



RECEIVING TEMPLE ORDINANCES AND COVENANTS

“And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh” (D&C 84:21).

OBJECTIVE

To help class members understand the importance of temple ordinances and covenants.

PREPARATION

1. If it is available in your area, you may want to show the video presentation *Together Forever* (53411). The presentation lasts approximately 27 minutes.
2. You may want to prepare to have the class members sing “More Holiness Give Me” (*Hymns*, no. 131).

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.

IN THE TEMPLE WE RECEIVE ORDINANCES AND MAKE COVENANTS

Explain that in the temple we receive the ordinances that will enable us to return to the presence of God. We also make covenants to live the laws of the gospel. The following material will provide information about ordinances and covenants in general, and temple ordinances and covenants in particular.

Ordinances

Explain that an ordinance is a sacred ceremony that has a spiritual meaning and effect.

Ask the class members to name some of the ordinances in the Church. (They may mention naming and blessing of babies, baptism, confirmation, the sacrament, ordination to the priesthood, and temple ordinances.)

Explain that ordinances performed by the power of the priesthood are essential to our exaltation. It is through these ordinances that we receive the power of God in our lives.

“We covenant to give of our resources in time and money and talent—all we are and all we possess—to the interest of the kingdom of God upon the earth” (Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple, 35).

Ask the class members to read Doctrine and Covenants 84:19–21.

- What is necessary in order for the power of godliness to be manifest in our lives? (The ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood. The “greater priesthood” mentioned in these verses is the Melchizedek Priesthood.)

Have class members turn to page 29 in *Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple*. Ask a class member to read the following statement aloud:

“How important are the ordinances to us as members of the Church?

“Can you be happy, can you be redeemed, can you be exalted without them? Answer: They are more than advisable or desirable, or even than necessary. More even than essential or vital. They are *crucial* to each of us.”

Covenants

Explain that a covenant is a sacred agreement between God and a person or group of people. God sets specific conditions, and He promises to bless us as we obey those conditions. When we choose not to keep covenants, we cannot receive the blessings, and in some instances we suffer a penalty as a consequence of our disobedience. The saving ordinances of the priesthood are always accompanied by covenants.

- What covenants have you made with the Lord up to this point in your lives? (Class members may mention the covenant of baptism, which is renewed each time we take the sacrament.)
- What covenants do we make when we are baptized? (See Mosiah 18:8–10; D&C 20:37.)

Emphasize that when we make covenants with God, we express our desire to serve God and our willingness to obey all that is asked of us. In return, God promises us many wonderful blessings. We must make and keep covenants in order to progress toward eternal life.

Temple Ordinances and Covenants

Explain that the temple ordinances include the endowment and sealings (temple marriage and sealing of parents to children) for both the living and the dead. The ordinance of baptism for the dead is performed in temples, as are other priesthood ordinances. In the temple ordinances, we make solemn covenants to give ourselves to God and to help build His kingdom on earth.

Elder James E. Talmage said about the covenants we make in the endowment:

“The ordinances of the endowment embody certain obligations on the part of the individual, such as covenant and promise to observe the law of strict virtue and chastity, to be charitable, benevolent, tolerant and pure; to devote both talent and material means to the spread of truth and the uplifting of the race; to maintain devotion to the cause of truth; and to seek in every way to contribute to the great preparation that the earth may be made ready to receive her King,—the Lord Jesus Christ. With the taking of each covenant and the assuming of each obligation a promised blessing is pronounced, contingent upon the faithful observance of the conditions” (*The House of the Lord*, rev. ed. [1976], 84).

You may want to review the covenants just described by writing them on the chalkboard. Emphasize that we make covenants to be righteous and pure, and we also make covenants to give all we have to building the Lord’s kingdom. Read the following statement:

“We are a covenant people. We covenant to give of our resources in time and money and talent—all we are and all we possess—to the interest of the kingdom of God upon the earth” (*Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple*, 35).

- In what ways can we give “all we are and all we possess” to the kingdom of God?
- What sometimes hinders members from giving all that they have to the Lord’s kingdom?

You may want to share your testimony about the blessings that have come into your life because you have made and kept temple covenants. Or you may want to ask another endowed person to share his or her testimony.

WE MUST BE FAITHFUL TO THE COVENANTS WE MAKE IN THE TEMPLE

Explain that the Lord said, “Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required” (Luke 12:48).

- How do you think this verse applies to the covenants we make in the temple?

Explain that the Lord has provided temple ordinances and covenants so that His children can understand the purpose of this life and be prepared for the glorious opportunities of eternal life. When we receive these blessings, we become accountable to live worthy of our increased knowledge and opportunities. Emphasize that we must be faithful to the covenants made in the temple.

- Why is it so important to be faithful to the covenants we make in the temple?

“I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise” (D&C 82:10).

Ask the class members to read Doctrine and Covenants 82:10.

President Joseph Fielding Smith said: “I say unto you *the Lord is not bound, unless you keep the covenant*. The Lord never breaks his covenant. When he makes a covenant with one of us, he will not break it. If it is going to be broken, we will break it. But when it is broken, he is under no obligation to give us the blessing, and we shall not receive it” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 2:256–57).

FAITHFULNESS TO OUR COVENANTS WILL BRING PEACE AND SAFETY

Explain that the temple is a place of peace and a sanctuary in a troubled world. As we attend the temple regularly and are faithful to our covenants, we will find peace, safety, and direction in our lives.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell said, “If we will keep our covenants, the covenants will keep us spiritually safe” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 87; or *Ensign*, May 1987, 71).

- In what ways have the covenants you have made thus far helped to keep you spiritually safe?

Point out that in the temple we covenant to live worthy to return to the presence of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. Sometimes, in the midst of our daily struggles, we may wonder if such living is possible.

Ask the class members to read 1 Nephi 17:3, 13.

- What do these scriptures teach about how the Lord will help as we strive to return to Him? How have you seen these scriptures fulfilled in your life?

Elder Boyd K. Packer said: “When you come to the temple and receive your endowment, and kneel at the altar and be sealed, you can live an ordinary life and be an ordinary soul—struggling against temptation, failing and repenting, and failing again and repenting, but always determined to keep your covenants. . . . Then the day will come when you will receive the benediction: ‘Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord’ (Matthew 25:21)” (*Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled* [1991], 257).

President Howard W. Hunter invited us to go to the temple often “for the personal blessing of temple worship, for the sanctity and safety which is provided within those hallowed and consecrated walls. The temple is a place of beauty, it is a place of revelation, it is a place of peace. It is the house of the Lord. It is holy unto the Lord. It should be holy unto us” (quoted in Jay M. Todd, “President Howard W. Hunter,” *Ensign*, July 1994, 5).

CONCLUSION

Ask class members to share their feelings about the blessings of receiving the temple ordinances and making covenants with Heavenly Father.

If time permits and the video presentation *Together Forever* is available in your area, you may want to show the presentation.

You may want to have class members sing “More Holiness Give Me.” Bear testimony about the blessings of receiving the temple ordinances and the privilege of entering into covenants with Heavenly Father.

Invite someone to give the closing prayer.