

Lesson
15

The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon

Purpose

To help each child understand how we received the Book of Mormon.

Preparation

1. Prayerfully study Joseph Smith—History 1:29–54, 59–60; Mormon 8:1, 4.
 2. Learn and be prepared to sing or say the words to “The Golden Plates” (*Children’s Songbook*, p. 86).
 3. Materials needed:
 - a. A Pearl of Great Price; also, if possible, a Book of Mormon for each child.
 - b. Picture 3-32, Moroni Appears to Joseph Smith in His Room (62492; Gospel Art Picture Kit 404); picture 3-33, Joseph Receives the Gold Plates (62012; Gospel Art Picture Kit 406); picture 3-34, Mormon Abridging the Plates (62520; Gospel Art Picture Kit 306); and picture 3-35, Moroni Hides the Plates in the Hill Cumorah (62462; Gospel Art Picture Kit 320); picture 3-36, The Gold Plates.
 4. Make the necessary preparations for any enrichment activities that you will be using.
-

Suggested Lesson Development

Invite a child to give the opening prayer.

Follow up with the children if you encouraged them to do something during the week.

Mormon Wrote on the Gold Plates

Attention activity

Hum the first verse of “The Golden Plates.”

- Display picture 3-36, The Gold Plates. Can anyone tell me what song I am humming? (“The Golden Plates.”)

Explain that the lesson is about the gold plates.

Tell the class that many years ago, some fathers kept histories of their families. Usually, just before a father died, he would give his family history to his son, who would continue writing the history. Families would keep their histories like this for many years. Prophets too wrote what happened to their families. But they also wrote about how Heavenly Father helped them and about the people who lived around them at that time.

Picture discussion

Display picture 3-34, Mormon Abridging the Plates.

Explain that Heavenly Father called a prophet named Mormon to gather all the histories of his people, copy the most important parts, and write them on thin sheets of gold, like pages of a book. These were called gold plates.

- Why do you think Mormon wrote the records on sheets of gold instead of paper?

Tell the children that gold is a metal that will last. Gold does not fall apart like paper and other materials or rust like many other metals.

Explain that Mormon used gold plates because they would last a long time. It took many years for Mormon to finish writing on the plates. Before Mormon died, he gave the plates to his son, Moroni.

Picture

Display picture 3-35, Moroni Hides the Plates in the Hill Cumorah.

Explain that when Moroni had finished writing on the gold plates, Heavenly Father told him to bury the plates in a hill. Heavenly Father knew that the writings on the gold plates would be important to people living many years later. Moroni made a stone box to bury the plates in so that they would be safe until Heavenly Father wanted his children to read them.

Moroni Instructed Joseph Smith about the Gold Plates

Song

Sing or say the first verse of “The Golden Plates” with the class.

The golden plates lay hidden
Deep in the mountainside,
Until God found one faithful,
In whom he could confide.

A record made by Nephi,
Written in days of old;
Now, in the Book of Mormon,
The story is retold.

- What kind of man does the song say Heavenly Father needed to bring forth the gold plates? (A faithful man.)

Explain that a faithful man is one who is honest and obedient. The faithful man Heavenly Father chose to help him was Joseph Smith.

Picture and story

Tell the children about Moroni’s visit to Joseph Smith (see Joseph Smith—History 1:29–54, 59–60).

One evening Joseph Smith was praying. A bright light entered his room. It was night, but the room became lighter than when the sun shines. Suddenly, an angel appeared at Joseph’s bedside, standing a little above the floor.

Display picture 3-32, Moroni Appears to Joseph Smith in His Room.

The angel told Joseph that his name was Moroni and explained that he had been sent to tell Joseph that Heavenly Father had a special work for him to do.

Moroni told Joseph about a wonderful book, a history, that had been buried for hundreds of years. The book was written upon thin sheets of gold. This angel was the same Moroni who had buried the plates when he still lived on the earth.

Moroni told Joseph that when the right time came, Joseph would be allowed to take the gold plates from their hiding place in the Hill Cumorah. Moroni also told Joseph many other important things about the gold plates and the special work Joseph was going to be called to do. When Moroni had finished speaking, the light surrounded Moroni and he returned to heaven.

As Joseph lay thinking about what had taken place, the light entered the room again. Moroni appeared a second time and gave Joseph the same message he had given him during the first visit. Then Moroni left the same way as before.

Joseph again lay in his bed trying to understand all that had happened. Then, to Joseph's great surprise, Moroni appeared by his bed a third time and repeated again the story of the gold plates and Joseph's special work. Moroni added that Satan would try to tempt Joseph to get the plates for money, but Joseph would be able to get the plates only to do Heavenly Father's work.

- Why do you think the angel Moroni appeared to Joseph Smith three times that night?

