

Lesson
46

Strengthening Our Testimonies of the Restored Gospel

Purpose

To strengthen the children's testimonies that Jesus Christ restored his true church through the Prophet Joseph Smith and that Jesus Christ directs the Church today.

Preparation

1. Prayerfully study 2 Nephi 28:30, Ether 4:11, and the following scriptures describing the parts of a testimony:
 - a. Doctrine and Covenants 19:16–19, 46:13, 76:22–23; Joseph Smith—History 1:17 (Jesus Christ is Heavenly Father's Son and our Savior.)
 - b. Doctrine and Covenants 21:1–3, 135:3; Joseph Smith—History 1:33 (Joseph Smith was the prophet through whom Jesus Christ restored his church to the earth.)
 - c. Moroni 10:3–5, Doctrine and Covenants 17:6 (The Book of Mormon is true.)
 - d. Doctrine and Covenants 1:30, 115:4; Joseph Smith—History 1:10–19 (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only true church.)
 - e. Doctrine and Covenants 1:38; 21:1, 4; 28:6–7 (We are led by a living prophet today.)

Then study the lesson and decide how you want to teach the children the scriptural account. (See "Preparing Your Lessons," pp. vi–vii, and "Teaching the Scriptural and Historical Accounts," pp. vii–ix.)

2. Additional reading: *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. Prepare the following wordstrips:

I can strengthen my testimony that—

Jesus Christ is Heavenly Father's Son and our Savior.

Joseph Smith was the prophet through whom
Jesus Christ restored his church to the earth.

The Book of Mormon is true.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
is the only true church.

We are led by a living prophet today.

5. Materials needed:
 - a. A Book of Mormon, a Doctrine and Covenants, and a Pearl of Great Price for each child.
 - b. A few reference books such as a dictionary or encyclopedia, magazines such as the *Friend*, or schoolbooks appropriate to be shown in Primary.
 - c. A picture of the living prophet (from the meetinghouse library or a Church magazine); selected pictures from previous lessons to illustrate the events you review while teaching the scriptural account.

**Suggested
Lesson
Development**

Invite a child to give the opening prayer.

Attention Activity

Write the word *knowledge* on the chalkboard.

- How do you learn new things or obtain knowledge?

Give the reference books, magazines, or schoolbooks to the children and let them quickly find some fact they can briefly share with the class. (If you have more children than books, let the children work in teams.) Allow the children to share their facts with the class. Explain that gaining knowledge is important, but knowing that the gospel of Jesus Christ is true is the most important knowledge. This knowledge is called a testimony. Write the word *testimony* next to the word *knowledge* on the chalkboard.

- How do you gain a testimony?

Read 2 Nephi 28:30 with the children and discuss what this verse means. Explain that we gain our testimonies of the gospel a little at a time. As we learn a few things about the gospel and live accordingly, we will learn more and strengthen our faith in what we have already learned. As we live the principles of the gospel, the Holy Ghost will help us know that they are true. Ask the children to listen to the following quotation to see how President Joseph F. Smith, the sixth President of the Church, gained his testimony. Read or have a child read the quotation:

“I would frequently go out and ask the Lord to show me some marvelous thing, in order that I might receive a testimony. But the Lord withheld marvels from me, and showed me the truth, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. . . . He did not have to send an angel from the heavens to do this. . . . By the whisperings of the still small voice of the spirit of the living God, He gave to me the testimony I possess” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1900, pp. 40–41).

Point out that even though Joseph F. Smith became a prophet, he did not gain his testimony by a spectacular experience, but a little at a time.

Tell the children that in this lesson they will discuss some of the basic parts of a testimony of the gospel, review what they already know about those parts, and learn how they can strengthen their own testimonies of the gospel.

Scriptural Account

Display the wordstrip *I can strengthen my testimony that—*. Discuss with the children what a testimony is. Explain that a testimony is a knowledge, confirmed by the Holy Ghost, that something is true. Help the children understand that as we study the gospel and pray about what we learn, the Holy Ghost will help us know that the gospel of Jesus Christ is true.

