

Lesson
17

We Believe the Book of Mormon to Be the Word of God

Purpose

To help the children understand that the scriptures can help them learn and understand the commandments and that the scriptures can help them come unto Jesus Christ.

Preparation

1. Prayerfully study 1 Nephi 3–4; 3 Nephi 18:19; and Mosiah 23:15. Be prepared to tell the story of Nephi and the brass plates.
2. Arrange the four standard works on a table; place several other books, such as a storybook, recipe book, and textbook, in separate corners of the room. Prepare to discuss with the children the various types of books you have displayed so that they understand the purpose of each.
3. Be prepared to sing or say the words to “The Eighth Article of Faith” (*Children’s Songbook*, p. 127); the words are the same as the actual article of faith.
4. Materials needed:
 - a. The four standard works.
 - b. Several other books, such as a storybook, recipe book, and textbook.
 - c. Chalkboard, chalk, and eraser.
 - d. Picture 3-41, Laman Fleeing; picture 3-42, Nephi Near Laban’s House; picture 3-43, Nephi and Zoram; and picture 3-44, Lehi and the Brass Plates.
5. 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.

The Scriptures Contain Heavenly Father’s Commandments

Attention activity

Place the various types of books in separate corners of the room and tell a little about each. Then ask the following questions or other questions pertaining to the books that you have displayed. After the children answer each question correctly, have them go to the corner of the room that contains that book and point it out to you.

- Which of these books explains how to make a cake?
- Which of these books has pretend stories?
- Which of these books has teachings of the prophets that will help us keep the commandments?

Explain that Heavenly Father wants us to obey the commandments. He told the prophets to write his words so that we could know his teachings and commandments.

- What do we call the sacred books in which the prophets have written? (The scriptures.)

Explain that many prophets recorded the gospel and how people lived it so we would know what the commandments are. These commandments are recorded in our four books of scripture. We sometimes call them the standard works.

Nephi Obtained the Scriptures

Pictures,
scripture story,
and discussion

Explain that the Book of Mormon contains a story that shows how important the scriptures were to Nephi and his family.

Tell the children that Lehi told his sons—Laman, Lemuel, Sam, and Nephi—that the Lord wanted them to go back to Jerusalem and get some brass plates from a man named Laban. The brass plates were a book of scripture made from metal (brass) pages. Laman and Lemuel did not want to go back to Jerusalem and were very angry, but Nephi and Sam were willing to go.

To show the children how Nephi felt about going to get the brass plates, read aloud 1 Nephi 3:7 and discuss it with the children.

- Why was Nephi willing to go? (He knew that the Lord would prepare a way for him to fulfil the commandment he had been given.)
- What promise did Nephi make? (That he would do what the Lord had commanded him to do.)

Explain that Nephi convinced his brothers to go with him.

Laman was the first to go to Laban's house. He asked Laban for the brass plates. Laban would not give Laman the plates and threatened to kill him. Laman was afraid and ran back to his brothers. Show picture 3-41, Laman Fleeing. He wanted to go back to their father in the wilderness.

Nephi said they must obey the commandment to get the brass plates. Nephi and his brothers went back to their former home in Jerusalem and got their gold and silver. They planned to trade their riches for the brass plates.

Laban took their gold and silver but would not give Nephi and his brothers the brass plates. He ordered his men to kill them. Nephi and his brothers ran away and hid.

Laman and Lemuel were angry. They beat Nephi and Sam with a stick. An angel appeared and commanded them to stop. The angel said that the Lord would help them get the brass plates and told them to obey Nephi.

Display picture 3-42, Nephi Near Laban's House.

This time Nephi went to get the plates. His brothers waited outside the city wall as he crept up to Laban's house. Nephi saw Laban lying drunk on the ground. The Holy Ghost told Nephi to kill Laban. Nephi hesitated because he did not want to kill anyone.

Nephi remembered the great importance of the scriptures, and he knew that he could not obtain the brass plates unless he killed Laban. So he did what the Holy Ghost told him to do. He killed Laban and dressed in Laban's clothes.

He then pretended to be Laban.

Display picture 3-43, Nephi and Zoram.

