



Foundations of the Restoration

Teacher Manual
Religion 225

A Cornerstone Course

Foundations of the Restoration Teacher Manual

Religion 225

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Contents

Introduction to the <i>Foundations of the Restoration Teacher Manual</i> (Religion 225) . . .	v
1 A Marvelous Work and a Wonder	1
2 The First Vision	6
3 The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon	11
4 The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion	17
5 The Restoration of the Priesthood	22
6 The Organization of the Church	27
7 Proclaim the Everlasting Gospel	32
8 The Gathering of Latter-day Israel	37
9 Follow the Living Prophet	42
10 Seek Truth	47
11 The Lord’s Voice in the Doctrine and Covenants	53
12 Additional Scriptures in Our Day	57
13 “The Vision”	62
14 The Kirtland Temple and Priesthood Keys	67
15 Strength amid Opposition	72
16 Redemption of the Dead	77
17 Gospel Teachings in Nauvoo	82
18 The Relief Society and the Church	87
19 The Doctrine of Eternal Marriage and Family	93
20 Plural Marriage	99
21 The Prophetic Mission of Joseph Smith	106
22 The Martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith	111
23 Succession in the Presidency	116
24 Leaving Nauvoo and the Trek West	122
25 The Utah War and the Mountain Meadows Massacre	128
26 The Revelation on the Priesthood	135
27 Preparing the World for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ	140
28 Hastening the Work of Salvation	144
Handouts	149

Introduction to the *Foundations of the Restoration Teacher Manual* (Religion 225)

What is expected of a religion teacher?

As you prepare to teach, it is important to understand the Objective of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion:

“Our purpose is to help youth and young adults understand and rely on the teachings and Atonement of Jesus Christ, qualify for the blessings of the temple, and prepare themselves, their families, and others for eternal life with their Father in Heaven” (*Gospel Teaching and Learning: A Handbook for Teachers and Leaders in Seminaries and Institutes of Religion* [2012], x).

You can achieve this purpose by diligently living the gospel, effectively teaching the gospel to your students, and appropriately administering your class or program. As you prepare and teach the gospel in these ways, you will qualify for the influence of the Holy Ghost (see D&C 42:14).

It is your opportunity to help students learn by the Spirit so they can strengthen their faith and deepen their conversion. You can help students accomplish this as you lead them to identify, understand, feel the truth and importance of, and apply significant doctrines and principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The *Gospel Teaching and Learning* handbook is an essential resource for understanding the teaching process and learning how to become successful in the classroom. Refer often to this handbook.

What are the objectives of this course?

This course, *Foundations of the Restoration* (Religion 225), gives students the opportunity to study the foundational revelations, doctrine, historical events, and people relevant to the unfolding of the Restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ as found in the standard works, the teachings of latter-day prophets, and Church history. The course will provide students with the doctrinal foundation and historical context necessary for an accurate understanding of Church doctrine and history. Students will increase their abilities to seek truth, evaluate the validity and reliability of source material, and discern truth from error. Students will study the scriptures, Church doctrine, and Church history in ways that relate to their lives and circumstances. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) testified of the reality of the Restoration:



"This is the restored Church of Jesus Christ. We as a people are Latter-day Saints. We testify that the heavens have been opened, that the curtains have been parted, that God has spoken, and that Jesus Christ has manifested Himself. . . .

"God be thanked for His marvelous bestowal of testimony, authority, and doctrine associated with this, the restored Church of Jesus Christ.

"This must be our great and singular message to the world. We do not offer it with boasting. We testify in humility but with gravity and absolute sincerity" ("The Marvelous Foundation of Our Faith," *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 81).

As students develop greater faith in Jesus Christ and stronger testimonies of the restored gospel, they will increase their commitment to make and keep sacred covenants and be better prepared to share the message of the Restoration.

What is expected of students?

In order to receive credit toward institute graduation, students are required to read the scripture passages, general conference talks, and other materials listed in the Student Readings section of each lesson. Students must also meet attendance requirements and demonstrate competency with course material.

How are lessons structured in this manual?

This course is designed as a semester-long course with 28 lessons written for 50-minute class periods. If your class meets twice each week, teach one lesson each class period. If your class meets only once each week for 90 to 100 minutes, combine and teach two lessons each class period. Each lesson outline consists of four sections:

- Introduction
- Background Reading
- Suggestions for Teaching
- Student Readings

Introduction

This section provides a brief introduction to the topics and objectives of the lesson.

Background Reading

This section recommends resources, such as messages from latter-day prophets, that can help you better understand the doctrines, principles, and gospel truths covered in the lesson outline.

Suggestions for Teaching

The Suggestions for Teaching section includes material to help you know both *what* to teach and *how* to teach it (see also sections 4.3.3 and 4.3.4 in the *Gospel Teaching and Learning* handbook). Suggested learning activities are designed to help students identify, understand, and apply sacred truths. You may choose to use some or all of the suggestions as you adapt them to fit your individual teaching style and

to meet the needs and circumstances of your students. As you consider how to adapt lesson materials, follow this counsel from Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



“President Packer has often taught, in my hearing, that we first adopt, then we adapt. If we are thoroughly grounded in the prescribed lesson that we are to give, then we can follow the Spirit to adapt it. But there is a temptation, when we speak about this flexibility, to start off by adapting rather than adopting. It’s a balance. It’s a continual challenge. But the approach of adopting first and then adapting is a good way to stay on sound ground” (“A Panel Discussion with Elder Dallin H. Oaks” [Seminaries and Institutes of Religion satellite broadcast, Aug. 7, 2012], lds.org/broadcasts).

This course includes statements by Church leaders that are likely to be available in multiple languages. As you prepare to teach, you may adapt the lessons by using other available statements by Church leaders that are relevant to the subject matter.

The Suggestions for Teaching section contains at least one doctrine or principle statement, which appears in bold. As students discover these doctrines and principles and share what they have learned, their words may differ from those stated in the manual. When this happens, be careful not to imply that their answers are wrong. However, if a statement could be more accurate, carefully help clarify understanding.

This curriculum models how to incorporate the fundamentals of gospel teaching and learning into a thematic course (see *Gospel Teaching and Learning*, 10, 23–31, 38–41). In coming months, Seminaries and Institutes will publish a document called “Teaching and Learning the Scriptures in Institutes of Religion,” which will further explain how to incorporate the fundamentals of gospel teaching and learning into a thematic course.

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles described some of the benefits that come from studying the gospel thematically:

“Whereas reading a book of scripture from beginning to end provides a basic breadth of knowledge, studying by topic increases the depth of our knowledge. Searching in the revelations for connections, patterns, and themes builds upon and adds to our spiritual knowledge ... ; it broadens our perspective and understanding of the plan of salvation.

“In my judgment, diligently searching to discover connections, patterns, and themes is part of what it means to ‘feast’ upon the words of Christ. This approach can open the floodgates of the spiritual reservoir, enlighten our understanding through His Spirit, and produce a depth of gratitude for the holy scriptures and a degree of spiritual commitment that can be received in no other way. Such searching enables us to build upon the rock of our Redeemer and to withstand the winds of wickedness in these latter days” (“A Reservoir of Living Water” [Brigham Young University fireside, Feb. 4, 2007], 3, speeches.byu.edu).

Some of the material in this manual is based on material in *Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Seminary Manual*.

Student Readings

This section lists scripture passages, talks by Church leaders, and other materials that will enrich student understanding of the topics emphasized in the lessons. Assign and encourage students to read these materials before they come to each class. As they study these inspired materials, they will not only be better prepared to participate in class discussions, but they will also gain broader and deeper understanding of course topics. Provide students with a list of all Student Readings at the beginning of the semester.

How can I prepare to teach?

The Lord will assist you as you prepare to teach. As you prepare, you may find it helpful to ask yourself the following questions:

- Have I prayed to receive the guidance of the Holy Ghost?
- Have I studied the assigned scripture blocks and background reading?
- Have I read the curriculum and determined if there is anything that I need to adapt or adjust to meet the needs of my students?
- How can I follow up with students to ensure that they are getting the most out of assigned readings?
- How can I help each of my students fully participate in the lesson?

The following suggestions may also be helpful:

- Encourage students to read assigned scripture passages and articles before each class.
- Expect students to fulfill their role as learners.
- Provide frequent opportunities for students to explain doctrines and principles in their own words, share relevant experiences, and testify of what they know and feel.
- Vary the learning activities and approaches you use in each class and also from day to day.
- Create a learning environment that invites the Spirit and gives students the privilege and responsibility to teach and to learn from one another (see D&C 88:78, 122).

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:



“Assure that there is abundant participation because that use of agency by a student authorizes the Holy Ghost to instruct. . . . As students verbalize truths, they are confirmed in their souls and strengthen their personal testimonies” (“To Understand and Live Truth” [evening with Elder Richard G. Scott, Feb. 4, 2005], 3, si.lds.org).

How can I adapt lessons for those with disabilities?

As you prepare to teach, be mindful of students who have particular needs. Adjust activities and expectations to help them succeed.

For more ideas and resources, consult the Disability Resources page at disabilities.lds.org and the Seminaries and Institutes of Religion policy manual section titled “Adapted Classes and Programs for Students with Disabilities.”

LESSON 1

A Marvelous Work and a Wonder

Introduction

Throughout history, Heavenly Father has ended periods of apostasy by calling prophets who receive divine authority to restore the fulness of the gospel and establish the Church of Jesus Christ. Joseph Smith was this prophet in our

dispensation. Understanding how God leads His people and establishes His Church through prophets will help students develop a deeper appreciation of the need for a Restoration and a greater ability to teach others about the Restoration.

Background Reading

- M. Russell Ballard, “The Miracle of the Holy Bible,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2007, 80–82.
- Gordon B. Hinckley, “At the Summit of the Ages,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 72–74.
- Neal A. Maxwell, “From the Beginning,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 18–20.
- *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 31–36.

Suggestions for Teaching

Amos 8:11–12; Joseph Smith—History 1:5–10

The Great Apostasy and the need for the Restoration

Begin the lesson by writing the following on the board:

Famine =

Invite a student to read Amos 8:11–12 aloud. Ask students to follow along and identify how the word *famine* is used as a symbol.

- What type of famine did Amos prophesy would occur? (Write student responses on the board next to “Famine =”.)
- What did Amos prophesy that people would do because of this famine?
- What evidence have you seen in the world that there has been a famine of “hearing the words of the Lord”? (Amos 8:11).

Explain that although the prophecy found in Amos 8:11–12 has likely been fulfilled multiple times throughout history, one important fulfillment is known as the Great Apostasy. You may want to suggest that students write *Apostasy, including the Great Apostasy* in the margin of their scriptures next to Amos 8:11–12.

Display the following statement, and invite a student to read it aloud. Ask students to look for some of the factors that contributed to the Great Apostasy.

“After the death of Jesus Christ, wicked people persecuted the Apostles and Church members and killed many of them. With the death of the Apostles, priesthood keys and the presiding priesthood authority were taken from the earth. The Apostles had kept the doctrines of the gospel pure and maintained the order and standard of worthiness for Church members. Without the Apostles, over time the doctrines were corrupted, and unauthorized changes were made in Church organization and priesthood ordinances, such as baptism and conferring the gift of the Holy Ghost.

“Without revelation and priesthood authority, people relied on human wisdom to interpret the scriptures and the principles and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ. False ideas were taught as truth. Much of the knowledge of the true character and nature of God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost was lost. The doctrines of faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost became distorted or forgotten. The priesthood authority given to Christ’s Apostles was no longer present on the earth” (*Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* [2004], 35).

- According to this statement, what were some factors that contributed to the Great Apostasy?
- Why is it essential to understand that the Great Apostasy actually occurred? (Students may use different words, but make sure they identify the following principle: **Knowing that there was a Great Apostasy can help us recognize the need for the Restoration of the gospel.**)

Explain that during this period of apostasy, Heavenly Father continued to exercise His influence in the world through the Light of Christ, which is “given to every man” (Moroni 7:16), and through the power of the Holy Ghost, which witnesses that the gospel is true (see Guide to the Scriptures, “Holy Ghost,” scriptures.lds.org. He inspired men and women in many cultures who sought His help during that time. Christian reformers such as Martin Luther and William Tyndale labored to help Christians live closer to the ideals they found in the Bible. The efforts of reformers, philosophers, and even statesmen in Europe and North America led to an increased emphasis on human dignity and religious freedom in many parts of the world. Notwithstanding these important developments, God had not yet fully restored His Church. (See *Preach My Gospel*, 45–46.)

Display the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), and invite a student to read it aloud:



“For centuries the heavens remained sealed. Good men and women, not a few—really great and wonderful people—tried to correct, strengthen, and improve their systems of worship and their body of doctrine. To them I pay honor and respect. How much better the world is because of their bold action. While I believe their work was inspired, it was not favored with the opening of the heavens, with the appearance of Deity” (“The Marvelous Foundation of Our Faith,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 80).

Remind students that in 1820 the young boy Joseph Smith was searching for the true Church but could not find it. Invite students to read Joseph Smith—History

1:5–10 silently, looking for phrases that describe challenges caused by the Great Apostasy.

- What are some of the phrases Joseph Smith used to refer to the spiritual challenges of his day?
- How did Joseph describe his feelings that came as a result of the religious turmoil that surrounded him?

Remind students that Joseph Smith’s search for truth resulted in the First Vision and his call as a prophet. (These will be discussed in the next lesson.) Point out that the calling of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Restoration of the gospel followed a pattern established by God that has been repeated throughout history. For example, the calling of Enoch (see Moses 6:26–32) and of Noah (see Moses 8:17–20) followed this pattern. Display the following explanation of this pattern, and invite a student read it aloud:

“Biblical history has recorded many instances of God speaking to prophets, and it also tells of many instances of apostasy. To end each period of general apostasy, God has shown His love for His children by calling another prophet and giving him priesthood authority to restore and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ anew. In essence, the prophet acts as a steward to oversee the household of God here on earth. Such periods of time headed by prophetic responsibility are called dispensations” (*Preach My Gospel*, 33; see also Bible Dictionary, “Dispensations”).

- How does the Restoration of the gospel through Joseph Smith follow a pattern seen in earlier dispensations? (Students may use different words, but make sure they identify the following doctrine: **After periods of general apostasy, God calls prophets and gives them authority to restore and teach the gospel anew.** Students should also understand this doctrine: **Joseph Smith was called by God to restore the gospel for our dispensation.**)
- How might understanding this pattern help you explain the Restoration of the gospel to someone of another faith?

Emphasize that in the First Vision, Joseph Smith learned that no true Church existed upon the earth and that the fulness of Christ’s gospel needed to be restored. Although the Bible contains prophecies of the Great Apostasy, the most important evidence that this apostasy occurred is the fact that Joseph Smith was called to be a prophet and the fulness of the gospel was restored.

2 Nephi 27:25–26; Doctrine and Covenants 1:12–30

The Restoration of the gospel is “a marvelous work and a wonder”

Explain that the scriptures relate some of the Lord’s reasons for restoring His gospel to the earth in the latter days.

Invite students to silently read Isaiah’s prophecy of the Restoration found in 2 Nephi 27:25–26, looking for the Lord’s description of the spiritual condition of the world at the time of the Restoration. You may want to suggest that students mark words and phrases that describe these spiritual conditions. (*Note:* One of the most helpful ways for students to capture and retain what they learn from the scriptures

is to mark important words and phrases.) After sufficient time, ask students to share what they found.

- Why do you think the Restoration of the gospel is referred to as “a marvelous work and a wonder”?
- What do you find “marvelous” and “wonderful” about the Restoration? (As students respond, point out that the Restoration of the gospel as a “marvelous work and a wonder” is an example of a recurring theme in the Doctrine and Covenants. “Themes are overarching, recurring, and unifying qualities or ideas” [David A. Bednar, “A Reservoir of Living Water” (Brigham Young University fireside, Feb. 4, 2007), 6, speeches.byu.edu].)

Invite half of the class to study Doctrine and Covenants 1:12–17, looking for reasons the Lord gave for bringing about the Restoration of the gospel. Invite the other half of the class to study Doctrine and Covenants 1:18–30, looking for ways that the Restoration of the gospel would bless God’s children. (*Note:* Doctrine and Covenants 1:30 will be studied in greater detail in lesson 6.)

After sufficient time, invite students to share what they found. Make sure students understand the following truth: **The Restoration of the gospel helps those who believe in Christ to increase in faith and overcome the calamities of the last days.**

Read aloud the following statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–1844):



“[Prophets] 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” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 186).

- Why might past prophets have looked forward to our day? (One idea students are likely to identify is that **the Restoration will spread across the globe and prepare the world for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.**)

Display the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley, and ask several students to take turns reading it aloud:



“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. ...

“... The latter-day work of the Almighty, that of which the ancients spoke, that of which the prophets and apostles prophesied, is come. It is here. For some reason unknown to us, but in the wisdom of God, we have been privileged to come to earth in this glorious age. ...

“Given what we have and what we know, we ought to be a better people than we are. We ought to be more Christlike, more forgiving, more helpful and considerate to all around us.

“We stand on the summit of the ages, awed by a great and solemn sense of history. This is the last and final dispensation toward which all in the past has pointed. I bear testimony and witness of the reality and truth of these things” (“At the Summit of the Ages,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 74).

- What thoughts and feelings does the statement “we stand on the summit of the ages” stir within you?
- If it is not too personal, share an experience from your life that strengthened your testimony of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.
- What can we do to show our gratitude for the Restoration of the gospel?

Student Readings

- Isaiah 29:13–14; Amos 8:11–12; 2 Nephi 27:1–5, 25–26; Doctrine and Covenants 1:12–30; Joseph Smith—History 1:5–10.
- Gordon B. Hinckley, “At the Summit of the Ages,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 72–74.

LESSON 2

The First Vision

Introduction

The account of Joseph Smith's First Vision found in the Pearl of Great Price was written in order to correct false reports about the Church. Throughout his life, the Prophet Joseph Smith provided several accounts of the First Vision. These

accounts can increase our understanding of that experience and strengthen our faith in the Restoration. This lesson is intended to help students understand the importance of having a testimony of this uniquely important event.

Background Reading

- Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Marvelous Foundation of Our Faith," *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 78–81.
- "First Vision Accounts," Gospel Topics, [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics).

Suggestions for Teaching

Joseph Smith—History 1:1–2

The Prophet wrote about the First Vision to correct false reports

Explain that in 1838 Joseph Smith began work on his official history. The section in the Pearl of Great Price known as Joseph Smith—History was extracted from that much longer history.

Invite a student to read Joseph Smith—History 1:1–2 aloud. Ask the class to follow along and look for reasons Joseph Smith gave for preparing his history.

- According to verse 1, what was circulating among the people during the early days of the Church?
- What was the intent of those who sponsored reports opposing the Church?
- What similarities to this situation exist in our day?

Explain that today there continue to be individuals and groups who spread false or misleading information about the Church with the intent to destroy faith.

- What reasons did Joseph give for writing his history? (To "disabuse the public mind, and put all inquirers after truth in possession of the facts, as they ... transpired" [Joseph Smith—History 1:1].)
- Why is it important that "inquirers after truth" about the Restoration rely on Joseph Smith's firsthand account? (Students may use different words, but be sure it is clear that **relying on the Prophet's account can help individuals avoid being deceived by false or misleading information.**)

Display the following counsel from Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and invite students to read it silently:



"There have always been a few who want to discredit the Church and to destroy faith. Today they use the Internet.

"Some of the information about the Church, no matter how convincing, is just not true" ("Trial of Your Faith," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 41).

- What sources should we seek out and trust in our personal search to know the truth regarding the First Vision, the Restoration of the gospel, and other events in Church history? Why? (Help students understand the following principle: **To avoid being deceived by false or misleading information, those who seek the truth should search out credible sources of information about the Church and its history rather than simply accepting any information they hear or read, including information that comes from an Internet search.**)

Explain that critics of the Church argue against the reality of the First Vision by saying that Joseph Smith did not record his experience with the vision until many years after it occurred. Explain that 14-year-old Joseph Smith became reluctant to speak about his vision following the reaction of those he initially told (see Joseph Smith—History 1:21–26). He recorded the experience when he felt that it was the right time to do so. The Savior instructed Peter, James, and John not to speak of their experience on the Mount of Transfiguration until after His Resurrection (see Matthew 17:9), making clear that some sacred experiences should be shared only as prompted by the Spirit.

First Vision accounts

Note: As you teach this portion of the lesson, leave adequate time to teach the last section of the lesson, which covers Joseph Smith—History 1:8–20.

Explain to students that Joseph Smith wrote, either personally or with the help of scribes, at least four different accounts of the First Vision. Additionally, several accounts of this vision were recorded by Joseph Smith's contemporaries. Each account emphasizes different aspects of Joseph's experience, but they all share essential elements of what Joseph saw and heard. To help explain why there are differences in the various accounts, ask students to consider the following:

- Think of a significant or meaningful experience you have had in your life. How might your account of that experience differ depending on who your audience is? How might it change depending on when or why you are telling about the experience?

Invite a student to read the following statement aloud, and ask students to listen for what historians expect when an experience is recounted multiple times:

"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 [Acts 9:3–9; 22:6–21; 26:12–18; Matthew 17:1–13; Mark 9:2–13; Luke 9:28–36]. Yet despite the differences, 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, [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics)).

As an example of the differences in the accounts, you might tell students that "whereas the 1832 account emphasizes the more personal story of Joseph Smith as a young man seeking forgiveness, the 1838 account focuses on the vision as the beginning of the 'rise and progress of the Church'" ("First Vision Accounts," Gospel Topics, [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics)). Remind students that their assigned reading includes the Gospel Topics article "First Vision Accounts," which provides a more detailed analysis of each of the different accounts of the First Vision. Invite students to study the article outside of class to better understand how each account contributes to our knowledge about the First Vision. (*Note:* Remind students of the importance of reading the assignments under "Student Readings" before class. Doing so will help them contribute to class discussions.)

- How could multiple accounts of the First Vision support the validity and enrich our understanding of this sacred event? (Help students understand that **the multiple accounts of Joseph Smith's First Vision enable us to learn more about this sacred experience than we could if it were less well documented.**)

Display the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), and invite a student to read it aloud:



"I am not worried that the Prophet Joseph Smith gave a number of versions of the First Vision anymore than I am worried that there are four different writers of the gospels in the New Testament, each with his own perceptions, each telling the events to meet his own purpose for writing at the time" ("God Hath Not Given Us the Spirit of Fear," *Ensign*, Oct. 1984, 5).

Bear your testimony of the reality of the First Vision and of the Restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Joseph Smith—History 1:8–20

The validity of the Church rests upon the truthfulness of the First Vision

Invite several students to take turns reading aloud from Joseph Smith—History 1:8–15.

- What were some of the things Joseph Smith did to find answers to his questions?
- Why do you think Satan tried to stop Joseph Smith from praying?

Invite a few students to take turns reading aloud from Joseph Smith—History 1:16–19.

- What are some important truths we learn from verses 16–17? (As students respond, emphasize that **eternal truths were restored to the earth when Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph Smith.**)

Display and read aloud the following statement by Elder Tad R. Callister, who served in the Presidency of the Seventy. As you read this statement, you may want to suggest that students mark in their scriptures the truths that Brother Callister emphasized. You may also want to suggest that they write *truths that Joseph learned* in the margin next to Joseph Smith—History 1:16–19. (*Note: Learning to mark and annotate scriptures is an important scripture study skill you can help students develop [see *Gospel Teaching and Learning: A Handbook for Teachers and Leaders in Seminaries and Institutes of Religion* (2012), 21].*)



“Joseph Smith was the Lord’s anointed to restore Christ’s Church to the earth. When he emerged from the grove of trees, he eventually learned four fundamental truths not then taught by the majority of the contemporary Christian world.

“First, he learned that God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, are two separate, distinct beings. ...

“The second great truth Joseph Smith discovered was that the Father and the Son have glorified bodies of flesh and bones. ...

“The third truth that Joseph Smith learned was that God still speaks to man today—that the heavens are not closed. ...

“The fourth truth that Joseph Smith learned was that the full and complete Church of Jesus Christ was not then upon the earth” (“Joseph Smith—Prophet of the Restoration,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 35–36).

- Why do you think these truths about Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ are essential to know and understand?
- How might the need for those truths help explain why Satan tried to prevent young Joseph Smith from praying?

To highlight the importance of Joseph Smith’s First Vision, display the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley and invite a student to read it aloud:



“Our whole strength rests on the validity of [the First Vision]. It either occurred or it did not occur. If it did not, then this work is a fraud. If it did, then it is the most important and wonderful work under the heavens. ...

“... In 1820 came that glorious manifestation in answer to the prayer of a boy who had read in his family Bible the words of James: ‘If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him’ (James 1:5).

“Upon that unique and wonderful experience stands the validity of this Church” (“The Marvelous Foundation of Our Faith,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 80).

- How is the validity of the Church linked to Joseph Smith’s First Vision?
- Why is it important to have a testimony that Joseph Smith saw God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ? (Students may give a variety of answers, but be sure that the following principle is clear: **When we gain a testimony that Joseph Smith saw God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, we can also come to know the truthfulness of the Restoration of the gospel.**)

As you conclude the lesson, emphasize the importance of having a personal witness of the truth of the First Vision. This personal testimony, built on the rock of revelation, helps us to stay strong in our faith when we are confronted with false information about the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Church. Testify that Joseph Smith’s way of learning the truth will work for us too. We can seek truth, read the scriptures, ponder, and ultimately ask God, and He will answer (see James 1:5). Invite students to ponder how they have gained a testimony that the Father and the Son appeared to Joseph Smith. Allow time for one or two students to share how they gained a testimony of the First Vision.

Student Readings

- Joseph Smith—History 1:1–26.
- Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Marvelous Foundation of Our Faith,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 78–81.

LESSON 3

The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon

Introduction

The Lord sent the angel Moroni to prepare Joseph Smith to receive and translate the Book of Mormon. Little is known about the actual translation process. Joseph Smith said that the Book of Mormon was translated “by the gift and power of God” (preface to the Book of Mormon, 1830 edition). In

accordance with the law of witnesses (see 2 Corinthians 13:1), the Lord allowed several others to be witnesses of this ancient record. Their testimonies strengthen the credibility of the Book of Mormon for the entire world.

Background Reading

- Neal A. Maxwell, “By the Gift and Power of God,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1997, 36–41.
- “Book of Mormon Translation,” Gospel Topics, [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics).
- “Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon and Restoration of the Priesthood,” chapter 5 in *Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual*, 2nd ed. (Church Educational System manual, 2003), 52–66.

Suggestions for Teaching

Joseph Smith—History 1:30–35, 42–54

Translated by the gift and power of God

Invite one or two volunteers to summarize for the class what they remember about the angel Moroni’s visit to young Joseph Smith on the night of September 21, 1823. As needed, share the following information:

“On the night of September 21, 1823, Joseph retired to his attic bedroom in his family’s log home in Palmyra, New York, but he stayed awake after the others in the room had gone to sleep, earnestly praying to know more about God’s purposes for him. ...

“In answer to his prayer, Joseph saw a light appear in his room that grew brighter and brighter until the room was ‘lighter than at noonday.’ A heavenly messenger appeared at his bedside, standing in the air, wearing a robe of ‘exquisite whiteness.’ (Joseph Smith—History 1:30–31.) This messenger was Moroni, the last Nephite prophet, who centuries earlier had buried the plates upon which the Book of Mormon was written and who now held the keys pertaining to this sacred record (see D&C 27:5). He had been sent to tell Joseph that God had forgiven his sins and had a great work for him to do. As part of this work, Joseph was to go to a nearby hill, where a sacred record, written on gold plates, was deposited. ... Joseph was to translate the record and bring it forth to the world.

“The next day, Joseph went to the hill where the Book of Mormon plates were buried. There he met Moroni and saw the plates, but was told that he would not receive them for four years. ...

“... On September 22, 1827, [Joseph’s wife, Emma,] went with him to the hill and waited nearby while Moroni delivered the plates into the Prophet’s hands” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 57–59).

Invite students to turn to the title page of the Book of Mormon and scan the first paragraph, looking for information about how this ancient record would come forth and be translated. After students have read, ask them to share what they found. (Students should identify the following truth: **The Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God.**)

Invite a student to read Joseph Smith—History 1:34–35 aloud. Ask the class to follow along and look for one way that the Lord helped Joseph Smith translate the Book of Mormon.

- According to these verses, what is one way that the Lord assisted Joseph Smith in translating the ancient record? (The Lord provided the Urim and Thummim for the translation.)

Explain that another instrument Joseph Smith used while translating the Book of Mormon was a small oval stone, sometimes referred to as a “seer stone,” that he discovered several years before he obtained the gold plates (see “Book of Mormon Translation,” Gospel Topics, [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics)). The historical account indicates that the Prophet sometimes used the Urim and Thummim and sometimes used the seer stone to translate.

Read the following statement aloud to help students understand that the Lord revealed the English translation of the Book of Mormon to the Prophet through the Urim and Thummim and the seer stone:

“When pressed for specifics about the process of translation, Joseph repeated on several occasions that it had been done ‘by the gift and power of God’ and once added, ‘It was not intended to tell the world all the particulars of the coming forth of the book of Mormon.’

“Nevertheless, the scribes and others who observed the translation left numerous accounts that give insight into the process. Some accounts indicate that Joseph studied the characters on the plates. Most of the accounts speak of Joseph’s use of the Urim and Thummim (either the interpreters or the seer stone), and many accounts refer to his use of a single stone. According to these accounts, Joseph placed either the interpreters or the seer stone in a hat, pressed his face into the hat to block out extraneous light, and read aloud the English words that appeared on the instrument. The process as described brings to mind a passage from the Book of Mormon that speaks of God preparing ‘a stone, which shall shine forth in darkness unto light’ [Alma 37: 23–24]” (“Book of Mormon Translation,” Gospel Topics, [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics)).

Explain that the Lord’s help was also evident in the short amount of time in which Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon. Display the following statement by Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and invite a student to read it aloud:



“Think of the short time Joseph took to translate the Book of Mormon. Working from April to June of 1828, Joseph translated the 116 pages that Martin Harris later lost. Joseph began translating again on Tuesday, April 7, 1829, with Oliver Cowdery as scribe. The manuscript was completed eighty-five days later, on June 30 of that year. Of course, not all of that time was spent working on the translation. ... Conservatively estimated, this left sixty-five or fewer working days on which the prophet and his scribes translated this book, which contains 531 pages in its current edition. (See John W. Welch, *Ensign*, Jan. 1988, pp. 46–47.) 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” (“A Treasured Testament,” *Ensign*, July 1993, 61–62).

- What are some of the ways that the coming forth of the Book of Mormon occurred “by the gift and power of God”?
- If we do not know all of the details surrounding the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, how can we know that this book is true? (We can receive a spiritual witness of the Book of Mormon without knowing all the details regarding its translation.)
- What has helped you gain a testimony of the Book of Mormon?

Invite a student to read aloud the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley:



“First came Moroni with the plates from which was translated the Book of Mormon. What a singular and remarkable thing this was. Joseph’s story of the gold plates was fantastic. It was hard to believe and easy to challenge. Could he have written it of his own capacity? It is here, my brothers and sisters, for everyone to see, to handle, to read. Every attempt to explain its origin, other than that which he gave, has fallen of its own weight. He was largely unschooled; and yet, in a very brief time, he brought forth the translation which in published form comes to more than 500 pages. ...

“Through all of these years critics have tried to explain it. They have spoken against it. They have ridiculed it. But it has outlived them all, and its influence today is greater than at any time in its history” (“The Stone Cut Out of the Mountain,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 85).

- What could you say to help someone who is struggling to believe that the Book of Mormon is true?

Testify that the Book of Mormon came forth by the gift and power of God.

Doctrine and Covenants 17

The Testimonies of the Three Witnesses and the Eight Witnesses

Explain that while Joseph Smith was translating the Book of Mormon, he learned that the Lord would appoint others to be witnesses of the ancient record (see 2 Nephi 27:12–13; Ether 5:2–5). At that time, Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris each expressed a desire to be these special witnesses. Doctrine and Covenants 17 contains the Lord’s instructions to these men.

Invite several students to take turns reading aloud from Doctrine and Covenants 17:1–6. Ask the class to follow along looking for what the Lord instructed the witnesses to do after they saw the plates. After students share what they found, ask:

- Why do you think these men needed to show faith like the prophets of old before the Lord would allow them to see the plates?
- According to verses 3–5, what responsibility would these witnesses have after seeing the plates?
- What responsibility do we have when the Lord manifests to us the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon? (Students should identify a principle similar to the following: **After we obtain a witness of the truth, we have a responsibility to testify of it.** [See also D&C 88:81.] You might point out that this principle is also an example of a pattern we can find in the scriptures. “A pattern is a plan, model, or standard that can be used as a guide for repetitively doing or making something” [David A. Bednar, “A Reservoir of Living Water” (Brigham Young University fireside, Feb. 4, 2007), 5, speeches.byu.edu].)
- How might testifying of the truth be a demonstration of our faith?

Invite a student to read aloud Joseph Smith’s account of his experience with the Three Witnesses:

“Martin Harris, David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery and myself, agreed to retire into the woods, and try to obtain, by fervent and humble prayer, the fulfillment of the promises. . . . [After] our second failure, Martin Harris proposed that he should withdraw himself from us, believing, as he expressed himself, that his presence was the cause of our not obtaining what we wished for. He accordingly withdrew from us, and we knelt down again, and had not been many minutes engaged in prayer, when . . . an angel [Moroni] stood before us. In his hands he held the plates. . . . He turned over the leaves one by one, so that we could see them, and discern the engravings thereon distinctly. . . . We heard a voice from out of the bright light above us, saying, ‘These plates have been revealed by the power of God, and they have been translated by the power of God. The translation of them which you have seen is correct, and I command you to bear record of what you now see and hear.’

“I now left David and Oliver, and went in pursuit of Martin Harris, whom I found at a considerable distance, fervently engaged in prayer. He soon told me, however, that he had not yet prevailed with the Lord, and earnestly requested me to join him in prayer, that he might also realize the same blessings which we had just received. We accordingly joined in prayer, and ultimately obtained our desires, for before we had yet finished, the same vision was opened to our view, at least it was again opened to me, and I once more beheld and heard the same things; whilst at the same moment, Martin Harris cried out, apparently in an ecstasy of joy, ‘Tis enough; ‘tis enough; mine eyes have beheld; mine eyes have beheld’ ” (in *History of the Church*, 1:54–55).

Joseph returned to the Whitmer home and said to his parents, “The Lord has caused the plates to be shown to three more besides me who have also seen an angel and will have to testify to the truth of what I have said, for they know for themselves that I do not go about to deceive the people, and I do feel as though I was relieved of a dreadful burden which was almost too much for me to endure, . . . and it does rejoice my soul that I am not any longer to be entirely alone in the world” (in Lucy Mack Smith, *History, 1844–1845*, book 8, page 11, josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/lucy-mack-smith-history-1844-1845).

- Why do you think Joseph Smith rejoiced after this experience? (He was no longer alone as a witness of the plates and the heavenly messenger.)

Explain that eight additional witnesses also received the opportunity to see the plates.

Invite half of the class to read “The Testimony of Three Witnesses” and the other half to read “The Testimony of Eight Witnesses,” both of which can be found in the introductory pages of the Book of Mormon. Ask students to look for significant elements of the witnesses’ experiences. After sufficient time, invite students to share what they discovered.

- How did the experience of the Three Witnesses differ from that of the Eight Witnesses? (The Three Witnesses heard the voice of God and saw an angel but did not handle the plates. The Eight Witnesses were shown the plates by Joseph Smith and were able to handle them. The Eight Witnesses had a more physical witness of the reality of the plates, while the Three Witnesses had a more spiritual experience.)
- Why do you think having multiple witnesses was so important to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon?

Some students may not be aware that each of the Three Witnesses and some of the Eight Witnesses eventually left the Church. Invite a student to read aloud the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



“Measured against all ... possible objections, the testimony of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon stands forth in great strength. ... As is well known, because of disagreements or jealousies involving other leaders of the Church, each one of these three witnesses was excommunicated from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by about eight years after the publication of their testimony. ... Yet to the end of their lives ... not one of these witnesses deviated from his published testimony or said anything that cast any shadow on its truthfulness.

“Furthermore, their testimony stands uncontradicted by any other witnesses. Reject it one may, but how does one explain three men of good character uniting and persisting in this published testimony to the end of their lives in the face of great ridicule and other personal disadvantage? Like the Book of Mormon itself, there is no better explanation than is given in the testimony itself, the solemn statement of good and honest men who told what they saw” (“The Witness: Martin Harris,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 36).

- How do you think the testimony of the Three Witnesses is strengthened by the fact that they never denied their witness, even after they were excommunicated from the Church? (Explain that Oliver Cowdery and Martin Harris were later rebaptized.)

Refer students back to Doctrine and Covenants 17:6, and emphasize that this verse contains the greatest possible witness of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. This verse contains the testimony of God Himself, sworn with an oath, that the Book of Mormon is true.

Ask students to imagine that their personal testimony of the Book of Mormon could be added to each copy of the Book of Mormon. Invite students to share what they would include in their witness or testimony.

Invite students to share their testimony of the Book of Mormon with someone before the next class.

Student Readings

- Doctrine and Covenants 17; Joseph Smith—History 1:29–54.
- Neal A. Maxwell, “By the Gift and Power of God,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1997, 36–41.

LESSON 4

The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion

Introduction

The Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion and evidence that God has restored the gospel of Jesus Christ to the earth in our day. President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) taught that the Book of Mormon “is the keystone in our witness of Christ. It is the keystone of our doctrine. It is the

keystone of testimony” (“The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 5). As students deepen their testimonies of the Book of Mormon, they can become fortified against those who seek to disprove its authenticity.

Background Reading

- Ezra Taft Benson, “The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 4–7.
- Jeffrey R. Holland, “Safety for the Soul,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 88–90.
- “Book of Mormon and DNA Studies,” Gospel Topics, [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics).

