



# Doctrinal Mastery

New Testament Teacher Material





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# Instructions for Teachers

The Objective of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion states: “We teach students the doctrine and principles of the gospel as found in the scriptures and the words of the prophets” (*Gospel Teaching and Learning: A Handbook for Teachers and Leaders in Seminaries and Institutes of Religion* [2012], x). In seminary this is primarily accomplished through a sequential study of the scriptures, following the natural flow of the books and verses of a volume of scripture from beginning to end. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles emphasized that “this is the first and most fundamental way of obtaining living water” (“A Reservoir of Living Water” [Church Educational System fireside for young adults, Feb. 4, 2007], 3, [lds.org/broadcasts](https://www.lds.org/broadcasts)).

Another way we help students to understand, believe, and live the doctrine of Jesus Christ is through Doctrinal Mastery. Doctrinal Mastery builds on and replaces previous efforts in Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, such as scripture mastery and the study of Basic Doctrines. Doctrinal Mastery is intended to help students accomplish the following outcomes:

1. Learn and apply divine principles for acquiring spiritual knowledge.
2. Master the doctrine of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the scripture passages in which that doctrine is taught. We will focus particularly on doctrine relating to the following nine topics:
  - The Godhead
  - The plan of salvation
  - The Atonement of Jesus Christ
  - The Restoration
  - Prophets and revelation
  - Priesthood and priesthood keys
  - Ordinances and covenants
  - Marriage and family
  - Commandments

Seminaries and Institutes of Religion has produced instructional materials to help teachers and students accomplish these outcomes. These materials include the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document* and the Doctrinal Mastery teacher material. (*Note:* Doctrinal Mastery teacher material will be available for each of the four seminary courses.)

## Doctrinal Mastery Core Document

The *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document* is addressed to students. It consists of (1) an introduction that explains what Doctrinal Mastery is and how it will be helpful to them, (2) instruction that teaches them principles of acquiring spiritual knowledge, and (3) a section on the doctrinal topics listed above. Under each of the doctrinal

topics are statements of doctrine that are relevant to the students' lives and important for them to understand, believe, and apply.

Some of the doctrine and principles in the "Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge" and "Doctrinal Topics" sections of the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document* are supported by doctrinal mastery scripture passages. There are 25 doctrinal mastery scripture passages for each course of study (Old Testament, New Testament, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants and Church History), for a total of 100 passages. A list of these passages is provided at the back of the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*. Helping students to remember and locate these passages and to understand how the passages teach the Savior's doctrine is an important part of your work as a teacher.

Each of the 100 doctrinal mastery scripture passages is used to directly support only one statement of doctrine in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*. For example, Joseph Smith—History 1:15–20 is cited in doctrinal topic 4, "The Restoration," to support the truth that **God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to Joseph Smith in response to Joseph's prayer, and They called him to be the Prophet of the Restoration.** However, this doctrinal mastery passage could also be used to support the truth in doctrinal topic 1, "The Godhead," that **there are three separate personages in the Godhead: God, the Eternal Father; His Son, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Ghost.** Therefore, this doctrinal mastery passage is listed as a related reference in that topic.

Noting where each doctrinal mastery passage is cited allows you to know in which learning experience that particular passage will be treated in the Doctrinal Mastery teacher material for the current year's course of study. In the preceding example, Joseph Smith—History 1:15–20 will be treated in the learning experience for "The Restoration" in the *Doctrinal Mastery Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Teacher Material*.

Not every doctrinal topic will receive the same level of emphasis every year. Though each doctrinal topic will be covered every year, only the specific statements of doctrine that are supported by doctrinal mastery passages associated with a given year's course of study will be emphasized in the Doctrinal Mastery lessons for that year.

## Doctrinal Mastery Teacher Material

The Doctrinal Mastery curriculum consists of 10 learning experiences to be covered during the year's course of study. The instructional material for each learning experience will likely need to be taught during more than one class session.

The first learning experience focuses on helping students learn and apply principles related to acquiring spiritual knowledge. This should be taught within the first two weeks of the school year. It will help students catch the vision of doctrinal mastery. In addition, the principles taught in this learning experience provide a foundation that will be built upon and revisited during the subsequent nine learning experiences that will be taught during the remainder of the year.

Each of the subsequent learning experiences is based on one of the nine doctrinal topics listed previously. They are designed to help students understand the Savior's



doctrine more deeply and apply it more readily in their lives. Each of these learning experiences consists of three main parts: “Understanding the Doctrine,” “Practice Exercises,” and “Doctrinal Mastery Review.”

**Understanding the Doctrine.** This part of each learning experience includes a series of learning activities or segments that can be taught during one or more class sessions. These activities will help students develop a deeper understanding of each doctrinal topic and specific statements of doctrine associated with each topic.

“Understanding the Doctrine” activities usually begin with a study of the doctrinal topic in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*. In addition, the activities focus on particular statements of doctrine supported by the doctrinal mastery passages specific to the volume of scripture for the year’s course of study. For example, in the learning experience for “The Godhead” in the *Doctrinal Mastery New Testament Teacher Material*, teachers are instructed to help students master Hebrews 12:9. As students study the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants and Church history during other years of their seminary experience, they will focus on additional doctrinal mastery passages that support other statements of doctrine associated with the topic “The Godhead” in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*.

In the “Understanding the Doctrine” activities, students are encouraged to locate, mark, and study doctrinal mastery passages so they can use them to teach and explain the statements of doctrine the passages support. You may want to add additional learning activities as needed to help students master the statements of doctrine and the doctrinal mastery passages that support them.

**Practice Exercises.** Each learning experience provides at least one practice exercise for students. These exercises typically consist of case studies, role plays, scenarios, or questions that students can participate in or discuss together in small groups or as a class. These exercises are vital to helping students understand how the doctrinal statements they have been learning are relevant in modern circumstances. The exercises also emphasize how the doctrine students have learned can bless and assist them in living the gospel and in teaching the gospel and explaining their beliefs to others in a nonthreatening, inoffensive way.

**Doctrinal Mastery Review.** Frequently reviewing the doctrinal statements and the doctrinal mastery passages used to support them will help students in their mastery efforts. Each learning experience includes a section with ideas to help you lead students in a review of the doctrinal statements and related doctrinal mastery passages that they have learned throughout the school year.

## Implementing Doctrinal Mastery

Doctrinal Mastery is implemented differently based on the type of seminary program students are enrolled in: daily seminary (early-morning and released-time programs), online seminary, and home-study seminary.

### Doctrinal Mastery in Daily Seminary

It is anticipated that you will spend approximately 30 minutes of class time per week throughout the school year on Doctrinal Mastery. The number of weeks spent on each of the 10 learning experiences will vary depending on the number of

doctrinal statements and doctrinal mastery passages to be emphasized and studied for that doctrinal topic. Some topics will be adequately covered in two weeks, while others will require additional weeks to complete (see the “New Testament Doctrinal Mastery Pacing Guide” below).

The “Understanding the Doctrine” part of each Doctrinal Mastery learning experience is divided into learning activities (segments) that can generally be completed in 5 to 10 minutes each. This allows for a flexible approach to using class time for Doctrinal Mastery. For example, one day you may plan to cover one or two learning activities during class, while on another day you may need the full class time to sufficiently cover the scripture block, leaving no time for Doctrinal Mastery. Some learning activities require more time, so you may want to do them on a flexible teaching day (see “Pacing Guide for Daily Teachers” and “Suggestions for Flexible Days” in the appendix of your teacher manual).

In addition to addressing key scripture passages topically as a part of Doctrinal Mastery, you should emphasize those same passages as you encounter them in your sequential study of the scriptures with students. Doing so will help students gain a greater understanding of the context and content of each passage, as well as magnify the importance of the truths each passage teaches.

In daily seminary, Doctrinal Mastery builds upon and replaces the scripture mastery program. For those doctrinal mastery passages formerly identified as scripture mastery passages, the *New Testament Seminary Teacher Manual* contains suggestions and learning activities that will help you give the passage an appropriate emphasis in your sequential scripture study with students. Where the doctrinal mastery passages are new, the teacher manual will not identify the passages as such; it will be important for you to emphasize the passages effectively and appropriately as a part of sequential scripture study.

*Note:* Some scripture passages are identified in the *New Testament Seminary Teacher Manual* as scripture mastery passages but are not doctrinal mastery passages. These passages should no longer be emphasized according to the scripture mastery instructions in the manual, but they should be covered in the normal flow of sequential scripture study.

### **New Testament Doctrinal Mastery Pacing Guide**

The number of weeks spent on each of the 10 learning experiences for the New Testament varies, depending on the number of doctrinal points and scripture passages to be studied for the doctrinal topic. Approximately 30 minutes per week should be spent on Doctrinal Mastery using the following learning activities:

- Understanding the Doctrine segments
- Practice Exercises
- Doctrinal Mastery Review activities

For example, in the pacing guide below, two weeks are given for Doctrinal Mastery activities related to the Godhead. On Monday of the first week, you could do the first “Understanding the Doctrine” segment. On Tuesday you could do the second and third segments, and on Wednesday you may choose to do a three-to-five-minute mastery activity that you design or select from the resources

in the appendix of the *New Testament Seminary Teacher Manual*. On Thursday you may choose not to do a Doctrinal Mastery activity because you need the full class time to sufficiently cover the scripture block, and on Friday you could do the fourth “Understanding the Doctrine” segment. For the second week, you may choose to do one additional teacher-selected mastery activity, the practice exercise, and the “Doctrinal Mastery Review” activity.

Reviewing the curriculum in the *New Testament Seminary Teacher Manual* for the upcoming week alongside the Doctrinal Mastery learning activities contained in the *Doctrinal Mastery New Testament Teacher Material* will help you plan for and allot class time to Doctrinal Mastery. You may need to identify portions of lessons that can be summarized to create time for Doctrinal Mastery learning activities and practice exercises.

The following pacing guide is based on an approach of covering doctrinal points in the sequence in which they occur in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*. However, as long as the “Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge” learning experience is taught first, the other doctrinal topics may be taught in any order. Consider the following two approaches:

- Cover the doctrinal topics in the sequence in which they occur in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document* (beginning with “The Godhead” and concluding with “Commandments”).
- To the extent possible, align students’ study of the doctrinal topics with those they will study in their Sunday meetings.

| Week | Doctrinal Topic               |
|------|-------------------------------|
| 1    | Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge |
| 2    |                               |
| 3    |                               |
| 4    |                               |
| 5    | The Godhead                   |
| 6    |                               |
| 7    | The Plan of Salvation         |
| 8    |                               |
| 9    |                               |
| 10   |                               |
| 11   |                               |
| 12   |                               |
| 13   | The Atonement                 |
| 14   |                               |

| Week | Doctrinal Topic                |
|------|--------------------------------|
| 15   |                                |
| 16   |                                |
| 17   | The Restoration                |
| 18   |                                |
| 19   |                                |
| 20   | Prophets and Revelation        |
| 21   |                                |
| 22   |                                |
| 23   |                                |
| 24   | Priesthood and Priesthood Keys |
| 25   |                                |
| 26   | Ordinances and Covenants       |
| 27   |                                |
| 28   | Marriage and Family            |
| 29   |                                |
| 30   | Commandments                   |
| 31   |                                |
| 32   |                                |

**Doctrinal Mastery in Online Seminary**

Doctrinal Mastery learning activities will be incorporated into the online seminary lessons. If you teach an online seminary class, it will be helpful to review the previous section on “Doctrinal Mastery in Daily Seminary” to help you understand important principles and practices that could be adapted and applied in an online seminary environment.

**Doctrinal Mastery in Home-Study Seminary**

At this time the materials that home-study teachers and students use have not been updated to include Doctrinal Mastery content. Therefore, teachers and students should continue to use the current home-study materials and included scripture mastery activities. Until the home-study materials are updated, teachers are encouraged to provide students with copies of the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document* and to encourage them to study it and the doctrinal mastery scripture passages on their own.

# Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge

## Part 1 (40 minutes)

Note: Parts 1 and 2 can be taught over the course of two 40-minute class sessions, or they can be combined and taught in one 80-minute session.

### The Search for Eternal Truth

Write the word *Truth* on the board, and ask the students the following question:

- Why can discovering or learning what is true be challenging?

After a few students have responded, write the following question on the board:  
*How can I learn and know what is true?*

Explain that President Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the First Presidency addressed the challenge of learning truth by sharing an ancient parable entitled “The Blind Men and the Elephant.”

You may want to display the following statement by President Uchtdorf, or provide each student with a copy of it. Ask a student to read the statement aloud. Invite the class to follow along, looking for how this parable represents some of the challenges we face as we search for truth.



“Well over one hundred years ago, an American poet put to rhyme an ancient parable. The first verse of the poem speaks about:

*Six men of Indostan  
To learning much inclined,  
Who went to see the Elephant  
(Though all of them were blind),  
That each by observation  
Might satisfy his mind.*

“In the poem each of the six travelers takes hold of a different part of the elephant and then describes to the others what he has discovered.

“One of the men finds the elephant’s leg and describes it as being round and rough like a tree. Another feels the tusk and describes the elephant as a spear. A third grabs the tail and insists that an elephant is like a rope. A fourth discovers the trunk and insists that the elephant is like a large snake.

“Each is describing truth.

“And because his truth comes from personal experience, each insists that he knows what he knows.

