

THE SACRED ROLES OF FATHERS AND MOTHERS

LESSON
10

Part 1: Fathers' Roles

Purpose To help participants understand how fathers fulfill their sacred roles and how fathers and mothers can help one another as equal partners.

Preparation

1. Consider ways you can apply the principles under “Your Responsibilities as a Teacher” (pages ix–xi in this manual).
2. Ponder the doctrines and principles outlined in the lesson’s bold headings. Throughout the week, think about ways to teach these doctrines and principles. Seek the guidance of the Spirit in deciding what you should emphasize to meet participants’ needs.
3. Remind participants to bring their copies of the *Marriage and Family Relations Participant’s Study Guide* to class.

Suggested Lesson Development

Fathers and mothers should work together to provide each of their children with a shield of faith.

Write *Shield of Faith* on the chalkboard. Read Doctrine and Covenants 27:15, 17 with participants.

- In what ways is faith like a shield?

Read the following statement by President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Ask participants to listen carefully to see why children need to receive “the shield of faith” at home.

“Our Father’s plan requires that, like the generation of life itself, the shield of faith is to be made and fitted in the family. No two can be exactly alike. Each must be handcrafted to individual specifications.

“The plan designed by the Father contemplates that man and woman, husband and wife, working together, fit each child individually with a shield of faith made to buckle on so firmly that it can neither be pulled off nor penetrated by those fiery darts.

“It takes the steady strength of a father to hammer out the metal of it and the tender hands of a mother to polish and fit it on. Sometimes one parent is left to do it alone. It is difficult, but it can be done.

“In the Church we can teach about the materials from which a shield of faith is made: reverence, courage, chastity, repentance, forgiveness, compassion. In church we can learn how to assemble and fit them together. But the actual making of and fitting on of the shield of faith belongs in the family circle. Otherwise it may loosen and come off in a crisis” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 8; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 8).

- What does this statement teach about the roles of fathers and mothers?

Ask participants to turn to “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” on page iv in the *Marriage and Family Relations Participant’s Study Guide* (see also page viii in this manual). Read with them the following principles from the seventh paragraph of the proclamation:

“By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation.”

Explain that this lesson and lesson 11 are about the sacred roles of fathers and mothers. Although one lesson focuses on fathers’ roles and the other focuses on mothers’ roles, the two lessons apply to both fathers and mothers, who “are obligated to help one another as equal partners.” The lessons are also helpful for single parents who do all they can, with the Lord’s help, to fulfill both roles.

Fathers are to preside in love and righteousness.

Refer participants to the following statement in the proclamation on the family: “By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness.” Explain that the word *preside* means to lead and guide and to take responsibility for the family’s welfare.

Emphasize that as a man fulfills his responsibility to preside in the home, he works in partnership with his wife. President Howard W. Hunter, the 14th President of the Church, counseled: “A man who holds the priesthood accepts his wife as a partner in the leadership of the home and family with full knowledge of and full participation in all decisions relating thereto. . . . By divine appointment, the responsibility to preside in the home rests upon the priesthood holder (see Moses 4:22). The Lord intended that the wife be a helpmeet for man (*meet* means equal)—that is, a companion equal and necessary in full partnership. Presiding in righteousness necessitates a shared responsibility between husband and wife; together you act with knowledge and participation in all family matters. For a man to operate independently of or without regard to the feelings and counsel of his wife in governing the family is to exercise unrighteous dominion” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 68; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 50–51).

President Spencer W. Kimball, the 12th President of the Church, taught that fathers “must preside as Jesus Christ presides over his Church—in love, in service, in tenderness, and in example” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1976, 68; or *Ensign*, May 1976, 45).

- Why is it important for fathers to preside in love and righteousness?

While serving as First Counselor in the First Presidency, President Gordon B. Hinckley declared to fathers: “Yours is the basic and inescapable responsibility to stand as the head of the family. That does not carry with it any implication of dictatorship or unrighteous dominion. It carries with it a mandate that fathers provide for the needs of their families. Those needs are more than food, clothing, and shelter. Those needs include righteous direction and the teaching, by example as well as precept, of basic principles of honesty, integrity, service,

respect for the rights of others, and an understanding that we are accountable for that which we do in this life, not only to one another but also to the God of heaven, who is our Eternal Father” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 78–79; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 60).

President Howard W. Hunter said: “We encourage you, brethren, to remember that priesthood is a righteous authority only. Earn the respect and confidence of your children through your loving relationship with them” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 69; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 51).