Suggestions for Teaching

Doctrine and Covenants 17:6; 19:26; 20:5–12

The Book of Mormon is evidence that God has restored truth in our day

Before class, write the following dates and events on the board.

1820 First Vision received

1823 Moroni’s visits began

1829 Priesthood restored

June 1829 Book of Mormon translation completed

April 6, 1830 Church organized

- What can we learn from the sequence of these events about the role of the Book of Mormon in the Restoration of the gospel? (The Book of Mormon had to be completed before the Church could be restored. It would play a significant role in the spreading of the gospel.)

Explain that when the Church was organized in April 1830, the printing of the Book of Mormon had just been completed, and the book had been advertised for sale less than two weeks before. Ask students to read Doctrine and Covenants

20:8–12 silently, looking for what the Book of Mormon contains and what the Book of Mormon proves. You may want to suggest that students mark what they discover. (*Note:* Throughout this course, you might encourage students to mark important truths they discover in their scriptures.) As students are reading, write the following incomplete statement on the board:

The Book of Mormon proves to the world that ...

After sufficient time, ask students the following questions:

- Based on what you read, how would you complete the statement on the board? (Students may use different words, but make sure they identify the following truth: **The Book of Mormon proves to the world that the scriptures are true, that God inspires and calls people to do His work in our day, and that God is unchangeable.**)
- How does the Book of Mormon prove that God inspires and calls people to do His work in our day?
- When a person comes to know that the Book of Mormon is true, what knowledge does he or she gain about the Prophet Joseph Smith?

Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 17:6 and 19:26 silently, looking for what the two verses have in common.

- What do these two verses have in common? (The Lord’s declaration of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon.)
- Of what value is it to you to know that the Lord has declared His testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon?

The Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion

Write the following truth on the board: **The Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion.**

- What do you think this statement means?

Display the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), and invite a student to read it aloud:



“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 testimony” (“The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 5).



Divide the class into small groups. Assign each group to discuss one of the following topics: how the Book of Mormon is “the keystone in our witness of Christ,” how it is “the keystone of our doctrine,” or how it is “the keystone of

testimony.” (You may need to assign each topic to more than one group.) Provide each group with a copy of the following handout and ask them to use the statement that corresponds to their topic in their discussions.

The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion

“The Keystone in Our Witness of Christ”



“The Book of Mormon is the keystone in our witness of Jesus Christ, who is Himself the cornerstone of everything we do. It bears witness of His reality. . . . Its testimony of the Master is clear, undiluted, and full of power. . . . 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” (Ezra Taft Benson, “The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 5).

“The Keystone of Our Doctrine”



“In the Book of Mormon we will find the fulness of those doctrines required for our salvation. And they are taught plainly and simply so that even children can learn the ways of salvation and exaltation. 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” (Ezra Taft Benson, “The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 6).

“The Keystone of Testimony”



“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, 6).

After sufficient time, invite groups to share with the class what they discussed.

Conclude this portion of the lesson by asking students to share how they feel about the Book of Mormon and to share how it has been a keystone of their own testimonies.

Enemies attempt to disprove the Book of Mormon

Invite a student to read aloud the following statement by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



"For [more than 180] years this book has been examined and attacked, denied and deconstructed, targeted and torn apart like perhaps no other book in modern religious history—perhaps like no other book in *any* religious history. And still it stands. Failed theories about its origins have been born and parroted and have died—from Ethan Smith to Solomon Spaulding to deranged paranoid to cunning genius. None of these frankly pathetic answers for this book has ever withstood examination because *there is no other answer* than the one Joseph gave as its young unlearned translator. In this I stand with my own great-grandfather, who said simply enough, 'No wicked man could write such a book as this; and no good man would write it, unless it were true and he were commanded of God to do so.'" ("Safety for the Soul," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 89).

- Why is it important to remember that modern enemies of the Church frequently attempt to discredit the Book of Mormon?
- How does the statement by Elder Holland's great-grandfather support the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon?

As an example, you may want to explain that one way modern enemies of the Church attempt to discredit the Book of Mormon is by using DNA evidence to try to discredit any link between Book of Mormon peoples and Native Americans. If students have questions about this issue, encourage them to read the Gospel Topics article "Book of Mormon and DNA Studies," which can be found at [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics).

Hold fast to what you know is true

Ask students to imagine that a friend has said that he or she has heard something that seems to contradict the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon.

- What counsel would you give to your friend?
- How can your witness that the Book of Mormon is true help you when you are confronted by criticisms of the Book of Mormon?

Invite a student to read aloud the following statement by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



"In moments of ... doubt or troubling times, hold the ground you have already won, even if that ground is limited. ... When those moments come and issues surface, the resolution of which is not immediately forthcoming, *hold fast to what you already know and stand strong until additional knowledge comes*" ("Lord, I Believe," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2013, 93–94).

- How might you apply Elder Holland's statement when you encounter questions about the authenticity of the Book of Mormon? (Students may suggest a variety of answers, but you may want to emphasize the following principle: **When we face questions or doubts about the gospel, we should hold fast to what we**

already know to be true and trust that we can either find an answer through further study or that God will reveal the answer at a future time.)

- What truths do you already know about the Book of Mormon and the principles it contains? How have you come to that knowledge?

Conclude the lesson by displaying the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson and inviting a student to read it aloud:



"Every Latter-day Saint should make the study of this book a lifetime pursuit. Otherwise, he is placing his soul in jeopardy and neglecting that which could give spiritual and intellectual unity to his whole life. There is a difference between a convert who is built on the rock of Christ through the Book of Mormon and stays hold of that iron rod, and one who does not" ("The Book of Mormon Is the Word of God," *Ensign*, Jan. 1988, 5).

- How has regularly studying the Book of Mormon protected you against those who want to destroy your faith?

Testify of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. Invite students to consider how the Book of Mormon has influenced their lives. Ask them to think about what they could do to give greater priority to studying the Book of Mormon. Remind students of Moroni's promise, found in Moroni 10:3–5, that those who desire to strengthen their testimony of the Book of Mormon can do so by studying the book and praying about its truthfulness.

Student Readings

- Doctrine and Covenants 17:6; 19:26; 20:5–12.
- Jeffrey R. Holland, "Safety for the Soul," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 88–90.

LESSON 5

The Restoration of the Priesthood

Introduction

On May 15, 1829, John the Baptist appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and restored the Aaronic Priesthood. Shortly thereafter, the ancient Apostles Peter, James, and John appeared to Joseph and Oliver and restored the Melchizedek Priesthood. The Melchizedek Priesthood holds

authority over all offices in the Church and administers in all spiritual things. This lesson will help students understand how the Church functions under the direction of the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Background Reading

- Thomas S. Monson, “The Priesthood—a Sacred Gift,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2007, 57–60.
- Dallin H. Oaks, “The Keys and Authority of the Priesthood,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2014, 49–52.
- Larry C. Porter, “The Restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1996, 30–47.

Suggestions for Teaching

Joseph Smith—History 1:68–71; Doctrine and Covenants 13:1

John the Baptist restored the Aaronic Priesthood

Display a picture of a baptism (see Young Man Being Baptized [*Gospel Art Book* (2009), no. 103; see also LDS.org]) and a picture showing the administration of the sacrament (see Blessing the Sacrament [*Gospel Art Book*, no. 107; see also LDS.org]). Ask students to describe how their lives would be different if they did not have access to these sacred ordinances. Remind students that these ordinances represent some of the blessings we receive because of the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood.

Invite a student to read Joseph Smith—History 1:68 aloud. Ask the class to follow along and identify what Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were doing that led them to ask the Lord about baptism. Ask them to report what they discovered.



Invite a student to read Joseph Smith—History 1:69 aloud. Point out that the words of the messenger, who was John the Baptist, are also recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 13. Ask the class:

- Why was it necessary for Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery to receive the priesthood from a heavenly messenger? (There was no one on the earth at that time who held keys of the priesthood [see Articles of Faith 1:5].)



Invite students to read Joseph Smith—History 1:70–71. Explain that these verses clarify that the Prophet Joseph was the first to exercise the priesthood in this dispensation. Some people wonder why John the Baptist did not baptize Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and why the two men were commanded to re-confer the priesthood on each other. You may want to explain that while it was necessary for a heavenly messenger bearing proper authority to restore priesthood authority to the earth for a new dispensation, once that authority was restored, all earthly ordinances such as baptism and ordination were to be performed by mortal beings. In addition, John the Baptist’s instruction that Joseph and Oliver re-confer the priesthood on each other placed “the ordination and baptism in the proper relationship [or the proper order]” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 3:91).

Write the following question on the board:

How does the Aaronic Priesthood help us access the blessings of the Atonement of Jesus Christ?

Encourage students to consider this question as you read aloud the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



“What does it mean that the Aaronic Priesthood holds ‘the key of the ministering of angels’ and of the ‘gospel of repentance and of baptism, and the remission of sins’? The meaning is found in the ordinance of baptism and in the sacrament. 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" ("The Aaronic Priesthood and the Sacrament," *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 37–38).

Invite students to share their answers to the question on the board. Testify that **the ordinances of the Aaronic Priesthood make available many blessings of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, including baptism for the remission of sins.**

Joseph Smith—History 1:72; Doctrine and Covenants 84:19–22; 107:8, 18–19

Peter, James, and John Restored the Melchizedek Priesthood

Invite the class to follow along as a student reads Joseph Smith—History 1:72 aloud. To help students broaden their understanding of the context of this passage, explain that shortly after John the Baptist's visit, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery received the Melchizedek Priesthood from Peter, James, and John. This occurred in May 1829, somewhere near the Susquehanna River (see Larry C. Porter, "The Restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods," *Ensign*, Dec. 1996, 30–47). After the organization of the Church, the Prophet received other revelations on the doctrine and purpose of the priesthood. The priesthood is a common theme throughout the Doctrine and Covenants.

Invite students to study Doctrine and Covenants 84:19 and 107:8, 18–19 silently, looking for how these verses describe the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood. You may want to suggest to students that they cross-reference these passages. (*Note:* Cross-referencing is a scripture study tool that can provide additional information about and insight into the passage being studied.) After sufficient time, invite students to share what they learned about the Melchizedek Priesthood. As they respond, write the following phrases on the board:

Administers the gospel

Holds keys of the mysteries of the kingdom

Holds the key of the knowledge of God

Holds the keys of the spiritual blessings of the Church

Holds keys to receiving revelation

Holds keys to communing with heavenly hosts and dwelling with the Father and the Son

You might summarize the answers on the board by emphasizing the following truth: **The Melchizedek Priesthood holds the keys of all the ordinances and**

spiritual blessings of the Church. To help students better understand the phrases on the board, discuss some or all of the following questions:

- What are some ways in which the Melchizedek Priesthood “administereth the gospel”? (D&C 84:19). (Responses may include administering specific ordinances and presiding over and directing the Church.)
- What do you think it means that the Melchizedek Priesthood “holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom”? (D&C 84:19). (You may want to explain that “mysteries of God are spiritual truths known only by revelation” [Guide to the Scriptures, “Mysteries of God,” scriptures.lds.org]. Among other mysteries, this verse refers to the temple ordinances that would soon be revealed to Joseph Smith and the fact that they must be administered by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood. In the temple, worthy Church members can learn some of the “mysteries of God” as they participate in the ordinances administered there and keep the associated covenants.)
- How does the Melchizedek Priesthood help us gain “the knowledge of God”? (D&C 84:19). (We gain the knowledge of God as we participate in ordinances that are performed by the Melchizedek Priesthood.)

To help students understand the phrase “the knowledge of God,” you may want to read the following statement by President James E. Faust (1920–2007) of the First Presidency:



“What is the key of the knowledge of God, and can anyone obtain it? Without the priesthood there can be no fulness of the knowledge of God. The Prophet Joseph Smith said that the ‘Melchizedek Priesthood . . . is the channel through which all knowledge, doctrine, the plan of salvation, and every important matter is revealed from heaven’ [*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 108]” (“The Key of the Knowledge of God,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 52).

Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 84:20–22. Ask the class to follow along, looking for ways the spiritual blessings available through the Melchizedek Priesthood can be enjoyed by every member of the Church. Then ask the following questions:

- What ordinances can be administered only by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood? (Confirmation, conferral of Melchizedek Priesthood, temple ordinances, blessing babies, administering to the sick, patriarchal blessings, setting a person apart for a calling.)
- How can priesthood ordinances help a person experience “the power of godliness,” meaning the power to become like God?
- How can the ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood prepare us to see the face of God?
- How have priesthood ordinances helped you to become more like God?
- What other experiences have contributed to your appreciation for and testimony of the priesthood?

Consider sharing your own testimony of the blessings of the priesthood. Encourage students to consider what they might do to better align themselves with the direction coming from their priesthood leaders.

Student Readings

- Joseph Smith—History 1:68–72; Doctrine and Covenants 13:1; 84:18–22; 107:1–19.
- Thomas S. Monson, “The Priesthood—a Sacred Gift,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2007, 57–60.

LESSON 6

The Organization of the Church

Introduction

In a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord commanded that His Church be organized on April 6, 1830 (see D&C 20, section heading; D&C 20:1). This revelation also provided members with a greater understanding of the mission and teachings of the Savior. In a revelation recorded

in Doctrine and Covenants 1:30, the Lord identified the restored Church as the “only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth,” which emphasizes the important role the Church plays in the latter days and in our lives.

Background Reading

- Henry B. Eyring, “The True and Living Church,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2008, 20–24.
- “Organization of the Church of Jesus Christ,” chapter 6 in *Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual*, 2nd ed. (Church Educational System manual, 2003), 67–68.
- Boyd K. Packer, “The Only True Church,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 80–83.
- Jeffrey G. Cannon, “‘Build Up My Church’: D&C 18, 20, 21, 22,” Revelations in Context series, Jan. 3, 2013, history.lds.org.

Suggestions for Teaching

Doctrine and Covenants 20:1–3

The Restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ

Begin the lesson by asking students to describe what they know about the Church established by Jesus Christ during the New Testament time period. Then ask:

- What do we believe happened to the Church of Jesus Christ following the death of the Apostles?
- How does this explain the need for a restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ?

Ask a student to read the following statement aloud while the class listens for ways in which the organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints restored important features of the Church established by Jesus Christ in New Testament times.

“On April 6, 1830, just eleven days after the Book of Mormon was advertised for sale, a group of about 60 people assembled in the log home of Peter Whitmer Sr. in Fayette, New York. There Joseph Smith formally organized the Church, later designated by revelation as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (see D&C 115:4). It was a joyous occasion, with a great outpouring of the Spirit. The sacrament was administered, believers were baptized, the gift of the Holy Ghost was bestowed, and men were ordained to the priesthood. In a revelation received

during the meeting, the Lord designated Joseph Smith as the leader of the Church: ‘a seer, a translator, a prophet, an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of the church through the will of God the Father, and the grace of your Lord Jesus Christ’ (D&C 21:1). The Church of Jesus Christ was once again established on the earth” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 8–9).

Invite students to describe some of the features of the restored Church of Jesus Christ that were similar to those of the New Testament Church.

Explain that when reading from the Doctrine and Covenants, it can be helpful to read the section headings. This helps establish the historical context of the revelations. Invite a student to read aloud the section heading for Doctrine and Covenants 20. (You might point out that in the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, some historical information not included in the 1981 edition was added to the section heading.) Ask another student to read aloud Doctrine and Covenants 20:1–3. Ask the class to follow along, looking for insights about the Restoration of the gospel. Ask:

- What truths concerning the Restoration of the gospel are taught in these verses? (One of the truths that students should identify is that **Joseph Smith was called of God and commanded to organize the Church of Jesus Christ.**)

Read aloud the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008):



“Joseph Smith and his associates met in the inconspicuous log house on the Peter Whitmer farm in the quiet village of Fayette, New York, and organized the Church of Christ. ...

“From the original six members has grown a vast family of worshippers. ... From that quiet village has grown a movement that today is scattered through some 160 nations of the earth. ... That is a remarkable development. More members of the Church reside out of this nation than in it. That, too, is a remarkable thing. No other church to come out of the soil of America has grown so fast nor spread so widely. ... It is a phenomenon without precedent” (“The Church Goes Forward,” *Ensign*, May 2002, 4).

- What is remarkable to you about the rapid growth of the Church in the latter days?
- How can we as individuals help the Lord’s Church continue to grow in our day?

Doctrine and Covenants 20:17–37, 68–69

The doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ and duties of baptized members

Explain that section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants was known to early Church members as the Articles and Covenants of the Church. This section contains many of the Lord’s instructions concerning the doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ and the duties of its members. This revelation was read aloud at some early Church conferences.

Invite students to imagine that they are new members of the Church in 1830 and are seeking to know what they should believe as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ. Invite half of the class to silently read Doctrine and Covenants 20:17–28 and the other half to read verses 29–36, looking for doctrine that is important for every member of the Lord’s restored Church to know. You may want to suggest that they mark what they find.

After sufficient time, invite students to share truths they identified and to explain why each truth is significant to them. Consider writing the following truth on the board: **Through revelation, the Lord clarified the doctrine and principles upon which His gospel is founded.**

Consider inviting half of the class to read Doctrine and Covenants 20:37, looking for the requirements for those who desire to be baptized. Ask the other half of the class to read Doctrine and Covenants 20:68–69, looking for the Lord’s expectations of us following our baptism. Point out that the instructions found in these verses form a clear pattern for Church members to follow.

Discuss the following questions with the class:

- What must a person demonstrate before he or she can be baptized? (Students should identify the following: **Before individuals can be baptized, they must be humble, repentant, willing to take upon themselves the name of Jesus Christ, and determined to serve Him to the end.**)
- What does the Lord expect of us after we are baptized? (Students’ answers may vary, but they should identify the following truth: **After baptism, we show the Lord our worthiness through our godly walk and conversation.**)
- What do you think it means to “manifest ... a godly walk and conversation”? (D&C 20:69).
- Why can blessings come to members of the Church who are “walking in holiness before the Lord?” (D&C 20:69).

If time permits, you might point out to students that the doctrines and Church practices recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 20 are also described in the Book of Mormon, helping us understand that the Church of Jesus Christ has been fundamentally the same in all dispensations. For instance, the doctrines described in Doctrine and Covenants 20:17–36 are also described in the Book of Mormon. Similarly, the ordinances and practices recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 20:73–80 are also recorded in the Book of Mormon.

Doctrine and Covenants 1:30

The “only true and living church”

Explain that many in our day believe that all churches are true and are equally right in the sight of God. However, about a year and a half after The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized, the Lord gave an important description of the Church. Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 1:30 silently.

Then ask:

- How did the Lord describe the restored Church? (Students should express the following truth: **The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only true and living church upon the earth.**)
- What does it mean to you that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is “the only true and living church” on the earth? (Before students respond, you may want to remind them that this doctrine is not intended to mean we should feel superior to others.)

Display the following statements by President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency and Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and invite a student to read them aloud. Ask the rest of the class to follow along, looking for why The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is considered the “only true and living church.”



“This is the true Church, the only true Church, because in it are the keys of the priesthood. Only in this Church has the Lord lodged the power to seal on earth and to seal in heaven as He did in the time of the Apostle Peter. Those keys were restored to Joseph Smith, who then was authorized to confer them upon the members of the Quorum of the Twelve” (Henry B. Eyring, “The True and Living Church,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2008, 20).



“The Lord has declared that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is ‘the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth’ (D&C 1:30). This restored Church is true because it is the Savior’s Church; He is ‘the way, the truth, and the life’ (John 14:6). And it is a living church because of the workings and gifts of the Holy Ghost” (David A. Bednar, “Receive the Holy Ghost,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 97).

- How do the truths identified by President Eyring and Elder Bednar make The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints different from every other church on the earth? (It is the Savior’s Church, it has the workings and gifts of the Holy Ghost, and the keys of the priesthood are found in it. You may want to suggest that students write some of these ideas in the margin of their scriptures next to Doctrine and Covenants 1:30.)

Explain that President Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles quoted from Doctrine and Covenants 1:30 and then explained why this divinely given description of the Church is so important. Invite a student to read aloud the following statement by President Packer:



“Yield on this doctrine, and you cannot justify the Restoration. ...
 “We did not invent the doctrine of the only true church. It came from the Lord. Whatever perception others have of us, however presumptuous we appear to be, whatever criticism is directed to us, we must teach it to all who will listen. ...

"We do not claim that others have no truth. The Lord described them as having "a form of godliness." Converts to the Church may bring with them all the truth they possess and have it added upon" ("The Only True Church," *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 82).

- How does this doctrine clarify the need for the Restoration?

Invite students to explain how individuals can come to know for themselves that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is true.

Student Readings

- Doctrine and Covenants 1:30; 20:1–3, 17–37, 68–69.
- Henry B. Eyring, "The True and Living Church," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2008, 20–24.

LESSON 7

Proclaim the Everlasting Gospel

Introduction

The Doctrine and Covenants contains revelations from the Lord to certain Church members, through the Prophet Joseph Smith, commanding the members to declare repentance and gather His elect. The Church grew rapidly as missionaries

were called by the Prophet Joseph Smith and became instruments in the Lord's hands. Church members today receive blessings from missionary work when they recognize and fulfill their responsibility to assist in sharing the gospel.

Background Reading

- Neil L. Andersen, "It's a Miracle," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 77–80.
- L. Tom Perry, "Bring Souls unto Me," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 109–12.

Suggestions for Teaching

Doctrine and Covenants 29:4–7; 33:2–7

The Lord calls servants to help gather His children

Display the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), and invite a student to read it aloud:



"Missionary work is the lifeblood of the Church. It is the principal means by which it grows. It is because of this service that the Church has reached its present size" ("Missionary Service," *First Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, Jan. 11, 2003, 17).

- In your opinion, in what ways can missionary work be considered the "lifeblood of the Church"?

Explain that early in the Restoration, individuals often asked the Prophet to seek revelations in their behalf to help them know how they might contribute to the Lord's work. Sometimes these revelations were received for a single individual and sometimes for multiple individuals. Explain that Doctrine and Covenants 33 is an example of a revelation received in behalf of two individuals: Ezra Thayer (or Thayre) and Northrop Sweet.

Invite a few students to take turns reading aloud from Doctrine and Covenants 33:2–7. Ask the class to follow along, looking for words, phrases, or symbols the Lord used that apply to our role in missionary work and that emphasize the importance of declaring the gospel in the latter days.

- What symbols did the Lord use? (As students respond, you may want to write their answers on the board.)

- How do these symbols illustrate our role in missionary work and emphasize the importance of declaring the gospel?

Invite students to carefully study verse 6 and identify what is accomplished as we declare the gospel to others. Then ask them to state in their own words what they found. (Students may use different words, but they should identify the following principle: **As we declare the gospel of Jesus Christ to others, we help to gather the Lord's elect.** You may want to relate that following this revelation, Ezra Thayer “filled his barn” with people to hear Joseph Smith and others preach the gospel [*Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831*, vol. 1 of the Documents series of *The Joseph Smith Papers* (2013), 206].)

Share with students the following definition of the gathering of Israel by Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



“The gathering of Israel consists in believing and accepting and living in harmony with all that the Lord once offered his ancient chosen people. ... It consists of believing the gospel, joining the Church, and coming into the kingdom” (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [1985], 515).

Invite a student to read aloud the following account about some of the first missionaries called following the organization of the Church. Ask the class to listen for how these early missionaries succeeded in gathering some of the Lord's elect.

“[In the fall of 1830], the Lord revealed to Joseph Smith that Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer Jr., Parley P. Pratt, and Ziba Peterson were to ‘go unto the Lamanites and preach my gospel unto them’ (D&C 28:8; 30:5–6; 32:1–3). These missionaries traveled some 1,500 miles, preaching briefly among various Indian tribes. ... However, 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. The missionaries also found some converts among the settlers in Jackson County, Missouri, where the city of Zion would later be established” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 150; see also Richard Dilworth Rust, “A Mission to the Lamanites: D&C 28, 30, 32,” *Revelations in Context* series, Feb. 22, 2013, history.lds.org).

Explain that these conversions in northern Ohio more than doubled Church membership at that time.

Ask students to read Doctrine and Covenants 29:4–7 silently, looking for a description of “the Lord's elect.”

- How did the Savior describe His elect?

Explain to students that the work of the first missionaries serving outside of North America includes a dramatic example of how the Lord uses His servants to gather His elect. Invite a student to read the following summary aloud. Ask the class to

follow along and listen for the Prophet Joseph Smith’s counsel to Elder Heber C. Kimball (1801–1868).

“Heber C. Kimball, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, 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.’

“The Prophet also extended calls to Orson Hyde, Willard Richards, and Joseph Fielding in Kirtland, and to Isaac Russell, John Snyder, and John Goodson in Toronto, Canada. These brethren were to join Elder Kimball on his mission to England. Gathering in New York City, they sailed on the ship *Garrick* for Great Britain on July 1, 1837. This first mission outside of North America brought some 2,000 converts into the Church during the missionaries’ first year in England. Elder Kimball wrote joyfully to the Prophet: ‘Glory to God, Joseph, the Lord is with us among the nations!’

“A second apostolic mission to Britain, involving most members of the Twelve under the leadership of Brigham Young, was directed by the Prophet from Nauvoo. Leaving in the fall of 1839, the Twelve arrived in England in 1840. There they began a labor that by 1841 would bring over 6,000 converts into the Church” (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 327, 329).

- What counsel did Heber C. Kimball receive from the Prophet Joseph Smith?
- Describe a time when you experienced the Lord’s help in your efforts to share the gospel.

Doctrine and Covenants 4:1–7; 18:10–16; 31:1–12; 34:5–6; 39:20–23; 88:81

Those who have been warned are to warn their neighbors

Explain that the Doctrine and Covenants repeatedly reminds Church members of the responsibility and blessings of participating in missionary work. Our responsibility to share the gospel with others is a recurring pattern and theme in the revelations recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants. Learning to recognize patterns and themes enables readers to better feast upon the words of Christ (see David A. Bednar, “A Reservoir of Living Water” [Brigham Young University fireside, Feb. 4, 2007], speeches.byu.edu).

Invite students to silently read Doctrine and Covenants 88:81 and then summarize in their own words how it applies to current Church members. (One response students might give is that **all who have accepted the gospel of Jesus Christ have a duty to share it with others.**)

Display the following chart, or copy it on the board. Divide the class into three groups, and assign each group one of the scripture passages. Ask students to read their assigned passages and look for the responsibilities and promised blessings of sharing the gospel.

	<i>Responsibilities</i>	<i>Blessings</i>
<i>Doctrine and Covenants 4:1–7</i>		
<i>Doctrine and Covenants 18:10–16</i>		
<i>Doctrine and Covenants 31:1–12</i>		

After sufficient time, invite students to share their findings with the class.

Display the following statement by Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and invite a student to read it aloud. Ask the class to listen for Elder Bednar’s description of our individual responsibility to share the gospel.



“Devoted disciples of Jesus Christ always have been and always will be valiant missionaries. A missionary is a follower of Christ who testifies of Him as the Redeemer and proclaims the truths of His gospel.

“The Church of Jesus Christ always has been and always will be a missionary church. The individual members of the Savior’s Church have accepted the solemn obligation to assist in fulfilling the divine commission given by the Lord to His Apostles, as recorded in the New Testament:

“‘Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

“‘Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen’ (Matthew 28:19–20).

“Latter-day Saints take seriously this responsibility to teach all people in all nations about the Lord Jesus Christ and His restored gospel. . . .

“Indeed, we feel a solemn responsibility to carry this message to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people” (“Come and See,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 107).

- Why should members of the Savior’s Church view missionary work as a solemn obligation?

Display the following statement by Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and invite a student to read it aloud. Ask the class to follow along and ponder why they might want to consider becoming more diligent in sharing the gospel.



“The gospel is centered on the Atonement of our Lord and Savior. The Atonement provides the power to wash away sins, to heal, and to grant eternal life. All the imponderable blessings of the Atonement can be given only to those who live the principles and receive the ordinances of the gospel—faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end. Our

great missionary message to the world is that all mankind is invited to be rescued and to enter the fold of the Good Shepherd, even Jesus Christ.

“Our missionary message is strengthened by the knowledge of the Restoration. We know that God speaks to His prophets today, just as He did anciently. We also know that His gospel is administered with the power and authority of the restored priesthood. No other message has such great eternal significance to everyone living on the earth today” (“Bring Souls unto Me,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 110–11).

- Why do you think each of us should become more diligent in sharing the gospel? (Answers should include the following: **When we share the gospel with others, we offer them access to the blessings of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.**)

Invite students to study Doctrine and Covenants 34:5–6; 39:20–23, looking for another important reason why the Lord has commanded us to share the message of the gospel with others. (Students may use different words, but they should identify the following truth: **As we share the gospel message with others, we help them prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.**)

- How does understanding the eternal significance of the gospel help motivate you to share it with those not of our faith?
- Describe an experience you have had with sharing the message of the gospel with others.

Give students a few minutes to ponder and write down what they can do to participate in sharing the gospel. For example, they could write the name of someone they know who is not currently a member of the Church and commit to share the gospel with that person. Invite a few students to share what they plan to do. Encourage students to act on any impressions they have received and to pray daily for an opportunity to share the gospel with others.

Student Readings

- Doctrine and Covenants 4:1–7; 18:10–16; 29:4–7; 31:1–12; 33:2–7; 34:5–6; 39:20–23; 88:81.
- Neil L. Andersen, “It’s a Miracle,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 77–80.

LESSON 8

The Gathering of Latter-day Israel

Introduction

Within one year of the organization of the Church, the Lord commanded the Saints to gather to the Ohio area (see D&C 37:3). Since that time, the Latter-day Saints have gathered to different locations as they have sought to follow the living prophet and establish safe places to live. In this lesson,

students will learn that the Lord gathers His people to strengthen them and to prepare them to receive greater blessings, including the blessings of the temple (see D&C 84:4).

Background Reading

- Russell M. Nelson, “The Gathering of Scattered Israel,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2006, 79–82.

Suggestions for Teaching

Doctrine and Covenants 38:31–33; 39:15; 95:8; 110:9

The call to gather to Ohio

Display the map “The New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio Area of the USA” (Church History Maps, no. 3), located at the back of the Doctrine and Covenants, or another map of this area.



Invite students to identify the general locations of the following significant events of the Restoration: the First Vision (Manchester, New York), the restoration of the priesthood (Harmony, Pennsylvania), and the organization of the Church (Fayette, New York).

Then ask a few students to take turns reading aloud from the following statement:

"Sidney Rigdon, a former minister and newly converted member from the Kirtland area, and a nonmember friend named Edward Partridge were anxious to meet the Prophet and learn more of the teachings of the Church. In December 1830 they traveled more than 250 miles to Fayette, New York, to visit Joseph Smith. They asked him to seek the will of the Lord in relation to themselves and the Kirtland Saints. In response, the Lord revealed that the New York Saints should 'assemble together at the Ohio' (D&C 37:3). At the third and last conference of the Church in New York, held at the Whitmer farm on 2 January 1831, the Lord repeated his directive [that Church members move to Ohio]. ... This was the first call in this dispensation for the Saints to gather together. ...

"... Some 68 members from Colesville were on their way to Ohio by mid-April 1831. Equally obedient to the Lord's command were 80 Saints from the Fayette Branch and 50 from the Manchester Branch, who left their homes in early May 1831. ... By mid-May all the branches of the Church from New York had been able to travel by ship across Lake Erie to Fairport Harbor, Ohio, where they were met by fellow Saints and taken to destinations in Kirtland and Thompson townships. The great gathering of latter-day Israel had begun" (*Our Heritage: A Brief History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* [1996], 17–19).

Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 38:31–33 aloud. Ask the class to follow along and identify ways the Saints would be blessed if they obeyed the commandment to gather to Ohio. Students should identify four blessings: (1) they "might escape the power of the enemy"; (2) they would "be gathered unto [God] a righteous people"; (3) they would receive God's law; and (4) they would be "endowed with power from on high." You may want to suggest that students number these four blessings in their scriptures. (*Note:* Identifying lists in the scriptures can help students recognize key points that the Lord or the prophet is emphasizing.)

Write the following on the board: **The Lord gathers His people to protect them and to strengthen them spiritually.** You might point out that in the scriptures, the doctrine of gathering is often connected with protection. "A connection is a relationship or link between ideas, people, things, or events, and the scriptures are full of connections" (David A. Bednar, "A Reservoir of Living Water" (Brigham Young University fireside, Feb. 4, 2007), 4, speeches.byu.edu).

Explain that just as the Lord took ancient Israel to Mount Sinai and gave them His law, so He instructed the Latter-day Saints to gather to the Ohio so that they could receive His law in this dispensation (see D&C 38:32). In Ohio, the Lord began to reveal His law to the Church (see the section heading to D&C 42). Then ask:

- How does gathering with those who share your beliefs and standards help protect you from the power of Satan?
- How does receiving God's laws help strengthen us spiritually?
- What do you think it means that in Ohio the Saints would be "endowed with power from on high"?

Explain that the promised blessing of being "endowed with power from on high" began to be fulfilled when the Kirtland Temple was completed five years after the Saints gathered to Ohio. Heavenly messengers visited the completed temple to restore to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery the keys and authority necessary to

perform sacred ordinances. Spiritual manifestations were poured out upon numerous Saints at the time of the temple dedication. And a small number of Saints received temple washings and anointings in the temple. A few years later in Nauvoo, the promise of being endowed with power was further fulfilled when the ordinances of the temple endowment were introduced to the Saints. Display the following statement given in Nauvoo by the Prophet Joseph Smith, and ask a student to read it aloud:



“What was the object of gathering the ... people of God in any age of the world? ... The main object was to build unto the Lord a house whereby He could reveal unto His people the ordinances of His house and the glories of His kingdom, and teach the people the way of salvation” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 416).

- In what ways have you observed that God blesses the Latter-day Saints when they gather and build temples as He has directed?

Doctrine and Covenants 45:62–67

The Lord describes the New Jerusalem, or Zion

Explain that not long after the New York Saints had gathered to Ohio, many false newspaper accounts and rumors misrepresented and maligned the Church. During this time, the Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation about a designated gathering place of peace and safety.

Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 45:62–67 aloud. Ask the class to follow along and identify the Lord’s purposes in commanding the Saints to gather toward “the western countries” (D&C 45:64). Consider asking the following questions:

- What did the Lord say was “even at your doors”? What does the phrase “even at your doors” mean to you?
- What did the Lord want the Saints to do as they assembled together into the western countries?
- Why were they to gather their riches? (Explain that the word *inheritance* refers to land they were to purchase where they could dwell and worship the Lord.)
- What was the Saints’ land of inheritance to be called?

Explain that in the scriptures, the word *Zion* can have several meanings. Sometimes it refers to the people of *Zion* and describes them as “the pure in heart” (D&C 97:21). Elsewhere *Zion* refers to the entire Church and its stakes (see D&C 82:14). The word *Zion* can also refer to specific geographic locations. In Doctrine and Covenants 45:66–67, *Zion* referred to a physical city that the Saints would establish and gather to, sometimes called the New Jerusalem (see also 3 Nephi 20:22; 21:23; Ether 13:1–8; Bible Dictionary, “Zion”). Discuss the following questions:

- How did the Lord describe the New Jerusalem, or Zion? (Students should identify the following doctrine: **The New Jerusalem would be a place of peace, refuge, and safety, and the glory of the Lord would be there.**)
- In what ways has being a member of the Church provided you with the safety and peace found in Zion?

Explain that at the close of the fourth conference of the Church, held in June 1831, in Kirtland, Ohio, the Lord commanded Joseph Smith and other elders to travel in pairs approximately 900 miles to Missouri, preaching along the way (see D&C 52, verse summary). After arriving, the Prophet received a revelation identifying Missouri as the “land of promise, and the place for the city of Zion” with Independence, Missouri, identified as the “center place” (D&C 57:1–3). Over the next couple of years, hundreds of Latter-day Saints, eager to build Zion, moved to the Jackson County area of Missouri. Unfortunately, conflict grew between Church members and other citizens of the area and the situation eventually turned violent. The Saints were forced to leave their homes in Jackson County in November and December of 1833.

Doctrine and Covenants 115:5–6

God’s people gather today in the stakes of Zion

To illustrate the efforts of the Saints to gather to additional places of safety and peace, display the map “The Westward Movement of the Church” (Church History Maps, no. 6), located at the back of the Doctrine and Covenants.



Explain that the Saints were eventually forced to leave Kirtland, Ohio, as well as locations in western Missouri. In 1839, the Saints began gathering to Nauvoo, Illinois, where they established a large city. But shortly after the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the members of the Church were again forced to leave their homes. They moved to the Rocky Mountains and established settlements throughout western North America, with Church headquarters established in Salt Lake City.

Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 115:5–6. Then ask:

- According to these verses, what blessings are promised to those who gather to the stakes of Zion? (Answers should include the following truth: **We gather to the stakes of Zion for a defense and for a refuge against evil.**)

- In what ways can the stakes of Zion provide Church members with a defense and a refuge in their own homelands?
- When have you felt strength and protection as you have gathered with the Saints in your own ward or branch?

To help students further understand what it means today for Church members to gather in stakes of Zion, display the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and invite a student to read it aloud:



"In the early years of this last dispensation, a gathering to Zion involved various locations in the United States: to Kirtland, to Missouri, to Nauvoo, and to the tops of the mountains. Always these were gatherings to prospective temples. With the creation of stakes and the construction of temples in most nations with sizeable populations of the faithful, the current commandment is not to gather to one place but to gather in stakes in our own homelands. There the faithful can enjoy the full blessings of eternity in a house of the Lord. . . . In this way, the stakes of Zion are 'for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth' (D&C 115:6)" ("Preparation for the Second Coming," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2004, 8).

Invite a student to read aloud the following statement by President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985):



"Now, the gathering of Israel consists of joining the true church and their coming to a knowledge of the true God. . . . Any person, therefore, who has accepted the restored gospel, and who now seeks to worship the Lord in his own tongue and with the Saints in the nations where he lives, has complied with the law of the gathering of Israel and is heir to all of the blessings promised the Saints in these last days" (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 439).

