

Book of Mormon

TEACHER RESOURCE MANUAL



**Prepared by the
Church Educational System**

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INTRODUCTION TO THE *BOOK OF MORMON* TEACHER RESOURCE MANUAL

“The objective of religious education in the Church Educational System is to assist the individual, the family, and priesthood leaders in accomplishing the mission of the Church” (*Teaching the Gospel: A Handbook for CES Teachers and Leaders* [1994], 3). The first area of emphasis in meeting this objective is to teach students the gospel of Jesus Christ as it is found in the standard works and the words of the prophets. This manual is provided to help you accomplish that—whatever your teaching experience and in whatever language or country you teach.

The second area of emphasis is to teach by precept, by example, and by the power of the Spirit. To teach by precept you must first seek, “by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118), to understand the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. To teach by example you must live the gospel in your personal life. Regarding teaching by the Spirit, Elder Boyd K. Packer, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught: “Power comes when a teacher has done all that he can to prepare, not just the individual lesson, but in keeping his life in tune with the Spirit. If he will learn to rely on the Spirit for inspiration, he can go before his class . . . secure in the knowledge that he can teach with inspiration” (*Teach Ye Diligently* [1975], 306). The power Elder Packer spoke of is manifest as a teacher bears personal testimony of the principle or doctrine being taught.

How to Use This Manual

The scriptures are to be your primary source as you prepare your lessons. To help you with your scripture study and in preparing your lessons, you should have the following manuals:

- This manual—*Book of Mormon Teacher Resource Manual* (item no. 34588)
- The home-study seminary student manual—*Book of Mormon Student Study Guide* (item no. 34187)
- The support materials for the Book of Mormon video series—*Book of Mormon Video Guide* (item no. 34810)
- The institute manual—*Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122* (item no. 32506)

These manuals do not replace your study of the scriptures, nor do they substitute for the guidance of the Holy Ghost as you prepare to teach your students. They are additional resources for your lesson preparation. In particular, the *Book of Mormon Teacher Resource Manual* provides introductory information to the scripture blocks, outlines important gospel principles to look for, and suggests ways many of those principles might be taught so as to help students understand them and apply them in their lives.

“The CES administration has determined that in the CES weekday setting, where more time is available for instruction,

the scriptures should be taught in a sequential manner. One of the best ways to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ is to teach the scriptures sequentially. *Sequential scripture teaching* is teaching the scriptures in the sequence they appear in the standard works” (*Teaching the Gospel*, 20; see that page for more information on sequential scripture teaching). This manual follows the sequence of the scriptures but does not provide teaching helps for all of the verses in each scripture block. Additional helps are found in the institute student manual and the seminary student study guide.

Teaching the Gospel: A Handbook for CES Teachers and Leaders (item no. 34829) gives detailed help on teaching a CES class. You should become very familiar with its contents. The following general suggestions may be helpful in your lesson preparation.

Prepare Yourself to Study and Teach the Gospel

- Live the gospel.
- Pray for the Spirit to guide you as you study, as you prepare, and as you teach.
- Exercise faith in the Lord, in the power of the Spirit, and in the power of the scriptures to meet the needs of your students.

Decide What You Will Teach

- Decide what portion of the scriptures you want to cover in your lesson. This manual is divided into scripture blocks that indicate where the story line or the subject changes. The pacing guide on pages 5–6 can help you determine how much material to cover each day or week.
- Study the scripture block thoroughly. Read it several times, making note of the doctrines, principles, events, and difficult words or phrases. This manual, the institute student manual, and the student study guide will help you understand the scripture block and decide what is important for your students. You will be more effective in your teaching if *you* have discovered something inspiring in the scripture block. You might then lead your students to make a similar discovery.
- Choose those doctrines, principles, and events that are most important for your students to know. Let the promptings of the Spirit and the needs of your students guide you as you decide what to teach.

Decide How You Will Teach

- Choose one or more teaching methods for each event, principle, or doctrine you want to teach. Use your own methods or those suggested in the curriculum materials.



- Choose methods that encourage student readiness, participation, and application.
 1. *Readiness* means that students are prepared spiritually and intellectually, alert, focused, and willing to participate in the learning experience. “Readiness is a condition of the heart as well as the mind” (*Teaching the Gospel*, 13). It is not a gimmick used to start a lesson; it is a continual assessment of your students’ focus.
 2. *Participation* means that students are involved in the learning process. Their participation may be physical, emotional, and intellectual, as well as spiritual. The more involved students are in the learning process, the more they will understand, remember, and apply.
 3. *Application* means that students accept the ideas being taught, understand how they can apply them in their lives, and then seek to live according to those principles.

How This Manual Is Organized

The resource materials for the scripture blocks are found in four sections.

Introductory Material

The “Introduction” section provides background material and other information to help you understand the scripture block in its historical and scriptural setting. Introductory material is also provided for each book of scripture. These, together with background information in the student study guide and the institute student manual, can enhance your own study and understanding of the scriptures.

You can also use the introductory material to provide:

- Motivating questions to ask your students and promote learner readiness.
- Background information, things for students to look for as they read, and other prereading helps.
- Quotations to display or write on the board, or notes for the students to write in their scriptures.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

You may find many important doctrines and principles in a scripture block. The “Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For” section lists many of those you might want to teach your students. The following are ways to use them in your teaching:

- Use them as a standard to ensure that correct doctrine is being taught.
- Use them to help determine what your students need to be taught.
- Write them on the board to give students principles to look for as they study the scripture block.

- Invite students to look for additional scripture references that support or explain the doctrine.


Additional Resources

The “Additional Resources” section provides corresponding page numbers in the Book of Mormon institute student manual to help you locate resource information. References to materials in the appendix are also included.


Suggestions for Teaching

The “Suggestions for Teaching” section contains teaching ideas you may want to consider as you decide how to teach the events, principles, and doctrines you have chosen from the scripture block. You are not required to use these teaching suggestions. They are provided as a resource for you as you consider the needs of your students with the direction of the Spirit. You will also find useful suggestions in the student study guide that can be adapted for use in the classroom (see “An Introduction for Teachers to the *Book of Mormon Student Study Guide*,” p. 3).


The headings for the teaching suggestions include the following information:

- **Statement of Focus.** Introducing each suggestion is a section in bold type that tells the scripture block and principle that particular teaching suggestion focuses on. These statements of focus often correspond to the principles found in the “Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For” section of the scripture block.
-  **Scripture Mastery.** Teaching suggestions that include scripture mastery passages are identified with the icon shown here. President Howard W. Hunter, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve, said, “We would hope none of your students would leave your classroom fearful or embarrassed or ashamed that they cannot find the help they need because they do not know the scriptures well enough to locate the proper passages” (*The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, ed. Clyde J. Williams [1997], 187).

“Scripture mastery” is a method for teaching students how to find scripture verses, gain an understanding of their meaning, and apply them in their lives. One hundred scriptural passages—twenty-five for each scripture course—have been chosen to receive special emphasis in seminary. These references are labeled “Scripture Mastery” in the teaching suggestions where they are found. You should help students master the scripture mastery references by reviewing them in class and encouraging students to learn them on their own. For suggestions on how to encourage scripture mastery in your classes, as well as a list of the scripture mastery references for all four courses of study, see “Scripture Mastery” and “Scripture Mastery Lists” in the appendix (pp. 285–86; see also *Teaching the Gospel*, pp. 34–35).

-  **Weekly Icon.** This icon identifies teaching suggestions recommended for a teacher in a home-study program or one who wants help teaching larger blocks of scripture.
- **Time Designation.** At the end of the heading is the approximate amount of time it would take to teach that suggestion. It is included only to help you plan your daily lessons and is not an indication of how much time should be spent teaching that suggestion.

Other Teaching Helps

-  **Book of Mormon Video (item no. 53785).** This video package contains presentations to help you teach the Book of Mormon. Teaching suggestions for the *Book of Mormon Video* presentations are found in the *Book of Mormon Video Guide* (item no. 34810). Scripture blocks for which there is a video presentation are designated with the icon shown here and a note at the beginning of the teaching suggestions section.
- **Appendix.** Occasionally a teaching suggestion refers to a chart, harmony, or handout in the appendix that can help you teach that suggestion. These items are referred to by title and page number for your convenience.
- **Gospel Art Picture Kit (item no. 34730).** The 160 color pictures in this package depict scripture and Church history stories and illustrate gospel principles. All pictures used in the teaching suggestions in this manual come from the Gospel Art Picture Kit. The kit is available in ward and branch libraries throughout the Church. *Note:* If you ordered the Gospel Art Picture Kit before 1999, you may also need the Supplement (item no. 34740) to have all 160 pictures.
- **Student Reading of the Book of Mormon.** Encourage students to read the entire Book of Mormon. President Spencer W. Kimball once said: “I find that when I get casual in my relationships with divinity and when it seems that no divine ear is listening and no divine voice is speaking, that I am far, far away. If I immerse myself in the scriptures the distance narrows and the spirituality returns” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 135).

Encourage your students to follow the assignments in the “Book of Mormon Reading Chart” in the *Book of Mormon Student Study Guide*. (You may need to adapt this chart to your school year.) This will help them pace their reading to correspond with class activities.

Students who want to read ahead may do so, but encourage them to review the scripture block the class will be studying during the week. Using the reading chart will challenge you to pace yourself during the year so you can teach the entire Book of Mormon.

- **Students with Special Needs.** “Special needs” is a general term used to identify students of unique circumstances. It may include those with reading or learning disabilities,

behavioral disorders, and intellectual disabilities. It may also include those who are incarcerated, attending alternative schools, confined to wheelchairs, homebound, hearing or visually impaired, and so forth.

The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “All the minds and spirits that God ever sent into the world are susceptible of enlargement” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 354). You should make every reasonable effort to meet the learning needs of all your students. It may not be possible to meet all the needs of all the students all the time. You can, however, be aware of the special needs of your students and adapt the regular curriculum materials so that all students can gain something from at least part of each lesson. Other students can also be given the opportunity to help students with special needs. Such selfless service is a blessing to both the giver and the receiver.

In addition to the regular curriculum materials, other materials are available to help teach those with special needs. The *Church Educational System Publications Catalog* lists the Beginning Course, a highly visual, simplified curriculum for students on a second- to fourth-grade reading level. The catalog also includes items in braille and on audiocassette or videocassette. (For these and related materials, see “Specialized Curriculum” in the subject index.) Note that all new CES videos produced for the classroom are closed-captioned. In addition to the CES catalog, the *Church Materials Catalog* includes many helpful items for students with special needs (see especially the “Audiocassettes”; “Disabilities, Materials for Members with”; “Videocassettes”; and “Videocassettes, American Sign Language” sections in the subject index). The Church magazines are good sources for articles, pictures, and ideas that may relate to the special needs of your students. The Gospel Art Picture Kit is another source of pictures that may help you in your teaching.

An Introduction for Teachers to the *Book of Mormon Student Study Guide*

The *Book of Mormon Student Study Guide* helps students read the Book of Mormon and then ponder and apply its teachings. It is required for the home-study program, but most daily teachers will also find it useful in their preparation and teaching.

Use in the Home-Study Seminary Program

Seminary is a five-day-a-week program (or its equivalent) throughout the school year. Because home-study seminary classes meet only once a week, home-study students should use the student study guide the other four days. Although all students are encouraged to read the scriptures daily, home-study students should understand that they are expected to spend 30–40 minutes a day for four school days each week working on the activities and assignments in the study guide.

Students do not write in their study guides. Use one of the following options for written assignments:

- Have each student do the written work on pages in a loose-leaf notebook and submit the pages completed each week. When you return the work, the student can put the pages back in the notebook.
- Have each student use two notebooks and alternate between them. The first week, the student works in one notebook and submits it to you when class is held. The next week the student writes in the other notebook, and then exchanges it in class for the first notebook, and so on.

After you collect the students' work each week, read it and write comments to the students. This is an excellent way for you to get to know your students and determine how well they are understanding their studies. You can help motivate your students by inviting them to share some of what they wrote in their notebooks as part of the weekly class lessons.

Grading the Student Notebooks

There is no answer sheet for checking the activities in the student study guide. Some of the answers are found in the scriptures and should be apparent to you as you familiarize yourself with each activity. Other answers are based on the students' ideas, experiences, opinions, and testimonies. In these cases there may not be a single correct answer. Evaluate and grade students on the degree of effort made based on their abilities. As you write your comments, correct any misunderstandings or answers that are clearly incorrect, and praise students for their effort.

Be sensitive to students with special needs and adapt the student study guide accordingly. For example, students with disabilities that make writing difficult might be allowed to use a tape recorder to record their work or have friends or family members write for them. You may need to adapt the number of study activities assigned to some students because of special needs. Other students may be advanced and could be encouraged to go beyond the minimum requirements.

Use in the Daily Seminary Program

The *Book of Mormon Student Study Guide* is not required for students in daily seminary programs, but you should provide a desk copy for each student. You can then have students refer to the "Understanding the Scriptures" sections for help in understanding difficult words and phrases and for quotations and explanations.

While preparing lessons, look at the introduction to each scripture block and the "Studying the Scriptures" section for help in deciding what and how to teach. For example, some of the introductions provide discussion questions that help create learner readiness. Occasionally you may want to have students do one of the "Studying the Scriptures" activities during class and then have them share what they wrote, either in groups or with the entire class. Even when the activities are not followed exactly as prescribed in the study guide, they may provide good ideas that can be adapted for use in a classroom setting.

PACING YOUR TEACHING OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

As with the other standard works, there is not enough time in a school year to discuss every verse in the Book of Mormon. The challenge is to pace your teaching. If you move slowly and spend too much time teaching 1 Nephi or 3 Nephi, you will miss the messages of Ether and Moroni. If you move too fast, your students may not understand and appreciate significant parts of the Book of Mormon. Use this pacing guide to help you decide how much you need to cover each day and week and what chapters to assign your students to read.

Because there are many types of seminary programs throughout the world, it is not possible to organize this manual to fit every situation. You may need to adapt this 36-week guide to your program and the needs of your students.

Seminary is taught five days per week, but lesson material is provided for only four days, to allow time for interruptions such as school activities and assemblies, special seminary activities and presentations, scripture mastery, and tests and quizzes. You may choose to spend more than one day to teach a scripture block more effectively. This flexibility is meant to encourage you to seek the direction of the Spirit to meet the specific needs of your students.

Teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to the youth of the Church is a sacred trust and a joyous duty. May the Lord bless you and your students this year as you study the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ.

Pacing Guide for a 36-Week School Year

Week	Suggested Scripture Block to Be Taught
1	Day 1–2: “Plan of Salvation Overview” and “Overview of the Book of Mormon” Day 3–4: “The Title Page of the Book of Mormon” and “The Introduction to the Book of Mormon”
2	Day 1: 1 Nephi 1 Day 2: 1 Nephi 2–3 Day 3: 1 Nephi 4 Day 4: 1 Nephi 5
3	Day 1: 1 Nephi 6–7 Day 2: 1 Nephi 8–9 Day 3–4: 1 Nephi 10–15
4	Day 1: 1 Nephi 16 Day 2: 1 Nephi 17–18 Day 3: 1 Nephi 19 Day 4: 1 Nephi 20–22
5	Day 1–2: 2 Nephi 1–2 Day 3–4: 2 Nephi 3–5
6	Day 1: 2 Nephi 6 Day 2: 2 Nephi 7–8 Day 3–4: 2 Nephi 9–10
7	Day 1: 2 Nephi 11 Day 2–4: 2 Nephi 12–24
8	Day 1: 2 Nephi 25 Day 2: 2 Nephi 26–27 Day 3: 2 Nephi 28 Day 4: 2 Nephi 29–30
9	Day 1: 2 Nephi 31 Day 2: 2 Nephi 32 Day 3: 2 Nephi 33 Day 4: Jacob 1
10	Day 1: Jacob 2 Day 2: Jacob 3–4 Day 3: Jacob 5 Day 4: Jacob 6–7

Week	Suggested Scripture Block to Be Taught
11	Day 1: Enos Day 2: Jarom, Omni, Words of Mormon Day 3–4: Mosiah 1–3
12	Day 1: Mosiah 4 Day 2: Mosiah 5–6 Day 3: Mosiah 7–8 Day 4: Mosiah 9–10
13	Day 1: Mosiah 11–12 Day 2–3: Mosiah 13–15 Day 4: Mosiah 16–17
14	Day 1: Mosiah 18 Day 2: Mosiah 19–22 Day 3: Mosiah 23–24 Day 4: Mosiah 25–26
15	Day 1: Mosiah 27 Day 2: Mosiah 28–29 Day 3: Alma 1–2 Day 4: Alma 3–4
16	Day 1–2: Alma 5 Day 3: Alma 6–7 Day 4: Alma 8
17	Day 1: Alma 9–10 Day 2: Alma 11 Day 3–4: Alma 12–13
18	Day 1–2: Alma 14–16 Day 3–4: Alma 17–19
19	Day 1: Alma 17–19 (continued) Day 2: Alma 20 Day 3: Alma 21–22 Day 4: Alma 23–26
20	Day 1: Alma 27–29 Day 2: Alma 30 Day 3–4: Alma 31–32

Week	Suggested Scripture Block to Be Taught
21	Day 1–2: Alma 33–34 Day 3: Alma 35–36 Day 4: Alma 37–38
22	Day 1: Alma 39 Day 2: Alma 40 Day 3: Alma 41 Day 4: Alma 42
23	Day 1: Alma 43–45 Day 2: Alma 46–49 Day 3: Alma 50–53 Day 4: Alma 54–58
24	Day 1: Alma 59–63 Day 2: Helaman 1–2 Day 3: Helaman 3–4 Day 4: Helaman 5–6
25	Day 1–2: Helaman 7–9 Day 3: Helaman 10–11 Day 4: Helaman 12
26	Day 1: Helaman 13 Day 2: Helaman 14 Day 3: Helaman 15–16 Day 4: 3 Nephi 1–2
27	Day 1: 3 Nephi 3–4 Day 2: 3 Nephi 5–7 Day 3: 3 Nephi 8–10 Day 4: 3 Nephi 11
28	Day 1: 3 Nephi 12 Day 2: 3 Nephi 13 Day 3: 3 Nephi 14 Day 4: 3 Nephi 15

Week	Suggested Scripture Block to Be Taught
29	Day 1: 3 Nephi 16 Day 2: 3 Nephi 17 Day 3: 3 Nephi 18 Day 4: 3 Nephi 19–20
30	Day 1: 3 Nephi 21 Day 2: 3 Nephi 22–23 Day 3: 3 Nephi 24–25 Day 4: 3 Nephi 26
31	Day 1–2: 3 Nephi 27–30 Day 3: 4 Nephi Day 4: Mormon 1–2
32	Day 1: Mormon 3–5 Day 2: Mormon 6–7 Day 3: Mormon 8 Day 4: Mormon 9
33	Day 1–2: Ether 1–2 Day 3: Ether 3 Day 4: Ether 4–6
34	Day 1: Ether 7–8 Day 2: Ether 9–11 Day 3: Ether 12 Day 4: Ether 13–15
35	Day 1–2: Moroni 1–6 Day 3–4: Moroni 7
36	Day 1: Moroni 8 Day 2: Moroni 9 Day 3–4: Moroni 10

PLAN OF SALVATION OVERVIEW

Introduction

In 1993 Elder Boyd K. Packer, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, told teachers in the Church Educational System that they should give an overview of the plan of salvation at the beginning of every school year. The following teaching suggestions refer frequently to Elder Packer's talk "The Great Plan of Happiness," parts of which are included with other helps in the appendix. Please refer to it as you prepare to teach the plan of salvation to your students (see "The Great Plan of Happiness," pp. 287–90).

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

Note: Prayerfully study these introductory materials and consider the principles in this section before preparing your lessons.

- Heavenly Father is a glorified, perfected, celestial Father who possesses a fulness of joy (see Mosiah 4:9; 3 Nephi 28:10).
- We lived with Heavenly Father before we came to earth. We are His spirit children and He wants us to have the same joy that He has by becoming like Him (see Jeremiah 1:5; Hebrews 12:9).
- In order to become like God, we must have a resurrected, glorified physical body and we must grow to acquire the qualities of godhood (see Alma 11:43–44; Job 19:26; 3 Nephi 27:27; D&C 130:22).
- Our mortal life on earth is designed to help us gain godly attributes. It provides us with the opportunity to gain a physical body and learn the lessons of godhood by having the freedom to choose to follow the counsel of God or the enticements of Satan (see Genesis 2:16–17; 2 Nephi 2:25–27; Alma 34:32–34).
- The Creation of the earth and the Fall of Adam brought about the necessary conditions of mortality, including spiritual and physical death and a world where there is toil, pain, and sorrow (see Genesis 2:17; 3:6–7; 2 Nephi 2:15–25).
- The Atonement of Jesus Christ provides for the Resurrection so that everyone will receive an immortal physical body (see Job 19:25–27; Ezekiel 37:12–14; Alma 11:42–45; 42:23).
- The Atonement can also cleanse us from personal sins through our repentance and enable us to obtain eternal life and become like God (see Isaiah 1:18; 2 Nephi 10:24–25; Mosiah 3:19; Moroni 10:32–33).
- In every dispensation, Jesus Christ has sent prophets to teach His gospel to God's children on earth. The Church of Jesus Christ has been established in these latter days to invite all to come unto Christ and partake of His plan of happiness (see Amos 3:7; Alma 12:32–34; D&C 1:1–14).

Additional Resources

- "The Great Plan of Happiness," pp. 287–90.

Suggestions for Teaching

Note: Choose from the ideas in this section, or use some of your own, as you prepare to teach the assigned topic. The four teaching suggestions for the plan of salvation overview will be the same for each of the four scripture courses. It is recommended that you teach a different one to your students each year.



Plan of Salvation Overview: Suggestion 1.

(90–120 minutes)

Help the students visualize the plan of salvation (the plan of happiness) by stretching a string from one wall of your classroom to the other. Hang a paper clip over the string so that it can easily slide along the string. Prepare two identical figures, one of clear plastic and another of white paper, that can be attached to the paper clip.

Tell students that the string represents the line of our lives and that one end of the string represents our past and the other our future. The clear plastic figure represents our spirit body, and the white paper figure represents our physical body. Move the paper clip along the string and add the figures to it as you discuss our progression from premortal past to postmortal future. When you discuss death, separate the clear plastic figure from the white paper one. Ask questions such as those listed in the following sections as you teach the plan of happiness, and use the information in the appendix as needed. It is usually preferable to let the students discover as many of the answers as they can by letting them search the suggested scripture references.

Premortal life

- Where does the life line begin and end? (see D&C 93:29; Abraham 3:18; "Spiritual Creation," p. 288). Explain that the line of our lives actually extends beyond the walls of the room and continues forever in both directions. Our lives did not have a beginning, and they will have no end.
- What do you know about your Father in Heaven and your life with Him before you were born on earth? (see "Premortal Existence," p. 287).
- What does it mean to be a spirit child of God? (see "Premortal Existence," p. 287; "Spiritual Creation," p. 288).
- Since we lived with Heavenly Father in the premortal world and we were immortal, why didn't we stay there? (see "Agency," "The Grand Council and the War in Heaven," p. 288).
- What do we know about the differences between Heavenly Father's plan and Lucifer's alternative? (see Moses 4:1–4; "The Grand Council and the War in Heaven," p. 288).

- Why do you think the Lord prizes the freedom to choose (agency) so much that He would even allow Lucifer and his followers to rebel and start a war in heaven? (see “Agency,” p. 288).

Mortal life

- Since Satan will eventually be cast into outer darkness, why did God allow him and his followers to come to earth and tempt us? (see D&C 29:39).
- Why was it necessary for us to come to a physical earth and get a physical body? (see D&C 93:33–34; Moses 1:39; “The Grand Council and the War in Heaven,” “Physical Creation,” p. 288).
- What were the consequences of the transgression of Adam and Eve? Why was the Fall of Adam and Eve necessary? (see 2 Nephi 2:19–25; “The Fall and Mortality,” p. 288).
- Why was a Redeemer chosen even in premortality? What would result if there were no Redeemer? (see 2 Nephi 9:7–10; “The Grand Council and the War in Heaven,” p. 288; “The Atonement,” p. 289).
- Why did Jehovah (Jesus Christ) need to come to earth and take upon Himself a mortal body? (see “The Atonement,” p. 289).
- Since we face so much temptation in the world today, what can we do in cooperation with the Lord to change our natures and resist evil? (see 1 Nephi 2:16; Mosiah 3:19; 4:1–3; 5:1–2; Ether 12:27).

Postmortal life

- What is the difference between physical death and spiritual death? How are we rescued from each one? What is our part in overcoming spiritual death? (see 2 Nephi 9:6–23; Alma 40:11–14; D&C 29:40–44; “The Mission of the Church and the Principles and Ordinances of the Gospel,” “The Atonement,” p. 289; “The Spirit World,” p. 290).
- Where do we go upon death? What important works that we know of are going on in the spirit world? (see Alma 40:11–14; D&C 138:11–37; “The Spirit World,” p. 290).
- Who is the Great Judge? When will we be judged? Is there more than one judgment? (see “Judgment,” p. 290).
- For what will we be judged? By what standard will we be judged? (see Mosiah 2:36–41; Alma 41:3–7; D&C 82:3; “Judgment,” p. 290).
- What possibilities are available to those who don’t hear about the gospel in this life? (see D&C 138:1–37; “Judgment,” p. 290).
- What will we be like when we are resurrected? (see Alma 11:42–45; “Judgment,” “Resurrection,” p. 290).
- What is our ultimate destiny and what can we become if we follow the “great plan of happiness”? (see D&C 76:50–70).
- Why couldn’t our Father in Heaven bestow godhood upon us without our having to go through this mortal experience? (see Alma 34:32–34).

Consider leaving the string up for a time and referring to it as needed to help students see how the truths they are learning fit into the plan.

Ask students how a knowledge of the plan helps them understand why the Lord commands certain things and forbids others. Choose a commandment that some young people in your area seem to struggle with (perhaps honesty, chastity, or Sabbath observance) and ask students why keeping that commandment makes sense when you understand the plan of happiness.

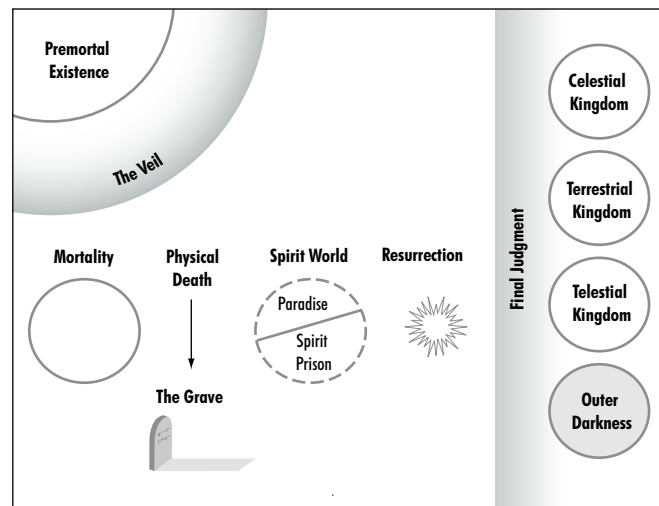
Share your testimony of the beauty of the plan and the importance of remembering why we are here and what the Lord has done to help us return to Him.



Plan of Salvation Overview: Suggestion 2.

(90–100 minutes)

A diagram such as the one below can be used to teach the plan of salvation. This method is good for teaching the plan visually but does not teach the chronology as well as suggestion 1.



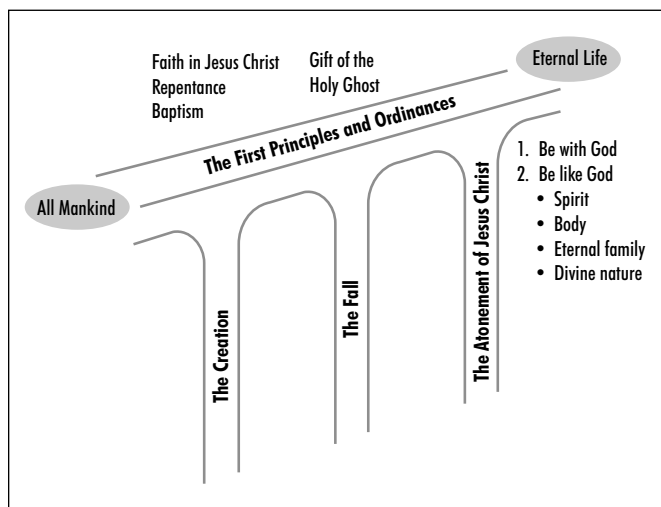
Ask questions such as those listed in suggestion 1 as you draw the diagram on the board (or you could use a handout) and discuss the elements of the plan of salvation. Draw arrows to indicate our progression through the stages of our existence, according to the plan. Where possible, let the students discover the answers to the questions by searching the suggested scripture references. Consider displaying the chart in the classroom so you can refer to it throughout the year.



Plan of Salvation Overview: Suggestion 3.

(60–70 minutes)

A simple yet effective way to review the plan of salvation that emphasizes the importance of mortality is to use an illustration of a bridge. Draw the accompanying diagram on the board or on a poster. Leave the labels off at first and write them in as your students discover the elements of the plan as you study the scriptures together.



Show students the bridge and ask: What purpose does a bridge serve that a road alone cannot? (It helps you cross a canyon or gap.) Read Abraham 3:22 with your students and help them understand where we were before we came to earth. Then read Moses 1:39 to help them understand what Heavenly Father is seeking to bring to pass, or where He wants to take us. (*Immortality* means to live forever as resurrected beings; *eternal life* means to be with God and be like Him; see “Premortal Existence,” p. 287; “Spiritual Creation,” “Agency,” p. 288.) Write *All Mankind* at the lower end of the bridge and *Eternal Life*, with its definition, at the other end.

Ask the following questions:

- Why were we encouraged to leave the premortal world and come to this earth?
- What “gap” or “canyon” (what differences) existed between Heavenly Father and us when we lived with Him as His spirit children?

Help students discover that although we lived with Heavenly Father and were His children, in many ways we were not yet like Him (see 3 Nephi 12:48; D&C 76:70; 88:41; 130:22; “Premortal Existence,” p. 287).

Tell students that the pillars supporting the bridge represent what Heavenly Father has brought about to help us become like Him, and the span on top of the pillars represents what we are to do. Have your students read Abraham 3:24–27 to find what Heavenly Father did for us; then discuss why that was necessary (see “Agency,” “The Grand Council and the War in Heaven,” “Physical Creation,” p. 288). Write *The Creation* on the first pillar.

Ask students:

- What do you think the second pillar represents?
- After the physical creation of the earth, what part did Adam and Eve play to prepare the way for us to become more like Heavenly Father? (see 2 Nephi 2:22–25; “The Fall and Mortality,” p. 288).

Write *The Fall* on the second pillar and discuss briefly how the Fall brought opposition, sin, and death into the world.

Ask students: What would happen to us physically and spiritually if everything remained in a fallen condition? Read 2 Nephi 9:6–10 and discuss what God did to help us overcome the effects of the Fall (see “The Atonement,” p. 289). Ask what the third pillar represents and label it *The Atonement of Jesus Christ*. Ask:

- Why can Jesus Christ promise to redeem us from our sins?
- On what conditions can we be forgiven of our sins and bring about the plan of redemption in our lives? (see Alma 42:9–15).

Have students read Helaman 14:15–17, and ask: What blessings of the Atonement are given to all mankind regardless of how they live? (The Resurrection and being brought back into God’s presence for judgment.) There are other blessings that are given only to those who earnestly seek them and live by His gospel. Have students read Articles of Faith 1:3–4 and list the first things God requires us to do to be forgiven of our own sins and to be perfected (see also “The Mission of the Church and the Principles and Ordinances of the Gospel,” p. 289).

Finish labeling the bridge as in the diagram and ask students how understanding the plan of salvation helps them understand why we are commanded to do some things and forbidden to do others. Choose commandments that some young people in your area might be struggling with, and discuss what the plan teaches us about why God has given us those commandments.

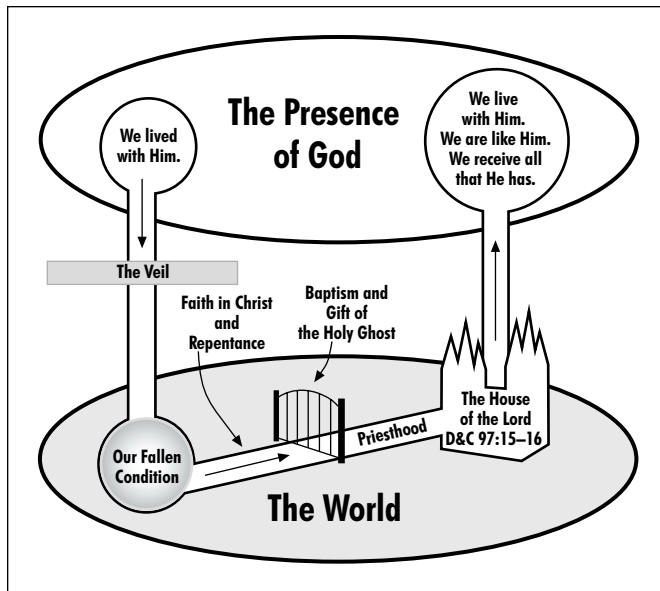
Read to your students Elder Boyd K. Packer’s statement in “Judgment” (p. 290) and share your testimony of the “great plan of happiness” that Heavenly Father has prepared for His children.



Plan of Salvation Overview: Suggestion 4.

(40–45 minutes)

Prepare the accompanying diagram as a handout for each student or as an overhead transparency. Review with students that we once lived in the presence of God (see “Premortal Existence,” p. 287) and the circumstances that brought us to our fallen condition (see “The Fall and Mortality,” p. 288).



Ask students:

- Where does the strait and narrow path lead?
- What has our Heavenly Father given us to help us stay faithfully on the path?

Invite a student to read the following statement by Elder Orson F. Whitney, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, to help them understand the seriousness of our fallen condition and the only way we can be freed from it:

“When Adam fell, it was as if the human race had fallen into a pit, from which they were powerless, by any act of their own, to emerge; having no means whereby to climb up and out, and not even knowing how to climb. But a Friend, all-wise and all-powerful, comes to the mouth of the pit . . . and proposes to rescue them from their unhappy situation. *He makes of his own life a ladder*; lets it down into the pit and says: ‘Now climb!’ They who climb, get out of the pit. They who refuse to climb, remain in the pit—and who is to blame but themselves?” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1927, 149).

Have students, individually or in groups, study the following questions to help them discover how the Atonement of Jesus Christ and the principles and ordinances of the gospel provide the way for us to overcome our fallen condition:

- What is the path that leads us out of our fallen condition? What are the first steps we must take to get on that path? (see 2 Nephi 31:17–19; “The Mission of the Church and the Principles and Ordinances of the Gospel,” p. 289).
- What are some of the ways the gift of the Holy Ghost helps us overcome our fallen condition and press forward on the path? (see John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13; 3 Nephi 27:20; D&C 45:56–57).
- Who provided and pointed out this path for us? What must we do to stay on it? (see 2 Nephi 31:19–21; “The Atonement,” p. 289).
- In addition to the covenant of baptism, what other ordinances and covenants has Heavenly Father given us to help us rise above our fallen condition? (see D&C 84:33–40; 131:1–4).
- What will we be like when we return to live with Heavenly Father if we have been faithful in making and keeping our sacred covenants? (see 1 John 3:1–4; Moroni 7:48).
- How does a knowledge of the plan of salvation help us understand why we are commanded to pray? to be baptized? to be honest? to be morally clean?
- How does a knowledge of the plan of salvation help us understand why we are commanded to be free from addictive substances? to pay tithing? to serve a mission? to attend the temple?

When students have completed the exercise, invite them to share what they learned with the class. Bear your testimony of all that the plan of salvation means to you. Encourage students to ponder the plan of salvation often and determine how an understanding of it can help them live the gospel in their daily lives. Conclude by reading the following statement by President Hugh B. Brown, who was a member of the First Presidency:

“The leaders of the Church have, from the beginning, taught faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and we acknowledge him as our Savior and Redeemer. It is our duty to teach this to our children . . . and, because they are children of God, [to] teach them to be loyal to the royal spirit that is in them” (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1966, 104).

SCRIPTURE STUDY HELPS

Study Helps in the LDS Edition of the King James Bible

In 1979 the Church published a Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Version of the Bible in English. Included in this edition were numerous helps to make a study of the scriptures more meaningful and rewarding. Speaking of this new edition of the scriptures, Elder Boyd K. Packer, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, testified: “This work . . . will one day emerge as a signal inspired event of our generation. Because of it, we shall raise up generations of Latter-day Saints who will know the gospel and know the Lord” (*Bruce R. McConkie, Apostle* [address at the funeral of Elder Bruce R. McConkie, 23 Apr. 1985], 4).

See the section “Study Helps in the Latter-day Saint Editions of the Scriptures” in the *Book of Mormon Student Study Guide* for a detailed explanation of these study helps.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The Latter-day Saint editions of the scriptures contain significant study aids that can help us increase our understanding of the scriptures.

Suggestions for Teaching

Scripture Study Helps. Knowing the names and the order of the books in the Book of Mormon helps us find scripture references more quickly. (10–15 minutes)

Students often enjoy learning the books in the Book of Mormon by singing “The Books in the Book of Mormon” (*Children’s Songbook* [1995], 119). Singing this song several times and then again at the beginning of class each day for about a week could help students quickly learn the books.

Scripture Study Helps. The study helps provided in the Latter-day Saint editions of the scriptures help us get the most out of our scripture study. (40–45 minutes)

The Church has included numerous study helps in the scriptures. These are explained in the “Study Helps in the Latter-day Saint Editions of the Scriptures” section of the student study guide. The following suggestions can help you teach the study helps.

Chapter Headings and Section Introductions. Have students turn to the chapter heading for 1 Nephi 16. Read it and explain that the headings emphasize the main points of each chapter and often present doctrinal insights.

Have students read the chapter headings for the following chapters and answer the accompanying questions:

- Ezekiel 38. What battle will usher in the Second Coming?

- John 1. Who created all things?
- Helaman 6. Who guided the Gadianton robbers in their murders and wickedness?
- Moroni 1. What happened to those Nephites who refused to deny Jesus Christ?
- Abraham 3. How did Abraham learn about the sun, moon, and stars?

Have students examine the two headings for a section of the Doctrine and Covenants. Explain that the first heading contains background information for the section and the second is a synopsis of the section’s contents.

Italicized Words in the Bible. Explain that italicized words in the King James Version of the Bible are words the translator inserted to render a correct English reading. When the Bible was translated from Greek and Hebrew, a direct translation into English was not always possible. It was sometimes necessary to insert words in order for the scriptures to be grammatically correct.

Footnotes. Choose a couple of pages in the Bible that illustrate the several types of footnotes available in the Latter-day Saint editions of the scriptures. Have the students turn to the pages, and share with them the advantages of the footnote system.

- Point out that each verse is independently footnoted and that each footnote in the verse is in alphabetical sequence.
- Show examples of footnotes that point to the Bible Dictionary (BD) and the Topical Guide (TG).
- Show examples of footnotes that give Hebrew (HEB) and Greek (GR) meanings.
- Show examples of footnotes that give modern synonyms and explanations (OR and IE) for archaic or obscure words and phrases in the scriptures.
- Show examples of footnotes that present insights from the Joseph Smith Translation (JST).

Refer to the study helps section in the student study guide for additional help and examples.

Use the following questions to give students an opportunity to practice using the footnotes in the Book of Mormon:

- What does “Nahom” mean in 1 Nephi 16:34? (see footnote 34b).
- Read Jacob 1:4. What does the phrase “engraven the heads of them” refer to? (see footnote 4b).
- Read Alma 36:18. What does it mean to be in the “gall of bitterness”? (see footnote 18b).
- What was the fate of the prophet Zenos, who is referred to in Helaman 15:11? (see footnote 11b).
- Where besides Moroni 4 can we find the blessing on the sacrament bread? (see footnote 1d).

The Joseph Smith Translation. Share with your students the information under “Joseph Smith Translation” in the Bible Dictionary (p. 717). Tell them that not all of the changes from the Joseph Smith Translation are included in the Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Version of the Bible, but more than 600 verses with changes are included. Some verses or passages that are too long to be included as footnotes have been placed in a separate appendix in the Bible.

For examples of Joseph Smith Translation contributions, have your students refer to the JST footnotes for Exodus 4:21 and Amos 7:3 and determine what changes the Prophet made.

Topical Guide. Tell students that they can use the Topical Guide to search more than 750 gospel topics as deeply as they want. Help them understand that this guide contains scripture references from all of the standard works and that it can serve as a concordance or an index. The following exercises can help students become familiar with the Topical Guide:

- Have students select subjects they would like to talk on if asked to speak in a church meeting. Have them use the Topical Guide to find scripture references they could use to prepare their talks.
- Have students turn to the Topical Guide and note the various topic headings about Jesus Christ.

Index to the Triple Combination. Explain that the index in the triple combination is a combined index for the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price and contains numerous references from each on many topics. It is similar to the Topical Guide in the Bible except the index gives a short summary of each scripture reference, while the Topical Guide quotes from each reference. The index also only gives references from the triple combination, while the Topical Guide covers all of the standard works. Note that by searching for key words in the index, students can quickly locate scripture references. One helpful feature of the index is that it identifies people or places with the same name by superscript numbers and gives brief descriptions to differentiate them. Have the class turn to the first page of the index and find out how many men were named Aaron and who each one was.

Bible Dictionary. Look through the Bible Dictionary with the students. Explain that it contains 1,285 biblical topics prepared from a Latter-day Saint point of view. Share several specific topics and point out the following sections:

- Chronological tables (“chronology,” pp. 635–45)
- A harmony of the four Gospels (“Gospels, harmony of,” pp. 684–96)
- An analysis of the Apostle Paul’s letters (“Pauline Epistles,” pp. 743–48)
- Old Testament quotations found in the New Testament (“quotations,” pp. 756–59)

- A list of weights and measures mentioned in the Bible (“weights and measures,” pp. 788–89)

Bible Maps and Photographs. In 1999, the Church added a new maps and photographs section to the Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Bible. Indexes and helps for both the photographs and maps are grouped together at the beginning of the section. The color maps and photographs themselves appear together at the end.

Have students look at several photographs from the back of the Bible Maps and Photographs section and determine what each shows. The photographs in this section depict sites from Bible history. Ask the students to find a photo of the Temple of Herod (no. 9). Refer them to the description of the temple under the “Photographs of Scriptural Sites” heading at the front of the section. Ask them to name three important events that took place at this temple.

Have students turn to the “Maps and Index of Place-Names” heading. The first page of this subsection explains map features. Refer students to the second paragraph for an explanation of how to use the index of place-names. Show them the index, beginning on the next page. The index lists the names of places alphabetically and includes coordinates for locating them on the maps.

Some of the individual maps are accompanied by notes and scripture references related to locations on those maps. Have the students turn to map 12 and the accompanying page of notes. Ask them to find the temple and to identify two events that took place there during the life of Jesus Christ (see note 9).

Church History Chronology, Maps, and Photographs. In 1999, the Church also added new maps and photographs to the triple combination. These features are similar to the corresponding ones in the Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Bible. This section also includes a chronology of Church history events. Have the students turn to this section and find what year and month Joseph Smith completed his translation of the Book of Mormon. Have them turn to map 2 and locate the Joseph Smith Sr. log home. Ask: What important event occurred at this location? (see note 1).

Pronouncing Guide. The pronouncing guide at the end of the Book of Mormon provides a standard for the pronunciation of Book of Mormon names. Encourage the students to become familiar with this guide.

Scripture Study Helps. Using the study aids can help increase our understanding of the scriptures.
(5–10 minutes)

Share the following story from Elder Richard G. Scott, then a member of the Presidency of the Seventy. It illustrates the worth of the study aids in the new editions of the standard works.

"I remember when the new triple combination was introduced to the Brethren. Elder McConkie made the presentation. He held up a book and read from the flyleaf, 'To Bruce R. McConkie.' It was signed 'Amelia' [his future wife] and dated the day he entered the mission home. He said, 'I have carried these scriptures all over the world. I've used them extensively. They have been bound three times. I can tell you the location on the page for many of the scriptures in that book.' He then added, 'But I'm not going to use that book anymore. It does not have the precious teaching aids and powerful tools to enhance study and understanding that are in this new volume.' I was really impressed by that. The next day I had occasion to go into his office. He has a large desk, and there he sat, book in hand, with ruler and red pencil marking the new edition of the scriptures. Well, if someone who knows the scriptures as well as he does finds it worthwhile to use the new edition, I have resolved to do likewise" ("Spiritual Communication," in *Principles of the Gospel in Practice*, Sperry Symposium 1985 [1985], 18–19).

Scripture Study Helps. Help students use what they learned about the scripture study aids.

(30–35 minutes)

After you have taught students about the scripture study aids, have them use the aids to complete the following quiz as a review of what they learned. You may want them to work in groups.

1. Answer the following questions about baptism:

- What does the word *baptism* mean?
- What evidence is there that baptism was practiced before the time of Christ?
- What does baptism symbolize?
- What are four purposes of baptism?

2. Find the meaning of the italicized word in each of the following phrases. Notice how knowing what these words mean brings added understanding to the scripture passages.

- "An help *meet* for him" (Genesis 2:18).
- "Ye *kine* of Bashan" (Amos 4:1).
- "Trucebreakers, false accusers, *incontinent*"

(2 Timothy 3:3).

- "The word of God is *quick*, and powerful" (Hebrews 4:12).

3. List three scripture references for each of the following topics:

- Last days
- Lost scriptures
- Prophecy
- Revelation

4. Answer the following questions after reading the verses and referring to the footnotes:

- Matthew 4:23. Why were those people in Galilee healed?
- Matthew 4:24. What is palsy?
- Matthew 4:25. Where is the region of Decapolis? (see the maps section).
- Matthew 5:3. What are some other meanings of the word *blessed*?
- Matthew 5:3. What does the Book of Mormon add to our understanding of this verse?
- Matthew 5:5. What are some other meanings of the word that was translated as *meek*?

5. Read about Lehi's vision of the tree of life in 1 Nephi 8 and, using the cross-references in the footnotes, identify what the following symbols represent:

- River of water
- Rod of iron
- Mist of darkness
- Great and spacious building

6. Identify the following people and tell where they are mentioned in the scriptures:

- Antionah
- Josiah Butterfield

7. What states, territories, and countries did the Saints travel through during their migrations from New York to the Great Salt Lake Valley?

OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

Introduction

In an address to Church Educational System teachers, Elder Boyd K. Packer, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, said:

“There is great value in presenting a *brief* but very carefully organized overview of the entire course at the very beginning. . . .

“Those few beginning periods, so brief an investment of time by comparison, make it possible for the students to locate themselves anywhere along the way. They have something of a feeling. They retain much more when they know how all of the pieces fit together, and the light of learning shines more brightly. The preview forms a framework and is more than worth the time and work invested in it” (*The Great Plan of Happiness* [address to religious educators at a symposium on the Doctrine and Covenants/Church history, Brigham Young University, 10 Aug. 1993], 2; or *Charge to Religious Educators*, 3rd ed. [1994], 113).

Take the time to develop and teach an introduction to and overview of the Book of Mormon. This will help your students understand the importance of the Book of Mormon and look forward to the materials they will read and learn during the school year. An introduction and overview will strengthen your own and your students’ understanding of the divine mission of Jesus Christ.

What Is the Book of Mormon?

The Book of Mormon is a record of three groups of people that were led by the Lord to the American continent, their promised land. The first group, the Jaredites, left the Old World at the time of the Tower of Babel to escape the confounding of the tongues. Their story is found in the book of Ether. The second group came with father Lehi from Jerusalem during the reign of King Zedekiah. Most of the Book of Mormon is a record of the Nephites and Lamanites, rival nations that descended from Lehi’s family. The third group, sometimes referred to as the Mulekites, arrived in the promised land a few years after Lehi, with a son of Zedekiah named Mulek. They later joined with the Nephites. The Book of Mormon depicts the struggles of these peoples and testifies of the role of Jesus Christ and His gospel in their temporal welfare and spiritual salvation.

The Book of Mormon is an inspired voice from the past with vital messages for today. President Ezra Taft Benson said: “It is not just that the Book of Mormon teaches us truth, though it indeed does that. It is not just that the Book of Mormon bears testimony of Christ, though it indeed does that, too. But there is something more. There is a power in the book which will begin to flow into your lives the moment you begin a serious study of the book. You will find greater power to resist temptation. You will find the power to avoid deception.

You will find the power to stay on the strait and narrow path. The scriptures are called ‘the words of life’ (D&C 84:85), and nowhere is that more true than it is of the Book of Mormon. When you begin to hunger and thirst after those words, you will find life in greater and greater abundance” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 6; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 7).

Why Should We Study the Book of Mormon?

Elder Boyd K. Packer taught:

“The Book of Mormon . . . affirms both the Old and the New Testaments. Here, more details of the doctrines of salvation, lost from them, are revealed.

“In its pages justice and mercy, the Fall and the Atonement, and mortal death and spiritual death are explained. You learn of the frailties and the consummate goodness of men and of peoples.

“You are taught of the still, small voice of personal revelation.

“You read of the appearance of the Lord to his other sheep. And you are promised that he will ‘manifest the truth of [this sacred book] unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost’ (Moroni 10:4)” (in Conference Report, Mar.–Apr. 1990, 50; or *Ensign*, May 1990, 38).

Both ancient and modern prophets have stressed the value of the scriptures in helping us come to know God. Jesus said, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). The Apostle Paul taught Timothy about the value of holy writings:

- They are able to make one “wise unto salvation” (2 Timothy 3:15).
- They are “given by inspiration of God” (v. 16).
- They are “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (v. 16).
- They help the righteous become perfect and “thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (v. 17).

The prophet Mormon wrote:

“Yea, we see that whosoever will may lay hold upon the word of God, which is quick and powerful, which shall divide asunder all the cunning and the snares and the wiles of the devil, and lead the man of Christ in a strait and narrow course across that everlasting gulf of misery which is prepared to engulf the wicked—

“And land their souls, yea, their immortal souls, at the right hand of God in the kingdom of heaven” (Helaman 3:29–30).

The scriptures help us “divide asunder” (overcome) the lies and temptations of the devil and follow a course that will “land” us in (bring us to) the celestial kingdom.

The following doctrines, all taught in the Book of Mormon, show why a careful study of this book is not only meaningful but crucial:

- The Book of Mormon was preserved by God to testify of Jesus Christ.
- Angels have a mission to assist God in redeeming His children.
- God will fulfill His promise to gather scattered Israel and will do so with power.
- All must be spiritually born of God to be saved.
- The Lord extends a hand of mercy to those who repent.
- The only way to perfection is to come unto Christ.
- The Lord will provide a land of promise for His faithful children.
- The natural man is an enemy to God.
- The devil will not support his children in the end.

Consider this challenge given by President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“I would like to urge every man and woman . . . and every boy and girl who is old enough to read to again read the Book of Mormon during this coming year. This was written for the convincing of the Jew and the Gentile that Jesus is the Christ. There is nothing we could do of greater importance than to have fortified in our individual lives an unshakable conviction that Jesus is the Christ, the living Son of the living God. That is the purpose of the coming forth of this remarkable and wonderful book. May I suggest that you read it again and take a pencil, a red one if you have one, and put a little check mark every time there is a reference to Jesus Christ in that book. And there will come to you a very real conviction as you do so that this is in very deed another witness for the Lord Jesus Christ” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [1997], 44).

How Is the Book of Mormon Organized?

The Book of Mormon is a collection of books. The greater part of its pages are an abridgment written by the hand of Mormon. Mormon was a prophet-leader who abridged sacred Nephite records, and it is from him that the Book of Mormon receives its name. In total there are fifteen books in the Book of Mormon. The “Main Sources for the Book of Mormon” chart in the appendix (p. 279) may be helpful in understanding how the Book of Mormon is organized. (See also A Brief Explanation about the Book of Mormon in the introduction to the Book of Mormon.)

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The Book of Mormon was preserved for our day to give us power over temptation, guide us in our daily lives, and help us come to Jesus Christ.

Suggestions for Teaching



Book of Mormon Video presentation 1, “For Our Day,” can be used to introduce the Book of Mormon (see *Book of Mormon Video Guide* for teaching suggestion).

Book of Mormon Overview. The Book of Mormon was preserved for our day to give us power over temptation, guide us in our daily lives, and help us come to Jesus Christ. (30–35 minutes)

Place a Book of Mormon in a box and wrap it. Display the box on a table in front of the class and tell students that it is a valuable gift. Ask:

- What are some of the most valuable gifts you have received?
- What makes a gift valuable?
- How do you feel when you give a gift that is valuable to you and the person receives it with a caring attitude? an uncaring attitude?

Have a student open the gift and look inside without allowing the others to see. Ask the student if the gift inside is valuable. Take the Book of Mormon out of the box and show it to the class. Ask:

- Who gave us this gift?
- What makes this gift valuable?
- Why might a person not be willing to receive this gift?

Invite students to join you in opening this gift from the Lord to discover its value.

Show students the chart on page 279. (You could use an overhead, make handouts, or use the version in “Introductory Pages to the Book of Mormon” in the student study guide.) Have students open their copies of the Book of Mormon to the table of contents and use the chart to help them mark the books by source.

Have students name some of their favorite stories or teachings from the Book of Mormon and tell why they like them.

Tell students that this year they will be studying about real people with real challenges and problems. Ask students to consider the following questions:

- Have you ever been asked to accomplish something that seemed impossible? (This year they will read how the brother of Jared provided light for the vessels that carried his people across the ocean to a promised land.)
- Have you ever been treated unfairly by your brothers or sisters? (They will learn how Nephi struggled with this problem and how the Lord helped him through it.)
- Have you ever been confronted by bullies? (They will discover how Alma and his people trusted in the Lord even though the Amulonites treated them unfairly and threatened to kill them.)

- Are people today tempted to break the law of chastity? (They will learn about how Alma’s son Corianton had to experience the serious consequences of his sins.)

Tell students that the Book of Mormon Saints faced problems much like our own. Remind them that although the Book of Mormon speaks as a voice from the past, its doctrines, histories, and stories are of great value today. The Book of Mormon was written for our day and for our benefit. Invite students to read the following verses and answer the accompanying questions:

- Helaman 5:12. What does the Book of Mormon teach about combating Satan and having power over temptation?
- 2 Nephi 32:3. What does the Book of Mormon teach about receiving guidance in our daily lives?
- Moroni 10:32–33. What does the Book of Mormon teach about coming unto Jesus Christ?
- What evidence do these teachings provide that the Book of Mormon was organized and preserved for our day?

Tell students that, like gifts in boxes, the Book of Mormon can only be discovered and understood as it is opened, carefully

examined, and cherished. Have a student read the following statement by President Joseph Fielding Smith, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“What a sad reflection it is that the Lord, knowing the end from the beginning, predicted that even after the Book of Mormon was published and presented to the world, many of those who had entered into covenant with him in the waters of baptism would think so little of the Book of Mormon, that they would pay no heed to its teachings, and by their indifference and lack of faith, the great blessings which the Lord has in store for the faithful have to be withheld” (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., 5 vols. [1957–66], 4:141).

Ask: What is the relationship between people’s attitudes toward the Book of Mormon and their ability to understand its teachings? Encourage students to approach their study of the Book of Mormon with sincere effort and a prayerful attitude.

THE TITLE PAGE OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

Introduction

According to the Prophet Joseph Smith, “the title-page of the Book of Mormon is a literal translation, taken from the very last leaf, on the left hand side of the collection or book of plates, which contained the record which has been translated, the language of the whole running the same as all Hebrew writing in general; and that said title page is not by any means a modern composition, either of mine or of any other man who has lived or does live in this generation” (*History of the Church*, 1:71).

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

Note: Prayerfully study each assigned scripture block and consider the principles in this section before preparing your lessons.

- The Book of Mormon is another testament of Jesus Christ. It was written to show what great things the Lord does for His children, to explain His covenants, and to convince all people that Jesus is the Christ (see the title page of the Book of Mormon; see also 2 Nephi 26:12).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, p. 1.

Suggestions for Teaching

Note: Choose from the ideas in this section, or use some of your own, as you prepare to teach the assigned scripture block.

Title Page of the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon is another testament of Jesus Christ.

(20–25 minutes)

To help students understand the purpose of the title page of the Book of Mormon, bring to class three or four books with prefaces or introductions. Ask students what the purpose of each book is. Then read the part of the preface that explains the purpose of the book. One good example is *The Miracle of Forgiveness* by Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve. In his preface, Elder Kimball explains:

“This book is not presented to entertain, but rather it has the serious purpose of presenting scriptures, experiences and exhortations with the hope that thereby many will be enticed to repent of their sins and indiscretions and set out to purify and perfect their lives” ([1969], ix).

Have students turn to the title page of the Book of Mormon and look for the purposes of the Book of Mormon. Write their findings on the board. Read the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson:

“The major mission of the Book of Mormon, as recorded on its title page, is ‘to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations.’

“The honest seeker after truth can gain the testimony that Jesus is the Christ as he prayerfully ponders the inspired words of the Book of Mormon.

“Over one-half of all the verses in the Book of Mormon refer to our Lord. Some form of Christ’s name is mentioned more frequently per verse in the Book of Mormon than even in the New Testament.

“He is given over one hundred different names in the Book of Mormon. Those names have a particular significance in describing His divine nature” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1987, 101; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 83).

Ask students if they can give scriptural examples of how the Book of Mormon fulfills its primary mission. As part of the discussion, use the accompanying chart to show that the Book of Mormon is focused on Jesus Christ.

Book of Mormon References to Jesus Christ

Book	References to Names and Titles of Christ	Number of Verses in Book	Number of Verses per Reference
1 Nephi	474	618	1.3
2 Nephi	591	779	1.32
Jacob	156	203	1.3
Enos	22	27	1.23
Jarom	8	15	1.88
Omni	20	30	1.5
Words of Mormon	15	18	1.2
Mosiah	492	785	1.6
Alma	1,013	1,975	1.95
Helaman	225	497	2.21
3 Nephi	293	788	2.69
4 Nephi	42	49	1.17
Mormon	188	227	1.21
Ether	220	433	1.97
Moroni	166	163	0.98
Total	3,925	6,607	1.68

(Adapted from Susan Easton Black, *Finding Christ through the Book of Mormon* [1987], 16.)

Help students understand that the authors of the Book of Mormon make reference to Jesus Christ by one of His names or titles about once every 1.7 verses. By comparison, the New Testament writers use a form of His name an average of once every 2.1 verses (see Susan Easton Black, *Finding Christ through the Book of Mormon* [1987], 15).

As an example of one specific passage that testifies of Jesus Christ, have students read 2 Nephi 25:23–26. Ask: According to these verses, what is the message of the Book of Mormon prophets?

Share your own testimony of the Book of Mormon as a witness for Jesus Christ.

THE INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF MORMON

Introduction

The introduction to the Book of Mormon was not a part of the original plates; it was first published in the 1981 edition of the Book of Mormon. It introduces the Book of Mormon to the modern reader by providing background information and a description of the book.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book” (the introduction to the Book of Mormon).
- The Book of Mormon is evidence that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God and that the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored to the earth (see the introduction).

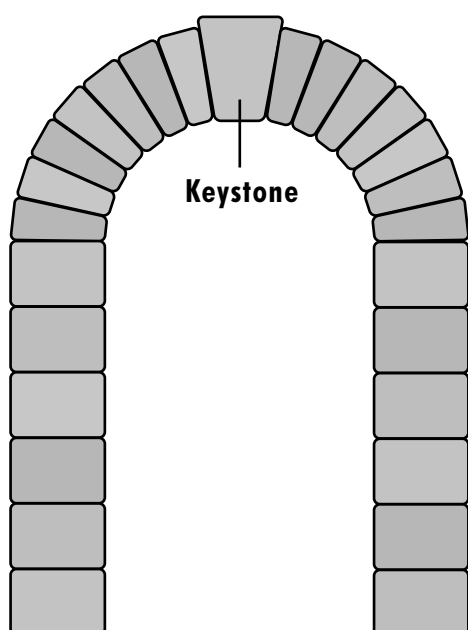
Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 2–3.

Suggestions for Teaching

Introduction. The Book of Mormon is “the keystone of our religion.” (25–30 minutes)

Draw on the board a picture of an arch (see the accompanying diagram), or make a model of one from wood or other materials.



Ask students how the keystone of this arch represents the Book of Mormon in relation to the restored gospel. Ask them to find the “keystone” statement in the Book of Mormon (see the sixth paragraph of the introduction). Read the keystone statement and tell students that the Prophet Joseph Smith made this statement on 28 November 1841 (see *History of the Church*, 4:461).

Ask: What purpose does a keystone serve? Explain that the keystone is the central stone at the top of an arch. When an arch is constructed, the two sides are built up with supports to hold them. The space at the top of the arch is carefully measured, and then the keystone is cut to fit it exactly. When the keystone is put in place, the arch can stand without supports. Ask: What happens to the arch if the keystone is removed? (If you are using a model, demonstrate by removing the keystone.)

Now that the students have a better understanding of the importance of the keystone in an arch, ask them again how the Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion. List responses on the board. (For additional insights, see the commentary for the introduction to the Book of Mormon in *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 2–3.)

Conclude by reading the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson:

“The Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion. This was the Prophet Joseph Smith’s statement. He testified that ‘the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion’ (*History of the Church*, 4:461). A keystone is the central stone in an arch. It holds all the other stones in place, and if removed, the arch crumbles.

“There are three ways in which the Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion. It is the keystone in our witness of Christ. It is the keystone of our doctrine. It is the keystone of testimony.

“The Book of Mormon is the keystone in our witness of Jesus Christ, who is Himself the cornerstone of everything we do. It bears witness of His reality with power and clarity. Unlike the Bible, which passed through generations of copyists, translators, and corrupt religionists who tampered with the text, the Book of Mormon came from writer to reader in just one inspired step of translation. Therefore, its testimony of the Master is clear, undiluted, and full of power. But it does even more. Much of the Christian world today rejects the divinity of the Savior. They question His miraculous birth, His perfect life, and the reality of His glorious resurrection. The Book of Mormon teaches in plain and unmistakable terms about the truth of all of those. It also

provides the most complete explanation of the doctrine of the Atonement. Truly, this divinely inspired book is a keystone in bearing witness to the world that Jesus is the Christ (see title page of the Book of Mormon).

“The Book of Mormon is also the keystone of the doctrine of the Resurrection. As mentioned before, the Lord Himself has stated that the Book of Mormon contains the ‘fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ’ (D&C 20:9). That does not mean it contains every teaching, every doctrine ever revealed. Rather, it means that in the Book of Mormon we will find the fulness of those doctrines required for our salvation. And they are taught plainly and simply so that even children can learn the ways of salvation and exaltation. The Book of Mormon offers so much that broadens our understandings of the doctrines of salvation. Without it, much of what is taught in other scriptures would not be nearly so plain and precious” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 4; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 5–6).

Invite students to write the second paragraph of President Benson’s statement in their copies of the Book of Mormon at the top or bottom of the first page of the introduction. Encourage them to watch for the three ways the Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion as they read the book.

Introduction. The Book of Mormon is “the most correct of any book on earth” and we can get “nearer to God by abiding by its precepts.” (20–25 minutes)

Display several recent books of science, mathematics, fiction, and history. Include in the display a copy of the Book of Mormon. Ask:

- Which of the books in this display is the most correct?
- How is one book more correct than the others?
- In what way is the Book of Mormon the most correct book?

Read the Prophet Joseph Smith’s “keystone” statement from the sixth paragraph of the introduction to the Book of Mormon.

Point out that in each new edition of the Book of Mormon since the first, the Church has included corrections of spelling and typesetting errors. Ask: How could the Book of Mormon be the most correct book if it contained these kinds of errors? Write responses on the board. These might include:

- The Book of Mormon contains the “fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ” (D&C 20:9).

- “A man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book” (introduction).
- The Book of Mormon testifies that Jesus is the Christ (see title page).

The following statement by President Joseph Fielding Smith, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve, might be helpful in answering this question:

“There were bound to be some typographical errors in the first edition [of the Book of Mormon], and perhaps an omission of a word or two. Those who have published books under the most careful and favorable circumstances, have, to their dismay, found errors, typographical and mechanical, some of which occurred after the final examination of proof has been made.

“. . . A careful check of the list of changes . . . shows there is not one change or addition that is not in full harmony with the original text. Changes have been made in punctuation and a few other minor matters that needed correction, but never has any alteration or addition changed a single original thought. As it appears to us, the changes . . . are such that make the text clearer and indicate that they were omitted. I am sure that the mistakes or omissions in the first edition were in large measure the fault of the compositor or the printer. *Many of these mistakes which were in the first proofs were caught by the Prophet Joseph Smith himself, and he made the corrections*” (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, 2:199–200).

Point to the display of books and ask: Does owning these books on science, math, and history make me a great scientist, mathematician, or historian? Discuss their responses. Refer to the Book of Mormon and ask some of the following questions:

- How could this book help me become a true Christian?
- Why isn’t owning it or even reading it enough?
- What are precepts? (Instructions, teachings, commandments, and principles.)
- What are some examples of precepts in the Book of Mormon? (see 1 Nephi 17:3; Alma 30:60; Helaman 3:20).
- According to the Prophet Joseph Smith, what must we do with these precepts before we can draw nearer to God? (We must abide by them.)

- What does the phrase *abide by* mean? (To live by or obey.)
- Why is it so important to live by the precepts in the Book of Mormon?
- If we can become mathematicians by studying math books and scientists by studying science books, what can we become if we study and apply the teachings of the Book of Mormon?

Share the following statement by President Marion G. Romney, who was a member of the First Presidency:

“I feel certain that if, in our homes, parents will read from the Book of Mormon prayerfully and regularly, both by themselves and with their children, the spirit of that great book will come to permeate our homes and all who dwell therein. The spirit of reverence will increase; mutual respect and consideration for each other will grow. The spirit of contention will depart. Parents will counsel their children in greater love and wisdom. Children will be more responsive and submissive to the counsel of their parents. Righteousness will increase. Faith, hope, and charity—the pure love of Christ—will abound in our homes and lives, bringing in their wake peace, joy, and happiness” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1980, 90; or *Ensign*, May 1980, 67).

Bear your testimony of the Book of Mormon.

THE TESTIMONIES OF THE WITNESSES

Introduction

As prophesied in the Book of Mormon, the Lord in this dispensation chose individuals to be witnesses to the Book of Mormon to fulfill the divine law of witnesses. The Testimony of Three Witnesses and The Testimony of Eight Witnesses have been included in every edition of the Book of Mormon.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The Lord chose men to be witnesses of the Book of Mormon, thus fulfilling the law of witnesses (see The Testimony of Three Witnesses; The Testimony of Eight Witnesses; Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith; see also D&C 6:28).
- The Book of Mormon is an inspired translation of ancient records written on gold plates (see The Testimony of Three Witnesses; The Testimony of Eight Witnesses; Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith; see also D&C 1:29; 20:8).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, p. 3.

Suggestions for Teaching

Testimony of the Witnesses to the Book of Mormon. The Lord chose men to be witnesses of the Book of Mormon, thus fulfilling the law of witnesses.

(15–20 minutes)

Read the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who was then a member of the Seventy. As you read, have an individual, preferably someone class members do not know, walk through the classroom, pick up an item of value that you have left somewhere in the room, and then leave.

“Whenever the Lord has established a dispensation by revealing his gospel and by conferring priesthood and keys upon men, he has acted in accordance with the *law of witnesses* which he himself ordained. This law is: ‘In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.’ (2 Cor. 13:1; Deut. 17:6; 19:15; Matt. 18:15–16; John 8:12–29.)

“Never does one man stand alone in establishing a new dispensation of revealed truth, or in carrying the burden of such a message and warning to the world. In every dispensation, from Adam to the present, two or more witnesses have always joined their testimonies, thus leaving their hearers without excuse in the day of judgment should the testimony be rejected” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [1966], 436).

Ask students why the law of witnesses is so important. To illustrate this principle, ask:

- What did the person who just entered the room look like? (Get student responses on the person’s height, weight, gender, hair color and length, and so forth.)
- What was the person wearing?
- At what exact time did the person enter the room?
- What did the person do?
- What did the person take?

Try to reconstruct what happened. Then ask the following questions:

- How was it helpful to have more than one witness?
- How did having multiple witnesses help you reconstruct what happened?
- Why is the law of witnesses so useful in establishing the truth?

Invite students to quickly read The Testimony of Three Witnesses, The Testimony of Eight Witnesses, and Doctrine and Covenants 17 heading and verse 1. Have students list the experiences of both groups of witnesses, and write their findings on the board (see the accompanying chart).

Three Witnesses	Eight Witnesses
1. An angel showed them the plates, the Urim and Thummim, the breastplate, the Liahona, and the sword of Laban.	1. Joseph Smith showed them the plates.
2. The voice of God declared the divinity of the record.	2. They handled the plates.

Ask students how the combined experiences of the witnesses can help strengthen their own testimony. Read Doctrine and Covenants 8:2 and discuss how personal testimonies are developed through the mind and the heart.

Invite a student in advance to prepare to read aloud the Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith from the introduction to the Book of Mormon. (The student should practice enough to be able to read it smoothly and effectively.) Have the student read the passage to the class. Ask the other students to listen carefully for what Joseph Smith learned from Moroni’s visit, and list their findings on the board. (These might include what an angel is like, what the records were like, the means for translating them, how to prepare, and the strict instructions for caring for the records.)

Ask students to compare the Prophet Joseph Smith's testimony with that of the other eleven witnesses. Ask if they know any other witnesses of the Book of Mormon (for example prophets, teachers, parents, family). Speaking of the divine mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith, President Joseph Fielding Smith said:

"These things I know. The Lord has revealed them to me, and this knowledge I have had since the day I was baptized. I know that the power of the Almighty is guiding this people, that we are under covenant to keep his commandments, to walk in light and truth. It is my firm conviction that every member of this Church should be able to bear witness and declare by words of soberness that these things are true, that the *Book of Mormon* is true, that the destiny of this latter-day work is true, and, according to the revelations, must and will be fulfilled" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 1:201–2).

Ask students to share their testimonies of the Book of Mormon if they feel prompted by the Spirit to do so.

THE FIRST BOOK OF NEPHI

The First Book of Nephi, written by Nephi the son of Lehi, is the first book in the Book of Mormon. This book was translated from the small plates, which include 1 Nephi through the book of Omni. Nephi was commanded to make this record thirty years after he left Jerusalem (see 2 Nephi 5:28–33). He had kept other records devoted mainly to “the reign of the kings, and the wars and contentions of my people.” These small plates, however, were to focus mainly on “the ministry” (1 Nephi 9:4) and “that which is pleasing unto God” (2 Nephi 5:32). Nephi wrote that his intent in writing was to “persuade men to come unto the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and be saved” (1 Nephi 6:4).

In the first eight chapters of this book, Nephi provides an abridgment of the record of his father Lehi (see 1 Nephi 1:17). In chapter 9, Nephi further discusses his record-keeping responsibilities and his approach to the task. Beginning in chapter 10, Nephi begins the account of his own “reign and ministry” (1 Nephi 10:1).



Introduction

The Book of Mormon, “the keystone of our religion,” began as the record of a family, a grateful son’s account of his parents’ obedience to the call of the Lord. Not all were so obedient, however. The Jews rejected the message of the prophets, and Laman and Lemuel murmured and rebelled against their father and the Lord. Nephi, faithful to the end, recorded this uplifting and hopeful message: “I, Nephi, will show unto you that the tender mercies of the Lord are over all those whom he hath chosen, because of their faith, to make them mighty even unto the power of deliverance” (1 Nephi 1:20).

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

Note: Prayerfully study each assigned scripture block and consider the principles in this section before preparing your lessons.

- Record keeping is a divine law. Inspired records provide us with scripture and history and enlarge our memory (see 1 Nephi 1:1–3; see also 1 Nephi 6; 9; D&C 21:1).


- Sincere and humble prayer is essential for receiving revelation (see 1 Nephi 1:4–18).
- The Lord will inspire us, help us overcome difficulties, and deliver us from evil if we have faith in Him and keep His commandments (see 1 Nephi 1:14, 20; 2:1–2; 3:7; 4).
- A desire to know spiritual things, combined with sincere prayer, can soften our hearts, strengthen our testimonies, and lead us to be obedient (see 1 Nephi 2:12–17; see also 1 Nephi 11:1; 15:7–11).
- The Lord will provide a way for us to accomplish His purposes if we are faithful and obedient (see 1 Nephi 3:7; 4).
- The scriptures are of great worth. They teach God’s commandments, they are a record of His dealings with His children, and they invite the Spirit (see 1 Nephi 4:10–17; 5).
- If we respond with patience and love, we can help others grow in faith (see 1 Nephi 5:1–9).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 4–7.

Suggestions for Teaching

Note: Choose from the ideas in this section, or use some of your own, as you prepare to teach the assigned scripture block.

 **1 Nephi 1:1–3, 16–17. Record keeping is a divine law. Inspired records provide us with scripture and history and enlarge our memory.**
(20–25 minutes)

Bring to class several journals, school yearbooks, and diaries to demonstrate different kinds of record keeping. Read a few selections from them (avoid anything that is confidential, embarrassing, or personal).

Tell students that there are many different ways of keeping journals, diaries, and histories. Make a list on the board of the different kinds of records they are familiar with (such as journals, yearbooks, newspapers, history books). Make a second list of different ways of keeping a personal record (such as making daily entries, writing a life history, recording personal observations, listing the dates and places of life events). Point out that the way a person keeps a diary or journal is a personal matter. Ask students what ways the information they record in their own journals might be important to them at a later date.

Explain that while Nephi’s record is scripture and not just a personal journal, we can apply the same principles Nephi did to determine what we write in our journals. Read 1 Nephi 1:1–3. Why did Nephi make this record? Have students read

1 Nephi 6:1 looking for whose record Nephi had access to. According to this verse, what was included in Lehi’s record?

Have students read the chapter heading to 1 Nephi 9. Discuss the differences between the two records Nephi kept.

Reproduce on an overhead transparency or as a handout the charts on pages 156–57 of *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*. Use these charts and A Brief Explanation about the Book of Mormon, which is located in the Book of Mormon just before the table of contents, to aid in your discussion. Some of the following questions might be helpful:

- What is the main difference between the large and small plates of Nephi?
- Why don’t we have Mormon’s abridgment of the large plates of Nephi in our current copies of the Book of Mormon?
- Was 1 Nephi on the large or small plates of Nephi?
- What is the difference between the small plates of Nephi and the plates of Mormon?

Have students read 1 Nephi 1:16–17 looking for what Nephi planned to include in his record. Write the following chart on the board to show what Nephi actually recorded:

1 Nephi 1–8	Nephi’s abridgment of his father’s record
1 Nephi 9	Nephi’s explanation of his two records
1 Nephi 10–2 Nephi 33	Nephi’s account of his own life and teachings

Ask students what their plan is for recording their own and their family’s histories. Read the following statement by President Spencer W. Kimball:

“How happy we are as we find our grandparents’ journals and follow them through their trials and joys and gain for our own lives much from the experiences and faith and courage of our ancestors.

“Accordingly, we urge our young people to begin today to write and keep records of all the important things in their own lives and also the lives of their antecedents in the event that their parents should fail to record all the important incidents in their own lives. Your own private journal should record the way you face up to challenges that beset you. Do not suppose life changes so much that your experiences will not be interesting to your posterity. Experiences of work, relations with people, and an awareness of the rightness and wrongness of actions will always be relevant. . . .

“No one is commonplace, and I doubt if you can ever read a biography from which you cannot learn something from the difficulties overcome and the struggles made to succeed. These are the measuring rods for the progress of humanity.

“As we read the stories of great men, we discover that they did not become famous overnight nor were they born professionals or skilled craftsmen. The story of how they became what they are may be helpful to us all. . . .

“Your journal is your autobiography, so it should be kept carefully. You are unique, and there may be incidents in your experience that are more noble and praiseworthy in their way than those recorded in any other life. There may be a flash of illumination here and a story of faithfulness there; you should truthfully record your real self and not what other people may see in you.

“Your story should be written now while it is fresh and while the true details are available. . . .

“What could you do better for your children and your children’s children than to record the story of your life, your triumphs over adversity, your recovery after a fall, your progress when all seemed black, your rejoicing when you had finally achieved? . . .

“Get a notebook, my young folks, a journal that will last through all time, and maybe the angels may quote from it for eternity. Begin today and write in it your goings and comings, your deepest thoughts, your achievements and your failures, your associations and your triumphs, your impressions and your testimonies. Remember, the Savior chastised those who failed to record important events” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball* [1982], 350–51).

1 Nephi 1:4–18. Sincere and humble prayer is essential for receiving revelation. (20–25 minutes)

Have students read 1 Nephi 1:4–18 and write a brief summary of the verses on a piece of paper. Discuss their responses.

Share with students the following story told by Jeffrey R. Holland, who later became a member of the Quorum of the Twelve. A father is helping his daughter Donna understand the Book of Mormon. He invites her to read the first chapter silently.

“Donna: . . . O.K., I’ve read it.

“Dad: Good. What do you think it says?

“Donna: Daddy, I said I *read* it. I didn’t say I knew what it meant.

“Dad: Well, then we have to read it again, only a little slower this time. And out loud. We’ll talk as we go.”

After some reading and discussion, the father suggests they outline the chapter.

“Dad: Let’s just put down on paper a little outline of this chapter. I think it would look something like this:

- a prophet prays
- has a vision
- sees heavenly messengers (apparently including Jesus)
- receives a book
- is rejected by most of the people

“Now that’s a rough outline of the story you described in chapter 1. Does it look at all familiar to you?

“Donna: I don’t believe so.

“Dad: Think about it.

“Donna: Well, it does sort of sound like Joseph Smith’s experience. Hey! It sounds a *lot* like Joseph Smith’s experience. That’s neat. Why is that, Daddy?”

Ask students:

- How does the summary in this story compare with your own summaries?
- How would you answer Donna’s question? (Discuss their answers.)
- Does the pattern noted by Donna and her father remind you of any other prophet? Who? (Ezekiel, John the Revelator, and others.)

Read the father’s answer in Brother Holland’s story:

“It seems to me one possible answer to your question is that all prophets usually have some very similar experiences. In any case one thing we *know* they have in common is receiving revelation from the Lord. Joseph Smith once said that revelation is the rock on which the Church of Jesus Christ will always be built and there would never be any salvation without it

[*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Deseret Book Co., 1970), p. 274]. I think we’re going to find, Donna, that this whole book will be one long revelation about revelation. And Jesus is going to be at the center of it all. These first 20 verses tell an awfully lot about what is to follow. You can’t do much better than that in an opening chapter.

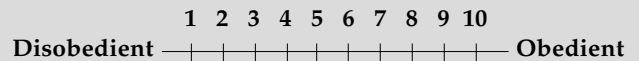
“And maybe there’s another reason for having the Book of Mormon begin like this. Maybe it helps in its own way to teach that if we accept Lehi and the Book of Mormon, we surely have to accept Joseph Smith as a prophet of God. On the other hand, when we accept Joseph Smith as a prophet, we must accept and faithfully live by the teachings of this book which he helped bring forth.

“In a way, Donna, this record is not only the testimony of Nephi and Alma and Mormon and Moroni, but it is also the testimony of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young and Harold B. Lee and Spencer W. Kimball. Maybe that’s why the Church wasn’t even organized until the Book of Mormon was completely translated and published” (“Daddy, Donna, and Nephi,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1976, 8–9).

Bear your testimony that just as the Book of Mormon record begins with a prayer, so also must our testimonies of the Book of Mormon. Urge students to sincerely pray for a testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon throughout this year as they read and study its pages.

1 Nephi 2:1–20. The Lord will inspire us, help us overcome difficulties, and deliver us from evil if we have faith in Him and keep His commandments.
(20–25 minutes)

Before class draw the accompanying continuum on the board.



Ask: How would you feel if your parents told you that your family was going to abandon your home and possessions and go into the desert with just enough food and equipment to survive? (You may want to role-play this question, with yourself as a parent and four students as your children.) Invite students to look at the scale on the board and to rank in their minds how obedient they would be. Ask: How would it affect your feelings if you learned that Heavenly Father had told your parents to move to the wilderness? Invite them to rank their obedience now. Would it change? Why or why not? Read with students 1 Nephi 2:1–5 and discuss the difficulties of such a move.

Have students read 1 Nephi 2:6–10 to find the qualities Lehi desired in his sons (“continually running into the fountain of all righteousness” and “firm and steadfast, and immovable in keeping the commandments of the Lord”). Discuss what these phrases mean. Help students see how they apply in their own lives (for example, keeping the Word of Wisdom in spite of great peer pressure).

Have students read 1 Nephi 2:11–14 to see where Laman and Lemuel would fit on the scale. According to verse 12, what caused them to murmur? How might they have better handled the situation?

Have students read 1 Nephi 2:16–20 looking for where Nephi and Sam would fit on the scale. How does this compare to where Laman and Lemuel were on the scale?

Point out that even though all four of Lehi’s sons made the same journeys, they did so with different attitudes. As a class, compare the quality of obedience of Nephi, Sam, Laman, and Lemuel. Use the scriptures from the accompanying chart. If desired, create a handout from the chart using only the scriptures and perhaps a few hints, and have your students complete it before the discussion.

Nephi	Sam	Laman and Lemuel
Acknowledged “goodly parents” (1 Nephi 1:1).	Accompanied family into wilderness (see 1 Nephi 2:5).	Murmured against their father (see 1 Nephi 2:11–12).
Centered heart on things of the Lord (see 2:16).	Believed in Nephi’s words (see 2:17).	Centered hearts on worldly treasures (see 2:11).
Prayed for his rebellious brothers (see 2:18).	Accompanied Nephi to Jerusalem (see 3:9).	Railed and persecuted Sam and Nephi (see 3:28; 7:16, 19).
Responded with faith to the Lord’s command to obtain the plates (see 3:7).	Endured punishment from Laman and Lemuel (see 3:28–29).	Murmured against the Lord’s command, saying it was “a hard thing” (3:5).
Remained undaunted (see 3:15, 21; 7:8–15).	Returned with his brother to Jerusalem for family of Ishmael (see 7:2–5). Endured persecution (see 7:6).	Gave up easily (see 3:14; 7:6–7).
Exhorted his brothers to faithfulness and to put their trust in God alone (see 3:15–21; 4:1; 7:8–21).		Put their trust in and feared the power of man (see 3:31).

Responded readily to spiritual impulses (see 4:5–18).		Denied themselves great spiritual blessings by rebelling (see 2:9–12).
Frankly forgave abuse (see 7:21).		Were alternately humble and rebellious (see 2:9–10, 14; 7:19–20).

Read the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Obedience is the first law of heaven. All progression, all perfection, all salvation, all godliness, all that is right and just and true, all good things come to those who live the laws of Him who is Eternal. There is nothing in all eternity more important than to keep the commandments of God” (*The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ* [1978], 126).

Ask:

- How do the lives of Nephi, Sam, Laman, and Lemuel show the truth of this statement?
- How is this statement reflected in your life?



1 Nephi 3:7 (Scripture Mastery). The Lord will provide a way for us to accomplish His purposes if we are faithful and obedient. (20–25 minutes)

Ask students:

- Are callings in the Church always convenient?
- What are some callings that you feel would not be easy to do? that would be very time-consuming?
- What can you say about those people who accept such calls?
- How can you prepare yourself to accept any calling, no matter how difficult or time-consuming it may appear?

Sing or read “I’ll Go Where You Want Me to Go” (*Hymns*, no. 270). Invite the students to find the theme or themes of each verse. As they discover them, write them on the board and discuss them as a class.

Verse 1: “I’ll go where you want me to go.”

Verse 2: “I’ll say what you want me to say.”

Verse 3: “I’ll do thy will with a heart sincere.”

“I’ll be what you want me to be.”

Point out that the themes are summarized in the chorus after each verse.

Read 1 Nephi 3–4 as a class to find the relationship these chapters have to the hymn. Comment and give insights as you read, and encourage students to interrupt with questions or comments of their own. (For background information, see *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 5–7.)

Note: Give special emphasis to the scripture mastery verse, 1 Nephi 3:7. This can be done as it comes up in the reading or, if you prefer, after you finish the chapters. Refer to the list on the board and ask students how many of these themes apply to Nephi. Write on the board *obedience, faith, and trust*. Ask:

- How did Nephi show that he had the qualities of obedience, faith, and trust?
- Which of these qualities did Laman and Lemuel lack?
- Which of these qualities does it take to serve a mission?
- Which is the most difficult for you to demonstrate right now?
- How can you develop these qualities to the extent that Nephi did?

Read the following statement by Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“I recall sitting in this Tabernacle when I was fourteen or fifteen—up in the balcony right behind the clock—and hearing President Heber J. Grant tell of his experience in reading the Book of Mormon when he was a boy. He spoke of Nephi and of the great influence he had upon his life. And then, with a voice ringing with a conviction that I shall never forget, he quoted those great words of Nephi: ‘I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them.’ (1 Ne. 3:7.)

“There came into my young heart on that occasion a resolution to try to do what the Lord has commanded” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1971, 158; or *Ensign*, Dec. 1971, 123).

Have students write a letter to a missionary asking how he or she has seen 1 Nephi 3:7 in action while doing missionary work.

1 Nephi 4:1–18. Nephi was “led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things” he should do.

(20–25 minutes)

Read the following statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“God said, ‘Thou shalt not kill;’ at another time He said, ‘Thou shalt utterly destroy.’ This is the principle on which the government of heaven is conducted—by revelation adapted to the circumstances in which the children of the kingdom are placed. Whatever God requires is right, no matter what it is, although we may not see the reason thereof till long after the events transpire” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 256).

Ask students to read 1 Nephi 4:1–18 looking for how the Prophet’s statement applies to the account of Nephi slaying Laban. Ask how Nephi knew he should slay Laban. (He was commanded by the Spirit; see vv. 10, 12–14, 18.) Ask: What other sources of knowledge was Nephi acting on? List responses on the board. These might include:

- Nephi had already received revelation from the Lord, so there was no doubt in his mind that it was God’s will (see 1 Nephi 2:15–16, 18–24).
- The Lord had commanded Nephi and his brothers through their father Lehi, the prophet, to obtain the plates (see 1 Nephi 3:1–4).
- Nephi was acting within the bounds of his calling (see 1 Nephi 4:17).
- His knowledge of the scriptures led him to know of their necessity for keeping his family true to the commandments (see 1 Nephi 4:15–16).
- He had been following the Spirit when he found Laban (see 1 Nephi 4:5–8).

Write on the board *Living Prophets—Divine Calling—Scriptures—Holy Ghost*. Explain that these are ways Heavenly Father has given us to know His will. Have students read Jacob 7:10–12 looking for the sources of knowledge Jacob used to convince Sherem, an anti-Christ, of the truth. (He used all of them; see also Jacob 1:18–19.) These same sources of truth can help us avoid being deceived if we are obedient to the commandments of God and if we are acting within the bounds of our calling. Ask: How do we know that Nephi was an obedient servant of God? (One answer is his response to his father in 1 Nephi 3:7.)

Read the following statement by Elder Ezra Taft Benson, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“May I suggest three short tests to avoid being deceived. . . .

“1. What do the standard works have to say about it? ‘To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them,’ said Isaiah. (Isa. 8:20.) . . .

“We must diligently study the scriptures. Of special importance to us are the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants. . . .

“2. The second guide is: what do the latter-day Presidents of the Church have to say on the subject—particularly the living President? . . .

“There is only one man on the earth today who speaks for the Church. (See D&C 132:7; 21:4.) That man is [the] President [of the Church]. Because he gives the word of the Lord for us today, his words have an even more immediate importance than those of the dead prophets. When speaking under the influence of the Holy Ghost his words are scripture. (See D&C 68:4.) . . .

“3. The third and final test is the Holy Ghost—the test of the Spirit. By that Spirit we ‘. . . may know the truth of all things.’ (Moroni 10:5.) This test can only be fully effective if one’s channels of communication with God are clean and virtuous and uncluttered with sin” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1963, 16–17).

Ask: How can we know the will of God in our lives?

1 Nephi 4:5–18. The scriptures are of great worth to the children of men. (10–15 minutes)

Ask students to imagine that they have been shipwrecked on an island in the South Pacific. The storm is still raging and it looks as though they will only be able to save one of the following items. Ask: Which one would you save and why?

- Clothes
- Weapons
- Tools
- Novels
- Table and chairs
- Blankets
- Scriptures

Have students read 1 Nephi 4:5–18 to find how important the scriptures are to a nation. Have a student read Omni 1:17 and compare the people of Nephi to the people Mosiah discovered who had no record. Ask: How did the death of one person, Laban, save a nation?

Have students share examples of how important the scriptures are to the life of their family.

1 Nephi 5:1–9. If we respond with patience and love, we can help others grow in faith. (15–20 minutes)

Relate the following situation (or have some students present it as a role play). A family struggles financially to keep two sons on their missions. The whole family loves the Lord and the gospel with all their hearts, but they deeply miss their sons and brothers. One night, during a stressful discussion about money matters, one of the parents begins to complain that the Lord requires too much from them. The parent murmurs about missing the two boys and says they cannot afford to pay for both missions.

The other parent comforts the spouse with a reminder that the Lord has actually blessed them. Their sons are worthy and willing to serve the Lord. Even though missions are expensive, they have been able to make ends meet with better budgeting and sacrifices by the family. Both parents agree that the Lord has done much more for them and their family than they could ever repay.

Tell students that this scene is similar to the events in 1 Nephi 5. Invite them to watch for similarities and differences as they go through the chapter.

Have students read 1 Nephi 5:1–3 looking for why Sariah began to complain. What were Sariah’s complaints? List responses on the board. These might include:

- Lehi was a visionary man.
- Lehi led the family away from their inheritance.
- Lehi’s decisions led to the loss of their sons.
- Lehi’s choices would lead to their own deaths in the wilderness.

Ask: Which of Sariah’s complaints were justified? Ask students if they have ever complained without having all the information. Invite them to share examples of times they hastily came to conclusions that were incorrect.

Have students read 1 Nephi 5:4–6 looking for how Lehi responded to his wife’s complaints. Ask: How do you respond when you are unjustly criticized? Explain that Lehi did not respond angrily but with love and compassion. What can we learn from Lehi’s understanding response to his wife?

Have students read 1 Nephi 5:7–8. Ask:

- What reconfirmed and strengthened Sariah’s faith and trust in the Lord and the prophetic call of her husband?
- Why do you think the Lord allows us to face problems and difficulties?
- What is the role of the family in helping us face problems and difficulties?
- What other lessons can we learn from this insightful account?

Read the following statement by Sister Barbara B. Smith, who was then Relief Society general president:

“Sariah, the wife of Lehi, had the wrenching experience of leaving their home and their possessions to travel in the wilderness. We are not told of the trials she may have experienced; but going on foot, living in tents, and cooking over an open fire could have been devastating after their comfortable life in Jerusalem. We do read of her anguished waiting when she feared her beloved sons had perished in their return to obtain the plates. (See 1 Nephi 5:2.) But in spite of troubles, she did love and serve her family. With the return of her sons, she knew of a certainty that the Lord had commanded her husband to flee into the wilderness, and in their safe return she found the assurance that the Lord was with them. (See 1 Nephi 5:8.) Their circumstances did not change; they still slept in tents. But she had joy and comfort in the knowledge that the Lord was guiding them. In that light she could carry on and meet further difficulties as they came” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1982, 123; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 85).

1 Nephi 5. The scriptures teach God’s commandments, they are a record of His dealings with His children, and they invite the Spirit.

(20–25 minutes)

Ask students if there is any material possession they would consider sacrificing their lives to gain or keep. Discuss their responses.

Have a student summarize 1 Nephi 3–4 and tell of the sacrifice required to obtain the plates of brass. Ask why such sacrifice was warranted. Invite students to read 1 Nephi 4:13–15; 5:11–18 and look for what the plates of brass contained that was so valuable to Lehi and his family.

Write the following matching exercise on the board. Have students match the numbered items in the left column to the corresponding lettered items in the right column. Discuss the answers with the class.

The Valuable Contents of the Brass Plates	
1. The first five books of the Old Testament (see 1 Nephi 5:11)	A. The book of Jeremiah
2. A valuable gift from the holy prophets (see 1 Nephi 5:13)	B. In order to the keep the commandments.
3. Writings of a prophet who lived in Jerusalem at the same time as Lehi (see 1 Nephi 5:13)	C. The books of Moses
4. A record of Lehi’s fathers (see 1 Nephi 5:14–16)	D. To teach every nation, kindred, tongue, and people

5. The future of the plates of brass (see 1 Nephi 5:18)	E. Family history
6. The plates of brass are necessary (see 1 Nephi 4:13–15)	F. Prophecies

(Answers: 1–C, 2–F, 3–A, 4–E, 5–D, 6–B)

Have students read 1 Nephi 5:21 looking for why the plates were “of great worth” to Lehi and his family. Ask:

- How would the plates help them “preserve the commandments of the Lord unto [their] children”?
- How have your parents preserved the commandments of the Lord for you?

Have a student read aloud 1 Nephi 5:22. Ask: Why would it be of value to carry our scriptures with us in our journeys today?

Ask students to share times it was helpful to have their scriptures with them.



Introduction

Lehi’s and Nephi’s deep love and concern for their family permeates these chapters. Nephi notes briefly that they descended from Joseph of Egypt and states that his record is intended to “persuade men to come unto the God of Abraham . . . and be saved” (1 Nephi 6:4). He emphasizes their arduous physical journey back to Jerusalem for Ishmael’s family so they would have suitable marriage partners. He details his father’s dream of the beautiful tree of life, along with Lehi’s abiding hope that his “family should partake of it” (1 Nephi 8:12).

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- A major purpose of the Book of Mormon is to bring souls to Christ (see 1 Nephi 6:3–6).
- The Lord strengthens those who diligently seek Him and follow His prophets, but He withdraws His Spirit from those who reject Him and seek wickedness (see 1 Nephi 7:6–21; see also 1 Nephi 1:20; 10:17).
- All people are invited to come to the tree of life, but because of unbelief and the temptations of the world,


many will not come (see 1 Nephi 8:10–36; see also Matthew 13:18–23; John 3:16; Alma 5:34).

- The Lord knows all things from the beginning, and He prepares a way to accomplish all His works (see 1 Nephi 9; see also 2 Nephi 9:20; Words of Mormon 1:6–7).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 8–11.

Suggestions for Teaching

 *Book of Mormon Video* presentation 2, “For a Wise Purpose,” can be used in teaching 1 Nephi 9 (see *Book of Mormon Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

1 Nephi 6:3–6. A major purpose of the Book of Mormon is to bring souls to Christ. (15–20 minutes)

Note: The following object lesson is similar to one used in the teaching suggestion for the title page of the Book of Mormon (p. 17). Consider using it even if you taught it earlier, since the repetition can serve as an effective reminder.

Bring to class several appropriate books and movies popular with today’s youth. Ask students what they feel was the author’s or creator’s purpose for each of the books or movies. Hold up a copy of the Book of Mormon and ask students: What was the purpose of its writers and record keepers? Have students read 1 Nephi 6:3–4 looking for the answer to this question. Encourage students to write the reference 2 Nephi 25:26 in the margin, and then turn to this verse and read it. Ask if there is any doubt as to the purpose of this book. Have students write the reference 2 Nephi 33:10–11 in this margin, and then turn to the verse and read it. Ask: Whose words are we reading in the Book of Mormon?

Read 1 Nephi 6:5–6 and share the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson:

“The Book of Mormon is the great standard we are to use in our missionary work. It shows that Joseph Smith was a prophet. It contains the words of Christ, and its great mission is to bring men to Christ. All other things are secondary. . . . It does not contain things which are ‘pleasing unto the world,’ and so the worldly are not interested in it. It is a great sieve” (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [1988], 203).

1 Nephi 7:14–21. The Lord strengthens all those who diligently seek Him and follow His prophets, but He withdraws His Spirit from those who reject Him and seek wickedness. (20–30 minutes)

Ask students if they have ever played a game where they selected sides. Ask:

- How do you think the person felt who was not selected or who was picked last?
- What is the difference between the way people pick teams by “choosing sides” and how we decide “who is on the Lord’s side”?

Explain that the Savior wants all of us on His side, but we have the agency to accept or reject His invitation.

As part of Nephi’s exhortation to his brethren, he warns them of the consequences of rejecting the prophets. Read 1 Nephi 7:14, and ask what those consequences are. Read 1 Nephi 7:15. Invite a student to paraphrase Nephi’s warning to his brothers. Ask: Whose choice was it whether or not they perished with the wicked?

Have students read 1 Nephi 7:16. Ask:

- Why were Laman and Lemuel angry with Nephi?
- How were their actions evidence of the choice they had made?
- How can you tell which side people are on today?
- How do our outward expressions show whether or not we are striving to follow the Lord?
- From what you know of Nephi, whose side do you think he wanted to be on?

Read 1 Nephi 7:17–20 and ask:

- How did the Lord sustain Nephi in these verses?
- What are some advantages of being on the Lord’s side?

Invite students to consider whether they are on the Lord’s side. Ask: How do you show it?

Encourage students to choose the Lord’s side. Share with them the blessings that come from making that choice. Sing “Who’s on the Lord’s Side?” (*Hymns*, no. 260) or read the words aloud to the class.

1 Nephi 8. All people are invited to come to the tree of life, but because of unbelief and the temptations of the world, many will not come. (40–50 minutes)

You might want to begin your discussion of Lehi’s dream with an activity called “thumbs.” Tell students that you will ask them questions about dreams. To answer yes, they should put their thumbs up. To answer no, they put them down. (*Note:* Your students may be quite interested in the topic of dreams. Be sure to keep the discussion focused on Lehi’s vision.) Ask:

- Do you dream every night when you sleep?
- Have you ever been frustrated because something woke you up in the middle of a dream?
- Have you ever dreamed about something that actually happened later?
- Have you ever had a dream that gave you an answer to a prayer?

- Do you believe that revelations can come in the form of dreams?
- Did you know that Lehi had a dream about a tree?
- Do you think Lehi understood his dream?

Emphasize that Lehi’s dream or vision of the tree of life is one of the most important accounts in the Book of Mormon. Understanding the symbolism of this dream can help us understand other portions of the Book of Mormon. (Ideas for teaching the symbolism of the dream as Nephi experienced it can be found in the first teaching suggestion for 1 Nephi 10–14, p. 36.)

Ask for three volunteers and have them come to the board. (Or if available, provide them with large sketch pads and colored markers.) Have the other class members take turns reading the account of Lehi’s vision beginning with 1 Nephi 8:4. Each student should read two or three verses before you go to the next student. Stop at intervals and have the three volunteers draw their interpretation of the dream, adding to their drawing as additional information is given. (See the accompanying chart for suggestions.)

1 Nephi 8:4–6	The dark and dreary wilderness, a man in a white robe who invites Lehi to follow him
1 Nephi 8:7–9	The dark and dreary waste, the large and spacious field
1 Nephi 8:10–12	The tree with white and desirable fruit
1 Nephi 8:13–14	The river of water and Sariah, Sam, and Nephi
1 Nephi 8:15–16	The family partaking of the fruit
1 Nephi 8:17–18	Laman and Lemuel refusing to partake of the fruit
1 Nephi 8:19–20	The strait and narrow path, the rod of iron, the fountain
1 Nephi 8:21–23	Numberless concourses of people pressing forward, the great mist of darkness that causes some to lose their way
1 Nephi 8:24–25	Those who reach the tree but are ashamed after they partake
1 Nephi 8:26–28	The great and spacious building, people mocking, people falling away into forbidden paths
1 Nephi 8:29–30	Those who “came forth and fell down and partook of the fruit of the tree”
1 Nephi 8:31–33	Multitudes trying to reach the building, those who are “drowned in the depths of the fountain,” those who are “lost from his view, wandering in strange roads”

Have the volunteers explain their drawings, and use them as you discuss the vision as a class. (*Note:* Consider saving the drawings to use when you teach Nephi’s vision.)

Invite students to review 1 Nephi 8:6–9 looking for Lehi’s first concern. Ask: What did Lehi do to escape the darkness? Have students reread 1 Nephi 8:10–12, and ask some of the following questions:

- What was Lehi’s first desire after he partook of the fruit? (see v. 12).
- How did Lehi’s family react when he called them to the tree to partake? (see vv. 15–18).
- Why do you think Laman and Lemuel did not partake of the fruit of the tree?
- How would you feel if your family rejected something that brought you joy and happiness?

Have students read 1 Nephi 8:36–37 looking for how Lehi handled Laman and Lemuel’s rejection. Ask students to consider if their parents have ever spoken to them “with all the feeling of a tender parent,” pleading with them to listen and obey. (Allow them to respond if they desire.) Share your feelings about how parents want their children to believe and live the gospel. Help them understand that Heavenly Father loves each of us and also wants us to believe and obey.

Explain that Lehi saw many other people in his dream. Write the accompanying chart on the board. Divide the class into four groups. Have each group take one row of the chart and compare the accomplishments and failures of the people described in 1 Nephi 8 with those described in Matthew 13.

Lehi’s Dream	Comparison	Parable of the Sower
1 Nephi 8:21–23		Matthew 13:3–4, 19
1 Nephi 8:24–28		Matthew 13:5–6, 20–21
1 Nephi 8:30		Matthew 13:8, 23
1 Nephi 8:31–33		Matthew 13:7, 22

Have the groups write their findings in the “Comparison” column on the board, and discuss them as a class. Ask questions like the following:

- To whom was the fruit of the tree available?
- What prevented some from partaking of the fruit?
- Did tasting the fruit guarantee joy and eternal life? Why or why not?
- Why do you think some never got to the tree?
- Why do you think some tasted the fruit but then fell away?
- Why do you feel some were able to faithfully partake of the fruit of the tree?

Sing or read “The Iron Rod” (*Hymns*, no. 274).

1 Nephi 9. The Lord knows all things from the beginning, and He prepares a way to accomplish all His works. (25–35 minutes)

Show students a history book. Indicate what time period the book covers. Also show a personal history, diary, or journal that covers some of the same time period. If appropriate, read a spiritual experience from the journal. Ask some of the following questions:

- What are the differences between the two texts?
- Which text is most properly called a history? (One could make a good case for either.)
- Which text is most valuable? (Each is valuable for a different reason.)
- What is each text useful for?
- How would each of these texts compare to the Book of Mormon?

Explain that the Book of Mormon records a thousand years' worth of events among the Nephites and Lamanites and longer than that among the Jaredites. Ask: Is the Book of Mormon a history in the same sense as the history book? (No, it is primarily a religious record.) Have students read Jacob 3:13 and Words of Mormon 1:5 to find whether the Book of Mormon claims to be a complete history of the people it describes.

Have students read 1 Nephi 9:2. Explain that Nephi kept both a secular and a religious history. Have students mark the phrase “the plates upon which I make a full account of the history of my people” and write *large plates* in the margin next to the verse. Have them read 1 Nephi 9:3 and mark the phrase “an account engraven of the ministry of my people.” Invite them to write *small plates* in the margin by verse 3. Ask some of the following questions:

- According to verse 3, why did Nephi make the small plates in addition to the large plates?
- To which plates do the words “these plates” in verses 2–5 refer? (The small plates.)
- When we read 1 Nephi, are we reading from the large plates or the small plates? (The small plates.)
- What did the large plates of Nephi contain? (see v. 4).

Have students read 1 Nephi 9:5–6. What reason does Nephi give in these verses for the Lord requiring him to make a second set of plates? Have students read Words of Mormon 1:3–7. What reasons does Mormon give for including the small plates with his abridgment of the large plates of Nephi?

Have a student read the following statement aloud for the class:

At least part of the Lord’s “wise purpose” (1 Nephi 9:5; Words of Mormon 1:7) for having Nephi keep two records became apparent when Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon. Joseph originally translated Mormon’s abridgment of the large plates of Nephi. Martin Harris, who had been helping Joseph, wanted to show his wife and family the translation. Reluctantly, the Prophet allowed him to take the 116 pages of manuscript that had been completed up to that time. The pages were stolen, and the translation stopped.

After Joseph Smith went through a period of repentance, the Lord told him not to retranslate the lost portion. Instead He commanded him to translate the small plates, which covered the same period of time. He warned Joseph that those who had taken the 116 pages had changed them and planned to use them to discredit the work. But the Lord had foreseen this many hundreds of years earlier and had provided the second record to thwart Satan’s plan. (See *History of the Church*, 1:20–23; D&C 10:38–46.)

Read 1 Nephi 9:6 and ask how helpful it is to know that “the Lord knoweth all things from the beginning” (see also 2 Nephi 9:20; Words of Mormon 1:7). Read the following statement:

“Without the knowledge of all things God would not be able to save any portion of his creatures; for it is by reason of the knowledge which he has of all things, from the beginning to the end, that enables him to give that understanding to his creatures by which they are made partakers of eternal life; and if it were not for the idea existing in the minds of men that God had all knowledge it would be impossible for them to exercise faith in him” (Joseph Smith, comp., *Lectures on Faith* [1985], 51–52).

Close by bearing testimony that God knows all things.



1 Nephi 10–15

Introduction

Nephi, because of his faith, obedience, and desire to understand the revelations of his father, received expansive visions of eternity. He saw by the power of the Holy Ghost the future of his people; the Savior's birth, ministry, and Atonement; the Apostasy; the Restoration of the gospel; and the ultimate destiny of the kingdom of God. Chapters 10–15 provide proof of the divine promise that all who "diligently [seek] shall find; and the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto them, by the power of the Holy Ghost" (1 Nephi 10:19).

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The mission of the Savior is to redeem mankind from their lost and fallen state (see 1 Nephi 10:4–6; 11:31–33).
- The mysteries of God are unfolded by the power of the Holy Ghost to those who diligently seek them (see 1 Nephi 10:17–22; see also D&C 76:5–10).
- God reveals the future to His prophets so they can warn His children and prepare them for what is to come (see 1 Nephi 11–14; 15:12–36; see also D&C 1:17–23).
- Desire, faith, pondering, and prayer invite personal revelation (see 1 Nephi 11:1; 15:7–11).
- Jesus Christ was born of a mortal mother (Mary) and was the Son of an immortal Father (God the Father; see 1 Nephi 11:18–21; 13:40).
- God showed His love for all His children by His willingness to give His Beloved Son Jesus Christ to die for us (see 1 Nephi 11:16–33; see also John 3:16).
- The tree of life is a symbol of the love of God. This love is manifested by the life and mission of Jesus Christ (see 1 Nephi 11:21–25; see also 1 Nephi 8:30; 2 Nephi 11:4; Mosiah 4:2–3, 11–12).
- The Book of Mormon foretold a time when the gospel would be restored in a choice land that would be free from the control of all other nations (see 1 Nephi 13:12–19, 30–36).
- Many plain and precious truths were taken from the Bible. God restored many of these truths to us in the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price (see 1 Nephi 13:20–29, 35–41).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 11–16.

Suggestions for Teaching

1 Nephi 10:4–6. The mission of the Savior is to redeem mankind from their lost and fallen state.
(15–20 minutes)

Invite students to imagine that they have been dropped into a deep, dark pit with steep, slippery walls. They can't climb out and nothing in the pit can help them escape. Ask them what they would do.

Have students read 1 Nephi 10:6. Ask: What would it be like for mankind if there had been no Redeemer? Have them read Mosiah 16:3–4 looking for what caused mankind to become lost and fallen. Explain that a person in this lost and fallen condition is sometimes referred to as a "natural man."

Read Mosiah 3:19 looking for what the natural man must do to overcome his lost and fallen condition. Have students mark the phrase "and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ." Read 1 Nephi 10:4–6 and ask: Why is it impossible to become a Saint without the Atonement of Jesus Christ?

Remind students of the deep, dark pit. Ask: What is the only way of escaping the pit? (Someone who is not in the pit must help.)

Have students read 2 Nephi 9:10. Explain that the pit illustrates mankind's dilemma in this fallen world. Without the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we could not escape from our lost and fallen condition.

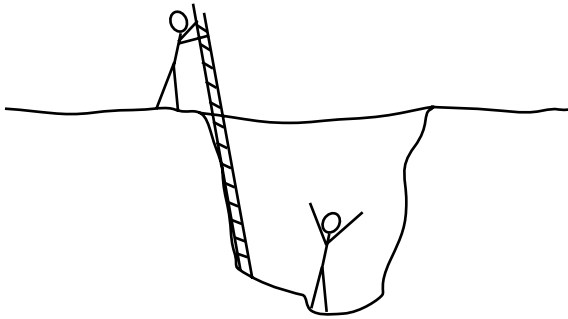
Read the following statement by President Joseph Fielding Smith, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve:

"The whole plan of redemption is based on vicarious sacrifice, One without sin standing for the whole human family, all of whom were under the curse. It is most natural and just that he who commits the wrong should pay the penalty—atone for his wrongdoing. Therefore, when Adam was the transgressor of the law, justice demanded that he, and none else, should answer for the sin and pay the penalty with his life.

"But Adam, in breaking the law, himself became subject to the curse, and being under the curse could not atone for or undo, what he had done. Neither could his children, for they also were under the curse, and it required one who was not subject to the curse to atone for that original sin. Moreover, since we were all under the curse, we were also powerless to atone for our individual sins.

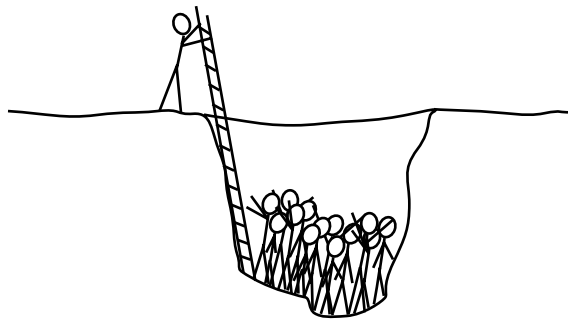
“It, therefore, became necessary for the Father to send his Only Begotten Son, who was free from sin, to atone for our sins as well as for Adam’s transgression, which justice demanded should be done. He accordingly offered himself a sacrifice for sins, and through his death upon the cross took upon himself both Adam’s transgression and our individual sins, thereby redeeming us from the fall, and from our sins, on condition of repentance.”

(Note: Before continuing with President Smith’s statement, it might be helpful to draw on the board a man in a pit being helped by another man on the rim with a ladder.)



“Let us illustrate: A man walking along the road happens to fall into a pit so deep and dark that he cannot climb to the surface and regain his freedom. How can he save himself from his predicament? Not by any exertions on his part, for there is no means of escape in the pit. He calls for help and some kindly disposed soul, hearing his cries for relief, hastens to his assistance and by lowering a ladder, gives to him the means by which he may climb again to the surface of the earth.”

(Note: At this point you might want to draw more people in the pit.)



“This was precisely the condition that Adam placed himself and his posterity in, when he partook of the forbidden fruit. All being together in the pit, none could gain the surface and relieve the others. The pit was banishment from the presence of the Lord and temporal death, the dissolution of the body. And all being subject to death, none could provide the means of escape.

“Therefore, in his infinite mercy, the Father heard the cries of his children and sent his Only Begotten Son, who was not subject to death nor to sin, to provide the means of escape. This he did through his infinite atonement and the everlasting gospel” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 1:126–27).

Testify to students of the power of the Atonement in overcoming the effects of the Fall.

1 Nephi 10:17–22. The mysteries of God are unfolded by the power of the Holy Ghost to those who diligently seek them. (15–20 minutes)

Read the following statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what He will make known unto the Twelve, and even the least Saint may know all things as fast as he is able to bear them, for the day must come when no man need say to his neighbor, Know ye the Lord; for all shall know Him (who remain) from the least to the greatest” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 149).

Ask some or all of the following questions:

- Who can receive answers to prayer?
- What have you learned through answers to your prayers?
- How can one know and understand the same spiritual truths as the living prophet?

Explain that Nephi provides an excellent example of how revelation is received. Have students read 1 Nephi 10:17–11:1; 15:7–11, and ask:

- What did Nephi desire to know?
- By what power did Nephi realize these truths would be revealed?
- What must we do to receive revelation by the power of the Holy Ghost?

Tell students that mysteries are spiritual truths known only by revelation. Ask:

- Who can know the mysteries of God? (see 1 Nephi 10:19).
- What prevented Nephi’s brothers from understanding their father’s revelations?

Have students read Doctrine and Covenants 76:5–10. Share your testimony of the Lord’s willingness to answer our prayers.

1 Nephi 10–14. Nephi’s vision provides interpretations for the symbols in Lehi’s dream.

(20–25 minutes)

Give students a brain teaser or other puzzle and have them try to solve it. You could use the following:

Write these nine groups of letters on the board: (1) NV, (2) AT, (3) SA, (4) XS, (5) BD, (6) DK, (7) NE, (8) XTC, (9) NTT. Ask students to figure out the words these letters represent. Answers: (1) envy, (2) eighty, (3) essay, (4) excess, (5) beady, (6) decay, (7) any, (8) ecstasy, (9) entity.

Ask:

- What is it about these kinds of puzzles that makes many of us want to solve them?
- What is the hardest puzzle you have ever tried to solve?

Sometimes we face problems that can be as perplexing as the most difficult puzzle. Ask students if they have ever had a burning desire to know the answer to a problem. Ask: To what lengths did you go to find the solution?

Have students read 1 Nephi 10:17, and ask:

- What was it that Nephi desired to know?
- Read 1 Nephi 15:8–11. How did Nephi’s pursuit of spiritual understanding compare with his brothers’?
- What role did obedience to the commandments play for each? (see v. 11).
- Who was more successful in gaining spiritual knowledge?

Explain that Nephi’s efforts to gain spiritual knowledge led not only to his own understanding but ours as well. Write the accompanying chart on the board, leaving the “Interpretation” column blank. As a class, look up each of the references to determine the inspired interpretation of the symbols. *Note:* If you saved the student drawings from the teaching suggestion for 1 Nephi 8, it would be helpful to refer to them.

Symbol	Lehi’s Dream	Cross-Reference	Interpretation
Great and spacious field	1 Nephi 8:9	1 Nephi 8:20	World
Tree	1 Nephi 8:10	1 Nephi 11:21–22, 25 1 Nephi 15:21–22	Love of God Tree of life
Fruit	1 Nephi 8:10–16	1 Nephi 15:36	Greatest gift of God
Rod of iron	1 Nephi 8:19–20	1 Nephi 15:23–24	Word of God
Strait and narrow path	1 Nephi 8:20	2 Nephi 31:18–19	Way to eternal life
River of water	1 Nephi 8:13	1 Nephi 12:16 1 Nephi 15:26–27 1 Nephi 15:28–29	Depths of hell Filthiness Gulf, hell
Great and spacious building	1 Nephi 8:26	1 Nephi 11:36 1 Nephi 12:18	Pride of the world Vain imaginations, pride
Mist of darkness	1 Nephi 8:23	1 Nephi 12:17	Temptations of the devil

Close with an expression of appreciation for Nephi’s desire to understand his father’s vision.

1 Nephi 10–14. God reveals the future to His prophets so they can warn His children and prepare them for what is to come. (35–45 minutes)

Write the following statement by Elder Ezra Taft Benson on the board: “Prophecy is but history in reverse—a divine disclosure of future events” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1973, 89; or *Ensign*, Jan. 1974, 69).

Have students read Doctrine and Covenants 1:17–23. Ask the following questions:

- According to these verses, why would God give revelations to His prophets?
- How does divine revelation to a prophet such as Joseph Smith increase the faith of God’s other children?

Have students read Doctrine and Covenants 38:30 looking for another reason God reveals His word through His prophets. Ask:

- What are some examples of warnings the prophet has given in his recent discourses?
- How has our prophet’s counsel helped you?

Explain that because of Nephi’s righteous desires, the Lord showed him a vision reaching far into the future. Note that Nephi saw events that were to take place in three societies. He describes Christ’s ministry in Judea, the Nephite-Lamanite civilization and its decline, and events of the last days among the gentile nations. Show students an overhead transparency of the chart “Nephi’s Vision (1 Nephi 10–14)” from the appendix (p. 292). Or write it on the board or give copies to students as a handout. Point out that the “Gentile Nations in the Last Days” column is longer because the vision deals so extensively with events of our day.

Divide the class into groups and assign each group one of the columns. (You may want to have four groups and divide the “Gentile Nations in the Last Days” column between two of them.) Give them fifteen minutes to read and discuss the scriptures, looking for answers to the following questions:

1. How could it help Nephi to know these prophecies?
2. How could it help Nephi’s later descendants to know them?
3. How could it help us to know them?

Have each group appoint a spokesperson to share their findings.

Discuss the following questions as a class:

- What is the message of Nephi’s great vision to us today?
- What will you do differently because of this vision?

1 Nephi 13:20–29, 34–41. Many plain and precious truths were taken from the Bible. God restored many of these in the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price.

(35–45 minutes)

List the topics from the accompanying chart on the board (do not write the scripture references). Divide your class into small groups. Have each group start at the top of the list and find as much information as they can on the topics using only the Bible (excluding Joseph Smith Translation footnotes and references). After ten minutes, have the groups compare their findings, and discuss them as a class. Ask: Why couldn’t you find more information in the Bible?

Topic	Scripture References
The three degrees of glory	D&C 76
The spirit world	D&C 138
The Father and the Son have bodies of flesh and bones, but the Holy Ghost is a personage of spirit.	D&C 130:22–23
Melchizedek, the prince of Salem	JST, Genesis 14:25–40
Secret combinations	Moses 5:29–31, 49–51; 6:15; Helaman 2:8; 6:17–30; Mormon 8:27, 40; Ether 8:18; 10:33; 11:15
Premortal existence	D&C 93:29; Abraham 3:22–23
Origin of Satan	Moses 4:1–4; Abraham 3:27–28
Enoch and the city of Zion	Moses 6–7
Abraham was ordained by Melchizedek.	D&C 84:14
New and everlasting covenant of marriage	D&C 131–32
Baptism by immersion by one having proper authority	3 Nephi 11:22–26; D&C 13:1
Baptism for the dead	D&C 127–28
Sealing children to parents	D&C 138:48
Teachings of the prophets Zenock, Zenos, and Neum	1 Nephi 19:10; Alma 33:3–17

Choose a few topics from the list on the board and ask students where in the scriptures we learn about them. Encourage the students to use the Topical Guide in their Bibles to find the answers. It should soon become obvious that although the Bible gives information on many of these topics, most of what we know comes from latter-day revelation. Ask: Why aren’t these truths taught more plainly in the Bible? Have students read 1 Nephi 13:19–29 to find one answer. Consider asking some or all of the following questions:

- What book “proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew”? (v. 24). What does this record contain?
- What did the book contain when it “proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew”?

- In what condition was the book when it went forth from the Jews to the Gentiles? (see v. 25).
- Who gained control of the book in verse 26, and what did they do to it?
- Why did they take things from the book? (see v. 27).
- What effect did this have on those who received the book? (see v. 29).
- What is the book to which these verses refer? (The Bible.)

Ask: Which article of faith describes our belief in the Bible? Ask for a volunteer to recite the eighth article of faith. Ask: Why do you think the eighth article of faith includes the phrase “as far as it is translated correctly”? The Prophet Joseph Smith once said:

“I believe the Bible as it read when it came from the pen of the original writers. Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 327).

Ask: Why doesn’t the phrase “as far as it is translated correctly” include the Book of Mormon? Have students turn to the introduction to the Book of Mormon and read the first sentence of the fifth paragraph to find the answer to this question. (Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon “by the gift and power of God.”)

Read 1 Nephi 13:35–41 to see how the Book of Mormon and other latter-day scriptures would restore and clarify the teachings of the Bible. The following questions may be helpful in guiding students through these verses:

- What will be the source of the plain and precious truths that will “be hid up, to come forth unto the Gentiles, by the gift and power of the Lamb”? (v. 35).
- What book does this refer to? (The Book of Mormon.)
- What will this book contain? (see v. 36).
- Who will teach the Lamanites the gospel of Jesus Christ? (see vv. 37–38).
- Verse 39 mentions other books that will come forth in our day through the power of Christ. What books might these be?
- According to verse 40, what three things will the Book of Mormon and the other records do for the Bible?
- Verse 41 says that the Book of Mormon and the Bible will “be established in one.” How has that already happened?

Return to the list of topics on the board and invite students to give examples of how the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and the Joseph Smith Translation add to our understanding of these topics. If desired, use the references in the second column of the chart to help your discussion.

Testify that the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price restore plain and precious truths that were taken from the Bible.



Introduction

Lehi’s family was of the house of Israel. Like Israel during the Exodus, they faced hardships and trials as they traveled in the wilderness. Also like Israel, different members of Lehi’s family had different responses to the ordeals they faced. Laman and Lemuel murmured and contended, while Nephi used the same difficulties to build character and increase faith in the Lord. Nephi studied the scriptures, particularly Isaiah, and likened them to himself and his family. As you study these chapters, look for ways their experiences and teachings can be likened to you.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For


- Humility and willing obedience to God’s commandments determine how people respond to the truth (see 1 Nephi 16:1–3; see also 1 Nephi 2:12, 16).
- The Lord expects us to do what we can for ourselves (see 1 Nephi 16:17–32; see also Ether 2:22–3:1, 4–6).
- The Lord provides many sources of guidance and nourishment for the faithful (see 1 Nephi 16:10, 16–32; 17:7–10; see also Alma 37:38–41).
- God blesses and sustains those who learn to listen to the Spirit and are faithful in keeping His commandments (see 1 Nephi 17:1–18:15).
- People trample the Lord under their feet when they reject the counsel He gives through His prophets and the scriptures (see 1 Nephi 19:7; see also D&C 1:38).
- The Jews were scourged and scattered because they rejected Jesus Christ. Many Jews still wander from the truth but will be gathered again when they accept the Savior (see 1 Nephi 19:8–17; 22:3–8).
- The scriptures are of greater value to those who liken them to their own lives (see 1 Nephi 19:23–24).
- As long as Israel strays from her covenants with the Lord, she will be punished and scattered. When she remembers her covenants, she will be gathered and restored with great power (see 1 Nephi 20–21).

- We can understand the writings and prophecies of Isaiah, like all scripture, by the Spirit (see 1 Nephi 22:1–2; see also 2 Nephi 25:1–6).
- At the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, the wicked will be destroyed and the righteous will be saved (see 1 Nephi 22:15–22, 24, 26; see also Malachi 4:1).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 16–21.

Suggestions for Teaching

 *Book of Mormon Video* presentation 3, “I Will Prepare the Way,” can be used in teaching 1 Nephi 17 (see *Book of Mormon Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

1 Nephi 16:1–3. Humility and willing obedience to God’s commandments determine how people respond to the truth. (10–15 minutes)

Sing or read “Oh Say, What Is Truth?” (*Hymns*, no. 272). Have students read 1 Nephi 16:1–2 looking for Laman and Lemuel’s reaction to Nephi’s words.

- Why do people react so differently to prophets teaching the truth?
- Who decides how one will react to the truth?

Ask students to search the Book of Mormon for other accounts that show how people react to the teachings of the prophets. (See for example the people of Ammonihah in Alma 8:9–13; Amulek in Alma 10:6–9; and Zeezrom in Alma 11–12; 15:3–12.) Discuss the students’ findings and list them on the board.

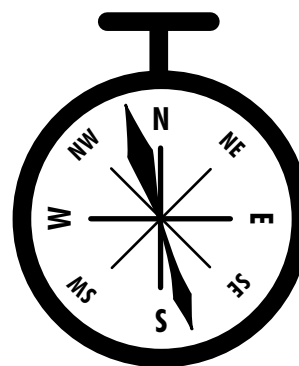
Read 1 Nephi 16:3–5 and ask:

- What counsel did Nephi give his brothers to help them be more receptive to the truth?
- How can this counsel help you?
- What scriptural examples do you know in which someone received the truth with gladness? (One example is Lamoni in Alma 18:21–23, 40–42.)
- What do you think are the keys to being able to respond positively to the truth?

1 Nephi 16:10, 16–32; 17:7–10. The Lord provides many sources of guidance and nourishment for the faithful. (20–25 minutes)

Show the class a compass (or draw one on the board). Ask a student who knows how to use a compass to explain how it is used. Have a few students find various directions using the

compass (for example, have a student find the northwest corner of the classroom). Discuss how a compass could be helpful in finding a destination.



Read 1 Nephi 16:9–10 and ask:

- How did the Lord direct Lehi and his family while they were in the wilderness?
- How did the Liahona differ from a modern compass?

Have students read the verses in the accompanying chart, looking for three important differences.

Reference	Compass	Liahona
2 Nephi 5:12	A compass is man-made.	“The ball, or compass, . . . was prepared for my father by the hand of the Lord” (2 Nephi 5:12).
1 Nephi 16:29–31	A compass helps travelers use a map to navigate.	The writing on the Liahona “did give us understanding concerning the ways of the Lord; and it was written and changed from time to time, according to the faith and diligence which we gave unto it” (1 Nephi 16:29).
1 Nephi 16:28; Alma 37:38–42	A compass works by allowing a magnetized needle to align itself with the earth’s magnetic field.	The Liahona worked “according to their faith in God” (Alma 37:40).

Ask: What has the Lord provided that can give direction in our lives today? Have students read Alma 37:44–45 looking for what Alma compared to the Liahona. Ask: Where might you obtain the word of Christ? Explain that the words of Christ can come from several sources, including the scriptures (see J. Richard Clarke, in Conference Report, Oct. 1982, 16–20; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 13–15); living prophets (see D&C 68:3–4); patriarchal blessings (see Thomas S. Monson, in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 81–83; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 65–67); and the Holy Ghost speaking to our conscience (see Spencer W. Kimball, in Conference Report, Oct. 1976, 114–17; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1976, 77–79).

Read from one of the sources given above or use the following paragraphs from the talk by President Spencer W. Kimball:

“The ball, or Liahona—which is interpreted to mean a compass—was prepared by the Lord especially to show unto [Lehi] the course which he should travel in the wilderness. Wouldn’t you like to have that kind of a ball—each one of you—so that whenever you were in error it would point the right way and write messages to you? . . .

“That . . . you all have. The Lord gave to every boy, every man, every person, a conscience which tells him every time he starts to go on the wrong path. He is always told if he is listening; but people can, of course, become so used to hearing the messages that they ignore them until finally they do not register anymore.

“You must realize that you have something like the compass, like the Liahona, in your own system. Every child is given it. When he is eight years of age, he knows good from evil, if his parents have been teaching him well. If he ignores the Liahona that he has in his own makeup, he eventually may not have it whispering to him. But if we will remember that every one of us has the thing that will direct him aright, our ship will not get on the wrong course and suffering will not happen and bows will not break and families will not cry for food—if we listen to the dictates of our own Liahona, which we call the conscience” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1976, 116–17; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1976, 79).

Bear your testimony of the importance of heeding the words of Christ.

