

Being Friends with Our Brothers and Sisters

Lesson 43

Purpose To encourage class members to develop bonds of friendship and love with their brothers and sisters.

Preparation

1. Prayerfully study Genesis 37:15–30; 45:1–15; 1 Nephi 2:16–17; Doctrine and Covenants 135:1, 3.
2. Materials needed: 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 We often take for granted our relationships with our brothers and sisters. We may harm these relationships by taking advantage of each other and being the most unkind to those that we ought to love and respect the most. The scriptures tell of many situations where love and respect between brothers and sisters was a great mutual blessing. Help class members understand that the family can be the source of strength and encouragement if brothers and sisters develop bonds of friendship and love.

Be sensitive to the feelings of class members who do not have brothers or sisters. You may want to expand the theme of the lesson to include other family members, such as cousins.

Suggested Lesson Development

Brothers and Sisters Can Be Friends

Chalkboard discussion and story

Without revealing the subject of the lesson, ask class members to suggest things they could do to strengthen a friendship. List their responses on the chalkboard.

Then tell the following story:

“I walked into sacrament meeting late that Sunday, and as usual sat on the back row. I didn’t know it at the time, but when I walked out of that meeting I would be a different person. It wasn’t just an ordinary meeting—it was the missionary farewell for my brother who’s a year older than I am. He was the fourth one in the family to go on a mission, so it was nothing new to me, but I was closer to Chuck than the others. . . .

“As the speakers in the meeting started talking, I thought about how much I would miss Chuck. We’d grown up together. In fact, we’d shared the same bedroom until just a year before when he had moved into mom’s sewing room because I wouldn’t keep the room clean. We’d worked together almost every day of our lives since I was six years old. . . . But all of a sudden he’d be gone. In two days he’d be in the MTC learning Spanish, and then on to Spain for two years to teach the gospel.

“I left my daydreaming as I heard Chuck’s voice come over the loudspeaker. He was always a joker and started this talk with a joke that had everybody laughing. Then he talked a little about Spain and what his mission would be like. Then for a few seconds everything was quiet and Chuck’s face clouded with emotion. And he said, ‘I want to talk to my little brother Dean for a few minutes.

“Throughout my life I’ve done everything I could to make my brother proud of me. I’ve always kept the Word of Wisdom and been the best person I could. And as I accept this call to serve the Lord on a mission, I hope that he’ll be proud of me.’

“I couldn’t believe what I was hearing. He had been trying to make me proud of him? . . . For the first time since I was a kid tears filled my eyes and I started to cry. . . .

“As Chuck talked, I thought back on our lives. . . . He’d always lived a Christlike life and been a good example of a member of the true Church of Jesus Christ. Then I thought back on my own life and how I’d fallen short of his example. He’d never put me down for my shortcomings, though. Sitting in that sacrament meeting, I made a promise to myself that I would someday make my brother proud of me.

“It’s been a year and a half since that meeting, and I have not forgotten the promise I made. I have turned my life around and am now serving a mission for my Heavenly Father—the best decision I have ever made in my life. As I kneel every night in prayer, I thank the Lord for the great examples I have had in my life, like my brother, who have had the courage to live the teachings of the Church and act like the sons and daughters of God that they are” (“My Brother the Example,” *New Era*, Nov. 1981, 6–7).

Discussion

- How did the friendship between these two brothers benefit both of them?
- What lessons can we learn from this story?

Refer to the question you asked at the beginning of the lesson and the responses written on the chalkboard. Ask the following questions:

- Do you consider your brothers and sisters to be your friends?
- Would your answers to the original question have been different if you were asked how to develop friendships with your brothers and sisters? Why?

Emphasize that we often forget that our brothers and sisters can be our closest and most reliable friends. If we will treat our brothers and sisters as we treat our best friends, we can create more love, unity, and support within our families.

Brothers and Sisters Can Help and Support Each Other

Scripture stories and discussion

The scriptures provide several examples of love and friendship between family members. Select one or two of the following scripture stories. Have class members read and mark the scriptures. Discuss the stories using the questions.

1. Nephi and Sam (1 Nephi 2:16–17)

- What effect did Nephi have on his brother Sam?
- Why do you think Nephi shared what he had learned with his brothers?
- How could your love and friendship help your brothers or sisters?

2. Reuben and Joseph (Genesis 37:15–30)

- What did Reuben do that showed he cared about his brother Joseph?
- When has a brother or sister's love and friendship helped you?

3. Joseph and his brothers (Genesis 45:1–15)

- What did Joseph do that showed his love for his brothers?
- How did his friendship bless their lives?

Story and
discussion

Read or tell the following account from Church history:

Speaking of his brother Hyrum Smith, the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote:

“Brother Hyrum, what a faithful heart you have got!” (quoted by Joseph Fielding Smith, in Conference Report, Apr. 1930, 93).

Throughout his life, Hyrum was a true friend and brother to Joseph. After hearing Joseph's account of the First Vision, Hyrum made a commitment to help Joseph with his responsibilities. He kept this commitment, becoming one of the first six members of the Church and always following the counsel Joseph received through the Lord.

In June 1844 a mob was determined to take the life of Joseph Smith. Hyrum Smith and others met with Joseph and carefully planned what he could do to avoid being killed. But Joseph seemed more concerned for his brother Hyrum's safety than he was for his own. He told Hyrum to take his family to Cincinnati, but Hyrum refused to leave. He followed Joseph to the Carthage Jail.

On 27 June 1844 at about 5:00 P.M., the mob came to the jail. After members of the mob had surrounded the building, some of them went past the guard and up the stairs and began shooting through the door. Others stayed outside and fired through the open windows. Hyrum was standing by the door when a bullet struck him on the side of his nose. He fell to the floor saying, “I am a dead man!” When Hyrum fell, Joseph exclaimed, “Oh! my poor, dear brother Hyrum!” (*History of the Church*, 7:102).

