



WE MUST BE WORTHY TO ENTER THE TEMPLE

*“It would be the deepest desire of my heart to have every member of the Church be temple worthy. I would hope that every adult member would be worthy of—and carry—a current temple recommend”
(President Howard W. Hunter).*

OBJECTIVE

To help class members understand that they must be worthy to enter the temple.

PREPARATION

1. Well in advance of this lesson, invite the bishop or branch president to present information about the process of obtaining a temple recommend. Suggested material for this presentation is provided on pages 10–11 in the section “The Process of Obtaining a Temple Recommend Is a Blessing.” If the bishop is not available, you could ask one of his counselors to make the presentation.
2. Write the following quotation on the chalkboard or a poster: “I invite all members of the Church to live with ever more attention to the life and example of the Lord Jesus Christ” (President Howard W. Hunter, in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 7; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 8).

LESSON PRESENTATION

Invite someone to give an opening prayer.

Ask class members if they have any questions. Take the time required to answer questions to the best of your ability and as guided by the Lord’s Spirit. Remember that some aspects of temple work must not be discussed outside the temple.

Explain that those who enter the temple must show their faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ by living the gospel and keeping the commandments. They must be morally clean, pay a full tithing, obey the Word of Wisdom, keep the Sabbath day holy, and strive to live righteously in all other ways. They must also be interviewed by the bishop or branch president and the stake or mission president and be found worthy to receive a temple recommend. This lesson will review some of the gospel principles and commandments that the class members must be living in order to worthily attend the temple.

MORAL CLEANLINESS

Explain that the Lord and His prophets have repeatedly taught the great importance of being morally clean. President Gordon B. Hinckley

taught: “We believe in chastity before marriage and total fidelity after marriage. That sums it up. That is the way to happiness in living. That is the way to satisfaction. It brings peace to the heart and peace to the home” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 68; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 49).

Read together the following scriptures:

Doctrine and Covenants 42:22–24 (The Lord has commanded us to love our spouse and not to seek after anyone else; He has commanded us not to commit adultery.)

Doctrine and Covenants 121:45 (The Lord has commanded us to “let virtue garnish [our] thoughts unceasingly.”)

1 Timothy 4:12 (We are to be examples of purity.)

1 Nephi 10:21 (No unclean thing can dwell with God.)

Articles of Faith 1:13 (We believe in being chaste and virtuous.)

- Why does the Lord place so much emphasis on moral cleanliness?
- What are some of the results of immorality that we can see in the world around us? What are some of the blessings of living a morally clean life?

Direct class members’ attention to the quotation you have written on the chalkboard or a poster (see the “Preparation” section in this lesson).

- How can this counsel help us and our children to resist worldly temptations and live morally clean lives?

TITHING

Ask the class members to read Doctrine and Covenants 119:4.

Point out that the First Presidency has given the following explanation of a proper tithing: “The simplest statement we know of is the statement of the Lord himself, namely, that the members of the Church should pay ‘one-tenth of all their interest annually,’ which is understood to mean income” (First Presidency letter, 19 Mar. 1970). Tithing funds are used to build meetinghouses and temples, to sustain missionary work, and to build the kingdom of God on earth.

Share the following statement by President James E. Faust:

“Tithing is a principle that is fundamental to the personal happiness and well-being of the Church members worldwide, both rich and poor. Tithing is a principle of sacrifice and a key to the opening of the windows of heaven. . . . Members of the Church who do not tithe do not lose their membership; they only lose blessings” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 73–74; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 58–59).

Review with class members the following scriptures:

Leviticus 27:30 (Tithing is the Lord's; it is holy unto the Lord.)

Malachi 3:8–11 (We rob God when we withhold our tithes; God will abundantly bless those who pay tithing.)

- What blessings have you received because you have paid tithing?
- Why are we robbing God when we withhold our tithing? (See D&C 104:14.)

Explain that each year members are asked to meet with their bishop or branch president in tithing settlement and declare to him whether they pay a full tithing. This meeting is an opportunity for members to evaluate how well they are fulfilling this important commandment.

THE WORD OF WISDOM

Explain that before we may enter the temple, the Lord expects us to be free of practices that make our lives unclean and unhealthy, both spiritually and physically.

Read parts or all of the following scriptures:

1 Corinthians 3:16–17 (Our bodies are temples of God and should not be defiled.)

Doctrine and Covenants 89 (This revelation is known as the Word of Wisdom. Verses 1–9 discuss the things we should not take into our bodies; verses 10–17 discuss the things that are good for our bodies; verses 18–21 describe the Lord's promises to those who keep His commandments.)

- What things in the world today influence us to break the commandments given to us in the Word of Wisdom?
- How can we help ourselves and our children to keep the Lord's laws of health?

Ask the class members to read Doctrine and Covenants 29:34.

- In what ways do you think obedience to the Word of Wisdom can bless us spiritually as well as physically?
- What are some "great treasures of knowledge" (D&C 89:19) we might receive by keeping these commandments?

Share the following statement by President Boyd K. Packer:

"What you learn spiritually depends, to a degree, on how you treat your body. That is why the Word of Wisdom is so important.

“The habit-forming substances prohibited by that revelation—tea, coffee, liquor, tobacco—interfere with the delicate feelings of spiritual communication, just as other addictive drugs will do.

