, list them on the chalkboard.

Activity

Explain that in addition to the gifts of the Spirit mentioned in this scripture, we may have other strengths. Have class members think of other talents and abilities to add to the list of gifts already on the chalkboard. When the board

is full or all suggestions have been given, invite a class member to draw a line that encloses some of the gifts and strengths he or she has. (If class members are reluctant to talk about their own strengths, let them draw for another member of the class.)

For example:



Have another class member enclose his or her gifts and strengths (using a different color of chalk, if possible). Repeat until at least three or four class members have done this. Point out that although two sets may contain some of the same gifts, no two sets are identical.

Scripture
discussion

Point out that in addition to talents and gifts, we each have weaknesses. Have class members read and mark Ether 12:27.

- Why does the Lord give us weaknesses?
- What can we do to receive the Lord's help in overcoming our weaknesses?

Story and
discussion

To illustrate the importance of working hard to overcome our weaknesses and develop our talents, tell class members about Demosthenes [*dih MAHS thuh neez*], who was a great orator in ancient Greece. Although Demosthenes was born with a serious speech impediment, he wanted to be a great speaker. To overcome his weakness in speaking, he would go to the beach and fill his mouth with pebbles. Then he would shout above the noise of the waves. Through constant practice he learned to speak so well that people came from long distances to hear the great speeches he gave. (See *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., s.v. "Demosthenes.")

Invite class members to tell of anyone they know who has overcome a weakness to develop a strength. Ask class members to identify from the list on the chalkboard those gifts or talents that were weaknesses for them before they developed them into strengths.

Develop and Share Your Gifts

Quotation

Have a class member read the following statement made by Elder Gordon B. Hinckley when he was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"The work of the world is not done by intellectual geniuses. It is done by men [and women] of ordinary capacity who use their abilities in an extraordinary manner" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1972, 107; or *Ensign*, Jan. 1973, 92).

Chalkboard discussion

- What can we do to discover our gifts and talents and use them to the fullest?

Erase the chalkboard, and list the answers that are given. Discuss how each item on the list can help us discover and use our gifts and talents.

The list could include the following:

- Prepare for and receive a patriarchal blessing.
- Live worthy of the companionship of the Holy Ghost.
- Fulfill Church callings and responsibilities.
- Study the scriptures.
- Listen to the prophet and other Church leaders.
- Listen to parents.
- Try new skills.

Scripture discussion

Have class members read and mark Moses 1:39.

- According to this scripture, what is Heavenly Father's primary concern?
- How can we use our gifts and talents to aid in this work?
- How can using our gifts and talents to the fullest increase our sense of worth? (If we use these abilities righteously, we can be an instrument in the Lord's hands to help others return to him. Knowing that we are helping in the Lord's work can increase our sense of worth.)
- How can we help others understand who they are and what they can contribute to their family, the Church, and the community? (Answers may include share our gifts with them; recognize or compliment them for their gifts and talents; provide opportunities for them to share their gifts and talents with others.)

Quotation

Have a class member read the following statement from Elder Marvin J. Ashton, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"As children of God we are somebody. He will build us, mold us, and magnify us if we will but hold our heads up, our arms out, and walk with him. What a great blessing to be created in his image and know of our true potential in and through him!" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1973, 21; or *Ensign*, July 1973, 24).

Testimony

As the Spirit directs, bear your testimony of each person's worth and of God's plan for each one of us. Encourage class members to strive to see their own worth and the worth of others in the sight of God.

Enrichment Activities

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

1. Before class, make individual lists of the gifts and talents that you see in each class member. If possible, contact each class member's parents during the week to find out more. Give each class member his or her list during class.

- What do you think of your list? Does it contain more talents than you thought you had? What else could you add to the list?

Ask each class member to pick one of the talents on the list and describe how he or she could use it to serve others.

2. Relate the following story:

“I remember the first time Jenni walked into my seminary class and said hi to me. She had a very difficult time speaking, her words were slurred and hard to understand, and she limped and hobbled as she tried to make her legs carry her frail body toward her desk. During Jenni’s first week . . . in my class, she seemed content to be mostly ignored by her classmates, who appeared to be struggling to figure out how to interact with her.

“Jenni would try to speak, and very few students could understand her. . . . Most of them distanced themselves from her both physically and socially and, as a result, proceeded to politely ignore her.

“However, they weren’t aware that inside Jenni’s deformed body was a keen mind, a heart of gold, and an indomitable spirit crying out to be heard, to be understood, to be accepted, and to be loved. She wouldn’t be ignored, politely or otherwise.”