Post the remaining wordstrips one at a time. For each wordstrip, use the scriptures listed in the “Preparation” section and the applicable discussion and application questions to teach the children about the basic parts of a testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ. You may want to review (or have the children review) events discussed in previous lessons, showing appropriate pictures, to help the children understand the parts of a testimony.

After you discuss the wordstrips, help the children understand that the good feelings we have when we hear these things—that Jesus Christ is Heavenly Father’s Son and our Savior, Joseph Smith was the prophet through whom Jesus Christ restored his church to the earth, the Book of Mormon is true, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only true church, and we are led by a living prophet today—are a witness from the Holy Ghost that these things are true.

Help the children understand that they already have the beginnings of a testimony. To strengthen their testimonies they can study the gospel, pray about it, obey Heavenly Father’s commandments, and share their testimonies with others (see enrichment activities 1, 2, 3, and 5). Explain that when we bear our testimonies to others, we should include the basic parts of a testimony.

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.

- Who is Jesus Christ? (JS—H 1:17.) How is Jesus our Savior? (D&C 19:16–19; 46:13.) How can we know that Jesus Christ is our Savior?
- What did you learn about Jesus Christ when you learned about the First Vision and the appearance of Jesus Christ in the Kirtland Temple? How do these things help strengthen your testimony that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and our Savior?
- How did Joseph Smith find out which church he should join? (JS—H 1:10–19.) How can following Joseph Smith’s example help us strengthen our testimonies of the gospel?
- What did Jesus Christ restore to the earth through Joseph Smith? How can we know that Joseph Smith was the prophet through whom Jesus Christ restored his church? (See enrichment activity 4.)
- How did Joseph Smith assist the Savior in the restoration of the true church to the earth? (D&C 135:3; you may want to have each child tell about a different event that contributed to the restoration of the church of Jesus Christ, such as Moroni appearing to Joseph Smith, Joseph receiving the plates, Joseph translating the plates, or Joseph organizing the Church.)
- Why is it important to read and study the Book of Mormon throughout our lives? How can we gain a testimony that the Book of Mormon is true? (Moroni 10:3–5; help the children understand that we can use the procedure described in Moroni 10:3–5 to gain a testimony of any gospel principle, not just that the Book of Mormon is true.)
- Why did Jesus Christ’s church need to be restored? (JS—H 1:19; D&C 1:30.) How can we know that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is Jesus Christ’s true church?

- What is the complete name of the Church? (D&C 115:4.) Who gave the Church this name? Explain that the name of the Church was given to Joseph Smith by Jesus Christ himself. Remind the children that the name of the Church signifies that this is Jesus Christ's true church on the earth today.
- Who is the head of the Church today? (Jesus Christ.) Who is the leader of the Church on earth? (The living prophet.) Read or have a child read the following quotation from Gordon B. Hinckley, fifteenth President of the Church: "This church does not belong to its President. Its head is the Lord Jesus Christ, whose name each of us has taken upon ourselves" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, p. 94; or *Ensign*, May 1995, p. 71).
- Show a picture of the living prophet. Who is this man? What do you know about him? (Give each child an opportunity to tell something he or she knows about the prophet.) What does the prophet do? (He teaches us things that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ want us to know and do; see D&C 1:38; 21:1, 4.)
- How can we know that we are led by a living prophet today?
- What makes up a testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ? How do we receive a testimony? (Through the Holy Ghost; see Ether 4:11.)
- Why is it important for each of us to have our own testimony of the gospel? How can we strengthen our testimonies? (See enrichment activities 1, 2, 3, and 5.)
- How has learning about the Doctrine and Covenants and Church history this year in Primary helped strengthen your testimony of the gospel?

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. Emphasize how important it is for each member of the Church to have his or her own testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Read or have a child read the following quotation from Harold B. Lee, eleventh President of the Church:

"You will have to be guided by the light within yourself [your own testimony]. If you do not have it, you will not stand" (*Stand Ye in Holy Places* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1974], p. 95).