1 Nephi 16:17–32. The Lord expects us to do what we can for ourselves. (20–25 minutes)

Before class assign each of three students one of the examples below. Ask them to read them and thoughtfully consider ways

to resolve the dilemmas presented. In class, have them read or tell their examples and offer their solutions. Give the class time to discuss their solutions and to offer alternate ones.

- You have just been called to serve in the presidency of the priests quorum. Your family is excited about your new responsibilities, but a disagreement emerges when they learn that you now have meetings on Sunday mornings. Your parents also have Sunday morning meetings, and your family has depended on you to get your two little brothers ready and then drive all of your brothers and sisters to church.
- For years your whole family has enjoyed cheering for you at your soccer games. Changes in the league schedule have placed some games on Sunday. When you talk to your family, they are surprised that you are worried about playing on Sunday. All are in favor of continuing the family outings to the games. You decide to keep the Sabbath but now don’t know how to tell your family.
- Times have been difficult for your family. Not only is your dad working two jobs, but your mother, your older brothers and sisters, and you have all been forced to take jobs too. On the way to your late-night job, a drunk driver speeds through a red light and hits your car. You survive without injuries, but your car is totaled. Even though the accident was not your fault, your entire family is upset at you because they depended on the car. Even your dad loses his temper.

Explain that Nephi also faced difficult situations while traveling with his family in the wilderness. Ask: Why would it be helpful to know how Nephi solved his family’s problems?

Have students read 1 Nephi 16:17–21 and look for Nephi’s problem. Invite a student to summarize Nephi’s predicament and explain it to the class. Ask: What could Nephi have done? List responses on the board and discuss them.

Read 1 Nephi 16:22–32 looking for Nephi’s response to the problem. Ask:

- What did Nephi do instead of complain like the rest of his family? (see v. 23).
- How does hard work and taking positive action help resolve your problems?
- Why did Nephi approach his father for help? (see vv. 23–26).
- What did the Lord tell Lehi to do? (see v. 26).
- How did the Liahona function? (see vv. 27–29).
- How was the family crisis resolved? (see vv. 30–32).
- Read Alma 37:44–46. According to these verses, what was the Liahona a type of (what did it represent)?
- What can we learn from Nephi’s experience about handling life’s challenges?

Read the statement by Elder Marion D. Hanks, a member of the Seventy, in the commentary for 1 Nephi 16:18–32 in *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122* (p. 16).



1 Nephi 17. God blesses and sustains those who learn to listen to the Spirit and are faithful in keeping His commandments. (40–50 minutes)

Ask students to imagine being forced to go on a long, hot trip with their family. Nine people are packed into a small car. The air-conditioning is broken, and three of the four windows will not roll down. There is a new infant on board, and you have no food or money. Discuss the following questions:

- How do you think everyone will get along with each other?
- What are likely areas of contention?
- What could you personally do to improve the situation?

Have students read 1 Nephi 17:1–6. Ask some or all of the following questions:

- How long had Lehi’s family been traveling in the wilderness? (Eight years; see v. 4.)
- What do you suppose were a few of their afflictions? (The Arabian Peninsula is a hot, desolate area. It was difficult to obtain food. The family didn’t always get along. Children were born during their travels.)
- How did the Lord bless them during their journey?
- How would you relate the lesson in verse 3 to what you have learned in your own life?

Divide the class into groups, and invite them to imagine the following situation: You are a space crew originally scheduled to rendezvous with a mother ship at a set location on the surface of the moon. Due to mechanical difficulties, your ship has been forced to land some 300 kilometers from the rendezvous point. Much of your equipment was damaged. The only way to survive is to travel the 300 kilometers to the mother ship. You can take with you only what is absolutely necessary.

Give each student a copy of the accompanying chart. Invite them to rank the items according to their importance for the journey. Have them place a number 1 by the most important item, number 2 by the second most important, and so on through number 15. Have them write their personal rankings first and then rank the items as a group. Give them fifteen minutes to make their decisions.

Personal Decision	Group Decision	
		Box of matches
		Food concentrate
		Length of nylon rope
		Parachute silk
		Portable heating unit
		Two 45-caliber pistols
		Case of dehydrated milk
		Two 50-kilogram tanks of oxygen
		Map of the moon
		Life raft
		Magnetic compass
		Five jugs of water
		Signal flares
		First-aid kit with hypodermic needles
		Solar-powered radio transmitter-receiver

At the conclusion of the exercise, ask:

- When you were ranking the items as a group, did someone take charge? Who?
- Did some participate in the process more than others? In what ways?
- What motivated the group to succeed?
- What attitudes helped the group succeed?
- How did the group discussion help you understand any errors in your own thinking?
- What attitudes led to disorganization?
- What can you learn about yourself by working with a group to solve a difficult problem?

Invite students to read 1 Nephi 17:7–18, and then discuss the following questions:

- Why did the Lord command Nephi to go to the mountain?
- Once Nephi went to the mountain, what did the Lord command him to do?
- How would you respond if you were commanded to build a ship capable of carrying your family across the ocean?

- How did Nephi respond to the commandment?
- What was the first problem Nephi faced in building the ship?
- What did Nephi do to solve the problem?
- How did the Lord help him?
- Why did Laman and Lemuel become so upset when they learned that Nephi was planning to build a ship and leave the land of Bountiful?

Read 1 Nephi 17:19–22 and list on the board all of the incorrect statements made by Nephi’s brothers in these verses. Ask:

- Have you ever made reckless statements toward someone?
- How can we avoid this?
- Read James 1:19. How does James’s advice relate to what we just read in 1 Nephi?

Have students scan 1 Nephi 17:23–34 to find the historic event that Nephi recited to his brothers. Ask:

- Why do you think Nephi would recite the account of the Exodus of Israel from Egypt?
- How can the Exodus build your trust in the Lord?

Ask students whether they think the Lord honors or loves some more than others. Have a student read 1 Nephi 17:35 to find the answer. Ask: How might one be favored of the Lord?

Have students scan 1 Nephi 17:36–44 looking for why Israel was scattered and destroyed. Ask: How were Laman and Lemuel like the people in Jerusalem?

Before class set up a radio tuned to play nothing but static. Turn it on and read 1 Nephi 17:45. Tune the radio to a clear station. Discuss the following questions:

- How is the poor reception on the radio like the inability of some to understand the things of the Lord?
- What do the wicked do to desensitize themselves to the Spirit?
- How is a righteous person’s ability to feel the Spirit like a properly tuned radio?
- What role does distance play in radio reception? (A radio must be within range of the transmitter to get clear reception.)
- How is that like prayer and receiving revelation?
- What role does having batteries or an electrical outlet play in radio reception? (A radio won’t work without a source of power.)
- How is that like prayer and revelation?

Read 1 Nephi 17:45–55 looking for a situation that was similar to the static on a radio.

- How is static on a radio like the inability of Laman and Lemuel to “tune” themselves to the will of the Lord?
- What had they done to put themselves out of tune?

- How does the Lord speak to us today?
- How can we avoid being “past feeling”? (v. 45).

Invite students to look for the word *listen* as you read the following statements by Elder Boyd K. Packer, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Many years ago John Burroughs, a naturalist, one summer evening was walking through a crowded park. Above the sounds of city life he heard the song of a bird.

“He stopped and listened! Those with him had not heard it. He looked around. No one else had noticed it.

“It bothered him that everyone should miss something so beautiful.

“He took a coin from his pocket and flipped it into the air. It struck the pavement with a ring, no louder than the song of the bird. Everyone turned; they could hear that!

“It is difficult to separate from all the sounds of city traffic the song of a bird. But you can hear it. You can hear it plainly if you train yourself to listen for it.

“One of our sons has always been interested in radio. When he was a little fellow, his Christmas present was a very elementary radio construction set.

“As he grew, and as we could afford it, and as he could earn it, he received more sophisticated equipment.

“There have been many times over the years, some very recently, when I have sat with him as he talked with someone in a distant part of the world.

“I could hear static and interference and catch a word or two, or sometimes several voices at once.

“Yet he can understand, for he has trained himself to tune out the interference.

“It is difficult to separate from the confusion of life that quiet voice of inspiration. Unless you attune yourself, you will miss it.

“Answers to prayers come in a quiet way. The scriptures describe that voice of inspiration as a still, small voice.

“If you really try, you can learn to respond to that voice” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, 27–28; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 19–20).

“That voice of inspiration is so quiet and so still, that it can easily be explained away. It is easy to be disobedient to that voice. It often takes very great courage to follow it. It is a clear signal to Latter-day Saints” (in Conference Report, Stockholm Sweden Area Conference 1974, 20).

Testify that we must learn to listen to and feel the Spirit.

1 Nephi 19:7–10. People trample the Lord under their feet when they reject His counsels given through His prophets or the scriptures. (20–25 minutes)

Ask students: What do you consider most sacred in your life? List responses on the board (these might include family, mother, church, flag, chastity, their testimony of Jesus Christ, knowing they have a Heavenly Father who loves them). Refer to a few of the responses and ask: How do you feel when people ignore, mock, or belittle these?

Read 1 Nephi 19:7 and ask:

- What does it mean to set something “at naught”? (To consider something worthless.)
- How is it possible to “trample” the Savior under one’s feet?
- What does “hearken” mean? (To listen to and obey.)

In other words, Nephi is saying that if we do not listen to and obey the Lord’s counsel, we trample God under our feet. Ask:

- How did those who lived anciently ignore the counsel of the Lord?
- Read 1 Nephi 19:8–9. According to these verses, how did those at the time of Jesus Christ’s mortal ministry “set him at naught”?

Have students read Helaman 12:2–6, and ask some of the following questions:

- According to this prophetic warning, what can lead people to “trample under their feet the Holy One”?
- How and why do people today ignore the counsels of the Lord?
- How can you and I ensure that we do not ignore His counsel?

Read the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“We speak with wonder and horror, and properly we should, of the fact that the Jews, with the scriptures, the miracles, and the mighty works before them, yet rejected their God, and did it so violently and with such a fixed determination that they brought about his death by Roman hands. To enable us to keep our perspective, however, we need to view with fairness and dispassion how and in what manner he was rejected and ask whether he would be so treated today. As Jacob said, only the Jews, among all the then existing nations, seeing the miracles he did and being aware of the wonders he performed, would have crucified him. (1 Ne. 19:7–9.) But would others among men have rejected him, and how and in what manner do men reject so great a thing as the ministry of a God among them?” (*The Promised Messiah*, 494–95).

1 Nephi 19:8–17; 22:3–8. The Jews were scourged and scattered because they rejected Jesus Christ. Many Jews still wander from the truth but will be gathered again when they accept the Savior. (20–30 minutes)

Write these sentences on the board:

Don’t run in the street!
Don’t play with fire!
Don’t take candy from a stranger!

Ask:

- Where have you heard these before?
- Why would someone give such warnings?
- What is the danger of ignoring these warnings?
- If you warned your friend and the friend ignored your warning, how would you feel if something bad then happened to your friend?
- Would you try to help your friend? Why?

Explain that prophets warn us of the dire consequences of dangerous and sinful actions. They feel no joy over the pain and difficulty we suffer when we ignore them. Instead they continue to love us and strive to lead us to safety and peace. Encourage students to keep these truths in mind as they study the scattering of the Jews.

Have students read the second paragraph of the title page of the Book of Mormon, and ask:

- In the Book of Mormon, who are the Gentiles? (see Bible Dictionary, “Gentile,” p. 679).
- How does the Lord feel about the Jews and the Gentiles?
- What great things can you think of that the Lord has done for the Jews and the Gentiles?
- What caused those living at the time of the Savior’s mortal ministry to “judge him to be a thing of naught”? (1 Nephi 19:9).
- How did they treat Him?
- Why was the Lord willing to submit to them?

Read 1 Nephi 19:10–12 looking for the prophecies recorded in these verses, and discuss how they were fulfilled. Read 2 Nephi 10:3–6; 25:12–15 looking for what led people to mock and crucify the Lord. Read 1 Nephi 19:13–14 and ask:


- What would happen to the Jews who were at Jerusalem during the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ? Why? (see v. 13).
- Were the descendants of the Jews at Jerusalem punished by God for the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ? (No; see Articles of Faith 1:2.)
- Why would the Jews wander in the flesh for centuries, perish, and become “a hiss and a byword, . . . hated among

all nations"? (Because of their ongoing rejection of Jesus Christ and His gospel; see v. 14. Stress that the scriptures do not in any way encourage or excuse the persecution and hatred that others have heaped on the Jews.)

Read 1 Nephi 22:5, and then read and discuss the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

"Why was Israel scattered? The answer is clear; it is plain; of it there is no doubt. Our Israelite forebears were scattered because they rejected the gospel, defiled the priesthood, forsook the church, and departed from the kingdom. They were scattered because they turned from the Lord, worshipped false gods, and walked in all the ways of the heathen nations. They were scattered because they forsook the Abrahamic covenant, trampled under their feet the holy ordinances, and rejected the Lord Jehovah, who is the Lord Jesus, of whom all their prophets testified. Israel was scattered for apostasy. The Lord in his wrath, because of their wickedness and rebellion, scattered them among the heathen in all the nations of the earth" (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [1985], 515).

- Read 1 Nephi 19:15–16. At what point will Israel be gathered by the Lord? (As soon as they repent and turn back to their God, the Lord will gather them.)
- Read 1 Nephi 22:6–9. What role will the Gentiles have in bringing Israel back to the Lord?

 **1 Nephi 19:23–24 (Scripture Mastery, 1 Nephi 19:23). We should liken the scriptures to ourselves for our profit and learning.** (20–25 minutes)

Ask students if they have ever heard the prophet give a conference talk without referring to the scriptures or statements from other prophets. Ask: Why do you suppose that is the case? Have students read 1 Nephi 19:23–24. Ask: Why do prophets spend so much time reading and citing from the scriptures?

Write the word *liken* on the board and the following definition: "To compare; to represent as resembling or similar" (Noah Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language* [1828]). Ask students to list the benefits of comparing scriptural accounts to their own lives.

Write the accompanying chart on the board, leaving the "Meaning" column blank. Discuss the phrases as a class, and write your students' conclusions about their meanings and modern applications in the "Meaning" column. (The words in parentheses are for your reference. The objective of this exercise is not to provide definitive answers but to help students see that they can already "liken" some words and phrases of Isaiah to themselves.)

Reference	Phrase	Meaning
1 Nephi 20:1	"waters of Judah"	(waters of baptism)
1 Nephi 20:4	"thy neck is an iron sinew"	(you are stiff-necked or proud)
1 Nephi 20:10	"furnace of affliction"	(tests or trials)
1 Nephi 20:14, 20	"Babylon"	(the world, wickedness)
1 Nephi 20:18	"righteousness as the waves of the sea"	(continual or everlasting righteousness)
1 Nephi 21:1	"the pastors of my people"	(leaders)
1 Nephi 21:1	"called me from the womb"	(foreordained me in the premortal life)
1 Nephi 21:6	"light to the Gentiles"	(example to the Gentiles)

Help students understand that we must liken, or apply, the scriptures to ourselves.

Have a student read the following statement by Elder Carlos E. Asay, who was a member of the Seventy:

"How many times have parents heard a son or daughter complain, 'Let's not read the scriptures. They deal with people of an ancient day and are boring.' When complaints of this nature are voiced, it is likely that the parents have failed to do what Nephi did. Said he: 'I did liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning' (1 Nephi 19:23)" (*Family Pecan Trees: Planting a Legacy of Faith at Home* [1992], 39).

Invite students to mark the word *that* each time it appears in 1 Nephi 19:22–24. Explain that, following the word *that*, Nephi told what he did and why he did it. List the phrases that describe why Nephi quoted from Isaiah, and discuss them as a class.

- "That they might know concerning the doings of the Lord in other lands, among people of old" (v. 22).
- "That I might more fully persuade them to believe in the Lord their Redeemer" (v. 23).
- "That it might be for our profit and learning" (v. 23).
- "That ye may have hope as well as your brethren from whom ye have been broken off" (v. 24).

Ask: Which of these statements describe the purpose of the Book of Mormon? Compare the statements with the second paragraph of the title page of the Book of Mormon. Testify that Nephi’s use of Isaiah fits well within the purpose given there:

“Which is to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever—And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD, manifesting himself unto all nations” (title page).

Spend some time going over the scripture mastery scripture (1 Nephi 19:23) to help students remember it. Have them mark the verse in their scriptures.

1 Nephi 20–21. As long as Israel strays from her covenants with the Lord, she will be punished and scattered. When she remembers her covenants, she will be gathered and restored with great power. (40–50 minutes)

Tell students that Old Testament prophets sometimes used the language of legal contracts or treaties to talk about sacred covenants. The material in 1 Nephi 20–21 can be compared to a lawsuit brought against Israel for breaking her covenant with the Lord. Write on the board the following outline of 1 Nephi 20, which essentially follows the pattern of the contract between the Lord and Israel.

The Contract

1. *Preamble* (1 Nephi 20:1–2). Hearken, O Israel, to the Lord.
2. *Historical Review* (1 Nephi 20:3–8). The Lord predicted Israel’s current problems.
3. *Conditions of the Contract* (1 Nephi 20:9–11, 14–15). The Lord promises to defer His anger and redeem Israel from Babylon.
4. *Witnesses* (1 Nephi 20:12–14, 16). The earth, the heavens, and Israel are called to witness what God has done and will do.
5. *Curses and Blessings* (1 Nephi 20:17–22). The Lord contrasts the results of Israel’s wicked and righteous acts.

Ask students if they understand what a covenant is and how it compares to a contract (see Bible Dictionary, “covenant,” p. 651).

Assign students to five “fact-finding committees.” Give each group one of the five parts of the contract as outlined on the

board. Allow the groups five to ten minutes to read and summarize the verses of scripture relating to their part of the contract. Invite each group to choose a spokesperson to report their findings, and discuss them as a class.

Write on the board the following outline of 1 Nephi 21, which follows the pattern of a contract lawsuit.

The Trial

1. *The Summons* (1 Nephi 21:1–6). God’s servant says, “My judgment is with the Lord.”
2. *The Plaintiff’s Charge* (1 Nephi 21:7–13). The Lord declares that (unlike Israel) He has kept and will keep His promises.
3. *The Defendant’s Plea* (1 Nephi 21:14, 21, 24). Israel offers excuses for her lack of faith in the Lord’s promises.
4. *The Judge’s Verdict* (1 Nephi 21:15–20, 22–23, 25–26). The Lord assures Israel she will be redeemed.

Ask for volunteers for the following roles: court recorder, plaintiff, defendant, and judge. Have the defendant rise, and explain to the class that the defendant represents Israel. Ask: Who do we mean when we say “Israel”? (see Bible Dictionary, “Israel,” p. 708).

Strike a table with a gavel and declare that court is now in session. Have the court recorder read the summons (1 Nephi 21:1–6). Ask students:

- Why, according to verse 1, has Israel been scattered?
- What do the words of the servant in verse 4 mean? (The servant has tried to get Israel to repent, but his efforts have been in vain, so he has brought his “case” before the Lord for judgment.)
- Who is the servant referred to in verses 1–6?

Note that Isaiah sometimes speaks for himself, sometimes for Israel, and sometimes for the Lord in the first person. Because the speaker can change without warning, it is sometimes not immediately clear to modern readers who is speaking. The servant in these verses may refer to Israel or to Isaiah. However, both Israel and Isaiah serve also as types of Jesus Christ, and these verses are clearly Messianic (see v. 6; Luke 2:25–32). Ultimately it is the Lord who issues the summons.

Ask the plaintiff to read the charge against the defendant (1 Nephi 21:7–13). Remind students that Israel was scattered and brought into bondage because she had not kept her covenants with the Lord. In these verses the Lord reminds Israel that He fulfills all His promises. Ask:

- In verse 9, who are the prisoners who sit in darkness? (One answer is Israel without the light of the gospel; see D&C 45:28. Another is those who have died and are in spirit prison; see 1 Peter 3:18–19; D&C 138:57.)

- How are these prisoners freed?

Israel, the defendant, lodges three “objections” to the Lord’s charge. Have the defendant read 1 Nephi 21:14, 21, 24.

Ask the defendant to summarize Israel’s objections, inviting other students to help if necessary. (The Lord has forsaken and forgotten her [see v. 14]; her children are lost [see v. 21]; her captors are too strong for her to be freed [see v. 24].) Ask students:

- What brought about the problems Israel refers to in these objections?
- What would it take to solve these problems? (Point out that trust in the Lord’s ability to save us is a necessary part of repentance.)

Invite your judge to read the verdict (1 Nephi 21:15–20, 22–23, 25–26). Ask students:

- When is the Lord willing to forgive and restore Israel?
- How does the phrase “I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands” (v. 16) show the Lord’s love for Israel?
- What does the Lord vow to do to those who have harmed and oppressed Israel? (see vv. 25–26).

Have students review the second paragraph of the title page of the Book of Mormon looking for what it teaches about Israel. Testify that God has an abiding love for all His children. He wants us all to repent and return to Him.

1 Nephi 22. We can understand the writings and prophecies of Isaiah, like all scripture, by the Spirit.

(15–25 minutes)

Write the following questions on the board:

Who would you go to for a better understanding of how a car works?

Who would you go to for a better understanding of Isaiah?

Discuss with students their responses to the questions on the board. Ask:

- Why would it be important to gain insights and understanding on Isaiah’s prophecies from a prophet? (see 2 Peter 1:20–21).
- Where would you search for such insights?

Explain that 1 Nephi 22 is Nephi’s commentary on the words of Isaiah found in 1 Nephi 20–21. Ask: Why would Nephi’s insights be of more value than other sources?

Write the following questions on the board or give them to students as a handout. Do not include the references unless you are short on time. Have students answer the questions by searching 1 Nephi 22. Have them work individually or in small groups, or complete the exercise as a class. Discuss their answers.

1. How can we understand the words of Isaiah? (see 1 Nephi 22:1–2).
2. Should Isaiah’s prophecies be considered temporal or spiritual? (see v. 3).
3. How, when, and where will Israel be scattered? (see vv. 3–4).
4. Why will Israel be scattered? (see v. 5).
5. What does Isaiah mean when he prophesies that Israel will someday be nursed by the Gentiles? (see vv. 6–12).
6. What will happen to those who fight against Israel? (see vv. 13–16).
7. How will the great and abominable church be destroyed? (see vv. 13, 16).
8. How will the Lord ensure that the righteous do not perish because of the wicked? (see vv. 16–22).
9. Who is the prophet like unto Moses who would be raised up by the Lord? (see vv. 20–21).
10. How will Satan be bound during the millennial reign of Jesus Christ? (see vv. 24–26).

Emphasize that the most helpful commentary on Isaiah and other scripture is the commentary that comes from prophets, such as that found in the Book of Mormon.

THE SECOND BOOK OF NEPHI

Second Nephi is a continuation of Nephi’s writings on the small plates. While 1 Nephi focuses on Lehi’s journey to the promised land, 2 Nephi can be thought of as Nephi’s witness of Jesus Christ as the Savior and Redeemer. Nephi, in the last verse of 1 Nephi, explains, “Wherefore, ye need not suppose that I and my father are the only ones that have testified” (1 Nephi 22:31). The book of 2 Nephi includes several additional witnesses of Jesus Christ (see the accompanying chart).

Witnesses	Chapters in 2 Nephi
Lehi	1–4
Joseph in Egypt	3
Nephi	4–5; 11; 25–33
Jacob	6; 9–10
Isaiah	7–8; 12–24; 27

Besides testifying of Christ, 2 Nephi includes the following doctrines:

- The scattering and gathering of Israel.
- The Great Apostasy.
- The coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the Restoration of the Church.
- The last days and the destruction of the wicked at the Second Coming.
- The plan of salvation and the redeeming power of Jesus Christ’s Atonement.
- The Resurrection of all mankind.

Finally, Nephi teaches how obedience to “the doctrine of Christ” (2 Nephi 32:6) leads the Lord’s disciples to eternal life.

Nephi closes with an invitation for everyone to seriously consider his words. He testifies that they are “the words of Christ,” and adds that “at the last day . . . you and I shall stand face to face before [God’s] bar; and ye shall know that I have been commanded of him to write these things. . . .

“And I pray the Father in the name of Christ that many of us, if not all, may be saved in his kingdom” (2 Nephi 33:11–12).

Nephi’s final words reflect his life’s theme: “The Lord commanded me, and I must obey” (2 Nephi 33:15; see also 1 Nephi 3:7).



Introduction

Nephi begins 2 Nephi with some of his father’s last words as a witness of Jesus Christ. Lehi, before his death, blessed and taught his children and their families. He warned Laman and Lemuel about rejecting “the true Messiah” (2 Nephi 1:10) and told them to accept Nephi’s righteous leadership. He taught Jacob about the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement of Jesus Christ, that he might know to whom he must turn to be saved. He spoke to his youngest son Joseph about Joseph in Egypt and of his prophecies concerning the latter days.

Soon after Lehi’s death, Nephi was warned to flee from Laman and Lemuel, who were plotting to kill him. “Those who believed in the warnings and the revelations of God” (2 Nephi 5:6) followed Nephi into the wilderness, while the remainder of Lehi’s family stayed with Laman and Lemuel. This marked the beginning of the Nephite and Lamanite nations. Nephi wrote of his brothers: “Wherefore, the word of the Lord was fulfilled which he spake unto me, saying that: Inasmuch as they will not hearken unto thy words they shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord. And behold, they were cut off from his presence” (2 Nephi 5:20). One theme to look for in 2 Nephi 1–5 is the promise that those who keep God’s commandments will prosper.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

Note: Prayerfully study each assigned scripture block and consider the principles in this section before preparing your lessons.

- Those whom the Lord leads to the land of promise will prosper if they keep His commandments. If they do not keep the commandments, they will be cut off from His presence and swept off the land when their iniquity is full (see 2 Nephi 1:3–12, 20; 5:8–27; see also Ether 2:7–12).
- God will consecrate the suffering and afflictions of the righteous for their gain (see 2 Nephi 2:1–3; see also 2 Corinthians 4:17; D&C 122:7).
- Heavenly Father knew that no mortal could live His law perfectly, so He sent His Son Jesus Christ to atone for sin and bring salvation to those who repent (see 2 Nephi 2:3–10).

- Agency is essential to progression. Our choices will eventually result in freedom, happiness, and eternal life with God or captivity and misery with the devil (see 2 Nephi 2:11–29; see also Helaman 14:30–31).
- The Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement are essential in Heavenly Father’s plan. Knowing about them helps us understand why we need the Savior (see 2 Nephi 2:14–26; see also 2 Nephi 9:6–15; Alma 18:36–39).
- “Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25).
- The Lord raised up the Prophet Joseph Smith to bring about the Restoration and bring forth the Book of Mormon. As we study the Book of Mormon we can come to know the covenants of the Lord and the power by which we may obtain salvation (see 2 Nephi 3:6–15; see also D&C 20:5–16).
- The Lord holds parents accountable to teach their children the truth (see 2 Nephi 4:3–9; see also D&C 68:25–32).
- A knowledge of our sins and shortcomings can lead us to despair, but as we recognize the Lord’s blessings in our lives and trust in His power, we can replace despair with hope (see 2 Nephi 4:17–5:5).
- The wicked separate themselves from the Lord’s presence and His blessings through their evil actions (see 2 Nephi 5:1–27; see also 2 Nephi 7:1).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 22–26.

Suggestions for Teaching

Note: Choose from the ideas in this section, or use some of your own, as you prepare to teach the assigned scripture block.



Book of Mormon Video presentation 4, “Act for Themselves,” can be used in teaching 2 Nephi 2 (see *Book of Mormon Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

2 Nephi 1:1–24. Individuals and nations are blessed or cursed according to their obedience to God’s commandments. (25–30 minutes)

Show students a family picture, a bowl of seeds, fruit that grows from that kind of seed, and some money. Have them write a definition for the word *prosperity* on a sheet of paper. Discuss what they write. Read 2 Nephi 5:10–13 and discuss the following questions:

- According to Nephi’s description, what are some ways people can prosper?
- How do the picture, seeds, fruit, and money relate to Nephi’s description?
- Why do you think some people believe that prospering only has to do with gaining money?
- In what other ways can we prosper?

Have students read 1 Nephi 4:14 and look for the promise the Lord gave Nephi and his posterity. Testify that the obedient prosper. Write the headings *Nephites* and *Lamanites* on the board. Have students read 2 Nephi 5:13–17, 20–24 looking for examples of prosperity or lack of prosperity among the two peoples. List their findings under the headings on the board. Have a student read the following statement by Elder Dean L. Larsen, then a member of the Presidency of the Seventy:

“When the lives of the people are in harmony with the Lord’s will, all of the essential factors that produce the blessings God deigns to give to his children seem to come into line. Love and harmony prevail. Even the weather, the climate, and the elements seem to respond. Peace and tranquillity endure. Industry and progress mark the lives of the people. It is as the Lord has promised” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 58; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 41).

Discuss how this principle applies today.

Tell students that both individuals and nations are blessed or cursed according to their obedience. Write two more headings on the board: *Nations* and *Individuals*. Divide students into two groups. Assign one to study 2 Nephi 1:1–12 and the other 2 Nephi 1:13–23. Have both groups look for answers to the following questions:

- What blessings come to nations for obedience?
- What blessings come to individuals?
- In what ways will nations or individuals be cursed for their disobedience?

Invite students to share their answers, and list them on the board under the appropriate headings. Discuss the similarities and differences between nations and individuals.

Ask: Why does it sometimes seem that the wicked prosper as much as or even more than the righteous? Explain that this question has been asked since ancient times (see Jeremiah 12:1). Testify that eventually the wicked will be punished and all will be judged according to their works upon the earth. The following statements may be helpful as you discuss this principle. Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, wrote:

“Those who brood over the prosperity or seeming happiness of the wicked put too much emphasis on material things. . . .

“ . . . The possession of wealth or the acquisition of significant income is not a mark of heavenly favor, and their absence is not evidence of heavenly disfavor” (*Pure in Heart* [1988], 75).

Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, wrote:

“People who are concerned about the prosperity of the wicked are sometimes blinded to their own weaknesses yet magnify greatly the errors of others. . . . The wicked may prosper for a time, the rebellious may seem to profit by their transgressions, but the time is coming when, at the bar of justice, all men will be judged, ‘every man according to their works.’ (Rev. 20:13.) No one will ‘get by’ with anything. On that day no one will escape the penalty of his deeds, no one will fail to receive the blessings he has earned” (*The Miracle of Forgiveness* [1969], 304–5).

2 Nephi 2:1–3. God will consecrate the suffering and afflictions of the righteous for their gain.

(10–15 minutes)

President Howard W. Hunter related the opposition we face to the friction that a racing boat encounters. He described watching the *fautasi*, or longboat, races in Apia Harbor in Samoa. Have a student read the following statement by President Hunter:

“We walked over to the place where the boats docked after the race had concluded. One of the oarsmen explained to us that the prow of the *fautasi* is so constructed that it cuts through and divides the water to help overcome the resistance that retards the speed of the boat. He further explained that the pulling of the oars against the resistance of the water creates the force that causes the boat to move forward. Resistance creates both the opposition and the forward movement.

“Friction, or resistance, is an interesting phenomenon. Without this force, a person or vehicle could not move about or, if already in motion, could not be stopped except by collision. Simple things like nails, screws, and bolts would not stay in place; a cork would not stay in a bottle; a light globe would drop from its socket; a lid would not stay on a jar.

“The law of friction or resistance that we think of as only applying to science seems to find application in our personal lives.”

Have students read 2 Nephi 2:1–3 and look for how the law of resistance applied in the life of Jacob. Consider the following questions:

- What resistance did Jacob have in his life?
- What promise did Jacob receive from his father Lehi?
- In what ways will the Lord consecrate, or bless, our afflictions for our gain?

Have students read and cross-reference Doctrine and Covenants 122:7 and 2 Corinthians 4:17 as you discuss their answers.

President Hunter continued:

“We came to mortal life to encounter resistance. It was part of the plan for our eternal progress. Without temptation, sickness, pain, and sorrow, there could be no goodness, virtue, appreciation for well-being, or joy” (*That We Might Have Joy* [1994], 97–98).

2 Nephi 2:3–10. Heavenly Father knew that no mortal could live His law perfectly, so He sent His Son Jesus Christ to atone for sin and bring salvation to those who repent. (15–20 minutes)

Tell students that you are going to write an instruction on the board that you want them to follow perfectly, regardless of what happens around them. Write on the board *Think about nothing*. While students try to follow this instruction, do things to distract them (for example, play a video, read to them from a book, or play a hymn on the piano). After about two minutes, ask:

- How difficult was it for you to think about nothing? Why?
- What would it take to follow this instruction perfectly?

Explain that in order to return to Heavenly Father, we must obey Heavenly Father’s commandments perfectly. Nephi taught, “There cannot any unclean thing enter into the kingdom of God” (1 Nephi 15:34). Ask: How difficult is it to obey all of Heavenly Father’s commandments perfectly?

Invite students to read 2 Nephi 2:5 and look for the words *temporal law* and *spiritual law*. Explain that the temporal law came into effect because of the Fall of Adam, which subjected all mankind to physical death. The spiritual law includes the commandments of God. All people suffer a spiritual death (separation from God) as a result of not keeping the spiritual law completely. Ask:

- According to this verse, who will qualify for exaltation? (No one.)
- What do these two laws have in common? (With one you are “cut off” and with the other you “perish.”)
- Why is it that “by the law no flesh is justified” or approved before God? (Except for Christ, no one has lived the law perfectly.)
- What kind of help do we need to fulfill the law? (The Atonement.)

Read 2 Nephi 2:6–7 and ask:

- What did the Lord do to help us fulfill both of these laws?
- What are “the ends of the law”? (Punishment; have students read 2 Nephi 2:10, 26 to find the answer to this question.)

Discuss the following questions:

- How did Jesus Christ answer the ends of the law for us? (He suffered our punishment for breaking the law; see 2 Nephi 2:7.)
- The Lord provided an atoning sacrifice for our sins. What are “the ends of the atonement”? (Happiness; see v. 10.)
- Read 2 Nephi 2:8. According to these verses, who escapes the punishment inflicted by the temporal law (death)? (Everyone.)
- According to verse 7, who receives the blessings of happiness and escapes the punishment inflicted by the spiritual law? (Only those who have “a broken heart and a contrite spirit.”)
- What does it mean to have “a broken heart and a contrite spirit”?

If necessary, point out that *contrite* means “repentant.” To further understand this phrase, invite a student to read the following statement by Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“This absolute requisite of ‘a broken heart and a contrite spirit’ prescribes the need to be submissive, compliant, humble (that is, teachable), and willingly obedient” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 77; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 53).

Discuss the words that Elder Scott uses to describe “a broken heart and a contrite spirit,” and ask students how they can put these concepts into daily practice. Read 2 Nephi 2:8, and ask students to write on a piece of paper how they feel about the Savior’s great love for them and what they will do to be worthy of His sacrifice. Conclude by reading the following statement, also by Elder Scott:

“Please understand that the way back is not as hard as it seems to you now. Satan wants you to think that it is impossible. That is not true. The Savior gave His life so that you can completely overcome the challenges you face (see 2 Nephi 2:6–8)” (in Conference Report, Mar.–Apr. 1990, 95; or *Ensign*, May 1990, 74).



2 Nephi 2:14–29. The Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement are essential in Heavenly Father’s plan. Knowing about them helps us understand why we need the Savior. (25–30 minutes)

Display a picture of the earth, the solar system, or vast numbers of stars (see Gospel Art Picture Kit, no. 600). Ask:

- How many planets do you think exist in the universe? (see Moses 1:33).

- Of all the planets in the universe, why do you think we are here on earth?

After discussing their responses, have a student read the following statement by Elder Russell M. Nelson, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Why are you here on planet earth?”

“One of the most important reasons is to receive a mortal body. Another is to be tested—to experience mortality—to determine what you will do with life’s challenging opportunities. Those opportunities require you to make choices, and choices depend on agency. A major reason for your mortal existence, therefore, is to test how you will exercise your agency (see 2 Nephi 2:15, 25)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1990, 94–95; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 74).

Ask: According to Elder Nelson, what are two major reasons we are on the earth? Explain that these reasons are essential for us to progress in Heavenly Father’s plan. On another occasion Elder Nelson said:

“A great council in heaven was once convened, in which it seems that all of us participated. There our Heavenly Father announced His plan. . . .

“ . . . The enabling essence of the plan is the atonement of Jesus Christ. As it is central to the plan, we should try to comprehend the meaning of the Atonement. Before we can comprehend it, though, we must understand the fall of Adam. And before we can fully appreciate the Fall, we must first comprehend the Creation. These three events—the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement—are three preeminent pillars of God’s plan, and they are doctrinally interrelated” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 45; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 33).

Ask: What are the three “pillars” or major elements of God’s plan?

To sum up, two major purposes of life are to receive a mortal body and to test how we will use our agency. Three pillars of Heavenly Father’s plan are the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement. Ask: How do these three pillars of the plan help us achieve these two purposes of life?


To answer this question, write the accompanying chart on the board, but leave the answers in the two “Purpose” columns blank. Have the students read the scriptures in the “Pillars of God’s Plan” column looking for how each pillar fulfills each purpose. Have them work individually or in groups.

How Does God’s Plan Fulfill the Purposes of Our Coming to the Earth?

Pillars of God’s Plan	First Purpose: Receive Our Body	Second Purpose: Test How We Use Our Agency
The Creation (2 Nephi 2:14–16, 22–23, 25)	God created physical bodies for all His creatures (see 2 Nephi 2:14–15).	God created “things to act and things to be acted upon” (2 Nephi 2:14). He allowed opposition (see v. 15). He gave man the ability to act for himself (see v. 16).
The Fall (2 Nephi 2:16–25; 1 Corinthians 15:21–22)	Adam and Eve fell so that God’s children could receive mortal bodies and experience life and death (see 2 Nephi 2:19–23, 25; 1 Corinthians 15:21–22).	We cannot exercise agency without being enticed (attracted or persuaded) by good and evil. The Lord invites us to do good, and the devil entices us to do evil (see 2 Nephi 2:16–18).
The Atonement (2 Nephi 2:26–29; Alma 11:42–43)	The Atonement redeems all mankind from the Fall and provides the Resurrection from the dead (see 2 Nephi 2:26; Alma 11:42–43).	Because of the Atonement we can choose a course that will lead to freedom and eternal life or captivity and spiritual death (see 2 Nephi 2:27–29).

Discuss students’ findings. Conclude by discussing the following statement by President Joseph Fielding Smith, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“This life is a very brief part of our existence, but is the most critical, for it is in mortality where we are tried and figuratively placed in the fire and tested, proved to see what kind of material we are made of, whether we will be worthy of an exaltation in the kingdom of God or be assigned to some other kingdom” (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., 5 vols. [1957–66], 4:82).


 **2 Nephi 2:25 (Scripture Mastery).** “Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy.” (5–10 minutes)

Relate the following fictional story: One day a student was walking across a university campus feeling the weight of school and family responsibility. On the same sidewalk, coming in the opposite direction, was an older man. He smiled at the student and asked, “Are you happy?” The question surprised the student who hesitantly answered, “Well, yes I am.” The older man then kindly asked, “Why don’t you tell your face?”

Have students read 2 Nephi 2:25 and explain how they think it relates to the story. Ask:

- How would you define joy?
- Why do some people lose joy in mortality?
- What can we do to bring more joy into our lives?
- How might we live our lives differently each day if we fully understood the doctrine taught in 2 Nephi 2:25?

Memorize the scripture as a class, and encourage students to live the principles that lead to joy.

 **2 Nephi 2:27 (Scripture Mastery).** Agency is essential to progression. Our choices will eventually result in freedom, happiness, and eternal life with God or captivity and misery with the devil. (15–20 minutes)

Place an empty plate on a table and invite a student to stand next to it. Tell the student: “You can choose any candy bar from the plate.” Ask:

- What is keeping you from choosing a candy bar?
- What if I placed a single candy bar on the plate and asked you to choose your favorite. Then would you have a choice?

Read 2 Nephi 2:11 with the class and ask:

- Why must we have more than one choice in order to exercise our agency?
- What word in this verse expresses this principle? (“Opposition.”)

Have students read 2 Nephi 2:26–27 looking for the choices we have in this life. Ask:

- How do the consequences of following the Lord compare with those of following Satan?
- How do the Lord’s desires for us compare with Satan’s?
- What does the Savior offer that is most appealing to you? (Answers might include the Atonement, eternal life.)
- Given the consequences of sin, why do you think people choose to heed Satan’s enticements?

Read the following statement by Elder Marvin J. Ashton, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Avoid Satan’s territory of deceit. It will never lead to happiness. Evidence to the contrary, there are no successful sinners. All of us must one day stand before God and be judged according to our personal deeds done in the flesh. The burdens of the sinner will never be lighter than that of the saint” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1990, 25; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 21).

2 Nephi 3:6–15. The Lord raised up the Prophet Joseph Smith to bring about the Restoration and bring forth the Book of Mormon. As we study the Book of Mormon we come to know the covenants of the Lord and the power by which we may obtain salvation. (25–30 minutes)

Display the pictures *Joseph Is Sold by His Brothers* (Gospel Art Picture Kit, no. 109) and *The Prophet Joseph Smith* (no. 401). Have students read the chapter heading for 2 Nephi 3 to identify the two pictures and what they have in common. Explain that in 2 Nephi 3 Lehi tells his son Joseph about both of these great prophets who shared his name. Lehi recounts an ancient prophecy given by Joseph of old about the Joseph who would live in the last days.

Divide the class into two groups and assign both groups to read 2 Nephi 3:6–15. Have one group look for a description of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Have the other group identify what he would do in the last days. Invite each group to report what they learned. Read the following statement by President Brigham Young:

“It was decreed in the counsels of eternity, long before the foundations of the earth were laid, that he, Joseph Smith, should be the man, in the last dispensation of this world, to bring forth the word of God to the people, and receive the fulness of the keys and power of the Priesthood of the Son of God. The Lord had his eyes upon him, and upon his father, and upon his father’s father, and upon their progenitors clear back to Abraham, and from Abraham to the flood, from the flood to Enoch, and from Enoch to Adam. He has watched that family and that blood as it has circulated from its fountain to the birth of that man. He was fore-ordained in eternity to preside over this last dispensation” (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [1941], 108).

Read as a class 2 Nephi 3:11; Doctrine and Covenants 5:10; 135:3. Ask:

- What are some of the Prophet Joseph Smith’s major accomplishments?
- How did Joseph Smith bring forth the Lord’s words?

When students mention the Book of Mormon, testify of its truth and power. You could also have a student read the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley, then a member of the First Presidency:

“Without reservation I promise you that if you will prayerfully read the Book of Mormon, regardless of how many times you previously have read it, there will come into your hearts an added measure of the Spirit of the Lord. There will come a strengthened resolution to walk in obedience to his commandments, and there will come a stronger testimony of the living reality of the Son of God” (“The Power of the Book of Mormon,” *Ensign*, June 1988, 6).

Have students study 2 Nephi 3:12 and ask what they think it means that the Bible and the Book of Mormon will “grow together.” Have them identify and mark the five promises resulting from the combining of ancient scriptures. (False doctrines will be confounded, contentions will be laid down, peace will be established, the people will be brought to a knowledge of their fathers, and they will come to know the Lord’s covenants.) Ask students to share ways they have seen these five promises fulfilled.

If time permits, cross-reference 2 Nephi 3:12 with Ezekiel 37:15–17, and discuss how the Book of Mormon has fulfilled this ancient prophecy. Share the following statement by Elder Boyd K. Packer, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“The stick or record of Judah—the Old Testament and the New Testament—and the stick or record of Ephraim—the Book of Mormon, which is another testament of Jesus Christ—are now woven together in such a way that as you pore over one you are drawn to the other; as you learn from one you are enlightened by the other. They are indeed one in our hands. Ezekiel’s prophecy now stands fulfilled” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1982, 75; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 53).

Invite students to share how the Book of Mormon has made a difference in their lives.

2 Nephi 4:3–9. The Lord holds parents accountable to teach their children the truth. (20–25 minutes)

Ask students:

- How would you respond if you were a parent and your eight-year-old son told you he didn’t want to be baptized?
- How would you respond if your ten-year-old son refused to go to church because he thought it was boring?
- How would you respond if your friend said, “I’m not going on a mission—I would never make a good missionary because my family isn’t religious”?
- How would you respond if a friend said, “I can’t be like you Mormons because both my mom and dad are alcoholics”?

- How would you respond if you were a bishop and a member of your ward said, “It’s my parents’ fault I left the Church—they never taught me about the scriptures or anything”?
- How would you respond if a member of your ward said, “I don’t see a problem with what I’ve done—my dad does it all the time”?

Discuss these questions, and then ask:

- When should parents share in the responsibility for their children’s actions?
- When shouldn’t they be held responsible for their children’s actions?

Read the following statement by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, to teach them to love and serve one another, to observe the commandments of God and to be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. Husbands and wives—mothers and fathers—will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102).

Explain that just prior to his death Lehi gathered his children and their families to give blessings and warnings. Read 2 Nephi 4:3–9 and look for the counsel Lehi gave to the children of Laman and Lemuel. Ask:

- What promise did the Lord give them?
- What did Lehi believe about children who are “brought up in the way [they] should go”? (v. 5).
- What blessing did Lehi leave for Laman’s children if they were to be cursed? (see v. 6).
- Why would he say that the curse would be “answered upon the heads of [their] parents”? (v. 6).

Tell students that the children of Laman and Lemuel would become known as the Lamanites.

Divide the students into two groups. Have the first group read Mosiah 10:11–17 and list the teachings that the Lamanites had been taught to believe. Have the second group read Doctrine and Covenants 68:25–31 and list what the Lord has said parents should teach their children. Write their findings on the board under the headings *What the Lamanites taught their children* and *What the Lord says parents should teach*, and compare the two lists. Ask: What does the Lord say about parents who do not teach their children the gospel? (see D&C 68:25).

Encourage students to carefully study the gospel and prepare to be righteous parents in Zion who will bring up their children in the Lord’s way.

2 Nephi 4:17–5:5. A knowledge of our sins and shortcomings can lead us to despair, but as we recognize the Lord’s blessings in our lives and trust in His power, we can replace despair with hope.

(20–25 minutes)

Sing “Count Your Blessings” (*Hymns*, no. 241) or take turns reading each verse. Ask:

- What do you think is the message of this hymn?
- Does this message have the power to change your life? Why?

Tell students that today they will study what is sometimes called the Psalm of Nephi. Nephi’s psalm can be divided into four parts. Write the accompanying chart on the board, but rearrange the descriptions in random order. Invite the students to read the verses and look for the correct descriptions. Have them work individually or in groups. When they finish, match the references and descriptions as a class.

The Psalm of Nephi	
Reference	Description
2 Nephi 4:17–19	Nephi expresses sorrow for his sins.
2 Nephi 4:20–25	Nephi lists his blessings.
2 Nephi 4:26–29	Nephi, seeing his blessings, resolves to improve.
2 Nephi 4:30–35	Nephi trusts in the Lord and prays that the Lord will redeem him.

Ask some or all of the following questions:

- Have you ever felt the way Nephi did? If so, what was it like?
- What blessings did Nephi recognize in his life?
- What was the source of those blessings?
- What impact can recognizing God as the source of your blessings have on your life?
- What can we learn from the kind of prayer Nephi offered to the Lord?
- Read Alma 38:5. According to this verse, how can we be delivered from our afflictions?
- How can we show the Lord that we trust in Him?

Tell students that many of Nephi’s trials came at the hands of his older brothers Laman and Lemuel. On several occasions they beat him or tried to take his life (see 1 Nephi 3:28; 7:16; 18:10–12). Still, Nephi trusted in the Lord. As a class, read 2 Nephi 5:1–11 and look for ways the Lord fulfilled His promise to deliver those who trust in Him. The following questions might be helpful as you study these verses:

- How did Nephi’s brothers’ attitude toward him change? (see v. 2).

- What did they try to do to him?
- What did the Lord do for Nephi and those who believed him as a prophet?
- Where did they go?
- What role did trust play in their delivery from their enemies?

Encourage students to count their blessings and trust in the Lord to help them and deliver them from evil. Consider sharing the following statement by Elder Richard G. Scott:

“We see such a limited part of the eternal plan He has fashioned for each one of us. Trust Him, even when in eternal perspective it temporarily hurts very much. Have patience when you are asked to wait when you want immediate action. He may ask you to do things which are powerfully against your will. Exercise faith and say, ‘Let Thy will be done.’ Such experiences, honorably met, prepare you and condition you for yet greater blessings. As your Father, His purpose is your eternal happiness, your continuing development, your increasing capacity. His desire is to share with you all that He has” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1991, 118; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 86).

2 Nephi 5. The wicked separate themselves from the Lord’s presence and His blessings through their evil actions. (15–20 minutes)

Display a picture of a temple and ask:

- Whose house is this?
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 97:15–16. What promise is made to those who enter the temple worthily?
- What would you be willing to do to enjoy the presence of the Lord?
- In what ways do we separate ourselves from the Lord?

Explain that the Lord loves us and wants us to dwell in His presence, but sometimes our actions make us unworthy to be there. Have students read 2 Nephi 5:20–24 and discuss the following questions:

- What was the curse that came upon the Lamanites for their disobedience? (They were cut off from the presence of the Lord; see v. 20.)
- Why were they cut off? (see v. 21).
- Why did the Lord “cause a skin of blackness to come upon them”? (v. 21).
- What warning did the Lord give to those who would mix with the Lamanites? (They would receive the same curse; see v. 23. *Note:* Be sure students understand that the curse was not the “skin of blackness” but being “cut off from the presence of the Lord.”)

- What happens to a people who have separated themselves from the Lord? (see v. 24).
- Read 2 Nephi 7:1. According to this verse, who is responsible to ensure that we are not separated from the Lord?

Discuss the following statement by President Joseph Fielding Smith, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“The Spirit of the Lord will not argue with men, nor abide in them, except they yield obedience to the Lord’s commandments.

“It is the duty of each member of the Church to live humbly, sincerely, and in strict obedience to the commandments that have been given. If this is done, a man will know the truth. Evidently there are many members of the Church who have not received a testimony simply because they do not make their lives conform to the requirements of the gospel. The Spirit of the Lord cannot dwell in unclean tabernacles, and because of this the knowledge which is promised is not received. Then again, there are members of the Church who take no time to inform themselves by study and faith, and all such are without the inspiration which the faithful are promised. When this is the case, those who are guilty are easily deceived and are in danger of turning away to false doctrines and theories of men” (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, 3:29–30).



2 Nephi 6–10

Introduction

Nephi included two of his brother Jacob’s sermons in 2 Nephi 6–10 as a witness of the life and mission of Jesus Christ. In the first sermon, Jacob quotes extensively from the prophet Isaiah concerning the house of Israel, as background for his own witness of the Savior’s Atonement (see 2 Nephi 6–9). In the second sermon, Jacob pleads with his people to “reconcile yourselves to the will of God, and not to the will of the devil,” a reconciliation that can only come “in and through the grace of God” (2 Nephi 10:24). Jacob’s prayer for his people is that “God raise you from death by the power of the resurrection, and also from everlasting death by the power of the atonement” (2 Nephi 10:25).

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, taught that Jacob’s witness was a “reminder that the Atonement would be infinite and eternal, benefiting all men, women, and children who ever lived. The Savior’s mercy and love, including his fairness and justice, would require that *everyone* hear the good news of his gospel. Therefore, those living before Christ’s mortal ministry needed to hear the message just as much as those living during and after his mortal ministry. But he cannot spread that message alone. Thus it is for Christ’s sake—or in his behalf, if you will—that the gospel must be recorded and testified of in every era, including the Nephite dispensation” (*Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon* [1997], 61).

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Prophets foretold that in the last days the gospel would be proclaimed, the Lord would gather His people, and redemption would come to all who repent (see 2 Nephi 6:6–18; 8:1–9:3; 10:1–2, 7–22).
- The Lord never turns away from His people, even if they break their covenants and turn from Him (see 2 Nephi 6:8–11, 14–15; 7:1–2, 4–7; see also Nehemiah 9:16–17, 30–31; Revelation 3:20).
- In the last days the Lord’s covenant people will be gathered to Zion in joy and gladness (see 2 Nephi 8:3–7, 11–16; see also D&C 101:13–19).
- The Atonement of Jesus Christ will deliver all men from physical and spiritual death. However, the unrepentant will suffer a second spiritual death (see 2 Nephi 9:6–24; 10:23–25; see also Helaman 14:15–19).
- If we succumb to temptation and do not repent, we become proud, carnally minded, and spiritually dead (see 2 Nephi 9:27–39).
- To be learned is good if we listen to God’s counsel (see 2 Nephi 9:28–29; see also Isaiah 55:8–9; 1 Corinthians 3:18–20).
- When we come unto the Lord we become spiritually alive and filled with the hope of salvation (see 2 Nephi 9:39, 41–43, 45–46, 49–52; see also 2 Nephi 26:24–28).
- In the last days the Lord will establish a Zion on the American continent, and those who fight against Zion will perish (see 2 Nephi 10:10–20; see also Ether 2:6–12; Articles of Faith 1:10).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 26–30.

Suggestions for Teaching

2 Nephi 6:1–3. Jacob was qualified to teach the gospel to the Nephites. (10–15 minutes)

Display a picture of the President of the Church and a picture of a prominent civic or business leader, sports figure, or movie star. Discuss the following questions:

- Which of these two people would you want to teach you the gospel? Why?
- What might a prominent leader or movie star lack that would make it hard to teach the gospel?
- What qualifies a person to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Have students read 2 Nephi 6:1–3 and mark at least five reasons that Jacob was qualified to teach the gospel. List each reason on the board and discuss each point. The list might include:

- Jacob was called of God (see v. 2).
- Jacob was ordained after “his holy order” (he held the priesthood; see v. 2).
- Jacob was consecrated, or set apart, by the prophet Nephi (see v. 2).
- Jacob cared deeply about his people (see v. 3).
- Jacob had already put a great deal of effort into teaching the gospel (see v. 3).

Briefly discuss why these reasons qualify a person to teach the gospel. Invite students to share reasons the President of the Church is as qualified as Jacob was and to give specific examples if they know any.

2 Nephi 6:6–18. Prophets foretold that in the last days the gospel would be proclaimed, the Lord would gather His people, and redemption would come to all who repent. (30–35 minutes)

Invite students to read 1 Nephi 19:23; 2 Nephi 6:4; and 3 Nephi 23:1 and look for what these verses have in common. Ask: Why do you think Nephi, Jacob, and even the Savior Himself quoted Isaiah’s words and encouraged us to search them? Read 2 Nephi 6:5; 11:2; and 3 Nephi 23:2. Ask: What do these verses teach us about why Isaiah is quoted so often? Invite students to watch for these principles as they study Jacob’s inspired commentary on Isaiah.

Jacob begins by giving a brief history of the Jews to provide the setting for the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy. Read 2 Nephi 6:8–11, and discuss the following questions:

- What did the Lord reveal to Jacob about the Jews living in his day? (They were carried into captivity; see v. 8.)
- What was Jacob shown next? (The Jews would later return to Jerusalem; see v. 9.)

- How would the Jews respond to Jesus’ mortal ministry? (see v. 9; 2 Nephi 10:3–4).
- Why would they respond this way? (see 2 Nephi 6:10; 10:5).
- What would happen to the Jews because they rejected the Holy One of Israel? (They would be scattered again and not be gathered until the last days; see 2 Nephi 6:10–11; 10:6.)

Display your country’s flag and a picture of parents holding children in their arms (for example, Gospel Art Picture Kit, no. 616). Read 2 Nephi 6:6–7 and discuss how these two images relate to Isaiah’s message.

Show students a copy of *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122* and explain what a commentary is (an insightful explanation). Tell students that they, with the help of Jacob, are going to write a commentary on 2 Nephi 6:6–7. Give students copies of the accompanying chart as a handout. Leave the “Commentary” column blank except for the scripture references at the beginning of each item. Have the students read the scriptures in the “Prophecy” column and write in the “Commentary” column how they would explain that portion of Isaiah’s prophecy.

	Prophecy	Commentary
2 Nephi 6:6 (Isaiah 49:22)	“Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people. . . .”	2 Nephi 6:11–12; 9:1–2. The Lord will involve the gentile nations in gathering scattered Israel to “the true church” and “all their lands of promise.”
2 Nephi 6:6–7 (Isaiah 49:22–23)	“. . . and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. “And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers. . . .”	2 Nephi 10:7–9. As loving parents, the Gentiles will carry the house of Israel back to their lands of inheritance as part of the fulfillment of the Lord’s covenant with Israel.
2 Nephi 6:7 (Isaiah 49:23)	“. . . they shall bow down to thee with their faces towards the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord; for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.”	2 Nephi 6:13–15. Those who fight against the covenant people will “lick up the dust” or be humbled. Those who wait for the Lord’s coming will be saved.

When they finish, discuss their insights. If desired, use the suggested answers in the “Commentary” column. Ask any or all of the following questions to help your discussion:

- Imagine attending the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games and watching the parade of nations, in which the athletes march in wearing their country’s colors and waving their country’s flag. Why do countries have flags? What are they for? (To identify a place or group, to give people something to rally around, to inspire troops in battle.)
- What do you think is the standard or flag that the Lord has set up in the last days? (Possible answers include “the knowledge of their Redeemer” [2 Nephi 6:11], the “true church and fold of God” [2 Nephi 9:2], and political events that made possible the Restoration of the Church and the gathering of Israel.)
- What image did Isaiah use to describe how the gentile nations would help gather the house of Israel?
- How could a nation be like a “nursing father” or a “nursing mother”?
- Who did Jacob say would be destroyed and why?
- How does Jacob describe those who will be spared from destruction?
- How do these prophecies apply to you?

Tell students that members of the Church are of the house of Israel. Explain that Nephi also spoke about the house of Israel in the last days. Read 2 Nephi 25:16–18 looking for what we can do to be spared from the destruction to come. Discuss with students how believing in Christ and worshiping “the Father in his name, with pure hearts and clean hands” (v. 16) can help prepare us to be accepted as the Lord’s covenant people when He comes again.

Conclude by singing “High on the Mountain Top” (*Hymns*, no. 5).

2 Nephi 6:8–11, 14–15; 7:1–2, 4–7. The Lord never turns away from His people, even if they break their covenants and turn from Him. (20–25 minutes)

Display a picture of the Savior next to a picture of an ordinary person. Ask students which of the following demonstrations best shows what would happen if the person in the second picture committed a sin. First move the picture of the Savior away from the other picture. Put the Savior’s picture back, and then move the other picture away from the Savior’s. Ask: When we sin, does the Savior turn from us, or do we turn from Him? How do you know?

Have students read Isaiah’s prophecy in 2 Nephi 7:1–2 and look for similarities to the demonstration. Discuss the following questions:

- Who is speaking in these verses?
- Who is He speaking to? (Israel.)
- According to verse 1, who left whom?
- In what ways do we turn away from the Lord?
- When the Lord called in verse 2, who answered?
- How does the Lord call us?

- In what ways do we respond? In what ways do we not respond?

Divide the class into two groups. Assign one group to study 2 Nephi 6:8–11 and the other to study 2 Nephi 6:14–15. Have students report on the differences between the first and second times Jesus Christ comes to “manifest himself” to the Jews. Ask:

- What happened to the Jews when they turned away from the Lord?
- What will happen to them as they turn back to the Lord?
- What happens when individuals turn away from the Lord?
- What has the Lord done for you when you have turned to Him?

Have students read 2 Nephi 7:4–7 and look for ways Isaiah described Jesus Christ. Ask students to compare Israel’s behavior with the Savior’s. Ask: What do we learn about the Lord from these verses that can give us hope as we choose to turn back to Him? (The Lord does not turn away but will always be there to help us.) Read Mosiah 11:24 and point out that sometimes the Lord is slow to respond to us because of our reluctance to hearken to Him. Read Mosiah 7:33 and ask what we must do to merit the Lord’s blessings. Conclude by reading the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“We cannot say it frequently enough. Turn away from youthful lusts. Stay away from drugs. They can absolutely destroy you. Avoid them as you would a terrible disease, for that is what they become. Avoid foul and filthy talk. It can lead to destruction. Be absolutely honest. Dishonesty can corrupt and destroy. Observe the Word of Wisdom. You cannot smoke; you must not smoke. You must not chew tobacco. You cannot drink liquor. . . . You must rise above these things which beckon with a seductive call. Be prayerful. Call on the Lord in faith, and He will hear your prayers. He loves you. He wishes to bless you. He will do so if you live worthy of His blessing” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 70; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 49).

2 Nephi 8:3–7, 11–16. In the last days the Lord’s covenant people will be gathered to Zion in joy and gladness. (30–35 minutes)

Bring several newspapers or magazines to class. Distribute them among the students and have them find articles describing disasters happening around the world. Invite them to report on the articles they found and show any photographs of the disasters. Ask: How do these destructions compare to those that will occur prior to the Second Coming? Invite them to share scriptures that describe the destructions that will occur before Christ’s coming (for example, 1 Nephi 22:13–16; D&C 43:25; 45:31–33; 88:88–91; 112:23–24).

Isaiah prophesied not only about the destruction of the wicked in the last days but also about the blessings the Lord will give to the righteous. Read 2 Nephi 8:3–6 and discuss the following questions:

- What blessing awaits the righteous in Zion?
- What will the Lord do with the “waste places” (v. 3), those parts of the earth that are destroyed?
- The wicked will be destroyed, but what is the Lord’s promise to those who trust in Him and in His gospel? (see v. 6).

Divide the class into two groups. Have the first group study 2 Nephi 8:7–12 and identify the Lord’s promises to His people. Some of the language may be difficult for them, but allow them to struggle with the assignment. Have the second group study Doctrine and Covenants 97:10–20 and identify what we must do for Zion to prosper in the last days. Have the first group report, and discuss their findings. Be sure the following points are made:

- 2 Nephi 8:7–8. The Lord’s people need not fear the wicked. Eventually the wicked will be destroyed and the righteous live forever. (See also D&C 29:17–20.)
- 2 Nephi 8:9–11. Just as the Lord delivered ancient Israel from Egypt by parting the Red Sea, He will deliver His people from the destruction of the last days and bring them to Zion. (See also 1 Nephi 17:23–27 and the commentary for 2 Nephi 8:9–11 in *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, p. 28.)
- 2 Nephi 8:12. The Lord’s people need not fear men. Men are mortal and subject to death and destruction. The Lord has power over all His people’s enemies. (See also Isaiah 40:5–8; Malachi 4:1.)

Explain that though the righteous will be spared as a people, there may be some righteous who are victims of the destruction. Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, said:

“We do not say that all of the Saints will be spared and saved from the coming day of desolation. But we do say there is no promise of safety and no promise of security except for those who love the Lord and who are seeking to do all that he commands” (in Conference Report, Mar–Apr. 1979, 133; or *Ensign*, May 1979, 93).

Have the second group report on what we can do to help Zion prosper. Discuss their answers and list them on the board. The following questions might be helpful:

- What did the Lord command His people to build?
- How was the temple to be paid for?
- What purpose would the temple serve in preparing His people for His Second Coming? (Answers might include instructing them in all things pertaining to the kingdom)

and providing a place where the pure in heart could be in the presence of the Lord.)

- How would Zion be blessed for worthily worshiping in the Lord's house?
- What can you do to make the temple a more important part of your spiritual life?

Have a student read the following statement by President Howard W. Hunter:

“And we again emphasize the personal blessings of temple worship and the sanctity and safety that are provided within those hallowed walls. It is the house of the Lord, a place of revelation and of peace. As we attend the temple, we learn more richly and deeply the purpose of life and the significance of the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us make the temple, with temple worship and temple covenants and temple marriage, our ultimate earthly goal and the supreme mortal experience” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 118; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 87–88).

Briefly discuss how the temple can provide safety for those who worship there. Conclude by having students read Doctrine and Covenants 97:21–26 looking for the safety the Lord promises to His people in Zion.

2 Nephi 9. The Atonement ransoms man from the Fall. (30–40 minutes)

Invite students to imagine being in a high-rise building still under construction. While walking around on the fifteenth floor, they slip and fall off the edge. Ask:

- Which of the following safety devices would you rather have: an umbrella, a parachute, a bungee cord, or a net around the base of the building? Why?
- Which would provide the greatest amount of safety?
- Is it possible that some would not choose the safest item? Why?
- Read Mosiah 16:3–4. How could these verses be compared to the analogy of falling off a building?
- Which of the safety devices do you think best represents the Atonement? Why?

Explain that the Atonement ransoms man from the effects of the Fall. Write the following statement on the board: “The ninth chapter of II Nephi . . . should be carefully read by every person seeking salvation” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 4:57).

Ask students to read the heading to 2 Nephi 9 and tell why they think this chapter is so important.

Tell students that in 2 Nephi 9 Jacob uses the term *O* to express awe and reverence and the term *wo* to express sorrow and dread. Invite students to make two columns on a sheet of paper. Have them label one *The O's* and the other *The Wo's*. Invite them to study 2 Nephi 9:6–38 looking for these terms. Have them write in the appropriate columns what Jacob revered and what he sorrowed over. At the bottom of their paper have them write why they think “every person seeking salvation” should carefully read 2 Nephi 9.

Help and encourage individual students as they study. When they have finished, discuss what they learned from the exercise, and invite those who would like to share what they wrote at the bottom of their paper to do so.

2 Nephi 9:6–24. The Atonement of Jesus Christ will deliver all men from physical and spiritual death. However, those who are unrepentant will suffer a second spiritual death. (25–30 minutes)

Write the word *phobia* on the board. Ask students what it means, and list some phobias or fears people have. Ask the following questions as part of the discussion:

- Why do people fear these things?
- How do the consequences of sin and wickedness compare to the fears listed here?
- Why do we often embrace that which can keep us from returning to live with our Father in Heaven?

Tell students that in 2 Nephi 9 Jacob explains the seriousness of sin, why we need to avoid it, and how faith in the Lord's power can help us overcome it. Read 2 Nephi 9:10, 19, 26 and look for a phrase that is found in each verse. Ask:

- What is the “awful monster”?
- Why do you think Jacob used the image of a monster to describe death and hell?

Write the words *death* and *hell* on the board. Ask: What does Jacob mean when he uses these terms? (see v. 10). Have students read 2 Nephi 9:6–9, and discuss some or all of the following questions:

- According to verse 6, what “passed upon all men”? (Death.)
- What did God's merciful plan provide to overcome this death? (The Resurrection.)
- What kind of death does this refer to? (Write *death of the physical body* on the board under the term *death*.)
- What other death was brought about by Adam's Fall? (Write *death of the spirit* and *being cut off from the presence of the Lord* under the term *hell*.)

- According to verse 7, what would happen to our physical bodies if there had been no “infinite atonement”? (They would remain in the grave forever.)
- According to verses 8–9, what would happen to our spirits? (We would be angels to the devil.)
- Because Jesus Christ was resurrected, what hope do we all have for our physical bodies?
- Our bodies will be resurrected, but what could still keep us from overcoming spiritual death?

Have a student read the following statement by Elder Russell M. Nelson:

“There is another type of separation known in scripture as spiritual death (see 2 Nephi 9:12; Alma 12:16; 42:9; Helaman 14:16, 18). It ‘is defined as *a state of spiritual alienation from God*’ (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954–56], 2:217). Thus, one can be very much alive physically but dead spiritually. . . .

“If physical death should strike before moral wrongs have been made right, opportunity for repentance will have been forfeited. Thus, ‘the [real] sting of death is sin’ (1 Corinthians 15:56).

“Even the Savior cannot save us in our sins. He will redeem us from our sins, but only upon condition of our repentance. We are responsible for our own spiritual survival or death (see Romans 8:13–14; Helaman 14:18; D&C 29:41–45)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1992, 102; or *Ensign*, May 1992, 73).

Explain that Jesus Christ’s Atonement has the power to overcome not only physical death but spiritual death as well. Divide the class into two groups and assign both groups to study 2 Nephi 9:10–24. Have both groups mark the phrase “all men.” Have the first group list what Jacob said will happen to all people, including us. Have the second group find out how, through the Savior’s help, physical and spiritual death can be overcome and what we can do to live with God again. Discuss their findings.

Read together 2 Nephi 10:23–24, and testify of the Savior’s power to save us all from “that awful monster, death and hell, and the devil” (2 Nephi 9:26).

2 Nephi 9:27–39, 41–43, 45–46, 49–52. If we succumb to temptation and do not repent, we become proud, carnally minded, and spiritually dead. When we come unto the Lord we become spiritually alive and filled with the hope of salvation. (25–30 minutes)

Invite students to consider what they would say if someone asked them, “Are you a product of the Fall or the Atonement?” Discuss what the question might mean, and

invite students to suggest possible answers. Apply it to the following situations:

- Jack got very nervous as he looked at the math test sitting on his desk. He shook his head with regret at having spent his study time the night before playing soccer with his friends. Then he noticed the girl’s paper on the desk next to his. He could see the answers clearly. The teacher was busy helping another student. Jack quickly copied the answers and sat back relieved.
- Margaret flinched only a little when her mother, who was the Relief Society president, asked if she would help in the nursery during homemaking meeting that night. Margaret smiled and said she would be happy to. She hurried to her room to finish some homework before she had to leave. A few minutes later a friend called and invited her to see a movie. Margaret really wanted to go, but she declined so she could help her mom at the homemaking meeting.

Discuss the following questions:

- What influenced Jack’s behavior: his fallen nature or the Savior’s Atonement?
- What influenced Margaret’s behavior?
- What do you think it means to be influenced by our fallen nature?
- What does it mean to be influenced by the Savior’s Atonement?

Explain that both the Fall of Adam and the Atonement of Jesus Christ greatly influence our lives. Because of the Fall we are tempted to sin and live as a “natural man.” Through the Atonement we can repent, be forgiven, and enjoy the blessings of a spiritual life. Discuss the following statement by Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“There are many people in this Church today who think they live, but they are dead to the spiritual things. And I believe even many who are making pretenses of being active are also spiritually dead. Their service is much of the letter and less of the spirit” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1951, 105).

Read 2 Nephi 9:39 and look for what leads to death and what leads to life. Tell students that they can be spiritually alive each day by choosing to apply the Atonement in their lives.

Divide the class into two groups. Assign the first group to study 2 Nephi 9:27–38. Have them mark each occurrence of the word *wo* and the kind of people who will have “wo” or suffering for their sins. (*Note:* If you used the teaching suggestion for 2 Nephi 9 and students kept their list of the “O’s” and the “wo’s,” allow them to use these charts as they complete this assignment.) Have the second group study

2 Nephi 9:39, 41–43, 45–46, 49–52. Have them mark each occurrence of the word *come* and what we must do to come unto the Lord. Have them list the blessings that come to those who live the spiritual life.

Write the phrases *Product of the Fall* and *Product of the Atonement* on the board. Have the groups share what they have learned about being a “product of the Fall” and a “product of the Atonement,” and list their findings under those headings on the board. Conclude by having a student read the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley:

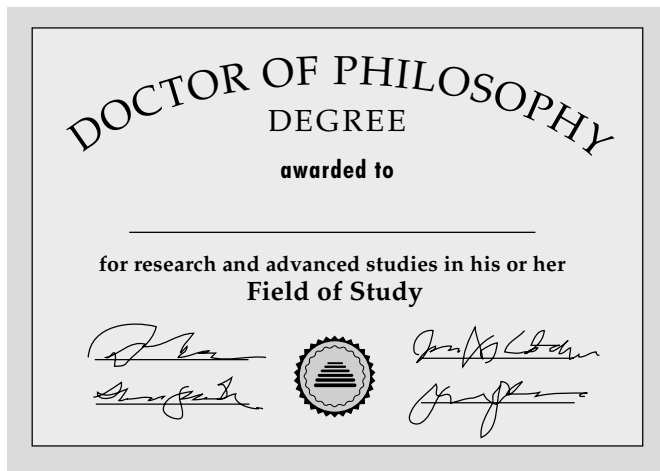
“The most satisfying experience I have is to see what this gospel does for people. It gives them a new outlook on life. It gives them a perspective that they have never felt before. It raises their sights to things noble and divine. Something happens to them that is miraculous to behold. They look to Christ and come alive” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 68; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 48).



2 Nephi 9:28–29 (Scripture Mastery). To be learned is good if we listen to God’s counsel.

(10–15 minutes)

Draw on the board a representation of a diploma indicating that a student in the class graduated from a university with a Ph.D. Ask students to list the benefits that come from being well-educated.



Read together 2 Nephi 9:28 and discuss the possible pitfalls of being well-educated. Have students tell what might happen to us if we thought we were wiser than those listed below:

- A parent
- Our bishop
- The prophet
- Heavenly Father

Read together 2 Nephi 9:29 looking for when it is good to be learned. Tell students that it is important for them to improve

themselves through education, but encourage them to remember this counsel from Elder Russell M. Nelson:

“Choose what you will learn and whose purposes you will serve. But don’t place all your intellectual eggs in one basket of secular learning” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 5; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 6).

Discuss what other “basket” students could place their “intellectual eggs” in.

2 Nephi 10:10–20. In the last days the Lord will establish a Zion on the American continent, and those who fight against Zion will perish. (15–20 minutes)

Display a map of the world. Select a place anywhere in the world and point to it. Ask students:

- Would any of you like to move there? Why or why not?
- Would you change your mind if you learned that you and your family would have greater happiness and blessings there?

Have students read 2 Nephi 10:20 and look for a similar experience that Jacob had. Ask:

- What did the Lord provide for Jacob’s family after they were “driven” away from their original home?
- What continent was Jacob’s family taken to? (The American continent.)

Explain that many prophets have testified that a Zion would be built on the American continent and that it would be “a choice land” (Ether 2:12; see vv. 6–12; 2 Nephi 1:5; Articles of Faith 1:10).

Write the following questions on the board:

- What blessings were promised to those living on the American continent?
- What will happen to those who fight against the Zion that will be established on the American continent?
- Who will be the only King to those living in Zion, and what will He provide for them?
- What blessing will come to the Gentiles whose hearts are softened?

Invite students to read 2 Nephi 10:10–18 and write on a sheet of paper the answers to the questions on the board. Discuss their findings. Have students identify what blessings have come into their lives because God established a land of liberty on the American continent. (The Restoration of the gospel and the organization of the Church were made possible by the liberties God provided on the American continent.)



2 Nephi 11–24

Introduction

Nephi said, “That I might more fully persuade [my brethren] to believe in the Lord their Redeemer I did read unto them that which was written by the prophet Isaiah” (1 Nephi 19:23). Isaiah is quoted more extensively in these chapters than in any other part of the Book of Mormon. Isaiah had seen the Savior (see 2 Nephi 11:2), so his was an important witness for Nephi to add to his own (see 2 Nephi 11:3–4). Of all the principles of the gospel taught by Isaiah, the most important is his testimony of Jesus Christ and of the Savior’s role in the plan of salvation (see 2 Nephi 11:5–6).

In 2 Nephi 11, Nephi introduces the thirteen chapters of Isaiah’s writings that follow. Here he explains why he delights in and quotes from Isaiah. He also gives some keys to understanding Isaiah’s writings and adds the important teaching that “all things which have been given of God from the beginning of the world, unto man, are the typifying of [Jesus Christ]” (2 Nephi 11:4; see also Moses 6:63). Chapters 12–24 correspond to Isaiah 2–14 and contain many types and shadows of the Savior. (For more help with understanding Isaiah, see Elder Bruce R. McConkie’s article “Ten Keys to Understanding Isaiah,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1973, 78–83.)

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The Atonement of Jesus Christ is essential to the plan of salvation (see 2 Nephi 11:2–8; see also 2 Nephi 31:21; Mosiah 3:7).
- Wickedness and worldliness bring the punishment of God. The scattering of Israel and the destructions of the Second Coming are examples of this punishment (see 2 Nephi 12:5–14:1; 15:1–25; 18:19–22; 20:1–6; 23:6–22).
- In the last days temples will be built and a righteous remnant of Israel will be gathered (see 2 Nephi 12:1–3; 15:26–30; 20:19–22; 21:10–16; 24:1–4).
- During the Millennium the righteous will experience peace, happiness, and rest from Satan’s influences. The Savior will rule as King on David’s throne (see 2 Nephi 14:2–6; 19:6–7; 21:6–9; 22).
- God works with His children through prophets. Prophets teach, testify, and prophesy of Jesus Christ (see 2 Nephi 16:1–17:16; see also Amos 3:7; Jacob 7:11).

- Jesus Christ and His gospel are a stepping stone for the righteous and a stumbling block for the wicked (see 2 Nephi 17:14–15; 18:5–17; 19:1, 5–7; 21:1–5; 23:10–13).
- Lucifer, a son of the morning, was cast out of heaven and became the devil because he wanted to exalt himself to the status of God (see 2 Nephi 24:12–23; see also Revelation 12:7–11).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 31–35.

Suggestions for Teaching

2 Nephi 11:2–8. The Atonement of Jesus Christ is essential to the plan of salvation. (15–20 minutes)

Bring a paper bag to class. Put something unique or valuable in the bag (such as a rare book, a letter from the First Presidency, a letter from some famous person, an engagement ring, or a valued item from the past). Show the bag but not its contents to the class. Describe the object, and ask how many students believe that you have that object in the bag. Write the number of believers on the board.

Choose a student to look into the bag and describe its contents for the class. Ask how many students believe now, and write the new number on the board (the number of believing students should increase). Invite a second student to look into the bag and describe its contents. Ask how many students believe now, and write that number on the board.

Discuss with the class why it is easier to believe something when there is more than one witness. Have a student read Doctrine and Covenants 6:28 and describe the gospel principle it teaches. Have students list some examples they can think of where the Lord has used two or three witnesses to establish the truth. (These might include the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon, missionaries going two-by-two, or the fact that two witnesses are required at baptisms.)

Read 2 Nephi 11:2–3 and ask:

- How did Nephi use the law of witnesses?
- Who were the other witnesses Nephi referred to?
- What were these men witnesses of?
- Who might the “more witnesses” in verse 3 be?

Explain to students that 2 Nephi 11 is Nephi’s introduction to the thirteen chapters of Isaiah’s writings he quotes in 2 Nephi 12–24. Invite students to read 2 Nephi 11:2–7 and underline the phrase “my soul delighteth” each time they see it. Ask: What did Nephi delight in? Have students circle all the references to the Lord (names, titles, and pronouns) they can find in these same verses. Then ask:

- How many references to the Lord did you find in these verses?

- What plan does Nephi refer to in verse 5? (The plan of salvation.)
- According to verses 6–7, what would happen to the plan if Jesus Christ were not part of it?
- Read verse 8. Which word in this verse means the same thing as “delighteth”?
- If Nephi delights in talking of Christ, and Nephi believes that reading these words will cause us to rejoice or delight, what do you think the Isaiah chapters will focus on? (Jesus Christ.)

Invite students to read the commentary in the “Understanding the Scriptures” section for 2 Nephi 11:4 in the student study guide. Ask: Why would Nephi teach that “all things which have been given of God” are types of Jesus Christ just before quoting thirteen chapters of Isaiah? (One reason might be that Isaiah often speaks of the Savior in symbolic terms.) Help students understand that much of what Isaiah prophesied has more than one fulfillment. Many passages apply both to Isaiah’s day and to the Savior (see 2 Nephi 18:18; 2 Nephi 20 heading). Encourage students as they study these chapters of Isaiah to watch for types of Jesus Christ.

2 Nephi 12–24. Overview of Isaiah’s writings in 2 Nephi 12–24. (5 minutes)

Write the following phrases on pieces of poster board and display the posters in the room. Refer to them periodically as you study 2 Nephi 12–24.

- The Scattering of Israel
- The Gathering of Israel
- The Millennium
- Prophecies about Jesus Christ

Show students these four phrases. Explain that Isaiah wrote about many topics and often jumps quickly from one to another. But in 2 Nephi 12–24 he frequently returns to these four major topics. Ask students to watch for how often these topics are taught and what Isaiah says about them.

2 Nephi 12:5–14:1; 15:1–25; 18:19–22; 20:1–6; 23:6–22. Wickedness and worldliness bring the punishment of God. The scattering of Israel and the destructions of the Second Coming are examples of this punishment. (45–50 minutes)

Drop a ball on the floor in front of the class. Put your fingers in water. Dry your hands and then turn off the classroom lights. Ask:

- Why did the ball move toward the floor when I let go of it?
- Why did my fingers get wet when I put them in the water?
- Why did the lights go out when I flipped the switch?
- What do all of these have in common? (They are natural consequences.)

- What is a natural consequence? (The natural result of an action.)

Write the following question on the board and discuss it with students: *What are the natural consequences of sin?* Explain that the prophet Isaiah repeatedly taught about the consequences of sin.

(If you taught the overview of 2 Nephi 12–24, refer to the poster you made with the phrase “The Scattering of Israel,” and explain that you will now spend some time studying that topic.)

Write on the board the headings *Sins of the People* and *Consequences of Sin*. Divide the class into two groups. Have the first group study the following scriptures and look for specific sins the people committed: 2 Nephi 12:5–9; 13:5, 8–9, 15–16; 15:11–12, 20–23; 18:19, 21; 19:13, 15–17; 20:1–2. As they find the different sins, list them on the board under *Sins of the People*.

Have the second group study the following scriptures looking for the consequences that came to those who sinned: 2 Nephi 12:10–22; 13:1–4, 11–12, 17–26; 14:1; 15:9–10, 13–15, 24–25; 18:21–22; 19:11–12, 14, 18–21; 20:4–6; 23:6–9, 15–16, 19–22. As they find the consequences, list them on the board under *Consequences of Sin*.

Have each group briefly summarize their findings.

Invite a student to stand and read the allegory found in 2 Nephi 15:1–7. Ask students:

- What should have been the natural consequence of finding fertile ground, fencing it for protection, gathering out the stones, and planting? (It should have produced good crops.)
- What grew instead?
- How do the wild grapes relate to the sins listed on the board?
- What consequence did the Lord promise would come because of the “wild grapes”?
- Who does the vineyard represent? (see v. 7).
- Read 2 Nephi 23:11. How does this verse summarize the allegory?
- In what future event will the wicked be destroyed? (The Second Coming; see the chapter headings for 2 Nephi 12; 20; 23–24.)
- How do the wicked feel about the consequences of their sins?
- Read 2 Nephi 13:10; 23:3, 22. What does the Lord say about the righteous amid the destruction prophesied for the wicked?
- Which of the sins listed on the board are common in the world today?
- How can learning about the consequences of other people’s sins help us avoid making the same mistakes?
- What can we do to avoid these punishments?

2 Nephi 12:1–3; 15:26–30; 20:19–22; 21:10–16; 24:1–4. In the last days temples will be built and a righteous remnant of Israel will be gathered.

(35–40 minutes)

Show the class a picture of the Salt Lake Temple (for example, Gospel Art Picture Kit, no. 502). Ask:

- Which temple is this?
- In the middle of which famous mountain range was Salt Lake City built? (The Rocky Mountains.)

Invite students to read 2 Nephi 12:1–3 and ask:

- When was this prophecy to be fulfilled?
- What is “the Lord’s house”? (The temple.)
- Who will be gathered to the Lord’s house?
- Why will they gather to the Lord’s house?
- What ordinances do temples offer that are necessary for salvation?

Write the following questions on the board:

- What symbolic meanings are associated with mountains?
- When was 2 Nephi 12:2 fulfilled, or when will it be fulfilled?

Invite a student to read the commentary for 2 Nephi 12:1–4 in *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122* (p. 31), and have the class listen for answers to the questions on the board. Share also this statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie: “All of the temples now built or that may be built in the high mountains of America also do or will fulfill this prophetic word” (*The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man* [1982], 276).

Invite students to read 2 Nephi 15:26, and ask them what the word *ensign* means. (An ensign is a flag or standard used to identify or gather a group of people.) Have students read 2 Nephi 29:1–2 and look for what we have in the Church that serves as a vital part of the latter-day ensign. Ask:

- Where can we find the words of Lehi’s and Nephi’s descendants?
- How is the Book of Mormon a good gathering tool?

Share with students the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson:

“A missionary who is inspired by the Spirit of the Lord must be led by that Spirit to choose the proper approach to be effective. We must not forget that the Lord Himself provided the Book of Mormon as His chief witness. The Book of Mormon is still our most powerful missionary tool. Let us use it” (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [1988], 204).

(If you taught the overview of 2 Nephi 12–24, refer to the poster you made with the phrase “The Gathering of Israel” and explain that you will now spend some time studying that topic.)

Read 2 Nephi 15:27–30 and ask: How will people be gathered as a result of the Book of Mormon? To help answer this question, share with students the commentary for 2 Nephi 15:26–30 in *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122* (p. 32).

Invite students to read 2 Nephi 20 chapter heading and verses 20–22, and ask:

- How many people will be left after the destruction at the Second Coming?
- What word in verses 21–22 can mean “gather”?
- Who will be gathered?

Have students read 2 Nephi 21:10–16, and ask: Who is the “root of Jesse” in verse 10? (see D&C 113:5–6). Elder Bruce R. McConkie said:

“Are we amiss in saying that the prophet here mentioned is Joseph Smith, to whom the priesthood came, who received the keys of the kingdom, and who raised the ensign for the gathering of the Lord’s people in our dispensation? . . . Those whose ears are attuned to the whisperings of the Infinite will know the meaning of these things” (*The Millennial Messiah*, 339–40).

Ask:

- In verse 10, who will “seek” for the “ensign” that is to be raised?
- What words in verses 11–12 could mean “gather”? (“Recover,” “assemble.”)
- From what parts of the world will the Lord gather Israel?
- Who will be able to stand against Israel in that day?
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 133:26–36. How do these verses compare to 2 Nephi 21:16?

Write the accompanying chart on the board. Have students read the scripture and fill in the blanks with the letters of the phrases that complete the statements.

2 Nephi 24:1–4

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Israel will return to her ____. | A. The ends of the earth. |
| 2. Israel will come from ____. | B. Rest from sorrow, fear, and bondage. |
| 3. Israel will rule ____. | C. Lands of promise. |
| 4. The Lord shall give Israel ____. | D. Over their oppressors. |

(Answers: 1–C, 2–A, 3–D, 4–B)

Ask students:

- Would you rather be a part of Israel when it is scattered or when it is gathered? Why?
- What are ways you can be a part of the gathering effort of the Lord in the last days?

Encourage students to be determined to stand for what is right in these last days. Share the following statement by Elder Neal A. Maxwell, then a member of the Presidency of the Seventy:

“President Brigham Young noted . . . that as the Church extended and expanded into the nations of the world . . . , so in like manner and simultaneously would the power of the adversary rise. . . .

“In such dramatic circumstances you will need those virtues which President George Q. Cannon ascribed to those of the latter days: courage, determination, and ‘obedience to God under all circumstances.’ (*Journal of Discourses* 11:230.) . . .

“ . . . All the easy things the Church has had to do have been done. From now on it is high adventure!” (*Wherefore, Ye Must Press Forward* [1977], 81–84).

2 Nephi 12:16. The Book of Mormon adds to our understanding of Isaiah. (10–15 minutes)

Bring a simple jigsaw puzzle to class, or make one by cutting up a picture. Remove some of the pieces. Ask for a few volunteers, and invite them to work together to assemble the remaining pieces. When they have done all they can, ask:

- Why weren’t you able to complete the puzzle?
- What would it take to have the “whole picture”?

Choose a student to read 2 Nephi 12:16. Invite half the class to follow along in their copies of the Book of Mormon and the other half to follow along in Isaiah 2:16. Ask the second half what was different between the two accounts. Display the first two columns of the accompanying chart on an overhead projector or write them on the board.

Isaiah 2:16		
King James Version	Book of Mormon (2 Nephi 12:16)	Septuagint
—	And upon all the ships of the sea,	and upon every ship of the sea,
And upon all the ships of Tarshish,	and upon all the ships of Tarshish,	—
and upon all pleasant pictures.	and upon all pleasant pictures.	and upon every display of fine ships.

Explain that the Septuagint is a Greek translation of the Old Testament that was made in the third and second centuries B.C. (see Bible Dictionary, “Septuagint,” p. 771). Tell students it is a good translation but is sometimes different from our King James Version. Display the last column of the chart, and ask:

- What part of Isaiah 2:16 is missing from the Septuagint?
- What part of the scripture is missing from the King James Version of the Bible?
- Which is the only book with both phrases?
- What does this illustrate about the Book of Mormon?

Note: The Book of Mormon does not restore all the discrepancies in the King James Version or the Septuagint.

Share the following statement by Elder Hartman Rector Jr., then a member of the Seventy:

“The nicest gift that you can give to nonmember friends or acquaintances is to share the gospel with them. This is probably most easily done by having a copy of the Book of Mormon delivered to them by the missionaries. Why the Book of Mormon? Because it is, in the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith, ‘the most correct . . . book on earth’ (*History of the Church*, 4:461). Why is the Book of Mormon so great? Probably because the ‘plain and precious’ truths that were lost or taken from the Bible were put back or restored in the Book of Mormon (see 1 Nephi 13:40). In my opinion, a man can learn more about Jesus Christ by reading the Book of Mormon than any other book” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1990, 99; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 77).

Bear your testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon.



2 Nephi 14:2–6; 19:6–7; 21:6–9; 22. During the Millennium the righteous will experience peace, happiness, and rest from Satan’s influences. The Savior will govern as King of Kings on David’s throne. (20–25 minutes)

Write the following words on separate pieces of paper or poster board: *door locks, prisons, hospitals, morticians, cemeteries, Satan, security systems, a strong military, national elections, poverty, pornography.* Choose several students to hold up the posters. Invite the class to play “Twenty Questions.” In this game, students can ask up to twenty yes-or-no questions to help them guess what the words have in common (they are all things we may not have during the Millennium). When they discover the answer, ask: How would you like to live in such a society?

(If you taught the overview of 2 Nephi 12–24, refer to the poster you made with the phrase “The Millennium” and explain that you will now spend some time studying that topic.)

Invite students to read 2 Nephi 14:2–6 looking for the conditions that will exist during the Millennium. Ask:

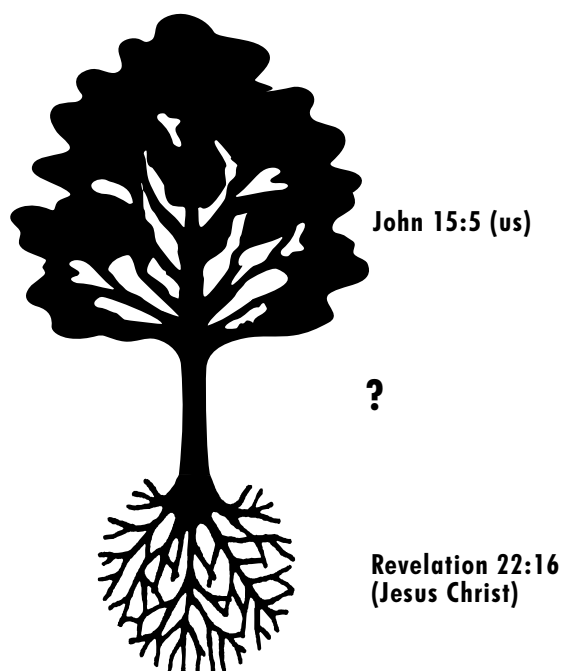
- How does Isaiah describe the fruits of the earth in that day? (see v. 2).
- What word in verse 3 describes the condition of the people? (“Holy.”)
- How many will be “holy” or righteous? (“Every one.”)
- In verse 4, what does having our filth washed away symbolize? (Being spiritually cleansed.)
- What will the Lord create in Zion? (see v. 5).
- Read Exodus 13:21–22. How do these verses compare with Isaiah’s prophecy?
- Read 2 Nephi 19:6–7. Who will control the government during the Millennium?

Read 2 Nephi 21:6–9 and ask:

- What changes will occur in animals during the Millennium?
- Why will the lamb be able to dwell safely with the wolf?
- How might this affect man’s relationship with animals?
- According to verse 9, what is the source of this change?

Have students read the chapter heading for 2 Nephi 22 and identify what time period Isaiah prophesied about in this chapter. Have students silently read verses 1–6 and underline all the verbs. Ask them how studying the verbs helps us better understand this chapter. Ask: How do you think people will feel about living in the Millennium? Discuss their answers.

2 Nephi 16:1–13; 17:1–9. God works with His children through prophets. Prophets teach, testify, and prophesy of Jesus Christ. (15–20 minutes)



Show the class a tree or other plant with a single trunk or stem. Draw the accompanying diagram on the board, leaving off the words in parentheses. Ask students to read the verses and identify those parts of the plant.

Ask:

- How do the roots of a tree help the branches?
- If the roots are symbolic of Jesus Christ, and the branches represent us, what might the trunk or main stem represent? (The prophet; see Amos 3:7.)
- What is the source of the prophet’s revelation?
- How is that like a tree receiving nourishment from the roots?
- In what ways does the prophet transmit knowledge from the Lord to you?
- How has your life been blessed as a result of being nourished by a prophet?

Explain that several prophets have expressed how inadequate they felt when they received their calls. President Spencer W. Kimball described the telephone call in which President J. Reuben Clark Jr. of the First Presidency informed him that he had been called to the Quorum of the Twelve:

“‘Oh, Brother Clark! Not me? You don’t mean me? There must be some mistake. I surely couldn’t have heard you right.’ This as I sank past the chair to the floor. . . .

“‘Oh, Brother Clark! It seems so impossible. I am so weak and small and limited and incapable.’” (Edward L. Kimball and Andrew E. Kimball Jr., *Spencer W. Kimball: Twelfth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* [1977], 189).

Elder Ezra Taft Benson described a similar scene when he was informed by President Heber J. Grant of his call to the Twelve:

“The announcement seemed unbelievable and overwhelming. . . . For several minutes [I] could say only, ‘Oh, President Grant, that can’t be!’ which I must have repeated several times before I was able to collect my [thoughts] enough to realize what had happened. . . .

“I felt so utterly weak and unworthy” (Sheri L. Dew, *Ezra Taft Benson: A Biography* [1987], 174).

Invite students to read Moses 6:31 to learn how Enoch felt when he was called to be a prophet. Explain that 2 Nephi 16 describes another prophet who felt unworthy to serve.

Ask students to list some prophets who have seen the Lord (these might include Moses, Lehi, Nephi, and Joseph Smith). Read 2 Nephi 16:1–10 and ask:

- What did Isaiah see? (see vv. 1–4).
- How did he feel about seeing what he saw? (see v. 5).
- What happened to change Isaiah’s feeling of unworthiness? (see vv. 6–7).
- What happened to him after he was cleansed? (see v. 8).
- How is Isaiah a type of Christ? (see Abraham 3:27).
- What was Isaiah’s mission? (see 2 Nephi 16:9–10).
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 11:9. How does this compare to Isaiah’s mission?
- What are the advantages of having prophets?

Read 2 Nephi 17:1–2 and have a student summarize what happened. Draw the accompanying map on the board and ask students to use their Bible maps to identify the cities where the following kings ruled:

- Ahaz, king of Judah (in the capital city of Jerusalem)
- Rezin, king of Syria (in the capital city of Damascus)
- Pekah, king of Israel, which was also called Ephraim or Samaria (in the capital city of Samaria)


Label the map on the board as they find the answers.



Have students read 2 Nephi 17:3–9, and ask:

- What did the Lord command Isaiah to tell King Ahaz?
- If you were Ahaz, how would the message in verse 7 make you feel?
- What confidence can come into our lives if we trust in the counsel of the prophet?

Sing or read “We Ever Pray for Thee” (*Hymns*, no. 23) or “Come, Listen to a Prophet’s Voice” (*Hymns*, no. 21).

 **2 Nephi 17:14–15; 18:5–17; 19:1, 5–7; 21:1–5; 23:10–13. Jesus Christ and His gospel are a stepping stone for the righteous and a stumbling block for the wicked.** (25–30 minutes)

Write *Jesus Christ* on the board. Ask students to guess the number of times this name appears in the Old Testament. After some guessing, explain that it doesn’t appear at all in the Old Testament as we have it. Ask: Do you think that Jesus Christ is ever talked about in the Old Testament? Read 1 Nephi 19:23 and find why Nephi quoted Isaiah.

(If you taught the overview of 2 Nephi 12–24, refer to the poster you made with the phrase “Prophecies about Jesus Christ” and explain that you will now spend some time studying that topic.)

Give students copies of the following chart without the information in the second column. Have students read 2 Nephi 17:14–15 and fill in the chart with Isaiah’s prophecies about Jesus Christ. (*Note:* This chart is separated into three sections for convenience while teaching. Combine it into a single chart for the handout.)

Reference	What We Learn about Jesus Christ from Isaiah
2 Nephi 17:14	His mother would be a virgin. He would be called “Immanuel” (which means “God is with us”).
2 Nephi 17:15	He would be righteous.

Review the information in the last paragraph of the teaching suggestion for 2 Nephi 11:2–8, and remind students about types of Jesus Christ in Isaiah’s writings. Then read 2 Nephi 18:6–8 looking for how Isaiah referred symbolically to the Savior. To guide students in discovering types of the Savior in these verses, ask the following questions:

- Read John 7:37–38. How does Jesus refer to Himself in these verses? (As a source of water.)
- What word is used to describe the waters in 2 Nephi 18:6? (“Softly.”)
- What word is used to describe the waters in verse 7? (“Strong.”)
- How did the people react to the water when it ran “softly”?
- Why did the Lord send the “strong” waters?
- How far do the “strong” waters eventually reach?
- How can Jesus be described as both “soft” and “strong”? (One answer is that He came “softly” during His mortal ministry but will come “strongly” at His Second Coming. To reinforce this point, read the words to “Jesus, Once of Humble Birth” [*Hymns*, no. 196].)

Invite students to add these prophecies to their chart and to continue working through the references up to 2 Nephi 19:5.

2 Nephi 18:6	Christ would be rejected by most people at His first coming.
2 Nephi 18:7–8	At His Second Coming He will appear in power and glory.
2 Nephi 18:9–12, 14–15	Those who oppose Him will fail, but those who are on His side will be protected.
2 Nephi 18:13, 16–17	We can prepare for the Second Coming by obeying the scriptures and worshipping and waiting for the Lord.
2 Nephi 19:5 (see also 20:16–18; 23:9)	At the Second Coming the wicked will be destroyed by fire (see D&C 133:41 to learn about the source of the fire that will destroy the wicked).

If possible, bring to class a recording of Handel’s *Messiah*. Invite students to read along in 2 Nephi 19:6 as you play “For unto Us a Child Is Born.” Have them add to the chart what they learned about the Savior from this verse, and then have them continue to the end of the chart.

2 Nephi 19:6	Christ will control the governments of the world during the Millennium. People will recognize Him for who He is.
2 Nephi 19:7	His power and control will be limitless and last forever.
2 Nephi 21:1–2	He will have the Spirit, wisdom, and might.
2 Nephi 21:3–5	He will righteously judge the people. He will slay the wicked by the power of His word.
2 Nephi 23:10	The sun, moon, and stars will not shine at His coming.
2 Nephi 23:13	Earthquakes will accompany His return.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 97:22–25 and ask: What is the best way for us to prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ?

2 Nephi 24:12–23. Lucifer, a son of the morning, was cast out of heaven and became the devil because he wanted to exalt himself to the status of God.

(10–15 minutes)

Show students a university diploma, or draw one on the board (see p. 60). Ask: What is required to receive a diploma? (Answers might include study, perseverance, desire, work, time.) Invite the class to imagine a first-year university

student going to the president of the university and demanding a diploma. Ask:

- What would you do if you were the president? What would you tell this student?
- How would you feel if the student threatened to take over your job if you didn’t provide the diploma?

Read 2 Nephi 24:12–15 and look for who tried to obtain something great without doing the work for it. Ask:

- What was Satan’s name in the premortal life?
- What was his title? (Son of the morning.)
- What pronoun precedes each clause in verses 13–14?
- What does that suggest about Satan’s problem?

Write on the board *What Satan Wanted* (2 Nephi 24:13–14) and *What Satan Received* (2 Nephi 24:12, 15, 19). Ask students to read verses 13–14 and list the words that describe what he wanted. Then have them read verses 12, 15, and 19 and list the words that describe what he received.

What Satan Wanted (2 Nephi 24:13–14)	What Satan Received (2 Nephi 24:12, 15, 19)
ascend	fallen
heaven	cut down
exalt	ground
throne	brought down
above	hell
stars	pit
mount	cast out
heights	grave
clouds	slain
Most High	trodden under feet

- Read Matthew 23:1–12. How does the Savior’s counsel in Matthew relate to these verses in Isaiah?
- Read Mark 8:35. What does this verse say we must do to be saved?
- How do we “lose” our life? (President Marion G. Romney, who was a member of the First Presidency, said, “We lose our life by serving and lifting others” [in Conference Report, Oct. 1982, 135; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 93].)
- What can you do now to implement these teachings of the Savior in your life?



2 Nephi 25–30

Introduction

In chapters 25–30, Nephi provides keys for understanding ancient scripture and prophecies. He reminds us that salvation can only come through the Atonement of Jesus Christ and warns about pitfalls that lead away from Christ. Having seen our day, Nephi knew that his writings would provide direction and hope to a world mired in the wiles of the devil. Nephi prophesied that the Book of Mormon would come forth in the last days bearing this message, and that “there shall be many which shall believe the words which are written” (2 Nephi 30:3).


Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- We understand the words of Isaiah better when we study them with the Spirit and with the help of modern scripture and prophets. It also helps to learn about the history and culture of the Jews (see 2 Nephi 25:1–8).
- The Book of Mormon testifies that salvation comes only through the Atonement of Jesus Christ (see 2 Nephi 25:19–30; see also Mosiah 3:18–19).
- Whatever the Lord says through His prophets will be fulfilled (see 2 Nephi 26:1–23; 27:1–20; see also D&C 1:37–38).
- We serve in the Church to build the kingdom of God (see 2 Nephi 26:29–31; see also D&C 121:34–36).
- In the last days many people will be deceived by false doctrines. Some of these false doctrines are: God no longer works with man, miracles have ended, sin is acceptable because in the end God will save everyone, “all is well in Zion,” and there is no hell or devil (see 2 Nephi 28; see also Moroni 7:35–37).
- In the last days many will be “puffed up in their hearts” and will mistakenly believe that they can hide their wickedness from the Lord (see 2 Nephi 28:7–9; see also D&C 1:3).
- The Lord has given us the Bible and the Book of Mormon as two separate testimonies that the gospel of Jesus Christ is true. This fulfills the Lord’s own law of witnesses (see 2 Nephi 29:1–9; see also Matthew 18:16; D&C 6:28).
- The Book of Mormon will be the means of bringing many to a knowledge that Jesus is the Christ (see 2 Nephi 30:3–8; see also D&C 20:8–12).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 36–41.

Suggestions for Teaching

 *Book of Mormon Video* presentation 5, “Spiritual Crocodiles,” can be used in teaching 2 Nephi 28 (see *Book of Mormon Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

2 Nephi 25:1–8. We understand the words of Isaiah better when we study them with the Spirit and with the help of modern scripture and prophets. It also helps to learn about the history and culture of the Jews. (35–40 minutes)

Hold up a combination padlock and ask for volunteers to open it (do not provide the combination). Ask: Why is it so difficult to open the lock? Give the volunteers the combination and invite them to try again. If they still have difficulty, give additional instructions. When they succeed, ask the class:

- Why is it important to know the right combination in order to open the lock?
- Why won’t any other combination of numbers work?
- Why is it important to understand how to use the numbers in order to open the lock?

Display a picture of Isaiah (for example, Gospel Art Picture Kit, no. 113). Ask students what they have heard about the writings of Isaiah. Ask:

- How is this lock like the writings of Isaiah?
- How could you compare opening the lock to understanding Isaiah?

Explain that Nephi and other prophets have provided the “combination” for unlocking the writings of Isaiah. Have students read 2 Nephi 25:1–8 looking for Nephi’s insights on how to understand Isaiah.

To further examine this passage, write on the board *Combination Number 1: Understand the ways of ancient Israel and the judgments of God*. Ask:

- According to 2 Nephi 25:1, why were many of the teachings of Isaiah hard for Nephi’s people to understand? (see also Jacob 4:14).
- According to verse 2, why didn’t Nephi teach his people many things concerning the manner, or customs and traditions, of the Jews? (Have students read the reference given in footnote 2*a*.)
- What do you think are the “judgments of God” referred to in verse 3?

Read the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, then a member of the Seventy:

“In all ages the Lord pours out his *judgments* upon the children of disobedience. Famines, captivity, plagues, floods, lightnings, hailstorms, pestilences, tempests, earthquakes, wars, fire and brimstone raining from heaven—all these and infinitely more are sent of God upon men who forsake him and his laws. (Lev. 26; Deut. 28; 29; 30; 3 Ne. 8; 9; 10; D. & C. 43:25; 63:32–33; 88:88–91.) Obviously these judgments come upon peoples and nations to punish them for their rebellion and to humble them that peradventure they will turn to righteousness. And obviously also a righteous minority group may be called upon to suffer with those who are receiving a just reward for their unholy deeds. (*Teachings [of the Prophet Joseph Smith]*, pp. 162–163; Dan. 11:35.)” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [1966], 404–5).

Ask: How do the words of Isaiah, as well as the other prophets, help people understand the “judgments of God”?

Write on the board *Combination Number 2: Have the “spirit of prophecy.”* Remind students that Nephi said his soul delighted in “plainness” (2 Nephi 25:4). Ask:

- According to verse 4, what can make the words of Isaiah plain?
- What is the “spirit of prophecy”? (The inspiration and witness of the Holy Ghost.)

The “spirit of prophecy” is further clarified in Revelation 19:10. Read this verse looking for the meaning of the phrase. Ask: Why is a testimony of Jesus Christ essential to understanding Isaiah?

Write on the board *Combination Number 3: Study the culture, history, and geography of ancient Israel.* In verse 5, Nephi points out that he came from Jerusalem and had observed “the things of the Jews.” In Hebrew, one word for “thing” is *dabar*, which can also mean “word,” “saying,” or “act.” Nephi says that the Jews understood “the things of the prophets,” and that no one understands those prophecies like them unless they have been “taught after the manner of the things of the Jews.”

Ask: How might we better understand the “manner of the things of the Jews”? One of the best ways is to study their writings, particularly the Bible and the Book of Mormon. To understand Isaiah, it helps to be familiar with all the scriptures. Studying the history, culture, and language of the

Jews is also helpful. Consider sharing the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“Scriptural insight . . . is aided by a knowledge of the history, political and social conditions, educational status, and temperament of the peoples to whom the various scriptures were originally revealed. For instance, it was more difficult for the Nephites to gather the full import of Isaiah’s prophecies than it was for the Jews in Jerusalem, because the Nephites were not taught ‘after the manner of the Jews.’ True, Isaiah’s words ‘are plain unto all those that are filled with the spirit of prophecy’; but just as scientific and medical writings can be better understood by those trained in science and medicine, so those schooled in interpreting prophecies are in a better position to determine their full meanings” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. [1966–73], 1:58).

- What does the phrase “the regions round about” in verse 6 mean? (The geography of Israel and surrounding lands.)
- How might being familiar with “the regions round about” help us understand Isaiah?

Write on the board *Combination Number 4: Know the prophecies concerning the last days and the signs of the times.* Ask:

- According to verses 7–8, when will men understand Isaiah’s words? Why?
- How does studying the teachings of the prophets, including the “signs of the times,” help us better understand the words of Isaiah?

Testify of the value of understanding the words of Isaiah, and point out that we are commanded to study them diligently (see 3 Nephi 23:1–3).

2 Nephi 25:19–30. The Book of Mormon testifies that salvation comes only through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. (25–30 minutes)

Hold up a picture of Jesus Christ. Ask students how many times they can find the title *Christ* in 2 Nephi 25. (The word is found eighteen times in this chapter, including the chapter heading.) Ask:

- What does the title *Christ* mean? (see Bible Dictionary, “Christ,” p. 633; “Anointed One,” p. 609).
- Why do you think this title is used so often in this chapter?

Have students read 2 Nephi 25:19–21, and ask:

- What is Nephi’s main message concerning Jesus Christ?
- What promise did Nephi receive concerning his message?
- Why was it so important to Nephi that his descendants receive this message?

Invite students to consider whether they feel the same way Nephi did about sharing the gospel with their family and friends. Have them read verse 22, and ask: What does the Book of Mormon have to do with our eternal judgment?

Read verse 23 and ask: What does *grace* mean? (see Bible Dictionary, “grace,” p. 697). Read the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Grace consists of God’s gift to His children wherein He gave His Only Begotten Son in order that whosoever would believe in Him and comply with His laws and ordinances would have everlasting life.

“By grace, the Savior accomplished His atoning sacrifice so that all mankind will attain immortality.

“By His grace and by our faith in His atonement and our repentance of our sins, we receive the strength to do the necessary works that we otherwise could not do by our own power.

“By His grace, we receive an endowment of blessing and spiritual strength that may eventually lead us to eternal life if we endure to the end.

“By His grace, we become more like His divine personality.

“Yes, it is ‘by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.’ What is meant by the phrase ‘after all we can do’?

“‘After all we can do’ includes extending our best effort.

“‘After all we can do’ includes living His commandments.

“‘After all we can do’ includes loving our fellowmen and praying for those who regard us as their adversary.

“‘After all we can do’ means clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, visiting the sick, and giving ‘succor [to] those that stand in need of [our] succor’ (Mosiah 4:16), remembering that what we do unto one of the least of God’s children, we do unto Him (Matthew 25:40).

“‘After all we can do’ means leading chaste, clean, pure lives, being scrupulously honest in all our dealings, and treating others the way we would want to be treated” (*Come unto Christ* [1983], 7–8).

Have students read 2 Nephi 25:24–30. Ask: How did the Nephites differ from the Jews of Jesus’ day in the way they lived the law of Moses? Note that we do not have much detail on the daily practice of the law of Moses among the Nephites. But it is clear that they obeyed the law knowing that they were saved by faith in and obedience to Jesus Christ.

Sing “I Stand All Amazed” (*Hymns*, no. 193).



2 Nephi 26:1–23; 27:1–20. Whatever the Lord says through His prophets will be fulfilled.

(45–50 minutes)

Write on the board the following three statements by the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve from “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102):

1. “Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, to teach them to love and serve one another, to observe the commandments of God and to be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. Husbands and wives—mothers and fathers—will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations.”
2. “We warn that individuals who violate covenants of chastity, who abuse spouse or offspring, or who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God.”
3. “Further, we warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.”

Ask:

- How do we know that these prophetic warnings will come true?
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 1:37–38. Does the Lord ever vary from His word?

Explain that the passages of scripture they will be studying today contain many prophecies that have been fulfilled. Ask: How can knowing that all these prophecies have been fulfilled exactly as prophesied help a person have more confidence in the Lord’s word?

Give students a copy of the accompanying chart as a handout, or duplicate it on the board. Use the version included in the appendix (p. 293), which leaves the “Fulfilled” column blank. Divide students into four groups, and assign each group one of the chart’s four categories. Have the groups read the prophecies and scriptures for their category and find additional scriptures that show each prophecy has been fulfilled. Tell them that after ten minutes you will give them a hint to help them in their search. After ten minutes, give them the references from the “Fulfilled” column, but not in the correct order. Have them work five to ten minutes longer, and invite them to choose a spokesperson for their group.

1. Prophecies Concerning the Coming of Jesus Christ to the Americas		
Prophecy	Declared	Fulfilled
Christ would show Himself to the Nephites.	2 Nephi 26:1	3 Nephi 11:8–10
There would be great wars between the Nephites and Lamanites.	2 Nephi 26:2	Mormon 1:8
The Nephites would be shown signs of Christ's birth, death, and Resurrection.	2 Nephi 26:3	3 Nephi 1:15–21; 8:3, 19–20, 23
At the time of Christ's death, there would be terrible destructions and the wicked would perish.	2 Nephi 26:4–6	3 Nephi 8:5–25
The righteous who looked forward to Christ would not perish in the destruction at the time of His death.	2 Nephi 26:8	3 Nephi 10:12–13
2. Prophecies Concerning the Book of Mormon Peoples after Christ's Coming		
Prophecy	Declared	Fulfilled
There would be a great period of peace in America after Christ's coming.	2 Nephi 26:9	4 Nephi
The Nephites would be destroyed shortly after the fourth generation following Christ's visit to America.	2 Nephi 26:10, 18	Mormon 8:7
The descendants of the Book of Mormon peoples would dwindle in unbelief after the destruction of the Nephite nation.	2 Nephi 26:15	Mormon 8:8–10
3. Prophecies Concerning the Last Days		
Prophecy	Declared	Fulfilled
The Gentiles would suffer from pride and would stumble spiritually. There would be many churches built up, causing envyings, strife, and malice.	2 Nephi 26:20–21	JS—H 1:5–6
There would be secret combinations.	2 Nephi 26:22	D&C 42:64
4. Prophecies Concerning the Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon		
Prophecy	Declared	Fulfilled
The Book of Mormon would be delivered to an unlearned man (the Prophet Joseph Smith).	2 Nephi 27:9	JS—H 1:59
Three witnesses, and a few others, would see the plates containing the record of the Nephites.	2 Nephi 27:12–14	D&C 5:11; 17
God would command that some of the unsealed portion of the Book of Mormon be delivered to the learned.	2 Nephi 27:15	JS—H 1:63–64
The learned man would ask for the plates to translate them.	2 Nephi 27:15	JS—H 1:65
The learned man would say he could not read the book because it was sealed.	2 Nephi 27:17	JS—H 1:65

Invite the spokesperson for each group to summarize their findings, and discuss them as a class. Ask how the fulfillment of these prophecies has an impact on our lives today.

Have students scan 2 Nephi 27:21–35 to find prophecies about our day that have not yet been completely fulfilled. List these prophecies on the board as the students identify them.

Read the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson:

“All the words of the Lord will be fulfilled, whether He gives the words Himself or through inspiration and revelation to His servants to declare those words, and the Holy Spirit bears testimony to all who seek to know the truth of the revelations and commandments”
(*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, 333–34).

2 Nephi 26:29–31. We serve in the Church to build the kingdom of God. (10–15 minutes)

Write the word *craft* on the board and ask students to define it. Give the following definitions of the word: (1) “skill in planning, making, or executing”; (2) “an occupation or trade requiring manual dexterity or artistic skill”; (3) “skill in deceiving to gain an end”; (4) “the members of a trade or trade association” (*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th ed. [1993], “craft,” 270). Ask students if they consider the word a negative term.

Write the heading *Priestcraft* on the board and ask: How would you define *priestcraft* in light of what you know about the word *craft*? Explain that in an American dictionary printed at the time the Book of Mormon was being translated, *priestcraft* is defined as “the stratagems and frauds of priests; fraud or imposition in religious concerns; management of selfish and ambitious priests to gain wealth and power, or to impose on the credulity of others” (Noah Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language* [1828], “priestcraft”).

Write the heading *Priesthood* on the board to the right of *Priestcraft*. Ask: How is this definition of *priestcraft* different from the definition of *priesthood*? Discuss their answers briefly, and then read the following statement by Elder Stephen L Richards, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“The Priesthood is usually defined as being ‘the power of God delegated to man to administer the ordinances of the gospel.’ This is a true definition, but I like to add to it an interpretation in terms of service. The power is not static. The extent of it varies with a man's worthiness and capacity to hold and use it” (*The Church in War and Peace* [1943], 42).

Have students read 2 Nephi 26:29–31, keeping in mind the meanings of the terms *priestcraft* and *priesthood*. Ask: How does this scriptural definition of *priestcraft* differ from the 1828 dictionary definition?

Invite students to identify the problems with priestcraft as listed in these verses. Write their responses on the board under the heading *Priestcraft*. Have students name contrasting points of the true priesthood, and write these under the heading *Priesthood*. See the accompanying chart for suggested answers.

Priestcraft	Priesthood
Those engaging in priestcraft set themselves up for a light unto the world.	Those who hold the true priesthood hold up Jesus Christ as their light.
They seek their own gain.	They build the kingdom of God.
They seek the praise of the world.	They serve humbly, often without recognition.
They seek not the welfare of Zion.	They seek the welfare of Zion.
They would let the laborer in Zion perish.	They have charity.
They labor for money.	They labor for Zion.

Explain that understanding the differences between priesthood and priestcraft helps us tell who is from God and who is not. Even those who hold the true priesthood of God must guard against the misuse of their authority. Read Doctrine and Covenants 121:36–37 and ask: How can we be sure to exercise our priesthood righteously?

2 Nephi 28. In the last days many people will be deceived by false doctrines. Some of these false doctrines are: God no longer works with man, miracles have ended, sin is acceptable because in the end God will save everyone, “all is well in Zion,” and there is no hell or devil. (30–35 minutes)

Write on the board *Thoughts precede deeds*. Ask: If you want to change your behavior, what must you change first?

Share with students some headlines from recent newspapers describing crimes against persons (such as “Two Charged in Drug Bust,” “High School Teacher Sues Student for Attack,” “Man Charged with Domestic Violence,” “Party Turns into Riot, Alcohol Involved”). Ask: What kind of thinking would lead a person to do these kinds of things?

Write on the board: “The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior” (Boyd K. Packer, in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 20; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 17). Ask: In light of this statement, what is one reason the Lord wants you to study the Book of Mormon every day?

Read 2 Nephi 28:1–14 and ask some or all of the following questions:

- As used in verse 1, what does the word *constrained* mean? (“Compelled” or “brought to do something out of necessity.”)
- What is the book mentioned in verse 2? (The Book of Mormon, which Nephi had described in chapters 26–27.)
- Read Joseph Smith—History 1:5. How does this verse fulfill what Nephi describes in 2 Nephi 28:3–4?
- According to 2 Nephi 28:4–6, what would the churches in the last days teach?
- How would these churches feel about Jesus Christ, miracles, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost?
- Why do you think the churches and doctrines Nephi warned against would be popular with the world? (see vv. 7–9).
- What kind of acts do these teachings lead people to do? (see vv. 10–14).
- Review verses 1–2. What is it about the Book of Mormon that will help counteract these conditions in the latter days?

Have students spend a few minutes searching for specific scriptures in the Book of Mormon that counteract the false teachings identified in 2 Nephi 28:3–14 (see the accompanying chart for examples). Discuss their findings.

False Teachings in the Last Days	Scriptures That Counteract the False Teachings
2 Nephi 28:4–6	Moroni 7:37
2 Nephi 28:8	2 Nephi 9:24–27; Alma 34:32–34
2 Nephi 28:12–14	Moroni 8:26–27

Read and bear testimony of the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson:

“Yes, it is the precepts of men versus the revealed word of God. The more we follow the word of God the less we are deceived, while those who follow the wisdom of men are deceived the most” (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, 354).

Show the class a few carpenter’s tools, such as a hammer, a saw, and a tape measure. As you hold up each tool, ask what it is used for and how it is used. Explain that there are many types of carpenter’s tools because there are many types of wood and many different tasks that a carpenter needs to do.

Explain that Satan also has many different tools because people have many different weaknesses. Write the accompanying chart on the board. Include the scripture references in the left column, but leave the other two columns blank. Have students

scan 2 Nephi 28:13–32 looking for ways Satan tempts people and for what happens when they give in to his temptations. Fill in the other two columns as you discuss these verses.

References	Satan's Wiles (Tricks)	Results
2 Nephi 28:13–15	He persuades people to rob the poor out of pride and to satisfy their love of fine clothes and ornate churches.	The wicked will be thrust down to hell.
2 Nephi 28:16, 20	He persuades them to think that good things are bad or worthless.	They will perish.
2 Nephi 28:21, 24–25	He pacifies them into carnal security and tells them that all is well.	The devil will cheat their souls and lead them down to hell.
2 Nephi 28:22–23	He uses flattery and says there is no devil or hell.	They will be bound by Satan's chains and go down to death and hell.
2 Nephi 28:27–30	He persuades them that the revelations they have received are enough and they don't need more.	They will lose what they have.


Invite students to reread verses 20–22, and ask: Why does Satan use different approaches with different people? Have students provide examples from their own experiences of how Satan gets some to rage, how he pacifies others, and how still others he flatters.

Read 2 Nephi 28:24–32. Explain that *wo* means deep distress, suffering, or grief. Ask:

- What woes did Nephi warn us of?
- What examples of these sins and false beliefs today can you think of?
- According to Nephi, how can the Lord help us overcome the wiles and temptations of the devil?

Read and bear testimony of the following statement by Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“God never forgets us, even those who turn away from or deny Him. If they repent and come unto Him, He will be merciful to them, ‘for [His] arm is lengthened out all the day long’ (2 Nephi 28:32)” (*A Wonderful Flood of Light* [1990], 60).

 **2 Nephi 28:7–9 (Scripture Mastery).** In the last days many will be “puffed up in their hearts” and will mistakenly believe that they can hide their wickedness from the Lord. (10–15 minutes)

Bring some whole-grain wheat or rice to class along with some puffed wheat or rice. (This demonstration will also work with popcorn.) Show the puffed cereal to the class and ask what it is. Show the whole-grain cereal and ask: Which of these could you store the longest? Why? (The whole-grain cereal would store best because it is still protected by its hull.) Ask some or all of the following questions:

- How is puffed grain made? (Grain is heated in a closed container until it is hotter than the temperature at which water turns to vapor. When the pressure is released, the water in the kernel turns to steam and explodes the kernel.)
- Do we ever get into life situations that “put the heat (or pressure) on” and then, when circumstances change, we become “puffed up”?
- What does it mean when people get “puffed up”? (They become conceited and snobbish. A person who is “puffed up” does not feel a need to rely on the Lord.)
- Which has more food value: a bushel of whole grain or a bushel of puffed grain? Why? (With whole grain you get more food value. The puffed grain is mostly air.)
- Which would you rather have: five “puffed up” friends or five sincere friends?
- Which kind of friend would you rather be?

Have students read 2 Nephi 28:7–9 looking for the types of teachings believed and taught by those who are puffed up, and list them on the board. Ask: How can one avoid being “puffed up”? Review the role of the Book of Mormon in counteracting false teachings, pride, and wickedness as discussed in the teaching suggestion for 2 Nephi 28.

Have students mark the scripture mastery verses (2 Nephi 28:7–9). Ask: Why do you think these verses are important enough to be included in the scripture mastery list? Identify key phrases that might help students remember the content, such as “eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die”; “take the advantage of one because of his words”; “dig a pit for thy neighbor”; and “God will beat us with a few stripes.” Suggest that students underline these phrases if they desire.

2 Nephi 29:1–9. The Lord has given us the Bible and the Book of Mormon as two separate testimonies that the gospel of Jesus Christ is true. This fulfills the Lord's own law of witnesses. (25–30 minutes)

Invite two students to play the role of missionaries knocking on your door. Tell them to try to interest you in the Book of Mormon. During the role play tell the missionaries that you appreciate their intentions, but that you already have a Bible and do not think you need another. Let the

missionaries respond without coaching. Allow the class to offer suggestions on how to respond. Ask: Is there a passage in the Book of Mormon that answers this objection? Explain that 2 Nephi 29 offers a powerful answer.

Chapter 29 begins with Nephi’s prophecy that in the last days the Lord will do a marvelous work. Have students read verses 1–2 looking for five reasons the Lord will proceed to do His “marvelous work,” and list them on the board. Your list might look like this:

- “That I may remember my covenants which I have made unto the children of men.”
- “That I may set my hand again the second time to recover my people.”
- “That I may remember the promises which I have made unto thee, Nephi, and also unto thy father, that I would remember your seed.”
- “That the words of your seed should proceed forth out of my mouth unto your seed.”
- “My words shall hiss forth . . . for a standard unto my people, which are of the house of Israel.”

Discuss the meaning of each point.

Ask: What do you think the Lord meant when He said that His words would “hiss forth”? (To *hiss* is to make a sharp, prolonged *s* or *psst* sound, as we sometimes do to get someone’s attention.) Stress to students that the word of God in the Book of Mormon is to be hissed forth to the ends of the earth (see 2 Nephi 29:2; Moroni 10:28).

President Ezra Taft Benson, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve, said of 2 Nephi 29:2:

“We, the members of the Church, and particularly the missionaries, have to be the ‘hissers,’ or the tellers and testifiers, of the Book of Mormon unto the ends of the earth” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1975, 96; or *Ensign*, May 1975, 65).

Read 2 Nephi 29:3–14 and look for three reasons we should study the Book of Mormon in addition to the Bible, and list them on the board. Your list might look like this:

- The Lord speaks to more nations than one (see v. 7).
- The witness and testimony of two nations is better than one (see v. 8).
- The Lord will judge us out of the books that are written (see v. 11).

Concerning the third reason, President Marion G. Romney said:

“For me there could be no more impelling reason for reading the Book of Mormon than this statement that we who have the Book of Mormon shall be judged by what is written in it” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1980, 87; or *Ensign*, May 1980, 66).

Go through the role play with students acting as missionaries once again. This time have them practice responding to your objection using the knowledge they have gained from 2 Nephi 29.

2 Nephi 30:1–8. The Book of Mormon will be the means of bringing many to a knowledge that Jesus is the Christ. (15–20 minutes)

Write on the board *What, combined with the Spirit, is the greatest single tool available to every missionary?* Hold up a copy of the Book of Mormon. Explain to students that it is essential that we learn how to use the Book of Mormon as a missionary tool. The Book of Mormon will be the means of converting many and by which prophecies will be fulfilled. Read the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“My beloved brethren and sisters, for some years now I have been deeply concerned that we are not using the Book of Mormon as God intends.

“As I participated in the Mexico City Temple dedication, I received the distinct impression that God is not pleased with our neglect of the Book of Mormon. . . .

“The Book of Mormon is for both member and nonmember. Combined with the Spirit of the Lord, the Book of Mormon is the greatest single tool which God has given us to convert the world. If we are to have the harvest of souls that President Kimball envisions, then we must use the instrument which God has designed for that task—the Book of Mormon” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1984, 4–7; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 6–7).

Read 2 Nephi 30:1–8 and ask: What impact will the Book of Mormon have on the world? (For help understanding the terms *Gentiles*, *Jews*, and *remnant*, see the commentaries for 1 Nephi 13:1–3; 2 Nephi 30:4; and 2 Nephi 30:4–6 in *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 12–13, 41.) Ask some or all of the following questions:

- What is our role in this conversion process?
- How will the Book of Mormon be made available to the world?

- How can you be most effective in using the Book of Mormon for missionary work?
- Why should you diligently study the Book of Mormon on a daily basis?

Read the following statement made by President Benson while President of the Church:

“There are three great reasons why Latter-day Saints should make the study of the Book of Mormon a lifetime pursuit.

“The *first* is that the Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion. This was the Prophet Joseph Smith’s statement. He testified that ‘the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion’ (*History of the Church*, 4:461). A keystone is the central stone in an arch. It holds all the other stones in place, and if removed, the arch crumbles. . . .

