

Helps for the Teacher

Purpose

This manual has been written to help you teach the children that by following Jesus Christ's example, they can choose the right, be baptized, and become members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

**Message to
Primary
Teachers**

Our Father in Heaven has given you the sacred calling to teach children the gospel of Jesus Christ and help them learn to live it. As you serve the children and invite each one to "come unto Christ," you will bless their lives. You can help them begin to understand Heavenly Father's blessings and receive testimonies of his gospel. You will also grow personally and learn from them. Your service in Primary can bring you great joy. By serving Primary children, you are also serving Heavenly Father (see Mosiah 2:17).

As you live the principles of the gospel, study the scriptures, follow the counsel of priesthood leaders, and draw near to Heavenly Father through prayer, you will receive inspiration from the Holy Ghost regarding the children you teach. Bear your testimony often to the children, and let the Holy Ghost work through you in this important calling. As you do so, the Spirit will direct you so that all you do in Primary will be what our Heavenly Father desires for his children.

**Class
Information**

The CTR shield, found in the front of this manual, and the CTR ring are used in several lessons. CTR stands for "Choose the Right." The CTR ring is mentioned in several lessons and enrichment activities and serves as a reminder to its owner to choose the right. If the CTR ring is available in your area, ask the bishop or branch president to provide funds to purchase one for each child.

Class Time**Prayer**

Open and close every class period with prayer. Give each child regular opportunities to say the prayer. Make prayer a meaningful part of the class by giving instructions and suggestions for prayers and by asking the children for ideas to include in the prayer. Focus such suggestions on class needs and the lesson's message.

Teaching the lesson

Prepare each lesson carefully and prayerfully so that the children will understand and enjoy it and so that you will have the guidance of the Spirit. Do not read the lesson to the children. They will respond better if you present it in your own words.

Select from the lesson materials those that are appropriate for your class. Enrichment activities listed at the end of each lesson are meant to be used during the lesson presentation as you see fit. Not all lesson materials or enrichment activities will be appropriate for your class. Select those that your

class will respond to well. If you have younger children in your class, you might want to use songs and finger plays often during the lesson to help keep their attention. You might repeat an action verse several times if the children enjoy it. In place of wordstrips for younger children, you might draw pictures or cut some out of magazines that illustrate the concept taught with the wordstrips.

The manual *Teaching—No Greater Call* (33043) can help you significantly in teaching the lessons.

Bear a brief, personal testimony often so that class members will be more likely to hear and respond to the gospel message with the Spirit.

Music in the classroom

Music can bring the Spirit of the Lord into the classroom. Singing as a class can help the children better remember the lesson concepts and make your lessons more interesting.

The words to songs that are referred to more than once are printed in the back of the manual. The words to songs used only once in the manual are included within the lessons. Music for these songs can be found in the *Children's Songbook* (hardbound, 31246; spiral bound, 33441). Recorded music from the *Children's Songbook* is available on audiocassette (music only, 52505; words and music, 52428) and compact disc (music only, 50505; words and music, 50428).

You need not be a skilled musician to make classroom singing a rewarding experience. Practice and learn the songs at home as part of the lesson preparation. If you need special help, ask the music leader or accompanist for assistance. (For additional help, see "Music in the Classroom," *The How Book for Teaching Children* [31109], pp. 40–42.)

Particularly with younger children, you may wish to use appropriate actions with the songs. You may also say the words rather than sing them.

Articles of Faith

The Articles of Faith are an important part of the Primary curriculum. Encourage each child who is able to memorize all or parts of an article of faith used in a lesson.

Scriptures

Bring your scriptures to class each week, and let the children see you reading and teaching from them. If the children have their own copies of the scriptures, encourage them to bring them to class each week. Help older children find and read passages used in the lesson. Occasionally bear your testimony of the value of the scriptures.

Teaching aids

Pictures. Most of the pictures used in the lessons are numbered and included in a packet with the manual. These pictures should stay with the manual. A library number is listed in the lessons for pictures that may be available in larger sizes in your meetinghouse library. A Gospel Art Picture Kit number is also listed for those pictures included in that kit.