“The poem concludes:

*And so these men of Indostan  
Disputed loud and long,  
Each in his own opinion*



*Exceeding stiff and strong,  
Though each was partly in the right,  
And all were in the wrong!*

[John Godfrey Saxe, *The Poems of John Godfrey Saxe (1873)*, 135–36, [books.google.com](https://books.google.com)].

("What Is Truth?" [Church Educational System devotional, Jan. 13, 2013], [lds.org/broadcasts](https://lds.org/broadcasts).)

- How does this parable illustrate some of the challenges of discovering truth?
- What are some of the other challenges of seeking to discover truth?
- What would help the blind men come to a more accurate understanding of what an elephant is? (For example, receiving help from someone who can see the whole elephant.)

### God Is the Source of Eternal Truth

Explain that during their experience in seminary, students will have many opportunities to increase their understanding of eternal truth. To help students effectively do this, an effort called Doctrinal Mastery is being introduced. This effort includes seeking to learn and apply principles of acquiring spiritual knowledge and developing a deeper understanding of key doctrines of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Provide students with copies of the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*, and ask them to open to the "Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge" section. Invite them to silently read the first paragraph, looking for the source of eternal truth.

Ask students to report what they find. You may want to suggest that they mark the following doctrine: **God knows all things and is the source of all truth.**

To help students further understand this doctrine, invite a student to read Mosiah 4:9 aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for how this verse helps us understand why we can rely upon God as the source of all truth.

- What words or phrases in this verse describe why God is the only reliable source of truth?
- Why do you think it is important to rely upon God as the source of all truth? (Help students understand that knowing where to turn for truth is one of the first steps to obtaining it.)

### How to Acquire Spiritual Knowledge

Invite a student to read aloud the last sentence of the first paragraph and the entire second paragraph of the "Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge" section of the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*. Ask students to follow along, looking for what we can do to invite God to reveal spiritual truth to us.

Invite students to report what they discover. To help students deepen their understanding of what we must do to acquire spiritual truth, divide the class into four groups and assign each group one of the following doctrinal mastery passages or sets of passages:

- Moroni 10:4–5

- John 7:17
- James 1:5–6; 2 Nephi 32:8–9
- 2 Timothy 3:15–16; 2 Nephi 32:3

Explain that they will have five minutes to read their assigned verses as a group and discuss what they read by using the following questions. (You may want to display these questions on the board or provide them on a handout.)

1. What principle of seeking spiritual truth is being taught in these verses?
2. How can these verses help you better understand how you can seek spiritual truth?
3. What experiences have you had with this part of the pattern of acquiring spiritual truth?

After sufficient time, invite a member of each group to share with the class what they discussed. Ensure that as each group reports their findings, they include which part of the process for acquiring spiritual learning their verses taught.

After each group has reported, you may want to ask the class for additional insights or experiences related to acquiring spiritual truth. Then consider asking the following question:

- How do each of these ways of seeking truth relate to each other in helping us acquire spiritual knowledge?

Invite a student to read aloud the following statement by Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Ask the class to listen for what Elder Scott taught is required to obtain spiritual knowledge.



“To gain knowledge of great worth requires extraordinary personal effort. This is particularly true when our desire is to obtain spiritual knowledge” (“Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 87).

- Why do you think the Lord requires effort on our part before we can acquire spiritual knowledge?
- In your experience, why is the effort you have put forth worth it to acquire spiritual knowledge—such as a testimony of our Heavenly Father; His Son, Jesus Christ; and the truthfulness of Their teachings?

Testify that our best personal effort is needed to obtain spiritual knowledge. Heavenly Father is willing to teach us, but we must be willing to do our part.

### Asking Questions and Seeking Answers Is a Vital Part of Our Effort to Learn Truth

Ask a student to read aloud the third paragraph of the “Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge” section in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*. Invite students to

follow along, looking for what this paragraph teaches about the importance of asking questions in our efforts to gain spiritual knowledge.

Ask students to report what they found. Then write the following summary statement of truth on the board: **Asking questions and diligently seeking answers is a vital part of our effort to learn truth.**

- Why do you feel it is important to diligently seek for answers to questions that arise during your efforts to learn truth?

To help students understand the importance of this aspect of obtaining spiritual knowledge, invite a student to read aloud the following statement by President Dieter F. Uchtdorf. Ask the class to listen for what President Uchtdorf taught about asking the right questions. (You may want to provide students with a copy of this statement.)



“When it comes to spiritual truth, how can we know that we are on the right path?”

“One way is by asking the right questions—the kind that help us ponder our progress and evaluate how things are working for us. Questions like:

“‘Does my life have meaning?’

“‘Do I believe in God?’

“‘Do I believe that God knows and loves me?’

“‘Do I believe that God hears and answers my prayers?’

“‘Am I truly happy?’

“‘Are my efforts leading me to the highest spiritual goals and values in life?’

“Profound questions regarding the purpose of life have led many individuals and families throughout the world to search for truth. Often that search has led them to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and to the restored gospel” (“It Works Wonderfully!” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 20–21).

- How does this statement by President Uchtdorf help us further understand the importance of asking the right questions?

Ask students if they can think of any examples from the scriptures that illustrate how asking questions and diligently seeking answers led individuals to obtain spiritual knowledge. (Examples might include Joseph Smith—History 1:10–20; Enos 1:1–8; Doctrine and Covenants 138:1–11).

Point out the following principle from the end of the third paragraph of the “Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge” section: **The attitude and intent with which we ask questions and seek answers will greatly affect our ability to learn through the Holy Ghost.** You may want to suggest that students mark this principle in their copy of the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*.

To illustrate the difference between asking sincere questions and asking questions in order to justify one’s behavior or to criticize or entrap someone, invite students to work in pairs as they contrast questions Zeezrom first asked with questions he

asked after hearing the testimonies of Alma and Amulek. Have one partner silently study Alma 10:31–32; 11:21 and the other partner silently study Alma 12:8. Invite students to explain to their partners what they learned about the sincerity of and possible motivation behind Zeezrom’s questions. After students have discussed their assigned verses with their partners, ask the class the following questions:

- What is the difference in motivation and attitude between the first questions Zeezrom asked and the questions he asked after hearing the testimonies of Alma and Amulek?
- According to Alma 12:8, what kind of truth was Zeezrom seeking after he heard the testimonies of Alma and Amulek? (Point out that after hearing Alma and Amulek’s testimonies, Zeezrom still had questions, but the nature of his questions had changed. Zeezrom “began to inquire ... diligently, that he might know more concerning the kingdom of God.”)

Explain that much of the beautiful doctrine taught in Alma 12–13 came as a result of questions. These questions and answers ultimately helped Zeezrom to become converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ (see Alma 14:6; 15:3–12).

You may want to testify of the importance of asking sincere questions and diligently seeking answers. Consider sharing how you have come to know that the Lord will answer our sincere questions.

## Part 2 (40 minutes)

### Answering Doctrinal or Historical Questions

Invite a student to read aloud the following statement by President Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



“Young people wonder ‘why?’—Why are we commanded *to do* some things, and why we are commanded *not* to do other things?” (“The Great Plan of Happiness” [address to Church Educational System religious educators, Aug. 10, 1993], si.lds.org).

Ask students to consider if they have ever wondered why we are commanded to do some things and not to do other things. For example, some might wonder why God has commanded us to keep the Sabbath day holy or why He has commanded that sexual intimacy be expressed only between a man and a woman who are legally married. Point out that this portion of the lesson on acquiring spiritual knowledge is intended to help students learn principles that can guide them when they have questions or are presented with questions from others regarding the doctrine, practices, and history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Remind students about the doctrine that they learned about the source of truth and how to acquire spiritual knowledge: God knows all things and is the source of all truth. Explain that remembering this truth is helpful when we have questions about the Church that seem difficult to understand.

Display or write the following principles on the board:

- *Act in faith.*
- *Examine concepts and questions with an eternal perspective.*
- *Seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources.*

Explain that these principles can guide us as we seek to learn and understand eternal truth and resolve questions or issues.

### Act in Faith

Invite students to silently read principle 1, “Act in Faith,” from the “Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge” section in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*. Ask them to look for and mark the principles that will help them to answer questions they and others have about the Church.

Ask students to report what they found. If they do not mention it, point out the following principle: **As we seek to develop our understanding and to resolve concerns, it is important that we rely on the testimony that we already have of Jesus Christ, the Restoration of His gospel, and the teachings of His ordained prophets.**

- How do you think these principles can help us as we sincerely seek understanding and answers to difficult questions and issues?

Invite students to share examples of when any of these principles blessed them when they were confronted with an issue, concern, or question.

Invite a student to read aloud the following account shared by Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Ask the class to listen for how a young woman acted in faith when faced with a challenging situation.



“Recently, I spoke with a Laurel from the United States. I quote from her email:

“This past year some of my friends on Facebook began posting their position on marriage. Many favored same-sex marriage, and several LDS youth indicated they “liked” the postings. I made no comment.

“I decided to declare my belief in traditional marriage in a thoughtful way.

“With my profile picture, I added the caption “I believe in marriage between a man and a woman.” Almost instantly I started receiving messages. “You are selfish.” “You are judgmental.” One compared me to a slave owner. And I received this post from a great friend who is a strong member of the Church: “You need to catch up with the times. Things are changing and so should you.”

“I did not fight back,’ she said, ‘but I did not take my statement down.’

“She concludes: ‘Sometimes, as President Monson said, “You have to stand alone.” Hopefully as youth, we will stand together in being true to God and to the teachings of His living prophets’ ” (“Spiritual Whirlwinds,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 19–20).



- In what ways did this young woman act in faith when faced with a difficult situation?
- Have you ever faced similar criticism for standing up for what you believe? How did you respond?

Invite students to share with the class how holding fast to what they already know and standing strong when faced with challenges has blessed their lives and caused their testimonies to grow (see Jeffrey R. Holland, “Lord, I Believe,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 94). Encourage students to determine to always be faithful to their testimony of the teachings of Jesus Christ and His prophets (see Joseph Smith Translation, Luke 14:28 [in Luke 14:27, footnote b]).

### Examine Concepts and Questions with an Eternal Perspective

Explain that people during the time of the Apostle Paul faced many of the same questions and concerns that we may experience today. Invite students to read 1 Corinthians 2:5, 9–11 silently, looking for what Paul taught is necessary in order to understand spiritual truth. You may want to point out the inspired change the Prophet Joseph Smith made to verse 11 (see Joseph Smith Translation, 1 Corinthians 2:11 [in 1 Corinthians 2:11, footnote c]).

Ask students to summarize what these verses say about how we can understand spiritual truth. Help them understand that it is only by the Spirit of God that we can know “the deep things of God” (1 Corinthians 2:10)—meaning the truths that can only be understood through revelation.

Invite a student to read aloud principle 2, “Examine Concepts and Questions with an Eternal Perspective,” in the “Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge” section in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*. Ask the class to follow along, looking for how we can seek the help of the Spirit and examine concepts and questions with an eternal perspective.

Invite students to identify truths listed under principle 2 that help them understand how to best examine questions that come to them. Write their responses on the board. (Students’ answers might include principles like the following: **Having an eternal perspective allows us to reframe questions and view ideas based on the Lord’s standard of truth rather than the world’s assumptions. As we stay anchored to our trust in our Heavenly Father and His plan of salvation, we are able to see issues more clearly.**)

To help students further understand how these principles can help us as we consider our questions and the questions of others, invite a student to read aloud the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Ask the class to listen for why it is important to consider the assumptions or beliefs on which a question is based. (You may want to give each student a copy of the statement.)



"Because of our knowledge of [the plan of salvation] and other truths that God has revealed, we start with different assumptions [or beliefs] than those who do not share our knowledge. As a result, we reach different conclusions on many important subjects that others judge only in terms of their opinions about mortal life. ...

"... [We] will often be better off to respond by identifying the worldly premises or assumptions in the assertions [we] face [from others], and then by identifying the different assumptions or premises that guide the thinking of Latter-day Saints. This won't elicit agreement from persons who don't share our faith, but it can move the discussion away from arguing over conclusions to identifying the real source of disagreement" ("As He Thinketh in His Heart" [evening with Elder Dallin H. Oaks, Feb. 8, 2013], [broadcasts.lds.org](http://broadcasts.lds.org)).

- How might our beliefs or assumptions affect the questions we ask and the conclusions we arrive at? (Help students to understand that a person who begins with worldly assumptions is likely to arrive at worldly conclusions. However, because we desire to understand eternal truth, it is important to consider questions in context of what we already know about God and His plan of salvation.)

Point out that our knowledge of God and His plan of salvation helps us understand the purpose for the commandments He has given us. In contrast, those who do not share our knowledge of Heavenly Father's plan of salvation will likely view the commandments differently from how we might view them.

To illustrate the relationship between a person's assumptions and the questions and conclusions he or she may arrive at, write the following question on the board: *Why would a loving God restrict us or take away our rights by giving us commandments rather than allow us the freedom to do whatever makes us happy?*

- What are the assumptions someone might make when asking this question?
- What truths do we know about Heavenly Father and His plan for us that help us look at this question through His perspective?
- How does this eternal perspective change our understanding of the concern?

Invite students to mention other questions or issues that are important to consider with an eternal perspective. Consider writing their responses on the board. Then ask students to explain how the principle of examining concepts and questions with an eternal perspective can help us understand more clearly the questions and issues they identified and evaluate them according to the Lord's standard of truth. As part of your discussion, consider asking follow-up questions such as the following:

- How does having a spiritual witness, through the power of the Holy Ghost, of the Restoration, the divine calling of the Prophet Joseph Smith, and the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon help you when you are faced with a question regarding the Church?
- How does knowing that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is a central part of His plan affect your views when

societal opinions challenge the definition of marriage as between a man and a woman?