Explain that Moroni told Joseph many things that night that were very important. He gave his message three times so Joseph would learn the message well.

Soon after the angel Moroni left the third time, a rooster crowed, so Joseph knew that it was early morning. Moroni's three visits had lasted all night. Joseph got out of bed but did not tell anyone what had happened. After breakfast, he went with his father to the field to work. Joseph was so tired from his experience and lack of sleep that he could not work. His father, thinking he was sick, sent him home.

Joseph started wearily for home, but as he was climbing over a fence, he fell to the ground because his strength failed him. After he lay there for a time, he heard a voice calling his name. It was the angel Moroni.

Once again the angel repeated what he had told Joseph the night before. Then the angel told him to go back to his father and tell him all he had seen and heard.

Joseph's father listened to every word and knew his son was telling the truth. He told Joseph to do exactly as the angel had said because the message was from Heavenly Father. Later that day, Joseph went to the Hill Cumorah to find the buried gold plates. When he got to the hill, he went straight to the place where the plates were buried.

Scripture

Read or tell in your own words what Joseph said he found there (see Joseph Smith—History 1:52).

Explain that the angel Moroni appeared as Joseph was looking in the stone box. He told Joseph not to remove the plates because the time for Joseph to take them had not yet come.

Moroni told Joseph Smith to return to the Hill Cumorah each year for four years. Joseph did this, and each time he visited there, he found Moroni waiting to teach him what Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ wanted him to know.

Picture

Display picture 3-33, Joseph Receives the Gold Plates.

Finally, after four years, the time came to take the plates out of the box. The cover was taken off the stone box, and the gold plates were placed in Joseph's hands. Moroni told Joseph Smith to be very careful with them and to guard them with his life.

- Why was it important for Joseph to protect the plates? (Because wicked men would try to get them from him and would not do what Heavenly Father wanted done with the plates.)

Joseph Translated the Plates

Explain that the writing on the plates was in a language that Joseph could not read. Joseph received a special tool to help him translate the writing on the plates.

- Do any of you know what the Urim and Thummim are?

Explain that the Urim and Thummim are like special glasses through which Joseph could look to help him translate the ancient writing on the plates. With Heavenly Father's help and by using the Urim and Thummim, Joseph was able to translate the words on the gold plates into words we could understand. When the translation into English was completed, the book was printed. It was called the Book of Mormon.

Hold up a Book of Mormon. Point out that this book is what Joseph translated from the gold plates.

After he translated the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith returned the plates to Moroni.

Scripture activity

Distribute copies of the Book of Mormon to those children who do not have one.

Point out that the Book of Mormon contains many separate books. The books in the Book of Mormon were named for the prophets who wrote on the plates. Show the children how the book of Moroni is divided into chapters and verses.

Help the older children find Mormon 8. Read with the class Mormon 8, verses 1 and 4, to the word *earth*.

Explain that we call this book the Book of Mormon because Mormon wrote most of the words on the gold plates. Mormon's son, Moroni, finished the record.

Summary

Review discussion

Display all the pictures from the lesson or lay them on the floor. Let each child have a turn pointing to the correct picture as you ask questions.

- Which picture shows the gold plates?
- Which picture shows Mormon writing on the gold plates?
- Which picture shows Moroni burying the gold plates?
- Which picture shows the angel Moroni talking to Joseph Smith?
- Which picture shows the angel Moroni giving the gold plates to Joseph Smith?

Song

Sing or say both verses of "The Golden Plates" with the class.

Ask the child offering the closing prayer to thank Heavenly Father for the Book of Mormon.

Enrichment Activities

Choose from the following activities those that will work best for your children. You can use them in the lesson itself or as a review or summary. For additional guidance, see "Class Time" in "Helps for the Teacher."

1. Using appropriate pictures, review a few of the Book of Mormon stories the children will learn about this year. For example:
 - a. Show picture 3-37, Nephi Subdues His Rebellious Brothers (62044; Gospel Art Picture Kit 303). Tell the children that they will learn how Heavenly Father helped Nephi build a ship even though his older brothers were mean to him.
 - b. Show picture 3-38, Two Thousand Young Warriors (62050; Gospel Art Picture Kit 313). Tell the children that they will learn how more than two thousand young men fought to keep their families free.
 - c. Show picture 3-17, Jesus Teaching in the Western Hemisphere (62380; Gospel Art Picture Kit 316). Tell the children that they will learn about Jesus Christ's visit to the Nephites.
2. Have the children draw a picture of the gold plates and the Book of Mormon. Write *Gold Plates* and *Book of Mormon* on their pictures.
3. To help the children understand how ancient prophets could write on metal plates, invite each child to try writing his first initial on the bottom of a tin can with a nail. The teacher should demonstrate this first.
4. Review with the children the eighth article of faith. Help those who can to memorize part or all of it.