- What have you seen happen to the number of temples the Church has built in your lifetime?
- How have you been blessed by membership in a stake or district of Zion? How have you been blessed by the holy temple?

Conclude by asking students to consider what they might do to help others receive the spiritual protection and strength that comes from faithful participation in the stakes of Zion and worship in the holy temple. Invite students to act on the promptings of the Spirit they may have received.

Student Readings

- Doctrine and Covenants 37:1–3; 38:31–33; 39:15; 45:62–67; 95:8; 110:9; 115:5–6.
- Russell M. Nelson, "The Gathering of Scattered Israel," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2006, 79–82.

LESSON 9

Follow the Living Prophet

Introduction

On the day the Church was organized, the Lord promised spiritual safety to those who would give heed to the words of the prophet (see D&C 21:4–6). Shortly thereafter, to help Church members avoid deception, the Lord further revealed

that only the prophet is authorized to receive revelation for the whole Church (see D&C 28:1–7). The prophet also has authority to clarify scripture. Understanding these truths brings additional spiritual safety in these latter days.

Background Reading

- Russell M. Nelson, “Sustaining the Prophets,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 74–77.
- Ezra Taft Benson, “Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophet” [Brigham Young University devotional, Feb. 26, 1980], speeches.byu.edu; see also *Tambuli*, June 1981, 1–8.

Suggestions for Teaching

Doctrine and Covenants 21:1–6

Give heed to the words of the prophet

Ask students what titles we sometimes use to refer to the President of the Church. Write students’ responses on the board. Then invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 21:1 aloud while the class follows along. List any additional titles on the board. Then ask:

- How do each of the titles in this verse describe the work of the President of the Church?

Help students understand the context of Doctrine and Covenants 21 by explaining that the revelation it records was revealed on the day the Church was organized.

(*Note:* When students learn to understand the context of a scripture, they are more likely to understand the meaning and importance of what they read.) Then ask:

- Why would it have been important for early Church members to recognize that Joseph Smith’s calling as prophet differed significantly from the roles of leaders of other churches?

Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 21:4–5 aloud while the class follows along. Then discuss the following:

- Why does it sometimes take patience and faith to heed the prophet’s counsel?

As needed, consider sharing the following statement from President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) with students:



"We must learn to give heed to the words and commandments that the Lord shall give through His prophet. ... You may not like what comes from the authority of the Church. It may contradict your political views. It may contradict your social views. It may interfere with some of your social life. But if you listen to these things, as if from the mouth of the Lord Himself, with patience and faith, the promise is that 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name's glory' (D&C 21:6)" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee* [2000], 84).

As the Spirit prompts, you might explain the following:

1. As Latter-day Saints, we do not believe that prophets are perfect men. However, the Lord will never allow them to lead the Church astray (see Official Declaration 1, "Excerpts from Three Addresses by President Wilford Woodruff Regarding the Manifesto").
2. We believe and rejoice in continuing revelation. There have been occasions in Church history when one prophet has clarified previous prophetic counsel or identified teachings or practices once widely accepted that were later in need of change. For instance, in the early years of the Church, members were encouraged to gather to one central location, such as Kirtland, Ohio, or Jackson County, Missouri. Today, Church members are encouraged to gather in their local stakes or districts.

Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 21:6 aloud. Ask the class to follow along and identify the promises given to those who heed the words of the prophet. You may want to suggest that students mark what they find. Then ask:

- How would you summarize the promises given to those who heed the words of the prophet? (Though they may use different words, students should identify the following principle: **If we heed the words of the prophet, we will be protected against the adversary.** As students respond, you may want to explain that one meaning of *shake* is to dislodge or release something from a support or a container. Thus, one interpretation of verse 6 could be that when the heavens shake "for [our] good," revelations and blessings are "released" and poured out upon us.)

Display the following statement by President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency, and ask a student to read it aloud:



"Looking for the path to safety in the counsel of prophets makes sense to those with strong faith. When a prophet speaks, those with little faith may think that they hear only a wise man giving good advice. ...
 "... But the choice not to take prophetic counsel changes the very ground upon which we stand. It becomes more dangerous. The failure to take prophetic counsel lessens our power to take inspired counsel in the future" ("Finding Safety in Counsel," *Ensign*, May 1997, 25).

- Why would “the very ground upon which we stand” become “more dangerous” if we reject the counsel of prophets? What examples show that this is true?
- When have you or someone you know been blessed by heeding the counsel of living prophets?
- How can the principle of giving heed to prophetic counsel apply to religious, moral, and social questions of our day?

Encourage students to ponder what they can do to claim the blessings promised in Doctrine and Covenants 21:6. Assure them that as they earnestly heed the words of living prophets, they will receive great blessings now and in the eternities. Explain that heeding the counsel of prophets does not imply that we blindly obey their words.

Read aloud the following statement by President Harold B. Lee:



“It is not alone sufficient for us as Latter-day Saints to follow our leaders and to accept their counsel, but we have the greater obligation to gain for ourselves the unshakable testimony of the divine appointment of these men and the witness that what they have told us is the will of our Heavenly Father” (*Teachings: Harold B. Lee*, 45).

Doctrine and Covenants 28:2, 6–7; 43:1–7

The Lord gives revelation in an orderly manner

Explain that soon after the Church was organized, some members of the Church were deceived by efforts of the adversary to provide counterfeit prophetic direction. Invite a student to read aloud the section heading to Doctrine and Covenants 28 while the class follows along (see also Jeffrey G. Cannon, “All Things Must Be Done in Order: D&C 28, 43,” *Revelations in Context* series, Apr. 4, 2013, history.lds.org). Then ask:

- If Church members had continued to believe in the supposed revelations from Hiram Page, what problems could have occurred?

Give students a moment to study Doctrine and Covenants 28:2, 6–7. Then ask:

- How did this message from the Lord clarify the role of the President of the Church? (Students should understand the following doctrine: **The President of the Church holds the keys to receive revelation for the Church.**)

To help students deepen their understanding of this doctrine, ask a student to read aloud the following historical background for Doctrine and Covenants 43:

In February 1831, a woman named Mrs. Hubble came among the Saints in Kirtland, Ohio. She claimed that she was a prophetess, that she had received revelations for the Church, that she knew the Book of Mormon was true, and that she should become a teacher in the Church. She was able to deceive some of the Saints. Joseph Smith and others were concerned about her influence and about other false revelations among the Saints. The Prophet decided to inquire of the Lord about what should be done, and he received a revelation, now recorded in Doctrine and

Covenants 43 (see *Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831*, vol. 1 of the Documents series of *The Joseph Smith Papers* [2013], 257).

Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 43:1–7 silently, looking for doctrines the Lord expounded at that time. You may want to suggest that students mark what they find. You might also suggest that they cross-reference these verses to Doctrine and Covenants 28:2. Point out that the revelation recorded in section 28 was directed to the Saints in New York, and the revelation recorded in section 43 was directed to the Saints in Kirtland. Then ask:

- At the time the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 43 was given, who was appointed to receive commandments and revelations for the entire Church?
- What doctrines can we learn from these verses? (Students may use different words, but they should identify the following doctrines: **There is only one person appointed at a time to receive revelation for the whole Church. Those who give heed to the President of the Church will not be deceived.**)

Consider sharing the following statement by Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



"There is order in the way the Lord reveals His will to mankind. We all have the right to petition the Lord and receive inspiration through His Spirit within the realm of our own stewardship. Parents can receive revelation for their own family, a bishop for his assigned congregation, and on up to the First Presidency for the entire Church. ... The Prophet Joseph Smith declared:

"'It is contrary to the economy of God for any member of the Church, or any one, to receive instructions for those in authority, higher than themselves' [*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 197–98]" ("We Believe All That God Has Revealed," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2003, 85–86).

- How does knowing that revelation from God always comes through recognized priesthood channels help you avoid deception? How can this knowledge bring peace into your life?
- How does the Lord's pattern of revelation keep order in the Church?

Doctrine and Covenants 90:1–6

The Lord established order in the Church

Explain that as the Church grew the Lord directed the Prophet Joseph Smith in organizing the priesthood and membership of the Church.

Read aloud or summarize the following statement:

"As the Church increased in membership, the Prophet continued to receive revelation about priesthood offices. As directed by the Lord, he organized the First Presidency, made up of himself

as the President and Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams as Counselors. He also organized the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and the First Quorum of the Seventy. He called and ordained bishops and their counselors, high priests, patriarchs, high councils, seventies, and elders. He organized the Church's first stakes" (*Our Heritage: A Brief History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* [1996], 26).

Explain that the First Presidency holds a unique position in the Church. Invite students to study Doctrine and Covenants 90:1–6 and identify specific duties of the First Presidency. (The First Presidency “bear[s] the keys of the kingdom” [verse 2] and is the means through which “the oracles be given” to the Church [verse 4]). As students respond, you may need to explain that the word “oracles” refers to revelations from God given through His prophets.

Invite a student to read aloud the following statement by Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Ask the class to listen for two different ways in which doctrine is established in the Church.



“In 1954, President J. Reuben Clark Jr., then a counselor in the First Presidency, explained how doctrine is promulgated in the Church and the preeminent role of the President of the Church. Speaking of members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, he stated: ‘[We] should [bear] in mind that some of the General Authorities have had assigned to them a special calling; they possess a special gift; they are sustained as prophets, seers, and revelators, which gives them a special spiritual endowment in connection with their teaching of the people. 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. ...’

“... The President of the Church may announce or interpret doctrines based on revelation to him (see, for example, D&C 138). Doctrinal exposition may also come through the combined council of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (see, for example, Official Declaration 2)” (“The Doctrine of Christ,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2012, 86–88).

- Why is it important to remember who has the authority to declare the “mind and will of God” to the world?

Conclude by asking students to consider what they have learned from the messages of living prophets and apostles. Invite students to share their testimonies of how these messages have blessed them.

Student Readings

- Doctrine and Covenants 21:1–6; 28:2, 6–7; 43:1–7; 90:1–6, 16.
- Russell M. Nelson, “Sustaining the Prophets,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 74–77.

LESSON 10

Seek Truth

Introduction

God's children are encouraged to "seek learning, ... by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118). Following this pattern helps individuals qualify for the help of the Holy Ghost in the learning process. Today, the Internet and other sources provide an abundance of information—some true, some

false, and some misleading—about the Church's doctrine, history, and position on social issues, making it especially important for us to rely on the Holy Ghost to help us discern truth from error. Learning to identify and use appropriate sources of information is part of this process.

Background Reading

- Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "What Is Truth?" (Church Educational System devotional, Jan. 13, 2013), [lds.org/broadcasts](https://www.lds.org/broadcasts).
- "Gospel Learning," Gospel Topics, [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics).

Suggestions for Teaching

Doctrine and Covenants 88:118, 121–26

A pattern for learning

Read aloud the following description of the School of the Prophets held in Kirtland, Ohio:

"In 1833, the Prophet and a group of Kirtland Saints had a unique opportunity to study the gospel. In January of that year, in accordance with the Lord's command (see D&C 88:127–41), the Prophet organized the School of the Prophets to train priesthood holders for their work in the ministry and to prepare them to preach the gospel. The school was held in a second-floor room in the Newel K. Whitney store, where the Prophet lived. About 25 brethren attended, some traveling hundreds of miles for the privilege of studying the gospel in a room no larger than 11 by 14 feet. Many of these men would later become Apostles, Seventies, and other Church leaders. Though the Prophet and the other brethren occasionally studied language, they focused primarily on learning the doctrines of the gospel, diligently pursuing their studies from early morning until late afternoon. This school lasted for four months, and similar schools were later held in Kirtland and also in Missouri, which hundreds of people attended" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 261).

Explain that Doctrine and Covenants 88 contains instructions from the Lord to those who would participate in the School of the Prophets. Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 88:118 silently, looking for the pattern of learning prescribed by the Lord. Then discuss the following questions:

- What do you think it means to "seek learning, ... by study and also by faith"?
- In what ways could following this pattern increase our ability to learn? (Students may give a variety of answers, but make sure it is clear that **when we include faith in the learning process, we qualify for the Lord's help.**)

Invite several students to take turns reading aloud from Doctrine and Covenants 88:121–26, which records further instruction from the Lord to the School of the Prophets. Ask the class to follow along, looking for principles that help us understand how to learn by faith. You may want to suggest that students mark what they find. Consider listing these principles on the board as students share them. You may also want to suggest that students write the phrase “principles that teach how to learn by faith” in the margin of their scriptures next to these verses. (*Note:* Making notes in the margins of the scriptures can help students find and remember important principles more easily.) If there is time, you could ask students to search Alma 32:28, 41–43 and John 7:17 for additional principles.

- How can living the principles taught in these verses help us learn by study and by faith? (As students respond, you may want to emphasize that following these principles will help us qualify for the help of the Spirit.)
- When we qualify to have the Spirit of the Lord with us, how does this Spirit affect our search for truth?

Doctrine and Covenants 91:1–6

Discerning truth from error

Display the following statement by President Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the First Presidency, and invite a student to read it aloud:



“Never in the history of the world have we had easier access to more information—some of it true, some of it false, and much of it partially true.

“Consequently, never in the history of the world has it been more important to learn how to correctly discern between truth and error” (“What Is Truth?” [Church Educational System devotional, Jan. 13, 2013], 3, lds.org/broadcasts).

- What are possible consequences if we do not learn to discern between truth and error?

Write the following question on the board:

How can we correctly discern between truth and error?

Explain that the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 91 taught Joseph Smith how to discern if something he was reading in the Apocrypha was true. Ask a student to read aloud the heading to section 91 while the class follows along. Then invite students to consider the question on the board as they study Doctrine and Covenants 91 as a class.

Explain that the Apocrypha is a collection of sacred books of the Jewish people. These books were not originally included in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) but were included in the Greek translation of the Bible shortly before the time of Christ. When early Christians compiled the books of the Bible centuries later, they

included the books of the Apocrypha as an appendix. Some Christian religions consider the books of the Apocrypha to be scripture, but other religions do not believe they are inspired writings. The copy of the Bible that Joseph Smith used to create his inspired translation contained the Apocrypha. Joseph asked the Lord if his translation of the Bible should include these books.

Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 91:1–3 aloud.

- What did Joseph Smith learn about the Apocrypha? (You may need to explain that an *interpolation* is material that has been inserted in a manuscript, sometimes resulting in the corruption of the original text.)

Invite another student to read Doctrine and Covenants 91:4–6 aloud.

- How can the counsel in verses 4–6 help us to discern truth from error and evaluate the reliability of what we read? (Students may use different words, but make sure they identify the following truth: **The Holy Ghost can help us know if the things we read are true.**)

Explain that the abundance of information available on the Internet has created a growing need for each of us to have the spiritual gift of discernment (see D&C 46:23) so we know how to correctly discern truth from error. (For further information about why the gift of discernment is so important in our lives, see Elder David A. Bednar’s article “Quick to Observe,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Dec. 2006, 31–36.)



Give each student a copy of the following statement by Elder Steven E. Snow of the Seventy. Invite students to search the first two paragraphs for counsel Elder Snow gave about evaluating information we might read about the Church’s history and teachings.

Balancing Church History



Elder Steven E. Snow of the Seventy said:

“The Internet has put all kinds of information at our fingertips—good, bad, truthful, untruthful—including information on Church history. You can read a great deal about our history, but it’s important to read about it and understand it in context. The difficulty with some information online is that it’s out of context and you don’t really see the whole picture.

“Information that tries to embarrass the Church is generally very subjective and unfair. We should seek sources that more objectively describe our beliefs and our history. Some websites are very mean-spirited and can be sensational in how they present the information. Look for sources by recognized and respected historians, whether they’re members of the Church or not.

“Some young people are surprised and shocked by anti-Mormon material on the Internet because they haven’t fortified themselves against it. They may not have spent enough time on the spiritual side to prepare and strengthen themselves for whatever may come. When life experiences come to knock their legs out from under them, it’s important that they do those basic things we always talk about: continuing to study the scriptures and having meaningful prayer with our Heavenly Father. Those basic things prepare people for all kinds of adversity, including anti-Mormon articles they’ll come across online” (“Balancing Church History,” *New Era*, June 2013, 21–22).

- Since we need to carefully evaluate the reliability of sources of information about the Church’s history and teachings, how could you use Elder Snow’s teachings to help you evaluate the reliability of something you read about the Church?

Invite students to read the third paragraph of Elder Snow’s statement silently. Then discuss the following question:

- How will Elder Snow’s counsel help when you encounter information that may challenge your beliefs?

Staying faithful when questions arise

Explain that Church members may sometimes have questions or even doubts about the Church’s doctrine, history, or position on social issues. Share the following statement by President Dieter F. Uchtdorf with your students:



“It’s natural to have questions—the acorn of honest inquiry has often sprouted and matured into a great oak of understanding. There are few members of the Church who, at one time or another, have not wrestled with serious or sensitive questions. One of the purposes of the Church is to nurture and cultivate the seed of faith—even in the sometimes sandy soil of doubt and uncertainty” (“Come, Join with Us,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 23).



Provide each student a copy of the handout “Discerning Truth from Error,” which includes counsel from Church leaders for those who have questions or doubts. Invite students to read the statements on the handout silently and identify principles that would help someone approach questions or doubts in a faithful manner. After sufficient time, invite students to explain how something they read on the handout could help someone who has a question or doubt about the Church’s doctrine, history, or position on social issues.

As you conclude the lesson, emphasize that although there may be some questions we cannot find answers to in our lifetimes, **we can find answers to our greatest questions when we obey the commandments, study appropriate sources of information—particularly the words of living prophets—seek guidance through prayer, and exercise patience and faith.**

Invite students to share experiences they have had when they felt the Lord’s help guiding them to find truth and answers to their questions.

Encourage students to review the statements on the handout, and invite them to follow the counsel from the lesson to seek learning by study and by faith.

Student Readings

- Doctrine and Covenants 88:118–26; 91:1–6.
- Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “What Is Truth?” (Church Educational System devotional, Jan. 13, 2013), lds.org/broadcasts.

Discerning Truth from Error

In all gospel dispensations, the forces of evil have opposed God and His work. But God's work will not be frustrated. In these latter days, the stone has been cut out of the mountain, and it will "roll forth, until it fills the whole earth" (D&C 65:2). However, because individual members of the Church can be deceived, we each need to "watch and pray always" (3 Nephi 18:18).



"There is no need for you or for me, in this enlightened age when the fulness of the gospel has been restored, to sail uncharted seas or to travel unmarked roads in search of truth. A loving Heavenly Father has plotted our course and provided an unflinching guide—even *obedience*. A knowledge of truth and the answers to our greatest questions come to us as we are obedient to the commandments of God" (Thomas S. Monson, "Obedience Brings Blessings,"

Ensign or *Liahona*, May 2013, 89).



"My dear friends—please, first doubt your doubts before you doubt your faith. We must never allow doubt to hold us prisoner and keep us from the divine love, peace, and gifts that come through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ" (Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Come, Join with Us," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 23).



"Satan is the great deceiver, 'the accuser of [the] brethren' [Revelation 12:10], the father of all lies [see John 8:44], who continually seeks to deceive that he might overthrow us [see D&C 50:3]. ...

"For those who already embrace the truth, his primary strategy is to spread the seeds of doubt. For example, he has caused many members of the Church to stumble when they discover information about the Church that seems to contradict what they had learned previously.

"If you experience such a moment, remember that in this age of information there are many who create doubt about anything and everything, at any time and every place. ...

"... And it is always good to keep in mind that just because something is printed on paper, appears on the Internet, is frequently repeated, or has a powerful group of followers doesn't make it true.

"Sometimes untrue claims or information are presented in such a way that they appear quite credible. ...

"... What may seem contradictory now may be perfectly understandable as we search for and receive more trustworthy information" (Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "What Is Truth?" [Church Educational System devotional, Jan. 13, 2013], lds.org/broadcasts).



"When we begin by measuring modern practices and proposals against what we know of God's plan and the premises given in the word of God and the teachings of His living prophets, . . . we know that this puts us on safe ground eternally" (Dallin H. Oaks, "As He Thinketh in His Heart" [evening with Elder Dallin H. Oaks, Feb. 8, 2013], [lds.org/broadcasts](https://www.lds.org/broadcasts)).



"In moments of fear or doubt or troubling times, hold the ground you have already won, even if that ground is limited. . . . When those moments come and issues surface, the resolution of which is not immediately forthcoming, *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, 93–94).



"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" (Neil L. Andersen, "Joseph Smith," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 29).



"Answers to spiritual questions are given to individuals who don't harden their hearts; who ask in faith, believing they will receive; and who diligently keep the commandments" (Paul V. Johnson, "A Pattern for Learning Spiritual Things" [Church Educational System address to religious educators, Aug. 7, 2012], [si.lds.org](https://www.si.lds.org)).



"Studying the Church . . . through the eyes of its defectors [is] like interviewing Judas to understand Jesus" (Neal A. Maxwell, "All Hell Is Moved" [Brigham Young University devotional, Nov. 8, 1977], 3, [speeches.byu.edu](https://www.speeches.byu.edu)).

LESSON 11

The Lord's Voice in the Doctrine and Covenants

Introduction

The Doctrine and Covenants is evidence that God speaks to prophets in the latter days and that He is preparing the world for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. When we read the revelations found in the Doctrine and Covenants, we can hear

the voice of Jesus Christ. When we come to understand the importance of the Doctrine and Covenants, we will prize its teachings above all the wealth of the earth.

Background Reading

- Ezra Taft Benson, "The Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants," *Ensign*, Jan. 2005, 24–28.

Suggestions for Teaching

Introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants

The Lord's voice in the Doctrine and Covenants

Display the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994). Ask a student to read it aloud while the class follows along.



"The Book of Mormon brings men to Christ. The Doctrine and Covenants brings men to Christ's kingdom, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 'the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth' [D&C 1:30]. I know that.

"The Book of Mormon is the 'keystone' of our religion, and the Doctrine and Covenants is the capstone, with continuing latter-day revelation. The Lord has placed His stamp of approval on both the keystone and the capstone" ("The Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants," *Ensign*, Jan. 2005, 26).

- What have you found in the Doctrine and Covenants that shows the book's importance to the Church and to individual members?

Ask the class to open their scriptures to the introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants, found at the beginning of the Doctrine and Covenants. Invite a couple of students to take turns reading paragraphs one and three aloud while the rest of the class follows along. Ask the class to look for ways in which the Doctrine and Covenants differs from other books of scripture and to note the introduction's emphasis on hearing the voice of the Lord. Then ask:

- How is the Doctrine and Covenants different from the other standard works?
- What does the introduction say about the "voice of the Lord Jesus Christ"? (Help students understand that **as we study the Doctrine and Covenants, we can learn to recognize the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ.** Explain that the

phrase “voice of the Lord,” or a variation thereof, occurs more than 40 times in the Doctrine and Covenants [for example, see D&C 1:2; 18:35–36; 76:30]; the phrase “thus saith the Lord” occurs more than 60 times in the Doctrine and Covenants [for example, see D&C 36:1; 56:14].) Hearing the voice of the Lord is an important theme in the Doctrine and Covenants.

Display the following statement by Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Ask a student to read it aloud while the class follows along.



“If asked which book of scripture provides the most frequent chance to ‘listen’ to the Lord talking, most individuals would at first think of the New Testament. The New Testament *is* a marvelous collection of the deeds and many of the doctrines of the Messiah. But in the Doctrine and Covenants we receive the voice as well as the word of the Lord. We can almost ‘hear’ him talking” (“The Doctrine and Covenants: The Voice of the Lord,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1978, 4).

- How might learning to hear and recognize the voice of the Lord through studying the Doctrine and Covenants make a difference in your life?

Give students a few minutes to study paragraph eight of the introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants. Ask them to identify doctrines that are recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants. After sufficient time, ask:

- What makes the Doctrine and Covenants “worth to the Church the riches of the whole earth”?

Consider sharing what Elder Steven E. Snow of the Seventy said about the revelations found in the Doctrine and Covenants:



“Through these inspirational and edifying revelations, the Doctrine and Covenants teaches and reiterates important doctrine. . . . Elder John A. Widtsoe (1872–1952) wrote, ‘Every doctrine taught by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is found, either outlined or shadowed forth, in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. As far as I know, there is no doctrine taught by the Church which is not found in some way or form in this book.’ He added that the Doctrine and Covenants is essential because ‘no other one of our sacred books can lay the same claim to a full survey of all the doctrines of the Church’ [*The Message of the Doctrine and Covenants* (1969), 117]” (“Treasuring the Doctrine and Covenants,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2009, 52).

Invite students to share how studying the Doctrine and Covenants has blessed their lives.

Doctrine and Covenants 1:1–17; 5:10

Background of the Doctrine and Covenants

Explain to students that the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 1 was originally given by the Lord as a preface to the Book of Commandments, which was the first compilation of Joseph Smith’s revelations. This collection of

revelations, along with many more of the Prophet’s revelations and the *Lectures on Faith*, was later published as the Doctrine and Covenants. Section 1 addresses the need for this book of scripture in our day. Invite a student to read aloud the section heading to Doctrine and Covenants 1. Help students analyze the section heading by asking the following question:

- What decision was agreed upon at the special conference of elders? (The revelations Joseph Smith received up to this time would be published in a book. Remind students that although this book was originally called the Book of Commandments, it would later be called the Doctrine and Covenants.)

Invite a few students to take turns reading aloud from Doctrine and Covenants 1:1–5. Then ask the class:

- To whom was Jesus Christ speaking in these verses?
- How would you summarize the central message recorded in these verses?
- How did the Lord say He would deliver His warnings to all people? (Students should identify the following doctrine: **The Lord speaks His warnings to all people through His chosen disciples.**)

Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 1:12 aloud. Then ask:

- According to footnote 12*b*, what event does the Lord want the world to prepare for? (After students respond, you might encourage them to regularly refer to footnotes to clarify and deepen their understanding of the scripture text.)

Ask students to read Doctrine and Covenants 1:14–16 silently, looking for the Lord’s description of the world we live in. After students share what they have found, ask them to read verse 17 and explain what the Lord did to address the problem described in verses 14–16.

Ask a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 5:10 aloud while the class follows along. Then discuss the following:

- What do you learn from this passage about Joseph Smith’s unique calling? (Students should identify the following truth: **The Lord called Joseph Smith to deliver His word to the world.**)

Invite a student to read the following statement by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



“In all else that he accomplished . . . Joseph [Smith] left us above all else the resolute legacy of divine revelation—not a single, isolated revelation without evidence or consequence, and not ‘a mild sort of inspiration seeping into the minds of all good people’ everywhere, but specific, documented, ongoing directions from God. As a good friend and faithful LDS scholar has succinctly put it, ‘At a time when the origins of Christianity were under assault by the forces of Enlightenment rationality, Joseph Smith [unequivocally and singlehandedly] returned modern Christianity to its origins in revelation’ [Richard L. Bushman, “A Joseph Smith for the Twenty-First Century,” in *Believing History* (2004), 274]” (“Prophets, Seers, and Revelators,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2004, 8).

- How has this lesson deepened your understanding of the purpose and significance of the Doctrine and Covenants?
- How has the Doctrine and Covenants strengthened your testimony of Joseph Smith's divine calling as a prophet of God?

Conclude by asking if any students would like to share their testimonies of the doctrines, principles, and truths recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants.

Student Readings

- Introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants; Doctrine and Covenants 1:1–39; 5:10.
- Ezra Taft Benson, "The Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants," *Ensign*, Jan. 2005, 24–28.

LESSON 12

Additional Scriptures in Our Day

Introduction

The Lord continues to provide divine instruction to us by revealing His word and His will to His servants through the Holy Ghost. Because God continues to speak to modern prophets, the canon of scripture remains open. Additional

scriptures brought forth in our day—such as the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible and the book of Abraham—confirm, clarify, and expand our understanding of the gospel.

Background Reading

- Jeffrey R. Holland, “My Words . . . Never Cease,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2008, 91–94.
- “Translation and Historicity of the Book of Abraham,” Gospel Topics, lds.org/topics.
- Elizabeth Maki, “Joseph Smith’s Bible Translation: D&C 45, 76, 77, 86, 91,” Revelations in Context series, Mar. 20, 2013, history.lds.org.

Suggestions for Teaching

Latter-day scriptures

Invite students to imagine that a friend sincerely asks, “Why do Mormons have more scriptures than the Bible? I thought the Bible contained the complete word of God.” Ask students to raise their hands if they have been asked a question like this. Invite a few students to share how they answered the question and how they felt as they testified of the scriptures to others.

Write the word *canon* on the board. Display the following statements by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland and Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and invite two students to take turns reading them aloud. Ask the class to listen for the meaning of the word *canon* in the context of these statements.



“Some Christians, in large measure because of their genuine love for the Bible, have declared that there can be no more authorized scripture beyond the Bible. In thus pronouncing the canon of revelation closed, our friends in some other faiths shut the door on divine expression that we in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints hold dear: the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and the ongoing guidance received by God’s anointed prophets and apostles” (Jeffrey R. Holland, “My Words . . . Never Cease,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2008, 91).



"Most Christians believe that God closed the scriptural canon—the authoritative collection of sacred books used as scriptures—shortly after the death of Christ and that there have been no comparable revelations since that time. Joseph Smith taught and demonstrated that the scriptural canon is open [see *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 195]. ...

"... Joseph Smith taught that God will guide His children by giving new additions to the canon of scriptures. The Book of Mormon is such an addition. So are the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price" (Dallin H. Oaks, "Fundamental to Our Faith," *Ensign*, Jan. 2011, 29).

- What does the phrase "scriptural canon" mean? (It is "a recognized, authoritative collection of sacred books. In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the canonical books are called the standard works" [Guide to the Scriptures, "Canon," scriptures.lds.org].)
- What does it mean that Latter-day Saints believe in an open canon? (Though they may use different words, make sure students understand the following truth: **The authoritative word of God is not contained in the Bible alone** [see Articles of Faith 1:9].)
- What difference does it make to believe that the Lord still reveals scripture to latter-day prophets?

Doctrine and Covenants 42:56; 45:60–62; 76:15–19; 93:53; 94:10

The Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible

Write the following truth on the board:

Through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord revealed additional scripture that confirms, clarifies, and expands our knowledge of truth.

Invite a student to read aloud the section heading to Doctrine and Covenants 35. Ask the class to follow along and look for what the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were doing when they received the revelation contained in this section.

- What work were the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon engaged in when they received this revelation?

To help explain what the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible is, invite a student to read the following two paragraphs aloud:

Around the summer of 1830, the Lord commanded Joseph Smith to translate the Bible. Joseph Smith 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. Thus, the translation was more of an inspired revision than a traditional translation.

The Joseph Smith Translation affected over 3,000 verses in the King James Version of the Bible. These differences include additions (to clarify meaning or context or to restore prophetic writings, such as the book of Moses), deletions, rearranged verses, and complete restructurings of certain chapters. For more information on the Joseph Smith Translation, see Bible Dictionary or Guide to the Scriptures, "Joseph Smith Translation (JST)."

Copy the following chart on the board:

<i>Doctrine and Covenants</i> 45:60–62	<i>Section headings for Doctrine and Covenants</i> 35; 76; 77; 86; 91
<i>Doctrine and Covenants</i> 42:56, footnote a	<i>Doctrine and Covenants 94:10, footnote b</i>
<i>Doctrine and Covenants</i> 76:15–19	
<i>Doctrine and Covenants</i> 93:53	

Divide the class into two groups. Invite each group to study the material in one of the columns, looking for information about the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. After sufficient time, invite students to share what they learned. Then ask the following question:

- What effect do you think the work of translation had on Joseph Smith's spiritual education and on the restoration of gospel truths?

To help students appreciate the effect that Joseph Smith's work on the translation of the Bible had on the Church, invite students to turn to the "Chronological Order of Contents" (located at the beginning of the Doctrine and Covenants) and explain that the Prophet worked on the translation primarily between June 1830 and July 1833. Then ask:

- How many sections of the Doctrine and Covenants were received between June 1830 and July 1833? (The Prophet received 74 revelations that became part of the Doctrine and Covenants in this time period.)

You might also point out that the books of Moses and Joseph Smith—Matthew, both of which are in the Pearl of Great Price, are also part of Joseph Smith's translation of the Bible and were received during this time period. The book of Moses is the Joseph Smith Translation for the first eight chapters of Genesis. Joseph Smith became aware of how much was missing from the Bible as he translated the verses about Enoch. The King James Bible contains 109 words about Enoch, and the Book of Moses contains 5,240 words about Enoch.

- What might the large number of revelations received during this time period suggest about the role that the Joseph Smith Translation played in the Restoration?
- As you look at the sections of the Doctrine and Covenants received during this time period, what are some of the important doctrines that were revealed during this time? (Examples of important doctrines revealed during this time period can be found in sections 29, 42, 45, 76, 88, and 93.)

Display the following and invite a student to read it aloud:

“The Prophet’s translation of the Bible was an important part of his own spiritual education and the unfolding restoration of gospel truth. As he revised the Old and New Testaments, he often received revelations clarifying or expanding upon biblical passages. In this way, the Prophet received many doctrines from the Lord, including those now found in Doctrine and Covenants 74, 76, 77, 86, and 91, and in portions of many other sections of the Doctrine and Covenants” (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 208).

Testify that the Lord revealed a significant portion of the Doctrine and Covenants as a direct consequence of Joseph Smith’s work on the translation of the Bible. You might also explain that portions of the Joseph Smith Translation were added to the 1979 LDS edition of the King James Version of the Bible, making these important revelations more available to bless the lives of Church members.

The book of Abraham

Invite students to scan the chapter headings of the book of Abraham. Briefly discuss the content of the book of Abraham with the class. Then explain that in the summer of 1835 a man named Michael Chandler brought four Egyptian mummies and several papyrus scrolls containing ancient Egyptian writing to Kirtland, Ohio. Members of the Church purchased the mummies and rolls of papyrus. Though the exact method of translation is unknown, the Prophet Joseph Smith translated some of the writings in the months following the acquisition of the Egyptian papyri. Beginning in March 1842, segments of the book of Abraham were published in a Church newspaper called *Times and Seasons*. The book of Abraham was later published in the Pearl of Great Price.

Share the following summary about the coming forth of the book of Abraham. Invite students to listen for what we know about the translation process.

A common objection to the authenticity of the book of Abraham is that the manuscripts (papyri) are not old enough to have been written by Abraham, who lived almost 2,000 years before Jesus Christ. Joseph Smith never claimed that the papyri were written by Abraham himself or that they originated from the time of Abraham. “Ancient records are often transmitted as copies or as copies of copies. The record of Abraham could have been edited . . . by later writers such as the Book of Mormon prophet-historians Mormon and Moroni revised the writings of earlier peoples” (“Translation and Historicity of the Book of Abraham,” *Gospel Topics*, [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics)).

While translating, the Prophet Joseph Smith may have been working with sections of papyri that were later destroyed. Thus, “it is likely futile to assess Joseph’s ability to translate papyri when

we now have only a fraction of the papyri he had in his possession" ("Translation and Historicity of the Book of Abraham"). It is also possible that Joseph Smith's careful examination of the writings led him to receive "revelation about key events and teachings in the life of Abraham, much as he had earlier received a revelation about the life of Moses while studying the Bible" ("Translation and Historicity of the Book of Abraham"). Although we do not know exactly how Joseph Smith translated the book of Abraham, we do know that the translation was done through the gift and power of God.

- What are some examples of how the additional scriptures made available through the Prophet Joseph Smith contribute to our understanding of God's plan for His children?

You may want to testify that as students study the doctrinally important book of Abraham, the Holy Ghost will witness to them of its importance and authenticity.

Doctrine and Covenants 1:38; 68:3–5

Continuing revelation comes through living prophets

Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 1:38 aloud, and invite another student to read Doctrine and Covenants 68:4 aloud. Ask the class what they learn from these passages. (Students should identify the following principle: **When the Lord's servants speak by the power of the Holy Ghost, their words convey the will of the Lord.**)

- What experiences have you had that made you feel grateful that the Lord continues to pour out revelation today?

Explain to students that in the Church, certain revelations to latter-day prophets are canonized (accepted as scripture) through the law of common consent (see D&C 26:1–2). Church members are asked to sustain the prophet and apostles in adding a revelation to the scriptures. For example, at the October 1978 general conference, Church members sustained the prophet and apostles in adding Official Declaration 2, which granted the priesthood to all worthy male members, to the canon of scripture.

Invite students to turn to someone sitting near them and briefly discuss what they might say to someone who believes that the scripture canon is closed and we cannot receive additional scripture from God.

Conclude by asking students to contemplate what they might do to strengthen their testimonies that the heavens are open and that the Lord continues to reveal His words in our day.

Student Readings

- Doctrine and Covenants 1:38; 42:56; 45:60–62; 68:3–5; 76:15–19; 93:53; 94:10.
- Jeffrey R. Holland, "My Words ... Never Cease," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2008, 91–94.

LESSON 13

“The Vision”

Introduction

The vision given to the Prophet Joseph Smith that is now recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 76 gives us a foundational understanding of life after death, including the

degrees of glory. From it we also learn what we must do to live again in the presence of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

Background Reading

- L. Tom Perry, “The Plan of Salvation,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2006, 69–72.
- Matthew McBride, “The Vision’: D&C 76,” Revelations in Context series, Mar. 11, 2013, history.lds.org.

Suggestions for Teaching

Doctrine and Covenants 76

Foundational understanding of life after death

Explain that in the 1830s many Christians held one of two general beliefs about heaven and hell, sometimes described as the “traditional” and “universal” views. The “traditional” view was simply heaven for the righteous and hell for the disobedient. The “universal” view was that God would not eternally punish sinners, for all would eventually be saved in God’s kingdom. At this time, members of the Church of Jesus Christ knew little more than other Christians about heaven and hell. In February 1832, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon experienced a vision that significantly changed Latter-day Saints’ understanding of and belief in the hereafter. This vision, recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 76, revealed an intricate combination of God’s love, mercy, justice, and judgment, and it opened the door to a more perfect view of Heavenly Father’s plan. For many years, early Church members referred to this vision simply as “the Vision.” (See Matthew McBride, “The Vision’: D&C 76,” Revelations in Context series, Mar. 11, 2013, history.lds.org.)