As the mob continued to fire their guns, Joseph went to the window, where he was struck by four bullets. As he died, he fell out of the window, exclaiming, “O Lord my God!” (D&C 135:1).

Though Hyrum could have saved his own life, he chose to stay with his brother. As Elder John Taylor wrote, “In life they were not divided, and in death they were not separated!” (D&C 135:3).

- How did Hyrum show his brother Joseph that he loved him?
- What could you do to support your brothers and sisters?

I Will Be a Friend to My Brothers and Sisters

Story

Tell the following story:

Marety was the only girl in a family of four brothers. She was often lonely for someone to talk to and play with. Most of the time she played alone, except when she could talk her little brothers into playing dolls with her, which was not very often.

When Marety said her prayers at night, she would say, "Please, Heavenly Father, send me a little sister." Marety's parents wanted another girl in the family, too, so they adopted a seven-year-old girl from Korea. Her name was Arnetta.

For the next 10 years Marety and Arnetta played together and were not only sisters but best friends.

As they grew up, Marety became very popular at school. She became more interested in her new school friends than she was in the Church and her family. She started missing school classes and stopped doing things with the girls in her ward. She was having a hard time. Her parents were constantly talking with her and trying to get her to do better in school and to be more active in the Church. But Marety was not interested in their counsel because she felt they did not understand her.

So it was Arnetta that Marety talked to about all her frustration and troubles. Arnetta was still her good friend. Although Marety did not think her parents or her brothers could understand or help her, Arnetta continued to encourage her to participate in family activities. After Arnetta had asked her several times, Marety agreed to come to a family home evening.

During this particular family home evening, Marety's father asked the children to bear their testimonies. When it was Marety's turn to bear her testimony, she began to cry. She told her family that she was sorry for the way she had been acting. Then she reminded the family about her prayers when she was a little girl. She told Arnetta that she loved and admired her and was thankful that God had answered her prayers and sent her such a good sister and friend.

Discussion

- How was Arnetta a good friend to Marety?
- Are you able to confide in your brothers and sisters?
- How could the ability to love and trust your brothers or sisters be important to you?

Note to the teacher

In the following discussion, keep the focus on the solutions, rather than the obstacles. For each obstacle the class members bring up, have them think of one or more possible solutions.

Chalkboard discussion

Explain to the class that there can be obstacles in the way of brother and sister friendships.

- What are some of the things that make it difficult for brothers and sisters to become good friends?

Let class members respond freely. List their answers on one side of the chalkboard.

- How can you overcome these obstacles to friendship?

List the solutions on the other side of the chalkboard.

**Situation
discussion**

Read the following three situations. Ask class members what they would do if the person in each situation were a friend. Then ask them what they would do if the person were a brother or sister.

1. John has borrowed something of yours without asking your permission.
 2. You spill a glass of water. Mary says, “Good work, clumsy!” and starts laughing at you.
 3. You are ready to get on the bus when Robert drops his money. While he is trying to find the money in the grass, the bus drives away, leaving you both.
- Why do we often treat our brothers and sisters differently than we do our friends?
 - How would our lives be blessed if we treated our brothers and sisters more as we treat our friends?

Quotation

Conclude by reading the following statement from Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“Continue building lasting, loving relationships for all family members. Listen to one another, be united, work together, play together, pray together, study together. Live celestial principles together, serve the Lord together” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1985, 29; or *Ensign*, May 1985, 23).

Testimony

Testify of the importance of developing close friendships within our families. As appropriate, share a personal experience in which you or a family member was blessed because of this kind of friendship.

Encourage class members to choose one of the solutions listed on the chalkboard and use it during the coming week to strengthen the bonds of friendship between themselves and their brothers and sisters.

**Enrichment
Activities**

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

1. Ask class members to choose one of their brothers or sisters with whom they would like to have a better friendship. Invite them to be an anonymous friend to that brother or sister this week. Ask them to think of kind things they could do for their brother or sister. Write their responses on the chalkboard. When you have written several responses, ask class members to do at least three of these kind things secretly for their brother or sister during the next week. Possible anonymous acts of service could include:
 - Doing a brother’s or sister’s jobs around the house.
 - Leaving a treat on a brother’s or sister’s bed.
 - Saying something nice about him or her to someone else.
 - Writing him or her a note of congratulations or encouragement.

2. Explain that a boomerang is a curved, flat implement that is thrown as a weapon or for sport. The boomerang, if thrown correctly, spins forward, then rises and begins a curved path back to the thrower.

The actions we send out return to us like a boomerang. The best way to get someone to be happy to see you is for you to be happy to see them. The best way to get someone to be a friend to you is for you to be a friend to them.

Encourage class members to try this “boomerang” principle on the members of their family by being a friend to each family member. Ask class members to try the principle for one week and then evaluate how well they are doing at making their brothers and sisters their friends.

3. Obtain a piece of lightweight cardboard. Glue a picture of the world on one side of the cardboard (see page 261 for a picture you can copy), and then glue a magazine picture of a family on the other side. Cut the cardboard into a puzzle. Make the puzzle fairly simple so that little time will be required to put it together.

Lay the puzzle, family side up, where all class members can see it. (Use a table or the floor.) Ask class members to study the pieces. When someone sees two pieces that fit together, have that class member give a suggestion of how families can make the world a better place. Then have the class member place the two pieces together. As the pieces of the family picture are put together, use clear tape to secure their position so the puzzle will hold together when it is turned over. Continue until the picture of the family is complete.

When the picture of the family is finished, turn the picture over so the picture of the world is displayed. Discuss with class members how strengthening family friendships can make the world a better place.

