

The Restored Church of Jesus Christ Is Organized

Purpose

To strengthen each child's testimony that through revelation the true church was restored to the earth.

Preparation

1. Prayerfully study the historical account given in this lesson and Doctrine and Covenants 20:1–4, 37, 71–79 and 21:1–5. Then study the lesson and decide how you want to teach the children the scriptural and historical accounts. (See “Preparing Your Lessons,” pp. vi–vii, and “Teaching the Scriptural and Historical Accounts,” pp. vii–ix.)
2. Additional reading: Doctrine and Covenants 68:27 and *Gospel Principles* (31110), chapters 16 and 17.
3. Select the discussion questions and enrichment activities that will involve the children and best help them achieve the purpose of the lesson.
4. Materials needed:
 - a. A Doctrine and Covenants for each child.
 - b. Picture 5-6, The First Vision (Gospel Art Picture Kit 403; 62470); picture 5-8, Moroni Appears to Joseph Smith in His Room (Gospel Art Picture Kit 404; 62492); picture 5-11, Joseph Smith Receives the Gold Plates (Gospel Art Picture Kit 406; 62012); picture 5-14, Joseph Smith Translating the Gold Plates; picture 5-15, John the Baptist Conferring the Aaronic Priesthood (Gospel Art Picture Kit 407; 62013); picture 5-16, Melchizedek Priesthood Restoration (Gospel Art Picture Kit 408; 62371); picture 5-20, Organization of the Church.

Suggested

Lesson

Development

Invite a child to give the opening prayer.

Attention Activity

Review the events in the life of Joseph Smith that led to the restoration of the true church on the earth by showing the pictures listed in the “Preparation” section (all but the picture of the organization of the Church) and letting the children tell about the events pictured.

- Why did all these events happen in Joseph Smith's life?

Read or have a child read the following quotation:

“This day of organization was . . . the graduation for Joseph from ten years of remarkable schooling. . . . All of these [events] were preliminary to that historic April 6” (Gordon B. Hinckley, “150-Year Drama: A Personal View of Our History,” *Ensign*, April 1980, pp. 11–12).

Help the children understand that these events prepared Joseph Smith for his most important work, helping the Lord restore the church of Jesus Christ to the earth.

Scriptural
and Historical
Accounts

Teach the children about the organization of the Church and the instructions that were given to the Prophet Joseph Smith, as described in the following historical account and the scriptures listed in the “Preparation” section. Show the picture of the organization of the Church at an appropriate time.

Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery received the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods from John the Baptist and Peter, James, and John in 1829, and at this time Joseph was given the authority to organize and preside over the Church. Joseph Smith received two important revelations in April 1830 concerning how the Church should be organized. These revelations, published now as Doctrine and Covenants 20 and 21, told Joseph to organize the Church as Jesus Christ had organized his church when he lived on the earth.

The Lord revealed to the Prophet the exact day on which the Church should be organized (see D&C 20, section heading and verse 1). An organization meeting was held on Tuesday, 6 April 1830, at the home of Peter Whitmer Sr. in Fayette, New York. About sixty people came to this meeting, which Joseph Smith conducted.

The state of New York required a church to have six official members before it could be legally organized. Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery had been baptized on the day they received the Aaronic Priesthood, and later Hyrum Smith, Peter Whitmer Jr., Samuel H. Smith, and David Whitmer had been baptized. These men were the first official members of the Church. All of these men had seen the gold plates and had testimonies that Joseph Smith was a prophet and the person through whom Jesus Christ would restore his church.

After a prayer, Joseph asked the people at the meeting if they accepted him and Oliver as their teachers and spiritual leaders. Everyone said yes by raising their hands (as we do in the Church today when we sustain people to callings). Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery then ordained each other to the office of elder. Joseph and Oliver administered the sacrament to the people at the meeting, and after that they confirmed those who had been baptized and gave them the gift of the Holy Ghost. Now Jesus Christ’s true church was restored and organized on the earth again. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is Jesus Christ’s restored church and teaches the same gospel that Jesus taught when he lived on the earth (see enrichment activity 3).

Discussion
and Application
Questions

Study the following questions and the scripture references as you prepare your lesson. Use the questions you feel will best help the children understand the scriptures and apply the principles in their lives. Reading and discussing the scriptures with the children in class will help them gain personal insights.

