



Foundations of the Restoration Class Preparation Material

Foundations of the Restoration Class Preparation Material

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Seminaries and Institutes of Religion Curriculum Services
50 East North Temple Street, Floor 8
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150-0008
USA

Email: ces-manuals@ChurchofJesusChrist.org

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Translation of *Foundations of the Restoration Class Preparation Material*

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LESSON 1 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

Prelude to the Restoration

Welcome to *Foundations of the Restoration*. In this course, you will study the foundational revelations, doctrine, people, and historical events related to the latter-day Restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ. Prayerfully studying these things will help you relate these concepts and people to your life and circumstances. You will also be better able to acquire spiritual knowledge and discern truth from error.

This preparation material will provide you with a foundation for your class experience. Studying each lesson's preparation material prior to class will help you have a deeper, more meaningful learning experience.

As you prayerfully approach this course, you will see the Lord's hand in the history of the Restoration and hear His voice in the revelations of the Restoration (see Doctrine and Covenants 18:34–36). By the end of this first lesson, you should be able to explain why the Church needed to be restored. You should also recognize how the Lord prepared the way for a new dispensation of truth in our day.

SECTION 1

What led to the Great Apostasy?

After the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, His Apostles continued to lead the Church as it expanded. President M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained how the Church of Jesus Christ eventually fell into apostasy:



The New Testament indicates that the early Apostles worked hard to preserve the church that Jesus Christ left to their care and keeping, but they knew their efforts would ultimately be in vain. Paul wrote to the Thessalonian Saints, who were anxiously anticipating the second coming of Christ, that

“that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first” (2 Thes. 2:3). . . .

Eventually, with the known exception of John the Beloved, Peter and his fellow Apostles were martyred. The Apostle John and members of the Church struggled for survival in the face of horrifying oppression. To their everlasting credit, Christianity did survive and was truly a prominent force by the end of the second century A.D. Many valiant Saints were instrumental in helping Christianity to endure.

Despite the significance of the ministries of these Saints, they did not hold the same apostolic authority Peter and the other Apostles had received through ordination under the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. When that authority was lost, men began looking to other sources for doctrinal understanding. As a result, many plain and precious truths were lost. (M. Russell Ballard, “Restored Truth,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 65–66)

The prophet Nephi saw the Great Apostasy in vision. He saw that during this apostasy, wicked people would “[take] away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away” (1 Nephi 13:26). He also saw that “many plain and precious things [would be] taken away from” the Bible during the Great Apostasy (1 Nephi 13:28). An angel told Nephi, “Because of these things which are taken away out of the gospel of the Lamb, an exceedingly great many do stumble, yea, insomuch that Satan hath great power over them” (1 Nephi 13:29).



Ponder in Preparation for Class

Why was a restoration of the fulness of Jesus Christ’s gospel needed?

SECTION 2

How did the Lord prepare the way for the Restoration?

After centuries of apostasy, during which very few people had access to the scriptures, inspired men and women did what they could, often at their own peril, to help others seek truth. In the late 1300s John Wycliffe started a translation of the Bible into English and was consequently condemned as a heretic by the religious authorities of his time. The invention of the printing press in the mid-1400s made affordable copies of the Bible available to many more people. In the 1500s the Spirit of the Lord moved upon Martin Luther, Huldrych Zwingli, John Calvin, John Knox, Ann Askew, and many others who began to speak out against the errors of the predominant churches of their day. William Tyndale and others also made new translations of the Bible. Many of these reformers paid for their actions with their lives. Their efforts led to the organization of new Protestant churches. Because Europe lacked religious freedom, the creation of these new churches led to significant conflicts.

Religious persecution prompted many of these and other individuals to find a new home where they could worship freely, including the Pilgrims, who traveled from England to the Americas in the early 1600s. The prophet Nephi saw in a vision many such religious reformers who would eventually settle in America.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read 1 Nephi 13:13–16, 19.

Descendants of the Pilgrims and other immigrants who were seeking further freedom separated from Great Britain, leading to the American

Revolutionary War. One soldier who fought on the American side was named Asael Smith. Asael, the paternal grandfather of the Prophet Joseph Smith, is noted as having said on one occasion, “It has been borne in upon my soul that one of my descendants will promulgate a work to revolutionize the world of religious faith” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Church History and Modern Revelation*, 2 vols. [1953], 1:4). Asael witnessed the founding of a new nation, one with religious freedom at its core.

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that the founding of the United States of America was a step in preparing the world for the Restoration of the gospel:



Religious feeling guided founders of a new nation on the American continent. Under God’s hand, they secured religious freedom for every citizen with an inspired Bill of Rights. Fourteen years later, on December 23, 1805, the Prophet Joseph Smith was born. The preparation was nearing its completion for the Restoration.

. . . I testify that [Jesus Christ’s] hand has been over the work of the Restoration from before the foundation of this world. (Robert D. Hales, “Preparations for the Restoration and the Second Coming: ‘My Hand Shall Be over Thee,’” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2005, 90, 92)

President M. Russell Ballard taught the following:



Joseph Smith Sr., the prophet’s father, suffered financially. . . . [He] went into business with a partner. The business partner took the money and lost it. They bought a farm that failed. They bought another one, and that failed; bought another one, and that failed. Finally Joseph Smith Sr. moved to Palmyra. The hand of the Lord was at work, moving the Smith family to where He needed them to be. (M. Russell Ballard, “The Tapestry of God’s Hand” [Joseph Smith Memorial Fireside,

Feb. 13, 2011, Logan Institute of Religion, Utah State University])

By divine design Joseph Smith was born at the right time, in the right place, and under the right conditions to initiate the founding events of the Restoration. President Brigham Young testified:



[Joseph Smith] was fore-ordained in eternity to preside over this last dispensation. (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 96)



Ponder in Preparation for Class

What can we learn about the Lord by how He prepared the way for Joseph Smith and the Restoration?

Want More? (Optional)

What had to happen before there could be a restoration of the gospel?



Read “Preparations for the Restoration and the Second Coming: ‘My Hand Shall Be over Thee’” by Elder Hales (*Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2005, 88–92). In this address, Elder Hales talks about the Lord’s continuing influence throughout the Restoration.

Did people in Joseph’s day know there was a need for a restoration?

The video “A Search for Truth” (15:43) tells the story of Wilford Woodruff’s search for the Savior’s Church.



LESSON 2 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

The First Vision

President Joseph F. Smith described Joseph Smith’s First Vision as “the greatest event . . . since the resurrection of the Son of God” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* [1998], 14). As you study the First Vision, think about the significance of this sacred event and the effect it has had on your life and on the world.

SECTION 1

What truths can we learn from Joseph Smith’s First Vision?

Speaking of Joseph Smith’s First Vision, Elder Richard J. Maynes of the Seventy taught:



It is an amazing and enlightening experience to analyze what we learn from this sacred, awe-inspiring experience . . . regarding the eternal nature of our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ; the reality of Satan; the struggle between good and evil; and other important aspects of the great plan of salvation. . . .

Joseph Smith’s First Vision is the key to unlocking many truths that had been hidden for centuries. Let us not forget or take for granted the many precious truths we have learned from the First Vision. (Richard J.

Maynes, “The First Vision: Key to Truth,” *Ensign*, June 2017, 64, 65)

Joseph Smith grew up in a time of great religious confusion. The various Christian churches in his area competed for converts and vigorously disputed with one another over doctrine and religious practices. As you study the following account of the First Vision recorded in 1838 and now included in the standard works as Joseph Smith—History, note insights you gain and mark the gospel truths that are personally meaningful to you.



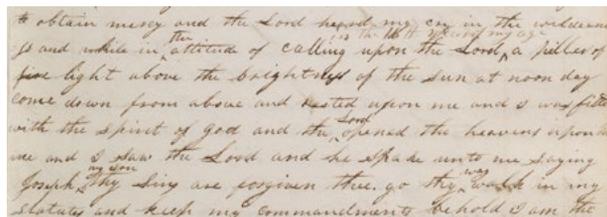
Study in Preparation for Class

Read Joseph Smith—History 1:8, 11–19.



SECTION 2

How do the multiple accounts of Joseph Smith’s First Vision provide greater insight into this sacred event?



Joseph Smith’s handwriting from his 1832 account of the First Vision.

The 1838 account of the First Vision recorded in Joseph Smith—History was dictated by Joseph during a time of opposition to “put all inquirers after truth in possession of the facts” (Joseph Smith—History 1:1). It is the preeminent account of the First Vision and was recorded as part of Joseph Smith’s official history of the Church. It was canonized with the rest of the Pearl of Great Price in 1880 and became part of the standard works of the Church at that time.

In addition to the 1838 account, the Prophet Joseph Smith recorded or dictated three other accounts of his experience. There are also five secondhand accounts of the First Vision recorded by Joseph Smith’s contemporaries.

The various accounts of the First Vision tell a consistent story, though naturally they differ in emphasis and detail. Historians expect that when an individual retells an experience in multiple settings to different audiences over many years, each account will emphasize various aspects of the experience and contain unique details. Indeed, differences similar to those in the First Vision accounts exist in the multiple scriptural accounts of Paul’s vision on the road to Damascus and the Apostles’ experience on the Mount of Transfiguration. Yet despite the differences,



Record Your Thoughts

Record the truths you were able to identify from Joseph Smith’s 1838 account of his First Vision in a journal or in the space provided below. Also write down why you think these truths are important to understand. Come to class ready to share what you wrote.

a basic consistency remains across all the accounts of the First Vision. Some have mistakenly argued that any variation in the retelling of the story is evidence of fabrication. To the contrary, the rich historical record enables us to learn more about this remarkable event than we could if it were less well documented. (“First Vision Accounts,” Gospel Topics, topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

As you read the following excerpts from the additional firsthand accounts of Joseph Smith’s First Vision, consider marking details and truths that stand out to you. You may also want to record any questions you have and bring them to class.

Note: The complete record of each account is available in “Joseph Smith’s Accounts of the First Vision” at josephsmithpapers.org.

1832 Account

This account was written at the beginning of Joseph Smith’s letter book and is the only account that contains a portion of his own handwriting. Some of it was also in the handwriting of Joseph’s scribe.

At about the age of twelve years, my mind [became] seriously impressed with regard to the all-important concerns for the welfare of my immortal soul. . . .

. . . My mind became exceedingly distressed, for I became convicted of my sins. . . . I felt to mourn for my own sins and for the sins of the world. . . .

Therefore, I cried unto the Lord for mercy, for there was none else to whom I could go and obtain mercy. And the Lord heard my cry in the wilderness, and while in the attitude of calling upon the Lord, in the sixteenth year of my age, a pillar of light above the brightness of the sun at noonday came down from above and rested upon me. I was filled with

the spirit of God, and the Lord opened the heavens upon me and I saw the Lord.

And he spake unto me, saying, “Joseph, my son, thy sins are forgiven thee. Go thy way, walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments. Behold, I am the Lord of glory. I was crucified for the world, that all those who believe on my name may have eternal life. Behold, the world lieth in sin at this time, and none doeth good, no, not one. They have turned aside from the gospel and keep not my commandments. They draw near to me with their lips while their hearts are far from me. And mine anger is kindling against the inhabitants of the earth, to visit them according to their ungodliness and to bring to pass that which hath been spoken by the mouth of the prophets and apostles. Behold and lo, I come quickly, as it is written of me, in the cloud, clothed in the glory of my Father.”

My soul was filled with love, and for many days I could rejoice with great joy. The Lord was with me, but I could find none that would believe the heavenly vision. Nevertheless, I pondered these things in my heart.

1835 Account

This account is a record of Joseph describing his First Vision to someone who visited his home. It was written in Joseph’s journal by his scribe.

I called on the Lord in mighty prayer. A pillar of fire appeared above my head. It presently rested down upon me and filled me with joy unspeakable. A personage appeared in the midst of this pillar of flame, which was spread all around and yet nothing consumed. Another personage soon appeared, like unto the first. He said unto me, “Thy sins are forgiven thee.” He testified unto me that Jesus Christ is the son of God. And I saw many angels in this vision. I was about fourteen years old when I received this first communication.

1842 Account

This account comes from a letter that was written to respond to questions from a Chicago newspaper editor named John Wentworth.

I retired to a secret place in a grove and began to call upon the Lord. While fervently engaged in supplication, my mind was taken away from the objects with which I was surrounded, and I was enwrapped in a heavenly vision and saw two glorious personages who exactly resembled each other in features and likeness, surrounded with a brilliant light which eclipsed the sun at noonday. They told me that all religious denominations were believing in incorrect doctrines and that none of them was acknowledged of God as his church and kingdom. And I was expressly commanded to “go not after them,” at the same time receiving a promise that the fulness of the gospel should at some future time be made known unto me.



Ponder in Preparation for Class

How do these additional accounts add to your understanding and appreciation of Joseph Smith’s First Vision? What additional truths could you add to your list from section 1 of this

material? How has your testimony of this sacred event affected your life?

Want More? (Optional)

How can I learn more about the various accounts of Joseph Smith’s First Vision?

Read the essay “First Vision Accounts,” available on ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

Watch the video “Ask of God: Joseph Smith’s First Vision” (6:35). This video depicts the First Vision as woven together from Joseph’s accounts.

Read “The First Vision: A Narrative from Joseph Smith’s Accounts” (history.ChurchofJesusChrist.org), which also weaves the accounts together into a single narrative.

What other truths can we learn from Joseph Smith’s First Vision?



Read “The First Vision: Key to Truth” (*Ensign*, June 2017, 60–65) by Elder Richard J. Maynes of the Seventy, which shares some of the remarkable truths we can learn from the First Vision.



LESSON 3 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge

Sometimes we discover new information that surprises us or sparks questions regarding the doctrine, practices, or history of the Church. How you frame your questions and where you turn for answers can either strengthen or weaken your faith. As you study how to acquire spiritual knowledge, identify principles that can help as you seek answers in the Lord’s way.

SECTION 1

Is it OK to have questions about the Church?

The scriptures repeatedly encourage us to ask God questions (see James 1:5; Doctrine and Covenants 88:63). While serving in the First Presidency, President Dieter F. Uchtdorf taught:



My dear young friends, we are a question-asking people. We have always been, because we know that inquiry leads to truth. That is the way that the Church got its start, from a young man who had questions. In fact, I’m not sure how one can discover truth without asking questions. . . . Inquiry is the birthplace

of testimony. . . . Asking questions isn’t a sign of weakness. It’s a precursor of growth. (“The Reflection in the Water,” Church Educational System devotional [Nov. 1, 2009], broadcasts. ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ delight to give us knowledge and understanding. We grow spiritually as we ask questions and seek answers with sincerity and faith. Remember that as the Lord helps us learn to have faith in Him, He may not provide every answer to every question we have in this life. In fact, we do not have to find answers to every question in order to receive a testimony and stand as a witness of the truth. But asking sincere questions can help us to continue to learn and grow.



Record Your Thoughts

In the space provided, write a couple of questions that you have heard or that you have about religion, spirituality, the gospel, or the Church.

Students: Send one or two of these questions via text or email to your institute teacher. He or she will keep your questions anonymous but may use them in class to practice finding answers in the Lord's way. These questions will also help your teacher better understand your concerns and how they can be addressed during the course. As you continue to study, look for principles that can teach you how to seek answers to challenging questions.

SECTION 2

How would the Lord want me to seek answers to questions and acquire spiritual knowledge?

The following principles can help you seek answers to questions and resolve concerns in the Lord's way:

1. Act in faith.
2. Examine concepts and questions with an eternal perspective.
3. Seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources.

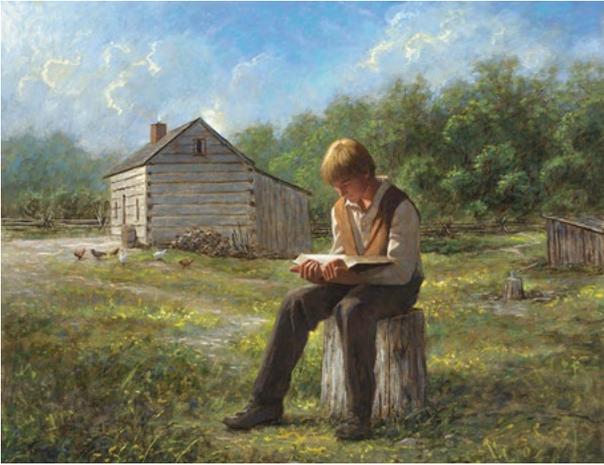
As you study these principles of acquiring spiritual knowledge below, consider marking the significant statements or points that stand out to you so you can share them in class and refer to them later.

Act in Faith

Faith begins with the belief that God lives, knows all things, and is the source of all truth. We act in faith when we choose to trust God and turn to Him by sincerely praying, studying His teachings, and obeying His commandments. The Lord invites us to “doubt not, but be believing” (Mormon 9:27). As we establish a pattern of acting in faith in our daily lives, we build a firm foundation on Jesus Christ that ensures we will remain strong, even when we face difficult questions or challenges (see Helaman 5:12).

When you encounter information or claims that you do not understand or that challenge your beliefs, you do not need to doubt your testimony or past spiritual experiences. During such moments, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland counseled, “Don’t panic and retreat. Don’t lose your confidence. Don’t forget how you once felt. Don’t distrust the [spiritual] experience[s] you [have] had” (“Remember How You Felt,” *New Era*, Aug. 2004, 6). Instead, “hold fast to what you already know and stand strong until additional knowledge comes” (Jeffrey R. Holland, “Lord, I Believe,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 94).

While you “hold fast to what you already know,” remember that the attitude and intent with which you ask questions and seek answers will affect to a large extent your ability to learn from the Holy Ghost. This process requires humility, sincerity, and real intent to act on the truth we receive from the Lord.



When Joseph Smith faced a religious climate filled with “confusion and strife among the different denominations” (Joseph Smith—History 1:8), he could have easily become discouraged, let doubt fill his heart, and “remain[ed] in darkness and confusion” (verse 13). Instead, he searched the scriptures and was deeply impressed by the message found in James 1:5 to “ask of God.” Acting in faith, he went to the woods and “[knelt] down and began to offer up the desires of [his] heart to God” (Joseph Smith—History 1:15). His sincere prayer was answered with a heavenly vision. He left the woods having “learned for [himself]” the answers to his questions (verse 20).



Ponder in Preparation for Class

Think about one of the questions you recorded earlier. How might you or another person with this question act in faith while seeking answers and further guidance?

Examine Concepts and Questions with an Eternal Perspective

To examine doctrinal concepts, questions, and social issues with an eternal perspective, we consider them in the context of the plan of salvation and the teachings of the Savior. We seek the help of the Holy Ghost in order to see things as the Lord sees them (see 1 Corinthians 2:5, 9–11). This approach helps us to see things from the Lord’s point of view rather than from a worldly perspective. We can do this by asking questions such as “What do I already know about Heavenly Father, His plan, and how He deals with His children?” and “What gospel teachings relate to or clarify this concept or issue?”

Questions related to historical events should also be examined with an eternal perspective. It can also help to examine historical questions in the proper historical context by considering the culture and norms of the time period rather than imposing current perspectives and attitudes. For example, if you discovered an ancestor from the 1800s who married at the age of 14 or 15, you might see it as an extremely early marriage unless you understood that in that time period, it was not uncommon.

It is important to remember that historical details do not carry the saving power of ordinances, covenants, and doctrine. To be distracted by less significant details at the expense of missing the unfolding miracle of the Restoration is like spending time analyzing a gift box and ignoring the wonder of the gift itself.



Record Your Thoughts

Think about one of the questions you wrote earlier. How can you view the question with an eternal perspective? _____

Seek Further Understanding through Divinely Appointed Sources

Imagine that a stranger accused one of your loved ones of doing something wrong. How would you figure out if they were telling the truth or if they were misled? What would the danger be in believing the stranger without further investigating the matter?



Through the internet, we have unprecedented access to good information. At the same time, the internet exposes us to an onslaught of unreliable information. Because the internet does not automatically filter out misleading, deceptive, or false information for us, we must filter it ourselves. President Dallin H. Oaks of the First Presidency warned, “We need to be cautious as we seek truth and choose sources” (“Truth and the Plan,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 25).

As part of the Lord’s appointed process for obtaining spiritual knowledge, He has established sources through which He reveals truth and guidance to His children. These divinely appointed sources include the Light of Christ, the Holy Ghost, the scriptures, Church leaders, and faithful family members. The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve

Apostles—the Lord’s prophets on the earth today—are a vital source of truth. The Lord has chosen and ordained these individuals to speak for Him.

We can also learn truth through other trustworthy sources. However, sincere seekers of truth should be wary of unreliable sources of information. Learning to recognize and avoid unreliable sources can protect us from misinformation and from those who seek to destroy faith. The following questions and guidelines can help as you determine the reliability of sources:

Questions for Evaluating Sources

1. What are the qualifications, intentions, and possible biases of the author?

President Dallin H. Oaks of the First Presidency taught that we should “be cautious about the motivation of the one who provides information. . . . Our personal decisions should be based on information from sources that are qualified on the subject and free from selfish motivations” (Dallin H. Oaks, “Truth and the Plan,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 25).

2. How closely connected is the author to the events being described?

When a source addresses something from Church history, ask yourself how far removed the source is from the event it is discussing. Stories based on second- or thirdhand accounts are often less reliable.

3. Does the author intentionally ignore available evidence in order to mislead?

Some authors deliberately omit important facts and ignore critical evidence to support their particular point of view.

4. Are the teachings and events addressed in this source presented in the proper context of their time, place, and circumstance?

Some teachings and historical events can become confusing when they are taken out of the context of their time and place. Historical

context also includes other events happening at the time (such as wars, economic crises, and social and political movements) and the culture and demographics of a given time and setting.

5. Are the teachings and events supported by additional reliable sources?

Support from other reliable sources helps establish the accuracy of doctrine and historical events.



Ponder in Preparation for Class

Take a few minutes to search the Church's website, the Gospel Library, or the scriptures for resources that might help you or someone you know seek further understanding about the questions you recorded earlier. Ponder the role the Holy Ghost has played in your own life as you have evaluated sources and searched for truth.

Want More? (Optional)

Where can I learn more about the principles of acquiring spiritual knowledge?

The *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document* (ChurchofJesusChrist.org) contains additional information on acquiring spiritual knowledge.

Where can I learn about actual experiences of those who have wrestled with hard questions?

Elder D. Todd Christofferson in his talk "Firm and Steadfast in the Faith of Jesus Christ" (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 30–33) recounts a story of a man whose faith was challenged by some family members (watch the video from time codes 9:40 to 11:00).

Talks such as the following can also help you better understand and apply principles of acquiring spiritual knowledge:

- David F. Evans, "The Truth of All Things," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 68–70
- Jeffrey R. Holland, "Lord, I Believe," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 93–95
- Sheri L. Dew, "Will You Engage in the Wrestle?" (Brigham Young University–Idaho devotional, May 17, 2016), byui.edu/devotionals
- Lawrence E. Corbridge, "Stand Forever" (Brigham Young University devotional, Jan. 22, 2019), speeches.byu.edu

How can I reframe questions in order to answer them from an eternal perspective?

The video "Examining Questions with an Eternal Perspective" (ChurchofJesusChrist.org) gives an example of how we might reframe questions and issues to help answer them from an eternal perspective.



LESSON 4 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

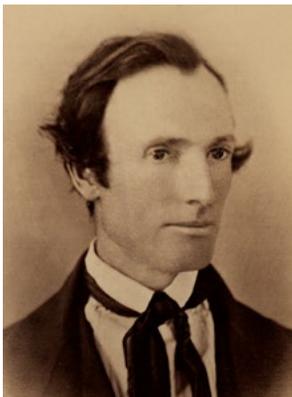
The Doctrine of Revelation

Ponder the following prophetic invitation by President Russell M. Nelson: “In coming days, it will not be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, directing, comforting, and constant influence of the Holy Ghost. . . . I plead with you to increase your spiritual capacity to receive revelation” (“Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 96).

As you study this material, look for truths that can help you increase your spiritual capacity to receive and recognize revelation.

SECTION 1

How can I recognize when God is speaking to me?



In the winter of 1828–29, a 22-year-old school-teacher named Oliver Cowdery learned of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the gold plates while boarding with Joseph’s parents in Palmyra, New York. After praying in private to know if what he had heard was true, Oliver felt a convincing assurance of peace. He traveled to Harmony, Pennsylvania, where he met the Prophet. Convinced that the message Joseph shared of the restored gospel was true, Oliver served as Joseph’s scribe in translating the Book of Mormon. Not long after Oliver began helping with the translation, the Prophet received revelations that provided instruction to Oliver and addressed his desire to help translate. The words from the Lord to Oliver found

in Doctrine and Covenants 6:14–15, 22–23 help us to better understand ways He may speak to us.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 6:14–15, 22–23.

When Joseph received this revelation, “Oliver was astonished. He immediately told Joseph about his [earlier] prayer and the divine witness he had received. No one could have known about it except God” (*Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, vol. 1, *The Standard of Truth, 1815–1846* [2018], 62).

When Oliver desired to translate portions of the plates, the Lord taught him more about receiving revelation.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 8:2–4. Consider marking these verses in your scriptures.

Speaking of how the Lord communicates to both our minds and hearts through the power of the Holy Ghost, Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained one way that this could happen:



A communication to the *heart* is a more general impression. The Lord often begins by giving impressions. Where there is a recognition of their importance and they are obeyed, one gains more capacity to receive more detailed instruction to the *mind*. (Richard G. Scott, “Helping Others to Be Spiritually Led”

[address to CES religious educators, Aug. 11, 1998, 4], ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

Elder Craig C. Christensen of the Seventy has also taught:



We all have experiences with the Holy Ghost, even though we may not always recognize them. As inspired thoughts come into our minds, we know them to be true by the spiritual feelings that enter into our hearts. (Craig C. Christensen, “An Unspeakable Gift from God,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 14)

Sometimes you may wonder if a thought or feeling is really from God. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles discussed how we can tell the difference between the Holy Ghost and our own thoughts in the video “Patterns of Light, Part 2: Discerning Light” (2:12).

SECTION 2

What can I do to invite the spirit of revelation into my life?



At times, you may feel frustrated when it seems that the revelation you seek does not come. When this happens, you might consider the Lord’s instruction to Oliver Cowdery when he felt frustrated at being unable to receive the revelation necessary to translate the plates (see *Saints*, 1:62–64).



Study in Preparation for Class

Read how the Lord taught Oliver as recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 9:7–8.

President Dallin H. Oaks of the First Presidency explained a principle we can learn from the Lord’s teachings to Oliver Cowdery:



We will get promptings of the Spirit when we have done everything we can, when we are out in the sun working rather than sitting back in the shade praying for direction on the first step to take. . . .

So we do all we can. Then we wait upon the Lord for His revelation. He has his own timetable.

. . . Being taught by the Spirit is not a passive thing. Often the Lord’s communication does not come until we have studied matters out in our own minds. Then we receive a confirmation. (Dallin H. Oaks, “In His Own Time, in His Own Way,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2013, 24, 26)

Even when you have prepared yourself to receive revelation through your worthiness and faithful actions, the Lord’s answers may not come immediately.

Elder Scott counseled:



What do you do when you have prepared carefully, have prayed fervently, waited a reasonable time for a response, and still do not feel an answer? You may want to express thanks when that occurs, for it is an evidence of His trust. When you are living worthily and your choice is consistent with the Savior’s teachings and you need to act, proceed with trust. . . . When you are living righteously and are acting with trust, God will not let you proceed too far without a warning impression if you have made the wrong decision.

(Richard G. Scott, “Using the Supernal Gift of Prayer,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2007, 10)



Ponder and Discuss in Preparation for Class

Why do you think the Lord expects you to study matters out in your mind as part of seeking revelation?

If possible, ask a friend or family member to share with you what he or she has done to invite revelation. You might ask the person how revelation has come to him or her in the past when making big decisions. Come to class prepared to share some of what you learned.

SECTION 3

How does revelation usually come?

Watch the video “Patterns of Light: Spirit of Revelation” (3:04), or study Elder Bednar’s statement below:



Some revelations are received immediately and intensely; some are recognized gradually and subtly. . . .

A light turned on in a dark room is like receiving a message from God quickly, completely, and all at once. Many of us have experienced this pattern of revelation as we have been given answers to sincere prayers or been provided with needed direction or protection, according to God’s will and timing. . . . However, this pattern of revelation tends to be more rare than common.

The gradual increase of light radiating from the rising sun is like receiving a message from God “line upon line, precept upon precept” (2 Nephi 28:30). Most frequently, revelation

comes in small increments over time and is granted according to our desire, worthiness, and preparation. . . . This pattern of revelation tends to be more common than rare. . . .

Another common experience with light helps us learn an additional truth about the “line upon line, precept upon precept” pattern of revelation. Sometimes the sun rises on a morning that is cloudy or foggy. Because of the overcast conditions, perceiving the light is more difficult, and identifying the precise moment when the sun rises over the horizon is not possible. But on such a morning we nonetheless have sufficient light to recognize a new day and to conduct our affairs.

In a similar way, we many times receive revelation without recognizing precisely how or when we are receiving revelation. (David A. Bednar, “The Spirit of Revelation,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 88–89)



Ponder and Record Your Thoughts in Preparation for Class

Think about times when you have received guidance and revelation. Consider what you have learned from your own experience receiving revelation as well as from your personal study today. Then take a couple of minutes to write in a journal or the space provided how these principles can influence your search for answers to your current questions.

Want More? (Optional)

Where can I find additional information about receiving revelation?

In the video “Wrong Roads” (3:57), Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shares a story about when he and his son felt prompted to go down what ended up being a wrong road.



President Dallin H. Oaks of the First Presidency teaches additional principles about receiving revelation in the article “In His Own Time, In His Own Way” (*Ensign*, Aug. 2013, 22–27).

How can I recognize when the Spirit is speaking to me?



Sister Linda K. Burton, former Relief Society General President, shares about learning the language of the Spirit in her talk “Tuning Our Hearts to the Voice of the Spirit” (Church Educational System devotional for young adults, Mar. 2, 2014, broadcasts.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).



LESSON 5 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon

Before Moroni hid the Nephite record, he prophesied of its coming forth in the latter days: “None can have power to bring it to light save it be given him of God” (Mormon 8:15). Consider why Heavenly Father would choose a young, uneducated farm boy to translate and publish one of the most influential books of our time.