“The *second* great reason why we must make the Book of Mormon a center focus of study is that it was written for our day. The Nephites never had the book; neither did the Lamanites of ancient times. It was meant for us. . . .

“The *third* reason why the Book of Mormon is of such value to Latter-day Saints is given in the same statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith cited previously. He said, ‘I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book’ (*History of the Church*, 4:461). That is the third reason for studying the book. It helps us draw nearer to God. Is there not something deep in our hearts that longs to draw nearer to God, to be more like Him in our daily walk, to feel His presence with us constantly? If so, then the Book of Mormon will help us do so more than any other book.

“It is not just that the Book of Mormon teaches us truth, though it indeed does that. It is not just that the Book of Mormon bears testimony of Christ, though it indeed does that, too. But there is something more. There is a power in the book which will begin to flow into your lives the moment you begin a serious study of the book. You will find greater power to resist temptation. You will find the power to avoid deception. You will find the power to stay on the strait and narrow path. The scriptures are called ‘the words of life’ (D&C 84:85), and nowhere is that more true than it is of the Book of Mormon. When you begin to hunger and thirst after those words, you will find life in greater and greater abundance” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 4–6; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 5–7).



Introduction

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland wrote:

“In a marvelous final testimony to his people, as well as to the unborn and unseen of the last dispensation yet to come, Nephi made ‘an end’ of his prophesying (including prophesying about the coming forth of the Book of Mormon) and concluded his writing—and his lifetime of teaching—with a ‘few words . . . concerning the doctrine of Christ’ [2 Nephi 31:1–2]. . . .

“The ‘doctrine of Christ’ as taught by Nephi in his grand, summational discourse focuses on faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism by immersion, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end. It does not, in this declaration, attempt to cover the entire plan of salvation, all the virtues of a Christian life, or the rewards that await us in differing degrees of heavenly glory. It does not, in this declaration, deal with the offices of the priesthood, the ordinances of the temple, or many other true doctrines. All these are important, but as used in the Book of Mormon, ‘the doctrine of Christ’ is simple and direct. It focuses on the first principles of the gospel exclusively, including an expression of encouragement to endure, to persist, to press on. Indeed, it is in the clarity and simplicity of ‘the doctrine of Christ’ that its impact is found. Nephi knew it would be so. He wrote, ‘I shall speak unto you plainly, according to the plainness of my prophesying’ [2 Nephi 31:2]” (*Christ and the New Covenant*, 49–50).

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Obedience, faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Ghost, feasting on the words of Christ, enduring to the end, and following the Savior’s example are all part of the “doctrine of Christ” (see 2 Nephi 31:2–32:6; see also 3 Nephi 11:28–41; 27:8–22; Moses 6:48–68).
- Jesus Christ, though sinless, needed to be baptized to fulfill all righteousness (see 2 Nephi 31:4–9; see also Matthew 3:11–17).
- Baptism is the gate to the strait and narrow path that leads to eternal life (see 2 Nephi 31:10–18; see also John 3:3–5).

- Those who speak “with the tongue of angels” speak the words of Christ under the influence of the Holy Ghost (see 2 Nephi 31:13–14; 32:1–3).
- We can better understand things of the spirit by searching the words of Christ, praying diligently, and seeking the inspiration of the Holy Ghost (see 2 Nephi 32:1–33:2).
- The Spirit teaches us to pray, but Satan teaches us not to pray (see 2 Nephi 32:8–9; see also Ether 4:11; Moroni 7:16–19; D&C 11:11–14).
- When a person speaks by the power of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost carries those words into the hearts of those who sincerely listen (see 2 Nephi 33:1–5).
- We will all be judged by God according to the knowledge we receive (see 2 Nephi 33:10–15; see also Revelation 20:12–15; D&C 82:3).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 42–44.

Suggestions for Teaching



2 Nephi 31:2–32:6. Obedience, faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Ghost, feasting on the words of Christ, enduring to the end, and following the Savior’s example are all part of the “doctrine of Christ.” (35–40 minutes)

Read the following statement by Elder Boyd K. Packer:

“True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior.

“The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior. Preoccupation with unworthy behavior can lead to unworthy behavior. That is why we stress so forcefully the study of the doctrines of the gospel” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 20; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 17).

Ask students what they think this statement means, and then share the following definition of *doctrine* by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, then a member of the Seventy:

“*Doctrines* are teachings. . . . *True doctrines* come from God, the source and fountain of all truth, and are the teachings and concepts found in the gospel. . . .

“. . . The fulness of salvation can come to those only who believe and conform to the fulness of the Lord’s revealed doctrines” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 204).

Discuss the following questions:

- Why do you think understanding true doctrine can have such a powerful impact on our lives?
- How has understanding true doctrine helped you?

Have students read 2 Nephi 31:1–2, 21; 32:6. Ask: According to these verses, how important is the “doctrine of Christ”? Read to students the statement by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland in the introduction to this scripture block (p. 75). Point out that the “doctrine of Christ” that Nephi explains focuses on the basic principles and ordinances of the gospel.

Write the following topics on the board: *faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end*. Explain that these are five essential parts of the doctrine of Christ. Divide students into five groups and assign each group a topic. Have them read 2 Nephi 31:3–20 to find what these verses teach about the topic. Discuss their findings as a class. Ask:

- In what ways do these basic doctrines help us come unto Christ?
- Why do you think understanding these basic doctrines is essential?
- How can understanding these doctrines affect your behavior?

Elder Holland wrote:

“[Nephi’s] listeners, like some contemporaries, may have given quizzical looks at hearing such simple doctrine. Can this be ‘the doctrine of Christ’? They may have wondered. Is this the message? Is this the ‘good news’?” (*Christ and the New Covenant*, 55).

Ask students how the doctrine of Christ is simple yet challenging.

Conclude by reading the answer Elder Holland gave to these questions:

“They had no need to worry. It was not more complicated than it sounds. There was no other sandal to drop. They had only to comply with these oft-stated first principles and ordinances and then persist in them with two great safeguards, two unfailing sources of divine direction. As they ‘press[ed] forward,’ they were to ‘feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ [would] tell [them] all things what [they] should do.’ Then they must live true to the promptings of the Holy Ghost, which would ‘show unto [them] all things what [they] should do.’ . . .

“This is not easy or whimsical teaching, but it is plain and it is simple. It is not convenient or even comfortable doctrine for some—especially the

repentance part—but it is very plain and very precious. The doctrine of Christ is not complicated. It is profoundly, beautifully, single-mindedly clear and complete” (*Christ and the New Covenant*, 55–56).

2 Nephi 31:4–9. Jesus Christ, though sinless, needed to be baptized to fulfill all righteousness.

(15–20 minutes)

Display a picture of the Savior’s baptism (see Gospel Art Picture Kit, no. 208) and have students consider the following question: Since Jesus Christ never sinned, why was He baptized? Discuss their answers and then ask them to read 2 Nephi 31:4–6 and Matthew 3:15. Ask:

- What reason is given for the necessity of the Savior’s baptism?
- What do you think it means “to fulfil all righteousness”?

Read the following statement:

“Latter-day Saints understand from the Bible and the Book of Mormon that Jesus was baptized ‘to fulfill all righteousness,’ which means that Jesus humbled himself before the Father, witnessed to the Father that he would obey him, and thereby showed mankind the narrowness of the gate leading to eternal life” (“Baptism of Jesus Christ,” in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. [1992], 2:730).

Tell students that Nephi identified four ways that the Savior fulfilled all righteousness. Invite students to read the following verses and mark the words that identify how the Savior fulfilled all righteousness, and then discuss the accompanying questions as a class.

1. 2 Nephi 31:7. “He humbleth himself before the Father.”
 - Why would it be important for you to be humble?
 - How does baptism show humility?
 - How can humility lead to becoming righteous?
2. 2 Nephi 31:7. The Savior covenanted with the Father “that he would be obedient unto him in keeping his commandments.”
 - Read Mosiah 18:8–10. According to these verses, what covenants do we enter into at baptism?
 - Why is it important to you to know that the Savior made these same covenants?
 - How does keeping the commandments help us on the path toward righteousness?

3. 2 Nephi 31:8–9. The Savior’s baptism showed the “straitness of the path, and the narrowness of the gate.”

- How did the Savior’s baptism show His willingness to do the will of the Father?
- How is baptism like a gate leading to the strait and narrow path to the celestial kingdom?
- Why do you think it is important to know that the Savior entered the same gate that everyone else is required to enter?

4. 2 Nephi 31:9. The Savior “set the example” for us to follow.

- How has the Savior’s example helped you?
- What righteous examples of others have helped you follow the Savior?
- How does setting a good example for others help us become righteous?

2 Nephi 31:10–17. Baptism is the gate to the strait and narrow path that leads to eternal life. We should each repent of our sins, be baptized, and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (15–20 minutes)

Ask a student to come to class prepared to give a three-minute talk on baptism, including the student’s recollections and feelings about having been baptized. After the talk, discuss with the class how they would respond to the following two situations:

1. One day after seminary your friend says: “I don’t know why we are baptized when we are eight years old. That seems too young to me. Don’t you think we should wait until we are old enough to better appreciate and understand what baptism is all about?”
2. A friend confides: “I wish I could be baptized now instead of when I was eight. It sure would be nice to have all these sins of mine washed away.”

Write on the board: *Receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost can help young people learn about the gospel as they come to understand the covenant of baptism.*

Read 2 Nephi 31:10–13 looking for a blessing associated with baptism that would be helpful for even an eight-year-old child to have. Ask:

- Why is the gift of the Holy Ghost such an important blessing?
- How could that gift bless a young person?
- How can the gift of the Holy Ghost help a young person learn about the gospel?
- How would your life be different without the gift of the Holy Ghost?

Write on the board: *We are cleansed from sin through the power of the Holy Ghost. This can happen at baptism and throughout our lives.*

Read 2 Nephi 31:17 and ask: What power cleanses us from sin? Read the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Sins are remitted not in the waters of baptism, as we say in speaking figuratively, but when we receive the Holy Ghost. It is the Holy Spirit of God that erases carnality and brings us into a state of righteousness. We become clean when we actually receive the fellowship and companionship of the Holy Ghost. It is then that sin and dross and evil are burned out of our souls as though by fire. The baptism of the Holy Ghost is the baptism of fire” (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [1985], 290).

Discuss the following questions:

- Why would it be important to receive the baptism of fire?
- How often can you receive the cleansing power of the Holy Ghost in your life?
- How would the cleanliness you have whenever you receive forgiveness from Heavenly Father compare to the cleanliness you had as a child?

Share the following statement by Bishop Henry B. Eyring, then a member of the Presiding Bishopric:

“You can invite the Holy Ghost’s companionship in your life. And you can know when he is there, and when he withdraws. And when he is your companion, you can have confidence that the Atonement is working in your life. . . .

“ . . . You will feel the influence of the Holy Ghost helping you, and you will feel approval. And you will know that, for at least those minutes, the power of the Holy Ghost was with you. And you will know that some healing came into your soul, for the Spirit will not dwell in an unclean tabernacle. His influence cleanses.

“Not only is your feeling the influence of the Holy Ghost a sign that the Atonement, the cure for sin, is working in your life, but you will also know that a preventative against sin is working” (“Come unto Christ,” in *Brigham Young University 1989–90 Devotional and Fireside Speeches* [1990], 41).

Return to the two situations presented earlier in the lesson. Invite students to again respond, this time using 2 Nephi 31 and the words of Elder McConkie and Bishop Eyring to answer the questions.

Testify of the importance of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Encourage students to continue to renew their covenants by taking the sacrament and to exercise the gift of the Holy Ghost throughout their lives.

2 Nephi 32:1–33:2. We can better understand spiritual communications by searching the words of Christ, praying diligently, and seeking the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. (25–30 minutes)

Blindfold one of your students. Show the class a picture or painting and ask someone to describe it to the blindfolded student. Allow the student to remove the blindfold and look at the picture. Ask the student:

- How well were you able to understand what the picture looked like based only on the description?
- How did the blindfold limit your understanding?

Ask the class: How does this principle relate to our other senses (smell, taste, touch, and hearing)?

Tell students that in addition to being able to see physically, we can also “see” spiritually. Invite them to think about a time they have felt the Spirit’s influence, and then ask:

- Why is it important for us to have the influence of the Spirit in our own lives?
- Why would it be difficult to explain your spiritual feelings to others in a way they could understand?
- What are some things that can make us less sensitive to the Spirit?
- How can we become more sensitive to the Spirit?

Read 2 Nephi 32:1–5 and ask:

- What did Nephi say the “words of Christ” and the Holy Ghost would do for the faithful? (“Tell you all things what ye should do” [v. 3]; and “show unto you all things what ye should do” [v. 5].)
- Why is it important to have this kind of direction in your life?
- What can you do to receive this spiritual guidance?

Tell students that Nephi compares not understanding spiritual things to being in the dark (see v. 4). This is like being “blindfolded” to spiritual things. Have students read 2 Nephi 32:4–9 and look for ways we can better prepare ourselves to receive the influence of the Spirit. Discuss what students find, and encourage them to implement these teachings in their lives.



2 Nephi 32:3 (Scripture Mastery). We should feast upon the words of Christ.
(10–15 minutes)

Write the following words on separate pieces of paper: *sample, gorge, taste, nibble, snack, and feast*. Hand the papers out to six students, without letting the other students see what is written. Have the six students come to the front of the class. Give them dishes and tell them to imagine there is food in them. Invite the six students to describe or demonstrate the word on their paper, and have the class try to guess the word. Reveal the six words, and then discuss the following questions:

- How does feasting compare to the other words used to describe eating?
- Which of the following do you think *feasting* refers to most: (1) the amount of food eaten, (2) the type of food eaten, (3) the speed at which you eat, or (4) the frequency of your meals? Why?

Invite students to read 2 Nephi 32:3, and ask:

- What did Nephi encourage us to feast on?
- How does feasting on the scriptures compare to reading, scanning, looking at, or browsing the scriptures?
- What are some synonyms for *feasting on the words of Christ*? (Studying, searching, pondering.)
- What do you think *feasting on scripture* refers to: (1) the amount of scripture you read, (2) the types or passages of scripture you read, (3) the speed at which you read, or (4) the frequency of your scripture study? Why?

Share the following statement by Elder M. Russell Ballard, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Individual, personal testimony of gospel truth, particularly of the divine life and mission of the Lord Jesus Christ, is essential to our eternal life. ‘And this is life eternal,’ said the Savior, ‘that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent’ [John 17:3]. In other words, life eternal is predicated upon our own individual, personal knowledge of our Father in Heaven and His Holy Son. Simply knowing about them is not enough. We must have personal, spiritual experiences to anchor us. These come through seeking them in the same intense, single-minded way that a hungry person seeks food” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 111; or *Ensign*, May 1996, 80).

Invite students to share positive experiences they have had as a result of diligently studying their scriptures. Encourage them to continue to feast upon the words of Christ.



2 Nephi 32:8–9 (Scripture Mastery). The Spirit teaches us to pray, but Satan teaches us not to pray. (10–15 minutes)

Present the following situation to your students: If you were in charge of your country’s armies during a war, what would be the first thing belonging to the enemy that you would want to destroy? After students give their responses, ask:

- What might be the advantage of destroying the enemy’s communication system?
- What is our communication system with our Father in Heaven? (Prayer.)
- Why would Satan want to destroy our communication with God?
- How might he go about doing that?

Divide students into five groups and assign each group one of the following hymns:

- “Joseph Smith’s First Prayer” (*Hymns*, no. 26)
- “Be Thou Humble” (no. 130)
- “Did You Think to Pray?” (no. 140)
- “Sweet Hour of Prayer” (no. 142)
- “Secret Prayer” (no. 144)

Have students read the words of their hymn and look for three important principles taught in that hymn. Invite each group to share what they found, and discuss the principles as a class.

Read 2 Nephi 32:8–9 and ask:

- Why do you think Satan doesn’t want us to pray?
- How would life be different if we didn’t have prayer?
- Is it easy or difficult for you to be consistent in your prayers? Why?
- In what ways has prayer blessed your life?
- What are some things that can help us become more consistent in our prayers?

Share an experience that you have had with the power of prayer (do not reveal anything too sacred or personal). Invite students to share their testimonies of prayer, and encourage them to continue to pray daily.

2 Nephi 33. Nephi ended his writings with his testimony. (30–35 minutes)

Ask students to imagine knowing that today would be their last day on earth. Ask:

- What in your life thus far would you be grateful for?
- How would you like people to remember you?

- What would you like people to say about you at your funeral?
- What would you like written on your gravestone?

Tell students that the following epitaph is written on President Howard W. Hunter's gravestone: "A Prophet, and a kind, patient, courteous, forgiving man." Ask: Even if you had never met President Hunter, what would be your impressions of him as you read his gravestone?

Tell students that 2 Nephi 33 is Nephi's final testimony. This chapter can help us better understand what kind of man he was and what message he wanted to leave to the world. Have each student silently read 2 Nephi 33 to find answers to the following questions:

- What teaching or doctrine do you think was most important to Nephi?
- What are five words that could be written on his gravestone to describe him and his beliefs?

Discuss their findings.

Share your testimony of Nephi and your gratitude to be able to study his life and writings. Ask students to select the one character trait or teaching of Nephi that they would most like to exemplify. Have each student write a personal goal that would help them develop that trait, and encourage them to strive to reach that goal.

THE BOOK OF JACOB

The book of Jacob is part of the small plates of Nephi. Nephi, before he died, made his younger brother Jacob custodian of the plates. Nephi had already included some of Jacob's teachings in the plates (see 2 Nephi 6; 9–10). Jacob had been faithful despite having “suffered afflictions and much sorrow, because of the rudeness of [his] brethren” (2 Nephi 2:1). He fulfilled his father Lehi's prophecy that he would dwell with Nephi and spend his life in the service of God (see 2 Nephi 2:3). Like Nephi, Jacob became an eyewitness of the Savior (see 2 Nephi 11:2–3). When Jacob was made steward of the sacred records, he was ready. Jacob is known for his doctrinal writings focusing on Jesus Christ and His Atonement. His book may be divided into the following categories:

- Jacob 1—Introduction and commission
- Jacob 2–3—Temple sermon and call to repentance
- Jacob 4—Teachings on Jesus Christ
- Jacob 5–6—Allegory of the tame and wild olive trees and Jacob's explanation
- Jacob 7—Confrontation with Sherem the anti-Christ



Introduction

When Jacob received the responsibility of record keeping, fifty-five years had passed away since Lehi left Jerusalem (see Jacob 1:1). By this time Lehi's posterity likely included his children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren. His descendants by this time may have numbered in the hundreds or even over a thousand. Not only had the people grown in number but also in wealth (see v. 16) and, unfortunately, wickedness (see v. 15). Jacob describes himself as “weighed down” (Jacob 2:3), and writes “it grieveth my soul” (v. 6) and “it burdeneth my soul” (v. 9) to have to call the people to repentance. He understood that if he “did not teach them the word of God with all diligence,” he would be partly to blame for their sins (Jacob 1:19). For this reason Jacob delivered a sermon to his people from the temple. He reprimanded them for their pride, their love for and misuse of riches, and their sexual impurity, and encouraged them to hear the word of God (see Jacob 2–3). Jacob taught that we should center our lives in Jesus Christ (see Jacob 4).

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

Note: Prayerfully study each assigned scripture block and consider the principles in this section before preparing your lessons.


- The Lord holds His Church leaders accountable if they do not teach the people and warn them of their sins (see Jacob 1:17–2:3; see also Ezekiel 3:17–21).
- Pride, misuse of riches, and sexual immorality are grievous sins and must be avoided (see Jacob 1:15–16; 2:12–35).
- Plural marriage is forbidden unless the Lord commands it through His prophet (see Jacob 2:27–30; see also D&C 132:7, 37–39).
- To return to the presence of God and live with Him forever, we must come to know Jesus Christ and build our lives on His foundation (see Jacob 4:9–16; 6:8–12; see also John 17:3; 2 Nephi 25:23; Helaman 5:12).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 45–46.

Suggestions for Teaching

Note: Choose from the ideas in this section, or use some of your own, as you prepare to teach the assigned scripture block.

-  *Book of Mormon Video* presentation 6, “Pride,” can be used in teaching Jacob 2 (see *Book of Mormon Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

Jacob 1:1–8. Jacob was entrusted with the small plates of Nephi. (5–10 minutes)

Write *entrust* on the board. Ask students to define the word. (“To put something in the care of someone you trust.”) Explain that today you will study about someone in the Book of Mormon who was entrusted with the gold plates.

Read Jacob 1:1–8 looking for answers to the following questions (list responses on the board if desired):

- Who was entrusted with the plates after Nephi?
- What did Nephi tell him to write on the plates?
- What did Nephi ask him to avoid writing on the plates?

These verses in Jacob can be used to help students understand who Jacob was, what condition the people were in, and what Jacob focuses on in his writings.

Jacob 1:17–2:3. The Lord holds His Church leaders accountable if they do not teach the people and warn them of their sins. (10–15 minutes)

Invite the students to imagine a family in their ward that has little or no food. Ask: Who might have responsibility to see that the family’s needs are taken care of? (The parents, extended family members, the bishop, the quorum leader, home teachers, the Relief Society president, visiting teachers.)

Invite students to study Jacob 1:17–19 and look for who had responsibility for the people. Ask:

- Who are the leaders spoken of in these verses?
- What were their positions of responsibility?
- Who did they have responsibility for?
- What does the phrase “magnify our office” mean?
- How did these leaders feel about their responsibility?

Cross-reference Ezekiel 3:17–21 with Jacob 1:17–19, and discuss how these scriptures relate to each other. Ask:

- According to the verses in Ezekiel, if our leaders teach us the truth, who then is accountable for our actions?
- How does the second article of faith relate to these verses? (Prophets and Church leaders are responsible to teach and warn us, but we are responsible for our own sins. Help students understand that we are born with the light of Christ and are responsible to act according to the light we have [see Moroni 7:15–17]. When a prophet teaches a principle and we have an opportunity to hear and understand, we are responsible to live that principle as well.)

Invite students to raise their hands if they have ever served in a Church calling. Ask:

- How is your calling similar to Jacob’s and Joseph’s? How is it different?
- How do these scriptures change the way you feel about your calling?

Invite students to write what they can do to better magnify their callings.

Jacob 2:3–10. Some of the Lord’s commandments may seem difficult. Our obedience should be motivated by our desire to do Heavenly Father’s will above all else. (10–15 minutes)

Invite the class to name difficult tasks that the Lord has asked of His servants, and have a student list them on the board. (Abraham was asked to sacrifice Isaac, Jonah was asked to go to Nineveh to teach the gospel, Nephi was asked to build a ship to cross the ocean, Jesus Christ was asked to perform the Atonement.) Ask the students if they think these tasks were always pleasant or easy. Ask:

- Which of these tasks has the Lord asked of us?

- What other tasks might the Lord require of us in our day?

Read Jacob 2:3–9 and list the expressions Jacob used in these verses to describe the way he felt about his difficult task. (“I this day am weighed down” [v. 3], “it grieveth my soul and causeth me to shrink with shame” [v. 6], “it grieveth me” [v. 7], “it burdeneth my soul” [v. 9].) Ask:

- What do these expressions suggest about Jacob’s feelings in calling the people to repentance?
- Who wanted the people called to repentance? (see v. 10).

Invite students to read Mosiah 2:41 and 4 Nephi 1:12, 16. Ask:

- What happens when we do the Lord’s will?
- How can Jacob’s example of putting the Lord’s will above his own be helpful to us?

Point out to students that most of what the Lord asks of us is not difficult.

Share the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“People serve one another for different reasons, and some reasons are better than others. . . .

“Some may serve for hope of earthly reward. . . .

“Another reason for service . . . is that motivated by a personal desire to obtain good companionship. . . .

“Some may serve out of fear of punishment. . . .

“Other persons may serve out of a sense of duty or out of loyalty to friends or family or traditions. . . .

“[A] higher reason for service is the hope of an eternal reward. . . .

“The last motive I will discuss is, in my opinion, the highest reason of all. . . .

“‘Charity is the pure love of Christ’ (Moroni 7:47). The Book of Mormon teaches us that this virtue is ‘the greatest of all’ (Moroni 7:46). . . .

“. . . Our service should be for the love of God and the love of fellowmen rather than for personal advantage or any other lesser motive” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1984, 14–16; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 13–14).

Read Matthew 26:36–39 to find what the Savior said about His willingness to experience the pain of the Atonement. Both Jesus and Jacob teach us that if we love our Heavenly Father above our own desires, then we will do what He asks, even when it requires great sacrifice or is not what we would normally choose to do. As Elder Lorenzo Snow, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, counseled, we should “submit our will to the will of our Heavenly Father” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 20:191).

Ask:

- How can knowing that the Lord may require us to do things that are unpleasant help us as we strive to accomplish His will in our lives? (One possible answer is that there is no reason to feel guilty if we don't enjoy everything we do.)
- How can we use the Savior's example to show Heavenly Father that doing His will comes first in our lives?



Jacob 1:15–16; 2:12–35 (Scripture Mastery, Jacob 2:18–19). Pride, misuse of riches, and sexual immorality are grievous sins and must be avoided. (20–25 minutes)

Write the following quote by President Ezra Taft Benson on the board, but leave a blank in place of the words *sexual immorality*:

“The plaguing sin of this generation is sexual immorality. This, the Prophet Joseph said, would be the source of more temptations, more buffetings, and more difficulties for the elders of Israel than any other. (See *Journal of Discourses*, 8:55.)” (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [1988], 277).

Invite students to guess what the words in the blank might be.

Read Jacob 1:15–16 looking for the sins Jacob said the people of his day were guilty of. (They had become hardhearted, sexually immoral, and proud, and they sought after riches unrighteously.) Read Alma 39:3–5 looking for which of these sins is the most serious. Fill in the blank words if the students still haven't guessed them.

Divide the class into two groups. Have the first group study Jacob 2:12–21 and list what they find about the sins associated with riches and pride. Have the second group study Jacob 2:22–35 and list what they find about the sin of sexual immorality. Encourage students to look for and include in their lists:

- Why people fall into these sins.
- How these sins affect other people.
- How people justify these wicked actions.
- The consequences of these sins.
- How the Lord and Jacob feel about these sins.

Invite each group to share what they found. Ask students:

- In what ways do you see these sins in the world today?
- Which sin do you think is most common?
- What are the benefits of avoiding these sins in our lives?
- What can we do to avoid having these sins creep into our lives?

Jacob 2:27–30. The practice of plural marriage is forbidden unless the Lord commands it through His prophet. (5–10 minutes)

Invite students to read Jacob 2:27–30 and look for why practicing plural marriage is sometimes considered righteous while at other times it is considered wicked. Read the following statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“I have constantly said no man shall have but [more than] one wife at a time, unless the Lord directs otherwise” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 324; see also the commentary for Jacob 2:23–30 in *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, p. 46).

Ask: How does this principle show the importance of listening to the current prophet?

Share the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“I wish to state categorically that this Church has nothing whatever to do with those practicing polygamy. They are not members of this Church. Most of them have never been members. They are in violation of the civil law. They know they are in violation of the law. They are subject to its penalties. . . .

“If any of our members are found to be practicing plural marriage, they are excommunicated, the most serious penalty the Church can impose. Not only are those so involved in direct violation of the civil law, they are in violation of the law of this Church. An article of our faith is binding upon us. It states, ‘We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law’ (Articles of Faith 1:12). . . .

“More than a century ago God clearly revealed unto His prophet Wilford Woodruff that the practice of plural marriage should be discontinued, which means that it is now against the law of God. Even in countries where civil or religious law allows polygamy, the Church teaches that marriage must be monogamous and does not accept into its membership those practicing plural marriage” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 92; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 71–72).

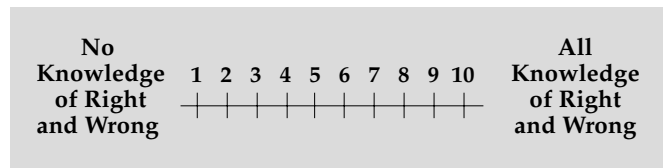
Jacob 3. Where much is given, much is required. Those who sin with greater knowledge receive a greater condemnation. (10–15 minutes)

Ask three students to come to the front of the class. Give the first student a fake check or play money totaling \$5,000. Give the second student \$500. Have them imagine that the first

two students don't have any pressing needs but that the third student needs a lifesaving medical procedure and has no money. Ask the two students with the money how much they would give to help the third student. Ask the class:

- Which student do you think should give the most money? Why?
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 82:3. Why would we expect the student with the most money to share the most?
- This verse isn't about money. What is it about?

Draw the accompanying continuum on the board, and ask students to consider where they would place themselves on the scale.




Explain that today they will study two groups of people. One group had much more gospel understanding than the other. Write the following questions on the board, and invite students to read Jacob 3:3–11 to find the answers. If desired, write the students' responses next to each question.

- Who are the two groups of people?
- Which one had greater gospel understanding?
- What promises were given to the Lamanites?
- Why were the promises given?

Discuss the following questions:

- What responsibility do those of us who have an understanding of the gospel have toward those who don't have that understanding?
- What responsibility do parents have for their children?
- What will happen to those who understand the gospel but don't live it?

Conclude by singing or reading the words to "Because I Have Been Given Much" (*Hymns*, no. 219).

 **Jacob 4:9–16; 6:8–12. To return to the presence of God and live with Him forever, we must come to know Jesus Christ and build our lives on His foundation.** (25–30 minutes)

Share the following incident, as related by Gerald N. Lund, a Latter-day Saint educator:

"The belay system is the way a mountain climber protects himself from falls. Someone goes up first, gets in a firm, secure position, gets the rope tightly around his waist, and then calls down to his partner, 'You're on belay,' which means, 'I have you if you fall.' This is what [an] article says about Alan Czenkusch, [a] man who runs [a] climbing school (and who, incidentally, is not a Latter-day Saint):

"Belaying has brought Czenkusch his best and worst moments in climbing. Czenkusch once fell from a high precipice, yanking out three mechanical supports and pulling his belayer off a ledge. He was stopped, upside down, 10 feet from the ground when his spread-eagled belayer arrested the fall with the strength of his outstretched arms."

Ask students the following questions:

- How would you feel if someone saved your life?
- How would you repay someone for such an act?

Finish the narrative:

"Don saved my life," says Czenkusch. "How do you respond to a guy like that? Give him a used climbing rope for a Christmas present? No, *you remember him. You always remember him.*" (Eric G. Anderson, "The Vertical Wilderness," *Private Practice*, Nov. 1979, p. 17; emphasis added.) ("To This End Was I Born," in *A Symposium on the New Testament*, 1984 [1984], 30).

Ask students to consider for a moment all those who have helped them in their life. Ask:

- How do you feel about these people?
- Who has done the most for you? (see D&C 135:3).

Read Jacob 4:12 and look for what Jacob thought we ought to talk about. Then share the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, then a member of the Seventy:

"The doctrine of the *atonement* embraces, sustains, supports, and gives life and force to all other gospel doctrines. It is the foundation upon which all truth rests, and all things grow out of it and come because of it. Indeed, the atonement is the gospel!" (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [1966], 60).

Give students copies of the accompanying chart as a handout, with the right-hand column left blank. Have them read the verses and fill in the right-hand column, or complete the chart as a class.

What Can We Learn of Christ in Jacob 4?

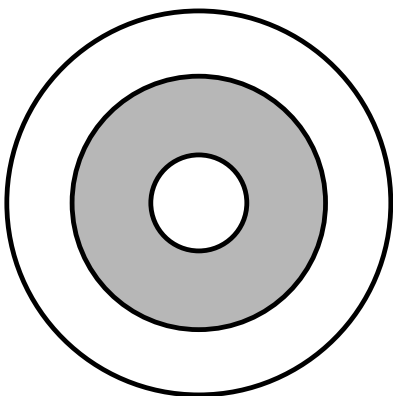
Verse	Christ's Life and Mission
4	One of the purposes of the Book of Mormon is to testify of Jesus Christ.
4	"All the holy prophets" believed in Him.
5	We worship the Father in the name of Jesus Christ.
5	The purpose of the law of Moses was to point souls to Jesus Christ.
5	Abraham's offering of Isaac was a type of the Father's offering of Jesus.
6–7	By searching the writings of the prophets we can increase in hope, faith, grace, and power through Christ.
9	Through the power of God's word, man and the earth were created.
10	The Lord counsels with wisdom, justice, and mercy.
11	We are reconciled unto the Father through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.
11	We are resurrected through Christ.
11	We obtain a hope of glory through Christ.
13	The Spirit and the prophets reveal the need for the Atonement for our salvation.
14–16	Jesus is the mark we must aim for and the stone upon which we must build to have a safe foundation.
14–16	Many Jews of Jesus' day rejected Him. However, their descendants will someday accept Him.

Ask: How does knowing these characteristics of Jesus make you feel a deeper gratitude for His sacrifice and mission? Share your feelings and love for the Savior with the class. Invite any students who would also like to share their feelings to do so.



Jacob 4:14. Our lives should be centered in Jesus Christ. (15–20 minutes)

Draw a target on the board.



Put a piece of masking tape on the floor some distance from the target. Invite a few students to stand behind the masking tape and shoot a rubber band at the target. Before class, arrange with one of the students who will participate to shoot the rubber band at the opposite wall instead of the target. Ask the class if there is a difference between those who try to hit the mark and miss and those who are not even aiming at the mark.

Read Jacob 4:14 looking for what group looked beyond the mark. Read Moroni 4:3 looking for three covenants we make that help us know what our mark or target in life should be. Go back to the target on the board and label the center *Jesus Christ*. Elder Neal A. Maxwell, then an Assistant to the Twelve, said of Jacob 4:14, "The mark is Christ" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1976, 39; or *Ensign*, May 1976, 26). Point out that the bull's-eye of a target is in the center, not off to one side. Read Helaman 5:12 and Ether 12:41 and look for ways we can make Jesus Christ the mark in our lives.

Read the following statement by Bishop H. Burke Peterson, who was then a member of the Presiding Bishopric:

"Nephi once said that because of the simpleness of the way or the easiness of it, there were many who perished. (See 1 Ne. 17:41.) Jacob put it another way when he said that they became blinded because they were continually looking beyond the mark in their search for answers. (See Jac. 4:14.) They didn't believe in the simplicity of the gospel teachings" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1975, 78; or *Ensign*, May 1975, 52–53).

Share also this statement by Elder Gene R. Cook, a member of the Seventy:

"The teacher [should] teach in simplicity, according to the true needs of the people, basic gospel doctrines like faith, repentance, and prayer, which all men—all men—can apply. (See D&C 19:31; Al. 26:22.) He will not look beyond the mark by exaggerating, by teaching in the fringe areas, by expanding on the scriptures, or by teaching exotic extremes in any principle, like excessively lengthy prayers, false doctrines about the Savior or about Adam, or extremes in diet, or politics, or investments. He will remember that Satan works in the extremes. He knows of the exactness of the Lord's doctrine, but also of 'temperance in all things.' (D&C 12:8.)" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1982, 37; or *Ensign*, May 1982, 26).

Ask: What does it mean to look beyond the mark? Allow time for students to write ways they can try harder to put Christ in the center of their lives.



Jacob 5–7

Introduction

In Jacob 5, Jacob quotes Zenos's allegory of the tame and wild olive trees, which deals with the scattering and gathering of Israel. One of Jacob's purposes in telling the allegory was to show how the Jews who rejected Christ would eventually accept Him (see Jacob 4:15–18). In chapter 6 Jacob gives an explanation of the allegory.

The last chapter of Jacob records a confrontation between Jacob and Sherem, an anti-Christ. Watch for the ways Jacob responds to Sherem. We can use these same tactics to avoid being deceived in our own lives.


Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The house of Israel has been scattered throughout the world. They will be gathered in preparation for a cleansing of the earth by fire and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (see Jacob 5–6).
- Satan and his supporters oppose Christ, work diligently to overthrow His doctrine, and deceive the people (see Jacob 7:1–8).
- The Lord has provided the scriptures, prophets, and the Holy Ghost to help us know the truth and not be deceived (see Jacob 7:9–12; see also 2 Nephi 32:2–5).
- All prophets since the beginning have testified of Jesus Christ (see Jacob 7:11–12; see also 3 Nephi 20:24).
- Those who choose not to keep the commandments will ultimately experience unhappiness and disappointment (see Jacob 7:15–20).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 47–49.

Suggestions for Teaching

 *Book of Mormon Video* presentation 7, “The Olive Tree Allegory,” can be used in teaching Jacob 5–6 (see *Book of Mormon Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

Jacob 5–6. The house of Israel has been scattered throughout the world. They will be gathered in preparation for a cleansing of the earth by fire and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. (40–50 minutes)

Show students a piece of bread and ask:

- Who said, “I am the bread of life”? (John 6:35).
- Why would Jesus compare Himself to bread? (Bread is a staple of life, and He is our staple of eternal life [see D&C 89:16–17; John 6:35]. He gave manna to nourish the starving people of Israel in the wilderness, and He nourishes us today [see John 6:49–51]. He used bread as a symbol of His broken body when he instituted the sacrament [see Luke 22:19].)

Share the following definition of *symbolism*:

To use something as a likeness or image of another thing. Symbolism in the scriptures uses a familiar object, event, or circumstance to represent a principle or teaching of the gospel.

Ask: How is Jesus' calling Himself the bread of life symbolic? Point out that the Savior often used parables and other symbols to teach the people during His mortal ministry.

Invite students to read the chapter heading for Jacob 5 and find what kind of symbolic story is told in that chapter. (An allegory.) To help students understand who Zenos was, see the commentary for Jacob 5:1 in *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122* (p. 47).

Explain that in his allegory Zenos uses the planting and grafting of tame and wild olive trees to symbolize the scattering and gathering of the house of Israel. The Lord showed Zenos that the descendants of Israel would be scattered among all nations (see 1 Nephi 22:3). Write on the board the elements of the allegory and their interpretation as found in the commentary for Jacob 5:4–77 in *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122* (p. 48). Or list the elements and interpretations on a handout.

When students are familiar with the symbols and their meanings, share the following statement by President Joseph Fielding Smith, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“In brief, [the allegory of Zenos] records the history of Israel down through the ages, the scattering of the tribes to all parts of the earth; their mingling with, or being grafted in, the wild olive trees, or in other words the mixing of the blood of Israel among the Gentiles by which the great blessings and promises of the Lord to Abraham are fulfilled. After Abraham had been proved even to the extent of being willing to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, the Lord blessed him with the greatest of blessings, and said to him:

“ . . . By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:

“That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

“And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.”
[Genesis 22:16–18.]

“[Zenos’s] remarkable parable portrays how, as branches of the olive tree (Israelites) were carried to all parts of the earth (the Lord’s vineyard) and grafted into the wild olive trees (the Gentile nations). Thus they are fulfilling the promise that the Lord had made.

“Today Latter-day Saints are going to all parts of the world as servants in the vineyard to gather this fruit and lay it in store for the time of the coming of the Master. This parable is one of the most enlightening and interesting in the Book of Mormon. How can any person read it without feeling the inspiration of this ancient prophet?” (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., 5 vols. [1957–66], 4:141–42).

Divide the class into four groups, and assign each group one of the following sets of verses:

- Jacob 5:4–14
- Jacob 5:15–28
- Jacob 5:29–60
- Jacob 5:61–77

Explain that each group will study verses that record a separate visit of the Lord to His vineyard. Write the following questions on the board and ask students to answer as many of them as they can while they read:

- Why was Israel scattered throughout the world?
- Which visit of the Lord are we living in today?
- What does the allegory teach us about the attitude of the Lord toward His children?
- Why do you think Jacob included the allegory in the Book of Mormon?
- What does the allegory teach about when the gathering of Israel would occur?

Have the groups share their findings.

As a review, give students a copy of the chart “Zenos’ Allegory of the Tame and Wild Olive Trees, Jacob 5” found in *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122* (p. 162). Go through the chart together and summarize the Lord’s activities during each visit to His vineyard. *Note:* Do not try to link every part of the allegory to a specific event or period. Use the allegory to provide an overview of history.

Explain that Jacob 6 records Jacob’s explanation of the allegory. Invite students to read Jacob 6:2–12 and find Jacob’s answers to the following questions:

- Will the gathering of Israel happen before or after the Second Coming? (see v. 2).
- What will happen to those who are not gathered? (see v. 3).
- How did Jacob describe those who would not be gathered? (see vv. 4, 6–8).
- What can we do to be gathered? (see vv. 5, 11–12).
- What will ultimately happen to those who are not gathered? (see vv. 9–10).

If desired, conclude by singing or reading the words to “Israel, Israel, God Is Calling” (*Hymns*, no. 7).

Jacob 7:1–8. Satan and his supporters oppose Christ, work diligently to overthrow His doctrine, and deceive the people. (5–10 minutes)

Ask for a volunteer to come to the front of the room. Put a single piece of candy in one bowl and several pieces of candy in a second bowl. Tell the volunteer, “You can choose whichever bowl you want, but you have to choose without looking.” Blindfold the student and mix up the bowls. Instruct half the class to try to persuade the student to choose one bowl and the other half to try to persuade the student to choose the other. (The student should not know which half of the class has been assigned which bowl.) After the student chooses, remove the blindfold and ask: Were you influenced in your choice by what others said? If so, who influenced you the most and why? Ask the class: In what ways do others influence us in our lives?

Invite students to read Jacob 7:1–8 and answer the following questions. (These could be written on the board before class.)

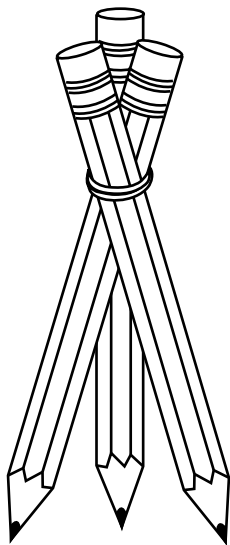
- Who wanted to influence the people? (see vv. 1–2).
- What did he teach or proclaim? (see vv. 2, 6–7).
- What was his goal? (see v. 2).
- How successful was he in accomplishing his goal? (see v. 3).
- What great prophet did he think he could influence? (see v. 3).
- How did Sherem use his learning to influence others? (see v. 4).
- What did the Lord do to assist Jacob? (see vv. 5, 8).

Ask students:

- What quality of Sherem's do some people have today that allows them to have a strong negative influence on others?
- How are people who are deceived today like the student with the blindfold?
- What must we do to see clearly, avoid being deceived, and keep our testimonies from being shaken?
- What had Jacob experienced that helped him avoid being deceived by Sherem? (see vv. 5, 8).
- Who are some examples of people in the world today who seem to have a good influence on others?
- What can we do to be a good influence on others?

Jacob 7:9–12. The Lord has provided the scriptures, prophets, and the Holy Ghost to help us know the truth of all things. (25–30 minutes)

Bring three pencils or small sticks and a rubber band to class. Stand one pencil on its end to demonstrate how easily it falls over. Put the rubber band around one end of two pencils. Spread the other ends apart and try to stand them up. Then put the rubber band around one end of three pencils. Spread the other ends to form a tripod and stand them up (see the accompanying diagram). Explain that three points are required to form a sure foundation. (This might also be illustrated by discussing a unicycle, a bicycle, and a tricycle.)



Invite students to read 2 Corinthians 13:1 and find how the message of this verse applies to the three pencils standing together. Read Jacob 7:8–12 and look for what three witnesses the Lord has given us (the scriptures, prophets, and the Holy Ghost). Read and cross-reference 2 Nephi 32:2–5. Share the following statement by Elder Ezra Taft Benson, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“May I suggest three short tests to avoid being deceived. . . .

“1. What do the standard works have to say about it? . . .

“2. The second guide is: what do the latter-day Presidents of the Church have to say on the subject—particularly the living President? . . .

“3. The third and final test is the Holy Ghost. . . . This test can only be fully effective if one's channels of communication with God are clean and virtuous and uncluttered with sin” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1963, 16–17).

Write *Scriptures*, *Prophets*, and *Holy Ghost* on the board.

Explain that Jacob used these three witnesses to convince Sherem of certain truths. Have students look again at Jacob 7:8–12 to find what truths Jacob taught using these three witnesses (the reality of Jesus Christ and His Atonement). Use the following activity to help students understand how to use these same three witnesses.

Invite students to use the Topical Guide to find scriptural witnesses of Jesus' life and mission. (Possible topics to look under include “Jesus Christ, Redeemer,” and “Jesus Christ, Resurrection.” References might include Job 19:25; Matthew 16:15–16; and 2 Nephi 31:20–21.) Invite students to share the scriptures they found. Write the references on the board under the heading *Scriptures*.

Ask students if they remember any modern prophets or apostles testifying of Jesus Christ. Play a recent audio or video recording of general conference that includes such a witness, or have a student read the following testimony of President Gordon B. Hinckley, then a member of the First Presidency:

“This is the great basic purpose of the restoration of the gospel in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times—to declare the living reality of God the Eternal Father and of His Beloved Son, the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. To know them, to love them, to obey them is to have life eternal. It is our mission to declare with words of soberness and truth that God is our Eternal Father, the God of the universe, the Almighty One; and that Jesus Christ is his firstborn, the Only Begotten in the flesh, who condescended to come to earth; who was born in a stable in Bethlehem of Judea, lived the perfect life, and taught the way of salvation; who offered Himself a sacrifice for all, enduring pain and death on the cross; and who then came forth in a glorious resurrection, the firstfruits of them that slept. (See 1 Corinthians 15:20.) Through Him, and by Him, and of Him, all are assured salvation from death and are offered the opportunity of eternal life” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1986, 62–63; or *Ensign*, May 1986, 47).

Write *Gordon B. Hinckley* (or the name of the prophet or apostle whose recording you played) on the board under the heading *Prophets*. Read Doctrine and Covenants 76:22–24 as another example of a modern prophet’s testimony of Jesus Christ. Add *Joseph Smith* to the list on the board.

Share your testimony of Jesus Christ and how the Holy Ghost has borne witness of Him to you. Invite any students who would like to share their testimonies to do so. Invite them to describe the feelings they have had from the Holy Ghost that testify that Jesus is the Christ. List the feelings mentioned by you and the students on the board under the heading *Holy Ghost*. (These might include peace, confidence, a burning in the bosom.)

Encourage students to test the truth of what they learn by what the scriptures, the prophets, and the Holy Ghost say about it.

Jacob 7:11–12. All prophets since the beginning have testified of Jesus Christ. (10–15 minutes)

Write on the board *What are some of the most important elements in raising crops?* and ask students to respond. (Answers could include water, sunlight, fertile soil, and time.) Ask:

- If every farmer agreed, how might that convince you that they were the most important?
- Why would it be important for a farmer to understand these elements?

Refer back to the question on the board. Erase the words *raising crops* and replace them with *the gospel*. Ask: If you could list only one element, what would it be? After some discussion, ask: If every prophet focused on one doctrine, how would that help us answer the question? Read Jacob 7:11 looking for what every prophet has taught. Read and cross-reference 3 Nephi 20:24. Ask questions such as the following to help students understand how many aspects of the gospel point to Jesus Christ:

- What covenants do we make when we take the sacrament? (see Moroni 4:3).
- What place does Jesus Christ have in these covenants? (We witness that we are willing to take upon us His name, keep His commandments, and always remember Him.)
- What are the New Testament, the Old Testament, and the Book of Mormon all testaments of?
- If Jesus Christ is the central figure in the gospel, what place should He have in our lives?

Read John 17:3 and look for the benefit that comes to those who know Jesus Christ. Invite students to take a few minutes to write in their notebooks ways they could make Jesus Christ the center of their lives. Encourage them to continually strive to become more like the Savior.

Jacob 7:15–20. Those who choose not to keep the commandments will ultimately experience unhappiness and disappointment. (5–10 minutes)

If available, show students a container of antifreeze (with the safety cap attached). Explain that antifreeze is placed in vehicles to keep the engine from freezing in cold weather. It is essential to the operation of a car in cold climates. It is extremely toxic, but animals are attracted to its sweet taste, and many dogs, cats, and other animals have died from drinking it. Point out the irony that the animal temporarily enjoys that which kills it.

Invite students to read Jacob 7:15–20 and compare Sherem’s life with the example above. Read Matthew 16:26 and ask students how it applies to Sherem.

Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, said of the prodigal son in the Lord’s parable:

“He had exchanged the priceless inheritance of great lasting value for a temporary satisfaction of physical desire, the future for the present, eternity for time, spiritual blessings for physical meat” (*The Miracle of Forgiveness* [1969], 311; see Luke 15:11–32).

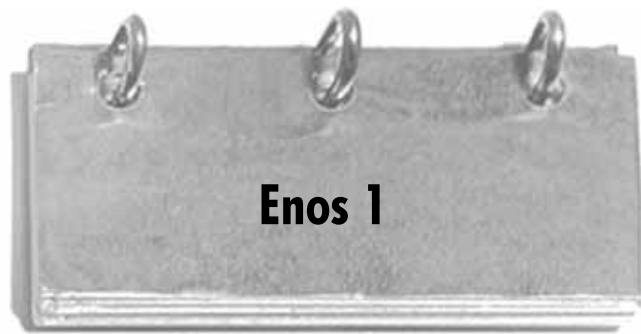
Ask:

- In what ways are people deceived into trading lasting happiness for temporary pleasure?
- What can we do to avoid making that kind of trade in our own lives? (Answers could be listed on the board.)

Explain that trading eternal blessings for temporary pleasure is like trading a seven-course meal later for a piece of candy now. Encourage students to avoid making this kind of trade in their lives.

THE BOOK OF ENOS

As Jacob grew old and saw that he would soon die, he passed the responsibility of keeping the plates to his son Enos (see Jacob 7:27). Jacob gave Enos the same strict commandments concerning the plates that Nephi had given him (see Jacob 1:1–4). Enos served his people as a prophet and a record keeper.



Introduction

In his brief but powerful book, Enos describes his “wrestle” to receive a remission of his sins (v. 2). “Enos placed a proper price upon the blessings of heaven; yet he did so in such a way as to encourage those who in like manner seek the light and mercy of heaven. Having tasted of such things, he sealed his book in the spirit of rejoicing in Christ” (Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon: Volume II—Jacob through Mosiah* [1988], 95).


Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The Lord forgives those who exercise faith in Jesus Christ and diligently repent of their sins (see Enos 1:1–8, 27).
- Whatever the righteous ask the Lord in faith that is right, they will receive (see Enos 1:4–17; see also 3 Nephi 18:20; D&C 50:29).
- A person who experiences forgiveness for sin becomes concerned for the welfare of others and desires to share the gospel with family, friends, and even enemies (see Enos 1:9–12, 20; see also 1 Nephi 8:11–12).
- The Lord can reveal His will to our minds (see Enos 1:10; see also D&C 8:2–3).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 50–51.

Suggestions for Teaching

 *Book of Mormon Video* presentation 8, “And My Soul Hungered,” can be used in teaching Enos 1 (see *Book of Mormon Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).



Enos 1:1–8, 27. The Lord forgives those who exercise faith in Jesus Christ and diligently repent of their sins. (20–25 minutes)

Ask students to share some goals they have for the next few months or years, and list them on the board. (These might include getting good grades, learning to play a musical instrument, doing well at sports, and excelling in a hobby.)
Ask:

- How long have you worked toward your goal?
- What else will you have to do to meet your goal?

Tell students that faith and desire lead people to actions, and actions lead to results. Explain that today they will read about a man who had great faith and desire. Invite students to read Enos 1:1–4 and answer the following questions:

- What desire did Enos have?
- What words did Enos use to describe the intensity of his faith and his desire to be forgiven? (These might include “wrestle” [v. 2]; “sunk deep into my heart” [v. 3]; “my soul hungered” [v. 4]; “cried unto him in mighty prayer” [v. 4].)

To help students better understand the importance of faith and desire in our efforts to receive forgiveness, share the following account by Elder Sterling W. Sill, who was then an Assistant to the Twelve:

“A young man came to Socrates one time and said, ‘Mr. Socrates, I have come 1,600 miles to talk to you about wisdom and learning.’ He said, ‘You are a man of wisdom and learning, . . . and I would like to have you teach me how to be a man of wisdom and learning.’ Socrates said, ‘Come follow me,’ and he led the way down to the seashore. They waded out into the water up to their waists, and then Socrates turned on his friend and held his head under the water. His friend struggled and kicked and bucked and tried to get away, but Socrates held him down. . . . And after this man had stopped struggling, Socrates laid him out on the bank to dry, and he went back to the market place.

“After the young man had dried out a little bit, he came back to Socrates to find the reason for this rather unusual behavior. Socrates said to him, ‘When your head was under the water what was the one thing you wanted more than anything else?’ And the man said, ‘More than anything else, I wanted air.’ Socrates said, ‘All right, when you want wisdom and learning like you wanted air, you won’t have to ask anybody to give it to you.’” (“The Five Fingers of Leadership Success,” in *Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year* [9 Feb. 1965], 9).

Ask:

- What role did desire play in the account of Socrates and the young man?
- How could this experience be compared to the one Enos had?

Remind students that faith and desire move us to action. Share the following statement from *Lectures on Faith*, compiled under the direction of the Prophet Joseph Smith: “Faith . . . is the moving cause of all action” ([1985], 1–2).

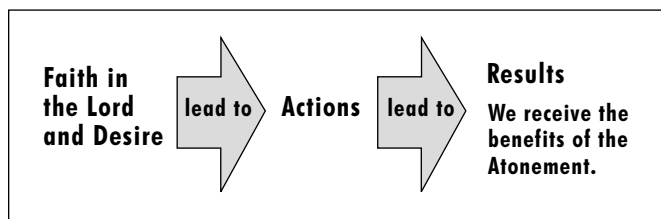
Ask students to give examples of how actions are motivated by faith or belief. Read Enos 1:1–4 again and list on the board what actions Enos’s faith and desire led him to. The list might include the following:

- He wrestled before the Lord for forgiveness for his sins (see v. 2).
- He pondered his father’s teachings on eternal life (see v. 3).
- He “cried unto [Heavenly Father] in mighty prayer” (v. 4).

Remind students that actions lead to results. Read Enos 1:5–6, 27 and look for what happened as a result of Enos’s actions. (He received forgiveness [see vv. 5–6]. He had the peace of knowing he would receive eternal life [see v. 27].) Ask:

- What question did Enos ask the Lord? (see v. 7).
- What was the Lord’s answer to the question? (see v. 8).
- Why do you think faith in Jesus Christ is so important in obtaining forgiveness?

As a review, draw the accompanying diagram on the board. Discuss with students how faith and desire lead to actions, and actions lead to results in making the Atonement effective in our lives.



Ask students to consider the following questions:

- What would you be willing to do to receive the blessings Enos received?
- What could you do to increase your faith and change your desires and actions in order to receive the full benefits of the Atonement in your life?

Read the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Our divinely granted willpower gives us control over our desires, but it may take many years for us to be sure that we have willed and educated them to the point that all are entirely righteous.

“President Joseph F. Smith taught that the ‘education . . . of our desires is one of far-reaching importance to our happiness in life.’ (*Gospel Doctrine*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939, p. 297.)” (“The Desires of Our Hearts,” *Ensign*, June 1986, 65).

Share your testimony and express your gratitude for the blessings of the Atonement in your life.

Enos 1:4–17. Whatever the righteous ask the Lord in faith that is right, they will receive. (10–15 minutes)

Ask students what righteous action preceded each of the following events:

- Joseph Smith’s First Vision (see Joseph Smith—History 1:5–20).
- The first visit of Moroni to Joseph Smith (see Joseph Smith—History 1:27–43).
- The revelation to President Spencer W. Kimball allowing every worthy male to receive the priesthood (see Official Declaration 2).
- The Lord touching the rocks for the brother of Jared to create lights for the Jaredite barges (see Ether 3).

Point out that each event was preceded by a righteous person praying with faith in accordance with the will of the Lord.

Invite students to read Enos 1:4–8 and look for what preceded Enos’s receiving forgiveness for his sins. Read the following groups of verses. In each case identify (1) what Enos prayed for and (2) the Lord’s response.

- Enos 1:9–10
- Enos 1:11–12
- Enos 1:15–16

Write on the board *Bible*, *Book of Mormon*, *Doctrine and Covenants*, and *Pearl of Great Price*. Write the following scripture references under the standard work in which they are found: *Mark 11:24*; *Enos 1:15*; *D&C 4:7*; *Moses 6:52*. Have four students read the scriptures to the class, and invite the class to cross-reference the scriptures to each other. Ask:

- What can we learn from the fact that all of the standard works teach the same principle?

- Why do you think the Lord would repeat something so many times?
- What part does our belief play in receiving what we ask for?

Share the following statement by Elder Boyd K. Packer, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve: “No message appears in scripture more times, in more ways than ‘Ask, and ye shall receive.’” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1991, 26; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 21).

Sing or read the words to “Sweet Hour of Prayer” (*Hymns*, no. 142). Share an example of a time the Lord answered your prayers, and invite any students who would like to share an example to do so.

Enos 1:9–12, 20. A person who experiences forgiveness for sin becomes concerned for the welfare of others and desires to share the gospel with family, friends, and even enemies. (10–15 minutes)

Invite students to think about the last good movie they saw, good book they read, or good restaurant in which they ate. Ask:

- Did you tell anyone about it? If so, who?
- Why did you tell that person?

Invite students to read Enos 1:9–12, 20 to see what Enos did after he received forgiveness for his sins. Ask: For whom did he have a concern in verse 9? in verse 11? Read Matthew 5:43–47 and look for how it relates to Enos’s prayers. (You may want to have students cross-reference these verses to Enos 1:11.) Ask:

- What relationship did the Nephites and Lamanites have in Enos’s time? (see vv. 20, 24).

- Read 1 Nephi 8:10–12. How was Enos’s reaction similar to that of his grandfather Lehi?
- Read Matthew 22:39. How does this verse relate to what Enos did?
- What can we do to show the Lord we are concerned for others?

Share the following statement by President Harold B. Lee:

“You cannot lift another soul until you are standing on higher ground than he is. You must be sure, if you would rescue the man, that you yourself are setting the example of what you would have him be. You cannot light a fire in another soul unless it is burning in your own soul” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1973, 178; or *Ensign*, July 1973, 123).

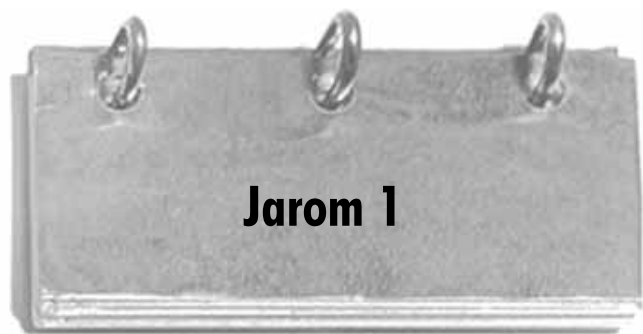
Ask:

- If you were sinking in quicksand, who would you want to try to save you: someone who is also sinking in the quicksand or someone on solid ground? Why?
- In what way is this example like President Lee’s principle of being on higher ground before helping others?
- Considering President Lee’s teaching, why do you think Enos’s experiences in verses 9 and 11 come after his experiences in verses 5–6?

Sing or read the words to “Because I Have Been Given Much” (*Hymns*, no. 219).

THE BOOK OF JAROM

Jarom, like his father Enos, wrote only a few words in the Book of Mormon, but his words are powerful. One reason for his short account may be that the small plates he wrote on were nearly completed when he received them (see Jarom 1:2, 14). Jarom had the spirit of prophecy and revelation (see v. 2). He lived in a time of Nephite prosperity (see v. 8). The Lamanites came against them in battle, but the Nephites, led by “mighty men in the faith,” prevailed (see v. 7). Jarom records that this was accomplished because the people believed the prophets, who taught them to believe in Christ “as though he already was” (v. 11) and warned them of destruction if they did not keep the commandments (see vv. 9–12).



Introduction

The book of Jarom offers promises of blessing for the righteous and suffering for the wicked. “Be it said of the book of Jarom that its language is plain, its spirit strong, and its message universal” (Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon: Volume II—Jacob through Mosiah* [1988], 105).

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- God is patient and merciful, offering the wicked opportunities to repent and return to Him (see Jarom 1:3).
- The Holy Ghost communes with those who are humble and exercise faith (see Jarom 1:4).
- The righteous are blessed spiritually and often temporally, while the wicked suffer and are eventually destroyed (see Jarom 1:3–12).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, p. 51.

Suggestions for Teaching

Jarom 1:3–12. The righteous are blessed spiritually and often temporally, while the wicked suffer and are eventually destroyed. (10–15 minutes)

Draw two doors on the board. Label one door *Happiness and Eternal Life* and the other *Suffering and Destruction*. Show students the doors and ask:

- Would you be interested in a key that would allow you to enter the door to happiness and eternal life? Why?
- Who decides what door you will go through?
- What would you be willing to do to receive the key?

Divide the class into two groups. Invite one group to read Jarom 1:4–12 and look for what people do that leads to happiness and eternal life. Have the other group read the same verses and look for what people do that leads to suffering and destruction. Have them write what they find on the board beneath the appropriate door.

Another option would be to read Jarom 1:4–12 with the students, asking the following questions as you read:

- What did the Nephites do to keep the Lord’s commandments? (see v. 5).
- According to verse 7, what part did their leaders play in their strength?
- What effect did the Nephites’ righteousness have on their strength? (see v. 9).
- What does “threaten . . . according to the word of God” mean in verse 10?
- How could the Nephites’ belief in the coming of Christ help them? (see v. 11).
- In what ways do latter-day prophets and apostles “continually stir [us] up unto repentance”? (v. 12).
- What blessing resulted from the Nephites’ repentance?
- What blessing can it bring us?

Consider asking students why they think people sometimes choose evil even when they know the consequences that accompany that choice.

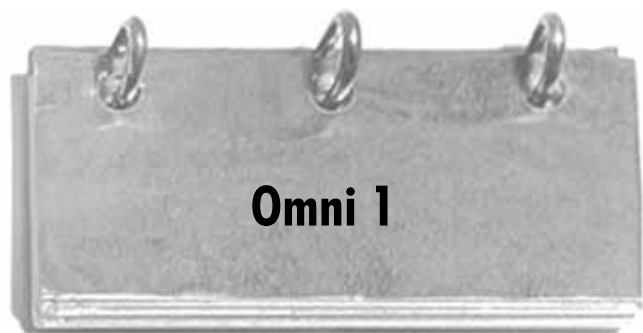
THE BOOK OF OMNI

Omni was the son of Jarom and a great-great-grandson of Lehi and Sariah. When Omni wrote, 276 years had passed since Lehi left Jerusalem. Omni describes himself as a “wicked man” who had “not kept the statutes and the commandments of the Lord” (Omni 1:2). He fought many battles against the Lamanites (see v. 3).

The book of Omni covers several generations and was written by five different men: Omni, Amaron, Chemish, Abinadom, and Amaleki. Amaleki wrote most of the book of Omni and was the last writer in the small plates of Nephi. Because he did not have any children, Amaleki gave the plates to King Benjamin. Amaleki concluded his record in about 130 B.C., about 470 years from the time Lehi left Jerusalem. The accompanying chart might be helpful in understanding the authors and times described in Omni.

Verses	Author	Dates
Omni 1:1–3	Omni (son of Jarom)	361–317 B.C. (Jarom 1:13–15; Omni 1:3)
Omni 1:4–8	Amaron (son of Omni)	317–279 B.C. (Omni 1:3, 5)
Omni 1:9	Chemish (brother of Amaron)	
Omni 1:10–11	Abinadom (son of Chemish)	
Omni 1:12–30	Amaleki (son of Abinadom)	about 130 B.C.

The book of Omni covers a period of 231 years (from about 361 B.C., when Omni received the records, to about 130 B.C.) in just a few pages.



Introduction

Amaleki, the principal writer of the book of Omni, was a man of spiritual insight. He wrote about many gifts of the Spirit.

He invited all to “come unto Christ . . . and offer your whole souls as an offering unto him, and continue in fasting and praying, and endure to the end” (Omni 1:26). Amaleki promised salvation to those who would willingly follow this direction.

Amaleki also provided several important historical links. He recounted the migration of the Nephites from the land of Nephi to Zarahemla. He explained that the people of Zarahemla (called Mulekites) had been brought by the Lord from Jerusalem when “Zedekiah, king of Judah, was carried away captive into Babylon” (Omni 1:15). Amaleki also described the discovery of the last survivor of the Jaredite nation, a group of people the Lord led to the Americas after the confounding of the languages at the Tower of Babel (see Omni 1:20–22). Their history is recorded in the book of Ether.


Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Several times the Lord has led righteous people to the Americas, a promised and choice land. Those who live in that land must remain righteous to prosper (see Omni 1:14–22; see also Ether 2:10).
- To fully come unto Christ, we must be willing to offer Him all that we are and all that we have (see Omni 1:26; see also Mosiah 2:34; D&C 103:28).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, p. 51.

Suggestions for Teaching

 *Book of Mormon Video* presentation 9, “An Overview of Book of Mormon History,” can be used in teaching Omni 1 (see *Book of Mormon Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

Omni 1:1–12. The book of Omni has several authors and covers several generations. (10–15 minutes)

Draw on the board the chart found in the introduction to the book of Omni, without the information in the middle column. Invite students to read the verses in the left column and fill in the name of the author of the verses and his relationship to the previous writer. Discuss the following questions (these could be written on the board in advance):

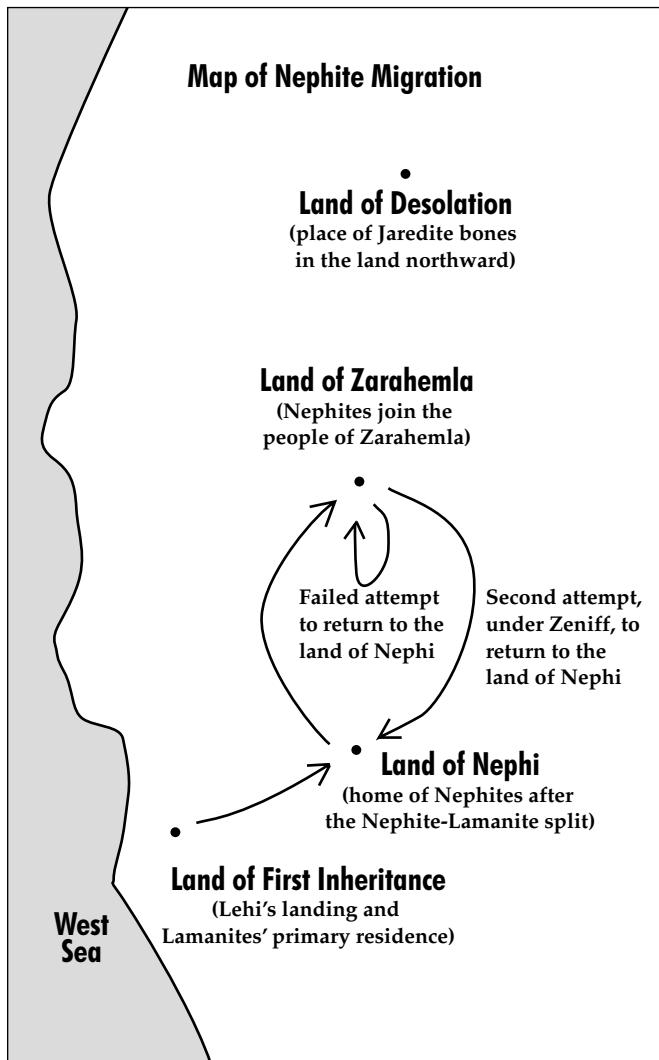
- What happened between the Nephites and Lamanites during this time period?
- What do we know about these Book of Mormon writers?
- Were the Nephites wicked or righteous during this period?
- What happened to the wicked Nephites? the righteous Nephites? (see vv. 5–7).

Note: For more information on the record keepers of the Book of Mormon, see the chart “Nephite Record Keepers” in *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122* (p. 155).

Omni 1:12–19, 27–30. Knowing the history, geography, and peoples of the book of Omni is essential to understanding the Book of Mormon.

(5–10 minutes)

Draw the accompanying map on the board (leave off the arrows). Remind students that in Nephi’s time the Nephites left the Lamanites and traveled “in the wilderness for the space of many days” (2 Nephi 5:7). Their new home came to be called the land of Nephi (see Omni 1:12). Draw an arrow from the land of first inheritance to the land of Nephi.



Explain to students that today they will study about another migration of the Nephites. Read Omni 1:12–19 and look for answers to the following questions:

- What was the name of the Nephite king?
- What was the name of the new land that the Nephites went to?

- Why did the Nephites leave?
- Where did the people of Zarahemla come from?
- What resulted from their not having any scripture?
- What did the Nephites do with the people of Zarahemla?

As students respond, draw an arrow from the land of Nephi to the land of Zarahemla.

Invite students to read Omni 1:27–30 and look for additional travels some Nephites made during the life of Amaleki. As students respond, draw an arrow from Zarahemla toward the land of Nephi and back again. Draw another arrow from Zarahemla all the way to the land of Nephi.

Omni 1:25–26. To fully come unto Christ, we must be willing to offer Him all that we are and all that we have. (10–15 minutes)

Before class make two pitchers of punch. Make them the same flavor and color, but put sugar in one and no sugar in the other. Invite a student to taste some punch from each pitcher and describe the difference between the two. Ask students:

- What is the purpose of a recipe?
- What happens when you leave out an ingredient or two?
- How does including all the ingredients affect how much we enjoy our food or drink?

Share the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson: “Yes, brothers and sisters, the mission of the Church is glorious—to invite all of us to come unto Christ” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1988, 98; or *Ensign*, May 1988, 85). Ask:

- If there were a “recipe” that showed how to “come unto Christ,” would you want to follow it completely? Why?
- In what ways do some people fail to do what is necessary to come to Christ completely?
- Why do you think some people choose not to come to Christ?

Invite students to read Omni 1:26 to find what is needed to come to Christ completely. Ask: What do you think it means to offer your whole soul as an offering to the Lord? Read Mosiah 2:34 and cross-reference it with Omni 1:26. As an example of a complete change, discuss the following questions:

- What must a caterpillar do to become a butterfly?
- How is a caterpillar’s life the same after it becomes a butterfly? How is it different?
- Do you think a caterpillar is generally more or less beautiful than the butterfly it becomes?

Ask students to consider whether they are willing to offer everything they have and are to the Lord. Ask:

- How difficult would this kind of sacrifice be?
- Would your life be better or worse as a result of giving yourself to the Lord? In what ways?

Share the following statement by Sister Elaine Jack, former general president of the Relief Society:

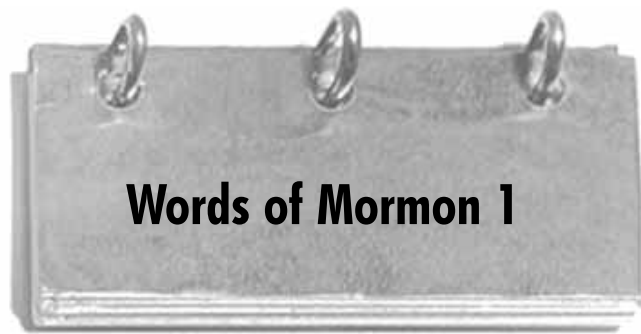
“The Prophet Joseph Smith described offering ‘your whole soul’ as serving God with all your ‘heart, might, mind and strength’ (D&C 4:2). It is to put on the altar of God your time, talents, gifts and blessings, your willingness to serve, to do all that He asks” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 101; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 73).

Write the following questions on the board and ask students to write their answers on a piece of paper:

- What are you willing to give up to come to the Lord?
- What does it mean on a day-to-day basis to give your all to the Lord?

THE WORDS OF MORMON

The Words of Mormon provides a transition between the small plates of Nephi and Mormon's abridgment of the large plates of Nephi. The Book of Mormon takes its name from Mormon because the larger part of it comes from this abridgment by his hand. For more information on Mormon, see the introductory section to the book of Mormon (p. 244).



Introduction

The Words of Mormon plays an important role in helping the reader understand the flow of the Book of Mormon. The books of 1 Nephi, 2 Nephi, Jacob, Enos, Jarom, and Omni are all writings from the small plates of Nephi. The books of Mosiah, Alma, Helaman, 3 Nephi, and 4 Nephi are abridgments from the large plates of Nephi. The Words of Mormon explains the connection between the small plates and the large plates.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- All scripture testifies of Christ and is given for our profit and learning. We will be judged by the principles taught in the scriptures (see Words of Mormon 1:2–11).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 51–52.

Suggestions for Teaching

Words of Mormon 1. All scripture testifies of Christ and is given for our profit and learning. Boldly preaching the word brings greater righteousness.

(5 minutes)

Have students write on a blank piece of paper three ways they have been blessed through reading and studying the

scriptures (they should not include their names). Collect their answers and read some to the class. Discuss with students how they think their life would be different if they did not have the scriptures. Read Omni 1:17 and look for how not having scripture affected the people of Zarahemla.

Invite students to read Words of Mormon 1:2, 4, 7, 15–18 and find the benefits the scriptures can bring to our lives. List responses on the board if desired. Encourage students to maintain the habit of daily scripture study.

Words of Mormon 1:3–10. The small plates of Nephi and the large plates of Nephi make up the greater portion of the Book of Mormon. (5 minutes)

Hold up a clear glass of water and ask:

- What is this?
- Would it be correct to call it H₂O?
- What does H₂O stand for? (Two parts hydrogen, one part oxygen.)
- If you take away either of the two elements (hydrogen or oxygen), is it still water?

Invite students to read item 1 in A Brief Explanation about the Book of Mormon at the beginning of the Book of Mormon. Have them identify the two elements that make up the plates of Nephi. Invite a few students to share a favorite account or story from the Book of Mormon. Ask whether these stories came from the large or the small plates. Ask: What are some of the doctrines, teachings, and stories of the Book of Mormon that would be lost if only the large plates had been included? only the small plates?

The Words of Mormon explains why the small plates were inserted in the Book of Mormon. Have students silently read Words of Mormon 1:3–10 looking for and underlining the word *plates* every time it appears. Read the verses again as a class, identifying which are the large plates and which are the small plates. (*Note: In these verses, the phrase plates of Nephi refers to the large plates, and the phrase these plates refers to the small plates. In verse 10, the phrase the other plates refers to the large plates.*)

THE BOOK OF MOSIAH

The book of Mosiah marks the beginning of the “large plates of Nephi” in the Book of Mormon (see A Brief Explanation about the Book of Mormon in the introduction to the Book of Mormon). The large plates (Mosiah through 4 Nephi) were abridged or edited by Mormon, whereas the small plates (1 Nephi through Omni), were not abridged.

The book of Mosiah is named for King Mosiah, who ruled in Zarahemla from about 124 B.C. to 91 B.C. Chapters 1–5 include the final teachings of Mosiah’s father, King Benjamin. Chapters 6–8, 25–29 give the history of Mosiah and his reign. Chapters 9–22 detail the history of Zeniff, Noah, and Limhi and their people, who left Zarahemla before the reign of Mosiah to return to the land of Nephi. Mosiah 23–24 is the story of Alma and his people, who broke away from the people of King Noah. The “Seven Journeys in the Book of Mosiah” chart in the appendix (p. 295) shows how these groups relate to each other.



Introduction

During his lifetime, King Benjamin dealt with wars, false Christs, false prophets, contentions among his people, and defections to the Lamanites (see Words of Mormon 1:12–16). However, Benjamin, “by laboring with all the might of his body and the faculty of his whole soul, and also the prophets, did once more establish peace in the land” (v. 18). It was under these conditions that Benjamin delivered his powerful discourse recorded in Mosiah 2–4. Of this discourse, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, said:

“King Benjamin gave a magnificent discourse on Christ’s suffering and atonement, the role of justice and mercy, and the need to take upon ourselves the name of Christ in a covenantal relationship. . . .

“That this sermon carried a spiritual power beyond the clarity of the written word is undeniable, for following the close of the discourse and wishing to take ‘the names of all those who had entered into a covenant,’ this mighty servant of God realized ‘there was not one soul, except it were little children, but who had entered into the covenant and had taken upon them the name of Christ’ [Mosiah 6:1–2]. Oh that we might have more such sermons, and, even more important, that all

who hear them might make such honest and binding covenants as a result” (*Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon* [1997], 99, 103).

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

Note: Prayerfully study each assigned scripture block and consider the principles in this section before preparing your lessons.


- Those who search the scriptures diligently can understand the mysteries of God, better keep His commandments, and strengthen their faith (see Mosiah 1:3–7; see also D&C 1:37).
- The truths of the gospel clarify our vision and protect us from evil (see Mosiah 1–2).
- By loving and serving our fellow beings, we show love for and serve God (see Mosiah 2:11–21; see also Matthew 25:40).
- Because of God’s many blessings to us, we will always be indebted to Him. All He asks in return is that we recognize His influence and keep His commandments (see Mosiah 2:19–26, 34, 41; 4:2, 5, 11, 17–24; see also Matthew 22:36–40; Moses 1:9–11).
- Those who sin against the greater light will receive the greater condemnation (see Mosiah 2:32–33, 36–39; 3:12, 23–27; see also Matthew 12:31; D&C 82:3).
- The message of Jesus Christ and His Atonement is a message of great joy and hope to all men (see Mosiah 3:2–6, 13–15; 4:3, 11; see also Luke 2:10; John 13:17; Jacob 7:11; Alma 41:10).
- In working out the infinite Atonement, Jesus Christ suffered more than any mortal could bear. The Atonement paid for the sins of those who die without knowing the gospel, those who die before reaching the age of accountability, and those who have faith in Him and repent (see Mosiah 3:7–19; 4:2–3, 6–8; see also D&C 19:16–19; 29:46–47; 137:10).
- Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, those who heed the Spirit’s promptings and become as little children can overcome the natural man and be born again (see Mosiah 3:18–19; 4:11–16, 26).
- Our Father in Heaven has given us great blessings and expects us to share what we have with those in need (see Mosiah 4:16–22).
- At the Final Judgment, Jesus Christ will judge us by our thoughts, words, and actions (see Mosiah 4:30; see also John 5:22).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 53–57.

Suggestions for Teaching

Note: Choose from the ideas in this section, or use some of your own, as you prepare to teach the assigned scripture block.

 *Book of Mormon Video* presentation 10, “Becoming Children of Christ,” can be used in teaching Mosiah 2–5 (see *Book of Mormon Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

Mosiah 1:3–12. Those who search the scriptures diligently can understand the mysteries of God, better keep His commandments, and strengthen their faith. (10–15 minutes)

Ask students to think about the time the Saints trekked 1,300 miles (2,100 kilometers) west from Nauvoo to Salt Lake City. Imagine how much easier it would have been for them if Brigham Young had a fleet of modern trucks to transport them to their promised land. Ask: How useful would the trucks be if none of the pioneers learned to drive them? Explain that today you will learn about something that is very valuable but that sometimes goes unused.

Remind students who King Benjamin was by reading Omni 1:23–25 and Words of Mormon 1:10–18. Ask students to describe King Benjamin from these verses. Read Mosiah 1:2–8 looking for what King Benjamin taught his sons and why. Ask:

- What was the focus of King Benjamin’s counsel?
- What benefits come to those who study the scriptures? (List responses on the board if desired.)
- How is having the scriptures and not using them like the pioneers in the example having trucks and not learning to drive them?

Tell students that King Benjamin wanted to teach not only his sons but all the people. Read Mosiah 1:9–12 and list the reasons King Benjamin wanted to speak to the people. Ask:

- According to verses 11–12, what did he want to give the people?
- What name do you think the king wanted to give them? (see Mosiah 5:7–12).

Explain to students that when they get to Mosiah 5 they will discuss in more detail the name given to the people.

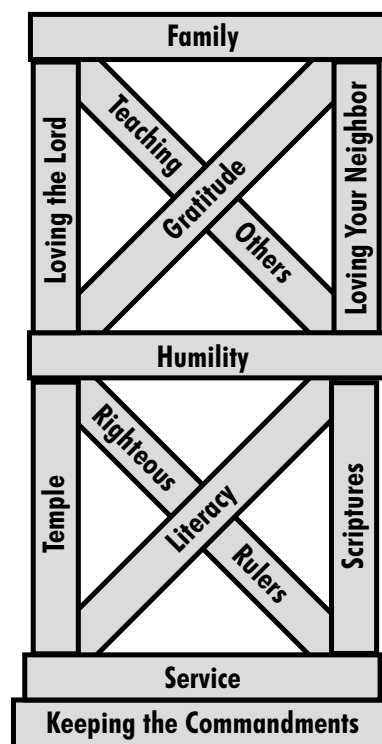
Mosiah 1–2. The truths of the gospel clarify our vision and protect us from evil. (15–20 minutes)

Show or draw pictures of different kinds of towers (for example tall buildings, water towers, airport control towers, radio transmission towers). Ask: Why do people build towers? (To see farther, for protection, and so on.) Tell students that today we also need greater vision and protection. The truths King Benjamin taught can help build us spiritually. Write the accompanying chart on the board or give it to students as a handout, leaving the right-hand column blank. As a class, read the verses indicated and fill in the right-hand column with the building blocks that can help us build our own spiritual towers.

King Benjamin’s Teachings

Reference	Building Blocks for the Tower
Mosiah 1:2	Literacy, education
Mosiah 1:3–7	Scriptures
Mosiah 1:18	Temple
Mosiah 2:5	Family
Mosiah 2:11–15, 31	Righteous rulers
Mosiah 2:13	Keeping the commandments
Mosiah 2:17	Service (love the Lord; love your neighbor)
Mosiah 2:20	Gratitude
Mosiah 2:21	Humility
Mosiah 2:27–28	Teaching others

Draw a tower similar to the one in the accompanying diagram. Have students label the tower with the building blocks from Mosiah 1–2. As they “build” the tower, have them judge which of the building blocks are “foundation truths,” which are “pillars of truth,” and which are “supporting truths.” Have them explain why they ordered the truths the way they did. (Their order does not need to reflect the order given in the diagram.)



Mosiah 2–4. An overview of King Benjamin’s address.

(5–10 minutes)

Have students imagine that they found out a Book of Mormon prophet was going to speak in their next sacrament meeting. Ask:

- In what ways would you feel differently about going to church that Sunday?
- Who would you tell about the meeting?
- How would you act while he spoke? Would that be different than you usually act?

While we probably won’t hear Book of Mormon prophets speak in sacrament meeting, we do have the opportunity to study their words. Tell students that in Mosiah 2–4 King Benjamin gave a significant talk. Mosiah 2–4 can be divided into three themes that build on one another. Invite students to search the chapter headings of Mosiah 2–4 and look for these themes. Discuss their ideas, and write the following outline on the board or a poster. (Consider displaying it for the next couple of days so students can refer to it as they study King Benjamin’s speech.)

- Mosiah 2—We are indebted to God and should serve Him and our fellowman.
- Mosiah 3—The Atonement of Jesus Christ is our greatest blessing.
- Mosiah 4—We must be faithful to retain the blessings of the Atonement.

Ask students how these chapters build on one another. Invite them to watch for the principles in this outline as they study King Benjamin’s talk.

Mosiah 2:4, 22–24, 41. Keeping the commandments brings spiritual and temporal blessings, including great happiness. (20–25 minutes)

Write the phrase *That’s not fair* on the board. Ask students to give examples of times when they or others use this phrase, and then list their responses on the board. Ask:

- Do the righteous always receive immediate blessings for their actions? Why or why not?
- Do the wicked sometimes prosper in this life? Why?
- Read Matthew 5:45. How does this verse apply to these questions?

Invite students to read Mosiah 2:3–4, and ask:

- What had the Lord done for the people of Nephi?
- How did those blessings influence their feelings toward God?
- Read verses 22–24. What blessings does the Lord promise those who keep His commandments?

- For what blessings are we indebted to the Lord?

Divide the class into three groups and invite each group to read one of the following references: Mosiah 2:41; 4 Nephi 1:15–17; and Alma 41:10–11. Have the groups compare the level of happiness enjoyed by the obedient and the disobedient. Share the following statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God. . . .

“. . . He never will institute an ordinance or give a commandment to His people that is not calculated in its nature to promote that happiness which He has designed” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 255–56).

Ask:

- When have you been the happiest in your life?
- Why do you think keeping the commandments leads to happiness?

Have the class read Mosiah 2:41, and ask:

- What does God promise those who keep the commandments?
- Are the blessings promised in this verse for keeping the commandments short-term or long-term?
- What long-term blessings are mentioned in this verse?
- Why are these blessings worth keeping the commandments?
- Does there seem to be a paradox between the principles taught in Matthew 5:45 and Mosiah 2:41? How can they both be true?

Help students understand that God always blesses the righteous but that sometimes those blessings are not immediate or obvious. Share the following statement by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland:

“One of the challenges of the faithful is to realize that sometimes those who are not obedient and worthy seem to receive as many or more of the temporal blessings of life as do those who sacrifice and serve. . . . The Saints are to be faithful to the end without too many sidelong glances at their neighbors. . . . Undoubtedly the unfaithful will also have the sun shine upon them, perhaps at times even more abundantly than on the righteous. But the faith

and devotion of the faithful is recorded in the Lamb's book of life, and the day will come when they will be included among God's jewels. In that day it will matter very much who was righteous and who was wicked, who served God and who did not. In the meantime, all must remember that God does not settle his end-of-year accounts in September" (*Christ and the New Covenant*, 296–97).

 **Mosiah 2:11–21 (Scripture Mastery, Mosiah 2:17). By loving and serving our fellow beings, we show love for and serve God.** (10–15 minutes)

Ask students what is their most difficult class at school. Discuss what their grade in that class is based on, and list these requirements on the board. Next to each requirement, assign a hypothetical percentage that indicates how much of their grade is based on that requirement. For example:

Final test = 40%
Other tests and quizzes = 20%
Papers = 15%
Reports = 10%
Assignments = 10%
Attendance = 5%

Ask:

- If these percentages really made up your grade, on what would you spend most of your effort?
- How do these requirements compare to the commandments?

Invite students to read Matthew 22:36–40 and look for the commandments God considers most important. Read Matthew 25:40 and Mosiah 2:17 and ask:

- How do the first and second great commandments relate to each other?
- Do we ever have to choose between keeping the first great commandment and the second? Why?
- If you made a list of the important requirements for entering heaven, where would you place “loving your neighbor”?
- How can knowing the importance of the commandments affect the way we live?

Invite students to make a scripture chain with Matthew 22:36–40; Matthew 25:40; and Mosiah 2:17. (For directions on making a scripture chain, see “Cross-Reference” under “Methods for Teaching the Scriptures” in the appendix, p. 280.)

Read Mosiah 2:11–21 looking for the word King Benjamin used to describe his love for his neighbors, and have students underline every form of the word they see. Ask: In what ways does service show our love for others? Share the following statement by President Marion G. Romney, who was a member of the First Presidency:

“We lose our life by serving and lifting others. By so doing we experience the only true and lasting happiness. Service is not something we endure on this earth so we can earn the right to live in the celestial kingdom. Service is the very fiber of which an exalted life in the celestial kingdom is made.

“Knowing that service is what gives our Father in Heaven fulfillment, and knowing that we want to be where He is and as He is, why must we be commanded to serve one another? Oh, for the glorious day when these things all come naturally because of the purity of our hearts. In that day there will be no need for a commandment because we will have experienced for ourselves that we are truly happy only when we are engaged in unselfish service. Let us use the freedom which comes from self-reliance in giving and serving” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1982, 135; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 93).

Sing or read “Have I Done Any Good?” (*Hymns*, no. 223). Invite students to share examples of how they have felt more joy in their life from serving someone. Encourage them to look for opportunities to serve from day to day.

Mosiah 2:19–24, 34. Because of God's many blessings to us, we will always be indebted to Him. All He asks in return is that we recognize His influence and keep His commandments. (10–15 minutes)

Have students each make a list of the five blessings they are most grateful for, and briefly discuss some of them as a class. Invite a student to relate the story of Jesus healing the ten lepers (or read Luke 17:11–17). Ask students how they think Jesus might have felt when only one of the healed lepers thanked him. Read Mosiah 2:19–24, 34 and discuss the following questions:

- To whom do we owe our thanks? (To God, and to people who have served us; see v. 17.)
- According to verse 21, why are we indebted to God?
- What could we do for the Lord beyond saying “thank you” to show our gratitude? (Keep His commandments; see v. 22. Other possible answers include accepting callings, befriending new or less-active members, supporting ward or branch activities.)
- Why can we never thank Him enough? (see vv. 21–24).
- How long will we be indebted to our Father in Heaven? (see v. 34).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 59:7, 21. Ask:

- What commandment has the Lord given us in verse 7?
- How does the Lord feel about those who are ungrateful?

Cross-reference these verses with Mosiah 2:19–24, 34. Share the following statement by President Joseph F. Smith.

“I believe that one of the greatest sins of which the inhabitants of the earth are guilty today is the sin of ingratitude. . . . God is not pleased with the inhabitants of the earth but is angry with them because they will not acknowledge his hand in all things [see D&C 59:21]” (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [1939], 270–71).

Ask:

- Why do you think some people are ungrateful?
- What can we do to increase our gratitude?

Read as a class Doctrine and Covenants 78:19 and look for the blessing that comes to those who are grateful.



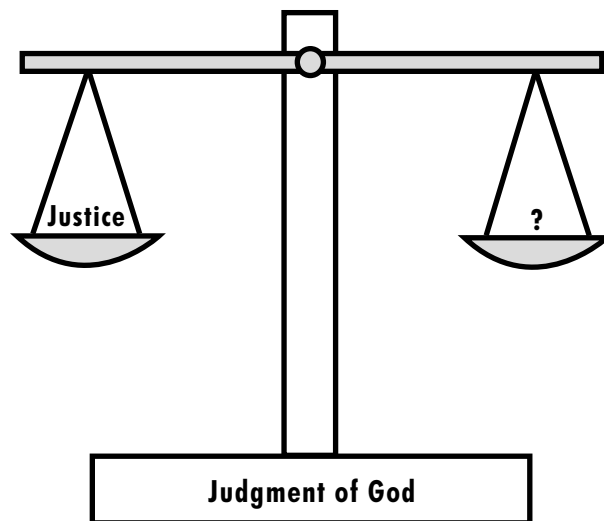
Mosiah 3:7–13, 17; 4:2–3, 6–8. In carrying out the Atonement, Jesus Christ suffered more than any mortal could bear. Through the Atonement Jesus paid for our sins so that if we repent, we can be forgiven. (40–45 minutes)

Invite a student to come to the front of the class and remove the shoe and sock from one foot. Give him a large stone and ask him to hold it high above his foot. Ask the class:

- What would happen if he dropped the stone on his foot?
- How sure are you that the stone will fall if it is dropped?
- What causes it to fall? Will it fall every time it is dropped?
- If he drops the stone accidentally, will it still fall?
- If after he has dropped the stone and hurt his foot, he changes his mind and wishes he hadn’t done it, will that make his foot feel better?

Have students read 2 Nephi 9:17 and look for something that is as sure as the law of gravity. What parallels can you see between the law of justice and the object lesson? (The stone is like sin. Letting go of the stone is like choosing to sin. The pain in one’s foot is like the consequences of sin.)

Draw a scale on the board, as in the accompanying diagram. Ask students to read Mosiah 3:26 and look for what balances justice on this scale. (Mercy.)



Have students read Mosiah 4:2–3, 6–8 and answer the following questions:

- Why did King Benjamin’s people want the Lord’s mercy? (see v. 2).
- What did they do to receive His mercy? (see vv. 2, 6).
- What resulted from the Lord extending His mercy to them? (see v. 3).
- How did they feel when they experienced this result?
- What is the final outcome for those who receive mercy through the Savior’s Atonement? (see vv. 7–8).

Make an overhead transparency of the chart “King Benjamin Teaches of Christ” from the appendix (p. 294), or write it on the board. Show students the scripture references only and give them ten to fifteen minutes to read the verses indicated. Have them look for what Jesus did that enabled Him to offer mercy to all who are subject to the law of justice. Invite them to write on a piece of paper what they learn from each scripture about Christ and His Atonement.

When they finish, discuss what they wrote and compare it with the chart, which is adapted from the writing of Elder Jeffrey R. Holland. Read Doctrine and Covenants 19:16–19 and discuss the following questions:

- According to verse 16, why did the Lord perform the Atonement?
- Who will not suffer for their sins as the Lord suffered?
- What happens to those who do not repent?
- What do these verses say about the suffering of the Savior for our sins?

Sing or read “In Memory of the Crucified” (*Hymns*, no. 190). Bear testimony of the reality of the Atonement.



Mosiah 3:18–19; 4:2–26 (Scripture Mastery, Mosiah 3:19). Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, those who heed the Spirit’s promptings and become as little children can overcome the natural man and be born again. (30–35 minutes)

Use masking tape to make a square on the floor big enough for a student to stand in, and invite a student to stand in the square. Place a candy bar (or some other desirable item) on a desk just out of the student’s reach. Tell the student, “If you can reach the candy bar without leaving the square, you can have it.” After the student has made a few futile efforts, invite a second student to come forward. Tell the student in the square, “If you let the other student help you, you can both have a candy bar.” Allow the second student to give the first student the candy bar, and then give another candy bar to the second student.

Ask the class to imagine being in that situation, except that the item they cannot reach is something they need to save their life. Discuss the following questions:

- How would your desire to save your life compare to your desire to have a candy bar?
- How would you feel toward the person who saved your life?
- How would your feelings about this person change if he not only saved your life but everyone else’s also?
- What would you think if someone offered to save another’s life but the person in need didn’t accept the help?

Invite students to read 1 Corinthians 15:22 and compare it with Mosiah 3:16–17. Look for (1) who has fallen and (2) who provided the way for salvation. What similarities are there between these verses and the object lesson above? Ask:

- Who could the student in the square represent? (Fallen man.)
- Who of us are in that situation? (Everyone.)
- Who offered His life to give us salvation? (Jesus Christ.)

Write *Becoming a Saint (Mosiah 3)* on the board, and beneath it make two columns with the headings *What the Lord Does* and *What We Must Do*. Invite students to read Mosiah 3:18–19 and look for what the Lord does and what we must do to overcome the natural man. List their findings under the two headings (see the accompanying chart).

Becoming a Saint (Mosiah 3)

What the Lord Does	What We Must Do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides the Atonement (see vv. 18–19). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humble ourselves (see v. 18). • Become as little children (see v. 18). • Have faith in Jesus Christ (see v. 18). • Yield to the promptings of the Holy Ghost (see v. 19). • Put off the natural man (see v. 19). • Be submissive, meek, patient, full of love, willing to submit to the Lord (see v. 19).

Ask: What does *natural man* mean? Share the following explanation:

“The phrase ‘natural man’ is understood by Latter-day Saints to be an unrepentant person; it does not imply that mortals are by nature depraved or evil, but only that they are in a fallen condition. Natural man describes persons who are ‘without God in the world, and they have gone contrary to the nature of God’ (Alma 41:11). The Lord declared to Joseph Smith: ‘Every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning; and God having redeemed man from the fall, men became again, in their infant state, innocent before God’ (D&C 93:38)” (in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. [1992], 3:985).

Refer to the chart on the board and ask: Why can’t we become Saints without the Lord?

Read Mosiah 4:3 and look for how King Benjamin’s people responded to his message. Ask:

- According to this verse, what results from exercising faith in Jesus Christ and repenting of our sins? (Receiving the Holy Ghost, being filled with joy, being forgiven, “having peace of conscience.”)
- How valuable are these blessings?
- What would you be willing to do to have them in your life?

Write *keep* on the board. Have students read Mosiah 4:6–7, 9–12, 26 and find the word that conveys the same meaning as the word on the board. (“Retain.”)

- What does King Benjamin teach in verses 6–7, 9–11 that enables people to retain the blessings of the Atonement in their lives?
- How do King Benjamin’s suggestions compare to the list on the board?
- What does this teach us about the importance of these commandments?

Share the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who was then a member of the Seventy:

“A convert is one who has put off the natural man, yielded to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and become ‘a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord.’ Such a person has become ‘as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.’ (Mosiah 3:19.) He has become a new creature of the Holy Ghost: the old creature has been converted or changed into a new one. He has been born again: where once he was spiritually dead, he has been regenerated to a state of spiritual life. (Mosiah 27:24–29.) In real conversion, which is essential to salvation (Matt. 18:3), the convert not only changes his beliefs, casting off the false traditions of the past and accepting the beauties of revealed religion, but he changes his whole way of life, and the nature and structure of his very being is quickened and changed by the power of the Holy Ghost” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. [1966–73], 1:770).

Tell students that as we overcome the natural man, our desires change. Read Mosiah 4:12–16, 26 looking for the kind of actions that are typical of someone whose nature has changed, and list them on the board. Your list might look like this:

Those Who Have Been Born Again

- Have joy and rejoice (see vv. 11–12).
- Are filled with the love of God (see v. 12).
- Retain a remission of their sins (see v. 12).
- Grow in their knowledge of God and truth (see v. 12).
- Do not want to injure others (see v. 13).
- Want to be fair to others (see v. 13).
- Care for and teach their children (see vv. 14–15).
- Help the needy (see vv. 16, 26).

Ask students to consider which of these characteristics they have. Invite them to look again at the “Becoming a Saint” chart. Have them write on a piece of paper how they could improve in any one of the areas listed under “What We Must Do.”

Mosiah 4:16–22. Our Father in Heaven has given us great blessings, and He expects us to share what we have with those in need. (5–10 minutes)

Ask students when they last saw someone begging for food. Invite them to think about the following questions:

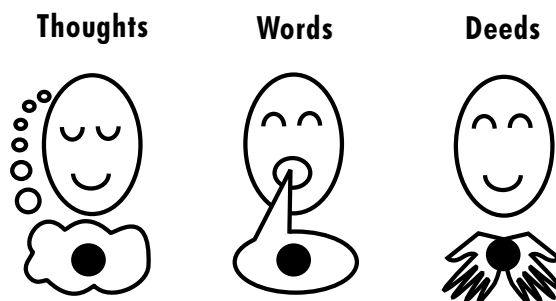
- How did the beggar’s condition make you feel?
- How did you respond to the beggar?
- How might the Savior have responded?

Invite students to read Mosiah 4:16–25 and look for how the Savior would have us respond. Cross-reference these verses with Isaiah 58:3–7. Read the verses in Isaiah and look for what the Lord has instituted to help us give to the poor. (Fast offerings.) Ask: What constitutes a proper observance of the law of the fast? (Going without food and water for two consecutive meals and giving a generous offering to the Church for the care of the poor. Fast day is also an opportunity to pray and bear testimony.) Read or sing “Because I Have Been Given Much” (*Hymns*, no. 219). Share the following statement by President David O. McKay:

“The underlying purpose and far-reaching benefits of [paying a fast offering] make the monthly observance of fast day one of the most significant features of this latter-day work. There [is] in it . . . an economic means, which, when carried out by a perfect and active organization, will supply the needs of every worthy poor person within the confines of the organized wards and branches of the Church” (“On Fasting,” *Improvement Era*, Mar. 1963, 156).

 **Mosiah 4:30 (Scripture Mastery). We will be judged by our thoughts, words, and deeds.** (10–15 minutes)

Draw the accompanying diagram on the board.



Ask the class what these three words have in common. After a few guesses invite students to look in Mosiah 4:30 for the answer. Ask:

- Which of these is the hardest for you to control?
- What can we do to better control our thoughts, words, and deeds?

Share the following statement by President George Q. Cannon, who was a member of the First Presidency:

“Some people have an idea that because they have entered the waters of baptism and repented of their sins then that is an end of it. What a mistake! We need to have this spirit of repentance continually; we need to pray to God to show us our conduct every day. Every night before we retire to rest we should review the thoughts, words and acts of the day and then repent of everything we have done that is wrong or that has grieved the Holy Spirit. Live this way every day and endeavor to progress every day. We may indulge in many things that are not right, indulge in wrong thoughts, be actuated by wrong motives, may have wrong objects in view. . . .

“Therefore, we need to repent every day and every hour, every one of us” (*Gospel Truth: Discourses and Writings of President George Q. Cannon*, ed. Jerreld L. Newquist, 2 vols. [1957], 1:164).

Ask students how knowing this principle helps us appreciate the blessing of repentance in our lives.



Introduction

Mosiah 5–6 records the people’s response to King Benjamin’s teachings. The spirit and power of the address profoundly affected them. As a result, they made covenants with God and promised to keep them “all the remainder of [their] days” (Mosiah 5:5).

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For


- Baptism symbolizes being born again. When people are born again, they experience a mighty change of heart.

Through making and keeping sacred covenants they become the children of Christ (see Mosiah 5:2, 5–13; see also John 3:3–5).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 57–59.

Suggestions for Teaching

 **Mosiah 5:2, 5–13. Baptism symbolizes being born again. When people are born again, they experience a mighty change of heart. Through making and keeping sacred covenants they become the children of Christ.** (45–50 minutes)

Invite some students to bring pictures of their families, and show them to the class. Ask:

- What name did you receive as a result of being born or adopted into your family? (Your family name or surname.)
- Why didn’t you get your friend’s family name when you were born?
- What responsibility do each of us have to bring respect to our own name?

Remind students that Mosiah 2–4 records a discourse given by King Benjamin to his people. Read Mosiah 1:11–12 and look for one reason King Benjamin wanted to talk to the people. Ask:

- What did King Benjamin want to give his people?
- Where did King Benjamin deliver his discourse? (see Mosiah 1:18; 2:1).

Tell the class that today you will show them what name King Benjamin gave his people. Read Mosiah 5:1–5 looking for answers to the following questions:

- What question did King Benjamin ask the people after his speech? (see v. 1).
- Why do you think King Benjamin wanted to know if the people believed his words?
- How did the people answer? (see v. 2).

In Mosiah 5:2 the people reported that “the Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent” had already made a mighty change in them. Have students read Mosiah 4:2–3 looking for when this happened to King Benjamin’s people. Ask:

- What prompted this change?
- What effect did the change of heart have on the people? (see Mosiah 5:5).
- When have some of you made the covenant King Benjamin’s people made with God?
- By a show of hands, how many of you have been baptized?

- What covenants did you make at baptism? (see Mosiah 18:8–10).

Remind students that we renew these covenants every week when we take the sacrament. Read Moroni 4:3 and list the sacrament covenants on the board:

- Be willing to take upon us the name of Christ.
- Always remember Him.
- Keep His commandments.

Remind students that in Mosiah 5:5 the people of King Benjamin promised to keep the Lord’s commandments. Have students read Mosiah 5:7–13 to find other covenants King Benjamin’s people made. (To take upon them the name of Christ [see vv. 7–11], and to always remember Him [see vv. 12–13].) Point out that the covenants described in these verses are the same ones we make when we are baptized and that we renew when we take the sacrament. Ask:

- What does it mean to keep Christ’s commandments?
- What does it mean to always remember Him?
- What does it mean to take upon you the name of Christ?

Tell the class that you want to help them better understand these three covenants. Have students read the following scriptures looking for what each teaches about keeping the first covenant (to obey the commandments):

- Mosiah 2:41
- John 13:17
- Alma 41:10
- 2 Nephi 2:13–14

Discuss their findings. Read Mosiah 5:5, 8 again and look for how long we should be obedient to the commandments.

To better understand why it is important for us to always remember the Savior, ask:

- Which one of the covenants is mentioned in the sacrament prayers for both the bread and the water? (see D&C 20:77, 79).
- Which of the covenants did the Savior emphasize when He instituted the sacrament among the Nephites? (see 3 Nephi 18:7, 11).
- What did the Lord emphasize when He administered the sacrament to His disciples in Jerusalem? (see Luke 22:19).

Read Mosiah 5:13 and invite students to restate in their own words King Benjamin’s question. Ask students to silently consider the following questions:

- How close is Jesus Christ to the “thoughts and intents” of your heart?
- Is the Savior in your thoughts when you are at school? at work? with your friends? on a date?

Ask: What difference would it make in your actions if the Savior were constantly on your mind?

Remind students that the reason King Benjamin called the people to the temple was to give them a new name (see Mosiah 1:11–12). Have them read Mosiah 5:7 and look for insight into what it means to take upon ourselves the name of Christ. Ask: How is taking on us the name of Christ like becoming a member of His family?

Share with the class the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Family members bear the family name; by it they are known and called and identified; it sets them apart from all those of a different lineage and ancestry. . . . And so it is that the children of Christ, those who are born again, those who are spiritually begotten by their new Father, take upon themselves the name of Christ. By it they are known; . . . it identifies and sets them apart from all others. They are now family members, Christians in the real and true sense of the word.”

Ask students to listen as you read the next part of Elder McConkie’s statement for what responsibilities come with taking upon us the name of Christ:

“They do carry his name and are obligated to bear it in decency and dignity. No taint of shame or disgrace, no sliver of dishonor must ever be permitted to attach itself to that name. . . . The saints of God must remember who they are and act accordingly” (*The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ* [1978], 363).

Read and cross-reference Mosiah 5:12 and Mosiah 26:24 to see what those who take upon themselves the name of Christ are able to hear. Ask:

- What difference does it make to be called by the right name?
- What does it mean to be on the right or left hand of the Lord? (see Matthew 25:31–46).

Ask students which hand of the Lord they would rather be on. Share the following statement by Elder McConkie:

“Those who take upon themselves the name of Christ, who thereafter hearken and hear when he continues to call them in the name which is both his and theirs, and who keep the standards of the Christian family, having enjoyed the fellowship of hosts of brothers and sisters in the Church, go on to eternal joy and felicity as members of the family of God in the celestial kingdom!” (*The Promised Messiah*, 365).

Read Mosiah 5:15 and ask: How does Elder McConkie’s statement compare with this verse? Tell students that if we are born again and make the covenants to take upon us the name of Christ, keep His commandments, and always remember Him, we become His children and part of His family. Refer students to verse 15 again and ask: How are the blessings that come to those who keep these covenants like what happens to families in temples?

Write the following questions on the board and give students time to respond to them on a piece of paper:

- What would it mean to me to be sealed into the family of Christ?
- What can I do to better keep my baptismal covenants?



Introduction

King Mosiah and his people wondered what had become of a large group of people who had left Zarahemla years earlier to return to the land of Nephi (see Omni 1:27–30). Sixteen men under the direction of Ammon embarked on a journey to find the group. Mosiah 7–8 records Ammon’s journey to the land of Nephi.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The scriptures contain many types and shadows of the life of Jesus Christ (see Mosiah 7:1–8, 16; see also Moses 6:63).

- Disobedience can lead to temporal and spiritual bondage. Those who trust in the Lord and serve Him will enjoy temporal and spiritual freedom (see Mosiah 7:17–33; see also Alma 36:27; 38:5).
- A seer is a revelator and a prophet whose power is a gift from God. A seer can translate unknown languages and can know the past, the future, and hidden things (see Mosiah 8:6–18).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 59–61.

Suggestions for Teaching

Mosiah 7:1–5. Several different groups traveled from Zarahemla to the land of Nephi. (5–10 minutes)

Draw on the board the map “Seven Journeys in the Book of Mosiah” found in the appendix (p. 295), or give it to students as a handout. Explain that the book of Mosiah includes accounts of seven major journeys, and that today they are going to study the first two. Read Omni 1:27 and tell students that in about 200 B.C. a large number of Nephites wanted to return to the land of Nephi. Read Mosiah 9:1 and ask:

- Why was Zeniff sent to spy on the Lamanites?
- Read Omni 1:28 and Mosiah 9:2. What caused contention in the group after Zeniff made his report?
- What was the fate of this expedition?

Show the course of this ill-fated expedition on the map. Explain that Zeniff later mounted a second, more successful expedition to the land of Nephi. Have students read Omni 1:29 and Mosiah 9:3, and ask:

- Why did Zeniff organize the second expedition?
- Why did this expedition meet with much affliction? (see Mosiah 9:3).
- Read Mosiah 9:4–7. What lands did the Lamanites leave to make room for the new colony?
- Read Mosiah 7:9. Who was the first king of this colony? How was he chosen?

Show the course of Zeniff’s journey on the map.

Have students look up the scripture references included with the map for all seven of the major journeys in the book of Mosiah. Invite them to write the names of the journeys in the margins of their scriptures.

(*Note:* This overview will help students better understand what they read as they study these chapters of Mosiah. Consider displaying the map in the room throughout your study of the book of Mosiah. The questions in this teaching suggestion are adapted from the commentary for Mosiah 7:1–14; 8:7–21 in *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121*

and 122 [pp. 59–61]. The *Book of Mormon Student Manual* includes similar questions for the other seven journeys that you could use if desired.)

Have students read the chapter heading for Mosiah 7 to briefly review what happens in this chapter.

Mosiah 7:1–8, 16. The scriptures contain many types and shadows of the life of Jesus Christ. (15–20 minutes)

(Note: This teaching suggestion covers some of the same material as the teaching suggestion for Mosiah 11–17 [p. 119]. This one uses Ammon as an example, and the other uses Abinadi. You could use either one of the teaching suggestions, or use both to reinforce how types in the scriptures serve to remind us of Christ.)

Write on the board *What is the purpose of the Book of Mormon?* Discuss the question with students. Point out the full title of the Book of Mormon from the introduction (The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ). Invite students to read 2 Nephi 25:26, and repeat the question on the board. Share the statement by President Ezra Taft Benson from the teaching suggestion for the title page of the Book of Mormon (p. 17).

Show students a rock, a clear glass of water, and a piece of bread. Write the following references on the board: Helaman 5:12; Jeremiah 17:13; John 6:47–51. Ask students to read the verses and discuss ways a rock, water, and bread could represent, or be *types* of, Jesus Christ. Read the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve: “A *type* . . . is a likeness or reminder of something else” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 51; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 37).

Invite students to read Moses 6:63 and find how many of God’s creations are types of Christ. Help students understand that events in the scriptures can also serve as types of Christ. For example, there are several parallels between the account of Abraham offering Isaac as a sacrifice and our Heavenly Father offering His Son Jesus Christ as a sacrifice (see Jacob 4:5). By looking for parallels in the scriptures to the life and mission of Jesus Christ, we can learn more about Him and better remember Him. Share the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“No doubt there are many events in the lives of many prophets that set those righteous persons apart as types and shadows of their Messiah. It is wholesome and proper to look for similitudes of Christ everywhere and to use them repeatedly in keeping him and his laws uppermost in our minds” (*The Promised Messiah*, 453).

Invite students to read Mosiah 7:1–8, 16 and look for parallels to the life of Jesus Christ. Use the accompanying chart to help your discussion. (You could show it on an overhead projector or give it to students as a handout.)

Ammon	Jesus Christ	Parallel
Mosiah 7:2	John 5:36	The king sent Ammon. Heavenly Father sent Jesus.
Mosiah 7:3	Psalms 24:8	Both Ammon and Jesus are described as mighty and strong.
Mosiah 7:4, 16	Matthew 4:1–2	Both experienced forty days of hunger, thirst, and fatigue.
Mosiah 7:6	Matthew 26:37	Both took three others and went a little further.
Mosiah 7:7	John 18:12	Both were bound and taken away.
Mosiah 7:8	Luke 23:7	Both were brought before kings and questioned.
Mosiah 7:18; see also Mosiah 22:11	D&C 138:23	Ammon led the people out of physical bondage. Jesus delivers the people from death and hell.

Review Elder McConkie’s statement above. Refer students to the sacrament prayer (see Moroni 4:3) and ask: How could looking for types and shadows help us “always remember him”? Read Doctrine and Covenants 52:14 and look for another blessing that comes from looking for types. Ask: How could avoiding deception help you in your life? Read with students Ether 12:41 and look for a blessing that comes to those who seek Jesus Christ. Ask: How long will that grace abide with those who seek Him? Read 3 Nephi 27:27 and ask:

- According to this verse, who should we strive to be like?
- Who do you know who seems Christlike?
- What does this person do that reminds you of the Savior?

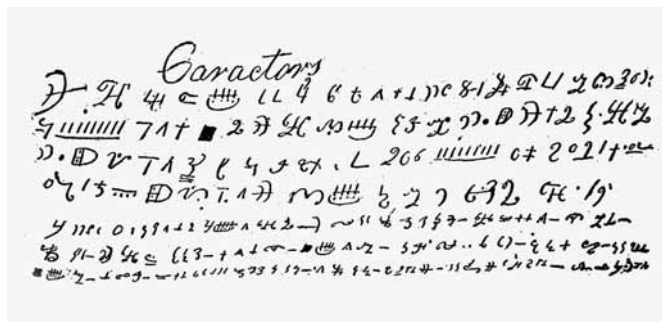
Ask students to consider the following questions:

- What traits do you have that are like the Savior’s?
- What could you do to make your life more like His?

Encourage students to look for types of the Savior in the scriptures and the world around them.

Mosiah 8:6–18. A seer is a revelator and a prophet whose power is a gift from God. A seer can translate unknown languages and can know the past, the future, and hidden things. (10–15 minutes)

Draw on the board some of the following characters copied by Joseph Smith from the gold plates:



Invite students to imagine how Joseph Smith must have felt after being given the difficult task of translating the gold plates. Have them read Joseph Smith—History 1:62 and look for what the Lord gave Joseph to help him translate the Book of Mormon. Explain that today they will learn about the Urim and Thummim and those who used it. Read Mosiah 8:6–17 and ask:

- What question did King Limhi ask Ammon? (see v. 6).
- What had King Limhi commanded a group of forty-three people to do? (see v. 7).
- Why did King Limhi want someone who could translate unknown languages? (see vv. 8–9, 12).
- By what power was King Mosiah able to translate? (see vv. 13–14; to clarify what the interpreters described in verse 13 are, read the Bible Dictionary entry for “seer” [p. 771]).
- What is a person called who possesses this power to translate? (see v. 13).

Share the following statement by Elder John A. Widtsoe, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“A seer is one who sees with spiritual eyes. He perceives the meaning of that which seems obscure to others; therefore he is an interpreter and clarifier of eternal truth. He foresees the future from the past and the present. This he does by the power of the Lord operating through him directly, or indirectly with the aid of divine instruments such as the Urim and Thummim. In short, he is one who sees, who walks in the Lord’s light with open eyes” (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, arr. G. Homer Durham, 3 vols. in 1 [1960], 258).

Ask:

- What did King Limhi say about the value of a seer? (see v. 15).
- What did Ammon say to help King Limhi better understand seers? (see v. 16).
- What does a seer know? (see v. 17).

Share with the class the following from the Prophet Joseph Smith’s account of the dedication of the Kirtland Temple:

“I then made a short address, and called upon the several quorums, and all the congregation of Saints, to acknowledge the Presidency as Prophets and Seers, and uphold them by their prayers. They all covenanted to do so, by rising.

“I then called upon the quorums and congregation of Saints to acknowledge the Twelve Apostles, who were present, as Prophets, Seers, Revelators, and special witnesses to all the nations of the earth, . . . and uphold them by their prayers, which they assented to by rising” (*History of the Church*, 2:417).

Ask:

- Who do we sustain today as prophets, seers, and revelators? (The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve.)
- How does understanding the calling and authority these men have affect the way we receive their counsel?



Introduction

Mosiah 9–22 is the first of two historical flashbacks recorded in the book of Mosiah (see the introduction to the book of Mosiah, p. 98). These chapters are Mormon’s abridgment of the record of Zeniff and describe the reign of three Nephite kings: Zeniff, Noah, and Limhi. Mosiah 9–10 begins the account with the story of Zeniff, who led a large group of Nephites from Zarahemla to settle in the land of Lehi-Nephi. They suffered many afflictions and defended themselves against Lamanite aggression. One theme to watch for in these chapters is how the Lord delivered Zeniff’s people from their enemies.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The righteous prosper and the wicked perish, though sometimes righteous people suffer from the punishments the Lord sends upon the wicked (see Mosiah 9:1–3, 12–19).
- Parents are responsible to teach their children the truths of the gospel. The wickedness of parents can have a strong negative effect on their children (see Mosiah 10:12–16; see also D&C 68:25–27).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, p. 62.

Suggestions for Teaching

Mosiah 9:1–3, 12–19. The righteous prosper and the wicked perish, though sometimes righteous people suffer from the punishments the Lord sends upon the wicked. (15–20 minutes)

Write on the board *The wicked perish and the righteous prosper*. Invite students to read Mosiah 9:3 and look for the reason Zeniff gave for his people’s suffering. Refer to the statement on the board and ask:

- Is this principle true? (Yes, eventually.)
- Can you think of any examples that appear to be exceptions to this rule? (Job’s suffering, Nephi’s abuse by his brothers, the deaths of Joseph Smith and Abinadi.)
- What will happen to these righteous people in the eternities? (see Malachi 3:14–18).
- Why in mortality does it sometimes appear that the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer?

Invite a student to read the statement on judgments by Elder Bruce R. McConkie in the teaching suggestion for 2 Nephi 25:1–8 (p. 69).

Divide the class into four groups. Invite each group to read one of the following sets of verses in Mosiah: 9:1–3; 9:12–19; 10:6–11; 10:19–21. Have them summarize what they read, and then ask:

- What do these verses say about the spiritual state of the Lamanites and Nephites?
- Who won these battles: the wicked or the righteous?
- Do you think that only the wicked died in these battles?
- In what ways did the righteous suffer because of these battles?
- How many Lamanites died in the battle described in Mosiah 9? (see v. 18).
- How many Nephites died in the same battle? (see v. 19).
- How does this apply to the statement on the board?
- What righteous person or people in this dispensation have suffered?
- When will we see the complete fulfillment of the statement on the board? (At the Second Coming of the Savior.)

Read the following statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“I explained concerning the coming of the Son of Man; also that it is a false idea that the Saints will escape all the judgments, whilst the wicked suffer; for all flesh is subject to suffer, and ‘the righteous shall hardly escape;’ still many of the Saints will escape, for the just shall live by faith; yet many of the righteous shall fall a prey to disease, to pestilence, etc., by reason of the weakness of the flesh, and yet be saved in the Kingdom of God” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 162).

Ask: How can it help us now to know that one day we will receive great blessings for our righteous acts?



Introduction

King Noah’s people became so wicked that the Lord sent a prophet named Abinadi to warn them of their destruction if they did not repent. These chapters give an account of the ministry of Abinadi and record his testimony, which focused on the Savior Jesus Christ and His Atonement. Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, said, “The testimony [Abinadi] bore as he called an apostate king, Noah, and his priests to repentance is one of the most significant doctrinal discourses in the Book of Mormon. The king and his priests, except one, rejected Abinadi’s teachings and had him put to death. That one was Alma” (in *Conference Report*, Apr. 1989, 10–11; or *Ensign*, May 1989, 10).

Elder Robert D. Hales, also a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, taught: “The firmness of Abinadi’s faith is found in this poignant entry in the sacred record: ‘And now, when Abinadi had said these words, he fell, having suffered death by fire; yea, having been put to death because *he would not deny the commandments of God*, having sealed the truth of his words by his death.’ (See Mosiah 17:6–20; italics added.)

“. . . What a powerful example Abinadi should be to all of us! He courageously obeyed the Lord’s commandments—even though it cost him his life!” (in *Conference Report*, Apr. 1996, 49; or *Ensign*, May 1996, 35).

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Wickedness leads to misery and spiritual destruction (see Mosiah 11:1–25; 12:2–8; 16:1–5; see also Mosiah 4:30).
- Prophets have the power to know and prophesy of the future (see Mosiah 11:20–25; 12:3–8; 13:10; 17:15–19; see also Amos 3:7; Mosiah 19:18–20; Alma 25:1–12).
- The Lord protects His righteous servants until their mission in mortality is complete (see Mosiah 11:26; 13:1–7; see also D&C 122:9).
- Salvation comes through the Atonement of Jesus Christ to those who repent and obey God’s commandments (see Mosiah 12:30–37; 13:11–35; see also Exodus 20:1–17; 2 Nephi 31:20–21; D&C 14:7).
- During the Atonement, Jesus Christ suffered for our griefs, transgressions, and sins. His death and Resurrection provide a way for every mortal to be resurrected (see Mosiah 13:28–15:1; 16:7–15; see also Alma 7:11–13).
- There are several ways in which Jesus Christ is both a Father and a Son. There are also many similarities between Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ (see Mosiah 15:1–7; see also John 10:30).
- The righteous, including children, will rise in the resurrection of the just. The wicked will rise in the resurrection of the unjust (see Mosiah 15:20–27; 16:8–11; see also D&C 76:17).
- Righteous people rejoice in the truth, while wicked people reject it (see Mosiah 16:13–17:12; see also 1 Nephi 16:1–2; 4 Nephi 1:12, 16).
- Some, like the Savior, are called upon to seal their testimony with their blood (see Mosiah 17:13–20; see also D&C 135:3).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 62–64.

Suggestions for Teaching

Mosiah 11–12. Wickedness leads to misery and spiritual destruction. (45–50 minutes)

Make two paths in your classroom, one that leads to pictures of a temple and a happy family, and another that leads to a picture of a prison or prisoners. Show students the paths and talk about both destinations. Ask which of the destinations they prefer. Place a student who wants to get to the temple and the happy family on the path that leads to the prison. Ask:

- Can you get to your desired destination from here? Why not?
- What would you think if someone said they wanted one destination but chose the other path?

- How could this compare to your own life?
- In real life, is it always easy to tell which path leads to which destination? Why or why not?

Explain that while few people seem confused about the destination they want to reach, some are confused about which path leads to it. Tell students that today they will study about a people who wanted happiness but continually chose the path that led to unhappiness.

Read Mosiah 10:19–21 to find the success the people of Zeniff had over the Lamanites. Ask:

- What key phrase in these verses helps us understand why they were successful? (“Putting their trust in the Lord” [v. 19].)
- Were these people on a path that led to happiness or misery?
- Read Mosiah 11:1–2. When Zeniff’s son Noah came to power, what change occurred in the path the people followed?

Write the accompanying chart on the board with the right-hand column blank. Invite students to read the verses and underline the words and phrases that describe the sins of Noah and his people. Then fill in the chart as a class.

Reference	Sins of Noah and His People
Mosiah 11:2	selfishness, polygamy, whoredoms
Mosiah 11:3–4, 6	greed, laziness, idolatry
Mosiah 11:5	pride
Mosiah 11:7, 11	vanity, deceitfulness
Mosiah 11:14	setting hearts on riches, sexual immorality
Mosiah 11:15	drunkenness
Mosiah 11:18–19	boasting in their own strength
Mosiah 11:20, 26	rejecting the prophet
Mosiah 11:27–28	anger, desiring murder
Mosiah 11:29	hardening their hearts, refusing to repent

- Read Mosiah 11:20–25. According to these verses, what path were Noah and his people on?
- What did Abinadi teach them they could do to change their destination?
- How can you tell what path you are on?
- How do people switch paths today?
- Why do you think it is important to consider the path you are on?

Read Mosiah 12:1–8 and look for the warning Abinadi gave the people. Ask:

- What path did he encourage them to take? Why?
- How did he encourage them to change paths?

Read Mosiah 12:9–16 looking for the people’s reaction to Abinadi’s message. Add the following to the chart on the board:

Mosiah 12:9	being angry with and binding Abinadi
Mosiah 12:14	calling Abinadi a liar and saying his prophecies were false
Mosiah 12:15	relying on their own strength

According to Mosiah 12:15 what destination did Noah’s people think they were pursuing? Read Mosiah 12:17–19 and add the following to the chart on the board:

Mosiah 12:17	imprisoning Abinadi
Mosiah 12:18–19	trying to trick Abinadi

Read Mosiah 12:25–37 and ask:

- Who began asking questions? (see v. 19).
- Who asked the questions in the end?
- What questions did Abinadi ask?
- What principles of everyday living can we learn from these teachings of Abinadi?

Invite students to choose one or two of Abinadi’s teachings that they struggle with and write on a piece of paper a few ways they could improve in that area.

Mosiah 11:26; 13:1–7. The Lord protects His righteous servants until their mission is complete. (10–15 minutes)

Tell students that in the early history of the Church, mobs in Missouri surrounded the town of Far West, where many Church members had gathered. Invite a student to read the following account:

“To avoid bloodshed, Joseph Smith and others agreed to meet with militia leaders, who . . . arrested them. A court-martial that evening summarily sentenced Joseph Smith and his associates to be shot, and [Major General] Lucas ordered Brig. General Alexander Doniphan to execute them at dawn. Doniphan thought the order illegal and heroically refused to carry it out, declaring that he would bring to account anyone who tried to do it” (“Missouri Conflict,” in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. [1992], 2:931).

Explain that there were many times when the life of the Prophet was threatened. Have students read Doctrine and Covenants 122:9 and find the Lord’s promise to Joseph while he was imprisoned in Missouri. Read the following account by William Taylor, who was the Prophet’s companion for several days in 1842 while the Prophet was in hiding from enemies who sought his life:

“I said to him once:

“‘Brother Joseph, don’t you get frightened when all those hounding wolves are after you?’

“And he answered:

“‘No, I am not afraid; the Lord said he would protect me, and I have full confidence in His word.’” (in “Joseph Smith, the Prophet,” *Young Woman’s Journal*, Dec. 1906, 548).

Invite students to read Luke 4:28–30, and ask:

- What did the people of Nazareth try to do to the Savior?
- How did He avoid them?

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained, “Evidently our Lord’s enemies were restrained in some unusual way from carrying out their murderous intentions” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:162).

Have students read Mosiah 11:26 and compare it with the accounts of Joseph Smith and the Savior. Read Mosiah 13:1–7 and ask:

- What did the king command?
- How did the servants respond?
- What saved Abinadi’s life?
- According to these verses, why did the Lord preserve Abinadi’s life at this time?
- What did Abinadi tell the people?

Invite a student to read the following statement by President Joseph Fielding Smith:

“May I say for the consolation of those who mourn, and for the comfort and guidance of all of us, that no righteous man is ever taken before his time” (address at the funeral of Elder Richard L. Evans, 4 Nov. 1971, 1).

- What does this statement imply about the deaths of Joseph Smith, Abinadi, and Jesus Christ?
- How could this statement apply to us?
- What comfort can this statement be to us when a friend or family member dies?

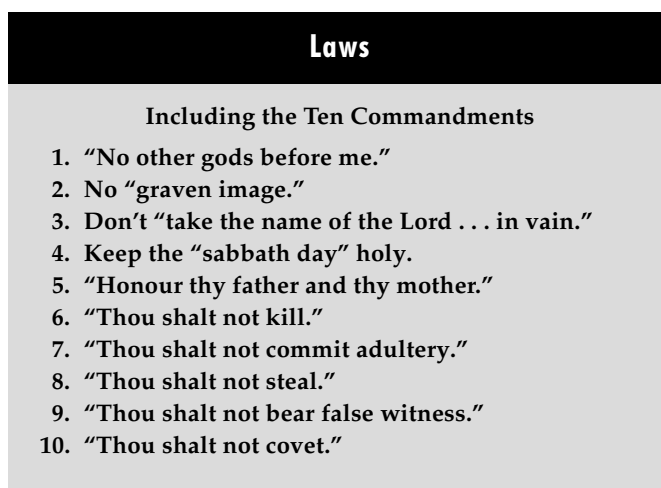
Mosiah 13:11–35. Salvation comes through the Atonement of Jesus Christ to those who repent and obey God’s commandments. (15–20 minutes)

Write $2 + 2 + 2 = 6$ on the board. Ask:

- What would happen to this equation if one of the 2s were eliminated?
- Could $2 + 2$ ever equal 6?

