

# Helps for the Teacher

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The Savior taught the importance of obeying and teaching the commandments when he said, “Whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:19). You have been given a sacred trust to help the children learn how to keep their baptismal covenants and give service. As each girl prepares to become a young woman and each boy prepares to become a young man and receive the priesthood, you can be an important influence in their lives.

In 1831, shortly after the Church was organized, the Savior taught that teachers “shall teach the principles of my gospel, which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon” (D&C 42:12), which were the only scriptures available then. Today teachers have the responsibility to teach the sacred truths from all the standard works, including the Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price, that help children develop faith in God and in his Son Jesus Christ.

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## **Courses of Study**

All children who are ages eight through eleven on 1 January are to be taught from one of the Primary 4, 5, 6, and 7 manuals. Only one course of study is used each year for all children of this age-group. Each course of study is based on a specific book of scripture: Primary 4 on the Book of Mormon, Primary 5 on the Doctrine and Covenants, Primary 6 on the Old Testament, and Primary 7 on the New Testament. Over a four-year period the children will have studied each of the standard works.

Depending on local needs and the number of children ages eight through eleven, the classes could be organized by individual age-groups, combined age-groups, or separate classes for boys and girls. However your class is arranged, you need to make sure each child receives adequate attention.

When children turn twelve years old, they begin attending Young Women or Aaronic Priesthood. However, they continue to attend their Primary class during Sunday School time until the first week in January, when they begin attending Sunday School.

## Priesthood Preparation Lesson

A special lesson, “The Priesthood Can Bless Our Lives,” is included in this manual. This lesson is to be used by teachers of eleven-year-old children as the boys prepare to become deacons and the girls advance to Young Women. Teach this lesson before the first child in your class turns twelve. Pray for the Lord’s guidance as you prepare and present the lesson so that the children will understand what the priesthood is, how it can bless their lives, and how they can fulfill their responsibilities to honor the priesthood.

## Easter and Christmas Lessons

This manual does not contain specific Easter or Christmas lessons. Because the manual focuses on Jesus Christ’s life and mission, you may not feel you need additional lessons for Easter and Christmas. If you do want to teach a special lesson, you can prepare one using references from the Book of Mormon and New Testament and other resources such as the Gospel Art Picture Kit and appropriate issues of the Church magazines. Plan lessons that will help the children feel closer to Jesus Christ and understand his mission.

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## Teaching with This Manual

This course of study centers on teachings from the New Testament, emphasizing the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. As you share and discuss these teachings, the children should better understand the mission and atonement of Jesus Christ and develop greater faith in and a testimony of him. They should learn how to apply the teachings of Jesus Christ to their own lives and gain a stronger desire to keep his commandments.

Encourage the children to read the New Testament at home. By learning of Jesus' love and better understanding his teachings, the children will grow in love for the Savior and want to be like him. The important truths the children learn from Jesus' life and teachings will help prepare them to keep their covenants and give service in the Church throughout their lives. These truths will also give them strength to resist temptations in today's world.

### Preparing Yourself to Teach

To fulfill your sacred calling to teach children, you should be prepared both mentally and spiritually. Part of this preparation is understanding and having a testimony of the principles you teach. The Savior, the greatest teacher of all, taught us how to prepare to teach his gospel to others:

- Humbly seek the Spirit through prayer. The Lord has said, "Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers" (D&C 112:10). If we are humble we have the right to know how the Lord wants us to teach his children.
- Study the scriptures and the words of the living prophets. There is great power in learning and pondering the words of the Lord. He commanded us, "First seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men" (D&C 11:21).

A latter-day prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, has reaffirmed our need to learn the words of the Lord: "I urge you to recommit yourselves to a study of the scriptures. Immerse yourselves in them daily so you will have the power of the Spirit to attend you in your callings" (*Ensign*, May 1986, p. 82).

- Keep your covenants. Your ability to be guided by the Spirit depends on your faithfulness in keeping the covenants you have made with Heavenly Father. You will also be setting a good example when you "observe the covenants . . . to do them" (D&C 42:13). When children see your love for the Savior and commitment to living the gospel, they will be more motivated to follow him.
- Search for ways to help the children feel the Savior's love. Tell them often how much you love them, and acknowledge their worth and potential. Your love and kindness will help the children understand the love Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ have for them. It will also help them learn to love others.

### Preparing Your Lessons

This manual will help you organize lessons that focus on the scriptures. The lessons use accounts and references from the New Testament to help children understand gospel principles. The lessons do not indicate exactly how the scripture accounts should be taught. As you prepare and teach by the Spirit, you will help the children better understand the scripture accounts, the principles they contain, and how the children can apply these principles in their lives. When your lessons are well prepared and interesting, the children will be more stimulated to listen and learn.