Music. See “Music in the Classroom” above.

Visual aid cutouts. Cut out and use the figures in the appropriate lessons. Keep them with the manual.

Food. Whenever a lesson suggests using food, please check with the parents of the children in advance to ensure that none of the children have allergies or other adverse physical reactions to the food.

Other teaching aids. You will need to make other simple teaching aids that are suggested in the lessons, such as wordstrips, charts, and handouts. Save these aids to use later with other lessons and in following years.

Sharing time presentations

Occasionally your class will give a simple gospel presentation during Primary sharing time. Such presentations should be adapted from the lessons. Look for suitable ideas for sharing time as you prepare and give the lessons. You may also choose a principle from the current children’s sacrament meeting presentation.

Having children teach a gospel principle during sharing time is an effective way to help them learn and share that principle. You may use part of a class period to prepare the presentation.

Make sure the sharing time presentation is simple and doesn’t require much rehearsing. The following suggestions may help you give effective, simple class presentations:

1. Act out a story or situation from a lesson.
2. Show and explain the chart “Becoming a Member of the Church of Jesus Christ” (see lesson 7).
3. Have the children explain their feelings about their coming baptisms. If a child has reached the age of eight and has been baptized, ask him to share his feelings about his baptism.
4. Tell a story from a lesson using pictures, wordstrips, or cutout figures.
5. Repeat and explain an article of faith. You may also wish to sing one of the article of faith songs from the *Children’s Songbook*, pp. 122–33.

For additional help, see the *Primary Sharing Time Resource Manual* (33231).

Sharing with the Children’s Families

Encourage the children to share what they learn in Primary with their families. Invite parents to visit and participate in your class occasionally to enrich the lessons. Be open to ideas from parents that will help make Primary more meaningful for their children.

Preparing for Baptism

If you have seven-year-olds in your class, some of them will be baptized during the year. As their Primary teacher, you can support the children’s families and help class members prepare for their baptisms. Consider the following suggestions to help you do this:

1. If possible, teach some of the lessons on baptism (lessons 11, 13, 21, 32, and 33) before the first child in your class is baptized.
 2. Take a few minutes of class time on the Sunday before each child's baptism to discuss the importance of this ordinance.
 3. If possible, attend each child's baptism with a member of the Primary presidency and any class members who can attend.
 4. Help the children prepare class presentations about baptism for sharing time.
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Understanding the Children

Your calling to teach children the gospel of Jesus Christ is a sacred trust given to you through your bishopric or branch presidency. You can greatly influence these children to follow the Savior throughout their lives. Remember, priesthood leaders have called you by inspiration from Heavenly Father.

Always show to the class a positive attitude and a love for the children. Become acquainted with each child's talents, interests, and abilities. Adapt lesson activities requiring reading and writing to the abilities of the children.

Help all the children build a sense of positive self-worth by listening to them and giving them as much individual attention as possible.

These lessons have been written for classes of either same-age groups or mixed-age groups from four through seven years old. However, you might need to adapt them according to the ages in your particular class. Regardless of how your class is organized, understanding the age characteristics of the children will help you teach more effectively. This can help you know why the children behave as they do and how to teach them in a way that they can best learn. Understanding the children will also help you maintain a positive feeling in the classroom. Review the following characteristics as you prepare your lessons. Remember, however, that each child matures at his or her own rate. These are only general guidelines.

Four-year-olds

Four is the age of finding out. *Why* and *how* are two of the words most frequently used by four-year-olds. Four-year-olds are doers and are very active. The following are general characteristics of four-year-olds:

1. They can run, jump, and climb with more ease and confidence than three-year-olds.
2. They can throw or kick a ball and build a house out of blocks.
3. They are fond of saying such things as "I did that before; I can make something different now."
4. They like to play with other children but are not socially ready for a large group.
5. Although they want and need other children to play with, they play mostly as individuals. They may run or dance to music with the group, but they do not pay much attention to how other children are playing.