Explain that the prophet Abinadi taught a true spiritual formula, but King Noah’s people tried to twist and destroy it, just as if someone tried to say $2 + 2 = 6$.

Invite students to read Mosiah 12:29 and find the first question Abinadi asks in that verse. Explain that Abinadi spent the next chapter explaining aspects of the law of Moses. Write the numbers 1–10 on the board. Have a few students take turns reading aloud Mosiah 12:35; 13:11–24. Invite the rest of the class to follow along in Exodus 20:3–17 and to stop the readers whenever Abinadi recites one of the Ten Commandments. As the students discover each commandment, write it on the board by the appropriate number (see diagram).

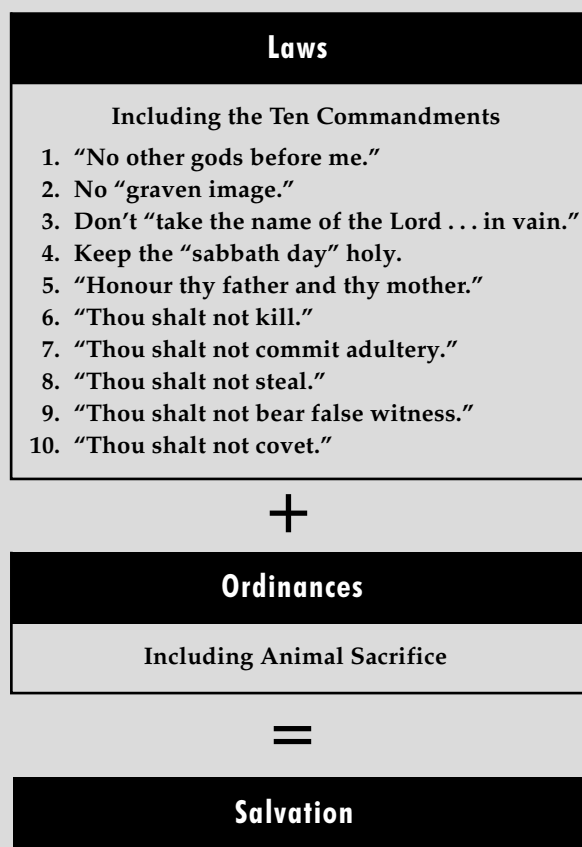


Ask:

- What did King Noah and his priests claim brought salvation? (see Mosiah 13:27).
- Why did the Lord give Israel the law of Moses? (see vv. 29–30).

To summarize these questions, add the following to the diagram on the board:

What King Noah and His Priests Pretended to Believe



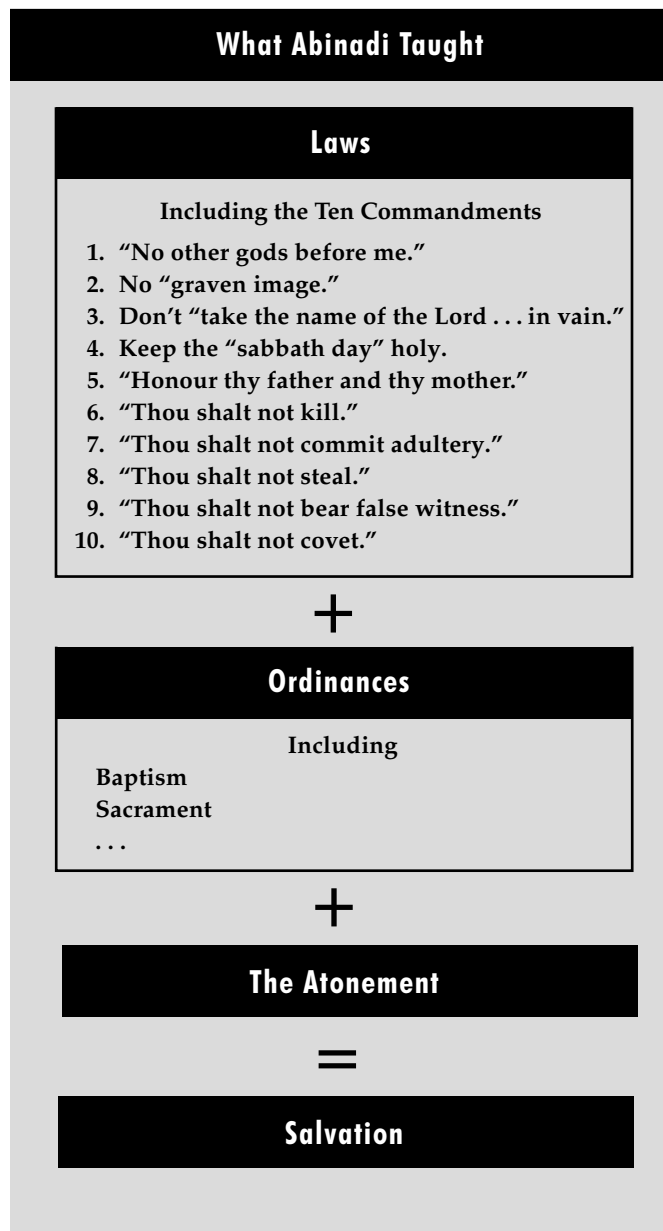
Invite students to read Mosiah 13:28, 30–35, and ask:

- What did Noah and his priests leave out of the formula?
- Why was the Atonement essential, even with the law? (see v. 28; see also 2 Nephi 2:5–7).
- According to Abinadi, why was the law of Moses given? (see Mosiah 13:30–31).

Add the Atonement to the diagram on the board and change the heading to *What Abinadi Taught* (see below). Ask:

- What caused the children of Israel to misunderstand this doctrine? (The hardness of their hearts; see v. 32.)
- How many prophets have taught about Jesus Christ and His Atonement? (see v. 33).
- What did these prophets say He would do? (see vv. 34–35).
- Read Mosiah 13:27; 3 Nephi 9:17–20. Why don’t we offer animal sacrifices today?

- What ordinances does the Lord require in our day? (*Note:* Erase *Animal Sacrifice* in the second box and write the ordinances that the students name [for example baptism and the sacrament].)
- Which of the laws delivered through Moses are still part of the gospel today? (Be sure students understand that the Ten Commandments are still in force.)



Conclude by reading or having a student recite the third article of faith.

Mosiah 13:34–15:1. To work out the Atonement, Jesus Christ suffered for our griefs, transgressions, and sins. His death and Resurrection provide a way for every mortal to be resurrected.
(50–55 minutes)

Invite students to compare Mosiah 13:34 with Mosiah 15:1. Ask: How are these verses similar? Invite students to

underline the similar wording and cross-reference the two verses. Explain that these verses briefly summarize the “condescension” of Jesus Christ (see also 1 Nephi 11:26–33). In between these verses in Mosiah, Abinadi quotes Isaiah 53, one of the most powerful chapters in scripture dealing with the Savior and His Atonement. Of all that Abinadi could have said in the last moments of his life, he chose to quote this chapter, which explains doctrines stated briefly in Mosiah 13:34 and Mosiah 15:1.

Invite students to spend five minutes studying Mosiah 13:35–14:12. Whenever they find something about Jesus Christ or His Atonement, have them write on a piece of paper the reference and what it teaches. Invite them to share their findings, and list them on the board. These might include:

- Mosiah 13:35. The Savior would bring to pass the resurrection of the dead.
- Mosiah 13:35. He would be oppressed and afflicted.
- Mosiah 14:2. He would look like an ordinary man.
- Mosiah 14:3. He would know sorrow and grief and be hated and rejected.
- Mosiah 14:4. He would suffer for our griefs and sorrows.
- Mosiah 14:5. He would suffer for our transgressions and sins so we could be healed.
- Mosiah 14:7. He would be the sacrificial lamb of the Father.
- Mosiah 14:8–9, 12. He would be killed with the wicked.
- Mosiah 14:10. He would work out the Atonement.
- Mosiah 14:11. He would satisfy the demands of justice.
- Mosiah 14:12. He would receive great rewards for His sacrifice.

As time allows, use some or all of the following questions, activities, and statements to study Mosiah 13:34–15:1 in more depth.

Mosiah 13:35

Read Alma 11:43–44 and ask:

- According to these verses, who will be resurrected?
- What are the characteristics of a resurrected body?
- What great event will occur after our resurrection?

Mosiah 14:2

- Who does *him* refer to in the phrase “before him”? (The Father.)
- Read Luke 2:40. How does this describe the Father watching over His Son?
- Read John 15:5. How are we like branches and Jesus Christ like the vine or trunk? (Discuss their answers.)
- How were the people where the Lord grew up like the dry ground that surrounded them? (Just as a seed cannot grow in dry ground, the gospel could not easily grow in their hardened hearts.)

Share the following commentary on this verse in Isaiah from President Joseph Fielding Smith, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“There was nothing about [Christ] to cause people to single him out. In appearance he was like men; and so it is expressed here by the prophet that he had no form or comeliness, that is, he was not so distinctive, so different from others that people would recognize him as the Son of God. He appeared as a mortal man” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 1:23).

Not only would Jesus Christ look like other men, but He would be born into the world in the usual way. Ask: How would that fact be a great test of faith for some people?

Mosiah 14:3

Have students read Luke 4:16, 22, 28–29; 2 Nephi 10:3, and ask:

- How do these verses apply to Mosiah 14:3?
- What does “we hid as it were our faces from him” mean? (They not only didn’t listen to Him, they shunned Him.)

Mosiah 14:4

Ask: According to this verse, what did Jesus suffer for in addition to our sins? Have students read Alma 7:11 and underline what the Savior suffered for. Read Matthew 11:28–30 and ask: How does knowing that the Savior suffered for all our pains, afflictions, and sicknesses help us understand these verses in Matthew?

Share the following statement by Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Jesus’ daily mortal experiences and His ministry, to be sure, acquainted Him by observation with a sample of human sicknesses, grief, pains, sorrows, and infirmities which are ‘common to man’ (1 Corinthians 10:13). But the agonies of the Atonement were infinite and first-hand! Since not all human sorrow and pain is connected to sin, the full intensiveness of the Atonement involved bearing our pains, infirmities, and sicknesses, as well as our sins. Whatever our sufferings, we can safely cast our ‘care upon him; for he careth for [us]’ (1 Peter 5:7)” (*Not My Will, But Thine* [1988], 51).

Mosiah 14:4–5

Jesus Christ, as described in Isaiah 53 and Mosiah 14, is sometimes referred to as the “Suffering Servant.” Share the following explanation of the phrase “smitten of God” in verse 4:

“It has been common in many ages for people to assume that someone who suffers is being punished by God. Those who see the Servant consider that he is being punished for sin. Ironically, they are correct, but it is not his own sin that causes him to suffer; rather, it is ours” (Donald W. Parry and others, *Understanding Isaiah* [1998], 474).

Explain to students that another translation for *bruised* is “crushed.” Ask:

- What are the blessings mentioned in verse 5 that come to us as a result of Christ’s suffering the Atonement?
- How is oil extracted from olives? (They are crushed in an olive press.)

Tell students that the word *Gethsemane* is derived from “oil press.” Ask:

- How might the meaning of *Gethsemane*, the name of the place where the Lord suffered the Atonement, relate to Isaiah’s statement that He was “crushed” for our iniquities?
- Read Matthew 27:26. According to this verse, what happened to Jesus before He was crucified?
- How does this relate to the last part of Mosiah 14:5? (Isaiah and Abinadi used the stripes of Jesus’ scourging to represent the healing powers of the Atonement; see also 1 Peter 2:24–25.)

Mosiah 14:6

Read 1 John 1:8 and ask: How does this verse relate to Mosiah 14:6?

Mosiah 14:7

Read Matthew 26:67–68; 27:29–30 and ask: According to these verses, what afflictions did Jesus bear? Read Mark 15:3–5; Luke 23:9 and ask: How do these verses apply to Mosiah 14:7? Point out that in Mosiah 14:6 we are the sheep and Jesus is the shepherd (see also John 10:14). Ask: Who is the lamb and the sheep in verse 7? Invite students to read John 1:29 and Moses 5:6–8 and list ways that Jesus is the Lamb of God.

Mosiah 14:8

Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 19:16–18 and look for how terrible it was for Jesus to be “stricken” with the “transgressions of [the] people.”

Mosiah 14:8, 10

Explain that the word *generation* in verse 8 might also be translated as “descendants.” Ask students to read Mosiah 5:7; 15:10–13 and look for who the “seed” or “descendants” of Christ are.

Mosiah 14:9

Read Matthew 27:38 and look for who the wicked were who died with the Savior. Read Matthew 27:57–60 and ask students to tell how Jesus was “with the rich in his death.”

Mosiah 14:10

Read John 3:16; 10:17–18 to find who willingly allowed the Atonement to be completed. (Both the Father and the Son.)

Mosiah 14:11

Invite students to read Mosiah 15:9; Alma 34:14–16 and look for how these verses apply to Mosiah 14:11. Ask:

- Who made the last sacrifice?
- What was satisfied?
- Who was justified?
- What made it possible for them to be justified?

Mosiah 14:12

Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 49:5–6 and look for the high office that Jesus attained. Read or sing “Jesus, Once of Humble Birth” (*Hymns*, no. 196). Invite students to pay close attention to the contrast between where Jesus was and where He is now. Read Romans 8:16–17 and look for what Jesus is willing to share with us.

Share your testimony of Jesus Christ and allow students time to do the same.

Mosiah 15:1–7. There are many ways that Jesus Christ is both a Father and a Son. There are also many similarities between Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. (15–20 minutes)

Ask students if all fathers are also sons. Ask: In what ways is Jesus both a Father and a Son? Have students read the first phrase of the chapter heading for Mosiah 15. Explain that there are several ways that Jesus is a Father and a Son. This does not mean that Jesus Christ and Heavenly Father are the same person. It means that Jesus can also be called “the Father.”

Have a student read aloud Mosiah 15:1–9. Invite half the class to look for examples of Jesus Christ in the role of a Son, and have the other half look for examples of Jesus Christ in the role of a Father. Have them stop the reader whenever they find an example of Jesus acting in one of these two roles, and list their findings on the board. Your list might include the following:

Jesus Christ in the Roles of Son and Father

Son	Father
He dwelt on the earth in the flesh (see v. 2).	He subjected His flesh to the will of the Father (see v. 2).
He was born into mortality (see v. 3).	He was conceived by the power of Heavenly Father (see v. 3).
He subjected the flesh and was slain (see v. 7).	He triumphed over death (see v. 8).

(Adapted from Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon* [1997], 192.)

To summarize the ways that Jesus Christ is a Father, share the following statement by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland: “There are ways in which Christ is so united with his Father that in some assignments he rightfully plays a fatherly role and rightfully bears the title of Father in doing so” (*Christ and the New Covenant*, 183).

Mosiah 15 not only explains how Jesus Christ is a Father and a Son but also deals with some similarities between Jesus Christ and Heavenly Father. Write the following sentences on the board, leaving blanks in place of the words in italics. Have students read Mosiah 15:4–5, and invite them to fill in the blanks.

- They are “one God” because They both participated in *the Creation of heaven and earth*.
- The Son’s *will* is the same as the Father’s.

Ask:

- Do the Father and the Son have other similarities? (One answer is that They look like each other; see Hebrews 1:3.)
- Are They the same person?

To find more ways They are similar, share the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one God in a sense far greater than merely being one in purpose. . . .

“In the exalted family of the Gods, the Father and the Son are one. They have the same character, perfections, and attributes. They think the same thoughts, speak the same words, perform the same acts, have the same desires, and do the same works. They possess the same power, have the same mind, know the same truths, live

in the same light and glory. To know one is to know the other; to see one is to see the other; to hear the voice of one is to hear the voice of the other. Their unity is perfect. The Son is in the express image of his Father's person; each has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; and both reign in power, might, and dominion over all the creations of their hands" (*The Promised Messiah*, 5, 9).

Ask students to read 3 Nephi 12:48 looking for who else is invited to become like the Father and the Son. Read together Moroni 7:48 and look for a way we can become more like the Father and the Son. Encourage students to choose an area of their life that needs improvement and to determine to become more like the Father and the Son in that area.

Mosiah 15:20–27; 16:8–11. Righteous people, including children, will rise in the resurrection of the just. Wicked people will rise in the resurrection of the unjust. (15–20 minutes)

Ask: Have any of you ever lost a loved one through death? Invite a few students to share some of the difficulties of dealing with their loss. (*Note:* Be careful not to intrude on sensitive feelings.) Ask: How does a knowledge of the gospel help us cope with death? Read Mosiah 16:8 and look for what takes away the "sting" of death.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 76:17 and look for two divisions in the Resurrection. Write on the board *Resurrection of the Just* and *Resurrection of the Unjust*. Tell students that the prophet Abinadi describes those who are part of these two resurrections. Divide the class into two groups. Invite the first group to study Mosiah 15:20–25 and answer the following questions. (These questions could be written on the board under *Resurrection of the Just*.)

1. Who broke the bands of death? (see v. 20).
2. Who is included in the resurrection of the just (which includes the "first resurrection" spoken of by Abinadi)? (see v. 22).
3. Where do they go? (see v. 23).
4. What do they receive? (see v. 23).
5. According to verse 24, what other group of people take part in the resurrection of the just?
6. Who else participates in the resurrection of the just? (see v. 25).

Invite the other group to study Mosiah 15:26–27; 16:10–11; Revelation 20:4–5; Doctrine and Covenants 76:102–6 and answer the following questions. (These could be written on the board under *Resurrection of the Unjust*.)

1. Who must wait for the resurrection of the unjust? (see Mosiah 15:26).

2. Why can't these people participate in the resurrection of the just? (see vv. 26–27).
3. Who will these people live with? (see Mosiah 16:11).
4. When will those of the resurrection of the unjust be resurrected? (After the Millennium; see Revelation 20:4–5.)
5. What characteristics do those who take part in the resurrection of the unjust have? (see D&C 76:102–4).
6. Where do these people go? (see Mosiah 16:11; D&C 76:105–6).

Invite a spokesperson from the first group to teach the class the answers to the first set of questions. Then have a spokesperson from the second group teach the class the answers to the second set of questions.

Mosiah 16:13–17:12. The truth affects people in different ways. Righteous people rejoice in the truth, while wicked people reject it. (5–10 minutes)

Ask students to imagine they are in a sacrament meeting. As they walk out they hear one person say, "That was a wonderful meeting," and another say, "That was the most boring meeting I've ever been to." Ask:

- What would cause such a different feeling among people in the same meeting?
- Who would you say is mainly responsible for whether we receive the Spirit?

Explain that today you will study how hearing the same testimony of Christ caused one person to believe and others to be angry. Invite three students to take the following roles: Abinadi, King Noah, and Alma. Write the accompanying chart on the board (do not include the answers listed under "King Noah's Reaction" and "Alma's Reaction").

Abinadi's Words	
King Noah's Reaction	Alma's Reaction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Didn't believe • Was angry • Wanted to kill the prophet • Wanted to kill those who believed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believed • Spoke in favor of the prophet • Was willing to risk his life to obey

Invite the student playing the role of Abinadi to read Abinadi's last testimony of Christ as found in Mosiah 16:13–15. Invite the second and third students to read the reactions of Noah (Mosiah 17:1, 3, 5) and Alma (Mosiah 17:2, 4). Have the class describe the reactions of the two men. List their responses on the board under the appropriate headings. Discuss the following questions:

- How do you react when you are told to repent and improve in some area of your life?

- Does your reaction differ depending on what area of your life is in question? Why?
- How can knowing these scriptures help you when you are asked to repent?

Read Mosiah 17:6–8 and ask:

- According to King Noah, what did Abinadi say that made him worthy of death?
- What could Abinadi have said to save himself?
- In what way is King Noah’s reasoning illogical?
- What does it teach about Noah? (He did not care about the coming of Christ; he cared only for himself.)
- Read verses 9–10. According to these verses, what was Abinadi’s response?
- Read verse 11. How did Abinadi’s boldness affect Noah?
- Read verse 12. What kind of influence did Noah’s peers have on him?
- What kind of influence do your friends have on you?

Encourage students to follow Abinadi’s example and boldly stand for the truth, in spite of the trials they may face. Share the following statements by President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“Be strong—in standing for the right. We live in an age of compromise. . . . In situations with which we are daily confronted, we know what is right. . . . We must cultivate the strength to follow our convictions” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 73; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 52).

“None of us can slip down without taking the whole Church down somewhat. None of us can do better without lifting the whole Church somewhat. . . . We can do a little better. I pray that we will work at it just a little harder, with a little more devotion, a little more love, a little more prayer, a little more enthusiasm. This is the Savior’s work” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [1997], 137).

Mosiah 17:11–20. Some, like the Savior, are called upon to seal their testimony with their blood.

(5–10 minutes)

Invite a spiritually mature student to bear testimony of Jesus Christ. Ask the student:

- What would it take for you to renounce your testimony?
- Do you think you would renounce it for money? Even if it were a lot of money?
- Would you renounce it for ease and comfort? for fame? for power?
- Do you think you would renounce it if you were threatened with death?

(*Note:* If you think your students would be uncomfortable answering these questions, you might substitute the example of Church leaders or members who have shown great faith.)

Ask the class how they feel about people who believe in something so strongly that they hold to it no matter what. Ask: How does that compare to someone whose belief has limits?

Invite students to take turns reading aloud the following passages of scripture: Matthew 14:1–10; Acts 7:51–60; Mosiah 17:11–20. Discuss with students the similarities in these stories. Ask:

- What did John the Baptist, Stephen, and Abinadi do that angered the people?
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 135:3. According to this verse, what did Joseph Smith and “most of the Lord’s anointed in ancient times” do?
- Why are so many called upon to seal their testimony with their blood? (see Hebrews 9:16).
- What is necessary for a person to have that kind of testimony today?

Share the following account with students:

“The crack of six rifles echoed over the little town of San Marcos, not far from Mexico City. Jesusita Monroy knew that her son, Rafael, and his companion, Vicente Morales, were dead.

“Putting a shawl over her head, she hurried out to find their bodies, heedless of a downpour of rain which washed over the ground as if to erase the stain of martyrs’ blood from this Sabbath Day, July 17, 1915. . . .

“When revolutionary upheavals in Mexico forced the abandonment of the missionary effort there in 1913, Rafael Monroy, a storekeeper in his 30s, was left in charge of the San Marcos Branch of the Mexican Mission. He had been a member of the Church for only three months.

“Rafael held weekly meetings with the little group of seven members. He taught the Gospel to his neighbors, and the branch grew. By May, 1915, 50 people had been baptized, 75 were attending the meetings.

“At this time, two rival armies, fighting for control of the country descended on San Marcos. For a time, Carranza held the town. Then Zapata with his fanatic devotees of the Virgin of Guadalupe gained possession.

“A neighbor of the Monroys, fiercely opposed to their religious activities, went to the Zapata headquarters and denounced Rafael as a Carranzista and as a Mormon.

“Soldiers surrounded the Monroy house. Rafael was arrested together with Vicente, a member of the Church who happened to be visiting there. ‘Give up your arms,’ the soldiers demanded.

“Drawing from his pocket a Bible and a Book of Mormon, Rafael answered, ‘Senores, there are the only arms I ever carry. They are the arms of truth against error.’

“The two men were tortured, threatened and told to renounce their religion. ‘My religion is dearer to me than my life and I cannot forsake it,’ Rafael declared.

“He spent the afternoon in jail reading and explaining the scriptures to his fellow prisoners and to the guards. At 7 p.m. his mother brought some food. Rafael blessed it, but did not eat. ‘I am fasting today,’ he said.

“Moments later he and Vicente were marched to a large tree on the outskirts of San Marcos. They were offered their freedom if they would forsake their religion and join the Zapatistas. They refused.

“Rafael was allowed to pray. He knelt, and asked protection for his family, for the little branch. Finally, he prayed for his executioners, ‘Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.’

“Rising and folding his arms, he announced, ‘Senores, I am at your service.’

“‘Never have I seen men die more courageously,’ the soldier said” (“Two Members Died Courageously for the Truth,” *Church News*, 12 Sept. 1959, 19).

Ask students to consider the following questions:

- How strong is your testimony?
- Would you be willing to die for it? More importantly, are you willing to live for it?
- How should our everyday actions be different because of the strength of our testimonies?

Mosiah 11–17. The scriptures contain many types and shadows of Jesus Christ. (20–25 minutes)

Review with students the material on types and shadows from the teaching suggestion for Mosiah 7:1–8, 16 (p. 108). *Note:* If you did not use that teaching suggestion, you may want to use it now, substituting the accompanying chart for the one in that teaching suggestion.

Have students read the verses from the accompanying chart and look for similarities between the lives of Abinadi and Jesus Christ. If desired, give students a copy of the chart with the “Similarities” column blank and have them fill in the missing information.

Abinadi	Jesus Christ	Similarities
Mosiah 11:20–25; 12:9	Matthew 4:17; Luke 4:28	Both called the people to repentance. In both cases, the people became angry at their preaching.
Mosiah 11:26	Luke 4:29–30	The people they taught tried to kill them, but they were delivered out of their hands.
Mosiah 12:9	John 18:12; Luke 23:7	Both were bound and taken to the king.
Mosiah 12:17–18	Matthew 26:57	Abinadi was judged by a council of priests. Jesus was judged by a council of chief priests, scribes, and elders.
Mosiah 12:19	Mark 14:55–59; Luke 20:19–20	The priests tried to catch them in their words.
Mosiah 12:26	Matthew 23:13–26	Both rebuked the religious leaders.
Mosiah 13:1	John 10:20	King Noah said Abinadi was crazy. Many of the people said Jesus was crazy.
Mosiah 14; 17:1	Luke 4:16–21, 28–30	Abinadi quoted from Isaiah’s prophecies of the Savior, and then Noah had him killed. Jesus quoted from Isaiah’s prophecies of the Savior, and then the people of Nazareth tried to kill Him.
Mosiah 17:5–6	Acts 10:40; 1 Peter 3:18–19	Abinadi spent three days in prison. Jesus spent three days in the tomb, during which He preached to the spirits in prison.
Mosiah 17:7–8	Matthew 26:63–66	Both taught that Christ was God.
Mosiah 17:9	John 18:1–8	Both allowed themselves to be arrested.
Mosiah 17:9–10	John 10:17–18	Both willingly suffered death.
Mosiah 17:10	Matthew 27:22–24	Both were innocent of wrongdoing.
Mosiah 17:11	Matthew 27:15–18	In both cases the political leader was willing to release them.
Mosiah 17:12	Luke 23:2	Both were accused of treason.
Mosiah 17:13	John 19:1	Both were scourged.
Mosiah 17:19	Luke 23:46	Both died while praying for the reception of their soul.
Mosiah 17:20	John 19:30; see also Hebrews 9:15–16	Both sealed their testimony with their blood.

Encourage students to look for types of the Savior in the scriptures and the world around them.



Mosiah 18–22

Introduction

The final portion of Zeniff's record is found in Mosiah 18–22. Mosiah 18 is an account of Alma and his experiences at the Waters of Mormon. After Abinadi's death, Alma, the young priest of King Noah who had believed Abinadi's words, taught secretly among the people. Many followed him to the Waters of Mormon, and about two hundred were baptized.

The suffering and death of King Noah and the retribution that came upon his people are described in Mosiah 19–22. These chapters show how Abinadi's prophecies concerning King Noah were fulfilled.

Several groups of people are mentioned in these chapters. Each group had to choose between righteousness and wickedness and then face the consequences. Those who chose righteousness were blessed, and those who chose wickedness were cursed. As Alma taught, "wickedness never was happiness" (Alma 41:10), or as Paul explained, "the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life" (Romans 6:23).


Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- At baptism we covenant to keep God's commandments and support and comfort one another. In return, God promises to pour out His Spirit upon us and grant us eternal life (see Mosiah 18:7–13; see also Moroni 4:3; 6:1–6).
- Church leaders, like all Church members, should love the Lord and keep His commandments. Leaders should also encourage members to love one another, teach and serve one another, and impart of their substance to those in need (see Mosiah 18:17–30; see also Moses 7:18–21).
- The word of the Lord through His prophets will always be fulfilled (see Mosiah 19:15, 20; 20:21; 21:2–4, 15; see also Mosiah 11:23–24; 12:1–5; 17:17–18; D&C 1:37–38).
- Wickedness brings suffering. As we humbly make and keep gospel covenants and repent of our sins, the Lord can deliver us from our suffering (see Mosiah 21–22; see also 1 Nephi 1:20; Mosiah 23–24).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 65–67.

Suggestions for Teaching

 *Book of Mormon Video* presentation 11, "Stand as Witnesses," can be used in teaching Mosiah 18:1–16 (see *Book of Mormon Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

Mosiah 18. At baptism we covenant to keep God's commandments and support and comfort one another. In return, God promises to pour out His Spirit upon us and grant us eternal life. (40–45 minutes)

Arrange your classroom as in the accompanying diagram. Use tape or string to mark the different areas, and put up signs indicating the name of each area.



As students enter the room, ask them to remain in the outer section of the room (the "Land of Lehi-Nephi"). Invite them to think about what they have learned concerning the land of Lehi-Nephi and King Noah's people in their study of Mosiah 9–17. Discuss the following questions:

- What kinds of sins were common among King Noah's people?
- Read Mosiah 17:1–4. According to these verses, why did Alma flee from Noah?
- How were the sins of that day similar to the ones of today?
- What is difficult about living in a world so full of wickedness?

Invite students to imagine that the "Land of Lehi-Nephi" portion of the room represents the world. Have a student read Doctrine and Covenants 53:2; 59:8–9, and ask:

- What do these verses teach about the world?

- What can we do to forsake or stay unspotted from the wickedness of the world?

Explain that Mosiah 18 contains helpful doctrine for those who seek spiritual peace and protection from the evil influences of the world.

Have students move to the center area of the room (the “Land of Mormon”). Have them read Mosiah 18:1–7 and look for a description of both the land of Mormon and the people there. Ask:

- How do the land and people described in these verses compare with the land of Lehi-Nephi and its people?
- What is most impressive to you about the land of Mormon and these people?
- Which of these two places would you rather be in? Why?
- What are some places today where we can find beauty, peace, purity, and protection from the world’s evils?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 84:2 and ask: What are two reasons the Lord established the Church in the latter days? Invite students to imagine that the “Land of Mormon” section of the room represents the Church. Testify that the Church can provide peace, security, and help for its members. Tell students that the “Waters of Mormon” section of the room represents a door or gate that leads to membership in the Church. Read 2 Nephi 31:17–18 and look for what that gate might be.

Have students read Mosiah 18:8–10, and ask:

- What promises or covenants do we make when we are baptized?
- What is significant to you about these covenants?
- How do you think these covenants can help you endure the wickedness of the world?
- What promises does the Lord give in return?
- How have the Lord’s promises blessed your life?
- Why are the blessings of being in God’s fold worth the sacrifices they require?

Read Mosiah 18:11–17 and invite students to mark the words that show how the people felt at their baptism. Discuss the words the students marked.

Write the following chart on the board (leave the right-hand column blank).

Some Blessings of Church Membership (Mosiah 18)

Members are taught correct doctrine.	v. 19
They are taught about faith and repentance.	v. 20
They are surrounded by people who love them.	v. 21
They become children of God.	v. 22
They learn the gospel by attending weekly meetings.	v. 25
Priests receive the Spirit and a knowledge of God.	v. 26
The poor receive help through the gifts of members.	vv. 27–28

Invite students to read Mosiah 18:19–28 and identify the verse that describes each benefit listed on the board. Ask students if they believe that those same benefits come to Church members today. Ask: How is the Church like a refuge or oasis from the world?

Invite students to share times they have been blessed in the ways listed on the board. Testify of the great blessings and responsibilities we have as members of God’s true Church. Read Mosiah 18:29–30 and encourage students to make their home, ward, or branch like the Waters of Mormon—a place of beauty, love, peace, prosperity, and protection where the gospel is taught and lived.

Mosiah 19:1–21:15. The word of the Lord through His prophets will always be fulfilled. (30–40 minutes)

Write each of the following twelve events on a separate piece of paper, and tape the papers on the board in random order:

- King Noah is almost killed by Gideon.
- King Noah’s people flee from the Lamanites.
- The Lamanites enslave King Noah’s people.
- Limhi takes charge.
- King Noah is killed.
- King Noah’s wicked priests hide in the wilderness.
- There is peace in the land of Lehi-Nephi.
- Lamanite daughters dance.
- The Lamanites attack Limhi’s people.
- Gideon saves the day.
- The Lamanites spare Limhi’s people.
- Limhi’s people are enslaved.

Assign each student one of the following persons or groups:

- King Noah (Mosiah 19:1–12, 20–21)
- Gideon (Mosiah 19:4–8, 18–24; 20:17–22)
- Noah’s people (Mosiah 19:9–12)
- Lamanite soldiers (Mosiah 19:6, 14–15; 20:7–11, 24–26)
- Fair daughters of the Nephites (Mosiah 19:13–15)
- King Limhi (Mosiah 19:16–17, 26–29; 20:8–26)
- Wicked priests (Mosiah 19:18, 21, 23; 20:3–5, 18–23)
- Singing and dancing Lamanite daughters (Mosiah 20:1–6, 15, 18, 23)
- Lamanite king (Mosiah 20:12–15, 23–26)
- King Limhi’s people (Mosiah 21:1–13)

Have students read the chapter headings for Mosiah 19–21 and then read the verses in parentheses for the person or group they were assigned. When they finish, as a class arrange the twelve papers in the correct order on the board. Invite ten students (one for each of the assigned scripture blocks) to share what they think is the most important lesson they learned from the person or group they studied and how that lesson could be applied to us today.

Read Mosiah 11:20–21; 12:1–5; 17:14–18, and ask:

- What do these prophecies from Abinadi have in common?
- How does Mosiah 19–21 relate to these prophecies? (The prophecies were fulfilled in these chapters.)
- What does that teach you about the words of the prophets? (Prophetic words will always be fulfilled.)
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 1:37–38. How do these verses support this truth?

Testify of the importance of following the prophets. Share the following statement by Elder Robert D. Hales:

“I give my testimony that the prophets of this day have the qualities of the prophets of old and the other prophets of this dispensation. . . .

“We declare with soberness, and yet with the authority of God in us vested, that we have a prophet today. The President of the Church, as a prophet, is God’s representative on earth and is appointed to lead His church. . . .

“. . . Our spiritual safety lies in turning to the clear voice of our living prophet. If we listen to his voice and obey his counsel, we will be able to live as Christ would have us live and endure to the end so that one day we, along with our families, will return back into the presence of our Heavenly Father and our Savior, Jesus Christ” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 20–21; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 17).



Mosiah 21–24. Wickedness brings suffering. As we humbly make and keep gospel covenants and repent of our sins, the Lord can deliver us from our suffering. (45–55 minutes)

Note: This teaching suggestion covers material from both this scripture block (Mosiah 18–22) and the one following (Mosiah 23–24).

Have students imagine that they were each given a camera and the assignment to take a picture that portrayed one of the following words: *captivity*, *suffering*, *afflictions*, *trials*, or *hardship*. (Or have them look in newspapers and magazines to find such pictures.) Discuss the following questions:

- What would you take a picture of?
- What experiences have you or someone you know had that would portray these words?
- Were these challenges a blessing or a curse to you? Why?
- How can the Lord help you overcome your challenges?
- What must you do to receive His help?

Share the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson about those who wrote the Book of Mormon:

“If they saw our day and chose those things which would be of greatest worth to us, is not that how we should study the Book of Mormon? We should constantly ask ourselves, ‘Why did the Lord inspire Mormon (or Moroni or Alma) to include that in his record? What lesson can I learn from that to help me live in this day and age?’” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 5; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 6).

Tell students that following the death of Abinadi, the people of King Noah divided into two colonies. One was led by King Limhi (Mosiah 19–22) and the other by Alma (Mosiah 18; 24–25). The stories of these two groups provide an interesting comparison of how the Lord deals with His children. They also provide important answers to help us deal with our challenges.

Give students copies of the following chart as a handout. Leave the “People of Limhi” and the “People of Alma” columns blank except for the scripture references given in italics. Assign the first group to complete the handout for Limhi’s people, and the other group to do the same for Alma’s people.

Questions	People of Limhi	People of Alma
What were the people like?	<p><i>(Mosiah 19:2–20)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They were divided (see v. 2). • They were contentious (see v. 3). • They fled before the Lamanites (see v. 9). • They abandoned their families (see v. 11). • They had their daughters plead for them (see v. 13). • They killed the king (see v. 20). 	<p><i>(Mosiah 18:3–21)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They believed Alma (see v. 3). • They traveled to hear the gospel (see v. 4). • They endured risk (see vv. 4, 6). • They were taught to repent and have faith in the Lord (see v. 7). • They covenanted with God (see vv. 8–11). • They were filled with grace (see v. 16). • They were taught not to contend but to love one another (see v. 21).
What happened to them, and how did they react?	<p><i>(Mosiah 19:22–20:22)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They were brought into captivity and paid a 50 percent tribute (see 19:22). • They lived peacefully in bondage for two years (see 19:29). • The Lamanites attacked them (see 20:7). • They fought back (see 20:8–11). • They accepted bondage (see 20:22). 	<p><i>(Mosiah 23:2–37)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Lord strengthened them (see v. 2). • They built a city (see vv. 5, 20). • They prospered exceedingly (see vv. 19–20). • The Lamanites found them (see v. 25). • They cried to the Lord (see v. 28). • They surrendered and accepted bondage (see vv. 29, 36–37).
What were the conditions of their bondage?	<p><i>(Mosiah 21:3–6)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Lamanites smote them on the cheeks (see v. 3). • They exercised authority over them (see v. 3). • They gave them heavy burdens and drove them like animals (see v. 3). 	<p><i>(Mosiah 24:8–14)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amulon persecuted them (see v. 8). • He exercised authority over them and gave them taskmasters (see v. 9). • Their afflictions were great (see v. 10). • They were threatened with death (see v. 12). • They had burdens on their backs (see v. 14).
How did they respond to this bondage?	<p><i>(Mosiah 21:7–14, 25–26)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They began to murmur (see v. 6). • They went to war and were defeated three times (see vv. 7–12). • They were compelled to be humble (see vv. 13–14). • They accepted their bondage and abuse (see v. 13). • They cried mightily to the Lord (see v. 14). • They sent for help (see vv. 25–26). 	<p><i>(Mosiah 24:10–16)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They cried mightily to God (see v. 10). • They prayed in their hearts (see v. 12). • They submitted cheerfully (see v. 15). • They showed faith and patience (see v. 16).

What was the result of their response?	<p><i>(Mosiah 21:15–22:16)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Lord was slow to hear them (see 21:15). • The Lord softened the hearts of their enemies, who eased their burdens (see 21:15). • They were not delivered at first (see 21:15). • They prospered by degrees (see 21:16). • They helped others (see 21:17). • They covenanted to serve God (see 21:31). • They gave wine to the Lamanite guards, who then fell sleep (see 22:7, 10). • They escaped (see 22:11). 	<p><i>(Mosiah 24:13–25)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Lord spoke to them (see v. 13). • He promised to deliver them (see v. 13). • He eased their burdens and strengthened them (see vv. 14–15). • He promised to deliver them “on the morrow” (v. 16). • He caused a deep sleep to come upon the guards (see v. 19). • They escaped (see v. 20).
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When students have finished working through the chart, discuss their findings. Invite both groups to compare and contrast what they learned about Limhi’s people and Alma’s people. Discuss the following questions:

- What are some struggles or difficulties we face today that could be compared to the bondage that Limhi’s or Alma’s people faced?
- What can we learn from these groups about facing our challenges?
- In what ways do you believe the Lord will help deliver you from your trials and struggles?
- What is the most important lesson you learned from studying these two accounts?

Invite students to read Alma 32:13, 16, and ask: Which of these verses best describes Limhi’s people? Alma’s people? Ask the students to consider which verse best describes them and why. Ask: How can we voluntarily be more humble before the Lord?



Introduction

Mosiah 23–24 continues the account of Alma and his people (see Mosiah 18). After escaping from King Noah and

organizing the Church at the Waters of Mormon, these faithful Saints were brought into captivity by a group of Lamanites. Because of their faith and righteousness, the Lord delivered them from their enemies, and they were able to unite with the Nephites in Zarahemla.

These chapters, like much of the book of Mosiah, emphasize the theme of deliverance from trials and suffering. King Benjamin spoke of spiritual deliverance through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Limhi's people, whose decisions brought them into physical bondage, were delivered after humbly submitting to the Lord's will. Alma's people were also delivered from physical bondage, through their continued faith and obedience. They cried to the Lord, and He heard and answered their prayers. Whether the trials we face are physical or spiritual, whether they are the result of our own decisions or of living in a fallen world, we can learn from Alma's example where to look for deliverance.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- When a government has leaders who are elected by the people, the people share the responsibility for the good and bad in that society (see Mosiah 23:6–13; see also Mosiah 29:8–32).
- To be authorized to preach the gospel and administer its ordinances, a man must be called of God by prophecy and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority (see Mosiah 23:14–18; see also Mosiah 18:13, 17–20; Articles of Faith 1:5).
- Our Father in Heaven is concerned with our growth. Sometimes He strengthens us so we can endure our trials. Other times He takes away our burdens (see Mosiah 23:21–24:25; see also Mosiah 21:15–16).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 66–67.

Suggestions for Teaching

Mosiah 23:6–14. When the government has leaders who are elected by the people, the people share the responsibility for the good and bad in that society. (15–20 minutes)

Tell students that today they will have the opportunity to vote for the person they would most like to be their leader. Their vote must be for one of two people: King Benjamin or King Noah. Choose two volunteers to act as “campaign managers” for the candidates. Invite the first volunteer to give a short speech to try to convince the class to vote for King Benjamin. Have the student include Mosiah 2:10–16 as

part of the speech. Invite the second volunteer to give a speech in favor of King Noah, quoting from Mosiah 11:1–9. Ask the class:

- If you had the opportunity, which of these two men would you select as your leader? Why?
- What qualities do you think are important for leaders to have?
- What dangers exist when a leader is wicked?
- What responsibilities do people have when selecting a leader?
- Why are the people who elect leaders partly responsible for the good or bad that happens in their society?

Tell students that Alma's people wanted him to be king because of their great love for him (see Mosiah 23:6). However, Alma had concerns about kings ruling the people. Read Mosiah 23:6–14 and ask what cautions Alma gave about selecting a leader. Tell students that in the scriptures we read of times when people were led by kings and other times when they were not. Read again Mosiah 23:8, 14 and help students understand that when we have the opportunity to choose our leaders, it is important for us to choose righteous people.

Have students read Moses 7:53 looking for which king is referred to in that verse. Ask:

- How can Jesus Christ be considered a king?
- What traits does the Savior have that would be good for earthly leaders to have?
- How can we show support and love for our Heavenly King?
- When Jesus Christ reigns personally on the earth during the Millennium, how do you imagine life will be different?
- How does Mosiah 23:8 apply to Jesus Christ being our King?

Share the following testimony from President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“Jesus Christ [is] the Son of God, who by His matchless and eternal power overcame death. He is the Redeemer of the world. He gave His life for each of us. He took it up again and became the firstfruits of them that slept. He, as King of Kings, stands triumphant above all other kings. He, as the Omnipotent One, stands above all rulers. He is our comfort, our only true comfort, when the dark shroud of earthly night closes about us as the spirit departs the human form. . . .

“He is our King, our Lord, our Master, the living Christ, who stands on the right hand of His Father. He lives! He lives, resplendent and wonderful, the living Son of the living God” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 92; or *Ensign*, May 1996, 67).

Mosiah 23:14–18. To be authorized to preach the gospel and administer its ordinances, a man must be called of God by prophecy and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority. (20–25 minutes)

Show students a chain or draw one on the board. Tell them it is a “chain of authority,” and ask them to imagine that the first link represents the Lord and the final link represents our prophet today. Explain that the current prophet was set apart by the Apostles and that they were ordained by other Apostles going back through Peter, James, and John to Jesus Christ. Discuss the following questions:

- Why is it important for the chain of authority to extend from Jesus Christ to the prophet?
- What would happen if this chain of authority were broken?
- Why is it essential for all priesthood holders to be called by proper authority?

Invite students to open their scriptures to the Articles of Faith. Ask which article of faith best summarizes what you have been discussing.

Invite students to divide the fifth article of faith into phrases that describe principles related to priesthood calls in our day (for example “called of God”), and write their answers on the board. Explain that these same principles were followed in the Book of Mormon. Have students study Mosiah 18:13; 23:16–18 and list phrases that describe these principles (for example “from God” [23:17]). Ask: Why do you think these principles are found also in the Book of Mormon?

Consider having an Aaronic Priesthood holder in the class give a presentation on the priesthood and how that authority continues in the Church today. Testify of the importance of the priesthood, and help students understand that God’s authority is found only within His Church. Conclude by reading the following statement by President Joseph Fielding Smith, who was then a member of the First Presidency:

“Priesthood is a part of God’s own power that he bestows upon his chosen servants, that they may act in his name in proclaiming the gospel and officiating in all the ordinances thereof. . . .

“Man cannot act legally in the name of the Lord unless he is vested with the priesthood, which is divine authority. No man has the power or the right to take this honor to himself. . . . Should he do so, his act is not valid or recognized in the heavens. . . .

“The question of priesthood, or divine authority, is a vital one, since it concerns the salvation of each of us. It is impossible for a man to enter the kingdom of

God without complying with the laws of that kingdom. Only authorized officers may properly officiate in rites and ceremonies of his kingdom. No man has the right to assume the authority and officiate without being ordained to the ministry. To do so is an unauthorized and illegal act” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1966, 83–84).



Introduction

Mosiah 25–29 is a record of what happened in Zarahemla from approximately 120 to 91 B.C. The people of Zeniff’s colony, including Limhi’s people and Alma’s followers, had returned to Zarahemla and were united safely under King Mosiah’s rule. This was a time of peace and prosperity, even though many members of the Church were led into sin by unbelievers.

King Mosiah ruled the people in righteousness. During the final years of his life, many important events transpired that helped to bless and protect his people even after his death: (1) Mosiah gave Alma the Elder the authority to organize the Church in Zarahemla; (2) Mosiah enacted laws to help believers and unbelievers live together in peace; (3) Alma the Younger and the sons of Mosiah were converted miraculously and dedicated their lives to God’s service; (4) Mosiah translated the Jaredite records by means of the interpreters (the Urim and Thummim); (5) Mosiah gave Alma the Younger charge of the brass plates and the other religious records and artifacts, and commanded him to continue the record of God’s people; (6) Mosiah proposed that judges, instead of kings, rule the people, and the people agreed; and (7) Alma the Younger served as high priest over the Church and as the first chief judge.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Scripture reading can fill us with joy, thankfulness, and sorrow for sin (see Mosiah 25:4–12; see also Joshua 1:8; 2 Timothy 3:15–17).

- Those who repent, keep their covenants, and endure faithfully are blessed temporally and spiritually and can inherit eternal life (see Mosiah 25:17–24; 26:15–24; see also D&C 14:7).
- Those who do not believe true doctrine, who do not follow the Lord, and who do not call upon His name separate themselves from the Lord and His blessings (see Mosiah 26:1–6, 25–32; see also Deuteronomy 28:1–6, 15–19).
- Receiving personal revelation often requires great spiritual effort (see Mosiah 26:7–14; see also Enos 1:1–6; Official Declaration 2; Joseph Smith—History 1:10–16).
- An excommunicated person loses membership in the Church (see Mosiah 26:29–36; see also 3 Nephi 18:31; D&C 134:10).
- To repent we must confess, feel sorrow, forsake the sin, make restitution, forgive others, and have a change of heart. Repentance brings spiritual rebirth and the joy of the Lord’s forgiveness (see Mosiah 27:11–37; see also Alma 36:6–26).
- Having a testimony of Jesus Christ, a love for others, and a desire for their eternal welfare can motivate disciples of Jesus Christ to serve missions (see Mosiah 28:1–9; see also D&C 4:1–7).
- One who has possession of the Urim and Thummim is called a seer (see Mosiah 28:10–16; see also Mosiah 8:13–17; D&C 107:91–92; Joseph Smith—History 1:35).
- Leaders have the responsibility to make righteous judgments and serve in accordance with the laws of God (see Mosiah 29:11–44; see also Jarom 1:7, 11–12; D&C 107:99).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 68–70.

Suggestions for Teaching

Mosiah 25. Church members strengthen each other as they gather together to listen to the prophets declare the word of God. (25–30 minutes)

Tell students that members of the Church often make great sacrifices to attend conferences where a prophet or apostle will be speaking. Share the following account by Elder M. Russell Ballard, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, or invite students to share a similar account they may be aware of:

“I was assigned to preside over a regional conference in La Paz, Bolivia. Some members came from small towns and villages far away, showing great sacrifice and commitment to attend the meetings. Prior to the

priesthood leadership training session, I greeted the brethren as they gathered. I noticed that one older brother’s shirt was a different color from the middle of his chest down; the upper portion was white, while the lower part was brownish-red. He and three of his companions, all Melchizedek Priesthood holders, had traveled for many hours, walking most of the way and fording two rivers where the brownish-red water came up to their chests. They had flagged down a truck and stood in the back of it for the last two hours of their journey.

“Their sacrifice and their attitude about it made me feel extremely humble. One of these faithful men said to me: ‘Elder Ballard, you are one of the Lord’s Apostles. My brethren and I would do whatever was required to be taught by you.’” (“The Law of Sacrifice,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1998, 11–12).

Discuss the following questions:

- What motivates people to make these kinds of sacrifices?
- What blessings can come when members of the Church gather together? (see D&C 6:32).

Invite students to read Mosiah 25:1–4 and ask:

- Who gathered together for this special meeting?
- How long had it been since the people of Zarahemla had been united with the people of Limhi and Alma? (About eighty years; see the footnotes for Mosiah 9:1; 24:25.)
- What do you imagine it was like for these people to be reunited in this special meeting?

Tell students that this meeting in Zarahemla can be compared to general conference today. Have the class do activity A for Mosiah 25 in the student study guide. When they finish, correct and discuss their answers.

Mosiah 26. Receiving personal revelation sometimes requires great spiritual effort. (35–40 minutes)

Write the following questions on the board, and discuss them as a class:

- What is the most difficult problem young people face?
- What is the most difficult problem you believe parents face?
- What would you guess is the most difficult problem the prophet faces?

Tell students that while it is important to identify our problems, it is more important to solve them. Discuss the following questions:

- What is the first step you take when trying to solve your problems?
- What other steps do you take?
- What have your parents or the prophets taught you about solving problems?

Read the following statements and discuss how they apply to solving problems. President Marion G. Romney said:

“The major reason for the world’s troubles today is that men are not seeking to know the will of the Lord and then to do it. Rather do they seek to solve their problems in their own wisdom and in their own way. The Lord, in the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants, . . . pointed this out and marked it as one of the causes of the calamities which he foresaw coming upon the inhabitants of the earth. Listen to this ringing declaration:

“They have strayed from mine ordinances, and have broken mine everlasting covenant;

“They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way’ (D&C 1:15–16)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1983, 22; or *Ensign*, May 1983, 17–18).

Elder Harold B. Lee, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, said:

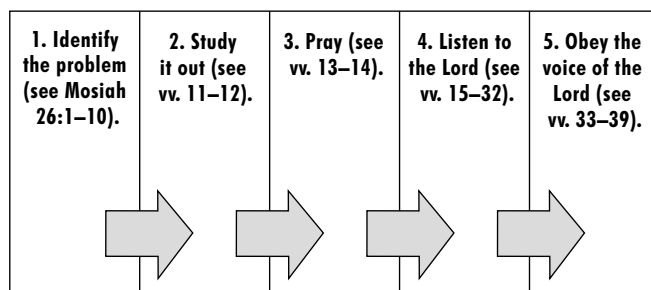
“If you want the blessing, don’t just kneel down and pray about it. Prepare yourselves in every conceivable way you can in order to make yourselves worthy to receive the blessings you seek” (*The Teachings of Harold B. Lee* [1996], 129).

Later, as President of the Church, President Lee said:

“The most important thing you can do is to learn to talk to God. Talk to Him as you would talk to your father, for He is your Father, and He wants you to talk to Him. He wants you to cultivate ears to listen, when He gives you the impressions of the Spirit to tell you what to do. If you learn to give heed to the sudden ideas which come to your minds, you will find those things coming through in the very hour of your need. If you will cultivate an ear to hear these promptings, you will have learned to walk by the spirit of revelation” (*Teachings*, 130).

Discuss the following saying with students: “Pray as if everything depended on the Lord, and then work as if everything depended on you.”

Draw the accompanying diagram on the board. Tell students that this pattern for solving problems is used in Mosiah 26.



Invite students to read Mosiah 26:1–10, and discuss the following questions:

- What problem did Alma face?
- What caused the wickedness in the rising generation?
- What did Alma feel as a result of this problem?
- What causes similar problems in our day?
- How concerned do you think parents and priesthood leaders are about these problems? Why?

Read verses 11–12 and ask:

- What did Alma do to try to solve this problem?
- Why might it have been helpful to consult with Mosiah?
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 9:7–8. How do these verses relate to Alma’s action?

Ask a student to read the following statement by Elder Mark E. Petersen, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Let us not suppose that a few feeble prayers will be sufficient to call down [God’s] aid. It will take more than halfhearted supplications to save us” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1968, 62).

Read Mosiah 26:13–14, and ask:

- What words in these verses show that Alma’s prayer was more than just “halfhearted”?
- Why must we pray with our whole soul in order to receive answers that help us solve our problems?

Invite students to mark the word *blessed* each time it occurs in Mosiah 26:15–19. Explain that the Lord gave comfort and assurance to Alma in answer to his pleadings. Testify that He will do the same for us as we ask Him for help with our problems. Read Mosiah 26:20–21 and look for the great blessing Alma was given.

Have students quickly read Mosiah 26:22–32 looking for the Lord’s instructions to Alma concerning this problem. Ask:

- What did the Lord ask Alma to do with the unbelievers?
- What were His instructions concerning those who repented?
- Why is the doctrine taught in verse 30 so important to know and believe?

Have students look for words or phrases in Mosiah 26:33–39 that show Alma followed the Lord’s counsel. Discuss their findings.

Share an appropriate example of a time the Lord inspired you in solving a problem, or invite a student to do so. Encourage the students to follow this pattern when they face difficulties in their lives.



Mosiah 27. To repent we must confess, feel sorrow, forsake the sin, make restitution, forgive others, and have a change of heart. Repentance brings spiritual rebirth and the joy of the Lord’s forgiveness. (50–60 minutes)

Use the following analogies or some of your own, and ask how each analogy relates to repentance:

- Show one dirty and one clean dish or cloth. (Repentance is a cleansing process.)
- Show two strings or ropes, one of which is tied into many knots. (Repentance helps “undo” our mistakes.)

Invite students to think of other analogies for repentance, and discuss them as a class. Read Mosiah 27:25–29 and ask:

- What do these verses teach about repentance?
- What words are used to describe this process?
- Why is everyone in need of some change or redemption? (Because everyone sins.)
- What do you think it means to become “new creatures”? (v. 26).

Tell students that we can learn much about repentance from Alma the Younger’s experience recorded in Mosiah 27. For most of us the process of repentance is not so dramatic, but the principles of repentance in Alma’s experience apply to each of us.

Write on the board the headings *Alma Before* and *Alma After*. Have students read Mosiah 27:8–12 looking for words that describe what Alma was like before he repented, and list them on the board under *Alma Before*. Ask:

- What part of this description stands out the most to you? Why?

- Which of these behaviors is common among people today?

Read Mosiah 27:32–37 looking for the changes that took place in Alma. List what students discover on the board under *Alma After*. Discuss the following questions:

- What impresses you most about Alma at this time in his life?
- How do you think Alma’s joy after he repented compared to the misery he felt before? (see vv. 28–29).
- Do you believe this kind of change can occur in people today? Why or why not?

Read Mosiah 27:24, 28 and invite students to mark the words *repented* and *repenting*. Testify that this change can only come into people’s lives as they repent and apply the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

Share the following principles of repentance with students. Read the accompanying statements by Elder Neal A. Maxwell and discuss the questions that follow to help students understand that Alma’s repentance was based on the same principles that apply to us.

Each of us has need to repent

“Repentance [is] one of the most vital and merciful doctrines of the kingdom. It is too little understood, too little applied by us all. . . . Personal repentance is part of taking up the cross daily (see Luke 9:23). Without it, clearly there could be no ‘perfecting of the Saints’ (Ephesians 4:12). . . .

“Repentance is a rescuing, not a dour doctrine. It is available to the gross sinner as well as to the already good individual striving for incremental improvement. . . .

“Real repentance involves not a mechanical checklist but a [reining in] of the natural self. Often overlapping and mutually reinforcing, each portion of the process of repentance is essential. This process rests on inner resolve but is much aided by external support.”

- Read Mosiah 27:11–17. What part did the prayers of Alma’s father and the people play in helping Alma?
- Who came to Alma to call him to repentance?
- How is the message of repentance given to us? (Prophets, scriptures, the Holy Ghost.)

We must recognize what is wrong

“There can be no repentance without *recognition* of wrong. Whether by provocation, introspection, or wrenching remembrance, denial must be dissolved. As with the prodigal son who finally ‘came to himself’ (Luke 15:17), the first rays of recognition help us begin to see ‘things as they really are’ (Jacob 4:13). . . . Recognition is a sacred moment, often accompanied by the hot blush of shame.”

- Read Alma 36:12–13. What phrases show that Alma recognized the seriousness of his sin?
- Why do you think it is important to recognize when we have sinned?

We must feel godly sorrow

“After recognition, real *remorse* floods the soul. This is a ‘godly sorrow,’ not merely the ‘sorrow of the world’ nor the ‘sorrowing of the damned’ when we can no longer ‘take happiness in sin’ (see 2 Corinthians 7:10; Mormon 2:13). . . .

“There can be no real repentance without personal suffering and the passage of sufficient time for the needed cleansing and turning. This is much more than merely waiting until feelings of remorse subside. . . .

“Real remorse quickly brings forth positive indicators, ‘fruits meet for repentance’ (Matthew 3:8; see also Acts 26:20; Alma 5:54). In process of time, these fruits bud, blossom, and ripen.”

- Read Mosiah 27:28; Alma 36:12–17. Why do you think remorse, or godly sorrow, is necessary for repentance?

We must confess our sins

“True repentance also includes *confession*. . . . As confession lets the sickening sin empty out, then the Spirit which withdrew returns to renew. . . .

“All sins are to be confessed to the Lord, some to a Church official, some to others, and some to all of these. A few may require public confession. Confessing aids forsaking. We cannot expect to sin publicly and extensively and then expect to be rescued privately and quickly, being beaten with only a few stripes (see D&C 42:88–93).”

- Read Mosiah 27:35. To whom did Alma confess his sins?

- How do you think his confessions helped the people he had injured?
- What blessings do you believe come as a result of appropriately confessing our sins?

We must forsake our sins

“In real repentance, there is the actual *forsaking* of sinning. ‘Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin’ (Ezekiel 18:30). . . .

“Thus, when ‘a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them’ (D&C 58:43).

“Genuine support and love from others—not isolation—are needed to sustain this painful forsaking and turning!”

- Read Alma 36:23–25. What evidence shows that Alma forsook his sins?
- How easy do you think it is to forsake sins? Why?
- How can we develop the power to forsake our sins?

We must make restitution where possible

“*Restitution* is required too.

“‘Because he hath sinned, . . . he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found’ (Leviticus 6:4).

“Sometimes, however, restitution is not possible in real terms, such as when one contributed to another’s loss of faith or virtue. Instead, a subsequent example of righteousness provides a compensatory form of restitution.”

- Read Mosiah 27:35. What does the word *restitution* mean?
- What did Alma do to make restitution for his sins?

Great blessings follow repentance

“As we do repent, however, special assurances await:

“Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool’ (Isaiah 1:18).

“All his transgressions . . . shall not be mentioned unto him’ (Ezekiel 18:22).

“I, the Lord, remember [their sins] no more’! (D&C 58:42).

“Along with all the foregoing reasons for our individual repentance, Church members have a special rendezvous to keep, brothers and sisters. Nephi saw it. One future day, he said, Jesus’ covenant people, ‘scattered upon all the face of the earth,’ will be ‘armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory’ (1 Nephi 14:14). This will happen, but only after more members become more saintly and more consecrated in conduct” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1991, 39–41, 43; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 30–32).

- Read Mosiah 27:29–31; Alma 36:19–21. How did Alma describe the joy that comes from repentance?

Explain that following these principles of repentance does not bring forgiveness of itself but puts a person in a position to obtain forgiveness from the Lord. Actual forgiveness is given by the Lord and allows a person to feel peace.

Invite students to share experiences that show that this joy is possible for each of us. Sing “Come unto Jesus” (*Hymns*, no. 117). Encourage students to turn to the Lord and repent of their sins.

Mosiah 28:1–9. Having a testimony of Jesus Christ, a love for others, and a desire for their eternal welfare can motivate disciples of Jesus Christ to serve missions. (20–25 minutes)

Ask: What reasons might prospective missionaries give for wanting to serve a mission? List responses on the board. These might include:

- “I want to strengthen my testimony and think this will be a great way to draw closer to the Savior.”
- “I believe a mission will prepare me for life’s challenges, including education, employment, and family life.”
- “It is a commandment, and I believe in keeping the commandments.”
- “I love the Savior and want to share His gospel.”
- “All of my friends have gone, and they say they are having a great time. I think it will be a really fun experience, even if it is difficult.”

Discuss the reasons listed, asking questions such as the following:

- How did you feel about each of the reasons listed for serving a mission?
- What do you believe ought to motivate a missionary to serve?

Invite students to read Mosiah 28:1–3 and mark the reasons the sons of Mosiah wanted to serve a mission. Ask:

- How do their reasons compare to those on the board?
- What difference do you think it would make for a missionary to have that kind of motivation?

Read the following statement by Elder David B. Haight, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“To serve the Lord as a full-time missionary is a privilege; the primary purpose of full-time missionary service is the building up of the kingdom of God. And the Lord needs His best. Young men and young women who respond to the call must be prepared for the most rigorous challenge of their young lives—prepared spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, and physically.

“Although our missionaries are strengthened, elevated, and magnified by their service, that is not their primary purpose, and neither they nor their families nor their leaders should regard a mission as the solution to unresolved problems. The Lord needs our best; He needs those who can run, not just walk—but to run physically and spiritually—those who can wield eternal influence with purity and strength and conviction” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 82–83; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 62).

Read Mosiah 28:5–9 looking for what happened to the sons of Mosiah. Discuss the following questions:

- Who called the sons of Mosiah on a mission?
- What did the Lord promise Mosiah concerning his sons?
- What do you think the sons of Mosiah sacrificed in order to serve a mission?
- What sacrifices might someone have to make to serve a mission today?

Tell students that the “account of their proceedings” referred to in verse 9 is found in the book of Alma. As they study this account they will discover that the blessings the sons of Mosiah received from serving a mission were worth the sacrifices they made.

Testify that just as in the days of the sons of Mosiah, mission calls today come through revelation from the Lord. Encourage your students to remain worthy to serve an honorable full-time mission.

Mosiah 28:10–20. One who has possession of the Urim and Thummim is called a seer. (10–15 minutes)

Write the following Hebrew phrase on the board (which means “Salvation belongeth unto the Lord”; see Psalm 3:8):

ליהוה הישועה

Invite students to imagine that the information in this sentence is necessary for their salvation. Discuss the following questions:

- How useful is this information to you if you don’t read Hebrew? Why?
- How important would it be to you to have it translated?

Tell students that the scriptures are so important that the Lord provided the means to translate them when the people have no other way to read the language they are written in. Have students search Mosiah 28:10–20 looking for answers to the following questions. (The questions could be written on the board before class.) Discuss their findings.

- What concerns did Mosiah have after his sons received their mission calls?
- What was Mosiah called because he possessed the interpreters? (see v. 16).
- What phrases in verses 12 and 19 show the importance of having scriptures translated in a language we can understand?
- What Church material is available to you in your language?
- Of what value is that material to you?
- Who did Mosiah entrust with the sacred records, the interpreters, and the other sacred relics? (see v. 20).
- What evidence can you find that Alma was qualified and worthy to receive these records?

Mosiah 29. We believe in being subject to our political leaders and obeying our nation’s laws. Leaders have the responsibility to make righteous judgments and serve in accordance with the laws of God.

(20–25 minutes)

Tell students that in chapter 29 King Mosiah wrote a proposal concerning the government and sent it among his people. Read Mosiah 29:1–4 and ask: What circumstances led to this proposal? (Mosiah was nearing death, and his sons refused to be king.)

Divide students into three groups, and assign each to learn about one of the following kinds of leaders: righteous kings, unrighteous kings, and judges. Have each group quickly read Mosiah 29:11–25, 28–36 and find what Mosiah said about the kind of leader they were assigned, and why it was important for the Nephites to change their form of government. Discuss their findings. Read Mosiah 29:37–42 and ask:

- How did the people respond to Mosiah’s words?
- How did the people feel toward Mosiah? Why? (see v. 40).
- Who was appointed the first chief judge?
- What other position did Alma the Younger occupy?

Read Mosiah 29:39 and discuss with students why having the liberty to choose their leaders would cause the Nephites to rejoice. Ask:

- What freedoms do you have?
- How do those privileges make you feel?
- How do you think life would be different if those freedoms were removed?

Share the following statement by Elder Royden G. Derrick, then a member of the Presidency of the Seventy:

“The history of the people of ancient America, recorded in the Book of Mormon, teaches that civilizations are built on moral foundations; that when people are morally strong, they do well; that when they are morally weak, they suffer. It teaches us that freedom cannot outlive morality and that freedom is not free—it must be earned” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1981, 88; or *Ensign*, May 1981, 66).

Ask students: Why do you think freedom must be earned? Discuss any examples they can think of from the Book of Mormon that show that the people prospered when they were morally strong but suffered when they were wicked. Read Mosiah 29:26–27 and ask:

- How do these verses support Elder Derrick’s statement?
- What can you do to influence other people to desire and seek what is right?
- In what ways can each of us be “anxiously engaged in a good cause”? (D&C 58:27).

Testify that agency is a vital part of Heavenly Father’s plan of happiness. Make sure students understand that the freedom to choose brings with it the responsibility for our choices. Encourage students to be a “voice” for righteousness.

THE BOOK OF ALMA

The book of Alma comes from the plates of Mormon (see A Brief Explanation about the Book of Mormon in the introductory pages of the Book of Mormon). It is an abridgment of the records of Alma the Younger and his son Helaman. The book begins with an account of the Nephite nation during a time of peace under the recently-established reign of judges. Alma the Younger was the first of these new judges and the keeper of the sacred records. The book concludes with Alma's grandson Helaman taking possession of the sacred records, and the Nephites and Lamanites at war.

Alma is the longest book in the Book of Mormon. It is also the most detailed, taking over 160 pages to cover just 38 years. The book contains numerous accounts with modern applications, such as how Alma dealt with priestcraft and apostasy in the Savior's Church (see Alma 1; 4). Alma explains details of the Atonement to the righteous people of Gideon (see Alma 7:11–13). Alma and the sons of Mosiah teach about our fallen nature and the resulting need for a Savior (see Alma 12; 18; 22). The people of Ammon, who were persecuted for keeping their covenants, provide us with an inspiring example of faithfulness (see Alma 24–25). Alma shows that preaching the word of God has a powerful ability to lead people to righteousness (see Alma 31:5). Alma sets an example for fathers by teaching the gospel to both obedient and errant children (see Alma 36–42). In the last part of the book, Captain Moroni and other wartime leaders illustrate the need to trust in Heavenly Father for deliverance (see Alma 43–63). These chapters also provide insights for the continuing war against spiritual enemies. As you study the book of Alma, look for truths that can help you and your students live the gospel in your daily lives.



Introduction

Which is more serious: an attack on one's physical safety and liberty or an assault on one's testimony of the truth? In Alma 1–4 we read of the Nephites facing assaults on both their physical and spiritual safety. Alma the Younger, as the nation's chief judge (the highest political office) and the Church's high priest (the presiding spiritual office), had

to take action to protect his people on both fronts. Look for how Alma led the faithful in overcoming both temporal and spiritual opposition.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

Note: Prayerfully study each assigned scripture block and consider the principles in this section before preparing your lessons.

- Pride and priestcraft lead to spiritual destruction (see Alma 1:2–12, 19–24). Faithfulness, patience, and humility lead to peace (see Alma 1:25–28).
- People who are humble and faithful receive strength from the Lord. His strength can help us overcome or endure any problem (see Alma 2:18–19, 27–31; see also Deuteronomy 31:6; Isaiah 40:29–31; Mosiah 24:14–15; D&C 104:78–80).
- Depending on our faithfulness, our example can be either a stepping stone or a stumbling block for others (see Alma 4:9–11; see also Proverbs 4:18–19; Matthew 5:14–16; Alma 39:11; D&C 115:5).
- Studying the word of God can help us live the gospel (see Alma 4:11–20).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 71–72.

Suggestions for Teaching

Note: Choose from the ideas in this section, or use some of your own, as you prepare to teach the assigned scripture block.

Alma 1:2–28. Pride and priestcraft lead to spiritual destruction. Faithfulness, patience, and humility lead to peace. (20–25 minutes)

Display a picture of a church building on the board. Next to the picture, place a sign with the words *Visitors Welcome. Admission \$10*. Have students read 2 Nephi 26:29 and find a word for such a requirement. (Priestcraft.) Ask them why they would never see such a sign on a building of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Write *priestcraft* on the board. Reread 2 Nephi 26:29 and ask the students to define the word. Read Alma 1:2–6 looking for elements of priestcraft that Nehor introduced among Alma's people. Students may wish to underline these elements and write a cross-reference to 2 Nephi 26:29 in the margin. Have them find other teachings of Nehor in Alma 1:2–6. Ask:

- Which of these teachings do you think made Nehor the most popular? Why?

- Which of these teachings are taught in the world today? Explain and provide examples.
- What happened to Nehor when he was successful? (see v. 6).
- Why might priestcraft lead to pride?
- How could both priestcraft and pride destroy one spiritually?

Not everyone accepted Nehor and his priestcraft. Read Alma 1:26 and look for what the righteous priests taught the people. Divide the class into three groups. Assign the first group Alma 1:3, 26; the second group Alma 1:5–6, 27; and the third group Alma 1:19–21, 25. Have each group read their assigned verses and write what they learn about those who did and did not follow the teachings of Jesus Christ (see the accompanying chart for suggested answers).

Those Who Did Not Follow the Teachings of Christ	Those Who Followed the Teachings of Christ
Alma 1:3. Nehor taught that teachers ought to be popular and that the people should support them financially.	Alma 1:26. Priests in the Church of God did not consider themselves better than their hearers. All labored for their own support.
Alma 1:5–6. People paid Nehor. He was lifted up in pride and began wearing costly apparel.	Alma 1:27. Church members shared their wealth with the poor, needy, and sick. They did not wear costly apparel.
Alma 1:19–20. Nonmembers persecuted those who belonged to the Church of God.	Alma 1:21, 25. The Church had a strict law not to persecute anyone, whether nonmember or member. Faithful members patiently bore persecution.

Not all Church members respond the same way to persecution. Read Alma 1:21–25 and look for the different responses of Church members. Read verses 26–28 looking for how the Lord blessed those who were faithful, patient, and humble. Ask:

- Why would peace be such a prized blessing for the Church during that time?
- In addition to an absence of war, what other sources of peace are there? (Harmony within our family, the Church, and our community; inner peace from a clear conscience; the presence of the Holy Ghost.)
- How would peace be a blessing in your life?
- What were Alma’s people doing that you could also do to bring more peace to your life? (see vv. 26–27).

Share the following statements about peace. Elder John Taylor, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, said:

“Peace is the gift of God. Do you want peace? Go to God. Do you want peace in your families? . . . If you do, live your religion, and the very peace of God will dwell and abide with you, for that is where peace comes from and it doesn’t dwell anywhere else” (*The Gospel Kingdom*, sel. G. Homer Durham [1943], 340–41).

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve said:

“The Lord’s promise of peace comes from knowing and living the principles of our Heavenly Father’s plan of happiness” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 32; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 24).

Add your testimony that peace will come, as it did to Alma’s people, if we humbly and patiently live the gospel.

Alma 1. The Lord will bless us as we keep the laws of the land as well as His commandments. (20–25 minutes)

Read Alma 1:1 and ask:

- Who established the laws of the land?
- What was the people’s responsibility toward the laws?

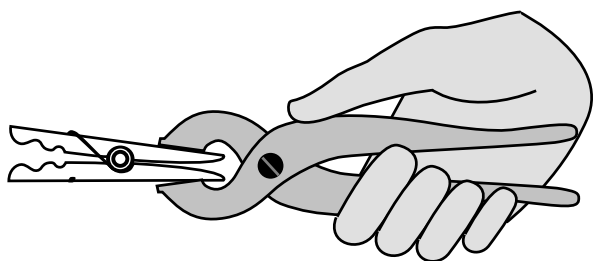
Invite students to imagine being in Alma’s situation. Show an overhead transparency of the “Alma and Nehor” activity found on page 296 of the appendix (or you could write it on the board before class). For each situation, read the question and discuss the possible answers. Then read the answer from the scriptures and discuss with students why they think Alma took the action he did.

After the activity, discuss the following questions:

- Why were Alma’s responses the best way to deal with each situation?
- What are the advantages of following the laws of the land?
- Reread verses 29–31. Why did the Lord bless the faithful Church members with riches at that time?
- Why were they so willing to share their wealth with those in need?
- How can sharing with the poor bless the giver as well as the receiver?

Testify that the Lord will bless us as we keep the laws of the land and His commandments. Explain that sometimes blessings come in the form of material wealth, while other times the Lord blesses us spiritually (see Malachi 3:10; Helaman 3:24–25). *Note:* Be sure students understand that riches are not necessarily a sign of righteousness. Both the wicked and the righteous may be poor or rich at various times.

Alma 2:1–31. If we are humble and faithful the Lord will strengthen us. He can help us overcome or endure any problems we have. (25–30 minutes)



Bring to class a pair of pliers and a clothespin with a spring clamp. Invite a student to hold the clothespin open using only her forefinger and thumb. Instruct her that when she gets tired she can ask for help, but she must still keep the clothespin open. If she asks for help, give her the pliers to keep the clothespin open.

Ask: How is the help of the pliers like the way Heavenly Father helps us? Point out that the Lord often waits for us to ask Him for things rather than giving them to us right away (see 3 Nephi 27:29). Ask:

- What qualities does asking the Lord for help develop in us?
- Why do you think Heavenly Father sometimes gives us help rather than simply removing the trial we face? (see D&C 122:7).

Invite students to watch for places in Alma 2 where Heavenly Father does not remove trials but instead strengthens His faithful Saints so they can endure.

Read with students Alma 2:1–4, 7–8. Write on the board *Alma* (Mosiah 29:43) and *Amlici* (Alma 2:4, 10). Have the class read these verses and compare Amlici to Alma. Ask: What would have happened to the Nephites if the voice of the people had chosen Amlici? To answer this question you could have students read Mosiah 29:25–27 and cross-reference it with Alma 2:7.

Have students read Alma 2:15–19, 21, 23–24, 28–31 and mark the words *strengthen* and *strengthened* each time they appear. Ask: How could the Nephites possibly defeat the large numbers of Amlicites and Lamanites? Read and cross-reference Deuteronomy 31:6 and Isaiah 40:29–31. Ask students to tell what phrases they like most from each of these Old Testament scriptures. Invite students to share times the Lord has strengthened them or a member of their family. Conclude by singing or reading “How Firm a Foundation” (*Hymns*, no. 85).

Alma 3:4, 15–18. We “mark” ourselves when we choose to follow the styles of the world. (10–15 minutes)

The day before teaching this suggestion, ask a student to wear to class a piece of clothing or a uniform that would identify the student with a sports team or a particular profession. As you begin your lesson, ask the class what clothing tells about a person. Have students read Alma 3:4, 15–18 and discuss why the Amlicites marked themselves. Read the first paragraph under “Dress and Appearance” in the pamphlet *For the Strength of Youth* ([1990], 8). Ask how both modest and immodest dress can be a “mark.” Have students suggest additional ways people mark themselves. (Answers might include jewelry, language, diet, entertainment, hairstyles.)

Have a student read this warning by Elder M. Russell Ballard:

“There is an entire subculture that celebrates contemporary gangs and their criminal conduct with music, clothing styles, language, attitudes, and behaviors. . . .

“I do not believe that you can stand for truth and right while wearing anything that is unbecoming one who holds the priesthood of God. To me, it is impossible to maintain the Spirit of the Lord while listening to music or watching movies or videos that celebrate evil thoughts and use vulgar language” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 51–53; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 38–39).

Read Matthew 5:14–16 and ask students what positive ways faithful people can “mark themselves” to bless those around them.

Alma 4:1–11. Depending on our faithfulness, our example can be either a stepping stone or a stumbling block for others. (10–15 minutes)

Set a large rock on the floor in the front of the classroom. Begin class by walking by the rock and pretending to trip. Stand on the rock to do some task that requires reaching (for example, hang a picture on the wall). Ask students if the rock is a help or a hindrance. In what ways?

Divide the class into two groups. Have the first group read Alma 4:1–5 and the second Alma 4:6–11. Have both groups look for answers to the following questions:

- Were these Church members a stepping stone or a stumbling block to those who did not belong to the Church?

- How would you describe their material wealth?
- What words describe the spiritual condition that came as a result?
- How did they treat others?
- What effect did this have on nonmembers?

Allow time for a discussion of these questions. As part of the discussion, have students compare the dates for Alma 4:1, 5 (86–85 B.C.) and Alma 4:6, 11 (84–83 B.C.). Ask: Why do you think many members of the Church changed from being stepping stones to stumbling blocks in such a short time?

Share this statement by Elder Robert D. Hales, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“No matter our circumstances, we can be an example to others, we can lift them, we can inspire them to seek righteousness, and we can bear testimony to all of the power of Jesus Christ” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 113; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 82).

The Apostle Paul taught that a young person’s life can provide a positive example. Have students read 1 Timothy 4:12 and cross-reference it with Alma 4:10. Ask students to share times a young person’s example influenced them in a positive way. You may also wish to share how the faithful lives of people you know have influenced you for good.

Alma 4:11–20. Studying the word of God can help us live the gospel. (5–10 minutes)

Read Alma 4:11–12, 15 and ask:

- What problem is described in these verses?
- What could be done to resolve this problem?

Read verses 16–18 to find what Alma was willing to give up to help his people. Have students read verse 19 and underline what Alma did to help the Church members. Ask: What benefits of preaching the word of God does Alma list? Share with students this statement by President Ezra Taft Benson:

“When individual members and families immerse themselves in the scriptures regularly and consistently, these other areas of activity will automatically come. Testimonies will increase. Commitment will be strengthened. Families will be fortified. Personal revelation will flow” (“The Power of the Word,” *Ensign*, May 1986, 81).

Invite students to tell how daily scripture study has helped them live gospel teachings.



Introduction

When the Church and the newly-formed Nephite government were threatened by internal wickedness and contention (see Alma 4:9–11), Alma knew that true reform could only come through a mighty change in the hearts of Church members. Many leaders might have attempted to alter the laws to change behavior. But Alma understood what modern prophets know: “The Lord works from the inside out. . . . The world would mold men by changing their environment. Christ changes men, who then change their environment. The world would shape human behavior, but Christ can change human nature” (Ezra Taft Benson, in Conference Report, Oct. 1985, 5; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 6).

Alma gave up his political position as chief judge and started traveling throughout the Church, calling the people to repentance. His reformation efforts began in the capital city of Zarahemla and moved to Gideon. Watch how Alma invites the wayward Church members of Zarahemla to examine their lives and experience “a mighty change.” Notice how his message changes when he speaks to the faithful Saints in Gideon.


Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Faith in God can lead to a mighty change in our heart. This spiritual rebirth cleanses us from sin and makes us more like Christ (see Alma 5:11–15, 58–62; see also Romans 6:4; Mosiah 5:1–2, 7).
- Those who teach the gospel should teach from the scriptures and the words of the prophets as led by the Spirit (see Alma 5:44–49; 6:8; see also D&C 52:9; 68:1–5).
- Jesus Christ suffered “pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind” (Alma 7:11). Because of His Atonement, He has power to resurrect us, cleanse our sins, comfort us in our trials, and give us power to become like Him (see Alma 7:7–13; see also Hebrews 2:18; 4:15; Moroni 10:32–33; D&C 62:1).
- Living gospel principles, receiving the essential ordinances, and keeping our covenants helps us to be worthy to have the Holy Ghost in our lives and keeps us on the path to eternal life (see Alma 7:14–27; see also 2 Nephi 31:19–20; D&C 14:7).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 73–74.

Suggestions for Teaching

 *Book of Mormon Video* presentation 12, “Can You Imagine?” can be used in teaching Alma 5 (see *Book of Mormon Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

Alma 5:20–48. Pure testimony is a real and powerful influence that can change lives. (35–40 minutes)

Place a large container of water where everyone can see inside it. (Teachers with large classes could place a clear container of water on an overhead projector.) Ask what will happen to the surface of the water if a pebble is dropped in the container. Drop a pebble in the water and observe the ripple effect. Discuss questions like the following:

- How is a testimony like the pebble in the object lesson?
- How can sharing our testimony change those around us?
- How does it affect us?
- What would happen if we dropped a larger pebble in the water?
- How is that like a testimony?

Read 2 Nephi 33:1; Doctrine and Covenants 100:7–8 and ask what these verses teach about sharing one’s testimony. Explain that Alma understood that bearing testimony can change the lives of others just as the pebble changed the surface of the water. Tell students that many of the Zarahemla Church members were caught up in pride, craftiness, and contentions (see Alma 4:19). Alma went among them to “preach the word of God unto them, to stir them up in remembrance of their duty.” Read Alma 4:19 and look for what else he planned to do to “reclaim them.” (“[Bear] down in pure testimony.”) Share the following statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it. But in connection with these, we believe in the gift of the Holy Ghost, the power of faith, the enjoyment of the spiritual gifts according to the will of God, the restoration of the house of Israel, and the final triumph of truth” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 121).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, then a member of the Seventy, wrote:

“To bear one’s testimony is to make a solemn declaration, affirmation or attestation that personal revelation has been received certifying to the truth of those realities which comprise a testimony” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [1966], 786).

Alma used the power of his testimony of the Savior to reclaim Church members who had strayed. Have your students read the scriptures in the accompanying chart looking for what Alma taught in each set of verses:

Alma 5:20–21	Only those who are cleansed by Jesus Christ will be saved.
Alma 5:22–25	Those who are guilty of wickedness cannot have a place in the kingdom of heaven.
Alma 5:28–29	Those who are proud are not ready for the kingdom of God.
Alma 5:30–31	Those who mock or persecute others need to repent.
Alma 5:38–39	Those who are not of the fold of Christ have the devil as their shepherd.
Alma 5:40–41	Those who bring forth good works listen to the Good Shepherd.
Alma 5:48	Jesus Christ will come and take away the sins of those who believe in Him.

Ask:

- How does each of these teachings relate to the Atonement of Jesus Christ?
- How did Alma obtain his testimony?

Read Alma 5:44–46 looking for sources of Alma’s knowledge, and list them on the board. The list might look something like this:

Alma 5:44

- He spoke with priesthood authority (“according to the holy order of God”).
- He had been taught by other men of God.

Alma 5:45

- He had personal knowledge of what he taught.

Alma 5:46

- He had fasted and prayed many days.
- The Lord gave him knowledge by His Holy Spirit.

Ask students which of the sources of knowledge mentioned in verses 44–46 are available to them. Tell them that testimony can and should be a part of our lives. Explain that testimonies

do change lives, our own and those of people around us. Read the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley:



“Personal testimony is the factor which turns people around in their living. . . . This is the element which motivates the membership to forsake all in the service of the Lord. . . .

“. . . This testimony which is carried in the hearts of our people motivates to an impelling duty. . . . It impels to action. It demands that we do what we are asked to do” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 90; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 69–70).

Encourage students to gain or strengthen their testimony by praying, fasting, and searching the words of the prophets and apostles. You may wish to invite students to share how the testimonies of others have made a difference in their lives, or ask for volunteers to share their own testimonies.

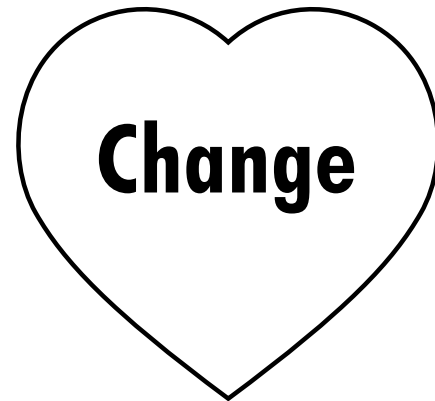


Alma 5. Faith in God can lead to a mighty change in our hearts. This spiritual rebirth cleanses us from sin and makes us more like Christ.
(35–40 minutes)

Show students an egg. Write the following questions on the board and discuss them as a class:

- What does a fertilized egg have the potential to become?
- How different is the end product from the egg?
- What importance do outside conditions have in bringing about this change?
- How much time is necessary for this change to take place?

Draw an outline of a heart on the board. Write *change* in the heart as illustrated:



Write the following questions under the illustration and discuss them as a class:

- What does this illustration represent? (see Mosiah 5:2).
- How does this change affect people?
- What people in the scriptures experienced a change of heart? (Answers might include Enos, Alma the Younger, King Lamoni.)

Explain that Alma 5 also speaks of a mighty change of heart. Add these questions to the board and read Alma 5:4–14 to find the answers:

- In what two ways were Alma the Elder and his followers delivered? (see vv. 4–6).
- Who changed their hearts? (see v. 7).
- On what conditions were they saved? (see vv. 10–13).
- How might the message of verse 14 be considered the central message of this entire passage of scripture?

Some students may feel that they have not experienced a spiritual rebirth because they haven't seen a dramatic change in their lives. Ask: Is a change of heart an event or a process? Share the following caution by President Ezra Taft Benson:

“The scriptures record remarkable accounts of men whose lives changed dramatically, in an instant, as it were: Alma the Younger, Paul on the road to Damascus, Enos praying far into the night, King Lamoni. Such astonishing examples of the power to change even those steeped in sin can give confidence that the Atonement can reach even those deepest in despair.

“But we must be cautious as we discuss these remarkable examples. Though they are real and powerful, they are the exception more than the rule.

For every Paul, for every Enos, and for every King Lamoni, there are hundreds and thousands of people who find the process of repentance much more subtle, much more imperceptible. Day by day they move closer to the Lord, little realizing that they are building a godlike life. They live quiet lives of goodness, service, and commitment. They are like the Lamanites, who the Lord said ‘were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost, *and they knew it not.*’ (3 Ne. 9:20; italics added.)” (“A Mighty Change of Heart,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1989, 5).

Have students scan Alma 5:6–30 and circle all the question marks they can find. Explain that Alma poses several questions that can help us build the kind of godlike life mentioned by President Benson. Have students read verses 15, 19, 26–28, 53–55 (or choose some of your own from the chapter). Invite them to underline the questions they feel would best help them evaluate their spiritual progress. Have them copy the questions on a piece of paper and write why they find those questions helpful.

Read Alma 5:58–62 as a class. Point out that as we are willing and patient, Jesus Christ can care for us and change our nature. Give students copies of the following statement by Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, as a handout:

“We can contemplate how far we have already come in the climb along the pathway to perfection; it is usually much further than we acknowledge, and such reflections restore resolve. . . .

“ . . . We can allow for the reality that God is still more concerned with growth than with geography. . . .

“This is a gospel of grand expectations, but God’s grace is sufficient for each of us if we remember that there are no *instant* Christians” (*Notwithstanding My Weakness* [1981], 9, 11).

Return to the questions about the egg. Invite students to help you rewrite each question so it applies to a person, and then have them answer the questions. Correct any misunderstandings they may have. Encourage students to copy Elder Maxwell’s statement in their journals and to add their feelings about their own progress toward perfection. Testify that each of us, with the Savior’s help, can become more like Him.

Alma 7:7–16. Jesus Christ suffered “pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind.” Because of His Atonement, He has power to resurrect us, cleanse our sins, comfort us in our trials, and give us power to become like Him. (25–30 minutes)

Hand out paper and ask students to write answers to the following questions:

- What is the most important event of next week? next year?
- What is the most important event of the next five years? the next fifty years?

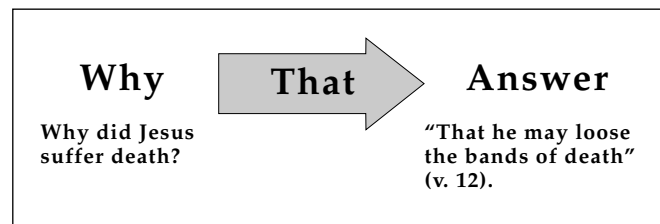
Discuss their answers. Have them read Alma 7:7, and ask:

- What is the most important event of the earth’s entire existence?
- Why do you think Alma would cite the coming of the Redeemer as being of “more importance than they all”?

Read verses 8–9 looking for what the Spirit said should be done to prepare for the coming of the Son of God. (You could suggest students underline the answer.) Ask: How would this prepare us for His Second Coming?

Invite a student to act as scribe for the class. Have the student write the following words on the board: *suffering, pain, affliction, temptation, sickness, infirmities*. Ask students to give examples for each of these words. (Note: *Infirmities* means “weaknesses.”) Read Alma 7:11. Have students cover up the rest of the verses on the page, and ask: Why would Jesus, who was sinless, need to experience this suffering?

After discussing possible reasons for Jesus’ suffering, invite students to mark every occurrence of the word *that* in Alma 7:12–13. Explain that words like *because* and *that* often act as “arrows” that point to answers to a question. Draw the accompanying diagram on the board (include only the arrow and the words *Why, That, and Answer*). Have students read verses 12–13 looking for the implied questions and Alma’s answers. As they find them, discuss them as a class and write them under the appropriate headings on the board. Invite students to underline the answers in their scriptures. Use the list on the board to help students realize that one reason Jesus suffered was to help us endure our difficulties.



Help students understand that the Atonement covers more than the consequences of sin. The Atonement covers *all* the effects of the Fall of Adam. Elder Neal A. Maxwell explained:

“Since not all human sorrow and pain is connected to sin, the full intensiveness of the Atonement involved bearing our pains, infirmities, and sicknesses, as well as our sins. Whatever our sufferings, we can safely cast our ‘care upon him; for he careth for [us]’ (1 Peter 5:7)” (“*Not My Will, But Thine*” [1988], 51).

Bruce C. Hafen, who later became a member of the Seventy, wrote:

“Some Church members feel weighed down with discouragement about the circumstances of their personal lives, even when they are making sustained and admirable efforts. Frequently, these feelings of self-disappointment come not from wrongdoing, but from stresses and troubles for which we may not be fully to blame. The Atonement of Jesus Christ applies to these experiences because it applies to all of life. The Savior can wipe away *all* of our tears, after all we can do. . . .

“The Savior’s atonement is . . . the healing power not only for sin, but also for carelessness, inadequacy, and all mortal bitterness. The Atonement is not just for sinners” (“Beauty for Ashes: The Atonement of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1990, 7).

You may wish to point out the following phrase in Alma 7:13: “The Spirit knoweth all things; nevertheless the Son of God suffereth according to the flesh,” and ask students what they think it means. Share the following insight from Elder Neal A. Maxwell:

“In Gethsemane, the suffering Jesus began to be ‘sore amazed’ (Mark 14:33), or, in the Greek, ‘awestruck’ and ‘astonished.’

“Imagine, Jehovah, the Creator of this and other worlds, ‘astonished’! Jesus knew cognitively what He must do, but not experientially. He had never personally known the exquisite and exacting process of an atonement before. Thus, when the agony came in its fulness, it was so much, much worse than even He with his unique intellect had ever imagined! No wonder an angel appeared to strengthen him! (See Luke 22:43.)

“The cumulative weight of all mortal sins—past, present, and future—pressed upon that perfect, sinless, and sensitive Soul! All our infirmities and sicknesses were somehow, too, a part of the awful arithmetic of the Atonement” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1985, 92; or *Ensign*, May 1985, 72–73).

Invite students to read verses 11–13 and identify at least five experiences of mortality that Jesus took upon Himself. (You could write them on the board or have students mark them in their scriptures.) Ask: How can knowing that the Savior understands our struggles help us? Testify that as we follow His teachings and example, He will comfort us in our suffering and deliver us from our sins. Ask: Because Jesus has done so much for us, what could we do for Him?

Alma 7:14–27. Living the principles of the gospel and receiving its ordinances will keep us on the path to the kingdom of God. (15–20 minutes)

Invite two volunteers to come to the board. Have one write the third article of faith and the other the fourth article of faith. (Have them work from memory if possible.) Invite the class to read Alma 7:14–16 and mark references to the teachings found in these articles of faith. Discuss the following questions:

- Why would Alma speak to members of the Church about basic gospel principles and ordinances? (They, like us, needed to be reminded of them and continue to live them.)
- How do we renew the covenants we make at baptism?

Invite students to look in the scriptures for the sacrament prayer on the bread (see Moroni 4:3 or D&C 20:77) and compare it with Alma 7:15. If desired, list similar phrases side-by-side on the board, as in the accompanying chart, and discuss the questions that follow:

Moroni 4:3	Alma 7:15
“witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they are willing”	“show unto your God that ye are willing”; “witness it unto him”
“keep his commandments which he hath given them”	“lay aside every sin”; “enter into a covenant with him to keep his commandments”

- How is laying aside every sin like keeping the commandments?
- How does a weekly renewal of this covenant help us stay on the strait and narrow path to God?
- What does it mean to witness unto God?
- What part does agency play in these verses?

Remind students that chapter 7 records Alma’s teachings in Gideon. To help students understand that the Saints in Gideon were not perfect but were doing their best to trust in the Savior, read verses 17–19, 25–27. Testify to students that when they live as faithfully as possible, they are also

“in the path which leads to the kingdom of God.” Share this statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“As members of the Church, if we chart a course leading to eternal life . . . and are going in the right direction . . . and, step by step and phase by phase, are perfecting our souls by overcoming the world, then it is absolutely guaranteed—there is no question whatever about it—we shall gain eternal life. . . . If we chart a course and follow it to the best of our ability in this life, then when we go out of this life we’ll continue in exactly that same course” (“Jesus Christ and Him Crucified,” in *1976 Devotional Speeches of the Year* [1977], 400–401).

Alma 7:20–27. Living gospel principles, receiving the essential ordinances, and keeping our covenants helps us to be worthy to have the Holy Ghost in our lives and keeps us on the path to eternal life.

(15–20 minutes)

Share the following story from President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve, who described a cross-country train trip he took as a member of the military in World War II:

“We were transported on a freight train with boxcars fitted with narrow bedsprings that could be pulled down from the wall at night. There were no dining cars. Instead, camp kitchens were set up in boxcars with dirt floors.

“. . . The baggage car got sidetracked, so we had no change of clothing during the six-day trip. It was very hot crossing Texas and Arizona. Smoke and cinders from the engine made it very uncomfortable. There was no way to bathe or wash our uniforms. We rolled into Los Angeles one morning—a grubby-looking outfit—and were told to return to the train that evening.

“We thought first of food. The 10 of us in our crew pooled our money and headed for the best restaurant we could find.

“It was crowded, and so we joined a long line waiting to be seated. I was first, just behind some well-dressed women. Even without turning around, the stately woman in front of me soon became aware that we were there.

“She turned and looked at us. Then she turned and looked me over from head to toe. There I stood in that sweaty, dirty, sooty, wrinkled uniform. She said in a tone of disgust, ‘My, what untidy men!’ All eyes turned to us.

“No doubt she wished we were not there; I shared her wish. I felt as dirty as I was, uncomfortable, and ashamed” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 8–9; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 9).

Ask students:

- Why did being dirty in the presence of those who were clean cause President Packer to feel uncomfortable?
- Read Mormon 9:4. How might President Packer’s discomfort with physical filth be compared with being spiritually unclean? (see also Alma 36:11–15).
- How does sin keep us from inspiration from the Holy Ghost? (see 1 Nephi 15:34).
- How might repentance be compared with soap? (see Isaiah 1:18).

Alma encouraged the faithful Saints in Gideon to stay spiritually clean and worthy of the Holy Ghost. Read Alma 7:21, and then read the scriptures listed in footnote *a* for help in understanding how Alma uses the word *temples*. Ask: Why must we be spiritually clean to have the companionship of the Holy Ghost? Read 2 Nephi 31:17; Alma 7:25; and 3 Nephi 27:20 looking for how living worthy of the Holy Ghost can prepare us to be clean enough for the kingdom of God. (The Spirit sanctifies us or cleanses us from sin.)

Compare Alma 7:23–24 with Galatians 5:22–23. Ask:

- What fruits does Alma add to the ones Paul lists in Galatians?
- How do these characteristics relate to living in tune with the Spirit? (These characteristics often come when we have the Spirit. In addition, living by these qualities invites the Spirit into our lives.)

Read Alma 7:27 looking for the fruit of the Spirit that Alma invoked upon the faithful Saints of Gideon. Divide the following references among the students: John 14:27; Romans 8:6; 1 Corinthians 14:33; Mosiah 4:3. Have them read their verses, and discuss what it means to have “the peace of God.” Reread Alma 7:27 and ask:

- How could the peace of God be a blessing in your home?
- How could it be a blessing in regard to your possessions?
- How could it help your faith and obedience?

Invite students to share times they were influenced by the Holy Ghost. Ask: How did the Holy Ghost communicate with you during these times? Have them name some of the ways impressions from the Spirit can come. Testify of the fruits that accompany the Spirit when we live worthy to receive them.



Alma 8–16

Introduction

Lehi taught his son Jacob that there must be opposition in all things (see 2 Nephi 2:11). The contrasts in the scriptures can teach us many gospel truths. In Alma 5–8 the prophet Alma delivered his message of repentance in several Nephite cities. Many responded positively to his message, and he succeeded in reclaiming the Saints of Zarahemla, Gideon, and Melek. Alma 8–16 records that the people of Ammonihah reacted quite differently to the prophet’s plea. What gospel truths can you learn by comparing these two accounts?

Heavenly Father gives His children ample opportunities to hear and accept His message. After Alma was cast out by the people of Ammonihah, an angel sent him back a second time to deliver the Lord’s message. Although most of the people rejected Alma’s message, there were many whose lives were changed. Watch for who accepted Alma’s message and what they sacrificed in order to embrace the gospel.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Missionary work is challenging, but the Lord will assist us (see Alma 8; see also Philippians 4:13; 1 Nephi 3:7; D&C 5:34).
- Those who sin with greater understanding of the gospel receive greater condemnation than those who sin with less understanding (see Alma 9:15–24; see also James 4:17; D&C 82:3; 112:24–26).
- The people of a region may be blessed because of the righteous who live among them (see Alma 10:22–23; see also Genesis 18:28–32; 2 Nephi 26:3; 3 Nephi 9:11; D&C 86:1–7).
- Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is “the very Eternal Father” and provides salvation to all who “believe on his name” (see Alma 11:38–40; see also Mosiah 5:7; 15:1–4).
- All people will be resurrected with perfect bodies and brought back into the Savior’s presence to be judged (see Alma 11:40–45; see also 1 Corinthians 15:20–22; 2 Nephi 9:22; Mormon 7:6).
- God knows our thoughts and, when necessary, reveals them to His servants by the power of the Holy Ghost (see Alma 12:3, 7; see also Hebrews 4:12–13; Jacob 2:5; D&C 6:16).

- We learn the mysteries of God according to the heed and diligence we give to Him and as He sees fit to reveal them to us (see Alma 12:9–11; see also D&C 76:5–10; 130:19).
- We will be judged according to our words, works, and thoughts (see Alma 12:12–18).
- God provided the plan of redemption to save all mankind from their fallen condition. He sends His servants to teach the plan to His children (see Alma 12:22–37; see also Alma 42:9–15; D&C 29:42).
- One responsibility of Melchizedek Priesthood holders is to teach God’s children how to live worthy, Christlike lives and eventually receive eternal life (see Alma 13:1–19; see also Alma 6:1, 4, 8).
- Agency is so important that God sometimes allows the righteous to suffer from the evil acts of others. Nevertheless, He is mindful of our afflictions and will bless those who are faithful in their trials (see Alma 14:7–29; see also Mosiah 17:9–10; Alma 60:13; D&C 24:8).
- We can be healed from our afflictions if we have faith in Jesus Christ and it is according to God’s will (see Alma 15:3–11; see also Matthew 9:20–22; Acts 14:8–10; 3 Nephi 18:20).
- Teaching and receiving the word of God by the power of the Holy Ghost will help prepare us for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (see Alma 16:14–17; see also D&C 50:13–14; 136:32–33).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 75–80.

Suggestions for Teaching

Alma 8. Missionary work is challenging, but it is the work of the Lord and He will assist us.
(35–40 minutes)

Share the following story from President Gordon B. Hinckley, who described his experience as a young missionary in Great Britain:

“When I arrived, it seemed that everyone was prejudiced against us.

“I was not well when I arrived. Those first few weeks, because of illness and the opposition which we felt, I was discouraged. I wrote a letter home to my good father and said that I felt I was wasting my time and his money” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [1997], 350).

Tell students that the story is not over and you will return to it later in the lesson. Explain that President Hinckley’s story is not unlike the challenges many missionaries face while serving the Lord. Alma also experienced difficulties during

his missionary labors. Have students read Alma 8:1, 3–5, and discuss his success in Zarahemla, Gideon, and Melek. Read what happened in Ammonihah (see vv. 8–13) and compare it with his experience in the previous three cities. Ask:

- Why do you think Alma’s experience in Ammonihah was so different?
- What does this tell us about missionary work? (Answers might include that sometimes it is more difficult than others and that it isn’t always filled with immediate, visible success.)
- How might the Lord comfort His missionaries when their message is rejected?

Have students read verses 14–15 and compare the angel’s message with the reaction of the people of Ammonihah when they heard Alma’s message. Read Alma 8:16–17 looking for what the angel told Alma next. Remind students of verse 13, and ask: How might you have felt about this assignment if you had been in Alma’s position? Why did Alma have reason to be apprehensive?

Read 1 Nephi 3:7 and ask: What does this scripture teach about God’s commandments? Have students read Alma 8:18–22 looking for the “way” the Lord prepared for Alma to accomplish his mission. Discuss their findings. Have them do the same for verses 27–32. As you discuss these verses, point out that the Lord called Amulek to serve this mission with Alma. The following questions may be helpful:

- What might have occurred while “Alma tarried many days with Amulek”? (It was probably a time of preparation for their mission.)
- What is the advantage of having two messengers rather than just one to deliver the Lord’s message? (To answer this question, have students read Alma 9:6 and then read the reference in footnote *b*; see also D&C 6:28.)
- Why might the power spoken of in Alma 8:31 be needed to teach the people of a wicked city?

Testify that missionary work can be difficult and discouraging, but the Lord will help us if we are humble and trust Him. Remind students of the difficult time President Hinckley had at the start of his mission. Share the rest of his account:

“I wrote a letter home to my good father and said that I felt I was wasting my time and his money. He was my father and my stake president, and he was a wise and inspired man. He wrote a very short letter to me which said, ‘Dear Gordon, I have your recent letter. I have only one suggestion: forget yourself and go to work.’ Earlier that morning in our scripture class my companion and I had read these words of the

Lord: ‘Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it.’ (Mark 8:35.)

“Those words of the Master, followed by my father’s letter with his counsel to forget myself and go to work, went into my very being. With my father’s letter in hand, I went into our bedroom in the house at 15 Wadham Road, where we lived, and got on my knees and made a pledge with the Lord. I covenanted that I would try to forget myself and lose myself in His service.

“That July day in 1933 was my day of decision. A new light came into my life and a new joy into my heart. The fog of England seemed to lift, and I saw the sunlight. I had a rich and wonderful mission experience, for which I shall ever be grateful”
(*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, 350).

Ask students:

- What difference did the advice of President Hinckley’s earthly father make?
- How did Heavenly Father speak to the discouraged missionary?

Invite students to share examples of friends or family members who have been assisted by the Lord during their missions.

Alma 9:1–24. Those who sin with greater understanding of the gospel receive greater condemnation than those who sin with less understanding. (25–30 minutes)

Devise a mathematical story problem or get one from a high school math book. Before class, give a student the problem and provide instructions on how to solve it (do not give the student the answer). In class, invite this student and a student who has not seen the problem to find the answer. (The student you gave instructions to before class should be able to solve the problem first.) When they finish, describe to the class the help you gave the first student, and ask the two volunteers why the one with the extra information should have been able to find the answer first.

Invite two additional students to solve a complicated division problem. Give one student a piece of paper and a pencil and the other a calculator. Ask the class who should be able to find the answer first. Have students read Doctrine and Covenants 82:3 and suggest ways the above examples illustrate this scripture.

Write *ritual prodigalism* on the board, and ask students what they think it means. Tell them that one definition for *ritual* is “according to social custom or tradition.” A definition for *prodigal* is “extremely wasteful.” The young man in Christ’s parable who wasted his inheritance on riotous living is referred to as “the prodigal son” (see Luke 15:11–32). Ask students again what the phrase *ritual prodigalism* might mean. Share the following observation by Elder Neal A. Maxwell:

“Why do some of our youth risk engaging in ritual prodigalism, intending to spend a season rebelling and acting out in Babylon and succumbing to that devilishly democratic ‘everybody does it’? Crowds cannot make right what God has declared to be wrong. Though planning to return later, many such stragglers find that alcohol, drugs, and pornography will not let go easily. Babylon does not give exit permits gladly” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1988, 40; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 33).

Ask what Elder Maxwell is warning us about. Have students suggest reasons young Church members might rationalize doing what they have been taught is wrong. Read James 4:17 and Doctrine and Covenants 82:3 and ask: How do these scriptures warn against such rationalization? Have students take turns reading from Alma 9:1–18 to find an example of this principle. Ask why Alma proclaimed to the people of Ammonihah: “It shall be more tolerable for [the Lamanites] in the day of judgment than for you, if ye remain in your sins” (v. 15).

Read verses 19–22 with students. Invite them to find and underline blessings the people of Nephi received, and list these on the board. Ask: Which of these blessings have we received? Discuss how the people of Ammonihah could have forgotten these blessings. Read verses 23–24 and Doctrine and Covenants 3:4. Ask:

- How could we lose blessings we have been given?
- Why do you think more is required of those who have been taught the gospel of Jesus Christ? (Answers might include that it is fair, that we have made covenants, that we need to be good examples, that we need to live up to the trust we’ve been given, that obeying the Lord is a good way to show gratitude.)

President Gordon B. Hinckley, then a member of the First Presidency, said:

“Let us be grateful. But let us not be boastful. Let us rather be thankful and humble, as becomes those who are the beneficiaries of such rich blessings from the Almighty” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1982, 67; or *Ensign*, May 1982, 44).

Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, taught:

“As we remember our Lord and Savior, we should contemplate the great blessings we have as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We have been taught by the Lord Jesus Christ. We have been led by his prophets. We have received the sealing ordinances of his gospel. He has blessed us bounteously.

“As we remember all of this, we should also remember the divine caution: ‘For of him unto whom much is given much is required’ (D&C 82:3; see also Luke 12:48). That eternal principle of law and justice is a measure of what God expects of us” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1988, 37; or *Ensign*, May 1988, 32).

Ask students to share ways they express their gratitude for the blessings they have received from the Lord.

Alma 9:25–34. Those who are righteous will receive salvation “according to the power and deliverance of Jesus Christ.” (10–15 minutes)

Invite students to turn to “Redeemer of Israel” in the hymnbook (no. 6). Have them read the words and determine which coming of the Savior this hymn refers to (the Second Coming). Remind students that Jesus Christ was to come to the earth twice. Some scriptures prophesy of His first coming, some prophesy of His Second Coming, and some apply to both. Invite students to read Alma 9:25–27 and determine which coming of Jesus Christ Alma is referring to. (He is referring to Christ’s first coming, but his words can also be related to the Second Coming.) Encourage students to discuss the phrases in the verses that support their conclusions. Be sure they understand that as Jesus grew in mortality, He developed all the attributes and virtues listed in verse 26 (see Luke 2:52; Hebrews 5:8–9; D&C 93:12–14).

Have students reread Alma 9:26 and tell how each of these virtues of the Savior enables Him to help us live the gospel.

Read verse 27 again and the first part of verse 28, stopping at the words “deliverance of Jesus Christ.” Ask:

- What must one become to receive salvation “according to the power and deliverance of Jesus Christ”?
- What element of righteousness does Alma teach in verse 27?
- How do faith on the name of Jesus Christ, repentance, and baptism prepare us for the Savior’s Second Coming?

Have students read the rest of verse 28 and contrast the rewards of those who choose good and those who choose evil. Then have them read verses 30–33 and identify phrases that indicate how the people of Ammonihah responded to Alma’s message. Ask: Who was happier, Alma or the people he taught? Read Alma 41:10 and discuss why this is so.

Testify that the Savior will bless us if we follow His teachings. He wants to help us attain immortality and eternal life (see Moses 1:39). Share the following statement by President James E. Faust, a member of the First Presidency:

“All of us have made wrong turns along the way. I believe the kind and merciful God, whose children we are, will judge us as lightly as He can for the wrongs that we have done and give us the maximum blessing for the good that we do. Alma’s sublime utterance [in Alma 9:26] seems to me an affirmation of this” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 75; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 53).

Alma 10:1–8. The cares of the world can preoccupy us and deafen us to spiritual communication.

(20–25 minutes)

Plug your ears with earplugs or cotton balls. Ask students questions about their school or church activities, and as they answer, indicate that you are having trouble hearing them. Remove the earplugs and ask:

- How can earplugs be useful?
- How can they be a problem?

Point out that we can choose to use or remove earplugs. Whether they help us or hinder us depends largely on how we use them.

Write *Amulek* on the board and ask students to tell who he is. Have them read Alma 10:1–6 to learn all they can about him, and invite some of them to write on the board what they learned. Ask:

- What does verse 6 teach about spiritual communication?
- How was Amulek’s response to the Lord’s voice like using earplugs?

If desired, use some or all of the following questions to help your discussion:

- Does Amulek appear to have known something about the gospel prior to his call?
- In what ways might the Lord have “called many times”? (v. 6).
- What do these phrases mean: “I was called . . . and I would not hear” and “I knew . . . yet I would not know”?
- Has the Lord called *us* many times? How? When?

Share the following statements by Elder Neal A. Maxwell:

“Youth may even have gifts, including the gift of the Holy Ghost, and yet be like counterparts of old who ‘knew it not’ (3 Nephi 9:20). Concerning the gospel message, they may be like busy and preoccupied Amulek” (*Sermons Not Spoken* [1985], 2).

“Amulek . . . is a classic case of an essentially good man being out of touch with the great spiritual realities; he resisted the things of the Spirit because, though he was basically good, he was preoccupied with the cares of the world” (*Meek and Lowly* [1987], 12).

Ask: What cares of the world might preoccupy us? Have students read Alma 9:1; 10:7–9 and determine how the Lord called Amulek. (Through an angel and a prophet.) Not everyone changes who sees and hears an angel. Ask students to give an example from the scriptures of an angel appearing to someone who did not subsequently change (see 1 Nephi 3:29–31). Ask:

- How do you think Amulek was able to begin hearing and knowing?
- How might the Lord call us to make changes in our lives?

Explain to students that Amulek’s change was life-altering. Elder Maxwell taught that Amulek “experienced the costs of discipleship” when he accepted the Lord’s call (*Meek and Lowly*, 12). Return to verse 4 and have students see what Amulek had prior to his call. Then have them read Alma 15:16 and compare what he forsook in order to obey the Lord. Discuss with students whether blessings are worth “the costs of discipleship.” Ask: What sacrifices might we be asked to make in order to hear and follow Heavenly Father’s will? Testify that hearing and knowing God is worth any worldly sacrifice.

Alma 10:22–23. The people of a region may be blessed because of the righteous who live among them. Destruction comes to the wicked who cast out the righteous from among them. (15–20 minutes)

Show students a package of yeast. Ask them to read Matthew 13:33 and Galatians 5:9 and find another name for this substance. Ask how a small amount of leaven affects an entire batch of dough.

Read the following examples to your students and ask them to determine what each has to do with spiritual leaven:

- Inga’s soccer team just won the championship. Their coach wants to celebrate at a local bar. But Inga, the team captain, invites them to a party at her house. They accept her offer and celebrate without alcohol.
- Shawn, Todd, and Randy decide to go to a movie together. Shawn and Todd want to see the newest release, an action movie with a lot of violence and profanity. Randy persuades them to attend another movie that has higher standards.
- The Ferrera family are the only Church members in their small farming community. Relief from a severe drought comes to the area after the Ferreras’ frequent fasting and prayers.
- Mele’s family often argues. When she is present there is more peace because of her humble, cheerful attitude.

Explain that there were righteous people living in the wicked city of Ammonihah. Amulek taught that these faithful people were the reason the city had been preserved. Invite a student to read to the class Alma 10:22–23. Ask:

- What were the righteous people doing that blessed the rest of the city?
- What could happen if the wicked cast out or killed those who were praying for them?
- What does this teach us about the effect a few righteous people can have on the lives of those around them?

Help students see how this prophecy was fulfilled by reading the chapter heading to Alma 14 as well as Alma 16:9–10. Ask students to give other examples from the scriptures of wicked people who lost the Lord’s protection after the righteous were gone. (These might include Sodom and Gomorrah after Lot’s family left [see Genesis 18:23–32], Jerusalem after Jesus and several Apostles were killed [see Luke 19:41–44], King Noah’s people after the righteous were cast out or killed [see Mosiah 17–19].)

President Spencer W. Kimball, then Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve, taught:

“Many voices of seducing spirits advocate carnal pleasures and unrestrained physical satisfactions. Our world is now much the same as it was in the days of the Nephite prophet who said: ‘. . . if it were not for the prayers of the righteous . . . ye would even now be visited with utter destruction. . . .’ [Alma 10:22.] Of course, there are many many upright and faithful who live all the commandments and whose lives and prayers keep the world from destruction” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1971, 7; or *Ensign*, June 1971, 16).

President Gordon B. Hinckley added:

“I think we stand in this dispensation like the righteous in the days of the cities of the plains when perhaps the Lord might spare the wicked, some of them, because of the righteous. That places upon us a great and significant burden. That’s why we are here, to make of ourselves more effective instruments, truer warriors under the direction of the Almighty to save His sons and daughters from those things which will destroy them in time and for eternity unless they turn their lives around” (“Messages of Inspiration from President Hinckley,” *Church News*, 5 Apr. 1997, 2).

Invite students to share thoughts or feelings they have about how to be a good influence in the lives of their families, other students in their schools, their neighbors, and members of their communities.

Alma 11:1–25. We are sometimes faced with the temptation to trade our testimony for personal gain or selfish interests. True happiness comes from living righteously. (15–20 minutes)

Show students coins or bank notes of various denominations. Ask them to name honest ways they can earn money. Read Alma 11:1, 3, 20. Ask students to comment on the honesty and sincerity of the judges and lawyers in Ammonihah. Ask: What was their motive? (To get gain.)

Have students quickly read verses 5–19. Ask: What do these verses describe? Draw the following chart on the board.

	1	2	4	7
Gold	senine	seon	shum	limnah
Silver	senum	amnor	ezrom	onti

Point out that an *onti* is the silver currency with the greatest value (see vv. 7–13). Read verses 21–22 and ask:

- How much money did Zeezrom offer Amulek?
- What did he tell Amulek he had to do to obtain this money?
- What are people today sometimes tempted to exchange for their testimony, beliefs, or standards? (Power, popularity, money, worldly pleasures.)
- What are the consequences of choosing wickedness over righteousness? (see Alma 41:10).

Read Alma 10:10–12; 12:1; 14:6 and compare Zeezrom with Amulek. Invite students to write descriptions of each man on the board.

Have a student read the following statements. President Ezra Taft Benson said:

“We must first and foremost come to realize this eternal truth—the gospel plan is the plan of happiness. Wickedness never did, never does, never will bring us happiness. Violation of the laws of God brings only misery, bondage, and darkness” (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [1988], 71).

President Gordon B. Hinckley said:

“There is no happiness in doing what’s wrong. There is no happiness in sin. There is misery and pain and regret and heartache and suffering. Happiness lies in walking in righteousness. Happiness lies in faithfulness and in righteousness” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, 256).

Ask:

- In what ways does following the Lord make us happy?
- Why do temporal pleasures bring less happiness than obeying our Father in Heaven?
- What acts of obedience to Heavenly Father have brought you the greatest joy?

Testify that there is lasting joy in choosing righteousness over temporal, or temporary, pleasure.

 **Alma 11:21–40. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is “the very Eternal Father” and provides salvation to all who “believe on his name.”**

(40–45 minutes)

Write the following quiz on the board, or give it to students as a handout. Explain that these questions were asked of a prophet. Invite students to write the answers on a piece of paper. Do not correct the quizzes yet.

True or False?

1. We must answer every gospel question that is asked of us.
2. There is more than one God.
3. Jesus Christ will save His people in their sins.
4. The Son of God is the very Eternal Father.
5. *Eternal life* and *salvation* usually have the same meaning.

Invite two good readers to play the roles of Zeezrom and Amulek. Ask them to take turns reading the dialogue between these two men from Alma 11:21–40. (You could take the part of the narrator.) While the two students read their parts, invite the class to listen for Amulek’s answers to the quiz questions. Suggest to students that they underline the questions and answers in their scriptures.

When the readers finish, discuss the quiz questions. Explain that some of the statements might be true *or* false depending on the context, and that Amulek’s answers were appropriate for his situation. The following suggestions and questions may help your discussion:

1. *We must answer every gospel question that is asked of us.* (False; see Alma 11:21–22.)

Have students read Alma 12:9–11; Doctrine and Covenants 42:12–14 and cross-reference them with Alma 11:22. Discuss why it is important to teach only what the Holy Ghost permits us to teach. Emphasize that generally people must be ready to learn a doctrine before the Spirit will witness the truth of it to them.

2. *There is more than one God.* (False; see Alma 11:28–29.)

Help students understand that we believe the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are members of the Godhead and each carry the title of God. Amulek’s answer, however, doesn’t address the physical nature of the Godhead. Rather than getting into the plurality of gods, Amulek is focusing on Jesus Christ and His role as God. Read 1 Corinthians 3:2 and ask:

- What does it mean to feed someone spiritually “with milk, and not with meat”?
- How does this apply to answering gospel questions?
- What are some circumstances that would call for being brief and simple with our answers to gospel questions?
- Why was Amulek’s one-word answer a wise way to answer Zeezrom’s question about God? (Zeezrom was asking the question as a debate strategy. He wasn’t trying to understand God’s nature.)

3. *Jesus Christ will save His people in their sins.* (False; see Alma 11:34.)

Ask students what important word makes this a false statement. What word could they replace the word *in* with to make the sentence true? Nephi the son of Helaman later taught this same doctrine and answered this question (see Helaman 5:10–11; see also 3 Nephi 9:21).

4. *The Son of God is the very Eternal Father.* (True; see Alma 11:38–39.)

This doctrine was also taught by King Benjamin. Read Mosiah 5:7 and ask: In what ways is Jesus Christ our Father? Consider listing their answers on the board. The list might include the following:

- He created the earth, which sustains our life. He is our Father through His Creation. (See Hebrews 1:1–2; Moses 1:31–33.)
- He brings about the Resurrection. He is the Father of our resurrected bodies. (See 1 Corinthians 15:22; Alma 11:42; Mormon 9:12.)
- He provides a newness of life through the Atonement. He is the Father of our spiritual rebirth. (See Moroni 10:33; Moses 6:59.)
- He changes our nature as we repent and follow Him and makes us part of His family. He becomes our Father as we take on ourselves His name. (See Mosiah 5:7–8; 27:25.)

See also the commentary for Mosiah 5:7 in *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122* (p. 58). *Note:* Be sure students understand that God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ are separate and distinct beings.

5. *Eternal life and salvation usually have the same meaning.* (True; see Alma 11:40.)

Invite students to carefully read Alma 11:40, paying particular attention to the promise to those who believe on the Savior’s

name. Note that, as Amulek uses the words, salvation is granted only to those who gain eternal life. Share the following explanation by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“Since it is the prophetic purpose to lead men to full salvation in the highest heaven of the celestial world, when [prophets] speak and write about salvation, almost without exception, they mean eternal life or exaltation. They use the terms *salvation*, *exaltation*, and *eternal life* as synonyms, as words that mean exactly the same thing without any difference, distinction, or variance whatever” (*The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ* [1978], 129).

Invite students to write on a piece of paper the doctrines Amulek taught that they understand better than they did before class. Have them include why these doctrines are important and how they can apply them to their lives. Encourage them to save these papers to refer to later.

Alma 11:40–46. Because of the Savior’s Atonement, we will all be resurrected and brought back into God’s presence to be judged. (20–25 minutes)

Write on the board the definitions of the words below (do not write the words you are defining). Read Alma 11:40–45 with students, asking them to watch for words that match the definitions. As students identify the correct words, write them on the board next to their definitions.

- **Redemption:** Deliverance from the effects of the Fall and sin through Christ’s Atonement.
- **Temporal death:** Separation of the spirit from the body.
- **Reunited:** Brought together again.
- **Restored:** Returned to a former condition.
- **Recollection:** Memory.
- **Arraigned:** Called to account for actions.
- **Mortal:** Subject to death.
- **Corruption:** Decomposition as a result of death.

Write *Resurrection* and *Judgment* on the board. Ask half the class to reread verses 41–43 and the other half to reread verses 44–45 looking for teachings about the Resurrection and the Judgment. Have them share their findings, and suggest that they mark in their scriptures any insights they gain.

Read verse 46 and ask: Which of Amulek’s teachings from Alma 11 do you think made Zeezrom tremble? Why?

Ask students if any of them have lost a family member or friend to death. (*Note:* Be careful not to intrude on sensitive feelings.) Ask:

- What was most difficult about the death of this person?
- Why do you miss this person?

Ask students to think of someone they know about with a physical or mental disability. Ask: What comfort comes from knowing that the Savior provided a way for everyone to live forever with a perfect body and mind?

Share your feelings about the power of the Resurrection. Testify that because of Jesus Christ *all* people will be resurrected and stand before the Godhead “to be judged according to our works” (Alma 12:12). If we apply the Atonement and keep the commandments with hope in Christ, we will receive the promised blessings of the faithful.

Alma 12:1–8. God knows our thoughts and, when necessary, reveals them to His servants by the power of the Holy Ghost. (30–35 minutes)

Read the following account:

“Being in charge of the Endowment House, while the [Salt Lake] Temple was in the process of construction, Heber C. Kimball [a member of the First Presidency] met with a group who were planning to enter the temple [the Endowment House] for ordinance work. He felt impressed that some were not worthy to go into the temple, and he suggested first that if any present were not worthy, they might retire. No one responding, he said that there were some present who should not proceed through the temple because of unworthiness and he wished they would leave so the company could proceed. It was quiet as death and no one moved nor responded. A third time he spoke, saying that there were two people present who were in adultery, and if they did not leave he would call out their names. Two people walked out and the company continued on through the temple” (Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness* [1969], 112).

Ask students how President Heber C. Kimball knew that “some were not worthy to go into the temple.” Explain that Alma and Amulek had an experience similar to President Kimball’s. Read Alma 12:1–3, and have students mark Alma’s explanation of how he knew of Zeezrom’s intentions.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 6:16 and cross-reference it with Alma 12:3. Ask students to name a truth taught in each verse that is not taught in the other. (Doctrine and Covenants 6:16 teaches that only God knows our thoughts. Alma 12:3 shows that our thoughts can be made known to another by the

Spirit.) This discernment is a gift of the Spirit (see D&C 46:11–12, 23, 27). Be sure students understand that though Heavenly Father knows our thoughts, He respects our privacy and does not frequently reveal them to others. Read the following explanation by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“Men’s thoughts are secret and cannot be pried into by other men, or for that matter by devils. . . .

“However, the Lord can and does on occasion reveal to his prophets the thoughts and intents of the hearts of men. [Jacob 2:5; Alma 10:17.] This revealing of the thoughts of another is one of the gifts of the Spirit; it is akin to the spirit of prophecy; it comes by the power of God and not of man. [Alma 12:3, 7; 18:16–20, 32; Helaman 9:41.] Our Lord during his ministry frequently exercised the power to read the thoughts of those among whom he labored” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 777; see also p. 197).

Read Alma 12:4–8 looking for what Alma did with his knowledge of Zeezrom’s thoughts. Ask:

- What effect did Alma’s exposing Zeezrom’s plan have on Zeezrom’s heart?
- How might a priesthood leader, such as a bishop or a stake president, use the gift of discernment to help a Church member?

Testify that those who live in tune with the Spirit may be prompted in various ways to help others. Ask students to suggest ways our Heavenly Father might lead us to bless His children because of His knowledge of their thoughts and intents. Invite them to share examples from their own experience. If needed, the following examples may help your discussion:

- Yoshiko, on her way to lunch one day, walks past a girl standing by her locker. Yoshiko responds to a brief thought to turn around and talk to the girl. Upon doing so Yoshiko learns that this girl has just transferred to the school, doesn’t know anyone, and is lonely. Yoshiko invites the new girl to eat lunch with her, and a friendship begins.
- As he is delivering newspapers, Juan, the new teachers quorum president, can’t get the name of a quorum member off his mind. He concludes that this quorum member should be his new first counselor. That evening he calls the bishop with his recommendation. The bishop tells Juan that it is the same person he was considering.
- Brother Wong is a busy father. One evening as he returns home from work he feels that he should stop and see a family he home teaches. Upon arriving he learns that the family’s father is seriously ill. The mother had been unable to reach Brother Wong to request a blessing.

- Danielle is making bread for her family. She thinks about a family in her branch whose father has lost his job. She decides to give several of her loaves of bread to the needy family. When she presents the bread, the family’s mother expresses gratitude, mentioning that they were running low on food. She tells Danielle the gift will provide enough for several meals.

Elder Thomas S. Monson, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, shared the following experience:

“Late one afternoon I was swimming at the Deseret Gym, gazing at the ceiling while backstroking width after width. Silently, but ever so clearly, there came to my mind the thought: ‘Here you swim almost effortlessly, while your friend Stan languishes in his hospital bed, unable to move.’ I felt the prompting: ‘Get to the hospital and give him a blessing.’

