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**Purpose** To help the children understand that at the age of eight they begin to become accountable for their actions.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study Alma 23 and 24.
2. Bring some money to be used in the role play, or make some play money.
3. Prepare to sing or say with the children the words to “Dare to Do Right” (*Children’s Songbook*, p. 158); the words are included at the back of this manual.
4. Materials needed:
  - a. A Book of Mormon for each child who can read.
  - b. An article of baby clothing, such as a shoe, hat, or sweater.
  - c. Optional (use this activity only if you feel it is helpful and you are able to obtain these items without great expense): A book, a ball, and a bag of candy or other appropriate food.
  - d. Chalk, chalkboard, and eraser.
  - e. Picture 3-54, The Anti-Nephi-Lehies Burying Their Swords (62565; Gospel Art Picture Kit 311).
5. Make the necessary preparations for any enrichment activities that you will be using.

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**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.

**When We Are Eight, We Are Accountable**

Attention activity

Hold up the article of baby clothing you brought.

- Would this fit any of you? (You might have some of the children try to put on the piece of clothing; they will then answer that it does not fit.)
- Why not? (Because it’s too small.)

Discuss with the children that once they were small enough to fit into tiny clothes such as this, but their bodies have grown bigger. Explain that just as they grow in physical size, they also grow in other ways, such as in their ability to do things like dressing themselves.

- What can you do now that you could not do when you were a baby?

Explain that these things show that the children are growing older and learning more. A person who has learned to do these things is also usually old enough to know right from wrong.

Discussion

Remind the children that Heavenly Father is wise. He knows that we must learn what is right and wrong. When we have grown enough and learned enough about right and wrong, we become accountable for what we do. Being accountable means that we must take responsibility for what we do wrong, and we are blessed for what we do right.

- At what age do we begin to be accountable to Heavenly Father for what we do? (Eight.)

Explain that because Heavenly Father knows we are old enough to be responsible for our actions, he allows something important to take place when we are eight.

- What important event happens when we are eight? (We are baptized; see Doctrine and Covenants 68:27.)
- Why is baptism important? (Because when we are baptized and confirmed, we receive the gift of the Holy Ghost and make a covenant with Heavenly Father to obey his commandments.)

Explain that being baptized does not mean we will never make a mistake again. It means we are old enough to be responsible for our choices. We are old enough to know the difference between right and wrong.

Article of faith

- Which article of faith tells us that we are responsible for our own sins? (The second article of faith. You might need to explain any words that the children do not understand.)

Have the class repeat the second article of faith together. Allow any children who can to repeat it by themselves.

### **We Are Responsible to Choose the Right**

Class ring

- What do the letters on our class ring stand for?

Have the children repeat the words, "Choose the right." Explain that their rings can help the children realize that they are growing old enough to learn to be responsible to choose the right.

Teacher presentation

Explain that learning to choose right from wrong is a big step in growing up. Our Father in Heaven will not force us to do right. He gives us freedom to choose for ourselves between right and wrong and to be responsible for keeping the promises we make. He knows that only by having freedom to choose for ourselves can we grow and learn.

Write *CTR* on the chalkboard. Have the children tell you again what these letters stand for. Express your confidence that the children can learn what is right and wrong and become responsible for their actions.

Activity

Give one or two of the children the book that you have brought. Tell them that they are responsible to take care of it. Explain to the class that these children will be accountable for that book during class. If it gets lost, torn, or otherwise damaged, they will have to answer to you. They will be accountable to you for the book.

Give another child the ball. Explain that this child will be responsible for the ball just as the other children are responsible for the book.

Give a third child the bag of candy or some other appropriate food. Be sure to choose a child who can handle this well. Tell the child to share the candy or food with the entire class after the closing prayer. The child is responsible for keeping the food safe until it is time to share it.

- Could (child's name) choose to eat all of this candy alone? (Yes, the child could choose to disobey the teacher and eat it rather than save it to share.)

Emphasize that this child has the freedom to choose what to do, but the child will be held accountable for that choice.

Explain that this is similar to life. Heavenly Father's plan gives us choices. We may choose right or wrong, wisely or foolishly, but we are responsible for our choices and the results.

#### Scripture story

Display the Book of Mormon. Tell the children that a group of people in the Book of Mormon had a very difficult choice to make, and they decided to choose the right. Tell the following story in your own words:

Ammon was a missionary who explained the teachings of Jesus Christ to King Lamoni, the king of a certain group of Lamanites. King Lamoni believed these teachings and became converted to the gospel. He asked his people to listen to Ammon and his brothers. King Lamoni knew that these men were telling the truth.

Ammon and his brothers went from city to city and from house to house teaching the Lamanites. The Lamanites did not know the gospel, and they were very wicked. Many of the people believed the teachings of Ammon and his brothers and were converted. They knew the words of Jesus Christ were true, and they repented of their wicked ways.

These people decided to change their name from Lamanites to Anti-Nephi-Lehies. They did this to separate themselves from the wicked Lamanites who were not following the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Before these people repented, they had killed many people with their swords. They were sorry for the wrong things they had done and wanted to repent. They chose to promise Heavenly Father never to fight or raise their swords against any people again.

#### Scripture

Explain that these people made another decision too. Have the children follow along as you read Alma 24:17–18.