The following steps will help you be better prepared to effectively teach the children in your class:

1. Prayerfully study the lesson's purpose and the scripture passages listed in the "Preparation" section a week or two before the lesson is to be taught. Reread the lesson's purpose and the scripture passages, and consider how they apply to the children in your class. Ask yourself: "What does Heavenly Father want each child to learn and do as a result of this lesson? How can this lesson help the children develop faith in Jesus Christ, strengthen their testimonies, and enable them to withstand the evil temptations they face?" Write down ideas that come to you.

The book *Gospel Principles* (31110) was prepared to be a personal study guide on basic gospel principles and doctrines. Specific chapters from *Gospel Principles* are listed in the "Preparation" section of some lessons. These chapters can help you prepare to teach the main principle or doctrine contained in the lesson. A copy may be available in your meetinghouse library or may be purchased from your local distribution center.

2. Decide whether to use the suggested attention activity at the beginning of the lesson or to create one yourself, being sure it is appropriate and relevant to teaching the scripture account.
3. The lessons do not tell you how to teach the scripture account, so you should seek the Spirit to help you determine what and how to teach. Use a variety of teaching methods each week (see "Teaching from the Scriptures" on this page). Plan to involve class members as much as possible in learning activities, and teach your lesson so the children will be able to retell the scripture account to others.
4. Select from the "Discussion and Application Questions" those that will best help the children understand the scriptures and apply them in their lives. You may use the questions at any time during the lesson. You do not need to use all of them.
5. Read the "Enrichment Activities" and plan when and how to use the ones you feel will best help the children in your class understand the scriptures and the purpose of the lesson. Each class will be different, and some activities that would work well for one group will not work well with another group.
6. Plan to share appropriate personal experiences that support the purpose of the lesson. Let the Spirit direct you as you share experiences with the class and as class members share experiences with you and each other. Some family and personal experiences are very sacred or very private and should not be discussed in public.

#### Teaching from the Scriptures

You should always seek the Spirit as you prepare and teach your lessons (see Alma 17:2–4; D&C 42:12–14; 50:17–22). The Spirit will help you know how to make your lessons interesting and meaningful for the children.

Some of the children in your class might not be familiar with the scriptures. As you read together, be sensitive to those class members who might need help in learning how to look up scriptures. You may need to take some time at the beginning of the year, particularly if you are teaching younger children, to show the children how to find scripture references.

Try different ways of presenting the material to keep the children's interest. The following suggestions can help you vary how you teach from the scriptures.

1. Tell the scripture account in your own words. Try to help the children visualize the events and the people in them. Help the children understand that the people you are talking about really lived and the events actually happened.
2. Have the children read the whole account or selected passages directly from the scriptures. Keep in mind that not all of the children may read well and that reading ability is not determined by age. If all the children can read, you might give them a few minutes to read silently. Afterward, you could discuss what they read. Use the discussion time after the children have finished reading to help them understand difficult words and passages.
3. Use the suggested pictures of the scripture accounts to help the children visualize what happened. Most of the lessons contain suggested pictures in the "Materials Needed" section. The pictures are numbered and included with the manual. Some of the pictures are also in the Gospel Art Picture Kit and may be in the meetinghouse library (meetinghouse library numbers are listed in the "Materials Needed" section). Most of the pictures have summaries printed on the back. You may also use other pictures as appropriate.
4. Have the children dramatize the scripture account. (Make sure that the dramatizations do not detract from the sacredness of the scriptures.) You might bring simple props, such as a robe, scarf, and so forth, and let the children act out all or parts of the account. Ask them how they would feel if they were the person they represent. The Savior should not be portrayed except in a nativity scene. Heavenly Father and the Holy Ghost should never be portrayed.
5. Draw simple figures or illustrations on the chalkboard, or use pictures or cutouts, as you tell or read the scripture account.
6. Conduct a readers' theater where several children take the parts of people in the scripture account. Where appropriate, have the children read the dialogue directly from the scriptures.
7. Invite a parent, ward or branch member, or class member to tell the account. Allow the person a week or two advance preparation time, and be sure to give him or her a time limit for the presentation.
8. Give the children a simple pretest, such as a true-false or short-answer quiz, before teaching the scripture account. Explain to the class that you want to find out how much they know about the account. Then give them the same test afterward so they can see what they have learned.
9. List on the chalkboard important words or names of people from the scripture account. Have the children listen for these words or names as you tell the account. Help the children increase their vocabulary so they will better understand the scriptures and enjoy reading them at home.
10. Before giving the lesson, write questions about the account on the chalkboard. As the children hear the answers during the account, stop to discuss them.
11. Tell the account, and then let the children volunteer to retell their favorite parts. You could ask one class member to start the account and then call on other children to continue.

