

The Saints Are Taught to Recognize Good and Evil

Purpose

To teach the children how to recognize and seek the true gifts of the Spirit and not be deceived by evil.

Preparation

1. Prayerfully study the historical accounts given in this lesson; Doctrine and Covenants 50:1–9, 17–24, 31 and Moroni 7:15–17 (how to distinguish between true and false spiritual manifestations); and Doctrine and Covenants 46:7–26, 32–33 (spiritual gifts). 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: *Gospel Principles* (31110), chapter 22.
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. A Book of Mormon.
 - c. An imitation item such as play money, a cut-glass “jewel,” or a paper flower.

Suggested Lesson Development

Invite a child to give the opening prayer.

Attention Activity

Display the imitation item. Explain that the item is a counterfeit, an imitation of the real thing.

- Which would you rather have—this imitation item or the real thing? Why?

Point out that imitations are often of poorer quality or less value than the real things they imitate. Explain that Satan is a counterfeiter. He tries to deceive us with bad imitations of good things Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ have given us. He does this because he wants us to follow him instead of Heavenly Father and Jesus. Share some examples of Satan’s imitations, such as the following:

Things of God

Uplifting music or movies
 Scriptures and good books
 Love between husband and wife
 Doing our best

Satan’s Imitations

Degrading music or movies
 Bad books
 Immorality
 Trying to be better than everyone else

Explain that Satan tries to convince us that his imitations are just as good as or even better than the things of God. While it may be easy to tell the difference between the imitation item you displayed and the real item, some of Satan’s imitations are more difficult to distinguish. Explain that in this lesson the children will learn how to recognize some of Satan’s imitations to avoid being deceived.

Teach the children about the difference between true and false spiritual gifts and about how and why to seek the gifts of the Spirit, as described in the following historical account and the scriptures listed in the “Preparation” section.

Satan Can Imitate Miracles and Spiritual Gifts

Explain that in the early days of the Church, members experienced many miracles. These miracles came about because of spiritual gifts that the Lord gave to Church members. Review with the children some of the miracles and spiritual gifts that have been discussed in previous lessons, such as the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Three Witnesses seeing the angel Moroni; the Prophet being able to translate the Book of Mormon into English from reformed Egyptian, a language he did not know; and the revelations given by the Lord on how the Church should be established and how its members should live. Point out that many members did not personally experience any miracles, but they were blessed with the spiritual gift of believing in other people’s experiences. Spiritual gifts from the Lord strengthened the Church members and led many people to join the Church.

A Methodist preacher named Ezra Booth came to Kirtland in the spring of 1831 with a group of people including John Johnson and his wife, Elsa. Elsa Johnson could not raise her arm because it was partially paralyzed. As these people talked with Joseph Smith, one of them asked if anyone on earth could heal Elsa’s arm. Later the Prophet took Elsa’s hand in his and quietly said, “Woman, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I command thee to be whole.” To everyone’s amazement, Elsa Johnson then raised her arm. The next day she hung her wash on the clothesline without pain for the first time in over six years (*History of the Church*, 1:215–16). This miracle led Ezra Booth and some members of the Johnson family to join the Church.

Satan did not like to see the Church growing, and he worked hard to stop the growth. One of his methods was to imitate the spiritual gifts given to members of the Church by the Lord. He did this so he could deceive people and lead them away from the Church.

During the first year after the Church was organized, some people claimed to have received revelations for the Church, just as the Prophet did (see lesson 15). Other people claimed to have seen visions or had other strange things happen to them. Parley P. Pratt observed that some people would get terrible expressions on their faces and seem to faint. Others would twist their bodies or have cramps and convulsions. Others claimed to have visions and revelations that did not agree with the teachings and spirit of the gospel.

Although some people had received revelations and visions from the Lord, Parley P. Pratt and other Church leaders felt that the strange happenings they observed were *not* from the Lord. They asked Joseph Smith to inquire of the Lord concerning these events. The answer Joseph received from the Lord in May 1831 is found in Doctrine and Covenants 50.