SECTION 1

How did Joseph Smith bring forth the Book of Mormon through the power of God?

Several miraculous events occurred as part of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon that provide evidence that it was translated by the power of God (see *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, vol. 1, *The Standard of Truth, 1815–1846* [2018], 21–30, 39–64).

An angel ministered to Joseph Smith and told him of the ancient record.

On the evening of September 21, 1823, the angel Moroni appeared to Joseph Smith and told him that God had a work for him to do (see Joseph Smith—History 1:33).



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Joseph Smith—History 1:34–35.



Joseph Smith translated the book despite being young and having little education.

Joseph Smith was 17 years old when the angel Moroni first visited him and when he first saw the gold plates. Between the ages of 18 and 21, Moroni visited him once each year and gave him “instruction and intelligence” (Joseph Smith—History 1:54). At age 21 Joseph was permitted to take the plates so that they could be translated. At age 22 he translated a portion of the plates, with Martin Harris acting as scribe. (This manuscript consisting of 116 pages was then lost and was not retranslated.) At age 23 Joseph completed the rest of the translation, with Oliver Cowdery and others acting as scribes.

Emma Smith, wife of the Prophet Joseph Smith, explained: “[At that time] Joseph Smith . . . could

neither write nor dictate a coherent and well-worded letter; let alone dictating a book like the Book of Mormon. And, though I was an active participant in the scenes that transpired, and was present during the translation of the plates . . . it is marvelous to me, ‘a marvel and a wonder,’ as much so as to anyone else. . . . The Book of Mormon is of divine authenticity—I have not the slightest doubt of it” (“Last Testimony of Sister Emma,” *The Saints’ Herald*, Oct. 1, 1879, 290).

Joseph Smith completed the translation in an exceptionally short period of time.

It is estimated that Joseph Smith completed the translation in “sixty-five or fewer working days,” translating a book “which contains 531 pages in its current edition. That calculates to an average of eight pages per day. Consider this when you translate a book, or as you schedule your own reading of the Book of Mormon” (Russell M. Nelson, “A Treasured Testament,” *Ensign*, July 1993, 61–62).

Joseph Smith translated without notes and without reviewing the manuscript.



Emma described the translation process to her son, Joseph Smith III, shortly before her death in 1879:

[I] believe the Church to have been established by divine direction. I have complete faith in it. . . .

[Joseph] had neither manuscript nor book to read from [as he was translating]. . . .

If he had had anything of the kind he could not have concealed it from me. . . .

The plates often lay on the table without any attempt at concealment, wrapped in a small linen table cloth, which I had given him to fold them in. I once felt of the plates, as they thus lay on the table, tracing their outline and shape. They seemed to be pliable like thick paper, and would rustle with a metallic [*sic*] sound when the edges were moved by the thumb, as one does sometimes thumb the edges of a book. . . .

I am satisfied that no man could have dictated the writing of the manuscripts unless he was inspired; for, when acting as his scribe, your father would dictate to me hour after hour; and when returning after meals, or after interruptions, he would at once begin where he had left off, without either seeing the manuscript or having any portion of it read to him. This was a usual thing for him to do. It would have been improbable that a learned man could do this; and, for one so ignorant and unlearned as he was, it was simply impossible. (Emma Smith, in "Last Testimony of Sister Emma," *The Saints' Herald*, Oct. 1, 1879, 289–90)

Joseph Smith was given instruments to help him translate.

Joseph did not translate the Book of Mormon in a conventional way. He did not know the original language of the plates and then translate that language into English. Rather, he rendered the text from one language to another through revelation—by “the gift and power of God” (Doctrine and Covenants 135:3).

Joseph and his scribes wrote of two instruments used in translating the Book of Mormon. One instrument, called in the Book of Mormon the “interpreters” (Mosiah 8:13), is better known to Latter-day Saints today as the “Urim and Thummim” (Joseph Smith—History 1:35). Oliver Cowdery stated that by “looking through” the Urim and Thummim, Joseph “was able to read in English, the reformed Egyptian characters, which were engraven on the plates” (“Book of Mormon Translation,” Gospel Topics, topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

Some later accounts indicate that Joseph sometimes used another instrument to translate the Book of Mormon. This instrument was a small oval stone, referred to as a seer stone, that Joseph had discovered several years before he obtained the gold plates. These accounts indicate that Joseph would place either the interpreters or the seer stone in a hat to help block out light, which allowed him to better see the words that appeared on the instrument. (See “Book of Mormon Translation,” topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org; see also Richard E. Turley Jr., Robin S. Jensen, and Mark Ashurst-McGee, “Joseph the Seer,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2015, 51.)

More than a year after the Book of Mormon was published, Joseph was asked in a meeting to relate some specifics of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. The minutes of the meeting state that he “said that it was not intended to tell the world all the particulars of the coming forth of the book of Mormon” and “that it was not expedient for him to relate these things” (“Minutes, Oct. 25–26, 1831,” in Minute Book 2, 13, josephsmithpapers.org).

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained:



Many who read the Book of Mormon understandably desire to know more about its coming forth, including the actual process of translation. . . . What we do know about the actual coming forth of the Book of Mormon is adequate, but it is not comprehensive. . . .

... Perhaps the details of translation are withheld ... because we are intended to immerse ourselves in the substance of the book rather than becoming unduly concerned with the process by which we received it. (Neal A. Maxwell, “By the Gift and Power of God,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1997, 39, 41)



Ponder in Preparation for Class

Why do you think we should be more concerned with the “substance of the book” than “with the process by which we received it”?

SECTION 2

How do the testimonies of the Book of Mormon witnesses provide further evidence of its truthfulness?



During the translation of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery learned that the Lord would show the plates to three special witnesses (see Ether 5:2–4). Oliver, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris were “moved upon by an inspired desire to be the three special witnesses” (Doctrine and Covenants 17, section heading).

In June 1829 Oliver, David, and Martin were shown the plates in a miraculous way. They testified that “an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon” (“The Testimony of Three Witnesses,” Book of Mormon).

Immediately after the Three Witnesses had their experience with the angel, Joseph Smith returned to the Whitmer home and exclaimed to his parents: “Father, mother; you do not know [how] happy I am; the Lord has now caused the plates to be shown to three more besides myself—they have seen an angel, who has testified to them; and they will have to bear witness to the truth of what I have said; for now they know for themselves, that I do not go about to deceive the people. And I feel as if I was relieved of a burden, which was almost [too] heavy for me to bear; and it rejoices my heart, that I am not any longer to be entirely alone in the world.” (“Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1845,” 153–54, josephsmithpapers.org)

Later, Joseph showed the plates to an additional eight witnesses. They declared that “we did handle [the plates] with our hands; and we also saw the engravings thereon, . . . and know of a surety that [Joseph Smith] has got the plates of which we have spoken” (“The Testimony of Eight Witnesses,” Book of Mormon).

Despite differences with Joseph Smith that led each of the Three Witnesses to part ways individually with the Church ([Oliver] Cowdery and [Martin] Harris later returned), they continued to affirm their testimony as witnesses throughout their lives. Each of the Eight Witnesses likewise reaffirmed his testimony of examining the plates, though some eventually became estranged from the Church. The combined weight of their numerous statements, given over many years and despite their changing attitudes toward Joseph Smith

and the Church, is a powerful witness of the reliability of the statements they published in the Book of Mormon. (“Witnesses of the Book of Mormon,” Church History Topics, ChurchofJesusChrist.org)



Record Your Thoughts

Record experiences you have had that have helped you come to know the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. You will be given an opportunity, if you choose, to share your own witness during class.

Want More? (Optional)

What else do we know about the coming forth of the Book of Mormon?

- The essay “Book of Mormon Translation,” available at ChurchofJesusChrist.org, contains details we do know about Joseph Smith’s experience translating the plates.
- In the video “How Did Joseph Smith Translate the Book of Mormon?” (8:06), Church historians and Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles describe what we know about the translation process.
- In the video “Days of Harmony” (25:01), Oliver Cowdery’s experience with the coming forth of the Book of Mormon is recounted.
- Information about the contributions of Martin Harris to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, including visits he had with scholars about the characters on the gold plates, can be found in “The Contributions of Martin Harris” by Matthew McBride (*Revelations in Context* [2016], ChurchofJesusChrist.org).



LESSON 6 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

The Book of Mormon—the Keystone of Our Religion

What is your testimony of the Book of Mormon? What can you do to continue to strengthen it? As you study the following material, you should be better able to explain why the Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion and our testimonies.

SECTION 1

What are some evidences of the truthfulness and importance of the Book of Mormon?

Shortly after the Book of Mormon was published in March 1830, the Lord commanded Joseph to organize the restored Church of Jesus Christ. Missionaries began selling copies of the Book of Mormon as they traveled. The book began to have a profound impact in gathering people to the Church.

The same year the Book of Mormon was published, a young man named Parley P. Pratt felt inspired to sell his farm in Ohio so he could preach the Bible. Shortly after selling the farm, Parley and his wife, Thankful, traveled east. As they neared Palmyra, New York, Parley felt prompted to get off the boat.

He disembarked, and Thankful continued her journey. Parley then walked 10 miles to the home of a Baptist deacon. The deacon told him about a book he had acquired that was translated from gold plates. Parley later recorded the following:



I opened [the Book of Mormon] with eagerness, and read its title page. I then read the testimony of several witnesses in relation to the manner of its being found and translated. After this I commenced its contents by course. I read all day; eating was a burden, I had no desire for food; sleep was a burden when the night came, for I preferred reading to sleep.

As I read, the spirit of the Lord was upon me, and I knew and comprehended that the book was true, as plainly and manifestly as a man comprehends and knows that he exists.

(*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. [1938], 37)



Since the early days of the Church, millions of people have discovered what Parley was taught by the Holy Ghost that night—that the Book of Mormon is true. It contains the word of God.

As Joseph Smith completed the translation of the Book of Mormon in June 1829, the Lord Himself testified of its truthfulness.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 17:6.

The Lord later affirmed the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon and provided reasons He brought it forth.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 20:8–12, 14.

Years later on a Sunday in 1841, the Prophet Joseph Smith spent the day in council with the Twelve Apostles at the house of President Brigham Young, who was serving at the time as president of that quorum. While talking with them on a variety of subjects, Joseph taught the significance of the Book of Mormon:



I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book. (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 64)

Study the following sections to learn more about these truths taught by the Prophet Joseph.

SECTION 2

What does it mean that the Book of Mormon is the most correct of any book on earth?

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:



The Book of Mormon is the most correct of any book on earth because it centers upon the Truth (see John 14:6; 1 Nephi 13:40), even Jesus Christ, and restores the plain and precious things that have been taken away from the true gospel (see 1 Nephi 13:26, 28–29, 32, 34–35, 40). The unique combination of these two factors—a focus on the Savior and the plainness of the teachings—powerfully invites the confirming witness of the third member of the Godhead, even the Holy Ghost. Consequently, the Book of Mormon speaks to the spirit and to the heart of the reader like no other volume of scripture. (David A. Bednar, “Watching with All Perseverance,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2010, 41)



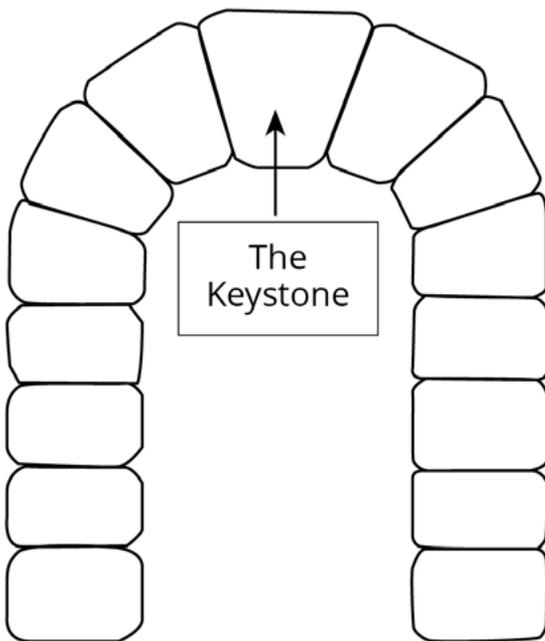
Ponder in Preparation for Class

What truths from the Book of Mormon have strengthened your faith in Jesus Christ and His restored gospel?

SECTION 3

How is the Book of Mormon the keystone of our religion?

When an arch is constructed, the two sides are built up with external supports to hold them upright. The space at the top of the arch is carefully measured, and the keystone is cut to fit it exactly. When the keystone is put in place and the pressure from the other stones rests on it, the arch stands firm without supports.



President Ezra Taft Benson explained how the Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion:



There are three ways in which the Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion. It is the keystone in our witness of Christ. It is the keystone of our doctrine. It is the keystone of our testimony.

The Book of Mormon is the keystone in our witness of Jesus Christ. . . . Much of the Christian world today rejects the divinity of the Savior. They question His miraculous birth, His perfect life, and the reality of His glorious resurrection. The Book of Mormon teaches in plain and unmistakable terms about the truth of all of those. It also provides the most complete explanation of the doctrine of the Atonement. . . .

The Book of Mormon is also the keystone of the doctrine of the Resurrection. . . . The Book of Mormon offers so much that broadens our understandings of the doctrines of salvation. Without it, much of what is taught in other scriptures would not be nearly so plain and precious. . . .

*. . . The Book of Mormon is the keystone of testimony. Just as the arch crumbles if the keystone is removed, so does all the Church stand or fall with the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. . . . If the Book of Mormon be true . . . then one must accept the claims of the Restoration and all that accompanies it. (Ezra Taft Benson, "The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion," *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 5–6; italics added)*



Ponder in Preparation for Class

In what ways does the Church stand or fall with the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon? How is

the Book of Mormon a keystone of your personal testimony?

SECTION 4

How does the Book of Mormon help us draw nearer to God?

Consider marking words or phrases in the following statements that teach how the Book of Mormon helps us draw nearer to God and blesses our lives.



President Benson taught:



There is a power in the [Book of Mormon] which will begin to flow into your lives the moment you begin a serious study of the book. You will find greater power to resist temptation. You will find the power to avoid deception. You will find the power to stay on the strait and narrow path. The scriptures are called ‘the words of life’ (Doctrine and Covenants 84:85), and nowhere is that more

true than it is of the Book of Mormon. When you begin to hunger and thirst after those words, you will find life in greater and greater abundance. (Ezra Taft Benson, “The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion,” 7)

President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency has also testified:



The effect of the Book of Mormon on your character, power, and courage to be a witness for God is certain. The doctrine and the valiant examples in that book will lift, guide, and embolden you. . . . Prayerful study of the Book of Mormon will build faith in God the Father, in His Beloved Son, and in His gospel. It will build your faith in God’s prophets, ancient and modern. It can draw you closer to God than any other book. It can change a life for the better. . . . I plead with you to drink deeply and often from its pages. (Henry B. Eyring, “A Witness,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 69–71)

And President Russell M. Nelson has promised:



I promise that as you prayerfully study the Book of Mormon *every day*, you will make better decisions—*every day*. I promise that as you ponder what you study, the windows of heaven will open, and you will receive answers to your own questions and direction for your own life. I promise that as you daily immerse yourself in the Book of Mormon, you can be immunized against the evils of the day, even the gripping plague of pornography and other mind-numbing addictions. (Russell M. Nelson, “The Book of Mormon: What Would Your Life Be Like without It?” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 62–63)



Record Your Thoughts

How have studying and living the teachings found in the Book of Mormon helped you draw nearer to God? What are some scripture passages from the Book of Mormon that have helped you become more like Him? Record your answers to these questions in the space provided. Come to class prepared to share your thoughts.

Want More? (Optional)

What would your life be like without the Book of Mormon?



In his talk “The Book of Mormon: What Would Your Life Be Like without It?” (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 60–63), President Nelson answers questions about the Book of Mormon.

Why is the Book of Mormon so important if we already have the Bible to teach us about Jesus Christ?



Brother Tad R. Callister, former Sunday School General President, addresses criticisms of the Book of Mormon and affirms its place as the most compelling witness of God, Jesus Christ, and the truthfulness of the Church. Read “God’s Compelling Witness: The Book of Mormon” (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 107–9).



LESSON 7 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

Restoration of the Priesthood

Think of the last time you participated in a priesthood ordinance or received a priesthood blessing. What did you feel during that experience? As you study, consider how the authority and keys of the priesthood have provided you access to the blessings of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

SECTION 1

How did the Lord restore priesthood authority to the earth?

Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery had questions about priesthood authority as they translated the Book of Mormon. Joseph and Oliver read in 3 Nephi that after Jesus taught His twelve Nephite disciples that baptism was necessary for salvation, He then gave the disciples priesthood authority to baptize (see Joseph Smith—History 1:68; 3 Nephi 11:21–27).

Joseph and Oliver were struck by these teachings. . . . Joseph had never been baptized,

and he wanted to know more about the ordinance and the authority necessary to perform it.

On May 15, 1829, the rains cleared and Joseph and Oliver walked into the woods near the Susquehanna River. Kneeling, they asked God about baptism and the remission of sins. As they prayed, the voice of the Redeemer spoke peace to them, and an angel appeared in a cloud of light. He introduced himself as John the Baptist and placed his hands on their heads. Joy filled their hearts as God's love surrounded them. (*Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, vol. 1, *The Standard of Truth, 1815–1846* [2018], 66–67)



Then John the Baptist conferred the Aaronic Priesthood upon them, as recorded in Joseph Smith—History and Doctrine and Covenants 13.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Joseph Smith—History 1:68–70, 72. (See also Doctrine and Covenants 13.)

Sometime after Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery received the Aaronic Priesthood from John the Baptist, they received the Melchizedek Priesthood from Peter, James, and John (see Doctrine and

Covenants 27:12–13). The specific date of this event is not known. However, historical evidence suggests it occurred in May or June of 1829. (See Larry C. Porter, “The Restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1996, 30–47.)



The Lord gradually revealed more about the priesthood and its functions and sent messengers who committed additional priesthood keys to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. The following chart illustrates this restoration.

The Restoration of Priesthood Authority, Keys, and Knowledge

Date	Heavenly Messengers and Revelations	Priesthood Authority, Keys, and Knowledge Restored
1829	John the Baptist	Conferred the authority and keys of the Aaronic Priesthood (Doctrine and Covenants 13)

Date	Heavenly Messengers and Revelations	Priesthood Authority, Keys, and Knowledge Restored
1829	Peter, James, and John	Conferred the Melchizedek Priesthood and keys of the kingdom (Doctrine and Covenants 27:12-13)
1830	Doctrine and Covenants 20	Revealed the procedures for baptism and the sacrament, and outlined the duties of priesthood holders
1832	Doctrine and Covenants 84	Revealed the history, purpose, and covenant of the priesthood
1831, 1835	Doctrine and Covenants 107	Revealed the naming, administration, and structure of priesthood offices and quorums
1836	Moses	Committed keys to gather the house of Israel (Doctrine and Covenants 110:11)

Date	Heavenly Messengers and Revelations	Priesthood Authority, Keys, and Knowledge Restored
1836	Elias	Committed “the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham” (Doctrine and Covenants 110:12)
1836	Elijah	Committed keys for the sealing power (Doctrine and Covenants 110:13-16)
1839	Doctrine and Covenants 121:34-46	Revealed knowledge about conduct of priesthood holders
Unknown	Adam, Gabriel, Raphael, and divers angels	Declared their dispensation, rights, keys, and the power of their priesthood (Doctrine and Covenants 128:21)
1978	Official Declaration 2	Revealed that all worthy male members of the Church of Jesus Christ could receive the priesthood

Note: The meaning of specific priesthood keys will be discussed more in lesson 16, “The Kirtland Temple and Priesthood Keys.”



Ponder in Preparation for Class

How can your testimony of the priesthood be strengthened by knowing how it was restored to the earth?

Ultimately, all keys of the priesthood are held by the Lord Jesus Christ, whose priesthood it is. He is the one who determines what keys are delegated to mortals and how those keys will be used. (Dallin H. Oaks, “The Keys and Authority of the Priesthood,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 49–50)

SECTION 2

What is the relationship between priesthood authority and priesthood keys?

President Joseph F. Smith taught:



The Priesthood in general is the authority given to man to act for God. Every man ordained to any degree of the Priesthood, has this authority delegated to him.

But it is necessary that every act performed under this authority shall be done at the proper time and place, in the proper way, and after the proper order. The power of directing these labors constitutes the keys of the Priesthood. (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* [1998], 224)

President Dallin H. Oaks of the First Presidency has also taught:



“Priesthood keys are the authority God has given to priesthood [holders] to direct, control, and govern the use of His priesthood on earth” [*Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 2.1.1]. Every act or ordinance performed in the Church is done under the direct or indirect authorization of one holding the keys for that function. As Elder M. Russell Ballard has explained, “Those who have priesthood keys . . . literally make it possible for all who serve faithfully under their direction to exercise priesthood authority and have access to priesthood power.” . . .

SECTION 3

How do priesthood ordinances help us access the Savior’s atoning power?

In the Church, an ordinance is a sacred, formal act performed by the authority of the priesthood. Some ordinances are essential to our exaltation. These ordinances are called saving ordinances. They include baptism, confirmation, ordination to the Melchizedek Priesthood (for men), the temple endowment, and the marriage sealing. With each of these ordinances, we enter into solemn covenants with the Lord. (“Ordinances,” Gospel Topics, topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained the power we access through priesthood ordinances:



For Heavenly Father’s purposes to be accomplished, Christ’s atoning power needs to be made available to God’s children [see 1 Nephi 11:31; 2 Nephi 2:8]. The priesthood delivers these opportunities. . . . Priesthood is essential because necessary ordinances and covenants on earth are administered only by its authority. If the priesthood fails to deliver the opportunity to benefit from the Savior’s atoning power, what would be its purpose? . . .

. . . Through the priesthood, the power of godliness is manifest in the lives of all who make and keep gospel covenants and receive the associated ordinances [see Doctrine and

Covenants 84:19–21]. This is the way each of us comes unto Christ, is purified, and is reconciled to God. Christ’s atoning power is made accessible through the priesthood. (Dale G. Renlund, “The Priesthood and the Savior’s Atonement,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 65)

President Oaks also offered the following explanation of how the Aaronic Priesthood is a channel to access the Lord’s cleansing power:



Baptism is for the remission of sins, and the sacrament is a renewal of the covenants and blessings of baptism. Both should be preceded by repentance. . . .

Not one of [us] has lived without sin since [our] baptism. Without some provision for further cleansing after our baptism, each of us is lost to things spiritual. . . .

We are commanded to repent of our sins and to come to the Lord with a broken heart and a contrite spirit and partake of the sacrament in compliance with its covenants. When we renew our baptismal covenants in this way, the Lord renews the cleansing effect of our baptism. . . .

We cannot overstate the importance of the Aaronic Priesthood in this. All of these vital steps pertaining to the remission of sins are performed through the saving ordinance of baptism and the renewing ordinance of the sacrament. (Dallin H. Oaks, “The Aaronic Priesthood and the Sacrament,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 38)



Record Your Thoughts

How have the ordinances of the priesthood helped you access the blessings of the Savior’s Atonement? Record your response in your journal or in the space provided below. _____

Want More? (Optional)

What are priesthood keys?



In his talk “The Keys and Authority of the Priesthood,” President Dallin H. Oaks teaches about priesthood authority (*Ensign or Liahona*, May 2014, 49–52).

In the video “Priesthood Keys: The Restoration of Priesthood Keys” (2:07), Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles talks about an experience he had that taught him the significance of the keys of the priesthood.

How does the priesthood deliver the Savior's power to others?

In the video "How the Priesthood Works" (3:46), Elder Dale G. Renlund compares the way a rocket delivers a payload to the way the priesthood makes the blessings of the Atonement of Jesus Christ available to God's children.

The video "Ministry of Joseph Smith: The Restoration of Priesthood Authority" (1:20) depicts the restoration of the priesthood and includes some of the teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith on the priesthood.



LESSON 8 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

The Organization of the Church of Jesus Christ

What does your membership in the restored Church of Jesus Christ mean to you? As you study this lesson, consider how your participation in the Lord’s Church can lead to greater blessings for you and your family, as well as others you come in contact with throughout your life.

SECTION 1

How is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints unique among all other churches and religions?

Standing beside a stream on April 6, 1830, Joseph Smith “witnessed the baptisms of his mother and father into the church. After years of taking different paths in their search for truth, they were finally united in faith. As his father came out of the water, Joseph took him by the hand, helped him onto the bank, and embraced him.

“My God,’ he cried, burying his face in his father’s chest, ‘I have lived to see my father baptized into the true church of Jesus Christ!’” (*Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, vol. 1, *The Standard of Truth, 1815–1846* [2018], 86).

After Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon and received priesthood authority from heavenly messengers, the Lord directed him “by the Spirit of Prophecy and revelation . . . to organize [Jesus Christ’s] Church once again, here upon the earth” (Joseph Smith, in *History*, circa June 1839–circa 1841 [draft 2], 29, josephsmithpapers.org). On April 6, 1830, about 60 people gathered in the home of Peter Whitmer Sr. in Fayette, New York, to witness the “rise of the Church of Christ in these last days” according to “the will and commandments of God” (Doctrine and Covenants 20:1).

On the day the Church was organized, the Saints sustained Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery as their leaders, took the sacrament, witnessed the ordination of men to priesthood offices, and saw those who had previously been baptized receive the gift of the Holy Ghost and be confirmed members of the Church.

Of this day, the Prophet Joseph Smith observed:



After a happy time spent in witnessing and feeling for ourselves the powers and blessings of the Holy Ghost, through the grace of God bestowed upon us, we dismissed with the pleasing knowledge that we were now individually members of, and acknowledged of God, “The Church of Jesus Christ,” organized in accordance with commandments and revelations given by Him. (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 138)

The Lord designated through revelation the precise day His Church was to be organized again on the earth (see Doctrine and Covenants 20, section heading), and He later gave the name by which the Church should be called.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 115:4–5.

About a year and a half after the Church was organized, the Lord declared that He had given Joseph Smith and others power “to lay the foundation of this church, and to bring it forth out of obscurity and out of darkness, the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth, with which I, the Lord, am well pleased, speaking unto the church collectively and not individually” (Doctrine and Covenants 1:30).



Ponder in Preparation for Class

How has being a member of the Church of Jesus Christ influenced your life?

SECTION 2

What are some reasons that the Lord declared this to be “the only true and living church”?

President Dallin H. Oaks of the First Presidency taught:



Three features—(1) fulness of doctrine, (2) power of the priesthood, and (3) testimony of Jesus Christ—explain why God has declared and why we as His servants maintain that this is the only true and living Church upon the face of the whole earth. . . .

Because so much had been lost in the Apostasy, it was necessary that the Lord restore the fulness of His doctrine. . . .

The doctrine of Jesus Christ, understood in its fulness, is the plan by which we can become what children of God are supposed to become. . . .

The second and absolutely essential characteristic . . . is priesthood authority. . . .

As a result of our having the power of the priesthood, the leaders and duly authorized members . . . are empowered to perform the required priesthood ordinances. . . .

The third reason why we are the only true Church is that we have the revealed truth about the nature of God and our relationship to Him, and we therefore have a unique testimony of Jesus Christ. Significantly, our belief in the nature of God is what distinguishes us from the formal creeds of most Christian denominations. (Dallin H. Oaks, “The Only True and Living Church,” *New Era*, Aug. 2011, 3–5)



Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles further explained that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints “is a living church because of the workings and gifts of the Holy Ghost” (“Receive the Holy Ghost,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 97).

Brother Tad R. Callister, former Sunday School General President, has also taught:



[The Lord’s declaration in Doctrine and Covenants 1:30] does not mean that other churches do not have some truth, for certainly they do. It does not mean that other churches do not render good, for they render much good. What it does mean is that this is the only church that has all the truth that has been revealed thus far in this dispensation—the only church that has the ordinances necessary for exaltation and the only church that has the priesthood of God to perform those ordinances with divine validity. What evidence do we have of this assertion? . . .

If one were to match the blueprint of Christ’s original Church against every church in the world today, he would find . . . it will only match one—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. (Tad R. Callister, “What Is the Blueprint of Christ’s Church?” [Church Educational System

devotional for young adults, Jan. 12, 2014], ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

It is important to understand that being a member of the “only true and living church” of Jesus Christ does not mean that we believe we are better than other people. But our membership does include a responsibility to love others and invite them to come unto Christ and receive the blessings of His restored gospel.



Ponder in Preparation for Class

What experiences have helped you come to know that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Savior’s true and living Church?

SECTION 3

What might I share with someone who feels he or she can be religious or spiritual without participating in the Lord’s Church?

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:



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. . . .

. . . 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. . . .

... It is important to recognize that God's ultimate purpose is our progress. His desire is that we continue "from grace to grace, until [we receive] a fulness" [Doctrine and Covenants 93:13] of all He can give. That requires more than simply being nice or feeling spiritual. It requires faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism of water and of the Spirit, and enduring in faith to the end [see 2 Nephi 31:17–20]. One cannot fully achieve this in isolation, so a major reason the Lord has a church is to create a community of Saints that will sustain one another in the "strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life" [2 Nephi 31:18]. . . .

If one believes that all roads lead to heaven or that there are no particular requirements for salvation, he or she will see no need for proclaiming the gospel or for ordinances and covenants in redeeming either the living or the dead. But we speak not just of immortality but also of eternal life, and for that the gospel path and gospel covenants are essential. And the Savior needs a church to make them available to all of God's children—both the living and the dead. (D. Todd Christofferson, "Why the Church," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 108, 110)



Sister Bonnie L. Oscarson, who served as Young Women General President, taught that participation in the Church also helps us become more like the Savior by giving us opportunities to serve and minister to others:



It is true that we attend our weekly Church meetings to participate in ordinances, learn doctrine, and be inspired, but another very important reason for attending is that, as a ward family and as disciples of the Savior Jesus Christ, we watch out for one another, encourage one another, and find ways to serve and strengthen each other. We are not just receivers and takers of what is offered at church; we are needed to be givers and suppliers. . . .

Ask your Heavenly Father to show you those around you who need your help and to inspire you on how to best serve them. Remember that the Savior most often ministered to one person at a time. (Bonnie L. Oscarson, "The Needs before Us," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 26)



Ponder in Preparation for Class

How can actively participating in the Lord's Church help you to become more like Him and your Heavenly Father? What can you do to participate more fully in the Church of Jesus Christ?