12. Play a recording of selected verses from the scriptures.
13. Play a matching game. Prepare from four to eight sets of matching 3" x 5" cards or papers. In the following example, you would put the first half of each beatitude on one card and the second half, or blessing, on the other card of the set. Mix the cards or papers up and place them face down on a table or the floor. Have the children come up one at a time and turn over two cards. Read aloud what each card says. If the cards match (in this case if they complete a beatitude), they are left face up. If the cards do not match, they are turned face down again and another child takes a turn. Continue until all the cards have been matched correctly.

These are eight sets you could use for a matching game on the Beatitudes:

Set 1: Blessed are the poor in spirit—for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Set 2: Blessed are they that mourn—for they shall be comforted.

Set 3: Blessed are the meek—for they shall inherit the earth.

Set 4: Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness—for they shall be filled.

Set 5: Blessed are the merciful—for they shall obtain mercy.

Set 6: Blessed are the pure in heart—for they shall see God.

Set 7: Blessed are the peacemakers—for they shall be called the children of God.

Set 8: Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake—for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

14. Play a game asking questions. Place several questions in a jar or box, and have class members take turns picking one of these questions and answering it.

#### Conducting Class Discussions

Participating in discussions and other learning activities will help children learn gospel principles. The following guidelines can help you ask meaningful questions and stimulate class discussions:

1. Ask questions and give scripture references so class members can find answers in the scriptures.
2. Ask questions that cannot be answered with “yes” or “no” but require thought and discussion. Questions that begin with *why*, *how*, *who*, *what*, *when*, and *where* are usually more effective.
3. Involve children who do not usually participate by calling on them by name and asking them a question you feel they can answer. Give them time to respond. Help them if they need it, but only after they have had time to think and respond.
4. Encourage the children to share their feelings about what they are learning from the scriptures. Make positive comments about their contributions.
5. Compliment the children sincerely when they answer questions. Help them recognize that their thoughts and feelings are important. Be sensitive to children who may be reluctant to participate.

#### Helping Children Apply the Scriptures

Help the children apply what they have learned to their lives. James challenged us to be “doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (James 1:22). The following ideas may help you accomplish this task:

1. As you are prompted by the Spirit, bear personal testimony of the truths you are teaching. Your lessons will be more powerful when you teach with sincerity and conviction.
2. Encourage the children to read the scriptures at home by themselves and with their families. Encourage the children to bring their own copies of the scriptures with them to class. If the children do not have personal copies of the scriptures or forget to bring them to class, have extra copies for the children to use in class. If you have a ward or branch library, you may obtain copies of the scriptures there.
3. Ask the children to share what they have learned. Ask them how they can apply the gospel principles taught in the lesson to their own lives.
4. Act as a reporter, and interview the children as if they were scripture characters. Ask them to tell you the details of the scripture account and how they feel about what took place.
5. Divide the class into two or more small groups. After sharing the scripture account, have each group write down the important principles from the account. Then let the groups take turns discussing how these principles apply in their lives.
6. Do a scripture search: Throughout the year encourage class members to mark specific verses of scripture that apply meaningfully to their lives. For example, they could mark Matthew 7:12, Luke 11:9, John 3:16, and Acts 2:38. Give them a clue, such as an event, situation, or problem; then challenge class members to locate a scripture that applies. Have the children who find it first help the rest of the class find the scripture. Then have them tell why this scripture fits the clue.
7. Share specific instances when you have seen the children obeying the principle being discussed. For example, if you are teaching a lesson on being kind, you could point out some instances when you saw the children being kind to others.
8. Follow up on assignments. Whenever you give an assignment or challenge, be sure to ask the children about their experience at the beginning of class the following Sunday.

### Helping Children Memorize Scriptures

Memorizing scriptures can be an effective way to teach gospel truths. Most children enjoy memorizing when you use fun and creative approaches. The following suggestions are enjoyable ways to help children memorize:

1. Write on the chalkboard, or make a chart, of the first letter of each word to be memorized. For example, you might make the following chart for the words in the first article of faith:

W b i G t E F a i H S J C a i t H G

Point to the letters as you repeat each corresponding word. Repeat it a few times and let the children repeat it as they are able. Before long they will not need the chart.

2. Divide the scripture into short phrases. Repeat each phrase out loud starting at the end and working backward so that the children are repeating the least familiar part first. For example, in Matthew 5:16 the children could repeat

“and glorify your Father which is in heaven” several times. Then they could add the next phrase, “that they may see your good works.” Then they could repeat the entire verse.

