

Teaching with This Manual

This manual provides lessons for teaching children who are three years old by 1 January. Teachers can also adapt the manual for use with children 18 months to three years old. If children under three years old are attending Primary, they should be in a nursery class separate from the three-year-olds unless the ward or branch is very small. If there are more than eight or ten children of the same age in a ward or branch, the class may be divided.

Teachers of nursery children should see “Adapting the Manual for Use in the Nursery,” beginning on page ix, in addition to this section.

Leaders and teachers should prayerfully determine how best to organize the classes and use the lessons and activities in this manual to meet the needs of children in their ward or branch.

THE THREE-YEAR-OLD CLASS

Children who are three years old by 1 January are in the three-year-old class.

Purpose

The purpose of the three-year-old class is to help children develop an understanding of and love for Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, be involved in positive experiences in Primary, and grow in feelings of self-worth.

Prayer

Each class period should open and close with a prayer by a child. Usually the opening prayer will come at the beginning of the lesson time, and the closing prayer will come at the end of class. Teach the children to give short, simple prayers. Help them as necessary.

Time Schedule

This class provides a gradual transition from the nursery class to the regular Primary. During the first part of the year, it may be desirable for the three-year-olds to have sharing and activity time in their own classroom. During the rest of the year, they may go to sharing time with the other Primary children. The maturity of the children in the class will determine when the class makes the change. Watch the children to see when they are ready, and consult with the Primary presidency to determine when the change should take place. The three-year-olds may go to opening or closing exercises with the other Primary children during the entire year.

Primary normally lasts for 1 hour and 40 minutes. Opening or closing exercises last 20 minutes, with 5 minutes for the children to go to their classrooms. If the three-year-olds are having sharing time in their own classroom, the class time is 75 minutes. The following suggested schedule may be adjusted according to local needs:

Greeting Time:	10–15 minutes
Lesson Time:	25–30 minutes
Sharing and Activity Time:	20–25 minutes
Closing Time:	10–15 minutes

When the three-year-olds attend sharing time with the rest of the Primary, the class time will last 40 minutes and will consist of the lesson time and shorter greeting and closing times.

Greeting Time: The purpose of greeting time is to allow the children to talk and interact with the teacher and with each other in an informal setting. The children will feel more secure and more positive about being in Primary if they are free to move around during this time.

Help each child feel welcome and comfortable in the class. Show love, warmth, and respect by your words and actions. Discuss the children's needs and interests. Appropriate topics of discussion might include:

- Recent experiences in the children's lives, such as a new baby in the home or a family outing.
- Special holidays.
- The weather.
- Observations of nature.
- Social skills such as listening, sharing, or using good manners.
- Acts of kindness.

Finger plays, bend-and-stretch exercises, and songs may also be used during this time to help the children overcome restlessness.

Lesson Time: Follow the general outline of each lesson, adapting it as necessary for your class. Focus on the children's understanding and interests. Choose stories and activities that will best teach your class members the important principles of the lesson. Choose from the "Enrichment Activities" section any of the activities you feel will work well with the children in your class. Use these activities whenever you want during the lesson. Children learn well through repetition, so you may want to use the same activity, song, story, or scripture more than once during a lesson or in subsequent lessons.

Teach the lessons in order, except for lessons 45 and 46 (Easter and Christmas).

Sharing and Activity Time: When the children have sharing time in class rather than with the other Primary children, use the activities in the lessons and in the "Enrichment Activities" sections for sharing time. You may want to repeat the children's favorite activities from previous lessons. Include time for singing Primary songs (see "Music in the Classroom," p. vii). Encourage the children to participate and to share their ideas with each other.

After the three-year-olds begin attending sharing time with the other Primary children, they may occasionally be asked to give a presentation in sharing time. Plan a simple gospel presentation that will involve all of the children in the class. You might:

- Help the children act out a story or situation from one of the lessons.
- Have the children use pictures to help tell a story from one of the lessons.
- Have each child share a scripture or thought about a principle of the gospel.
- Have the children sing a song about the principle being taught.

Closing Time: Review and summarize the main ideas of the lesson. Specifically mention one or two short scriptural phrases from the lesson, and emphasize the main ideas so that the children will be able to share them at home. Invite a child to offer a closing prayer.

PREPARING THE LESSONS

The first key to successfully teaching young children is to know and love them. Know and use your class members' names when you speak to them. Interact personally with them and learn about their lives. Look for ways to involve them in the lessons and to make the lessons personally relevant to them. Show appropriate love for and interest in all the children in your class.

The second key is to be prepared. Start preparing each lesson at least a week in advance. Read the entire lesson; then prayerfully study it to determine the best way to teach the principles to the children in your class. Choose enrichment activities to

supplement the activities in the lesson and to keep the children interested and involved. Plan several kinds of activities, and then be flexible in using them to meet the children's needs. Know the lesson well enough that you do not need to read from the manual. Maintain eye contact with the children as much as possible. Pray often as you prepare each lesson, and seek for the Spirit to guide you as you prepare and teach.

