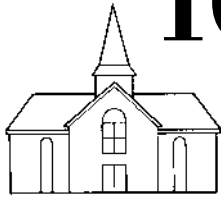


Teaching in the Nursery, Teaching at Home



Many things make the new Primary nursery manual special, including activities to help nursery-age children learn gospel truths through seeing, hearing, and doing.

BY MARGARET S. LIFFERTH
First Counselor in the Primary General Presidency

Charlie, at 20 months of age, eagerly responds to gospel learning at home. He can point to a picture of the Savior and say, “Jesus.” However, when he attends the Primary nursery class, where he also learns about Jesus, he is still a little shy.

Sam is almost three and is comfortable in the nursery. He has learned a variety of Primary songs in class and likes to sing them during family home evening. In fact, when his grandmother sang with him, she was surprised that Sam could sing at least a dozen songs from memory.

Both Charlie and Sam are participating in their first organized Church experience—the nursery class. Here children age 18 months to three years expand their gospel learning. The new Primary nursery manual, *Behold Your Little Ones*, is a wonderful resource for both teachers in the nursery and parents in the home to teach children basic gospel truths.

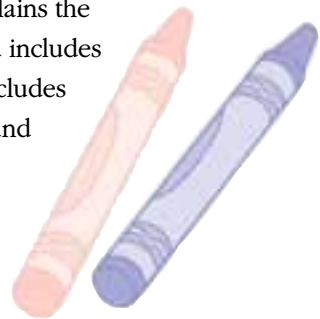
A Flexible Teaching Tool

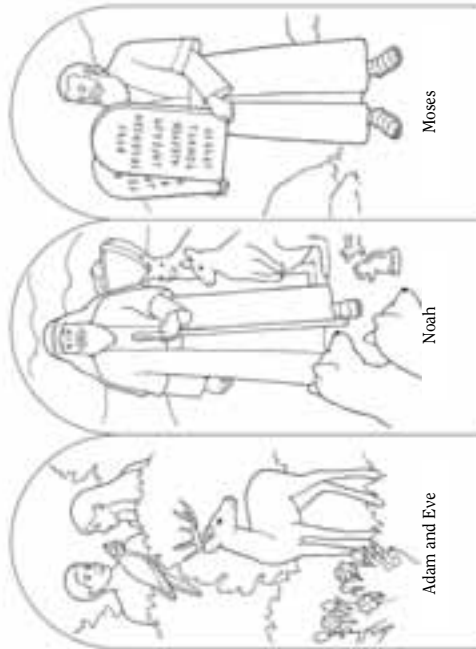
Children of this age can begin to understand simple, yet profound, gospel principles such as the reality and love of Heavenly Father and Jesus, the love of family, the strength of prayer, the truth of the First

Vision, and the beauty of God’s creations.

They are active, need love and affection, have short attention spans, are acquiring language skills, and enjoy a variety of activities. They are always learning. President Thomas S. Monson has quoted a prominent medical authority who said “that the most receptive age in human life is that of two or three years.”¹

During the class time, the children enjoy music activities, play time, snack time, and a lesson in which they are taught the basic doctrines of the gospel. The lessons in the new nursery manual are designed to be flexible and meet the needs of this age group. Each lesson begins with an introduction for the teacher. It briefly explains the doctrine to be taught and includes scripture references. It includes teaching tips so parents and teachers will know what to expect from nursery-age children and how to adapt the teaching experience to meet the children’s needs. The lessons also include a variety of learning activities that help children hear the doctrine, see something related to





Each lesson includes two pages of visuals to reinforce the doctrine taught in the lesson.

Teachers in the nursery and parents at home can use Behold Your Little Ones to teach children basic gospel truths.