Want More? (Optional)

What if I do not feel there is a place for me in the Church of Jesus Christ?

In the video "Is There a Place for Me?" (4:00), Elder D. Todd Christofferson teaches principles that can help those who may feel unwelcome in the Church.

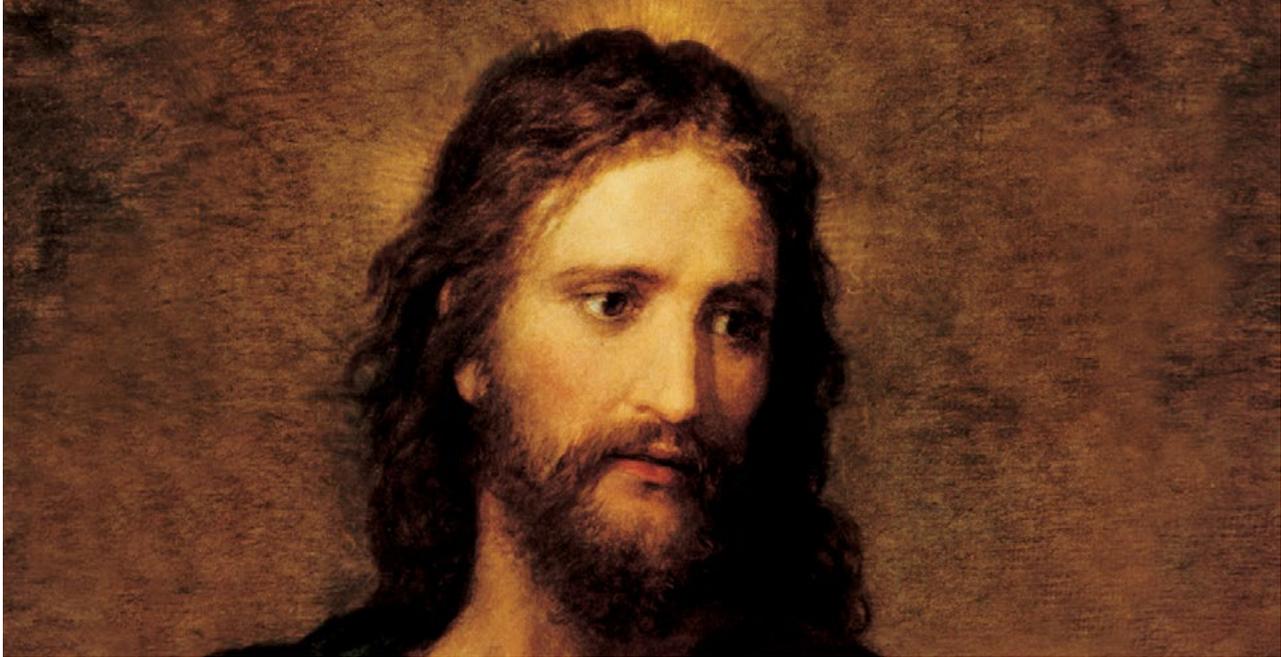


In his talk “Come, Join with Us” (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 21–24), President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, while serving in the First Presidency, explained why there is room in the restored Church of Jesus Christ for those who have separated themselves from it.

What is the importance of using the correct name of the Lord’s Church?



In his talk “The Correct Name of the Church” (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 87–90), President Russell M. Nelson emphasizes the Lord’s command to call His Church by His name.



LESSON 9 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

Jesus Christ: Our Divine Redeemer

Some people see Jesus Christ as merely a good example to follow, some as a prophet of old, and some as the Savior of the world. What are the most common beliefs and attitudes about the Lord where you live? What are your beliefs and convictions about Him? As you study the visions, revelations, and scripture the Prophet Joseph Smith received about Jesus Christ, consider how they can deepen your faith and testimony of Him as your divine Redeemer.

SECTION 1

How are Joseph Smith and the Restoration critical to my understanding of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Joseph Smith's personal relationship with the Lord began in Joseph's youth. He wrote that at about age 12, "my mind became exceedingly distressed, for I became convicted of my sins. . . . I felt to mourn for my own sins and for the sins of the world."



Later, the young Joseph "cried unto the Lord for mercy," and the Lord spoke to him in a vision, saying: "Joseph, my son, thy sins are forgiven thee. Go thy way, walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments. Behold, I am the Lord of glory. I was

crucified for the world, that all those who believe on my name may have eternal life.”

Through this experience of the First Vision, Joseph came to know personally that Jesus Christ and Heavenly Father are merciful and forgiving. After talking with the Lord and being forgiven of his sins, Joseph testified: “My soul was filled with love, and for many days I could rejoice with great joy. The Lord was with me” (“Joseph Smith’s Accounts of the First Vision,” Circa Summer 1832 History, joseph-smithpapers.org).

Think of times in your life when you have felt concerns similar to Joseph’s. You might be able to relate to his desire to be forgiven and also his joy in learning that the Lord was with him.

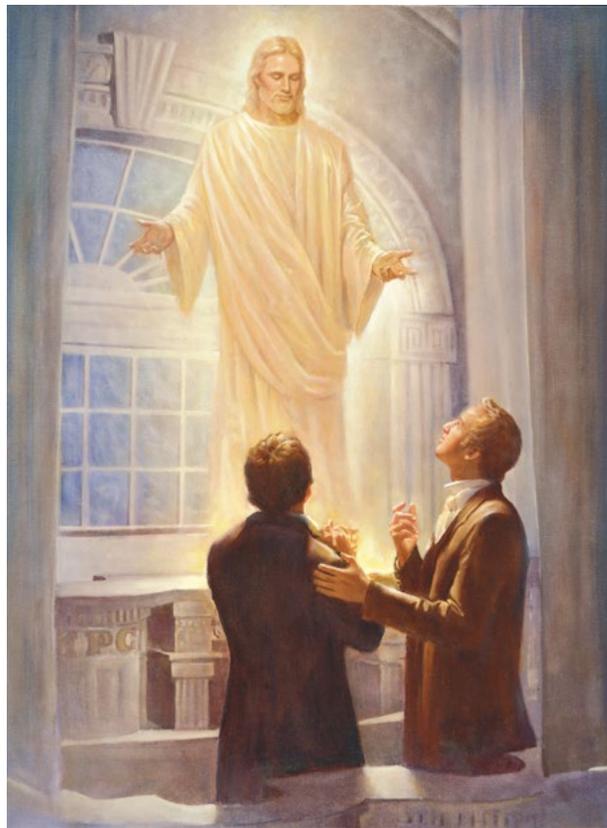
Joseph Smith’s numerous visions of the Savior allowed him to serve as a powerful latter-day witness of Jesus Christ. On February 16, 1832, while working on inspired revisions of the Bible (known as the Joseph Smith Translation), Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon saw a vision in which they “beheld the glory of the Son, on the right hand of the Father.” Speaking of Jesus Christ, they testified: “He lives!” (Doctrine and Covenants 76:20, 22–23).

Notice what other truths about Jesus Christ the Prophet was shown in this vision.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 76:23–24.



Four years later, the Prophet again testified of seeing the Savior in the Kirtland Temple and declared that “his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters” (Doctrine and Covenants 110:3).

The Lord taught the Saints that when they study the revelations given through the Spirit, “you can testify that you have heard my voice, and know my words” (Doctrine and Covenants 18:36).

Reflecting on Joseph Smith’s contributions to our understanding of Jesus Christ, Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles declared:



Through his personal association with the Lord, his translation and publication of the Book of Mormon, and the sealing of his testimony with his martyr’s blood, Joseph has become the preeminent revelator of

Jesus Christ in His true character as divine Redeemer. (D. Todd Christofferson, “Born Again,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2008, 79)



Ponder in Preparation for Class

Because of the visions, revelations, and scripture given to Joseph Smith, we have a much better understanding of the Savior’s character.

- What knowledge of the Savior would be missing without the Prophet Joseph Smith? What impact would it have on your life if that knowledge were missing? (Keep these questions in mind as you continue to study.)

SECTION 2

What restored truths about the Savior’s Atonement can increase my faith in Him?

Note: As you read the following scripture passages and prophetic teachings, consider marking truths relating to the Savior’s Atonement that stand out to you.

Many plain and precious truths about the Savior’s gospel and Atonement were restored through Joseph Smith’s translation of the Book of Mormon (see 1 Nephi 13:34, 40).



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Alma 34:10, 12, looking for what the Book of Mormon prophet Amulek taught a group of Zoramites about the Savior’s atoning sacrifice.

President Russell M. Nelson explained what makes the Atonement of Jesus Christ infinite:



His Atonement is infinite—without an end [see 2 Nephi 9:7; 25:16; Alma 34:10, 12, 14]. It was also infinite in that all humankind would be saved from never-ending death. It was infinite in terms of His immense suffering. It was infinite in time, putting an end to the preceding prototype of animal sacrifice. It was infinite in scope—it was to be done once for all [see Hebrews 10:10]. And the mercy of the Atonement extends not only to an infinite number of people, but also to an infinite number of worlds created by Him [see Doctrine and Covenants 76:24; Moses 1:33]. It was infinite beyond any human scale of measurement or mortal comprehension.

Jesus was the only one who could offer such an infinite atonement, since He was born of a mortal mother and an immortal Father. Because of that unique birthright, Jesus was an infinite Being. (Russell M. Nelson, “The Atonement,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 35)



Study in Preparation for Class

The prophet Alma also taught important truths to the people of Gideon about the Savior’s Atonement. Read Alma 7:11–13.

After quoting from Alma 7, Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:



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. (David A. Bednar, "Bear Up Their Burdens with Ease," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2014, 90)

Joseph Smith received a revelation that connected the Lord's incomprehensible suffering to the worth of souls. After calling Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer to preach repentance, the Lord instructed them.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 18:10–11, 13.



The Lord further expounded on His atoning sacrifice in a revelation given for Martin Harris. Martin was struggling with the possibility of losing his farm to pay for the publication of the Book of Mormon. In the revelation, the Lord commanded Martin to repent and then revealed a unique first-person account of His suffering.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 19:16–19.

As you ponder the suffering that Jesus Christ endured on your behalf, consider reading or listening to the words of the hymn "I Stand All Amazed" (*Hymns*, no. 193).



How can I know Jesus Christ better?

In your journal or in the space provided, write a few truths that stand out to you from the scripture passages and teachings in this section as well as any other thoughts and questions you have about the Savior's atoning sacrifice. Come to class prepared to share the truths you identified and any insights.

Want More? (Optional)

Would you like to know Jesus Christ better?

In the video "The Only True God and Jesus Christ Whom He Has Sent," Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles testifies of the Savior and what it means to be Christian.

What if I feel I'm not worth saving?

The video "The Savior Wants to Forgive" shows how a former addict learned of the Savior's willingness and desire to forgive.

How do I repent?



In his talk "The Divine Gift of Repentance" (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 38–40), Elder D. Todd Christofferson teaches how we might think about and apply the principle of repentance.

Why do people claim that members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are not Christians?

The Gospel Topics essay "Are Mormons Christian?" ([topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/topics/are-mormons-christian?lang=eng)) explains why some

people say that Church members are not Christians and provides information that you could use to respond to such claims.





LESSON 10 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

Following the Lord's Living Prophets

Think about how your life would be different without the influence and teachings of living prophets. As you study, consider how following the Lord's prophets can bring greater guidance and blessings into your life.

SECTION 1

How can choosing to follow the Lord's prophets bless my life?

On the day the Church of Jesus Christ was organized, the Lord revealed that the Prophet Joseph Smith would “be called a seer, a translator, a prophet, an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of the church” (Doctrine and Covenants 21:1).



The Lord then gave a commandment to the Saints about following His prophet and described the blessings that would come if they did so.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 21:4–6.

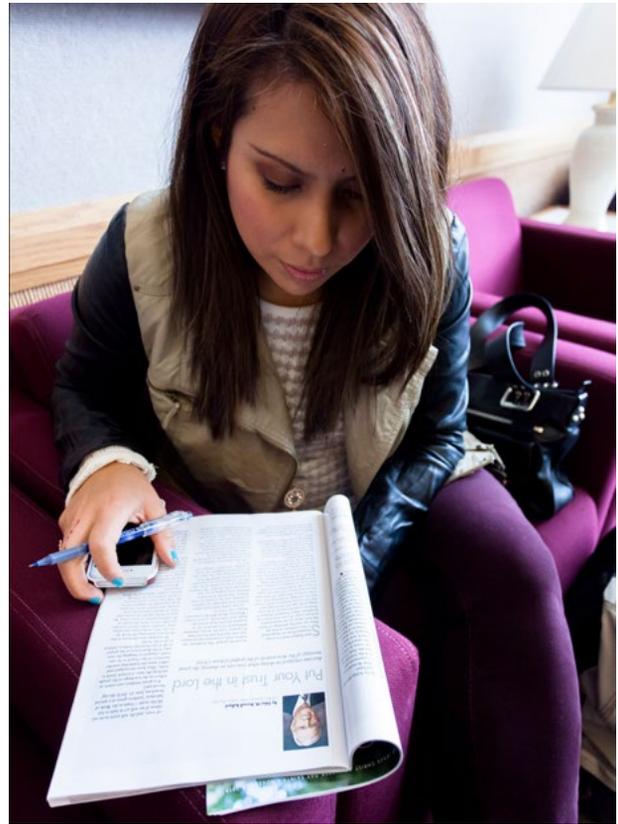
The following year the Lord reiterated the connection between His voice and the voice of His prophets. In a revelation that served as a preface for the Book of Commandments, which would later become the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord again taught that “though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or the voice of my servants, it is the same” (Doctrine and Covenants 1:38).

Elder Ulisses Soares of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles testified:



Having prophets is a sign of God's love for His children. They make known the promises and the true nature of God and of Jesus Christ to Their people. . . .

By following [the Lord's prophets], our lives are happier and less complicated, our difficulties and problems are easier to bear, and we create a spiritual armor around us that will protect us from the attacks of the enemy in our day. (Ulisses Soares, “Prophets Speak by the Power of the Holy Spirit,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 99)



Ponder in Preparation for Class

How has your life been blessed by following the teachings and counsel of prophets?

SECTION 2

How can I receive the words of the Lord's prophets in “patience and faith” (Doctrine and Covenants 21:5)?

At times, you may find it difficult to accept and follow the counsel and teachings of the Lord's prophets. This might occur when you do not fully

understand the reasoning behind their words. Or their teachings may conflict with popular views and practices of society or with your own personal views and family traditions.

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles gave the following counsel and promise:



Don't be surprised if at times your personal views are not initially in harmony with the teachings of the Lord's prophet. These are moments of learning, of humility, when we go to our knees in prayer. We walk forward in faith, trusting in God, knowing that with time we will receive more spiritual clarity from our Heavenly Father. . . .

. . . I have found that as I prayerfully study the words of the prophet of God and carefully, with patience, spiritually align my will with his inspired teachings, my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ always increases. If we choose to set his counsel aside and determine that we know better, our faith suffers and our eternal perspective is clouded. I promise you that as you remain resolute in following the prophet, your faith in the Savior will increase. (Neil L. Andersen, "The Prophet of God," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 26–27)

Sister Carol F. McConkie, who served as first counselor in the Young Women General Presidency, taught:



As we give heed to, uphold, and affirm prophetic word, we witness that we have the faith to humbly submit to the will, the wisdom, *and* the timing of the Lord.

We heed prophetic word even when it may seem unreasonable, inconvenient, and uncomfortable. According to the world's standards, following the prophet may be unpopular, politically incorrect, or socially unacceptable. But following the prophet is always right. . . .

When we heed the words of the prophets, we build our homes and our lives upon an

eternally sure foundation, "the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God" [Helaman 5:12]. (Carol F. McConkie, "Live according to the Words of the Prophets," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 77, 79)



The following example from Church history can help illustrate what it means to receive the words of the Lord's living prophets in patience and faith. Speaking of the vision of the kingdoms of glory, now recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 76 (see also "The Vision (D&C 76)," ChurchofJesusChrist.org), President Brigham Young related:



When God revealed to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon that there was a place prepared for all, according to the light they had received and their rejection of evil and practice of good, it was a great trial to many, and some apostatized because God was not going to send to everlasting punishment heathens and infants, but had a place of salvation, in due time, for all, and would bless the honest and virtuous and truthful, whether they ever belonged to any church or not. It was a new doctrine to this generation, and many stumbled at it. (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 292)

Brigham Young himself had difficulty accepting this doctrine at first. He said: "My traditions were such, that when the Vision came first to me, it was directly

contrary and opposed to my former education. I said, Wait a little. I did not reject it; but I could not understand it. . . . I [had] to think and pray, to read and think, until I knew and fully understood it for myself” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 6:281).



Discuss with Others and Prepare to Share in Class

Consider sharing with a family member or friend what you have learned about following the Lord's prophets in patience and faith. Then ask, “What has helped you to follow the Lord's prophets in patience and with faith?” Come to class ready to share what you learned.

SECTION 3

What is the role of prophets in teaching me true doctrine?

Early in the Church's history, Joseph Smith sought the Lord's help concerning Church members who had been deceived by false doctrine.

[Several months after the Church was organized, Joseph Smith] learned that Hiram Page, one of the Eight Witnesses [of the Book of Mormon] and a teacher in the Aaronic Priesthood, had started to seek revelations for the church through what he thought was a seer stone. Many Saints . . . believed these revelations were from God.

Joseph knew he was facing a crisis. Hiram's revelations mimicked the language of scripture. They spoke of the establishment of Zion and the organization of the church, but at times they contradicted the New Testament and truths the Lord had revealed through Joseph.

Unsure of what to do, Joseph stayed up praying one night, pleading for guidance. (*Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, vol. 1, *The Standard of Truth, 1815–1846* [2018], 97)

In response to Joseph Smith's prayers, the Lord gave the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 28, which clarified Joseph's unique role as the Prophet of the Church.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 28:2, 7.

The Lord also declared that the things Hiram Page had written were not of God (see Doctrine and Covenants 28:11). Soon after this revelation was given, “the Saints renounced Hiram's revelations and unanimously sustained Joseph as the only one who could receive revelation for the church” (*Saints*, 1:98).

Because the Lord's living prophets hold the keys to receive revelation for the Church, they also have the responsibility to teach and clarify doctrine for Church members. Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught:



In the Church today, just as anciently, establishing the doctrine of Christ or correcting doctrinal deviations is a matter of divine revelation to those the Lord endows with apostolic authority. . . .

They have the right, the power, and authority to declare the mind and will of God to his people, subject to the over-all power and authority of the President of the Church. . . .

How does the Savior reveal His will and doctrine to prophets, seers, and revelators? He may act by messenger or in His own person. He may speak by His own voice or by the

voice of the Holy Spirit . . . (see 1 Nephi 17:45; Doctrine and Covenants 9:8). He may direct Himself to His servants individually or acting in council (see 3 Nephi 27:1–8). . . .

. . . It should be remembered that not every statement made by a Church leader, past or present, necessarily constitutes doctrine. It is commonly understood in the Church that a statement made by one leader on a single occasion often represents a personal, though well-considered, opinion, not meant to be official or binding for the whole Church. (D. Todd Christofferson, “The Doctrine of Christ,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2012, 86–88)

Elder Andersen explained that true doctrine is taught consistently by the Lord’s chosen, living prophets:



A few question their faith when they find a statement made by a Church leader decades ago that seems incongruent [inconsistent] with our doctrine. There is an important principle that governs the doctrine of the Church. The doctrine is taught by all 15 members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve. It is not hidden in an obscure paragraph of one talk. True principles are taught frequently and by many. Our doctrine is not difficult to find. (Neil L. Andersen, “Trial of Your Faith,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 41)



Ponder in Preparation for Class

What blessings have come into your life as you have followed the teachings and counsel of the Lord’s prophets in our day?

Want More? (Optional)

How can I have greater faith to follow the Lord’s prophets?



Read Elder Andersen’s talk “The Prophet of God” (*Ensign or Liahona*, May 2018, 24–27), where Elder Andersen explains reasons for and blessings of following the Lord’s prophet in faith.

How might I respond to someone who feels living prophets are too old or out of touch to guide today’s younger generations?



Find ideas in Elder David A. Bednar’s talk “Chosen to Bear Testimony of My Name” (*Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 128–31).

Is there really a need for prophets today?



Read “The Case for a Living Prophet” (*Ensign*, Jan. 2017, 80), where President Hugh B. Brown of the First Presidency describes a conversation he had in 1939 with a member of England’s House of Commons.



LESSON 11 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

The Gathering of Israel

In speaking to the young people of the Church, President Russell M. Nelson asked: “Would you like to be a big part of *the greatest* challenge, *the greatest* cause, and *the greatest* work on earth today? Would you like to help gather Israel during these precious latter days?” (“Hope of Israel” [worldwide youth devotional, June 3, 2018], supplement to the *Ensign* and *New Era*, 8, ChurchofJesusChrist.org; italics in original).

As you study this lesson, look for why the Lord is gathering His people from every corner of the world, and consider how you can help Him accomplish this great work.

SECTION 1

What is the gathering of Israel?

The children of Israel are the descendants of the Old Testament prophet Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. They are partakers of the same covenant God gave to Jacob’s father Isaac and to his grandfather Abraham (see Genesis 26:3–4, 24; Abraham 2:6–11). Jacob’s 12 sons and their descendants are the “house of Israel” or the “twelve tribes of Israel.” At times “the Lord scattered and afflicted the twelve tribes of Israel because of their unrighteousness and rebellion. However, the Lord also used this scattering of His chosen people among

the nations of the world to bless those nations” (Guide to the Scriptures, “Israel,” scriptures. ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

Consider marking some of the following prophecies about the gathering of Israel.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Isaiah 11:11–12 (see also 2 Nephi 25:17; 29:1; Jacob 6:2).

The Book of Mormon teaches that the Savior Himself will gather the descendants of Jacob.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read 3 Nephi 5:24–26.

In our dispensation, some early Church members had great interest in the Book of Mormon prophecy about the gathering of God’s people in the last days to build Zion in preparation for the Savior’s Second Coming (see 3 Nephi 21:23–26). Days before a Church conference in September 1830, Joseph Smith and others inquired of the Lord concerning this prophecy and received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 29.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 29:1–2, 7.

A month after this revelation was given, Oliver Cowdery and three others began a missionary journey to help in the gathering of the Lord’s elect.



The missionaries’ greatest success came when they stopped in the area of Kirtland,

Ohio. There they baptized about 130 converts, principally from among the Reformed Baptist congregation of Sidney Rigdon, thus opening what would become a gathering place for hundreds of Church members the following year. (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 150)

After this first missionary effort, the Lord continued to call missionaries to the work of gathering those who would listen to His voice.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 33:5–7.

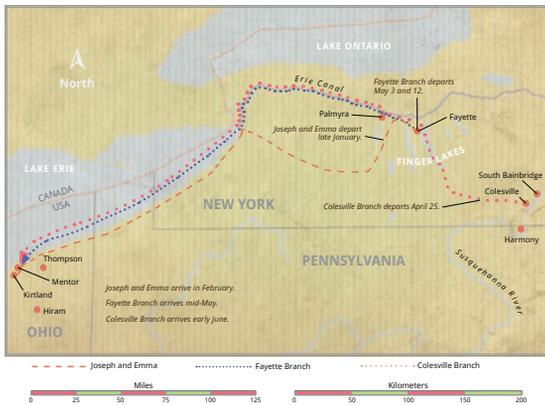


At the end of December 1830, the Lord revealed through Joseph Smith His will for the Church regarding a gathering place in Ohio:

“A commandment I give unto the church,” He declared, “that they should assemble together at the Ohio.” They were to gather with the new converts in the Kirtland area and wait for the missionaries to return from the West. . . .

The call to move to Ohio seemed to bring the Saints closer to fulfilling ancient prophecies about the gathering of God’s people. The Bible and Book of Mormon both promised that the Lord would gather together His covenant people to safeguard them against the perils of the last days. (*Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, vol. 1, *The Standard of Truth, 1815–1846* [2018], 109)

The New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio area of the United States, 1831



Through this and other revelations, the Saints were commanded to gather together first to Ohio and Missouri, then to Illinois, and then to the Salt Lake Valley. In each of these places of gathering, the Lord commanded the Saints to build a temple.

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught:



The Lord gathers His people to worship, to build up the Church, for a defense, and to receive counsel and instruction. . . .

The Prophet Joseph Smith declared that in all ages the divine purpose of gathering is to build temples so that the Lord’s children can receive the highest ordinances and thereby gain eternal life [see *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 416–19]. (David A. Bednar, “The Spirit and Purposes of Gathering” [Brigham Young University–Idaho devotional, Oct. 31, 2006], byui.edu)



Today the Lord physically gathers His people to the stakes of Zion and to temples in nations throughout the earth.

He is also spiritually gathering them to the knowledge of His gospel (see 1 Nephi 15:12–16).



Ponder in Preparation for Class

What can we learn about the Lord and His character through the scattering and gathering of His covenant people? How has gathering with other members of the Church in wards, stakes, and temples blessed your life?

SECTION 2

How can I help the Lord gather latter-day Israel?

One early convert to the newly restored Church named Heber C. Kimball was later called to be a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Heber felt nervous about his ability to share the gospel with others. He recalled:



“About the first day of June 1837, the Prophet Joseph came to me, while I was seated in . . . the Temple, in Kirtland, and whispering to me, said, ‘Brother Heber, the Spirit of the Lord has whispered to me, “Let my servant Heber go to England and proclaim my gospel and open the door of salvation to that nation.”’” Elder Kimball was overwhelmed by the thought of such an undertaking: “I felt myself one of the very weakest of God’s servants. I asked Joseph what I should say when I got there; he told me to go to the Lord and He would guide me, and speak through me by the same spirit that [directed] him.” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 327)

Elder Kimball recorded the following in his journal:

Feeling my own weakness and unfitness for such an undertaking, I was led to cry mightily to the Lord for wisdom and for that comfort and support which I so much needed. . . .

I endeavored to put my trust in God, believing that he would assist me in publishing the truth, give me utterance, and that he would be a present help in the time of need. (*Journal of Heber C. Kimball*, ed. R. B. Thompson [1840], 15)

Heber C. Kimball later recalled:

I went and performed the mission according to the words of the Prophet of the living God and was gone eleven months and two days from Kirtland, . . . in which time there were about two thousand souls added to the church and kingdom of God. (Heber C. Kimball, “Sermon,” *Deseret News*, Dec. 2, 1857, 3)

President Dallin H. Oaks of the First Presidency has also taught that we can rely on the Lord while we help gather Israel by sharing His gospel:



We must pray for the Lord’s help and directions so we can be instruments in His hands for one who is now ready—one He would have us help today. Then, we must be alert to

hear and heed the promptings of His Spirit in how we proceed.

Those promptings will come. We know from countless personal testimonies that in His own way and His own time the Lord is preparing persons to accept His gospel. Such persons are searching, and when we are seeking to identify them the Lord will answer their prayers through answering ours. He will prompt and guide those who desire and who sincerely seek guidance in how, where, when, and with whom to share the gospel. (Dallin H. Oaks, “Sharing the Gospel,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 8)



President Nelson has further taught:



Now, participating in the gathering of Israel will require some sacrifice on your part. It may even require some changes in your life. It will definitely take some of your time and energy and your God-given talents. Are you interested? . . .

. . . The gathering of Israel ultimately means offering the gospel of Jesus Christ to God’s children on both sides of the veil who have neither made crucial covenants with God nor received their essential ordinances. . . .

. . . You were sent to earth at this precise time, the most crucial time in the history of the world, to help gather Israel. There

is *nothing* happening on this earth right now that is more important than that. There is *nothing* of greater consequence. Absolutely *nothing*.

. . . This is the mission for which you were sent to earth. (Russell M. Nelson, “Hope of Israel,” 8; italics in original)



Act on What You Have Learned

What will you do in the coming days and weeks to take a more active part in the gathering of Israel?

Want More? (Optional)

How can I make sharing the gospel with others feel more natural?

In the video “Sharing the Gospel,” President Oaks teaches how to share the gospel in authentic and loving ways. (See his October 2016 general conference talk “Sharing the Restored Gospel” [*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 57–60].)



Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf gives ideas for how we can be better prepared to share the gospel in natural ways in his talk “Missionary Work: Sharing What Is in Your Heart” (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2019, 15–18).



In his talk “Sisters’ Participation in the Gathering of Israel” (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 68–70), President Nelson highlights spiritual gifts the women of the Church can use to help gather Israel.



LESSON 12 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

Establishing the Cause of Zion

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “We ought to have the building up of Zion as our greatest object” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 186). As you study this material, look for truths that will help you understand what Zion is, why we need to build Zion, and what you can do to help with this effort.

SECTION 1

What does it mean to establish Zion?

In December 1830 while Joseph Smith worked on the translation of the Bible, the Lord revealed, as is now recorded in Moses 7, that the Old Testament prophet Enoch had built a city called Zion.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Moses 7:18–21.



Watch the video “Teachings of Joseph Smith: Preparing for Zion” (1:42), or study the Prophet Joseph Smith’s statement below:

The Prophet Joseph Smith declared:



The building up of Zion is a cause that has interested the people of God in every age; . . . they have looked forward with joyful anticipation to the day in which we live; and fired with heavenly and joyful anticipations they have sung and written and prophesied of this our day; . . . we are the favored people that God has made choice of to bring about the Latter-day glory; it is left for us to see, participate in and help to roll forward the Latter-day glory.

Anyplace where the Saints gather is Zion, which every righteous man [and woman] will build up for a place of safety for [their] children. . . .

. . . The time is soon coming, when no man will have any peace but in Zion and her stakes.
(*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 186)

In a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord declared that Zion also refers to “the pure in heart” (Doctrine and Covenants 97:21).

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:



Zion is both a place and a people. . . .

Zion is Zion because of the character, attributes, and faithfulness of her citizens. . . . If we would establish Zion in our homes, branches, wards, and stakes, . . . [it] will be necessary (1) to become unified in one heart and one mind; (2) to become, individually and collectively, a holy people; and (3) to care for the poor and needy with such effectiveness that we eliminate poverty among us. We cannot wait until Zion comes for these things to happen—Zion will come only as they happen. . . .

We will become of one heart and one mind as we individually place the Savior at the center of our lives and follow those He has commissioned to lead us. (D. Todd Christofferson, “Come to Zion,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 37–38)

For more information about the characteristics of a Zion-like people, see 4 Nephi 1:1–4, 15–18.