3. If the children read well, prepare a written copy of the scripture for each child. Cut each copy into word or phrase strips. After saying the verse together a few times, give the children a scrambled set of the strips, and have them individually or as a class arrange their strips in the right order.
4. Repeat the scripture several times, stopping to let a child say the next word or phrase. Then have another child add a few more words. Continue until all the children have had at least one turn.
5. Use music to help the children memorize. For example, you could teach the Articles of Faith from the *Children’s Songbook* (pp. 122–32).
6. Divide the children into two groups. Let each group take turns repeating words or phrases in order. You could let one group say the first word, the other group the second, and so on through the verse.
7. Choose a scripture passage you want the children to memorize. Write the scripture on the chalkboard or on a poster. Repeat the passage several times, gradually covering or erasing more and more words until the children have memorized the whole scripture.

#### Using Extra Time Wisely

If you finish your prepared lesson before the class time is over, you may want to improvise an activity to fill the rest of the time. The following suggestions can help you use this time effectively:

1. Have some of the children talk about their favorite scripture stories.
2. Conduct a scripture search by giving the children clues to important scripture references they have already marked. Let them work together in pairs or small groups to locate the correct passage of scripture.
3. Help the children memorize a scripture or an article of faith from the lesson.
4. Have the children share ideas about how they can use the principles from the lesson at home, in school, and with their friends.
5. Divide the class into groups, and have them take turns asking each other questions about the lesson.
6. Have each child draw a picture related to the lesson, or print a quotation to take home and display as a reminder of the purpose of the lesson.
7. Invite the children to mark scripture references for future study. You might ask the children to mark verses from the lesson that they particularly like, or you could suggest verses that you think will remind the children of the purpose of the lesson.
8. Help the children memorize the order of the books in the scriptures. You can find these set to music in the *Children’s Songbook* (pp. 114, 116, and 119).
9. Review principles or scripture accounts from previous lessons.

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**Music in the Classroom**

Gospel learning can be enriched and strengthened through music. Often children are better able to remember and learn through music.

You do not have to be a musician to use appropriate music to help children feel the Spirit and learn the gospel. Music could include audiocassettes or a musical group during or at the beginning of a lesson. You may also sing or read the words to songs to involve the children in your lesson. If the *Children's Songbook* audiocassettes (music only, 52505; words and music, 52428) or compact discs (music only, 50505; words and music, 50428) are available, you may use them to help you learn the songs or to accompany singing in the classroom.

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**Sharing Time**

Occasionally the class will be asked to give simple gospel presentations during Primary Sharing Time. These presentations could come from lessons, would require little rehearsing, and would help reinforce the principles you have been teaching. You could use the following suggestions for sharing time:

1. Act out a scripture account.
2. Recite memorized scriptures together.
3. Repeat or sing an article of faith and explain its meaning.
4. Role-play a modern application of a gospel principle.

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**Articles of Faith**

You should incorporate the Articles of Faith into your lessons and encourage each child to memorize the Articles of Faith before advancing from Primary. Use every opportunity to help the children memorize and understand the Articles of Faith.

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**Understanding Children Eight through Eleven Years of Age**

To help children learn and gain self-confidence, you need to understand their needs and characteristics and plan appropriate activities and classes. For more information about characteristics of children this age, see *Teaching—No Greater Call* (33043), pages 37–38.

**Characteristics****Physical**

- Has periods of fast and slow growth
- May be awkward
- Enjoys playing in groups

**Mental**

- Is eager to learn
- Thinks about past experiences
- Begins to base decisions on logic
- Wants to know why
- Is judgmental
- Worships heroes
- Becomes more accountable
- Likes memory work



## Social

- Begins to move from a dislike for the opposite sex to a desire for more interactions between boys and girls
- Enjoys both group and individual time
- Feels a strong need for independence
- Develops an expanded sense of humor
- Gains interest in others

## Emotional

- Dislikes criticism
- May demonstrate inappropriate behavior if there are peer problems
- Becomes more dependable and trustworthy
- Is conscious about being fair
- Begins to have doubts about his or her self-worth
- Becomes less domineering and less determined to have his or her own way

## Spiritual

- Enjoys learning and practicing gospel principles
- Is influenced by the testimonies of others
- Grows in readiness to understand gospel principles
- Has a strong sense of right and wrong

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### **Special Guidelines for Including Those with Disabilities**

The Savior set the example for us in feeling and showing compassion for those 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 are probably not trained to give professional assistance, 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, intellectual impairments, language or speech problems, vision or hearing loss, behavioral 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 read, 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 *Salt Lake Distribution Center Catalog*).

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### **Dealing with Problems of Abuse**

As a teacher you may become aware of children in your class who suffer from emotional or physical abuse. If you become concerned about a child in your class, please counsel with your bishop. As you prepare and present lessons, pray for the Lord's guidance and direction. Help each child in your class feel that he or she is a precious child of Heavenly Father and that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ love each of us and want us to be happy and safe.