“I ceased my swimming, dressed, and hurried to Stan’s room at the hospital. His bed was empty. A nurse said he was in his wheelchair at the swimming pool, preparing for therapy. I hurried to the area, and there was Stan, all alone, at the edge of the deeper portion of the pool. We greeted one another and returned to his room, where a priesthood blessing was provided.

“Slowly but surely, strength and movement returned to Stan’s legs. . . .

“Frequently Stan speaks in Church meetings and tells of the goodness of the Lord to him. To some he reveals the dark thoughts of depression which engulfed him that afternoon as he sat in his wheelchair at the edge of the pool, sentenced, it seemed, to a life of despair. He tells how he pondered the alternative. It would be so easy to propel the hated wheelchair into the silent water of the deep pool. Life would then be over. But at that precise moment he saw me, his friend. That day Stan learned literally that we do not walk alone. I, too, learned a lesson that day: Never, never, never postpone following a prompting” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1985, 87; or *Ensign*, May 1985, 70).

Ask:

- How did Heavenly Father’s knowledge of Stan’s thoughts lead Elder Monson to give assistance?
- Why was it important for Elder Monson to be in tune with the Holy Ghost?
- What did Elder Monson need to do after receiving his prompting to help his friend? (He needed to act on the prompting.)

Invite students to record on a piece of paper what they will do to (1) be worthy to receive the Lord’s promptings, (2) recognize promptings, and (3) act on promptings to assist Heavenly Father in blessing His children.

Alma 12:8–11. We learn the mysteries of God according to the heed and diligence we give to Him and as He sees fit to reveal them to us.

(10–15 minutes)

Ask students:

- If you could visit for fifteen minutes with anyone in the Church, who would it be? Why?
- What would you ask this person?
- How would you respond to any counsel this person gave you? Why?

Read to students the following experience of Elder Marion G. Romney, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Last fall, near the conclusion of a three-mission tour in which I had interviewed personally about 400 missionaries, I was abruptly cut down to size by a missionary who, in answer to my inquiry as to whether he had anything further he would like to comment on or ask, said: ‘What is so great about an interview with a General Authority?’ . . .

“ . . . Most of the missionaries look forward in anticipation to an interview with a General Authority, and then they talk about it for a long time after. I don’t see anything so great about it.”

Have the students imagine they are traveling with President Romney and he asks them to answer the missionary’s question. How would they respond? After discussing their answers conclude President Romney’s account:

“Having recovered my composure, I . . . said, ‘Maybe you can answer this question. Why is it that two men can sit side by side in a conference and then when they leave, one of them says to the other: “Wasn’t that the most glorious meeting we ever attended? It thrilled me.” The other responds: “Oh, I didn’t think it was so wonderful. It just sounded like the same old stuff to me.”’” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1970, 66).

Ask students to suggest reasons two people can have very different experiences in the same church meeting. Invite a student to read aloud Zeezrom’s question at the end of Alma 11:21. Ask students to read verse 22 and determine whether or not Zeezrom was sincerely trying to learn the gospel. Have

a student read aloud the first sentence in Alma 12:8, and discuss the following questions:

- What words show that Zeezrom’s intent had changed?
- In what ways had it changed?
- How could this alter his ability to understand gospel truths?
- What role do you think Zeezrom’s diligence in asking about the gospel played in his eventual conversion?

Have the class read verse 9. Explain that the phrase *mysteries of God* means truths that are withheld from the world but given to the faithful through revelation (see Alma 26:22). Ask: According to this verse, what must a person do to learn the mysteries of God? Read verses 10–11, looking for who receives “the lesser portion of the word” and who receives “the greater portion of the word.” Ask: What is the eventual result if we harden our hearts?

Invite students to listen for how “heed and diligence” relate to receiving “the greater portion of the word” as you read the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks:

“We become receptive to inspiration and revelation by obedience to the commandments of God, by prayer, and by attention to the teachings of the living prophets. Their words serve as a guide for each of us, in scripture interpretation as in other matters. . . .

“ . . . Elder Bruce R. McConkie said, ‘I sometimes think that one of the best-kept secrets of the kingdom is that the scriptures open the door to the receipt of revelation’ (*Doctrines of the Restoration*, ed. Mark L. McConkie, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1989, p. 243). This happens because scripture reading puts us in tune with the Spirit of the Lord” (“Scripture Reading and Revelation,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1995, 7–8).

Ask students to comment on how each of the following activities can lead them to a greater understanding of the gospel:

- Searching the scriptures
- Praying sincerely
- Obeying the teachings of living prophets

Testify that the Spirit will guide us as we diligently study the gospel and heed the truths we learn. The Savior set a perfect example for us in applying the gospel to our lives.

Alma 12:12–18. We will be judged according to our words, works, and thoughts. (10–15 minutes)

Ask students to give examples of how our thoughts and beliefs affect what we do. Read Alma 12:12–13 looking for how this principle pertains to Amulek’s teaching.

Amulek gave a stern warning to Zeezrom. Read verse 14 and suggest that students mark the three ways we can be condemned. Read Mosiah 4:30 and cross-reference it to verse 14. Ask: Why would we “not dare to look up to our God” if our words, works, or thoughts were not clean? Read verses 15–18 and list the results of not learning to control one’s thoughts, words, or actions.

Ask: Since so much of who we are and how we live starts with what we think, what can we do to control our thoughts? Share the following suggestions for maintaining proper thoughts. Elder Boyd K. Packer, who was then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, said:

“If you can control your thoughts, you can overcome habits—even degrading, personal habits. If you can learn to master them, you will have a happy life.

“I would teach you this. Choose from among the sacred music of the Church a favorite hymn, one with words that are uplifting and music that is reverent, one that makes you feel something akin to inspiration. . . .

“Now, use this hymn as the place for your thoughts to go. Make it your emergency channel. . . .

“As the music begins and as the words form in your mind, the unworthy thoughts will slip shamefully away” (*Teach Ye Diligently* [1975], 46–47).

President Marion G. Romney, who was a member of the First Presidency, said:

“The great overall struggle in the world today is, as it has always been, for the souls of men. Every soul is personally engaged in the struggle, and he makes his fight with what is in his mind. In the final analysis the battleground is, for each individual, within himself. Inevitably he gravitates toward the subjects of his thoughts. Ages ago the wise man thus succinctly stated this great truth: ‘As he thinketh in his heart, so is he’ [Proverbs 23:7]. . . .

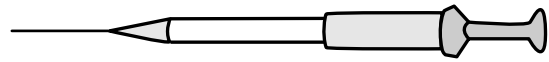
“I am persuaded, my brothers and sisters, that it is irrational to hope to escape the lusts of the world without substituting for them as the subjects of our thoughts the things of the Spirit, and I know that the things of the Spirit are taught with mighty power in the Book of Mormon. . . .

“And so, I counsel you, my beloved brothers and sisters and friends everywhere, to make reading the Book of Mormon a few minutes each day a lifelong practice” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1980, 88–90; or *Ensign*, May 1980, 66–67).

Invite students to share how uplifting music and daily reading of the Book of Mormon can help them control their thoughts, words, and actions.

Alma 12:22–37. God provided the plan of redemption to save all mankind from their fallen condition. He sends His servants to teach the plan to His children.

(40–45 minutes)



Draw a syringe on the board. Ask:

- How is this instrument used to protect us from contracting diseases? (It is used to inject vaccines into our bloodstream.)
- What does a vaccine do? (It stimulates our immune system to create antibodies to attack the germs that cause a given disease.)
- Germs cannot be seen with the naked eye. How do we know they are dangerous? (Others who have contracted them have become ill or died.)

Invite a student to read this statement by President Boyd K. Packer:

“When you were children, you went through an immunization program. Antibodies were injected into your system to protect you should you be exposed to contagions, enemies so small as to be invisible. . . .

“. . . I do not know how many times I have been exposed to, yet spared from, serious illness by having submitted to the momentary discomfort of an inoculation.

“While we can protect our bodies from contagious diseases with the proper serums, we cannot immunize our minds and spirits that way. We immunize our minds and our spirits with ideas, with truth” (*The Play and the Plan* [address to young adults, 7 May 1995], 1).

Have students read Alma 12:25–26, 30, 32–33 and look for the phrase that appears seven times. (“Plan of redemption.”) Suggest that they mark the phrase each time it occurs. Point out that phrases such as “the plan of redemption,” “the plan of happiness,” “the great plan of mercy,” “the plan of salvation,” and “the merciful plan of the great Creator” appear more than two dozen times in the Book of Mormon. Ask: Why do you think the Lord’s prophets emphasize this doctrine so much? Invite students to think about how knowledge of the plan of redemption is like a vaccine, as President Packer suggested.

Have students review Alma 12:25, 30 and look for when the plan of redemption was prepared. Testify that the plan was

taught to us before we came to this earth. Each of us understood and accepted the plan. President Packer taught:

“The course of our mortal life, from birth to death, conforms to eternal law and follows a plan described in the revelations as the great plan of happiness. The one idea, the one truth I would inject into your minds, is this: There are three parts to the plan. You are in the second or the middle part, the one in which you will be tested by temptation, by trials, perhaps by tragedy. Understand that and you will be better able to make sense of life and to resist the disease of doubt and despair and depression” (*The Play and the Plan*, 1–2).

Although the veil prevents us from remembering our premortal life, we lived before we came to earth and we will live after we die. Ask:

- How can knowing that you are living in the second part of a three-part plan help you when you are faced with temptation?
- How can this understanding help you face hardship?

Alma explained the plan of redemption to Zeezrom. The following activity will help students identify elements of the plan.

Divide the class into groups of two or three students. Assign each group one or more sets of verses from the accompanying chart. Give each group a sheet of paper for each set of verses they are assigned. Instruct them to find an element of the plan of redemption in each verse or set of verses. Have them describe these elements on the paper (you could also have them illustrate with simple pictures). When they finish, have the groups read their verses to the class and explain what they wrote.

Alma 12

v. 22	Because of the Fall of Adam, all mankind is lost and fallen.
vv. 23, 26	Death was a result of the Fall of Adam and is a necessary part of the plan.
v. 24	Earth life is a probation and a time to prepare to meet God.
v. 25	If there were no plan of redemption, there would be no Resurrection.
vv. 25, 30	The plan was prepared before the creation of the earth.
v. 27	All people will die and be judged.
vv. 28–30	God teaches the plan to His children according to their faith, repentance, and holy works.

v. 32	God gave commandments <i>after</i> He taught the plan of redemption.
vv. 33–34	The Atonement of the Only Begotten Son is central to the plan of redemption.

Post the papers on the board in the order of the verses. Review the principles they describe to help students see how the pieces of the plan fit together. Be sure students understand each of the concepts in the right-hand column of the chart. Discuss how these doctrines can provide us with a “spiritual vaccination.”

Draw students’ attention to the importance of verses 33–34. Explain that the Redeemer made the plan of redemption possible. Point out that the root of both *redemption* and *Redeemer* is *redeem*. Write on the board the following definition of *redeem*: “to buy back; recover; free from captivity by paying a ransom; rescue; restore; repair.” Ask: What do these words teach about the Redeemer’s role in the plan of redemption? Read Mosiah 3:7 and the third verse of “There Is a Green Hill Far Away” (*Hymns*, no. 194). Ask: Why was Jesus Christ the only one who could fulfill the plan of redemption?

President Packer counseled:

“Some are born with so little and others with so much. Some are born in poverty, with handicaps, with pain, with suffering. Some experience premature death, even innocent children. There are the brutal, unforgiving forces of nature and the brutality of man to man. We have seen a lot of that recently.

“Do not suppose that God willfully causes that which, for his own purposes, he permits. When you know the plan and purpose of it all, even these things will manifest a loving Father in Heaven” (*The Play and the Plan*, 2).

Express gratitude for Heavenly Father and His Son for loving us enough to provide the plan of redemption.

Alma 12:31–13:2. One responsibility of Melchizedek Priesthood holders is to teach God’s children how to live worthy, Christlike lives and eventually receive eternal life. (25–30 minutes)

Prior to class place a picture of the Prophet Joseph Smith on the board. Next to it, write this statement:

“The Melchizedek Priesthood . . . is the channel through which all knowledge, doctrine, the plan of salvation and every important matter is revealed from heaven” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 166–67).

Ask students what the following have in common: a stripe painted down the middle of a road, a boundary between two pieces of property, a time zone, the border between countries, longitude and latitude, hours and minutes. (They are all man-made boundaries.) Explain that, much like these artificial boundaries, the chapter and verse numbers in scriptures were added by human beings. They assist us in locating scripture passages. However, because of chapter breaks we sometimes don't see the development of an idea that may have started in the previous chapter. You could show students examples of this in the Bible by reading the last few verses of Matthew 24 and the first verse of Matthew 25. Another example can be found at the end of 1 Corinthians 12 and the beginning of chapter 13.

Explain that we can understand some chapters in the Book of Mormon better when we read them in context with the previous chapter. Have students read Alma 13:1, stopping at the words "these commandments." Ask: Which commandments is Alma referring to? Invite them to search Alma 12:37 for a reference to commandments. To clarify what "second commandments" refers to, read Alma 12:31 and point out the words *first commandments*. Have students look up the references in footnote *b* to see what these first commandments were. Read Alma 12:32 and ask:

- What did the Lord do before He gave Adam and Eve new commandments? (He made known unto them the plan of redemption.)
- How does first knowing the plan of salvation help us obey Heavenly Father's commandments? (The plan helps us understand why we have the commandments.)
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 82:3. How does this verse relate to the principle taught in Alma 12:32? (We are required to live a greater law *after* we have been taught.)

Write *These Commandments* on the board. Ask the following questions, and as students respond, write the answers on the board:

- According to Alma 12:32, what is one of the commandments God gave?
- Read verses 33–34. What else does God call on us to do?
- How does this bring us to Christ?

Have students read Alma 13:1–2 and look for how Heavenly Father teaches "these commandments" to His children. Suggest that students mark footnote *2a*, and then read Doctrine and Covenants 107:2–4. Ask: What authority do the words "after the order of his Son" in Alma 13:2 refer to? (The Melchizedek Priesthood.) Read the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

"Book of Mormon prophets gave the title *priest* to officers known in this dispensation as *high priests*. That is, they were priests of the Melchizedek Priesthood. . . . Since there was no Aaronic Priesthood among the Nephites in Alma's day . . . , there was no need to distinguish between priests of the lesser and greater priesthoods" (*Mormon Doctrine*, 599).

According to Alma 13:1, why did the Lord give the Melchizedek Priesthood? If you have time, you may wish to show an example of this from an earlier Book of Mormon chapter. For example, read Alma 6:1–5 and look for how these priesthood holders fulfilled their call. Read the statement on the board by the Prophet Joseph Smith and refer to the list of "these commandments." Ask students to suggest ways that Melchizedek Priesthood holders serve by fulfilling these responsibilities. (Answers might include filling missions, completing home teaching assignments, attending quorum meetings, administering priesthood blessings and temple covenants and ordinances.)

Testify that the Melchizedek Priesthood provides all Church members with opportunities to serve, covenants and ordinances, and callings so we can learn how to live Christlike lives.

Alma 13. Many were foreordained in the premortal life to receive callings in the Melchizedek Priesthood in mortality. Callings to the priesthood are based on personal worthiness and following the example of Jesus Christ. (35–40 minutes)

Show a picture of the Salt Lake Temple (for example Gospel Art Picture Kit, no. 502). Ask students the following questions:

- How long did it take to build this temple? (Forty years.)
- What preparations were needed prior to its construction? (Plans were drawn, materials were gathered, workers were organized.)
- Who had knowledge of this temple hundreds of years before the Saints entered the Salt Lake Valley? (Read with students Isaiah 2:2–3. President Gordon B. Hinckley, then a member of the First Presidency, said of the Salt Lake Temple, "It is a veritable fulfillment of the words of Isaiah" ["The Salt Lake Temple," *Ensign*, Mar. 1993, 6].)
- How must we live in order to enter this sacred building? (see D&C 97:15–16).

Teach students that the Melchizedek Priesthood is like a temple. Building a temple requires physical preparation, and before we enter a temple we must prepare spiritually. Alma 13 teaches that those who hold the priesthood in mortality were called, prepared, and foreordained in their premortal life.

During the following activity, encourage students to mark in their scriptures words and phrases that teach them about the priesthood. Arrange your students into two groups. Have each group read one of the scripture blocks from the following chart and answer the questions that go with it. Write their findings on the board, and discuss them as a class.

Alma 13:1–9 Requirements for Holding the Priesthood	Alma 13:10–19 Honoring the Priesthood
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why are Melchizedek Priesthood holders ordained? (see vv. 1, 6). • When were they first called? (see vv. 3, 5). • What qualifies them to receive the priesthood? (see vv. 3–4). • What is the nature of the priesthood? (see vv. 7–9). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do priesthood holders become worthy of this holy calling? (see vv. 10–12). • How should priesthood holders (and other Saints) live to stay worthy? (see vv. 12–14). • What does Melchizedek’s example teach about honoring the priesthood? (see vv. 17–19).

Use the following prophetic statements to help your discussion. The Prophet Joseph Smith said:

“Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was. I suppose I was ordained to this very office in that Grand Council” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 365).

President J. Reuben Clark Jr., who was a member of the First Presidency, said:

“I like to think that [this statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith] does include those of us of lesser calling and lesser stature. . . . I like to think that perhaps in that grand council something at least was said to us indicating what would be expected of us, and empowering us, subject to the re-confirmation here, to do certain things in building up the kingdom of God on earth” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1950, 170–71).

President Wilford Woodruff, who was then President of the Quorum of the Twelve, said:

“I believe with regard to the apostles, the high priests, seventies and the elders of Israel bearing the holy priesthood, I believe they were ordained before they came here; and I believe the God of Israel has raised them up, and has watched over them from their youth, and has carried them through all the scenes of life both seen and unseen, and has prepared them as instruments in his hands to take this kingdom and bear it off” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 21:317).

President Harold B. Lee said:

“Despite that calling which is spoken of in the scriptures as ‘foreordination,’ we have another inspired declaration: ‘Behold, there are many called, but few are chosen. . . .’ (D&C 121:34.)

“This suggests that even though we have our free agency here, there are many who were foreordained before the world was, to a greater state than they have prepared themselves for here. Even though they might have been among the noble and great, from among whom the Father declared he would make his chosen leaders, they may fail of that calling here in mortality” (*Stand Ye in Holy Places* [1974], 9).

President Gordon B. Hinckley, then a member of the First Presidency, said:

“Every one of us who holds this divine power must recognize this transcendent truth—that those powers of heaven which are associated with the priesthood ‘cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness.’” (“Only upon Principles of Righteousness,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1992, 69; see D&C 121:36).

Ask the students to list ways that righteous Melchizedek Priesthood holders bless the members of the Church. (Answers might include through example, service, priesthood blessings, patriarchal blessings, ordinances.) Ask:

- In what ways may a young man prepare to hold the Melchizedek Priesthood?
- In what ways can young women help young men prepare?
- In what ways can young men and women prepare to receive temple ordinances?

Read with students Alma 13:27–28 and suggest that they mark how we can keep ourselves worthy of these blessings.

Alma 14. Agency is so important that God sometimes allows the righteous to suffer from the evil acts of others. Nevertheless, He is aware of our afflictions and will bless those who are faithful in their trials.

(30–35 minutes)

Ask students if they have ever been accused of doing something wrong that they did not do. Discuss the feelings that resulted. Ask students to share examples from the scriptures of people who were unjustly criticized, persecuted, or killed. Alma 14 includes an account of faithful women and children who lost their lives at the hands of evil people. You may wish to read the entire chapter with students. The following questions and suggestions may help your students' understanding.

Verse 3

Read 1 Nephi 16:2 and cross-reference it with Alma 14:3. Ask: Why do those who are doing wrong get so angry at those who call them to repentance?

Verses 6–7

Zeezrom had previously been recognized as “one of the most expert” among the lawyers (Alma 10:31). Why wouldn't the people listen to him now?

Verse 10

Why do you think the Lord allows innocent people to suffer at the hands of the wicked? (Read Alma 60:13 to help answer this question.)

Verse 11

Ask:

- What doctrine in this verse can bring some comfort regarding those who suffer for the gospel?
- How might the example of those who are patient in affliction strengthen us during our difficult times?

Review with students the story of Rafael Monroy and Vicente Morales in the teaching suggestion for Mosiah 17:11–20 (pp. 118–19).

Verses 17–19

Compare these verses with the Savior's response in Matthew 27:12–14. Ask: Why do you think no answer was the best response?

Verses 26–29

- Notice Alma's first question. Have you ever felt like asking this same question? When?
- How did the Lord finally deliver Alma and Amulek from their affliction?
- Why were they preserved?

Share this statement by President James E. Faust:

“Let us not presume that because the way is at times difficult and challenging, our Heavenly Father is not mindful of us. . . . May each of us follow the Lord's comforting counsel: ‘Be patient in afflictions, for thou shalt have many; but endure them, for, lo, I am with thee, even unto the end of thy days’ (D&C 24:8)” (“The Blessings of Adversity,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1998, 7).

Testify that the Lord is aware of our trials and will bless us if we endure faithfully to the end.

Alma 15:3–11. We can be healed of our afflictions if we have faith in Jesus Christ and it is God's will.

(15–20 minutes)

Ask students if they or anyone they know has ever been so nervous about something that they became physically ill. Invite them to relate their experience. Elder Boyd K. Packer said:

“I recently asked a doctor of family medicine how much of his time was devoted purely to correcting physical disorders. He has a large practice, and after thoughtfully considering, he answered, ‘Not more than 20 percent. The rest of the time I seem to be working on problems that very much affect the physical well-being of my patients but do not originate in the body.

“‘These physical disorders,’ the doctor concluded, ‘are merely symptoms of some other kind of trouble.’” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1977, 89; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 59).

Ask:

- What nonphysical troubles can cause physical sickness? (Answers might include stress, worry, anger, fear.)
- Can sin cause a person to become physically ill?

Without telling the class the scripture reference, read to students Alma 15:1–3, stopping after the words “which was caused by.” Ask them to complete the sentence. Have students read verse 3 to discover the source of Zeezrom's fever. Have them mark the reason he was ill, and ask why they think this made him sick.

Read verses 4–5 and ask:

- What was the source of Zeezrom's most intense suffering?
- How was Alma able to help him?

Elder Packer continued:

“There is another part of us, not so tangible, but quite as real as our physical body. This intangible part of us is described as mind, emotion, intellect, temperament, and many other things. Very seldom is it described as spiritual.

“But there is a *spirit* in man; to ignore it is to ignore reality. There are spiritual disorders, too, and spiritual diseases that can cause intense suffering.

“The body and the spirit of man are bound together. Often, very often, when there are disorders, it is very difficult to tell which is which” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1977, 89; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 59).

Read Alma 15:6 and ask: Why was Alma’s question important if Zeezrom was to be healed? (The healing would be based on Zeezrom’s faith in Jesus Christ.) Invite three students to each read one of the following scripture passages to the class: Alma 15:7–12; Matthew 9:2–7; James 5:14–15. Ask: In addition to overcoming his fever, what other kind of healing did Zeezrom experience? Share the following explanation by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“The person who by faith, devotion, righteousness, and personal worthiness, is in a position to be healed, is also in a position to have the justifying approval of the Spirit for his course of life, and his sins are forgiven him, as witnessed by the fact that he receives the companionship of the Spirit, which he could not have if he were unworthy” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 297–98).

Testify that the same power that can cure physical illness can also bring spiritual healing to the sick soul (see Matthew 9:5; Luke 5:18–25; JST, Luke 5:23). Both are possible through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Consider sharing a time you witnessed the healing of someone who was sick.

Alma 16:14–17. Teaching and receiving the word of God by the power of the Holy Ghost will help prepare us for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

(20–25 minutes)

A day or two prior to using this teaching suggestion, invite two to four students to prepare a “news broadcast” to present to the class from the events in Alma 16. Encourage them to use props and to be creative. Instruct half the students preparing the broadcast to focus on the destruction of Ammonihah (see Alma 16:1–11). Have them include what kind of people lived there (see Alma 8:9; 9:4; 14) and the

results of their wickedness. Instruct the other half to report on Alma and Amulek’s success in preaching to the Nephites after Ammonihah’s demise (see Alma 16:12–21). Have them include how the people responded to their teaching (see especially Alma 16:13, 16–17, 21).

Introduce their presentation by telling the class that they are about to see a news report from Alma’s day. Invite the class to listen for the contrast between how the people of Ammonihah and how the people in the other Nephite cities responded to the gospel message.

After the news report, ask the class what the major difference was in how the message was received. Read Alma 16:12–17 looking for how those who were teachable and believing were blessed. Encourage students to mark the words that describe these blessings. Read Alma 14:26–27, 29 and have students note the word *fear*. Read Alma 16:20 looking for feelings that contrast with the fear felt by the wicked in Ammonihah. Read verse 21 and discuss why these people were prepared for the Savior’s coming. Ask: What does this teach us about preparing for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ?



Introduction

Why do thousands of men and women return from serving a mission and describe their experience as the best years of their life? Elder Loren C. Dunn, a member of the Seventy, explained: “They come on their missions for many reasons: duty, service, the testimony they have of their message. But after serving honorably for eighteen months or two years, virtually all of them develop a deep and profound love for the people they serve among” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1985, 12; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 10).

The sons of Mosiah were Nephites who shared the gospel for fourteen years with people who hated Nephites. In spite of the affliction and persecution they faced, they succeeded in turning the hearts of many Lamanites to the gospel of Jesus Christ (see Alma 17:4–5). Their love for and service to the Lamanites softened the Lamanites’ hearts and opened the door for them to teach. Searching the scriptures and much prayer and fasting brought them the spirit of prophecy and revelation so they could teach with power and authority (see Alma 17:2–3). “They could not bear that any human soul

should perish; yea, even the very thoughts that any soul should endure endless torment did cause them to quake and tremble” (Mosiah 28:3). As you study these chapters, look for the acts of love and service shown by the sons of Mosiah toward the Lamanites, and notice the difference these acts made in their missionary success.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Fasting, prayer, and scripture study help us receive the Holy Ghost and understand the gospel (see Alma 17:1–3, 9–10; see also Jacob 4:6; D&C 88:76–78).
- Those who serve in a Christlike way have greater ability to influence those they teach (see Alma 17:11, 20–25; 18:8–23).
- Teaching true doctrine, including the nature of God, the Creation, the Fall of Adam, our fallen nature, and the need for the Savior’s Atonement, can lead people to repent and change their lives (see Alma 18:24–41; see also Colossians 1:13–16; Alma 22:10–14).
- The gospel of Jesus Christ brings light, hope, and joy to the soul (see Alma 19:6, 12–14, 29–36).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 81–82.

Suggestions for Teaching

Alma 17:1–6. Chronology Overview. (5–10 minutes)

Read Alma 17:1–4 looking for how long Alma and the sons of Mosiah served on their missions. Have students look at the Book of Mormon Chronology Chart on their bookmarks (item no. 32336) and find “Alma the Younger” and “Mission to the Lamanites.” (A copy of this chart is also included at the end of the student study guide.)

Have a student read the heading above the start of Alma 17 in the Book of Mormon. Discuss the following questions:

- What do chapters 17–26 of Alma describe?
- What other events were taking place at the same time in the Book of Mormon? (Alma and Amulek were doing missionary work.)
- Approximately what years do these chapters include? (About 91–77 B.C.)

Show students the following chart and quickly review the scriptures listed on it. Consider giving students copies of the chart to keep in their scriptures.

Overview of Alma 1–27 (dates are approximate)		
Among the Nephites		Among the Lamanites
91 B.C. Alma is chief judge over the Nephites (see Alma 1–4).		91 B.C. The sons of Mosiah go on missions to the Lamanites (see Alma 17:6–19).
83 B.C. Alma resigns judgeship and does missionary work (see Alma 5–15).	81–78 B.C. Unconverted Lamanites go against the Nephites and destroy the city of Ammonihah (see Alma 16; 25).	The sons of Mosiah rejoice in missionary success (see Alma 25:17; 26).
77 B.C. Alma and the sons of Mosiah meet (see Alma 17:1–5; 27:16).		77 B.C. The sons of Mosiah and converted Lamanites prepare to go to Zarahemla (see Alma 27:1–15).

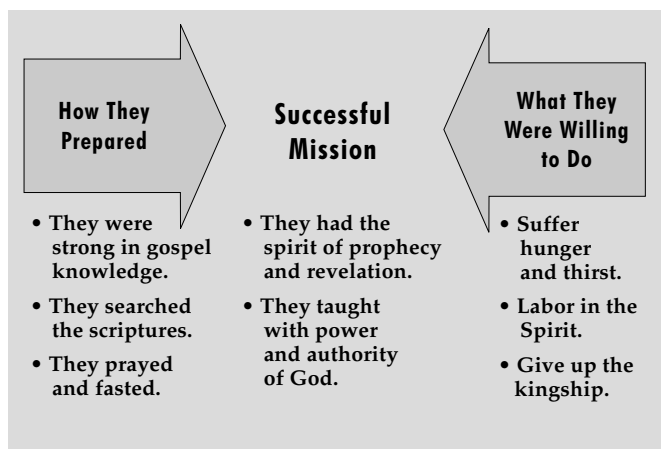
Alma 17:1–12. Fasting, prayer, and scripture study help us receive the Holy Ghost and teach the gospel. (10–15 minutes)

Ask students: What physical or material preparation must missionaries make prior to going on a mission? List their answers on the board under the heading *Physical Preparation*. (These might include obtaining clothing, getting medical and dental checkups, saving money.) Ask: What spiritual preparation should missionaries make? List responses under the heading *Spiritual Preparation*. (These might include reading the Book of Mormon, praying, fasting, studying the missionary discussions, making temple covenants.) Discuss the following questions:

- Why is physical preparation important to a missionary’s success?
- Why is spiritual preparation essential to a missionary’s success?
- How will a missionary’s success be affected when preparation is lacking? Why?

Read Alma 17:1–6 looking for how the sons of Mosiah had prepared and what they were willing to do to succeed on

their missions. As you find the answers, list them on the board as in the accompanying diagram.



Ask students to consider how their feelings about serving a mission compare to the expectations the sons of Mosiah had. Invite them to share missionary experiences they know of that demonstrate how today’s missionaries sacrifice, serve, study, and fast in order to receive the Lord’s power. Read Alma 17:9–10 and testify of the guidance, protection, and comfort the Lord provides to those who serve.

Ask: How could the spirit of revelation and the ability to teach “with power and authority of God” (v. 3) bless others? bless you? Share this statement by Elder W. Mack Lawrence, then a member of the Seventy:

“That same spirit of revelation—the spirit of conversion, if you will—is available to each of us as we diligently seek for it through fasting, prayer, obedience, and searching the scriptures” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 104; or *Ensign*, May 1996, 75).

Read the Lord’s promise in Doctrine and Covenants 84:85. Testify of the spirit of revelation that comes through fasting, prayer, obedience, and searching the scriptures. Explain that we need this spirit to help us share the gospel with others.



Alma 17:19–18:17. Prophets often serve as types of the life of the Savior. (45–50 minutes)

Note: This teaching suggestion builds on the teaching suggestions for Mosiah 7:1–8, 16 and Mosiah 11–17.

Before class write the following statement on the board:

“Live in such a way that people who know you but don’t know Christ will want to know Christ because they know you” (in H. David Burton, in Conference Report, Apr. 1994, 89; or *Ensign*, May 1994, 68).

Invite students to read Moses 6:63, and ask:

- How does this scripture relate to the statement on the board?
- In what ways can our lives testify of Jesus Christ?

Read 1 Nephi 22:20–21 looking for whom Moses was describing to his people. Invite students to suggest ways Moses’ life reminds them of the life of Jesus Christ. (Both survived attempts to kill them when they were babies, both fasted forty days and nights, both miraculously fed their followers, both delivered their followers from bondage.) The lives of other prophets in the scriptures also point to Jesus Christ. Ask students how Abraham’s being asked to sacrifice Isaac reminds them of Heavenly Father and His Only Begotten Son (see Jacob 4:5).

Divide the rows of the accompanying chart among students. (Each of the assigned students should have one or more verses about Ammon and corresponding verses about Jesus Christ.) Give the assigned students time to silently read their verses. As a class, read Alma 17:19–18:17. Pause at the verses in the chart to allow the assigned students to share how Ammon’s experience reminds them of Jesus Christ.

Ammon	Jesus Christ
Alma 17:20	Matthew 27:2
Alma 17:25	John 10:11
Alma 17:31	Matthew 18:12–13
Alma 17:37	D&C 6:2
Alma 18:3	John 10:17–18
Alma 18:10	John 6:38
Alma 18:13	John 20:16
Alma 18:17	Luke 22:42

Testify to students that a major purpose of the Book of Mormon is to convince “Jew and Gentile that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD, manifesting himself unto all nations” (title page of the Book of Mormon). Share this counsel from President Ezra Taft Benson:

“The honest seeker after truth can gain the testimony that Jesus is the Christ as he prayerfully ponders the inspired words of the Book of Mormon. . . .

“ . . . Let us read the Book of Mormon and be convinced that Jesus is the Christ. Let us continually reread the Book of Mormon so that we might more fully come to Christ, be committed to Him, centered in Him, and consumed in Him” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1987, 101, 104; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 83, 85).

Alma 17:19–18:23. Those who serve in a Christlike way have greater ability to influence those they teach.
(15–20 minutes)

Note: This teaching suggestion assumes students are familiar with the experience of Ammon in Alma 17–18.

Tell students that missionaries are given a small handbook at the start of their mission. If you can obtain one, show it to students. Explain that the book provides guidelines, principles, and rules for serving a successful mission. Missionaries are to carry the book with them, read it frequently, and live by its teachings. Read to students the handbook’s instructions on service:

- “1. Be courteous and provide acts of service.
“2. Provide community service as approved by your mission president. Limit service activities to four hours a week . . . except in times of emergency or disaster as directed by your mission president” (*Missionary Handbook* [1990], 30).

Ask: Why do you think counsel concerning service is included in the missionary handbook?

Remind students of the events that led to Ammon’s teaching King Lamoni. Upon entering the land of Ishmael, Ammon was captured by the king’s guards. According to custom, the king could have taken his life. Yet within days the king was so desirous to learn the gospel that he was willing to protect Ammon with his armies (see Alma 18:20–21).

- Read Alma 17:20–25; 18:10. What caused the change in the king’s feelings toward Ammon?
- How long was Ammon willing to serve the king? (see v. 23).
- Read Mosiah 28:3; Alma 17:9, 16. Why were the sons of Mosiah willing to do so much for the Lamanites?
- How might Ammon’s experience have been different if he had simply announced to the guards that he was there to teach the gospel to the king?

Elder Henry B. Eyring, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, said:

“Thousands of times every day, members of the Church are watched . . . by people curious to know something about our lives. Because we are under covenant to be witnesses, we will try to tell them how the gospel has brought us happiness. What they think of what we say may depend largely on how much they sense we care for them.”

Ask:

- In what ways have your parents taught you principles of the gospel?
- What made their teaching effective?

Invite students to think about teachers who have influenced them in the gospel. Ask:

- What made these teachers effective?
- How much did it matter that you knew these teachers cared about you?
- What does this teach you about sharing the gospel with others?

Have a student read the rest of Elder Eyring’s statement:

“Those we meet will feel the love. . . . It may not be in hours or days as it was for King Lamoni, but they will feel our love after testing our hearts. And when they find our concern sincere, the Holy Spirit can more easily touch them to allow us to teach and to testify, as it did for Ammon” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 42; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 32).

Tell students that sharing the gospel *is* service. Service is not simply a method to persuade others to listen to the gospel. Our service must be offered out of love and concern for others, regardless of how they respond to the gospel message.

Invite students to think about someone with whom they would like to share the gospel. Ask them to write on a piece of paper what they can do to serve that person. Have them include a scripture about service and write how serving others can help bring them to Christ.

Alma 18:24–19:36. Teaching true doctrine, including the nature of God, the Creation, the Fall of Adam, our fallen nature, and the need for the Savior’s Atonement, can lead people to repent and change their lives. (45–55 minutes)



Show students a piece of tapestry or a picture of one. Explain that tapestry is a heavy, embroidered cloth with a pictorial design, used for curtains, wall hangings, and upholstery. In the past large tapestries were sometimes used to tell stories or record important events. Ask: How would a piece of tapestry

be affected if it were missing several of its strands? Point out that each part of the fabric needs the other parts for strength and for the design to be complete.

Compare the gospel of Jesus Christ to a tapestry. Each strand of the gospel is related to the others. For example, repentance is related to baptism. Ask students to suggest other gospel principles that are related to each other. (Answers might include baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost, faith and works, obedience and blessings.) Testify that because gospel doctrines are so interrelated, learning about one doctrine will influence our understanding of another. Elder Bruce R. McConkie said:

“The three greatest events that ever have occurred or ever will occur in all eternity are these:

“1. The creation of the heavens and the earth, of man, and of all forms of life;

“2. The fall of man, of all forms of life, and of the earth itself from their primeval and paradisiacal state to their present mortal state; and

“3. The infinite and eternal atonement, which ransoms man, all living things, and the earth also from their fallen state so that the salvation of the earth and of all living things may be completed.

“These three divine events—the three pillars of eternity—are inseparably woven together into one grand tapestry known as the eternal plan of salvation” (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 81).

Help students understand that effective gospel teaching includes many important and related principles. Write on the board *the existence of God, the Creation, the Fall, and the plan of redemption*. Explain that Ammon taught each of these essential doctrines as he instructed King Lamoni. Read Alma 18:24–40 and ask students to point out verses in which Ammon teaches the doctrines listed on the board.

Read Alma 18:40–43; 19:6 to find what happened to Lamoni as a result of learning these doctrines. (Students may wonder why Lamoni reacted as he did upon hearing the gospel. Though Lamoni’s response was unusual, others have had similar experiences; see Mosiah 27:11, 19; Alma 22:18–19.)

Read Alma 19 together as a class, discussing the significant doctrines and principles in this chapter. (The narrative flows well and will hold the students’ interest.) The following questions and suggestions may help your discussion.

Verse 5

Ask: Why do you think the queen had a different reaction than others to the idea that her husband was dead? (Students may enjoy analyzing this passage.)

Verse 6

Ask:

- What change was Lamoni going through?
- What was influencing him?

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained:

“Those who heed the enticements and submit to the strivings of the Holy Spirit (which is the light of Christ) are enabled to receive the Holy Spirit (which is the Holy Ghost).

“We have no better illustration of the full operation of the light of Christ upon an investigator of the gospel than what happened to King Lamoni” (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 261).

Verse 13

Ask: What effect did Lamoni’s testimony and the power of the Spirit of God have on his wife?

Verse 14

Ask: How did Ammon show he was a humble missionary?

Verses 16–17

Ask:

- What do we know about Abish?
- What opportunity did she recognize and seize? (A chance to share the gospel.)
- What missionary opportunities have you had?

Verses 22–23

Suggest that students mark footnote 23a and read the scriptures referenced. Ask: What can we learn from these verses about the Lord’s promises?

Verses 24–29

Notice the arguing that arose over these miracles. Who would want the people to contend with each other even while great miracles from God were occurring? (see 3 Nephi 11:29). Why?

Verses 31–35

Have students write on the board the elements of the process of conversion experienced by Lamoni’s people as Lamoni begins to teach.

Verse 36

- Who is invited to receive the Holy Ghost?
- What must they do to receive it?

Testify that everyone who is willing to listen to and learn the gospel may experience a change of heart by the power of the Holy Ghost. (If you sense that students may be

overwhelmed or discouraged because they have not had a dramatic change in their lives, you may wish to share the caution by President Ezra Taft Benson found in the teaching suggestion for Alma 5, pp. 137–38.)



Introduction

Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, taught that “by not returning aggressions from others we can have a profound effect on them. Literally, we can change their hearts when we follow Christ’s example and turn the other cheek. Our examples as peaceable followers of Christ inspire others to follow him” (*Living with Enthusiasm* [1996], 128). The sons of Mosiah were instrumental in bringing many to the truth who then left behind a life of bloodshed. Their meekness impressed many of their enemies, who also laid down their weapons and joined their converted brothers and sisters. Help your students see that the change that comes into the lives of converts and their resulting happiness is worth any sacrifice they may be required to make.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The Holy Ghost prompts us to do God’s will, even when it is difficult (see Alma 20:1–5; 21:13–18; 22:1–4; see also Proverbs 3:5–6; 1 Nephi 4:10–13; D&C 11:12–13).
- Anger can lead to greater sins (see Alma 20:8–18; see also 3 Nephi 11:29–30; JST, Ephesians 4:26).
- Living the gospel does not always prevent suffering. However, the Lord eventually delivers those who endure to the end (see Alma 20:28–30; 21:13–14; see also Job 1:1; 2:7; Matthew 5:38–42; D&C 67:13; 90:24).
- To understand our need for a Savior, we must first know that God lives, that He created all things, and that because of the Fall and our own sins, we are cut off from God’s presence (see Alma 22:7–14; see also Colossians 1:13–16; Alma 18:24–41).
- Giving up our sins and being willing to sacrifice all we have brings eternal life and the joy of knowing God (see Alma 22:15–18; see also Matthew 13:44–46; Omni 1:26).
- Those who are converted to the Lord glory in His power and goodness, fear sin more than death, find joy in helping save souls, and are strengthened against apostasy (see

Alma 23:1–7; 24:6, 16–26; 26:11–17, 35–37; 29:1–3; see also Alma 30:19–20; D&C 18:10–16).

- We sorrow over those who die in wickedness. We teach the gospel of Jesus Christ to all of God’s children so that they can escape the consequences of dying in wickedness (see Alma 28:11–29:5; see also D&C 42:46–47).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 82–86.

Suggestions for Teaching

Alma 20:1–5; 21:16. The Holy Ghost prompts us to do God’s will, even when it is difficult. (15–20 minutes)

Show the class a pitcher of water. Have a student come to the front of the class. Request that the student change the water into orange juice without using any other objects or supplies. Ask the student:

- Why can’t you do it?
- What difference would it make if the Lord told you to do it?
- What commandments, if any, has the Lord given that seem impossible to keep?

Ask the class to name people from the scriptures who were asked by the Lord to do things that might have seemed impossible. List their answers on the board. (These might include Noah being commanded to build an ark, Moses being called to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt, and so on.) Ask:

- What made it possible for each person to accomplish the command?
- Why do you think they even attempted such tasks?
- Did they always know beforehand how they would accomplish their tasks?
- What could they rely on until the commandment was fulfilled?

Have a student read Alma 20:1–3, and ask:

- What task did the Lord give Ammon?
- Why would this assignment be difficult? (The people of Middoni were unfriendly toward Ammon’s brothers and did not know Ammon.)
- Why was Ammon ready to leave before he even knew *how* he was to rescue his brothers?

Remind students that Nephi was also given a difficult assignment. Have them read the chapter heading for 1 Nephi 3 to discover what it was. Have a student read 1 Nephi 4:6 and explain how this was similar to Ammon’s assignment. (Ammon was told of a problem but not how to solve it.) Read the first sentence of Alma 20:4 and ask:

How did Lamoni show that he had faith in the Lord’s ability to help His children accomplish His commands? Have students read Romans 8:31 and cross-reference it with Alma 20:4. Ask students what principle both Lamoni and Paul testified of.

Read Alma 20:4–7 and ask: How did the Lord provide a way for Ammon to rescue his fellow missionaries? You may wish to ask students to share experiences in which they felt impressed to do something difficult and found a way to do it with the Lord’s help. Testify that as we live worthily, we will receive promptings to do the Lord’s work. This inspiration will not always be easy to follow, but with faith and prayer we can do what we are asked.

Alma 20:8–17. Anger can lead to greater sins.

(20–25 minutes)

Have students suggest some reasons people become angry. Read 3 Nephi 11:29 and ask who encourages angry feelings and contention. Read Alma 20:16 and ask students what they think led Lamoni’s father to anger. Have them read verses 8–15 looking for reasons that could explain his anger, and have them share their findings. Ask: How do these reasons relate to the doctrine taught in 3 Nephi 11:29?

Read Alma 20:17 and ask:

- What did Ammon warn the king about his anger?
- Why do you think Ammon told the king about the spiritual danger of anger rather than simply defending Lamoni with his sword?
- Why is it so difficult to feel the Spirit when we are angry?

Write the following references on the board: *JST, Ephesians 4:26; 3 Nephi 11:30; 12:22*. Invite students to read the passages and summarize their message in one brief sentence. Explain that we must repent of anger in order to feel the influence of the Holy Ghost in our lives (see D&C 1:33). Have students share ways they have learned to overcome their anger.

Share the following observations about anger and invite students’ comments. Elder Lynn G. Robbins, a member of the Seventy, said:

“We can ‘do away’ with anger, for He has so taught and commanded us.

“Anger is a yielding to Satan’s influence by surrendering our self-control. It is the thought-sin that leads to hostile feelings or behavior. It is the detonator of road rage on the freeway, flare-ups in the sports arena, and domestic violence in homes.

“Unchecked, anger can quickly trigger an explosion of cruel words and other forms of emotional abuse that can scar a tender heart” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 106; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 80–81).

President Gordon B. Hinckley, then a member of the First Presidency, said:

“May I suggest that you watch your temper now, in these formative years of your life. . . . This is the season to develop the power and capacity to discipline yourselves. You may think it is the macho thing to flare up in anger and swear and profane the name of the Lord. It is not the macho thing. It is an indication of weakness. Anger is not an expression of strength. It is an indication of one’s inability to control his thoughts, words, his emotions. Of course it is easy to get angry. When the weakness of anger takes over, the strength of reason leaves. Cultivate within yourselves the mighty power of self-discipline” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1991, 71; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 51).

Later, as President of the Church, President Hinckley said:

“If you have a temper, now is the time to learn to control it. The more you do so while you are young, the more easily it will happen. Let no member of this Church ever lose control of himself in such an unnecessary and vicious manner” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 68; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 50).

Alma 20:28–30; 21:13–14. Living the gospel does not always prevent suffering. However, the Lord eventually delivers those who endure to the end.

(20–25 minutes)

Show students a polished stone, a piece of forged metal (such as that used for many metal tools), and a smooth piece of woodwork. Ask what they have in common. Help them see that all have been through a refining process—abrasion polished the stone, heat forged the metal, and carving and sanding shaped the wood. Share the following observation from the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“I am like a huge, rough stone rolling down from a high mountain; and the only polishing I get is when some corner gets rubbed off by coming in contact with something else, . . . knocking off a corner here and a corner there. Thus I will become a smooth and polished shaft in the quiver of the Almighty” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 304).

Discuss the following questions:

- What did Joseph Smith say helped him become a better servant of the Lord?
- What are some examples of his suffering?

- What are some examples in the scriptures of righteous people who suffered? (List responses on the board for later reference.)
- Why does Heavenly Father allow His followers to suffer?

Assign three students to each read one of the following passages to the class: Alma 17:2–3, 5; Alma 20:28–30; Alma 21:13–14. Discuss the following questions:

- What experiences faced by Ammon’s brothers might have challenged their faith?
- Why do you think their missionary experience was so different from Ammon’s?
- How did they react to their hardships? (see Alma 20:29).

To help students better understand how to bear their own trials, have them make a scripture chain with the following references: Matthew 5:10–12, 38–44; Mosiah 24:13–14; Doctrine and Covenants 24:8; 67:13; 90:24 (see page 280 for directions on making a scripture chain).

Share the following statements about patience during affliction. Elder Marion D. Hanks, an emeritus member of the Seventy, said:

“The promise is that in times of sorrow and affliction, if we endure and remain faithful and put our trust in him and are courageous, the Lord will visit us in our afflictions, strengthen us to carry our burdens, and support us in our trials. He’ll be with us to the end of our days, lift us at the last day to greater opportunities for service, and exalt us at last with him and reunited loved ones, and he will consecrate our afflictions to our gain” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 87; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 64).

Elder Rex D. Pinegar, then a member of the Presidency of the Seventy, taught:

“There is terrible suffering in our world today. Tragic things happen to good people. God does not cause them, nor does He always prevent them. He does, however, strengthen us and bless us with His peace through earnest prayer” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1993, 83; or *Ensign*, May 1993, 67).

Elder Ronald E. Poelman, then a member of the Seventy, said:

“Without adversity, we may tend to forget the divine purpose of mortality and live our lives focused on the transitory things of the world.

“Should we therefore desire or seek to experience adversity and suffering? No! May we appropriately try to avoid it? Yes! Is it proper to ask for relief? Yes, always adding, in accordance with the Savior’s example, ‘nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt’ (Matthew 26:39)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1989, 31; or *Ensign*, May 1989, 24).

Refer students to the list on the board of righteous people in the scriptures who suffered. Ask which of these people endured their suffering with patience. Invite students to briefly share examples of people they know who have been patient during affliction. Ask them to tell what helped these people endure patiently.



Alma 22:1–14. To understand our need for a Savior, we must first know that God lives, that He created all things, and that because of the Fall and our own sins, we are cut off from God’s presence. (30–35 minutes)

Show the class some cups and a pitcher of ice-cold water. Offer a drink to a few students who are thirsty. Ask if there are any students who are not interested in a drink of water. Ask:

- What makes a drink of water appealing?
- Why does everyone need water?
- Why might some not want it?

Display a variety of foods or pictures of food on a table and ask if anyone is hungry.

- Why does food interest those who are hungry?
- Why does everyone need food?
- If we are not hungry, does food have the same appeal for us? Why not?

Display a picture of Jesus Christ. Ask:

- Does everyone need the Savior in their lives? Why?
- Does everyone know they need Him? Why or why not?

Share the following observation by President Ezra Taft Benson:

“Just as a man does not really desire food until he is hungry, so he does not desire the salvation of Christ until he knows why he needs Christ.

“No one adequately and properly knows why he needs Christ until he understands and accepts the doctrine of the Fall and its effect upon all mankind. And no other book in the world explains this vital doctrine nearly as well as the Book of Mormon” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 106; or *Ensign*, May 1987, 85).

Ammon taught Lamoni about the Fall so he could understand why we all need Christ (see Alma 18:36–39). Aaron did the same with Lamoni’s father. Read with students Alma 22:1–8 to see how Aaron prepared the king to learn the doctrines of the Fall and the Atonement. Ask: Why do you think Aaron began his teaching by asking the king about his belief in God? Share the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“A knowledge of God and of his laws is essential to salvation. No one can be saved in ignorance of God”
(*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 43).

Tell students that after teaching the king about God, Aaron read and explained the scriptures to him. Elder Henry B. Eyring said, “Aaron taught the word of God in a way that emphasizes God’s love and our need for Him” (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1995, 52; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 39).

Write the headings *Creation*, *Fall*, and *Atonement of Jesus Christ* on the board. Have students read Alma 22:9–14 looking for the verses in which these doctrines are taught. Then have a few of them come to the board and write the verse numbers they identified and a brief summary of the doctrines found in those verses under each heading. The lists on the board might look something like this:

Creation	Fall	Atonement of Jesus Christ
Verses 10–11. God created the heavens and the earth.	Verses 12–13. Because of transgression, man is fallen and is in a carnal state.	Verse 13. The plan of redemption was prepared during the premortal existence.
Verse 12. God created man in His own image.	Verse 14. Fallen man cannot “merit anything of himself.”	Verse 14. “The sufferings and death of Christ atone for [our] sins, through faith and repentance.”
		Verse 14. Christ’s Atonement breaks the bands of death (all will be resurrected).

Refer students to the three headings on the board and ask:


- How does the doctrine that we are created in God’s image help you understand His love for you?
- Why does God allow His children to break His commandments?

- What does the Atonement of Jesus Christ do for us that we cannot do for ourselves?
- What must we do to apply the gift of the Atonement in our lives?

Share the following questions from President Ezra Taft Benson and invite students to write their answers on a piece of paper:

“What personal meaning does the Lord’s suffering in Gethsemane and on Calvary have for each of us?”

“What does redemption from the Fall mean to us? In the words of Alma, do we ‘sing the song of redeeming love’? (Alma 5:26)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 107; or *Ensign*, May 1987, 85).

 **Alma 22:15–18. Giving up our sins and being willing to sacrifice all we have brings eternal life and the joy of knowing God.** (25–30 minutes)

List on the board *baptism*, *the gift of the Holy Ghost*, *priesthood ordination*, and *temple sealings*. Ask:

- Why are these ordinances so important?
- What would you be willing to sacrifice in order to receive these ordinances?

Share the following remark by Elder Dallin H. Oaks:

“Two companion qualities evident in the lives of our pioneers, early and modern, are *unselfishness* and *sacrifice*. Our Utah pioneers excelled at putting ‘the general welfare and community goals over individual gain and personal ambition’ [Carol Cornwall Madsen, *Journey to Zion: Voices from the Mormon Trail* (1997), 6]. That same quality is evident in the conversion stories of modern pioneers. Upon receiving a testimony of the truth of the restored gospel, they have unhesitatingly sacrificed all that was required to assure that its blessings will be available to their children and to generations unborn. Some have sold all their property to travel to a temple. Some have lost employment. Many have lost friends. Some have even lost parents and extended family, as new converts have been disowned for their faith. This must be the greatest sacrifice of all” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 100; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 72).

You might want to share recent accounts of members who sacrificed much to accept the gospel or receive gospel ordinances, or have students share examples. Be sure to emphasize the blessings of such sacrifice.

Explain to students that sometimes we are called on to make material sacrifices to receive some of the blessings of the gospel. And though the ordinances are always free, we must meet the requirements to receive them. Have students read Doctrine and Covenants 64:34, and suggest they underline what the Lord requires. Read Alma 22:15 to see what King Lamoni's father was willing to give to receive the joy of the gospel. Ask:

- How did the king's offer begin to fulfill the requirement the Lord gave in Doctrine and Covenants 64:34?
- Why did the king have to give more than material possessions to be filled with joy?
- What evidence can you give that the king's heart, or motive, was right?

Read Alma 22:16–18 and invite students to mark in their scriptures what the king offered and what he desired in exchange. Ask some of the following questions:

- How did the king's "giving away" all his sins show he was offering his "heart and a willing mind"?
- In what ways are sins a possession?
- What does it mean to give away all our sins?
- Which of his offers (verse 15 or verse 18) do you think required the greater sacrifice? Why?
- Why is it so difficult to give away our sins?

Ask students what they think it means to know God. Have them consider what we must do to give away our sins. Show students the statements under "Giving Away Our Sins" in the appendix (p. 297). (You could display them on an overhead projector or on the board, or give them to students as a handout.) Ask students to identify words or phrases in the statements that describe what we can do to give away our sins, and discuss their findings.

Alma 23–29. Those who are converted to the Lord glory in His power and goodness, fear sin more than death, find joy in helping to save souls, and are strengthened against apostasy. (35–40 minutes)

Ask students if they have ever heard people speak of their conversion to the gospel. Ask: Why are they usually enthusiastic about the gospel? Help students see that true conversion to the gospel brings many blessings. Read the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson and have them identify words that describe those who are truly converted:

"Men captained by Christ will be consumed in Christ. To paraphrase President Harold B. Lee, they set fire in others because they are on fire. (See *Stand Ye in Holy Places* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1974], p. 192.)
"Their will is swallowed up in His will. (See John 5:30.)

"They do always those things that please the Lord. (See John 8:29.)

"Not only would they die for the Lord, but more important they want to live for Him.

"Enter their homes, and the pictures on their walls, the books on their shelves, the music in the air, their words and acts reveal them as Christians.

"They stand as witnesses of God at all times, and in all things, and in all places. (See Mosiah 18:9.)" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1985, 6; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 6–7).

Divide your class into four groups. Assign each group one of the following scripture blocks:

- Alma 23:1–7, 16–18
- Alma 24:6, 16–26
- Alma 26:11–17, 35–37
- Alma 29:1–3, 9–14

Give each group a copy of the quotations that go with their scripture block from "Those Who Are Truly Converted" in the appendix (p. 297). Have them read their verses and the quotes, and then invite each group to teach the rest of the class what they learned about true conversion.

Help students summarize how conversion changes us (you could list some ways on the board). Testify that these changes can continue throughout our lives as we faithfully keep our covenants.

Alma 28–29. We sorrow over those who die in wickedness. We teach the gospel of Jesus Christ to all of God's children so they can escape the consequences of dying in wickedness. (40–45 minutes)

Invite students to describe what they feel is the saddest experience in life. Ask:

- What makes each circumstance so sad?
- Could it be prevented? How?

Alma 28 contains an account of a very sad experience. Read with the class verses 1–11, pausing after verses 2 and 6 to apply the questions above. Read verse 12 and ask:

- What is different about this description?
- Why is the thought of someone dying in wickedness a reason to feel sorrow?
- Why can we rejoice when a righteous person dies, even though we will miss the person?
- How might our sorrow at the physical death of a loved one differ from our sorrow when a loved one dies spiritually?

Read and cross-reference Alma 28:13–14 and Doctrine and Covenants 93:38–39. Ask students to discuss the following questions:

- All people are born innocent (see D&C 93:38). What causes the inequality spoken of in Alma 28:13? (Sin, transgression, and disobedience.)
- Why doesn't everyone face death with the same perspective?
- What can we do to offer others a better view of life and death?
- How can we "labor in the vineyards of the Lord"? (Alma 28:14).

Have a student read Alma 29:1–3, and ask:

- What was Alma's wish?
- What frustrated him?

Continue reading verses 4–5 and look for what Alma understood about sharing the gospel with others. (People have their agency and may choose to reject the gospel message.)

Explain that sharing the gospel brings great joy, but it can also be very challenging. Many wish to share the Lord's message but do not know how.

Divide students into five groups. Have them prepare for and then role-play the following situations:

1. You consider Monique to be your closest friend. You do a lot of things together but have never talked about the gospel. Your challenge is to introduce the Book of Mormon to her and invite her to start reading it.
2. You have become friends with Dennis. He is a lot of fun but is not a member of the Church. He has high standards and always treats you well. He lives in your ward area. Your challenge is to get him to attend church with you.
3. You are a member of a school sports team. Each day after practice you walk home with Nigel, a good athlete who is very popular. You have not associated with him very much until lately. You are impressed with his attitude. Your ward has a youth activity planned. Your challenge is to invite him to attend with you.
4. A group of your friends are at your home one evening. Ricardo is the only nonmember in the group. You have had a great time playing games and enjoying each other's company. Suddenly Ricardo says, "You Mormons seem to really know how to have fun." Your challenge is to let him know why Mormons have such good, clean fun and to invite him to attend church with you on Sunday.
5. You work in a restaurant with Nykele. She has been married about two years, and her marriage is in trouble. As she explains her problems to you, it becomes clear that the teachings of the Church can help her find what she and her husband seem to be lacking. Your challenge is to invite her to listen to the full-time missionaries.

Consider discussing the following questions:

- Read Alma 29:8. What are some ways the Lord accomplishes what is described in this verse?
- How can you assist Him?
- Read verses 9–10. How does our sharing the gospel bring glory to the Lord?
- In what ways does sharing the gospel bring us joy? (Invite students who have shared the gospel to describe how the experience brought them closer to the person they shared it with and to their Heavenly Father.)
- Read verses 14–15. Why do you think returned missionaries have so much love for the missionaries they served with?

Share the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley:

"[The Lord] expects us to be good neighbors, Christians in every sense of the word. Those who follow the golden rule—'whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.' (Matt. 7:12; 3 Ne. 14:12.) My brothers and sisters, we must be good neighbors. We must be a friendly people. We must recognize the good in all people. We don't go about tearing down other churches. We preach and teach in a positive and affirmative way. We say to those of other faiths, 'you bring with you all the good that you have and let us see if we can add to it.' That is . . . the essence of our great missionary program and it yields results" ("Messages of Inspiration from President Hinckley," *Church News*, 7 Nov. 1998, 2).



Introduction

To help us grow spiritually in these difficult times, our Heavenly Father has given us His word. President Ezra Taft Benson explained, "The word of God, as found in the scriptures, in the words of living prophets, and in personal revelation, has the power to fortify the Saints and arm them with the Spirit so they can resist evil, hold fast to the good, and find joy in this life" ("The Power of the Word," *Ensign*, May 1986, 80). Alma 30–35 illustrates the power of the word

of God to change lives and fortify the Saints against enemies of the Lord’s work.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Satan uses those who come under his power to teach his false doctrines. The words of prophets and scripture expose Satan’s lies (see Alma 30:6–18).
- The peace and joy that come from the Spirit, together with the testimonies of prophets, the scriptures, and all of creation, are evidence that God exists (see Alma 30:34–44; see also Moses 6:63).
- The word of God has the power to change people’s thoughts and attitudes and lead them to choose the right (see Alma 31:5; 35:3; see also 1 Nephi 11:25; Helaman 6:37).
- People must be humble before they will repent and accept the gospel (see Alma 31:24–28; 32:6–8, 12–16, 25; see also D&C 136:32–33).
- Faith is a “hope for things which are not seen, which are true” (Alma 32:21). Gaining faith in Jesus Christ can be a gradual process (see Alma 32:21–43; 33:12–23; see also Hebrews 11:1; Ether 12:6).
- God hears and answers our prayers. Daily prayer helps us recognize our dependence on the Savior (see Alma 33:2–11; 34:17–27, 39).
- The infinite and eternal Atonement of Jesus Christ is the central feature of the plan of redemption (see Alma 34:2, 6–16).
- Mortality is the time for us to repent. We will carry the qualities and habits we gain in this life with us into the next life (see Alma 34:32–35).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 87–92.

Suggestions for Teaching

Alma 30:1–18. Satan uses those who come under his power to teach his false doctrines. The words of prophets and scripture expose Satan’s lies.

(25–30 minutes)

Arrange with two students in advance to help you with the following object lesson. Use a nail to poke a small hole in the bottom of a soda can and allow the contents to drain out. Have one student show the can to the class without revealing that it is empty and offer to sell it to the highest bidder. As students begin to make offers, have the second student step forward, examine the can, and tell the class what is inside.

Point out that the can may look appealing, but its appearance is deceiving. Ask:

- How did the second student know what the rest of the class did not know?
- How may we compare the second student to the Lord’s prophets and scriptures?

The prophet Alma’s experience with Korihor provides an example of how the prophets and the scriptures reveal truth and expose false doctrines. To help students understand the context of Alma 30, have them quickly read verses 1–5, and ask:

- How well were the people of Nephi living the commandments of the Lord?
- What blessings did this bring them?

Have them quickly read verses 6–11, and ask:

- What laws of the Nephites allowed people to preach against the coming of Christ?
- What is an anti-Christ? (Someone who counterfeits the true gospel plan and opposes Christ.)
- Read verse 12. What was the name of the anti-Christ?

Write the following matching exercise on the board. Have students read Alma 30:12–18 and take turns matching the teachings of Korihor in the left column with their implications in the right column. (The answers are given at the end.)

Teachings of Korihor the Anti-Christ	
1. “No man can know of anything which is to come” (v. 13).	A. Unless you have physical evidence of religious truths, you should not believe.
2. “These things which ye call prophecies . . . are foolish traditions” (v. 14).	B. There is no such thing as sin.
3. “Ye cannot know of things which ye do not see” (v. 15).	C. People prosper by their own efforts alone, not by God’s blessings.
4. There is no remission of sins (see v. 16).	D. The scriptures are not true.
5. “Every man [fares] in this life according to the management of the creature” (v. 17).	E. You cannot believe the prophets or their prophecies.
6. “Whatsoever a man [does is] no crime” (v. 17).	F. Since there is no Christ, there can be no atonement for sin.
7. When a person dies, that is the end of him (see v. 18).	G. There will be no future accounting or judgment since there is no life after death.

(Answers: 1–E, 2–D, 3–A, 4–F, 5–C, 6–B, 7–G)

Have students read verse 18 and tell what effect Korihor’s teachings had on many of the people. Discuss the following questions:

- Which of Korihor’s teachings have you heard taught?
- Why do so many of Korihor’s teachings continue to be popular today?

Tell students that the Lord inspired the prophet Alma to expose and confound Korihor’s false teachings. Ask: What has the Lord given us to protect us from enemies of the truth?

Testify that Heavenly Father has blessed us with scripture and modern prophets to help us discern the false teachings of our day. President Ezra Taft Benson, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve, explained:

“The Book of Mormon exposes the enemies of Christ. It confounds false doctrines and lays down contention. (See 2 Ne. 3:12.) It fortifies the humble followers of Christ against the evil designs, strategies, and doctrines of the devil in our day. The type of apostates in the Book of Mormon are similar to the type we have today. God, with his infinite foreknowledge, so molded the Book of Mormon that we might see the error and know how to combat false educational, political, religious, and philosophical concepts of our time” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1975, 94–95; or *Ensign*, May 1975, 64).

Elder Henry B. Eyring taught:

“Every time that I have listened to the counsel of prophets, felt it confirmed in prayer, and then followed it, I have found that I moved toward safety. Along the path, I have found that the way had been prepared for me and the rough places made smooth. God led me to safety along a path which was prepared with loving care, sometimes prepared long before” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 33; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 25).

Alma 30:19–60. When confronted with opposition from enemies of the Lord’s Church, we can respond without contention and in harmony with the Savior’s teachings. (30–35 minutes)

Share the following Chinese fable, related in 1857 by Elder George A. Smith, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“A man travelling through the country came to a large city, very rich and splendid; he looked at it and said to his guide, ‘This must be a very righteous people, for I can only see but one little devil in this great city.’

“The guide replied, ‘You do not understand, sir. This city is so perfectly given up to wickedness, corruption,

degradation, and abomination of every kind, that it requires but one devil to keep them all in subjection.’

“Travelling on a little further, he came to a rugged path and saw an old man trying to get up the hill side, surrounded by seven great, big, coarse-looking devils.

“‘Why,’ says the traveller, ‘this must be a tremendously wicked old man! Only see how many devils there are around him!’

“‘This,’ replied the guide, ‘is the only righteous man in the country; and there are seven of the biggest devils trying to turn him out of his path, and they all cannot do it.’” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 5:363–64).

Invite students to discuss the principle Elder Smith was teaching with this fable. Ask them how the fable helps them understand the opposition the Church has faced since the First Vision. Testify that because the restored gospel is a threat to Satan’s efforts, there will be those who oppose the Church. We can learn much about dealing with false doctrine by reading how Book of Mormon prophets dealt with opposition.

If you have already taught Alma 30:1–18, move to the questions below. Otherwise you first need to introduce Korihor and briefly share some of his teachings (see vv. 13–18).

- Read Alma 30:18. How did the people of Zarahemla respond to Korihor’s teachings?
- Read verses 19–20. What did the people of Ammon do with Korihor when he started teaching in their land?
- Why do you think Mormon said they were more wise than many of the Nephites?
- Read verses 21–22. Why was Korihor unsuccessful in Gideon?
- Read verses 23–31. What accusations did Korihor make against Church leaders?
- Were the accusations justified? (see v. 35).

Alma’s response to Korihor provides a good example of how to deal with opposition. Alma, in accordance with the Savior’s teachings, did not contend with Korihor (see 3 Nephi 11:29; D&C 60:14). He corrected Korihor’s false accusations against Church leaders. He showed how Korihor was twisting the truth. And he used his testimony and the teachings of the prophets and the scriptures to defend the truth. Read Alma 30:31–45 with your students to see Alma’s approach. Choose some ideas from the accompanying chart and the questions that follow to help your discussion.

Alma 30

Korihor Said	Alma Responded
Church leaders glut themselves on the labor of the people (see v. 31).	You know Church leaders don't profit from their service in the Church; our only profit is rejoicing in the joy of our brethren (see vv. 32–34).
You can't know things that you can't see (see v. 15). God never was and never will be (see v. 28).	I know there is a God (see v. 39). You have no evidence that there is no God (see v. 40). Church leaders, prophets, the scriptures, and all of creation testify that there is a God (see v. 44).
I do not believe in God (see vv. 37–38, 45).	I know you believe, but you are possessed of a lying spirit (see v. 42; see also vv. 52–53).
I won't believe in God unless you show me a sign (see vv. 43, 45, 48).	You already have signs (see vv. 44–45). As an additional sign, you will be struck dumb (see vv. 49, 51).

Alma 30:37–43

- What does Korihor's request for a sign teach us about him? (see Matthew 16:4; see also the commentary for Alma 30:37–43 in *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, p. 88).

Alma 30:39, 44

- What four evidences did Alma give for the existence of God? (His testimony, the testimony of Church members and prophets, the scriptures, and the existence of the earth and movement of the planets.)
- Which of these evidences exist today? (see the commentary for Alma 30:44–45 in *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, p. 88).

Alma 30:48–51

- Why do you think the Lord chose to strike Korihor dumb rather than give him some other sign? (*Note:* Remind students that not all who deny the Lord or fight against His work are immediately struck dumb, but ultimately they will receive the consequences of their acts.)

Alma 30:54–56

- How did Alma know that Korihor would again lead others to sin?
- In what ways does our prophet warn us about those who would lead us to sin?

Alma 30:59–60

- What do these verses teach us about the kind of people the Zoramites were?
- Read Mormon 4:5. How does Korihor's death illustrate the principle taught in this verse?

- What is the difference between the devil's support and the support we receive in the Church?

Share the following conclusions drawn by Elder George A. Smith about the fable related earlier:

"The Devil has . . . the whole world . . . so perfectly at his disposal, that it only takes a very few devils to keep them all in subjection; and the whole legion of devils have nothing to do but look after the 'Mormons' and stir up the hearts of the children of men to destroy them—to put them out of existence" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 5:364).

Share the following counsel from Elder Carlos E. Asay, who was a member of the Presidency of the Seventy:

"How do we respond to such malicious and evil designs? Do we strike back? Allow me to suggest a course of action—one which is in harmony with the teachings of the Savior, and one which, if followed, will be in harmony with the wise counsel of prophets past and present:

"1. *Avoid those who would tear down your faith.* Faith-killers are to be shunned. The seeds which they plant in the minds and hearts of men grow like cancer and eat away the Spirit. True messengers of God are builders—not destroyers. . . .

"2. *Keep the commandments.* President Brigham Young promised, 'All we have to do is to go onward and upward, and keep the commandments of our Father and God; and he will confound our enemies.' (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1957, p. 347.) . . .

"3. *Follow the living prophets.* . . . 'Always keep your eye on the President of the Church, and if he ever tells you to do anything, and it is wrong, and you do it, the Lord will bless you for it. . . . But you don't need to worry. The Lord will never let his mouthpiece lead the people astray.' (Heber J. Grant, quoted by Marion G. Romney in Conference Report, Oct. 1960, p. 78.) . . .

"4. *Do not contend or debate over points of doctrine.* The Master warned that 'the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil.' (3 Ne. 11:29.) We are inconsistent if we resort to Satanic tactics in attempting to achieve righteous ends. Such inconsistency results only in frustration, loss of the Spirit, and ultimate defeat. . . .

"5. Search the scriptures. Few of us would go astray or lose our way if we regarded the scriptures as our personal guide or compass. . . .

"6. Do not be swayed or diverted from the mission of the Church. . . . Satan used a diversion ploy when he tempted Christ in the wilderness. The Savior's decisive response, 'Get thee hence, Satan' (Matt. 4:10), is a proper example for all of us. . . .

"7. Pray for your enemies. . . .

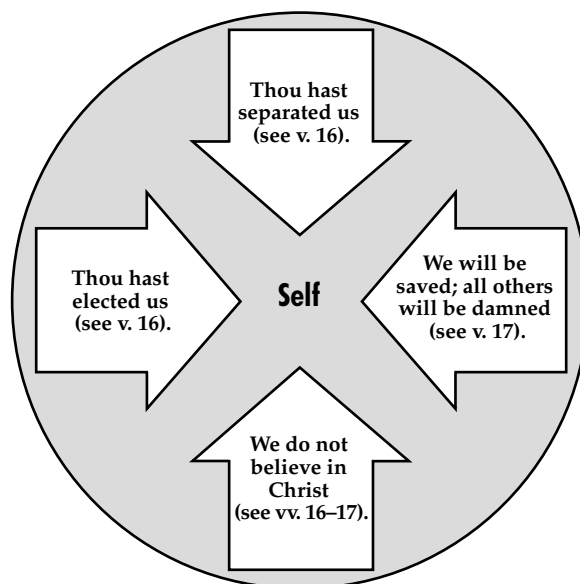
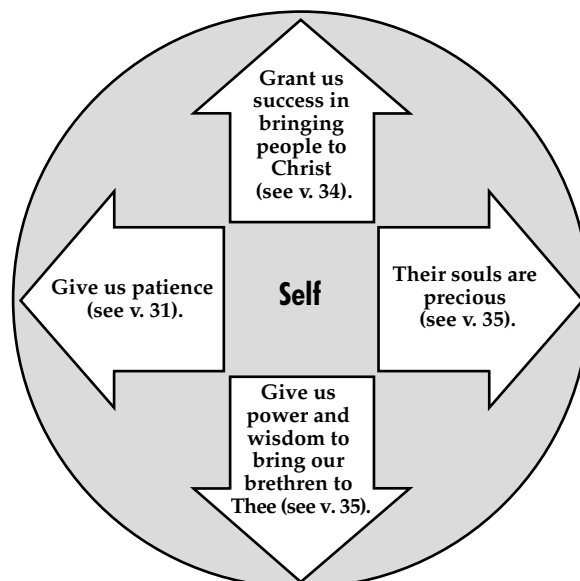
"8. Practice 'pure religion.' Involve yourself in Christian service. . . .

"9. Remember that there may be many questions for which we have no answers and that some things have to be accepted simply on faith" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1981, 93–94; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 67–68).

Alma 31. The word of God has the power to change people's thoughts and attitudes and lead them to choose the right. (40–45 minutes)

Prior to class invite a student who is a good reader to participate in the following activity. Without giving any scripture reference or explanation to the class, have the student come to the front of the room and read Alma 31:15–18. Ask students if they know where this prayer came from. Explain that it is a prayer the Zoramites offered while standing on a high tower. Ask the class to estimate the spiritual level of these people. Have students read the first two phrases from the chapter heading of Alma 31 and compare the phrases with their own guesses.

Write on the board *we*, *us*, and *our*. Invite students to read Alma 31:15–18 and find the number of times these words appear in the prayer. What does this teach us about the Zoramites? Draw the accompanying charts on the board. Include the word *self* on both charts, but leave off the other words. Ask which chart best represents the Zoramites' prayer. Invite students to suggest words and ideas from the prayer that could be written in the arrows of the chart they chose to illustrate the self-centered nature of the Zoramites' prayer. (Students' answers may not agree exactly with the ones suggested here.)



As a contrast to the Zoramites' prayer, read the prayer Alma offered prior to teaching the Zoramites (see Alma 31:26–35). Have students identify words from Alma's prayer that could be placed in the arrows pointing outward.

Read Alma 31:13, 21–22 looking for how the Zoramites worshiped. Have students take turns reading verses 8–10, 23–25, 27–28 and summarize what these verses say about the Zoramites. Have them read verses 1–2 and tell how the Zoramites' wickedness affected Alma. Have students imagine that Alma came to them for advice on how to deal with the Zoramites, and ask: What would you suggest? Read verses 3–4 and ask: If Alma decided to send an army to the land of the Zoramites, do you think that would change their beliefs and behavior? Why or why not?

Have students read Alma 31:5 and mark the tool Alma decided to use with the Zoramites and his reason for doing so. Ask: Why is the word of God effective in leading people to do what is right? Read Helaman 6:37 and look for what weapon the Lamanites used to destroy the Gadianton robbers. Share the following statement by Elder Boyd K. Packer:

“True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior.

“The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 20; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 17).

Read also the statement by President Ezra Taft Benson in the teaching suggestion for Alma 4:11–20 (p. 135).

Alma 32:1–16. People must be humble before they will repent and accept the gospel. (10–15 minutes)

Show the class a piece of soft clay and a piece of clay that is dry and hard. (If clay is not available, you might use hard and soft soil.) Ask:

- Which piece is easiest to work with? Why?
- How could you compare the soft clay to a new convert to the Church?
- What does it mean to have a soft heart? a hard heart?
- Why is it necessary to have a soft heart to be able to learn gospel principles?

Remind students of the spiritual condition of the Zoramites (see Alma 31:20–25). Invite them to read Alma 32:1–3 to find which Zoramites were most willing to listen to the message of Alma and his companions. Ask: Why do you think poor people are sometimes more willing than the prosperous to listen to the gospel message? Read Alma 32:5–6 looking for why these people were prepared to be taught. Ask:

- What times in your life have you been the most enthusiastic or willing to learn gospel principles?
- In what ways might the Lord help humble us?

Read Alma 32:14 and look for ways Alma said we could become humble. Ask:

- How can we receive the Lord’s word? (Answers might include studying the scriptures, listening to prophets and inspired leaders, following the promptings of the Holy Ghost, studying our patriarchal blessings.)
- How can the word of the Lord make us humble?

Have students read Alma 32:13, 16 and compare the two

ways to be humble. Read Alma 32:15–16 and ask: Why might Alma say we are more blessed if we humble ourselves than if we are compelled to be humble? Ask students to ponder whether they are humble because of the word or whether they must usually be compelled to be humble.

Share the following statement by Elder Neal A. Maxwell:

“The gospel requires us to yield our minds as well as bend our knees. Minds are often more arthritic than knees” (*That Ye May Believe* [1992], 101).

Ask: How does this statement relate to Alma 32:15–16?

Testify that humility can come from simple, daily experiences such as prayer, scripture study, recognizing our dependence on the Lord, and sharing our testimony with others.

Alma 32:21 (Scripture Mastery). Faith is a “hope for things which are not seen, which are true.” (5–10 minutes)

Ask if any of your students have been to Japan (or some other far-away but well-known country). Address the following questions to those who haven’t been to that country:

- How do you know it exists?
- What evidence do you have that it exists? (They may know people who have been there, or may have seen pictures of it, or heard the language, or seen it on maps.)
- How could you eventually know for yourself that it exists?

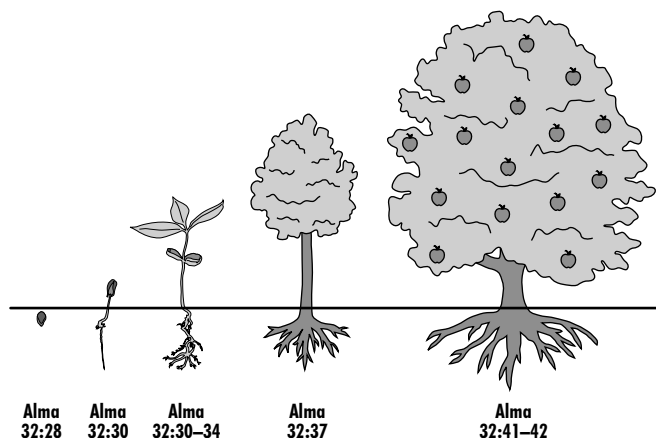
Read Alma 32:21 and ask students to compare faith in God to knowing a country exists when you haven’t been there. Read Hebrews 11:1 and look for additional insights on faith. Ask:

- How can we come to know that the President of the Church is a prophet of God?
- If you didn’t have a testimony that he is a prophet, how could you receive one?

Explain that Alma compared the word of the Lord to a seed. If we plant a seed and nourish it, and if it is a good seed, our faith can grow into a perfect knowledge (see v. 34). But even then we must continue to exercise faith by planting other seeds. Tell students that as we exercise faith in Jesus Christ and live a principle, our testimonies will grow (see John 7:17).

 **Alma 32:21–33:23. Gaining faith in Jesus Christ can be a gradual process.** (50–55 minutes)

Before class draw the accompanying diagram on the board (do not include the scripture references).



Show students a seed and a piece of fruit that grows from that kind of seed. Ask how many students have planted and cared for a garden. Discuss what is required to grow fruit from a seed. Include the following elements:

- Your soil must be fertile.
- Your seed must be good.
- You must plant the seed.
- You must water it, weed it, fertilize it, and give it sunlight.
- You must harvest the fruit.

Ask students to compare developing faith in Jesus Christ to growing a garden. Invite them to watch for how Alma uses this same analogy to teach the Zoramites.

Read Alma 32:21 and invite two or three students to tell Alma's message in their own words. Have students read verses 22 and 26 looking for what Alma is inviting them to exercise faith in. (His words.) In Alma 32:28, Alma compares the word to a seed. Before studying his discourse, have students search Alma 33:1, 11, 13–14, 16–18, 22–23 to find what "the word" refers to. (The gospel, centering on Jesus Christ and His Atonement.) Discuss their findings. Have students compare Alma 30:12 and Alma 31:16. Ask: What false doctrine did Alma encounter again as he started teaching the Zoramites? (That there would be no Christ.) Be sure students understand that Alma 32 is more than a lecture describing faith. It is counsel on how to develop or rekindle faith in Jesus Christ.

Refer students to the drawings on the board. Read Alma 32:6, 27–43; 33:22–23. As you read, invite the students to look for verses that match each tree in the drawings, and write these on the board. The following questions and suggestions may help your discussion:

Alma 32:6

Ask: What kind of heart must we have for the seed to grow in us?

Alma 32:27

Ask students to identify phrases that describe what else we must do to cultivate our soil. (Answers might include "awake and arouse your faculties," "desire to believe," "give place for a portion of my words.")

Alma 32:28

Explain that Alma compares "the word"—not faith—to a seed. "The word" refers to the gospel, centering in Jesus Christ. Ask:

- How do we plant this word in our hearts?
- What must we *not* do to the seed?
- How will we know when our testimony of the word begins to grow? (We will feel swelling motions, and it will enlarge our soul, enlighten our understanding, and begin to be delicious to us.)

Alma 32:30

Ask: What will we begin to know about the seed, or the word of God, when we start to feel it growing? (That it is a good seed; see also vv. 31–32.)

Alma 32:34–36

- Once we begin to feel that the word is good, why must we not stop searching and praying?
- What would happen to a garden if you stopped watering it?

Alma 32:37–40

Ask: What are some spiritual activities that could be likened to weeding, watering, and fertilizing? (Searching and pondering the scriptures, praying, hearkening to Church leaders, obeying the commandments, fasting, giving service, strengthening family and others, accepting church callings, and so forth.)

Alma 32:41–43

Ask: Why are faith, diligence, and patience such important elements to a growing testimony of the Savior? Alma says the tree will eventually bear fruit that is sweet, white, and pure, and that we may feast on this fruit until we are filled. Ask: What does this fruit represent? (Help students see that the fruit represents a life of obedience to gospel principles, the blessings that come from living the gospel, and the joys of eternal life; see 1 Nephi 8:10–12; 15:36; D&C 14:7.)

Alma 33:22–23

- What was the message Alma said we should plant in our hearts, nourish by our faith, and allow to grow?
- According to verse 23, how can our burdens be made light? (see also Matthew 11:28–30).

Invite students to tell of burdens the Lord has made light for them or others they know.

Review with your students the process of gaining a testimony of the Savior and His gospel. Help them see that it must include humility, a desire to believe, faith in the Lord, correct doctrine, study, prayer, patience, obedience, and diligence. Our testimony must be centered in Jesus Christ and His Atonement. Share these statements by President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“The strength of the Church lies in the conviction carried in the hearts of its members, by the individual members of the Church. It is the privilege, it is the opportunity, it is the obligation of every Latter-day Saint to gain for himself or herself a certain knowledge that this is the work of the Almighty, that God our Eternal Father lives and watches over His children when they look to Him in faith; that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the Redeemer of all mankind, who rose from the dead to become the firstfruits of them that slept. That testimony . . . is the most precious possession that any of us can hold” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, 647).

“I am satisfied, I know it’s so, that whenever a man has a true witness in his heart of the living reality of the Lord Jesus Christ all else will come together as it should. . . . That is the root from which all virtue springs among those who call themselves Latter-day Saints” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, 648).

Alma 33:2–11; 34:17–27. God hears and answers our prayers. Daily prayer helps us recognize our dependence on the Savior. (20–25 minutes)

Display the picture Jesus Praying in Gethsemane (Gospel Art Picture Kit, no. 227). Ask students what Jesus prayed for in Gethsemane (see Matthew 26:39, 42, 44). Have them list other times He prayed during His ministry. (Answers might include the night before He chose the Twelve Apostles [see Luke 6:12–13]; at the Last Supper when He prayed on behalf of His disciples [see John 17]; while visiting the Nephites [see 3 Nephi 17:15–17].) Discuss the following questions:

- Under what circumstances have you turned to Heavenly Father in prayer?
- Why does prayer require humility?

Explain that the Zoramites had accepted false forms of worship and prayer. Read Alma 33:1 with students and help them understand that the humbled Zoramites wanted to know how to plant the seed. Read Alma 32:4–5 looking for a concern of the poorer Zoramites. Write the following questions on the board:

- When can the Lord hear and answer our prayers?
- Where can we pray and worship?
- What should we pray for?
- How does prayer help us recognize our need for Heavenly Father and His Son?
- What are some of the circumstances in which Heavenly Father grants us His mercy?

Invite half the class to read Alma 33:2–10 and the other half to read Alma 34:17–27. Have them look for and discuss answers to the questions on the board.

Read Alma 33:11 and ask:

- How can our afflictions help us recognize our need for the Savior?
- Why must our prayers be sincere?
- How can our prayers provide us with daily access to the Lord’s mercy?

Read Alma 33:1; 34:8 and ask: What did Alma and his companions teach? (Faith in the Savior.) Explain that we have been commanded to pray to the Father in the name of the Son (see 2 Nephi 32:9; 3 Nephi 18:19). Prayer reminds us of our dependence on the Savior as we ask forgiveness for our sins and request help in living the commandments. Prayer allows us to seek the companionship of the Spirit each day.

Share this statement by Elder Gene R. Cook, a member of the Seventy:

“To pass successfully through the trials we encounter, we must keep our eyes and our hearts centered on the Lord Jesus Christ. ‘Since man had fallen he could not merit anything of himself’ (Alma 22:14); therefore, we needed an advocate, an intercessor, a mediator to assist us. ‘And it is *because of thy Son* that thou hast been thus merciful unto [us]’ (Alma 33:11; italics added)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1993, 98; or *Ensign*, May 1993, 80).

Invite students to answer the following questions on a piece of paper:

- What can I do to improve my prayers?
- How can prayer help me remember the Savior?

Alma 34:1–16. The infinite and eternal Atonement of Jesus Christ is the central feature of the plan of redemption. (20–25 minutes)

This activity should help your students understand the second witness that Amulek provided for Alma’s teachings to the Zoramites. Give students the worksheet “Amulek Testifies That the Word Is in Christ” from the appendix (p. 298). Have them work through it individually or in pairs. Correct the handout as a class and discuss what they learned.

Answers

1. Faith, patience.
2. “Whether the word be in the Son of God, or whether there shall be no Christ.”
3. Alma, Zenos, Zenock, Moses, and Amulek.
4. All are fallen and lost.
5. Infinite, eternal.
6. It was fulfilled. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
7. Salvation. Faith unto repentance.
8. Student choice.

Share the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“In the gospel sense repentance is the system, ordained of God, whereby fallen man may be saved. It is the plan of mercy that enables sinners to be reconciled to God. It is the way whereby all men, being sinners, can escape the grasp of justice and be encircled forever in the arms of mercy. It operates in and through and because of the infinite and eternal atonement; and if there had been no atonement, the doctrine of repentance would serve no purpose and save no souls. Salvation comes because of the atonement and is reserved for those who repent” (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 217).



Alma 34:32–34 (Scripture Mastery). Mortality is the time for us to repent. We will carry the qualities and habits we gain in this life with us into the next life. (10–15 minutes)

Write on the board *Procrastination is the thief of eternal life* (see Joseph Fielding Smith, “Procrastination Is the Thief of Eternal Life,” *Improvement Era*, June 1969, 37). Ask students to discuss the meaning of this sentence. Read the following account by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“I knew a man, now deceased, not a member of the Church, who was a degenerate old reprobate who found pleasure, as he supposed, in living after the manner of the world. A cigarette dangled from his lips, alcohol stench his breath, and profane and bawdy stories defiled his lips. His moral status left much to be desired.

“His wife was a member of the Church, as faithful as she could be under the circumstances. One day she said to him, ‘You know the Church is true; why won’t you be baptized?’ He replied, ‘Of course I know the Church is true, but I have no intention of changing my habits in order to join it. I prefer to live the way I do. But that doesn’t worry me in the slightest. I know that as soon as I die, you will have someone go to the temple and do the work for me and everything will come out all right in the end anyway.’

“He died and she had the work done in the temple. We do not sit in judgment and deny vicarious ordinances to people. But what will it profit him?” (“The Seven Deadly Heresies,” in *1980 Devotional Speeches of the Year: BYU Devotional and Fireside Addresses* [1980], 77).

Ask three students to each read a verse of Alma 34:32–34. Have them share what phrases they would have read to the man in the story if he had been willing to listen. Invite the class to underline the phrases shared by the three students.

Have students think about any personal sins of which they have not repented. Encourage them to decide to make a change in their life. Read Helaman 13:38–39 and discuss how it relates to these scripture mastery verses. Share the following counsel by President Harold B. Lee:

“Now, if you have made mistakes, make today the beginning of a change of your lives. Turn from the thing that you have been doing that is wrong. The most important of all the commandments of God is that one that you are having the most difficulty keeping today. If it is one of dishonesty, if it is one of unchastity, if it is one of falsifying, not telling the truth, today is the day for you to work on that until you have been able to conquer that weakness. Put that aright and then you start on the next one that is most difficult for you to keep. That’s the way to sanctify yourself by keeping the commandments of God” (*The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, ed. Clyde J. Williams [1996], 82).



Alma 36–42

Introduction

The Lord has always required parents to teach their children the gospel. Adam and Eve provided our first mortal example of parental gospel instruction (see Moses 5:12). Soon after the Church was restored, the Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation directing parents in Zion to teach their children repentance, faith in Christ, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost (see D&C 68:25; see also D&C 93:40–49). More recently, the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve reminded parents of their “sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, to teach them to love and serve one another [and] to observe the commandments of God” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102).

Parents in the Book of Mormon were given these same responsibilities. King Benjamin admonished Nephite parents of his day: “Ye will not suffer your children that they go hungry, or naked; neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel one with another” (Mosiah 4:14). Alma 36–42 illustrates how well the prophet Alma understood his duty to instruct his own children and call them to repentance when necessary. Alma provided personal direction for each child, anchoring his message in the Savior’s Atonement and teachings.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For


- Sin causes suffering. Repentance takes away that suffering and replaces it with joy (see Alma 36:10–22; see also Mosiah 27:28–29; D&C 19:16–17).
- By “small and simple things,” great things are brought to pass (see Alma 37:3–12, 38–47; see also 2 Timothy 3:15; 1 Nephi 15:23–24; Alma 31:5).
- It is wise to learn in our youth to keep God’s commandments (see Alma 37:35; 38:2; see also Proverbs 22:6).
- Pride and boasting lead to sin, while humble dependence on the Lord protects us from sin (see Alma 38:11–39:4; see also 2 Nephi 4:30–35).
- The examples of Church members, whether good or bad, reflect on the Church (see Alma 39:1–12; see also Matthew 5:14–16; Jacob 2:35; Alma 4:10–11).


- Breaking the law of chastity is a very grievous and abominable sin. Forgiveness can only come through complete repentance (see Alma 39:3–9; see also Jacob 2:28; D&C 59:6).
- A universal resurrection was made possible through the Atonement of Jesus Christ (see Alma 40; see also 1 Corinthians 15:22; Helaman 14:16–17).
- Through the plan of restoration, our spirits and bodies will be reunited to stand at the Judgment. The righteous will be restored to happiness, while the wicked will be miserable (see Alma 41; see also Galatians 6:7; D&C 6:33).
- Because of the law of justice, when we sin we are cut off from God’s presence. Through the Savior’s Atonement, mercy satisfies the demands of justice for all those who repent (see Alma 42:1–28; see also Alma 34:16; D&C 19:16–17).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 93–97.

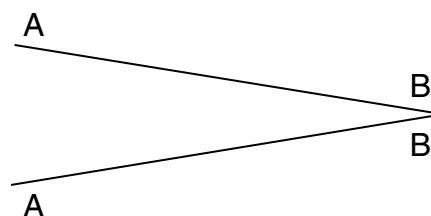
Suggestions for Teaching

 *Book of Mormon Video* presentation 13, “God Has Delivered Me,” can be used in teaching Alma 36. Presentation 14, “These Things Are an Abomination,” can be used in teaching Alma 39. Presentation 15, “The Mediator,” can be used in teaching Alma 40–42. (See *Book of Mormon Video Guide* for teaching suggestions.)

 **Alma 36. Sin causes suffering. Repentance takes away that suffering and replaces it with joy.** (45–50 minutes)

Read a short rhyming poem to your students. Ask them what kind of literature it is. Explain that rhyming poetry is a form of writing that is easy to listen to because it has a predictable pattern. A lesser-known literary form is “chiasmus” (pronounced ki-Az-mus). Chiasmus was sometimes used by ancient Hebrew writers. Similar to rhyming poetry, it is effective because it follows a predictable pattern.

Chiasmus is an arrangement of words or ideas placed in a certain order and then repeated in reverse order. To illustrate a simple chiasmus, draw the following diagram on the board:



Have students read the examples of chiasmus in Isaiah 55:8 and Matthew 10:39 and look for how the diagram illustrates the chiasmus in these verses. The passages are given below with the related words italicized and marked by the letters A and B:

Isaiah 55:8

For (A) *my thoughts* are not (B) *your thoughts*,
neither are (B) *your ways* (A) *my ways*, saith the Lord.

Matthew 10:39

He that (A) *findeth his life* shall (B) *lose it*:
and he that (B) *loseth his life* for my sake shall (A) *find it*.

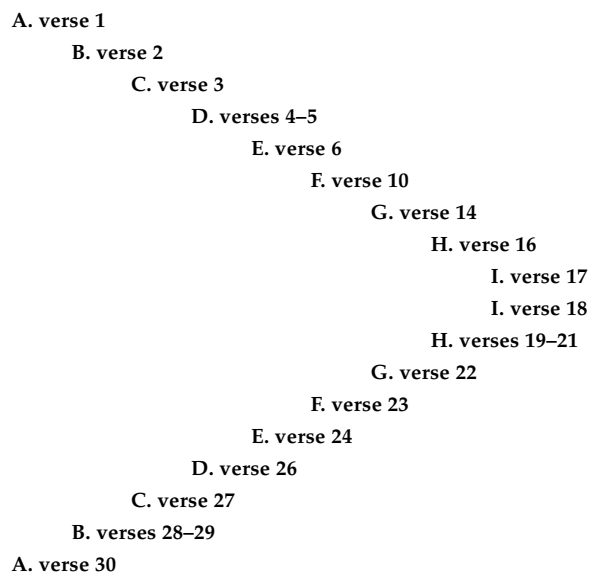
Point out that in chiasmus, important ideas and words are emphasized through repetition. Additionally, the writer's main idea is often located at the center of the chiasmus.

Explain that Alma used chiasmus to tell the story of his conversion to his son Helaman. Assign each of your students to study a row of verses from the accompanying chart. (Depending on your class size, you may wish to pair students together.) Have the students determine how the verses relate to each other, and have them write on a piece of paper a brief summary of each verse.

Alma 36

position	verse(s)	verse(s)
A	1	30
B	2	28–29
C	3	27
D	4–5	26
E	6	24
F	10	23
G	14	22
H	16	19–21
I	17	18

Write the following outline on the board. Read the entire chapter as a class. Pause after each verse included in the outline, and invite students to write their summaries on the board next to the numbers of the verses they read.



(Adapted from John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," in Noel B. Reynolds, ed., *Book of Mormon Authorship* [1982], 49–50.)

Remind students that the main message of a chiasmus is often located at its center. Ask:

- What is the central message of this chiasmus? (see vv. 17–18).
- What do we learn from Alma's experience about how we can be delivered from suffering for our sins?
- From Alma's example, how would you describe repentance that is centered in Jesus Christ?

Have a student read the following testimony by Jeffrey R. Holland, who later became a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

"Christ is the power behind all repentance. . . . Alma had been touched by the teaching of his father, but it is particularly important that the prophecy he remembered was one regarding 'the coming of one Jesus Christ, a Son of God, to atone for the sins of the world.' (Alma 36:17.) That is the name and that is the message that every person must hear. . . . Whatever other prayers we offer, whatever other needs we have, all somehow depends on that plea: 'O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me.' He is prepared to provide that mercy. He paid with his very life in order to give it" (*However Long and Hard the Road* [1985], 85).

Explain that we must be humble before we can recognize the need for the Savior's help in our lives. Focusing on Him will not only help us be humble but will bring us greater joy. Read the following statement, also by Brother Holland:

"Our will quite literally changes to receive *His* will. We may have avoided church attendance, the sacrament, the bishop, our parents, our worthy companions—avoided anyone we had sinned against, including God himself—but now that repentant heart longs to be with them. That is part of the joy and light of the Atonement—the 'at-one-ment'—which not only binds us back to God but also brings us back to a special unity with our best natural self and our most beloved human associates" (*However Long and Hard the Road*, 86–87).

Sing or read the first and third verses of "Come unto Jesus," (*Hymns*, no. 117).



Alma 37:1–20, 38–47 (Scripture Mastery, Alma 37:6–7). By "small and simple things," great things are brought to pass. (30–35 minutes)

Show or draw on the board a few items such as the following: a spark plug, a horse's bit, a computer disc, a picture of a ship's rudder, a paper clip, a compass, an empty sacrament cup. Ask students: What do these items have in common? After they discuss their ideas, write *small and simple* on the board. Ask: How does each item fit this description? Have students read Alma 37:6–7 and decide which of the items these verses best describe and why.

Read as a class Alma 37:1–5 and determine what Alma was describing to his son (the brass plates). Have students read the first phrase of the chapter heading looking for another item that could be added to the display of "small and simple things" ("other scriptures").

Read Alma 37:8–10 and have students mark the words *these things* and *they*. Ask what these words refer to. List on the board the "great things" the scriptures did for the Nephites and Lamanites who heeded them. Ask:

- Which of these benefits do the scriptures bring to your life?
- In what ways have the scriptures enlarged your memory or convinced you of the error of your ways?
- Who do you know who has come to a knowledge of God because of the scriptures?

Have students compare verse 15 with verses 16–18. Discuss the following questions:

- In verse 15, what was Helaman warned would be taken away if he broke the commandments?
- What can be taken away from us if we break the commandments?

- How can God's power strengthen us when we keep His commandments? (see v. 16).
- How has the Book of Mormon fulfilled God's promises to Helaman's "fathers"? (see vv. 17–18).

Show the class a compass and ask:

- How does a compass work?
- What forces can keep it from working properly?
- How would ignorance of how to use it keep it from being helpful?

Write the following on the board:

- Alma 37:40. The Liahona worked according to _____.
- Alma 37:41–42. The Liahona ceased to work when _____.
- Alma 37:43–45. How is the Liahona like the words of Christ? _____.
- Alma 37:46. Alma cautions us _____.

Have students read the verses indicated and fill in the blanks. Discuss their answers, and invite them to give examples of how these verses apply in their lives. (*Note:* In verses 43–45, students may need help with the meaning of the words *type* and *shadow*. Types and shadows are symbols or representations of other things, particularly of the Savior.)

Testify that the words of Christ are a source of strength and help. We must not neglect searching the scriptures out of the mistaken belief that they are too "small and simple" to help with our complex problems. Read Alma 37:47 and the following counsel from Elder Marvin J. Ashton, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

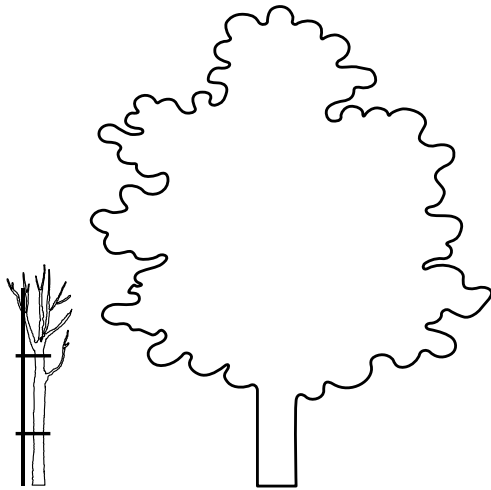
"How often have we ourselves said or have we heard others exclaim in times of crisis or trouble, 'I just don't know where to turn'?

"If we will just use it, a gift is available to all of us—the gift of looking to God for direction. Here is an avenue of strength, comfort, and guidance" (*The Measure of Our Hearts* [1991], 18).



Alma 37:35 (Scripture Mastery). It is wise to learn in our youth to keep God’s commandments. (15–20 minutes)

Draw the accompanying picture on the board:



Ask students:

- Why are young trees often tied to poles?
- Why are the supports removed from mature trees?

Point out that people often prune or trim young trees so they will grow properly. Ask: Why is it important to prune a tree while it is young rather than waiting several years?

Have a student read the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley, then a member of the First Presidency:

“Not long after we were married, we built our first home. We had very little money. I did much of the work myself. It would be called ‘sweat equity’ today. The landscaping was entirely my responsibility. The first of many trees that I planted was a thornless honey locust. Envisioning the day when its filtered shade would assist in cooling the house in the summertime, I put it in a place at the corner where the wind from the canyon to the east blew the hardest. I dug a hole, put in the bare root, put soil around it, poured on water, and largely forgot it. It was only a wisp of a tree, perhaps three-quarters of an inch in diameter. It was so supple that I could bend it with ease in any direction. I paid little attention to it as the years passed.

“Then one winter day, when the tree was barren of leaves, I chanced to look out the window at it. I noticed that it was leaning to the west, misshapen and out of balance. I could scarcely believe it. I went out and

braced myself against it as if to push it upright. But the trunk was now nearly a foot in diameter. My strength was as nothing against it. I took from my toolshed a block and tackle. Attaching one end to the tree and another to a well-set post, I pulled the rope. The pulleys moved a little, and the trunk of the tree trembled slightly. But that was all.”

Have students read Alma 37:35 and relate it to President Hinckley’s experience with his tree. Ask:

- What was Alma teaching his son about keeping the commandments?
- Why does Alma use the word *wisdom* to describe those who learn to keep the commandments while they are young?
- What commandments have you kept since you were young that would be more difficult to begin living as a teenager? as an adult?

Share the rest of President Hinckley’s account:

“Finally in desperation I took my saw and cut off the great heavy branch on the west side. The saw left an ugly scar, more than eight inches across. I stepped back and surveyed what I had done. I had cut off the major part of the tree, leaving only one branch growing skyward.

“More than half a century has passed since I planted that tree. My daughter and her family live there now. The other day I looked again at the tree. It is large. Its shape is better. It is a great asset to the home. But how serious was the trauma of its youth and how brutal the treatment I used to straighten it.

“When it was first planted, a piece of string would have held it in place against the forces of the wind. I could have and should have supplied that string with ever so little effort. But I did not, and it bent to the forces that came against it” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 77–78; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 59).

Invite students to write on a piece of paper their thoughts and feelings about Alma 37:35. Suggest they include:

- The message of this verse in their own words.
- How they feel about a specific commandment they have kept since they were young.
- When they first learned about this commandment and why they started obeying it.

- How much easier it is to keep this commandment because they started when they were young.

Encourage them to copy what they wrote into their journals at home.

Alma 37:32–37; 38:11–39:4. Pride and boasting lead to sin, while humble dependence on the Lord protects us from sin. (10–15 minutes)

Write on the board: *True or False: A Book of Mormon prophet counseled his son to teach others to have an everlasting hatred.*

Have students read Alma 37:32 to find the answer. Ask:

- What did Alma tell Helaman to teach the people to have an everlasting hatred toward?
- Why should we hate sin?
- How can sin damage a person's life?

Read Alma 37:33–35 to find how we can withstand the devil's temptations. Ask:

- Why do you think it is important to be humble?
- In what ways can humility help you better keep the commandments?

Invite students to share times that faith in Jesus Christ helped them resist temptation. Read Alma's counsel to his son Corianton in Alma 39:1–3 looking for the more serious sin Corianton succumbed to. Ask: What sin may have led to his more serious sin? How?

Invite half of your students to read Alma 37:36–37 and the other half Alma 38:11–14. Have them underline Alma's advice that can help us resist temptation, and discuss what they find.

Read the following illustration by Elder Boyd K. Packer:

"When I was president of the New England Mission, the Tabernacle Choir was to sing at the world's fair in Montreal. The choir had one day unscheduled and suggested a concert in New England. One of the industrial leaders there asked for the privilege of sponsoring the concert.

"Brother Condie and Brother Stewart came to Boston to discuss this matter. We met at the Boston airport and then drove to Attleboro, Massachusetts. Along the way Mr. Yeager asked about the concert. He said, 'I would like to have a reception for the choir members. I could have it either at my home or at my club.' He wanted to invite his friends who were, of course, the prominent people of New England—indeed, of the nation. He talked of this, and then he asked about serving alcoholic beverages.

"In answering, Brother Stewart said, 'Well, Mr. Yeager, since it is your home and you are the host, I suppose you could do just as you want to do.'

"'That isn't what I had in mind,' this wonderful man said. 'I don't want to do what I want to do. I want to do what you want me to do.'

"Somewhere in that spirit is the key to freedom. We should put ourselves in a position before our Father in Heaven and say, individually, 'I do not want to do what I want to do. I want to do what Thou wouldst have me do.' Suddenly, like any father, the Lord could say, 'Well, there is one more of my children almost free from the need of constant supervision.'" (*That All May Be Edified* [1982], 257).

Invite students to describe how humble obedience gives them freedom from sin.



Alma 39:1–11. Breaking the law of chastity is a very grievous and abominable sin. Forgiveness can only come through complete repentance. (50–55 minutes)

Note: The following teaching suggestion includes several lengthy quotes. You may find it useful to make copies of these statements for your students to read and keep.

Read Alma 39:3–5 and invite students to name the three most abominable sins in the sight of the Lord. Tell students that Alma's son Corianton became involved in one of these sins. Read Alma 39:1–2 looking for what Corianton did that led to his greater sin. Read Proverbs 3:3–6 and ask: How would living these teachings have saved Corianton from falling?

Share the following statement:

"One of God's many powers, one that he values very highly, is the power to give and take life. He has forbidden us to take life, but has shared with us his power to create it, by allowing us to bring children into the world. Because this is a divine power, he has commanded all of his children to use it correctly and reserve it only for marriage. He has also told us that the desire behind this great power must be controlled and used within the bounds he has set" (*The Uniform System for Teaching Families* [missionary discussions, 1973], H-13).

Ask: Why do you think sexual sins are next to murder in seriousness? Explain that because the power to create life is so sacred, Satan makes great efforts to persuade us to misuse it. Share this statement by Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Satan tempts a weaker individual to rationalize that when two are in love and agree that sexual intimacies can be performed, such things are acceptable. They positively are not. The boundaries of appropriate behavior are defined by God.

“Strongly tied to the sacred, private parts of the body are powerful emotions intended to be used within the covenant of marriage between a man and woman in ways that are appropriate and acceptable to them both. They are an important part of the love and trust that bond a husband and wife together and prepare them for the responsibilities of a family. They bring the blessing of children. These emotions are not to be stimulated or used for personal gratification outside of the covenant of marriage. Do not touch the private, sacred parts of another person’s body to stimulate those emotions. Do not allow anyone to do that with you, with or without clothing. Do not arouse those emotions in your own body. These things are wrong. Do not do them. Such practices would undermine your ability to be inspired by the Holy Ghost in the vitally important decisions you must make for your future. They lead to binding addictions and grievous transgressions.

“Satan knows that those powerful emotions can be aroused by things you could see, hear, or touch. When stirred, those emotions can be used to lead one to destructive experimentation, then to serious transgressions. He uses pornography through videotapes, movies, magazines, computer images, or contaminated music for this purpose. Close your eyes, ears, mind, and heart to it. Unchecked, it would surely grow unrelentingly from initial curiosity step-by-step to become a raging monster. That demon would wreck wholesome desires, worthy companionship, and noble thoughts and acts until it could destroy you. Don’t lift the cover of salacious material in any form, and you will not be captured by it” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 88; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 69).

Tell students that because Corianton had broken the law of chastity, his father Alma wanted to help him repent and make his life clean again. Read Alma 39:7–8 and discuss what Corianton needed to know about his sin. Read Doctrine and Covenants 38:7 and cross-reference it with Alma 39:7–8. Read John 3:20 and discuss how it relates to Corianton. Discuss the following questions:

- Why might people want to hide their sins? What might they hope to gain?
- Why do you think Satan teaches us to hide our sins and keep them secret?
- How does trying to hide our sins delay our repentance?

- What could be the consequences of a missionary trying to hide sins from a priesthood leader?

Invite students to read Alma 39:9–11 and mark Alma’s counsel on repenting and forsaking these serious sins. Ask students to share what words they marked and why. Discuss the phrase *cross yourself* in verse 9. (For help understanding the phrase, read with students Matthew 16:24, footnote *d*.) Elder Richard G. Scott counseled:

“For a moment I speak to anyone who has succumbed to serious temptation. Please stop now. You can do it with the help from an understanding parent, bishop, or stake president. Serious transgression such as immorality requires the help of one who holds keys of authority, such as a bishop or stake president, to quietly work out the repentance process to make sure that it is complete and appropriately done. Do not make the mistake to believe that because you have confessed a serious transgression, you have repented of it. That is an essential step, but it is not all that is required. Nor assume that because someone did not ask you all the important details of a transgression, that you need not mention them. You personally must make sure that the bishop or stake president understands those details so that he can help you properly through the process of repentance for full forgiveness” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 89; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 69–70).

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, taught:

“To you is extended the peace and renewal of repentance available through the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. In such serious matters the path of repentance is not easily begun or painlessly traveled. But the Savior of the world will walk that essential journey with you. He will strengthen you when you waver. He will be your light when it seems most dark. He will take your hand and be your hope when hope seems all you have left. His compassion and mercy, with all their cleansing and healing power, are freely given to all who truly wish complete forgiveness and will take the steps that lead to it” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 101–2; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 78).

Testify that sexual sins are serious and bring great sorrow. The Atonement of Jesus Christ, however, brings peace and a clear conscience to those who seek help from their priesthood leaders and repent fully.

Alma 40; 41:2; 42:23. A universal resurrection was made possible through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.
(50–55 minutes)

Ask students to list as many miracles from the scriptures as they can. Ask: Which of these miracles will everyone experience someday? Read 1 Corinthians 15:21–22 and discuss the following:

- What miracle did Paul testify everyone will experience?
- How does knowledge of the Resurrection affect your view of life and death?

Tell students that the word *resurrection* or some form of it is found over sixty times in the Book of Mormon. Ask: Why do you think a book written for our day would speak so often on this subject? Read the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson:

“The Lord promised . . . that righteousness would come from heaven and truth out of the earth. We have seen the marvelous fulfillment of that prophecy in our generation. The Book of Mormon has come forth out of the earth, filled with truth” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 102; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 79).

Read Moses 7:62 looking for two truths that the Lord would send forth “out of the earth” (the reality of Jesus Christ and of the Resurrection). Explain that Alma gave one of the Book of Mormon’s longest discussions on the Resurrection. Divide the verses from the following chart among your students and ask them to read and summarize them. Write their conclusions on the board and discuss them as needed. (Suggested answers are given in the chart’s right-hand column.) Have students underline words and phrases in their scriptures that will help them remember what the verses teach. A list of additional scriptures and quotes for each of the nine groups of verses follows the chart. Use these as needed to help your discussion.

Alma Teaches Corianton about the Resurrection		
1.	Alma 40:1–2	There will be no Resurrection until after the coming of Jesus Christ.
2.	Alma 40:3	Jesus Christ brings the Resurrection.
3.	Alma 40:4	There is a time appointed for all people to be resurrected.
4.	Alma 40:6–9	There is a period of time between death and the Resurrection.
5.	Alma 40:11–12	Righteous spirits await the Resurrection in a state of happiness called paradise.
6.	Alma 40:13–14	The wicked await the Resurrection in darkness and fear of judgment.

7.	Alma 40:16–19	Those who lived before Jesus Christ are resurrected before those who live after Him. (Note: Be sure students understand that the righteous are resurrected before the wicked; see John 5:29; D&C 88:95–102.)
8.	Alma 40:23; 41:2	When the spirit and body are reunited, every limb, joint, hair, and part of the physical body will be restored to its proper place.
9.	Alma 42:23	The Atonement makes the Resurrection possible, and the Resurrection brings everyone back into the presence of God to be judged.

- 1 Corinthians 15:20, 25–26; 2 Nephi 2:8.
- Mosiah 16:7; Alma 7:12; 11:42.
- John 5:28–29.
- Doctrine and Covenants 138:11, 15–16.
- Bible Dictionary, “paradise,” 742.

President George Q. Cannon, who was a member of the First Presidency, taught:

“Alma, when he says that ‘the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body, . . . are taken home to that God who gave them life,’ has the idea, doubtless, in his mind that our God is omnipresent—not in His own personality but through His minister, the Holy Spirit.

“He does not intend to convey the idea that they are immediately ushered into the personal presence of God. He evidently uses that phrase in a qualified sense” (*Gospel Truth: Discourses and Writings of President George Q. Cannon*, ed. Jerreld L. Newquist, 2 vols. [1957], 1:73).

- See the first quote by Elder Bruce R. McConkie in the commentary for Alma 40:11–15 in *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122* (p. 95).
- Mosiah 15:21–22.

President Joseph Fielding Smith, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve, wrote:

“Alma does not intend to say, although verse 19 of chapter 40 implies it, that the wicked who lived before Christ will be raised before the righteous who lived after the coming of Christ; that may be implied by what he says in verse 19, but in verse 20, he modifies this and says it shall be the souls and bodies of the righteous who come forth at the time of that resurrection” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 2:300).

8. The Prophet Joseph Smith said:

“As concerning the resurrection, I will merely say that all men will come from the grave as they lie down, whether old or young; there will not be ‘added unto their stature one cubit,’ neither taken from it; all will be raised by the power of God, having spirit in their bodies, and not blood” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 199–200).

President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote:

“Of course, children who die do not grow in the grave. They will come forth with their bodies as they were laid down, and then they will grow to the full stature of manhood or womanhood after the resurrection. . . .

“ . . . President Joseph F. Smith said that the same person, in the same form and likeness, will come forth ‘even to the wounds in the flesh. Not that a person will always be marred by scars, wounds, deformities, defects or infirmities, for these will be removed in their course, in their proper time, according to the merciful providence of God’ [*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. (1939), 23]” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:293).

9. Helaman 14:15–17.

Alma 41. Through the plan of restoration, our spirits and bodies will be reunited to stand at the Judgment. The righteous will be restored to happiness, while the wicked will be miserable. (25–30 minutes)

Display a piece of restored furniture, pictures of a wrecked car before and after it was repaired, or a simple puzzle that can easily be taken apart and put back together. Write *restoration* on the board and ask students to discuss how the object illustrates the word. Read Alma 41:13 and invite students to mark the word *restoration* and the definition to *bring back again*.

Have students read Alma 41:1–2 and look for an example of restoration. Ask: Why is the Resurrection such a good example of restoration?

Explain that, in addition to the Resurrection, the restoration Alma spoke of includes the Judgment. Have students read Alma 41:3 and underline two things we will be judged by. Read Moroni 7:8 and Doctrine and Covenants 137:9, and suggest to students that they cross-reference those verses with Alma 41:3. Ask: Why is what we desire as important as what we do? Read Alma 41:5–6 and discuss the following:

- What is restored or brought back to us at the Judgment?
- What does receiving happiness for a life of righteousness illustrate about the Judgment?

- What examples can you give of gospel principles that may be more difficult for some people to live than for others? (One possible answer is going to the temple, since some members live great distances from existing temples.)
- How does knowing we will be judged according to the desires of our hearts as well as our actions make you feel about the Final Judgment?

Share this insight from Elder Dallin H. Oaks:

“Just as we will be accountable for our evil desires, we will also be rewarded for our righteous ones. Our Father in Heaven will receive a truly righteous desire as a substitute for actions that are genuinely impossible. My father-in-law was fond of expressing his version of this principle. When someone wanted to do something for him but was prevented by circumstances, he would say: ‘Thank you. I will take the good will for the deed.’

“This is the principle that blessed Abraham for his willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac. The Lord stopped him at the last instant (see Genesis 22:11–12), but his willingness to follow the Lord’s command ‘was accounted unto him for righteousness’ (D&C 132:36).

“This principle means that when we have *done* all that we can, our *desires* will carry us the rest of the way. It also means that if our desires are right, we can be forgiven for the unintended errors or mistakes we will inevitably make as we try to carry those desires into effect. What a comfort for our feelings of inadequacy!” (*Pure in Heart* [1988], 59).

Show the class two very different kinds of seeds (such as carrot seeds and acorns). Divide the class into three groups and have each group read one of the following verses: 2 Corinthians 9:6; Galatians 6:7; Doctrine and Covenants 6:33. Have the groups look for and share how seeds are used in that verse to teach a gospel principle. Discuss the following questions:

- How might the two kinds of seeds illustrate the plan of restoration described in Alma 41:5–6? (Righteousness brings one fruit, wickedness a different one.)
- What “fruit” grows from the seeds of righteousness?

Read Alma’s warning to Corianton in Alma 41:9–11 and ask:

- What brief phrase best summarizes Alma’s message?
- Why can’t seeds of wickedness produce happiness?

Have students read Alma 41:14–15 and underline how Alma said we should apply the doctrine of restoration in our lives. Ask them to share what they underlined. Invite them to share positive examples of how “that which ye do send out shall return unto you again” (v. 15).



Alma 41:10 (Scripture Mastery). “Wickedness never was happiness.” (10–15 minutes)

Invite three students to each read one of the following statements to the class. Before they read, have them call on another student to summarize their statement’s message in a single sentence on the board.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, said:

“The commandments of the gospel come from a tender, loving Father whose laws are given to make us happy, to protect us, and to help us avoid the inescapable pain and misery that always result when we yield to Satan and give in to temptation” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1994, 56; or *Ensign*, May 1994, 42).

The *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet, published under the direction of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve, advises:

“You cannot do wrong and feel right. It is impossible! . . . Satan would have you believe that happiness comes only as you surrender to his enticement to self-indulgence. We need only to look at the shattered lives of those who violate God’s laws to know why Satan is called the ‘father of all lies’ (2 Nephi 2:18). . . .

“Joy and happiness come from living the way the Lord wants you to live” ([1990], 4, 19).

President Gordon B. Hinckley said:

“Evil never was happiness. Sin never was happiness. Happiness lies in the power and the love and the sweet simplicity of the gospel of Jesus Christ” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 69–70; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 49).

Ask students to find a verse in Alma 41 that summarizes the three sentences on the board. Have them mark Alma 41:10 as a scripture mastery scripture. Add your testimony that joy comes from keeping Heavenly Father’s commandments.



Alma 42:1–28. Because of the law of justice, when we sin we are cut off from God’s presence. Through the Savior’s Atonement, mercy satisfies the demands of justice for all those who repent. (55–60 minutes)

Before class, write the accompanying chart on the board.

Alma 42	Word	Meaning
v. 1	consigned	delivered, handed over
vv. 2–3	cherubim	angels
v. 4	probationary	trial, test
v. 7	temporally	physically, having to do with the mortal body
v. 8	expedient	suitable, appropriate
v. 8	reclaimed	recovered, brought back
v. 10	carnal	worldly, given to crude physical pleasures

Write on the board *I want the Final Judgment to be fair*. Invite students to raise their hands if they agree with the statement. Count the hands and write the number on the board. (Most should agree.)

Assign students to read the following scriptures to the class: Deuteronomy 32:4; Mosiah 16:1; 2 Nephi 26:7. Have class members listen for what these scriptures teach about God, and invite students to share what they observed. Testify that God is just and His judgments will be fair, but explain that this presents a problem for all of us. Read the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks:

“Justice has many meanings. One is balance. . . .

“People generally feel that justice has been done when an offender receives what he deserves—when the punishment fits the crime. . . .

“. . . The idea of justice as what one deserves is the fundamental premise of all scriptures that speak of men’s being judged according to their works. . . .

“The justice of God holds each of us responsible for our own transgressions and automatically imposes the penalty” (*Sins, Crimes, and Atonement* [address to CES religious educators, 7 Feb. 1992], 1–2).

Ask: How is God’s justice a problem for us? Be sure students understand that sin makes us all unworthy to enter God’s presence. Elder Oaks continued:

“Justice will also see that we receive what we deserve, and that is an outcome I fear. I cannot achieve my eternal goals on the basis of what I deserve. Though I try with all my might, I am still what King Benjamin called an ‘unprofitable servant’ (see Mosiah 2:21). To achieve my eternal goals, I need more than I deserve. I need more than justice” (*Sins, Crimes, and Atonement*, 2).

Explain that Alma’s son was troubled by something related to justice. Read Alma 42:1 and look for what concerned Corianton. (He didn’t think a sinner should suffer for his sins.) Explain that Corianton did not understand Heavenly Father’s plan. Read with students Alma 42:2–11. Refer them to the chart on the board for help with difficult words. Have students look for answers to the following questions:

- What did God grant to Adam and Eve and their descendants after the Fall? (see v. 4).
- In what two ways were our first parents (as well as their descendants) cut off? (see vv. 7–9).
- What would our condition be if there had been no Atonement? (see v. 11).

Explain that the Fall of Adam was a necessary part of the plan of salvation. Without the Fall, we could not have come to earth to gain our bodies and experience the tests that prepare the faithful for eternal life. But we cannot be saved in our fallen condition. Write *justice* and *mercy* on the board. Next to *justice* write *getting what we deserve*. Invite students to suggest a meaning for *mercy*. (One possible answer is getting better than we deserve.) Ask:

- How many of us need mercy? Why?
- How has Heavenly Father provided a source of mercy for us?

Read Alma 42:14–15, and share the following from Elder Oaks:

“In its relationship to justice and mercy, *the Atonement* is the means by which justice is served and mercy is extended. In combination, justice and mercy and the Atonement constitute the glorious eternal wholeness of the justice and mercy of God” (*Sins, Crimes, and Atonement*, 2).

Read Alma 42:13 and find what we must do to receive the mercy of the Atonement. Suggest to students that they cross-reference this verse with Alma 34:16 and Doctrine and Covenants 19:16–17.

Read Alma 42:16–18 and ask: What gift could not be extended to us if there were no law and no punishment? Why? Some students may wonder why suffering is required even for those who repent. The following explanation by President Spencer W. Kimball may be helpful:

“If a person hasn’t suffered, he hasn’t repented. . . . He has got to go through a change in his system whereby he suffers and then forgiveness is a possibility” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 99).

Elder Oaks added:

“The person who repents does not need to suffer ‘even as’ the Savior suffered for that sin. Sinners who are repenting will experience some suffering, but, because of their repentance and because of the Atonement, they will not experience the full ‘exquisite’ extent of eternal torment the Savior suffered for that sin. . . .

“. . . The repentant sinner who comes to Christ with a broken heart and a contrite spirit has been through a process of personal pain and suffering for sin. He understands the meaning of Alma’s statement that ‘none but the truly penitent are saved’ (Alma 42:24)” (*Sins, Crimes, and Atonement*, 5).

Read and discuss Alma 42:18–31, using the following suggestions and questions:

Verses 18–20

How is having a remorse of conscience a blessing to us? (see vv. 18–20).

Verse 23

Explain that when we repent, the Lord’s mercy keeps us from having to experience the whole punishment we deserve for our sins. Ask: What unconditional blessing of mercy is also provided by the Atonement? (We will be resurrected and brought back into the presence of God.)

Verse 29

Have students read 2 Corinthians 7:9–10, and suggest they cross-reference it with this verse. Ask:

- How did Paul describe the feeling of “trouble which shall bring you down unto repentance”? (“Godly sorrow.”)
- Why must we experience “godly sorrow” when we repent?

Verses 30–31

Even though Corianton had committed very serious sins, repentance and forgiveness were possible.

- What evidence is there in these verses that Corianton repented and was forgiven?
- What does this teach you about the sins you have committed?

The following request from Elder Dallin H. Oaks is for you, the teacher:

“I hope you will help your students feel their relationship to God, feel his concern for them, and feel his love for them. That love is manifest in the Atonement, and we accept that love when we practice the principle of repentance.

“Repentance is a continuing process, needed by all because ‘all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God’ (Romans 3:23). Teach your students that full repentance is possible and that thereafter forgiveness is certain” (*Sins, Crimes, and Atonement*, 8).



Introduction

In Alma 43:3 Mormon explains, “Now I return to an account of the wars between the Nephites and the Lamanites.” Some wonder why the Book of Mormon contains so much about war. President Ezra Taft Benson reminded us that those who compiled the book “saw our day and chose those things which would be of greatest worth to us” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 5; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 6). There may be several reasons why Mormon included so much about war, including the following:

- There will be much warfare in the last days (see Revelation 9). President Benson said, “From the Book of Mormon we learn how disciples of Christ live in times of war” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 5; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 7). This includes understanding proper justification for war and proper attitudes toward bloodshed.
- Some principles from physical battles can be applied to the spiritual war against wickedness.
- We can learn to recognize the protection that comes when we make and keep covenants.
- We can see how others found happiness in righteous living, even when surrounded by wickedness and destruction.
- We can receive help in our daily gospel living and, as President Benson explained, “find a pattern for preparing for the Second Coming” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 5; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 6).


Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Although the righteous never delight in bloodshed, they are justified in entering a war to preserve their freedom, peace, families, and rights of religion (see Alma 43:9–14, 45–54; 44:1–7; 46:12, 20–21, 28; 48:10–16, 21–23; see also Deuteronomy 20:10–12; Mormon 3:9, 15; D&C 98:32–38).
- Faith in God enables us to overcome our enemies (see Alma 43:49–50; 44:3–6; 48:7).
- Breaking the Lord’s commandments leads to dissension and conflict, but keeping our covenants brings unity, blessings, protection, and peace (see Alma 46:4–8, 11–15, 21–22; 49:23, 30; 50:21–24; see also 2 Nephi 2:11).
- “Christians” believe in Jesus Christ. They willingly and faithfully take upon themselves His name (see Alma 46:13–15; see also Acts 11:26; Mosiah 5:7–12).
- Righteousness restricts Satan’s power (see Alma 48:11–17; see also 1 Nephi 22:26).
- Righteousness and happiness can exist even in an atmosphere of war and rumors of war (see Alma 50:22–23; see also Alma 62:39–41).
- Children who follow the teachings of righteous parents, who grow up in righteousness, and who are full of faith can see great miracles in their lives (see Alma 53:16–21; 56:44–56; 57:19–27; 58:37–40).
- Faith, hope, and peace are gifts from God. These gifts are given to those who pray sincerely and recognize God as the source of their success (see Alma 57:35–36; 58:10–13).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 98–102.

Suggestions for Teaching

 *Book of Mormon Video* presentation 16, “Firm in the Faith of Christ,” can be used in teaching Alma 43–48 (see *Book of Mormon Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

Note: You may want to refer to the map “Possible Book of Mormon Sites” in the appendix (p. 291) as you teach these chapters. You could draw it on the board or give it to students as a handout.