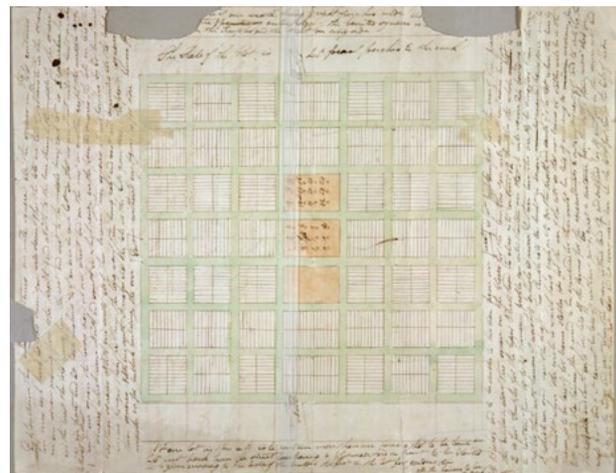
Ponder in Preparation for Class

How can placing the Savior at the center of my life and following Church leaders help me become like the people described in Moses 7:18 and Doctrine and Covenants 97:21?

SECTION 2

What happened to the Saints in Missouri who tried to build Zion?

One year after the organization of the Church, the Lord designated Independence, Jackson County, Missouri, as “the center place” (Doctrine and Covenants 57:3) of Zion where the Saints would gather and build the holy city of Zion, also referred to as the New Jerusalem (see Doctrine and Covenants 45:64–66; 57:1–3).



The plot map for the City of Zion was prepared under the direction of the Prophet Joseph Smith and sent to the Saints in Missouri in June 1833, along with architectural plans for the first temple in Zion.

Under the Prophet’s direction, early members of the Church attempted to establish a city of Zion in

Jackson County but struggled to develop a good relationship with the citizens there. Disagreement over issues of religion, slavery, politics, and the swelling population of Saints incited many of the other citizens of Jackson County to call for the expulsion of the Saints from the county.

On July 20, 1833, a mob of citizens in Jackson County confronted local Church leaders in a meeting at the courthouse and demanded that the Saints close their printing office and store and leave the county. Church leaders refused, so the mob destroyed the Church's printing office and tarred and feathered Bishop Edward Partridge and Church member Charles Allen. Three days later, the mob threatened further violence. Under duress, local Church leaders agreed to leave the county by the following spring. However, when Church leaders and members later decided to stay and fight for their rights in the fall of 1833, mob violence continued.

Parley P. Pratt recounted:



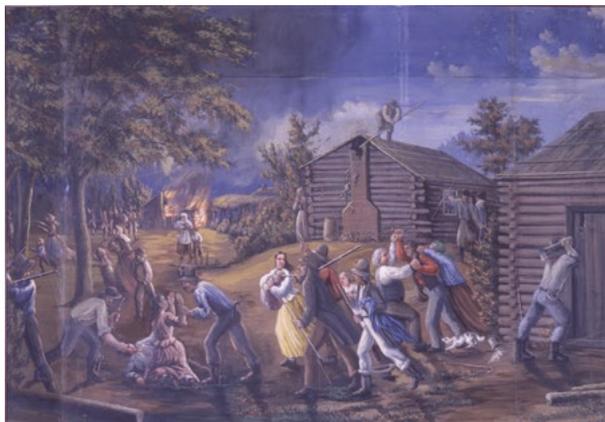
Companies of ruffians were ranging the county in every direction; bursting into houses without fear, . . . frightening women and children, and threatening to kill them if they did not flee immediately. . . .

. . . Women and children fled in every direction. One party of about one hundred and fifty fled to the prairie, where they wandered for several days, mostly without food; and nothing but the open [sky] for their shelter. Other parties fled towards the Missouri River. During the dispersion of women and children, parties were hunting the men, firing upon some, tying up and whipping others, and some they pursued several miles. . . .

The shore [of the Missouri River] began to be lined on both sides of the ferry with men, women and children; goods, wagons, boxes, provisions, etc., while the ferry was constantly employed. . . . Hundreds of people were seen in every direction, some in tents and

some in the open air around their fires, while the rain descended in torrents. Husbands were inquiring for their wives, wives for their husbands; parents for children, and children for parents. Some had the good fortune to escape with their families, household goods, and some provisions; while others knew not the fate of their friends, and had lost all their goods. . . .

. . . Every member of [our] society was driven from the county, and fields of corn were ravaged and destroyed; stacks of wheat burned, household goods plundered, and improvements and every kind of property destroyed. (*Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt*, ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. [1938], 101–3)



C. C. A. Christensen (1831–1912), *Saints Driven From Jackson County Missouri*, c. 1878, tempera on muslin, 77 1/4 x 113 inches. Brigham Young University Museum of Art, gift of the grandchildren of C.C.A. Christensen, 1970.

More than 1,000 Saints were driven from Jackson County, and more than 200 of their homes were burned.

SECTION 3

What prevented the Saints from establishing Zion in Jackson County, Missouri?

In the months following the Saints' violent expulsion from Jackson County, the Lord revealed to the

Prophet Joseph Smith the reasons He had permitted His Saints to be persecuted and driven from their lands and homes. As you study the following scripture passages from Doctrine and Covenants 101 and 105, look for what actions and attitudes prevented the Saints from establishing Zion in Jackson County, Missouri.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 101:2–3, 6–8 and Doctrine and Covenants 105:3–6.



Record Your Thoughts

Looking back through these scriptures, mark or list the actions and attitudes that the Lord requires of those in the latter days who desire to establish Zion.

SECTION 4

What is the future of Zion?

Elder Christofferson taught that as we establish Zion, we prepare ourselves and the world to receive the Savior at His Second Coming:



Crucial for the Lord’s return, is the presence on the earth of a people prepared to receive Him at His coming. . . .

In ancient times, God took the righteous city of Zion to Himself. By contrast, in the last days a new Zion will receive the Lord at His return. . . .

While we strive to be diligent in building up Zion, including our part in the gathering of the Lord’s elect and the redemption of the dead, we should pause to remember that it is the Lord’s work and He is doing it. . . .

This great and last dispensation is building steadily to its climax—Zion on earth being joined with Zion from above at the Savior’s glorious return. . . . Let us be about building up Zion to hasten that day. (D. Todd Christofferson, “Preparing for the Lord’s Return,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2019, 82–84)

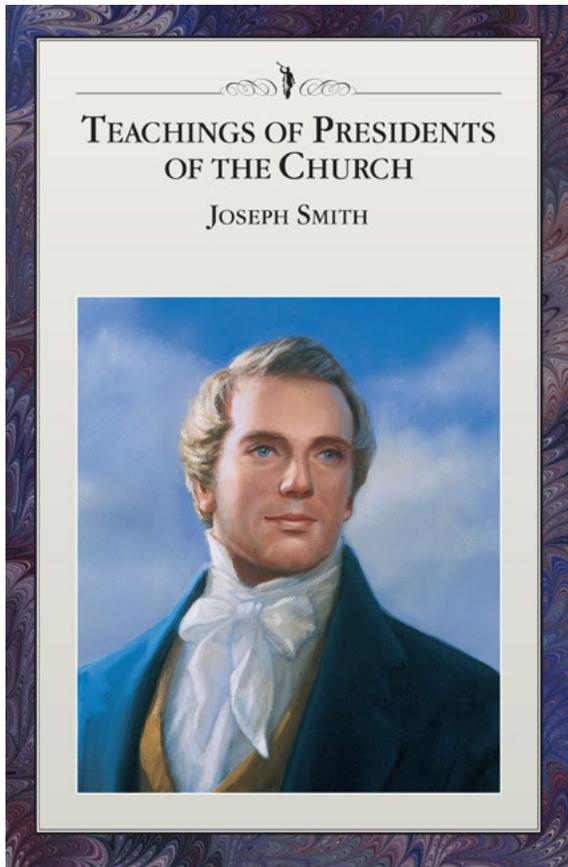


Ponder in Preparation for Class

What are you doing to help build up Zion in preparation for the Lord’s Second Coming? What more can you do?

Want More? (Optional)

Where can I learn more about establishing the cause of Zion?



Some of what Joseph Smith taught about establishing Zion can be found in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith*, chapter 15, "Establishing the Cause of Zion" (pages 183–92).



In his talk "Come to Zion" (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 37–40), Elder D. Todd Christofferson explained what we can do to help establish Zion.



President Spencer W. Kimball in his message "Becoming the Pure in Heart" (*Ensign*, Mar. 1985, 2–5) speaks of selflessness, cooperation, and sacrifice as fundamental to building Zion.



LESSON 13 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

The Laws of God

Think about the attitudes toward the laws and commandments of God you see in the world around you. Are these attitudes positive, negative, or indifferent? As you study the laws and commandments restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith, look for ways they can bring you peace and protection and help you become more like the Savior.

SECTION 1

How can obeying God’s laws bless my life?

In December 1830, the Lord commanded the Saints living in New York to gather with the Saints in Ohio. The Lord promised that if they obeyed, He would reveal unto them His law and endow them “with power from on high” (Doctrine and Covenants 38:32). Shortly after arriving in Ohio in February 1831, the Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation in which the Lord revealed His law (see Doctrine and Covenants 42). In the revelation, the Lord reaffirmed the necessity of keeping commandments that He had given His people anciently, including the law of chastity.

The Lord also instructed the Saints to care for the poor and to build up His kingdom by living the law

of consecration (see Doctrine and Covenants 42:30–35). Just as He had taught His ancient Apostles, the Lord explained that when the Saints serve Him and keep His commandments, they show their love for Him (see John 14:15; Doctrine and Covenants 42:29).

In the years that followed, the Lord restored more of His ancient laws through Joseph Smith, including the law of the Sabbath (see Doctrine and Covenants 59; 68:29) and the law of tithing (see Doctrine and Covenants 64:23; 119). He also revealed a law of health known as the Word of Wisdom (see Doctrine and Covenants 89).

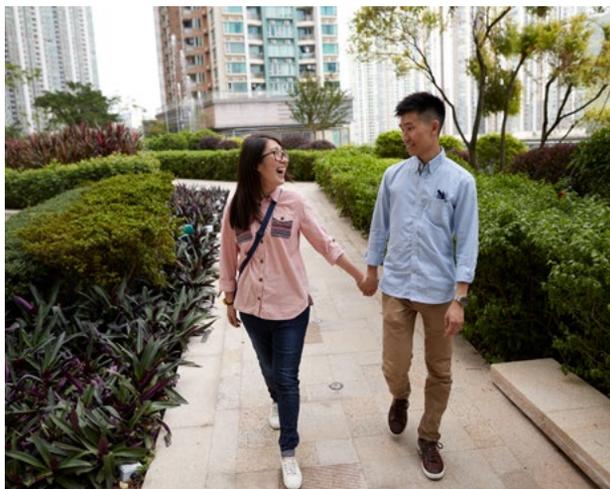
To prepare for class, please study *one or more* of the following laws that the Lord has reaffirmed or revealed in our day: (1) the law of chastity, (2) the law of consecration, (3) the law of the Sabbath, or (4) the law of health, known as the Word of Wisdom.

Use the resources below as you study the law or laws you have chosen. You could also search for additional resources on ChurchofJesusChrist.org. Come to class ready to discuss the following questions:

1. What truth or truths did you learn from your study?
2. What challenges are associated with obeying this law today, and how might they be overcome?
3. What blessings have you personally experienced by keeping this law?
4. How can obeying this law help you become more like your Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ?

SECTION 2

Law of Chastity



1. Study Doctrine and Covenants 42:22–25, looking for doctrine and principles the Lord teaches about sexual purity.
2. Consider what Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught about the seriousness of breaking God’s law of

chastity and the sacredness of sexual intimacy. Study paragraphs 9–16 of his talk “Personal Purity” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 75–79), looking for the reasons we should carefully safeguard our sexual purity.

3. Watch the video “Law of Chastity” (2:03) found on ChurchofJesusChrist.org, looking for the importance and blessings of keeping the law of chastity.

Want More? (Optional)

Study the “Sexual Purity” section found in *For the Strength of Youth* (2011) for current Church teachings on the law of chastity.

Watch “We Believe in Being Chaste” (1:17). In this video, Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles describes the Lord’s standard of sexual morality.

Watch “I Choose to Be Pure” (4:19). In this video, six young adults of various faiths explain candidly why they have chosen to be sexually pure.

SECTION 3

Law of Consecration



Learn more about the law of consecration by doing the following:

1. Read what the Guide to the Scriptures teaches about the law of consecration.
2. Review how some early Saints sought to live the law of consecration. Prior to Joseph Smith's arrival in Kirtland, Ohio, in February 1831, many of the Kirtland Saints had been striving to follow the example of the New Testament Saints who “had all things common” (see Acts 4:32) by attempting to share their goods and property with each other as one large family. Study Doctrine and Covenants 42:30–35, and look for the Lord's instructions that clarified how the Saints were to care for one another under the law of consecration.
3. Do one of the following activities:
 - Watch “The Law of Consecration” (5:02) on ChurchofJesusChrist.org, and listen for descriptions of how the early Latter-day Saints lived the law of consecration.
 - Study the article “Consecration and Stewardship” on ChurchofJesusChrist.org, and consider ways Latter-day Saints have lived the law of consecration.

Want More? (Optional)



Read Elder D. Todd Christofferson's talk “Reflections on a Consecrated Life” (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 16–19). In this talk, Elder Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explains how Latter-day Saints can pursue a consecrated life.

SECTION 4

Law of the Sabbath



1. As Church members settled in Jackson County, Missouri, in the summer of 1831, they encountered a frontier community where gambling, drunkenness, violence, and Sabbath breaking were prevalent. Study Doctrine and Covenants 59:9–19, looking for what the Lord instructed the Saints to do to help them resist the influence of the wickedness of the world.
2. President Russell M. Nelson has taught about the significance of the Sabbath day. Read paragraphs 3–16 of his talk “The Sabbath Is a Delight” (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 129–30). Look for counsel that can help you make the Sabbath a delight.
3. Watch the video “Upon My Holy Day—Honoring the Sabbath” (1:30), where Elder Jeffrey R. Holland explains some of the blessings of honoring the Sabbath.

Want More? (Optional)

Watch “Upon My Holy Day” (9:52). In this video, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland teaches about the purposes and blessings of the Sabbath day.

SECTION 5

Law of Health



1. The School of the Prophets, organized in January 1833, began meeting regularly in an upstairs room in the Newel K. Whitney Store in Kirtland, Ohio. During these meetings, the brethren often used tobacco. After his wife, Emma, voiced her concerns, Joseph Smith

inquired of the Lord and received the revelation known as the Word of Wisdom (see *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, vol. 1, *The Standard of Truth, 1815–1846* [2018], 167–68). Study Doctrine and Covenants 89:1–14, 18–21, and consider marking the Lord’s instructions and promises to the Saints.

2. Some Latter-day Saints wonder why the Word of Wisdom does not specifically prohibit other harmful substances. President Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles addressed this question and clarified the promised blessings for keeping the Word of Wisdom. Read paragraphs 10–12 and 23–34 of his talk “The Word of Wisdom: The Principle and the Promises” (*Ensign*, May 1996, 17–19).

Want More? (Optional)

Study the “Physical and Emotional Health” section found in *For the Strength of Youth* (2011) for current Church teachings on the Word of Wisdom.

The Word of Wisdom came by revelation, but it was not initially a “commandment or constraint” (Doctrine and Covenants 89:2). Read the article “Word of Wisdom (D&C 89)” on ChurchofJesusChrist.org. Look for how observance of the Word of Wisdom has changed over time.



LESSON 14 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

The Lord Reveals Additional Scripture

President Russell M. Nelson has noted, “Through [the Prophet Joseph Smith] we have received more pages of scripture than we have from any other prophet” (“Catch the Wave,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2013, 47). The scriptures the Lord brought forth through Joseph Smith provide a compelling witness of his divine calling as a prophet. As you study, consider how additional scripture has strengthened your understanding and testimony of Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and Their gospel.

SECTION 1

What do we believe about continuing revelation and additional scripture?

To a newspaper editor in Chicago who asked about the beliefs of the Church of Jesus Christ, Joseph Smith declared: “We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God” (Articles of Faith 1:9).

This belief in continuing revelation through living prophets is a distinctive doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In addition to the Holy Bible, we learn essential truths from the Book

of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price, all of which we regard as scripture.

The Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, in addition to clarifying many Bible passages, also restores many plain and precious truths that were lost through the ages.

SECTION 2

How can studying the Doctrine and Covenants bless my life?

The Prophet Joseph Smith wrote, “In these infant days of the Church, there was a great anxiety to obtain the word of the Lord upon every subject that in any way concerned our salvation” (History,

1838–1856 [Manuscript History of the Church], volume A-1, 146, josephsmithpapers.org). The Lord graciously and repeatedly responded to these yearnings through revelation.



The Church had been organized for just over 18 months when the Prophet proposed to a group of elders at a conference in Hiram, Ohio, that they compile and publish revelations that the Lord had given. Doing so would make the revelations available to all Church members and help in missionary work. Church members at this conference declared the revelations to be “worth . . . the riches of the whole Earth” (Minute Book 2, 18, josephsmithpapers.org). A short time later, the revelations

were published in a volume called the Book of Commandments. Later, these and additional revelations were published as the Doctrine and Covenants.

The introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants helps us understand why a compilation of revelations is so valuable: “The messages, warnings, and exhortations are for the benefit of all mankind and contain an invitation to all people everywhere to hear the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ, speaking to them for their temporal well-being and their everlasting salvation” (introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants; see also Doctrine and Covenants 18:34–36).

During the conference of elders, Joseph received a revelation now recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 1. It was the Lord’s own preface to the revelations.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 1:17, 21–23, 37.



Ponder in Preparation for Class

Think about how the Lord has spoken to you through your study of the Doctrine and Covenants. Find a passage of scripture from the Doctrine and Covenants that has strengthened your faith in Jesus Christ. Come to class prepared to share this passage.

SECTION 3

What do the Joseph Smith Translation and Pearl of Great Price add to my understanding of the Savior and His gospel?



The Prophet Joseph Smith showed a great love for the Bible throughout his life. However, he was aware that there were problems with the text. He said:



I believe the Bible as it read when it came from the pen of the original writers. Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors. (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 207)

Beginning in the summer of 1830 Joseph Smith began an inspired translation of the Bible. He did not translate the Bible from one language to another, nor did he have an original biblical manuscript to work from. Instead, Joseph read and studied passages from the King James Version of the Bible and then made corrections and additions as inspired by the Holy Ghost.

Portions of the Prophet’s inspired revisions can be found in the footnotes and appendix of some editions of the Bible and in the Guide to the Scriptures (scriptures.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

The Pearl of Great Price is a collection of inspired texts that clarifies and adds to our gospel understanding. The book of Moses is made up of excerpts from Joseph Smith’s translation of the first six chapters of Genesis in the Bible. Joseph Smith—Matthew is part of the Joseph Smith Translation of Matthew 23 and 24 found in the New Testament. Joseph Smith—History and the Articles of Faith are portions of Joseph’s testimony and declaration of beliefs.

The Pearl of Great Price also contains some of the writings of the patriarch Abraham. In the summer of 1835, a man named Michael Chandler arrived in Kirtland, Ohio, with four mummies and multiple scrolls of ancient papyrus discovered at Thebes, Egypt. The Prophet Joseph Smith examined the papyrus scrolls and after translating “some of the characters or hieroglyphics,” he declared that “one of the rolls contained the writings of Abraham, another the writings of Joseph of Egypt” (*History, 1838–1856, volume B-1* [1 September 1834–2 November 1838], 596). With the help of Church members, the Prophet purchased the mummies, two papyrus scrolls, and a number of papyrus fragments. He translated a portion of Abraham’s writings by the gift and power of God and later published them first in the Church’s newspaper, the *Times and Seasons*, as the book of Abraham.



Ponder in Preparation for Class

Find a scripture passage from the Joseph Smith Translation or the Pearl of Great Price that has deepened your understanding of the Savior's gospel. If you can't think of one, you might choose one from the following list. Come to class prepared to share your passage and why you chose it.

- Moses 5:5–11
- Moses 7:28–35
- Abraham 2:8–12
- Abraham 3:22–28
- Joseph Smith Translation, John 1:19 (in the Bible appendix; compare John 1:18); Joseph Smith Translation, John 4:26 (in John 4:24, footnote *a*)
- Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 7:1–2; Joseph Smith Translation, Luke 6:29–30 (in the Bible appendix; compare with the parallel passages in Matthew and Luke respectively)

words. It tells of his desire to “be a greater follower of righteousness” (Abraham 1:2) and of the trust he put in the Lord, who miraculously saved him after his “fathers” had turned him over to be sacrificed by the priest of Pharaoh (see Abraham 1:5–7, 30). This book also teaches profound truths relating to the Abrahamic covenant, the premortal life, the eternal nature of spirits, foreordination, the Council in Heaven and the purpose of life, and the planning and creation of the earth. Most significantly, it testifies of Jesus Christ—His premortal greatness, His mercy and His power to deliver God's children, and His central role in Heavenly Father's plan.



SECTION 4

What is the book of Abraham?



The book of Abraham is a book of scripture that recounts parts of this prophet's early life in his own

The following topics address what we do and do not know about the coming forth of the book of Abraham.

The Book of Abraham and the Ancient World

The book of Abraham is remarkably consistent with what scholars have learned about the ancient world. Some of this knowledge had not yet been discovered or was not well known in Joseph Smith's time. For example, it was once thought that Egyptians did not practice human sacrifice as described in the book of Abraham (see Abraham 1:8–15; “A Facsimile from the Book of Abraham,” No. 1). Recent historical

findings now attest that they did and that it was directed against those who challenged Egyptian religious practices, like the daughters of Onitah referred to in Abraham 1:11 did.

Scholars have also found that sacrifices took place not only in Egypt but also in areas under Egyptian influence (see Abraham 1:1, 5–11). The book of Abraham refers to “the plain of Olishem” near the land of Ur and Haran (see Abraham 1:10). This place-name was unknown to anyone in Joseph Smith’s day. However, ancient texts discovered since then refer to a location named Ulishem near Haran that may align with the city mentioned in the book of Abraham. A number of ancient texts also refer to Abraham teaching the Egyptians using astronomy (see Abraham 3:1–15; “Facsimile,” No. 3). Other ancient documents recount Abraham’s vision of the Creation and describe a heavenly council where humankind’s creation was discussed and planned (see Abraham 3:23–25; 4:26–27). These consistencies are indications of the authenticity of the book of Abraham.

For more information, see also “Translation and Historicity of the Book of Abraham,” Gospel Topics, topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org; Daniel C. Peterson, “News from Antiquity,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1994, 16–21; and Kerry Muhlestein, “Egyptian Papyri and the Book of Abraham: A Faithful, Egyptological Point of View,” in Robert L. Millet, ed., *No Weapon Shall Prosper: New Light on Sensitive Issues* (2011), rsc.byu.edu.

The Egyptian Papyri

After Joseph Smith’s death, his family eventually sold the mummies and papyri. Most of the papyri were presumably destroyed in the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. However, in 1967 the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York presented the Church with papyrus fragments once belonging to the Prophet Joseph Smith. These recovered fragments date to a few centuries before Christ, long after Abraham lived.

Critics have attempted to use the dating of the papyrus fragments to cast doubt on the authenticity of the book of Abraham. However, the papyrus fragments do not have to date to the time of Abraham for the book of Abraham to be authentic. Ancient texts were often passed down as copies or as copies of copies. For example, the oldest surviving manuscripts of books of the Bible date to centuries after they were originally written (see John Gee, *A Guide to the Joseph Smith Papyri* [2000], 23–25, scholarsarchive.byu.edu; Kerry Muhlestein, “Egyptian Papyri and the Book of Abraham: Some Questions and Answers,” *Religious Educator*, vol. 11, no. 1 [2010], 91–108).

Some individuals also criticize the book of Abraham because modern translations of the papyrus fragments, which contain ancient Egyptian funerary texts, do not match the text of the book of Abraham. There may be a few possible reasons for this.

One of the papyrus fragments includes a portion of the image that is now Facsimile 1 in the book of Abraham. Some have assumed that the text adjacent to this image must have been the source from which Joseph Smith translated the book of Abraham. However, it is common to find images in Egyptian papyri that are some distance from the text that describes them. Eyewitnesses described “a quantity of records, written on papyrus,” including “a long roll” or multiple “rolls” of papyrus (see John Gee, *An Introduction to the Book of Abraham* [2017], 5). While translating, the Prophet Joseph Smith may have been working with sections of the papyri that were later destroyed. Thus, we do not know which sections of the papyri Joseph used in the translation process.

Others have suggested that perhaps the book of Abraham, or portions of it, did not come from a literal translation of the papyri. According to this view, Joseph’s study of the Egyptian hieroglyphs may have led to a revelation about key events and teachings in Abraham’s life, similar to the way the

Prophet received the book of Moses while studying the Bible. Neither the Lord nor Joseph Smith explained the process of how the book of Abraham was translated.

A Witness from God

The book of Abraham is a gift from God. As with all other scriptures, a belief in the truthfulness of the contents of the book of Abraham is primarily a matter of faith. A divine witness of its teachings through prayerful study and revelation from the Holy Ghost is the greatest evidence that it is true. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, while serving in the First Presidency, testified: “There is one source of truth that is complete, correct, and incorruptible. That source is our infinitely wise and all-knowing Heavenly Father” (“What Is Truth?” [Brigham Young University devotional, Jan. 13, 2013], 5, speeches.byu.edu).

Want More? (Optional)

How can the Doctrine and Covenants help me receive more personal revelation?

Elder Steven E. Snow of the Seventy explains the power of the Doctrine and Covenants in the article

“Treasuring the Doctrine and Covenants” (*Ensign*, Jan. 2009, 50–53).

Where can I learn more about the book of Abraham?

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein, a trained Egyptologist, discusses the book of Abraham and provides a meaningful testimony of the importance of relying on revelation as we seek to acquire spiritual knowledge in his article “The Book of Abraham, Revelation, and You” (*Ensign*, Dec. 2018, 54–57). See also his article “Assessing the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Introduction to the Historiography of Their Acquisitions, Translations, and Interpretations,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship*, vol. 22 [2016], 17–49.

Dr. John Gee, an Egyptologist and Brigham Young University professor, explores various theories about the Joseph Smith papyri in his publications *A Guide to the Joseph Smith Papyri* (2000) (scholar.archive.byu.edu) and *An Introduction to the Book of Abraham* (2017).



LESSON 15 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

Heavenly Father’s Plan and Our Divine Potential

The Prophet Joseph Smith declared, “The great plan of salvation is a theme which ought to occupy our strict attention, and be regarded as one of heaven’s best gifts to mankind” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 208). Through revelation and visions, Joseph Smith came to understand God’s plan for His children in ways that would change the lives of millions of people around the world. This lesson can help you further understand who you are and what your divine potential is.

SECTION 1

How have restored truths about God’s plan of salvation affected my life?

Imagine being a new convert to the Lord’s restored Church in Joseph Smith’s time. Your view of Heavenly Father’s plan would have been incomplete. If you had been raised as a Christian, you might have had beliefs similar to the following: (1) God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are one God, without body, parts, or passions; (2) humans had no existence prior to this life, and they were created by God out of nothing; and (3) God is unknowable and mysterious—the idea of humans being His children is only a metaphor.

By revelation, Joseph Smith and the early Saints came to understand the nature of our Heavenly Father and His divine plan of salvation. Imagine what it must have felt like as they learned some of the restored truths we treasure today about Heavenly Father’s plan.

Much of Joseph’s understanding of the plan of salvation came through his work on the Book of Mormon and on his inspired translation of the Old and New Testaments. While translating the book of Genesis in 1830, the Prophet Joseph learned that Moses was taken to a high mountain and shown the expansiveness of God’s creations. This revelation is what we now know as the first chapter of the book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price. The Lord told Moses that he was a son of God. God also taught an

important truth found in Moses 1 about the purposes of His work.



presence so you can enjoy immortality and eternal life.

In a revelation received on May 6, 1833, Joseph Smith recorded, “Man was also in the beginning with God” (Doctrine and Covenants 93:29). Joseph’s translation of the book of Abraham, which was published in 1842, provided greater insight into our pre-earth life and our postmortal possibilities.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Abraham 3:22–26.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Moses 1:37–39.

When speaking of immortality and eternal life, Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:



The gift of eternal life is worth any effort to study, learn, and apply the plan of salvation. All humankind will be resurrected and receive the blessing of immortality. But to achieve eternal life—the life God leads—is worth living the plan of salvation with all our heart, mind, might, and strength. (Robert D. Hales, “The Plan of Salvation: A Sacred Treasure of Knowledge to Guide Us,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Oct. 2015, 25)

Notice that Elder Hales defined eternal life as “the life God leads.” Consider what it means for you that Heavenly Father’s work is to bring you back to His

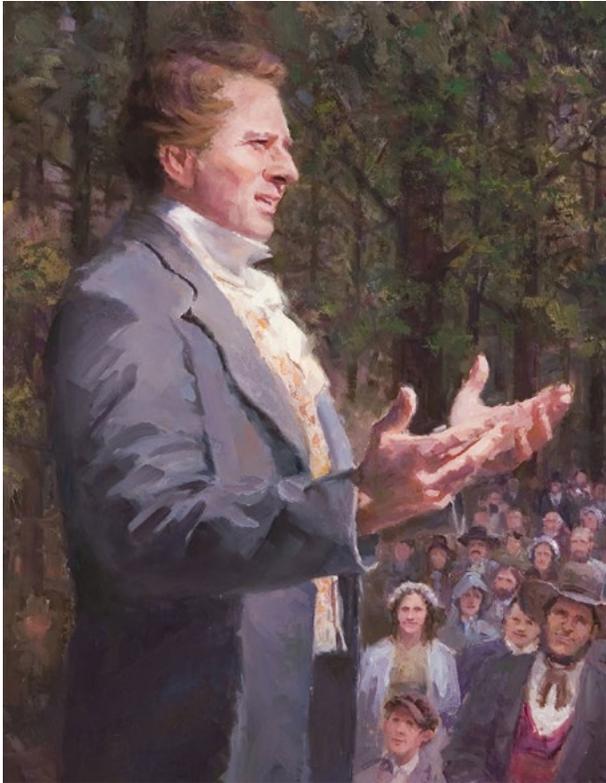


Ponder in Preparation for Class

How do you think knowledge of our pre-earth life and our purpose in mortality affected the early Saints? How does this knowledge affect your thinking, decisions, and actions today?

