

Lesson  
**42**

# Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother

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**Purpose** To inspire class members to honor their parents by living righteously and by expressing appreciation to their parents.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study Exodus 20:12; 1 Samuel 1–4; and 3 John 1:4.
2. If *Old Testament Video Presentations* (53224) is available, prepare to show “Hannah’s Faith,” a three-minute segment.
3. Materials needed:
  - a. Envelopes, paper, and a pen or pencil for each class member (see the activity on page 252).
  - b. The picture *Boy Samuel Called by the Lord* (62498; Gospel Art Picture Kit 111).
  - 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* *The love of parents for their children and children for their parents is one of the strongest influences for good in the world. Many people have been motivated to live good lives because of their love for their parents. Help class members see that their lives may bring honor or shame not only to themselves but to their parents as well. Help them commit themselves to honor their parents by living righteously and expressing gratitude to their parents.*

*Be sensitive to the feelings of class members who have a deceased parent. Help them understand the importance of honoring their parents, even if they cannot express this honor directly to them right now.*

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**Suggested Lesson  
Development**

**Our Parents Care About Us**

Role play and discussion Choose two class members to be the parents and another to be their daughter. Without any preparation, have them dramatize the following scene:

The daughter has been invited to a party by some of the most popular girls at her school. They plan to see a movie that has received very good reviews. However, the parents are concerned because this movie contains bad language, violence, and immorality. The parents have always taught their daughter to avoid these things, but the daughter doesn’t want to lose this chance to be friends with the popular girls.

*Note to the teacher* *For help with role plays, see Teaching—No Greater Call, 141–42.*

Let the three class members act out the situation without interference. After the role play, ask all class members the following questions:

- How would you have handled the situation if you were the daughter?  
If you were the parents?
- Why do you think parents care about what their children do?

### Story

Tell the following story:

Abraham Lincoln, who became the sixteenth president of the United States, once traveled in a stagecoach with a military man, a colonel, from the state of Kentucky. “After riding a number of miles together, the colonel took a bottle of whiskey out of his pocket, and said, ‘Mr. Lincoln, won’t you take a drink with me?’

“Mr. Lincoln replied, ‘No, Colonel, thank you, I never drink whiskey.’

“They rode along together for a number of miles more, visiting very pleasantly, when the gentleman from Kentucky reached into his pocket and brought out some cigars, saying, ‘Now, Mr. Lincoln, if you won’t take a drink with me, won’t you take a smoke with me? . . .’

“And Mr. Lincoln said, ‘Now Colonel, you are such a fine, agreeable man to travel with, maybe I ought to take a smoke with you. But before I do so, let me tell you a little story—an experience I had when a small boy.’ And this was the story:

“‘My mother called me to her bed one day when I was about nine years old. She was sick, very sick, and she said to me, “Abey, the doctor tells me I am not going to get well. I want you to promise me before I go that you will never use whiskey or tobacco as long as you live.” And I promised my mother I never would. And up to this hour, Colonel, I have kept that promise. Now would you advise me to break that promise to my dear mother, and take a smoke with you?’ . . .

“‘No, Mr. Lincoln, I wouldn’t have you do it for the world. It was one of the best promises you ever made. And I would give a thousand dollars today if I had made my mother a promise like that, and kept it as you have done’” (“Abraham Lincoln Keeps His Promise,” *A Story to Tell*, comp. Primary Association General Board and Deseret Sunday School Union Board [1945], 256–57).

### Discussion

- Why do you suppose Lincoln’s mother asked her son to make this promise?
- When has your parents’ counsel helped you know how to act in a certain situation?

Emphasize to class members that our parents love us and want what is best for us. Ask class members to think of how much time and effort it takes to raise a son or daughter. Our parents have made a commitment to help us live a happy, healthy life. When our parents try to guide us, they are trying to help us be our best and be worthy of exaltation with our family.

