

Lesson
39

Mormon Witnesses the Destruction of the Nephites

Purpose To strengthen each child's desire to remain true to the teachings of Jesus Christ in spite of the evil influences around us.

Preparation

1. Prayerfully study Mormon 1–6. Then study the lesson and decide how you want to teach the children the scripture account. (See “Preparing Your Lessons,” p. vi, and “Teaching from the Scriptures,” p. vii.)
2. Select the discussion questions and enrichment activities that will involve the children and best help them achieve the purpose of the lesson.
3. Materials needed:
 - a. A Book of Mormon for each child.
 - b. Six written descriptions of Mormon as described in the attention activity.
 - c. Pictures 4-1, Mormon Abridging the Plates (Gospel Art Picture Kit, 306; 62520), and 4-51, Mormon Bids Farewell to a Once Great Nation (Gospel Art Picture Kit 319; 62043).

Suggested Lesson Development

Invite a child to give the opening prayer.

Attention Activity Write *Mormon* on the chalkboard.

- What do you think of when you hear this word?

After the children discuss what they think of, explain that today they are going to learn about the prophet Mormon. Give six children each one of the following descriptions of Mormon as a young man to read to the class:

I was born about 321 A.D.

When I was ten years old, the prophet Ammaron told me that I would be given the large plates of Nephi when I was twenty-four years old. (Mormon 1:2–4.)

When I was eleven years old, I moved to Zarahemla, a large city with many people, with my father. That same year wars began. (Mormon 1:6–8.)

When I was fifteen years old, I was visited by Jesus Christ and felt his love and goodness. (Mormon 1:15.)

When I was sixteen years old, I was appointed to lead all the Nephite armies. (Mormon 2:1–2.)

Because of the wickedness of my people, I had to be strong in keeping the commandments and trusting in Heavenly Father.

Explain to the children that when we study the life of Mormon, we can see how it is possible to live a righteous life in spite of the evil influences around us.

Scripture Account	Teach the accounts of Mormon abridging the large plates of Nephi and the destruction of the Nephites from Mormon 1–6. Use the pictures at appropriate times. (For suggested ways to teach the scripture account, see “Teaching from the Scriptures,” p. vii.)
Discussion and Application Questions	<p>Study the following questions and the scripture references as you prepare your lesson. Use the questions you feel will best help the children understand the scriptures and apply the principles in their lives. Reading the references with the children in class will help them gain insights into the scriptures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How and why was Mormon chosen to keep the records? (Mormon 1:2–4.) How do you think you would feel if you were given the same responsibilities that Mormon was given so early in your life? How could you prepare yourself for such a sacred responsibility? • What was happening among the Nephites and Lamanites at this time? (Mormon 1:13.) What spiritual blessings did the Nephites give up because of their wickedness? (Mormon 1:13–14.) Why is it important to live so we can have the Holy Ghost with us? • Why was Mormon not allowed to teach the gospel to the Nephites? (Mormon 1:16–17.) In what ways is it hard to live in a wicked world? • What caused the Nephites to begin to repent? (Mormon 2:10–11. You might remind the children of Samuel's prophecy in Helaman 13:18.) Why did Mormon's happiness over the repentance of the people soon turn to sorrow? (Mormon 2:12–15.) How can we sincerely repent? • During the wars, what did Mormon do with the large plates of Nephi? (Mormon 2:16–18.) Help the children understand that the Book of Mormon is named after Mormon because he was the prophet who abridged or summarized the large plates of Nephi. Show the picture of Mormon abridging the large plates of Nephi. This abridgment made by Mormon; the things added by his son, Moroni; and the small plates of Nephi are the gold plates Joseph Smith got from Moroni at the Hill Cumorah. • Why weren't the Nephites as successful in battle as they could have been? (Mormon 2:26–27.) What can we do to have the “strength of the Lord” in our lives? • What happened when Mormon taught the Nephites about repentance? (Mormon 3:2–3.) Why do many people not listen to Heavenly Father and his prophets? • What did Mormon finally do because of the people's wickedness? (Mormon 3:11.) What did he do to show how much he cared about them? (Mormon 3:12.) Why should we pray for people who are not keeping Heavenly Father's commandments? • Which prophets had prophesied of the destruction of the Nephites? (Mormon 1:19; 2:10.) What were some of the hardships the people suffered, because of their wickedness, in fulfillment of these prophecies? (Mormon 2:8, 20; 4:11, 21; 5:16, 18; 6:7–9.) If you saw these hardships happening to your friends and neighbors, what would you want to do for them? What can we do to help others learn to keep Heavenly Father's commandments? (See enrichment activity 2.)

- How many people were killed in these wars? (Mormon 6:10–15. See enrichment activity 3.) How did Mormon feel about the destruction of his people? (Mormon 6:16–22.)

Enrichment Activities

You may use one or more of the following activities any time during the lesson or as a review, summary, or challenge.

1. Discuss Mormon's purpose for keeping the records (Mormon 3:20–22; 5:14–15). Assign each child at least one verse to read to find the answers.
2. Ask each child to name a commandment and tell what would have been different in Zarahemla or in their city if everyone lived just that one commandment.
3. Discuss the great numbers of people who were destroyed. Compare it to a city of 230,000 where all were killed except twenty-four people.
4. Review with the children the blessings we have because of Mormon's great faith and courage in being true to his responsibility. Include the following:
 - He set an example by showing us how to remain faithful when surrounded by evil.
 - He recorded the history of his people.
 - He abridged the history of the Nephites.
 - He wrote letters to his son, Moroni, which give us wise counsel and doctrine.
 - How can we show our gratitude for these sacred records?
5. Sing or read the words to "I Feel My Savior's Love" (*Children's Songbook*, p. 74), "I Will Follow God's Plan" (*Children's Songbook*, p. 164), or "Choose the Right" (*Hymns*, no. 239).

Conclusion

Testimony	Bear testimony of the Book of Mormon and how it can help us remain true to Jesus Christ in spite of the evil influences around us.
Suggested Family Sharing	Encourage the children to share with their families a specific part of the lesson, such as a story, question, or activity, or to read with their families the "Suggested Home Reading."
Suggested Home Reading	Suggest that the children study Mormon 1:1–7, 13–19 at home as a review of this lesson. Invite a child to give the closing prayer.