To help participants understand what fathers must do to give spiritual leadership to their children, have them turn to pages 41–42 in the *Marriage and Family Relations Participant’s Study Guide*. With participants, read and discuss the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson, the 13th President of the Church:

“With love in my heart for the fathers in Israel, may I suggest ten specific ways that fathers can give spiritual leadership to their children:

- “1. Give father’s blessings to your children. Baptize and confirm your children. Ordain your sons to the priesthood. These will become spiritual highlights in the lives of your children.
- “2. Personally direct family prayers, daily scripture reading, and weekly family home evenings. Your personal involvement will show your children how important these activities really are.
- “3. Whenever possible, attend Church meetings together as a family. Family worship under your leadership is vital to your children’s spiritual welfare.
- “4. Go on daddy-daughter dates and father-and-sons’ outings with your children. As a family, go on campouts and picnics, to ball games and recitals, to school programs, and so forth. Having Dad there makes all the difference.
- “5. Build traditions of family vacations and trips and outings. These memories will never be forgotten by your children.
- “6. Have regular one-on-one visits with your children. Let them talk about what they would like to. Teach them gospel principles. Teach them true values. Tell them you love them. Personal time with your children tells them where Dad puts his priorities.
- “7. Teach your children to work, and show them the value of working toward a worthy goal. Establishing mission funds and education funds for your children shows them what Dad considers to be important.
- “8. Encourage good music and art and literature in your homes. Homes that have a spirit of refinement and beauty will bless the lives of your children forever.
- “9. As distances allow, regularly attend the temple with your wife. Your children will then better understand the importance of temple marriage and temple vows and the eternal family unit.
- “10. Have your children see your joy and satisfaction in service to the Church. This can become contagious to them, so they, too, will want to serve in the Church and will love the kingdom” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1987, 62–63; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 50–51).

Fathers are to provide their families with the necessities of life and protection.

Remind participants that the proclamation on the family states that fathers “are responsible to provide the necessities of life . . . for their families.”

- What are some temporal necessities of life? (Answers may include food, money, clothing, and shelter.) In what ways are fathers to provide these necessities?

President Howard W. Hunter said: “You who hold the priesthood have the responsibility, unless disabled, to provide temporal support for your wife and children. No man can shift the burden of responsibility to another, not even to his wife. The Lord has commanded that women and children have claim on their husbands and fathers for their maintenance (see D&C 83; 1 Timothy 5:8). . . . We urge you to do all in your power to allow your wife to remain in the home, caring for the children while you provide for the family the best you can” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 69; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 51).

- What are some spiritual necessities of life? (Answers may include testimony, love, daily prayer and scripture study, gospel teaching, and priesthood ordinances.) What can fathers do to provide these necessities?
- How can a wife and children support the efforts of their husband and father to provide for them?

Refer participants to the following counsel in the proclamation on the family: “Fathers . . . are responsible to provide . . . protection for their families.”

- What do families need to be protected from?
- In what ways can husbands and fathers provide protection for their families?

President Howard W. Hunter said:

“A righteous father protects his children with his time and presence in their social, educational, and spiritual activities and responsibilities. . . .

“A man who holds the priesthood leads his family in Church participation so they will know the gospel and be under the protection of the covenants and ordinances. If you are to enjoy the blessings of the Lord, you must set your own homes in order. Together with your wife, you determine the spiritual climate of your home. Your first obligation is to get your own spiritual life in order through regular scriptural study and daily prayer. Secure and honor your priesthood and temple covenants; encourage your family to do the same” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 69; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 51).

- What are some examples you have seen of fathers fulfilling their sacred responsibilities?

Note: If you are teaching this lesson on its own and you do not plan to teach lesson 11, consider discussing the following statement from the proclamation on the family: “In [their] sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners.” Lesson 11 includes help for discussing this truth (see pages 56–57).

Conclusion

As prompted by the Spirit, testify of the truths discussed during the lesson.

Refer to pages 39–42 in the *Marriage and Family Relations Participant's Study Guide*. Encourage participants to review the doctrines and principles in this lesson by (1) following at least one of the suggestions in “Ideas for Application” and (2) reading the article “To the Fathers in Israel,” by President Ezra Taft Benson. Emphasize that married couples can receive great benefits from reading and discussing the articles in the study guide together.

Remind participants to bring their study guides to class for the next lesson.