

TEACHING GOSPEL PRINCIPLES TO CHILDREN

LESSON 14

Part 2

Purpose To help participants increase their desire and ability to teach children compassion and service, honesty and respect for others' property, the joy of honest labor, and moral purity.

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. If necessary, take two lesson periods to teach these principles.
3. If the following materials are available, review them and bring them to class:
 - a. *For the Strength of Youth* (34285).
 - b. *A Parent's Guide* (31125).
 - c. *Family Home Evening Resource Book* (31106). As you review this resource, give special attention to "Teaching Responsibility," on pages 246–47, and "Teaching about Procreation and Chastity," on pages 253–60. Consider referring to these articles during the lesson.

**Suggested Lesson
Development**

Parents show love for their children when they teach them.

Share the following experience related by Elder Loren C. Dunn of the Seventy:

"While we were growing up in a small community, my father saw the need for my brother and me to learn the principle of work. As a result, he put us to work on a small farm on the edge of town where he had been raised. He ran the local newspaper, so he could not spend much time with us except early in the morning and in the evening. That was quite a responsibility for two young teenagers, and sometimes we made mistakes.

"Our small farm was surrounded by other farms, and one of the farmers went in to see my father one day to tell him the things he thought we were doing wrong. My father listened to him carefully and then said, 'Jim, you don't understand. You see, I'm raising boys and not cows.' After my father's death, Jim told us his story. How grateful I was for a father who decided to raise boys, and not cows. In spite of the mistakes, we learned how to work on that little farm, and I guess, although they didn't say it in so many words, we always knew we were more important to Mother and Father than the cows or, for that matter, anything else" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1974, 12; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1974, 11).

- What impresses you about this story?

Emphasize that Elder Dunn and his brother always knew that their parents loved them. One way parents show love for their children is to take time to help them learn and apply gospel principles. This lesson discusses how to teach children five basic principles of gospel living: compassion and service, honesty, respect for others' property, the joy of honest labor, and moral purity.

Parents must teach children compassion and service.

Explain that throughout His ministry, the Savior taught the importance of loving and serving others. He taught this principle by word and example.

- What benefits come to children who have learned from their parents to love and serve others? (In addition to asking for participants' responses, share the following examples.)

President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, observed:

“Over the years I have watched one dear sister give service far beyond any calling to teach or lead in the Church. She sees a need and serves—not ‘Call me if you need help,’ but ‘Here I am; what can I do?’ She does so many small things, like holding someone’s child in a meeting or taking a child to school who has missed the bus. She always looks for new faces at church and steps forward to make them welcome. . . .

“She learned that spirit of service from her mother. The spirit of service is best taught at home. We must teach our children by example and tell them that an unselfish spirit is essential to happiness” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 5; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 6).

In one family, a child was having a difficult time. To help him face his challenges, his parents encouraged him to perform a secret act of service for another family member each day. By the end of the week, he was worrying less about his own troubles and beginning to enjoy the blessings and peace that come from caring for others.

- What can we learn at home about service that we cannot learn elsewhere?
- What suggestions can you share that could help parents teach their children to serve others?

Consider writing participants' answers on the chalkboard. Encourage participants to share examples from their own lives. Also ask them to share ideas for family service activities. As you guide the discussion, bring out the following ideas:

- a. Parents can set an example by serving family members, fulfilling Church assignments, and reaching out to help others around them.
- b. They can look for opportunities for their children to serve family members and others around them. Even very young children can feel the joy of serving.

Parents must teach children honesty and respect for others' property.

Share the following counsel from President N. Eldon Tanner, who served as First Counselor in the First Presidency:

“Training in honesty begins in the home. Each of us has personal possessions which are ours alone. We can and should share such things as toys and games and our services to one another; but we have money, or jewelry, or clothing that is the personal property of each and should not be taken without the consent of the owner. A child who respects such honesty in the home is not apt to violate the principle outside the home. On the other hand, lack of such training fosters disrespect for the rights and property of others” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1978, 64; or *Ensign*, May 1978, 44).

- What can happen when children are not taught to respect others’ property?
- In what ways can children learn in the home to be honest and to respect others’ property? When should parents begin teaching these principles to their children?

Parents must teach children about the rewards of honest labor.

Explain that Church leaders have frequently counseled parents about the importance of teaching children to work. Although it is sometimes difficult to teach children to work, parents should persist in this effort. Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles counseled, “Teaching children the joy of honest labor is one of the greatest of all gifts you can bestow upon them” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 78; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 62).

- What are the values of teaching children the principles of work and industry when they are young? How can parents help their children learn to work? (As participants discuss this question, encourage them to share examples from their lives. Consider mentioning the following ideas to prompt discussion.)
 - a. Set an example for children by cheerfully helping with household chores.
 - b. Give children responsibilities that match their abilities.
 - c. Take time to teach children how to succeed in their responsibilities.
 - d. Express appreciation for children’s help.

Read one or both of the following statements:

President Gordon B. Hinckley, the 15th President of the Church, counseled, “Children need to work with their parents—to wash dishes with them, to mop floors with them, to mow lawns, to prune trees and shrubbery, to paint and fix up and clean up and do a hundred other things where they will learn that labor is the price of cleanliness and progress and prosperity” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [1997], 707).