“Do not ignore the Word of Wisdom, for that may cost you the ‘great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures’ promised to those who keep it. And good health is an added blessing” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 78; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 61).

THE SABBATH DAY

Read together Exodus 20:8–11.

Explain that the Lord’s people have always been commanded to keep the Sabbath day holy. The Lord has promised great blessings to those who do so.

Ask the class members to read Doctrine and Covenants 59:9–13.

- What are the central reasons given by the Lord for keeping the Sabbath day holy?
- In what ways can Doctrine and Covenants 59:9–13 guide our observance of the Sabbath day?
- What are some of the blessings promised to those who properly observe the Sabbath?

As part of this discussion, share the following principles, taught by Elder James E. Faust:

“Why has God asked us to honor the Sabbath day? The reasons I think are at least threefold. The first has to do with the physical need for rest and renewing. . . .

“The second reason is, in my opinion, of far greater significance. It has to do with the need for regeneration and the strengthening of our spiritual being. . . .

“The third reason may be the most important of the three. It has to do with obedience to commandments as an expression of our love for God. Blessed are those who need no reasons other than their love for the Savior to keep his commandments” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1991, 46–47; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 35).

- What are some blessings that have come into your life because you have kept the Sabbath day holy?

Ask the class members to commit themselves to live by the commandments discussed today: moral cleanliness, tithing, the Word of Wisdom, and Sabbath day observance. Then they will be better prepared to attend the temple and will receive the Lord’s blessings more abundantly.

THE PROCESS OF OBTAINING A TEMPLE RECOMMEND IS A BLESSING

Explain that before members can go to the temple, they must each be found worthy to receive a temple recommend. As explained in the following statement, the process of obtaining this recommend can bless the life of each person:

"I . . . invite the members of the Church to establish the temple of the Lord as the great symbol of their membership and the supernal setting for their most sacred covenants" (President Howard W. Hunter).

"The bishop has the responsibility of making inquiries into our personal worthiness. This interview is of great importance to you as a member of the Church, for it is an occasion to explore with an ordained servant of the Lord the pattern of your life. If anything is amiss in your life, the bishop will be able to help you resolve it. Through this procedure, as you counsel with the common judge in Israel, you can declare or can be helped to establish your worthiness to enter the temple with the Lord's approval" (*Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple*, 3).

Explain that the bishop or branch president and the stake or mission president interview all those seeking a temple recommend for the first time and those planning to be married in the temple. Counselors in the bishopric and the stake presidency may interview those seeking renewal of their temple recommends.

At this time, have the bishop or branch president or one of the counselors in the bishopric make his presentation about temple recommends. He should not read the actual interview questions in a group setting, but he can present ideas about what class members can expect when they are interviewed for a temple recommend. The following statements may be used as a guide:

Members seeking a temple recommend should have testimonies of Heavenly Father, of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost. They should sustain the Lord's prophet, the other General Authorities, and their local Church leaders. They should not sympathize with or be affiliated with groups or individuals who have apostatized from the Church or whose teachings or practices are contrary to the gospel.

Those seeking recommends should be faithfully attending sacrament meetings, priesthood meetings, and other Church meetings. They should be conscientiously carrying out their callings given through priesthood authority. They should be striving to keep all of the Lord's commandments, including paying a full tithe, being honest in word and deed, and abstaining from the use of tea, coffee, alcohol, tobacco, and other harmful and habit-forming substances.

They should be living pure and virtuous lives and should be obeying the Lord's law of chastity, which prohibits sexual relations with anyone other than the spouse to whom they are lawfully wedded. They should be in harmony with gospel principles in both spiritual and physical relationships with other members of their families. They

must not be involved in any spiritual, physical, mental, or emotional abuse of others.

They must be willing to confess their sins and forsake them. Serious sins, such as moral transgressions, abuse of family members, affiliation with apostate groups or practices, or serious violations of the laws of the land, must be confessed to the bishop or branch president well in advance of a temple-recommend interview. If a person's conscience, which is the Light of Christ given to all people, raises a question in the person's mind about whether something should be discussed with the bishop or branch president, it should probably be discussed.

Those who have been divorced may need clearance from the bishop or branch president and the stake or mission president before obtaining a temple recommend. They must always adhere to the agreements of the divorce decree, including being current in making support payments.

Members seeking a temple recommend must be interviewed by a member of the stake presidency or by the mission president after being interviewed by a member of the bishopric or by the branch president. Some may wonder why this is necessary. When we seek a temple recommend, we are actually seeking permission from the Lord to enter the temple. We have the privilege of attesting to our worthiness before two witnesses who are the Lord's authorized servants. It is a blessing to us to affirm before the Lord's servants our worthiness to enter the holy temple.

CONCLUSION

To emphasize the importance of being worthy to attend the temple and always carrying a current temple recommend, review the following statement by President Howard W. Hunter:

"I . . . invite the members of the Church to establish the temple of the Lord as the great symbol of their membership and the supernal setting for their most sacred covenants. It would be the deepest desire of my heart to have every member of the Church be temple worthy. I would hope that every adult member would be worthy of—and carry—a current temple recommend, even if proximity to a temple does not allow immediate or frequent use of it" (quoted in Jay M. Todd, "President Howard W. Hunter," *Ensign*, July 1994, 5).

Bear testimony of the blessings that have come into your life as you have lived worthy to attend the temple.

Invite someone to give a closing prayer.