Ask a student to give a brief description of what is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 76. Display the following statement by President Wilford Woodruff (1807–98), and invite a student to read it aloud:



“I consider that the Doctrine and Covenants [contains] the most Godlike proclamations ever made to the human family. I will refer to the ‘Vision’ [in section 76] alone, as a revelation which gives more light, more truth and more principle than any revelation contained in any other book we ever read. It makes plain to our understanding our present condition, where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going to. Any man may know through that revelation what his part and condition will be” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff* [2004], 120–21).

Ask a student to read the section heading for Doctrine and Covenants 76 aloud.

Ask another student to read Doctrine and Covenants 76:15–19 aloud.

- What were Joseph and Sidney doing that resulted in their receiving this revelation?
- What can we learn from their experience about the value of studying and pondering scriptures? (Make sure students recognize the connection between meditating on the scriptures and receiving revelation.)

Note: Emphasize that learning to ponder the scriptures is a valuable scripture study skill that gives the Holy Ghost greater opportunity to reveal truths to us.

Doctrine and Covenants 76:1–10

Promises to the faithful

Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 76:1–4 aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for words and phrases that describe Jesus Christ. You may want to suggest that students mark what they find. Explain that the Savior’s attributes described in these verses are an example of a scripture list. A scripture list “is a series of related thoughts, ideas, or instructions. Looking for lists in the scriptures can help teachers and students identify key points the writer is emphasizing” (*Gospel Teaching and Learning* [2012], 23). Point out that Doctrine and Covenants 76 contains a number of scripture lists.

- Which of Jesus Christ’s attributes mentioned in verses 1–4 are most meaningful to you? Why?

Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 76:5–10 silently, looking for the Lord’s promises to the faithful. Invite students to notice the list of promises in verses 6–10. You might suggest that students mark the items in this list to emphasize the Lord’s promises.

- According to verse 5, what must we do to experience the Savior’s mercy, graciousness, and honor?

Help students identify the following principle from their study of these verses: **As we fear the Lord and serve Him in righteousness, He will honor us and be merciful to us.** Remind students that in this context, to “fear” the Lord means to reverence Him.

To help students deepen their understanding of this principle, ask the following questions:

- Of the promises you identified from verses 5–10, which one would you particularly like to receive? Why?
- What do you think you would need to do to receive that blessing?

Give students a moment to ponder why it would be worth pursuing these blessings and to evaluate how well they are reverencing the Lord and serving Him in righteousness and truth.

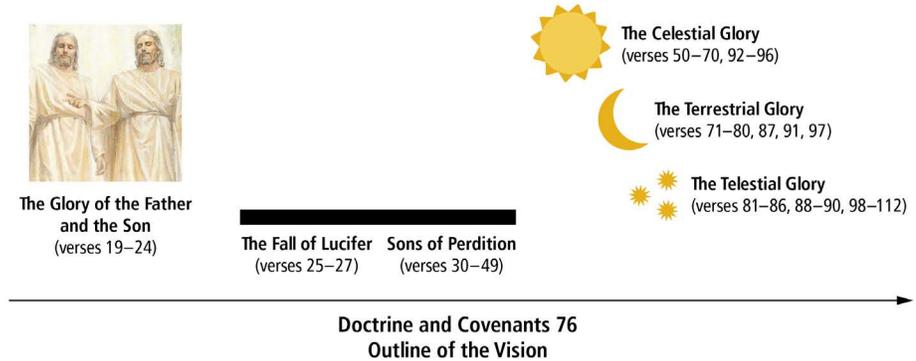
Point out to students that beginning with verse 11, the remainder of section 76 records the Lord’s revelation of the “mysteries of his kingdom,” which “surpass all

understanding in glory” (verse 114). The revelation opens to our understanding the wonders of eternity, teaching us about the life to come and making known what had been previously unknown.

Doctrine and Covenants 76:19–24

Vision of the Father and the Son

Explain that Doctrine and Covenants 76 contains a series of visions. To give students an overview of what Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon saw in these visions, display the accompanying image or provide a copy to each student. Explain that each item on the diagram focuses on one vision.



Point out that one of the visions opened to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon that day was a vision of the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. Display the following questions, or write them on the board:

What truths do we learn about Jesus Christ from this revelation?

Which of these truths can you testify of? How do you know they are true?

Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 76:19–24 silently and consider how they would answer the questions on the board. After sufficient time, invite students to share their responses to the questions. Student answers may vary, but be sure they understand the following principles. **Jesus Christ is a living, glorified being. Jesus Christ is the Only Begotten of the Father. Jesus Christ is the Creator of this and other worlds. The inhabitants of this and other worlds are begotten sons and daughters of God.**

Consider sharing your testimony of the Savior.

Doctrine and Covenants 76:25–113

The plan of salvation

Explain that verses 25–113 of section 76 teach wonderful truths about the plan of salvation. Invite students to select one group of these verses as listed on the

diagram and read them quickly. Divide students into pairs and ask them to discuss what they learned or what they found to be inspiring in the verses they read. Then discuss the following question as a class:

- What foundational doctrines about life and death does Doctrine and Covenants 76 help us understand? (Students may use different words but make sure they understand that **in Doctrine and Covenants 76, we gain a foundational understanding of life after death and what we must do to live again in the presence of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.**)

Explain that one of the most important visions given to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon was of the celestial kingdom. Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 76:50–53, looking for a list of requirements to enter the celestial kingdom. You might suggest that students mark or number these requirements in their scriptures. After a student shares what he or she identified, ask questions like the following:

- What do you think it means to receive a “testimony of Jesus”? (Have faith in the Savior’s redeeming mission and live according to His commandments.)
- What does it mean to “overcome by faith”? (Overcome temptations and sins by exercising faith in Jesus Christ and faithfully endure to the end.)
- What does it mean to be “sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise”? (The Holy Ghost, who is also the Holy Spirit of Promise, witnesses to the Father that we have properly received the saving ordinances of His gospel and that we have faithfully kept the covenants we have made.)

Summarize Doctrine and Covenants 76:54–70 by explaining that these verses list many of the blessings the exalted inhabitants of the celestial kingdom will receive. Give students a few moments to read through these verses looking for promised blessings or conditions that are particularly meaningful to them.

- What is a blessing promised to the faithful that has particular meaning to you? Why?
- How does verse 69 help us to understand the Savior’s role in the lives of those who inherit the celestial kingdom? (Each of us, no matter how hard we try, will fail to do everything necessary to inherit the celestial kingdom. Only through the Savior’s atoning sacrifice can we be cleansed of our sins and be made perfect.)
- How can knowing the truths about the plan of salvation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 76 help us make better choices in life?

Display the following statement by President Boyd K. Packer, and invite a student to read it aloud:



“Without a knowledge of the gospel plan, transgression seems natural, innocent, even justified. There is no greater protection from the adversary than for us to know the truth—to know the plan!” (*Our Father’s Plan* [1994], 27).

- In what ways can knowledge of the truths found in Doctrine and Covenants 76 help protect us from Satan’s influence?
- In what ways has your knowledge of our Heavenly Father’s plan protected and blessed you?

Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 76:114–117 aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for the promise given to those who purify themselves. Invite students to describe the promise in that passage.

After students respond, display the following statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44) in reference to the vision recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 76:



“I could explain a hundred fold more than I ever have of the glories of the kingdoms manifested to me in the vision, were I permitted, and were the people prepared to receive them” (in *History of the Church*, 5:402).

To help students apply what they learned in class, display or write the following incomplete phrases on the board:

After studying Doctrine and Covenants 76:

I know that ...

I want to ...

I will ...

Invite students to complete these phrases on a piece of paper. Encourage them to consider whether the choices they are making will qualify them to inherit the celestial kingdom and help them qualify for other blessings promised in Doctrine and Covenants 76. Share your testimony of the truths discussed in class today.

Student Readings

- Doctrine and Covenants 76.
- L. Tom Perry, “The Plan of Salvation,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2006, 69–72.

LESSON 14

The Kirtland Temple and Priesthood Keys

Introduction

After nearly three years of struggle and financial sacrifice, the Kirtland Temple was dedicated on March 27, 1836.

Miraculous occurrences accompanied the dedication, and one week later, heavenly messengers restored priesthood keys to

Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. These keys are a distinguishing feature of the Church and have blessed millions of people who have gathered into the Church.

Background Reading

- Jeffrey R. Holland, “Our Most Distinguishing Feature,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2005, 43–45.
- David A. Bednar, “Honorably Hold a Name and Standing,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2009, 97–100.
- “Glorious Days in Kirtland, 1834–1836,” chapter 13 in *Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual*, 2nd ed. (Church Educational System manual, 2003), 153–68.

Suggestions for Teaching

Doctrine and Covenants 109:1–28

The Saints sacrificed to build the Kirtland Temple

Show students a picture of the Kirtland Temple (see *Gospel Art Book* [2009], no. 117; see also LDS.org). Explain that the Saints labored and sacrificed for almost three years to build the Kirtland Temple. In doing so, they witnessed the fulfillment of the Lord’s promise that if they would keep His commandments, they would “have power to build it” (D&C 95:11). Nearly 1,000 people attended the temple dedication, held on March 27, 1836. The dedicatory prayer, which Joseph Smith received by revelation, is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 109.

Invite a couple of students to take turns reading aloud from Doctrine and Covenants 109:1–5. Encourage the class to follow along, noting especially the phrases that describe the Saints’ sacrifices to build the temple. Then ask the following questions:

- What phrases did Joseph Smith use to describe the Saints’ sacrifices?

To help students further understand the sacrifices made by the Saints, ask a student to read the following summary aloud:

Between June 1833 and March 1836, men and women worked side by side to construct and complete the house of the Lord. Some did masonry work, others hauled rock, others spun yarn and knit clothes for workers, and some worked on the curtains for the house of the Lord. They did

all this “that the Son of Man might have a place to manifest himself to his people” (D&C 109:5). Some Latter-day Saints, like John Tanner, gave much of their wealth for the building of the temple. In all, the temple may have cost as much as 40,000 U.S. dollars to build—a very large sum for that time. Despite the cost and sacrifice, the Saints were faithful in their labors to obey this commandment of the Lord (see D&C 95:11). The Kirtland Temple was a labor of love and an exercise in obedience, sacrifice, and faith.

- What sacrifices are we required to make today in order to enjoy the blessings of the temple?
- What blessings come into our lives as we sacrifice to perform the Lord’s work?

To help answer this question, display the following statement by Sister Carol B. Thomas of the Young Women General Presidency. Ask a student to read it aloud:



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“Sacrifice is an amazing principle. As we willingly give our time and talents and all that we possess, it becomes one of our truest forms of worship. It can develop within us a profound love for each other and our Savior, Jesus Christ. Through sacrifice our hearts can be changed; we live closer to the Spirit and have less of an appetite for things of the world” (“Sacrifice: An Eternal Investment,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 64).

Invite students to silently read Doctrine and Covenants 109:12–13 and 20–21, looking for how the sacred nature of the temple is suggested in this prayer. Ask students to share what stood out to them most in these verses.

Tell students that in the dedicatory prayer, Joseph Smith petitioned the Lord for specific blessings. Ask a few students to take turns reading aloud from Doctrine and Covenants 109:12–15, 22–28. Encourage the class to follow along and look for blessings that can come to those who worthily worship in the temple. You may want to suggest that students mark important words and phrases that stand out to them. Then discuss the following questions:

- Of the blessings you identified, which one has the most meaning to you? Why?
- What doctrine or principle can we learn from these verses? (Make sure students identify the following principle: **As we faithfully worship in the temple, we can receive greater protection and power against the wickedness of the world.**)

Display the following statement by Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and invite a student to read it aloud:



“Please consider [Doctrine and Covenants 109:24–28] in light of the current raging of the adversary and . . . our willingness to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ and the blessing of protection promised to those who honorably hold a name and standing in the holy temple. Significantly, these covenant blessings are to all generations and for all eternity. I invite you to study repeatedly and ponder prayerfully the implications of these scriptures in your life and for your family.

“We should not be surprised by Satan’s efforts to thwart or discredit temple worship and work. The devil despises the purity in and the power of the Lord’s house. And the protection available to each of us in and through temple ordinances and covenants stands as a great obstacle to the evil designs of Lucifer” (“Honorably Hold a Name and Standing,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2009, 99–100).

- How have you felt an increase in spiritual power as a result of worshipping in the temple?

Invite students to ponder what they might do to receive more of the blessings promised to those who faithfully worship in the temple. Remind students that as they ponder the scriptures and words of the prophets, their hearts and minds will be more open to inspiration from the Lord.

Doctrine and Covenants 110

Jesus Christ, Moses, Elijah, and Elias appeared in the Kirtland Temple

Explain that God rewarded the Saints’ sacrifice to build the Kirtland Temple with an outpouring of spiritual manifestations on the days surrounding the dedication. Time permitting, share briefly a few of the accounts found in chapter 13 (“Glorious Days in Kirtland, 1834–36”) of *Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual*, 2nd ed. (Church Educational System manual, 2003), specifically in the section titled “A Pentecostal Season” (pages 164–67). Tell students that perhaps the most significant of those events occurred on April 3, 1836, one week following the temple dedication.

Invite a student to read aloud the section heading to Doctrine and Covenants 110, and invite the rest of the class to follow along. Then ask the following:

- To whom was this vision given? What had Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery been doing before this vision occurred?

Explain to the students that the first ten verses of Doctrine and Covenants 110 consist of a glorious vision given to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery of the Savior, who appeared to them to declare His acceptance of the Kirtland Temple. Invite students to read these verses silently while looking for important truths regarding both the Savior and the temple. After sufficient time, ask the following:

- What in these verses is meaningful to you? Why?
- According to verse 6, the Savior declared, “Let the hearts of all my people rejoice.” Why do you think the Saints had reason to rejoice at that time?

Explain that after the vision of the Savior ended, a series of visions followed. In these visions, Moses, Elias, and Elijah appeared one by one to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.

Write the following on the board:

Moses: Doctrine and Covenants 110:11

Elias: Doctrine and Covenants 110:12

Elijah: Doctrine and Covenants 110:13–15

Divide the class into three groups. Assign each group one of the names on the board. Invite students to study the corresponding scripture passage to learn about the specific priesthood keys that were restored. After sufficient time, invite students to share what they found.

The following explanations can provide students with a deeper understanding of what they have read. Invite a student to read each statement aloud after you discuss its corresponding scripture passage:

Moses: The keys of the gathering of Israel give the authority to direct the preaching of the gospel to the four corners of the earth. "It is appropriate that Moses, who first led God's children to the land of their inheritance, would be the one to commit the keys of the gathering of Israel to the restored Church" (Russell M. Nelson, "The Gathering of Scattered Israel," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2006, 82, footnote 28).

Elias: "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 in the Kirtland (Ohio) Temple on April 3, 1836" (Bible Dictionary, "Elias"). "Elias [brought] 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).

Elijah: "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).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 110:16 aloud, and encourage students to follow along. Ask students to identify what was committed to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery at that time ("keys of this dispensation"). Then ask the following:

- According to verse 16, what can we know because these keys have been restored? (The Second Coming is near.)
- Keeping in mind verse 16, why did the keys restored by Moses, Elias, and Elijah need to be restored before the "great and dreadful day of the Lord"?
- How have you been blessed by the restoration of these priesthood keys? (After student responses, summarize the importance of the restoration of these keys by stating this principle: **The keys of missionary work, eternal families, and temple work help us prepare ourselves and the world for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.**)

Display the following statement by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and invite a student to read it aloud:



"The priesthood of God, with its keys, its ordinances, its divine origin and ability to bind in heaven what is bound on earth, is as *indispensible* to the true Church of God as it is *unique* to it and ... without it there would be no Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" ("Our Most Distinguishing Feature," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2005, 43).

Share how your life has been blessed because these priesthood keys have been restored. Testify that the keys of the priesthood are a distinguishing feature of the Church; they separate The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from every other church on the earth.

Student Readings

- Doctrine and Covenants 109:1–28; 110:1–16.
- David A. Bednar, "Honorably Hold a Name and Standing," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 97–100.

LESSON 15

Strength amid Opposition

Introduction

During 1837 and 1838, a spirit of faultfinding, contention, and apostasy spread among some Church leaders and members in Kirtland, Ohio, and northern Missouri. Problems escalated as some people came out in open opposition to the

Prophet Joseph Smith. From the experiences of the early Saints, we can learn that as we face opposition, we receive spiritual strength when we live righteously and sustain the Lord's servants.

Background Reading

- “Beware the Bitter Fruits of Apostasy,” chapter 27 in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 315–26.
- Jeffrey R. Holland, “Lessons from Liberty Jail” (Church Educational System fireside, Sept. 7, 2008), [lds.org/broadcasts](https://www.lds.org/broadcasts).
- Neil L. Andersen, “Trial of Your Faith,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 39–42.

Suggestions for Teaching

Doctrine and Covenants 112:10–15

Apostasy in Kirtland, Ohio

Write the following words on the board: *angry, offended, jealous*. Invite students to think of times when they may have experienced these feelings.

Display the following account and invite a student to read it aloud. Ask students to identify the situation that led Thomas B. Marsh to experience the feelings written on the board.

Soon after Thomas B. Marsh was called to be an Apostle in 1835, he was appointed President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. In the spring of 1837, President Marsh learned that one of the Twelve Apostles, Elder Parley P. Pratt, was planning a mission to England without President Marsh's direction. President Marsh, who was in Missouri, wrote to Elder Pratt and the other members of the Twelve and invited them to meet him in Kirtland, Ohio, on July 24, 1837, so they could be unified in their plans for missions. However, a month before that meeting took place, two other members of the Twelve, Elders Heber C. Kimball and Orson Hyde, departed for England after receiving mission calls from the Prophet Joseph Smith. President Marsh was apparently upset that members of the Twelve were proceeding to preach the gospel in England without his involvement.

- In this situation, what could President Marsh have done to avoid the feelings listed on the board?
- What are some dangers of allowing such feelings to govern our thoughts and actions? (Point out to students that such feelings are offensive to the Holy Ghost and often lead to more serious sin.)

Ask the student to continue by reading the following:

President Marsh shared his concerns with the Prophet Joseph Smith and sought his counsel. In response, the Lord gave the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 112.

In July 1837, when the Lord gave this revelation, the Church was experiencing disunity, contention, and apostasy. Pride and greed led some members of the Church to openly criticize the Prophet Joseph Smith and question his authority. Some Church members, including some of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, even sought to remove Joseph Smith as President of the Church.

- What feelings led some Church members to disregard their testimonies of the truth and become openly opposed to the Prophet Joseph Smith?

Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 112:10–12, 15, looking for counsel the Lord gave to President Marsh and other members of the Quorum of the Twelve that can help Church members avoid becoming critical of their leaders.

Ask students to report what they find. Then ask:

- How can the counsel in these verses help Church members avoid becoming critical of Church leaders? (As students share their answers, help them to understand the following principles: **If we are humble, the Lord will lead us and give us answers to our prayers. The Lord requires that we sustain those leaders who hold the keys to preside over the Church.** You might suggest that students cross-reference verse 15 with Doctrine and Covenants 84:35–38. You might also point out that the counsel to admonish members of the Twelve was given to the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and does not apply to individual Church members.)



Provide each student with a copy of the handout found at the end of this lesson. Consider dividing the class into small groups and inviting each group to read together the section titled “Apostasy in Kirtland: The Need to Faithfully Follow Church Leaders.” Ask the students to discuss the questions at the end of the section within their groups.

You might conclude this portion of the lesson by displaying and discussing the following statement by President Heber C. Kimball (1801–68) of the First Presidency:



“I will give you a key which Brother Joseph Smith used to give in Nauvoo. He said that the very step of apostasy commenced with losing confidence in the leaders of this church and kingdom, and that whenever you discerned that spirit you might know that it would lead the possessor of it on the road to apostasy”
(*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 318).

To emphasize the importance of faithfully following the prophet and other Church leaders, read the following experience from the life of Brigham Young (1801–77), who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles at that time:



“While in Kirtland, President Brigham Young encountered a group of apostates who were plotting against the Prophet Joseph Smith within the very walls of the temple. He declared, ‘I rose up, and in a plain and forcible manner told them that Joseph was a Prophet, and I knew it, and they might rail and slander him as much as they pleased, they could not destroy the appointment of the Prophet of God, they could only destroy their own authority, cut the thread that bound them to the Prophet and to God and sink themselves to hell’” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 79).

Doctrine and Covenants 121:1–10, 16–17; 122:1–9

Opposition in Northern Missouri

Consider keeping students in small groups and inviting each group to read the second section of the handout titled “Conflict in Northern Missouri: Learning to Endure Opposition Well.” Explain that this section describes some of the actions that led to the Saints being driven from northern Missouri and the Prophet being confined in Liberty Jail. Ask the students to discuss the questions at the end of this section within their groups.

After the students complete the handout, explain that Doctrine and Covenants 121–23 contains selections from a letter that the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote to the Saints near the end of his imprisonment in Liberty Jail.

Ask students to take turns reading aloud from Doctrine and Covenants 121:1–6. Ask students to look for the questions the Prophet expressed to the Lord.

- What questions did you find?

Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 121:7–10, 16–17; 122:7–9 aloud. Ask the class to follow along and think about how the Lord’s responses to Joseph Smith’s pleadings may have strengthened Joseph to face continued opposition from his enemies.

Ask students to state doctrines and principles they learned from the verses they read. (Answers might include the following: **If we endure opposition well in mortality, God will bless us now and in eternity. Those who accuse the Lord’s servants are servants of sin. We can be strengthened in our trials as we rely on the Savior’s Atonement and remember His example of faithful endurance.**)

Display the following statement by Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and invite a student to read it aloud:



“By definition, trials will be trying. There may be anguish, confusion, sleepless nights, and pillows wet with tears. But our trials need not be spiritually fatal. They need not take us from our covenants or from the household of God. ...

“Like the intense fire that transforms iron into steel, as we remain faithful during the fiery trial of *our* faith, we are spiritually refined and strengthened” (“Trial of Your Faith,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 41–42).

Invite students to think about what they have done or will do to remember that God can strengthen them when they experience trials or opposition to their faith. Allow time for students to share their experiences or thoughts about relying on God during difficult times.

Student Readings

- Doctrine and Covenants 112:10–15; 121:1–10, 16–17; 122:1–9.
- Neil L. Andersen, “Trial of Your Faith,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 39–42.

Remaining Strong in Times of Opposition

Apostasy in Kirtland: The Need to Faithfully Follow Church Leaders

In 1837, the Saints in Kirtland, Ohio, experienced some financial problems. To help the Saints be more self-sufficient in their finances, Joseph Smith and other Church leaders established a company similar to a bank and called it the Kirtland Safety Society. Because of a widespread economic depression during this time, many banks failed throughout the United States. The Kirtland Safety Society also failed in the fall of 1837. Two hundred investors in the bank lost almost everything, with Joseph Smith sustaining the greatest losses. Even though the Kirtland Safety Society was not funded by the Church, some of the Saints considered it a Church bank or the Prophet’s bank and blamed Joseph Smith for their financial problems. Some even began calling him a fallen prophet. But despite the bank’s failure, many others who lost money continued in the faith and stayed true to the Prophet.

A spirit of apostasy and faultfinding began to spread among many of the Saints. By June 1838, approximately 200 or 300 apostates had left the Church, including four Apostles, the Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon, and a member of the First Presidency. However, most of the Saints responded to this period of testing with faith, much like Brigham Young did. They were strengthened by the Lord, and they remained true to their testimonies. Several of those who left the Church during this period of apostasy later returned and requested that they be united again with the Lord’s Church. Among them were Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, Luke Johnson, and Frederick G. Williams.

In the midst of these struggles in Kirtland, a few apostates sought to kill Joseph Smith. Warned by the Spirit, he and Sidney Rigdon left during the night on January 12, 1838. Their enemies pursued them for days, but the Lord protected them. They arrived with their families in Far West, Missouri, on March 14, 1838.

Discuss the following questions as a group:

- What principles can we learn from these events about how to respond to opposition in our lives? What can we learn from these events about how to respond to opposition against the Church?
- What can we do to remain faithful to Church leaders even though we may hear other people criticize them?
- In what ways have you been blessed because you have followed the prophet?

Conflict in Northern Missouri: Learning to Endure Opposition Well

In 1837 and 1838, some disaffected and excommunicated members of the Church living among the Saints in Far West began to bring lawsuits against the Church and its leaders and to harass the Church. In June 1838, Sidney Rigdon spoke heatedly in what has become known as the “Salt Sermon.” He referenced Matthew 5:13 and said that if the salt loses its savor, it is good for nothing and should be cast out, implying that those who had left the Church should be cast out from among the Saints. Two weeks later, on July 4, Sidney Rigdon gave a speech in which he promised that the Saints would defend themselves even if it came to a “war of extermination.” Though both of these

speeches seemed to contradict the Lord's instruction to "sue for peace" (D&C 105:38), both speeches were published and caused great alarm among non-Latter-day Saints.

During this time, a convert named Sampson Avard administered secret oaths to those who would join him in forming a band of marauders called the Danites. Avard instructed them to rob and plunder the Missourians, saying that this would help build up the kingdom of God. Avard convinced his followers that his directions were coming from the First Presidency. The truth was later discovered, and Avard was excommunicated. Avard's actions caused significant damage to the image of the Church and helped lead to the Prophet's imprisonment in Liberty Jail.

In October 1838, a battle between some Church members and Missouri militiamen left a few men dead on each side. Exaggerated reports of the battle reached Governor Lilburn W. Boggs, governor of the state of Missouri, who then issued what has become known as the extermination order: "The Mormons must be treated as enemies and *must be exterminated* or driven from the state, if necessary for the public good" (quoted in *History of the Church*, 3:175). Soon, the city of Far West was surrounded by a militia that outnumbered the Saints' forces five to one. Joseph Smith and other Church leaders were imprisoned in Liberty Jail, where they remained all winter. The rest of the Saints were forced to leave the state.

Discuss the following questions as a group:

- What principles can we learn from these events to help us better endure opposition?
- Why is it important for each of us to follow the Savior's example at times of crisis or opposition? What happened in northern Missouri because some of the Saints did not do this?
- When have you seen another person's words or actions influence someone else to have a positive view of the Church?

LESSON 16

Redemption of the Dead

Introduction

As part of the Restoration of all things in the dispensation of the fulness of times, the Lord restored the doctrine of redemption of the dead through the Prophet Joseph Smith. This doctrine was restored “line upon line.” The work of redeeming the dead is essential to the salvation of both the

living and the dead, and the Prophet Joseph Smith taught the importance of participating in this work: “The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 475).

Background Reading

- Richard G. Scott, “The Joy of Redeeming the Dead,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 93–95.
- D. Todd Christofferson, “The Redemption of the Dead and the Testimony of Jesus,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 9–12.
- “Becoming Saviors on Mount Zion,” chapter 41 in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 469–78.
- Matthew S. McBride, “Letters on Baptism for the Dead: D&C 127, 128,” *Revelations in Context* series, May 29, 2013; history.lds.org.

Suggestions for Teaching

Doctrine and Covenants 137

The Prophet Joseph Smith’s vision of the celestial kingdom

Share the following historical background with students:

“In November 1823, Alvin Smith, the oldest child of Lucy Mack Smith and Joseph Smith Sr., suddenly became seriously ill and lay near death. Alvin was 25 years old, a strong and capable young man whose hard work contributed greatly to the family’s financial stability. His mother described him as ‘a youth of singular goodness of disposition,’ whose ‘nobleness and generosity’ blessed those around him ‘every hour of his existence.’ ...

“Knowing he was dying, Alvin called his brothers and sisters to him and spoke to each of them. To Joseph, who was almost 18 years old and had not yet received the gold plates, Alvin said, ‘I want you to be a good boy and do everything that lies in your power to obtain the records. Be faithful in receiving instruction and keeping every commandment that is given you. ...’

“When Alvin died, the 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, for Alvin was not a church member, but he was a good boy and my father did not like it’ ” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 401, 403).

- Because the doctrine of redemption for the dead had not been restored at the time of Alvin’s death, what concerns might the Smith family have had about Alvin’s salvation?

Tell students that this lesson will help them understand that the Lord revealed the doctrine of redemption for the dead incrementally, line upon line. Invite students to silently read the section heading to Doctrine and Covenants 137. Explain that this revelation preceded the dedication of the Kirtland Temple by just a few months. (You might point out that in the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, some changes were made to the heading for section 137.)

Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 137:1–6 aloud while the class follows along. Discuss the following:

- Who did Joseph Smith see in the celestial kingdom? (Students may be interested to know that Joseph Smith’s father and mother were alive at the time this vision was received; in fact, Joseph’s father was in the room with him as the revelation occurred.)
- According to verse 6, why did Joseph Smith marvel that his brother Alvin was in the celestial kingdom? (You may want to remind students that this vision was received several years before Joseph Smith learned about the doctrine of redemption for the dead.)

Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 137:7–9 aloud. Ask the class to follow along and look for a doctrine that helped the Latter-day Saints better understand God’s plan to save His children.

- What is the provision in God’s plan for those people like Alvin Smith who died without the opportunity to receive the gospel of Jesus Christ or the ordinance of baptism? (As students share their ideas, help them identify the following doctrine: **All people who die without a knowledge of the gospel, who would have received this knowledge if they had heard it, will inherit the celestial kingdom.**)
- What does this doctrine teach you about Heavenly Father’s character and His love for His children?
- When have you been comforted by this doctrine? When have you seen others, perhaps those you taught as a missionary, receive comfort from their understanding of this doctrine?

Doctrine and Covenants 124:30–34; 127:5–8; 128:1–18; 138:28–37

Vicarious ordinances for the dead

The Prophet Joseph Smith first spoke about the doctrine of baptism for the dead at the funeral of Seymour Brunson on August 15, 1840, soon after the Saints had established themselves in Nauvoo, Illinois. Church members were surprised and excited when they learned of this revealed doctrine. For several months after the announcement, Saints performed baptisms in the nearby Mississippi River on behalf of their deceased loved ones (see *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 403; *Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual*, 2nd ed. [Church Educational System manual, 2003], 251).

- How did this sermon add to the growing understanding of Heavenly Father’s plan to save His children? (As students respond, write the following truth on the board: **The saving ordinance of baptism can be performed for those who did not accept the gospel while in mortality.**)
- How do you think you would have responded if you had heard the Prophet Joseph Smith speak about the doctrine of baptism for the dead for the first time in this dispensation?

Explain that during the October 1841 general conference of the Church in Nauvoo, Illinois, the Prophet Joseph Smith declared that the Lord wanted the Saints to stop performing baptisms for the dead until the baptisms could be performed in His house (see D&C 124:29–34). On November 8, 1841, Brigham Young, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, dedicated the font in the basement of the unfinished Nauvoo Temple, and Church members began performing vicarious baptisms on behalf of the dead.

Ask students to read the section heading for Doctrine and Covenants 127, which explains that section 127 is a letter from the Prophet Joseph Smith to the Saints, instructing them to keep records of the baptisms they performed for the dead. Explain that about a week later, Joseph wrote another letter on the subject of baptism for the dead, which is found in Doctrine and Covenants 128.

Write the following scripture references on the board. (Do not include the material in parentheses; it is provided for you, the teacher.)

Doctrine and Covenants 127:5–7; 128:8 (When an ordinance is performed by priesthood authority and a proper record is kept, the ordinance is binding on earth and in heaven.)

Doctrine and Covenants 128:6–7 (The record of vicarious ordinances will be included among the books that are opened to judge the dead.)

Doctrine and Covenants 128:15, 17–18 (The salvation of our deceased ancestors is essential to our salvation.)

Assign students to read each of the passages written on the board. Ask them to look for the doctrines that have added to our understanding of God’s plan for the redemption of the dead. Invite students to summarize the doctrine about redemption for the dead that is taught in each scripture passage. Ask a few students to write the doctrines on the board next to the passages. Point out that the revelations recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 127 and 128 illustrate a common pattern found in the Restoration of the gospel—the Lord reveals truths line upon line, rather than all at once.

Explain to students that many years after these revelations were received, the Lord provided further understanding of His plan to redeem the dead. In 1918, President Joseph F. Smith received a vision about the redemption of the dead. The vision came when he was mourning the loss of his son Hyrum M. Smith, who had died earlier that year while serving as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 138:28–37, looking for truths that were revealed to President Joseph F. Smith concerning the redemption of the dead.

- What truths about redemption for the dead are taught in these verses? (As students share the truths they have found, make sure they understand this truth: **Under the direction of Jesus Christ, righteous messengers teach the gospel to those in spirit prison.**)
- How do these additional truths help us understand how someone who has died without receiving the ordinances of the gospel, such as Alvin Smith, can receive an inheritance in the celestial kingdom?

Read aloud the following statement by Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



“As members of Christ’s restored Church, we have the covenant responsibility to search out our ancestors and provide for them the saving ordinances of the gospel. ‘They without us should not be made perfect’ (Hebrews 11:40; see also *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 475). And ‘neither can we without our dead be made perfect’ (D&C 128:15)” (“The Hearts of the Children Shall Turn,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 25).

- Why should the work of redeeming the dead be a priority in our lives?
- How does providing saving ordinances for our kindred dead help both them and us to become perfect?

Read aloud the following statement by Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



“While temple and family history work has the power to bless those beyond the veil, it has an equal power to bless the living. It has a refining influence on those who are engaged in it. They are literally helping to exalt their families” (“Generations Linked in Love,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2010, 93).

- How does the doctrine of redemption of the dead testify of the infinite reach of the Atonement of Jesus Christ?

Read aloud the following statement by Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



“The Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith sublime doctrine concerning the sacred ordinance of baptism. That light came when other Christian churches taught that death irrevocably, eternally, determined the destiny of the soul. They taught the baptized were rewarded with endless joy while all others faced eternal torment without hope of redemption. ...

“This glorious doctrine is another witness of the all-encompassing nature of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. He made salvation available to every repentant soul. His Atonement conquered death, and He permits the worthy deceased to receive all ordinances of salvation vicariously” (“The Joy of Redeeming the Dead,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 93).

- What experiences have taught you the importance of participating in the work of redeeming the dead?
- How has your testimony increased because you have participated in the work of redeeming the dead? (Invite a few students to share their testimonies.)

Encourage students to consider how they might participate in the great work of redeeming the dead, whether through family history research or through serving as proxies in performing temple ordinances. Share your testimony that through the work done in modern temples, all of Heavenly Father’s children may receive all of the ordinances necessary for salvation.

Student Readings

- Doctrine and Covenants 124:30–41; 127:1–9; 128:1–18; 137:1–10; 138:28–37.
- Richard G. Scott, “The Joy of Redeeming the Dead,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 93–95.

LESSON 17

Gospel Teachings in Nauvoo

Introduction

The first several years the Saints spent in Nauvoo, Illinois, were marked by peace and prosperity. During this time Joseph Smith received revelations and then taught and clarified some doctrines that are unique to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. These include the purpose of

temples, our divine potential to become like Heavenly Father, and some of the doctrines taught in the Articles of Faith. This lesson will help students understand the greatness of the Prophet Joseph Smith as well as our own divine potential.

Background Reading

- “God the Eternal Father,” chapter 2 in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 37–43.
- “Doctrinal Developments in Nauvoo,” chapter 20 in *Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual*, 2nd ed. (Church Educational System manual, 2003), 251–62.
- “Becoming Like God,” Gospel Topics, [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics).

Suggestions for Teaching

Articles of Faith

Important statements of gospel doctrines

Explain that in Nauvoo, Illinois, Joseph Smith composed a letter to John Wentworth, the editor of a newspaper called the *Chicago Democrat*, who had requested information about the Mormons. In the letter, the Prophet gave an account of the history of the Latter-day Saints along with a concise list of doctrinal beliefs that later became known as the Articles of Faith. (The entire letter is reproduced in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 438–46.)

Display the following statement by Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and invite a student to read it aloud:



“[The Articles of Faith] are among the most important and certainly the most concise statements of doctrine in the Church. If you will use them as a guide to direct your studies of the gospel of Jesus Christ, you will find yourself prepared to declare your witness of the restored truth to the world. You will be able to declare in simple, straightforward, and profound ways the core beliefs you hold dear as a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (“The Doctrines and Principles Contained in the Articles of Faith,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 48).

- How would you summarize what Elder Perry taught? (As students share their summary statements, help them understand this truth: **As we learn the doctrines taught in the Articles of Faith, we will be better prepared to declare our beliefs to others.**)

- When have you used the Articles of Faith to help others understand the gospel?

Invite the class to turn to the Articles of Faith and silently read them. After sufficient time, discuss the following questions:

- Which article of faith do you particularly appreciate and why?
- How do the doctrines in the Articles of Faith help to guide you and strengthen your testimony that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God?

Doctrine and Covenants 124:25–28, 37–42

Restoration of temple ordinances

Explain that after the Saints had established themselves in Nauvoo, Illinois, the Prophet Joseph Smith received a commandment to build a temple. As with the temple constructed in Kirtland, Ohio, this task required great sacrifices from the Latter-day Saints.

Invite several students to take turns reading Doctrine and Covenants 124:25–28, 37–42 aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for the Lord’s teachings about why the Saints needed a temple. Before analyzing these verses, explain that they refer to the tabernacle built by Moses and his people. Moses’s people did not perform baptisms for the dead. No work for the dead was performed until the Savior instituted that work in the spirit world after His death. Then ask students:

- According to the Lord’s teachings in these verses, why did the Saints in Nauvoo need a temple? (As students respond, emphasize this doctrine: **Certain saving ordinances are acceptable to the Lord only if they are performed in temples.**)

Explain to students that the Kirtland Temple “was built *primarily* for the restoration of keys of authority” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 2:242). In the Nauvoo Temple, these priesthood keys were used to perform saving ordinances for the living and vicarious baptisms for the deceased. In the final two years of his life, Joseph Smith introduced the temple endowment to a small group of faithful members. He also introduced the ordinance of sealing a husband and wife together for eternity.

- What temple ordinances are mentioned in Doctrine and Covenants 124:39?