Alma 43:1–14, 45–54; 44:1–2; 48:10–23. Although the righteous never delight in bloodshed, they are justified in entering a war to preserve their freedom, peace, families, and rights of religion. (20–25 minutes)

Write this question on the board: *Why is so much of the Book of Mormon devoted to war?* Invite students to answer the question, and discuss their ideas.

Read Mormon 8:30 and look for one of the conditions of our day. Read Mormon 8:34–35 to see how the Book of Mormon writers knew we would live in a time of wars and rumors of wars. Share President Ezra Taft Benson’s statement from the first bullet of the introduction to Alma 43–58 (p. 184).

Explain that one challenge of living faithfully in a time of war is knowing when war is justified. Read Alma 43:5–8 and discuss the following questions:

- Why did the Lamanites attack the Nephites? (List responses on the board under the heading *Lamanites’ motive for war*.)
- If you were a Nephite, would you feel justified in going to war against the Lamanites? Why or why not?

Have students read Alma 43:9–14 and underline the reasons the Nephites chose to defend themselves. Invite students to share what they learned, and write their responses on the board under the heading *Nephites’ motives for war*. Ask: How were the Nephites’ motives different from the motives of the Lamanites? Read verses 44–48 to find how the motives of each group affected their fighting. Read Alma 43:49–44:2 and ask:

- When the Nephites had a chance to finish the battle, how did they respond?
- How did their military leader, Captain Moroni, feel about the death of an enemy?

Read Alma 48:11, 14, 16 and suggest that students cross-reference these verses with Alma 44:1. Ask: How did the Nephites’ beliefs regarding the shedding of blood influence them during this battle?

Have students read Alma 48:21 and mark the phrase that best describes how the Nephites felt about fighting their Lamanite brothers. Ask: What do you think “compelled reluctantly” means? Have students read verse 23 and mark two reasons the Nephites were sorry to fight the Lamanites.

Ask students what feelings they have about war. Explain that sometimes Church members live in countries that enter into destructive battles. Read the following statement issued by the First Presidency in 1942:

“The Church is and must be against war. The Church itself cannot wage war, unless and until the Lord shall issue new commands. It cannot regard war as a righteous means of settling international disputes; these should and could be settled—the nations agreeing—by peaceful negotiation and adjustment.

“But the Church membership are citizens or subjects of sovereignties over which the Church has no control.

The Lord Himself has told us to ‘befriend that law which is the constitutional law of the land’ [see D&C 98:4–7]. . . .

“ . . . When, therefore, constitutional law, obedient to these principles, calls the manhood of the Church into the armed service of any country to which they owe allegiance, their highest civic duty requires that they meet that call. If, harkening to that call and obeying those in command over them, they shall take the lives of those who fight against them, that will not make of them murderers, nor subject them to the penalty that God has prescribed for those who kill” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1942, 94).

Testify that war must be avoided whenever possible. However, the Lord has said that we are justified in going to war to preserve freedom, families, and the rights of religion. Additionally, if we go to war out of the duty we owe our countries and if we are faithful to the Lord’s commandments and do not delight in bloodshed, He will justify us.

Alma 43:18–38; 48:15–16; 49:1–15; 50:1–6. Just as the Nephites fortified their cities and put on armor, so we must strengthen ourselves with the word of the Lord so we can be protected from spiritual harm.

(20–25 minutes)

Have students silently read the words to the following hymns, looking for what they have in common: “Let Us All Press On” (*Hymns*, no. 243), “We Are All Enlisted” (no. 250), “Hope of Israel” (no. 259). Invite students to look for other hymns that mention war or conflict. (These might include “Onward, Christian Soldiers” [no. 246], “True to the Faith” [no. 254].) Discuss the following questions:

- Why do you think many of our hymns speak of battle or war?
- Who are we at war with?
- Read Revelation 12:7–9. According to these verses, when did the war with Satan begin?
- Read verse 11. What weapons are available in our fight with Satan?
- What kind of casualties does this war create?
- Has this war affected anyone close to you? In what way?
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 27:15–18. What do these verses teach us about how to protect ourselves in this conflict?

Explain to students that we can learn a lot about protecting ourselves in spiritual battles by studying the preparations and

plans that Captain Moroni and his soldiers made for their physical battles. Write the following references on the board:

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Alma 43:18–21, 37–38 | • Alma 48:15–16 |
| • Alma 43:23–24 | • Alma 49:1–4, 8, 14–15 |
| • Alma 43:28–30 | • Alma 50:1–6 |

Divide the class into six groups and assign each group one of the passages on the board. Give students time to read their verses and to consider the following question: “How can I apply a similar strategy to protect myself from Satan’s attacks?” Have them share what they learned, and discuss their findings.

Alma 43:49–50; 44:3–5; 48:7, 15–16. Faith in God enables us to overcome our enemies. (15–20 minutes)

Ask a few students to briefly tell about times they have been afraid. Have the class suggest as many different kinds of fear as they can. Explain that the scriptures speak of fear in two different ways. Sometimes *fear* means “to respect or revere.” To fear God means to reverence Him and keep His commandments. At other times *fear* means “to be afraid of danger, evil, pain, or the unknown.” Invite students to turn to the Topical Guide or their scripture indexes. Have them look for scriptures about the second kind of fear and how we can overcome it. Write several of these references on the board, along with brief summaries of the principles taught.

Ask: What kind of fear would you experience if you were placed on a modern battlefield with only a sword to defend yourself? Read the first sentence of Alma 43:48 and ask: Did Moroni’s men have reason to fear? Why? Read verses 49–51 looking for what the Nephites did in response to their enemies’ attack. Discuss the following questions:

- What gospel principle did the Nephites demonstrate?
- How did their faith in God deliver them?

Tell students that when the Nephites surrounded the Lamanites, Moroni stopped the battle and addressed Zerahemnah, the leader of the Lamanites. Have students read Alma 44:3–4; 48:7, 15–16 and mark the reasons the Nephites gained power over the Lamanites. Read Alma 44:5 looking for the source of the Nephites’ happiness, even in a time of war. Ask:

- Where is the “sacred word” found?
- How can it help increase our faith?
- What “enemies” could faith in Jesus Christ help you conquer?
- Who is a greater enemy: one who hurts your physical body or one who damages you spiritually? Why?
- In what ways does Satan attack our spirits?

Share this statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley, then a member of the First Presidency:

“The Church has a host of critics and an army of enemies. They mock that which is sacred. They demean and belittle that which has come from God. They pander to the desires of others who evidently enjoy seeing that which is sacred made to look funny. I cannot think of anything less in harmony with the spirit of Christ than this kind of activity.

“We are pained by the desecration of that which to us is holy. But we need not fear. This cause is greater than any man. It will outlast all its enemies. We need only go forward, without fear, by the power of faith” (*Faith: the Essence of True Religion* [1989], 16).

Ask:

- What is the relationship between faith and fear?
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 6:34, 36–37. How can having faith in the Savior give us strength to overcome our enemies?

Alma 45:1–19. The Lord knows of future events and can reveal them to His prophets. (15–20 minutes)

Read yesterday’s weather forecast of today’s weather. Ask students:

- How accurate was the forecast?
- How often would you guess weather forecasts are correct?
- Why are forecasts sometimes inaccurate?
- How is a meteorologist making a weather forecast different from a servant of the Lord prophesying?
- Why will the Lord’s promises always come to pass?

Tell students that at the end of his ministry the prophet Alma left his family and people. Have students read Alma 45:18–19 and find where he went. Before leaving, Alma interviewed and taught his son Helaman. Have students read Alma 45:1–8 and share what Alma wanted to know about his son. Read Alma 37:1 and ask:

- What was Helaman commanded to do that made it so important that he have a strong testimony?
- How could you share your testimony with future generations?

Tell the class that Alma made a sobering prophecy concerning the future of the Nephites. Have students read Alma 45:10–17 and underline elements of this prophecy. Ask: What would lead to the destruction of the Nephites? Invite students to use their footnotes and chapter headings to find where in the Book of Mormon this prophecy of the Nephites’ destruction was fulfilled. (Mormon 6.) Show students the dates at the

bottom of the pages in Mormon 6 and ask them when this destruction would be complete. Discuss the following:

- How did Alma know with such accuracy an event nearly 500 years before it occurred?
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 1:38. How did the promise of the Lord in this verse apply to the Book of Mormon people?
- How does it apply to our day?

Share the following statements. President Wilford Woodruff said:

“If we had before us every revelation which God ever gave to man . . . and they were piled up here a hundred feet high, the Church and kingdom of God could not grow, in this or any other age of the world, without the living oracles of God” (“The Keys of the Kingdom,” *Millennial Star*, 2 Sept. 1889, 548).

Elder John Taylor, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, said:

“Adam’s revelation did not instruct Noah to build his ark; nor did Noah’s revelation tell Lot to forsake Sodom; nor did either of these speak of the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt. These all had revelations for themselves” (“On Priesthood,” *Millennial Star*, 1 Nov. 1847, 323).

President Ezra Taft Benson, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve, said, “*The living prophet is more vital to us than the standard works*” (“Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophet,” in *1980 Devotional Speeches of the Year* [1981], 26). Ask: Why do you think this is true? Invite students to share times they have felt the Lord’s words come to them through His prophet. Ask: How has your life been blessed because of the words of a living prophet?

Sister Virginia U. Jensen, a member of the Relief Society general presidency, said:

“There aren’t many guarantees in this life. . . . Nothing man-made or man-controlled can ever be truly guaranteed! But here’s the miracle. The Lord has given some marvelous guarantees without any disclaimers. And this is one of them: He will choose the prophet, and He will never let that man lead us astray. Imagine for a moment the impact of that promise. There is at least one place we can turn for pure, unpolluted guidance” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 14; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 13).

Alma 46. Breaking the Lord’s commandments leads to dissension and conflict, but keeping our covenants brings unity, blessings, protection, and peace.

(40–45 minutes)

Show students a copy of an *Ensign* magazine. Ask what the word *ensign* means. If necessary, give a student a dictionary to look up the meaning (a flag or banner). Invite students to suggest reasons the Church might call its magazine the *Ensign*. Ask: Why might a military leader use a flag or ensign? Encourage students to watch for how Captain Moroni used his ensign with the Nephites.

Note: If the *Ensign* is not available where you live, use the following object lesson instead. Show students the flag of your country. Ask them to explain the flag’s colors and symbols. Ask: What feelings might a flag bring to people who care very much for their country? Encourage students to watch for what Captain Moroni used to gather his people.

Write the following chart on the board. Include the scriptures in the left column, but leave the answers in the other columns blank. Divide the class into four groups. Assign each group a set of verses, and have them fill in the chart for those verses.

Reference	Main leader	Were the leaders Lamanites?	Were the leaders dissenters from the Nephites?
Alma 43:5–8	Zerahemnah	No	Yes
Alma 46:3–7	Amalickiah	No	Yes
Alma 50:25–29	Morianton	No	Yes
Alma 61:8; 62:6	Pachus	No	Yes

Explain that every enemy Mormon identified in Alma 43–63 was either a group of Nephite dissenters or was led or stirred up by Nephite dissenters. Those who rebelled and left the Nephites created serious problems by their dissension. Have students read Alma 47:36 and discuss why the dissenters were such a threat to the righteous Nephites’ peace and safety.

Ask: Why do you think these dissenters would leave the Nephites and join the Lamanites in war against their former countrymen? Read Alma 45:23–46:3 to find why Amalickiah’s people dissented. Ask:

- How can riches bring disunity to a people?
- Who does a proud person rely on instead of God?
- Why would a proud person be less willing to obey the counsel of the Lord’s servants?
- How do those who reject the Lord’s counsel often act toward those who accept it?

Read Alma 46:4–7 and invite students to underline reasons Amalickiah was successful at leading people away from the Church. Read Alma 46:8–9 and ask students to give examples, from the scriptures or from life, that show that what Mormon says in these verses is true.

Read together Alma 46:11–12 and identify six reasons the Nephites felt that going to war was justified (see also

Alma 43:45–47). Divide students into six groups. Assign each group to draw on a piece of paper a picture representing one of the six reasons. Draw the title of liberty on the board, or display a large piece of cloth. Ask a student from each group to attach the group’s picture to your title of liberty and to explain that picture to the class. Read Alma 46:13–22 and discuss the following questions:

- In addition to raising the title of liberty, how else did Captain Moroni prepare to resist Amalickiah’s efforts? (see v. 16).
- How can prayer help bring people together in a common cause?
- What did the people intend by tearing their garments and throwing them at Moroni’s feet? (see vv. 20–22).
- What effect do you think covenanting to live faithfully while defending their families and freedoms had on the people?

Have students read verses 28–29, and ask: How successful was Captain Moroni in uniting the Nephites to his righteous cause? Read verses 33–35 and point out that while it would normally be wrong to enforce a covenant with the threat of death, the actions of the Amalickiahites were endangering the Nephites’ lives and freedoms. It is also important to remember that Captain Moroni acted with authority from the government. Ask: What value did Moroni place on making and keeping covenants? Explain that the people of the Book of Mormon took covenants so seriously that Moroni was willing to trust the traitors once they gave their word (see also Alma 44:6, 8, 19–20). Read Alma 46:36–41 and ask: What difference did it make when the Nephites kept their covenants?

Discuss the following questions:

- In what ways does keeping your covenants prepare you for spiritual “battles”?
- Why do you think keeping promises to the Lord brings greater peace and happiness?
- In what ways does keeping covenants even when it is difficult strengthen you?

Share this promise by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland: “Peace and freedom from fear . . . will come to those in Zion, including—and especially—to the children of those who have made and kept their covenants” (*Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon* [1997], 291).

Alma 46:13–15. “Christians” believe in Jesus Christ. They willingly and faithfully take upon themselves His name. (15–20 minutes)

Write *Are Mormons Christian?* on the board. Ask students:

- When was the last time you heard this question?
- If someone asked you this question today, how would you answer?

Invite the class to suggest qualifications that determine if a person is Christian, and list them on the board.

Ask if the members of the Church in Book of Mormon days were Christian. Invite students to search their scripture indexes for references to Christians in the Book of Mormon. Have them read Alma 46:13–16 and underline the word *Christians*. Ask: How are Christians described in these verses? Suggest that students underline these descriptions. Ask:

- How do these qualifications compare with the list on the board?
- Why do you think the true believers “gladly” took upon them the name of Christ? (v. 15).

Suggest that students cross-reference Alma 46:14–15 with Mosiah 5:7–12. Share the following statement by Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin:

“Two characteristics identify Christians: (1) they profess *belief* in the Savior, and (2) they *act* in harmony with the Savior’s teachings. Faithful members of the Church, called Saints or Latter-day Saints, qualify clearly in both characteristics. In our belief and our action, we demonstrate that ‘Jesus Christ himself [is] the chief corner stone’ of our faith [Ephesians 2:20]. . . .

“ . . . By definition a Christian not only professes *belief* in the Savior, but a Christian *lives and acts* according to the teachings and commandments of Jesus Christ. He taught, ‘Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth* the will of my Father’ [Matthew 7:21; italics added]. Jesus also said, ‘If ye love me, keep my commandments’ [John 14:15; D&C 124:87]. He commanded us to pattern our lives after His [see 3 Nephi 12:48; Matthew 5:48; 3 Nephi 27:27]. True disciples of the Lord must be ‘doers of the word, and not hearers only’ [James 1:22]. . . .

“As we take His name upon us, we most certainly are Christians, for we bear the name of Christ. Each week as we partake of the emblems of bread and water, we do it in remembrance of Him. We renew our covenant that we ‘are willing to take upon [us] the name of [the] Son [of God], and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given [us]’ [D&C 20:77]” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 96, 98–99; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 70, 72).

Explain to students that, in their true senses, the terms *Latter-day Saint* and *Christian* mean the same thing. Invite students to respond to the following questions on a piece of paper:

- In what ways do I show that I am a Christian?
- In what ways can I become a better Christian?

Alma 47; 48:11–20. Righteousness restricts Satan’s power. (45–50 minutes)

Ask students to think of a leader they admire. Have them suggest characteristics that contribute to this leader’s effectiveness. Write the headings *Righteous Leaders* and *Wicked Leaders* on the board. Read Doctrine and Covenants 121:41–43 and list on the board the characteristics of righteous leaders given in these verses. Ask: How can having these traits make us better servants of the Lord?

Explain that there are many righteous leaders in the Book of Mormon whose examples we can follow. Have students read Alma 48:11–20 and list descriptions of Captain Moroni and Helaman. Write these descriptions next to the “Righteous Leaders” list. Ask: Why would you want to follow such leaders? Have students discuss how having the righteous qualities of Moroni and Helaman could help them in their Church callings, their school, their work, and their homes.

Explain that just as learning about good leaders can help us follow them, learning about evil leaders can help us avoid being deceived by them. As a class, read Alma 46:9–10; 47:1–35; 49:10. As you read, invite students to take notes on Amalickiah’s character, goals, and tactics. When you finish reading, write their findings on the board under *Wicked Leaders*. Discuss the following questions:

- How would you feel about having Amalickiah as your leader? Why?
- Who, in addition to Amalickiah, might this list describe?
- Read Moses 4:1–6. Which of Amalickiah’s character traits, goals, and tactics are similar to those of Satan?
- Why is it helpful to know Satan’s strategies? (see 2 Corinthians 2:11).

Discuss the following statement by Elder James E. Faust, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“We all have an inner braking system that will stop us before we follow Satan too far down the wrong road. It is the still, small voice which is within us. But once we have succumbed, the braking system begins to leak brake fluid and our stopping mechanism becomes weak and ineffective. . . .

“ . . . We need not become paralyzed with fear of Satan’s power. He can have no power over us unless we permit it. He is really a coward, and if we stand firm, he will retreat [see James 4:7; 1 Nephi 22:26]. . . .

“ . . . One of Satan’s approaches is to persuade a person who has transgressed that there is no hope of forgiveness. But there is always hope. Most sins, no matter how grievous, may be repented of if the desire is sincere enough. . . .

“ . . . Satan’s efforts can be thwarted by all who come unto Christ by obedience to the covenants and ordinances of the gospel. The humble followers of the divine Master need not be deceived by the devil if they will be honest and true to their fellow men and women, go to the house of the Lord, receive the sacrament worthily, observe the Sabbath day, pay their tithes and offerings, offer contrite prayers, engage in the Lord’s work, and follow those who preside over them” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1987, 41, 43–44; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 34–36).

Alma 50:19–23. Righteousness and happiness can exist even in an atmosphere of war and rumors of war. (15–20 minutes)

Show the class a newspaper or magazine article about a recent disaster caused by extreme weather, such as a hurricane, blizzard, or flood. Ask:

- If such a catastrophe occurred near your home, where would you want to go to be safe?
- What is it about that location that would cause you to feel safe during turmoil or disaster?
- Why is it possible to feel peace even in times of disaster?

Consider having the class sing “We Are All Enlisted” (*Hymns*, no. 250). Point out that the hymn teaches that we can be happy even in times of conflict.

Explain that when Mormon abridged the Book of Mormon, he sometimes added his own comments to explain why he was including certain accounts. Have students read Alma 50:19 looking for a phrase Mormon used to alert readers to an important principle (“and thus we see”). Ask: What does Mormon teach us in this verse about the Lord’s mercy and justice? Have students read verse 20 and underline the two-part promise the Lord made to Lehi’s descendants. Ask:

- What is the promise to those who keep the Lord’s commandments?
- What is lost by those who ignore His commandments?

Have students read Alma 50:21–23 and identify ways that both parts of this promise were fulfilled. Ask:

- What phrase describes those who stayed faithful during this period of war? (“There never was a happier time among the people of Nephi.”)
- Why do you think they were happy during such trying times?
- How could this apply to members of the Church in today’s world?

Share the following statement by Elder M. Russell Ballard:

“Through faith we can find peace, comfort, and the courage to endure. As we trust in God and his plan for our happiness with all our hearts and lean not unto our own understanding (see Proverbs 3:5), hope is born. Hope grows out of faith and gives meaning and purpose to all we do. It can give us comfort in the face of adversity, strength in times of trial, and peace when we have reason for doubt or anguish” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 30; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 23–24).



Alma 53:10–21; 56:44–56; 57:19–27. Children who follow the teachings of righteous parents, who grow up in righteousness, and who are full of faith can see great miracles in their lives.

(45–50 minutes)

Display the following pictures from the Gospel Art Picture Kit side-by-side on the board: The Anti-Nephi-Lehies Burying Their Swords (no. 311) and Two Thousand Young Warriors (no. 313). Ask:

- Who is depicted in these pictures?
- What clues suggest that these are pictures of the people of Ammon (the Anti-Nephi-Lehies)?

Invite any students who may have read these chapters to tell how the young warriors were related to the people of Ammon.

Write *The People of Ammon* above the first picture and *Sons of the People of Ammon* above the second. Ask half the class to read Alma 24:13, 16, 18. Have a student from the group write beneath the first picture the main points of the covenant made by the people of Ammon. Ask the rest of the class to read Alma 53:16–17. Have a student from that group write beneath the second picture the main points of the covenant made by the young soldiers.

Have students read Alma 53:10–13 and explain why the people of Ammon were about to break their oath. Read verses 14–15 and ask:

- Why did Helaman persuade them to keep their covenant?
- What does this teach about the importance of keeping covenants?
- What covenants have you made with the Lord?

Have students read verses 19–21 and underline the qualities of these young men. Invite students to discuss how having these qualities could help them stay faithful through the “battles” they face each day.

Assign six students to each read one of the following sets of verses from Alma 56: verses 1–2, 3–4, 5–6, 7–8, 9–10, 16–17.

Have the students briefly summarize their verses. Explain that Helaman’s small, inexperienced army was asked to go to battle against the stronger Lamanite army (see vv. 34–44). Read Alma 56:45–46 and ask:

- Who did these young men trust?
- What did the young men say that showed who they trusted?
- Read verses 47–48. Why were they so courageous?
- Read verses 49, 54–56. What brought Helaman “great joy” after the battle?
- Why do you think all of these young men were protected?
- Why do you think the righteous are not always preserved physically in battle?
- Read Alma 57:36. How are the faithful victorious even if they lose their lives?

Summarize for students how the sons of Helaman entered a second battle in which they were outnumbered (see Alma 57:1–19). Read Alma 57:20–22, 25–27 and ask:

- How did these men act during this battle?
- To whom did Helaman attribute their great character?
- In what ways have the teaching, testimony, and example of your parents influenced you?
- How did the results of this battle compare to the results of the previous one? (see Alma 56:56).
- To what did the soldiers attribute their protection?

Invite students to share times they were helped by God’s power because they had faith in Him. Bear your testimony of the power of faith. Share this statement by Elder Rex D. Pinegar:

“From my own experience with life’s hardships I have learned that faith in God develops a personal love for Him which is reciprocated through his blessings to us in times of need. . . . Do not fear the challenges of life, but approach them patiently, with faith in God. He will reward your faith with power not only to endure, but also to overcome hardships, disappointments, trials, and struggles of daily living. Through diligently striving to live the law of God and with faith in Him, we will not be diverted from our eternal course either by the ways or the praise of the world” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1982, 36; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 26).

Ask students to recall who first taught these soldiers about faith (see Alma 56:47–48). Share the following guidance from the First Presidency:

“We counsel parents and children to give highest priority to family prayer, family home evening, gospel study and instruction, and wholesome family activities. However worthy and appropriate other demands or activities may be, they must not be permitted to displace the divinely-appointed duties that only parents and families can adequately perform” (First Presidency letter, 11 Feb. 1999).

Discuss the following questions:

- Who is this advice from the First Presidency addressed to?
- Why do you think it isn’t addressed only to parents?
- What can you do to help your family make family prayer, family home evening, gospel study and instruction, and wholesome activities your highest priority?
- How can following this counsel strengthen your faith and the faith of your family?



Introduction

Once again the Nephite nation was on the brink of destruction because of the wickedness of its people and leaders. Though Captain Moroni led a successful military campaign against the Lamanites, domestic confusion and division pushed his nation dangerously close to disaster. Learning of the crisis at home, Moroni marched to Zarahemla, united his army with Pahoran’s, and defeated the king-men who had seized control of the government.

When leaders become corrupt and seek to impose their wickedness upon a nation, the people often lose their religious freedom. Such was the situation in Zarahemla when the king-men took over the government. The Lord said to Captain Moroni, “The inward vessel shall be cleansed first, and then shall the outer vessel be cleansed also” (Alma 60:23). Captain Moroni and Pahoran stood together against the king-men so that their people might “stand fast in that liberty wherewith God [had] made them free” (Alma 61:21).

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- A lack of unity can weaken a nation. Righteousness and faith in God can increase unity and strengthen a nation (see Alma 59:9–13; 60:6–24; see also Matthew 12:25; D&C 38:27).
- To be delivered from enemies and receive God’s blessing, the people and leaders of a nation must first be clean within (see Alma 60:23; 61:19–20; 62:6–13).
- In times of trial, the righteous humbly turn to the Lord, who strengthens and blesses them, while the wicked reject the Lord and become more hardened (see Alma 62:39–51).
- Sometimes the Lord spares the wicked because of the prayers of the righteous (see Alma 62:40; see also Alma 10:22–23; Helaman 13:13–14).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 103–4.

Suggestions for Teaching

Alma 59–61. A lack of unity can weaken a nation. Righteousness and faith in God can increase unity and strengthen a nation. (45–50 minutes)

Invite a student to read the following statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“Unity is power; and when I reflect on the importance of it to the stability of all governments, I am astounded at the silly moves of persons and parties to foment discord in order to ride into power” (*History of the Church*, 6:198).

Ask:

- What do you think this statement means?
- How is unity power?
- What groups, teams, or organizations have you seen that had greater power because of unity?
- Why would Satan want to disrupt the unity of a nation? of the Church? of your family?

Write the following questions on the board (do not include the suggested answer to the fourth question). Have students scan Alma 59:1–13 looking for answers to the questions.

- Why was Moroni “exceedingly rejoiced” in verse 1 but “exceedingly sorrowful” in verse 11?
- Why should Pahoran have sent men to the city of Nephihah?
- What important principle do you learn from verse 9?
- How does this relate to giving in to sin? (It is easier to resist temptation than to repent of sin.)

- How did the wickedness or righteousness of the Nephites affect what happened to them? (see vv. 11–13).
- How can this be true in our lives?

Ask students to imagine that they are political advisors to Pahoran, the chief judge over the Nephite nation. Tell them Pahoran has just received a letter from Captain Moroni and wants their advice on how to respond. Take turns reading Moroni's letter from Alma 60:1–21, 36 (or other verses you select). Ask:

- What were Captain Moroni's accusations?
- Should Pahoran and the leaders of the nation have been offended by this letter? Why or why not?
- How would you characterize Captain Moroni? Was he a rebel or a patriot? How can you tell?
- How would you counsel Pahoran to respond?

Read as a class Alma 61:2–21 (or a selection of these verses) to see how Pahoran answered Captain Moroni's letter.

Discuss the following questions:

- What reasons did Pahoran give for not sending men and food to Moroni's army? (see vv. 1–8).
- Who was the common enemy that threatened to destroy their country? (see vv. 3–5).
- What did Pahoran and Moroni have in common? (see Alma 60:36; 61:9–10).
- In what ways could they be considered great patriots?
- How can wickedness divide a nation?
- How can dividing a nation lead to its destruction?
- Read Alma 62:6–8. What blessings come to those who are unified under righteous principles?
- How can these principles apply to your life? to your family? to the Church?

Have students read the following statements and discuss how they apply in their lives. Orson F. Whitney, who was later a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, wrote:

“Power dwells in unity, not in discord; in humility, not pride; in sacrifice, not selfishness; obedience, not rebellion” (*Life of Heber C. Kimball* [1945], 64).

Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve said:

“Beware of pride. A unity which comes to a family or to a people softened by the Spirit will bring great power. With that power will come recognition from the world. Whether that recognition brings praise or envy, it could lead us to pride. That would offend the Spirit. There is a protection against pride, that sure source of disunity. It is to see the bounties which God pours upon us not only as a mark of His favor but an opportunity to join with those around us in greater service” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 89; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 68).

Alma 62:1–13. To be delivered from enemies and receive God's blessing, a nation must first be clean within. (25–30 minutes)

Show the class two clear glasses, one dirty on the outside and the other dirty on the inside. Pour water in the glasses, and ask students which glass they would rather drink from. Ask:

- What is the difference between drinking from a glass that is dirty on the outside and one that is dirty on the inside?
- What would you want to do before drinking out of a glass that is dirty on the inside?
- How can people be like these glasses?
- Read Matthew 15:18–20. Why is it more important to be clean on the inside?

Read Alma 60:23–24 and look for how it relates to the discussion. Ask:

- Why do you think the “inward vessel” must be cleansed first? (see Matthew 23:26).
- What is the inward vessel that Captain Moroni refers to?

Ask a student to summarize the situation of the Nephites in Alma 59–61. Remind the class that the king-men had seized control of the government and were seeking to unite with the Lamanites. Read Alma 61:17–18 and ask:

- What did Pahoran want Moroni to do?
- How does this relate to cleansing the inward vessel?

Read Alma 62:1–13 and discuss the following questions:

- In what two ways did Captain Moroni respond to Pahoran's letter? (see vv. 1–2).
- How did Moroni gather a sufficient army to march against the rebels in Zarahemla? (see vv. 3–6).
- How was this war against Pachus's king-men like cleansing the inward vessel? (see vv. 7–9).

- What law were the Nephites forced to “strictly [observe] for the safety of their country”? (see vv. 10–11; see also the commentary for Alma 62:3–14 in *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, p. 104).
- How hard do you think it was for the Nephites to cleanse the inward vessel? Why?
- How did cleansing the inward vessel help deliver the Nephites from destruction? (see vv. 12–13).
- How can we apply this principle to our day?

Discuss the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson:

“The Lord works from the inside out. The world works from the outside in. The world would take people out of the slums. Christ takes the slums out of people, and then they take themselves out of the slums. The world would mold men by changing their environment. Christ changes men, who then change their environment. The world would shape human behavior, but Christ can change human nature” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1985, 5; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 6).

Alma 62:39–51. In times of trial, the righteous humbly turn to the Lord, who strengthens and blesses them, while the wicked reject the Lord and become more hardened. (20–25 minutes)

Ask students to identify some of the major wars that have been fought. It might be helpful to discuss related questions, such as “How long did they last?” and “What effects did they have on the people?”

Invite students to compare Alma 62:39 with Alma 43:3 to determine how long the Nephites had been at war with the Lamanites (about thirteen years). Ask:

- What effect do you think the “many years” of wars and bloodshed had on the Nephite nation?
- How do you think those years might have affected the Church?

Point out that hardship and trials have different effects on people. Discuss why the same events affect people differently. Read Alma 62:40–41 and ask:

- What allowed both good and evil people to be spared from destruction?
- Why do you think some people move away from the Lord during trial and hardship?
- Why do you think some grow closer to the Lord?
- How can knowing this help us as we face our own trials?

Explain that the Church organization had suffered because of the war. Have students read Alma 62:44–51 looking for answers to the following questions:

- What did “Helaman and his brethren” do to reestablish, or strengthen, the Church? (see vv. 44–46).
- What effect did establishing the Church and the central government have on the nation as a whole? (see vv. 47–48).
- What did the people do to continue receiving the Lord’s blessings? (see vv. 49–51).
- How could following the example of the Nephites help us today?

Alma 63. Concluding the book of Alma. (15–20 minutes)

Write the following headings on the board: *36th Year*, *37th Year*, *38th Year*, and *39th Year*. Divide the class into four groups, and assign each group one of the following sets of verses from Alma 63: verses 1–3, 4–6, 7–9, 10–16. Have the groups identify the events that occurred in their verses, and write them on the board under the appropriate headings.

Show students a map of the world and ask how far-reaching they think the travels of Lehi’s descendants were. Point to such South Pacific islands as Hawaii, Samoa, Tonga, and New Zealand, and ask who might have settled there. Explain that President Spencer W. Kimball, in an area conference in Samoa, read from Alma 63 and told the Saints:

“And so it seems to me rather clear that your ancestors moved northward and crossed a part of the South Pacific. You did not bring your records with you, but you brought much food and provisions. And so we have a great congregation of people in the South Seas who came from the Nephites, and who came from the land southward and went to the land northward, which could have been Hawaii. And then the further settlement could have been a move southward again to all of these islands and even to New Zealand. The Lord knows what he is doing when he sends his people from one place to another. That was the scattering of Israel. Some of them remained in America and went from Alaska to the southern point. And others of you came this direction.

“President Joseph F. Smith, when president of the Church, said to the [Maori] people of New Zealand, ‘I would like to say to you brethren and sisters from New Zealand, you *are* some of Hagoth’s people, and there is NO PERHAPS about it!’ (Joseph F. Smith, quoted by William A. Cole and Elwin W. Jensen, *Israel in the Pacific*, p. 388.) He didn’t want any arguments about it” (in Conference Report, Samoa Area Conference 1976, 15).

Have students write a paragraph about a person in the book of Alma they admire (such as Alma, Amulek, Ammon, Limhi, Abish, Helaman, Captain Moroni, or Teancum). Have them include why they admire this person and which of the person’s characteristics they would like to emulate. Invite some students to read to the class what they wrote.

THE BOOK OF HELAMAN

The last part of the book of Alma records how the Nephite civilization was ravaged by war. Wars with the Lamanites, which had been going on for several hundred years, and civil war between the king-men and freemen had crippled the nation's ability to sustain itself.

The book of Helaman reveals a new threat, much more insidious, lurking within the fabric of Nephite society. This book, taken from Mormon's abridgment of the large plates of Nephi, details the rise of a secret combination known as the Gadianton robbers. Their purpose was to obtain power and gain through murder, robbery, and intrigue (see Helaman 2:8). In Gadianton, Satan found a man like Cain to whom he could reveal secret oaths and covenants (see Helaman 6:26–27). Mormon declared, "This Gadianton did prove the overthrow, yea, almost the entire destruction of the people of Nephi" (Helaman 2:13).



Introduction

Despite the darkness that surrounded the Nephite-Lamanite world, the light of the gospel continued to shine. By the power of "the word of God" (Helaman 3:29), thousands joined the Church and received the promise of salvation (see vv. 24–26, 29–30). The Lamanite nation "utterly destroyed" the Gadianton robbers from among them (see Helaman 6:37). Notice how the Lord's light offset the powers of darkness and provided hope to those who accepted it. President Ezra Taft Benson declared, "The word of God, as found in the scriptures, in the words of living prophets, and in personal revelation, has the power to fortify the Saints and arm them with the Spirit so they can resist evil, hold fast to the good, and find joy in this life" ("The Power of the Word," *Ensign*, May 1986, 80).

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

Note: Prayerfully study each assigned scripture block and consider the principles in this section before preparing your lessons.

- Murder, intrigue, contention, and divisiveness weaken a nation and make it vulnerable to destruction (see Helaman 1:1–22, 27; 2; 3:17–23).


- As faithful members pray and "lay hold upon the word of God" (Helaman 3:29), the Church prospers despite the turmoil in the world (see Helaman 3:1–3, 17–35).
- When people forget the Lord and trust in their own strength, they become weak (see Helaman 4:11–26).
- The "more numerous" part of the inhabitants of the promised land must choose righteousness or risk being destroyed (see Helaman 5:2–3; 6:37–40; see also Mosiah 29:25–27).
- When we build our lives on the Savior's teachings, we find strength to overcome Satan's temptations (see Helaman 5:12).
- Servants of God who teach by the power of His Spirit can do more to change the hearts of their enemies than armies (see Helaman 5:13–19, 49–52; see also Alma 31:5).
- Wicked men are vulnerable to the influence of Satan, "the author of all sin" (Helaman 6:30). From the beginning Satan has taught men to get gain through murder and robbery (see Helaman 6:21–32; see also Moses 5:29–31).
- The Spirit of the Lord withdraws from the wicked who harden their hearts (see Helaman 6:35).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 105–7.

Suggestions for Teaching

Note: Choose from the ideas in this section, or use some of your own, as you prepare to teach the assigned scripture block.

 *Book of Mormon Video* presentation 17, "The Pride Cycle," covers Helaman 1–12 and can be used with this or the next scripture block (see *Book of Mormon Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

Helaman 1—3 Nephi 11. The coming of Jesus Christ to America parallels the Second Coming. (30–35 minutes)

Have students stand up, and then have them sit down when they think forty-seven seconds have elapsed (make sure they do this exercise without a clock or watch). Discuss the following questions:

- Why was it difficult to determine when the time was up?
- What would help you be more accurate in your timing?
- How can this be compared to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ? (No one knows the day or hour.)
- What has the Lord provided to help us know that we are nearing the Second Coming? (Answers might include

scriptures, prophets, the Restoration of the gospel, missionary work, and signs of the times.)

Have students stand up again and then sit down when twenty seconds have elapsed. This time have them use a watch or clock. Ask: How can being aware of the signs of the Second Coming help you prepare for that day? Discuss students' answers.

Read this statement by President Ezra Taft Benson: "The record of the Nephite history just prior to the Savior's visit reveals many parallels to our own day as we anticipate the Savior's second coming" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 3; or *Ensign*, May 1987, 4). Ask:

- Based on this statement, how can the Book of Mormon help us prepare for the Second Coming?
- What parallels can you think of between our day and the events in the Book of Mormon?

Give students copies of the chart "Helaman and 3 Nephi: A Parallel to the Second Coming of Christ" from the appendix (pp. 299–300), or write it on the board. Divide your class into five groups and assign each group one of the five sections of the chart ("Social and Political Turmoil," "Cataclysmic Events," and so on). Have them study the verses for their section. When they finish, have the groups report what their verses teach about the Lord's coming to the Nephites and how that parallels the Second Coming.

Encourage students to watch for parallels to the Second Coming as they study the books of Helaman and 3 Nephi so they can be strengthened in their commitment to be prepared.



Helaman 1–6. The gospel of Jesus Christ can cure the spiritual sickness of individuals and nations. (40–50 minutes)

Invite one or two students to tell about a time they were sick and what was done to make them well. Write on the board the headings *Sickness*, *Medication*, and *Made Well*. Have students identify these elements in their classmates' accounts, and list them under the appropriate headings. Explain that the Nephites and Lamanites in the book of Helaman suffered from another type of sickness and also needed medication to get well.

Read Helaman 4:11–15 looking for the sickness that is described, and list it on the board under the correct heading. Ask the following questions and list responses on the board:

- What medication was prescribed? (see v. 14).
- What sign indicated that the people had been made well? (see v. 15).

Have a student read the following statement by Elder Ezra Taft Benson, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

"The outlook for the world is not encouraging, but we know what the answer is. There is only one answer, and that is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Peace must come from the heart. Men's hearts must change, and righteousness must rule in the lives of the people of the world before peace can come. May God hasten the day. May the message of the restored gospel go forward in great force, by increasing numbers, that God's children may escape the calamities which are impending" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1947, 157).

Ask:

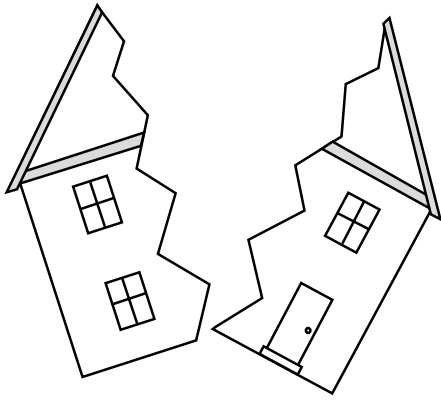
- What promises have been made to those who take their "medicine"? (Answers might include peace, a changed heart, protection.)
- What calamities do you think we might escape as we live the gospel?

Divide students into four groups and assign each a chapter from Helaman 1–3, 5. Have each group identify words and phrases that show spiritual sickness, medication, and evidence of being cured. Ask a student from each group to report their findings, and list them under the appropriate headings on the board.

Discuss as a class how the medication prescribed for the Nephites could help people today. Read Helaman 6:1–2, 34–36, and ask each student to write a paragraph describing what these principles mean to them. Invite some students to share with the class what they wrote.

Helaman 1:1–22, 27; 2:1–14. Murder, intrigue, contention, and divisiveness weaken a nation and make it vulnerable to destruction. (35–40 minutes)

Note: Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, foretold: "Bands of Gadianton robbers will infest every nation" (in Conference Report, Mar.–Apr. 1979, 131; or *Ensign*, May 1979, 93). Since secret combinations caused the destruction of both the Nephite and Jaredite nations (see Helaman 2:13; Ether 8:20–21), it is important that we become aware of this serious threat in our own lands. Focus on the eight characteristics of secret combinations listed in the commentary for Helaman 6 in *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122* (p. 107), not on particular organizations.



Draw the accompanying illustration on the board. Invite students to read Matthew 12:25 and suggest a caption for the drawing. Ask:

- What does the phrase “a house divided against itself” mean?
- How can this apply to a family? a city? a nation?
- Read Helaman 1:1–8. What brought about the division among the Nephites that is described in these verses?
- What impact did this division have on Pahoran’s family? on Nephite society?
- Read 3 Nephi 11:29. According to this verse, where does contention come from?
- How can it affect you?

Explain that the contention among the Nephites left them vulnerable within and without. Have students scan Helaman 1:9–13 looking for how the Nephites were vulnerable within. Then have them scan verses 14–22, 27 looking for how they were vulnerable without. Ask students which threat they think would be the most dangerous to Nephite society and why.

Review as a class the story in Helaman 2 and discuss the following questions:

- After the Nephites overcame the Lamanite threat from without, how did they go about filling the judgment-seat? (see vv. 1–2).
- What threat from within grew in power and influence? (see vv. 3–5).
- What would be a good name for this threat? (Possible answers include “Gadianton robbers” or “secret combination.”)
- What was the purpose of this secret combination? (see v. 8).
- What impact would this combination later have on the Nephite nation? (see vv. 13–14).

Discuss the following questions:

- What threatens our society from without?
- What threatens our society from within?

- Why is it important for us to avoid contention and be united?

Read the following statement by Elder Henry B. Eyring, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, and discuss its promises and warnings:

“The sacrament prayer can remind us every week of how the gift of unity will come through obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ. When we keep our covenants to take His name upon us, to remember Him always, and to keep all His commandments, we will receive the companionship of His Spirit. That will soften our hearts and unite us. But there are two warnings which must come with that promise.

“First, the Holy Ghost remains with us only if we stay clean and free from the love of the things of the world. A choice to be unclean will repel the Holy Ghost. The Spirit dwells only with those who choose the Lord over the world. . . .

“The other warning is to beware of pride. A unity which comes to a family or to a people softened by the Spirit will bring great power. With that power will come recognition from the world. Whether that recognition brings praise or envy, it could lead us to pride. That would offend the Spirit. There is a protection against pride, that sure source of disunity. It is to see the bounties which God pours upon us not only as a mark of His favor but an opportunity to join with those around us in greater service” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 88–89; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 68).

Helaman 3:1–3, 17–35. As faithful members pray and “lay hold upon the word of God,” the Church prospers despite the turmoil in the world. (20–25 minutes)

Invite students to suggest current events that show the turmoil and wickedness in the world. Ask:

- Do you believe that turmoil is increasing or decreasing? Why?
- What impact do these events have on the Church and its members?

Write the heading *Nephite World* on the board. Read Helaman 3:1–3, 17 and look for the condition of the Nephite world. Ask what phrases in these verses show that life became progressively worse, and list them under the heading on the board. (Answers might include “no contention,” “a little pride” [v. 1], “much contention” [v. 3], and “great contentions” [v. 17].)

Write the heading *Church of God* beside the first heading. Invite students to read Helaman 3:24–26 looking for the condition of the Church. Ask:

- What did the Church experience during this same time?
- How would you explain the incredible growth?
- What similarities do you see between then and now in the world and the Church?

Tell students that Mormon gave his explanation for the Church's growth in three "thus we see" statements. "Thus we see" is another way of saying "This is what we learn from that." Have students carefully read Helaman 3:27–30 and list three ways members can help the Church prosper in difficult times. Consider asking the following questions:

- How does "sincerity of heart" affect our prayers? (see v. 27).
- What would you say the "gate of heaven" is? (v. 28).
- What two blessings come to those who "lay hold upon the word of God"? (v. 29).
- What can we do to become men and women of Christ?

Tell students that not all members of the Church will experience these blessings. Have students read Helaman 3:33–35 looking for the two types of Church members identified in these verses. Ask:

- What does it mean for a person to "profess" to belong to the Church? (see Alma 5:37).
- What allowed the humble to become "stronger and stronger" and "firmer and firmer" in the faith? (Helaman 3:35).

Share the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, and testify of its truth:

"Truly, the Holy Ghost is a sanctifier, and the extent to which men receive and enjoy the gift of the Holy Ghost is the extent to which they are sanctified. In the lives of most of us, sanctification is an ongoing process, and we obtain that glorious status by degrees as we overcome the world and become saints in deed as well as in name" (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [1985], 266).

Helaman 4:11–26. When people forget the Lord and trust in their own strength, they become weak.
(25–30 minutes)

Show students a stick labeled *Doctrine and Covenants 130:20–21*. Read the following statement by Elder Boyd K. Packer, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve: "There is an old saying that if you pick up one end of a stick, you pick up the other end as well" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1984, 82; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 66). Demonstrate this principle with the stick. Have students read *Doctrine and Covenants 130:20–21* and look for why you labeled the stick with these verses.

Doctrine and Covenants 130:20–21

wickedness

unhappiness

touching a fire

getting burned

breaking a commandment

being punished

Show students other sticks with a choice listed on one end and a consequence on the other. Discuss the following statement by Elder Russell M. Nelson, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve: "While we are free to choose, once we have made those choices, we are tied to the consequences of those choices" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1988, 6; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 7). Invite students to list other choices and consequences that illustrate this principle.

Have students review the chapter heading for Helaman 4 looking for the latest Lamanite conquest. Read Helaman 4:11–13 and ask:

- What consequences did the Nephites suffer?
- What choices brought about these consequences?

Have students read Helaman 4:14–20 and tell what Moronihah and others tried to do to help the Nephites. Ask:

- How did the Nephites respond?
- What did the future look like for the Nephites?

Read the following statement:

"No matter how wicked and ferocious and depraved the Lamanites might be (and they were that!), no matter by how much they outnumbered the Nephites, darkly closing in on all sides, . . . they were not the Nephite problem. They were merely kept there to remind the Nephites of their real problem, which was to walk uprightly before the Lord" (Hugh Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, 2nd ed. [1988], 339–40; see also 1 Nephi 2:21–24).

In this serious condition, the Nephites finally realized their plight. Have a student read Helaman 4:21 and invite students to suggest an important word in that verse. Ask:

- What does the word *remember* indicate the Nephites were guilty of?
- How did forgetting the Lord and His prophets affect the Nephites?

Read Helaman 4:21–26 looking for at least five transgressions that the Nephites realized they had made and five consequences of those transgressions.

Helaman 5:2–3; 6:37–40. The “more numerous” part of the inhabitants of the promised land must choose righteousness or risk being destroyed. (10–15 minutes)

Show the class some rotten fruit (or other rotten food item). Discuss the following questions:

- What is normally done with rotten fruit?
- How do you know when it is rotten enough to throw away?
- What are some reasons we throw away rotten food?

Have students read Helaman 5:2–3; 6:37–40 and identify ways the Nephite nation was “ripening for destruction.” (The majority chose evil, they were stiffnecked, they were rebellious, they supported the Gadianton robbers.) Ask:

- What was the Nephites’ greatest need?
- How does this compare to our nation? (If the more part of the people are wicked, they also risk destruction.)

 **Helaman 5:12 (Scripture Mastery). When we build our lives on the Savior’s teachings, we find strength to meet Satan’s temptations.**

(10–15 minutes)

Show students a large rock and ask what might happen to it if you left it outside in a storm. Then show them a handful of sand and ask what might happen to it in a storm. Ask:

- If you were to build a house, which material would you build on? Why?
- How are the temptations of Satan like a storm?
- How is the rock like Jesus Christ?

Read Helaman 5:12 and discuss the following questions:

- How can we build our foundation on the rock of Christ?
- How would building on this rock help us weather Satan’s storms and life’s trials?
- What promise is given to those who build on this rock?

Invite students to review Helaman 5:5–12 looking for a word that stands out. Ask:

- Why do you think Helaman used the word *remember* again and again?
- What can we learn about human nature from this?

Read the following statement by Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, and encourage students not to forget it:

“When you look in the dictionary for the most important word, do you know what it is. It could be ‘remember.’ Because all of you have made covenants . . . our greatest need is to remember” (“Circles of Exaltation” [Brigham Young University devotional address, 28 June 1968], 8).

Helaman 5:13–19; 49–52. Servants of God who teach by the power of His Spirit can do more to change the hearts of their enemies than an army. (35–40 minutes)



Draw a picture of a sword on the board. Have students recall events that show the power of the sword to this point in the Book of Mormon. (Many people were killed by the sword and many cities were conquered.) Ask how persuasive a person with a sword is. Share the following testimony by President Gordon B. Hinckley, then a member of the First Presidency:

“Accept our testimony, which is the same testimony that each of you can bear, that God our Eternal Father lives, our Father, the ruler and the governor of the universe, to whom we may look and with whom we may speak in prayer. Jesus is the Christ, the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh, the Son of the living God, who gave his life to atone for the sins of all mankind. These two visited the earth to usher in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times, and conferred upon him who became Prophet great and grand keys which are the bedrock of this work. Such is our faith; such is our witness; such is our testimony in the name of Jesus Christ, amen” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1993, 116; or *Ensign*, May 1993, 94).

Ask students whether the sword or the testimony would be more persuasive. Review Alma 31:5 and explain to students that today they will see examples of the power of the word (see also Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12).

Have students quickly read Helaman 4:15–20. Ask:

- How much territory had the Nephites lost to the Lamanites?
- In what manner had they attempted to regain their lands?

Explain that Helaman’s sons Nephi and Lehi grew weary of the wickedness of their people and set out to reclaim them. Have students read Helaman 5:13–19, and discuss the following questions:

- Who did Nephi and Lehi preach to first?
- Who did they preach to in Zarahemla?
- What evidence is there that the Lord was with them?
- What was the result of their mission?

Explain that the experience of Nephi and Lehi in prison in Helaman 5:21–50 is an excellent example of the power of God’s word. Since this account is very readable and inspiring, invite students to read it individually. Write the following questions on the board and have students look for the answers as they read:

- Who imprisoned Nephi and Lehi?
- How were Nephi and Lehi treated in prison?
- How did the Lord protect His servants?
- What effect did the word of God have on the Lamanites?
- What happened to the prison walls?
- What entered the hearts of the Lamanites after they cried to God?
- How many were converted?
- What did those who were converted do?

Read to the class Helaman 5:51–52 and ask:

- What impact did the mission of Nephi and Lehi have on the Lamanites?
- What did the Lamanites do with the Nephite lands they had taken?

Testify of the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ to change the hearts of individuals and nations.

Helaman 6:21–32. Wicked men are vulnerable to the influence of Satan, “the author of all sin.” From the beginning Satan has taught men to get gain through murder and robbery. (25–30 minutes)

Read the following statement by Elder Russell M. Nelson, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“The heart is an incredible pump. It has four delicate valves that control the direction of blood flow. These valves open and close more than 100,000 times a day—36 million times a year. Yet, unless altered by disease, they are able to withstand this stress almost indefinitely. No man-made material developed to date can be flexed so frequently and so long without breaking.

“Each day an adult heart pumps enough fluid to fill a 2,000-gallon tank” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 111; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 85).

Ask:

- What do you find most impressive about the heart?
- What kind of life can a healthy heart provide? a diseased heart?
- What would you be willing to do to keep your heart healthy?

Have students read Proverbs 23:7, and ask:

- What “heart” does this verse refer to? (Our spiritual heart, our desires and feelings.)
- Why is it important to keep our spiritual heart as healthy as our physical heart?
- Why do you think Satan is interested in the hearts of men?
- What happens to a person whose heart is influenced or controlled by Satan?

Write the following references on the board and discuss what they teach about the heart: Matthew 5:27–28; 2 Nephi 28:19–20; Doctrine and Covenants 121:34–36. Review Helaman 6:1–5, 15 noting the following points:

- The Lamanites were for the most part more righteous than the Nephites. Lamanites preached throughout Nephite lands exhorting the Nephites to repent.
- Many of the Nephites were unrepentant and grossly wicked, even conspiring in the murder of their chief judges (see also v. 19).

Have students quickly read Helaman 6:17–33 and mark the word *heart* each time it occurs. Discuss what Satan did to “get hold upon the hearts of the children of men” (v. 30). Ask:

- What happened to Nephite society because of Satan’s influence?
- What can we do to keep Satan from getting a hold on our hearts?

Discuss the following statement by Elder Marvin J. Ashton, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“We must constantly emphasize the truth that we love that to which we give time, whether it be the gospel, God, or gold. Often we hear expressions of love for the scriptures, including Jesus’ teachings. Those who study, practice, and apply the truths not only know them best, but are fortified to use them for guidance all along life’s paths. The man who most appreciated the opportunity of tithing is he who experiences the joys and blessings that come through sacrifice, and obedience to that law. Our appreciation and love of the gospel and its teachings will always be in proportion to our service and commitment to the gospel” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1981, 31; or *Ensign*, May 1981, 24).



Helaman 7–12

Introduction

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, wrote of this period of Nephite history: “As the advent of Christ approached, social disorder increased, with burgeoning warfare, murder, and political disarray. To counter this trend and give hope, Nephi invoked the ancient teachings his people knew so well, testifying of these problems and the coming of the Messiah who would resolve them” (*Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon* [1997], 129). As you read these chapters, look for the kinds of problems Nephi warned of and what needed to be done to obtain the Lord’s help and blessings.


Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- If we seek to gain the riches and praise of the world, we become vulnerable to the temptations of the devil (see Helaman 7:13–29; see also D&C 121:34–35).
- In order to hold on to power, wealth, and glory, secret combinations fight against those who oppose them and those who try to expose their works of darkness (see Helaman 8:1–10; 11:1–2, 24–34; see also 1 Nephi 16:1–3).
- All the holy prophets testify of Jesus Christ and look forward to His coming (see Helaman 8:13–25; see also Jacob 4:4–6; 7:11).
- The prophecies and promises declared by the prophets will all be fulfilled by the Lord (see Helaman 8:26–9:5, 16–41; see also D&C 1:37–38).
- The sealing power of the priesthood is the authority to perform acts that are recognized both on earth and in heaven (see Helaman 10:3–12; 11:4–17; see also Matthew 16:15–19).
- People and nations pass through cycles of righteousness and wickedness. They can avoid these cycles by repenting and following God (see Helaman 12:1–6, 23–26).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 107–9.

Suggestions for Teaching

 *Book of Mormon Video* presentation 17, “The Pride Cycle,” covers Helaman 1–12 and can be used with this or the previous scripture block (see *Book of Mormon Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

Helaman 7:13–29. The wicked become vulnerable to the temptations of the devil as they seek to gain the riches and praise of the world. The righteous receive the Lord’s greatest blessings by repenting and following His will. (25–30 minutes)

Ask your students to name a prophet, one of their ancestors, or some other person long since dead in whose time they would like to have lived. Have them explain why they chose that person and time. Read Helaman 7:6–9 and discuss Nephi’s feelings about his day.

Write on the board: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times” (Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities* [1997], 1). Explain that there are trials and challenges that make life difficult no matter what age we live in. Ask:

- What makes our day “the worst of times”?
- What makes it “the best of times”?

Read the following statement by Elder M. Russell Ballard, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“The plan of happiness is available to all of [God’s] children. If the world would embrace and live it, peace, joy, and plenty would abound on the earth. Much of the suffering we know today would be eliminated if people throughout the world would understand and live the gospel” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 30; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 23).

Discuss how the gospel can help any day be “the best of times.”

To help students understand why Nephi was “filled with sorrow” because of the wickedness of his day (Helaman 7:9), divide the class into two groups and have them search Helaman 7:13–29. Assign one group to look for the iniquities (sins) of the Nephites and the other to look for what Nephi prophesied would happen if they did not repent. Have them report their findings, and then discuss why the Lord sends prophets to warn His people.

Have students compare Helaman 7:21 with Doctrine and Covenants 121:35 and look for two similar reasons people act wickedly. List these on the board as in the accompanying chart, and discuss how these motivations can lead to wickedness.

Helaman 7:21	D&C 121:35
“to get gain”	“their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world”
“to be praised of men”	“aspire to the honors of men”

Read and discuss the following statement, also by Elder Ballard:

“One of Satan’s clever tactics is to tempt us to concentrate on the present and ignore the future. The Lord warned Joseph Smith that ‘Satan seeketh to turn their hearts away from the truth, that they become blinded and understand not the things which are prepared for them’ (D&C 78:10). The ‘things which are prepared for them’ are the promised rewards of eternal life, which come as a result of obedience. The devil attempts to blind us to these rewards. President Heber J. Grant said that ‘if we are faithful in keeping the commandments of God His promises will be fulfilled to the very letter. . . . The trouble is, the adversary of men’s souls blinds their minds. He throws dust, so to speak, in their eyes, and they are blinded with the things of this world’ (*Gospel Standards*, comp. G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1941], pp. 44–45). He tempts us with the transitory pleasures of the world so that we will not focus our minds and efforts on the things that bring eternal joy. The devil is a dirty fighter, and we must be aware of his tactics” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1990, 45–46; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 36).

Testify that Satan does have the power to lead us astray, but that there is a way to receive the Lord’s blessings despite Satan’s power. Read again Helaman 7:17–19 and look for what we must do to obtain the Lord’s blessings.

Helaman 8:1–10; 11:1–2, 24–34. In order to hold on to power, wealth, and glory, secret combinations fight against those who oppose them and those who try to expose their works of darkness. (20–25 minutes)

Note: See the caution at the beginning of the teaching suggestion for Helaman 1:1–22, 27; 2:1–14 (p. 195).

Write on the board *What you don’t know can’t hurt you*. Ask students if they think this is a true statement. Have them imagine that an earthquake hit your community. Ask: Would it be more useful to know in advance or to be surprised? Why?

Read Helaman 7:4–5 and discuss the following questions:

- Who filled the judgment-seats?
- How did Gadianton robbers gain positions of power and authority? (They pretended to be good citizens, supported

each other, and kept secret the fact that they belonged to a band of robbers.)

- What did these wicked judges do to the righteous? to the guilty? Why?

Refer students to the phrase on the board again and ask: How were good Nephite citizens affected by what they didn’t know?

Have students quickly read Helaman 8:1–7, and ask:

- What did those involved in secret combinations do when Nephi opposed them?
- Why were they angry with Nephi?
- Why do you think they were worried when Nephi “spake plainly” about their secret works? (v. 4).

Read as a class Helaman 11:1–2, 25–33 to find what can happen to a community if secret combinations are allowed to flourish. Have a student read this statement by Elder M. Russell Ballard:

“The Book of Mormon teaches that secret combinations engaged in crime present a serious challenge, not just to individuals and families but to entire civilizations. . . .

“If we are not careful, today’s secret combinations can obtain power and influence just as quickly and just as completely as they did in Book of Mormon times. Do you remember the pattern? The secret combinations began among the ‘more wicked part’ of society, but eventually ‘seduced the more part of the righteous’ until the whole society was polluted [Helaman 6:38]” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 51; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 38).

Ask:

- What can we do to keep secret combinations from gaining power in our community or nation?
- How can the principles of the gospel help combat this influence?
- What would happen to secret combinations if there wasn’t a “more wicked part” of society?

Elder Ballard continued:

“As a Church, we recognize that the gospel of Jesus Christ, with its saving truths and teachings, provides the most effective preventative and rehabilitative assistance in overcoming criminal behavior. Parents bear the first and greatest responsibility to teach their children principles of gospel living and good citizenship. . . .

“We should also support the efforts of individuals, organizations, communities, and governments to assist

them and help prevent crime. We should work within our respective legal and judicial systems to enact and enforce laws that provide necessary protection against criminals while ensuring essential rights and freedoms. And we should volunteer to support and assist government leaders in promoting programs designed to protect and strengthen families and communities. . . .

“I know it is sometimes hard to stand for truth and right. Yet we need to be positive examples if we are to help others find a better way. Thankfully, we can draw strength from those who have gone before us. While the road they walked may have been different from the road we walk today, the courage required to be faithful is similar, and their experiences are instructive” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 52–53; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 38–39).

Ask:

- What solutions did Elder Ballard give that could help us improve our community?
- How can we support our parents in their responsibility to teach their children?
- Who can we look to for strength in difficult times as well as times of ease?
- How can we obtain that strength?

Helaman 8:13–25. All the holy prophets have testified of the coming of Jesus Christ and looked forward to that day. (10–15 minutes)

Invite the students to imagine they are speechwriters for the leader of your country. They have been asked to choose and prepare the most important message that could be given to your country’s people. Ask: What would you write, and why? Read Helaman 8:13–25 looking for the message that all the prophets have declared. Discuss why this is the most important message for everyone. Have a student read the following statement by President Howard W. Hunter, who was then President of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“As we search for the shore of safety and peace, whether we be individual women and men, families, communities, or nations, Christ is the only beacon on which we can ultimately rely. He is the one who said of his mission, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life’ (John 14:6).

“In this age, as in every age before us and in every age that will follow, the greatest need in all the world is an active and sincere faith in the basic teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, the living Son of the living God. Because many reject those teachings, that is all the

more reason why sincere believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ should proclaim its truth and show by example the power and peace of a righteous, gentle life” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 22; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 18).

Read or sing “Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee” (*Hymns*, no. 141). Have students write on a piece of paper how they can make Christ more of a beacon in their life. Invite those who would like to share their testimony of Jesus Christ to do so.

Helaman 8–9. The prophecies and promises declared by the prophets will all be fulfilled by the Lord. (20–25 minutes)

Briefly review Helaman 8:1–9, and explain to students that you would like them to help tell the rest of the story. Assign a student who is a good reader to act as narrator and read the following “script”:

- Act 1: The Murder (Helaman 8:27–28)
- Act 2: The Test (Helaman 9:1–4)
- Act 3: Prophecy Verified (vv. 5–9)
- Act 4: The Innocent (vv. 10–15)
- Act 5: The Accusation (vv. 16–24)
- Act 6: The Conviction (vv. 25–38)

Assign other students to take the parts of the five men, the people, the judges, Nephi, and Seantum. Invite them to act out their parts as the narrator reads them.

Read Helaman 9:39–10:1 as a class and discuss why some did not believe Nephi’s words, even though he had shown remarkable signs of his prophetic calling. Select a recent statement by the prophet and share it with your students. Encourage them to always believe in and follow living prophets.

Helaman 10:3–12; 11:4–17. The sealing power of the priesthood is the authority to perform ordinances and other acts that are binding both on earth and in heaven. (40–45 minutes)



Show your students a chain or draw one on the board, and ask what chains have been used for throughout the ages. Discuss these questions:

- How might some people compare God’s commandments to chains?
- Why do some people feel restricted by the commandments?

- How does sin take away our agency ?
- In what ways does keeping the commandments make us free? (Remind students that commandments are not restrictive but point us in a direction that will bring us happiness and freedom; see D&C 59:23.)

Read the following statement by Elder Donald L. Staheli, a member of the Seventy:

“Regardless of our age and stage in life, daily obedience to gospel principles is the only sure way to eternal happiness. President Ezra Taft Benson put it most poignantly when he said, ‘When obedience ceases to be an irritant and becomes our quest, in that moment God will endow us with power.’” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 108; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 82).

Ask:

- What people find the commandments irritating? Why?
- What is a quest? (A diligent search or journey toward a noble goal.)
- How would viewing the commandments as a blessing make a difference in how we obey them?
- How would having more of God’s power in your life be a blessing?

Tell students that today they will see an example of someone who obtained this power. Read Helaman 10:4 looking for at least two reasons the Lord called Nephi “blessed.” Ask:

- What does *unwearying* mean? (Diligent, faithful, without complaint.)
- In what ways had Nephi sought God’s will?

Read Helaman 10:5 looking for two blessings promised to Nephi.

- What does it mean to be blessed forever?
- In what ways did the Lord make Nephi mighty?
- Besides Nephi’s unwearyingness, what other reason did the Lord give for entrusting Nephi with great power? (He would not ask for anything contrary to God’s will.)

Read Helaman 10:6–10 looking for words that describe how the Lord would make Nephi “mighty in word and in deed” (v. 5), and write these on the board. Ask:

- How can having power over the earth help a prophet keep his people humble?
- What is the sealing power? (The authority to perform ordinances and other acts that are binding both on earth and in heaven.)
- How can it be used to bless people?
- How can it be used to chasten people?

- How can the sealing power bless your family forever?

Share and discuss the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“This, then, is the doctrine of the priesthood. . . . This is the power we can gain through faith and righteousness.

“Truly, there is power in the priesthood—power to do all things!

“If the world itself was created by the power of the priesthood, surely that same power can move mountains and control the elements.

“If one-third of the hosts of heaven were cast down to earth by the power of the priesthood, surely that same power can put at defiance the armies of nations or stay the fall of atomic bombs.

“If all men shall be raised from mortality to immortality by the power of the priesthood, surely that same power can cure the diseased and the dying and raise the dead.

“Truly there is power in the priesthood—a power which we seek to acquire to use, a power which we devoutly pray may rest upon us and upon our posterity forever” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1982, 50; or *Ensign*, May 1982, 34).

Have students read Helaman 10:11–12, 15–16. Ask:

- What was Nephi commanded to do after he received the sealing power?
- How did he respond?
- What can you learn from Nephi’s example?
- Has obeying without delay ever been a blessing to you or someone you know? How?
- How did the Nephites respond to Nephi’s testimony?
- What did the Lord do to protect him?

Remind students of the Lord’s promise to make Nephi “mighty in word and in deed” (Helaman 10:5). Divide the class into two groups. Have one group read Helaman 11:1–6 and the other Helaman 11:11–17. Have each group look for evidence that Nephi became mighty in word and deed. Invite them to share their findings with the class.

Show students the chain again and ask:

- In what ways could the commandments seem at first to restrict Nephi?
- In what ways did the commandments give him freedom?

Write on the board the quote by President Ezra Taft Benson about making obedience a quest (see Elder Donald L. Staheli’s

statement in the first part of this teaching suggestion). Discuss the following questions:

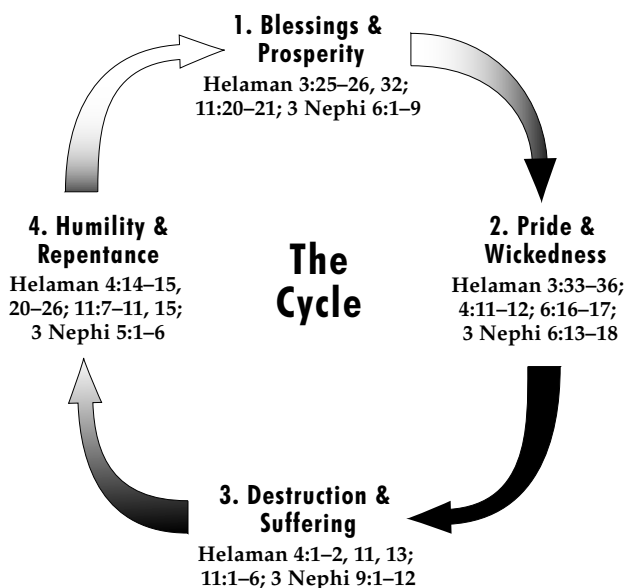
- What can you do to make obedience more of a quest in your life?
- In what ways can obedience “endow us with power” at school? at home? with our friends?



Helaman 12:1–6, 23–26. People and nations pass through cycles of righteousness and wickedness. They can avoid these cycles by repenting and following God. (40–45 minutes)

Write on the board the following statement by Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, leaving a blank in place of the word *history*: “I guess one of the greatest mysteries of mortality is why mankind fails to learn from history” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 19; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 16). Ask students to guess the missing word, and discuss their answers. Fill in the blank with the missing word and ask: What evidence can you think of that suggests that this statement is true?

Read this statement to students: “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it” (George Santayana, *The Life of Reason; or the Phases of Human Progress*, 5 vols. [1905], 1:284). Tell students that the Nephites failed to learn from their history, and as a result they repeatedly passed through cycles of righteousness and wickedness. First the Lord would bless them for their obedience. Then they would grow proud and begin to sin. Then the Lord would chasten them with destruction and suffering. Finally they would humble themselves and repent, the Lord would bless them, and the cycle would begin again.



To illustrate this cycle, display the accompanying diagram on the board or as an overhead transparency. Divide the class into four groups and assign each a different part of the cycle. Have them read the scriptures that go with their part of the cycle and discuss them with their group. When they finish, have them report their findings to the class. Ask:

- Where in the cycle do you think your country is right now? Why?
- When the Lord chastens a nation for its wickedness, do faithful members of the Church also suffer? (see the first statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie in the teaching suggestion for 2 Nephi 25:1–8, p. 69).
- Read Helaman 11:34–36. According to these verses, how quickly can the cycle repeat itself?

Invite students to read Helaman 12:1–6 and mark words that describe the cycle. Have them review the same verses looking for reasons people tend to repeat history. (They forget God and consider His counsel to be nothing.) Ask:

- What can we do to avoid this cycle?
- Read Helaman 12:23–26. What is Mormon’s counsel for avoiding the cycle?
- Who are those who are blessed?
- What does it mean to hearken to God?
- Who will be saved?

Consider asking the following questions:

- In what ways do people pass through a “personal pride cycle”?
- What parts of the cycle would we want to experience again and again?
- What have you found that helps you stay humble and repentant?

Share the following statement by Elder Ezra Taft Benson, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“The outlook for the world is not encouraging, but we know what the answer is. There is only one answer, and that is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Peace must come from the heart. Men’s hearts must change, and righteousness must rule in the lives of the people of the world before peace can come. May God hasten the day. May the message of the restored gospel go forward in great force, by increasing numbers, that God’s children may escape the calamities which are impending” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1947, 157).

Discuss how this counsel can help us avoid the cycle.



Helaman 13–16

Introduction

Despite Nephi's efforts to preach repentance and warn his people, they fell further into wickedness. God sent a second witness to warn the Nephites prior to their destruction. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland wrote:

"The degree to which social and religious disorder had come to the Nephites is evidenced by the appearance of a Lamanite . . . to call the Nephite people to repentance. Openly rejected in the land of Zarahemla, Samuel responded to the voice of the Lord, climbed upon the wall surrounding the city, and 'prophesied unto the people whatsoever things the Lord put into his heart' [Helaman 13:4].

"One of the things the Lord put into his heart was to warn the people of a 'heavy destruction' that awaited them if they did not change their ways. 'Nothing can save this people,' Samuel shouted from his place upon the wall, 'save it be repentance and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ, who surely shall come into the world, and shall suffer many things and shall be slain for his people' [Helaman 13:6].

"Of this coming—then just five years away—Samuel prophesied of signs and wonders to attend the event, signs and wonders that would be a matter of life and death for the faithful Nephites who would, at the peril of their life, watch for the fulfillment of these promises" (*Christ and the New Covenant*, 131).

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- If people continue in wickedness, the time will come when they cannot repent (see Helaman 13:5–11, 38–39; see also Alma 34:32–34; Mormon 2:12–15).
- The Lord often spares the wicked for the sake of the righteous. If the wicked cast out the righteous from among them, they are ripe for destruction (see Helaman 13:12–14; see also Alma 10:22–23).
- When we set our hearts upon the riches of the world, we may forget the Lord, give in to temptation, and eventually suffer God's punishment (see Helaman 13:17–23; see also D&C 121:34–38).
- Jesus Christ's death and Resurrection overcome the physical and spiritual deaths that resulted from the Fall.

His Atonement allows those who repent to escape a second spiritual death, which comes on Judgment Day as a result of our sins (see Helaman 14:15–19; see also 2 Nephi 2:4–10; 9:22).

- God loves His children. We can receive His blessings by repenting and keeping His commandments, but we cannot receive His blessings when we sin (see Helaman 15:1–10; see also Psalm 5:4–5, 11–12; 2 Nephi 7:1; D&C 95:12).
- God protects His servants until they have fulfilled the mission He has sent them to do (see Helaman 16:1–3, 6–8).
- Signs and wonders are given by the Lord to confirm the faith of the righteous. The wicked reject His signs and wonders, depend on their own wisdom, and do not comprehend the things of God (see Helaman 16:4–5, 13–23; see also 1 Corinthians 2:10–14; Jacob 4:8–10).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 110–12.

Suggestions for Teaching



Helaman 13–16. The President of the Church is a prophet, seer, and revelator. (35–40 minutes)

Display a picture of the current President of the Church. Ask: If a nonmember friend asked you to explain what the President of the Church does, what would you say? Invite a student to read the following statement by Elder John A. Widtsoe, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

"The President of the Church is sustained by the people as 'Prophet, Seer, and Revelator.' . . .

"A prophet is a teacher. That is the essential meaning of the word. He teaches the body of truth, the gospel, revealed by the Lord to man; and under inspiration explains it to the understanding of the people. . . .

"A seer is one who sees with spiritual eyes. He perceives the meaning of that which seems obscure to others; therefore he is an interpreter and clarifier of eternal truth. He foresees the future from the past and the present. . . .

"A revelator makes known, with the Lord's help, something before unknown. It may be new or forgotten truth, or a new or forgotten application of known truth to man's need. Always, the revelator deals with truth, certain truth (D. & C. 100:11) and always it comes with the divine stamp of approval" (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, arr. G. Homer Durham, 3 vols. in 1 [1960], 256–58).

Ask:

- How do you feel knowing the Church is led today by prophets, seers, and revelators?
- What examples can you give that show how the President of the Church is fulfilling these roles?
- What happens to those who decide not to follow the President of the Church in any of his roles?

Tell students that today they will examine the life of Samuel the Lamanite to better understand the roles of prophet, seer, and revelator. Write the headings *Prophet*, *Seer*, and *Revelator* on the board. Divide your class into three groups, and assign each group one of the roles. Have them quickly read Helaman 13–15 looking for at least two examples of how Samuel filled that role. Have each group choose a student to report their findings to the class.

Discuss the roles of prophet, seer, and revelator and why they are important to the Lord’s Church. Ask:

- How can you support the President of the Church as he fulfills these roles?
- How would it help the Church if all members sustained the President of the Church in this way?

Helaman 13. If people continue in wickedness, the time will come when they cannot repent.

(25–30 minutes)

Invite students to imagine they are in a forest and are surrounded by trees. Ask:

- Would you rather travel through a forest during the day or at night?
- What challenges are there in traveling in a forest when it is dark?

Explain that mortal life can be compared to traveling in a forest. Have students read Helaman 13:29, and ask:

- What did the Nephites choose in Samuel’s day?
- What do the words *wicked*, *perverse*, *hardened*, and *stiffnecked* have to do with choosing darkness?
- What are some examples of “blind guides” in today’s world?
- How is following one of these guides the same as choosing darkness?
- In what ways is darkness manifested today?

Read Helaman 13:1–4, 21–28 looking for at least two ways the Nephites chose darkness over light. Ask:

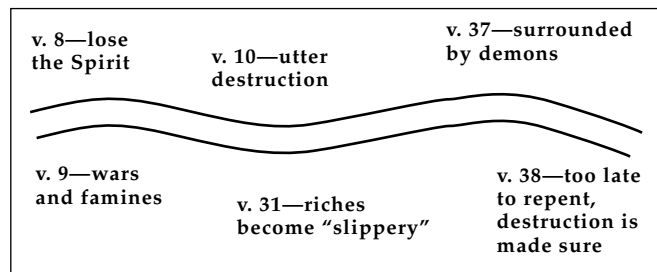
- In what ways do people reject the testimony of prophets today?
- What is the danger of setting our hearts on riches?

Read Helaman 13:5–7 and ask:

- Where does the path of darkness lead?

- What was the only way the people could be saved?
- Why might we consider these “glad tidings”? (v. 7).

To help students understand the path of darkness, display the accompanying drawing on the board. Include the scripture references, but leave off the other words. The references can be in a different order, but verse 38 should be at the end of the path. Invite students to read each verse and look for what Samuel warned would happen to the Nephites if they did not repent. As the students identify the warnings, write key words next to each reference similar to the ones given here.



Invite a student to read the following statement by President Joseph Fielding Smith, who was then President of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“It is possible for people to get so far in the dark through rebellion and wickedness that the spirit of repentance leaves them. . . .

“[The Nephites and Lamanites who left the Church after Christ’s coming] sinned wilfully, and therefore salvation cannot come to them. It was offered to them, and they would not have it. They rejected it. They fought it and preferred to take the course of rebellion” (Doctrines of Salvation, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 2:194–95).

Ask:

- How does this statement relate to the Nephites’ situation?
- How can it apply to us?
- What can we learn from Samuel’s warnings?

Conclude by asking students to share other scriptures that teach this principle, and have them mark the scriptures that mean the most to them. Invite them to consider what they can do to repent of their sins.

Helaman 13:12–14. The Lord often spares the wicked for the sake of the righteous. If the wicked cast out the righteous from among them, they are ripe for destruction. (10–15 minutes)

Read several newspaper headlines that show wickedness occurring today. Ask students:

- How have conditions in the world changed during your lifetime?

- What concerns you about the direction that many in the world are going?
- What can you do to help save them?

As a class, read Alma 10:22–23 and Helaman 13:12–14 and discuss the following questions:

- What can the righteous do to spare the world from destruction?
- What must we do to be considered righteous?
- What might happen to the world if it cast out the righteous?

Read 3 Nephi 1:9 and ask:

- What were the unbelievers going to do?
- According to Helaman 13:12–14, what would have to happen to the unbelievers if they killed the believers?

Remind students of what happened to the city of Ammonihah when they killed and drove out the righteous (see Alma 16:2–3). Read 3 Nephi 9:3 and look for what eventually happened to the city of Zarahemla. Testify that the Lord will punish the wicked according to His word.

To help students understand that there are still many good people living on the earth, share the following statement by President Spencer W. Kimball, then Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve: “Of course, there are many many upright and faithful who live all the commandments and whose lives and prayers keep the world from destruction” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1971, 7; or *Ensign*, June 1971, 16).

Helaman 14:2–6, 14, 20–25. Samuel the Lamanite declared the signs of Christ’s birth and death.

(25–30 minutes)

Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 1:38, and discuss it as a class. Tell students that they will see an example of this principle as they study Helaman 14. Make an overhead transparency of the accompanying chart or draw it on the board, and work through it as a class. Or give students copies of the chart as a handout and have them complete it individually or in small groups. You could also have students draw a representation of what they read.

Signs of the Birth of Jesus Christ			
Helaman 14	Prophecies	3 Nephi 1	Fulfillment
v. 2		v. 13	
vv. 3–4		v. 15	
v. 5		v. 21	

Signs of the Death of Jesus Christ

Helaman 14	Prophecies	3 Nephi 8	Fulfillment
vv. 20, 27		vv. 19–23	
vv. 21–22		vv. 5–7, 17–18	
v. 23		v. 12	
v. 24		vv. 8–10, 13	

Read Helaman 14:25 and look for another sign of the death of Jesus Christ. Then read 3 Nephi 23:9–13 and ask:

- What prophecy did the resurrected Lord remind the Nephites about?
- What did the disciples say about this prophecy?
- What did Jesus Christ command them to do?
- Why are the Resurrection and the fulfillment of prophecy important to you today?

Helaman 14:15–19. Jesus Christ’s death and Resurrection overcome the physical and spiritual deaths that resulted from the Fall. His Atonement allows those who repent to escape a second spiritual death, which comes on Judgment Day as a result of our sins. (15–20 minutes)

Relate the following story recounted by a Latter-day Saint educator:

“When I think of life hereafter, I am reminded of the story of an army chaplain who comforted an LDS boy who had been caught in a crossfire in the Battle of the Bulge. This soldier was near death. By looking at this soldier’s dog tag, the chaplain discovered that he was a member of the Church. The chaplain [said], ‘Son, I’m not a member of your church, but would you want me to pray for you?’ This young man replied, ‘Yes, I would like you to pray for me.’ So this chaplain knelt down, and two men of God prayed. The soldier [later] said, ‘I distinctly remember these words of the chaplain: “Oh, God, help us to so live that when the time comes for us to die we shall not be afraid to die, and that after we die we shall not be afraid to live again.”’” (Stan H. Watts, *The Blessings of This Day*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year [23 Nov. 1971], 2).

Read Helaman 14:15–19 and discuss the following questions:

- According to these verses, what types of death can a person suffer? (Note that besides physical death, mankind suffered a first spiritual death when Adam fell, and the unrepentant suffer a second spiritual death after final judgment.)
- What is a spiritual death?

- How does the death of Jesus Christ save us from the first spiritual death?
- How can His Atonement save us from the second spiritual death?
- How can being repentant prepare us to “not be afraid to live again”?

Explain that the Nephites of Samuel’s day resented the warnings he delivered. Ask: Is it possible to be dead spiritually and think we are still spiritually alive? How? Invite a student to read the following statement by Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“There are many people in this Church today who think they live, but they are dead to the spiritual things. And I believe even many who are making pretenses of being active are also spiritually dead. Their service is much of the letter and less of the spirit” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1951, 105).

Ask: What can we do now to avoid spiritual death in our own lives? Read Mosiah 2:41 and look for the blessings that come to those who prepare in this life for the next one.

Helaman 15:1–10. God loves His children. We can receive His blessings by repenting and keeping His commandments, but we cannot receive His blessings when we sin. (25–30 minutes)

Invite students to share what they fear more than anything else. List their answers on the board and discuss them. Ask: What should we fear even more than the items on the board? Have students read Helaman 15:9 looking for what the Lamanites feared. Ask:

- What were the Lamanites willing to suffer rather than commit sin?
- Why do you think they feared sin so much?

Read 2 Nephi 4:31 and look for what Nephi prayed for.

To see how the Lamanites came to this attitude toward sin, read Helaman 15:4–8. Have students list what led the Lamanites to faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, and a change of heart, and discuss their answers. The following questions might help your discussion:

- What part did the Nephites play in starting the Lamanites on the path of salvation?
- What do you think it means to be “in the path of their duty”? (v. 5).
- What did the converted Lamanites try to do?
- What part did the scriptures play in their conversion?
- What can we learn from their experience?

Have students read Helaman 15:1–3, 17 and contrast what they know about the Lamanites with what these verses teach

about the Nephites. As part of the discussion you might want to ask the following questions:

- What did Samuel warn would happen to the Nephites if they chose not to repent?
- Why does the Lord chasten His people? How might He do it?
- How can punishment be a manifestation of love?
- How might the Nephites have received Samuel’s warnings if they had been afraid to sin?

Testify that fearing sin and its punishment can motivate us to live so as to escape the judgments that came to the Nephites. However, there is a higher motivation that can keep us safe and clean. Share the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“It is an inspiration to look into the eyes of young men and women who love the Lord, who want to do the right thing, who want to build lives that are productive and fruitful of great good. They are working hard to develop skills that will bless them and the society of which they will become a part. They are serving missions for the Church in unprecedented numbers. They are clean, bright, able, and happy. Surely the Lord must love those of this choice generation of youth who learn and serve in His Church. I love them, and I want them to know that” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 90; or *Ensign*, May 1996, 66).

Helaman 15:11–13. The Lamanites are a people of promise. (5–10 minutes)

Invite students to read Helaman 15:11–13 looking for what Samuel prophesied about the Lamanites “in the latter times.” Ask: How do you think this prophecy is being fulfilled? Share the following statement by Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“The Lord chose to call them Lamanites. They are fulfilling prophecies. They are a chosen people with rich blood in their veins. They are casting off the fetters of superstition, fear, ignorance, and prejudice and are clothing themselves with knowledge, good works, and righteousness. And this Church is elated to have an important part in bringing about this transformation. . . .
“Yesterday they were deprived, weakening, vanishing; today thousands are . . . in regular seminaries and institutes. . . . Numerous are receiving secular as well as spiritual training in Mexico, South America, and Hawaii and the isles of the sea. Many are now in college and large numbers in full-time mission service. Tens of

thousands are now eligible for superior training and service through church organizations in all the Americas and in the Pacific. Lamanite-Nephite leaders are now standing forth to direct and inspire their people. *The day of the Lamanite is come*, and tomorrow will be even better” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1965, 70–71).

Helaman 16:1–3, 6–8. God protects His servants until they have fulfilled the mission He has sent them to do. (10–15 minutes)

Invite students to share times they feel the Lord protected them from harm. Ask: Why do you think the Lord protects His children? Discuss students’ answers. Ask if they can think of times the Lord has allowed His children to be harmed. (Answers might include the deaths of Abinadi, Joseph Smith, Jesus Christ.) Ask: Why might that be? (*Note:* Be careful that students do not get the impression that God does not love those He allows to suffer or die. The point of this discussion is that God protects His servants until they have fulfilled their missions.)

Review with students Samuel’s mission to Zarahemla by reading the chapter headings for Helaman 13–15. Have students estimate how long Samuel stood and preached on the walls of the city. Read Helaman 16:1–3, 6–8 and look for the reaction of the Nephites to Samuel’s message. Discuss the following questions:

- Why couldn’t the Nephites hit Samuel with their stones and arrows?
- What impact did this experience have on some of the Nephites?
- How did “the more part of them” react?
- Why do you think the Lord protected Samuel? (His mission was not over; see v. 7.)

Read with students Helaman 5:12 and discuss how, like Samuel on the wall of Zarahemla, we can stand firm against the buffetings of Satan.

Helaman 16:4–5, 13–23. Signs and wonders are given by the Lord to confirm the faith of the righteous. The wicked reject His signs and wonders, depend on their own wisdom, and do not comprehend the things of God. (20–25 minutes)

Before class cut out a star and tape it somewhere in your classroom. (It should be in plain sight but somewhere students ordinarily wouldn’t look.) Ask students if they noticed anything different about the classroom. When they identify the star, ask how many noticed it before it was pointed out to them. Ask:

- Why did some of you not notice the star at first?

- How many of you would have noticed it if I had pointed it out as you came into the classroom?
- How can this be compared to what a prophet does?

Read Helaman 16:4–5 and ask:

- What is the role of a prophet in relation to “signs and wonders”?
- Why does God give signs and wonders?
- How can the fulfillment of signs affect our belief?
- How might that affect the way we live the gospel?

Read Helaman 16:13–14 and look for two things that began to be fulfilled. Ask: What hope can this give us as we wait for the signs of the Second Coming to be fulfilled?

Explain that not everyone believes in the signs and wonders that God provides. Doubters think they have good reasons for their disbelief. Have students silently read Helaman 16:15–23 and look for at least four arguments the doubters used to explain away the signs. Invite students to share their findings, and consider listing them on the board. These might include:

- They depended on their own wisdom and suggested that “some things they may have guessed right” (v. 16; see v. 15).
- They determined that “it is not reasonable that such a being as a Christ shall come” (v. 18).
- They called the story of Christ “a wicked tradition” (v. 20) and said they would have no way to know if Christ had been born in a distant land (see vv. 19–20).
- They accused believers of using “the mysterious arts of the evil one” to keep the people ignorant and dependent on their teachers (v. 21).

Discuss with students what we can do to keep from being deceived by such arguments. Testify of the importance of listening to and obeying the Lord’s prophets. Conclude by reading the following statement by Elder Henry B. Eyring:

“There seems to be no end to the Savior’s desire to lead us to safety. And there is constancy in the way He shows us the path. He calls by more than one means so that His message will reach those willing to accept it. And those means always include sending the message by the mouths of His prophets whenever people have qualified to have the prophets of God among them. Those authorized servants are always charged with warning the people, telling them the way to safety” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 32; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 24).

THIRD NEPHI

The Book of Mormon was written to convince “the Jew and Gentile that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD, manifesting himself unto all nations” (title page of the Book of Mormon). The account of the Savior’s visit to the Americas, as recorded in 3 Nephi, helps achieve this purpose. President N. Eldon Tanner, who was a member of the First Presidency, said:

“I suppose that nowhere in the scriptures do we have a more beautiful or detailed record of God’s dealings with man than in the account of this visit as recorded in Third Nephi. . . . [The] warnings and beautiful teachings . . . , if accepted and lived, will do more than anything else to bring peace and happiness to the world and to the individual seeking such a way of life. Here we can find explanations for many unanswered questions in the Bible.

“Third Nephi gives us additional information in more detail than the four Gospels in the New Testament, and preserves the doctrines, teachings, and compassion of the Lord. For this reason there are many who refer to Third Nephi as the ‘fifth Gospel.’” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1975, 52; or *Ensign*, May 1975, 34).

President Ezra Taft Benson stated:

“What a blessing it would be if every family would read together 3 Nephi, discuss its sacred contents, and then determine how they can liken it unto themselves and apply its teachings in their lives.

“Third Nephi is a book that should be read and read again. Its testimony of the resurrected Christ in America is given in purity and beauty” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 5–6; or *Ensign*, May 1987, 6).



Introduction

Third Nephi’s historical narrative begins “six hundred years from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem” (3 Nephi 1:1). During this time many prophecies and signs concerning the birth of Jesus Christ began to be fulfilled. The Savior’s birth in Jerusalem was marked in the Americas by a night with no darkness, just as Samuel the Lamanite had prophesied (see Helaman 14:2–6). The next thirty-three years, the period of Jesus’ mortal life, were a turbulent time for the Nephites and Lamanites. Many believers prepared for the time when the

resurrected Lord would minister among them, as Nephi had prophesied (see 1 Nephi 12:1–6). At the same time the wicked tried to slay the righteous, sins and abominations increased, pride and class distinctions arose in the Church, and Satan extended his influence.

President Ezra Taft Benson said, “The record of the Nephite history just prior to the Savior’s visit reveals many parallels to our own day as we anticipate the Savior’s second coming” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 3; or *Ensign*, May 1987, 4). Look for these parallels as you read. Also notice how the Lord protected and comforted those who remained faithful during these trying times.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

Note: Prayerfully study each assigned scripture block and consider the principles in this section before preparing your lessons.

- The wicked deny the fulfillment of prophecy, while the faithful rejoice in prophecy and look forward to its fulfillment (see 3 Nephi 1:5–8, 22; 2:1–3; see also Helaman 16:4–6, 13–23).
- Every prophecy from the Lord will be fulfilled (see 3 Nephi 1:15–21; see also D&C 1:37–38).
- The disobedient often blame their troubles on others (see 3 Nephi 3:9–11).
- In a family, church, or nation, evil can be defeated by praying, repenting, following righteous leaders, and relying on the Lord’s words (see 3 Nephi 3:12–5:6).
- The Book of Mormon was written and preserved so the Lamanites could come to a knowledge of their fathers and all people could come to know their Savior (see 3 Nephi 5:12–26; see also Enos 1:11–18; D&C 3:16–20).
- Pride, reliance on the arm of flesh, and divisiveness can lead to the destruction of nations (see 3 Nephi 6:10–18; 7:2–8).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 113–14.

Suggestions for Teaching

Note: Choose from the ideas in this section, or use some of your own, as you prepare to teach the assigned scripture block.

3 Nephi. An overview of 3 Nephi. (10–15 minutes)

Tell students that missionaries frequently give copies of the Book of Mormon to people who are not members of the

Church and ask them to read it and pray about its truthfulness. Choose a student to role-play inviting a friend to read the Book of Mormon. Ask students:

- If you were a missionary, what parts of the Book of Mormon would you ask others to read? Why?
- What do you think would be the value of having people who are not members of the Church read 3 Nephi?
- Why is 3 Nephi an important part of the Book of Mormon?

Share President N. Eldon Tanner’s and President Ezra Taft Benson’s statements from the introduction to 3 Nephi (p. 210). Ask: What impresses you about these statements? Write the following outline on the board or give copies of it to students as a handout:

1. 3 Nephi 1–7. During the thirty-three years following Christ’s birth, Nephite society suffers a complete collapse because of wickedness, murder, and war.
2. 3 Nephi 8–10. Darkness, calamities, and destruction visit the American continent for three days at the time of Christ’s death.
3. 3 Nephi 11–26. The resurrected Lord ministers among the Nephites.
4. 3 Nephi 27–28. The Savior instructs His twelve Nephite disciples.
5. 3 Nephi 29–30. Mormon counsels the people of the latter days.

Read the heading at the beginning of 3 Nephi and discuss who Nephi was and how he was related to the other Nephis in the Book of Mormon. Read 3 Nephi 1:1–3; 2:9 and ask: According to these verses, why was Nephi chosen to keep the Nephite records and continue writing the Nephite history? Encourage students to watch as they study 3 Nephi for what makes it such a spiritually and doctrinally significant book.

3 Nephi 1. Prophecies from the Lord are always fulfilled. The wicked deny the fulfillment of prophecy, but the faithful rejoice in prophecy and look forward to its fulfillment. (40–45 minutes)

Ask students to name holidays or other important events they will celebrate in their lives. List them on the board, and ask:

- Why do you look forward to these events?
- How do you prepare for them?
- How can preparing for these events make a difference in how you celebrate them?

For each event listed, ask students to think of someone who may not look forward to that event and why. (For example, someone who does not believe in Christ might think Christmas and Easter are unimportant.)

Read 3 Nephi 1:1, 4–5 and ask:

- What prophecies began to be fulfilled? (see Helaman 14:1–6).
- How significant has the birth of Christ been in your life? Why?

Explain that, just as with the events listed on the board, there were people who looked forward to the Savior’s birth and others who did not. To help students compare these groups of people, write the headings *Believers* and *Unbelievers* on the board. Read 3 Nephi 1:5–14 as a class looking for characteristics of the believers and unbelievers, and list them under the appropriate headings. Discuss what each group did, how they treated each other, and what their motivations were.

Tell students that prior to the Second Coming there will also be both believers and unbelievers. Share the statement by President Ezra Taft Benson from the introduction to 3 Nephi 1–7 (p. 210). Ask: What have you learned from 3 Nephi 1 that can help you prepare for the Second Coming?

Invite students to read 3 Nephi 1:29–30, and ask:

- What do these verses teach about the rising generation?
- What do you think the phrase “they became for themselves” means? (v. 29).
- Why are the strength and testimonies of the youth so important?

Testify of the important role of the youth in the Church. Share the following statement by President David O. McKay: “The spirituality of a ward will be commensurate with the activity of the youth of that ward” (in Robert L. Backman, in Conference Report, Oct. 1982, 57; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 40).

Invite students to compare the rising generation of Lamanites in 3 Nephi 1:29–30 with Helaman’s two thousand stripling warriors (see Alma 53:16–22; 56:44–48). Ask:

- What did the stripling warriors do to stay strong in the faith?
- What can we do to remain faithful?
- How will remaining faithful help us prepare for the Second Coming?

3 Nephi 2:11–19. The evil oppose the righteous. (15–20 minutes)

Make a scoreboard and display it for the class, or draw one on the board. Briefly tell of an exciting sports event you participated in or watched, or ask a student to do so. Discuss some of the following questions:

- What is the purpose of a scoreboard in sports?
- Is a scoreboard only important at the end of the game? Why or why not?
- How does being aware of the score help a player, coach, or team?

Invite students to read 3 Nephi 2:11–12 and look for two “teams” or groups of people. Ask:

- Why is there a battle between sin and righteousness?
- If we had a scoreboard for the battle between good and evil, what might the scores represent? (Answers might include the number of souls won or lost, the amount of influence each had in the world, and so on.)

Read 3 Nephi 2:13–19 looking for how the Nephites did during this period. Tell students that 3 Nephi 3–7 continues the account of wars and struggles between the wicked and the righteous. Have students read the chapter headings and briefly look through these chapters. Invite them to describe the spiritual struggle between the wicked and the righteous in each chapter.

Read 3 Nephi 9:13; 10:12 and look for which group survived to witness the visit of the Savior. Read Doctrine and Covenants 97:21–25 looking for what group will survive the difficulties that precede the Second Coming. Discuss some of the following questions:

- What evidences can you think of that demonstrate that the battle between wickedness and righteousness continues today?
- What examples might the wicked give to try to show that they are winning this battle?
- What can the righteous give as evidence that they are winning the battle? (Answers might include the increasing numbers of members, temples, and priesthood holders.)
- Why would you want to be on the Lord’s side in the latter days?

Share the following statement by Elder Ezra Taft Benson, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“This is the last and great dispensation in which the great consummation of God’s purposes will be made, the only dispensation in which the Lord has promised that sin will not prevail. The Church will not be taken from the earth again. It is here to stay. The Lord has promised it and you are a part of that Church and kingdom. . . . The kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God on the earth will be combined together at Christ’s coming—and that time is not far distant. How I wish we could get the vision of this work, the genius of it, and realize the nearness of that great event. I am sure it would have a sobering effect upon us if we realized what is before us” (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [1988], 19).

Share also these statements made by President Benson while President of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“We live today in a wicked world. Never in our memory have the forces of evil been arrayed in such a deadly formation. The devil is well organized and has many emissaries working for him. His satanic majesty has proclaimed his intention to destroy our young people, to weaken the home and family, and to defeat the purposes of the Lord Jesus Christ through his great church” (*God, Family, Country: Our Three Great Loyalties* [1974], 90).

“All through the ages the prophets have looked down through the corridors of time to our day. Billions of the deceased and those yet to be born have their eyes on us. Make no mistake about it—you are a marked generation. There has never been more expected of the faithful in such a short period of time as there is of us. Never before on the face of this earth have the forces of evil and the forces of good been as well organized. Now is the great day of the devil’s power. . . . But now is also the great day of the Lord’s power, with the greatest number ever of priesthood holders on the earth” (“In His Steps,” in *1979 Devotional Speeches of the Year* [1980], 59).

3 Nephi 3–4. Evil can be defeated by praying, repenting, uniting under righteous leaders, and relying on the power of the Lord’s words.

(35–40 minutes)

Show students a variety of letters, such as a personal letter, a mission call, a form letter from an advertiser, and a thank-you card. Discuss questions such as the following:

- What is the best letter you have ever received? Why was it the best?
- Have you ever received a letter that made you cry? laugh? celebrate? get angry? change your attitude?

Explain to students that 3 Nephi 3:2–10 contains a letter from Giddianhi, the Gadianton leader, to Lachoneus, the Nephite governor. Have students read 3 Nephi 3:1–10 and think about how they might react if they received this letter. Discuss their impressions. (If time permits consider asking students to write a response to this letter, and read and discuss some of their letters as a class.)

Have students read 3 Nephi 3:11–12 and look for how Lachoneus responded to Giddianhi’s letter.

- How does his reaction compare to yours?
- Do you believe Lachoneus’s reaction was appropriate? Why or why not?

Invite students to circle the word *therefore* in verse 12. Tell them that this word indicates that the information that follows is a direct result of the fact that Lachoneus was a just and brave man. Read 3 Nephi 3:12–21. As you read, invite students to identify what Lachoneus and Gidgiddoni asked the Nephites to do to protect themselves from the Gadianton robbers, and list their findings on the board.

Help students apply this lesson by discussing some of the following questions:

- The Gadianton robbers opposed the Nephites. What evils oppose us today?
- In what ways are the evils in our society like those of the Gadianton robbers?
- How could the warnings and counsel that Lachoneus and Gidgiddoni gave the Nephites help us?
- The Nephites were asked to gather to Zarahemla. Where can we find safety today? (see D&C 115:4–6).
- In what ways has the Church been a protection or help to you? (Church members are taught correct doctrine, receive prophetic warnings of society’s evils, associate with people with good values, and so on.)

Read 3 Nephi 3:22, 25–26 to show that the Nephites followed the counsel of Lachoneus and Gidgiddoni. Read Doctrine and Covenants 1:14 and testify of the blessings that come from following inspired leaders. Invite a student to read the chapter heading for 3 Nephi 4. Ask:

- What blessings came to the Nephites because they obeyed inspired counsel?
- Read 3 Nephi 4:30–33. Whom did the Nephites credit for their victory?
- Why would it be important to follow this example?

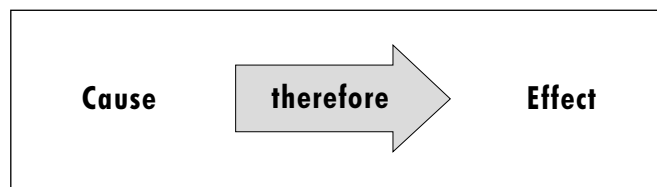
Invite students to share times when they may have felt as the Nephites did in these verses.

3 Nephi 5. The Book of Mormon record was written and preserved so the Lamanites could come to a knowledge of their fathers and all people could come to know their Savior. (20–30 minutes)

Write *Cause* and *Effect* on the board (leave enough space for another word between them). Ask students:

- What do these words mean?
- Why do they belong together? (If you have time, do an object lesson that illustrates these words. For example, you could illustrate “cause” by planting a seed in a flowerpot, watering it, and setting it in the sun. To illustrate “effect,” show students a mature plant in a second pot.)

Write *therefore* between the two words on the board, and draw an arrow around it.



Ask students what the word *therefore* means. (*Therefore* means that what came before the word caused or led to what came after the word.)

Write 3 Nephi 5:1–2 under *Cause* and 3 Nephi 5:3 under *Effect*. Have students read 3 Nephi 5:3 and look for what follows the word *therefore* (the Nephites forsook their sins). Now read 3 Nephi 5:1–2 looking for what caused or led to this event. (They *knew* that the prophecies of Christ’s birth were fulfilled and that all things spoken by the prophets would be fulfilled.) Testify that once we know the truth, we can have power to resist temptation and overcome the adversary (see also Helaman 5:12).

Tell students that in 3 Nephi 5:10–26 Mormon speaks about the Nephite records and the future of the descendants of Jacob (the house of Israel). Have students read 3 Nephi 5:21–26, and ask:

- According to these verses, what blessings come to the descendants of Jacob who are gathered in the last days? (Among other blessings, they come to “know their Redeemer, who is Jesus Christ” [v. 26].)
- Read 2 Nephi 3:12. What role does the Book of Mormon play in this gathering?

Show students the diagram on the board and ask: What can knowing our Redeemer cause or lead us to do? (As with the Nephites, it can lead us to forsake our sins and can give us power to resist temptation.)

Share the following statement by President Marion G. Romney, who was a member of the First Presidency:

“I feel certain that if, in our homes, parents will read from the Book of Mormon prayerfully and regularly, both by themselves and with their children, the spirit of that great book will come to permeate our homes and all who dwell therein. The spirit of reverence will increase; mutual respect and consideration for each other will grow. The spirit of contention will depart. Parents will counsel their children in greater love and wisdom. Children will be more responsive and submissive to the counsel of their parents. Righteousness will increase. Faith, hope, and charity—the pure love of Christ—will abound in our homes and lives, bringing in their wake peace, joy, and happiness” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1980, 90; or *Ensign*, May 1980, 67).



3 Nephi 6. Pride, reliance on the arm of flesh, and divisiveness were major factors in the destruction of the Nephite civilization.

(20–30 minutes)

List several diseases on the board (for example arthritis, cancer, chicken pox, heart disease, leprosy, malaria, rheumatic fever). Ask students to rank the diseases according to how much they fear them. Ask: What do you think is the most dreaded human disease? Share the following statement:

“What we read about in the Book of Mormon is the ‘Nephite disease’—and we have it! . . . We can be most grateful, therefore, regardless of how sick others may be, that God in the Book of Mormon has diagnosed our sickness for our special benefit, and prescribed a cure for us” (Hugh Nibley, *Since Cumorah* [1967], 354).

Ask students what they think the “Nephite disease” was, and discuss their answers.

Read 3 Nephi 6:10, 13, 15 looking for the Nephite disease. Read and discuss the following statements. Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, said:

“Pride and vanity, the opposites of humility, can destroy our spiritual health as surely as a debilitating disease can destroy our physical health” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1990, 82; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 65).

President Ezra Taft Benson taught:

“Pride is a very misunderstood sin, and many are sinning in ignorance (see Mosiah 3:11; 3 Nephi 6:18). In the scriptures there is no such thing as righteous pride—it is always considered a sin. Therefore, no matter how the world uses the term, we must understand how God uses the term so we can understand the language of holy writ and profit thereby (see 2 Nephi 4:15; Mosiah 1:3–7; Alma 5:61).

“Most of us think of pride as self-centeredness, conceit, boastfulness, arrogance, or haughtiness. All of these are elements of the sin, but the heart, or core, is still missing.

“The central feature of pride is enmity—enmity toward God and enmity toward our fellowmen. *Enmity* means ‘hatred toward, hostility to, or a state of opposition.’ It is the power by which Satan wishes to reign over us” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1989, 3; or *Ensign*, May 1989, 4).

Ask students how we diagnose, or identify, a sickness. (Answers might include considering the symptoms, visiting a

doctor.) Divide students into five “medical teams.” Assign each team to turn to 3 Nephi 6 and study one of the following sets of verses 1–9, 10–14, 15–18, 19–26, 27–30. When they finish, have each group answer the following questions for the class:

- What year or years do your assigned verses cover?
- What is your “diagnosis”? (In other words, how were the Nephites doing spiritually at this time?)
- What were they doing or not doing to maintain their spiritual well-being?
- What verse or verses do you think best help us understand the Nephites at this time?

Discuss each group’s findings. Discuss the following questions:

- How is the sin of pride evident today?
- What causes pride?
- How can we avoid it?

Read 3 Nephi 6:5 and testify of the principle it teaches. You may wish to share the following statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith to help students understand that, unlike the Nephite nation, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has a bright future:

“No unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done” (*History of the Church*, 4:540).

3 Nephi 7. We can remain righteous even while living in a world filled with wickedness. (20–30 minutes)

Display for the class a bucket of mud and a clean, white cloth. Tell students that the mud represents wickedness and the cloth represents righteousness. Explain that 3 Nephi 7 describes the Nephite civilization prior to Jesus Christ’s death and Resurrection.

Label the bucket of mud 3 Nephi 7:1–14 and the white cloth 3 Nephi 7:15–26. Assign half your students to study the verses on the bucket and the other half the verses on the cloth. When they finish, have each group answer the following questions for the class:

- What do your assigned verses teach about wickedness and righteousness?

- What did the people do that pleased or displeased the Lord?
- How common are these wicked or righteous acts in the world today?

Tell students that you are going to place the white cloth in the bucket of mud without getting it dirty. Ask if they think this is possible. Ask: Do you believe it is possible to live in a world filled with wickedness and remain righteous? How?

Put the white cloth in a plastic bag with the label *3 Nephi 7:18, 21, 24*. Demonstrate how the cloth can be dipped in the mud and remain clean if it is protected by the plastic bag. Invite students to read the verses on the bag and look for what gave Nephi and other righteous people the power to remain clean. (Testimony, faith, repentance, baptism, the power of the Spirit.) Testify that these same principles and ordinances can help us remain clean today. Invite students to share ways these principles and ordinances have helped them stay clean and worthy.

Share the following testimony by Elder Rulon G. Craven, then a member of the Seventy:

“It is a frightening realization that the powers of evil will increase in the world. This brings us to the questions, What can we do? Is there a way to escape from the powers of evil? Yes, there is.

“Members of the Church can overcome temptation by (1) obedience to the guiding principles and doctrines of the gospel of Jesus Christ, (2) following the counsel of our prophets and leaders, and (3) living in such a way that our lives are constantly influenced by the power of the Holy Ghost.

“Train your mind to obey gospel principles and covenants. Stay on the highway of daily personal and family prayer, the avenue of studying the scriptures and the teachings of the prophets, the road of serving in the Church, and be willing to get off the wrong road daily and on the right road leading to eternal life. Your greatest protection against temptation is an active and vibrant testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which binds us to our Heavenly Father” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 107; or *Ensign*, May 1996, 77).

Encourage students to protect themselves from the wickedness that exists in the world.



3 Nephi 8–10

Introduction

The prophet Zenos prophesied that the Crucifixion of Christ would be accompanied by storms, fires, earthquakes, and three days of darkness (see 1 Nephi 19:10–14). The fulfillment of this prophecy is recorded in 3 Nephi 8–10. Amid these upheavals, the whole face of the land was changed, and many people and cities were destroyed, but the “more righteous part of the people” were spared (3 Nephi 10:12). The Lord comforted His people by speaking to them.

One truth we can learn from 3 Nephi 8–10 is that in the face of suffering we can find peace and hope by heeding the words of Jesus Christ. As you read these chapters, look for what the Lord teaches us will lead us to hope and salvation.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- To use the power of the priesthood in our lives, we must be worthy (see 3 Nephi 8:1; see also D&C 50:29; 121:34–46).
- Those who kill the prophets or reject their testimony will eventually be destroyed, while the righteous will be blessed (see 3 Nephi 8:5–25; 9:5–13; 10:12–13, 18–19; see also D&C 1:14; 97:21–26).
- Christ offers comfort, joy, and eternal life to those who come unto Him through the principles and ordinances of the gospel (see 3 Nephi 9:14–10:10).
- The law of Moses was fulfilled in the Savior’s atoning sacrifice, and burnt offerings are no longer required. Instead, the Lord requires the sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit (see 3 Nephi 9:16–20).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 114–15.

Suggestions for Teaching



3 Nephi 8:1–9:14. Those who kill the prophets or reject their testimony will eventually be destroyed, while the righteous will be blessed. (20–25 minutes)

Darken your classroom as much as possible, or have students close their eyes. Invite students to listen as you read 3 Nephi 8:1–23 (you could use an audio recording), and have them try to visualize the events depicted in these verses. When you finish, ask:

- What most impressed you about these verses?
- What did you feel while listening to the verses?
- What do you imagine the people who experienced this destruction felt?

Invite students to read Matthew 27:45–54 and look for what happened at Jerusalem when Jesus was crucified. Ask:

- What similarities do you see to what happened in the Americas?
- Why do you think darkness and destruction accompanied the death of Jesus Christ?
- Read John 8:12. How does this verse help you understand the darkness that accompanied His death?

Read 3 Nephi 9:10–14 and ask:

- How did the darkness and destruction affect the righteous? the wicked?
- What reasons did the Lord give for destroying the wicked?

Tell students that there will also be destruction and calamities before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Testify that we can be blessed and protected in those times. Have students read Doctrine and Covenants 1:14; 109:22–26 to discover how or where we can find this protection in our day. Have them read 3 Nephi 11:1 looking for where the Nephite people gathered after the destruction. Share the following statement by Elder Lance B. Wickman, a member of the Seventy:

“Climbing atop the Mount of Olives with his disciples, the Savior prophesied the cataclysmic events that would precede the destruction of Jerusalem and his second coming. He then issued this portentous admonition to his disciples, ancient and modern: ‘Then you shall *stand in the holy place*; whoso readeth let him understand’ (Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:12; italics added; see also Matthew 24:15). Latter-day revelations provide understanding. They teach that in our day, amidst strife and catastrophe and pestilence, there are two kingdoms locked in grim struggle for the souls of men—Zion and Babylon. More than once they repeat

the injunction to ‘stand in holy places’ for a refuge from these storms of latter-day life (D&C 45:32; see also D&C 87:8; 101:16–23). Prominent among such holy places, and key to all the others, is the temple of the Lord” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 110; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 82–83).

3 Nephi 8–10. Christ offers comfort, joy, and eternal life to those who come unto Him through the principles and ordinances of the gospel. (30–35 minutes)

Invite students to tell about the most devastating natural disaster they have experienced and how it affected them. Or ask them to give details of a terrible natural disaster they have seen in the news. Ask:

- How did this disaster affect the community where it occurred?
- What was done to help the community and the families living there recover from the destruction?

Invite students to quickly read 3 Nephi 8:1–22 looking for details of the destructions in the Americas at the death of Jesus Christ. Ask:

- How do these events compare with the natural disasters you have witnessed or read about?
- Read 3 Nephi 8:23–25. How did this destruction affect the people who survived?

Invite students to find answers to the following questions by reading the accompanying scriptures:

- Who caused this destruction? (see 3 Nephi 9:3–8).
- Why did this destruction take place? (see 3 Nephi 9:9–12).
- Who was spared at this time? (see 3 Nephi 9:13; 10:12–13).
- How did Satan react to this destruction? (see 3 Nephi 9:2).

Tell students that the Lord spoke to the people during this time of darkness and distress and offered peace and comfort. Share the following statement by Elder Robert D. Hales, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“The fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ brings great comfort in stressful times of mortality. It brings light where there is darkness and a calming influence where there is turmoil. It gives eternal hope where there is mortal despair. It is more than just beautiful doctrine. It is a reality in our lives that if we can be obedient and obtain the eternal rewards that God grants us, if we will draw nigh unto Him and embrace the eternal doctrine, we will be blessed” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 89; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 66).

Have students read 3 Nephi 9:14–10:10. Invite them to share parts of the Savior’s message that they think would provide hope, comfort, and light, and discuss these as a class. Ask:

- How do you think the Savior’s message would help console the people?
- How can His message help give us comfort and peace?



Introduction

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, wrote that the appearance of the resurrected Lord to the Nephites and His declaration of His messiahship “constituted the focal point, the supreme moment, in the entire history of the Book of Mormon. It was the manifestation and the decree that had informed and inspired every Nephite prophet for the previous six hundred years, to say nothing of their Israelite and Jaredite forefathers for thousands of years before that.

“Everyone had talked of him, sung of him, dreamed of him, and prayed for his appearance—but here he actually was. The day of days! The God who turns every dark night into morning light had arrived” (*Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon* [1997], 250–51).

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For


- Jesus Christ has appeared on the earth and will appear again to give people a personal witness of His Resurrection (see 3 Nephi 11:1–19; see also D&C 93:1; Joseph Smith—History 1:16–17).
- Baptism is a priesthood ordinance that is essential to salvation. To be acceptable to God, it must be performed in the proper way by those who have received the proper priesthood authority (see 3 Nephi 11:20–34; see also John 3:5; D&C 132:7).
- The Lord’s doctrine includes faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism by immersion, and the gift of the Holy Ghost (see 3 Nephi 11:31–41; see also JST, Hebrews 6:1–3).
- God calls and authorizes servants to minister on earth. We will be blessed if we follow them (see 3 Nephi 12:1–2; see also D&C 84:36–38; Articles of Faith 1:5).
- The Lord blesses those who are good examples of His teachings (see 3 Nephi 12:3–16).

- Jesus Christ fulfilled the law of Moses through His atoning sacrifice and revealed again the fulness of the gospel (see 3 Nephi 12:17–47).
- We should strive to become perfect like Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ (see 3 Nephi 12:48; see also Matthew 5:48).
- As we serve God and our fellowman, we should act out of love rather than to be seen by others (see 3 Nephi 13:1–8, 16–20; see also Moroni 7:6).
- Heavenly Father hears and answers our prayers (see 3 Nephi 13:6; 14:7–11; see also 2 Nephi 32:9).
- The Lord will judge and forgive us according to the way we judge and forgive others (see 3 Nephi 13:14–15; 14:1–5; see also D&C 64:9).
- We can discern the righteous from the wicked by their fruits. Only those who are righteous will enter the kingdom of heaven (see 3 Nephi 14:12–27; see also Luke 6:46–49).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 116–19.

Suggestions for Teaching

 **3 Nephi 11:1–19. Jesus Christ has appeared on the earth and will appear again to give people a personal witness of His Resurrection.**
(20–25 minutes)

As students enter class, have music or a recorded speech playing very quietly. Stop the recording to have the opening prayer, and then ask students how many of them heard the recording. Discuss the following questions:

- Did you pay attention to the music or speech? Why or why not?
- What other sounds or noises did you focus on before class began?
- Would it have been possible to listen to the music or speech?
- What could have motivated you to pay special attention to it?

Read 3 Nephi 11:1–6 and ask:

- How is what these verses describe similar to the recording at the beginning of class?
- Why do you think the people didn’t understand the voice the first two times?
- What do you think it means that they “did open their ears”? (v. 5).
- How can we “open our ears” to understand God’s words?

Read 3 Nephi 11:7–11 and ask students to list some important truths from these verses. (Answers might include that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ are two separate beings, Jesus is Heavenly Father’s Son, God can appear to man, man is formed in the image of God.) Ask:

- How do these truths clear up misunderstandings about the Godhead that exist in the world today?
- How is the Savior’s appearance to the Nephites similar to His appearance to Joseph Smith? (see Joseph Smith—History 1:16–17).
- What do you imagine it would be like to be in the presence of Jesus Christ?

Share the following account by Elder Melvin J. Ballard, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“On this occasion I had sought the Lord, . . . and that night I received a wonderful manifestation and impression which has never left me. I was carried to this place [the Salt Lake Temple]—into this room. . . . I was told there was another privilege that was to be mine; and I was led into a room where I was informed I was to meet someone. As I entered the room I saw, seated on a raised platform, the most glorious being I have ever conceived of, and was taken forward to be introduced to Him. As I approached He smiled, called my name, and stretched out His hands toward me. If I live to be a million years old I shall never forget that smile. He put His arms around me and kissed me, as He took me into His bosom, and He blessed me until my whole being was thrilled. As He finished I fell at His feet, and there saw the marks of the nails; and as I kissed them, with deep joy swelling through my whole being, I felt that I was in heaven indeed. The feeling that came to my heart then was: Oh! if I could live worthy . . . so that in the end when I have finished I could go into His presence and receive the feeling that I *then* had in His presence, I would give everything that I am and ever hope to be!” (in *Melvin J. Ballard . . . Crusader for Righteousness* [1966], 66).

Invite students to read the sacred account of the Savior’s appearance to the Nephites from 3 Nephi 11:12–19. Discuss the following questions:

- What did the people do to show their love and respect for the Savior?
- How did the Savior show His love for each of the 2,500 people present?
- What most impresses you about this experience?
- How has the Savior shown individual attention to you?
- How do you know He loves you?

3 Nephi 11:20–27, 31–41. Baptism is a priesthood ordinance that is essential to salvation. To be acceptable to God, it must be performed in the proper way by those who have received the proper priesthood authority. (20–25 minutes)


Give students the following true-false quiz:

1. Baptism must be performed by someone with proper priesthood authority. (True; see 3 Nephi 11:21–22.)
2. In our day, the person baptizing calls the candidate by name and says, “Having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.” (True; see v. 25; D&C 20:73.)
3. The person being baptized must be completely immersed in the water. (True; see 3 Nephi 11:26.)
4. The ordinance of baptism is essential to inherit the celestial kingdom. (True; see v. 33.)
5. The prerequisites for baptism include desiring to be baptized and repenting of sins. (True; see vv. 37–38.)
6. At baptism we covenant, among other things, to take upon us the Lord’s name, serve Him, always remember Him, and keep His commandments. He in turn promises to give us the gift of the Holy Ghost as a constant companion as long as we remain worthy. (True; see Mosiah 18:8–13; D&C 20:37.)

Correct the quiz by reading 3 Nephi 11:20–27, 31–41. Each time you find a verse that pertains to one of the quiz questions, stop and discuss the answer as a class. Share the following statement about baptism by the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“Baptism is a sign to God, to angels, and to heaven that we do the will of God, and there is no other way beneath the heavens whereby God hath ordained for man to come to Him to be saved, and enter into the Kingdom of God, except faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins, and any other course is in vain; then you have the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 198).

Testify that today the authority to perform proper baptisms is found only in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

 **3 Nephi 11:29 (Scripture Mastery). We are commanded not to argue with others over points of doctrine.** (10–15 minutes)

Ask students to recall the last time they watched or participated in an argument. Ask:

- What feelings did you have during the argument?
- What was the mood after the argument was over?

- How did the people on both sides handle themselves?
- Have you ever witnessed a debate or argument over religion?
- How strong was the Spirit during the debate?
- Were either of the people convinced or converted to the other view? Why or why not?
- How do you think the Lord feels about debates over religion?

Read 3 Nephi 11:28–30 and look for what the Lord taught about contention. Read John 17:20–23 and ask:

- What do these verses add to our understanding of the Savior’s teaching concerning contention?
- Who is the author of contention? (see D&C 10:63).
- Read 3 Nephi 11:27. What does the teaching about the Godhead in this verse add to our understanding of why we must avoid contention?

Share the following statement by Elder Russell M. Nelson, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Divine doctrine of the Church is the prime target of attack by the spiritually contentious. . . .

“Dissecting doctrine in a controversial way in order to draw attention to oneself is not pleasing to the Lord. . . .

“Contention fosters disunity. . . .

“What can we do to combat this canker of contention? What steps may each of us take to supplant the spirit of contention with a spirit of personal peace?

“To begin, show compassionate concern for others. Control the tongue, the pen, and the word processor. Whenever tempted to dispute, remember this proverb: ‘He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace’ (Proverbs 11:12; see also 17:28). . . .

“Through love of God, the pain caused by the fiery canker of contention will be extinguished from the soul. . . . This commitment will then spread to family and friends and will bring peace to neighborhoods and nations” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1989, 87–88; or *Ensign*, May 1989, 70–71).

Encourage students to avoid contention.



3 Nephi 12:3–16. The Lord blesses those who are good examples of His teachings.

(15–20 minutes)

Share the following statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith without revealing the author: “Happiness is the object and design of our existence.” Ask students if they believe this statement is true. Ask: How many of you desire to be happy?

Tell students the statement comes from Joseph Smith, and share the rest of it with them: “Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 255).

Discuss the following questions:

- What is the path that leads to happiness?
- What would it take for you to gain the kind of happiness Joseph Smith spoke of?
- What are some events that could happen in a seminary student’s life over the next five years that could bring happiness?
- Have you ever thought something would make you happy, only to find out later that it didn’t? If so, what was it?
- Why do you think it failed to bring happiness?

Ask students if they have ever seen or used a set of blueprints. Ask:

- Why are they useful?
- What could happen if the builder didn’t use the blueprints?

Ask students if they would be interested in a “blueprint” or plan for a perfect life. Explain that President Harold B. Lee told us where we could find one:

“In his Sermon on the Mount the Master has given us somewhat of a revelation of his own character, which was perfect, or what might be said to be ‘an autobiography, every syllable of which he had written down in deeds,’ and in so doing has given us a blueprint for our own lives. . . .

“Each of his declarations is begun by the word ‘Blessed.’ . . . ‘Blessedness is an inward fountain of joy in the soul itself, which no outward circumstances can seriously affect’ [in *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, ed. J. R. Dummelow (1909), 639]. These declarations of the Master are known in the literature of the Christian world as the Beatitudes and have been referred to by Bible commentators as the preparation necessary for entrance into the kingdom of heaven. . . . May I speak of them as something more than that as they are applied to you and me. They embody in fact THE CONSTITUTION FOR A PERFECT LIFE” (*Decisions for Successful Living* [1973], 56–57).

Have a student read aloud Matthew 5:1–12 while the rest of the class follows along in 3 Nephi 12:1–12. Invite students to look for differences in the two accounts. Pause after each beatitude to discuss the following questions:

- What do you think is the message of this beatitude? (For example for verse 3 you could ask what it means to be “poor in spirit.”)

- What does the Book of Mormon account add to our understanding of this beatitude?
- How would living by this teaching help you find joy and happiness?

The following insight into the Beatitudes may be helpful:

“These choice, brief statements are not separate, disjointed platitudes; each has a relationship to the others. Let us look at them from the more complete list given in the Nephite sermon and in the Joseph Smith Translation. The Beatitudes deal first with a person’s relationship to God. They speak of such things as faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, forgiveness of sins, and receiving the Holy Ghost. (These particular features are missing from the King James Version.) The emphasis then shifts to a person’s feelings about himself, or of those feelings that spring from within. For example: Blessed are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, those who are meek, and those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. Then the emphasis shifts to a person’s attitude toward others. For example: Blessed are the peacemakers. And finally a fourth emphasis appears—how a person should handle other people’s attitudes toward himself. Thus, blessed are all they who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake or who are reviled and persecuted falsely” (Robert J. Matthews, *A Bible! A Bible!* [1990], 240).

Share the following statement by Elder Royden G. Derrick, then a member of the Seventy:

“The Savior concluded His sermon by encouraging us to become perfect, as our Heavenly Father is perfect. While these steps follow one another in a natural sequence, we should always be striving to perfect ourselves in each of these virtues” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1989, 97; or *Ensign*, May 1989, 77).

Encourage class members to strive to become perfect by living in harmony with the divine principles of the Beatitudes.

3 Nephi 12:13–16. The Savior taught us to serve others and be good examples to them. (15–20 minutes)

Hold up some salt. Ask students what salt is good for, and list responses on the board. (Include that it enhances flavor, that it preserves food, that it can be used as a medicine, and that it is an essential nutrient.) Explain that under the law of Moses, offerings to the Lord were seasoned with salt (see Leviticus 2:13). Salt was used to symbolize the making of covenants in ancient Israel (see 2 Chronicles 13:5).

Invite students to read 3 Nephi 12:13, and ask: Who is to become the “salt of the earth”? Use questions like the following to help students relate the qualities of salt listed on the board to the qualities the Savior wants us to develop:

- How could a member of the Church “add savor” to the lives of other people? (By serving them and sharing the gospel with them.)
- How can our knowledge of gospel truths help “preserve” the lives of others? (By our leading them to receive gospel ordinances, and by our doing temple work for the dead.)
- What are some ways we can offer “healing” to nonmembers?
- In what ways is the gospel an “essential nutrient” in our lives?

Ask students to read 3 Nephi 12:13 again and mark the phrase: “But if the salt shall lose its savor wherewith shall the earth be salted?” Ask:

- What does this question mean?
- How can salt lose its savor? (Through contamination.)
- What are some ways we might lose our savor, or become contaminated, so that we cannot bless others?

Show students a candle (do not light it). Read 3 Nephi 12:14–16 and list the qualities of light. (It provides warmth, it allows us to see in darkness, and so on.) Ask:

- What spiritual attributes can these qualities of light symbolize?
- How could your “light” grow brighter and brighter?
- Why is it important to be an example to others and let them see your light?
- Read 3 Nephi 18:24. What does this verse add to our understanding of letting our light shine?
- Why is it important that our examples “glorify [our] Father who is in heaven” (3 Nephi 12:16) rather than ourselves?

Invite students to share some examples of how others have blessed their lives. Encourage students to keep the covenants they have made with Heavenly Father so they can be the “salt of the earth” and the “light of this people” throughout their lives.

3 Nephi 12:17–47. Jesus Christ fulfilled the law of Moses through His atoning sacrifice and revealed again the fulness of the gospel. The gospel of Jesus Christ is a higher law than the law of Moses. (20–30 minutes)

Make three platforms of different heights and arrange them in descending order in the front of the classroom. (Use large, sturdy boxes or other objects that students can safely stand on.) Make a poster with the words *No Law*, another with *Law of Moses*, and another with *Law of Jesus Christ*. Give the posters

to three students, and invite them to stand on the platform they think best represents their poster. Ask:

- Why did you choose the platform you did?
- Why do you think the law of Moses is higher than no law?
- Why do you think the law of Christ is higher than the law of Moses?

Read 3 Nephi 12:17–18 and explain that Jesus Christ fulfilled the law of Moses and added a higher law. Read verses 19–20, 46–48 and look for what the law of Christ would help the people achieve. Read verses 21–45 and look for examples of the higher law of Christ. Discuss the importance of this higher law and how it applies to our lives. If desired, write the information from the accompanying chart on the three posters as the students find the “old” and “new” laws.