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HEAVENLY FATHER HAS A PLAN FOR ME

INTRODUCTION FOR THE TEACHER

To prepare yourself spiritually to teach this lesson, please read and ponder the following:
 We lived with Heavenly Father as spirits before we were born. Heavenly Father prepared a plan that allows us to come to earth and receive physical bodies in order to become like Him and return to His presence. This is made possible through the Atonement of Jesus Christ and our obedience. Jesus Christ was chosen to be our Savior. (See Abraham 3:24–27; Articles of Faith 1:3.)

PREPARATION

Mark page 98 in this manual so that you can turn to it easily.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Begin with a gathering activity. For ideas, see page 3.

Prayer Invite a child to give the opening prayer.

Sing a Story Use “I Am a Child of God” (*Children’s Songbook*, 2–3) to teach the children some basic details about the plan of salvation. The following outline is a suggestion:

Tell the children that we all lived with Heavenly Father before we were born.

Sing or say (invite children to join you):

I am a child of God,
 And he has sent me here.

Tell the children that Heavenly Father has a plan for us. He told us we would come to earth to live. We were so happy that we shouted for joy. Invite the children to say, “Hooray!”

Show the picture of a family on page 14. Tell the children that we came to earth to live with a family who loves us. Invite the children to cross their arms and hug themselves.

Sing or say:

Has given me an earthly home
 With parents kind and dear.

Tell the children that while we are on earth, Heavenly Father wants us to be happy and follow His commandments.

Sing or say:

Lead me, guide me, walk beside me,
 Help me find the way.

Show the picture of Jesus Christ on page 98. Tell the children that Heavenly Father chose Jesus Christ to help us return to Him. Explain that because of Jesus, we can live with Heavenly Father and with our families forever if we keep the commandments.

Sing or say:

Teach me all that I must do
 To live with him someday.



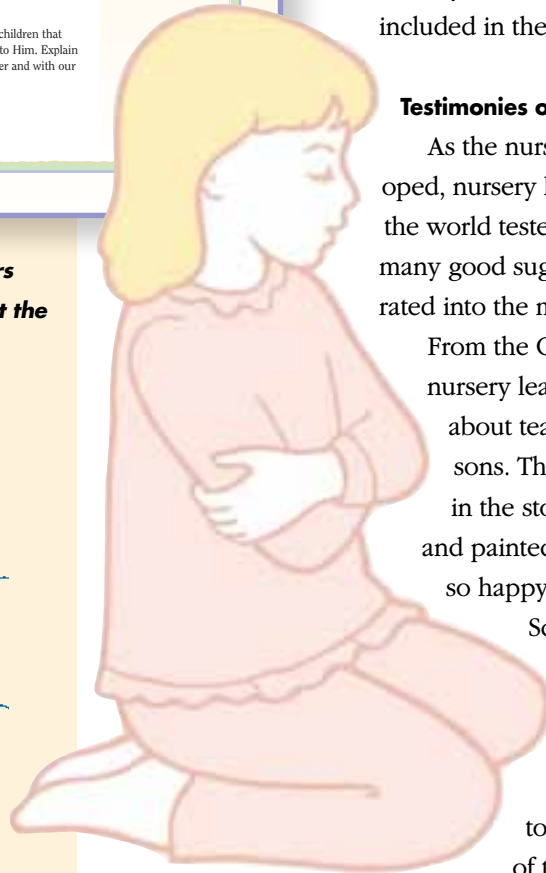
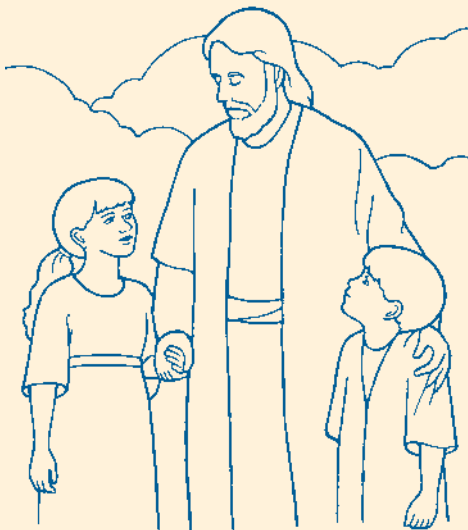
TEACHING TIPS

Preparation: Prepare pictures, illustrations, and other materials before nursery begins. This will allow you to focus your attention on the children.