How to Distinguish False Spiritual Gifts from True Ones

In Doctrine and Covenants 50:1–9, the Lord explains that false spiritual gifts do exist and that they come from Satan. Discuss with the children why Satan uses these counterfeit gifts (see v. 3).

Discuss with the children how members of the Church can distinguish between true and false spiritual gifts, as explained in Doctrine and Covenants 50:17–24, 31 and Moroni 7:15–17. Help the children understand that false spiritual gifts lead us away from Christ, while true spiritual gifts lead us to believe in Christ and help us want to follow him.

We Can Receive True Spiritual Gifts

Explain that the Lord gave Doctrine and Covenants 46, a revelation about true spiritual gifts, a few months before he revealed Doctrine and Covenants 50. He warned the early members of the Church about Satan’s counterfeit gifts (see D&C 46:7–8) and then described some of the true spiritual gifts members of the Church may receive (see D&C 46:9–26).

Explain that all of the spiritual gifts described in Doctrine and Covenants 46 are available to members of the Church today. Discuss with the children the spiritual gifts listed in Doctrine and Covenants 46:9–26 and how they are to be obtained and used. Help the children understand that spiritual gifts are given to righteous people and are to be used to help others (see vv. 9, 12, 26).

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.

- Where do false spiritual gifts come from? (D&C 50:2–3.) How might Satan’s imitations of the gifts of God sometimes confuse people? Why does Satan want to deceive us?
- What do righteous members of the Church have to help them recognize false spiritual gifts? (The Holy Ghost, also known as the Comforter or the Spirit of truth; see D&C 50:17.) How does the Holy Ghost help us know what things are right?
- How can we know if what we are seeing or hearing is from God? (Moroni 7:15–17; D&C 50:23–24.) Have a child read aloud Doctrine and Covenants 50:23. What does it mean to edify? Explain that something that edifies makes us feel uplifted and makes us want to improve. Things that are from God make us want to follow Christ and be better people. Things that are from Satan have a bad influence and try to lead us to disobey the commandments.
- If we are having difficulty knowing if something is from God, what can we do? (D&C 46:7; 50:31; we can also talk to our parents or Church leaders.)
- Why does God give us spiritual gifts? (D&C 46:8–9, 26.) Why doesn’t everyone receive the same spiritual gifts? (D&C 46:11–12.)
- What are some of the true spiritual gifts we can receive? (D&C 46:13–25; see enrichment activity 1.) How can the gift to believe the testimonies of others (D&C 46:14) be helpful? (See enrichment activity 2.)
- How should we seek for spiritual gifts? (D&C 46:8–9.) What should we do when we receive a spiritual gift? (D&C 46:32.) To keep these gifts what must we do? (D&C 46:33.)
- What spiritual gifts have you witnessed in your life and in the lives of those around you?

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 piece of paper listing the following scripture references and spiritual gifts. Have the children look up the scriptures and match the references with the appropriate gifts.

1. D&C 46:14	a. Gift to believe in Jesus Christ (testimony)
2. D&C 46:19–20	b. Gift to believe the testimonies of others
3. D&C 46:13	c. Gifts of wisdom and knowledge
4. D&C 46:17–18	d. Gifts of faith to heal and be healed
5. D&C 46:24–25	e. Gift of prophecy
6. D&C 46:22	f. Gifts of speaking and understanding languages

(Answers: 1-b; 2-d; 3-a; 4-c; 5-f; 6-e.)

After the children finish the matching activity, discuss each gift and how people who have that gift can use it to help others.

2. To help the children understand the gift to believe the testimonies of others, read or have a child read the following quotation by Harold B. Lee, the eleventh President of the Church:

“If you have doubts, you listen to those of us who are bearing you a strong testimony. . . . If you haven’t [a testimony], then you hold onto mine until you get and develop one for yourself” (*Qualities of Leadership* [address to the Latter-day Saint Student Association, Aug. 1970], p. 8).

- Whose testimonies can you rely on as you strengthen your own?