Invite students to share how they or someone they know was able to better understand an idea, a teaching, or a question when they considered it from an eternal perspective. You may also want to share an experience of your own.

### Seek Further Understanding through Divinely Appointed Sources

Remind students of the poem based on an ancient parable entitled “The Blind Men and the Elephant” that was read in a statement by President Dieter F. Uchtdorf in part 1 of this “Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge” teaching material. Invite students to explain how this poem illustrates the challenge of discovering and understanding truth.

Invite a student to read aloud principle 3, “Seek Further Understanding through Divinely Appointed Sources,” in the “Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge” section in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*. Ask the class to follow along, looking for what God has given us to help us discover and understand truth. You may want to suggest that students mark what they find.

- What has God given us to help us discover and understand truth?
- What blessings can we receive as we turn to the Lord’s divinely appointed sources of truth? (As part of this discussion, you may want to suggest that students mark the following principle: **As we turn to the Lord’s divinely appointed sources for answers and direction, we can be blessed to discern between truth and error.**)
- How does the poem about the blind men and the elephant illustrate the need to turn to divinely appointed sources for answers and direction?

Point out the first sentence of the second paragraph under principle 3, “Seek Further Understanding through Divinely Appointed Sources,” which states, “We can also learn truth through other trustworthy sources.”

- How can we recognize truth found in other trustworthy sources of information?
- Why is it important to beware of unreliable sources of information?

Invite students to share examples of how they have been blessed as they have turned to divine sources for answers when they were confronted with a question or issue. You may want to be prepared to share an example of your own.

Consider telling students about (and if possible, showing them) the official Church website [mormonnewsroom.org](http://mormonnewsroom.org), where the Church clarifies information regarding various issues of public interest related to the Church and corrects partial or incorrect information being spread through the media. Also consider showing students the Church’s Gospel Topics page at [topics.lds.org](http://topics.lds.org). The Gospel Topics essays contain valuable and forthright information on many difficult historical and doctrinal issues.

Explain that during the school year, in addition to studying the teachings of the New Testament sequentially, they also will be studying the nine doctrinal topics from the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document* (which correspond to topics in the

Sunday youth curriculum) and the New Testament doctrinal mastery passages associated with each topic. As each topic is studied, they will use the principles of acquiring spiritual knowledge discussed in this lesson to consider real questions, issues, and opportunities for personal application.

Share your testimony about the importance of applying these principles when we are faced with difficult concepts or questions. Assure students that the Lord wants to teach them through His Spirit. As we turn to Him in faith, He will give us answers and provide direction in our lives.

### **Doctrinal Mastery Review**

Consider using the following activity during a separate class session to help students review the New Testament doctrinal mastery passages referred to in parts 1 and 2 of this learning experience on acquiring spiritual knowledge.

Before class, write the following doctrinal mastery passages on the board: *John 7:17; 1 Corinthians 2:5, 9–11; 2 Timothy 3:15–17; James 1:5–6.*

Have students work in groups of two or three. Assign each group one of the doctrinal mastery passages written on the board. Instruct them to read the passage together in their group and identify the doctrine taught in it.

Invite students to report what they found. (Consider referring to material found earlier in this learning experience or in the associated lessons in the *New Testament Seminary Teacher Manual* to see examples of how truths related to these scriptures could be stated.)

Next, ask students to work in their groups and select several words from the passage that can be used to best represent the doctrine taught. For example, for James 1:5–6, students might select the words *lack, wisdom, ask, and God.*

Beginning with the group assigned John 7:17, ask one student from the group to write the words they selected under the reference on the board and to explain why they selected those words. (If more than one group was assigned the same reference, have a student from each group write their words on the board. If the words differ, help the class agree on the words to use.) As a class, repeat the scripture reference and the words on the board. Repeat this for the remaining three scripture passages.

At the beginning of the next several class sessions, consider reviewing these doctrinal mastery passages and the words students selected for each.

# The Godhead

*Note:* The following doctrinal mastery activities could be done over the course of several class sessions or in a single class session.

## Understanding the Doctrine (35 minutes)

### Segment 1 (10 minutes)

Explain that as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we are blessed with a clear understanding of the roles of Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost.



Divide the class into groups of three to four students. Provide each group with a copy of the following instructions, and ask them to complete the activity as directed:

Locate doctrinal topic 1, “The Godhead,” in your copy of the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*. Take turns reading aloud the paragraphs under this topic, looking for insights about the Godhead.

When you have finished reading, have each group member respond to one of the following questions:

- What new insight did you learn about the Godhead or one of its members?
- What doctrine about the Godhead or one of its members do you think is particularly important to understand? Why?

After sufficient time, invite several students to report to the class what they discussed in their groups.

### Segment 2 (5 minutes)

Ask students to turn to doctrinal topic 1, “The Godhead,” in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*. Then ask:

- What verse is used to teach the doctrine that God is the Father of our spirits? (Hebrews 12:9.)

Invite students to turn to Hebrews 12:9. Explain that this verse contains instruction from the Apostle Paul to Church members in his day who were Jews. Paul sought to help Church members understand how to respond to God’s chastening, or correction and instruction (see Hebrews 12:7, footnote *b*).

Invite a student to read Hebrews 12:9 aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for a title Paul used to refer to God.

- What title did Paul use to refer to God?

Invite students to consider writing the following truth in their scriptures next to Hebrews 12:9: **God is the Father of our spirits**. Because it is a doctrinal mastery passage, you may want to suggest that they mark Hebrews 12:9 in a distinctive way so they will be able to locate it easily.



### Segment 3 (10 minutes)

Read Hebrews 12:9 aloud together as a class. Ask students to state the doctrine about God that we learn from this verse.

To help students further understand the doctrine that God is the Father of our spirits, invite several students to take turns reading aloud paragraphs from the following statement from the Gospel Topics section of LDS.org. (If possible, you may want to show students how to navigate to Gospel Topics so they know how to locate this statement on their own.)

“The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches that all human beings, male and female, are beloved spirit children of heavenly parents, a Heavenly Father and a Heavenly Mother. ...

“Latter-day Saints direct their worship to Heavenly Father, in the name of Christ, and do not pray to Heavenly Mother. In this, they follow the pattern set by Jesus Christ, who taught His disciples to ‘always pray unto the Father in my name’ [3 Nephi 18:19–21]. Latter-day Saints are taught to pray to Heavenly Father, but as President Gordon B. Hinckley said, ‘The fact that we do not pray to our Mother in Heaven in no way belittles or denigrates her’ [“Daughters of God,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 100].

“As with many other truths of the gospel, our present knowledge about a Mother in Heaven is limited. Nevertheless, we have been given sufficient knowledge to appreciate the sacredness of this doctrine and to comprehend the divine pattern established for us as children of heavenly parents” (Gospel Topics, “Mother in Heaven,” [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics)).

- Why is it helpful to understand that we have both a Father and a Mother in Heaven?

### Segment 4 (10 minutes)



To review Hebrews 12:9 and the doctrine that God is the Father of our spirits, provide each student with a copy of the following instructions, and ask them to complete the activity:

Read and ponder the following statement by President Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“You are a child of God. He is the father of your spirit. Spiritually you are of noble birth, the offspring of the King of Heaven. Fix that truth in your mind and hold to it. However many generations in your mortal ancestry, no matter what race or people you represent, the pedigree of your spirit can be written on a single line. You are a child of God!” (“To Young Women and Men,” *Ensign*, May 1989, 54).

Answer the following questions in your study journal or class notebook:

- How do you know that you are a child of God?
- How does knowing that God is the Father of your spirit affect how you feel about yourself and the choices you make?
- How should understanding that God is the Father of our spirits influence how you view and treat others?

After sufficient time, invite one or two students who are comfortable doing so to share what they wrote.

You might consider using a few minutes at the beginning of the next few lessons, perhaps as part of the class devotional, to have additional students share what they wrote in this activity. If you do so, invite the first student who shares to read Hebrews 12:9 aloud and restate the doctrine that God is the Father of our spirits. Repeating this passage and doctrine can help students remember this truth.

## Practice Exercise (12–15 minutes)

Ask students to turn to the “Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge” section in their copy of the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*. Review the meaning of the three principles: act in faith, examine concepts and questions with an eternal perspective, and seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources.



Divide the class into groups of two to three students. Provide each group with a copy of the following instructions, and ask them to complete the activity:

1. Read aloud the following scenario, and consider if you have ever had feelings similar to those of the young woman:

Leah is experiencing several challenges in her family and in her relationships with some friends. One night she kneels to pray but never begins her prayer. In frustration she says to herself, “Why doesn’t God care about me?” She sits on her bed and thinks through her recent hardships, viewing each as evidence of God’s lack of care for her.

Several days later during a youth activity, a Young Women leader asks Leah how she is doing. Leah responds, “Not very well. Life’s hard right now.” Leah’s leader continues to ask questions, and Leah eventually shares her feeling that God doesn’t care about her.

2. Discuss the following question as a group:

- If you were Leah’s leader, what might you do to help Leah act in faith, examine her concern from an eternal perspective, or seek understanding through divinely appointed sources?

3. Continue reading the scenario aloud:

Leah’s leader expresses sincere sympathy and asks, “Has there ever been a time when you did know that God cares about you?”

Leah thinks for a moment and remembers several experiences in which God answered her prayers. She mentions these to her leader. Her leader responds, “Thank you for sharing those experiences with me. I know that God is our Father and that He loves us. And I know that He loves and cares about you. But sometimes it is difficult to feel His love if we aren’t actively striving to draw close to Him. What have you done lately to draw close to Heavenly Father?”

“Well, I usually say my prayers at night. But I haven’t really prayed to Heavenly Father about the challenges I’m going through,” Leah responds.

“Because you are His daughter, Heavenly Father would love to hear from you. Will you pray and share your problems and questions with Him?” Leah’s leader asks.

“Yes,” Leah says. She continues, “Thank you. I needed that reminder.”

4. Discuss the following questions as a group:

- How do you think Leah’s decision to act in faith will benefit her?

- What do you know about God that can help you during times when you may feel distant from Him or wonder if He cares about what you are going through?

After sufficient time, invite several students to report what they discussed in their groups.

You may want to conclude by testifying that God is the Father of our spirits and that He loves and cares for each of us as His children. Invite students to always remember that they are children of God.

### **Doctrinal Mastery Review**

List on the board each of the New Testament doctrinal mastery passages students have learned so far during this course of study. Assign each student a different doctrinal mastery passage. Instruct students to write a scenario or description of a situation on a piece of paper in which the principles and truths contained in their assigned doctrinal mastery passage could be applied.

After students have finished, collect their written scenarios. Read a scenario aloud, and invite students to identify a doctrinal mastery passage that could be helpful in responding to that scenario. Follow up by inviting them to explain how the truths taught in the doctrinal mastery passages they identified could be applied in the scenario. Repeat the activity by reading aloud other scenarios. You could also present some of the scenarios at the beginning or end of the lessons during the coming week.

# The Plan of Salvation

*Note:* The following doctrinal mastery activities could be done over the course of several class sessions or in a single class session.

## Understanding the Doctrine (60–70 minutes)

### Segment 1 (10 minutes)

Point out that many people throughout the world do not have an accurate or thorough understanding of Heavenly Father’s plan of salvation. However, as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we are blessed with a knowledge of scriptures and teachings of prophets that help us understand Heavenly Father’s plan.

Invite students to draw a picture of the plan of salvation that includes premortal life, mortal life, and life after death. After they have finished, divide the students into pairs, and ask them to read doctrinal topic 2, “The Plan of Salvation,” in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*, looking for additional details they can add to their drawings. Have them explain to their partner any additional details they found and how those details help us further understand God’s plan.

### Segment 2 (10 minutes)

Invite students to look through doctrinal topic 2, “The Plan of Salvation,” in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document* and mark the statements of doctrine supported by scripture references from the New Testament. These include the following:

- **To fulfill this plan and become like our Father in Heaven, we must come to know Him and His Son, Jesus Christ, and have a correct understanding of Their character and attributes** (see John 17:3).
- **Our bodies are sacred and should be respected as a gift from our Heavenly Father** (see 1 Corinthians 6:19–20).
- **Every person eventually will have the opportunity to learn the principles of the gospel and receive its ordinances and covenants. Many of the faithful will preach the gospel to those in spirit prison. Those who choose to receive the gospel, repent, and accept the ordinances of salvation that are performed for them in temples will dwell in paradise until the Resurrection** (see 1 Peter 4:6).
- **Every person born on earth will be resurrected because Jesus Christ overcame physical death** (see 1 Corinthians 15:20–22).
- **The Final Judgment will occur after the Resurrection. Jesus Christ will judge each person to determine the eternal glory that he or she will receive. This judgment will be based on each person’s desires and obedience to God’s commands** (see Revelation 20:12).
- **There are three kingdoms of glory: the celestial kingdom, the terrestrial kingdom, and the telestial kingdom** (see 1 Corinthians 15:40–42).

**Segment 3 (20–25 minutes)**

Choose some or all of the statements of doctrine and doctrinal mastery passages listed above for use in the following activity. If you choose to cover only a few of the statements, repeat the activity for the remaining statements of doctrine and doctrinal mastery passages on subsequent days.