Learning activities: To engage the children and help them focus on the lesson, gather them close around you. If possible, kneel or sit so that you can look into their eyes. Hold the pictures close to them.

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Teaching tips help parents and teachers know how to adapt the lesson to meet the children’s needs.



the doctrine, sing a song, do a physical activity, and say something related to the doctrine.

The nursery leader or parent, as guided by inspiration, can teach the lessons in any order. To reinforce learning, lessons and activities can be repeated in consecutive weeks or repeated twice during one nursery class depending on the needs and interests of the children.

The optional activities listed can be used any time and any number of times during the nursery class. All visual aids and activities are included in the manual.

Testimonies of Success

As the nursery manual was being developed, nursery leaders in Primaries all over the world tested the lessons. They offered many good suggestions that were incorporated into the manual.

From the Cape Coast Ghana Stake, one nursery leader wrote, “I learned a lot about teaching while testing the lessons. The children were interested in the stories, answered questions, and painted the pictures. They were so happy.” A Primary leader from

Scranton, Pennsylvania, USA, wrote: “We have a small branch, and we don’t always have a teacher.

These lessons can be put together in a very short amount of time and still be effective for the children.”

In the Caracas Venezuela Los Teques Stake, one leader appreciated the fact that the lessons leave room for the teacher to use them as guided by the Spirit.

“The children loved the finger puppets,”

wrote a leader from West Jordan, Utah. “I gave the children a chance to tell me a story using their own puppets. They did so well that I believe they could do it on their own for family home evening.” She added, “The teaching tips were also a great help to me.”

For Parents and Nursery Leaders

It is a privilege for parents or Primary leaders to be entrusted with the care and teaching of nursery-age children. These children are capable and full of faith. They are quick to believe, eager to learn, and happy to participate in activities. They thrive in an atmosphere of love and the light of the gospel.

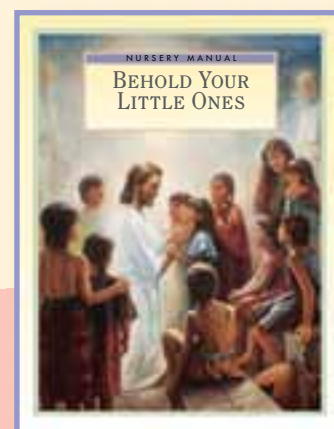
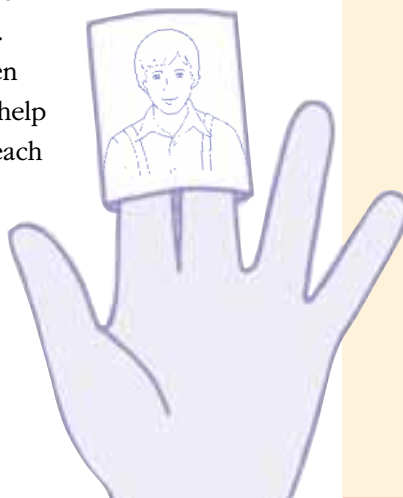
The new Primary nursery manual, when used with inspiration and testimony, will help parents and Primary leaders worldwide teach young children, such as Charlie and Sam, the gospel of Jesus Christ. ■

NOTE

1. Glenn J. Doman, quoted in Thomas S. Monson, “Constant Truths for Changing Times,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2005, 19.



Nursery-age children thrive in an atmosphere of love and the light of the gospel.



BEHOLD YOUR LITTLE ONES

Parents can purchase the manual (item no. 37108) to use in family home evening and to learn more about how best to teach young children.