Explain that while our testimonies are growing, we can use other people's testimonies to help us. For example, we can believe that the Book of Mormon is true because we know our parents, our bishop, or the living prophet know it is true. However, we must each work to gain our own testimony and keep it strong.

Have the children take turns illustrating on the chalkboard ways to strengthen testimonies, such as listening to the prophet, praying, reading the scriptures, being a missionary, going to church, participating in family home evening, giving a talk in Primary, singing in Primary, obeying the Word of Wisdom, and making wise choices. (You may want to write suggestions on separate pieces of paper for the children to choose, or have the children think up their own suggestions.) Have the other children try to identify the illustrations.

After each child has had a turn, ask:

- How do these things help strengthen your testimony? What would happen to your testimony if you decided to stop doing these things?

2. Write the word *testimony* on an uninflated balloon. Have the children suggest things that will help their testimonies grow, such as praying, reading the scriptures, and sharing their testimonies with others (see the suggestions in enrichment activity 1). As the children give each suggestion, blow some air into the balloon. Discuss how the balloon grows, just as their testimonies will grow if they do the things they have suggested.
 - What will happen to our testimonies if we do not do these things?

Slowly let the air out of the balloon, and explain that if we do nothing to keep them growing, our testimonies will shrink just like the balloon.
3. Explain that gaining a testimony can be compared to planting a seed. Read and discuss Alma 32:36–39 with the children.
4. Relate the following experience had by Gordon B. Hinckley, fifteenth President of the Church, at a priesthood meeting when he was twelve years old:

“The hall was filled with men . . . and they lifted their voices in unison in that great hymn, ‘Praise to the man who communed with Jehovah! Jesus anointed that Prophet and Seer. Blessed to open the last dispensation, Kings shall extol him and nations revere’ [see *Hymns*, no. 27]. . . . There came into my heart a conviction that the man of whom they sang [Joseph Smith] was really a prophet of God, and I am grateful to be able to say that that conviction, which came, I believe, by the power of the Holy Spirit, has never left me” (*Gordon B. Hinckley: Man of Integrity, 15th President of the Church*, videocassette [53503]).

Invite the children to share experiences when the Holy Ghost has given them a strong feeling that the gospel (or some principle of the gospel) is true. You may want to share an experience of your own.
5. Have a child read the following quotation from Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“Would you like a formula to tell how to get personal revelation [a testimony]? . . . My formula is simply this:

 - “1. Search the scriptures.
 - “2. Keep the commandments.
 - “3. Ask in faith.”

(“How to Get Personal Revelation,” *New Era*, June 1980, p. 50)

 - How did Joseph Smith apply this formula? How can you apply it?

You may want to have the children write this formula on cards that they can take home and display in their homes to remind them to continually strengthen their testimonies.
6. Invite the children to share how they feel about one or more of the statements on the wordstrips that were posted during the lesson. Help the children recognize that the good feelings they have about the Church and its teachings are the beginnings of a testimony.
7. Sing or say the words to “The Church of Jesus Christ” (*Children’s Songbook*, p. 77) or “I Know That My Redeemer Lives” (*Hymns*, no. 136).

Conclusion

Testimony	<p>Emphasize how important it is for all members of the Church to have their own testimonies of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Remind the children that they already have the beginnings of a testimony and that they can strengthen their testimonies through study and prayer. Express your gratitude for Jesus Christ, the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon, the Church, and the living prophet. Share your experiences in gaining your testimony, and invite the children to express their feelings about the gospel.</p> <p>Encourage the children to share their testimonies with their families.</p>
Suggested Home Reading	<p>Suggest that the children study Moroni 10:3–5 and Doctrine and Covenants 1:30, 76:22–23 at home as a review of this lesson.</p>
Suggested Family Sharing	<p>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.”</p> <p>Invite a child to give the closing prayer.</p>