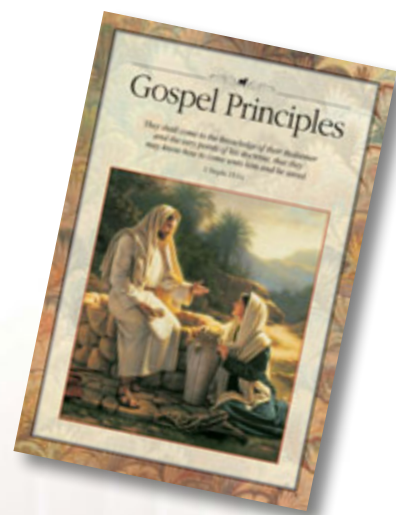


# Getting the Most Out of **Gospel Principles**

*Seven ways to improve  
your teaching.*



**By Joshua J. Perkey**

Church Magazines

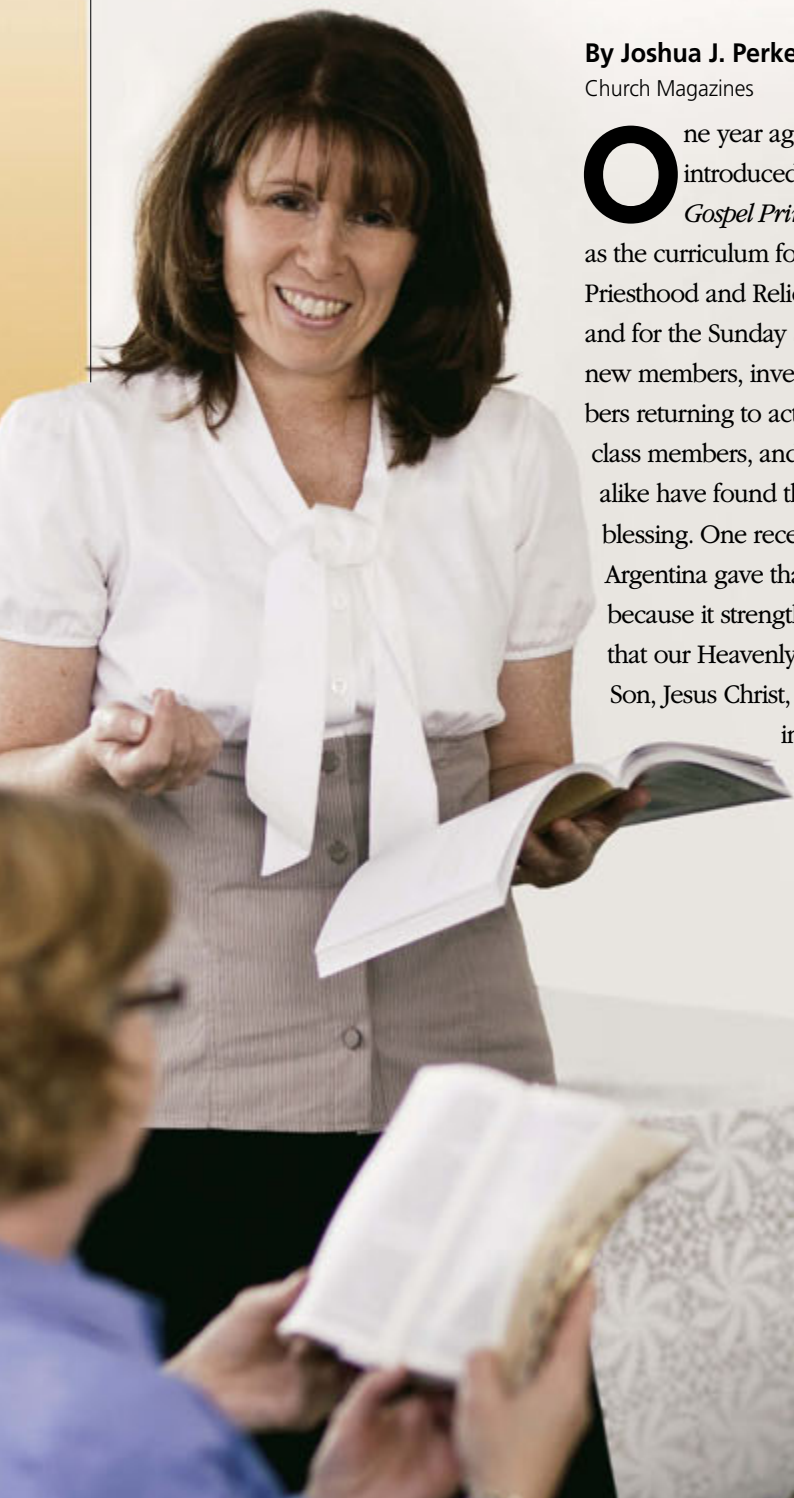
**O**ne year ago the Church introduced the newly revised *Gospel Principles* manual as the curriculum for Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society classes and for the Sunday School class for new members, investigators, and members returning to activity. Teachers, class members, and recent converts alike have found the revised book a blessing. One recent convert from Argentina gave thanks for the book because it strengthened his testimony that our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, live. He read all of it in one month and it changed his life.

