

# THE SACRED ROLES OF FATHERS AND MOTHERS

## *Part 2: Mothers' Roles*

---

### Purpose

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

---

### Preparation

1. Review the principles under “Your Responsibilities as a Teacher” (pages ix–xi in this manual). Look for ways to apply these principles in your preparation to teach.
2. Read the lesson’s bold headings, which outline the doctrines and principles in the lesson. As part of your preparation, ponder these doctrines and principles throughout the week, seeking 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

#### **Mothers participate in God’s work.**

As an introduction to this lesson, read with participants the following excerpt from an address by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (page 44 in the *Marriage and Family Relations Participant’s Study Guide*):

“One young mother wrote to me recently that her anxiety tended to come on three fronts. One was that whenever she heard talks on LDS motherhood, she worried because she felt she didn’t measure up or somehow wasn’t going to be equal to the task. Second, she felt like the world expected her to teach her children reading, writing, interior design, Latin, calculus, and the Internet—all before the baby said something terribly ordinary, like ‘goo goo.’ Third, she often felt people were sometimes patronizing, almost always without meaning to be, because the advice she got or even the compliments she received seemed to reflect nothing of the mental investment, the spiritual and emotional exertion, the long-night, long-day, stretched-to-the-limit demands that sometimes are required in trying to be and wanting to be the mother God hopes she will be.

“But one thing, she said, keeps her going: ‘Through the thick and the thin of this, and through the occasional tears of it all, *I know deep down inside I am doing God’s work*. I know that in my motherhood I am in an eternal partnership with Him. I am deeply moved that God finds His ultimate purpose and meaning in being a parent, even if some of His children make Him weep.

“‘It is this realization,’ she says, ‘that I try to recall on those inevitably difficult days when all of this can be a bit overwhelming. Maybe it is precisely our inability and anxiousness that urge us to reach out to Him and enhance His ability to reach back to us. Maybe He secretly hopes we *will* be anxious,’ she said, ‘and *will* plead for His help. Then, I believe, He can teach these children directly,

through us, but with no resistance offered. I like that idea,' she concludes. 'It gives me hope. If I can be right before my Father in Heaven, perhaps His guidance to our children can be unimpeded. Maybe then it can be *His* work and *His* glory in a very literal sense'" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 47; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 36).

Invite those you teach to share their feelings about how mothers participate in God's work.

**Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children.**

Have participants turn to page iv in the *Marriage and Family Relations Participant's Study Guide*. Refer them to the following statement in the seventh paragraph of the proclamation on the family: "Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children."

- In what ways do mothers nurture their children? (Invite participants to share experiences that show mothers' influence for good. Then share the following statements.)

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: "As a mother guided by the Lord, you weave a fabric of character in your children from threads of truth through careful instruction and worthy example. You imbue the traits of honesty, faith in God, duty, respect for others, kindness, self-confidence, and the desire to contribute, to learn, and to give in your trusting children's minds and hearts. No day-care center can do that. It is your sacred right and privilege" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 102; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 74).

President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, observed, "No teaching is equal, more spiritually rewarding, or more exalting than that of a mother teaching her children" ("Teach the Children," *Ensign*, Feb. 2000, 16).

To share more ideas about how mothers can nurture their children, have participants turn to pages 45–47 in the *Marriage and Family Relations Participant's Study Guide*. Ask them to look for President Ezra Taft Benson's 10 suggestions on what mothers can do to spend effective time with their children. As participants find these suggestions, list them on the chalkboard as shown below. Discuss the benefits of following each of the suggestions.

- |                               |                               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Be at the crossroads.      | 6. Be together at mealtimes.  |
| 2. Be a real friend.          | 7. Read scriptures daily.     |
| 3. Read to your children.     | 8. Do things as a family.     |
| 4. Pray with your children.   | 9. Teach your children.       |
| 5. Have weekly home evenings. | 10. Truly love your children. |

Point out that latter-day prophets have emphasized the importance of mothers staying home with their children rather than entering the workplace. Share the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley, the 15th President of the Church:

“There are some women (it has become very many, in fact) who have to work to provide for the needs of their families. To you I say, do the very best you can. I hope that if you are employed full-time you are doing it to ensure that basic needs are met and not simply to indulge a taste for an elaborate home, fancy cars, and other luxuries. The greatest job that any mother will ever do will be in nurturing, teaching, lifting, encouraging, and rearing her children in righteousness and truth. None other can adequately take her place” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 93; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 69).

- What sacrifices might families need to make in order to follow this counsel?

As you conclude this section of the lesson, share one or both of the following statements:

While serving as First Counselor in the First Presidency, President Gordon B. Hinckley said: “I remind mothers everywhere of the sanctity of your calling. No other can adequately take your place. No responsibility is greater, no obligation more binding than that you rear in love and peace and integrity those whom you have brought into the world” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 79; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 60).

Speaking to mothers, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland said: “Yours is the grand tradition of Eve, the mother of all the human family, the one who understood that she and Adam *had* to fall in order that ‘men [and women] might be’ [2 Nephi 2:25] and that there would be joy. Yours is the grand tradition of Sarah and Rebekah and Rachel, without whom there could not have been those magnificent patriarchal promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob which bless us all. Yours is the grand tradition of Lois and Eunice [see 2 Timothy 1:5] and the mothers of the 2,000 stripling warriors. Yours is the grand tradition of Mary, chosen and foreordained from before this world was, to conceive, carry, and bear the Son of God Himself. We thank all of you, including our own mothers, and tell you there is nothing more important in this world than participating so directly in the work and glory of God, in bringing to pass the mortality and earthly life of His daughters and sons, so that immortality and eternal life can come in those celestial realms on high” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 48; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 36; see also pages 44–45 in the *Marriage and Family Relations Participant’s Study Guide*).

### **Fathers and mothers are to help one another as equal partners.**

*Note:* If you are teaching this lesson on its own and have not taught lesson 10, consider beginning this section of the lesson with the statement by President Boyd K. Packer on page 49 of this manual.

Refer participants to the following statement in the proclamation on the family: “In [their] sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners.”

- What does it mean for a husband and wife to be equal partners in their responsibilities?

Point out that husbands and wives who work together as equal partners are united in their efforts. They will support one another and draw upon one another's strengths and talents. Every married couple can receive the guidance of the Lord in deciding how to support one another in their responsibilities. They can make decisions based on divinely revealed principles and the unique strengths and abilities of each partner.

- What can a husband do to support his wife in her responsibilities to nurture the children?
- What can a wife do to support her husband in his responsibilities to preside and provide?
- What examples have you seen of husbands and wives effectively supporting one another in caring for and teaching their children?

### Conclusion

Read Doctrine and Covenants 64:33–34 with participants.

- How does this scripture relate to the responsibilities of fatherhood and motherhood?

Emphasize that mothers and fathers truly are “laying the foundation of a great work.” The everyday tasks of raising children may sometimes seem small and insignificant, but “out of small things proceedeth that which is great.” As fathers and mothers work together to fulfill their sacred responsibilities, their families will receive great blessings from the Lord.

As prompted by the Spirit, share your conviction of the truths discussed during the lesson.

Refer to pages 43–47 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 articles “Because She Is a Mother,” by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, and “To the Mothers in Zion,” by President Ezra Taft Benson. Point out that married couples can receive great benefits from reading and discussing the articles in the study guide together.