SECTION 2

What teachings about the character of God were restored to the Prophet Joseph Smith?



In 1844, just months before his death, Joseph Smith spoke at what would be his last conference. His friend, King Follett, had recently died in an accident, and the family had asked Joseph to speak at the funeral. Joseph taught boldly the characteristics of God and our potential to become like Him. In what would become known as the King Follett discourse, Joseph declared:



There are but a very few beings in the world who understand rightly the character of God. . . . If men do not comprehend the

character of God, they do not comprehend themselves. . . .

God Himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! . . . If you were to see Him today, you would see Him like a man in form—like yourselves. . . .

When we understand the character of God, and know how to come to Him, He begins to unfold the heavens to us, and to tell us all about it. . . .

. . . God himself, finding he was in the midst of spirits and glory, because he was more intelligent, saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself. The relationship we have with God places us in a situation to advance in knowledge. . . .

Here, then, is eternal life—to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests [and queens and priestesses] to God, . . . by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one; from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation. (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 39–40, 210, 221)

Note: The entire King Follett discourse can be found in “Classics in Mormon Thought: The King Follett Sermon,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1971, 12–17.

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught:



God's purpose is that we, His children, may be able to experience ultimate joy, to be with Him eternally, and to become even as He is. (D. Todd Christofferson, “As Many as I Love, I Rebuke and Chasten,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 97)



Record in Preparation for Class

Answer the following questions in your journal or in the space provided: What truths did you identify in Joseph Smith’s King Follett discourse? How do these truths influence the way you view yourself, those around you, and your relationship with God?



SECTION 3

How can I gain eternal life in the celestial kingdom?

Imagine again living as an early convert to the restored Church. You most likely would have believed with a majority of Christians at the time that when a person died, he or she went to either heaven or hell. Many people in Joseph Smith’s day identified as Congregationalists or Universalists. If you held a “congregationalist” view, you would believe that only a small number of people would make it to heaven. If you held a “universalist” view, you would likely believe that God would require some punishment for sinners but that eventually all people would go to heaven.

In February 1832, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon had a vision that helped us better understand life after death. The two men were working on the Joseph Smith Translation of the New Testament in the upper floor of the John Johnson home and had stopped to ponder John 5:29, which is about the resurrection of the just and the resurrection of the unjust. Several men were in the room with Joseph and Sidney as the two men experienced the vision and described what they saw. This vision, recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 76, helps us better understand Heavenly Father’s plan. Consider marking truths from this section that expand our understanding of the afterlife and reveal Heavenly Father’s desire to bless all of His children:



Study in Preparation for Class

Read excerpts of the vision as recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 76:12, 20, 40–42, 50–54, 58, 62, 65, 69–71, 74–76, 79, 81–82, 86, 89–92, 111.



Ponder in Preparation for Class

How do you imagine the revealed knowledge in section 76 would have affected you if you were a convert to the early Church? What can we learn about Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ from this vision?

Want More? (Optional)

Where can I learn more about what eternal life means?

Gospel Topics entries like “Eternal Life” and “Becoming Like God” (topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) can help you understand more about God’s work and glory.

Where can I learn more about the vision of the degrees of glory?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 76 in its entirety for more information on the degrees of glory. The section “Beyond the Veil: Life in the Eternities” in *Teachings: Joseph Smith* (39–40, 217–26) gives insights into Doctrine and Covenants 76.

How can the plan of salvation help me examine challenging questions with an eternal perspective?

In his article “The Plan of Salvation: A Sacred Treasure of Knowledge to Guide Us” (*Ensign*, Oct. 2015, 25–31), Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles teaches how the knowledge of our Heavenly Father’s plan can help us think and act wisely when we encounter sensitive issues concerning family, gender, and same-sex attraction.



LESSON 16 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

The Kirtland Temple and Priesthood Keys

God’s commandment to build “a house of God” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:119) was an essential part of the Restoration of the gospel. The early members of the Church were willing to give all that they had in order to receive the promised blessing of being “endowed with power from on high” (Doctrine and Covenants 38:32). As you study, look for the blessings that came from the Saints’ willingness to sacrifice to build the Kirtland Temple.

SECTION 1

What can I learn from the sacrifices of the early Saints to build the Kirtland Temple?

In a revelation received on December 27 and 28, 1832, the Lord commanded the Saints to build a temple in Kirtland, Ohio.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 88:119.

Referring to this commandment, the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote: “This is the word of the Lord to us, and we must, yea, the Lord helping us, we will obey: as on conditions of our obedience He has promised us great things; yea, even a visit from the heavens to honor us with His own presence” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 415).



Eliza R. Snow, who lived in Kirtland while the temple was being built, recalled:



The Saints were few in number, and most of them very poor; and, had it not been for the assurance that God had spoken, and had commanded that a house should be built to His name, . . . an attempt towards building that Temple, under the then existing circumstances, would have been, by all concerned, pronounced preposterous. . . .

With very little capital except brain, bone and sinew, combined with unwavering trust in God, men, women, and even children, worked with their might; . . . their energies were stimulated by the prospect of participating in the blessing of a house built by the direction of the Most High and accepted by Him. (In *Eliza R. Snow, an Immortal* [1957], 54, 57)

Another challenge also slowed the progress of the temple construction:

The spring and summer of 1834 were difficult seasons for construction on the temple because most of the men in the community went with Joseph Smith to Missouri in the Camp of Israel. . . . With the men gone, women carried on the labor. Some did masonry, others drove cattle and hauled rock, and still others sewed, spun, and knit to make clothing for workers. (Lisa Olsen Tait and Brent Rogers, “A House for Our God,” *Revelations in Context* [2016], 170)

To assist the Saints in their efforts to build a temple, the Lord revealed to “Joseph Smith and his counselors in the First Presidency a remarkable vision in which they saw detailed plans for the temple. Frederick G. Williams, the Second Counselor in the First Presidency, later recalled:

Joseph [Smith] received the word of the Lord for him to take his two counselors, [Frederick G.] Williams and [Sidney] Rigdon, and come before the Lord, and He would show them the plan or model of the house to be built. We went upon our knees, called on the Lord, and the building appeared within viewing distance, I being the first to discover it. Then all of us viewed it together. After we had taken a good look at the exterior, the building seemed to come right over us. (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 271)



One of those who sacrificed a great deal to build the Kirtland Temple was a convert named John Tanner:

[John] “received an impression by dream or vision of the night, that he . . . must go immediately to the Church” in Kirtland. He disposed of his property—several flourishing farms, a hotel, and orchards—loaded his numerous family and several neighbors into wagons on Christmas morning, and traversed the five hundred mile distance to arrive in Kirtland on a Sunday, January 1835.

He had indeed been needed. A mortgage on the temple site was falling due and, according to some accounts, the impoverished Prophet Joseph and some of the brethren had been praying for assistance.

John Tanner did not hesitate. He loaned the Prophet two thousand dollars and took his note, loaned the temple committee thirteen thousand dollars, signed a note for thirty thousand dollars with the Prophet and others for goods purchased in New York, and made “liberal donations” toward the building of the temple. (Leonard J. Arrington, “The John Tanner Family,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1979, 46)

President Thomas S. Monson explained why Latter-day Saints have been willing to sacrifice to build temples and worship the Lord in these holy buildings:



Some degree of sacrifice has ever been associated with temple building and with temple attendance. Countless are those who have labored and struggled in order to obtain for themselves and for their families the blessings which are found in the temples of God.

Why are so many willing to give so much in order to receive the blessings of the temple? Those who understand the eternal blessings which come from the temple know that no sacrifice is too great, no price too heavy, no struggle too difficult in order to receive those blessings. (Thomas S. Monson, “The Holy

Temple—a Beacon to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 92)



Ponder in Preparation for Class

What can you learn from the example and sacrifice of the early Saints in building the Kirtland Temple?

SECTION 2

How can the priesthood keys committed by heavenly messengers in the Kirtland Temple bless my life today?

God rewarded the Saints’ sacrifice to build the Kirtland Temple with an outpouring of spiritual manifestations on the days before and after the dedication (see *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, vol. 1, *The Standard of Truth, 1815–1846* [2018], 232–35, 237–39).

Many Saints testified that heavenly beings were present during the dedication services.

Eliza R. Snow recalled: “The ceremonies of that dedication may be rehearsed, but no mortal language can describe the heavenly manifestations of that memorable day. Angels appeared to some, while a sense of divine presence was realized by all present, and each heart was filled with ‘joy inexpressible and full of glory’” [see 1 Peter 1:8].

That evening, as the Prophet gathered with about 400 priesthood bearers in the temple, “a noise was heard like the sound of a rushing mighty wind, which filled the Temple, and all the congregation simultaneously arose, being moved upon by an invisible power.” According to the Prophet, “many began to speak in tongues and prophesy; others saw

glorious visions; and I beheld the Temple was filled with angels, which fact I declared to the congregation” (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 307–8).

The most significant spiritual manifestations occurred on Easter Sunday, April 3, 1836, one week after the temple had been dedicated. While they were praying in the temple, a vision opened to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, and the Lord Jesus Christ appeared. He declared that He accepted the temple and promised to pour out blessings on the Saints (see Doctrine and Covenants 110:1–10).



That visit was followed by the appearance of heavenly messengers who committed priesthood keys necessary to accomplish God’s work in the last days. You might mark in the following passages who appeared to Joseph and Oliver and what keys they committed into the Church leaders’ hands:



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 110:11.

President Joseph Fielding Smith explained:



Moses held the keys of the gathering of Israel. He led Israel out of Egypt into the land of Canaan. It was his appointment in this dispensation to come and restore those keys for the modern gathering. (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Church History and Modern Revelation* [1953], 2:48)



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 110:12.

“A man called Elias apparently lived in mortality in the days of Abraham, who committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. . . . We have no specific information as to the details of his mortal life or ministry” (Bible Dictionary, “Elias”).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained why Elias appeared in the Kirtland Temple:



The man Elias brings back “the gospel of Abraham,” the great Abrahamic covenant whereby the faithful receive promises of eternal increase, promises that through celestial marriage their eternal posterity shall be as numerous as the sands upon the seashore or as the stars in heaven for multitude. (Bruce R. McConkie, “The Keys of the Kingdom,” *Ensign*, May 1983, 22)



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 110:13–16.

President Joseph Fielding Smith taught:



This sealing power bestowed upon Elijah, is the power which binds husbands and wives, and children to parents for time and eternity. It is the binding power existing in every Gospel ordinance. . . . It is by this power that all the ordinances pertaining to salvation are bound, or sealed, and it was the mission of Elijah to come, and restore it. (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Elijah the Prophet and His Mission* [1957], 5)

The appearance of the Old Testament prophet Elijah fulfilled promises made by the Lord through the prophet Malachi and reiterated to the Prophet Joseph Smith by Moroni when he first appeared in Joseph’s bedroom on September 21, 1823.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 2 (see also Malachi 4:5–6).



Ponder in Preparation for Class

In what ways are you blessed by the priesthood keys and powers that Moses, Elias, and Elijah committed to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple? How might your life be different if these priesthood keys had not been restored?

Want More? (Optional)

Where can I learn more about the significance of the keys committed to Joseph and Oliver in the Kirtland Temple?



In his general conference talk “Prepare to Meet God” (*Ensign or Liahona*, May 2018, 114–17), Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught

about the priesthood keys that were restored in the Kirtland Temple.

The video “Priesthood Keys Restored in the Kirtland Temple” (2:12) depicts the visits of heavenly messengers in the Kirtland Temple and the blessings that came from that event.



LESSON 17 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

Remaining Faithful amid Opposition and Affliction

We all have experiences that test our faith. One of our challenges in life is to remain valiant and steadfast to God when we face those hard times. As you study the following material, look for principles that can help guide you during trials of faith.

SECTION 1

What troubles did the Saints experience in Kirtland, Ohio, in the late 1830s?

“The knees of many of the strongest men in the Church faltered,” Brigham Young said of the crisis that gripped the Church in 1837 (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 317). Just the previous year the Saints had enjoyed peace and an outpouring of revelation at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. But in the months following the dedication, a “spirit of speculation” that had overtaken the nation also began to prevail among the Saints. Kirtland “seemed to be moving in great prosperity,” Heber C. Kimball wrote, “and all seemed determined to become rich; in my feelings they were artificial or imaginary riches. This appearance of prosperity led many of the Saints to believe that the time had arrived for the Lord to enrich them

with the treasures of the earth, and believing so, it stimulated them to great exertions, so much so that two of the Twelve, Lyman E. Johnson and John F. Boynton, went to New York and purchased to the amount of \$20,000 worth of goods, and entered into the mercantile business, borrowing considerable money from Polly Voce and other Saints in Boston and the regions round about, and which they have never repaid” (in Orson F. Whitney, *The Life of Heber C. Kimball* [1888], 111–12).

A spirit of pride, faultfinding, and apostasy began to spread among many of the Saints. Eliza R. Snow recalled:



Many who had been humble and faithful to the performance of every duty . . . were getting haughty in their spirits, and lifted up in the pride of their hearts. As the Saints drank in the love and spirit of the world, the Spirit of the Lord withdrew from their hearts.

(In *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 317)

Despite the illusion of prosperity, financial pressures on the Church were high following the expense of building a temple and purchasing land that had caused the Church to amass tens of thousands of dollars in debt. Now, in Kirtland and in Missouri, Saints struggled to follow the Lord's command to acquire even more land and build new settlements at Far West and in Jackson County. In an attempt to help ease financial pressures on the Church, Joseph Smith and other Church leaders created a small bank called the Kirtland Safety Society. Several Saints bought stock in the new bank, including Joseph. Many Saints believed that the future would bring prosperity and wealth if they were faithful.



But as a result of a widespread economic depression in early 1837, many banks failed throughout the United States. A nationwide economic panic along with heavy opposition from some nonmember citizens contributed to the failure of the Kirtland Safety Society about seven months after it opened. Two hundred investors in the bank lost almost everything, with Joseph Smith sustaining the greatest losses.

Although most of the Saints responded with faith, remaining true to their testimonies during this period of testing, many others, including some Church leaders, blamed Joseph Smith for their financial problems. Some claimed he was a fallen prophet and wanted to appoint a new President of the Church in his place.

SECTION 2

What can I do to remain strong and steadfast when my faith is tested?



In early 1837, Thomas B. Marsh, who was President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, was helping lead the Church in Missouri. After learning that some members of the quorum had become critical of Joseph Smith and had begun to quarrel with each other, Thomas traveled to Kirtland, Ohio, hoping to unify the Twelve.

On his way to Kirtland, Thomas learned that the Prophet had called two members of the quorum to serve missions to England. Thomas believed that as president of the quorum it was his duty to call them on missions. When Thomas arrived in Kirtland, he shared his concerns with Joseph Smith, and the Prophet received a revelation with counsel for Thomas (see *Revelations in Context* [2016], 55–57).

As you read the Lord's words to Thomas, consider what advice and truths from this passage could help someone who was struggling with his or her faith. Consider marking what you find.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 112:10, 12–15.



Ponder in Preparation for Class

What principles recorded in this revelation can help you remain strong and steadfast during trials of your faith?

SECTION 3

How can adversity prepare us for some of our most important learning?

A few of those in Kirtland who had left the Church sought to kill Joseph Smith. Warned by the Lord in a revelation, he and Sidney Rigdon left during the night and traveled to Far West, Missouri, arriving in March 1838. During the summer and fall of that year, misunderstandings and tensions between the Missourians and Church members led to armed conflict in northern Missouri. Relying on exaggerated reports of this conflict, the Missouri governor issued an extermination order to drive the Saints from the state by force. Shortly after this, in November 1838, the Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church leaders were arrested, falsely charged with treason against the state, and eventually imprisoned in Liberty Jail in Clay County, Missouri.



Historic photograph of Liberty Jail in Liberty, Missouri.

Life in prison wore Joseph down. Hecklers would peek through the barred windows to gawk or shout obscenities at him. He and the other prisoners often had nothing but a little cornbread to eat. The straw they had used for bedding since December was now matted and provided no comfort. When they lit a fire to try to warm themselves, the dungeon filled with smoke and choked them. . . .

Since receiving his divine call, Joseph had pressed forward in the face of opposition, striving to obey the Lord and gather the Saints. And yet, as much as the church had flourished over the years, it seemed to now be on the verge of collapse.

Mobs had driven the Saints out of Zion in Jackson County. Internal dissent had divided the church in Kirtland and left the temple in the hands of creditors. And now, after a terrible war with their neighbors, the Saints were scattered along the eastern bank of the Mississippi River, disheartened and homeless. . . .

[Joseph felt that] the Saints were good people who loved God. They did not deserve to be dragged from their homes, beaten, and left to die. (*Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, vol. 1, *The Standard of Truth, 1815–1846* [2018], 384–85)



In a letter to Church leaders and Saints back home, Joseph cried out prayerfully, “O God, where art thou? . . . How long shall thy hand be stayed, and thine eye . . . behold from the eternal heavens the wrongs of thy people and of thy servants, and thine ear be penetrated with their cries?” (Doctrine and Covenants 121:1–2).

Think about a time when you struggled with adversity and cried out to God for help. As you study the following words the Lord spoke to Joseph in Liberty Jail, imagine the Lord speaking them to you. Consider marking phrases and principles that stand out to you.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 121:7–10 and Doctrine and Covenants 122:7–9.



Record Your Thoughts

In your journal or in the space provided, record the words and principles that impressed you from the scripture passages above. Be prepared to share in class what you learned. How have you experienced for yourself the truthfulness of the principles the Lord taught Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail?

Want More? (Optional)

Why did some of the early members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles leave the Church?

The video “If They Harden Not Their Hearts” (11:20) depicts the experiences of Lyman E. Johnson and Thomas B. Marsh, who eventually left the Church and then rejoined many years later.

How can I remain steadfast during a trial of faith?

In the video “Trial of Your Faith” (1:01), Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explains how we can navigate our trials of faith. His full talk, “Trial of Your Faith” (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 39–42), can be found on ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

The video “The Refiner’s Fire” (5:02) illustrates the faith of one woman who allowed her trials to help her become more like the Savior.

Where can I learn more details about the events in Kirtland and Liberty Jail?

Some of the detail surrounding events in Kirtland and in Liberty Jail that tried the Saints' faith can be found in *Saints*, volume 1, chapters 23–25 and chapters 31–33.

You can read the entire text of the letters Joseph sent from Liberty Jail in March 1839 on the Joseph Smith Papers website: Letter to the Church and Edward Partridge, 20 March 1839; Letter to Edward Partridge and the Church, circa 22 March 1839.



LESSON 18 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

Latter-day Saint Women and the Relief Society

When speaking about the Relief Society, the Prophet Joseph Smith declared, “The Church was never perfectly organized until the women were thus organized” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 451). Think about the message this statement sends to the world about the place of women in the Lord’s Church. As you study these materials, ponder how the work of Latter-day Saint women and the Relief Society is essential in the restored Church of Jesus Christ.

SECTION 1

How do Latter-day Saint women build God's kingdom?



Elder James E. Talmage of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles once said, “The world’s greatest champion of woman and womanhood is Jesus the Christ” (in *Daughters in My Kingdom* [2011], 3).

President M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:



Our sisters have always been vital and integral to the work of the Lord. Faithful women have labored valiantly in the cause of truth and righteousness from before the foundations of this world. . . . Our dispensation is not without its heroines. (M. Russell Ballard, “Women of Righteousness,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2002, 69)

Emma Smith, the wife of the Prophet Joseph Smith, serves as an example of a Latter-day Saint woman who fulfilled an important role in the Restoration. In a revelation to Joseph Smith, the Lord referred to Emma as “an elect lady” (Doctrine and Covenants 25:3). As you read some of this revelation, consider marking the responsibilities and counsel the Lord gave Emma. Note that in verse 16 the Lord declares

that His counsel given to Emma also applies to each of us.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 25:5–7, 10–11, 13, 15–16.

Emma and Joseph suffered great trials during their time together. They also brought each other much comfort and joy. True to her calling, Emma was a great solace to Joseph, encouraging and comforting him through persecutions and trying ordeals. Reflecting on a time when Emma visited him while he was hiding from danger, the Prophet wrote, “Again she is here, even in the seventh trouble, undaunted, firm, and unwavering, unchangeable, affectionate Emma” (“Journal, December 1841–December 1842,” 135, josephsmithpapers.org).



Emma served for a time as Joseph’s scribe, helping with the Book of Mormon translation. Throughout her life she boldly testified of the Book of Mormon. Shortly before her death she told her son: “My belief is that the Book of Mormon is of divine authenticity—I have not the slightest doubt of it” (Emma

Smith, in “Last Testimony of Sister Emma,” *Saints’ Herald*, Oct. 1, 1879, 290). Obedient to the Lord’s command, Emma also compiled the Church’s first hymnbook.

Emma taught by example: “In New York, she sewed clothing for . . . missionaries called to preach the gospel. . . . In Kirtland, she worked with other women to collect blankets, food, and clothing for the Zion’s Camp marchers to take to distressed Saints in Missouri. She helped prepare meals and make [clothes] for the workmen building the Kirtland Temple. She took in so many temple workmen as boarders that she and Joseph had to sleep on the floor. In the early days of Nauvoo, she devoted much of her time and attention to nursing the many malaria victims camped outside her home on the banks of the Mississippi River. In these and other ways, she exemplified the service given by many sisters in her day” (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 450).



Ponder in Preparation for Class

Think about an exemplary woman you know who uses her influence, voice, and abilities to make meaningful contributions to building God’s kingdom. In what ways is she building the kingdom of God in our day?

SECTION 2

What is unique about the organization of the Relief Society?

In the spring of 1842, the Saints struggled in their poverty to build the Nauvoo Temple. Many of the sisters desired to do more to help. Led by Sarah Kimball and Margaret Cook, a group of sisters gathered to draft a constitution and bylaws for a new women’s society to sew clothes for the temple workers. When they consulted the Prophet Joseph

Smith, he told them their constitution was “the best he had ever seen” (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 450).

“But,” he said, “this is not what you want. Tell the sisters their offering is accepted of the Lord, and he has something better for them. . . . I invite them all to meet with me and a few of the brethren . . . and I will organize the women under the priesthood after the pattern of the priesthood” (in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 12). Eliza R. Snow recounted that Joseph Smith taught the Relief Society that “the same organization existed in the church anciently” (in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 7).



Sister Julie B. Beck, former General President of the Relief Society, taught what it means to be organized after the pattern of the priesthood:



Relief Society is unique because it was organized after the “pattern of the priesthood” [Joseph Smith, quoted in Sarah M. Kimball, “Auto-biography,” *Woman’s Exponent*, Sept. 1, 1883, 51]. . . . We operate in the manner of the priesthood—which means that we seek, receive, and act on revelation; make decisions in councils; and concern ourselves with caring for individuals one by one. Ours is the priesthood purpose to prepare ourselves for the blessings of eternal life by making and keeping covenants. Therefore, like our brethren who hold the priesthood, ours is a work

of salvation, service, and becoming a holy people. (Julie B. Beck, “Relief Society: A Sacred Work,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 110)

President Dallin H. Oaks of the First Presidency further emphasized that the work of the Relief Society is done with priesthood authority:



In an address to the Relief Society, President Joseph Fielding Smith, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said this: “While the sisters have not been [ordained to] the Priesthood, . . . that does not mean that the Lord has not given unto them authority. . . . You can speak with authority, because the Lord has placed authority upon you.” He also said that the Relief Society “[has] been given power and authority to do a great many things. The work which they do is done by divine authority” [“Relief Society--An Aid to the Priesthood,” *Relief Society Magazine*, Jan. 1959, 4–5]. . . .

. . . Whoever functions in an office or calling received from one who holds priesthood keys exercises priesthood authority in performing her or his assigned duties. (Dallin H. Oaks, “The Keys and Authority of the Priesthood,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 50–51)

SECTION 3

How do women and the Relief Society help accomplish the purposes of God and His Church?

The first Relief Society meeting was held on March 17, 1842, in the upper room of Joseph Smith’s Red Brick Store in Nauvoo, Illinois. Emma was chosen and sustained as president of the new organization. Joseph stood and explained that this was a fulfillment of the Lord’s declaration that Emma was “an elect lady, whom I have called” (Doctrine and Covenants 25:3). A short time later the Prophet said: “This Society is to get instruction through the order

which God has established—through the medium of those appointed to lead—and I now turn the key to you in the name of God, and this society shall rejoice and knowledge and intelligence shall flow down from this time” (in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 14–15).

Sister Emma Smith declared that together the women of the Church would do “something extraordinary” (“Joseph Smith’s Teachings about Priesthood, Temple, and Women,” Gospel Topics, [topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/topics)). As you study the following statements, consider marking what stands out to you about the purposes and mission of the Relief Society.

Zina D. H. Young, former General President of the Relief Society, recalled:



The Relief Society . . . was first organized . . . to dispense temporal blessings to the poor and needy: and to give encouragement to the weak, and restrain the erring ones, and for the better development, and exercise of woman’s sympathies, and charities, that she might have opportunity to attain spiritual strength, and power for the accomplishment of greater good in the work of the redemption of the human family. (“First General Conference of the Relief Society,” *Woman’s Exponent*, Apr. 15, 1889, 172)

Sister Beck taught:



Joseph Smith said that the women of this Church were organized to provide for “the relief of the poor, the destitute, the widow and the orphan, and for the exercise of all benevolent purposes” [in *History of the Church*, 4:567] and “not only to relieve the poor, but to save souls” [in *History of the Church*, 5:25]. That relief effort was further defined by Elder John A. Widtsoe as “relief of poverty, relief of illness, relief of doubt, relief of ignorance—relief of all that hinders . . . joy and progress. . . .” [*Evidences and Reconciliations*, arr. G. Homer Durham, 3 vols. in 1 (1960), 308]

... Through Relief Society we practice being disciples of Christ. We learn what He would have us learn, we do what He would have us do, and we become what He would have us become. (Julie B. Beck, "What Latter-day Saint Women Do Best: Stand Strong and Immovable," *Ensign and Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 111, 109)



President Spencer W. Kimball explained why both men and women must understand the purposes and power of the Relief Society:



There is a power in this organization [of Relief Society] that has not yet been fully exercised to strengthen the homes of Zion and build the Kingdom of God—nor will it until *both the sisters and the priesthood [brethren]* catch the vision of Relief Society. (Spencer W. Kimball, in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 142; italics added)



Ponder in Preparation for Class

What can both women *and* men do to catch the vision of Relief Society and work together to help accomplish its purposes?

Want More? (Optional)

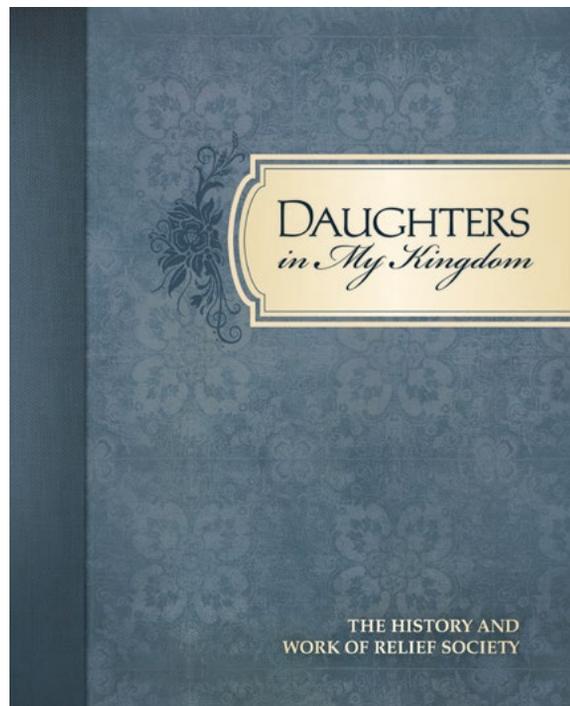
What did Joseph Smith teach about women and priesthood authority?

The essay "Joseph Smith's Teachings about Priesthood, Temple, and Women" (Gospel Topics, topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) highlights Joseph Smith's teachings about women and priesthood authority.

Where can I find inspiring stories of faithful Latter-day Saint women?

Explore the Women of Conviction collection on history.ChurchofJesusChrist.org for stories of faithful Latter-day Saint women around the world.

The book *Daughters in My Kingdom* also contains several accounts of faithful women and their work in the Relief Society.



As an example, you might start with the story of Relief Society President Belle Spafford, who

extended the Relief Society's influence among those of other faiths.



In what ways was Emma considered to be “an elect lady”?

Watch the video “An Elect Lady” (5:18) to learn more about why the Lord honored Emma with this title.



LESSON 19 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

Redemption of the Dead

Think about a time when someone did something for you that you could not do alone. How did you feel toward this person? As you study, consider how your deceased family members may feel toward you when you do for them what they cannot do for themselves—perform essential ordinances for their salvation.

SECTION 1

What happens to those who die without a knowledge of the gospel?

Note: Instead of reading this first section of this lesson, you may choose to watch the video “Glad Tidings: The History of Baptisms for the Dead” (6:55) and then ponder the questions at the end of the section.

At the age of 17, Joseph Smith was heartbroken over the sudden death of his older brother Alvin, whom he greatly loved and admired. The Smith family “asked a Presbyterian minister in Palmyra, New York, to officiate at his funeral. As Alvin had not been a member of the minister’s congregation,

the clergyman asserted in his sermon that Alvin could not be saved. William Smith, Joseph’s younger brother, recalled: “[The minister] . . . intimated very strongly that [Alvin] had gone to hell” because Alvin had not been baptized (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 401).

The clergyman’s response to Alvin’s death may have sounded harsh. However, his teaching was based on the truth that all people must accept Christ and be baptized to be saved (see John 3:5).

In January 1836, more than 12 years after Alvin’s death, the Prophet Joseph Smith gathered with his father and other Church leaders in an upper room of the nearly completed Kirtland Temple. During the meeting, the Prophet had a vision of the future, now recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 137.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 137:1, 5–8.

Joseph “marveled” at seeing his brother Alvin in the celestial kingdom because Alvin had not been baptized. Four years later, in August 1840, the Prophet began teaching the Saints the doctrine of baptism for the dead. The Apostle Paul had taught this doctrine in the New Testament before the Lord restored it in our day (see 1 Corinthians 15:29).