Invite students to imagine they will be answering a friend’s questions about the plan of salvation. Assign students to work in pairs or small groups to study the doctrinal mastery passages you selected. Write the following questions on the board for students to discuss as they study each passage:

- *How would you use the doctrinal mastery passage to explain the statement of doctrine it supports in the Doctrinal Mastery Core Document?*
- *In what ways could the scripture and doctrine be helpful to someone who does not know very much about Heavenly Father’s plan of salvation?*
- *How might the doctrine and teachings in the doctrinal mastery passage affect how you choose to live your life today?*

After sufficient time, invite several students to report their answers to the entire class. To promote further discussion and understanding, you may want to ask additional questions such as the following:

- Why are these doctrines important for us and others in the world to understand?
- What questions about our Heavenly Father’s plan do these doctrines answer?

**Segment 4 (20–25 minutes)**

Write each of the following questions on a separate index card or piece of paper and place the cards face down on a table in the classroom:

- *If a person must accept the gospel of Jesus Christ in order to be saved, what happens to people who died never knowing about the gospel?*
- *Who will be resurrected?*
- *Why should I be grateful for my body even though it may have problems?*
- *I’ve heard that all people will eventually go to either heaven or hell. Is that true?*
- *What is the most important knowledge I can gain?*
- *How will my choices in this life affect what happens to me after I die?*

As needed, review the New Testament doctrinal mastery passages associated with doctrinal topic 2, “The Plan of Salvation.” You may want to write the references to these passages on the board: *John 17:3; 1 Corinthians 6:19–20; 1 Corinthians 15:20–22; 1 Corinthians 15:40–42; 1 Peter 4:6; Revelation 20:12.*

Assign students to work in pairs. Invite one pair to come to the front of the class. Explain that the rest of the class represents friends who have questions about the

teachings of the Church. The cards on the table represent these friends' questions about the plan of salvation. Invite the pair to consider how they can respond to these questions using the doctrinal mastery passages and statements of doctrine they have learned concerning the plan of salvation. Have the pair choose a card, have another student in the class read the question, and then allow the pair to answer the question by using the doctrinal mastery passages. Repeat the activity with other pairs of students answering the questions. (*Note:* To break this activity into smaller time allotments, you might consider answering one or more of these questions on different days, rather than all in one activity.)

Conclude by asking students how their understanding and testimony were strengthened during the activity.

## Practice Exercises (30–40 minutes)

Using the “Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge” section of the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*, help students practice using the three principles—act in faith, examine concepts and questions with an eternal perspective, and seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources—and applying them to the statements of doctrine they have learned regarding the plan of salvation. The following activities can help you accomplish this. These activities can be taught on the same day or on different days, depending on your schedule and the needs of your students.

### Exercise 1 (20–25 minutes)

Read aloud the following statement, and invite students to imagine that it is a social media post:

“I don’t understand Mormons. Why do they live with so many restrictions—no tattoos or alcohol, abstinence before marriage, only modest clothes? I say it’s your body and it’s your life. If you’re not hurting anyone else, do what you want to do. Mormons need to loosen up.”

Invite students to write a response to this social media post. Ask them to use 1 Corinthians 6:19–20 and the three principles of Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge in their responses. Write the principles on the board:

- *Act in faith.*
- *Examine concepts and questions with an eternal perspective.*
- *Seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources.*

To help students practice seeking further understanding through divinely appointed sources, consider inviting them to look for additional scripture passages in the Topical Guide, Bible Dictionary, or Guide to the Scriptures. They could also look for statements from Church leaders that explain the sacredness of our bodies. If available, they could use electronic devices to search LDS.org, or they could look for these statements in copies of the Church magazines. You might read aloud the

following statement by Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as an example:



“Those who believe that our bodies are nothing more than the result of evolutionary chance will feel no accountability to God or anyone else for what they do with or to their body. We who have a witness of the broader reality of premortal, mortal, and postmortal eternity, however, must acknowledge that we have a duty to God with respect to this crowning achievement of His physical creation. In Paul’s words:

“‘What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

“‘For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s’ (1 Corinthians 6:19–20).

“Acknowledging these truths . . . , we would certainly not deface our body, as with tattoos; or debilitate it, as with drugs; or defile it, as with fornication, adultery, or immodesty. As our body is the instrument of our spirit, it is vital that we care for it as best we can. We should consecrate its powers to serve and further the work of Christ” (“Reflections on a Consecrated Life,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 17).

When students finish writing, invite them to read their responses to another class member and discuss how they used the three principles in responding to the question in the post. Invite them to share some of their responses with the class and discuss how these responses exemplified the principles of Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge.

Conclude by inviting students to consider how they might better live according to the doctrine they reviewed today.

### Exercise 2 (10–15 minutes)

Review briefly with students the New Testament doctrinal mastery passages that help explain the doctrine of the plan of salvation. Then invite a student to read aloud the following scenario to the class. Ask the class to consider how the doctrines of the plan could help José with his choices:

“Faster,” the coach yelled at José, who had just missed his chance to score a goal. José’s friend Sylvia watched him walk back to the bench, clearly frustrated. She knew how much he wanted to perform well. He had worked hard to make the soccer team. He was not the fastest or the strongest on the team, but he had unique skills that impressed the coaches.

José and Sylvia had been friends ever since he moved into her ward a few years ago. She had been impressed not only by his kindness, but also his commitment to his priesthood duties. She was grateful to have a friend who shared her beliefs.

Sylvia watched as José pulled his water bottle from his bag and picked out one of the green pills now exposed at the bottom of the bag. She frowned as she saw him take the pill and wash it down with a few gulps of water. Some of his friends on the team had given him the illegal enhancers a few days ago. José said he felt stronger in his performance since he started taking them.



Sylvia had also seen him take one earlier that morning, and now she decided to say something to him. “You know it’s not right to take those,” she told him, “and if the coach finds out, you’ll be off the team for sure.”

“It’s not that big of a deal,” he replied. “It’s my body, and I’ll stop once I catch up to the other guys in strength and speed. Let’s talk about something else.”

- What struggles do you see in this scenario?
- What might be wrong with how José is thinking and behaving?
- How do you think Sylvia sees the situation?

After students answer these questions, remind them of the three principles of Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge: act in faith, examine concepts and questions with an eternal perspective, and seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources.

Consider having two students role-play a continuation of the scenario—one being Sylvia and the other being José. Invite the student who role-plays Sylvia to demonstrate how to use one or more of the three principles of Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge to help José reconsider his choices. Invite the student who role-plays José to respond in a thoughtful and genuine manner.

After the role play, invite the rest of the class to identify the principles that were demonstrated. You might also have the class suggest how the principles could be further implemented in the role play.

Encourage students to share their testimonies of the doctrine and principles taught in this activity.

## Doctrinal Mastery Review

Doctrinal mastery passages should be reviewed on subsequent days to help students remember and be able to use them. Look for opportunities to review these scripture passages throughout the school year.

The following activity is designed to help students remember the six New Testament doctrinal mastery passages listed in doctrinal topic 2, “The Plan of Salvation,” in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*. However, you could adapt this activity to include other doctrinal mastery passages students have learned this school year.



Provide each student with a copy of the following quiz for the New Testament doctrinal mastery passages that help us understand the doctrine of the plan of salvation. You may need to review these scripture passages periodically before this activity so students are familiar with the references and key phrases in the text. Allow students to use their scriptures and doctrinal topic 2, “The Plan of Salvation,” in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document* to study with a partner for a few minutes before taking the quiz. Then administer the quiz, asking students to write the correct scripture reference in the blank by each number.

Correct the quiz as a class so you can answer questions or offer further explanations about the passages.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?"
2. \_\_\_\_\_ "And the dead were judged out of ... the books, according to their works."
3. \_\_\_\_\_ "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars. ... So also is the resurrection of the dead."
4. \_\_\_\_\_ "For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead."
5. \_\_\_\_\_ "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."
6. \_\_\_\_\_ "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

Encourage students to memorize these references and key phrases. You might quiz students on these passages in other ways during the next few weeks.

*Answers to the quiz:* (1) 1 Corinthians 6:19–20; (2) Revelation 20:12; (3) 1 Corinthians 15:40–42; (4) 1 Peter 4:6; (5) 1 Corinthians 15:20–22; (6) John 17:3.

# The Atonement of Jesus Christ

*Note:* The following doctrinal mastery activities could be done over the course of several class sessions or in a single class session.

## Understanding the Doctrine (65 minutes)

### Segment 1 (10 minutes)

Write the following statement on the board: *Because of His Atonement, Jesus Christ can do more for us than forgive our sins.*

Invite students to name additional blessings beyond forgiveness from our sins that we can receive because of the Savior's Atonement. List students' responses on the board.

Ask students to turn to doctrinal topic 3, "The Atonement of Jesus Christ," in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*. Invite several students to take turns reading the first five paragraphs aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for the blessings we can receive because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

Invite students to report what they discovered, and add any additional blessings not previously mentioned to the list on the board.

Direct students' attention to the fourth paragraph, and invite them to highlight the following truth: **As we come to Him in faith, the Savior will strengthen us to bear our burdens and accomplish tasks that we could not do on our own.**

- What types of burdens and challenges might we face in mortality that are not a result of our sins?

Invite students to ponder challenges they are facing. Encourage them to consider, as they continue to study about the Atonement of Jesus Christ, how they can receive strength from the Savior to help them with their challenges.

### Segment 2 (5 minutes)

Divide students into pairs, and invite them to read together and mark the doctrinal mastery passage Matthew 11:28–30. Ask them to discuss the following questions:

- How does this passage illustrate the doctrinal statement we identified earlier: As we come to Him in faith, the Savior will strengthen us to bear our burdens and accomplish tasks that we could not do on our own?
- What does this passage teach about our responsibility?
- What does it teach about what the Savior will do for us as we come unto Him?

### Segment 3 (5 minutes)

Display or provide copies of the following statements by Elders David A. Bednar and Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Explain that both of these Apostles' statements help us further understand the doctrinal mastery topic

of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, and specifically the doctrine that as we come to Him in faith, the Savior will strengthen us to bear our burdens and accomplish tasks that we could not do on our own. Invite two students to each read one of the statements aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for insights into how the Savior can strengthen us to bear our burdens.



“There is no physical pain, no spiritual wound, no anguish of soul or heartache, no infirmity or weakness you or I ever confront in mortality that the Savior did not experience first. In a moment of weakness we may cry out, ‘No one knows what it is like. No one understands.’ But the Son of God perfectly knows and understands, for He has felt and borne our individual burdens. And because of His infinite and eternal sacrifice (see Alma 34:14), He has perfect empathy and can extend to us His arm of mercy. He can reach out, touch, succor, heal, and strengthen us to be more than we could ever be and help us to do that which we could never do relying only upon our own power” (David A. Bednar, “Bear Up Their Burdens with Ease,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2014, 90).



“The Atonement also gives us the strength to endure ‘pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind,’ because our Savior also took upon Him ‘the pains and the sicknesses of his people’ (Alma 7:11). Brothers and sisters, if your faith and prayers and the power of the priesthood do not heal you from an affliction, the power of the Atonement will surely give you the strength to bear the burden” (Dallin H. Oaks, “He Heals the Heavy Laden,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2006, 9).

Invite several students to share a phrase or insight that stood out to them and how it adds to their understanding of the blessings available to us through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

- How have you or someone you know been blessed with this kind of help and strength from the Savior?

You may want to conclude by sharing your testimony of the Savior’s power to strengthen us as we come to Him in faith.

#### Segment 4 (5 minutes)

Begin by explaining that many people in the world today, including Christians, do not understand that Jesus Christ has a resurrected body of flesh and bones. Invite students to consider why it matters whether or not Jesus Christ was resurrected with an immortal physical body.

Invite a student to read Luke 24:36–39 aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for what it teaches about Jesus Christ’s resurrected body. Tell them that Luke 24:36–39 is a doctrinal mastery passage, and encourage them to mark or note it in a distinctive way that will help them locate it.

- According to this passage, what did the Savior do to witness to His disciples that He had risen from the dead with a glorified physical body?

Invite students to consider writing the doctrine **Jesus Christ rose from the tomb with a glorified, immortal body of flesh and bone** in their scriptures near Luke 24:36–39.

### Segment 5 (5 minutes)

Write the following doctrinal statement and questions on the board:

*Jesus Christ rose from the tomb with a glorified, immortal body of flesh and bone.*

1. *Why was Jesus Christ able to be the first to be resurrected?*
2. *How does Jesus Christ's resurrection with a glorified, immortal body of flesh and bone affect all mankind?*

Ask students to turn to doctrinal topic 3, “The Atonement of Jesus Christ,” in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*. Divide the class in half, and assign one half to silently read the second paragraph, looking for answers to the first question on the board. Assign the other half to silently read the third paragraph and look for answers to the second question on the board.

After sufficient time, invite those who studied the first question to report their insights. Then invite those who studied the second question to report what they learned.

### Segment 6 (5 minutes)

To help students deepen their understanding of the doctrine that Jesus Christ rose from the tomb with a glorified, immortal body of flesh and bone, display or provide copies of the following statement by President Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the First Presidency. Invite a student to read it aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for what President Uchtdorf said about how the ancient Apostles were affected when they witnessed the resurrected Jesus Christ.



“In the hours following His Crucifixion, [the Savior’s Apostles] were consumed with despair and grief, unable to understand what had just happened. But one event changed all of that. Their Lord appeared to them and declared, ‘Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself’ [Luke 24:39].