Explain to the children that each of them needs to develop his or her own testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel, but while they are working on their own testimonies they can believe in the testimonies of Church leaders, their parents, their teachers, and other Church members they respect and trust.

Discuss how we can strengthen each other by sharing our testimonies in fast and testimony meeting. You may want to share your testimony of the gospel with the children.

3. Tell in your own words one of the following stories about the gift of tongues:
 - a. In 1921 Elder David O. McKay, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles who would later become President of the Church, went to New Zealand for a Church conference. He was to give a talk to a group of Maori people, but he did not speak the Maori language, and they did not speak English. At the beginning of his talk Elder McKay told the people that he wished he could talk to them in their own language, but since he could not, he would ask the Lord to give them the gift of interpretation of tongues so that they would be able to understand him. Elder McKay told the people that even if they could not understand his exact words, they would be able to feel the Spirit and know that his words were inspired by the Lord.

Elder McKay then began to give his talk with the help of an interpreter. Elder McKay would talk for a moment in English, and then the interpreter would repeat his words in Maori so the audience could understand. Suddenly people throughout the audience started calling to the interpreter to stop talking and sit down. They could understand Elder McKay themselves and did not need the interpreter anymore. Even though the people in the audience did not understand English, the Lord blessed them with the gift of interpretation of tongues and they were able to understand everything Elder McKay said in his talk. (See R. Lanier Britsch, "Roots of Faith," *Ensign*, Sept. 1989, p. 48.)

b. The Prophet Joseph Smith was once invited to preach the gospel to a group of American Indians. The Indians could not understand English and the Prophet could not speak the Indians' language, so the Prophet paid a special government agent to translate his words into the Indian language. The Prophet spoke for a few minutes, and the agent interpreted his words for the Indians. When the Indians showed anger at the message, the Lord helped the Prophet know that the agent was not telling the Indians the right words. He was telling lies in order to make the Indians angry. The Prophet moved the agent aside and preached a sermon to the Indians without the help of an interpreter. Although they did not speak the same language, the Indians understood every word the Prophet said in the sermon. The Lord blessed the Indians with the gift of interpretation of tongues so that they could understand what the Prophet was telling them. (See E. Cecil McGavin, *The Historical Background of the Doctrine and Covenants* [Salt Lake City: Paragon Printing Co., 1949], p. 156.)

4. Tell in your own words the following story about the gifts of faith to heal and faith to be healed:

John Shumway of Orem, Utah, was riding his bicycle to a Scout meeting when he was struck by a car and received serious head injuries. He was taken to a hospital, where the doctor told John's family that there was little chance that John would survive, and that if he did live he would have severe brain damage. Several priesthood holders, including John's father and his bishop, laid their hands on John's head to give him a blessing. The bishop felt prompted to bless John that he would be healed. After the blessing, delicate surgery was performed on John's brain. John survived the surgery but was unconscious for many days.

Randy, a friend who was with John when the accident happened, prayed constantly for John. When the ward held a special fast, Randy participated, praying sincerely for John to recover. That same day at church, John's father told Randy that John had regained consciousness. Randy received a strong testimony of the power of fasting and prayer when John later told him that he felt Randy's faith had helped him wake up.

John had more surgery and spent much time recovering, but eventually his health was restored. To the amazement of his doctors, he was able to play basketball, learn to drive a car, become an Eagle Scout, graduate from high school, and prepare for a mission. Because of the faith of many people, John was healed.

Explain to the children that although John was healed, sometimes people are not healed even though they have great faith (see D&C 42:48). Remind the children that Heavenly Father knows what is best for each of us and answers our prayers accordingly.

5. Help the children memorize or review the seventh article of faith. You may want to have the children sing “The Seventh Article of Faith” (*Children’s Songbook*, p. 126) to help them memorize.

Conclusion

Testimony	Testify to the children of the importance of seeking the gifts of the Spirit. Encourage them to stay close to the Lord and pray often so that they will be able to distinguish between true and false spiritual gifts.
Suggested Home Reading	Suggest that the children study Doctrine and Covenants 46:11–14, 17–26 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.