Another

member appreciated the updating and republishing of the *Gospel Principles* manual. She loves the new images and format, but for her the best part was getting back to basics.

Helping members worldwide focus on the fundamental doctrines of the gospel is one of the key purposes of the current program of study. As Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: "All Church members will benefit by a return to the basics. A careful study of core doctrines as presented in the new and improved *Gospel Principles* manual will help members strengthen their understanding of the fundamental teachings of the gospel."<sup>1</sup>

The following ideas will help teachers make the most of this manual.



**1. Prepare in advance.** Your lessons will be more successful if you carefully read the chapter materials, including all the scripture references, several days in advance and then prayerfully consider which ideas will best address the needs of class members. Many teachers are realizing that they can't just walk into class and expect to be able to teach without preparing. The materials require them to think about their classes before they start teaching. Of course, lessons also tend to be more effective when members come to class having studied the chapter and related scriptures as well.

**2. Regularly review the introduction on pages 1–3.** This section provides specific suggestions: love those you teach, teach by the Spirit, teach the doctrine, and invite diligent learning. Remember that the best teaching will encourage class members to see how gospel principles apply to daily living.

**3. Read the “For Teachers” suggestions in each chapter.** They are drawn from *Teaching, No Greater Call* (see the URL at the end of this article) and may apply to any chapter or teaching situation, not just the chapter in which they are printed.

**4. Read from the materials in the text and the accompanying scriptures—in class.** The text is wonderfully concise, direct, and easy to understand. And it contains the core

doctrines of the gospel. This clarity will invite the Spirit and facilitate learning and discussion.

**5. Do not substitute outside materials, however interesting they may be.** Although some additional materials may add to the lesson, the manual cautions: “Stay true to the scriptures and the words in the book. As appropriate, use personal experiences and articles from Church magazines to supplement the lessons.”<sup>2</sup> There is a difference between supplementing material and substituting material. Appropriate supplemental materials include the scriptures, Church magazines, and uplifting personal experiences (see D&C 42:12–13).

**6. Use questions to inspire discussion.** Class members can learn from one another when they share insights and uplifting experiences. “Use questions at the beginning of a section in a chapter to start a discussion and send class members . . . to the text to find more information. Use questions at the end of a section to help class members . . . ponder and discuss the meaning of what they have read and apply it in their lives.”<sup>3</sup>

**7. Testify of the truths you teach and invite class members to ponder the lesson.** As you prayerfully prepare your lessons and ponder what would be best for your class, you will find this promise to be true: “Then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall



## **ABOVE ALL, TESTIFY**

“Don’t try to dazzle everyone with how brilliant you are.

Dazzle them with how brilliant the gospel is. Don’t worry about the location of the lost tribes or the Three Nephites. Worry a little more about the location of your student, what’s going on in his heart, what’s going on in her soul, the hunger, sometimes the near-desperate spiritual needs of our people. Teach them. And, above all, testify to them. Love them. Bear your witness from the depths of your soul. It will be the most important thing you say to them in the entire hour, and it may save someone’s spiritual life.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Teaching and Learning in the Church,” *Liahona*, June 2007, 72; *Ensign*, June 2007, 104.

have my Spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men” (D&C 11:21). You will then rejoice with those you teach, for you will both be edified by the Spirit in truth and virtue (see D&C 50:22). ■

See also *Teaching, No Greater Call* online at [lds.org/gospellibrary/materials/teachingnogreatercall.pdf](https://lds.org/gospellibrary/materials/teachingnogreatercall.pdf).

### **NOTES**

1. Russell M. Nelson, “The New *Gospel Principles* Manual,” *Liahona*, Jan. 2010, 23–24; *Ensign*, Jan. 2010, 29–30.
2. *Gospel Principles* (2009), 2.
3. *Gospel Principles*, 5.