In a letter to her husband, Vilate Kimball wrote of the Saints’ excitement over this newly restored doctrine:



President Smith has opened a new and glorious subject. . . . He says it is the privilege of this church to be baptized for all their kinsfolk that have died before this gospel came forth. . . . By so doing, we act as agents for them, and give them the privilege of coming forth in the first resurrection. He says they will have the Gospel preached to them in Prison. . . . Since this order has been preached here, the waters have been continually troubled. During conference there were sometimes from eight to ten elders in the river at a time baptizing. . . . Is not this a glorious doctrine? (Vilate Kimball, in Janiece Johnson and Jennifer Reeder, *The Witness of Women: Firsthand Experiences and Testimonies from the Restoration* [2016], 181)

The Smith family undoubtedly felt great joy when Hyrum was baptized for his brother Alvin.



Ponder in Preparation for Class

What do you think makes the redemption of the dead such “a glorious doctrine”? What does this doctrine teach you about the character and desires of Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ?

The following year, in 1841, the Lord declared that “this ordinance belongeth to my house” and that after the temple font was ready, the Saints were to stop performing baptisms for the dead in the river (see Doctrine and Covenants 124:29–34). Joseph Smith provided further instructions about the redemption of the dead in two letters he wrote to the Saints while he was in hiding due to false accusations. The content of these letters is now found in Doctrine and Covenants 127 and 128. The Prophet taught that only when a gospel ordinance, such as baptism for the dead, is performed by priesthood authority and a proper record is kept will the ordinance be binding on earth and in heaven (see Doctrine and Covenants 127:5–7; 128:1–9).

SECTION 2

What did the Lord further reveal about the redemption of the dead in the vision he gave President Joseph F. Smith?

After the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord continued to reveal truths about His plan to redeem the dead “line upon line” (Doctrine and Covenants 98:12). In 1918 President Joseph F. Smith received a vision that revealed further truths about the redemption of the dead. His vision is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 138.

President M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained how President Joseph F. Smith was prepared to receive this remarkable vision:



During his lifetime, President Smith lost his father [at age 5], his mother [at age 13], one brother, two sisters, two wives, and thirteen children. He was well acquainted with sorrow and losing loved ones. . . .

[The year 1918] was particularly painful for him. He grieved over the death toll in the Great World War that continued to climb to over 20 million people killed. Additionally, a flu pandemic was spreading around the world, taking the lives of as many as 100 million people.

During the year, President Smith also lost three . . . precious family members. Elder Hyrum Mack Smith of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, his firstborn son and my grandfather, died suddenly of a ruptured appendix.

President Smith wrote: “I am speechless— [numb] with grief! . . . My heart is broken; and flutters for life! . . . O! I loved him! . . . From the depths of my soul I thank God for him! But . . . O! I needed him! We all needed him! He was most useful to the Church. . . . And now, . . . O! what can I do! . . . O! God help me! . . .”

And so it was on October 3, 1918, having experienced intense sorrow over the millions who had died in the world through war and disease as well as the deaths of his own family members, President Smith received the heavenly revelation known as “the vision of the redemption of the dead.” (M. Russell Ballard, “The Vision of the Redemption of the Dead,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 72)

Joseph F. Smith received his divine vision while pondering the Savior’s atoning sacrifice and reading the

Apostle Peter’s description of Jesus’s ministry in the spirit world following His Crucifixion (see Doctrine and Covenants 138:1–11).



President Joseph F. Smith with his son Hyrum and grandson Joseph.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 138:30, 33–34, 57, and consider marking what the Lord taught President Smith about how the gospel was preached in the spirit world.

In another setting, President Smith taught that faithful women are also called to preach the gospel in the spirit world (see *Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [1939], 461).

SECTION 3

How can participating in the work to redeem the dead help me draw nearer to the Savior?

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:



President Gordon B. Hinckley has expressed: “I think that vicarious work for the dead more nearly approaches the vicarious sacrifice of the Savior Himself than any other work of which I know. . . .” [“Excerpts from Recent Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1998, 73]

Our anxiety to redeem the dead, and the time and resources we put behind that commitment, are, above all, an expression of our witness concerning Jesus Christ. It constitutes as powerful a statement as we can make concerning His divine character and mission. . . .

By identifying our ancestors and performing for them the saving ordinances they could not themselves perform, we are testifying of the infinite reach of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. (D. Todd Christofferson, “The Redemption of the Dead and the Testimony of Jesus,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 10)



Ponder and Discuss in Preparation for Class

How is participating in the work to redeem the dead an expression of your testimony of Jesus Christ and His Atonement?

If you are able, ask a family member or friend to share his or her experience of doing family

history. Ask questions about how to begin or how to more effectively do family history. Come to class prepared to share some of what you learned.

Want More? (Optional)

How can I help my ancestors in the work of redeeming the dead?

In the video “A Sacrifice of Time” (2:54) President Russell M. and Sister Wendy Nelson give direction on how we can best help our ancestors and the Lord in His work to redeem the dead.

Where can I go to get started doing family history research?

Check out the resources and training materials available on FamilySearch.org. Look over your family tree, and try out some of the search features.

In what ways will family history and temple service provide joy in my life?



In Elder Quentin L. Cook’s article “The Joy of Family History Work” (*Ensign*, Feb. 2016, 29–33) he spoke of Elijah’s mission and how we can be blessed as we do family history.

What additional witnesses do we have of the redemption of the dead in the spirit world?

President Nelson recounts an experience his grandfather had that relates to the preaching of the gospel in the spirit world.



LESSON 20 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

Temple Ordinances and Worship

President Thomas S. Monson taught, “We are a temple-building and a temple-attending people” (“Welcome to Conference,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 5). As you study this material, consider why temple ordinances are such an important part of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the last days. Determine what you can do to make temple worship a more important part of your own life.

SECTION 1

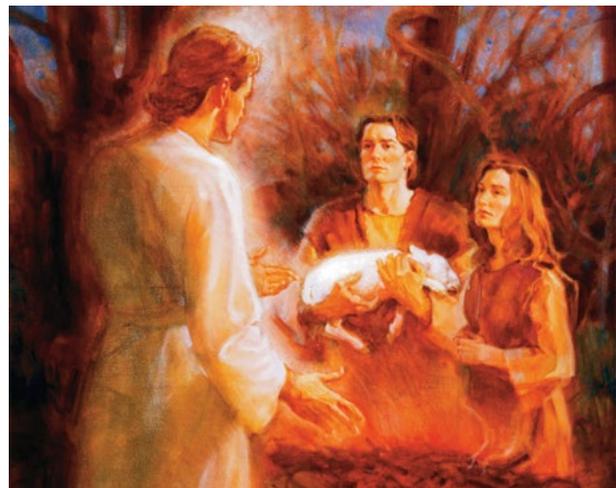
How can worshipping in the temple bless my life?

In 2019, the First Presidency shared:

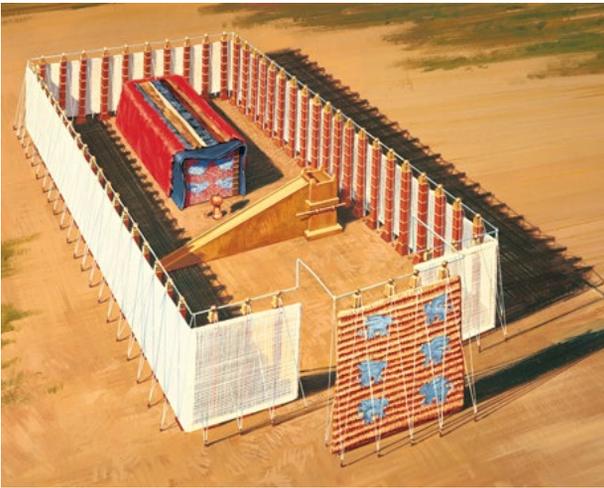
Whenever the Lord has had a people on the earth who will obey His word, they have been commanded to build temples. Scriptures document patterns of temple worship from the times of Adam and Eve, Moses, Solomon, Nephi, and others.

With the restoration of the gospel in these latter days, temple worship has also been restored to bless the lives of people across the world and on the other side of the veil as well. . . . A dedicated temple is the most holy of any place of worship on the earth. (“First

Presidency Statement on Temples,” Jan. 2, 2019, newsroom.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)



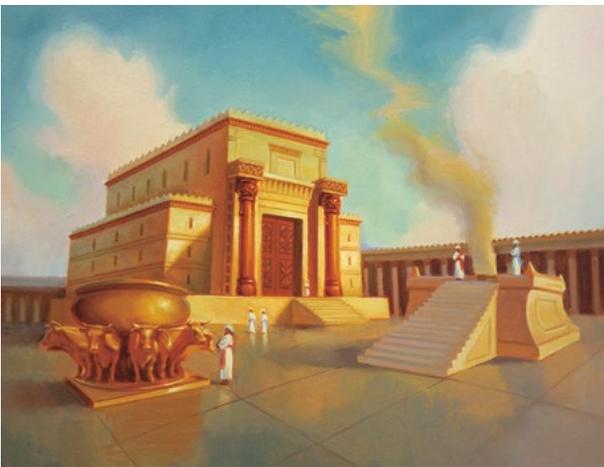
Adam and Eve Offer Sacrifice (Moses 5:5-7)



The Tabernacle (Exodus 26-28)



King Benjamin Preaches to the Nephites (2 Nephi 5:16; Mosiah 2:1; 3 Nephi 11)



The Temple of Solomon (1 Kings 6)

The first temple to be built in our dispensation was the Kirtland Temple in 1836. The dedication of that temple began a remarkable season of spiritual manifestations. The faithful felt the Holy Ghost, and some spoke in tongues, had visions, or saw angels. The culminating event of this time was the appearance of the Savior to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple shortly after it was dedicated. At that time the Savior said, “I have accepted this house” (Doctrine and Covenants 110:7).





Ponder in Preparation for Class

Consider some of the feelings you have had or would like to have as you enter the Lord's temple.

On March 27, 1836, Joseph Smith offered a dedicatory prayer (the words for which he received by revelation from the Lord) for the Kirtland Temple. This dedicatory prayer is recorded as Doctrine and Covenants 109. In this prayer, Joseph asked the Lord to give certain blessings to those who worship in the temple.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 109:13, 22–26.

Sister Jean A. Stevens, former First Counselor in the Primary General Presidency, said this about the blessings we receive in the temple:



If we are to receive all the blessings God so generously offers, our earthly path must lead to the temple. Temples are an expression of God's love. He invites us all to come, learn of Him, feel His love, and receive the priesthood ordinances necessary for eternal life with Him. Each covenant is made one by one. Every mighty change of heart matters to the Lord. And yours will make all the difference to you. For as we go to His holy house, we can be "armed with [His] power, . . . [His] name . . . upon [us], . . . [His] glory . . . round about [us], and [His] angels have charge over [us]" [Doctrine and Covenants 109:22].

. . . It is through His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, that every hope, every promise, and every blessing of the temple is fulfilled. (Jean A. Stevens, "Covenant Daughters of God," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 117)



Discuss with Others

Ask a family member or a friend what specific blessings he or she has felt in his or her life through receiving temple ordinances and participating in temple worship. In what ways has this person felt God's love by attending the temple?

SECTION 2

Why does the Lord command His people to build temples?

Even before the Lord commanded the Saints to build a temple in Kirtland, Saints in Missouri had dedicated a site to build a temple in Independence, Missouri. Later, they laid cornerstones for a temple in Far West, Missouri. Both remain unfinished because the Saints were driven from their homes and properties. In the October 1840 conference, the Saints accepted the Prophet's call to build a temple in Nauvoo. Again, with a spirit of sacrifice, the Saints began donating labor, money, and other resources to help with construction. In January 1841, Joseph Smith received a revelation that provided further reasons why the Lord required this temple to be built. This counsel is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 124. As you study the following verses, consider some of the reasons that the Lord commands us to build temples in the latter days.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 124:27–28, 40–42.

In the temple, the Saints received important ordinances that the Lord had revealed to the Prophet, including the endowment ceremony.

Among these [temple] ordinances was a ceremony called the endowment, which expanded upon the washing and anointing ceremony Joseph had introduced in the Kirtland Temple in 1836. Fearing his life would be taken before the temple was completed, Joseph Smith called a handful of men on May 3, 1842, to arrange the upper room of his Red Brick Store to represent “the interior of a temple as much as the circumstances would permit.” The next day, Joseph administered the endowment for the first time to a group of nine men. (“Temple Endowment,” Church History Topics, ChurchofJesusChrist.org/study/church-history)



This endowment ceremony “taught exalting truths. It drew upon scriptural accounts of the Creation and the Garden of Eden . . . to guide the men

step-by-step through the plan of salvation. Like Abraham and other ancient prophets, they received knowledge that would enable them to return to the presence of God. Along the way, the men made covenants to live righteous, chaste lives and dedicate themselves to serving the Lord” (*Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, vol. 1, *The Standard of Truth, 1815–1846* [2018], 453).

On [or before] September 28, 1843, Emma Smith became the first woman to receive the endowment. Joseph’s promise that Relief Society members would see “the blessings of the endowment rolling on” was confirmed as Emma began to help administer the ordinance to other women. (Jill Mulvay Derr and others, eds., *The First Fifty Years of Relief Society: Key Documents in Latter-day Saint Women’s History* [2016], 10)



Although Joseph initially invited only a few people to participate in the endowment, he

clearly intended to open the temple ceremonies broadly to worthy Latter-day Saints. . . . Willard Richards explained, “There was nothing made known to [us], but what will be made known to all the Saints of the last days, so soon as they are prepared to receive, and a [temple] is prepared to communicate them.” (“Anointed Quorum (‘Holy Older’),” Church History Topics, ChurchofJesusChrist.org/study/church-history)



Ponder in Preparation for Class

What can we learn about the Lord from His commandments to the Saints to build temples? Why would the Lord want His people to be endowed in the temple?

SECTION 3

How can I and those I love be blessed by the temple endowment?

In the April 2019 general conference, Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles invited all members of the Church to become familiar with the resources available at temples. ChurchofJesusChrist.org (see “Prepared to Obtain Every Needful Thing,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2019, 103–4). From this website, we learn the following about the temple endowment:

The word *endowment* means “a gift.” In this context, the temple endowment is literally a gift from God whereby He bestows sacred blessings upon you [through the Atonement of Jesus Christ]. The endowment can only be received in His way and in His holy temple. Some of the gifts you receive through the temple endowment include:

1. Greater knowledge of the Lord’s purposes and teachings.
2. Power to do all that God wants us to do.
3. Divine direction and protection as we serve the Lord, our families, and others.
4. Increased hope, comfort, and peace.
5. Promised blessings now and forever. . . .

In conjunction with these ordinances, you will be invited to make specific covenants with God. These covenants include:

- Law of Obedience
- Law of Sacrifice
- Law of the Gospel
- Law of Chastity
- Law of Consecration

In return, God promises wonderful blessings in this life and the opportunity to return to live with Him forever. (“About the Temple Endowment,” temples. ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

President Russell M. Nelson has taught this about the spiritual significance of the endowment:



The temple endowment was given by revelation. Thus, it is best understood by revelation, vigorously sought with a pure heart. President Brigham Young explained that “your endowment is, to receive all those ordinances in the house of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, . . . and gain your eternal exaltation” [*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1954), 416]. (Russell M. Nelson, “Preparing for the Blessings of the Temple,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2010, 42)



Record Your Thoughts

What would you suggest someone do to prepare to receive his or her endowment? Why is the temple and its ordinances important to you personally? Write your thoughts in a personal journal or in the space provided below.

Want More? (Optional)

What can I do to prepare for the temple?

Read the article “Prepare for the Blessings of the Temple” (*Ensign*, Oct. 2010, 40–51), by President Russell M. Nelson, for helpful information.

What resources has the Church provided to help me explain the temple to others?

The following videos might be helpful in answering questions about the temple:

- “Two Apostles Lead a Virtual Tour of the Rome Italy Temple,” with Elders David A. Bednar and Ronald A. Rasband (11:31)
- “What Is a Temple Endowment?” (1:58)
- “Sacred Temple Clothing” (4:15)

What are the differences and similarities between the temple endowment and Freemasonry?

Some historians have written about the similarities between the temple endowment and Freemasonry. For information on this topic, read the section titled “Masonry and the Endowment” in the Church History Topics article “Masonry” (ChurchofJesusChrist.org/study/church-history).



LESSON 21 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

The Doctrine of Eternal Marriage and Family

President Dallin H. Oaks has taught, “The purpose of mortal life and the mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is to prepare the sons and daughters of God for their eternal destiny—to become like our heavenly parents” (“Same-Gender Attraction,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1995, 7). As you study the doctrine of eternal marriage and family, identify principles that can help you understand how marriage and family prepare us to become more like our Heavenly Parents.

SECTION 1

What are the purposes of marriage in God’s eternal plan?

In 1831 a recently baptized Church member named Leman Copley visited the Prophet Joseph Smith. Leman had previously been a member of the Shakers, a religious sect that rejected marriage and believed that total celibacy (abstaining from sexual relations) was the highest form of Christian devotion. Following Leman’s visit, the Prophet Joseph Smith asked the Lord about the Shakers’ teachings and received the revelation now recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 49. (You may find it helpful to read the introduction for that section.)

Consider marking words and phrases in the following scripture passage that teach the Lord’s doctrine of marriage.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 49:15–17 (see also Jacob 2:27–30).

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained why marriage is ordained of God. Consider marking what stands out to you from his statement.



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 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. . . .

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. . . . Thus, marriage between a man and a woman is the authorized channel through which premortal spirits enter mortality. . . .

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. (David A. Bednar, "Marriage Is Essential to His Eternal Plan," *Ensign*, June 2006, 83–84)



Ponder in Preparation for Class

How would you explain why marriage between a man and a woman is essential to Heavenly Father's plan?

SECTION 2

What are some blessings of an eternal marriage?

In Nauvoo, Joseph Smith began to teach more widely the doctrine of eternal marriage. This was a new and astounding doctrine to the Saints. Most of them believed that marriage ended at death.



A depiction of Joseph and Emma Smith, who were sealed to one another for eternity in May 1843.

Elder Parley P. Pratt of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles described how he felt when the Prophet taught him about the possibility of eternal marriage.



It was from [Joseph Smith] that I learned that the wife of my bosom might be secured to me for time and all eternity. . . . It was from him that I learned that we might cultivate these affections, and grow and increase in the same to all eternity; while the result of

our endless union would be an offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven, or the sands of the sea shore. . . .

I had loved before, but I knew not why. But now I loved—with a pureness—an intensity of elevated, exalted feeling. (*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. [2007], 260)

In 1843 the Prophet dictated the revelation now recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 132, which included the doctrine of eternal marriage.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 132:19–20.

President Russell M. Nelson explained:



To qualify for eternal life, we must make an eternal and everlasting covenant with our Heavenly Father [see Doctrine and Covenants 132:19]. This means that a temple marriage is not only between husband and wife; it embraces a partnership with God [see Matthew 19:6]. . . .

. . . When a family is sealed in the temple, that family may become as eternal as the kingdom of God itself [see Doctrine and Covenants 132:19–20]. (Russell M. Nelson, “Celestial Marriage,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 92–93)

The blessings of eternal marriage are not just for the next life. Those who strive to keep their covenants faithfully can enjoy the blessings of eternal marriage in this life as well. President Thomas S. Monson taught:



If you choose wisely and if you are committed to the success of your marriage, there is nothing in this life which will bring you

greater happiness. (“Priesthood Power,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2011, 67)

Some Church members have questions about circumstances that do not enable individuals to experience the blessings of eternal marriage and family now. Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles addressed this matter:



To declare the fundamental truths relative to marriage and family is not to overlook or diminish the sacrifices and successes of those for whom the ideal is not a present reality. Some of you are denied the blessing of marriage for reasons including a lack of viable prospects, same-sex attraction, physical or mental impairments, or simply a fear of failure that, for the moment at least, overshadows faith. Or you may have married, but that marriage ended, and you are left to manage alone what two together can barely sustain. Some of you who are married cannot bear children despite overwhelming desires and pleading prayers.

. . . With confidence we testify that the Atonement of Jesus Christ has anticipated and, in the end, will compensate all deprivation and loss for those who turn to Him. No one is predestined to receive less than all that the Father has for His children. (D. Todd Christofferson, “Why Marriage, Why Family,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2015, 52)



Discuss in Preparation for Class

All marriages, especially eternal ones, require effort and commitment from each spouse. Talk to a married couple you know who have a strong and loving marriage, and ask them what they have done to build it. Also ask them how their marriage has enriched their lives as a result. Be ready to share what you learned in class.

SECTION 3

Why should I stand up for the Lord’s doctrine of marriage and family?

As the Restoration continues to unfold, the Lord has inspired His prophets to emphasize the doctrine of marriage and family. In the September 1995 general Relief Society meeting, President Gordon B. Hinckley read “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.” The conclusion of the proclamation teaches why we must stand up for the Lord’s doctrine of marriage and family.

We warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.

We call upon responsible citizens and officers of government everywhere to promote those measures designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society. (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

Sister Julie B. Beck, former Relief Society General President, explained the need to study the doctrine of the family found in “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.”



This generation will be called upon to defend the doctrine of the family as never before. If they don’t know it, they can’t defend it. . . .

President [Spencer W.] Kimball said:

“Many of the social restraints which in the past have helped to reinforce and to shore up the family are dissolving and disappearing. The time will come when only those who believe deeply and actively in the family will be able to preserve their families in the midst of the gathering evil around us” [Spencer W. Kimball, “Families Can Be Eternal,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 4]. (Julie B. Beck, “Teaching the Doctrine of the Family,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2011, 17)

Sister Bonnie L. Oscarson, former Young Women General President, taught:



We need to boldly defend the Lord’s revealed doctrines describing marriage, families, the divine roles of men and women, and the importance of homes as sacred places—even when the world is shouting in our ears that these principles are outdated, limiting, or no longer relevant. Everyone, no matter what their marital circumstance or number of children, can be defenders of the Lord’s plan described in the family proclamation. If it is the Lord’s plan, it should also be our plan! . . .

. . . Let us be defenders of marriage as the Lord has ordained it while continuing to show love and compassion for those with differing views. (Bonnie L. Oscarson, “Defenders of the Family Proclamation,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2015, 15)



Record Your Thoughts

In your journal or in the space provided, write your thoughts about how a young adult can be a defender of marriage and family. Have you ever defended the doctrine of marriage? What was your experience like?

Want More? (Optional)

What have the prophets taught about marriage and family?

Find recent counsel from Church leaders on marriage and family:

The First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles, "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," ChurchofJesusChrist.org



D. Todd Christofferson, "Why Marriage, Why Family," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2015, 50–53

What are some of the benefits of marriage?

In the video "Renaissance of Marriage," President Henry B. Eyring discusses many of the blessings marriage can bring to our lives.

What does the Church teach regarding same-sex marriage?

The Gospel Topics page "Same-Sex Marriage" outlines the Church's stance on same-sex marriage.

What does the Church teach about divorce?

In the video "Marriage and Divorce," President Dallin H. Oaks teaches that the Savior's Atonement can heal the pain of a troubled or broken marriage.



LESSON 22 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

Plural Marriage

The Lord taught Abraham that one of the purposes of mortality is to “prove” God’s children “to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them” (Abraham 3:25). Some of God’s commandments can seem very difficult, especially when they go against cultural norms or our own expectations. As you study, ponder what you can learn from the extraordinary faith and obedience of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the early Saints to the Lord’s command to practice plural marriage.

SECTION 1

Why did the Prophet Joseph Smith and many of the early Saints practice plural marriage?

As early as 1831, when Joseph Smith was working on his inspired translation of the Old Testament, he prayed to understand why some ancient prophets and Israelite kings practiced plural marriage (see the section heading and verse 1 of Doctrine and Covenants 132). The Lord gave a revelation to the Prophet.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 132:34–37.

In verse 37, the word *concubine* refers to a woman who, in Old Testament times, was legally married to a man but had a lower social status than a wife. Concubines were not part of the practice of plural marriage in our dispensation.

Sometime after the Lord revealed the principle of plural marriage to Joseph Smith, He commanded the Prophet to live this principle and to teach it to others. While we do not understand all of God’s purposes for initiating plural marriage in the early

days of the Church, its introduction was part of the latter-day restoration of “all things” (Doctrine and Covenants 132:40, 45; see also Acts 3:19–21).

SECTION 2

What do we know about the Prophet Joseph Smith’s experience with plural marriage?

Individuals close to Joseph Smith reported that he had told them that an angel of God appeared to him as many as three times between 1834 and 1842, commanding him to live the principle of plural marriage. “Fragmentary evidence suggests that Joseph Smith acted on the angel’s first command by marrying a plural wife, Fanny Alger, in Kirtland, Ohio, in the mid-1830s. . . . Little is known about this marriage, and nothing is known about the conversations between Joseph and Emma regarding Alger. After the marriage with Alger ended in separation, Joseph seems to have set the subject of plural marriage aside until after the Church moved to Nauvoo, Illinois” (“Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo,” Gospel Topics, topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

Beginning in 1841, the Prophet Joseph Smith married additional women in obedience to the Lord’s commandment and introduced the principle of plural marriage to a limited number of other Church members.

Eliza R. Snow, who was sealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith and later served as the second Relief Society General President, recalled:



The Prophet Joseph . . . described the trying mental ordeal he experienced in overcoming the repugnance of his feelings . . . relative to the introduction of plural marriage. He knew the voice of God—he knew the commandment of the Almighty to him was to go forward. . . . He knew that he had not only his own prejudices and prepossessions [beliefs]

to combat and to overcome, but those of the whole Christian world stared him in the face; but God, who is above all, had given the commandment, and He must be obeyed. (Eliza R. Snow, in *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow* [1884], 69)



Ponder in Preparation for Class

What does the Prophet Joseph Smith’s willingness to obey such a difficult commandment reveal about his faith and character?

One of the reasons our understanding of Joseph Smith’s practice of plural marriage is limited is that he and others who practiced plural marriage in Nauvoo rarely mentioned it in written records. Many details of the practice of plural marriage were kept confidential, and historical records simply do not answer all of our questions.

From a Gospel Topics essay about plural marriage we learn:

During the era in which plural marriage was practiced, Latter-day Saints distinguished between sealings for time and eternity and sealings for eternity only. Sealings for time and eternity included commitments and relationships during this life, generally including the possibility of sexual relations. Eternity-only sealings indicated relationships in the next life alone. . . .

Some of the women who were sealed to Joseph Smith later testified that their marriages were for time and eternity, while others indicated that their relationships were for eternity alone.

Most of those sealed to Joseph Smith were between 20 and 40 years of age at the time of their sealing to him. The oldest, Fanny Young, was 56 years old. The youngest was Helen

Mar Kimball, . . . who was sealed to Joseph several months before her 15th birthday. Marriage at such an age, inappropriate by today's standards, was legal in that era, and some women married in their mid-teens. Helen Mar Kimball spoke of her sealing to Joseph as being "for eternity alone," suggesting that the relationship did not involve sexual relations. . . .

. . . Joseph Smith was sealed to a number of women who were already married. Neither these women nor Joseph explained much about these sealings, though several women said they were for eternity alone. . . .

There are several possible explanations for this practice. These sealings may have provided a way to create an eternal bond or link between Joseph's family and other families within the Church. . . .

These sealings may also be explained by Joseph's reluctance to enter plural marriage because of the sorrow it would bring to his wife Emma. He may have believed that sealings to married women would comply with the Lord's command without requiring him to have normal marriage relationships. . . .

Another possibility is that, in an era when life spans were shorter than they are today, faithful women felt an urgency to be sealed by priesthood authority. Several of these women were married either to non-Mormons or former Mormons, and more than one of the women later expressed unhappiness in their present marriages. Living in a time when divorce was difficult to obtain, these women may have believed a sealing to Joseph Smith would give them blessings they might not otherwise receive in the next life. . . .

. . . After Joseph's death, most of the women sealed to him moved to Utah with the Saints, remained faithful Church members, and defended both plural marriage and Joseph.

("Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo," topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

SECTION 3

How did members of the Church respond to the principle of plural marriage?



The practice of plural marriage was as foreign and difficult for most early Saints as it would be to Church members today. "In many parts of the world, polygamy was socially acceptable and legally permissible. But in the United States, most people thought that the practice was morally wrong" ("The Manifesto and the End of Plural Marriage," Gospel Topics, topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org). The commandment to practice plural marriage "was among the most challenging aspects of the Restoration—for Joseph personally and for other Church members. . . . For Joseph Smith's wife Emma, it was an excruciating ordeal. . . . She vacillated in her view of plural marriage, at some points supporting it and at other times denouncing it" ("Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo," topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

Not all Latter-day Saints were expected to live plural marriage. And some Church members who struggled with the principle of plural marriage were blessed with a spiritual witness that gave

them courage to move forward with the practice. The experiences of two such members are summarized here:

Brigham Young said that, upon learning of plural marriage, “it was the first time in my life that I had desired the grave.” “I had to pray unceasingly,” he said, “and I had to exercise faith and the Lord revealed to me the truth of it and that satisfied me.” . . .

Lucy Walker recalled her inner turmoil when Joseph Smith invited her to become his wife. “Every feeling of my soul revolted against it,” she wrote. Yet, after several restless nights on her knees in prayer, she found relief as her room “filled with a holy influence” akin to “brilliant sunshine.” She said, “My soul was filled with a calm sweet peace that I never knew,” and “supreme happiness took possession of my whole being.”

Not all had such experiences. Some Latter-day Saints rejected the principle of plural marriage and left the Church, while others declined to enter the practice but remained faithful. Nevertheless, for many women and men, initial revulsion and anguish was followed by struggle, resolution, and ultimately, light and peace. Sacred experiences enabled the Saints to move forward in faith. (“Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo,” topics. ChurchofJesusChrist.org)



Ponder in Preparation for Class

How might these experiences of early Church members help someone who has questions about whether Joseph Smith acted as an inspired prophet of God when he implemented the practice of plural marriage?

SECTION 4

How did the practice of plural marriage in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints come to an end?

Not long after the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1844, the Saints migrated to the Salt Lake Valley in the western United States, where Church members eventually practiced plural marriage openly. From the 1860s to the 1880s, the United States government passed laws against the practice and eventually put harsh punishments in place for those who did not comply, including imprisonment. After seeking the Lord’s guidance and receiving His direction, President Wilford Woodruff prepared a statement in September 1890 that became known as “the Manifesto” (Official Declaration 1), which ultimately led to the end of the practice of plural marriage by members of the Church.