- What choice did the Anti-Nephi-Lehies make? (They chose to bury their swords in the ground.)
- Why did they do this? (Because they made a covenant or promise never to kill again.)

#### Picture and story

Show picture 3-54, The Anti-Nephi-Lehies Burying Their Swords.

Continue with the story:

After the Anti-Nephi-Lehies buried their swords, the wicked Lamanites came to fight them. The Anti-Nephi-Lehies had a very difficult decision to make. They could break their promise to Heavenly Father and use their swords to fight, or

they could decide not to fight and possibly be killed. They decided to keep their promise to not use their swords against other people. Many of them were killed by the Lamanites. When the Lamanites saw that these people had no weapons and would not fight, they were surprised. Many of them laid down their own swords because they too recognized that they were doing a great wrong by killing people. Many Lamanites repented and joined the Anti-Nephi-Lehies in righteousness.

The Anti-Nephi-Lehies were faithful to their promise even when other people were trying to kill them.

- How were the Anti-Nephi-Lehies responsible for what they did?
- What can you learn from the Anti-Nephi-Lehies about choosing the right?

### **At the Age of Eight We Become Accountable to Heavenly Father**

Chalkboard discussion

Remind the children that being accountable means that they are responsible for what they do.

Print the word *accountable* on the chalkboard, and say the word aloud. Have the children repeat it. Explain that when they are eight years old, Heavenly Father considers them old enough to begin to be accountable for their actions.

Song

Sing or say with the children the words to “Dare to Do Right.”

Situation

Explain to the children that when they become eight they are accountable, but those who are not yet eight can practice being responsible now by helping parents and keeping their promises to others. Relate the following situation (you might want to have a child go through the actions):

Pretend that your mother is sick and asks you to clean part of the house. You want to play, so you run outside to be with your friends.

When you come back inside, your mother calls to you from her bed and asks, “Did you clean the part of the house that I asked you to clean?”

You answer yes, and then quickly straighten up a few things in the areas you should have already cleaned.

Discussion

Explain to the children that when their parents give them work to do, it means that they are old enough to be responsible and accountable enough to do that work.

- Have you ever returned from Primary, from a friend’s house, or from school and had one of your parents say, “Tell me what you did today?”

Point out that when the children report to their parents and tell them what they have done, the children are accounting for their actions. Parents love their children. This is why parents want to know what their children do at home, at school, and at play.

Article of faith

Our Heavenly Father loves us also, and, like our parents, he wants us to report and be accountable to him for the good things and the bad things we do. When we do bad things—like stealing, lying, or hurting someone—after we are eight years old, they are called sins. Have the class repeat the second article of faith together.

Point to the word *accountable* on the chalkboard, and ask the children to say the word aloud. Tell them that they are preparing to be accountable to Heavenly Father, because when they become eight years old they are old enough to show responsibility and know right from wrong.

### Summary

#### Activity

Ask some questions to help the children determine what they are accountable for and what others must account for. Have them answer the questions together.

1. Who is accountable for teaching you to pray?
2. Who is accountable for saying your prayers?
3. Who is accountable for teaching you the lessons in Primary?
4. Who is accountable for learning what your Primary teacher teaches?
5. Who is accountable for the way you act in Primary?
6. Who is accountable for doing what Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ want you to do?
7. Who is accountable for keeping your baptismal covenants?

#### Discussion

Have the children tell several ways they are or will be accountable. This could include being kind to friends; telling the truth; being modest; attending church meetings; avoiding alcohol, drugs, and tobacco; or keeping promises they make.

#### Activity and teacher testimony

Have the children with the book and ball account to you for their actions with those objects. Have them return the items to you, and praise them if they have done well.

Conclude by telling the class that this is an important time in their lives, but they are not alone. They have parents and leaders to guide and help them. They also have Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ to love them and guide them. After baptism, they have the Holy Ghost to prompt them continually. Encourage the children to show more and more that they are learning to be responsible and to account for what they do. Help them to understand that they will make mistakes. Everyone does. But they can repent and do better each day with the help of the Holy Ghost.

Bear testimony that Heavenly Father loves all of his children. For this reason, he has planned a way for us to grow and become more like he is. Express again your confidence in each one of the children to become more responsible for what he or she does.

Invite a child to give the closing prayer.

After the closing prayer, have the child with the candy account to you. Then have the child give a piece of candy to each class member.

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### 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. Give each child a turn to finish one of the following situations in a way that shows that the child is being responsible. (You may use the following situations or make up your own.)
  - a. You are going to play outside. It is very cold. Mother tells you to wear a coat.
  - b. Father tells you that if you remember to clean part of the house on Saturday morning, you can go to a ball game with him that evening.
  - c. Your friends want you to share your toys with them. They are sharing with you.
  - d. Your mother asks you to watch your little sister.
  - e. You are helping mother bake cookies. She reminds you not to touch the pan until it is cool.
  - f. Your friend or his older brother asks you to drink some beer.
  - g. You are not dressed appropriately and you want to go outside.
  - h. Father asks you to help him in the garden. You yell at him and run to be with your friends.
  - i. Your Primary teacher asks you to sit reverently and sing the songs. You don't want to.
2. Have the children draw pictures of things they are accountable for doing. Label the pictures "I am learning to be accountable."