6. In addition to asking many questions, they can carry on a conversation with another child or with an adult.
7. Since their experience has been mainly in the home, they talk mostly about home and family. Children this age love to tell the teacher about their family. They would often rather tell their own stories than listen to the stories of other children. They love lessons and activities that focus on the family.
8. They live completely in the here and now. Yesterday and tomorrow mean little. They do, however, show great excitement for coming events, and because they cannot yet grasp the meaning of time, they may ask of some future event, "Is it tomorrow?"
9. They like to listen to stories and nursery rhymes. They want to hear favorite stories over and over again without the slightest change. After hearing the story, they like to dramatize the characters.
10. They can learn to pray with a little help.

Five-year-olds

Five-year-olds are more sure of themselves and are generally dependable. They have learned to do what is expected of them in the household. They play well with other children, but they can also amuse themselves alone in a number of ways, such as skipping about or drawing pictures. The following are normal behavior patterns for five-year-olds:

1. Their large-muscle coordination continues to improve. They can now skip, turn somersaults, and hop—even on one foot. They can pull a sled or wagon with some ease.
2. Their small-muscle coordination now permits them to paste, cut out pictures, and color predrawn pictures, even though it might still be hard for them to stay within the lines. Many can also tie their shoes.
3. They are more reliable and independent than four-year-olds. They often like to help around the house and are happy when they can work along with their parents.
4. They are serious when they ask "What is that for?" or "How does this work?" They want and should receive thoughtful, honest answers, but not in language or detail that they cannot understand.
5. They love their teachers and think it a privilege to sit by them. They are delighted when teachers ask them to help with the lesson by holding a picture or doing something else to help.
6. They like small-group projects and dramatizations about home and family.
7. They love to hear and tell stories, and they ask for the same story over and over again. Repetition is their main way of learning. Often they can tell a story almost word for word as they turn the pages of a book.
8. They are usually friendly, sympathetic, affectionate, and helpful, but when they don't get their own way, they can be very quarrelsome.
9. They like to receive new privileges to show that they are bigger and older.
10. With an attention span from ten to twelve minutes, they change rapidly from one activity to another. They are beginning to think that finger plays are for

the little kids and want more grown-up activities or rest exercises.

11. They will often demand that they have the right to play with something that another child is already playing with. Try to handle such matters carefully; teach the children to take turns.
12. They are not very social and prefer small groups to large ones. They would rather have one best friend than be with a group of ten.
13. They have not yet learned to distinguish between imagination and reality. Therefore, a child may say that his clock is made of gold, that his father is bigger than any other father, and that the fish he caught was extremely long. Adults should realize that this is a normal phase in a child's life and that it takes time to distinguish between what is real and what is not. This phase passes as a child develops.
14. They are eager learners. Since Heavenly Father is very real to them, they are very interested in him and ask many questions about him. Children this age enjoy praying and may be able to pray without help.

Six-year-olds

Six-year-olds have acquired good control over their bodies and have a great deal of energy to expend on learning new skills and perfecting those already gained. For example, they may learn to jump rope, bounce a ball, whistle, turn handsprings, and ride a bike. Six-year-olds may still have some difficulty using their small muscles, but they can learn to print the letters of the alphabet, their own names, and a few other words. The following are general characteristics of six-year-olds:

1. Their attention span is increasing. Even though they can become very restless, they can also concentrate on an activity for fifteen or twenty minutes, depending on their interest.
2. They enjoy whole body movements, such as climbing trees, performing on playground equipment, or running races.
3. They like games and friendly competition.
4. The teacher's opinion is very important to them. They want to sit by the teacher and help with the lesson by holding pictures or carrying materials back to the library.
5. They still like to hear stories; dramatize them and pretend. Many like to dress in grown-up clothes.
6. They are very generous, affectionate, and compatible until they don't get their own way, and then they can be very quarrelsome.
7. They like parties.
8. They may have perfected skipping, galloping, and hopping and like to use these skills in games.
9. They are very concerned with what is good and bad behavior.
10. Their faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ is increasing. Most six-year-old children can pray alone if they have had previous experience at home or in other classes.