Ask a student to read the following statement aloud. Invite the class to listen for why temple ordinances are important in Heavenly Father’s plan:

“In response to the Lord’s command [to build a temple in Nauvoo], the Prophet and the Saints moved forward as quickly as possible to begin building a house of the Lord. But the Prophet realized that the construction would take years, and he knew that the Saints needed the full blessings of the temple. Consequently, on May 4, 1842, even though the temple was not complete, Joseph Smith administered the endowment to a small group of faithful brethren.

“The group met in the large upper room of the Prophet’s Red Brick Store. ...

“The Prophet’s history records: ‘I spent the day in the upper part of the store, ... in council with General James Adams, of Springfield, Patriarch Hyrum Smith, Bishops Newel K. Whitney and George Miller, and President Brigham Young and Elders Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards,

instructing them in the principles and order of the Priesthood, attending to washings, anointings, endowments and the communication of keys pertaining to the Aaronic Priesthood, and so on to the highest order of the Melchizedek Priesthood, setting forth the order pertaining to the Ancient of Days, and all those plans and principles by which anyone is enabled to secure the fullness of those blessings which have been prepared for the Church of the First Born, and come up and abide in the presence of the Eloheim in the eternal worlds' " (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 413–14).

Ask students:

- Why was the restoration of temple ordinances necessary?

As students respond, add to their understanding by sharing the following statement by Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



"The primary purpose of the temple is to provide the ordinances necessary for our exaltation in the celestial kingdom. Temple ordinances guide us to our Savior and give us the blessings that come to us through the Atonement of Jesus Christ" ("Blessings of the Temple," *Ensign*, Oct. 2009, 48).

- How has your life been blessed by the restoration of temple ordinances?

Invite students to ponder during the coming week how they might make worshipping in the house of the Lord a higher priority in their lives.

Psalm 82:6; Matthew 5:48; John 10:32–34; Romans 8:16–17; 2 Peter 1:3–4; 1 John 3:2–3; Doctrine and Covenants 93:11–20; 132:20

Our divine potential

Explain that the Bible records the words of ancient prophets who wrote of our divine potential. Write the following scripture references on the board, and invite students to read several of them and look for what they teach about our eternal potential: Psalm 82:6; Matthew 5:48; John 10:32–34; Romans 8:16–17; 2 Peter 1:3–4; 1 John 3:2–3. You might encourage students to cross-reference or link these references as they study them.

After sufficient time, ask:

- What can we learn from these scriptures about our potential? (Though they may use different words, students should understand this doctrine: **As children of our Heavenly Father, we have the potential to become like Him.**)
- What phrases in those verses describe our divine potential?

Explain that our divine potential is also taught in modern scripture. Invite a student to read aloud Doctrine and Covenants 93:11–13, 19–20 and Doctrine and Covenants 132:20. Help the students understand this doctrine: **Like the Savior, we can grow from grace to grace until we receive of the Father’s fulness.**



Explain that one of the Prophet Joseph Smith’s most significant sermons was given during a general conference of the Church in April 1844. During

this sermon, the Prophet paid tribute to Brother King Follett, who had recently died. This talk has come to be known as the King Follett discourse. Provide a copy of the handout “Excerpts from the King Follett Discourse” to all students. Invite them to read the excerpts and underline words and phrases that explain why we should seek to understand the character of God.

Excerpts from the King Follett Discourse

The Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44) taught:



“If a man learns nothing more than to eat, drink and sleep, and does not comprehend any of the designs of God, the beast comprehends the same things. It eats, drinks, sleeps, and knows nothing more about God; yet it knows as much as we, unless we are able to comprehend by the inspiration of Almighty God. If men do not comprehend the character of God, they do not comprehend themselves. . . .

“My first object is to find out the character of the only wise and true God, and what kind of a being He is. . . .

“God Himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret. If the veil were rent today, and the great God who holds this world in its orbit, and who upholds all worlds and all things by His power, was to make Himself visible,—I say, if you were to see Him today, you would see Him like a man in form—like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man; for Adam was created in the very fashion, image and likeness of God, and received instruction from, and walked, talked and conversed with Him, as one man talks and communes with another” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 40).

“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 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, until you attain to the resurrection of the dead, and are able to dwell in everlasting burnings, and to sit in glory, as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power” (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 221).

Help students analyze these teachings by asking:

- Why is it important for us to learn about God’s character and nature and our relationship with Him as our Heavenly Father?
- What is the process of becoming like our Heavenly Father?

To deepen students’ understanding of their divine potential, display the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008). Ask a student to read it aloud:



“The whole design of the gospel is to lead us onward and upward to greater achievement, even, eventually, to godhood. This great possibility was enunciated by the Prophet Joseph Smith in the King Follett sermon [see *History of the Church*, 6:302–17] and emphasized by President Lorenzo Snow. It is this grand and incomparable concept: *As God now is, man may become!* [See *The Teachings of Lorenzo Snow*, comp. Clyde J. Williams (1984), 1.]

“Our enemies have criticized us for believing in this. Our reply is that this lofty concept in no way diminishes God the Eternal Father. He is the Almighty. He is the Creator and Governor of the universe. He is the greatest of all and will always be so. But just as any earthly father wishes for his sons and daughters every success in life, so I believe our Father in Heaven wishes for his children that they might approach him in stature and stand beside him resplendent in godly strength and wisdom” (“Don’t Drop the Ball,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 48).

To summarize, ask students the following questions:

- What difference can it make in our lives to know these important truths about Heavenly Father and our divine potential?
- As you reflect on what we discussed today (Articles of Faith, temple ordinances, and our divine potential), how can understanding these truths give you an appreciation for the Prophet Joseph Smith? How can understanding these truths help you understand the character of God and your relationship with Him as your Father in Heaven? (Give students time to record their impressions in writing.)

Invite students to testify or share a few of the impressions they wrote, if they are not too personal. Conclude by sharing your testimony of the doctrines taught in this lesson and of the Prophet Joseph Smith as a mighty revelator.

Student Readings

- Psalm 82:6; Matthew 5:48; John 10:32–34; Romans 8:16–17; 2 Peter 1:3–4; 1 John 3:2–3; Doctrine and Covenants 93:11–22; 124:25–28, 37–42; 132:20–24.
- “God the Eternal Father,” chapter 2 in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 37–43.

LESSON 18

The Relief Society and the Church

Introduction

“Relief Society prepares women for the blessings of eternal life by helping them increase their faith and personal righteousness, strengthen families and homes, and help those in need” (“The Purpose of Relief Society,” [lds.org/callings/relief-society/purposes](https://www.lds.org/callings/relief-society/purposes)). This lesson will help students better

understand the establishment of the Relief Society and its purposes. Students will also see that women have great opportunities and responsibilities in building God’s kingdom that are unique to them.

Background Reading

- Dallin H. Oaks, “The Keys and Authority of the Priesthood,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2014, 49–52.
- M. Russell Ballard, “Men and Women and Priesthood Power,” *Ensign*, Sept. 2014, 28–33.
- Julie B. Beck, “The Vision of Prophets Regarding Relief Society: Faith, Family, Relief,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2012, 83–85.

Suggestions for Teaching

Doctrine and Covenants 25

The Lord’s instructions to Emma Smith

Display the following statement by President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985), and ask a student to read it aloud:



“Much of the major growth that is coming to the Church in the last days will come because many of the good women of the world . . . will be drawn to the Church in large numbers. This will happen to the degree that the women of the Church reflect righteousness and articulateness in their lives and to the degree that the women of the Church are seen as distinct and different—in happy ways—from the women of the world” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* [2006], 222–23).

- What thoughts do you have as you consider this statement?
- Do you know any women who exemplify happiness in righteous living? How have they made a difference in the lives of those who know them?

Explain that this lesson will focus on the ways in which Relief Society blesses Heavenly Father’s daughters and sons in the restored Church of Jesus Christ.

Ask students to turn to Doctrine and Covenants 25 and look at the section heading to find the person the Lord spoke to in this revelation. Then read verse 3 aloud.

Explain to students that in the eyes of the Lord, Emma Smith was an “elect lady.” At the first meeting of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo, Joseph Smith explained that “elect meant to be elected to a certain work.” He also said that the revelation given to Emma Smith was “fulfilled by Sister Emma’s election to the Presidency of the [Relief] Society” (in *History of the Church*, 4:552–53). Divide the class in half, and invite half of the class to read Doctrine and Covenants 25:4–9 and the other half to read Doctrine and Covenants 25:10–15. Invite students to find the assignments or callings that the Lord gave to Emma Smith. They could make a list of these responsibilities or mark them in their scriptures. After sufficient time, invite students to share what they have found.

- How would the fulfillment of these responsibilities contribute to the growth of the Church?
- What blessing did the Lord promise to Emma Smith if she was obedient to His commandments?

Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 25:16 aloud.

- While this was a revelation given to Emma Smith, in what ways can the Lord’s words to Emma be likened to us? (The teachings about obedience and other gospel principles taught in this revelation apply to everyone. [Note: Explain that likening the scriptures to our own experiences is an important scripture study skill that helps us see similarities between our experiences and those of individuals in the scriptures.])

As the students share their answers to this question, help them understand the following truth: **As we faithfully keep the commandments and fulfill our assignments from the Lord, we will receive a crown of righteousness.** You may want to testify of this truth.

The Relief Society is a significant part of the restored Church of Jesus Christ

Tell students that the Lord revealed the organization of the Church line upon line. As part of this process, He gave a very important calling to Emma Smith. Invite a student to read aloud the following summary of the organization of the Relief Society. Ask students to listen for how the Prophet Joseph Smith’s vision of the Relief Society expanded the women’s initial vision.

In Nauvoo, Latter-day Saint women were blessed with their own organization in the Church. It had its beginning when several women, led by Sarah Granger Kimball, organized to make shirts for the men working on the temple. The women decided to formally organize, and they asked Eliza R. Snow to write a constitution for their group. When the Prophet Joseph Smith was consulted, he told them that their constitution was excellent but offered to organize the women in a better way. On March 17, 1842, the Prophet, along with Elders John Taylor and Willard Richards, met with 20 women in the upstairs room of the Red Brick Store, where the Prophet organized the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo. Emma Smith was selected as the organization’s president, thus fulfilling the revelation identifying her as an “elect lady” (D&C 25:3). The Prophet later stated that the organization’s objective was to “relieve the poor” and “to save souls” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 453).

On April 28, 1842, the Prophet met again with the sisters. He told them that they would receive instruction through the order of the priesthood and then declared, “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” (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 451).

You might point out to students that they can read the minutes of early Relief Society meetings at josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/Nauvoo-relief-society-minute-book.

- How did the Prophet’s vision of the potential of the Relief Society expand on the original proposal of Sarah Kimball?
- What do you think the following statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith means: “I now turn the key to you in the name of God”? (The Relief Society was organized under the direction of the priesthood by those who held priesthood keys.)

Display the following statements by Sister Zina D. H. Young (1821–1901) and Sister Julie B. Beck, former Relief Society general presidents, concerning the purposes of the Relief Society, and invite three students to read the statements. Ask the class to follow along and consider what these statements teach about the purposes of the Relief Society.



“The Relief Society ... was first organized nearly half a century ago, by the Prophet Joseph Smith; after the pattern of the Holy Priesthood, and under its direction, 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” (Zina D. H. Young, “First General Conference of the Relief Society,” *Woman’s Exponent*, Apr. 15, 1889, 172).



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“The Prophet Joseph Smith defined the purpose of the Relief Society and instructed the sisters in their purpose. ... Ours is an organization that continues to be led today by prophets, seers, and revelators” (Julie B. Beck, “Relief Society: A Sacred Work,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 110–11).

“Just as the Lord’s prophets have continually taught elders and high priests their purposes and duties, they have shared their vision for the sisters of the Relief Society. From their counsel, it is clear that the purposes of Relief Society are to increase faith and personal righteousness, strengthen families and homes, and seek out and help those in need. *Faith, family, and relief*—these three simple words have come to express the vision of prophets for sisters in the Church” (Julie B. Beck, “The Vision of Prophets Regarding Relief Society: Faith, Family, Relief,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2012, 83).

- How do the purposes of the Relief Society bless the whole Church? (Students should identify the following truth: **The Relief Society seeks to increase faith and personal righteousness, strengthen families and homes, and provide**

relief by seeking out and helping those in need. The entire Church is blessed as women accomplish these purposes.)

- How have you seen the Relief Society accomplish its purposes?

Display the following statement, and ask a student to read it aloud:

“The Prophet Joseph Smith declared, ‘The Church was never perfectly organized until the women were thus organized’ [*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 451]. ...

“Besides Joseph Smith, other latter-day prophets have testified that the organization of Relief Society is an inspired part of the Restoration, whereby women in the Church are called in ecclesiastical positions to serve one another and to bless the entire Church. President Joseph F. Smith ... said, ‘This organization is divinely made, divinely authorized, divinely instituted, divinely ordained of God to minister for the salvation of the souls of women and of men’ [*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 184]” (*Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* [2011], 7).

- What does this statement teach about the part Relief Society plays in the Restoration of the gospel? (As students respond, make sure they understand this truth, even if it is expressed in different words: **Relief Society is a divinely inspired part of the Restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ.** Write this truth on the board.)
- How does knowing that the organization of Relief Society is part of the Restoration make a difference in your life?
- How does women’s participation in callings in the Church help the Church to be “perfectly organized”?

Women and the priesthood

Explain to students that there are some who question why women are not ordained to priesthood offices. Emphasize that while we do not know why women are not ordained to priesthood offices, we do know that women participate in the priesthood in their Church callings and in their homes.



Distribute a copy of the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to each student, and ask a student to read it aloud. Invite students to identify ways in which women can exercise priesthood authority:

Women and the Priesthood

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said:



"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 given the Priesthood, it has not been conferred upon them, that does not mean that the Lord has not given unto them authority. . . . A person may have authority given to him, or a sister to her, to do certain things in the Church that are binding and absolutely necessary for our salvation, such as the work that our sisters do in the House of the Lord. They have authority given unto them to do some great and wonderful things, sacred unto the Lord, and binding just as thoroughly as are the blessings that are given by the men who hold the Priesthood' ['Relief Society—An Aid to the Priesthood,' *Relief Society Magazine*, Jan. 1959, 4].

"In that notable address, President Smith said again and again that women have been given authority. To the women he said, '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.' And, of course, the Church work done by women or men, whether in the temple or in the wards or branches, is done under the direction of those who hold priesthood keys. Thus, speaking of the Relief Society, President Smith explained, '[The Lord] has given to them this great organization where they have authority to serve under the directions of the bishops of the wards . . . , looking after the interest of our people both spiritually and temporally' ['Relief Society—An Aid to the Priesthood,' 4–5]. . . .

"We are not accustomed to speaking of women having the authority of the priesthood in their Church callings, but what other authority can it be? When a woman—young or old—is set apart to preach the gospel as a full-time missionary, she is given priesthood authority to perform a priesthood function. The same is true when a woman is set apart to function as an officer or teacher in a Church organization under the direction of one who holds the keys of the priesthood. Whoever functions in an office or calling received from one who holds priesthood keys exercises priesthood authority in performing her or his assigned duties" ("The Keys and Authority of the Priesthood," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2014, 50–51).

- What truths about the roles and responsibilities of women in the Church do you learn from Elder Oaks? (As students share their answers, make sure they understand this truth: **When women are set apart to serve in the Church, they receive priesthood authority to perform their responsibilities.**)

To deepen students' understanding and their feelings about the truths they have discussed in class, divide students into pairs and ask them to discuss the following:

- How can we improve what we say about women in the Church to reflect the true significance of their contributions?

Invite students to share their feelings about the influence of women and the work they do as disciples in the Lord's kingdom. Encourage students to act upon what they have felt during the lesson, particularly by elevating the importance of Relief Society in their lives.

Student Readings

- Doctrine and Covenants 25.

- Julie B. Beck, “The Vision of Prophets Regarding Relief Society: Faith, Family, Relief,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2012, 83–85.

LESSON 19

The Doctrine of Eternal Marriage and Family

Introduction

The gospel of Jesus Christ emphasizes the doctrine that marriage and family are ordained of God. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that married couples can continue as husband and wife after the Resurrection. Revelation from the Lord explains that the “new and everlasting covenant of

marriage” (D&C 131:2) is necessary in order to receive exaltation. This lesson will make clear to students that for a marriage to last for eternity, a couple must be sealed by one who holds priesthood keys and then live righteously.

Background Reading

- Russell M. Nelson, “Celestial Marriage,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 92–95.
- David A. Bednar, “Marriage Is Essential to His Eternal Plan,” *Ensign*, June 2006, 82–87.
- Joshua J. Perkey, “Why Temple Marriage?” *New Era*, Aug. 2013, 30–32.

Suggestions for Teaching

Doctrine and Covenants 49:15–17; 131:1–4

“The new and everlasting covenant of marriage”

Note: As you teach this lesson, be aware that you may have students who have had a difficult home life or have experienced heartbreak or pain in connection with marriage and having children. Consider the needs of these students as you prepare and teach your lesson.

Tell students that in 1831 in Kirtland, Ohio, Leman Copley joined the Church. He had been a member of the United Society of Believers in Christ’s Second Appearing, commonly called Shakers because of their manner of worship, which involved shaking their bodies as they sang, danced, and clapped their hands to music. While Leman Copley believed the gospel, he still also believed in some of the Shaker teachings. He visited Joseph Smith, and as a result of the visit, the Lord gave Joseph the revelation now known as Doctrine and Covenants 49 on May 7, 1831. (Section headings in earlier editions of the Doctrine and Covenants gave this date as March 1831. Historians have recently ascertained that a more accurate date is May 7, 1831.)

The Shakers rejected marriage and believed in living a life of total celibacy (abstaining from sexual relations). The Lord corrected this false doctrine in the revelation and also commanded Leman Copley and others to preach the gospel to the Shakers.

Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 49:15–17, looking for what the Lord said about the importance of marriage and family. Ask:

- According to these verses, what does the Lord teach about marriage? (Students should identify the following doctrine: **Marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God.**)
- What do you think it means that marriage is ordained of God “that the earth might answer the end of its creation”? (Student responses could include the following truths: **Husbands and wives are commanded to have children. The earth was created to provide a place where God’s children could live as families.**)
- How might an understanding of the truths taught in these verses help us explain the Church’s teachings about marriage?

Explain that years later, the Saints’ understanding of the importance of the doctrine of eternal marriage and family grew significantly. On May 16, 1843, Joseph Smith traveled to Ramus, Illinois. While staying at the home of Benjamin and Melissa Johnson, the Prophet taught them about eternal marriage. Some of the Prophet’s instructions given at Ramus are recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 131. Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–4 aloud, and then ask:

- What must we do in order to obtain the highest degree of the celestial kingdom? (Students should identify the following doctrine: **In order to obtain the highest degree of the celestial kingdom, we must enter into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage.** Explain that the word *new* in this context means that this covenant was newly restored in our dispensation. The term *everlasting* means that this covenant has always existed and will endure through eternity. You may want to suggest that students write these definitions in the margin of their scriptures.)
- In our day, how do a man and woman enter into this “new and everlasting covenant of marriage”?

Emphasize that men and women can enter into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage only inside holy temples. Individuals who are married outside of the temple might include terms such as “married for time and eternity” in their marriage vows, but God will not honor these marriages in eternity.

Display the following statement by Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and invite a student to read it aloud. Encourage students to look for what Elder Nelson taught about why eternal marriage is so important:



“The subject of marriage is debated across the world, where various arrangements exist for conjugal living. My purpose in speaking out on this topic is to declare, as an Apostle of the Lord, that marriage between a man and a woman is sacred—it is ordained of God. I also assert the virtue of a temple marriage. It is the highest and most enduring type of marriage that our Creator can offer to His children.

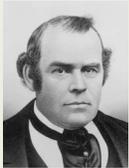
“While salvation is an individual matter, exaltation is a family matter. ...

“... To qualify for eternal life, we must make an eternal and everlasting covenant with our Heavenly Father [see D&C 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]" ("Celestial Marriage," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 92–93).

- What do you think this sentence means: "While salvation is an individual matter, exaltation is a family matter"?
- What does it mean to embrace "a partnership with God" in an eternal marriage? Why do you think having a partnership with God in marriage is important? (Only in marriage does an individual make a covenant with another person and with God. All other gospel covenants are made between an individual and God.)
- How can the restored doctrine of eternal marriage and family elevate a person's desire to build a loving and lasting marriage?

Elder Parley P. Pratt (1807–57) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained the effect that the knowledge of this restored doctrine had on him. Invite a student to read the following:



"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. [1938], 297–98).

Before continuing with the lesson, it might be wise to briefly discuss the following:

"Some members of the Church remain single through no fault of their own, even though they want to marry. If you find yourself in this situation, be assured that 'all things work together for good to them that love God' (Romans 8:28). As you remain worthy, you will someday, in this life or the next, be given all the blessings of an eternal family relationship" (*True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* [2004], 99).

Doctrine and Covenants 132:1–21

Celestial marriage is essential for exaltation

Explain that about two months after Joseph Smith provided the instruction recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 131, he dictated the revelation now known as Doctrine and Covenants 132. Ask a student to read the section heading for Doctrine and Covenants 132 aloud. Explain that the practice of plural marriage will be addressed in the next lesson. Invite another student to read Doctrine and Covenants 132:3–6 aloud. Ask the class to follow along and identify words and phrases that suggest the importance of entering into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage. Discuss the following questions:

- What words and phrases in these verses clarify the importance of eternal marriage?
- What are the consequences of rejecting this doctrine? (You may want to explain that the word *damm*ed means that a person is stopped in his or her eternal progression.)

Note: Take a few minutes to point out to students the important scripture study skill of noticing key words and phrases, the skill they have just used with Doctrine and Covenants 132:3–6. It is important to notice and understand words and phrases when studying the scriptures. With verses 3–6, the following phrases are important to understand: “receive and obey,” “must obey,” “if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye damned,” “no one can reject,” “must and shall.” Some of these phrases are also examples of connections between ideas in the scriptures. Connections show a relationship or link between ideas. For example, verse 3 shows the connections between the ideas of preparing, receiving, and obeying.

Invite students to silently read Doctrine and Covenants 132:7–8, looking for the conditions of the Lord’s law that make it possible for a husband and wife to live as a married couple after this life.

- According to these verses, what conditions are necessary for a marriage to endure eternally? (As the students respond, write the following truth on the board: **When a covenant is made through the proper priesthood authority and sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, it will last forever.**)

Share the following definition of the Holy Spirit of Promise: “The Holy Ghost is the Holy Spirit of Promise (Acts 2:33). He confirms as acceptable to God the righteous acts, ordinances, and covenants of men. The Holy Spirit of Promise witnesses to the Father that the saving ordinances have been performed properly and that the covenants associated with them have been kept” (Guide to the Scriptures, “Holy Spirit of Promise,” scriptures.lds.org).

To help students further understand this principle, consider displaying the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



“To seal is to *ratify*, to *justify*, or to *approve*. Thus an act which is sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise is one which is ratified by the Holy Ghost; it is one which is approved by the Lord; and the person who has taken the obligation upon himself is justified by the Spirit in the thing he has done. The ratifying seal of approval is put upon an act only if those entering the contract are worthy as a result of personal righteousness to receive the divine approbation” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [1966], 361–62).

The Lord continued to outline the necessary conditions for and blessings of eternal marriage, as recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 132:19–21. Assign students to work in pairs to study this passage. Ask the pairs to make two lists: (1) conditions for a marriage to be eternal, and (2) blessings received when these conditions are met. When completed, lists might include the following:

Conditions for a marriage to be eternal

The marriage must be performed according to the Lord's law and "the new and everlasting covenant."

The marriage must be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise.

The marriage must be performed by one who holds the keys of the priesthood.

The married couple must abide in God's covenant.

Blessings that will be received

The married couple will come forth in the First Resurrection.

The married couple will inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, powers, dominions, and all heights and depths.

The marriage will be of full force after physical death.

The married couple will pass by the angels.

The married couple will be exalted and will have glory in all things.

The married couple will have a "continuation of the seeds forever" (their family and posterity will continue throughout eternity; they will have eternal increase).

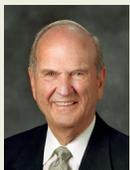
The married couple will be gods and have no end.

The married couple will be above all things and have all power, and all things will be subject to them.

Discuss the following questions to help students further understand the necessary conditions and promised blessings of eternal marriage:

- What do you think it means to "abide" in the marriage covenant? (You may want to explain that one meaning of the word *abide* is to remain or continue. It also means to live in accordance with the covenant.)
- Why is being sealed in the temple on its own not sufficient to achieve an eternal marriage?
- What thoughts and feelings do you have as you consider what Heavenly Father is promising to you?

Display the following statement by Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



"Celestial marriage is a pivotal part of preparation for eternal life. It requires one to be married to the right person, in the right place, by the right authority, and to obey that sacred covenant faithfully. Then one may be assured of exaltation in the celestial kingdom of God" ("*Celestial Marriage*," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 94).

- How would you explain to someone who is not a Church member the importance of being married "in the right place, by the right authority"?

- Given the importance of the doctrine of eternal marriage and family, what can you do now to prepare for an eternal marriage and build strong relationships?

Invite students to consider what they may need to change in their lives to be better prepared for a temple sealing or to keep the covenants associated with that sealing. Share your testimony that seeking an eternal marriage is worth our sacrifice and effort.

Student Readings

- Doctrine and Covenants 49:15–17; 131:1–4; 132:1–24.
- Russell M. Nelson, “Celestial Marriage,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 92–95.

LESSON 20

Plural Marriage

Introduction

Marriage between one man and one woman is the Lord's law unless He commands otherwise (see Jacob 2:27–30). The Prophet Joseph Smith was commanded to restore the practice of plural marriage, which was practiced in the Church for over half a century until President Wilford Woodruff was inspired by the Lord to discontinue the

practice. Plural marriage was a significant test of faith for Joseph Smith and most who practiced it. As students exercise faith, they can come to know that the practice of plural marriage in the latter days was part of the Restoration of all things.

Background Reading

- “Plural Marriage in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” Gospel Topics, lds.org/topics.
- “Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo,” Gospel Topics, lds.org/topics.
- “Plural Marriage and Families in Early Utah,” Gospel Topics, lds.org/topics.
- “The Manifesto and the End of Plural Marriage,” Gospel Topics, lds.org/topics.

Note: These Gospel Topics essays will provide you with far more material than you can teach in the allotted time. Please be mindful of this in your lesson preparation and instruction.

Suggestions for Teaching

Jacob 2:27–30; Doctrine and Covenants 132:1–2, 34–48, 54, 63

The Lord revealed the practice of plural marriage

Explain that in 1831, while Joseph Smith was working on the inspired translation of the Old Testament, known as the Joseph Smith Translation, he read that some of the ancient prophets practiced plural marriage (also called polygamy). These prophets included Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and David. Joseph Smith studied and pondered the scriptures to know how these prophets were justified in this practice (see D&C 132:1–2). The Lord revealed the answers to his questions in a revelation now known as Doctrine and Covenants 132. Although the date of this revelation is July 12, 1843, it is likely that Joseph Smith was receiving revelation on the principles recorded in this section over time, beginning as early as 1831.

Invite a few students to take turns reading aloud Doctrine and Covenants 132:34–36. Ask the class to follow along, looking for why Abraham and Sarah began to practice plural marriage.

- According to verse 34, why did Sarah give Abraham another wife? What does this teach us about the practice of plural marriage? (As students respond, write the following principle on the board: **Plural marriage is an acceptable practice only when the Lord commands it.**)

Invite a student to read Jacob 2:27, 30 aloud. Emphasize the following principle: **Marriage between one man and one woman is God's standard unless He**

commands otherwise. Point out that these verses also include a reason given by the Lord for the practice of plural marriage—to “raise up seed unto [the Lord]” by increasing the number of children born to faithful parents (see also D&C 132:63).

Explain that the Lord revealed to Joseph Smith, as recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 132:37–43, that when His people practice plural marriage because He has commanded them to do so, they are not guilty of the sin of adultery. However, anyone who practices plural marriage without receiving a commandment from the Lord through His prophet is guilty of adultery. Point out to students that the word *destroyed* in verses 41 and 54 means that those who violate their sacred covenants, including their marriage covenant, will be separated from God and from His covenant people (see also Acts 3:22–23; 1 Nephi 22:20).

Invite students to silently read Doctrine and Covenants 132:40 and identify another reason given by the Lord for the practice of plural marriage.

- According to verse 40, what was the Lord going to do in the last dispensation? (“Restore all things.”)

Explain that the words “all things” refer to the laws and ordinances of the gospel that had been revealed in previous dispensations. Write the following truth on the board: **The commandment to live the law of plural marriage in the latter days was part of the Restoration of all things** (see also Acts 3:20–21).

Invite a student to read aloud Doctrine and Covenants 132:45, 48. Ask the class to follow along, looking for what made it possible for Joseph Smith to participate in bringing about the Restoration of all things. Help students understand the following principle: **Plural marriage can be authorized only through the priesthood keys given to the President of the Church.**



Distribute a copy of the handout found at the end of the lesson to each student. Invite a student to read aloud the first section, titled “Plural Marriage.”

- How can knowing that the practice of plural marriage was given by revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith help you better understand its practice in the early days of the Church?

The practice of plural marriage was a test of faith

Invite half of the class to silently read the section of the handout titled “A Difficult Commandment.” Have the other half of the class read the section titled “A Test of Faith.” Then discuss the following questions:

- What are some reasons why the Prophet Joseph Smith and others might have been hesitant to implement the practice of plural marriage?
- What did Joseph Smith, Lucy Walker, and others experience that eventually helped them overcome great difficulties so they could accept and live the law of plural marriage?

Ask several students to take turns reading aloud the section of the handout titled “Joseph Smith and Plural Marriage.”

Explain to students that there is much we do not know about the practice of plural marriage in the early Church. For instance, our current understanding of the term *sealing* is not exactly the same as the understanding of this term in the 1840s, when the practice of sealing was still new and some aspects of the practice were not completely understood. We hear the term *sealing* and automatically think of *marriage*, but for Joseph Smith and the early Saints, *sealing* did not always mean *marriage* in the full sense, meaning to live together as husband and wife. Many details of the practice of plural marriage were kept confidential, and historical records simply do not answer all of our questions. Encourage students to study the Student Readings listed at the end of the lesson for additional information about the practice of plural marriage.

You may want to remind students that as they study about plural marriage, they should remember the pattern that the Prophet Joseph Smith followed in his gospel learning. He studied, pondered, and prayed to gain knowledge. They should also remember that much unreliable information about plural marriage exists 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 of these writings is to destroy faith.

Official Declaration 1

The Lord revealed that Latter-day Saints should cease the practice of plural marriage

Explain that the practice of plural marriage expanded after the Saints arrived in the Utah area and then was later discontinued in accordance with revelation. Ask students to take turns reading aloud the sections of the handout titled “Opposition to Plural Marriage” and “The Second Manifesto.”

- What consequences did the early Latter-day Saints face because they obeyed the Lord’s commandment to practice plural marriage?

Invite a few students to take turns reading aloud from the last two paragraphs of Official Declaration 1 in the Doctrine and Covenants and the first and seventh paragraphs of “Excerpts from Three Addresses by President Wilford Woodruff Regarding the Manifesto,” which follows Official Declaration 1. Then ask:

- What did President Woodruff teach the Saints? (Some of the principles he taught include the following: **The Lord will never permit the President of the Church to lead the Church astray. The Lord directs His Church through revelation to the President of the Church.**)

The following may be helpful in further explaining the decision to end the practice of plural marriage:



“President George Q. Cannon reflected on the revelatory process that brought the Manifesto about: ‘The Presidency of the Church have to walk just as you walk,’ he said. ‘They have to take steps just as you take steps. They have to depend upon the revelations of God as they come to them. They cannot see the end from the beginning, as the Lord does.’ ‘All that we can do,’ Cannon said, speaking of the First Presidency, ‘is to seek the mind and will of God, and when that comes to us, though it may come in contact with every feeling that we have previously

entertained, we have no option but to take the step that God points out, and to trust to Him' " ("The Manifesto and the End of Plural Marriage," Gospel Topics, [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics)).

Conclude the lesson by asking students:

- Based on what you have learned, how would you respond if someone asked you if Latter-day Saints practice plural marriage?

Consider sharing the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008):



"If any of our members are found to be practicing plural marriage, they are excommunicated, the most serious penalty the Church can impose. ... More than a century ago God clearly revealed unto His prophet Wilford Woodruff that the practice of plural marriage should be discontinued, which means that it is now against the law of God. Even in countries where civil or religious law allows polygamy, the Church teaches that marriage must be monogamous and does not accept into its membership those practicing plural marriage" ("What Are People Asking about Us?" *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 71–72).

The following paragraph might also be helpful as you discuss the Church's current practices:

"Consistent with Joseph Smith's teachings, the Church permits a man whose wife has died to be sealed to another woman when he remarries. Moreover, members are permitted to perform ordinances on behalf of deceased men and women who married more than once on earth, sealing them to all of the spouses to whom they were legally married. The precise nature of these relationships in the next life is not known, and many family relationships will be sorted out in the life to come. Latter-day Saints are encouraged to trust in our wise Heavenly Father, who loves His children and does all things for their growth and salvation" ("Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo," Gospel Topics, [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics)).

Before concluding the lesson, it may be wise to tell students that some people who have apostatized from the Church are practicing plural marriage today. They urge people to pray and ponder about whether it is right to practice plural marriage today. We should not seek to receive revelation that is contrary to what the Lord has revealed through His prophets. The Lord has revealed through His prophet that the practice of plural marriage has ceased in the Church. Anyone who advocates the practice of plural marriage today is not a servant of the Lord.

Share your testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith. You may want to testify that he received and obeyed revelation from God, just as did the ancient prophets Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (see D&C 132:37).

Student Readings

- Jacob 2:27–30; Doctrine and Covenants 132:1–3, 34–48, 54, 63; Official Declaration 1.

- “Plural Marriage in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” Gospel Topics, [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics).

Understanding Plural Marriage

Plural Marriage

“Latter-day Saints believe that the marriage of one man and one woman is the Lord’s standing law of marriage. In biblical times, the Lord commanded some to practice plural marriage—the marriage of one man and more than one woman. By revelation, the Lord commanded Joseph Smith to institute the practice of plural marriage among Church members in the early 1840s. For more than half a century, plural marriage was practiced by some Latter-day Saints under the direction of the Church President” (“Plural Marriage in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” Gospel Topics, [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics)).

A Difficult Commandment

Eliza R. Snow (1804–87), the second Relief Society general president, was sealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith. She recorded the following experience in which the Prophet Joseph taught the principle of plural marriage to her brother Lorenzo Snow.

“The Prophet Joseph unbosomed his heart [to Lorenzo Snow], and described the trying mental ordeal he experienced in overcoming the repugnance of his feelings, the natural result of the force of education and social custom, 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—to set the example, and establish Celestial plural marriage. He knew that he had not only his own prejudices and prepossessions 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. Yet the Prophet hesitated and deferred from time to time, until an angel of God stood by him with a drawn sword, and told him that, unless he moved forward and established plural marriage, his Priesthood would be taken from him and he should be destroyed! This testimony he not only bore to my brother, but also to others—a testimony that cannot be gainsayed [contradicted]” (*Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow* [1884], 69–70).

A Test of Faith

Many who struggled with the principle of plural marriage were blessed with a confirming spiritual witness of the truth of the principle.

“According to Helen Mar Kimball, Joseph Smith stated that ‘the practice of this principle would be the hardest trial the Saints would ever have to test their faith.’ Though it was one of the ‘severest’ trials of her life, she testified that it had also been ‘one of the greatest blessings.’ ...

“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’” (“Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo,” Gospel Topics, [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics)).

Joseph Smith and Plural Marriage

Many women were sealed to Joseph Smith, but the exact number is unknown.

“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. Other women left no records, making it unknown whether their sealings were for time and eternity or 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 ties extended both vertically, from parent to child, and horizontally, from one family to another. Today such eternal bonds are achieved through the temple marriages of individuals who are also sealed to their own birth families, in this way linking families together” (“Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo,” Gospel Topics, [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics)).

After the Prophet’s death, many women were sealed to him who had no mortal relationship with him.

Opposition to Plural Marriage

Many religious and political leaders in the United States opposed the plural marriage system, which they considered immoral and uncivilized. Latter-day Saints were ridiculed in public speeches, books, magazines, and newspapers. The United States Congress passed laws that limited Church members’ freedom and hurt the Church economically by restricting the amount of property the Church could own. “This legislation ultimately caused officers to arrest and imprison men who had more than one wife and to deny them the right to vote, the right to privacy in their homes, and the enjoyment of other civil liberties” (*Our Heritage: A Brief History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* [1996], 97). By 1890, hundreds of faithful Latter-day Saints had served time in prison. Others went

into hiding to avoid arrest and imprisonment. In these conditions, many families suffered from stress, grief, poverty, and hunger.

Although the world ridiculed them for practicing plural marriage, many faithful Latter-day Saints defended the practice and testified that they knew it had been revealed by God through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

These difficult circumstances led President Wilford Woodruff to prayerfully seek the Lord's guidance concerning the Saints' practice of plural marriage. In 1889, President Woodruff instructed Church leaders to discontinue teaching the principle of plural marriage. By 1890, very few plural marriages were performed, and these were done against the counsel of President Woodruff. However, some people published reports that the Church was still promoting the practice of plural marriage. These reports brought further opposition against the Church. In September 1890, President Woodruff issued a Manifesto, which is now known as Official Declaration 1 in the Doctrine and Covenants.

The Second Manifesto

"The Manifesto [Official Declaration 1] declared President [Wilford] Woodruff's intention to submit to the laws of the United States. It said nothing about the laws of other countries. Ever since the opening of colonies in Mexico and Canada, Church leaders had performed plural marriages in those countries, and after October 1890, plural marriages continued to be quietly performed there. ... Under exceptional circumstances, a smaller number of new plural marriages were performed in the United States between 1890 and 1904, though whether the marriages were authorized to have been performed within the states is unclear" ("The Manifesto and the End of Plural Marriage," Gospel Topics, [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics)).

