

TEACHING GOSPEL PRINCIPLES TO CHILDREN

LESSON
13

Part 1

Purpose To help participants increase their desire and ability to teach children about basic gospel principles and ordinances.

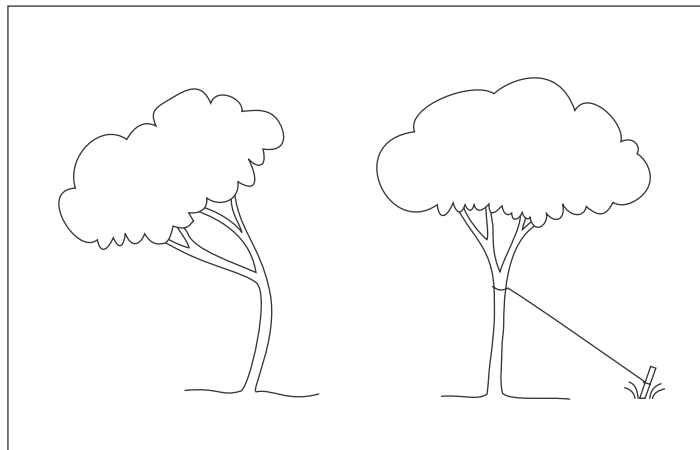
Preparation

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, look for ways to teach these doctrines and principles. Seek the guidance of the Spirit in deciding what you should emphasize to meet participants’ needs.

**Suggested Lesson
Development**

Parents’ teachings can help children stay strong in the faith.

Draw the following pictures on the chalkboard:



- What do these two pictures represent? What do the pictures teach about raising children?

If participants have difficulty answering these questions, remind them of President Hinckley’s story about planting a tree, from lesson 12. (If you are teaching this lesson on its own and have not taught lesson 12, share the story on pages 58–59 before you discuss the pictures on the chalkboard.)

The tree on the left represents a child who is straying from the gospel because his or her parents have not taught and lived the gospel in the home. The tree on the right represents a child who is learning the gospel because of parents’ words and example. When strong winds blow, a young tree that is guided by a string will continue to grow straight. Likewise, children are more likely to stay strong in the faith when their parents have taught them simple gospel principles.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 68:25–28 with participants.

- According to this scripture passage, what does the Lord require parents to teach their children? (List participants' responses on the chalkboard as shown below.)

Faith in Jesus Christ
Repentance
Baptism
Receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost
Prayer
Walking uprightly before the Lord

- Why is it important that parents teach these principles and ordinances to their children while the children are young?

While serving as Presiding Bishop, Bishop Robert D. Hales explained: “Children who are taught to pray and who pray with their parents when young are more likely to pray when they are older. Those who are taught when they are young to love God and believe He lives will more often continue their spiritual development and increase their feelings of love as they mature” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 10; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 10).

Parents are to teach their children the first principles and ordinances of the gospel.

Use the following questions to discuss ways parents can help their children apply the principles of faith and repentance and prepare to be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. As you guide the discussion, encourage participants to share examples from their own lives.

- To exercise faith in Jesus Christ, we must have a correct understanding of His character and attributes. What can parents do to help their children understand the character and attributes of the Savior?
- Briefly review the accounts of Jesus healing Jairus’s daughter (Mark 5:21–24, 35–43) and Nephi responding to the command to get the brass plates (1 Nephi 3:1–7). How can these scripture accounts help children exercise faith in Jesus Christ?
- How can sharing experiences from our lives help strengthen a child’s faith?

Point out that parents need to look for opportunities to teach their children that faith helps us through the challenges and difficulties of life. For example, if a child is having difficulty in school or with a friend, parents could read a scripture passage with the child, help him or her pray for guidance and comfort, and then help the child understand how the Lord provides help.

- As parents strive to teach their children about repentance, why is it important for them to watch for teaching moments in daily life?

Explain that when parents see their children make unwise decisions, they can ask the children how they feel about the decisions and what they could have done differently. They can allow the children to correct the mistakes and, as needed, express sorrow to the Lord and those who have been offended or hurt. Parents can also help their children recognize the happiness and peace that come through true repentance.

- Briefly review the conversions of Alma the Younger (Mosiah 27; Alma 36) and the Anti-Nephi-Lehies (Alma 23). How can these scripture accounts help children value the blessings of repentance and forgiveness?
- Review the baptismal covenant by reading Mosiah 18:8–10 and Doctrine and Covenants 20:37 with participants. How can parents help their children prepare to make and keep the baptismal covenant?
- In what ways can parents help their children look forward to being baptized and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost?

Parents should “teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord.”

- Why is parents’ example the greatest teacher in helping children make prayer a regular part of their lives?
- In addition to setting an example of prayer, what are some principles about prayer that parents can teach their children? (As participants respond to this question, read and discuss the following scripture passages and quotation. Encourage participants to share experiences that relate to these teachings.)
 - a. James 1:5–6 (God will give us wisdom if we ask Him in faith.)
 - b. 2 Nephi 32:9 (We should pray always. We pray to the Father in the name of Jesus Christ.)
 - c. Alma 37:37 (When we counsel with the Lord in all we do, He will direct us for good.)
 - d. 3 Nephi 18:19–21 (When we pray to the Father in the name of Jesus Christ, we will receive what we ask for if it is right. We should pray in our families.)
 - e. Doctrine and Covenants 112:10 (When we are humble, the Lord will answer our prayers.)

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke about the importance of using “the language of prayer.” In English, this includes using the words *Thee*, *Thou*, *Thy*, and *Thine* in place of *you* and *your*. He said that children can learn this language from their parents:

“We learn our native language simply by listening to those who speak it. This is also true of the language with which we address our Heavenly Father. The language of prayer is easier and sweeter to learn than any other tongue. We should give our children the privilege of learning this language by listening to their parents use it in the various prayers offered daily in our homes” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1993, 20; or *Ensign*, May 1993, 18).

- How can parents use family prayer as a time to teach their children?
- What can parents do to encourage their children to pray individually?

- The Lord has said that parents must teach their children to “walk uprightly” before Him (D&C 68:28). In what ways can parents use the settings of home and family to encourage their children to “walk uprightly before the Lord”? (Answers may include that parents can teach their children to obey the laws and ordinances of the gospel and stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all places.)
- What can grandparents and other extended family members do to help parents teach gospel principles to children? In what ways have you seen that the good example of extended family members can help children?

Conclusion

Emphasize that God has given parents the responsibility to teach their children principles of righteousness. Encourage participants to strive to live the principles taught in this lesson and to determine ways in which they can better teach these principles to children.

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

Refer to pages 54–57 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 “Strengthening Families: Our Sacred Duty,” by Elder Robert D. Hales. Point out that married couples can receive great benefits from reading and discussing the articles in the study guide together.