While serving in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Elder James E. Faust taught: “An essential part of teaching children to be disciplined and responsible is to have them learn to work. . . . The best teachers of the principle of work are the parents themselves. For me, work became a joy when I first worked alongside my father, grandfather, uncles, and brothers. I am sure that I was often more of an aggravation than a help, but the memories are sweet and the lessons learned are valuable. Children need to learn responsibility and independence. Are the parents personally taking the time to show and demonstrate and explain so that children can, as Lehi taught, ‘act for themselves and not . . . be acted upon’? (2 Nephi 2:26)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1990, 42; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 34; see also page 50 in the *Marriage and Family Relations Participant’s Study Guide*).

- Why is it important for children to work alongside their parents and other family members? In what ways are relationships influenced when family members work together?
- What are some rewards of honest labor? (Answers may include those in the following list.)
 - a. Satisfaction and joy in a job well done
 - b. A sense of accomplishment
 - c. Education in essential practical skills
 - d. Realization of self-worth
 - e. Material rewards, such as academic honors and financial benefits
- In what ways is work a spiritual blessing as well as a temporal blessing?
- What can parents do to help their children earn money and use it wisely? How can parents help their children balance employment with other types of work, such as Church work, schoolwork, and household chores?
- What are some dangers of parents allowing their children to avoid the responsibility to work?

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

“The gospel of work is part of ‘the fulness of the gospel.’ Though joyful, missionary work is work. Though joyful, temple work is work. Alas, a few of our underwhelmed youth work all right, but mostly at trying to please themselves. . . .

“Be careful . . . when you inordinately desire things to be better for your children than they were for you. Do not, however unintentionally, make things worse by removing the requirement for reasonable work as part of their experience, thereby insulating your children from the very things that helped make you what you are!” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 50; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 38).

Parents must teach children moral purity.

Emphasize that parents have an obligation to teach their children the Lord’s standards of moral purity. This will help the children resist temptation.

- Why should parents take the initiative to discuss moral purity and sexuality with their children? What are the risks when parents do not take this initiative?

Point out that in today’s world, children cannot avoid hearing about sexuality. However, much of what they hear in the world promotes the abuse of the sacred power of procreation. Children—and especially teenagers—need accurate information and true doctrine about these subjects. Parents must help them gain strength to withstand the falsehoods taught in the world. They must teach children the Lord’s plan for the use of the power of procreation.

Invite participants who are parents to tell about successful experiences they have had with teaching their children about these subjects. In addition to asking for participants’ insights, share the following principles:

Very young children should be given clear and simple information about the sacred nature of their bodies. This understanding helps them protect themselves from those who may try to take advantage of them. As children approach the age of puberty, parents should carefully explain to them the changes that will occur in their bodies. They should explain that physical maturation is normal and a part of God's plan.

Parents should also help their children understand that sexuality is good when used within the bounds set by the Lord but that it is a serious sin when used in violation of the Lord's commands. Teenagers need clear guidelines from their parents about the Lord's standards.

Display the pamphlet *For the Strength of Youth*. Explain that this pamphlet provides excellent help for youth and their parents. It includes information on the Church's standards for dating, dress, language, media, and music and dancing. Encourage parents to read and discuss this pamphlet individually with each of their children who is in early adolescence. This provides an easy way for parents to approach subjects that can be difficult to talk about. It also gives youth an opportunity to ask specific questions about standards of morality. Share the following excerpt from pages 14–15 in the pamphlet:

“Our Heavenly Father has counseled that sexual intimacy should be reserved for his children within the bonds of marriage. The physical relationship between a husband and a wife can be beautiful and sacred. It is ordained of God for the procreation of children and for the expression of love within a marriage: ‘Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh’ (Genesis 2:24).

“Because sexual intimacy is so sacred, the Lord requires self-control and purity before marriage as well as full fidelity after marriage. In dating, treat your date with respect, and expect your date to show that same respect to you. Never treat your date as an object to be used for your own lustful desires or ego. Improper physical contact can cause a loss of self-control. Always stay in control of yourself and your physical feelings.

“The Lord specifically forbids certain behaviors, including all sexual relations before marriage, petting, sex perversion (such as homosexuality, rape, and incest), masturbation, or preoccupation with sex in thought, speech, or action. . . .

“Homosexual and lesbian activities are sinful and an abomination to the Lord (see Romans 1:26–27, 31). Unnatural affections, including those toward persons of the same gender, are counter to God's eternal plan for his children. You are responsible to make right choices. Whether directed toward those of the same or opposite gender, lustful feelings and desires may lead to more serious sins. All Latter-day Saints must learn to control and discipline themselves.”

Display *A Parent's Guide* and the *Family Home Evening Resource Book*. Explain that these resources offer help to parents who are striving to teach their children about chastity. *A Parent's Guide* is devoted entirely to this subject. The *Family Home Evening Resource Book* addresses the subject on pages 253–60.

Emphasize that as parents talk with their children about sexuality, they can testify that moral purity leads to joy and peace.

- Why is it essential for parents to set an example of moral purity in addition to teaching about it? In what ways can parents set an example of moral purity?

Point out that children can learn true principles of moral purity by the way their parents treat each other, by the types of literature and other media that their parents allow in the home, and by the way their parents speak about the sacred power of procreation.

Conclusion

Emphasize that parents have 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 58–63 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 “Teach the Children,” by President Boyd K. Packer. Point out that married couples can receive great benefits from reading and discussing the articles in the study guide together.