- When was the Church organized? (D&C 21:3.) What was Joseph Smith called to be in the Church? (D&C 20:2; 21:1.) What was Oliver Cowdery called to be? (D&C 20:3.) Who gave Joseph and Oliver these callings? (D&C 20:4.) Who calls men to be apostles and prophets today? (Jesus Christ.)
- Who should be baptized? (D&C 20:37, 71.) What does it mean to be accountable? What is the age of accountability? (D&C 68:27.) How should we be baptized? (D&C 20:72–74.)
- When should we partake of the sacrament? (D&C 20:75.) Why do we partake of the sacrament?

- What were the early members of the Church taught about the Prophet Joseph Smith? (D&C 21:4–5.) Who tells us what Jesus Christ wants us to do today? (The living prophet.) Where can we hear or read about the teachings of the living prophet? Why should we learn what the living prophet is teaching us today?
- Why is it important that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the same as the church Jesus established when he lived on the earth? Why do we need Jesus Christ’s church on the earth today? What blessings do you receive by being a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?

Enrichment Activities

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

1. Give each child a copy of the quiz found at the end of the lesson (if it is not feasible to make copies, write the quiz on the chalkboard). Have the children take the quiz at the beginning of the lesson to see what they already know about the organization of the Church, or have them take it at the end of the lesson as a review.
2. Explain that Jesus Christ told Joseph Smith exactly how the Church should be organized. He even told Joseph what the name of the Church should be (although this revelation came in 1838, eight years after the Church was organized).

- What did Jesus Christ tell Joseph Smith the name of the Church should be?

Have the children follow along in the Doctrine and Covenants as one child reads Doctrine and Covenants 115:4 aloud. Explain that the name of the Church means that it is Jesus Christ’s church restored to the earth in our time, the latter days.

3. Divide the class into two groups. Give each group one of the following signs:

Jesus Christ’s church when he was on the earth
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Jesus Christ’s restored church—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Give the group designated “Jesus Christ’s church when he was on the earth” the Bible references listed below, and give the group designated “Jesus Christ’s restored church” the Doctrine and Covenants references listed below.

Matthew 3:13, 16 / D&C 20:72–74

(baptism by immersion by someone having authority)

Ephesians 2:19–20 / D&C 21:1

(living apostles and prophets)

Amos 3:7 / D&C 21:5

(current revelation)

Luke 22:19–20 / D&C 20:75

(sacrament)

Have each child read aloud one of the scriptures assigned to his or her group. Discuss with the children what these references say about the church of Jesus Christ. Help the children understand that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is organized the same way that Jesus Christ's church was organized when he was on the earth.

4. Help the children understand that to have a testimony of Jesus Christ and his restored church, they must believe that—

- Jesus Christ is Heavenly Father's Son and our Savior.
- Joseph Smith is the prophet of God through whom the gospel was restored.
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is Jesus Christ's true church.
- We are led by a living prophet of God today.

Help the children understand that through study and prayer they can gain a testimony that these things are true. Help them think of ways they can gain or strengthen their testimonies of these important principles.

5. Remind the children that living apostles are an important part of Jesus Christ's church. Have the children look up Matthew 10:2–4 and read the names of Jesus' original Twelve Apostles. Then show pictures of the current Twelve Apostles (from the meetinghouse library or Church magazines) and teach the children their names.

6. Help the children memorize the sixth article of faith. Point out that the Church today has all the positions mentioned in this article of faith, although we use different names for some of them (*bishops* instead of *pastors* and *patriarchs* instead of *evangelists*).

7. Have the children sing or say the words to "The Church of Jesus Christ" (*Children's Songbook*, p. 77). As the children sing, have them listen for two things they know and five things they will do as members of the Church. List these things on the chalkboard; then have the children sing the song again.

Conclusion

Testimony	Bear your testimony that Joseph Smith was the prophet through whom the church of Jesus Christ was restored to the earth. Express your gratitude for the many blessings the Church brings to your life. Allow the children to share ways the Church blesses their lives.
Suggested Home Reading	Suggest that the children study Doctrine and Covenants 20:1–4 and 21:1–5 at home as a review of this lesson.
Suggested Family Sharing	Encourage the children to share with their families a specific part of the lesson, such as a story, question, or activity, or to read with their families the "Suggested Home Reading." Invite a child to give the closing prayer.

The Organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

On what day was the Church organized?

1. 12 June 1828
2. 6 April 1830
3. 13 September 1944

In what state of the United States was the Church organized?

1. Missouri
2. Ohio
3. New York

How many members did the Church need to have to be legally organized?

1. 6
2. 60
3. 600

List three ways in which the restored Church is the same as the church Jesus Christ organized when he was on the earth.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.