No Law	Law of Moses	Law of Jesus Christ
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can do anything you want to others, and they can do anything they want to you. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't kill (see 3 Nephi 12:21; see also Exodus 20:13). • Don't commit adultery (see 3 Nephi 12:27; see also Exodus 20:14). • Don't break oaths made to or by the name of the Lord (see 3 Nephi 12:33; see also Numbers 30:2). • Justice—take an eye for an eye (see 3 Nephi 12:38; see also Leviticus 24:20). • Love your neighbor (see 3 Nephi 12:43; see also Leviticus 19:18). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't get angry (see 3 Nephi 12:22–26). • Don't have lustful thoughts (see 3 Nephi 12:28–30). • You should not need oaths; your word should be enough (see 3 Nephi 12:34–37). • Mercy—turn the other cheek (see 3 Nephi 12:39–42). • Love your enemy (see 3 Nephi 12:44–45).

Testify of the blessings that come from following God's laws. Encourage students to live by the laws and commandments of the gospel.



3 Nephi 12:48. Jesus Christ commanded us to be perfect. (15–20 minutes)

Tell students that you are going to take a survey. After you read each of the following questions, have students raise their hand if they believe the answer to that question is yes:

1. Does Heavenly Father really expect us to be perfect?
2. Do we need to attain perfection in this life to enter the celestial kingdom?
3. Can we ever be perfect?
4. Is there a difference between perfection in this life and eternal perfection?

Briefly discuss the survey. Divide students into four groups. Assign each group one of the questions, and have them read the scriptures and statements given for their question below. Have them select a spokesperson to present their findings to the rest of the class.

1. *Does Heavenly Father really expect us to be perfect?*

Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 5:50; 2 Nephi 25:23. We are commanded to be perfect. Jesus Christ's Atonement saves and perfects us after all we can do.

“In both His Old and New World ministries, the Savior commanded, ‘Be ye therefore perfect’ [Matthew 5:48; see also 3 Nephi 12:48]. A footnote explains that the Greek word translated as *perfect* means ‘complete, finished, fully developed’ [Matthew 5:48, footnote *b*]. Our Heavenly Father wants us to use this mortal probation to ‘fully develop’ ourselves, to make the most of our talents and abilities. If we do so, when final judgment comes we will experience the joy of standing before our Father in Heaven as ‘complete’ and ‘finished’ sons and daughters, polished by obedience and worthy of the inheritance that He has promised to the faithful” (Joseph B. Wirthlin, in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 15; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 14).

2. *Do we need to attain perfection in this life to enter the celestial kingdom?*

Doctrine and Covenants 14:7; 67:13; 93:11–14, 19–20. One does not need to attain perfection in this life to inherit the celestial kingdom.

“Everyone in the Church who is on the straight and narrow path, who is striving and struggling and desiring to do what is right, though is far from perfect in this life; if he passes out of this life while he’s on the straight and narrow, he’s going to go on to eternal reward in his Father’s kingdom.

“We don’t need to get a complex or get a feeling that you have to be perfect to be saved. You don’t. There’s only been one perfect person, and that’s the Lord Jesus, but in order to be saved in the Kingdom of God and in order to pass the test of mortality, what you have to do is get on the straight and narrow path—thus charting a course leading to eternal life—and then, being on that path, pass out of this life in full fellowship. I’m not saying that you don’t have to keep the commandments. I’m saying you don’t have to be perfect to be saved” (Bruce R. McConkie, *The Probationary Test of Mortality* [address delivered at University of Utah institute of religion, 10 Jan. 1982], 12).

“When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the gospel—you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. But it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil before you will have learned them. It is not all to be comprehended in this world; it will be a great work to learn our salvation and exaltation even beyond the grave” (Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 6:306–7).

3. *Can we ever be perfect?*

Moroni 10:32–33. The power to become perfected comes through the Atonement of Jesus Christ as we make and keep sacred covenants with God.

“No accountable individual can receive exaltation in the celestial kingdom without the ordinances of the temple. Endowments and sealings are for our personal perfection and are secured through our faithfulness.

“This requirement also pertains to our ancestors. . . .

“. . . Perfection is pending. It can come in full only after the Resurrection and only through the Lord. It awaits all who love Him and keep His commandments” (Russell M. Nelson, in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1995, 117–18; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 87–88).

4. *Is there a difference between perfection in this life and eternal perfection?*

Matthew 5:48; 3 Nephi 12:48. Note that Jesus Christ referred to Himself as perfect only after His Resurrection. There are two kinds of perfection: mortal perfection, which is mastering certain tasks in this life, and eternal perfection, which can only take place after the Resurrection.

“In this life certain actions can be perfected. A baseball pitcher can throw a no-hit, no-run ball game. A surgeon can perform an operation without an error. A musician can render a selection without a mistake. One can likewise achieve perfection in being punctual, paying tithing, keeping the Word of Wisdom, and so on. . . .

“Scriptures have described Noah, Seth, and Job as *perfect men*. . . .

“This does not mean that these people never made mistakes or never had need of correction. The process of perfection includes challenges to overcome and steps to repentance that may be very painful. . . .

“Mortal perfection can be achieved as we try to perform every duty, keep every law, and strive to be as perfect in our sphere as our Heavenly Father is in His. If we do the best we can, the Lord will bless us according to our deeds and the desires of our hearts.

“But Jesus asked for more than mortal perfection. The moment He uttered the words ‘even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,’ He raised our sights beyond the bounds of mortality. Our Heavenly Father has eternal perfection. . . .

“The perfection that the Savior envisions for us is much more than errorless performance. It is the eternal expectation as expressed by the Lord in His great intercessory prayer to His Father—that we might be made perfect and be able to dwell with them in the eternities ahead. . . .

“Resurrection is requisite for eternal perfection. Thanks to the atonement of Jesus Christ, our bodies, corruptible in mortality, will become incorruptible. Our physical frames, now subject to disease, death, and decay, will acquire immortal glory. Presently sustained by the blood of life and ever aging, our bodies will be sustained by spirit and become changeless and beyond the bounds of death.

“Eternal perfection is reserved for those who overcome all things and inherit the fulness of the Father in His heavenly mansions. Perfection consists in gaining eternal life—the kind of life that God lives” (Russell M. Nelson, in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1995, 115–16; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 86–87).

3 Nephi 13:1–24. As we serve God and our fellowman, we should act out of love rather than to be seen by others. (25–35 minutes)

Show students the pictures Blessing the Sacrament (Gospel Art Picture Kit, no. 603) and Passing the Sacrament (no. 604). Ask: Why is it good to bless and take the sacrament? Read the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“If a person performs a seemingly righteous act but does so for the wrong reasons, such as to achieve a selfish purpose, his *hands* may be clean but his *heart* is not ‘pure.’ His act will not be counted for righteousness. . . .

“We must not only *do* what is right. We must act for the right reasons. The modern term is *good motive*. The scriptures often signify this appropriate mental attitude with the words *full purpose of heart* or *real intent*.

“The scriptures make clear that God understands our motives and will judge our actions accordingly” (*Pure in Heart* [1988], 13, 15).

Ask students to think about how Elder Oaks’s statement applies to the pictures. Ask:

- What are some proper motives for blessing or partaking of the sacrament?
- How might the blessings we receive for taking the sacrament vary depending on our motives for doing so?

Have students read Matthew 6:1 footnote *b* to discover what alms are. Read 3 Nephi 13:1–4 and discuss the following questions:

- What do these verses teach about having proper motives?
- What did the Savior warn against?
- How would that apply to our payment of tithes or other acts of faith and worship?

Have students look at Matthew 6:2 footnote *a* to find the definition of a hypocrite. Read 3 Nephi 13:5–15 and ask:

- What does the Savior warn against in these verses?
- How can these teachings help you improve your prayers?
- What should we avoid when praying?

Read 3 Nephi 13:16–24 and look for how these verses apply to the discussion. Share the following statement by Bishop Robert D. Hales, who was then Presiding Bishop of the Church:

“We must examine our motives. A good check and balance in decision making is to look at our motives for making our decisions. We should ask ourselves, ‘Are my motives selfish, or is there charity in the decision I am about to make? Is this decision in keeping with the commandments, both in the spirit and the letter of the law? Is my decision basically right, honorable, and compatible with the golden rule? Have I considered the impact of my decision on others?’

“Let all your [decisions] be done with charity’ (1 Corinthians 16:14).

“Beware of fear and greed. Be aware of your true motives” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1988, 12; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 11).

3 Nephi 13:25–34. Jesus asked the twelve Nephite disciples to devote their lives to the ministry.

(10–15 minutes)

Ask students to think of the rules and expectations that full-time missionaries are required to follow that other Church members are not. (For example, missionaries are expected to spend full time in missionary labors, remain with their companions at all times, and hold companionship and personal study every day.) Give students two minutes to write down as many rules as they can think of, and then have them share what they wrote with the class. Discuss the following questions:

- Why do missionaries have these additional rules?
- How does obeying these rules help them succeed in their work?

Invite students to compare 3 Nephi 13:25 with Matthew 6:25, and ask how these passages are different. (3 Nephi 13:25 clarifies that these instructions were intended for the twelve disciples.) Read 3 Nephi 13:26–34 and ask:

- How do you think these guidelines could help the twelve disciples in their ministry?
- What are some of the responsibilities of the Twelve Apostles today? (see D&C 107:23, 33, 35).
- How might the Savior’s instructions in 3 Nephi help us understand the calling of the Apostles today?
- How can you apply these teachings in your life, even though you are not called to minister in the Church full-time?

Reread 3 Nephi 13:33 and testify of the blessings that come, not only to missionaries and Apostles, but to all who seek first the kingdom of God.

3 Nephi 14. The Lord will judge and forgive us according to the way we judge and forgive others. We should use good judgment to discern wickedness from righteousness. (45–50 minutes)

Invite a student to sit at the front of the classroom facing the other students. Proclaim that this student will serve as “judge for the day.” Ask the student: Would you feel comfortable judging:

- Who you want to be your friends?
- Which movies are appropriate to attend?
- Whether to go on a date with a particular student?
- Which members of the class are righteous or wicked?

Discuss with students the difference between these types of judgments. Explain that there are some decisions and issues we should make judgments about and others we should not. Ask: How can you tell the difference?

Read the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks:

“I have been puzzled that some scriptures command us not to judge and others instruct us that we should judge and even tell us how to do it. I am convinced that these seemingly contradictory directions are consistent when we view them with the perspective of eternity. The key is to understand that there are two kinds of judging: final judgments, which we are forbidden to make, and intermediate judgments, which we are directed to make, but upon righteous principles” (*Judge Not and Judging* [CES fireside for young adults, 1 Mar. 1998], 1).

To help students understand the difference between these two kinds of judgments, give them copies of “Final Judgment and Intermediate Judgment” from the appendix (p. 301) as a handout, or show it on an overhead projector. Read and discuss it as a class.

Read 3 Nephi 14:1–2 and the Joseph Smith Translation of Matthew 7:1–2. Ask how these verses correspond to Elder Oaks’s explanation of judging. Read 3 Nephi 14:3–5 and ask:

- What judgment is required in these verses?
- What could the beam represent? (Personal sin or weakness.)
- Why is it important to make correct judgments about our own weaknesses and sins?
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 11:12. According to this verse, how does following the Spirit help us make righteous judgments?
- Read 3 Nephi 14:6. What judgment is required in these verses?

- Why would it be important to be careful about who you tell sacred things?

Tell students that 3 Nephi 14:7–11 teaches about prayer. Ask: Do we need to judge what to pray for? Why? Have students read verses 13–14 and look for how these verses relate to judging. Ask:

- How can you judge which path in life to follow?
- How does Elder Oaks’s message help in this decision?

Invite students to read verses 15–23, and ask what these verses teach about judging. Read to students verses 24–27. Testify that those who make righteous judgments and live by their decision to follow the Lord are building on a solid foundation.



Introduction

Jesus Christ is “the law, and the light” (3 Nephi 15:9). He taught that all people must look to Him to receive eternal life. In chapters 15–18 we witness His compassion. When He perceived that many did not understand His words concerning the law of Moses, He took the time to give further explanation. When the people looked upon Him with tears, desiring that He tarry longer, He stayed and ministered to them. He healed their sick, prayed for them, and instituted the sacrament among them.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For


- Jesus Christ gave the law of Moses to ancient Israel. God’s laws are given to help lead people to the Savior (see 3 Nephi 15:2–10).
- Christ’s “sheep” are those people who hear His voice and follow Him (see 3 Nephi 15:12–16:3; see also John 10:14–16, 25–27).
- Because the Jews rejected the Savior, in the latter days the gospel will go first to the Gentiles. Those Gentiles who repent and accept the gospel will be numbered among the house of Israel and receive the same blessings (see 3 Nephi 16:6–13).
- Pondering and prayer can lead to revelation and understanding (see 3 Nephi 17:1–3; see also Helaman 10:1–3; D&C 138:1–2, 11).

- Spiritual experiences are real, even though human language sometimes cannot describe them (see 3 Nephi 17:15–18; see also 3 Nephi 19:31–34).
- Taking the sacrament helps us remember the Atonement of Jesus Christ. As we partake worthily and keep our covenants, God has promised that we will always have His Spirit to be with us (see 3 Nephi 18:1–11; see also 3 Nephi 20:3–9).
- Jesus Christ is the Light of the World. We hold up His light to others when we keep His commandments (see 3 Nephi 18:24–25).
- The Lord has commanded us not to take the sacrament unworthily (see 3 Nephi 18:27–30).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 120–22.

Suggestions for Teaching

 *Book of Mormon Video* presentation 18, “My Joy Is Full,” can be used in teaching 3 Nephi 17 (see *Book of Mormon Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

3 Nephi 15:1–10. Jesus Christ gave the law of Moses to ancient Israel. God’s laws are given to help lead people to the Savior. (20–25 minutes)

Select a student who has a skill such as juggling or playing a musical instrument. Give the student two minutes to demonstrate the skill and to teach the rest of the class how to do it. Discuss the following questions:

- What do you think makes teaching this skill difficult?
- How can you tell if people you are trying to teach are actually learning?
- What would you do if the people did not understand what you were teaching?

Have students read 3 Nephi 15:1–10, and ask:

- What teaching of the Savior did the people have difficulty understanding?
- What did the Savior do when He perceived that the people did not understand His teachings about the law of Moses?

Explain that *behold* means “look” or “pay attention.” Ask:

- How many times does the word *behold* appear in these verses?
- What do you think this implies about the importance of what Christ was teaching?

Write the following four points on the board:

1. The law of Moses was given by Jesus Christ.
2. Jesus Christ fulfilled or completed the law of Moses. Parts of the law were “done away” in Christ (3 Nephi 12:47), and people were no longer obligated to live them.
3. The fulfillment of the law of Moses did not do away with other parts of the law or with other teachings, doctrines, and prophecies in the Old Testament (for example the Ten Commandments, the law of tithing, and the gathering of Israel).
4. The law of Moses pointed to and testified of Jesus Christ.

Ask students to carefully read 3 Nephi 15:3–10 and look for words or phrases that teach these points. Discuss their findings, and answer any questions that may arise in your discussion. As needed, refer to the commentaries for 3 Nephi 15:1–10 and 3 Nephi 15:9 in *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122* (p. 120).

Share the following statement by President Harold B. Lee, then a member of the First Presidency:

“Keep in mind that the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ are divine. Nobody changes the principles and doctrines of the Church except the Lord by revelation. But methods change as the inspired direction comes to those who preside at a given time” (“God’s Kingdom—A Kingdom of Order,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1971, 10).

Have students reread 3 Nephi 15:9–10, and ask:

- What laws are you required to live today?
- In what ways can looking to Christ help us endure to the end?
- What blessings does the Lord promise to those who keep His commandments?

3 Nephi 15:12–16:3. Christ’s “sheep” are those people who hear His voice and follow Him. Jesus had followers at Jerusalem, in the Americas, and among other members of the house of Israel. (30–35 minutes)

Tell the class that you are going to send them on a treasure hunt. Group students in pairs. Give each pair the first clue from the accompanying chart. Have them search the scripture looking for the answer to the question. When they find it, have them bring it to you to check. If it is correct, give them

the next clue, and continue until they have found the answers to all the clues.

Treasure Hunt Clues

1. What animal is spoken of in John 10:14?
2. According to John 10:27, who are Christ's sheep?
3. What does John 10:16 call an enclosure for sheep? Where was this enclosure located?
4. According to 3 Nephi 15:16–17, 21, 24, where was another of the Savior's folds?
5. Why didn't the Lord tell the Jews about the fold in the Americas? (see 3 Nephi 15:11–14, 18–19).
6. What fold does 3 Nephi 15:15, 20–21; 16:1–2 refer to?
7. According to 3 Nephi 16:3; 17:4, what did the Savior do for the other sheep of Israel?

At the end of the search discuss what students learned. Ask them how the information they found could be considered valuable or like a treasure. Tell students that John 10:16 and 3 Nephi 15:21 are often used by missionaries to help those they teach understand that the Book of Mormon is another testament of Jesus Christ.

Invite one of the pairs of students to come to the front of the class. Have them play the role of missionaries teaching you as a nonmember. Ask them: Is there any scripture in the Bible that talks about the Book of Mormon? Invite other class members also to respond. Testify that the Book of Mormon is truly a record of God's other sheep. Discuss the following questions:

- In what ways could we be considered the Savior's sheep?
- What responsibilities do we have as members of His fold or Church?
- How can we know that we are in the sheepfold today?

3 Nephi 16:4–20. Because the Jews rejected the Savior, in the latter days the gospel will go first to the Gentiles. Those Gentiles who repent and accept the gospel will be numbered among the house of Israel and receive the same blessings. (20–25 minutes)

Show students a picture of two missionaries (for example Gospel Art Picture Kit, no. 612). Ask:

- What do you think it would be like to contact people as a missionary?
- What are some reactions people might have to missionaries who contact them?
- Do you believe it is easy for missionaries to tell the difference between people who are ready to receive the gospel and people who are not? Why or why not?
- Why would it be important to keep a positive attitude, even if people did not accept your message?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 29:1–2, 4, 7 and ask:

- What do these verses have to do with missionary work?
- How can missionary work be compared to gathering things?
- Who listens to and accepts the missionaries' message?

Tell students that 3 Nephi 16:4–20 teaches about the latter-day gathering of converts among the Gentiles and the house of Israel. These verses speak of times when members of each of these groups will accept the gospel and of other times when they will reject it. Write the following chart on the board. Read the references and quickly complete the chart as a class.

3 Nephi 16	Gentiles' Reaction to the Gospel	Israel's Reaction to the Gospel
vv. 5–7		
vv. 10–12		
vv. 13–14		

Have students read 3 Nephi 16:7, 10, and ask:

- What are some of the reasons that both the Gentiles and the house of Israel would reject the gospel?
- Read verses 8–9, 15. What consequences would come to those who reject the gospel?
- Read verses 11–13. On what condition is the Lord willing to forgive those who reject the gospel?
- Read verse 16. What does He promise the house of Israel for their faithfulness?

Testify that the latter-day gathering has begun. Encourage students to prepare to serve full-time missions to help in this gathering.

3 Nephi 17:1–3. Pondering and prayer can lead to revelation and understanding. (15–20 minutes)

Before class write the following words and phrases on the board and cover each with a separate piece of paper: *dinner, soccer game, math test, date with a friend, school, mission call, temple marriage, taking the sacrament, receiving revelation.*

As the lesson begins, write on the board *Preparation precedes power.* Ask students: What do you think this statement means? Ask them if they believe it is true.

Tell them that under each piece of paper on the board is written an event. Explain that you are going to uncover the events one at a time, and that as you do, they should think of the most important thing they can do to prepare for that event. Uncover the events one by one (do not uncover the last event, *receiving revelation*). Have students call out their answers, and write some of them under the events.

Uncover *receiving revelation*, and discuss the following questions:

- Why is it important to receive revelation?
- How do you prepare to receive revelation?

- What might happen if you don't prepare?

Ask students to read 3 Nephi 17:1–2 and look for the concern the Savior had for the Nephites. Read verse 3 and ask:

- What four instructions did the Savior give the Nephites?
- Why do you think being “home,” away from distractions, is helpful preparation?
- What does it mean to “ponder”? How can it help?
- Why do you think prayer is an important part of this process?
- How can you prepare your mind to receive revelation and understanding?

Invite students to read Joseph Smith—History 1:8–14 looking for similarities between what the Savior asked the Nephites to do and what Joseph Smith did prior to receiving the First Vision. Discuss the students' findings.

Encourage them to follow this pattern in their lives. Urge them to pray and study the scriptures daily and to continually seek the Lord's guidance. Consider the following statement by Sister Anne G. Wirthlin, then a member of the Primary general presidency:

“The Savior has given us a pattern to follow as we study the scriptures. We hear the word, we ponder upon its meaning, we ask our Heavenly Father to help us understand, and then our minds and hearts are prepared to receive the promised blessings. Pondering is more than reading words; it is searching for meanings that will help us as we relate to one another and as we make choices in our lives. It is allowing the word to move from our minds to our hearts. The Spirit bears witness to our hearts as we prayerfully seek to know the things of our Heavenly Father. When we have that witness and knowledge, we think and live and relate to each other in more Christlike ways” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 10; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 10).

 **3 Nephi 17; 18:36–39. The Savior showed compassion for the Nephites as He ministered to them.** (40–50 minutes)

Ask students to think of someone they admire because of the way that person treats others. Invite several students to share who they chose. Ask them:

- How has this person been a positive influence in the Church, school, or community?
- Why do you think treating others compassionately is so important?

Invite students to think of a time someone showed them kindness and compassion. Ask: How did that experience impact your life? Have them think of a time someone

mistreated or ignored them, and ask: How did the feelings you had during these two experiences differ?

Have students imagine being in a large meeting with the prophet. Ask: How might you feel if he took time to visit with you individually, shake your hand, and express his love for you? Have them imagine that the Savior came to the class today. Ask: How might you feel if He took the time to visit with you personally?


Tell students that 3 Nephi 17; 18:36–39 contains a beautiful account of the Savior ministering among the Nephites. Read these sections together as a class, and ask students to look for the compassion the Savior showed to the people individually as He ministered to them. Ask:

- What do you imagine it was like to see the Savior at this time?
- What do you learn about the Savior's love and compassion from this account?
- Which verse is most impressive to you? Why?
- What evidence is there of the sacred nature of this experience?

Have the students answer the following three essay questions on a piece of paper:

- What impressions did you have as you studied 3 Nephi 17; 18:36–39?
- If your family had never read these chapters before, what part would you most like to tell them about? Why?
- What did you learn from the Savior's actions that you most want to apply in your life?

Invite a few students who are willing to read their answers to the class to do so.

 **3 Nephi 18:1–12, 26–32. Taking the sacrament helps us remember the Atonement of Jesus Christ. As we partake worthily and keep our covenants, God has promised that we will always have His Spirit to be with us.** (40–45 minutes)

Write on the board the following statement by Elder David B. Haight, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“The weekly opportunity of partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is one of the most sacred ordinances of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and is further indication of His love for all of us. Associated with the partaking of the sacrament are principles that are fundamental to man's advancement and exaltation in the kingdom of God and the shaping of one's spiritual character” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1983, 16; or *Ensign*, May 1983, 14).

Ask students: What do you believe is the most precious possession we can have in mortality? Discuss their answers. Share the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks: “To have the continuous companionship of the Holy Ghost is the most precious possession we can have in mortality” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 50; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 38).

- Why is the gift of the Holy Ghost such a precious possession?
- How does that gift bless your life?
- What can you do to receive that gift in greater abundance?

Tell students that 3 Nephi 18 contains instructions from the Savior that can help us better understand the relationship between taking the sacrament and receiving the Holy Ghost. Remind students that in chapter 17 the Savior was about to leave the Nephites but decided to stay longer out of compassion for them. Knowing this can help students recognize the value of the Savior’s additional teachings in chapter 18 and how those teachings can strengthen us when the Savior is not in our midst.

Read 3 Nephi 18:1–3, 8 and ask what ordinance the Savior performed. Read verses 4, 9 and discuss the following questions:

- What happened when the disciples ate the bread and drank the wine? (They were filled.)
- Read 3 Nephi 20:8–9. According to these verses, what were the people filled with?
- How can the sacrament help us be filled with the Spirit?

Invite a student to read the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks:

“The close relationship between partaking of the sacrament and the companionship of the Holy Ghost is explained in the revealed prayer on the sacrament. In partaking of the bread, we witness that we are willing to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ and always remember Him and keep His commandments. When we do so, we have the promise that we will always have His Spirit to be with us (see D&C 20:77). . . .

“Not one of you . . . and not one of your leaders has lived without sin since his baptism. Without some provision for further cleansing after our baptism, each of us is lost to things spiritual. We cannot have the companionship of the Holy Ghost, and at the final judgment we would be bound to be ‘cast off forever’ (1 Nephi 10:21). How grateful we are that the Lord has provided a process for each baptized member of His Church to be periodically cleansed from the soil of sin. The sacrament is an essential part of that process.

“We are commanded to repent of our sins and to come to the Lord with a broken heart and a contrite spirit

and partake of the sacrament in compliance with its covenants. When we renew our baptismal covenants in this way, the Lord renews the cleansing effect of our baptism. In this way we are made clean and can always have His Spirit to be with us. The importance of this is evident in the Lord’s commandment that we partake of the sacrament each week (see D&C 59:8–9)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 49–50; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 38).

Have students read 3 Nephi 18:7, 10–14; Doctrine and Covenants 20:77, 79 and tell what they learn about the sacrament. Discuss some of the following questions:

- What promises do we make when we take the sacrament?
- What do the bread and water represent?
- What can we do to make the sacrament more sacred and spiritual?

Read 3 Nephi 18:26–34 and ask:

- What does the Savior warn against in these verses?
- Why do you think it is important that we not take the sacrament unworthily?

Share the following statement by Elder Oaks to help students understand how we can take the sacrament worthily:

“I plead with all members of the Church, young and old, to attend sacrament meeting each Sabbath day and to partake of the sacrament with the repentant attitude described as ‘a broken heart and a contrite spirit’ (3 Nephi 9:20). I pray that we will do so with the reverence and worship of our Savior that will signify a serious covenant to ‘always remember him’ (D&C 20:77). The Savior himself has said that we should partake ‘with an eye single to my glory—remembering unto the Father my body which was laid down for you, and my blood which was shed for the remission of your sins’ (D&C 27:2).

“I pray that we will also partake of the sacrament with the submissive manner that will help us accept and serve in Church callings in order to comply with our solemn covenant to take His name and His work upon us. I also plead for us to comply with our solemn covenant to keep His commandments” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 81–82; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 61).

Read 3 Nephi 18:5–6 and ask: What did the Lord promise He would give power to do? Invite an Aaronic Priesthood holder to explain his responsibilities in administering the sacrament. Ask the young men: How does it make you feel to perform this sacred duty? Ask the class:

- What can you do to make sure the ordinance is performed in a way that is pleasing to the Savior?
- What feelings should we have toward the young men who perform these priesthood duties? (see D&C 84:35–38).

Read the first two paragraphs in the following statement by Elder Oaks, and then assign several young men to each read one of the paragraphs that follow. After each paragraph, pause to ask the young man who read to share why he thinks that point is important, and invite the class to share their thoughts as well.

“Those who officiate in the priesthood act in behalf of the Lord (see D&C 1:38; 36:2). . . .

“The principle I suggest to govern those officiating in the sacrament—whether preparing, administering, or passing—is that they should not do anything that would distract any member from his or her worship and renewal of covenants. This principle of nondistractedness suggests some companion principles.

“Deacons, teachers, and priests should always be clean in appearance and reverent in the manner in which they perform their solemn and sacred responsibilities. Teachers’ special assignments in preparing the sacrament are the least visible but should still be done with dignity, quietly and reverently. Teachers should always remember that the emblems they are preparing represent the body and blood of our Lord.

“To avoid distracting from the sacred occasion, priests should speak the sacrament prayers clearly and distinctly. Prayers that are rattled off swiftly or mumbled inaudibly will not do. All present should be helped to understand an ordinance and covenants so important that the Lord prescribed the exact words to be uttered. All should be helped to focus on those sacred words as they renew their covenants by partaking.

“. . . Brethren, remember the significance of those sacred prayers. You are praying as a servant of the Lord in behalf of the entire congregation. Speak to be heard and understood, and say it like you mean it.

“Deacons should pass the sacrament in a reverent and orderly manner, with no needless motions or expressions that call attention to themselves. In all their actions they should avoid distracting any member of the congregation from worship and covenant making.

“All who officiate in the sacrament—in preparing, administering, or passing—should be well groomed and modestly dressed, with nothing about their

personal appearance that calls special attention to themselves. In appearance as well as actions, they should avoid distracting anyone present from full attention to the worship and covenant making that are the purpose of this sacred ordinance.

“This principle of nondistractedness applies to things unseen as well as seen. If someone officiating in this sacred ordinance is unworthy to participate, and this is known to anyone present, their participation is a serious distraction to that person. Young men, if any of you is unworthy, talk to your bishop without delay. Obtain his direction on what you should do to qualify yourself to participate in your priesthood duties worthily and appropriately.

“I have a final suggestion. With the single exception of those priests occupied breaking the bread, all who hold the Aaronic Priesthood should join in singing the sacrament hymn by which we worship and prepare to partake. No one needs that spiritual preparation more than the priesthood holders who will officiate in it. My young brethren, it is important that you sing the sacrament hymn. Please do so” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 51–52; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 39–40).

3 Nephi 18:13–25. Sincere prayer can help us resist temptation. (20–25 minutes)

Invite a student to come to the front of class and put on a coat and hold an umbrella and a shield. (You could make a shield from paper or cardboard.) Ask the class what a coat, an umbrella, and a shield have in common. (They can all be used for protection.) Read 3 Nephi 18:15–19 and look for something the Savior taught that also offers protection. Ask:

- How can prayer protect us?
- What experiences have you had in which the Lord protected you because of your prayers?

Invite four students to each read one of the following statements. Elder Bernard P. Brockbank, who was then an Assistant to the Twelve, said:

“Proper sincere prayer to a living Father in heaven, through a living Savior and Mediator, is essential for protection from the power and evil influence of the devil” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1974, 166; or *Ensign*, May 1974, 115).

Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, said of his upbringing:

“We were dressed in our home each morning, not only with hats and raincoats and boots to protect us from physical storm, but even more carefully our parents dressed us each day in the armor of God. As we would kneel in family prayer and listen to our father, a bearer of the priesthood, pour out his soul to the Lord for the protection of his family against the fiery darts of the wicked, one more layer was added to our shield of faith” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1974, 140–41; or *Ensign*, May 1974, 98).

Elder Joe J. Christensen, then a member of the Presidency of the Seventy, said:

“Sending children out of your home without the spiritual protection of prayer is like sending them out into a blizzard without sufficient clothing” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 14; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 12).

Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, said:

“I like to compare the home evening, family prayer, and other associated activities of the Church for the saving of the family, when they are conscientiously carried out, with an umbrella. If the umbrella is not opened up, it is little more than a cane and can give little protection from the storms of nature. Likewise, God-given plans are of little value unless they are used” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1969, 23).

Read 3 Nephi 18:20–25 as a class. Ask students to think of another object (besides a coat, umbrella, or shield) that prayer can be likened to. Invite several students to share the object they thought of, and discuss how that object reminds them of prayer. Encourage students to seek Heavenly Father’s protection through daily personal prayer.



Introduction

Chapters 19–26 of 3 Nephi give an account of the events and teachings of the second and third days of the Savior’s ministry among the Nephites. A great multitude, having heard that Christ had ministered to 2,500 the first day, labored all that night to gather for His return. On the second day Jesus prayed with the people, administered the sacrament to them, and expounded important doctrine to them. Jesus described the people as having great faith (see 3 Nephi 19:35–36).

During the second day of His ministry, wrote Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, “Christ quoted in their entirety, with only slight variations, three revelations that, as Jehovah, he had given to Isaiah and Malachi respectively in an earlier day. . . . That he would do so, and that he would select these particular chapters to quote, deserves some examination” (*Christ and the New Covenant*, 288–89). As you read these chapters consider the value of Isaiah’s and Malachi’s words.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- We are commanded to pray frequently and to always have a prayer in our hearts. Our prayers should be directed by the Spirit (see 3 Nephi 19:6–20:1; see also Matthew 6:5–13; 2 Nephi 32:8–9; Ether 2:14; D&C 46:30–32).
- Those who desire the gift of the Holy Ghost may receive it after baptism (see 3 Nephi 19:7–13; see also John 14:26; 15:26; 2 Nephi 31:17).
- Those who worthily partake of the sacrament will be filled with the Holy Ghost (see 3 Nephi 20:1–9; see also Moroni 4–5; D&C 20:75–79).

- God covenanted to send the gospel to scattered Israel and gather them to their promised lands in the latter days (see 3 Nephi 20:11–23, 29–46; 21:22–22:17).
- The Book of Mormon was brought forth to the Gentiles, and from them it will be taken to the house of Israel. Those who reject the Book of Mormon and latter-day revelation will be cut off from the kingdom of God (see 3 Nephi 21:1–21; see also 1 Nephi 13:39–40; D&C 1:14; 84:54–58).
- The Savior commanded us to search the words of Isaiah (see 3 Nephi 23:1–5; see also 1 Nephi 19:23; Mormon 8:23).
- The righteous will be blessed and the wicked will be destroyed at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (see 3 Nephi 24:2, 5–6; 25:1–3).
- The Savior foretold that before the Second Coming the prophet Elijah would restore the authority to seal families together (see 3 Nephi 25:5–6; see also D&C 110:13–16).
- The law of tithing brings great blessings. A person who refuses to pay tithing robs God and forfeits those blessings (see 3 Nephi 24:8–12; see also Malachi 3:8–10; D&C 119).
- The scriptures are the word of God. If we believe and obey what has been revealed in them, we are promised even greater revelations (see 3 Nephi 26:1–12; see also Alma 12:9; D&C 98:11–12).
- Spiritual experiences are sacred and should not be shared except as directed by the Spirit (see 3 Nephi 26:14–18; see also 3 Nephi 28:12–14; D&C 10:34–37; 63:64).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 123–26.

Suggestions for Teaching

3 Nephi 19:1–15. Receiving and following the words of Jesus Christ will help us prepare for His Second Coming. (15–20 minutes)

Have students imagine that Jesus Christ is coming to their home tomorrow, and ask:

- What emotions might you experience?
- Would you want to tell others about His visit? Why or why not?
- If you could, who would you invite to be there with you?

Read 3 Nephi 19:1–3 and ask:

- Who was told about the Savior’s visit?
- How did they react?
- What impresses you most about their reaction?

Read verses 4–15 as a class looking for what preparations the people made for the return of Jesus Christ the next day, and list them on the board. (They followed the leaders Jesus had chosen, they prayed, they taught and learned the words that Jesus had previously spoken, they were baptized, they desired and received the Holy Ghost.) Discuss the following questions:

- How would each item in this list be helpful in preparing the people for the Savior’s return?
- How willing did the people seem to follow these instructions?
- How could following this pattern help us prepare for the Second Coming of the Lord?
- What difference would it make if we had as strong a desire to prepare ourselves in these ways?

Encourage students to share their testimonies of the Savior with others and to prepare for the coming of the Lord.

3 Nephi 19:16–20:1. We are commanded to pray frequently and to always have a prayer in our hearts. Our prayers should be directed by the Spirit.

(30–35 minutes)

List the following five statements on the board. Ask several students why they think each is important in their personal prayers, and discuss their answers.

- Use reverent titles and pronouns while praying (such as Thee, Thou, Thy, and Thine).
- Follow the basic pattern when praying (Our Heavenly Father, we thank Thee. . . . We ask Thee. . . . In the name of Jesus Christ, amen).
- Pray from the heart.
- Pray regularly (every morning and night).
- Pray as directed by the Holy Ghost.

Ask students to quickly read 3 Nephi 19:16–36 and notice how often forms of the word *pray* appear. Ask: What does the frequent use of the word *pray* in this chapter teach you about the importance of prayer?

Tell students that 3 Nephi 19:16–20:1 describes four prayers. Divide students into four groups, and invite each group to read one of the following accounts:

1. The Nephite disciples pray as commanded by Jesus (see 3 Nephi 19:16–18, 24–26, 30; 20:1).
2. The Savior prays a short distance from the disciples (see 3 Nephi 19:19–23).

3. The Savior prays a second time (see 3 Nephi 19:27–29).
4. The Savior prays a third time (see 3 Nephi 19:31–36).

As the students read the accounts, have them look for answers to the following questions:

- What was prayed for at this time?
- What can you learn about the pattern of prayer from this experience?
- What evidence is there of the sacred nature of this prayer?
- What most impresses you about this prayer?
- What do you think is the most important doctrine you can learn from this prayer?

Invite each group to share what they learned with the rest of the class, and discuss their findings. Ask:

- How can we apply these teachings in our lives?
- What can we do to improve our communication with our Father in Heaven?
- How do you think improving our prayers would improve our relationship with the Lord?

Share the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson, who was then President of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“If we would advance in holiness—increase in favor with God—nothing can take the place of prayer. . . . Give prayer—daily prayer, secret prayer—a foremost place in your lives. Let no day pass without it. Communion with the Almighty has been a source of strength, inspiration, and enlightenment through the world’s history to men and women who have shaped the destinies of individuals and nations for good” (*God, Family, Country: Our Three Great Loyalties* [1974], 8).

Encourage students to pray each day.

Note: As you teach 3 Nephi 19:18, help students understand that we do not pray to Jesus. The following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, may be helpful:

“Jesus was present before them as the symbol of the Father. Seeing him, it was as though they saw the Father; praying to him, it was as though they prayed to the Father. It was a special and unique situation that as far as we know has taken place only once on earth during all the long ages of the Lord’s hand-dealings with his children” (*The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ* [1978], 561).

3 Nephi 20:3–9. Those who worthily partake of the sacrament will be filled with the Holy Ghost.

(10–15 minutes)

Display pictures of various food items. Discuss the following questions:

- How often do you need to eat?
- What happens if you don’t eat often enough?
- How often do you need spiritual nourishment?
- How does spiritual nourishment help you?

Have students read 3 Nephi 20:3–9, and ask:

- What spiritual nourishment did the Savior offer the Nephites?
- What were they filled with? (see v. 9).
- When was the last time they had taken the sacrament? (The day before; see 3 Nephi 18:1–9.)
- What do you think would be the value of taking the sacrament again so soon?

Read the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks:

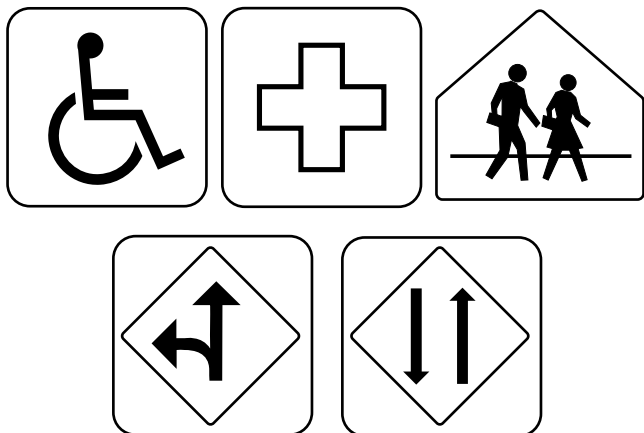
“To those brothers and sisters who may have allowed themselves to become lax in this vital renewal of the covenants of the sacrament, I plead in words of the First Presidency that you ‘come back and feast at the table of the Lord, and taste again the sweet and satisfying fruits of fellowship with the saints’ (‘An Invitation to Come Back,’ *Church News*, 22 Dec. 1985, 3). Let us qualify ourselves for our Savior’s promise that by partaking of the sacrament we will ‘be filled’ (3 Nephi 20:8; see also 3 Nephi 18:9), which means that we will be ‘filled with the Spirit’ (3 Nephi 20:9). That Spirit—the Holy Ghost—is our comforter, our direction finder, our communicator, our interpreter, our witness, and our purifier—our infallible guide and sanctifier for our mortal journey toward eternal life.

“Any who may have thought it a small thing to partake of the sacrament should remember the Lord’s declaration that the foundation of a great work is laid by small things, for ‘out of small things proceedeth that which is great’ (D&C 64:33). Out of the seemingly small act of consciously and reverently renewing our baptismal covenants comes a renewal of the blessings of baptism by water and by the Spirit, that we may always have His Spirit to be with us. In this way all of us will be guided, and in this way all of us can be cleansed” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 82; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 61).

Discuss with students how they think their lives would be different if they were not able to take the sacrament each week. Testify of the blessings that come as we worthily take the sacrament.

3 Nephi 21. The Book of Mormon was brought forth to the Gentiles, and from them it will be taken to the house of Israel. Those who reject the Book of Mormon and latter-day revelation will be cut off from the kingdom of God. (30–35 minutes)

Draw the following signs on the board (or use other signs that are common where you live). Ask students to identify what each sign means.



Discuss the following questions:

- What are signs used for? (To prepare, warn, and instruct us.)
- What could happen if a sign were posted in the wrong place?
- Why is it important that a sign be posted properly and that the message on the sign be easy to understand?

Tell students that the scriptures also speak of “signs.” Scriptural or spiritual signs are intended to prepare, warn, and instruct us concerning the fulfillment of Heavenly Father’s plan. Invite students to quickly look through 3 Nephi 21:1–2, 7 and mark the word *sign* wherever it appears. Have them carefully read verse 1, and ask:

- Why does the Lord say this sign will be given?
- What events does this sign point to? (The gathering of Israel.)

Have students read verses 2–7 and underline the phrases *these things* and *these works* wherever they appear. Ask: What “sign” was the Savior speaking of? Hold up a copy of the Book of Mormon and testify that it is the sign that Jesus Christ spoke of. Share the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“The Book of Mormon is for both member and nonmember. Combined with the Spirit of the Lord, the Book of Mormon is the greatest single tool which God has given us to convert the world. If we are to have the harvest of souls . . . , then we must use the instrument which God has designed for that task—the Book of Mormon” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1984, 6–7; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 7).

3 Nephi 21:22–22:17. Isaiah prophesied of the latter-day gathering of Israel. (20–25 minutes)

Before class scatter rocks around the classroom floor. Ask a student to gather all the rocks into a single container you provide (make sure the container is too small to hold all the rocks). When the container is full, ask the student:

- What options do you have with the rocks that remain on the floor? (Leave them there or get a larger container.)
- How might you decide which option to take?
- If you knew that you would receive a large sum of money for each of the rocks, would that affect your choice? Why?

Have students imagine that the rocks represent people and gathering them represents missionary work. Ask:

- What could the container represent? (The Church.)
- What happens to the Church as more people are baptized? (More chapels and temples must be constructed, and more wards and stakes must be organized.)
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 18:10–16. What do these verses teach about the worth of a soul?
- How do these verses help us understand why we should help the Church grow?

Have students read the first phrase of the chapter heading for 3 Nephi 21 and the first ten words of 3 Nephi 22:1. Ask what time period is being referred to. (The period after the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the Restoration of the gospel; see also 3 Nephi 21:26–29.) Invite students to read 3 Nephi 21:22–29 and answer the following questions:

- What do people who join the Church become? (Covenant members of the house of Israel; see v. 22.)
- What will they build? (The New Jerusalem; see v. 23.)
- What work will they assist in? (Further gathering; see v. 24.)
- Who will be among them? (Jesus; see v. 25.)
- Who else will hear the gospel and be gathered? (The ten lost tribes; see v. 26.)
- For what purpose are the people gathered? (To come unto Christ and call upon the name of the Father; see v. 27.)

Have students read 3 Nephi 22:1–3, and ask:

- What did Isaiah prophesy would happen to the Church in the last days?
- How can the enlarging of a tent be compared to the activity with the container and the rocks?

Read 3 Nephi 22:7–17 with students, discussing the following questions as you read:

- What did the Lord promise would happen during this time of gathering?
- How does the Lord feel toward those who are to be gathered?

Testify that the gathering is taking place today. Share the latest available statistics on the number of Church members, full-time missionaries, and wards and stakes in the Church (see the statistical report in the most recent *May Ensign*).

Discuss the following questions:

- How are these statistics evidence that Isaiah’s prophecy was accurate?
- How do you feel being part of such a vibrant, growing church?
- What can you do now to help the gathering continue?
- What can you do in the future?
- Why would it be important to do so?



3 Nephi 23:1–5. The Savior commanded us to search the words of Isaiah. (10–15 minutes)

Invite two students to answer the following question: What is taking place right now 500 meters down the road? Give one of the students an advantage. (For example you could provide a pair of binoculars or allow that student to walk outside the classroom and look.) Ask the class: Which answer do you trust the most? Why?

Tell students that some people have the gift of being able to “see” into the future (see D&C 46:11–12, 22). Ask: What are some names for someone with that spiritual gift? (Prophet, seer, revelator.) Invite students to read Mosiah 8:13, 15–17, and discuss the following questions:

- What does it mean to be a seer?
- How valuable is the gift of seership?
- What value should the words of a seer have for you?

Have students read 3 Nephi 23:2 looking for evidence that Isaiah was a seer. Read verses 1–5 and ask the following questions:

- What did the Savior command us to do with Isaiah’s words?

- Why do you think it would be important to search them?
- How does knowing Isaiah was a seer and a prophet help motivate you to study his words?

Ask students to turn to 2 Nephi 12–24, 27 to see what they may have marked in these Isaiah chapters. Invite them to share verses that have special meaning for them.

3 Nephi 23:6–14. Jesus Christ commanded the Nephites to keep a record of the spiritual proceedings of their day. (20–25 minutes)

Bring to class several items such as the following: a journal, scriptures, a pedigree chart, family group sheets, a scrapbook, a family history. Discuss the following questions:

- What do these items have in common?
- Why is keeping records so important?
- How can what was written in the past help us today?
- How might it help us in the future?

Read 3 Nephi 23:6–11 and ask:

- What did the Lord command Samuel the Lamanite to testify to the people?
- Why do you think it would be important for people in the future to know if this prophecy had been fulfilled?
- What did the Savior ask Nephi to do at this point?

Read verses 12–14 and invite students to mark words and phrases that show that Nephi obeyed the commandment of the Savior. Apply this lesson to today by asking: What records does the Church keep that contain the words of the current prophets? (Conference Reports, Church magazines, scriptures, meeting minutes, talk transcripts.)

Give each student a piece of paper. Invite them to spend five minutes writing a description of the last time they felt the Spirit of the Lord. The description might include:

- Where they were.
- What time it was.
- What they were doing.
- Who they were with.

Or they could write what they feel they can do to invite the Spirit into their lives.

Encourage students to keep a journal and record their spiritual experiences and feelings in it. Ask: How do you believe this kind of record can bless you or your posterity? Invite students to include in their journal the description they wrote in class today.



3 Nephi 24–25. Jesus Christ quoted Malachi’s prophecies about the Second Coming, the law of tithing, and Elijah’s latter-day return to the earth. (40–45 minutes)

A few days before class, assign a student to prepare a two-minute presentation about the prophet Malachi. (They could use the Bible Dictionary, the Topical Guide, or similar sources.) Have the student give the presentation to the class.

Invite students to read the following scriptures to learn more about Malachi:

- 3 Nephi 24:1. Jesus Christ quoted Malachi 3–4 to the Nephites.
- 3 Nephi 26:1–2. The Nephites did not have the book of Malachi, but the Savior taught that those scriptures were important for future generations.
- Joseph Smith—History 1:36–39. Moroni quoted from Malachi 3–4 to Joseph Smith.

Ask: What do these references show about how important Malachi 3–4 is for us?

Give students copies of the worksheet “Malachi in the Book of Mormon (3 Nephi 24–25)” from the appendix (p. 302) or display it on an overhead projector. Have students complete the worksheet by reading the verses and filling in the answers. (You could divide your students into pairs or groups for this activity.) Correct the worksheets and discuss the answers.

Ask: How has knowing about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ influenced you in the past? How do you think it will influence you in the future? Ask students these same two questions about the law of tithing, and then ask the same questions about the restoration of sealing power by Elijah.

3 Nephi 26:1–12. The scriptures are the word of God. If we believe and obey what has been revealed in them, we are promised even greater revelations. (25–30 minutes)

Write the following scripture on the board: “That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day” (D&C 50:24). Ask students:

- What do you think this verse means?
- Why is it important to receive “more light”?
- What do you think the phrase “continueth in God” means?
- Why do you have to be obedient to the light you have before you can receive more?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 93:12–14, 19–20, 27–28 and discuss how these verses add to our understanding of Doctrine and Covenants 50:24.

Divide the class into groups of two. Ask each pair of students to think of an example of how, once we master something

basic, we can go on to something more difficult. (For example, once we understand arithmetic, we can learn algebra. Once we earn our parents’ trust, we may receive greater privileges.) Invite some of the students to share their examples.

Read 3 Nephi 26:1–8 and discuss the following questions:

- What did the Savior teach or expound to the Nephites? (see vv. 3–6).
- What portion of His teachings are included in 3 Nephi? (see v. 8).
- Why do you think Mormon included these teachings?
- How have the Savior’s teachings in 3 Nephi helped you?

Read 3 Nephi 26:9–12 and discuss the following questions:

- What part of the Savior’s teachings to the Nephites are included in the Book of Mormon?
- Why did the Lord say the other teachings were held back? (see vv. 9, 11).
- Will we ever receive the parts that were held back?
- What must we do first? (see vv. 9–10).

Share the following insight:

“I will try the faith of my people,” the Lord said. This is not some cruel game that God plays with mankind. It is, rather, an act of love and mercy for us. For our own sake—our spiritual development and salvation—the Savior expects us to develop faith and righteousness by trusting in and following the teachings of the portions of his word that he has already revealed—as in our standard works and in the words of prophets and Apostles of our dispensation. He desires us to study, ponder, pray about, and heed those teachings we have so that we will desire more and be spiritually prepared to have ‘greater things’ manifest to us” (Joseph Fielding McConkie and others, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon: Volume IV—Third Nephi through Moroni* [1992], 170).

Share the following statement by Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve, and testify of its truth:

“Just as there will be many more Church members, families, wards, stakes, and temples—later on, there will also be many more nourishing and inspiring scriptures. However, we must first feast worthily upon that which we already have!” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 70; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 52).

3 Nephi 26:13–21. Spiritual experiences are sacred and should not be shared except as directed by the Spirit. (15–20 minutes)

Share the following statement by Elder Boyd K. Packer, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Occasionally during the past year I have been asked a question. Usually it comes as a curious, almost an idle, question about the qualifications to stand as a witness for Christ. The question they ask is, ‘Have you seen Him?’

“That is a question that I have never asked of another. I have not asked that question of my brethren in the Quorum.”

Ask students:

- How do you feel about the question Elder Packer was asked?
- Why do you think Elder Packer would never ask that question of another person?

To help students understand why such a question would be inappropriate, share the conclusion of Elder Packer’s statement:

“That is a question that I have never asked of another . . . , thinking that it would be so sacred and so personal that one would have to have some special inspiration, indeed, some authorization, even to ask it.

“There are some things just too sacred to discuss. We know that as it relates to the temples. In our temples, sacred ordinances are performed; sacred experiences are enjoyed. And yet we do not, because of the nature of them, discuss them outside those sacred walls.

“It is not that they are secret, but they are sacred; not to be discussed, but to be harbored and to be protected and regarded with the deepest of reverence.

“I have come to know what the prophet Alma meant:

“‘. . . It is given unto many to know the mysteries of God; nevertheless they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart only according to the portion of his word which he doth grant unto the children of men, according to the heed and diligence which they give unto him.

“‘And therefore, he that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word; and he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God until he know them in full.’ (Al. 12:9–10.)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1971, 123; or *Ensign*, June 1971, 87).

Have students read 3 Nephi 26:13–21 and mark the verses or phrases that teach the following points:

- The doctrine that Jesus taught the Nephites at this time was sacred.
- Events that occurred at this time were sacred.
- The Nephites were instructed not to share these experiences.

When the students are finished, discuss what they found and marked. Have them read Matthew 7:6; Doctrine and Covenants 6:11–12; 10:37 looking for instructions the Lord has given to others on how to treat sacred communications. Discuss these as needed, and invite students to cross-reference them to 3 Nephi 26:13–21. Share the following statement by Elder Boyd K. Packer:

“I heard President Romney once counsel mission presidents and their wives in Geneva. ‘I do not tell all I know. I have never told my wife all I know, for I found out that if I talked too lightly of sacred things, thereafter the Lord would not trust me.’” (*That All May Be Edified* [1982], 337).



Introduction

“The sequence and circumstance of Christ’s third day of ministering to the Nephites is not entirely clear in the text we have been given, but Mormon did record that ‘the Lord truly did teach the people, for the space of three days; and after that he did show himself unto them oft, and did brake bread oft, and bless it, and give it unto them’ [3 Nephi 26:13]. . . .

“From that time forth, the disciples began to teach, baptize, and confer the Holy Ghost upon as many as sought the privilege. The new converts, as with the children whom they were like in many ways, ‘saw and heard unspeakable things, which [were] not lawful to be written.’ With such conversion and infusion of the Spirit, all self-centeredness and vanity were swept away, and they did ‘minister one to another; and they had all things common among them, every man dealing justly, one with another. And it came to pass that they did do all things even as Jesus had commanded them’ [3 Nephi 26:18–20]” (Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant*, 301–2).

The final chapters of 3 Nephi give an account of a visit of the Lord to His twelve disciples some time after His three-day ministry among the Nephites. The Savior expounded significant doctrines concerning His gospel and gave promises and powers to the Nephite twelve. The book ends with a powerful call to repentance by the Savior to those of us in the latter days.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The true Church of Jesus Christ is called by His name and built on His gospel (see 3 Nephi 27:5–12; see also D&C 115:3–4).
- The foundation of the gospel is that Jesus Christ obeyed Heavenly Father’s will and atoned for the sins of all mankind. Because of the Savior’s Atonement, if we exercise faith in Him, repent, are baptized, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, and endure to the end, we can receive eternal life (see 3 Nephi 27:9–22; see also D&C 76:40–42).
- Jesus Christ will judge all mankind according to their works (see 3 Nephi 27:14, 23–27; see also John 5:22).
- Transfiguration is a temporary change in a physical body so it can abide the glory of God. Translated beings undergo a similar change, but they remain in that state until they are resurrected. Translated beings are no longer subject to physical pain, nor will they taste of death (see 3 Nephi 28:4–40; see also D&C 67:10–12; Moses 1:11).
- The Lord has commanded us to repent of our sins and come unto Him. Those who reject Him will be cursed (see 3 Nephi 29–30).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 126–27.

Suggestions for Teaching

3 Nephi 27:1–12. The true Church of Jesus Christ is called by His name and built on His gospel.

(20–25 minutes)

Divide the class into groups of four. Have each group imagine that they are going to start an organization (such as a club or sports team). Give them a few minutes to decide what kind of organization they would like to start and to write it on a piece of paper. Have them also choose a name for their organization and write it on the other side of the paper. Collect the papers.

Read one at a time the names the groups chose for their organizations, and see if the class members can guess the type of organization based on the name. Discuss the following questions:

- Why is the selection of a name important for an organization?
- What might a name tell about an organization?
- Why is the name chosen for a church also important?
- What might the name of a church tell you about it?

Read 3 Nephi 27:1–3 and look for the question Jesus’ disciples had. Ask:

- Why do you think the disciples raised this question?
- Read verses 4–8. What did Jesus Christ teach them about the name of the Church?
- What did He say to show the importance of using His name?
- Read verses 9–12. What else did the Savior teach about His Church?
- Why is it important to know that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints not only has His name in its title but is also built upon His gospel?

Tell students that Elder Russell M. Nelson gave a talk about the name of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He shared important information regarding each word in the Church’s name. Review each of these points with students as time permits. If possible, make copies of these points and give them to students as a handout.

The Church

“The first two words of the name the Lord chose for His earthly organization are *The Church*.

“Note that the article *The* begins with a capital letter. This is an important part of the title, for the Church is the official organization of baptized believers who have taken upon themselves the name of Christ (see D&C 10:67–69; 18:21–25). . . .

“The Church is the way by which the Master accomplishes His work and bestows His glory. Its ordinances and related covenants are the crowning rewards of our membership. While many organizations can offer fellowship and fine instruction, only His church can provide baptism, confirmation, ordination, the sacrament, patriarchal blessings, and the ordinances of the temple—all bestowed by authorized priesthood power. That power is destined to bless *all* children of our Heavenly Father, regardless of their nationality” (in Conference Report, Mar.–Apr. 1990, 20; or *Ensign*, May 1990, 18).

Jesus Christ

“By divine directive, the title of the Church bears the sacred name of Jesus Christ, whose church this is (see D&C 115:3–4). . . .

“We worship God the Eternal Father in the name of His Son by the power of the Holy Ghost. We know the premortal Jesus to be Jehovah, God of the Old Testament. We know Him to be ‘the chief corner stone’ upon which the organization of His church is based (Ephesians 2:20). We know Him to be the Rock from whom revelation comes to His authorized agents (see 1 Corinthians 10:4; Helaman 5:12) and to all who worthily seek Him (see D&C 88:63)” (in Conference Report, Mar.–Apr. 1990, 19; or *Ensign*, May 1990, 17).

Latter-day

“It is true that scriptures foretell the final days of the earth’s temporal existence as a telestial sphere. The earth will then be renewed and receive its paradisiacal, or terrestrial, glory (see Articles of Faith 1:10). Ultimately, the earth will become celestialized (see Revelation 21:1; D&C 77:1; 88:25–26). But its *last* days must be preceded by its *latter* days!” (in Conference Report, Mar.–Apr. 1990, 18; or *Ensign*, May 1990, 17).

Saints

“A saint is a believer in Christ and knows of His perfect love. The giving saint shares in a true spirit of that love, and the receiving saint accepts in a true spirit of gratitude. A saint serves others. . . .

“A saint ‘refrain[s] from idleness’ (Alma 38:12) and seeks learning by study and also by faith. . . .

“A saint is honest and kind, paying financial obligations promptly and fully, treating others as she or he would want to be treated. . . .

“A saint is an honorable citizen, knowing that the very country which provides opportunity and protection deserves support, including prompt payment of taxes and personal participation in its legal political process (see D&C 134:5).

“A saint resolves any differences with others honorably and peacefully and is constant in courtesy—even in traffic at the rush hour.

“A saint shuns that which is unclean or degrading and avoids excess even of that which is good.

“Perhaps above all, a saint is reverent. Reverence for the Lord, for the earth He created, for leaders, for the dignity of others, for the law, for the sanctity of life, and for chapels and other buildings are all evidences of saintly attitudes. . . .

“A reverent saint loves the Lord and gives highest priority to keeping His commandments. Daily prayer, periodic fasting, and payment of tithes and offerings are privileges important to a faithful saint.

“Finally, a saint is one who receives the gifts of the Spirit that God has promised to all His faithful sons and daughters (see Joel 2:28–29; Acts 2:17–18)” (in Conference Report, Mar.–Apr. 1990, 18; or *Ensign*, May 1990, 16–17).

3 Nephi 27:13–33. The foundation of the gospel is that Jesus Christ obeyed Heavenly Father’s will and atoned for the sins of all mankind. Because of the Savior’s Atonement, if we exercise faith in Him, repent, are baptized, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, and endure to the end, we can receive eternal life. (25–30 minutes)

Display a large number of pictures related to Christ and the gospel. You could use the following from the Gospel Art Picture Kit:

- Adam and Eve Teaching Their Children (no. 119)
- The Birth of Jesus (no. 200)
- John the Baptist Baptizing Jesus (no. 208)

- Christ Ordaining the Apostles (no. 211)
- Jesus Healing the Blind (no. 213)
- Christ and the Children (no. 216)
- The Good Samaritan (no. 218)
- The Prodigal Son (no. 220)
- The Last Supper (no. 225)
- Jesus Washing the Apostles' Feet (no. 226)
- Jesus Praying in Gethsemane (no. 227)
- The Crucifixion (no. 230)
- Mary and the Resurrected Lord (no. 233)
- Jesus the Christ (no. 240)
- The First Vision (no. 403)
- Salt Lake Temple (no. 502)
- Latter-day Prophets (no. 506)
- Baptism (no. 601)
- The Gift of the Holy Ghost (no. 602)
- Blessing the Sacrament (no. 603)
- Young Boy Praying (no. 605)

Have students think about what the word *gospel* means. Invite them to choose the picture they feel best illustrates what they think the gospel is. Have some of them share what picture they chose and why.

Have students look up the definition of the word *gospel* in their Bible Dictionary. (Good news; see “Gospels,” p. 682.) Read 3 Nephi 27:13, 21 and ask students to mark the phrases *this is the gospel* and *this is my gospel*. Explain that the verses between these two phrases contain a good description from the Savior Himself of what the gospel is. Read verses 13–21 and ask:

- According to the Savior, what is the gospel?
- Why is that “good news”?
- Would you select a different picture to represent the gospel after reading these verses? If yes, which picture would you choose and why?

Invite students to read the first paragraph in the Bible Dictionary under “Gospels,” and ask what it adds to their understanding. Study 3 Nephi 27:22–33 as a class, pausing as you read to consider the following questions:

- What blessing comes to those who do the works of the Savior? (see v. 22).
- How does the gospel help us become like Jesus Christ? (see v. 27).
- How do you feel about the commandment to become as He is?
- Why is the promise in verse 29 so important?
- When have you experienced the fulfillment of this promise?
- What do verses 30–31 tell us about the Nephites in that day?
- What do you think it would be like to live in a generation where none were lost spiritually?

- Why do you think the path that leads to life is narrow? (see v. 33).
- What can we do to ensure that we are among those who “find it”?
- How can we apply the Savior’s teachings about the gospel in our personal lives? our homes? at Church activities? at school?



3 Nephi 27:27 (Scripture Mastery). We should strive to become like Jesus Christ. (15–20 minutes)

Bring magazines, books, or newspapers to class that contain pictures of famous people. Distribute the magazines among class members and ask them to find a picture of a person they admire. Have them tell who they selected. Discuss the following questions:

- If you could trade places with any of these people for a day, who would you choose? Why?
- What characteristics do these people have that you admire?

Read 3 Nephi 27:27 and ask:

- Who are we commanded to become like? (see also 3 Nephi 12:48).
- What characteristics does Jesus Christ have that we need to develop?
- Why should we focus more on Him than on other famous or popular people?

Encourage students to look to the Savior as their primary example. Discuss what we could do to help us become more like Jesus Christ. This might include:

- Placing a picture of Him in our bedroom or home.
- Memorizing some of His sayings or teachings.
- Listening to music that includes lyrics about Him.
- Studying about Him in the scriptures.
- Praying regularly.

Give students a few minutes to find a scripture that describes a characteristic of Jesus Christ that they admire. Invite them to share the trait they selected and why. Encourage them to apply what they have discussed and to strive to become as the Savior would have them be.

3 Nephi 28. Transfiguration is a temporary change in a physical body so it can abide the glory of God. Translated beings undergo a similar change, but they remain in that state until they are resurrected. Translated beings are no longer subject to physical pain, nor will they taste of death. (40–45 minutes)

Have a student come to the front of the room. Tell the student: Imagine you have been granted one wish. The wish can be anything except to receive more wishes. What would you wish for and why?

Read 3 Nephi 28:1 and ask the class:

- After the Savior had taught the Nephite disciples and given them commandments, what did He ask them?
- Read verses 2, 4–6. What did nine of the disciples desire?
- What do you think of their desire?
- What did the other three desire?
- What did the Savior say about their desire?
- If you had a choice between those two desires, which would you choose and why?

Show students a gift-wrapped box. Discuss the following questions:

- When was the last time you received a gift?
- How anxious were you to open it? Why?

Read 3 Nephi 28:3, 7–12 and ask if the Savior granted each of His disciples the gift they desired.

Explain that the rest of 3 Nephi 28 could be compared to opening a gift. Jesus Christ told the three Nephite disciples that they would be translated, and verses 13–40 show them receiving that gift.

Group students into pairs. Have each pair read 3 Nephi 28:13–40 and answer the following questions on a piece of paper:

- What do these verses teach about translation? (List each detail and the verse or verses where it is found.)
- What questions do you have after reading these verses?

Invite one pair of students to read their list to the class. Ask how many other groups found the same details. Invite any who found additional details to share them with the class. Have students share the questions they have about translated beings, and discuss those questions as a class. (The commentary for 3 Nephi 28 in *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122* [pp. 126–27] may be helpful in answering students' questions.)

3 Nephi 29–30. The Lord has commanded us to repent of our sins and come unto Him. Those who reject Him will be cursed. (15–20 minutes)

Give students five minutes to find several scriptures from the New Testament in which the Savior is treated cruelly. (If they need help, you could suggest they use the harmony of the

Gospels in the Bible Dictionary [pp. 684–96].) Invite students to share some of the scriptures they found, and then discuss the following questions:

- Why do you think people treated the Savior this way?
- How do you feel about the way they treated the Savior?
- If you could have talked to these people, what would you have said to them?

Tell students that 3 Nephi 29:1–4 teaches that the coming forth of the Book of Mormon is a sign that the Lord has begun to gather Israel and fulfill His covenants. Have students read verse 4 and mark the word *spurn*. Ask: What do you think this word means? Have them read verses 5–9 to find what the word means in this scripture. Discuss the following questions:

- What warning did the Savior give to those who spurn Him in the latter days?
- What does *wo* mean in the scriptures? (It is a stern warning that misery or grief will come to those who do not repent.)
- What do you think about the Savior's warnings?
- In what ways do people spurn the Savior in our day?
- What can you do to show greater love for the Savior?

Read 3 Nephi 30:1 and look for who commanded Mormon to write the words in verse 2. Read verse 2 and ask students to summarize the Savior's words. Ask: How do you feel about this warning?

As you conclude teaching 3 Nephi, consider discussing the following questions:

- What did you enjoy most in 3 Nephi?
- What part of the Savior's teachings most impressed you?
- Why do you think this account of the Savior's ministry among the Nephites is such an essential part of the Book of Mormon?
- How has your life changed because of your study of 3 Nephi?

Invite students to share their testimonies of the truths they learned in 3 Nephi.

FOURTH NEPHI

There are four authors of 4 Nephi: Nephi (whose father Nephi was one of the disciples of Jesus Christ); Amos the son of Nephi; Amos the son of Amos; and Ammaron the brother of Amos. (For more information on the authors of the Book of Mormon, see *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, p. 155.) Apparently Mormon greatly abridged the writings of these four, since 4 Nephi covers a nearly 300-year period in only forty-nine verses (see 4 Nephi 1:48). After the Savior's ministry in the Americas, all the people were righteous. Fourth Nephi records their decline over four generations to a state of gross wickedness.



Introduction

Just prior to the Savior's coming to the Americas, the wicked were destroyed and the more righteous part of the people were spared (see 3 Nephi 9:13). The Lord taught the people the gospel, established His Church, and laid the foundation for an unusually stable society in which several generations of righteous people lived and died. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, wrote:

"To our knowledge there has never been a historical sequence like it, before or since. . . .

"So remarkable was their success that in two short years all the people throughout the land were converted. . . . It was a heavenly time. . . . 'And they had all things common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor . . . ' [4 Nephi 1:3].

". . . With no contention among any of the people, there were mighty miracles at every turn. . . .

". . . Such righteous lives brought blessed peace and the greatest characterization of it all: 'Surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God' [4 Nephi 1:16]" (*Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon* [1997], 313–14).

In about A.D. 194 "a small part of the people" broke away from the Church and called themselves Lamanites (4 Nephi 1:20). By A.D. 244 the wicked outnumbered the righteous (see v. 40). The people fell into such wickedness that "there were none that were righteous save it were the disciples of

Jesus" (v. 46). The Lord eventually took the disciples from among the people, and "the work of miracles and of healing did cease" (Mormon 1:13).


Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Righteous people can experience miracles according to their faith in Jesus Christ (see 4 Nephi 1:5, 11–13; see also Mormon 9:19–21; Ether 12:6).
- When Apostles die, others are called and ordained to serve in their stead (see 4 Nephi 1:14; see also Acts 1:15–26).
- Righteousness leads to prosperity and happiness. Wickedness leads to misery and sorrow (see 4 Nephi 1:7–49; see also Mosiah 2:41; Alma 41:10; D&C 130:20–21).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 128–29.

Suggestions for Teaching

 *Book of Mormon Video* presentation 19, "O Ye Fair Ones," can be used in teaching 4 Nephi–Mormon 6 (see *Book of Mormon Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

4 Nephi 1:7–49. Righteousness leads to prosperity and happiness. Wickedness leads to misery and sorrow. (45–50 minutes)

Invite students to think about how often they face difficult or important decisions. Discuss the following questions:

- What was the last important decision you made?
- How did you make up your mind?
- Did you consider the consequences before deciding? Why or why not?
- Why is it important to think about consequences when making decisions?

Place in a bowl several cards with various good and bad decisions written on them (for example *smoke cigarettes, study the scriptures daily, break the law of chastity, pay a full tithing*). Take cards out of the bowl one at a time and read them to the class. After each card, ask:

- Why do you think some people make the choice on this card?
- What are some consequences of this choice?

If the consequence is bad, ask: Why do some people still make this choice? If the consequence is good, ask: Why don't all people choose to do this?

Share the following statement by Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Our Eternal Father defined truth and established what is right and wrong before the creation of this earth. He also fixed the consequences of obedience and disobedience to those truths. He defined our right to choose our path in life so that we would grow, develop, and be happy, but *we do not have the right to choose the consequences of our acts*. Those who willfully, consistently disobey His commandments will inevitably learn that truth. Joseph Smith was inspired to record, ‘When we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated’ (D&C 130:21)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 82; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 61).

Explain that today you will study the choices made by the people in 4 Nephi and the consequences of their choices. Write the headings *Righteous Choices* and *Consequences* on the board. Divide the class into two groups. Invite the first group to read 4 Nephi 1:1–3, 12, 14–17 to find righteous choices made by the people. Have the second group read verses 2–11, 14–17 looking for the blessings that came from making righteous choices. Have them write their findings under the appropriate headings on the board. The lists might include the following:

Righteous Choices	Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The twelve disciples established the Church in all the land (see v. 1). • The people repented, were baptized, and received the Holy Ghost (see v. 1). • They avoided contention (see v. 2). • They treated one another fairly (see v. 2). • They lived the law of consecration (see v. 3). • They kept the commandments (see v. 12). • They fasted and prayed (see v. 12). • They met together often to pray and study the word of the Lord (see v. 12). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the people were united in the true Church (see v. 2). • There was no contention (see v. 2). • There were no rich or poor (see v. 3). • Everyone was free; no one was in bondage (see v. 3). • There was peace in the land (see v. 4). • The disciples performed miracles such as healing the sick, lame, blind, and deaf and even raising the dead (see v. 5). • The Lord prospered them (see v. 7). • They increased in numbers and became strong (see v. 10).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New disciples were ordained to replace those who had died (see v. 14). • The people had the love of God in their hearts (see v. 15). • They did not envy, contend, break the law of chastity, lie, or commit murder (see v. 16). • They did not rob (see v. 17). • They set aside national and tribal divisions (see v. 17). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They became a “fair [beautiful] and delightful people” (v. 10). • The disciples, after they died, went to live with God (see v. 14). • There couldn’t be a happier people (see v. 16). • They were united and made heirs to God’s kingdom (see v. 17).
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Ask:

- What do you think gave these people the power to make such righteous decisions?
- Which of the blessings listed came during mortality? Which came in the next life?
- What does this teach you about righteous living?

Ask them to consider in their minds the following question: How does the way the Nephites and Lamanites lived at this time compare with the way you live? the way your family lives? people in your school? your nation? Ask: How might the way of life described in 4 Nephi compare with the way we will live after the Second Coming of Jesus Christ?

Have students read verses 18, 21–22 looking for how many years had passed since the Savior came. Ask:

- How many people who witnessed the Savior’s visit were still alive?
- How do you think the second and third generations learned of His teachings?

Write two more headings on the board: *Wicked Choices* and *Consequences*. Have all the students quickly read verses 20–42 looking for the wicked choices of the people and the consequences of these choices. Invite students to write their findings under the appropriate headings on the board. The lists might include the following:

Wicked Choices	Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some left the Church (see v. 20). • They divided into social classes (see vv. 20, 26). • They became proud and wore expensive clothing (see vv. 24, 43). • They built up churches to get gain (see v. 26). • They accepted wickedness as normal (see v. 27). • They denied Christ (see v. 29). • They persecuted the righteous (see vv. 29–30, 34). • They rejected and tried to kill the disciples (see vv. 30–33). • They hardened their hearts (see v. 34). • They willfully rebelled against the gospel (see v. 38). • They taught their children not to believe the truth and to hate believers (see vv. 38–39). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priestcraft was established again among the people (see v. 26). • They were no longer united. There were many false churches (see vv. 27, 34), and the people divided into tribes (see vv. 36–38). • Satan got a hold on the hearts of the people (see v. 28). • The righteous suffered persecutions (see vv. 29–30, 34). • Secret combinations returned (see v. 42).

Discuss the following questions:

- What differences are there between the way the righteous and the wicked lived?
- What does this indicate about the consequences of wicked living?
- Why are the consequences for righteous or wicked living not always immediate?

Explain that many of the consequences of the Nephites' and Lamanites' wickedness are described in Mormon 1–6. Encourage students to compare those consequences to the consequences of righteousness in 4 Nephi when they study those chapters in Mormon. Point out that the ultimate consequences of both righteousness and wickedness do not come until the Final Judgment. Share your testimony that righteousness leads to happiness and wickedness leads to unhappiness.

THE BOOK OF MORMON

The book of Mormon has two authors, Mormon and his son Moroni. Mormon wrote chapters 1–7. After he was killed, Moroni finished his father’s record in chapters 8–9, abridged the book of Ether, and wrote the book of Moroni. Mormon was a great prophet-leader who lived in a time of wickedness and apostasy. The entire Book of Mormon bears his name because he abridged most of the other prophets’ writings.

Mormon 1–6 recounts Mormon’s love for his people, his sorrow for their wickedness, and the eventual destruction of the unrepentant Nephite nation. Mormon 7–9 includes counsel and teachings from Mormon and Moroni to the descendants of the Lamanites and other people of the latter days.



Introduction

In chapters 1–6, Mormon recounts the consequences of the wickedness detailed in 4 Nephi. “His account bears witness of the hopeless, hell-like state of a people who once knew an almost celestial existence and [later] rejected God in totality. . . .

“ . . . Mormon was an incredible man. Not only was he entrusted with the responsibility of the plates and called to lead the Nephite armies at tender ages, but Mormon profoundly loved and cared about his unbelievably degenerate Nephite people. Even after he felt compelled to resign as their leader because of their refusal to repent, his compassion for them drew him back to help them, knowing he would lead them to their inevitable demise and probably die with them. Mormon was surrounded by gross iniquity and sorrow throughout his life, yet he remained . . . strong and valiant. . . .

“ . . . Mormon, in the final words of his own record, had born testimony to the descendants of those whom he knew would probably kill him and his family. . . . Rather than writing words of bitterness, he had invited them to believe in Christ, repent, and be saved” (Joseph Fielding McConkie and others, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon: Volume IV—Third Nephi through Moroni* [1992], 207–8).

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

Note: Prayerfully study each assigned scripture block and consider the principles in this section before preparing your lessons.


- Righteousness leads to prosperity and happiness. Wickedness leads to misery and sorrow (see Mormon 1–6; see also John 13:17; 2 Nephi 2:13; Mosiah 2:41; Alma 41:10; 4 Nephi 1:7–18; D&C 130:20–21).
- If we delay our repentance, repentance becomes more and more difficult (see Mormon 2:8, 11–15; see also Alma 34:33; Helaman 13:38).
- We should recognize God as the source of our blessings and be grateful to Him (see Mormon 3:3, 7–10, 14–15; see also D&C 59:7, 21).
- The Book of Mormon is a second witness to the Bible that Jesus Christ is the Savior and Redeemer and that He will judge all of Heavenly Father’s children (see Mormon 3:17–22; 5:10–24; see also John 5:22).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 130–33.

Suggestions for Teaching

Note: Choose from the ideas in this section, or use some of your own, as you prepare to teach the assigned scripture block.

 *Book of Mormon Video* presentation 19, “O Ye Fair Ones,” can be used in teaching 4 Nephi–Mormon 6 (see *Book of Mormon Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

Mormon 1:1–5, 13–16; 2:1–8, 16–17, 29; 4:19–20; 5:6–7; 8:3. Mormon abridged most of the records of the Book of Mormon. (15–20 minutes)

Share the following and ask students who they think it describes:

1. A prophet came to him when he was young and told him of records engraved on metal plates that he had hidden in a hill. The prophet told him that he was to go to the hill when he was older and obtain the plates (see Mormon 1:1–3; Joseph Smith—History 1:33–35, 42).
2. In his mid-teens he was visited of the Lord (see Mormon 1:15; Joseph Smith—History 1:17).
3. He tried to share part of what he had learned, but the people hardened their hearts (see Mormon 1:16; Joseph Smith—History 1:21–22).

4. He was in his early twenties when he received the plates (see Mormon 1:3; 2:16–17; Joseph Smith—History 1:59).
5. He was large in stature (see Mormon 2:1; *Church History in the Fulness of Times* [Religion 341–43 student manual, 1993], 49).
6. He had the same name as his father (see Mormon 1:5; Joseph Smith—History 1:4).
7. The people in his time lived in a state of apostasy (see Mormon 1:13; Joseph Smith—History 1:18–19).
8. He led his people as a military leader, prophet, and record keeper (see Mormon 2:1; D&C 43:1–5; *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 223).
9. He was forced by his enemies to leave his home and move with his people from city to city (see Mormon 2:4–6; 4:19–20; 5:6–7; D&C 124 heading; Joseph Smith—History 1:61).
10. His enemies finally succeeded in killing him (see Mormon 8:3; D&C 135:4).

Explain to students that these statements describe not only the Prophet Joseph Smith but also Mormon. Mormon abridged most of the records of the Book of Mormon, and Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon. Write the following verses on the board: Mormon 1:1–5, 13–16; 2:1–8, 16–17, 29; 4:19–20; 5:6–7; 8:3. Invite students to read the verses and look for the prophet Mormon’s characteristics described above.

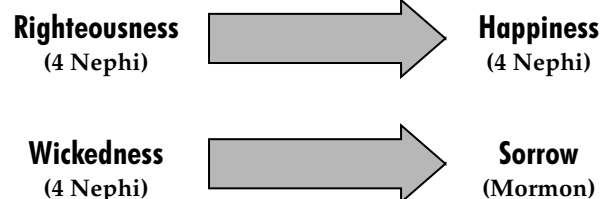
 **Mormon 1–6. Righteousness leads to prosperity and happiness. Wickedness leads to misery and sorrow.** (35–40 minutes)

Note: This teaching suggestion builds on the one for 4 Nephi 1:7–49, showing in more detail the consequences of the wickedness described there.

Give students the following true-false quiz:

1. The book of 4 Nephi describes a people who devotedly kept the commandments. (True.)
2. The righteous people described in 4 Nephi experienced great happiness. (True.)
3. Their happiness was a direct result of their righteousness. (True.)
4. The book of 4 Nephi also describes how the people became wicked and includes a detailed list of their sins. (True.)
5. The book of 4 Nephi describes in detail the misery, suffering, and sorrow that come to the wicked because of their sins. (False; this information is found mainly in Mormon.)

Correct the quiz as a class. To help students see how the book of Mormon builds on 4 Nephi, draw the accompanying diagram on the board.



Write the accompanying chart on the board, leaving the right-hand column blank. Invite students to read the verses in Mormon and identify ways the people suffered because of their wickedness.

Mormon	Results of Wickedness
1:8–11	War broke out between the Nephites and Lamanites.
1:13, 16	The Lord took away His disciples.
1:13	Miracles and healings ceased.
1:14; 5:16	The Spirit of the Lord withdrew.
1:16–17	Leaders were forbidden to teach the wicked.
1:17–18	The land was cursed.
1:18	Robbers infested the land.
1:19	Sorcery, witchcraft, magic, and the power of the devil abounded.
2:8	There was much blood and carnage.
2:11	The people mourned and lamented.
2:20	They were driven from their homes.
4:11	People took pleasure in killing.
4:14, 21	They offered women and children as sacrifices.

Read Mormon 4:12 to find how wicked the Nephites had become. Read Ether 2:9 and discuss when the “fulness of [God’s] wrath” comes upon the wicked. Then have students complete the rest of the chart.

4:18	The wicked Nephites began to be destroyed.
5:7–9	The people were slaughtered.
6:7	They had an “awful fear of death.”
6:9–15	The Nephites were completely destroyed.

Ask:

- What is the eventual result of choosing wickedness over righteousness?
- Read Mormon 2:13. Why didn't the Nephites' sorrowing help them?
- Why do you think the Lord does not always punish the wicked immediately?
- Read Mormon 6:17–18. What could the Nephites have done to avoid their destruction?
- How can knowing that the wicked will suffer for their sins make a difference in the way you live?

Mormon 2:8, 11–15. If we delay our repentance, repentance becomes more and more difficult.

(10–15 minutes)

Bring two magnets to class. Invite several students to take turns holding the magnets in such a way that they attract each other. Have them see how close together they can hold the magnets without them touching. Ask: How difficult was it to keep the magnets from pulling together? Why?

Read Mormon 2:8, 11–15; 3:2–3; 5:1–2 and ask:

- What could happen to the wicked who continually refuse to repent?
- How is that like trying to keep the magnets apart?
- Read Helaman 13:32–33, 38. How do these verses relate to this principle?

Share the following statement by President George A. Smith, who was a member of the First Presidency:

“There is a line of demarcation well defined. On one side of the line is the Lord’s territory, and on the other side of the line is the devil’s territory. If you will stay on the Lord’s side of the line the devil cannot come over there to tempt you or to annoy or distress you. If you go onto the devil’s side of the line just one inch you are in his territory, you are in his power, and he will seek to draw you just as far from that line of demarcation, that division line, as he can, knowing that if he can keep you in his territory he has you in his power” (in George Albert Smith, in Conference Report, Oct. 1932, 27).

Ask students:

- How does this statement relate to the magnets?
- How can this statement apply to your life?
- What happens to those who cross the “line of demarcation” into Satan’s territory and do not return to the Lord’s side?

Share the following statements. Elder James E. Talmage, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, wrote:

“As the time of repentance is procrastinated, the ability to repent grows weaker; neglect of opportunity in holy things develops inability” (*The Articles of Faith*, 12th ed. [1924], 114).

Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, wrote:

“It is true that the great principle of repentance is always available, but for the wicked and rebellious there are serious reservations to this statement. For instance, sin is intensely habit-forming and sometimes moves men to the tragic point of no return. . . . As the transgressor moves deeper and deeper in his sin, . . . and the will to change is weakened, it becomes increasingly near-hopeless, and he skids down and down until either he does not want to climb back or he has lost the power to do so” (*The Miracle of Forgiveness* [1969], 117).

Read Alma 34:32–34 and discuss the following questions:

- How is your life affected when you repent?
- Why is the timing of a person’s repentance important?

Mormon 3:3, 7–10, 14–15. We should recognize God as the source of our blessings and be grateful to Him.

(10–15 minutes)


Ask several students to name something they are grateful for. Ask:

- Who is the source of all blessings?
- How can we express our gratitude to God for our blessings?
- How do you think the Lord feels about ingratitude?

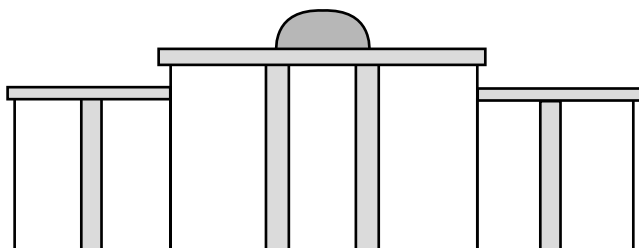
Read Mormon 3:3, 7–10, 14–15; 4:8 looking for the sin the people committed. Ask: Who did these people credit for their successes? Have a student read Doctrine and Covenants 59:7, 21, and ask:

- What did the Lord command His children to do in these verses?
- How does the Lord feel toward those who break this commandment?
- What can you do besides thanking the Lord in prayer to show Him you are grateful for His blessings?

Read or sing “Because I Have Been Given Much” (*Hymns*, no. 219).

 **Mormon 3:17–22; 5:10–24. The Book of Mormon is a second witness to the Bible that Jesus Christ is the Savior and Redeemer and that He will judge all of Heavenly Father’s children.**
(10–15 minutes)

Draw on the board an illustration showing the judgment bar of God.



The Judgment Bar of God

Have students imagine that the day of their final judgment has come. Ask:

- What do you imagine you will think and feel on that day?
- Who do you think will be there to judge you?

Have students read Mormon 3:17–19 and underline the groups of people Mormon addressed. Invite the students to identify in their mind which of the groups they think they belong to.

Write the following questions on the board (do not write the suggested answer or the scripture references). Have a student read aloud Mormon 3:18–22. Write the answers to the questions as students find them.

- Who will assist Jesus Christ in judging the twelve tribes of Israel? (see v. 18).
- Who will assist in judging the descendants of Lehi? (see v. 19).
- Who will stand before Christ’s judgment-seat? (see v. 20).
- By what will we be judged? (By our works; see v. 20; see also Alma 12:14.)
- How can we best prepare for our final judgment? (see v. 22).
- For whom will the judgment bar be “pleasing”? (Jacob 6:13).

Share the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“The reality is that there will be a whole hierarchy of judges who, under Christ, shall judge the righteous. He alone shall issue the decrees of damnation for the wicked” (*The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man* [1982], 520).



Introduction

The final chapters of Mormon are directed to future generations who would have the Book of Mormon. Mormon and Moroni, after recording the fall of the Nephite nation, testify that the only way for us to avoid a similar fall is to have faith in Jesus Christ.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Believing in and obeying Jesus Christ is the way to avoid spiritual destruction and obtain salvation (see Mormon 7; see also John 14:6; Mormon 6:17–18).
- When we follow the Savior’s example and choose the right, He will be with us, even if others turn against us (see Mormon 8:1–11; see also 1 Kings 19:10–14; John 16:32).
- The Book of Mormon was prophesied to come forth in the latter days during a time of apostasy as another witness of Jesus Christ (see Mormon 7:8–9; 8:12–41).
- Miracles, signs, and revelations are poured out on the faithful but cease when there is no faith (see Mormon 9:7–27).
- The Fall of Adam brought physical and spiritual death to all mankind. Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, all mankind will be resurrected and brought back into the Lord’s presence to be judged (see Mormon 9:11–14).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 133–35.

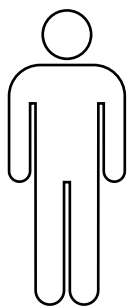
Suggestions for Teaching



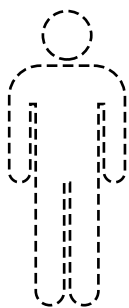
Mormon 7. Believing in and obeying Jesus Christ is the way to avoid spiritual destruction and obtain salvation. (25–30 minutes)

Write 230,000 on the board. Have students read Mormon 6:11–15 to determine what this number has to do with the Book of Mormon. To give students a sense of how many were slain, write on the board the population of the town or city where you live.

Draw the accompanying diagram on the board.



Physical Body



Spirit Body

Read Mormon 6:17–18 and ask:

- What caused the physical destruction of the Nephite nation?
- What could have saved them from physical destruction?
- Did the Nephites die physically or spiritually first?
- Which death do you think is more tragic? Why?

Have students read Mormon 7:4–10 and underline what Mormon said we could do to avoid spiritual death. List their findings on the board. These might include:

- Do not delight in bloodshed (see v. 4). (*Note:* Ask students how we can avoid delighting in bloodshed in time of peace. Answers might include avoiding violent movies, video games, and television shows.)
- Repent (see v. 5).
- Believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that He was crucified, that He was resurrected, that He provides a resurrection for all, and that He will judge us all (see vv. 5–7).
- Be baptized (see v. 8).
- Accept and live the gospel of Christ (see v. 8).
- Study the scriptures (see vv. 8–9).
- Receive the Holy Ghost (see v. 10).
- Follow the Savior’s example (see v. 10).

Ask: Which of these topics did Mormon spend the most time describing? (Believing in Christ; see vv. 5–7.)

Share the following statement by Bishop Richard C. Edgley, a member of the Presiding Bishopric:

“To those who wonder how Christ fits into our theology and our personal lives, we testify that Christ is the Redeemer of the world. He is our Lord, our Light, and our Savior. He was ordained from on high to descend below all, to suffer above all! He is the focus of all that we teach and all we do. As a Church we are individual Christians, trying to prove our discipleship to the Savior. It is not an institutional matter; it is a personal matter” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 14; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 13).

Write the following questions on the board:

- How can you tell if Jesus Christ is the focus of your life?
- What could you do to make Him more a part of your life?

Briefly discuss these questions as a class, and then allow the students five minutes to write their personal answers on a piece of paper.

Mormon 8:1–11. When we follow the Savior’s example and choose the right, He will be with us, even if others turn against us. (10–15 minutes)

Share the following statement by Bishop Richard C. Edgley:

“Real courage includes standing against the evil one, even when we stand alone, often feeling the disdain and the ridicule of others. This is courage. This is strength. This is manhood, and it can be tough” (“Behold the Man,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 42).

Ask students if they have ever felt alone or separated from friends or family after choosing the right. Invite a few students who would feel comfortable sharing their experiences to do so (be sure these are appropriate). Have a student read Mormon 8:1–11 and ask:

- How do you think Moroni felt in this situation?
- How do you think you would feel?
- How does that compare to the times you felt alone after choosing the right?

Have students compare the dates for Mormon 8 and Moroni 10 (see the footnotes in these chapters) and ask:

- About how many years was Moroni alone? (At least twenty-one.)
- What other people in the scriptures had to stand alone? (see 1 Kings 19:10–14; John 16:32).
- How can it help us, when we feel alone in doing what is right, to know that others have had the same experience?
- Read Mormon 8:34. Who remained with Moroni?
- How does that apply to us when we are left alone after choosing the right?

Read or sing “Abide with Me” (*Hymns*, no. 166). Testify that the Lord will be with us when we choose the right, even though others may not.

Mormon 7:8–9; 8:12–41. The Book of Mormon was prophesied to come forth in the latter days during a time of apostasy as another witness of Jesus Christ. (30–35 minutes)

Ask students:

- What events are you familiar with that require witnesses? (Baptism, marriage, trials in courts of law.)
- Why is it important to have witnesses at these events?

Ask students if they have ever seen or read two news reports covering the same event. Ask:

- Were the reports exactly the same? Why or why not?
- What is the value of having more than one witness to an event?

Invite students to read Mormon 7:8–9 and look for the two records mentioned by Mormon (the Bible and the Book of Mormon). Ask:

- What are some truths that both the Book of Mormon and the Bible testify of?
- What is the value of having both these books? (Point out that the Book of Mormon includes many truths that are not found or are not taught as plainly in the Bible.)
- How does your belief in one of these books affect your belief in the other?

Invite students to read Mormon 8:12–41. Have them list on a piece of paper all the information they can find about the Book of Mormon in these verses, and discuss their findings. Their lists might include the following:

- Those who believe in the Book of Mormon will be given “greater things” (v. 12).
- The gold plates cannot be used to get rich (see v. 14).
- The Book of Mormon is of great spiritual value (see v. 14).
- The one who would bring forth the book (Joseph Smith) would be blessed (see vv. 14–16).

- The Book of Mormon would be published for the welfare of the Lord’s ancient covenant people (Israel; see v. 15).
- The Book of Mormon would come to the knowledge of the people by the power of God (see v. 16).
- Those who condemn the Book of Mormon will be condemned of the Lord (see vv. 17–19).
- People would try to stop the Book of Mormon from coming forth (see vv. 18–21).
- Isaiah prophesied of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon (see v. 23).
- The ancient prophets of the Book of Mormon will speak “from the dust” to us (v. 23; see vv. 23–26).
- The Book of Mormon would come at a time of apostasy and wickedness:
 - People would deny miracles and the power of God (see vv. 26, 28).
 - People would kill the righteous and build up secret combinations (see v. 27).
 - False churches would be lifted up in pride, teach false doctrine, love money, and neglect the poor (see vv. 28, 32–33, 36–39).
 - There would be fires, tempests, earthquakes, wars, and rumors of war (see vv. 29–30).
 - People would murder, rob, lie, and break the law of chastity (see v. 31).

Share the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson.

“My beloved brethren and sisters, today I would like to speak about one of the most significant gifts given to the world in modern times. The gift I am thinking of is more important than any of the inventions that have come out of the industrial and technological revolutions. This is a gift of greater value to mankind than even the many wonderful advances we have seen in modern medicine. It is of greater worth to mankind than the development of flight or space travel. I speak of the gift of the Book of Mormon. . . .

“This gift was prepared by the hand of the Lord over a period of more than a thousand years. . . .

“Once we realize how the Lord feels about this book, it should not surprise us that He also gives us solemn warnings about how we receive it. After indicating that those who receive the Book of Mormon with faith, working righteousness, will receive a crown of eternal glory (see D&C 20:14), the Lord follows with this warning: ‘But those who harden their hearts in unbelief, and reject it, it shall turn to their own condemnation’ (D&C 20:15)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 3; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 4).

Paraphrase for students the three great reasons President Benson gave that Latter-day Saints should study the Book of Mormon (see the teaching suggestion for 2 Nephi 30:1–8, p. 75). Then read this additional excerpt from President Benson’s talk:

“There is a power in the book which will begin to flow into your lives the moment you begin a serious study of the book. You will find greater power to resist temptation. You will find the power to avoid deception. You will find the power to stay on the strait and narrow path. . . .

“Brethren and sisters, I implore you with all my heart that you consider with great solemnity the importance of the Book of Mormon to you personally and to the Church collectively” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 6; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 7).

Mormon 9:1–6. God extends His mercies even to the wicked in allowing them to have a measure of glory in the life to come. (10–15 minutes)

Write *Peaceful* and *Uneasy* on the board. Invite six students to each read one of the following examples to the class. After each example, ask students whether they would feel at peace or uneasy if they were in a similar situation.

- Joshua is fifteen years old. Many of his friends of the same age have dates for an upcoming school activity and are encouraging him to get a date as well.
- José attends an area conference where the prophet speaks. Afterward he is invited to the stand to shake hands with the prophet.
- Fiona is attending a party with her friends. One of her friends invites the group to watch a video with lots of profanity and crude jokes.
- Yves loves sports, but a member of his team swears every time someone makes a mistake in a game.
- Nadya is called to serve as president of her Young Women class.
- Kamau is the high school debate president. After his team wins a debate away from home, some of his friends break out some alcohol to celebrate and ask him to join them.

Ask:

- What can influence people to feel differently in the same setting?
- Can people change how they feel about situations?

Read Isaiah 6:1, 5–7 and ask:

- How did Isaiah feel when he was brought into the presence of God?

- Read Alma 36:12–14. How is Alma’s experience like what Isaiah describes?
- If a prophet like Isaiah felt unworthy in the presence of God, how do you think the wicked would feel?
- According to Isaiah 6:6–7, what happened to help Isaiah feel more worthy in the presence of the Lord?
- Read Alma 36:18–20. According to these verses, what happened to help Alma feel joy?

Invite students to read Mormon 9:1–6, and ask:

- Who is Moroni speaking to in these verses? (see vv. 1–2).
- What will happen at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ? (see v. 2).
- How would the wicked feel to dwell with the Lord? (see vv. 3–4).
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 88:32. According to this verse, why can’t some people “enjoy” the presence of the Lord? (They are not willing.)
- In what way is it merciful for the Lord to prepare glories according to the righteousness of the people?
- What can we do to feel more worthy to be in the presence of the Lord? (see Mormon 9:6).

Share the following statement by Elder Lorenzo Snow, who was then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“God loves His offspring, the human family. . . . He loves them all and His plans are for the salvation of the whole, and He will bring all up into that position in which they will be as happy and as comfortable as they are willing to be” (*The Teachings of Lorenzo Snow*, comp. Clyde J. Williams [1984], 91).

Mormon 9:7–27. Miracles, signs, and revelations are poured out on the faithful but cease when there is no faith. (35–40 minutes)

Invite students to list some of the miracles Jesus performed. (You could write these on the board.) Ask:

- Which of these miracles is most impressive to you?
- How would you feel if you witnessed these miracles?
- What similar miracles happen today?

Have students read Mark 5:35–42, and ask:

- Who did Jesus take with Him?
- Who did Jesus “put out” of the room?
- Why do you think He had them leave before He raised the girl from the dead?

Write the following matching exercise on the board, or give it to students as a handout. Have students match the numbered items in the left column to the corresponding lettered items in the right column.

Mormon 9:7–24	
1. Moroni spoke to _____.	A. They would cast out devils and speak with new tongues, poisons would not hurt them, and they would heal the sick.
2. What did these people not know?	B. Variableness neither shadow of changing.
3. What had they not read?	C. Unbelief, departing from the right way, and knowing not God.
4. With God there is no _____.	D. Those who deny the revelations of God.
5. The plan of salvation includes these three major principles or events.	E. The gospel of Christ.
6. Moroni described God's miracles as _____.	F. The creation of heaven, earth, and man.
7. Moroni gave these examples of God's miracles.	G. The scriptures.
8. Who did Moroni say had done miracles?	H. Jesus and His Apostles.
9. What three reasons did Moroni list for why miracles cease?	I. Marvelous.
10. What signs or miracles did Moroni say would follow those who believe?	J. The Creation, Fall, and redemption.

(Answers: 1–D, 2–E, 3–G, 4–B, 5–J, 6–I, 7–F, 8–H, 9–C, 10–A)

Ask:

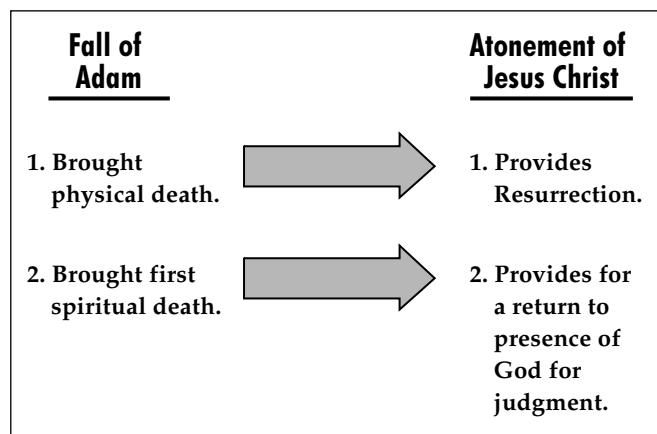
- What principles of the gospel need to be present for miracles to occur? (Faith and in many cases prayer and priesthood power.)
- In what ways has the Holy Ghost comforted, warned, or taught you?
- What are some of God's miracles that are all around us? (The birth of a baby, the creation of the earth, the Restoration of the Gospel, patriarchal blessings.)

- Read Mormon 9:21, 27–28. According to these verses, how can having faith in Jesus Christ, not doubting, and living righteously help prepare you to experience miracles?

Mormon 9:11–14. The Fall of Adam brought physical and spiritual death to all mankind. Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, all mankind will be resurrected and brought back into the Lord's presence to be judged. (20–25 minutes)

Give students the following quiz (allow them to use their scriptures):

1. According to Moses 4:25, what was one result of the Fall of Adam? (Physical death.)
2. According to Doctrine and Covenants 29:41, what was another result of the Fall of Adam? (Spiritual death.)
3. According to Alma 42:9, what is spiritual death?
4. According to 1 Corinthians 15:22, what is one result of the Atonement of Christ?



Draw the accompanying diagram on the board, but leave the answers in the right-hand column blank. Ask the following questions, and fill in the right-hand column as students respond:

- What has the Lord done to overcome physical death for all?
- How does He help each of us overcome spiritual death?

Read as a class Mormon 9:11–14, and discuss the following questions:

- What did God create? (see vv. 11–12).
- What did Adam and Eve bring about? (see v. 12).
- What occurred to help us overcome the Fall of Adam? (see v. 12).

- What does the Atonement of Jesus Christ provide? (Redemption; see v. 12.)
- What happens to man as a result of the plan of redemption? (We will be resurrected and brought back into the presence of the Lord; see v. 13.)
- How many people are saved from physical death through the redemption of Christ?
- How many people are saved from the first spiritual death through the redemption of Christ?

- What follows this redemption? (see v. 14).
- Read Helaman 14:15–19. According to these verses, what will happen to those who are brought back into the presence of God and are found to be “filthy still”?
- How does knowing about the Savior’s Atonement affect your feelings toward Him?

As a summary you may want to invite a student to tell how the effects of the Fall of Adam have been overcome by the Savior.

THE BOOK OF ETHER

When Mormon abridged the account of the discovery and translation of the book of Ether, he wrote, “This account shall be written hereafter; for behold, it is expedient that all people should know the things which are written in this account” (Mosiah 28:19). Moroni, true to his father’s desires, abridged the book of Ether and included it on the plates of Mormon.

Moroni wrote that he did not include even a “hundredth part” of the Jaredite record (Ether 15:33). This is not surprising, since their history extends from the Tower of Babel (about 2500–2200 B.C.) until after the people of Mulek came to the Americas (after 587 B.C.). The book of Ether provides a powerful second witness to the Nephite record that if the inhabitants of the promised land do not serve Jesus Christ, they will be destroyed (see Ether 2:8).



Introduction

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve wrote: “One of the greatest prophets in the Book of Mormon goes unnamed in the record that documents his remarkable life. He is identified only as ‘the brother of Jared.’ Yet the revelation that unfolded before his eyes was so extraordinary that his life and legacy have become synonymous with bold, consummate, perfect faith” (*Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon* [1997], 14).

The brother of Jared, pleading with the Lord on behalf of his family, provides an example of selfless service, humility, and faith. His life bears record that these qualities lead to divine revelation. Although the scriptural account never mentions it, the Prophet Joseph Smith revealed that this prophet’s name was Mahonri Moriancumer (see the commentary for Ether 1:34 in *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, p. 136).

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

Note: Prayerfully study each assigned scripture block and consider the principles in this section before preparing your lessons.

- The prayers of the faithful can bring great blessings and even miracles from heaven. Failure to pray brings the Lord’s chastening (see Ether 1:34–43; 2:14–16; 3:1–16; see also James 5:16; Alma 10:22–23).
- The Americas are a choice land, and the nations that live there must serve God or be swept off when they become ripe in iniquity (see Ether 2:7–12; see also Mormon 8:1–8; Ether 9:20, 26–29; 15).
- The Lord wants us to rely on Him for guidance, but He expects us to do all we can to solve our own problems (see Ether 2:18–3:6).
- Because of the Fall of Adam, we are born into a telestial world where people often choose evil. The Lord helps us overcome the natural man as we repent, pray, and exercise faith in His Atonement (see Ether 3:2; see also Mosiah 3:19; 5:2–4).
- If we are righteous and obedient and seek the things of God, our faith in Jesus Christ can grow until we are worthy to have all things revealed to us (see Ether 3:1–20; see also James 2:14–20; Ether 12:6; D&C 88:67–68; 93:1, 27–28).
- When we are prepared, the Lord will reveal more sacred records to us (see Ether 3:21–4:18; see also 2 Nephi 27:7–11).
- The Lord uses the law of witnesses to testify of His work (see Ether 5; see also Deuteronomy 17:6; 2 Corinthians 13:1).
- The righteous are often led by the Lord to safety (see Ether 6:1–12; see also Mosiah 24:17).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 136–39.

Suggestions for Teaching

Note: Choose from the ideas in this section, or use some of your own, as you prepare to teach the assigned scripture block.

Ether 1:33. The people of Jared lived at the time of the Tower of Babel. (10–15 minutes)

Show a picture of the Tower of Babel (a full-sized version of the accompanying picture is included in the appendix, p. 303). Ask students to find scriptures in the Old Testament that refer to the Tower.



Review Genesis 11:1–9 with your students. Have them use the Book of Mormon Chronology Chart on their bookmark (item no. 32336) to find when this event occurred (approximately 2500–2200 B.C.). Read Ether 1:33 and ask: About how long before Lehi left Jerusalem did Jared and his brother begin their journey?

Before class assign a student to report on how Moroni received the book of Ether (see Mosiah 8:7–12; Alma 37:21–26; Ether 1:2). Read Ether 1:1–4 looking for what was included in the first part of the book of Ether. Ask: Why did Moroni decide not to include some of the writings in his abridgment?

Have students read Ether 1:5; 8:22–23, and ask: Why did Moroni include the material he did? Testify that the Jaredite record stands as a second witness to the Nephite record that if the inhabitants of the promised land do not serve Jesus Christ, they will be destroyed (see Ether 2:8).

Ether 1:33–43; 2:14–16. The prayers of the faithful can bring great blessings and even miracles from heaven. Failure to pray brings the Lord’s chastening. (30–35 minutes)

As a class, sing “Did You Think to Pray?” (*Hymns*, no. 140). Ask students to explain the phrase “Prayer will change the night to day.” Invite them to share times when prayer lifted their spirits.

Read Ether 1:33 and ask:

- If something similar to what is described in this verse happened today, how would it affect your life?
- How might it affect your attitude?
- What do you think you would do?

Read verse 34 looking for how Jared and his brother, Mahonri Moriancumer, reacted to a world thrown into confusion. Have students scan verses 35–43, and ask:

- What did the brother of Jared do to avoid the confusion of tongues?
- What did the Lord tell his people to do?
- What promises did the brother of Jared receive from the Lord for his people?
- According to verse 43, why did the Lord make these promises to Jared’s brother?

Read the following statement by President Spencer W. Kimball:

“Prayer is such a privilege—not only to speak to our Father in Heaven, but also to receive love and inspiration from him. At the end of our prayers, we need to do some intense listening—even for several minutes. We have prayed for counsel and help. Now we must ‘be still, and know that [he is] God’ (Ps. 46:10.) . . .

“Learning the language of prayer is a joyous, lifetime experience. Sometimes ideas flood our mind as we listen after our prayers. Sometimes feelings press upon us. A spirit of calmness assures us that all will be well. But always, if we have been honest and earnest, we will experience a good feeling—a feeling of warmth for our Father in Heaven and a sense of his love for us. It has sorrowed me that some of us have not learned the meaning of that calm, spiritual warmth, for it is a witness to us that our prayers have been heard” (“Pray Always,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1981, 5).

Read Ether 2:13–14 and point out how long the interview of the brother of Jared with the Lord lasted (at least three hours). Ask:

- What was included as part of the revelation to Jared’s brother? (Chastening.)
- Why did the Lord chasten him?
- Read Job 5:17 and Revelation 3:19. According to these verses, who does the Lord chasten?
- How can being chastened by the Lord or priesthood leaders bless us?

Tell students: Imagine you are about to be interviewed personally by the Lord. You are ushered into His presence. He calls you by name and begins to speak. . . .

Invite students to think of one point of praise the Lord might give them for how they have lived. Have them also think of one aspect of their lives the Lord would want them to improve. Ask: Do you think the Lord would correct you in a loving and caring way?

Have students compare Ether 1:43 with Ether 2:14. Ask: How could someone who was so righteous neglect something as important as “call[ing] upon the name of the Lord”? Read the following statement by Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“How great and continuing is our dependency upon the Lord, which is one of the first and fundamental facts of life, never to be forgotten, even when we are making genuine progress.

“No wonder Jesus prayed so to the Father. And oh, how He prayed, *never* forgetting to call upon the Father. In this, too, Jesus was unique. Even the very righteous brother of Jared, a truly remarkable man, once was chastised during a visitation from the Lord because he ‘remembered not to call upon the name of the Lord’ [Ether 2:14]. How vital prayer is, therefore, for all of us! How vital it is that even our ‘busyness’ in doing His work not crowd out our prayers to our Father” (*Even As I Am* [1982], 67).

Read Ether 2:15 looking for how Jared’s brother reacted to the Lord’s correction. Compare his reaction to that of Laman and Lemuel in 1 Nephi 16:1–2. Ask:

- Why do you think Jared’s brother received the truth so much better than Nephi’s brothers?
- How do you react when you are chastised?
- Who decides how you react when you are chastised?
- What can you do to handle correction better?

Read the following statements. The Prophet Joseph Smith said:

“The Lord deals with this people as a tender parent with a child, communicating light and intelligence and the knowledge of his ways as they can bear it” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 305).

Elder Henry B. Eyring, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, wrote:

“If I listen humbly, with the expectation that what matters most will be clear even to a little child, then I will be both meek enough to be quiet inside—and therefore able to hear the still, small voice—and humble enough to take correction easily” (*To Draw Closer to God* [1997], 33).

Ether 2:7–12. The Americas are a choice land, and the nations that live there must serve God or be swept off when they become ripe in iniquity. (15–20 minutes)

Tell students that you are going to show them one of the most fearsome weapons in history. Hold up a broom, and explain that one of the most severe warnings in scripture involves this “weapon.” Have students find references to a broom in Ether 2. Then have them read Ether 2:7–12.

Explain that these promises and warnings hold true for the nations that presently inhabit North and South America. Ask: What other nations have possessed these lands only to be “swept off” because of iniquity? (The Nephites and the Jaredites.) If desired, share President Marion G. Romney’s statement in the commentary for Ether 2:7–10 in *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122* (p. 136).

Point out that Ether 2:7–12 fits the pattern of a covenant, with God promising specific blessings if the people do certain things. Have students quickly review these verses looking for God’s promises and what He expects of the people, and write them on the board. These might include:

God’s Promises to the People	God’s Expectations for the People
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He will give them the land as a land of promise (see Ether 2:7, 9; see also 2 Nephi 1:5–7). • They will be free from the bondage and captivity of all other nations (see Ether 2:12). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They must repent of their iniquity (see Ether 2:11). • They must serve Jesus Christ, “the God of the land” (Ether 2:12; see vv. 8–12).

Ask students how they think their nation is doing relative to the list of God’s expectations on the board. Ask: What can we do to continue to receive His blessings? Testify of the importance of these principles for every nation.

Ether 2:16–3:6. The Lord wants us to rely on Him for guidance, but He expects us to do all we can to solve our own problems. (30–35 minutes)

Read for students Ether 2:16–25. While you read, have them sketch what they believe the Jaredite barges looked like. Discuss their designs. If desired, read the description of the barges in the commentary for Ether 2:16–25 in *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122* (pp. 136–37).

Read Ether 2:18–19 and ask:

- How did the brother of Jared make the barges?
- How does this show his degree of obedience to the Lord’s commandment?
- What three problems did the brother of Jared present to the Lord?

Summarize on the board the students' answers to the second question, as in the left-hand column of the accompanying chart. Have the students read Ether 2:20–25 looking for the Lord's solutions to the problems, and summarize them, as in the right-hand column.

Problem (Ether 2:18–19)	Solution (Ether 2:20–25)
No light	The Lord asks the brother of Jared what he would like Him to do (see vv. 23, 25).
No steering	The Lord says He will guide the barges (see v. 24).
No air	The Lord instructs him to make holes with removable plugs in the top and bottom of the barges (see v. 20).

Ask:

- Why do you think the Lord revealed solutions for two of the problems but left it to the brother of Jared to solve the problem of not having light?
- What are some other scriptural examples where the Lord required an individual's own effort in solving a problem? (Answers might include Nephi obtaining the brass plates [see 1 Nephi 3–4]; Oliver Cowdery translating [see D&C 8–9].)
- How can it help us when the Lord requires us to find solutions to our own problems with His guidance?

Read the following statement by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland:

“Clearly the brother of Jared was being tested. God had done his part. Unique, resolutely seaworthy ships for crossing the ocean had been provided. The brilliant engineering had been done. The hard part of the construction project was over. Now the Lord wanted to know what the brother of Jared would do about incidentals” (*Christ and the New Covenant*, 16).

Ask:

- What do you think Jared's brother may have learned from the way the Lord helped him solve his problems?
- How might this have helped him later?
- In what ways do you think the Lord has tested you?
- How has the knowledge you gained from these tests helped you?

Read Ether 3:4–6 and ask:

- How did the brother of Jared decide to solve the problem of not having light?

- How did the Lord respond to the brother of Jared's request?
- What impresses you most about the Lord's response?

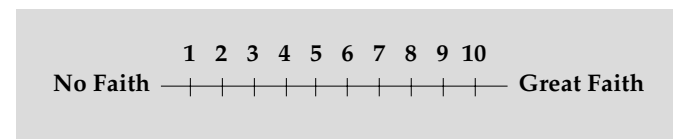
Read the commentary for Ether 2:23 in *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122* (p. 137).

Testify that the Lord loves us and wants us to progress. He wants us to rely on Him for guidance, but He expects us to do all we can to solve our problems.



Ether 3. If we are righteous and obedient and seek the things of God, our faith in Jesus Christ can grow until we are worthy to have all things revealed to us. (50–55 minutes)

Draw the accompanying continuum on the board. Ask students: How would you describe someone with great faith? Discuss the characteristics they name and list them under *Great Faith* on the continuum.



Assign the examples below to four students. Have them read their assigned example and decide how much faith they think the person in the example has. (*Note:* Explain that the Lord may reveal what is in a person's heart to His servants, but in general we do not have the ability to judge another person's faith. The point of this exercise is to explore qualities of faith to help us better understand them and evaluate ourselves.) Have the four students write the name of the person in their example where they think it belongs on the continuum of faith. Invite the students to explain why they wrote the names where they did. Allow the class to agree or disagree and tell why.

- Nadre does not enjoy reading the scriptures. He claims they are boring. He does not pray much either. He says that he gets much closer to the Lord by going on nature walks and meditating than by studying and praying.
- Auggi studies the scriptures and doctrines constantly. In fact, he would rather read and study than just about anything. He feels that he gets much more out of reading and studying than he does going to meetings and home teaching. He hasn't been home teaching in months, but he does not feel that it matters much if he diligently studies the gospel.
- Mori tries hard to apply what he studies in the scriptures and Church publications. He knows he is far from perfect but also believes that it is important to strive to always live the gospel. He prays regularly for divine help to grow more obedient and spiritually stronger.
- Sonya gives up! She is tired of all the expectations made of her. She has tried hard to be perfect for years but has found she just can't do it all on her own. She has become very bitter.

Have students read James 2:14–20, and ask:

- What characteristics of the faithful are noted in these verses?
- Which of the people in the examples resembles these characteristics best?
- Who in the scriptures had this kind of faith?
- Do you know anyone personally who has this kind of faith?

Have students quickly review Ether 1:34–43; 2:16–21 looking for evidence of the brother of Jared’s faith in the Lord. Invite students to share their findings, and list them on the board. Your list might look something like this:

- The brother of Jared was highly favored of the Lord (see Ether 1:34).
- He “cried unto” the Lord (see vv. 34, 43).
- He went to work as the Lord commanded him (see Ether 2:16).
- He made the barges exactly according to the Lord’s specifications (see v. 18).
- He did “as the Lord had commanded” (v. 21).

Ask how the brother of Jared measures up to the qualities of faith noted in James 2:14–20. Explain that the truly faithful person is one who acts.

Read Ether 3:1–6 looking for other characteristics of faith shown by Jared’s brother. Invite students to share their findings, and add them to your list on the board. Answers might include:

- He went to work making the stones and brought them to the Lord (see v. 1).
- He expressed deep humility over his weakness and fallen nature (see vv. 2–3).
- He testified that God has all power (see vv. 4–5).

Read the following statement by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland:

“For all of his self-abasement, the faith of the brother of Jared was immediately apparent—in fact, we might better say *transparent* in light of the purpose for which the stones would be used. Obviously Jehovah found something striking in the childlike innocence and fervor of this man’s faith. ‘Behold, O Lord, thou canst do this.’ In a sense there may be no more powerful expression of faith spoken in scripture. It is almost as if the brother of Jared was encouraging God, emboldening him, reassuring him. Not ‘Behold, O Lord, I am sure thou canst do this.’ Not ‘Behold,

O Lord, thou hast done many greater things than this.’ However uncertain the prophet was about his own ability, he had *no* uncertainty about God’s power. This was nothing but a single, assertive declaration with no hint of vacillation. It was encouragement to him who needs no encouragement but who surely must have been touched by it. ‘Behold, O Lord, thou canst do this.’” (*Christ and the New Covenant*, 17).

Write on the board *Ye receive no witness until after* ____ _____. Have students read Ether 12:6 to fill in the blanks. Read Ether 3:6–8 and ask :

- How is forgiving others a trial of your faith?
- What might the promised witness be?
- How had the brother of Jared’s faith been tried and tested?
- What do you think the phrase “the veil was taken from off the eyes of the brother of Jared” means? (v. 6).
- Why do you think the brother of Jared fell to the earth after seeing the finger of the Lord?
- How do you think you would feel if you had this experience?

Have a student read aloud Ether 3:9–12, and ask: What did the Lord say was the reason the brother of Jared could see His finger? Point out that the Lord knows all things and yet still asked the brother of Jared the questions in verses 7, 9, 11. Ask: How might answering these questions have helped the brother of Jared? Help students understand that the questions could increase his faith, confidence, and knowledge. If desired, share the following statement by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland:

“It is a basic premise of Latter-day Saint theology that God ‘knoweth all things, and there is not anything save he knows it’ [2 Nephi 9:20; see also D&C 38:1–2]. The scriptures, both ancient and modern, are replete with this assertion of omniscience. Nevertheless, God has frequently asked questions of mortals, usually as a way to test their faith, measure their honesty, or develop their knowledge” (*Christ and the New Covenant*, 19–20).

Read Ether 3:13–17 and ask:

- What did the brother of Jared learn about himself at this time? (see vv. 13, 15).
- What do these verses say the brother of Jared saw?
- What did the brother of Jared learn about Jesus Christ?
- What can we learn about the Lord from these verses?

If students are confused about the Lord's statements that "never has man come before me with such exceeding faith as thou hast" (v. 9) and "never have I showed myself unto man whom I have created" (v. 15), consider sharing the following statement by Elder Holland:

"The potential for confusion here comes with the realization that many (and perhaps all) of the major prophets living prior to the brother of Jared had seen God. . . .

"This issue has been much discussed by Latter-day Saint writers, and there are several possible explanations, any one—or all—of which may cast light upon the larger truth of this passage. Nevertheless, without additional revelation or commentary on the matter, any conjecture is only that and as such is inadequate and incomplete.

"One possibility is that this is simply a comment made in the context of one dispensation and as such applies only to the people of Jared and Jaredite prophets—that Jehovah had never before revealed himself to one of their seers and revelators. Obviously this theory has severe limitations. . . .

"Another suggestion is that the reference to 'man' is the key to this passage, suggesting that the Lord had never revealed himself to the unsanctified, to the nonbeliever, to temporal, earthly, natural man. . . .

"Some believe that the Lord meant he had never before revealed himself to man in that degree or to that extent. . . .

"A further possibility is that this is the first time Jehovah had appeared and identified himself as Jesus Christ, the Son of God, with the interpretation of the passage being 'never have I showed myself [as Jesus Christ] unto man whom I have created.' That possibility is reinforced by one way of reading Moroni's later editorial comment: 'Having this perfect knowledge of God, he could not be kept from within the veil; therefore he saw *Jesus*' [Ether 3:15, 20].

"Yet another interpretation of this passage is that the faith of the brother of Jared was so great he saw not only the *spirit* finger and body of the premortal Jesus (which presumably many other prophets had also seen) but also some distinctly more revealing aspect of Christ's body of flesh, blood, and bone. . . . A stronger position would suggest it was only the spiritual likeness of that future body. In emphasizing that this was a spiritual body being revealed and not some special precursor simulating flesh and bone, Jehovah said, 'This body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit . . . and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh' [Ether 3:16]. . . .

"A final explanation—and in terms of the brother of Jared's faith the most persuasive one—is that Christ was saying to the brother of Jared, 'Never have I showed myself unto man *in this manner, without my volition, driven solely by the faith of the beholder.*' As a rule, prophets are *invited* into the presence of the Lord, are bidden to enter his presence by him and only with his sanction. The brother of Jared, on the other hand, seems to have thrust himself through the veil, not as an unwelcome guest but perhaps technically as an uninvited one. Said Jehovah, 'Never has man come before me with such exceeding faith as thou hast; for were it not so ye could not have seen my finger. . . . Never has man believed in me as thou hast.' Obviously the Lord himself was linking unprecedented faith with this unprecedented vision. If the vision itself was not unique, then it had to be the faith and how the vision was obtained that was so unparalleled. The only way that faith could be so remarkable was its ability to take the prophet, uninvited, where others had been able to go only with God's bidding.

"That appears to be Moroni's understanding of the circumstance when he later wrote, 'Because of the knowledge [which came as a result of faith] of this man *he could not be kept from beholding within the veil.* . . . Wherefore, having this perfect knowledge of God, *he could not be kept from within the veil*; therefore he saw Jesus' [Ether 3:19–20]" (*Christ and the New Covenant*, 20–23).

Read Ether 3:18–21 looking for what happened next. Ask:

- Who ministered to the brother of Jared?
- Why could Jared's brother "not be kept from beholding within the veil"? (v. 19).
- What do you think it means that the brother of Jared "had faith no longer"? (v. 19).
- Why do you think he was commanded not to tell anyone what he had seen and heard?
- How do you know when an experience in your life is too sacred to share with others? (see Alma 12:9; D&C 63:64).

Read Ether 3:22–28 and ask:

- What were the two stones mentioned in these verses? (A Urim and Thummim; see footnote 23a.)
- Why do you think the Lord told the brother of Jared to include a Urim and Thummim with his record?
- What else did the Lord show the brother of Jared? (see vv. 25–26).

Refer again to Ether 12:6 and ask:

- What was the witness that came after the trial of the brother of Jared's faith?

- Who can receive such a witness? (All who exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.)

Read Doctrine and Covenants 67:10; 93:1. Testify that great blessings are available to all of us based on how we exercise our faith in Jesus Christ.

Ether 3:21–4:18. When we are prepared, the Lord will reveal more sacred records to us. (25–30 minutes)

Ask if there is anyone in the class who has a driver’s license (or you could use your own). Have the student come to the front of the class and display the license. If there are any students in the class who do not have a license, ask why. Discuss the requirements for getting a driver’s license, and list them on the board. These might include:

- Be the proper age.
- Pass an eye test.
- Take a driver’s education course.
- Pass a written test.
- Pass a driving test.
- Pay a fee.
- Get permission from a parent or guardian.

Ask if anyone in the class has ever heard of the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon and, if so, what they know about it.

Have students scan Ether 3:21–28; 4:1–8, 14–16 looking for answers to the following questions:

- How were these records sealed? (see Ether 3:21–24).
- Why were they sealed? (see Ether 3:21; 4:1–3).
- When will these records be unsealed? (see Ether 4:6–7, 14–16).
- According to these verses, what information is in these records?

If it would be helpful, read the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Of this much we are quite certain: When, during the Millennium, the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon is translated, it will give an account of life in preexistence; of the creation of all things; of the Fall and the Atonement and the Second Coming; of temple ordinances in their fulness; of the ministry and mission of translated beings; of life in the spirit world, in both paradise and hell; of the kingdoms of glory to be inhabited by resurrected beings, and many such things (see, e.g., Ether 1:3–5)” (*Doctrines of the Restoration: Sermons and Writings of Bruce R. McConkie*, ed. Mark L. McConkie [1989], 277).

Explain that just as there are certain requirements you must meet to receive a driver’s license, there are also requirements that must be met before the contents of the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon will be revealed. Ask students to name these requirements based on Ether 4:1–8, 15–16. Answers might include:

- Repent of iniquity and become clean before the Lord (see Ether 4:6).
- Exercise faith in Christ like that of the brother of Jared and become sanctified (see v. 7).
- Not contend against the word of the Lord or “deny these things” (v. 8).
- Rend the veil of unbelief (see v. 15).

Read 3 Nephi 26:3, 8–10 and look for when additional scripture will be revealed. Ask:

- What did the Savior teach the Nephites? (see v. 3).
- What is one purpose of the Book of Mormon? (To try our faith; see v. 9.)
- What must we do to receive “greater things”? (v. 9).

Ask students if they believe we are ready to receive the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon. Read the following statement by President Joseph Fielding Smith, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“The Lord has promised us greater knowledge, greater understanding than we find in the Book of Mormon, when we are prepared to receive it. . . .

“Now the Lord has placed us on probation as members of the Church. He has given us the Book of Mormon, which is the lesser part, to build up our faith through our obedience to the counsels which it contains, and when we ourselves, members of the Church, are willing to keep the commandments as they have been given to us and show our faith as the Nephites did for a short period of time, then the Lord is ready to bring forth the other record and give it to us, but we are not ready now to receive it. Why? Because we have not lived up to the requirements in this probationary state in the reading of the record which had been given to us and in following its counsels” (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1961, 19–20).

Ether 5. The Lord uses the law of witnesses to testify of His work. (10–15 minutes)

Invite students to imagine they are scribes for the Prophet Joseph Smith as he translates Ether 5. Ask them to write on a piece of paper the main idea of each verse as you slowly read this chapter of Ether. Ask:

- As a scribe, what thoughts came to you upon hearing verse 2?

- What hope might have come to you upon hearing verses 3–4?

Read the commentary for Ether 5:2–4 in *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122* (p. 138).

Ether 6:1–12. The righteous are often led by the Lord to safety. (15–20 minutes)

Share newspaper or magazine reports of a recent powerful storm. Ask:

- What is the best way to survive a terrible storm?
- Where can you go for safety in a storm?
- Why is light such an important aid to automobiles, airplanes, and boats during storms?
- How can some aspects of life be compared to a powerful storm?
- Why do we have “storms” or trying times in life?
- How can we prepare for the storms of life?
- What do the prophets and apostles do to help us find safety from life’s storms?
- What light can guide us through the storms of life?

Read Ether 6:1–4 and ask:

- How did Jared and his people prepare for their ocean voyage?
- How did the Lord help prepare the family of Jared to cross the great sea?
- According to verse 4, in whom did the people trust for their safety? (They worked hard to prepare themselves but “commend[ed] themselves unto the Lord.”)

Read Ether 6:5–11 looking for the conditions of the Jaredite voyage. Ask:

- Who caused the great winds? Why? (see v. 5).
- Why do you think the Lord didn’t calm the sea?
- Have you ever been seasick? How do you think you would have managed on this trip?
- How did the Lord bless the Jaredites in their travels? (see vv. 7, 10).
- How long were they on the sea? (see v. 11).
- What did the Jaredites do during their stormy passage? (see v. 9).
- Read verse 12. How did the Jaredites show their gratitude when they reached the promised land?

Ask students how they might compare the Jaredites’ sea crossing to their own lives. Testify that in times of trouble we can turn to the Lord for help. He will guide us to safety if we are willing to follow Him. Sing or read “Master, the Tempest Is Raging” (*Hymns*, no. 105).