Seven-year-olds

At seven, children are still close to their parents and still appreciate their attention, love, and sympathy, but they are beginning to relate more to people and situations outside the home. They have individual tastes and want to be allowed to make some of their own decisions. They are lively, eager, and tremendously interested in life about them. They explore many activities and like to repeat those that give them pleasure. The following are other general characteristics of seven-year-olds:

1. Their large muscles are well controlled, and the children are becoming more graceful, speedy, and agile.
2. Their small-muscle control is developing. They are able to print more easily and more accurately.
3. Many like rough-and-tumble games, playing the same ones over and over.
4. They are full of energy but tire easily. Rest periods are important.
5. They are often restless and fidgety.
6. They like to collect things and talk about them. They also like to talk about things they have made either by themselves or in groups.
7. The attention span of the seven-year-old is growing; children this age can complete a project if it interests them, even though it takes from twenty to twenty-five minutes. They still need to have a change in activity in most lessons.
8. They are beginning to interact less with members of the opposite sex.
9. They are becoming less domineering and less determined to have their own way .
10. They are becoming more independent and more logical in their thinking.
11. They are more aware of right and wrong and are very critical of those who do not do what they think is right.
12. They are looking forward to baptism.
13. They can pray alone and often expect an immediate answer to their prayers.
14. They take pride in the fact that they can fast at least one meal on fast day and that they pay tithing.

Special Guidelines for Including Children with Disabilities

The Savior set the example for us in feeling and showing compassion for people with disabilities. When he visited the Nephites after his resurrection, he said:

”Have ye any that are sick among you? Bring them hither. Have ye any that are lame, or blind, or halt, or maimed, or leprous, or that are withered, or that are deaf, or that are afflicted in any manner? Bring them hither and I will heal them, for I have compassion upon you” (3 Nephi 17:7).

As a Primary teacher, you are in an excellent position to show compassion. Although you may not be trained to give professional assistance, you can understand and nurture children who have disabilities. Concern, understanding, and a desire to include, insofar as possible, each class member in the learning activities are needed.

Children with disabilities can be touched by the Spirit no matter what their level of understanding. Although some children may not be able to attend the entire Primary time, they need to have the opportunity to attend even briefly to feel the Spirit. It may be necessary to have a companion who is sensitive to a child's needs be with the child during Primary in case the child needs time away from the whole group.

Class members with disabilities may be challenged by learning disabilities, intellectual impairments, language or speech problems, vision or hearing loss, behavioral and social problems, mental illness, movement and mobility problems, or chronic health impairments. Some may find the language or cultural setting unfamiliar and difficult. Regardless of individual circumstances, each child shares the same needs to be loved and accepted, to learn the gospel, to feel the Spirit, to participate successfully, and to serve others. The following guidelines can help you teach a child with disabilities.

- Look beyond the disability and get to know the child. Be natural, friendly, and warm.
- Learn about the child's specific strengths and challenges.
- Make every effort to teach and remind each class member of his or her responsibility to respect every class member. Helping a class member with a disability can be a Christlike learning experience for the entire class.
- Find the best methods for teaching the child by talking with parents, with other family members, and, when appropriate, with the child.
- Before calling on a child with disabilities to read, pray, or otherwise participate, ask how he or she feels about participating in class. Emphasize each child's abilities and talents and look for ways each can participate comfortably and successfully.
- Adapt lesson materials and physical surroundings to meet the individual needs of children with disabilities.

Additional materials for teaching children with disabilities are available from Church distribution centers (see "Materials for Those with Disabilities" in the distribution center catalog for your area).

Dealing with Problems of Abuse

As a Primary teacher, you may become aware of children in your class who suffer from emotional or physical abuse. If you become concerned about a child in your class, please counsel with your bishop. As you prepare and present lessons, pray for the Lord's guidance and direction. Help each child in your class feel that he or she is a precious child of Heavenly Father and that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ love each of us and want us to be happy and safe.

