

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of This Course

The Marriage and Family Relations course is designed to help Church members strengthen marriages and families and find joy in their family relationships. It is divided into two parts. Part A, “Strengthening Marriages,” is particularly helpful for married couples and for members who are preparing to be married. Part B, “Parents’ Responsibilities to Strengthen Families,” assists parents and grandparents in their efforts to “bring [children] up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

The course is based on doctrines and principles taught in the scriptures and by latter-day prophets and apostles. It gives special emphasis to “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” which is included on page iv of this study guide.

For an overview of the course, see pages vii–viii. Refer to this overview often to review the doctrines and principles you have learned and to prepare yourself for upcoming lessons.

Attending the Course According to Your Own Needs

You have the option to attend according to your individual needs. For example, if you are married but do not have children, you may choose to attend the first eight lessons but not the final eight. If you are a single parent, you may decide to attend only the lessons in part B.

Participating in the Course

By choosing to participate in this course, you have demonstrated a desire to strengthen your family. To receive the full benefit of the course, you need to contribute to class discussions, use this study guide, and strive to apply the doctrines and principles you learn.

Contributing to Class Discussions

As you and other participants contribute to class discussions, you will be able to invite the influence of the Holy Ghost and teach and edify one another. The Lord said, “Appoint among yourselves a teacher, and let not all be spokesmen at once; but let one

speak at a time and let all listen unto his sayings, that when all have spoken that all may be edified of all, and that every man may have an equal privilege” (D&C 88:122).

All who participate in the course can learn from each other, regardless of their experience with marriage or raising children. Your experience in the classroom will be most rewarding as you share experiences that relate to the lessons and listen respectfully when others do the same. As you testify of truths that are discussed, you can strengthen your testimony and the testimonies of others. However, you should be careful not to discuss intimate or sacred experiences that are inappropriate for classroom discussion. You should also be aware of the time limits of the class and be considerate of the teacher and other participants.

Using This Study Guide

In the week following each lesson, use this study guide to review what you have learned. The study guide contains “Ideas for Application,” which are suggestions to help you live according to the doctrines and principles you have learned in each lesson. In addition, one or two articles by General Authorities of the Church accompany each lesson. If you are married, you can receive great benefits from reading and discussing the articles with your spouse.

Some of the articles were originally given as discourses in general conference and other settings, and others were written for the Church magazines. Because they have been taken from different publications, minor modifications have been necessary to make the format in this study guide consistent. For example, some introductory comments have been removed from the general conference addresses, and some headings and citations have been changed. The teachings remain unchanged.

Applying the Doctrines and Principles You Learn

It is not enough to merely learn the gospel. For the gospel to be effective in your life, you must live what you learn. President Harold B. Lee, the 11th President of the Church, counseled:

“All the principles and ordinances of the gospel are in a sense but invitations to learning the gospel by the practice of its teachings. No person knows the principle of tithing until he pays tithing. No one knows the principle of the Word of Wisdom until he keeps the Word of Wisdom. Children, or grownups for that matter, are not converted to tithing, the Word of Wisdom, keeping the Sabbath day holy, or prayer by hearing someone talk about these principles. We learn the gospel by living it. . . .

“. . . We never really know anything of the teachings of the gospel until we have experienced the blessings that come from living each principle” (*Stand Ye in Holy Places* [1974], 215).

Additional Resources

The following Church-produced resources provide additional information on subjects discussed in this course. They are available through Church distribution centers. You may want to obtain these publications and use them in your home.

- *Family Guidebook* (31180). This guidebook describes the organization of the family, provides information about teaching the gospel in the home, and outlines procedures for priesthood ordinances and blessings.
- Articles about marriage and the family in Church magazines.
- *Family Home Evening Resource Book* (31106). This book helps parents and children prepare lessons for family home evening (pages 3–160, 173–232). It contains ideas for making family home evening successful (pages 163–70) and includes suggestions for teaching specific principles and responsibilities to children (pages 235–62). It also contains ideas for family activities (pages 265–340).
- *Teaching, No Greater Call* (36123). This resource contains principles and practical suggestions to help Church members improve as gospel teachers. Part D, “Teaching in the Home” (pages 125–48), is particularly helpful for parents.
- *Teaching Guidebook* (54595). This guidebook provides suggestions for improving gospel teaching and learning.
- *For the Strength of Youth* (34285). This pamphlet outlines the Church’s standards for dating, dress and appearance, friendship, honesty, language, media, mental and physical health, music and dancing, sexual purity, Sunday behavior, repentance, worthiness, and service.
- *A Parent’s Guide* (31125). This handbook contains suggestions to help parents teach their children about physical intimacy.
- *Guidebook for Parents and Guardians of Handicapped Children* (31123). This guidebook offers counsel for families with children who have disabilities. It also contains information about Church-produced materials to help parents and others who teach those with disabilities.
- *Cornerstones of a Happy Home* (33108). This pamphlet contains an address given by President Gordon B. Hinckley while he was serving as Second Counselor in the First Presidency.
- *Being a Righteous Husband and Father* (35402). This pamphlet contains an address given by President Howard W. Hunter, the 14th President of the Church.
- *One for the Money: Guide to Family Finance* (33293). This pamphlet, by Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, provides practical suggestions on managing family finances.