TEACHING THE LESSONS

As you teach children gospel principles, you should encourage the children's love of the gospel. The following suggestions can help you make Primary enjoyable for the children in your class:

- Give the children many opportunities to talk and participate.
- Listen when the children talk, and try to respond positively but appropriately.
- Be enthusiastic. If the teacher enjoys Primary, the children will enjoy Primary.
- Speak in a kind voice.
- Be patient, kind, and loving, especially when the children are tired or restless.
- Give positive attention to good behavior and ignore negative behavior whenever possible.
- Prepare several kinds of activities and be flexible in using them to meet the children's needs. Young children have short attention spans and need to move frequently.
- Try to redirect the children's attention when arguments occur.
- Remember that young children enjoy stories, visual aids, music, and movement. They enjoy frequently repeating activities and songs, especially those they know well.

MUSIC IN THE CLASSROOM

Each lesson in this manual includes songs to help reinforce gospel teachings. You need not be a skilled musician to make classroom singing fun and meaningful. The children will not know whether or not you sing well; they will know only that you enjoy singing. Learn each song well, and practice it as part of your lesson preparation. If available, the *Children's Songbook* on audiocassettes (music only, 52505; music and words, 52428) or compact discs (music only, 50505; music and words, 50428) can help you learn the songs. You may also use these recordings as you sing in the classroom.

Repeated singing is the best way to teach songs to children. You might use the same song several times during a lesson. Simple actions can help involve young children in a song. If the children know a song well and enjoy singing it, sing it often during lesson time or sharing and activity time.

To teach a new song or activity verse to children:

- Memorize the song or activity verse before class.
- Introduce the new song or activity verse by singing or saying it to the children. Exaggerate the actions, if there are any.
- Invite the children to sing or say the words with you. They will not know the words immediately, but if you repeat the song or activity verse several times, they will learn the words.
- Go slowly so the children will understand the words and actions.
- Use visual aids occasionally to help present the song or activity verse. Children pay attention and learn better if they have something to look at.
- Shorten the song or activity verse if the children become restless. If a song or activity verse is long, you may want to help the children do the actions while you sing or say the words alone.

Young children will not always want to sing with you, but they will enjoy participating by listening to the singing.

VISUAL AIDS

Visual aids are important in teaching young children. Pictures, cutouts, objects, and other visual aids can gain and keep the children's attention, helping the children remember what you are teaching.

The pictures and cutouts called for in the lessons are included with the manual. The "Preparation" section of each lesson lists the pictures used in that lesson by title and number. Numbers in parentheses identify each picture (or a similar one) in the Gospel Art Picture Kit (34730 or 34735) and the meetinghouse library. The "Preparation" section also lists each cutout by its number in the manual and by the Primary Visual Aids Cutouts set (33239–33250 or 08456) that includes similar cutouts.

Objects make good visual aids, especially if they are familiar things that the children can touch or hold. When you tell a scripture story, use your own scriptures or scriptures from the meetinghouse library as visual aids.

SPECIAL GUIDELINES FOR INCLUDING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

The Savior set the example for us in feeling compassion for people with disabilities. When He visited the Nephites after His Resurrection, He said:

"Have ye any that are sick among you? Bring them hither. Have ye any that are lame, or blind, or halt, or maimed, or leprous, or that are withered, or that are deaf, or that are afflicted in any manner? Bring them hither and I will heal them, for I have compassion upon you" (3 Nephi 17:7).

As a Primary teacher you are in an excellent position to show compassion. Although you probably are not trained to give professional assistance, as a teacher you can understand and nurture children who have disabilities. Concern, understanding, and a desire to include each class member in the learning activities are needed.

Children with disabilities can be touched by the Spirit no matter what their level of understanding. Although some children may not be able to attend the entire Primary time, they need to have the opportunity to attend even briefly to feel the Spirit. It may be necessary to have a companion who is sensitive to a child's needs be with the child during Primary in case the child needs time away from the whole group.

Some class members may be challenged by learning disabilities, vision or hearing loss, intellectual impairments, language or speech problems, behavior and social problems, mental illness, movement and mobility problems, or chronic health impairments. Some may find the language or cultural setting unfamiliar and difficult. Regardless of individual circumstances, each child shares the same needs to be loved and accepted, to learn the gospel, to feel the Spirit, to participate successfully, and to serve others.

These guidelines can help you teach a child with disabilities:

- Look beyond the disability and get to know the child. Be natural, friendly, and warm.
- Learn about the child's specific strengths and challenges.
- Make every effort to teach and remind class members of their responsibility to respect every class member. Helping a class member with a disability can be a Christlike learning experience for the entire class.
- Find the best methods for teaching the child by consulting with parents, with other family members, and, when appropriate, with the child.
- Before calling on a child with disabilities to pray or otherwise participate, ask how he or she feels about participating in class. Emphasize each child's abilities and talents and look for ways each can participate comfortably and successfully.
- Adapt lesson materials and physical surroundings to meet the individual needs of children with disabilities.

Additional materials for teaching children with disabilities are available from Church distribution centers (see "Materials for Those with Disabilities" in the *Church Materials Catalog*).