A small number of Church members continued to enter into new plural marriages after the Manifesto was given. During the April 1904 general conference, President Joseph F. Smith issued a second manifesto and announced “that all [plural] marriages are prohibited, and if any officer or member of the Church shall assume to solemnize or enter into any such marriage he will be . . . excommunicated” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1904, 75). This policy continues today.

SECTION 5

Is plural marriage required for exaltation?

Elder Marcus B. Nash of the Seventy has taught:



Some [misread the scriptures] to mean that plural marriage is necessary for exaltation. . . . This, however, is not supported in the revelations. . . . Eternal life is promised to a

monogamous couple who are sealed by the authority of the priesthood and who abide in the covenant—with no additional condition or requirement [see Doctrine and Covenants 132:19]. . . . The Church affirms that monogamy is God’s standard for marriage except when He authorizes or commands otherwise through His prophet. The Church does not teach that participation in plural marriage is necessary for exaltation. (“The New and Everlasting Covenant,” *Ensign*, Dec. 2015, 44, 46)

Again, we do not understand all of God’s purposes for introducing plural marriage in the early days of the Church. But Latter-day Saints today respect the sacrifices and devoted efforts made by those who practiced plural marriage in obedience to God’s command.



Record Your Thoughts

Based on what you have learned, how was the practice of plural marriage by the early Saints of this dispensation an indication of their faith, trust, and love of the Lord?

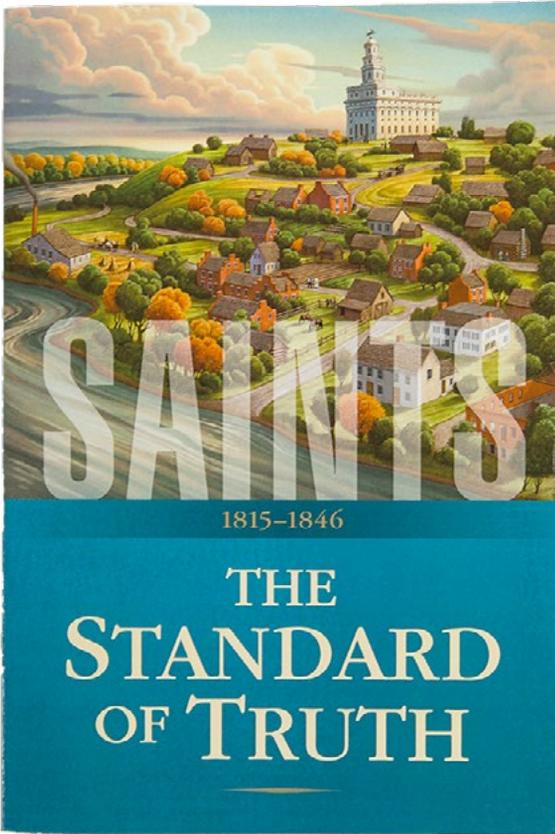
Want More? (Optional)

Where can I find trustworthy resources to learn more about the practice of plural marriage by the early Saints?

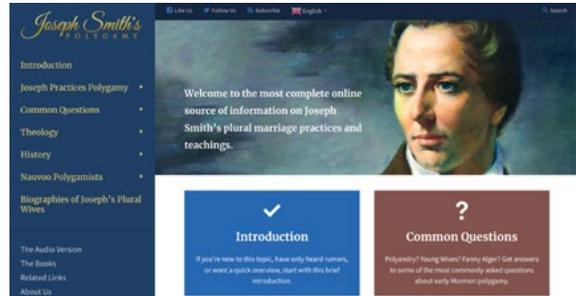
As you study more about plural marriage in Church history, remember that there is much unreliable information about this topic on the internet and in many print sources. Some authors who write about the Church and its history present information out of context, or they include partial truths that can be misleading. The intent of some writings is to destroy faith.

The following resources are examples of those that can help provide candid yet faithful insight into the practice of plural marriage in Church history:

- “Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo,” Gospel Topics, topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org
- “Plural Marriage and Families in Early Utah,” Gospel Topics, topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org
- “The Manifesto and the End of Plural Marriage,” Gospel Topics, topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org
- “Why Was It Necessary for Joseph Smith and Others to Practice Plural Marriage?” [10:07]. In this video, Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, along with Church historians, answers a question about plural marriage during a worldwide devotional.
- “Mormon Polygamy Q and A” [7:40]. In this video, Church historians discuss plural marriage in the early Church—how the practice began, how it changed over time, and why it was discontinued.
- *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, volume 1, *The Standard of Truth, 1815–1846*, chapters 36, 40–41. These chapters give a narrative account of Joseph Smith’s efforts to obey the Lord’s command and establish the practice of plural marriage.



- Joseph Smith's Polygamy website. Though not produced by the Church, this online resource provides comprehensive and candid information on Joseph Smith's plural marriage practices and teachings from a perspective of faith.





LESSON 23 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

The Prophetic Mission and the Martyrdom of Joseph Smith

Think of people in the scriptures who were willing to sacrifice their lives to do the Lord's will. What do such sacrifices teach you about these people's testimony and conviction? As you study the mission and martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith, think about how his contributions and legacy have impacted your life.

SECTION 1

What events led to the imprisonment of the Prophet Joseph Smith at Carthage Jail?

"Joseph and Hyrum are dead. [John] Taylor wounded. . . . I am well." These words are a portion of a message Willard Richards sent to Emma Smith and other Saints in Nauvoo just hours after Joseph and Hyrum Smith were brutally killed at Carthage Jail on the evening of June 27, 1844 (Willard Richards letter, Carthage Jail, June 27, 1844, Church History Library, Salt Lake City). Imagine the thoughts and feelings Emma and the Saints might have had while they read these words.

The Saints' growing political and economic influence was viewed as a threat by neighboring communities. By the summer of 1844, opposition to Joseph Smith and the Church had greatly intensified. Some who had left the Church conspired to inflame public opinion against the Prophet. Some Illinois citizens discussed driving the Saints from the state, while others plotted to kill the Prophet.

On June 10, 1844, Joseph Smith, who was the mayor of Nauvoo, and the Nauvoo city council ordered the destruction of the *Nauvoo Expositor* and the press on which it was printed. The *Nauvoo Expositor* was an anti-Mormon newspaper that slandered the Prophet and other Saints and called for the repeal of the Nauvoo Charter. City officials feared that this publication would lead to

mob action. As a result of the action by the mayor and city council, Illinois authorities brought an unfounded charge of riot against the Prophet, his brother Hyrum, and other Nauvoo city officials. The governor of Illinois, Thomas Ford, ordered the men to stand trial in Carthage, Illinois, the county seat, and promised them protection. Joseph knew that if he went to Carthage, his life would be in great danger from the mobs who were threatening him. . . .

. . . On June 24, Joseph and Hyrum Smith bade farewell to their families and rode with other Nauvoo city officials toward Carthage. (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 529–30)

Complete one or both of the following activities:

1. Watch the video “Ministry of Joseph Smith: Sealed His Testimony with His Blood” (1:14).

1. Study the rest of section 1.

As the Prophet traveled with others to Carthage, he prophesied of his martyrdom.



Study in Preparation for Class

Study Doctrine and Covenants 135:4.

Joseph and Hyrum “voluntarily surrender[ed] themselves to county officials in Carthage the next day. After the brothers had been released on bail for the initial charge, they were falsely charged with treason against the state of Illinois, arrested, and imprisoned in Carthage Jail to await a hearing.

Elders John Taylor and Willard Richards, the only members of the Twelve who were not then serving missions, voluntarily joined them” (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 530).



SECTION 2

What happened at Carthage Jail?

Complete one or both of the following activities:

1. Watch the video “Joseph Smith—Prophet of the Restoration,” which depicts the scene of Joseph and Hyrum’s death, from time codes 0:00 to 3:20.

1. Read the following narrative from *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*:

Time passed slowly in the Carthage jail that afternoon. In the summer heat, the men left their coats off and opened the windows to let in a breeze. Outside, eight men . . . guarded the jail while the rest of the militia camped nearby. Another guard sat just on the other side of the door.



Stephen Markham, Dan Jones, and others were running errands for Joseph. Of the men who had stayed there the night before, only Willard Richards and John Taylor were still with Joseph and Hyrum. Earlier in the day, visitors had smuggled two guns to the prisoners—a six-shooter revolver and a single-shot pistol—in case of an attack. Stephen had also left behind a sturdy walking stick he called the “rascal beater.”

To ease the mood and pass the time, John sang a British hymn. . . .

[Shortly after John Taylor sang the hymn for the second time] the prisoners heard a rustling at the door and the crack of three or four gunshots. Willard glanced out the open window and saw a hundred men below, their faces blackened with mud and gunpowder, storming the entry to the jail. Joseph grabbed one of the pistols while Hyrum seized the other. . . . All four men pressed themselves against the door as the mob rushed up the stairs and tried to force their way inside.

Gunfire sounded in the stairwell as the mob shot at the door. . . . [A] ball splintered through the wood. It struck Hyrum in the face and he turned, stumbling away from the door. Another ball struck him in the lower back. . . .

“Brother Hyrum!” Joseph cried. Gripping his six-shooter, he opened the door a few inches and fired once. More musket balls flew into the room, and Joseph fired haphazardly at the mob while John [Taylor] used a cane to beat down the gun barrels and bayonets thrust through the doorway.



After Joseph’s revolver misfired two or three times, John ran to the window and tried to climb the deep windowsill. A musket ball flew across the room and struck him in the leg, tipping him off balance. His body went numb and he crashed against the window sill, smashing his pocket watch at sixteen minutes past five o’clock.

“I am shot!” he cried.

John dragged himself across the floor and rolled under the bed as the mob fired again and again. A ball ripped into his hip, tearing away a chunk of flesh. Two more balls struck his wrist and the bone just above his knee.

Across the room, Joseph and Willard strained to put all their weight against the door as Willard knocked away the musket barrels and bayonets in front of him. Suddenly, Joseph dropped his revolver to the floor and darted for the window. As he straddled the windowsill, two balls struck his back. Another ball hurtled through the window and pierced him below the heart.

“O Lord, my God,” he cried. His body lurched forward and he pitched headfirst out the window.

Willard rushed across the room and stuck his head outside as lead balls whistled past him. Below he saw the mob swarming around Joseph’s bleeding body. . . .

Joseph Smith, the prophet and seer of the Lord, was dead. (*Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, vol. 1, *The Standard of Truth, 1815–1846* [2018], 548–552; see also Doctrine and Covenants 135:1–2)



Ponder in Preparation for Class

What are your thoughts and feelings as you consider the sacrifice Joseph and Hyrum Smith were willing to make for their testimonies of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ?



Study in Preparation for Class

Study Doctrine and Covenants 135:3. Consider marking words and phrases that seem significant to you.



Record Your Thoughts

Think about your testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the ways his prophetic mission has influenced and blessed your life. Consider recording your thoughts in your journal.

SECTION 3

How has the prophetic mission of Joseph Smith blessed my life?

Under the direction of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, a written announcement of the martyrdom was prepared based on the eyewitness accounts of Elder John Taylor and Elder Willard Richards. This announcement is now recorded as Doctrine and Covenants 135.

Want More? (Optional)

Where can I learn more about the prophetic mission and the martyrdom of Joseph Smith?



President Dallin H. Oaks of the First Presidency shared his witness of Joseph Smith’s remarkable life and prophetic mission in his article “The Miraculous Mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith” (*Ensign*, Jan. 2019, 30–39).

The video *Joseph Smith: Prophet of the Restoration* (1:09:25) depicts the life and martyrdom of Joseph Smith.



LESSON 24 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

The Prophet Joseph Smith—A Choice Seer

The Lord described the Prophet Joseph Smith as “a choice seer” who would bring people to a knowledge of the Lord’s covenants (2 Nephi 3:7–8). Yet from the very beginning of the Restoration, Joseph Smith acknowledged his feelings of inadequacy. As you study this material, consider how you might respond with faith to callings from the Lord, despite your weakness. Consider also how you can respond to those who would criticize Joseph Smith because of his weakness.

SECTION 1

What can I learn from Joseph Smith about my own ability to serve the Lord?

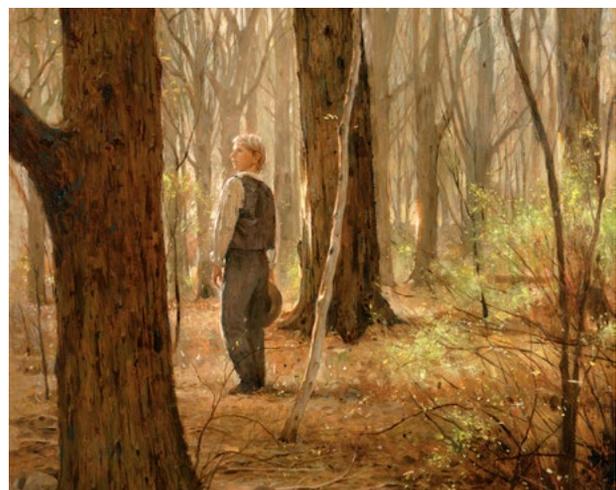
As a young man, Joseph Smith felt overwhelmed with his calling from the Lord. He said of himself:



I stood alone, an unlearned youth, to combat the worldly wisdom . . . with a new revelation. (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 60)

I was an obscure boy, . . . and my circumstances in life [were] such as to make [me] a boy of no consequence in the world . . . who was doomed to the necessity of obtaining

a scanty maintenance by [my] daily labor.
(Joseph Smith—History 1:22–23)



Joseph thought it was “very strange” that “men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me, and create a bitter persecution” (Joseph Smith—History 1:22–23).

Imagine the feelings Joseph may have had as he translated 2 Nephi 3 in the Book of Mormon and learned from Lehi that Joseph of Egypt prophesied of a “choice seer” in the latter days.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read 2 Nephi 3:7, 11, 13.

In a later revelation the Lord explained one reason why He had chosen and called Joseph to be the prophet of the Restoration:

Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you, my servant Joseph Smith, I am well pleased with your offering . . . ; for unto this end have I raised you up, that I might show forth my wisdom through the weak things of the earth. (Doctrine and Covenants 124:1)

Commenting on the scripture passage from 2 Nephi 3, Elder Marcus B. Nash of the Seventy taught:



It may seem counterintuitive that the Lord would call upon the weak to accomplish a mighty work. Yet those who recognize their weakness can be moved by that very weakness to seek the Lord’s strength. Those who thus humble themselves in faith will be strengthened by Him who has all power in heaven and earth (see Matthew 28:18; Mosiah 4:9).

From the time of his youth, Joseph Smith approached the Lord on these terms. . . .

Joseph described himself as “an obscure boy . . . who was doomed to the necessity of obtaining a scanty maintenance by his daily labor” (Joseph Smith—History 1:23). He was born into a low social stratum with limited formal education. . . .

Joseph felt so keenly his lack of education that he once lamented being trapped in “the little narrow prison almost as it were total [*sic*] darkness of paper pen and ink and a crooked broken scattered and imperfect language.” Despite this, the Lord called him to translate the Book of Mormon—all 588 pages of it as originally published—which he did in less than 90 days! . . .

Yes, a theme of the Book of Mormon—and the Prophet Joseph’s life—is that the weak who humbly seek the Lord in faith are made strong, even mighty, in the work of the Lord. This strengthening will occur even in seemingly small things. . . .

. . . There is another, more personal lesson: if we, like Joseph, will recognize our weakness and turn in faith to the Lord with all of our heart, determined to do His will, we too will be made strong out of weakness. This does not necessarily mean that the weakness is erased in mortality—but it does mean that such an individual will be made strong by God. (“Joseph Smith: Strength Out of Weakness,” *Ensign*, Dec. 2017, 55–56, 58)



Ponder in Preparation for Class

What can you learn from the Lord calling Joseph Smith, a mortal with weaknesses, and then strengthening Joseph to do His work?

SECTION 2

What did those who were closely acquainted with Joseph Smith say about him and his character?

The Lord declared to Joseph of Egypt that his descendants would highly esteem the Prophet of the Restoration (see 2 Nephi 3:7). President Dallin H. Oaks of the First Presidency declared:



Men who knew Joseph best and stood closest to him in Church leadership loved and sustained him as a prophet. His brother Hyrum chose to die at his side. John Taylor, also with him when he was murdered, said: "I testify before God, angels, and men, that he was a good, honorable, virtuous man . . . —that his private and public character was unimpeachable—and that he lived and died as a man of God" (*The Gospel Kingdom*, [1987], 355; see also D&C 135:3). Brigham Young declared: "I do not think that a man lives on the earth that knew [Joseph Smith] any better than I did; and I am bold to say that, Jesus Christ excepted, no better man ever lived or does live upon this earth" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 9:332). (Dallin H. Oaks, "Joseph, The Man and the Prophet," *Ensign*, May 1996, 71)

Jane Snyder Richards said of Joseph's personality and character:



[Joseph Smith] was one of the most engaging personalities it has ever been my good fortune to meet. . . . As Seer and Revelator he was fearless and outspoken, yet humble, never considering that he was more than the mouth-piece, through whom God spoke. As the Leader of his people he was ever active and progressive but always modest and considerate of them and their trying circumstances. (Jane Snyder Richards, in "Joseph Smith, the Prophet," *Young Woman's Journal*, Dec. 1905, 550)

Edwin Holden recounted that the Prophet was filled with the love of God, eager to lift and bless others:



In 1838 Joseph and some of the young men were playing various out-door games, among which was a game of ball. By and by they began to get weary. He saw it, and calling them together he said: "Let us build a log cabin." So off they went, Joseph and the young men, to build a log cabin for a widow woman. Such was Joseph's way, always assisting in whatever he could. (*The Juvenile Instructor*, Mar. 1, 1892, 153)

Eliza R. Snow wrote of the Prophet's humility and integrity:



I resided in the family of Joseph Smith, and taught his family school, and had ample opportunity to mark his "daily walk and conversation," as a prophet of God; and the more I became acquainted with him, the more I appreciated him as such. . . . In his devotions he was as humble as a little child. (Eliza R. Snow, "Sketch of My Life," *Relief Society Magazine*, Mar. 1944, 136)

Mary Frost Adams remembered one of Joseph's kind deeds:

While Joseph was mayor of Nauvoo, a black Latter-day Saint named Anthony was arrested for selling liquor on the Sabbath, which was against the law. Anthony had done so to raise money to purchase the freedom of his child who was a slave in the South. He had purchased his wife's and his own liberty and now wanted to bring their child to join them. Despite the worthiness of Anthony's cause, the Prophet said, "I am sorry, Anthony, but the law must be observed, and we will have to impose a fine." However, "the next day Brother Joseph presented Anthony with a fine horse, directing him to sell it, and use the money obtained for the purchase of the child." ("Joseph Smith, the Prophet," *Young Woman's Journal*, Dec. 1906, 538)



Ponder in Preparation for Class

What do you learn about Joseph Smith’s character from the accounts of those who knew him? What feelings and testimony do you have about the Prophet Joseph Smith?

SECTION 3

How should I respond when I encounter negative information about the Prophet Joseph Smith?

Even as Joseph Smith’s work to restore the gospel was barely beginning, it was prophesied that many would speak against him and accuse him of evil deeds and motives. Joseph Smith recorded in his history a prophecy delivered by the angel Moroni when he appeared to Joseph in 1823. At that time, Joseph was just 17 years old.



Study in Preparation for Class

Study Joseph Smith—History 1:33.

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles suggested ways Latter-day Saints might respond to the criticisms against the Prophet Joseph Smith:



Should we be surprised with the evil spoken against [Joseph Smith]? The Apostle Paul was called mad and deranged [see Acts 26:24]. Our Beloved Savior, the Son of God, was

labeled gluttonous, a winebibber, and possessed of a devil [see Matthew 11:19; John 10:20]. . . .

Many of those who dismiss the work of the Restoration simply do not believe that heavenly beings speak to men on earth. Impossible, they say, that golden plates were delivered by an angel and translated by the power of God. From that disbelief, they quickly reject Joseph’s testimony, and a few unfortunately sink to discrediting the Prophet’s life and slandering his character. . . .

To questions about Joseph’s character, we might share the words of thousands who knew him personally and who gave their lives for the work he helped establish. . . .

We might remind the sincere inquirer that Internet information does not have a “truth” filter. Some information, no matter how convincing, is simply not true. . . .

We might remind the inquirer that some information about Joseph, while true, may be presented completely out of context to his own day and situation. . . .

Each believer needs a spiritual confirmation of the divine mission and character of the Prophet Joseph Smith. This is true for every generation. Spiritual questions deserve spiritual answers from God. . . .

A testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith can come differently to each of us. It may come as you kneel in prayer, asking God to confirm that he was a true prophet. It may come as you read the Prophet’s account of the First Vision. A testimony may distill upon your soul as you read the Book of Mormon again and again. . . . With faith and real intent, your testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith will strengthen. (Neil L. Andersen, “Joseph Smith,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 28–30)



Ponder in Preparation for Class

Why do you think that it is important to include a study of reliable sources along with prayer when seeking to answer questions about Joseph Smith and his prophetic mission? Why do you think that questions about Joseph Smith and his prophetic mission deserve spiritual answers from God?

Want More? (Optional)

Where can I learn more about the prophetic mission of Joseph Smith?

The video *Joseph Smith: Prophet of the Restoration* (1:09:25) depicts the life of Joseph Smith.



In his talk “Joseph Smith: Strength Out of Weakness” (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Dec. 2017, 55–61), Elder Marcus B. Nash of the Seventy used the experiences of the Prophet Joseph Smith to teach principles relating to making weaknesses become strong.

You can also learn more about the Prophet Joseph Smith and details about his life by exploring the following resources:

- *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, vol. 1, *The Standard of Truth, 1815–1846* (2018)
- Joseph Smith Papers
- Joseph Smith: Prophet of the Restoration Videos



Brigham Young looks on as the Saints leave Nauvoo.

LESSON 25 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

Succession in the Presidency and the Trek West

After announcing the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, one newspaper article concluded, “Thus ends Mormonism” (*Weekly Herald*, July 13, 1844, 220). With the Prophet Joseph’s death, many outside observers believed the Church would fall apart. And Church members questioned who would lead them. As you study this lesson material, look for how the Lord continues to guide His Church after the death of the prophet.

SECTION 1

Who leads the Lord’s Church when the prophet dies?

Complete *one* of the following options for this section:

1. Watch the video “The Succession Crisis after Joseph Smith’s Murder” (8:03), and then complete the ponder activity at the end of this section.
2. Study the following material, and then complete the ponder activity.

A feeling of gloom settled over Nauvoo with the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. During this time of confusion, several people claimed they had

the right to lead the Church. One of these people was Sidney Rigdon.

At the time of Joseph’s death, Brigham Young and other Apostles were serving missions in the eastern United States. It was not until July 16, 1844, that Brigham received a letter describing the murders of Joseph and Hyrum Smith.

When he read the letter, Brigham felt like his head was going to crack. He had never felt such despair.

His thoughts turned instantly to the priesthood. Joseph had held all the keys necessary to endow the Saints and seal them together for eternity. Without those keys, the work of the Lord could not move forward. For a moment, Brigham feared that Joseph had taken them to the grave.

Then, in a burst of revelation, Brigham remembered how Joseph had bestowed the keys on the Twelve Apostles. Bringing his hand down hard on his knee, he said, “The keys of the kingdom are right here with the church.” (*Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, vol. 1, *The Standard of Truth, 1815–1846* [2018], 559)

On August 7, 1844, the Twelve and other Church leaders gathered in council. During this meeting Sidney Rigdon, who had become disaffected from the Church, asserted that because he had previously been called and ordained as a spokesman for Joseph Smith (see Doctrine and Covenants 100:9), it was his responsibility to “see that the church is governed in a proper manner” (in *History, 1838–1856* [Manuscript History of the Church], volume F-1, 295, josephsmithpapers.org).

After Sidney concluded his remarks, Brigham Young declared:



Joseph conferred upon [the] heads [of the Twelve Apostles] all the keys and powers belonging to the apostleship which he himself held before he was taken away. (Brigham Young, in *History, 1838–1856*, volume F-1, 296, josephsmithpapers.org)

The next day, the Saints in Nauvoo gathered to hear Sidney Rigdon make his leadership claim. After his speech, Brigham Young spoke briefly, advocating that the Quorum of the Twelve, who collectively held all the priesthood keys restored to the Prophet Joseph Smith, lead the Church for now.

As Emily [Hoyt] listened to Brigham speak, she caught herself glancing up at him to make sure it was not Joseph speaking. He had Joseph’s expression, his method of reasoning, and even the sound of his voice. . . .

Seven years later, Emily recorded her experience of watching Brigham speak to the Saints, testifying how much he looked and sounded like Joseph on the stand. In

the years to come, dozens of Saints would add their witness to hers, describing how they saw Joseph’s prophetic mantle fall on Brigham that day. (*Saints*, 1:565–66)

Wilford Woodruff wrote, “If I had not seen him [Brigham] with my own eyes, there is no one that could have convinced me that it was not Joseph Smith” (in *History of the Church*, 7:236).

With Brigham Young’s declaration concerning Joseph’s conferral of the keys and powers of the apostleship upon the Twelve and the confirming witness of the Holy Ghost, the Saints understood the will of the Lord and sustained the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as the leaders of the restored Church of Jesus Christ.



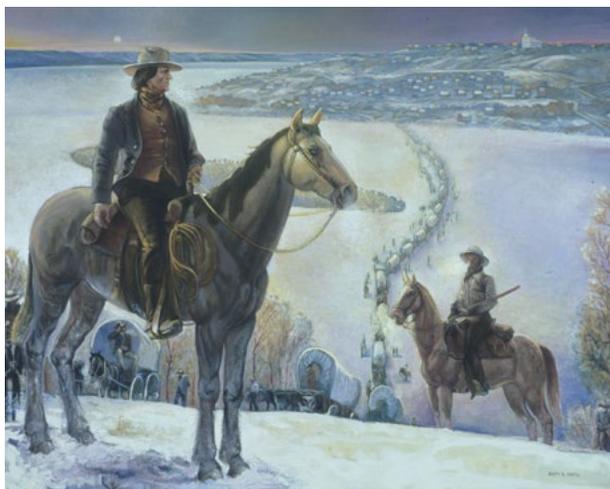
Ponder in Preparation for Class

Consider how Heavenly Father made known His will and His love for the Saints by showing to them that Brigham Young and the Twelve were to lead the Church. How have you come to know that those who lead the Church today are chosen and called of God?

SECTION 2

How might the Lord guide us when the future looks uncertain?

In January 1846, amid growing persecution against the Saints, the Twelve Apostles finalized plans to leave Nauvoo and go west. In 1842 Joseph Smith had prophesied “that the Saints would continue to suffer much affliction and would be driven to the Rocky Mountains . . . [and make] settlements and build cities and . . . become a mighty people in the midst of the Rocky Mountains” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 517).



Brigham Young leads the Saints out of Nauvoo.

While the Saints were preparing to leave Nauvoo, they also worked to complete the Nauvoo Temple. As it neared completion, thousands of Saints thronged the temple day and night to receive the endowment and sealing ordinances. Sister Sarah Rich observed:



If it had not been for the faith and knowledge that was bestowed upon us in that temple by the influence and help of the Spirit of the Lord, our journey would have been like one taking a leap in the dark. . . . But we had faith in our Heavenly Father, and we put our trust in Him feeling that we were His chosen people. (Sarah Rich, in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* [2011], 30)

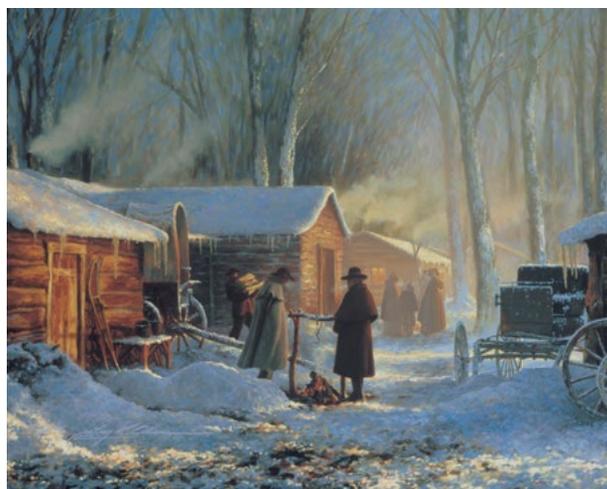
Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke of the Saints who were in Nauvoo at that time:



Their covenants with the Lord in the Nauvoo Temple were a protection for them during their journey westward, as it is for each of us today and throughout our lives. (Robert D. Hales, “Temple Blessings,” *New Era*, Feb. 2014, 4)

As persecution intensified, the Saints finalized their plans and the first large body of Saints started the

journey across Iowa in February 1846. They faced severe winter weather, inadequate provisions, and disorganization. Spring brought constant rain, swollen creeks, and mud, restricting the Saints’ travel to only 300 miles (483 kilometers) in 131 days. As a result of these delays and depleted resources, Brigham Young halted the journey and established a way station called Winter Quarters. By fall, the population of Winter Quarters had swelled to over 7,000 people.



Many were sick from malnutrition and exposure, and the faith of some was being challenged. These trying circumstances made the winter of 1846–47 among the most difficult periods of Brigham Young’s life. He felt “like a father with a great family of children around [him]” and later recalled that his responsibilities pressed down upon him like a “twenty-five ton weight” (“This Shall Be Our Covenant,” *Revelations in Context* [2016], 307–8; see also *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, vol. 2, *No Unhallowed Hand, 1846–1893* [2020], 40–44, 46–51).

Under this weight, Brigham Young pled with the Lord for guidance and received a revelation constituting the “Word and Will of the Lord concerning the Camp of Israel in their journeyings to the West” (Doctrine and Covenants 136:1). As you study the following portions of this revelation, consider

marking the Lord's instructions and promises to the Saints.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 136:2, 8, 10–11, 21–22.

President Dallin H. Oaks of the First Presidency gave an important insight into the timing of the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 136. He said:



Fundamental to any effort to receive revelation is a commitment to do all we can with our own efforts and judgment. This means we need to serve and to work.

Going forward with our service and work is an important way to qualify for revelation. In my study of the scriptures I have noted that most revelation to the children of God comes when they are on the move, not when they are sitting back in their habitations waiting for the Lord to tell them the first step to take.