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### Heavenly Father Wants Us to Honor Our Parents

### Scripture discussion

Have class members read and mark Exodus 20:12.

- How do you honor someone? (Answers may include by showing them respect, obeying their wishes, listening to them, asking their advice, and following their example.)
- How did Abraham Lincoln honor his mother?

Quotation and discussion

Read the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“Be true to your parents and your heritage. Regrettably there are a few parents who act in a way that does serious injustice to their children. But these cases are relatively few. No one has greater interest in your welfare, in your happiness, in your future than do your mothers and fathers. . . . They were once the age that you are now. Your problems are not substantially different from what theirs were. If they occasionally place restrictions on you, it is because they see danger down the road. Listen to them. What they ask you to do may not be to your liking. But you will be much happier if you do it” (“Stand True and Faithful,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 92–93).

- What does it mean to you to be true to your parents?
- How can honoring your parents help you enjoy greater blessings and happiness in your life? (Our parents can teach us how to succeed at our goals and how to receive the blessings they have received. Because of their experience, our parents can also help us avoid many of the mistakes they have made or seen others make.)
- What are some ways you can honor your parents? (Ask a class member to list the responses on the chalkboard.)

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**We Can Honor Our Parents by Living Righteously**

Scripture stories and video presentation

Tell the story of Samuel and the story of Eli and his sons (1 Samuel 1–4). (If you are going to show the video segment “Hannah’s Faith,” show it before you tell the story of Samuel). Ask class members to listen for ways that the people in the stories honored or dishonored their parents.

*Samuel*

Elkanah lived in Israel during the time of the judges. Hannah, one of Elkanah’s wives, did not have any children. Each year when Elkanah took his family to the tabernacle, Hannah prayed and asked God to bless her with a child. Finally, Hannah promised the Lord that if he would bless her with a son, she would give that son back to serve the Lord all his life.

The next year, Hannah had a son and named him Samuel. When Samuel was a young child, Hannah took him to the tabernacle and had him stay there and live with the high priest Eli. Samuel grew up in the tabernacle.

One night, as Samuel was going to sleep, he heard a voice call his name. (Display the picture of Samuel.) He thought that it was Eli. He jumped out of bed and ran to see what Eli wanted. Eli told Samuel that he had not called him and told him to go back to bed. This happened three times. Finally Eli realized that it was the Lord that was calling Samuel. He told Samuel that the next time the voice called he should say, “Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth.” Samuel did so. It was then, in his youth, that Samuel received the first of many revelations he received throughout his life. Samuel became a great Old Testament prophet.

*Eli’s Sons*

Eli was the high priest in Israel during Samuel’s childhood. As Eli grew old, his two sons helped him in the tabernacle. Even though they worked in the tabernacle,

Eli's sons were evil men. They forcefully took the best meat away from the men who came to the tabernacle to make sacrifices to God. And they were immoral with the young women who came to the tabernacle to worship. The people of Israel hated to come to the tabernacle because of the wicked things Eli's sons were doing. Although Eli did not approve of his sons' behavior, he did not stop them from doing evil in God's house.

Finally the Lord prophesied that because Eli honored his sons more than he honored God, he and his sons would die. There would not be a priest left in Eli's family.

A short time after this prophecy, there was a war. Both of Eli's sons were killed and the Ark of the Covenant was captured by the Philistines. When Eli heard about the death of his sons and the loss of the ark, he fell off his chair. He was old, and the fall broke his neck and killed him.

#### Discussion

- Did Samuel honor his parents?
- Did Eli's sons honor their parents?
- How did Samuel honor his parents? (By keeping God's commandments.)
- How do you think Hannah and Eli each felt about their children's behavior?

Write on the chalkboard *We can honor our parents by living righteously.*

To emphasize how parents feel when their children honor them by living righteously, have class members read 3 John 1:4.

Point out that sometimes parents make mistakes. When this is the case, children should still honor them by being respectful to them, living an honorable life, and obeying the commandments.