"At the April 1904 general conference, President [Joseph F.] Smith issued a forceful statement, known as the Second Manifesto, making new plural marriages punishable by excommunication" ("Plural Marriage in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," Gospel Topics, [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics)).

LESSON 21

The Prophetic Mission of Joseph Smith

Introduction

Following the martyrdom of Joseph Smith, Elder John Taylor, who was with Joseph Smith when he was killed, eulogized the Prophet (perhaps in collaboration with one or more Saints) by recording: “Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of

men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it” (D&C 135:3). This lesson will help students see how the Prophet’s ministry fulfilled ancient prophecies. This lesson will also examine the contributions Joseph Smith made to the salvation of all God’s children.

Background Reading

- Neil L. Andersen, “Joseph Smith,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 28–31.
- Tad R. Callister, “Joseph Smith—Prophet of the Restoration,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 35–37.
- “D&C 135:3. Joseph Smith Has Done More for the Salvation of Men Than Anyone Other Than Jesus,” *Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual* (Church Educational System manual, 2001), 349–50.

Suggestions for Teaching

2 Nephi 3:1–21

The foreordained mission of Joseph Smith

Ask students to share what comes to their mind first when they think of Joseph Smith. Invite a few students to briefly share a time when they were grateful for the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Tell students that the prophet Nephi recorded some counsel that Lehi gave to his son Joseph. This counsel is recorded in 2 Nephi 3 and includes a prophecy that Joseph of Egypt gave concerning Lehi’s family and the latter days. Lehi likely learned these prophecies from reading the brass plates. In 2 Nephi 3, we learn that Joseph of Egypt foretold the latter-day mission of Joseph Smith. Ask a student to read 2 Nephi 3:6–9 aloud. Encourage the class to follow along and look for how Joseph of Egypt described Joseph Smith.

- What are some words or phrases that Joseph of Egypt used to describe Joseph Smith? (Answers should include “choice seer,” “esteemed highly,” “great in mine eyes,” and “great like unto Moses.” You may want to suggest that students mark these terms in their scriptures; in the margin next to verses 6–9, they might also write *Joseph Smith*.)
- In what ways was Joseph Smith like Moses and Joseph of Egypt? (See also Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 50:24–35 [in the Bible appendix].)
- According to verses 7–8, what did Joseph of Egypt foresee regarding Joseph Smith’s ministry? (Make sure students understand this truth: **Joseph Smith**

would be raised up by the Lord to bring people to a knowledge of His covenants and to do His work.)

Invite students to work in pairs and study 2 Nephi 3:7, 11–15, 18–21. Ask each pair to make a list of what the scriptures say that Joseph Smith would do to help accomplish the Lord’s work. You may want to suggest that students make this list by marking important phrases they find in these verses. After sufficient time, invite several pairs to share what they found. (Answers should include the following: bring people to a knowledge of covenants [verse 7]; bring forth the Book of Mormon [verses 13, 18–21]; convince people of the truthfulness of the Bible [verse 11]; be made strong [verse 13]; and bring people unto salvation [verse 15].)

Display the following statement by President Brigham Young (1801–77), and invite a student to read it aloud:



“It was decreed in the counsels of eternity, long before the foundations of the earth were laid, that he, Joseph Smith, should be the man, in the last dispensation of this world, to bring forth the word of God to the people. . . . The Lord had his eyes upon him, and upon his father, and upon his father’s father, and upon their progenitors clear back . . . to Adam. He has watched that family and that blood as it has circulated from its fountain to the birth of that man. He was fore-ordained in eternity to preside over this last dispensation” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 343).

To help students feel the truth and importance of Joseph Smith’s foreordained mission, discuss the following:

- Why is it important for you to know that Joseph Smith was foreordained and prepared in the premortal life to be the Prophet of the Restoration?

Doctrine and Covenants 135:3

Joseph Smith has “done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men”

Ask students to share what they would say or testify about Joseph Smith if they were given only a few sentences to do so. Explain that following Joseph Smith’s death, a tribute to Joseph Smith was written and later preserved for us in the Doctrine and Covenants. Ask a student to read the first sentence of Doctrine and Covenants 135:3 aloud. Ask:

- What truth about Joseph Smith is declared in this sentence? (Students should identify the following truth: **Joseph Smith has done more for the salvation of people in this world than any other man except Jesus.**)

To review the work and contributions of the Prophet Joseph Smith, organize students into small groups. Assign them to skim through the Doctrine and Covenants and to think back over the lessons discussed in this course up to this point. Ask them to make a list of the blessings and doctrines restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith that contribute to our salvation. After sufficient time, invite students to select an item on their list and share with their group how it influences their lives and leads them toward salvation.

To summarize student responses, display the following statement by Elder Tad R. Callister, who served in the Presidency of the Seventy. Ask a student to read it aloud while the other students follow along:



“Through Joseph Smith have been restored all the powers, keys, teachings, and ordinances necessary for salvation and exaltation. You cannot go anywhere else in the world and get that. It is not to be found in any other church. It is not to be found in any philosophy of man or scientific digest or individual pilgrimage, however intellectual it may seem. Salvation is to be found in one place alone, as so designated by the Lord Himself when He said that this is ‘the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth’ (D&C 1:30)” (“Joseph Smith—Prophet of the Restoration,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 37).

Give students a moment to ponder how Joseph Smith’s ministry has contributed to their own salvation, and then ask:

- In what specific ways might your life be different without the ministry of the Prophet Joseph Smith?

Doctrine and Covenants 122:1–2; Joseph Smith—History 1:33

Joseph’s name will be “had for good and evil among all nations”

Tell students that despite all the good that Joseph Smith accomplished, he had many detractors, particularly near the end of his life. This aspect of his life was also foreseen by ancient prophets (see, for example, 3 Nephi 21:10). Invite a student to read aloud what Moroni said to Joseph Smith about those who would oppose him, as recorded in Joseph Smith—History 1:33. Invite another student to read Doctrine and Covenants 122:1–2 aloud. Help students to state a truth found in these passages by asking:

- How would you summarize what we learn from these two scripture passages about how people would respond to Joseph Smith? (As students share their suggested summaries, help them understand this truth: **While many in the world will hold Joseph Smith in derision, the righteous will seek blessings made available through his ministry.**)
- Why do you think the Prophet Joseph Smith has so many critics and enemies, even though many years have passed since his death? (A testimony of the Restoration hinges on whether or not Joseph Smith was a prophet who performed God’s work. Therefore, Satan continues to strive to discredit Joseph Smith.)

Invite a student to read the following statement by Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



"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.

"We are especially saddened when someone who once revered Joseph retreats from his or her conviction and then maligns the Prophet.

"'Studying the Church ... through the eyes of its defectors,' Elder Neal A. Maxwell once said, is 'like interviewing Judas to understand Jesus. Defectors always tell us more about themselves than about that from which they have departed' ["All Hell Is Moved" (Brigham Young University devotional, Nov. 8, 1977), 3; speeches.byu.edu]. ...

"The negative commentary about the Prophet Joseph Smith will increase as we move toward the Second Coming of the Savior. The half-truths and subtle deceptions will not diminish. There will be family members and friends who will need your help. Now is the time to [prepare] to help others who are seeking the truth" ("Joseph Smith," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 28–30).

Discuss the following questions:

- Why is it helpful to be aware that even though many years have passed since the death of Joseph Smith, enemies of the Church continue to attack his reputation?
- What can we do to help those who are seeking the truth to know that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God?

Display the following statement by Elder Neil L. Andersen, and invite a student to read it aloud:



"A sincere inquirer should see the spreading of the restored gospel as the fruit of the Lord's work through the Prophet. ...

"Jesus said:

"'A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. ...

"'... By their fruits ye shall know them' [Matthew 7:18, 20].

"These explanations are convincing, but the sincere inquirer should not rely on them exclusively to settle his or her search for truth.

"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" ("Joseph Smith," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 29–30).

Give students an opportunity to testify of the Prophet Joseph Smith by asking the following questions:

- What aspects of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints do you see as evidence of Joseph Smith's prophetic mission?
- What experiences have you had that have contributed to your testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith?

Conclude by displaying the following statements by Bathsheba W. Smith (1822–1910), who served as the fourth general president of the Relief Society, and President Brigham Young (1801–77). Both Sister Smith and President Young knew Joseph Smith in mortality. Invite a student to read these statements aloud:



“When I heard the Gospel I knew it was true; when I first read the Book of Mormon, I knew it was inspired of God; when I first beheld Joseph Smith I knew I stood face to face with a prophet of the living God, and I had no doubt in my mind about his authority” (Bathsheba W. Smith, quoted in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* [2011], 34).



“I feel like shouting, hallelujah, all the time, when I think that I ever knew Joseph Smith, the Prophet whom the Lord raised up and ordained, and to whom he gave keys and power to build up the kingdom of God on earth” (quoted in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 495).

Invite students to consider their testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith and what they might do to share it with others, whether in person or using social media. Encourage them to identify someone with whom they would like to share this testimony and then follow through with their desire.

Student Readings

- 2 Nephi 3:1–21; Doctrine and Covenants 122:1–2; 135:3; Joseph Smith—History 1:33.
- Neil L. Andersen, “Joseph Smith,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 28–31.

LESSON 22

The Martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith

Introduction

Dissenters within the Church and opponents outside the Church brought about the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum Smith. Their deaths added a powerful seal to their testimonies of the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the restored gospel of Jesus

Christ. A study of the life and martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith will help students consider the many blessings the Lord has given them through the ministry of the Prophet Joseph Smith, through whom He restored His gospel in the latter days.

Background Reading

- Thomas S. Monson, “The Prophet Joseph Smith: Teacher by Example,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2005, 67–70.
- “The Martyrdom,” chapter 22 in *Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual*, 2nd ed. (Church Educational System manual, 2003), 273–85.
- “The Martyrdom: The Prophet Seals His Testimony with His Blood,” chapter 46 in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 529–40.

Suggestions for Teaching

Doctrine and Covenants 135:4–5; 136:36–39

Enemies sought to kill Joseph Smith

Display a picture of the Carthage Jail. Explain to the students that on June 27, 1844, the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum, who was the Patriarch to the Church, were martyred in this jail in Carthage, Illinois. Joseph Smith was 38 years old at the time of his death, and Hyrum was 44.

Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 136:36–39 aloud while the class follows along. Encourage students as they read to identify how the Lord summarized the life of Joseph Smith and the work he performed. Then discuss the following question:

- How did the Lord describe the life and work of the Prophet Joseph Smith? (Student responses could include the following truths: **Joseph Smith laid the foundation for God’s work in this gospel dispensation. The Prophet Joseph Smith was innocent at the time of his death, and he had faithfully fulfilled the mission given to him by God.**)



To help students understand some of the influences that brought about the death of the Prophet, tell them that the Saints lived in relative peace in the state of Illinois for about three years, but by 1842, they were again experiencing opposition. Opponents of the Church included citizens of Illinois who feared the political influence of the Saints. Others grew envious of the economic growth of Nauvoo and were critical of the power of Nauvoo's city government and militia. Some misunderstood certain unique Mormon doctrines and practices. Dissenters within the Church and opponents outside the Church combined their efforts to fight against the Prophet and the Church.



Distribute a copy of the handout found at the end of this lesson to each student. Invite a student to read aloud the section titled "Opposition to the Prophet and the Church."

Explain that according to the laws that were in effect at the time of the Prophet's death, no law was broken when a press was destroyed. Display the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



"The amendment to the United States Constitution that extended the guarantee of freedom of the press to protect against the actions of city and state governments was not adopted until 1868, and it was not enforced as a matter of federal law until 1931. ... We should judge the actions of our predecessors on the basis of the laws and commandments and circumstances of their day, not ours" ("Joseph, the Man and the Prophet," *Ensign*, May 1996, 72).

- Why is the last sentence in Elder Oaks's statement important to remember as we consider the actions of early Church leaders? (You may want to point out that most of the members of the Nauvoo city council were Church members, but they were acting in their capacity as elected civil servants when they ordered the press to be destroyed. The Church as an organization did not take action against the press, but the city council took action to "abate the ... nuisance" [in *History of the Church*, 6:432]).

Invite a student to read aloud the handout section titled "Joseph and Hyrum Are Falsely Charged." Ask another student to read Doctrine and Covenants 135:4 aloud. Invite the class to follow along, looking for the prophecy Joseph Smith made as he traveled toward Carthage.

- Even though every mortal is imperfect, what do you think it would take for someone to have "a conscience void of offense towards God, and towards all men"? (D&C 135:4).

Explain that as Hyrum Smith prepared to go to Carthage Jail, he read Ether 12:36–38 and then turned down the page. Invite a student to read aloud Doctrine and Covenants 135:5, which is a direct quotation of these verses from Ether, while the class follows along. Invite students to consider why this scripture passage would have been meaningful to Hyrum. You might suggest to students that they mark any words or phrases that stand out to them.

- What specific words or phrases in these verses from the book of Ether do you think would have been meaningful to Hyrum as he faced imprisonment and possible death?
- What do you think the following phrase means: “All men shall know that my garments are not spotted with your blood”? (Consider having students cross-reference verse 5 with Jacob 1:19 and Mosiah 2:27 to discover the meaning of this phrase. Learning to cross-reference a scripture with other scriptures that provide additional insight is an important scripture study skill.)

Ask students to consider how Joseph and Hyrum might have felt knowing they had fulfilled their callings and duties from God to the best of their abilities.

- What can we learn from the examples of Joseph and Hyrum Smith that could help us fulfill the responsibilities we receive from God?

Doctrine and Covenants 135:1–3, 6–7

Martyrdom at Carthage Jail and tributes to Joseph Smith

Ask a student to read aloud the section heading for Doctrine and Covenants 135. (You may want to point out that the differences between this heading in the 1981 and 2013 editions of the scriptures reflect recent scholarship.) Invite several students to take turns reading aloud Doctrine and Covenants 135:1–2 and the handout section titled “Martyrdom at Carthage Jail.” Ask the class to follow along as these students read.

- What do you think the phrase “to seal the testimony of this book and the Book of Mormon” means?

As students share their thoughts, consider writing the following definition on the board: *to “seal” is to permanently establish something, such as a testimony.* You might suggest that students write this definition in their scriptures next to verse 1.

Ask students to silently read Doctrine and Covenants 135:3, 6–7, looking for some of the truths we learn from this announcement of the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith.

- What truths did you learn from this announcement of the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith? (Students may identify many truths, including the following: **Joseph Smith has done more for the salvation of people in this world than any other man except Jesus Christ. The Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants were brought forth for the salvation of the world.**)
- In what specific ways do you think your life would be different without the ministry of the Prophet Joseph Smith?

Ask a student to read aloud the statement from Elder Dallin H. Oaks found in the handout section titled “Tributes to the Prophet Joseph Smith.”

- Why is it important to realize that close associates of Joseph Smith considered him to be a prophet and an “honorable, virtuous man”?

Conclude by asking students if any of them would like to share their testimony of Joseph Smith. Encourage students to look for opportunities in the next few days to

share with others their testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his role in restoring the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Student Readings

- Doctrine and Covenants 135:1–7; 136:36–39.
- Thomas S. Monson, “The Prophet Joseph Smith: Teacher by Example,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2005, 67–70.

The Martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith

Opposition to the Prophet and the Church

By June 1844, animosity against the Church had greatly intensified. Some citizens in Illinois were discussing driving the Saints from the state, while others were plotting to kill the Prophet. Some of those who were conspiring against the Prophet and the Church were former members of the Church who had apostatized. On June 7, 1844, William Law, who had served as Second Counselor in the First Presidency, and other apostates printed the first issue of a newspaper called the *Nauvoo Expositor*. In an attempt to inflame the public against the Prophet and the Church, these men used this newspaper to slander Joseph Smith and other Church leaders. Joseph Smith, acting as the mayor of Nauvoo, and the majority of the Nauvoo city council recognized that the inflammatory newspaper would lead to mob violence against the city. They declared the newspaper a public nuisance and ordered that the *Nauvoo Expositor* press be destroyed.

Joseph and Hyrum Are Falsely Charged

“As a result of the [destruction of the *Nauvoo Expositor*] 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.

“Believing that the mobs wanted only them, Joseph and Hyrum decided to leave for the West to preserve their lives. On June 23, they crossed the Mississippi River, but later that day, brethren from Nauvoo found the Prophet and told him that troops would invade the city if he did not surrender to the authorities in Carthage. This the Prophet agreed to do, hoping to appease both government officials and the mobs. On June 24, Joseph and Hyrum Smith bade farewell to their families and rode with other Nauvoo city officials toward Carthage, voluntarily surrendering 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 of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 529–30).

Martyrdom at Carthage Jail

During the day on June 27, 1844, a visitor had given Joseph a revolver. As the mob tried to enter the room where the Prophet and the other men were held, Hyrum was shot to death, acting in defense of everyone in the room. Joseph sprang to the door and reached around the doorframe to shoot the pistol into the hall. Only three of the six chambers fired, wounding several members of the mob. The mob then forced their guns through the half-closed door, and John Taylor tried to beat the barrels of their guns back with a walking stick.

As the conflict at the doorway increased, John Taylor tried to escape the room through a window. As he attempted to leap out of the window, he was shot in the thigh from the doorway and was also shot by someone outside. He fell to the floor, and while attempting to get under the bed next to the window, he was severely wounded by three more shots. Meanwhile, as guns came through the doorway, Willard Richards began striking them with a cane.

Joseph Smith then decided to try to escape through the same window. As Willard Richards continued to deflect the mob at the door, the Prophet leaped to the open window. As he did so, he was struck by bullets from both inside and outside the jail. He fell out of the window, exclaiming, "O Lord, my God!" and landed on the ground below. The members of the mob who were inside the jail rushed outside to assure themselves that Joseph was dead. Although there were no members of the Church on their way to Carthage, someone yelled, "The Mormons are coming!" and the entire mob fled.

Tributes to the Prophet Joseph Smith

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said:



"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' [*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1954), 459]" ("Joseph, the Man and the Prophet," *Ensign*, May 1996, 73).

LESSON 23

Succession in the Presidency

Introduction

Near the end of his life, Joseph Smith conferred the priesthood keys of this dispensation on the members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. After the Prophet's martyrdom, at a meeting held on August 8, 1844, many Saints received a spiritual manifestation confirming to them that Brigham Young, who was President of the Quorum of

the Twelve Apostles, was to lead the Church. As students come to understand the principles associated with succession in the Presidency of the Church, they will have confidence that the Lord has selected and prepared each individual who becomes President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Background Reading

- "Succession in the Presidency," chapter 3 in *Teachings of the Living Prophets Student Manual* (Church Educational System manual, 2010), 28–41.
- "The Twelve to Bear Off the Kingdom," chapter 23 in *Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual*, 2nd ed. (Church Educational System manual, 2003), 286–96.
- Brent L. Top and Lawrence R. Flake, "'The Kingdom of God Will Roll On': Succession in the Presidency," *Ensign*, Aug. 1996, 22–35.

Suggestions for Teaching

Doctrine and Covenants 107:33; 112:30–32

Apostles hold the keys of this dispensation

Ask the following question:

- How does the process of selecting a new President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints differ from the way leaders might be chosen in other organizations?

Inform students that this lesson will examine the transfer of Church leadership following the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Explain that several years before his death, the Prophet had received revelations concerning the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Ask students to study Doctrine and Covenants 107:33 and 112:30–32 looking for the Lord's description of the priesthood authority held by the members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve.

- How did the Lord describe the authority of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles? (Make sure students understand the following principle: **The members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles hold the priesthood keys of this dispensation, and the Twelve function under the direction of the First Presidency.**)



Distribute a copy of the handout found at the end of the lesson to each student. Explain that Joseph Smith spent the last months of his life meeting frequently with members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to prepare them to lead the Church. Have a student read aloud the handout section titled

“Meeting with the Twelve Apostles, March 1844.” Tell students that this is a brief account of a meeting held by the Prophet Joseph Smith with the Apostles and other Church leaders, as recounted by President Wilford Woodruff, who was an Apostle at that time. After the reading, ask:

- How did this conferral of keys on members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles help prepare them for the time when the Prophet Joseph Smith would no longer be with them? (They received the same priesthood keys that were held by the Prophet Joseph.)
- Why was it important for Joseph Smith to confer these priesthood keys on the Apostles before his death? (At that time, Joseph Smith was the only one who held all the priesthood keys of this dispensation. If he had not conferred these keys on others, then angels would have had to come to earth again to restore them.)

Doctrine and Covenants 124:127–28

Brigham Young succeeded Joseph Smith as Church President

Explain that when the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was first organized in 1835, the order of seniority was determined by age. Thomas B. Marsh, who was believed at the time to be the oldest Apostle, was considered the senior Apostle (it has since been learned that David W. Patten was actually the oldest Apostle).

Ask a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 124:127–28 aloud. Explain that in October 1838, President Marsh apostatized and left the Church and David W. Patten died. Brigham Young then became the senior Apostle, as explained in these verses. Following the initial selection of Apostles and continuing to the present, seniority in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has been determined by date of ordination.

Explain that when Joseph and Hyrum Smith were martyred on June 27, 1844, the Twelve, except for John Taylor and Willard Richards, were in the eastern United States serving missions. Within three weeks, however, all of the Apostles had learned the tragic news and hurriedly returned to Nauvoo. As the Apostles arrived, they found confusion among Church members about who would lead the Church. Some Church members believed the leadership rightly fell to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Over the next months, several men put forth claims that they had the right to lead the Church. Ask two students to read aloud the handout sections titled “Sidney Rigdon’s Claim” and “James Strang’s Claim.” As the class listens, invite them to think about the concerns they might have had about these claims had they been in Nauvoo at the time.

Follow up by asking students:

- Why were the claims made by these men not legitimate? (You may need to point out that although Sidney Rigdon was a member of the First Presidency, Joseph had not conferred priesthood keys on him.)

Invite a student to read aloud the handout section titled “August 7, 1844.” Discuss the following question with the class:

- Why was Brigham Young’s testimony of the keys of the apostleship important? (After students respond, write the following doctrine on the board: **The Apostles hold all the keys of the priesthood necessary to preside over the Church.**)

Invite a student to read aloud the handout section titled “August 8, 1844, 10:00 A.M.”

- How did the Lord bless the Saints to know whom He had appointed to lead the Church?
- How can we know that Church leaders today are called of God? (After students respond, write the following principle on the board: **Through the Holy Ghost, we can receive a witness that those who lead the Church have been called of God.**)
- When have you felt the Spirit witnessing to you that the President of the Church today is called of God?

Explain that during the meeting held at 2:00 p.m. on August 8, Brigham Young and other Apostles spoke. Have a student read aloud the handout section titled “August 8, 1844, 2:00 P.M.”

Explain that when Joseph Smith died, Brigham Young, as the senior Apostle, was immediately able to exercise all of the keys of the priesthood. For more than three years following the Prophet’s martyrdom, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles presided over the Church, under the direction of Brigham Young. Then on December 5, 1847, Brigham Young was sustained as President of the Church and the First Presidency was reorganized.

Sidney Rigdon moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and organized a Church of Christ with apostles, prophets, priests, and kings. This church collapsed by 1847. And even though James Strang’s claims to the presidency were false, three of the former Twelve Apostles—William E. McLellin, John E. Page, and William Smith—supported him. Strang was murdered in 1856 by disaffected followers.

To help students understand the process of succession in the Church Presidency today, display the following statement by President Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles about what took place following the death of President Gordon B. Hinckley. Ask a student to read the statement aloud:



“There was no question about what would be done, no hesitancy. We knew that the senior Apostle was the President of the Church. And in that sacred meeting, Thomas Spencer Monson was sustained by the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as the President of the Church. ... Now, as the scriptures provide, he is the only man on the earth who has the right to exercise all of the keys. But we all hold them as Apostles. There is one man among us called and ordained, and he becomes the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (“The Twelve,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2008, 83).

- Following the death of the President of the Church, who will always become the next President of the Church? (The senior Apostle, who is the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.)

Some students may wonder when the President of the Church receives the keys necessary to preside over the Church. Explain that every Apostle is given all of the keys when he is first ordained as an Apostle. Ask a student to read aloud the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008):



“But authority to exercise those keys is restricted to the President of the Church. At his passing, that authority becomes operative in the senior Apostle, who is then named, set apart, and ordained a prophet and President by his associates of the Council of the Twelve” (“Come and Partake,” *Ensign*, May 1986, 47).

- What feelings do you have as you realize that the Lord’s kingdom on earth will move forward with little interruption following the death of a Church President?

You may want to conclude this lesson by testifying that the same priesthood keys and powers that Joseph Smith conferred upon Brigham Young and the members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles are held today by the President of the Church, his Counselors in the First Presidency, and the members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. You might also share how you gained your testimony that Church leaders are called by God. Invite students to prayerfully seek to obtain or strengthen their testimonies of the truths they have discussed today.

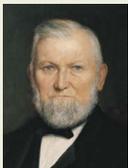
Student Readings

- Doctrine and Covenants 107:33; 112:30–32; 124:127–28.
- Boyd K. Packer, “The Twelve,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2008, 83–87.

Succession in the Presidency of the Church

Meeting with the Twelve Apostles, March 1844

President Wilford Woodruff (1807–98) recalled:



“I remember the last speech that [Joseph Smith] ever gave us before his death. . . . He stood upon his feet some three hours. The room was filled as with consuming fire, his face was as clear as amber, and he was clothed upon by the power of God. He laid before us our duty. He laid before us the fullness of this great work of God; and in his remarks to us he said: ‘I have had sealed upon my head every key, every power, every principle of life and salvation that God has ever given to any man who ever lived upon the face of the earth. And these principles and this Priesthood and power belong to this great and last dispensation which the God of

Heaven has set His hand to establish in the earth. Now,' said he, addressing the Twelve, 'I have sealed upon your heads every key, every power, and every principle which the Lord has sealed upon my head.' ...

"After addressing us in this manner he said: 'I tell you, the burden of this kingdom now rests upon your shoulders; you have got to bear it off in all the world' " (quoted in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 532).

Sidney Rigdon's Claim

Sidney Rigdon, First Counselor in the First Presidency, arrived in Nauvoo from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on August 3, 1844. He called for a special meeting to be held on Tuesday, August 6, so that Church members could choose a guardian for the Church. It appeared as though Sidney Rigdon tried to hold this meeting so Church members could ratify his position as guardian of the Church before all of the Twelve Apostles would return from their missions to the eastern United States. Fortunately, because of the efforts of Elder Willard Richards and Elder Parley P. Pratt, the meeting was moved to Thursday, August 8, 1844, by which time most of the Apostles had returned to Nauvoo.

Sidney Rigdon claimed that because he had previously been called and ordained as a spokesman for Joseph Smith (see D&C 100:9), it was his responsibility to "see that the church is governed in a proper manner" (in *History of the Church*, 7:229).

James Strang's Claim

After Joseph Smith's death, James Strang, who had been baptized in February 1844, claimed to have received a letter from Joseph Smith stating that Joseph had appointed Strang as his successor. The letter was a forgery, but it appeared to include Joseph Smith's signature, and it deceived some members of the Church when Strang showed it to them. Strang also said that he had been visited by an angel, who had given him keys.

August 7, 1844

Elders John Taylor, Willard Richards, Parley P. Pratt, and George A. Smith were already in Nauvoo when Sidney Rigdon arrived. Most of the rest of the Apostles, including Brigham Young, returned to Nauvoo on the evening of August 6, 1844. The next day, August 7, the Apostles met in council at the home of John Taylor. Later that afternoon, the Twelve Apostles, the high council, and the high priests met together. President Young asked Sidney Rigdon to state his message to the Saints. Sidney Rigdon boldly declared that he had seen a vision and that no man could succeed Joseph Smith as President of the Church. He then proposed that he be appointed as the guardian of the people.

After Sidney Rigdon concluded his remarks, Brigham Young (1801–77) said:



"I do not care who leads the church, ... but one thing I must know, and that is what God says about it. I have the keys and the means of obtaining the mind of God on the subject. ...

"Joseph conferred upon our heads all the keys and powers belonging to the Apostleship which he himself held before he was taken away, and no man or set of men can get between Joseph and the Twelve in this world or in the world to come.

"How often has Joseph said to the Twelve, 'I have laid the foundation and you must build thereon, for upon your shoulders the kingdom rests'" (in *History of the Church*, 7:230).

August 8, 1844, 10:00 A.M.

On August 8, 1844, the Saints in Nauvoo gathered at 10:00 a.m. to hear Sidney Rigdon make his claims as guardian of the Church. He spoke to the thousands of assembled Saints for an hour and a half, explaining why he should be guardian of the Church. Several people described his speech as uninspiring.

President Brigham Young spoke briefly and said that he would have preferred to come back to Nauvoo to mourn for the Prophet than to have to appoint a new leader. He announced that an assembly of leaders and members would be held later that day at 2:00 p.m. Several members of the Church later testified that as Brigham Young spoke, they saw his appearance change and heard his voice change, and he took on the appearance and voice of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Emily Smith Hoyt remembered: "The manner of reasoning, the expression of the countenance, the sound of the voice thrilled my whole soul. . . . I knew that Joseph was dead. And yet I often startled and involuntarily looked at the stand to see if it was not Joseph. It was not, it was Brigham Young" (quoted in Lynne Watkins Jorgensen, "The Mantle of the Prophet Joseph Passes to Brother Brigham: A Collective Spiritual Witness," *BYU Studies*, vol. 36, no. 4 [1996–97], 142).

Wilford Woodruff wrote, "If I had not seen him with my own eyes, there is no one that could have convinced me that it was not Joseph Smith, and anyone can testify to this who was acquainted with these two men" (in *History of the Church*, 7:236).

August 8, 1844, 2:00 P.M.

At 2:00 p.m., thousands of Saints gathered for what they knew would be a significant meeting. Brigham Young spoke frankly about the proposed guardianship of Sidney Rigdon and his alienation from Joseph Smith during the previous two years and then said:

"If the people want President Rigdon to lead them they may have him; but I say unto you that the Quorum of the Twelve have the keys of the kingdom of God in all the world.

"The Twelve are appointed by the finger of God. Here is Brigham, have his knees ever faltered? Have his lips ever quivered? Here is Heber [C. Kimball] and the rest of the Twelve, an independent body who have the keys of the priesthood—the keys of the kingdom of God to deliver to all the world: this is true, so help me God. They stand next to Joseph, and are as the First Presidency of the Church" (in *History of the Church*, 7:233).

Many Saints commented that Brigham Young looked and sounded like Joseph Smith as he spoke that afternoon. In addition to this miracle, many of the Saints also felt the Holy Ghost witness to them that Brigham Young and the Quorum of the Twelve were called by God to lead the Church. At the conclusion of this meeting, the Saints in Nauvoo voted unanimously to sustain the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, with Brigham Young at their head, to lead the Church. However, not all the members of the Church ultimately chose to follow the Apostles. Some of the people chose instead to follow individuals such as Sidney Rigdon and James Strang, who formed their own churches.

LESSON 24

Leaving Nauvoo and the Trek West

Introduction

Under the inspired leadership of Brigham Young, the Saints finished building the Nauvoo Temple, where they made sacred covenants before they started their arduous journey to their new home in the Rocky Mountains. These temple covenants provided the Saints with strength and inspiration

as they faced hardships along the way. As inheritors of the legacy of these faithful Saints, we can learn from their examples and prepare the way for others to enjoy the blessings of the gospel.

Background Reading

- Gordon B. Hinckley, “True to the Faith,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 65–67.
- M. Russell Ballard, “You Have Nothing to Fear from the Journey,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 59–61.
- *Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual*, 2nd ed. (Church Educational System manual, 2003), 302–14, 329–36.

Suggestions for Teaching

Completion of the Nauvoo Temple

Display a picture of the original Nauvoo Temple, or use a picture of the new Nauvoo Illinois Temple (see *Gospel Art Book* [2009], no. 118). Tell students that after the Latter-day Saints left Nauvoo, the temple they had built was gutted by fire in 1848 and then almost completely leveled by a tornado in 1850. Some 150 years later, a new temple was built that looked very similar to the original and was dedicated in June 2002.

Explain that after the martyrdom of Joseph Smith, the Saints worked under the direction of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to complete the original Nauvoo Temple as quickly as possible. Display the following statements and invite a student to read them aloud. Invite the class to note the sacrifices the Saints made to build the Nauvoo Temple:





“More than 1,000 men donated every tenth day in labor. Louisa Decker, a young girl, was impressed that her mother sold her china dishes and a fine bed quilt as her temple contribution. Other Latter-day Saints gave horses, wagons, cows, pork, and grain to aid in the temple’s construction. The women of Nauvoo were asked to contribute their dimes and pennies for the temple fund” (*Our Heritage: A Brief History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* [1996], 59).

Elizabeth Terry Kirby Heward gave the only possession she had to give—the watch owned by her husband, who had recently died. “I gave it to help the Nauvoo Temple and everything else that I could possibly spare and the last few dollars that I had in the world, which altogether amounted to nearly \$50” (quoted in Carol Cornwall Madsen, *In Their Own Words: Women and the Story of Nauvoo* [1994], 180).

Explain that because of increasing persecution of the Saints and threats from the Church’s enemies, Church leaders announced on September 24, 1845, that the Saints would leave Nauvoo the following spring. Ask students:

- How do you think the decision to leave Nauvoo might have affected the Saints’ efforts to complete the temple?

Explain to students that even though the Saints knew they would have to leave Illinois, they increased their efforts to complete the temple before they left. Rooms in the temple were dedicated as they were completed so that ordinances could be performed as early as possible. Before his death, the Prophet Joseph Smith had administered the temple endowment ceremony to a small group of men and women. On December 10, 1845, these men and women began administering temple ordinances to other members in the dedicated temple rooms. Invite a student to read aloud the following two paragraphs, which describe the efforts of the Saints and their leaders to ensure that as many people as possible received temple ordinances before leaving Nauvoo:

From 1844 to 1846, President Brigham Young and the Twelve Apostles made completion of the Nauvoo Temple an urgent priority. Endowments and sealings were performed there even before construction ended. Brigham Young (1801–77) recorded: “Such has been the anxiety manifested by the saints to receive the ordinances [of the Temple], and such the anxiety on our part to administer to them, that I have given myself up entirely to the work of the Lord in the Temple night and day, not taking more than four hours sleep, upon an average, per day, and going home but once a week” (in *History of the Church*, 7:567).

In addition to the men who worked in the temple, “thirty-six women became ordinance workers in the Nauvoo Temple, working round the clock during the winter of 1845–46 to administer the ordinances to as many as possible before the exodus. ‘I worked in the Temple every day without cessation until it was closed,’ recalled Elizabeth Ann Whitney, one of the thirty-six. ‘I gave myself, my time and attention to that mission.’ Dozens of other women washed the clothing and prepared the food that physically sustained that remarkable undertaking” (Carol Cornwall Madsen, “Faith and Community: Women of Nauvoo,” in *Joseph Smith: The Prophet, The Man*, ed. Susan Easton Black and Charles D. Tate Jr. [1993], 233–34).

Explain that between December 10, 1845 and February 7, 1846—the date when the Saints began to depart for their journey west—approximately 5,615 Saints received the ordinance of the endowment in the Nauvoo Temple and numerous families were sealed there.

- What can we learn from the Saints’ sacrifices to complete the temple, even when they knew they would soon be leaving Nauvoo? (Students may identify a variety of principles, such as the following: **Receiving temple ordinances is worth all of our righteous effort and sacrifice.** Consider writing this on the board for emphasis.)
- In what ways do you think receiving temple ordinances might have prepared those leaving Nauvoo for their journey of over a thousand miles to find refuge in the western United States?

To help answer this question, display the following statements from Sister Sarah Rich and Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and ask a student to read them aloud:



“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” (Sarah Rich, quoted in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* [2011], 30).



“Our pioneer ancestors were sealed together as families in Nauvoo. 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. ...

“For these early Saints, their participation in the ordinances of the temple was essential to their testimonies as they faced the hardships, the angry mobs, being driven from comfortable homes in Nauvoo, and the long and difficult journey ahead. They had been endowed with power in the holy temple. Husband and wife were sealed to each other. Children were sealed to their parents. Many lost family members to death along the way, but they knew that wasn’t the end for them. They had been sealed in the temple for all eternity” (Robert D. Hales, “Temple Blessings,” *New Era*, Feb. 2014, 4).

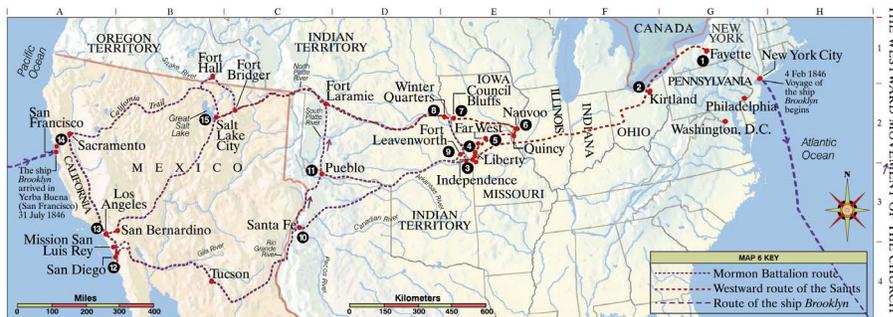
Ask students:

- What effect did receiving temple ordinances have on the early Latter-day Saints who were forced to make the long journey westward? (As students share their answers, help them to understand the following principle: **Temple ordinances can provide us with protection and strength when we face times of hardship and adversity.**)
- How has temple worship protected and strengthened you or those you know during times of trial?

Encourage students to ponder what they might do to find greater spiritual protection and strength through worship in the house of the Lord.