“When the Apostles recognized the risen Christ—when they experienced the glorious Resurrection of their beloved Savior—they became different men.

Nothing could keep them from fulfilling their mission. . . . They changed the lives of people everywhere. They changed the world” (“Grateful in Any Circumstances,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 76).

- How were the Apostles affected by their witness of the resurrected Jesus Christ?
- In what ways can your testimony that Jesus Christ was resurrected with a glorified, immortal body of flesh and bones influence your life in similar ways?

### Segment 7 (10 minutes)

Write the following truth on the board: **In paying the penalty for our sins, Jesus Christ did not eliminate our personal responsibility.** Ask students to explain what this means in their own words.

Invite students to turn to doctrinal topic 3, “The Atonement of Jesus Christ,” in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document* and silently read the fifth paragraph, which begins with the sentence on the board. Encourage students to look for important insights into what we must do to access the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

- What is our personal responsibility in order to receive the full blessings of the Savior’s Atonement? (We must exercise faith in Him, repent, be baptized, receive the Holy Ghost, and endure faithfully to the end of our lives.)

Explain that in doctrinal topic 3, “The Atonement of Jesus Christ,” the sections “Faith in Jesus Christ,” and “Repentance” help us better understand what we must do in order to receive the blessings available because of Jesus Christ’s Atonement. Invite one student to read aloud the section “Faith in Jesus Christ” and a second student to read aloud the section “Repentance.” Ask the class to follow along and to note insights that are important to them about what we must do to accept the Savior’s sacrifice. (*Note:* You may want to explain that the ordinances of baptism and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost and honoring covenants are discussed in doctrinal topic 7, “Ordinances and Covenants.”)

After reading through the sections on faith in Jesus Christ and repentance, invite students to share statements of doctrine and insights that are important to them.

### Segment 8 (5 minutes)

Write the following incomplete statement on the board: *True faith in Jesus Christ leads to ...*

Invite a student to read aloud the section “Faith in Jesus Christ” in doctrinal topic 3, “The Atonement of Jesus Christ” in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*. Ask students to follow along, looking for how they might complete the statement on the board.

- How would you complete the statement on the board? (After students respond, complete the statement on the board so that it conveys the following doctrine: **True faith in Jesus Christ leads to action and is expressed by the way we live.**)
- Why does true faith have to be centered in the Lord Jesus Christ?
- What are examples in the scriptures of how true faith in Jesus Christ led someone to righteous action?

### Segment 9 (5 minutes)

Write *James 2:17–18* on the board. Explain that this is a doctrinal mastery passage, and invite students to locate it in their scriptures, read it silently, and mark it in a distinctive way. You may also want to invite students to write the following statement of doctrine in their scriptures near these verses: *True faith in Jesus Christ leads to action and is expressed by the way we live.*

### Segment 10 (10 minutes)

Divide the class into groups of 3–4 students. Invite each group to read James 2:17–18 aloud together and be prepared to share with the class their answers to the following questions. (You may want to display the questions or prepare a handout for each of your students.) Before the students begin reading, it may be helpful to explain to the class that the word *works* in these verses refers to righteous actions.

- Why do you think that faith without works (or righteous actions) is “dead”?
- What are examples of actions that should accompany true faith in Jesus Christ?
- How could you teach this relationship between faith and righteous action to a five-year-old primary child so that he or she could understand it?

After sufficient time, ask one or two groups to share their responses to the first question and one or two other groups to share their insights into the second question. Then invite at least one group to teach the relationship between faith and action as they would to a young child.

Following the class discussion, you may want to share your testimony of the power of exercising faith in the Savior through our righteous actions.

### Practice Exercise (20 minutes)

Read the following situation to the students:

A Latter-day Saint young woman begins to make choices and act in ways that are contrary to some of the standards of the Church, including the law of chastity. She justifies her actions by saying that no one is perfect and that she still goes to Church and seminary and continues to have faith in Jesus Christ.



Display the following questions on the board or provide them in a handout and invite students to discuss them in small groups:

*Act in faith:*

- If this young woman were your friend, what would you encourage her to do to exercise her faith in Jesus Christ and His gospel?

*Examine concerns and questions with an eternal perspective:*

- What truths related to the plan of salvation and faith in Jesus Christ could help this young woman better evaluate her choices and actions?

*Seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources:*

- What scriptures or prophetic teachings could you share to help this young woman understand what it means to show her faith in Jesus Christ by her works?

Testify of the doctrine that true faith in Jesus Christ leads to action and is expressed by the way we live.

### Doctrinal Mastery Review

Students’ understanding of doctrinal mastery passages can increase when they create their own clues about the passages. These clues could include questions, key



words, scenarios, or applications. Invite students to work together, as a class or in small groups, to write clues that point to specific doctrinal mastery passages. (You may want to select a group of passages that you would like students to learn or review.) Then invite students to take turns reading their clues to you and the rest of the class. One point is awarded to whoever guesses a doctrinal mastery passage correctly—you or the class.

# The Restoration

*Note:* The following doctrinal mastery activities could be done over the course of several class sessions or in a single class session.

## Understanding the Doctrine (40 minutes)

### Segment 1 (6 minutes)

Write the following question on the board: *Why did the gospel need to be restored?* Invite students to discuss the question, and then ask them to turn to doctrinal topic 4, “The Restoration,” in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*. Invite a student to read aloud the section on “Apostasy.” Ask the class to follow along, looking for what happened after the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ and the deaths of His Apostles.

- What happened after the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ and the deaths of His Apostles? (Help students identify the following doctrinal truth: **The Great Apostasy occurred when people turned away from the truths of the gospel and the Lord withdrew the authority and keys of the priesthood from the earth.**)
- What are some of the problems described in the section we just read that were part of the Great Apostasy?

### Segment 2 (8 minutes)

Ask students to turn to doctrinal topic 4, “The Restoration,” in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*. Have them scan the section on “Apostasy” and recall the doctrine they identified earlier about the Great Apostasy. Then ask them to find which doctrinal mastery passage supports this doctrine.

Invite students to turn to 2 Thessalonians 2:1–3. Consider inviting them to mark this passage in a distinctive way so they can find it easily.

Explain that the Apostle Paul wrote this passage to reassure Church members who were feeling troubled that the Second Coming might have already occurred or was about to occur. Invite a student to read the passage aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for what Paul said would happen before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ would occur.

- What did Paul say would happen before the Second Coming?
- What do you think Paul meant by “a falling away” (2 Thessalonians 2:3)?

If needed, explain that the “falling away” was the Great Apostasy that would occur after the deaths of Jesus Christ’s Apostles.

- How might this explanation have helped the members of the Church in Paul’s day?
- Why is it important for us today to understand that the “falling away” foretold by the Apostle Paul has already occurred?

### Segment 3 (6 minutes)

To help students better understand the truth that the Great Apostasy occurred when people turned away from the truths of the gospel and the Lord withdrew the authority and keys of the priesthood from the earth, ask a student to read aloud the following statement by President Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



"The true name of the Church is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is the reestablished original Church of Jesus Christ. When He walked upon the earth, He organized His Church. He called Apostles, Seventies, and other leaders to whom He gave priesthood authority to act in His name [see Matthew 10:1; Luke 6:13; 10:1; Ephesians 4:11–12]. After Christ and His Apostles passed away, men changed the ordinances and doctrine. The original Church and the priesthood were lost. After the Dark Ages, and under the direction of Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ brought back His Church. Now it lives again, restored and functioning under His divine direction [see D&C 1:30]" ("Ask the Missionaries! They Can Help You!" *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 18).

- According to President Nelson, why was the Restoration necessary?
- How does knowing about the Great Apostasy help us to appreciate the importance of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?

### Segment 4 (8 minutes)

Invite a few students to take turns reading aloud the first three paragraphs of doctrinal topic 4, "The Restoration," in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*. Ask the class to follow along, looking for events that brought about the Restoration of the gospel in the latter days. Ask students to point out some of the significant events they discover.

Point out the following doctrine in the first paragraph: **Ancient prophets foretold the latter-day Restoration of the gospel.** Invite students to consider writing this truth in their scriptures near the supporting doctrinal mastery passage, Acts 3:19–21.

- Why do you think the Lord revealed that there would be a latter-day Restoration to His ancient prophets and commanded them to prophesy concerning it?

### Segment 5 (12 minutes)

Invite students to mark Acts 3:19–21 in a distinctive way as a doctrinal mastery passage. Explain that the Apostles Peter and John had healed a man who was lame, or unable to walk, near the temple in Jerusalem. News of the miracle spread quickly, and many people gathered together, including some who had previously rejected Jesus Christ. Invite a student to read the passage aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for what the Apostle Peter instructed the people who were gathered there to do.

- What message did Peter deliver to the people?

It may be helpful to point out that the phrase “when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ” in verses 19–20 refers to the time at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ when “the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory” (Articles of Faith 1:10).

Explain that according to Acts 3:21, Peter prophesied that Jesus Christ would remain in heaven “until the times of restitution of all things.” The phrase “times of restitution of all things” refers to the Restoration of the gospel in the latter days.

- According to verse 21, who in addition to Peter prophesied that there would be a latter-day Restoration of the gospel?
- When did Peter’s prophecy begin to be fulfilled? (When God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph Smith in the Sacred Grove.)

Share your testimony that the Lord’s prophets in many different eras have prophesied of the time in which we live and looked forward to the Restoration of the gospel and the Second Coming of the Lord.

### Practice Exercise (25 minutes)

Help students practice applying the three principles of Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge as they relate to the topic of the Restoration: act in faith, examine concepts and questions with an eternal perspective, and seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources.

The following activity can be completed during one class session or spread out over different class sessions, depending on your schedule and the needs of your students.



Divide the class into pairs, and give each pair a copy of the following instructions. (To help students prepare responses to the questions about divinely appointed sources, consider showing them how to locate scriptures and other information about apostasy and the Restoration in the Guide to the Scriptures or the Topical Guide. You could also show them how to access talks from Church leaders on these subjects by searching LDS.org.)

Read the following scenario together, and then discuss the questions following each principle. Be prepared to help the friend described in the scenario understand how to act in faith, view the questions with the perspective of eternal truth, and seek further understanding from divinely appointed sources. (Later you will have the opportunity to role-play this scenario with another pair of students.)

Several of your friends are not members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. One day you are explaining about Joseph Smith and the Restoration of the gospel when one of your friends, a sincere Christian of another denomination, asks, “Why would God need to appear to Joseph Smith since Christianity was already in the world and many people believed in the Bible?”

*Seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources:*

- How could you use the doctrines and doctrinal mastery passages we have been studying to help your friend gain further understanding concerning this question?
- Along with the scriptures, what additional divinely appointed sources might you encourage your friend to turn to in order to gain greater understanding?

*Examine the question with an eternal perspective:*

- Considering your friend's faith in God and Jesus Christ, how could you help him or her examine the question from the perspective of what they know about how God's children have turned from the truth at other times in the past? (For example, you could mention how people turned away from the teachings of prophets such as Noah and Moses.)
- How could you encourage your friend to consider what he or she knows and believes about God and His desire to teach His children when examining the question?

*Act in faith:*

- In what ways could your friend exercise faith in God in order to learn truth?
- What could you invite or encourage your friend to do that would strengthen his or her faith?

After sufficient time, organize the class so that each pair of students is working with another pair. Invite one pair of students to take the role of the friend with the question and the other pair to respond according to what they discussed using the three principles. Once one pair has had an opportunity to respond, invite the two pairs of students to switch roles.

Consider inviting several students to share something they learned or felt from their discussion and role play. Conclude by giving a few students an opportunity to share their testimonies of the latter-day Restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

## Doctrinal Mastery Review

Review doctrinal mastery passages with students during subsequent classes to help them remember and be able to use them. Look for opportunities to review these scriptures throughout the school year. You could use an activity like the following:

Pass out blank cards or small pieces of paper to the students. Invite the students to choose several of the doctrinal mastery passages they have studied so far this year and write the reference of a passage on each card. On the other side of the card, have students write a key phrase or other clue that could be helpful in identifying the passage. (Key phrases for doctrinal mastery passages are provided on the doctrinal mastery bookmark.)

Divide the class into groups of two to three students. Invite the students to use the cards they created to quiz the other student or students in their group. Students could show the reference side of a card and ask the other students to identify the passage, or they could show the key phrase and ask the other students to identify the book and chapter, and perhaps the verse or verses, in which the doctrinal mastery passage is found.

At the end of the activity, you may want to give a verbal or written quiz for the students to match the scripture references for the doctrinal mastery passages with their key phrases.

# Prophets and Revelation

*Note:* The following doctrinal mastery activities could be done over the course of several class sessions or in a single class session.

## Understanding the Doctrine (35 minutes)

### Segment 1 (10 minutes)

Write the following question on the board: *What are some aspects of our Church that make it unique?* Invite students to respond. As they do so, write their answers on the board. Explain that one aspect that sets our Church apart from others is our belief in living prophets and continuing revelation.

Point out that the New Testament contains three doctrinal mastery passages that help us better understand the topic of prophets and revelation. Write the following references on the board, and give students time to read and mark or note each passage in a distinctive way that designates it as a doctrinal mastery passage: *John 15:16; Ephesians 2:19–20; Ephesians 4:11–14.*

Invite students to turn to doctrinal topic 5, “Prophets and Revelation,” in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*. Ask several students to take turns reading the five paragraphs aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for statements of doctrine that are supported by the three doctrinal mastery passages on the board.