Nephi told Laban's servant, Zoram, to bring the brass plates to him and to follow him. Zoram obeyed, thinking Nephi was Laban. Later, Nephi explained to Zoram that the Lord had commanded him and his brothers to get the brass plates. Zoram believed him. He also wanted to obey. He went with Nephi and his brothers back to Lehi in the wilderness.

Display picture 3-44, Lehi and the Brass Plates.

Lehi read the brass plates. The plates contained the commandments and some stories about Moses and other prophets. They also contained the genealogy of Lehi's family. Lehi was commanded to take the brass plates with him to the promised land.

- Whose writings were on the brass plates?
- What was written on the brass plates?
- Why do you think Lehi and his family needed the brass plates?

Activity

Play the following game to help the children understand why it was important for Lehi's family to take the brass plates, which contained a written record of the commandments, with them to the promised land.

The object of the game is to show how the words of the scriptures can be confused if they are not written down.

Have the children sit in a circle. Whisper to the child on your right, "I will obey Heavenly Father's commandments." Then have that child whisper what he or she heard to the person on his or her right. Continue passing the message on until everyone in the circle has heard it. Have the last child stand up and repeat the words he or she heard. The child probably will not repeat the original message correctly. (If the message is the same, you might compliment the children on how well they did. Then try another message of two or three sentences.) Tell the children the message you began with.

Explain that it is easy to forget or confuse stories or messages that are not written down. The prophets wrote down Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ's teachings so they would not be forgotten. These teachings are in our scriptures.

Lehi's family needed the brass plates so they would remember the commandments and obey them.

The Scriptures Help Us Obey

Scripture activity

Explain that we need to know the commandments just as much as Lehi's family. The scriptures can help us obey Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ because they contain many of their commandments.

Ask the children to listen carefully while you read two scriptures. Ask them to raise their hands when they know what commandment the scripture is teaching. Read 3 Nephi 18:19 and Mosiah 23:15 and discuss them with the children.

Remind the children that if we did not have the scriptures, we might forget the commandments and not obey them. Then we would not receive the blessings that come from living the commandments.

Article of faith and song

Have the children sing or say the words to the song “The Eighth Article of Faith.” Explain that this article of faith tells us that the Bible and the Book of Mormon contain the word of God, which means that they contain true teachings. Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ commanded the prophets to write down these teachings for future generations.

Have the class repeat the eighth article of faith with you. You might help older children to memorize it. Remind the children that we have the scriptures so that we can learn the commandments that will help us choose the right and keep our baptismal covenants.

Summary

Discussion

Have the class discuss the following:

- What should we thank our Heavenly Father for in our prayers? (Accept all answers, but emphasize the scriptures.)
- What should we ask him for in our prayers? (Help in obeying the commandments.)

Invite a child to give the closing prayer.

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. Begin to tell the story of Nephi and his brothers returning to Jerusalem to get the brass plates from Laban. Have each child add a sentence to the story, telling what happened next. Encourage them to give as many details as they can remember. Use the pictures to help them remember the story. (If children give wrong answers or retell the story out of order, merely help them get the order as close to correct as possible. Accept and encourage all answers.)
2. Have a child draw a picture on the chalkboard or piece of paper of how he will keep the commandments during the week and then tell the rest of the children what he plans to do. Take turns doing this so that each child has a chance to draw a picture and explain it. The children could draw pictures of such things as going to church, praying, helping their families, and sharing their toys.
3. Have the children sing or say the words to “Nephi’s Courage” (*Children’s Songbook*, p. 120); the words are included at the back of this manual. You might want to do some actions or role-playing with the words.
4. For children who can read, make a copy of “My Baptismal Covenant” from the handout at the end of lesson 13. Cut the handout into four pieces by cutting it below the words “I, _____, promise,” below the words “to obey Heavenly Father’s commandments,” and below the words “Heavenly Father promises to.” Mix the pieces up and ask the children to put them in their proper order. After the children have put the pieces together, read the baptismal covenant aloud with the class. Explain that Heavenly Father wants us to keep our covenant that we make at baptism to obey the commandments. He told the prophets to write his words so we could know his teachings and commandments.