Doctrine and Covenants 136

The Lord’s instructions to those who journeyed west



Invite students to turn to Church History Maps, no. 6, “The Westward Movement of the Church,” and ask them to locate Nauvoo and Winter Quarters. Explain that because of excessive rain and insufficient supplies, the Saints who left Nauvoo in February 1846 spent four months making the 300-mile journey across Iowa. During this time, more than 500 Latter-day Saint men—who became known as the Mormon Battalion—heeded the call of President Brigham Young to enlist in the United States Army to serve during the United States’ war with Mexico. Some of the men were joined by their wives and children. Their service would earn money to help poor Church members make the journey west, but many families were left

without husbands and fathers for part of their westward journey. For these reasons, Church leaders determined not to continue west to the Rocky Mountains until the spring of 1847. The Saints settled at a place they called Winter Quarters. It was there that Brigham Young received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 136.

Invite a few students to take turns reading aloud from Doctrine and Covenants 136:1–5. Ask the class to follow along, looking for what the Lord instructed the Saints to do to prepare to continue their journey west.

- How were the companies to be organized? How do you think this organization would have helped the Saints on their journey?
- How is this organization similar to the way the Church is organized today? (After students respond, you may want to write the following truth on the board: **The Lord organizes His Saints into groups so that each person can be guided and cared for.**)
- What does verse 4 suggest about how the Saints would receive strength in their efforts to accomplish the Lord’s will?

Assign students to silently study Doctrine and Covenants 136:6–11, looking for ways the Saints were to organize to care for one another’s needs and assist the poor and needy during the westward journey. After sufficient time, consider asking the following questions to lead the discussion:

- What words or phrases in verses 6–11 indicate how the Saints were to care for one another and for those in need? (You might emphasize the word “prepare” in verses 6, 7, and 9. This will draw attention to the scripture study skill of learning to recognize repetition.)
- According to verse 11, what are the Lord’s promises to those who seek to help others and prepare the way for them? (As students respond, write the following principle on the board: **The Lord will bless us when we help others and prepare the way for them.**)
- Who has prepared the way for you to enjoy the blessings of the gospel? What did they do to prepare the way for you?

You may want to explain that the word *pioneer* can be defined as one who goes before to prepare or open up the way for others to follow, meaning that all of us can be pioneers in some ways. Give students a moment to ponder what they could do to help others and prepare the way for them to enjoy the blessings of the gospel. Invite a few students to share their thoughts. Bear testimony that the Lord desires us to strive throughout our lives to help prepare the way for each of His children to receive the gospel and return to live with Him.

Explain that the Saints obeyed the Lord’s commands by helping one another and preparing the way for those coming after them. The first group of pioneers left Winter Quarters on April 5, 1847. They traveled more than 1,000 miles and arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in late July 1847. On July 24, 1847, President Brigham Young entered the valley and received confirmation that the Saints had found their new home.

Display the following statement from Elder William R. Walker, a former member of the Seventy, and ask a student to read it aloud:



“Whether or not you are a descendant of pioneers, the Mormon pioneer heritage of faith and sacrifice is your heritage. It is the noble heritage of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (“Live True to the Faith,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2014, 97).

- Why do you think it is important for each member of the Church to understand that the “Mormon pioneer heritage of faith and sacrifice” is their heritage, no matter what their ancestry?
- In what ways can learning about the journey of the Mormon pioneers inspire Church members today in their efforts to serve others and help them in their journey back to Heavenly Father?

Display the following statement from President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), and ask a student to read it aloud:



“We stand today as the recipients of [the pioneers’] great effort. I hope we are thankful. I hope we carry in our hearts a deep sense of gratitude for all that they have done for us. ...

“My beloved brethren and sisters, how blessed we are! What a wonderful inheritance we have! It involved sacrifice, suffering, death, vision, faith, and knowledge and a testimony of God the Eternal Father and His Son, the risen Lord Jesus Christ. ...

“We honor best those who have gone before when we serve well in the cause of truth” (“True to the Faith,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 66–67).

Remind students that every member of the Church has been blessed by others who prepared the way for them to enjoy the blessings of the gospel. Encourage students to consider what they might do to prepare others, including their posterity, to live in faith and obedience to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

Student Readings

- Doctrine and Covenants 136.
- Gordon B. Hinckley, “True to the Faith,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 65–67.

LESSON 25

The Utah War and the Mountain Meadows Massacre

Introduction

During the 1850s, tension and miscommunication between Latter-day Saints and officials of the United States government led to the Utah War of 1857–58. In September 1857, some Latter-day Saints in southern Utah Territory and members of an emigrant wagon train on their way to

California came into conflict, and the Latter-day Saints, motivated by anger and fear, planned and carried out the massacre of about 120 emigrants. This atrocity is now known as the Mountain Meadows Massacre.

Background Reading

- Richard E. Turley Jr., “The Mountain Meadows Massacre,” *Ensign*, Sept. 2007, 17–21.
- “Peace and Violence among 19th-Century Latter-day Saints,” Gospel Topics, [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics).
- Henry B. Eyring, “150th Anniversary of Mountain Meadows Massacre,” Sept. 11, 2007, [mormonnewsroom.org/article/150th-anniversary-of-mountain-meadows-massacre](https://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/150th-anniversary-of-mountain-meadows-massacre).

Suggestions for Teaching

Tension built between early Latter-day Saints and the United States government

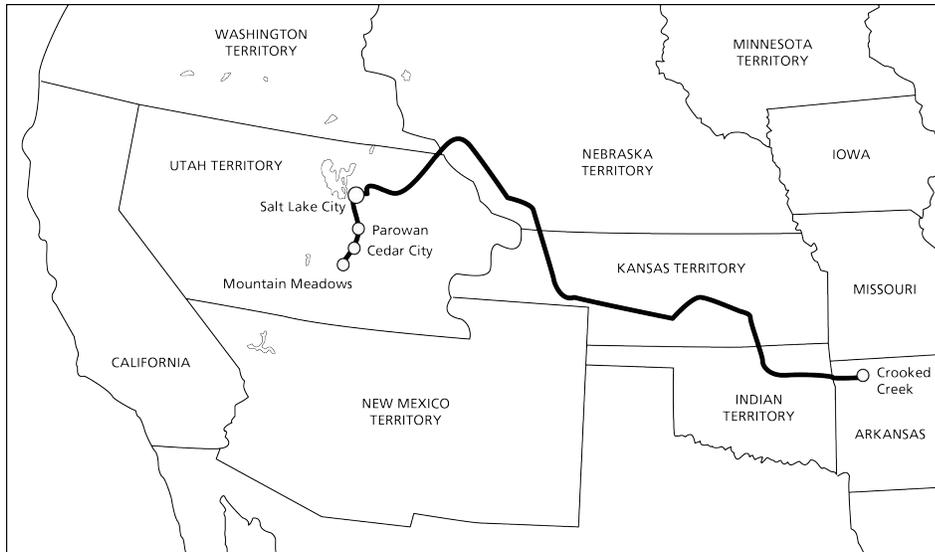


Distribute a copy of the handout at the end of the lesson to each student. Ask a student to read aloud the handout section titled “Growing Tension Led to the Utah War.”

- If you had been a Latter-day Saint in 1857 and had heard that a large army was approaching your city, what concerns might you have had? (Students might mention that the Saints had been violently driven from Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois; many had lost valued possessions and land; and some had been killed or had died during these persecutions. News of the approaching army caused some Saints to worry that such events might also occur in Utah.)

Invite a student to read aloud the handout section titled “Preparing to Defend the Territory.”

Conflict arose between some Latter-day Saints and members of an emigrant wagon train



Display a map similar to the one shown here, or draw one on the board.

Invite a student to read aloud the handout section titled “Conflict with the Emigrant Wagon Train.”

Invite students to think of times when they have experienced conflict with another person or a group of people. Invite a student to read 3 Nephi 12:25 aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for a principle Jesus Christ taught that can guide us when we experience tension with others.

- What do you think it means to “agree with thine adversary quickly”?

To help students understand this phrase, you may want to ask a student to read aloud the following statement by Elder David E. Sorensen of the Seventy:



“The Savior said, ‘Agree with thine adversary quickly ...,’ thus commanding us to resolve our differences early on, lest the passions of the moment escalate into physical or emotional cruelty, and we fall captive to our anger” (“Forgiveness Will Change Bitterness to Love,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2003, 11).

- How would you summarize the Savior’s teaching in 3 Nephi 12:25? (As students respond, write a principle similar to the following on the board: **If we resolve conflict with others in the Lord’s way, then we can avoid the harmful effects of contention.**)
- How could those who plotted to harm the members of the wagon train have applied this principle?

Have a student read aloud the handout section titled “Escalating the Confrontation.”

- What should the Cedar City Church leaders have done when William Dame counseled them not to use the militia? What did rejecting counsel then lead them to do? (After students respond, write the following principle on the board: **If we ignore counsel to do what is right, then we become more susceptible to making poor and even sinful choices.** You might also point out that there is great wisdom in the system of councils by which the Church is governed.)

Invite a few students to take turns reading aloud the handout section titled “Attack on the Emigrants,” and invite students to look for how Cedar City leaders continued to make sinful choices after ignoring the counsel they had received.

- What resulted from the Cedar City leaders’ decision to disobey the counsel of William Dame, the militia commander?
- At this point, what choices did those responsible for the attacks have? (They could confess what they had done and receive the consequences, or they could try to hide their crimes and sins.)

Invite students to ponder the following questions:

- What do you do when you do something wrong? Do you confess what you have done wrong and receive the consequences, or do you try to hide the sin through deception?

Some Latter-day Saints planned and carried out the Mountain Meadows Massacre

Explain that the Church members involved in the attacks against the emigrants chose to try to hide their sins. Invite the class to listen for what occurred as a result of this decision as students take turns reading aloud the handout sections titled “The Mountain Meadows Massacre” and “Tragic Consequences.”

Explain that the choices of some Latter-day Saint 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 negotiations 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.

- How would you summarize the choices that led to the Mountain Meadows Massacre?
- What principles can we learn from this tragedy? (Students may identify various principles, including the following: **Choosing to hide our sins can lead us to commit further sins. Choosing to hide our sins can bring regret and suffering.**)

Assure students that if they have started down a path of mistakes and sin, they can prevent future heartache and regret by turning to the Lord and repenting of their sins.

Invite a student to read aloud the handout section titled “Church Leaders Learned of the Massacre.”

Explain that because a number of local Latter-day Saints were responsible for planning and carrying out the Mountain Meadows Massacre, some people have allowed this event to negatively affect their view of the entire Church.

- Why is it important to realize that the wrong actions of some Church members do not determine the truthfulness of the gospel?

Invite a student to read the statement by President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency found in the handout section titled “150th Anniversary of the Mountain Meadows Massacre.”

- How should we respond when we learn of instances when Church members have failed to live according to the teachings of Jesus Christ?

Invite a student to read Helaman 5:12 aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for what we can do to develop and maintain our testimonies so that during difficult times, such as when we learn of instances when Church members have failed to live according to the teachings of Jesus Christ, our faith will not be shaken.

- According to Helaman 5:12, what can we do to develop and maintain our testimonies? (After students respond, you may want to write the following principle on the board: **We can develop strong testimonies by building our faith on the foundation of Jesus Christ.**)

To illustrate this principle, display the following and invite a student to read it aloud:

“James Sanders is the great-grandson of ... one of the children who survived the massacre [and is also a member of the Church]. ... Brother Sanders ... said that learning his ancestor had been killed in the massacre ‘didn’t affect my faith because it’s based on Jesus Christ, not on any person in the Church’” (Richard E. Turley Jr., “The Mountain Meadows Massacre,” *Ensign*, Sept. 2007, 21).

- How can our faith in Jesus Christ strengthen us when we learn of instances when Church members have failed to live according to the Savior’s teachings?
- What do you do that helps you build your faith on the foundation of Jesus Christ?

Testify of the importance of living the Savior’s teachings and basing our faith on Him and His gospel. Invite students to ponder how they might better build their faith on the foundation of Jesus Christ and to set a goal to do so.

Student Readings

- “Peace and Violence among 19th-Century Latter-day Saints,” Gospel Topics, [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics).

The Utah War and the Mountain Meadows Massacre

Growing Tension Led to the Utah War

Three years after the first Latter-day Saint pioneers reached the Salt Lake Valley, the United States government organized the Utah Territory and appointed Brigham Young as the first governor over the territory. In mid-1857, Latter-day Saint leaders heard rumors that the federal government might replace Brigham Young with a new governor of the Utah Territory, who would be backed by large numbers of federal troops. On July 24, 1857, President Brigham Young was with a group of Saints celebrating the 10th anniversary of their arrival in the Salt Lake Valley when he received confirmation of earlier news that an army was coming to Salt Lake City.

In previous years, disagreements and miscommunication had resulted in growing tension between the Latter-day Saints and officials of the United States government. The Saints wanted to be governed by leaders of their own choosing and had rejected federal appointees who did not share their values, some of whom were dishonest, corrupt, and immoral. Some of the federal officials believed that the Saints' actions and attitudes meant that they were in rebellion against the United States government.

United States President James Buchanan sent approximately 2,500 troops to Salt Lake City to accompany a new governor safely to Utah and to put down what he thought was a rebellion among the Saints. This decision was made without accurate information about the situation in Utah (see *Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual*, 2nd ed. [Church Educational System manual, 2003], 368–71).

Preparing to Defend the Territory

In sermons to the Saints, President Young and other Church leaders described the coming troops as enemies. They feared that the troops might expel the Saints from Utah, as they had previously been driven from Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois. President Young, who for years had asked the Saints to save grain, renewed his instructions 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 territory's militia to prepare to defend the territory.

Conflict with the Emigrant Wagon Train

An emigrant wagon train traveling west from Arkansas to California entered Utah just as Latter-day Saints were preparing to defend the territory against the coming United States troops. Some members of the wagon train became frustrated because they had a difficult time purchasing much-needed grain from the Saints, who had been instructed to save their grain. The emigrants also came into conflict with Saints who did not want the wagon train's large numbers of horses and cattle to consume food and water resources the Saints needed for their own animals.

Tensions erupted in Cedar City, the last settlement in Utah on the route to California. Confrontations occurred between some members of the wagon train and some of the Latter-day Saints. Some members of the wagon train threatened to join the incoming government troops against the Saints. Even though the captain of the wagon train rebuked his companions for making these threats, some Cedar City leaders and settlers viewed the emigrants as enemies. The wagon company left town only about an hour after arriving, but some of the settlers and leaders in Cedar City wanted to pursue and punish the men who had offended them.

Escalating the Confrontation

Because these Saints did not resolve their conflict with the emigrants in the Lord's way, the situation became much more serious. Isaac Haight, the Cedar City mayor, militia major, and stake president, requested permission from the militia commander, who lived in the nearby settlement of Parowan, to call out the militia to confront the offenders from the wagon train. The militia commander, William

Dame, a Church member, counseled Isaac Haight to ignore the emigrants' threats. Instead of yielding to this counsel, Isaac Haight and other Cedar City leaders decided to persuade some local Indians to attack the wagon train and steal their cattle as a way of punishing the emigrants. Isaac Haight asked John D. Lee, a local Church member and militia major, to lead this attack, and the two planned to blame Indians for the deed.

Attack on the Emigrants

Isaac Haight presented the plan to attack the wagon train to a council of local leaders in the Church, community, and militia. Some council members strongly disagreed with the plan and asked Haight if he had consulted with President Brigham Young about the matter. Saying he had not, Haight agreed to send a messenger, James Haslam, to Salt Lake City with a letter explaining the situation and asking what should be done. However, because Salt Lake City is approximately 250 miles from Cedar City, it would require about a week of hard riding on horseback for the messenger to reach Salt Lake City and return to Cedar City with President Young's instructions.

Shortly before Isaac Haight sent his letter with the messenger, John D. Lee and a group of Indians attacked the emigrant camp at a place called the Mountain Meadows. Lee led the attack but concealed his identity so that it would appear that only the Indians were involved. Some of the emigrants were killed or wounded, and the remainder fought off their attackers, forcing Lee and the Indians to retreat. The emigrants quickly pulled their wagons into a tight circle, or corral, for protection. Two additional attacks followed during a five-day siege on the wagon train.

At one point, Cedar City militiamen became aware of two emigrant men who were outside the wagon corral. The militiamen fired on them, killing one. The other man escaped and brought news to the wagon camp that white men were involved in the attacks against them. Those who planned the attacks were now caught in their deception. If the emigrants were allowed to go on to California, news would spread that Latter-day Saints were responsible for the attack on the wagon train. The conspirators feared this news would bring negative consequences upon themselves and their people.

The Mountain Meadows Massacre

In an attempt to prevent news from spreading that Latter-day Saints were involved in the attacks on the wagon train, Isaac Haight, John D. Lee, and other local Church and militia leaders made a plan to kill all the remaining emigrants except for small children. Enacting this plan, John D. Lee approached the emigrants 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, James Haslam arrived in Cedar City with President Young's message of reply, instructing the local leaders 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).

Tragic Consequences

The Mountain Meadows Massacre not only resulted in the deaths of about 120 victims, but it also caused great suffering to the surviving children and other relatives of the victims. Some Latter-day Saints took in and cared for the emigrant children who survived the massacre. In 1859, federal officials took custody of these children and returned them to relatives in Arkansas. Paiute Indians also suffered from being unjustly blamed for the crime.

Church Leaders Learned of the Massacre

“Although Brigham Young and other Church leaders in Salt Lake City learned of the massacre soon after it happened, their understanding of the extent of the settlers’ involvement and the terrible details of the crime came incrementally over time. In 1859 they released from their callings stake president Isaac Haight and other prominent Church leaders in Cedar City who had a role in the massacre. In 1870 they excommunicated Isaac Haight and John D. Lee from the Church.

“In 1874 a territorial grand jury indicted nine men for their role in the massacre. Most of them were eventually arrested, though only Lee was tried, convicted, and executed for the crime. Another indicted man turned state’s evidence [voluntarily testified and gave evidence against the other defendants], and others spent many years running from the law. Other militiamen who carried out the massacre labored the rest of their lives under a horrible sense of guilt and recurring nightmares of what they had done and seen” (Richard E. Turley Jr., “The Mountain Meadows Massacre,” *Ensign*, Sept. 2007, 20).

150th Anniversary of the Mountain Meadows Massacre

President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency said:

“The responsibility for the [Mountain Meadows Massacre] lies with local leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the regions near Mountain Meadows who also held civic and military positions and with members of the Church acting under their direction. ...

“... 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 [at the Mountain Meadows] long ago by members of our Church represents a terrible and inexcusable departure from Christian teaching and conduct. ... No doubt Divine Justice will impose appropriate punishment upon those responsible for the massacre. ...

“... May the God of Heaven, whose sons and daughters we all are, bless us to honor those who died here by extending to one another the pure love and spirit of forgiveness which His Only Begotten Son personified” (“150th Anniversary of Mountain Meadows Massacre,” Sept. 11, 2007, mormonnewsroom.org/article/150th-anniversary-of-mountain-meadows-massacre).

LESSON 26

The Revelation on the Priesthood

Introduction

During the 20th century, as missionary work spread throughout the earth, Church leaders prayed for guidance concerning restrictions on priesthood ordination and temple ordinances for Church members of African descent. A definitive revelation came to President Spencer W. Kimball, his counselors in the First Presidency, and members of the

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the Salt Lake Temple on June 1, 1978. As students participate in this lesson they will better understand how to approach gospel questions in a faithful manner and will also learn the circumstances and truths pertaining to this definitive revelation.

Background Reading

- Gordon B. Hinckley, “Priesthood Restoration,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1988, 69–72.
- “Race and the Priesthood,” Gospel Topics, [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics).
- Ahmad Corbitt, “A Personal Essay on Race and the Priesthood,” parts 1–4, Perspectives on Church History series, [history.lds.org/section/perspectives-on-church-history](https://www.history.lds.org/section/perspectives-on-church-history).

Suggestions for Teaching

Introduction to Official Declaration 2

Approaching gospel questions in a faithful manner

Present the following scenario to your class:

After school one day, Scott was approached by another member of the Church who had recently developed some questions about Church doctrine. Scott felt that he was able to provide some help to his friend, but afterward he wondered what he might do differently the next time a Church member in a similar situation approached him.

Ask students what they have done to help Church members who approach them with sincere questions about the Church or its doctrine.

Display and read the following statement from President Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the First Presidency:



“Inquiry is the birthplace of testimony. Some might feel embarrassed or unworthy because they have searching questions regarding the gospel, but they needn’t feel that way. Asking questions isn’t a sign of weakness; it’s a precursor of growth.

“God commands us to seek answers to our questions and asks only that we seek ‘with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ’ [Moroni 10:4]. When

we do so, the truth of all things can be manifested to us 'by the power of the Holy Ghost' [Moroni 10:5].

"Fear not; ask questions. Be curious, but doubt not! Always hold fast to faith and to the light you have already received" ("The Reflection in the Water" [Church Educational System fireside for young adults, Nov. 1, 2009], 7, ldschurchnewsarchive.com).

- What did President Uchtdorf teach that could help someone who has questions about doctrinal, historical, or social issues concerning the Church? (Help students understand the following principle: **If we will exercise faith in Jesus Christ, then sincere questions can eventually bring answers from our Father in Heaven.**)

Explain that one of the historical issues about which some Church members have questions stems from a Church policy that was in place from the mid-1800s through 1978 restricting black males of African descent from being ordained to the priesthood. It also prohibited black women and men from participating in the temple endowment or in sealing ceremonies. Invite a student to read aloud the following statement, which is a portion of the introduction to Official Declaration 2 (found in the Doctrine and Covenants). Ask students to think about how this information might help those who have concerns about this historical issue.

"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).

- What important truths does this statement contain for those who may struggle with this issue?

Point out the line that states, "Church records offer no clear insights into the origins of this practice." While some people may suggest reasons why males of African descent were not ordained to the priesthood for a time, those reasons may not be accurate. Invite a student to read the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



"If you read the scriptures with this question in mind, 'Why did the Lord command this or why did he command that,' you find that in less than one in a hundred commands was any reason given. It's not the pattern of the Lord to give reasons. We [mortals] can put reasons to revelation. We can put reasons to commandments. When we do, we're on our own. Some people put reasons to the one we're talking about here [race and the priesthood], and they turned out to be spectacularly wrong. ...

“... Let’s don’t make the mistake that’s been made in the past, here and in other areas, trying to put reasons to revelation. The reasons turn out to be man-made to a great extent” (*Life’s Lessons Learned* [2011], 68–69).

- Why is it wise to avoid speculating on reasons why individuals of African descent were not given the priesthood or granted access to temple ordinances prior to 1978? (Man speaks from a limited perspective, and God has not told us the reasons.)

Emphasize that today, the Church disavows the theories advanced in the past on this issue: black skin is a sign of divine disfavor or curse; black skin reflects unrighteous actions in a premortal life; mixed-race marriages are a sin; or blacks or people of any other race or ethnicity are inferior in any way to anyone else. Church leaders today unequivocally condemn all racism, past and present, in any form. (See “Race and the Priesthood,” Gospel Topics, [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics).)

- How can people’s faith in Jesus Christ help them resolve their questions or concerns about the priesthood restriction that existed before 1978?

Official Declaration 2

Priesthood and temple blessings extended to every worthy Church member

Explain that before 1978, thousands of people of African descent in various nations had come to know of the truthfulness of the restored gospel. Church leaders in Salt Lake City received many letters from unbaptized converts in Nigeria and Ghana requesting that missionaries be sent to Africa. For years, Church leaders prayerfully considered the matter but felt the time had not yet come to send missionaries to Africa. In Brazil, faithful black members helped to build the São Paulo Temple, announced in 1975, even though they knew they would not be able to enter the temple.

Inform students that Official Declaration 2 contains the official announcement of a revelation received by President Spencer W. Kimball, his Counselors in the First Presidency, and ten members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. The revelation was received on June 1, 1978. Invite a student to read aloud the first paragraph under the words “Dear Brethren.” Invite the class to follow along, looking for what Church leaders said they had witnessed.

- What had Church leaders witnessed throughout the earth?
- What were Church leaders inspired with as they witnessed the expansion of the Lord’s work?

Invite a student to read aloud the next paragraph, which begins with the words “Aware of the promises.” Invite the class to look for how Church leaders acted on their inspired desires. Ask:

- How did President Spencer W. Kimball and other Church leaders act on their inspired desires?

- According to the first three lines of this paragraph, what did Church leaders know about the restriction of the priesthood? (They knew that at some time, all worthy men would have the opportunity to receive the priesthood.)

Explain that for many years before 1978, knowing that a revelation was needed in order for change to occur, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles had discussed the priesthood restriction and prayed about it. Display the following statement by President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) and ask a student to read it aloud:



"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 are not making any plans to be spectacularly moving. We want only the thing that thou dost want, and we want it when you want it and not until'" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church:*

Spencer W. Kimball [2006], 238).

- What do President Kimball's words teach us about the way in which prophets seek revelation? (After students respond, you may want to write the following truth on the board: **Prophets seek the Lord's will in directing the Church.**)

Invite a student to read aloud the next two paragraphs in Official Declaration 2, beginning with "He has heard our prayers." Ask the class to look for the Lord's response to the prayers of President Kimball, his counselors in the First Presidency, and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

- What was the Lord's response to the prayers of His prophet? (Emphasize the Lord's message received in this revelation: **The blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ are available to all of Heavenly Father's children.**)

To help students understand how the revelation recorded in Official Declaration 2 was received, share the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), who was present the day the revelation was received in the temple:



"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, that the time had come, and that now the wondrous blessings of the priesthood should be extended to worthy men

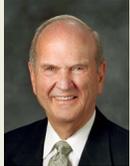
everywhere regardless of lineage. ...

"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 a perfect unity among us in our experience and in our understanding" ("Priesthood Restoration," *Ensign*, Oct. 1988, 70).

Explain that soon after the revelation ending the priesthood restriction was received, missionaries were sent to Africa. Temples have since been built on that continent, over one hundred stakes have been organized, and hundreds of

thousands of people have received the ordinances of the gospel for themselves and for their deceased ancestors. (See, for example, “Mormons in Africa: A Bright Land of Hope,” mormonnewsroom.org; “Emerging with Faith in Africa,” parts 1–3, lds.org/prophets-and-apostles/unto-all-the-world.)

Display the following statement by Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and ask a student to read it:



“On every continent and across isles of the sea, the faithful are being gathered into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Differences in cultural background, language, gender, and facial features fade into insignificance as members lose themselves in service to their beloved Savior. Paul’s declaration is being fulfilled: ‘As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.’

“‘There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus’ [Galatians 3:27–28].

“Only the comprehension of the true Fatherhood of God can bring full appreciation of the true brotherhood of man. That understanding inspires desire to build bridges of cooperation instead of walls of segregation” (“Teach Us Tolerance and Love,” *Ensign*, May 1994, 70).

- How does the gospel prepare us to become unified with people from different backgrounds?
- What examples have you seen of Church members from different backgrounds growing together in unity and cooperation?

In closing, invite students to consider how they might respond if they were asked why the Church did not ordain men of African descent to the priesthood for a time. Affirm that it is appropriate to explain to others that we do not know why the priesthood restriction began and that we should share and testify of the truths we do know.

Student Readings

- 2 Nephi 26:33; Official Declaration 2.
- “Race and the Priesthood,” Gospel Topics, lds.org/topics.

LESSON 27

Preparing the World for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ

Introduction

The Savior will one day return to the earth in power and great glory. In preparation for that great day, the Saints are taught to study the signs of His coming and to prepare for it by standing in holy places and taking “the Holy Spirit for

their guide” (D&C 45:57). The Lord has declared that the Church and its members have a responsibility to prepare the world for the Second Coming of the Savior.

Background Reading

- Neil L. Andersen, “Preparing the World for the Second Coming,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2011, 49–52.
- Dallin H. Oaks, “Preparation for the Second Coming,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2004, 7–10.
- “Preparing for the Second Coming of Christ,” chapter 44 in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 389–97.

Suggestions for Teaching

Doctrine and Covenants 45:15–46, 56–57

Signs that will precede the Second Coming

Ask students the following question:

- How can you tell when it is about to rain?

Explain that just as there are indicators that help us know when rain will fall, there are also indicators, or signs, that help us know when the Second Coming of Jesus Christ will occur. Tell students that as recorded in Matthew 24, the Savior met with His disciples on the Mount of Olives shortly before His death and described the signs of His Second Coming. He repeated some of these teachings to Joseph Smith in our day, as recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 45. Emphasize to students that preparing for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ is an important theme throughout the Doctrine and Covenants. Invite the students to take time as they study the Doctrine and Covenants to note teachings about the Second Coming and ponder how they can prepare for it.

Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 45:15–17, looking for what the Savior’s disciples asked Him and how He responded.

- What did the disciples ask Jesus?
- What was His response?

To help students identify signs that will precede the Second Coming, write the following references on the board:

D&C 45:25–27

D&C 45:28–31, 33

D&C 45:40–43

Divide students into pairs, and assign each pair one of the passages written on the board. Ask them to read the verses together, looking for the signs mentioned in those verses. Point out that some of the signs have already been fulfilled or are in the process of being fulfilled. You may want to share the following information in connection with verse 30: “The era in which the Gentiles have precedence in receiving the gospel is called the *times of the Gentiles*. In it the non-Jews ... have the opportunity to accept the gospel and gain salvation before that right is to be given, in any substantial degree, at least, to the Jews” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [1966], 721–22).

After sufficient time, ask pairs to report their findings to the class. You might suggest that students highlight the signs in their scriptures.

Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 45:34 aloud while the class follows along. Then ask:

- When you read or hear about the events or signs that will precede the Second Coming, are you ever troubled? Why or why not?
- In what ways can learning about the signs of the Second Coming of the Savior help us overcome fear and anxiety in our lives?

Invite students to silently read Doctrine and Covenants 45:35–38 to learn why the Savior revealed the signs that will precede His Second Coming.

- Why is it important to recognize when the signs of the Savior’s coming are being fulfilled?

Ask students to look for ways to prepare for the Second Coming of Christ as they read Doctrine and Covenants 45:32, 39, 56–57. Then discuss the following:

- What do you learn from these verses about how to prepare for the Second Coming? (As students share their ideas, emphasize the following principle: **Standing in holy places and taking the Holy Spirit as our guide are essential as we prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.**)
- What must we do in order to have the Holy Spirit as our guide?
- How do you think a follower of Jesus Christ can “stand in holy places”? (Holy places include temples, chapels, and homes. A home can be made holy through consistent personal and family prayer, scripture study, service, and family home evening. Standing in holy places also has to do with how we live. If we live worthy of the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost, then we stand in a

holy place. Consider suggesting that students write some of these ideas in the margin of their scriptures next to Doctrine and Covenants 45:32.)

- How have you been able to stand in holy places despite living in a wicked world?
- What are some of the reasons you are looking forward to the Savior's Second Coming? Why are you grateful that the Savior will come again?

Doctrine and Covenants 29:7–9; 34:5–7; 39:19–23

Preparing the world for the Second Coming

Remind students that the title of this course is *Foundations of the Restoration*. Ask students:

- What connection or relationship do you see between the Restoration of the gospel and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ?

Write the following references on the board. Ask students to study them looking for a common theme:

Doctrine and Covenants 29:7–9

Doctrine and Covenants 34:5–7

Doctrine and Covenants 39:19–23

After sufficient time, ask students to turn to the person sitting next to them and discuss what these scripture passages have in common. Ask a few students how they would summarize the message in these scriptures. (As students share their ideas, help them identify and understand this principle: **As we preach the gospel to others, we are helping to prepare the world for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.**)

Ask students to look back at sections 29, 34, and 39 in the Doctrine and Covenants and notice the dates when the revelations were given. Ask:

- How soon after the Church was organized did the Lord begin teaching the principle just identified?

Ask a student to read the following statement by Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



"From the early days of the Restoration, the Brethren have been very serious about their charge to declare the gospel. In 1837, only seven years after the organization of the Church, at a time of poverty and persecution, missionaries were sent to teach the gospel in England. Within the next few years, missionaries were preaching in such diverse places as Austria, French Polynesia, India, Barbados, Chile, and China.

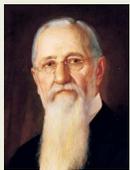
"The Lord has blessed this work, and the Church is being established across the world. ... The sun never sets on righteous missionaries testifying of the Savior. Think of the spiritual power of

52,000 missionaries, endowed with the Spirit of the Lord, boldly declaring that there is ‘no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come . . . , only in and through the name of Christ’ [Mosiah 3:17]. . . . The world is being prepared for the Second Coming of the Savior in large measure because of the Lord’s work through His missionaries” (“Preparing the World for the Second Coming,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2011, 51).

Discuss the following:

- How does the message taught by the Church’s missionaries prepare people for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ?
- Why was the Restoration of the gospel necessary before the Savior could come again to the earth?

Display the following statements by President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918), and ask a student to read them aloud:



“The gospel teaches men to be humble, faithful, honest and righteous before the Lord and with each other, and in proportion as its principles are carried out so will peace and righteousness extend and be established on the earth, and sin, contention, bloodshed and corruption of all kinds cease to exist, and the earth become purified and be made a fit abode for heavenly beings; and for the Lord our God to come and dwell upon, which he will do during the Millennium”

(*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* [1998], 394–95).

“The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints . . . regards it as part of its mission to prepare the way for the literal and glorious coming of the Son of God to the earth, to reign over it and dwell with His people” (*Teachings: Joseph F. Smith*, 395).

Ask the following:

- During the course of this lesson, what thoughts or spiritual impressions have you had about the responsibility of the Church and its members to help prepare the world for the Second Coming?
- How do you think helping others prepare for the Second Coming will help you prepare as well?

To conclude the lesson, invite students to share what they have done to share the message of the Restoration with those not of our faith.

Student Readings

- Doctrine and Covenants 29:7–9; 34:5–7; 39:19–23; 45:15–46, 56–57; 88:81–87.
- Neil L. Andersen, “Preparing the World for the Second Coming,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2011, 49–52.

LESSON 28

Hastening the Work of Salvation

Introduction

In recent years, Church leaders have emphasized the Lord's prophecy that He will "hasten [His] work" (D&C 88:73). The work of salvation includes member missionary work, convert retention, activation of less-active members, temple and

family history work, and teaching the gospel. This lesson will help students better understand their responsibility as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to participate in this work.

Background Reading

- Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Are You Sleeping through the Restoration?" *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 58–62.
- "Hastening the Work of Salvation," *Ensign*, Oct. 2013, 36–39.

Suggestions for Teaching

Doctrine and Covenants 138:53–56

The Lord is hastening His work

Tell students that shortly before his death, President Joseph F. Smith had a vision of the spirit world, which is now recorded as Doctrine and Covenants 138. He learned that the leaders of the final dispensation and "many others" were prepared in the premortal world for their earthly responsibilities. Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 138:53–56 aloud as the class follows along looking for the responsibilities that these leaders were given in the premortal world.

- What responsibilities were given to these leaders in the premortal world? What preparation did they receive there?
- What responsibilities might have been given to you in the premortal world? What preparation might you have received? (As students share their ideas, help them identify this principle: **We were prepared in the premortal life to come to earth in the fulness of times to labor for the salvation of the souls of men.**)

Display the following statement from President Thomas S. Monson, and ask a student to read it aloud:



"Do you realize that the restored Church was 98 years old before it had 100 stakes? But less than 30 years later, the Church had organized its second 100 stakes. And only eight years after that the Church had more than 300 stakes. Today [2014] we are more than 3,000 stakes strong.

"Why is this growth taking place at an accelerated rate? Is it because we are better known? Is it because we have lovely chapels?"

"These things are important, but 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' [D&C 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" ("Hastening the Work," *Ensign*, June 2014, 4).

- According to President Monson, why were we sent to the earth at this time? (As students share their answers, help them to understand this principle: **We have a responsibility to participate in hastening Heavenly Father's work.**)
- What are some of the ways you have witnessed a "hastening" of God's work? (There are many answers to this question, including the change in the ages for missionary service, the increasing number of missionaries, the increasing number of temples, and the increase in tools that make family history work easier.)

Point out that these answers provide evidence that the Lord is hastening His work on both sides of the veil. Explain that Church leaders today have given emphasis to five areas within the work of salvation and asked that each of us participate in these areas in order to hasten God's work in these latter days. Display the following statement from Elder L. Whitney Clayton of the Presidency of the Seventy, and ask a student to read it aloud. Have the class identify the five areas that are part of the work of salvation:



"Living prophets and apostles teach us that 'members of the Church of Jesus Christ are sent forth "to labor in his vineyard for the salvation of the souls of men" (D&C 138:56). This work of salvation includes member missionary work, convert retention, activation of less-active members, temple and family history work, and teaching the gospel' [*Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 5.0]" ("The Work of Salvation: Then and Now," *Ensign*, Sept. 2014, 63).

As students identify the five areas, write the following on the board:

Member missionary work

Convert retention

Activation of less-active members

Temple and family history work

Teaching the gospel

Doctrine and Covenants 88:73

We can each contribute to the hastening of the Lord's work



Ask a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 88:73 while the other students follow along. Then explain to students that each of us should

strive to increase our contribution to the hastening of the Lord's work. Distribute the handout at the end of the lesson to students, and explain that this handout will help them think about how they can increase their contribution. Invite students to select and silently read one or more of the statements on the handout and prepare to answer the questions found on the handout.

After students have had sufficient time to read and prepare, consider inviting a student to read aloud the first quotation. Then ask several students to provide their responses to the three questions on the handout, focusing on member missionary work. Repeat this process for each of the five quotations.

Help students to feel the truth and importance of participating in the work of salvation by asking the following questions:

- What blessings have you received as you have participated in one or more of these areas of the work of salvation? What experience have you had while participating in one of these areas that has been especially meaningful to you?

Display the following statement by President Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the First Presidency, and invite a student to read it aloud:



"When our time in mortality is complete, what experiences will we be able to share about our own contribution to this significant period of our lives and to the furthering of the Lord's work? Will we be able to say that we rolled up our sleeves and labored with all our heart, might, mind, and strength? Or will we have to admit that our role was mostly that of an observer?" ("Are You Sleeping through the Restoration?" *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2014, 59).