Invite students to report what they found. You may want to invite them to mark or underline the following statements of doctrine:

- **A prophet is a person who has been called by God to speak for Him.**
- **Prophets testify of Jesus Christ and teach His gospel. They make known God’s will and true character. They denounce sin, warn of its consequences, and help us avoid deception.**
- **During His mortal ministry and again in our day, the Lord organized His Church on the foundation of prophets and apostles.**

### Segment 2 (5 minutes)

Write the following doctrine on the board: *A prophet is a person who has been called by God to speak for Him.* Ask students to silently read John 15:16, looking for words or phrases that teach this doctrine.

Invite students to report what they find. You may want to suggest that they mark the phrase, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you.”

- What does this passage teach us about how someone becomes a prophet?
- Why do you think it is important to understand that prophets are chosen and called by God and not by man?

Explain that the word *ordain* means to officially invest with priesthood authority from God by the laying on of hands.

- Why do you think it is important for someone to be properly ordained in order to speak for God?

### Segment 3 (10 minutes)

Write the following statements of doctrine on the board: *Prophets testify of Jesus Christ and teach His gospel. They make known God's will and true character. They denounce sin, warn of its consequences, and help us avoid deception.*

Invite a student to read Ephesians 4:11–14 aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for words or phrases that support the statements of doctrine written on the board.

Ask students to report what they find.

Point out that verse 12 teaches three important reasons that God calls prophets. You may want to invite students to mark these three reasons.

Divide the class into three groups, and assign each group one of the following questions to discuss within their group. (Encourage students to refer to the statements of doctrine for Ephesians 4:11–14 written on board. Remind them that we sustain members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as prophets.)

1. What are some ways that prophets help perfect the Saints?
2. What are some examples of the “work of the ministry” (verse 12) that prophets perform?
3. How do prophets edify or strengthen the Church?

Invite students to read Ephesians 4:13–14, looking for some of the blessings that result from having living prophets in the Church.

Ask students to report what they find.

- How do prophets help us as members of the Church to achieve a “unity of the faith” (verse 13)? Why is this important?
- How do prophets help us avoid being “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of [false] doctrine” (verse 14)?
- What are some examples of false doctrine that our prophets have helped safeguard us against?

Consider inviting students to answer the following question in their scripture study journals or class notebooks:

- How has a recent talk, teaching, or testimony from a prophet helped you to grow in your knowledge of Jesus Christ and His gospel or to avoid deception?

After sufficient time, invite students who feel comfortable doing so to share with the class what they wrote.

### Segment 4 (10 minutes)

Write the following statement of doctrine taught in Ephesians 2:19–20 on the board: *During His mortal ministry and again in our day, the Lord organized His Church on the foundation of prophets and apostles.*



Explain that the Apostle Paul wrote his epistle to the Ephesians with the desire to spiritually strengthen, protect, and unify the Church members there, some of whom were faltering in their faith.

Invite a student to read Ephesians 2:19–20 aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for words or phrases that support the statement of doctrine on the board.

Ask students to report what they find.

- How do you think knowing that Christ organized His Church on a foundation of prophets and apostles could have strengthened the Saints in Ephesus?
- Why do you think it’s important that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is also organized on the foundation of prophets and apostles?

Divide students into pairs or small groups, and ask them to discuss the following question:

- Many people believe that organized religion is not necessary but rather a man-made invention. How might you use the truth taught in Ephesians 2:19–20 to help someone understand the importance of belonging to and participating in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?

After sufficient time, invite students to report to the class what they discussed.

Invite a student to read aloud the following statement by Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Ask the class to listen for what Elder Christofferson said about the purpose of the Church. (You may want to give each student a copy of the statement.)



“I realize that there are those who consider themselves religious or spiritual and yet reject participation in a church or even the need for such an institution. Religious practice is for them purely personal. Yet the Church is the creation of Him in whom our spirituality is centered—Jesus Christ. ...

“... In the meridian of time, Jesus organized His work in such a way that the gospel could be established simultaneously in multiple nations and among diverse peoples. That organization, the Church of Jesus Christ, was founded on ‘apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone’ [Ephesians 2:20]. It included additional officers, such as seventies, elders, bishops, priests, teachers, and deacons. ...

“Following the apostasy and disintegration of the Church He had organized while on the earth, the Lord reestablished the Church of Jesus Christ once again through the Prophet Joseph Smith. The ancient purpose remains: that is, to preach the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ and administer the ordinances of salvation—in other words, to bring people to Christ” (“Why the Church,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 108).

- According to Elder Christofferson, what is the purpose of the Church anciently and today?

### Practice Exercises (30–40 minutes)

Help students practice using the three principles of Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge in relation to the doctrinal topic “Prophets and Revelation”: act in faith, examine

concepts and questions with an eternal perspective, and seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources.

The exercises in this section can be done during the same class session or in different class sessions, depending on your schedule and the needs of your students.

**Exercise 1 (20–25 minutes)**

Write the following three principles on the board:

- *Act in faith.*
- *Examine concepts and questions with an eternal perspective.*
- *Seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources.*

Provide each student with a copy of *For the Strength of Youth* [booklet, 2011], and ask them to look through it and identify various behaviors that living prophets counsel us to avoid.

Ask students to report what they find, and list several of their answers on the board.

Invite the students to imagine they have a friend of another faith who asks, “I think it’s so weird that Mormons don’t ...” Invite students to complete the sentence with something from the list on the board.



Ask students to consider how they can use the three principles written on the board to confidently respond to their friend’s question. Explain that they will have an opportunity to role-play this. Consider using the following questions to help students organize their thoughts. (You may want to provide these questions to students as a handout.)

- Act in faith:*
- How do you think your faithful obedience to prophets’ teachings could help you answer your friend’s question?
  - How might you be able to invite your friend to act in faith regarding his or her question?
- Examine concepts and questions with an eternal perspective:*
- What do you know about the role of prophets in Heavenly Father’s plan of salvation?
  - What are some possible misunderstandings or false assumptions your friend might have about prophets?
  - How have prophets strengthened you and helped you learn more about Jesus Christ and Heavenly Father?
- Seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources:*
- What sources can you use in order to gain a greater understanding of why prophets would counsel us to avoid the behavior in your friend’s question? (Consider giving students time to

search teachings [such as those in *For the Strength of Youth*], talks, and testimonies from latter-day prophets that could help them further understand and explain the counsel and teachings of prophets.)

After sufficient time, divide students into pairs and have them take turns sharing with each other how they would respond to the friend in the situation above. After they have all had a turn, consider concluding this activity by inviting a few students to share their testimonies of latter-day prophets.

### Exercise 2 (10–15 minutes)

Write the following three principles on the board:

- *Act in faith.*
- *Examine concepts and questions with an eternal perspective.*
- *Seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources.*

Read aloud the following situation to your class:

You have a friend in your quorum or class who has started to skip Mutual and Sunday church meetings. You decide to talk with him or her about it. Your friend responds, “You know, I’m starting to wonder why going to a specific church is necessary. There are lots of good people on the earth who don’t attend any church, let alone ours. I think that as long as they live good lives and treat others well, they will still make it to heaven.”

- What points of doctrine concerning prophets and revelation could help your friend understand the importance of faithfully attending Church meetings?
- What might you do to help your friend act in faith, examine concepts and questions with an eternal perspective, and seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources in order to further understand the importance of attending Church meetings?

## Doctrinal Mastery Review

Give students a few minutes to review the doctrinal mastery passages they have learned so far this school year. Invite a student to come to the front of the classroom with his or her scriptures. Ask the student to turn to one of the doctrinal mastery passages without showing it to anyone else. Have the student write one word from the doctrinal mastery passage on the board. (Encourage the student to choose key words from the passage rather than words such as *and* or *the*.)

Invite the rest of the class to search their scriptures for the doctrinal mastery passage they think the word comes from. If no one can find the correct passage using one word, ask the student to write another word from the doctrinal mastery passage on the board. Repeat this process until at least one student has located the correct passage. Invite the rest of the class to turn to the passage, and invite the

students recite it together. Then repeat the activity with another student and a different doctrinal mastery passage.

# Priesthood and Priesthood Keys

*Note:* The following doctrinal mastery activities could be done over the course of several class sessions or in a single class session.

## Understanding the Doctrine (20 minutes)

### Segment 1 (7 minutes)

Hold up a key or draw a picture of a key on the board, and ask students to describe what it is used for. Explain that the Lord has used the analogy of a key to help us understand how He directs and governs His priesthood and His work upon the earth.

Invite a few students to take turns reading aloud doctrinal topic 6, “Priesthood and Priesthood Keys,” in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*. Ask the class to follow along and underline statements of doctrine that help them understand what priesthood keys are and how they relate to the power of the priesthood.

- How is the priesthood defined?
- What statements of doctrine did you identify that clarify what priesthood keys are? (Students may want to discuss a few statements of doctrine from what they have read. Once they have responded, invite them to mark the following doctrine in the third paragraph: **The keys of the priesthood are the rights of presidency, or the power God gives to man to govern and direct the kingdom of God on the earth.**)

To help students better understand this doctrine, invite them to use what they marked in this doctrinal topic as they discuss the following questions:

- What connection do you see between priesthood keys and ordinances?
- What priesthood ordinances must be authorized by those holding the appropriate priesthood keys?

Help students understand that saving ordinances (including baptism, confirmation, ordination to the Melchizedek Priesthood [for men], the temple endowment, and temple sealing) require authorization from a priesthood leader who holds the appropriate priesthood keys or who functions under the direction of a person who holds those keys (see also doctrinal topic 7, “Ordinances and Covenants,” in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*). Authorization is also required for naming and blessing a child, dedicating a grave, giving a patriarchal blessing, and preparing, blessing, and passing the sacrament. However, Melchizedek Priesthood holders may consecrate oil, administer to the sick, give father’s blessings, and give other blessings of comfort and counsel without first seeking authorization from a priesthood leader.

- What is the connection between callings in the Church, for both men and women, and the role of priesthood keys?

### Segment 2 (7 minutes)

Review with students the following doctrine: The keys of the priesthood are the rights of presidency, or the power God gives to man to govern and direct the kingdom of God on the earth. To help students deepen their understanding of this truth, ask them to imagine that they were given a vehicle that required a key to start it but were not given a key.

- Why would you need a key if you already have access to the vehicle? (Although they may have access to the vehicle, a key is required in order to start the ignition and allow the vehicle to function.)
- How might this analogy relate to how priesthood keys are necessary to direct the work of the priesthood and God’s kingdom upon the earth?

Display or provide copies of the following explanation of priesthood keys by President Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Invite a student to read President Nelson’s explanation aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for how President Nelson described priesthood keys.



“Keys are important and valuable. Most of us carry keys in pockets or purses wherever we go. Other keys are not only important and valuable; they are precious, powerful, and invisible! They have eternal significance. They are the keys of the priesthood. ...

“Priesthood is the authority of God delegated to man to minister for the salvation of men. ‘The power of directing these labors constitutes the keys of the Priesthood’ [*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 141]. We distinguish between holding the priesthood and holding keys of the priesthood. When an individual is given keys, he does not receive additional priesthood. What he has is the right to direct the work of the priesthood” (“Keys of the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2005, 40).

- What did you learn from President Nelson’s explanation that helps you better understand priesthood keys?

Invite students to silently read the fourth paragraph of doctrinal topic 6, “Priesthood and Priesthood Keys,” in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*. Ask them to look for some examples of individuals who hold priesthood keys. Invite students to report what they find.

- When has your life been blessed by someone using priesthood keys?

### Segment 3 (6 minutes)

Write *Matthew 16:15–19* on the board, and explain that this is a doctrinal mastery passage that teaches us about priesthood keys. Invite students to mark this passage in a distinctive way that designates it as a doctrinal mastery passage. Encourage them to consider writing key words in the margin of their scriptures that will help them remember the doctrine taught in this scripture passage concerning priesthood keys.

Explain that the Savior once asked His Apostles whom they thought He was. In response, Peter testified that he knew that Jesus was the Son of God. Jesus then

declared that He would confer upon Peter the keys of His kingdom. Invite a few students to take turns reading aloud Matthew 16:15–19. Ask the class to follow along, looking for what Jesus told Peter regarding priesthood keys.

- According to verse 19, what did the Savior say Peter would have the power to do after receiving the keys of the kingdom, or the priesthood keys? (Bind and loose on earth and in heaven. This means that actions such as ordinances performed under these priesthood keys are valid and in force in mortality and in eternity, including the binding, or sealing, of families in temples.)
- How could you use this doctrinal mastery passage to help someone understand the importance of the authority that the prophet and apostles hold today to direct God’s work?

*Note:* You will need to review doctrinal mastery passages with students on subsequent days to help them remember and be able to use them. Look for opportunities to review this and other doctrinal mastery passages throughout the school year.

### Practice Exercise (25–30 minutes)

Help students practice applying the three principles of Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge as they relate to doctrinal topic 6, “Priesthood and Priesthood Keys,” in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*. You may want to write these principles on the board before beginning the practice exercises:

- *Act in faith.*
- *Examine concepts and questions with an eternal perspective.*
- *Seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources.*



Divide the class into three groups, and provide the students in each group with copies of the handout that corresponds to their group number. Give each group 8–10 minutes to discuss the scenario and questions on their handout. Explain that following their group discussion, each student will have the opportunity to practice answering their assigned question with students from the other two groups.