Introduction

The families of Jared and his brother and friends flourished in the promised land. Ether 7–11 is a very condensed account of this people. The Jaredites experienced many of the same successes and failures as the Nephites and Lamanites. They were blessed when they were obedient and were punished when disobedient. They prospered under righteous kings and suffered under wicked ones. Prophets in their midst foretold their utter destruction if they refused to repent. These prophets were often rejected and killed. The people built up secret combinations according to the ancient oaths, which led to their destruction. Eventually they were destroyed by civil war.

Moroni’s abridgment of the book of Ether generally follows the descendants of Jared who reigned as kings throughout the long Jaredite history. Ether, who tells the story of the tragic end of the Jaredite nation, was of the lineage of these kings.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Those who seek after money or power unrighteously can divide communities and nations and bring violence, misery, and death to themselves and those around them (see Ether 7:4–7, 15–21; 8:1–10; 9:4–12; 10:5–8; 11:4–22).
- If we heed the words of the prophets, we will be blessed, but if we reject them we will be cut off from the Lord’s blessings (see Ether 7:23–27; 9:20–29; 11:5–8, 12–13, 20–22; see also Ether 13:20; 15:1–3; D&C 1:10–16).
- Secret combinations are groups of people who use any means necessary to get power and gain and who support each other in their wickedness. Secret combinations were started by Satan and have existed since Cain killed Abel. If supported by the people, secret combinations can result in the destruction of entire nations (see Ether 8:9–26; 9:4–6, 11–12, 26; 10:33–34; 11:7, 15, 22; see also Ether 13:15; 14:8–10).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 139–42.

Suggestions for Teaching

Ether 7–15. Those who seek after money or power unrighteously can divide communities and nations and bring violence, misery, and death to themselves and those around them. (90–100 minutes)

Note: This overview can be taught over more than one day if necessary. If you are short on time, consider dividing the study questions in the table among groups of students and having them report their findings to the class. Or use this overview in your personal study as you prepare to teach the rest of the book of Ether.

Draw a crown on the board. Ask students: If you could be king or queen for a day, how would you use your power? List responses on the board. After some discussion, ask who would be benefited by each response listed on the board. Ask: With all that power available to you, what might make it difficult to be a good queen or king?

Read Ether 6:19–23 and discuss the following questions:

- Why did Jared and his brother gather their people together?
- What did their people request of them?
- What prophetic concern did the brother of Jared express?
- What examples of this have we already seen in the Book of Mormon?

Write the following instructions on the board:


1. List the name of each king mentioned in your scripture block. Write whether he was righteous or wicked.
2. Write whether each king reigned in a time of war or peace and whether that king lived in captivity.

Display the accompanying chart on an overhead projector, or give students copies as a handout. Have them work through the study questions and suggestions on the chart as they complete the two instructions listed on the board.

Ether 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read verses 23–27. What happened to the prophets during the reign of Shule? • Why did Shule “execute judgment in righteousness”? (v. 27).
Ether 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read verses 7–22. Mark the words and phrases that describe secret combinations. • Read verses 23–26. What did Moroni say about secret combinations to the Gentiles living in the last days?
Ether 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read verses 12–25. List the blessings that came to the righteous Jaredites. • Read verses 26–35. What curse came upon the land? • Why did it come? • Why were some preserved by the Lord?

Ether 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read verses 9–13. Was Morianton a good king or a bad king? Why? • Read verses 18–28. Why were the people “prospered by the hand of the Lord” during the reign of Lib?
Ether 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read chapter 11 and identify the prophets’ prophecies. • How did the people react to the prophets and their messages? • Why did they treat the prophets the way they did? • What can we learn from this chapter that can help us today?
Ether 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read verses 1–6. What did Ether do to try to keep the people from following a course of destruction?
Ether 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read verses 20–22. Compare Ether’s prophecy to Coriantumr with what Mormon said about the Nephites in Mormon 6:16–19.
Ether 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read verses 8–10, 24–25. Explain how the Jaredites fulfilled Moroni’s prophecy in Ether 8:22.
Ether 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read verses 29–34. What do you think is the most important thing you have learned from the book of Ether?

Have students share with the class what they wrote in response to the two instructions on the board.

 **Ether 7–11. If we heed the words of the prophets, we will be blessed, but if we reject them we will be cut off from the Lord’s blessings.** (45–50 minutes)

Show an empty prescription medicine container to the class. Ask them to identify what you are holding. Ask if they have ever needed prescription medicine. Read the instructions on the container and ask:

- Why do doctors give directions on how to use medicine?
- Why is it important to use medicine as directed?
- What could happen if you don’t follow the directions?
- What directions have we received from the Lord that could have bad results if we don’t follow them?

Review the account of how King Mosiah obtained the twenty-four gold plates containing the book of Ether (see Mosiah 8; 21:25–28; 28:10–16). Have students read Mosiah 28:17–19, and discuss the following questions:

- What did King Mosiah do with the plates?
- What did the plates contain?
- How did Mosiah’s people respond to this account?
- According to Mormon, why would this account be written later? (see v. 19).

- How can Mormon’s statement be likened to a doctor’s instructions on prescription medicine?

Explain to students that today they will discover some reasons “it is expedient that all people should know the things which are written in” the book of Ether. Draw the following chart on the board (leave off the suggested answers in the “Warning Label” column). Divide the class into three groups and assign each group one of the sets of verses in the “Scripture References” column.

Scripture References	“Warning Label”
Ether 6:22–23; 7:4–7, 15–21; 8:1–10; 9:4–12; 10:5–8	Leaders who seek power in an unrighteous way bring captivity, death, and sorrow to their people.
Ether 7:23–27; 9:20–29; 11:5–8, 12–13, 20–22; 13:20; 15:1–3; D&C 1:10–16	We must listen to the prophets’ warnings or suffer destruction.
Ether 8:9–26; 9:4–6, 11–12, 26; 10:33–34; 11:7, 15, 22; 13:15; 14:8–10; 15:1–2	Because secret combinations can ruin whole nations, they must be destroyed.

Have the groups find the warning in their verses and write it on a piece of paper. Invite a spokesperson from each group to share their “warning label,” and write it next to that group’s verses on the chart. Have a student read the following statement by Elder Robert D. Hales, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“We live in a world of turmoil where we find sadness and destruction in every corner, much of which is brought about by man’s failure to listen to the words of the true prophets of God. How different would the lives have been of those who lived in all dispensations if they had listened to the prophet Moses and followed the Ten Commandments?

“There has always been a desperate need for the steady and reassuring voice of a living prophet of God—one who will speak the mind and will of God in showing the way to spiritual safety and personal peace and happiness” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 17; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 15).

Discuss how this statement relates to the Jaredite experience. Sing or read “Come, Listen to a Prophet’s Voice” (*Hymns*, no. 21).

Ether 8:20–26. Secret combinations are groups of people who use any means necessary to get power and gain and who support each other in their wickedness. Secret combinations were started by Satan and have existed since Cain killed Abel. If supported by the people, secret combinations can result in the destruction of entire nations.

(30–35 minutes)

Note: Review the teaching suggestions for Helaman 1:1–22, 27; 2:1–14 (pp. 195–96) and Helaman 8:1–10; 11:1–2, 24–34 (pp. 201–2) as well as the commentary for Ether 8:23–26 in *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122* (p. 140) as you prepare to teach this suggestion.

Write on the board the words *nuclear bombs*, *armies*, and *secrets*. Ask: Which of these three items has the greatest power to destroy a nation? Why? Invite students to read Ether 8:18 and tell how it relates to the items listed on the board.

Read Ether 8:20–22 looking for Moroni’s warning about the destructive power of secret combinations. Ask:

- What nations have been destroyed by secret combinations? What nations will be destroyed by them in the future? (see v. 22).
- Why are these combinations able to exist and grow?
- Why are nations that uphold secret combinations destroyed?
- What possible examples of secret combinations can you identify in the world today?

Invite a student to read the following statement by Elder M. Russell Ballard, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“The Book of Mormon teaches that secret combinations engaged in crime present a serious challenge, not just to individuals and families but to entire civilizations. Among today’s secret combinations are gangs, drug cartels, and organized crime families. The secret combinations of our day function much like the Gadianton robbers of the Book of Mormon times. They have secret signs and code words. They participate in secret rites and initiation ceremonies. Among their purposes are to ‘murder, and plunder, and steal, and commit whoredoms and all manner of wickedness, contrary to the laws of their country and also the laws of their God’ [Helaman 6:23]” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 51; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 38).

Discuss the following questions:

- How are secret combinations today like the Gadianton robbers in the Book of Mormon?
- What makes secret combinations so dangerous to our way of life?
- How does secrecy give power to these combinations?
- What kind of support would a secret organization have if it were open about its purposes?

Tell students that Moroni gave a warning to the people of our day. Read Ether 8:23–25 and discuss the following questions:

- What will happen to those nations that allow these combinations to “get above” them? (v. 23).
- Why do you think a nation is in an “awful situation” (v. 24) when it has secret combinations in its midst?
- What is the intent of those who build up these combinations?
- Who is the source of secret combinations?

Read the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson:

“I testify that wickedness is rapidly expanding in every segment of our society (see D&C 1:14–16, 84:49–53). It is more highly organized, more cleverly disguised, and more powerfully promoted than ever before. Secret combinations lusting for power, gain, and glory are flourishing” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1988, 103; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 87).

Discuss the following questions:

- When you consider these statements by Moroni and President Benson, what concerns do you have?
- Why should we seek to be more aware of organizations and powers in the world today?
- What do you think we can do to overcome secret combinations?

Read Ether 8:26 and discuss why Moroni gave us this warning about secret combinations. The following questions might help your discussion:

- How can knowing the truth about secret combinations help people do away with evil?
- How can exposing Satan as the source of secret combinations help decrease his “power upon the hearts of the children of men”?
- How can persuading people to “come unto the fountain of all righteousness” help them overcome the influence of secret combinations?



Introduction

The prophet Ether’s tale of the history of his people is a sad one. Ether was surrounded by continual conflict, war, and rebellion, yet the Lord blessed him with views of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the building of the New Jerusalem on the American continent, and other “great and marvelous” things that Moroni was forbidden to write (see Ether 13:4–6, 13). Elder Neal A. Maxwell, then a member of the Presidency of the Seventy, wrote:

“Ether is a classic example of a prophet who devoted his whole life to the cause of the Savior. ‘In the days of Coriantumr’ Ether reached a point in his spiritual development when, as a prophet, he ‘could not be restrained because of the Spirit of the Lord which was in him.’ (Eth. 12:2.) Because his righteousness removed the restraints that otherwise hold each of us back, Ether actually saw high points of the future—centuries before these were to occur. . . .

“Ether was born of a kingly line, but at one point his family was in captivity. Ether’s father ‘dwelt in captivity all his days.’ (Eth. 11:23; see also 1:6–33, 6:22–27.) . . .

“Later, courageous Ether prophesied face to face to King Coriantumr when Ether was directed by the Lord to do so: . . .

“‘And it came to pass that Coriantumr repented not, neither his household, neither the people; and the wars ceased not; and they sought to kill Ether, but he fled from before them and hid again in the cavity of the rock.’ (Eth. 13:20–22.) . . .

“It must have torn at Ether’s emotions to see the people he loved move relentlessly toward anarchy. This was actual physical and political anarchy. Eventually, the situation deteriorated into one in which ‘every man with his band [was] fighting for that which he desired.’ (Eth. 13:25.)” (“Three Jaredites: Contrasting Contemporaries,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1978, 6–8).

According to scripture, only two people survived the awful destruction of the Jaredite nation: Coriantumr, the king who was warned that this end would come, and Ether, the prophet who declared the Lord’s warning. Ether sealed up the record, and an abridgment has come to us through the hand of Moroni. It has come forth in our day to testify that we “should serve him, the true and only God, or [we] should be swept off when the fulness of his wrath should come” (Ether 2:8).

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

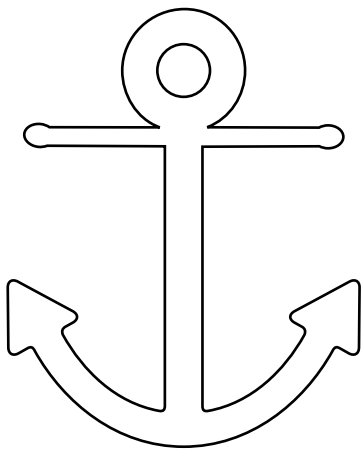
- Faith in Jesus Christ leads to spiritual power (see Ether 12:2–22; see also Hebrews 11).
- The Lord blesses us with a spiritual confirmation after we have exercised our faith through obedience to His commandments (see Ether 12:6; see also James 1:12; D&C 103:12–13).
- God gives us weakness so we will be humble. If we humble ourselves, our weakness can be made strong through Jesus Christ (see Ether 12:27, 37; see also Jacob 4:7; Moroni 10:32).
- We must have faith, hope, and charity to inherit a place in the celestial kingdom (see Ether 12:28–34; see also Alma 7:24–25; Moroni 10:18–23).
- In the last days, Jerusalem will be rebuilt and the New Jerusalem will be built on the American continent. In the Millennium, both will be holy cities, inhabited by members of the house of Israel who have been washed clean “through the blood of the Lamb” (see Ether 13:1–11; see also 3 Nephi 20:22, 46; D&C 45:66–67; Articles of Faith 1:10).
- When we reject God and His prophets, His Spirit withdraws, and destruction eventually follows (see Ether 13:15–25; 14; 15:6, 14–33; see also Mormon 4:5).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 142–43.

Suggestions for Teaching

Ether 12:1–22. Faith in Jesus Christ leads to spiritual power. (25–30 minutes)




Draw an anchor on the board. Ask students what an anchor does for a boat. Read Ether 12:1–6 and ask:

- To what did the prophet Ether liken faith?
- How can our faith in God be like an anchor in a spiritual storm?
- Read Mormon 5:18. Who had power over the Nephites because they lacked this anchor?
- What does Ether 12:5 teach about the Jaredites’ spiritual anchors?
- According to verse 6, why must we have faith before we can receive a spiritual witness?

Explain that Moroni gave several examples of individuals who were “anchored” to God and how they were blessed because of their faith. Have students read Ether 12:7–22 and identify as many of these examples as they can. Write the examples on the board and discuss what they have in common. Ask: Where must we place our faith in order for our “anchors” to be sure? Have a student read the following statement by Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Anchor your life in Jesus Christ, your Redeemer. Make your Eternal Father and His Beloved Son the most important priority in your life—more important than life itself, more important than a beloved companion or children or anyone on earth. Make their will your central desire. Then all that you need for happiness will come to you” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1993, 43; or *Ensign*, May 1993, 34).

Discuss with students what they can do to anchor their lives in Jesus Christ. Invite them to write a brief example from their own life (or the life of someone they know) that shows how faith anchored them in a time of need. Collect their examples and share some with the class without revealing names.

 **Ether 12:6 (Scripture Mastery). The Lord blesses us with a spiritual confirmation after we have exercised our faith through obedience to His commandments.** (10–15 minutes)

Show a copy of the book *Faith Precedes the Miracle* by President Spencer W. Kimball, or write the title on the board. Ask students what this phrase means. Invite them to give examples from the scriptures or their own lives in which someone exercised faith before a miracle occurred (caution them not to reveal anything too sacred or personal). Read and discuss Ether 12:6. Cross-reference it with Alma 32:21 and discuss how these two verses relate to each other.

Read the following statement by President Spencer W. Kimball, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“It takes faith—unseeing faith—for young people to proceed immediately with their family responsibilities in the face of financial uncertainties. It takes faith for the young woman to bear her family instead of accepting employment, especially when schooling for the young husband is to be finished. It takes faith to observe the Sabbath when ‘time and a half’ can be had working, when profit can be made, when merchandise can be sold. It takes a great faith to pay tithes when funds are scarce and demands are great. It takes faith to fast and have family prayers and to observe the Word of Wisdom. It takes faith to do home teaching, stake missionary work, and other service, when sacrifice is required. It takes faith to fill full-time missions. But know this—that all these are of the planting, while faithful, devout families, spiritual security, peace, and eternal life are the harvest” (*Faith Precedes the Miracle* [1972], 11).

Read Ether 12:7 looking for the blessing that came to the Nephites as a result of their faith. Testify that the Lord is reserving this same blessing for us today. Point out that the coming of Christ to the Americas can be likened to the Second Coming. After our faith has been tried, if we are found faithful, either in this life or the next we will see the Lord.



Ether 12:27 (Scripture Mastery). God gives us weakness so we will be humble. If we humble ourselves, our weakness can be made strong through Jesus Christ. (10–15 minutes)

Ask students to think of a weakness they have that they would like to overcome (do not have them tell the class). Remind them that a weakness is not the same thing as a sin. Ask: What would you be willing to give or do to overcome this weakness? Have them read Ether 12:27, and ask:

- What are some of the weaknesses we suffer as a result of mortality?
- Why do you think the Lord gives us weakness?
- How can we eventually overcome these weaknesses and become strong?
- Read Alma 26:11–12. How do these verses apply to the principle in Ether 12:27?
- Read Ether 12:37. According to this verse, what blessing came to Moroni because he recognized his weakness?

Read Ether 12:41 to find how Moroni says we can obtain God’s grace. Discuss with students ways they can “seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written.” Encourage students to choose something they can do during the week to help them seek the Lord and start to overcome a particular weakness.

Ether 12:38–41. We should “seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written.”

(10–15 minutes)

Write *Nephi, Jacob, Isaiah, brother of Jared, and Moroni* on the board and ask what they have in common. Have students search 2 Nephi 11:2–3; Ether 3:7–8, 13; 12:38–39 to find the answer. Display a picture of the Savior. Ask:

- Why is it important that there be people who are witnesses of the Savior?
- Who are some others who have seen the Lord? (Answers might include the Nephites who survived destruction [see 3 Nephi 11:8–10] and the Prophet Joseph Smith [see D&C 76:22–24].)

Read Ether 12:41 and look for what Moroni commends us to do. Ask:

- What does the word *seek* mean?
- What do you think it means to seek Jesus?
- In what ways have you felt His influence when you sought Him?

Write the following references on the board (do not include the suggested answers in parentheses). Have the students read the verses to find how we can seek Jesus in our lives, and write the answers by the references on the board.

- Deuteronomy 4:29. (Seek the Lord with all our heart and soul.)
- Proverbs 8:17. (Love Him and seek Him early.)
- Doctrine and Covenants 88:63. (Seek Him diligently.)

Ether 13:1–11. In the last days, Jerusalem will be rebuilt and the New Jerusalem will be built on the American continent. In the Millennium, both will be holy cities, inhabited by members of the house of Israel who have been washed clean “through the blood of the Lamb.” (25–30 minutes)

Ask students what city they would most like to live in. Ask them what they like about that city, and list the qualities they mention on the board. Have students read Moses 7:18–21 and tell what they like about Enoch’s city. Ask:

- Would you have liked to live there? Why?
- What happened to Enoch’s city?

Explain that Ether prophesied about three holy cities. Read Ether 13:2–11 looking for answers to the following questions:

- What are the names of these cities? (The New Jerusalem that would come down out of heaven, the New Jerusalem built in America, and the Jerusalem of ancient Israel, which would be rebuilt.)
- Where will they be located?

Note that in these verses both the city in America and the city of Enoch are referred to as the “New Jerusalem.” According to Moses 7:62–64, Enoch’s city will join the New Jerusalem in

America and they will become one city. To help students see that all three cities are mentioned in Ether 13:2–11, review the statement by President Joseph Fielding Smith in the commentary for Ether 13:1–12 in *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122* (p. 143).

Discuss with students the idea that *how* we live is more important than *where* we live. We must be holy to live in a holy city. Read again Ether 13:10–11 and ask:

- What do the people of these two cities have in common?
- What does this teach you about life during the Millennium, when “there shall be a new heaven and a new earth”? (v. 9).
- How can you receive the power of the Savior’s Atonement in your life? (see 3 Nephi 27:19–22).

Read with students Ephesians 2:19–22; 4:11–15 and discuss how the Church helps prepare us to be “fellowcitizens with the saints.”

Ether 13:15–15:33. When we reject God and His prophets, His Spirit withdraws, and destruction eventually follows. (25–30 minutes)

Read the following statement by the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve:

“We warn that individuals who violate covenants of chastity, who abuse spouse or offspring, or who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God. Further, we warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102).

Discuss the following questions:

- What are the prophets warning us about today?
- Who should be concerned about these warnings?
- What are some of the “calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets”? (see D&C 45:26–27, 31–33, 41–42, 68–69; 88:87–91).
- Why is it certain that these calamities will come to pass?
- Read Ether 2:8. What warning did the Jaredites receive soon after they arrived on the American continent?
- Read Ether 13:20–21. What warning did Ether give Coriantumr?

Read as a class selected verses from Ether 14–15 that tell the story of how the prophecies of the prophets were fulfilled. It might be helpful to point out the following ideas as you read:

- Ether 14:21–23. The Jaredites “march[ed] forth from the shedding of blood to the shedding of blood.”
- Ether 15:1–6. Though Coriantumr finally realized that Ether’s warnings were coming to pass, he could not convince anyone else of the plight they were in.
- Ether 15:19. The Spirit withdrew from the people and “Satan had full power over [their] hearts.” As prophesied, their wickedness was full and they were ready for complete destruction (see Ether 2:10).

Discuss why prophets are a blessing in our lives. Have students write on a piece of paper what they think is the most important principle they learned from the book of Ether, and also what they can do to better follow God’s prophets. Bear your testimony of the importance of following the prophets. Sing or read “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet” (*Hymns*, no. 19).

THE BOOK OF MORONI

Moroni, the last of the Nephite prophets, was given charge of the sacred records by his father Mormon. Moroni's book contains his last words before sealing up the record. Moroni, after witnessing the annihilation of his people, hid from the Lamanites because they put to death every Nephite who would not deny the Christ, and Moroni would not deny Him (see Moroni 1:2–3). Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, taught: "The life of Moroni is especially instructive in teaching perseverance. The obstacles he faced may seem beyond belief to us. He saw the entire Nephite nation destroyed by the sword in a terrible war because of the wickedness of the people. His father and all of his kinsfolk and friends were slain. He was alone for about twenty years, perhaps hiding and fleeing from savage Lamanites who sought to take his life (see Mormon 8:2–7). Yet he continued to keep the record as his father had commanded him" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1987, 8; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 8).



Introduction

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve wrote: "What Moroni first recorded in the book carrying his own name were vignettes—a brief catalog, if you will—of things he felt needed to be recorded before he died and the Book of Mormon saga ended. These included the words of Christ to his twelve disciples when they were commissioned to bestow the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, the prayer by which priests and teachers were ordained, the sacramental prayers, and instructions as to how those who were baptized were to be received into the 'church of Christ' and numbered among the 'people of Christ.'" (*Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon* [1997], 332).

The ordinances and practices recorded in Moroni 1–6 illustrate that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the same in every age.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

Note: Prayerfully study each assigned scripture block and consider the principles in this section before preparing your lessons.

- We have a covenant obligation to remain steadfast in our testimonies regardless of any danger, sacrifice, or temptation we face (see Moroni 1:1–3; 4:3; 5:2; 6:1–3).
- Priesthood ordinances are sacred ceremonies by which we make covenants with God. They must be performed in the proper way by those who have authority from God (see Moroni 2–3; 4:1; 5:1; see also 3 Nephi 11:21–28).
- We take the sacrament to renew our baptismal covenants and to help us remember the Atonement of Jesus Christ (see Moroni 4–5; 6:5–6; see also Mosiah 18:8–13; D&C 20:75–79).
- Church members are to meet together often to take the sacrament and to strengthen one another spiritually. Church meetings should be conducted as directed by the Holy Ghost (see Moroni 6:4–9; see also D&C 20:53–55).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 144–45.

Suggestions for Teaching

Note: Choose from the ideas in this section, or use some of your own, as you prepare to teach the assigned scripture block.

Moroni 1. We have a covenant obligation to remain steadfast in our testimonies regardless of any danger, sacrifice, or temptation we face. (20–25 minutes)

Read the following statement by Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

"Many years ago, large packs of wolves roamed the countryside in Ukraine, making travel in that part of the world very dangerous. These wolf packs were fearless. They were not intimidated by people or by any of the weapons available at that time. The only thing that seemed to frighten them was fire. Consequently, travelers who found themselves away from cities developed the common practice of building a large bonfire and keeping it burning through the night. As long as the fire burned brightly, the wolves stayed away. But if it were allowed to burn out and die, the wolves would move in for an attack. Travelers understood that building and maintaining a roaring bonfire was not just a matter of convenience or comfort; it was a matter of survival. (See Mary Pratt Parrish, 'Guardians of the Covenant,' *Ensign*, May 1972, p. 25.)

"We do not have to protect ourselves from wolf packs as we travel the road of life today, but, in a spiritual

sense, we do face the devious wolves of Satan in the forms of temptation, evil, and sin. We live in dangerous times when these ravenous wolves roam the spiritual countryside in search of those who may be weak in faith or feeble in their conviction. [See 1 Peter 5:8; D&C 122:6.] We are all vulnerable to attack. However, we can fortify ourselves with the protection provided by a burning testimony that, like a bonfire, has been built adequately and maintained carefully.

“Unfortunately, some in the Church may believe sincerely that their testimony is a raging bonfire when it really is little more than the faint flickering of a candle. Their faithfulness has more to do with habit than holiness, and their pursuit of personal righteousness almost always takes a back seat to their pursuit of personal interests and pleasure. With such a feeble light of testimony for protection, these travelers on life’s highways are easy prey for the wolves of the adversary” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 45–46; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 34).

Read Moroni 1:1–3 and discuss the following questions:

- What enemies did Moroni face?
- How do you think the threat of physical death he faced compares to the threat of spiritual death Elder Wirthlin warned of?
- How did Moroni’s testimony protect him?
- What sacrifices did he have to make to remain faithful to his testimony?
- What can you learn about testimony and commitment from Moroni’s example?
- Read Moroni 1:4. What does this verse add to your understanding of the power of Moroni’s testimony?

Read this 1867 prophecy by President Heber C. Kimball, who was a member of the First Presidency:

“Let me say to you, that many of you will see the time when you will have all the trouble, trial and persecution that you can stand, and plenty of opportunities to show that you are true to God and his work. This Church has before it many close places through which it will have to pass before the work of God is crowned with victory. . . .

“. . . The time will come when no man nor woman will be able to endure on borrowed light. Each will have to be guided by the light within himself. If you do not have it, how can you stand?” (in Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* [1945], 449–50).

Discuss the following questions:

- What do you think it means to “endure on borrowed light”?
- Why can’t we endure on borrowed light?
- What are some scriptural examples of people who had strong testimonies?

Encourage students to be firm in their testimonies. Share the following statement by Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin:

“I offer three suggestions that will fan the flame of personal testimony as a protection against the wolves of evil that are prowling all around us to threaten our spiritual security.

“First, make sure your testimony is built upon a solid foundation of faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ. . . .

“Anchored with that faith, we are ready for my second suggestion—another layer of kindling on the bonfire of testimony. It is humble, sincere repentance. Few things extinguish the fervor of the Holy Spirit in the heart of any individual more quickly than does sin. . . .

“My third suggestion is that we follow the example of the Savior. He set the pattern.

“In any pursuit and under any condition, we can ask ourselves what Jesus would do and then determine our own course accordingly” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 47–48; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 35–36).

Encourage students to do what is required to build strong, bright testimonies.

Moroni 2–3. Priesthood ordinances are sacred ceremonies by which we make covenants with God. They must be performed in the proper way by those who have authority from God. (20–25 minutes)

Invite some Aaronic Priesthood holders in your class to participate in a panel discussion. Ask them the following questions, and allow other class members to ask them questions regarding the priesthood.

- How did you feel when you received the Aaronic Priesthood?
- What priesthood office do you currently hold?
- Who ordained you to that office?
- What duties or responsibilities do you have in the priesthood?
- Why do you think it is important to magnify your callings in the priesthood?
- How important is the priesthood in your life? Why?

Ask the class: In what ways may young women receive the promised blessings of the priesthood?

Invite the class to read Moroni 2–3, and ask the following questions. (If time allows you could also study the accompanying scriptures.)

- Which verses in Moroni 2–3 teach that the priesthood is to be conferred by the laying on of hands? (see also Articles of Faith 1:5).
- What evidence can you give that the prayers accompanying priesthood ordinations were inspired? (see also D&C 20:60).
- What responsibilities were the priesthood holders in these chapters given?
- How do those responsibilities compare with those of priests and teachers today? (see also D&C 20:46–59).
- Why is it significant that this same pattern is followed today? (see also Articles of Faith 1:6).

Moroni 4–6. We take the sacrament to renew our baptismal covenants and to help us remember the Atonement of Jesus Christ. (20–25 minutes)

Tell students: Imagine you are a priest in a sacrament meeting. You have just broken the bread. You kneel to say the sacrament prayer and realize that the card you usually read the prayer from is missing.

- What would you do?
- How could your scriptures help?
- Where in the scriptures can you find the sacrament prayers? (Moroni 4–5; D&C 20:77, 79.)
- What word from the scriptures do you need to change when giving the prayer on the water?

Tell students: Imagine you are a member of the congregation in a sacrament meeting. The sacrament hymn has just concluded and everyone is prepared to listen to the blessing on the sacrament.

- What do you think about?
- What distractions do you try to avoid?
- What do you do that helps you focus on the Savior?

Invite students to consider how often they feel the Lord’s Spirit during the sacrament and how strongly they feel that Spirit.

Tell students: Imagine a deacon has just brought the sacrament to where you are sitting and you are about to take it.

- What promises are you about to make?
- What blessings may you receive from this experience?
- Why is this ordinance important to you?
- What can you do to improve your experience of partaking of the sacrament?

Invite students to read Moroni 4–5 to find the promises we make when we take the sacrament and the promises the Lord gives in return. Invite students to ponder the importance of the sacrament. Ask: What can an Aaronic Priesthood holder do to help make the sacrament more significant for others?

Give several students two pieces of rope. Allow them thirty seconds to tie the two pieces together using any knot they choose. Have the students show their knots. Ask the class which of the knots they would trust most if they were being rescued with this rope. Explain that, like a knot, the covenants we make with the Lord “tie” or “bind” us to Him. Ask:

- Why is it important to be bound to the Lord?
- Since we all need the Atonement to rescue us from our sins, how strong would you like the “knot” or covenant between you and the Lord to be?
- In what ways can worthily partaking of the sacrament strengthen our covenant relationship with the Savior?
- How can improving your understanding of the sacrament strengthen your bond with Jesus Christ?

Sing or read a sacrament hymn, and encourage students to try to make their time taking the sacrament more sacred.

Moroni 6:4–9. Church members are to meet together often to partake of the sacrament and to strengthen one another spiritually. Church meetings should be conducted as guided by the Holy Ghost. (20–25 minutes)

Ask a student to read the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“The Prophet Joseph Smith declared: ‘After all that has been said, the greatest and most important duty is to preach the Gospel’ (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 113). . . .

“Every one of the Presidents of the Church following Joseph Smith has spoken on this important matter.

“Great is our work, tremendous is our responsibility in helping to find those to teach. The Lord has laid upon us a mandate to teach the gospel to every creature. . . .

“Having found and baptized a new convert, we have the challenge of fellowshiping him and strengthening his testimony of the truth of this work. We cannot have him walking in the front door and out the back. Joining the Church is a very serious thing. Each convert takes upon himself or herself the name of Christ with an implied promise to keep His commandments. But coming into the Church can be a perilous experience. Unless there are warm and strong hands to greet the convert, unless there is an outreach of love and concern, he will begin to wonder about the step he has

taken. Unless there are friendly hands and welcome hearts to greet him and lead him along the way, he may drop by the side.

“There is absolutely no point in doing missionary work unless we hold on to the fruits of that effort. The two must be inseparable. These converts are precious. Every convert is a son or daughter of God. Every convert is a great and serious responsibility. It is an absolute imperative that we look after those who have become a part of us” (“Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 107–8).

Divide the class into four groups. Assign the first group to take the role of a new convert, the second a missionary, the third a ward member and neighbor of the new convert, and the fourth a priesthood or Relief Society leader. Invite students to read Moroni 6:1–6 and think about what it teaches from the perspective of the person their group was assigned to be. Discuss the following questions as a class:

- What did you learn from these verses about your responsibility as a new convert, missionary, neighbor, or ward leader?
- Why do you think it would be important for someone who is being baptized to have “a broken heart and a contrite spirit” and to have truly repented? (v. 2).
- What could a missionary do to help ensure that those who are baptized truly take “upon them the name of Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end”? (v. 3).
- What could a home teacher or visiting teacher, neighbor, or friend do for a new convert to help make sure that person is “remembered,” “nourished by the good word of God,” kept “in the right way,” and “continually watchful unto prayer, relying alone upon the merits of Christ”? (v. 4).
- Why do you think the Lord commanded Church leaders to number and take the names of new converts? (see v. 4).
- How would holding regular church meetings and speaking about the welfare of the soul of each member help new converts? (see v. 5).
- What other responsibilities are outlined in Moroni 6:7–9 that can help all members of the Church come to Christ?
- Why do you think Moroni may have included these teachings on the gold plates?



Moroni 7–9

Introduction

Before concluding the Book of Mormon record with his own testimony, Moroni included two letters and a masterful sermon on faith, hope, and charity by his father. This sermon is directed to those who “are of the church, that are the peaceable followers of Christ,” whom Mormon recognized by their “peaceable walk with the children of men” (Moroni 7:3–4). Mormon’s stirring words shed light on some of the most fundamental doctrines of the gospel. They provide a pattern that all must follow in order to receive the full blessings of the kingdom of God.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Our service is acceptable to God when it is given with real intent (see Moroni 7:5–14; see also D&C 64:33–35).
- Every person born into the world is given the Light of Christ, which helps us judge between good and evil (see Moroni 7:12–19).
- Faith, hope, and charity are gifts of the Spirit given to those who humbly come unto Christ (see Moroni 7:20–48; see also Matthew 22:36–40; 1 Corinthians 13).
- Through the Atonement of Christ, children who die before reaching the age of accountability are saved. Any errors little children commit are paid for through the Atonement, so these children do not need baptism (see Moroni 8:4–23; see also D&C 29:46–47; 68:25–27).
- People who fail to follow the Lord can become very wicked in a short period of time. No matter how hardened people become, we should still try to help them accept and live the gospel (see Moroni 9; see also Mormon 3:11–12; 4:11–12; 5:1–2).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 145–49.

Suggestions for Teaching

Moroni 7:5–14. Our service is acceptable to God if it is given with real intent. (20–25 minutes)

Show the picture *Serving One Another* (Gospel Art Picture Kit, no. 615) or another picture of someone giving service. Ask:

- Why do you think serving others is so important?
- What service have you participated in that meant a lot to you?
- What feelings do you have toward those who have served you? toward those you have served?

Show the picture again and have the students imagine they are giving service. Ask them how they think the person they are serving would feel if that person overheard them say:

- “I wish my parents had not made me come on this service project.”
- “I sure hope we get paid for all this work.”
- “I hope my friends notice how hard I am working. I really want them to like me.”
- “I don’t see why I have to do this work. Can’t these people handle their own problems?”

Discuss the following questions:

- What difference do our intentions make when we give service?
- Why do you think the Lord is concerned about our intentions as much as our actions?

Read Moroni 7:1–4 and ask who is speaking and who is being spoken to. Read Moroni 7:5–10 and discuss the following questions:

- What did Mormon teach about giving with “real intent” as opposed to giving “grudgingly”? (vv. 6–7).
- How does God judge service that is given grudgingly? Why do you think that is so?
- Why do you think service is a vital part of the gospel?

Read Moroni 7:11–14 and look for the analogy Mormon used to describe people who serve and pray without real intent. Ask:

- How is someone who serves grudgingly like a bitter fountain?
- What else do you learn from these verses?
- What warning does Mormon give us in verse 14?
- How can we apply these teachings in our personal life? in our families?

Write the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, on the board: “Service is a covenant obligation of all members of the Church of Jesus Christ” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1984, 13; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 12). Write on the board the following list of motivations

for serving, and ask students whether each is a lesser or higher motive:

- Riches or honor
- Good companionship
- Fear of punishment
- Duty or loyalty
- Hope of an eternal reward
- Charity, the pure love of Christ

Share the following excerpts from a talk by Elder Dallin H. Oaks. Stop and discuss his comments with students as needed.

“People serve one another for different reasons, and some reasons are better than others. Perhaps none of us serves in every capacity all the time for only a single reason. Since we are imperfect beings, most of us probably serve for a combination of reasons, and the combinations may be different from time to time as we grow spiritually. But we should all strive to serve for the reasons that are highest and best. . . .

“Some may serve for hope of earthly reward. . . . Others might serve in order to obtain worldly honors, prominence, or power. . . .

“Another reason for service—probably more worthy than the first, but still in the category of service in search of earthly reward—is that motivated by a personal desire to obtain good companionship. . . .

“These first two reasons for service are selfish and self-centered and unworthy of Saints. . . . Reasons aimed at earthly rewards are distinctly lesser in character and reward than the other reasons I will discuss.

“Some may serve out of fear of punishment. . . . Service out of fear of punishment is a lesser motive at best.

“Other persons may serve out of a sense of duty or out of loyalty to friends or family or traditions. . . . Those who serve out of a sense of duty or loyalty to various wholesome causes are the good and honorable men and women of the earth.

“Service of the character I have just described is worthy of praise and will surely qualify for blessings, especially if it is done willingly and joyfully. . . .

“. . . There are still higher reasons for service.

“One such higher reason for service is the hope of an eternal reward. This hope—the expectation of enjoying the fruits of our labors—is one of the most powerful sources of motivation. As a reason for service, it necessarily involves faith in God and in the fulfillment of his prophecies. . . .

“The last motive I will discuss is, in my opinion, the highest reason of all. In its relationship to service, it is what the scriptures call ‘a more excellent way’ (1 Corinthians 12:31).

“‘Charity is the pure love of Christ’ (Moroni 7:47). The Book of Mormon teaches us that this virtue is ‘the greatest of all’ (Moroni 7:46). . . .

“If our service is to be most efficacious, it must be accomplished for the love of God and the love of his children. . . .


“This principle—that our service should be for the love of God and the love of fellowmen rather than for personal advantage or any other lesser motive—is admittedly a high standard. . . .

“Service with all of our heart and mind is a high challenge for all of us. Such service must be free of selfish ambition. It must be motivated only by the pure love of Christ” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1984, 14–16; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 13–15).

Invite students to share ideas about how they might develop better motivations to serve. Read Moroni 7:48, and then read the following statement by President Marion G. Romney, who was a member of the First Presidency:

“Some may ask, ‘How do I obtain these righteous feelings in giving? How do I overcome giving grudgingly? How do I obtain the “pure love of Christ?”’ To those I would say: Faithfully live all the commandments, give of yourselves, care for your families, serve in church callings, perform missionary work, pay tithes and offerings, study the scriptures—and the list could go on. As you lose yourself in this service, the Lord will touch and soften your heart and gradually bring you to the feelings with which he blessed the people in King Benjamin’s time, which prompted them to say, ‘Yea, we believe all the words which thou hast spoken unto us; and also, we know of their surety and truth, because of the Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent, which has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually.’ (Mosiah 5:2.)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1981, 131–32; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 93).

Encourage students to strive to serve out of love for God and for others.

 **Moroni 7:12–19 (Scripture Mastery, Moroni 7:16–17). Every person born into the world is given the Light of Christ, which helps us judge between good and evil.** (30–35 minutes)

Discuss the following questions as a class:

- Why do you think God will never force you to do good?
- Why do you think Satan cannot force you to do evil?

Have students read Moroni 7:12–13 and find the words that show how God and Satan get us to follow them. Ask:

- What do the words “inviteth” and “enticeth” teach you about God and Satan?
- Why do you think the Lord wants to entice or persuade you to do good?
- Read 2 Nephi 2:27, 29. According to these verses, what is Satan’s intent?
- How can you tell the difference between the enticements of God and those of Satan?

Ask students which of the following choices is “of God” and which is “of Satan”:

- To read the *New Era*
- To read a pornographic magazine

Ask if this was an easy judgment to make, and why. Ask for examples of choices between good and evil that are more difficult to judge, and discuss them as a class. (One example might be a movie that was widely acclaimed as best picture of the year but that had sexual content and profanity.)

Testify that the Lord has given each of us a gift that helps us judge between good and evil. Read Moroni 7:14–15 and the first part of verse 16, stopping after the phrase “that he may know good from evil.” Testify that the Spirit of Christ is that gift.

Have students read Moroni 7:16–19 looking for what these verses teach about choosing. Ask:

- What impressed you in these verses?
- What should we use to help us choose?
- How could this counsel help you?
- What does this teach you about God’s interest in your decisions and about His love for you?

To help students better understand the Spirit of Christ, read and discuss Doctrine and Covenants 84:44–47; 93:12, 16–20, 26–28. Have students cross-reference these verses with Moroni 7:16.

Invite students to list some popular movies, television shows, songs, or magazines. Discuss the following questions:

- Which of these do you think “[invite] to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ”?
- How do the Lord’s standards compare to the world’s standards concerning these forms of entertainment?

- How can the principles in Moroni 7:16–19 help you decide what to read, watch, or listen to?

Read the section on media in the pamphlet *For the Strength of Youth* ([1990], 11–12), and ask: How do Mormon’s teachings compare to the standards found in this pamphlet?

Share the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson:

“Let us use [Mormon’s] standard to judge what we read, the music we hear, the entertainment we watch, the thoughts we think [see Moroni 7:13, 17]. Let us be more Christlike” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1986, 100; or *Ensign*, May 1986, 78).

Sing or read “Choose the Right” (*Hymns*, no. 239). Have students listen for the pattern for making choices as you read this statement by President Howard W. Hunter:

“Let us follow the Son of God in all ways and in all walks of life. Let us make him our exemplar and our guide. We should at every opportunity ask ourselves, ‘What would Jesus do?’ and then be more courageous to act upon the answer. We must follow Christ, in the best sense of that word. We must be about his work as he was about his Father’s. . . . To the extent that our mortal powers permit, we should make every effort to become like Christ—the one perfect and sinless example this world has ever seen” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1994, 84; or *Ensign*, May 1994, 64).

Encourage students to follow this pattern.



Moroni 7:20–48. Faith, hope, and charity are gifts of the Spirit given to those who humbly come to Christ. (40–45 minutes)

Write the following words, references, and statements on separate pieces of paper and place them in three gift-wrapped boxes (or other containers).

Box 1	<p>Faith Moroni 7:20–39 Alma 32:21–22</p>
Box 2	<p>Hope Moroni 7:40–43 Ether 12:4 Hebrews 6:11–19</p> <p>“Faith, Mormon taught, leads to hope, a special, theological kind of hope. The word is often used to express the most general of aspirations—wishes, if you will. But as used in the Book of Mormon it is very specific and flows naturally from one’s faith in Christ. . . .</p>

“What is the nature of this hope? It is certainly much more than wishful thinking. It is to have ‘hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised unto life eternal, and this because of your faith in him according to the promise’ [Moroni 7:41]. That is the theological meaning of hope in the faith-hope-charity sequence. With an eye to that meaning, Moroni 7:42 then clearly reads, ‘If a man have faith [in Christ and his atonement] he must needs [as a consequence] have hope [in the promise of the Resurrection, because the two are inextricably linked]; for without faith [in Christ’s atonement] there cannot be any hope [in the Resurrection].’” (Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon* [1997], 334–35).

Box 3
Charity
 Moroni 7:44–48
 1 Corinthians 13

Show students the boxes (do not open them yet). Have students read Doctrine and Covenants 46:7–9, 11–12, 26 and find answers to the following questions:

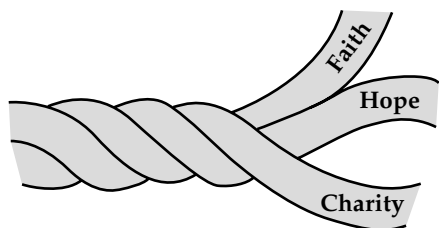
- Where do gifts of the Spirit come from?
- How many gifts does each person receive?
- Should we seek for gifts of the Spirit?
- For what purpose are gifts of the Spirit given?

Tell students that gifts of the Spirit can help us avoid being deceived by Satan and help us better understand the Lord’s promptings. Explain that in Moroni 7:5–19 Mormon gives counsel on how we can judge between good and evil. In verses 20–48, Mormon teaches about three gifts of the Spirit that will help us “lay hold upon every good thing” (v. 20). Ask students what it means to “lay hold upon” something. Have them read verse 1, and ask them which three gifts of the Spirit Mormon speaks of.


Divide students into three groups. Give each group one of the gift-wrapped boxes. Invite the groups to open their box, find the gift of the Spirit, and study the scriptures (and statement) about that gift. Write the following questions on the board, and have students look for the answers as they study. When they finish, discuss the questions as a class.

- What are at least two truths you learned about this gift?
- How can understanding these truths be a blessing to you?
- Why is this gift important?
- What can we do to strengthen this gift in our life?

Show students a twisted or braided rope, or draw the accompanying illustration on the board.



Tell students that a rope is made of strands that are intertwined. Each strand gives strength to the others. Testify that faith, hope, and charity are similar. They are interdependent and strengthen one another. Encourage students to seek to gain or strengthen these gifts in their lives.

 **Moroni 7:45–48 (Scripture Mastery, Moroni 7:45). Charity is the pure love of Christ.**
(15–20 minutes)

A day or two before class, invite students to watch for acts of service being performed. As you begin this lesson, ask students what acts of service they observed. Discuss the following questions:

- What act of service impressed you? Why?
- How did the person who received the service benefit from it?
- How do you think the person who gave the service may have also benefited from it?

Read Moroni 7:45–48 and ask how the acts of service the students witnessed are like Mormon’s description of charity.

Tell students that charity means more than acts of service. Invite a student to read the following statement by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland:

“One [meaning of charity or ‘the pure love of Christ’] is the kind of merciful, forgiving love Christ’s disciples should have one for another. . . .

“The greater definition of ‘the pure love of Christ,’ however, is not what we as Christians try but largely fail to demonstrate toward others but rather what Christ totally succeeded in demonstrating toward us. *True* charity has been known only once. It is shown perfectly and purely in Christ’s unflinching, ultimate, and atoning love for us. . . . It is that charity—his pure love for us—without which we would be nothing, hopeless, of all men and women most miserable. Truly, those found possessed of the blessings of his love at the last

day—the Atonement, the Resurrection, eternal life, eternal promise—surely it shall be well with them.

“This does not in any way minimize the commandment that we are to try to acquire this kind of love for one another. We should ‘pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that [we] may be filled with this love’ [Moroni 7:48; see also 1 Corinthians 13:4–5, 7–8]. . . . As Christ lived so should we live, and as Christ loved so should we love. But the ‘*pure* love of Christ’ Mormon spoke of is precisely that—Christ’s love. With that divine gift, that redeeming bestowal, we have everything; without it we have nothing and ultimately are nothing, except in the end ‘devils [and] angels to a devil’ [2 Nephi 9:9]” (*Christ and the New Covenant*, 336–37).

Ask:

- What did Elder Holland’s statement add to your understanding of charity?
- Why do you think charity is so essential, and the greatest of all gifts?

Have a student read Moroni 7:45–48 for the class, but have the student replace the word *charity* with *the Atonement* each time it occurs. Ask: What does reading the verses this way teach you about the Atonement?

Encourage students to follow Jesus Christ’s example as they serve others. Also encourage them to seek the pure love of Christ in the sense Elder Holland spoke of, by applying the power of the Atonement in their lives.

Moroni 8:4–23. Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, children who die before reaching the age of accountability are saved. Any errors little children commit are paid for through the Atonement, so these children do not need baptism. (30–35 minutes)

Bring several pictures of little children to class, including Christ and the Children (Gospel Art Picture Kit, no. 216) or a similar picture. Ask students:

- What are some funny or interesting things you have seen little children do?
- Why do you think the Savior asked us to become like little children? (see 3 Nephi 11:38).
- How do you think Jesus Christ feels toward little children?
- Why do you think the Savior loves them so much?

Tell students that the Book of Mormon explains several important doctrines about children. Understanding these doctrines will help students as they have children of their own or as they teach the gospel to others.

Assign each student one of the following examples (if necessary give the same example to more than one student). Have students read Moroni 8:1–24 and look for teachings that relate to their example. Have them also read Doctrine and Covenants 29:46–50; 68:25–27. When they finish, read the examples to the class. Pause after each example and invite the students assigned to that example to share how they would respond to the situation using the truths in Moroni 8.

1. You have just met a young couple whose four-year-old son was killed in a car accident. They have many questions, especially about what will happen to their son now.
2. A recent convert agrees that baptism for eight-year-old children is a good idea but wonders why that doctrine is stressed so much. She asks, “It doesn’t really matter if a person is baptized when they are eight months old, eight years old, or eighty years old, does it?”
3. As a missionary you meet a man who is sincerely seeking truth. He explains that all his life he was taught that little children are born unclean because of Adam’s transgression. He is certain that when infants die without being baptized, they die “unclean” and go to hell.
4. Your seminary teacher asks, “How does a belief in infant baptism show a lack of understanding of the Atonement of Jesus Christ?”
5. You have been asked to give a two-minute talk to the Primary children on the topic “Jesus Christ has perfect love for little children.”
6. During a Relief Society meeting, a sister asks about little children being without sin. She tells how her six-year-old son did something very bad, even after she explained to him why it was wrong. She is convinced that her son knew better and wonders why what he did would not be considered a sin for him.
7. A friend of yours tells you she has a brother with Down’s syndrome and has always heard that people born with certain mental disabilities are “not accountable.” She thinks they might be guaranteed a place in the celestial kingdom, like those children who die before the age of eight. She asks if you know any scriptures that teach that doctrine.

Bear your testimony of God’s love for little children. Read Mosiah 3:19; 3 Nephi 11:38 and tell students that we are commanded to become like children. Encourage students to develop the childlike characteristics the scriptures mention and to become free from sin again through repentance.

Moroni 9. People who fail to follow the Lord can become very wicked in a short period of time. No matter how hardened people become, we should still try to help them accept and live the gospel.

(20–25 minutes)

A day or two before class peel a banana (or other fruit) and let it spoil. On the day of class, show students the rotten banana as well as a fresh banana still in its peel. Ask:

- What is the difference between these two bananas?
- What causes bananas to spoil?
- How long do you think it took this banana to spoil?

Have students compare this fruit to people. Read Moroni 9:11–14 and tell students that these verses describe Mormon’s concern about the Nephites’ spiritual decay. Ask:

- What do you think causes some people to decay spiritually?
- How fast do some people decay spiritually?

Point out that the skin kept the good fruit from spoiling. Ask: What can help protect us from spiritual decay?

Invite students to read Moroni 9:3–5, 7–10, 18–20 and underline phrases that show how wicked the people became and why. Discuss their findings. Ask:

- How do you think you would feel if you witnessed such wickedness?
- What would you say if you had the opportunity to talk with these people?
- What is our duty concerning people who have turned from the Lord?

Have a student read Moroni 9:6, and ask:

- What did Mormon teach Moroni about what should be done for these people?
- What can you learn from Mormon’s example?
- Read Jacob 1:19. How does this verse relate to Mormon’s teaching?
- What are some ways we could “labor diligently” for those who turn against the Lord?

Read Moroni 9:22, 25–26. Ask students why they think Mormon’s prayers for his son Moroni might have been helpful in his situation. Testify that in times of spiritual decay the prayers of the righteous can be a source of help and protection for others. Encourage students to guard themselves against spiritual decay and to pray for the well-being of others.



Introduction

President Ezra Taft Benson, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve, taught:

“The Book of Mormon brings men to Christ through two basic means. First, it tells in a plain manner of Christ and his gospel. . . .

“Second, [it] exposes the enemies of Christ” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1975, 94; or *Ensign*, May 1975, 64).

Throughout the Book of Mormon, the prophets encourage all people to come to Christ and gain salvation in the kingdom of God. The last prophet in the book to make this plea is Moroni. In the final chapter, he teaches “all the ends of the earth” how to know of the truthfulness of the record, and invites them to come unto Christ and be perfected in Him (see Moroni 10:4, 24, 32).


Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- We can know the truth of all things by the power of the Holy Ghost (see Moroni 10:3–7).
- Spiritual gifts come from God for the blessing of His people and are always found in the true Church (see Moroni 10:8–25, 30; see also D&C 46:8–33).
- If we come unto Jesus Christ, we can be cleansed from sin and become perfect and sanctified through His Atonement (see Moroni 10:30–33).

Additional Resources

- *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, pp. 149–51.

Suggestions for Teaching

 **Moroni 10:4–5 (Scripture Mastery).** We can know the truth of all things by the power of the Holy Ghost. (30–35 minutes)

Ask a student to give a definition of the word *promise*. Ask the class how confident they are that the following people would keep a promise:

- A prisoner at a penitentiary
- A telephone sales representative
- An acquaintance
- A good friend
- A person who has already lied to you
- A parent
- A prophet
- The Lord

Tell students that Moroni 10:3–5 contains what is sometimes referred to as “the Book of Mormon promise.” Write on the board the headings *God’s Promise* and *Our Duty*. Have students read Moroni 10:3–4 and look for God’s promise and what we must do to obtain that promise. List their findings under the appropriate headings on the board. Use any or all of the following questions as you discuss these verses:

- Why do you think we usually must read the Book of Mormon before we can receive a witness of its truth?
- How can remembering the Lord’s mercy prepare our hearts to receive an answer through the Holy Ghost?
- Nephi explained that one reason he wrote was to show the Lord’s tender mercies (see 1 Nephi 1:20). What are some stories from the Book of Mormon that remind you of the Lord’s mercy?
- What do you think it means to ponder? (“Ponder means to weigh mentally, think deeply about, deliberate, meditate” [Marvin J. Ashton, in Conference Report, Oct. 1987, 23; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 20].)
- How does God promise to communicate the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon to you?
- Why do you think it is important that this prayer be offered “with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ”? (Moroni 10:4).
- How can we recognize the power of the Holy Ghost? How can you know which feelings are from God? (see Alma 32:28; D&C 6:22–23; 9:7–9).
- How can we apply this pattern to learning other truths? (see v. 5).
- What are some truths you have come to understand by the power of the Holy Ghost?

Share your testimony of the Book of Mormon. Help students understand that this promise applies to each of them and to all with whom they may someday share the Book of Mormon. Invite a few parents or teachers to come to class and share how they applied this promise and came to know that the Book of Mormon is true.

Moroni 10:8–25. Spiritual gifts come from God for the blessing of His people and are always found in the true Church. (25–30 minutes)

Tell students that, now that they have spent several months together as a seminary class, they probably know one another fairly well. Ask them to think about each of the other students in class. Have them consider what talents, character traits, or abilities each of them has. Discuss:

- Why is it important to recognize the strengths of every person in our class?
- How has the combination of our talents helped make our seminary experience better this year?
- How might our class be different if everyone had the exact same talents and abilities?

Read Moroni 10:8 and ask: What does Moroni begin to teach about in this verse? (The gifts of God.) Read Moroni 10:17–18; Doctrine and Covenants 46:11–12 and ask:

- How many people have been given at least one spiritual gift?
- From whom do these gifts come?
- Why are these gifts given? (see Moroni 10:8; D&C 46:9, 12, 26).

Have students read Moroni 10:9–16, 20–23 and make a list of the spiritual gifts mentioned. Ask:

- What evidence have you seen that these gifts exist in the Church today? (Discuss students' answers.)
- How can we use our individual gifts, together with the gifts of others, to bless our class? our families? the Church? the world?
- What would the Church be like if everyone had the exact same spiritual gifts?
- How have the gifts of others been a blessing in your life?

Read Moroni 10:24–25 and Doctrine and Covenants 46:8. Testify that spiritual gifts come to those who earnestly seek them, but are taken away from those who disbelieve. Encourage students to seek for spiritual gifts and to use them to benefit others.



Moroni 10:30–34. If we come unto Jesus Christ, we can be cleansed from sin and become perfect and sanctified through His Atonement.

(20–25 minutes)

Show students the picture Moroni Hides the Plates in the Hill Cumorah (Gospel Art Picture Kit, no. 320). Ask:

- What do you imagine Moroni was thinking at that time?
- How do you think he felt about the gold plates? Why?
- Why was this such a significant event for people today?

Show the picture The Gold Plates (Gospel Art Picture Kit, no. 325). Invite students to imagine the period of time right before Moroni buried the plates. Discuss the following questions:

- What do you think Moroni might have wanted to say as he concluded this record?
- Why are someone's final words or testimony so important?
- How do you imagine Moroni must have felt as he wrote Moroni chapter 10?

Read Moroni 10:28–34 to the class. Have students stop you at each word or phrase they think is a significant part of Moroni's final testimony. Before you continue, discuss why that word or phrase is significant and how we can apply it in our life.

Stress to students how strongly Moroni wanted them to "come unto Christ, and be perfected in him" (v. 32). Have a student read the following statement by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland:

"Moroni's last appeal, expressed on behalf of every prophet who ever wrote in this other testament of Jesus Christ, is for us to be cleansed from the blood and sin of our generation [see D&C 88:75, 85]. 'Come unto Christ,' he says, 'and be perfected in him . . . ' [Moroni 10:32].

". . . Purity. Holiness. Character and conscience without blemish. All these through the grace of Christ, which cleanses our garments, sanctifies our souls, saves us from death, and restores us to our divine origins.

"With his last recorded breath Moroni bore witness of his own firm faith in such divine redemption. To his fallen Nephites, to the warring Lamanites, to those tragic Jaredites, and to us, Moroni wrote:

"'And now I bid unto all, farewell. I soon go to rest in the paradise of God, until my spirit and body shall again reunite, and I am brought forth triumphant through the air, to meet you before the pleasing bar of the great Jehovah, the Eternal Judge of both quick and dead. Amen' [Moroni 10:34].

“Thus the Book of Mormon ends, flying as it were with Moroni, on the promise of the Holy Resurrection [see Revelation 14:6]. That is most fitting, for this sacred testament—written by prophets, delivered by angels, protected by God—speaks as one ‘crying from the dead,’ exhorting all to come unto Christ and be perfected in him, a process culminating in the perfection of celestial glory. In anticipation of that triumphant hour, God has set his hand for the last time to gather Jew, Gentile, Lamanite, and all the house of Israel.

“The Book of Mormon is the New Covenant memorializing that grand latter-day endeavor. All who receive it and embrace the principles and ordinances it declares will one day see the Savior as he is, and they will be like him. They will be sanctified and redeemed through the grace of his innocent blood. They will be purified even as he is pure. They will be holy and without spot. They will be called the children of Christ” (*Christ and the New Covenant*, 338–39).



1 Nephi–Moroni. Review of the Book of Mormon and the year in seminary. (30–35 minutes)

Display as many Book of Mormon pictures as you have available. Also display other pictures, handouts, or other items from lessons you taught during the year. Invite students to think about some of the experiences they had studying the Book of Mormon.

Share the following statements by the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“I spent the day in the council with the Twelve Apostles at the house of President Young, conversing with them upon a variety of subjects. . . . I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book” (*History of the Church*, 4:461).

“Take away the Book of Mormon and the revelations, and where is our religion? We have none” (*History of the Church*, 2:52).

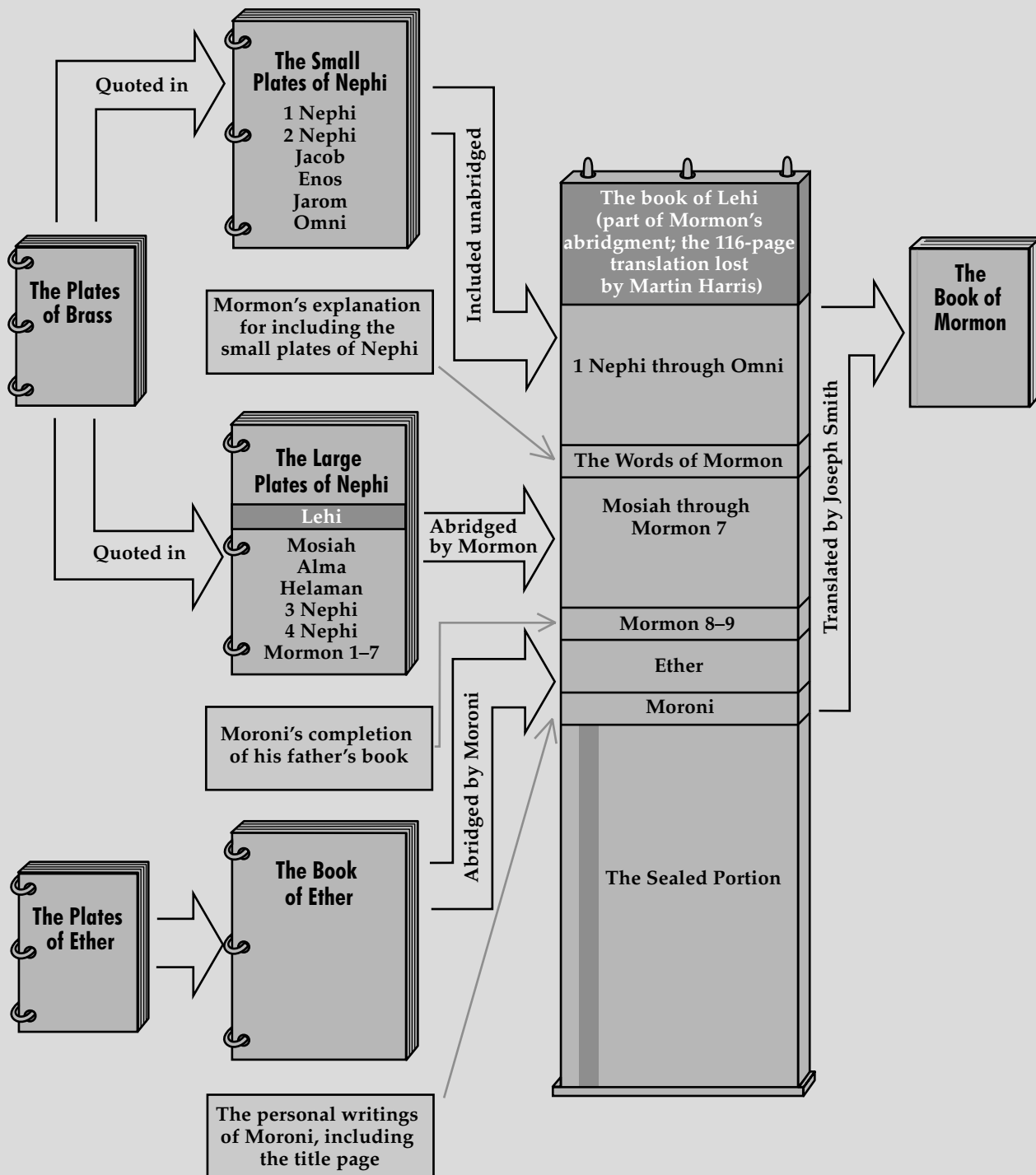
Share with students how studying the Book of Mormon and living by its teachings have helped you grow nearer to the Savior this year. Review some of your favorite lessons and some of the significant experiences you had with your class. Bear testimony of the love that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ have for the students, and express your gratitude for the students’ efforts.

Invite those students who would like to share their testimony of the Book of Mormon to do so. Encourage them to tell how their lives have changed as a result of their studies. Invite them to share some of the important doctrines they learned and how those doctrines have helped them draw nearer to Jesus Christ.

THE MAIN SOURCES FOR THE BOOK OF MORMON

Some of the sources for the plates of Mormon

The plates of Mormon that were given to the Prophet Joseph Smith (does not necessarily reflect the order of the books on the plates)



METHODS FOR TEACHING THE SCRIPTURES

After you have decided *what* to teach, ask the Lord to help you decide *how* to teach. Use this section, as well as *Teaching the Gospel: A Handbook for CES Teachers and Leaders* (1994), for ideas on methods for teaching the scriptures.

Read

- Read aloud to your students, and ask them to take turns reading aloud. (*Note:* Though this manual includes frequent instructions in the form “Read Alma 13:23 and ask . . .,” it is a good idea to divide reading assignments between yourself and your students.) Have those who are not reading follow along in their scriptures. Be careful not to embarrass students who do not read well.
- As the scriptures are read, pause to explain words and phrases, gospel principles, or other items you feel impressed to discuss.
- If a part of the scripture block is easy to read, you could ask your students to read it silently.
- Identify who is speaking in the scripture block and whom the speaker is addressing.

Summarize

- Prepare what you will say about the verses or chapters that will not be read in class. This should help students see how the last verses they read and the next verses they will read go together.
- Use the chapter headings to tell what is in chapters you do not read.
- Use pictures that show the stories or principles in the verses you do not read. For example, as you tell about 2 Nephi 16–19, show the picture Isaiah Writes of Christ’s Birth (Gospel Art Picture Kit, no. 113).

Apply

- Teach your students that they can find answers to their questions and problems if they “feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell [them] all things what [they] should do” (2 Nephi 32:3).
- Invite students to share experiences in which they found help in the scriptures. Tell of such experiences of your own.
- Help students liken the scriptures to themselves (see 1 Nephi 19:23). Ask questions such as: “How is this person in the scriptures like us?” and “How is this story like what happens to us?”

- Ask students how people in the scriptures found solutions to their problems.
- Invite your students to answer questions that are in the scriptures. For example, have them answer the questions asked in Alma 5:14 or Moroni 7:20.
- Use a student’s name in place of a name or pronoun in the scriptures. For example, in Alma 36:3 use the name of a student instead of Helaman’s name, or in Moroni 10:4, use the name of a student instead of the words *you* and *ye*. (*Note:* Be cautious about verses that are addressed to specific individuals and might not apply generally. Do not use verses that might associate a student with a sin or otherwise prove embarrassing.)

Cross-Reference

- A cross-reference is a reference to a scripture that explains or adds meaning to a verse you are studying. For example, when you are teaching Mosiah 3:3, you can cross-reference it with D&C 76:40–42 by having students write *D&C 76:40–42* in the margin.

2 And the things which I shall tell you are made known unto me by an ^aangel from God. And he said unto me: ^bAwake; and I awoke, and behold he stood before me.

3 And he said unto me: Awake, and hear the words which I shall tell thee; for behold, I am come to declare unto you the ^aglad tidings of great ^bjoy.

4 For the Lord hath heard thy prayers, and hath judged of thy ^arighteousness, and hath sent me to declare unto thee that thou mayest rejoice; and that thou mayest declare unto thy people, that they may also be filled with joy.

D&C 76:40–42

- Teach students how to find and use cross-references in footnotes or other scripture study helps.
- Have students tell how the cross-reference explains or adds meaning to the verse they are studying.
- Have students create scripture chains by cross-referencing the first scripture on a list to the second, the second to the third, and so on to the end, and then cross-referencing the last scripture to the first.

Mark

- Teach students to mark important items in their scriptures so they can find them easily and remember them.
- Teach students how to circle, underline, or shade words or phrases.

10 Do not suppose, because it has been spoken concerning restoration, that ye shall be restored from sin to happiness. Behold, I say unto you, ^awickedness never was ^bhappiness.

10 Do not suppose, because it has been spoken concerning restoration, that ye shall be restored from sin to happiness. Behold, I say unto you, ^awickedness never was ^bhappiness.

10 Do not suppose, because it has been spoken concerning restoration, that ye shall be restored from sin to happiness. Behold, I say unto you, ^awickedness never was ^bhappiness.

- Have students circle verse numbers, draw a box around verses, or draw a line in the margin.

③ Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how ^amerciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ^bponder it in your ^chearts.

4 And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ^aask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not ^btrue; and if ye shall ask with a ^csincere heart, with ^dreal intent, having ^efaith in Christ, he will ^fmanifest the ^gtruth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

5 And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may ^aknow the ^btruth of all things.

- Draw a line from one word or phrase you have circled to another.

28 And now, my sons, I would that ye should look to the great ^aMediator, and hearken unto his great commandments; and be faithful unto his words, and choose eternal life, according to the ^(will) of his Holy Spirit;

29 And not choose eternal death, according to the ^(will) of the flesh and the ^aevil which is therein, which giveth the spirit of the devil power to ^bcaptivate, to bring you down to ^chell, that he may reign over you in his own kingdom.

- Circle the footnote letter by the word or phrase in the scripture and in the footnote. You could connect the reference to the footnote with a line.

11 Thy pomp is brought down to the grave; the noise of thy viols is not heard; the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.

12 ^aHow art thou fallen from heaven, O ^bLucifer, son of the morning! Art thou cut down to the ground, which did weaken the nations

13 For thou hast said in thy heart: ^aI will ascend into heaven, I will

<p>^a 13; : 24. 6 (6–8); lon. h, Cleansing of; ness lon. h, Renewal of. 12 (12–13).</p>	<p>^{9a} Ezek. 32: 21. TG Hell. ^b TG Spirits in Prison. ^(12a) ^cBE the fallen king of Babylon is typified by the fallen “son of the morning,” Lucifer in v. 12–15. D&C 76: 26. ^b TG Devil. ^{13a} Moses 4: 1 (1–4). [Between 559 and 545 B.C.]</p>
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- Write notes in the margin.

13 And it came to pass that I beheld the Spirit of God, that it wrought upon other Gentiles; and they went forth out of captivity, upon the many waters.

14 And it came to pass that I beheld many ^amultitudes of the Gentiles upon the ^bland of promise; and I beheld the wrath of God, that it was upon the seed of my brethren; and they were ^cscattered before the Gentiles and were smitten.

First Europeans
went to America

Use Words of Apostles and Prophets

- Study the words and teachings of the General Authorities, especially those sustained as prophets, seers, and revelators, as you prepare your lessons. Study regularly what they say in general conference. Use these teachings to help your students understand and apply the scriptures.
- Read the words and teachings of the General Authorities to your students. Ask questions such as “How do these words help you understand the verse we are studying?” and “How do they help you understand how you can apply the message of the scripture in your life?”
- Have students write in the margins of their scriptures short quotations by the General Authorities that you read to them or that they find on their own.

Discuss

- Encourage students to tell what they have learned and how they feel about the scriptures. The Lord said, “Let not all be spokesmen at once; but let one speak at a time and let all listen unto his sayings, that when all have spoken that all may be edified of all, and that every man may have an equal privilege” (D&C 88:122).
- Read “Ask Questions,” “Compare,” “List,” and the other methods in this section for ideas on how to start discussions.
- Divide the class into groups, and give each group something in the scriptures they can study and discuss.
- Involve students who do not usually say anything in discussions by asking them to tell how they feel or what they think.
- Always try to keep discussions positive and uplifting. When the teacher and the student seek to have the Holy Ghost, “he that preacheth and he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together” (D&C 50:22).

Ask Questions

- Ask questions that cause your students to search the scriptures for the answers. Have them find the answers in the scriptures. For example, before teaching 1 Nephi 1:18–20, ask students to find in the scriptures why the Jews wanted to kill Lehi.
- Ask questions that students care about and want to know the answers to. For example, before teaching Mosiah 4:1–3, ask students how we can know when the Lord has forgiven us.
- Ask questions that encourage students to think about and apply the scriptures or a principle of the gospel. Questions with answers that are either too easy or too hard may frustrate students. Questions that can be answered *yes* or *no* usually do not encourage discussion.

- Ask questions that begin with *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, or *how*.
- Ask students to explain why they gave the answers they did.
- Invite students to comment on answers given by other class members.

Compare

- Have students compare things in the scriptures to see how they are alike or different. For example, students could compare how Nephi felt about his experiences in the wilderness with how Laman and Lemuel felt (see 1 Nephi 17:1–3, 20–21).
- Have students compare lists (see “List” below). For example, students could list what Korihor said in Alma 30 and what Alma said, and then compare the two lists.
- Have students look for the words *like* or *as*. These words are often used in the scriptures to show how one thing can be like another. For example, in Mosiah 20:11, Mormon compares the way the people of Limhi fought to dragons: “Therefore they exerted themselves and like dragons did they fight.” In 1 Nephi 17:48 Nephi compares what would happen to anyone who touched him to what happens to a plant when it dries up.

List

- Sometimes it is helpful to make a list of the events or ideas that you are studying. You can write a list for the students to see, or have the students write the list on a piece of paper, or just have them think of the list in their minds. When you make a list, you should also discuss what you learn from the list.
- Have students find and write down the events in a scripture story, and then discuss what they have written. For example, students could review the events in the story of Nephi and his brothers getting the brass plates (see 1 Nephi 3–4). Then the class could list things that show that 1 Nephi 3:7 is true.
- Have students list and discuss the reasons a person in the scriptures did the things he did. For example, students could list and discuss the reasons Jesus let the people take Him and crucify Him (see 1 Nephi 19:9–10).
- List and discuss each part of a principle of the gospel. For example, students could list and discuss what they learn about baptism in 2 Nephi 31.
- Have students mark or number in their scriptures things that can be listed. For example, in Alma 17:2–3 students could mark or number what the sons of Mosiah did so they could teach the word of God.

Memorize

- Have students say the words of the scripture out loud several times.
- Have students write the scripture several times.
- Write the scripture, and have the students repeat it several times. Cover or erase a few words each time they repeat it until you have covered or erased all the words.

Use Hymns

- Start or end class by singing a hymn that helps teach something from the scripture block.
- Invite individual students or groups of students to sing or play hymns.
- During your lesson, have students sing or read the words of hymns that help teach something from the scripture block. For example, students could sing or read “How Great the Wisdom and the Love” (*Hymns*, no. 195) when you teach Mosiah 16:6–9.

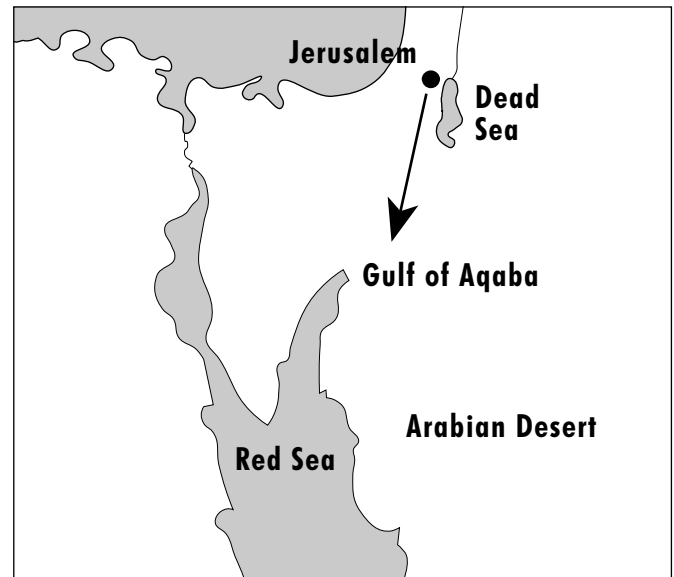
Show Objects

- Show objects mentioned in the scriptures that your students may not have seen before. For example, you could show a sling to help students understand 1 Nephi 16:23.
- Show objects that your students have seen before but that will increase their interest and understanding of the scripture block. For example, you could show a seed when discussing Alma 32:28.
- Have students draw objects mentioned in the scriptures (see “Draw”). For example, after reading Alma 31:12–21, students could draw a Rameumptom.

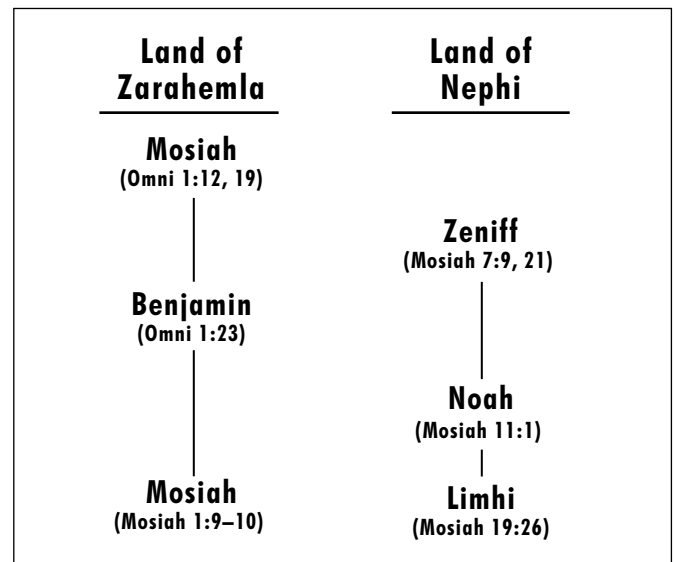
Draw

- Draw pictures for your students that will help them understand the scripture block.
- Have students draw pictures that show what they think the people, objects, or events in the scriptures might have looked like. Drawing helps students remember what they read and discuss. Be careful not to embarrass students when you ask them to draw.

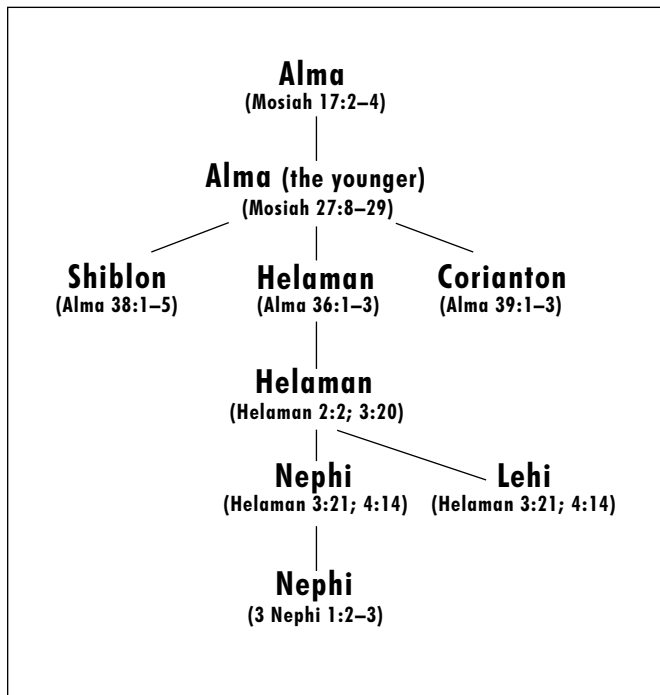
- Have students draw maps that show where people in the scriptures lived, where people went, or where events took place. For example, when you read 1 Nephi 2:2–8, have students draw a map showing where Lehi’s family might have traveled.



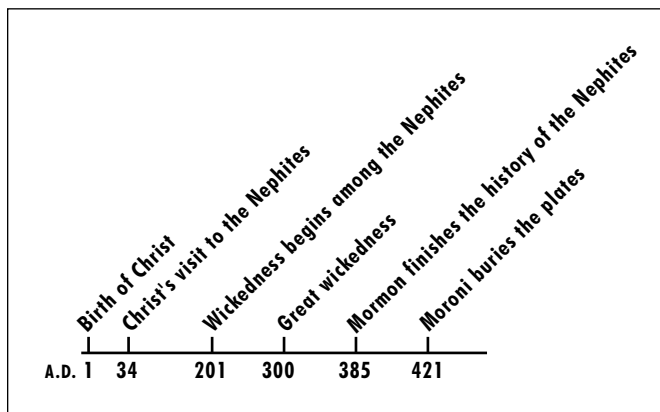
- Have students make charts that explain what happens in a story or that make clear what someone is teaching. For example, make a chart that shows the Nephite kings.



- Have students make charts that show the people in a family. For example, make a chart of Alma’s descendants.



- Have students make a time line by drawing a line and writing dates and events along the line in the order they happened. For example, have them draw a time line showing the history of the Nephites from A.D. 1 to A.D. 421.



Act Out

- Have students act out stories in the scriptures. Have them use the words and actions that the people in the scriptures used.
- Have students tell how they think the people in the scriptures felt. Discuss how students felt or what they learned as they saw the story acted out.

Look For

When you have students read scripture passages, give them something in advance to look for as they read. If they begin reading with a principle or detail in mind, they will pay closer attention and retain more of what they read. You could have students look for:

- Gospel principles illustrated by the lives of people.
- Questions asked in the scriptures.
- Scriptural lists, such as the qualities of charity (see 1 Corinthians 13).
- Definitions of words or concepts, such as *Zion* (see D&C 97:21).
- Difficult words or phrases students might have trouble understanding.
- Imagery, types, and symbols.
- Prophetic commentary (for example Book of Mormon passages that begin “and thus we see”).
- If-then relationships (see Isaiah 58:13–14).
- Traits that please or displease God.
- Patterns (for example the covenant pattern in the sacrament prayers; see Moroni 4:3).

Note: When you see the phrases “look for” or “looking for” in this manual, use the “look for” method as described here.

SCRIPTURE MASTERY

Scripture mastery means being able to find scripture verses, understand what they mean, and apply them in our lives. The scripture mastery program has one hundred scripture verses (twenty-five for each year in the seminary curriculum) that teachers should help students “master” and review (see *Teaching the Gospel: A Handbook for CES Teachers and Leaders* [1994], 35).

President Howard W. Hunter, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve, said, “We would hope none of your students would leave your classroom fearful or embarrassed or ashamed that they cannot find the help they need because they do not know the scriptures well enough to locate the proper passages” (*Eternal Investments* [address to religious educators, 10 Feb. 1989], 2).

Use the following ideas to help students learn scripture mastery verses:

- Read the verses with students and help them understand difficult words or phrases (see “Read,” p. 280).
 - Have students write what the verses mean, and discuss how the verses can provide answers to students’ questions and problems (see “Apply,” p. 280).
 - Have students use scripture study helps such as the footnotes or the Topical Guide to find other verses in the scriptures that teach the same doctrines or principles.
- Or give them verses not in the footnotes and have them write them in the margins (see “Cross-Reference,” p. 280).
- Ask questions about the verses. For example, ask students who was speaking and to whom (see “Ask Questions,” p. 282).
 - Discuss the historical setting (the people, place, and time).
 - Discuss what comes before and after the scripture mastery verses and how that helps explain them.
 - Have students tell how they could use the verses to teach others about the gospel.
 - Have students rewrite the verses in their own words, write questions about the verses, or draw pictures about something in the verses (see “Draw,” p. 283).
 - Have students tell how the verses were used in talks they have heard at church or in general conference.
 - Have students make posters about the verses for their home or the classroom.
 - Have one group of students list problems or questions that could be answered by the scripture mastery verses. Have another group take the first group’s list and find scripture mastery verses that answer the questions or problems.

SCRIPTURE MASTERY LISTS

Book of Mormon	Old Testament	New Testament	Doctrine and Covenants
1 Nephi 3:7	Moses 1:39	Matthew 5:14–16	Joseph Smith—History 1:15–20
1 Nephi 19:23	Moses 7:18	Matthew 6:24	D&C 1:37–38
2 Nephi 2:25	Abraham 3:22–23	Matthew 16:15–19	D&C 8:2–3
2 Nephi 2:27	Genesis 1:26–27	Matthew 25:40	D&C 10:5
2 Nephi 9:28–29	Genesis 39:9	Luke 24:36–39	D&C 14:7
2 Nephi 28:7–9	Exodus 20:3–17	John 3:5	D&C 18:10, 15–16
2 Nephi 32:3	Exodus 33:11	John 7:17	D&C 19:16–19
2 Nephi 32:8–9	Leviticus 19:18	John 10:16	D&C 25:12
Jacob 2:18–19	Deuteronomy 7:3–4	John 14:15	D&C 58:26–27
Mosiah 2:17	Joshua 1:8	John 17:3	D&C 58:42–43
Mosiah 3:19	Joshua 24:15	Acts 7:55–56	D&C 59:9–10
Mosiah 4:30	1 Samuel 16:7	Romans 1:16	D&C 64:9–11
Alma 32:21	Job 19:25–26	1 Corinthians 10:13	D&C 64:23
Alma 34:32–34	Psalms 24:3–4	1 Corinthians 15:20–22	D&C 76:22–24
Alma 37:6–7	Proverbs 3:5–6	1 Corinthians 15:29	D&C 82:3
Alma 37:35	Isaiah 1:18	1 Corinthians 15:40–42	D&C 82:10
Alma 41:10	Isaiah 29:13–24	Ephesians 4:11–14	D&C 84:33–39
Helaman 5:12	Isaiah 53:3–5	2 Thessalonians 2:1–3	D&C 88:123–24
3 Nephi 11:29	Isaiah 55:8–9	2 Timothy 3:1–5	D&C 89:18–21
3 Nephi 27:27	Jeremiah 16:16	2 Timothy 3:16–17	D&C 121:34–36
Ether 12:6	Ezekiel 37:15–17	Hebrews 5:4	D&C 130:18–19
Ether 12:27	Daniel 2:44–45	James 1:5–6	D&C 130:20–21
Moroni 7:16–17	Amos 3:7	James 2:17–18	D&C 130:22–23
Moroni 7:45	Malachi 3:8–10	Revelation 14:6–7	D&C 131:1–4
Moroni 10:4–5	Malachi 4:5–6	Revelation 20:12–13	D&C 137:7–10

THE GREAT PLAN OF HAPPINESS

Introduction

In 1993 Elder Boyd K. Packer, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, told teachers in the Church Educational System that, along with a brief overview of the subject to be studied, they should give an overview of the plan of salvation at the beginning of every school year:

“A brief overview of the ‘plan of happiness’ (which is my choice, my favorite title, in talking of the plan), if given at the very beginning and revisited occasionally, will be of immense value to your students.

“I have an assignment for you. . . . You are assigned to prepare a brief synopsis or overview of the plan of happiness—the plan of salvation. Design it as a framework on which your students can organize the truths you will share with them.

“At first you may think that a simple assignment. I assure you, it is not. Brevity and simplicity are remarkably difficult to achieve. At first you will be tempted to include too much. The plan in its fulness encompasses every gospel truth. . . .

“This may be the most difficult, and surely the most rewarding, assignment of your teaching career.

“Your overview of the plan of happiness should be but a sweeping glance across the unfolded scroll of scriptural truths. Your students can thereafter locate themselves in respect to the plan. . . .

“I will give you the barest outline of the plan as a beginning, but you must assemble your framework yourself.

“The essential components of the *great plan of happiness, of redemption, of salvation*, are these:

- “Premortal existence
 - Spiritual creation
 - Agency
 - War in heaven
- Physical creation
- The Fall and mortality
 - Principles and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ (first principles: faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, . . .)
- The Atonement
- Life beyond the grave
 - Spirit world
 - Judgment
 - Resurrection”

(The Great Plan of Happiness [address to religious educators at a symposium on the Doctrine and Covenants/Church history, Brigham Young University, 10 Aug. 1993], 2–3; or Charge to Religious Educators, 3rd ed. [1994], 113–14).

The following information is included to help you further understand that great plan of happiness and develop your overview. You may be tempted to teach more about the plan of salvation than the brief overview Elder Packer recommended. Please resist, keeping in mind that many of the details of the plan will be discussed in the course of your study of the Book of Mormon. As you teach these principles during the school year, consider referring back to your plan of salvation overview.

The Plan of Salvation Is Like a Three-Act Play

In a 1995 fireside address to young adults, President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve, said:

“The course of our mortal life, from birth to death, conforms to eternal law and follows a plan described in the revelations as the great plan of happiness. The one idea, the one truth I would inject into your minds, is this: There are three parts to the plan. You are in the second or the middle part, the one in which you will be tested by temptation, by trials, perhaps by tragedy. Understand that and you will be better able to make sense of life and to resist the disease of doubt and despair and depression.

“The plan of redemption, with its three divisions, might be likened to a grand three-act play. Act 1 is entitled ‘Premortal Life.’ The scriptures describe it as our first estate (see Jude 1:6; Abraham 3:26, 28). Act 2, from birth to the time of resurrection, is the ‘Second Estate.’ And act 3 is called ‘Life After Death’ or ‘Eternal Life.’

“In mortality, we are like actors who enter a theater just as the curtain goes up on the second act. We have missed act 1. The production has many plots and subplots that interweave, making it difficult to figure out who relates to whom and what relates to what, who are the heroes and who are the villains. It is further complicated because we are not just spectators; we are members of the cast, on stage, in the middle of it all!” (*The Play and the Plan* [CES fireside for young adults, 7 May 1995], 1–2).

Premortal Existence

Before our mortal birth we lived with our Heavenly Father (see Job 38:4–7; Jeremiah 1:5; Abraham 3:21–23). Heavenly Father is a glorified, perfected, celestial being with a body of flesh and bones (see D&C 130:22). The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens!” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 345).

Heavenly Father is the father of our spirit bodies (see Numbers 16:22; Acts 17:29; Hebrews 12:9; Moses 3:5). He possesses a fulness of all godly attributes and joy, and He desires that His children become like Him (see Matthew 5:48; 2 Nephi 9:18; Moses 1:39).

Spiritual Creation

Abraham saw that all of Heavenly Father's children were "intelligences" or spirits that were organized before the world was (see Abraham 3:18–23). President Packer taught: "The spirits of men and women are eternal (see D&C 93:29–31; see also Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith . . .*, 158, 208). All are sons and daughters of God and lived in a premortal life as his spirit children (see Numbers 16:22; Hebrews 12:9; D&C 76:24). The spirit of each individual is in the likeness of the person in mortality, male and female (see D&C 77:2; 132:63; Moses 6:9–10; Abraham 4:27). All are in the image of heavenly parents" (*The Play and the Plan*, 3).

In "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," the First Presidency stated: "All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose" (*Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102; see also D&C 29:31–32; Moses 3:5; *Old Testament: Genesis–2 Samuel* [Religion 301 student manual, 1981], p. 32).

Agency

- "1. All beings are subject to divine law, obedience to which brings blessings. Disobedience results in suffering and damnation.
- "2. Each person has the divine gift of agency to choose good or evil. A person may worship how, where, or what he or she may, but only by learning and obeying celestial laws can he or she be exalted.
- "3. Each person can choose and act for him- or herself only as he or she gains knowledge of good and evil and is influenced by one or the other" ("Basic Doctrine," *Charge to Religious Educators*, 3rd ed. [1994], 85).

The proper exercise of our moral agency is essential to becoming like God (see 2 Nephi 2:14–16). There are, however, some consequences to granting us the opportunity to choose. As essential as agency is to our growth, it was inevitable that we would not always choose correctly. As the Apostle Paul wrote, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). This consequence was anticipated and provided for in the plan the Father presented to His children in a premortal council.

The Grand Council and the War in Heaven

After our Heavenly Father provided us with spirit bodies in that premortal world, we were more like Him, but we still lacked many essential attributes. He is an exalted and perfected being with a glorified physical body; we were not.

The Father called His children together in a grand council in heaven and presented His plan for helping us become like Him (see Moses 4:1–4; Abraham 3:22–27).

President Packer said:

"In the council of the Gods, the plan of the Eternal Father was sustained (see Alma 34:9; see also *Teachings [of the Prophet Joseph Smith]*, 349–50). The plan provided for the creation of an earth whereupon his children would receive physical bodies and would be tested according to his commandments (see Moses 6:3–10, 22, 59; Abraham 3:24–25; 4:26–27). Each spirit in premortal life was provided opportunities for learning and obedience. Each was given agency (see Alma 13:3–5).

"A grand council in heaven was convened (see *Teachings*, 349–50, 357). The divine plan required one to be sent as a savior and redeemer to fulfill the plan of the Father. The Firstborn of the Eternal Father, Jehovah, willingly volunteered and was chosen (see Moses 4:1–2; Abraham 3:19, 22–27).

"Most sustained this choice. Others rebelled, and there was a war in heaven. Satan and those who followed him in rebellion against the Father's plan were cast out and denied mortality (see Revelation 12:7–13; D&C 29:36; 76:28; Moses 4:3).

"Those who kept the first estate (you are among them) were to be added upon with a physical body and were permitted to live upon the earth in this planned second estate (see Abraham 3:26). Each was appointed the times and the bounds of his or her habitation (see Deuteronomy 32:8; Acts 17:26). Some were foreordained to be prophets (see Alma 13:7–9; Abraham 3:23; see also *Teachings*, 365)" (*The Play and the Plan*, 3; see also Bible Dictionary, "War in Heaven," p. 788).

Physical Creation

The physical creation of the heavens, the earth, and all things thereon was another essential step in helping us become like our Father in Heaven (see Moses 1:33–39; Abraham 3:24–26). When God created the earth it was "very good" (Moses 2:31) and a place of beauty and abundance (see Genesis 1–2; Moses 2; 3:7–25; Abraham 4–5; see also D&C 59:16–20; *Old Testament: Genesis–2 Samuel*, pp. 27–36).

President Packer taught: "An earth was then organized (see Abraham 5:4). Adam and Eve, in a paradisiacal state, were the first man and first woman (see Moses 1:34; 3:7; 4:26; 6:3–10, 22, 59). They were married eternally and were given commandments (see Moses 3:23–25). They were in a state of innocence and knew no sin (see 2 Nephi 2:23)" (*The Play and the Plan*, 3).

The Fall and Mortality

The Fall of Adam and Eve was the next step in the great plan of happiness. The Fall brought about the conditions of mortality, including spiritual and physical death (see 2 Nephi 2:19–25; Alma 42:1–10). Mortal life on earth is essential to becoming like God. It provides us with the opportunity to

gain a physical body and to be able to continue to grow and learn by having the freedom to choose to follow the counsel of God or the enticements of Satan (see Alma 42:1–12; D&C 29:36–43; Moses 5:9–12). It is by the choices we make that we “prove” ourselves (see Abraham 3:25; see also *Old Testament: Genesis–2 Samuel*, pp. 39–43).

Referring to his metaphor of existence as a three-act play (see p. 287), President Packer gave the following counsel about our mortal condition:

“As part of the eternal plan, the memory of our premortal life, act 1, is covered with a veil. Since we enter mortality at the beginning of act 2 with no recollection of act 1, it is little wonder that it is difficult to understand what is going on.

“That loss of memory gives us a clean start. It is ideal for the test; it secures our individual agency and leaves us free to make choices. Many choices must be made on faith alone. Even so, we carry with us some whispered knowledge of our premortal life and our status as offspring of immortal parents.

“You were born in innocence, for ‘every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning’ (D&C 93:38), and you have an inborn sense of right and wrong, for the scriptures tell us in the Book of Mormon that we ‘are instructed sufficiently that [we] know good from evil’ (2 Nephi 2:5). . . .

“If you expect to find only ease and peace and bliss during act 2, you surely will be frustrated. You will understand little of what is going on and why things are permitted to be as they are.

“Remember this! The line ‘And they all lived happily ever after’ is never written into the second act. That line belongs in the third act, when the mysteries are solved and everything is put right. . . .

“Until you have a broad perspective of the eternal nature of this great drama, you won’t make much sense out of the inequities in life. Some are born with so little and others with so much. Some are born in poverty, with handicaps, with pain, with suffering. Some experience premature death, even innocent children. There are the brutal, unforgiving forces of nature and the brutality of man to man. We have seen a lot of that recently.

“Do not suppose that God willfully causes that which, for his own purposes, he permits. When you know the plan and purpose of it all, even these things will manifest a loving Father in Heaven.

“There exists something of a script for this great play, the drama of the ages. . . .

“That script, as you should already know, is the scriptures—the revelations. Read them. Study them. . . .

“The scriptures speak the truth. From them you can learn enough about all three acts to get your bearings and get direction in your life. They reveal that ‘ye were also in the beginning with the Father; that which is Spirit, even the Spirit of truth;

“‘And truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come’ (D&C 93:23–24).

“Act 1, act 2, and act 3” (*The Play and the Plan*, 2).

The Mission of the Church and the Principles and Ordinances of the Gospel

The Fall of Adam and Eve was not a mistake or a surprise. Had they not chosen to become mortal, neither they nor the rest of Heavenly Father’s children could progress to become like God (see 2 Nephi 2:22–25). The Fall was a necessary part of the plan, but there are some negative consequences from which we need to be saved (see the commentary for Genesis 3:19 in *Old Testament: Genesis–2 Samuel*, p. 42).

The gospel of Jesus Christ provides the way for all mankind to be saved in the presence of God and to become like Him if they will (see 2 Nephi 31:10–21; Mosiah 3:19; Alma 7:14–16; 3 Nephi 27:13–22; Moses 5:9; Articles of Faith 1:4; see also the commentary for Genesis 4:1 in *Old Testament: Genesis–2 Samuel*, pp. 51–52). If we refuse to follow the plan and do not accept the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we cannot be redeemed from our sins and perfected (see Mosiah 2:36–39; 4:1–12; Alma 11:40–41; D&C 29:43–44).

In every dispensation, prophets have been sent to teach the gospel to God’s children on earth. The Church of Jesus Christ has been established in these latter days to invite all to come unto Christ by proclaiming the gospel to the world, perfecting the Saints, and redeeming the dead (see Amos 3:7; Ephesians 4:11–15; D&C 1:4–23; 110:11–16; 138; Articles of Faith 1:5–6).

The Atonement

Because of the Fall of Adam we will all die (physical death), we are all cut off from the presence of God and cannot return to Him on our own (spiritual death), and we all live in a world of toil, sin, and sorrow. The Atonement of Jesus Christ provides for the resurrection of all mankind, with immortal physical bodies, thus overcoming physical death. The Atonement ensures too that all mankind will be redeemed from the Fall and brought back into the presence of God in their resurrected state for the Judgment, thus overcoming the first spiritual death (see 2 Nephi 9:15, 21–22; Helaman 14:16–18; Bible Dictionary, “Atonement,” p. 617; “death,” p. 655). Through the Atonement, if we repent we can also be cleansed from personal sins and changed from our fallen condition to become like God our Father (see 2 Nephi 2:5–10; 9:4–14, 19–27; Alma 7:11–13; 12:32–34; 34:8–16; 42:11–28; D&C 19:16–19; Articles of Faith 1:3; see also “The Grand Council and the War in Heaven,” p. 288).

No ordinary man could have brought about the Resurrection and atoned for the sins of all mankind. Only one who had power over death and the power of a sinless life could have done so. It required the sacrifice of a God (see John 10:17–18; Alma 34:9–14; D&C 45:4).

Life beyond the Grave

The Spirit World

Physical death is the separation of the body and the spirit. At death the spirits of all of Heavenly Father's children go to a spirit world to await the Resurrection. In the spirit world there is a separation between those who accepted the gospel and kept the commandments and those who did not. As President Packer explained, "It is happiness, a paradise, for the righteous. It is misery for the wicked (see 2 Nephi 9:10–16; Alma 40:7–14). In either state, we continue to learn and are accountable for our actions (see D&C 138:10–22)" (*The Play and the Plan*, 3). For more information about the spirit world, see Doctrine and Covenants 138—President Joseph F. Smith's account of the remarkable vision given to him of the work that goes on there.

Judgment

When the Father presented His plan and proposed the creation of an earth, His purpose was to "prove" His children to see if they would keep His commandments (see Abraham 3:25). Through the Prophet Joseph it was revealed that we will be judged not only on the basis of what we do but also on what we desire in our hearts (see Alma 41:3–6; D&C 137:9).

The Judgment and the Resurrection are closely intertwined, and part of our final judgment will take place as we are resurrected. All, except for sons of perdition, will come forth in the Resurrection with perfect bodies, but they will differ in glory. All will be raised with a body appropriate to the kingdom they will inherit, be that celestial, terrestrial, or telestial. Sons of perdition will be resurrected but will not be given any degree of glory; they will be cast out into outer darkness (see 1 Corinthians 15:35, 39–42; D&C 88:28–32).

President Packer said:

"After all have been dealt with equally, a judgment will be rendered (see Mosiah 3:18; see also *Teachings*, 218–19). Each will be resurrected in his or her own order (see 1 Corinthians 15:21–23). The glory one receives, however, will depend on obedience to the laws and ordinances of our Father's plan (see 1 Corinthians 15:40–42).

"Those who have become pure through repentance will obtain eternal life and return to the presence of God. They will be exalted as 'heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ' (Romans 8:17; see also D&C 76:94–95; 84:35; 132:19–20; see also *Teachings*, 374).

"Provision is made in the plan for those who live in mortality without knowing of the plan: 'Where there is no law given there is no punishment; and where there is no punishment there is no condemnation . . . because of the atonement; for they are delivered by the power of him' (2 Nephi 9:25).

"Without that sacred work of the redemption of the dead, the plan would be incomplete and would really be unfair. The ordinances of the temple—the endowments, the sealing in eternal marriage—are worth all the preparation required. Do not do anything that may make you unworthy to receive them or act 3 of this eternal drama will be less than you are now free to make it" (*The Play and the Plan*, 3–4).

Resurrection

Everyone who has ever lived on this earth, righteous or not, will be resurrected with an immortal physical body. This is a gift because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ (see 1 Corinthians 15:19–22; 2 Nephi 9:6–15, 19–22). Not all are resurrected at the same time, "but every man in his own order" (1 Corinthians 15:23; see also Mosiah 15:20–26; Alma 40:1–2; D&C 76:15–17).

POSSIBLE BOOK OF MORMON SITES (IN RELATION TO EACH OTHER)



Possible relationships of sites in the Book of Mormon based on internal evidence. No effort should be made to identify points on this map with any existing geographical location. Originally prepared by Daniel H. Ludlow and used by his permission.

NEPHI'S VISION (1 NEPHI 10–14)

Judea and Galilee in the Meridian of Time	Nephite-Lamanite Civilization	Gentile Nations in the Last Days
Virgin birth (11:13–20)	Christ's ministry to descendants of Lehi (12:4–10)	Formation of a great church (13:4–9)
John the Baptist (10:7–10)	Battle between Nephites and Lamanites (12:13–15, 19)	Columbus discovers America (13:12)
Ministry of Christ (11:24)	Destruction of Nephites (12:19–20)	Immigrants seek freedom in America (13:13)
The Twelve Apostles (11:29)	Lamanites dwindle in unbelief (12:21–23)	Scattering of latter-day Lamanites (13:14)
Christ performs miracles (11:31)		Wars of independence (13:16–19)
Trial and Crucifixion (11:32–33)		Gentiles stumble when plain and precious truths removed from the Bible (13:20–34)
Apostles persecuted (11:34–36)		Restoration of the gospel (14:7)
		Bible and Book of Mormon taken to Lamanites (13:35–41)
		Lord's promise to the Gentiles (13:34, 42)
		Wars and rumors of wars (14:15–16)
		Saints of the Church of the Lamb armed with the power of God (14:14)
		God's wrath poured out on the abominable church (14:13)
		Second Coming and end of the world*

*Nephi witnessed these events but was told not to write them because that was the stewardship of John the Revelator. At least some of these events are included in the book of Revelation.

PROPHECIES IN 2 NEPHI 26–27

1. Prophecies Concerning the Coming of Jesus Christ to the Americas

Prophecy	Declared	Fulfilled
Christ would show Himself to the Nephites.	2 Nephi 26:1	
There would be great wars between the Nephites and Lamanites.	2 Nephi 26:2	
The Nephites would be shown signs of Christ's birth, death, and Resurrection.	2 Nephi 26:3	
At the time of Christ's death, there would be terrible destructions and the wicked would perish.	2 Nephi 26:4–6	
The righteous who looked forward to Christ would not perish in the destruction at the time of His death.	2 Nephi 26:8	

2. Prophecies Concerning the Book of Mormon Peoples after Christ's Coming

Prophecy	Declared	Fulfilled
There would be a great period of peace in America after Christ's coming.	2 Nephi 26:9	
The Nephites would be destroyed shortly after the fourth generation following Christ's visit to America.	2 Nephi 26:10, 18	
The descendants of the Book of Mormon peoples would dwindle in unbelief after the destruction of the Nephite nation.	2 Nephi 26:15	

3. Prophecies Concerning the Last Days

Prophecy	Declared	Fulfilled
The Gentiles would suffer from pride and would stumble spiritually. There would be many churches built up, causing envyings, strife, and malice.	2 Nephi 26:20–21	
There would be secret combinations.	2 Nephi 26:22	

4. Prophecies Concerning the Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon

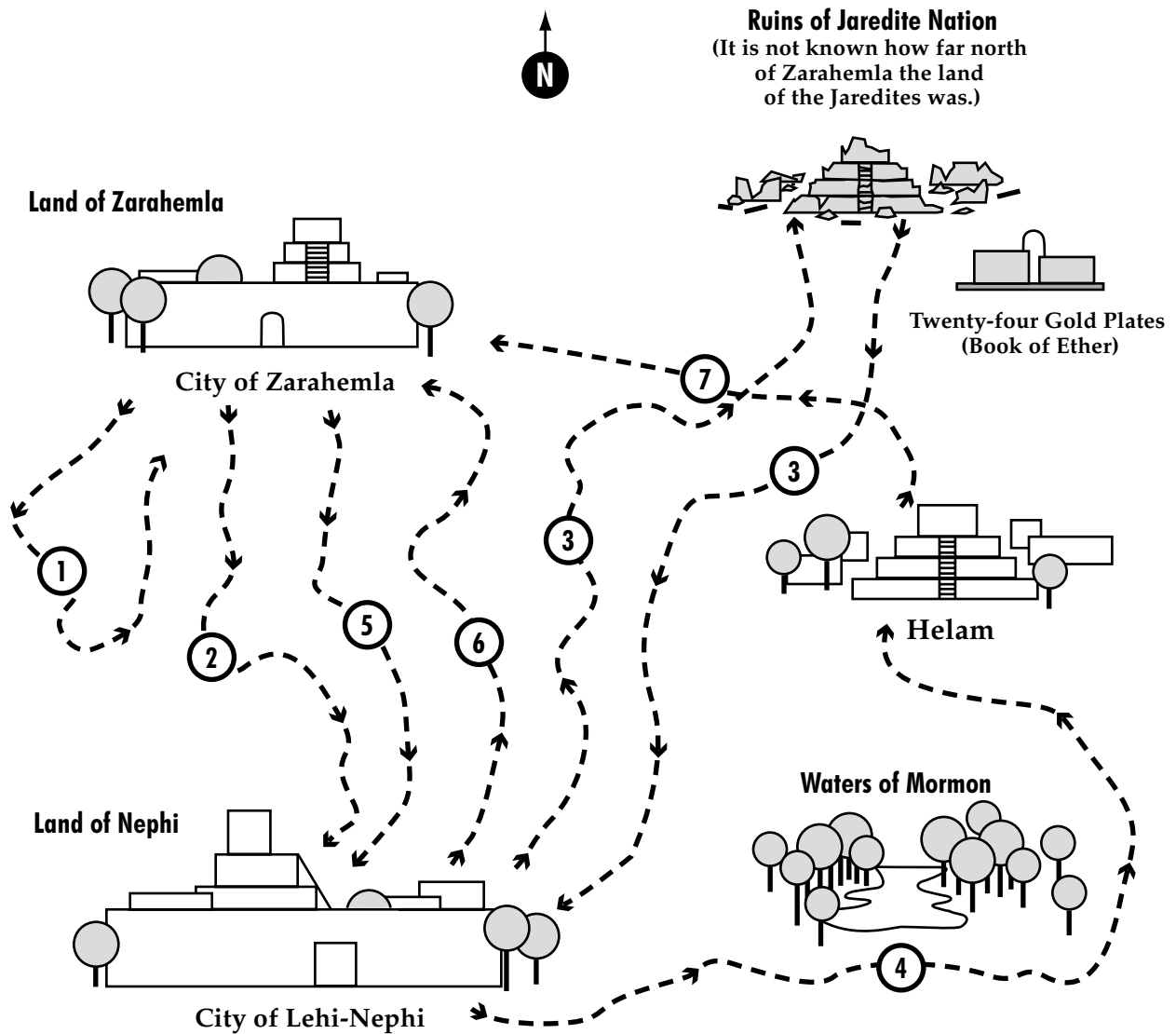
Prophecy	Declared	Fulfilled
The Book of Mormon would be delivered to an unlearned man (the Prophet Joseph Smith).	2 Nephi 27:9	
Three witnesses, and a few others, would see the plates containing the record of the Nephites.	2 Nephi 27:12–14	
God would command that some of the unsealed portion of the Book of Mormon be delivered to the learned.	2 Nephi 27:15	
The learned man would ask for the plates to translate them.	2 Nephi 27:15	
The learned man would say he could not read the book because it was sealed.	2 Nephi 27:17	

KING BENJAMIN TEACHES OF CHRIST

Mosiah 3:5	Christ, who reigns “from all eternity to all eternity,” would “come down from heaven among the children of men, and . . . dwell in a tabernacle of clay.”
Mosiah 3:5–6	Christ would work “mighty miracles,” such as raising the dead and healing all manner of disability and disease, and casting out the evil spirits that “dwell in the hearts of the children of men.”
Mosiah 3:7	He would suffer temptations, hunger, thirst, fatigue, and “pain of body,” more than a man can suffer “except it be unto death.”
Mosiah 3:7	Blood would come from every pore, so great would be His anguish over the wickedness of mankind.
Mosiah 3:8	He would be called “Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning.”
Mosiah 3:8	His mother would be called Mary.
Mosiah 3:9	His own people would reject Him, considering Him only “a man.” They would accuse Him of having an evil spirit and would scourge and crucify Him.
Mosiah 3:10	He would rise from the dead on the third day.
Mosiah 3:10	He would judge the world with “righteous judgment.”
Mosiah 3:11	His blood would atone for those who sin in ignorance.
Mosiah 3:12	Repentance is required of all who sin knowingly.
Mosiah 3:15	Many “signs, and wonders, and types, and shadows” would be given to the house of Israel, including the law of Moses, pointing the people toward Christ’s coming. Still they would harden their hearts and fail to understand that the law of Moses “availeth nothing except it were through the atonement of [Christ’s] blood.”
Mosiah 3:17	There would be “no other name given nor any other way nor means” by which salvation could come. It comes only in and through “the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent.”

(Adapted from Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon* [1997], 99–100.)

SEVEN JOURNEYS IN THE BOOK OF MOSIAH



1. Ill-fated journey (see Omni 1:27–28; Mosiah 9:1–2)
2. Zeniff’s journey (see Omni 1:29–30; Mosiah 9:3–9)
3. Journey to find Zarahemla (see Mosiah 8:7–9; 21:25–27)
4. Alma’s escape to Waters of Mormon and later to Helam (see Mosiah 18:4–5, 32–35; 23:1–5, 19–20)
5. Ammon’s journey to find land of Nephi (see Mosiah 7:2–7)
6. Limhi’s escape to Zarahemla (see Mosiah 22:3–13)
7. Alma’s escape to Zarahemla (see Mosiah 24:16–25)

ALMA AND NEHOR

Alma faced serious problems that if not handled correctly could have led to the downfall of the nation and the Church. Imagine yourself in the place of Alma.

Situation 1 (Alma 1:3–12)

An anti-Christ named Nehor has been teaching priestcraft. He declares that religious leaders should be popular and supported by the people and that all mankind will be saved. In an argument with Gideon, a member of the Church, Nehor draws his sword and kills him. You are the new chief judge, and Nehor has been brought before you for judgment. What should you do?

1. Forgive him and let him go his way.
2. Hear his defense, judge him, and exact any warranted punishment.
3. Forgive him if he will renounce his beliefs.
4. Debate with him to prove his teachings wrong.

To see how the real Alma handled this situation, read Alma 1:14–16.

Situation 2 (Alma 1:16–23)

Dissenters begin to persecute the members of the Church. Some of the members endure patiently, but some also begin to contend, both verbally and physically. You are the high priest of the Church. What should you do?

1. Forgive those who contend, but do nothing to stop them.
2. Tell the members of the Church to move to a new city.

3. Use the military to force the dissenters to move to a new city.
4. Call the people to repentance and excommunicate Church members who don't repent.

To see how the real Alma handled this situation, read Alma 1:24.

Situation 3 (Alma 1:25–32)

The members of the Church share their goods with the poor and work that all might have peace. The Lord blesses them and they prosper. Those who are not members of the Church are idle, wear costly apparel, practice idolatry, commit whoredoms, and are lifted up in pride. What should you do?

1. Enforce the laws and arrest those who commit wickedness.
2. Ignore them and let them continue to sin.
3. Change the laws so they are easier to obey.
4. Leave the land to the wicked and seek a new home.

To see how the real Alma handled this situation, read Alma 1:33.

(Adapted from Dennis N. Wright, *The Scripture Connection: The Book of Mormon Edition* [1997], 130; used by permission.)

GIVING AWAY OUR SINS

“When we too are willing to give away all our sins to know him and follow him, we too will be filled with the joy of eternal life” (Howard W. Hunter, in Conference Report, Apr. 1993, 80; or *Ensign*, May 1993, 64).

“Giving away all our sins is the only way we can come to know God.

“In contrast, those who hold back some of their sins will be held back. So will those who refuse to work humbly and honestly with the Lord’s appointed. Partial disclosure to appointed leaders brings full accountability” (Neal A. Maxwell, in Conference Report, Oct. 1991, 42; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 32).

“Prayer, fasting, pleading, importuning—all are involved. Striving each day that we live to mirror the Master in our thoughts and actions is necessary. . . .

“ . . . Those who yield ‘their hearts unto God’ (Helaman 3:35), who are willing to give away all their sins to know him (see Alma 22:18), soon find that what they have given up was no sacrifice at all. They feel no sense of loss but rather a deep rejoicing” (Alexander B. Morrison, *Feed My Sheep: Leadership Ideas for Latter-day Shepherds* [1992], 45, 50).

“Brethren, each of us must surrender our sins if we are to really know Christ. For we do not know Him until we become like Him. There are some, like [the father of Lamoni], who must pray until they, too, have ‘a wicked spirit rooted’ from them so they can find the same joy” (Ezra Taft Benson, in Conference Report, Oct. 1983, 63; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1983, 43).

THOSE WHO ARE TRULY CONVERTED

Alma 23:1–7, 16–18

“Social, ethical, cultural, or educational converts will not survive under the heat of the day unless their taproots go down to the fulness of the gospel which the Book of Mormon contains” (Ezra Taft Benson, in Conference Report, Apr. 1975, 96; or *Ensign*, May 1975, 65).

“The Book of Mormon . . . speaks of God, the creation of man, the Fall, the Atonement, the ascension of Christ into heaven, prophets, faith, repentance, baptism, the Holy Ghost, endurance, prayer, justification and sanctification through grace, and loving and serving God.

“We must know these essential truths. Aaron and Ammon and their brethren in the Book of Mormon taught these same kinds of truths to the Lamanite people (see Alma 18:22–39), who were ‘in the darkest abyss’ (Alma 26:3). After accepting these eternal truths, the Book of Mormon states, those converted Lamanites never did fall away. (See Alma 23:6.)” (Ezra Taft Benson, in Conference Report, Oct. 1984, 6; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 7).

Alma 24:6, 16–26

“In former days, disciples of the Lord ‘were firm, and would suffer even unto death rather than commit sin’ [Alma 24:19]. In latter days, devoted disciples of the Lord are just as firm”

(Russell M. Nelson, in Conference Report, Apr. 1994, 93; or *Ensign*, May 1994, 71).

“The nearer man approaches perfection, the clearer are his views, and the greater his enjoyments, till he has overcome the evils of his life and lost every desire for sin” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 51).

Alma 26:11–17, 35–37

“I feel so profoundly grateful in my heart for the blessings of the Lord. How good and kind and generous and wonderful He has been to us, as His sons and daughters. How thankful we ought to be every day of our lives” (Gordon B. Hinckley, “Messages of Inspiration from President Hinckley,” *Church News*, 5 Dec. 1998, 2).

“Gospel gladness can be experienced . . . , as with Ammon, in rejoicing over being part of the Lord’s work” (Neal A. Maxwell, *Meek and Lowly* [1987], 39).

Alma 29:1–3, 9–14

“No joy is equal to bringing another to the light of the gospel” (Ezra Taft Benson, in Conference Report, Apr. 1984, 64; or *Ensign*, May 1984, 44).

See also D&C 18:15–16.

AMULEK TESTIFIES THAT THE WORD IS IN CHRIST

1. Alma 34:1–3. Amulek reviews Alma’s discourse on developing a testimony of Christ. He reminds us that we must have _____ and _____ as we wait upon the Lord.

2. Alma 34:4–5. “To plant the word in your hearts” means to ponder, pray, and experiment on the question at hand. What was “the great question”? _____

3. Alma 34:6–8. What five witnesses testified that Jesus is the Son of God and would come to earth to redeem mankind?

4. Alma 34:9. What would result if there were no Atonement?

5. Alma 34:10–12. Amulek called the Savior’s Atonement _____ and _____. No mortal could atone for the sins of any other mortal. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is an infinite and eternal being (see D&C 20:17, 28). His Atonement’s power extends to past, present, and future (see D&C 20:25–27). “Its effects cover all men, the earth itself and all forms of life thereon, and reach out into the endless expanses of eternity” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [1966], 64).

6. Alma 34:13–14. How was the law of Moses affected by the Atonement? _____

What was the great and last sacrifice? _____

7. Alma 34:15. What does the Savior’s sacrifice make possible for us? _____

What does His sacrifice give us the means to have? _____

8. Alma 34:16. The expression “encircles them in the arms of safety” describes a blessing for those who exercise faith unto repentance. Describe how you would feel knowing that all your sins were forgiven. _____

HELANAN AND 3 NEPHI: A PARALLEL TO THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

“The record of the Nephite history just prior to the Savior’s visit reveals many parallels to our own day as we anticipate the Savior’s second coming” (Ezra Taft Benson, in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 3; or *Ensign*, May 1987, 4).

	Events or Signs	Coming to the Nephites	Second Coming
1. Social and Political Turmoil	Secret combinations	Helaman 1:11–12; 2:3–13; 6:15–30; 7:1–9	Ether 8:22–25; D&C 42:64
	Wars and rumors of wars	Helaman 1:14–30; 11:24–25; 3 Nephi 2:13, 17	D&C 45:26; 87:3; JS—M 1:28–29
	Pride, love of riches, and inequality	3 Nephi 6:12–14	Mormon 8:35–38
	A final terrible battle	3 Nephi 4:7–27	Zechariah 12:1–3, 8–11; Revelation 9
2. Cataclysmic Events	Signs and wonders in the heavens	Helaman 14:5–6, 20; 3 Nephi 1:21; 8:19, 22	Joel 2:30–31; D&C 45:40
	Earthquakes in divers places	Helaman 14:21–23	JS—M 1:29
	Droughts and famines	Helaman 11:4–6	Revelation 11:6; 18:8
	Storms, tempests, thunderings, lightnings	Helaman 14:21, 23, 26; 3 Nephi 8:5–7, 12	Revelation 16:18, 21; D&C 88:90
3. The Wicked	Great wickedness among the people: pride, contention, immorality, worldliness, apostasy	Helaman 3:1–3, 17–19, 33–36; 4:11–13; 6:2, 31–35; 7:4–6; 11:36–37; 16:12; 3 Nephi 2:3; 6:15–18	2 Timothy 3:1–6; Revelation 17:4; 18:10–14; 2 Nephi 27:1; 28:4, 8–11; D&C 10:63
	Wickedness among the youth	3 Nephi 1:29–30	Isaiah 3:5, 12; 2 Timothy 3:2
	The wicked reject true prophets and accept false ones.	Helaman 8:3–6; 10:13; 13:24–28; 14:10; 16:2, 6; 3 Nephi 7:14	2 Nephi 27:1, 5
	The wicked deny signs and wonders before Christ’s coming.	Helaman 16:13–23; 3 Nephi 1:5, 22; 2:1–2	2 Peter 3:3–4; D&C 45:26

	Events or Signs	Coming to the Nephites	Second Coming
4. The Righteous	A strong, righteous minority gathers out from the wicked.	3 Nephi 2:11–12; 3:13–16, 22	1 Nephi 14:12; Jacob 5:70; D&C 45:64–71; 115:6
	The Church grows, prospers, and experiences spiritual outpourings and miracles.	Helaman 3:24–26; 6:9–13; 16:13–14; 3 Nephi 1:4, 22–23; 7:17–20	Daniel 2:44; Joel 2:28–30; D&C 45:40
	Prophets wield great power and declare a constant message of repentance.	Helaman 5:18–23, 42; 11:3–6; 13:2; 14:11; 16:2; 3 Nephi 6:20	Revelation 11:3, 5–6; D&C 77:15. President Ezra Taft Benson said: “I have had reaffirmed in my mind and heart the declaration of the Lord to ‘say nothing but repentance unto this generation’ (D&C 6:9; 11:9). This has been a theme of every latter-day prophet” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1986, 3; or <i>Ensign</i> , May 1986, 4).
	The righteous watch for signs and pray to hasten Christ’s coming.	3 Nephi 1:8, 10–14	D&C 45:39, 44; 68:11; 133:37–40; Moses 7:62
5. The Lord Comes	Complete destruction of the wicked	Helaman 10:12; 11:6; 14:24; 15:1; 3 Nephi 8:14–16; 9:2–12	Isaiah 26:21; Malachi 4:1; D&C 1:9; 133:41
	The righteous survive the destruction at Christ’s coming.	3 Nephi 9:13; 10:12–13	1 Nephi 22:16–22, 24–26; D&C 97:21–25
	Jesus descends from the heavens.	3 Nephi 11:8	D&C 65:5; JS—M 1:26
	The graves of the dead open.	Matthew 27:52; Helaman 14:25	D&C 88:96–98; 133:56

FINAL JUDGMENT AND INTERMEDIATE JUDGMENT

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve. Excerpted from Judge Not and Judging (CES fireside for young adults, 1 Mar. 1998, 1–5).

The Final Judgment

“First, I speak of the final judgment. This is that future occasion in which all of us will stand before the judgment seat of Christ to be judged according to our works. . . . I believe that the scriptural command to ‘judge not’ refers most clearly to this final judgment, as in the Book of Mormon declaration that ‘man shall not . . . judge; for judgment is mine, saith the Lord’ (Mormon 8:20).

“. . . I believe this commandment was given because we presume to make final judgments whenever we proclaim that any particular person is going to hell (or to heaven) for a particular act or as of a particular time. When we do this—and there is great temptation to do so—we hurt ourselves and the person we pretend to judge.

“The effect of one mortal’s attempting to pass final judgment on another mortal is analogous to the effect on an athlete and observers if we could proclaim the outcome of an athletic contest with certainty while it was still underway. A similar reason forbids our presuming to make final judgments on the outcome of any person’s lifelong mortal contest. . . .

“. . . We must refrain from making final judgments on people because we lack the knowledge and the wisdom to do so. We would even apply the wrong standards. The world’s way is to judge competitively between winners and losers. The Lord’s way of final judgment will be to apply his perfect knowledge of the law a person has received and to judge on the basis of that person’s circumstances, motives, and actions throughout his or her entire life. . . .

Intermediate Judgments

“In contrast to forbidding mortals to make final judgments, the scriptures require mortals to make what I will call ‘intermediate judgments.’ These judgments are essential to the exercise of personal moral agency. . . .

“We must, of course, make judgments every day in the exercise of our moral agency, but we must be careful that our judgments of people are intermediate and not final. Thus, our Savior’s teachings contain many commandments we cannot keep without making intermediate judgments of people: ‘Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine’ (Matthew 7:6); ‘Beware of false prophets. . . . Ye shall know them by their fruits’ (Matthew 7:15–16); and ‘Go ye out from among the wicked’ (D&C 38:42).

“We all make judgments in choosing our friends, in choosing how we will spend our time and our money, and of course, in

choosing an eternal companion. Some of these intermediate judgments are surely among those the Savior referenced when he taught that ‘the weightier matters of the law’ include judgment (Matthew 23:23). . . .

Making Righteous Intermediate Judgments

“. . . Let us consider some principles or ingredients that lead to a ‘righteous judgment.’

“First of all, a righteous judgment must, by definition, be intermediate. It will refrain from declaring that a person has been assured of exaltation or from dismissing a person as being irrevocably bound for hellfire. It will refrain from declaring that a person has forfeited all opportunity for exaltation or even all opportunity for a useful role in the work of the Lord. The gospel is a gospel of hope, and none of us is authorized to deny the power of the Atonement to bring about a cleansing of individual sins, forgiveness, and a reformation of life on appropriate conditions.

“Second, a righteous judgment will be guided by the Spirit of the Lord, not by anger, revenge, jealousy, or self-interest. . . .

“Third, to be righteous, an intermediate judgment must be within our stewardship. We should not presume to exercise and act upon judgments that are outside our personal responsibilities. . . .

“A fourth principle of a righteous intermediate judgment of a person is that we should, if possible, refrain from judging until we have adequate knowledge of the facts. . . .

“. . . Sometimes urgent circumstances require us to make preliminary judgments before we can get all of the facts we desire for our decision-making. . . .

“. . . In such circumstances we do the best we can, relying ultimately on the teaching in modern scripture that we should put our ‘trust in that Spirit which leadeth to do good—yea, to do justly, to walk humbly, to judge righteously’ (D&C 11:12).

“A fifth principle of a righteous intermediate judgment is that whenever possible we will refrain from judging people and only judge situations. . . .

“A final ingredient or principle of a righteous judgment is that it will apply righteous standards. If we apply unrighteous standards, our judgment will be unrighteous. By falling short of righteous standards, we place ourselves in jeopardy of being judged by incorrect or unrighteous standards ourselves. The fundamental scripture on the whole subject of not judging contains this warning: ‘For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again’ (Matthew 7:2; see also 3 Nephi 14:2).”

MALACHI IN THE BOOK OF MORMON (3 NEPHI 24–25)

1. Read 3 Nephi 24:2. To what is Jesus Christ compared in this verse?
2. Read 3 Nephi 24:3; Doctrine and Covenants 128:24. What offering can we make that is like the offering of the sons of Levi?
3. List five kinds of people that the Lord will swiftly judge (see 3 Nephi 24:5).
4. Read 3 Nephi 24:7. What promise is made in this verse?
5. Why do you think neglecting to pay tithes and offerings could be called “robbing God”? (see 3 Nephi 24:8).
6. Use your Topical Guide to find three other scriptures that teach the importance of tithing. Cross-reference them to 3 Nephi 24:8, and then list them here.
7. List the blessings the Lord promises to those who obey the law of tithing (see 3 Nephi 24:10–12). Which of these blessings have you noticed in your own life?
8. Read 3 Nephi 24:16–17. Who does the Lord compare to jewels in these verses? Why is that an appropriate comparison?
9. Find another verse that teaches the value of Heavenly Father’s children, and write the reference here.
10. Read 3 Nephi 25:1. What day is being spoken of in this verse?
11. Read verse 2. In this verse, the Savior promises to “arise with healing in his wings.” Why is that promise comforting?
12. Read verse 5. What promise is made in this verse?
13. Read Doctrine and Covenants 110:13–16. When was the prophecy in 3 Nephi 25:5 fulfilled? Where was it fulfilled?
14. What latter-day prophet did Elijah appear to?
15. Read 3 Nephi 25:6 and compare it to Malachi 4:6 and Joseph Smith—History 1:39. What differences are there in the three versions of this verse?
16. The Prophet Joseph Smith stated, “The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead” (*History of the Church*, 6:313). Read Doctrine and Covenants 128:15–18. What do you think “turn[ing] the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers” means?
17. What is your favorite verse in 3 Nephi 24–25? Why?