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#### **We Can Honor Our Parents by Expressing Appreciation for Them**

#### Discussion and story

Write on the chalkboard *We can honor our parents by expressing appreciation for them.*

- Do you think your parents need to feel that you honor and appreciate them? Why?

Read the following experience of a father and his son:

"I was suffering from depression. No matter how hard I tried, I always felt sad and worn out. My 14-year-old son was like a light at the end of the tunnel. During those dark days when I would come home from work, cross and irritable, he would often be there playing the piano. He would always greet me with a cheerful hello, a hug, or some funny remark. He always made the weight on my shoulders feel a little lighter.

"There was not a specific thing that he did to show his appreciation. He just let me know that he loved me, that he appreciated how I tried to be kind and patient, and that he was willing to trust and obey me. And even more importantly, he seemed always to do what was right. That wasn't easy to do. I was not easy to get along with at the time. But as a parent, I needed his confidence. I thank God that he was there to love me.

“Now my illness has been cured. But still, there are few things in this world that build a parent’s spirit like a child’s expression of love or appreciation or his decision to do something good and right.”

- How can showing our appreciation for our parents help them?

Quotation

Have a class member read the following statement by President Spencer W. Kimball:

“No gift purchased from a store can begin to match in value to parents some simple, sincere words of appreciation. Nothing we could give them would be more prized than righteous living for each youngster” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 348).

Activity

Give each class member an envelope, a piece of paper, and a pen or pencil. Have class members write a letter to one or both of their parents (or guardians) and express their love and appreciation. Depending on individual circumstances, you may need to give each class member more than one envelope. (You may want to use the first enrichment activity in place of this activity.)

When they have finished writing their letters, have them address the envelopes and seal their letters inside. Assure them that no one but their parents (or guardians) will see what they have written. Collect the envelopes, and mail or deliver them to the appropriate people.

Testimony

Testify of the importance of honoring our parents and of the blessings we can receive by doing so. As appropriate, share a personal experience that taught you the importance of honoring your parents.

Urge class members to consider the consequences of their acts and how they will affect their parents. Encourage them to show appreciation to their parents and also to think, when they consider some action, “Am I doing my best to honor my parents?”

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**Enrichment  
Activities**

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

1. You may want to use this activity in place of the letter activity in the lesson. Give each class member a copy of the Parent Award on page 254. Have them fill out the award and take it home to present to their parents. (The award is worded in such a way that it can be used in either one-parent or two-parent families.)
2. Help class members prepare a plan for a Parent Honor Night for their own parents with the participation of their brothers and sisters or other family members. (This Parent Honor Night could be held during family home evening or at another time convenient for all family members.)

Class members could use one or more of the following ideas (or their own ideas) in planning their Parent Honor Night:

- Pretend to be nominating your parents for the “National Parent of the Year” and tell the reasons why they deserve the award (the Parent Award could be given at this time).

- Prepare a talent show and have your parents be the honored guests at the family theater.
  - Plan and carry out a home project in your parents' honor.
  - Have a "Happy Memories" night and tell some of your most cherished memories of your parents.
3. Have class members answer the following questions to themselves:

Do I honor my parents?

1. Am I respectful in the way I treat my parents? In my choice of words and tone of voice when I speak to them? In what I tell my friends about them?
2. Do I honor them by the way I live? Am I trustworthy? Am I a good example?
3. Do I help my parents, even before they ask? Do I do my best work?
4. Am I grateful for what they have done for me? Do I say "Thank you"? Do I forgive mistakes they make? Do I show that I care?
5. Am I honoring my parents by living a Christlike life? Am I honest? Am I clean? Am I trying to be like Jesus Christ?

# Parent Award

awarded to \_\_\_\_\_ for being

the Best of the Best Parents anywhere

To mention only a few of your many honorable qualities:

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You will be held in honor forever by your loving and dutiful

(Son/Daughter) \_\_\_\_\_.

Signed and delivered this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_.