#### Group 1

Read the following scenario as a group:

You are serving as a missionary, and you and your companion are teaching an investigator about the importance of baptism. When you invite your investigator to be baptized, she responds by asking, “Why do I need to be baptized again? I was already baptized in my church.”

Discuss how you could help your investigator by using the principles and questions outlined below:

*Act in faith:*



- What could your investigator do to act in faith as she seeks to understand why she needs to be baptized by the authority of the priesthood and under the direction of one holding priesthood keys?

*Examine concepts and questions with an eternal perspective:*

- How does an understanding of the priesthood and priesthood keys help put your investigator's question in a new light?

*Seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources:*

- How could the doctrine taught in Matthew 16:15–19 help your investigator find an answer to her question?
- Are there other scriptures that would help your investigator understand why she needs to be baptized by proper authority?

## Group 2

Read the following scenario as a group:

A friend confides in you that he has committed some serious sins involving the law of chastity and is trying to repent. In your study of the scriptures, you have learned that the bishop or branch president in each ward or branch of the Church holds the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood, which include the keys of "the gospel of repentance" (D&C 13:1).

You encourage your friend to visit with his bishop, but he responds by saying, "I don't know why I need to meet with my bishop. I know I need to confess what I have done, but I have already confessed to the Lord. I have prayed for forgiveness and have changed my behavior. I have taken the sacrament. Why do I need to go to the bishop in order to receive the Lord's forgiveness? Isn't it between me and the Lord?"

Discuss how you could respond to your friend by using the principles and questions outlined below:

*Act in faith:*

- What could your friend do to exercise and strengthen his faith in the Savior and in the priesthood keys He has conferred upon His authorized servants?

*Examine concepts and questions with an eternal perspective:*

- How does an understanding of the priesthood keys held by the bishop help clarify your friend's question?

*Seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources:*

- How could the Savior's words in Matthew 16:19 help your friend understand how the priesthood keys held by the bishop are related to the eternal blessings available to him, including forgiveness of sin?
- What other divinely appointed sources could your friend turn to for further understanding?

## Group 3

Read the following scenario as a group:

While vacationing with your extended family for a week, your family discusses finding a ward or branch to attend on Sunday. Your cousin, who is a priest in the Aaronic Priesthood, turns to you and

says, “Why don’t we just hold our own sacrament meeting? I’m a priest and can bless and pass the sacrament, and you and a few other family members can give prayers and talks.”

Discuss how you might respond to your cousin’s suggestion by using the principles and questions outlined below:

*Act in faith:*

- How might your family demonstrate faith in the authority of those holding priesthood keys to direct the work of the priesthood as they plan how to partake of the sacrament on their vacation?

*Examine concepts and questions with an eternal perspective:*

- How does an understanding of the doctrine of priesthood keys help clarify when a priesthood holder can perform an ordinance, such as administering the sacrament?

*Seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources:*

- What divinely appointed sources could you turn to for further understanding about when a priesthood holder is authorized to perform a priesthood ordinance?

If students need help identifying divinely appointed sources related to the questions in their assigned scenarios, consider inviting them to search the following sources:

*Group 1:* Doctrine and Covenants 22:2–4.

*Group 2:* Mosiah 26:12–15, 29–31; Elder C. Scott Grow, “Why and What Do I Need to Confess to My Bishop?” *New Era*, Oct. 2013, 28–30; or *Liahona*, Oct. 2013, 58–60.

*Group 3:* “Priesthood Ordinances and Blessings,” *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 20.1, LDS.org; Elder Dallin H. Oaks, “The Keys and Authority of the Priesthood,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 49–52.

After each group has discussed their assigned scenario and how they might respond, place students in groups of three consisting of one student from group 1, one from group 2, and one from group 3. Invite each student to read his or her assigned scenario to the students in the group and then role-play how he or she might respond to the question.

After sufficient time, invite a few students to share their thoughts and testimonies regarding the blessings of being led by those who hold priesthood keys.

## Doctrinal Mastery Review

To help students remember the location of the doctrinal mastery scriptures they have learned thus far in the course, have each student draw a 4 × 4 grid on a piece of paper. Ask them to number each row from top to bottom and write the letters A, B, C, and D across the top of the columns.

|   | A | B | C | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 |   |   |   |   |
| 2 |   |   |   |   |

|   |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| 3 |  |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |  |

Review the doctrinal mastery passages students have learned so far in the course. Then ask them to write 16 doctrinal mastery passage references randomly on the grid. (If students have learned fewer than 16 passages, they could write some of the passages more than once. If they have learned more than 16, you could have them add rows or columns to the grid as necessary.)

Read a portion of one of the doctrinal mastery passages aloud as each student places a finger on the reference on their grids that he or she thinks corresponds with the passage. After you have finished reading, say the reference aloud for students to check their answers. If they are pointing to the correct reference, have them mark it with an X.

When a student has marked off four squares in a row in any direction, he or she should call out "Doctrinal Mastery." You could continue until everyone has marked four in a row or until students have marked all of their squares.

# Ordinances and Covenants

*Note:* The following doctrinal mastery activities could be done over the course of several class sessions or in a single class session.

## Understanding the Doctrine (20 minutes)

### Segment 1 (10 minutes)

Write the words *Ordinances* and *Covenants* on the board. Invite students to explain how they would define each of these words to someone who may not be familiar with them.

Invite several students to take turns reading aloud the paragraphs under doctrinal topic 7, “Ordinances and Covenants,” in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*. Ask students to follow along and mark words or phrases that help them better understand what ordinances and covenants are.

After sufficient time, invite a few students to report what they marked. Consider asking the following questions:

- What is a saving ordinance?
- What saving ordinances of the gospel have you received?
- What does this doctrinal topic teach about why baptism is necessary? (Invite students to mark the following truth in their copy of the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*: **Baptism is necessary for an individual to become a member of the Church of Jesus Christ and to enter the celestial kingdom.**)
- Why do you think baptism is necessary for becoming a member of the Church of Jesus Christ and to enter the celestial kingdom?

Ask students to quietly reflect for a moment on when they were baptized and confirmed a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Invite a few students to share where they were baptized, who baptized them, and any impressions or feelings they would like to share about their experience.

### Segment 2 (10 minutes)

Review with students the following doctrine taught in the doctrinal topic “Ordinances and Covenants” in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*: Baptism is necessary for an individual to become a member of the Church of Jesus Christ and to enter the celestial kingdom.

- What New Testament scripture passage supports this doctrine?

Invite students to turn to John 3:5. you may want to suggest that they mark this doctrinal mastery passage in a distinctive way so they will be able to locate it easily. Explain that John 3 contains the Savior’s teachings to a Pharisee named Nicodemus who sought to learn more about the gospel.

Ask a student to read John 3:5 aloud. Invite the class to follow along, looking for what the Savior said is required to enter the kingdom of God.

- What did the Savior say is required to enter the kingdom of God?

- What saving ordinance does being “born of water” refer to?
- What saving ordinance does being “born ... of the Spirit” refer to?
- How has being baptized helped you in your efforts to be worthy to enter the celestial kingdom and live again with your Father in Heaven?

### Practice Exercise (10 minutes)

Remind students of the three principles listed in the “Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge” section of the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*, and write them on the board:

- *Act in faith.*
- *Examine concepts and questions with an eternal perspective.*
- *Seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources.*

To help students practice using these principles in relation to questions regarding the topic “Ordinances and Covenants,” read the following scenario aloud:

One of your friends is interested in learning more about the Church and is receiving lessons from the missionaries. She has read parts of the Book of Mormon, attended church meetings a few times, and expressed a belief in the restored gospel. While walking home after a missionary discussion one day, your friend says, “I believe what I am being taught by the missionaries, but can’t I be a good person and a good Christian without being baptized into a particular church?”

- What are ways you might invite your friend to act in faith while considering the invitation to be baptized?
- How could you help your friend view her question about baptism with an eternal perspective? What truths of the plan of salvation and gospel of Jesus Christ could you share to help her understand the eternal importance of the ordinance of baptism?
- What could you do to help your friend seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources?
- How could you use John 3:5 to help your friend?

Give students a few minutes to search the Topical Guide, Guide to the Scriptures, Bible Dictionary, or Gospel Topics (on [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics)) entries for “Baptism,” looking for additional information or scripture passages that might help their friend with her question. After sufficient time, divide students into pairs or small groups, and invite them to share with each other what they found. Consider spending some time with each group so you can listen to their discussions and offer help as needed.

You might conclude by inviting one or more students to share their testimonies of the importance of ordinances and covenants—particularly the ordinance of baptism—in Heavenly Father’s plan.

## **Doctrinal Mastery Review**

Consider using quizzes to provide students with opportunities to test their memory of doctrinal mastery passages. Questions could include clues such as key words or scripture references, quotations from passages, or scenarios that illustrate the truths taught in the passages. These quizzes could be given by reading the questions aloud or writing them on the board or on paper. After students have taken a quiz, consider pairing high-scoring students with students who have lower scores. The higher-scoring student could help the student with the lower score understand effective ways to study and improve mastering the doctrinal passages. As part of this effort, the pair could also set a goal to achieve a higher combined score on the next quiz. Consider creating a chart or bulletin board to display students' goals and recognize their progress.

# Marriage and Family

*Note:* The following doctrinal mastery activities could be done over the course of several class sessions or in a single class session.

## Understanding the Doctrine (25–30 minutes)

### Segment 1 (10 minutes)

Write *1 Corinthians 11:11* on the board. Point out that this is a doctrinal mastery passage, and invite students to locate it in their scriptures and mark it in a distinct way so they can find it easily. Explain that this passage helps us understand the doctrinal topic of Marriage and Family.

Explain that in a letter to members of the Church in Corinth (in modern-day Greece) the Apostle Paul taught about marriage. Invite a student to read *1 Corinthians 11:11* aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for what Paul taught about the relationship between a husband and a wife.

Explain that “in the Lord” refers to Heavenly Father’s gospel plan, which enables us to receive eternal life and become like Him.

- What does this verse suggest about the need for marriage between a man and a woman?

Ask students to read doctrinal topic 8, “Marriage and Family,” in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*, looking for statements that help us understand the need for marriage between a man and woman in God’s plan.

Invite students to report what they find. Then point out the following truth in that topic: **Only by entering into and faithfully keeping the covenant of celestial marriage can a man and a woman fulfill their divine, eternal potential.** You may want to suggest that students write or note this doctrine in their scriptures next to *1 Corinthians 11:11*.

### Segment 2 (5–10 minutes)

Write the following doctrine on the board: *Only by entering into and faithfully keeping the covenant of celestial marriage can a man and a woman fulfill their divine, eternal potential.* Ask students to find the doctrinal mastery passage in the New Testament that teaches this doctrine. Once the students have located *1 Corinthians 11:11*, invite a student to read it aloud.

Invite a student to come to the front of the classroom. Then ask the student to hold out both hands.

- How are your hands similar?
- How are they different?

Ask the student to put one hand behind his or her back. Then ask the class the following questions:

- What are activities that might be difficult to do with only one hand?
- What are examples of how both hands working together make us stronger?

- How might we relate the example of our hands to this doctrinal truth concerning marriage between a man and a woman?

Point out that some individuals do not have the opportunity to enter into the covenant of celestial marriage in this life. Invite a student to read aloud the following statement by President Howard W. Hunter:



"No blessing, including that of eternal marriage and an eternal family, will be denied to any worthy individual. While it may take somewhat longer—perhaps even beyond this mortal life—for some to achieve this blessing, it will not be denied" ("The Church Is for All People," *Ensign*, June 1989, 76).

- Why do you think it is important to understand that in Heavenly Father's plan, all worthy individuals will eventually have the opportunity to enter into the covenant of celestial marriage and have an eternal family?

### Segment 3 (10 minutes)

Display or provide each student with a copy of the following statement by Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Invite a student to read it aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for insights into the doctrine they have been studying regarding marriage between a man and a woman.



"After the earth was created, Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden. Importantly, however, God said 'it was not good that the man should be alone' (Moses 3:18; see also Genesis 2:18), and Eve became Adam's wife and helpmeet. The unique combination of spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional capacities of both males and females was needed to enact the plan of happiness. ... The man and the woman are intended to learn from, strengthen, bless, and complete each other" ("We Believe in Being Chaste," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 41–42).

- How do Elder Bednar's teachings relate to the truth taught in 1 Corinthians 11:11?

Invite students to answer one of the following questions in their study journal:

- What are some ways that the characteristics and responsibilities of men and women can complement each other in a marriage and a family?
- What attributes can a husband and wife develop through their covenant marriage that will help them to become more like Heavenly Father?

Invite a few students to share their responses with the class.

### Practice Exercises (45–55 minutes)

The following activities can help students implement the principles they learned at the beginning of the year in the learning experience on acquiring spiritual



knowledge. To help remind students of these principles, it may be helpful to write them on the board:

- *Act in faith.*
- *Examine concepts and questions with an eternal perspective.*
- *Seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources.*

These activities can be taught on the same day or on different days, depending on your schedule and the needs of your students.

### **Exercise 1 (20–25 minutes)**

*Note:* If necessary, adapt the following scenario according to the life experience of your students.

Invite a student to read the following scenario aloud:

While pursuing additional education after a mission, you meet and begin to date someone who has a strong testimony of Jesus Christ, treats you with respect, and helps you to become your best self. Over time, your love for one another grows, and you begin to talk about marriage. However, as you consider getting married, you become worried about the stress and challenge of marriage and having a family while attending school, working, and starting a career. You think to yourself, “Wouldn’t it be easier and better to just wait and postpone marriage and family until I finish school, find a well-paying job, and save sufficient money?”