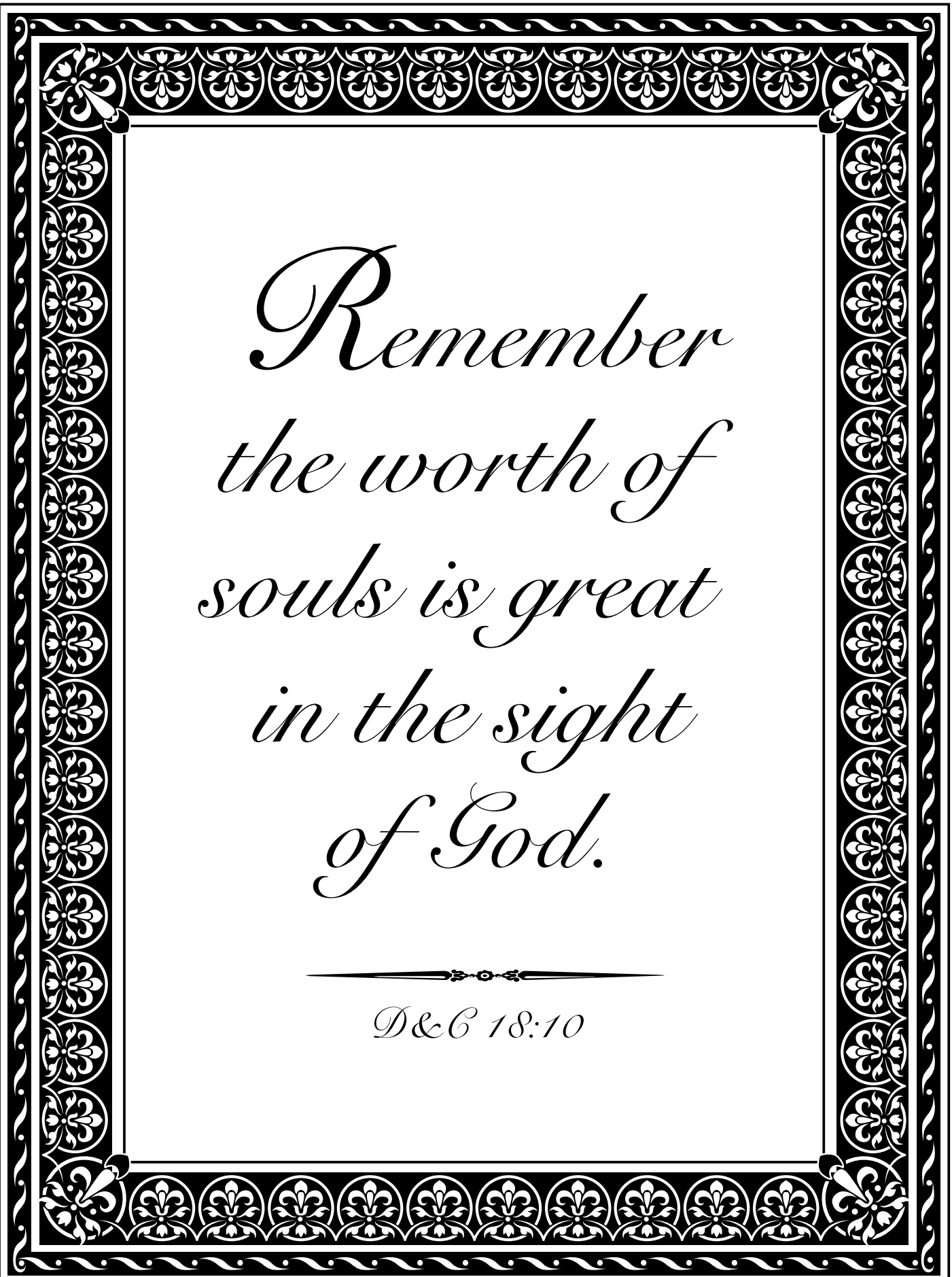
One day Jenni asked her teacher if she could say something in class. She asked for a friend to sit by her at lunch. The class was silent for a long moment, and then a girl named Treasure volunteered.

“‘I’ll be your friend, Jenni.’ . . . This . . . gave Treasure’s friend Wendy the confidence to raise her hand and tell Jenni that she would also be her friend and sit by her at lunch every day. . . .

“I noticed as the days turned into weeks that Treasure and Wendy began to translate Jenni’s words when we couldn’t understand her.

“As the students began to see what a beautiful, intelligent person Jenni was, they began to invite her to activities [and] help her with her difficulties. . . . Jenni’s classmates helped her realize what a wonderful person she is. [They] included her in their circle of friends and helped her feel like she belonged; [they] saw through her handicap to the special needs of her heart—a young woman wanting to be accepted and understood” (Victor W. Harris, “The Miracle of Jenni,” *New Era*, Mar. 1996, 12–14).

- Why did the class ignore Jenni at first?
- What did the class discover when they got to know Jenni?
- How can we learn to look beyond physical differences to understand each person’s worth in the sight of God? (See 1 Samuel 16:7.)



*Remember
the worth of
souls is great
in the sight
of God.*

D&C 18:10