For example, it is significant to note that the revelation known as “the Word and Will of the Lord concerning the Camp of Israel” (D&C 136:1) was not given in Nauvoo as the Quorum of the Twelve planned the exodus from Nauvoo; . . . nor was it given on the west bank of the Mississippi River. . . . The revelation to guide the movement of the Saints across the plains was given on January 14, 1847, when the Saints had already gone about a third of the way to the valleys of the mountains. (Dallin H. Oaks, “In His Own Time, in His Own Way,” *Ensign*, Aug, 2013, 22, 24)

Consider for a minute how this insight from President Oaks may apply to your own questions and decisions that affect your future.



In early April 1847, Brigham Young left Winter Quarters with the first company of Saints. They traveled 1,031 miles (1,660 kilometers) in four months and arrived in the Salt Lake Valley on July 24, 1847. Wilford Woodruff recorded that when Brigham Young saw the valley, “he was enraptured in vision for several minutes. . . . When the vision had passed, he said, ‘It is enough. This is the right place. Drive on!’” (in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff* [2004], 146). By October, about 1,700 Saints had settled in Utah. However, about 10,000 others still lived along the Missouri River in Iowa and Nebraska and would travel west within the next five years (see “Sustaining a New First Presidency in 1847,” ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

For more than three years, the Twelve Apostles had led the Church in the absence of the First Presidency. In December 1847, the Apostles met in Council Bluffs, Iowa, where many of the Saints still lived. They gathered in a small log home to discuss reorganizing the First Presidency. “A great manifestation of the Holy Spirit was poured out upon those present,” and the Twelve unanimously sustained Brigham Young, the senior Apostle, as President of the Church (Autobiography of Bathsheba W. Smith, 12, Church History Library, Salt Lake City; spelling standardized; see also *Saints*, 2:87–89, 92–95).



Ponder in Preparation for Class

Think about how the Lord guided the Saints as they journeyed to the Salt Lake Valley. How have you felt the Lord guiding your life? What could you focus on to receive greater guidance from the Lord?

Want More? (Optional)

What counsel and promises did the Lord give the Saints in preparation for their westward migration?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 136 to learn more about how the Lord organized and directed the Saints in their migration to the Salt Lake Valley.

How do the ordinances and covenants of the temple help fortify me?

Watch the video “Endowed with Power” (12:17), which portrays the earnest desires of the Saints to receive their temple blessings before leaving Nauvoo.



Engraving of Salt Lake City in 1853, by Frederick Piercy

LESSON 26 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

The Church in the West

The Saints who gathered to the valley of the Great Salt Lake and surrounding regions experienced several challenges after their arrival. These included harsh weather, crop-eating crickets, drought, and hunger. However, Brigham Young “was less concerned with raising crops and money than he was with helping his people to become a holy nation. He knew from experience that they would grow from working hard and accepting responsibility. ‘This is a good place to make Saints,’ he told a congregation of members in Salt Lake City in 1856 (*DNW [Deseret News Weekly]*, 10 Sept. 1856, 5)” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 9). Most of the Saints demonstrated great faith in the Lord during these early years, despite these trials. Sadly, this period of Church history also includes the tragedy of the Mountain Meadows Massacre, which can teach us important lessons we can apply in our day.

SECTION 1

What can I learn from the early pioneer Saints about serving the Lord and building His kingdom today?

During the trying winter of 1848–49 when the weather was cold and food was scarce, some Saints wanted to move on to California and mine gold. President Brigham Young prophesied:



“Some have asked me about going [to California]. I have told them that God has appointed this place [the Great Basin] for the gathering of his Saints, and you will do better right here than you will by going to the gold mines. . . . God has shown me that this is the spot to locate His people, and here is where they will prosper; . . . God will temper the climate and we shall build a city and a temple to the Most High God in this place. We will extend our settlements to the east and west, to the north and to the south, and we will build towns and cities by the hundreds, and

thousands of the Saints will gather in from the nations of the earth.” (In James S. Brown, *Life of a Pioneer: Being the Autobiography of James S. Brown* [1900], 121–22)

By the time of Brigham Young’s death in 1877, Latter-day Saints had seen the miraculous fulfillment of this prophecy. Their faith in the Lord and His prophet inspired 60,000 to 70,000 pioneer Saints to immigrate to the Salt Lake Valley, where they founded between 350 and 400 communities in Utah, Arizona, California, Idaho, Nevada, and Wyoming.

The Perpetual Emigration Fund that was established to assist poor Latter-day Saint immigrants helped fund the travel of 30,000 Saints from the British Isles, Scandinavia, Switzerland, Germany, and the Netherlands. Missionaries preached the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world. The Saints consecrated their time to build temples in Salt Lake City, Logan, and St. George. Most important, the Saints left a legacy of faith, sacrifice, and unyielding devotion to the cause of Jesus Christ and His restored gospel. (See “Brigham Young,” Newsroom Topics, newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org.)

Choose one of the following accounts of faithful Saints who gathered to Utah in the early days of the Church. Read the account and come to class prepared to share lessons or principles you learn from it about serving the Lord and building His kingdom today.

Lucy Meserve Smith

Read about the compassion of Lucy Meserve Smith and other Latter-day Saint women who provided relief to the handcart pioneers, in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* [2011], 36–37. Start with the paragraph that begins “Lucy Meserve Smith, for example, led a group . . .,” and read until the end of the chapter.

John Moyle

Read the inspiring story of John Moyle, who journeyed to Salt Lake to work on the temple each week despite losing his leg in an accident, in Dieter F. Uchtdorf’s talk “Lift Where You Stand” (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 55–56). Read the section titled “The Example of John Rowe Moyle.”

Or watch the video “Only a Stonecutter” (15:00).

Joseph Millett

Read about Joseph Millett’s willingness to give flour to a man who was directed to him by the Lord: Boyd K. Packer, “A Tribute to the Rank and File of the Church,” *Ensign*, May 1980, 63. Start with the paragraph that begins “Let me quote from the diary of Joseph Millett . . .,” and conclude with the paragraph beginning “The Lord knew Joseph Millett.”

Or watch the video “The Joseph Millett Story” (6:14).

Charles Walker and Charles Rich

Read about the faith of two men and their families who answered the call to establish new settlements for the gathering Saints, in *Our Heritage: A Brief History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (1996), 88–89. Read from page 88, starting with the paragraph that begins “At general conference meetings, President Young . . .,” and concluding with the paragraph on page 89 that begins “There have been many hardships . . .”

SECTION 2

What led to the Mountain Meadows Massacre?

During the 1850s, disagreements and miscommunication resulted in growing tension between the Latter-day Saints and officials of the United States government. Falsely believing the Saints to be in

rebellion, United States President James Buchanan sent 1,500 troops to Salt Lake City to put down the alleged rebellion.

In sermons to the Saints, President Young and other Church leaders described the coming troops as enemies. They feared that the troops might drive the Saints from Utah Territory, as they had previously been driven from Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois. President Young instructed the Saints to save grain so they would have food to eat if they needed to flee from the troops. As governor of the Utah Territory, he also directed the militia to prepare to defend the territory. To avoid bloodshed, the rest of the Saints were prepared to evacuate their homes and lands and destroy them if needed.

During this time, an emigrant wagon train traveling west from Arkansas to California entered Utah. Some members of the wagon train became frustrated because they had a difficult time purchasing much-needed grain from the Saints.

Tensions escalated in Cedar City, the last settlement in Utah on the route to California. Confrontations occurred, and some members of the wagon train threatened to join the coming government troops against the Saints. After the wagon company left town, some of the settlers and leaders in Cedar City wanted to pursue and punish the men who had threatened and offended them.

Isaac Haight, the Cedar City mayor, militia major, and stake president, requested permission from William Dame, militia commander in nearby Parowan, to call out the militia and confront the offenders from the wagon train. However, Dame denied their request and instructed them not to notice the emigrants' threats.

Instead of following this instruction, Isaac Haight and other Cedar City leaders planned to persuade local Paiute Indians to attack the wagon train, steal cattle, and kill some or all of the men. Haight asked

John D. Lee, a local Church member and militia major, to lead the Paiutes in this attack. They conspired to blame the Paiutes for the deed.

Isaac Haight presented his plan to a council of local Church, community, and militia leaders. Some council members strongly disagreed with Haight's plan and asked if he had consulted with President Brigham Young. Saying he had not, Haight agreed to send a messenger to Salt Lake City with a letter explaining the situation and asking what should be done. It would require about a week for the messenger to reach Salt Lake City and return with President Young's instructions.

But shortly before the messenger was dispatched, John D. Lee and a group of Indians prematurely attacked the emigrant camp at a place called Mountain Meadows. Lee attempted to make it appear as if only local Piutes were involved. Some of the emigrants were killed or wounded, and the remainder fought off their attackers, forcing Lee and the Piutes to retreat. The emigrants quickly pulled their wagons into a tight circle for protection.

At one point, Cedar City militiamen were seen by two emigrant men. The militiamen fired on them, killing one. The other man escaped.

In an attempt to prevent news from spreading that Church members were involved in the attacks, Isaac Haight, John D. Lee, and other local Church and militia leaders developed a plan to kill all the remaining emigrants, except for small children. "Again they sought Dame's permission to call out the militia, and again Dame held a . . . council, which decided that men should be sent to help the beleaguered emigrants continue on their way in peace. Haight later lamented, 'I would give a world if I had it, if we had abided by the deci[s]ion of the council'" (Richard E. Turley Jr., "The Mountain Meadows Massacre," *Ensign*, Sept. 2007, 18).

After the council meeting, Isaac Haight succeeded in convincing Dame to rethink the council's decision, and Haight left believing he had permission

to use the militia to carry out their plan. John D. Lee approached the emigrants under a white flag of truce and said the militia would protect them from further attacks by guiding them safely back to Cedar City.

As the emigrants were walking toward Cedar City, the militiamen turned and fired on them. Some Indians recruited by the settlers rushed from hiding places to join the attack. Of approximately 140 emigrants who were part of the wagon train, only 17 small children were spared.

Two days after the massacre, President Young’s reply arrived, with the instruction to allow the wagon train to go in peace. “When Haight read Young’s words, he sobbed like a child and could manage only the words, ‘Too late, too late’” (Richard E. Turley Jr., “The Mountain Meadows Massacre,” *Ensign*, Sept. 2007, 20).

The choices of some Church leaders and settlers in southern Utah Territory led to the tragic Mountain Meadows Massacre. In contrast, Church and territory leaders in Salt Lake City resolved the conflict with the United States government through peace talks and negotiation in 1858. During this conflict—later called the Utah War—the United States troops and Utah militiamen engaged in acts of aggression but never in battle.



Speaking at the Mountain Meadows Massacre memorial site on September 11, 2007, President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency said:



The gospel of Jesus Christ that we espouse abhors the cold-blooded killing of men, women, and children. Indeed, it advocates peace and forgiveness. What was done here long ago by members of our Church represents a terrible and inexcusable departure from Christian teaching and conduct. . . . We express profound regret for the massacre carried out in this valley . . . and for the undue and untold suffering experienced by the victims then and by their relatives to the present time. (Henry B. Eyring, “150th Anniversary of Mountain Meadows Massacre,” newsroom. ChurchofJesusChrist.org)



Ponder in Preparation for Class

What are some of the lessons we can learn from the terrible choices that led to the Mountain Meadows Massacre? Read Proverbs 28:13 and 3 Nephi 12:24–25, 43–44, and identify principles that if followed could have prevented this tragedy. Consider how living these principles could prevent unnecessary heartache or tragedy in your own life.

Want More? (Optional)

Where can I learn more about some of the positive and faithful experiences of the early pioneer Saints?



In the article “The Faith of the Pioneers” (*Ensign*, July 1984, 3–6), President Gordon B. Hinckley teaches lessons we can learn

from the early pioneers who settled in the Salt Lake Valley.

Where can I learn more about the Mountain Meadows Massacre?

See the following resources:

- Richard E. Turley, "The Mountain Meadows Massacre," *Ensign*, Sept. 2007, 14–21

- *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, vol. 2, *No Unhallowed Hand, 1846–1893* [2020], 241–269
- "Peace and Violence among 19th-Century Latter-day Saints," Gospel Topics, topics. [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)



LESSON 27 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

The Revelation on the Priesthood

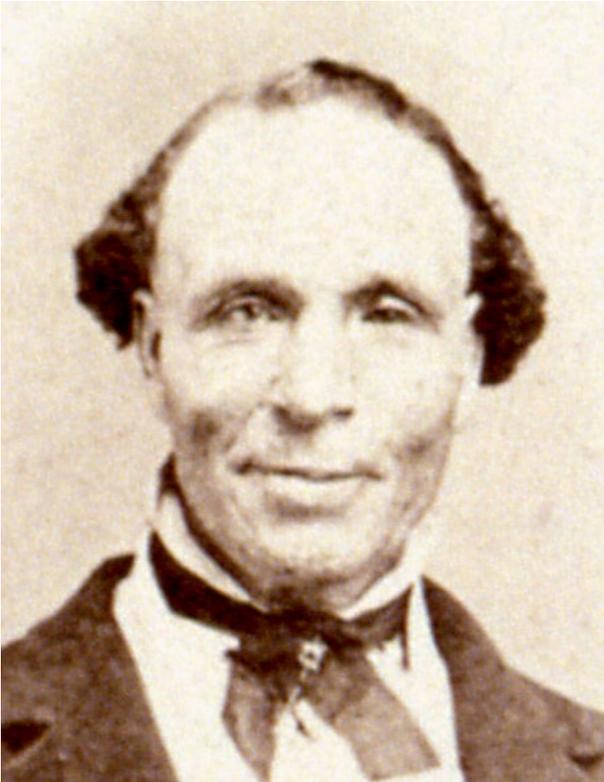
Have you ever wondered or been asked to explain why Latter-day Saints of black African descent were restricted for a time from being ordained to the priesthood and receiving temple ordinances? As you study, identify what we do and do not know about the priesthood and temple restrictions. Look for truths that can help you better understand this topic and explain it to others in an accurate and faithful way.

SECTION 1

What do we know about the origin of the priesthood and temple restrictions?

“The Book of Mormon teaches that ‘all are alike unto God,’ including ‘black and white, bond and free, male and female’ (2 Nephi 26:33). Throughout the history of the Church, people of every race and

ethnicity in many countries have been baptized and have lived as faithful members of the Church. During Joseph Smith’s lifetime, a few black male members of the Church were ordained to the priesthood. Early in its history, Church leaders stopped conferring the priesthood on black males of African descent. Church records offer no clear insights into the origins of this practice” (introduction to Official Declaration 2).



Elijah Able was one of the few black men ordained to the priesthood in early Church history.

During this time, black men and women were also restricted from receiving the ordinances of the temple, but they were still permitted to be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Although much is unknown about the origin of the priesthood and temple restrictions, Latter-day prophets, including Brigham Young, David O. McKay, and Harold B. Lee, taught that the time would come when all worthy Church members, regardless of race, would be able to receive all the blessings of the gospel (see “The Long-Promised Day,” *Ensign*, June 2018, 34).

Over the years, some Church leaders and members suggested reasons for why the priesthood and temple restrictions had been introduced. However, these statements were given as opinions and do not represent Church doctrine.

President Dallin H. Oaks of the First Presidency, not yet an Apostle at the time the priesthood and

temple restrictions were lifted, spoke of his feelings prior to the revelation that lifted those restrictions:



I observed the pain and frustration experienced by those who suffered these restrictions and those who . . . sought for reasons [for them]. I studied the reasons then being given and could not feel confirmation of the truth of any of them. As part of my prayerful study, I learned that, in general, the Lord rarely gives reasons for the commandments and directions He gives to His servants. I determined to be loyal to our prophetic leaders and to pray—as promised from the beginning of these restrictions—that the day would come when all would enjoy the blessings of priesthood and temple. (“President Oaks Remarks at Worldwide Priesthood Celebration,” *Be One—A Celebration of the Revelation on the Priesthood*, June 1, 2018, newsroom.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

SECTION 2

What circumstances led to the revelation from the Lord extending the priesthood to every worthy male member of the Church and temple blessings to all worthy members?

In 1964, Joseph William Billy Johnson of Cape Coast, Ghana, gained a testimony of the restored gospel after reading the Book of Mormon and other Church literature that had been given to him. Brother Johnson and others who joined the Church sent letters to President David O. McKay requesting that missionaries be sent to Africa to baptize him and others with whom he had shared the gospel. President McKay responded that missionaries would be sent “in the Lord’s own due time,” but until then, Brother Johnson should continue to study the gospel and help his fellow believers (in E. Dale

LeBaron, “Steadfast African Pioneer,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1999, 45–49).

Although there was no opportunity for Brother Johnson to be baptized at that time, he and a few others diligently spread the message of the gospel in Ghana for many years. Brother Johnson organized a number of congregations of believers and led them in regular fasts in which they pled for missionaries to come to their land and establish the Church among them (see Elizabeth Maki, “A People Prepared’: West African Pioneer Preached the Gospel before Missionaries,” history. ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

Like the believers in Ghana, thousands of other people of black African descent gained testimonies of the restored gospel as missionary work spread throughout the earth during the 20th century. Leaders of the Church were inspired by the faith of these individuals and desired to extend the blessings of the priesthood and temple to them (see Official Declaration 2).

President Spencer W. Kimball felt an especially strong desire to address the priesthood and temple restrictions during his time as President of the Church. He recalled:



I knew that something was before us that was extremely important to many of the children of God. . . . Day after day I went alone and with great solemnity and seriousness in the upper rooms of the temple, and there I offered my soul and offered my efforts to go forward with the program. I wanted to do what he wanted. I talked about it to him and said, “Lord, I want only what is right. . . . We want only the thing that thou dost want, and we want it when you want it and not until.” . . . The Lord made it very clear to me what was to be done. (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* [2006], 238–39)

As recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants, “The revelation came to Church President Spencer W. Kimball and was affirmed to other Church leaders

in the Salt Lake Temple on June 1, 1978” (introduction to Official Declaration 2).

In their public announcement of the revelation, the First Presidency stated:



We have pleaded long and earnestly in behalf of these, our faithful brethren, spending many hours in the Upper Room of the Temple supplicating the Lord for divine guidance.

He has heard our prayers, and by revelation has confirmed that the long-promised day has come when every faithful, worthy man in the Church may receive the holy priesthood, with power to exercise its divine authority, and enjoy with his loved ones every blessing that flows therefrom, including the blessings of the temple. (Official Declaration 2)

President Gordon B. Hinckley, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles at the time

the revelation was received, testified of what it was like to be in the temple that day:



We joined in prayer in the most sacred of circumstances. President Kimball himself was voice in that prayer. . . . There was a hallowed and sanctified atmosphere in the room. For me, it felt as if a conduit opened between the heavenly throne and the kneeling, pleading prophet of God who was joined by his Brethren. The Spirit of God was there. And by the power of the Holy Ghost there came to that prophet an assurance that the thing for which he prayed was right. . . .

All of us knew that the time had come for a change and that the decision had come from the heavens. The answer was clear. There was perfect unity among us in our experience and in our understanding. (“Priesthood Restoration,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1988, 69–70)



Record Your Thoughts

When have you witnessed the Lord guide His Church through revelation to His prophets? In your lifetime, what changes have you seen the Lord make in the way His Church fulfills its mission? If possible, watch all or part of the announcement of the 1978 revelation on the priesthood in general conference and record your feelings.

SECTION 3

What impact did the revelation have on the Church and people throughout the world?

At the end of one difficult day, Brother Billy Johnson felt compelled to turn on his radio at around midnight before going to bed. While listening he heard the news that the priesthood restriction had been lifted. He recalled, “I jumped and started crying and rejoicing in the Lord with tears that now is the time that the Lord will send missionaries to Ghana and to other parts of Africa to receive the priesthood. . . . I was so happy indeed.” When missionaries arrived in Ghana, they found a group of people who had already embraced the restored gospel. Brother Johnson along with approximately 600 members of his congregation were baptized. “After serving as the Cape Coast branch’s first president, [Brother] Johnson went on to serve as a district president, a full-time missionary, and as patriarch of the Cape Coast Ghana Stake” (see Elizabeth Maki, “‘A People Prepared’: West African Pioneer Preached the Gospel before Missionaries,” history.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

For more information you can watch the video “Long-Promised Day” (8:40), which depicts the joy that Billy Johnson felt after learning about the revelation that extended the priesthood to all worthy males.



Elder Edwin Q. "Ted" Cannon Jr. baptizing a group of Nigerian converts.

As a result of the revelation ending the priesthood and temple restrictions, missionaries today preach the gospel in many countries in Africa, temples have since been built on that continent, and hundreds of thousands of people of black African descent have received the ordinances of the gospel for themselves and for their deceased ancestors. Today, Church members of black African descent make invaluable contributions to the Church throughout the world as they unite with their fellow Saints and strive to become “one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28).



Ponder in Preparation for Class

What can you learn from Brother Johnson’s willingness to embrace and live the restored gospel even though he was denied priesthood and temple blessings for a time?

Want More? (Optional)

How can I respond to questions about the priesthood and temple restrictions?



Read “Till We All Come in the Unity of the Faith: A Personal Essay on Race and the Priesthood, Part 4” (history.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) by Brother Ahmad Corbitt, and look for how he was able to resolve his concerns about the priesthood and temple restrictions.

Where can I learn about some of the earliest black Latter-day Saints?

Read about the faithfulness of two of the earliest black Latter-day Saints, Elijah Able and Jane Manning James (History.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).



How has the Church moved forward after the revelation on the priesthood?

In June 2018, the First Presidency commemorated the 40-year anniversary of the revelation on the priesthood. Watch *Be One—A Celebration of the Revelation on the Priesthood* (1:35:07), and look for how Church members have moved forward after the revelation on the priesthood. Time code 1:06:55–1:09:14 contains a special video presentation where black Latter-day Saints describe how the priesthood has blessed their lives.



LESSON 28 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

The Lord Is Hastening His Work

President Russell M. Nelson has taught: “These are exciting days. The Lord is hastening His work right before our eyes. It is thrilling. It is rigorous. More is required from each of us—more than ever before. And more is being given” (“A Personal Invitation to Participate in Seminary and Institute,” Feb. 4, 2019, ChurchofJesusChrist.org). As you study this material, look for ways you can participate as the Lord hastens His work in preparation for His Second Coming.

SECTION 1

What is the destiny of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?

On Tuesday, April 6, 1830, about 50 people crowded in and around Peter Whitmer’s log home in Fayette, New York. There, Joseph Smith, under the direction of Jesus Christ, organized the Lord’s Church again upon the earth. Although the Church started small, its destiny is to fill the whole earth.



In Old Testament times, the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar had a dream where he saw a “stone [that] was cut out of the mountain without hands” (Daniel 2:45). This stone increased in size until it

“became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth” (Daniel 2:35). In his interpretation of the king’s dream, the prophet Daniel foretold that in the latter days, God would set up a kingdom that would never be destroyed but would stand forever (see Daniel 2:28, 44).

The Lord reiterated Daniel’s prophecy to the Prophet Joseph Smith 18 months after the organization of the Church, at a time when there were only about 600 Latter-day Saints on the earth. In Doctrine and Covenants 65:2 we read: “The keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth, and from thence shall the gospel roll forth unto the ends of the earth, as the stone which is cut out of the mountain without hands shall roll forth, until it has filled the whole earth.”

Two and a half years later, in April 1834, the Prophet Joseph Smith made a remarkable prophecy about the destiny of the Church to a group of priesthood holders in Kirtland, Ohio.

President Wilford Woodruff, who was at the meeting, recalled:



The Prophet called on all who held the Priesthood to gather into the little log school house they had there. It was a small house, perhaps 14 feet square. But it held the whole of the Priesthood of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who were then in the town of Kirtland. . . . The Prophet said, “Brethren, . . . I want to say to you before the Lord, that you know no more concerning the destinies of this Church and kingdom than a babe upon its mother’s lap. You don’t comprehend it.” I was rather surprised. He said, “It is only a little handful of Priesthood you see here tonight, but this Church will fill North and South America—it will fill the world.”

(Wilford Woodruff, in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 137)

Watch the video “The Gospel Shall Roll Forth” (2:47), and ponder how the growth of the restored Church is evidence of Heavenly Father’s desire to bless all the world.

Over 160 years later, after the Church had grown to more than 11 million members and spread over much of the world, President Gordon B. Hinckley taught:



My brethren and sisters, do you realize what we have? Do you recognize our place in the great drama of human history? This is the focal point of all that has gone before. This is the season of restitution. These are the days of restoration. . . . This is the summation of all of the centuries of time since the birth of Christ to this present and wonderful day. (Gordon B. Hinckley, “At the Summit of the Ages,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 74)

And less than a decade later, President Hinckley proclaimed:



A great miracle is taking place right before our eyes. . . . And this is only the beginning. This work will continue to grow and prosper and move across the earth. (Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Stone Cut Out of the Mountain,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 83–84)



Ponder in Preparation for Class

Why do you think it is important to understand and have a testimony of the destiny of the Lord’s Church?

SECTION 2

How is the Lord hastening His work today?

Speaking of the accelerated growth and influence of the Lord’s Church, President Thomas S. Monson taught:



The reason the Church is growing today is that the Lord indicated it would. In the Doctrine and Covenants, He said, “Behold, I will hasten my work in its time” [Doctrine and Covenants 88:73].

We, as spirit children of our Heavenly Father, were sent to earth at this time that we might participate in hastening this great work. (Thomas S. Monson, “Hastening the Work,” *Ensign*, June 2014, 4)

The following examples are a few of the ways the Lord and His servants have invited you to participate in the hastening of the work of salvation. Consider marking any of the principles or ideas that stand out to you, and be ready to share your thoughts about them in class.

Gathering Israel



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 29:4, 7, which are parts of an early revelation from the Lord to elders of the Church.

Speaking of this gathering, President Russell M. Nelson taught:



My dear young brothers and sisters, these surely *are* the latter days, and the Lord is hastening His work to gather Israel. That gathering is the most important thing taking place

on earth today. Nothing else compares in magnitude, nothing else compares in importance, nothing else compares in majesty. . . .

When we speak of the *gathering*, we are simply saying this fundamental truth: every one of our Heavenly Father’s children, on both sides of the veil, deserves to hear the message of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. They decide for themselves if they want to know more. (Russell M. Nelson, “Hope of Israel” [worldwide youth devotional, June 3, 2018], supplement to the *Ensign* and *New Era*, 8, ChurchofJesusChrist.org; italics in original)

Sharing the Gospel



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 123:12, looking for what the Lord taught the Prophet Joseph Smith about many who are blinded by the “craftiness of men.”

Think about the teaching in this verse as you reflect on this invitation by Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles encouraging us to help in the work of salvation in new ways:



The Lord is hastening His work, and it is no coincidence that . . . powerful communication innovations and inventions are occurring in the dispensation of the fulness of times. Social media channels are global tools that can personally and positively impact large numbers of individuals and families. And I believe the time has come for us as disciples of Christ to use these inspired tools appropriately and more effectively to testify of God the Eternal Father, His plan of happiness for His children, and His Son, Jesus Christ,

as the Savior of the world; to proclaim the reality of the Restoration of the gospel in the latter days; and to accomplish the Lord's work. (David A. Bednar, "To Sweep the Earth as with a Flood" [Brigham Young University Education Week devotional, Aug. 19, 2014], ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

Ministering

During His mortal ministry the Savior taught His disciples that He "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Matthew 20:28). He ministered as He "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38). In a revelation to Joseph Smith, the Lord invited Frederick G. Williams to minister to others.



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 81:5.

We have similarly been called to minister. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:



I bear my own witness that these adjustments [from home and visiting teaching to ministering] are . . . yet more evidence that the Lord is hastening His work in its time. . . .

. . . May we labor side by side with the Lord of the vineyard [see Jacob 5:70–72], giving the God and Father of us all a helping hand with His staggering task of answering prayers, providing comfort, drying tears, and strengthening feeble knees [see Doctrine and Covenants 81:5]. If we will do that, we will be more like the true disciples of Christ we are meant to be. (Jeffrey R. Holland, "Be with

and Strengthen Them," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2018, 101, 103)

Sister Linda K. Burton, former Relief Society General President, also shared:



Imagine with me some of the possible spiritual "help wanted" signs related to the work of salvation:

- Help wanted: parents to bring up their children in light and truth
- Help wanted: daughters and sons, sisters and brothers, aunts and uncles, cousins, grandparents, and true friends to serve as mentors and offer helping hands along the covenant path
- Help wanted: those who listen to the promptings of the Holy Ghost and act on impressions received
- Help wanted: those who live the gospel daily in small and simple ways
- Help wanted: family history and temple workers to link families eternally
- Help wanted: missionaries and members to spread the "good news"—the gospel of Jesus Christ
- Help wanted: rescuers to find those who have lost their way
- Help wanted: covenant keepers to stand firm for truth and right
- Help wanted: true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ . . .

. . . It does not matter if we are not yet perfect and complete. . . . We can walk as one, as disciples, as servants with willing hearts and hands to hasten the work of salvation. As we do so, we will become like the Savior. (Linda K. Burton, "Wanted: Hands and Hearts to Hasten the Work," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2014, 124)

Honoring the Sabbath



Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 59:9–10 to learn what the Lord taught His Saints about keeping the Sabbath day holy.

President M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught the following about the power of honoring the Sabbath day:



Of all of the organizational or policy changes or doctrinal training that could hasten the work of salvation at this time, we have determined that elevating the spirit and power of the Sabbath day would be most influential in drawing members and families closer to the Lord Jesus Christ. (M. Russell Ballard, in Chad H. Webb, “The Sabbath Day” [Seminaries and Institutes training satellite broadcast, Aug. 4, 2015], ChurchofJesusChrist.org)



Record Your Thoughts

What additional evidence have you seen that the Lord is hastening His work in our day? What are

some specific ways you would like to assist more in the Lord’s work? Record your thoughts in your journal or in the space provided below.

Want More? (Optional)

Where can I learn more about the destiny of the Church?

Find more information about the destiny of the Church here:



M. Russell Ballard, “The Truth of God Shall Go Forth,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 81–84.



Neil L. Andersen, “Preparing the World for the Second Coming,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2011, 49–52.

How can I help the Lord hasten His work?

Visit the Church’s Hastening the Work of Salvation web pages to find ideas and resources.

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