- Why might it be tempting to postpone or avoid marriage in this situation?
- What could you do to act in faith as you consider this question and make future plans?
- How can seeking divine guidance help you to make wise choices regarding education, career planning, marriage, and family?

Ask students to consider what they know about the role of marriage and family in the plan of salvation.

- How could the doctrine we have been studying in 1 Corinthians 11:11 relate to this situation?
- How might you reframe, or restate, this concern in order to consider the issue from an eternal perspective? (Possible examples include: What might I be giving up if I wait to get married? What are the benefits and blessings both now and eternally of making marriage and family a priority in my life?)

Divide the class into groups of three to five students, and give them 5–10 minutes to search the scriptures and, if available, the most recent general conference addresses and other Church resources for additional understanding that could help guide their actions and decisions regarding marriage and family. To provide an example, you may want to invite a student to read aloud the following statement by President Thomas S. Monson to men of the Church:



“If you are concerned about providing financially for a wife and family, may I assure you that there is no shame in a couple having to scrimp and save. It is generally during these challenging times that you will grow closer together as you learn to sacrifice and to make difficult decisions” (“Priesthood Power,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2011, 67).

Invite students to report what scriptures or sources of additional understanding they found with the class.

- Why do you think it is important to make marriage and family a priority in your life?
- What can you do now to prepare yourself to establish an eternal marriage and family?

### Exercise 2 (25–30 minutes)

Read the following scenario aloud:

As you talk with your brother one night, he confides in you that he is struggling with the Church’s teachings regarding same-gender marriage. He says, “It is difficult for me to understand why the Church continues to teach that same-gender marriage is wrong. Why deny people the happiness that could come from committed same-gender relationships?”

Ask students to consider how they would respond in this situation.

- What could you do to act in faith as you strive to answer your brother’s questions?
- What are ways you could help your brother to act in faith?
- What doctrine did we learn from our study of 1 Corinthians 11:11 that can help us understand the issue of same-gender marriage through the Lord’s perspective?
- What other doctrinal truths can help us see the issue of same-gender marriage with an eternal perspective?



To help encourage students to look to prophetic teachings for further understanding, distribute copies of the handout “Why Marriage Is Essential,” at the end of this learning experience. It is taken from “Marriage Is Essential to His Eternal Plan,” by Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Invite students to read it with a classmate and look for truths about marriage and family that could help them address the issue of same-gender marriage.

- How might you use Elder Bednar’s teachings to help your brother look at the issue of same-gender marriage from the perspective of the plan of salvation and gospel of Jesus Christ?

*Note:* You might consider using a different or more recent talk from a Church leader in place of the one in the handout.

## Doctrinal Mastery Review

To help students remember and know how to find the doctrinal mastery passages they have learned this school year, use clues to help them practice quickly locating the passages in their scriptures. Clues could include key words, context statements, doctrine and principles, and application ideas.

Scripture chase activities, in which students race to locate doctrinal mastery passages, can help them actively engage in learning the passages. Scripture chase activities should never result in hurt feelings or offend the Spirit. Help students avoid treating their scriptures irreverently or being overly competitive. Consider having them compete against a standard rather than each other. For example, students could race against the teacher, or you could have them race to see if a certain percentage of the class can find a particular passage in a specified amount of time.

To prepare students to participate in scripture chase activities, consider giving them a few minutes to review the references and key words of doctrinal mastery passages before beginning an activity. They could do this with a partner, or you could review the passages as a class.

### Why Marriage Is Essential

Elder David A. Bednar

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Excerpt from "Marriage Is Essential to His Eternal Plan," *Ensign*, June 2006, 82–87; or *Liahona*, June 2006, 50–55

In "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles proclaim "that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children" ["The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129]. This keynote sentence of the proclamation teaches us much about the doctrinal significance of marriage and emphasizes the primacy of marriage and family in the Father's plan. Righteous marriage is a commandment and an essential step in the process of creating a loving family relationship that can be perpetuated beyond the grave.

Two compelling doctrinal reasons help us to understand why eternal marriage is essential to the Father's plan.

**Reason 1:** *The natures of male and female spirits complete and perfect each other, and therefore men and women are intended to progress together toward exaltation.*

The eternal nature and importance of marriage can be fully understood only within the overarching context of the Father's plan for His children. "All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and . . . has a divine nature and destiny" ["The Family: A Proclamation to the World"]. The great plan of happiness enables the spirit sons and daughters of Heavenly Father to obtain physical bodies, to gain earthly experience, and to progress toward perfection.

"Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose" ["The Family: A Proclamation to the World"] and in large measure defines who we are, why we are here upon the earth, and what we are to do and become. For divine purposes, male and female spirits are different, distinctive, and complementary.

After the earth was created, Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden. Importantly, however, God said it was “not good that the man should be alone” (Genesis 2:18; Moses 3:18), and Eve became Adam’s companion and helpmeet. The unique combination of spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional capacities of both males and females were needed to implement the plan of happiness. Alone, neither the man nor the woman could fulfill the purposes of his or her creation.

By divine design, men and women are intended to progress together toward perfection and a fulness of glory. Because of their distinctive temperaments and capacities, males and females each bring to a marriage relationship unique perspectives and experiences. The man and the woman contribute differently but equally to a oneness and a unity that can be achieved in no other way. The man completes and perfects the woman and the woman completes and perfects the man as they learn from and mutually strengthen and bless each other. “Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, *in the Lord*” (1 Corinthians 11:11; italics added).

**Reason 2:** *By divine design, both a man and a woman are needed to bring children into mortality and to provide the best setting for the rearing and nurturing of children.*

The commandment given anciently to Adam and Eve to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force today. “God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife. . . . The means by which mortal life is created [are] divinely appointed” [“The Family: A Proclamation to the World”]. Thus, marriage between a man and a woman is the authorized channel through which premortal spirits enter mortality. Complete sexual abstinence before marriage and total fidelity within marriage protect the sanctity of this sacred channel.

A home with a loving and loyal husband and wife is the supreme setting in which children can be reared in love and righteousness and in which the spiritual and physical needs of children can be met. Just as the unique characteristics of both males and females contribute to the completeness of a marriage relationship, so those same characteristics are vital to the rearing, nurturing, and teaching of children. “Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity” [“The Family: A Proclamation to the World”].

# Commandments

*Note:* The following doctrinal mastery activities could be done over the course of several class sessions or in a single class session.

## Understanding the Doctrine (25 minutes)

### Segment 1 (10 minutes)

Write the following questions on the board:

- *Why does God give us commandments?*
- *Why should we obey them?*

Invite students to read silently the first paragraph of doctrinal topic 9, “Commandments” in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*, looking for answers to the questions listed on the board.

- Why does God give us commandments? (To help us progress and become like Him. The commandments are a manifestation of God’s love for us.)
- Why is it important for us to obey God’s commandments? (Obeying the commandments allows us to show our love for the Lord and will bring us happiness and blessings.)

Ask students to turn to John 14:15, and suggest that they mark it as a doctrinal mastery passage. Explain that following His final meal with His Apostles before His Crucifixion, Jesus taught His Apostles an important insight into how we should feel about keeping the commandments. Take a few minutes to help students memorize the location and text of this scripture, and then ask:

- According to this verse, what are we showing the Savior when we keep the commandments? (After students respond, you might consider writing the following truth on the board: **We manifest our love for the Savior by keeping His commandments.**)
- Why do you think keeping the commandments shows our love for the Savior?

### Segment 2 (5 minutes)

Invite students to write the cross-reference Matthew 22:36–39 in the margin of their scriptures next to John 14:15. Then have them turn to Matthew 22:36–39, and invite them to mark it as a doctrinal mastery passage.

To help students understand the context for this passage, ask them to read Matthew 22:34–36 silently, looking for a question the Savior was asked.

- What question did the lawyer ask the Savior?

Invite a student to read Matthew 22:37–39 aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for the Savior’s answer.

- What did the Savior declare are the two great commandments? (Students should identify the following doctrine: **The two great commandments are to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, and mind and to love thy neighbor as thyself.**)

Ask a student to read the second paragraph of doctrinal topic 9, “Commandments,” in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*. Invite the class to follow along, looking for the relationship between loving God and loving others.

- What is the relationship between loving God and loving others?
- Why do you think these two are the great commandments?

Encourage students to ponder what they are doing to show their love for God and for those around them.

### Segment 3 (5 minutes)

Ask students to recall what Jesus Christ taught were the two great commandments and to identify the doctrinal mastery passage that teaches this truth.

To help students better understand Matthew 22:36–39 and the doctrine that the two great commandments are to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, and mind and to love thy neighbor as thyself, invite a student to read Matthew 22:40 aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for what Jesus Christ said about these two great commandments.

- What did Jesus say about these commandments? (All commandments taught in the law and the prophets—two main divisions of the scriptures at that time—hang, or are based, on these two great commandments.)

You may want to display or provide copies of the following statement by President Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the First Presidency. Invite a student to read the statement aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for how all other commandments hang on the two great commandments.



“How clearly the Savior spoke when He said that every other commandment hangs upon the principle of love. If we do not neglect the great laws—if we truly learn to love our Heavenly Father and our fellowman with all our heart, soul, and mind—all else will fall into place” (“The Love of God,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 24).

- How does every other commandment hang upon the two great commandments?

After students have had sufficient time to respond, invite them to read the last three paragraphs of doctrinal topic 9, “Commandments,” in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*. Encourage them to mark some of the other commandments listed there and to consider how our obedience to them shows our love for God and for others.

### Segment 4 (5 minutes)

Suggest that students write the cross-reference Matthew 5:14–16 in the margin of their scriptures next to Matthew 22:36–39. Explain that in the Sermon on the Mount, the Savior taught how we can show our love to God and to others. Have students turn to Matthew 5:14–16, and invite them to mark it as a doctrinal mastery passage. Explain that in these verses, the Savior gave His disciples a commandment that is one of the most important ways we can show our love for those around us and for God.

Invite students to read Matthew 5:14–16 silently, looking for what the Savior taught His disciples.

- What do you think it means to “let your light so shine before men” (Matthew 5:16)?
- How does this doctrinal mastery passage help us understand one way we can share the gospel with those around us? (As we keep the commandments and set a righteous example, those around us will see our choices and the resultant blessings and may be more open to receiving the gospel.)

Invite students to write the principle that **we can teach the gospel to others through our good example** next to Matthew 5:14–16.

Ask students if they have ever been taught or strengthened because of the example of a friend or family member who has chosen to keep the commandments. Invite a few students to share their experiences if they are comfortable doing so.

Consider inviting students to write the cross-reference John 14:15 in the margin of their scriptures next to Matthew 5:14–16. If you have time during class, help students locate the verses they have written in the margins as part of this doctrinal mastery activity, and give them time to memorize these verses of scripture.

Conclude by bearing your testimony of the principles discussed in the doctrinal topic “Commandments” in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*.

### Practice Exercise (20 minutes)

The following activity can help students act on the three principles they learned in “Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge” in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*. To remind students of these principles, it may be helpful to write them on the board:

- *Act in faith.*
- *Examine concepts and questions with an eternal perspective.*
- *Seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources.*

Invite students to review doctrinal topic 9, “Commandments,” in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*, and then ask them what commandments a youth might struggle to obey if he or she did not have a clear understanding of their purpose. List their responses on the board.



Invite students to work in pairs and choose one of the commandments from the list on the board. Give each pair a copy of the following handout, and ask them to read it and discuss their answers to the questions.

*Act in faith:*

- What could you do to encourage someone to act in faith as he or she struggles to understand why God would give this particular commandment?

*Examine concepts and questions with an eternal perspective:*

Review the doctrine taught in John 14:15; Matthew 5:14–16; and Matthew 22:36–39.

- How can the doctrine taught in these passages help someone better understand the commandment you chose?
- What other truths could help provide an eternal rather than a worldly perspective on the commandment you chose?

*Seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources:*

- What have the Lord’s prophets recently taught that could help someone understand the importance of obeying the commandment you chose? (You could refer to statements by members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles that are found on LDS.org and in Church magazines.)

After students have had sufficient time to discuss these questions, invite them to participate in a role play. Have one student from each pair role-play as an individual who is struggling to understand why the Lord would require His children to live the commandment that the pair chose. Have the other student help the struggling individual to act in faith, examine the commandment with an eternal perspective, and seek further understanding about the commandment through divinely appointed sources. Give students approximately 10 minutes to role-play their situation.

After students have had sufficient time to complete the role play, consider discussing some of the following questions as a class:

- What are ways we can choose to act in faith when we do not understand certain commandments or find them difficult to keep?
- How did you help your friend to examine his or her particular question or concern about a commandment with an eternal perspective?
- What divinely appointed sources did you use to answer the question or to encourage your struggling friend to seek further understanding?

Conclude the activity by inviting students to share any insights they gained as they participated in this activity.

## Doctrinal Mastery Review

Invite students to look through the New Testament doctrinal mastery passages and choose one that contains a doctrine or principle that they have a testimony of. Invite them to testify of this doctrine or principle and share experiences that helped them gain a testimony of it. As students share their testimonies, the Holy Ghost



will confirm the truth of the doctrine or principle that they are testifying of. Their testimonies may also inspire others to act in faith.





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