Invite students to plan what they will do to more fully participate in the work of salvation by asking:

- What are some ways you have seen others help to hasten the Lord's work?
- What are some ways in which you plan to contribute to the hastening of the Lord's work?
- How does our knowledge and testimony of the Restoration motivate us to more fully participate in the work of salvation?

Invite a few students to share and testify of something they have learned about the Restoration of the gospel through their study in this course. Conclude by testifying of the truthfulness of the Restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Student Readings

- Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Are You Sleeping through the Restoration?" *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2014, 58–62.

Hastening the Work of Salvation

Ponder the following questions in connection with each of the five areas that are part of the work of salvation:

- How can your efforts in this area of God's work bring others closer to the blessings of salvation?
- What experiences have you had and what blessings have you received as you have participated in this area of the Lord's work of salvation?
- What can you do, regardless of your current Church calling, to contribute in this area of the work of salvation?

Member Missionary Work

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:



"Brothers and sisters, as surely as the Lord has inspired more missionaries to serve, He is also awakening the minds and opening the hearts of more good and honest people to receive His missionaries. You already know them or will know them. They are in your family and live in your neighborhood. They walk past you on the street, sit by you in school, and connect with you online. You too are an important part of this unfolding miracle.

"If you're not a full-time missionary with a missionary badge pinned on your coat, now is the time to paint one on your heart—painted, as Paul said, 'not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God' [2 Corinthians 3:3]. ... All of us have a contribution to make to this miracle" ("It's a Miracle," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 78).

Convert Retention

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles declared:



"You and I must do everything we can to see that every member of the Church is completely fellowshipped and enjoying all the blessings the gospel has to offer.

"President Gordon B. Hinckley has reminded you and me of our responsibility to be coworkers with the Lord in bringing about His plans for the Church. In a satellite broadcast President Hinckley said:

"The Lord has laid upon us a mandate to teach the gospel to every creature. This will take the very best efforts of every missionary—full-time and stake. It will take the very best efforts of every bishop, of every bishop's counselor, of every member of the ward council ...' ('Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep,' *Ensign*, May 1999, 107). It will take the best efforts of every member" ("Members Are the Key," *Ensign*, Sept. 2000, 10).

Activation of Less-Active Members

"Our role [as members] is to immerse ourselves in loving and serving those around us—comforting a coworker in need, inviting our friends to a baptism, helping an elderly neighbor with his yard work, inviting a less-active member over for a meal, or helping a neighbor with her family history. These are all natural, joyful ways to invite less-active members and those not of our faith into our lives and consequently into the light of the gospel. Sharing with them the fun times and the sacred times of our lives may actually be the most effective way any of us can 'labor in [Jesus Christ's] vineyard for the salvation of the souls of men [and women]' (D&C 138:56)" ("Hastening the Work of Salvation," *Ensign*, Oct. 2013, 36).

Temple and Family History Work

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:



"The leadership of the Church has issued a clarion call to the rising generation to lead the way in the use of technology to experience the spirit of Elijah, to search out their ancestors, and to perform temple ordinances for them. Much of the heavy lifting in hastening the work of salvation for both the living and the dead will be done by you young people" ("Roots and Branches," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 46).

Teaching the Gospel

"The responsibility to teach the gospel is not limited to those who have formal callings as teachers. As a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, you have the responsibility to teach the gospel. As a parent, son, daughter, husband, wife, brother, sister, Church leader, classroom teacher, home teacher, visiting teacher, coworker, neighbor, or friend, you have opportunities to teach. Sometimes you can teach openly and directly by the things you say and the testimony you bear. And you always teach by example" (*Teaching, No Greater Call: A Resource Guide for Gospel Teaching* [1999], 3–4).

Handouts

The Book of Mormon— Keystone of Our Religion



“The Keystone in Our Witness of Christ”

“The Book of Mormon is the keystone in our witness of Jesus Christ, who is Himself the cornerstone of everything we do. It bears witness of His reality. . . . Its testimony of the Master is clear, undiluted, and full of power. . . . 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” (Ezra Taft Benson, “The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 5).

The Book of Mormon— Keystone of Our Religion



“The Keystone of Our Doctrine”

“In the Book of Mormon we will find the fulness of those doctrines required for our salvation. And they are taught plainly and simply so that even children can learn the ways of salvation and exaltation. 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” (Ezra Taft Benson, “The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 6).

The Book of Mormon— Keystone of Our Religion



“The Keystone of Testimony”

“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, 6).



Balancing Church History

Elder Steven E. Snow of the Seventy said:



“The Internet has put all kinds of information at our fingertips—good, bad, truthful, untruthful—including information on Church history. You can read a great deal about our history, but it’s important to read about it and understand it in context. The difficulty with some information online is that it’s out of context and you don’t really see the whole picture.

“Information that tries to embarrass the Church is generally very subjective and unfair. We should seek sources that more objectively describe our beliefs and our history. Some websites are very mean-spirited and can be sensational in how they present the information. Look for sources by recognized and respected historians, whether they’re members of the Church or not.

“Some young people are surprised and shocked by anti-Mormon material on the Internet because they haven’t fortified themselves against it. They may not have spent enough time on the spiritual side to prepare and strengthen themselves for whatever may come. When life experiences come to knock their legs out from under them, it’s important that they do those basic things we always talk about: continuing to study the scriptures and having meaningful prayer with our Heavenly Father. Those basic things prepare people for all kinds of adversity, including anti-Mormon articles they’ll come across online” (“Balancing Church History,” *New Era*, June 2013, 21–22).

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Discerning Truth from Error

In all gospel dispensations, the forces of evil have opposed God and His work. But God’s work will not be frustrated. In these latter days, the stone has been cut out of the mountain, and it will “roll forth, until it fills the whole earth” (D&C 65:2). However, because individual members of the Church can be deceived, we each need to “watch and pray always” (3 Nephi 18:18).



“There is no need for you or for me, in this enlightened age when the fulness of the gospel has been restored, to sail uncharted seas or to travel unmarked roads in search of truth. A loving Heavenly Father has plotted our course and provided an un-failing guide—even *obedience*. A knowledge of truth and the answers to our greatest questions come to us as we are obedient to the commandments of God” (Thomas S. Monson, “Obedience Brings Blessings,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2013, 89).



“My dear friends—please, first doubt your doubts before you doubt your faith. We must never allow doubt to hold us prisoner and keep us from the divine love, peace, and gifts that come through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ” (Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Come, Join with Us,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 23).



“Satan is the great deceiver, ‘the accuser of [the] brethren’ [Revelation 12:10], the father of all lies [see John 8:44], who continually seeks to deceive that he might overthrow us [D&C 50:3]. . . .

“For those who already embrace the truth, his primary strategy is to spread the seeds of doubt. For example, he has caused many members of the Church to stumble when they discover information about the Church that seems to contradict what they had learned previously.

“If you experience such a moment, remember that in this age of information there are many who create doubt about anything and everything, at any time and every place. . . .

“ . . . And it is always good to keep in mind that just because something is printed on paper, appears on the Internet, is frequently repeated, or has a powerful group of followers doesn’t make it true.

“Sometimes untrue claims or information are presented in such a way that they appear quite credible. . . .

“ . . . What may seem contradictory now may be perfectly understandable as we search for and receive more

trustworthy information” (Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “What Is Truth?” [Church Educational System devotional, Jan. 13, 2013], lds.org/broadcasts).



“When we begin by measuring modern practices and proposals against what we know of God’s plan and the premises given in the word of God and the teachings of His living prophets, . . . we know that this puts us on safe ground eternally” (Dallin H. Oaks, “As He Thinketh in His Heart” [evening with Elder Dallin H. Oaks, Feb. 8, 2013], lds.org/broadcasts).



“In moments of fear or doubt or troubling times, hold the ground you have already won, even if that ground is limited. . . . When those moments come and issues surface, the resolution of which is not immediately forthcoming, *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, 93–94).



“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” (Neil L. Andersen, “Joseph Smith,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 29).



“Answers to spiritual questions are given to individuals who don’t harden their hearts; who ask in faith, believing they will receive; and who diligently keep the commandments” (Paul V. Johnson, “A Pattern for Learning Spiritual Things” [Church Educational System address to religious educators, Aug. 7, 2012]; si.lds.org).



“Studying the Church . . . through the eyes of its defectors [is] like interviewing Judas to understand Jesus” (Neal A. Maxwell, “All Hell Is Moved” [Brigham Young University devotional, Nov. 8, 1977], 3; speeches.byu.edu).



Remaining Strong in Times of Opposition

Apostasy in Kirtland: The Need to Faithfully Follow Church Leaders

In 1837, the Saints in Kirtland, Ohio, experienced some financial problems. To help the Saints be more self-sufficient in their finances, Joseph Smith and other Church leaders established a company similar to a bank and called it the Kirtland Safety Society. Because of a widespread economic depression during this time, many banks failed throughout the United States. The Kirtland Safety Society also failed in the fall of 1837. Two hundred investors in the bank lost almost everything, with Joseph Smith sustaining the greatest losses. Even though the Kirtland Safety Society was not funded by the Church, some of the Saints considered it a Church bank or the Prophet's bank and blamed Joseph Smith for their financial problems. Some even began calling him a fallen prophet. But despite the bank's failure, many others who lost money continued in the faith and stayed true to the Prophet.

A spirit of apostasy and faultfinding began to spread among many of the Saints. By June 1838, approximately 200 or 300 apostates had left the Church, including four Apostles, the Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon, and a member of the First Presidency. However, most of the Saints responded to this period of testing with faith, much like Brigham Young did. They were strengthened by the Lord, and they remained true to their testimonies. Several of those who left the Church during this period of apostasy later returned and requested that they be united again with the Lord's Church. Among them were Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, Luke Johnson, and Frederick G. Williams.

In the midst of these struggles in Kirtland, a few apostates sought to kill Joseph Smith. Warned by the Spirit, he and Sidney Rigdon left during the night on January 12, 1838. Their enemies pursued them for days, but the Lord protected them. They arrived with their families in Far West, Missouri, on March 14, 1838.

Discuss the following questions as a group:

- What principles can we learn from these events about how to respond to opposition in our lives? What can we learn from these events about how to respond to opposition against the Church?
- What can we do to remain faithful to Church leaders even though we may hear other people criticize them?
- In what ways have you been blessed because you have followed the prophet?

Conflict in Northern Missouri: Learning to Endure Opposition Well

In 1837 and 1838, some disaffected and excommunicated members of the Church living among the Saints in Far West began to bring lawsuits against the Church and its leaders and to harass the Church. In June 1838, Sidney Rigdon spoke heatedly in what has become known as the "Salt Sermon." He referenced Matthew 5:13 and said that if the salt loses its savor, it is good for nothing and should be cast out, implying that those who had left the Church should be cast out from among the Saints. Two weeks later, on July 4, Sidney Rigdon gave a speech in which he promised that the Saints would defend themselves even if it came to a "war of extermination." Though both of these speeches seemed to contradict the Lord's instruction to "sue for peace" (D&C 105:38), both speeches were published and caused great alarm among non-Latter-day Saints.

During this time, a convert named Sampson Avard administered secret oaths to those who would join him in forming a band of marauders called the Danites. Avard instructed them to rob and plunder the Missourians, saying that this would help build up the kingdom of God. Avard convinced his followers that his directions were coming from the First Presidency. The truth was later discovered, and Avard was excommunicated. Avard's actions caused significant damage to the image of the Church and helped lead to the Prophet's imprisonment in Liberty Jail.

In October 1838, a battle between some Church members and Missouri militiamen left a few men dead on each side. Exaggerated reports of the battle reached Governor Lilburn W. Boggs, governor of the state of Missouri, who then issued what has become known as the extermination order: "The Mormons must be treated as enemies and *must be exterminated* or driven from the state, if necessary for the public good" (quoted in *History of the Church*, 3:175). Soon, the city of Far West was surrounded by a militia that outnumbered the Saints' forces five to one. Joseph Smith and other Church leaders were imprisoned in Liberty Jail, where they remained all winter. The rest of the Saints were forced to leave the state.

Discuss the following questions as a group:

- What principles can we learn from these events to help us better endure opposition?
- Why is it important for each of us to follow the Savior's example at times of crisis or opposition? What happened in northern Missouri because some of the Saints did not do this?
- When have you seen another person's words or actions influence someone else to have a positive view of the Church?



Excerpts from the King Follett Discourse

The Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44) taught:



“If a man learns nothing more than to eat, drink and sleep, and does not comprehend any of the designs of God, the beast comprehends the same things. It eats, drinks, sleeps, and knows nothing more about God; yet it knows as much as we, unless we are able to

comprehend by the inspiration of Almighty God. If men do not comprehend the character of God, they do not comprehend themselves. . . .

“My first object is to find out the character of the only wise and true God, and what kind of a being He is. . . .

“God Himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret. If the veil were rent today, and the great God who holds this world in its orbit, and who upholds all worlds and all things

by His power, was to make Himself visible,—I say, if you were to see Him today, you would see Him like a man in form—like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man; for Adam was created in the very fashion, image and likeness of God, and received instruction from, and walked, talked and conversed with Him, as one man talks and communes with another” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 40).

“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 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, until you attain to the resurrection of the dead, and are able to dwell in everlasting burnings, and to sit in glory, as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power” (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 221).

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Women and the Priesthood

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said:



“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 given the Priesthood, it has not been conferred upon them, that does not mean that the Lord

has not given unto them authority. . . . A person may have authority given to him, or a sister to her, to do certain things in the Church that are binding and absolutely necessary for our salvation, such as the work that our sisters do in the House of the Lord. They have authority given unto them to do some great and wonderful things, sacred unto the Lord, and binding just as thoroughly as are the blessings that are given by the men who hold the Priesthood’ [‘Relief Society—An Aid to the Priesthood,’ *Relief Society Magazine*, Jan. 1959, 4].

“In that notable address, President Smith said again and again that women have been given authority. To the women he said, ‘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.’ And, of course, the Church work done by women or men, whether in the temple or in the wards or branches, is done under the direction of those who hold priesthood keys. Thus, speaking of the Relief Society, President Smith explained, ‘[The Lord] has given to them this great organization where they have authority to serve under the directions of the bishops of the wards . . . , looking after the interest of our people both spiritually and temporally’ [‘Relief Society—An Aid to the Priesthood,’ 4–5]. . . .

“We are not accustomed to speaking of women having the authority of the priesthood in their Church callings, but what other authority can it be? When a woman—young or old—is set apart to preach the gospel as a full-time missionary, she is given priesthood authority to perform a priesthood function. The same is true when a woman is set apart to function as an officer or teacher in a Church organization under the direction of one who holds the keys of the priesthood. Whoever functions in an office or calling received from one who holds priesthood keys exercises priesthood authority in performing her or his assigned duties” (“The Keys and Authority of the Priesthood,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2014, 50–51).

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Understanding Plural Marriage

Plural Marriage

“Latter-day Saints believe that the marriage of one man and one woman is the Lord’s standing law of marriage. In biblical times, the Lord commanded some to practice plural marriage—the marriage of one man and more than one woman. By revelation, the Lord commanded Joseph Smith to institute the practice of plural marriage among Church members in the early 1840s. For more than half a century, plural marriage was practiced by some Latter-day Saints under the direction of the Church President” (“Plural Marriage in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” Gospel Topics, [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics)).

A Difficult Commandment

Eliza R. Snow (1804–87), the second Relief Society general president, was sealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith. She recorded the following experience in which the Prophet Joseph taught the principle of plural marriage to her brother Lorenzo Snow.

“The Prophet Joseph unbosomed his heart [to Lorenzo Snow], and described the trying mental ordeal he experienced in overcoming the repugnance of his feelings, the natural result of the force of education and social custom, 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—to set the example, and establish Celestial plural marriage. He knew that he had not only his own prejudices and prepossessions 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. Yet the Prophet hesitated and deferred from time to time, until an angel of God stood by him with a drawn sword, and told him that, unless he moved forward and established plural marriage, his Priesthood would be taken from him and he should be destroyed! This testimony he not only bore to my brother, but also to others—a testimony that cannot be gainsayed [contradicted]” (*Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow* [1884], 69–70).

A Test of Faith

Many who struggled with the principle of plural marriage were blessed with a confirming spiritual witness of the truth of the principle.

“According to Helen Mar Kimball, Joseph Smith stated that ‘the practice of this principle would be the hardest trial the Saints would ever have to test their faith.’ Though it was one

of the ‘severest’ trials of her life, she testified that it had also been ‘one of the greatest blessings.’ . . .

“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’ ” (“Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo,” Gospel Topics, [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics)).

Joseph Smith and Plural Marriage

Many women were sealed to Joseph Smith, but the exact number is unknown.

“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. Other women left no records, making it unknown whether their sealings were for time and eternity or 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 ties extended both vertically, from parent to child, and horizontally, from one family to another. Today such eternal bonds are achieved through the temple marriages of individuals who are also sealed to their own birth families, in this way linking families together” (“Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo,” Gospel Topics, [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics)).

After the Prophet’s death, many women were sealed to him who had no mortal relationship with him.

Opposition to Plural Marriage

Many religious and political leaders in the United States opposed the plural marriage system, which they considered immoral and uncivilized. Latter-day Saints were ridiculed in public speeches, books, magazines, and newspapers. The United States Congress passed laws that limited Church members’ freedom and hurt the Church economically by restricting the amount of property the Church could own. “This legislation ultimately caused officers to arrest and imprison men who had more than one wife and to deny them the right to vote, the right to privacy in their homes, and the enjoyment of other civil liberties” (*Our Heritage: A Brief History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* [1996], 97). By 1890, hundreds of faithful Latter-day Saints had served time in prison. Others went into hiding to avoid arrest and imprisonment. In these conditions, many families suffered from stress, grief, poverty, and hunger.

Although the world ridiculed them for practicing plural marriage, many faithful Latter-day Saints defended the practice and testified that they knew it had been revealed by God through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

These difficult circumstances led President Wilford Woodruff to prayerfully seek the Lord’s guidance concerning the Saints’ practice of plural marriage. In 1889, President Woodruff instructed Church leaders to discontinue teaching the principle of plural marriage. By 1890, very few plural marriages were performed, and these were done against the counsel of President Woodruff. However, some people published reports that the Church was still promoting the practice of plural marriage. These reports brought further opposition against the Church. In September 1890, President Woodruff issued a Manifesto, which is now known as Official Declaration 1 in the Doctrine and Covenants.

The Second Manifesto

“The Manifesto [Official Declaration 1] declared President [Wilford] Woodruff’s intention to submit to the laws of the United States. It said nothing about the laws of other countries. Ever since the opening of colonies in Mexico and Canada, Church leaders had performed plural marriages in those countries, and after October 1890, plural marriages continued to be quietly performed there. . . . Under exceptional circumstances, a smaller number of new plural marriages were performed in the United States between 1890 and 1904, though whether the marriages were authorized to have been performed within the states is unclear” (“The Manifesto and the End of Plural Marriage,” Gospel Topics, [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics)).

“At the April 1904 general conference, President [Joseph F.] Smith issued a forceful statement, known as the Second Manifesto, making new plural marriages punishable by excommunication” (“Plural Marriage in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” Gospel Topics, [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics)).



The Martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith

Opposition to the Prophet and the Church

By June 1844, animosity against the Church had greatly intensified. Some citizens in Illinois were discussing driving the Saints from the state, while others were plotting to kill the Prophet. Some of those who were conspiring against the Prophet and the Church were former members of the Church who had apostatized. On June 7, 1844, William Law, who had served as Second Counselor in the First Presidency, and other apostates printed the first issue of a newspaper called the *Nauvoo Expositor*. In an attempt to inflame the public against the Prophet and the Church, these men used this newspaper to slander Joseph Smith and other Church leaders. Joseph Smith, acting as the mayor of Nauvoo, and the majority of the Nauvoo city council recognized that the inflammatory newspaper would lead to mob violence against the city. They declared the newspaper a public nuisance and ordered that the *Nauvoo Expositor* press be destroyed.

Joseph and Hyrum Are Falsely Charged

“As a result of the [destruction of the *Nauvoo Expositor*] 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.

“Believing that the mobs wanted only them, Joseph and Hyrum decided to leave for the West to preserve their lives. On June 23, they crossed the Mississippi River, but later that day, brethren from Nauvoo found the Prophet and told him that troops would invade the city if he did not surrender to the authorities in Carthage. This the Prophet agreed to do, hoping to appease both government officials and the mobs. On June 24, Joseph and Hyrum Smith bade farewell to their families and rode with other Nauvoo city officials toward Carthage, voluntarily surrendering 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 of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 529–30).

Martyrdom at Carthage Jail

During the day on June 27, 1844, a visitor had given Joseph a revolver. As the mob tried to enter the room where the Prophet and the other men were held, Hyrum was shot to death, acting in defense of everyone in the room. Joseph sprang to the door and reached around the doorframe to shoot the pistol into the hall. Only three of the six chambers fired, wounding several members of the mob. The mob then forced their guns through the half-closed door, and John Taylor tried to beat the barrels of their guns back with a walking stick.

As the conflict at the doorway increased, John Taylor tried to escape the room through a window. As he attempted to leap out of the window, he was shot in the thigh from the doorway and was also shot by someone outside. He fell to the floor, and while attempting to get under the bed next to the window, he was severely wounded by three more shots. Meanwhile, as guns came through the doorway, Willard Richards began striking them with a cane.

Joseph Smith then decided to try to escape through the same window. As Willard Richards continued to deflect the mob at the door, the Prophet leaped to the open window. As he did so, he was struck by bullets from both inside and outside the jail. He fell out of the window, exclaiming, “O Lord, my God!” and landed on the ground below. The members of the mob who were inside the jail rushed outside to assure themselves that Joseph was dead. Although there were no members of the Church on their way to Carthage, someone yelled, “The Mormons are coming!” and the entire mob fled.

Tributes to the Prophet Joseph Smith

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said:



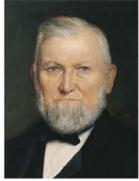
“Men who knew Joseph best and stood closest to him in Church leadership loved and sustained him as a prophet. His brother Hyrum chose to die at his side. John Taylor, also with him when he was murdered, said: ‘I testify before God, angels, and men, that he was a good, honorable, virtuous man . . . —that 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’ [*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1954), 459]” (“Joseph, the Man and the Prophet,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 73).



Succession in the Presidency of the Church

Meeting with the Twelve Apostles, March 1844

President Wilford Woodruff (1807–98) recalled:



"I remember the last speech that [Joseph Smith] ever gave us before his death. . . . He stood upon his feet some three hours. The room was filled as with consuming fire, his face was as clear as amber, and he was clothed upon by the power of God. He laid before us our duty. He laid before us the fullness of this great work of God; and in his remarks to us he said: 'I have had sealed upon my head every key, every power, every principle of life and salvation that God has ever given to any man who ever lived upon the face of the earth. And these principles and this Priesthood and power belong to this great and last dispensation which the God of Heaven has set His hand to establish in the earth. Now,' said he, addressing the Twelve, 'I have sealed upon your heads every key, every power, and every principle which the Lord has sealed upon my head.' . . .

"After addressing us in this manner he said: 'I tell you, the burden of this kingdom now rests upon your shoulders; you have got to bear it off in all the world' " (quoted in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 532).

Sidney Rigdon's Claim

Sidney Rigdon, First Counselor in the First Presidency, arrived in Nauvoo from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on August 3, 1844. He called for a special meeting to be held on Tuesday, August 6, so that Church members could choose a guardian for the Church. It appeared as though Sidney Rigdon tried to hold this meeting so Church members could ratify his position as guardian of the Church before all of the Twelve Apostles would return from their missions to the eastern United States. Fortunately, because of the efforts of Elder Willard Richards and Elder Parley P. Pratt, the meeting was moved to Thursday, August 8, 1844, by which time most of the Apostles had returned to Nauvoo.

Sidney Rigdon claimed that because he had previously been called and ordained as a spokesman for Joseph Smith (see D&C 100:9), it was his responsibility to "see that the church is governed in a proper manner" (in *History of the Church*, 7:229).

James Strang's Claim

After Joseph Smith's death, James Strang, who had been baptized in February 1844, claimed to have received a letter from Joseph Smith stating that Joseph had appointed Strang

as his successor. The letter was a forgery, but it appeared to include Joseph Smith's signature, and it deceived some members of the Church when Strang showed it to them. Strang also said that he had been visited by an angel, who had given him keys.

August 7, 1844

Elders John Taylor, Willard Richards, Parley P. Pratt, and George A. Smith were already in Nauvoo when Sidney Rigdon arrived. Most of the rest of the Apostles, including Brigham Young, returned to Nauvoo on the evening of August 6, 1844. The next day, August 7, the Apostles met in council at the home of John Taylor. Later that afternoon, the Twelve Apostles, the high council, and the high priests met together. President Young asked Sidney Rigdon to state his message to the Saints. Sidney Rigdon boldly declared that he had seen a vision and that no man could succeed Joseph Smith as President of the Church. He then proposed that he be appointed as the guardian of the people.

After Sidney Rigdon concluded his remarks, Brigham Young (1801–77) said:



"I do not care who leads the church, . . . but one thing I must know, and that is what God says about it. I have the keys and the means of obtaining the mind of God on the subject. . . .

"Joseph conferred upon our heads all the keys and powers belonging to the Apostleship which he himself held before he was taken away, and no man or set of men can get between Joseph and the Twelve in this world or in the world to come.

"How often has Joseph said to the Twelve, 'I have laid the foundation and you must build thereon, for upon your shoulders the kingdom rests' " (in *History of the Church*, 7:230).

August 8, 1844, 10:00 A.M.

On August 8, 1844, the Saints in Nauvoo gathered at 10:00 a.m. to hear Sidney Rigdon make his claims as guardian of the Church. He spoke to the thousands of assembled Saints for an hour and a half, explaining why he should be guardian of the Church. Several people described his speech as uninspiring.

President Brigham Young spoke briefly and said that he would have preferred to come back to Nauvoo to mourn for the Prophet than to have to appoint a new leader.

He announced that an assembly of leaders and members would be held later that day at 2:00 p.m. Several members of the Church later testified that as Brigham Young spoke, they saw his appearance change and heard his voice change, and he took on the appearance and voice of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Emily Smith Hoyt remembered: “The manner of reasoning, the expression of the countenance, the sound of the voice thrilled my whole soul. . . . I knew that Joseph was dead. And yet I often startled and involuntarily looked at the stand to see if it was not Joseph. It was not, it was Brigham Young” (quoted in Lynne Watkins Jorgensen, “The Mantle of the Prophet Joseph Passes to Brother Brigham: A Collective Spiritual Witness,” *BYU Studies*, vol. 36, no. 4 [1996–97], 142).

Wilford Woodruff wrote, “If I had not seen him with my own eyes, there is no one that could have convinced me that it was not Joseph Smith, and anyone can testify to this who was acquainted with these two men” (in *History of the Church*, 7:236).

August 8, 1844, 2:00 P.M.

At 2:00 p.m., thousands of Saints gathered for what they knew would be a significant meeting. Brigham Young spoke frankly about the proposed guardianship of Sidney Rigdon and his alienation from Joseph Smith during the previous two years and then said:

“If the people want President Rigdon to lead them they may have him; but I say unto you that the Quorum of the Twelve have the keys of the kingdom of God in all the world.

“The Twelve are appointed by the finger of God. Here is Brigham, have his knees ever faltered? Have his lips ever quivered? Here is Heber [C. Kimball] and the rest of the Twelve, an independent body who have the keys of the priesthood—the keys of the kingdom of God to deliver to all the world: this is true, so help me God. They stand next to Joseph, and are as the First Presidency of the Church” (in *History of the Church*, 7:233).

Many Saints commented that Brigham Young looked and sounded like Joseph Smith as he spoke that afternoon. In addition to this miracle, many of the Saints also felt the Holy Ghost witness to them that Brigham Young and the Quorum of the Twelve were called by God to lead the Church. At the conclusion of this meeting, the Saints in Nauvoo voted unanimously to sustain the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, with Brigham Young at their head, to lead the Church. However, not all the members of the Church ultimately chose to follow the Apostles. Some of the people chose instead to follow individuals such as Sidney Rigdon and James Strang, who formed their own churches.



The Utah War and the Mountain Meadows Massacre

Growing Tension Led to the Utah War

Three years after the first Latter-day Saint pioneers reached the Salt Lake Valley, the United States government organized the Utah Territory and appointed Brigham Young as the first governor over the territory. In mid-1857, Latter-day Saint leaders heard rumors that the federal government might replace Brigham Young with a new governor of the Utah Territory, who would be backed by large numbers of federal troops. On July 24, 1857, President Brigham Young was with a group of Saints celebrating the 10th anniversary of their arrival in the Salt Lake Valley when he received confirmation of earlier news that an army was coming to Salt Lake City.

In previous years, disagreements and miscommunication had resulted in growing tension between the Latter-day Saints and officials of the United States government. The Saints wanted to be governed by leaders of their own choosing and had rejected federal appointees who did not share their values, some of whom were dishonest, corrupt, and immoral. Some of the federal officials believed that the Saints' actions and attitudes meant that they were in rebellion against the United States government.

United States President James Buchanan sent approximately 2,500 troops to Salt Lake City to accompany a new governor safely to Utah and to put down what he thought was a rebellion among the Saints. This decision was made without accurate information about the situation in Utah (see *Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual*, 2nd ed. [Church Educational System manual, 2003], 368–71).

Preparing to Defend the Territory

In sermons to the Saints, President Young and other Church leaders described the coming troops as enemies. They feared that the troops might expel the Saints from Utah, as they had previously been driven from Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois. President Young, who for years had asked the Saints to save grain, renewed his instructions 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 territory's militia to prepare to defend the territory.

Conflict with the Emigrant Wagon Train

An emigrant wagon train traveling west from Arkansas to California entered Utah just as Latter-day Saints were preparing to defend the territory against the coming United States troops. Some members of the wagon train became frustrated because they had a difficult time purchasing much-needed

grain from the Saints, who had been instructed to save their grain. The emigrants also came into conflict with Saints who did not want the wagon train's large numbers of horses and cattle to consume food and water resources the Saints needed for their own animals.

Tensions erupted in Cedar City, the last settlement in Utah on the route to California. Confrontations occurred between some members of the wagon train and some of the Latter-day Saints. Some members of the wagon train threatened to join the incoming government troops against the Saints. Even though the captain of the wagon train rebuked his companions for making these threats, some Cedar City leaders and settlers viewed the emigrants as enemies. The wagon company left town only about an hour after arriving, but some of the settlers and leaders in Cedar City wanted to pursue and punish the men who had offended them.

Escalating the Confrontation

Because these Saints did not resolve their conflict with the emigrants in the Lord's way, the situation became much more serious. Isaac Haight, the Cedar City mayor, militia major, and stake president, requested permission from the militia commander, who lived in the nearby settlement of Parowan, to call out the militia to confront the offenders from the wagon train. The militia commander, William Dame, a Church member, counseled Isaac Haight to ignore the emigrants' threats. Instead of yielding to this counsel, Isaac Haight and other Cedar City leaders decided to persuade some local Indians to attack the wagon train and steal their cattle as a way of punishing the emigrants. Isaac Haight asked John D. Lee, a local Church member and militia major, to lead this attack, and the two planned to blame Indians for the deed.

Attack on the Emigrants

Isaac Haight presented the plan to attack the wagon train to a council of local leaders in the Church, community, and militia. Some council members strongly disagreed with the plan and asked Haight if he had consulted with President Brigham Young about the matter. Saying he had not, Haight agreed to send a messenger, James Haslam, to Salt Lake City with a letter explaining the situation and asking what should be done. However, because Salt Lake City is approximately 250 miles from Cedar City, it would require about a week of hard riding on horseback for the messenger to reach Salt Lake City and return to Cedar City with President Young's instructions.

Shortly before Isaac Haight sent his letter with the messenger, John D. Lee and a group of Indians attacked the emigrant camp at a place called the Mountain Meadows. Lee led the attack but concealed his identity so that it would appear that only the Indians were involved. Some of the emigrants were killed or wounded, and the remainder fought off their attackers, forcing Lee and the Indians to retreat. The emigrants quickly pulled their wagons into a tight circle, or corral, for protection. Two additional attacks followed during a five-day siege on the wagon train.

At one point, Cedar City militiamen became aware of two emigrant men who were outside the wagon corral. The militiamen fired on them, killing one. The other man escaped and brought news to the wagon camp that white men were involved in the attacks against them. Those who planned the attacks were now caught in their deception. If the emigrants were allowed to go on to California, news would spread that Latter-day Saints were responsible for the attack on the wagon train. The conspirators feared this news would bring negative consequences upon themselves and their people.

The Mountain Meadows Massacre

In an attempt to prevent news from spreading that Latter-day Saints were involved in the attacks on the wagon train, Isaac Haight, John D. Lee, and other local Church and militia leaders made a plan to kill all the remaining emigrants except for small children. Enacting this plan, John D. Lee approached the emigrants 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, James Haslam arrived in Cedar City with President Young's message of reply, instructing the local leaders 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).

Tragic Consequences

The Mountain Meadows Massacre not only resulted in the deaths of about 120 victims, but it also caused great suffering to the surviving children and other relatives of the victims. Some Latter-day Saints took in and cared for the emigrant

children who survived the massacre. In 1859, federal officials took custody of these children and returned them to relatives in Arkansas. Paiute Indians also suffered from being unjustly blamed for the crime.

Church Leaders Learned of the Massacre

"Although Brigham Young and other Church leaders in Salt Lake City learned of the massacre soon after it happened, their understanding of the extent of the settlers' involvement and the terrible details of the crime came incrementally over time. In 1859 they released from their callings stake president Isaac Haight and other prominent Church leaders in Cedar City who had a role in the massacre. In 1870 they excommunicated Isaac Haight and John D. Lee from the Church.

"In 1874 a territorial grand jury indicted nine men for their role in the massacre. Most of them were eventually arrested, though only Lee was tried, convicted, and executed for the crime. Another indicted man turned state's evidence [voluntarily testified and gave evidence against the other defendants], and others spent many years running from the law. Other militiamen who carried out the massacre labored the rest of their lives under a horrible sense of guilt and recurring nightmares of what they had done and seen" (Richard E. Turley Jr., "The Mountain Meadows Massacre," *Ensign*, Sept. 2007, 20).

150th Anniversary of the Mountain Meadows Massacre

President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency said:

"The responsibility for the [Mountain Meadows Massacre] lies with local leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the regions near Mountain Meadows who also held civic and military positions and with members of the Church acting under their direction....

". . . 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 [at the Mountain Meadows] long ago by members of our Church represents a terrible and inexcusable departure from Christian teaching and conduct. . . . No doubt Divine Justice will impose appropriate punishment upon those responsible for the massacre. . . .

". . . May the God of Heaven, whose sons and daughters we all are, bless us to honor those who died here by extending to one another the pure love and spirit of forgiveness which His Only Begotten Son personified" ("150th Anniversary of Mountain Meadows Massacre," Sept. 11, 2007, mormonnewsroom.org/article/150th-anniversary-of-mountain-meadows-massacre).



Hastening the Work of Salvation

Ponder the following questions in connection with each of the five areas that are part of the work of salvation:

- How can your efforts in this area of God's work bring others closer to the blessings of salvation?
- What experiences have you had and what blessings have you received as you have participated in this area of the Lord's work of salvation?
- What can you do, regardless of your current Church calling, to contribute in this area of the work of salvation?

Member Missionary Work

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:



"Brothers and sisters, as surely as the Lord has inspired more missionaries to serve, He is also awakening the minds and opening the hearts of more good and honest people to receive His missionaries. You already know them or will know them. They are in your family and live in your neighborhood. They walk past you on the street, sit by you in school, and connect with you online. You too are an important part of this unfolding miracle.

"If you're not a full-time missionary with a missionary badge pinned on your coat, now is the time to paint one on your heart—painted, as Paul said, 'not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God' [2 Corinthians 3:3]. . . . All of us have a contribution to make to this miracle" ("It's a Miracle," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 78).

Convert Retention

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles declared:



"You and I must do everything we can to see that every member of the Church is completely fellowshipped and enjoying all the blessings the gospel has to offer.

"President Gordon B. Hinckley has reminded you and me of our responsibility to be coworkers with the Lord in bringing about His plans for the Church. In a satellite broadcast President Hinckley said:

"The Lord has laid upon us a mandate to teach the gospel to every creature. This will take the very best efforts of every missionary—full-time and stake. It will take the very best efforts of every bishop, of every bishop's counselor, of every member of the ward council. . . ." ("Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep," *Ensign*, May 1999, 107). It will take the best efforts of every member" ("Members Are the Key," *Ensign*, Sept. 2000, 10).

Activation of Less-Active Members

"Our role [as members] is to immerse ourselves in loving and serving those around us—comforting a coworker in need, inviting our friends to a baptism, helping an elderly neighbor with his yard work, inviting a less-active member over for a meal, or helping a neighbor with her family history. These are all natural, joyful ways to invite less-active members and those not of our faith into our lives and consequently into the light of the gospel. Sharing with them the fun times and the sacred times of our lives may actually be the most effective way any of us can 'labor in [Jesus Christ's] vineyard for the salvation of the souls of men [and women]' (D&C 138:56)" ("Hastening the Work of Salvation," *Ensign*, Oct. 2013, 36).

Temple and Family History Work

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:



"The leadership of the Church has issued a clarion call to the rising generation to lead the way in the use of technology to experience the spirit of Elijah, to search out their ancestors, and to perform temple ordinances for them. Much of the heavy lifting in hastening the work of salvation for both the living and the dead will be done by you young people" ("Roots and Branches," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 46).

Teaching the Gospel

"The responsibility to teach the gospel is not limited to those who have formal callings as teachers. As a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, you have the responsibility to teach the gospel. As a parent, son, daughter, husband, wife, brother, sister, Church leader, classroom teacher, home teacher, visiting teacher, coworker, neighbor, or friend, you have opportunities to teach. Sometimes you can teach openly and directly by the things you say and the testimony you bear. And you always teach by example" (*Teaching, No Greater Call: A Resource Guide for Gospel Teaching* [1999], 3–4).





SEMINARIES AND
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